

IMPACT REPORT

2022 - 2023



ORCHID  PROJECT

WORKING TOGETHER TO END
FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING

FORWARD FROM THE CEO

Together to #EndFGM/C

I am delighted to share with you our impact report for 2022-23. This report is a particularly special one; it is my first as the CEO for Orchid Project.

As I write this, I sit in our regional office in Nairobi. We are now placed at the heart of the issue of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Our physical presence in the African continent has provided Orchid with the opportunity to even better serve the region with the highest-prevalence of FGM/C.

As well as recentring our organisation, we used this moment to reflect on our achievements, limitations and journey thus far, resulting in the development of our five-year strategy (2023-2028). We believe that moving forward, our strengths best place us to focus on the three areas that are fundamental to ending FGM/C. These are: evidence, grassroots capacity, and advocacy.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to driving positive change, catalysing the movement, investing in sustainable partnerships, fostering innovation and striving to achieve a world free from FGM/C.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to all our stakeholders for their unwavering support. Thank you for joining us in this journey- together to end FGM/C!



Asenath Mwithigah
CEO



Knowledge sharing workshop,
Kenya, Narok, April 2022.

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“Our physical presence in the African continent has provided Orchid with the opportunity to even better serve the region with the highest-prevalence of FGM/C.”

STRATEGY 2023-2028

Why?

Every year, 4.3 million girls undergo female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), where their genitals are removed or injured for non-medical purposes. It is a breach of a girl's human rights that can have severe, long-term effects on her physical and mental health. FGM/C is a global issue, most common in parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, but also occurring in the Americas, Europe and Australia.

What?

Orchid Project is an international NGO, with offices in Nairobi and London, working at the forefront of the global movement to create a world free from FGM/C. At the heart of our mission are grassroots organisations that are pioneering change, and by working together, one step at a time, we believe we can help to end FGM/C globally.

How?

1. Undertaking research, generating evidence and curating knowledge to equip those working to end FGM/C.
2. Facilitating capacity strengthening of partners, through knowledge sharing and learning, to improve programme design and impact for the movement to end FGM/C.
3. Influencing global and regional policies, action and funding to end FGM/C through advocacy.



Human Dignity Foundation supported Kenya, Niakarra visit, March 2022.

RESEARCH

Key areas of focus

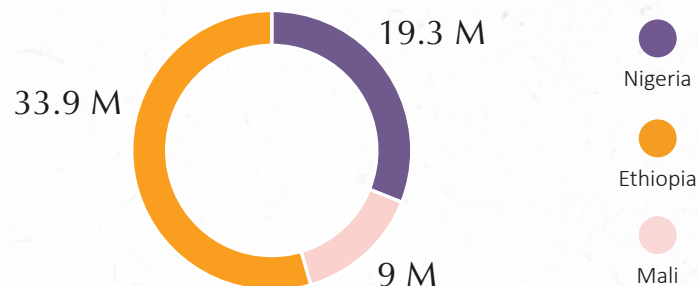


STRONGER TOGETHER

Since 28 Too Many joined Orchid Project on 1 April 2022, our efforts towards ending FGM/C have been strengthened. Our research outputs are not just key in informing the sector of trends in FGM/C, but also informing our capacity-strengthening and knowledge-sharing work. Combining forces provided an opportunity to draw on the unique strengths and experiences of both organisations. Orchid Project's research aims to fill three critical gaps:

1. The gap in data: where data is not available at the national levels (i.e. Asia) and where subnational/localised data is not available
2. The gap in access: making research more accessible through knowledge products, webinars, translation, and summaries
3. The gap in understanding: trying to understand what works and what doesn't to end FGM/C

Absolute number of women and girls impacted by FGM in each country where Orchid has produced major reports. Figures shown in millions.



NEW RESEARCH

SIX NEW REPORTS PUBLISHED:

Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Central African Republic, Chad, Mauritania

For these reports we profiled grassroots organisations working to end FGM/C in their contexts (10 organisations in Nigeria, 11 organisations in Mali, and 18 organisations in Ethiopia)

Each organisation shared their approach to ending FGM/C, their insight on the data trends in the DHS/MICS reports, and participated in panel discussions during the report launches.

