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World Vision



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FGM: A LASTING TRADITION

Female genital mutilation (also known as FGM) is defined by the World Health Organization as interventions that occur that intentionally alter/injure a woman's external genitalia for non-medical reasons. World Vision reports that FGM does not only have any health benefits but that the act itself hinders the natural and healthy functions of the female organism. The practise of FGM is not recognized by health professionals, but they instead employ the use of razor blades or scissors without anaesthetic drugs causing a greater risk of infection and other obstetric risks

So why is FGM practised so frequently against girls and women? Practised in over 30 countries, the cultural beliefs behind FGM suggest that the act signifies a rite of passage that preserves a young girl's virginity and fosters her social acceptance. There are also many shameful associations tied to a woman who has not received FGM; moreover, her chances of marriage are reduced. The basis of this practice is founded on traditions and customs, however, there are severe long-term consequences to women's mental and physical health.

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A Case Study of World Vision's Collaborative FGM Prevention Programme



World Vision employs collaborative approaches to work with local grassroots organizations to support the abandonment of the FGM practice. FGM is particularly prevalent in Africa and in Senegal, World Vision has worked with communities in the Kolda region; more specifically in the Dabo and Velingara areas where women and girls are still victims of FGM.

The establishment of retraining excisors (those who perform FGM) did not change or prevent the occurrence of this practice between 2005-2010, however, since the establishment of a programme aimed at grandmothers, mentalities have evolved. In a survey carried out by the Grand Mother Project, it was reported that 93% of grandmothers in the Kolda region were opposed to FGM in 2011 compared to 41% in 2008. This targeted programme was successful because of the significance of a grandmother's authority as she is the decision-maker regarding a girl's FGM in her family. Moreover, World Vision has trained excisors in new-income generating activities in order to encourage them away from maintaining these traditional practices.

In 2016, 23% of women aged 15-49 declared to have been excised; a rate that has decreased compared to 2005 when it was 28%.

University of Ottawa World Vision Mission

To operate a student run non-profit organization that raises awareness of the injustices in the world and organizes funds to support these causes in conjunction with the campaigns of World Vision Canada.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The severity of this issue cannot be overlooked. There are many things that you can do to bring awareness to this issue and help the families affected by this crisis!

1. Learn more about FGM and state indifference to the continuation of the harmful practice.

- a. FGM does not just occur in Africa; moreover, governments are often indifferent to FGM's prevalence in rural communities.

2. Support a girl as part of World Vision's campaign to prevent FGM!

- a. Learn about World Vision's campaign at your university.
- b. Take action against FGM at <https://www.worldvision.org.uk/our-work/what-is-female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

3. Increase your own awareness and inspire change through social media platforms.

- a. There are various activists against FGM on social media and grassroots communities across the world in collaboration with World Vision.

