GAMS

BELGIQUE - BELGIË

« Prevention of female genital mutilation in Europe: experience from Belgium»

Seydou Niang, project officer & social worker

Stéphanie Florquin, project and reserach officer, coordinator of the CS-FGM

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Fil rouge

- Introduction FGM
- Presentation of GAMS
- Community work in Belgium
- Tools for & by the communities
- Engaging Professionals in prevention & care
- Tools for professionals
- Building bridges to end FGM
- Q & A

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Question 1

Did you ever come in contact with the issue of FGM in your professional practice or personal life?

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

What is FGM/C ?

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)
(also know as *Female genital cutting* or *Female circumcision*)
is the removal of all or part of a girl's external genitals
for non medical reasons.

By whom?

- Traditional cutter (often without anaesthesia)
- + Medicalisation (doctor, nurse, midwife..) (77,4% in Egypt (DHS 2008)

When is it performed?

In half of the countries that practice FGM,
the majority of girls are cut before age 5
(incl a few weeks, months old).
Elsewhere, cutting occurs between 5 and 14 years of age.

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Classification (WHO 2007)

WHO typically defines 4 types of FGM

- **Clitoridectomy** – cutting of the clitoral hood or partial or total removal of the (EXTERNAL part of the) clitoris* (type 1)

- **Excision** - Partial or total removal of the external clitoris and the labia minora (the inner folds of the vulva), with or without excision of the labia majora (the outer folds of skin of the vulva) (type 2)

- **Infibulation -** narrowing of the vaginal by cutting and repositioning the labia minora, or labia majora, sometimes through stitching, with or without cutting of the clitoral gland

- all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area. (type 4)

** The Clitoris is a BIG organ, it cannot be entirely removed without major surgery.*

GAMS

BELGIQUE - BELGIË

The clitoris….

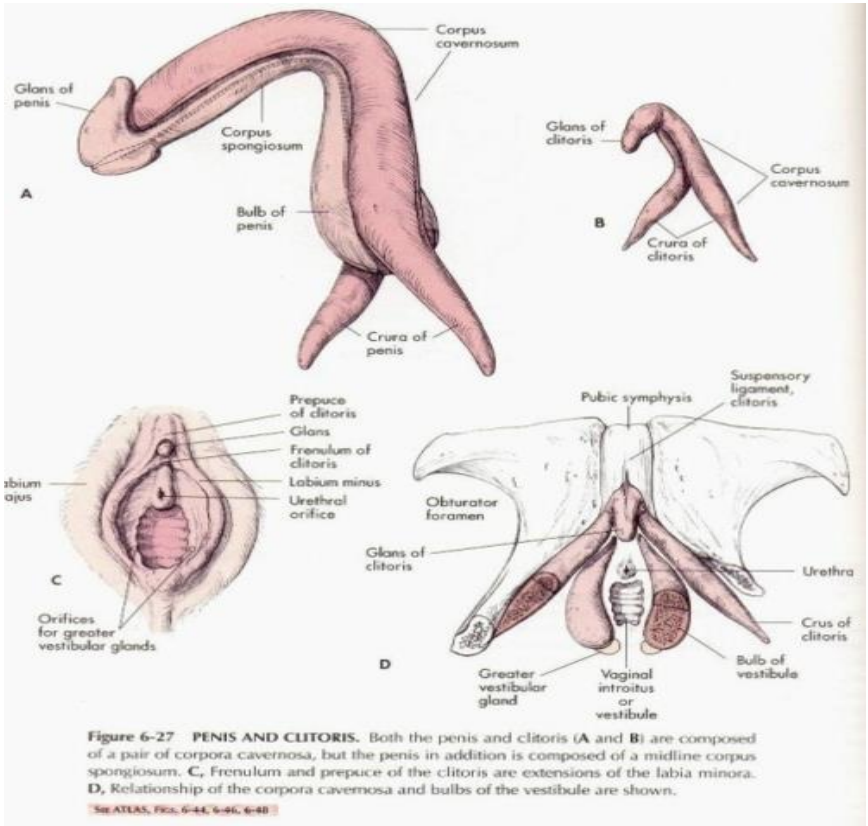


Figure 6-27 PENIS AND CLITORIS. Both the penis and clitoris (**A** and **B**) are composed of a pair of corpora cavernosa, but the penis in addition is composed of a midline corpus spongiosum. **C,** Frenulum and prepuce of the clitoris are extensions of the labia minora. **D,** Relationship of the corpora cavernosa and bulbs of the vestibule are shown.

