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THE GIRL GENERATION IS A SOCIAL CHANGE COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVE, PROVIDING A GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR GALVANISING, CATALYSING AND AMPLIFYING THE AFRICA-LED MOVEMENT TO END FGM.
WE BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER WE WILL END FGM IN ONE GENERATION.

We are united by our vision that FGM can – and must – end in this generation. FGM is one of the gravest human rights violations of our time. For too long, it has been neglected on the global agenda, and treated as a taboo subject.

Ending FGM can be a catalyst for change, going hand-in-hand with other gender equality issues, including child marriage, girls’ education, and ‘honour’-based violence. No country can achieve its full potential, socially or economically, when half of its population is held back by extreme forms of discrimination. FGM is everyone’s issue, and each of us can play a role in creating a world that is safe for girls.

We are driven by the conviction that for FGM to end, there needs to be a positive transformation in the way that girls are valued, and in the beliefs and social norms that underpin FGM. We are confident that communication – which has the power to positively influence the very fabric of society and communities – lies at the heart of this transformation. But this isn’t about simplistic messages or lecturing people about what they should and shouldn’t be doing – this is communication which speaks to the motivations behind the practice, and identifies the very real personal and social barriers that hinder abandonment of FGM. Communication which provides a positive alternative, opens up debate and discussion in the public sphere, prompts individuals to question their acceptance of the practice, and increasingly builds confidence to speak out against it. This is social change communication.

We are a social change communications initiative, providing a global platform for galvanising, catalysing and amplifying the Africa-led movement to end FGM, building on what has already been achieved. We are also our members and partners: a global collective brought together by this shared vision. Supported by a small team, we seek to inspire organisations and individuals, including youth, across the most affected countries in Africa and beyond, to end FGM in one generation.

What do we do? We support grassroots organisations to strengthen their social change communications to end FGM, building on The Girl Generation vision and values, and multiplying the message of hope we promote. We catalyse and amplify the voices of the African movement, linking them together and to the wider global audience. We are building a critical mass for change, which will help to unlock regional, national and international commitments, to increase resources that can sustain and scale up these efforts, and end FGM in one generation.

Everything we do is rooted in our brand – The Girl Generation - envisioning the very change we want to see by depicting a generation of girls increasingly empowered and able to enjoy access to their fundamental human rights. A generation of young women who know the reality of the fear and consequences of FGM, but are empowered to speak up, inspire change in their families and communities, and able to realise their potential.

The Girl Generation’s vision is of women and girls across the African continent and beyond living healthy and empowered lives, with their fundamental human rights protected, and with opportunities to realise their potential.

ACHIEVING THIS VISION IS GUIDED BY OUR STRATEGIC PLAN (2015-2020) which is realised and underpinned by the following:

GOAL (the high level change that The Girl Generation is working towards):
- Transformation in social norms underpinning FGM ends in one generation.

OUTCOME (the change that The Girl Generation is aiming for):
- Accelerated and sustained social change in focal countries and beyond.

Outputs (The Girl Generation’s direct deliverables):
- Output 1: An Africa-led, global collective of organisations working together to end FGM.
- Output 2: Partners delivering effective social change communications to end FGM.
- Output 3: Amplified positive stories of change build the global movement to end FGM at all levels.
- Output 4: FGM mainstreamed on the global development agenda.
Our Guiding Principles

Our approach, methodology and personality are all driven by our three guiding principles, which inspire and underpin all that we do.

We Are Africa-led

The Africa-led movement to end FGM is vibrant and active. This movement is at different stages across the continent; in some countries there are high levels of political will to end FGM; leadership from enthusiastic and committed (if under-resourced) civil society actors; and policies and plans addressing FGM. In other countries, the movement still faces enormous challenges, including high levels of public support for FGM; extremely limited resources for action; and fragmented civil society response. This is compounded by limited political freedoms and restricted press freedom. Beyond the African continent, there are highly motivated civil society organisations active on FGM (including in the USA, Australia, UK, Europe, and Middle East), as well as international media outlets keen to cover the issue. Women affected by FGM are also speaking out and supporting each other, and there are a growing number of international initiatives and networks on FGM, as well as a growing girls’ rights movement spearheaded by many actors across the globe.

Despite these opportunities, gaps remain. There is lack of coordination and a common identity for the movement at global level, as well as an absence of focused, coordinated messages or calls to action across the movement. There are also tensions arising as a result of different terminology and approaches used to end FGM. There are inadequate resources, and in many cases resources are not reaching grassroots organisations working at the heart of the issue. Moreover, there is a risk that US and UK civil society and media voices can dominate the FGM space, minimising African voices.

