Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) refers to “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.” 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. As many as 30 million girls are at risk of being cut before their 15th birthday if current trends continue. FGM/C is a violation of girls’ and women’s human rights and is condemned by many international treaties and conventions, as well as by national legislation in many countries. Yet, where it is practised FGM/C is performed in line with tradition and social norms to ensure that girls are socially accepted and marriageable, and to uphold their status and honour and that of the entire family. UNICEF works with government and civil society partners towards the elimination of FGM/C in countries where it is still practised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>National decree/legislation banning FGM/C passed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SELECTED STATISTICS ON WOMEN’S STATUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Of women 20-24 years were married or in union before age 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52%</td>
<td>Of women 20-24 years were married or in union before age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28%</td>
<td>Of women 20-24 years have given birth by age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44%</td>
<td>Of women 15-49 years think that a husband/partner is justified in hitting or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beating his wife under certain circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52%</td>
<td>Of women 15-49 years make use of at least one type of information media at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>least once a week (newspaper, magazine, television, or radio)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DHS/MICS 2010
The prevalence of FGM/C in Burkina Faso ranges from 22 per cent to 87 per cent by ethnicity.

**HOW WIDESPREAD IS THE PRACTICE?**

The majority of girls in Burkina Faso undergo FGM/C before the age of five.

**WHEN AND HOW IS FGM/C PERFORMED?**

The majority of girls in Burkina Faso undergo FGM/C before the age of five.
WHAT ARE THE PREVAILING ATTITUDES TOWARDS FGM/C?

Approximately 9 out of 10 people in Burkina Faso think that the practice should stop.

Among girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about FGM/C, the percentage who cite specific benefits or advantages for a girl to undergo the procedure:

- No benefits: 52%
- Cleanliness/Hygiene: 6%
- Social acceptance: 24%
- Better marriage prospects: 3%
- Preservation of virginity: 4%
- More sexual pleasure for the man: 0.4%
- Required by religion: 3%
- Other: 2%
- Don’t know: N/A

Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about FGM/C and think the practice should continue, by household wealth quintile, education, ethnicity and age:

- Total: 9%
- Poorest: 11%
- Richest: 6%
- No education: 11%
- Primary complete: 8%
- Secondary or higher: 3%
- Ethnic group with highest support: 20%
- Ethnic group with lowest support: 3%
- 45-49 years: 12%
- 15-19 years: 10%

IS THE PRACTICE OF FGM/C CHANGING?

Fewer adolescents have undergone FGM/C compared to older women, and support for the practice has declined significantly.

Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C, by current age:

- 45-49: 89%
- 40-44: 88%
- 35-39: 85%
- 30-34: 83%
- 25-29: 78%
- 20-24: 70%
- 15-19: 58%

Source: DHS/MICS 2010

Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about FGM/C, and percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about FGM/C and think the practice should continue:

- DHS 1998-1999: 72%
- DHS 2003: 77%
- MICS 2006: 73%
- DHS/MICS 2010: 76%

Prevalence of FGM/C

Think FGM/C should continue
These country profiles were made possible through core funding to UNICEF and financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of these country profiles are the sole responsibility of UNICEF and can in no way reflect the views of the European Union.

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Notes: Data on attitudes for Yemen refer to ever-married girls and women. In Liberia, girls and women who have heard of the Sande society were asked whether they were members; this provides indirect information on FGM/C since it is performed during initiation into the society. Egypt data refer to girls aged 0-17 years who have undergone FGM/C. Data on attitudes for Ghana are from MICS 2006, for Nigeria from DHS 2008, and for Sierra Leone from DHS 2008 as data from the most recently available MICS surveys are not comparable. In Liberia, only cut girls and women were asked about their attitudes towards FGM/C; since girls and women from practising communities are more likely to support the practice, the level of support in this country as captured by the DHS 2007 is higher than would be anticipated had all girls and women been asked their opinion.