

A Decade of Action to Achieve
Gender Equality:

The UNICEF Approach to the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation

For every girl, a voice
For every girl, a choice
For every girl, agency
#EndFGM

Empower a girl,
change the world.

Over 4 million girls are at risk of undergoing female genital mutilation (FGM) in 2020.¹ A manifestation of entrenched gender inequality, FGM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women. Poverty, deprivation and inequalities are drivers of FGM. Empowering girls to realize their rights and potential by ensuring access to education, health-care and employment opportunities accelerates the elimination of FGM and contributes to equitable social and economic development.

What is female genital mutilation and how does ending this harmful practice contribute to achieving gender equality?

An estimated 200 million girls and women have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM), a human rights violation that can lead to health consequences that affect girls' and women's physical, mental and sexual health and well-being. As a gendered harmful practice, FGM is a manifestation of gender inequality deeply entrenched in social, political and economic structures. It also represents society's control over girls and women and perpetuates normative gender roles that are unequal and harmful.²

For more than two decades, global consensus has been that the elimination of FGM contributes to the achievement of gender equality. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 identified ending FGM as essential to realizing girls' rights.³ The 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) renewed this commitment by introducing target 5.3 calling for the elimination of FGM under Goal 5, achieving gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment by 2030.⁴ This comprehensive policy agenda for gender equality has played a key role in ensuring girls' equitable access to education, health care, nutrition and protection, resulting in progress towards realizing girls' rights including the right to be free from FGM. In Africa, the continent with the highest FGM prevalence rates in the world, the African Union adopted the Maputo Protocol in 2003 which has specific provisions banning FGM.⁵ Investing in gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment is central to Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want launched in 2014, which calls for addressing gender discrimination and ending all forms of gender-based violence including FGM.⁶



Generation Equality

Generation Equality, which will be convened by UN Women in 2021, marks the 25th anniversary of the launching of the Beijing Platform for Action and the launch of ambitious actions for accelerating the achievement of gender equality by 2030. For UNICEF, Generation Equality presents an opportunity during the Decade of Action, 10 years left to achieve the SDGs, to catalyse a social movement that strengthens the voices of girls and women through greater participation and representation in decision-making processes and collective organization. Given its strong history of advocating to protect and promote children's and women's rights, and its access to spaces and places of influence, UNICEF is well positioned to consolidate the voices of civil society organizations at national and grass-roots levels. UNICEF can provide a national platform for those voices to champion the elimination of FGM by participating in the development and implementation of national and local strategies for ending the practice, and holding governments accountable for achieving SDG target 5.3.

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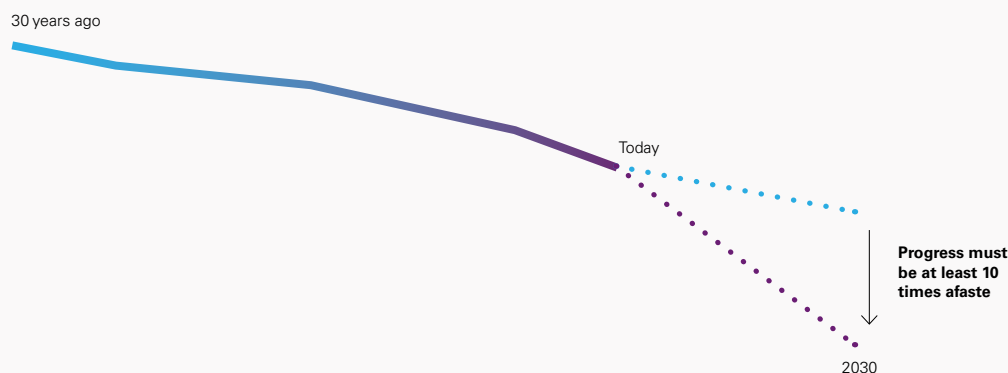
What progress has the global community made in eliminating female genital mutilation?

