

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019



**End FGM**  
EUROPEAN NETWORK



The End FGM European Network thanks its funders for their continued support



The European Union

SIGRID  
RAUSING  
TRUST



The End FGM European Network is a 27-member organisation represented in 14 countries, working to ensure sustainable European action to end Female Genital Mutilation.



## OUR VISION

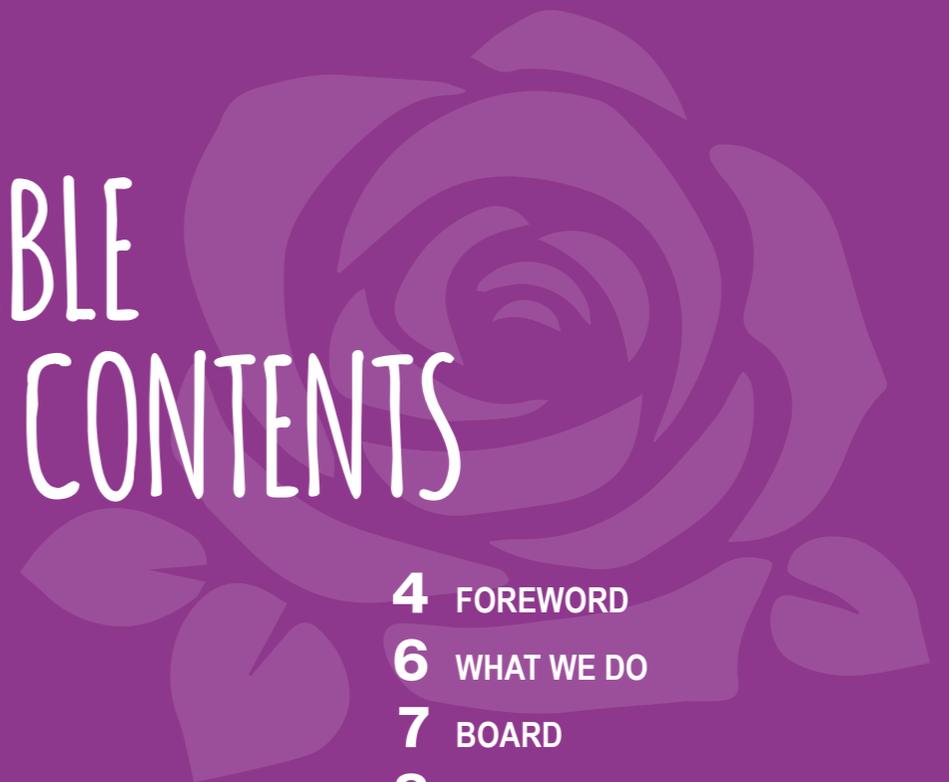
A world free of all forms of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) where women and girls are empowered and can fully enjoy their human rights.



## OUR MISSION

To be the driving force of the European movement to end all forms of female genital mutilation (FGM), joining forces with communities, civil society organisations, whilst building synergies and cooperation with all relevant actors in Europe and globally.

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# A WORD FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS



Dear friends, supporters and colleagues,

As Co-Presidents and on behalf of the rest of the End FGM European Network Board, we would like to thank you for your continued support and collaboration. 2019 was a memorable year for the End FGM European Network. From celebrating our 5th anniversary to continuing to galvanise this European movement, we keep on putting the end of FGM high on the agenda of policy makers. Internally, the Network secretariat also expanded with the creation of two new roles: Programme Officer and an additional Policy & Advocacy Officer. These positions have increased our capacity to achieve our mission.

