Joint Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

MAIN RESULTS

Informal consultation with the EXECUTIVE BOARD

New York, 21 January 2014

Evaluation Office UNFPA and Evaluation Office UNICEF
The FGM/C Joint Programme

- **Objective**: help reduce the practice of FGM/C among girls aged zero-15 by 40 per cent, and eliminate FGM/C altogether in at least one country by 2012
- **Duration**: 2008-2013
- **Budget**: USD 37 million
- **15 countries joined**:
  - 2008: Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Senegal and Sudan;
  - 2009: Burkina Faso, Gambia, Uganda and Somalia;
  - 2011: Eritrea, Mali and Mauritania
- **Request**: in 2011, by the JP Steering Committee; welcomed by both Agencies
Objectives of the Evaluation

1. Assess the **relevance**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency**, and **sustainability** of the holistic approach adopted by the JP.

2. Assess the **adequacy** and quality of the inter-agency coordination mechanisms at global, regional, and country levels.

3. Provide **recommendations** for a broader programming and partnership.

4. Identify **lessons learned**, and generate knowledge.

To further accelerate change on FGMC/C

To pursue JP phase II

Learning

Accountability
Evaluation Governance and Management

- Evaluation **jointly conducted** by UNFPA and UNICEF Evaluation Offices.
- **(A)** Joint evaluation management group (EMG) led by UNFPA Evaluation Office: main decision-making body
- **(B)** Joint evaluation reference group (ERG): provide technical inputs
- **(C)** National reference groups established in countries where field visits took place: ensure broad participation including civil society
- **(D)** External evaluation team: carried out the evaluation (Universalia)
## Evaluation Phases: joint process

### 1) Preparatory (April – July 2012)
- Setting up the joint EMG and joint ERG
- Jointly drafting the terms of reference
- Jointly gathering data and background information on the JP
- Jointly selecting and recruiting the evaluation team (UNFPA led procurement and management of the contract)

### 2) Design (September – December 2012)
- Reviewing documents and literature
- Piloting the methodology and approach
- Drafting an inception report

### 3) Data collection (October 2012 – April 2013)
- Performing in-depth document and literature review;
- Conducting field visits (joint EMG join in on all 4 visits: UNFPA – Kenya, Burkina Faso and Senegal; UNICEF - Sudan)
- Consulting with key stakeholders at global and regional levels
- Conducting a web-based survey + virtual focus groups

### 4) Analysis and Reporting (December 2013 – August 2013)
- Drafting four country case study reports – Kenya, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Sudan
- Producing the final evaluation report

### 5) Dissemination and Follow-up (October 2013 – March 2014)
- Preparing a joint dissemination note
- Launching the joint management response process
- Organizing dissemination events jointly
Overview of the Evaluation Results
Overall, positive assessment:

- Progress towards the achievement of the majority of envisaged outputs - albeit to varying degrees, as well as contributions towards the two outcomes
- Inter-agency coordination and programme management

Key areas for improvement:

- Systematic, longer-term data collection, analysis and link to decision making
- Predictability of funds, longer-term financing and planning
- Operationalization of the regional component (inter-country)
- Institutionalization and system development/capacity development at national and sub-national levels

→ Recommendation:

Pursue a second phase of the JP
Main Findings
EQ 1: The Programme is relevant; its design is sound; its objective somewhat too ambitious

- Pursued in line with national and international commitments; responded to existing gaps/needs; adequately aligned with UNFPA/UNICEF CP and with the priorities of other development partners regarding the human rights of women and girls
- Showed significant design strengths: catalytic, emphasis on holistic, human-rights based and culturally sensitive approach; validated social norms approach
- Used appropriate strategies in view of the underlying theory of change assumptions -- at the same time, too ambitious overall objective
- Findings supported important parts of the theory of change – with data gaps prevailing in relation to transition from changes in social norms to changes in behaviour
EQ 2: The evaluation found significant contributions to Results...

- Reinforced national environment through coordination mechanisms
- Strengthened legal and policy frameworks
- Integrated issues of FGM/C prevention, response and tracking in health sector-specific programmes and plans
- Established and used partnerships with religious groups and other organizations to strengthen local level commitment
- Used simultaneously several complementary strategies and entry points, enhancing chances of influencing collective behavior change
- Supported ongoing changes in public discourse (since 2008, nearly 10,000 communities declared abandonment)
EQ 2: ... With some variations

• Important contributions to enhancing global movement for FGM/C abandonment:
  • e.g. the passing of the UN General Assembly resolution on “Intensifying Global Efforts for the Elimination of FGM”

• No significant contributions were found in relation to:
  • Strengthening regional dynamics
  • JP-generated data not allowing for systematic comparison of long-term results and cost-effectiveness of combinations of diverse strategies and in different contexts
EQ 3: Resources were used strategically – yet their unpredictability was limiting

- JP catalytic nature (i.e. helping to enhance existing resources and activities) provided a good basis for using available resources strategically to achieve results.