See ATLAS, Figs. 6-44, 6-46, 6-48

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Question 2

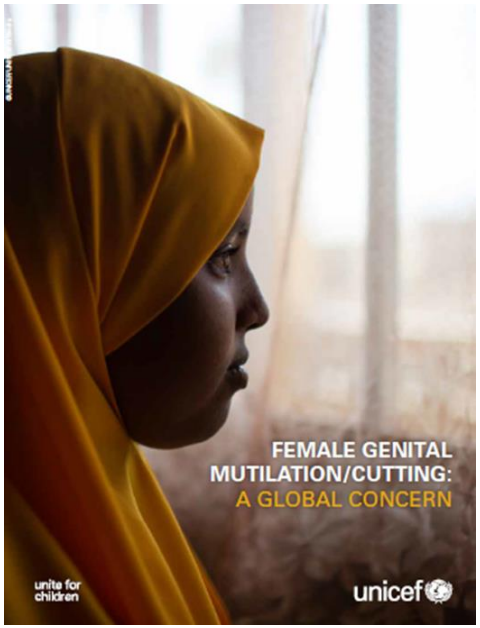
What do you think : FGM is practiced only on the African continent ?

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Where is it practiced?

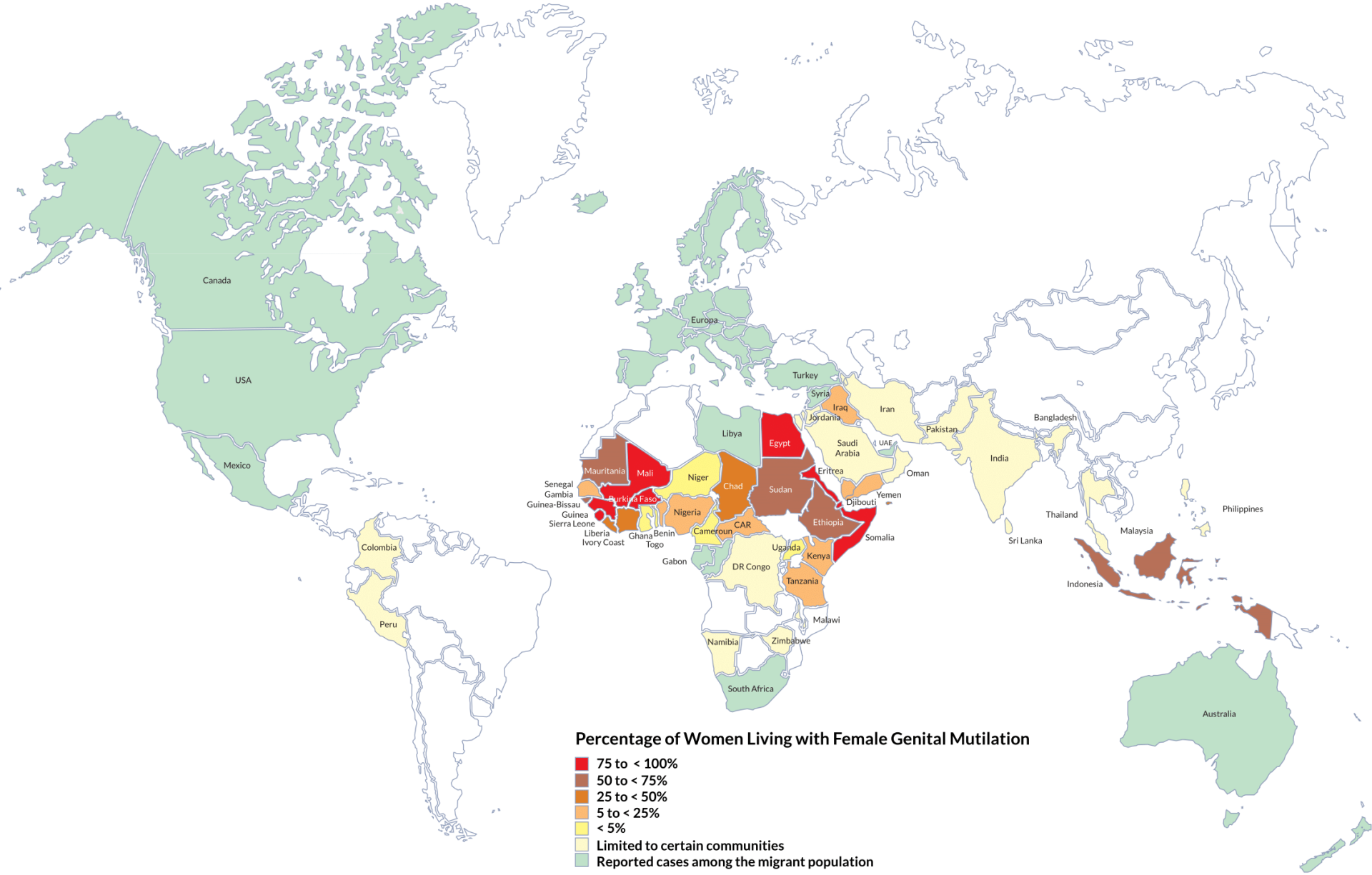
FGM is a **global issue**, which concerns all continents (including Europe and Africa) - needs to be addressed as such.

