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UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme
on the Elimination of Female Genital
Mutilation: Accelerating Change



FGM Elimination and COVID-19:

Sustaining the Momentum

Performance Report

| ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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On behalf of the UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change, wish to acknowledge the support and collaboration of its various stakeholders for the successful implementation of its work. Particularly, the Joint Programme recognizes the support of SIARP of European Union and the governments of Austria, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The support has helped to strengthen efforts towards the elimination of FGM in the 17 countries where the Programme is implemented.

We also express our gratitude to members of the Joint Programme's Steering Committee for their support and technical guidance. We recognize the commitment and leadership of the national and sub national governments in all our implementing countries including civil society organizations, regional institutions and other partners for their commitment despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic during the year. As the world continues to grapple with the impact of COVID-19, we will continue to count on the support of our partners and other stakeholders to sustain the momentum on eliminating FGM by 2030.

This report was produced by the Joint Programme Global Coordination Team with technical leadership from Mirelle Tushiminina and Nankali Maksud. Authors of the report include Thierno Diouf and Stephanie Baric with contributions from Berhanu Legesse, Fahmia AL-FOTIH, Meltem Agduk, Harriet Akullu, Julie Dubois, Paola Pileri, Lamin Massaquoi, Ramz Shalbak, Yasmine Sinkhada, and Menbere Legesse.

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Contents

1

Executive Summary

5

Introduction



9

Section A.

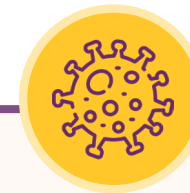
Global Policy and
Advocacy Achievements



13

Section B.

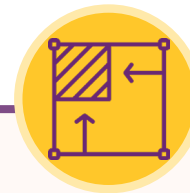
The Joint Programme
Performance by Result Area



67

Section C.

Adaptive Monitoring,
Evaluation and Learning
in the COVID-19 Context



71

Section D.

Snapshot of the
Programme Results
Framework

List of tables

Table 1	Tougher Penalties for Medicalized FGM in Egypt
Table 2	National Budget line to Support Mobile Courts
Table 3	How does the Joint Programme define “Functional” National Monitoring Mechanism?
Table 4	Synergies Between Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme and Joint Programme on FGM
Table 5	Women’s Manifesto Opposing FGM in Mauritania
Table 6	A Smartphone App for Reporting FGM in Kenya
Table 7	#TouchePasAmasoeur
Table 8	Intersection of GBV, FGM and VAC
Table 9	Health Care Providers Who Oppose/Support Medicalized FGM in Guinea
Table 10	Innovative Data Monitoring

List of figures

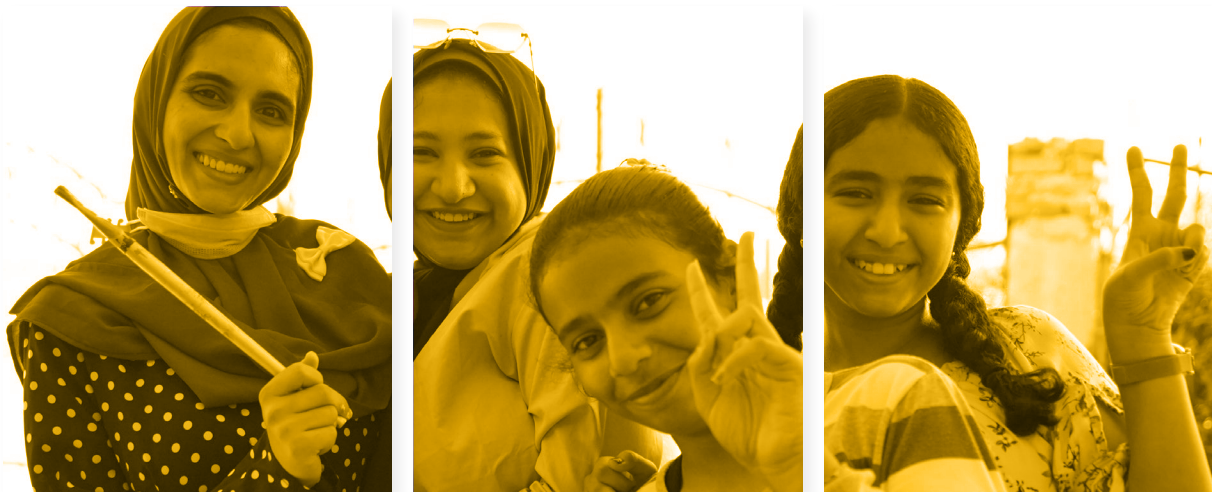
Figure 1	Map showing Joint Programme countries with legislation criminalizing FGM
Figure 2	Number of arrests, cases brought to court, and convictions and sanctions
Figure 3	Number of law enforcement staff (policy prosecutors, judges) competent to apply the FGM law
Figure 4	Number of countries with evidence-based costed national plan to end FGM under implementation by all government sectors, CSOs, faith-based organizations and other actors
Figure 5	Mapping of countries that have established a national budget line for programmes addressing FGM
Figure 6	Countries that utilized at least 50% of the national government budget line for FGM
Figure 7	Distribution of countries that have in existence a functional national FGM monitoring mechanism
Figure 8	Existence of an evidence-based costed national action plan for FGM
Figure 9	Number of annual progress reports with recommendations on FGM elimination produced by country and regional CSOs and young people’s networks

