



ANNUAL REPORT SAHIYO U.S.

JULY 1, 2022—JUNE 30, 2023

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WELCOME FROM SAHIYO U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of Sahiyo,

Another year has come and gone, and Sahiyo U.S. continues to make strides toward ending female genital cutting (FGC). As we wrap up the 7th full year since our founding in 2015, we'd like to reflect on our accomplishments.

Our training and technical assistance capacity has grown over the past year. We've partnered with Asian Women's Shelter (AWS) to provide culturally specific training on FGC to their advocates to increase their capacity to provide support services to FGC survivors; addressing a gap in resources that exist for FGC survivors in the U.S. In August 2022, AWS opened its existing support line to FGC survivors, creating a first-of-its-kind culturally specific support line in the country.

On February 6th, 2023, International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, Sahiyo released [Bhaiyo: A Male Ally Initiative to Support Ending Female Genital Cutting](#). This report tracks the progress of our male ally program since its creation in February 2021. Bhaiyo now has 18 male members, and through public awareness

campaigns, we've reached 13,247 individuals. An additional 176 people have attended our Bhaiyo-led educational webinars and 28 blogs were written by these male allies working to end FGC.

To celebrate International Women's Day this past March, Sahiyo held its first silent auction. With the help of our incredible donors and supporters, we raised over \$14K to support our mission. Our five-day celebration of women's voices began March 8th, with a fun, interactive virtual comedy show featuring incredible comedians Zahra Noorbakhsh, Marga Gomez, Pallavi Gunalan, and Zahra Ali. Throughout the week we featured other talented women and their gifts, such as poetry, artwork, dance, and more on our social media platforms, in an effort to bring attention to the issue of FGC. We are truly grateful for this show of support from our community!

Finally, Sahiyo made huge strides in building policy solutions to address FGC. In Washington state,



Sahiyo supported the formation of the [Washington Coalition to End FGM/C](#), a coalition consisting of survivors, advocates, and community-based organizations. On April 20, 2023, the Coalition successfully helped Washington become the 41st state to pass a law protecting children from the harms of FGC.

I take great pride in our team and all we have accomplished together. Our consistent dedication to elevating survivors' voices via storytelling initiatives has only grown stronger over the last year. With this in mind, I'm pleased to deliver our Annual Report for the fiscal year July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023. As we anticipate and look to the future, we thank you for your ongoing assistance in supporting us to meet our mission.

In solidarity,

Mariya Taher, MSW, MFA

U.S. Executive Director

Sahiyo-United Against Female Genital Cutting

ABOUT SAHIYO

Sahiyo is the Bohra Gujarati word for 'saheliyo,' or female friends, and reflects **our mission to empower Asian and other communities to end female genital cutting (FGC) and create positive social change through dialogue, education, and collaboration based on community involvement.** The World Health Organization defines FGC as "all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injuries to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons." FGC can have lifelong physical, emotional, psychological,

and sexual impact on a person.

Sahiyo's vision is to end FGC (also known as female genital mutilation or female circumcision), which has been internationally recognized as a human rights violation. We aim to enable a culture in which a women/girl's body and female sexuality are not feared or suppressed but embraced as normal. We recognize and emphasize the values of consent and a woman/child's right over their own body. Today, Sahiyo has been divided into two legal entities - Sahiyo U.S. & Sahiyo India. The Sahiyo U.S.

programs operate transnationally, with primary work carried out in the United States. We work with survivors, their families, and their larger religious/ethnic communities in which FGC continues as a social norm. Sahiyo was recognized in 2018 by the Population Reference Bureau as one of six inspiring organizations working to end FGC. Sahiyo U.S. is a fiscally sponsored project of Empowerment Works.

This annual report is specific to the work of Sahiyo U.S.



MEET THE TEAM



MARIYA TAHER (she/her)
U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
mariya@sahiyo.org

U.S. Executive Director Mariya Taher has worked in gender-based violence for nearly fifteen years in the areas of teaching, research, policy, program development, and direct service. In 2018, Mariya received the Human Rights Storytellers Award from the Muslim American Leadership Alliance. In 2020, she was recognized as one of the six inaugural grant recipients for the Crave Foundation for Women. After starting a Change.org petition and gathering over 400,000 signatures, Mariya helped Massachusetts become the 39th state to pass legislation on FGC. Subsequently she supported other states to pass such laws including Washington state. She also sits on the steering committee for the US End FGM/C Network.

As of 2021, Mariya serves as an expert consultant for the Department of Justice's Training and

Technical Assistance For Addressing FGM/C Program. In 2023, she became a Valor LEAP Fellow. Prior to Sahiyo, Mariya held positions at Saheli, Support and Friendship for South Asian Women & Families, W.O.M.A.N., Inc., Asian Women's Shelter, San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, and was a 2014 Women's Policy Institute Fellow through the Women's Foundation of California.

Additionally, Mariya is an extensive writer and has contributed pieces to NPR, HuffPost, The Fair Observer, Brown Girl Magazine, Solstice Literary Magazine, The Express Tribune, The San Francisco Examiner, and more. She graduated with her MFA in Creative Writing from Lesley University. She also holds a Master in Social Work from San Francisco State University and a B.A. from UC Santa Barbara in Religious Studies.

MEET THE TEAM



KRISTEL MENDOZA CASTILLO
(she/her)
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
kristel@sahiyo.org

Communications Coordinator Kristel Mendoza Castillo completed her Bachelor's degree in Communications at the University of Connecticut. Driven by a deep belief in Sahiyo's mission, Kristel seeks to use her knowledge in social media, marketing, and communications to raise awareness and drive change. She recognizes the importance of ending female genital cutting and empowering survivors globally and aims to amplify Sahiyo's message, ensuring it reaches a wider audience and inspires action.



