



**#YOUTH
FOR
CHANGE**
GIRL SUMMIT 2014

YouthForChange survey report

Youth voices on ending
Child Early Forced Marriage and
Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

Summary

This report is the result of a Plan UK and DFID global survey which sought the views of young people on how they can take forward action to tackle Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C) and Child and Early Forced Marriage (CEFM). The survey results show that respondents want to be part of the solution. However respondents feel for change to really happen and to end these practices they need the support of national governments, civil society and the communities they live in. A total of **1,045** young people from **87** countries (in annex a) aged 14 to 26 and over responded to the survey, enabling the report to pull out key findings on; (i) why respondents feel FGM/C and CEFM takes place; (ii) what action needs to be taken to tackle this through a youth movement; (iii) what Government and leaders can do to help support youth action to eradicate both practices.

The Girl Summit 2014 will include young people's voices, experience and recommendations for tackling FGM/C and CEFM, and is seen to be a key part of the approach Girl Summit 2014 is taking to end these harmful practices. A key recommendation coming out of this report is that young people must be part of the solution to these practises, not just as the leaders of tomorrow but as activists today.

Key findings

- ◆ FGM/C and CEFM are seen as violations of girls' human rights and respondents call for greater action from governments, civil society and young people globally to end these practices.
- ◆ The survey showed that respondents feel frustrated by a lack of voice and their power to affect change on issues is limited
- ◆ Respondents feel powerless in the decision making process of whether they want to undergo FGM/C or CEFM
- ◆ Creating a space for dialogue and engaging with communities to change attitudes and behaviours is central to tackling FGM/C and CEFM. Respondents have a positive role to play in preventing FGM/C and CEFM by working in partnership with communities, civil society and Governments and need to be recognised by the international community and leaders as legitimate partners
- ◆ Education for all, especially for girls and boys on sex and relationships, is seen as an important way to tackle both practices
- ◆ Respondents called for the implementation and introduction of the law to deter these practices
- ◆ The survey respondents were overwhelmingly female, and both girls and boys said they were not likely to speak to their fathers about FGM/C or CEFM. This suggests it is critical to engage with men and boys in work around FGM/C and CEFM.

FGM/C definition

Female genital mutilation/cutting is defined by the World Health Organisation as ‘all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-therapeutic reasons’.

Child Early Forced Marriage definition

CEFM includes any marriage without the consent of one or both parties where there is emotional or physical coercion. Child or Early marriage refers to unions where one or both parties are children or under 18.

How the survey took place

The online survey reached 1,045 respondents in 87 countries and was supported by focus group discussions with another **908 young** people in **7 countries**. 634 of the individual survey responses were from young people living in the global north, 282 were from young people in the global south, and 129 respondents did not give their location. Of the 52% of respondents from the UK 33% were from diaspora groups, which brought additional perspectives to the survey. 77.5% of survey respondents were female, which suggests the scale of interest from girls in these issues. That could be a result of the impact of FGM/C and CEFM on girls, and also highlights the importance of working to involve boys in these conversations. The survey gave a wide cross section of young people the chance to contribute their views, but is not a global representation of opinions of young people on these issues.

The survey was promoted by Plan, UNICEF and IPPF, through global youth networks. These included UNICEF’s Voices for Youth platform, the UN major group on children and youth and the Girls Summit youth panel’s networks. These included diaspora groups who shared the survey with their home countries. Data was analysed through web survey development software called Survey Monkey, and

FGM/C key facts

- More than 125 million girls and women alive today have been cut in the 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East where FGM/C is concentrated.
- Procedures can cause severe bleeding and problems urinating, and later cysts, infections, infertility as well as complications in child-birth and increased risk of newborn deaths
- More than 125 million girls and women alive today have been cut in the 29 countries in Africa and Middle East where FGM/C is concentrated
- FGM/C is mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and age 15.
- FGM/C is a violation of the human rights of girls and women.

analysis of the offline focus group discussions were added to the qualitative analysis. The questions sought to capture young people's views on the key issues of FGM/C and CEFM.

| Age of respondents | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Under 15 years old | 3.5% | 33 |
| 15 - 17 years old | 18.3% | 174 |
| 18 - 20 years old | 24.9% | 237 |
| 21- 24 years old | 32.8% | 312 |
| Over 24 years old | 20.5% | 195 |

CEFM key facts

- The factors that drive CEFM are complex, dynamic and vary from context to context. They often intersect to rob many girls of their childhood, their right to go to school and their chance to determine and secure their own future.
- Every year 14 million girls are married as children, denied their rights to health, education and opportunity, and robbed of their childhood.
- If we do nothing, by 2030 an estimated 15.4 million girls a year will marry as children.
- In the developing world, one in seven girls is married before her 15th birthday and some child brides are as young as eight or nine.
- Factors, such as lack of education, the lower value placed on girls' education, school drop-out, gender-based violence (including sexual violence) and early pregnancy, can be both causes and consequences of CEFM.
- CEFM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women.