Figure 10	Number of communities that have made public declaration of abandonment of FGM
Figure 11	Number of communities that made public declaration of abandonment of FGM that have established a community-level surveillance system to monitor compliance
Figure 12	Number of girls saved from FGM
Figure 13	Number of communities where girls became change agents after completing a capacity development package
Figure 14	Projection of the number of communities where girls that have completed a capacity development package and are expected to become change agents based on actual performance (2018, 2019 and 2020), compared to planned targets
Figure 15	Number of communities where enablers of social norm change are in place: Religious leaders’ public statements delinking FGM from religious requirements
Figure 16	Number of communities where enablers of social norm change are in place: Community/ Traditional rulers publicly denounce FGM practices
Figure 17	Number of people who actively participated in education/sensitization/social mobilization promoting the elimination of FGM
Figure 18	Number of listeners to radio/TV programmes on FGM in Joint Programme target areas
Figure 19	Number of interactions on social media activities related to FGM that are initiated with t he support of the Joint Programme
Figure 20	Number of communities implementing a capacity package for girls related to FGM elimination
Figure 21	Number of girls graduated from a capacity development package
Figure 22	Number of Joint Programme intervention areas where men and boys’ networks/coalitions actively advocate for the elimination of FGM
Figure 23	Number of girls and women who have received health services related to FGM
Figure 24	Number of girls and women who have received social services related to FGM
Figure 25	Number of girls and women who have received legal services related to FGM
Figure 26	Cumulative number of girls and women accessing legal services related to FGM
Figure 27	Number of health service delivery points in Joint Programme intervention areas that provide FGM-related services to girls and women
Figure 28	Number of organizations (government/non-governmental organizations/private sector) in Joint Programme intervention areas that provide services to girls and women
Figure 29	Number of organizations (government/non-governmental organizations/private sector) in Joint Programme intervention areas that provide legal services for girls and women

List of Acronyms

ACRL	African Council of Religious Leaders
ARP	Alternative Rites of Passage
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BoWCY	Bureau of Women, Children and Youth
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DFA	Data For All
FBOs	Faith-Based Organizations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GAMS	Group Against Sexual Mutilation and Harmful Practices Against Women
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ICPD25	International Conference on Population and Development
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
JOPTC	Justice Organs Professional Training Center
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MTR	Mid-Term Reviews
NAPs	National Action Plans
NCCW	National Council on Child Welfare
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPROGEM	Office for the Protection of Gender, Children and Morals
RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
RIOPEAB	Network of Imams and Ulemas for the Protection of Children and Charitable Actions
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
SYVA	Saleema Youth Victorious Ambassadors
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
VAC	Violence Against Children
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization





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Executive Summary

The year 2020 marked the launch of the Decade of Action, a global call for accelerating sustainable solutions to the world's biggest challenges -- inequality, poverty, and, discrimination -- to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. In 2019, the Nairobi Summit International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25) celebrated advances in sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), wellbeing, and gender equality, 25 years after the Programme of Action was launched in Cairo.



