Good Governance and Female Genital Mutilation:

A Political Framework for
Social Change

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BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
DED	German Development Service
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation/cutting
IEC	Information, education, communication
KfW	German Federal Government Development Bank
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Preface

Since 1999 GTZ has been implementing the supraregional project "Ending Female Genital Mutilation" on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). BMZ's intention is that this project should make a lasting contribution towards protecting women and girls from the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) and in this way support the realisation of the human rights of women and girls.

The issue has acquired added significance with the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals. Although the practice may at first appear to be an isolated issue that affects only the private sphere of women and families, it is important not to overlook the ways in which it is closely interlinked with many aspects of development policy: FGM has implications for almost all the sustainable development issues set down in the Millennium Development Goals.

Despite longstanding efforts on the part of African and international organisations, extensive surveys rarely indicate that the practice is on the wane. Whereas the elimination of FGM was first seen as a health education issue, it is now clear that FGM is a societal problem. If this serious violation of human rights is to be stopped in the long term, solutions are required that focus on the deeply embedded nature of the practice in society and are geared towards social change.

Such solutions also place responsibility on the state and its institutions to create political framework conditions that facilitate a process of social change leading towards the ending of FGM. This necessarily entails a particular focus on issues of good governance. The links between good governance and FGM need to be recognised and exploited in order to achieve greater success in efforts to eliminate the practice.

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Executive Summary

Female genital mutilation constitutes a serious violation of human rights and must be seen as an expression of bad governance. Bringing the practice to an end is not merely a challenge in the field of health but one that applies to society as a whole.

If the practice is to be stopped in the long term, solutions are required that are geared towards social change and place part of the responsibility on the state. Political framework conditions must be created that facilitate a process of social change leading towards the abolition of FGM. FGM should be understood as an expression of structural discrimination against women, and deep-seated gender roles need to be overcome.

Projects aimed at ending FGM have to take account of the fact that there are two different views of the practice: from the insider perspective of those involved, FGM is seen as a socially desired practice, while from the outsider perspective it is classed as grievous bodily harm and a grave violation of human rights. This "institutional pluralism" provides a basis for a multi-level approach that combines top-down measures derived from the outsider perspective with bottom-up measures from the insider perspective that are adapted to the prevailing socio-cultural conditions in-country.

A multi-level approach aimed at ending FGM should include the following key elements:

1. Rigorous use of participatory and process-led methods
2. Analytical design taking account of the cultural background
3. Support for processes of societal transformation at different levels
4. Promotion of negotiation processes
5. Guarantee of sustainability and protection at target group and institutional levels

A closer link between good governance and FGM in development policy practice would make a strategic contribution to eliminating the practice and enhance the results of efforts to this end. GTZ's good governance service package offers points of linkage for measures aimed at ending FGM in six fields:

→ Good governance at national level (reform of public administration, public finances, promotion of democracy)
→ Good governance at local level (local self-government, decentralisation, local governance)
→ Law and justice
→ Human rights
→ Strengthening civil society
→ Gender

To end the practice in the long term, there is an urgent need to develop opportunities for action at the political level and to put into place an enabling environment for delicate processes of societal transformation.

Introduction

FGM is carried out mainly in 28 countries in Africa[1], to a lesser extent in some Asian countries and immigrant communities the world over. According to estimates by the World Health Organization, around 140 million girls and women worldwide are affected by the practice, a number that yearly increases by about three million babies, girls and women. FGM takes a variety of forms, the associated procedures varying accordingly in terms of their severity.

Working on behalf of BMZ, GTZ is committed to ending the practice through the supraregional project "Ending Female Genital Mutilation". Working hand in hand with bilateral German technical cooperation projects and programmes, the project develops, tests and disseminates appropriate measures. Project staff are currently cooperating with technical cooperation programmes in Benin, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali and Mauritania, in some cases in collaboration with the German Development Service (DED) and Plan International. Cooperation with the KfW Entwicklungsbank (KfW) is at the planning stage. The supraregional project has long-standing experience in the health and education sectors. Cooperation with the good governance sector is still relatively new, but some headway has been made in Benin und Mauritania.

FGM is part of a broader legal, cultural, social, political and economic framework which severely restricts the rights of women and makes FGM possible. FGM therefore cannot be reduced simply to questions of health nor can it be viewed in isolation from its socio-political context.

Societal change leading to equality between women and men is also one of the objectives of good governance. Since the early 1990s good governance has become a key concern of development cooperation, with policy advisory services becoming the preferred mode of delivery. Good governance should be understood as transparent interaction among all relevant political, economic and social forces working for the responsible shaping of public life and democratically legitimised decision-making, in particular with regards to having public resources used to achieve sustainable development that benefits the population as a whole. This understanding expressly includes the participation of civil society and the private sector.

Efforts aimed at ending FGM undertaken in the context of education or health projects have already successfully extended their range of influence into core areas of good governance, for example through measures directed at strengthening women's rights. Experience indicates that whenever the position of women is strengthened in that they have more say in decision-making processes within society and have access to more economic resources, families see more benefit in renouncing the practice than in continuing it.

This paper supports the theory that FGM needs to be understood as an expression of poor governance and that a government's actions can be said to be pro-development where serious efforts are made to eliminate the practice, by passing legislation banning the practice and by supporting related measures. With regards to the recommendations for action that can be derived for development policy practice, the paper takes a dual approach:

1 Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda

1. How can efforts in the field of good governance contribute directly and indirectly towards ending FGM?
2. In what ways do efforts aimed at ending FGM contribute to good governance issues and how can their political impact be further reinforced?

The paper offers concrete recommendations for measures aimed at ending FGM in six areas of GTZ's good governance service package. It also describes some contributions relevant to good governance that are already being made by efforts in the health and education sectors designed to eliminate FGM. In addition, it presents the most important elements of a multi-level approach aimed at ending FGM and identifies potential opportunities for action within the context of programme-oriented development cooperation.

The paper is intended to win over colleagues to a topic that at first sight seems far removed from their concerns. At the same time, we hope to offer experts already involved in the struggle against FGM some pointers towards how they might extend their scope for exerting political influence. Through this publication we wish to address not only GTZ but also other German and international development organisations involved in the struggle against FGM.

One of our explicit concerns is to forge new coalitions as part of the effort to end female genital mutilation. It would be a grave mistake to see FGM as an exotic, isolated cultural practice that seems merely to confirm our perception of how incomprehensible other cultures are to us. This would prevent us from engaging constructively with the people who practise FGM and would close our eyes to the many different socio-political contextual factors involved.

I would like to thank Prof. Friederike Diaby-Pentzlin for her contribution as co-author, the many colleagues both here and abroad for their willingness to be interviewed on the subject, as well as Ruth Bigalke, Emanuela Finke, Marion Fischer, Andrea Frischholz, Monika Rickert, Dr. Jochen Salow, Bianca Schimmel and Katrin Schneider for their constructive comments.