± 200 million girls and women in 30 countries are currently living with FGM, with a further 8,000 girls at risk every day—some 3 million girls a year
(UNICEF, 2016)



→ More than 50% of affected girls/women:
Indonesia, Egypt, Ethiopia

PREVALENCE OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN THE WORLD



Percentage of Women Living with Female Genital Mutilation

- 75 to < 100%
- 50 to < 75%
- 25 to < 50%
- 5 to < 25%
- < 5%
- Limited to certain communities
- Reported cases among the migrant population

Based on DHS, MICS - March 2016 and other nationally representative surveys.

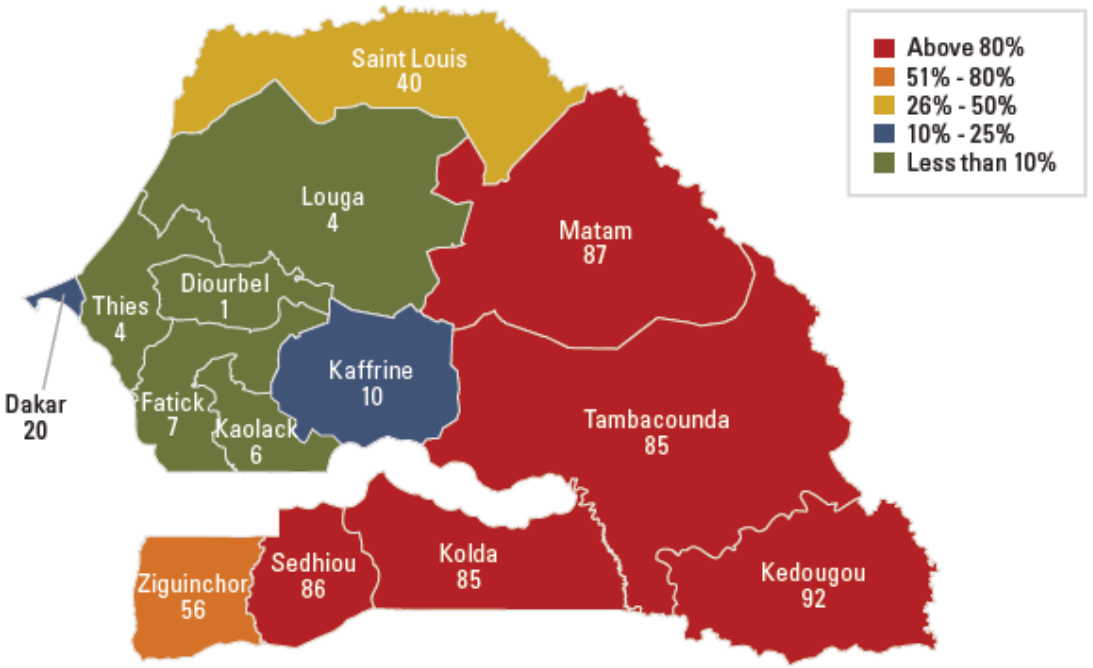
© GAMS Belgium 2016

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Prevalence rates vary between and within countries and regions (importance of ethnicity).

Map 4.4 Variations in FGM/C prevalence in Senegal, a moderately low prevalence country, are dramatic

Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C in Senegal, by region



Notes: This map is stylized and not to scale. It does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.
Source: DHS/MICS 2010-2011.

(Unicef, 2013)

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

FGM/C in Europe

± 500,000 women and girls living in the EU have been subjected to FGM
(European Parliament, 2016).

± 20,000 women and girls from FGM-risk countries of origin seek asylum in the EU each year
(20% of all female applicants in 2011)

± 8,800 of these (mostly from Somalia, Eritrea or Guinea)
are affected by FGM.
Lack of accurate data and limited research on FGM prevalence in Europe.

→ Scientific evidence suggests that many families are giving up FGM after migrating

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

FGM in Belgium

- **48.000** wn/girls from affected countries
- **13.000** wn/girls very likely to have undergone FGM
- **4.000** at risk of FGM

(Prevalence study conducted in 2014, numbers on January 1st 2012)

> Participating, facilitating and encouraging FGM is illegal (Penal Code)
