

# Beliefs and practices of Somali citizens related to child protection and gender

Findings from Africa's Voices Foundation's interactive radio programmes  
aired during January and February 2017 for UNICEF Somalia



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*Above image: A young girl sits in the shade, while her sister sleeps behind her, at an IDP camp in Baidoa. UN Photo/Tobin Jones*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report presents findings from research carried out through five interactive radio shows on key protection issues that affect young women and girls, carried out in January and February 2017. Across five weeks **40,544 messages** were received in response to questions aired on the radio from **16,541 people within 73 districts** across Somalia - of these participants 45.2% were female. Through this approach AVF generated the following insights on four gender and child protection topics.

### Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

#### 1. There are geographical variations between SCZ and NWZ in beliefs related to FGM/C.

- a. **Insights:** Radio participants in NWZ are slightly more likely than those in SCZ and NEZ to agree with FGM/C as a form of sexual control of women, whilst those in SCZ were far more likely to agree with it on religious grounds. Overall, participants in NWZ were more likely to hold beliefs that disagreed with the practice and perceive that the practice was occurring due to ignorance, whilst those in SCZ were more likely to hold views that disagreed with only the more severe types of FGM/C.
- b. **Recommendations:** Programming around FGM/C might differentiate strategies between SCZ and NWZ. In SCZ using religious leaders and narratives based on the Qoran to re-frame perceptions will be crucial to positive change, as well as targeting beliefs specifically justifying Type I/II FGM/C. In NWZ, programming could focus on re-framing narratives of female sexuality and autonomy -- a sensitive topic that may be best suited to community theatre and radio dramas.

#### 2. There are distinct beliefs related to experiences of different types of FGM/C

- a. **Insights:** Amongst radio audiences, there was a clear variation in beliefs between households with mothers who had undergone Type I/II and those who had undergone Type III (more severe). The former were more likely to believe the practice was driven by religious beliefs in their community, while the latter were more likely to perceive it as a form of sexual control and as a cultural practice.
- b. **Recommendations:** Programming could be organised around tackling these practices as two distinct norms. Eliminating Type I/II FGM/C may benefit from programmes that focus on changing perceptions of the religious drivers of the practice. Programming around Type III may focus on re-shaping perceptions on women's sexuality and promoting female identities that do not include FGM/C. The former may require drama and roleplay; the latter may require greater engagement from community leaders and elders.

#### 3. Religion can be both a barrier and a path to change.

- a. **Insight:** Many participants, especially in SCZ, agreed with FGM/C on religious grounds, or perceived religion as the main driver of the practice in their community. Crucially, our research showed that these beliefs are associated with the continuation of FGM/C. There were, however, some who disagreed with the practice on religious grounds.
- b. **Recommendation:** Reframing people's perception of the relationship between

religion and FGM/C remains key to eliminating it. Focusing on promoting the positive aspect of this narrative that already has some traction amongst audiences will likely be more successful than directly contradicting existing beliefs.

#### 4. Stressing negative health impacts as path to positive change.

- a. **Insight:** There is a positive association between those who disagree with FGM/C on health grounds and those whose daughters don't undergo the practice.
- b. **Recommendation:** This provides some justification for UNICEF's ongoing strategy of stressing the health risks of FGM/C to reduce the practice, though this research provides no definitive conclusion on causality.

## Child Marriage

### 1. Different notions of childhood development affect beliefs on age of marriage.

- a. **Insight:** Support of child marriage (under 18 years) was associated with narratives of a girl's biological development with a focus on puberty as a clear threshold for marriage. Those against child marriage were more likely to focus on a girl's intellectual, psychological, and emotional development as setting the boundary for marriage.
- b. **Recommendation:** Project a positive model of womanhood as defined by intellectual and emotional development, and the importance of these aspects of maturity for marriage. Radio dramas and community theatre, especially if interactive, could project relatable female characters that embody this trajectory.

### 2. Male and female participants vary in their beliefs around girl-child development and marriage.

- a. **Insight:** Female participants were more likely to talk about emotional and intellectual maturity as being important for marriage readiness, whilst men were more likely to talk about puberty and biological development.
- b. **Recommendation:** Reaching men through engaging channels they trust is important to shift male beliefs around female readiness for marriage. Programmes which only tackle issues related to gender such as child marriage risk not being as engaging for male audiences. Combining programming with issues perceived as important to men, such as employment, agricultural livelihoods, and politics, may be key to achieving men's critical engagement with the issue.

### 3. Religion is a key constituent of norms that support child marriage.

- a. **Insight:** A prevalent belief amongst radio audiences in support of child marriage was that the practice was justified in the Qoran. By contrast with episodes on FGM/C, there was no discussion from participants of a religious justification for avoiding child marriage. This suggests that no positive religious narrative is currently associated with child marriage, at least among radio participants.
- b. **Recommendation:** Public communications appealing to religious reasoning

against child marriage should be crafted with caution. Insensitive messaging that runs against people's deeply held values may lead to further polarising and hardening of negative beliefs. Discussions with agencies, donors and religious leaders may be the first step towards defining an effective narrative grounded in people's existing beliefs, before embarking on campaigning.

#### 4. Beliefs around child marriage vary with age

- c. **Insight:** Older generations above 30, especially in rural areas, were more likely to support child marriage compared to younger radio participants.
- d. **Recommendation:** Campaigning to shift norms around child marriage should seek to build conversations that span generations, so that the voice of youth can be heard by older decision-makers. This could also be achieved through radio drama with relatable characters from different age groups.

### Gendered access to education

#### 1. There are demographic variations in attitudes towards girls' access to education.

- a. **Insight:** Male participants, those from rural areas, and nomads, were more likely than other social groups to hold a negative view towards girls' education.
- b. **Recommendation:** Communications programming to change norms around girls' access to education should focus on these groups in order to ensure no sub-set of girls is left behind in terms of their educational outcomes.

#### 2. Proverbs and idioms reinforce beliefs around girls' education.

- a. **Insight:** Beliefs can be expressed and reinforced through specific language and phrases. Negative beliefs around, for example, how women belong in the kitchen, risk being entrenched through these idioms. Positive proverbs, such as educating girls is equivalent to educating a family, may help reinforce positive beliefs.
- b. **Recommendation:** Using specific positive narratives and proverbs identified through this research may communicate change in a way that resonates with audiences. Branding campaigns around proverbs such as "educating women is like educating the family" builds a positive narrative attuned to cultural context.

#### 3. Positive narratives of female education vary by geography.

- a. **Insight:** In SCZ, audiences were more likely to believe that girls should have the same education as boys due to reasons of equality between the sexes, whilst in NWZ, participants were more likely to make this case with reference to the wider benefits that women's education has on the family and community.
- b. **Recommendation:** Target programming based on geography, emphasizing language and proverbs around the significance of women's education to the wider family and community in NWZ, and a broader campaign for gender equality in SCZ.

#### 4. Girls' access to education is a complex mixture of factors.

- a. **Insight:** Whilst many parents expressed their willingness and optimism for girls

going to school, other data in Somalia suggests that in practice many girls do not receive secondary or even primary education. Though this may be in part a reflection of this study's coverage error, it is also a reminder that social factors alone do not determine educational outcomes for women.

- b. **Recommendation:** Programmes to improve access to education need to combine social campaigns with improving legislation and providing resources. Otherwise, social change campaigns risk being fruitless and even counterproductive.

## Juvenile justice

### 1. Communication campaigns and legislation should build on existing positive narratives for giving juveniles special treatment

- a. **Insight:** Amongst radio audiences there were many who called for differential treatment for juveniles committing crime (59.5% of messages). This attitude was commonly justified by arguing that younger people were not yet fully mature and could not be considered fully responsible for their actions. At the same time, people claimed that it was possible to pull juveniles away from crime by giving them guidance and counsel.
- b. **Recommendation:** These perspectives suggest there is some firm grounding for enacting and enforcing legislation on juvenile justice in Somalia in line with international norms. Building on the narratives presented by radio audiences, such as role-modelling cases of reform and rehabilitation, will enable campaigning that can resonate with audiences, and shift beliefs and attitudes.

### 2. Notions of childhood development that link puberty to maturity need to be dispelled

- a. **Insight:** Many participants argued that juveniles were already in a position of moral maturity and responsibility. In particular reference was made to puberty as the defining threshold of when a human should take full responsibility for their actions.
- b. **Recommendation:** Presenting alternative models of human development in which biological maturity is not equivalent to moral and emotional maturity may be important to encouraging positive perspectives on juvenile justice. This might be accomplished through radio drama and community theatre.

### 3. Emergent policy in Somalia must be sensitive to perspectives that religion supports the equal treatment of adults and juveniles in the justice and correction system

- a. **Insight:** Some radio participants resisted the idea that young offenders should be treated differently by referencing Islamic *sharia*. In their eyes, Islam does not fully differentiate between juveniles and adults when it comes to justice and correction.
- b. **Recommendation:** Legislation supported by the international community in Somalia should be sensitive towards those who resist differential treatment for by referencing strongly-held religious beliefs. Enacting legislation in line with international norms will require grounding it in arguments taken from Islamic *sharia*, developed in collaboration with local religious leaders.

# Beliefs and practices of Somali citizens concerning child protection and gender

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## Acronyms used in this report include:

<b>AVF</b>	Africa's Voices Foundation	<b>NWZ</b>	North West Zone
<b>C4D</b>	Communications for Development	<b>PESS</b>	Population Estimate Survey of Somalia
<b>FGM/C</b>	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting	<b>SCZ</b>	South-Central Zone
<b>FM</b>	Frequency Modulation	<b>SMS</b>	Short Message Service
<b>MICS</b>	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>NEZ</b>	North East Zone	<b>UNICEF</b>	The United Nations Children's Fund



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Child protection and gender equality in Somalia: addressing knowledge gaps

Despite some improvements, harmful practices that violate the rights of women and children, such as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage, continue at concerning levels in Somalia. These practices have a severe impact on Somali people in terms of health and educational outcomes, psychosocial well-being, and prospects for political and economic empowerment.

In particular, a range of norms persist which create and reproduce a stark gender inequality. Norms related to child marriage, FGM/C, and denying girls' access to education contribute to negative outcomes for girls and women, and their broader marginalisation at the household, community, and institutional level. The extent of this inequality is clear in the gender inequality index, which identifies Somalia as the fourth most unequal country in the world in terms of gender at 0.776.<sup>1</sup>

Because of poor infrastructure and large areas of political insecurity in Somalia, traditional, on-the-ground qualitative research on the diverse beliefs and practices of Somali citizens related to these priority concerns is difficult to undertake and costly to reproduce at scale. As the HEART assessment describes in regard to FGM/C: "To date, work in Somalia has acknowledged the need to change public opinion on FGM/C, but there is little background research or evidence to help us understand exactly what makes change happen, in any given context."<sup>2</sup>

Africa's Voices Foundation (AVF) has a growing track record of overcoming such obstacles, addressing evidence and data gaps by leveraging the popularity of interactive radio in Somalia.<sup>3</sup> Since 2015, AVF has partnered with UNICEF Somalia to generate insights into a range of topics using interactive radio as a research tool. Our research focuses on the socio-cultural factors that reinforce norms, giving insight into different collective beliefs that are associated with practices, such as those related to gender inequality.

This report refers to five radio shows on gender and child protection issues, which were part of the latest series of interactive radio shows broadcast across Somalia in early 2017. Within a framework for social research design and analysis, these shows sought to address gaps in knowledge on social norms and barriers to change on four topics: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C); child marriage; girls' access to education; and, juvenile justice.

### 1.1.1. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

Somalia has been known to have the highest proportion of girls and women who have undergone FGM/C in the world - data from 2011 put FGM/C prevalence at 98% of women between 15 and 49

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP, Somalia Human Development Report 2012, (online at: [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/242/somalia\\_report\\_2012.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/242/somalia_report_2012.pdf), last accessed 31 August 2017). The gender parity index is a composite indicator based on key indicators in health, political participation, education and participation in the labour market.

<sup>2</sup> HEART, Situational Analysis of FGM/C Stakeholders and Interventions in Somalia, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> AVF ([www.africasvoices.org](http://www.africasvoices.org)) is a non-profit research organisation spun out of the University of Cambridge. We believe that listening to citizens is at the heart of responsive and effective development and governance. Combining social research theory and methods, digital media and communications, and innovations in data analysis, we leverage new opportunities of the digital revolution to generate rich insights and amplify diverse, local voices.

years old in NEZ and NWZ<sup>4</sup>. The impact of this on girls and women is severe as the practice can have negative psychosocial effects and increases the risk of a number of health complications.<sup>5</sup>

More recent data has suggested that the prevalence of FGM/C may have decreased. In one recent study, the proportion of mothers reporting that their *daughter* had undergone FGM/C was reported to be far lower in all parts of Somalia: 27.4% , 38.2% , and 33.7% in SCZ, NWZ, and SCZ respectively.<sup>6</sup> This stark contrast with 2011 figures potentially suggests a downward trend across all regions. However it may also raise questions on the validity and representativeness of these findings.

This evidence may be confounded by competing perceptions of what constitutes FGM/C, with some citizens reporting only the more extreme types of FGM/C<sup>7</sup> (i.e. Type III, which includes infibulation), meaning that Type I (clitoridectomy) and II (excision) are being underreported. Indeed two qualitative studies suggest that urban and more educated groups of society have moved away from the most severe forms of FGM/C for their daughters - as well as towards a 'medicalisation' of the practice to reduce health risks such as infection.<sup>8</sup>

Eliminating FGM/C has long been understood to require powerful programming directed towards changing social norms, but this can only be effective if interventions are tailored to the specific context through a granular and qualitative understanding of the collective beliefs and perceptions of the practice - ie. beyond the narrow parameters of a survey.<sup>9</sup>

While the state of the evidence may not give a clear assessment of the practice and associated norms - it informs two key motivations for this study. First, work remains to be done towards eliminating all types of FGM/C -- in line with the SDGs<sup>10</sup> and national priorities<sup>11</sup>. Second, research will have to go beyond quantitative indicators towards a qualitative understanding of how people perceive and talk about the practice in order to inform effective social change.

## 1.1.2. Child marriage

Child marriage (before the age of 18 years old)<sup>12</sup> threatens to increase the rates of maternal mortality, whilst limiting girls' prospects for education and future economic independence and empowerment.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> UNICEF Somalia, Multi- Indicator Cluster Survey, 2011, North-East Zone, Somalia, Final Report 2014; UNICEF Somalia, Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey, 2011, North-West Zone, Somaliland, Final Report 2014.

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF Somalia, Situation Analysis of Children in Somalia, 2016, 22-23.; WHO, 'Female genital mutilation and obstetric outcome: WHO collaborative prospective study in six African countries' The Lancet 2006;367:1835-1841.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, UNICEF, UNFPA Gender-based Violence Aggregation of Findings from Southern and Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland (Forthcoming 2017).

<sup>7</sup> HEART, Situational Analysis of FGM/C Stakeholders and Interventions in Somalia, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid; CISP and International Alert, The Complexity of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Insights from Mogadishu and South Central Somalia, October 2015.

<sup>9</sup> C. Bicchieri, *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose Measure and Change Social Norms*, Cambridge University Press 2016

<sup>10</sup> Eliminating female genital mutilation: an interagency statement, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO.

([http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw52/statements\\_missions/Interagency\\_Statement\\_on\\_Eliminating\\_FGM.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw52/statements_missions/Interagency_Statement_on_Eliminating_FGM.pdf), last accessed 09/07/2017); UN, Sustainable Development Goal 5.3, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>.

<sup>11</sup> The Federal Republic of Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, Mogadishu, Somalia (online at: <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/research/Somalia-Constitution2012.pdf>, last accessed 9 June 2016), UNICEF Somalia, Important Religious Ruling against all forms of female circumcision signed in Puntland, North Eastern Somalia, Garowe, Puntland, 13 November 2013 (online at [https://www.unicef.org/somalia/cpp\\_13980.html](https://www.unicef.org/somalia/cpp_13980.html) last accessed: 9 June 2016).

<sup>12</sup> As defined in line with: UN, Sustainable Development Goal 5.3, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>.

<sup>13</sup> The legal age of marriage in Somalia is 18 years old for both sexes, although girls can marry at 16 years old with parental consent.



The prevalence of child marriage in Somalia is high and far from the global objective defined under the SDGs of eliminating the practice.<sup>14</sup> In 2011, 38.1% of women in NEZ between 20-49 years old reported that they had married before 18. There is a similar picture in NWZ: 30.8% of this age bracket were married before the age of 18.<sup>15</sup> A survey carried out in three regions of SCZ suggests that 57.5% of women aged 20-49 years were married before the age of 18 years.<sup>16</sup>

A number of contributing factors have been identified for the continuation of this practice, including material and structural barriers, but previous research also shows the importance of differing ideas on men and women's role in society, certain religious beliefs, perceptions of what constitutes 'maturity' and the belief that it can protect girls from sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>17</sup> However up-to-date in depth qualitative research that can shed further light on these beliefs remains lacking in Somalia.

