



RECENT & UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- Khareef Salalah Festival, July 5—14
- World Population Day, July 11
- Tawasul Youth Conference, July 7
- 10 Days of Activism Sep 1—10
- International day of the Girl Child, Oct 11

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Boosting Regional Activities

As part of the duties of being the sub-regional office for the GCC, a main goal this year, and top priority was to boost regional activities—not only successful activities in the GCC countries, but regional activities that bring together different sectors of the 6 GCC nations together to encourage dialogue and collective action.

As part of this, the office took part in 2 regional activities during the Khareef Salalah Festival, which takes place annually in the southern city of Oman - Salalah - to mark the Khareef, or Autumn season. One such activity was the Tawasul AFKAR 2 Think Tank meeting, which had a designated UNFPA supported youth session in the evening.



UNFPA GCC Area Office Representative a.i gives a welcoming speech to attendants at the regional activities for youth participation in Think Tanks across the gulf.

UNFPA’s support allowed for 12 youth from around the GCC to attend the forum, which was titled “Youth, Participation and the Future” and featured an inspiring speech from the GCC Area Office Representative a.i, Mr. Asr Toson. In his speech, he encouraged youth to be more proactive in taking charge of

their futures and be more involved in the world around them.

The second was the participation in the festival itself, where the GCC Area Office brought members from the Oman and Bahrain Y-PEER networks together to inspire and encourage future collaboration and participation.

Khareef Salalah Festival Participation

Following the successes of participation in 2011 Khareef Salalah Festival, and 2012 Muscat festival, the UNFPA GCC Area Office in Muscat began their participation in the Khareef Salalah festival this year in collaboration with the MOH HIV section, with participants from the Y-PEER Oman

and Y-PEER Bahrain networks making this regional activity reach a larger audience.

This participation lasted over 10 days and involved raising awareness on the mandate of the UNFPA - Reproductive health for all, but also issues related to birth

spacing, HIV and the growing population.

The activities followed the usual interactive style of edutainment of the Y-PEER network, including the newly acquired skill of puppet theatre. For a news feature read the Oman Observer article [here](#).

World Population Day Puppet Tribute



Puppets during the World Population day show

This year, the UNFPA led World Population Day was held under the theme of “Universal Access to Reproductive Health Services” a cause near and true to the heart of the UNFPA globally.

In Oman, WPD was celebrated in the Khareef Salalah Festival where thousands flock every year. We took this opportunity to raise awareness about family planning and the importance of reproductive rights and choice. We chose

our youth participants at the recent Puppetry Theatre TOT to write a sketch on the importance of family planning within the local context.

The result was a beautiful, heart warming and amusing story of the 3 main challenges that couples face in Oman: Early child bearing, lack of spacing and large family size. The youth created sketches tackling each theme individually using the same likeable characters. The performances were

met with a great reception in the outdoor venue at the festival, and also got the attention of young married couples, and created a good opportunity for further dialogue, where health officials and UNFPA staff were on hand to answer and create an open environment for discussion.

It was a small and effective celebration to the international World Population Day, read about it in the Oman Daily Observer [here](#).

Oman took part in the global annual 10 days of activism. This year the theme focused on youth civic participation under the slogan “Nothing for us, without us”

The Y-PEERs spread awareness on various issues and spread the message at one of the activities in Muscat Grand Mall on days 1 and 2 of the campaign.



“Nothing For Us, Without Us”

The annual Y-PEER international 10 Days of Activism campaign arrived in Oman for the first time in full force. The Oman network joined 41 other countries in celebrating the global campaign with 10 days of constant activities from the 1st to the 10th of September under the slogan “Nothing for us, Without us” and focused on the importance of youth inclusion and participation.

The campaign began at the newly opened Muscat Grand

Mall, where the Y-PEERs had an awareness corner for the first 2 days of the campaign. This attracted a large number of youth who frequent the mall, and generated a buzz around the campaign.

The next 4 days took place in the western region of Buraimi, where there was a general awareness activity followed by an exhibition and a 2 day Peer Education and Introductory workshop to establish an arm of the Y-PEER network in the region, under the guidance of a focal point. This was extremely successful and made the campaign nationwide. It also gave the enthusiastic members in Buraimi the chance to showcase their work and further expand the reach of the network, with newly trained members that will continue to spread the Y-PEER message.

The final 4 days found the campaign returning to Muscat, and collaborated with the

Clean Up Oman initiative. They got together for a successful beach clean up, followed by a 2 day activity at the popular Qurum City Centre, where the Y-PEERs had an exhibition, puppetry performances, an area designated for the creation of puppets from recycled material and an awareness presentation from Clean Up Oman. The focus of this and the final day’s online discussion was the environment and how youth play an integral role in preserving the world we live in.

