



United Nations Population Fund
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UNFPA will highlight its work and commitment to gender equality, human rights and culturally sensitive approaches by sharing 14 audio visual(AV) presentations for the course of 5 days of the ECOSOC Innovation Fair. While most of the AV presentations will play on a television, the remaining will be displayed on the computer enticing an interactive experience. Best practices of the following issues will be displayed: fistula, maternal health, violence against women, commodities and family planning, emergencies, population and development, gender equality, young people, HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence, female genital mutilation/cutting and maternal health. Two of these AV presentations are detailed below.

Freedom from Fistula <http://www.endfistula.org/dispatch.html>

Description

As part of its commitment to universal access to reproductive health and to achieving MDG 5, UNFPA is working to end obstetric fistula. Obstetric fistula, a preventable and treatable childbearing injury that leaves women incontinent, ashamed and often isolated from their communities, is one of the leading causes of maternal mortality in the developing world. UNFPA, with partners, launched the global “Campaign to End Fistula” in 2003. The Campaign has helped to highlight the urgent need of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity in order to improve women’s health. The target for the Campaign is to eliminate obstetric fistula by 2015 by preventing and treating obstetric fistula and by empowering affected women to return to society after treatment. The Campaign not only targets MDG 5, but also aims to improve MDG 3 by helping to empower women and to promote gender equality. One of the successful approaches to ending obstetric fistula includes community-based intervention.

Innovative

Community-based intervention and communication help to increase awareness to overcome the three delays, to educate the community about obstetric fistula prevention and to identify solutions that are culturally accepted. Over the last few years, one of the innovative and successful approaches is the involvement of fistula survivors in community mobilization. Eighteen Campaign countries supported fistula survivors to sensitize communities, provide peer support and advocate for improved maternal health at both the community and national levels.

Evidence of results and impact

The work of fistula survivors is expanding both in terms of the number of countries working in this area and the level of engagement of the survivors. More than 18 countries across the globe are continuing to develop their work with fistula survivors as advocates. For example, in Ghana, 18 fistula survivors received training in personal leadership, prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula, rehabilitation and reintegration, advocacy, communication, power mapping and counseling skills – after which each woman developed an action plan detailing her community level activities. Successful community sensitization programs were organized in other countries with the strong involvement and active participation of Fistula survivors. In some countries, UNFPA has also supported the orientation and recruitment of actors that mobilize in the community such as Safe Motherhood Action Groups (SMAGs), peer educators and counselors, and other community-based groups in order to galvanize the communities to improve their reproductive health conditions and the status of women.

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Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change

<http://video.unfpa.org/video/43891327001-67511579001-Joint-Programme-on-Female-Genital-MutilationCutting-Accelerating-Change>

Description

The Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) video examines the practice of FGM/C and strategies employed by UNFPA and UNICEF to encourage communities to abandon it. The agencies, working closely with governments, NGOs, religious leaders, and small community groups, aim to stop the practice. The goal of the Joint Programme is to contribute to the acceleration of the abandonment of FGM/C within a generation in 17 countries in Africa, but at the moment 12 countries are implementing the Joint Programme.

Innovative

UNFPA and UNICEF have joined efforts to maximize resources through a Joint Programme on FGM/C. The Joint Programme is also working with the WHO to gain support for stopping FGM/C among the medical community. This approach is innovative because it incorporates holistic and culturally sensitive approaches that respect the community and create an enabling environment for social change. The Joint Programme aims to have communities themselves denounce the practice making them the center of partnership. The holistic approach not only targets the community level through an empowerment process for community led abandonment, but also targets the national level through national legislation and build national capacity. The comparative advantage of each UN agency is utilized at the global and country level and as a result, together stakeholders can work towards a comprehensive approach on the FGM/C.

Evidence of results and impact

There is evidence that these partnerships empowered communities and fostered an enabling environment for collective social change aiming at shifting the FGM/C social norm. Several countries have enacting laws forbidding the practice. Networks of religious leaders and the media are active promoters of the abandonment of FGM/C. By mainstreaming FGM/C into the reproductive health sector, the Joint Programme has contributed to an improvement in the wellbeing of girls and women already subjected to FGM/C. Last year activities have led to large-scale abandonment of FGM/C by communities in Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea, Somaliland, Ethiopia and Sudan.

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