ACADEMIC PAPER

FINDING CONVERGENCE IN POLICY FRAMEWORKS

A background paper on the policy links between gender, violence against women and girls, and female genital mutilation/cutting

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**ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN SECTION
UN WOMEN**
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1. INTRODUCTION

Work to end different types of violence against women and girls (VAWG) often takes place in separate streams so initiatives can be tailored to the dynamics of violent relationships and different local contexts. Female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) is a harmful practice that contravenes women's and girls' human right to sexual and reproductive health and physical integrity. FGM/C is perpetuated by specific social norms, primarily in Africa, but also in the Middle East and parts of Asia.[1] Efforts to end the practice have evolved separately from those aimed at the elimination of other forms of VAWG, which tend to focus more specifically on intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.

1.1
Background

This paper provides an overview of information related to both FGM/C and VAWG. It looks at the similarity of the many underlying causes and contributing factors that increase the risk of VAWG and FGM/C. It also aims to identify intersections in policy frameworks and programme approaches in addressing VAWG in general and FGM/C in particular. By examining where and how FGM/C and VAWG initiatives can be improved and strengthened—through analysis of shared policy elements and identification of areas where programming might most effectively converge—this paper offers a basis for strengthening efforts to end FGM/C.

The paper is based on a desk review of available literature, online information and input from an advisory group comprised of the UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women (Secretariat) and seven non-government organizations working on FGM/C and VAWG.[2] The review began with a search of approximately 125 English language documents and websites related to FGM/C and VAWG policy and programming identified by UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF. The scope of the paper was then expanded to include reference to selected documents and links to original information sources, as well as links from NGO and development partner websites. Additionally, searches were conducted of websites of selected governments and academic digests, which are also included in the bibliography.

The paper was commissioned by UN Women, a collaborating agency in the UNICEF-UNFPA Joint Programme on FGM/C.

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1   A social norm can be defined as a contributing factor and social determinant of certain practices in a community that may be positive and strengthen its identity and cohesion, or may be negative and potentially lead to harm. It is also defined as a social rule or behavior, which members of a community are expected to observe. Definition drawn from: UN Women, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNOHCHR, WHO. 2015. A Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent Violence against Women, which is adapted from the 2014 Joint General Recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/General Comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices.

2   Advisory Board members include the Africa team of the Center for Reproductive Rights, End FGM European Network, The Girl Generation, Population Council, Promundo, Raising Voices, Regional Center for Training in Family Planning and Reproductive Health (Egypt).

1.2
Purpose

The primary purposes of this background paper are to:

i) Explore commonalities between FGM/C and VAWG initiatives and identify potential synergies;

ii) Foster higher levels of collaboration at the international and national levels; and

iii) Identify where resources and technical skills overlap.

While the paper examines both policy and programme-related literature, the main goal is to clarify what policy elements are relevant to both FGM/C and VAWG. The paper cites selected resources and tries to give an indication of the spectrum of views, programme approaches, and analyses of good practice that exist in the literature.

Gender inequality, typically reflected in socio-cultural norms based on discrimination against women and girls, shapes behaviours and is the root cause of different types of violence against women and girls. FGM/C and VAWG share some, but not all, risk factors that can exacerbate violence. International and national efforts to end FGM/C and VAWG identify these causes and risk factors in their theories of change but they sometimes use different terminology to describe similar strategies and approaches.

Efforts to end violence against women and girls, including FGM/C, are being made on multiple levels by many different types of organizations, and the documentation and emphasis in related literature varies, depending on the type and level of programming. For example, global advocacy initiatives and campaigns have different objectives and target different audiences than national or community-level programmes run by non-government organizations or coalitions. International research bodies have their own criteria and quality standards, which influence their literature and give different emphasis to concepts, theory and practice than the publications of multilateral and bilateral development agencies. National governments also have their own criteria, which include informing the public, providing direction to one or more sectors, and meeting standards for accountability and transparency. Information from all these sources provides a wide range of perspectives and information relevant to policy development.

The references cited in this paper while only a portion of available material, do provide insight into the extensive scope of the literature. More information on sources is included in the spreadsheet of resources, which is a companion document to this report available upon request.[3]

The remainder of the paper is presented as follows:

- Section Two presents an overview of policy-related issues and approaches that arise in the literature on FGM/C and VAWG;
- Section Three examines selected factors that support policy coherence between and within programmes focused on FGM/C and VAWG;
- Section Four identifies policy lessons with potential to strengthen effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to end FGM/C and VAWG;
- Section Five looks at gaps in the literature and areas for further research; and
- A Conclusion is intended to guide the development of a document on policy elements essential to ending FGM/C as a form of violence against women and girls.

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3   Due to limited time and resources, this paper does not intend to provide a detailed, critical review of FGM/C and VAWG literature. Such information is available in a number of more specific reviews and synthesis papers referred to in Section 2.1.

2. OVERVIEW OF POLICY ISSUES AND APPROACHES

This section provides a scan of policy issues and approaches raised in existing literature on FGM/C and VAWG. While the literature reviewed includes English language sources from both developed and developing countries, the focus of discussion is on FGM/C and VAWG issues within those countries in Africa where FGM/C is concentrated. Significant information and detail is also available on how developed countries with migrant populations from FGM/C practicing countries are providing support and services to the diaspora. This is referenced in some sections of the document, but mainly as it relates to the African context.

2.1
VAWG and FGM/C as manifestations of discrimination

Discrimination on the grounds of sex exists to differing degrees in all societies. At the same time, recognition of women's and girls' rights, and their right to exercise them, is a relatively recent phenomenon in many societies.[4] Consequently, there is considerable variation in how socio-cultural, economic and government systems either reinforce, or work to end, gender-based inequality. In developing countries where communications, infrastructure, economic development, health and education systems are often not well developed, and where there are significant rural/urban discrepancies, gender-biased social systems may be much more entrenched. In addition, data indicates that gender inequality and under-development can be mutually reinforcing.[5]

Violence against women and girls is rooted in gender inequality. It stems from historical and current patriarchal norms that assign control of key resources, including economics and decision-making, to men. In this context, women and children have been considered economic and social assets controlled by men.[6] Related paradigms of male privilege that cast men as 'protectors of family honor' perpetuate male dominance over women and girls, and generally accept violence as a mechanism to exercise this dominance.

It is important to note that patriarchy and paradigms of violent masculinity do not influence all men in the same way. In general, most men are not violent toward women and girls. However, it is also clear that men are overwhelmingly the main perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual violence, with women, and oftentimes girls, as their targets. Particularly in intimate partner relationships, violence results from historical acceptance of men's possession, power and control over women and girls. Furthermore, gender inequality contributes not only to the occurrence of

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4   This recognition of rights can be indicated, amongst others, by national legislation giving women the right to vote and control property and government accession or ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

5   Underdevelopment and gender inequality are mutually reinforcing in many ways, for more discussion and exploration of data see Gender Inequality Index overview. http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii. See also: Jayachandran, S. 2014. The roots of gender inequality in developing countries. Working paper 20380 National Bureau of Economic Research. http://www.nber.org/papers/w20380

6   UN Women. 2012. Supplement to the Handbook for Legislation Against Violence Against Women: Harmful Practices. New York.

VAWG itself; it also influences wider social acceptance of violence, giving rise to blaming victims of intimate and non-partner sexual violence, and treating perpetrators with impunity.

All forms of violence against women and girls take place on a continuum and there are many ways in which gender inequality results in the submission of women and girls to practices that contravene their rights to health, security and physical integrity.[7] While patriarchy and other forms of male privilege are blatant forms of male dominance, subtler socially-reinforced patterns of male control have also evolved through localized culturally-specific definitions of gender roles and social standards. These include systems that convey social acceptance and reward for being a 'good' daughter, wife or mother who conforms to existing norms and gender roles. Socially-defined goodness or proper behaviour and strict gender roles often link to other restrictions. For example, if women's roles are restricted to growing food and managing children and the household, it may be difficult for families to rationalize sending girls to school. Similarly, women may be restricted from participating in decision-making because it is seen to be outside their domain of responsibility.

Related to this are socio-cultural understandings of women's and girls' sexual purity, chastity before marriage, and how a girl's value to her family is measured. These underpin harmful practices such as FGM/C and child marriage. In communities where these practices are entrenched, they are portrayed as 'necessary' prerequisites for the proper upbringing of girls and to keep women and girls 'safe' from social stigma, exclusion and economic hardship. In such situations, changing gendered power relations needs to address the complex web of norms and relationships that limit women's independence and participation while concurrently providing practical positive alternatives that meet basic needs and promote the value of women and girls in families and communities, and that address women's right to their own life choices and exercise of their human rights.[8]

What the evidence and literature unanimously concludes is that gender inequality grounded in patriarchal structures and unequal power between men and women—enforced by social norms, and embedded structurally in laws and systems—is the root cause of all forms of violence against women and girls. However, while gender inequality is common to both FGM/C and VAWG, different sets of interventions may be needed depending on how violence is conceptualized and rationalized by perpetrators, local communities and societies. Initiatives seeking to end intimate partner violence, for example, which is based on the concept of men's possession, power and control over women and girls in intimate relationships, will be different from those designed to end FGM/C, where the expression of male power over women and girls is based on the premise that marriage is the norm and within marriage women are seen as assets based on their sexual and reproductive contributions to family and society. This premise justifies men's control and limitation of opportunities for girls and women to exercise their rights, including ultimately their right to education and independence. FGM/C has been a prerequisite to ensure girls and women stay within socially accepted parameters, meet criteria for marriageability and are protected from exclusion, stigma and hardship.

Overall, the literature provides clear analysis of different interventions related to ending FGM/C and VAWG, respectively. Most of that work also references key causes and risk factors for these different forms of violence against women and girls. Risk factors may vary or be common across different types of violence. Much of the literature also assumes prior understanding of the roots of discrimination, focusing more on policy and programming efforts to

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7   Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. 2015. Position paper: Repositioning FGM as a Gender and Development Issue.

8   UNICEF. 2013. Female Genital Mutilation: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change. New York; See also: UNFPA. 2014. Implementation of the International and Regional Human Rights Framework for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. New York; and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. 2015. Position paper: Repositioning FGM as a Gender and Development Issue

end violence and harmful practices. However, there is some research that has examined how patriarchal systems have resulted in multiple forms of violence against women and girls. Analyses from Europe for example, summarize links between gender inequality, patriarchy, FGM/C and other forms of violence and harmful practice, and clearly identify a need to address gendered power relations, structures and systems that continue to reinforce men's control over women and girls.[9] Work on engaging men in ending violence against women and girls and harmful practices also explores the historical socio-cultural dynamics that have entrenched male power over women and girls. This work also analyzes how men can contribute to eliminating violence.[10] Additionally, work to more closely identify and target root causes of imbalanced

gender power dynamics is a focus of some NGOs including the Ugandan-based Raising Voices.[11] Their work, in alignment with much of FGM/C and VAWG literature, focuses on analysis of gender relations and identifies education, community mobilization, and empowerment strategies as key approaches to balance gender power dynamics.

