

Samyuktha Rajagopalan, CEO, Chairperson of the Board

The Midnimo Education Project

(248)730-6728

director@midnimoeducationproject.org

## Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Primary and Secondary Prevention Course and Seminar Series

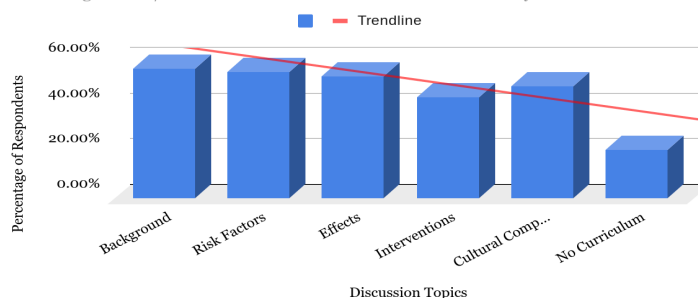
Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting or Female Circumcision (abbreviated as FGM/C), referring to the (partial) removal, pricking, piercing, or scraping of female external sex organs, is an internationally recognized human rights violation and form of child abuse emphasized under target 5.3 of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ("Goal 5").

Including all four types: Clitoridectomy; Clitoridectomy (excision or circumcision); Infibulation; and piercing, pricking, cutting, or scraping, 4 million females are at risk yearly, with over 230 million females worldwide having experienced this practice ("What is Female Genital Mutilation"). While it is commonly believed that the practice occurs mainly in Africa and Asia, 1 to 2 million females belonging to communities who have migrated to developed countries, are at risk yearly ("Female Genital Mutilation- Statistics"). Within the United States of America, California leads, having over 56 thousand documented cases of FGM/C since documentation by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) began in 1997 ("U.S. Laws Against FGM"). Data from a 2016 CDC report shows a growth in population risk of FGM/C, with over 513,000 women in the United States having future risk for or having experienced FGM/C ("Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)"). Populations at risk are primarily children of the female sex, ranging from infancy to age 15, though the practice is also prevalent in groups from 15-49 years old ("What is Female Genital Mutilation"). The effects of FGM/C include both short-term

consequences such as urinary tract issues, and long-term consequences including psychological issues and possibly death (“What is Female Genital Mutilation”).

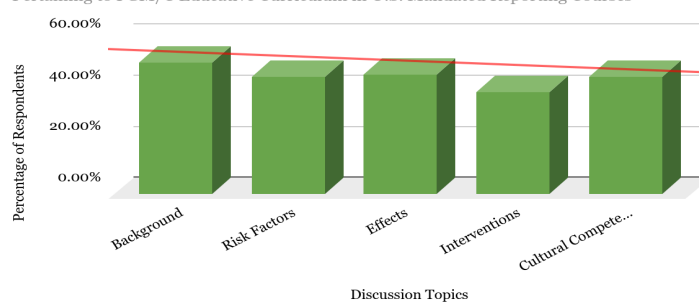
Currently, two main mitigating interventions include legislation and education. According to UNICEF, “Females are 30% more likely to oppose FGM if they have primary education and 70% more likely with secondary education,” (“What is Female Genital Mutilation”). The impact of public opinion (specifically the opposition to FGM/C) resulting from education, on public policy and legislation is shown in the following literature review conducted by Paul Burnstein, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Washington: “the impact of public opinion is substantial; salience enhances the impact of public opinion; the impact of opinion remains strong even when the activities of political organizations and elites are taken into account,” (Burnstein). FGM/C specific education, an impactful approach to the legislative mitigation of FGM/C, otherwise known as primary prevention and secondary prevention education has not been popularized; market research done by The Midnimo Education Project utilizes a 5-point Likert scale to show popular exposure to FGM/C specific educative measures within a sample size of 121 U.S. public-school- educated survey respondents.

