# END FGM/C

## U.S. NETWORK

# US End FGM/C Network Report
# Executive Summary

## Overview

An informal US End FGM/C Network has emerged as a loose affiliation of civil society organizations, foundations, activists, policymakers, researchers, and others committed to promoting the abandonment of FGM/C in the US and around the world. To date, the Network has facilitated information exchange and networking, and it played a key role in advancing the End Violence against Girls: Summit on FGM/C in December 2016. With support from the Wallace Global Fund, the Network has embarked on a scoping effort to assess how it might best move forward in a way that maximizes its impact. Entrellis LLC was retained to support this effort, and has worked with a six-member steering committee in structuring and carrying out research and analysis to develop this report and recommendations.
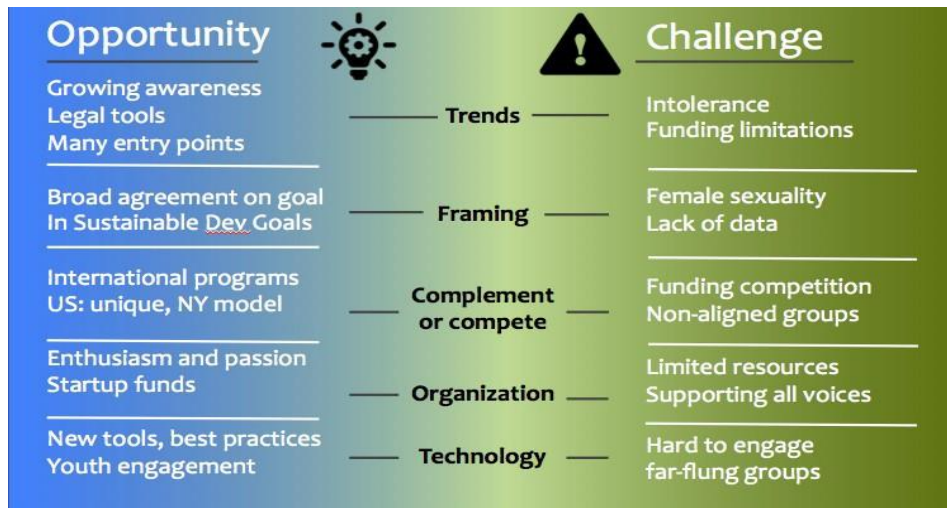
## Research findings

### Methodology

Research was conducted via a survey to over 250 FGM/C activists, researchers, policymakers and others; interviews with 21 diverse stakeholders and potential members of the network, desk research, and research and analysis of 30 networks with relevant frameworks. In recognition of the breadth of the US effort to end FGM/C, those providing input to the research included groups working directly with practicing communities around the country; leaders of policy and advocacy organizations; respondents in the fields of health care, education, and legal and child protection; researchers; individual survivors and supporters doing work from advocacy to community support; and leaders of other relevant networks in and outside of the US.

## Opportunities and challenges

Assessing the context for the network's development indicated relevant opportunities and challenges:



| Opportunity | | Challenge |
|---|---|---|
| Growing awareness<br>Legal tools<br>Many entry points | Trends | Intolerance<br>Funding limitations |
| Broad agreement on goal<br>In Sustainable Dev Goals | Framing | Female sexuality<br>Lack of data |
| International programs<br>US: unique, NY model | Complement<br>or compete | Funding competition<br>Non-aligned groups |
| Enthusiasm and passion<br>Startup funds | Organization | Limited resources<br>Supporting all voices |
| New tools, best practices<br>Youth engagement | Technology | Hard to engage<br>far-flung groups |

## Priority needs

The research identified priority needs that the network could fulfill:

- **Education** was the top choice of respondents. The need was viewed broadly and included areas such as: the network as a central source of knowledge; outreach and awareness-building for the public and specifically for communities; and training and guidance for service providers. Prioritizing these specific areas may be an iterative process over time.

- **Connections and information-sharing** was a strong second choice, including more information about current research, stronger bridges between US and international work, resources like educational toolkits to share with those they serve, and shared learning within and across different fields of work.

- **Capacity-building and funding** was the third choice for the network's focus. Respondents flagged the lack of funding for smaller organizations as a challenge to doing work in the field.

- **Equity and breadth.** Respondents expressed a preference for ensuring that smaller, grassroots groups are fully represented in leadership and agenda-setting for the network. There was an emphasis om promoting equitable ways to approach decision making and power-sharing.

- **A holistic approach.** A related issue was thinking holistically, from inclusivity as decisions are made to framing FGM/C in a bigger context of girls' and women's empowerment to create a stronger foundation and greater visibility in thought leadership.

## Priorities and Governance

The report reviews how the network can identify its priorities and build strategic and implementation plans, as well as good process and procedures. It provides information and options regarding governance structures in three areas: members, leadership, and staffing, and identifies other organizations with relevant structures or innovative strategies, such as MenEngage's Code of Conduct and Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition's Innovation Fund to support grassroots ideas that other funders might deem too risky.

## Recommendations and next steps for Steering Committee

The report includes recommendations for structuring the US End FGM/C Network, including:

### Framing

➤ Directly address issues of equity and empowerment

➤ Frame the approach to FGM/C broadly and intersectionally

➤ Establish a clear values statement and theory of change

### Process

➤ Don't skimp on process

➤ Build in learning

➤ Create small wins

### High-level governance

➤ Clarify how grassroots leadership will be framed

➤ Find the balance between flexibility and structure

➤ Find the balance between inclusive engagement and action

➤ Establish clear expectations and communications

### Structure

➤ Invite a broad-based membership

➤ Establish clear membership requirements

➤ Utilize a steering committee

➤ Encourage working groups

➤ Provide both leadership and administrative staffing