



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

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

EMPOWERING

Girls and

Women to

LEAD

CHANGE



“ Each time a woman
stands up for herself,
**she stands up
for all women.”**

– Maya Angelou



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unicef 
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This year's Annual Report is dedicated to the girls and women who are leading change by championing gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women to say "no" to female genital mutilation.

Remembering Bogaletch Gebre

She was a scientist, an activist, a community organizer, a survivor of female genital mutilation and the first girl from her remote village to get more than a primary school education. When she died in 2019, Bogaletch Gebre, or “Boge” as she was called, left a powerful legacy that demonstrates how much one person can impact her world.



“If I could save a single girl from a dreadful life, from practices that numb, crush the spirit and rob women of their dignity, I would have done my life’s mission.”

she once said.

But her accomplishments far surpassed that goal.

A brilliant child from what is now Ethiopia’s Kembatta-Tembaro zone, Boge secretly attended an informal school while recovering from the consequences of female genital mutilation. She later convinced her father to allow her to attend the local mission school, which was a springboard to scholarships to study microbiology, physiology and epidemiology in England, Israel and the United States of America. Boge left her doctoral

studies and the prospect of a very comfortable life in the United States to return to her homeland, which was embroiled in conflict and poverty. She was determined to help end female genital mutilation, a practice that had killed one of her 13 siblings and nearly claimed her own life, as well as other harmful practices such as child marriage and bride abduction. She used her own experiences and her intimate knowledge of her community to change hearts and minds.

In Kembatta, she pioneered a programme of social change based on addressing local needs and initiating “Community Conversations”, a model widely replicated across the country and elsewhere. “To make people understand the harm that comes to their children, you can’t come in and tell them, ‘You are doing bad and must stop’,” Boge said in a 2013 interview.

“It has to come from inside the community. It has to be discussed over and over again, in the African tradition. That’s how change comes.”

Boge’s work was carried out through KMG-Ethiopia, the organization she founded with her sister. She will be remembered for her determination, her intelligence and her ability to create solutions that work. Female genital mutilation went from being nearly universal to being almost completely abandoned a decade later in some of the communities where she worked.

And she never forgot her broader mission: to empower girls, women and communities.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AU	African Union	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
CoP	Community of Practice	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organization	UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
DFA	Data For All	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
EU	European Union	WHO	World Health Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation		
IGAs	Income Generating Activities		
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys		

Executive Summary



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In 2007, a United Nations **interagency statement** called on governments, international and national organizations, civil society and communities to uphold the rights of girls and women, and end female genital mutilation. Today, a global movement has emerged. It recognizes that enabling girls and women to fulfil their potential in dignity and equality,

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