

# True Sharif – exploring the sensitivities and barriers to services experienced by some African communities



The '5Ms' - Mental Health, Men and Female Genital Mutilation, FGM Protection Orders, Money Abuse and No Recourse to Public Funds & Modern Slavery (Domestic Servitude)

*"You've done a brilliant job – I'm going to watch them all!"*  
**Oxford FGM Ops Group Member**

*"We have never talked about [FGM] protection orders and this conversation was important to take this forward"*  
**Community Organiser**

## Oxford Against Cutting Film Project Evaluation Report prepared: November 2022

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*“The 5Ms project captured community groups speaking openly and honestly about a range of abuse issues, including domestic servitude, financial abuse and female genital mutilation. Whilst we know that these experiences are certainly not limited to African communities, we wanted to explore some of the specific barriers that some African communities may be facing when it comes to accessing support. We hope the films feel relatable to people experiencing these types of abuse and provide a helpful guide to possible routes to support. We are hugely grateful to all our community group partners”.*

**Dot Pritchard, Oxford Against Cutting Project Manager and 5Ms Project Lead**

## **1 Introduction and project aims**

Oxford Against Cutting (OAC) is an Oxford-based charity working to end harmful practices suffered by girls and women living in the Thames Valley. These include female genital mutilation (FGM), 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) and early and forced marriage (EFM) and female cosmetic genital surgery. Our mission is to end practices that harm girls and women by providing education, supporting survivors, raising awareness of support services and empowering young people to champion initiatives against such practices. People from affected communities and young people are at the forefront of our activities.

The following report describes and evaluates the process and outcomes related to a series of five films on domestic abuse issues beginning with 'M'. Whilst these issues can impact women, girls and families across many communities, this programme recognises the specific sensitivities and barriers to services experienced by some African communities and aims to open the conversation and help people reach support. The series is named 'True Sharif' ('sharif' meaning 'honour'), and the '5Ms' covers the subjects of Mental Health, Men and Female Genital Mutilation, FGM Protection Orders, Money Abuse and No Recourse to Public Funds and Modern Slavery (Domestic Servitude). Planning for the project commenced early in September 2021, with delivery of the substantive films in April 2022.

We are very grateful for the support of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups, who commissioned this work using domestic abuse specific funding from NHS England that focuses on the viewpoints of community members, rather than statutory agencies. Thanks also to all of those who took part and contributed to such a rich and positive project, which we are confident will go on to have lasting impact.

The overall aim of the project is to raise awareness about abuse services and increase disclosure of abuse. Our previous project work has shown us that a model of filmmaking where we partner with community groups to produce and take part in films, ie, combining filming with awareness-raising, supports a conversation and helps us to better reach the target audience. The True Sharif films were therefore made with a number of community groups from the African diaspora, with discussions led by individuals from affected communities. The films are designed to be highly sensitive and supportive of learning on abuse issues and potential for harm without challenging community family values.

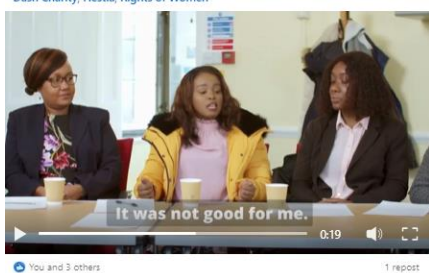
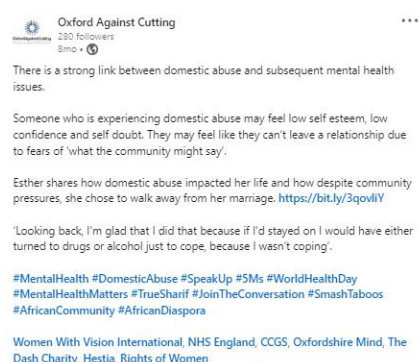
## **2 Film development**

Following filming during late 2021 and early 2022, the five short films were prepared and launched online during March and April 2022. They have been created in two parts – the first parts ('Part 1s') are around 2 minutes long, non-audio, with key messages aimed at all ages so that they can be widely shown, for example in health settings. The second parts include the community group conversations and are certification aged 16+ plus.<sup>1</sup> Through wide dissemination, a project aim was to reach an audience of 300 members of our target

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<sup>1</sup> For detail on timings, etc for all of the film versions, see Annex I.

communities. The films were made in English, and Arabic versions will be available in Q1 of 2023.<sup>2</sup>



The film-making project was led by Dot Pritchard (OAC Project Manager), working alongside Hauwa Suleiman (Gender Specialist) and Kate Agha (CEO). Moram Nafaa (volunteer and facilitator) and Lena El-Hindi (Senior FGM Facilitator) were involved in content development and facilitation. Details of the OAC team members who were involved in the project are provided in Annex III. Film production was by Clark Wiseman and Becky Stacey of Studio8.

Content was developed through a number of initial ‘brainstorm’ sessions during September and October 2021 supported by a range of experts and partners in addition to the OAC team.<sup>3</sup> The main challenges at this stage were to condense the key messaging for each film and agreeing how it should be ‘pitched’. The outputs from the brainstorm, once summarised by the OAC team, were circulated for agreement as part of an iterative process to take on board as wide a range of expertise and experience as possible. Following this process, consensus was reached upon a final version of content that was clear and in language that could be widely understood, whilst taking into account the needs of diverse African communities. A good range of community groups was achieved across the sessions, which included participation from Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan and The Gambia amongst others.

Throughout the project, notes and coordination documents were maintained and accessed by the team on a shared drive, including a proposed timeline and recording schedule. Following an hour-long team debrief soon after the end of the filming process in mid-June, a set of key learning points was developed. This was related to both the filmmaking process as well as other issues relating to working closely with a number of stakeholders and community groups. A flowchart showing all the stages of the film development process is provided in Annex IV.