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Links between FGM and good governance
Key concept: Institutional pluralism

The practice of female genital mutilation can be viewed from two different perspectives: as a socially desired practice, from an insider perspective; or as grievous bodily harm and a grave violation of human rights, from an outsider perspective.

The insider perspective describes the viewpoint of the individuals involved in the action. In this case, interest is focused not on the medical intervention but rather on enhancement of the status of the woman (or woman-to-be). Even where FGM is a traumatic experience, the practice is not rejected. Rather, the circumcised body is perceived as an aesthetic norm and the intact genitals as unaesthetic. Acquiring the status of a marriageable woman and preparing for this role fills the girls with pride and a sense of importance. Mothers and circumcisers enjoy the power they wield. Their ritual capabilities are in demand, and their child-rearing knowledge is held in high regard. They know the importance of virginity, they know all about the power of sexuality, and they willingly accept the need to remove the masculinity from the bodies of their daughters.[2] The pain experienced in rites of passage lends depth to the communal memory, confers identity and creates solidarity among those in the same age group. Rather than being attributed to the ritual itself, deleterious health effects are explained in other ways.

In contrast to this, the outsider perspective makes use of its own analytic concepts. Many intellectuals and activists have been fighting against the practice since the 1970s. They reveal the serious physical harm that is caused and describe the violence used against babies, toddlers and girls who are too young to make their own decisions. They analyse asymmetric gender relations and examine how structural violence is manifested in female genital mutilation. Nowadays FGM is seen at the international level as a *harmful traditional practice* that ought to be outlawed. It has been banned not only by international conventions but also by various African constitutions and laws. The most recent example is the Maputo Protocol of the African Union, which came into force in November 2005. This commits the member states ratifying the Protocol to uphold African women's rights and ban FGM.[3]

It is important to make a distinction between the two perspectives if FGM is to be brought to an end. Nowadays the practice is carried out separately from the realm of initiation and ritual interpretation. Different views of FGM often co-exist within a given community: from the point of view of the state, for example, FGM is considered a violation of human rights, while from the perspective of a particular local group it is seen as a social norm.

The fact that there are co-existing perspectives with regards to norms, rules and procedures is captured most concisely by the concept of "institutional pluralism".[4] This denotes the simultaneous existence of different forms of social organisation. It provides a basis for later project design that takes a multi-level approach (national, regional, local) and makes use of both perspectives. Taken on their own, neither top-down measures derived from the outsider perspective and aimed at achieving a widespread impact nor individually packaged bottom-up measures from the insider

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2 According to this belief, people are born with both male and female physical attributes and only become a woman or a man through circumcision.
3 Cf. GTZ: The Maputo Protocol of the African Union. An instrument for the rights of women in Africa. Eschborn 2006.s
4 Quite rightly, the concept of "legal pluralism" refers to the fact that there are parallel legal mechanisms in existence, and that in many countries laws made by the state are a long way from providing a reliable and predictable framework for everyday conduct. Social life is structured and guided additionally by a large number of other, more or less formalised rules.

perspective that are adapted to the socio-cultural conditions are likely to have any great impact. Rather, a combination of both types of measure, adapted to the context in question, can significantly enhance the impact of an intervention in terms of bringing about changes within the society in question.

FGM and good governance

Understanding FGM as an expression of "poor governance" or lack of development orientation enables us to look at the links between ending the practice and good governance. Abandoning FGM touches on several of the models that constitute good governance: a government's actions are development-oriented when it shapes policy with poverty reduction and sustainability in mind; when it endeavours to respect, protect and progressively guarantee the human rights of all population groups; when it promotes democracy and the rule of law; when it commits itself to improving the capacity and transparency of the state; and when it engages cooperatively in the international community.[5]

Good governance needs to be related not only to state-based regulatory structures but also to informal, historically evolved societal ones. In its good governance service package, GTZ points out that the expectations and objectives on which support for governance is based emerge from the values, political structures, culture and objectives of the society in question.

BMZ too sees legal and institutional pluralism as an obstacle to development, particularly in African states, and emphasises that it is necessary to look closely at the reform of traditional norms and institutions as part of the support for the legal and justice system, as traditional legal systems often accord women and girls in particular a less favourable legal position.[7]

In its manual on "Good governance", BMZ points out that its own understanding of governance is not based on a formal democratic approach but rather on the way social relationships and processes of negotiation are conducted between the various actors. At the level of results, reforms should not only offer technical solutions but should also effect long-term change in their associated value systems, beliefs and patterns of behaviour. Although the principles of good governance are recognised universally, it is important not to overlook the fact that its concrete manifestations are always culture- and context-specific.[8]

5   See E+Z, Neue Akzente: Das BMZ hat seinen Kriterienkatalog überarbeitet, Frankfurt/Main, Year 48, 2007:6, p. 250.
6   In the context of the sector programme "Mitgestaltung politischer Rahmenbedingungen in den Partnerländern" (Helping to shape political framework conditions in the partner countries) GTZ, on behalf of BMZ, worked out a set of principles to be used in the promotion of good governance and summarised these in 2004 in the following publications: "Good Governance und Demokratieförderung zwischen Anspruch und Wirklichkeit – Ein Diskussionspapier"; "Governance Questionnaire – Ein Instrument zur Analyse von Politischen Rahmenbedingungen"; "Mitgestaltung politischer Rahmenbedingungen in der Technischen Zusammenarbeit – Ein Fortbildungskonzept".
7   Cf. BMZ: Postitionspapier Recht und Justiz in der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (available in English entitled "Legal and Judicial Reform in German Development Cooperation"). Bonn 2002, pp. 6 and 9.
8   Cf. BMZ: Profilbildung der bilateralen EZ mit Sub-Sahara-Afrika in den Bereichen Good Governance, Wirtschaftsentwicklung und Wasser. Bonn 2006, pp. 43–47.

In actual project work, however, insufficient attention is paid to the difference between informal cultural structures and formal state-based structures, and between the de facto balance of power within a society and the government's claim to power. This trend is being reinforced by an increasing involvement in programme-based development cooperation.

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to engage with strategic groups in local and informal arenas in addition to cooperating with state actors at national level - even if this is a complex and double-edged undertaking. Social organisation involves the existence of regulatory structures which are far removed from the ideals of good governance but which are nonetheless important for the lives of individuals; they have an impact, even though they are not formalised.

Since female genital mutilation is a traditional practice which persists in spite of being formally banned by central governments, good governance can only be successfully linked with moves to overcome FGM if this institutional pluralism is addressed. Otherwise, the measures taken to end FGM will fall far short of the results they could have achieved. Two areas in particular must be singled out when this link is established, namely gender and culture.

The significance of gender

FGM needs to be understood as an expression of the structural discrimination of women and thus of poor governance. The discrimination of women is closely linked to the socio-cultural construction of "male" and "female" and the associated roles and power resources attributed respectively to men and women in a given society. It is thus inextricably linked to gender.

The reasons for practising female genital mutilation illustrate these asymmetric power relations. The underlying motivations for practising FGM have always been of a functional, practical nature as well as a social one.

