



What is Sahiyo?

Sahiyo is a transnational organization that works to end female genital cutting (FGC) in Asian and other communities worldwide. Our mission is to empower communities to engage in conversations about the practice and create positive social change through dialogue, education, and collaboration based on community involvement.

Sahiyo is the Bohra Gujarati word for "saheliyo," or friends, and reflects the organization's mission to engage in dialogue with communities and amongst friends about FGC, a harmful practice recognized by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund as a human rights violation.

The organization has received international recognition for its community-based and dialogue-driven approach in addressing FGC. Today, Sahiyo is divided into two legal entities - Sahiyo U.S. & Sahiyo India. This brochure reflects Sahiyo U.S. programming.



Aims and Objectives

01. To bring an end to female genital cutting
02. To enable a culture in which a woman/girl's body and female sexuality is not feared or suppressed, but openly discussed and embraced as normal
03. To recognize and emphasize the values of consent and a woman/girl's right over her own body

Stop FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING



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Programs

Sahiyo U.S. offers a variety of resources and programs.

Storytelling

Sahiyo understands the power of connecting people through the sharing of experiences. Storytelling is an important medium for allowing people affected by FGC to share their narratives in their own words. Sahiyo's blog gives a voice to those looking to express themselves by collecting and distributing submissions. To read these personal stories or [submit](#) your own, visit our [blog](#) at [Sahiyo.org](#). Sahiyo also expands its storytelling approaches through photo, video, print, and in-person gatherings.

Volunteer

Volunteer support is the backbone of the organization, and Sahiyo thrives on the passion and dedication of its volunteers. One Sahiyo volunteer says:

Working with an organization teaches one a lot about group involvement, support, and unity. Being involved with an organization that fights for a cause that is very personal for me, is like having a platform for your voice. Sahiyo has given me the gentle push and reminder to keep fighting for my cause, whether or not I see results immediately.

– **Lubaina Plumber**

To volunteer with Sahiyo, visit [Volunteer with Us](#) on [Sahiyo.org](#) and fill out the application form.

Activists Retreats

These retreats take place in person and online to bring together activists speaking out against FGC — people who work either publicly or anonymously to strengthen relationships with one another and create a collective impact in raising community awareness about the need to end this harmful practice.

Bhaiyo Male Allies

This group works with Sahiyo and other survivors to raise awareness of FGC. Bhaiyo aims to create a space where male allies can collaborate to spark dialogue and spread knowledge about this form of gender-based violence.

Community Education & Outreach

Sahiyo partners with a diverse range of organizations to offer community presentations on FGC and its consequences to a variety of attendees, from survivors and community members, to students, healthcare professionals, and government officials. Some topics include:

- Learning about FGC in the Dawoodi Bohra Community
- Female Genital Cutting and Social Change
- Incorporating Storytelling into Gender-Based Violence Work
- Sensitively Reporting on Female Genital Cutting

Other webinars have focused on healthcare, engaging male allyship, sexuality/mental health, and art as activism and education.

Additionally, Sahiyo creates conversations and spaces for FGC education through public outreach campaigns such as [More Than a Survivor](#). These campaigns spread awareness on FGC and help survivors and FGC-impacted communities connect with us for support and to take part in our programs.

Training and Technical Assistance

Sahiyo provides training and technical assistance to educate and build the capacity of service providers and front-line professionals on FGC. This includes trainings for gender-based violence organizations, law enforcement, education, social work, healthcare and mental health practitioners, as well as others. Through these training sessions, organizations are able to better incorporate culturally responsive programming on FGC into their work.

Policy Outreach, Education, and Advocacy

Since its founding in 2015, Sahiyo has supported policy work to address FGC at the global, national, state, and local levels. We recognize that in order to achieve wide-scale abandonment of FGC and support survivors, policies and laws should be informed by, and created in partnership with, communities impacted by FGC.

Voices to End FGM/C

Voices to End FGM/C mobilizes a critical mass of storytellers and activists from across the globe by bringing people together to share and heal from their experiences of FGC, connect and grow as leaders in their own communities, and create short videos calling for an end to this harmful practice.



Research

Sahiyo has released research reports on the prevalence of FGC in Dawoodi Bohra communities, actions and support needed for survivor activists, and a report revealing that FGC is carried out in parts of Kerala. In 2018, Sahiyo partnered with a healthcare market research consultancy to conduct primary market research with activists. The [Sahiyo Activist Needs Assessment](#) was done to better understand the hopes and challenges activists face, and draws implications for the broader gender-based violence activist community. Additionally, in 2022, Sahiyo undertook research to better understand the intersections of FGC with other social oppressions and how social movements can cross-collaborate to build more equitable futures.

Sahiyo also collects and conducts research to bring more understanding, awareness, and advocacy on the topic of FGC. Sahiyo partners with institutions (including Brandeis University, Brigham Young University, University of Massachusetts) to support students on their capstone projects, theses and dissertations on topics such as psycho-sexual health and healing, raising awareness in education institutions, the importance of male allies, and funding programs around FGC.