### 1.1.3. Girls' access to education

In Somalia, girls do not have the same opportunities as boys to attend and complete primary and secondary education. This is clearly seen in the Gender Parity Index values for the country (GPI)<sup>18</sup> where 1 is equivalent to an education system with no gender discrimination, whilst a GPI of less than one indicates a bias towards boys. In NEZ, the GPI is 0.85 at primary level and 0.67 at secondary level.

<sup>19</sup> In NWZ GPI at primary level was found to be 0.87; the figure for secondary level was 0.61.<sup>20</sup>

These indicators are well short of the complete parity laid out as a target of the SDGs.<sup>21</sup> This inequality is set against the background of Somalia having some of the worst education indicators in the world, including the lowest rate of primary school attendance at 21% for girls and 25% for boys.<sup>22</sup>

Whilst material and structural factors (i.e. household income, proximity to schools) will play a role in household decision-making around education, collective beliefs on the differing roles of men and women and the value of education will also play a role.<sup>23</sup> Qualitative research from 2009 found that socio-cultural factors in Somalia, such as the perception that boys benefit more from education than girls, and the perception that girls must play a role in the household, acted as barriers to girls' access to education.<sup>24</sup> Further up-to-date research is needed however to understand the nuances and narratives of these beliefs.

### 1.1.4. Juvenile Justice

Somalia's legal system manifests a legal pluralism in which judicial authority is divided between sharia law, traditional justice, and nascent state institutions. This creates an enabling environment for many child protection issues, for example in cases of sexual abuse where women and girls are

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<sup>14</sup> UN, Sustainable Development Goal 5.3, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>.

<sup>15</sup> UNICEF Somalia, Multi- Indicator Cluster Survey, 2011, North-East Zone, Somalia, Final Report 2014, p. 101, UNICEF Somalia, Multi- Indicator Cluster Survey, 2011, North-West Zone, Somaliland, Final Report 2014, p. 96.

<sup>16</sup> Baseline Survey in Central South Zone 2013-2014, Regions: Banadir, Galgadud and Lower Juba (2014).

<sup>17</sup> CISP and International Alert, The Complexity of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Insights from Mogadishu and South Central Somalia, October 2015; A global framework is defined in: CARE, Applying Theory to Practice: CARE's Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming (2017).

<sup>18</sup> The Gender Parity Index is calculated by taking the ratio of the enrollment ratio of girls over the enrollment ratio of boys for a given education level.

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF Somalia, Multi- Indicator Cluster Survey, 2011, North-East Zone, Somalia, Final Report 2014;

<sup>20</sup> UNICEF Somalia, Multi- Indicator Cluster Survey, 2011, North-West Zone, Somaliland, Final Report 2014. The most recent MICS in SCZ was 2006, so the data was not presented here.

<sup>21</sup> UN, SDG 4, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>.

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF Somalia, Situation Analysis of Children in Somalia, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> CARE, Applying Theory to Practice: CARE's Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming (2017).

<sup>24</sup> BBC World Service Trust, Somali Girl's Education (ISPABE Project) Qualitative Research Findings (2009).

pressured to settle cases through customary law.<sup>25</sup> A particular concern is the lack of clarity on the definition of a juvenile and the absence of a rehabilitative approach to juvenile justice in line with international norms and standards.

There is currently only one prison in Somalia where children are incarcerated separately from adults, meaning that passing through the correction and justice system can leave long-lasting negative impacts on children's health and well-being<sup>26</sup>. Nor is there a clear delineation of what crimes are considered sufficiently minor to be 'divertible' from the formal justice system, and which are deemed grave enough to justify treating young offenders in the same way as adults.<sup>27</sup> In this setting those who commit crimes before the age of 18 years old are at risk of facing justice as an adult and having their education and psychosocial well-being severely impaired.

Developing an appropriate policy framework for protection of children's rights in the judicial and correction system will require incorporating the views of the Somali citizens themselves. In this way international frameworks can be attuned to local context and ultimately attain legitimacy.

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<sup>25</sup> CISP and International Alert, The Complexity of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Insights from Mogadishu and South Central Somalia, October 2015, p. 22.

<sup>26</sup> UNICEF Somalia, Situation Analysis of Children in Somalia, 2016, p. 83.

<sup>27</sup> Email communication with UNICEF Child Protection Officer, 6 January 2017.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Theoretical framework

Led by UNICEF and other development stakeholders there is an increasing recognition that **Communications for Development** -- dialogue and conversations directed towards changing norms and behaviour -- will be essential to ensure the protection of children.<sup>28</sup> Research clearly shows that effective campaigning to change social norms relies on a clear understanding of how to tailor dialogue to groups in a respectful manner that resonates in the local context.<sup>29</sup> This report is intended to fit within this framework by providing clear recommendations on how communications programming can be tailored and improved to ensure key protection outcomes.

#### 2.1.1. Social norms and collective beliefs

The objective of this study is to understand *the beliefs that underpin social norms* rather than describing the social norms in a community.<sup>30</sup> Social norms are understood to be informal rules shared by a group that govern behaviour - they are made up of individuals' perception of what others do and what they think others do.<sup>31</sup>

In this study, participants in interactive radio discussions are asked questions that elicit their collective beliefs. Collective beliefs are ideas constructed and shared by members of a social group that form the basis of social judgement and behaviour and promote identity among their members. For example, in a given community, people tend to agree about the role of women in the household. People behave and expect others to behave in a way consistent with their beliefs.

Changing beliefs can only lead to sustainable changes in social norms if the new ideas are accepted by the other members of social group with which the person identifies. Therefore changing collective beliefs can be achieved through media (e.g., radio) where people are not only exposed, but also have a chance to discuss these new ideas and perceive that others also endorse them.

#### 2.1.2. Interactive radio as a research tool

AVF uses audience responses to specifically designed radio questions to identify collective beliefs. By designing interactive radio programmes to provoke SMS responses from a diverse and heterogeneous audience it is possible to gain insight into the beliefs of differing groups.<sup>32</sup> Contrary to surveys, this approach gathers opinions in their cultural context and through a conversational mode, more aligned to the socio-cognitive processes that generate and shape the beliefs of interest.<sup>33</sup> This

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<sup>28</sup> World Bank, World Development Report 2015: *Mind, Society, and Behavior* (2014).

<sup>29</sup> Overseas Development Institute, *How do Gender Norms Change* (2015).

<sup>30</sup> Research based on probabilistic samples of individual questions about the frequency of behaviours and perceptions would be more suited to addressing research questions related to social norms in a community.

<sup>31</sup> C. Bicchieri, *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose Measure and Change Social Norms*, Cambridge University Press 2016; adapted from phrasing in: CARE, *Applying Theory to Practice: CARE's Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming* (2017).

<sup>32</sup> Inclusiveness is enhanced by reading messages from all strata of population during the show, giving particular relevance to messages from women, nomads, and those living in rural communities - see Lopes, C. and Srinivasan, S. (2014). *Africa's Voices: Using mobile phones and radio to foster mediated public discussion and gather public opinions in Africa*. Centre of Governance and Human Rights, Working Paper 9. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.

<sup>33</sup> Sudman, S., Bradburn, N. M., & Schwarz, N. (1996). *Thinking about answers: The application of cognitive processes to survey methodology*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

data can then be compared with information gathered by follow-up SMS questionnaires. on demographic groups and practices, such as having daughters undergo FGM/C.

The findings of this research are based on testing for the associations between these collective beliefs and practices, giving insight on which beliefs are linked with the continuation of harmful practices and need to be re-framed, and which are associated with positive social change and could be amplified. By analysing the data for associations with demographic information, we can then see how beliefs vary by groups (eg. men vs women) to support a tailored approach to communications based on a granular understanding of audiences.

## 2.2. Limits of the Approach

### 2.2.1. Associations between beliefs and norms

The data gathered using this method constitutes a non-probabilistic sample. The radio participants differ from the Somali population as a whole - 30% of the population is not covered by the reach of radio. Those who participate are also self-selected amongst potential audiences based on a range of factors such as phone ownership, media habits, literacy, and gender roles.<sup>34</sup> It is therefore not possible to reach an estimate on the prevalence of certain beliefs or practices based on this sample for either radio audiences or the Somali population.<sup>35</sup> Some beliefs held by those groups outside of radio participants may not even be identified by this approach.

Instead of pursuing quantitative indicators, our research seeks to understand how beliefs are linked to particular norms amongst certain groups. As the beliefs identified are *collective*, they are held and analysed at the group level. The knowledge about these relationships can be applied beyond the specific group of participants in the radio shows as they represent the collective belief of a wider group (such as urban women with a certain media habit). From a statistical point of view the lack of representativeness is less important for a study based on associations than aggregate indicators.<sup>36</sup>

The qualitative insights about collective beliefs and practices, and associations between them, contained in this report can thus be used for UNICEF programming decisions that involve groups of the population comparable with participants of the radio shows in terms of their social, demographic, geographical characteristics/identities, and media habits.

### 2.2.2. Causality assumptions between beliefs and practices

We employed an ex-post facto design to identify collective beliefs that were associated with practices. Because there was neither manipulation of beliefs nor random assignment of participants into groups, it is assumed that any relationship found is bi-directional. We also recognise that a range of other factors at the individual, material and structural level may reproduce certain practices, and therefore assume a change in beliefs is a necessary but not sufficient factor in shifting norms.

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<sup>34</sup> S. Srinivasan & C. A. Lopes. (2016). Africa's Voices Versus Big Data? The Value of Citizen Engagement Through Interactive Radio, in *Voice & Matter, Communication, Development and the Cultural Return*, O. Hemer and T. Tufte (eds.) NORDICOM.

<sup>35</sup> The percentages and confidence interval reported have only a statistical value of understanding the distribution of certain key variables and their biases in the group of participants. These biases are reported in the results section.

<sup>36</sup> See: Rothman KJ, Gallacher J, Hatch EE. (2013). Why representativeness should be avoided. *International Journal Epidemiology*, 42:1012–14; This is especially the case when data collection is inclusive, and distribution of key variables are not skewed (this includes demographic attributes but also individual characteristics that influence belief such as interest in the topic) sample size is large enough (n>1000) see: Nemes, S., Jonasson, J., Genell, A., Steineck, G. (2009). Bias in odds ratios by logistic regression modelling and sample size. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 9, 56.

## 2.3. Research design

AVF worked with UNICEF Somalia's Child Protection and C4D teams to identify key knowledge gaps, and priority areas for their country programme.<sup>37</sup> This was refined further through a review of the relevant literature as laid out above. AVF then designed and implemented a radio project to answer the following research questions:

1. **What are some of the collective beliefs of Somali people related to FGM/C, and how do they vary by demographic groups?**<sup>38</sup>
2. **How are collective beliefs around FGM/C associated with different practices related to FGM/C?**
3. **What are some of the collective beliefs of Somali people around child marriage, and how do they vary by demographic groups?**
4. **What are some of the collective beliefs of Somali people related to gendered access to education, and how do they vary by demographic groups?**
5. **How are these beliefs associated with different practices around the education of daughters?**
6. **What are some of the collective beliefs of Somali people related to juvenile justice, and how do they vary by demographic groups?**

Based upon these research questions, we designed **open-ended radio questions** to spark discussion and elicit responses from audience members about their beliefs related to gender and child protection topics. Usually in a binary yes/no format, they evoked contrasting opinions to promote lively and plural discussion.<sup>39</sup>

Follow-up **SMS questions** were sent to gather insights into an individual's own practices, and demographics (eg. gender, age and district).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Due consideration was also given to the suitability of certain topics for discussion in the mass media to avoid airing issues and messages that would cause offence, damage the reputation of the programme or be seen as culturally insensitive. For this reason, topics such as household violence and marital rape were left out of the research, despite their prevalence and importance.

<sup>38</sup> This is not assumed to be an exhaustive list as noted above. There may be other beliefs amongst groups that don't participate in radio shows. This methods only identifies beliefs for the groups who have participants in the show.

<sup>39</sup> Lopes, C. and Srinivasan, S. (2014). *Africa's Voices: Using mobile phones and radio to foster mediated public discussion and gather public opinions in Africa*. Centre of Governance and Human Rights, Working Paper 9. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.

<sup>40</sup> These SMS surveys were designed and implemented using UNICEF's Rapidpro SMS platform. All questions were assessed for comprehension and adjusted to the specific cultural context. Specific wordings were decided with the MediaINK team, AVF's media partner in Somalia. Particular attention was paid to encouraging participation from a female audience, in particular through selecting a female co-presenter to lead the discussions on the shows and through selecting opinions from females to be broadcast during the show. See: Lopes, C. and Srinivasan, S. (2014). *Africa's Voices: Using mobile phones and radio to foster mediated public discussion and gather public opinions in Africa*. Centre of Governance and Human Rights, Working Paper 9. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.

**Table 1: Wording of radio and SMS questions**

 <b>Radio show questions</b> (to gather data on beliefs)	 <b>SMS Questions</b> (to gather data on practices, asked after demographics)
<b>Radio Q1:</b> Do you agree with the practice of FGM/C? Yes or No? Why?	<p><b>SMS Q1.</b> [SENT TO PARENTS OF DAUGHTERS ONLY] Has your daughter undergone FGM/C?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [IF SMS Q1 = YES] <b>SMS Q1.1.</b> Why did you choose to have your daughter undergo FGM/C?</li> <li>• [IF SMS Q1 = NO] <b>SMS Q 1.2.</b> Why did you NOT choose to have your daughter undergo FGM/C?</li> <li>• [IF SMS Q1 = NOT-CODED] <b>SMS Q 1.3.</b> Why did you take this course of action?</li> </ul>
<b>Radio Q2:</b> Does FGM/C happen in your community? Yes or no? If yes, why do you think it happens?	<p><b>SMS Q2.</b> [SENT TO PARENTS ONLY] Have you/your wife undergone FGM/C? If so which type?</p>
<b>Radio Q3:</b> What do you think is the youngest age at which girls can be married? Please explain your answer.	<p><b>SMS Q3.</b>[SENT TO PARENTS OF DAUGHTERS ONLY]</p> <p>Have any of your daughters been married before they were 18 years old?</p>
<b>Radio Q4:</b> Do you think that girls should have the same level of schooling as boys? Yes or No? Why?	<p><b>SMS Q4.1.</b> [SENT TO PARENTS OF DAUGHTERS ONLY]</p> <p>What level of schooling would you like your daughter to receive?</p> <p><b>SMS Q4.2.</b> [SENT TO PARENTS OF DAUGHTERS ONLY]</p> <p>Do you think she is likely to attain the level you would like? Yes or No? Please explain your answer</p>
<b>Radio Q5:</b> Do you think that violent criminals aged 14-18 should be treated differently from adult criminals? Yes or No? Why?	<p><b>SMS Q5.</b> [SENT TO ALL] What medium do you use to access trustworthy news and information?<sup>41</sup></p>

<sup>41</sup> The C4D unit at UNICEF requires data on how people choose to access information, and as a conversation on ‘practices’ around juvenile justice may have proved convoluted, it was agreed that this was an opportunity to ask radio audiences about their wider media habits.

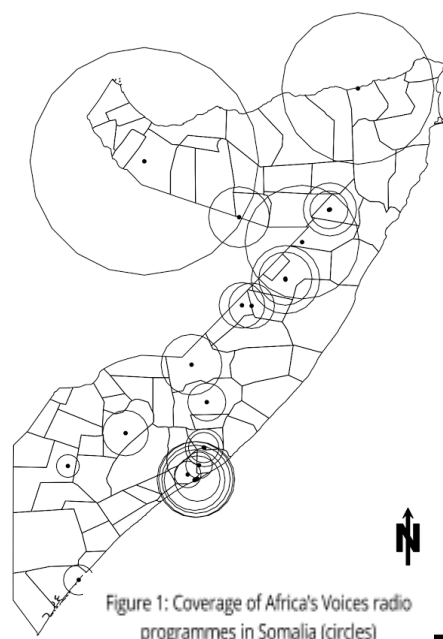


## 2.4. Data collection: Radio & SMS

In partnership with MediaINK, our Hargeisa-based media partner, AVF deployed interactive radio programmes across a network of 27 FM radio stations covering all three zones of Somalia, 49% of Somali territory and 70% of the population (see circles indicating radio broadcast coverage, fig.1).<sup>42</sup>

Five interactive radio shows covering child protection issues were broadcast on a weekly basis during January and February 2017. Radio promos with the above radio questions were broadcast for three days at the beginning of each week.

These responses were then read out in the weekly radio show alongside expert voices and key influencers in society for an inclusive and engaging C4D intervention, in turn encouraging further participation.



## 2.5. Approach to data analysis

The raw data on beliefs first underwent pre-processing to remove non-relevant messages as well as to structure the dataset for analysis. A thematic analysis was then undertaken by Somali-speaking research assistants to identify and organise the beliefs expressed in the messages into specific categories or 'themes', which resulted in a coding frame organising the data into themes and sub-themes. Before labelling the dataset, three research assistants labelled the same subset of messages and their different samples were compared for inter-coder reliability (ICR) to manage the subjectivity of labelling messages.<sup>43</sup> Once a sufficient threshold of ICR was reached the coding frame was applied to the whole dataset of beliefs.