## 2.1 The 5Ms films

**FGM Protection Orders** was filmed in Reading with a group consisting of six participants, four of whom were members of Utulivu and Women with Vision. The discussion was led by Leethen Bartholomew from the National FGM Centre and specialist legal advisor Jennifer Obaseki. The key aims were to highlight the facts around FGM Protection Orders so girls at risk/families have a better understanding of various responses to a disclosure and to emphasise that FGMPOs do not necessarily call for the removal of children. This workshop

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<sup>2</sup> Note that there has been a delay in finalising the Arabic versions, and the challenges faced have been outlined in the section on ‘Transferability and accessibility’.

<sup>3</sup> See Annex II for those involved.

was of a slightly different structure as there were also questions allowing the legal expert to clarify some points.

**Men and FGM** – filmed in Reading, this group featured 10 participants including men from ACRE. It was led by Leethen Bartholomew and planned as a film by men, to appeal to men to speak up about FGM and abuse. Some experience has shown men to be receptive towards advocacy. Drawing men into the discussion can also incorporate influential faith leaders.

**Mental Health** was filmed in Reading and featured 13 participants, including women from Utulivu and Women with Vision. Discussion was led by Jammie Koroma and Cecily Mwaniki. This discussion aimed to encourage people to access services supporting mental health recovery following abuse, using terms that African communities are likely to relate to, rather than “mental health” which can often be linked to spirituality and spiritual abuse.

**Money Abuse** and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), to talk about aspects of abuse related to money, the impact of NRPF and some of the myths around immigration status, focusing on the support available. Filmed in Oxford, it featured nine women with representation from the Sudanese Community in Oxford and Oxfordshire. Lena El-Hindi and Amani Ibrahim led, with support from Moram Nafaa. In addition, independent DA abuse expert Vania Martins was filmed discussing features of financial abuse, housing and support for people with No Recourse to Public Funds.



**Modern Slavery, with an emphasis on Domestic Servitude** as there can be little recognition of this as a concept because it is often intertwined with kinship and ‘helping’ others. We filmed the group discussion in Oxford in partnership with Refugee Resource, led by Fatou Ceesay (Women’s Services Coordinator) and including 15 women from the Refugee Resource women's group representing a diverse range of cultural groups, some of whom have lived experience.

Questions used to guide each of the group discussions are shown in Annex V.

## 2.2 Filming the sessions

The team were keen to draw on learning from a previous film project, where having reflected on the process and recording honest feedback supported planning for developing the 5Ms work more efficiently and effectively. In particular, they wanted to bring in the benefits of filming an open conversation in a group setting, which previous work showed as allowing for a more ‘natural’ approach to discussing difficult issues and is potentially more interesting for diverse groups.

To help maintain energy levels, each workshop was limited to one and a half hours (including any stops and starts with the filming). The workshops were mainly filmed in one cut to capture spontaneous discussion and ensure the conversation

*“At the beginning a lot of the women were really hesitant in terms of being on camera, but by the end all of them signed consent forms and I felt we had done something right for them to want to be on camera”*

**Volunteer facilitator**

flowed naturally. All efforts were made to make the contributors feel comfortable, and feedback from facilitators was that the community groups reacted positively to the filming sessions. On occasion, participants were hesitant to speak on camera at first, but it was reported that they became more engaged as the discussion developed. Contributors were on the whole willing to share their experiences and views. On the some occasions that views on services were less than positive (as one participant's was in relation to social care), they were able to air these freely and we could include other, more positive views and information to achieve some balance. This was not always easy, for example, in relation to access to services for those with NRPF. Where mental health issues, FGMPOs and domestic servitude were concerned, there were more positive feelings that 'help is out there', albeit that there are still language barriers, stigma from communities etc.

Inevitably, there were some technical issues, such as poor sound quality at times, which may be addressed for future projects though is sometimes unavoidable because of acoustics in particular venues and/or working with individuals who are not accustomed to being recorded or speaking on camera. In terms of the filmmaking process itself, there was scope for miscommunication, partly because the film-makers were technical specialists who could not always have knowledge about the subjects being addressed to give them context. Also, there was heavy reliance on email communication during the editing process. This was often time-consuming, and the potential benefits of having filmmakers with expertise in our area may lead OAC to explore developing in-house film-making skills for future projects. This would have the benefit of allowing more responsiveness and adaptability during the development process, for example, allowing more organic development of ideas to support a broader range of creativity from the team.

### 2.3 Translation and accessibility

It was understood from previous project work that the translation process constitutes a sub-project in itself due to the number of stages involved and the level of skill required from a voiceover artist. A specific meeting was held early on in the project, and careful consideration made over the needs of our audience, e.g. in relation to classical v colloquial Arabic, levels of formality, etc. Nevertheless, achieving an accurate translation and dubbing are complex, and we encountered a number of delays including inaccuracies in the initial translation, technical issues with filming related to the slowing down of frames to fit Arabic words and absence due to sickness and annual leave. Despite early preparatory work, therefore, progress on this aspect of producing films is often slow and unpredictable.

