

# ORCHID PROJECT

WORKING TOGETHER TO END  
FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING

2011/2012

OUR FIRST YEAR IN REVIEW

“  
I think it should be our mission to take the ‘neglected’ out of female genital cutting, because it has been ‘a neglected issue.’

**Stephen O'Brien MP**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,  
Department for International Development, UK

”

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**Acknowledgements**



Julia Lalla-Maharajh, Orchid Project's  
CEO and Founder in Ethiopia, 2009



“ It is entirely possible that we could

## Foreword

**In winter 2009, I was volunteering in Ethiopia. I was fortunate to be working with local women, who told me about their lives. But there was something that they were not able to tell me. I read this in the Lonely Planet guide:**

**“...female genital mutilation brings enormous physical pain and suffering. As one doctor put it, ‘These women are holding back a scream so strong, it would shake the earth.’ ”**

**Lonely Planet Guide to Ethiopia and Eritrea, page 51, November 2006 edition**

**I could scarcely believe that 3 million girls were at risk every year, in Africa alone, and that 140 million women lived with the consequences. Equally, I found it hard to understand why FGC was so hidden. But I was being naïve. This is one of the most silenced issues affecting girls, women and entire communities in some of the most disadvantaged areas in the world. No wonder it is easy to look away.**

**On my return to London, I read and learnt what I could and volunteered with organisations in the sector. I entered a competition on YouTube and won the prize, which was to take an urgent human rights issue to the World Economic Forum in Davos, where I rubbed shoulders with the good and the great. Far from being disinterested, everyone asked the question: “How can we work together to end FGC?”**

Id see FGC ended within a lifetime. ”

**I found answers to this question when I visited Tostan, a Senegal-based NGO. Tostan’s community empowerment programme is working towards and leads to large-scale abandonment. For the first time, instead of finding people being silenced, talking furtively about a taboo, I found communities celebrating their choice of life without cutting.**

**It was a profound moment and I knew there was a role for an organisation dedicated to ending female genital cutting, to shine a light on the communities that continue to abandon every day across Africa. We set up Orchid Project to raise awareness about ending female genital cutting, to act as a catalyst and try to accelerate abandonment across the world.**

**We believe that the “social change” approach will have the most success in ending FGC worldwide. Social change can lead to sustainable abandonment across whole communities; these communities then reach out to their social networks and the abandonment starts to spread. With the right resources and will, it is entirely possible that we could see FGC ended within a lifetime.**

**The time to act is now, to invest in a movement that has momentum. This could be the last generation of girls who are cut. We owe it to them to respond to this opportunity. Millions of girls are waiting.**

**Julia Lalla-Maharajh  
CEO and Founder - Orchid Project**

Some numbers are so large they just can't be ignored

# 3 million

Three million girls and young women are at risk of genital cutting every year in Africa alone. One hundred and forty million women are living with the consequences.

'The girl who undergoes FGM/C is the same girl who is taken out of school early to marry. And this is the same girl who dies before she reaches age twenty, giving birth to her third child.'

Dr Nafissatou Diop, UNFPA

# 140 million



“

I lost seven of my nine children in childbirth. Because of the scarring I sustained I was not elastic enough. All seven of them suffocated inside my womb.

Tadelech Shanko, Ethiopia

”

# Our first year in review

APRIL 2011 – MARCH 2012

**Orchid Project has a simple vision: a world free from female genital cutting (FGC).**

**We are a UK-based charity with an international reach. We aspire to make a significant impact on the reduction of FGC by 2030, which we believe is entirely possible. To achieve this:**

- **We partner with organisations and projects around the world to accelerate the abandonment of FGC in a sustainable way**
- **We communicate best practice and experiences of success between those working for an end to FGC**
- **We advocate to ensure FGC remains on the global agenda for increased resources and action.**

**We believe that our work across our three strands of partnerships, communications and advocacy is adding value to the sector, and we look forward to continuing to make an impact. Together, we are working to end female genital cutting.**

“ Together, we are working to end female genital cutting. ”

Our first 'official' year has been characterised by:

- **Partnerships:** growing and deepening our relationship with Tostan, our Senegal-based partner
- **Communications:** successfully communicating the case for, and the path towards, ending FGC to a wider audience, through our increasing online presence and through our efforts to secure more media attention for FGC
- **Organisational development:** growing the Orchid Project team and supporter base, including recruiting fantastic volunteers, supporters and fundraisers. This includes those who raise funds, work in our London office, as well as the members of Orchid Project Denmark who have all made an impact on our organisation and its achievements
- **Growing the Orchid Project team:** fantastic volunteers, supporters and fundraisers - ranging from those who ran races to raise funds, worked in our London office or formed a dynamic supporters group in Denmark -- have all made an impact on our organisation and its achievements.



