



Health  
Western Sydney  
Local Health District

# MEN TAKING A STAND AGAINST FGM

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“ If lasting change is to be achieved, it is imperative to understand the important role men play in communities that Practice FGM.”

# THE NSW EDUCATION PROGRAM ON FGM

The program has two main arms:

- Professional and Service providers Training and Education
  - Clinical Training : Drs, Nurses , Midwives and other medical professionals e.g. physiotherapists, Radiologists etc...
  - Professional Education Training: Service providers, counselors, teachers, community workers.
- Community Education and Development Program.
  - Working with women and men from communities that practice FGM.



# CURRENTLY WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

## AT RISK IN NSW –

- Currently the program is working with women from the following communities: Sudanese (Northern), Somali, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Liberian, Egyptian, Ethiopian, Iraqi (Kurdish).
- Other communities identified as at Risk: Kenyan, Nigerian, Mauritanian, Indonesian, Bangladeshi and Malaysian
- Communities which are non-practicing but border practicing communities include: DR Congo, Burundian and Southern Sudanese



# COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## **Aims:**

To assist affected communities in NSW to work towards the prevention of the occurrence of FGM.

## **How :**

By addressing the social, physical, and mental well being of the affected communities through information dissemination in the context of health education and other settlement issues.



# STRATEGIES USED TO WORK WITH WOMEN

## Strategies used to deliver the program include:

- Community Education Program:
  - **“Women’s Health And Traditions in a New Society” (WHATINS)**
- Direct group consultations with and education of women from affected communities.
- Present information at community functions.
- Engage and empower women and men to take ownership of FGM issue.
- Train community members to become Bilingual Community worker’s (BCW) to present the program to their communities in their own language.
- Feed Back from women attending the WHATINS groups said men had to be included in the dialogue on FGM as they were the decision makers.
- Men asked why there were not similar programs held for them about health.

# HOWEVER!!!

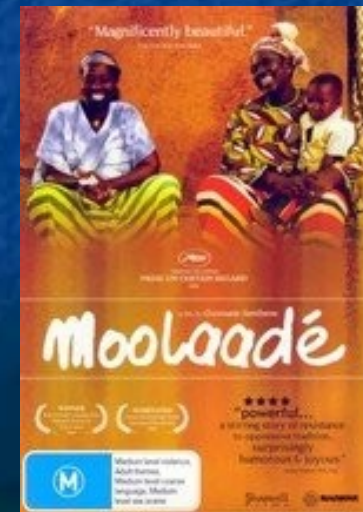
**“ If lasting change is to be achieved, it is imperative to understand the important role men play in communities affected by FGM.”**

Their roles as Providers, Husbands', Fathers, Protectors, Community Leaders and Elders makes it imperative for them to be consulted, educated and encouraged to be a part of issues pertaining to women's health. Women who are their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters.



# MEN'S SEMINAR ON FEMALE CIRCUMCISION"

- Held the first men's Seminar in January 2006 at the Pacific International Suites – Parramatta
  - **Speakers included**
    - Medical Doctor
    - Lawyer
    - Muslim Imam
    - Christian Coptic Pastor
  - **Topics included**
    - Healthy bodies healthy relationships
    - Men's role in protecting their wives, daughters and women in the community
    - Community's role ownership and control of issues of FGM
    - The Law in NSW
    - Healthy bodies healthy relationships
  - Screened "Moolaade" A woman's fight against FGM in Senegal.
- 55 men from 5 communities attended the day





# AFRICAN MEN'S GROUP ON WOMEN'S HEALTH – FOCUS GROUP

- Organized an African Men's Focus Group in October 2007
- 11 men attended the session from 6 cultural groups
- Presented the Final Report on the “Men's Seminar on Female Circumcision” held in January 2006
- Engaged the men in a discussion around:
  - ” How does FGM Impact on Men and the marital relationship?
  - What can be done to protect women and Girls against FGM?
  - Feed back led to men openly sharing their own experiences.
  - One man wrote the poem: “ The Killing of Hope”

# NSW FGM MEN'S ADVISORY GROUP

- Formed the FGM Men's Advisory Group: 6 men from 4 cultural groups
- Terms of reference were written for the FGM Men's Advisory Group
- NSW FGM Men's Advisory Group - attend the bi-monthly the Men's Advisory Group.

Currently has men from the following communities: Sudanese – Sierra Leone – Ethiopian – Kurdish and Somali men attending the bi-monthly the Men's Advisory Group.



# 2<sup>ND</sup> MEN'S SEMINAR ON WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES

The NSW FGM Advisory group assisted in organizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Men's Seminar on Women's Health Issues.

