



# **Launch of a Special Initiative to Tackle Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the UK**

**24 June 2010**

## BACKGROUND

City Parochial Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Rosa (the UK Fund for Women and Girls) have collaborated to establish a new UK-wide Special Initiative to fund community based, preventative work to safeguard children from the practice of Female Genital Mutilation. By supporting organisations based within practising communities, the initiative will strengthen the voice of women and children already affected, or at risk of genital mutilation in all its forms. Approximately £1million has been invested in 15 organisations across the UK. The initiative started in January 2010 and will be implemented over a three year period.

**Sacred Bodies** is a partnership initiative between **Africa Advocacy Foundation** and the **North Brixton Islamic Culture Centre** working in South London. As well as offering counselling and support groups, they will be working across the community, challenging elders who condone FGM, and working with young people to explore the issues in creative ways. Many groups are working to inform and support new and emerging communities. **Bolton Solidarity Community Association** work with the Sudanese, Somali, Oromo and Eritrean communities in Bolton, to address attitudes to FGM within the communities, believing that legislation alone will not combat the practise. The **Black Women's Health & Family Support** charity is working in east London on a **Peer Education Project**, raising awareness amongst those already working in the community, tapping into existing networks so as to be able to reach groups of newly arrived girls and young women, and **Ocean Somali Community Association** hope that by targeting young people and mosque leaders in Tower Hamlets they will be able to explore the health implications as well as the religious standpoint. **Granby Somali Women's Group** will be working in Liverpool in a project which aims to challenge accepted ideas about FGM.

**Young People Speak Out**, a youth programme run by **Forward**, a Diaspora-led charity safeguarding the sexual and reproductive health and rights of African women and girls, will design and implement youth-led activities, strengthening capacity while raising awareness of the issue. The grant will help **Forward** to scale-up the programme in London and around the country. The **Sudan Women Association** will also be aiming to strengthen the capacity of those affected so that they can call on their communities (Eritrean, Ethiopian and Sudanese) to reject the practice. In Leicester **Somali Development Services** will be working with families to raise awareness about legal and health issues, as well as working to improve inter-generational relationships.

The FGM initiative is helping **Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid** to employ a dedicated Community Development Worker to not only give support to affected women, but to map local groups so as to better understand the demographics of the city in regard to FGM practice. Sessional advocates have also been recruited for the **Health Advocacy Project** based at the Manor Gardens Centre in North London to help train and support individuals as well as groups. Training will help participants understand better the UK legislation as well as how to access services. **The Himilo Project** in Camden, run by **British Somali Community**, also aims to bridge communication gaps between statutory services and the Somali community. And in Wales, **Black Association of Women Step Out** supports communities, helping them to take ownership of the issues around FGM in order to break its cycle.

Many groups and communities will be supported by the work of **Southall Community Alliance**, an umbrella group working in Ealing. A dedicated part-time FGM Officer will provide educational, capacity building and advocacy support for groups throughout the borough. The Alliance will work in partnership with the council and Primary Care Trust. **Women's Health and Culture Organisation** were enabled to rent office space and employ a project manager to take forward their FGM work with communities in Middlesbrough. And in Bedford **ACCM** has used the grant to rent office space and cover volunteer expenses in order to develop their FGM project.

## INDIVIDUAL PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>Group</b>	<b>Africa Advocacy Foundation</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Charity promoting access to health, education and other opportunities for disadvantaged African people.
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Lambeth, Southwark
<b>Reach</b>	Young African women within Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham and faith leaders
<b>Funded Activity</b>	The project 'Sacred Bodies' is run in partnership with North Brixton Islamic Cultural Centre and will educate and empower young African women through activities including counselling, workshops, targeted outreach, mobilisation at cultural and community events, engagement with faith leaders and development of culturally and religiously sensitive materials and shows.

<b>Group</b>	<b>ACCM</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Charity set up in response to concerns and problems faced by women and girls of African, Asian and Middle East origin living in the UK. Particular areas of concern are FGM, forced marriage, and honour based violence.
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Based in Bedford
<b>Reach</b>	Developing work in Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Luton, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire, as well as providing training, information and support throughout UK, Europe and Africa.
<b>Funded Activity</b>	The grant awarded will help ACCM move to and furnish an office and help towards covering rent and volunteer expenses. This will help the development of the FGM project.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO)</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Provide services to BME women made homeless through domestic violence or the threat of domestic violence.
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Wales (offices in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham)
<b>Reach</b>	Supports women and children throughout Wales
<b>Funded Activity</b>	This project will tackle FGM at family and community level, empower women and girls affected or at risk to do the work and support them to speak out against FGM. Frontline staff will also be trained to deal with FGM issues and a resource pack will be developed with guidance to practitioners.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Black Women's Health &amp; Family Support</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Charity working with Somali and other African women to facilitate effective change for women suffering discrimination and social marginalisation.
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Reach</b>	Works in east London with newly arrived children and vulnerable adults as well as relevant professionals.
<b>Funded Activity</b>	The project will build on its work with young people through the Peer Education Project to raise awareness of FGM amongst young people and with the older community. It will also offer training for health professionals, schools, social workers, community organisations and youth workers. They have also identified a need to tap into existing networks to reach newly arrived families.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Birmingham &amp; Solihull Women's Aid (BSWA)</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Charity providing services for women affected by domestic abuse, including refuges and outreach work.
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Birmingham
<b>Reach</b>	29 years of experience with women across the city.
<b>Funded Activity</b>	BSWA will be employing a Community Development Worker to set up and run groups in practising communities to strengthen their capacity to influence others to reject FGM. The project will also map groups to understand the demographic of practising communities across the city.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Bolton Solidarity Community Association</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Serves new and emerging communities in Bolton to improve access to services.
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Bolton
<b>Reach</b>	Sudanese, Somali, Oromo and Eritrean communities (amongst others)
<b>Funded Activity</b>	The FGM project aims to inform and educate new and emerging communities and reduce the practice through action from within the communities.

