Final Technical Implementation Report

Title:
Strengthening the European Network for the Prevention of FGM by building on experiences and results from the early past

Start Date: 01/10/2003   End Date: 30/06/2005
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Partner Organisation’s name and country:

1. European Network for the Prevention and Eradication of Harmful Traditional Practices, in particular Female Genital Mutilation (EuroNet-FGM), Belgium (Network that joins 26 organisations from 11 European countries – status as of June 2005).

2. Groupement pour l’Abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles (GAMS), France
1. Aims of the project

1.1. What problem did the project aim to address?

The project addressed the problem of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Europe, more specifically it focused on educational material developed by former Daphne projects on FGM, and that are used in Europe for the prevention of FGM.

FGM affects between 100 and 140 million women and girls worldwide and it is estimated that at least 2 million girls a year are at risk of mutilation. Even though practiced primarily in 28 countries from the horn of Africa, to parts of central, eastern and western Africa, international migration has extended the practice outside the African continent: it is now an issue of European concern.

In the past 4 years, a lot of efforts have been done to tackle the problem of FGM in the EU. Both the International Centre for Reproductive Health (ICRH; coordinator of this project) and GAMS (partner of this project) have coordinated or were partner in several Daphne projects (from 1998 to 2003), which have led to the establishment of the European Network for the Prevention of FGM and produced a wide variety of valuable information-education-communication (IEC) tools. The following materials have been produced:

- Recommendations for a European strategy for the prevention of FGM in Europe (at medical, legislative and community level);
- Agenda with research priorities on FGM in Europe;
- Frameworks for the health sector for the care of women with FGM and training of health professionals;
- Overview of priorities for prevention activities at community level by non-governmental- (NGOS) and community based organisations (CBOs);
- Cartography of FGM in Europe including a review of statistics, a review of legislation in Europe, and a history of the struggle against FGM;
- General educative tool on FGM in Europe;
- Manual for health providers;
- Review of EU laws applicable to FGM, in the 15 former member states of the EU, analysis of the implementation of the laws regarding FGM in 5 EU countries -legislative strategies.

Within the Network, several member organisations have also coordinated Daphne projects or were partners in Daphne projects, and produced other IEC tools. To give more visibility to what has been achieved so far, to exchange these good practices and to avoid a duplication of efforts, it is paramount to discuss the achievements of Daphne projects on FGM as well as the way forward in Europe. These discussions need to be done in collaboration with NGOs and CBOs of European member states.

In this context the project aimed at testing the results produced by ICRH and GAMS in Daphne FGM projects by field experts, to exchange good practices of other Daphne projects and to disseminate the results to all EU Member States. In order to reach these aims, two workshops were organised with field experts and a booklet on IEC strategies and behaviour change interventions was produced. The booklet included also the outcome of the two workshops. The workshops have also been an excellent opportunity to reinforce the Network by building the capacity of its members organisations present, by training them on behaviour change strategies in Africa and Europe.

1.2. Who are the beneficiaries?

The member organisations of the European Network for the Prevention of FGM are the principal target groups of this project. They were responsible for disseminating the results in their respective
countries to a diversity of beneficiaries such as practicing communities, national governments, health professionals, schools, other NGOs and community based organisations etc.

1.3. What were the expected results?

Initially, the development of an IEC tool was planned, that would be general and basic and adaptable to the specific situation in each European country and adaptable to various target groups. It was to include basic information on FGM, lessons learned from other Daphne projects and the basics concerning prevention of FGM in Europe. However, the format of this tool has been changed, due to the outcome of the first workshop (see point 2.1).

2. Implementation of the project

2.1. Planned versus implemented activities

1. Planned activity: organisation of 3 steering committee meetings
   - A steering committee was organised in Brussels on November 20, 2003, with the two partners (GAMS, Isabelle Gillette-Faye) and EuroNet-FGM (Khady Koita, president and Gerda Nienhuis, treasurer). At this meeting the background, aim and methodology of the project was discussed.
   - Another steering committee was organised at GAMS in Paris (November 17, 2004), to discuss the re-orientation of the tool from IEC to behaviour change.
   - Steering committee meeting June 10, 2004: follow-up of project and evaluation of workshop 1.