The resulting coded dataset consisted of: text messages that were labelled as containing one or more collective beliefs as well as data on demographic information and individual practices (which were validated for internal consistency between different data points - eg. urban/rural vs nomad). The dataset was then analysed for associations between beliefs and practices, and associations between beliefs and demographic groups. Odds ratios were used because they are particularly sensitive to sample size and therefore set a higher threshold for achieving results with statistical significance. In this instance statistical significance is not indicative of the ability to infer these results to a wider population, but suggestive of the validity of the pattern identified in the data - only results that were significant were considered for reporting. Insights found were complemented with further qualitative interrogation, and illustrated by a selection of translated text messages.

<sup>42</sup> The numbers in the map indicate total participation for the previous season of 8 radio shows - the breakdown for the show on HIV/AIDS specifically is included in the results section below.

<sup>43</sup> A threshold was set of 0.7 for the Fleiss Kappa Statistic between three raters.

# 3. Findings & Recommendations

## 3.1. Participants

Across five weeks of interactive radio broadcasting, Africa's Voices received **40,544 messages** in response to questions aired on radio from **16,541 unique phone numbers within 73 districts** across Somalia.



**45.2% of participants are female**  
compared to 49.3% in population

● Women ● Men

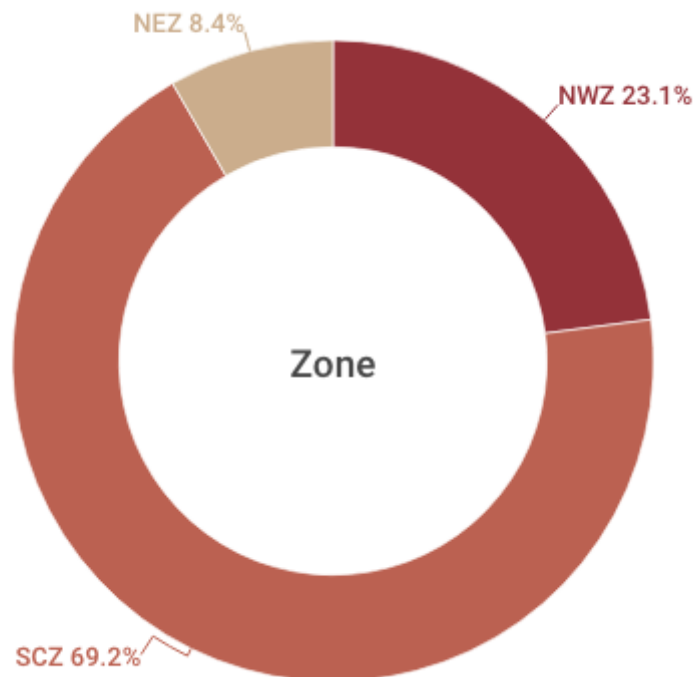
**69.2% of participants from South Central Zone (SCZ)**  
compared to 58.0% in population

**23.1% of participants from North-West Zone (NWZ)**  
compared to 28.5% in population

**8.4% of participants from North-East Zone (NEZ)**  
compared to 13.6% in population

**45.1% of participants from a major urban centre**  
compared to 27% in population

**8.8% of participants are nomads**  
compared to 25.9% population



**76% of participants are the parent or primary caregiver of a girl**

There was an association between age and gender in participants - with women being more likely to be younger (15-19), whilst men were more likely to be older (20 and over) ( $\chi^2 = 55.9, p < 0.001$ ) (see fig. 2)

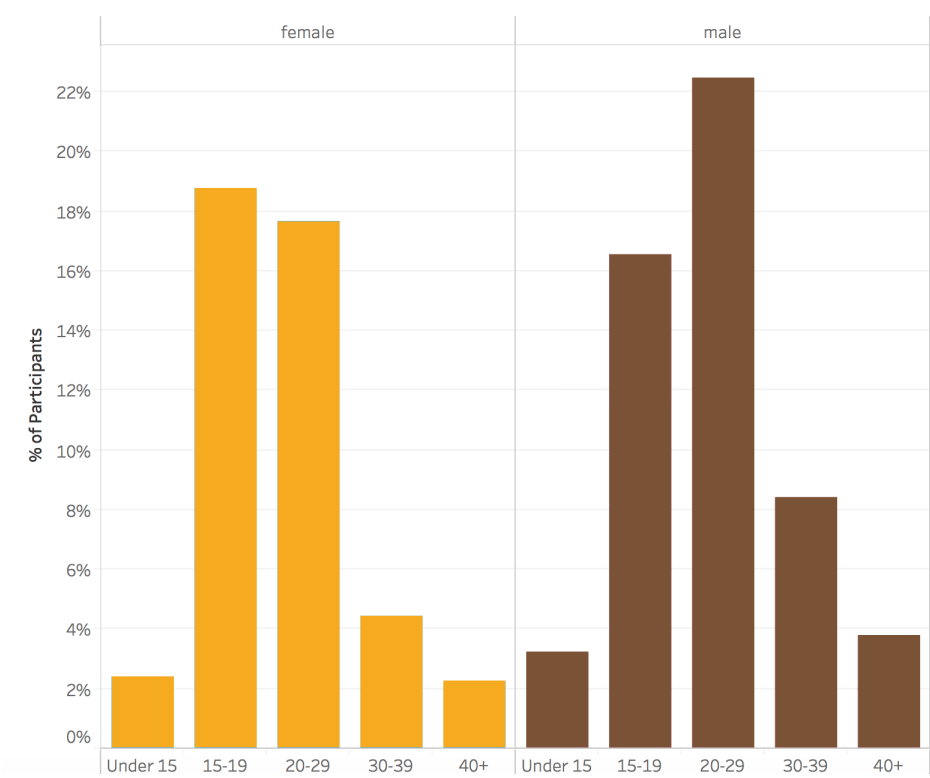


Fig. 2: Age distribution by gender

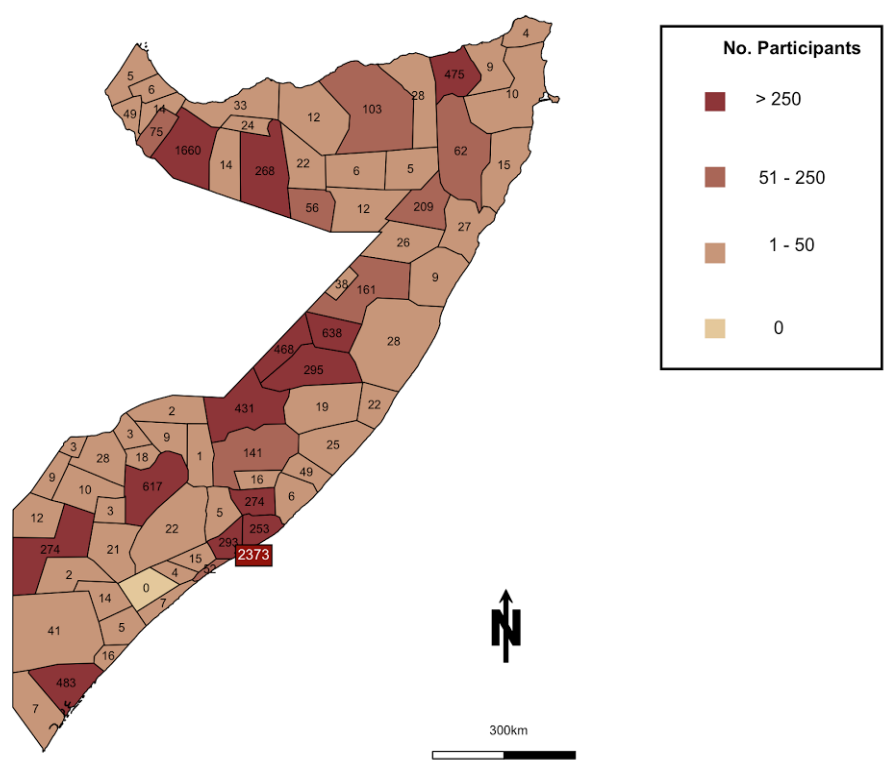



Fig.3: Composition of participants by district of Somalia

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of participants and deviations from population estimates					
Socio-demographic category	 Associated SMS question	Answer given:	% of participants <sup>44</sup>	% in population (PESS) <sup>45</sup>	% response rates <sup>46</sup>
Gender	Are you male or female? Please reply with word male or female.	<b>Female</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>48.3</b>
Urban/Rural	Do you live in a city/town or in a village? Please reply with City or Village.	<b>Urban</b>	<b>81.9</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>43.8</b>
Nomad <sup>47</sup>	Are you a nomad? Please reply with Yes or No.	<b>Yes (Nomad)</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>25.9</b>	<b>47.5</b>
Parent	Are you a parent/guardian? Please respond with Yes/No.	<b>Yes (Parent)</b>	<b>87.4</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>37.7</b>
Parent of a girl	Are you the parent/primary caregiver of a girl?	<b>Yes (Has Daughter)</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>39.4</b>
Area-Type	Which district do you currently live in?	<b>Mogadishu, Bosasso, Garowe, Hargeisa (Major Urban Centres)</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>62.0</b>
Age	What is your age? Please answer with a number <sup>48</sup>	<b>10-14</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>9.3<sup>49</sup></b>	<b>41.0</b>
		<b>15-19</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>41.0</b>
		<b>20-29</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>41.0</b>
		<b>30-39</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>41.0</b>
		<b>40+</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>41.0</b>
Zone	Which district do you currently live in?	<b>NWZ</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>62.0</b>
		<b>NEZ</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>62.0</b>
		<b>SCZ</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>62.0</b>

<sup>44</sup> Every question was asked to every participant. The percentage is calculated from those who responded, excluding those who did not answer or did not give a relevant response. The one exception is the question on nomads, which was asked to only those who lived in rural areas, and therefore the calculation of the percentage does not include those that weren't asked the question

<sup>45</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey for the 18 Pre-War Regions of Somalia, 2014. However as estimates of urban and rural populations in Somalia are exclusive of the IDP population, and collecting data on IDP status via mobile phone has proved problematic, comparisons between this dataset and Urban and Rural categories in PESS would be invalid. There is no data available in PESS to provide a comparisons for data on those who are parents and those who are primary caregivers of girls.

<sup>46</sup> The number of proportion of people who responded out of those who were asked a given question.

<sup>47</sup> Asked only to participants who said they live in a village.

<sup>48</sup> The age question was asked bi-weekly after discussions with UNICEF, where it was decided that it was low priority.

<sup>49</sup> Figures are given for percentage of population over 10 years old, thus comparable to radio participants.

## 3.2. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

### 3.2.1. Analysis & Findings

This section provides insights relevant to research question 1: **What are some of the collective beliefs of Somalis related to FGM/C, and how do they vary by demographic groups?**

We received 13,972 messages on FGM/C, 48.9% from women and 81.4% from people in large urban centres.<sup>50</sup> The description that follows outlines the collective beliefs related to FGM/C as well as the perceptions people held of the driving forces behind practices of FGM/C in their community.

#### Beliefs related to FGM/C

This following coding frame shows a breakdown of answers to:

##### Radio question 1: “Do you agree with the practice of FGM/C? Yes or No? Why?”

- 46.4% of messages agreed with FGM/C
- 42.6% of messages disagreed with FGM/C
- 11.0% of messages contained an ambivalent view on FGM/C.

The data was categorised accordingly, as presented in the coding frames below.

**Table 3: Coding frame for beliefs agreeing with the practice of FGM/C**

<b>‘Yes’ Reasons for <u>agreeing</u> with FGM/C</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>1. Religion</b>	Religious practice Prophet's teaching Differentiates from non-muslims
<b>2. Allows girls to avoid stigma and get married</b>	Safeguards the girl's future No one will trust a lady that is uncircumcised No-one will marry her otherwise
<b>3. Effective way of controlling sexual desire</b>	Controls sexual desires Without FGM/C they will be promiscuous Allows her to be celibate Ensures virginity
<b>4. Cultural tradition</b>	It's our culture
<b>5. Other</b>	It is good It is beautiful I don't know the reason

**Table 4: Coding frame for beliefs disagreeing with the practice of FGM/C**

<b>‘No’ Reasons for <u>disagreeing</u> with FGM/C</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>6. Religion</b>	Not allowed by Islam
<b>7. Long-term health impacts</b>	Leads to health problems later in life

<sup>50</sup>The most represented urban centres are Mogadishu (46% of messages) and Hargeisa (24.4% of messages). The participants are mostly young, with 34% of messages from participants aged between 15 and 19 years and 42% of messages from participants between 20 and 29 years (minimum=7 years and maximum=89 years). Only 6% of messages are from participants with 40 years or older.

	Bad for emotional well-being Causes bleeding and problems with menstruation Leads to serious diseases
<b>8. Immediate health impacts</b>	It causes serious injuries to the girl Equipment is not clean
<b>9. Damages sex life</b>	It destroys the girl's sex life Uncircumcised women enjoy sex better No they are sweeter uncircumcised
<b>10. Human rights violation</b>	It is a violation of basic rights
<b>11. Culture</b>	A bad cultural practice

**Table 5: Ambivalent perspectives on the practice of FGM/C**

Reasons	Sub-themes
<b>12. A good practice, but not essential</b>	It is important but not essential as for men
<b>13. Only some types are acceptable</b>	It's acceptable if its a minor cut

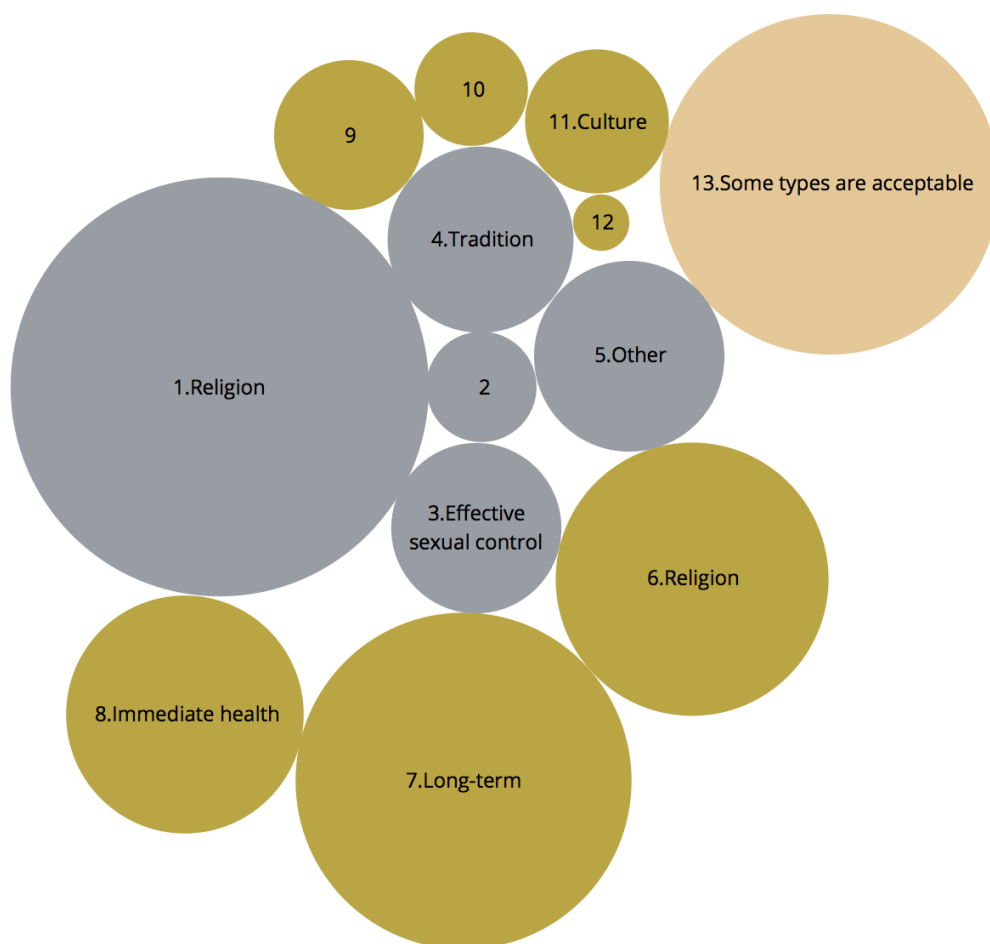


Fig. 4: Prevalence of beliefs around FGM/C amongst radio show participants, as listed in coding frame for agreeing with FGM/C, and for disagreeing with FGM/C, as well as ambivalent beliefs.



## Beliefs agreeing with the practice of FGM/C

46% of participants support the practice of FGM/C, with many different ideas expressed to justify their opinion. This included those who pointed to **Islamic teaching** as the reason for supporting the practice.

**"Yes [I agree with FGM/C] because our religion, Islam, teaches to circumcise girls."** - 24 years, Buuhoodle.

**"Yes, [I agree with FGM/C] because it's our prophet's (PBUH) teaching."** - Gaalkacyo

Some participants made the case that FGM/C was necessary as a means of **controlling the sexual behaviour** of young girls and women. It was argued that FGM/C ensured that women would remain a virgin before marriage, and not undertake sexual practices that were perceived as illicit.