This was followed by the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020, the most visionary agenda for girls' and women's rights and empowerment. But the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures, disruptions in services, and rising household monetary poverty have increased girls' risk of FGM, impeding progress towards meeting SDG 5.3, while also making its achievement even more urgent and necessary. UNFPA anticipates a one-third reduction towards achieving the elimination of FGM by 2030.¹

From the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, girls and women have been at the center of the humanitarian response of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change (Joint Programme). Research shows that when girls and women are involved in prevention and crisis response, it leads to better humanitarian outcomes. By empowering and protecting girls and women, adapting interventions to ensure continuity of services, while pivoting to prevent and mitigate the risk of gender-based violence (GBV) and FGM, the Joint Programme has made considerable progress in 2020 despite facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. This has been achieved in partnership with governments, civil society, women and youth-led groups, community leaders, advocates and activists, among other key stakeholders of the Joint Programme.

Despite the challenges experienced globally in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Joint Programme recorded achievements in several areas. These include:



79,863,144
PEOPLE WERE ENGAGED
THROUGH DIGITAL APPROACHES
AND CAMPAIGNS PROMOTING
THE ELIMINATION OF FGM



120,605
GIRLS WERE SAVED
FROM UNDERGOING THE
HARMFUL PRACTICE



¹UNFPA, Avenir Health, Johns Hopkins University (USA) and Victoria University (Australia). 2020. Interim Technical Note. Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female, Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage. <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/impact-covid-19-pandemic-family-planning-and-ending-gender-based-violence-female-genital?page=8%2C0%2C9>



2,156

COMMUNITIES INVOLVING
2,220,937 PEOPLE MADE
PUBLIC DECLARATIONS TO
ABANDON FGM



1,792

COMMUNITIES ESTABLISHED
SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS THAT
CONTINUE TO PROTECT GIRLS
FROM UNDERGOING
THE HARMFUL PRACTICE

As the pandemic continues to unfold, the Joint Programme and its partners will continue to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on progress towards SDG 5.3, while boosting transformative recovery from the pandemic that reduces the risk of future crises and re-launches the Decade of Action.





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Introduction

FGM is recognized internationally as a gross violation of the human rights of girls and women, which reflects deep-rooted inequalities between the sexes and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls.² The practice comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. Current estimations indicate that over 200 million girls and women alive today have

The practice has been reported in over 92 countries across Africa and Asia, with varying prevalence. Although FGM is declining in most countries where it is prevalent, the growing population rates in these countries presents an emerging challenge, if the practice continues at the current levels.

To accelerate the elimination of FGM, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF, the United Nations Children’s Fund Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM (Joint Programme) continues to invent strategies aimed at catalyzing positive social change for the abandonment of the practice. Created in 2007, the Joint Programme is the largest global programme aimed at accelerating the elimination of FGM. Currently in its third phase, the Joint Programme is implemented in 17 countries³ across the globe, and builds on lessons learned from previous phases. It focuses on contributing to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and particularly target 3, seeking to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and FGM by 2030.

The Joint Programme has over the years catalyzed a global movement to eliminate FGM and has shown unparalleled ability to effect change at the regional, sub-regional, national and community levels towards the advancement of the rights, health and well-being of women and girls. Leveraging the complementary expertise of the two agencies, the Joint Programme strengthens policy development and implementation, while improving access to quality health care, protection, and legal and social services. It engages communities and educates people, through evidence based and sustainable interventions, on the need to eliminate FGM, transforming social norms through collective action.

In 2020, over 79,863,144 people were engaged through digital approaches and campaigns promoting the elimination of FGM; 120,605 girls saved from undergoing the harmful practice, while 2,156 communities involving 2,220,937 people made public declarations to abandon FGM, of which 1,792 established surveillance systems that continue to protect girls from undergoing the practice.

³Burkina-Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, , The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Yemen

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