2. Planned activity: Collection and review of IEC tools and materials produced in former Daphne projects on FGM
   The review has been produced and was presented at the first workshop (see point 3). It is also included in the report of the first workshop.

3. Planned activity: Organisation of a first workshop
   This activity has been organised in Brussels (Belgium) on June 3 – 5, 2004. The goal of the workshop was to discuss the overview of the existing educational material produced within the Daphne Initiative and Programme I, used in Europe. This was done in collaboration with NGOs and community based organisations in Europe that work on the prevention of FGM. The 15 participants came from NGOs from 9 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Denmark, Finland, Spain, UK, Portugal, the Netherlands).

   Special attention was paid to send invitations to all Daphne coordinators to participate in this workshop, and with the exception of GAMS Belgium and Centro Piemontese of Italy (IDIL project), all were present. Furthermore, we have invited NGOs from Sweden, Norway and Germany to participate, but unfortunately they could not make it.

   The first afternoon of the workshop was used for presenting the analysis of Daphne projects on FGM and to discuss the overview of IEC tools and materials. The second day, participants discussed in two smaller groups, some issues with regard to IEC material and with regard to tools used for behaviour change. Saturday morning, the groups reported in plenary the outcome of their discussions.
4. **Planned activity: Organisation of a second workshop**

This second workshop entitled “Behaviour change instruments with regard to FGM in Europe” has been organised in Ghent (Belgium) on May 18-19, 2005. The workshop aimed at:

- Capacity building of member organizations of EuroNet FGM on behaviour change strategies towards FGM and best practices of community based interventions in Africa
- Determining essential elements for interventions on behaviour change towards FGM in Europe
- Exchange of experiences regarding behaviour change interventions in Europe
- To give comments on the draft tool.

28 participants from member organizations of EuroNet-FGM attended the workshop. They came from 13 European countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Finland, Denmark, Italy, Ireland, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK, the Netherlands). Also, Dr Baumgarten from the Violence and Injury Prevention Programme of WHO Regional Office for Europe was present and gave a presentation on “Approaches and methods for FGM programmes”. Other presentations focused on the lessons learned from successful community based interventions in Africa with regard to FGM, community based dimensions of the FGM Daphne projects and essential elements for success of community based interventions, both in Africa and Europe.

5. **Planned activity: Production, translation and dissemination of basic tool**

The tool « Behaviour change towards female genital mutilation: lessons learned from Africa and Europe », has been produced (2250 copies in total) in English (750 copies) and translated into French (750 copies) and Somali (750 copies). The book (28 pages) contains information on prevention strategies of FGM (IEC and behaviour change), and draws heavily on the experiences and lessons learned from the prevention of FGM in Africa, before reviewing the prevention strategies in Europe. The content of the book is as follows:

- IEC for raising awareness in Africa
- Behaviour change theories
- A review of frequently used approaches to prevent FGM in Africa,
- Good practices of community based interventions targeting behaviour change of FGM in Africa,
- Essential elements of successful community based interventions in Africa.
- Prevention of FGM in Europe: achievements to date and the way forward for Europe.
- A list of further readings and useful information on the topic of behaviour change of FGM

2.2. **Revision of the timetable**

A first extension of the project, until the 31st March 2005, has been requested for the following reasons:

- The first workshop, held in June 3rd-5th 2004, was initially planned for February 2004, but was delayed because of several other FGM workshops and meetings taking place earlier that year:
  - The Daphne project JAI/DAP/01/225, coordinated by GAMS France held a workshop in Paris, from 29th – 31st January 2004, with a number of NGOs working towards the prevention of FGM, including ICRH. Many of these NGOs are also member organizations of the European Network for the Prevention of FGM, and as such are invited to the workshops organized by ICRH.
  - Nosotras, an Italian NGO organised a conference on FGM in Firenze, on February 28th, 2004, where the same organisations were invited, including ICRH.
In addition, the project “Strengthening the European Network” JAI/DAP/03/02/WYC) wants to take into account the outcome of the Daphne project “First European Project” (JAI/DAP/01/225), more specifically the “Guide for Prevention” and the “Cartography”. As this project has also been extended, its outcomes were not available in February 2004.

