

Acknowledgements

This manual was produced by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change, under the direction of Nafissatou J. Diop and Cody Donahue.

Credits go to Maria Gabriella De Vita and Marguerite Monnet for writing the manual, Ryan Muldoon for reviewing Module 1 and Gretchen Kail for supporting work on the original version in 2016.

Maria Gabriella De Vita revised and updated this 2021 edition. Ramz Shalbak provided photos and image and Thierno Diouf helped with statistics. Wanda Rodriguez and Menbere Lagesse supported the revision process. The Italian Association for Women in Development (AIDOS) produced four videos for Modules 1 to 4 to provide a visual rendering of the main concepts.

Several people provided valuable ideas and comments. Francesca Moneti commented on all modules, Alfonso Barragues provided inputs on human rights issues, Claudia Cappa assisted with statistics and Daniela Colombo offered additional suggestions. Thanks also go to those who offered insights on operational tools for community interventions, including Gabriel Haile Dagne, Vivian Fouad, Godfrey Kuruhiira, Gunther Lanier, Patricia Rudy, MarieRose Sawadogo, Cristiana Scoppa, Jane Serwanga and Rob Willison, as well as participants in the Saly validation meeting in Senegal. Valuable ideas and comments for updating the manual came from Nafissatou J. Diop, Mireille Tushiminina, Nankali Maksud, Berhanu Legesse, Thierno Diouf, Isatu Sesay-Bayoh, Emilie Filmer-Wilson, Violeta Canaves, Harriet Akullu, Stephanie Baric, Sofia Canovas Pereda, Julie Dubois, Seynabou Tall, Mandi Chikombero.

The manual draws on a social norms perspective. It uses the definition articulated by the social scientist Cristina Bicchieri, and applies the concepts of social expectations, empirical and normative, to determine whether or not female genital mutilation (FGM) is a social norm in a specific context. The manual also uses and adapts some of the outcomes of the Penn-UNICEF Course on Advances in Social Norms, 2010-2016, co-chaired by Cristina Bicchieri and Gerry Mackie at the University of Pennsylvania.

The current revision draws on three workshops on social norms and change: a UNFPA regional workshop held in Cairo in October 2017, a UNFPA-UNICEF joint regional workshop held in Johannesburg in October 2017 and a UNICEF regional workshop held at the Dead Sea in Jordan in February 2018. Valuable inputs were provided by Samira Amin, Eman Eltiquani and Marquerite Monnet.

Case studies have been taken from articles and papers by the social scientists Ellen Gruenbaum and Antanas Mockus, the Saleema Campaign in Sudan, the TOSTAN programme in Senegal, an AIDOS/RAINBO case study in Burkina Faso, the child protection campaign on positive child disciplining in Egypt and the Kishori Abidjan project in Bangladesh.

Module 2 of the manual was partially adapted from Session 3, "Power and Control", and Session 4, "FGM as a Form of Violence Against Women", in *The Training Manual on Gender and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting* developed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

The manual is a continuation of previous work by UNFPA and UNICEF. These include "Changing a Harmful Social Convention: Female genital mutilation/cutting" in the UNICEF Innocenti Digest (2005), the UNICEF "Coordinated Strategy to Abandon Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in One Generation" (2007), and UNICEF's "Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Statistical Overview and Exploration of the Dynamics of Change" (2013). All of these were informed by collaboration with social scientist Gerry Mackie, and a multitude of academic and development partners.

The UNFPA-UNICEF publication *How Changing Social Norms Is Crucial in Achieving Gender Equality* (2020) summarizes the manual's main concepts, and includes insights and comments from some participants in the UNFPA meeting on Gender-biased Harmful Practices held in Brussels in 2016. The UNFPA-UNICEF Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change, Programme Document for Phase 3 (2017) and the UNFPA-UNICEF *Metrics of Progress, Moments of Change: 2015 Annual Report* provide important insights.

The UNICEF and UNFPA country offices in Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania have provided valuable inputs.

The 2021 revision was edited by Gretchen Luchsinger and designed by LS Graphic Design.

The original manual was made possible through funding to the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Program from Germany, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The 2021 updated manual drew on support from the European Union (through the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme), and the Governments of Austria, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

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O1 INTRODUCTION

This manual is meant for training programme managers to promote the abandonment of female genital mutilation (FGM). It has been designed under a joint programme of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change applies an innovative approach to FGM abandonment, using a social norms perspective to guide the selection of an appropriate mix of strategies and activities most conducive to self-sustained social change. This innovative approach can be adapted and applied to other maladaptive norms.

The programme seeks to contribute to the overall goal set by the 2008 Interagency Statement on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, reaffirmed by the 2012 United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/146, to support governments, communities, and girls and women in abandoning FGM. The programme also supports progress on target 5.3 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which stipulates eliminating all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and FGM by 2030.

A social norms perspective sheds light on issues that seem complex and sometimes intractable, and offers insights that put attitudinal and collective behavioural change at the forefront of positive social change. Recognizing FGM as a social norm entails working through multiple channels to create a social movement, and mobilizing people among practising groups as well as other individuals who are influential and make decisions.

The number of people involved may be small at first, but will slowly expand to large-scale coalitions and networks backing a new norm of no longer cutting girls. Implementation of this strategy involves a wide range of stakeholders (governmental, civil society and individuals) from across a variety of sectors, including health, education, child protection, communications and media, and business. The partnerships they form can disseminate

acquired knowledge, and foster a shift in social conventions and norms around FGM that leads to collective social change and the improved well-being of girls and women.

Through the Joint Programme, there are growing opportunities to use the social norms approach to address other harmful practices that, like FGM, are rooted in gender discriminatory norms. In particular, where FGM and child marriage coexist, they are typically linked and perceived as necessary for social acceptance and inclusion. Phase I of the Joint Programme addressed FGM alongside issues related to sexual and reproductive health. The issue of child marriage was raised in various countries. Many communities have organized public declarations on abandoning both FGM and child marriage.

The Training Manual on Gender and Female Genital Mutilation/
Cutting developed by UN Women complements this revised
manual. The former approaches FGM from a gender perspective
in order to increase participants' understanding of the practice as
an expression of gender inequality and a form of violence against
women and girls.

THE 2030 AGENDA AND SDG TARGET 5.3

It is increasingly clear that accelerating the abandonment of gender-biased harmful practices will be a major contribution towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda provides a significant opportunity for advances, with many countries developing national strategies to accomplish the SDGs along with systems to measure progress. Target 5.3, under SDG 5 on gender equality, is to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Harmful practices are relevant for many other goals as well, including SDG 1 to end poverty, SDG 2 to end hunger, SDG 3 to ensure healthy lives, SDG 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and SDG 8 to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and decent work. Gender-biased harmful practices cannot be fully eliminated without reaching these objectives, but at the same time, eliminating such practices can help in realizing the goals. SDG 17 is also important, calling for strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

Through the Joint Programme, UNFPA and UNICEF work with many partners to bridge academic theory with realities on the ground, towards influencing policies and programming approaches aimed at the abandonment of gender-biased harmful practices when deep-seated social norms, such as those underpinning FGM, are at stake. Collaboration with academics and development experts in the area of social norms is part

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