**"Yes [I agree with FGM/C] because if uncircumcised [girls] will become a prostitute. FGM is better."** - Unknown

**"Yes, [I agree with FGM/C] because a girl who is not circumcised is not a virgin."** - Mogadishu

There were **clear geographical variations** in the prevalence of these two collective beliefs amongst radio audiences which have strong implications for C4D programming. Those in NWZ who agreed with FGM/C were less likely to refer to religious reasons for FGM/C, and more likely to agree with the practice as a form of sexual control (Fig. 5).<sup>51</sup> By contrast, those in southern and central Somalia who agreed with FGM/C were more likely to quote religious beliefs in their justification of the practice, and less likely to discuss FGM/C as a form of sexual control (Fig. 6).<sup>52</sup>

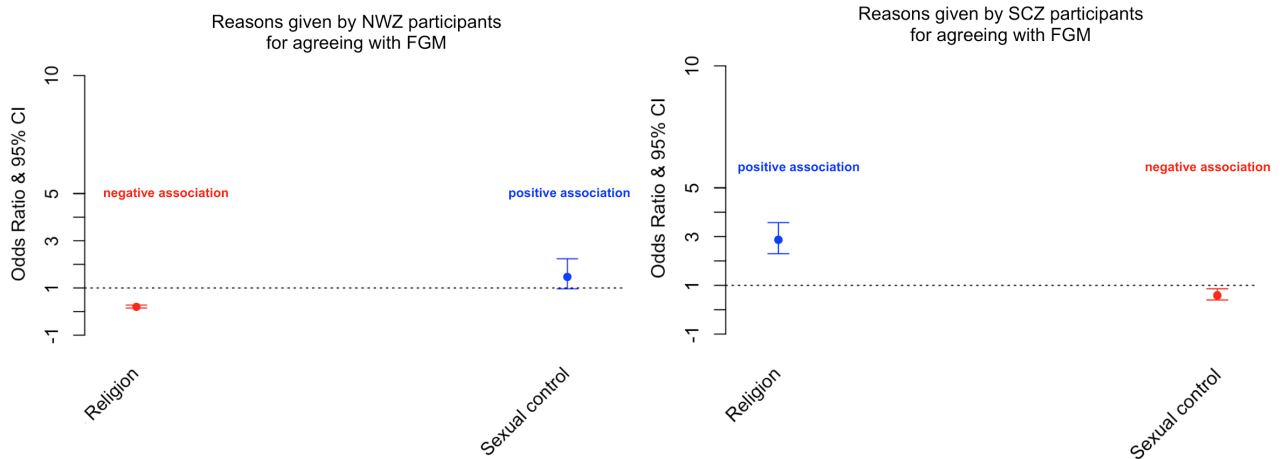


Figure 5 (left): Variation in reasons for agreeing with FGM/C by zone - NWZ vs NEZ and SCZ

Figure 6 (right): Variation in reasons for agreeing with FGM/C by zone - SCZ vs NEZ and NWZ

<sup>51</sup> The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they agree with the practice of FGM/C for religious reasons are 80% lower than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.2,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.15, 0.3). The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they agree with the practice of FGM/C as a form of sexual control are 47% higher than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 1.47,  $p = 0.08$ , CI = 0.95, 2.24).

<sup>52</sup> The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they agree with the practice of FGM/C for religious reasons are 180% higher than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 2.86,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 2.30, 3.58). The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they agree with FGM/C as a form of sexual control is 41% lower than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.59,  $p < 0.007$ , CI = 0.4, 0.8).

Another idea mentioned frequently was the notion that **a girl risked being stigmatised** if she had not undergone FGM/C. In particular this was likely to impact negatively on her prospects for getting married, as audience members suggested men would only marry women who had undergone the practice.

**"Yes [I agree with FGM/C] because Somali people don't trust a girl who is uncircumcised"** - Mogadishu

**"Yes, [I agree with FGM/C] a girl who hasn't undergone FGM - no man wants her"** - Male, Bossaso

Others thought of FGM/C as a **traditional practice** in Somali society and this justified its continuation.

**"Yes I support [FGM/C] because it is a traditional culture."** - Female, 17 years, Mogadishu

### Beliefs disagreeing with the practice of FGM/C

43% of participants did not agree with FGM/C, with a number of ideas expressed that oppose the practice. Contrasting with the religious notions above, was the idea that FGM/C was **not permissible under Islam**.

**"No I don't support [FGM/C] because our religion, Islam, doesn't allow it."** -30 years, Mogadishu

Many voices argued against the practice of FGM/C, on account of its **long-term and short-term health impacts** on girls and women, including problems with menstruation, risk of infection, difficulties during childbirth, and a negative impact on mood.

**"No I don't support the culture of FGM because it can cause many diseases and a bride and groom will struggle in the first couple of days of their marriage."** - Eyl

**"No [I disagree with FGM/C] because she will face difficulties during childbirth and also as a woman."** - Unknown

Another view that featured in radio discussions was that uncircumcised women were **better able to enjoy sexual intercourse** and therefore they disagreed with the practice of FGM/C.

**"No [I disagree with FGM/C] because the women that are uncircumcised enjoy themselves more."** - Male, 30 years, Jowhar

Lastly there were those perspectives that saw FGM/C as unjustified because it was **a violation of basic human rights**.

**"No [I disagree with FGM/C] because it is a crime and a violation against the human body and our religion is against such violation."** - Hargeisa

There were also **clear geographical variations** in ideas disagreeing with FGM/C.

- Participants from Somaliland (NWZ) were more likely than those in SCZ to give a range of reasons for disagreeing with FGM/C than the rest of the country, suggesting a set of more progressive radio participants overall. These included disagreeing with the practice on the

grounds of religion and culture, negative health impacts, and because it is regarded as a human rights violation.<sup>53</sup>

- By contrast, those in SCZ were more likely than those in other regions to disagree with the practice based upon the practice threatening sexual satisfaction.<sup>54</sup>

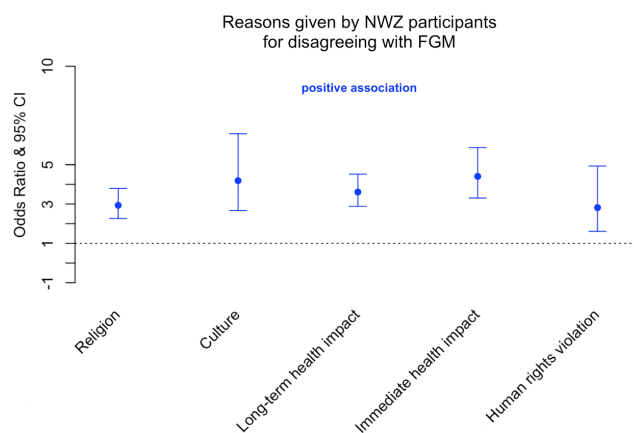


Fig. 7: Variations in beliefs in disagreement with FGM/C by zone **NWZ** vs NEZ/SCZ

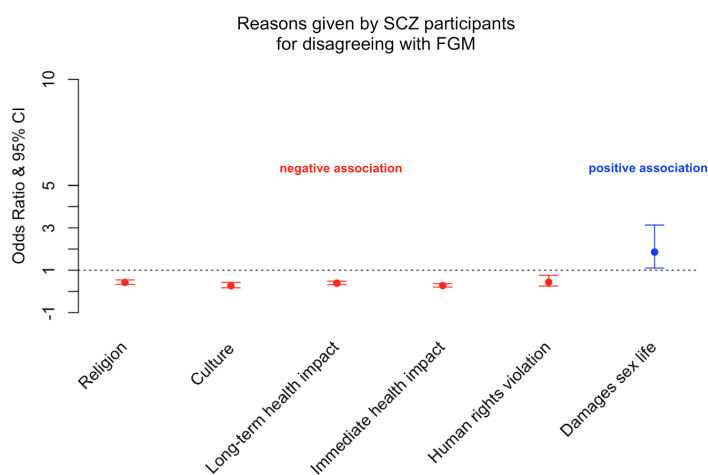


Fig. 8: Variations in beliefs in disagreement with FGM/C by zone **SCZ** vs NEZ/NWZ

<sup>53</sup> The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they disagree with FGM/C for religious reasons are 190% higher than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 2.9,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 2.3, 3.80). The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they disagree with FGM/C for cultural reasons are 320% higher than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 4.20,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 2.67, 6.57). The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they disagree with the practice of FGM/C because of long-term health impacts are 260% higher than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 3.6,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 2.88, 4.51). The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they disagree with the practice of FGM/C because of immediate health impacts are 340% higher than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 3.40,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 3.30, 5.90). The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they disagree with the practice of FGM/C because it is a violation of human rights is 180% higher than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 2.8,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 1.61, 4.93).

<sup>54</sup> The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they disagree with the practice of FGM/C on religious grounds is 58% lower than it is for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.42,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.3, 0.5). The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they disagree with the practice of FGM/C for cultural reasons were 74% lower than they were for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.27,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.17, 0.43). The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they disagree with the practice of FGM/C because of long-term health impacts was 61% lower than they were for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.39,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.32, 0.48). The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they disagree with the practice of FGM/C because of immediate health impacts were 73% lower than they were for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.27,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.2, 0.37). The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they disagree with the practice of FGM because it damages sex lives was 85% higher than it was for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 1.85,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 1.1, 3.1). The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they disagree with the practice of FGM/C because it violates human rights was 66% lower than it was for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.44,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.25, 0.76). T

## Ambivalent beliefs about the practice of FGM/C

11% of participants sent messages that contained ambivalent sentiment towards FGM/C. Some argued that whilst FGM/C was a good practice it was **not strictly necessary**.

**"Yes I support it but It's not compulsory like it is for the men, their body shouldn't be cut."** -16 years, Mogadishu.

Most of the messages that put forward an ambiguous perspective, differentiated their view **according to the type** of FGM/C - the most severe types of FGM/C (analogous to Type III) were considered unacceptable, whilst other types were tolerated and even encouraged.

**"No to the kind that involves stitching and cutting but yes if it's the minor cut which is acceptable in the religion."** - Caabudwaaq.

Ambivalent perspectives on FGM/C were more likely to be put forward by those in SCZ than the rest of the country, and less likely to be put forward by NWZ.<sup>55</sup> It therefore seems that whilst audiences in NWZ were more likely to be against the practice, those in SCZ were more likely to be against only the stricter forms.

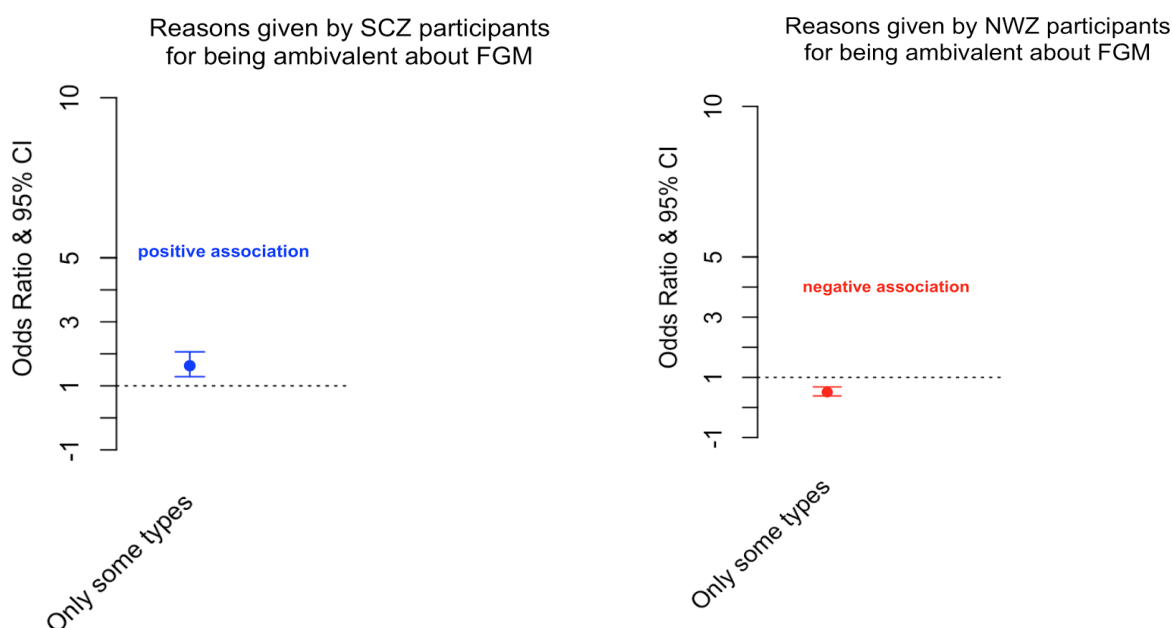


Fig. 9: Variation in radio audiences in putting forward ambivalent perspectives around FGM/C by zone

<sup>55</sup> The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they are ambivalent about FGM/C are 49% lower than they are for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.51,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.38, 0.68). The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they are ambivalent about FGM/C was 63% higher than it was for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 1.63,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 1.3, 2.1).

## Perceptions of FGM/C in the community

The coding frame below summarises the themes evident in the responses to:

**Radio Question 2: “Does FGM/C happen in your community? Yes or no? If yes, why do you think it happens?”**

- 84.3% of messages said that ‘yes’ FGM/C happens in the community
- 15.7% of messages argued ‘no’ - FGM/C does not happen in the community

**Table 6: Coding frame for perceived reasons why FGM/C *is happening* in communities**

<b>‘Yes’ Reasons for FGM/C happening in community</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>1. Cultural Practice</b>	It is a traditional practice
<b>2. Religion</b>	People believe it is justified in religion
<b>3. Avoid Stigma</b>	It's shameful for a girl not to be circumcised It avoid parents shame through girls' promiscuity It acts as a veil and makes them modest
<b>4. Ignorance/Lack of awareness</b>	The parents are ignorant It happens due to lack of awareness
<b>5. Curb Sexual Desires</b>	It happens so as to reduce sexual desires It reduces pregnancies before marriage
<b>6. Other</b>	Many parents believe it's good

**Table 7: Coding frame for perceived reasons why FGM/C *is not happening* in the community**

<b>‘No’ Reasons for FGM/C <i>not</i> happening in community</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>7. Religion</b>	It's not allowed in Islam
<b>8. Long term health impacts</b>	It has long term health consequences It has negative effects on her mental health It causes difficulties during childbirth and menstruation It increases the risk of infection It intensifies PMS
<b>9. Short term health impacts</b>	It can cause bleeding
<b>10. Greater awareness</b>	There has been a lot of awareness created around FGM/C
<b>11. Against Human Rights</b>	It's a violation of basic rights It marginalises women
<b>12. Other</b>	People have stopped it It's stopped because the community is not made up of rural people It's been stopped because it has caused suffering in many marriages It's believed to be wrong

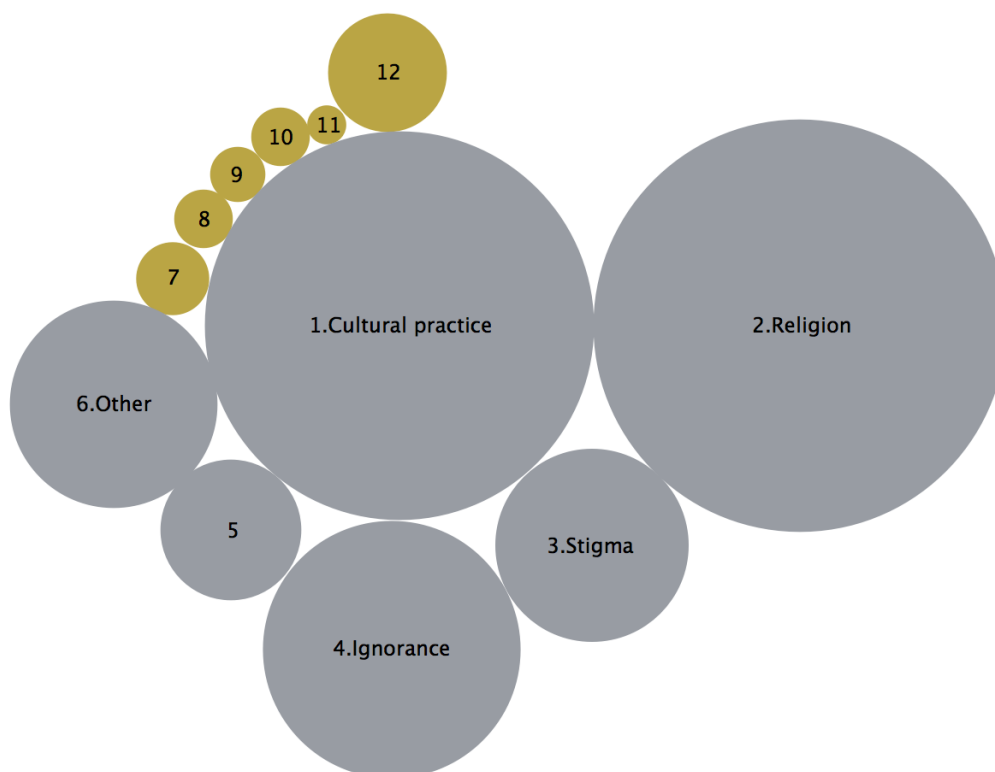


Fig. 10: Prevalence of beliefs amongst radio audiences around the practice of FGM/C in the community as listed in coding frame tables above, with beliefs of those who perceive FGM/C in their community and those who do not perceive FGM/C in their community

### Beliefs of those who perceive that FGM/C is happening in the community

In response to our radio question, 84.3% of participants responded 'yes', that FGM/C is happening in their community, with different perceptions around why this practice was occurring.

