

Concept note for Community of Practice FGM
of the project « *Building bridges between Africa and Europe to end FGM/C* »

Context of the project

The **Africa-Europe Community of Practice project on Female Genital Mutilation (CoP FGM)** piloted by GAMS Belgium is an activity of the project « *Building bridges between Africa and Europe to end FGM/C* », funded by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM/C, in partnership with AIDOS and Equilibres & Populations.

The idea behind the **CoP FGM is to be able a discussion on the issue of FGM in African countries, including the 11 partner countries of the joint program, and in Europe and to offer policy makers and professionals, including those of the health care system, context-specific responses**. The project places particular focus on the psycho-sexual approaches to care for women affected by FGM. The first major activity under the CoP will also concentrate on these approaches (mapping, exchanging good practice, discussions ...).

What is a Community of Practice ?

A **Community of Practice** is a « group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better by interacting regularly ». This is a way for professionals, civil society organisations, researchers, to interact online around a specific theme. See for example the CoP on health financing in Africa : <http://www.healthfinancingafrica.org/join-our-cops.html>

Objectives of the Community of Practice FGM

The **purpose** of this activity is to contribute to the abandonment of female genital mutilation (FGM) as well as to the improvement of the well-being of women / girls affected by the practice, particularly in Africa and in Europe.

Specific Objectives

More specifically this activity will:

- Promote the exchange of knowledge and experience between stakeholders in Europe and Africa, in a horizontal and cross-sectoral approach at both local and international level.

- Make techniques, tools and information (such as guidelines, studies, psychological support tools, training, awareness tools ...), accessible through:
 - a. Discussions on the CoP forum
 - b. *Face-to-face* Meetings
 - c. Mapping
 - d. Discussion workshops
 - e. Blog posts
- Identify best practices for improving the quality of interventions for the prevention and management of FGM (including the psycho-sexo area).
- Share field activities with policy makers at National and International levels.

Target audience :

The CoP is open to any person concerned by FGM, either in their work as a professional or an activist, in Africa and Europe. Experts from various backgrounds (researchers, policy makers, health care providers, technical experts, civil society, etc.) are invited to join the platform by completing a membership application form.

Available tools (non-exhaustive list) :

- Facebook (www.facebook.com/copfgm)
- Wordpress blog
- Google form (membership application)
- Google group
- Google maps (evolutionary map)
- Twitter
- Newsletter
- Flyer

Expected Results :

Discussions and consultations conducted as part of this project will allow to :

- Better inform participants, policymakers of the threats and consequences associated with FGM;

- Improve the quality of care (including psycho-sexual) for women / girls affected by FGM in Europe and Africa;
- Strengthen the capacity of professionals from Europe and Africa to provide quality care (particularly psycho-sexual) to women / girls affected by FGM;
- Promote the commitment of political policy makers in the process of abandonment of FGM programmes ;
- Contribute to the implementation of prevention, protection and appropriate care in the fight against FGM ;
- Improve knowledge of African/EU health professionals in respect to the support of women / girls affected by the practice;
- Strengthen strategic partnerships between Africa and Europe.