

A ROADMAP TO END FGM

2023 ANNUAL
NARRATIVE REPORT



End FGM
EUROPEAN NETWORK



INTRODUCTION

This report is written for the End FGM European Network (End FGM EU) General Assembly and gives an overview of progress made in 2023 towards the implementation of the Strategic plan 2023-2027. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is an integral part of the End FGM EU decision making and management processes. The Network reports yearly against a structured 5-year monitoring and evaluation framework. This framework has been designed to monitor the Strategic Plan. Progress against the indicators and the plan is reviewed regularly by the board and programme implementation is adjusted to ensure delivery against targets. The following monitoring report draws upon data contained in the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework. The report reviews each area of the plan and highlights several significant pieces of work.



2023 AT A GLANCE

2023 was a the year that End FGM EU kicked off the implementation **of its new Strategic plan 2023-2027.**

It was a year of a lot of new beginnings, great achievements but also challenges.



PRIORITY 1: ADVANCE THE END FGM AGENDA IN EUROPE, ENSURING A COORDINATED, HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED, CHILD- AND COMMUNITY-FOCUSED APPROACH

INFLUENCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES WITHIN AND BEYOND EUROPE

Contribute to shaping European legislation, policy making, funding, national implementation (through Members and project partners) and monitoring on FGM and areas of relevance (e.g. gender equality, health, asylum, protection of victims, etc) and holding duty-bearers accountable.

2023 was a busy year for the End FGM European Network when it comes to shaping European legislation and holding duty bearers accountable, with some continued work as well as major successes.

On the 1st of June 2023 the EU acceded to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), marking a crucial step towards the elimination of gender based violence and FGM.



For End FGM EU this journey started in 2016 when we started our advocacy campaign urging the EU to ratify the convention so this was a huge success for us! (more info: [April news](#), [Summer newsletter](#), [Social media](#)).

Talking about the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, together with our UK members: the National FGM Centre, FORWARD UK, We Speak Out, and Orchid Project, we [submitted a Shadow Report](#) to the Council of Europe GREVIO Committee on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention by the UK concerning prevention, protection, prosecution and integrated policies on FGM. The report aims to emphasize FGM as part of gender-based violence against women and girls in a holistic manner



We also continued working towards shaping EU legislation. We submitted written recommendations to both the [Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#) as well as the [Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#). These were particularly important in light of the negotiations for key legislation on the Directive on gender-based violence, including the accession/ratification to the Istanbul Convention of the EU, and the negotiations for the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, the revision of the Victims' Rights Directive and the negotiations for the towards a fair Migration and Asylum Pact, in line with the EU's fundamental values and human rights guarantees, to ensure that all migration and asylum policies take into consideration the human rights of people on the move, in particular girls and women, and their right to receive international protection when affected or at risk of being affected by FGM.

The End FGM European Network continued working tirelessly on the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, both in its own advocacy efforts but also in close cooperation with coalitions and partners, submitting [joint statements](#) and reactions.

End FGM EU contributed to the Call for Evidence on a Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health of the EU outlining promising practices we have identified regarding support services for Survivors and calling for the implementation of these practices at the wider EU level. [More info here.](#)

The Network also continued working on better and more sustainable funding towards the EU, contributing to the mid-term evaluation of the MFF and the CERV programme as well as submitting joint letters on how to better the CERV action grants, FSTP programme and Operating grants. This was followed up with meetings with DG Just and EACEA.

With the European Elections coming up in 2024, we drafted a manifesto together with the Advocacy Working Group and starting to plan the election campaign strategy for 2024. Furthermore, at the General Assembly 2023 we held a workshop for our members on how best to engage with the European Elections, aiming at building the capacity of our membership and building a Network wide momentum.



The 9th of October kickstarted the weeklong series of events to mark the European Week of Action for Girls (EWAG). From a movie screening at CineONU to a breakfast with the Spanish Presidency, this week was packed with discussions, debates and advocacy for youth advocates.