The program included

- Welcome
- Brutal Global Issues Affecting Women Globally
- Egypt's Stand against FGM
- Medical facts on FGM
- What I witnessed – a man's perspective
- Sudanese singer
- Islam's stand on FGM
- Christianity's stand on FGM
- FGM and You!!
- NSW Legislation on FGM
- Focus Groups –
- Sierra Leone Mask Dance
- Word of thanks and Door prizes



# Focus Group Questions

What are some reasons given in your community for practicing FGM?

In your opinion where does this practice come from in your community?

What is the most significant information you have learnt from today's Seminar ?

What do think are some of the fears that people from your community might have about stopping FGM being practiced?

What are some things you can do personally to prevent this harmful tradition from affecting other girls and women?

Would you be interested in organizing men from your community to attend a 2 hour information session about FGM?



# ENGAGING MEN IN FGM TOPICS

- ❖ Initially men did not want their voices to be identified by their community.
- ❖ 2008 and 2009 Community Radio Campaign:
- ❖ Sudanese Arabic
- ❖ Sierra Leone
- ❖ Kurdish

Translated and currently to be recorded

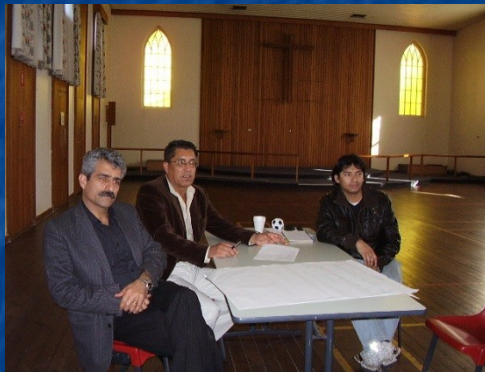
- ❖ Egyptian
- ❖ Ethiopian
- ❖ Somali



# MEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING - AUGUST

2009

- Human Rights
  - What
  - Why is it important?
- Human Rights Framework and instruments
- UN position on FGM
  - Violence Against Women
  - The Girl Child
  - Other relevant treaties
- FGM and Human Rights
  - Historical Analysis
  - Position of Global Women's Groups
  - Position of women's groups in Africa
  - ICCPR and FGM
- Australia's position on FGM
- Australia's Action on FGM
- Where do you fit in?
- Conclusions and Evaluation





# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE CHILD - NOV

2009

- First program run with men and women attending together
- Focus was on the Rights of the Child
- Parent role in protecting their girl Child from harm.
- 90 women and men attended from 8 communities
- The Hon. MP Barbarra Perry attended program
- Several Children's services presented information on their services
- Presentations of Certificates of Appreciation for BCWs and Community women

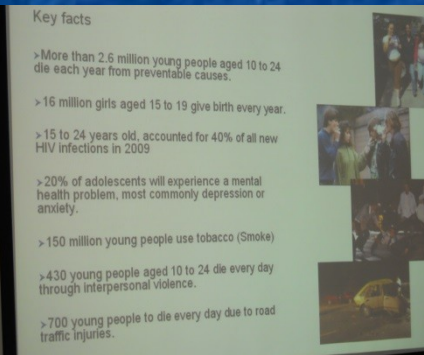
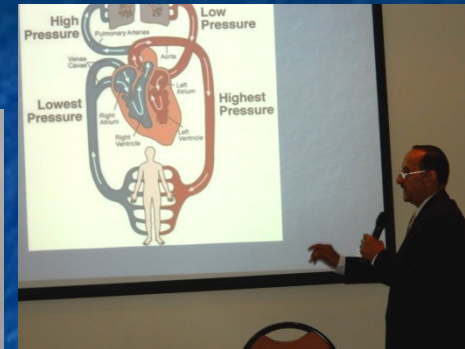




# MEN'S HEALTH INFORMATION DAY

## 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2011

- Men's advisory group organized and presented several sessions
- 37 men from 7 communities attended
- Topics on men's health issues were presented by men.
- Services in NSW
- FGM and relating topics





# Program

## Men's Health Information Day

### Topics on men's Health included:

Men and Health – global outlook  
High Blood pressure and its implications  
Sexually transmitted infections  
Diabetes Prevention



