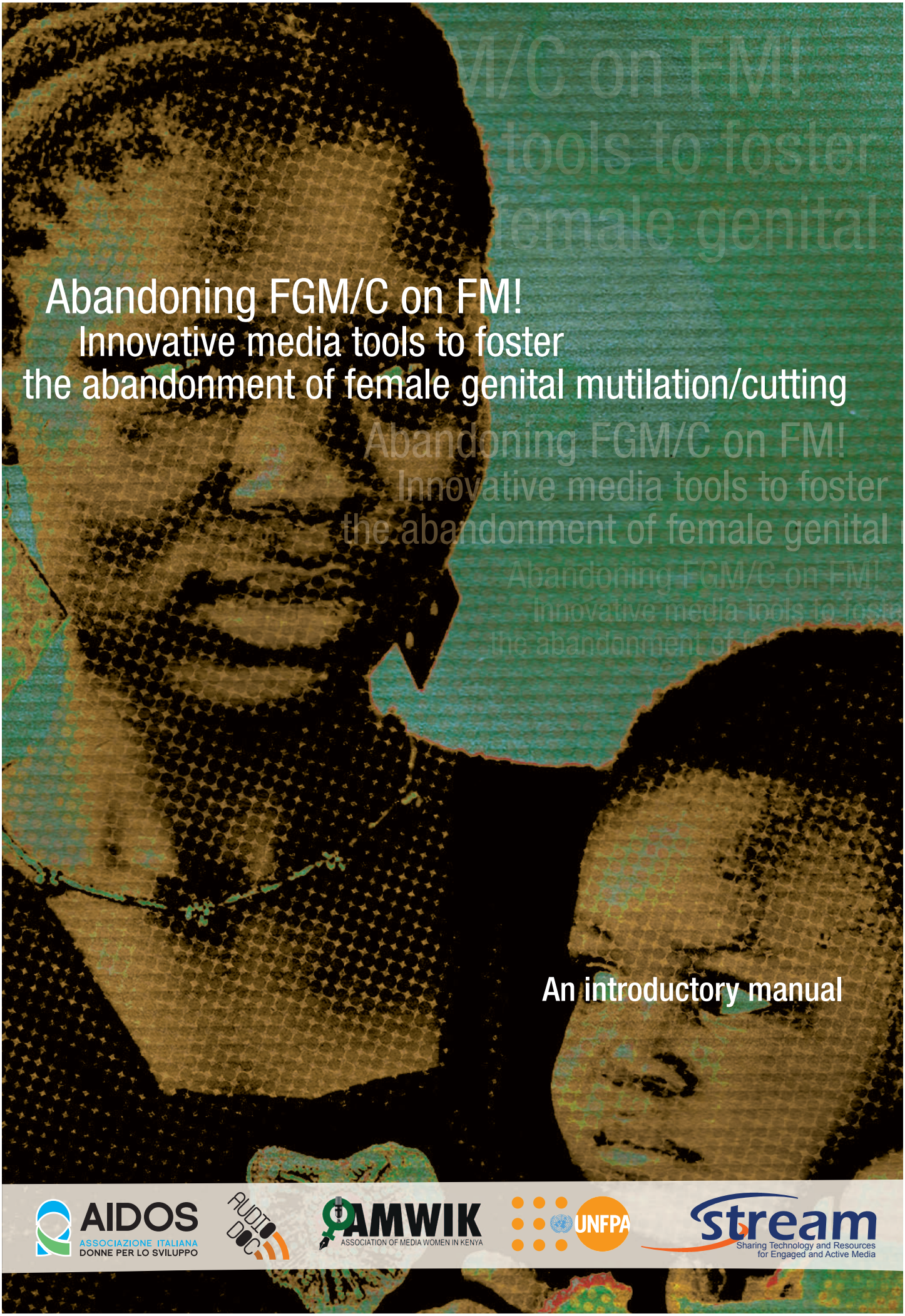
Abandoning FGM/C on FM!
Innovative media tools to foster
the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting
An introductory manual
AIDOS
ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA
DONNE PER LO SVILUPPO
AUDIO DOC
AMWIK
ASSOCIATION OF MEDIA WOMEN IN KENYA
UNFPA
stream
Sharing Technology and Resources
for Engaged and Active Media

ISBN
9788890443541

© AIDOS – Audiodoc 2010

Abandoning FGM/C on FM!
Innovative media tools to foster the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting

An introductory manual

by Jonathan Zenti / Audiodoc
edited by Cristiana Scoppa / AIDOS

AIDOS – Italian Association for Women in Development
Audiodoc

Abandoning FGM/C on FM! Innovative media tools to foster the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting. An introductory manual has been produced in the framework of the project "Bring emotions in the media to promote the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Development of innovative media strategies to foster the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting in Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania, in collaboration with Women Media Organizations", coordinated by AIDOS, the Italian Association for Women in Development and implemented in collaboration with AMWIK – Association of Media Women in Kenya, TAMWA – Tanzania Media Women Association and EMWA – Ethiopia Media Women Association. The project is supported by UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. Audiodoc, an Italian association of radio documentarists, is the technical partner.

The project is part of the StopFGM/C! campaign implemented by STREAM – Sharing technologies and resources for engaged and active media, a network of African NGOs coordinated by AIDOS and meant at improving media coverage to foster the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting.

Credits

Project coordinator	**Daniela Colombo / AIDOS**
Text	**Jonathan Zenti / Audiodoc**
Editing	**Cristiana Scoppa / AIDOS**
Translation	**Myriam Laplante**
Research and documentation	**Giovanna Ermini / AIDOS**
Design and layout	**Alessandro Longo**
Printing	**Centro Copia**
Published by	**AIDOS – Italian Association for Women in Development**
	Audiodoc
In collaboration with	**AMWIK – Association of Media Women in Kenya**
With the support of	**UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund**

Contents

Foreword *by Jonathan Zenti / Audiodoc* ..... pag. 5

Introduction *by Cristiana Scoppa / AIDOS* ..... pag. 6

1. Radio as a possible tool for analysis and social intervention ..... pag. 7

2. The radio advertising campaign ..... pag. 8

2.1 The use of advertising campaigns in the field of communication ..... pag. 8

2.2 The possible interrelations with the social context of FGM/C ..... pag. 8

2.3 Meeting the objective using possible benefits from the interrelations ..... pag. 9

2.4 The limitations of advertising campaigns in reducing the diffusion of FGM/C ..... pag. 9

3.The audio documentary ..... pag. 10

3.1 The audio documentary in the context of communication ..... pag. 10

3.2 The possible interrelations with the social context of FGM/C ..... pag. 11

3.3 Meeting the objective using possible benefits from the interrelations ..... pag. 13

3.4 The drawbacks in the use of audio documentaries in reducing the diffusion of FGM/C ..... pag. 13

3.5 Form and creativity ..... pag. 14

4.The preparation of an audio-documentary ..... pag. 15

4.1 From the target to the goal ..... pag. 15

4.2 The preparation of the programme ..... pag. 15

5. Recording ..... pag. 17

5.1 Choosing a sound recorder ..... pag. 17

5.2 Choosing microphones ..... pag. 17

5.3 Recording standards ..... pag. 18

5.4 The headphones ..... pag. 18

6. The languages of the documentary ..... pag. 19

6.1 Music ..... pag. 19

6.1.1 Theme music ..... pag. 19

6.1.2 Background music ..... pag. 19

6.1.3 Foreground music ..... pag. 19

6.2 Ambient sounds ..... pag. 20

6.2.1 Ambient sounds ..... pag. 20

6.2.2 Silence ..... pag. 20

6.3 The spoken word ..... pag. 20

6.3.1 The word from archive documents ..... pag. 20

6.3.2 The interview ..... pag. 21

6.3.3 Voice-over ..... pag. 22

7. Editing and mixing ..... pag. 23
7.1 Editing ..... pag. 23
7.2 Mixing ..... pag. 23
8. Tips and tricks ..... pag. 24
9. Conclusion ..... pag. 24
10. Appendix – Believes and realities behind female genital mutilation/cutting ..... pag. 25
10.1 Believes to justify the practice of FGM/C ..... pag. 25
10.2 Realities behind the practice of FGM/C ..... pag. 26
11. Bibliography ..... pag. 29
12. Linkography ..... pag. 33
13. Notes ..... pag. 35

Foreword

This small handbook is being written in a moment of geophysical transition as I am in Westlands, Nairobi, camped up in the office of the President of Amwik (Association of Media Women in Kenya) with bags and backpacks, waiting for my flight back to Italy. I'm also in a stage of mental transition, preparing a workshop on the use of audio documentaries in the fight for the abandonment of the FGM/C practice, which will take place in Nairobi during the second half of September.

I'm on my way back to Italy after having spent 8 days in the chaotic capital of Kenya with Annamaria Giordano from Audiodoc, and Jane Thuo and Marceline Nyambala from Amwik who were my unwavering guides. The first insight about this project came to Annamaria and Cristiana Scoppa from Aidos and Andrea Giuseppini from Audiodoc. The idea was to prepare the workshop locally instead of doing it sitting at a desk in a Rome office, exchanging emails between Rome, Milan, Verona and Nairobi. This has enabled me to feel the pulse of the FGM/C issue in Kenya before running the workshop with Sara Zambotti from Audiodoc in September.

A few hours before leaving, I recall a few flashes from my Kenyan experience. For example, I remember arriving in the Amwik offices on the day Alice Chae was supposed to give an interview. Alice Chae is an activist and journalist, involved in the questions of FGM/C, and is from the Kisii ethnic group, in which 90% of girls are submitted to FGM/C. When introducing her to us, Marceline listed some biographical elements and discretely concluded: "She's a … survivor?", looking into Alice's eyes for confirmation. Laughing warmly, she replied: "I'm not a survivor! I'm a victim!" I also recall the interview I made with the gynaecologist Doctor Jardesa Guyo whom I ingenuously asked: "Maybe it's not your field, as a doctor, but do the men search for pleasure outside their marriage, with women not subjected to FGM?" He looked at me straight in the eye and answered: "Oh, that is my field!"

In these and dozens of other images, I came upon words that I wouldn't have found otherwise: survivor, victim, pleasure, sexuality, female orgasm, male pleasure. Some of these words surfaced onto a clear slate and settled in. Other words I hadn't thought of but recognized at once, such as culture and religion: the cultural and religious motivations that justify the practice. As if "culture" were a chapter of the Genesis, or a permanently fixed natural element like the sun, the sea, the mountains, instead of a continuous motion and exchange, a combination of connections and interferences. I hear this type of assertion every day, even in Italy. I started to see other words under a completely different light. I think of expressions like "take a bath". For me, taking a bath is part of the semantic field of total pleasure, of taking care of oneself, of wellbeing (economic wellbeing as well, as I can only afford an apartment with a small shower). Here in Kenya, however, the victims of infibulation are compelled to "take a bath" to prevent the bad smell generated by the "fistulas", that is the perforations produced between the vagina and the rectum because the foetus is unable to come out through the natural passageway. So, in my mind, taking a bath has completely new connotations.

The local preparation of the workshop has given great momentum and intensity to the research, as I have had to challenge my own position in relationship to the problems of FGM/C: as a man, as a European in Africa, as an Italian who grew up in a place where words like "tradition" and "culture" are used to generate politics that I don't agree with, and finally as a person with great respect and affection towards female sexuality, be it anatomical, human or social. I believe that the participants will naturally approve of this need for an in depth analysis of the matter.

The final phase of transition I find myself immersed in is linked to my personal journey as an audio documentarist, trying not only to produce independent quality documentaries, but also to search for and define a method that could confer an effective social function to communication media. This is why this handbook is divided in two parts: part one is based on theoretical observations, and part two is an actual technical manual. In the theoretical part, there are many references to sociological and psychological writings: there is a great need to compensate for the absence of literature on radio documentaries and, as explained in the beginning of the handbook, sociologists and psychologists have shown great interest in the matter. The theoretical factor is not usually considered in practical workshops on communication media, but I find it essential in order not to leave the students with a mass of technical notions and no plan or indication of possible trajectories. This method offers stimulating new horizons, but its procedures need to be defined to prevent getting lost in this new approach.

In Italy, where the media manage most of the social dynamics without being considered useless or invasive, it seems to me that the attempt to find a method for effective means of communication used as social tools is a kind of "pleasant option". I have spent the past eight days in a context where the "urgency" is palpable, where an involvement in the movement against FGM/C means taking action (now, or as soon as possible) upon the physical health of women, in the hope that they may one day control their own lives or live their sexuality with the same freedom as men (whether they be African or not). I am now convinced that there's a way and that it must be developed. This is why I have asked that on the last day of the workshop, those who struggle every day on the front line for the abandonment of FGM/C hear the recordings. I want to have the opportunity to ask them whether the audio documentaries and the promotion ads produced by participants and teachers might be useful in their fight to change the state of things. Even if there is only one "yes", we will be able to say that our goal has been reached. Because our goal is to change an ancient culture. And culture does not refer to "yesterday" but to "tomorrow".