The practice has the functional meaning of being able, as a family, to compete on the marriage market with daughters who are physically guaranteed to be pure. Beyond that it has a secondary social meaning and in many cases it persists mainly due to these social factors, which include the following: it is simply "tradition" - respect for the older generation demands that it be adhered to; the practice is a symbol of belonging to a group and enables integration into a community; it conveys security and a positive self-image; and the rituals give women at least some degree of power, status and respect within existing unjust gender relations. The most important factor is this, however: given a way of life in which women are economically dependent on men, they secure their survival when they carry out the practice, because it is only once these social norms have been fulfilled that they become marriageable and therefore capable of survival.

Thus, since FGM is practised mainly because of its social implications nowadays, efforts to eradicate the practice need to focus on these factors and to find ways in which society could develop new interpretations. In summarising her analysis of efforts aimed at ending FGM over the last 20 years, Nahid Touiba, a doctor and women's rights activist from Sudan, states, " We may scare them with all the possible risks of FGM/C to health. We may bring religious leaders to persuade them that the practice is not requirement. We can try to bring the wrath of the law to bear upon them. But in their desperate hold on the little negotiated power they have known for centuries, they are not willing to let go unless they see a benefit that is equal to or more than what they already

have."[9] This is why, along with establishing the political framework, it is also essential to take account of the social dimension of good governance and overcome deeply rooted gender roles. What is needed is no less than a redressing of the gender gap in terms of domination and violence, and for women to achieve a higher status and economic independence.

Redressing unequal power relations between men and women can ultimately be achieved only when women have greater access to resources, paid work, education and information, and when they are able to determine how they spend their time. It is thus a matter of women acquiring greater power to make economic, legal and socio-political decisions. FGM is more than just a problem of health or education; it is above all a problem of asymmetric gender relations.

The significance of culture

Culture is a multi-faceted concept that refers to the products of human learning and creation. The glossary "Culture and Development", published by GTZ and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), points out that culture is very closely linked with power and opportunities for participation in society and can only be usefully defined within the context of development cooperation when all factors are taken into account. [10] Prevailing cultural ideas and attitudes are projected onto the human body, as expressed, for example, in the clothes we wear and the predominant ideals of beauty. [11]

FGM plays a key role not only in the cultural construction of gender identity but also in terms of membership of a particular ethnic group and relations between women and men and between one generation and another. Local communities have ways of applying pressure in order to uphold the unjust and asymmetric distribution of power between men and women and young and old, and to encourage women to retain the practice of FGM. For example, uncircumcised women can be declared to be ineligible for marriage.

In addition to these factors, religious - specifically Islamic - attitudes also have an influence on the practice of female genital mutilation. Even if FGM is not called for explicitly by any religion, the belief that it constitutes a virtue or even a religious duty is widespread, particularly in African countries influenced by Islam. A variety of legal interpretations exist concerning FGM and there is no consensus among religious authorities. Since the Muslim population of Africa is strongly influenced by local Islamic leaders' interpretations of the Qur'an and the hadith, it is important to work with this group of intermediaries if we are to bring about social change. [12]

9 Nahid Toubia, "Legislation as a tool for Behavioural and Social Change", in: AIDOS and NPWJ (Eds.): Stop FGM. Legal Tools for the prevention of FGM. Proceeding from the Expert Consultation, Cairo 21–23 June 2003. Rome 2003.
10 Cf. GTZ and SDC (Eds.): Glossar Kultur und Entwicklung. Eschborn 2005, p. 109 and 150.
11 This is illustrated, for example, by the practice of facelifting, which ageing white women (and now small numbers of men as well) increasingly undergo in order to avert a loss of prestige. The facelifting procedure involves peeling off the whole skin from the cheeks with cuts running from the ears to the nose, severing the sensory nerves to the facial skin in the process. The skin is then pulled taut and sewn together again at the ears. The demand for corrective plastic surgery on the female genitals for "aesthetic" purposes is also on the increase.
12 Cf. GTZ: Factsheet Female Genital Mutilation and Islam. Eschborn 2005.

Cultural change aimed at ending FGM occurs at the level of individuals, families and groups. Just as nowadays the individual is seen as being a perpetual "work in progress", collective identities too are subject to a process of constant change. The objective of efforts to overcome FGM is for a critical mass of people to change their behaviour, because any individual person or family who opposes FGM risks being ostracised, if the rest of the community upholds the practice.

There are constant feedback loops and interchanges between the insider and outsider perspective. Change cannot be brought about solely by sensitising target groups and working with traditional authorities at village level, any more than by focusing exclusively on legal reform. What is needed at all times are measures for ending harmful traditional practices that simultaneously address both the formal government level and the informal traditional level.

Ending FGM through policy advisory services

One of the most important methods used in promoting good governance is policy advice. GTZ bases its approach on a systemic understanding of policy advisory services which distinguishes between three distinct policy dimensions:

1. Polity is the dimension that covers political structures, norms, values and institutions
2. Politics is the dimension that covers political processes, such as the negotiation of interests, the development of informed public opinion, conflict resolution and the exercise of power
3. Policy is the dimension that covers policy content and outcomes in the sense of measures implemented in a particular policy field.

Policy advisory services are thus seen to be the interaction between institutional advice (polity), advice on political process (politics) and technical advice (policy). Policy advisory services are not only used in projects that address the specific issue of good governance but also in other sectors that address good governance as a cross-cutting theme.[13]

FGM as an issue in good governance projects/programmes

Projects and programmes to promote good governance influence the structural framework in place in partner countries, generally in order to introduce or to strengthen democratic, rule-of-law institutions. Social change leading to the abandoning of the practice of FGM too can be fostered taking approaches borrowed from the sphere of good governance. "Creating an enabling environment for change" - this is how UNICEF describes the role of the state in ending FGM.[14] The stronger presence of or access to responsible state administrative and legal institutions helps end harmful cultural practices. For example, modern institutions can provide safety nets for those who have already abandoned FGM ("early adopters"), thus encouraging other families to reject the practice.

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13 Cf. GTZ: Mitgestaltung politischer Rahmenbedingungen in der Technischen Zusammenarbeit – ein Fortbildungskonzept, Eschborn 2004, pp. 12–13 and GTZ: Instrumente und Ansätze der Politikberatung in der Technischen Zusammenarbeit, Eschborn 2004, pp. 8–9.
14 UNICEF emphasises, for example, the importance of mainstreaming laws, regional and international mechanisms, information and awareness-raising campaigns and dialogue forums in a society. Cf.: UNICEF: Innocenti Digest. Changing a harmful social convention: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. Florence 2005, especially Chapter 6 "Creating an enabling environment for change", pp. 29–34.
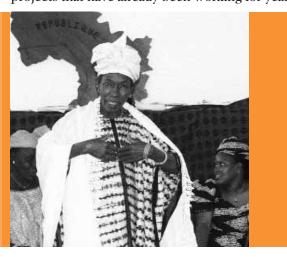
Efforts to promote good governance thus extend the spectrum of measures aimed at eliminating female genital mutilation. The key addition, although not the only one, is a professional approach to the polity dimension, in the form of institutional advice. It is true that reforms carried out at the formal macro level of the state require various stages of translation and measures to mainstream them if they are to have a direct impact at the village or city neighbourhood level.

