



# Working Together To End Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

STRATEGY 2023 - 2028



**“Activism is about passion. Social change doesn’t happen instantly. Unless we grow the movement we cannot strengthen progress to end FGM/C. We need to ensure we have the evidence, the research to show what we, activists, need. We have to strengthen global political commitment, but starting locally. Lastly, and most importantly, we need to work with the community that we are influencing. ”**

**Christine Ghati Alfons**

**SAFE ENGAGE Foundation, Online Online Youth Forum 2022, hosted by Orchid Project for GirlGeneration**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year, 4.3 million women and girls undergo female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), during which 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 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 and Europe.

Orchid Project was registered in 2011 with a single mission: to catalyse the end of FGM/C. After working for more than twelve years to end the practice, Orchid Project reflected on the successes and lessons learnt from the last decade. From there, we looked towards Orchid Project's future to envision how and where we could make the biggest impact to end FGM/C.

As part of the strategy-development process, interviews were conducted with a number of stakeholders within the sector – staff and board members, organisation founders, partners, peer organisations and networks. The interviews looked at identifying the outside perspective of Orchid Project's position and its strengths in the sector. It was from this point that we built our objectives.

Our approach remains centred on working with grassroots and geographically wider partners to provide communities with the tools they need to make long-lasting steps towards abandoning cutting for themselves. Our approach is community-centric, but aimed at achieving larger-scale change by catalysing a movement of organisations, youth and survivor activists, politicians, ambassadors and leaders at all levels, in the areas where we are most experienced.

**“One voice can bring change but collectively we can bring great change to the community.”**

**Assistant Chief Sialo Simat, Naarosura.  
COVAW grassroot partnership  
programme 2022.**



Youth KSW Participants, Godson Saliman 2023

The strategy detailed below outlines the focus of Orchid Project for the next five years. We believe as an organisation that, through knowledge-sharing, advocacy and research, we can significantly bolster the movement to end cutting and help achieve a world without FGM/C.

## OUR VISION

A world free from female genital mutilation/cutting.

## OUR MISSION

To catalyse the movement to end FGM/C by generating and sharing knowledge, enabling collaboration and uniting actors to influence global commitments.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

1. To undertake research, generate evidence and curate knowledge to better-equip those working to end FGM/C.
2. To facilitate capacity-strengthening of partners, through learning and knowledge-sharing, to improve programme designs and impacts for the movement to end FGM/C.
3. To influence global and regional policies, actions and funding towards ending FGM/C.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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Term	Definition
Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)	The partial or total removal of, or injury to, a woman or girl's genitals for non-medical purposes.
Partners	Organisations with whom Orchid Project has an ongoing, close working relationship. Sometimes this includes providing funding, researching and capacity-strengthening, but not exclusively.
Grassroots	Organisations and individuals from, and working directly with, practising communities, helping to end the practice.
Medicalisation	When female genital mutilation/cutting is increasingly carried out by medical professionals.

## VALUES

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Our values inform our thoughts, words and actions. They guide the way that we work and how we interact with each other, survivors, partners and other stakeholders. We believe that living and working according to these values will allow us to operate with integrity and make meaningful impacts.



WE ARE  
**COLLABORATIVE**



WE ARE  
**OPEN AND  
ACCOUNTABLE**



WE ARE  
**RESPECTFUL**



WE ACHIEVE  
**TRANSFORMATIONAL  
CHANGE**

# CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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## THE HISTORY OF ORCHID PROJECT

Orchid Project was founded by Julia Lalla-Maharajh in 2010, after she witnessed some of the realities of FGM/C whilst volunteering in Ethiopia. At the time, the United Nations and a host of national and community-based organisations were working on ending FGM/C, but it was perceived as a silent issue: one that communities, governments and organisations did not talk about because of the stigma surrounding it. Therefore, it was not prioritised within the international-development system or given the resources and attention that it needed. Orchid Project was formed with the intent to increase the resources and attention given to ending the practice of FGM/C. The organisation sought to do this by funding and supporting grassroots organisations through close partnerships and by elevating the voices and learnings of these partnerships to (primarily) Global North governments, to steer the allocation of resources towards ending the practice of FGM/C.

Strong and fruitful partnerships helped Orchid Project speak informatively on global platforms, and The organisation in turn offered funding and organisational capacity-strengthening to partners. The amplification of grassroots voices through advocacy, in particular, was seen to work well for Orchid Project and was perceived as an important part of ending the silence shrouding the issue globally.

## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

To date, Orchid Project has achieved a great many things, some of which are highlighted below.

### Programmes:

- Orchid Project partnered with grassroots organisation Tostan in 2011 to support their community-empowerment programmes, which aided the abandonment of harmful practices, including FGM/C. By 2021 more than 9,517 communities in Africa had publicly abandoned FGM/C.
- Orchid Project partnered with grassroots organisation SAFE Kenya in 2013 and in 2017 partnered with COVAW. These partnerships contributed to FGM/C prevalence in 0-14 year olds in target communities in Samburu and Narok county (Kenya) reducing from 99.3% and 44.6%, respectively, to 67% and 23%, since 2018.
- Our partnership work in Kenya and Ethiopia has allowed us to share information on FGM/C, human rights, social and gender norms and reach more than 35,000 people, including men, women, girls, boys, traditional leaders, cultural leaders, social workers, religious leaders and healthcare providers.
- In 2016, Orchid Project partnered with transnational grassroots organisation Sahiyo, to support it establishing charitable status. This goal came to fruition in 2020.

### Advocacy initiatives:

- We contributed to securing the first ever governmental commitment to end FGM/C through the UK's Department for International Development.
- We successfully advocated, with the sector, for the inclusion of Target 5.3.2 under the SDG Agenda 2030 framework and for that target to apply to all countries.
- We are a founding member of the Global Platform for Action to End FGM/C, which convened members of the FGM/C sector, for its first time, at the Women Deliver 2019 (WD2019) conference. This was recognised as one of the top ways that WD2019 delivered for gender equality.
- We, alongside our Global Platform for Action to End FGM/C partners and with the input of more than 270 grassroots activists, developed a global Call to Action to End FGM/C that has been endorsed by more than 80 organisations.
- We elevated the voices of grassroots activists by supporting them to attend global-influencing events and to hold decision-makers to account.
- We co-founded and co-hosted a regional Asia Network to End FGM/C conference alongside our partner, ARROW, shining light on the scale of FGM/C practices in Asia.
- We published a policy briefing on the impact of COVID-19 on FGM/C and reverting trends resulting from the pandemic.
- We developed a policy discussion paper on gender-transformative approaches to ending FGM/C, re-positioning FGM/C strongly within the debates on gender inequality and gender-based violence.

- We are a consortium member of the Support-to-Africa-led movement to end FGM/C, a key initiative supported by the FCDO. Within the consortium Orchid Project is co-leading the global advocacy work. In this role, Orchid Project convened youth activists from Africa and Asia in its Youth Forum, facilitating sharing of knowledge between African and Asian movements to end FGM/C.

### Knowledge generation and sharing:

- In July 2016 we supported a baseline study of FGM/C in Somaliland, in partnership with ActionAid and the Edna Adan Hospital Foundation.
- To date, Orchid Project has convened more than 200 individuals from over 90 organisations at 12 knowledge-sharing workshops. These workshops have included participants from seven countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Somaliland, Liberia and The Gambia.

The above does not include the impressive accomplishments of 28 Too Many before its merger with Orchid Project. 28 Too Many had, among other things, created more than thirty-one Country Reports and seven Thematic Reports, which are available for use on the website. 28 Too Many's work highlights trends in the practice globally, which can be used to inform programming and advocacy efforts to accelerate the end of FGM/C.

## PREVALENCE OF FGM/C

Every year 4.3 million women and girls undergo FGM/C, during which their genitals are removed or injured for non-medical purposes. On average, girls are subjected to FGM/C before the age of five, although this varies between communities and can happen at any time from a girl's birth into adulthood.

The practice can cause long-lasting physical and psychological damage.

It is estimated that more than 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone FGM/C worldwide, and another 68 million are at risk of being cut by 2030.<sup>1</sup> However, data is only available for 31 countries where the practice is measured and reported on, through large-scale representative surveys, which in themselves are flawed. Beyond those countries, the practice has been documented in at least 64 others across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the Americas and Europe, through the collation of other less-representative evidence (for example, small-scale research surveys, anecdotal evidence, indirect estimates and reports from community-based organisations). The evidence

indicates that FGM/C is a global practice. As such, its end should, without question, be a global concern.

