

MAY 2014 – SEPTEMBER 2015

# THE GUARDIAN GLOBAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO END FGM



**This campaign, and the production of this report, would not have been possible without the generous support of Human Dignity Foundation.**



The aim is to ensure that FGM remains high on the political and social agendas of the target countries and internationally.



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# THE GUARDIAN GLOBAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN (GGCM) TO END FGM



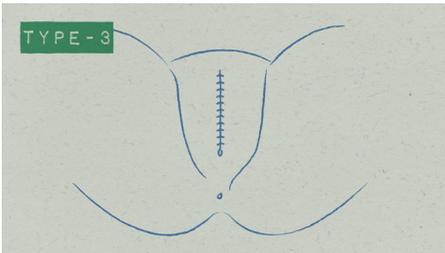
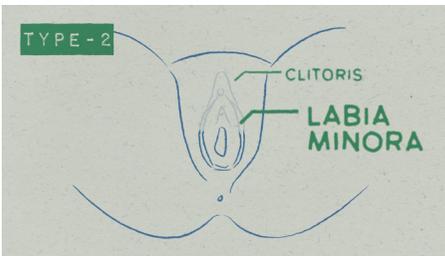
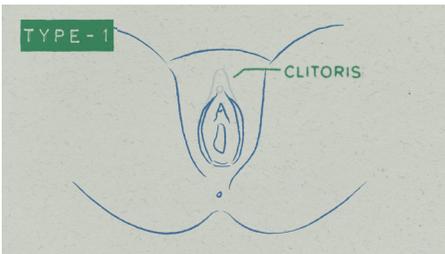
**MAY 2014 - SEPTEMBER 2015**

**TOTAL BUDGET: 1 MILLION USD**

The Guardian Global Media Campaign (GGCM) to end FGM seeks to harness the international reach and reputation of The Guardian's global media platform to amplify ongoing work to end FGM.

Over a period of 17 months, the programme has built on the successes of The Guardian campaign to accelerate the end of FGM in the UK, expanding its focus to Kenya, the Gambia and the US. Using the international reach and reputation of The Guardian's global media platform, it has built partnerships and alliances with journalists, INGOs, media and grassroots activists to produce and present content that seeks to influence policy and decision-making from the global to the local, and change attitudes and behaviour around FGM on the ground. The aim is to ensure that FGM remains high on the political and social agendas of the target countries and internationally.

# ABOUT FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING



There are four different types of Female Genital Mutilation, according to the World Health Organisation. With the first two types, parts or all of the clitoris is removed. With the third type, also called 'infibulation', all of the clitoris and the inner and outer labia are removed.

Type four takes type three one step further: parts of the vagina are stitched shut or tightened through chemicals or other harmful procedures.

Often, once a woman with a type three or four cut has given birth, or after the wedding night, the vagina is stitched shut again. This is called 're-infibulation'. Most cut women fall into categories one and two; type three is most common in East-Africa. Girls are usually cut between the ages of four and puberty, but it can also happen much later or just few days after birth. FGM can be dangerous and often causes women who have been cut significant lifelong problems, both emotionally and physically.

# CAMPAIGN BEGINNINGS: THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Guardian Global Media Campaign began in the UK in February 2014, driven by the newspaper's editor, Alan Rusbridger, in collaboration with the campaigning platform Change.org. The British/Somali teenager, Fahma Mohammed, was the face and a strong force behind the initiative. A newly established Guardian FGM editorial team drove the coverage from "within" the media organisation calling for the Minister of Education to write to all head teachers in the UK to take whatever action necessary to protect the children in their schools from FGM. It was a new and innovative media approach to tackling FGM. Nearly a quarter of a million signatures were collected in 21 days and, following a decision by the Minister, schools throughout the UK are adopting best practice training and safeguarding guidelines for 'at risk' girls. The online petition was supported by editorial content, including an endorsement by the UN Secretary Ban Ki Moon, and was recognized as a standout example of campaign journalism when it was presented with the title of **Best Editorial Campaign at the British Media Awards 2015.**

The UK Guardian is increasingly moving towards becoming a media hub on the topic, curating and collating content which calls for an end to FGM.



# MOMENTUM BUILDS: THE USA

In May 2014, again working alongside Change.org, the GGMC supported FGM activist Jaha Dukureh, a Gambian woman based in Atlanta, with her demands to have up to date figures about how many young women and girls in USA were at risk of FGM. Jaha's petition garnered 221,182 signatures and succeeded in prompting the Obama administration to carry out a survey into the number of US citizens affected by the procedure and to form a working party to combat the problem.