RACHEL WINE
(she/her)
EDITORIAL COORDINATOR
rachel@sahiyo.org

Editorial Coordinator Rachel Wine is a graduate of Georgetown University's MSc Global Health program, where she focused on mental health equity. She earned her BSPH at Tulane University with a double-major in public health and anthropology. Her passion lies at the intersection of activism and storytelling, and she is honored to continue Sahiyo's work of elevating survivors' voices for empowerment and healing of the individual and collective.

MEET THE TEAM



MICHELLE TAYLOR

(she/her)

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

michelle@sahiyo.org

Development Coordinator Michelle Taylor comes to Sahiyo with over a decade of nonprofit development experience. Michelle earned a B.S. in Business Administration from CSU, Long Beach and a M.S. in International Affairs from Marquette University. Michelle is excited to bring her vast knowledge of finance, marketing, event management, and passion for her greater community to help advance Sahiyo's mission to end FGC and create positive social change.



CATHERINE COX

(she/her)

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

catherine@sahiyo.org

Programs Coordinator Catherine Cox received her B.A. from Simmons University in International Relations and Economics. Her research and work experiences center on the rights of women and girls, gender-based violence, as well as conflict and migration. She has had numerous international internships in places like Jordan and Cameroon addressing these topics, and currently works on FGM/C prevention in the United States.

MEET THE TEAM



MEG SINNOTT
(she/her)
PROGRAMS ASSOCIATE
meg@sahiyo.org

Programs Associate Meg Sinnott received her Bachelor's degree of Sociology and Social Policy in 2021 from Trinity College Dublin, in Ireland. As a first-generation immigrant born in Switzerland, she has developed a love for learning about different cultures which has led her to become an advocate for the empowerment of minority groups. Meg is passionate about creating positive social change through policy advocacy, and is a part of coalitions against FGM/C in Washington and Connecticut through Sahiyo. She looks forward to supporting and expanding Sahiyo's various programs.



URVASHI SHARMA
(she/her)
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
urvashi@sahiyo.org

Editorial Assistant Urvashi Sharma is a rising freshman at The University of Michigan– Ann Arbor. She has been volunteering with Sahiyo since 2020, and came on the team as an Editorial Intern in 2022. Now as Editorial Assistant, she is looking forward to continuing her involvement and taking it one step further. Urvashi, who aspires to be a doctor, has a keen interest in women's health and feels excited and privileged to learn, raise awareness, and amplify the voices of survivors whose stories must be heard.

MEET THE TEAM



ZEHRA PATWA

(she/her)

SAHIYO U.S. ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR

zehra.patwa@gmail.com

Zehra Patwa is the Co-Founder and US Lead of **WeSpeakOut**, an organization striving to work for equal rights for Bohra women, specifically, on FGM/C (khafz). Educated at the University of Bradford Management Centre in the UK and the Université de Montpellier in France, Zehra serves on several Boards, including Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS), and Hopkins School in New Haven.

Discovering well into adulthood that khafz (type 1 FGM/C) was practiced in her community, and that she had been subjected to it also, she has worked with WeSpeakOut to expose the practice within, and outside, the community. Zehra is working to bring about an anti-FGM/C law in CT. She works in Digital Customer Delivery for the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, CT.



SAKINA SHARP

(she/her)

SAHIYO U.S. ADVISORY BOARD VICE CHAIR

sakinasharp@gmail.com

Sakina has advocated against gender-based violence for over two decades. In 2011, she co-founded **Awaaz**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to help survivors of domestic violence. She led it in an executive leadership and board capacity for 7 years. With a passion to give voice to the issue of female genital cutting, she currently coordinates Sahiyo's newsletter and drafts the legislative updates. Sakina

is a legal and compliance leader with 15+ years of experience in a broad range of enterprise legal issues, including insurance regulatory and privacy law, in large financial services organizations. She has led large business operations teams as well as multiple legal teams. She received her J.D. from Brooklyn Law School and her B.A. from New York University.

Additional Sahiyo U.S. Advisory Board Members

NESHA ABIRAJ	PRIYA GOSWAMI	NAZNEEN VASI
RENEE BERGSTROM	AAREFA JOHARI	JOANNA VERGOTH
AREFA CASSOOBHOY	JO KEOGH	KRISTEN ZALESKI
INSIA DARIWALA	ZAHRA QAIYUMI	
JOANNE GOLDEN	MARYUM SAIFEE	

Thank you to our wonderful interns:

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS INTERNS support education and outreach efforts by planning and coordinating virtual events such as our webinar on male ally engagement on preventing FGC or virtual screening of the Voices to End FGM/C digital stories. Interns this year included: *Ellen Ince, Beth Fotheringham, Trisha Kini, Hannah Manucal, and Derrick Simiyu.*

COMMUNICATIONS INTERNS assist the Communications Coordinator and wider team with internal and external communications activities. Interns this year included: *Maiyim Jordan Da Cruz and Grace Berrios.*

DEVELOPMENT INTERNS assist the Development Coordinator and ensure the organization remains

financially stable by maintaining relationships and securing funds from grant-making organizations and enacting fundraising campaigns to support Sahiyo's programs. Interns this year included:

Avery Boudreau, Katia Orozco Saucedo, Anaïs Furukawa, Shatize Pope, Beth Fotheringham, Alyson Maye, Sarah Rundle and Abigail Cervantes.