In the above context, when looking at literature related to both FGM/C and VAWG, there is clear scope to i) build on shared understanding of the need to engage communities in critical analysis of gender power relations and human rights, ii) develop parallel policy principles implemented through similar frameworks and strategies, iii) apply those principles through similar, although culturally contextualized and issue-specific, strategies.

Robust landscape of information, resources and analysis

The bulk of programme and policy-related information on the topics of FGM/C and VAWG comes from development partners and international NGOs who often work very closely and co-publish their findings. In addition, there is a rich academic literature exploring both topic areas from multiple disciplinary perspectives, which contributes to both theoretical knowledge and practical programming.

In the violence against women and girls literature there is a strong focus on intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. In this body of

work, likely due to the differences in how intimate partner violence, sexual violence and FGM/C are contextualized, FGM/C is generally referenced only in passing as a type of VAWG and a harmful practice. There seem to be assumptions that FGM/C will be dealt with in separate legal, policy and programming streams, as a culturally-specific type of violence. As a result, FGM/C is often divorced from national programming to end violence against women and girls. This in turn creates silos of effort rather than synergies between individuals and agencies working on inter-related issues. This separation also limits sharing of lessons learned about common structural, cultural and systemic causes of violence. Conversely, policy approaches that facilitate more shared analysis and interpretation have the potential to develop more efficient and effective program approaches relevant to both FGM/C and VAWG. To-date, while little work has been done to combine efforts to end both intimate partner violence and FGM/C, there is some evidence that programmes promoting abandonment of FGM/C

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9   Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. 2015. Position paper: Repositioning FGM as a Gender and Development Issue; See also: Governance and Social Development Resource Center. 2011. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. Help desk research report in response to DFID inquiry on FGM/C linkages. GSDRC.

10 Flood, M. 2007. Harmful Traditional and Cultural Practices Related to Violence Against Women and Successful Strategies to Eliminate Such Practices – Working with Men. Paper presented to UNESCAP Expert Group Meeting April 2007. Bangkok. http://w110.bcn.cat/Homes/Continguts/Documents/Fitxers/harmful_traditions.pdf ; See for example the programme work identified on websites of Promundo http://promundoglobal.org and Sonke Gender Justice http://www.genderjustice.org.za; and http://menspeakout.eu/?page_id=513.

11 See the Raising Voices website http://raisingvoices.org

have resulted in reduced levels of intimate partner violence. [12]

Capturing the breadth and depth of information produced by development partners is a challenge, but key reference sites and sources do provide a useful insight into the scope of the literature and the scale of effort that exists to end FGM/C and VAWG. For instance, UNFPA provides resources for understanding FGM/C in the context of human rights and programming frameworks. UNICEF has published a Statistical Overview that includes in-depth analysis of data collected from nationally- representative household surveys, highlights key trends and provides insight into the dynamics of social change that result in the abandonment of FGM/C.[13] UN Women's Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence Against Women and Girls provides parallel information on all types of violence against women and girls as well as some information on FGM/C.[14] Further, numerous

websites of organizations working to end FGM/C and VAWG in both developed and developing countries are rich resources for research, case studies and methodological discussion.[15]

There are also several useful synthesis, and 'review of reviews' papers on both FGM/C and VAWG that have been commissioned by development partners and NGOs. These present information on and summarize key qualitative and quantitative findings from a wide range of sources, and systematically analyze the way findings are interpreted. They draw conclusions on factors that contribute to the perpetuation of both FGM/C and VAWG, and to the success of programmes aimed to eliminate all forms of violence. The reviews generally provide considerable detail on their methodology and, as such, they can be useful as guides to establish more credible programme design, monitoring frameworks and evaluation approaches.[16]

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12 Diop, N. et al. 2004. The Tostan Program: Evaluation of a Community Based Education Program in Senegal. Population Council. GTZ. Tostan.

13 UNICEF. 2013. Female Genital Mutilation: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change. New York.

14 UNFPA. 2014. Implementation of the International and Regional Human Rights Framework for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. New York. http://www.unfpa.org/publications/implementation-international-and-regional-human-rights-framework-elimination-female; UN Women Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence Against Women and Girls. Webpage on sources of international human rights law on female genital mutilation. http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/645-sources-of-international-human-rights-law-on-female-genital-mutilation.html. Note that the Virtual Knowledge Centre provides a comprehensive listing of human rights mechanisms related to FGM/C.

15 The World Bank sponsored website Violence Against Women and Girls Resource Guide provides links to recent publications, and organizations: http://www.vawgresourceguide.org/resources; See also a listing of multiple NGOs working on FGM/C issues at: http://16days.thepixelproject.net/16-organisations-charities-and-grass-roots-groups-working-to-stop-fgm/.

16 Examples of critical analysis and/or synthesis papers on VAWG and FGM/C programmes and approaches can be found in inter alia: Ellsberg, M., D. Arango, M Morton, F Gennari, S Kiplesund, M Contreras, C Watts. 2015. Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say? Published in The Lancet online, http://www.thelancet.com/series/violence-against-women-and-girls; Arango, D. M Morton, F Gennari, S Kiplesund, M. Ellsberg. 2014. Interventions to Prevent or Reduce Violence Against Women and Girls: A systematic review of reviews. Women's Voice and Agency Research Series 2014 No 10. World Bank; Berg R. C. & E. Denison (2013) A Tradition in Transition: Factors Perpetuating and Hindering the Continuance of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). Summarized in a Systematic Review, Health Care for Women International, 34:10, 837-859; Population Reference Bureau. 2013. Ending Female Genital Mutilation: Lessons from a decade of progress; World Health Organization. 2011. Female Genital Mutilation programmes to date: what works and what doesn't; Varol, N. S. Turkmani, K. Black, J. Hall, and A. Dawson. 2015. The Role of Men in Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation: A systematic review. BioMed Central Public Health (2015) 15:1034.

Evolution of programming and policy approaches

The literature does show that approaches to ending FGM/C and VAWG have evolved over time from single-issue or stand-alone programmes to more holistic and comprehensive ones including a set of contextualized interventions. For example, early VAWG initiatives included single-issue approaches such as raising women's awareness of their rights to challenge violent behaviour. Where these did not include more nuanced considerations, such as backlash women might face from their intimate partners or communities, or biases they might encounter when pressing charges at the police station or in court, they actually put women at higher risk.

In the area of FGM/C abandonment, programming has also evolved away from single-issue approaches. One example is sexual and reproductive health programming that sought to raise community awareness of the health risks of the practice. It was assumed that when people were aware of these risks they would stop the practice. In fact, the results

were limited and in some cases counter-productive with families making conscious decisions to have the cutting done in a medical setting by trained doctors as a way to protect girls from health complications and use medical professionals to legitimize the practice.

Over time, sharing information and learning from good practice has led to recognition of the need to ground both FGM/C and VAWG initiatives in human rights commitments, related legislation and action-oriented policies. Globally endorsed frameworks, national action plans and coordinated, multiple entry-point interventions involving multiple sectors and actors are becoming planning norms. Concurrently, engaging communities, including through influential opinion leaders, and empowering communities to take the lead in changing social norms are becoming common programming themes for both FGM/C and VAWG. These approaches continue to evolve and are discussed further in the following sections.

2.2
Current frameworks to end VAWG and FGM/C: approaches and practice

As mentioned, while FGM/C and other forms of violence against women and girls are both rooted in gender inequality, strategies to address them have evolved somewhat separately. Frameworks that guide work in both areas tend to be somewhat different in their use of terminology and approaches. Despite this, there are also a number of commonalities and areas of convergence in terms of, for example:

• Use of a human rights-based approach;
• Establishment of national commitments and policies, as well as legislation;
• Development of coordinated programming mechanisms;
• An emphasis on cross-sector collaboration;
• A focus on capacity development, and
• Engagement with men and women at the community level to foster sustainable change.

In this context, FGM/C and VAWG frameworks both describe foundational elements considered critical to create an enabling environment for ending violence. These include i) stated national commitments to ending discrimination and violence against women and girls, ii) legislation and policies that uphold women's and girls' rights and specifically address violence against women and girls, and iii) technical capacity to implement comprehensive and quality policies and action plans in alignment with globally agreed standards and norms.

Further, FGM/C and VAWG frameworks also identify the importance of collaboration between bilateral partners, government ministries and NGOs with the objective of creating integrated services, and necessary protocols for consistent quality provision of, and reporting on, those services.

Examining differences and similarities between VAWG and FGM/C frameworks

With regard to differences in focus and terminology, VAWG frameworks increasingly place more emphasis on prevention of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, by addressing the root causes of VAWG.[17] The concept of prevention is sometimes divided into three nuanced categories. The first is 'primary prevention,' that is preventing violence before it happens. For example, undertaking group-based relational interventions with men and women and adolescent girls and boys; undertaking community mobilization to challenge social norms; conducting group education with community outreach—including with men and boys; and supporting women and girls to become educated and economically independent.[18] The second category emphasizes protection against and/or reduction of the risk of recurring exposure to/perpetration of violence. The third is focused on building supportive social structures, norms and practices that maximize the prospects of rebuilding lives after violence, minimize its impacts, and reduce the likelihood of recurrence in the long term.

In contrast, while FGM/C frameworks are designed to encompass the same concepts of comprehensive prevention and elimination of violence, this is generally articulated in the context of changing social norms. FGM/C frameworks often use the term 'abandonment' rather than 'ending or eliminating' FGM/C, as it reflects that communities have reached a decision themselves to let older, harmful practices be left behind.

The ways in which FGM/C and VAWG interventions are designed can also be considered in terms of how they support individual and collective agency. Here, approaches have evolved. FGM/C and VAWG programmes both include aims to bring about individual and collective change and both use community mobilization to challenge social norms and engage men and boys in critical thinking about gendered power dynamics. This is a change from earlier VAWG approaches that were more heavily focused on response to survivors and supporting women and girls to understand and exercise their individual agency. Evidence generated from a range of interventions is beginning to show that higher levels of holistic community engagement, linked to meeting the strategic interests of both men and women, is more effective at reducing VAWG and FGM/C prevalence over time.[19]

Other framework terminology used by VAWG practitioners refers to early intervention programmes for those perceived to be at particular risk of either perpetrating or experiencing violence, and response programmes to meet immediate needs of survivors of violence. In the area of response, VAWG frameworks often include multi-sectoral support services for survivors, including referral mechanisms. These services strive to ensure that women and girls who are survivors of violence do not 'fall through the cracks' when seeking support and justice. Such services commonly include counseling, health, legal, policing

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17 Illustrative examples of VAWG frameworks include: UN Women, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNOHCHR, WHO. 2015. A Framework to Underpin Action to end Violence Against Women. New York; See also Australian National Research Organization for Women's Safety, Out Watch and VicHealth. 2015. Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia. Melbourne.

18 These points are drawn from examples provided in DFID. 2014. What works to prevent violence against women and girls? Evidence review of the effectiveness of response mechanisms in preventing violence against women and girls.