When prevalence is mapped against population size for countries that actually collect representative data, more than half of those affected by or at risk of the practice live in just three countries – Indonesia, Egypt and Ethiopia. The practice is almost universal in Somalia, Guinea and Djibouti, where more than 90% of women and girls undergo FGM/C. Evidence further suggests that FGM/C exists in places such as Colombia, India and Saudi Arabia, but there are, as yet, no representative data on the prevalence.<sup>2</sup> The inability to measure prevalence in every country is grossly inhibiting efforts to end the practice.

Although prevalence of the practice as a whole is currently declining, progress has been derailed by uneven global-population growth and the effects of climate change along with the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that the number of girls at risk of being cut continues to increase, despite efforts to end the practice. It is predicted that at least two million more girls will have undergone FGM/C by 2030 because of the impacts of COVID-19.<sup>3</sup>

Orchid Project remains hopeful that we can contribute to the end of the practice globally – but we must act now.

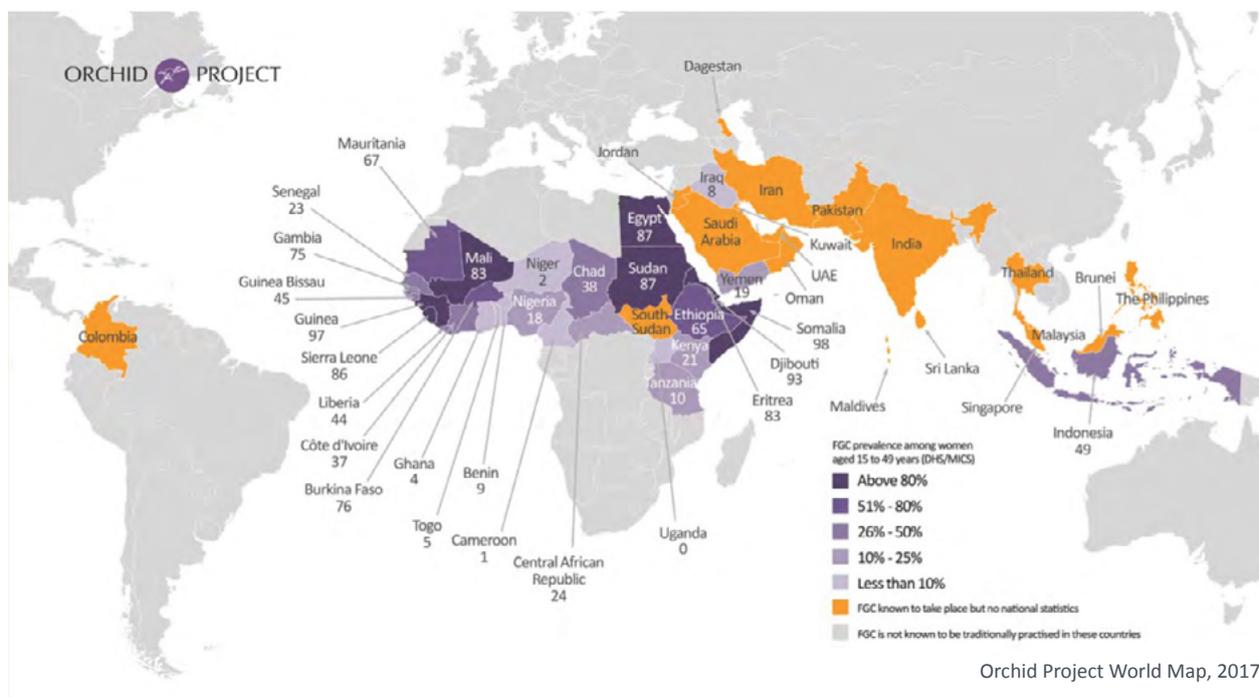


Malaysia partner visit, Orchid Project 2022.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics are from the UNFPA website, but 68 million covers 2015–2030 and only refers to countries where data is collected on a representational scale.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF website.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics from UNFPA website.



Orchid Project World Map, 2017

## SOCIAL/ECONOMIC

Girls can undergo FGM/C for many reasons, but it is often because of deep-rooted tradition and entrenched gender inequalities in practising communities. It is commonly seen as a social and gender norm held in place by entire communities, often reinforced by economic need. The practice is frequently based on a belief in the need to control a girl’s sexuality, increasing her marriageability or as a religious obligation. There are misconceptions that an uncut girl will be promiscuous, unclean, bad luck, or less fertile. Therefore, to bring long-lasting and systemic change for FGM/C abandonment, responses need to be complex and varied according to each context.

