



Charter of the Community of Practice on Female Genital Mutilation

The Community of Practice on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is piloted by GAMS Belgium and was founded in 2016 as a part of the « Building bridges between Africa and Europe to End FGM ». This project is financed by the Joint programme on FGM of the UNFPA-UNICEF and is coordinated by the Italian organisation for women in development (AIDOS).

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a « *group of persons who share a common interest or passion for something that they do and who interact regularly in order to learn how to do it better* »."

Topic of the CoP

The issue of this Community of Practice is Female Genital Mutilation, also known as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), female circumcision, excision or non-therapeutic female genital cutting, among others.

FGM are all non-therapeutic female genital cutting practices ranging from nicking or pricking a part of the vulva (commonly, the clitoral hood), to excising parts of the external female genitalia, to infibulation (narrowing of the vaginal opening) (types I, II, III, IV of the WHO).

This diverse set of practices is carried out by different groups for different reasons, under different conditions, with many different —sometimes overlapping — motivations across communities.

We observe that this set of practices, generally imposed on girls, is contrary to their rights - including their right to physical and psychological integrity – and constitute a gender-based violence. Moreover, they have no health benefits and can, on the contrary, have adverse consequences of a person's health and well-being.

Purpose and aim of the CoP FGM

Our goal is the abandonment of female genital mutilation (FGM) and the promotion of the well-being and human rights of women and girls.

This Community of practice enables professionals and activists to exchange within the frame of mutual learning and to improve their actions of prevention, advocacy and care for concerned persons, as well as related policies.



The **specific objectives** are:

1. Favour the exchange of knowledge, experiences, information and tools between stakeholders in Europe and Africa, in a horizontal and intersectoral perspective and at a local and international level;
2. Identify good practices and make research more accessible, in order to improve the quality of prevention and care of persons affected by FGM, as well as related policies;
3. Feed into advocacy on national and international policy.

Members of the CoP FGM

The Community of practice is open to all persons concerned by FGM in their work (on a grass-root level, research, communication, advocacy...) or activism, present everywhere in the world, with a particular focus on the African and European continents.

Professionals of different profiles (social workers, educators, researchers, health professionals, law makers, civil society, technical experts, journalists, international institutions, students, religious- and community leaders, etc) are invited to join the CoP FGM.

The registration form is available on the blog of the CoP.

Management of the CoP FGM

The CoP FGM is a heterogenous group. We encourage a non-technical, accessible and simple communication, ensuring that all members can understand and participate.

The CoP FGM is an official web (virtual) community.

- The debate is done on a Google group (mailing list and online Forum);
- The CoP has a blog;
- « face-to-face » meetings can be organized;
- Specific projects can be implemented by the members;
- One or several moderators are responsible for the good operation of the CoP.

Debates within the CoP

All subjects related to FGM can be debated in the CoP FGM. A discussion can be launched by any member or by the moderators.

We encourage analytical and constructive analysis. The debate must stay focused on the theme and have as a main goal the collective learning of the group.



We commit to the following **principles for a constructive dialogue** within the CoP FGM :

- A well-meaning tone;
- Well-argued opinions, if possible supported by references;
- Messages stating a clear object;
- Messages whose aim is to advance the debate, to provide new information and to favour the collective learning.

Are **not accepted within the CoP FGM** :

- Discriminatory discourse (racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, etc);
- Insults, against other members, the moderators or other persons ;
- Messages which are out of topic, spams;
- One-on-one communication (these messages should be sent directly to the person);
- Messages directed specifically to the moderators (should be sent to the moderators on the address cop.mgf@gmail.com);
- Excessive self-promotion.

Role of the moderators

The role of the moderators is to ensure the good operation of the CoP FGM, to subscribe and unsubscribe members, to facilitate the discussion on the list and to ensure that the tone of the debate is well-meaning. They can also propose subjects for discussion and provide clarifications.

The moderators do not censor the debate. However, **they may ask someone to change their behaviour or exclude a person from the list if their behaviour is opposed to the Charter or the objectives of the CoP.**

By joining the Community of Practice on FGM, I pledge to respect this Charter.