

YOUTH in ACTION

Youth in ACTION for change

MANIFESTO Y-ACT PADOVA

Manifesto for the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the Promotion of Women's Empowerment *United for a Future Free from Violence*

We, the young leaders of the Y-ACT Project in Padova, together with citizens from foreign communities residing in the city, draft the following manifesto to commit to abandoning the practice of FGM and promoting women's empowerment.

Declaration of Intenti

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a harmful practice that violates the fundamental rights of women and girls. It has no religious basis but stems from cultural norms that perpetuate discrimination and gender-based violence.

This Manifesto, the result of collective effort, outlines principles and actions to end this practice in Italy and beyond, prioritizing knowledge, information, empowerment, and action. Our commitment is clear: **to encourage women to embrace their wholeness and to oppose the cultural standards underlying FGM.**

10 Points to End FGM

- 1 **Define and Understand FGM:** it is crucial to raise awareness of the lasting harm caused by FGM to change hearts and minds. Disseminating scientific facts helps dismantle myths and misinformation surrounding this practice.
- 2 **Educate in Schools and Through Media:** information is our tool for change. Preventing and countering the harmful practice of FGM must reach every corner of our communities-from homes to schools, from churches to mosques, and into workplaces.
- 3 **Promote Clear and Accessible Information:** using simple, respectful language ensures that information is understood by all. Community meetings, open workshops, and dialogues are essential tools for building trust and fostering debate.

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- 4 **Ensure Accessible Healthcare Services:** it is vital that every woman and girl in Padova and its province knows how to access healthcare services for prevention, care, and support related to FGM. Local healthcare institutions must play a role in creating a support network with trained personnel.
- 5 **Support Women's Leadership:** women want to lead the way in abandoning FGM by driving campaigns and advocacy efforts. Their voices are essential for change. Empowerment begins with giving girls the right to make informed decisions about their own bodies.
- 6 **Promote Male Engagement:** FGM and its elimination are not just women's issues. Men and boys play a fundamental role as allies, supporting women's rights and opposing harmful cultural norms that sustain FGM.
- 7 **Support Survivors:** it is crucial to create networks of solidarity where women who have undergone FGM can share their stories and inspire action. Collaboration with healthcare professionals, counselors, and legal experts is essential for building these support systems.
- 8 **Strengthen Legislation and Its Enforcement:** laws should serve not only as deterrents but also as tools for prevention and protection. Training law enforcement on FGM is critical to building trust and ensuring effective enforcement of the law.
- 9 **Collect Local Data:** understanding the extent of FGM in Padova is fundamental to addressing it. Data collection initiatives are needed to develop tailored actions that more effectively meet the needs of women and local communities.
- 10 **Mobilize Communities Through Events and Marches:** words are not enough-we must act! Every individual has a role to play in ending FGM. Communities should organize public events, awareness campaigns, and marches to create visibility and promote collective action against FGM.

Conclusion: Join the Change

Female genital mutilation is a violation of human rights that can only be stopped through collective and local commitment. Padova, with its rich network of associations, institutions, and active citizens, can become a model for change.

We invite everyone - citizens, communities, institutions, universities, healthcare workers, and stakeholders - to join our cause by spreading information, participating in awareness initiatives, contributing to dialogue spaces, and supporting women affected by FGM.

Together, we can:

Understand and dismantle the myths surrounding FGM.	Educate and raise awareness among new generations.	Guarantee access to healthcare and legal services.	Strengthen women's leadership and male involvement.	Mobilize communities and collect data for informed action.
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The end of FGM begins with the involvement of each of us. **Join the change and sign the Manifesto: let us make Padova a territory free from female genital mutilation and an example of respect for human rights.**

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