Because FGM/C is an important part of cultural identity, individuals who reject the practice may face ostracism. A social-norms approach to achieving sustainable community abandonment of the practice is currently evidenced as the most effective way to ensure that no individual will be disadvantaged by the decision.<sup>4</sup> However, the drivers that reinforce the practice greatly vary, and therefore, more work is necessary to evaluate which interventions are effective and transferable to which contexts. This work would be valuable for catalysing the end of FGM/C.

## POLITICAL/LEGAL

FGM/C is recognised internationally as a violation of human, women’s and children’s rights. A number of international and regional treaties recommend that countries legislate against FGM/C, the most prominent of these being the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (‘CEDAW’), to which 191 countries are signatories.<sup>5</sup> In 2015 FGM/C became

a target within the Sustainable Development Goals (‘SDGs’) under Goal 5 on Gender Equality to eliminate by the year 2030 all harmful practices, including female genital mutilation, as well as child, early and forced marriage. The goal requires all 193 countries that signed on to the SDGs to take action. However, despite the global legislative framework, only 51 countries have laws prohibiting FGM/C within their national legal frameworks.<sup>6</sup> Knowledge of these laws is weak and enforcement is limited. Within Asia and the Middle East, in particular, governments have not acknowledged or have denied that FGM/C happens. Therefore, few investments or protective measures are established for the women and girls we know are at risk.<sup>7</sup> The lack of global awareness of the issue results in a lack of global action and investment.

UNICEF and UNFPA run the Joint Programme on Accelerating the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (‘UNJP’), supporting 17 countries with a high prevalence of FGM/C. The aim is to shift

<sup>4</sup> Manual on Social Norms and Change 2022 UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation. De Vita and Monnet available: <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Manual%20on%20Social%20Norms%20and%20Change%202022.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Human Rights Council have all adopted resolutions to eliminate FGM/C (28 Too Many, The Law and FGM, p.19).

<sup>6</sup> End FGM European Network, End FGM/C US Network and Equality Now (2020) Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Call For A Global Response, p.11. Available at <https://www.equalitynow.org/resource/female-genital-mutilation-cutting-a-call-for-a-global-response/>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.9.

social norms in affected communities, while working with the governments to put in place legal and policy frameworks, funding and coordination mechanisms. The UNJP supports global and regional advocacy initiatives to reinforce political commitments and resolutions. The UNFPA has included the elimination of FGM/C in its top three strategic aims for 2022–2025.

The African Union runs the Saleema Initiative, supported by the UNJP, which is designed to galvanise political action to enforce legislation; increase financial resources; strengthen partnerships, regional learning and accountability mechanisms; and shift the social norms that hold FGM/C in place.

## MOVEMENTS TO ELIMINATE FGM/C

Feminist movements have mobilised support for the elimination of FGM/C, including the introduction of policy frameworks and national resources to end the practice. More recently there has been a rapid increase in feminist movements mobilising grassroots and survivor voices, shedding light on many issues of abuse and women’s rights to bodily autonomy.

Increasingly, youth movements have added to existing movements, often focused not only on ending FGM/C, but also on the wider agendas of ending impunity for gender-based violence (‘GBV’) and dismantling norms, practices and policies that perpetuate gender inequalities. These movements have been particularly successful, raising voices creatively in digital civic spaces – an opportunity that was not available in traditional civic spaces.

Building cross-movement collaboration and the sharing of change agendas is becoming increasingly necessary to achieving systemic change and engaging governments to bring an end to the practice of FGM/C at scale and within the context of shifting social and gender norms that reinforce gender inequality and GBV.<sup>8</sup>

## SECTOR FUNDING

It is estimated that US\$2.1 billion in new investments is needed to end FGM/C by 2030, in 31 priority countries alone, with this funding needing to be channeled to the grassroots organisations working to end the practice. Currently, however, only \$275 million has been committed in development assistance to end FGM/C. Without increased funding to scale up global efforts, due to population growth, the number who undergo FGM/C will be higher in 2030 than in 2021, when the initial estimate was made. Furthermore, treating the devastating health impacts of FGM/C for survivors has been estimated to cost \$1.4 billion per year globally. Therefore it also makes financial sense to fund an end to this practice.