19 DFID 2014. What works to prevent violence against women and girls? Evidence review of the effectiveness of response mechanisms in preventing violence against women and girls; see also Arango, D. M Morton, F Gennari, S Kiplesund, M. Ellsberg. 2014. Interventions to Prevent or Reduce Violence Against Women and Girls: A systematic review of reviews. Women's Voice and Agency Research Series 2014 No 10. World Bank.

and economic services as well as safe accommodation shelter. [20]

Similarly, some FGM/C abandonment frameworks also incorporate protection for those considered to be at high risk of being cut, and specific support services for those suffering from physical and psychosocial complications after being cut. Examples of this combination of interventions have been successful in Kenya.[21] It is also found in a number of developed countries, where early intervention and response efforts tend to remain primarily in the domain of health ministries, but with network links to justice, social welfare and the police. [22]

Both VAWG and FGM/C frameworks generally analyze and strive to identify root causes as well as specific social risk factors that can drive FGM/C or VAWG. These frameworks facilitate strategic mapping of these factors—in different national and sub-national settings—which helps to clarify how change is expected to happen. The mapping also serves to inform planning, and to identify relevant stakeholders and partners from across sectors of government, the private sector and civil society.

Within the context of 'prevention,' for VAWG and 'changing social norms' for FGM/C, the frameworks combine sets of approaches that include:

• Development of enabling environments for respect, gender equality and equal treatment of men and women;
• Raising awareness about rights, laws and the negative impacts of FGM/C or VAWG;

• Engaging, empowering and up-skilling women, girls and whole communities to meet basic needs and promote acceptance of women and girls' independence and economic empowerment;
• Engaging with men and boys to facilitate understanding about how gender equality contributes to national development, community stability and family security, and
• Changing social norms that perpetuate rigid gender roles and negative stereotypes.

Social norms, and the associated gender relationships shaped by them, have historically supported male power and men's control over women's and girls' sexuality and ability to exercise their rights. Frameworks for prevention of VAWG include addressing social norms that stigmatize survivors, justify men's violent behaviour and create a climate of impunity for perpetrators. Similarly, frameworks for abandonment of FGM/C seek to create enabling social environments where discussion can take place among women and men about a range of community problems and issues, including FGM/C. Exploration of issues is generally led by communities themselves and ideally moves toward discussion of what FGM/C signifies to them in the present day. Hence, both FGM/C and VAWG frameworks guide efforts to identify community priorities for change and help to develop consensus that women and girls can make more meaningful and useful contributions to their families and communities if they are healthy and free to exercise their rights. Both types of frameworks support women and girls to access their

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20 UN Women, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNOHCHR, WHO. 2015. A Framework to Underpin Action to end Violence Against Women. New York. There are few examples of such networks operating in countries where FGM/C is practiced, but examples exist in other regions. For detail and evidence emerging from response services see: Community of Practice in Building Referral Systems for Women Victims of Violence http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2010081854458. pdf;Jewkes, R. 2014. What works to prevent violence against women and girls? Evidence review of the effectiveness of response mechanisms in preventing violence against women and girls. Government of the United Kingdom; and UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNODC. 2015. Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence-Core Elements and Quality Guidelines. New York.

21 See information on safe houses in Kenya at Equality Now website, http://www.equalitynow.org/partner/agnes_ pareyio. See also Obstetric and gynecological support on the most recent statement on FGM/C from the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics at http://www. equalitynow.org/press_release/health_bodies_demand_ zero_tolerance_on_fgm_by_all_health_personnel

22 See for example UK Department of Health. 2015. Commissioning Health Services to Support Women and Girls with Female Genital Mutilation. See also: European Institute for Gender Equality. 2013. Good Practices in Combating Female Genital Mutilation. European Union. Luxembourg.

rights to education, health, economic opportunity and meaningful participation in public life. They also facilitate engagement with civil society groups to support 'bottom up' change that can demand for legislation and mechanisms to formalize an end to unequal gender power relations.

Box 1 illustrates some of the commonalities in FGM/C and VAWG frameworks.

BOX 1

Commonalities in FGM/C and VAWG policy and programme approaches

Principle commitments of FGM/C and VAWG frameworks

- Apply a human rights-based approach and align with international norms and standards on gender equality and non-discrimination
- Apply gender and power analysis and employ theory and evidence-based approaches
- Work across social ecology toward sustainable systems that facilitate critical reflection at multiple levels and promote gender equality
- Focus on comprehensive and locally-owned changes to end social norms, practices, attitudes and behaviours that tolerate and/or condone VAWG and harmful practices

Strategic approaches included in FGM/C and VAWG prevention frameworks

- Mapping and analysis of issues by sector and identification of how to get those sectors committed and engaged
- Adoption and or/revision of legislation and national policies addressing gender inequality, VAWG and harmful practices
- Training of judiciary, police and health services providers
- Creating partnerships and engaging communities

- Engaging men and boys as partners together with women and girls
- Educating and fostering agents of change
- Empowering women and girls through education and economic opportunities
- Collaborative and cross-sector policy development
- Use of media, including social change and communication and social marketing, to convey stories of individual and community experiences, raise awareness of human rights and legal frameworks and available services
- Use of benefit-based approaches and positive language to build influence and ownership at all levels
- Development of evidence to underpin change and evaluation

Commitment to immediate support and response for victims/survivors of FGM/C and VAWG

- Provision of comprehensive, survivor-centred, coordinated and multi-sectoral services, including referral mechanisms (mainly VAWG)
- Protection of women and girls, including providing safety from immediate threat and risk of violence
- Prosecution and rehabilitation of perpetrators
- Remedies and reparations for survivors

2.3
What types of interventions seem most effective

Despite the wealth of documentation, resources and reporting on programmes, the literature on FGM/C and VAWG has consistently lamented the shortage of high quality evidence on effectiveness and results achieved. Fortunately, recognition of this shortage of data, analysis and evidence has triggered more research and is leading to an emerging body of valuable information. As a result, a number of review and synthesis papers looking at FGM/C and VAWG make reference to good practice, lessons learned, what seems to work and what types of interventions seem less effective or unproven. [23]

An article published in April 2014 in the *Lancet* examines evidence on violence against women and girls including intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence and harmful traditional practices.[24] One of the paper's key messages is that, at a high level, successful programmes engage multiple stakeholders with multiple approaches. These aim to address underlying risk factors for violence—including social norms that condone violence and gender inequality—and support the development of non-violent behaviour. The paper discusses a number of categories of programmes working to prevent or respond to violence, and identifies those that had more or less success. Overall, it highlights that the more interconnected an initiative is with local communities, other sectors, other programmes and other agencies working to end FGM/C or VAWG, the higher the likelihood of effectiveness.

A 2014 World Bank paper presents similar findings to those in the *Lancet*. It highlights that initiatives that 'addressed underlying risk factors for violence, including social norms regarding gender dynamics and the acceptability of violence' were more effective than those that did not. Furthermore, the review showed that for low and middle income countries, promising evidence-based approaches included i) community mobilization, ii) empowerment training for women and girls, iii) workshops for women and men, and iv) economic empowerment and income supplements plus gender equality training. For most other types of interventions, including work on engaging men and boys to end FGM/C and VAWG, evidence was either insufficient or conflicting. This does not mean that these approaches do not work, but it does point to a need for improved programme design, development of clear indicators and careful monitoring.

The same World Bank-sponsored study also found evidence that a few approaches were ineffective. These included: stand-alone media-based awareness raising campaigns; re-training for traditional FGM/C excisors; and stand-alone programmes to train specific personnel—such as police, teachers and health workers—to respond to FGM/C or VAWG.[25]

Another systematic review (2013) of interventions to reduce FGM/C reached similar conclusions to those on VAWG.[26] In addition, it offered insights into ways to improve effectiveness which include the need

23 Berg, R. C. & E. Denison. 2013. A Tradition in Transition: Factors Perpetuating and Hindering the Continuance of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). Summarized in a Systematic Review, Health Care for Women International, 34:10, 837-859; Arango, D. M Morton, F Gennari, S Kiplesund, M. Ellsberg. 2014. Interventions to Prevent or Reduce Violence Against Women and Girls: A systematic review of reviews. Women's Voice and Agency Research Series 2014 No 10. World Bank; and Population Reference Bureau. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. 2013. Lessons from a decade of progress. USAID. Washington; Heise, L. 2011. What works to prevent partner violence: an evidence overview. DFID.

24 Ellsberg, M., D. Arango, M Morton, F Gennari, S Kiplesund, M Contreras, C Watts. 2014. Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say? Published in The Lancet online http://www.thelancet.com/series/violence-against-women-and-girls;

25 Arango, D. M Morton, F Gennari, S Kiplesund, M. Ellsberg. 2014. Interventions to Prevent or Reduce Violence Against Women and Girls: A systematic review of reviews. Women's Voice and Agency Research Series 2014 No 10. World Bank.

26 R. C. Berg & E. Denison. 2013. A Tradition in Transition: Factors Perpetuating and Hindering the Continuance of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). Summarized in a Systematic Review, Health Care for Women International, 34:10, 837-859;

to i) establish community approved non-sectarian organizations to coordinate or lead work on FGM/C abandonment; ii) engage community decision makers; and iii) design interventions to be culturally-responsive and tailored to local needs.

A slightly divergent systematic review (2015) examines 10 years of literature on the role of men in abandonment of FGM/C. It did not look specifically at effectiveness, but rather identified factors that contribute to men's support of abandonment. Findings relate to i) the importance of culturally-sensitive education messages in changing men's and boys' attitudes to FGM/C; ii) the ways that social obligation pressures influence men's acceptance of FGM/C differently in different settings; iii) barriers created by lack of dialogue between men and women on the subject of FGM/C; and iv) the effectiveness of men as advocates in both health and community programmes on abandonment.[27] Importantly, there appears to be general consensus in the literature on engaging men and boys in ending FGM/C and VAWG, that promoting discussion on gender power relations and culturally-specific beliefs among men and boys is an important intervention in and of itself, and also serves as a key mechanism for adapting interventions to local contexts.[28]

27 Varol, N. S. Turkmani, K. Black, J. Hall, and A. Dawson. 2015. The Role of Men in Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation: A systematic review. BioMed Central Public Health (2015) 15:1034.

28 Edström, J.; Hassink, A.; Shahrokh, T. and Stern, E. (eds). 2015. 'Engendering Men: A Collaborative Review of Evidence on Men and Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality', EMERGE Evidence Review, Promundo-US, Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute of Development Studies; see also: Flood, M. 2007. Harmful Traditional and Cultural Practices Related to Violence Against Women and Successful Strategies to Eliminate Such Practices – Working with Men. Paper presented to UNESCAP Expert Group Meeting April 2007. Bangkok; See also Men Speak Out website on men's engagement in ending FGM/C: www.menspeakout.eu

3. STRATEGIES TO INFLUENCE POLICY COHERENCE

FGM/C and VAWG frameworks seek to ensure cross-sector policy coherence through strategies that include legislation against discrimination and violence against women and girls, national action plans that promote gender equality, increased awareness of links between ending violence and achieving positive development results, and coordination across different sectors.

3.1
Guiding international norms and standards and regional conventions

International and regional agreed norms and standards support the elimination of FGM/C and VAWG. These norms and standards, guided by international instruments and agreements, provide the core rationale for FGM/C and VAWG frameworks. They can be adapted and used at multiple levels to support national initiatives, and can then facilitate increased multi-country collaborations.

