What is FGM?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), female genital mutilation (FGM) refers to any procedure involving total or partial removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genitals for non-therapeutic reasons such as custom and cultural, religious, social or other beliefs. By causing ‘an irreversible reduction of human capacity’, FGM constitutes an extreme form of gender-based violence.

It is estimated that at least 200 million women and girls currently live with the consequences of this practice. Carried out on women and girls of various ages from new-borns to women about to be married, FGM is prevalent in at least 28 countries in Africa, some communities in the Middle East and Asia, and certain ethnic groups in Central and South America. Increasingly, many countries are facing the challenge of FGM within diasporas.
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*Photographs on the cover and pages 5, 9, 12, 17 and 22 were sourced from Shutterstock. All other photography by 28 Too Many or our partners.*
About 28 Too Many

28 Too Many is a research organisation created to end FGM in the 28 African countries where it is practised and in other countries across the world where there are diasporas of practising communities.

Founded in 2010 and registered as a charity in 2012, 28 Too Many aims to provide a strategic framework where knowledge and tools enable in-country anti-FGM campaigners and organisations to be successful and make sustainable changes to end FGM.

We are building an information base that includes detailed country profiles for each country in Africa (and its diaspora) that practises FGM. We campaign and advocate locally and internationally to bring change and support community programmes to end FGM.
Our Influence is Growing

We have firmly established our reputation with both key influencers and grassroots activists as a leading anti-FGM voice for Africa. We believe that, as part of a bigger anti-FGM movement, change happens when policy and legislation align with community action and education.

Our approach is to play catalytic roles in both and to base our interventions on solid research. 28 Too Many's research is used by UN bodies, governments, international donors, global non-profit organisations and local activists to help shape their ongoing work to end FGM in Africa and the diaspora.

In 2017/18 our focus was on making our research as accessible as possible. This meant a significant investment in our online platform.

Our research efforts were focused on our ground-breaking *The Law and FGM* project, which publishes in the summer of 2018, and on two in-depth reports: *Country Profile: FGM in Egypt* and *Country Profile: FGM in Eritrea*. During the year, we also commissioned research into *Anthropology and FGM*, the report on which will also be published in 2018.
‘Let’s make the world a place where every girl can dream and be able to achieve her dreams.’

~ Diaka Salena Koroma, Anti-FGM Campaigner & Child Rights Activist, Sierra Leone
Theory of Change

This impact is driven in part by our work to effect change by:

1. **Collating and interpreting data (research)**

   We present data in a number of ways, primarily in country profiles and thematic papers, and in additional research products (for example, factsheets) as required. To support our aims, we make this research freely available globally.

2. **Influencing influencers (top-down approach)**

   Using the data we have collated, we engage influencers, encouraging them to advocate for change (of policy, legislation, etc.) within their spheres of influence.

3. **Supporting community change (bottom-up approach)**

   Based on our research, we develop and distribute advocacy materials, training tools and curricula that local organisations can use to bring effective change at a community level.

   Ultimately, change happens when policy and legislation (top down) align with community action and education (bottom up). Our approach is to play catalytic roles in both and to base our interventions on solid research.
Ann-Marie’s Thoughts

Every year seems to bring more opportunities for us and this year was no exception, starting with the launch of our *Egypt Country Profile Report*. Sadly, with an FGM prevalence of 87.2% among all women aged 15-49 in a population of nearly 95 million, Egypt has the greatest number of women and girls who have experienced FGM of any country in the world. It is also one of the countries with the highest rates of medicalised FGM, a growing challenge in many countries, which has become evident as the research for our FGM law project together with Trustlaw has progressed throughout the year.

We also launched our *Eritrea Country Profile Report*, a country where anti-FGM campaigns that use a community approach seem to be recording successes in reducing FGM prevalence. It is vital that such initiatives are promoted, and best-practice shared, and this is sometimes a challenge in countries where information is not freely available.

It has been good to see that there has been an increase in the media reporting of FGM around the world though and we are incredibly pleased that our research is contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and raising of awareness of FGM globally. Our reputation as a leading FGM research organisation has grown strongly, enhanced by the accuracy of our work and the development of our website portal to provide a
comprehensive range of research, resources and training materials to support those working to end FGM, including governments, policy advisors, NGO’s and activists.

