

# FGM/C

## A Under-Recognized Form of Gender-Based Violence in the United States

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What is FGM/C

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01

# Introduction

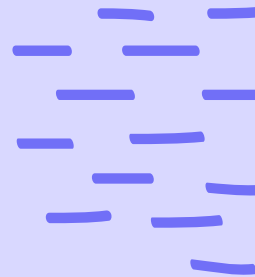
Who are we and what do we do.



# Shirley Luo

Shirley Luo works at the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence addressing issues of gender-based violence.

She is the Resource Center Coordinator and is responsible for analyzing and presenting program data, organizing and presenting trainings and webinars



# Mariya Taher

Mariya Taher has worked for over a decade on gender-based violence issues.

She is 1 of the 5 co-founders of Sahiyo and the organization was founded around the belief that storytelling in all forms can create change.



# Dr. Natoschia Scruggs

Dr. Natoschia Scruggs in the U.S. End FGM/C Network's National Director.

Natoschia has held positions over the years in academia, at NGOs, and in government, including having served for nearly five years as principal advisor on research to Ambassador Susan Rice, Ambassador Samantha Power, and Ambassador Nikki Haley at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.



# Carey Walovich

Carey Walovich is the US End FGM/C Network's Partnerships & Operations Manager.

She manages the day-to-day operations of the Network as well as the vital relationships, collaborations, and projects with members and stakeholders



02

## WHAT IS FGM/C

FGM/C stands for Female  
Genital Mutilation/Cutting



How many people know  
someone who has experienced  
FGM/C?

# FGM/C ACCORDING TO THE WHO

“FGM/C involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.”

