

Report back to The Funding Network

1. Name of your organisation and date funded by TFN: Orchid Project, presented at TFN December 2011. Funding received January 2012.

2. What does your organisation do?

Orchid Project was set up to achieve three strategic objectives:

1. Identify and partner with delivery organisations and projects around the world which accelerate the abandonment of FGC in the communities they work in. We currently have one partner, Tostan
2. Communicate our findings and learning. We disseminate best practice and experiences. We assist with communication around FGC and raise awareness, fostering support for a positive movement to end FGC
3. Advocate at the international, regional and national levels to ensure that the requisite attention is paid to FGC and that the issue remains on the global agenda.

3. When was your organisation first established? Orchid Project was founded in June 2010 and achieved charitable status on 1 April 2011

4. Since receiving funding from TFN how has your organisation changed?

In December 2011 Orchid Project's CEO & Founder, Julia Lalla-Maharajh, presented to The Funding Network about how TFN could support our work to end female genital cutting. Her proposal totalled £5,000 to cover expenses of our many volunteers. TFN members were inspired to donate incredibly generously, and in total Orchid Project received £16,924.33 from TFN, of which £7,000 is being used to support our in-office volunteers.

With agreement, the remainder is being used for core expenditure to support the salaries of our three staff members. Orchid Project's core costs include the costs of the majority of our activity to communicate and advocate about ending FGC, and hence TFN's funding has had a significant impact across the whole organisation.

In December 2011 Orchid Project was approaching the end of our first full financial year, in which we raised over £270,000 to support our work towards ending female genital cutting. A year earlier, we entered April 2011 with just £5,000 in our bank account so we are delighted with the progress. Since April 2012, the start of our second year, we have so far raised £220,000 of our £330,000 target, and securing core funding from visionary donors such as TFN has been a huge boost. In September 2012, Orchid Project's staff team increased from 2 FTE to 3 FTE, and in October we also took on a freelance Advocacy Assistant to work with us two days a week; all of this has been made possible thanks to securing funding from TFN. Since receiving funding from TFN we were also able to commit to supporting more volunteers, and in 2012 18 individuals have worked with us in our office as volunteers, with funding from TFN enabling us to reimburse them their travel and lunch expenses.

5. Can you describe/measure the impact that the specific TFN funded project/work has had?

Volunteer achievements in 2012

In the first six months of 2012, volunteers in our office worked over 250 days for Orchid Project and made vital contributions towards our work to end female genital cutting. Volunteers continue to be a central part of the Orchid Project team, and volunteer-power means that (on average) we work in total twice as many days a week as are worked by our paid staff team – this has a huge impact on what we are able to achieve.

FGC programmes

- Volunteers developed and maintained a database of c.500 organisations and campaigns working on female genital cutting, mapping the stakeholders within the FGC arena
- Volunteers developed a concept for a research programme looking specifically at Kenya and why the prevalence of FGC is dropping there. Although this research was not funded, the desk-based research carried out by volunteers forms the basis of our current search for new partners in Kenya

Communications

- Volunteers supported the re-development of orchidproject.org by researching and drafting content for the site. Volunteers draft blogposts, manage social media, and update the website
- February 6 is International Day against FGC. This year, we held two events, one in the House of Commons, attended by over 30 MPs and Peers, with speakers including our partner, Senegalese hip-hop singer Sister Fa, and two Ministers. In the evening, Sister Fa and her band performed at Union Chapel. Volunteers contributed a huge amount to these events, planning and managing the concert at Union Chapel, providing logistical support, and speaking to attendees at the House of Commons. A PR specialist volunteer also arranged for almost 10 different press opportunities
- Orchid Project supported Sister Fa's third 'Education without Cutting' tour of Senegal in May 2012. Orchid Project volunteers prepared briefings ahead of the trip, and a volunteer photographer, and volunteer from our group in Denmark, both travelled to Senegal with our Programme Co-ordinator and provide support documenting and reporting on the visit (although TFN funds were not used for the trip)

Advocacy

- Volunteers undertook extensive research ahead of our Parliamentary event, and following it, to develop invitation lists and follow-up with those parliamentarians who attended
- Volunteers have researched MPs and Peers ahead of meetings, providing briefings to staff members
- Volunteers drafted a submission to the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Indonesia, and then presented at a pre-UPR meeting in Geneva

Operational

- Volunteers provide a huge amount of research support, regularly looking into individuals, trusts and foundations to approach for fundraising
- Volunteers provided administrative and financial support to our Finance Co-ordinator

Other achievements

Our relationship with Tostan was strengthened substantially over the past year. By the end of our first financial year (March 2012), we disbursed a total of £47,800.00 to Tostan for 15 motorcycles. These motos facilitate outreach and awareness-raising between villages, ultimately accelerating the abandonment of female genital cutting throughout the country.

In May 2012 we started discussions about a new collaborative project on social mobilisation activities. This project seeks to support members of communities who have already abandoned FGC to undertake outreach work. We are committed to support this project with £60,000 over the course of the next year.