EDITORIAL INTERNS assist the Editorial Coordinator with blog development, creation of the monthly newsletter, and copyediting for Sahiyo's website. Interns this year included: *Urvashi Sharma (now staff), Cecilia Mwakenya, and Megan Seaver.*

SOCIAL MEDIA INTERNS support Sahiyo's communications, providing content for our social media channels, and strategizing around digital

campaigns to engage and educate survivors, advocates, and the larger community. Interns this year included: *Olachi Nwagu and Xinge Lei.*

BHAIYO INTERNS support Sahiyo with the day-to-day function of Bhaiyo, help recruit new volunteers, help implement and design Bhaiyo programming, and promote communications on male engagement for Sahiyo's various communication platforms. Interns this year included: *Ian Makale.*

U.S POLICY INTERNS support policy work to address female genital mutilation, they attend meetings with advocates, organizations, and legislators as needed. Interns this year included: *Delia Donovan.*

THEORY OF CHANGE

Based on external research on FGC and independent research Sahiyo conducted with over 400 women from FGC practicing communities, we developed a theory of change that leads to two primary outcomes:

- 1) Increased abandonment of FGC amongst future generations and
- 2) A strong network of community advocates raising awareness of FGC within their own communities that will lead to the social norm change of abandoning FGC.

Our Theory of Change was also developed with influence from our partner organization Tostan's Social Norm Approach. Tostan, a nearly 30-year old NGO, has utilized social norm theory to reduce FGC in Senegal. In 2014, they reported a **69% reduction in instances of FGC** over the course of 5 years. Subsequently, **UNFPA-UNICEF** Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation has also found social norm change interventions to be effective.

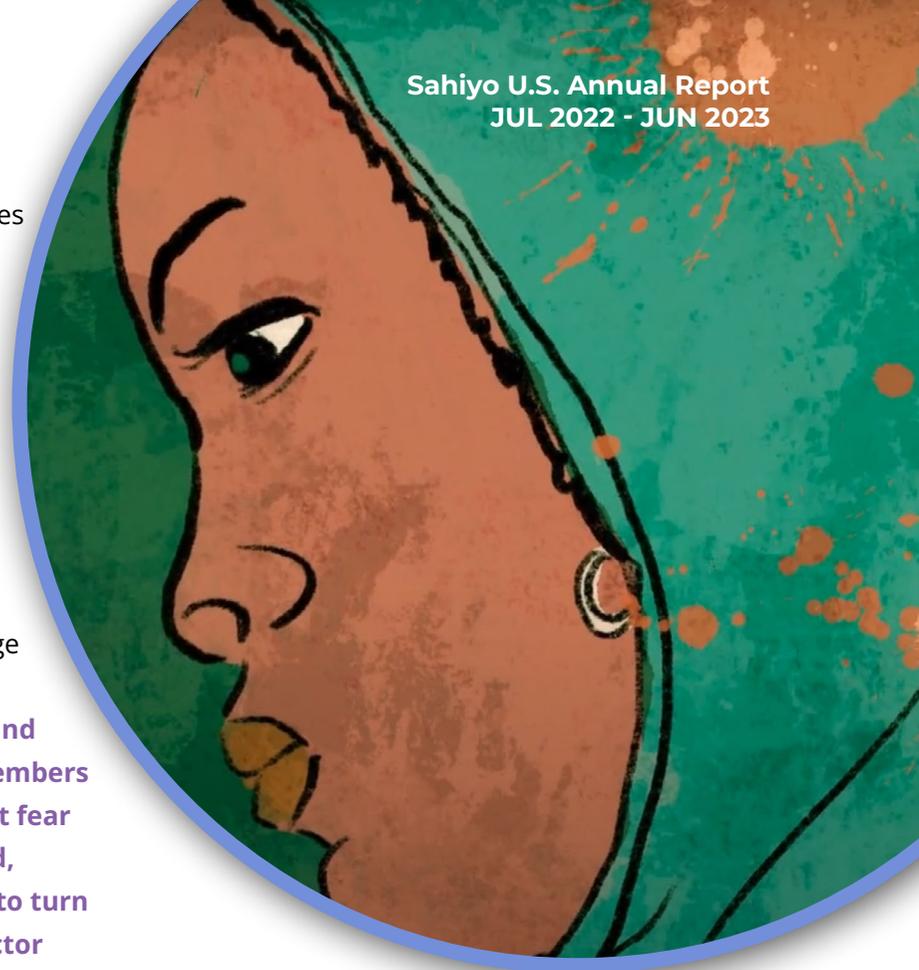
FGC continues because it is a deeply embedded social norm justified by cultural or religious necessity, and/or the need to control a woman's sexuality. As such, social norm theory dictates that the threat of social rejection is very

real if an individual makes different choices from those of the group. '

Therefore, despite Sahiyo's research revealing that 81% of the Bohra community does not want FGC to continue, the fear of social rejection and resulting silence surrounding the practice has allowed it to do just that. Sahiyo understands that only by building a critical mass of voices willing to challenge FGC will the trend towards abandoning it gain momentum. **Creating safe spaces and mechanisms that allow community members to share dialogues on the topic without fear of reprisal, or if that cannot be avoided, establishing a built-in support system to turn to when reprisals occur, is a critical factor towards social change.**

A 2018 study revealed that once 25% of a social group adopts a new social norm, the rest will follow. To reach a 25% tipping point that shifts the social norm from cutting to not cutting, vast numbers of community members must have informed conversations on FGC. Sahiyo utilizes social mobilization techniques involving storytelling to further this effort.

Sahiyo's programming has focused on breaking that silence, supporting survivors, raising awareness, and seeking systemic change at the legislative level. This vital groundwork has led community members to debate FGC within their networks of family and friends.