# TYPES OF FGM/C

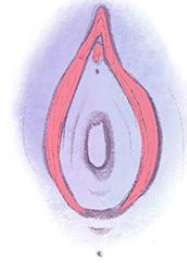
NO FGM



TYPE 1 - CLITORIDECTOMY

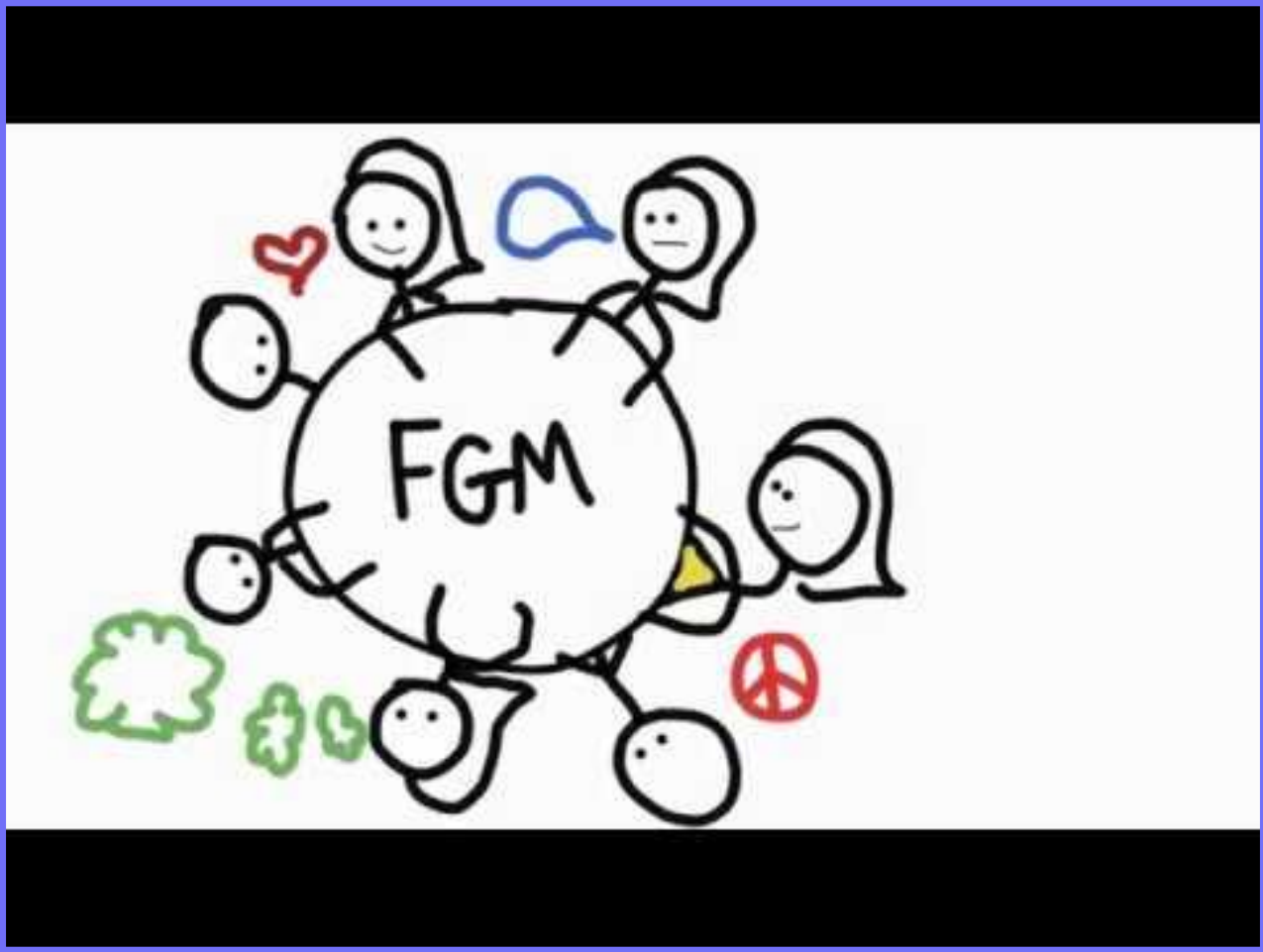


TYPE 2 - EXCISION



TYPE 3 - INFIBULATION





# Mental and Physical Effects of FGC

## Sexual Pain

FGC survivors can experience pain during intercourse, vaginismus, and decreased sexual desire and pleasure

## Childbirth

FGC can cause disrupted labor, postpartum hemorrhaging, and infant and maternal death

## Mental Health

FGC is a traumatic experience that can cause PTSD, depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues

## Infections

Immediately after and in the long term, FGC can cause severe infections in the affected region

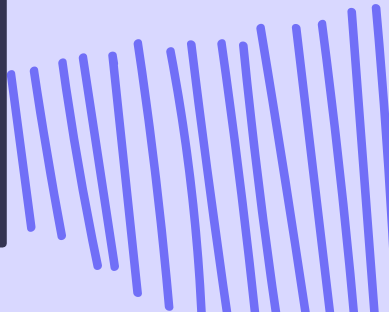
## Urinary and Vaginal Health

FGC can cause urinary tract problems, painful menstruation, and other long term health issues

## Death

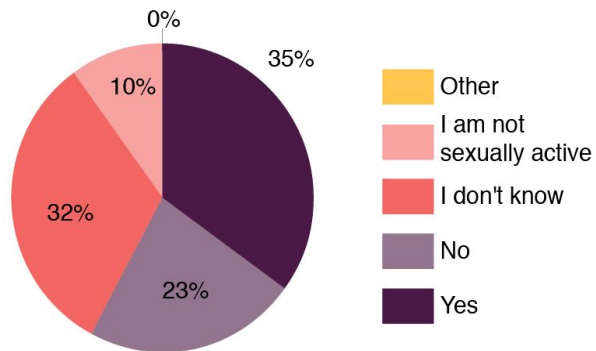
Infections from FGC, blood-loss, and other issues can ultimately lead to death





### Has Khatna affected your sexual life?

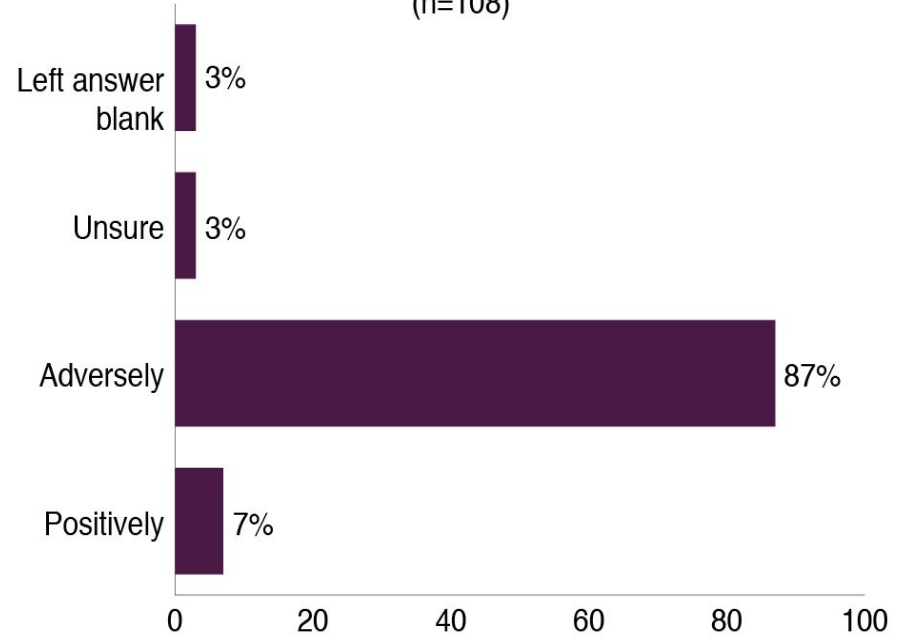
(n=309)