## Supporting our partners

### OUR FGC PROGRAMMES

#### **Strategic goal:**

We partner with organisations and projects around the world to accelerate the abandonment of FGC in a sustainable way.

#### **Objectives:**

To provide resources, grants and support to organisations that are working to end female genital cutting and prioritise our involvement towards organisations with a proven track record of ensuring sustainable change.

To examine current work being done to end female genital cutting, and identify strategic delivery partners that help end FGC in geographic or thematic areas.

**We believe that the most effective way to end FGC is by using the “social change” approach which was pioneered by Tostan, our partner in Africa. Evaluation and research based on this approach has been produced by UNICEF and UNFPA and in 2008, 10 UN agencies endorsed it as the most effective way to abandon FGC.**



"To abandon FGC there must be a whole movement of villages involved, and therefore a means of transportation between villages is essential."

**Alilou Ly, Supervisor, Tostan Senegal**

**This year we directly supported :**

- **Tostan's social mobilisation activity, by helping to buy motorcycles that allow community members to share with neighbouring villages (in a structured fashion) why they have chosen to end FGC, and ultimately accelerate abandonment**
- **Sister Fa, a Senegalese hip-hop artist, with a small grant to work with 33 West African musicians to raise awareness and produce a series of songs about the potential end to FGC in the region**
- **"Safe Hands for Mothers", with support towards film-making to raise awareness about FGC and its impacts.**

**As part of our partnerships development work, we also:**

- **Mapped the stakeholders in the FGC arena, developing a database of over 500 organisations working directly or indirectly in the FGC arena worldwide**
- **Developed a working model of how FGC is abandoned through social change, based on work by UNICEF and Tostan.**



## Telling the FGC story

### OUR COMMUNICATIONS

#### **Strategic goal:**

We communicate best practice and experiences of success between those working for an end to FGC.

#### **Objectives:**

Raise awareness of ending female genital cutting as a result of work happening at community level, including communicating best practice, particularly through the internet and social media.

Foster support for a global, positive movement to end female genital cutting.

**In our work, we have discovered that not many people know the true impacts of FGC. Once they are told the gravity of the situation and how it affects communities, they begin to understand why it has to be a priority.**



"I know that things are changing and that when people understand they have a choice, they are able to change. There is hope for the future."

**Sister Fa**

### **This year we:**

- Reached over 2,000 people in the UK and Denmark through events such as
  - the 'Girls, Girls, Girls' series, raising awareness of the Orchid Project and FGC organised by musicians who seek to celebrate women's empowerment through music;
  - An Evening with Sister Fa, a Senegalese hip-hop star campaigning for an end to FGC by using her powerful music and voice
  - Orchid Project Denmark's events in Copenhagen in June 2011 and in February 2012 with UNICEF Ambassador Caroline Henderson.
- Generated extensive press coverage and social media activity about ending FGC on International Day Against FGC, 6th February 2012, including BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour, BBC World News, BBC World Service and the Guardian
- Developed our FGC 'Big Picture' to create awareness about how communities abandon FGC. The picture was shown at a House of Commons event and also displayed prominently in DFID's offices
- Established Orchid Project's website as a primary source of current and relevant information about FGC, with diverse blogs and commentary about FGC news
- Built the 'Orchid Project community' through our £7 for 7 fundraising campaign as well as quarterly newsletters.

“  
Our ultimate goal is to see the practice eliminated altogether. And to meet success, communities have to be at the centre of all efforts.