In bilateral and multilateral institutional mechanisms, funding is often earmarked for FGM/C within wider funding allocations for gender equality and GBV. Donors are commonly located outside local contexts and dispatch funding through three-year funding schemes, expecting tangible and quantitative results during that time period. However, challenging prevailing power structures and community norms takes time, and so a disconnect exists between how funds can be used productively and donor expectations. As social movements grow to be effective, the means of achieving change in policies, legislation and social/gender norms, requires more funding. Traditional bilateral and multilateral funds are not well equipped, though, to fund social movements. Without the negotiation and direction provided by a global sector lead, progress towards designing effective funding mechanisms is slower than it can be.

## OTHER EMERGING TRENDS

The trend towards making FGM/C a ‘safe practice’ through medicalisation is significantly on the increase. According to UNFPA’s estimates, around 52 million girls and women who have undergone FGM/C (or one in four) were cut by health personnel, and in some countries and age groups the frequency is very high. Trained health professionals carrying out the practice can create a false sense of legitimacy and safety around it, potentially ignoring serious health consequences and violate the rights of women or girls subjected to the practice.

Cross-border FGM/C has also increased as a trend, particularly among migrant communities, who sometimes take girls back to their countries of origin to be cut or transplant the practice into new communities in their resident countries. Solutions to tackle cross-border cutting have been limited and lack enough evidence to date.

**“We need to be radical when we seek out political leaders to create policies to end FGM/C . Be loud. Speak Up. Speak out.”**

**Diaka Koroma**  
**Online Youth Forum 2022, hosted by Orchid Project for GirlGeneration.**

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF (2022) Building Movements, Building Power: Eliminating female genital mutilation by 2030 through social movements, p.10. Technical Note. Available at <https://www.unicef.org/media/130146/file/FGM-Building-Movements-2022.pdf>.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Historically, the 2020–2023 strategy focused on four objectives:

1. accelerate resources and commitment to end FGM/C at all levels;
2. support communities to end FGM/C
3. enable evidence-creation and its effective use to accelerate an end to FGM/C; and
4. be a strong and strategic organisation to effectively support an end to FGM/C.

Orchid Project aims to catalyse the end of FGM/C, building on and evolving those objectives by working towards the three objectives below from 2023 to 2028.

## Strategic Objective One

1. To undertake research, generate evidence and curate knowledge to better- equip those working to end FGM/C.

### Outcome:

Global knowledge gaps are filled by accessible knowledge resources.

### Impact indicator:

Application of knowledge that results in better informed programme and policy designs and targeted funding.

### Sub-objectives:

- 1.1 Establish an FGM/C Research Network to deepen our research capacity.
- 1.2 Close knowledge gaps by undertaking and curating research and evidence that increase understanding of the following:
  - (a) where, why (drivers) and how FGM/C occurs at the local, national and regional levels;
  - (b) what works to address FGM/C in each particular context;
  - (c) effective programme-design options that are transferable to, and scalable in, other contexts; and
  - (d) thematic and intersectional issues related to FGM/C.
- 1.3 Further develop the FGM/C Knowledge Hub (website) to make these research and evidence resources accessible to all.



Youth KSW participants, Godson Salman 2023.

To make significant progress to eliminate FGM/C, those working to end the practice need access to good-quality research and evidence of the scale and distribution of FGM/C, as well as the underlying drivers of the practice. Furthermore, they need to better-assess which approaches have proven to be effective in reducing prevalence and the extent to which those approaches could be adopted, adapted, scaled and transferred to other contexts.

Globally, knowledge gaps exist because insufficient research has been conducted or is not widely available. Policy-makers, donors and grassroots actors require clear contextual analysis and evidence of what works to guide their investments and policy designs.

Three knowledge gaps are identified: (1) a data gap (the data and evidence have not been gathered); (2) an access gap (the available knowledge is locked behind journal firewalls and hidden in complex data repositories); and (3) an understanding gap (practitioners and policy-makers find it challenging to translate the available evidence into action). Seeking to close these three gaps shapes our research strategy.

Orchid Project aims to play a catalytic role in building a knowledge base by undertaking and curating research and evidence and making it accessible to all. As a result of our merger with 28 Too Many, which produced Africa-focused research for the past decade, we possess the expertise to generate and curate knowledge, as well as the connections to amplify this knowledge across the sector, from grassroots, community-based organisations and activists to global institutions, governments and academia.



Mannion Daniels/ Orchid Project workshop participants, Godson Salman 2023.