Our achievements in 2019 show the power of working together as a strong, collective voice. The power of a movement grounded in the wisdom and experience of communities affected by FGM. Over 300 people attended our events in 2019, which shows how vibrant a Network we are. Following are some of our personal highlights:

## #MYVOICEMATTERS A SPOTLIGHT ON WORK AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

This year's Network campaign focused on the importance of Community Voices in the movement to end FGM. See [page 18](#)

## ENGAGING WITH NEW POLITICAL CHAMPIONS

In May came the European elections, during which we launched **our manifesto with 7 key asks** for the new legislature. This campaign was highly successful gathering, 407 candidate signatures and with over 90 of those being elected to the European Parliament. This success is also the result of the hard work of our Members at national level. See [page 16 for more information on our advocacy work](#)

## LAUNCH OF A GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION

In June, on the sideline of the Women Deliver conference, the Network was part of a group of organisations who set-up a pre-conference on FGM. This was the first time that NGOs, grassroots and survivor-led organisations from across the globe came together to discuss FGM and pen a **Call to Action**. This was viewed by many as a catalytic moment. See [page 17](#)

## THE YOUTH AMBASSADORS MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD

Globally 2019 was a year specifically dedicated to youth activism. This was also true within the European Movement. The Youth Ambassadors made their voices heard, they spoke to policy makers and mobilised money to launch their very own YouTube channel. See [page 8](#)

## 'HOW TO TALK ABOUT FGM' GUIDE

Words and their connotations are powerful and have an impact on how a subject is perceived and tackled. The year ended on a high note with the launch of the **'How to talk about FGM'** guide. See [page 19](#)

This is a glimpse of a few of the many activities of 2019. While reflecting on our year it is also important to thank those who made these achievements possible. Firstly, to the Network Secretariat thank you for your passion and hard work. To our fellow Board Members thank you for your commitment in guiding and strengthening the Network. We wish to extend our sincerest gratitude to our Ambassadors, whose passion and commitment to ending FGM inspire us on a daily basis. Our sincere thanks to our donors: the City of Brussels, the European Commission, Sigrid Rausing Trust and Wallace Global fund. Finally, none of this would be possible without our Members and your willingness and energy to collaborate and work together.

2020 is the start of a new decade and we are confronted with only ten years to achieve the goal of zero girls undergoing FGM. We have no more time to waste. Collaboration and working together will be key. We must continue to collectively make our voices loud and demand the much-needed support to scale up our efforts.

Warm wishes,

SOKHNA FALL BA & TOKS OKENIYI

# WELCOMING 5 NEW MEMBERS



NATIONAL FGM CENTRE  
UK



SWISS END FGM NETWORK  
SWITZERLAND



ACTIONAID  
SWEDEN



WASSU FOUNDATION  
SPAIN



WE SPEAK OUT  
UK

# WHAT WE DO

We **ADVOCATE** and influence for a coordinated and human rights-based approach to end FGM

We **CONNECT** civil society organisations, professionals and decision makers to tackle FGM

We **COMMUNICATE** using a non-stigmatising narrative to include all affected communities

We **EMPOWER** affected communities and reinforce our members' capacities with training, tools, information and resources

We **BUILD BRIDGES** between stakeholders and movements for a transcontinental cooperation

## BOARD



**CO-PRESIDENT**  
**SOKHNA FALL BA**  
Project Officer,  
Equilibres & Populations, France



**CO-PRESIDENT**  
**TOKS OKENIYI**  
Head of Programmes & Operations,  
FORWARD, UK



**SECRETARY**  
**STÉPHANIE FLORQUIN**  
Deputy Director,  
GAMS, Belgium



**TREASURER**  
**VALENTINA FANELLI**  
Programmes Officer,  
AIDOS, Italy



**MEMBER**  
**GWLADYS AWO**  
Founder of Lessan  
Project Manager Plan International,  
Germany



**MEMBER**  
**JOHANNA LATVALA**  
Manager of gender-based  
violence projects,  
Finnish League for Human Rights,  
Finland



**MEMBER**  
**SONIA DUARTE LOPES**  
Programmes Manager,  
APF, Portugal

## SECRETARIAT



**DIRECTOR**  
**FIONA COYLE**

Communications Officer: **OPHÉLIE MASSON**

Communication Volunteer (from our Member AIDOS): **SERENA FIORLETTA**

Fundraising and Events Officer: **MARIA PAOLA CHESSE**

Policy and Advocacy Officer: **CHIARA COSENTINO**

Policy and Advocacy Assistant: **FATIMA AWIL**

Programmes Officer: **ISMA BENBOULERBAH**



# AMBASSADORS & YOUTH AMBASSADORS

The End FGM European Network is proud to be fostering these two groups of committed activists who fight within their communities to end FGM and other harmful traditional practices.



