

Accelerating the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

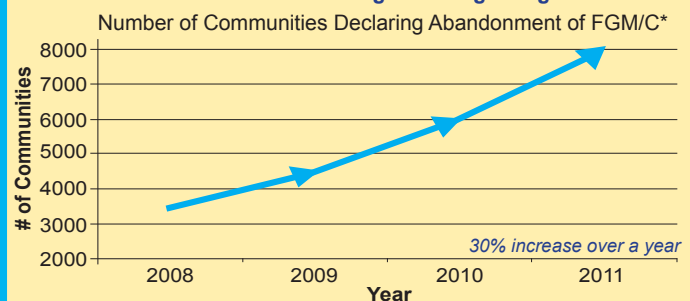


Key Facts

1. Four years into the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme, thousands of communities across the 15 countries covered by the Programme - Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia Sudan and Uganda - have abandoned female genital mutilation/cutting.
2. In some countries, such as Djibouti and Somalia, the intervillage public declarations of abandonment of FGM/C that took place thanks to the Joint Programme were the first in the country. In all cases they were joyous occasions that included high level government officials.
3. The Programme has helped to strengthen government action and partnerships within countries to promote national efforts toward ending FGM/C.
4. In Programme countries, social norms and cultural practices have begun to change, and women and men in communities are uniting to protect the rights and health of girls. The rate of FGM/C abandonment is speeding up thanks to the use of a culturally sensitive and human rights-based approach that facilitates positive change within communities.
5. The Programme has led to significant results in spite of limited funding and needs more support to continue and further accelerate the momentum toward ending FGM/C in one generation.

The Joint Programme was informed by the UN Interagency Statement on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation (2008). It builds on decades of work by NGOs such as the Inter-African Committee on Harmful Practices and governments that brought the issue of FGM/C to national and global agendas. It also builds on the successful national experiences led by national governments in all 15 countries in conjunction with NGOs.

Public Manifestations are increasing - and beginning to accelerate



*Tracked by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM/C; other communities also abandoned outside of this programme

Accelerating change

Through a culturally sensitive, human rights-based approach

The success behind the acceleration in the abandonment of FGM/C lies in the incorporation of a social norms perspective and the greater focus on promoting collective abandonment of the practice. Reaching this point entails:

- Ensuring an enabling national environment for promoting abandonment of the practice;
- Enabling communities to discuss and reaffirm the positive values that are shared within their culture, including wanting to do the best for their girls, and connecting them to human rights;
- Engaging all groups within a community in the discussion, including traditional and religious leaders, young girls themselves, women and men;
- Ensuring discussion of the harms of the practice and that it is not a religious requirement, with information coming from trusted sources;
- Facilitating public manifestations of the commitment to abandon the practice, thereby enabling others to see that others share the commitment;
- Supporting the efforts of communities, including by informing of legislation and policies against the practice, which gives additional legitimacy to those committed to ending the practice.



We call on the international community to make this practice history - support the movement of communities that have stood up to defend the health and rights of their women and girls and end FGM/C.



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UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM/C

February 2012



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