The United Nations international conventions and covenants on human rights such as the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), are key reference points for legislation and policy at the national level. As a reference source for these instruments, the Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls provides an extensive listing of (and relevant links to) all international human rights legal and policy documents on FGM/C and VAWG. It also includes regional charters, declarations and resolutions. Further, the site also links to Treaty Monitoring Committee sites, General Recommendations and

General Comments, and identifies specific paragraphs referencing all forms of violence against women and girls.[29]

At the regional level, the European Commission works with European Union (EU) members to implement and enforce the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the 'Istanbul Convention'). The Commission and member states provide multi-lateral and bilateral support to end VAWG, often in the same countries where they support FGM/C abandonment. On FGM/C, the European Commission works collectively to support African and Middle Eastern countries to eliminate FGM/C through dialogue and investment. The Commission communicates with the European Parliament on both FGM/C and VAWG and, in relation to FGM/C, specifically reports on issues related to i) protection and provision of asylum to girls and women at risk of FGM/C and other harmful practices; ii) prosecution of crimes related to FGM/C

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29 UN Women Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence Against Women and Girls. Webpage on sources of international human rights law on female genital mutilation. http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/645-sources-of-international-human-rights-law-on-female-genital-mutilation.html

in the European Union (EU); and iii) promoting social change to end the practice.[30]

In addition, the Istanbul Convention is an instrument that engages European and other Member States of the Council of Europe in discussions on rights, gender inequality, and structural barriers to women's empowerment. The convention takes a holistic approach to tackling VAWG and FGM/C. It identifies a number of innovative policy mechanisms, and is open for signature and ratification by all states, not just Council of Europe members.[31] Similarly, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights provides oversight on the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (also known as the Maputo Protocol). The Protocol explicitly prohibits FGM/C and has resulted in a General Comment on sexual and reproductive rights and clearly recognizes that FGM/C is a violation of women's and girls' rights and freedoms.[32] The Commission receives state reports and provides a forum for discussion, debate and regional action on ending FGM/C and VAWG.[33] The Convention of Belem Do Para provides similar guidance, support and a framework for action on VAWG in the Inter-American states. Belem Do Para does not address FGM/C explicitly as this is not as grave an issue in Latin America.

The 2015 Sustainable Development Goals also provide new guidance to countries through inclusion of targets on VAWG as well as harmful practices. Targets for both elimination of all harmful practices (5.3) and elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls (5.2) are under Goal 5: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, reinforcing that FGM/C and VAWG have common underlying causes and require common strategies to eliminate them.

There are a number of other agreements that support addressing FGM/C and harmful practices in the context of the gender inequality that underlies all forms of violence against women and girls. These include broad global agreements such at the Beijing Platform for Action and the agreed conclusions of the 57th Commission on the Status of Women (2013) on the Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence against Women and Girls. Also worth mentioning is the 2014 Joint General Recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and General Comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices.[34] International and regional recognition of all forms of violence against women and girls, as indicators of gender inequality, creates leverage to encourage states to more clearly demonstrate their stated commitments and fulfill their human rights obligations. [35]

30 European Commission. 2013. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Toward the End of Female Genital Mutilation. Brussels, 25.11.2013, COM (2013) 833 final

31 For information see the website of the Council of Europe, Istanbul Convention Webpage: http://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention

32 The General Comment associated with the Maputo Protocol is: General Comment No. 2 on Article 14.1 (a), (b), (c) and (f) and Article 14. 2 (a) and (c) of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

33 Webpage linking to resolutions and state reports on FGM/C: http://www.achpr.org/search/?q=female+genital+mutilation

34 Joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, General Comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices (2014). Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, General Recommendation No.14 on the right to the highest attainable standard of health (2000).

35 Sustainable Development Goals website. Decisions page: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/women/decisions

3.2
National legislation

Cross-references between human rights commitments, regional declarations and resolutions on FGM/C and VAWG demonstrate that there is ongoing dialogue and integration at the global and regional levels. Integration from there to the national level however, is less standardized. Consequently, the connections between national statements of intent that are made in multi-country settings, to actual national development policies and implementation of laws are more difficult to track in the literature.

For example, UNICEF's Statistical Overview of FGM/C notes that 24 of the 29 countries where FGM/C is concentrated and examined in that 2013 analysis have enacted decrees or legislation related to FGM/C, in at least some sub-national jurisdictions[36] and the Gambia adopted legislation banning the practice most recently in 2015. VAWG legislation protecting women from intimate partner violence exists in 11

of the countries. Partial legal coverage for intimate partner violence exists in another eight countries, and in 11 countries there is no legislation at all. Rape is more highly legislated than intimate partner violence in countries with FGM/C laws—29 countries have rape included in the penal code and one country has some partial references to prosecution of rape. (See Table 1). It should be noted that in all but a few cases rape legislation excludes marital rape. It should also be noted that in Nigeria and Sudan, legislation on domestic violence, rape and FGM/C can be handled within both federal and state jurisdictions although the specifics of legislation and criminalization may vary between levels. This makes it more complex to compare national information, and requires special measures to track progress by different states. Further, there is lack of clarity on data presented for Sudan. Few sources clarify if information relates to the Republic of Sudan or South Sudan.

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36 UNICEF. 2013. Female Genital Mutilation: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change. New York. It is also worth noting that FGM/C legislation also exists in 33 countries outside of Africa and the Middle East to provide protection to women and girls who are part of the African and Middle Eastern diaspora.

TABLE 1
Legislation on Domestic Violence, Rape and FGM/C

Country	Existence of legislation on domestic violence [a]	Existence of legislation on rape in penal code [a]	Existence of FGM/C legislation [b]
Benin	Yes	Yes	Yes
Burkina Faso	No	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	No	Yes	No
Central African Republic	Partial	Partial	Yes
Chad	Partial	Yes	Yes
Côte d'Ivoire	No	Yes	Yes
Djibouti [c]	No	Yes	Yes
Egypt	Partial	Yes	Yes
Eritrea	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ethiopia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gambia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ghana	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guinea	Partial	Yes	Yes
Guinea-Bissau	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indonesia	Yes	Yes	No
Iraq	Only in Kurdish Autonomous Region	Yes	Only in Kurdish Autonomous Region
Kenya [d]	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liberia	No	Yes	No
Mali	No	Yes	No
Mauritania	No	Yes	Yes
Niger	Partial	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Partial	Yes	Yes
Senegal	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sierra Leone	Yes	Yes	No
Somalia	No	Yes	Yes
Sudan	No	Yes	Yes (some states)
Togo	No	Yes	Yes
Uganda	Yes	Yes	Yes
United Republic of Tanzania	Partial	Yes	Yes
Yemen	No	Yes	Yes

Note: Partial legislation indicates that there are aspects of general legislation – e.g. for assault – that partially cover crimes associated with rape or domestic violence.

Source: [a] OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index http://genderindex.org/countries is the source of most of the data on rape and domestic violence legislation. [b] All information on FGM/C legislation comes from UNICEF. 2013. Female Genital Mutilation: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change, New York, with the exception of information on Iraq which is sourced from the NGO WADI http://www.stopfgmmideast.org/countries/iraq/. Information on domestic violence and rape was cross-checked where possible with World Bank data on protecting women from violence http://wbl.worldbank.org/data/exploretopics/protecting-women-from-violence. [c] Additional information on Djibouti is sourced from UNICEF http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Djibouti-Gender-Eqaulity-Profile-2011.pdf and [d] for Kenya from All Africa website http://allafrica.com/stories/201505201065.html

To ensure appropriate design, content and applicability of legislation, development partners and NGOs support states to draft or improve legislation. In 2010, UNICEF published a detailed guide titled *Legislative Reform to Support the Abandonment of FGM/C*. In addition to detailed analysis and explanation about legal reform, it provides a checklist for development of laws on FGM/C, and annexes that include listings of i) applicable international and regional binding and non-binding instruments on FGM/C; ii) most featured national laws representing good practice; and iii) international and regional normative frameworks.[37] Amnesty International and the Council of Europe have also published a guide to accompany the 'Istanbul Convention' that includes information, good practice, protocols and other guidance on enforcement of laws and agreements to end violence against women and girls and specifically FGM/C. [38]

UN Women has developed a *Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women*, a *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women*, and a *Supplement to the Handbook for Legislation* specific to "Harmful Practices" against Women.[39] The handbook on legislation first outlines the international and regional legal and policy frameworks that mandate States to enact and implement comprehensive and effective laws to address VAWG. It then presents a model framework for such legislation. Finally, it provides a checklist of considerations when drafting legislation on VAWG. Other organizations including the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) also provide support to decision-makers to both develop and use VAWG legislation. [40]

Legislation, when combined with other efforts to end FGM/C and VAWG, is an important tool to raise awareness of the issues with lawmakers, and foster discussion within civil society. Legal rationales can be articulated and discussed in political and judicial venues, and trainings can be conducted on their application. Once laws have been passed, increasing the visibility of cases brought to justice can help to strengthen the legitimacy of social movements that support ending FGM/C or VAWG, thereby accelerating social change. At the same time, if legislation is not clear, or not appropriately contextualized and explained in relation to FGM/C and VAWG offenses, it can be challenging to train enforcement, legal and judicial personnel on how to apply the law.

There are a number of prerequisites needed for legislation to be effective. It must be clearly articulated and applied in coordination with other elements of FGM/C and VAWG frameworks including: i) efforts to change adverse social norms; ii) action to generate commitment to women's and girls' rights at the community level; iii) establishment of feasible protection measures; and iv) mechanisms that support women and girls to report crimes.

There is currently more policy emphasis on adopting legislation to end FGM/C and VAWG than monitoring/supporting its use and enforcement. Yet without properly enforced legislation, national action plans and programmes to end FGM/C and VAWG operate from a weaker position. Recent data indicate that only 44 per cent of countries with domestic/family violence legislation report these laws being

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37 UNICEF. 2010. Legislative Reform to Support the Abandonment of FGM/C. http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/UNICEF_-_LRI_Legislative_Reform_to_support_the_Abandonment_of_FGMC_August_2010.pdf

38 Council of Europe and Amnesty International. 2014. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence: A tool to end female genital mutilation. Council of Europe. Strasbourg.

39 UN Women. 2012. Handbook for legislation on violence against women. http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/12/handbook-for-legislation-on-violence-against-women; Women. 2012. Handbook for National Action Plans of violence against women http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/7/handbook-for-national-action-plans-on-violence-against-women; Women. 2012. Supplement to the Handbook for legislation on violence against women http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/12/handbook-for-legislation-on-violence-against-women

40 Website of the Inter-parliamentary Union. Webpage on priorities for ending violence against women: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/vaw/priorities.htm

fully enforced.[41] Resistance to creating legislation and failure to implement existing laws undermines other policy efforts aiming to end violence. It demonstrates that not enough senior government officials take gender equality and the issues of FGM/C and VAWG seriously. It hinders reporting of cases and provision of necessary support services for survivors. It heightens the constraints of enforcement due to deeply engrained patterns of discrimination and unbalanced gender power relations at the household level, in policing and community courts.