Challenging factors

- FGC continues because it is a deeply ambedded social norm justified by masons of religion culture, gender roles (i.e., sexual control)
- Lack of dialogue and communication around FGC due to fear of social exclusion, getting in legal trouble, etc.
- Lack of skills to engage in effective dialogue
- Lack of awareness of FGC amongst Asian communities due to lack of research, leading to lack of support and funding for resources connected to prevention of FGC and support for survivors

Who we work with

- FGC survivors & community members
- Advocates and allies
- Civil society (NGOs)
- Child welfare professionals
- Government
- Health professionals
- Gender-based violence advocates

Programs



Outcomes/Goals

Short-term Outcomes:	Long-term Objectives:
Building a coalition of stories across different platforms (blogs, photos, video, theater, etc.) on FGC and uplift survivors voices	Creating a critical mass of voices speaking publicly against FGC that will lead to a social norm shift within FGC practicing communities toward viewing FGC as a social ill
Help to connect survivors globally through shared experience as well as breaking the silence and isolation	Establishing a strong network of community advocates raising awareness of FGC within their own communities, leading to increased percentages of abandonment of FGC
Fill the gap in research that exists on FGC amongst Asian communities, including diaspora communities (FGC prevalence, health impacts, best practices in advocacy efforts to end FGC, etc.)	Research on FGC amongst Asian communities and other communities that enables policy creation and implementation of laws against FGC and funding for support programs for survivors

At Sahiyo, we offer a variety of resources and programs to spread awareness and education about FGC and provide a platform for those impacted to share their stories

“Through its programs around preventing and healing from FGMC, Sahiyo gives a voice to survivors through the Voices to End FGM/C project, supports legislation to end FGM/C in the USA and abroad, provides valuable research, and gives opportunities to people like me to help where I can” - Joanne Golden

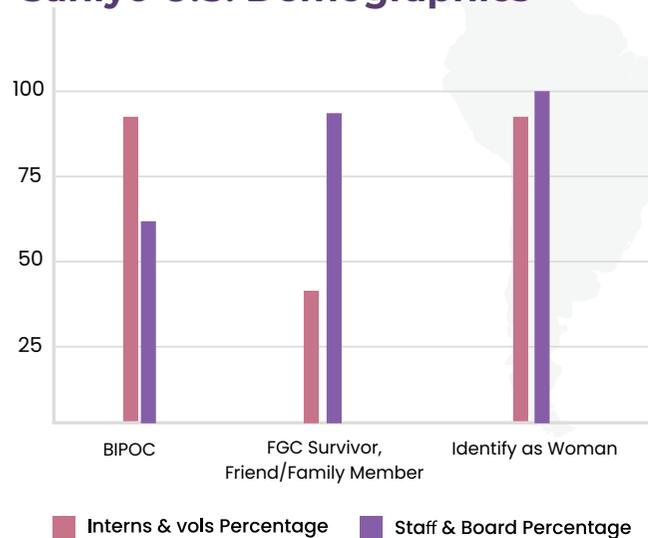
We pride ourselves on being an all-women-led organization, with staff representing a diverse background of ethnicities, religions, sexualities, and ages. This past year, Sahiyo U.S. brought on new part-time staff, including a new Editorial Assistant to help us increase our capacity to meet our mission. We’ve also expanded our internship program and trained 19 new interns.

Our Sahiyo volunteer program has grown significantly and today we have 69 volunteers from across the United States,

India, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Kuwait, Bahrain, Canada, and Germany.

Volunteers work with us remotely to support our storytelling initiatives, providing administrative support, and event logistical support as needed.

Sahiyo U.S. Demographics



As a result, over the past year, our programs and campaigns have garnered attention in various media publications, including:

- [Eating from the Bohra thaal - Himal Southasian](#)
- [Ending female genital mutilation through collective action | The Nation Newspaper](#)
- [An unspoken abuse: Time to end female genital mutilation in Pakistan](#)
- [What Can States Do to Address Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in the U.S.?](#)
- [A Quiet Violence: Navigating Female Genital Cutting as an LGBTQ+ Survivor - The Media Line](#)
- [Campaigners fear girls could be put at risk of FGM/C by Bohra religious leader’s UK visit - Equality Now](#)
- [Laws alone won’t end female genital mutilation in India: Mariya Taher](#)
- [Is there female genital mutilation in India? Delhi says no, survivors say yes.](#)
- [Health Humanities Educational Approach to Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Enhancing Cross-Cultural Education - NCEAS](#)
- [Washington State introduces new law to protect women and girls from female genital mutilation or cutting](#)

OUR PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

184,334

SAHIYO BLOG VIEWS

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ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

SAHIYO BLOG

“Sahiyo provided me the very meaning of the word — a band of compassionate camaraderie where I was able to reconcile the part of me labeled ‘survivor’ with the part of me that wanted to own the name of ‘activist.’ Like friends often do, Sahiyo’s work to de-stigmatize and de-mystify brings clarity of purpose and renewed hope in the promise that survivors and activists do not do their very important work alone.”

—Umme Kulsoom Anif

Sahiyo provides survivors of FGC, FGC-practicing communities, and advocates against FGC a platform to share their stories, opinions, research, and work towards ending FGC. Storytelling is an important medium for healing and allows people impacted by FGC to share narratives in their own words and connect with others through shared experiences.

The Sahiyo blog collects and distributes survivor story submissions and gives a voice to those looking to express themselves. Our readers and authors hail from the U.S., India, the U.K., Pakistan, Kenya, and across the globe.

This year alone, Sahiyo has published **71 blog posts**. Over time, the blog has increased in viewership, and **between 2022 and 2023 we received 184,344 views**.

Some of our most viewed blogs and posts from the past year included:

- [Trauma and Female Genital Cutting, Part 3: The Body and the Brain](#)
- [Get involved with the next cohort of the Voices to End FGM/C project!](#)
- [Why are Indian ethics committees still hesitant to approve studies on FGM/C?](#)

Read these personal stories [here](#).



SPOTLIGHT: Dear Maasi Advice Column

As part of our blog, we offer a Dear Maasi column for all of those with questions about khatna (female genital mutilation/cutting or FGM/C) and how it impacts bodies, minds, sexualities, and relationships. It’s a partnership between Sahiyo and WeSpeakOut. It’s for all of us who have questions about FGC or khatna, and how it impacts our bodies, minds, sexuality, and relationships. In the Bohra context, Maasi means auntie.

We welcome all to submit your anonymous questions to be answered by novelist and psychotherapist Farzana Doctor, or Maasi.

