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CHAT – Changing Attitude. Fostering dialogue to prevent FGM

Call for Action in order to involve the private sector

Female Genital Mutilation

The private sector's role to pursue the gender equality

Agreeing with the Chat project – Changing Attitude

Enclosures

- a) *Project synthesis*
- b) *Private sector's path*

By

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Female genital mutilation includes all procedures having as a result a partial or total removal of external female genital organs or any other wound to female genital organs for non-medical reasons (definition by WHO).

UNICEF has esteemed that 125 millions of women and little girls have undergone that practice worldwide and that 30 millions are at risk of undergoing it during the next 10 years. The phenomenon concerns over 20 African countries and, during the last few years, it has expanded also into some other Asian regions and in the Middle East, as a consequence of new migratory and geopolitical phenomena.

Changes in migratory phenomena have also increased the number of little girls at risk outwardly their country of origin, in particular Australia, North America, New Zealand and Europe.

The European Parliament has calculated that **in Europe are living about 500,000 women who have undergone a genital mutilation and that about 180,000 little girls are at risk every year.**

In Italy, in particular, there are 35,000 women that have undergone that practice and the little girls at risk might be over 7,000.

Such a genital mutilation for a girl it means having a **dreadful shock and a quite great physical pain**. Moreover, she will be exposed to **risks of infections, infertility and death** because of bleeding and illnesses. In addition, genitals mutilated women are liable to have several problems concerning the sexual sphere and when delivering a child, whose safety could be at risk.

As recognized by the European Commission- by means of the Communication for the Elimination of FGM – by the Council of Europe – thru the Istanbul Convention – and by the UN resolution about the elimination of mutilations, the practice is an infringement to human rights, to children's rights and a kind based discrimination. As such, it has social, political and economic implications that hinder the abandonment.

The opposition to female genitals mutilations has been fully recognized on a worldwide scale thru its **inclusion in the Objective number 5 for the Sustainable Development**, i.e. the achievement of kind equality and the emancipation of all women and young girls, by engaging the entire world community to put an end to this practice.

The involvement of the private sector

New global challenges, migratory fluxes, social-economical changes demand that the private sector elaborates new intervention strategies, capable to generate win-win results, by linking economic objectives to social objectives.

Why is that necessary?

The promotion of the kind equality, in all its forms, has its effects on the workers' rights and territories where they operate and allows to valorize the female contribution to the economic development, as expressed by the 7 Women's Empowerment Principles of UN, according to which the female empowerment is essential to the private sector, in order to

- *Strengthen economy*
- *Promote a better social justice*
- *Become adequate to the international standards of a sustainable development*
- *Actively promote human rights*
- *Improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities.*

How to assent

One of aims of the CHAT project – Changing Attitude, sustained by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship fund of the European Community and co-ordinated by Fondazione L'Albero della Vita – is the private sector involvement in the 6 countries: Italy, Portugal, Austria, Holland, Spain and United Kingdom, in order to prevent and contrast female genitals mutilations, by adopting an approach based upon the dialogue and on the agents of change. It is necessary to create a critical mass, such as to facilitate the abandonment of this social rule by the communities concerned.

The support by private companies can be effected through two main channels, i.e.

- The assent to the project aims and its messages spread thru their own communication channels;

- Directly carrying out information and prevention activities inside their own companies and the territory outside it or supporting associations operating in this sector.

Three main meetings are planned, in order to share the project aims and develop together efficient strategies:

- a **webinar and a careful study event** on the mutilations theme and on the ensuing social, economic, health implications. The webinar will be performed in collaboration with the **Csr Manager Network** and will be open to the associated companies only, during **September 2016** (to be confirmed). The event will take place in **the Csr and IS Hall** at the Bocconi University in Milan, on **October 4 and 5, 2016**.
- A **planning workshop**, in order to define how the private sector can contribute to contrast the practice thru the application of the **Theory of Change** and start the individual interventions. The workshop will take place in **February 2016** at the seat of L'Albero della Vita, Via Pisani, 13 in Milan.
- A **return event** on the results attained and of sharing next common aims on occasion of the **Csr and IS Hall**, taking place at the Bocconi University, in **October 2017**.

The engagements undertaken and the results attained by the companies involved will also be divulged on occasion of the final event of the project, in Brussels.





Enclosure a. Project Synthesis

The *CHAT project – Changing Attitude. Fostering Dialogue to prevent FGM* is a project co-financed by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program of the European Union, lasting 2 years, from February 1, 2016 to January 31, 2018.

The project is coordinated by Fondazione L'Albero della Vita Onlus (FADV) and involves 5 partners: Associaao para o pleneamento da Familia in Portugal, African Women's Organisation in Austria, Fundacion Wassau-UAB Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona in Spain, Himilo Relief and Development Association in Holland and Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation in the United Kingdom.

The general aim of the project is to facilitate awareness and change of attitude as regards female genitals mutilations inside the communities concerned with that practice, thru instruments like dialogue, the reciprocal learning and the exchange of best practice. The project is based on 3 main pillars. i.e.

1. Working inside the community,
2. Involvement in the private sector,
3. Co-development.



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1. Favoring a mobilization process inside the concerned communities through formation and support of 144 change agents, who could possibly involve over 2,400 people in the change, directly, during the planned 2 years. Indirect objective of this phase of the project is to endow the involved people with competencies and motivations inducing them to continue their own sensitization work for a much longer period than the end date of the project, in so activating a series of cascading effects.

2. Connections between third sector and private sector offer more and more possibilities to expand the effects of social interventions. Inside the project, each partner works in order to sensitize the companies on the theme of the gender violence, focusing on mutilations, in order that they give a part of the work of their corporate social responsibility to spread the sensitization campaign as elaborated in the project; to allow funds for projects preventing FGMs.

3. The project intends to support and form migrants' associations willing to implement co-development actions that positively affect countries traditionally practicing FGMs. The action will consist in an analysis of each context, in order to elaborate the best intervention strategy, also thru the involvement – wherever possible – of embassies and consulates.

Activities carried out by Fondazione L'Albero della Vita will mainly concentrate on Milan and province territories, whilst the sensitization campaign is concerning the national and European territories.

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Enclosure b. Private sector path

Percorso di coinvolgimento del settore privato	2016												2017												2018
	Feb	Mar	Apr	Mag	Giu	Lug	Ago	Set	Ott	Nov	Dic	Gen	Feb	Mar	Apr	Mag	Giu	Lug	Ago	Set	Ott	Nov	Dic	Gen	
Webinar																									
Salone del CSR e dell'innovazione																									
Workshop																									
Attività e diffusione campagna																									
Salone del CSR e dell'innovazione																									
Evento finale a Brussels																									

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