

# January U.S. Retreat 2018



Sahiyo's U.S. Activist Retreat

January 19- 21, 2018

Brooklyn, New York

**sahiyo**  
United Against Female Genital Cutting

*Connecting  
Activists for  
Social Change*



## What was it?

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 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 reflects the opinions and suggestions of nine participants who filled out an evaluation after the retreat.

# Workshops & Sessions

## Importance of Survivor-Led Movements



This session highlighted the importance of survivors taking the lead in ending FGC especially since they are most affected by the practice.

*"I liked listening to everyone's personal stories. It was emotional and sensitive. Everyone became vulnerable. It was a great opportunity to bond with each other and get to know everyone closely. This session also opened up many discussions that followed."*

## Effective Communication and Challenges in the Community

This session focused on the problems that activists and survivors face within their communities (religious, cultural or patriarchal).

*"It was somewhat cathartic articulating the challenges FGC activists face, and knowing that there were others who were experiencing these same challenges gave me hope. The Sahiyo communication guide and toolkit were amazing resources. Really well presented and articulated and are really good reference material."*



## Creating a Critical Mass of Voices: How to Support Activists and Community Members



This session discussed research findings from external research organizations and opened the discussion to global FGC issues.

*"Casey's presentation was very informative. Gave me the ability to quantify the data and look at the issues with the backing of statistics and data. Information that I can take forward with me."*

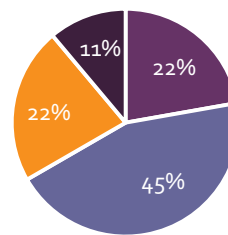
# Informed Activism

Participants agreed that the retreat provided them with new materials and resources to aid their work as an activist.

Sahiyo has maintained contact with the participants of the retreat and organized follow-ups and check-in calls. Participants have gone on to partner on projects and continue activism efforts. Our activists are planning two Thaal Pe Charcha (community-based discussion) events in the future, as well as a Mentorship Program.

Several participants have written [reflection blog posts](#) regarding the retreat which have been published on the Sahiyo website and will be attending storytelling workshops to produce video documentation of their activist and FGM/C stories.

Which session did you like the most? (n=9)



- Creating a Critical Mass of Voices
- Effective Communication Guide & Challenges within the community
- Action Steps Session
- Why are survivor-led movements important?