<b>Group</b>	<b>British Somali Community (BSC)</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Voluntary women-led Somali organisation, seeking to make a significant improvement in lives of Somali children by addressing education and recreational needs and improving access to health and education for Somali women.
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Camden
<b>Reach</b>	Somali children and women of all ages in Camden.
<b>Funded Activity</b>	The Himilo Project aims to develop awareness of UK laws and support services available and to bridge gaps in communication between statutory bodies and the community.

<b>Group</b>	<b>FORWARD</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Diaspora led campaign and support charity to advance and safeguard sexual and reproductive health and rights of African women and girls.
<b>Geographic Location</b>	London
<b>Reach</b>	UK and African countries (Nigeria and Ghana)
<b>Funded Activity</b>	The Young People Speak Out project focuses on youth-led peer education activities around FGM including work on gender based violence, leadership and communication skills. The project is in London but will be replicated in Middlesbrough, Bristol and Manchester.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Granby Somali Women's Group</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	To provide services for BME groups in Princes Park Ward
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Liverpool
<b>Reach</b>	Although originally for Somali women, the project now also serves a wider community.
<b>Funded Activity</b>	The project will target young men, women, families, professionals, schools, religious and community leaders in order to challenge FGM, through workshops, events and a drop-in service.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Manor Gardens Welfare Trust</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Charity providing health and welfare services in North London
<b>Geographic Location</b>	North London
<b>Reach</b>	The Health Advocacy Project, part of the Trust has been operating for many years to increase the health prospects of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.
<b>Funded Activity</b>	The Health Advocacy FGM Initiative will target practising communities in Islington, Haringey and Hackney incorporating training, advocacy and support. The Project works in partnership with other community organisations to deliver services.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Ocean Somali Community Association</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Voluntary Organisation supporting Somali and other BME groups
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Reach</b>	Somali and other BME groups across Tower Hamlets and Newham
<b>Funded Activity</b>	Project will target young Somali people by providing education sessions and workshops and will deliver a peer-education programme as well as sessions in local Mosque to give men more understanding of FGM as well as offering advice and referrals for clients.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Somali Development Services</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	A community based organisation providing services to a range of minority communities
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Leicester
<b>Reach</b>	Somali community and other minority ethnic groups
<b>Funded Activity</b>	This project will work through existing family support services to reduce the risk to girls and young women of being victims of FGM, as well as improving relationship between Somali children and their parents.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Southall Community Alliance</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Umbrella organisation in LB Ealing, with over 120 affiliated groups
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Ealing
<b>Reach</b>	Works with groups representing local Indian, Somali, Iranian, Afghan and Russian communities (amongst others).
<b>Funded Activity</b>	A part-time FGM officer will be employed to provide targeted help, working with men/parents/professionals to raise awareness as well as outreach, peer advocacy and a media pilot project to engage with young people. Working in partnerships with other voluntary groups, the project will target women/men from Somalia, Iraq, Ghana, Nigeria and India (among others).

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sudan Women Association</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Charity working to support refugees from Sudan
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Camden
<b>Reach</b>	Sudanese, Eritrean and Ethiopian women in Camden.
<b>Funded Activity</b>	Will aim to bring women together from different communities in workshops to strengthen collective voice in a call to end the practise of FGM.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Women's Health and Culture Organisation (WHCO)</b>
<b>Nature of Group</b>	Works with BME groups to promote healthy life, religious and racial harmony between faiths, to assist people in overcoming barriers to employment and to provide leisure activities, as well as liaising with other organisations.
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Middlesbrough
<b>Reach</b>	Works with women - but not exclusively, throughout North East England
<b>Funded Activity</b>	The funds have helped WHCO rent office space and pay for equipment and a part-time project manager and a sessional worker to continue their work to tackle FGM.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation  
Kings Place  
90 York Way  
London  
N1 9AG  
Tel: 020 7812 3700  
Fax no:020 7812 3701  
www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk  
Charity No 200051

Trust for London  
6 Middle Street  
London EC1A 7PH  
Tel: +44 (0) 207 606 6145  
www.trustforlondon.org.uk  
Charity No 205629

Rosa, c/o Women's Resource  
Centre, Ground Floor East  
33-41 Dallington St  
London EC1V 0BB  
T: 020 7324 3044  
M: 07545 696903  
F: 020 7324 3050  
www.rosauk.org  
Charity No 1124856