In 2022/23, Orchid Project published three substantial country profile updates documenting FGM/C data: Mali, Nigeria and Ethiopia. While the prevalence of FGM/C in Ethiopia and Nigeria appears to be decreasing, FGM/C prevalence in Mali has not changed significantly since 2013, decreasing from 91.4% to 88.6%. FGM/C prevalence in Ethiopia has dropped from 79.9% in 2000 to 65.2%, while in Nigeria prevalence has dropped from 24.8% in 2013 to 19.5%.

However, our research also found out that since the population of **Ethiopia** is growing, an increasing number of girls are still at risk. Orchid Project's estimate of 33 million girls and women at risk in Ethiopia is the largest absolute number of girls/women in eastern and southern Africa and the third-highest globally, after Indonesia and Egypt.

In **Nigeria**, there is some evidence that part of the decrease is due to social desirability bias, as a result of which women will be more reluctant to report that they have been cut. It is likely that the introduction of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (see below) is one cause. Additionally, over the period 2013 to 2018, a worrying trend emerged among girls (aged 0–14 years), of whom 19.2% had been cut in 2018, as opposed to 16.9% in 2013. Of particular note is that, among girls whose mothers were uncut, the percentage who have been cut has doubled.

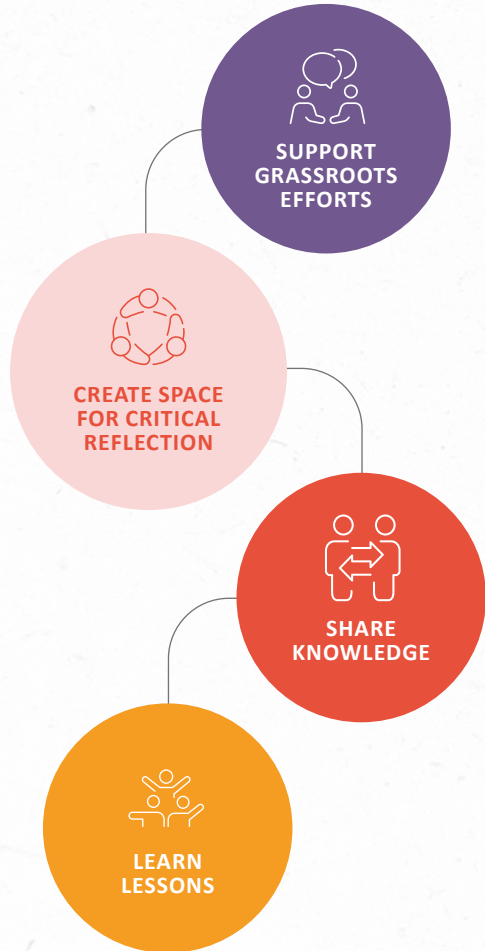
In **Mali**, 75.5% of girls are cut before the age of five. Furthermore, 70% of women and 68% of men believe FGM/C to be a religious requirement while three-quarters of the population believe that the practice should be continued.

We also published three Short Reports documenting the practice in the **Central African Republic**, **Chad** and **Mauritania** where prevalence was found to be 21.6%, 38.4% and 63.9% respectively.

All the above reports are a vital source of baseline data for policymakers and programme implementers and are used by governments, academics, UN-agencies, NGOs and local activists in shaping their interventions.

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

In our capacity-strengthening work, Orchid Project comes alongside local activists and organisations to support their grassroots efforts, create space for critical reflection, and share knowledge and learn lessons from their work.



GRASSROOTS IMPACT

2023 saw the successful conclusion of our three-year project in collaboration with Coalition of Violence Against Women (COVAW) and S.A.F.E. aimed at accelerating an end to FGM/C in Narok and Samburu counties in Kenya. The project adopted a combination of community dialogue forums, complemented by radio shows and performance tours to raise awareness of FGM/C.