## YOUTH AMBASSADORS

The Youth Ambassadors are a group of 10 young activists from 5 different countries, who are fighting against FGM at national level alongside some of our members. In 2019, they all gathered twice in Brussels to receive training, meet policy makers and continue to influence the vision of the Network to end FGM. Our commitment to end FGM in Europe and beyond would be incomplete and unsustainable without mobilising, preparing and working alongside the next generation of activists for the tasks ahead.

In 2019, the Youth Ambassadors were awarded an Erasmus+ project to create their very own European YouTube channel, called the Purple Chair! Here they will produce their own videos on tackling gender-based violence and FGM in four different European languages, to reach out to other young European citizens and expand their fight. This year they received technical training on video production and visited the YouTube offices. A project by young people and for young people, to raise awareness on violence against women and girls. Stay tuned!



## AMBASSADORS

After a successful first phase, in 2019 we welcomed to the Network the second intake of inspiring Ambassadors! These 9 international activists represent 7 different European countries and are actively advocating for ending the practice of FGM within their communities and beyond.

The End FGM European Network values the work of survivors and members from FGM-affected communities and their leading role on shaping the work against FGM. Community voices must play a more central role in all actions and decisions moving forward, if we are to see an end to FGM.

In 2019, the Ambassadors received a training on self-care, emotional well-being and mental health.

During this year the Ambassadors took part in more than 40 events, such as:

- UN Women events: “Translating political decisions into national and grassroots action for Zero Tolerance to FGM by 2030” and “Generation Equality”
- Conference “Prévenir et Protéger” on the importance of the Building Bridges strategy between Africa and Europe
- Interactive learning session on Female Genital Mutilation with the City of Brussels
- Conference on Brexit and Women’s Rights
- “FGM and safeguarding children” as part of a project closing



# 5-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

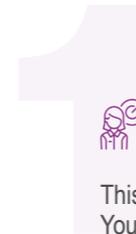
In April 2019, the End FGM European Network celebrated its 5-year anniversary. This milestone was celebrated with Members, friends and supporters of the Network. It was an opportunity to look back at what the Network has achieved so far and honour all the amazing women and men we shared this journey with and who made it possible.

Thank you all for joining us and showing your support in ending violence against women, in Europe and beyond. Stay tuned for the next 5 years!



# WORKING GROUPS

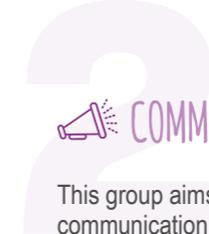
Participants of the Working Groups are Members of the Network. They hold online meetings and meet in person once a year. These groups provide spaces for Members to connect and to work hand in hand to address key issues affecting the movement to end FGM.



## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

This working group is led by the Youth Ambassadors. In 2019, together with Members the group co-wrote a 'Youth Manifesto' which:

- Highlights the importance of youth in ending FGM
- Addresses the challenges to youth engagement, including from a youth perspective
- Provides strategies for working specifically with youth to ensure they have platforms to speak out and have a recognised role in ending the practice of FGM in Europe



## COMMUNICATION

This group aims at defining common communication tools that are useful and relevant for all members of the Network. In 2017, the Network released its first position paper on "How to Talk About FGM". It was time for the working group to turn this document into a short and practical tool to be shared with media and decision-makers on improving the way they report on FGM. This new guide contains:

- Do's and don'ts on what to say or write in a report, article, media feature, policy paper, etc.
- Do's and don'ts when talking with FGM survivors or members of FGM-affected communities
- Myths vs. facts on FGM



## ASYLUM

The field of asylum is of increasing importance for FGM-affected women and girls in Europe. This working group was created to deepen the Network's knowledge on laws, policies and practices at country level around asylum and FGM. Participating Members helped produce a paper that:

- Provides an overview on asylum systems and practices in 8 European countries
- Identifies gaps in implementation of European and international standards
- Shows trends and differences among European countries and highlights promising practices



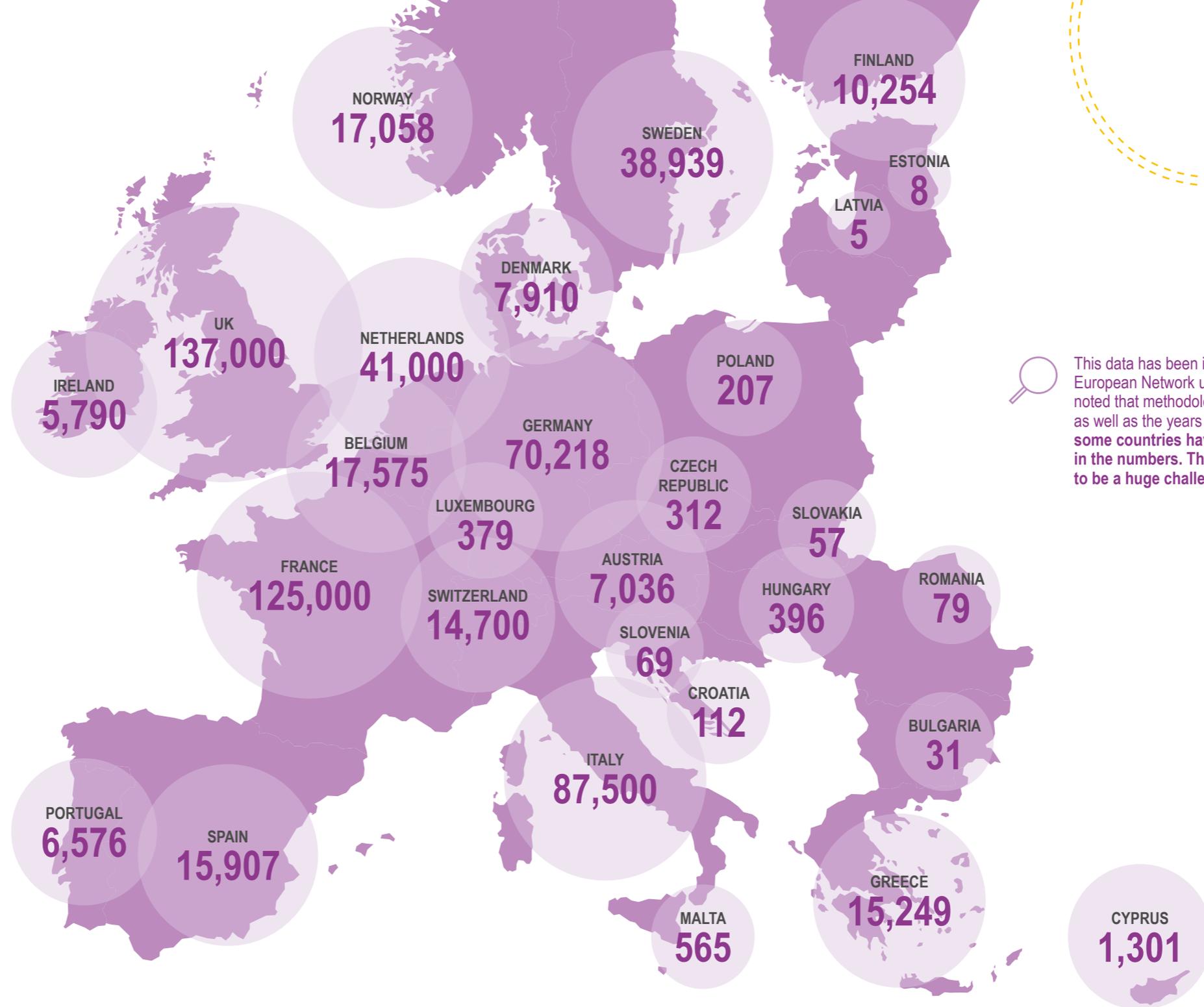
# FGM IN EUROPE

200 million women and girls alive today have undergone FGM and 4.1 million have been subjected to FGM only in 2019.

