

Viewing Guide: Facing FGM

Thank you for taking the time to educate your chapter on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). My name is Niyathi, I'm 16, and I'm a She's the First Girl Activist Fellow. After learning about the severity of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a harmful cultural practice still common across the world, I wanted to make sure other girls were prepared to advocate against this practice.

Thanks to Msichana Empowerment Kuria, an organization based in Kenya, I was able to hear directly from girls who have been impacted by FGM and become activists for themselves and other girls. I've learned so much from their activism and research, and I hope through this video you and your chapter can as well.

- *Niyathi*

Hosting a Viewing

If your chapter hasn't spent time discussing FGM before, we **strongly recommend** that you hold a chapter-only viewing first, rather than a public viewing. That way, you and your chapter members have the opportunity to listen and learn about this sensitive topic in a more private space with people you know and trust. If you would like to hold a second viewing and discussion open to other students or community members, you can choose to do that afterward by repeating the steps in this guide.

Background



Msichana Empowerment Kuria (MEK)

Founded in 2013, MEK's mission is to "utilize girl-centered strategies to tackle socio-economic, cultural, & environmental barriers to the development of girls". Ultimately, this revolves around FGM, and MEK has been working for the last decade to help girls make their own choices. Like STF, MEK focuses on including girls in the conversation, emphasizing girl-centered



advocacy and has grown to encompass over 1,000 adolescent girls in the Lake Region working to end Female Genital Mutilation". If you're interested in hearing more about MEK, check out [this video](#) from the 2023 STF Summit of founder, Natalie Tingo.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a harmful practice entailing the partial or complete removal of any part of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. Women who have undergone FGM later see countless medical complications, including infection, bleeding, and childbirth complications. Despite its health risks, FGM is still practiced in over 30 countries across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, parts of the US, and more. FGM continues to violate Right #6 in the Global Girls' Bill of Rights, the right to protection from harmful traditions and the enjoyment of positive cultural practices. This is why it's crucial that we work to increase awareness on FGM and advocate to replace it with alternative rites of passage. We highly recommend you read through [this discussion guide](#) for a more in-depth look into FGM.

Logistics

The video is 15 minutes long, and we suggest you plan for 15-20 minutes for a post-video discussion. This should allow it to fit easily into a chapter meeting. We recommend you all have a room exclusively for this viewing/discussion to help create a safe space. Before your meeting, make sure you have a laptop or, ideally, a projector so that you can show the video. You will need to be able to play sound, and we recommend that you always have captions turned on.

Creating a Safe Space

FGM is a very sensitive topic. We recommend that you send the content warning below to your members in advance so that they are prepared, and read it once more to them before you show the video.

This video and discussion will deal with Female Genital Mutilation, or FGM. In the video, girls who have been impacted by FGM will discuss reasons why FGM is performed and what they have done to advocate against this practice. While there are no graphic details or images, some of these stories may be difficult to hear. If at any point during the viewing and discussion you need to leave the room, please know that you are welcome to do so. We recommend that you plan an activity that will help you process this experience later, such as body movement like a walk or stretches, journaling your feelings, or speaking with a friend. Thank you for listening to the stories of these girls and ensuring their voices are heard.

Discussion Questions

1. What has watching this discussion taught you about FGM? What were your biggest takeaways? Did this resolve any of your misconceptions?
2. Hearing the girls mention various times that FGM is a necessary rite for marriageability, can you think of any similar harmful traditions either in your community or across the world believed to “make girls ready for marriage”? How are these other traditions similar to or different from FGM?
3. The girls mentioned that the best way we could help them was through fostering a safe, educational environment for them. How do you think you could best create a safer environment for girls here in our own community?



Watch the video: shesthefirst.org/facing-fgm