In consultation with the EC Daphne Programme, a second extension of three months, until the 30th June 2005, has been requested for the following reasons:

- The development of the tool “Good practices from Africa and Europe of community based interventions on behaviour change of female genital mutilation” needed careful consultation and concertation with other NGOs and more specifically with our partners EuroNet FGM and GAMS. The draft tool was discussed during the second workshop in May 2005, after which it was finalised. The development of the draft tool needed more time then initially envisage, in order to be able to present workshop participants a draft of the tool that meets high standards of quality.
- The tool was also translated into Somali, since the Somali community is one of the most important communities in Europe. This community practices the most severe form of FGM (infibulation or type III) which has proven to be very difficult in terms of changing behaviour towards a total abandonment of the practice of FGM. To this end, close consultation with two Somali spokespersons of the Netherlands was paramount.
- The possibility of developing a tool on behaviour change, rather than on IEC material only has also been discussed with the ex-post evaluator Mrs Pero on her visit of December 16, 2004, and she suggested to request an extension of the project with 3 months to be able to develop the tool in a satisfying way.
- At the end of December 2004, the results of the Daphne project 01/225 – that were to be taken into account in the current Daphne project – were still not available. After consultation with the EC, we have proceeded with designing the tool without the input of this project.

2.3. Activities and contribution of the partners

1. EuroNet and GAMS participated actively in the steering committee meetings that have been organized:
2. EuroNet-FGM has organised and participated in the first workshop. 15 participants from EuroNet-FGM member organisations, coming from 9 EU countries, attended this workshop.
3. GAMS participated in the first workshop.
4. EuroNet-FGM and GAMS have participated in the second workshop. 28 participants from EuroNet-FGM member organisations, coming from 13 EU countries, attended this workshop.
5. EuroNet-FGM and GAMS assisted in the collection and review of IEC tools that have been produced in former Daphne projects on FGM.
6. EuroNet-FGM and GAMS assisted in developing the basic tool on behaviour change.
7. EuroNet-FGM and its member organisations actively participated in the distribution of the tool “Good practices from Africa and Europe of community based interventions on behaviour change of female genital mutilation”.

3. Results and impacts of the project

3.1. Results obtained from the activities

- List and analysis of educational material produced or used in Europe
- Report of first steering committee, November 20, 2003
- Workshop report “Testing existing educational material for the prevention of FGM, produced by the Daphne programme, by field experience. June 3-5, 2004”.

5

- **Findings from both workshops**

Participants of both workshops made two main conclusions about activities currently being implemented in Europe to prohibit or stop the practice.

The first conclusion was that there is a sufficient amount of IEC material available in Europe. However, there is a need to consolidate what has been produced (Leye, 2004). The following recommendations, which have been summarised below, were made:

### Consolidating the achievements regarding IEC material in Europe

- Existing IEC material needs to be assembled, pre-tested, evaluated, translated and disseminated. It will be necessary to build the capacities of NGOs to perform such pre-tests and evaluations. Criteria should also be developed to select IEC material for translation. More efforts need to be made to ensure effective dissemination of IEC materials amongst various stakeholders and across European countries.
- More information regarding issues other than FGM, for example, access to the health and education systems in host countries, needs to be provided.
- Research reports need to be "translated". There is a need to present the results of research so that findings can be understood, interpreted and adapted by people working with and for practising communities, and not least, by the communities themselves in Europe.
- Specific communication tools to reach men need to be developed.
- A focal point is needed to centralise all existing IEC material.

The topic of behaviour change and how it can be achieved was discussed at length during the first workshop. Participants reported a lack of knowledge and understanding of behaviour change communication and how it might be useful in stopping FGM in Europe amongst practising communities.

Community-based organisations, as well as other NGOs wanted information about the use and effectiveness of behaviour change communication as well as knowledge about best practices of this method of communication in Europe.

Given that communication for behaviour change is an interactive process, oral communication channels are considered to be more reliable in terms of such an interaction. The effectiveness of oral communication channels have not yet been fully explored by Daphne projects, where the focus has been the production of material for raising awareness, educating or training and teaching.

The second conclusion from the workshops was that it is necessary to move from raising awareness on FGM towards developing activities designed to bring about sustainable behaviour change in Europe and that using behaviour change communication interventions could be instrumental in bringing about such change.

Participants therefore suggested a number of issues that could facilitate behaviour change interventions amongst communities in Europe:
Suggestions for Behaviour change communication in Europe

- A participatory and multidisciplinary approach is paramount: activities should always be developed in collaboration with communities and with professionals from various backgrounds.