As part of the **#16DaysofActivism** and our Healing as Activism campaign, we created a new Dear Maasi column animation featuring the answer to **“How do I move past the shame of being cut?”**

A big thank you to our amazing and talented volunteer Kamakshi Arora, for creating this animation and to the great psychotherapist behind ‘Dear Maasi’, Farzana Doctor.



PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

VOICES TO END FGM/C

“Their stories normalized my own; their feelings validated mine. In the beginning, listening to others’ stories was very hard. At the end of each session, they kept saying: take care of yourself. But I felt like the session was taking care of me. I opened up. I started talking and writing about this experience, and started recording myself”

- Dr. Muna Osman

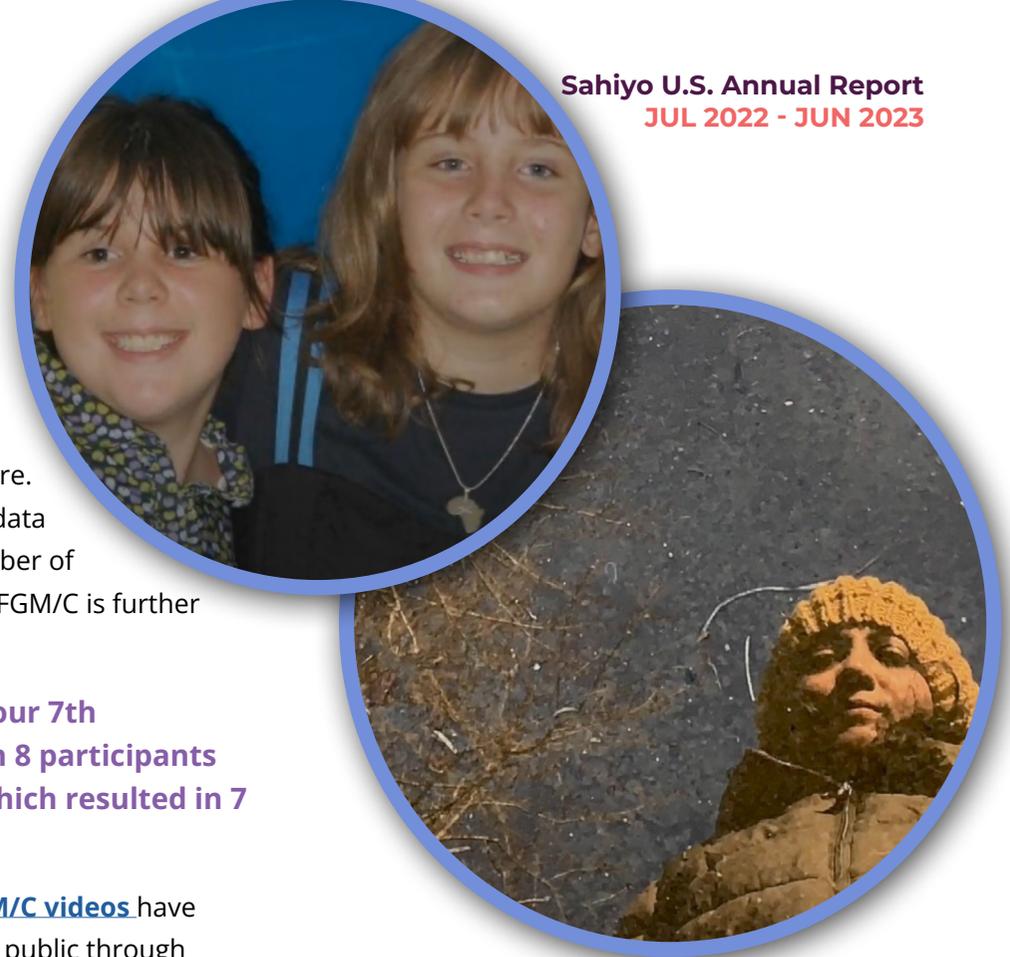
Voices to End FGM/C is a joint digital storytelling project initiated in 2018 by Sahiyo and StoryCenter seeking to mobilize a critical mass of storytellers and activists from across the globe by bringing people together to share and heal from their experiences of FGM/C, connect and grow as leaders in their own communities, and create short digital videos calling for an end to this harmful practice.

The Voices project is ultimately about breaking from deeply ingrained social norms by normalizing the voices of those who dare to speak publicly and openly about a practice that

for many communities is considered taboo to speak about. With storytelling comes a ripple effect in that one person’s story can influence others to also share. As stories build, the gap in data that exists on the total number of those impacted globally by FGM/C is further filled.

In 2023, Sahiyo hosted our 7th workshop virtually with 8 participants over a 6-week period which resulted in 7 new videos.

In all, **68 Voices to End FGM/C videos** have been shared with the wider public through YouTube and our educational outreach programming. Participants have hailed from 19+ countries, including Singapore, Tanzania, Egypt, Chad, Pakistan, Bahrain, India, the U.S. and Zimbabwe. These stories have been used as educational material not only in communities that practice FGC, but also with healthcare professionals and government officials. Since 2018, the 68 Voices videos have been viewed over 99,707 times across Sahiyo’s social media platforms.



U.S. ACTIVISTS RETREAT

“Attending the Sahiyo Activists Retreat was powerful for me. Although I had been involved in anti-khatna work for some time, it was my first opportunity to be in a wonderfully facilitated space with twenty other Bohra feminists/survivors. It accelerated my own healing and activism.”

– Farzana Doctor

Since 2017, Sahiyo has hosted annual Activists Retreats in recognition that many activists had been working in isolation and desired to be connected with others. Sahiyo’s Activists Retreats help to strengthen relationships amongst the activists, who are often geographically distant from one another, and allow for best practices and tools to be shared; as a result activists are now utilizing these best practices and tools in their advocacy work, and various new collaborations have formed between and amongst the retreat attendees.