> 19 FGM-related cases filed in Belgium (2008-2014), no conviction.

> Several international Conventions applicable in Belgium.
> FGM as gender-based persecution = grounds for awarding refugee status

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Question 3

Are you aware of the legal situation regarding FGM in your country?

1. Yes, it is illegal
2. Yes, it is legal
3. I don’t know

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Why is it practiced?

Reasons given for the continuation of FGM
vary across countries and cultures
and may change over time

Common rationales include:

- *Assurance of girls' or women's social status (fear of stigma)*
- *Chastity, maintenance of pre-marital virginity*
  → marriageability (financial stability)
- *Religious identity, respect of culture*
- *Ritual marking of a transition to womanhood*
- *Maintenance of family honour and respect*
- *Improvement of beauty and hygiene…*
- *Myths about the female genitalia, clitoris*
- *Economic reasons for the practitioner*

→ SOCIAL NORM

FGM/C is a self-enforcing, behavioural rule or **social norm** (deeply rooted in the unequal power relations between men and women).

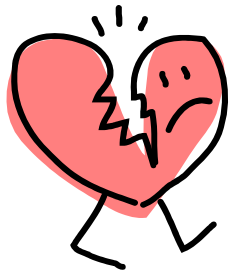
GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

FGM = a type of GBV

FGM is internationally recognised as a GBV and a violation of the Human rights of women and girls :

- International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)
- Programme of Action, the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2012 UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/67/146).
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Istanbul Convention …

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË



Physical heath consequences :

- Immediate (bleeding, infection, pain.. Death)
- Long-term (cyst, urinary tract infections…)

Psychological consequences :

- Immediate - fear, sideration, surprise…
- Long-term - loss of self-confidence, feeling of betrayal, dissociation