**Fig 1: Percentage of Respondents Replying Not Covered, Vaguely Covered, and Somewhat Covered to Discussion Topics**  
Pertaining to FGM/C Educative Curriculum in U.S. Public School Systems



According to the above survey, FGM/C-specific education remains largely unaddressed in schools as a primary prevention educative measure; About 21.49% of respondents have experienced no FGM/C awareness curriculum, and about 56.84%, 55.79%, 53.69%, 44.21%, and 49.47% of respondents have received unsubstantial and limited education in vital discussion topics (background, risk factors, effects, interventions, and cultural competency, respectively) regarding FGM/C. Secondary prevention education has been seen to be equally unsubstantial. A market research survey conducted by The Midnimo Education Project utilizes a 5-point Likert scale to show 87 Mandated Reporter-respondents' evaluations of their Mandated Reporter (child abuse prevention) courses.

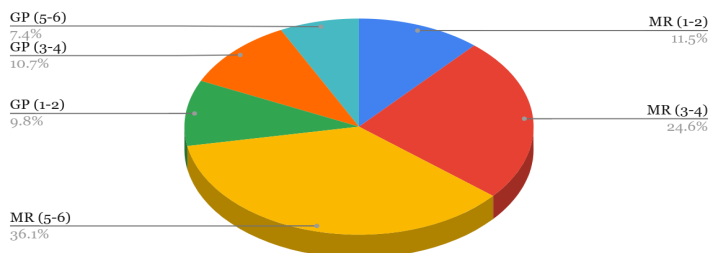
**Fig 2: Percentage of Respondents Replying Not Covered, Vaguely Covered, and Somewhat Covered to Discussion Topics**  
 Pertaining to FGM/C Educative Curriculum in U.S. Mandated Reporting Courses



FGM/C, being a form of child abuse, remains largely unaddressed in Mandated Reporter courses across the nation, with 51.14%, 45.45%, 46.59%, 39.77%, and 45.45% of respondents receiving unsubstantial and limited education about the background, risk factors, effects, interventions, and cultural competency, respectively, of a major form of child abuse (which Mandated Reporter courses are targetted towards informing about). Both respondent demographics (U.S. public-school-educated general population and Mandated Reporters) were then asked to self-report and verify their FGM/C competence on a 6-point Likert scale (1: No Previously

Obtained Knowledge; 2: Very Inaccurate; 3: Somewhat Accurate; 4: Neutral; 5: Somewhat Accurate; and 6: Very Accurate) presented below.

Fig 3: Makeup of Mandated Reporter (MR) and General Population (GP) Previous Knowledge



About 82.0% of the survey respondents find themselves between no previous knowledge (1) and neither having accurate nor inaccurate (4) knowledge of FGM/C. Granted that FGM/C educative measures are the main mitigating agent towards the rise of FGM/C, the major gap in FGM/C-specific education and awareness is the issue that The Midnimo Education Project.

The Midnimo Education Project is focused on increasing the FGM/C-specific primary and secondary prevention education available to the youth and Mandated Reporters with the objective of designing a series of Mandated Reporter and Youth-Seminar courses with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. Two main factors were considered throughout course development; the accessibility and the course's Learning Outcomes. UDL was chosen as an appealing framework that emphasizes accessibility to all learning styles; According to the Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, this framework includes multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression, while emphasizing self-reflection and formative assessments ("Teaching and Learning Frameworks"). Its prioritization of multiple means/forms increases the accessibility of the course for a diverse range of learning styles. The

course series will be designed to contain both Learner-Learner interaction and Learner-Teacher interaction. The Learning Outcomes of this course series are organized per Bloom's taxonomy, and include Remember: Students can independently identify all risk factors and indicators of FGM/C by the end of the course; Remember: Students can independently identify Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting background information/statistics and physiological and psychological effects by the end of the course; Evaluating: Students can independently make evaluations towards the necessity of filing Child Abuse reports and sensitive approaches for intervention; and Apply: Students can apply knowledge on cultural sensitivity, legislation on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, and deploy available resources.