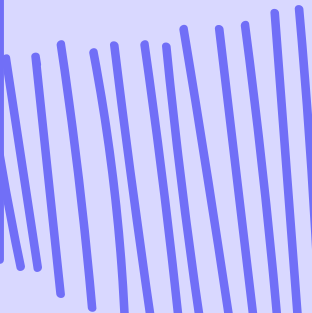
### If Khatna affected sex life, is it positively or adversely?

Respondents from Q26

(n=108)







# JUSTIFICATIONS FOR FGC

01

To Control Sexuality

02

Marriageability

03

Tradition and Culture

04

'Cleanliness'

05

Religion



My jaw fell to the ground.


The background features a light blue gradient with several abstract elements: a large dark blue shape in the upper center, a yellow shape in the lower left, a yellow circle outline in the lower right, a dark blue circle outline at the top, and a pattern of small dark blue dots in the lower right. The text is centered within the dark blue shape.

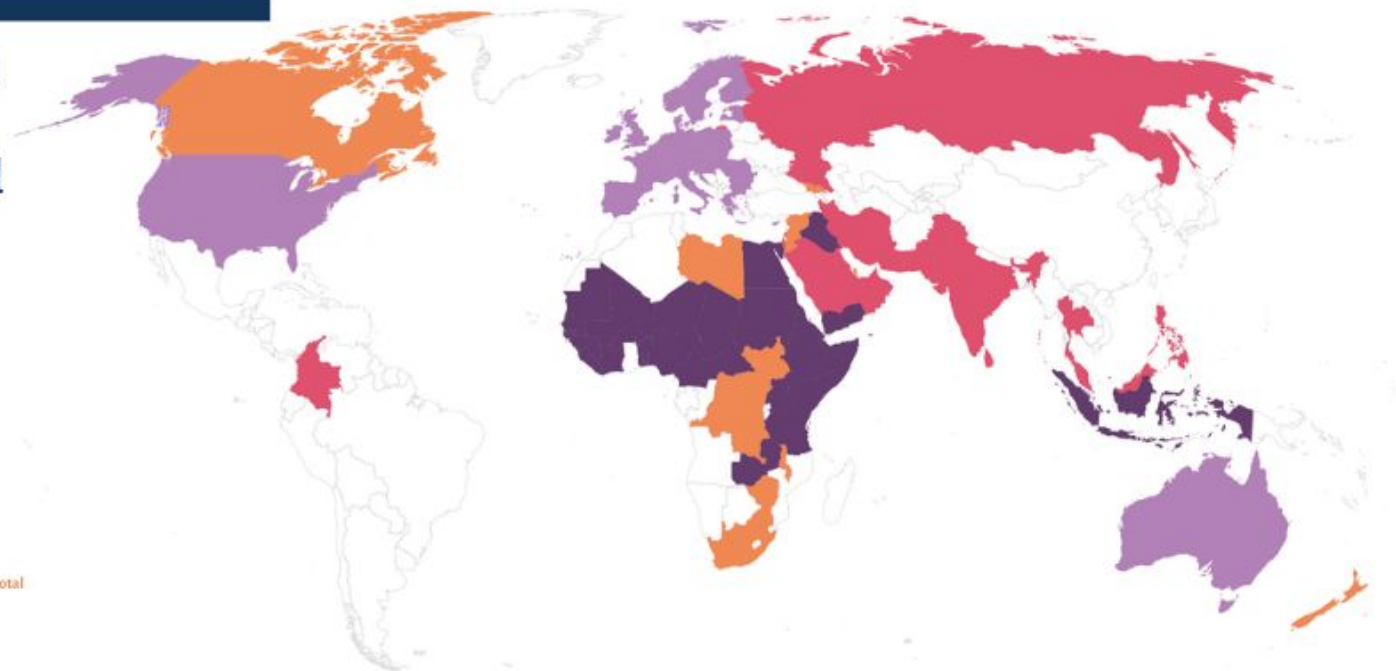
200 million

women and girls are living with  
the effects FGM/C in the world.