Jonathan Zenti
Audiodoc

Introduction

In the past few years, behavioural change has become synonymous with the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting for those who work on this issue, not only in Africa. This decision is apparently a female matter, but the opinion of men holds a significant value, as well as that of the couple's families, of the elders who are the transmitters of cultural values and traditional practices vital to the community's identity, and of the entire community.

Many African countries are working towards the abandonment of FGM/C, adopting laws that ban the practice and appointing national committees to promote the abandonment. Several non-governmental and community organizations are also working on the field, with the support of international organizations such as UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund), UNFPA (the United Nations Population Fund). But still, nowadays girls can be victims of the practice, especially in places where marriage is still considered the safest (or only) way to ensure a "decent" future for them. Fidelity during matrimony and virginity before, guaranteed by the cutting of the clitoris, are binding prerequisites in order to negotiate a good marriage and obtain a higher "price for the bride".

Female genital mutilation/cutting is a social convention and the abandonment of the practice is not an individual or simply rational decision, but a choice influenced by complex relational, psychological, social and emotional factors. It is important to build a network of actors that can confront the topic in a responsive and congenial manner, talking with the men and women who follow this tradition, in order to promote the abandonment in a context of migration and open the way to change a set of values where the mutilation of female genitals is a symbol, carved in flesh.

There is also a need to publicize the changes that significantly and constantly are taking place in both urban and rural contexts, according to the data obtained by the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) in several African countries over a time span of 5/6 years. According to this data, there is a definite trend towards the abandonment of the practice, shown through a reduction of the prevalence especially in the younger age bracket, and an increase in the number of men and women in favour of the abandonment.

It is therefore necessary to get this message across to the communities, to reassure those who have not yet abandoned the practice but who could change their minds through, for example, the new laws, and offer their daughters a better future made of love, marriage, family and well-being without undergoing genital mutilation.

In order to appeal to those feelings, we must keep in contact with the emotions, the facts and prejudices, the values, ambitions of the people involved in perpetuating the FGM/C, offering them a opportunity to work together, through confrontation and dialogue with those who have chosen to abandon the practice and those who are actively committed in promoting the abandonment, giving them a different perspective on their daughters' future.

Radio is the most accessible media in Africa. It is ever present in daily life, transmitting knowledge and sparking debate. The audio documentaries, with their combination of spoken language, music and ambient sound, are a great tool for supporting the changes that are taking place, addressing the doubts and uncertainties that go with them, exploring the available alternatives and the way in which those who have already abandoned FGM/C have dealt with the challenges of their new condition.

The ads are shorter and easier to convey. They are very effective in stimulating consciousness, offering supporting arguments or reinforcing ingrained convictions: their conciseness and reiteration allow the message to seep through and give the listeners time to react, choose, decide and eventually act.

Obviously, the media alone are not sufficient. But as we said before, all African countries are now reducing the taboos surrounding the practice through information and awareness campaigns, community projects with rites of passage that exclude the cutting of the clitoris, and ceremonies in which the excisors (traditional practitioners) deposit their knives. The increasing female education, the greater participation of women in socio-economic and political affairs, the reaction to HIV infection, migration to other countries and wide diffusion of mobile phones and mass media are engendering major social changes.

The radio campaign will combine audio documentaries and possibly promotional ads in Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia, and seeks to penetrate this trend and to become a factor in establishing a future in which female genital mutilation/cutting will be just a vague memory of the past.

Cristiana Scoppa

AIDOS

1. Radio as a possible tool for analysis and social intervention

" Radio is purely an apparatus for distribution, for mere sharing out. So here is a positive suggestion: change this apparatus over from distribution to communication. The radio would be the finest possible communication apparatus in public life, a vast network of pipes. That is to say, it would be if it knew how to receive as well as to transmit, how to let the listener speak as well as hear, how to bring him into a relationship instead of isolating him."[1]

In 2008, AIDOS (Italian Association for Women in Development) asked Audiodoc (Italian association of independent authors of radio documentaries) to help them produce an audio documentary for the radio as part of a project for the abandonment of female genital mutilations in Burkina Faso. The first objective of the project was to *"contribuer à la réduction du taux de diffusion des MGF/E au Burkina Faso"* (contribute to the reduction of the diffusion rate of FGM/C in Burkina Faso). The association of radio documentarians was asked to participate in the process of resolving the FGM/C problem, be it in society, culture, health or psychology.

This is a new kind of request for a present-day radio or documentary journalist, accustomed to giving accounts of reality through the best possible use of available languages.

This new request originates from an organization that deals with social issues and whose work is based on the improvement of the condition of women. The journalist is not asked to be simply interesting, engaging and innovative but to be *efficient in generating a social change*, which involves an expansion of his professional perspective. To fulfil this request, an interrelation must be established between the realm of mass media and the social, cultural, medical and psychological spheres.

To many of the media workers such as journalists, writers, technicians, authors or producers, this request could provoke a deontological[2] crisis: their personal know-how is used only for commercial purposes (these medias are mostly used in advertisement), they have no way of being *useful* through their work as they are responsible for the technical aspect and have no access to contents.

It is important to set foundations in such a way that an audio documentarian might fulfil his need to feel *useful* while being competent in his contribution to a social cause.

AIDOS made a further request to Audiodoc that provided the occasion to set these foundations: to produce a workshop involving workers from Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia to teach them to produce an advertisement campaign and two audio documentaries that can help reduce the diffusion rate of the practice in their countries. We now have the possibility to describe the *interrelations*, the meeting-points between two different grounds, the so-called "mass media" and the medical-social-psychological fight against the practice.

In this handbook, we will examine the advertising campaign and the audio documentary that will be created during this workshop. For each of the two products, we will try to identify their position in the "communications" world, analyze how to establish interrelations between the technical aspect and the social intervention, how to exploit these connections and where their drawbacks lay.

1 From Brecht on Theatre. Translated and edited by Jon Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. [«Der Rundfunk als Kommunikationsapparat» in Blätter des Hessischen Landestheaters, Darmstadt, No. 16, July 1932].

2 Deontological refers to the "series of duties associated with particular professional categories of people" (translated from (Zingarelli N., *Lo Zingarelli 2005 – Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, Zanichelli 2004). A deontological crisis occurs when the professional ambitions no longer coincide with the duties intrinsic to the profession.

2. The radio advertising campaign

2.1 The use of advertising campaigns in the field of communication

The origins of the art of "promoting a product" probably coincides with the existence of man, forced to "promote" himself or offer an irrefutable image of his experience in order to be able to reproduce. Without going through the whole history of mankind, we can skip directly to the "industrial revolution", which in many ways still affects us. In the context of communications, the industrial revolution has brought upon the possibility to technically reproduce a work of art or writing[3]. This process started with the invention of the printing press, which then led to lithography, photography, phonograph, cinema, television and to everything that is now transmitted through the internet and mobile telephones.

During the first industrial revolution, the promotion of a product was dependent on the product itself. The aim of the industry was to produce, on a wide scale and with moderate costs, objects considered essential to Western society. The fact that the *product* existed was already a promotion. People who never had the possibility of owning a new t-shirt would live a "promotional moment" simply by approaching a market stall full of affordable t-shirts.

Meanwhile, industry started to diversify the offer. When everyone had a t-shirt, it became inevitable to manufacture pants, then shoes, then socks, and so on, in all production fields. Barely one century later, the first industrial revolution had completed its task: by then, almost everyone in the Western world had access to the basic goods. Consequently, the industrial system felt the need to invest in innovation and diversification in order to keep the profit machine running.

The development of innovation has been impetuous. They were no longer manufacturing "a t-shirt" but "a certain type of t-shirt, different from all the other t-shirts". One of the problems of this new concept of industry was to understand how to convince a person who already owned a t-shirt, to now buy "a certain type" of t-shirt. Having created this new demand, industrials were compelled to think not only about the product itself, but also about its potential buyer. That's how *marketing, design* and *publicity* were born, systems that analyze and study ways to convince people to continue "buying" things they don't need. While the industry creates and produces objects, marketing and publicity **produce object buyers**.

In time, the promotion of a product and the product itself are slowly diverging. It is now unusual to find an advertisement that really presents a product: in an ad for a t-shirt, you don't see a t-shirt. What you see is the buyer, the consumer, or else the misfortunes of those who don't buy. Regardless of the product.

2.2 The possible interrelations with the social context of FGM/C

The effects of this historical process are obvious. Most of the products that surround us come from publicity. From what we drink (like Coca Cola, global industrial product synonymous of modernity and cool lifestyle), to what we wear, to the computers we work with, and so on. When searching for a quality article, we must navigate the sea of hyped products. When looking for the right drink, we first experiment with publicized drinks, easily recognizable and effortlessly found on the store shelf. Drinking that drink puts us in a "privileged" position, we become part of those who know how to choose and can afford that lifestyle, that cool lifestyle, as maintained by the advertisements.

From a social point of view, a person is viewed as a buyer. The person buys objects, always new ones, and uses them. The person is subject to constant *one-sided* media blitzes. Publicity is the quintessential use of "mass media" as a means of distribution; in fact, publicity is the biggest source of business in the communications market.

Advertising is one-sided and allows no "communication", no exchange. If an advertisement is wrong and deceptively promotes a product, there are no possibilities to interact in the same context, or within the mass media. The only possibility one has is to no longer buy that product, taking action on the economic level.

An advertisement is fixed and non-negotiable. If, for example, an ad says: "If you don't use this t-shirt, people will no longer speak to you", there is no way to reply, it is impossible to alter the message. One can only believe or not believe that message. The number of those who believe (or don't) that message proportionally triggers social dynamics that can condition the relationship between people and ultimately change the social structure.

If many people *believe that with that t-shirt they will be more appreciated*, and therefore buy it and wear it, we will be surrounded by a certain number of people wearing that t-shirt. These people will be motivated to interact within their social context according to the contents of the advertisement because they covet the promised "benefits" (the appreciation of others). There are two possible consequences: a certain number of people will be more willing to speak to someone wearing that t-shirt, but then if they don't, the person who bought it and wears it will be deceived.

3 To investigate the topic of the relationship between the industrial revolution and technical reproduction, please refer to Benjamin, W., *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. In the first words of the introduction, Benjamin quotes the "diagnosis" on Karl Marx's model of capitalistic production. Benjamin believed that the productive and economic model, the possibility to technically reproduce works of art and politics were to be contextually analyzed. In fact, the essay ends with a reference to "fascism" and "communism", two totalitarian regimes born from very successful industrial models thanks to their control of the media.

2.3 Meeting the objective using possible benefits from the interrelations

The analysis of the interrelations between contexts will enable us to locate entry points. The ads can be used to try to reduce the diffusion rate of FGM/C: we must simply establish parallels between our objective and the rules and conventions of advertising.

We must first settle on the product we need to sell in order to reach our goal, decide what our "t-shirt" is about: it could be, for example, "a society without FGM/C". Then we must create the "buyers", or people who will want to live in a society without FGM/C. And then we will try to create a one-sided, non-negotiable message, such as "if you sustain FGM/C, no one will talk to you". The listeners will be unable to retort: their choices will be whether to believe it and change their lifestyle abandoning the practice, or not believe it and continue perpetrating it.

2.4 The limitations of advertising campaigns in reducing the diffusion of FGM/C

A well-planned advertising campaign on the abandonment of FGM/C can reach quite a lot of people. By playing on their social position, on indirect involvement and responsibility, on the guilt-feeling for violating the right to health and physical integrity, or on how FGM/C are "out", many people can be reached and may start thinking about FGM/C in a different way, or start "believing" in the change promoted by the radio ad.

But the problem of those who "don't believe" remains. The one-sided structure of the ad drives those who have decided not to believe to other camps. They can decide not to think about it and ignore it, or continue with the practice motivated by the need to resist the message, comparable to the person who decides not to buy the t-shirt.

In the case of FGM/C in Kenya, this could happen to people who defend the practice maintaining that the fight against it is generated by a "Western occupation" whose goal is to wipe out local culture. They have no other way to interact with the message, so perpetrating the practice becomes a means of "resistance" against Western interference. Therefore, the "non believer" becomes invisible, unreachable, just like his claims for "not believing" in our "product", or in "a society without FGM/C".

3. The audio documentary

3.1 The audio documentary in the context of communication

It is difficult to draw an account of the audio documentary from its creation till now. Very little has been written globally on the subject, and it is often confounded with ethnomusicology and contemporary musicology.

One of the few certified definitions of the audio or radio documentary is one from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism: "At its best, radio combines the power and immediacy of great documentary films with the intimacy and poetry of a New Yorker-style magazine piece." This definition is very appropriate, but too America-centric, making it hard to understand in countries where there is little diffusion of video documentaries or no distribution of the New Yorker magazine. Until now, there is no universally shared definition of the audio documentary. Those who approach this tool for the first time will not find a semantically well-defined context but one whose boundaries are vague and easily confused with other branches of artistic or media production.