**“Our future depends on actions we take today. As young people, let us lead the charge in ending FGM/C and create a more just and equitable world”**

**Participant of Youth Knowledge sharing workshop, Narok, Orchid Project 2022.**

Over the next five years, much of our research efforts will be focused on closing knowledge gaps in Asia and the Horn of Africa. In Asia we will focus on mapping the distribution and prevalence of FGM/C, both by commissioning our own research and by advocating through Objective 3 (see below) for the collection of more robust national data. In the Horn of Africa we will focus on understanding the persistence of FGM/C and communities’ resistance to change. We will explore interventions and approaches that have been effective at reducing prevalence, both in the region and in other contexts, to identify elements that could be transferred, piloted and eventually scaled up in the Horn of Africa. In doing so, we will focus research on issues intersecting with FGM/C that affect abandonment of the practice.

Orchid Project will also seek to build local research capacity, enabling communities and community-based organisations to conduct their own research. We will work with partners to develop robust research protocols that can be implemented by community-based organisations. We will support these research efforts with technical advice and seek to co-publish results, thus elevating local knowledge to the global context.

Orchid Project will ensure that knowledge resources are accessible to many more actors and will focus upon collating and curating credible evidence and guidance resources from multiple sources, making them available through a digital portal aimed at providing a central, multilingual knowledge hub of high-quality evidence. Furthermore, this knowledge will be actively shared with stakeholders at various levels through Objective 2 (see below). Through this, Orchid Project aims to increase its credibility as a knowledge provider and thought leader in relation to ending FGM/C.

With Objective 1 (above) we will bolster programme design and advocacy efforts with accurate research. This is paramount to assisting the movement to end FGM/C.

## Strategic Objective Two

2. To facilitate capacity-strengthening of partners, through learning and knowledge-sharing, to improve programme designs and impacts for the movement to end FGM/C.

### Outcome:

Grassroots and (I)NGO stakeholders are equipped with more skills to implement contextualised interventions informed by a global knowledge base.

### Impact indicator:

Extent to which grassroots and (I)NGO stakeholders are equipped with skills to design well-targeted interventions and effectively evaluate the impact of interventions to end FGM/C.

### Sub-objectives:

- 2.1 Build regional and national level collaborations to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, experiences and research in Africa and Asia.
- 2.2 Strengthen the capacity of grassroots and (I)NGO stakeholders to improve programme design and impact.
- 2.3 Strengthen the capacity of grassroots and (I)NGO stakeholders in terms of research and advocacy.

To effectively end FGM/C, global efforts need to be strengthened, scaled up and well-coordinated. Evidenced good practices need to be shared and incorporated into programme designs, and opportunities for learning coordinated. Many stakeholders in the FGM/C space are multi-sectoral and do not always have the technical expertise to sustainably end FGM/C. Therefore, resources dedicated to developing and sharing learning and providing coordination on FGM/C need expanding.

Orchid Project is well positioned to play a critical role in bringing together grassroots activists and (I)NGOs to develop a more coordinated approach to learning. We aim to do this by creating interactive spaces to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and promote collaboration, improving programme design and impact.

Furthermore, with Orchid Project's ability to generate research and evidence, through its merger with 28 Too Many, we are well positioned to build upon Objective 1 by presenting research and evidence in these knowledge-sharing spaces. This will feed into discussions on how data and findings can be used to improve programme designs. They will create opportunities for grassroots and (I)NGO stakeholders to expand their knowledge, share their own experiences and consider how to adapt their work to incorporate new learnings.

These spaces will also create opportunities for Orchid Project to identify, with participating organisations, what research gaps exist. This will in turn inform research priorities for Objective 1.

In summary, these spaces will aim to strengthen the capacity of grassroots and (I)NGO stakeholders' work to end FGM/C. Orchid Project will strengthen capacity in the areas where we have capacity: researching and using data, advocating and campaigning, and designing programmes. Other capacity gaps will be filled by experts who are brought in or are already in the spaces, or signposted outside of the spaces, depending on the need.

**“Not every child survives female genital cutting...but I’m one of the 200 million women alive today who has.... I work along with Orchid Project to end Female Genital Cutting.”**

**Hoda Ali, BBC Radio 4 Appeal, 2022.**



At present, it is perceived that the sector could benefit from more coordinated activities, shared learning and common advocacy agendas.

These knowledge-sharing spaces will be introduced at the regional and national levels in Africa and Asia, with a focus on the Horn of Africa in the immediate future to support in shared learning. Orchid Project will build upon our existing knowledge sharing workshop model and evaluate its impact. We will seek to establish more sustainability in these spaces as arenas for continued sharing, collaboration and learning.