Similarly, in terms of access to the videos, we have noted that automated subtitles on YouTube are very poor quality, and our understanding is that this is a well-known issue. Having liaised with the filmmaker to explore the possibility of replacing these with our own, we have identified that this would require a considerable amount of additional resource outside the scope of this project. Therefore, we have added to the YouTube descriptions and instruction to: *'please avoid using YouTube's automatic subtitle function for this film, due to inaccurate translation of speech'*. We will also upload full transcripts for all of the videos which will give



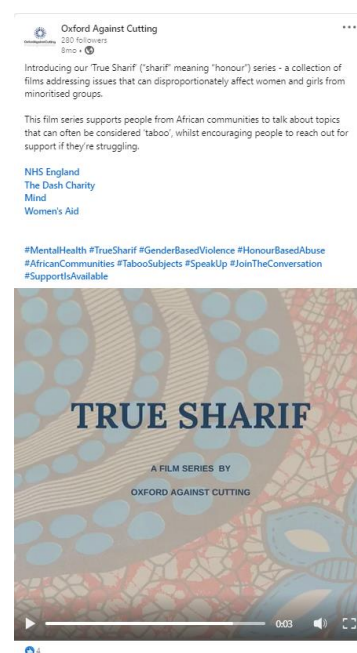
an accurate accompaniment to the films. This is also good practice for accessibility purposes, especially for those with hearing impairments and/or who want to read at a slower pace. This will also make the videos more 'searchable' and therefore more likely to be available to someone searching for information on the issues covered in the 5Ms.

## 2.4 Outreach and partnerships

Oxford Against Cutting were able to draw on existing partnerships and develop new ones as part of this project, though it did take some time to finalise the groups who were eventually involved. The original aim of the project was to cover the whole Thames Valley, however, we struggled to find African community groups for each area of the TV who were willing to be filmed for the workshop. Although Oxford Against Cutting has good relationships with a number of partners, for example, in Slough, the group we identified did not feel comfortable to be filmed. We also worked to forge new links, for example, in Milton Keynes. However, the key organiser – despite best efforts – was unable to get confirmation of attendance from the group, leading to cancellation of the session because of the risk of no / very few participants. This led to a focus on groups running in just Oxford and Reading. Though a learning point may be for the development of further links with other parts of the Thames Valley, it must be recognised that there are inherent difficulties involved in working with grass roots organisations on this type of media-based project.

In recognition of the amount of time it takes to coordinate and facilitate an in person group workshop the project was designed with a budget of £500 for each service involved to support this work (sending invitations/sorting the venue/providing refreshments/facilitation and providing a minimum number of participants). It was a key aim of the project to forefront the groups we worked with, and this included them joining initial brainstorm meetings, checking the messaging, support with logistics such as booking venues, coordinating the groups etc. Engaging with partners at a very early stage in the process allows for input of expertise from the outset and sets a robust course for the content of the material as it is developed. This is also more time-efficient, as it leads to fewer revisions later in the process. In particular, we recognise the benefits to increasing the reach of the films that will result from public acknowledgment, and partners were given prominence on the front page of our films as these were integral to the film they helped create. We hope this will help group members feel a sense of ownership and pride about their involvement, encouraging sharing in their networks and potentially using them for education in other groups. We also hope that those conducting frontline work with communities can benefit from showcasing the film to funders, which will in turn support more front line activities.

Working closely with grass roots organisations for this project has provided a number of benefits for OAC and the projects, not least because of the rich cultural knowledge and experience they are able to bring, and because of their diversity of networks that will enable sharing of a range of services. We also identified some key learning points for future activities with such organisations, which included:





- Understanding that some groups will have be more informal structures and may need more support with organisation and direction for this type of exercise than other charities or NGOs. This did vary, though, between those involved.
- Remembering that the structure of the workshop can be very important in terms of serving food, etc, as there may be cultural expectations and norms that have built up over time within the group.
- Recognising that there is more likelihood of language barriers in smaller, locally run groups. This may feed in to planning the content of any workshop or activity, for example, the differences between ‘financial abuse’ and ‘financial hardship’ are not necessarily clear or easily transferable across cultural or language barriers.
- Based on feedback from the groups themselves, trying to build in as much time as possible for groups to mobilise their members, being mindful that many will have other responsibilities and it takes time to rearrange things or contact others.

### 3 Dissemination activities

The films have been disseminated widely and across a variety of media, including:

- A comprehensive social media campaign for the English film content – using the hashtag #TrueSharif - during March and April 2022, with some follow-up on Instagram in November in which all contributors and stakeholders were targeted/tagged to encourage sharing of the material. A specific social media campaign for the Arabic film versions is being planned for 2023.
- Distribution of the video links to all contributors and other key stakeholders and professional contacts during April 2022,<sup>4</sup> encouraging them to share with their networks, with confirmation from a number that they had circulated widely, e.g., to the Thames Valley-wide BAED Communities Partnership Board and via the Reducing the Risk Champions Bulletin – see image right (where there are over 2,300 champions in the network).
- Issue of a press release on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (see Annex VI) to press houses in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, with additional support from the National FGM Centre, through the OCCG internal communications and NHS teams and via partners including Refugee Resource who also circulated via their own communications networks and social media.
- An appearance on That’s TV Oxfordshire by our gender specialist Hauwa Suleiman to explain the purpose of the 5M films (April 2022).
- Inclusion in the OAC newsletter which has a circulation list of 1k across a wide range of stakeholders and agencies.
- All of the films are available on [a link in the Oxford Against Cutting website.](#)



In addition, the English versions of the ‘Mental Health’ and ‘FGM Protection Orders’ films were previewed and discussed with the commissioning CCGs on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 via a Zoom meeting. This presented an opportunity to discuss further opportunities for dissemination and possibilities for feeding into training programmes such as safeguarding for GPs across Thames Valley. Other potential outlets include the Oxford School Nursing Service and running a pilot workshop based on one of the films at a school, to consider developing workshops as part of a schools programme.

Feedback was obtained from a number of sources during this stage of the dissemination, which we have fed into our evaluation (see section below).

