



## European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health

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### Interim report form for a granted project

#### ESC Central Office only

Date of sending out the form:

Contact person/applicant: Fabienne Richard

Country: Belgium

Email: fabienne@gams.be

Title of the granted project: Men Speak Out: Engaging Men in Female Genital Mutilation Prevention in Europe

Amount granted by the ESC (in euro): 8.000 €

Initial funding (part of the grant received already) in euro: 6.000 €

Final amount to be paid by ESC (in euro): 2.000 €

**Project number:** P-2013-B-03

**Allocated mentor:** No mentor assigned

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#### Your interim report

Date project actually started: 1.01.2015

Planned date of completion: 31.12.2016

Have there been any problems or issues with starting or continuing this project? If so, what impact will that have on your planned completion date?

The start of the project has been delayed due to the process selection of the EU Daphne project as the ESC Grant was a co-financing of the EU Daphne project. Since the project has started all the different programmed phases are done following the planning. The research will be done in 2 year time.

Have you discussed the project status and any problems with your Mentor?  
No. We don't know who is our Mentor.

Please provide:

- A synopsis of your findings and data so far (max 500 words)

## **Men Speak Out: Results of qualitative research on African men and Female Genital Cutting/Mulitacion (FGC/M) in Belgium, Holland and the UK.**

### **Background**

Since FGM has been brought up as a health issue by the WHO, it has often been taken for granted that men's domination and control of women has an important role to play in the perpetuation of the practice. The UNICEF report (2013), however showed that in 16 African countries the percentage of men who want to stop FGM is higher than the rate of women who want to stop FGM, apart from in Sudan and Nigeria. With the aim of understanding men's role in the perpetuation of FGM in Europe, this qualitative research enquired into men's views about the practice, their understanding of the practice as a health risk, communication between men and women about the practice and men's involvement in the decision making process to end the practice.

### **Methods**

In total 60 in-depth interviews (IDI) and 9 Group Discussions (FGD) were undertaken: 20 IDIs and 3 FGDs per country (Belgium, Netherlands, UK).

### **Results**

Commonly mentioned reasons for FGC/M were religion, tradition, culture, social pressure, controlling women's sexuality, lack of knowledge, ignorance and the construction of identity. In all three countries more than half of the participants stated that FGC/M is practised for the control of women's sexuality. Women who are not cut were considered to be promiscuous. Across all three countries half of the respondents knew some consequences of the practice. However, for most of them it was after arriving in the Europe that they realised that the (health) problems women were experiencing were related to FGC/M. Across all three countries we found that men and women rarely talked about the practice. It was more acceptable for men to speak to men and for women to speak to women about the practice than cross-gender. The majority of older men said that they had never spoken to their wives about FGC and did not know what they thought. Some young men said that they had spoken to women about the practice in the past. A few informants stated that it had become more acceptable to talk about FGC/M since they arrived in Europe than it was 'back home'. When the interviewed men communicated with women on FGC/M it was often in relation to health problems or if it was a sexual partner, about sexual problems. Men's preferences regarding cut and uncut women were contradictory. Most respondents stated that uncut women were commonly said to be dirty and promiscuous. Furthermore it was said that women generally do not show that they are experiencing pleasure during sex. During interviews women said that if they showed pleasure they would be perceived as promiscuous and potentially unfaithful. Most men, however, stated that sex with uncut women was more enjoyable because they actively desire to have sex whereas cut women merely endure sexual rapport. Some men said that there was no difference between cut and uncut women. In all three countries most research participants stated that the decision to cut the daughters was made by women in the family. In particular, the mother and the two grandmothers were seen to wield the ultimate power. The man is traditionally less involved or uninvolved in decisions concerning FGC/M and more often than not uninformed about the whole process. Many participants in all three countries stated that even if the father was opposed to the practice the mother could get the girl cut without his knowledge or against his will. Nevertheless, research participants stated that FGC was done in order to please men - the role of men therefore was to be the person who benefited from the practice.

- A current budget on how much you have spent to date. Receipts may be requested.

We have spent to date 5304,83 euros (see budget attached)

649,39 euros : Travel and registration to the ASA conference in Durham to present the preliminary result of the research (see powerpoint attached)

4655, 44 euros: Staff cost for the research

The balance ( 8000 euros – 5304,83 euros) will be used for the printing of the final multi-country comparative research report due in December 2016.

- Add any other information you feel we should have at this stage.
- Sign and date the form and return to the ESC Office.

Once received and assessed, you will be contacted regarding the final payment.

Signed – Name: Fabienne Richard

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'f Richard', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Date: 5 September 2016

**Please return this form (by email) to:** ESC Central Office at [info@escrh.eu](mailto:info@escrh.eu).