# FGM/C IS GLOBAL

FGM/C is present in at least 92 countries around the world.

-  **CATEGORY 1**  
Countries with nationally representative surveys on FGM/C
-  **CATEGORY 2**  
Countries with indirect estimates on FGM/C
-  **CATEGORY 3**  
Countries with small-scale studies on FGM/C
-  **CATEGORY 4**  
Countries where media reports and anecdotal evidence refer to occurrence of FGM/C



Source: *FGM/C: A Call For A Global Response (2020)* Equality Now, End FGM EU Network, US End FGM/C Network

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03

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History of the U.S.  
Movement

Have you heard about  
anti-FGM/C work in the U.S?

The background features a light blue gradient with various abstract elements: a large dark blue shape containing the main text, a yellow shape on the left, a black ring at the top, and a yellow ring at the bottom right. There are also patterns of horizontal lines and dots in blue and black.

500,000+

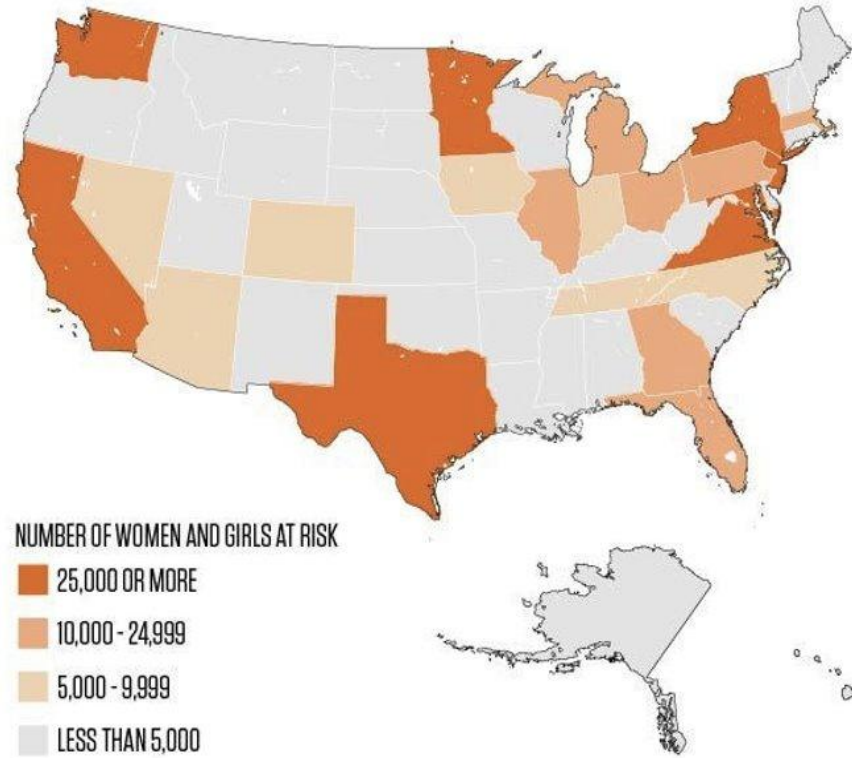
women and girls are living with  
or at risk of FGM/C in the US.