The campaign was backed by women's rights organisations and civil society movements who were successful in gaining support from 50 US members of Congress, raising the profile of the campaign. Under increasing pressure, the US Department of Health and Human Services commissioned a strategic plan to end FGM in the US, with further research commissioned by the Center for Disease Control to analyse and quantify the number of girls at risk of FGM in the US at the

## Taking it global: from the White House to South Africa to the UN



In March 2015, the GGMC and The Girl Generation, an African-led movement to end FGM, hosted a side event at the UN Commission on the Status of Women's annual two-week session in New York. The event, "New Generation: New Tools", gave a platform to grassroots activists, Jaha Dukureh and Domtila Chesang Lorema, the latter an anti-FGM campaigner who works with the self-help group, Kepsteno Rotwo (Abandon the Knife), in the West Pokot region of Kenya. The conference was opened by UN Under-Secretary and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, with over 100 representatives from civil society, governmental bodies, donor organisations and international development agencies; here the GGMC called for the creation of partnerships to further amplify the voices of young activists combatting FGM by using the latest communication tools and media

Jaha was later invited to the White House where her opinion was sought on the instigation of the working party to combat FGM in the US. The GGMC is exploring her new powerful political and cultural leverage, in the US and beyond, in a major feature documentary following her story, which will premier worldwide in June 2016. Produced by the Emmy Award winning Guardian Films, it is expected the film will challenge widespread indifference about FGM in the West, as well as exploit popular television as a means to get the message out to affected communities in Africa.

The documentary has already attracted interest from 21 international broadcasters and will be screened in film festivals and cinemas, followed by cable and broadcast television, and video-on-demand. In regions of Africa where FGM is prevalent an hour-long version of the film will be offered free to popular television networks, in the local languages. Further distribution will come in the form of a mobile cinema network through schools and NGOs, allowing penetration across more remote areas, with shorter versions also available on social media to further diversify opportunities to see the film.

## EXPANDING FOCUS: KENYA & THE GAMBIA



Beginning with Kenya, before widening the campaign to include the Gambia, and later Nigeria, the GGMC has operationalized a two-pronged approach in all of the target countries in Africa: firstly, working with political, mainstream media and social influencers to build strong relationships and partnerships with those interested in changing the landscape on FGM; and secondly, empowering activists at the grassroots in order they are better equipped to tell their stories and push them out across relevant channels, exploring ways of harnessing the power of social media to unite activists on virtual platforms, as well as promoting their stories across more traditional media.

Funded by the Human Dignity Foundation (HDF), the GGMC worked in the first year in small affected communities to harness the power of selected young activists, which they trained in a campaign academy. They looked to unite a force of change makers able to effectively utilize social media and campaigning media tools, stunts or events to raise the profile of anti-FGM activities at the grassroots. The Guardian meanwhile nurtured collaboration with key media houses to enable them to take up and promote new stories around FGM, providing a series of grants to support journalists in this work – not hitherto covered in the media-, with the support of the UNFPA/UNICEF joint programme. The aim was to ensure the mainstream media houses have a consistent supply of verifiable, evidence-based stories, establishing a network of local contacts trusted as having the relevant tools and knowledge to follow-up on these stories.



# KENYA: A CLOSER LOOK

Work in Kenya was announced with the official launch of the UN/GGMC partnership in Nairobi in October 2014. The opening was combined with meeting media houses who had previously shown interest in reporting more on FGM, gathering additional insight regarding the obstacles currently preventing media from covering the issue and providing opportunities for exploring how to build links between mainstream media channels and grassroots activists.

Subsequent to this scoping activity, a funding partnership with UNFPA was established to create structures for sustained mainstream media initiatives on FGM in Kenya. Small grants to journalists and news editors would be provided to help circumnavigate the issue that financial resources were not available to send journalists to remote areas, whilst ensuring cover for them in the office, an obstacle the majority of editors cited as preventing follow-up. A quick reaction grant for journalists to travel to regions where cutting was known to be imminent was to be made available.

Meanwhile dissemination of offline material to support the spread of information regarding the health ramifications of FGM was to be planned for, promoting the achievements of girls who had not been cut to position keeping girls in education as a valuable alternative to FGM. The need for community radio presentations, advertising spots featuring respected local and religious political leaders, and content translated into dialects spoken by practicing communities was also identified.