The Girl Generation will address these gaps in a truly Africa-led approach. We will continually seek strategic leadership and guidance from African experts, including those who make up our Strategic Advisory Group. We will be led by the priorities and contexts of our focal countries, with flexibility and responsiveness to local issues. We will work with and through African institutions, partners and media to support, strengthen and grow the existing movement, building on what has already been achieved. We will raise the profile of African voices, and amplify positive social change from across the continent. All of our work is rooted in learning, participation and co-creation with those across the African continent, facilitating linkages and learning, and allowing the energy and action which already exists to take on its own momentum.

FGM is a form of violence against women and girls, held in place by social norms

FGM is a harmful practice which is internationally recognised as a form of violence against women and girls. It is held in place by social norms – the invisible rules that govern the behaviour which is considered acceptable in a group or society. We believe social change communications will play a critical role in addressing these social norms as part of wider efforts to end FGM. Social change communications can support and accelerate behaviour change in multiple ways and at different levels. They can open up debate and discussion in the public sphere, exposing people to alternative perspectives, and encouraging them to reflect on their beliefs and norms; and amplify social change where it is happening, emboldening and facilitating connections between those committed to ending FGM.

Yet there is a gap within the current movement to end FGM in the development of locally-led, impactful, targeted communications, which seek to influence the social norms which hold FGM in place. This is our opportunity to act. We will take a nuanced and context-specific approach to social change communications, which builds on a strong understanding of the social motivations and barriers for change at grassroots level, recognising both the power of social influencing, and the fact that FGM is an expression of gendered power dynamics.
We are embracing the opportunity to catalyse the take-up of sophisticated and sensitive communications approaches which focus on inspiring a change in social norms, as well as in building awareness and momentum behind the movement as a whole. There is an opportunity both to harness the power of social media to get the message out and generate discussion, and use mainstream culture, including radio, print, music and other discussion forums to engage broader audiences in the debate.

**OUR DO NO HARM PRINCIPLE**

**FGM is a sensitive and often taboo issue**, enshrined within complex political, social, cultural and religious perceptions that go to the heart of gender identity and gender relations. Efforts to end FGM can result in damaging consequences - driving the practice underground, undermining existing efforts to end the practice, putting individuals at risk, stigmatising those that have undergone FGM, and adding to broader political or cultural tensions. Of course, the process of change is riddled with resistance and protest - and this is unavoidable when social change begins to take place, shifting power dynamics.

We are dedicated to changing the discourse which has surrounded FGM – moving from engagement based on fear, power and ignorance to one of hope, empowerment and knowledge. The Girl Generation brand celebrates positive change, it values and empowers women and girls, and focuses on solution-based and practical action where everyone can play their part. We believe that this will maximise positive impact of the movement, and minimise opposition, by increasing the number of entry points for individuals to engage with the issue.

We are committed to the protection and empowerment of women and girls, activists and advocates across all of our work. Our Do No Harm principles help us do just that – raising awareness of the potential for backlash, both personal and cultural, and mitigating against these negative effects. Our Do No Harm framework helps us to systematically apply this principle – and support our partners and members to do the same.
We believe that working together is the foundation of the Africa-led, global movement to end FGM. Through a strong, friendly, inclusive, dynamic and authentic brand, The Girl Generation unites our members and inspires passion, energy and courage in everything we do.

This document is a simple guide for our members. We aspire to continually engage new members and supporters so that together we can amplify and disseminate messages and stories of social change. Essentially – we cannot do it alone, but together, we can end FGM in a generation.

Who can become a member of The Girl Generation?

We define a member as any organisation, network or institution who shares our vision, endorses our guiding principles and signs up to be part of the generation that ends FGM. We particularly encourage grassroots organisations, youth networks, diaspora organisations, media and others committed to ending FGM across the African continent to apply, as well as those working on related issues, such as violence against women and girls, gender equality, health and education.

We specifically prioritise our focal countries: Kenya, the Gambia, Somalia, Nigeria, Senegal, Egypt, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Sudan, but welcome members from anywhere in the world.

Why become a member of The Girl Generation?