Sahiyo held our 6th annual retreat virtually with 10 participants. Since the program’s inception, Sahiyo has trained 87 advocates, who have gone on to organize and host workshops to raise awareness of FGC; participated in outreach campaigns within communities; and given testimony at policy briefings in various states on FGC.

In April 2023, Sahiyo was selected by Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence as a subaward recipient through the Family Violence Prevention

and Services Act under the 2021 American Rescue Plan (ARP) to expand the Activists Retreat to include other API communities.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Sahiyo holds community outreach and education events, on an array of topics related to FGC and Sahiyo's work. Through these events, we continue to engage communities in conversations related to FGC and uplift the voices of those working to end the practice. **In 2022-2023 we hosted and participated in 21 different community outreach and education events, reaching over 800 people from across the globe**

Some events include:

- [An Emergency Within An Emergency: The Crisis of Climate Change and FGC](#)

- [Understanding Social Norms to End Female Genital Cutting](#)
- [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and the Role of Health Care Professionals in Prevention and Patient Support: A Virtual Lunch-and-Learn on FGM/C with Prince George's County Health Department](#)
- [The International Digital Storytelling Conference 2023](#)

In addition to presentations, Sahiyo organizes public awareness and community outreach campaigns. These campaigns encourage communities to actively participate to speak out against FGC, using grassroots mobilization methods, and communicating via WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and other digital media.

Campaigns include:

- [Healing As Activism](#)
- [New Years Resolution: Self-Love](#)
- [More Than a Survivor: Celebrating Queer Joy](#)



TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

SPOTLIGHT: Supporting Asian Women's Shelter to implement services supporting FGC survivors

In January 2022, Sahiyo began working with Asian Women's Shelter (AWS), a domestic violence organization based in San Francisco, CA, on a three-year project funded by the Department of Justice - Office of Victims of Crime to increase the capacity of care for survivors of FGC in the United States. For eight months, Sahiyo has provided a series of in-depth, interactive trainings to AWS staff, volunteers, and crisis line volunteers about FGC, the mental and physical health consequences of this harmful practice, and how to best support survivors. As a result, Asian Women's Shelter was able to expand the capacity of the crisis line to include supporting survivors of FGC in August 2022. The goal of this collaborative pilot project between Sahiyo and AWS is to address gaps in resources for underrepresented populations of survivors in the U.S. who are in need of support services, in order to reduce the harms of FGC.

"I was so happy to know that Sahiyo is collaborating with the Asian Women's Shelter to support women who suffer from trauma of FGC and need an empathetic ear. I have worked in the domestic violence (DV) space for a couple of decades, and this is the first time I am seeing a recognition of this trauma in the sphere of DV. I am so proud of both organizations and hope collaboration expands with other organizations throughout the U.S. and abroad."

- Sakina Sharp

Hotline Operator: Asian Women's Shelter

Phone: 1-877-751-0880

Hours of Operation:

Mon - Fri, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM PT

PTSD Symptoms

- Reliving**
 - Flashbacks
 - Nightmares
 - Bad memories
- Avoidance**
 - Memory problems
 - Feeling detached
 - Guilt
 - Sadness & Anxiety
- Hyperarousal**
 - Easily scared
 - Insomnia
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Sweaty, pain, trembling
- Hyperarousal**
 - Thoughts
 - Emotions
 - Reminders of the Trauma



Sahiyo provides training and technical support to educate and strengthen the capacity of service providers and front-line professionals on FGC. This includes training for organizations that address gender-based violence, law enforcement, education, social work, healthcare, and mental health practitioners, among others. As a result of these trainings, organizations can better incorporate culturally competent programming on FGC into their operations and services. This year Sahiyo gave presentations to a variety of key stakeholders, including social workers, nurses, local policymakers, and others.

PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

BHAIYO

“Bhaiyo allows men to have open and honest conversations about topics they may or may not know should be important to them. As brothers, it’s our collective responsibility to leave the world safer than we found it for those that we love. Bhaiyo aims to raise awareness to help advocates and survivors working to end FGC today.”

- Murtaza Kapasi

On International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation in February 2021, Sahiyo launched our male allyship program, Bhaiyo. Meaning male friends or brothers in Bohra Gujarati, Bhaiyo is both a resource and an avenue for men to become involved in raising awareness of FGC. This year, Sahiyo published the ***Bhaiyo Cumulative Report*** that includes all of the programmatic activities for Bhaiyo since its inception, including webinars, meetings, and public outreach campaigns.

Over the last two years, Bhaiyo has accomplished the following:

- 15 men joined the Bhaiyo program
- 13,247 people engaged with Bhaiyo public awareness campaigns
- 36 people participated in Bhaiyo public awareness campaigns
- 176 people attended Bhaiyo male-engagement webinars
- 28 blog posts written to uplift the voices of male activists
- 81.3% of members have joined additional programming efforts after joining Bhaiyo



Bhaiyo's public awareness campaigns saw the participation of 36 individuals who contributed with their video, photo, or blog submissions.



A Male Ally Initiative to Support Ending Female Genital Cutting

PROGRAM IMPACT REPORT



POLICY

“Sahiyo’s grassroots, survivor-led efforts in protecting girls from gender-based violence, in this case FGC, is interrupting generational trauma, and saving lives. Connecticut remains an outlier as one of the few states in the country yet to adopt a clear ban and penalties against FGC.”

- Steven Hernández



Since its founding, Sahiyo has supported policy work to address FGC at the global, national, state, and local levels. We recognize that in order to achieve wide-scale abandonment of FGC and support survivors, policies, and laws should be informed by and created in partnership with communities impacted by female genital cutting. Over the past year, Sahiyo has supported continued leadership with Coalitions in [Connecticut](#), [Washington state](#), and New York City. This year, Sahiyo helped Washington state to pass a law addressing FGC, becoming the 41st state to do so. Read more about Sahiyo’s policy work below:

- [Washington state becomes 41st state to pass law against FGM/C](#)
- [Reflecting on ‘Moving Connecticut Ahead: Protecting Girls from FGM/C’, a webinar](#)

SPOTLIGHT: Legislation to protect children from FGC passed in Washington state

Sahiyo supported the formation of the [Washington Coalition to End FGC](#) which saw Washington state Governor Jay Inslee sign [Senate Bill 5453](#) concerning FGC into law on April 20, 2023. This law created a private right of action for survivors of FGC; prohibited providers from performing FGC on a minor; established education and outreach initiatives to prevent FGM/C; and provided care for survivors and families of FGC.