In addition, the staff involved in good governance projects/programmes have good access to political decision-makers; they provide policy advice on the basis of their technical expertise and have an influence on what is included, and how, in various policy fields. Efforts to eliminate FGM can be implemented in this dimension, too. This could, for instance, take the form of measures which condemn FGM as a violation of human rights and bring the practice out of the realm of taboo and into the light of the public sphere. Furthermore, the issue of FGM can be integrated into consultancy activities designed to implement poverty reduction strategies. Given German development cooperation's long-standing experience in the field of FGM, the necessary expertise is readily available.

The dimension of processes of political negotiation (politics), by contrast, is still being insufficiently addressed in the area of good governance. Process consultancy is about promoting procedures that are just and transparent, so that society can negotiate decisions, rules and norms that find broad acceptance within society. Also with regards to FGM, a new social contract must be negotiated, with the active participation of both women and men. The creation of innovative forums for such processes of negotiation may be pivotal in prompting a re-evaluation of the practice and its eventual abandonment.

Since FGM is a practice demanded above all by informal norms and institutions, efforts at the formal state level are not enough on their own. Project concepts that address only the level of modern state institutions fail to do justice to the social reality, with its many co-existent values and regulatory systems (institutional pluralism); neither can they really reach the rural poor. In some cases, for example, legal bans on FGM have led to the procedure being carried out in secret on ever younger girls or in neighbouring countries. Good governance measures need to address these dangers.

When devising relevant measures, German Technical Cooperation can draw on a veritable treasure trove of experience in projects aimed at empowering women in sub-Saharan Africa; these are projects that have already been working for years in a context of institutional pluralism. These projects can help the struggle against FGM by contributing professional knowledge about innovative legal forms. This includes, for example, cooperation with traditional and religious authorities in the harmonisation of different legal systems, incorporating traditional conflict resolution structures into state law, and improving access to justice and the courts.

Beyond this, good governance measures which redress the discriminating power imbalance in gender relations in favour of women and help to empower women make an indirect contribution to overcoming FGM. Few governance projects yet design policy measures in a gender-differentiated way, however.

Good governance as an issue within efforts to end FGM

The key to ending FGM has already been identified, and that is a change in the attitudes and behaviour patterns of a community. Virtually all approaches to ending FGM pursue this objective, even if they are implemented in different sectors, whether health, education or youth. Many measures aimed at ending FGM are already having a positive impact in various spheres related to good governance.

Over the past few years the following areas formed the focus of these efforts: [15]

→ Health education that highlights the harmful effects of FGM and includes health care workers
→ Alternative rituals
→ Awareness-raising and behavioural change using IEC campaigns (information, education, communication) on the negative impacts on the health of victims; debunking myths, explaining social constructs and marriageability; men and religious authorities are also involved in this approach
→ Focus on support for families who break with the practice (positive deviants)
→ Sensitisation and alternative income-generating measures for those who carry out the circumcisions
→ Approaches based on religious argumentation
→ Human rights education
→ Legal reform.

A consensus has now emerged concerning holistic approaches. Various approaches listed above are integrated into *"comprehensive social development"* approaches.[16]

Modern projects to tackle FGM focus first and foremost on the comprehensive empowerment of girls and women at the centre of their efforts. At the level of personal attitudes the aim is to generate a new self-awareness, while at the level of broader societal conditions it is a matter of enhancing the economic situation of girls and women so that they have a choice; they must be able to choose to abandon the practice and their decision must be accepted. Gender-specific measures to reduce poverty that take account of the different conditions facing women and men, can make a valuable contribution here.

Secondly, measures are aimed at creating consensus in a community about the fact that the right of women and girls to physical integrity should be protected and upheld by the entire community. In almost every instance an attempt is made to mark this transformation with some sort of public act of celebration - a public declaration by the community, or a ritual, perhaps; this serves to cement the binding nature of the change and its perception in public.

15 For a description of the various approaches, cf. GTZ: Addressing Female Genital Mutilation. Challenges and Perspectives for Health Programmes. Part I: Select Approaches. Eschborn 2003.
16 Such as the Women's Empowerment Community Consensus model for social change to stop FGM/C (WECC) adopted by the NGO RAINBO; GTZ was one of the bodies to support the development of this model.

Thus efforts to end FGM deal especially with the areas of good governance relating to gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, human rights, processes of societal negotiation and social change. The staff involved in such projects have at their disposal specific technical expertise in areas closely linked with FGM and in the area of FGM itself. This affords them considerable acceptance among the target groups along with opportunities for working closely with these groups. They take into account the socio-cultural factors relevant for ending FGM and the insider perspective of those involved - in fact, they operate on the basis of institutional pluralism.

The existence of relatively accurate knowledge about the living conditions of the target groups also means that the staff of projects involved in combating FGM become more aware of the divergent interests of women and men, thus enabling them to differentiate accordingly in the planning and implementation of their projects. In this way, the projects make a significant, if indirect, contribution towards ending FGM.

While such efforts are effective in terms of their mainstreaming and sector-related impact, this is often achieved at the expense of a broader impact. This is partly because sector-specific efforts to end FGM have not tended to tackle the need to reform the institutional framework in the past. Insights gained at local level are still far too rarely incorporated in institutional reforms at national level. There also seems to be room for improvement in feedback mechanisms that would benefit the design of national anti-FGM policies (sector policy advice).

It should also be pointed out that even efforts aimed at ending FGM in the health and education sectors run the risk of generating resistance and undesired impacts, which need to be recognised and responded to. For example, the exclusive emphasis on health arguments has led to numerous problems, including the medicalisation of FGM, in other words performance of the operation by health care personnel.

Comparison of the two approaches

The table below summarises the strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches - FGM as an issue within good governance projects/programmes on the one hand and good governance as an issue within anti-FGM efforts on the other.

	FGM as an issue in good governance-projects/programmes	Good governance as an issue within efforts to end FGM
STRENGTHS	• Expertise in institutional consultancy (polity) • Measures have a broad impact • Expertise in legal projects aimed at promoting the rights of women in Africa / in addressing settings marked by legal pluralism • Access to political decision-makers and advisory services for policy design (policy) • Big potential for political institutions, procedures and policies to be designed on the basis of gender equality	• Specialist expertise in the sphere of FGM and in FGM-related issues • Usually good access to, acceptance among and knowledge of target groups • Approaches take into account institutional pluralism • Gender awareness
WEAKNESSES	• Focus on formal state structures, leading to danger of resistance and counter-reaction among the population • Neglect of process consultancy (politics) • Distance to target groups • Less developed awareness of gender	• Good local embeddedness and sector-specific impact occurs at the expense of more general widespread effectiveness • Neglect of institutional consultancy (politics) • Too little use of potential for consultancy regarding the design of national anti-FGM policies (policy) • Danger of resistance among the population and undesired results (e.g. medicalisation)

Measures aimed at ending FGM in the context of promoting good governance
Six good governance topics that support the ending of FGM

The GTZ service package for good governance[17] includes six themes in particular that can make a significant contribution towards ending FGM:

→ Good governance at national level (reform of public administration, public finances, promotion of democracy)
→ Good governance at local level (local self-government, decentralisation, local governance)
→ Law and justice
→ Human rights
→ Strengthening civil society
→ Gender

In the following, the links between FGM and these themes are explained on the basis of three questions:

1. How do measures aimed at ending FGM achieve results in the sphere of good governance and how can these be extended?
2. What possibilities are available to good governance projects/programmes to provide direct support to efforts to end FGM?
3. How do gender-specific approaches in the sphere of good governance make an indirect contribution to ending the practice?