### Services

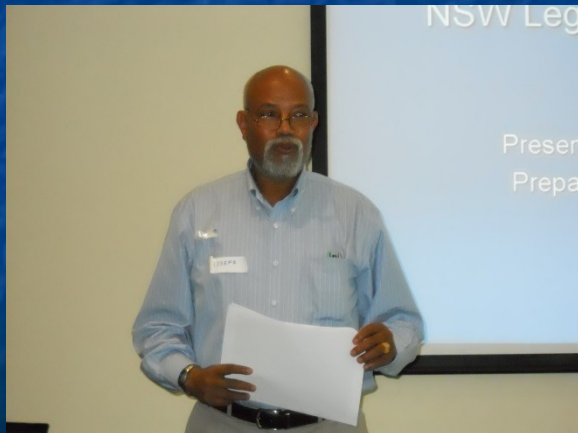
#### STARRTS

Bo's Children in Sierra Leone

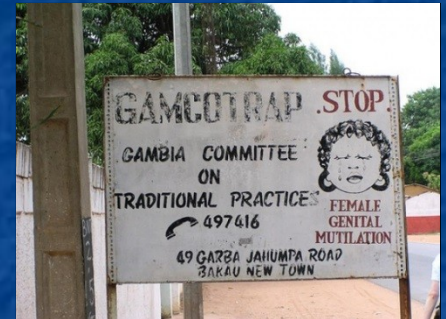
Young men's Youth Services and programs.

### Topics on FGM included:

The Effect of FGM on Women's Health and Marital Relationships  
Islamic Stance on FGM  
Christian Stance on FGM  
NSW Legislation against FGM  
FGM and Men  
Kurd's in N. Iraq lobby to Parliament for Legislation against FGM



# PICTURES SCREENED ON THE DAY





# FEEDBACK FROM THE MEN'S HEALTH DAY

- Which of the following would you like to have more information on:  
(please tick)
- NSW Health Services (7)
- Gambling (1)
- Hepatitis B (2)
- Smoking & it's harmful effects (4)
- Keeping children safe (5)
- Men's Health (6)
- Mental Health (6)
- Parenting of Children (4)
- Marital Relationships (4)
  
- Is there a role for men to stop FGM from continuing?
- Yes (14)                       No                       Unsure (2)
  
- Have you had a general health check up in the past two years?
- Yes (15)                       No (1)
  
- Will you have a general health check in the next year because of what you have learned today?
- Yes (15)                       No                       Unsure (1)

# MEN'S BCW TRAINING SEPTEMBER 2012

- A seven session program “Men’s Health and Traditions” on Men’s health was developed for men from the target communities.
- 9 men attended the training on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2012 for 5 Saturdays.
  - 2 Sierra Leone
  - 3 Sudanese
  - 2 Egyptian
  - 1 Ethiopian
  - 1 Kurdish



## Men’s Health and Traditions

Each session runs for 2 ½ - 3 hours .

It presents a holistic approach to men’s health including FGM and it’s harmful effects on women’s health, the legislation against it, and referral pathways.





# STRATEGIES USED IN THE MHAT

## PROGRAM

### “Men’s Health And Traditions” (MHAT)

- Group Agreement
- Small group and paired exercises – easy talk about sensitive subjects
- Group discussions – sharing of knowledge, opinions and experiences.
- Minimal use of reading and writing – different literacy levels
- Self care exercises to enhance self-esteem
- Time for reflection
- Practice of communication and relaxation skills
- Examine health and community issues from the men’s perspectives and different cultural experiences
- Evaluation and feed back is collected during the program.
- Certificates of Participation are presented to men who attend the program.

# NSW FGM RURAL OUTREACH PROGRAM

Since May 2006 rural outreach teams have been organized and worked with women only in over 6 areas.

December 2012- Rural visit to Wagga  
Wagga :  
3 Female BCWs and 2 Male BCWs





# FEED BACK FROM MEN WHO ATTENDED THE MHAT PROGRAM

“I did not know that babies and mothers can die from that”

“I was unaware of the complications of FGM”

“It was good to know about FGM in general and the Australian laws”

“To tell my community to totally stop (FGM)”

“I learned how to approach services in case of an FGM incident”

“Include boosting women’s health as an alternative of FGM.”

“I would like the course to continue with other people from our community”

“I learnt how I can take care of my family”

# MEN REPRESENTING NSW FGM PROGRAM

- **Insight program on FGM** – 2 male BCWs attended and spoke against the practice of FGM
- **THE FGM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS – CANBERRA**
  - Round table on FGM – One male BCW was invited to participate in consultations
  - FGM Summit – 3 male BCWs were invited to participate in consultations



# CURRENT MHAT GROUPS

- Mt Druitt – Egyptian men
- Fairfield – Arabic men
- Harris park – Kurdish men
- Auburn – Ethiopian men
- Blacktown – Sudanese men
- Current Men's Advisory group includes men from:
  - Ethiopian
  - Sierra Leone
  - Sudanese
  - Kurdish
  - Egyptian
  - Somali