Related to FGM/C, the organization '28 Too Many' collaborated with the university of Oxford and Lawyers Without Borders to compile information on legislation and enforcement in seven African countries and the UK. Their analysis indicates that while all FGM/C specific legislation has resulted in some legal action, it is small in relation to national incidences of cutting. In the case of VAWG, there is very limited data on the percentage of VAWG cases reported to the police and taken to court. Anecdotal

evidence indicates that only a small percentage of cases are reported to police and that an even smaller number are prosecuted.[42] In the majority of countries with available data, less than 40 per cent of women who experience violence seek help of any sort. Among women who do, most look to family and friends and very few look to formal institutions and mechanisms, such as police and health services. Less than 10 per cent of women seeking help for experience of violence appealed to the police.[43] Engrained values held by individual police, legal and judicial personnel, social pressure by families and communities, coercion by spouses and lack of support services for survivors wishing to leave abusive relationships all influence enforcement of domestic violence legislation. In addition, for both FGM/C and VAWG, limited effectiveness of training provided to judges, parliamentarians and police, lack of personnel with knowledge of FGM/C or VAWG specific laws, remoteness of villages, strength of customary law, and ongoing civil conflicts are all identified as constraints to enforcement. [44]

3.3
Advocacy, awareness-raising and education at all levels

Advocacy campaigns are an element of most FGM/C and VAWG programmes. Objectives may include raising awareness, stimulating discussion and debate within communities and in society-at-large, increasing commitment to end violence, educating the general public or specific groups of women and/or men, and generating demand for legislation and government action. While evidence reviews have found that one-off advocacy campaigns are ineffective, well-coordinated efforts can have varying degrees of impact, especially

when they are complemented with other interventions addressing FGM/C and VAWG. Here, a common understanding of issues can support more coherent commitment and action on multiple fronts.

Coordinated advocacy statements—by human rights organizations, national and international NGOs, and multilateral and bilateral development agencies—can support alignment of national legislative frameworks

41 WHO, UNODC, UNDP. 2014. Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2015. Geneva, Switzerland

42 See descriptive supplemental information on data websites of OECD and World Bank. OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index: http://genderindex.org/countries; and World Bank data on protecting women from violence http://wbl.worldbank.org/data/exploretopics/protecting-women-from-violence.

43 United Nations Economic and Social Affairs. 2015. The World's Women 2015, Trends and Statistics. New York.

44 28 Too Many and Oxford Lawyers Without Borders. 2015. FGM Research Collaboration Panel Newsletter. http://28toomany.org/media/uploads/oxlwob_newsletter_2015.pdf. For an academic analysis of this issue see for example: Shell-Duncan, B., Y. Hernlund, K. Wander, A. Moreau. 2013. Legislating Change? Responses to Criminalizing Female Genital Cutting in Senegal. Law and Society Association. In relation to VAWG see Denny, L. and A Ibrahim. 2012. Violence Against Women in Sierra Leone: How Women Seek Redress. Politics and Governance Series. Overseas Development Institute. London. http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8175.pdf

with international standards on gender equality. For FGM/C, for example, international advocacy supports improved coordination of legal approaches in migrant-receiving countries.[45] In addition, advocacy targeting decision-makers who develop policy, done by global networks of politicians themselves—for example, the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) and IPU—supports education about FGM/C and VAWG for a group that is critical to facilitating development, implementation and monitoring of legislation.[46]

In Africa and globally, women's human rights organizations and development partners can be instrumental in using their own networks, advocacy and education campaigns, and training courses to help disseminate the work of governments and NGOs working on FGM/C and VAWG. These more broadly-focused rights networks often add analysis and information to the original advocacy messages, which helps contextualize issues for their members and the public.[47]

3.4
Coordination and collaboration

FGM/C and VAWG frameworks, and research on effectiveness of interventions to end all forms of violence, clearly indicate that coordination and collaboration through multiple entry points are critical to progress. Collaboration at a national or local level allows exchange of technical knowledge, sharing of information and increased coherence within VAWG programmes and within FGM/C programmes. Identification of overlap between FGM/C and VAWG initiatives at the legislative, policy and programme design level could prompt better use of knowledge, time and funds for all development partners.

Yet in many cases, FGM/C and VAWG initiatives operate in parallel with little or no consultation or coordination at the government, NGO or community level. This creates a risk that policies may compete for limited resources. It can also stretch human resources too thin to meet demands from FGM/C and VAWG interventions, and marginalize some programming priorities.

It is important that planners recognize that managing coordinated initiatives is a technical task requiring

specific skills and dedicated effort. Poorly designed collaboration efforts can lead to excessive meetings, additional layers of bureaucracy and work, including new task forces and committees, that put unrealistic time demands on all programming partners, create burnout, and hinder achievement of results. Ideally, efforts to increase collaboration between FGM/C and VAWG initiatives would begin with careful planning and testing of flexible approaches that include regular analysis of process and results. Collaboration should also take place through existing national mechanisms linked to national development plans and multiple sectors.

Multi-country collaboration, broadly defined, is any effort to consistently bring together programme groups, organizations, and/or governments to work together on a common theme and agree on strategies to move forward with a mutual agenda.

45 WHO. 2008. Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: an interagency statement; see also UNICEF. 2010. Platform for Action: Toward the Abandonment of FGM/C. A statement by the donor working group on FGM/C. See also mission statement of selected FGM/C NGOs http://16days.thepixelproject.net/16-organisations-charities-and-grass-roots-groups-working-to-stop-fgm/. On VAWG see UNITE campaign http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/.

46 Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa. http://www.awepa.org/programmes/female-genital-mutilation-cutting-programme/. See also AWEPA. 2012. Guidelines for Parliamentarians: Abandoning Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. http://www.awepa.org/?s=guidelines+abandoning+female+genital+mutilation&lang=en

47 A sample of advocacy groups taking different approaches, but all supporting an end to VAWG and FGM/C include: http://www.africa4womensrights.org/public/Dossier_of_Claims/GambiaENG.pdf; http://www.federationgams.org/presentation_english.php; http://www.equalitynow.org/fgm http://www.desertflowerfoundation.org/index.php/en/home.html

Multi-country collaboration to end VAWG and FGM/C can serve a number of purposes: i) they can draw attention to issues at a higher level and are more likely to involve senior decision makers, ii) they can facilitate mutual learning by disseminating information on benefits and good practices, iii) they can support testing programme approaches in different settings and concurrently accommodate the realities of cross-border ethnic groups, and iv) they can create economies of scale for development organizations and regional government groupings.

Existing mechanisms that can bring countries together to strategize on FGM/C and VAWG legislation, policy development and programming for FGM/C abandonment include regional multilateral agencies like the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the United Nations, donor working groups, international or regional NGOs, human rights and legal advocacy groups and other multi-lateral groupings including the European Union and African Union. Groups such as the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Harmful Practices is another group that brings together advocates from the continent to lobby politicians, raise awareness and support programmes that are working to end harmful practices.[48]

The NGO Tostan, although based in Senegal, runs programmes regionally in both East and West Africa in collaboration with local NGOs. Bringing those NGOs together to share information about mobilizing communities, ending FGM/C and VAWG, linking grass-roots action to legislative change, and then monitoring progress, results in considerable value-added. Through its training center, activists from across the continent benefit from capacity building, awareness of broader political and human rights agendas and how to apply these at the community level.[49]

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48 Website of Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices. http://www.iac-ciaf.net

49 Tostan website. Training Centre webpage. http://tostan.org/TTC

4. COMMON POLICY LESSONS FROM FGM/C AND VAWG INITIATIVES

Analyzing the inter-related policy issues contained in the literature on FGM/C and VAWG can offer valuable insights on how to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to end violence and harmful practices.

The literature emphasizes that FGM/C and VAWG takes place at the intersection of many different cultural, social, political and economic forces. A number of sources also stress how different types of VAWG, including FGM/C, vary from culture to culture and by national geo-political setting.[50] The purpose of this section is to raise policy issues that can inform and improve efforts to address and eliminate FGM/C and VAWG while concurrently i) increasing actions to promote non-discrimination against women and girls, and ii) aligning with international norms and standards for gender equality.

4.1

Existing knowledge and experience provides valuable information but data and evidence is still lacking

As discussed earlier, there is a wealth of information on FGM/C and VAWG commitments, frameworks, policies and programmes in the literature and online. While this includes solid analyses on underlying causes of violence and types of interventions that seem to be effective, the literature highlights that significant weaknesses and gaps in knowledge also exist, particularly around effectiveness, good practices, lessons learned and results achieved. For example, few programmes combine clear theories of change, strong methodological design, simple but comprehensive monitoring indicators and evaluation plans. Without these components in place it is difficult to develop conclusive evidence about what works and what does not work.

In addition, FGM/C and VAWG are contextual problems, and responses need to be sensitive to

the culture, politics and economic realities of each national or sub-national setting. This means that a 'one size fits all' approach will not work. More financial resources and local technical expertise are necessary to fit global lessons to local settings; and to translate local evidence into higher-level analyses.

Further, resources are also sorely required to address the considerable weaknesses in collection of qualitative and quantitative data and analysis at the programme level. Data limitations make it very challenging, for example, to explore correlations and common risk factors for intimate partner violence, sexual violence and FGM/C. Another challenge is the need to adapt and refine common indicators to culturally-specific settings in order to assess different types of violence. This observation reinforces the need to develop specific policy direction on evidence creation and quality of data.

See also section 5.3 for more discussion on addressing gaps in data and evidence generation and analysis.

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50 Fulu, F and L. Heise. 2014. What do we know about violence against women and girls and what more do we need to know to prevent it? A summary of evidence. UK Aid. London. http://www.svri.org/WhatKnowSummary.pdf

4.2
Promoting social change by building political will at all levels is critical to sustainability

Building political will, and ownership of stated commitments to end FGM/C and VAWG is critical to sustainability of that work. Creation, and more importantly, demonstration of political will is needed not only in national political arenas, but also within development agencies, by senior decision makers in all types of organizations and with the support of civil society. Furthermore, it is also needed at community level, among male and female opinion leaders and decision-makers, service providers and within families. At each of these levels, decisions about changing longstanding social norms and behaviours are inherently political.

There are numerous existing strategies to develop political will, foster social change and create ownership of the FGM/C and VAWG agendas. These include:

• Consulting with communities on their priorities and concerns;
• Identifying and engaging with local, regional and national opinion leaders and helping them to become change agents;
• Building value-based understanding among all stakeholders that gender equality and ending all forms of violence makes sense in terms of family stability, social and economic development, and sustainability;[51]
• Presenting convincing rigorously analyzed data and evidence that violence against women and girls constrains desired development results;
• Helping governments take step-by-step action on international and regional human rights commitments;
• Developing and financing the implementation of legislation; and

• Integrating protocols for ending FGM/C and VAWG into existing programmes for health, education and economic empowerment initiatives.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies has been done to varying degrees in different countries and by different organizations. This is a continuing area of work.

'Lessons learned' publications, and the synthesis literature on FGM/C and VAWG stress the complexity and layers of commitment that hold people to their worldviews about gender relations and related social norms. There is also anecdotal evidence that it is harder for leaders to fully commit to policy and legal changes on complex and power related gender issues, than those associated with more 'neutral' issues.[52] Complex belief systems tether high-level decision makers to their own deeply rooted personal, social, and cultural beliefs, meaning that passing legislation, changing policy, or allocating resources to ending FGM/C or VAWG can end up a much more complex and conflicting decision than, for example, changing fiscal or health policy or the education curriculum for mathematics.

