



# Building capacity to use media to address FGM

AIDOS' WORK WITH MEDIA TO TACKLE FEMALE  
GENITAL MUTILATION



The Italian NGO AIDOS has always put a lot of focus on communication in its work to promote the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), in particular through **training on the use of different types of media**. These trainings aim to build the capacity of professionals to address the issue as well as to provide activists with the tools to speak with their own voices.

In the last ten years, several **training courses on video and radio production** have been organized in the framework of projects supported by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation, lately with the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda. Online trainings have also been organized.

The aims of the training courses are:

- To **empower young people** already working on the issue at community level to better communicate and advocate on FGM
- To encourage professionals and activists **to produce radio programs or videos** on the topic, from their personal experience / perspective
- To provide young activists with tools to allow them **to speak with their own voice**

AIDOS adopts a « building bridges perspective », inviting participants from different countries and regions. Sometimes the groups include both people living in Africa and in Europe (migrants and Afro-descendants). This provides the occasion to share practices, point of views and stories. The tools can be used both in Africa and in Europe and they often address issues related to migration.





In addition to working together on a common project, participants also develop their **own concept for a video/radio program during the training** (working on their own or in small groups). They have several occasions to present it to trainers and other trainees, receive feedbacks and inputs, rework it and fine-tune it. At the end, all or some of the personal projects receive a budget, remote technical assistance and equipment. Participants are thought how to produce their works with a **low budget and light equipment**, such as smartphones and free software for editing. Each participant/group might choose a different style (particularly in the case of video, where documentary, fiction and animation were used) and focus on a specific aspect relevant for their context. A common theme is the lack of communication, in particular among men and women. FGM is shown as a difficult topic, an uncomfortable conversation to have, even more within the family or the couple.

Several products resulting from the trainings have received important recognition and awards, including the radio documentary **Arrêter l'excision: tous pour toutes** by Celine Elola that won the Efua Dorkenoo Pan African Award for Reportage on Female Genital Mutilation in 2015 and the film **Against All Odds**, by Charity Resian Nempaso and Andrea Iannetta, that was awarded the price for best short documentary at Fespaco, one of the most important film festival in Africa, in 2019.



More information on AIDOS radio production trainings:

- The film "**Abandoning FGM on FM**"
- The **Video on the AIDOS media training methodology**

Watch videos produced by the 2017 training participants online:

- De retour au pays**
- One Voice**

A compilation of **videos** produced by AIDOS trainees can also be found on **[AIDOS Youtube channel](#)**.



## How to talk about FGM in videos and radio programmes?

Participants are encouraged to tell positive stories, **changing the narrative** about FGM by also providing examples of social change and of women and men committing and coming together to promote the abandonment of the practice. They are also invited to use their own perspective and to shed light on unsung aspects of the phenomenon and to portray **women as agents of change** rather than as victims.

The trainings integrate important do's and don'ts, set out in the **How to talk about FGM** brochure produced by the End FGM European Network, such as: using empowering and non-stigmatizing language, not using images that might shock the viewers and re-traumatize survivors, recognizing FGM as a form of gender-based violence and FGM abandonment as a feminist issue, letting survivors own their narrative.

Several languages are used both for radio and video products, including local languages, to foster **dissemination**. The products are often also dubbed or subtitled. Public transmissions on local radios make it possible to reach remote and rural areas where other medias are often not present and where radio is still the most powerful tool to communicate. Moreover, podcasts and videos published online enable the recordings to reach migrant communities. Videos are used both for sensitization activities in Africa and for advocacy and training of professionals encountering FGM survivors in Europe.





In addition to their work on radio and video training, AIDOS produced, in 2020, a series of 4 animated videos as a support tool for the UNFPA-UNICEF Manual on Social Norms and Change:

[\*\*Dynamics of a social norm: Female Genital Mutilation\*\*](#)

[\*\*From Gender Inequality to Shared Positive Social Norms\*\*](#)

[\*\*Legislation as a tool for behavioral and social change\*\*](#)

[\*\*Collective Consensus and Harmful Norms Shift: Transformative Elements for Change\*\*](#)