Good governance at national level

Contributions of anti-FGM efforts to good governance at national level
Holistic approaches to combating FGM have hitherto focused primarily on the community level. Only awareness-raising and public information measures - especially in health and human rights education and in the educational system - address the national level to create an enabling environment.

In addition to such public information work, sector-specific projects/programmes that are involved in combating FGM can achieve a broad impact if they incorporate concerns connected with ending FGM at the level of sector policy advice (policy level) and if these policy initiatives are then translated into practice by the health or education ministries.

Example of Mali: Since 2003 the supraregional FGM project has been supporting a bilateral basic education project in Mali in which FGM is integrated into the syllabus, teacher training and extracurricular work. Teaching guidelines drawn up for the ministry of education makes FGM a compulsory element of instruction and teacher training. The school authorities and trained teachers are reliable intermediaries for passing on the information. In the extracurricular sphere, FGM is discussed along with other delicate issues with trained facilitators. Intergenerational dialogue has proved to be a good method here.

Governance measures with direct impacts on combating FGM
At national level GTZ concentrates on promoting public finance institutions and administrative bodies as well as institutions and procedures related to political consensus building, parliaments and the media. Cooperation with parliaments and media provides useful points for linking up to the issue, such as information, media and awareness-raising campaigns as well as dialogue forums about FGM involving journalists, politicians, ministries of women's affairs and religious authorities. Laws that ban FGM have the most impact when they are preceded or at least accompanied by such measures. The importance of the role of parliaments and political representatives has also been stressed by the Interparliamentary Union (IPU), which has set up a think tank and an online database on the issue.[18]

Numerous German technical cooperation projects provide assistance for financial and budgetary planning as well as for the process of drawing up and implementing poverty strategy papers. Anti-FGM projects can offer recommendations as to which practical and strategic needs of women should be taken into consideration in order to help target efforts at ending FGM (such as allocation of funds for health and legal services). Some helpful pointers are provided by poverty reduction strategy papers that already contain clauses on FGM (e.g. in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Niger).[19]

Some African countries have already developed national action plans in order to support and coordinate state and non-governmental efforts to end FGM. In some cases, specific institutions have been set up or given responsibility for the issue, such as the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in Egypt.

Example of Mauritania: The supraregional FGM project has been cooperating with the bilateral programme for the promotion of good governance in Mauritania since 2005. As part of the gender component of the programme, the national partner institution is being advised on the development of a national anti-FGM strategy and appropriate legislation. In addition to this, education and dialogue about FGM are being integrated into training modules for community representatives and political decision-makers as well as into measures aimed at promoting the rights of women and girls.

18 www.ipu.org/wmn-e/fgm-ipu.htm
19 On behalf of the World Bank the Italian NGO AIDOS has developed a manual for training government personnel and NGOs which provides valuable pointers as to how the issue can be integrated into government programmes. Cf. AIDOS: Mainstreaming the fight against FGM/C. A training manual. Rome 2005.

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Gender-specific governance measures with indirect impacts on combating FGM

There is considerable potential for good governance projects/programmes at the national level to have an indirect impact on ending FGM by making strategic contributions to achieving equality between women and men. Examples of measures that lend themselves to this approach include the following:

→ Gender responsive budgeting
→ Gender-appropriate policies for implementing poverty strategy papers
→ Use of gender-specific data and procedures, for example in planning and monitoring, such as Qualitative Impact Monitoring (QUIM) in Malawi
→ Gender-appropriate administrative reform (organisational development, quotas for women in the administration, affirmative action)
→ Gender-appropriate reform of parliamentary, legal and policing institutions

Good governance at local level

Contributions of anti-FGM efforts to good governance at local level

Working with local communities is the key to success for interventions to eradicate FGM. GTZ-sponsored efforts to end FGM culminate in a change in attitudes and behaviour within a local community, which is sometimes marked by a public ceremony.

Example of Kenya: Since 2001 the FGM component of the health programme in Kenya has been supporting community-based efforts to bring about social change in the area of FGM. This component seeks to replace traditional circumcision ceremonies with alternative initiation rituals, to empower girls and to generate a greater awareness within the community. The project places an emphasis throughout on cooperation with local decision-makers, "positive deviants" and representatives of formal state institutions. The programme addresses the following concerns in its work with local government authorities:

→ The setting up of contact units and support networks with the involvement of local municipal officials
→ Local conciliation units, e.g. to resolve conflicts between girls and their parents
→ Local campaigns on advocacy and health education
→ Improvements in police investigation procedures and the enforcement of court judgements
→ Agreements with the local judiciary concerning the waiving of court fees
→ Payment of school fees by local authorities

Governance measures with direct impacts on combating FGM
In the context of formal good governance measures at the level of municipalities and municipal service providers, concrete offers relating to FGM can be made in the areas of law, education and health. It would be useful to establish whether municipal services aimed at ending FGM can be extended within the framework of decentralisation and community development projects. If, for instance, support is provided for women in local parliaments, one training unit could look at specific opportunities to intervene against FGM.

Local governance should also be supported at informal level. This is especially important for women, whose domestic duties limit their mobility, putting them more at the mercy of traditional authorities. Decentralisation projects already address the issue of the power of informal authorities, for example through support for local elections.

Gender-specific governance measures with indirect impacts on combating FGM
Municipal development projects are particularly suitable for achieving the economic empowerment of women. Other themes that suggest themselves in terms of gender equality at local level include:

→ Gender orientation in participatory planning processes, e.g. planning in groups that are divided up according to gender and age
→ Gender-responsive budgetary planning (local gender budgeting)
→ Gender-responsive promotion of local economic activities
→ Attention to gender in the exercise of sovereign duties, especially the empowerment of female officials and members of community parliaments
→ Gender-sensitive institutional reform and organisational development

Law and justice

Contributions of anti-FGM projects to law and justice
Anti-FGM efforts around the world utilise legal arguments but rarely venture onto the relevant legal terrain with their own interventions (beyond human rights advocacy).

Interdisciplinary approaches are needed in order to implement measures that address the framework of institutional pluralism in an appropriate way. To do this, it is possible to draw on the experience of women's rights projects which have developed approaches to dealing with the contradiction between legal claims and legal reality.