It is possible to obtain a definition of the audio documentary through the etymology of the term. If it was named like this, the linguistic elements of the term probably hold the key to its definition.

Audio documentary is a composite term, which is formed by two complete lexical elements (that exist independently outside the composite term): "audio" and "documentary"

***Audio**: "*of or for the transmission or reproduction of sound, from Latin *audire* to hear."[4] The use of *audio* as a prefix in composite terms indicates a connection with hearing or refers to acoustic perception. This indicates that the moment in which we want to enter in contact with the audio documentary, we must keep in mind that the user will receive the message through listening. We must therefore use a language that was developed to be "heard". The more precisely we choose the elements of that language, the deeper we will enter the "sound sphere", a world made of elements of the sound "species".

The languages specific to the sound sphere are:

• *music*: sound language[5] formed by voluntary sonorities, generated to be heard;

• *ambient sounds*: sounds extraneous to pure listening, that may be generated *involuntarily* (the sound of a motor: what interests us is the function of the motor and the sound is a side-effect) or *voluntarily* (the horn: uses sound, hence also the auditory canal, to call attention, but the intention is not one of pure listening)[6];

• *spoken word*: It is the system of vocal signs that enable ordinary language to be listened to, be it the rendering of thoughts, memories, writings[7] or experiences assimilated through other senses;

Documentary: is a confix, or composed term, formed of a root *document* and a suffix *–ary*. A suffix can adjectivate nouns (a beneficiary is he who receives a benefit), or it can be used to form a collective noun (a formulary is a collection of formulas). *Document* stems from the Latin *doceo*, which means "show, demonstrate". A document shows something. A document is the proof of a fact, the element that demonstrates that something has taken place. So a documentary is a collection of elements, which aims not to catalogue but to show, to prove and to diffuse something that exists, something related to our daily lives, something *real*.

In fact, a documentary produces knowledge based on reality. The documentarian is asked to document reality.

From this short analysis, we can draw a primary legitimate definition of audio documentary.

The audio documentary is a body of documents collected with the aim of producing a certain knowledge of reality, through a cognitive process that involves languages specific to the sound sphere such as music, ambient sounds and spoken words.

4 In Collins English Dictionary, Zanichelli, 2007

5 Music is here described as a language. Musicology has greatly evolved throughout the 20th century, after Schönberg. For centuries, music was considered a science leading to the knowledge of God or of sound existing in Nature, and developed its own formal language, like any science related to monist realism (see next paragraph). In the course of centuries, as new Galilean sciences developed, the Absolute divinity of musical knowledge gave way to interferences between the formal language (music notation) and ordinary language (adagio, andante, etc.). Schönberg's studies on noise and interference, experiments on the almost-note and on the relationship between music and text, have brought music from the science category to the language category where formal language, ordinary language, technique and listening merge (for example, Luigi Nono has studied music as a "global language"). The objective of music is not knowledge but to communication.

6 It is important to specify that the difference between music and ambient sound does not lie in the means but in the intention. For example, the fire fighter siren used by Brian Wilson on the Beach Boys' album "Smile" is considered music because it is meant to be simply listened to. On the contrary, some musical themes, such as military marches, are to be considered as voluntary ambient sound, because their aim is to beat the marching rhythm.

7 The system of writing is graphic rather than vocal.

This definition encircles the role of audio documentaries within the frame of communication. Following the definition, one can produce an audio documentary. But the basic requirement of our research is to establish a base upon which an audio documentary can be used as a tool for social intervention. We must closely examine the different ways of conceiving reality in order to understand how to go about creating a documentary that will meet the request.

3.2 The possible interrelations with the social context of FGM/C

Once we have established that *reality* is the object of the research for an audio documentary, we must now specify how to go about that research, how to reach knowledge of reality.

In order to reflect on the approaches to knowledge, we need to refer to epistemology, which is "the theory of knowledge, esp. the critical study of its validity, methods, and scope.[8]"

Epistemological philosophy individuates three *levels of realism*, each of which corresponds to a different "concept of reality" involving different forms of knowledge, in accordance with what is assumed to be real.

Monist realism *(or ontological or "ingenuous" realism)* contemplates "given" reality, that which exists independently of categories or of the process used to attain its knowledge. On this level, priority is given to the "observed" rather than to cognitive categories of the observer. On this level of realism, the scientific principles individuate the object and measure it with precision, in reference to objects that belong to an empirical-factual system. The observation becomes the mere photographic process of an existent reality, autonomous from the observation process itself.

In ***hypothetical realism***, reality is postulated as existing, but remains unknowable; it is however possible to create theories, construct hypothesis to "approach" it. So the map – or theory – is knowable, but the territory – or reality – is not.

In ***conceptual realism***, reality does not exist ontologically, but is "built" from the categories of knowledge used to describe it as real or, vice versa, becomes real or "known" through the cognitive act of description. On this level of realism, consideration is not given to the contents – the "known" – but to the *processes* of constructing reality, or cognitive modes applied. Removing the cognitive map leaves no knowable territory: so it is not "reality" that is considered, but the "configurations of reality".[9]

We can reassume this epistemological reflection with this chart:

monist realism	reality *is*
hypothetic realism	reality *is according to*
conceptual realism	reality *is known as*

Now that we have traced the cognitive paths of reality, we must put them into practice to create the documentary.

As we asserted in the definition, "*the audio documentary is a body of documents collected with the aim of producing a certain knowledge of reality"*. We must now define how to collect the necessary documents. Depending on what is collected and how it is presented, we can trace a different cognitive path of reality, or a different type of documentary.

8 In Collins English Dictionary. Epistemological thinking is inherent to science and as such does not involve standard procedures for mass media, or radio documentaries. But it can be extremely helpful in virtue of the object of the research and the narration of the documentary: "reality". This is what the scientist and the documentarian have in common: they both, even though with different means and goals, seek a certain knowledge of reality.

9 Translated from Turchi G.P., Della Torre *C., Psicologia della salute – dal modello bio-psico-sociale al modello dialogico, (Psychology of health – from the bio-psycho-social model to the dialogical model)* Armando 2007, pag. 30-39. This textbook is based on epistemological thinking and the levels of reality, with some sections strictly related to psychology. It comes natural to wonder what relationship exists between a communications discipline such as audio documentaries and a "health" discipline such as psychology. While searching for a definition of the audio documentary and its usefulness as a social tool, we found some "answers" in the deontological reflections of researchers in psychology and sociology: sociologists like Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann and Erving Goffman, psychotherapists like Miguel Benasayag, or psychology professors like Gian Piero Turchi. A sentence in Miguel Benasayag's *L'Epoca delle passioni tristi (The time of sad passions)* caught my attention: "the clinician must take his responsibilities towards the family and the patient and find, together with them, a direction that can change the present situation: direction in its original connotation of orientation, of movement towards…" This is what the documentarian as social worker must learn to do. He must be responsible for what he documents and find, together with the workers in other disciplines on the field, a direction that can generate a change. In other words, workers in different fields have the same deontological and existential need to find ways and methods to efficiently generate a (positive) change in their daily lives.

Working on the *monist reality* level, we present reality as existent and define it as such. *This is reality, this is the factual truth*, and the demonstration will be based on the cognitive process. On this level of realism, documentaries are normally presented as ***investigations*** of a pre-established and defined reality. Using a metaphor to illustrate this, reality is like a stone thrown in a pond while we were turned the other way. Working in monist realism, we must say "this is the stone" and present documents that "prove" that a stone was thrown, and that this is the stone that was thrown.

Working on the *hypothetic reality* level, we show reality as existing but impossible to define. We can define aspects of reality only through the tools we use to present them. On this level of realism, documentaries are normally presented as ***coverage***. In this cognitive map of reality, documents are not used to demonstrate reality, but to *show* aspects of reality. When creating coverage, we often collect "statements", not reality itself but accounts of the effects produced by reality. Going back to our stone in the pond, the stone is not knowable because it has been thrown and ended up on the bottom of the pond, but we can try and define it by tracing a profile of the circles it created on the surface.

Working on the *conceptual reality* level, we create ***documentaries as social tools***, in which reality itself does not exist, but is constructed in the moment in which it is generated as reality. The collection of documents "is not proposed in terms of a "discovery" of reality, but as a description of the process that established it as such."[10] The documents collected have no need to "demonstrate" an autonomous reality that exists without being observed. It is the observation that created the reality, so the documents are a mere "description" of how it was created. In this way, there is no hierarchy within the collection of documents (no document has more "value" than another because there is nothing to prove): they all acquire the same value because they describe the ways in which reality is constructed. All the documents and statements collected interact, and reality is formed through this interaction. Going back to our pond, we should look at the circle on the pond's surface, understand *how* they came about, describe them and suggest ways of transforming them or of creating others, regardless of what was thrown in the pond. Because the existence of those circles creates reality. With this type of documentary, we will not learn about reality but about the *process of knowledge*[11].

Level of realism	**Type of documentary**	**Method of production according to the metaphor of the "stone thrown while we turned the other way"**
monist realism	investigation	demonstrate which stone was thrown
hypothetical realism	coverage	expose the circles created by the thrown stone
conceptual realism	documentary as social tool	describe the circles on the pond's surface

Now that we have explained the different ways an audio documentary can investigate and depict "reality", we can try to describe the different possible scenarios, keeping in mind that the aim of our documentary is to contribute in "*reducing the rate of diffusion of FGM/C*".

Let's assume, for example, that we have been asked to document the "reality" of the relationship between men and the practice of FGM/C.

If we work on the level of ***monist realism***, we will make an ***investigation***. We will first need to establish what is real and in what terms. We could, for example, produce a documentary on the "responsibility of men in the perpetuation of the practice of FGM/C". We have established that there is something to prove and have defined what we want to demonstrate (responsibility of men in the perpetuation of FGM/C). The collection of documents will be corroborating or confuting of what was defined as real. If the objective is to prove the existence of the "responsibility" of men in maintaining the practice, the documents confuting this theory will be discarded, or the traces that would lead in the opposite direction won't be followed. Our aim is to focalize on demonstrating the "responsibility".

If we work on the level of ***hypothetical realism***, we will produce coverage, keeping in mind that it will be impossible to identify and comprehensively define the basic reality of this research. We will get to experience it according to the collected documents and their classification. We will no longer talk about "responsibility" but of "the role of men in the perpetuation of the practice of FGM/C". The collected documents will relate a "version" of reality that would

10 Translated from Turchi G.P., Della Torre C., *Psicologia della salute – dal modello bio-psico-sociale al modello dialogico, (Psychology of health – from the bio-psycho-social model to the dialogical model)* Armando 2007, pag. 38

11 Ivi, pag 77-82. In this chapter, we find a thorough description of a contemporary psychologist's need: "There is an increasing number of "cultural exchanges" nationally and internationally (immigration, flexibility, relocation, etc.) that have created a need for models of intervention connected to "narrating voices" or "subjects" that can be extremely diversified within a context." Today's documentarian feels the same need, finding him/herself confronted with a "reality" made of variable elements and elusive mutations. Every definition of reality as a "matter of fact" is already obsolete the moment it is formulated. Focusing on the process enables us to "surf" on the wave of change without being cast aside.

vary if we had come upon different documents during our research. Repetitive elements will be discarded, or those elements too divergent from the others (not to prove anything but because on this level, reality no longer needs to be defined).

If we work on the level of ***conceptual realism***, we will produce a ***documentary as a tool for social change***, keeping in mind that there is no existent reality to be proven or to be researched. There are *configurations of reality*, or ways in which reality is described or defined as such. The subject of our documentary will be "men and the perpetuation of the practice of FGM/C". All the configurations and all the documents will be on the same level, there will be no need to make a selection based on what is more useful. Everything that is collected, or that is to be found on the documentarian's path from the beginning to the end of the research, is part of the making. The documents will be presented, drawing attention to the way they developed as documents, regardless of their contents. Our perspective will be about "how" reality is configured.

3.3 Meeting the objective using possible benefits from the interrelations

By examining these three possible types of documentary, we can make conjectures about their potential success or failure as a tool for social change.

The *investigation* is the most exploited and successful form of documentary. In television documentaries or in the film world, important directors like Michael Moore conduct investigations, claiming to bring out "hidden truths" or reveal the "factual truth". They are all declarations of intent that have strong communicating powers, and are very reassuring for the public but are totally unfounded [12]. In an investigation, the emerging "truth" never attains an absolute level, but is always controversial and open to disagreement. The interesting part of investigations is not the conclusions they reach but the documents used as arguments. For example, if a documentarian researching the "responsibility of men in the perpetuation of FGM/C" reveal the amount of money involved in the clandestine practice of FGM/C, this fact becomes very relevant even if it doesn't specifically refer to the "responsibility".

