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, almost all countries are facing the challenge of FGM within diasporas.
Contents

What is FGM? .................................................................................................................. 1

About 28 Too Many....................................................................................................... 3

Theory of Change........................................................................................................... 4

Ann-Marie’s Thoughts.................................................................................................... 6

The Board’s Thoughts.................................................................................................... 9

Global Recognition....................................................................................................... 12

Research Focus............................................................................................................. 16

Strategic Communications.......................................................................................... 22

Financial Information.................................................................................................. 25

Thank You.................................................................................................................... 26

Photographs on the cover and pages 1, 5, and 21 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.

The 28 Too Many management team are Amy Hurn, Ann-Marie Wilson, Sean Callaghan and Emma Lightowers
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, such as 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 legislation and policy (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.
‘It’s been ages since the #EndFGM campaign began. It’s time we interrogated the strategies that we have employed.’

– Emmanuel Yegon, Kenya
Ann-Marie’s Thoughts

The highlight of this year has to be the publication of our 30 law reports in cooperation with TrustLaw and lawyers from all over the world. This was an incredible achievement for us – one that was recognised at the TrustLaw Awards in November, where our project won the TrustLaw Collaboration Award. Our heartfelt thanks go to Latham & Watkins, Shearman & Sterling, Cleary Gottlieb, Reed Smith LLP, Omer Abdelati Law Firm, Sharkawy & Sarhan Law Firm, Udo Udoma and Belo-Osagie and all of the lawyers who helped us to make this dream come true. We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved with this project and to see that these law reports are being used at all levels to advocate and successfully implement laws against FGM that will help to protect women and girls. It is proof that what we are doing is having a great impact on the work to end FGM globally.

Although laws are crucial, we also recognise that more is needed if we are to end FGM. That is why we have commissioned new research this year looking at the connection between FGM and social norms. We are very excited about this project, which will help to guide those producing and implementing programmes to end FGM and will be an essential tool for those involved in developing and funding anti-FGM programmes.
We also published our 14th country profile on Somalia and Somaliland this year, a particularly challenging country where FGM prevalence is almost 100%. Our research highlighted many issues that need to be overcome, including increasing the support of religious leaders in the campaign to end FGM there, but it also showed how much progress is being made to address these challenges. It is also very encouraging to see that laws against FGM are now being drafted in both Somalia and Somaliland.

Another highlight for us this year was the collaboration with Impact BBDO in launching the #NoFGM ribbon – a new global symbol against all forms of FGM. The ribbon is already being used by many people around the world, and we are thrilled that it is growing in popularity as a symbol that unites all those working to end FGM. It was used at the UN’s Commission for the Status of Women meetings in New York, at the Women Deliver conference in Vancouver and at the official launch of our research in Somalia.

Once again, this year has been unbelievably successful for us. We are truly thankful to everyone who continues to support us on this journey, whether donating, volunteering, working for us, being a trustee or offering us pro bono services. Thank you to each and every one of you.

Dr Ann-Marie Wilson (Executive Director)
Dr Ann-Marie Wilson and Acting Board Chair Yemi Garuba at the London launch of our award-winning The Law and FGM research
The Board’s Thoughts

It has been an exceptional year for us all at 28 Too Many, not only completing our project with TrustLaw to produce 30 reports on FGM law, but also publishing a new country profile for Somalia and Somaliland.

The success of the law reports has been tremendous. The project won the TrustLaw 2018 Collaboration Award in New York and, significantly, received huge acclaim from activists, who have used the reports to advocate for laws to be introduced and implemented in their countries. Although laws alone are not enough to end FGM, they are vital in protecting women and girls from FGM as well as showing governments’ commitments to ending the practice.

Law was also a very relevant part of our new country profile for Somalia and Somaliland, where nearly all women and girls are subjected to the most severe form of FGM, Type III (infibulation). There are many challenges to ending FGM in Somalia and Somaliland, but our research has shown that there is much progress being made, and we are delighted that draft laws against FGM are now being developed for both Somalia and Somaliland.

We were thrilled to work with Impact BBDO and Tadwein Gender Research Centre in Egypt this year to launch the #NoFGM ribbon on International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM. The ribbon, which
is a global symbol uniting those working to end all forms of FGM, has since gone on to win 11 awards at the Dubai Lynx Awards and has been nominated for the Cannes Lion Awards. There has been real enthusiasm among activists for the ribbon, and we are very excited about the plans for it for the coming year.

Once again there have been changes to the board. We were particularly sorry to say goodbye to Sue Watson, and we thank her for her amazing support and tireless energy during her time as Chair. We are grateful to current and recent members of the board for their valuable contributions, support and insight and look forward to welcoming new board members in the coming year.