We did experience some challenges in relation to dissemination which led to a deviation from our original strategy. A key element was for the films to be shown in GP and dental surgeries and other health settings, with the aim of reaching at least 300 individuals from our target

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<sup>4</sup> See Annex II for those we contacted in addition to contributors to the films.

communities. However, there have been barriers to this throughout, not least because many surgeries are not using screens in their waiting rooms as they discourage people from waiting inside due to Covid, or are trying to make cost savings. We discussed this widely, for example with the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership to identify other potential settings, though no viable opportunities have been identified for locations to show the films. Therefore, we will not aim to disseminate the films in these settings at this time. The Part 1s (short, non-audio sections) have still been created and are not time-bounded (except in terms of possible changes of service providers, which is beyond our control). Our hope is that the films can be used in waiting rooms when things change.

Through participation in the workshop sessions alone we engaged with over 50 individuals from diverse African communities. We are confident that we have reached many others with our messages through distribution of the films, as based on the number of views of the films since posting to YouTube/the OAC website. As of 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022, the videos (as identified via Oxford Against Cutting YouTube channel<sup>5</sup>) overall have been viewed 633 times, with the full-length film on Mental Health being most popular (171 views), followed by the full-length film on FGM Protection Orders (135 views).

**Finally, a key opportunity to disseminate and embed one of our films in practice – ‘FGM Protection Orders’** – has been through the development of a workshop. This was piloted on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 via Zoom. Eight individuals, including representatives from OAC, the police, and child protection services attended the pilot, three of whom are from FGM-affected communities. In a follow-up poll, the pilot attendees gave on average 4.75/5 score that they would recommend the workshop to others, 4/5 in how confident they now feel in discussing FGMPOs and 100% of whom felt that the workshop had increased their understanding. The pilot was also useful for clarifying the best way to deliver some of the information (e.g., relating to legislation overlapping with that on FGMPOs), and for broadening the discussion on how important it is to raise awareness, with suggestions that PSHE lessons should include this type of information.



Following the pilot, the workshop was successfully delivered face-to-face at the National FGM Centre conference on International Day of the Girl Child (10<sup>th</sup> October 2022), receiving very positive feedback from the conference hosts.



<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/@oxfordagainstcutting7038/videos>

## 4 Project feedback

We collected a significant amount of feedback on the films via email and, in the case of the group facilitators both through email and some 1-2-1 discussion on the content and quality of the films.

Where possible we also asked for comment on any impact they felt that the workshops and the films contributed to increased understanding on the five areas.

In terms of impact on the groups, Cecily Mwaniki of Utulivu fed back that our partnership had successfully supported their conversations on both money abuse and mental health issues, and partners also confirmed that the filming had initiated new conversations, for example, around FGMPOs.

A positive response to the films has also led to some organisations including the National FGM Centre offering to add them to their websites. Furthermore, following a direct request, Thames Valley Police have been provided with a version of the 'Men and FGM' video upon their request to use in training police officers, PCSOs and other relevant staff, with a potential audience of 3000+.

*"Great videos. Especially powerful to hear men talking"*

*"You've done a brilliant job – I'm going to watch them all!"*

**Oxford FGM Ops Group Members**

*"I found it informative and helpful that it [the Mental Health film] was from 'regular' people rather than professionals"*

*"Good to see men talking on such a sensitive/taboo subject and to really understand how it is perceived in their culture, liked how it started with text messaging conversation"*

**CCG feedback**

*"It's a great project ... to cover those topics within the African community, they're major topics, and they are topics we need to raise more awareness of ... they needed to be raised"*

**Volunteer facilitator**

Finally, there was also positive feedback on the way in which the films were made, and the appropriateness of the content from the perspective of frontline service providers, for example:

*"I am a wellbeing worker for Oxfordshire Mind and just wanted to say how moved I was watching your film. I found it inspiring and loved the comments that all your participants made. Great use of music and the wind moving the fabric. Gave you time to breathe and contemplate. Thank you*

*Best wishes, Kat"*

**Kat Davison (She/her), Wellbeing worker across localities for Oxfordshire Mind**

*"Thanks so much for sharing, truly moved by the video's I managed to watch today. Each was so powerful; I found the men*

*speaking about FGM particularly fascinating. I've never had the opportunity to hear what men from practicing cultures actually think about it. I will definitely share it all with colleagues within my organisation."*

**Selina Ferguson, Partner Link Worker, Probation Service Reading**

*"Thank you so much for sharing these films – which are all brilliant and so valuable to us here at OSARCC. I have shared all of the films with our staff team, and will let you know if they have any specific questions."*

**Beki Osborne, Development Manager, Oxfordshire Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre**

*"Thank you for sending your film and for signposting to Samaritans ...the overall message about talking, reaching out and looking after your mental health is great.  
Kind regards"*

**Monica Hawley, Media Adviser, Samaritans**

*"Thank you so much for sharing ... They look great – a lot of hard work and thought has gone in to them, well done."*

**Sophie Wing-King, DA Coordinator, Bracknell Forest and RBWM**

Comments from those involved in making the films were complimentary about the process and the final product, and some contained useful feedback that we have taken on board as learning for future projects (see our section above on 'Outreach and partnerships'):

*"Thank you for sending this through. Those who have watched it so far find it very informative and culturally representative."*

**Cecily Mwaniki, Utulivu**

*"I want to commend your production team for making sense of the hour plus long conversation and coming up with this comprehensive video"*

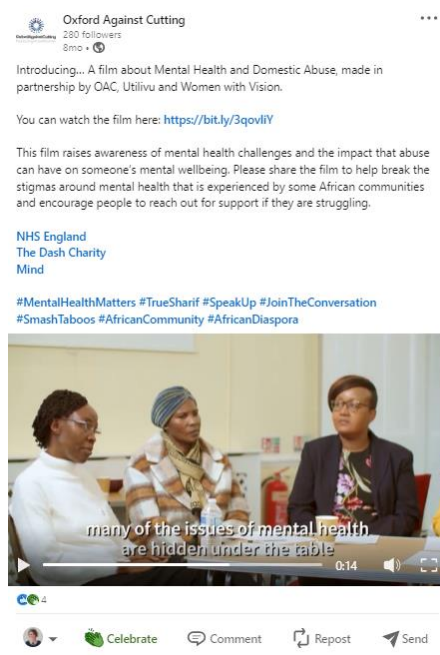
**Victor Koroma, General Manager, ACRE**