Our youth ambassadors, Sherifat and Imtinan, took the stage this week to speak with decision-makers. This was a learning opportunity for them and a way to actively participate in EU decision-making by making their voices heard. Check out this [message](#) recorded by Sherifat during EWAG, asking for conversations to be had about FGM and calling on the UK Government to provide more support.

EUROPEAN WEEK OF ACTION FOR GIRLS

Check out the [EWAG website](#) to learn more about the activities.



And read our [accountability tool](#)!



Women Deliver Conference 2023



Discover [our advocacy achievements of 2023](#)

On November 30th, the End FGM EU participated in the yearly meeting of the [EUAA consultative forum](#), held in person in Malta. On 1st December, we participated in the thematic working group meeting focusing on asylum and vulnerability. It was a unique opportunity to learn from other consultative forum members and share ideas and inputs with the Agency to ensure that fundamental rights are respected in all asylum procedures and reception. Our member Save a Girl Save a Generation was there to provide insights on the specific needs and challenges faced by FGM-affected asylum seekers in Spain. ([More info](#)).



In 2023 we kicked off the [End FGM E-campus project](#) which aims to create an FGM online learning platform for European professionals dealing with the practice. This project is coordinated by MIGS (Cyprus) and implemented in partnership with AIDOS (Italy), APF (Portugal), CUT (Cyprus), End FGM European Network (EU-level), GAMS (Belgium). It is a two-year project and is co-funded by the EU. The learning platform itself will only be launched in 2024, but we had a busy year of preparations in 2023 from creating the visual identity, the dissemination and endorsement strategy and actually drafting the 5 learning modules. End FGM EU was responsible for Module 5 on community engagement, and the Ambassadors were actively involved in shaping the module and we also sought expertise directly from our members who are community-based organizations.

Step up collaboration with global and regional partners worldwide to end FGM by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[UNFPA Director visit.](#)



PRIORITY 2: CONSOLIDATE THE NETWORK AND STRENGTHEN ITS ROLE AS A SUSTAINABLE, IMPACTFUL COLLECTIVE FORCE DRIVING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

2023 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN: THE ROADMAP TO END FGM: GOOD PRACTICES AND STORIES OF CHANGE FROM THE GROUND

In 2023, we will be asking the questions: **what is the best path to end of FGM? And what can grassroots expertise teach us about concrete ways to address the practice?**

The 2023 Annual Campaign of the Network “A roadmap to end FGM” will seek to answer these questions by showcasing examples and first-hand experiences of promising practices to tackle FGM in Europe. It will be based on the Network’s mapping of FGM laws and policies in Europe as well as individual stories of people who are involved in the movement to end FGM or affected by the practice. Through the sharing of resources as well as storytelling, the campaign will inform policy actors, key stakeholders and the general public about concrete ways forward when it comes to eliminating the practice. The campaign will be closely linked to our FGM in Europe interactive map, bringing attention to the demands of the anti-FGM movement at EU and national levels, through the sharing of contextualised information from the countries of our mapping.



This year, we look at what works to prevent and respond to FGM. We have many policies and laws at the EU and national levels. We also have grassroots initiatives showing results in uprooting the practice at the community level. Yet, for professionals, civil society and most importantly, the communities affected by FGM to reap the benefits of these good practices* across Europe and globally, they need to be upscaled, spread and implemented. This campaign aims at raising awareness of the concrete demands of the anti-FGM movement through individual stories.

