

UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- International Day of Non-Violence
- Omani Woman's Day
- Y-PEER Global Advisory Board Meeting
- IUCD Training
- Regional HIV/AIDS forum
- 10 Days of Activism (10DOA)

UNFPA GCC Office Supports 3rd Youth Dialogue

Tawasul, the first national independent and professional not-for-profit think tank in Oman, organized the 3rd Youth Dialogue "Assessing Youth Initiatives Impact" in Salalah. The programme was targeted towards the active youth community based initiatives who are interested in identifying, analyzing and addressing potential challenges and suc-

cesses at multiple levels, create a stage for networking and exchanging of ideas and promote professional volunteerism in selected environment and entrepreneurship areas. The main crux of the dialogue was to plan, sustain and develop a communication strategy that would help the youth organizations to identify indicators and assess their

impacts. The dialogue was attended by 22 representatives from leading civil societies and various youth organizations such as the Y-PEER in the Sultanate and Bahrain.

UNFPA GCC Office, provided its technical and logistical support for the success of this workshop.

It's International Youth Day 2013!!



Youth Migration: Moving Development Forward

importance of youth migration in development and to draw attention to the mechanisms and the opportunities that maximize benefits and minimize risks of youth migration.

Youth is one of the key areas, the UNFPA Sub Regional office for the GCC countries, focuses on. With the help from the Youth Peer Education network, Y-PEER, various youth targeted programs are practiced to build capacities and harness creativity through fun and interactive activities. Y-PEER volunteers took this opportunity to raise awareness about the day. (Continued on next page)

On August 12th, United Nations celebrates International Youth Day. It has dedicated the day to emphasize on the importance of young citizens for our present and future.

United Nations celebrates this day to educate the youth about their rights and the opportunities they have. Every year, the International Youth Day is celebrated with a theme and 2013 is themed as "Youth Migration: Moving Development Forward".

The theme is chosen to highlight the im-

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Youth

The team of Y-PEERS in Al Buraimi, a city located 375km north west of Muscat, hosted an event at the local Buraimi park addressing and informing the community about issues about youth migration and creating awareness about the International Youth Day.

Apart from this, the Y-PEERs were also active online, taking on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook, posting about the youth of today, their achievements and dreams.

Mr. Asr Toson, Representative, UNFPA Sub-Regional Office for the GCC Countries said; *“The International Youth Day is one of the most important international days the UN*

celebrates and we take it as a vital opportunity to reach out to the youth of GCC and engage with them and build awareness about opportunities and challenges they face and their roles as individuals in the society. This year, which is themed as the Youth Migration: Moving Development Forward, the UNFPA Sub-Regional office for the GCC Countries aims to join hands with one of the leading volunteering groups in Oman, the Y-PEERs to increase awareness about the topic.”

Y-PEERs Successfully Implement Awareness Activity at Khareef Festival

One of the major events that the Y-PEERs successfully hosted this year was the drug awareness stall at Khareef Festival in the southern state of Salalah from the 27th of August till the 1st of September.

A group of nine volunteers from Y-PEER, the Youth Peer Education Network, and the volunteer group of the National Committee for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, *My Life, My Decision*; both supported by UNFPA, the United Nations Populations Fund, Sub-Regional Office for the GCC Countries, departed to Salalah to celebrate the Khareef Festival and raise awareness about the various harmful effects of drugs and educate about prevention methods. The volunteers did a remarkable job of

attracting and briefing the youth and adults about the various negative aspects of drug addiction on their life and health. They also informed them about the different ways it can be combated. Apart from this topic, other UNFPA mandated issues were also addressed. The volunteers used innovative art techniques to convey the message of drug combat, such as their newly attained skills in puppet art and shadow techniques, to ‘Edutain’ (educate and entertain) the audience about the respective issues.

They held an interactive fun session with young people about road safety and traffic rules and regulations with the Oman Road Safety Association (ORSA). The sessions were diverse and included question and answers combined with singing songs about road safety. The main objective of this event was to increase awareness about the traffic safety amongst the youngsters and adults (parents).

Y-PEERs further collaborated with the Oman National Youth Committee at the event, supporting them in facilitating their stage programme and also participated



in various other activities that attracted the public's attention.

Witnessing the exciting work and the enthusiasm of the Y-PEERs and the volunteers of *My Life, My Decision*, the General Directorate of Dhofar Public Prosecution invited them to join hands and participate in their activities as well. This further encouraged the volunteers to promote and educate the festival visitors about harmful drugs effects and drug combat.

