



TOGETHER TO END FGM

# How To...

USE

COMMUNITY

DIALOGUE

TO END FGM



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# About this Guide

This guide is a quick resource for activists and campaigners working to End FGM, on how to use community dialogues to end 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.

# WHY IS COMMUNITY DIALOGUE IMPORTANT?

A community dialogue is an opportunity for members of the community and stakeholders to get together to discuss a particular issue, and to work together to find a way to address and solve the issue going forward.

It is an opportunity to get communities together to engage in constructive conversations so as to come up with a shared way forward. Community dialogues offer a better way of challenging and changing community members' beliefs about FGM. They increase the public space for dialogue on the issue, raising its importance on the public agenda, giving confidence to those affected to speak out. Community dialogues also present the opportunity to facilitate inter-generational dialogues, allowing listening and questioning to happen between different generations.

Community dialogue and shared solutions are a central element of social change communication.





## BREAK SILENCE

To break the silence on FGM – to prompt discussion and conversation



## DISCUSSION

To drive the end of FGM by giving people the opportunity to think and discuss the issue themselves



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

To serve as a conversation starter, dialogue or a silence breaker



## COMMITMENTS

To increase community responses and commitments to ending FGM

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ON ENDING FGM CAN LEAD TO THE FOLLOWING



## UNDERSTANDING

To increase community members understanding of FGM



## COMMON ISSUES

To identify common issues that community members are facing in ending FGM, and to find solutions



## BEING HEARD

To provide an opportunity for everyone in the community to be heard



## OWNERSHIP

To support community ownership and accountability on ending FGM

An effective dialogue is solution oriented and includes a wide range of diverse voices. It provides the opportunity for people to clarify their own values and understanding around FGM.

# STEP-BY-STEP

## 1. Team

Identify a team to support and develop your dialogue, being sure to include a diverse group of people. Team members should have a variety of skills, as well as represent a variety of stakeholders in the community

## 2. Goals

Identify the goals of the dialogue – to be clear on what you want to achieve. Some potential goals may include: initiation of an on-going conversation within the community on ending FGM or developing an action plan to end FGM in your community, sharing facts and ideas about FGM, or to talk about a recent situation or the upcoming cutting season

## 3. Location

Identify the location of your dialogue – ensuring to find a neutral location. Identify if your dialogue can be part of other meetings or convenings that a discussion on FGM can be included. For example, other spaces include meeting of religious leaders, regular community meeting, school meeting. It is important to think about how to most effectively introduce the topic of FGM rather than an event solely focused on FGM as this may cause issues or reduce your impact.

## 4. Participants

Identify who should be invited to the dialogue and send your invitations. It is important to identify allies who are already working to end FGM and to identify the right person to facilitate the event. Participants can include community leaders, young people, the private sector, health care providers, faith leaders, elders and community organisers. When identifying who should be invited, you should also focus on who should lead the dialogue. You should also ensure to identify who has the trust of the community members and who will allow an open and trusting conversation to take place. If possible, you should work with this person, or persons, to issue the invitations.

## 5. Issue analysis

Issue identification and analysis. While a discussion about ending FGM may be your end goal, it is important to think how you can fit it into a dialogue around broader issues. For example, your dialogue

may be about maternal and child health, community safety and well-being or education, all framings which can include FGM as a part of the dialogue. It is important to conduct an analysis to understand the causes FGM in the community, is it a shared issue, what is the community doing to address FGM, have previous conversations happened in the community on ending FGM, etc.

## 6. Agenda

Set your agenda, and develop a dialogue guide. The agenda should be built so that it helps to identify the issue(s), highlights the causes and facilitates a brainstorm on solutions to the issues directed at their causes. You can use these solutions to develop an action plan together. During the discussion of the action plan it is important to identify who will be responsible for achieving the different items in the action plan, a timeline and an overview of who will take responsibility to facilitate check ins on progress. The dialogue guide is used by the facilitator to facilitate and engage the participants in an open conversation. Spend time with the leaders/facilitators so that everyone is clear who will do what, and how you will work together.

