

File: Hibo Wardere 6

Key

[time e.g. 5:22] = inaudible word at this time

[5:22 IA] = inaudible section at this time

word = best guess at word

... = interruption in sentence, trailing off or short pause

FGM stands for female genital mutilations. In Somalia 98% of the girls are cut. I was born in Somalia. I was cut. Civil war started to break up, but luckily enough for me there was a family friend, a lady who was coming to London, and my mother said, 'Oh, can my daughter come with you?' And she said yes, and I ended up <laughs> here. No parents, I was seeing freedom, knowing that my kids were never going to know FGM. About five years ago I kind of fell in love with classroom, and became a teaching assistant in school. I just look at the school child protection policy and there was nothing about FGM, and the head teacher said, 'It's something that we're looking at', and that night is when I wrote about FGM. [0:43] It was just a huge thing to do and I ended up staying the whole night, breaking down a million times, writing, and by the time I finished I think it was about five o'clock in the morning. So I took the assignment to the head teacher and I said, 'You need to read this.' And he said, 'Can I give it to the head assistant, because they are females?' And I said, 'No, I'm not leaving until you read.' He did, and poor man was emotional afterwards, and he promised that it's going to be part of the child protection policy, but then he said, 'You need to talk to all the staff about this,' 120 of them, sat in front of them, 45 minute talk without stop. They were absolutely furious that nobody ever gave them this information. So it was quite a revelation.

From then on I never looked back. It was going from one school to the other, talking to the head teachers and teachers and it was amazing. And for me I just felt I needed to go higher, I need the youth. Every school was a bit apprehensive about me talking to the students until Stella Creasy invited me to [1:49] School. This was the first school that actually was talking about FGM to the students, and one of the girls said, 'Hibo kept on talking about you have a right to your body, you have right to this ...' and she said, 'We should be taught more about that, of the rights we have.' After that every school is getting in touch and saying, 'Can you come to our school?' After I finished talking one of the girls staying behind and telling me they've undergone FGM. That was ... devastating, but also proud ... and telling me she stayed back because she's got two younger sisters and she did not want them to undergo FGM. I felt courageous young girl, only sixteen, and she had that courage to stay and tell me, 'Actually I want you to help my sisters.' I thought that was devastating but proudest moment, because you live for that.

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