One of the most frequent ideas was that the practice of FGM/C was driven by **tradition and culture**.

**"Yes because it is a culture that Somali people believe in and think is safe."** Female, 28 years, Hargeisa.

**"Yes, [FGM/C] happens because it's a culture or tradition that has been there and it is difficult to for them stop it at once"**- Male, 25 years

**"Yes, [FGM/C happens in the community] because it is a custom or behavior that was practiced by the people before them and that is why it is difficult to eradicate this bad culture"**- 20 years, Cabudwaaq

Another frequent idea was that FGM/C occurred because members of the community saw the practice as a **religious requirement**.

**"Yes [FGM/C happens] because we are Muslims and our religion says that FGM is compulsory for both men and women"**- 22 years, Kismayo



**"Yes [FGM/C] happens because it's sunnah and because the Prophet (P.B.U.H) say they should be circumcised with the sunnah type"-16 years, Mogadishu**

Some radio discussion participants put forward the view that the practice was happening so as to **avoid girls being stigmatised**. These citizens argued that it was shameful for a girl and her family, if she was uncircumcised as her virginity could not be guaranteed, or ascertain whether she had been married before.

**"Yes, the people doing [FGM/C] always say that if FGM is not done then that girl is going to be promiscuous and the parents will be insulted that their daughter is uncircumcised"- 30 years, Cadaado.**

There were some participants that pointed to **ignorance and lack of awareness in the community** as the driving factor behind FGM/C. This often referred specifically to rural areas as having limited awareness.

**"Yes I can say [FGM/C happens in the community] because the parents are ignorant" - Female, 16 years, Hargeisa**

**"Yes [FGM/C] still happens because the people lack knowledge and they still hold on to traditional practices" - Male, Dhuusamareeb**

Others amongst radio audiences felt that FGM/C continued as a means of **curbing sexual desires** of girls.

**"Yes [FGM/C] still happens and in my opinion it happens so as to reduce sexual desire of the girls"- Male, 27 years, Mogadishu**

**"Yes [FGM/C happens] because the women today are not like those in the old days as in the girls today are not assertive so if they are not circumcised and she can't control herself when she meets a man" - Bossaso**

### **Beliefs of those who did not perceive FGM/C happening in their community**

In contrast 15.7% said that FGM/C is not happening in their community. In contrast to the above voices there were those who perceived FGM/C didn't happen due to **the religious beliefs of their community**.

**"No because our Islamic religion doesn't say it and if they are going against the religion then it is a bad thing"-Male, Mogadishu**

Another perceived reason for the absence of FGM/C was that the practice had severe **long-term and short-term health impacts**.

**"No, I don't support it because it causes many problems to the girl like problems with menstruation, childbirth, pain and infections"- 25 years**

**"No because people have understood that circumcision of girls is causing them injuries and that her reproductive organs/parts are being cut" - Female, 32 years, Hargeisa**

Some respondents argued that the practice has stopped or reduced due to the broader **creation of awareness** amongst their community.

**"No -- it doesn't happen because the community has understood that circumcision is a bad thing" - Female, Afgoye**

Other perceived that FGM/C was no longer happening because it was seen as a **violation of the**

girl's human rights.

**"No because it a disregard to the rights of the girl"** - Female, 19 years, Hargeisa

### Variations by Zone

Participants from NWZ were more likely than those in NEZ and SCZ to believe that FGM/C continued as a result of the community's ignorance and less likely to believe it continued due to the religious beliefs of the community.<sup>56</sup>

By contrast, those in SCZ were more likely than those in NEZ and NWZ to believe that FGM/C continued due to the community's religious beliefs. Those in SCZ were less likely to believe that it occurred due to the community's ignorance.<sup>57</sup> This parallels findings above showing how religious values are more likely to be related to the practice of FGM/C in SCZ.

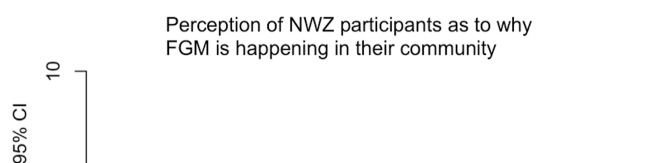


Figure 11: Variation in beliefs around FGM/C by Zone - NWZ versus NEZ and SCZ

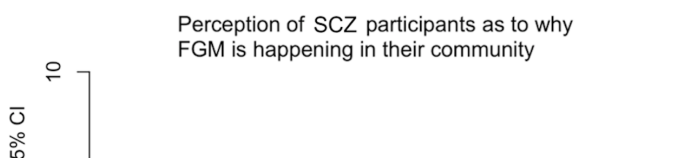


Figure 12: Variation in beliefs around FGM/C by Zone - SCZ versus NEZ and NWZ

<sup>56</sup> The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they perceive FGM/C to be occurring in their community for religious reasons is 80% lower than it is for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.2,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.13, 0.3). The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they perceive FGM/C to be occurring in their community for reasons of ignorance is 190% higher than it is for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 2.9,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 2.0, 4.1)

<sup>57</sup> The odds of participants from SCZ stating that they perceive FGM/C to be occurring in their community for religious reasons is 230% higher than it is for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 3.3,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 2.4, 4.4). The odds of participants from NWZ stating that they perceive FGM/C to be occurring in their community for reasons of ignorance is 60% lower than it is for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.4,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.3, 0.6)

## Associations between beliefs and practices in relation to FGM/C

The following section provides an analysis for **Research Question 2: How are collective beliefs around FGM/C associated with different practices related to FGM/C?**

Of the participants in our first week of radio shows on FGM/C, **56%** of parents/caregivers reported that their daughter had undergone FGM/C.<sup>58</sup>

- There is a clear association between those who believe that FGM/C is justified on religious grounds and those whose daughters have undergone FGM/C.
- Those who disagree with the practice due to its negative health impacts are less likely to have their daughters undergo FGM/C, compared to those with other beliefs.
- Those who presented ambivalent views about the practice are less likely to have their daughter undergo FGM/C -- but this may also reflect different perspectives on what constitutes FGM/C.<sup>59</sup>

These findings are important when compared with the geographical variations described above, particularly the association between religious beliefs and the practice of FGM/C in SCZ.

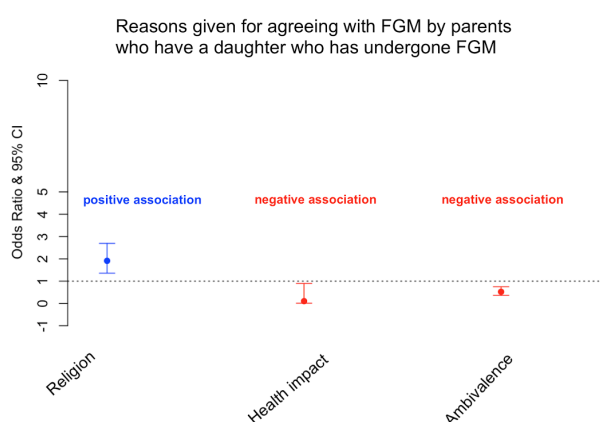


Fig. 13: Associations between beliefs and the practice of having a daughter undergo FGM/C

**89%** of parents/caregivers who responded in the second week of radio shows reported that themselves or their wife had undergone FGM/C. Of those that also reported the nature of the procedure, 59.4% had undergone Type I/II of FGM/C and 40.6% Type III.<sup>60</sup>

- Overall, parents in households with a mother who had undergone FGM/C were more likely (than those who had not) to perceive that the practice occurred for religious reasons.<sup>61</sup>
- Households with a mother who had undergone **Type I/II** FGM/C were a lot more likely (than those who did not) to perceive FGM/C as happening for **religious reasons**, and far less likely to see it as a cultural practice or perpetrated as a form of sexual control.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> This was gathered in response to SMS Q1: Has your daughter undergone FGM/C? (Response Rate: 58%).

<sup>59</sup> The odds of participants who say they have a daughter who has undergone FGM stating that they agree with the practice of FGM/C for religious reasons is 65% higher than it is for participants who do not say this (odds ratio = 1.65,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 1.2, 2.2). The odds of this same group stating either that they disagree with it on health grounds or that they are ambivalent about the type of FGM are 87% and 40% lower respectively than those who do not state this (health grounds: odds ratio = 0.13,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.004, 2.2) (ambivalence: odds ratio = 0.6,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.44, 0.82) (Figure).

<sup>60</sup> This data was gathered in response to SMS Q2: Have you/your wife undergone FGM/C? If so which type? (Response Rate: 51%).

<sup>61</sup> The odds of households with mothers having undergone FGM/C saying they believed the practice occurred for religious reasons, were higher than households without (odds ratio = 1.8, CIs = 1.3, 2.4,  $p < 0.001$ ).

<sup>62</sup> The odds of participant mothers who state they have undergone FGM Type 1 saying that they believe FGM/C happens in their community for religious reasons is 94% higher than it is for participants who do not state this (odds ratio = 1.94,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 1.41, 2.67). The odds of this same group saying that they believe FGM/C happens in their community for cultural

- By contrast, households with mothers who had undergone **Type III** were far more likely to see it as continuing in the community as a **cultural practice or as a form of sexual control** than other households. Compared to other households, this group was less likely to refer to religious reasons.<sup>63</sup>

This suggests a divergence in belief sets associated with different types of FGM/C -- which is especially important to consider in a context where people are shifting from practicing Type III to Type I/II. Given the variation in beliefs associated with type of FGM/C it may be more useful for programming to consider the two types as distinct norms.

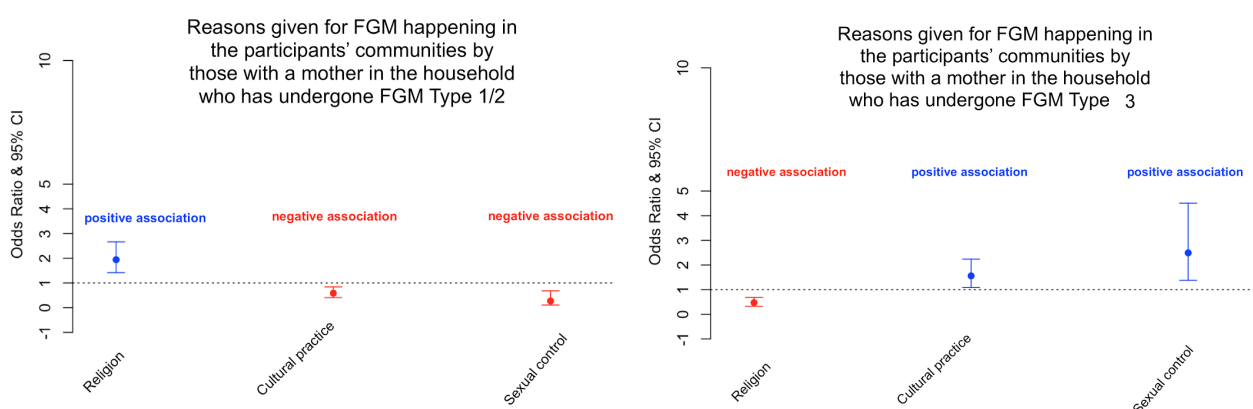


Fig. 14 (left): Associations between beliefs and the practice of mothers undergoing **Type I/II** FGM/C

Fig. 15 (right): Associations between beliefs and the practice of mothers undergoing **Type III** FGM/C

Comparing these findings with the regional variations reveals some interesting insights:

- In NWZ audience it seems that two divergent groups emerge - those with progressive beliefs associated with not practicing FGM/C and those with beliefs associated with Type III
- In SCZ, people are more likely than those from other zones to hold beliefs associated with Type I/II

reasons is 42% lower than those who do not state this (odds ratio = 0.58,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.40, 0.84). The odds of this same group saying that they agree with the practice of FGM as a form of sexual control is 73% lower than those who do not state this (odds ratio = 0.27,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.68, 2.02 ).

<sup>63</sup> The odds of participant mothers who state that have undergone FGM Type 2 saying that they believe FGM/C happens in their community for religious reasons is 53% lower than it is for participants who do not state this (odds ratio = 0.47,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.32, 0.68). The odds of this same group stating that they believe FGM/C happens for cultural reasons is 56% higher than those who do not state this (odds ratio = 1.56,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 2.24, 2.10). The odds of this same group stating that they agree with the practice of FGM as a form of sexual control is 50% higher than those who do not state this (odds ratio = 2.50,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 4.51, 5.25).

### 3.2.2. FGM/C: Insights & Recommendations

#### 1. There are clear geographical variations between SCZ and NWZ in beliefs related to FGM/C.

- a. **Insights:** Radio participants in NWZ are slightly more likely to agree with FGM/C on the grounds that it allows for effective sexual control of women (which was associated with undergoing Type III) and far less likely to agree with it on religious grounds, or perceive it happening in their community for these reasons. The reverse was true for participants in SCZ who were more likely to justify FGM/C on a religious basis and perceive it as occurring in their community for religious reasons. Participants in NWZ were also more likely to hold beliefs that disagreed with the practice as a whole and perceive that the practice was occurring out of the ignorance of the community, whilst those in SCZ were more likely to hold views that disagreed with only the more severe types of the practice.
- b. **Recommendations:** Programming around FGM/C should consider differentiating strategies between the SCZ and NWZ. In SCZ using religious leaders and narratives based on the Qoran to re-frame perceptions of religion and FGM/C will be crucial to positive change, as explained in the second finding below. It may also be important to focus on directing narratives specifically towards the reduction of Type I/II in SCZ. By contrast in NWZ, it may be important to ensure that programming includes a focus on re-framing narratives of female sexuality and autonomy -- a sensitive topic that may be best suited to formats such as community theatre and radio dramas.

#### 2. There are distinct norms of FGM/C related to personal experiences with different types of FGM/C

- a. **Insights:** Amongst radio audiences, there was a clear variation in beliefs between households with mothers who had undergone Type I/II FGM/C and those who had undergone Type III. The former were more likely to believe the practice was driven by religious beliefs in their community, while the latter were more likely to perceive it as a form of sexual control and as a cultural practice.
- b. **Recommendations:** UNICEF might consider organising their programming around tackling these practices as two distinct norms. Dealing with the elimination of Type I/II might benefit from a programme that focuses on changing people's perception of the religious drivers of the practice as outlined above. By contrast programming around Type III may require a greater focus on re-shaping perceptions on women's' sexuality and promoting Somali/community identities that do not see FGM/C as essential. Whilst the former may require drama and role play as discussed above, the latter may require greater engagement from community leaders and elders. It is worthwhile to continue collecting data on the practice disaggregated by FGM/C type in case change occur at different rates between the two types. This would be especially important if an overall reduction in the prevalence of FGM/C masked the continuation of Type III given the greater risks associated with this practice.

### 3. Religion can be both a barrier and a path to change.

- a. **Insight:** Amongst radio participants as a whole, many agreed with FGM/C on religious grounds, and similarly many perceived religion as the driver of the practice in their community, more so in SCZ than NWZ. Crucially, our research showed that these beliefs are associated with the continuation of the practice. However there were also those that disagreed with the practice on religious grounds and saw FGM/C as being absent from their community due to people's religious outlook.
- b. **Recommendation:** Reframing people's perception of the relationship between religion and FGM/C remains key to eliminating the practice. Focusing on promoting the positive aspect of this narrative that already has some traction amongst audiences will likely be more successful than directly contradicting existing beliefs. The reach of mass media in combination with amplifying the voice of religious leaders will likely be key to this.

### 4. Stressing negative health impacts as path to positive change.

- a. **Insight:** Our research suggests a positive association between those who disagree with FGM/C on health grounds and those who do not allow their daughters to undergo the practice.
- b. **Recommendation:** This provides some justification for UNICEF's ongoing strategy of stressing the health risks of FGM/C to reduce the practice. Whilst this research can provide no definitive conclusions on causality, this association suggests that communications clarifying the health risks of FGM/C are an important part of the strategy towards elimination.



## 3.3. Child marriage

### 3.3.1. Analysis and Findings

This section lays out an analysis that speaks to research question 3: **What are some of the collective beliefs of Somalis around child marriage, and how do they vary by demographic groups?**

We received 7391 messages, 47.5% from women and 44.5% from people in big urban centres<sup>64</sup> in response to the radio question:

**Radio question 3: “What do you think is the youngest age at which girls can be married? Please explain your answer.”**

- 59.9% of messages said girls can marry before the age of 18 years.
- 40.1% said girls should marry at 18 years or older.

These numbers are in no way indicative of trends in the wider population, rather they serve to contextualise the voices gathered on beliefs concerning child marriage.

From all the messages received, 22% of messages contained clear justifications for the age of marriage presented. From these, we developed the coding frames below.