The scope of this project (course development and Youth Seminar series) includes the following outcomes/deliverables and budget and timeline. The budget for the deliverables/outcomes of a fully designed UDL Mandated Reporter and Youth Seminar series with Full Immersion eLearning (the highest extent of eLearning) integrated on an education-web platform as a state-mandated program, is about \$12,160 to \$42,560 depending on factors including the projected course development hours (ranging from 320 to 1120 hours for a 4-hour course, or 2 to 7 months) and median price of course design stakeholders like Instructional Designers and Subject Matter Experts. The scale and timeline of this project includes three phases: Course Design, which is projected to be about 40 to 140 business days or 2 to 7 months (beginning from October 2024 to May 2025); Local implementation, which is about 4 months (ending in September 2025); and national implementation, taking about 3 years (beginning from September 2025 to September 2028). The project will be implemented through local channels including school district Mandated Reporter training services/partnerships, as well as through state legislature and organizations concerned with child abuse prevention, including the Civic

Welfare and Training Services (CWTS). This will be nationally established through the groups and stakeholders involved. The groups include a course development team consisting of an Instructional Designer, Copywriter, Video Editor, Graphic Designer, and Subject Matter Expert. Stakeholders include youth students (to connect with local district diversity programs), secondary school districts, Mandated Reporters, medical/mental health professionals (including social workers) serving as Subject Matter Experts, local legislators, and the California Governor's office. Currently, The Midnimo Education Project has partnered with youths across 2 Californian Districts (Campbell Union High School District and Fremont Unified School District) and enlisted the mentorship of Dr. Geetha Nagasubramanian, community consultant gynecologist with Barts NHS Health Trust and MBE winner, as a Subject Matter Expert.

The effectiveness of the UDL course-design framework in the engagement of students has been observable in many studies. According to an empirical literature review of a study done by the team of J.D. Basham, a Professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas, the Universal Design for Learning framework created an environment where there was "significant success in students' class interaction and participation. [Furthermore,] Elements of UDL principles enhanced students' participation in discussion." (Seok). The UDL framework is shown to have resulted in success and an overall increase in discussion participation, a form of behavioral engagement. Furthermore, elements of UDL including Learner-learner and Learner-Teacher interactions have been cited by the team of Longcheng Lin, a Professor at the Nantong Health College of Jiangsu Province, to have a positive effect on emotional and behavioral engagement, while Learner-Teacher interactions also have a positive effect on cognitive engagement (Lin). YouScience states the importance of engagement, saying, "When students are engaged, they... develop critical thinking skills that

extend to real-life situations.” (“What is Student Engagement”). In the case of FGM/C, facing real-life situations is a common occurrence, making engaging frameworks such as UDL a vital and effective method of mitigating FGM/C through primary prevention and secondary prevention education. Finally, the key position of Mandated Reporters in child abuse secondary prevention is highlighted by the team of Amy J.L. Baker, a PhD laureate, and Parental Alienation Researcher, in the following statement: “[they are responsible for] identifying three quarters of substantiated cases of physical abuse and sexual abuse, and two-thirds of cases of substantiated psychological abuse and neglect’ (US DHHS, 2010).” (Baker et al.). Here, it can be seen that Mandated Reporters serve as a major secondary prevention step in child abuse. Appropriate primary and secondary prevention education and training will undoubtedly help mitigate the FGM/C crisis in America, as these forms of education courses and programs further inform the largest preventative and mitigating measures of forms of child abuse including FGM/C.

Overall, FGM/C is a medically inappropriate practice, resulting in the psychological and physiological detriment of millions of females in the world. It is a common misconception that FGM/C only happens in developing countries, as the United States of America has rising FGM/C numbers. To combat these numbers, legislative and educational approaches are required, the latter being a major catalyst for legislative action. The creation of a course is a long-lasting and sustainable solution; upon launch, it runs itself. The Midnimo Education Project chooses to fill the gap in existing FGM/C education through a primary and secondary prevention education approach with the creation of Mandated Reporter and Youth-Seminar courses designed with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, to encourage practical engagement, and eventually reduce FGM/C, keeping the future safe, through primary prevention, secondary prevention, and impacting public opinion.

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