The activities of the volunteers received the much deserved spotlight when they were interviewed by Radio Oman for "Ma'a Shabab" (with the youth) show, where

two Y-PEER Oman volunteers spoke from the studio and two volunteers spoke live from the Festival. This gave them a great opportunity to create awareness about the mandates of UNFPA, Y-PEER and their activities at the Khareef Festival and beyond.

The publishing of the excellent and dedicated work of the volunteers, did not stop there, but was followed by an interview by The Festival Lens magazine.

Oman Y-PEERs Get Trained at NCCA, Jordan



One of the most exciting aspects of being a Y-PEER, are the variety of opportunities that are provided to the volunteers to sharpen their skills and stand out from the crowd.

One such opportunity was the Theater Based Peer Education Training of Trainers (TBTOT) workshop that was organized by the National Center for Culture and Arts (NCCA), Amman Jordan. The six days workshop was held from September 22nd till the 27th.

The NCCA invited various youth groups within the MENA region to apply for the workshop. These applications were scanned and a total of 24 participants were chosen. Ms.

Azza Al Badi and Mr. Mohammad Al Wahaibi from Oman joined their fellow participants for this workshop.

The workshop was aimed at bringing out the unique skills of every participant through the art of theatre. The core concepts of the workshop were to help the volunteers to think out-of-the-box and increase efficiency in team work. They were taught how to make their work humorous and appealing to a larger audience. Various 'ice-breaker' activities enabled the volunteers to overcome their initial shyness and helped them work freely and comfortably.

The Y-PEERs of Oman were able to obtain various unique tips and techniques on delivering their work through interesting theatre methods. The two Y-PEER volunteers are very interested to transfer their skills to their fellow volunteers in Oman by organizing a similar workshop.

"The method in which they taught us the skills and techniques were very interesting. It was very simple, thus, it was very understandable. The best part is it was not theoretical but practical which gave us on hand experience. It was really fun." said Azza, Y-PEER Focal Point from Oman.

Youth

Celebrating GCC Adolescence Health Day 2013

With the rapidly changing society, the young people who are in the adolescence stage today lead an unbalanced and influenced lifestyle. As these young citizens are in the verge of change; both mentally and physically, they have to be equipped with the right information and advice that will help them step into adulthood with more confidence. In 2011, the GCC Health Ministers declared the 30th September as the GCC Adolescence Health Day. Since then, UNFPA in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Oman and Y-PEER Oman, have been celebrating the day dedicated to these young adults.

Since the past two years, Y-PEERs Oman, planned and implemented activities with the

adolescents themselves. This year, the volunteers implemented a week long awareness activity at the Zainab Bint Khuzaimah Secondary School in the Buraimi Governate, where they lectured young female students about malnutrition, adulthood and general health issues.

On the 30th September, they carried out a fun day with the concept of adolescence as its core at the Roudhat Oman School. The day consisted of activities such as role plays about smoking, lectures about road safety, how to choose and be with the right company of friends, how to deal with adolescence and various other topics.

Ms. Hana'a Al Sinidi, Y-PEER Oman member from the Buraimi Governate, conducted the

lecture and talked to the youth about the topics enabling them to see how adolescents view adulthood. Ms. Ahlam Al Maqbali, Focal Point In Charge of Y-PEER Oman, excited the students with informative materials on various youth issues.

The teachers took special interest to attend the lectures conducted by the Y-PEERs and know more about the youth network and their activities.

Selection of New Y-PEER FPCs

The Y-PEER network has proven to be one of the most successful youth volunteering networks not just in the GCC region but worldwide with many socially responsible activities being implemented in the local communities.

One of the main reasons for the success of this youth network is its structure that defines clear roles and responsibilities based on successfully absolved trainings, and personal experiences. Members must all attend a Peer Education Training, in order to become Y-PEERs. To evolve to the next step, which is becoming a Y-PEER Focal Point (FP), the members have to successfully partake in a Regional Y-PEER Training of Trainers. The most outstanding Y-PEER is usually

electd for a one year term as the Focal Point In-Charge (FPC). A FPC is selected based on votes that the candidate receives from their fellow members in their respective countries, recommendations of the UNFPA Country Office and Final Decision of the Y-PEER International.

In September, an election for the new 2014 FPC, was held for the Y-PEERs in different regions. For the GCC, candidates from Oman and Bahrain; where the network has been established, participated in the FPC elections. Ms. Ahlam Al-Maqbali and Ms. Maryam Buzaboon were selected as the new FPCs from Oman and Bahrain. (Continued in next page)

The new FPCs from all over the world will be gathering for the Global Advisory Board (GAB) meeting, which is scheduled to be held in Belgrade, Serbia from the 28th till the 31st of October. This would give a chance to the newly elected members to get

to know their colleagues from the different regions, exchange experiences about their activities and put forward creative ideas.

