

Gender A B C

Education Programme
for Primary and
Secondary Schools



Risk Assessment

The GenderABC project is coordinated by



and implemented by



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INTRODUCTION

Gender ABC is a project implemented in 4 european countries that are particularly in need of gender related education programmes in schools: Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

The project aims at preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) in all its forms within the school context and inside the community’s students (6/18 years).

The common root causes of these forms of GBV include gender inequality perpetuated by patriarchal structures and the unequal distribution of power between men and women, upheld by social, cultural and religious norms and often by government policies.

The objectives of the project are:

- Empower children to understand and respect human rights, recognise violations of children rights and forms of GBV and protect themselves
- Raise the awareness of school personnel, families, communities and support services to develop a supportive environment for children
- Strengthen political commitment of local authorities (education, welfare, youth) to sustain school education programmes on gender

Children in Europe are victims or at risk of different types of abuse and violence. Especially girls who are highly vulnerable to forms of gender-based violence.

Any girl can be victim of gender based violence because of gender stereotypes, roles and norms attributed to or expected of them. Some boys could be also be victims of gender based violence if they don’t conform to dominant notions of heterosexual masculinity and heteronormativity.

1. Female Genital Mutilation¹

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a harmful practice that is recognised worldwide as a human rights violation. **The practice of FGM violates fundamental rights**, such as these:

- Right to physical and mental integrity
- Right to highest attainable standard of health
- Right to be free from all forms of discrimination against women (including violence against women)
- Right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment
- Rights of the child
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- In extreme cases, Right to life

FGM has been documented in certain parts of Africa, Asia and Middle East. It is now encountered in Europe as well. Most often, girls and women are taken to their parents' countries of origin during school holidays where they are confronted with the pressure to undergo FGM.

The European Parliament estimates 600,000 girls and women living in Europe live with the lifelong consequences of female genital mutilation. The European Union (EU) has the power to act, by maintaining and scaling up commitments to combat violence against women and girls, including FGM, and promoting gender equality. The End FGM European Network works to ensure that the EU plays a key role to put an end to this practice and protect all women and girls.

→ THE 4 TYPES OF FGM

The World Health Organization (WHO, a UN agency) has created a detailed typology and identified four main types: Types I–III varies in how much tissue is removed; and Type IV describes miscellaneous procedures, including symbolic nicking.