In the last two decades, FGM prevalence rates have dropped by a quarter and the proportion of girls and women in high-prevalence countries who oppose the practice has doubled.⁷ However, in some countries FGM remains near universal or is as common today as it was even 30 years ago. For the global community to meet SDG target 5.3 by 2030, progress would need to be at least 10 times faster than it has been over the past 15 years.⁸ There are also alarming global trends that not only present significant barriers to the elimination of FGM by 2030 but may also roll back progress to date. Rapid population growth in some of the world's least-developed countries with the highest FGM prevalence rates may increase the number of girls at risk of undergoing FGM from 4 million in 2020 to 4.6 million in 2030.⁹

Figure 1. Female genital mutilation: statistics and trends¹⁰

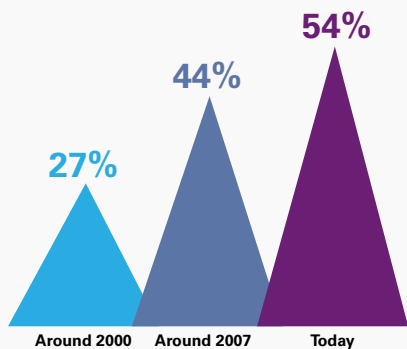
Even in countries where the practice of FGM has become less common, progress would need to be at least 10 times faster to meet the global target of elimination by 2030.

Percentage of adolescent girls ages 15 to 19 years who **have undergone FGM in countries with a decline in prevalence, observed, projected and required for elimination**



Opposition is building, propelling momentum to abandon FGM. In the last two decades, the proportion of girls and women in high prevalence countries who want the practice to stop has doubled.

Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who **have heard of FGM and think the practice should stop**, in high-prevalence countries

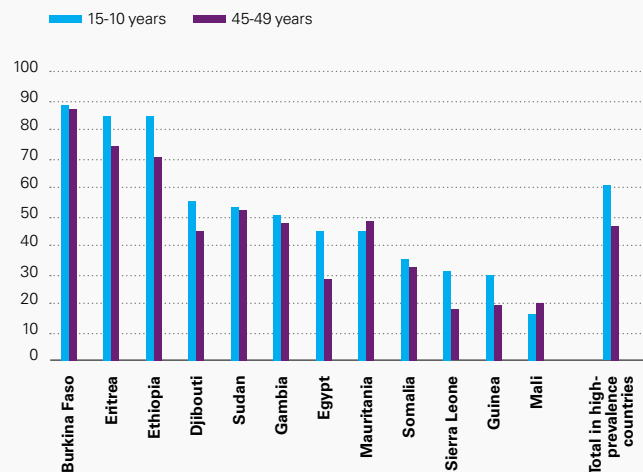


Source: UNICEF global databases, 2020, based on Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, and other nationally representative surveys.

Citation: United Nations Children's Fund, Female Genital Mutilation: A New Generation Calls for Ending an Old Practice, UNICEF, New York, 2020.

Adolescent girls are more likely than older women to oppose FGM. In Egypt, Guinea and Sierra Leone, adolescent girls are at least 50 per cent more likely than older women to oppose the practice.

Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who **have heard of FGM and think the practice should stop**, in high-prevalence countries, by age



The COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) global pandemic in 2020 appears to have increased girls' risk of undergoing FGM. School closures are potentially placing many girls in harm's way for longer periods. Meanwhile, law-enforcement and front-line service providers are being redeployed to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, weakening formal protection systems. Analysis from UNICEF shows that as many as 86 million more children will be living in poverty by the end of 2020.¹¹ As COVID-19 containment measures push more households into monetary poverty, families may increasingly adopt negative coping strategies to reduce economic burdens – such as having girls undergo FGM as a precursor to child marriage.