Project findings show that there is now an overwhelming awareness of the human rights, health effects and legal implications of FGM/C amongst women, girls, youth, and men across all project sites. The community also report a shift towards a strong value attachment to education for girls, which is critical for their empowerment and agency. In fact, education for girls is now serving as an alternative to FGM/C and uncut women are being bestowed leadership roles based on their studies. As a result, FGM/C is no longer being perceived as an essential part of Maasai and Samburu culture in the target communities.

Human Dignity Foundation supported Kenya, Niakarra visit, March 2022.



KNOWLEDGE SHARING WORKSHOPS (KSWs):

Orchid Project brought together young people and young survivors of FGM/C from the 22 FGM/C hotspot counties to share knowledge and learn from each other. The KSW explored abandonment at a practical level, understanding social norms, networking, emerging trends, and gender transformative approaches to ending FGM/C. These topics assisted the participants in identifying the most effective ways of empowering their fellow youth to abandon the practice when returning home. Participants also formed a WhatsApp group to continue supporting each other, and joined the Youth Anti FGM Network Kenya (YANK) movement, which has a presence in all hotspot counties, to sustain the conversation of youth involvement in ending FGM/C.

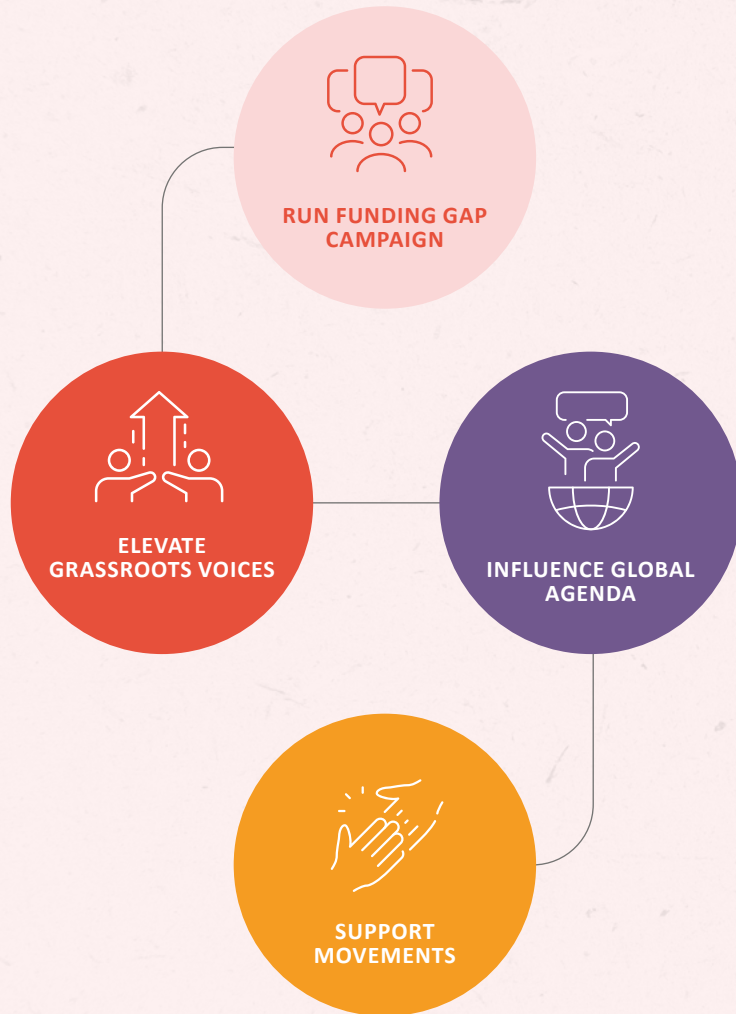
REGIONAL CONVENING

Orchid Project with support from MannionDaniels, hosted a regional workshop which brought together 14 dedicated activists from six African countries: Kenya, Somaliland, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and The Gambia. Its primary objective was to foster capacity strengthening among participants and establish a foundation for an African Network aimed at ending Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C) in the region.