Coverage doesn't try to define "factual truth", but "hovers around it". The truth is "according to" someone or something. For this reason, many types of *coverage* are produced (travel coverage, historical coverage, etc…) Coverage makes a great use of testimonies to document the effects of reality. They are very useful in understanding the daily lives of the people affected by the question. It is a great instrument used to "give an insight" to those who are uninformed about the question. In our case, a coverage on the role of men in the perpetuation of the practice can be very useful to those who know little or nothing about FGM/C. The author of the documentary is familiar with the issue he is dealing with and illustrates it to the listeners with the support of the collected documents.

The *documentary as a tool for social change* does not deal with reality as such. It has no reality to demonstrate, or to explain. It is a collection of documents pertaining to a cognitive process. It is a compilation of testimonies, concealed microphone recordings, presentations of laws and regulations, etc. Each element is given the necessary space to expose its definition of the relationship between men and FGM/C. The way the documents are connected will *describe the process* by which reality is configured as such. The author will also describe the process he/she went through while researching the configuration of reality. This way, author and listener will follow the same "path" from the beginning. This type of documentary offers a wider prospective as a social tool. There is no hierarchy between documents, they all have equal value. All the constituents, from the purchaser to the author, witnesses and listeners are directly involved as elements of the documented reality. Having established the fact that reality is constructed according to the way it is defined as such, and that interaction is a basis for cognition, this type of documentary is *the only form that admits the possibility that reality is subject to change.* Not only the documentarian, but also the medical, legal, psychological and social workers dealing with FGM/C will have the possibility to mediate on the processes of configuration of reality, changing "what is said" and thus reality itself.

3.4 The drawbacks in the use of audio documentaries in reducing the diffusion of FGM/C

The main drawback is in the nature of the audio documentary which was not conceived as a social tool. We have tried to describe different ways in which it could be effective in generating a change, but it cannot function alone. An author working on this use of the documentary must be concerned not only with the product, but of all the aspects that precede or follow its creation. One possibility could be, for example, to get people who consider themselves

12 So far, the quotations were about views on the languages that make a distinction between different disciplines according to their level of realism. For further information on the matter, see Turchi G.P., Della Torre C., *Psicologia della salute – dal modello bio-psico-sociale al modello dialogico, (Psychology of health – from the bio-psycho-social model to the dialogical model)* Armando 2007, pag. 30-34. The context of audio documentaries is different and these views have no importance because it is not part of any scientific discipline, which mostly work on the monist realism level (they identify an object to investigate and establish a measuring system to explore it). The only possible language in a documentary is ordinary language. In this particular case, it's enough to specify that any attempt to define "factual truth" is speculative, because there are no measurement systems in ordinary language. Investigations are constructed "as if reality could be measured" and the documents are used as a measuring system. For example, a verdict is used to measure responsibility, but a verdict is based on the "deliberations of the parts". In fact, a "trial" is needed to reach a sentence.

“victims” involved in the creation of the documentary. Often, “victims” have developed a need for change, if not for themselves, for others who could find themselves in the same situation, and for future generations. By participating in the production, they can feel “useful” and prevent other people from enduring the same pain.

Should there be no involvement or interest in an issue raised by the documentary, it will be the author’s duty to suggest, in line with his/her competence, social intervention programs. Generally speaking, if a documentarian wants to be efficient in generating social change, he/she will have to take responsibility for the creation and preservation of a network involving victims, witnesses, social workers, doctors, media technicians and all those who can generate change.

The audio documentarian can be efficient as social worker only if he/she is part of a network. The creation of an audio documentary does not end with the production of a sound file: the documentarian will have to create spaces where the contents of the documentary can be discussed. It is his responsibility to keep in touch with all that comes before and after the production.

3.5 Form and creativity

This theoretical foreword has no intention of invalidating the creativity and the personal style of the authors, or of suggesting the creation of documentaries according to this or that criterion. On the contrary. It is an attempt to establish solid bases so that the authors may feel free and confident to use these different languages.

4. The preparation of a documentary

In order to create a sound product, be it an advertising campaign or an audio documentary, different procedures can be used, according to the sensibility or technical skills of the author. A great variety of material has been written on the subject: most authors describe their personal working process, exposing the practical features of their approach. In the next chapter, we will illustrate and suggest the techniques that we found most effective for the creation of audio documentaries intended for social mobilization, and that correspond with the first part of this handbook.

4.1 From the target to the goal

When producing radio contents, one of the first things editors and producers demand is to "identify the target", a practice that has become part of the radio world through osmosis with publicity. "The identification of a target" is the first step in creating radio contents, and the basis on which to draw the characteristics of a "format", that is a radio product with specific features. The "target" is the segment of hypothetical public to be reached by the product, be it publicity or radio program. This permeation is effective if we consider radio as a tool for entertainment or for commercial uses[13], but becomes a problem when attempting to expand the product into a context of social intervention.

When conceiving a documentary, we must think of the possible consequences brought about by the arguments and the story we plan to include in the debate. When we identify a target, or a hypothetical public, we exclude all the other potential listeners. This entails a lack of cohesion with the social context within which we have chosen to work. When we are confronted with an issue, we must keep in mind that the elements of the issue are closely linked to the context from which it stemmed, and the elements of the context contribute in creating the issue. If we define a slice of potential listeners, we leave out all the other slices, and trigger secondary issues.

Let's take for example a possible audio documentary on FGM/C: if we decide that the documentary should refer to a "young public", the selected documents and testimonies, the music and the spoken language will be enticing to young listeners. However, this alternative excludes the victims of FGM/C who are no longer young. Furthermore, we would bring to light only models or references we suppose will appeal to a young public, but they might be misunderstood or misjudged by more mature listeners.

Another consequence that must not be underestimated is that a generational prejudice could be created: should the documentary be efficient with a young public, it might be deleterious to an older public who might label the anti-FGM/C arguments as "kids' stuff". We must also keep in mind that those "youngsters" were brought up and educated by their parents and grandparents, and these bonds must not be ignored.

Hence it is necessary to avoid using the target as hypothetical selection of the public: the issue stems from a context and the documentary must be introduced into that context. All the elements of the context are possible documents on which to work, and anyone can be a potential listener of our finished work. The target must not be seen as an end but as a **goal**, an abstract point to be reached. To reach this goal, we must first set the features we need to create the format.

Going back to our possible audio documentary on FGM/C, one goal could be to "describe the way young people experience the persistence of the practice of FGM/C". In this way, all the elements of the intervention context are potential listeners: the social workers that have ways to find out how the new generations feel about the tradition of FGM/C, the youngsters who are concerned and could do some soul searching, the elders who could reflect upon their models of education, and so on.

4.2 The preparation of the programme

In order to establish a target as a "goal", we need to do some research on the chosen theme. Preparation is fundamental because it helps us in getting acquainted with the context we will be working in, and it allows us to be ready to adjust to any change in the scenario that could come up during the making of the documentary.

As we said earlier, the audio documentary as a tool for social intervention must *describe the process* by which reality is configured as such. Reality becomes our point of observation as we collect the necessary documents. The documentary will not reveal an existing "reality", but will describe the elements detected from the point of observation and combine them in such a way that they can generate a reflection, a debate or any other form of adjustment within the context of the intervention.

13 Take for example the *Soap Opera* genre, that proliferated on American radio as of 1927: dedicated to housewives, it set off as a container for advertising soap and household products. In this case in history, the target of the radio program format was so closely related to the advertising target that it gave the name to the genre.

A documentary is not a “rendering of reality”, or a version of “factual truth”, but a description of the path followed by the author within the issue, from the first contact - whether triggered by a personal interest or a specific commission - to the finished product that will be transmitted on the radio or the Internet.

When dealing with the preparation of a documentary, one is already inside it. Extracts from references that were studied during the preliminary research can be read by speakers and become part of the final product. The same goes for phone calls and fixings of appointments.

It is appropriate to record the preliminary phases of the preparation and keep the collected or taped material in good order.

For example, if we should phone a Member of Parliament to propose an interview on FGM/C and the secretary answers that “the Member of Parliament is not interested in being interviewed on the matter”, this non-answer has the same value as an interview because it describes how that politician deals with the issue of FGM/C. The recorded conversation can become part of the documentary.

Preparation allows us to focus on the goal and make is as effective as possible. As the material is collected, some useful elements for the description of our goal will emerge: on one hand, we start to understand the demands of the person who commissioned the work and the needs of those who live in the specified context; on the other hand, through research, the critical points start to surface, such as the “areas” in which it is possible or necessary to intervene, those areas that will be the centre of the story told in the documentary.

The goal may change in the course of creation, according to indications found in the collected materials. The goal is not an end it itself, it is just a point of reference that enables us to select one document rather than another, or to follow one path rather than another.

5. Recording

Recording is the backbone of all sound productions, be it music, ads, radio programs or documentaries.

It is very important to feel familiar with the tools and the procedures inherent to audio recording, to be able to fully exploit the possible forms of sound.

In order to do so, the writing skills must be supported by a good knowledge of recording, editing and audio mixing techniques[14]: in this handbook, we will only illustrate the basic notions needed to carry out your first recordings.

In the past fifteen years, technological progress in the audio field has drastically reduced the costs of equipment. This way, any author can independently produce an audio documentary without difficulty.

On the other hand, editors and producers are requesting self-sufficiency from the authors in order to cut the costs of technique and materials. The author must thus have the basic competence to buy the right recorder, microphone and all the necessary equipment to adequately edit and mix sound.

5.1 Choosing a sound recorder

Recently, both professional and amateur audio productions have turned from analogical to digital technology. Nowadays, audio recording equipment is quite affordable due to the great variety of products on the market, cheap raw materials and lower production costs.

The parallel race of technological progress and price reductions has reduced the gap between professionals and amateurs. It is now more difficult to distinguish between equipment that fulfils the basic needs of an amateur and equipment that can produce a professional audio quality.

At times a company famous for its professional equipment like BlueTech®, may put non-professional devices on the market, such as a quality microphone to be used with smart phones.

With the proliferation of mp3 players, many professional audio companies have launched high quality, small, easy to handle and inexpensive digital recorders on the market. These products were not conceived for an exclusively professional market. When faced with choosing one of these devices, you must be aware of your own requirements and pay attention to the technical specifications.

For example, Sony®'s PCM – D50 is apparently an excellent device, with good built-in microphones, good versatility, good software, easy to handle and functional. Looking at the technical specifications, however, you will note that there are no XLR sockets for external microphones, which means it would be difficult to record ambient or panoramic sounds. Or M-Audio®'s Microtrack II which is operated by a built-in lithium battery that is rechargeable only with a charger or through a USB slot, making it difficult to use for outdoor recordings when there is no electric plug or computer available.

For this handbook, we chose Tascam®'s DR-100, a device with good technical specifications, well adjusted for outdoor recordings, with reasonable built-in microphones and an affordable price[15].

5.2 Choosing microphones

Many portable digital recorders, especially those with a shoulder strap, have no built-in microphone. Most hand-held ones have built-in low quality microphones that do not meet the requirements for a professional sound product that is to be radio transmitted. So you often have to buy and use an extra microphone.

It is not easy to choose from the vast variety of microphones on the market. We must bear in mind both the technical characteristics that fulfil our requirements and the quality of sound we want to obtain. We will try to point out the basic materials needed by an audio documentarian, and the type of microphone to be used in different situations.

When recording a narrative voice, an annotation or a musical instrument, you will need a MONO microphone, with a single capsule that records on a single channel.

When recording voice, it is best to use a *microphone with a wide diaphragm condenser*. The condenser microphone captures sound according to an electrostatic principle. The diaphragm is the membrane that will "capture" the sound. Usually, a narrower diaphragm consents a more precise sound recording. When recording a voice, however, a wide diaphragm microphone is preferable; a wide membrane captures broader and less precise oscillations, amplifying the overtones created by the emission of a voice, making it more full-bodied.

14 We suggest that you study the techniques and procedures of sound recording. We would like to recommend one of the most complete manuals written on the matter to date: Huber, David M., Runstein, Robert E., *Modern Recording Techniques*, Butterworth – Heinemann, 1995.

15 The instruction booklet for Tascam®'s DR-100 is included in this handbook.

When choosing a microphone, one must also pay attention to the “polar response”, that is the orientation of the capsule in respect to the sound source. In our case, the capsule must be oriented directly on the source, producing a “cardioid” polar response.

When recording in non-professional studios, like a room or an office without acoustic treatment, it is best not to use the omni-directional or the bi-directional types of polar response in order to avoid phase cancellation [16].

The condenser microphones, especially those with a wide diaphragm, are very delicate and sensitive. While recording, it is appropriate to install the microphone on a stand with a *shock mount*, a fastener that keeps your microphone isolated from stand vibrations. You will also need to position a *pop filter* to protect the capsule against the accumulation of saliva.

For outdoors recordings, you will need a different microphone: one that is less delicate and more precise in capturing sound, possibly STEREO, with two directional recording devices in order to capture sound from two directions.