As discussed in Section 3, in countries where FGM/C is concentrated there has been more success introducing specific legislation on FGM/C and rape than on development of laws to stop intimate partner or domestic violence. From a gender equality perspective, this is interesting. It appears to show that there is less resistance to laws that 'protect' women and girls, than to laws that more overtly challenge gender power relations within the family.

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51 Value-based understanding is an understanding that resonates with an existing worldview and can be conceptualized in an individual's current socio-economic and cultural setting.

52 While there is little large scale and definitive evidence on this point it can be illustrated for example by the nature of rulings handed down in sentencing for gender-linked crimes when made by male judges in settings where changes in social norms have lagged behind changes in legislation. Further, the relatively more intense degree of advocacy and education required to pass legislation on family protection and ending VAWG compared to more neutral topics also points to engrained resistance at the leadership level.

It may be valuable in this regard therefore, for policy discussions to explore the strategies used to influence decision-makers to adopt FGM/C legislation, so as to potentially use related strategies to advocate for legislation against intimate partner violence.

Statements of political will – only the first step

Statements related to FGM/C abandonment within one generation or time-bound targets for declines in FGM/C and VAWG prevalence are, when examined in relation to trend data, realistic for some countries and aspirational for others.[53]

While statements of commitment are preliminary elements of political will, demonstrating action on those statements often takes much longer to manifest. Timeframes for change are an issue raised in reviews of progress to date. Analysis centers on how accurately trend data can track real change in social attitudes. In some cases, it may be discouraging to NGOs to see only incremental changes in data when key cohorts of people seem to be actively participating in programmes.[54] Estimation of when a critical mass of opinion will affect more significant change and how long that will take, are important discussion points and need to be closely monitored.

Factors that seem to help move stated political will into political action need to show that change will have national benefit and reflect positively on political leaders, or at the community level that it will have tangible benefit for men, women and children. One example is the use of multiple programme interventions combined in a holistic way, which have shown to accelerate change in behaviours linked to both FGM/C and VAWG.

Most governments have not yet taken significant steps to integrate FGM/C or VAWG into national strategic development plans and budgets. The sustainability of programmes thus requires ongoing technical, financial and advocacy inputs from development partners. At the same time, it is important that national policy also continues to focus on tackling FGM/C and VAWG and mainstreaming gender equality as a 'whole of government' responsibility—not just a task assigned to the national women's machinery. This issue is discussed in some FGM/C literature, but is more commonly found in VAWG and gender mainstreaming discussions.[55]

4.3

Organizational and community attitudes and commitments contribute to changing social norms

Because FGM/C and VAWG most often manifest as intimate, family-centered forms of violence, building political will at the community level is important for programme uptake and sustainability. Finding effective entry points to promote a shared understanding of human rights principles, stimulate commitment, and change social norms are objectives of most initiatives to end FGM/C and VAWG.

At the community level, there are a number of considerations that are related to political will. These include recognizing the importance of engaging male gatekeepers, discussing masculinities and gender roles, and promoting awareness of how FGM/C and VAWG inhibit overall development, health and economic security. Recent studies stress

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53 UNICEF. 2013. Female Genital Mutilation: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change.

54 Rosche, D. 2015. Close the Gap: How to Eliminate Violence Against Women Beyond 2015. Oxfam Briefing Note. Oxford. And Population Reference Bureau. 2013. Ending Female Genital Mutilation: Lessons from a decade of progress;

55 UN Women. 2012. Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women

the importance of addressing masculinities and supporting men and boys to think critically about how violence affects them and their communities.[56] Similar work is being done in both FGM/C and VAWG programmes, and positive results have been reported from working with different configurations of groups (women only, men only and mixed sex groups) to build understanding and commitment.

Efforts to make government services more sensitive to issues of violence can also show positive community level results in FGM/C and VAWG programmes, although more evidence is needed to draw conclusions on direct causality. One example is using informal and formal education, and in some cases social media, to influence opinions about FGM/C and VAWG. Surveys indicate that in many countries, younger men and women disagree more than older adults when asked if men are justified in hitting their partners—this could be linked to exposure to value-based discussions in schools or social media campaigns.[57] There is also evidence from some countries that young men and women with more education are less likely to consider FGM/C an important criterion for a woman's marriageability.[58] Another example relates to mainstreaming FGM/C and VAWG response into health systems and service provision. When this is integrated with staff training on gender equality, it has been shown to build commitment to women's and girls' rights among health service providers. Such lessons are essential to inform evolving programme design and help develop a critical mass of understanding and opinion at both community and national levels.[59]

At the community level, a key policy consideration is including flexibility to test and adapt interventions to programme frameworks and, where appropriate, to replicate them in other contexts. Over the past decades, the following approaches have been tested:

• Alternative rites of passage to substitute for FGM/C;
• Working with young men on alternatives to macho and violent expressions of masculinity;
• Use of individual change agents as examples of alternative ways of thinking and behaving;
• General community-based programmes on education and economic empowerment; and
• Establishing protection networks and safe houses for girls escaping FGM/C.

Overall, the literature identifies some key factors that can strengthen community commitment and also benefit learning and effectiveness. These include: adaptability and flexibility of programming; using approaches that meet practical needs of both men and women in the community while at the same time promoting the strategic interests of women; and ensuring that stakeholders (male and female, and of all ages) are engaged and educated about the benefits of gender equality and ending violence.

In addition, particularly from an implementation perspective, involving community stakeholders in programme design and assessment can improve analysis, monitoring and evaluation of how change happens and how age, customs and gender intersect with decision-making. As an example, the SASA programme, based in Uganda, uses a four-stage approach to community engagement. First, men and women in communities are involved in critical analysis of power relations initially focused within

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56 Jewkes, R. M. Flood, J. Lang. 2014. From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls. Published in the Lancet online http://www.thelancet.com/series/violence-against-women-and-girls

57 Edström, J.; Hassink, A.; Shahrokh, T. and Stern, E. (eds). 2015. 'Engendering Men: A Collaborative Review of Evidence on Men and Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality', EMERGE Evidence Review, Promundo-US, Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute of Development Studies; see also

58 UNICEF. 2013. Female Genital Mutilation: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change. New York

59 See Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence Against Women, Health webpage: http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/325-health.html; For related discussions see: Johansen, R.E., N. Diop, G. Laverack, L. Els. 2012. What Works and What Doesn't: A discussion of interventions for abandonment of female genital mutilation. Community Medicine and Health Education. 2:5. http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/2161-0711.1000151; and Berg. C and Denison, E. 2013. A Tradition in Transition: Factors Perpetuating and Hindering the Continuance of FGM/C Summarized in a Systematic Review. Health Care for Women International.

themselves. Second, they then examine how power is divided between men and women. This leads to the third step of wider community discussion and analysis of unequal male-female power relations, the potential of individuals to become activists, and what can be done, on a community-by-community basis to promote equality, and end violence and the spread of HIV. Finally, communities are encouraged to mobilize and become activists working to end VAWG and HIV. Monitoring and reporting on this and similar programmes contribute to building the available evidence on factors influencing social change, and should be shared as valuable learning between FGM/C and VAWG programmes.[60]

Collaborative and tailored interventions support enabling environments for change

Tailoring human rights-based programming principles to national, ethnic, and community contexts can help to facilitate change. This can make programme strategies more relevant to participants and thus more likely to achieve desired results.[61] These principles mesh with those used in VAWG prevention frameworks, including the use of: i) ecological/ holistic models for intervention design that use sustained multi-sector efforts; ii) analysis of gender power relations as a component of programming that encourages critical analysis at the individual and community level; and iii) identification of aspirational and transformational objectives that inspire community and individual action.[62]

FGM/C and VAWG frameworks recognize that addressing problems in the context in which they occur requires meaningful inclusion of stakeholders at each level. Meaningful inclusion implies that stakeholders' views are carefully considered in consultation, their analysis is weighed and assessed against common interests and, as much as possible, their views and concerns are integrated in programme designs.

Transformational approaches, with longer monitoring horizons, aim to rebalance social and gender relations. These include women's and girls' empowerment programmes and initiatives to engage men and boys in ending FGM/C and VAWG. Because these programmes can be perceived to challenge unequal gender power relations and social norms that can perpetuate and/ or condone VAWG, clear culture-specific objectives are mandatory to ensure community acceptance. This is another area where shared experience between FGM/C and VAWG programmes could be beneficial.

Working with agents of change to transform gender relations and social norms is common to both FGM/C and VAWG programmes. They are a key stakeholder group to engage, and an important means of tackling challenges within specific contexts. It allows known individuals to engage with their own communities, build trust for new ideas and increase understanding that social change can be beneficial. This approach has shown positive effects at both national and community levels.[63]

60 All evidence reviews mention the need for more rigorous design of methodologies, indicators and monitoring plans. See for example: Ellsberg, M., D. Arango, M Morton, F Gennari, S Kiplesund, M Contreras, C Watts. 2015. Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say? Published in The Lancet,online http://www.thelancet.com/series/violence-against-women-and-girls; See also: UNFPA-UNICEF. 2013. Joint Evaluation. UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting: Accelerating Change. 2008- 2012. Vol 1.

61 Johansen, R.E., N. Diop, G. Laverack, L. Els. 2012. What Works and What Doesn't: A discussion of interventions for abandonment of female genital mutilation. Community Medicine and Health Education.

62 Michau, L et al. 2014. Prevention of violence against women and girls: lessons from practice. Published in The Lancet online http://www.thelancet.com/series/violence-against-women-and-girls

63 Population Reference Bureau. 2013. FGM/C Lessons from a decade of progress

Because of the need to adapt interventions to different levels or different local contexts the selection and roles of change agents will vary. Opinion leaders from different social positions (political, religious, traditional, educated elite) and older people who are afforded traditional/cultural respect are often engaged as key change agents.[64] It is important to celebrate their engagement and encourage them to build a critical mass of influence and opinion by educating their peers on the benefits of ending all forms of violence against women and girls.

Both FGM/C and VAWG use agents of change from specific social groups including fathers and/or mothers of young girls, grandmothers and mother-in-laws who have authority over their sons, health service providers, teachers, or adolescent girls and/or boys. With increased support from development partners, improving the technical and analytical capacity of change agents can be a powerful way to support them to change behaviour in others. Consultations and other ways to increase space for discussion, exploration and discovery; development of critical analysis skills; training on reproductive health and rights; and development of advocacy skills are included in many programmes as a way to build the capacity of those identified as potential change agents.

Interestingly, some initiatives place specific emphasis on what are known as positive deviants. These change agents are individuals who have already begun to question or challenge a social norm. The initiatives provide support to such individuals, helping them to model change in their personal and professional circles. For instance, involving men in speaking out against FGM/C makes it more feasible to challenge some specific ideas related to continuance of FGM/C. [65]

Male sexual preference or preference for a wife who has been cut or not is a discussion that can be most effectively led by men known to the community.[66] In addition, supporting men to speak about their feelings and perspectives—and to challenge the stigma associated with articulating alternative views about gender roles in relation to both FGM/C and VAWG—can facilitate broader and deeper self and peer-questioning that can help accelerate changing social norms.[67]

Collaboration and the sharing of good practices across sectors and between development partners, supports effective implementation of programmes, while reducing duplication of effort and the associated waste of human and financial resources. Similar objectives in FGM/C and VAWG programmes, for example those that involve interventions across sectors such as health, security/police/legal and social services require common national agreements. Often, these are similarly focused on gender equality and empowering women and girls. Collaboration at the policy level can help build more solid understanding of root problems and generate commitment for gender responsive work across sectors. This includes shared protocols that will support reliable delivery of quality services and production of evidence.

