

# Female Genital Mutilation and Social Norms

## 1. What are social norms ?

a. Complete the definition of social norms with the following words :

appropriate                      expectations                      society                      rules

Social norms are the ..... or ..... that determine and regulate ..... behavior within a culture, group, or .....

<https://sociologydictionary.org/norm/>

## 2. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Social Norms

**Myth of fact ? Read the following sentences and say if you think they are myths or facts. Then, share your answers with your classmates.**

- a. In many countries it is carried out (= done) by women who have no medical training, using unsterilised knives, blades, without anaesthetic.                       Myth                       Fact
- b. Female genital mutilation is nearly always carried out on children, commonly between four and twelve years of age.                       Myth                       Fact
- c. There are lots of health benefits to having female genital mutilation.                       Myth                       Fact
- d. Female genital mutilation is supported by religion.                       Myth                       Fact
- e. Female genital mutilation is not a crime in the UK.                       Myth                       Fact
- f. Female genital mutilation is a form of child abuse (*maltraitance sur enfant*).                       Myth                       Fact
- g. Female genital mutilation is a violation of human rights.                       Myth                       Fact
- h. We can't do anything to stop FGM.                       Myth                       Fact

<https://www.actionaid.org.uk>

## 3. Social Norms in Desert Flower

Watch the extracts from Desert Flower and answer the questions.

a. FGM can be considered a social norm. Explain why.

.....  
.....

b. What are the consequences if young girls and their mothers refuse to have FGM done?

.....  
.....

c. Compare social norms in the UK and Somalia.

.....  
.....

# Female Genital Mutilation and Social Norms **KEY**

## 1. What are social norms ?

a. Complete the definition of social norms with the following words :

appropriate                      expectations                      society                      rules

Social norms are the **rules** or **expectations** that determine and regulate **appropriate** behavior within a culture, group, or **society**.

<https://sociologydictionary.org/norm/>

## 2. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Social Norms

**Myth of fact ? Read the following sentences and say if you think they are myths or facts. Then, share your answers with your classmates.**

a. In many countries it is carried out (= done) by women who have no medical training, using unsterilised knives, blades, without anaesthetic.                       Myth                       **Fact**

b. Female genital mutilation is nearly always carried out on children, commonly between four and twelve years of age.                       Myth                       **Fact**

c. There are lots of health benefits to having female genital mutilation.                       **Myth**                       **Fact**

**Girls are in danger of dying from blood loss or infection during and after the procedure.**

d. Female genital mutilation is supported by religion.                       **Myth**                       **Fact**

**Female genital mutilation is a 'traditional' practice and is linked to custom rather than religion.**

e. Female genital mutilation is not a crime in the UK.                       **Myth**                       **Fact**

**There is a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison for anyone found guilty of the offence. It is also illegal to take someone out of the UK for them to be cut.**

f. Female genital mutilation is a form of child abuse (*maltraitance sur enfant*).                       Myth                       **Fact**

g. Female genital mutilation is a violation of human rights.                       Myth                       **Fact**

h. We can't do anything to stop FGM.                       **Myth**                       **Fact**

**By speaking out and saying female genital mutilation is unacceptable, you add your voice to international pressure for the practice to end.**

<https://www.actionaid.org.uk>

## 3. Social Norms in Desert Flower

Watch the extracts from Desert Flower and answer the questions.

**Extract 1: 27'58**

**Extract 2: 39'**

**Extract 3: 1h51**

a. FGM can be considered a social norm. Explain why.

**FGM functions as a self-enforcing social convention or social norm. In societies where it is**

practised, it is a socially upheld behavioural rule. Families and individuals continue to perform it because they believe that their community expects them to do so.

It is considered to be a necessary step to enable girls to become women and to be accepted, together with the rest of the family, by the social group of which they are part.

**b. What are the consequences if young girls and their mothers refuse to have FGM done?**

**If young girls and their mothers do not respect the social rule, they will suffer social consequences such as derision, marginalization and loss of status.**

**c. Compare social norms in the UK and Somalia. (from 27'58)**

.....

.....

.....