

Accelerating the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting



Key Facts

1. Three years into the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme, over 6,000 communities across Africa have abandoned female genital mutilation/cutting.
2. The communities are in Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Kenya, the Gambia, Guinea and Somalia.
3. In the last three years, 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.
4. The UNFPA-UNICEF Programme and partners have seen the rate of abandoning FGM/C speed up due to the use of a culturally sensitive and human rights-based approach to change within communities
5. The Programme is working to help end FGM/C in one generation and needs more support.

Over 6,000 communities have abandoned FGM/C

With the help of the social norm approach supported by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM/C, over 6,000 communities have abandoned FGM/C.

The approach began in Senegal and is now being used in 15 of the 17 African priority countries and abandonment rates are speeding up. In Senegal, Tostan, an NGO, estimates that about 4,625 of the 5,000 communities that practiced FGM/C have declared the abandonment of the practice.



Accelerating change

The human rights based approach

The success behind the recent change lie in the collective abandonment of FGM/C. There is now a culturally sensitive approach, based on dialogue and social networking, which leads to abandonment within one generation. Because the programme is anchored in human rights, it allows participants to understand better the choices they are making.

It involves all groups within a community, including religious leaders, men and young girls themselves. Rather than condemn FGM/C, it encourages collective abandonment, which tends to bring about a community's voluntary renunciation. The public pledge are the result of one to two years of community education, dialogue, social mobilization processes and organized diffusion of information.