You will probably be recording in precarious situations, so you must be ready for sudden shifts. This is when most phase cancellation errors occur. You must use a stereo microphone whose diaphragms are placed in the so-called XY position, with the criss-crossed orientation of the left and right capsules.

One of the major problems in outdoor recordings is the wind that hits the diaphragm creating an intense low-pitched sound that covers the ones you want to record. Normally, microphones are equipped with a light windproof protection that often is not enough. You must then get a better sort of “furry” windproof protection that redirects the wind away from the capsule.

A hand-held microphone could be uncomfortable, and in long interviews can be quite painful for the arm. To avoid these problems during long interviews, you could use a small tabletop stand. Or for outdoor recordings, you can use a “boom” pole, a support that stands on two rods, together with a shock mount.

Another recurring problem in outdoor recordings is the background noise that can cover a voice or another sound. You then would need to use a directional “shotgun” microphone. This type of microphone has a hypercardioid polar response, a highly directional device with an extremely restricted field of recording, that can successfully eliminate background noise, or, when in a crowd, isolate the rest of the voices and concentrate on the one the microphone is directed on.

5.3 Recording standards

When you enter the menu of a recording device, you have access to the recording settings: sampling frequency and quantization of waveforms. In analogical recording, the sound and the recording are parallel by nature, whereas in digital recording, the recording of the waveform is periodical. These periodical recordings are called “samples” and are transformed into binary terms in order to be interpreted, stored and made available by a computer.

The *sampling frequency* or *sampling rate* is the measurement of the number of samples captured in one second. *Quantization* is the assignment of a binary number to the amplitude of a wave within a sample, in other words the conversion from analogical to digital.

We will now illustrate the different standards in use and the setting adjustments.

When the Compact Disc (CD) hit the market as an audio storage device, the standard for a digital audio file was established at 44.1 kHz for sampling rate, and 16 bit for quantization. These two parameters are still a valid reference for recording.

But since the CD came out, technology has made enormous progress and many different portable devices offer the possibility of recording high quality sound.

The DR-100 that we chose as reference for this handbook offers the possibility to record at 24 bit quantization and 96 kHz sampling rate. When possible, it is best make the highest possible quality recording. Even though the resulting audio file will end up being reduced to a standard format, it is preferable to work with sound that contains more precise information at the source.

You must however remember that once you decide to record sound according to certain standards, it is highly recommended to keep the same parameters throughout the recordings. And later when you start a session with editing and mixing software, you must use the same parameters as you have in the recordings.

5.4 The headphones

One of the easiest mistakes to make is to think that what you hear with your ears is what enters the microphone. That’s not how it is. A simple piece of paper leafed through during an interview creates a movement of the air that hits the membrane and creates a distortion that our bare ear does not perceive.

We must always remember to monitor the course of our recordings with the help of headphones, preferably wide enough to cover the whole ear and isolate it from outside noise. The earphones are essential devices during the editing and mixing phase, especially if we are working in non-professional environments, because they enable us to listen to the recordings regardless of the acoustic qualities of the room we’re in.

16 Phase cancellation is a sound phenomenon by which if two sound waves of the same width hit the capsule at different times, they can provoke the modification or the deletion of the sound.

6. The languages of the documentary

As we have said in the first part of the handbook, audio documentary may use three distinct languages: music, sound and spoken word. Let us examine these languages and analyse the risks of error. We are not establishing rules, but just giving practical indications: how and when to use those languages will depend on the author's sensibility.

6.1 Music

Music has an enormous potential in audio narration. First of all, because it responds to a habit (when a person listens to the radio, it usually is to listen to music). It is a language that knows no frontiers, and can transmit very strong sensations in a very short time. It is a very powerful tool and must be used cautiously.

Music can achieve three functions in a documentary: theme, background and foreground.

6.1.1 Theme music

The theme must be carefully chosen because it will be the trademark and give the tone to our work. It is the moment in which a listener can decide whether or not to continue listening. A functioning theme can be used not only in the beginning but also at the end of the programme, giving the listener the impression of having come to a full circle, of having been through a beginning and an end.

The theme will have to be closely connected to the documentary. We must not choose music only because we "like it": tastes are not universal. The music is not chosen to please the listener, but to help him find links with the contents of the documentary and orient him throughout the program.

6.1.2 Background music

Background music is used as comment or accompaniment to the voices and sounds that are in the foreground.

Background music should be instrumental. If it accompanies an interview, the words of a song can be confounded with the spoken words; if it accompanies ambient sounds, the words of the song might not be heard because its volume will be lower.

It is better not to fill a documentary with music: there will be moments of particular emotion where we will need music to communicate a certain state of mind. This won't work if the listener's ear has been accustomed to a continuous music flow.

It is recommended not to use too many different styles of music in the same documentary. Music has a role, even if it is in the background. In a key moment of the documentary, when for example the contents express what was said in the title, we can use an instrumental version of the theme as a background. Or if we use some music as comment for an observer who refuses to talk about a given issue, we can use the same music every time we encounter a similar response.

It is important to pay attention to the structure of the background music to avoid using lively music as background for a contemplative narration.

It is also better not to use music with a strong rhythm section. When we reduce the volume (usually 10 db lower) of background music, the risk is to hear only the drum or the bass.

6.1.3 Foreground music

Foreground music is used in some points of the documentary, at the same level as the rest (testimonies, interviews, ambient recordings). It is a space in which music is used not as an opening curtain (theme music), or a comment (background music), but to be listened to.

Music can be a document, material we have collected during our research.

In the case of a long documentary, we can repeat the theme music to create an interlude.

It could also be a recording of ambient sound in which someone sings or plays music and that is worth listening to as a testimony.

In general, the rules for foreground music are the same as those for the theme. We must keep in mind that music is a language, and every time we use it we convey something. It must be used when necessary and when we feel that music is an important element in the course of the documentary.

We must also be aware of the lyrics of the songs we use, especially if they are foreign songs. Sometimes the music seems right for the documentary, but the lyrics could lead in a totally different direction. If we don't understand the language of the song and use it merely as musical sound, the listeners might understand it and be disoriented by the clashing contents of the lyrics.

6.2 Ambient sounds

6.2.1 Ambient sounds

When in the recording phase, it is important to collect as many ambient sounds as possible, single or panoramic. In the editing phase, they will become the "soundtrack" for our documentary.

When making an interview, it is important to always record a few minutes of ambient sound: we ask the interviewed person and the production staff to remain still and we record a few minutes of the sounds in the room. It is also good to start recording before the interview starts and not interrupt right at the end: in these moments, we can collect precious sounds that are part of the ambient and the habitat of the interviewed person. These sounds can then be used, for example, to create a pause during a long interview.

If we are using a MONO directional microphone during outdoor recordings, it would be recommended to make a long recording of ambient sounds in stereo to later use as background for the MONO recording.

Often, sounds can be used to orient the listener. If you think in terms of images, a shot of a church or a mosque offers an immediate cultural indication of the setting we are working in. In the same way, we can use the sound of bells or the prayer of a muezzin.

If we are working in a particular geographical area, we must remember to record long ambient sounds, even 5 or 10 minutes. They can turn out to be very useful as background for voice-overs.

It is also useful to record passages that seem unimportant, like our arrival in a place where we will make an interview. Many elements, like coming out of the car, or greetings and presentations, can then be inserted as background to create a setting or a pause.

Ambient sounds are a fundamental part of our "set design". They must be carefully chosen and used with motivation, to try and faithfully express what we want to transmit to the listener.

6.2.2 Silence

Silence is also an ambient sound. It is not only the radio author's "white page"or the nil creation starts from, it is also a very important narrative element, just as total darkness in cinema.

Silence can be an important element within narration, to create a short break or to isolate a concept that has just been stated, to let it resonate for a few seconds in the listener's ear.

6.3 The spoken word

6.3.1 The word from archive documents

The spoken word could be a voice recovered from an archive document such as a telephone call, a recording of a radio newscast, a declaration or a speech: a document that the author did not have direct live access to but that can be retrieved from other recordings.

In this case, the quality of the recording is important. Even if it is possible to find an enormous amount of audio files on the Internet, their quality is often very low. The risk is to introduce a disparate element into a flow of high quality sound. It is important to use documents that have the same quality as the rest of the sound material.

Sometimes, archive documents can be combined to improve a narrative sequence. They can be inserted into the foreground music, with added reverberation or other sound effects. Or they can be inserted into ambient sounds. For example, a political speech can be used not only for its contents, but because that speech has already been introduced in most homes through television. We can then record the speech from television together with the surrounding sounds from the room.

6.3.2 The interview

An interview can be made with an ordinary person, a key informant or a specialist in the issue treated in the documentary.

There are many ways to prepare an interview, and every author or journalist finds his own style. Here are a few suggestions.

The “street” voices are widely used in journalism. One collects impressions and opinions from people on the street, trying to give an account of “what people think”.

These interviews present a lot of drawbacks when making an audio documentary. People who are stopped on the street have other things to do, they are thinking about other problems. They see a big intimidating microphone right in front of their face. The first thought that comes to their mind is that many people will hear their statement, and this perception can alter their answer. It is very unlikely that the collected sample may be useful in understanding “what people think”. But these interviews can be very useful if one of the interviewed persons proposes a very simple consideration, or points out a discrepancy in the state of affairs. This can become the starting point for investigating the issue.

Interviews with key informants are very important. The informant is a person who has been, at one point in his/her life, directly involved with the issue we are treating.

Compared to video, audio has the great advantage of using compact devices and of not having durational limitations. It is easy to establish a face-to-face dialogue with the informant. During the conversation, the informant can easily forget about the microphone and give way to his/her thoughts to share his experience and impressions.

To be able to work under the best conditions, we must gain the informant’s confidence: explain the project and its objectives, and attenuate the elements that could disengage him and make him/her refuse to give the interview. For example, if we have the opportunity to interview an excisor in a village, it might not be a good idea to say that the goal of the documentary is to promote the abandonment of genital mutilations, but to refer to the documentary as a “coverage of the practice”, and avoid using terms such as “mutilation”, replacing them with “female circumcision” or “cutting”, or any other words used to describe the practice in that cultural context.

Even if at times we don’t feel comfortable, we must keep in mind the objective of our project and accept to “play dirty” for the sake of all the girls and women that could be spared if the documentary reaches its goal.

The author must not be distracted if he/she wants to gain the informant’s confidence. If he/she continuously watches the recording level, fiddles with the microphone or controls background noise, the informant will not feel secure and will not get into a confidential dialogue with the interviewer.

For this reason, it is best to work with a colleague that takes care of the technical problems. If this is not possible, it is better to set all the instruments before starting to record the interview in order to be able to fully concentrate on the conversation.

There are also different techniques in preparing an interview. As a rule, it is recommended to study the argument beforehand, without programming the full contents of the interview. This way, one can start the conversation without prejudices or personal positions.

When interviewing a key informant, we are often confronted with intense suffering. The author probes this pain, and must move extremely gently, with attention and efficiency like a surgeon operating on a patient.

Every author is also an individual, with a personal history, with feelings and opinions. When interviewing a key informant, all his/her personal considerations must disappear. The goal is to describe how people define a reality, and will be impossible to reach if we project our own opinions and thoughts on top of the informant’s. We must accept that what an informant tells us and shares with us is true and legitimate, even if we don’t agree with the contents. As we have seen in the first part of the handbook, there are no hierarchies in the description of reality: no one is right and no one is wrong, and no one has more right to speak than another. We must always keep this in mind while doing an interview, because it is the only way of not influencing a witness.

Often we must prepare an interview one step at a time, for example also involving a friend of the informant so as to make him/her feel more at ease.

If we have studied the issue, it will be easier to ask a question that has been triggered by an answer. This will also instil faith in the interviewee, because if the questions stem from what he/she is saying, he/she will feel like an integral part of the project rather than one who is simply submitted to an interview.

That is why we must be ready to be astonished and to take unexpected turns. It doesn’t matter if the interview goes in an unpredicted direction: the author is there to serve the documentary and the story, and not vice versa.

The interviews with specialists are a fundamental part of documentary work, because they have a double value. On one hand, they speak as key informants because the specialists are people who have dedicated their lives to a given issue (regardless of how they have been treated by that issue); on the other hand, we suppose that they hold the key to a scientific approach of the issue, different from ours or that of other informants. The specialists can offer explanations and examples to illustrate obscure points of the matter. An issue must involve the whole context that surrounds it, and the specialists are an integral part of the essence of the issue.

It could be useful to handle the interviews with specialists towards the end of our research. This way, we can come prepared with examples, stories and testimonies collected during the previous recordings, and invite the specialist to offer his/her impressions on a specific example. Besides, the specialist can help clear doubts that might have emerged during the research.

Also in this case, it is essential to be well prepared on the issue: it could be useful to present the specialist with a list of doubts, controversial questions or other elements that need to be elucidated.

6.3.3 Voice-over

Voice-over is the spoken word that stems directly from the author's writings. It is an important component but it is not crucial. Some authors, like Martin Johnsson in Sweden, use it liberally. Others, like David Isay in the U.S.A. or Andrea Giuseppini in Italy use it very rarely and only when it is essentially needed to create narrative connections.