Importantly, collaboration at national levels does not mean that FGM/C and VAWG programmes at the community level will necessarily be delivered jointly,

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64 UNFPA-UNICEF. 2013. UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change. Summary report of phase one 2008 – 2013; See also Johansen, R.E., N. Diop, G. Laverack, L. Els. 2012. What Works and What Doesn't: A discussion of interventions for abandonment of female genital mutilation. Community Medicine and Health Education.

65 A network of men working as change agents from Europe to promote different thinking and behavior is Men Speak Out. Their work can be viewed at menspeakou.eu

66 Berg, R.C. & E. Denison (2013) A Tradition in Transition: Factors Perpetuating and Hindering the Continuance of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). Summarized in a Systematic Review, Health Care for Women International, 34:10, 837-859; see also UNICEF. 2013. Female Genital Mutilation: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change. New York.

67 See for example the programme work identified on websites of Promundo http://promundoglobal.org and Sonke Gender Justice http://www.genderjustice.org.za; See also Edström, J.; Hassink, A.; Shahrokh, T. and Stern, E. (eds) (2015) 'Engendering Men: A Collaborative Review of Evidence on Men and Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality', EMERGE Evidence Review, Promundo-US, Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute of Development Studies. http://promundoglobal.org/programs/engendering-men-evidence-on-routes-to-gender-equality-emerge/

as this may not be feasible in many settings. Rather, it supports harmonization of priorities, resources and data. As an example, the "Global guidelines for the provision of quality essential services for women and girls subject to violence", developed by UN Women and UNFPA, in partnership with WHO, UNODC and UNDP, provides guidance on coordination across sectors, leadership issues and governance mechanisms that can inform both FGM/C and VAWG programming. [68]

4.5
Technical capacity gaps hinder progress

A critical policy area needing attention is the shortage in technical capacity. This exists across governments and NGOs in developing countries and is a serious constraint to effective implementation of policies and programmes. Gender inequality exacerbates these shortages as many women have limited access to education, economic resources and decision-making forums, all systemic impediments that keep them from contributing to the development process. Other systemic barriers may include male-dominated government processes, lack of gender-sensitivity in decision-making, and limited budget allocations for addressing FGM/C and VAWG. In many cases, governments assign gender-related programmes to a single underfunded ministry—such as national women's machineries—rather than create structures that make meeting national commitments to gender equality a shared responsibility of the 'whole of government'.[69] In some cases FGM/C and VAWG programmes may be assigned to different ministries with no direction to share information or learning. This hinders technical capacity development as a whole, because efforts can be fragmented or silo-ed, and resources unnecessarily strained to meet both areas of work.

Technical capacity gaps are also evident elsewhere. Programmes may lack clear theories of change and monitoring indicators that can measure changes in knowledge, attitudes and social expectations leading to longer-term behaviour change. Despite receiving support from development partners, programmes can often face shortages of skilled staff at the national and community level, which impedes consistent implementation, monitoring and reporting. Furthermore, national NGOs working to end all types of violence are often forced to operate on the basis of short-term funding commitments that include onerous and duplicative reporting requirements. This can significantly hinder staff ability to focus on programme implementation. Donors are aware of these problems and are working to harmonize and coordinate their work with national and local NGOs to reduce them, but progress is uneven.

Harmonization between FGM/C and VAWG programmes has the potential to alleviate some technical capacity shortfalls, particularly at the analysis, government liaison, administration and monitoring levels.

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68 UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNODC. 2015. Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence- Core Elements and Quality Guidelines. New York.

69 Grown, C, G.Rao Gupta and A. Kes. 2005. Taking Action: Achieving gender equality and empowering women. Millennium Project. New York. http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/Gender-complete.pdf. See also. J. Cooper and G. Nelson. Two Roads, One Goal: Dual Strategy for Gender Equality Programming in the Millennium Development Fund. UN Women and UNDP.

4.6
Finding and developing synergies

The literature reflects how strategic alliances and resulting synergies can contribute to the momentum of somewhat separate global movements to end FGM/C and VAWG. Human rights, gender equality, community empowerment and health are the most common combination elements in both approaches; and collaboration among specialists in these fields has led to a wealth of inter-disciplinary development work.[70]

From the national policy level to local community programmes, increased collaboration and cooperation between FGM/C and VAWG initiatives has the potential to build knowledge, technical capacity and commitment to ending all types of violence against women and girls. Seizing on the inherent synergies can optimize the use of available skilled people, reduce costs, support accelerated change, improve monitoring and evaluation, and strengthen the evidence base.

Development agreements that mainstream action on VAWG, gender equality and against FGM/C across a number of government ministries can help dismantle existing sector silos. For example, work with ministries of health and education in Burkina Faso has resulted in introduction of FGM/C into the natural sciences curricula to clarify harmful impacts of the practice. In other countries, multi-sectoral work on legislative change has linked national women's machineries with the judiciary and legal professionals.[71] FGM/C and VAWG initiatives in some countries have also brought together gender equality NGOs and government to address human rights commitments in the preparation of reports to human rights treaty body monitoring committees. Financial inclusion initiatives are another indirect means of simultaneously reducing the risk of exposure to violence against women and girls and creating opportunities for women and girls to become more independent. While many of these approaches have not been rigorously evaluated, anecdotal information indicates that they may be capable of creating synergies in ending both FGM/C and VAWG, as one cash transfer could support change in both areas and concurrently improve women's status in the community.

On the flip side, there are governmental and development constraints to FGM/C and VAWG programming that are indirectly linked to lack of gender mainstreaming and lack of collaboration across sectors. An early evaluation of Tostan programmes in Senegal highlighted that implementation of FGM/C programmes is constrained by lack of infrastructure—including health, education and transportation infrastructure—and that participants cannot focus their energies on social change when their basic needs remain unmet.[72] This points to a need to mainstream gender equality objectives within cross-sector collaboration across a wider network of government sectors and NGOs than just health, education and justice.

Work in rural development and environment sectors to integrate women's and girls' empowerment strategies and involve women on local committees has been shown as a useful way to increase community respect for women's knowledge and ability to participate in decision-making.[73] This has spin-off effects at the household level, and the potential therefore to reduce violence against girls and women. For example,

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70 The spreadsheet of FGM/C resources demonstrates the interdisciplinary work done to date on the issue. See specific diverse example such as: UK multi-sector guidelines and interagency statements

71 UNFPA-UNICEF. 2013. UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change. Summary report of phase one 2008 – 2013.

72 Diop, N. et al. 2004. The Tostan Program: Evaluation of a Community Based Education Program in Senegal. Population Council. GTZ. Tostan.

73 See examples supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). http://www.ifad.org/story/feature/evaw/index.htm. See also: Brody A. et al. 2008. Gender and climate change: mapping the linkages. DFID and Institute of Development studies. Brighton. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/DFID_Gender_Climate_Change.pdf

community empowerment programmes that bring men and women together to discuss one set of issues—for example environmental or agricultural development—can later integrate more sensitive social issues, and eventually offer more opportunities for women to become confident leaders and speak out on abandonment of FGM/C and VAWG.[74] This reflects the fact that social norms and values at the individual level can be influenced in a non-directive manner by deliberating on issues that are agreed to be relevant to community values and empowerment, provided that discussions are guided within an overarching

human rights-based approach. Moreover, changes in social dynamics can foster alliances between men and women, and between groups of women and girls who previously had not worked together. Such generational synergies have been used to increase dialogue and support community-wide change. One example is "The Grandmother Project," which supports older women with information and advocacy skills and encourages them to use their traditional positions of respect to speak to younger men and women in the community about the abandonment of FGM/C.[75]

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74 See the Tostan website for links to examples, lessons learned and evaluative information. http://www.tostan.org/resources/evaluations-and-research

75 See The Grandmother Project website. http://www.grandmotherproject.org/?page_id=37.

5. GAPS IN THE LITERATURE AND AREAS OF CURRENT RESEARCH

As mentioned, despite the wealth of information available, gaps remain in the literature on the connections between VAWG and FGM/C as a manifestation of gender inequality and uneven gender power relations.[76] This section highlights four areas where there is scope for further analytical work to strengthen the inter-linkages between FGM/C and VAWG

5.1
Analysis of connections between FGM/C and VAWG

International norms and standards, grounded in CEDAW, CRC, CESCR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Convention against Torture (CAT) among others, can be used to address specific rights violations and associated types of violence against women and girls. In turn, linking types of violence and specific rights can facilitate effective action to end them. Types of violence include: i) physical, sexual and emotional violence against women by intimate partners and non-partners; ii) sexual exploitation and abuse of girls and women (particularly for the purposes of trafficking, prostitution and forced labor); iii) early marriage; and iv) FGM/C. While early marriage and FGM/C are sometimes grouped as harmful practices, they have, until recently, been treated quite separately in the literature on violence prevention and response.

While human rights standards are clear and provide solid policy and programme rationalization, there is very little literature that offers substantive analysis of underlying socio-cultural and economic links between

FGM/C and VAWG. The literature contains mainly generalized observations regarding discrimination on the grounds of sex as root causes of both FGM/C and VAWG. In addition, it reflects the idea that promoting gender equality is the underlying rights and policy principle central to ending both FGM/C and VAWG more broadly. In this regard, what is important to note is how recent programming evidence is showing the effectiveness of using the language and focus of power (rather than gender) to prevent VAWG.[77] Power analysis represents an important connection between FGM/C and VAWG that has not been fully explored.

There are two forthcoming research initiatives that may advance a deeper analysis of connections between FGM/C and VAWG. The first is being led by the International Center for Research on Women and the National University of Ireland. In 2015, they initiated a study on the socio-economic costs of violence against women, which aims to go beyond intimate partner violence and include all forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls in the home and community. Pilot countries include Ghana, Pakistan and South Sudan, where surveys included an

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76 For discussion of this point see What Works in preventing violence against women and girls: review of the evidence from the programme https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-works-in-preventing-violence-against-women-and-girls-review-of-the-evidence-from-the-programme

77 See exploration of power analysis as an approach to ending violence against women at the SASA website. http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/

estimated 4,500 respondents.[78] The second initiative involves the Tostan programme in Senegal which supports community empowerment actions to end both FGM/C and VAWG. A forthcoming evaluation of their programmes may contribute insight and clarity on possible dual prevention programme models.[79]

UN Women's work on ending violence against women and girls has considerable potential to more fully address harmful practices, especially through prevention. To ensure optimal adaptation of programming principles, additional research is still needed however, to identify how these forms of violence are inter-related and what common risk factors exist. This may be advanced through the UN "Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent Violence against Women", developed by UN Women in partnership with OHCHR, UNFPA, UNESCO, WHO, ILO and UNDP, and the previously-mentioned "Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence – Core Elements and Quality Guidelines". Although primarily focused on intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, these

provide strategies and recommendations that can also be applied to other forms of violence, including FGM/C prevention and response.[80]

Where existing analyses of linkages between FGM/C and VAWG do exist, they tend to be made from an intersectional perspective, which helps clarify the entry points for change. For example, they examine how combinations of socio-cultural and/or religious norms create specific social dynamics that then manifest in different behaviours and practices.[81] There is increasing research and analysis of linkages between violence and harmful practices, for example, such as between intimate partner violence and child marriage.[82] Research carried out for this paper however, has uncovered no work on cross-vulnerabilities or correlated prevalence between VAWG and FGM/C. For example, there do not seem to be any studies that examine the autonomy of women who experience intimate partner violence to influence whether their daughters are cut, or whether women who have been cut are more or less susceptible to intimate partner violence than those who have not been cut.

