

UK FGM NETWORK NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 3

WELCOME! To our 3rd FGM Network Newsletter. Finally after a setback during the Summer floods we are able to be back with you bringing you all the latest in our news round up. Enjoy! We're especially proud of our **Citizen 2007 Project** here at ACCM which had a very successful pilot this summer. A mention of that later this issue, and you can see more on our website at www.accmsheffield.org. Thanks to all our members as always and keep in touch. Email us at info@accmsheffield.org. And our new Sheffield Head Office from December will be **St Jude's, 14-18 West Bar Green, Sheffield S1 2DA**. Our number remains 01142 750193. Look forward to your feedback and ideas. These are very encouraging and inspiring times so everyone keep up the good work! Best wishes **Sarah McCulloch, National Director, ACCM**

End Violence Against Women are delighted to announce the publication of 'Tools For Change' jointly produced with the Equal Opportunities Commission (now part of the Equality and Human Rights Commission). This practical and innovative toolkit will help service providers, women's organisations, activists and others ensure that public bodies address FGM and other forms of violence against women when implementing the public sector equality duties on gender, race and disability in England and Wales.

'Tools for Change' contains Factsheets on all 3 equality duties, an Action Card and Postcard as well as template enforcement letters on the Gender Equality Duty. Packs can be downloaded from www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/publications.asp or hard copies can be ordered by emailing holly.dustin@amnesty.org.uk. Get involved! Lets make the equality duties create real change.

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FEMALE DEPRIVATION

I am a victim of tradition and culture
In the lush, productive valleys and soaring peaks of Mount Elgon,
Uprooted are the lush, fertile valleys and peaks of myself,
To guarantee my chastity and marital fidelity.

I lie on the earth surrounded by kith and kin
My "aunts" perform crude surgery to my sisters and me
Driven by men's conception of what my sexuality should be.
My brother will lose only skin, but I am castrated.

I must tow the line or be seen as irresponsible and immoral
Unable to protest, I am pressured, objection not an option
Resistance viewed as an attack on the whole community
Who unite to rejoice at the festive event.

I will arrive chaste and untainted on my wedding bed
My flower, a closed bud will not open.
Deflowered, consummated consumed by pain
Rivers of red will flow from a jagged gash in the dam.

If I cannot accommodate my lord and master planting his seed
How will I manage his fruit, nine months or more later?
I do not have the option of a Caesarian section.
The shadow of infection looms domed by HIV and AIDS.

Should you stray to the other side of the mountain
And sample my sisters, who cultivate and enhance their gardens,
After you taste the heat of their peppers and beans
Will you eat with gusto from my hollowed bowl?

MARY MASABA



BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH & FAMILY SUPPORT 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Black Women's Health & Family Support (BWHAFS) successfully celebrated its 25th Anniversary on Wednesday 24 October 2007 at Oxford House plc, Derbyshire Street, which attracted over 200 delegates including women, men, and children from different cultures, religion and backgrounds.

We were very privileged to have the Mayor of Tower Hamlets Cllr Ann Jackson to give the keynote address. We also had several other inspirational speakers from the Maxim Solicitors, Akina Mama Wa Africa, and Sickle Cell & Thalasaemia giving valuable talks on Family Law, Housing, education and health issues to raise awareness and to encourage participation from groups and individuals from a wide range of community sectors.

The event was indeed a very colourful one as it attracted people from different cultures, religion and background. There were cultural activities such as poetry recitals, FGM Monologue, Young People's Drama productions, displays of Somali Arts and Crafts and some exhibition from BWHAFS Somali Older Women's Sewing Project funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

The event concluded with an outstanding performance of Traditional African Dance & Drumming by the Ale Douvan Group.

BWHAFS would like to take this opportunity to say a very Big Thank You to the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Maxim Solicitors, Akina Mama Wa Africa and Sickle Cells & Thalasaemia for making the day a memorable one. Our utmost thanks goes to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Arts & Events for sponsoring the event.

Joycelyn Hayford
Operations Director



ACCM sends its best wishes and congratulations on a very successful and inspiring 25th anniversary event.

NEWS

What's going on in Leeds?

My name is Nicolette Clark, I'm a midwife based at St. James's University Hospital Leeds. I chair the Leeds FGM Strategy Group whose inception followed the sound advice and wise words of Sarah McCulloch. We have since become active on many levels; some of which I would like to share with you now.

Development of Clinical Guidelines

These extensive guidelines draw from the most up to date, reliable research, expert consensus and current practice guidelines relating to FGM across the globe. They provide all health professionals involved in the care of pregnant women affected by FGM with a clear pathway for effective, evidence based care throughout the antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal period.

FGM Clinic

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals are set over two main sites, St. James's and the Leeds General Infirmary. Both sites have integrated a specialist FGM clinic in to their current working clinics and accept gynaecology and obstetric referrals. Once identified, women are referred to a lead consultant/midwife for a full physical, psychological, social needs assessment. This enables identification of holistic needs and anticipation/elimination of obstetric complications. A mutual plan of care is formulated and documented in the hand held notes. A deinfibulation service is offered for pregnant and non-pregnant women.