We must remember to use the best possible tool to reach our goal, disregarding our personal tastes or inclinations.

A lot has been written on the rhythm and the timing of voice-overs. Every author is convinced that his/her method is the best; some have advanced cognitive theories trying to describe how one's brain experiences the timing and the pitch of radio elocution. They are all theories, some more interesting than others, but nothing irrefutable.

The most important thing is that **the author must see him/herself as his/her own first listener**. He/she must listen and listen again to the sections of interviews to be edited, the parts played by the actors, the music, the breaks, the fade-ins and the fade-outs. The same goes for voice-over.

A calm and relaxed reading, where each word is clear and understandable, can go through 10/11 lines a minute. But the rules applying to the spoken word are different than those applying to the written word.

While writing, it is important to read out loud what we have written: beware of difficult words to pronounce, use language that can be understood by nearly everyone, and avoid long sentences and digressions. When following one's voice becomes difficult, when the sentences seem too long or when we tend to get distracted, it is necessary to take action: we can eliminate parts of the text, or divide it by inserting less than a minute foreground music or ambient noise.

At times, voice-over can be used as an interval in the middle of a long interview. Instead of leaving six straight minutes of interview, it can be broken down into two-minute modules. The eliminated parts can be reassumed through voice-over.

A voice in an audio documentary is the equivalent of a face in a film. Each voice has characteristics. We must pay great attention in the use of voices: a thin shrill voice is not suitable to report a tragic event.

Each voice plays a different role. If we decide to insert some spaces dedicated to the laws and regulations concerning a certain issue, they should all be recorded by the same voice.

The texts should always be descriptive. Every time a matter is discussed and an opinion is expressed, it is necessary to specify that the opinion is personal and not universal[17]. Too much dwelling on an element can lead us astray. Simple descriptions are the best approach. Each author must use his/her sensibility to find the right words to reach the goal.

17 If we state our views as being absolute, we are operating on the "demonstrative" level of reality which, as we saw in part one, is not adequate for social interventions.

7. Editing and mixing

Editing is the assembly phase of everything that has been collected and recorded, and mixing is the process that enables us to balance all the edited material.

Both steps are carried out on a multi-tracking software[18] that processes different parallel audio tracks.

7.1 Editing

Editing is done in modules. One interview at a time, one music track at a time, one voice recording at a time. The interviews and other documents are selected and abridged, always keeping our goal in mind.

Sometimes we must clean out hesitations from the interviews – the mumbles and stutters – that can hinder listening. In visual communication, these hesitations are compensated by a facial expression or a gesture, elements that are missing in sound communication.

These hesitations can be due to the search for the right word, or a distraction. But other times they stem from embarrassment or difficulty. At times, it might be worth it to leave them in.

7.2 Mixing

Once all the pieces of the puzzle are ready, the delicate phase of mixing begins. Through this operation, our sound file will become smooth and uniform.

The first thing to do is to import into our session a CD whose sound quality we would like to replicate. Once it is imported, the volume must be reduced by 2 db, which is the volume acquired by an audio file through mastering. This file will be our point of reference for the whole mixing operation.

There are no fixed rules for a mixing operation: basically, you learn by experience. Equalization and compressor plug-ins can be used to adjust and clean sound files.

If we want to use ambient sound as background, we just have to turn down the volume by 10 db, or 16 db for music. But we must be the first listeners of our products and judge the quality for ourselves. The best reference is our own ear.

Mixing can improve or clean a sound, but it can't do miracles. It is important to be meticulous and precise in the recording phase so that the material we import into our editing sessions can be as clean as possible.
When editing and mixing, it is preferable to rely on friends or colleagues as listeners. After spending many hours working on sound, we can easily lose our instinctive perception of quality or of rhythm in an audio file. Having someone else listen to it before consigning the final product offers precious feedback and enables us to add finishing touches where needed.

18 Along the years, some programs have become standard in the edition world, such as Cool Edit, Logic and mostly Pro Tools. They are quite expensive professional tools. Pro Tools, for example, compels you to buy hardware without which the software cannot operate. For this handbook, we have opted for two audio editing programs: Audacity, a freeware that can be downloaded from the internet, and Reaper, which is quite affordable (around US$60) and offers a 30 day updatable trial version.

8. Tips and tricks

Here are some suggestions to avoid making mistakes while the work is in progress.

- Before recording, make sure all the devices are plugged in or charged.
- Always bring extra batteries for the equipment.
- Make sure to have sufficient memory space.
- Always carry extra memory cards.
- When recording outdoors, make sure you have windproof protection and use headphones.
- Always listen to recordings through headphones, don't trust your bare ears.
- When using a MONO microphone for outdoor recordings, remember to record ambient sounds in STEREO on the spot.
- When recording in motion, always try to keep one hand free, with which you can move objects that block you way, or open doors, etc… If you are using a hand held recorder with a microphone, try putting the recorder in a shoulder bag.
- Before starting an interview, make sure the device is recording and not in stand-by.
- Before you start an interview sitting at a table, ask the interviewee to be careful not to hit the table with his/her hands.
- When you finish a day's work, feed your recordings into the computer right away, listen to them and name them in reference to the contents: if you spend months recording, you won't end up with a mass of audio files that you have no idea what they contain.
- At the beginning of an interview, always remember to have the interviewee give his/her name, surname and profession/function.
- Avoid referring to visual images that cannot be heard.
- Remember that the standard for audio files is 16 bit 44.1 KHz.

9. Conclusion

The use of audio documentaries in the context of social interventions whose goal is the promotion of important behavioural change such as the abandonment of female genital mutilations is very recent. This handbook does not pretend to be all encompassing, but is a tool to assist in the technical and practical training of those who want to autonomously create audio documentaries.

This is why we left blank pages at the end of the handbook. They can be useful for noting technical or practical observations that can ease the work and help make radio an efficient tool for the promotion of the abandonment of female genital mutilations.

10. Appendix - Believes and realities behind female genital mutilation cutting

10.1 Believes to justify the practice of FGM/C

FGM/C preserves virginity before marriage and ensures fidelity during marriage

Remaining a virgin until marriage is strongly encouraged in most African societies. So much so that virginity confers a high level of prestige and, even more than the morality of the girl herself, it symbolizes the morality of her family. In the communities that practice FGM/C, people are convinced that it is very difficult for a non-excised girl to remain a virgin until marriage given the hyper-sexuality of the exterior organs of the female genital apparatus. So FGM/C, infibulation in particular, is supposed to guarantee girls' chastity. Excised girls are more capable of controlling their sexual desire, of more easily dominating themselves, and will be more inclined to remain faithful during their marriages.

It is a rite of passage for girls

FGM/C practiced in puberty in group and with a period of reclusion for the excises girls used to be, and is still true in some rural areas, an important rite of initiation for girls. The decision for FGM/C is made by the extended family (family chiefs, aunts, grandmothers or in-laws) or by local authorities (traditional chiefs, councils of elders and diviners). Girls' initiation was a socialization of their roles as wives and mothers, and an apprenticeship of the secret rites and codes of behavior of adult females. It sometimes included a transfer of occult knowledge or professional training. Girls in puberty submitted courageously to the torments of FGM/C and the entire collectivity rejoiced in what was known as the girls' "blessed day" and their preparation for life. It was the allowed framework to discuss and learn the details of sexuality, and the chance to create group solidarity. The greatest recompense for excised girls was acquisition of the status of adulthood and the rights that came with it with the chance to be given in marriage, while in general boys who underwent circumcision were then allowed access to the highest spheres of power and sacred knowledge.

FGM/C contributes to gender identity

It is suggested through the myth of "twin birth" (duality of the soul) that every human being has a double identity, and that FGM/C is used as an instrument that affirms femininity or masculinity. Thus, the clitoris would be a male organ in a girl and the female organ in a man is the prepuce covering the penis. Moreover, the clitoris is perceived as an organ where evil forces may cause problems with the psyche or make a girl vulnerable to evil spirits. Because of all these magical powers attributed to the clitoris, FGM/C is conceived as a preliminary to marriage in those areas, believing that this protects the husband and progeny from the misfortunate that can assault a non-excised woman.

FGM/C contributes to women's health

It is believed that women that have been submitted to FGM/C are always in good health and rarely fall ill; it is also believed that FGM/C has healing powers. It has, people say, healed women suffering from depression, from melancholy, from hymphomania, from hysteria, from madness, from epilepsy and has the ability to stop women with kleptomania tendencies. Some supporters of FGM/C believe that the secretions produced by the labia and the clitoris gland (Skene and Bartholin glands), produce bad odors, compromise hygiene and keep women from caring for their bodies. In those communities where washing the vulvar region with soap and water is common after relieving oneself, it is believed that the hand that washes is contaminated by the secretions and that the contamination is extended to foods, water, clothes, etc. It is therefore deemed necessary that the glands and organs responsibility for these secretions be eliminated to avoid contamination and safeguard individual cleanliness.

FGM/C beautifies the sexual organs of women

It is said that prepuce of the penis is removed essentially for aesthetic reasons, and that the clitoris — homologous to the penis — is removed for the same reason. In addition, in some cultures, the theory prevails that female genital organs have the capacity to develop, as with those of a man, as the body grows and that if the clitoris becomes longer, it can hang in an embarrassing way against the thighs, like the penis. Even when there is a more rational concept of the size of a clitoris, a large number of ethnic groups that consider this organ ugly to look at and indecent to touch. In their opinion a smoother female genital organ, with protuberances removed, is much more palatable.

FGM/C contributes to increase male's pleasure

According to certain social groups the clitoris is analogous to the penis and increases male excitation, leading to premature ejaculation. In these societies, when the sexual act is completed too rapidly (even though it escapes the man's control) it is considered an insult and create resentment and conflict within the marriage, It is also felt that the man should be able to control all aspects of sexual relations, from initial excitement to organism and ejaculation. In those types of FGM/C that call for cutting of the *labia minora* and *majora* and suture of the vulva, one of the aims is to convert the organ into a tight orifice whose size is calculated to increase male sexual pleasure.

FGM/C is recommended by religion, in particular Islam

There is an ambiguous relationship between affiliation to Islam and the justification of FGM/C in Africa. Some Moslems make reference to a dialogue that the Prophet Mohammed apparently had with a traditional practitioner during his lifetime to say that by excising their daughters, they are only following the Hadiths that are important elements in their religions. Indeed, in most of these country, most of the women who practice FGM/C are Moslem, which some consider a *de facto* confirmation of the relationship between Islam and FGM/C, supported by the fact that the practice is almost universal in Islamic countries such as Somalia or Egypt. Nevertheless, the contradiction is that in the countries where this is practices by a minority (e.g. Senegal, Mauritania and Niger), most of the Moslem population does not follow this practice. Moreover, the most fundamentalist subgroups of some countries (for example, Mali and Senegal) do not practice FGM/C while some of their countrywomen submit to it, convinced that all good Moslem women must have their daughters undergo FGM/C.

Some Christians claim that they practice FGM/C while keeping with Christian tradition. They explain FGM/C with their affiliation to given ethnic groups. In contrast, the symbols and initiations that accompany FGM/C adapt easily with animist believes and the tradition of blood sacrifice to their gods or fetishes.

FGM/C is an essential practice for preserving ethnic identity

It is alleged that membership in an ethnic group and identification with that group requires that certain obligations be met to achieve full admission. Those adhering to the group must conform to the group's rules and regulations and defend its cultural base. The chiefs of certain ethnic groups firmly believe that non-compliance with these obligations takes away any right for members to claim the privileges and advantages they would normally be due. Most African families who want their children to be accepted by their societies and to make full used of the social rights, hold that it is very important to identify with the culture or group of their lineage. They attribute a very high value to membership in the group and the creation of ties with other children without fear of exclusion. In some communities, FGM/C is the rite that gives women this acceptability and social integration. Otherwise, they risk being separated from the group and losing their right to contribute to and participate in community life. Loss of these rights and privileges could even be extended to the head of a family where women and girls have not undergo FGM/C.

10.2 Realities behind the practice of FGM/C

None of the reasons advanced to justify excision have scientific justification.

Preserving virginity

From a material point of view, the "virgo intacta" is a girl whose hymen is still intact. From a psychological point of view, a virgin is a young woman who has never has sexual relations, i.e. whose vagina has never been penetrated by a penis. Presumably, at the moment of excision, since the walls of the vagina are scraped, the hymen can be torn and the girl could lose her virginity. At the same time, a girl can be a virgin in the literal meaning of the word and find herself pregnant as a result of heavy petting (if the sperm is ejaculated near the vagina).

Prevention of promiscuity

Every community has the right to take steps to oppose behavior that risks breaking the daily balance of community life. However, promiscuity is a form of conduct that arises from a complex combination of social conditions on which maintaining or eliminat ing sensitive sexual organs have no direct influence.