“SB 5354 passing is a victory and an emotional moment on so many levels. The power of the collective work and collaboration of the coalition members and affected communities is a living example of the power of community engagement/ involvement. The representation and story shared is so real and compelling. The coalition work is not yet over, the coalition work model should be replicated to propose similar bills in the remaining nine states. More importantly, the bulk of the work starts after SB 5354 was signed by the Governor. The goal is to make sure appropriate pathways, educational programs, and materials developed to meet these communities’ needs are culturally sensitive and will maintain families well beings, as well as promote healing; and the community should have access (parents, children, and professionals). I am so proud to be a part of this great coalition.” – Dr. Muna Osman

RESEARCH

“Working with the Sahiyo team has been a consistent reminder of the power of collective action, where individuals come together to heal and empower, illuminating a path of resilience and solidarity for survivors of FGM/C.”

- Jessica Puri

Sahiyo recognizes that research is critical to understanding the prevalence and impact of FGC as well as how to engage in programs and methods to end it. As such, Sahiyo conducts innovative research to bridge the gap in data that exists on FGC globally, and to bring understanding, awareness, and advocacy to the topic of FGC within Asian and other communities.

Additionally, Sahiyo works with and supports students on their capstone projects, theses, and dissertations on related FGC topics such as psychosexual health and healing, raising awareness in education institutions, and the importance of engaging male allies. In 2023, we worked with and supported students from George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health, Stanford University, Charles Darwin University, and the University of Northern British Columbia.

THE CRITICAL INTERSECTIONS TEAM



SPOTLIGHT: Critical Intersections

In late July 2021, Sahiyo held a webinar, *Critical Intersections: Anti-Racism and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)* to explore the intersection of anti-racism work and FGC. The success of the webinar indicated a high demand and need for further exploration into these themes, as well as recommendations on how to address these themes to strengthen the movement to end FGC for all future generations. In line with past research, we have initiated exploratory research to better understand the challenges, best practices, and opportunities that exist or could exist to better address the critical intersections of FGC with intersecting social justice movements. The need for a global study addressing these issues is necessary to support survivors of various races, religions, sexual orientations and genders, and differently-abled individuals.

This past year, Sahiyo’s nine-member advisory group consisting of experts and advocates on

FGC from around the globe, as well as experts from related GBV fields, met quarterly to guide the project. With these advisors, we’ve hosted several meetings in which we solicited guidance and feedback to shape the project’s methodology and direction.

We completed the quantitative survey in July 2022. After having completed the survey, we worked on analyzing the data. We then mapped out and prepared for the qualitative portion of the study (the interviews). The 31 interviews were completed in March 2023.

“The first project I worked on with Sahiyo, was their ‘Critical Intersections’ literature review, which allowed me the opportunity to apply skills from my master’s degree program and the time to delve more into a topic that I am passionate about. I’ve enjoyed learning about how personal identity and social stigmas/expectations continue to shape the lived experiences of FGC survivors.”

- Arles Nuno

PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

“Being a part of Sahiyo has allowed me the chance to better understand how the systems of the world are designed to oppress and hurt women. By learning about FGC, I have come to understand that for many survivors it’s believed that this practice is normal, rational, and expected because it’s what their communities have preached, what their families have taught them, and what their governments has allowed to happen.” - *Megan Seaver*

The internship program at Sahiyo immerses future activists in the organization’s operations and teaches them about the inner workings of a social justice organization. Interns can work in several departments at Sahiyo, including Programs, Development, Editorial, Social Media, and Communications. This year, Sahiyo created two new internship positions: Bhaiyo and Policy. The Bhaiyo Interns work to grow and improve Sahiyo’s male engagement program, while Policy Interns help expand Sahiyo’s capacity to support legislative-related education and other activities. Sahiyo generally has **7-12 interns** to assist **our operations** at any one time.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

“Volunteering with Sahiyo has always been seamless and rewarding. There is plenty of advocacy materials, everyone is so warm/friendly, and everything is organized.” - *Mariam Sabir*

Volunteers are our organization’s backbone, and Sahiyo thrives on the passion and dedication of its volunteers. Sahiyo currently has 60+ active volunteers stationed globally (in the U.S., India, Bahrain, Pakistan, Kenya, U.K, Canada, U.A.E., Sri Lanka). As Sahiyo is a transnational organization, volunteers work with us remotely to support our storytelling initiative via our blogs, providing administrative support, and event logistical support as needed.