By January 2015, individuals and stories relevant to the campaign had been located, establishing research contacts on the ground. By Spring 2015 the research in outlying areas and visits to local communities had identified a number of young men and women working in isolation to challenge the cultures and traditions within their own communities which upheld the practice of FGM. Scoping indicated the need to go beyond simply relying on journalists to create and roll out content; instead, it would be essential to engage these young regional activists and empower them in their existing efforts, providing them with media training to amplify their voices, working with them to use locally relevant tools for collecting and telling stories around FGM.

**The training focused on four key areas: campaign strategy & tactics, media skills, leadership skills and building power.**

The GGMC subsequently launched a pilot media campaign training academy in Nairobi 17th – 22nd September 2015, in cooperation with Campaign Bootcamp and Change.org. They brought together 35 anti-FGM campaigners from around Kenya, with the aim of building a community of activists who would become regional leaders and create a working template that could be used in countries with similar circumstances.



#KOT



Within just two weeks of the training ending, seven of the graduate activists initiated media activities. One of the most striking examples of graduates demonstrating they had the skills, knowledge, confidence and community to wage successful campaigns against FGM was when a story about the arrests of two sets of parents of children who had been cut broke in West Pokot. Graduates from the Media Training Academy utilized their newly established Whatsapp network to share the news, as rumours were reported on a local radio station.

As soon as the story was verified, the activists contacted journalists in the national media to amplify coverage around the arrests, pushing updates out on Twitter using the hashtag #KOT (Kenyan on Twitter). This served to draw attention to the fact that FGM is illegal and the resulting media coverage was significant, picked up by The Star, The Standard and KTN, alerting people to the consequences of breaking the anti-FGM law. KBC followed up with subsequent reports on girls fleeing the cut and Kenyan journalists, Diana Kendi's and Jane Gatwiri's investigative work won the first ever Pan African award on FGM reporting, presented in Nigeria in February 2016. The award prompted almost 100 submissions on FGM reporting from all over Africa.



## ON THE GROUND IN THE POKOT: A LOCAL CASE STUDY

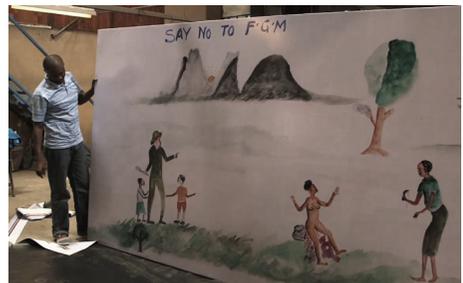
Over 50 percent of the girls between 10–21 years have been cut in the Pokot region. 80 percent of girls don't go to school or drop out prematurely after undergoing FGM. Having made a film local anti-FGM campaign group Kepsteno Rotwo, the GGMC identified them as a suitable group to collaborate with on a pilot for identifying appropriate methodologies and media tools for amplifying the work the group was doing at a local and national level.

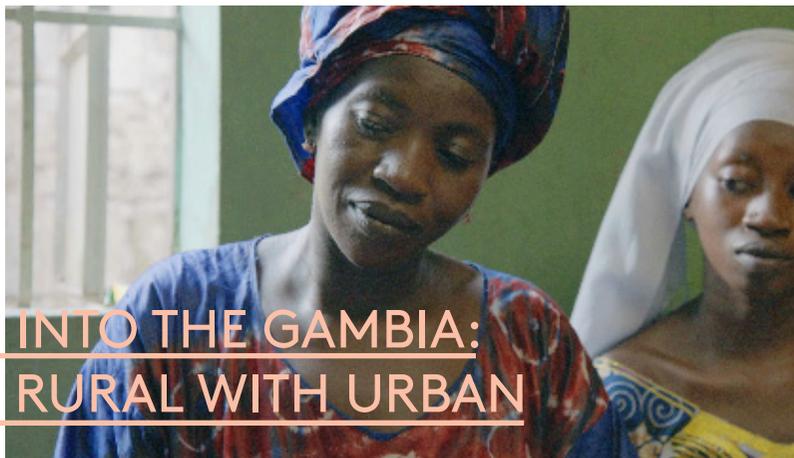
A primary school association in West Pokot was approached to decide the most appropriate way to convey an EndFGM message to the local community. The teachers proposed holding a poster competition amongst the girls, which would be erected in the center of the village and judged in a public ceremony. The winner would receive a year of school fees. The GGMC provided management and funds, while the judging panel was representative of local, regional and national governing and civil society organisations. A total of seven posters were selected, and were placed at entry points to local market towns in the region, generating significant local media interest.

