

GAMCOTRAP



Protect the Girl-Child

The Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children

Organisational Profile



*Respect women's bodily rights
Women's Rights are Human Rights*

Contact Information

Visiting Address

Plot no.41
Kanifing Institutional Area
Kanifing Municipal Area

Situated Opposite Sheikh Zayed Regional Eye Clinic, Serrekunda Hospital,
Kanifing.

Postal Address

P.O Box 2990
Serrekunda
The Gambia

Tel: 00220 4399568 Fax: 00220 4399569

Email: info@gamcotrap.gm

website: www.gamcotrap.gm

Facebook/ GAMCOTRAP Twitter:@gamcotrap

Youtube channel name: GAMCOTRAP

You can also contact the following numbers:
9813325 / 9957592 / 9941896 / 9926038

Introduction

GAMCOTRAP is a grassroots women's rights organization established in 1984 after a Regional conference was organised in Dakar – Senegal organised by the World Health Organisation. The focus of the conference was to discuss issues regarding harmful traditional practices that affective the reproductive health of women in Africa. As a result the Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices affecting the Health of Women and Children was constituted to address those practices affecting women's sexual and reproductive health i.e. Female genital mutilation, early marriages etc. Its activities include advocacy and creating awareness around traditional practices and other gender related issues affecting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of children, women, and other vulnerable groups. This has given the organization added opportunity to deal with activities relating to harmful traditional practices and reproductive health targeting various groups. GAMCOTRAP has focal points and trained Community Based Facilitators who are identified by their communities; make their services available to the organization. The Community Based Facilitators are spread throughout the administrative regions of the country. GAMCOTRAP has developed the principle of working with relevant ministries and organization's who can contribute to the realization of the project objectives.

Goal

To reach a wide and culturally diverse audience on, sexual and reproductive health and harmful traditional practices for men and women as well as youths.

To develop and implement relevant and effective gender related activities that promotes and protects the reproductive health rights of women, youth and girl-children in the communities.

Overall objective

To intensify efforts to accelerate the elimination of harmful traditional practices that contributes to gender based violence and abuse of human rights and reproductive health of women and girl children in the Gambia.

Year Founded: June 1984

Status: Non Governmental Organization; Registered with the NGO Affairs under the Department of State for Local Government and Lands and also the Registered with the Attorney General's Chambers.

Registration Number: A21NGO

GAMCOTRAP Mission Statement

To create awareness about traditional practices in The Gambia, We aim for the preservation of beneficial practices as well as the elimination of all forms of harmful traditional practices.

GAMCOTRAP is committed to the promotion and protection of women and girl children's political, social, sexual, reproductive health and educational rights

We support any national and international declaration protecting these rights, in particular the Convention on the elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as the African Protocol on Women's Rights and all other treatise that address gender inequality.

AIM:

To create and raise the consciousness of men, and women about traditional practices that negatively affect the health of children and women whilst encouraging positive practices. In addition, we aim to protect the rights of children and women by involving them to participate in decision-making processes.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To carry out research into traditional practices that affect the sexual and reproductive health of women and girl children in The Gambia.
2. To identify and promote traditional practices that improves the status of girl-children and women.
3. To create awareness on the effects of harmful traditional practices on the health of girl-children and women, in particular FGM, nutritional taboos, child/early marriages and wife inheritance.
4. To promote and encourage the education of girls at all levels.
5. To sensitize and lobby, decision and policy makers, about socio-cultural practices that are harmful to the health of girl-children and women.
6. To promote and protect the human rights of girl-children and women
7. To create awareness on international and national instruments that address discrimination and violence against girl-children and women.

8. To solicit funds locally and externally for the purpose of carrying out the above objectives.
9. To influence policies in promoting and protecting women and children's rights
10. To use the rights based approach into our activities and
11. To promote the political participation and representation of women in elective decision making positions.

Our area of coverage is throughout the seven administrative divisions of the Gambia namely:

1. Banjul
2. Kanifing Municipality
3. West Coast Region
4. Lower River Region
5. Central River Region (North and South)
6. Upper River Region
7. North Bank Region

Main Areas of Focus for GAMCOTRAP:

The Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (GAMCOTRAP) is a women's rights organisation. GAMCOTRAP has been the leading women's rights NGO in the Gambia working tirelessly in the area of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women and Children. Prominent among these is the campaign against harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women and children especially the girl child. Among the harmful traditional practices affecting women, special emphasis is given to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. This campaign is undertaken through advocacy and effective social mobilization at the grassroots level in various local languages.