It is the people at 28 Too Many who make everything possible, and we would like to end by wholeheartedly thanking the team – staff, volunteers and ambassadors - for their dedication and hard work, which have transformed 28 Too Many into the leading anti-FGM research organisation it has become. Finally, my thanks go to Ann-Marie for her boundless spirit and enthusiasm throughout the year in progressing the 28 Too Many agenda to end FGM.

**Yemi Garuba** (Acting Board Chair)

The **28 Too Many trustees are** Dr A. M. Wilson (Executive Director), S. Watson (Chair), O. Garuba (Vice Chair), K. Collin (Treasurer), T. Alqassis, M. Galpin, D. Mayne and S. Michaels.
Ann-Marie Wilson and Amy Hurn of 28 Too Many with Boin Cheong of Latham & Watkins receiving the Collaboration Award from TrustLaw
Global Recognition

28 Too Many has a firmly established reputation as a leading anti-FGM voice for Africa with both key influencers and grassroots activists.

A Global Award

28 Too Many was honoured to win the Thomson Reuters Foundation TrustLaw Collaboration Award for our Law and FGM research, together with our partners Latham & Watkins and alongside Shearman & Sterling, Cleary Gottlieb, Reed Smith LLP, Omer Abdelati Law Firm, Sharkawy & Sarhan Law Firm, Udo Uduma and Belo-Osagie. The eighth annual TrustLaw Awards celebrated remarkable pro bono projects undertaken by legal teams with NGOs and social enterprises around the world.

A Global Campaign

28 Too Many was honoured to work with global advertising agency Impact BBDO alongside Tadwein Gender Research Center in Egypt to launch a new global anti-FGM symbol – the #NoFGM Ribbon – on February 6, International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM. By turning the universal symbol for awareness upside down and transforming it into the Arabic word for ‘no’, the #NoFGM Ribbon
provides a unique and instantly recognizable symbol that is being used to showcase and amplify the powerful anti-FGM work that is being accomplished today. The #NoFGM Ribbon design is part of the public domain and is becoming recognised as the global symbol uniting those who work to end all forms of FGM.

We are proud that this campaign won 11 awards at the Dubai Lynx Awards in March 2018, including the Grand Prix for Good, and it has been nominated for the Cannes Lion Awards later in the year.
THE FIGHT AGAINST FGM TAKES MANY FORMS

WHAT WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON IS A DESIRE TO PROTECT WOMEN & GIRLS

NOFGMРИBBON.INFO
‘It is incredible to see what 28 Too Many has produced. We are delighted and humbled to have helped you in some small way.’

– JP Sweny, Latham & Watkins, speaking at the launch of our law reports
Research Focus

The Law and FGM

Following nearly two years of research, working in partnership with over 120 international and in-country lawyers through the Thomson Reuters Foundation and TrustLaw, we published a set of 29 country law reports between May and September 2018.

These ground-breaking reports identified legislation banning FGM in each country and, importantly, highlighted gaps in laws and countries that still fail to protect women and girls from the practice.
We brought together the key findings from across the countries into a main project report that identified best practice and recommendations to tighten and implement laws in future. Our report found that, although 22 out of 28 FGM-practising countries in Africa have national legislation criminalising FGM, in many countries the legislation is failing to protect women and girls from the practice – anti-FGM laws are rarely enforced and the continuing absence of prosecutions is putting millions of women and girls at risk. In addition, 6 of the 28 practising countries remain without laws, meaning FGM is effectively still legal there.

28 Too Many recognises that laws alone cannot end FGM. Laws are important because they are a statement of intent and demonstrate a commitment to eradicating FGM, yet they need to be applied alongside education on the rights of women and girls forming part of the community engagement around changing cultural and social norms.

The findings of this major piece of research have been disseminated widely, including through our website and social media platforms. Most significantly, the information has been
used by governments, organisations and activists working to improve legislative frameworks across the continent, specifically in helping to change the law in Nigeria, Egypt, Somalia and Kenya.

Our work on the law and FGM continues with the development, in partnership with TrustLaw, of a ‘Model FGM Law’ which is due to be published in early 2020.

**Country Profile: FGM in Somalia and Somaliland**

In March 2019 we published our 14th country profile on FGM in Somalia and Somaliland. In a country where nearly 100% of women and girls have been subjected to FGM, and usually the most severe, Type III (infibulation), this research was particularly challenging. The political situation in the region poses difficulties in presenting the research, and the lack of up-to-date, accurate data on FGM adds to the challenge of identifying trends in prevalence and practice.

Some very difficult issues still need to be overcome in Somalia and Somaliland, including the ongoing support, particularly from
influential religious leaders, of FGM labelled ‘sunna’, the dangers of increasing medicalisation, the continuing absence of national laws banning FGM and the lack of new data to inform programmes.