With these spaces, it is expected that the outcomes will go beyond the facilitation and support that Orchid Project provides to include closer collaboration on FGM/C initiatives between community-based organisations and (I)NGOs, the strengthening of grassroots voices for national-level advocacy, and an increase in funding opportunities through the building of consortiums. Orchid Project will not necessarily intentionally nurture the creation of these outcomes, but will collaborate and support where we can add value.

To encourage greater sustainability, Orchid Project will evolve away from a continuous country-programme-funding model and will explore an innovations model designed to support shorter-term seed funding to scale up effective programming and pilot new approaches, building our research and knowledge base.

Through our grassroots focus and partnering ethos, Orchid Project will also be able to facilitate purposeful conversations and connections with grassroots and (I)NGO stakeholders on a more continuous and formal basis through networks.

The intention here is to strengthen mutual learning and elevate grassroots voices to influence investment and policy changes towards ending FGM/C. Although the knowledge-sharing spaces will continue to be created and facilitated for this second objective for the purpose of improving programming, the management of more formal networks, such as the Asia Network and the planned Africa Network, will be taken forward through Objective 3 to create a sharper focus on achieving the advocacy and campaigning objectives of Orchid Project as outlined in Objective 3, below.

The knowledge-sharing spaces will continue to provide contacts and nurture collaboration, as a result of which grassroots and (I)NGO stakeholders may choose to join the networks, and the networks will continue to be spaces where research and knowledge are occasionally shared.

## Strategic Objective Three

3. To influence global and regional policies, actions and funding to end FGM/C.

### Outcome:

Increased global commitments to policies, actions and funding implemented to end FGM/C.

### Impact indicator:

Extent to which issues that Orchid Project advocates for are prioritised in global and regional spaces of influence.

### Sub-objectives:

- 3.1 Strengthen movements by supporting regional networks, championing grassroots activists', youths' and survivors' voices, and collaborating intra- and inter-sectorially.
- 3.2 Lead strategic advocacy campaigns that demonstrate a more united global or regional advocacy voice on a selected issue.
- 3.3 Use evidence to influence global and regional policies and campaign work.
- 3.4 Increase focus on the issue of FGM/C on the global and regional policy agenda.

Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 and the inclusion of Target 5.2.3 to end FGM/C was a tremendous achievement and heralded a new era of action to end FGM/C. However, the ambition was not matched with adequate political and financial commitment and was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a reversal of some of the steps made towards women's rights. With only seven years left to end the practice, Orchid Project's objective of influencing global policies, actions and funding to end FGM/C still stands and is more critical than ever.

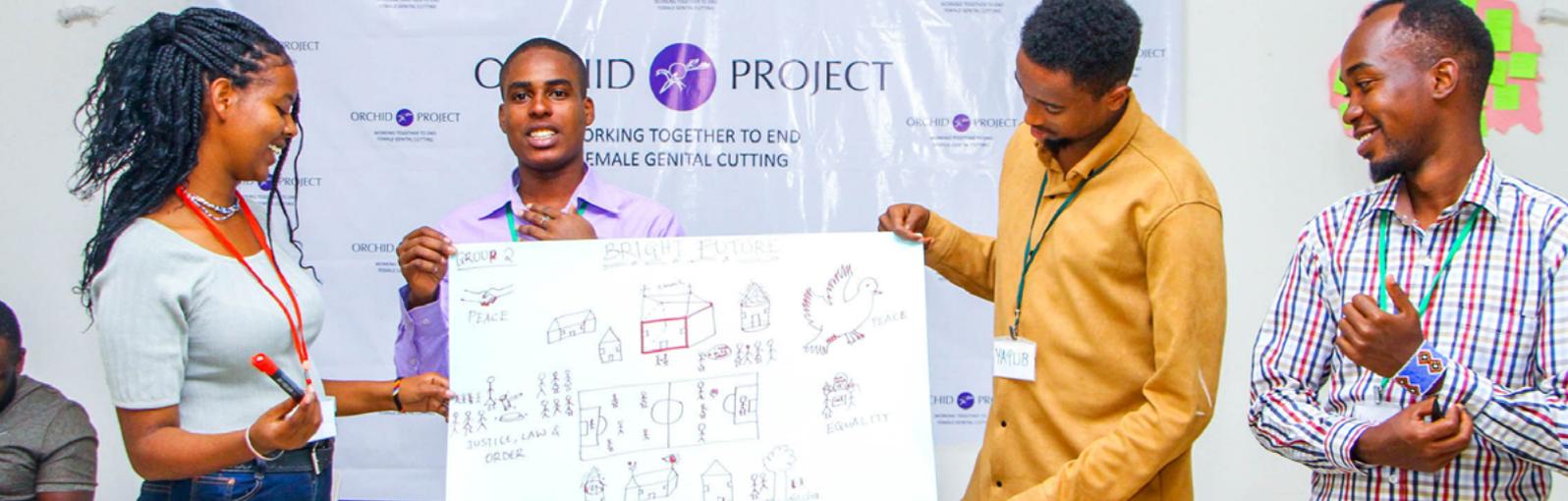
With a new office and staff body in Kenya and a strengthened Asia Network to end FGM/C, Orchid Project is planning to expand our advocacy work at the regional level, particularly through engagement with the African Union.