Example of Ethiopia: Between 2001 and 2004 GTZ implemented a project in Ethiopia which helped women demand their rights. The universal standard outlawing harmful traditional practices is enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution and in national laws. To help this standard gain a foothold in the villages as well, the state law was "ratified" in village law-making ceremonies and translated explicitly into local law, with the support of NGOs versed in ethno-legal issues. Local institutions responsible for the administration of justice thus dissociated themselves from certain harmful traditional practices.

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Governance measures with direct impacts on combating FGM

National legislation banning FGM can accelerate change, especially when corresponding processes of social change are already in motion and sections of the population are already sensitised. Laws banning the practice should always go hand in hand with information and awareness-raising campaigns in order to increase social acceptance of the laws.

What is unique to GTZ is that gender-oriented legal projects in Africa have worked on situations in which legal claims and legal reality are a world apart. Among the lessons learned from this are the following: [20]

→ Change is speeded up when traditional authorities and elites are involved. They themselves take on the responsibility for bringing anachronistic traditional law more in line with universal legal standards and with the system of norms that is legally binding for the state as a whole.

→ Cooperation with "communication go-betweens" and "change agents" (e.g. returning emigrés) is very important. Their life history allows them to move freely from one cultural environment to another, and this lends them legitimacy in a community as well as giving them translation expertise and the ability to build bridges across cultural gaps.

→ Islamic religious law is and has been variously interpreted, depending on the underlying power constellations. It has proven to be prudent to argue within the religious context and to emphasise those interpretations that are aimed at establishing a more just relationship between women and men. [21]

→ In order to increase the legitimisation and, with it, the leverage of state legislation and dispensation of justice, attempts are being made to bring it "closer" to civil society, for example by integrating traditional rulings into the formal state legislation or by including traditional channels of conflict resolution in state law.

→ Beyond the form of dispensation of justice with which we are familiar, as a third power, innovative forms, such as forums for mediation and paralegals (barefoot lawyers), also receive support.

→ Great importance is also attached to the creation of transparency through information policy; information can be passed on through advisory councils, public discussion forums, white papers, national dialogues and accountability (evaluation).

Gender-specific governance measures with indirect impacts on combating FGM

As has already become clear, within the overall promotion of good governance, projects/ programmes in the sphere of law and justice in particular integrate the objective of achieving gender equality into their project design. Thus, in addition to the measures described above that have a direct impact on combating FGM, all gender-oriented legal projects make a valuable contribution towards ending FGM by supporting a legal and social environment that improves the status of women.

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20 The experiences of the legal projects and programme modules in Ghana, Ethiopia, Zambia and Malawi as well as from the sector programme "Strengthening women's rights" are available in processed form. Cf. e.g. GTZ: Bridging the Gap between Modern Legislation and Legal Reality: Working with Customary Legal Structures to Improve Women's Rights. Eschborn 2006.

21 Cf. GTZ: Gender Equality and Islam. Promoting Women's Human Rights through Religion. Eschborn 2005.

Contributions of anti-FGM efforts to promoting human rights
Measures to end FGM make direct contributions to the promotion of human rights. There are differences in the extent to which the issue of human rights is explicitly addressed.

Example of Burkina Faso: In Burkina Faso, the GTZ-assisted Village Empowerment Programme focuses its efforts on the human rights argument, with a module on non-formal basic education. The approach was developed in Senegal, and combines participatory health education with human rights education. With the help of GTZ this approach was transferred to Burkina Faso and adapted accordingly between 2000 and 2003, as an NGO's "Village Empowerment Programme". The programme follows a set of standardised steps. One highlight is a public declaration by village communities that they will no longer carry out FGM or other harmful practices.

Governance measures with direct impacts on combating FGM
For GTZ, the main way of promoting human rights is to support institutions, the objective being to enable the state to respect, protect and guarantee human rights. This includes measures in the social environment, such as promoting procedures of political participation or discussion and dialogue forums between the state and society. Human rights work on its own cannot bring about social change, but it can support and accelerate it. In this sense, the promotion of human rights is also important in relation to ending FGM. It helps to bring the practice out of the silent realm of taboo and to make it a subject of public debate, and it also creates a favourable environment for those who are working to combat FGM. IEC campaigns are often keen to use human rights arguments, with their central philosophy that all human beings are entitled to equal dignity. Increasing women's understanding of human rights also helps eliminate the practice.

Gender-specific governance measures with indirect impacts on combating FGM
In the human rights module of GTZ's service package, the enforcement of human rights for women is regarded as a particularly urgent objective, with women's empowerment being given particular emphasis. Public information work that emphasises women's rights and measures that address advocacy, legal literacy and the empowerment of women make important indirect contributions to the ending of FGM.

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Contributions of anti-FGM measures to strengthening civil society

One priority common to all anti-FGM measures to date has been to work with different groups in society in order to influence local informal forms of governance. A number of empowerment measures pave the way for social change:

→ Awareness-raising measures and the social empowerment of girls, women and their immediate environment
→ Search for consensus within the community that the rights of women and girls to physical integrity must be protected
→ Public information campaigns and legal measures

Governance measures with direct impacts on combating FGM

As already mentioned, the concept of institutional pluralism refers to the fact that structures and norms exist within civil society itself which are at odds with the ideals of good governance. Thus "strengthening" civil society is, on its own, not enough. What is important here is a differentiated approach. Given this objective, measures that have a direct impact on combating FGM include, in particular, assistance in establishing forums where different groups of people can voice their opinions about FGM and providing support (in the sense of capacity building) for groups in society that are working to combat FGM.

Example of Benin: Since 2004 a project alliance in northwest Benin (decentralisation, environment, health) has been involved in the fight against FGM by organising a Civil Society Forum, in which state organisations are also represented. The Forum brings together doctors, journalists, midwives, circumcisers, village elders, regional representatives of the ministries of justice, health, family and education, the police force and the state prosecutor's office. Thus, a new platform has been created to discuss FGM within society.

Gender-specific governance measures with indirect impacts on combating FGM

Projects aimed at promoting democracy and good governance at national level, as well as decentralisation and legal projects, always include measures for strengthening and supporting "democratic spaces" or civil society, sometimes through one-off activities, often with a special focus on gender equality. Ever since women's rights were once again expressly equated with human rights at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, the number of NGOs working on this issue and receiving assistance from development cooperation has increased. This, too, has a positive, if indirect, impact in terms of ending FGM. Wherever awareness work fosters women's rights, it seems sensible to add anti-FGM components.

Contributions of anti-FGM projects to gender equality

Clearly, projects aimed at ending FGM will always contribute to gender equality and the strengthening of women's rights as well. Some examples of this, again, are: the economic, social and political empowerment of women; the creation of spaces for negotiating and abandoning informal traditional norms that discriminate against women; cooperation with traditional and religious authorities; cooperation with men; access for women to information, institutions and education.

