


PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS FOR PHASE II



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





The harmful social norm of female genital mutilation, common in some 30 countries around the world, rests on the shakiest of foundations: It is a constellation of faulty beliefs, perceived obligations and inferred expectations, tied together in a durable knot. Given the strength of social bonds that bind communities together, the norm that sustains female genital mutilation has proved difficult to unravel.

But the practice cannot forever withstand the harm it causes; the fact it violates laws and human rights meant to protect women and girls; the moving voices of survivors; and mounting evidence of changing attitudes. Female genital mutilation cannot withstand the force of collective action and social evolution. Our work is to accelerate the inevitable demise of the practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Specifically, we thank the European Union and the governments of Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom for their generous financial contributions. And we acknowledge, with gratitude, the members of the Joint Programme's Steering Committee for their support and technical guidance throughout Phase II.

Our appreciation is extended as well to each national and local government and to civil society organizations for their collaboration in accelerating the abandonment of FGM through their in-depth local perspectives and for their political support, without which the achievements in this report would not have been possible.

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Foreword

The **UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation** aims to transform an entrenched social norm – one that for too long has normalised systemic violence against girls and young women into one in which they have autonomy over their own bodies. Working with partners at the global, regional, national and community level, Phase II of the Joint Programme (2014 to 2017) embraced a holistic approach that:

- Leveraged social dynamics to support communities in 17 countries to better protect girls;
- Amplified voices of leaders, individuals and groups who have themselves abandoned female genital mutilation (FGM);
- Empowered girls and women to play a catalytic role that has fueled further positive action; and
- Catalysed a global movement with strong regional support to end FGM.

New insights about FGM and the social norms that support it are informing the design of policies and programmes in countries where the practice has been entrenched over generations. Key results during Phase II point to the positive difference the Joint Programme has made in galvanizing support for the elimination of FGM: more than 24.6 million individuals made public declarations of FGM abandonment, some 3.3 million women and girls accessed prevention, protection and care services across 16 countries, and 13 countries have laws banning FGM with similar laws pending in three more countries. This gives us confidence in the sustainability of interventions.

The growing number of public commitments to end FGM as well as its abandonment by communities show that the practice can indeed become a vestige of the past. Grassroots movements have fueled an international movement to eliminate FGM worldwide. Through Target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development

Goals, the global community committed itself to eliminating harmful practices, including, child, early and forced marriage and FGM, by the year 2030.

Thanks to this stepped-up effort to encourage its full and irreversible elimination, the prevalence of FGM among girls aged 15-19 has declined in 10 of the 17 countries. Additional insight and analysis will be needed during the next phase to understand and effectively address pockets of resistance. The generally encouraging results call for sustained commitment and strengthening of the Joint Programme to consolidate these gains. Many of the good practices and lessons from Phase II have been integrated into Phase III, launched in January 2018.

UNFPA and UNICEF wish to express their gratitude to the Governments of the European Union, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom for their generous support. With a growing number of girls at risk of FGM due to population growth, Phase III is a critical time for donors, Member States and the international community to increase resources and investments for FGM elimination. With your support, the Joint Programme can accelerate the elimination of FGM so that girls and women may realize their rights, and more fully contribute to the health and productivity of their families and communities. This will also improve prospects for the next generation, a generation in which girls and young women need not fear the cut.



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