This country profile did, however, highlight the important progress that is being made in the face of these challenges, including increased collaboration between government departments and civil society, more open discussion, particularly with religious leaders and men, the use of media as an advocacy tool, the move away from the most severe form of cutting, and the amazing growth of youth activism across the region.

We are also delighted to hear that laws have been drafted in both Somalia and Somaliland where we consulted with lawyers assisting in this process, and we continue to support the efforts being made by civil society to progress these vital pieces of legislation. Key Findings from the research will be translated into Somali and disseminated throughout the region in due course.

**FGM and Social Norms**

Following the commission of an anthropologist to bring together vital evidence on the importance of social norms in relation to FGM, research continued across 2018/2019, and publication is planned for June 2019.
The report will bring together rarely accessed anthropological theory together with real-life case studies of work in communities to provide an easy-to-read, practical guide for all those developing, funding and working on community projects to end FGM. It will be particularly timely as the anti-FGM network worldwide increasingly places emphasis on the importance of recognising the role of social norms in the perpetuation of the practice. We look forward to contributing to this important debate.

**FGM in the Diaspora**

Work has also started on mapping the prevalence of FGM within African communities in the diaspora. Initial estimates were presented to UK and US law-enforcement agencies in the summer of 2018. This work will continue over the next year in partnership with other diaspora-based anti-FGM agencies.
‘We should all stand against FGM; it has caused death to many and left others suffering throughout their lives. Let’s help girls to enjoy their body intact and no longer be victims.’ – Dr Mariam A Dahir
Strategic Communications

FGM Law Reports

The launch of our FGM law reports was welcomed by the anti-FGM community and had significant impact within many countries. Our research sparked encouraging discussions about FGM law and advocacy work leading to calls for laws to be introduced (or, where laws already existed, for them to be implemented). In addition, we noted a huge increase in media discussions about FGM law, and our reports were featured by Reuters and other top news organisations around the world.
Translation of our resources

In order to maximise our reach and impact, we initiated a project to translate our research as historically, most of our research has only been available in English. In 2017/2018, we focused on making our website available in English, French and Arabic.

In 2018/2019 we turned our attention to each of our research products. During the year we translated a number of our research reports into French, Arabic and Swahili. Efforts will continue in 2019/2020 that will see the addition of Somali and Amharic versions.

Global Campaigns

Once again, we took part in major global social media campaigns. We launched the FGM law reports for Togo, Ghana, Benin and Niger during the 17 Days of Activism for the Empowerment of Rural Women and Their Communities. The 19 Days of Activism for Prevention of Violence Against Children and Youth saw us supporting Kenyan activists in their ongoing online campaign #FGMNotMyReligion, for which we featured our research alongside quotes from 30 anti-FGM activists and organisations from Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, India, The Gambia, Somalia, Somaliland, the USA and Mali.
For our campaign for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, we focused on the six countries that do not have national anti-FGM laws in place: Sierra Leone, Mali, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan and Chad. Using strong images and quotes from activists, we emphasised that laws against FGM are necessary to protect girls and women from FGM.

We launched our new country profile report on FGM in Somalia/Somaliland on 8 March, International Women’s Day. The launch was supported by the activists and organisations in Somalia and Somaliland who had contributed to the report and was rolled out successfully across all of our social media channels.

Disseminating Our Research Globally

The year saw the team attending numerous events where they were able to present 28 Too Many’s research, and, in particular, the FGM law reports. These included presentations of 28 Too Many’s work in the UK, Kenya, Egypt, Switzerland and the USA. In addition, our work received media coverage all around the globe by Reuters, BBC, NY Times, The Independent, The Guardian, The Irish Times, Citizen TV Kenya, Voice of Africa and other key media publishers across Africa.
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 Church Mission Society (CMS), Freehold Sec, the Jane Metson Foundation, the Women’s World Day of Prayer, Phillip Vallentin, Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church, Soroptimist International and the many other donors and philanthropists who wish to remain anonymous who made our work possible.

28 Too Many wishes to thank TrustLaw for their partnership with us on the Law and FGM research. We especially wish to thank the pro bono teams for the thousands of hours they spent 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 CARE, CMS, Grant Thornton UK LLP, LandMark Chartered Accountants and Lawrence Ding. Finally, we want to thank all the 28 Too Many volunteers who contribute in so many ways.
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 Church Mission Society (CMS), Freehold Sec, the Jane Metson Foundation, the Women’s World Day of Prayer, Phillip Vallentin, Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church, Soroptimist International and the many other donors and philanthropists who wish to remain anonymous who made our work possible.

28 Too Many wishes to thank TrustLaw for their partnership with us on the Law and FGM research. We especially wish to thank the pro bono teams for the thousands of hours they spent 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 CARE, CMS, Grant Thornton UK LLP, LandMark Chartered Accountants and Lawrence Ding. Finally, we want to thank all the 28 Too Many volunteers who contribute in so many ways.