*“So pleased to see the films are now finished and ready to share and it was a pleasure to be able to be part of this important project. I will take time to watch all of the films and would also like to share them with my extended management team colleagues”*

**Sara Keppie, Oxfordshire MIND**

*“We have never talked about [FGM] protection orders and this conversation was important to take this forward”*

**Community Organiser, Utulivu**



*“I am pleased to say the overall filming project was very good, I can’t fault it. The meetings, regular feedbacks and effective communication was excellent.*

*The filming day itself went exceptionally well, very good team, the guys 🍌, communication and interaction was fab, it all flowed well.*

*The only comment is about the timing, for its to be more successful in growth, size, population, good dynamic we need to improve on the time framework given to the groups to galvanise attendees or audience was short, we needed more time to allow more people to attend, spread the word & capture a good mix of people. Most of my women work in Healthcare, rotas are 2/3 months ahead, requests needs to be required.*

*I enjoyed the planning, delivery & implementation of the project. Would love to do it again if an opportunity arises in the future.*

*Kind regards”*

**Jammie Koroma, Women with Vision**

## 5 Conclusions and looking forward

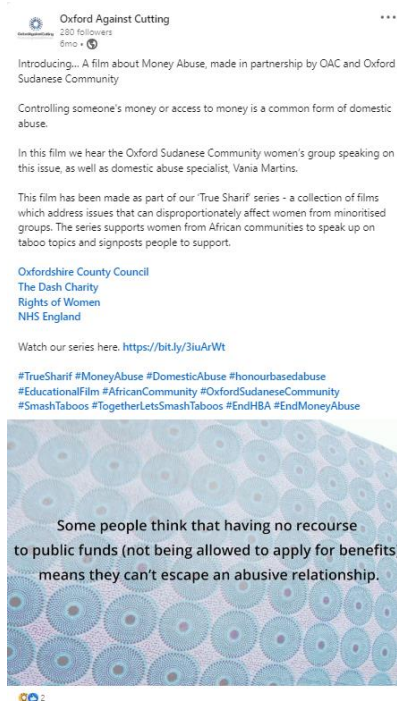
The 5Ms film project has given our charity an innovative way to stay connected with affected communities and their allies, particularly through the development of partnerships and the face-to-face interaction during planning and filmmaking. We hope that the films we have created continue raising awareness amongst these groups, enhancing networks and information-sharing, and prompting thought-provoking discussions.

*"... the skills I picked up filming ... I've never presented and asked questions confidently on film - that really helped my confidence overall"*  
**Volunteer facilitator**

Despite best efforts, the longer-term impact of the Covid pandemic has meant that we were unable to distribute the films through all of our planned channels. We were, though encouraged by the feedback from the dissemination work. Also, the films are now available for when the situation changes and (except for possible changes in service information) deliberately designed not to be time-limited in their content.

More positively, the project has led to developing new relationships such as with the National FGM Centre (NFGMC) and the strengthening of existing partnerships, for example with ACRE, Utulivu and Refugee Resource. Moreover, we are able to build on this, for example, we have received an invitation to join Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery network and Leethen Bartholomew of NFGMC has agreed to join the Oxford Against Cutting Trustee Board. There is much potential for taking this work forward. The workshop on FGMPOs has already been successfully piloted and delivered at a major anti-FGM conference, and there are a number of avenues for collaboration with those involved in 5Ms as we develop workshops on the other films.

The team involved in managing and delivering the 5Ms project expressed how much they had taken on board from this diverse and interesting project, and appreciated the space allowed for debrief and reflection. Although all acknowledged that it had been challenging at times, they have enriched their skills set, developed important relationships and added value to the project outputs by discussing and documenting key learning to take through into future OAC work and community engagement. By continuing to explore outlets and integrating the 5Ms project learning and outputs, we will seek to build on this to reach a wider audience and increase our impact, encouraging others to join in our mission to end harmful practices and continuing to explore innovative ways to support the communities involved.



## References and useful resources

Elmore Community Services (2022). Podcast: Preventing modern slavery, supporting survivors. A conversation with the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner – preventing modern slavery,

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/3VQKY7gWXolbrZ1bB5RXW1?si=pksOYtgUQo-mvHKN8TiVmw&nd=1>

Gell, F. Shackman, J., Webb-Johnson, A. (2022). Researching the extent and nature of Modern Slavery in Oxford,

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60914896017ac31a59bebf4b/t/620bd86422c4b75922df395f/1644943490953/Elmore\\_Modern\\_Slavery\\_Report%28Rebuild-full-v2%29.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60914896017ac31a59bebf4b/t/620bd86422c4b75922df395f/1644943490953/Elmore_Modern_Slavery_Report%28Rebuild-full-v2%29.pdf)

Oxford: Elmore Community Services and Oxford City Council.