A study conducted in Sudan has demonstrated that excision is not a way of stopping prostitution, here seen as a sign of promiscuity. Prostitution aside, some excised women believe that they are prevented from reaching certain levels of pleasure. After interviews with 50 urban women in Sierra Leone who had sexual experiences before excision, the researchers observed that none of these women ever reached the level of satisfaction they had before excision—and that before the interview, they had no idea that this lack was the result of excision. Some of the women interviewed admitted that their stubborn search for an ideal partner had cost them their husbands and their homes. Thus, an operation aimed at eliminating promiscuity risks achieving the opposite effect.

Safeguarding health

The belief that an excised woman has a better chance to stay in good health is clearly not valid. In traditional communities, women rarely complain. There are numerous examples in literature of excised women suffering from a multiple of ills caused by their operation. Their societies have taught them that this suffering is part of their condition as women. Generally speaking, in communities that practice excision, certain organs and certain bodily function are never mentioned and women are therefore required to ignore and bear any of the harmful consequences of excision as well as possible. We should also point out that it is often difficult for excised women to see the connection between infirmities or illnesses that come on them as adults and the FGM/C to which they were subjected during childhood and considered an isolated, far off episode. Finally, from a medical point of view, modernization of the procedure (which means turning to specialized health care personnel to avoid possible infection and pain) is against medical ethics.

Preserving hygiene

The normal secretion of the vulvar glands are practically imperceptible—just enough to moisten the vulva area. The expectation is at the moment of sexual arousal when secretion of the vagina increase enough to lubricate the zone and ease penetration. In addition, normal vaginal secretion is only seen in a vagina at rest (i.e. not sexually aroused) for a few days during the menstrual cycle. A “humid” period is a sign of ovulation and lubricates so that spermatozoids can swim the length of the vagina. Otherwise, the vulva is “dry”. Under normal conditions, in a health, clean female, these secretion are colourless and their odour is not disagreeable. Thick, coloured, bad-smelling, continuous vaginal secretions are signs of an infection and should be treated immediately. In areas where the women are required to wash the vulva after urinating, washing one’s hands with a sponge and soap is sufficient if there is fear of contamination. It has been noticed that washing the anal area takes place in the same way but that no one every proposed excision of the anus. In addition, excision can close the vulva (by scarring or infibulation) and keep the urine and menstrual flow from running down the usual channels, This can provoke acute retention of urine and menstrual blood, and lead to a state known as haematocolpos which can seriously compromise the health of the girl or woman concerned and created much worse odours than those from normal hormonal secretions.

Protection of fertility

The reasoning by which excision reinforces fertility and fecundity is absolutely groundless. Actually, the opposite is true. Excision is one of the causes of sterility, particularly among girls who develop pelvic infections after excision. The secretions believed to have a toxic effect on sperm are actually innocuous and are a lubricating mucus, eliminating the friction between the extremely sensitive walls of genital organs.

Prevention of stillbirths

There is no scientific basis to the idea that contact of the infant’s head with the clitoris during labour can cause death. Actually, the large number of normal healthy children born to non-excised women is proof that the argument is groundless. To the contrary, there is a much higher percentage of stillbirths due to prolonged labour in excised women.

Improvement of male sexual performance

The reasoning that excision increases male sexual performance is only valid where tradition induces men to believe that sexual pleasure and performance can be obtained in excised women who passively support the sexual act. The truth is that men only rarely claim that female passivity contributes to sexual pleasure. Men interviewed on a random basis in some African countries have admitted that sexual relations with nonexcised women were much more satisfying than with excised women. Many women have equally stated to family planning agents working in urban areas their belief that their husbands prefer rivals who are not excised. This is due to the fact that penetration in a well lubricated vulva of an excited woman is even more gratifying for a man than a woman.

Aesthetic aspects

The configuration, structure and function of most of the organs of the human body are determined by genetic and hormonal influent. The body's sexual hormones determine the distinctive characteristics of each sex. The male hormone stimulated grown and the function of all those organs that (like the penis) play a role in the male, just as it stop the growth of all those organs that the two sexes have in common (the breast, for example). In the same way, the female hormone stimulates development of the mammary glands (for the production of milk). A clitoris that grows abnormally in a female or breast that enlarge anomalously in a male are outward signs of an internal disorder that should be dealt with immediately. Just as no one would every dream of excising the breast of a young man (to avoid their developing later one), a girl's clitoris should never be touched since it cannot grow beyond a certain size. In addition, it is surprising that reasons of aesthetics and hygiene are invoked to justify excision. The harden scar and the stump that normally replace the clitoris, or the skin pulled to cover a long scar in the case of an infibulated vulva does not look normal.

A religious practice

It is truly astonishing to see the extension of the practice of excision in the name of religion when neither the Qur'an nor the Bible mention it. Reviewing the writings of Moslem exegetes, no mention of excision is found in the Qur'an. According to the Qur'an, God created human beings in the best possible form, so why deform the work of God? Islam prohibits the practice of all that is harmful and, as a result, prohibits excision because it is physically and psychologically injurious. Islam respects women and guarantees them all rights to live a satisfying, normal life. Excision is not practiced in any of its various form in Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan or Libya. Actually, some of the most prestigious religious leaders and theologists completely disapprove of the practice. It is sometimes sad to note that there is absolutely no consensus within Islam in favour of the elimination of excision. While most exegesists state that citations of the Habits have been changed, others have a different point of view on this subject.

Promotion of social cohesion

The belief that excision assures social integration is a real problem, since the right of membership in a community and to be accepted as a full member should not be obtained at the price of human suffering and death. It should be possible to formulate other rules and conditions of acceptability that do not compromise the health of women and girls while preserving the social values and positive rules inherent in rites of passage. Practices that are dangerous to health (like excision) should be eliminated. Actually, the societies that are responsibility for organizing rites of passage often pose laudable goals. In order to achieve these goals, initiation rites need to be altered and there must be teachings to prepare girls for their new status of womanhood (without excision). That kind of change does not necessarily mean, as is believed, dissolution of feminine society. It should be understood as a way of transformation or orientation towards a better life for everyone.

Adapted from: Abouzeid A., D. Colombo, L. Katzive, C. Scoppa, N. Toubia, *FGM/C as a development issue. A training manual to mainstream actions for the abandonment of FGM/C into development programs and projects in Kenya*, AIDOS and RAINBO, Rome, 2007

11. Bibliography

Audio-documentaries

BERGER, P. L. and T. LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Garden City, NY, 1966: Anchor Books.

L. WITTGENSTEIN, *On Certainty*, Oxford 1969-1975, Basil Blackwell (online at **http://budni.by.ru/oncertainty.html**)

BIEWEN John, *Reality Radio – Telling True Stories in Sound*, Carolina University 2010 (online at **http://www.amazon.com/Reality-Radio-Telling-Stories-Documentary/dp/0807871028/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1284366002&sr=1-1#reader_0807871028**)

KRAMER M., W. CALL, *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers' Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University,* Harvard University, 2007 (online at **http://www.amazon.com/Telling-True-Stories-Nonfiction-Foundation/dp/0452287553/ref=pd_bxgy_b_text_c#reader_0452287553**)

KERN J., *Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production*, NPR, 2009.

AMWIK, *Media Reporting with Gender in Mind*, AMWIK, Nairobi, (Kenya), 2006.

Anthropological and social aspects of FGM/C

ASKEW, Ian, "Methodological issues in measuring the impact of interventions against female genital cutting", in *Culture, Health, Sexuality*, September-October 2005, Population Council, 2005

DENNISTON, George C. - MANSFIELD HODGES, Frederick - FAYRE MILOS, Marilyn (edited by), *Flesh and blood: perspectives on the problem of circumcision in contemporary society*, New York (USA), Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2004

DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FUR TECHNISCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GTZ), *Good governance and female genital mutilation: a political framework for social change*, Eschborn (Germany), GTZ, 2007

GRUENBAUM, Ellen, *The female circumcision controversy: an anthropological perspective*, Philadelphia (USA), University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001

HASSAN, Amna A.R., *Female genital mutilation (FGM) historical background, views in Islamic Shari'a and recent research's findings on FGM*, Karthoum, (Sudan), SNCTP, 2000

HELLSTEN, S. K., "Rationalising circumcision: from tradition to fashion, from public health to individual freedom – critical notes on cultural persistence of the practice of genital mutilation", in *Journal of Medical Ethics,* vol. 30, June 2004

HERNLUND, Ylva, *Winnowing Culture: Negotiating Female "Circumcision" in The Gambia*, tesi di Ph.D., University of Washington, 2003 (not published)

HERNLUND, Ylva - SHELL-DUNCAN, Bettina, (edited by), *Transcultural bodies: female genital cutting in global context,* New Brunswick (USA), Rutgers University Press, 2007

IZETT, Susan - TOUBIA, Nahid, *Learning about social change: a research and evaluation guidebook using female circumcision as a case study*, New York (USA), Rainbo, 1999

LIGHTFOOT KLEIN, Hanny, *Prisoners of ritual: an odyssey into female genital circumcision in Africa*, New York (USA), Haworth Press, 1989

LIGHTFOOT KLEIN, Hanny, *Children's Genitals Under the Knife. Social imperatives, secrecy and shame*, Eugene (Oregon), Nunzio Press, 2008

NNAEMEKA, Obioma, *Female Circumcision and the Politics of Knowledge. African Women in Imperialist Discourses*, Praeger, 2005

NUSSBAUM, Martha C., "Judging other cultures: the case of genital mutilation", in *Sex and social justice* di Martha C. Nussbaum - Oxford (UK), Oxford University Press, 1999

SHELL-DUNCAN, Bettina - HERNLUND, Ylva, (edited by), *Female "Circumcision" in Africa: culture, controversy and change*, London (UK), Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001

TOUBIA, Nahid - SHARIEF, E.H., "Female genital mutilation: have we made progress?", in *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, Vol. 82, no.3, 2003

TOUZENIS, Kristina, "Female genital mutilation: a case for showing how social-cultural obstacles hinder the enforcement of women's human rights", in *Jura Gentium. Journal of Philosophy of International Law and Global Politics*, Vol.1 (2005), no.1

UNFPA, *Global consultation on female genital mutilation/cutting: technical report*, New York (USA), UNFPA, 2008

UNICEF, *Innocenti Digest "Changing a harmful social convention: female genital mutilation/cutting*", Firenze (Italy), UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2005

UNICEF, *Technical note. Coordinated strategy to abandon female genital mutilation/cutting in one generation: a human rights-based approach to programming. Leveraging social dynamics for collective change*, New York (USA), UNICEF, 2007

Human rights, norms and laws on FGM/C

ABUSHARAF, Rogaia Mustafa - ABDEL HALIM, Asma Mohamed, "Questioning the tradition: female genital mutilation", in *African women's health*, edited by Meredeth Turshen, Trenton (USA), Africa World Press, 2000

AIDOS – NPWJ – ESPHP, *Legislative norms for the prevention of female genital mutilation,* proceedings of the Afro-Arab Expert Consultation organized in Cairo (21-23 June 2003) in the framework of the international campaign "STOP FGM", AIDOS – Italian Association for Women in development; NPWJ – No Peace Without Justice; Egyptian Society for the Prevention of Harmful Practices (ESPHP), Roma (Italy), NPWJ, 2004

CENTER FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS (CRR), *Female genital mutilation: a matter of human rights. An advocate's guide to action*, New York (USA), CRR, 2006

CENTER FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS (CRR), *The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa: An Instrument for Advancing Reproductive and Sexual Rights*, New York (USA), CRR, n.d.