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

GAMS IN A FEW WORDS

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Groupe d'Abolution des Mutilations Sexuelles féminines Founded in **1996**

- Multidisciplinary team :
  15 paid staff
  + trained community based volunteers
- In Brussels + 3 regional offices

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Missions and activities

Missions	Activities
Prevent FGM in Belgium	➢ Sensitization and information provision to affected communities and professionals. ➢ Professionals training.
Reduce the health, psychological and social impact of FGM	➢ Individual psychosocial and community support
Fostering dialogue and intersectoral action	➢ Network creation> concerted strategies ➢ www.strategiesconcertees.com
Supporting prevention in Africa	➢ Bulding the Bridges-Velingara

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

WORKING WITH AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Community based work: Discussions and exchange on different themes. Well being. Challenging beliefs, etc

- General awareness raising (community organisations, asylum centers; etc)
- Regular workshops (proposition during 1st social counseling)
  - ✓ women
  - ✓ young girls
  - ✓ children
  - ✓ pregnant women
  - ✓ men
- Peer educators training and activities

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Tools produced by Community workshops participants

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Peer educators

To support GAMS in advocacy against FGM and to support professionals in their individual interviews or outreach activities

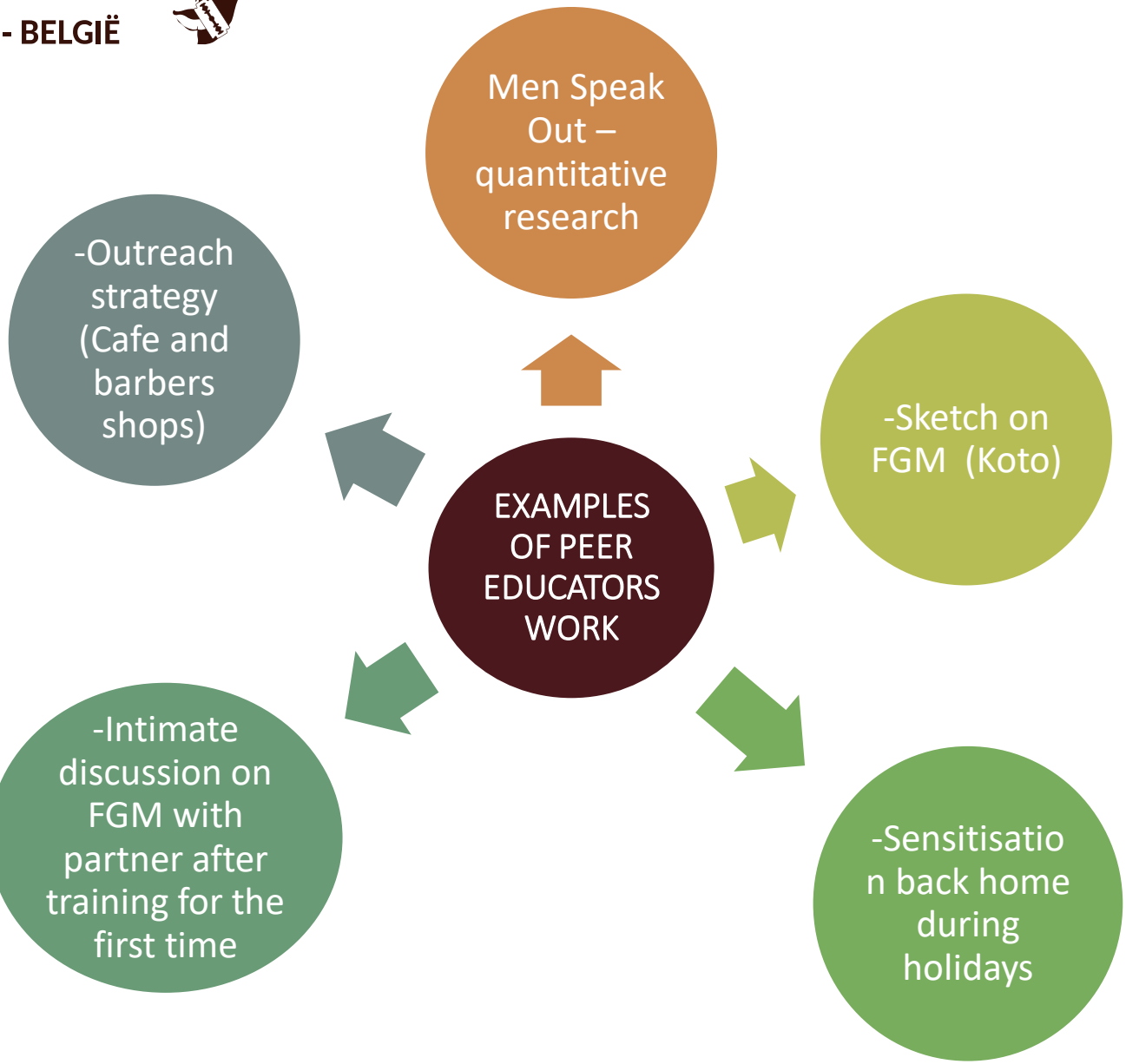
- a group of volunters from fgm practicing communauties