Generations of girls left behind

UNESCO estimates that 11.2 million girls and young women are at risk of not returning to school.¹² In addition to increasing girls' vulnerability to poverty, inequality and deprivation – and their likelihood of undergoing FGM – gaps in education may also have an impact on future generations of girls. Less-educated women are more likely to support the continuation of the practice.¹³

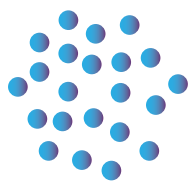
What is UNICEF doing to end female genital mutilation?

Working in 22 countries across Africa and the Middle East (see Figure 1), UNICEF supports ending FGM by ensuring girls are educated, empowered, healthy, and free from violence and discrimination. The organization's multisectoral and holistic approach supports the elimination of FGM by addressing the intersecting factors that are attributable to the continuance of the practice, such as discrimination, weak infrastructure, poverty, barriers to meaningful participation, and vulnerability to shocks and fragility in crises. In addition to contributing to meeting SDG target 5.3, ending FGM advances the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, specifically Goal Area 3: "Every child is protected from violence and exploitation."



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Figure 2. The 22 countries in Africa and the Middle East where UNICEF is supporting ending FGM



Out of the **22 countries**:

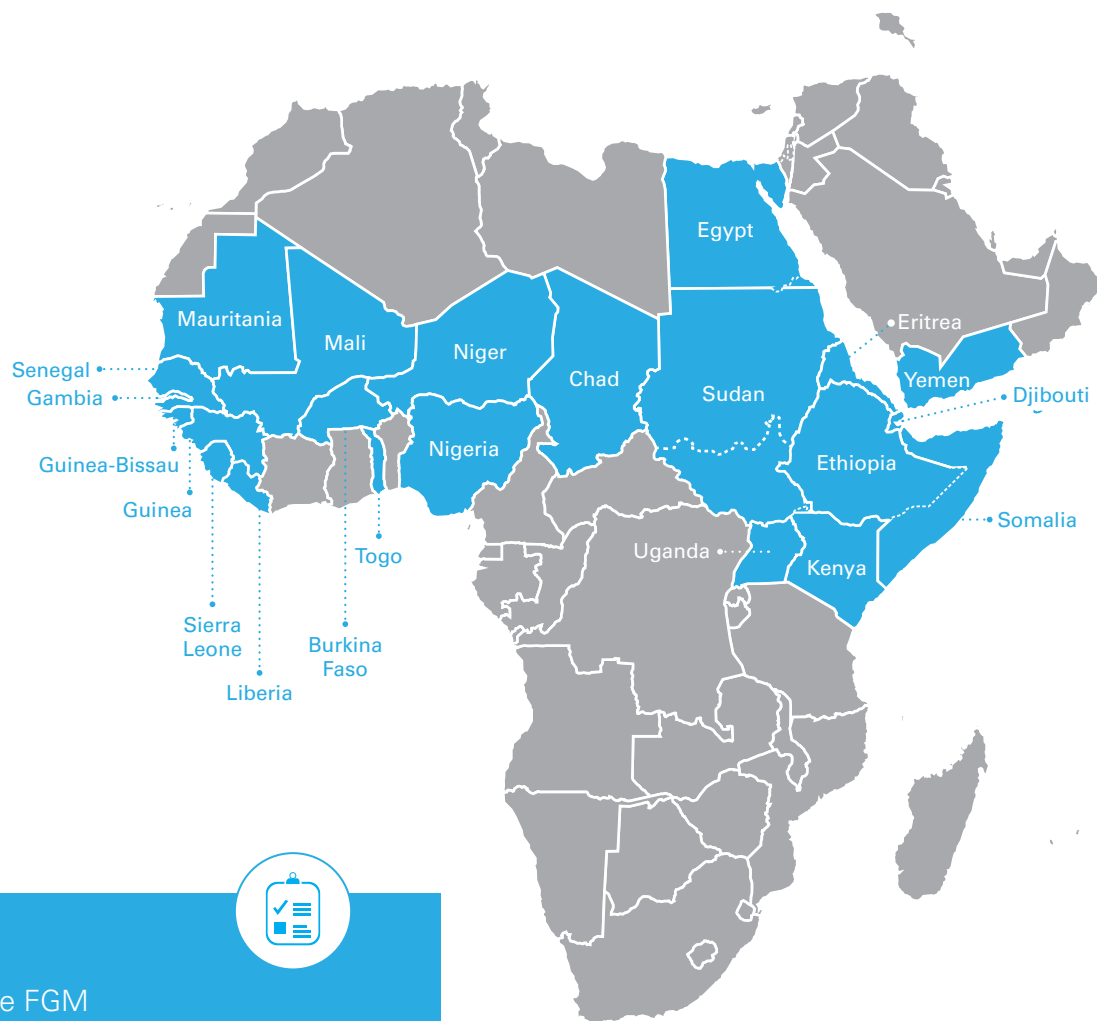
18 are least developed countries (LDCs)