# History in the U.S.

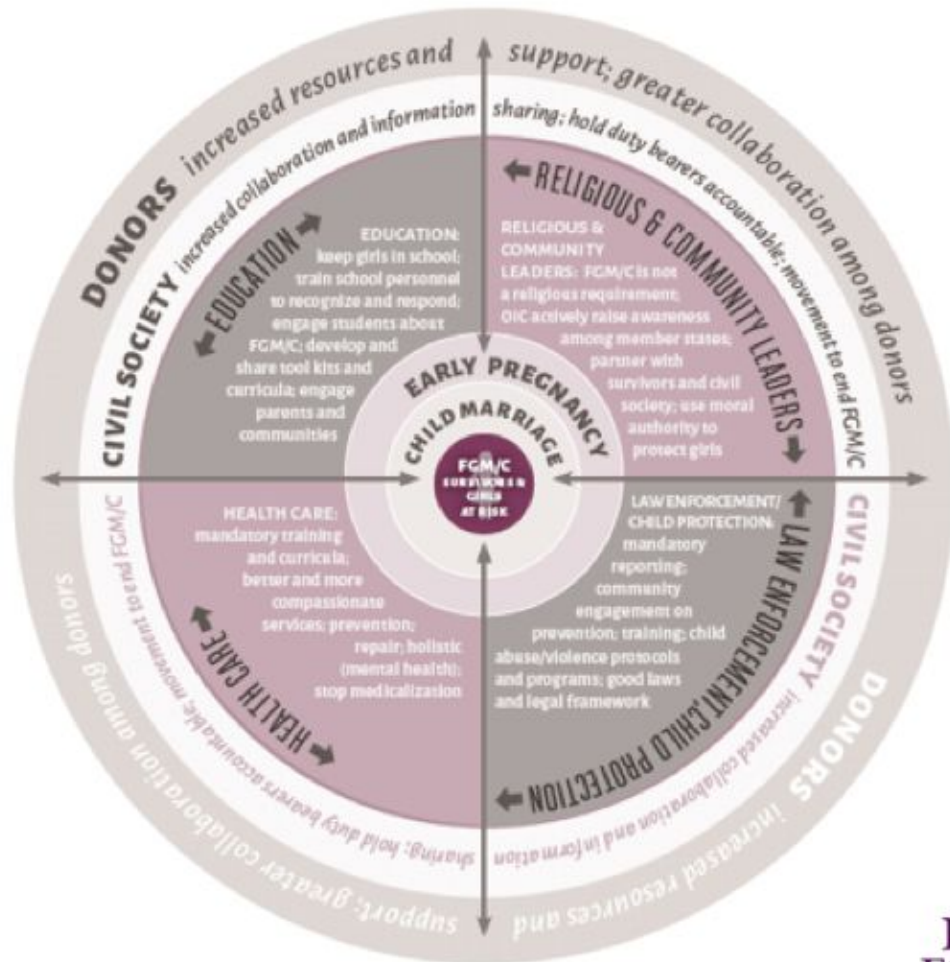
- FGM/C was routine medical practice in the U.S. for most of the 19th and 20th centuries to prevent and treat lesbianism, masturbation, depression, hysteria, and nymphomania.
  - These procedures were covered by insurance until 1977.
- Recent non-medical incidents reported from members of white Christian communities
- An estimated 500,000+ women and girls living in the U.S. are at risk, or have undergone FGM/C (CDC 2016). However, est. is problematic because:
  - Only examines immigrant communities from specific countries
  - Use indirect techniques = apply country prevalence est. to immigrant communities
  - Does not account for migration factors (i.e. characteristics of women in the country of origin vs. those who have migrated to the U.S.)

**THE NUMBER OF WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK OF FGM/C  
VARIES WIDELY ACROSS THE STATES.**



# Multi-Sectoral Survivor Centered Strategy

Tolerance  
Action  
Diversity  
Gender  
Equality  
Survivor  
Collaboration  
Respect



# FGM/C Trends in the U.S.

Source: US End FGM/C Network U.S. Scoping Report 2017



## Increased Awareness

US efforts focus on prevention, protection, research, and care



## Increased Government Support

Inter-Agency Working Group on FGM  
Government reports, policy statements and recommendations  
Research Funding



## Increased Collaborations

US End FGM/C Network

- End Violence Against Girls: Summit on FGM/C
- Official launch 2018
- 400+ indiv. Members and ↑ 50 orgs
- State/City Coalitions



## Survivors & Communities Speak out

↑ Survivor Led Initiatives  
Limited support survivors and survivor led organizations