The campaign was met with enthusiasm from the public and the media. A lot of attention was drawn to the good work that the Y-PEERs have been undertaking in Oman since its establishment in 2008, and how necessary such an initiative is for all youth living in Oman.

For some of the media coverage please visit the following links:

[Oman Daily](#)

[Oman Observer](#)

[Times of Oman](#)

[The Week](#)

Revival of the Y-PEER Bahrain Network



Y-PEER Bahrain members getting inspired at the Khareef Salah Festival.

be difficult to work in, and where youth can feel deflated.

After a short trip to the Salah festival where 3 Y-PEERs from Bahrain had the opportunity to participate in the Tawasul youth forum

and the awareness activities that the Y-PEER Oman network was running at the festival, the members left with a renewed energy.

The Focal Point in Charge of the Y-PEER Bahrain Network was among the attendees and was impressed and inspired by the activities that the network in Oman have been undertaking. They exchanged challenges and ideas and both sides are excited for future collaborations.

The UNFPA office hopes to support more exchange opportunities between the Y-PEERs as new networks form in the rest of the GCC countries are established, and more regional activities to take place in the coming months.

Y-PEER Bahrain has been quiet the past few months, the recent activities and the political situation creates an environment that can often

The Saudi Arabia Trust Fund continues to be a success and a model for establishment of trust funds in the other states

KSA Trust Fund Activities Continue

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's (KSA) Trust Fund with the UNFPA GCC Area Office can be used as a model of success for the other states in the region. Though the Oman TF has continuously provided high quality assistance, the KSA TF remains the most active trust fund outside of Oman, where the office is located.

This year 3 major missions took

place with the Central Department of Statistics and Information (CDSI), which is the main planning department for the Ministry of Economy and Planning in Saudi Arabia. The office provided technical assistance in the fields of demographics and sampling, with high level experienced consultants sent for this purpose.

The final mission scheduled for the

year is currently underway and is proving to be as successful as the previous ones, with good feedback already being expressed by partners at the CDSI.

As a result, the TF has been extended for an extra year, and is now valid until the end of 2013 to continue the high level of work which is contributing significantly to the development of KSA.

Network for Arab Youth NGOs?

Recently, Arab youth, including an enthusiastic member of the Y-PEER Oman network got together to share their vision for an independent network in the Arab world of youth NGOs and groups working for similar goals—the empowerment and advancement of youth in the region. Saif, Al Sharji, Focal Point with Y-PEER Oman joined youth, officials and decision makers,

including the UNFPA Arab States Regional Office to discuss the feasibility and prospects of this initiative.

The result was an impressive list of goals that the various organizations can implement in their own countries with the support of the other members of the network, including more youth involvement in decision making, improving research in

youth related statistics and realities, increased dialogue and the formation of a large network that communicate and learn from each others experiences.

It is indeed necessary, and with determined youth, and the right backing it is bound to be a success.



The Y-PEER Oman member joined inspiring youth at a conference in Tunisia

Raising HIV awareness through Youth

The Y-PEER network in Oman has long been partners with the MOH HIV Section, since the birth of the network in 2008. The members played a pivotal role in spreading awareness about the nationwide communications campaign “Let’s Talk AIDS”. The 2 year campaign had various stages and the Y-PEERs were involved in every way.



A Y-PEER display during the 10 Days of Activism Campaign

The great success of this campaign built a strong bond between the MOH, the Y-PEERs and the UNFPA, and is instrumental in building the capacities of the Y-PEER network, and has since utilized the Y-PEERs as the outreach and awareness builders in many events.

This year, as part of the Khareef Salah activities, the Y-PEER partnered with the MOH HIV Section to educate and make the public more aware of the HIV situation in Oman as well as the need to not discriminate and stigmatize those living with HIV. They helped guide interested youth and members of the public to the anonymous testing and counseling facilities which were available close by.

The Y-PEERs also add a unique twist to talking about such a

sensitive topic, using fun “edutainment” methods such as the newly developed HIV “Snakes & Ladders” game, which is played like the popular board game but with 2 teams played against each other. The winners are declared by those that answer the most correct questions about various topics surrounded HIV from knowledge of the virus to stigma and discrimination, and receive a goody bag of Y-PEER merchandise from USBs to exercise bottles and more. This has proven to be extremely successful in delivering the message, increasing the knowledge level, and engaging youth on a topic that is often very difficult to address.

It is for this purpose, and for their enthusiasm and dedication to their fellow youth that the Y-PEERs are the main instruments in raising awareness about HIV in Oman, especially at public events and in the public sphere nation-



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