



TOGETHER TO END FGM

How To...

DEVELOP A
SOCIAL CHANGE
COMMUNICATIONS
PLAN



IN

THIS

GUIDE

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About this Guide

This guide is a quick resource for activists and campaigners working to End FGM, explaining what social change communication is and why it is so important in ending FGM.

About The Girl Generation

The Girl Generation is a communications initiative, providing a global platform for galvanising, catalysing and amplifying the Africa-led movement to end FGM. We seek to inspire organisations and individuals, especially youth, across the most affected countries in Africa and beyond, to end FGM in one generation.

What is FGM?

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is a form of violence against women and girls. In 2012, the UN passed a resolution calling for a global ban on FGM.

Classification of types of female genital cutting

Sunna (no stitches) WHO type I	Partial or complete removal of the clitoris (clitoridectomy), requiring no stitching.
Intermediate cut WHO type II	Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (excision), requiring 2 or 3 stitches to partially close the vaginal orifice.
Pharaonic cut WHO type III	Narrowing of the vaginal orifice with creation of a covering seal by cutting and re-stitching the labia minora and/or the labia majora, with or without excision of the clitoris (infibulation), requiring 4-7 stitches and resulting in only a very small vaginal orifice.

WHAT ROLE DOES SOCIAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION PLAY IN ENDING FGM?

FGM is a social norm. Social norms are often invisible “rules” saying what is acceptable in a group or society.

Social norms govern behaviour. Shared ways of living and thinking are expressed through cultural and social institutions. Examples of these institutions are patterns of family life, education, religion, mass media and political and legal systems. With this in mind, it is important to recognize that social change is a change in the very structures of our societies.

Social change focuses on the **community**, rather than the individual, as the unit of change; a community being a social unit comprising of three or more people sharing common norms, values, identity (though in the case of FGM, the relevant community is likely to be much larger). Ending FGM will require such a social change. Ending FGM will come as a result of individuals making a decision individually to stop FGM because people are influenced by those around them, and by social pressures.

Social change communication (SCC) plays a critical role in sustainably addressing the social norms that underpin FGM, as part of wider efforts to end FGM. SCC can support and accelerate behaviour change in multiple ways and at different levels. Communications must be context-specific, and build on a strong understanding of the social motivations and barriers for change at the grassroots level.

Social change communication to end FGM is an approach to communication that speaks to the motivations behind the practice of FGM, and identifies the very real personal and social barriers that hinder abandonment of FGM. It provides positive alternatives, opens up debate and discussion in the public sphere, prompts individuals to question their acceptance of the practice, and increasingly builds confidence to speak out against FGM.





EMPOWERMENT

Equal participation, local ownership, and empowerment.



COMMUNITY

It focuses on the community not the individual as the unit of change.



INFORMATION

Information-sharing and discussion leads to mutual understanding, agreement and collective action about the way forward, or a change that can take place



SELF DRIVEN

Communities create their own change – rather than it being introduced from outside

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION



TIME

It involved repeated discussions over time, before consensus about the way forward is reached



CATALYSTS

It includes a catalyst(s) – which trigger the discussion, it could be a person, media campaign or an event



DIALOGUE

The emphasis is on dialogue, debate and negotiation.

STEP-BY-STEP

In Brief

1. WHY do you want to communicate about ending FGM?
2. WHO do you want to communicate with?
3. WHERE, when and how should you communicate with them?
4. WHAT will you say? (messages and information)

1. Analysis

Analyse the current situation or status quo in your community or where you want to have your impact. You might want to ask the following questions:

- a) How common is FGM in my community?
- b) Why is it practiced? What reasons do people give for continuing the practice?
- c) Who are the influencers and leaders in the community that can inspire change?

2. Collaborate

For a fully participatory approach – you should create your communication plan in dialogue with, and owned by the community. To achieve this, you should identify key stakeholders and how you will engage with them.

3. Goals

Identify what change you want to see. What is your goal? (i.e. for at least 50 parents in my village to commit to not cutting their daughters).

4. Audience

Identify who your audience is – this should include the people you want to directly target, as well as the people who can influence your primary audience. For example, who will your targets listen to?

5. Resources

Identify what resources you have available to you – money, people, etc.

6. Message

Identify what your message is. What do you want to communicate? = See the How To Guide on Developing key messages for further guidance.

- a) Content – this is the facts, figures, information, stories and messages you are hoping to share
- b) Mood – identify the emotions you want appeal to and how you want people to respond to your message
- c) Language – identify the language you want to use, i.e. the local dialect, and then identify the level of that language whether it is formal/informal, etc.

7. Platform

Identify where and how you want to share your message to help to shape it (e.g. community theatre, story-telling, music, community dialogues, social media, community radio, mainstream media, fliers etc.)

8. Risk

Identify any potential areas of risk, obstacles or emergencies

9. Test

Pre-test your messages and your plan with a select group of your key target audience

10. Implement

Implement the plan – develop your messages, and share it with the correct audience

11. Monitor

Once you've initiated your strategy it is important to monitor and evaluate your impact

QUICK TIPS

WHY

Why do you want to communicate about FGM?

WHO

Who do you need to communicate with?

HOW

How should you communicate with them?

WHERE

Where and when do you need to communicate with them?

WHAT

What will you say?

CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Analyse the situation**
- ✓ **Engage with the community for a community-led process**
- ✓ **Identify the why, who, where, when, how and what**
- ✓ **Pre-test your messages and plan**
- ✓ **Implement your plan**
- ✓ **Engage with the media**
- ✓ **Monitor and evaluate your impact**

USING SOCIAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION THROUGHOUT THE STAGES OF COMMUNITY READINESS TO END FGM

Stage of community readiness to end FGM		Focus of communication
1	No community awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalyse change: increase knowledge of health impacts and laws against FGM • Highlight benefits of ending FGM • Build community cohesion
2	Community denial/resistance	
3	Vague community awareness	
4	Preplanning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the belief systems supporting FGM = some people in the community recognise the problem • Clarification of perceptions around FGM • Identify and support community leaders/peer group champions/change agents to end FGM • Agree a shared vision to end FGM • Begin to harness community resources to end FGM • Begin to initiate behaviour change: develop appropriate interventions or action plan • Collective actions to end FGM
5	Preparation	
6	Initiation	
7	Stabilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce efforts to end FGM • Ensure ongoing community resources to ensure abandonment of FGM
8	Expansion	
9	Community ownership	

SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR SCC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

WHY do you want to carry out this communication project?					
WHO?	HOW?				
	Audience	Who can influence them?	Which communication channels do they use?	What media or materials would work for them?	What key messages or information do you want to share with them?
1.					
2.					
Etc.					

GLOSSARY

- **CATALYST** - A catalyst (a person or thing that causes a change) prompts one or more community members to identify an issue of concern. The catalyst could be a person, a media campaign, or an event that makes the problem more visible.
- **EVALUATION** is periodic (e.g. once a year, or at the end of the project). It seeks to explore:
 - Relevance – whether the project was appropriate
 - Impact – whether it made a difference in the lives of people
 - Effectiveness – whether it achieved what it set out to
 - Efficiency – whether it did so cost-effectively
 - Sustainability – whether it will leading to lasting change
- **MONITORING** is the systematic and routine collection of information from projects, in order to:
 - Learn from experiences to improve practices and activities in future
 - Account for the resources used and the results obtained
 - Efficiency – whether it did so cost-effectively
 - Take informed decisions on the future of the project
- **SOCIAL CHANGE** - the transformation of culture and social institutions over time.
- **SOCIAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION** - process whereby community dialogue and collective action work together to produce a social change in a community that improves the health and welfare of all its members.



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