- “Outreach” is an important tool in BCC in Europe, as it is used for collecting information from the community and if used successfully, can build networks within these communities. Outreach and networks are processes and channels for building trust within the communities.

- As the quality and extent of community and interpersonal interventions are critical factors in behaviour change, it is important to work with, listen to and train influential and respected women and men in the communities who can then be used as trainers, facilitators and outreach workers. The opinions and attitudes of this key community member’s method can reinforce anti-FGM messages and build trust amongst community members.

- A continuous dialogue with and support of the communities is vital.

- Children, young women and men are important target groups to address in Europe

- New communication channels are emerging, such as “chat rooms” in Finland; “peer groups for exchanging views and emotions” in France; and “young girls committees” in Denmark. These are important developments which need to be taken into consideration and explored when designing new interventions that will bring about behaviour change.

In order to develop and implement effective IEC activities and behaviour change interventions, needs assessments should be performed. These assessments should originate from and involve members from practising communities and should be done in cooperation with multi-disciplinary teams prior to developing new activities.

3.2. Evaluation of the results

- Reports of the workshops and steering committee meetings were sent to all participants of the workshops and steering committee meetings for comments and suggestions, before finalising the documents.
- The initial idea of an IEC tool was discussed and evaluated by participants of both workshops and adapted according to their suggestions and comments.
- At the monitoring visit of the evaluator Mrs Pero, the tool was further discussed.

3.3. Impacts of the results

Since the project ended 3 months ago, the impact of the results is impossible to assess at this moment. However, plans are being discussed for taking the results further (see point 4.2), which is a clear indication that the outcome is appreciated and worthwhile to be taken further.
4. Dissemination and follow-up

4.1. Dissemination
- The book/tool « Behaviour change towards female genital mutilation: lessons learned from Africa and Europe » has been produced in English, French and Somali. All member organisation received copies to distribute in their countries. Also, some copies will be distributed in Somalia, as this country is in great need of information on good practices and community based interventions regarding FGM. The books will be sent to Somalia too.
- An announcement will be put on the website of ICRH.
- A mail will be sent to the European e-mail discussion list.
- Dissemination is an ongoing process, even long after the project is finished. Copies will be further distributed at future international fora.

4.2. Follow-up
- The workshops came up with quite some recommendations regarding the way forward for Europe in the struggle towards the abandonment of FGM worldwide. Member organisations of EuroNet-FGM have been urged to take further these recommendations in their field work.
- Currently, we are exploring the possibility to set up a training on behaviour change strategies (both in Europe and Somalia), based on the booklet.

4.3. Visibility European Commission (EC)
On all documents (workshop report, tool/booklet, webpages), the support of the EC is mentioned.

5. Conclusions

The main conclusions of this project that focused on activities currently being implemented in Europe to prohibit or stop the practice of FGM are:

1. There is a sufficient amount of IEC material available in Europe. However, there is a need to consolidate what has been produced. The following recommendations, which have been summarised below, were made by those who participated in the workshops of this project (i.e. the member organizations of the European Network for the Prevention and Eradication of Harmful Traditional Practices, more specifically Female Genital Mutilation (EuroNet-FGM):

**Consolidating the achievements regarding IEC material in Europe**
- Existing IEC material needs to be assembled, pre-tested, evaluated, translated and disseminated. It will be necessary to build the capacities of NGOs to perform such pre-tests and evaluations. Criteria should also be developed to select IEC material for translation. More efforts need to be made to ensure effective dissemination of IEC materials amongst various stakeholders and across European countries.
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**Suggestions for Behaviour change communication in Europe**

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- A continuous dialogue with and support of the communities is vital.
- Children, young women and men are important target groups to address in Europe.
- New communication channels are emerging, such as “chat rooms” in Finland; “peer groups for exchanging views and emotions” in France; and “young girls committees” in Denmark. These are important developments which need to be taken into consideration and explored when designing new interventions that will bring about behaviour change.

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## Annex 1: Keywords

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<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Daphne Objectives</th>
<th>Areas</th>
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## Annex 2: List of materials produced during the project

- Book (tool) Els Leye, Soetkin Bauwens and Owolabi Bjälkander.