



SUCCESS STORY

Community Members Reinforce Messages to Stop Female Genital Cutting

Community development outreach workers and teachers help to educate parents on the dangers of Female Genital Cutting



The above caption reads “No to female genital cutting.”

“Circumcision is a custom not a religious obligation”

--Marwa, outreach worker for Alnawafil Charity CDA, Luxor City

The USAID-funded Integrated Reproductive Health Services Project (Takamol) conducts community-level training to increase knowledge of, and change attitudes towards, specific health practices. Included in community training programs are male and female religious leaders, literacy facilitators, Ministry of Health and community development association outreach workers, and agricultural extension workers. These trainings not only empower individuals to function as agents of change, but also ensure that community members hear consistent health messages from various sources.

During a home visit, Sabreen El Teiri told a Luxor City community development association outreach worker of her plans to circumcize her youngest daughter as soon as she could afford the cost of the procedure. The outreach worker did not immediately comment, but went to see Iman Metwally, Sabreen’s literacy class facilitator, to discuss ways to change Sabreen’s mind.

Iman raised the subject of female circumcision or *female genital cutting* (FGC) during class and explained the hazards associated with the practice. She also gave the students examples of 13-year old girls who are uncircumcized and are healthy without excessive "sexual desire." Iman told the class “it is the mind that controls our desires and if we raise our daughters properly, they will grow up normal.”

Iman then visited Sabreen at home to discuss the dangers of FGC, relaying the story of a girl who almost bled to death during the procedure. The outreach worker also re-visited Sabreen and brought her posters and photos of the FGC process.

Finally, Sabreen was convinced and managed to persuade her husband. The decision against circumcision was supported by the local religious leader as well as the local doctor who stated that circumcision is not a religious obligation and has many associated psychological, health and social complications