[Hauwa Suleiman appearance discussing 5Ms on That's TV Oxfordshire, April 2022.](#)

True Sharif films (full and key message) [https://www.oxfordagainstcutting.org/true-sharif/?\\_ga=2.24486138.1102817996.1672835525-41346754.1627573312](https://www.oxfordagainstcutting.org/true-sharif/?_ga=2.24486138.1102817996.1672835525-41346754.1627573312)



## Annex I – ‘5M’s’ film versions available online December 2022

Film name	Version	Language	Duration	Age recommendation
True Sharif – FGM Protection Orders	Key Messages	English	2:29	All ages
True Sharif – FGM Protection Orders	Full film	English	15:49	16+
True Sharif – Men talking about FGM	Key Messages	English	2:48	All ages
True Sharif – Men talking about FGM	Full film	English	13:59	16+
True Sharif – Mental health and domestic abuse	Key Messages	English	2:26	All ages
True Sharif – Mental health and domestic abuse	Full film	English	10:28	16+
True Sharif – Modern Slavery	Key Messages	English	2:41	All ages
True Sharif – Modern Slavery	Full film	English	14:54	16+
True Sharif – Money Abuse and No Recourse to Public Funds	Key Messages	English	2:27	All ages
True Sharif – Money Abuse and No Recourse to Public Funds	Full film	English	17:55	16+

## **Annex II – project stakeholders: community film partners, brainstorm participants and distribution network**

### **Community film partners**

Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality (ACRE) (feature in Men talking about FGM) <http://www.acrereading.org> promotes equality, community empowerment, and community cohesion in Greater Reading.

Refugee Resource (Modern Slavery) <https://www.refugeeresource.org.uk/> provides psychological, social and practical support for refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants to help them heal from trauma and suffering, and to build new lives as part of Oxfordshire’s diverse community.

Sudanese Community in Oxford and Oxfordshire (Money Abuse): recently formalised as a charity and aims to promote social inclusion.

Utulivu (Mental Health & FGMPOs) <https://www.utulivu.co.uk/> protect girls and women at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) by supporting FGM survivors and their communities and providing awareness on negative effects of FGM.

Women with Vision (Mental Health & FGMPOs) [www.wvwreading.org.uk](http://www.wvwreading.org.uk) a community group in and around Reading that discuss and plan events around cultural and gender related issues.

Thanks also to Vania Martins for her contribution to our Money Abuse and NRPF film.

### **Brainstorm participants**

These included representatives from A2 Dominion Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Services, Asylum Welcome, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire MIND, National FGM Centre, Berkshire Women’s Aid, Social Care Bucks, Turpin and Miller LLP, Victims First Specialist Services plus modern slavery researchers in addition to the filming partners.

### **Distribution network**

All Thames Valley Women’s Aids	Oxford City Council
AFI UK	Oxford Rose Clinic
Aspire Oxford	Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre (OSARCC)
Asylum Welcome	Oxfordshire MIND
Barnardo’s	Prison Service
Berkshire BAED Group	Reading Rose Centre
Berkshire Women’s Aid	Reducing the Risk
CCGs	Rights of Women
DA Partnership Oxfordshire	SAFE Project
DASH	Safety Partnership
Elmore Community Services	Salvation Army
FGM Ops Group	Samaritans
GP Safeguarding Leads	Sexual Health Services
Hestia	Slough Integration Services
Jennifer Obaseki, legal specialist	Slough Refugee Support
Karma Nirvana	Sunrise Multicultural Project

Migrant Help  
Modern Slavery Helpline  
National FGM Centre  
NHS England  
ODAS  
OSCB

Thames Valley PCC  
Thames Valley Probation  
Turpin and Miller  
TV Police

## Annex III – meet the OAC planning and film-making team

### Dot Pritchard – Project Manager



*Dot is Project Manager at Oxford Against Cutting, working to raise awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and issues around body image through education and conversation. Dot co-facilitates safeguarding training for teachers, as well as workshops for young people on FGM, forced marriage and body image. Dot was previously a mentor with Refugee Resource and a trustee for The Young Women’s Music Project. Dot holds a BA in Philosophy.*

### Hauwa Suleiman – Gender Specialist and BAED WORLDS Coordinator



*Hauwa is a specialist in gender issues affecting women and girls and has been involved in peacebuilding since the age of 13. She has experience volunteering in Nigeria with programmes targeting vulnerabilities in internally displaced persons camps, orphanages and impoverished communities. She has an MA in Development & Emergency Practice, specialising in Disasters, Risks and Shelter.*

### Kate Agha – CEO



*Kate Agha is the CEO and Co-Founder of Oxford Against Cutting. She has experience in one-to-one outreach work with girls and women from migrant communities suffering all types of domestic abuse and honour-based abuse. She has an MA in Humanitarian and Development Practice and previously practiced law as a solicitor. Her research includes violence against women in Pakistan and the effectiveness of the legal system.*

### Moram Nafaa – Anti-FGM Facilitator



*Moram is an Anti-FGM Facilitator at Oxford Against Cutting and is currently studying for a Masters in Development Studies, with reference to gender, at SOAS University of London. She has been actively involved in empowering women and girls specifically in Sudan, where she previously worked for CARE International. Moram believes strongly in raising awareness through education to empower women and girls, to eradicate harmful practices globally.*

### Lena el-Hindi – Senior Anti-FGM Facilitator



*Lena El-Hindi is a Capacity Building and Training Specialist and Representative of the Oxford Sudanese community. Lena previously worked as Gender and Child Rights Advisor for Plan International, UNFPA and the UN Ministry of Welfare in Sudan. Lena has graduated from a combined degree in Law and Anthropology from the London School of Economics and Political Science and has an LLM in Human Rights Law.*

## Annex IV – film-making process: flowchart



## **Annex V – community discussion group questions**

### **Mental health**

- What do we mean when we talk about mental health?
- What other words do our communities use to explain “mental health”?
- If someone is experiencing domestic abuse, this can impact someone’s mental health. In what ways do you think someone’s mental health might be affected if they’re experiencing domestic abuse?
- In what ways might poor mental health show up in our bodies?
- Is there a stigma around mental health? If so, why do you think that is?
- How might people who are experiencing poor mental health be perceived and how might people in your community try to help them? (Facilitator to explore whether people are seen as / called crazy when they have mental health problems.)
- Why do you think it’s important to break the stigma around poor mental health and ensure that we respond to anyone who is experiencing difficulties with care and non-judgement?
- What would you say to someone who you knew was struggling with their mental health? What would you suggest they do and which services would you tell them to go to? Do some people use healing services to help them with their mental health? What do you think about healing services? What about healing services compared to mainstream mental health services, such as Talking Space?