Another key aspect of the gathering was the facilitation of knowledge exchange. The workshop truly acted as a platform for disseminating valuable insights and fostering collaboration among participants. Additionally, the workshop played a vital role in promoting cross-learning. This cross-pollination of ideas and experiences is crucial for creating a comprehensive strategy to combat FGM/C effectively. Below is a quote from a participant who used the workshop to share how her community are addressing FGM/C:

“It is one thing to have a law and another to implement it. To some extent, the law is not effective as cutters resort to cutting in secrecy or cross the border to carry out FGC. Even in places where there are anti-FGC policies, government representatives rarely conduct anti-FGC campaigns. To mitigate these challenges, we engage chiefs (elders) in dialogue. It is paramount to engage cultural leaders in ending FGC.”

Frida - Workshop Participant



ONLINE YOUTH FORUM

As a member of 'The Girl Generation: African Led Movement to End FGM/C Programme' (TGG ALM) consortium, Orchid Project held a virtual Youth Forum on 22-24th August 2022, bringing together over 70 youth from Africa and Asia. The Forum was preceded by several interactive webinars in the months of June-July, where the youth were invited to share their input on the content and structure of the forum.

The Forum provided a platform for cross-continental knowledge sharing, learning and networking among the young people to strengthen the movement to End FGM/C. Young people discussed various issues that they identified as important to them, including: grassroots activism, youth engagement, and how to work with other movements, as well as the mental health and well-being of activists.

The outcome of the Forum was a [Call to Action](#) from the young people demanding that stakeholders urgently prioritize FGM/C as a global issue by making both political and financial commitments. Participants also developed Next Steps to enable them to continue their collective advocacy at international, regional and national levels towards the achievement of SDG 5 on the Elimination of Harmful Practices including FGM/C by 2030.

As a first step to engaging in strategic advocacy at regional and global levels, six of the youth participants were supported to attend Women Deliver 2023 which took place from 16-20th July in Kigali, Rwanda. Their participation provided an optimal opportunity for them to work together to refine and articulate their advocacy asks as a unified collective youth voice.

CEO Anti-FGM Board, Kenya- Bernadette Loloju speaking at Orchid Project Kenya office launch

67TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW67)

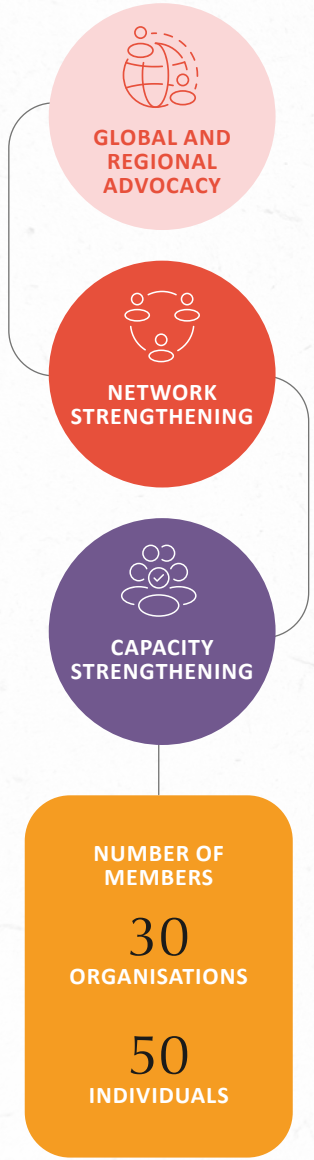
The sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place on 6-17th March 2023 in New York, USA. The priority theme of this global convening was 'Innovation, Technological Change, and Education in the Digital Age'. In our mandate of supporting global advocacy within the TGG ALM, Orchid Project submitted a written statement to UN Women on their behalf that focused on the nexus between gender equality and innovation.

