



Training Professionals and Community Structures in Qardho Puntland Somalia.

“Female Genital Mutilation is A crime committed and humanity destroyed!” MOWDAFA FGM theme

#ENDFGM/C

Introduction

Activity Name	Training Professionals and Community Structures in Qardho Puntland Somalia.
Date Of Action	August 7 th 2023
Duration	1 days
Participants	50 (50 Female)
Locations	Qardho
<u>Target Group</u>	SCOs, Women Activist, IDPS, Healthy professionals, and Youth

Background and Context :

Over 200 million girls and women have experienced female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in 30 countries across three continents. Should this practice is not discouraged, about 64 million girls and women are estimated to be at risk of being cut by 2030, violating their rights to health, to be free from violence, to life and physical integrity, to non-discrimination, and to be free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment¹. This harmful practice not only affects girls and women in Africa and the Middle East, where it has been traditionally carried out, but also touches the lives of girls and women living in migrant communities in industrialized countries. According to a WHO estimate, between 100 and 150 million women and girls in the world have undergone some form of FGM/C.² In the Somali culture, the practice of FGM/C is an honored tradition. The practise is associated with initiation rites or coming of age ceremonies that mark transition into adulthood and marriageable age. FGM/C is nearly universal among girls and women in Somalia with 98% of women reported to have experienced such practice; worse still, 46 % of the girls between the ages of 0 to 14 years have reported to have experienced FGM/C as reported by their mothers³. This can be associated to attitudes and perception of practice with Somalia with 65 % of girls and women aged 15-49 supporting the continuation of FGM/C⁴. The Somali have a close cultural value around virginity and marriageability. Type III FGM (infibulation) is performed to ensure sexual purity and chastity. A girl found to be uncut on the wedding night is perceived to be sexually promiscuous and unsuitable as a wife thus bringing shame to the family. In many cases, FGM has a negative impact on a girl's education. Girls are taken out of school to be cut and the healing time takes several weeks, resulting in further school absence. Moreover, as FGM is considered to be a rite of passage into womanhood, it is likely that a girl's education will end in order for her to be married. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006, the highest FGM prevalence is among women aged 15-49 is in South Central at 99.2%, Somaliland at 94.4% and Puntland at 98.1%. Women aged 15-49 who live in rural areas are only slightly more likely (98.4%) to undergo FGM than those who live in urban areas (97.1%), and the lowest prevalence of FGM is among women in the highest wealth quintile. Women aged 15-49 who live in rural areas believe that the practice of FGM should continue (71.8%) than those who live in urban areas (53.8%). Overall, 64.5% of women aged 15-49 believe that FGM should continue. Although the data may seem to be dated due to lack of updated information available with

geographic breakdown, the information can still consider relevant reference as its averaged prevalence rate is consistent to recent national wide estimation (98%) which can paint the severity of such issues across the country and show limited improvement over the years, Efforts have been made to combat these harmful practices. The first move to introduce legislation on FGM/C in Somalia was in 2012 when a Provisional Constitutional decree was introduced stating that the circumcision of girls is prohibited. However, the decree does not specify the penalty, the person who would be considered responsible or the process to secure a ruling when girls or women undergo FGM/C. In 2014, the newly elected President of Puntland, a region of Somalia adjacent to Somaliland, was reported to have enacted a new law against FGM and a religious fatwa was reported to have been issued by Islamic Scholars stating FGM had no basis in Islam. However, the status of these is unsure and the impact limited. Decades of conflicts and fragmentation have significantly undermined government's capacity in delivering basic services, pushing forward legislation as well as ensuring quality of activities. Although having the intention to advance the protection agenda, the relevant ministry can be crippled by lacking the resource and technical support to do so.

Executive summary:

A One-day for FGM Training was held in Qardho from August 8th 2023 within the framework of the SWA mandate to coordinate FGM prevention in humanitarian settings. The primary objective of this training was to build understanding and capacity in case management for how to eliminate FGM. In support of this, the training also aimed to improve understanding of GBV, by root causes and consequences, the underpinning theoretical frame works and capacity of Puntland Women.

The training brought together front-line civil society workers including social workers, caseworkers, and case managers directly dealing with FGM survivors. A total of 50 while all of them were Female invited from IDPS, SCOs, FGM Champions, Healthy professionals and supported SWA Community based workers and FGM Qardho Village Committees, participated the workshop, which was facilitated by GBV specialists and FGM technical advisor from the Ministry of Women Development and Family Affairs, namely Mohamed Yasin as the facilitator.

The specific objectives of the training

Opening Session

The first day of the workshop started with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by the welcome remarks by Sahra Saed a Regional Coordinator of the Ministry of women development and Family Affairs mentioned that the training sessions are principally designed to enhance the knowledge and capacity of the participants. Mis Sahro also expressed her gratitude to all participants, and resource persons of the workshop for their full cooperation and contribution to the capacity building in the training. After opening remarks, the participants were asked to introduce themselves. Afterward, the Norms of the workshop were discussed and agreed upon mutually.

Objectives of the workshop

The workshop objectives include:

- To educate the participants about the dangers of FGM/C Mobilize and empower young people to actively participate and play a lead role in elimination of all forms of violence.
- Increasing awareness on negative consequences of FGM
- To ensure free and health mothers in order to realize the children get their fundamental right.
- To enhance the capacity of the participants to lead and advocate for change.
- To discuss the consequences of those who have being circumcised, to raise awareness so that the understanding grows that female off spring should no longer be circumcised.

