

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Project Title: Future prospect and eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Domestic Violence (DV) in Sierra Leone

Submitted to:

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Vision: To see women and girls in Sierra Leone free from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Practices and Domestic Violence (DV) in SL.

Goal:

To contribute to the reduction of FGM and DV prevalence in Sierra Leone within a three year period

Objectives

1. Increase the awareness on the effects of FGM and DV on the church denominations/communities and the rest of the communities (e.g Parliamentarians, chiefs, community leaders, religious leaders, legislator etc
2. Increase the awareness on the effects of FGM and DV on government/law makers/ decision makers and enforcers (Police)
3. Create partnership and alliance with other FGM and Human Rights activists for lobby and advocacy
4. Offer assistance including Educational support, psychosocial counseling to victims of non initiates / forceful initiates and survivors of DV

Assumptions

- FGM and DV are practices that exist in SL
- People do not know the risk about FGM and DV
- There is no legislation against FGM and even though there is a gender law on DV, but it is not well understood or enforced. There is also a Memorandum of Understanding on FGM which was signed on 6th February 2011 but lacks key elements of enforcement and what will be the penalty of perpetrators.
- There is non functional partnership for lobbying and wider advocacy on laws and policies against FGM in SL
- The girl child lack basic educational support for education this include non initiates, victims of DV and those who are forcefully initiated

PROJECT LOCATION

Five chiefdoms in Bombali, Northern province, namely: Bombali Sherbora, Makarie Gbanti, Seferoko Limba, Mapaki Masa Bong, and Briwa Chiefdoms.

Justification

1. Extent of the problem and practice

Because state institutions, primarily the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and the courts have failed to provide adequate responses and remedies to human rights situation for women nationwide; various reports have disclosed an increase in the number of sexual and gender based violence cases in Sierra Leone.

In spite of the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act 2007 and the various radio and community sensitizations programmes, an increased number of domestic violence complaints were filed with the commission (HRCSL) in 2009 (state of Human Rights in Sierra Leone 2009 page 63).

Domestic Violence and FGM are serious human rights violations that affect women and young girls in Sierra Leone and across Africa. In addition to contravening basic human rights, both practices pose serious health risks to the physical, psychological and emotional well being of women and girls.

However, the efforts made by the Sierra Leone Police to improve the investigation and prosecution of cases, and the initiatives of community policing which has bridge the gap between the SLP and the civil populace; has helped in combating crimes effectively.

According to the state of Human Rights in Sierra Leone (2009); the Family support Unit (FSU) IN 2009 reported of 1,642 cases of domestic violence across the country, a substantial reduction over the year (2008:2,7447 cases). In 2009, 305 cases of domestic violence were charged to court resulting in 15 convictions; 777 were said to be under investigation while another 425 were 'Kept in View', 134 cases were resolved with one disposed of due to lack of evidence.

During and after the rebel war, children are traumatized, many forced into marriages by rebel fighters or gang-raped and enslaved. The ministry of gender, social welfare and children's affairs has drafted a bill aimed at protecting children's welfare. The bill was drafted with the help of experts hired by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) This bill which has been passed into law has much to offer children in post-conflict Sierra Leone. In the bill there was an aspect dealing with harmful traditional practices like FGM, tattoos and any bodily inscription not in the interest of the child. There are also proscribed and measures taken against people who may want to break the law.

The main components of the child right act are survival, development and protection of the child as well as ensuring the child's participation in all that is in his/her interest.

The bill has been passed into law but there was fierce opposition to the bill as Female Genital Mutilation as over 65% of women still considered an integral part of the culture. They express that 'Bondo Society is what hold us together as a community and keeps our traditional heritage; It shouldn't be banned because it helps prepare our young girls for marriage and it curbs promiscuity.

One major problem facing anti-FGM campaigners is the massive illiteracy standing at about 75 percent especially in the interior of the country where UNICEF estimates 90 percent of the women have been circumcised. There, it is a display of affluence and power. Family heads save for a whole year proceeds from the farming activities to spend

lavishly on 'Bondo' ceremonies.

Until recently, efforts to prevent and eliminate FGM in particular, had been largely social mobilization efforts, undertaken by civil society organizations, which emphasized the harmful health consequences of FGM. While such educational campaigns have had some deterrent effect and have opened up dialogue about FGM and other harmful traditional practices (HTPs), after several years of campaigning, the practices continue.

With the implementation of the "Breaking the silence on FGM and DV" project (2007 – 2010), intensive project activities, planning, designing and implementation was done with beneficiaries both at community and chiefdom levels. The Paramount chiefs, political councillors, women, youths, men, played vital roles in the processes with the aim of achieving the project's overall goal, which is to increase the knowledge on FGM and DV and minimise the incidences in the area. The project continued its strives to increase the knowledge and had to undertake diversified interventions to add value to activities implemented, carry out formative research around key challenges and lessons learnt and findings were documented for improving future programming efforts. The silence has been

The project have largely engaged in awareness raising, trainings, focus group discussions, one to one sensitizations, film shows, clubs formation in schools, campaigns, formation and enforcement of community by laws to break the silence surrounding these harmful traditional practices in an effort to prevent and eliminate FGM in particular. These activities have brought in many stakeholders and beneficiaries to understand issues, make inform decisions and choices.

The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practice has caught international concern, and currently, different strategies are being employed to try and defuse this concept, to ensure that women are treated fairly as one form of empowering them through human rights concerns for their security and or safety

The 'Bondo Society' and its practice of FGM is often used as a weapon of political campaign. Politicians from all sides win votes from women by extolling the virtues of the 'Bondo Society'.

In the 2012 presidential elections, an influential political parties were reported to have initiated 100 girls in a bid to win votes

Major strategies that can reduce the incidences of FGM are:

- Improve access to available information on the negative impact of FGM and DV
- Increase knowledge and skills related to the prevention of FGM and DV
- Build family and children educational level capacities to address the needs of the girl for education

Input Indicators

- 1.1 Number of awareness sessions
- 1.2 Number of people attending the sessions
- 1.3 Number of churches/mosques participating
- 1.4 Number of meetings held for advocacy, lobbying.
- 1.5 Number of people attending the meeting

Out Put Indicators

- 1.1 Number of people who have declared against FGM
- 1.2 Number of people involve in the campaign (change agents)

Impact Indicators

- 1.1 % decrease in the prevalence of FGM and DV
- 1.2 % decrease in the FGM rituals
- 1.3 % decrease in the prevalence of DV cases
- 1.4 % of DV cases prosecuted

Input indicators

- 2.1 Numbers of meetings held for legislators and policy makers/Police FSU
- 2.2 Number of people who attended
- 2.3 Number of workshops held for informants
- 2.4 Number of people who attended

Out put indicators

- 2.1 Number of debates held in parliament/media around the subject of FGM and DV
- 2.2 Number of public declarations by politicians/ Religious and community Leaders

Impact Indicators

Input indicators

- 3.1 Number of meetings held with FGM and human rights actors

Out put indicators

- 3.2 numbers of institutions/organizations involve in the joint partnership

Impact Indicators

- 3.1 Strong policy influence
- 3.2 Issuance of an anti FGM law
- 3.3 Prevalence of FGM decreased

Target groups/ beneficiaries

1. women and men
2. girls
3. youths/young adults
4. practitioners
5. religious and community leaders
6. government institutions that are very much link to women's health and human right
7. Girls initiates and non initiates