## 7. Pre-meet

Identify if you should meet with certain leaders or individuals before the meeting to get their buy-in. Key meetings before the dialogue itself can mean that you have key allies during the dialogue.

## 8. Dialogue

Conduct your dialogue. The dialogue should follow the agenda you have set with the dialogue guide supporting the facilitator through the process. If it's helpful be sure to note down what participants say during the dialogue, either by using flip charts or other visuals, or through note-taking. However, remember it is important to not identify the source of the information or comment to enable an open process.

## 9. Action

Continue the conversation and implement your action plan!

# HOW TO BE A GOOD FACILITATOR



- Be prepared to answer questions and support learning
- Establish ground rules
- Help to set the mood, and a positive tone
- Remain alert to expressions that indicate deep or strong feelings
- Support group interactions
- Build on the participant's personal experiences to advance the conversation

## Sample agenda

- Welcome and Ice Breaker
- Setting the ground rules
- Purpose of the dialogue and introduction to the agenda
- Introductory questions and scene setting
- Solution generation
- Development of community action plans
- Review/feedback of the dialogue
- Closing and next steps

## TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- To have a greater impact make sure you have a clear understanding of who needs to be in the room – either because they have the power to lead change on ending FGM, or because it is important their experiences of FGM are important to be heard.
- Make sure the language used in the dialogue is accessible to everyone, avoid big technical terms, and conduct the dialogue in the language of the community.
- Your dialogue will be the most successful when it is organised and lead by the community.
- Focus on solutions and actions that the community can take, particularly those in power, to end FGM.

# POSITIVE STORIES OF CHANGE...

## Dialogues with religious leaders in Somaliland lead to fatwa against FGM

In Somaliland, FGM is closely linked with Islamic faith. A number of religious leaders' dialogue meetings have been organised to foster debates among sheikhs with the ultimate goal of ending FGM in Somaliland. Since 2016, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has worked together with local organisations to pressure religious leaders to end FGM, and has committed to hosting national dialogue meetings with religious leaders. In 2017, a fatwa (a ruling on a point of Islamic law) against FGM was supported and led by the Ministry of Religious Affairs following a meeting of 12 prominent sheikhs and the Ministry of Religion.

## Maasai men lead dialogues with their communities on FGM

Children in Freedom (CIF) has worked with men in the Maasai community in Kenya to become End FGM Ambassadors (EFA). Once the EFAs complete workshops where they learn about FGM, the risks associated with it, the laws and human rights issues around FGM and the benefits of not cutting women and girls, they work together with their communities to end FGM. One group of EFAs held a community dialogue with fathers and sons. The dialogue enabled the fathers and sons to clarify their own values on FGM, and to understand the impacts it has on their daughters and sisters in the community.

## Religious leaders in Nairobi inspired by community dialogues to walk the talk

In Kenya, urban girls are more likely to be cut at the youngest range of five to nine years. Recognising this trend in Nairobi, the Kenya Women and Children's Wellness Center (KWCWC) organised a series of dialogue meetings with religious leaders and the community. The meetings have led to commitments from religious leaders to influence their communities to end FGM. Following the second meeting, some of the religious leaders took part in a door-to-door campaign in Korogocho and Eastleigh in Nairobi to speak with the community and prominent religious leaders to end FGM.

# CHECKLIST

- ✓ Plan the logistics of your dialogue
- ✓ Develop your guest list
- ✓ Send invitations
- ✓ Conduct your problem analysis
- ✓ Develop your dialogue guide
- ✓ Prep your facilitator
- ✓ Conduct your dialogue
- ✓ Review feedback
- ✓ Implement action plans

# GLOSSARY

## → ACCOUNTABILITY

an obligation or willingness to accept one's responsibilities. For example, a political leader has committed money to programmes on ending FGM, they are accountable if they have reached their commitment by including ending FGM programmes in their budget.

## → 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.

## → STAKEHOLDER

a person with an interest or a concern in something, in this case ending FGM. They can include faith leaders, politicians, health care providers, etc.



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