**Table 8: Coding frame for beliefs justifying the marriage of children under 18 years**

Reasons supporting child marriage (can marry under 18 years)	Sub-themes
<b>1. Religion</b>	Religious justification for child marriage
<b>2. Reaching puberty</b>	Girls are ready when they reach puberty (even before 18)
<b>3. Girls are mature before 18</b>	They can not carry any responsibility until they are 13
<b>4. Girls are able to give birth before 18</b>	Able to give birth before 18 Girls should marry young to ensure reproduction
<b>Other</b>	It is good for them before 18 years

**Table 9: Coding frame for beliefs justifying marriage only over 18 years**

Reasons for disagreeing with child marriage (should marry over 18 years)	Sub-themes
<b>5. Girls should finish education</b>	When they have finished their education
<b>6. Girls are more mature and responsible at 18 or older</b>	Girls are mature after 18 Girls are responsible after 18
<b>7. Girls are only able to be mothers at 18 or older</b>	Girls are able to be a mother after 18
<b>8. Girls are able to handle housework at 18 or older</b>	Able to handle all the activities in the house after 18
<b>Other</b>	Girls can get married when they please

<sup>64</sup> The most represented urban centres are Mogadishu (23.1% of messages) and Hargeisa (15.0% of messages). The participants are mostly young, with 41.4% of messages from participants aged between 15 and 19 years and 32.2% of messages from participants between 20 and 29 years (minimum=11 years and maximum=89 years). Only 5.8% of messages are from participants with 40 years or older.

## Beliefs that support child marriage

59.9% of messages said girls can marry before the age of 18. The main reasons for supporting child marriage are that girls are ready to marry when they reach puberty, and that religion dictate that girls should marry (sometimes even before they reach puberty and as young as 9 years old).

The same type of arguments are used by people who defend and who oppose child marriage, varying only in the specific age threshold they associate with their argument. For example, while some think that girls are mature and able to give birth before 18 years, others think that girls only reach maturity at 18 years. This result suggests that opposing views on child marriage are based on different conceptions of female development and maturity.

A number of voices argued that child marriage was acceptable because it was **encouraged by Islamic religion**.

**"9 years is [a] good [age to marry] because our prophet married someone of that age"** - 45 years, Mogadishu.

**"15 years because the prophet commanded us that"**- Female 26 years, Baidoa

Linked to this idea was the perspective that **saw puberty as the key threshold prescribed by sharia** after which a girl could be married,

**"I would say the youngest age at which girls can be married is when she reaches puberty because that is what our religion commands us"**- Female, 20 years, Garowe

There were those who saw a certain **level of maturity** as necessary before it was deemed acceptable that a girl could be married, without specifying a religious justification for this argument. However this was often said to be at an age below eighteen.

**"[The youngest age they should marry is] 13 years because before this age she can not handle responsibility."** - Male, 19 years, Cadaado.

**"[The youngest age they should marry is] 15 years because younger than that she can not take care of a home"**- Male 45 years, Cadaado

Other voices were concerned with the fact that women needed to spend as much time as possible focused on **reproductive labour** before they became less fertile - and therefore had to marry young.

**"[The youngest age they should marry is] 15 years because her fertility clock will be up soon and it is also part of our religion"**- Male 22 years, Kismayo

Similarly whilst others expressed their concern that women should be **able to give birth** before they could get married, the age at which this was considered possible was often under 18.

**"The youngest age that a girl can be married at is 17 to 20 years if they are younger than that when she gets pregnant she might have some problems during labor."** - Mogadishu

## Beliefs that do not support child marriage

40.1% said girls should marry at 18 or older. Those who oppose child marriage argue that only women who are 18 years or older are mature and responsible enough for marriage and motherhood.

One key concern was the fact that later marriage allowed time for **girls to pursue education**. This clearly evidences the connection between girls' education and appropriate marriage practices.

"I think the youngest age that girls get married at is 20 years because she is still studying. Thanks." - Mogadishu

"I think she can get married at 25 years because earlier than that she is still in school." -Female 16 years

Some focused on **psychological maturity** of girls and young women, with a threshold of age 18 years or above.

"She can be married at the age of 18 because the girl can understand everything but if she is younger, later on she and her husband might not understand each other." - Unknown

"The youngest age she can get married at is 18 years because then she is matured enough in every way"- Female 22 years, Mogadishu

Another important concern many audience members raised was ensuring marriage was delayed so as to reduce the **risks associated with childbirth** and ensure the **health** of the young mother.

"She can be married at the age of 20 years because it is good for her health and during childbirth." - Unknown

"18 years because she is able to be a mother then." - Male, 18 years, Cadaado.

Other reason for women to get married at or after 18 years old relates to her **housework capabilities**.

"The youngest age at which girls can get married is 20/25 years because at this age the girls understand everything and can take care of her home" - Unknown

Others stressed that **the decision to marry belonged to the girls alone**.

"I think she can be married when she wants/ready or when she reaches 20 years and above" - Female, Borama

## Variation in beliefs and attitudes by demographics

### Gender

Men and women seem to have different views on child marriage. While men tend to present reasons to support child marriage, women tend to present reasons to oppose it.<sup>65</sup> Most of the messages sent by men presented reasons to support child marriage (58.8% pro vs 41.2% against) while most of the messages sent by females presented reasons against child marriage (59.6% against vs 40.4% pro).

As presented in Figure 16, all reasons in favour of child marriage are mentioned more by men than women, and all reasons against child marriage are mentioned more by women than men (note that 47.5% of messages are from women).

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<sup>65</sup> The odds of women to reject child marriage are twice the odds of men (odds ratio=2.11, 95% C.I. [1.46; 3.06], p<.001)

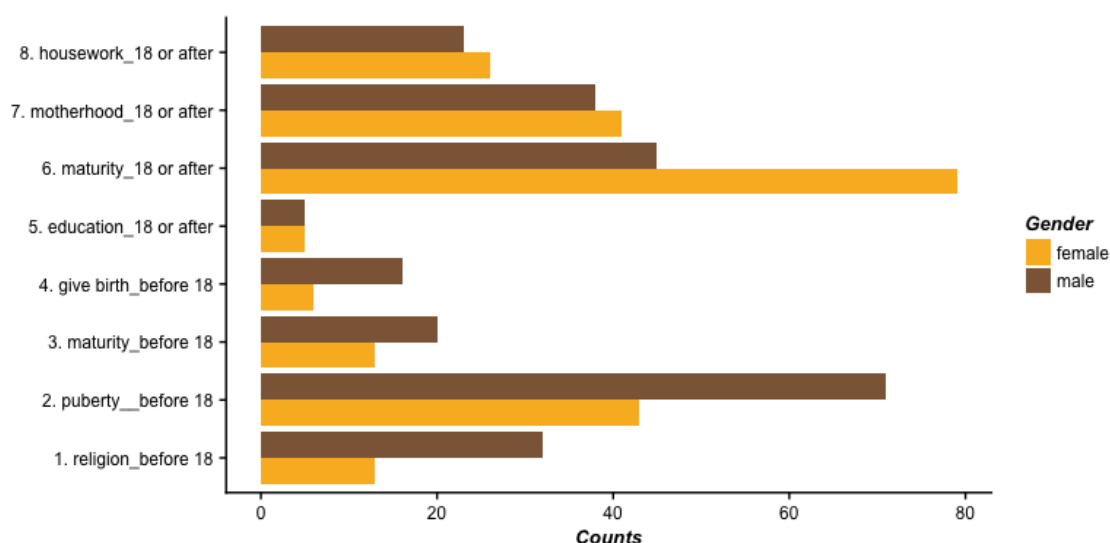


Figure 17. Counts of reasons for and against child marriage per gender (n=484 messages)

The difference between genders can be summarised as men focus mainly on physical development of girls (puberty, giving birth) while women focus mainly on psychological development (maturity, responsibility). Men and women also seem to differ on their conception of what constitutes maturity.

This gender pattern is observed across all zones but it is even more pronounced in rural areas, where more men agree with child marriage. Among women, their views don't differ between rural areas and in big urban centers.

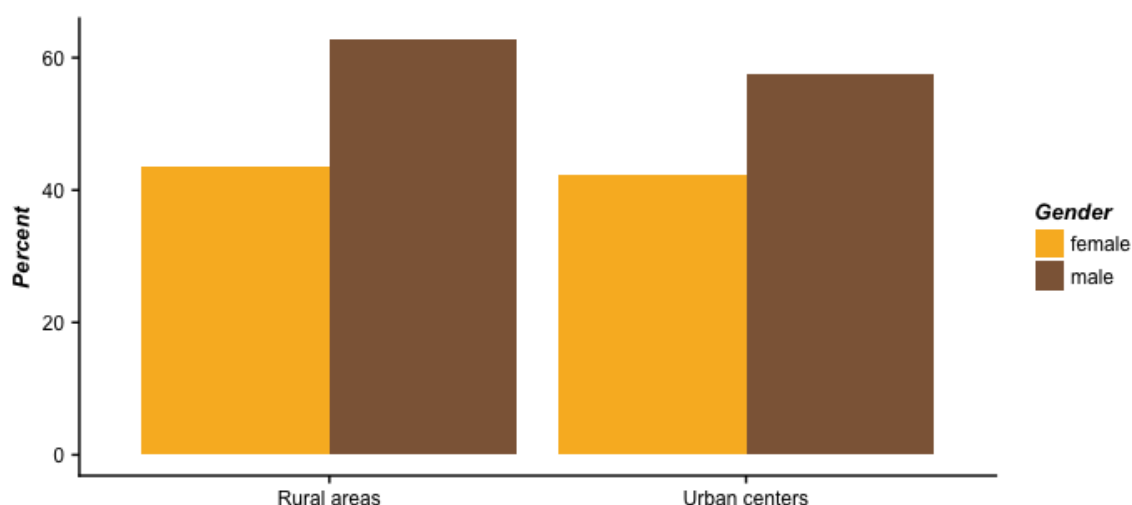


Fig. 18. Percentage of messages supporting child marriage from rural area and urban centers for both genders (n=484 messages)

### Age and region

People over 30 years are more supportive of child marriage both in rural areas and in big urban centres (58% of messages from rural areas and 60% from urban areas in this age group are in support of child marriage). In rural areas, the older group (40 and above) are even more in support of child marriage compared to urban centres (72% of the messages from this age group in rural areas are in support of child marriage).

### 3.3.2. Child marriage: Insights & recommendations

#### 1. Different notions of childhood development affect beliefs related to the appropriate age for a girl to marry.

- a. **Insight:** Support of child marriage was associated with narratives of a girl-child's biological and physical development with a focus on puberty as a clear threshold for marriage. By contrast, those who did not support child marriage were more likely to focus on a girl's intellectual, psychological, and emotional development as key to setting the boundary for marriage.
- b. **Recommendation:** Project a positive model of womanhood as defined by intellectual and emotional development, and the importance of these aspects of maturity for marriage. There is already some traction of this approach to girls' development and it could be further refined and expanded as a narrative to promote. Radio dramas and community theatre, especially if interactive, could project relatable female characters that embody this trajectory.

#### 2. Male and female participants vary in their beliefs around girl-child development and marriage.

- a. **Insight:** Female participants were more likely to talk about emotional and intellectual maturity as being important for marriage readiness, whilst men were more likely to talk about puberty and biological development.
- b. **Recommendation:** Reaching men, especially through engaging channels they trust, is important to shifting male beliefs around girl-child development and readiness for marriage. Programmes which tackle issues such as child marriage or other protection issues related to female marginalisation, risk not being engaging for male audiences. Combining programming on child marriage with programming around issues that are perceived as important to men, such as employment, agricultural livelihoods and politics, may be key to achieving men's critical engagement with the issue of child marriage.

#### 3. Religion is a key constituent of norms that support child marriage.

- a. **Insight:** A prevalent belief in support of child marriage was that the practice was justified in the Qoran. By contrast with episodes on FGM/C, there was no discussion from participants of a religious justification for avoiding child marriage. This suggests that discussion of child marriage, at least among radio participants, may not contain positive religious narratives so far.
- b. **Recommendation:** Public communications appealing to religious reasoning against child marriage should be crafted with caution. Insensitive messaging that runs against people's deeply held values may lead to further polarising and hardening of beliefs and attitudes. Discussions with agencies, donors and religious leaders may be the first step towards defining an effective narrative grounded in people's existing beliefs, before embarking on campaigning.

#### 4. Beliefs around child marriage vary with age

- a. **Insight:** Older generations above 30, especially in rural areas were more likely to favour child marriage than younger radio participants.
- b. **Recommendation:** Campaigning to shift norms around child marriage should seek to build inclusive conversations that span generations, so that the voice of youth can be heard by older decision-makers in conversations around child marriage. This also something that might also be achieved through radio drama with relatable characters from different age groups.

## 3.4. Girls' access to education

### 3.4.1. Analysis & Findings

This section presents an analysis of SMS data in answer to **Research Question 4: What are some of the collective beliefs of Somali related to gendered access to education, and how do they vary by demographic groups?**

We received 10,117 messages about education, 46% of which were from women and 43% of which came from participants in large urban centres. The following coding frames show a breakdown of answers to:

**Radio question 4: "Do you think that girls should have the same level of schooling as boys? Yes or No? Why?"**

- **16.6%** of messages said 'no' [girls should *not* have the same level of education as boys]
- **83.4%** of messages said 'yes' [girls should have the same level of education as boys]

#### Variations between demographic groups in attitude

- Men were **less likely** than women to believe that girls and boys should receive the same level of education
- Those in rural areas were **less likely** to believe that girls and boys should receive the same level of education
- Nomads were **less likely** than other participants to believe that girls and boys should receive the same level of education<sup>66</sup>

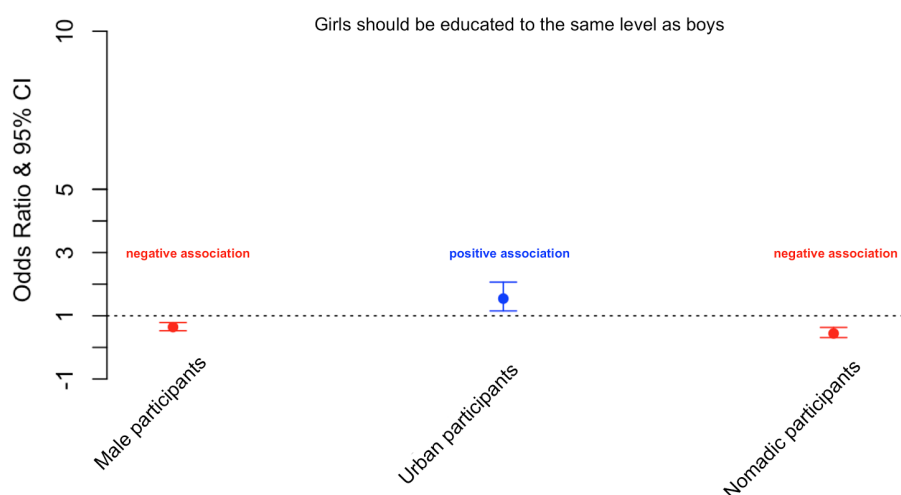


Fig 19: Variations towards girls' education in terms of gender, area type and whether a participant was a nomad

<sup>66</sup> The odds of male participants stating that they believe that girls should be educated to the same level as boys were 36% lower than they were for female participants (odds ratio = 0.64,  $p < 0.01$ , CI = 0.53, 0.79). The odds of urban participants stating this belief was 50% higher than it was for non-urban participants (odds ratio = 1.54,  $p < 0.01$ , CI = 0.31, 0.63). The odds of nomadic participants stating this belief was 56% lower than it was for non-nomadic participants (odds ratio = 0.44,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.31, 0.63). This remained the case when age and gender were accounted for.



