

# Joint Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change

## Sudan Pilot Case Study: Presentation of the Preliminary Results

Debriefing Meeting with the National Reference Group

February 3, 2012

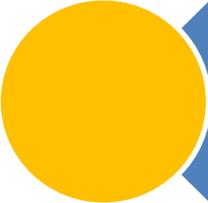
Ellen Gruenbaum, Team Leader; Samia El Nager, National Expert

UNFPA DOS Evaluation Branch & UNICEF Evaluation Office

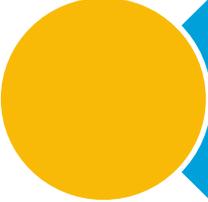
## Purpose of the Meeting

- 1. Provide a brief overview of data collection process during the site visit**
- 2. Share preliminary observations/findings deriving from the Sudan country site visit**
- 3. Elicit National ERG members' feedback and suggestions, and discuss any open questions**
- 4. Discuss next steps**

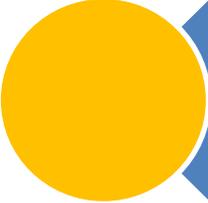
## Purpose of the evaluation



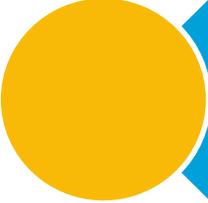
Assess the extent to which and under what circumstances (country context) the joint programme has accelerated the abandonment of FGM/C in programme countries over the last five years (2008-2012).