Training methodology

The One-day training workshop was conducted in a participatory manner that included presentations; documentary and plenary sessions enabled the participants to freely discuss on their stories and experiences with FGM. Facilitators also provided an opportunity to the participants to have debate on a given topic and share their experiences while applying the theory into practice. At the end of the group work participants were asked to present, which was followed by Q& As.

Participants Expectations:

The participants were then asked to note down their expectations regarding the training. The following is a summary of the participant's expectations.

- Exchange of expertise and knowledge on FGM
- Clinical case management capacity building
- Building understanding of case management

- Developing a well-defined strategy to approach FGM survivors
- Improving FGM case management skills to provide better services
- Learning how to convince FGM survivors of speaking up
- Gaining more knowledge
- Learning more about human rights
- knowing how to go about the challenges of my work
- getting a certificate

Why FGM/C is practiced by our community?

The participants were divided into groups and allowed to openly discuss the reasons why FGMC/C is widely practiced by this community and through the group work discussions; the participants presented the following beliefs/reasons of why FGM is practiced in their communities.

- FGM is a source of income for practitioners; therefore they will always keep to the traditions/society cultures through their personal interest.
- In FGM practising communities, it is believed that a woman's external genitalia are ugly and dirty, and will continue to grow ever bigger if they are not cut away. Removing these structures makes a girl hygienically clean.
- Some communities believe that unless a girl's clitoris is removed, she will not become a mature woman.
- Some communities believe that removing the external genitalia is necessary to make a girl spiritually clean and is therefore required by religion.
- The uncut girl is believed to have an overactive and uncontrollable sex drive so that she is likely to lose her virginity prematurely, to disgrace her family and damage her chances of marriage,
- It is also believed that the tight vaginal opening of an infibulated woman will enhance male sexual pleasure, in turn preventing divorce or unfaithfulness.
- Female genital mutilation is believed to ensure a girl's virginity. Virginity is a pre-requisite for marriage, which is necessary to maintain a family's honour and to secure the family line.
- Some of the participants also argued that FGM/C is understood as a religious issue and it will be difficult to eradicate from the community because of strong social beliefs which may need a lot of effort to overcome.

With vigorous efforts to end FGM/C, why not yet reached a result?

It was discussed the reason of why not reached remarkable results despite much efforts done by the humanitarian agencies and the government and this was explained as the lack or limited programs that are much focusing on the emotional treatment of the mothers or healing trauma associated with FGM instead of putting much attention to awareness and program delivery to the community as whole.



“The main reason we didn’t defeated and eradicated FGM/C from the country is socially and culturally mothers aren’t allowed to talk and discussed the pain and trauma of FGM”
said by Sahra Saed Mowdafa Kar-kaar Regional Coordinator.

Why are we conducting this FGM/C Training?

The participants were also made to understand that the main reason of the training was to ensure free and health mothers in order to realize the children get their fundamental right. FGM/C affects the relationship between mother and child, upon the circumcision the mothers taste the bitterness of FGM/C, this leads to depression, insecurity and lack of affection.

A mother who witnessed FGM her deepest soul is scratched therefore it'll be difficult for such a mother to have a normal bond with her child.

This platform gave them chance to release all the emotions they hold and have reawaken their dead emotions through narration of their past and breaking their silences.

Mothers and girls who were subject to FGM/C in Puntland never got a chance to a platform like this that they can share their stories and found some people who can relate to. When mothers have talked and related their stories and pain they heal together from the pain and trauma of FGM/C. Then they have pledged to save their daughters from the tragedy of the FGM/C.

Conclusion

Points Noted/result/Recommendations:

- It's recommended that it's important to conduct the trauma healing in the districts of Puntland that have not yet been reached.
- During the training women acknowledged that they got opportunity to talk and therefore feel relief and better capable to deal with problems and trauma caused by FGM.
- Participants stressed that over the two days they had learned a lot from discussions and they got confidence to talk their common problem and issue, knowing that they are not alone suffering the FGM complication, this helped them to become very excited It feels better.
- Increased awareness creations and education for the community groups is essential in eradication of FGM/C.
- The participants requested for more trauma healing workshops to the community and the other districts of Puntland to be reached.
- FGM trauma healing programs should be incorporated into a regular program and, if possible, integrated into the Government curriculum.
- And finally, to get trained groups for this training in order to deliver in detail about a problem which is undeniable to women in rural areas so that women living the rural would access to their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Closing remarks



All the participants agreed to stop the practice of female genital mutilation by starting from their own homes and volunteered to work for the end of female genital mutilation. ***“Now we are ready to say "No" Female Genital Mutilation, we work for zero tolerance for FGM.”***



At the closing, the training participants indicated that the training workshop was key for all and worth time spent by each of the participants. They noted that they had learned a lot from discussions at the workshop which would help inform their decisions in combating against FGM and other forms of violence.

Ayanle who is a member of the staff from SWA urged the participants to participate voluntarily in the project to prevent our girls for female genital mutilation which is being carried out by the CSOs and the government with financial support from GIZ. *“We should see such meetings as an important opportunity to showcase our experiences in the prevention of female genital mutilation and our unique creativity”*. Ayanle Awil.

They promised to take what they had learned back to their workplaces by transferring knowledge and skills to workplaces and assisting FGM survivors.

Activities Pictures

