

Sini Sanuman works against the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Mali through public meetings, a signature campaign, the **Pledge Against Excision** and through songs and the media. **Healthy Tomorrow** is Sini Sanuman's US sister organization. The Pledge Against Excision, a promise never to excise a girl, is a good mobilizing tool, starting conversations and giving a concrete action that people can do, who oppose FGM.

In 2002, 25 groups, including Amnesty Int'l and Planned Parenthood, as well as some individuals, joined together to collect signatures on the Pledge Against Excision. Now we have 56 partner groups, many individual activists and over 68,000 signatures, including those of many influential people.

Using the Pledge Against Excision – In October 2007 we presented 30,000 signatures on the Pledge Against Excision and in 2015 we presented 68,000 to the Malian legislature to encourage them to pass a law making FGM a crime. On the Pledge, people are asked if the time is right for such a law. Almost everyone who signs answers "yes." We have also presented a proposed bill to make it easier for the legislature to enact a law. We hope they will vote on this matter soon.

The signatures are also intended to impress the Malian public with how many people are willing to publicly renounce FGM. Both presentations of the signatures were broadcast on Malian news, which is also seen in 9 other West African countries.

Villages' decisions: We are pleased that 11

villages where we work have decided to give up the practice of FGM, and publicly announced their decision with ceremonies, most of which have been on Malian news. We are also responsible for a list kept by the Women's Ministry of 1,400 villages around Mali that have agreed to stop FGM..

Clubs: A number of groups have formed to help in our campaign. One is a club of girls who are proud not to be excised.

Media: We have put a major talk show on TV and many messages about FGM on the radio.

Videos: We have produced and aired a number of music videos with famous artists: Kandia Kouyaté, Amy Koita, the Zotto Boys, and Adama Yalomba. These videos have played many times on Malian TV.

Founding member Susan McLucas has worked in Mali for 18 years in the struggle against FGM. In that time, she has initiated and produced the poster "Let's Stop Excising," and the album Stop Excision. She also helped to start the Pledge Against Excision.

The album "Stop Excision" is still being played on Malian radio and sold in the markets. Many big stars in Mali recorded 8 songs in 5 local languages against FGM.

The album is available from Healthy Tomorrow for \$10-\$20, your choice, as a CD and for \$5-\$10 as a tape. All the proceeds go back into the struggle against excision.

Public meetings: We organize many public meetings, to share feelings about FGM and try to convince people to stop, the largest one

being for 3,000 people where students we'd worked with showed their sketches, poems and drawings against FGM. Often we sing or listen to anti-FGM songs at the end of meetings.

Excisers: A number of excisers have agreed to stop practicing, after being approached, respectfully, and in a friendly way, and having the negative aspects of the practice explained to them clearly. We are honored to collaborate with a number of such women. As ex-excisers, they are well-placed to convince other people to stop excising. Over 150 excisers have now signed the Pledge Against Excision, and help us spread our message.

Fifth Person Principle – Siaka Traoré, founding president of Sini Sanuman, was the fifth person to approach our first exciser about abandoning the practice. She explained to him that she was very angry at the first person to suggest this, still angry but also a little bothered by the second and so on down the line until, when Siaka came to her house and talked to her about stopping, she was ready to bow to group pressure. She even invited us to her house to lead a meeting, and invited other excisers, who all joined her in stopping.

Our project encourages people to speak up, reminding them that the worst thing that can happen to them is that someone will be angry and that, even so, they will be preparing the way for the next people.

Ex-excisers' song: We have a song by Ténin Bomboté, that is sung from the point of view of an exciser, "I Abandon." It says "The cries of the excised girls kept me up at night, so I

say ‘No’ to excision.” We have made this song into a video, featuring 17 ex-excisers, which has been shown many times on television in Mali and around West Africa.

As part of our outreach, we distribute a handout, “Stop Excision,” with the problems with FGM on one side and quotes from major religious leaders, like Ousmane Chérif Haidara, on the other. We also have a collection of graphic photographs of serious medical consequences of FGM, which immediately convince many people to stop practicing it, including some excisers.

We believe that a combination of public personalities, ordinary public-spirited people like Siaka and the others who invite people to sign the Pledge, ex-excisers, religious leaders, working person-to-person and through the media, will finally break down the resistance to change and allow people in Mali to do what is best for their girls. We will continue to organize meetings, put up posters and billboards, put music videos and news stories on TV and the radio and lobby the legislature to enact a law against excision, until there is no more FGM in Mali.

Healthy Tomorrow is a US-based registered non-profit corporation, so donations to it are tax-deductible.

Sini Sinuman is a registered non-profit in Mali.

Things you can do to help:

- * Learn more about FGM
- * Contribute to Healthy Tomorrow.
Donations are tax-deductible. Donate on

our website or send checks to 14 William St, Somerville, MA 02144.

- * Write a story about the movement against FGM or our part of it and publish it
- * Organize a meeting about the project
- * Order “Stop Excision” / distribute it (CDs: \$10-\$20, your choice, Tapes: \$5-\$10)
- * Order our music videos, \$10-\$20, your call
- * Help us fund raise, in a variety of ways
- * Join Healthy Tomorrow, and help find new ways to end excision or FGM.

Healthy Tomorrow

- * Susan McLucas, director (617) 776-6524, 14 William Street, Somerville, MA 02144, SusanBMcL@gmail.com
- * Polly Hertig, (339) 221-6093
- * keith harmon snow, lilyfairies@hotmail.com

Sini Sanuman

- * Siaka Traore, founding president, BP E 4829, Bamako, Mali, (223) 20 22 54 50 or (223) 76 02 14 11, Siaka_Traorefr@yahoo.fr, SiniSanuman@yahoo.fr (must be in French)
- * Saloum Traore, director of Amnesty Int’l - Mali, (223) 220 31 13 SaloumD@yahoo.fr (can be in English)

www.StopExcision.net is our website. You can see all of our materials there including our videos, and read more about our work. We have sections in French and English.

Healthy Tomorrow

Sini Sanuman

(in the Bambara language)



a humanitarian organization dedicated to eradicating female genital mutilation (FGM) in Mali, through education, community discussion, mobilization and music.