For the past twenty years, the organization has been working immensely in trying to create awareness about harmful traditional practices and women's empowerment, focusing on sexuality and gender based violence. In recent years Gender and Rights Education have been included in our strategies for social mobilization.

Strategies

To achieve our aims and objectives, GAMCOTRAP embarks on frequent and strategic implementation of training and sensitization programmes at community level. These community based training programmes are targeted at women, men, youths and children, community leaders, religious leaders, policy makers, journalists, medical doctors, civil rights organizations, gender activists and political activists as channels of advocacy and social mobilization etc. At the same time research feeds into our advocacy work. It also informs GAMCOTRAP policy issues.

GAMCOTRAP's activities in are based on empowering grassroots communities to change their own conditions through;

- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Community mobilization and sensitization
- ✓ Training and Information Campaigns (TIC) on harmful traditional practices and sexual and reproductive health and rights

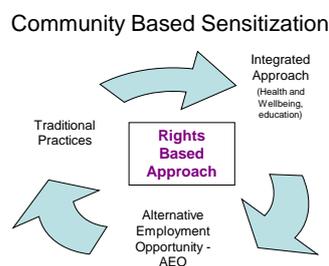
These strategies are grounded in the Rights Based Approach.

It focuses its interventions at community level targeting various critical actors such as women, men, local opinion leaders, religious leaders and youth, working with authorities and GAMCOTRAP community based facilitators.

At the policy level it targets the National Assembly Members and Law enforcement agencies as well as educational institutions and civil society in general.

The Systems Approach

Systems Approach to the elimination of FGM



Policy Makers and other Critical Actors for Change

The Cluster Approach

The discovery of the cluster was based on the long term and long standing relationship between GAMCOTRAP and the communities. The trust developed over the years resulted to making the traditional structures open up the “secret society” of FGM in the Gambia. This was a real revelation after over 20 years of advocacy at the grassroots. Since this discovery, the wind of positive change has emerged.

The approach has been theorized after so many years of intervention in Gambian communities. The idea emerged from the programmes conducted in various communities which also allowed GAMCOTRAP to develop an understanding about the social networks and relationship of communities. Furthermore, it generated critical information as to how communities relate to each other and how socio cultural practices are performed through the social networks and based on kinship and interrelations. These include cultures that are shrouded in secrecy; and understanding the dynamics and pattern of decision making to reach consensus was a driving force for theorizing the clusters. This approach has helped GAMCOTRAP to strategically implement project activities in communities with 100 per cent success rate in getting the communities in the clusters reaching consensus in the abandonment of FGM through a public declaration.

The approach has registered immense success in different regions of the Gambia. Between 2007 – 2015, 158 Circumcisers and 1015 communities have made public declarations against FGM through the Dropping of the Knife celebrations. These communities are important examples in verifying the success of the cluster approach. It is upon the basis of this that GAMCOTRAP adopts it in all regions it works.

The Cluster communities are characterized – but not limited to the following:

- The Cluster communities share a common geographic location and there is high level of socialization and sharing of information amongst the various groups.
- The clusters communities also intermarry amongst themselves which is characterized by sharing similar cultural patterns of practices, relations and family ties.
- There is often a head community in every cluster that probably has the senior traditional leader, or a council of elder who come together to discuss issues affecting their communities through their traditional structures.

- Each cluster has a central point; a bigger community and sometimes the chieftaincy. This serves as a reference and converging point for training and information campaign with various target groups
- Each cluster has its own Circumciser and Traditional Birth Attendant. These are critical targets in ending FGM in the communities. They are limited by territorial jurisdiction, trust, and history of the lineage; and do not circumcise girls in other clusters, unless they are invited to do so upon consultation with the circumciser designated.
- Each cluster has an average of 10 communities but there are bigger clusters that are demarcated based on kinship and settlement patterns. These clusters could have up to 15 - 20 settlements that are mainly close together geographically but traditionally unique in leadership and practice.
- In some cases, clusters share similar local structures i.e. community health post, schools and market place and this serves as a converging point for the communities.
- Politically, all the cluster members identify with the chosen point without reservation.

