



CHOOSING A WORLD FREE FROM FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING

Learning activities for KS3/4 learners

(with accompanying guidance for educators)



Activity 4 HOW CHANGE HAPPENS

Overview

The animation "[Aissata's True Story](#)" and the other activities in this resource are all related to trying to make a difference; to change. But how does change happen? This activity supports young people to think about how change happens, using the example of FGC and building on the learning from previous activities. The key learning intentions are:

1. to explore a well-known model of change called 'Tipping Point' and think about this in relation to FGC;
2. to think about their own role as change agents (in general) and about potential barriers to change;
3. to reflect on how they can personally and collectively contribute to an FGC tipping point.

Activity 4

How change happens



PPT



Information

This activity introduces a sensitive and perhaps controversial issue to young people. It is important to consider what this means for your learners and for your role as the educator before commencing with the activity. More detailed notes relating to these issues are included in the 'Guide' document that forms part of the wider resource and you are encouraged to read this before starting the individual activities. A reminder of some key points to consider in relation to this activity:

Sensitivity issues:

- Do you have learners who may be directly exposed to (or at risk from) the issues covered in this activity/resource?
- How will you help ALL learners to engage in this and avoid it being seen as a 'female' issue?

Facilitation issues (see '[A short guide to facilitating learning](#)' for more):

- How will you create an environment that supports dialogue and enquiry?
- What will your role be as the educator? How will you support the learning?

Safety issues (see '[Safe Spaces for caring and critical learning](#)' for more):

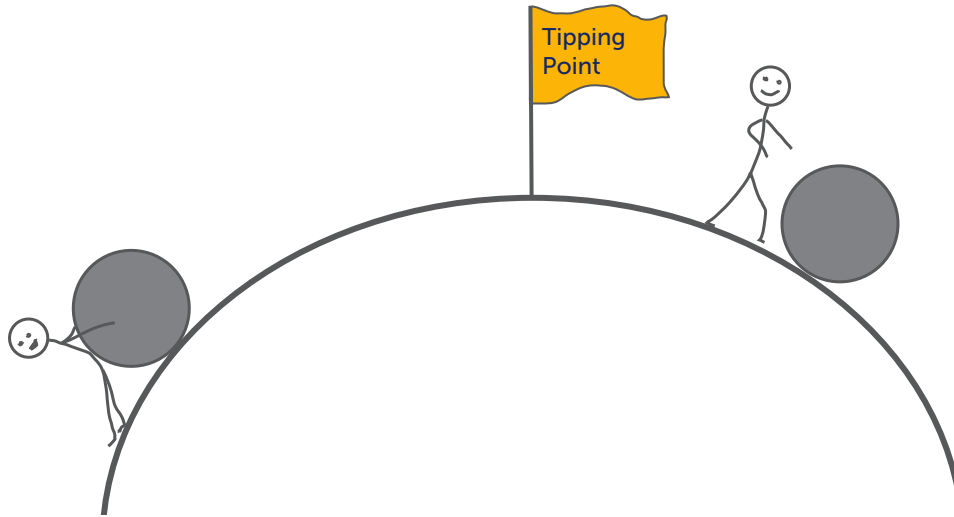
- How will you make sure learners feel secure to talk about the issue?
- Are there limits to what can be discussed and why are these there?
- Are you aware of safeguarding procedures should they be needed?

Process (part 1)

1. Show the image (PowerPoint Slide 1) that shares the basic 'tipping point' change theory.

- Ask learners what they understand about change from this image?

[Note: the key points are that initiating change can take some time and feel a bit like pushing a rock up hill. There are 'innovators' and 'early adopters' who help and they can 'network' and 'sell' the change to others. In time, enough people take on the



change, overcoming any resistance, and you reach the 'tipping point'. This is when the 'majority' adopt the change and/or it becomes a new 'normal' (this could be through changes in law for example). Although there may be some ongoing resistance and a group of 'late adopters' the momentum of the change is often much easier once you pass the tipping point.]

- You might like to also ask if they can think of any examples of this in their own lives/experience?

[Note: examples that you could share include: plastic bag charges in stores, public smoking ban, same-sex marriage, uptake of mobile phones, veganism].

2. Explain to learners that they are going to watch the animation Aissata's True Story again and use the tipping point model to think about how change has happened in relation to FGC.

- Organise learners into small groups (4-6 in each) and give them a sheet of paper (A3 minimum and preferably larger) to draw on a basic tipping point model as on PowerPoint Slide 2.

- Instruct them to watch the film and to try and identify the 'enabling factors' (those that help build momentum for change) and the 'tipping point' that led to a change. If they are able to, they could also see if there are 'momentum factors' that help the change go further and overcome any remaining resistance.

[Note: if you prefer you can give list of factors (see page 4) that have been preselected from the animation and ask learners to cut them out and stick them onto their tipping point model in the relevant places. You could also use these to review the responses from learners and check if they have missed any key factors. The tipping point is probably when the community came together to make a decision to end FGC.]

- Give learners a chance to share and debrief the change model as a group – airing differences and giving space for opinions and ideas to be discussed. Do they all agree on the key tipping point?

3. Ask learners if they think the tipping point shown in the animation (when the community made the decision to end FGC), means that this is the end of the issue?

[Note: they should identify that it is not, because this was just one community and the animation goes on to show that the message still has to reach other communities, let alone countries].

4. Remind learners how the animation ends (show PowerPoint slide 3). Ask them if they think the 'tipping point' to end FGC globally has already been passed?

- Give time for opinions to be shared and discussion to occur.

- You could list those things that they think are moving towards a global tipping point and those that still oppose or limit it.