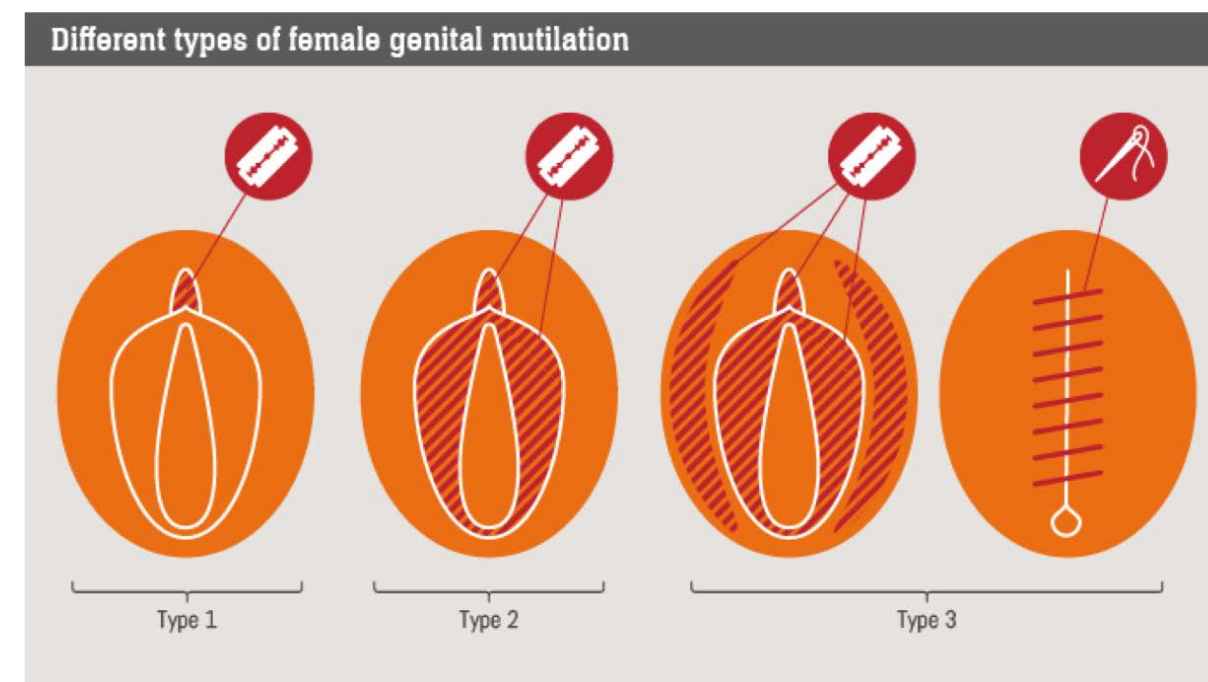
Type I

- **Ia** is "partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or the prepuce". Type Ia involves removal of the clitoral hood only. This is rarely performed alone
- **Ib** is the more common procedure (Clitoridectomy), i. e. the complete or partial removal of the clitoral glans (the visible tip of the clitoris) and clitoral hood

Type II (Excision) is the complete or partial removal of the inner labia, with or without removal of the clitoral glans and outer labia

Type III (Infibulation or Pharaonic Circumcision), the "sewn closed" category, involves the removal of the external genitalia and fusion of the wound. The inner and/or outer labia are cut away, with or without removal of the clitoral glans

Type IV refers to all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, including pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterization. It includes nicking of the clitoris (symbolic circumcision), burning or scarring the genitals, labia stretching, and introducing substances into the vagina to tighten it



¹ For more information, visit the website of The End FGM European Network (End FGM EU) at <http://www.endfgm.eu/>

→ WARNING SIGNS²

- The girl's family comes from a country where FGM is practiced
- Her mother has undergone FGM
- Her father comes from a community known to practice FGM
- A female family elder is very influential within the family and is/will be involved in the care of the girl
- Her mother/family has limited contact with people outside of her family
- A girl has spoken about a long holiday in her country of origin/another country where the practice is prevalent
- A girl friend or sibling asks for help
- A parent or family member expresses concern that FGM may be carried out on the child
- The girl has confided to someone that she is about to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a 'special occasion'. She has talked about going away 'to become a woman' or 'to become like my mum and sister'

→ HOW TO REACT

- **Avoid stigmatisation of the supposedly identified from FGM-practising communities:** take decisions based in thorough evaluations and adopt an inter-cultural approach, being sensitive to sociocultural differences and gender issues
- **Build trust:** gain the minors' trust. Let them know you care and that their wellbeing is of your concern. Always pursue the best interest of the child/youngster and protect her security and well-being
- **Be well informed:** ensure your knowledge is thorough and always up to date. Act in order to protect the rights of the child as established in the UN convention (1989) and the national laws regarding child protection
- **Aid possibilities:** point out auxiliaries and impart that the child is not alone. Keep the legal situation in the country in mind and provide access to counseling centers

If necessary, the youth welfare office must be informed. If concern about the girl's safety arises, call the youth welfare office immediately.

→ COUNTRY RESOURCES (Feel free to adapt this section according to your national context)

² UK Government, *Safeguarding women and girls at risk of FGM*, in "Guidance", available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-women-and-girls-at-risk-of-fgm>

2. Early forced marriage

Forced marriages describe those marriages in which at least one of the spouses is being forced into it. The union might be recognised under civil law, religious law or customary rites. It is binding not only for the spouses themselves, but also for their families and wider community. The spouse can be forced by physical or psychological violence or threats of violence. There is no international consensus upon the definition of forced marriage, but common elements of it include the issue of consent, coercion and duress. A marriage is also being considered forced when a partner stays in it against their will. This might be because of fear of sanctions from their family or community.