OBJECTIVES:



- Promoting the FGM in Europe interactive map and the good practices we have identified at European level



- Disseminating existing positions and recommendations of the Network on tackling FGM



- Highlighting the work and expertise of our members, ambassadors and other grassroots actors of the movement



- Engaging with policy actors and other key stakeholders on what they can do to help eliminate the practice

Hashtag:

#ROAD2ENDFGM

2.1 INCREASING THE NETWORK'S CAPACITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO GROWING AND SUSTAINED IMPACT.



2.1.1 Efficient Management and Governance

Change in Board, electing the first ever End FGM EU Board composed exclusively of women from FGM affected communities. We have implemented enhanced management and governance practices to ensure the sustainable financing of the Network. This includes [8 board meetings](#) and an external financial audit, which have improved transparency and accountability. Our governance structure has facilitated a more participative and collaborative experience for our members.



2.1.2 Knowledge Sharing and Capacity-Building

In 2023, we provided essential spaces for [knowledge sharing](#) organised by [Medicos Del Mundos \(MDM\)](#) hosted the KSE 2023 at Madrid, Spain and effective collaboration. This included the Capacity Building Programme, where we conducted four workshops aimed at empowering members, especially smaller organizations and community-based organizations (CBOs). This effort has resulted in better-informed members who are increasingly involved in the Network's activities.



2.1.3 Empowering Ambassadors and Communities

We facilitated knowledge-sharing among our ambassadors and affected communities through [intergenerational meeting](#) through targeted advocacy training sessions which included a Media training, contributing to the End FGM E-campus module on community engagement and much more. These initiatives have increased their impact and reach, enabling them to bring their expertise into the Network's advocacy and communications efforts. The 2023 intergenerational meeting involves 10 Youths and Seniors ambassadors.

2.1.4 4 new members:

ActionAid Italy, Existera (Sweden), TAMA (Malta), Women of Grace (UK).

2.1.5 Change to Full Member:

KONE (Germany).

2.1.6 Implemented the Capacity Building Programme:

Kone & Wadi received tailored trainings.



2.1.7 Developed, recorded and edited all 10 episodes of the Purple Chair podcast:

series with our youth ambassadors which will be launched in 2024.

2.1.8 Organised Fundraising trainings for End FGM EU staff

2.2 DEVELOPING COORDINATED AND COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

2.2.1 Supporting Engagement with Key Stakeholders

We actively promoted engagement and exchange among members and key stakeholders, including community organizations, professionals, and research centers tackling FGM across Europe.



[Our monthly meetings membership forum](#) It was held 10 times in 2023 provided a platform for collaboration, increasing opportunities for joint initiatives.

2.2.2 Building Alliances for Mutual Learning

The Network has successfully built alliances with strategic partners and institutions, fostering mutual learning on interconnected issues. This has allowed us to promote an intersectional approach to FGM, addressing related harmful practices as highlighted in the EU Recommendation on Harmful Practices.

[TERRE DES FEMMES - "Join our Chain" kick-off meeting in Berlin | End FGM | 2023.](#)

[Understanding Community Voices: new stage of the ESC project for 2022-2023. | End FGM.](#)

[Spring Updates from our Amazing Ambassadors | End FGM | 2023.](#)

[2023 General Assembly - 6th and 7th of June in Brussels | End FGM | 2023.](#)

Organised the global CSO panel & contribution to the Donors Working Group and The Network was the main liaison between UNICEF/DWG and the global civil society.

Continued working with partner coalitions such as HRDN, SDG watch, EU SRHR, EWAG, CSE and others.

Partners with OII for event in European Parliament on the parallels between FGM & IGM in the context of the Directive on VAW.

Kicked off Join our Chain project: aims to tackle FGM and Early and Forced Marriage by strengthening support measures for people affected by and/or at risk of either practice and sensitizing affected communities against both practices. Together with TDF, Akidwa and Action Aid Italy.

Together with partners developed report with recommendations on EU Youth Action Plan on External Action.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023 UNDER PRIORITY 2 – IMPACT

- **Increased Membership Engagement:** The membership survey indicated a significant increase in awareness of key EU funding opportunities and participation in joint projects aimed at tackling FGM-related issues.
[Membership Survey 2022](#)
- **Direct Dialogue Opportunities:** We facilitated increased direct dialogue for Ambassadors and affected communities with policymakers and the media, amplifying their voices in advocacy efforts.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Our collaboration with other relevant networks has strengthened exchanges between End FGM EU members and stakeholders in both Europe and countries of origin.