**Michelle Bachelet**  
Executive Director of UN Women,  
speaking at the UN Commission on the Status of Women 2012

”





## The Big Picture

The 'Big Picture' has been a very valuable communications tool for Orchid Project throughout this year. It is shown in large scale on the next two pages. Using easy-to-follow headings and a simple questioning style, it illustrates the approach behind the community abandonment model that is being implemented successfully across Africa by our partner organisation Tostan.

The 'Big Picture' starts by answering the questions that everyone asks when first hearing about FGC. These include "Where does FGC happen?", "Why does it happen?" and "Who does it happen to?" It then goes on to examine the long-term health consequences that affect women who experience female genital cutting, and the ongoing programme through which local communities are empowered to make their own decision to end FGC.

In its final section the 'Big Picture' shows the exponential growth of community abandonment of FGC. The first village to abandon, having taken the Tostan programme, was Malicoundra Bambara in Senegal. In the 15 years since its decision, more than 8500 further communities have taken the same step - across 8 countries. We need to capitalise on this momentum and invest now in ending FGC.

# FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING: THE STORY OF ABANDONMENT



WORKING TOGETHER TO END  
TRAVEL-RELATED DISEASES

- Better awareness
- Explicit recognition in policy
- More resources





# Building momentum

## OUR ADVOCACY WORK

### Strategic goal:

We advocate to ensure FGC remains on the global agenda for increased resources and action.

### Objectives:

Advocate for a global increase in resources to support an end to female genital cutting and gain support from international and national governance bodies for the necessary action to end female genital cutting.

**Our advocacy work is based on making the case for investment in a movement that has momentum, is achieving results and is solution-focused. If strategic investments were made now, they could ultimately lead to the total abandonment of FGC.**



Attendees at the international conference on FGC in Nairobi, October 2011



**"I see you as social evolutionaries."**

**DFID Minister Stephen O'Brien MP, speaking to Senegalese community members working to end FGC**

#### **This year we:**

- **Travelled to Senegal with DFID Minister Stephen O'Brien MP to introduce him to the work of Tostan and Orchid Project**
- **Met with UK politicians to brief them: there have been 38 mentions of FGC in the House of Commons and Lords over the course of the year**
- **Made the case for the UK Department for International Development to include FGC on their agenda and increase their support and understanding about abandonment**
- **Held an event in the House of Commons to brief parliamentarians and others about FGC and the abandonment movement in Africa**
- **Built relationships with organisations working in the field of FGC, including meetings and knowledge sharing between DFID, DFID Somalia, UNFPA, USAID, UNFPA Indonesia, UNICEF Somalia, WHO, Population Council and others**
- **Input into the UN Human Rights Council for the Universal Periodic Review of Indonesia's human rights record, presenting at a pre-session meeting**
- **Attended the UN's Commission on the Status of Women in New York.**

“

My daughter now won't be cut. I am ensuring her peace and well-being. It didn't happen because people told me to change, but because I found out why for myself.

Saikou Diallo, The Gambia

”



The “social change” approach is endorsed by the UN as the most effective way to abandon FGC.

## Looking forward

**In our second year Orchid Project will continue to work across our three operational strands: partnering, communications and advocacy. Given our strong achievements in our first year on communications and advocacy, we will focus particularly on our programmes work in our second year.**

**We remain committed to working with our current partner, Tostan, as well as identifying other potential partners. As we learn more about the social change model, we will work to ensure that its success is more widely disseminated.**

**As our relationships with our partners grow, we will also maximise opportunities to communicate how FGC is ending. We will re-launch our website and continue to use social media as a means of amplifying our activity.**

**Our advocacy efforts will also continue and we will work with both multilateral and bilateral agencies to ensure that FGC, and the solutions for ending FGC, take the priority position they deserve in governmental policy, programming and resourcing.**

**In terms of organisational development, we will work to ensure that Orchid Project is sustainable and continues to be well-governed.**



A world where FGC is no longer practised is possible. The abandonment movement is growing, but needs your help to accelerate.

**8500**  We partner with local organisations and projects around the world like Tostan who have helped over 5000 communities abandon FGC.

**communities have abandoned FGC**

  
**500** Orchid is engaging with more than five hundred stakeholder organisations in the FGC arena including UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and DFID. 

FGC has been practised for more than **2000** years and so predates both Christianity and Islam.