Our key findings from the survey

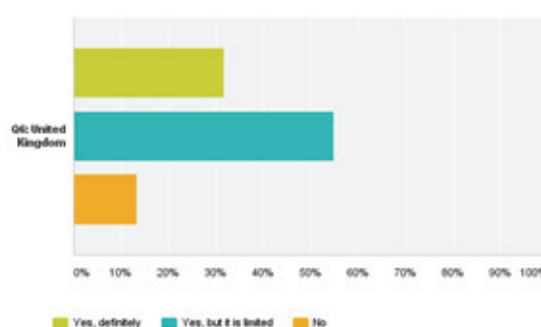
Young people influencing change

The survey questions explored how the young respondents view their capacity to influence change.

The survey found that 88% of respondents thought that young people have the power to lead change at a community level, yet 52% of these felt that this power was limited, demonstrating a perception that young people don't always have power within their communities to play a part in making the decisions that affect them.

Q8 Where you live, do you think young people have the power to lead change at the community level?

Answered: 679 Skipped: 4



The survey found respondents were often frustrated by their lack of power and influence in decision making across the globe.

“Decision making positions are being recycled by very same old people, leaving the youth out” (Female, Malawi, 21-24)

“Young people are not empowered so their voices are not heard and sometimes not even allowed to speak”

“Changing age long cultural practices are incredibly difficult. And in the generational transition of culture custody the youths are not yet in major position to provide input” (Male, Nigeria, 18-20)

“If we believe that the youth is the ‘present ‘of the country a lot can change. My country has a considerable youth population and thus a wider movement comes out to be a desirable solution. In a democracy like ours, popular movements have been more effective in influencing the change than any other political process. Thus a popular movement is also the most appropriate solution [to ending CEFM & FGM/C]” (Female, 18-20, India)

Why do FGM/C & CEFM take place?

Respondents were asked to rank the three most important causes of FGM/C and CEFM in their country.

| Why does FGM/C take place? | Girls | Boys |
|---|--------|--------|
| Tradition & culture | 64.62% | 74.10% |
| Because of a lack of education | 56.52% | 51.08% |
| Because of religious reasons | 32.37% | 28.75% |
| Because parents & grandparents support it | 37.92% | 31.65% |

| Why does CEFM take place? | Girls | Boys |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Tradition and culture | 77.60% | 72.97% |
| Because their families are poor | 43.00% | 46.85% |
| Lack of education | 42.40% | 37.84% |
| Religious reasons | 27.80% | 35.14% |

This highlights the difference between CEFM and FGM/C as respondents have placed the economic impact of CEFM as a higher factor than lack of education, which they felt was

the second major cause of FGM/C. **Girls and boys both prioritised tradition and culture as the most significant causes of CEFM.**

The responses given by some respondents below show their in-depth knowledge of the diverse context in which FGM/C and CEFM occurs. Respondents show their understanding of how power relations, cultural differences, social norms and gender relations contribute to these harmful practices.

FGM/C

“Because it gives men the power to make women feel inferior to them” (Female, 15-17, South Africa)

“There is too much focus on prosecution, which does not deal with the underlying issues and only serves to further segregate practicing ethnicities from the majority, increasing cultural defensiveness and secrecy surrounding FGM/C” (Female, 21-24, UK)

“It is a social norm” (15-17 year old, UK)

“People don’t understand the effects” (Female, 21-24, Malawi)

To push girls into the belief that it's the only way she will be accepted by her husband, who may also be chosen by the family; so she's accepted within the community (21-24, UK)

The culture of silence surrounding cutting means that people have never actually decided to talk about it. (15-17 years old, Nigeria).

Some respondents from the UK suggested FGM/C does not happen here, from which we can infer that there may be the need for greater outreach work with young people across the UK.

Child marriage

“Forcing girls to marry at such a young age is most likely one means of subordinating women; culture dependent, it ensures that their roles in society are limited to merely ensuring male satisfaction (Female, 15-17, UK)

Decision making behind FGM/C & CEFM

The majority of respondents, both girls and boys, agreed that girls who are married young or had FGM/C had not made the decision themselves, and did not choose for this to happen.

| | Girls | Boys |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Girls did not decide to have FGM/C | 89.49% | 81.45% |
| Girls did not decide to marry young | 86.00% | 75.00% |

These findings reflect the lack of choice and control young people have around decisions and actions on FGM/C and CEFM.