The clusters are identified in all regions but particular where FGM is practised. The pre-logistic consultation with traditional leaders gives a true picture of the cluster and helps in identifying the key issues within each cluster. The pre-logistics also give requisite information necessary to determine the knowledge, attitude and practice of a particular cluster in terms of FGM, early and forced marriage etc. However the process also facilitates identifying resistance groups in every cluster, which helps in the formulation of effective strategies to deal with resistance.

The Social Mobilization process engages key actors within the clusters for consensus building and key decision making regarding interventions on FGM to yield a unanimous agreement on the outcomes of such programmes and activities.

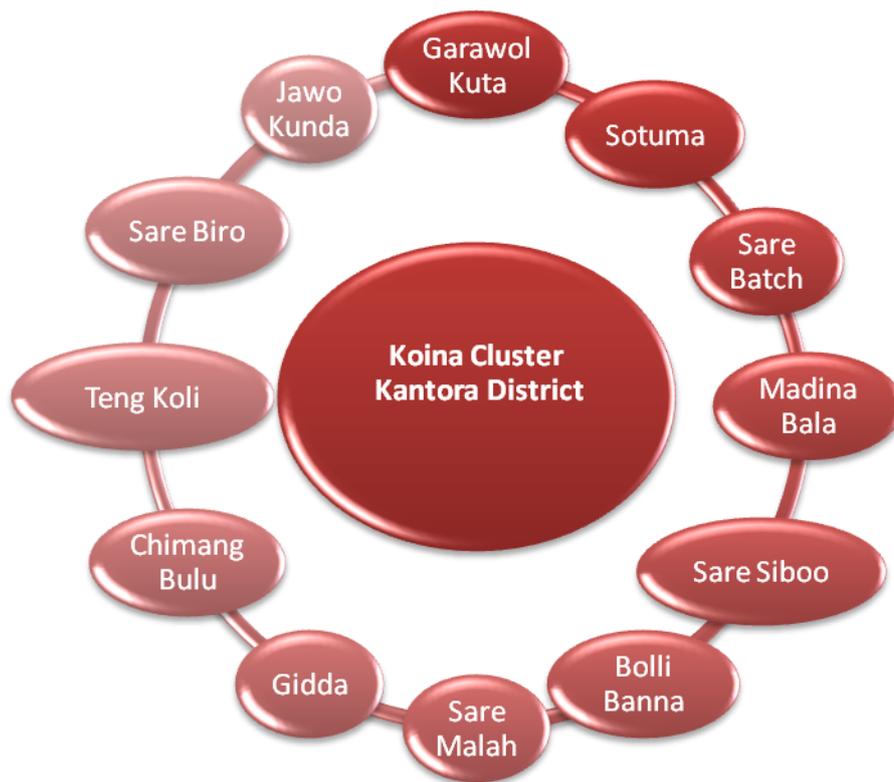
The approach is such that critical target groups are identified in each cluster for engagement. Primarily, the traditional leaders, women leaders, religious leaders, circumcisers and traditional birth attendants as well as women of reproductive age and young people are all targeted in each cluster to facilitate a comprehensive process of awareness creation in that cluster.

There is a process of consensus building where the circumcisers are brought together with women of reproductive age, women leaders and traditional birth attendants for values clarification to ensure a consensus to stop FGM.

Since there is the potential of religious confusion, sometimes the traditional leaders are brought together with the religious leaders and women leaders as well as circumcisers to ensure other values clarification and reach a voice to end FGM. However, the consensus building processes are preceded by individual target group training.

Finally, young people are targeted through their local village youth networks in as well as schools. Not all clusters are comprised of a school; therefore clusters that are close and share similar schools are targeted in project activities.

Sample cluster:



Matters of Policy

GAMCOTRAP is a national feminist organization with activist orientation based on the goal, objectives and vision we set for ourselves. As women, we are resolved to fight against the oppression we experience in various contexts. We also recognize the support of men who care to contribute to fighting the cause of women and girl children. Our primary concern / mandate is to empower grassroots groups, individuals and Community based organizations as well policy decision makers to support women's concerns towards equality..

In the bid to address the inequalities which results from oppressions - cultural, political or religious, we have resolved to engage ourselves in taking responsibility to change our circumstances. People can only change if they are willing to take responsibility and leadership in changing those circumstances. Therefore the organization shall recruit both women and men in fulfilling its objectives. However, GAMCOTRAP shall always be headed by a female and all its leadership positions where possible shall be led by women.

