

## GarGar Foundation (Hear Women)

### FGM NEWSLETTER

## **20,000 girls risk dangerous genital mutilation in the UK**

**-- *Hear Women* provides training to educate professionals and volunteers on how to combat the practice of FGM and how to help its victims**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), defined as the partial removal of the external genitalia for non-medical reasons, is a global problem that reaches to the UK. It is estimated that over 20,000 girls under the age of 15 in this country are at risk of being subjected to FGM each year. Beyond our borders, it is performed on girls and young women in 28 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The World Health Organisation estimates that 3 million girls are victims of FGM in Africa alone.

At *Hear Women* (GarGar Foundation), we are committed to speaking out against this inhuman practice and doing everything we can to advocate on behalf of young girls and ensure they are not forced to undergo this traumatic procedure. As part of this effort we have put together an FGM Training Program designed to educate local communities about the misconceptions and cruel practices of FGM. In particular, this will help professionals and volunteers working in places such as children centres, schools, churches, health institutions, and the justice system, including the police.

The aim of the Training Program is to help these professionals and volunteers: (1) to assist girls whom they suspect might be in danger by providing in-depth knowledge about the behaviours and early signs to detect those at risk; (2) to show how they can provide physical and emotional support to the victims that have suffered from FGM practices, estimated to be 66,000 girls and women in the UK; and (3) to educate them about the laws that help to protect children and women against this practice, and to discuss the implications of the upcoming change in legislation when the UK government makes reporting mandatory.

The Training Program is run by FGM specialist midwife Joy Clarke, a leading anti-FGM campaigner who set up the African Well Women Clinic at Whittington Health in 2000. Since this time, Ms. Clarke has provided FGM training and awareness for healthcare and frontline professionals working with women and children. In March 2014 she was presented with the Community Safety Partnership Award for her outstanding work in helping to address FGM in the borough of Islington where it is estimated that 1,812 girls are at risk or have already undergone FGM.