

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW 2016 - 2023

## Needs Statement

Globally, the number of women and girls reported to have undergone female genital cutting (FGC) is 200 million. However, this figure significantly underrepresents the true number of those impacted by FGC, as it is solely based on data collected by UNICEF in 32 countries, mostly in Africa and the Middle East. Sahiyo recognizes that FGC has been reported in at least [92 countries](#) around the globe, including the U.S., and encompasses survivors who do not identify as cisgender women. This gap highlights that FGC is misunderstood in terms of who it occurs to and how prevalent it is. Such misconceptions, in addition to other common misunderstandings, lead to the minimization of the issue globally.

Educational initiatives can dispel misconceptions and increase global awareness of FGC across FGC-impacted communities, frontline service providers (i.e. healthcare, law enforcement, education, mental health, social service, media, government agencies, etc.), and the broader public.

FGC is viewed as a social norm within FGC-practicing communities and is often performed in secret. By bringing the topic to the public's awareness through trainings and presentations, community education can remove the shame and stigma associated with discussing the topic. Shedding light on such issues is the first step toward fostering social change and ultimately working towards the abandonment of FGC.

## Program Goals

- Raise greater awareness of FGC and associated harms among the broader public.
- Increase knowledge about FGC amongst frontline service providers to provide culturally appropriate services to survivors FGC.
- Encourage communities to shift social norms around FGC to ultimately abandon the practice.
- Ensure that outreach and education efforts prioritize survivor and community-centered approaches to discuss what FGC is and its impact (i.e. using sensitive terminology, centering survivors' voices, and engaging communities in non-judgemental discussions).
- Empower survivors by aiding access to resources and opportunities to become involved in activism to prevent FGC for future generations.

## Program Activities

- Organizing and hosting webinars and community discussions.
- Providing training and technical assistance to other organizations or institutions.
- Creating and implementing public awareness campaigns.
- Facilitating virtual community spaces (i.e., WhatsApp group for Sahiyo volunteers).
- Writing blog posts.
- Designing resources such as toolkits, guides, reports, and videos to build greater knowledge of the topic.

# Program Impact by the Numbers

## 2016-2023

**79**

presentations hosted  
or co-hosted

**222,986**

people engaged via social  
media

**787**

blogs published

**667,146**

blog views

**9**

major social media  
campaigns

**44**

policy briefings with  
legislators on FGC

**4,667**

activists, community  
members, frontline  
professionals, and others  
engaged in trainings

**2**

websites created:  
sahiyo.org and  
voicestoendfgmc.org



# Looking Forward

Sahiyo hopes to grow the Community Outreach & Education program by:

- Holding additional public webinars and community discussions.
- Increasing training and technical assistance to organizations and institutions, specifically frontline professionals who work with FGC-impacted communities.
- Creating additional public awareness campaigns.
- Engaging a wider breadth of communities and stakeholders.
- Continuing to build safe spaces where individuals feel supported in sharing their experiences with FGC.
- Collaborating with other related organizations in the creation of culturally sensitive methods of supporting survivors.
- Implementing new outreach strategies that target marginalized voices in the movement to end FGC (i.e. males and nonbinary survivors of FGC).
- Allowing space for a diverse range of voices to be heard through Sahiyo's blog.
- Creating more educational resources for survivors, communities, and stakeholders.