In partnership with the Government of Kenya and other civil society organisations, Orchid Project co-hosted the side event titled 'Amplifying Gender Transformative Approaches: Male Engagement and Inclusion in Preventing Violence against Women and Girls'. Orchid Project CEO spoke on the panel to strategically highlight the existing funding gap to end FGM/C.



ASIA NETWORK TO END FGM/C

AREAS OF WORK



GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ADVOCACY

NETWORK STRENGTHENING

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

NUMBER OF MEMBERS

30 ORGANISATIONS

50 INDIVIDUALS

We continued to foster the Asia Network to End FGM/C with partner ARROW (The Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women), so ending FGM/C becomes a priority in the region. The network has developed to become a more self-sustaining and self-governing body, ensuring it is Asia-led and prioritises the needs of those in the network. Network membership stands at over 30 organisations and 50 individual activists now from across 12 countries.

To support its sustainability and capacity, members participated in a 3-day advocacy and communications workshop in March 2023, which was attended by over 30 organisations and activists from seven countries across the continent. The workshop was curated following a survey where members identified areas they considered important to help them advance/further the objectives of the network. Several recommendations and ways forward emerged from the workshop, including more training needed on fundraising and the development of a Network Advocacy Strategy.

In May 2023, the Network held its first virtual Board Meeting. Agreed actions and outcomes included a new mapping of network members. The functioning of the Board meeting is aimed at ensuring that the Network has a strong and accountable governance structure to support its sustainability moving forward.

A SNEAK PEAK INTO 2023/2024:

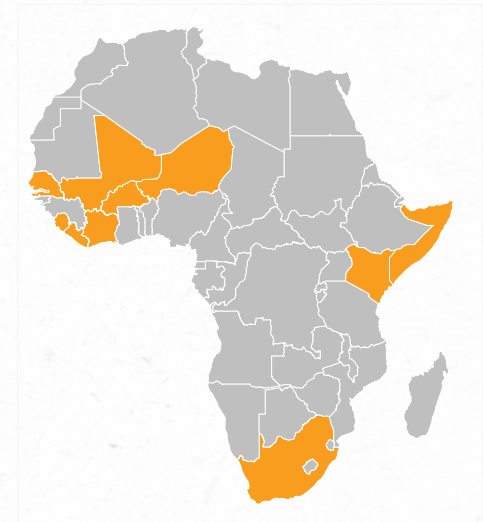
As we look forward into the next financial year, we will continue to prioritise the needs of our grassroots partners to end FGM/C as well as working towards delivering the objectives set out in our five-year strategy. Below are some activities we have begun pursuing as well as other exciting future plans:

AFRICA NETWORK TO END FGM/C

Building on the success of the Asia Network, our grassroots partners have requested our support in setting up an 'End FGM/C Network Africa'. We are honoured to support this movement that will fill a critical gap and will allow the sharing of knowledge, ideas, and experiences as well as joint advocacy for change on the global and regional level. This exciting journey has seen us announce the Network alongside our partners at the Women Deliver Conference 2023 and launch it at the AU International FGM conference in Tanzania in October 2023.

WOMEN DELIVER CONFERENCE 2023

We supported the largest cohort of grassroots partners we've ever taken to a global event.



PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED FROM THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| SENEGAL - 4 | BENIN - 1 | SINGAPORE - 1 |
| SIERRA LEONE - 2 | LIBERIA - 1 | SOUTH AFRICA - 1 |
| BURKINA FASO - 2 | KENYA - 3 | MALAYSIA - 1 |
| COTE D'IVOIRE - 1 | THE GAMBIA - 1 | NIGER - 1 |
| MALI - 1 | SOMALILAND - 1 | |