Ensure accountability

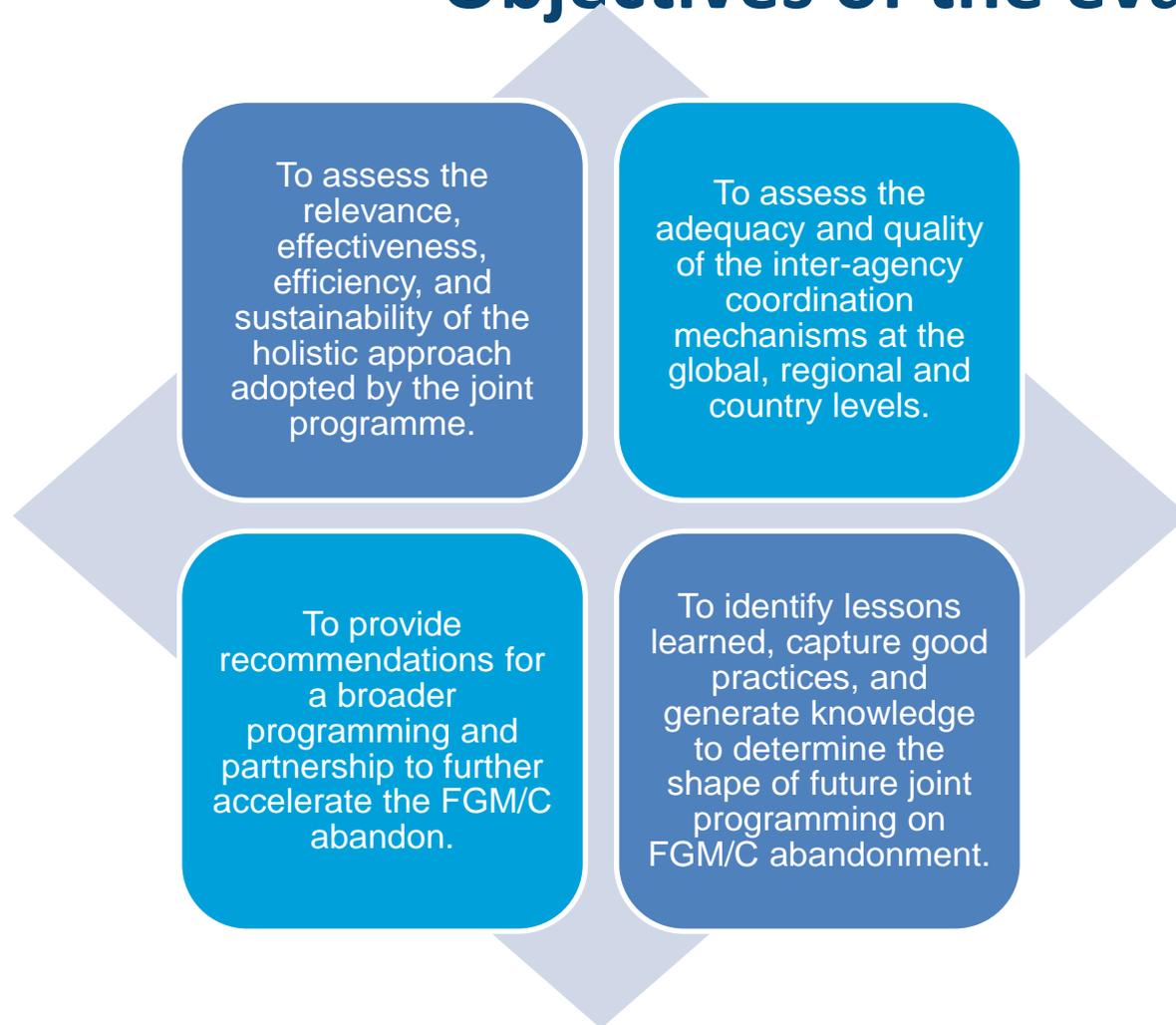


A useful learning exercise



Provide UNICEF and UNFPA with insights into the successes and challenges in conducting joint programming and delivering jointly.

# Objectives of the evaluation



# Data Collection

- **Methods of data collection:** Review of program documents and files; Interviews and discussions with programme staff at UNICEF and UNFPA; Interviews, meetings, and group discussions with stakeholders at national, state, and community levels
- **Geographic locations:** Khartoum/Omdurman, Gedaref, Damazeen (Blue Nile State), Kassala
- **Limitations:** Security situation in Blue Nile delayed access, some stakeholders were not available
- **Positive:** Strong support from UNFPA and UNICEF staff; Supportive and open stakeholders

# Number of People Interviewed/consulted

Institutions	Number of People Interviewed
UNFPA/UNICEF	18
National Government	26
State level governments	56
Civil Society Organisations	25
Religious scholars/leaders	14
Final Beneficiaries	252
<b>Total</b>	<b>391</b>

# Preliminary Observations

**In relation to the main evaluation questions**

# Preliminary Observations

- **The Joint Programme (JP) has helped with the integration of FGM/C in humanitarian context.**
- **JP helped with integration of FGM/C in community programs.**
- **JP is contributing to programs becoming more culturally sensitive.**
- **JP is giving a value added through coordination and integration of the activities of the two organizations.**
- **JP strengthened coordination of programs for the implementing partners.**
- **Coordination is helping government to improve commitment to FGM/C.**

## **Relevance to national and community needs & priorities**

- **The JP and its goals are harmonized with the Government of Sudan's commitments to international agreements and to its constitution, policies, and regional laws, in particular:**
  - **Article 32 of Constitution**
  - **National Women's Empowerment Policy, Reproductive Health Policy, FGM/C Strategy**
  - **Child Rights Act, Gedaref state**
- **Relevant to the situation analysis**
- **Supported by baseline surveys**

## Relevance to UN and development partners priorities

- **Aligns with UN strategies and programming priorities**
- **Aligns with priorities of development partners (UNDAF, UN joint programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.)**

## Programme Design

- **The Joint Programme design follows the global approach to ending FGM/C. It aims to shift the social and cultural norms concerning FGM/C and recognizes the importance of community decision-making and social support for abandonment.**
  - **Community involvements are well articulated**
  - **Strategic efforts bridge the gaps in regular programming of UNICEF and UNFPA, especially at the national level, to create a holistic approach that utilizes reproductive health, child protection, and gender equality**

## Programme design (continued)

- **Human rights based**
- **Culturally sensitive (e.g. focuses on rights in Islam in addition to international ideas of “human rights”)**
- **Creative use of multiple levels of intervention with attention to local leadership and ownership**
- **Monitoring and evaluation**
- **Regional and social differences are recognized through strategic choice of states and communities:**
  - **Areas of greater resistance**
  - **Areas with potential for rapid gains**
  - **Post-conflict areas and displaced populations**
  - **Both urban neighborhoods and rural communities**

# Contributions

## to creating favorable national conditions for the abandonment of FGM/C

- **There are areas of significant achievement, particularly in the development of an enabling environment for sustaining the changes in social norms leading to the abandonment of FGM/C.**
  - **Legislative initiatives at national and state levels**
  - **Strategic alliances**
  - **Coordination of efforts evident**

## Legislative initiatives

- **There has been significant progress on developing a law against FGM/C at the national level. Although article 13 of the Child Law (2009) that would have banned FGM/C was dropped from the draft law (due to political pressure related to some religious resistance), there is strong and clear support for amending the law from a key government minister, the Association of Women Parliamentarians, and a coalition of organizations working on the negotiations.**
- **States have enacted laws banning FGM/C separately from the national government.**
- **Other states are waiting to see how initiatives play out.**
- **Enforcement is a problem. Other means of monitoring may be needed.**