Strengthening movements to end FGM/C is essential for accelerating awareness, mobilisation, funding and progress. In the last three years, Asia Network has grown significantly and played a critical role in increasing awareness of the prevalence of FGM/C in Asia. The focus within the current strategy period will be to ensure sustainability of the Network.

**“We need to be bold and be the voice of other girls. Out there, there is a lot of pressure and stigma that may make us succumb to temptation of going through the cut, but we are now wiser and have that courage to say no. FGC is an experience that is not worth going through.”**

**Nashipae, student from Iseneto.**

**Credit: COVAW grassroots partnership programme 2022.**



Furthermore, capitalising on Orchid Project’s new data and evidence-generating function, we will use research findings to run strategic advocacy campaigns. In particular, the Asia Network can help act as an advocacy platform to push for policy recommendations based on research findings, such as the urgency of national data collection on the prevalence of FGM/C.

## Championing youth, grassroots and survivors’ voices in Orchid Project’s work remains essential.

Building on this work, Orchid Project sees significant importance in supporting the establishment of an institutionalised civil-society network in the Africa region, similar to other regional networks in Asia, North America and Europe. The Network will ensure that the perspectives of African NGOs working at the forefront to end the practice are included in the global conversations and spaces of influence and can act as a powerful catalyst in influencing the African Union and the global agenda.

At the same time, Orchid Project will continue to play a role leading on global advocacy within The Girl Generation: Support to the Africa-Led Movement to End FGM/C programme, in which Orchid Project’s efforts will focus on supporting young anti-FGM/C activists to advocate and engage in global spaces of power.

**“It’s about time that we give power to the young people because we have the zeal and power to end FGM/C. This is our generation and there is nothing for us without us!”**

**Faith from Samburu county**

Championing youth, grassroots and survivors’ voices in Orchid Project’s work remains essential. To ensure the organisation remains closely connected with and champions grassroots voices in our work, we will be establishing an ambassadors’ pool of activists working to end FGM/C.

Orchid Project will continue leading strategic campaigns and work closely with partner organisations in the sector and within the broader development sector to demonstrate a united global advocacy voice.

Over the next few years, the Organisation will continue campaigning for increased funding to the sector. This will build on the ‘What’s the Funding Gap’ campaign and will aim to secure funding commitments for the sector, with increased funding available for grassroots organisations.

Orchid Project will continue its engagement with global and regional spaces of influence by attending key events, and feeding into policy documents.

**“FGM has been a culture that we have always embraced and supported, and that was before we acquired knowledge from these dialogues how hazardous this tradition has been. If we don’t take the bold step and shun from such vices, then as a community we are setting a very difficult trend for the coming generations”**

**Cecilia Chepkoiga birth attendant from Olmekenyu. Credit: COVAW grassroots partnership programme 2022.**



COVAW 2019.

# CONCLUSION

Over the next five years from 2023 to 2028, Orchid Project will work to end FGM/C by bolstering the movement to end FGM/C at the global, regional, national and local levels.



To scale up our role as a catalyst within the movement to end FGM/C, we are evolving to generate evidence at national and regional levels, deliver global and regional advocacy, and strengthen grassroots programmes at regional, national and local levels. Using these approaches, we hope to be conveners and facilitators, sharing our technical expertise on ending FGM/C with those who need it most. That way, we can move closer to a world free from FGM/C.

**Thank you for reading our  
2023 - 2028 strategy**

**You can work with  
us to end FGM/C**

Over the next five years, we can make major progress toward our ambition of a world free from FGM/C. But we need you to support this transformative change.

# 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](https://orchidproject.org/donate) 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](https://orchidproject.org) to find out more.



## JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

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