It is estimated that there are over 600.000 FGM survivors living in Europe and around 180.000 are at risk in 13 countries alone.

## Sources

- Norway and Switzerland: Estimates of first-generation women and girls with female genital mutilation in the European Union, 2016
- Belgium: Prévalence des mutilations génitales féminines en Belgique, 2018
- France: Estimate of adult women with female genital mutilation living in France, 2019
- Germany: Dunkelzifferstatistik zu weiblicher Genitalverstümmelung in Deutschland, Terre des Femmes, 2019
- UK: Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales: National and local estimates, 2015
- Netherlands: Vrouwelijke Genitale Verminking Omvang en risico in Nederland, 2019
- Portugal: Mutilação Genital Feminina: prevalências, dinâmicas socioculturais e recomendações para a sua eliminação, 2015
- Finland: Action plan for the prevention of female genital mutilation (FGM), 2019
- Switzerland: Prävention, Versorgung, Schutz und Intervention im Bereich der weiblichen Genitalbeschneidung (FGM/C) in der Schweiz, 2014
- Ireland: AkiDwA estimations based on data collected by Ireland's Central Statistics Office, 2016
- Italy: Stima della prevalenza FGM in Italia e del numero di bambine a rischio, 2019



This data has been internally gathered by the End FGM European Network using existing studies. It should be noted that methodologies used for the studies differ as well as the years of data collection. **In the meantime, some countries have noted significant increases in the numbers. The collection of data continues to be a huge challenge.**



# PUBLICATIONS

The Network released four publications in 2019. These publications exist in web and/or print versions. Want a copy or link? Email us!

## 'HOW TO TALK ABOUT FGM' GUIDE

Aimed at media and decision-makers, this is a practical guide promoting empowering and non-stigmatising language when talking or writing about Female Genital Mutilation. This publication was translated into 10 languages.

## 'ADDRESSING COMMON MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS'

This guide was published by GAMS Belgium in 2017 before being translated into English and re-edited by the End FGM European Network in 2019. It tackles 13 misconceptions existing around FGM, to show the influence of social norms affecting women's rights and gender equality everywhere. Exists also in French and Dutch.

## 'ADVOCACY TOOLKIT'

This practical toolkit provides step-by-step guidance on defining an advocacy strategy through planning, clear messaging and monitoring advices. These concrete tips will help you support the national implementation of the Istanbul Convention as a tool to end FGM.

## '10 PRINCIPLES FOR INTEGRATED CHILD PROTECTION IN THE CONTEXT OF FGM'

This briefing paper shows how the European Commission's 10 principles for integrated child protections systems must be integrated with some FGM-specific principles and perspectives, to provide a more holistic protection of girls affected by or at risk of FGM.

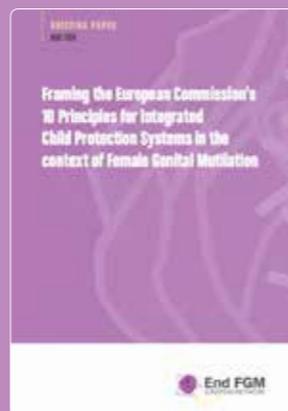
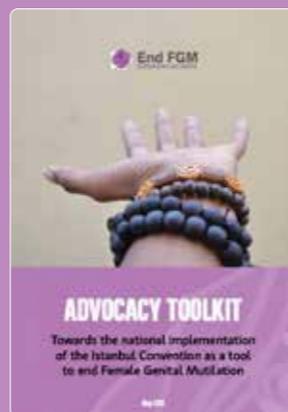
## TWO POSITION PAPERS

### → Youth Manifesto

This Manifesto, written in collaboration with the Youth Ambassadors, highlights the importance of youth participation and outlines 5 key principles for working adequately with young people committed to the fight against FGM.

### → Community engagement

This paper gives guidance to key stakeholders, through 7 principles to tackle FGM by highlighting the crucial role of engaging with FGM-affected communities.