**Table 10: Coding frame for reasons that do not support girls having the same access to education as boys**

<b>'No' - Reasons for gender discrimination</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>1. Women and men aren't equal</b>	Women cannot do what men can God has not made the genders equal Women cannot be trusted with responsibility Men and women are not equal
<b>2. Women marry young</b>	Girls get married at young age
<b>3. Women are needed in childbirth/as mothers</b>	Becoming a mother is a priority They will have less time to give birth
<b>4. Girls/women will flirt with boys/men</b>	Women will flirt with men
<b>5. Girls/women belong in the kitchen</b>	Women have to go back to the kitchen
<b>6. Girls/women can only have religious education</b>	It is not religious education
<b>7. There is no benefit for girls to have education</b>	They don't need education They don't benefit from education
<b>8. Girls would be unnecessarily empowered</b>	Girls would be unnecessarily empowered

**Table 11: Coding frame for reasons that support girls and boys having the same level of access to education**

<b>'Yes' Reasons for lack of gender discrimination</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>9. Girls can learn from boys</b>	Girls can learn from boys
<b>10. Educating girls has a positive impact on community</b>	It has positive impacts at a macro-level It benefits the community Women are the key to life
<b>11. Educating girls has a positive impact on family</b>	Educating a woman is like educating a family She can support her children's education
<b>12. Boys and girls are equal</b>	Boys and girls have equal rights
<b>13. Girls need to work in formal employment</b>	Girls need to work in formal employment
<b>14. Girls are more capable</b>	Girls are more intelligent than boys Girls work harder than boys
<b>15. Everyone sees the benefit</b>	People are no longer ignorant People understand the value of education

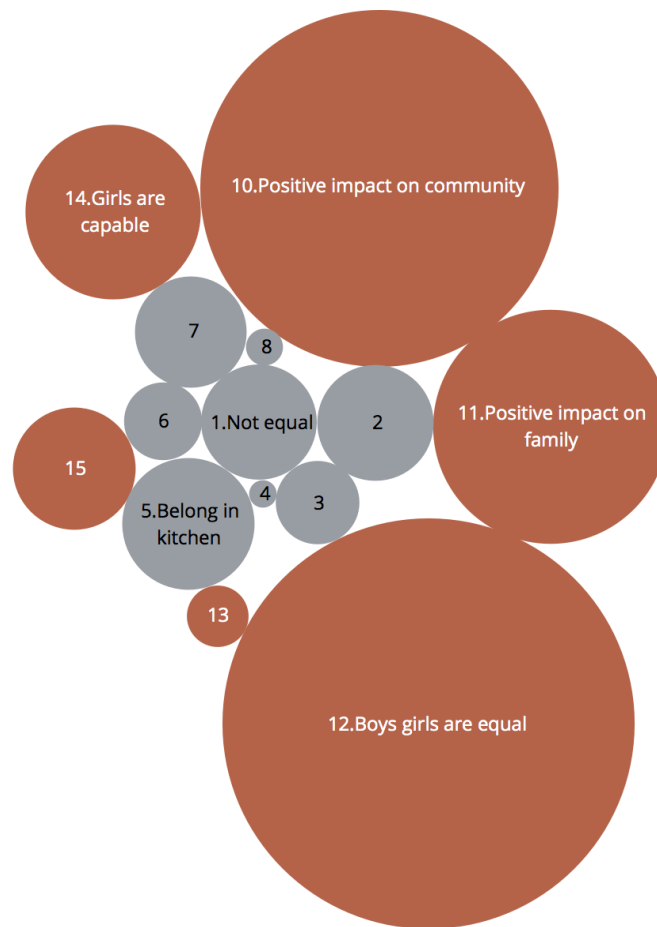


Fig 20: Prevalence of beliefs around girls' access to education amongst radio participants, as listed in coding tables above, with beliefs that **do not** support equal access to education, and beliefs that **support** equal access to education

## Beliefs that do not support girls' equal access to education

**16.6% of participants** said girls should not receive the same level of schooling as boys. The most common belief amongst this group was the idea that girls, even when educated, ended up doing **household work** - often specifically referencing a proverb in which women should be working in the kitchen.

**"No, [girls should not receive the same level of schooling as boys], the reason being, as it has been previously said, that educated girls end up in the kitchen."** - Mogadishu.

The second most common belief in this set was simply that **boys were more capable or more valuable** than girls and therefore should be prioritised.

**"No [girls should not receive the same level of schooling as boys] because god has not made boys and girls equal. The ratio is 100 boys and 50 girls."** - Baidoa

**"No, it is not good to give girls education. They cannot be trusted with responsibility, so leave education alone."** - Unknown

Others argued that because **girls tend to marry younger** than their male counterparts, it was not appropriate for girls to receive a formal education, showing the linkages between child marriage and negative educational outcomes for girls.

**"No, [girls should not receive the same level of schooling as boys] the reason being, girls are married when they are still young/little."** - Male, Hargeisa

Some voices argued that **a woman's role was as a mother** and ensuring the largest possible amount of children for her family. In this context education was seen as a detriment to reproductive labour, and in one case that it even threatened the diminution of the Somali community.

**"No, [girls should not receive the same level of schooling as boys] , the reason being, it will allow for less time giving birth - so at the age of 35, she will finish university. If she shortens [the time] giving birth, the Somali community will be smaller, just like in Europe."** - Bossaso

**"No, [girls should not receive the same level of schooling as boys] because girls are required to be mothers, because the time she can give birth is limited, and she is needed in homely duties, so they cannot be equal ."** - 18 years, Baardheere

Some voices argued that **education would lead to girls flirting with men**. By potentially bringing women into contact with male dominated spheres on society, education threatened to lead to interactions seen as immoral between the two genders.

**"No, [girls should not receive the same level of schooling as boys] , because girls and boys are not equal, because if girls are given education, they will flirt with men."** - Female, 15 years, Mogadishu.

**"Girls are not focused on education, they are flirting with/dating men without having completed their education and that has set them back ."** - Male, Hargeisa

Another perspective featured in the radio discussion was the idea that **women should only receive religious education**, as this would be most useful in their role in the family, rather than other types of education that would be useful for jobs they would not supposed to be doing.

**"No, [girls should not receive the same level of schooling as boys] , because the religion does not allow. If she is not learning/studying about religion, during these times, a woman's voice should not be heard, so they cannot do certain jobs. But they should work hard in religion."** - Hargeisa, Female

Others stressed that girls and women **only need a limited amount of education**. In some cases this was because they were perceived as requiring only a certain level of schooling in order to bring up children.

**"No, it is not allowed that they are educated at the same level as boys, but it is needed that they are educated in the level of training and teaching children."** - Male, 48 years, Cabudwaaq.

**"No [girls should not receive the same level of schooling as boys], because educating girls is a waste ."** - Male 19, Belet Weyn.

## Beliefs that support girls' equal access to education

**83.4% of participants** believed that girls *should* have the same level of education as boys. The most common idea referenced **equality between the genders**, often through a language of rights.

**"Yes [girls should receive the same level of schooling as boys], the reason being girls and boys have equal rights."** - Female, Belet Weyne.

Some said that educating a girl has **lasting positive effects on her family**, referencing a specific Somali proverb in making their case. Others saw a girl's education as important to ensuring that she could appropriately school her own children when she was a mother.

**"Yes [girls should receive the same level of schooling as boys] because there is a proverb that says educating one girl is equal to educating a family/community."** - Unknown

**"Yes [girls should receive the same level of schooling as boys], because if a girl does not educate herself, she will not be able to tolerate teaching her children ."** - Unknown

Similar to this was the notion that saw women's education **is beneficial to the functioning of the community** and wider development trajectories. Women were described as being central to community life and frequently providing assistance to those in need, therefore making their education necessary for the wider well-being of society.

**"Yes [girls should receive the same level of schooling as boys] because girls are the foundation of community and the progress of the nation"** - Unknown

Some posited the viewpoint that **girls were more capable than boys**, working harder and having greater intellectual ability, and therefore deserved an equal level of education to boys.

**"It would be nice for women to get education similar to those of boys. You would think that they have a better understanding in education ."** - Female, Mogadishu

**"Yes [girls] should have [the same level of education], because girls are more hardworking than boys ."** - Unknown

Other perspectives recognised the role that women play in the formal workforce and that **women need education in order to find an appropriate job** and through that gain greater economic independence and quality of life. It was found that old proverbs can be re-framed in new contexts and given the right conditions.

**"Yes [girls should receive the same level of schooling as boys], the reason being that girls need a good life. If she studies well, she can get a good job, [and] if she doesn't, she will make tea in small restaurants. A Somali proverb is that if a girl studies, she will still end up in the kitchen, but this isn't so if she works for herself, she can service herself/ buy what she wants ."** - Unknown

There were also those that argued that sending girls to school would allow them **to learn from boys** in the process.

**"Yes, [girls should receive the same level of schooling as boys], the reason being girls need someone to encourage them, and education needs brains. It seems to me that boys can encourage girls to educate themselves."** - Female, 22 years, Mogadishu.

Others argued that their **community had become aware of the benefits of education** for women and it was therefore imperative to support their schooling.

**"Yes, [girls] should be given [education], because the value of education has been understood. I study at a secondary school, and there are women who are more than 60 years old, and are studying the same grade as myself."** - Unknown

## Variations by Zones

Positive beliefs varied by geography. Participants from SCZ were slightly more likely (than those from other parts of the country) to argue that girls and boys are equal and should be treated as such, but less likely to mention the idea that educating girls has a positive impact on the family.<sup>67</sup>

The opposite was true in NWZ, where participants were more likely (than those in other parts of the country) to use the argument that educating girls has a beneficial impact on the family and community, and less likely to mention the point that boys and girls are equal.<sup>68</sup>

This suggests there are different positive narratives around girls' education that resonate with audiences depending on geography. Girls' access to education is more likely to be talked about in Somaliland (NWZ) in regards to how girls' education benefits the family and wider community. In SCZ, equal access to education is more likely to be talked about in broader terms of equality between the genders.

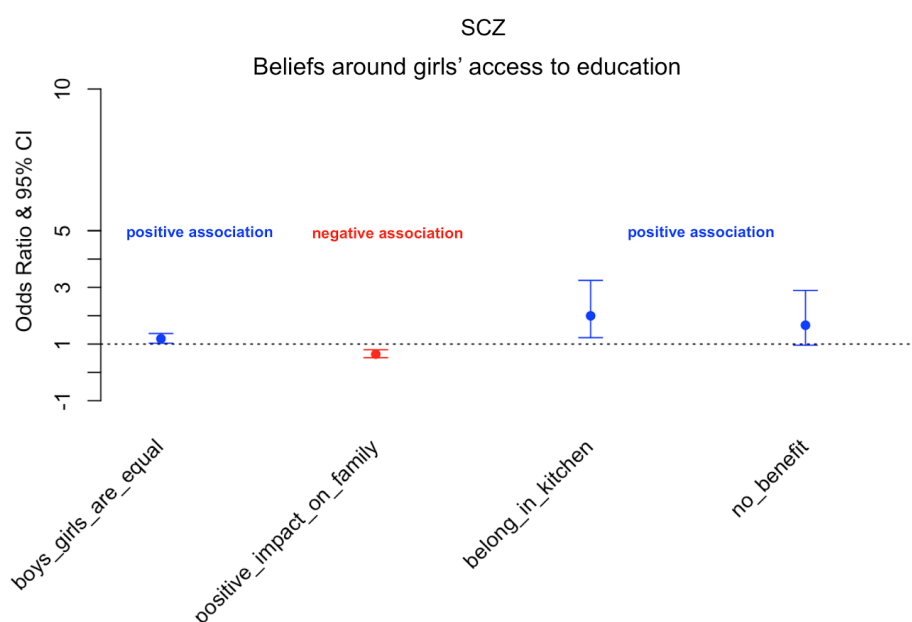


Fig 21: Variations in belief around girls' education by zone - SCZ compared with NEZ and NWZ

<sup>67</sup> The odds of participants from SCZ stating that girls should be educated to the same level as boys for the reason that boys and girls are equal were 19% higher than they were for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 1.19,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 1.0, 1.4). The odds of SCZ participants saying that they felt it had a positive impact on the family were 36% lower than they were for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.64,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.5, 0.8).

<sup>68</sup> The odds of participants from NWZ stating that girls should be educated to the same level as boys for the reason that boys and girls are equal were 27% lower than they were for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 0.73,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.6, 0.9). The odds of NWZ participants saying that they felt it had a positive impact on the family were 74% higher than they were for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 1.74,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 1.4, 2.2). The odds of NWZ participants saying that they felt it had a positive impact on the community were 14% higher than they were for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 1.14,  $p = 0.1$ , CI = 0.9, 1.4). The odds of SCZ participants saying that they felt that everyone sees the benefit were 60% higher than they were for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 1.6,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 1.0, 2.4).

We also see that those in SCZ who did not support equal access to education were more likely than in other areas to state that girls belong in the kitchen rather than schools, and slightly more likely to perceive that there was no benefit to educating girls.<sup>69</sup> This suggests a less progressive set of beliefs on gender and education amongst the audience in SCZ.

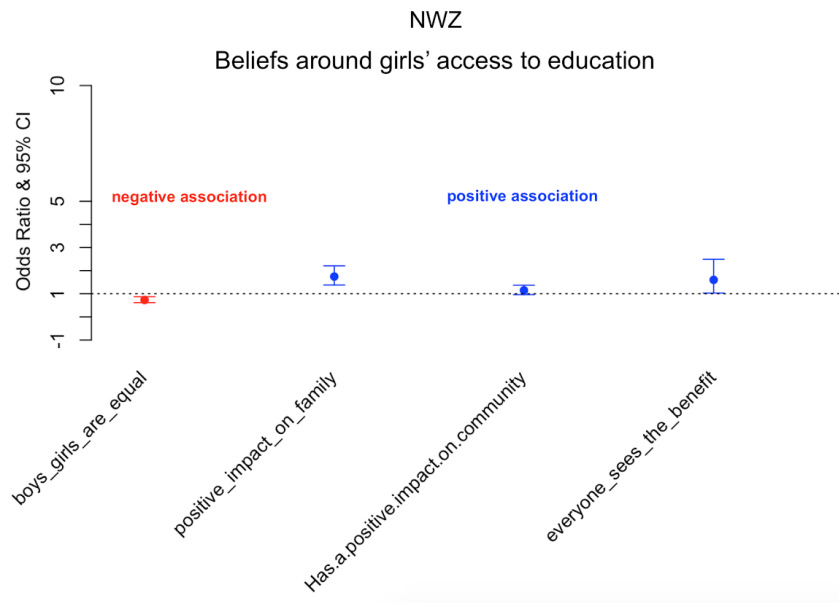


Fig 22: Variations in belief around girls' education by zone - NWZ compared with NEZ and SCZ

## Gender variations

Men were more likely than women to say that educational opportunities should not be equal for girls and boys by claiming that there are differences between genders, and that women should be married young (and therefore not be educated). A discriminatory perception of women and their role in the home emerges that is more present in male radio participants than women.<sup>70</sup> This was the case even when age was taken into account.

At the same time, women were more likely than men to talk about equality between the sexes, the capability of girls, and the positive impact of education on women, focusing on their agency and central role in communities.<sup>71</sup> Again these results held when controlling for age.

<sup>69</sup> The odds of SCZ participants saying that they felt girls belonged in the kitchen were 99% higher than they were for participants from the rest of the country (odds ratio = 1.99,  $p < 0.01$ , CI = 1.2, 3.2). The odds of SCZ participants saying that they felt there was no benefit to educating girls to the same level as boys were 66% higher than they were for the rest of the country (odds ratio = 1.66,  $p < 0.08$ , CI = 0.9, 2.9).

<sup>70</sup> The odds of male participants stating the following as a belief for not educating girls to the same level as boys was higher than for female participants - 1) Girls are not equal with men (80% higher, odds ratio = 1.8,  $p = 0.09$ , CI = 0.95, 3.43); 2) Girls are married young (93% higher, odds ratio = 1.9,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 1.02, 3.65); 3) Girls should only receive a religious education (280% higher, 3.8,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 1.1, 13.3).

<sup>71</sup> The odds of male participants stating the following beliefs was lower than for female participants - 1) It would have a positive impact on the community (45% lower, odds ratio = 0.55,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 0.44, 0.67); 2) Boys and girls are equal (18% lower, odds ratio = 0.82,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 0.69, 0.98); 3) Everyone sees the benefit (62% lower, odds ratio = 3.8,  $p < 0.01$ , CI = 0.21, 0.69); 4) Girls are capable (40% lower, odds ratio = 0.61,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 0.4, 0.91).

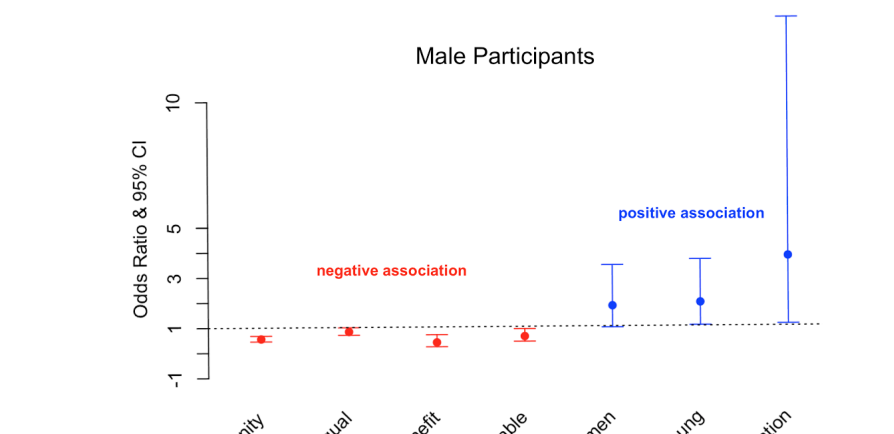


Fig 23: Variations in beliefs around girls' education by gender

## Urban versus rural variations

Urban participants were more likely than non-urban participants to value girls education by perceiving the positive impact on community and family, girls' capability and parity with boys.<sup>72</sup> This was the case even when age and gender were accounted for.