**Millions of girls are waiting.**

'The time to act is now, to invest in the success of a movement that has momentum. This could be the last generation of girls that are cut. We owe it to them to take this opportunity and respond.' (Julia Lalla-Maharajh, CEO and Founder of Orchid Project.)

**2030**  **2** Orchid Project has two full time staff members and operates successfully due to the thousands of hours of voluntary work donated by a wonderful, talented team. Learn more at [www.orchidproject.org](http://www.orchidproject.org)

 raised to help our activities in one year:  **£250,000**



## Financial information

<b>Orchid Project</b>		
<b>Statement of financial activities for April 2011 – March 2012</b>		
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		<b>GBP</b>
Donations		£86,542
Grants receivable		£170,594
Other income		£13,123
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£270,259</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>GBP</b>
Charitable expenses		£181,980
Governance		£780
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£182,760</b>
Net incoming resources		£87,499
Total funds b/f		£0
Total funds c/f		£87,499
<b>BALANCE SHEET (31 MARCH 2012)</b>		<b>GBP</b>
Current assets		£135,736
Creditors		(£48,864)
Total fixed assets		£627
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>£87,499</b>

## Trustee information

Orchid Project was incorporated on 13 December 2010 as a Company Limited by Guarantee, number 7467568 and as of 1 April 2011, registered with the Charity Commission under number 1141057. Orchid Project acts according to its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

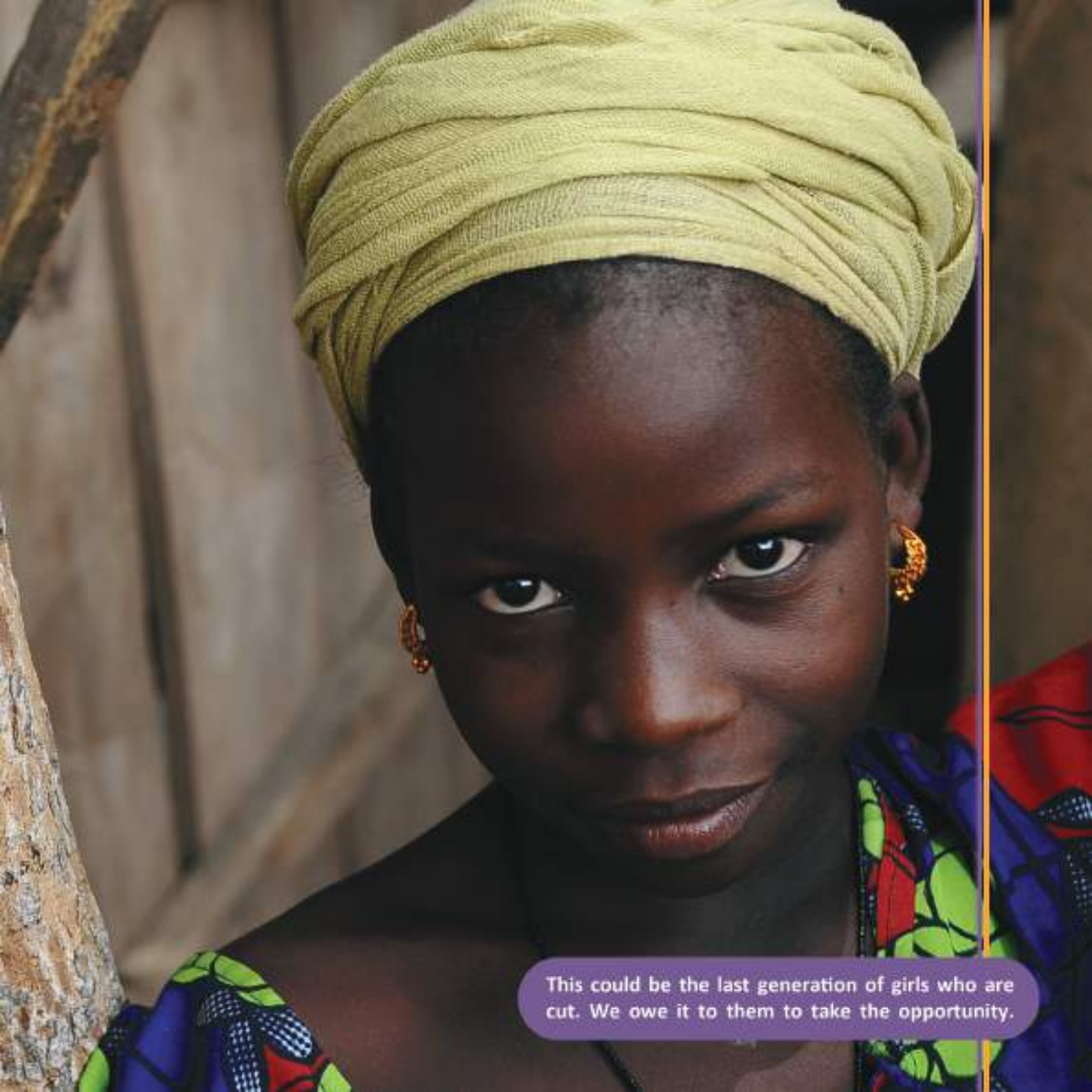
The Board of Trustees during the year were: (\* joined during the year)