In our bid to improve our circumstances we are conscious that men have to be part of this process and struggles. Therefore men are recruited on the basis of their commitment to the values as stated in the goal, mission, and objectives of the organization. This commitment is in response to the National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women and national laws that advance the rights of women and children. Also it is in line with other regional and international instruments that call for the empowerment of women.

This policy and procedures manual set the basic principles and practices of GAMCOTRAP as enshrined in the constitution and all other guiding documents for implementation.

Core Values of GAMCOTRAP

These are:

- Belief, recognise and respect women's rights
- Respect for women's rights
- Respect and recognise diversity
- Dignity and integrity
- Honesty
- Transparent
- Commitment
- Dedication
- Hardworking
- Spirit of Voluntarism
- Peaceful Co-existence
- Solidarity

List of GAMCOTRAP Board of Directors 2015 - 2017

No	Name	Sex	Background
1.	Yaya Jarjusey	Male	Community and influential leader, District Chief
2.	Dr. Saihou Sabally	Male	Medical Doctor
3.	Sagarr Cecilia Thomas Jahateh	Female	Lawyer
4.	Aja Babung Sidibeh	Female	Women's leader and Community mobilizer
5.	Fatou Danso	Female	Village Head
6.	Amie Ceesay	Female	Retired Nurse Midwife
7.	Momodou Jeng	Male	Principal Education Officer & Head of INSET
8.	Ya Fatou Touray	Female	Finance Manager
9.	Mam Sira Jobe Kurang	Female	Human resource management
10.	Oumie Sissoho	Female	Youth Activist
11.	Lamin K.Saidy	Male	Youth Activist

Executive Committee (Founding members)

Name	Gender	Status	Nationality
Dr. Isatou Touray	Female	Executive Director/ Women's Rights Activist	Gambian
Amie Joof Cole	Female	Women's Rights Activist	Gambian
Jarraï Daffeh	Female	Nurse/Midwife	Gambian
Amie Bojang - Sissoho	Female	Journalist/Women's Rights Activist	Gambian
Adele Sock	Female	Veteran Teacher/Lecturer	Gambian
Lang Dibba	Male	Journalist	Gambian
Imam Baba Leigh	Male	Islamic Religious Scholar	Gambian
Mary Small	Female	Nurse/Midwife	Gambian
Mam Sira Jobe Kurang	Female	Adminstrator	Gambian

Current Staffing

Dr. Isatou Touray	Executive Director	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Responsibility for the management of GAMCOTRAP activities. • Facilitate the vision and the fulfilment of GAMCOTRAP's obligations. • Act as liaison between GAMCOTRAP and donors. • Provide technical assistance and advise to GAMCOTRAP. 	Gambian
Mary Small	Senior Programme Coordinator	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answerable to the Executive Director (ED) • Coordinate and facilitate project implementation • Prepare progress reports • Supervise staff • Act in the absence of the ED • Any duty deem necessary in the interest of the organisation 	Gambian
Amie Bojang – Sissoho	Programme Coordinator – IEC	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answerable to the Executive Director • Coordinate and facilitate IEC activities • Works as a team member in the implementation of projects activities • Any duty deem necessary in the interest of the organisation 	Gambian
Musa Jallow	Finance Officer	Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answerable to the Executive Director (ED) • Responsible for financial management and accounting procedures of the organization. • Any duty deem necessary 	Gambian
Fatou Bojang	Field Coordinator	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate field work • Assist Finance Officer • Support programme coordinators • Any duty deem necessary 	Gambian
Baai Jaabang	Media Officer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support work and organize the available media resources 	Gambian

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce audio visuals on project interventions • Develop new initiatives to promote the work of GAMCOTRAP through the media • Any other duty deemed necessary 	
Fatoumata Touray	Programme Assistant	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support programming • Support Project implementation • Human Resource Management 	Gambian
Tida Jarra	Office Attendant	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the cleanliness of the office and its environment • Provide office assistance to staff • Any other duty deemed necessary 	Gambian
Madi Camara	Cleaner	Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the cleanliness of the office and its environment • Any other duty deemed necessary 	Gambian
Lamin Ceesay	Driver	Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport staff on official mission 	Gambian
Baboucarr Bah	Driver	Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport staff on official mission 	Gambian