5.2
Sexual rights in the context of FGM/C

The Beijing Platform for Action states, "The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination

and violence. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its

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78 ICRW website. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Component 3: Socio-economic costs of VAWG: http://www.icrw.org/where-we-work/violence-against-women-and-girls-vawg-component-3-economic-and-social-costs-vawg.

79 PATH website. Evaluating Tostan's Community Empowerment Program webpage. http://sites.path.org/hivaidsandtb/our-featured-projects/tostan-evaluation/

80 UN Women, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNOHCHR, WHO. 2015. A Framework to Underpin Action to end Violence Against Women. New York and UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNODC. 2015. Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence- Core Elements and Quality Guidelines. New York

81 Amnesty International. 2011. Amnesty International's Contribution to the Consultation on an EU strategy for Combating Violence Against Women 2011 – 2015. See also http://www.endfgm.eu/content/assets/Amnesty_International_Contribution_to_the_Consultation_on_an_EU_strategy_for_Combating_Violence_against_Women_2011.pdf; and https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230747165_The_association_between_female_genital_mutilation_and_intimate_partner_violence; and http://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6874-14-13

82 For examples of literature on these linkages see http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/reports-and-publications/association-early-marriage-intimate-partner-violence-india-focus-youth-bihar-rajasthan/; see also http://jiv.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/12/18/0886260513505710.

consequences."[83] These conditions are considered sexual rights.

The literature on VAWG addresses sexual rights in the context of non-partner sexual violence, marital rape, and intimate partner violence as violations of sexual and reproductive health rights. It also addresses sexual rights in relation to women's ability or inability to exercise choice about their sexuality and sexual activity. However, there is less literature on FGM/C in relation to sexual rights, particularly the right of women to enjoy their sexuality. What does exist comes from two different analytical perspectives. The first analysis, addressed in prevention programmes, examines how the practice of FGM/C is related to girls' or women's marriageability, virginity, morals and faithfulness. There is also corollary study of cultural beliefs that FGM/C is associated with men's sexual pleasure and preferences.[84] The second analysis looks at the impact of FGM/C on the sexual pleasure of women who have been cut.

FGM/C abandonment programmes aim to shift attitudes about female sexuality through work with communities and agents of change, attempting to provide sexuality education, clarify perspectives and debunk myths about female sexuality. However, to-date, there has been little exploration of links between sexuality and power imbalances, which are root causes of FGM/C and VAWG. In the area of support to women who have experienced FGM/C, there appears to be only a small amount of research on how various types of cutting impact women's experiences of sex. Furthermore, what has been done is almost exclusively in the academic arena,[85] with little apparent action in this area by NGOs or international agencies, aside from generalized statements about sexual and reproductive rights, the right to physical integrity, and recognition of the fact that sexual and psychosexual dysfunction are complications of FGM/C.[86] During the literature search on this topic, only one Dutch NGO included information on sexual pleasure and FGM/C on its website. [87]

5.3
Data and evidence on all forms of violence against women and girls

While excellent progress has been made in tracking FGM/C through the use of surveys such as DHS and MICS, there are considerable gaps remaining in collection of qualitative and quantitative data and analysis from the programme level. Data limitations make it very challenging to explore correlations and common risk factors for intimate partner violence, sexual violence and FGM/C. The UNICEF Statistical Overview, based on DHS and MICS data is currently

the main source of analysis of data on FGM/C, providing insights on trends and on dynamics of social change.[88] The most comparable cross-country data on programmes is being generated by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM/C abandonment for the 17 countries that it covers, using a common results-based framework with common indicators.

83 United Nations. 1995. Beijing Platform for Action. Section C paragraph 96. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/health.htm

84 Berg. R. C and Denison, E. 2013. A Tradition in Transition: Factors Perpetuating and Hindering the Continuance of FGM/C Summarized in a Systematic Review. Health Care for Women International. See also Toubia, NF and E.H. Sharief. 2003. Female Genital Mutilation, have we made progress? International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics 82 (2003) 251–261. RAINBO (Research, Action and Information Network for Bodily Integrity of Women), London; and WHO. 2014. Fact Sheet No 241: Female Genital Mutilation

85 See for example: Fahmy, A. et al. 2010. Female genital mutilation/cutting and issues of sexuality in Egypt. Published in Reproductive Health Matters. Nov. 2010. 18(36): 181-90; and also Catania, L. et al. 2007. Pleasure and orgasm in women with female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). published in the Journal of Sexual Medicine. 2007; 4: 1666 – 1678

86 Human Rights Watch website. 2010 Frequently Asked Questions webpage: https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/06/16/qa-female-genital-mutilation

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Availability of data on prevalence of other forms of VAWG varies considerably. Because of the stigma attached to survivors of non-partner sexual violence and/or the fact that intimate partner violence most often takes place within the confines of the household, women's degree of comfort with reporting what has happened to them in survey settings can influence the accuracy and comparability of data.[89] The most consistent and reliable source of data is from surveys using the methodology of the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence, which collects information on partner and non-partner violence.[90] In some countries, Demographic and Health Surveys, and Reproductive Health Surveys also provide prevalence data on VAWG by partners and non-partners.[91] However, while these studies and surveys have collected available data for both FGM/C and VAWG in countries where FGM/C is practiced, cross-analyses do not seem to be readily available. Consequently, it is also difficult to cross-reference information on attitudes and risk factors.[92]

All the major reviews of work on FGM/C and VAWG identify that clear, methodologically sound evidence confirming what types of interventions work, why they work, and how they can be replicated elsewhere is increasing. However, they also acknowledge that evidence is being obtained by holistic approaches that include a mix of interventions in the legal, policy, social and services spheres. This can render the evaluation of stand-alone interventions to be of limited use, with the exception perhaps of randomized control trials.

The Population Council is currently researching how to capture information and formulate evidence on FGM/C as a form of violence against women and girls. Their research will provide information on interrelations between types of violence, feasible indicators and improved, more rigorous measurement techniques that can improve the reliability and credibility of data. Aspects of this work include enhancing the use of theories of change in relation to research; and improving definitions and measurements of social norm changes. In addition, the Population Council is also examining what types of FGM/C abandonment approaches work in different settings and why. For example, what are the influences of location, of introduced versus locally developed interventions, and of generational change. This information will be relevant to other FGM/C programmes and may also provide policy guidance on evidence creation for both FGM/C and VAWG interventions.

5.4
Data and analysis of FGM/C in the Middle East and Asia

The literature search found little information on FGM/C as a form of VAWG in the Middle East and Asia. The German organization, WADI, has the most comprehensive information through its "Stop FGM Mideast" campaign. More research and information sharing is needed to reveal similarities and differences on work to end FGM/C in Africa, the Arab states and Asia, as well as to identify how work on VAWG can be better coordinated to end all forms of violence. Advancing geographical variety in the evidence would contribute to "making the case" for action.

89 Abrahams, N, et al. 2014. Worldwide prevalence of non-partner sexual assault: a systematic review. The Lancet. http://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736(13)62243-6/abstract

90 Garcia-Moreno, C., Jansen H.A.F.M., et al. 2005. WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence. Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses. Geneva, Switzerland.

91 For information on available VAW prevalence data from difference sources see UN Economic and Social Affairs. 2015. The World's Women 2015. Trends and Statistics. New York.

92 WHO. 2013. Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en/

6. CONCLUSION

There are multiple forms of violence against women and girls and all inter-relate with issues of gender power relations and related social norms of male dominance, and women's and girls' low social status. Existing initiatives to end FGM/C and VAWG have many commonalities in terms of the policy frameworks and policy implementation mechanisms needed to direct their work. Key similarities between initiatives to end FGM/C and VAWG are directly linked to tackling gender inequality, rigidity of discriminatory gender roles, and gender imbalances in control of resources and power. Additionally, both FGM/C and VAWG are perpetuated by social norms and, in some cases, legal norms that reinforce discrimination against women and girls. A third area of similarity is the use of holistic approaches that include sets of interventions from various sectors (legal, policy, social, services). These approaches seek to promote both individual empowerment of girls and women, as well as their collective empowerment, to bring about fundamental social change—improved status of women and girls, greater gender equality, and reduction of violence.

There are also key differences between approaches to ending FGM/C and VAWG. Initiatives seeking to end intimate partner violence for example, which is based on men's sense of possession, power and control over women and girls, will be different from those designed to end FGM/C. While FGM/C is similarly perpetuated by unequal gendered power relations, compared to VAWG, it is more linked to the concept of staying within socially accepted parameters in order for girls to meet criteria for marriageability and to protect girls and women from exclusion, stigma and hardship.

There are also differences in the emphasis that FGM/C and VAWG frameworks give to leveraging and developing individual and collective empowerment and agency, especially of girls and women. VAWG frameworks traditionally used to place relatively more emphasis on individual empowerment/agency-although evidence has contributed to a shift in this approach and VAWG prevention programmes are gradually using community mobilization interventions. By contrast, FGM/C programmes emphasize collective empowerment/agency covering entire communities and population groups. However, it should be kept in mind that there are many overlaps in approaches.

Both FGM/C and VAWG interventions can benefit from further integration across government sectors and from harmonization with work to promote gender equality. Increasing political will, technical capacity, accountability and available financial resources are all much needed areas that will support improved cross-sector support and services for both prevention and response. Linked to this is the need to ensure that interventions for FGM/C, VAWG and gender equality are designed with clear theories of change, feasible indicators and budgets for monitoring and evaluation of results. Creation of evidence on what works at national and local levels will inform progress and accelerate change. This is beginning to happen with the support of some development partners. Therefore, it is equally important that information sharing and analysis of evidence is built into frameworks, regional and national interventions, as well as local programmes.

In summary, while FGM/C and VAWG initiatives have considerable overlap, they have yet to work in the kind of closely coordinated way that would be beneficial to accelerate efforts. There appears to be considerable scope for greater collaboration at the national level. Such collaboration could potentially create synergies by closing gaps in legislation, technical capacity development, management efficiencies; and developing more coordinated national action on existing commitments across key sectors.

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USEFUL WEB LINKS

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- In addition, a listing of multiple NGOs working on FGM/C issues can be found at: http://16days.thepixelproject.net/16-organisations-charities-and-grassroots-groups-working-to-stop-fgm/

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.