

# **Bristol FGM Community Development Project 2008-2013**

# Project purpose

**Goal:** To safeguard girls by enabling families and communities to abandon the practice of FGM and to improve sexual and reproductive rights and access to entitlements

## Target audience

- women and girls from FGM affected communities, from Somalia and Sudan. Men, religious leaders and community leaders
- Statutory professionals from health , safeguarding, schools

# How the project works?

- Informed by community participatory research
- Partnerships with multiple stakeholders
  - Bristol NHS PCT\ FORWARD
  - Community based organisations- Refugee Women of Bristol and individual women
  - Coventry University
- Multiple approaches and levels of operation: structures, capacity development and standards
- Shared goal based on safeguarding girls at risk
- Sustained funding from PCT and foundations

# Main project activities

- Women's health and leadership training
- Community Health Advocates outreach programme
- Community Advisory Group- project delivery group
- Awareness raising community events –
- FGM training for professionals – supported by community health advocates
- Creating men only spaces and training on FGM
- Young Women's group (HOPE) – FGM board game performed in schools and youth centres

# Success factors & challenges

- PEER research- good entry point that created ownership
- Women's leadership and stronger voices on FGM - *"It is not seen as driven by Westerners so you don't feel threatened. They have a similar cultural experience to you, so it feels like it belongs to you, its part of you. When you see someone step in on your community you feel there are boundaries and you feel threatened."*
- Sustained multi agency partnership and ownership

## Challenges

- Volunteering vrs progression to paid employment
- Going beyond current target communities
- Making a balance between safeguarding and support

# Impact

- **Women**-Increased confidence, knowledge & awareness among women as well as the community partners
- **Health professionals**:-*"Being able to hear first hand from someone within the community really bought this subject to life and enabled better understanding by being able to ask questions and discuss to clarify issues... has left me feeling much more confident"*. Training attendee.
- **Replication** of women's health and leadership training in London, Birmingham and Essex by community facilitators
- Imkaan study for Greater London Authority cited the Bristol project as a model of good practice

# Empowering local Women