For us, collaboration has been the key word of the year. We have developed and grown our partnerships at all levels, particularly in Africa, and we were also honoured to work with leading New York-based Art Directors Paul Gregson and Jono Flannery on our campaign for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence.

In addition, as well as participating in key meetings and conferences throughout Europe and the UK, including at Oxford University’s International Gender Studies Centre and the European Forum to Build Bridges on FGM, we have also worked together with several faith organisations during the year, the support of religious leaders being a key aspect in the work to end FGM.

There is still plenty of work to be done to end FGM yet there are encouraging signs in many countries that FGM prevalence rates are reducing among the younger generations. I love that there is such an amazing energy in the youth activists around the globe, and I remain convinced that we will see an end to FGM. I also know that to do this, we need to work together and partnerships where everyone can bring their own strengths to the conversation are vital to success. You are also a part of this and I thank you all for your continued support and commitment, without which we could not do the work we do.

Dr Ann-Marie Wilson (Executive Director)
‘My hope for every girl child, is that they live without fear of harm or abuse.’

~ Janet Fyle, Campaigning Advocate for EndFGM, UK and Sierra Leone
The Board’s Thoughts

We produced two country profile reports this year, *FGM in Egypt* and *FGM in Eritrea*, while enormous effort continued to be deployed on the development and production and publication of 28 Law Country Reports due to launch in summer 2018. We are thankful for the 28 Too Many team and an army of lawyers that have made this possible.

Board members and staff at board away day (L to R): Katie, Mark, Ann Marie, David, Jacqueline, Sue and Andrea

We have witnessed increased reference to our work and its impact on FGM. It brings a smile to our faces when that reach extends far, wide and close to home, e.g. UK Government. Reports on the UK, the US and diaspora are to come, together with thematic reports, such as, anthropology.
Communications
Our website is now available in English, French and Arabic as we continue to spread the word across the globe. In addition, we have made a huge effort to increase our social media presence to ensure we connect with as many audiences as possible. We have witnessed a big increase in traffic across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Board of Trustees
This year has brought significant change for our Board. Some members have stood down to pursue others passions and interests, and we have worked hard to replace them. We now have a contingent of members who bring fresh experiences and ideas to support our vision moving forward.

Despite our small team, our efforts, hard work and dedication to 28 Too Many and ending FGM are huge. The board wishes to thank each and every member of the 28 Too Many team and extended community. Thank you too, to Ann-Marie for her tenacity and energy in keep our messages alive to ensure we deliver our strategic goals.

Sue Watson (Board Chair)

The 28 Too Many trustees are: Dr A. M. Wilson (Executive Director), S. Watson (Chair), S. M. Goodson, FCA (Treasurer), H. A. Warsame, J. Hoover, O. Garuba, S. Michaels, D. Mayne, and M. Galpin.
‘The moment we support community-led solutions, then we are certain to end FGM.’

~ Natalie Robi, Msichana Empowerment Kuria, Kenya
Making Our Research Accessible

A primary focus of our work in 2017/18 was to make our research easily accessible to as many people as possible. A number of strategies were used to achieve this objective:

1. A new online information portal

Our website was completely upgraded to a global reference library for FGM in Africa. The site is designed to provide to users increasing levels of detail, as required:

- At the top level, users can easily access information on all 28 African countries where FGM persists. This includes details on prevalence, ages of cutting, types of FGM, legal frameworks, maps and trend graphs for each country.
This information is then expanded upon in key-findings documents and presentations for each of the 13 countries for which we have conducted in-depth research.

Our country profile provide detailed focuses, and, where available, we have also included research conducted by other agencies including the UN and other international NGOs.
The site provides global- and continent-level overviews of the issues as well as in-depth, country-level analyses.

It also includes thematic research covering cross-cutting themes including law, religion and medicalisation. These sections bring together the best research from across the sector in one easily accessible resource library.
2. Translation of our resources

FGM in Africa straddles three dominant language groups: English, French and Arabic. Historically, most of our research has only been available in English. In order to maximise our reach and impact, we initiated a project to translate our research and website. In 2017/18, we focused on making our website available in those three key languages. In 2018/19 we will turn our attention to each of our research products.