For our next partnership, we have decided to focus our attention on East Africa and more specifically Kenya. After extensive research, we have identified five organisations which we will visit in November to see if we can collaborate together on accelerating FGC abandonment in the country.

In May 2012 Orchid Project supported Sister Fa with her third '**Education without Cutting**' tour in Senegal. Sister Fa and Band, supported by Orchid Project staff members, travelled through the southern-most region of Senegal, the Casamance, visiting 5 towns and playing 4 concerts where about 5,000 people attended. She also visited 9 schools and reached c.1,360 young people. The Orchid team were impressed by Sister Fa, who as a cut woman is a powerful role model for young people in Senegal. Her status as a hip-hop star means she is given access to schools and communities, and the presentations she gives at each school are powerful, persuasive and focus on the agency of the young people to decide not to cut their own children - in line with Tostan's work and belief that Senegal could be FGC-free in, or by 2015.

Orchid Project has developed a remarkable relationship with **DFID**. In July 2011, we met with one key civil servant, who has opened up an entire network of others within the department. The culmination of this was discovering that DFID will be submitting a "business case" to Ministers for them to invest in FGC programmes, which is a fantastic outcome. We hope there may be an announcement before Christmas.

As part of our more reactive activities, Orchid Project provided technical support to DFID in Somalia on FGC, this involved a scoping visit to Somalia in March-April 2012, and the completion of a comprehensive report. FGC will now be a factor in two DFID health programmes with a total spend of £55 million.

6. Could you give us an estimate of how many people have been reached by the TFN funded project/work and by how much?

TFN's funding enabled Orchid Project to take on more volunteers in 2012 and also enabled us to grow our staff team; this has led to us achieving a huge amount, as detailed above. In total, TFN's funding has supported the expenses of at least a dozen Orchid Project in-office volunteers. TFN's core funding supported our FGC Programmes work, through which we funded our partner Tostan £47,800 to support community outreach workers in Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania. This meant they were able to reach more communities to spread the message of ending female genital cutting, although it is impossible to say precisely how many people they reached. Our communications work included supporting our partner Sister Fa to take her 'Education without Cutting' tour to southern Senegal in May, where she reached over 6,000 people and spread the message of ending female genital cutting. In this period, our website has had over 70,000 views, meaning our message of the hope around ending FGC has been more widely seen.

7. Did receiving the money from TFN make positive difference to your organisation? If yes, in what way? If no, please specify why not?

The funding from TFN certainly made a positive difference to Orchid Project. Achieving far and beyond our expectations enabled us to plan for the future as core funding is often so hard to come by. It also led to receiving funding from other donors and individuals and to presenting at the TFN Strategic Funding Group in October, where, once again, we exceeded our expectations.

8. Do you have any other comments regarding TFN funding?

We are incredibly grateful to TFN for the funding secured at the event in December 2011, and the leverage as a result. We find it incredibly uplifting to have the opportunity to interact with our TFN donors, as they are so inspiring as individual philanthropists. It also gives us the opportunity to share our message and raise awareness about female genital cutting, with one of our target audiences: high level people, with networks of their own, whom they can share the story of abandonment with.

We were involved in the TFN/The Elders event in July 2012 which we've separately provided feedback for. Similarly, we are very happy to provide feedback and to apply for other TFN-related opportunities (e.g. Strategic Funding Group – huge thanks) but think that the forms used could be revised, or more 'free form', giving charities like us the option of using our own preferred format.

We also benefited from the free one hour fundraising coaching session with Jhumar Johnson of Kingston Smith, which then became a six month coaching arrangement which has been of great value to Orchid Project.

Orchid Project has not yet spent the entirety of the TFN funding, and we will provide another update to TFN once we have done so.

9. Can you please include any relevant photos or clips that may relate to the project.

Orchid Project's annual review for the year 2011/12 is available online:

<http://issuu.com/indiecomms/docs/orchid-project-annual-review>

Here is a video about our project with Sister Fa in May 2012:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgFAC2ZDDJY&feature=plcp>

Some feedback from Orchid Project volunteers:

"What I like most about volunteering with Orchid is the passion that everyone has for working towards an end to FGC and I'm constantly amazed by what they are achieving every day. Also, and I think this is testament to Julia and Ruthie, when you're volunteering for Orchid, it does feel like a little family and the accessibility of Julia and Ruthie and their appreciation of the volunteers helps make this so." – Amy Fairbairn (now Communications Manager with our partner Tostan in Senegal)

"The best thing about volunteering at Orchid Project is the way that Orchid involves its volunteers with all aspects of its work. And, the high level of responsibility they have given me has been much more productive to my learning and experience (as opposed to the very low-level that I have experienced as an intern with other NGOs)." – Lucy Barnett (now self-employed, part-time Advocacy Assistant with Orchid Project)

"The friendliness of the staff at Orchid Project meant that I gained confidence in a new kind of work environment. I am impressed by the work the people at Orchid do and what Orchid has so far managed to achieve, and it was great to be a part of that." – Sarah Penrhyn Jones (student, volunteered over the summer)