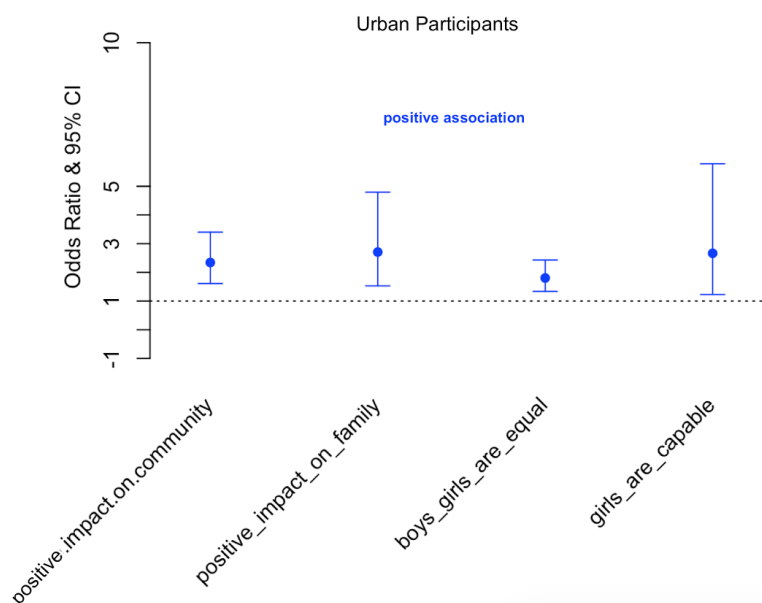


Fig 24: Variations in beliefs around girls' education by area-type (urban vs rural)

<sup>72</sup> The odds of urban participants stating the following beliefs was higher than for non-urban participants - 1) It would have a positive impact on the community (134% higher, odds ratio = 2.34,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 1.61, 3.4); 2) It would have a positive impact on the family (170% higher, odds ratio = 2.7,  $p < 0.001$ , CI = 1.53, 4.79) 3) Boys and girls are equal (80% higher, odds ratio = 1.8,  $p < 0.01$ , CI = 1.34, 2.43) 4) Girls are capable (160% higher, odds ratio = 2.66,  $p < 0.01$ , CI = 1.2, 5.78).

## Associations between beliefs and practices

This section was intended to provide insights on research question 5: **How are these beliefs associated with different practices around the education of daughters?**

However we can see clearly from the graph below the lack of variation amongst those who participated in terms of their aspiration and expectations for their daughters' education.

93% of radio participants reported that they would like their daughter to attend secondary education or above and most for hoped tertiary education.<sup>73</sup>

Of these participants, (92%) the majority did not see barriers to their daughter achieving this.<sup>74</sup> This is likely in part due to the bias towards educated groups found when collecting data via SMS.

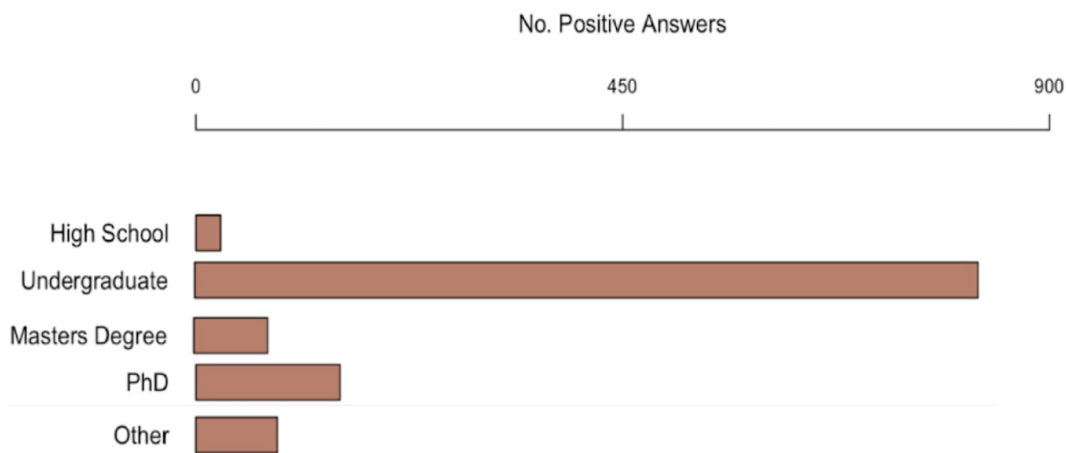


Fig 25: Distribution of ambitions for daughters' education amongst parents/caregivers who were radio show participants

Radio discussions unearthed beliefs that valued the education of girls less, compared to the education of boys. This data suggests that these beliefs alone may not entirely diminish parents' expectations for their daughters' education, it leaves open the possibility that they may however have an effect on household decision-making as they interact with other structural, material and individual factors.

<sup>73</sup> This is in response to SMS Q5: What level of schooling would you like your daughter to receive? (Response Rate = 67%).

<sup>74</sup> This is in response to SMS Q5: Do you think she is likely to attain the level you would like? Yes or No? Please explain your answer (Response Rate = 41%).



### 3.4.2. Girls' access to education: Insights & Recommendations

#### 1. There are demographic variations in attitudes towards girls' access to education.

- a. **Insight:** Male participants, those from rural areas and nomadic participants were more likely than other social groups to hold a negative view towards girls' education.
- b. **Recommendation:** Communications programming to change norms around girls' access to education should focus on these groups in order to ensure no sub-set of girls is left behind in terms of their educational outcomes.

#### 2. Proverbs and idioms reinforce beliefs around girls' education.

- a. **Insight:** Our research showed that beliefs can be expressed and reinforced through specific language and phrases. Negative beliefs around, for example, how women belong in the kitchen, risk being entrenched through these idioms. At the same time, positive phrases, such as educating girls is equivalent to educating a family, may achieve greater traction by leveraging linguistic triggers.
- b. **Recommendation:** Using specific positive narratives and proverbs identified through this research may be an effective way of communicating change in a way that can resonate with audiences. Branding communications around the idea that educating women is like educating the family and benefits the wider community builds a positive narrative attuned to cultural context, whilst avoiding negative directives towards deeply held values such as religious beliefs.

#### 3. Positive narratives of female education vary by geography.

- a. **Insight:** In SCZ, audiences were more likely to believe that girls should have the same education as boys due to broader equality between the sexes, whilst in NWZ, participants were more likely to make this case with reference to the wider benefits that women's education has on the family and community.
- b. **Recommendation:** Target programming and positive narratives based on geography. In NWZ it seems especially important to use language and proverbs around the significance of women's education to the wider family and community, as this seems likely to resonate with existing audiences. In SCZ communications may focus on a broader campaign for gender equality.

#### 4. Girls' access to education is a complex mixture of social, material, structural and individual factors.

- a. **Insight:** Whilst many parents expressed their willingness and optimism for girls going to school, other data in Somalia suggests that in practice many girls do not receive secondary or even primary education. Though this may be in part a reflection of this study's coverage error, it is also a reminder that social factors alone do not determine educational outcomes for women.

- b. Recommendation:** Programmes to improve access to education need to combine social campaigns with improving legislation and providing material resources to support education. Efforts towards changing social norms around girls' education should proceed alongside other interventions, and otherwise may risk being fruitless and even counterproductive.

## 3.5. Juvenile justice

### 3.5.1. Juvenile Justice: Analysis and Findings

This section provides an analysis that speaks to research question 6: **What are the collective beliefs of Somali citizens around juvenile justice, and how do they vary by demographic groups?**

The coding frame below summarises the themes manifested in the responses to:

**Radio question 5: “Do you think that violent criminals aged 14-18 should be treated differently from adult criminals? Yes or No? Why?”**

In response, AVF received 8,191 messages from 6,688 people.

- 59.5% of messages said ‘yes’ [violent juvenile criminals should be treated differently from adults]
- 37.5% of messages said ‘no’ [violent juvenile criminals should *not* be treated differently from adults]
- 3% of messages presented ambivalent perspectives.

**Table 12: Coding frame for reasons that juvenile criminals should be treated differently from adult criminals**

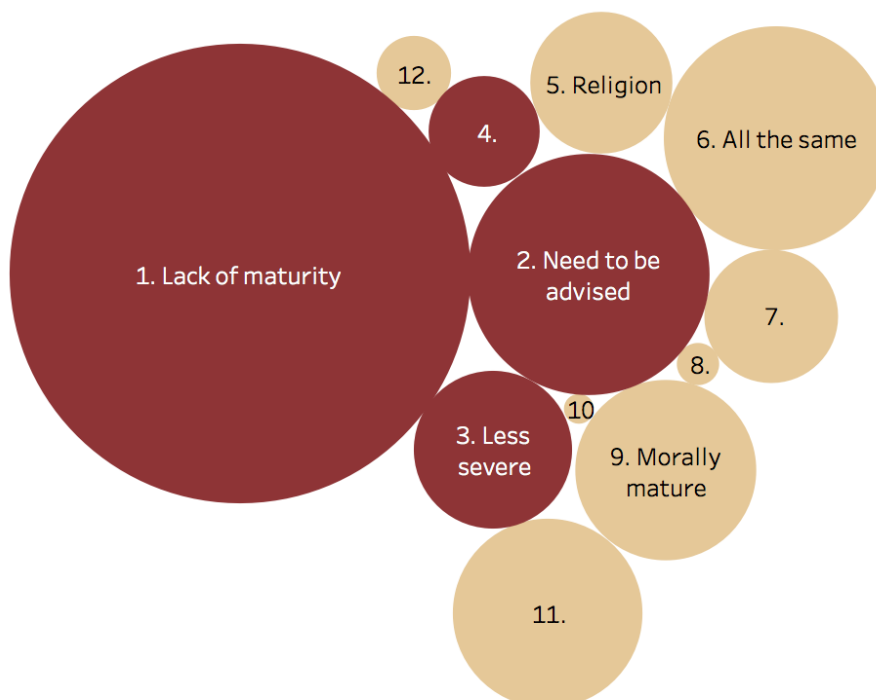
Reasons for treating differently	Sub-themes
1. Lack of maturity	Their minds are not mature They are still children
2. They need to be advised/reformed	They must be given advice and guidance instead Some children have been brainwashed into committing crimes Children risk becoming an outcast in society
3. Punishment need to be less severe for younger people	Children cannot tolerate severe punishments
4. Other	Mercy should be shown

**Table 13: Coding frame for reasons that juvenile criminals should be treated the same as adult criminals**

Reasons for treating juveniles the <u>same</u>	Sub-themes
5. Religion	According to Islamic law, 16-18 years old are adults They should be treated according to Islamic law
6. Criminals are all the same	A crime is a crime All criminals should be treated the same
7. To prevent repeated crimes	So as to prevent repeated criminals
8. If serious crime	If it is a violent crime If it's murder
9. Juveniles are Morally Mature/They are adults	They already know good from bad They are adults Reached puberty
10. Children's rights not protected	Children's rights are not protected in Somalia
11. Justice and punishment should fit crime regardless of age	The crime should fit the punishment Equality in justice is good

	There is equality in jail time
12. Other	They should be treated the same

Fig 26: Prevalence of beliefs around juvenile justice amongst radio show participants - beliefs for treating juveniles the same and beliefs for treating juveniles differently



## Beliefs that support a different treatment of juvenile criminals

59.5% of participants said that they support juvenile criminals being treated differently to adult criminals. A common belief was the idea that juveniles **lacked maturity** and therefore they were not accountable for crimes to the same extent as adults.

**"Yes [they should be treated differently to adults] they are still growing and their minds are not mature yet"** - Female, 32 years, Mogadishu

**"Yes [they should be treated differently to adults] because their minds are still immature and they could have made some irrational decisions and for that they can not be on the same crime level as adults."** - Male 21 years, Mogadishu

Linked to this idea was that justice with regards to juvenile criminals should **focus on reform** and providing them with advice and guidance. This was the second most frequent idea in the discussion in support of different treatment for juveniles.

**"Yes [they should be treated differently to adults] because they are children whose minds are still immature so they should be advised and taken care of and not beaten up badly as this might harm their brain."** - Female

**"Yes [they should be treated differently to adults] they are children whose minds have been corrupted and brainwashed and they should be counselled and advised"** - Unknown

Others said that juveniles are **too young to receive harsh punishment** and would suffer disproportionately from doing so.

**"Yes their punishment should be less severe until they can reach the age at which they can be treated like adults because their minds are still not mature"**-Female 20 years, Hargeisa

**"Yes [they should be treated differently to adults] because criminals aged 14 -18 are very young their punishment for the crimes committed should be easy or they should be forgiven but the older ones it's good if they are punished for their crimes or punishment extended"** - Male, Cabudwaaq

## Beliefs against different treatment of juvenile criminals

37% of participants said that juvenile offenders should be treated in the same way as their adult counterparts, and do not agree with differential treatment. The most frequent idea was that **criminals should not be differentiated by age** (or any other attribute), and therefore should be punished solely based on the severity of the crime committed.

**"No [they should be treated the same as adults] because criminals' crimes are all the same and they should be treated the same"** - Female, 18 years, Garowe

**"No [they should be treated the same] because when a person commits a crime there is no difference between young or old in terms of crime and it is good if all criminals are punished the same"**- Male, 16 years, Mogadishu

Others argued that criminals aged 14-18 had already attained full **moral maturity** and should thus be treated as fully responsible for the actions committed. This was the second most common reasoning. Similarly many argued that at this age they had already **reached puberty** and were thus considered adults.

**"No [they should be treated the same] because they are people that know good from bad"** -Male, 30 years, Baidoa

**"No [they should be treated the same] because if he has reached puberty by 14 years he is the same as an adult in terms of the crimes they have committed and they are punished equally"** - Male, 25 years, Jowhar

Some voices referred to **sharia law** to argue that juveniles should face justice in the same way as adults.

**"No [they should be treated the same] because muslims have the same rights"** - Female, 18 years, Cadale

**"No I will put them into two category 14 and 15 year olds have not yet reached puberty the way islamic sharia states but 16 and 18 year olds they should be treated like adults and go through the punishment that they deserve."** - Male, 30 years, Bossaso

**"No [they should be treated the same because] whoever commits a crime should face the islamic sharia"** -Female, 26 years, Mogadishu

At the same time, other participants argue that severe punishment of juvenile offenders was an effective method to ensure they **do not become repeat offenders**.

**"No [they should be treated the same] because if they are not stopped they will become known criminals so in my opinion they should face the law and the right actions be taken"** -Female, Mogadishu

There were also those that specified that juvenile criminals should receive the same punishment **in the case of severe crimes**, including murder and rape.

**"No [they should be treated the same because] murderers are all the same regardless if he is young or old because he has killed someone with his own hands and in the eyes of the law their punishments are all the same and they are treated the same."** -18 years

**"No [they should be treated the same] because if it is rape they will be treated really badly in an inhuman way"** - Male, 20 years, Hargeisa

Some perspectives included the idea that **children's rights are not protected** in Somalia and therefore there was no notion of treating them differently from adults in the justice and correction system.

**"No [they should be treated the same] because in Somalia children's rights are not protected"** - Female, NA

Other respondents believed that they should be treated the same because **punishment committed should fit crime**, regardless of who perpetrated it. Similarly others argued more broadly that **justice should be applied equally** regardless of the defendant.

**"Yes it is good to practice justice because the sentence that is passed by the kadhi should be equal for all criminals"** - Female, Kismayo

**"No brother [they should be treated the same] - there should be equality in jail time"** - Male 28 years, Hargeisa

There was no statistically significant variation in beliefs held by geography or demographic group.

### 3.5.2 Juvenile Justice: Insights & Recommendations

#### 1. Communication campaigns and legislation should build on existing positive narratives for giving juveniles special treatment in the justice and correction system

- a. **Insight:** Amongst radio audiences there were many who called for differential treatment for juveniles committing crime. This attitude was commonly justified by reference to the notion that younger people were not yet fully mature and therefore could not be considered fully responsible for their actions. At the same time, people argued that it was still possible to pull juveniles away from crime by giving them guidance and counsel.
- b. **Recommendation:** These perspectives suggest there is some firm grounding for enacting and enforcing legislation on juvenile justice in Somalia in line with international norms and standards. Building on the narratives presented by radio audiences, such as role modelling cases of reform and rehabilitation, will enable engaging campaigning that can resonate with audiences. This will be essential to further changing beliefs and attitudes towards juvenile justice and challenging ideas such as “criminals are all the same”.

#### 2. Notions of childhood development that link puberty to moral and emotional maturity need to be dispelled to ensure juvenile justice can be brought in line with international norms

- a. **Insight:** Many participants argued that juveniles were already in a position of moral maturity and responsibility. In particular reference was made to puberty as the defining threshold of when a human should take full responsibility for their actions.
- b. **Recommendation:** Presenting alternative models of human development in which biological maturity is not equivalent to moral and emotional maturity and responsibility may be important to encouraging positive perspectives on juvenile justice. This might be accomplished through radio drama and community theatre.

#### 3. Emergent policy in Somalia must be sensitive to perspectives that religion supports the equal treatment of adults and juveniles in the justice and correction system

- a. **Insight:** Our research showed that a small but notable portion of radio participants resisted the idea young offenders should be treated differently from adults by referencing Islamic *sharia*. In their eyes, Islam does not differentiate (or does so only in a limited way) between juveniles and adults when it comes to justice and correction.
- b. **Recommendation:** Legislation supported by the international community in Somalia should be sensitive towards those who resist differential treatment for young offenders by referencing strongly-held religious beliefs. Achieving legislation in line with international norms that can feasibly be enforced will require grounding it clearly in an argument taken from Islamic *sharia*, developed in full collaboration with local religious leaders.