Development of Training

To support our guidelines we teamed up with Leeds LSCB to produce our Multi-Disciplinary Child Protection Training. This half day session is delivered quarterly (more as required) and has been very well received.

The Future

Work does not stop here; this is only the beginning of a long term, ongoing project that we intend to develop extensively. Targeted in house training will be introduced for midwives and obstetricians. Training will also be provided for students at local universities.

We are eager to collaborate with others. This is key to the success and sustainability of any project and to the realisation of the collective aim(s) of all those who work in the FGM arena.

We have a long way to go but we hope to become active on many other levels which I will look forward to reporting in the future.

USEFUL CONTACTS

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Leeds General Infirmary (LGI)

Antenatal Clinic
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Belmont Grove
LS2 9NS

Dr Alison Wright **0113 3922657**

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION: AWARENESS & MANAGEMENT IN THE UK

The Florence Nightingale School of Nursing and Midwifery at King's College London with its partner Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust have spearheaded the development of FGM course. This new course aim to enable health care practitioners to frame FGM as a woman's health issue and to develop the appropriate skills, sensitivity and cultural competence to address the needs of affected women and girls.

For more information about the course please contact:

Dr Gillian Aston

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Email - gillian.aston@kcl.ac.uk

Or

Pauleen Hammett Tel 02078483600

Email; Pauleene.hammett@kcl.ac.uk

The West African Project

A journey seen through the eyes of an FGM Specialist - Comfort Momoh

[Click here](#) for more!

WORLD NEWS ROUND UP!!

Many thanks to TOBE LEVIN who has shared reports of news from France honouring women fighting against FGM and a must read report from Egypt. Congratulations to Tobe on all this incredibly hard work.

Follow these links:-

[Legionofhonourfrance](#)
[Egypt](#)

And for further essential and recommended reading, Tobe has kindly given the network news of a recent paper :-

http://polaris.umuc.edu/~acavanau/july2007/presenters/Levin_presentation.doc

Or perhaps you're in the mood for a film??? How about "Walk to Beautiful"? www.walktobeautiful.com

CITIZEN 2007

During Summer 2007, Abigail Dawes and Amina Ahmed of the ACCM Family Support Team launched a very successful pilot scheme in Sheffield. We proudly present CITIZEN 2007. During the long Summer school holidays, a large group of local school children attended our scheme at Sunnybank in Sheffield where they looked at citizenship, issues such as bullying, diversity and celebrating our differences – with a lot of fun outings thrown in such as picnics, cinema visits and rollerblading! Full details of the programme can be seen at www.accmsheffield.org. The children each achieved an award certificate for their hard work and demand is there for bigger and better things in 2008! ACCM wishes to say a massive thank you to the volunteers who did an amazing job and worked so hard.



NEW FGM PREVALENCE STUDY

A new Statistical Study to Estimate the Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales was launched on 9th October 2007 by FORWARD. The Study funded by the Department of Health was undertaken jointly by FORWARD and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and The Department of Midwifery at City University lead by Efua Dorkanoo OBE.

The study found that over 66,000 women aged between 15 to 49 have been subjected to FGM and that over 33,000 children under 15 were at risk in England and Wales alone. This data was based on women data from maternity hospitals and the 2001 Census and the Principle Investigators admit that the numbers are under stated and the Census data was out of date as there has been an influx of women and children since. The real picture is that these numbers are only estimates and the real picture is more disturbingly higher. For a full report, please contact FORWARD at forward@forwarduk.org.uk or you can visit this link <http://www.accmsheffield.org/links/FGMreport.pdf>

COMFORT MOMOH MEETS THE QUEEN

An evening reception with Her Royal Highness The Queen was a “dream come true” for Comfort Momoh, specialist midwife in female genital mutilation (FGM) at Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust.

Comfort met the HRH The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh at a reception at Buckingham Palace on Monday 12 November.

Comfort said being invited to Buckingham Palace was a significant recognition of the work she does to research and raise awareness of FGM both in the UK, Africa and World-wide.

“Events like this are very encouraging and promote the work I do with FGM,” Comfort said. “I have won many awards but meeting the Queens is a great lifetime achievement.”

Guests for the reception were from across the United Kingdom to reflect the work and associations with Commonwealth African countries.

The Reception was held prior to the state visit to Uganda by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh later this month.

All the staff and volunteers at ACCM would like to say a big thank you for all your support . We wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and a healthy, happy successful new year. We look forward to bringing you all the news again in 2008.



Seasons' Greetings!

REMEMBER!!! RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND KEEP ANY COPIES ETC OF THIS NEWSLETTER TO A MINIMUM. EMAIL TO A FRIEND IF YOU CAN!