# CAPACITY BUILDING

The End FGM European Network is made of 27 member organisations. Our goal is to build a strong and unified Network through ensuring we strengthen the capacity, outreach, visibility and sustainability of the Network and its members, with also other external actors. In 2019 we did this by implementing the following activities:

- 81% of Members engaged in the Network working groups, therefore showing willingness to collaborate more
- 3 webinars were attended in total by over 80 people
- 5 events were attended by over 300 people
- 1 Pan-European Knowledge exchange Conference, co-hosted by one of our Members
- 7 organisations received capacity building training tailored to their needs
- 2 Members visited peers of the Network to learn from each other
- 12 face-to-face meetings were organised by the Network with Members



AkiDwa visiting FORWARD offices



The Finnish League for Human Rights, visiting the National UK FGM Centre



# ADVOCACY

## NATIONAL LEVEL

At national level, our main focus for the past years has been on ensuring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which is the most comprehensive legal framework aimed at preventing and combatting violence against women and girls, including FGM. In this regard:

- We submitted 2 joint civil society reports (called Shadow reports) with our members in Spain and Belgium on the level of implementation of the Istanbul Convention regarding FGM
- We supported members in Portugal, Finland and France to develop advocacy strategies to make sure to hold their governments accountable
- We conducted 2 advocacy strengthening visits with our members from Portugal and Finland



## EUROPEAN LEVEL

The European elections to vote for the new Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) took place in May 2019. This was a big moment for us and our European advocacy work.

- Two months before, we launched our 7-point Manifesto campaign asking all candidates to sign and commit to our key principles to ending FGM. After a joint and intense campaign led by our Members, 407 candidates from 23 European countries signed our Manifesto! Of these, 94 signatories from 15 countries were finally elected and are now our cross-party allies inside the European Parliament
- We organised over 25 direct meetings with the newly elected Members of the Parliament (MEPs), presenting them concrete asks in order to ensure they would make gender equality and the fight to end FGM a priority
- We led a mapping exercise to develop an overview on legislation, policies, services and data on FGM in 8 European countries

- We coordinated two submissions to the European Commission and the EEAS (European External Action Service) respectively, to ensure FGM is included in the new Gender Equality Strategy and in the new Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan
- We provided our expertise in meetings with key European stakeholders among which the European Commission, the European Asylum Support Office, the European External Action Service, the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, and six Member States' Permanent Representation to the European Union



## INTERNATIONAL

- We released a Joint Letter with the Inter-Regional Coalition to end FGM, on the importance of engaging communities and survivors
- We co-organised a pre-conference on FGM prior to the June Women Deliver conference
- We issued a joint Call to Action as part of the Global Platform for Action to end FGM/C
- We strengthened our collaboration with Indonesia-based activists by coordinating the EU-Indonesia CSO seminar prior to the respective Human Rights Dialogue
- We brought our advocacy asks and key expertise to United Nations' events (CSW, Nairobi Summit, High level expert meeting on FGM) and key international events on women's rights (Women Deliver, Women 7)





## PROMOTING THE VISIBILITY OF OUR MEMBERS

AKIDWA  
Ireland



AITIMA  
Greece



LESSAN  
Germany



## ONLINE VISIBILITY

6 NEWSLETTERS

## SOCIAL MEDIA

f 6,581  
PAGE LIKES

t 11,744  
FOLLOWERS

WEBSITE  
155,097  
USERS  
91% ARE NEW VISITORS



# COMMUNICATIONS

## #MYVOICEMATTERS CAMPAIGN

- The annual campaign engaged over 900 individuals on the importance of supporting and promoting community voices and engagement of members from FGM-affected communities
- The online campaign reached a wide variety of people: on-the-ground activists, artists, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and decision-makers, national politicians, institutions, NGOs
- The launch of the campaign generated 55,800 Twitter impressions
- Over 20 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) directly engaged with the campaign
- 16 renowned activists shared quotes during the 16 Days of Activism

## WORDS MATTER!

The words we use when talking about FGM carry an impact. Language is a powerful tool in fighting the stigma and stereotypes that are targeting FGM-affected communities. The Network has been creating specific tools to guide the media and decision-makers in defining empowering and non-stigmatising narratives.