5. Share PowerPoint slide 4 that shows the idea of a series of smaller tipping points (like the one shown in Aissata's story) contributing to the bigger global tipping point. Introduce the idea that as well as global and community tipping points, there are also personal tipping points where people transform the way they think about things.

- Read Seckou's story (see page 5) about his experience of FGC (this could be done in small groups or as a whole class) and try to identify what the personal tipping points might have been for him?

- Thinking back to the earlier learning around campaigning, which bits of Seckou's experience would you choose to try and help others (perhaps especially men?) find a tipping point in their views towards FGC?

6. Close the activity by gathering learners to stand in a circle (as in Activity 1) so that learners can all see one another. Introduce the idea they also form a community, just like Aissata's.

- Ask learners to think about the global movement to end FGC and to each think of one thing they could do to contribute to the tipping point.

- When they are ready to share their idea, they should take one step forward into the circle to state their idea and then step back again.

- Explain that the following rules (available on PowerPoint slide 5) apply to this process (these add an extra dimension to 'community' as they encourage active presence and care for fellow members):

- a. The activity must be done in silence apart from the sharing of the idea
- b. Only one person may step forward and speak at a time. [Note: Thank each person for their contribution, without judging or commenting, in order to encourage others.]
- c. If more than one person steps in at the same time, then one person must yield (without speaking) and step back again.
- d. Each person can only speak once.
- e. All must have the chance to speak (you can decide whether you insist on each person sharing something)

[Note: it does not matter if several learners come up with same idea, but if they are simply repeating each other then try to gently encourage alternative ideas. Some

ideas you could suggest if they do not come from the learners include: share the animation/comic with family and friends, post something on social media, follow supporting organisations on social media, talk to friends and family, write to a politician, find out more about this as an issue.]

Enabling factors from Aissata's story

Education and learning: "We took part in a basic three-year education programme in our local language, thanks to a grassroots organisation."

"We learned so much about human rights and responsibilities..."

Time and space to learn: "Many months passed, with many, many discussions..."

Challenging beliefs around religion: "We learnt that most Muslim women in the world aren't cut."

Putting health and family first: "My daughter still has health problems. I would support anyone who chooses not to cut their daughter."

Challenging beliefs around community: "Talking openly helped me realise we practiced FGC because we thought others wanted it to continue."

Identifying obstacles: "I'm worried that if we cut my daughter, it will cause her lots of health problems. But if we don't, no man will marry her, and she will be excluded. The community expects it!"

"We also learnt that FGC is a violation of our human right to health."

"Even though we had been questioning it on our own, it took us a long time to speak openly about FGC".

"We spoke with religious leaders and found that this tradition is not an obligation of Islam or any religion."

"After our education programme, we made a community-wide decision to end FGC together!"

Seckou's story (male, Senegalese, living in the UK for 20 years)

Seckou Keita is a musician from Senegal. He was born into a Griot family where music has been passed down through the family for generations. Griots are not only musicians – they are storytellers, mediators, historians and much more. Seckou was taught to play the Kora (the West African harp) by his grandfather. He started playing at seven without any real formal training – but by watching, observing and listening to his grandfather, siblings, cousins and uncles play. As a teenager he had the opportunity to visit the capital of Senegal, Dakar with one of his uncles. This opened his eyes to the opportunities in the big city and he started visiting there regularly. Soon after he was invited to take his music to Europe and collaborated with musicians from many other places and traditions. Since then Seckou has travelled extensively around the world. He is now based in the UK, but regularly goes back home to where it all began.

I remember there was a period of circumcision for boys and then there was a period for the girls, so from being a little boy I was aware of it, as being normal without knowing the details. I had no clue what happens. I thought it was a woman's right to have a celebration and circumcision like the men.

I started to hear more about it as I grew up. It became clear from all the women I started talking to who were speaking against it. I started hearing about their struggles during circumcision and that some people might bleed too much, or even lose their lives. That was wrong but I compared it to the boys who also passed away through bleeding. It was so mixed in my childhood with spiritual beliefs and the reality of life, you know they would say the bad spirits had cut the person and that was why they had passed away.

It was when a strong community of women started to say that it (cutting) is wrong, talking about it and saying that it's not right even before it was illegal. Their voices became stronger - they were pushing the government to ban it. I joined in the understanding of it and started talking about it to others; about what was involved and the negative sides of it. As boys we didn't know what they cut and as a child I was like, I know what they cut for a boy, but does a woman have that? It was confusing but you couldn't talk about it because you are not allowed to even get close to women's ideas.

Some boys in the community were circumcised in the hospital. One of the master circumcisors was also a doctor. My family were very traditional, but because it was easier, I went to the hospital. I did the 3 months in the forest as well, and then went back to the hospital for them to take care of me - change bandages etc.

The girls didn't go to the hospital which kind of showed that they were strong... but I started to think, if they are not cutting the girls in the hospital, maybe it's because it's wrong. There are boys being cut in the bush and others being cut in the hospital which shows its being recognised traditionally and in the modern world, but if the girls are not doing that then maybe they are hiding something which is not right.

They never really explained the real reason behind it (FGC), and I didn't really know until I started investigating myself. You can't talk to anyone about it. This is not about the religion – at all – because it's been happening from way before people believed in Islam. It was done for the pride and the preservation of woman to delay her sexual activity, but also the pride of the family to be proud of their own daughters. I feel this is wrong, totally wrong. And I also think they haven't thought it through. I don't have an answer, but cutting is wrong. If you want women to take care of themselves sexually then maybe educating them in a different way, to look after themselves. It is their own body, and they can do whatever they want with it.

In Senegal, it became accepted to ban it and that a woman should not be circumcised. And now if you do the circumcision you can be imprisoned and face penalties and it's become clear this is not at all acceptable.