- At the same time, this potential considerably limited by lack of funding predictability -- Leading to:
  - Limitations to longer-term planning, implementation and monitoring
  - Misperception of the level of expected support by Country Offices and Partners
  - Fewer programming countries
EQ 4: Favorable conditions were in place to support sustainability of Effects

• Helped create a number of favorable conditions likely to support sustainability of achievements

• At the same time, continued efforts and external support needed to ensure that the existing potential for change can be maintained and expanded

• Key threats to sustainability:
  - Remaining gaps in national/local capacity and (financial) resources
  - External factors such as political and economic instability
  - Lack of political commitment; follow up of achievements, e.g. public declarations of FGM/C abandonment
  - Influence from conservative groups advocating for the continuation of FGM/C often based on religious arguments
EQ 5-6: Inter-agency coordination and JP management were mainly adequate

- Benefits deriving from the joint structure outweighing JP transaction costs
- Adequate inter-agency coordination at global level and, with nuances, at country level.
- Added value building up on the complementary strengths of both agencies
- Challenges:
  - Coordination work on resource mobilization at the global level
  - Institutionalization of country-level coordination
Key Conclusions and Recommendations
Conclusions

- JP helped
  - Accelerate existing change processes towards FGM/C abandonment at national, sub-national and community levels
  - Contributed to strengthening the momentum for change at the global level
- Available resources of the JP were adequate in light of the JP catalytic nature...
  ... but insufficient in view of existing needs, expectations and absorptive capacity of the countries
- Lack of predictability of funds limited the potential for using available resources efficiently inherent in this catalytic nature
Conclusions (con’t)

• Work of both agencies and partners limited by the annual planning, budgeting and reporting cycle, to enable consistent and longer-term implementation

• Benefits and value-added by the JP structure outweighed coordination effort costs

• Holistic and culturally sensitive approach adopted by the JP appropriate in view of its effectiveness and sustainability

• A knowledge and evidence gap remaining regarding the transition from changes in social norms to visible changes in individual and collective behaviours and, in the long term, a decrease in FGM/C prevalence
Recommendations

Taking the JP Approach Further

R1. Pursue a second phase of the JP to sustain gains and the existing positive momentum for change towards FGM/C abandonment.

R2. Further strengthen existing government commitment and leadership, as well as central and decentralized government systems for FGM/C abandonment. Maintain support and involvement of non-governmental change agents.

R3. Maintain the catalytic nature of the JP. Balance working with established/larger organizations while engaging with emerging/smaller actors.

R4. Fully operationalize/test theory of change on FGM/C, including assumptions on role of cross-community/border dynamics.

R5. Ensure that holistic approach taken by JP is better integrated in UNFPA and UNICEF country programmes.
Mobilizing Resources

R6. Advocate with existing or potential donors to commit to predictable, longer-term financing

Improving Future Inter-agency coordination and JP management

R7. Address weaknesses and integrate in future FGM/C-related work the lessons learned from the JP in relation to monitoring and reporting

R8. Further improve UNFPA/UNICEF coordination on FGM/C for resource mobilization and joint monitoring of results

Undertaking research and using new knowledge

R9. Engage and invest in more in-depth research on social norms change and its linkages to changes in behaviours
Evaluation Dissemination and Use
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• Dissemination:
  – Regular consultation with the joint evaluation reference group
  – National reference group briefings and debriefings at country level
  – Internal/joint dissemination within UNFPA and UNICEF (dissemination announcements, webinars)
  – Joint management response
  – Joint presentation of the main results at the Rome International Conference on FGM/C in October 2013
  – Joint presentations at other conferences and network meetings (UNEG meeting in March 2014)
  – UNFPA/UNICEF joint presentations to the Executive Boards (2014)

• Use:
  – Use in preparation of Phase II of the JP
  – Use in country-level planning
Lessons Learned on Joint Evaluation

• An excellent start due to:
  – Allocation of adequate time for ToR preparation and selection of the country case studies among the two agencies
  – Work with the team on inception report

• Key success factors to ensuring quality and utility of the evaluation
  – Clarity of roles in the joint EMG and the joint ERG, and between the two
  – Good collaboration through the entire process
  – Strong engagement and substantive review by the Joint ERG

• Critical factors in ensuing relevance and quality of the evaluation:
  – The strong commitment and professional involvement of the two Evaluation Offices through the entire evaluation process
  – Including active participation in field missions
Lessons Learned on Joint Evaluation

• External evaluation consultant team
  – Understood the importance of joint spirit
  – Responsive to the advice and guidance offered by the joint EMG

• Joint EMG
  – Prepared a dissemination plan; developed jointly all dissemination products and made joint presentations
  – Involvement of 2 senior experienced evaluation professionals from UNFPA/UNICEF Evaluation Offices ensuring quality and smooth delivery

• Optimal evaluation use:
  – organizing and attending joint events, e.g. FGM/C International Conference and Board sessions

• Push from both agencies and strong/collaboration for timely joint management response