Example of Guinea: In Guinea the supraregional project "Ending Female Genital Mutilation" has been supporting various NGOs working at grassroots and community levels in the fields of health, education, empowerment and participation. It is here that the idea of intergenerational dialogue was born. Since then, the dialogues - between men and women and old and young - have taken place on a regular basis and have been in constant demand. They have led, among other things, to greater understanding for young women who see certain traditions as acts of violence and no longer wish to carry them out. Intergenerational dialogue has also proved a success in Mali and Kenya in terms of removing the taboo from FGM and re-negotiating the custom.

Governance measures with direct impacts on combating FGM

In the GTZ service package there are two themes in particular within the overall field of gender that can contribute directly to ending FGM: combating gender-based violence and processes of legal reform to promote women's rights. FGM is a form of gender-based violence that can be countered using the following measures: setting up contact units and advice centres for (potential) victims, training relevant legal workers (judges, lawyers, police, paralegals, traditional arbitration services), creating an appropriate legal framework. Even if these measures are not necessarily able to prevent FGM, they at least provide a safety net for women and families who want to renounce FGM. In processes of legal reform it is important above all to draft and enforce specific laws banning FGM and to mediate between formal and traditional practices in applying the law.

Specific gender projects and programmes in countries where FGM is practised can have a positive impact on ending the practice. The implementation of national equality policies and the integration of gender sensitivity into the actions of the administration and into processes of legal reform provide a framework within which FGM itself can more easily be addressed.

Similar results emerge from development cooperation projects that meet the GTZ quality standards on gender and integrate the objective of gender equality into their project design. Nevertheless, the potential for improvement here is considerable.[22]

22 Cf. GTZ: CD-Rom "Gender und Governance", Eschborn 2005. For decentralisation projects, see GTZ: Dezentralisierung, Hinweise zur Gender-Orientierung, Eschborn 2001. On the issue of gender budgets and gender in poverty reduction strategy papers, see guidelines issued by the Gender Sector Advisory Project.

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Five key elements of a multi-level approach to combat FGM

A multi-level approach to combat FGM should include the following key elements:

1. Rigorous use of participatory and process-led methods
2. Analytical design taking account of the cultural background
3. Support for processes of societal transformation at different levels
4. Promotion of negotiation processes
5. Guaranteeing sustainability and protection at target group and institutional levels

Rigorous use of participatory and process-led methods
A change in perspective to that of the target groups requires procedures that are participatory and process-led throughout. Development cooperation actors should preferably work with local forces and "communication go-betweens"; local scientific resources should be built up for this purpose.

In the course of a project, reform proposals are developed empirically on the basis of networking with target groups and officials at every level. (Pilot) measures are supervised carefully, backed up with scientific knowledge and examined in terms of their effectiveness and changes in the local communities. Outcomes of results monitoring should feed back iteratively and self-critically into the participatory reform and decision-making processes.

Analytical design taking account of the cultural background
Thus culture-sensitive design - backed up scientifically - always begins with empirical studies on local values, norms, institutions and organisational forms so that afterwards it is possible, in dialogue with the partners, to assess the opportunities and risks involved in further efforts to combat FGM, as a guideline for action.

Support for processes of societal transformation at different levels
Before a community as a whole will renounce the practice of FGM (publicly), measures are required at various levels:

→ Measures to foster a climate of trust, for example through health, education or income-generation measures, or else, integrating the issue into ongoing projects building on existing trust

→ Awareness-raising, empowering and networking measures at the level of villages and town districts among those directly involved in practising FGM: girls, brothers, parents, peer groups, relatives, elders, neighbours, (potential) husbands and their families, traditional midwives, circumcisers, traditional and religious authorities and decision-makers

→ Human rights and educational measures in the form of workshops, going from grassroots to regional meso-level with actors who are still able to exert a direct influence on the practice of FGM: health workers, teachers, workers in other decentralised state services as well as staff of municipalities and churches, religious and traditional leaders

→ Media and awareness-raising work at national level as an indirect form of influence, in order to pave the way for a more generally supportive social and cultural environment with a corresponding legal policy; this involves journalists, politicians, parliaments, women's ministries along with their institutions, and religious authorities

- → The legal sector is particularly important in the struggle to end harmful traditional practices such as FGM, not only at village level but more widely at district and even national level: Training for local authority figures, members of traditional arbitration bodies, paralegals of various provenance, court staff and prison bodies, justice ministry
- → Gender-oriented reforms of formal state institutions, procedures and policies at every level have positive indirect impacts throughout

Promotion of negotiation processes

The main aim here is to create forums in which informal social norms and institutions can be looked at anew, discussed and done away with. The following methods present themselves:

- → Innovative solutions from previous anti-FGM projects: Intergenerational dialogue (Guinea), local legal transformation (Ethiopia), forum for negotiating and agreeing a "social contract" (Benin)
- → Innovative solutions from legal projects in Africa: cooperation with traditional and religious authorities for the harmonisation of law, cooperation with "communication go-betweens", arguing within the religious context, improving the capacity of state law to find an echo in the society, promotion of innovative legal institutions

Guaranteeing sustainability and protection at target group and institutional levels

In order for target groups to overcome the traditional ideas of their village authorities, it is necessary to support and protect firstly the pioneers and innovators, then the first imitators, an initial majority and finally the absolute majority throughout from the moment they change their attitudes to having their concerns accepted by informal and formal state authorities. It is also important to plan measures to address resistance and opponents, because when families leave the safety of their previous culture, they become vulnerable to attack. Making a choice to reject FGM should not worsen the position of girls and women and their families.

In the informal sphere, work can be done with peer groups, for example, to raise awareness. In the formal state sphere, municipal and legal services are important. Of crucial importance for the economic security of women is gender-specific economic development policy in the villages and municipalities that balances the needs and interests of women and men.

Sustainability is also underpinned by incorporating experience gained at local level into national institutions, procedures and policy making (e.g. national poverty reduction strategies, sector strategies).

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Programme-oriented development cooperation and FGM

As an instrument of German development cooperation, programme-oriented development cooperation has become increasingly important in supporting governance reform processes in the partner countries. It involves integrating contributions made by various donor and implementing organisations into the national, sectoral, regional and cross-cutting programmes of partner countries. Programme-oriented joint financing is one form of this. According to the BMZ definition, programme-oriented joint financing involves joint support for sector-specific, cross-sector and macroeconomic reform programmes of a partner country that have been developed at national level and are the responsibility of the national government. The several donors involved come to an understanding with the partner on common objectives and harmonised procedures. Programme-oriented joint financing presupposes that a broader enabling framework is in place. [23]

Whether or not programme-oriented joint financing [24] is suitable for any given country is decided on the basis of so-called entry criteria, which are geared towards the model of good governance and the latest BMZ criteria for assessing the development orientation of a partner country. The recognition of and support for women's rights is explicitly listed as one of three sub-headings under the heading human rights; these criteria are taken to assess the development orientation of a government. This is where the first link to FGM can be established: in countries with a high prevalence of FGM, the question of commitment to human rights and gender equality has to be answered with regard to FGM as well. German development cooperation has an opportunity, through political dialogue, of addressing any deterioration in the broader political framework and of responding with sanctions in the form of a partial or complete suspension of payments.