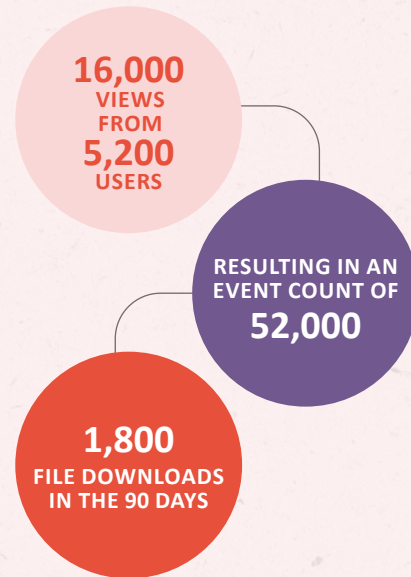
The Women Deliver Conference 2023, one of the largest multi-sectoral convenings to advance gender equality, took place on 17-20 July 2023 in Kigali, Rwanda. It brought together about 6,000 people, including representatives from civil society, government, private sector, and international agencies, alongside women's rights organisations and movements.

Ahead of the conference, Orchid Project and ARROW (as co-hosts of the Asia Network to End FGM/C) along with the Global Platform for Action to end FGM/C held "Catalysing Global Action to End FGM/C", a pre-conference that brought together more than 150 activists and NGO representatives, funders and government officials from different regions. The pre-conference, was a powerful way to put the FGM/C firmly on the agenda of the global event. It also allowed participants to take stock of our progress over the last four years, hold critical deliberations on identified issues and make recommendations on the way forward. Of importance for the Asia Network was the opportunity for members from different countries within the region to raise awareness of the issue of FGM/C in the Asian continent. The Pre-Conference resulted in the adoption of the Kigali Declaration "**From Rhetoric to Reality: Closing the Funding Gap and Uniting for Action to End Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting**".

Orchid also supported a delegation of 21 grassroots and youth activists from 16 countries to attend the global event and assisted them in engaging meaningfully during the pre-conference and the main conference.

FGM/C RESEARCH INITIATIVE LAUNCHED AT WOMEN DELIVE

Three months since we launched we have had:



A New FGM/C Research Initiative was launched to advance data and evidence to end the harmful practice of FGM/C. Orchid Project's Research Team was excited to announce the innovation's launch at the **Women Deliver Conference 2023**. This ground-breaking initiative aims to provide a one-stop shop for research, articles, and resources, shattering barriers that hinder access to vital knowledge and data required to eliminate the practice. The FGM/C Research Initiative website can be accessed at www.fgmcri.org.

MEET SOME OF OUR PARTNERS

One of the most effective ways to end FGM/C is to engage the community at a grassroots level. Orchid Project partners with pioneering grassroots organisations and other partners around the world to share knowledge and best practice, to raise awareness and to mobilise action. Our work would not have been possible without the guidance and support of our partners on local, regional and global levels.



JACQUELINE

Meet Jacqueline, she's from Liberia and is the Founder of Covenant Foundation for Girls. Jacqueline's organisation focuses on building the capacity of girls and young women, increasing their self confidence so that they can advocate on issues that impact them, including FGM/C.

Jacqueline's motivation to focus on FGM/C and girls' rights is deeply personal. "I am from a cutting family where both of my grandparents and grandmothers especially were senior cutters."

Up until the age of 7, Jacqueline accompanied her grandmother to carry out her role, watching FGM/C take place. She was due to be cut on the same day as 2 of her childhood friends. Tragically, when they carried out the procedure, both girls died due to excessive bleeding. "This incident spared me from the knife... but I could not express my experience to anyone as it was a serious taboo to do so, especially as a member of a cutting family."

Jacqueline has channelled her experience into providing girls and young women with the adequate information to make informed decisions around FGM/C and the necessary tools to advocate for their rights. From beginning their journey as a community based organisation in 2010, to becoming a National NGO in 2017, the Covenant Foundation for Girls has come a long way. They now work across 4 of Liberia's 15 counties.

In 2018, we came across the Orchid Project through the Amplify Change Grassroots Grantee programme, where our first convening took place in Bo, Sierra Leone." Here Unicef's 6 elements of advocacy were introduced, including non-judgemental open dialogue as a way for creating change. This really stood out to her.

"Prior to that training, every advocacy training we did we were challenged because we put our feelings as FGM survivors into the advocacy and were demanding that stakeholders should stop the practice as it is harmful. We were met with great resistance multiple times."