## Increased Intolerance

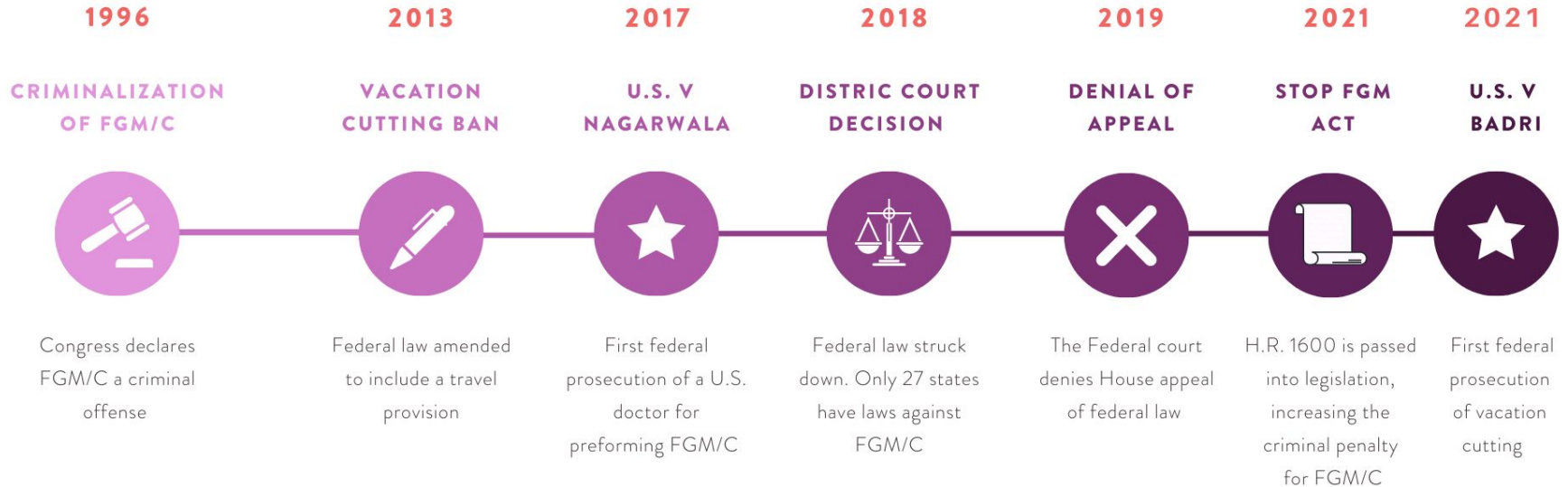
Islamophobia  
Anti-immigrant sentiment

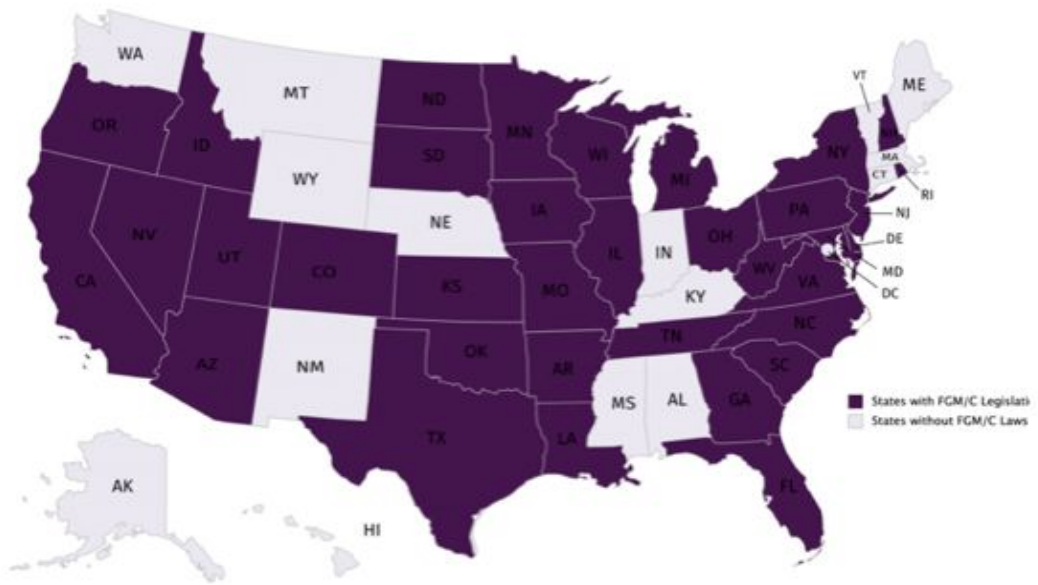


## Insufficient Resources

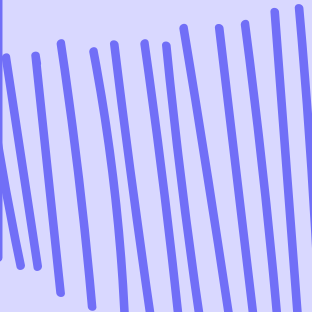
Limited access to funding and capacity building for CBOs  
Sustainability challenges

# FGM/C LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES





# State Laws on FGM/C



# COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS



## Islamophobia

Despite the fact that FGM/C has no religion, some people incorrectly think that it only happens in Muslim communities.