Programme-oriented joint financing is intended to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the national poverty reduction strategies of partner countries. Potential starting points present themselves in those countries where ending FGM is part of the national poverty strategy. However, due to the links between eradicating FGM and achieving the MDGs, connections to FGM can also be established in other countries, for example via indicators that are relevant for overcoming FGM. Additional points of access are provided by sector-specific programmes in the fields of health and education as well as Multi-donor Budget Support programmes, operating principally in social sectors. The idea here is to introduce FGM and the experience of German development cooperation in the fight against FGM into sector policy dialogue.

In exceptional cases, German development cooperation also has the opportunity, within its sector-specific programmes, to earmark budget resources for a specific purpose. This earmarking mechanism could be used, for example, to provide resources specifically for tackling gender inequalities, for other areas relevant to FGM (e.g. health and education) or for explicit strategies aimed at ending FGM.

23 BMZ: Leitfaden zur Kennzeichnung von Vorhaben der Programmorientierten Gemeinschaftsfinanzierung (PGF). Bonn 2006, p. 1.
24 The following section relates to a BMZ (Division 220) draft of a position paper entitled "Konzept zur Programmorientierten Gemeinschaftsfinanzierung (PGF)", dated 10.11.2006.

The main function of German Technical Cooperation in the context of programme-oriented joint financing is to respond to the increased demand for institutional capacity development in partner countries. The sector-specific expertise of German Technical Cooperation comes into its own in the context of providing policy advice for the planning and implementation of programme-oriented joint financing arrangements and in sector-specific advisory services. There is an opportunity here to provide technical and methodological support for the planning and implementation of programme-oriented joint financing: German Technical Cooperation can introduce issues that are both sector- and poverty-relevant - FGM, for example, in high prevalence countries - and can help develop appropriate strategies.

As has already been demonstrated for traditional Technical Cooperation in the sphere of good governance, consistent and systematic gender orientation within the framework of programme-oriented joint financing too would make a valuable indirect contribution to ending FGM. Gender responsive budgeting can be extremely valuable in this context. and can be used at the level of both national and local financial management to promote an enabling environment for the eradication of FGM.

It should however be pointed out that the results chains associated with the aforementioned contributions to ending FGM in the context of programme-oriented joint financing are very long. Furthermore, efforts to overcome FGM that are incorporated into programme-oriented joint financing run the risk of offering blanket responses to very heterogeneous sets of circumstances. Here too, then, it is absolutely vital to take the experience and findings of target-group-based approaches into account in the planning and implementation of programme-oriented joint financing.

Conclusion

"FGM is not culture. FGM is torture". These are the words of Waris Dirie, Somali ex-model and UN Special Ambassador for the Elimination of FGM, who herself experienced the ordeals of the ritual at the age of five. [25] There is hardly any more vivid way of describing the different perspectives on FGM than this. The clear message contained in this statement is useful for PR work outside Africa. As far as cooperation with African partner countries is concerned, however, both perspectives must be accepted as valid: FGM is both culture and a violation of human rights.

Successful efforts to eliminate FGM take both perspectives on board; they call the state to account in terms of creating an enabling environment within which communities are able collectively to abandon a cultural practice that constitutes a flagrant violation of the human rights of women and girls.

Where FGM is more the result of imitation and a lack of education than of any deep-seated part of people's identity or religious or cultural sensitivities, straightforward educational and awareness-raising measures can be effective. Where FGM is part of people's identity and culture, however, such measures remain largely ineffective. Thus, modern projects and programmes aimed at eradicating FGM take a holistic approach that addresses issues of good governance from central government to municipal level. Excellent results have been achieved by approaches that take the issue of health as their starting point for combating FGM and target their subsequent empowerment measures towards the legal self-determination of girls and women.

Nonetheless, projects aimed at ending FGM rarely work at the level of the political framework and only in isolated cases at national level, even if they are happy to draw on the human rights argument. To end the practice in the long term, political leeway must be used and an enabling environment put in place for delicate processes of societal transformation.

25 Waris Dirie: Schmerzenskinder. Berlin 2004, p.17. (Available in English as "Desert Children")

Linking good governance with FGM - whether in the context of bilateral technical cooperation projects and programmes or in the context of programme-oriented development cooperation - will generate added value if the following recommendations are heeded:

→ In order to make a strategic contribution towards ending traditions and practices that are at odds with the ideals of good governance, good governance projects/programmes at national level should make use of their expertise in the reform of broader institutional conditions, their access to political decision-makers and the widespread effectiveness of their projects.

→ Good governance projects/programmes should make better use of their potential for promoting gender equality in order to make an indirect contribution to ending FGM.

→ The multi-level approach of German development cooperation should be capitalised on in the cause of ending FGM, and the promotion of good governance at national formal government level should be linked to projects at regional and local target group levels.

→ Good governance projects/programmes should exert an influence on the governance structures and norms largely responsible for the persistence of FGM, which have generally emerged organically at local level, and are informal.

→ The extraordinary experience and knowledge of German technical cooperation's women's rights projects in Africa (some of which have already been completed) in terms of dealing with institutional pluralism and the contradictions between legal claims and legal reality should be harnessed in the service of ending FGM.

→ Development interventions aimed at ending FGM should extend their sphere of influence and their impacts on the political framework by enabling local experiences to feed into institutional reforms and national policy (poverty reduction strategies, sector strategies).

→ In countries with a high prevalence of FGM, opportunities for ending FGM should be used in the context of programme-oriented development cooperation (indicators, earmarking, sector policy dialogue, sector-specific advice on FGM, gender focus and gender responsive budgeting); existing experience and knowledge of target group-based approaches should be taken into account in the planning and implementation of programme-oriented joint financing.

It would be a real gain for the cause of eliminating female genital mutilation if the experience and expertise from different sectors could be brought together: the subject expertise, highly targeted work and sensitivity for gender issues that exist in anti-FGM efforts in the health and education sectors on the one hand; and the expertise in institutional consultancy, access to political decision-makers, broad impact and potential for building a political framework based on gender equality that exist in good governance projects/programmes on the other.

Appendix:
Overview of FGM
prevalence and
legislation in
selected African
countries

Country	Rate of prevalence[1]	Anti-FGM laws exist[2]
Benin	17%	x
Burkina Faso	72%	x
Central African Republic	43%	x
Chad	45%[2]	x
Côte d'Ivoire	45%	x
Egypt	97%	x
Eritrea	89%	
Ethiopia	80%	x
Ghana	5%[2]	x
Guinea	99%	x
Kenya	38%	x
Mali	92%	
Mauretania	71%	
Niger	5%	x
Nigeria	25%	
Sudan (North)	89%	
Tanzania	18%	x
Yemen	23%	

[1]ORC Marco 2004, [2]UNICEF 2005,

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