

# Female Genital Cutting

## A Faith Leader Toolkit to Address Harmful Traditional Practices in Your Community

## LETTER TO FAITH LEADERS



Dear Faith Leader,

Thank you for picking up this toolkit. It takes a lot of courage to begin open, honest conversations about harmful practices that are deeply entrenched in a community's culture and tradition. We commend you for taking this first step to eradicating female genital cutting (FGC) and promote the health and wellbeing of girls and women in your community.

No matter what your stance has been in the past, you can make a big difference in helping your congregation and community think more deeply about these practices. Whether you have never spoken to your community about FGC, or whether you have been speaking out against this practice for a long time, we offer you ways of starting or re-energizing the conversations around such issues. Your congregation looks to you for guidance and support; this means that you are uniquely positioned to make real and lasting change in the lives of girls today, and for generations to come.

We understand that FGC will likely be difficult to discuss. This toolkit is designed to educate and make it easier for you to talk about this harmful practice. In it, you will find resources that will arm you with medical facts and theological references that speak out against FGC, and ways to answer the tough questions you may face along the way.

We have worked with local and international partners and with faith leaders from diverse faith backgrounds across Africa to develop this toolkit. We recognize that eradicating FGC is a vital step to promote the health and wellbeing of girls and women, which will greatly improve the health and success of communities and nations as a whole.

We urge you to read this toolkit, and understand the value of comprehensive knowledge about the realities of FGC. Please feel free to share this approach with peers of your own faith or across faiths in your community. Our hope is that, by equipping you with information and useful tools, you can become a part of the movement to change the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of communities – and the lives of girls who need your support the most.

Thank you for joining us in our mission to empower girls by eliminating FGC.

National Faith Leader	Ministry of Health Official	Secretary General
Title	Title	National Inter-Religious Council
Denomination	Ministry of Health	Country
Country	Country	



### FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING (FGC)

#### Addressing Harmful Traditional Practices in Your Community: A Faith Leader Toolkit

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### Get Started: How to Use This Toolkit

#### Module 1

Picking up this toolkit for the first time? We suggest you start here.

- 1) Let's Get Started
- 2) Some Common Questions

#### Teach Yourself: Facts about FGC

#### Module 2

Key facts & information to help you inform your community about FGC

- 1) Key Facts about FGC, A Basic Information Sheet with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
  - A Christian Perspective
  - A Muslim Perspective
- 2) Scriptural and theological guides related to FGC and its impact
  - A Guide for Christian Faith Leaders
  - A Guide for Muslim Faith Leaders
- 3) Anatomy Lesson (including anatomy flipchart)

#### Begin the Conversation:

#### 4 Conversations That Healthy Communities Should Have

#### Module 3

Faith leaders touch the lives of their communities in many ways: at weekly prayers, during lifecycle events, during individual counseling, or out in the community. Each of these interactions can be a teachable moment – an opportunity to discuss health and well-being with your community and share important messages. Here are 4 key conversations that all faith leaders regardless of faith – can have with their community:

#### Eliminating FGC: All Human Life Has Dignity

- **Conversation 1:** Our bodies are the creations of God/Allah, the perfect creator. If this is true, does female genital cutting reduce the dignity of human life?
- **Conversation 2:** Medical facts have proven that FGC is not good for women. Why do we cut out a healthy, beautiful, perfectly functioning body part?

- **Conversation 3:** FGC is harmful, but used anyway in an attempt to “guarantee” virginity in girls. Does FGC punish the innocent before a crime is even committed?
- **Conversation 4:** How can responsible, healthy, and productive communities work to eliminate FGC?

### Engage Women:

#### All Human Life has Dignity

#### Module 4

This interactive workshop provides an opportunity for women to learn about FGC, its negative effects, and the truths behind the myths they may have encountered. The workshop in this module can be presented in one unified session, or it can be excerpted and spread out across several meetings as necessary. Furthermore, it can also serve as an inspiration for further workshops and open discussions!

### Engage Youth:

#### Girls, Boys, &/or Mixed groups the dignity of human life

#### Module 5

This interactive investigation is tailored specifically for youth groups within your faith institution – whether girls alone, boys, or mixed groups– providing them with thoughtful opportunities to understand FGC and its consequences. How to engage different subgroups of youth will depend on local circumstances, but the key messages remain constant: everyone can do something to stop FGC!

### Activity Kit:

#### Everything You Need to Engage Your Community

The activity kit includes the anatomy flipchart and accompanying lesson to be used as part of modules 4 and 5.