Who do young people think we need to work with to end FGM/C and CEFM?

Respondents were asked to rank those groups of people that would help to delay the age girls marry in their country, and could be involved in a movement to end FGM/C.

| Who do you think needs to be involved in a movement to end FGM/C in your country? | Girls | Boys |
|--|--------|--------|
| Everyone needs to be targeted | 64.20% | 44.92% |
| All young people | 38.72% | 40.68% |
| Girls themselves | 25.88% | 34.75% |
| Mothers and older women in the community | 25.88% | 26.27% |
| Young men and boys | 4.47% | 7.63% |
| Fathers and older men in the community | 15.56% | 22.88% |
| Religious leaders | 24.32% | 26.27% |
| Political leaders | 21.01% | 27.12% |
| Community leaders | 20.62% | 25.42% |
| Healthcare workers | 11.67% | 7.63% |
| Cutters | 7.00% | 6.78% |
| I do not think that FGM//C should be stopped | 0.19% | 1.69% |
| Who do you think are the most important groups to target to delay the age girls marry in your country? | Girls | Boys |
| Fathers and older men in the community | 71.91% | 64.00% |
| Mothers and older women in the community | 60.64% | 45.00% |
| Girls themselves | 36.38% | 56.00% |
| All young people | 49.36% | 53.00% |
| Young men and boys | 18.30% | 17.00% |
| Religious leaders | 48.72% | 47.00% |
| Healthcare workers | 8.09% | 9.00% |

For FGM/C respondents agreed the top priority was working with whole communities, and the focus for delaying the age of marriage was fathers and older men in the community.

Talking about CEFM and FGM/C

| Who do you talk to about FGM/C? | Girls | Boys |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Friends of both sexes | 47.06% | 59.69% |
| Friends of the same sex | 41.96% | 62.71% |
| Mother | 37.45% | 20.34% |
| Health workers | 36.27% | 35.59% |
| Youth leaders | 32.56% | 24.68% |
| Brothers | 1.37% | 4.24% |
| Neighbours | 0.59% | 1.77% |
| Fathers | 2.75% | 9.32% |
| Grandparents | 1.76% | 3.39% |

| Who do you talk to about CEFM? | Girls | Boys |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Friends of both sexes | 55.33% | 54.81% |
| Health workers | 35.99% | 35.66% |
| Mother | 37.66% | 19.38% |
| Youth leaders | 24.68% | 32.56% |
| Friends of the same sex | 31.56% | 25.96% |
| My sisters | 19.29% | 10.08% |
| Brothers | 1.48% | 4.65% |
| Neighbours | 0.56% | 2.33% |
| Fathers | 2.60% | 8.53% |
| Grandparents | 1.67% | 3.88% |

The differences between girls and boys were that boys were more likely to speak to their fathers and brothers than girls were about FGM/C. This suggests that more work is required to open the discussion to men and boys and between men and boys and women and girls.

For every four girls that undertook the survey, only one boy participated. This is reflective of semi structured discussions with the #YouthForChange Youth Panel who noted that more work needs to be done to engage boys in discussions around CEFM and FGM/C.

Young people who participated in focus group discussions in Cameroon said that fathers and older men in the community have the power to prevent CEFM, yet overall girls were less likely to want to speak to them about the issues. This highlights the urgent need to involve men and boys in programming and responses to CEFM. This has been proven to be effective, for example in Plan's programmes in Mali, where community leaders, often men, lead discussions and are able to lead changes in attitudes and prevent CEFM.

Critical actions to end FGM/C and CEFM

| 3 most important things to end FGM/C | Girls said | Boys said |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Introduce or enforce laws to stop it | 45.14% | 59.20% |
| Engage with communities to change attitudes and behaviours | 53.90% | 46.40% |
| Improve sex and relationships education at school | 32.95% | 34.40% |
| Provide safe spaces and support groups for young people to talk about the issue | 33.71% | 22.40% |
| Improve access to and value of girls' education | 25.52% | 28.80% |
| Improve economic (job) opportunities for women and girls | 5.52% | 15.20% |
| Enhance female leadership in the country | 19.05% | 17.60% |
| Provide stronger support services to girls and women who have been cut | 30.67% | 16.80% |
| Conduct media campaigns to raise awareness | 30.29% | 33.60% |
| Work with people from practicing communities currently living overseas to influence their friends and families in-country | 19.62% | 20.80% |
| I do not think that FGM/C should be stopped | 0.57% | 2.40% |