Marriage is considered **early** if at least one of the spouse is under 18 years of age. Early marriage has different impacts, such as: leaving school too early, early pregnancy, lifelong dependant relationship. It often goes along with domestic violence.

→ WARNING SIGNS³

- History of forced marriage in the family
- Not being allowed to leave the house
- Attempts to run away from home
- Constant monitoring by the family
- Request for extended leave of absence at school and/or failure to return from the country of origin after holidays
- Surveillance by siblings or family members who are in the same school
- Fear about forthcoming school holidays
- Being withdrawn from school or prevented from continuing with higher education
- Not engaging in school activities
- More frequent absence from school for longer periods of time
- Hyper-vigilance by the young person
- Attempted suicide or suicidal tendencies

There are many barriers that may stop the young person from seeking help, and may lead the young person to social isolation. They may be frightened of a range of people, including both male and female relatives, as well as others from the wider community and they may find it extremely difficult to trust anyone. As a result, social isolation becomes one of the biggest problems for the young people at risk of forced marriage or already in a forced marriage.

³ Safe lives, *Identifying and engaging with young people at risk of forced marriage*, 2014, available online at: <http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Forced%20marriage%20-%20practice%20briefing%20FINAL.pdf>

→ RISK-AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Certain behaviours that are socially acceptable in some cultures can be perceived as inappropriate and violating the family's "honour" in other cultures. Those behaviours can increase the risk of forced marriage for young people and include the following:

- Pregnancy
- Loss of virginity
- Smoking or drinking in public
- School informing the family of poor performance or attendance
- Being the source of community / family gossip
- Starting to date
- Make up or clothes perceived as inappropriate
- Dating someone outside the community or not from the same religion
- Talking to a stranger
- Intimacy in public place
- Disclosure of rape or sexual abuse
- Sexual orientation (lesbian/gay/bisexual or transgender) or behaviour indicating the young person is not heterosexual

→ HOW TO REACT

- **Build a trustful basis:** explain to the children that they can turn to you and that you will listen to them. State that you account for the confidentiality of what the child entrusts you with
- **Keep in mind** that male teenagers can be affected by forced marriage
- **Be aware** of the acute danger the child might be in: clarify how urgent an intervention is
- **A journey to the country of origin must be prevented:** if the parents have already arranged a marriage against the girls/women's will, a return journey is very difficult to achieve
- **Point out counseling centers:** these can be sought out and consulted together with the child. If necessary, the youth welfare office must be contacted

→ COUNTRY RESOURCES (Feel free to adapt this section according to your national context)

3. Cyber Violence - Sexting

Cyber Violence against Women & Girls -or people who do not comply with gender norms - is the manifestation of Gender-Based Violence that is perpetrated through the Internet. It can take various forms as cyberstalking, non-consensual pornography (or "revenge porn"); gender-based slurs, hate speech and harassment, "slut-shaming", unsolicited pornography, "sextortion", rape threats and death threats and electronically facilitated trafficking.⁴

Sexting is the action of sending sexual content (mainly photographs and/or videos) produced generally by the senders themselves, to other people by means of mobile phones.

→ WARNING SIGNS⁵

- Overly protective of their mobile phones
- Insisting on texting with friends from a private place or turn their back to read or send a text when someone comes near
- Uncomfortable, angry, or defensive attitude when you question them about their secretive phone use
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or refuses to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends and/or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness and/or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking/thinking about suicide

⁴ "Cyber Violence", EIGE, available online here: <https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1484>

⁵ Tony Birdsong, *5 Signs Your Teen May Be Sexting*, in "McAfee", Jan 2016, <https://securingtomorrow.mcafee.com/consumer/family-safety/5-overlooked-signs-your-teen-may-be-sexting/>