## Only in Africa

While FGM/C does happen in 29 countries in Africa, it happens in 92 countries globally in total, 63 outside of Africa.



## It doesn't happen here

Many in Europe in America don't believe it happens where they live, but that is false.





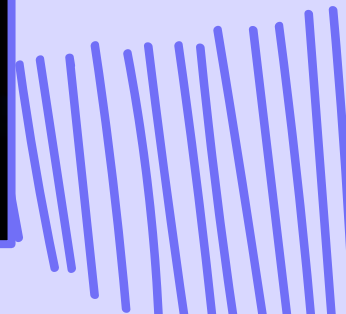
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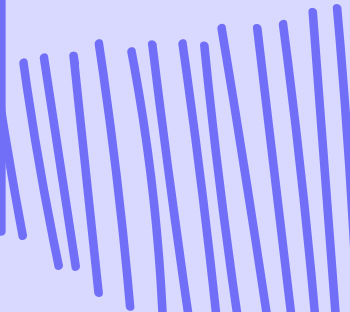
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FGM/C and  
GBV

What connections do you see  
between FGM/C and other  
forms of gender-based violence?  
(i.e. domestic violence, sexual assault, etc.)



'Don't be scared, it's just a small pinch.'





# FGC and Gender-Based Violence

## Relationship

FGC is a form of gender-based violence and child abuse.

FGC can be a learned behavior of childhood, is often surrounded by a culture of silence/stigma/shame, and is a form of generational violence like many other types of GBV.



05

COVID-19  
and FGM/C

# Covid-19 and FGM: *Lessons learned from Ebola*



## Key Effects on **FGM** Prevention and Care

Social isolation and loss of social support

Loss of access to education, reproductive health & protection services

Loss of livelihoods

New opportunities for young people to take on positive, new roles in their communities



## Key Program Recommendations

Support response plans grounded children's rights gender analysis & address the increased risks of GBV

Support efforts aimed at interrupting FGM/C during the pandemic & beyond

Support access to digital tools for education, health, psychosocial support and social protection services (e.g. sexual and reproductive health services, GBV services)

Support research both during and post-pandemic

# The Impacts of COVID-19 on FGM/C

## Key Findings: Orchid Project Report (September 2020)

- Increased rates of FGM/C reported across East and West Africa due to COVID lockdowns
  - Seen as opportunity to carryout FGM/C undetected
- Lack of FGM/C integration into COVID responses
  - Leaving girls at risk and survivors with no access to services
- Economic hardships pushing parents to seek “bride prices” and cutters who may have abandoned practice to begin again in order to generate income
- Shrinking space and capacity of CSO’s to reach communities with FGM/C education and services
  - Lack of funding for CSO’s to continue FGM/C work
- Increased use of social media to reach communities





06

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Resources for  
Service  
Providers

# Resources for Providers

- Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS) – [Health Practitioners Guide to Providing Culturally Competent Care for Women and Girls Affected by Female Genital Cutting](#)
- Dahlia Project – Female Genital Trauma: [Guidelines for Working Therapeutically with Survivors of Female Genital Mutilation](#)
- AHA Foundation – [Training Curriculum for Law Enforcement, Educators, and Service Providers](#)

# More Resources

- [US End FGM/C Network](#)
- [An Educational Toolkit to Empower Survivors](#)
- [Female Genital Trauma: Guidelines for Working Therapeutically with Survivors of Female Genital Mutilation](#)
- [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) – A Visual Reference and Learning Tool for Health Care Professionals \(Booklet\)](#)
- [Obstetric Care for Women Affected by Female Genital Cutting](#)
  - [And many more.....](#)

Questions?



# THANK YOU!

Do you have further questions?

Shirley Luo

[sluo@api-gbv.org](mailto:sluo@api-gbv.org)

Mariya Taher

[Mariya@Sahiyo.com](mailto:Mariya@Sahiyo.com)

Carey Walovich

[info@endfgmnetwork.org](mailto:info@endfgmnetwork.org)