“Work ahead by detecting it, doctors, scout leaders and teach them how to discuss this delicate issue”

| 3 most important things to end CEFM | Girls said | Boys said |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Introduce or enforce laws to prevent the marriage of young girls | 48.32% | 63.00% |
| Engage with communities to change attitudes and behaviours | 58.61% | 53% |
| Improve access to and value of girls' education | 48.32% | 49.00% |
| Improve sex and relationships education at school | 27.73% | 29% |
| Provide safe spaces and support groups for young people to talk about the issue | 29.62% | 24% |
| Enhance female leadership in the country | 24.79% | 15% |
| Provide stronger support services to girls and women who have married young | 19.75% | 10% |
| Media campaigns | 21.64% | 33% |
| Work with people from practicing communities currently living overseas to influence their friends and families in-country | 18.28% | 15% |

“Teach the local community about the danger of early marriage for girls and importance of education”

What can young people do?

Respondents suggested a number of avenues that young people could pursue to tackle CEFM and FGM/C across a series of themes. Survey participants highlighted that youth voice and youth action are powerful means to change societal attitudes on these issues. The majority of respondents thought that engaging with communities to change attitudes and behaviours was the most important way to end both FGM/C and CEFM. This was followed by introducing and enforcing laws and improving sex and relationship education.

Most respondents suggested that the whole community needs to be involved in ending the practice of FGM/C. Whereas for CEFM the majority thought the focus should be on fathers and older men in the community, and mothers and older women in the community, with a significant number of comments relating to the whole community.

The approaches respondents suggested to prevent FGM/C and CEFM were similar, highlighting their common roots in gender inequality and unequal power relations.

Young people felt they could contribute to creating change on CEFM and FGM/C by:

Awareness raising

- Working within their own communities to sensitise young people, religious leaders, schools, parents and grandparents about the impacts of FGM/C and CEFM
- Using social media to speak out about FGM/C and CEFM as violations of human rights
- Involving schools, communities, men and boys, and parents
- Looking out for friends if in affected communities

Awareness raising

This often takes the form of a group of people attempting to focus the attention of a wider group of people on some cause or condition. Informing people of a problem is often the first step to changing how institutions handle it. Awareness raising can take place with governments or in communities.

Campaigning

- Advocating to governments
- Working in partnership with adults
- Using social media and technology to increase the reach of campaigns
- Creating youth led campaigns – doing workshops in schools and talking to friends
- Getting recognised by the media

Creating youth movements

- Linking with other young people and organisations working on the issues
- Speaking out and joining together with other young people, including through social media, to show that young people don't want to accept FGM/C or CEFM as a cultural practice
- Telling your youth group and creating societies at university or school
- Pushing schools to include understanding of preventing FGM/C and CEFM in the curriculum
- Communicating with the elders in communities

Empowering girls

- “I can prevent it from happening to my future daughter” (18-20 year old, male, Somalia)
- Ensuring all girls and boys have equal access to education
- Providing role models
- Supporting individual girls to resist CEFM and FGM/C

“We have to lobby against the culture and typical social customs to make a change” (Male, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Over 24)

“We the young people have the tools, education and the volition to change such a horrible situation with information and knowledge, we can change, step by step, people's mind regarding this matter.” (Female, Portugal, 21-24)

“We must speak for those who have to face the consequences of FGM/C which may be harmful physically and psychologically. As we live in a multicultural society we need to start learning about these issues and the impact that they may have on our society as a whole.”

“Let women know there is another option, let men know it doesn't make a difference to a woman's worth, and to people from other cultures know that they CAN challenge the practice even if it is considered part of 'culture'.”

What should governments do?

Respondents suggested that governments in the global north and south have a responsibility to tackle FGM/C and CEFM through: awareness raising; enforcing laws; providing girls education and youth empowerment.

| | FGM/C | CEFM |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Awareness raising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for families, communities and religious leaders on the risks of FGM/C • Remove the stigma of FGM/C • Continue after the Girls Summit – raise this issue up the agenda • Governments should acknowledge the problem and take action – for example, support social workers in communities to end the practice. • Providing funding for anti – FGM/C campaigning • Reach out to areas where the risk of FGM/C is greatest and education communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating young people and parents on the impacts of CEFM • Run and support campaigns in media and encourage change in practice and attitudes • Provide funding for youth led activities • Create national groups to take action to end CEFM after the summit • Engage with religious and cultural leaders • Listen to the voices of young people, especially girls |