→ HOW TO REACT⁶

- **Develop an understanding** of the right to an image as a preventative strategy
- **Inform the young people** of the private protection settings on the social media and application they use
- **Inform the young people** they can report the cyber violence on the social media and application
- **Parents should be informed** of incidents of this nature unless there is good reason to believe that informing them will put the young person at risk
- **Provide the possibility** for the child/youngster to enroll in anti-bullying and/or anti-cyberbullying programmes
- **Children under the age of 13 are unable to consent to sexual activity** any imagery containing sexual activity by a child or young person under 13 years old should be referred to the police
- **Contact the Professionals Online Safety Helpline for advice and support** if the young person is being contacted by people they don't know who have viewed the image, then you should report to the local authorities

→ COUNTRY RESOURCES (Feel free to adapt this section according to your national context)

⁶ UKCCIS, *Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people*, available online at: <https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Sexting-in-Schools-UKCCIS.pdf>

4. Teen dating violence⁷

This is a type of intimate partner violence occurring between two people in a close relationship.

The nature of dating violence can be physical, emotional, or sexual (including stalking). Dating violence can take place in person or electronically, such as repeated texting or posting sexual pictures of a partner online.

Dating violence, and more specifically teen dating violence, is an emerging area of study that is similar in many respects to adult intimate partner violence. Its emergence partly reflects an evolution in how young adults and teens describe their dating partners.

→ WARNING SIGNS⁸ - Physical signs

- Unexplained or sudden illness
- Changes in physical appearance
- Starting to wear more makeup or stopping wearing makeup all together
- Wearing baggier clothes in public
- Prolonged exhaustion
- Changes in eating habits
- Depression and/or mood or overall personality changes
- Seeming passive or withdrawn
- Frequent self-blame or depreciation
- Hypervigilance
- Frequent bruises
- Self-harming behaviors such as cutting, hair pulling, etc.
- Using drugs or alcohol in excess
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking/thinking about suicide

⁷ "Cyber Violence", EIGE, available online here: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1073>

⁸ NCADV, *Take a stand for Healthy Relationships – Warning signs of Teen Dating Violence*, available online at: https://www.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/warning_signs_of_teen_dating_violence.pdf?1509130312431

SIGNS ATTACHED TO THE ABUSER	SIGNS ATTACHED TO PEERS	SIGNS APPARENT IN CLASS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constant check-ins/ texts and photos to prove where they are• Excessively texting or calling their partner• He/She makes excuses for his/her partner's behaviour• High-risk sexual behaviour• Pregnancy• Jealousy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolation/loss of friendships• Isolation from family• Changes in mood and overall personality• He/She becomes a bully or begins to be bullied• Concern that everyone can tell abuse is occurring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often late to class or does not attend class• Passive or compliant/ withdrawn• Newly failing grades• Inability to concentrate• Expression of gendered belief system• Feeling unsafe• Worried that the abuser may track them down because of class attendance

→ HOW TO REACT⁹

- **Be clear:** tell your students that abuse is unacceptable and that this is an issue you take very seriously
- **Encourage discussion:** ask students what they think about abuse
- **Encourage them to think critically** about the impact of violence - in their own relationships and society at large
- **Listen** to what students tell you and what you see and hear. Let them know you care, that you are there for them and that you are paying attention
- **Be prepared and aware** of mandatory reporting requirements that apply to you as a teacher and notify your school counselor when you suspect abuse
- **Spread the word:** enlist your colleagues and administrators in raising awareness of teen dating violence

⁹ Love is respect, *Healthy relationship: middle school educators toolkit*, available online at: <https://www.loveisrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/middle-school-educators-toolkit.pdf>

If you are certain that your student is involved in an abusive relationship, here's what you can do:

- **Tell your students that you're concerned for their safety**
Point out that what is happening is not "normal". Everyone deserves a safe and healthy relationship. In case it was possible to meet and consult with the student's parents, offer to connect them with a professional, like a counselor or attorney, who they can talk to confidentially.
- **Be supportive and understanding**
Stress that you're on their side. Provide information and non-judgmental support. Let your students know that it's not their fault and no one "deserves" to be abused. Make it clear that you don't blame them and you respect their choices.
- **Believe them and take them seriously**
Your students may be reluctant to share their experiences in fear of no one believing what they say. As you validate their feelings and show your support, they can become more comfortable and trust you with more information. Be careful not to minimize their situation due to age, inexperience or the length of their relationship.
- **Help develop a safety plan**
One of the most dangerous times in an abusive relationship is when the victim decides to leave. Be especially supportive during this time and try to connect the students to support groups or professionals that can help keep them safe.
- **Remember that ultimately your student must be the one who decides to leave the relationship**
There are many complex reasons why victims stay in unhealthy relationships. Your support can make a critical difference in helping your students find their own way to end their unhealthy relationship.

→ COUNTRY RESOURCES (Feel free to adapt this section according to your national context)

5. LGBTQI+ and bullying¹⁰

All students are at risk of being bullied, harassed or called names at school, but LGBTQI+ students face particularly hostile school environments.

Homophobia and transphobia can be used to stigmatize and silence someone; on occasion, they can also target people who are perceived as LGBT, but are not. For example, a male student may avoid drama class, or a female student may decide not to join the automotive club, just to avoid anti-LGBT bias.

→ WARNING SIGNS

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating
- Sleeping difficulties, insomnia or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

→ HOW TO REACT

- **Anti-LGBT behavior** comes in all shapes and sizes: biased language, name-calling, harassment and even physical assault
- **Address** name-calling, bullying or harassment immediately
- **Name** the behavior
- **Use the Teachable Moment** or create one
- **Support** the targeted student(s)
- **Hold Students Accountable:** check school policy and impose appropriate consequences
- If possible, **develop** the option of a gender-free toilet in your school

¹⁰ GLSEN, The Safe space kit: Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students, available online at: <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Safe%20Space%20Kit.pdf>

LGBT-Inclusive School Checklist	
POLICIES & PROCEDURES <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Fairly enforced non-discrimination and anti-bullying/harassment policies that explicitly protect LGBT students<input type="checkbox"/> School forms and applications that are inclusive of all identities and family structures.<input type="checkbox"/> A gender-neutral dresscode, including for yearbook photos.<input type="checkbox"/> Gender-neutral and/or private bathrooms and changing areas	COURSE CONTENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Health and sexuality education that is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities.<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum that regularly includes information about LGBT people, history and events.<input type="checkbox"/> Library resources and displays that are inclusive of LGBT people, history and issues.
SCHOOL EVENTS & CELEBRATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> School dances and proms that are safe for and inclusive of LGBT students.<input type="checkbox"/> Proms, homecoming and athletic Events that allow for gender-neutral alternatives to “King” and “Queen.”<input type="checkbox"/> Valentine’s Day celebrations inclusive of LGBT and non-coupled students.<input type="checkbox"/> Observations of Mother’s Day and Father’s Day that affirm all family structures.	CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Athletic teams and events that are safe for and inclusive of LGBT students.<input type="checkbox"/> GSA’s and other student clubs that combat name-calling, bullying and harassment<input type="checkbox"/> School publications that cover LGBT people and issues.

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→ COUNTRY RESOURCES (Feel free to adapt this section according to your national context)

¹¹ GLSEN, The Safe space kit: Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students, available online at: <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Safe%20Space%20Kit.pdf>

Gender

MODULES LIST

01 Risk Assessment

02 General Methodology

03 General Glossary

01 Body Safety / Female Genital Mutilation

02 Empowerment and Communication

03 Gender-Based Violence

04 Gender Social Norms and Stereotypes

05 Human Rights and Children's Rights

06 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

01 Cyber Violence

02 Early Forced Marriage

03 Empowerment and Communication

04 Female Genital Mutilation

05 Gender-Based Violence

06 Gender Social Norms and Stereotypes

07 Group Building

08 Human Rights and Children's Rights

09 Intimate Partner Violence

10 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

■ Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

12 Sexual Violence

✉ For more information please contact: info@endfgm.eu



A project by:



End FGM
EUROPEAN NETWORK



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AIDOS
ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA
DONNE PER LO SVILUPPO



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