



# Mobilizing Communities to Abandon FGM: Lessons from Egypt



#### Kathrin Tegenfeldt

Associate Director, Field Operations
The Centre for Development and Population
Activities

APHA - November 5, 2007



#### Acknowledgements

Leah Freij

cecpa

Roula El Saady, Amel Ahmed Gamal, Mona Selim

Egypt Partner NGOs, Local NGOs, and FGMAP communities

**UNICEF** 

## FGM in Egypt

- Prevalence at 97%
- Primarily Type I & II
- Medicalization
- Decreasing age
- National legislation against the practice
- Reasons for cutting: religion, culture, cleanliness, health, prevent promiscuity





## **CEDPA FGM Program Evolution**

1998: Positive Deviance Approach (PDA) – Identification and mobilization of Positive Deviants to break the silence

cecpa

2002-2003: Program design and manual, implementation plan, FGM kit, training materials, social mobilization, M&E



2003-2004: FGM Abandonment Program – Program expansion

#### FGM Abandonment Program (2004-2006)

- Continued use of positive deviants as change agents
- Community mobilization / outreach
- Identification and tracking of at-risk girls – those at immediate risk of being circumcised (9-12)
- 40 communities in 4 governorates





#### **FGMAP Objectives**

 Increase # of Local NGOs implementing the FGMAP through training and support by Partner NGOs

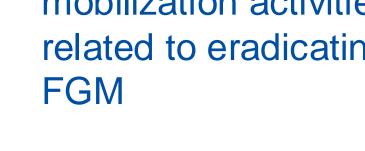


- Increase knowledge of community members of dangers of FGM and empower these individuals to be advocates for eradicating the practice
- Increase # of leaders who speak out against FGM in their communities

## FGMAP Objectives cont.

 Increase community mobilization activities related to eradicating **FGM** 

- Increase the number of girls saved from FGM
- Contribute to establishing FGM - Free communities









- Training of Partner NGOs (TOT)
- Selection and training of Local NGOs
- Situational analysis in each community
- Orientation Workshop (Workshop 1):
   LNGO staff trained on FGM, PDA
- Positive Deviant identification
- Analysis and Planning Workshop (Workshop 2): Design of 6-month community mobilization program



- Community Awareness activities speakers, large events, small groups
- Check-in meeting at 3 months
- Girls at risk Workshop (Workshop 3)
- Tracking and monitoring girls at risk

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation conducted by NGOs

# **Program Achievements**

- Program package completed
- FGM has become a main topic of conversation in all communities
- Increased awareness about harmful effects of FGM
- Recognition that circumcision does not regulate behavior
- Individuals encouraged to question practices







- Engagement of community leaders
- Introduced concept of rights-based gender equality
- Favorable shift in gender relations
- 88% (1045/1187) of families who had made a decision about circumcision decided *not* to circumcise their daughters





- Public resistance of some Islamic religious leaders
- Role of physicians in supporting FGM
- Difficulties completing M&E reports
- Considerable % of families still undecided about FGM
- At-risk girls must be tracked for a long period of time
- Funding limitations



#### **Lessons Learned**

 To bring about changes in cultural/ societal norms, must work at individual and community level

ce<mark>c</mark>pa

- Differences within and between communities must be understood
- Include focus on young people – they can be instrumental in bringing about change



#### **Lessons Learned cont.**

 Religious leaders and physicians strongly influence community attitudes and must be used as resources

 It is important to understand women's complicity in FGM and the role of men



cecoa

#### Voices of Stakeholders





"Not only were we convinced, we felt guilty. I remember by heart, the words of one religious leader at the seminar who said that 'FGM is a cheap victory on a girls' freedom."

—Director of Youth Center

"After I joined the program I realized that [FGM] constitutes physical violence because it involves the removal of a part of the female's body."

—Facilitator

## Thank you!

ငင်္ကောင

Kathrin Tegenfeldt CEDPA 1133 21st Street, NW Suite 800 Washington, DC 20036 ktegenfeldt@cedpa.org



Female Genital Mutilation Abandonment Program (FGMAP) was funded under a grant by UNICEF Egypt (August 2004 - April 2006). The opinions stated in this presentation are those of the author and do not reflect those of our funder.