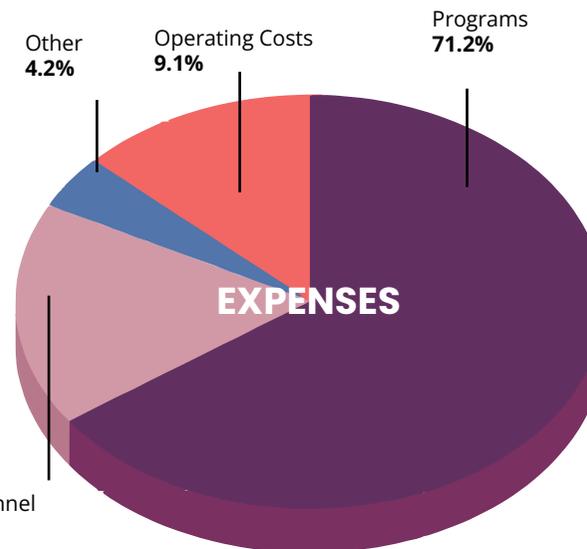
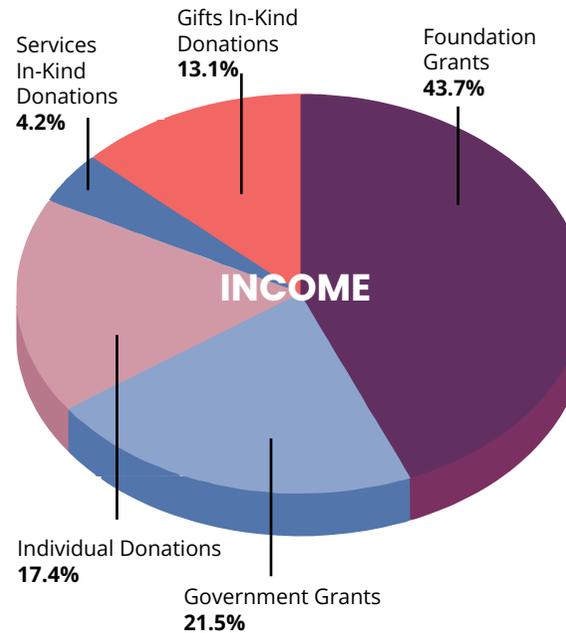
FINANCES AND FUNDING SOURCES

Total Operating Budget: \$188,467.43

INCOME

Each year, Sahiyo continues to increase and diversify our funding streams. This past year, we received private foundation funding from Wallace Global Fund, Resist, The Miami Foundation - The Secular Humanist Fund, and the Peace Development Fund. We also continued with our federal funding stream via our subcontract from the Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, and expanded this federal funding stream with a new subcontract received from RTI International. In April 2023, we announced that we received funding for two years from the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence connected to the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act under the 2021 American Rescue Plan.

This year, Sahiyo saw an increase in individual donations from our generous supporters, including those from our first-ever virtual silent auction in March 2023, in honor of Women's History Month. Additionally, Sahiyo received close to \$25,000 in in-kind donations from our supportive community. Finally, our Sahiyo volunteers and interns provide numerous hours of in-kind donation time to our various programs.



EXPENSES

Sahiyo's main expenses go towards fulfilling our programmatic mission to connect with FGC-impacted communities and survivors including:

- 1) Supporting survivors in their individual healing journeys;
- 2) Creating a critical mass of voices within communities to support the abandonment of FGC and prevent it from occurring to future generations of girls; and
- 3) Engaging with frontline professionals including healthcare, gender-based violence advocates, child protection workers, social workers, legal professionals, government officials, and more to create macro-level systems of care for women and girls at risk of FGC.

GET INVOLVED

"I decided to donate to Sahiyo because I believe in their work! I belong to a community that practices FGM/C and have been able to see firsthand the impact that Sahiyo has been able to make by encouraging conversations through storytelling and actively working with community members. Also, as a previous member of the Development Team at Sahiyo, I understand how impactful my donation can be to make Sahiyo's work possible — I know my donation is truly making a difference to ensure the Sahiyo team can more actively work towards eliminating FGM/C."

- Sarah Hussein

Without our dedicated volunteers and generous donors, Sahiyo would be unable to carry out its mission. If you would like to get involved with Sahiyo, here's how you can do so.

Donate: Support FGC survivors by donating to continue our programs. [Donate Here.](#)

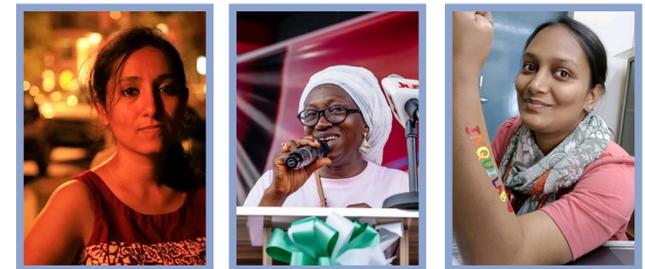
Volunteer: Support our mission by contributing your experience, interest, or time. Volunteer work includes creating newsletters, translating content, assisting at events, educational and outreach, and more. [Sign up to be a volunteer.](#)

Bhaiyo: If you would like to get involved with male engagement work, or identify as a male and are interested in becoming an advocate against FGC, [sign up to be a Bhaiyo.](#)

Intern: Interns assist Sahiyo in a variety of areas, including Development, Communications, Editorial, and Programs. Internships with Sahiyo require a minimum commitment of six months and ten hours each week. These are remote employment opportunities that provide excellent career experience for anyone interested in this work or human rights. Learn about the internships and [apply.](#)

Blog contributor: Be a part of the collective voices speaking about their knowledge or experience of FGC. Writers can seek assistance from Sahiyo's Editorial staff throughout the process of developing a blog post. The blog post submission form can be found here. For additional information, email editor@sahiyo.org.

U.S. Advisory Board: Our board consists of experts from a variety of disciplines in the United States, including health, law, the media, and more, to help drive Sahiyo's mission and vision forward. If you'd like to learn more about the advisory board, send an email to info@sahiyo.org.



PARTNERS



OUR FUNDERS

Sahiyo U.S. Annual Report
JUL 2022 - JUN 2023



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SPECIAL THANKS TO



Thank you to our 2022-2023 volunteers and interns for donating over 3,000 hours of support this year in areas such as blog and grant proposal editing, program support, communications, organizational development, fundraising, policy work, and social media.

Special thanks to **Shabana Feroze** and her team at **The Silver Kick Company** for offering their graphic design and editing skills to the completion of this annual report.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sahiyo U.S. Annual Report
JUL 2022 - JUN 2023

Thank you to our donors:

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100% of our Advisory Board donated to Sahiyo this past year.



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