



CHAT

Against
Female Genital
Mutilation
in Europe

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CHANGING ATTITUDE

The CHAT – Changing Attitude. Fostering dialogue to prevent FGM project involves 6 European countries: **Italy, Portugal, Austria, Spain, Netherlands** and the **United Kingdom**. The aim is to increase awareness about the risks of the practice and to encourage a change of attitude within the communities that are at risk in Europe as well as in the countries of origin.

Italy
Fondazione L'Albero della Vita onlus



Portugal
Associação para o Planeamento da Família



Austria
African Women's Organisation



Spain
Fundación Wassu-UAB



Netherlands
Himilo staat voor hoop in de toekomst



United Kingdom
IKWRO - Women's Rights Organisation



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Coordinated by



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As recognized in main international conventions, **Female Genital Mutilation constitutes a crime and a violation of Human Rights and Children's Rights as well as gender discrimination**, which all prevent women and girls from enjoying their lives to the full.

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 and does not bear any real benefit** for women.

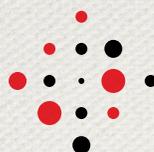
It is estimated that 180,000 young girls are at risk of being subjected to this practice every year in Europe.

The trauma of the abuse, the risk of contracting dangerous infections and diseases and the consequences for women and mothers who have been subjected to mutilation, will leave a mark in their life forever.

Norms and social conventions make this practice a **ritual for the social inclusion of the girl and her family, within the community**, in more than 20 African countries and in some Asian and Middle Eastern communities.

The same cultural pressures are common among migrants and refugee communities in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and United States of America. These communities suffer pressure from the countries of origin and this is exacerbated for those who face possible return.

The activities of the project



Encouraging a process of **mobilisation within at risk communities**, through the training and the support of **144 Positive Deviants (change agents)** who in turn can involve more than **2,400 people** in this change in the next two years.



Orienting the Corporate Social Responsibility strategies of European organizations to fight gender violence and to support **prevention of female genital mutilation**. Organising an online seminar about the importance of enterprises' actions in the social sector and a workshop to define available tools and individualised paths.



Supporting migrants' associations for the realisation of **co-development actions** that can become agents of change in the countries of origin. The interaction with migrants' associations is carried out in a series of workshops around this theme, in the implementation of co-development activities and in raising awareness within Embassies and Consulates.

I was 5 years old when I suffered mutilation. My father didn't agree. He was at work on that day. I remember my mother and my grandmother holding me lying on the floor. The cut was immediate, then the suture was made with thorns of the acacia. My legs were tied and immobilised to heal the wound. I remember the pain. I will remember it forever.

Amina, Somali woman, living in Italy.

In Italy FGM is a political issue from the end of the 90's, when a Parliamentary Committee for Children asked for a research on this topic.

It is estimated that in Italy there are 35.000 women who have been subjected to mutilation.

Source Piepoli Institute. Research of 2009, commissioned by the Department of Equal Opportunities.

It is estimated that more than 7.000 girls are at risk.

Source L'Albero della Vita Foundation (2011), *The right to be girls*.

The project focusses on the importance of dialogue and participation to tackle the problem.