

# Community-driven innovation to end female genital mutilation in the Arab region

*Five life-changing stories*





Female genital mutilation (FGM) is an extreme form of violence against women and girls. It is a severe human rights violation with life-long consequences for hundreds of millions of women and girls who are cut across the world.

Since 2008, UNFPA and UNICEF lead the largest global programme to accelerate the elimination of FGM. The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation is active in 17 of the worst affected countries globally, including Djibouti, Egypt, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

Across the five countries in the Arab region, UNFPA delivers creative solutions to end FGM in partnership with women and girls, men and boys, local leaders and communities.

The five life-changing stories provide a glimpse into how UNFPA and partners everyday accelerate innovation and invest in women's leadership, networks, technology and social entrepreneurship to eliminate the scourge of FGM.

*Support UNFPA to accelerate innovation to end FGM*





# Women, girls and youth join hands to tackle FGM in Djibouti



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Djibouti's landmark 'She and Hers' network works to break taboos, raise awareness of the risks from harmful practices and change attitudes and actions to build a better future for women and girls.

The network reaches more than 1000 people each month through public debates, home visits and campaigns. Over 7000 young people have been reached with messaging around FGM so far.



# Girl-led campaigns rally Sudanese communities to reject FGM



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Sudan's 'Saleema' Initiative, run by the National Council for Child Welfare, works to end FGM through public campaigns. Within the initiative, UNFPA and the Y-Peer youth network set up 20 Girls' Clubs, with support from teachers and religious leaders, to sensitize parents and children on the risks and dangers of FGM.

As a result, a community in Blue Nile State has publicly declared the abandonment of FGM, and leaders across the state are asking UNFPA to replicate the Girls' Club model in their own communities.





# Landmark innovation bootcamp empowers girls to fight FGM in Somalia



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The UNFPA Girls Innovation Challenge, held in partnership with iRise Hub, a Mogadishu-based innovation lab, has helped generate a range of ideas and actions to combat FGM, with 16 girls groups applying for the innovation bootcamp. Young women were given tools to design their own solutions, and the winners received funding and support to incubate their ideas to end FGM for good.

The FGM Innovation Challenge has left a lasting impact on the young women and their communities, instilling a bold and shared determination to end FGM in that is backed with confidence, knowledge and skills.



# Religious leaders and communities unite against FGM in Yemen



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Across Yemen, religious, community and academic leaders and influencers are coming together to stamp out the scourge of FGM, and the myths and norms that sustain it.

Through the ground-breaking 'Girls Stand Tall' network, 45 religious leaders and experts work to address the false assumption that FGM is condoned by religion, and to raise awareness of the risks, dangers and rights abuses associated with the harmful practice.



# Pioneering startups boost girls' skills, rights and futures in Egypt



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Wafaa Amin's dream was to help girls get ahead through vocational training, and to confront human rights abuses like FGM through storytelling.

As one of seven social entrepreneurs selected through the UNFPA Egypt Social Innovation Incubator in 2022, Wafaa received seed-funding, guidance and support for her startup that trains women and girls in handicrafts to sell, and brings them together to share stories and information on their rights.

The UNFPA Social Innovation Incubator works with the Life Makers Foundation to harness social entrepreneurship to end FGM, and to bring inspiring ideas from innovators like Wafaa Amin to life.









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