By joining The Girl Generation as a member you receive tangible and intangible benefits, including:

• A clear, shared vision and identity within The Girl Generation brand
• Inspiring, hopeful messaging and communications products for you to use in your work
• A greater understanding of and ability to develop social change communications, including tools and resources to support this
• Access to capacity-building opportunities on social change communications
• Increased visibility and profile for your work and voices on a global platform, including media connections and profiling of your work on The Girl Generation’s communications platforms
• Enhanced access to networks, connections, and spaces for dialogue on ending FGM
• Signposting to support advocacy and fundraising efforts, as part of our resource-leveraging mandate
• The knowledge that by working together, all of our voices are stronger both on the global stage, and in the communities where change must happen
• Increasing legitimacy and credibility, and a sense of belonging and courage, as a result of being part of an Africa-led, global movement
• Opportunities for peer-to-peer support and learning with others in the movement
HOW CAN MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE TO THE MOVEMENT TO END FGM?

The Girl Generation members are critical drivers of The Girl Generation brand, and integral members of the Africa-led movement to end FGM. We rely on our members to amplify The Girl Generation’s vision, engage new members and supporters, and disseminate messages and stories of social change.

Here’s some of the ways members can contribute to the movement:

**STAND UP:** We encourage you to co-brand with us, and to take up and amplify The Girl Generation’s vision alongside your own work. You are the hands and feet as well as the heart and soul of the movement — and we encourage you to use your wide ranging networks, platforms and activities to promote the brand and generate interest and support for the movement. We have developed The Girl Generation Brand Book for Members and Partners to help you do this in a powerful and consistent way, and to help you to put the focus on the exceptional value of girls to their communities and countries. In doing so, as multipliers of a united message that this is the generation where FGM ends, we will collectively increase visibility of the global movement to end FGM, and promote a sense of unity and solidarity.

**SPEAK UP:** Become active contributors to the movement by sharing your learning and stories of social change, blogs, newsletters and campaigns through The Girl Generation’s communications platforms. You can also speak out about national or regional-level policy developments and strategic opportunities that can enhance our collective work, and get others talking about them. This is an opportunity to get your voice heard around the world. We want to learn continuously from you, our members, gaining and sharing a greater understanding of the complexity of developing effective social change communications in each context, and how best we can support your work.

**LINK UP:** Collaborate with other members, as well as governments and other relevant actors at a local, national and global level, so that collectively you become multipliers of the values and messages of The Girl Generation. This is an opportunity to work together to develop more effective social change communications – events, media dialogues, films, music, community conversations – which bring more support for ending FGM and get more people talking about their views on the practice. The Girl Generation core team will support you to do this with co-creation opportunities and resources. You can also engage with other members to contribute to The Girl Generation country-specific strategies to shape our work and help us to stay aligned to national priorities. We also hope that you will catalyse the growth of the movement by recommending and introducing other organisations, networks or individuals who might be interested in becoming members.

**COMMITTING:** to transparency, accountability and good governance in our work to end FGM.
HOW DO YOU SIGN UP TO BECOME A MEMBER?

You can sign up by completing the membership form included with this guide and sending it to The Girl Generation at info@thegirlgeneration.org.

Online sign up forms are also available on our website www.thegirlgeneration.org. To sign up you will need to endorse our values and guiding principles.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SIGN UP?

The Girl Generation team reviews your membership form and completes the registration process within 10 - 20 days. You then receive an email welcoming you to The Girl Generation, and a membership pack which provides more details about The Girl Generation and how to get involved. The membership pack also includes a brand book, which tells you more about the brand and how to apply it to your work.

Signed up members are encouraged to:

• Share their logo and a paragraph describing their organisation and key contacts to be featured on our website.
• Share information about their work to be profiled and included in The Girl Generation communications – our newsletters, blog and other products.
• Participate, when possible, in on-going activities led by The Girl Generation at the national level.

PLEASE NOTE:

This membership has no governance mandate - members will not be expected to vote.

The Girl Generation will not issue statements on behalf of, or claiming to speak on behalf of, its members. Rather, members will be invited to endorse or support particular position statements or key messages as and when they are developed.

HOW DO WE SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS?

We are committed to supporting our members to work together as a strong global collective. To do this, our core team of staff based in Nairobi and London support the day-to-day interaction with our members. Our Membership Officer is on-hand to support the sign-up process, develop materials and send them out to you, profile members activities and provide regular updates to you through our quarterly newsletter, social media platforms and website.

Members can reach the core team through info@thegirlgeneration.org

The core team are guided by our Programme Steering Group and a Strategic Advisory Group made up of experts from across Africa who offer strategic direction and governance.