11 faced humanitarian crises in 2019



All are addressing the COVID-19 pandemic



Catalysing a global movement to eliminate FGM

A 2019 evaluation of the UNFPA–UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM Phases I and II (2008–2017) found that the programme has contributed to notable achievements at the global level – including raising the profile of FGM within a global discussion and ensuring its presence within the international development agenda. The Joint Programme has also galvanized the support of established and emerging actors around the issue at national and subnational levels. It has had important successes:

- Strengthened national legal frameworks
- Improved coordination among national and subnational actors
- Increased awareness around FGM-related health risks
- Supported changes in discourse related to FGM, resulting in the breaking of important FGM-related taboos
- Abandonment of the practice by meaningful proportions of communities within intervention areas.

Since 2008, UNICEF, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has been implementing the world’s largest programme on FGM elimination in 17 countries – the Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change. The Joint Programme supports the development of enabling policies and legal frameworks, access to essential services, girls’ and women’s empowerment, and community-led social and gender norms change.

What is the UNICEF approach to eliminating female genital mutilation?

UNICEF advocates for and takes concrete action to eliminate FGM by promoting gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women, particularly those most left behind. The UNICEF vision is the elimination of FGM by transforming the structures, institutions and norms that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality, and by enabling girls and women to make strategic life choices where that ability had been previously denied.

In partnership with governments, civil society, communities, women and child rights activists, from global to grass-roots engagement, the UNICEF strategy for the elimination of FGM includes the following **six pillars**:

1. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND LEGISLATION THAT PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

Ending FGM requires creating and supporting an enabling environment through a combination of interventions that focus on the implementation of legislation that protects the human rights of girls and women including their right to be free from FGM, and policy frameworks at the national and local levels that outline strategies and dedicate resources to eliminating FGM.

- **Legislation criminalizing FGM:** Legislation that protect a girl's right to health, bodily integrity, and to live free from gender-based discrimination and violence, including FGM, is critical in achieving gender equality. UNICEF supports building and enhancing capacities for the implementation of legislation on FGM, targeting the health-care, social welfare and justice sectors (e.g., health-care providers, social workers, police officers, prosecutors, judges and lawyers).
- **Costed action plans to eliminate FGM:** UNICEF provides governments with technical assistance for the development and implementation of national and local costed action plans that outline strategies for the elimination of FGM including ensuring access to quality, responsive services and capturing data for measuring progress towards meeting SDG target 5.3 by 2030. Since FGM spans a range of policy areas and sectors, national action plans also include coordination mechanisms that promote synergy and efficient resource utilization among key stakeholders across government ministries and civil society.



Legislation in the Sudan

Since 2006, UNICEF has been working with women and child rights activists, policymakers, civil society and donors to advocate for national legislation to criminalize FGM in the Sudan. The advocacy campaign and legal support from UNICEF experts on children's rights paid off when the Government ratified legislation prohibiting FGM in July 2020. UNICEF has facilitated collaboration between Government and civil society to develop a road map for the roll-out of the legislation that provides capacity development for law enforcement and health-care providers, develops community referral and reporting systems, and launches a mass media campaign to raise awareness the new law.

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2. INCREASE GIRLS' AGENCY AND ASSETS AND BUILD THEIR LEADERSHIP SKILLS TO INFLUENCE SOCIAL CHANGE

Strengthening girls' assets and agency to exercise their rights includes ensuring access to education and improved livelihood opportunities and girls' clubs where they can learn about social issues that directly affect them, expand their support networks, and take up leadership roles among their peers in advocating for the elimination of FGM. Recognizing that girls are powerful agents of change, building social movements that champion the end of FGM is an effective strategy for enabling girls and women and their allies to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order.

- **Girls' education:** Education plays a critical role in ending the cycle of poverty and preventing FGM in contexts where the practice is associated with marriageability for economic security and social inclusion. While education may not prevent girls being subject to FGM at a young age, it has the potential to positively affect future generations. Educated women are less likely to support the continuation of FGM.¹⁴
- **Girls' clubs:** Girls' (or adolescent) clubs, offered in school or other community settings, provide girls (in and out of school) who are the most likely to be left furthest behind with life-skills training and opportunities to develop their leadership skills, expand and strengthen their social networks, and engage in civic action. Activities around civic engagement give girls the experience they need to later participate as citizens who assert their rights and hold their community and country leaders accountable. Girls' clubs also provide a safe space for girls to explore new ideas and challenge discriminatory gender norms.



Girls' clubs in Ethiopia


In 2018, in the state of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) in Ethiopia, UNICEF reached 6,336 adolescent girls (3,893 in-school and 2,443 out-of-school) through life-skills training provided in girls' clubs. In 438 communities also in SNNPR, capacity-building interventions targeted adolescent girls, providing information and involving them in community dialogues, and encouraging intergenerational discussions with community members at household and community levels. This has contributed to breaking the silence about FGM and building trust and stronger relationships between girls and their parents, while also improving protection for girls in their households and communities.

- **Build a movement to end FGM:** As UNICEF supports girls' civic engagement, social movements can play a transformational role in realizing their rights. Reaching the SDGs and the elimination of FGM requires girls and women to be represented and to have voice and influence within public life and decision-making. Social movements can strengthen social accountability to improve policies and legislation, and strengthen service-delivery systems.



Unleashing Youth Power: one decade of accelerating actions for zero female genital mutilation

Unleashing Youth Power was launched by UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019 during the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (6 February). Unleashing Youth Power means investing in youth-led movements to champion gender equality, an end to violence against women and girls, and the elimination of harmful practices by 2030. UNICEF Kenya supported a youth caravan that travelled through four FGM hot spot counties (Embu, Isiolo, Meru and Samburu), raising awareness and mobilizing young people to champion the elimination of FGM. Aisha Hussein, 25, an anti-FGM youth activist from Isiolo County and an FGM survivor, led the caravan. Aisha has been leading awareness-raising campaigns since 2017 and is a leading youth voice against harmful practices. "I became an anti-FGM activist after I gave birth to my first kid," she explains. "I had a lot of difficulties giving birth and had to undergo a caesarean section. This got me thinking a lot about FGM." Aisha realized that her difficulties in giving birth could be partly attributed to the fact that she had been undergone FGM when she was just 7 years old. She reached out to her peers through a WhatsApp group and encouraged them to share their stories and experiences on FGM and childbirth. "We realized that many girls were suffering in silence," Aisha continues. "We decided to form an organization called Every Girl's Dream." Through Every Girl's Dream, Aisha and her team are giving girls a platform to speak out, share their experiences and report potential cases of FGM. They also advocate for the rights of girls in Embu, Isiolo and Meru counties.

Children’s National Assembly of the Gambia

In 2019, the Children’s National Assembly of the Gambia (CNAG) was established to promote the meaningful participation of children. CNAG, which has 105 members (58 girls and 47 boys), drafted a call to action titled “The Gambia We Want,” calling on the Government to implement legislation banning FGM.¹⁵ CNAG also met with the Vice President of the Gambia to discuss their call to action – the meeting was broadcast on national television.



Child Rights Committees in Eritrea

In partnership with the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, 134 children and youth representatives (50 per cent girls) from 67 community-based Child Rights Committees (CRCs) were trained in civic action and intergenerational dialogue. The CRCs organized 425 events in 37 sub-zobas (subregions), providing a platform for 21,576 adolescent girls to advocate for the elimination of FGM and other forms of violence against children, which reached 163,020 people.

3. SHIFT DISCRIMINATORY SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS THROUGH COMMUNITY-LED MOBILIZATION

Addressing the root causes of gender inequalities by transforming harmful gender roles, norms and power relations that sustain FGM is critical. Community mobilization interventions raise awareness, create space for self-reflection and encourage critical questioning of FGM. It also aims to facilitate a change process under the principle “the answer lies from within the community”. UNICEF interventions combine community dialogues and education sessions, Communication for Development (C4D), gender-responsive parenting, and engaging men and boys in understanding the consequences of FGM, as well as championing the elimination of the practice as a strategy for tackling discriminatory social and gender norms that perpetuate harmful practices.

- **Community mobilization:** UNICEF supports a community-led process that stimulates individual and collective reflection about harmful social and gender norms through community dialogues and educational sessions. Once enough community members establish a critical mass through this collective process, they are ready to adopt a new social norm; this collective shift is marked by a community pledge – a public declaration to abandon FGM. While a public declaration is symbolic or ceremonial, it is also a powerful public demonstration of the transformation of power structures and relations. After public declarations of abandonment, establishing or strengthening local surveillance systems such as community-based child protection committees is critical in sustaining a collective commitment to FGM abandonment by tracking girls at risk and reporting cases of FGM.



In Burkina Faso

In 2019 around 175,700 girls were prevented from undergoing FGM through community child protection committees that identified girls aged 0–14 years at risk of FGM. The identification and monitoring of vulnerable girls is carried out by community facilitators (*techniciens d'appui aux communautés*). The community facilitators manage adolescent clubs that enrol girls and boys aged 10–19 years and provide life-skills training and information about harmful practices and violence against children (VAC) through interactive sessions. In 2019, there were around 372,000 participants in these adolescent clubs. The community facilitators also conducted community education sessions and dialogues on harmful practices and VAC, worked with religious leaders to support change in social and gender norms, and provided positive parenting education through monthly home visits.



Because I am not afraid of change: Saleema in the Sudan

In the Sudan, UNICEF is implementing the Saleema social norms marketing campaign to promote long-term abandonment of FGM by reframing social norms. The campaign celebrates girls who are intact as Saleema (whole and healthy) rather than the derogatory term 'qulfa'. Saleema was branded and a visual symbol created using a swirling pattern of vibrant colours favoured by the Sudanese – orange, red, yellow and green. The design was transferred onto cloth and used to make headscarves and other traditional garments for women and men, along with swaddling clothes. Promotional products, including pottery, banners and tablecloths, were also developed, along with radio programmes, animated television spots, billboards and a campaign song. Well-known singers, comedians, artists and religious scholars have been appointed as national and state Saleema 'ambassadors', helping to spread the word and to serve as role models. A study completed in 2019 demonstrated that Saleema is effective in reducing social norms that sustain FGM.¹⁶

• **Communication for Development (C4D):**

Communication can challenge discriminatory social and gender norms and support the elimination of FGM. The UNICEF C4D approach for ending FGM includes organized diffusion (peer-to-peer influence), community dialogues and theatre; mass media such as radio and television; and digital tools such as U-Report and social media. UNICEF has also used social norms marketing and 'edutainment' to reach large numbers of people at relatively low cost, which is suitable for modelling and promoting new social norms in ways that resonate with target audiences, promoting the benefits of new norms such as keeping girls intact, changing attitudes towards harmful practices at scale, and amplifying stories of change.

- **Gender-responsive parenting:** Given that most girls undergo FGM before the age of 5,¹⁸ positive parenting to counter gender-related harmful practices can be key to FGM prevention among infants. This also includes integrating FGM in early childhood development programmes, such as the 'First 1,000 Days' package which encompasses pregnancy and the first three years of a child's life. UNICEF promotes gender-responsive parenting through mass media interventions, community engagement and home visits. Positive parenting can encourage communities to actively monitor and become engaged in the lives of girls at risk of undergoing FGM, and support community surveillance through child protection committees.

- **Men and boys as allies:** UNICEF programmes provide opportunities and safe spaces for critical reflection and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education targeting men and boys so they understand the consequences of FGM. Men and boys are also supported as allies championing the elimination of FGM in their communities and through activist networks.



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UNICEF U-Report

Rolled out in Uganda in 2010, the UNICEF U-Report leveraged increased connectivity and the proliferation of mobile phones to solicit opinions from young people about the issues they most care about, and shared the findings with policymakers including members of Parliament. An evaluation by the Centre for Public Impact in 2016 found that U-Report was strong in stakeholder engagement including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), youth organizations, governments and the private sector, and in making the voices of young people heard by their governments. Today, U-Report is active in 68 countries, benefiting over 11 million young people all over the world. A report by UNICEF in 2020 on digital civic engagement found “many of today’s youth take to digital spaces to develop their civic identities [as it] contributes to a sense of socio-political empowerment and agency.”¹⁷ UNICEF is developing a digital engagement strategy for adolescent girls who are often left behind as a result of the gender digital divide.



MenEngage Alliance in Nigeria

In partnership with the MenEngage Alliance, in 2019 UNICEF in Nigeria established 81 new coalitions of men and boys (60 coalitions were created the year before). These networks of men and boys groups are actively advocating for the elimination of FGM and other harmful social norms and practices in their communities by promoting critical reflections on what it means to “be a man” and exploring equitable and inclusive attitudes, behaviours and manifestations of masculinities. The coalitions target peer males in public spaces such as workplaces and markets, and work with religious and traditional leaders to mobilize support for FGM abandonment. In 2019, the MenEngage networks reached 14,511 people (13,918 male and 593 female).

4. STRENGTHEN CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS TO ENSURE ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

A holistic approach to addressing FGM includes a comprehensive child protection system that provides health-care, social welfare and legal services to girls and women who are at risk of or have undergone FGM. Provision of services contributes to promoting positive social norms that keep girls healthy and intact, as service providers share information and provide counselling to girls, women and other community members about the consequences of FGM. Given that FGM is performed to increase a girl's marriageability as a way to secure economic security and alleviate household poverty, UNICEF is increasingly using gender-responsive social protection, such as cash transfers, to prevent harmful practices including FGM.

- **Child protection services:** For UNICEF, ensuring access to child protection services – including health, social welfare and justice for girls – is part of expanding their choices. As part of a formal child protection structure, access to services ensures girls are protected from undergoing FGM throughout their different life stages and provided with care in cases where they face health consequences as a result of the practice. Beyond access to services, service providers (who are often respected members of the community) can also serve as community influencers and advocates for eliminating FGM, including the end of medicalization.
- **Gender-responsive social protection:** Social protection programmes such as cash transfers have proved successful in addressing poverty and poor educational outcomes. Gender-responsive social protection can be an effective strategy for preventing families from resorting to negative coping mechanisms to alleviate household poverty, such as having girls undergo FGM as a precursor to child marriage, which is linked to economic security and social inclusion.

5. BUILD A ROBUST EVIDENCE BASE

Building a robust evidence base by tracking progress towards achieving the SDGs and addressing critical knowledge gaps in policies and programmes for eliminating FGM through a global research agenda is a priority for UNICEF. UNICEF holds a custodial role for SDG target 5.3 and all data related to children, including FGM. In addition to capturing good practices and lessons learned, UNICEF actively facilitates South–South knowledge-sharing.



National Committee for the Eradication of FGM in Egypt

The National Committee in Egypt was established in 2019 and has reached more than 3.3 million people through a national door-to-door campaign, community mobilization, services and outreach interventions in more than 15 governorates. The National Committee developed a national radio campaign entitled 'Protect her from FGM' aired during the peak season for combatting FGM (summer holiday months). The radio spots were recorded by a renowned media figure and were broadcast 1,230 times on 18 radio stations for a month, covering Upper and Lower Egypt. During the campaign, the national helpline received 1,527 calls, primarily from fathers and girls seeking FGM-related counselling and services. UNICEF supported strengthening of the national protection systems through investment in the National Child Helpline and the child protection committees, law enforcement systems, and ensuring referral and counselling for girls at risk of or affected by FGM. In partnership with the Prosecution Office and the Ministry of Justice, UNICEF supported the mainstreaming of FGM in child protection institutional capacity-building programmes for law enforcement officials including judges and prosecutors.



Webinars for knowledge-sharing

UNICEF, as the Secretariat of the FGM Donor Working Group, has provided opportunities for knowledge-sharing across the global South and North through webinars. The first webinar explored challenges and opportunities in addressing FGM during the COVID-19 crisis. The second looked at digital engagement during the pandemic in support of social norms change given that most stakeholders were unable to continue working directly with communities. Both webinars had over 150 participants.



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6. HUMANITARIAN–DEVELOPMENT NEXUS: CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH TO FGM ELIMINATION

The humanitarian–development nexus is a cross-cutting approach for supporting FGM elimination. In 2019, prolonged and violent conflict remained the main drivers of humanitarian need, with displacement, food insecurity, natural disasters and other emergencies giving rise to substantial needs. In 2020, the world is challenged with a pandemic that presents an unprecedented health crisis that also has social, economic and political consequences. The nexus approach ensures the protection of children’s rights, including the right to be free from FGM, across development and humanitarian settings. Established as an organizational priority in 2019, the nexus approach supports UNICEF in strengthening child protection systems – from providing child protection in emergencies to building national child protection systems in governments. The nexus approach also prevents disruptions in UNICEF programmes addressing FGM, which is critical for staying on track towards achieving SDG target 5.3.

What is the strategic advantage of UNICEF for eliminating FGM?



- The **UNICEF approach is grounded in cutting-edge social research** that enhances the design, implementation and evaluation of community-led social and gender norms change in support of FGM elimination.



- Given that most girls undergo FGM before the age of five, the **UNICEF life course approach can effectively support FGM prevention** through protection systems that target parents and families from pregnancy to early childhood, and empower adolescent girls to say “no” to harmful practices including FGM.



- As UNICEF is a dual mandate organization, its child protection programmes span both humanitarian and development efforts. Consequently, **UNICEF is well positioned to bridge the development–humanitarian divide.**



- **UNICEF drives innovation such as digital civic engagement** for adolescent girls, which provides them with life skills and assertiveness, builds their self-confidence, and enables them to work collectively to speak out against things they see need to change.



- As the custodian of data related to FGM in the United Nations system, **UNICEF is uniquely positioned to lead a global research agenda** for FGM that contributes to addressing critical knowledge gaps in the sector that are a result of too few rigorous evaluations that identify promising and effective approaches for the elimination of FGM.

UNICEF wishes to thank the people and governments that have contributed to this work. Specifically, we thank the European Union and the governments of Austria, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, AECID (Spain), Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America for their generous financial contributions and technical support to UNICEF towards the elimination of FGM.

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Endnotes

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A close-up portrait of a young girl with a joyful expression. She is wearing a brown headscarf with small white dots and an orange long-sleeved shirt. She has a small gold nose ring. Her hands are resting on a wooden railing. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or school setting. In the top right corner, there is a blue rectangular box containing the UNICEF logo and the text "unicef" and "for every child".

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