The UNFPA GCC Office would like to congratulate the two new FPCs, Ms. Ahlam Al Maqbali and Ms. Maryam Buzaboon on their

new post and wish them all the success to take Y-PEERs Oman and Bahrain to new heights.

Giving Back to Society

As true volunteers and socially engaged citizens who give back to the society they live in, the Y-PEERs keep accomplishing different activities that set them apart.

Ahmed Fadhul, Focal Point of Y-PEER Bahrain, who by profession is a specialized nurse at the Almoayyed Drug and Alcoholic Rehabilitation Unit under the Ministry of Health, Bahrain and taking the role as the Vice president of Addict Friends Society (AFS), works closely with drug addicts and with those who are in rehabilitation trying to

build a better future.

He recently gave an interview for one of Bahrain's top selling women's magazine "Women This Month" to talk about the warning indications to addiction, the services provided and how addicts can approach them and the ways to create a brighter destiny.

Check out his full interview here: http://issuu.com/redhousemarketing/docs/wtm_september_2013/79?e=3590831/4516102?mode=window

Office

UNFPA GCC Office Participate in the YFS Regional Forum

Recently the Arab State Regional Office (ASRO) organized the Regional Consultation Meeting on Youth Friendly Services (YFS) in the Arab States: "Making Services in the Arab States Young People Friendly". The forum that was held in Casablanca, Morocco, in the month of September, discussed the issue of young people's health, development and protection particularly in the 'Post Arab Spring'.

The meeting discussed mainly five key points. 1. To evaluate the current status of YFS in countries where it has been established, also monitor the reproductive health education initiatives that has been made in the region, 2. Collaborate with experts in YFS and discuss the various global and regional activities, 3. Analyze UNFPA's involvement in YFS in the current sociopolitical and economic con-

text, 4. Discuss the development of comprehensive services that will successfully associate with income generating activities, life skills development, basic education, recreational opportunities and reproductive health services, 5. Agree on the key elements of the overall package of services to be provided for young people in the Arab States.

The UNFPA GCC Office was represented by the Programme Analyst, at this comprehensive meeting who discussed the current status of the environment for the establishment and the development of YFS as well as the prospective collaborative partners for the initiative.

Feature

Success of Young Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship, youth and social responsibility is a dynamic combination to be found in today's generation. This is the main motto and the burning spirit among a group of ten young men who built a charity organization named Al Khamis Al Shamila (AKAS) based in Jalan Bani Bu Ali.

The concept of AKAS sparked when the clothes and other home utilities were thrown out into the garbage for no one to use. With the fact that there were many who have the need for clothes and utilities and such things being disposed was not justified. The team of friends made an immature plan of collecting these clothes and providing them to the local charity Ayadi Al Khair (Hands of Good Deeds). Thus, started the incredible journey of AKAS.

Since then, AKAS has been growing and giving back to society. They have developed from a small initiative to a structured charity organiza-

tion, working in major cities such as Muscat and Sur. With more experience and support from other NGOs and charity organizations, AKAS has today, a well defined business and financial plan that states their ambition.

Like every other start up, AKAS had its downfalls and problems to face. One of the main struggles they had faced was the government orders to remove the collection boxes from the main capital areas as it was creating 'community nuisance'. However, the strong team came over this problem by strategically liaising with the officials who then decided to reduce the number of boxes and place the remaining boxes in residential areas rather than main streets which would not create major problems.

The team has encountered constant challenges which they say is necessary for their success and growth. Today AKAS has a defined organizational structure with a

CEO and a successful team responsible for financial, marketing, HR and logistical matters.

Why would we tell you the success story of a charity organization? Because, the UNFPA GCC

Always aiming for success so that they can give back more to the society

Office family has the pleasure of welcoming Mr. Jassim Al- Alawi, one of the founding members of the Charity of AKAS, who's responsible for the Arabic communication outreach.

Gender**Equality Between Men and Woman— A Review**

In order to update the report on the measurement of the improvement and the progress in achievement of equality between women and men in the Omani society, the National Center for Statistics and Information (NCSI), in collaboration with UNFPA GCC office, has initiated a desk review to assess and evaluate various aspects of women and men in Oman.

For this desk review, an international consultant was brought on board to prepare the report. The report is expected to focus on mainly three core points: the evolution

of the gap between men and women in all fields from 2003 to 2010, an analysis of this gap and what are the measures and actions that can be contributed to bridge the gap. The consultant is to provide recommendations for the best way forward.

The final report will be presented in both, Arabic and English.



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