| | FGM/C | CEFM |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Enforcing laws | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure girls have access to justice, and legal systems exist to prosecute those who carry out or enable FGM/C Work with religious leaders to prevent FGM/C Develop methods for girls to report risks of FGM/C in safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where laws against CEFM exist they should be enforced Where laws are inadequate ensure they are created or reformed and enforced Political leaders should respect laws on CEFM |
| Providing girls education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include FGM/C on the curriculum in all schools Sex and relationship education to be compulsory Teach young people about their rights Provide scholarships to allow girls to stay in school Educate mothers and women too. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure girls have equal access to education as boys CEFM should be included in school curricula All girls should be able to access a free education – provide sponsorships for girls to stay in school Ensure all teachers are aware of CEFM and report girls at risk |
| Youth empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support youth led grassroots initiatives to prevent FGM/C Provide spaces for young people to speak out | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give young people real power – and listen to their voices Ensure young people are involved in decision making processes around CEFM Support youth organisations |

“Ask young people to speak up against the practice and educate the people who join these marriages”

“Enforce already existing laws or create new laws if there are no existing ones to guide against CFM. Global and national leaders to put in place penalty for individuals who engage in CFM.”

“Ending child marriage requires an attitude change of society, that women and girls are capable of making valuable contributions. World leaders should ensure that women and girls have equal opportunities, especially access to education, while supporting community leaders working to change attitudes on a grassroots level.”

“Ask them to publicly condemn the practice of child marriage and give youth groups the funds to go to remote parts of developing countries to spread awareness themselves.”

Conclusion

As the #YouthForChange youth panel, we represent the vision and voices of young people from across the world. FGM/C and CEFM are a violation of human rights and they affect everyone. But as those most severely affected we offer unique insights and innovative solutions.

As young people we are committed to eradicating these harmful traditional practices and believe that this is within our grasp. This is why we are striving for a global movement to end FGM/C and CEFM around the world in a generation. We understand that each country and community is unique and must initiate positive change in its own way, as young people we will continue to take action in our communities and raise awareness across nations. National and global media must also commit to joining the fight against FGM/C and CEFM in order to make the necessary change possible.

FGM/C and CEFM are not issues that we should have to solve alone. This is everybody's business. We are determined that young people's voices heard at Girl Summit and the #YouthForChange event will spark an international youth movement for girls and women's rights . A movement strong enough to hold everyone to account for their commitments to end FGM/C and CEFM in a generation.

Annex: Respondent Country List

| Country | No. | Country | No. | Country | No. |
|------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| Albania | 1 | Trinidad and Tobago | 1 | Zimbabwe | 3 |
| Andorra | 1 | Tunisia | 1 | Italy | 4 |
| Angola | 1 | Turkey | 1 | Nepal | 4 |
| Armenia | 1 | Ukraine | 1 | Senegal | 4 |
| Bahrain | 1 | Uzbekistan | 1 | South Africa | 4 |
| Benin | 1 | Brazil | 2 | Singapore | 5 |
| Botswana | 1 | Colombia | 2 | Sri Lanka | 5 |
| Burma | 1 | Finland | 2 | Switzerland | 5 |
| China | 1 | Japan | 2 | Uganda | 5 |
| Congo - Democratic Republic of the | 1 | Macedonia | 2 | Zambia | 5 |
| Gambia | 1 | Mexico | 2 | Czech Republic | 6 |
| Hungary | 1 | Mozambique | 2 | Somalia | 6 |
| Israel | 1 | Norway | 2 | Ghana | 8 |
| Kuwait | 1 | Saudi Arabia | 2 | Australia | 9 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 1 | Sierra Leone | 2 | Canada | 9 |
| Madagascar | 1 | Spain | 2 | Indonesia | 9 |
| Maldives | 1 | Sudan | 2 | Malaysia | 9 |
| Mauritius | 1 | Sweden | 2 | Afghanistan | 10 |
| Morocco | 1 | Tanzania | 2 | Germany | 10 |
| New Zealand | 1 | Thailand | 2 | Mali | 10 |
| Nicaragua | 1 | United Arab Emirates | 2 | France | 12 |
| Niger | 1 | Argentina | 3 | Kenya | 13 |
| Papua New Guinea | 1 | Belgium | 3 | Malawi | 13 |
| Portugal | 1 | Cameroon | 3 | Nigeria | 13 |
| Saint Kitts and Nevis | 1 | Ireland | 3 | Egypt | 14 |
| Serbia | 1 | Korea South | 3 | Bangladesh | 17 |
| Seychelles | 1 | Netherlands | 3 | Pakistan | 29 |
| South Sudan | 1 | Occupied Palestinian Territories | 3 | India | 39 |
| Togo | 1 | Philippines | 3 | United States | 65 |
| | | | | United Kingdom | 482 |



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GIRL SUMMIT 2014

Jointly written by