### **FGM Protection Orders**

- What is FGM? Suggestion to film a participant saying the definition of FGM
- Why should we protect girls from being cut?
- Are there girls still at risk of being cut in the UK?
- How can we protect girls from FGM?
- Have you heard of FGM protection orders? If so, please can you tell us a bit about them?
- Do you know anyone who has had experience with an FGM protection order. (Opportunity for participant to share - without naming anyone - any experiences they've had or know of with FGM POs)

### **FGMPOs- Additional questions for expert**

- What is an FGM protection order?
- How can they protect girls from being cut?
- How can someone apply for an FGM protection order?
- Do FGM protection orders mean children being taken away from their families?
- What would you say to someone who was considering applying for an FGM PO, but worried about the repercussions for them?
- In your personal experience, are FGM protection orders helpful in protecting women and girls?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

## **Modern Slavery (domestic servitude)**

- What is the difference between domestic servitude and household chores?
- What makes a woman more vulnerable to domestic servitude?
- What impact might domestic servitude have on a woman?
- Why do you think that a woman might stay in a situation like this, even if she is unhappy?
- Why might a woman in this situation be hesitant to reach out to a service for help? What barriers do women face to accessing services for domestic servitude?
- How can we help women to recognise that no one has the right to take away their freedom?
- How can we make it easier for women to access help, if they want to?

## **Men talk about FGM**

- Please can you tell us about cultural practices involving women in your respective communities?
- What do you know about FGM, and what is its purpose in the community/society you represent?
- FGM is now generally seen as a harmful practice. In what category would you place it – harmful or not harmful, and why?
- Do you think men are fully aware of the harm FGM does to women?
- Please tell us to the best of your knowledge on the impact of FGM in a relationship or marriage?
- Is there a preference for men between a 'cut' and 'uncut' woman? Why is that?
- It is commonly perceived that men condone the practice as they do not speak out enough against it. Are there any barriers to men speaking out?
- Most anti-FGM campaign groups believe that if more men decided against the practice it will stop. Do you think men's voices are important in the campaign, and what can they do to help stop it?

## **Money abuse and NRPF**

- What is financial abuse? Can you give some examples of this type of abuse and the harm it can cause?
- Why might someone who is experiencing financial abuse be afraid to tell anyone what is happening to them?
- Sometimes people think there is 'no way out'. Why do you think people might think this? What are the barriers to getting support?
- If someone is experiencing abuse, including financial abuse, they are entitled to help and support, even if they have no recourse to public funds, no documents, or are here on a spousal visa.
- Services can help people leave abusive relationships and secure their own immigration status so that they can stay in the UK.
- How can we support people to know their rights and know what support is available?
- What is it like using a domestic abuse service to help with financial abuse?

## Annex VI – press release

For release on 4 April (2022). Interviewees available. Contact [kate.gha@oxfordagainstcutting.org](mailto:kate.gha@oxfordagainstcutting.org) 07909 510 840

### Tackling Abuse Issues in African Communities Using Film

Thames Valley charity, Oxford Against Cutting (OAC), is launching a new film series called “True Sharif” (“sharif” meaning “honour”) on abuse issues that can affect local African communities. The films address issues starting with the letter “M” and cover: Mutilation (specifically Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders), Mental Health and Domestic Abuse, Money Abuse, Men talking about FGM and Modern Slavery (specifically domestic servitude). The project has been commissioned by Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups using domestic abuse specific funding from NHS England and focuses on the viewpoints of community members, rather than statutory agencies.

The films will be shown in community groups and training workshops to support conversations on abuse issues. They aim to tackle misconceptions, raise awareness of specialist abuse services and increase uptake of these services. Oxford Against Cutting is also creating workshop plans and materials, using the films, to be piloted later this year.

Oxford Against Cutting worked in partnership with other NGOs in the Thames Valley to film community groups having conversations about the 5 “M’s”. The groups were Refugee Resource’s women’s group in Oxford, Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality (ACRE, based in Reading), Utulivu and Women With Vision based in Reading and Sudanese Community in Oxford. Other groups supported the initial brainstorming to help create key messaging in the films, including Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service, Berkshire Women’s Aid, Turpin and Miller and Oxfordshire MIND. The films about FGM were also supported by the National FGM Centre, which is a partnership between leading UK children’s charity Barnardo’s and the Local Government Association.

Each community group had about 10 participants, representing a diverse range of cultural groups. The men’s group for example, included men who identified as Kenyan, Sierra Leonean, Nigerian, Liberian and Sudanese. The films have been created in 2 parts – the first part is 1-2 minutes long, non-audio, with key messages that can be shown in GP waiting rooms, for example. The second part includes the community group conversations, and this part is certification aged 16 plus.

The films are called the True Sharif (“sharif” meaning “honour”) series as they tackle issues that can carry feelings of shame or dishonour, considered taboo in some African communities. For example, the film, Mental Health and Domestic Abuse, includes conversation on the stigma around mental health that can make it challenging for people to seek support. As Esther in the film explains, some African communities see mental health as ‘abnormal, as madness, as crazy...’ and the film aims to encourage people to speak to someone if they are struggling. Cecily, Utulivu Founding Member, explains ‘This is about actually normalising these conversations. Just as I go about saying I have a headache today, let’s feel comfortable saying you know, ‘mentally, I’m not ok’, and it’s ok not to be ok.’ The film also highlights the risk of poor mental health following domestic abuse and the support there is available.



