Round-table meeting
‘Strengthening cooperation to combat female genital mutilation’

June 9 2015, Lisbon, Portugal

Role of communities in FGM prevention:
exchange of good practices
Portugal

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Presentation:

Part I – brief overview of NGO/migrants organizations’ intervention on FGM

Part II – Some projects /activities undergoing

Part III – Some reflections on the challenges (present and future)
Part I – brief overview of NGO/migrants’ organizations intervention on FGM

- Interventions on FGM go beyound year 2004:
  
  - UMAR, APF, AJPAS...

- Involvement of NGO working on FGM in the Intersectorial Working Group for the implementation and monitoring of the I and II Plan of Action for the End of FGM;

- Involvement of migrant organizations in the intersectorial working group for III Plan of Action for the End of FGM (direct elections by migrant organizations)
Part I – brief overview of NGO/migrants’ organizations intervention on FGM

Efforts to support migrant organizations’ work on FGM:

CIG:
• Prize: “Contra a MGF – Mudar aGora o Futuro”
• Equality funding calls

ACM (High Commission for Migration):
• FGM as one of the funding themes within the annual call and European funds.
Part II – Some projects /activities undergoing

Some activities projects on FGM usually present:

- Identifying and training community/religious leaders to be agents of change (men, women, young people);

- Raising awareness / (in)formation / training sessions on FGM for governmental and non governmental services / professionals that may have to deal, directly or indirectly, with FGM (migrant associations, health, police, social security services, education, and others);

- Production of IEC materials (leaflets, videos, posters, among others);

- Use of activities with proven good results in other areas, like theatre.
Part II – Some projects /activities undergoing

Associação de Intervenção Comunitária, Desenvolvimento Social e de Saúde (Association for Community Intervention, Social development and Health)
- A migrant NGO (High Commission for Migration)

- A development NGO (Camões ICL)

Associação para a Cooperação sobre População e Desenvolvimento (Association for Cooperation for People and Development)
- A development NGO (Camões ICL)
Part II – Some projects /activities undergoing

**AmaDirHum – Intervenção Integrada contra a MGF**
(integrated approach against FGM) (financed by FEINPT/ACM):

- Sensitization/training of governmental and non-governmental, public and private organizations working on Amadora council, having the City Council of Amadora as the project partner;

- 1 municipal integrated protocol to address FGM (prevention and care for victims, potential victims and their families) based upon the existing national resources (Health, Police and Child Protection services guides);

- AJPAS integrates the Child protection services of Amadora working group on FGM and is the reference NGO for FGM in the Municipal Plan against Violence of Amadora.
Part II – Some projects /activities undergoing

“A(vozes) contra a MGF (Voices Against FGM)

Financed by CIG (Prize “Contra a MGF – Mudar Agora o Futuro)

• Production of a pedagogical film, giving voice to elder people from the communities, to speak against the practice.

Key messages identified by the community itself:

➢ we are not speaking against people, we are not speaking against culture, we are speaking for girls and women and their health and well being;
➢ FGM is not an obligation of Koran;
➢ There’s no need for cutting to get a husband or a better life, underlying the importance of education.
Part II – Some projects /activities undergoing

“A(vozes) contra a MGF” (Voices Against FGM)

Mission to Portugal from the President of the National Committe For the Abandonment of Harmful Practices to the Health of Children and Women (supported by the Portuguese Cooperation Insitute - Camões) - 18 th May – 2nd June 2015

President: Ms. Fatumata Djau Baldé
Vice-President – Prof. Malan Djassi (koranic specialist and spiritual leader)

Objectives:
• To give their testimony to the film;
• To identify key persons in the community to build a community network against FGM;
• To identify and mobilize religious leaders to be key actors for the end of FGM;
• To identify women that, empowerd, can be female leaders against FGM.
Part II – Some projects /activities undergoing

“A(vozes) contra a MGF (Voices Against FGM) – CNAPN’s mission
Part III – Some reflections on the challenges (present and future)

1. Funding and access to funding:

• Migrant communities and their associations face several obstacles:
  • Lack of human and financial resources (surviving mainly from voluntary work, with limited time available in after hours and weekends);
  • Lack of preparation to design and implement projects, having to face complex IT platforms and reporting;
  • Due to several daily needs (un/employment, housing, health and others) FGM is not seen as a priority.
2. Empowering women and working also with men

• Involving and work with men is crucial but, at the same time, women must be empowered to have space and voice (in meetings, generally only men attend);

• Working with communities implies having to devote weekends and night work (not compatible with “official or “regular” working hours) - governmental and non-governmental organizations may have to consider revising the working hours/schedules if they want to involve/reach communities;

• There are key persons in the communities that aren’t part of associations (informal groups) and can play a decisive role towards the end of FGM.
3. Community and religious leaders

- Religious leaders can play a decisive role in communities where FGM is allegedly related to Islam, but:
  
  ➢ Those leaders should know Arabic and be prepared to interpreter and discuss the Koran.

- Engaging community/religious leaders from practicing communities can more easily lead to changes.
4. FGM – the need for an integrated approach

- Due to the complexity, FGM must be addressed in several angles such as education or health including sexual and reproductive health, among others.

5. FGM and other harmful practices

- FGM is often a requirement for marriage and can be related to child marriage.
  - UNFPA (2013) - women with 20-24 years married before 18 year of age (2000-2011)
    - Guinea-Conakri 63%
    - Senegal 33%
    - Guinea-Bissau 34%
6. To enforce communication and collaboration between countries of destination and countries of origin:

- The mission from CNAPN showed that isolation and lack of communication between those who migrate and those who stay can endure behaviours and beliefs that were already left behind in the country of origin;

- Who migrates is seen as role model for those that stay, therefore their refusal for FGM and others harmful practices is an important contribute towards it end.
7. Mapping projects/interventions on FGM at national level

- Mapping projects on FGM implemented/undergoing to know the work that is being done, exchange information and experiences, and optimize resources (collaborative work is needed);

- Creation of a national database with the projects products and contacts of the persons trained (who/where are the mediators/women/men trained on FGM? They valuable resources)
8. More research is needed:

- To know more about the impact of migration on FGM risk levels for other groups than communities from Guinea-Bissau;

- To know more about FGM on other migrant communities in Portugal (Guiné-Conakri, Senegal, and others);

- To analyze if there is a link between FGM and Child marriage in Portugal, and, if so, in which communities and in what extent.
9. Strong leadership and Political commitment:

- Crucial at internacional, national, regional and local level.

10. Networking at european and national level:

- Optimizing financial and human resources, sharing best practices, experiences.
Thank you!

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