The translation process sparked its own research as we explored how to effectively communicate our work. We documented this research and included it in a new thematic section of the website, Terminology and FGM.
‘Take the good and richer parts of our culture and pass it on to your daughters. But leave FGM behind [;] there is no benefit in it.’

~ Fatma Naib, an award-winning journalist, Eritrea & Sweden
Research Focus

We were able to mobilise pro bono, volunteer research-support worth over £1 million in 2017/18. This collective effort was deployed on four research projects:

1. Country profiles for Egypt and Eritrea

We published two country profiles in 2017/18. *FGM in Egypt* and *FGM in Eritrea* were our 12th and 13th country profiles respectively.

Last year we published a report titled *The Medicalisation of FGM*, in which we highlighted the growing involvement of health professionals in FGM. Almost a year later, it is incredibly disappointing to see that, despite encouraging work to end FGM in Egypt, medicalisation continues to be a huge concern and the prevalence of FGM remains extremely high.

Our report shows that medicalised FGM (in other words, FGM performed by a health or medical professional) accounts for over three-quarters of the cases in Egypt.
Health workers have an obligation to do no harm, yet FGM causes untold damage not only physically, but also psychologically. Additionally, it is a violation of girls’ rights.

On a more positive note, our research suggests that there may be real progress towards ending FGM in Eritrea.

Encouragingly, support for the continuation of FGM in Eritrea has declined significantly over the last two decades. However, with an FGM prevalence of 83% among women and girls aged 15–49, Eritrea remains one of several countries where the majority of the female population has either been directly subjected to FGM or has family or friends whose lives have been affected by it.

Normally, when we produce reports, we work closely with local organisations and are able to validate data by cross-checking with other sources. For this report on Eritrea, however, we were unable to get that in-country cooperation, and we had limited datasets to work from.

What we are seeing from our research is that the prevalence of FGM in Eritrea is lower in the younger generations. Reportedly, FGM prevalence in Eritrean women aged 45–49 is 93.1%, while for the youngest cohort, those aged 15–19, it is 68.8%. This would indicate that FGM is on the decrease, and a key factor in this could be the holistic Habarawi (‘collective’) approach that has been adopted by the Eritrean Government. However, we simply cannot verify the figures. We sincerely hope that progress really is being made.
2. Law and FGM: 28 new country reports

Together with the Thomson Reuters Foundation and TrustLaw, 28 Too Many has worked with lawyers around the world to produce a series of reports covering 28 African countries. The reports identify which laws address FGM, what is working and where the gaps are, and suggest future actions.

FGM remains legal in six of the African countries where the practice continues. However, these countries only contain 30% of the at-risk population. The rest live in the other 22 countries that have laws banning FGM. Significantly, 50% lives in just three countries where FGM is illegal: Egypt, Ethiopia and Nigeria.

In 2017/18, this massive collaborative effort produced the base data required to compile 28 country reports that map out the legal framework and status of FGM in each of the African countries studied. They include constitutional protections, international treaties and national legislation that afford protection to women and girls at risk of FGM. They will be published over the summer of 2018.
3. Anthropology and FGM

A wealth of evidence from public-health sectors shows that, to be effective, interventions aimed at eradicating FGM need to be culturally sensitive and grounded in community worldviews and social dynamics. Over decades, anthropologists have developed deep cultural understandings of the different ways that FGM is practiced around the world, which are very useful to policy-makers and practitioners designing interventions.

Unfortunately, this information is rarely accessible to the public as it is written in complex language or held within pay-to-view academic databases.

In 2017/18 we commissioned a report, *Anthropology and FGM*, to address this gap by presenting some of the main anthropological findings about FGM, which can help support the design of effective, culturally sensitive interventions.

Our report is intended for policy-makers, practitioners and activists working to eradicate FGM in Africa, specifically. Each chapter will include a set of questions that grassroots activists can use to inform intervention design and that donors can use to judge which projects to fund.

This report will be published in the autumn of 2018.
‘Let’s eradicate FGM through education and action.’

~ National FGM Centre, UK
Influencing Public Policy

We have continued to influence public policy and research in 2017/18, speaking at multiple events each month. Some of our more influential engagements included:

- Co-chairing a workshop at Oxford University’s International Gender Studies Centre on communications and social media and their impact on the work to end FGM.