  90% were GAMS beneficiaries trained on diverses thems (human rights, gbv approch, fgm…

  participating on gams activities realinsing sensitisation (individually or in small group)

  translating for GAMS staff or other services

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË



GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Opportunities

- Strengthening personal confidence
- Mutual support between peer educators-motivation and courage
- Ability to reach people who do not necessarily attend GAMS (MSO)
- Diversity of languages-Possibility of translation with a community approach (less formal)
- Exchange with professionals

Difficulties

- Lack of time for some peers (work or travel)
- Sometimes uncomfortable approaching the problem of FGM with older people or in the mother tongue.
- Exposure and unpleasant remarks (Koto-notoriety case)
- Difficulty answering some translation requests (EX: Tygrinia)

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

ACCESS:

Appropriate Community-Based Care and Empowering Support Services for Migrants Affected by GBV

To improve the prevention, protection and provision of support services for migrant women and girls affected and at risk of multiple forms of gender-based violence.

Partners

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

MÉDICOS DEL MUNDO

FORWARD
Safeguarding rights & dignity

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Program

- **Training GBV peer counsellors**
> Brussels, Liège, Antwerp
  - 3 weekends (March – June)

- **Training key professionals**
- **Awareness campaign**
✓ Posters and cards
✓ 4 videos in 9 languages
✓ Web App

- **Meeting September 2019 in Madrid**
  - Launch November 2019
- **Accessing support and protection**
- Online counseling
✓ Sensitization activities in communities

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACHES TO TACKLING FGM

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

- **Abandonment** of FGM requires a process of social change that results in new expectations and the emergence of a new norm

- Survivors of FGM need adequate **psycho-sexual and social care**

→ Working with a wide range of stakeholders : governments, religious leaders, civil society, professionals, activists

→ Multisectoral perspective : Health, Education, Child protection, Media etc.

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Engaging professionals in Prevention & Care of FGM in Belgium

The Concerted Strategies against FGM (CS-FGM)

STRATÉGIES CONCERTÉES MGF

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

STRATÉGIES CONCERTÉES MGF

A Belgian network for professionals

> Founded in 2008 : Concerted Strategies against FGM

> Create a Network for a better coordination between Fieldwork professionnals on their work on FGM

- Modeled on the Concerted Strategies against HIV/STD's

Aims :

- Improve the quality and the coordination of our actions
- Ensure that these actions and our advocacy are recognised by relevant political stakeholders

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

STRATÉGIES CONCERTÉES MGF

Methodology : A Collaborative approach

1. Situational Analysis

2. Planning
- Common Objectives
- Strategies
- Activities

3. Validation : Reference Framework

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

STRATÉGIES CONCERTÉES MGF

Literature review

+

Workshops

Situational Analysis

Concerned communities ?