## Strategic alliances

- **The JP has successfully established and nurtured links to incorporate FGM/C into the work of key ministries:**
  - **Ministry of Health (Reproductive Health unit)**
  - **Ministry of Welfare and Social Security (especially the Council on Child Welfare)**
  - **Ministry of Justice (Violence Against Women unit), at national and state levels**
- **The JP has also fostered strong linkages NGO's and CBO's.**
- **Involvements of key religious leaders and political leaders in events and signing of declarations is highly significant.**
- **Influential civil societies figures are also linking their public images to the issue with the influence of the JP.**

## Coordination

- **The JP successfully reduced the number of small partners that UNFPA and UNICEF were working with separately in favor of a more coordinated effort of bringing together academic institutions, NGOs and CBOs working on FGM/C abandonment initiatives.**
  - **Ahfad University for Women has been a pivotal organization for groups and initiatives for abandonment of FGM/C, utilizing a range of tools and partnerships. The JP supports them in this coordinating work, which has enabled stronger and more focused work and goal-oriented rather than activity based programs for the partners.**

## **Contributions to fostering local level commitments to abandon FGM/C**

- **Document reviews showed significant numbers of declarations and activities to foster abandonment.**
- **Idea of making public declarations is catching on.**
- **Often these are individual acts, though, rather than whole communities declaring together, as in the Tostan model. For example, at a concert of a popular music group Igd al Jilad, hundreds of fans in attendance signed while there, inspired by the musicians and speakers, without clear community connection. Need to explore how such relatively spontaneous acts relate to spreading the message and changing norms.**
- **Need to clarify definition of community.**
- **The societal and mass media strategy is innovative and very important.**

## Possible limitations and challenges of declarations

- **A “community” declaration is not too difficult to get, according to some. Follow-up is key.**
- **If it is not done in a calculated, “whole community” manner, will it have the theorized effect on shifting the social norms for an intra-marrying group?**
- **Perhaps the community declaration for intra-marrying group idea will not work the same way for Sudan, with its highly urbanized population.**
- **Signing a “ta’ga” (roll of cloth to display signatures) in Sudan is different than taking an oath—it is a statement of intention only. Still, it is useful when politicians and religious leaders are seen in public signing the pledge, because they would feel pressure to follow through with what they said.**

## Shifting to more positive, relevant approach, de-linking from religion

- **JP has strengthened the religious dialogue to reduce the voice of the resistance to change.**
- **JP is promoting dialogue with Haiat al ulema, an influential religious council, so there can be a clear religious message in the communities and in publications—this is what was requested by the imam in Doka community near Gedaref and by religious scholars from the University of Gedaref.**
- **A clear message from religious leaders would be one that does not leave it to individuals in villages to figure out the correct interpretation of Islamic teachings or leave doubts about whether terms like “Sunna circumcision” encourage circumcision of girls based on the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. Followers of religious leaders value their teachings; if they have clarity people can accept change.**

# Media and communication initiatives

- **Saleema message is attractive, positive, fresh.**
- **Social marketing approach innovative.**
- **Ambassadors—Good selection of celebrities. Feedback on ads--need some “ordinary Sudanese.”**
- **The Saleema communications are still new, and many gave feedback and suggestions such as linking Saleema to FGM/C more clearly, providing more info on health effects somewhere to answer people’s questions about “What is Saleema?”**  
**People suggested offering more visual materials to use, on TV, a website, and booklets, videos, mobile media.**
- **Journalists encouraged continued work with journalists/media people: training about FGM/C, a repository of data for them to use, training in understanding statistics and data, etc.**

# Monitoring

- **Follow up on public declarations is not well developed. New monitoring mechanisms need to be developed. New forms? Assigning responsibility?**
- **One idea was to find committed individuals who investigate rumors of coming celebrations, partner with midwives to strengthen their commitment and report activities, training of law enforcement through community interventions. Alternatives to imprisonment, so that people will be willing to report. We were told that people say,**
  - **“How can we report the midwife, when she is the one who saves the lives of our women in childbirth?”**

## Regional and global interactions

- **Very positive effects of regional interactions.**
  - **Learning from trip to Egypt with team from Ahfad**
  - **Djibouti and Kenya—religious leaders visited or met with Sudanese religious leaders to learn from each other**
  - **Women parliamentarians from Sudan involved with Arab counterparts. Sudanese is chair.**
  - **UNICEF focal point training on Social Norms in US**
  - **Visits from other countries interested in Saleema communication initiative**