- Steen Rosenfalck (Chair)
- Angela Jameson
- Jeremy White
- Elisabeth Paulson \*
- Michael Ritto \* (chair of Foreningen Orchid Project Danmark)
- Helen Stokes \*

The trustees have control of the Charity and its property and funds. They meet every quarter to agree the organisational strategy and areas of activity for Orchid Project, including consideration of strategic direction, accountability, financial management, grant making, fundraising, and performance. The trustees regularly attend Orchid Project events and provide continuous support to the CEO and staff members. All trustees give of their time freely and no trustee remuneration was paid in the year.

Julia Lalla-Maharajh is appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO & Founder). She is responsible for delivering organisational strategy.





This could be the last generation of girls who are cut. We owe it to them to take the opportunity.

# Acknowledgements

**We are extremely grateful for the incredible support that has been received in our first year of operation. We would like to extend our thanks to:**

## **Donors:**

5 For Fairness, Det Obelske Familiefond, Joffe Charitable Trust, Lauritzen Fonden, Maryfonden, The Funding Network, Wallace Global Fund. Special thanks to Foreningen Orchid Project Denmark, a group of committed individuals who have now formed a group that supports our work.

## **Individual donors:**

We have a number of supporters who make monthly donations, while others have taken up fundraising challenges hitting personal targets as well as financial ones. We are deeply grateful for your support.

## **Gifts in kind:**

We have been lucky to secure support from organisations who have helped with everything from producing materials, to office space, through to intellectual capital and hosting events: Land Securities plc, Delta 7, Mantle Communications, idigram, Miller Rosenfalck.

## **Special thanks for support:**

Julian Burton, Marshall Clemens, Barbara Jayson (Foundation for Mother and Child Health), Amanda MacKenzie, Alan Mercer and Sara Hassen, Arwyn Thomas, Jo Valentine, Caitlin Walker, Liz Webber, Steve and Sarah Whitla.

## **Volunteers:**

Orchid has an incredible team of volunteers and advisers, without whom it would be impossible to achieve what we have. In the past year, almost 40 people have volunteered for Orchid, including 12 in-office volunteers, our trustees and advisers. Everyone involved with Orchid has at some point volunteered their time and we are hugely grateful to them for their passion and commitment. Others have helped with everything from financial management to developing our advocacy strategy, from taking photographs through to working on our submission to the UN's Human Rights Review.

“  
A massive impact to reduce the prevalence of FGC around the world can be made with relatively little money. FGC may be ended in one generation. We know how, but we need help to bring that change about.

**Dr Nafissatou Diop**  
**UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM/C Co-ordinator,**  
**United Nations Population Fund**

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You can contact Orchid Project in the following ways:

[www.orchidproject.org](http://www.orchidproject.org)

[info@orchidproject.org](mailto:info@orchidproject.org)

Engage with us via social media to help end FGC:



[www.facebook.com/orchidproject](https://www.facebook.com/orchidproject)



[@OrchidProject](https://twitter.com/OrchidProject)



**Orchid Project on YouTube channel JLMFGM**

Orchid Project is a UK registered charity, number 1141057



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