Actors ?

Health Determinants ?

- institutional
- environmental,
- educational
- socio-demographi

Community representatives, grass root org., SRHR org., Org for asylum & migration, Researchers, Health promotion centres, legal experts, Org for children and Youth…

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

STRATÉGIES CONCERTÉES MGF

Reference Framework on FGM for Analysis and Action in the Brussels-Wallonia region

> Published in 2009

> Updated in 2013

> 17 operational objectives, grouped by intervention strategies of the stakeholders

→ Used by decision-makers for the integration on FGM in the National Action Plan on GBV (2012-2014)

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

STRATÉGIES CONCERTÉES MGF

Activities of the Network

Communication

Website (FR, ENG, NL)
Newsletter, social media..
News, interviews, Agenda..

Publication of Tools

FGM Prevention Kit
Multisectoral Best practices
« Deconstructing false ideas around FGM »
« How to talk about FGM with affected women/girls »
Good Practices and Recommendations

Advocacy

National Action Plan

Creation of knowledge

Action-Research ex. risk situations
Community mapping
Common Projects

Knowledge exchange

Thematic Workshops
Shared agenda
Annual Assembly

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

GAMS BELGIQUE - BELGIË

STRATÉGIES CONCERTÉES MGF

Training & tools for professionals

→ Training of professionals – multiple sectors
- → What is FGM ?
- → How to prevent FGM ?
- → How can we know if a girl/woman is at risk
- → What to do ? (protection)
- → Professional secrecy

→ *Tools*

- *Kit prevention of FGM*

- *Good practices for professionals prevention & care (Health, Asylum, Police & Justice, Youth)*

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Web Platform UEFGM

European Project – Launched in 2017

→ The development of a **web-based knowledge platform on FGM,** which will gather easily accessible, gender sensitive and culturally appropriate information and support to professionals in order to:

- **Deliver victim support more effectively,**
- **Help prevent FGM and protect women and girls living with or at risk of FGM,**
- **Serve as a resource and education center**

12 partners – 11 countries

uefgm United to End Female Genital Mutilation

uefgm United to End Female Genital Mutilation

Hello, Kyriakos

Search

EN EL IT PT FR NL SV ES DE

ABOUT WHAT IS FGM E-LEARNING COUNTRY FOCUS LOGOUT

http://www.uefgm.org/

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

1. *Introduction to FGM*
2. *FGM: Understanding Gender and Social Dynamics*
3. *Consequences of FGM on Women's Health and their Management*
4. *Ethics, Communication and Counseling in the Health Context*
5. *FGM as Ground for International Protection*
6. *The Asylum Context: Communication and Interviewing Techniques*
7. *The Role of the Justice System in the Fight against FGM*
8. *The Role of Police in the Fight against FGM*
9. *Advise and Support for Survivors of FGM*
10. *FGM and Child Protection*
11. *The Role of the Education Sector in Preventing FGM*
12. *Community Based Approach in Responding to FGM*
13. *Communicating and Reporting on FGM*

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Building bridges between stakeholders in Africa & Europe

The Community of Practice on FGM

BUILDING
BRIDGES
TO END FGM

GAMS
BELGIQUE - BELGIË

Community of practice ?

« a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better by interacting regularly»

- A way for professionals, activists, civil society organisations, scholars…. to interact *online* around a specific theme – FGM :
  - Good practices, innovative projects
  - Research
  - Contacts of professionals, NGOs…
  - Thematic discussions

→ Enhance understanding – Make prevention & care better

- Horizontal communication without hierarchy
- Use of online tools : Forum, email list, social networks, blog…
- Organisation of face-to-face meetings and workshops

GAMS

BELGIQUE - BELGIË

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !

Stéphanie Florquin
stephanie@gams.be

Seydou Niang
seydou@gams.be

STRATÉGIES CONCERTÉES MGF

www.gams.be

www.strategiesconcertees-mgf.be