## Sustainability

- **JP has strengthened national ownership of the issue**
- **JP has established useful models for future activities**
- **JP has facilitated coordination of activities among branches of government and civil society organizations**
- **Contributed significant elements that will be self-sustaining, like spreading new language and theories of change**
- **However, government has many other priorities and may lose momentum if funding to ministries and councils is reduced.**

## Adequacy and effectiveness use of resources

- **The funds are little for the large agenda. This creates challenges for coordination and monitoring.**
- **Staff and partners are highly knowledgeable and effective—these human resources are vital to the success of the JP.**
- **Efficiency is hampered by the annual funding and reporting cycle, forcing reliance on larger organizations' willingness to bridge activities (e.g. Afhad University for Women, Tariq Nour agency).**

## UNIFEF/UNFPA Coordination

**The JP has successfully influenced coordination of UNFPA and UNICEF programs on FGM/C.**

- UNFPA and UNICEF focal points meet monthly, so they are well informed about the regular programs of each organization and have the opportunity to coordinate the JP actions.**
- At the state level this is particularly challenging, since some states do not have both UNICEF and UNFPA presence and coordination is sometimes difficult even where both are present.**
- They are exploring how to strengthen monitoring and evaluation especially in the states where the JP is working together.**

# Management

## In Kenya

- **Annual review & work-planning meetings very useful**
- **Discrepancy of envisaged and approved budget**
  - National partners not included in adjusting budget
- **Reporting requirements for IPs reasonable**
  - UNICEF/UNFPA provided support (e.g. RBM training) and feedback on reports. Quality of IP reporting varied.
  - Strong IP awareness how work fits into joint programme

## Globally

- **Annual review and work-planning meetings helpful**
- **Ongoing support from JP managers in New York**

# Preliminary Conclusions

- C1 - UNICEF and UNFPA programs on FGM/C are making major contributions through the JP in the areas of expansion of commitments in policy areas in government ministries and councils, especially in the work of the Reproductive Health division of the MOH and the continued efforts on legislative initiatives and the existence of a national strategic plan for FGM/C abandonment.**
- C2 - In addition, there is evidence that public opinion about FGM/C social norms is shifting rapidly with the work with religious leaders, Saleema initiative activities, and utilization of influential public figures.**
- C3 - The energy of efforts to identify gender issues in a variety of laws is fuelled in part by the efforts in GBV and FGM/C initiatives.**

## Preliminary Conclusions (2)

**C4 - Sudan's collaborative efforts suggest that the JP's commitment to forming networks and linking partners from government, NGO's, and CBO's is working to promote policy shifts and positive directions in social norm changes.**

**C5 -There remain some obstacles to coordination of programs between the partners, particularly concerning coordination in the states, and monitoring of results. Coordination of planning and reporting between UNFPA and UNICEF is improving through the efforts of the focal points, but still needs attention to coordination of funding from JP and from other sources and how these are articulated in planning and reporting.**

# Preliminary Recommendations

- **UNICEF and UNFPA should:**
  - Continue large scale social marketing, media, government, and civil society partnerships
  - Links to regional and global work on FGM/C
- **In the future, UNFPA/UNICEF should focus on:**
  - **COORDINATION and INTEGRATION** including at the state level to ensure more interaction and inclusiveness.
  - **MONITORING.** Strengthen indicators, mechanisms, baseline studies, and research.
  - **CONTINUITY.** At the grassroots, the message from women is, “Keep the momentum!”

# Over to You

**Questions, Comments,  
Suggestions...**

## Anticipated Timeline

- Draft Sudan Case Study Report – March 2013
- Final Sudan Case Study Report –April 2013
- Draft Evaluation Report – late April 2013
- Final Evaluation Report - July 2013
- Stakeholder Workshop - TBD

# Comments on the Sudan Case Study Report

Issues to be addressed in your comments	Follow up
- factual errors and errors of interpretation of the context	- corrections included in the report
- omissions (in terms of scope and coverage) which would materially change the findings or analysis	- corrections included in the report
- issues which may be politically sensitive	- taken on board as long as the rewording does not compromise the findings

## Joint Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

<http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/about/Evaluation/EBIER/TE/pid/10103>

Any other questions?

[chambel@unfpa.org](mailto:chambel@unfpa.org)

[kbelbase@unicef.org](mailto:kbelbase@unicef.org)

**THANK YOU!**