



SAHIYO U.S. 2021 VIRTUAL ACTIVIST RETREAT



BRIEF HISTORY OF SAHIYO ACTIVIST RETREATS

Sahiyo held its first-ever U.S.-based activist retreat on January 19-21, 2018 in Brooklyn, New York. The retreat brought together nine participants and two facilitators to discuss activism around female genital cutting (FGC) or “khatna” and other issues pertaining to the Dawoodi Bohra community. The retreat consisted of workshops and information sessions, reflection periods, and group lunches and dinners. The following report details Sahiyo's fourth iteration of this retreat.

2021 VIRTUAL ACTIVIST RETREAT

From April 2nd to April 4th, 2021 Sahiyo hosted its annual Activists' Retreat over Zoom. During this retreat, guests had the opportunity to listen to speakers about addressing activism and healing related to FGC and build community connections to further their activism. In total, 17 activists registered for this online retreat. The guests were joined by multiple facilitators including past retreat attendees and Sameera Qureshi (see left).



RETREAT GOALS

for 2021

QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS

"I felt so good about this retreat! It was such a wonderful experience!"

"I realized how ignorant I am on this topic and how much I have to learn for myself and to be in a position to effectively and compassionately help others."

"There were a few new attendees who were starting their activism journey so it was great for me to share what I have learned over the years and learn something from those who are new to the journey."

Sahiyo is a transnational organization with the mission to empower Asian communities to end FGC and create positive social change through dialogue, education, and collaboration based on community involvement.

Sahiyo understands it takes many to bring about social change and, as a result, we work with individuals, organizations, and coalitions in a collaborative fashion. As advocates and activists, we are better together and can find the best solutions if we collaborate and work as one. We also recognize that many advocates speaking out against FGC have been working in isolation from each other.

The Sahiyo Activist Retreat aims to continue to work towards building a network of U.S.-based Bohra activists by strengthening relationships with one another, sharing best practices, and providing tools for activists to utilize in their anti-FGC advocacy work moving forward. The retreat is also an opportunity for advocates/activists to discuss both challenges and opportunities they have found in advocating against FGC.

WORKSHOPS & SESSIONS

COMMUNITY AND SURVIVOR-LED MOVEMENTS

- This session provided an overview of the Bohra movement to end FGC. It also highlighted the importance of survivors & community members leading the efforts to end FGC.

MOCK CONVERSATIONS

- Talking to family and friends about female genital cutting can be challenging. This session explored conversations via role-playing and provided those attending with additional resources to help with carrying out those conversations.



Previous U.S. Activist Retreat, 2018

SEXUALITY, TRAUMA, AND, HEALING WITH SAMEERA QURESHI

- During this session, we specifically explored FGC and how myths about female sexuality are pervasive, especially as it relates to sexual pleasure and the clitoris.

ACTION PLANNING

- During this session, we worked with activists to plan a set of personal goals as well as group goals for the coming year related to advocacy on ending FGC.

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

At the end of our retreat, participants were asked to fill out a post-event survey based on their experiences.

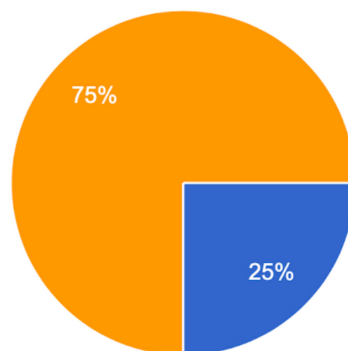
Important findings to note are that 100% of participants fulfilled their personal goals for attending the retreat and 100% agreed that the retreat achieved its goals and missions. Additionally, as seen below, 100% of participants said they would participate in another Activist Retreat in one form or another.

Overall, respondents stated that Sameera Qureshi's session and the breakout rooms were their favorite planned events of the retreat. They also stated that interacting with others, building community, and making connections was a major success of the program.

53% of participants filled out the post-event evaluation survey about their experience at the retreat.

Would you attend a future activist retreat?

8 responses



- Yes (In-person)
- Yes (Online)
- Yes (Either)
- No
- Maybe

Given its ongoing success, Sahiyo is committed to continuing this program in 2022 and beyond.

Previous U.S. Activist Retreat, 2018



LOOKING FORWARD

Below are a few of the group goals established during the Action Planning session:

- Continue to champion the passage of an anti-FGC law in Connecticut;
- Work closely with refugee resettlement organizations to talk about FGC in refugee communities;
- Host a webinar/workshop with Sameera Qureshi about mental health and sexuality webinar in 2021;
- Making space for people to continue to connect with one another.

WITH THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THE 2021 RETREAT A SUCCESS!



Previous U.S. Activist Retreats