In the “How to Talk About FGM” series, after creating an animated video we have now put together a concise and practical guide aiming at debunking most common myths and misconceptions about FGM and FGM survivors. The goal is to ensure a respectful and comprehensive coverage of the topic in the media and in the public space in general.

## #MyVoiceMatters





# EVENTS

The End FGM European Network organised no less than 7 events:

- 5-year anniversary of the End FGM European Network
- “Preventing FGM in hard to reach communities” in collaboration with GAMS Belgium
- Screening of the movie “Amal” within the One World Film Festival in Brussels
- Reception at the margins of International research expert meeting on management and prevention of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
- European Week of Action for Girls
- Fighting hate speech and raising awareness on FGM

Each year we open a call to Members to co-organise our annual knowledge-sharing event. This year FORWARD hosted a ‘Pan-European Knowledge exchange Conference’ in London, with the presence of several other Members.



The team also actively participated in 25 events in the course of 2019, including international level events such as:

- UN Commission for the Status of Women (USA)
- Forum on the Rights of the Child (Belgium)
- Women 7 Summit (France)
- Women Deliver (Canada)
- Expert group meeting on FGM by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Ethiopia)
- Nairobi Summit on ICPD+25 (Kenya)
- “Shaping a healthy environment fit for children” (Finland)
- “Reinforcing policies and collaboration on ending FGM” conference (France)
- Arab Sustainable Development Week (Egypt)
- Conference “Community dialogue, debunking myths on FGM” (Ireland)



# GENDER ABC

The Gender ABC project sets out to change children’s attitudes towards gender stereotypes and norms reinforcing gender-based violence. 18 educational modules were developed, for both Primary and Secondary school ages, on the following topics:

- Female Genital Mutilation & Body Safety
- Empowerment and Communication
- Cyber violence
- Early and forced marriage
- Gender-based violence
- Human and Children’s Rights
- Gender social norms and stereotypes
- Group building
- Intimate partner violence
- Sexual orientation and gender-identity
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Sexual violence

These educational modules exist in web and printed versions, in English, Spanish, Basque, German, Portuguese and Italian. Want a copy or link? Email us!

## GENDER ABC

### WHAT IS GENDER ABC?

In Europe, a third of women experience gender-based violence since the age of 15. Gender ABC is a two-year education based programme which explores and challenges the negative social norms that drive gender-based violence with students between the ages of 6-18. By designing and delivering education modules, the project aims at building trust among classmates, promoting healthy relationships within and outside the class and fostering young people’s understanding of the gender stereotypes and social norms reinforcing gender-based violence. Beyond schools, the project will also connect with families, communities and local support services to develop a supportive and safe environment for young people to learn.

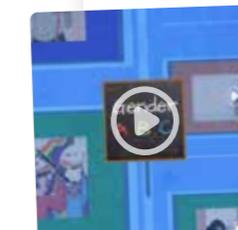
### OBJECTIVES

- Exploring & challenging young people’s attitudes towards gender stereotypes
- Challenging young people’s attitudes towards social norms that reinforce gender-based violence
- Raising awareness on these issues among schools, families and communities

### WHO’S THE PROJECT AIMED AT?



@ABCgender | WWW.ENDFGM.EU/WHAT-WE-DO/GENDER-ABC | @GenderABC



The modules are being implemented in schools by professional educators. The project helps raise awareness of schools, families and communities on the importance to develop a supportive and safe environment for children to learn. Gender ABC also includes several dissemination tools such as an animated video, a leaflet and its own Facebook page and Instagram account.

The project is coordinated by the End FGM European Network and implemented by four of our members: APF (Portugal), AIDOS (Italy), Médicos del Mundo (Spain) and TERRE DES FEMMES (Germany).

# MEMBERS' MAP

- Full Members
- Associate members
- Observer Members





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