Dot Pritchard, the Project Manager, explains “There can be such a stigma in talking about issues related to abuse. Often abuse issues are considered taboo and people may even be encouraged to stay quiet so as not to disrupt a marriage or bring “shame” to a family or community, for example. This culture of silence means that many people don’t feel like they have a right to speak out, seek support or in some cases leave an abusive situation. Our True Sharif series hears the voices of people bravely speaking out on these issues, breaking down some of the stigma and letting people know that support is out there”.

Many communities find it difficult to talk about female genital mutilation (FGM) and the series includes a film about what men can do to help end FGM. Victor, the Director at the Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality (ACRE in Reading) explains that he felt empowered to start campaigning against FGM after talking to an elderly woman in his community who told him that FGM is “an absolutely useless practice and serves absolutely no purpose”. Since then, Victor has been committed to encouraging men to learn about the harms of FGM, speak up and warn people that “FGM is not good for our communities”.

The film on FGM Protection Orders includes conversation about how orders can help protect girls at risk of FGM. Some people worry that FGM Protection Orders will lead to children being taken away from their families, however this does not happen in the majority of cases. Children are only removed from families as an absolute last resort, when all other options to keep them safe have been exhausted. As Leethen Bartholomew, Head of the National FGM Centre, explains ‘From my experience at the National FGM Centre, we have been involved in around 40 FGM Protection Orders, and only in two or three of those cases were the children removed temporarily from the family. In most of these cases there were other issues going on like domestic abuse and parental mental health which coincided with risks around FGM.’

The series also addresses domestic servitude, a form of modern slavery. Victims can have their passport and ID documents taken away from them; be staying in very poor living conditions; or be forced to work long hours on minimal to no pay, for example. Sometimes victims will have a sense that someone is using them but do not know that they can get support, or where to find it. As Sara from Refugee Resource’s women’s group says in the film, ‘there are a lot of people who experience this, but they don’t know the name of it or whether they can get help or not’.

Finally, the series addresses money abuse. Controlling someone's money or access to money is a common form of domestic abuse. Vania Martins, Domestic Abuse Specialist, comments in the film “The most common, usually, is when the abusers prevent the victims from acquiring basic needs. I remember a few examples we have been dealing with lately - simple things like not being able to buy your own period pads or top up your phone to have contact with your family, other people and friends. Then there are more extreme examples, like preventing you from buying food”. Support helplines are included at the end of each film to signpost people to help. As Lena, Senior Facilitator for Oxford Against Cutting and representative of Sudanese Community Oxford says: ‘If people don’t speak out, things are not really going to change.’

### **Additional information**

Oxford Against Cutting previously created a film series called True Izzat (“izzat” meaning “honour”) that includes 5 films that tackle taboo subjects connected with sexual health and relationships in South Asian communities.

True Sharif films can be accessed here: <https://www.oxfordagainstcutting.org/true-sharif/>

True Izzat films can be accessed here: <https://www.oxfordagainstcutting.org/true-izzat/>

For more information and to book workshops visit [www.oxfordagainstcutting.org](http://www.oxfordagainstcutting.org)

Helpline numbers:

NSPCC FGM Helpline - 08000283550

Rights of Women Immigration and Asylum Law Line - 020 7490 7689

Citizens Advice Bureau for details of local immigration lawyers – 08001448848

Modern Slavery Helpline (managed by Unseen): 08000 121 700

The Salvation Army - 0300 3038151

Migrant Help - 0808 8010 503

ENDS

For release on 4 April. Interviewees available. Contact [kate.gha@oxfordagainstcutting.org](mailto:kate.gha@oxfordagainstcutting.org)  
07909 510 840

Note to news desks:

**Oxford Against Cutting (OAC)** is a rights-based charity working to end harmful practices suffered by girls and women living in the Thames Valley.

These include: Female genital mutilation (FGM), honour-based abuse (HBA) and early and forced marriage (EFM), and female cosmetic genital surgery. Our mission is to end cultural practices that harm girls and women by providing education, supporting survivors, raising awareness of support services and empowering young people to champion initiatives against harmful practices. People from affected communities are at the forefront of our activities.

Visit [www.oxfordagainstcutting.org](http://www.oxfordagainstcutting.org) to find out more.

### **About Barnardo's**

Last year more than 382,000 children, young people, parents and carers were supported by Barnardo's through more than 790 services and partnerships across the UK, such as young carers, care leavers, foster carers and adoptive parents, training and skills or parenting classes.

We work to transform the lives of the UK's most vulnerable children and every year we help thousands of families to build a better future.

Visit [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk) to find out more.

Registered charity No. 216250 and SC037605.

Follow Barnardo's media team on Twitter [@BarnardosNews](https://twitter.com/BarnardosNews)

#### Film partner organisations

**Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality (ACRE)** promotes equality, community empowerment, and community cohesion in Greater Reading. Find out more at [www.acrereading.org](http://www.acrereading.org)

**Refugee Resource** provides psychological, social and practical support for refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants to help them heal from trauma and suffering, and to build new lives as part of Oxfordshire's diverse community. Find out more at [www.refugeeresource.org.uk/](http://www.refugeeresource.org.uk/)

**Sudanese Community in Oxford and Oxfordshire** has recently formalised as a charity and aims to promote social inclusion.

**Utulivu** helps protect girls and women at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) by supporting FGM survivors and their communities and providing awareness on negative effects of FGM. Find out more at [www.utulivu.co.uk](http://www.utulivu.co.uk)

**Women with Vision** is a community group in and around the Reading community that discuss and plan events around cultural and gender related issues. Find out more at [www.wvwreading.org.uk](http://www.wvwreading.org.uk)



# OxfordAgainstCutting

## ProtectingGirls&Women

**Acknowledgements:** Many thanks to those who helped in any way with film production, facilitated or took part and contributed to the discussions.



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