



## Issue 11

### Final Conference in Brussels and launch of the Toolkit and Community Handbook at the European Parliament

11<sup>th</sup> of November 2015

#### REPLACE Toolkit and Community Handbook launched at the European Parliament, Brussels

The REPLACE2 project held the launch of the new REPLACE Toolkit and Community Handbook at the European Parliament in Brussels on the afternoon of the 21st October 2015. The REPLACE 2 partners were gathered in celebration of the success of the project, and were proud to promote the launch of major outputs of their work.

The project lead, Prof Hazel Barrett said, 'The launch of the Toolkit and Handbook are important milestones for REPLACE and we will be making efforts to ensure they contribute to European efforts to engage communities affected by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in bringing about an end to the practice'

Politicians, NGOs, affected community members and academics gathered for the event which marked the conclusion of the REPLACE2 project. The event was hosted at the European Parliament by Neena Gill MEP. Neena is one of the MEPs for the West Midlands in the UK and provided opening and closing remarks to the two-hour session. The REPLACE2 team were also delighted to hear from Mary Honeyball MEP who has been outspoken in relation to issues of gender-based violence.

## Final Conference and end of the project activities

The Replace II project finishes on 18th November. It reached around 1200 people directly involved in the project activities among all partner countries. This last edition of the newsletter includes articles on the Final Conference that took place in Brussels on the 21st October and it gives an overview of the two main project outputs: the REPLACE Toolkit and Community Handbook. These are vital tools for working with FGM affected communities to end FGM.

### The REPLACE Toolkit and Community Handbook: What's Inside?

For those who want a quick read and easy access to what's contained in the new REPLACE Toolkit and Community Handbook, an Executive Summary is available in five European languages: English, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. See the REPLACE2 website for a free downloadable copy of each [www.replacefgm2.eu](http://www.replacefgm2.eu).

The REPLACE Toolkit provides detailed background to the issue of FGM and what is known about it in an EU context, and a rationale for the REPLACE 2 approach is provided. The approach, which draws on community-focussed and individualistic theories of behaviour change is explained in detail with reference to relevant theory and literature.

In contrast, the shorter Community Handbook gets straight to the issue of 'how to' apply the approach in practice and aims to provide a step-by-step guide for NGOs, practitioners and community members taking a lead on this issue.

The REPLACE approach is based around a cyclic framework and therefore both the Toolkit and Handbook are broken down according to the elements of the framework which include:

1. Community engagement
2. Understanding the beliefs systems and Social Norms that perpetuate FGM in a given community
3. Community Readiness to End FGM assessment
4. Intervention development (drawing on everything from elements 1, 2 and 3)
5. Intervention Delivery and Evaluation (planned alongside element 4)

The process of intervention delivery and evaluation by community members feeds back into the process of engaging the community as does learning what has been effective and what needs changing as a new cycle of the

Invited keynote speaker, Natalie Kontoulis from the End FGM European Network, set out issues in the wider political context for work in Europe targeted at ending FGM. She noted the challenges involved in meeting the agenda set by the Istanbul Convention in relation to ending FGM, and highlighted the importance of community engagement.

Prof Hazel Barrett and Dr Katherine Brown from Coventry University who led the two and half year project, went on to explain the REPLACE approach to ending FGM in the EU and provided details of the content of the Toolkit and Community Handbook. This included a showing of a short film created by the Dutch partner from REPLACE2, FSAN. The film is of a Dutch scholar, from the Islamic University of Rotterdam, Prof Hidir, explaining the reasons why FGM is not, as many there believe, a requirement of Islam.

Partners of the REPLACE2 project were noted for their hard work and dedication in working with FGM affected communities across the EU and Neena Gill MEP concluded the event following questions and discussion with the audience.

The REPLACE 2 team would like to thank all those who attended and helped to make the event a success. The Toolkit and Community Handbook can be accessed free of charge through the REPLACE2 website see [www.replacefgm2.eu](http://www.replacefgm2.eu)

### What people have said about the project

*'This is the only project that has directly addressed and listened to the community...others have worked for the Africans but without the Africans'*

*Female Community Based Researcher, Spain.*

framework begins. The REPLACE approach proposes that many cycles of the framework will be required before Social Norm transformation is achieved and the community shifts towards ending the practice. Both the REPLACE Toolkit and Community Handbook can be accessed for free on the REPLACE2 website – all we ask is that you let us know who you are and leave an email address so we can monitor use of the toolkit in EU countries. Please give us feedback or direct queries to us through the website [www.replacefgm2.eu](http://www.replacefgm2.eu)



*From the left: Hazel Barret (Coventry University), Neena Gill (Member of the European Parliament), Katherine Brown (Coventry University)*



*Neena Gill speaking at the Replace 2 Final Conference in Brussels*

*'Now I know that it really isn't something of our religion, that gave me the last convincing I need that it really isn't good. I think if everyone knew this they would drop it all together.'*

*Female Community member, the Netherlands*

*'People are more open about it, they are not ashamed to say they don't circumcise their girls.'*

*Female community peer champion, the Netherlands*

*'Thank you for FORWARD to give me this opportunity, I am very happy when I do this job!'*

*Female Community peer champion, UK*

*'Before this project I knew nothing about this issue. I believe that through this project the community is working well and that now above all the women are concerned about knowing what is happening...'*

*Male, community member, Spain*

*'Both men and women cover fundamental roles in my culture, they are different but both of them are important... thanks to this project I could reflect about my culture in a deeper way and this helped me to learn new things about myself'*

*Female Community member, Italy*



*Hazel Barret (Coventry University), Neena Gill (Member of the European Parliament), Natalie Kontoulis (EU Network End FGM) and Katherine Brown (Coventry University) at the Replace 2 Final Conference in Brussels*

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If you need any advice from the REPLACE 2 team please write to:

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