Since the trainings, The Covenant Foundation for Girls has changed their approach to engaging with the topic of FGM/C. "One success story is that in 2019, 2020 and 2021 we were able to carry out mediation for girls that were forcibly recruited to undergo FGM/C. Over three years, we were able to save 21 girls from being cut. If we didn't receive this training, we're convinced we would have failed on this advocacy"

Jacqueline's organisation is now one of the leading groups working to end FGM/C in Liberia and their work is growing. "The Orchid family has supported us to establish the end FGM network which is being launched in Tanzania." Her organisation are joint co-hosts of the network.



KESHIA

Meet Keshia, she's from Malaysia. She's a Senior Programme Officer with the Information and Communications team at the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW). Keshia initially began working on FGM/C in 2019 when ARROW received funding to conduct advocacy work and establish a regional network.

"Although I am not personally affected by FGM/C, my motivation to address this issue is deeply personal. As a Muslim living in Malaysia, I could have undergone the procedure as a baby, were it not for my parents who rejected it."

Keshia's personal connection to FGM/C drives her passion for raising awareness about the harmful effects of FGM/C. "It's important to note that FGM/C offers no health benefits, lacks religious basis, and should not be justified on cultural grounds."

As part of her role at ARROW, Keshia is also the regional coordinator for the Asia Network to End FGM/C. "[This] is a collaboration between ARROW and Orchid Project. Through a five-month consultation in 2019 with activists, civil society organisations, researchers and survivors from across the Asia region, we identified strong support for a regional network bringing together different actors working on FGM/C."

The network now comprises 80 member organisations across 12 countries in the Asia region. Together as co-hosts, ARROW and Orchid Project collaborate to strengthen the capacity of Asia Network members, facilitating connections, knowledge-sharing, and active participation in vital regional and global advocacy platforms.

Whilst the network still has a long way to go, Keshia is proud of its achievements.

"Our efforts have empowered grassroots activists to participate in regional and global advocacy arenas, enabling them to exchange knowledge and insights with fellow activists from Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and beyond."

Looking forward, Keshia hopes that activists and local civil society organisations can come together to collect data on the prevalence of FGM/C in Malaysia. "This data will serve as a crucial foundation for evidence-based advocacy, particularly in our engagements with government policymakers. To realise these goals, we need consistent, multi-year funding to expand and sustain the Network."

Only two countries in Asia currently report national data on FGM/C prevalence. Part of Orchid Project's role in supporting the Asia Network will be to produce a series of reports on FGM/C prevalence and legislation in the Asia region.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE NEXT YEAR:

Continuing the global campaign on Closing the Funding Gap with our partners

Supporting the grassroots organisations in setting up the Africa Network to end FGM/C

Research on FGM/C prevalence data in the Asia region

Understanding what works to end the practice in the Horn of Africa

Capacity strengthening of grassroots partners



Asenath Mwithigah, Orchid Project CEO, speaking at the Kenya Office launch

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

We would like to give a special thanks to our funders, without their support, our work would not be possible.

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Human Dignity Foundation

Lef-Pillon Trust

Roger Ross

The Boda Charitable Star Trust

UBS Optimus Foundation

Schwab Charitable

MannionDaniels

Those who wish to remain anonymous



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

INCOME	2022/23	2021/22
Restricted Funds	£695,115	£919,500
Unrestricted Funds	£892,966	£508,737
TOTAL INCOME	£1,588,081	£1,428,237

EXPENDITURE	2022/23	2021/22
Charitable Activities	£695,115	£919,500
Governance & Support Costs	£519,044	£285,907
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE	£1,214,159	£1,205,407

Here's how you can help



DONATE

Without your support we cannot make our plans to end cutting a reality.

Please visit orchidproject.org/donate or scan the QR below to make a gift.



ADVOCATE FOR A GLOBAL END TO MUTILATION /CUTTING

Lend your voice, tell your friends and be an active supporter! Visit orchidproject.org to find out more.



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