Heightened efficiency and effectiveness of End FGM EU' and its Members' operations: the Network's Members benefitted from the coordination of common strategies, including EU advocacy actions and has supported them in their work at the national level. The Network has also expanded through the inclusion of 4 new members. In 2023, the Network selected Medicos del Mundo as a member to benefit from the Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) grant to organise the Knowledge Sharing Event which they successfully implemented and allowed members to meet and exchange on their work and challenges.

Contributed to the improvement of prevention and protection mechanisms and services for FGM-affected girls and women at Member States' level: The Network continued to promote prevention and protection services for FGM affected communities, in particular through taking an active part in the EU Victim's Rights Platform and actively working on the revision of the Victims' Rights Directive as well as the Directive on Violence against women and domestic violence. Our positions continue to be informed from the direct experiences of our members, the research on support services in Europe (see [paper](#), [infographic](#) & [interactive map](#)) and [good practices in Europe](#).

Contributed to empower, equip and inform women and girls to advocate for themselves:

Womens and girls from affected communities benefitted from our empowering approach supporting them to claim their rights; be actors of change and feed their experience into policy and decision making and service provision. The Annual campaign contributed to this as well as the training provided to Ambassadors.

Improved the knowledge on FGM among relevant actors and their access to tools and evidence on FGM:

The work around the online interactive map has ensured increased knowledge and mutual learning among national authorities, ultimately ensuring the improvement of national systems and enhancing experience sharing among European countries around FGM. Moreover, the Knowledge-Sharing (KSE) event has created new spaces to share knowledge and good practices on FGM. It gave the members the possibility to focus on learning, sharing and strengthening the fight against FGM, this year focusing on transferability of good practices among different national contexts. Having a member take ownership of this event allowed them to build stronger connections to other members and play a more active role in regional cooperation on eliminating FGM.

Improved the training and awareness of professionals to provide comprehensive, tailored and specialised services to FGM-affected women and girls:

We have advocated for systematic and compulsory training for all relevant professionals in all EU countries. Our positions continue to be informed from the direct experiences of our members, the research on support services in Europe (see [paper](#), [infographic](#) & [interactive map](#)) and [good practices in Europe](#). Moreover, though not funded by this operating grant (though still under CERV) the End FGM Eu is developing a online E-Campus to train professionals on FGM.

Made sure that FGM was included in relevant policy areas:

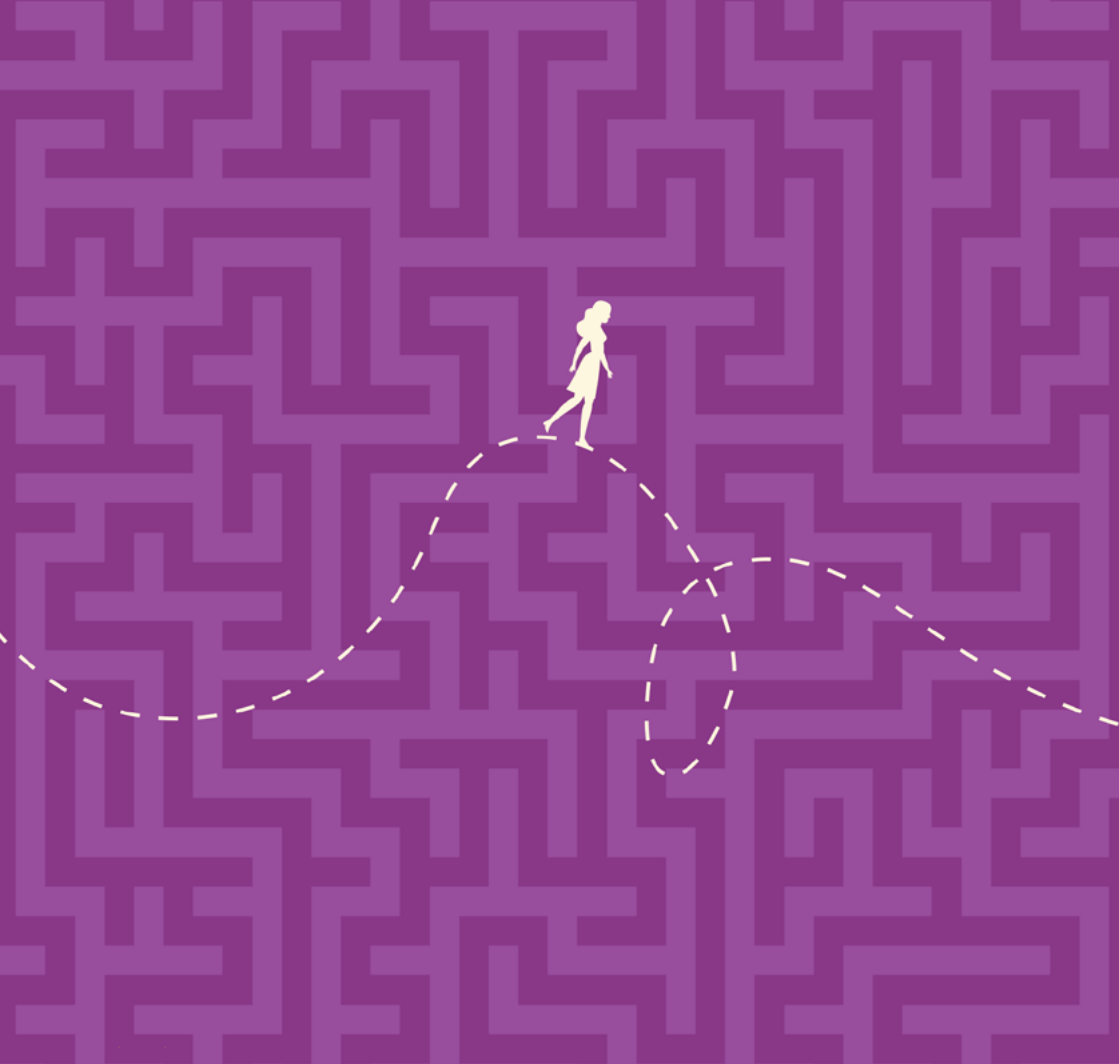
End FGM EU has increased substantial synergies and coordination with international actors, as well as among stakeholders in the EU and in countries of origin: End FGM EU has remained a leader in these spaces with multiple stakeholders (NGOs, communities, professionals), which has benefitted the efficiency of their actions thanks to better understanding of the transnational dynamics of FGM and strengthening of knowledge and skills.

Has increased awareness among the general public on FGM as a European issue:

End FGM EU has engaged the general public through our digital communication, media presence and events. Our social media content and website in 2023 reached around half a million people across platforms, we have gathered a total of 19 media mentions across Europe and we have organised 3 public events gathering a total of around 500 people.

CONCLUSIONS

2023 was yet again a successful year for the Network as it fully delivered on its Workplan and grew its reputation both in Europe and internationally. Our Network once again proved to be strong and progressive in advancing not only towards the elimination of FGM but of gender-based violence in general, continuing to carry out important partnerships and build fundamental alliances in an environment where women's fundamental rights are constantly questioned and curtailed by conservative forces. While the world needs to face other important challenges, it is important that we keep the end of harmful practices high on the agenda and help leaders understand that no society can thrive if gender-based violence, intertwined with other forms of discrimination and oppression, does not cease. We look forward to continuing our work, strengthening our Membership, and our collective voice in the next years.



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