

ACCELERATING CHANGE |



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

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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This report was produced by the Joint Programme Global Coordination Team: Nafissatou J. Diop, Nankali Maksud, Thierno Diouf, Berhanu Legesse, Harriet Akullu, Mar Jubero, Stephanie Baric, Ramz Shalbak and Wanda Rodríguez.

Author: UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation.

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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 Survey | | |

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Executive summary

The practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) has continued to decline around the world, including in high prevalence countries where the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have been implementing the Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change. The programme seeks to eliminate FGM in one generation. In the 30 countries with nationally representative FGM prevalence data, around one in three girls aged 15–19 today have undergone the practice versus one in two in the mid-1980s. Decline in FGM among girls aged 15–19 has occurred across countries with various levels of FGM prevalence, including Burkina Faso, Egypt and Kenya. However, with population growth rates being especially high in Africa, and an estimated 50 million girls are therefore at risk of FGM in Africa between now and

2030, concerted efforts are required to ensure that FGM rates continue to decline to counter this trend.

With global consensus that FGM is a human rights violation rooted in gender discrimination and a barrier to human development, the Joint Programme contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and specifically SDG target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation by 2030.

Building on the achievements of Phase II (2014–2017), including 24,611,443 individuals in 8,963 communities making public declarations of FGM abandonment, the Joint Programme Phase III (2018–2021) was launched in 2018 with an emphasis on strengthening accountability mechanisms to deliver on the international community's obligation to eliminate FGM. As a result, the Joint Programme reaffirmed its global convening role by mobilizing regional intergovernmental organizations, governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), social movements, local community and religious leaders, the media, the private sector and communities to renew their commitment to protecting the rights of girls and women to live free from violence and discrimination.

In 2018, the Joint Programme partnered with the African Union (AU) to galvanize sustained, country-driven interventions. An international conference on FGM organized by the AU, UNFPA and UNICEF in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, attracted more than 400 participants from 34 countries. Countries shared their experiences in addressing FGM and supported the adoption of the 'Ouagadougou Call to Action on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation', and an action plan for the 2019 roll-out of the AU Campaign on Ending FGM. The AU campaign marks a strengthened commitment to the elimination of FGM in Africa and worldwide. The AU also announced it will adapt and adopt the Joint Programme's innovative social marketing campaign, the Saleema Communication Initiative in the Sudan, across the continent. The Saleema approach has proven successful in positively influencing social norms that lead to long-term, sustainable behaviour change in support of the elimination of FGM.

At the national level, the Joint Programme prioritized countries for programmatic and financial investments for Phase III by adopting a tiered approach based on a set of criteria that included demographic trends, FGM prevalence and rate of change (particularly the rate of acceleration towards FGM elimination by 2030), and national commitment. The result was the development of three tiers. In 2018, the Joint Programme was implemented in eight Tier I countries: Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and the Sudan. Technical support was provided to Tier II and III countries: Eritrea, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Somalia and Uganda.

Working with the Tier 1 countries, the Joint Programme strengthened key interventions based on strategic review involving a participatory and consultative process that engaged key stakeholders at the global, regional, national and community levels in reflecting on good practices and lessons learned in the Joint Programme. In 2018, the Joint Programme's concerted effort to replicate and scale up proven interventions – as well as introduce innovations to enhance programme impact – paid off, as evidenced by the following accomplishments:

- 131 arrests, 123 cases brought to court and 30 convictions and sanctions;
- 2,455 communities made public declarations of abandonment of FGM;
- 83,068 girls benefited from a capacity-building package and, in 4,258 communities, girls became agents of change after completing this package;
- 560,271 girls and women received health services related to FGM, 231,375 receive social services and 83,812 receive legal services.

To address trends related to cross-border FGM (i.e., crossing borders to undergo FGM and avoid prosecution), the Joint Programme facilitated collaboration between the governments of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic

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