



FACTSHEET 1 OF 4

FGM AS A GENDER & VAW* ISSUE

**Violence Against Women*

FOCUS

**GENDERED VIOLENCE,
GENDER DISCRIMINATION,
PATRIARCHAL STRUCTURES**

WHAT IS FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (World Health Organisation).

FGM ON A CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

Violence against women is often a cycle of abuse that manifests itself in many forms throughout their lives" (UNICEF, 2000). That is why FGM may also be linked with other forms of VAW, specifically child marriage. Both are practiced due to dominant social norms related to a girl's sexuality and enduring gender inequalities.

IS IT A WOMEN'S RIGHTS ISSUE?

FGM is a part of wider patriarchal practices, rooted in inequality between the sexes and aimed at controlling women and girls' sexuality, their bodies and their sexual and reproductive rights. The practice denies women and girls' their right to: physical and mental integrity; freedom from violence; the highest attainable standard of health; freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex; freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment among others.

BURDEN OF HONOUR

Patriarchal beliefs most often place responsibility of 'honour' of the family and society on women. Compared to men, women are supposed to be more virtuous, less sexually active and bearing the brunt of family responsibility. As a result of this burden, women's rights become severely infringed on as a means to 'protect' her and, by extension, her family from losing this honour.

FGM AS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

FGM is a violation of women and girls' human rights and an extreme form of discrimination and violence directed exclusively at girls and women, because of their sex. Any girl born into a community that practices FGM is potentially at risk of the practice.

ESTIMATES & PREVALENCE

 **≈ 180,000** GIRLS ARE AT RISK OF UNDER-GOING FGM YEARLY IN EU  **> 125 million** GIRLS AND WOMEN LIVE WITH FGM CONSEQUENCES GLOBALLY

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

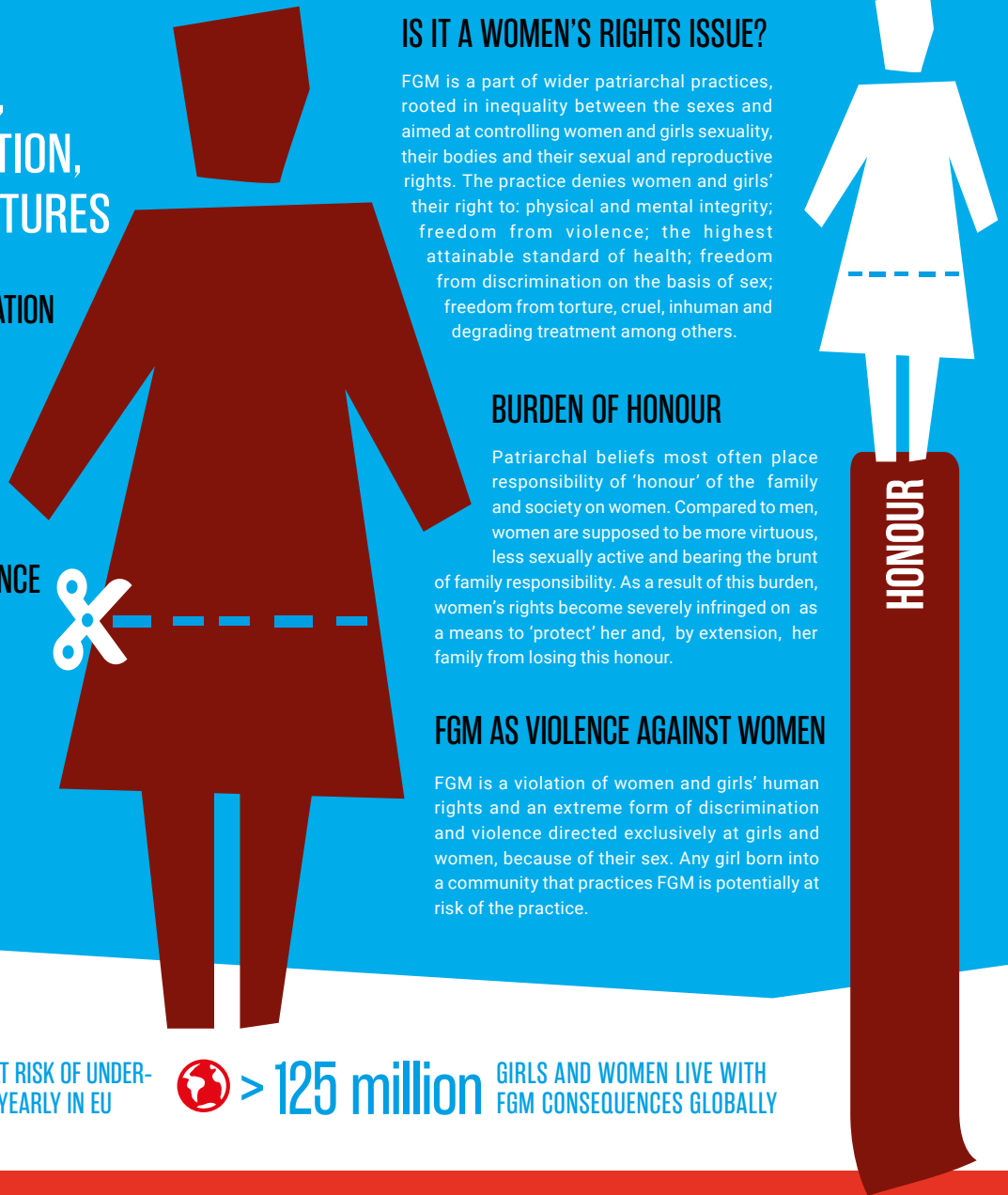
SHORT-TERM:

**PAIN
SHOCK
BLEEDING
LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS
INFECTIONS
SOMETIMES DEATH**

LONG-TERM:

**PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA
PTSD
DECREASE OF SEXUAL PLEASURE
DECREASE OF MOTIVATION &
RESILIENCE
SEXUAL DYSFUNCTIONS**

**COMPLICATIONS AT BIRTH
MATERNAL & INFANT MORTALITY
INFERTILITY
HIV RISK**



WHERE ?

SOCIAL

Practiced in households at all educational levels and all social classes.

EU

FGM is mostly present in the communities originating from countries affected by FGM.

>28

More than 28 countries in Africa and several countries Asia and the Middle East.

02% – 98%

Prevalence rates vary from country to country from 98 % in Somalia to 2 % in Uganda and Cameroon.

RELIGION

No major religion advocates or mandates the practice of FGM. Despite this, FGM is practiced by Muslims, Christians, and animists.

WHO ARE THE

PRACTITIONERS

Traditional practitioners (cutters)
Midwives
Older Women
Doctors
Nurses

WHO IS

AFFECTED

Girls and women from infancy to 15 years old
Occasionally older women

WHO ARE THE

GATEKEEPERS

Extended Families
Mothers & Fathers
Community Elders
Religious leaders
Health Practitioners

WHAT CAN YOU DO?



1 RECOGNIZE COMPLEXITY

FGM is a complex form of discrimination against women, exacerbated by other social problems: harmful traditional norms, sexual taboos, economic vulnerability, social (im) mobility, migration and integration.

2 EMPOWER WOMEN & GIRLS

- increase rights based education and literacy”
- In some communities, FGM occurs across and beyond economic classes
- Intergenerational Dialogue between younger and older women
- Community Interventions
- Awareness-raising among health practitioners
- “Girls Speak Up” initiatives
- Sexual Education / Family Planning Programs

3 4PS IN POLICY AND ACTION

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) is the first European legal instrument that provides a comprehensive framework for 4Ps in addressing FGM, combining **Prevention, Protection, Prosecution** and adequate **Provision** of services.

4 TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

FGM is a harmful practice that has no place in a society that aims to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of women. By ignoring the phenomenon, we place the fundamental rights of thousands of women and girls at risk of being violated. States must sign and ratify the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the first legally binding instrument and practical tool to address FGM in the EU and beyond.

CASE STUDY FORWARD UK, YOUNG PEOPLE SPEAK OUT (YPSO!)

YPSO! is a London-based programme, established in 2006, that seeks to educate, empower and inspire young people (aged 16 to 24) from FGM-affected communities, to take a stand on gender discrimination and gender-based violence. Through co-ordinated group activities, combined with spoken word, music events and educational materials, this initiative provides training on FGM, leadership and advocacy, to give young persons the skills to advocate within their local communities against FGM and early/child marriages. Through the YPSO! programme, a platform for young women has been developed to support and enable them to propel themselves into society.

<http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/what-we-do/uk-programmes/uk-youth-fgm-programmes/>

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<http://goo.gl/WhLPYgHERE>

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