Over 500 more people than expected turned up to the judging of the poster competition and there was considerable interest when the posters were erected, to the extent midwives and leaflets were dispatched to the places where people had convened. A group of Masai warriors sensitized at one of the launches formed an advisory group travelling to outlying communities, advising against FGM and informing chiefs of health implications. The group later approached the GGMC asking for support and ideas on furthering the work.



The campaign also highlighted a number of challenges to this type of local action, such as the need for more in-depth consultation with participating communities. For example, in two instances, community elders expressed resentment at what they felt to be judgment of their cultural practices and a lack of courtesy in the posters being erected without their permission. This perceived lack of ownership resulted with inaction when the posters were vandalized.





## MOVING INTO THE GAMBIA: LINKING RURAL WITH URBAN

In October 2014, GGMC worked together with Safe Hands for Girls and Think Young Women to facilitate a national youth forum bringing together over 100 young people eager to participate in the media campaign to accelerate the end of FGM in the Gambia – the first event of its kind in the country.

The GGMC went on to officially launch its campaign in the Gambia in January 2015, simultaneously announcing an ambition to provide media grants supporting wider coverage of stories about FGM, co-funded by the UNFPA. The UNFPA has been instrumental in further facilitating connections with the media and NGOs, with this ongoing partnership allowing the campaign to establish itself as a communications arm of these organisations, amplifying work and good news stories - as well as exposing ongoing practices - without replicating existing efforts.

Activities are at an earlier stage of implementation than Kenya, but are following a similar approach, working at both political/institutional and grassroots levels, using media to amplify the work of activists on the ground across the mainstream. The GGMC moved quickly to start building connections between rural and urban journalists, hosting a one-day FGM media workshop in June 2015. The course explained what the practice of FGM involves, addressing its medical implications and place within the Gambia's established religion. The workshop also facilitated contributions from FGM survivors on how journalists could access information or reach out to interview people who had been cut and were willing to share stories about the adverse effects of the practice.

The workshop attracted 65 journalists, with Deputy Permanent Secretary opening up new space for reporting and debate by challenging attendees to find evidence to persuade the government to ban the practice. Three days after the workshop, the country's first investigation of FGM in a rural district appeared in The Standard newspaper.

Responding to indicators from journalists and campaigners about the limited nature of data available on FGM in remoter rural areas, researchers visited 150 villages, compiling information in regards to how practicing communities could best be accessed, conducting focus group discussions and disseminating questionnaires to investigate attitudes towards FGM and what type of media would work best in terms of reach and engagement.

The GGMC encountered some hostility from local communities during these visits, with data gathered suggesting that the change needs to come from trusted sources within the community - local radio journalists seemingly have significant potential for encouraging change, particularly amongst men. Tribal leaders, women and cutters in the outlying practicing communities meanwhile reflected confusion between medical information they are being newly provided with, and the teachings of their religious leaders. It will be important to build relationships of trust with religious leaders, as key to gaining support from an Islamic population, almost half of which believe FGM is a religious obligation.

Jaha Dukureh is increasingly being viewed as a source of pride by the Gambian administration and President Yahya Jammeh. This has enabled the GGMC to work closely with the government and The First Lady's office to establish a relationship pushing the judicial system towards outlawing FGM. Since the campaign was launched, the government has gone from absolute support for the practice to a position of publicly appealing for journalists to bring evidence of harm FGM does to prove the case for creating a bill against FGM. That bill was made law at the end of 2015; GGMC greatly amplified the work of many long-term activists in the Gambia to achieve this.



## SUMMING UP PHASE ONE



These first 17 months have been instrumental in developing an understanding of how to effectively and efficiently build momentum from the bottom-up. There have been some very promising developments, including increased media coverage, real interest from stakeholders in the campaign and its goals, pledges from donors to fund further activities, and growing drive from the grassroots level to make a real change – the “green shoots” of a network of people who share the goal of eradicating the practice.

Work during this initial period has focused on raising the profile of FGM, with partnerships central to the GGMC’s strategy and roll out. Coordinating efforts with those working at the local, national and international levels will continue to be paramount to ensuring that The Guardian plays to its strengths as a media organization, within an established infrastructure working to end FGM.