FLUEHR-LOBBAN, Carolyn, "Cultural relativism and universal human rights", in *AnthroNotes*, Vol. 20, no. 2 (Winter 1998)

NNAEMEKA, Obioma e NGOZI EZEILO Joy (edited by), *Engendering Human Rights. Cultural and socio-economic realities in Africa*. *Comparative Feminist Studies*, New York (USA), Palgrave MacMillan, 2005

PACKARD, Corinne A.A., *Using Human Rights to Change Tradition,* Antwerpen (Belgium), Intersentia, 2002

RAHMAN, Anika - TOUBIA, Nahid (edited by), *Female genital mutilation: a guide to laws and policies worldwide*, London (UK), Zed Books, 2000

SKAINE, Rosemarie, *Female genital mutilation: legal, cultural and medical issues*, London (UK), McFarland, 2005

UNHCR, *Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Femal Genital Mutilation*, UNHCR, Protection Policy and Legal Advice Section, Division of International Protection Services, Geneva (Switzerland), May 2009

Psychophysical health and wellbeing

ADAMS, Karen E., “What’s ‘normal’: female genital mutilation, psychology, and body image”, in *Journal of the American Medical Women’s Association*, Vol. 59 (2004)

BARON, Erika M. - DENMARK, Florence L., “An exploration of female genital mutilation”, in *Ann. N.Y. Academy of Science*, vol. 1087, 2006

BEHRENDT, Alice - MORITZ, Steffen, “Posttraumatic stress disorder and memory problems after female genital mutilation”, in *American Journal Psychiatry*, n. 162, May 2005

KLUGMAN B., S. FONN, K. SAN TINT, *Reproductive health for all. Taking account of power dynamics between men and women*, AIDOS e Women’s Health Project, Rome (Italy), 2001

MAKHLOUF OBERMEYER, Carla, “Female Genital Surgeries : The Known, the Unknown, and the Unknowable”, in *Medical Anthopology Quarterly,* n. 13, American Anthopological Association, 1999

MWANGI-POWELL, Faith, *Holistic Care for Women: A Practical Guide for Midwives*, Forward, Londra, 2001

TOUBIA, Nahid, *Caring for women with circumcision,* New York (USA), RAINBO, 1999

WHO, “Female genital mutilation and obstetric outcome: WHO collaborative prospective study in six African countries”, in *Lancet*, vol. 367, 3 June 2006

WHO, *Female genital mutilation. Integrating the Prevention and the Management of the Health Complications into the curricula of nursing and midwifery. A teacher’s guide* e *A student’s manual,* Geneva (Switzerland), WHO, 2001

Biographies and fiction

BARNES, Virginia L. - BODDY, Janice, *Aman: the story of a Somali girl by Aman as told to Virginia Lee Barnes and Janice Boddy*, London (UK), Bloomsbury Publishing, 1994

DIRIE, Waris with Corinna Milborn, *Desert children*, London (UK), Virago Press, 2005

DIRIE, Waris with Cathleen Miller, *Desert flower: The Extraordinary Journey of a Desert Nomad,* Perennial / HarperCollins Publishers, 1999

LEVIN, Tobe e ASAAH Augustine H. *Empathy and Rage. Female Genital Mutilation in African Literature*, Ayebia Clarke Publishing, Bambury (UK), 2009

LIGHTFOOT KLEIN, Hanny, *A Woman’s Odyssey into Africa. Tracks across a Life*, Eugene (Oregon), Nunzio Press, 2008

STRONG-LEEK, Linda, *Excising the Spirit. A Literary Analysis of Femal Circumcision,* Africa World Press, 2009

THIAM, Awa, *Speak Out, Black Sisters*, London, Pluto Press, 1986

ZABUS, Chantal, *Between rites and rights: excision in women’s experiential texts and human contexts*, Stanford (USA), Stanford University Press, 2007

Statistics

FELDMAN-JACOBS, Charlotte - CLIFTON, Donna, *Female genital mutilation/Cutting: data and trends*, Washington (USA), Population Reference Bureau, 2008

JACKSON, Elizabethh F., P. AKWEONGO, E. SAKEAH, A. HODGSON, R. ASURU, J.F. PHILLIPS, *Women’s denial of having experienced female genital mutilation in Northern Ghana: Explanatory factors and consequences for analysis of survey data,* Population Council Working Papers n. 178, Population Council, 2003

LOAIZA, Edilberto - CAPPA, Claudia - JONES, Gareth, *Gender statistics and some existing evidence*, Firenze, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2006

POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU (PRB), *Abandoning female genital cutting: prevalence, attitudes, and efforts to end the practice* (edited by Liz Creef), Washington (USA), PRB, 2001

UNICEF, *Female genital mutilation/cutting: a statistical exploration*, New York (USA), UNICEF, 2005

UNICEF, *FGM/C: Indicators, Survey Data, and Results (Sources: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey-UNICEF; Demographic and Health Survey-ORC Macro,* New York (USA), UNICEF, 2003

YODER, Stanley P. - ABDERRAHIM, Noureddine - ZHUZHUNI, Arlinda, *Female genital cutting in the Demographic and Health Surveys: a critical and comparative analysis*, Calverton (USA), ORC Macro, 2004

YODER, Stanley P. - KHAN, Shane, *Numbers of women circumcised in Africa: the production of a total*, Calverton (USA), Macro International, 2008

Gender

BHASIN, Kamla, *Understanding gender*, New Delhi (India), Kali for Women, 2000

EL-BUSHRA, Judy, "Rethinking gender and development practice for the twenty-first century", in *Gender and development* vol. 8, no.1 *"Gender in the 21st century"*, edited by Caroline Sweetman, (marzo 2000)

FAVALI, Lyda - PATEMAN, Roy, "The virgin, the wife, the spinster and the concubine: gender roles and gender relations" in *Blood, land and sex: legal and political pluralism in Eritrea*, Bloomington (USA), Indiana University Press, 2003

GOETZ, Anne Marie, "A Review of Gender Equality Dimensions of all eight MDGs", in *Progress of the world's women 2008/2009: who answers to women? Gender accountability*, New York (USA), UNIFEM, 2008

HENSHALL MOMSEN, Janet, *Gender and development*, London (UK), Routledge, 2004

JOLLY, Susie, *Gender and cultural change: overview report*, Brighton (UK), IDS, 2002

KABEER, Naila, *Reversed realities: gender hierarchies in development thought*, London (UK), Verso, 1994

MEYER, Mary K. - PRUGL, Elisabeth (edited by), *Gender politics in global governance*, Lanham (USA), Rowman Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1999

MILLER, Carol - RAZAVI, Shahra (edited by), *Missionaries and mandarines: feminist engagement with development institutions*, London (UK), Intermediate Technology Publications, 1998

PARPART, Jane L. - RAI, Shirin M. - STAUDT, Kathleen (edited by), *Rethinking empowerment: gender and development in a global/local world* , London (UK), Routledge, 2002

REEVS, Hazel - BADEN, Sally, *Gender and development: concepts and definitions*, Brighton (UK), Institute of Development Studies, BRIDGE, 2000

SWEETMAN, Caroline (edited by), *Gender in the 21st century*, Oxford (UK), Oxfam, 2000

THE WORLD BANK, *Engendering development: through gender equality in rights, resources and voice*, New York (USA), Oxford University Press, 2001

THE WORLD BANK, *Global Monitoring Report 2007: Millennium Development Goals: Confronting the challenges of gender equality and fragile states*, Washington (USA), World Bank, 2007

VISVANATHAN, Nalini - DUGGAN, Lynn - NISONOFF, Laurie - WIEGERSMA, Nan (edited by), *The women, gender and development reader*, London (UK), Zed Books, 1997

12. Linkography

Audio documentaries

Transom.org is a website published by Atlantic Public Media: it is a tool for all radio documentarists, radio authors or simply fans. Inside, you can find radio documentaries, reviews and links, hardware and software tools, tips and tricks for recording and editing audio documentaries. (http://www.transom.org)

In the **Documentary Department of Swedish National Radio** website you can watch some "Radio-Video", mp4 files that have an audio documentary in Swedish on sound, and the English translation on video. (http://sverigesradio.se/sida/default.aspx?programid=3297)

StoryCorps is a sound-project driven by author David Isay that collects stories of American people, trying to paint a portrait of the United States. (http://www.storycorps.org). You can see also **SoundPortraits.org,** a previous project by David Isay where you can find his best radio documentaries (http://www.soundportraits.org/)

The Kitchen Sisters are Davia Nelson and Nikki Silva, two independent radio producers that focused their work on gender issues and memories (http://www.kitchensisters.org)

Radio Diaires is a website led by Joe Richman, that works with people to document their own lives for public radio: teenagers, seniors, prison inmates and others whose voices are rarely heard (http://www.radiodiaries.org)

This American Life is the most important radio documentary-based program broadcasted in the US. It counts 1.7 million radio listeners and half a million web-downloads each week. It is produced by Chicago Public Media (http://www.thisamericanlife.org)

Female genital mutilation/cutting

STREAM – Sharing technologies and resources for engaged and active media is a network African associations of women working in the media and NGOs (non governmental organizations) promoting the abandonment of FGM/C that manages the www.stopfgmc.org web portal addressed to media practitioners: a database of media coverage, laws, research and documentation, video and audio material that offers an entry point into the topic of female genital mutilation/cutting (www.stopfgmc.org)

The purpose of the **Female Genital Cutting Education and Networking Project** is the dissemination on-line and offline of material related to female genital mutilation/cutting. The Project seeks to form an online clearinghouse and a community for researchers, activists, attorneys, and health care practitioners to obtain information and network with others involved in similar projects (http://www.fgmnetwork.org)

END FGM is a European campaign, led by Amnesty International Ireland, working in partnership with a number of organisations in EU member states. The campaign aims to put female genital mutilation (FGM) high on the EU agenda and to echo the voices of women who have undergone FGM and those at risk of being subjected to it. (http://www.endfgm.eu/en/)

AllAfrica.com is an online news service that frequently covers FGM/C issue in the various African countries where the practice is widespread (http://allafrica.com)

For more than 15 years, the **Center for Reproductive Rights** has used the law to advance reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right that all governments are legally obligated to protect, respect, and fulfill. It specifically reviews laws and policies on female genital mutilation/cutting worldwide. (http://reproductiverights.org/en/document/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-legal-prohibitions-worldwide)

Devoted to illuminating both male circumcision and FGM, the **Circumcision Information and Resources Pages (CIRP)** website provides a "Circumcision Reference Library" and "Circumcision Information Pages" addressing medical issues, legal and cultural questions, and reversal treatment options.

The **Donors Working Group on FGM/C (DWG)** brings together key actors at the international level. The participants' foci and mandates differ, yet their individual policies and programs reflect a common approach as outlined in the group's Platform for Action. The platform is a systemic approach that stimulates and supports large scale social transformation that benefits children and women. (http://www.fgm-cdonor.org/)

Equality Now was founded in 1992 to work for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women around the world. Working with national human rights organizations and individual activists, Equality Now documents violence and discrimination against women and mobilizes international action to stop these human rights abuses. Its campaign on FGM/C includes the production of the newsletter **Awaken** (http://www.equalitynow.org/english/campaigns/fgm/fgm-campaign_en.html)

Human Rights Watch addresses female genital mutilation/cutting as a violation of human rights with research reports and news, not only from Africa but also from other countries such as the Iraqi Kurdistan, where the practice can also be found (http://www.hrw.org)

IRIN, the humanitarian news and analysis service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs often covers FGM/C in the Africa section of its web portal IRIN News (http://www.irinnews.org)

The **Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC)** is an International non-governmental network created in February 1984 at a seminar in Dakar, Senegal. It started with 20 African countries. To date, the organization has National Committees in 28 African countries and Affiliates in 8 European countries, USA, Canada, Japan and New Zealand (http://www.iac-ciaf.net/)

The **Population Council** is an international, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that seeks to improve the well-being and reproductive health of current and future generations around the world and to help achieve a humane, equitable, and sustainable balance between people and resources. Population Council research on FGM/C is available at http://www.popcouncil.org/topics/fgmc.asp#

The **Population Reference Bureau** informs people around the world about population, health, and the environment, and empowers them to use that information to advance the well-being of current and future generations. It compiles and updates the **Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Data and Trend** report, the latest issue is dated 2010 (www.prb.org/pdf10/fgm-wallchart2010.pdf)

UNFPA looks at female genital mutilation/cutting mainly as a matter of gender equality **(**http://www.unfpa.org/gender/practices1.htm)

UNICEF addresses FGM/C under the **"Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse"** section (http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_genitalmutilation.html). Statistical info can be found on the UNICEF website **Childinfo** (http://www.childinfo.org/fgmc.html)

WHO information on female genital mutilation is available at http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/

13. Notes

Contacts

AIDOS - Italian Association for Women in Development
Via dei Giubbonari 30
00186 Rome (Italy)
Tel. +39 06 6873214 / 196
Fax +39 06 6872549
E-mail aidos@aidos.it
Web www.aidos.it

Audiodoc
Via Rodi 25
00195 Rome (Italy)
Tel. +39 06 39722230
E-mail audiodoc@audiodoc.it
Web www.audiodoc.it

AMWIK - Association of Media Women in Kenya
House n. 6, Wendy Court, David Osieli Road – Westlands
Nairobi – Kenya
Mobile: +254 722 201958 and +254 737 201958
Tel. +254 20 4441226
E-mail info@amwik.org
Web www.amwik.org

STREAM – Sharing technologies for engaged and active media
www.stopfgmc.org

Radio is the most accessible media in Africa. It is ever present in daily life, transmitting knowledge and sparking debate. The audio documentaries, with their combination of spoken language, music and ambient sound, are a great tool for supporting the changes that are taking place in the area of female genital mutilation cutting, a traditional practice that violates the human rights of girls and women. This training manual will guide participants in learning how to produce audio-documentaries that can addressee the doubts and uncertainties that go with the changing, exploring the available alternatives to female genital mutilation/cutting and the way in which those who have already abandoned the practice have dealt with the challenges of their new condition.

This manual was prepared to support workshops on the use of innovative radio formats to promote the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting, implemented by AIDOS, the Italian Association for Women in Development, in partnership with Audiodoc, the Italian Association of Independent Audio Documentarists, with the support of UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund.