

# Voices of Change



2014 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNFPA-UNICEF JOINT PROGRAMME  
ON FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING: Accelerating Change



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## Acknowledgements

UNFPA and UNICEF on behalf of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM/C wish to acknowledge with gratitude the members of the Joint Programme's Steering Committee for their financial contributions and technical guidance throughout 2014. Specifically, we wish to thank the governments of Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Our deep appreciation is extended to each national and local government and civil society organizations for their collaboration in accelerating the abandonment of FGM/C and for their technical and political support, without which the achievements in this report would not have been possible.

We wish to recognize and commend the international community's vision for and commitment to achieving total global elimination of FGM/C in one generation.

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# Foreword



It has been gratifying to witness the substantive progress, at many levels, in attitudes and behaviour relating to female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) over the past few years. We are more certain than ever that the practice will be totally abandoned in a generation.

At the international and intergovernmental levels, there is now broad agreement that FGM/C represents an extreme violation of the human rights of women and children, a danger to sexual and reproductive health, and a form of gender-based violence that must end. This consensus, reflected in two United Nations General Assembly resolutions on FGM—resolution 67/146, reaffirmed by resolution 69/150 in 2014—represents a sea change over previous decades, when the subject was considered too culturally sensitive for Member States to address.

Another critical milestone in 2014 was the seminal report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. It identified the elimination of harmful practices, including FGM/C as a proposed target within the set of goals that aims to guide development for the 2016-2030 period. Whether or not FGM/C is specifically retained in the global indicators, the proposal has assured its place in the development blueprint for the next decades.

As 2015 unfolds, this momentum must be seized. Rapid acceleration of progress is crucial to the protection of millions of girls and young women. Data collection and analysis conducted in 2014 found that, although the practice is generally declining, rapid population growth and the large percentage of young people in countries where FGM/C is prevalent mean that the number of girls affected could actually increase.

The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change is the largest global initiative to promote abandonment of the practice. The programme has played, and will continue to play, a key role in this effort. We are greatly encouraged by the degree to which young people themselves are taking up the challenge.

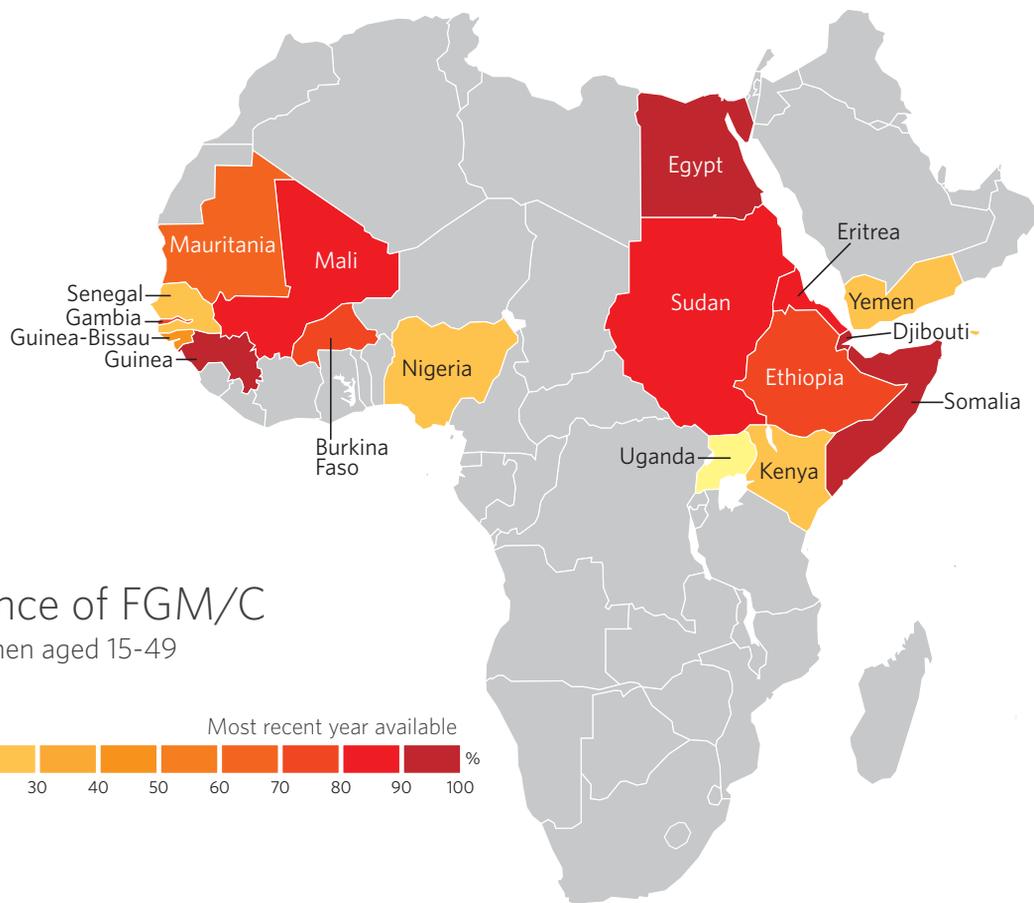
This report celebrates the courage of young women such as Betty Naisenya Logiso and Nancy Tomee in Kenya, who have stood up for their rights in the face of ridicule and disapproval in their communities. It applauds the social media work of activists in the Gambia and Senegal. And it acknowledges the young men who are speaking out for their sisters and prospective wives on social media with the words “Don’t Do It FOR US”.

These are the voices, and this is the generation, that will shift the future and consign FGM/C to history. Their stories and voices are woven throughout this report.

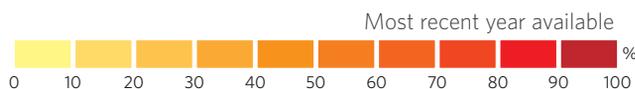
Overview

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# Getting to the Next Level



## Prevalence of FGM/C among women aged 15-49



Throughout 2014, the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change continued to build on the complementary expertise and mandates of the two agencies. Phase II, launched in 2014, benefits from a refined strategic framework, accumulated knowledge and results from previous years, strengthened partnerships and the growing capacities of programme countries. It also takes advantage of new data and analysis, as well as findings and insights derived from the independent evaluation of the programme in 2013.

Phase II aims to accelerate progress, because the current rate of change is insufficient to protect the millions of girls being born in countries where the prevalence of FGM/C remains high.

In high-prevalence countries, projections indicate that 15 million girls are at risk of being cut by 2020. If the Joint Programme reaches its targets, some 4 million of these girls will be protected over the next five years.<sup>1</sup> This is why the efforts of all actors need to be accelerated and their commitments fulfilled. Phase II of the Joint Programme aims to set in place conditions to create an unstoppable momentum towards total abandonment of the practice.

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FGM/C was mentioned within the draft of priorities that will guide development efforts through 2030.

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<sup>1</sup> Mengjia Liang, Edilberto Loaiza, Nafissatou J. Diop and Berhanu Legesse, *Demographic Perspectives on Female Genital Mutilation* (UNFPA, 2015).

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## Expanding in scope and breadth

The attention that FGM/C generated at the global level in 2014 was remarkable. Country-level commitments were expanded; efforts on the ground were refined and scaled up; more data were collected, analysed and used; partnerships were leveraged; and synergies were realized. In the first year of Phase II, these efforts were directed towards three broad outcomes:

- Improved policy and legal environments for the elimination of FGM/C
- Increased quality of related health-care, protection, legal and social services
- Increased acceptance of the elimination of the social norm upholding FGM/C.

This report documents major Joint Programme achievements and innovations across these outcome areas, as well as across eight specific outputs and related indicators identified in the new reporting framework introduced in 2014.

Of particular note in 2014 was the emergence of empowered young people as a bold, growing and dynamic force for change. This report

Two countries—Nigeria and Yemen—were added to the Joint Programme in 2014. The reach of the programme was also expanded into additional districts in most countries.

During 2014, as the end of FGM/C became firmly established as a goal on the international development agenda, global priorities have encouraged linkages between ending FGM/C and ending child marriage in nearly all Joint Programme countries.

Integrating FGM/C and child marriage within the context of gender-based violence and child protection increases the visibility of these crucial issues that adversely affect young women.

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