More robust data collection and documentation to monitor GGMC successes and challenges has been highlighted as necessary, while a more structured approach to governance and overall project management - with clearer reporting and lines of communication – should also be developed. Fundraising remains a challenge and capacity is to be made available for proposal preparation and exploitation of suitable grants.



The Guardian dedicate ourselves and our resources as a media organisation - to helping to end FGM within a generation. We will use all means possible and our influence across the world to that aim.



Alan Rusbridger, Guardian Editor, New York, Launch of the Guardian Global Media Campaign, March, 2014.



# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

## PHASE TWO ROLLOUT & FUNDING

Planning for the next phase of activity now well underway, with the primary programme objectives best summarized as:

- Sensitising and raising awareness of mainstream and community media in the countries where we work to the issues of FGM and the urgent need to cover these in all media outlets;
- Identifying and working with young activists already active at the community level, training them to use multiple media outlets to tell the stories of FGM;
- Raising global and national awareness across countries, policy makers, international agencies and the global media through trans-media outreach, national and international conferences, working alongside high-profile figures and change makers, and developing an online media hub available for all to use;
- Building the team and ensuring there is capacity and skills to deliver on, monitor and evaluate, and share the learning from the programme.

The GGMC has secured funding from Human Dignity Foundation to support rollout of the next phase. The \$1.1m grant is expected to cover approximately half of the cost of continuing this vital work in The UK, Kenya and the Gambia while also initiating work in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

The GGMC is very interested in hearing from other organisations or individuals that would like to support this vital work.



# TIMELINE

**February 2014:** Guardian launched media campaign with call to British Minister of Education to write to all schools to insist that FGM become a part of their training and safeguarding programmes.

Change.org petition reaches 243,000 signatures, Education Minister agrees to her ask and writes to all schools telling them to raise awareness of FGM within their safeguarding requirements.

**March 2014:** Jaha Dukureh launches Change.org campaign with the Guardian and Equality Now in the US to have the rate of FGM in the US measured by the Centre for Disease Control.

**May 2014:** US Campaign to back Jaha's activism and petition launched in New York at the Guardian's Broadway offices by Senator Joe Crowley, then editor Alan Rusbridger and Jaha Dukureh. Extensive coverage followed in the US and UK.

**June 2014:** Filming begins on Jaha's feature documentary in New York and Gambia.

**July 2014:** As a result of the petition which got 220,000 signatories the Obama administration announced it would conduct a major study into FGM to establish prevalence and set up a working group, with Jaha Dukureh as one of its advisors, to tackle the problem.

**October, 2014:** Ban Ki-Moon officially launches the Guardian Global Media Campaign to End FGM in Kenya. He also announced the launch of the first Pan African Award for FGM reporting across Africa. UNFPA come on board to support direct action grants.

Campaign launches at grassroots level in West Pokot, Kenya with first poster competition.

**December 2014:** First stage editing begins on the Jaha Feature documentary with funding from Wallace Foundation.

**January 2015:** Launch of the Global Media Campaign at a national youth conference in The Gambia.

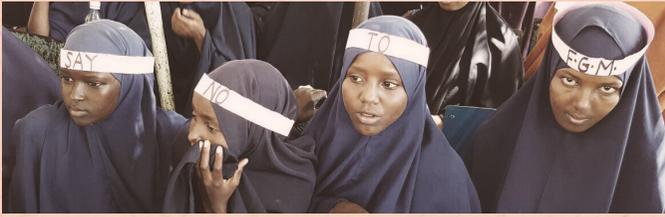
**March 2015:** Global Media grassroots campaign and activists Domtila Chesang Lorema (Kenya) and Jaha Dukureh (The Gambia) introduced to funders and potential supporters in New York at the Council for the Status of Women by Madame Phumzile, Deputy Secretary General of the UN.

**June 2015:** Guardian Global Media Campaign keeps its promise to start working with journalists and community radio producers in the Gambia with one day media training workshop for journalists.

**July 2015:** UNFPA agree to partner on 28 campaign academies around the world in all countries where FGM is practiced.

**September 2015:** First Media Training Academy for 35 activists takes place in Kenyan capital Nairobi. Residential over five days.





This media campaign focuses on finding all possible ways of opening up the airwaves, social media, local radio, TV, posters to FGM activists, amplifying and accelerating the message that FGM must end.





Global Media Campaign to  
**END FGM**