- Chairing and speaking at a public policy conference on FGM.

- Ongoing engagement with UK Government initiatives, including working with DFID, the Home Office and the Metropolitan Police.
Participating in the European Forum to Build Bridges on FGM, hosted by the End FGM Network in Brussels

Sean Callaghan, 28 Too Many’s operations manager, facilitating a research workshop on alternative rites of passage for Leicester University’s Institute of Advanced Studies

Throughout the year we have also engaged with grassroots activists in Africa, initiating and participating in joint campaigns.
Supporting Community Action

In April 2017 we launched our Egyptian country profile in association with Tadwein Gender Research Center in Cairo. We had the support of renowned Egyptian-American gender activist Mona Eltahawy, who wrote the foreword for the report and who has continued to promote and give exposure to our work. The launch included social media messages in English and, for the first time, Arabic.
For the launch of our Eritrea Country Profile, we worked with award-winning Eritrean-Swedish journalist Fatma Naib, who wrote the foreword of the report and was one of the panel members on the Twitter chat on harmful practices that we organised for the launch. We were also supported by the Network of Eritrean Women in the UK, who used our report as the basis for their #16Days social media campaign.

We were honoured to work this year with leading New-York-based art directors Paul Gregson and Jono Flannery, who, together with artist Suzanna Scott, created a range of visuals for us to use in our campaign ‘16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence’. The campaign was supported by grassroots organisations across Africa and, together with the hashtag #PriceofFGM, created awareness of the harsh reality of FGM.
We continued to disseminate our research through global social media campaigns and worked with organisations in-country on Twitter chats and campaigns throughout the year. We also worked closely with the press, and in particular with Reuters and The Guardian, to ensure that our research gained as much exposure as possible.

For International Women’s Day we organised a special Twitter chat on alterative rites of passage to tie in with a workshop being run by the Department of Advanced Studies at Leicester University that involved our research manager and operations manager. As part of the global International Women’s Day celebrations, we were thrilled that Ann-Marie was picked as one of the Top 100 Global Trailblazers celebrating ‘acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.’
Our support for local activists and NGOs in the 28 countries we work with has strengthened this year and the feedback from our support shows that this is an important element of our work.

This year two global anti-FGM social media campaigns were launched, which we fully supported, #DontTouchFGMLaw and #FGMNotMyReligion. We were particularly pleased to be able to influence the #DontTouchFGMLaw campaign against the abolition of Kenyan anti-FGM laws and turn it into a trending topic on Twitter.
Financial Information

Even with income slightly down this year, 28 Too Many remains in a strong financial position. Once again, we ended the year with cash reserves exceeding our annual operating budget. As can be seen from the figures below, the vast majority of our income comes from individual voluntary donors rather than specifically solicited grants.

Incoming Resources

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<th>Apr 17 – Mar 18</th>
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<td>Voluntary donations</td>
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Expenditure

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<th>Apr 17 – Mar 18</th>
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<td>Charitable activities</td>
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<td>Governance costs</td>
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<td>Total operating expenses</td>
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<td>£104,838</td>
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Thank You

28 Too Many gratefully acknowledges the many individual donors who share our vision and give generous donations to fund our work. We also thank the charitable trusts and other organisations that have contributed to our work, including Beaconsfield High School, Church Mission Society (CMS), Christof Walter Associates, Freehold Sec, the Jane Metson Foundation, St John the Baptist Church and many other donors who wish to remain anonymous.

28 Too Many wishes to thank TrustLaw, a Thomson Reuters Foundation service, for their partnership with us on the *Law and FGM* research. We especially wish to thank the pro bono teams at Latham & Watkins, Shearman & Sterling, Reed Smith LLP and Cleary Gottlieb for the thousands of hours they are spending on this vital international project. We would not be able to do this research without you and your networks across the world.

We also wish to extend our thanks to the many other individuals and organisations who offer support, expert advice and pro bono services. Your help greatly encourages us, and we are grateful to everyone who assists our work, especially Bolt Burdon Kemp, CARE, CMS, Grant Thornton UK LLP, LandMark Chartered Accountants, Lawrence Ding, Ramsay Brown Ltd, and Sharpstone Skinner Limited.

Finally, we especially want to extend our thanks to all the 28 Too Many volunteers who contribute in so many ways.