

- * Health
- * Youth
- * Gender
- * Population & Development
- * International



United Nations Population Fund
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UNFPA GCC awarded by Oman Ministry of Health at Birth Spacing Award Ceremony

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

UNFPA GCC awarded by Oman Ministry of Health at Birth Spacing Award Ceremony	1
Girls House	2
Y-PEER Retreat	3
International Days	4
UNFPA at World Economic Forum , Dubai	5
CEDAW-Oman working towards women empowerment	6
Glimpse at Population and Development activities in the Sultanate of Oman: Beyond 2014	8
UNFPA GCC, Annual Retreat	10
And more...	



UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, Sub-Regional Office for the GCC Countries, received an award from the Ministry of Health (MOH) for its continuous support for the Birth Spacing Programme of the Sultanate. The award was presented by H.E. the Undersecretary for Planning, Dr. Ali Talib Al-Hinai.

The ceremony was held on 4th of December, 2014 at

the Hotel Crown Plaza, Muscat, to present the achievements of the Birth Spacing programme since its inception in the early 90's and honour all involved parties from the various departments of the Ministry of Health and other ministries, as well as the UN agencies.

The ceremony also complimented medical doctors, health workers, medical scientist and individuals for

their exceptional work and contribution on birth spacing over the last two decades in Oman. UNFPA GCC Representative, Mr. Asr Toson, commented after receiving the award "This recognition is one of milestone of working with the Ministry of Health (MOH), and as UN we look forward to working further close with MOH".

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Health & Youth

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A hosting committee member shared that in Oman UNFPA works very close with MOH on its mandates in the area of development work. In regard to the Birth Spacing Programme, the collaboration between MOH and UNFPA has been essential for planning and implementing of various health components of the programme by the ministry in Oman.

MOH Director General, Primary Health Care De-

partment, Dr. Said Al-Lamki, noted in his presentation that infant mortality rate in Oman, especially during the last decade, has decreased to a tangible figure and also congratulated the health workforces for implementing and raising the awareness of birth spacing among Oma-

nis. In addition, he shared an invitee for health professionals to further scale the programme.



Girls House

The Girls House, established by Ahlam Al-Moqbali, former Y-PEER Oman Focal Point In-Charge and an active Focal

the idea to provide a creative space for the girls and women of Buraimi and the region who otherwise lack a gathering place to pursue

Youth Peer Education Network, spirit is youth-cheer and colourful to stimulate creativity and fun. At the same time the space will



be also used for educational purposes for various issues that interest its visitors, through the proved fun and educational Y-PEER methodology.

In addition, the Girls House can be used as leisure time meeting point

Point living in Buraimi; a bordering city of Oman to the UAE, was born out of

any hobbies or interests. Design and spirit; clearly bearing the fresh Y-PEER,

as well as a library. The formal inauguration of the Girls House is expected to take place in 2015.

Y-PEER Retreat

UNFPA GCC in association with Y-PEER Oman organized a one-day retreat with members of the Y-PEER network in Al-Mawalih on the 8th of November, 2014 at Omantel main office conference hall. Day's agenda focused on 2014 conducted Y-PEER activities, as well as providing a platform where former and current Y-PEERs cross-learned over their experiences and took the time to appreciate the work done by Y-PEERs and their partners, among which UNFPA is a prominent one.

Various skills of Y-PEERs were exhibited during the programme, such as skits on problems faced by today's youth such as substance abuse, performances, music, experience sharing of a South Korea visit to a global youth peace sum-

mit by seven Y-PEER Oman members, and a presentation about the various Y-PEER activities. Group of Y-PEERs presented a short video documentary on activities undertaken over the years that covered conferences, street theater performances, puppet shows, campaigns, posters and other activities which they were part of on grassroots level.

"Korea visit was beneficial in terms of education and gathering more knowledge to us on the subject, and with new learning experience we can expand more area of outreach in Oman" said Ms. Ahlam Al-Moqbali, 2013-2014 Y-PEER Focal Point In-Charge.

Y-PEERs mobilized resources for the retreat event to secure the ven-

ue, presents, photographers, and the catering along with planning and implementing the grand event. Speaking at the occasion Mr. Salah Al-Saleh, Programme Analyst, UNFPA GCC, thanked the Y-PEERs for such a wonderful coordination and for making the event a grand success and he also suggested the Y-PEERs to start durable communication with the private sector agencies so that the activities they carry may continue for wider outreach, sustainability and community ownerships. He also added some suggestions to take the theater performance to the next levels.

Each former and current Y-PEER member was given a certificate of appreciation by UNFPA with gifts of appreciation supported by various donors.



Theater performance by Oman Y-PEERs during the retreat

International Days

International Days

The time period between November and December 2014 witnessed the following International days of relevance:

25 November 2014 - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

1 December 2014 - World AIDS Day

5 December - International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development

10 December 2014 - International Human Rights Day

18 December - International Migrants Day

20 December - International Human Solidarity Day

The UNFPA GCC Office is accustomed to participating in celebrating/observing

international days of relevance i.e. related to the UNFPA mandate and to the GCC region, in different ways. Often UNFPA GCC communicates these international days through UNFPA Executive Director, Regional Director and/ or GCC Representative messages by publishing on relevant events, the website of UNFPA GCC and the media network and partner agencies within the Gulf region.

The communication team of the GCC office also engages in social media to promote these international days. During these events UNFPA GCC received good response of participation through new followers and retweeting tweets.

This year UNFPA observed Elimination of Violence

against Women with the message of 16 days of activism from 25th of November until 10th of December, which is the Human Rights Day. Joining the global effort to “Orange your Neighbourhood” as part of the United Nations Secretary General’s Campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women.

The annual 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence (GBV) campaign calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and invites the international community to take action against it. It is also an opportunity to raise awareness of GBV at the local, regional, and global levels. The 16 days of activism serves as a global platform for sharing the real stories of GBV as a way of inspiring change, solidarity and action.

World AIDS Day observed with focus of Universal Human Rights and Access - Key to Ending AIDS, and closing the gap by 2030, so that every person has access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services and no person is left behind.



UNFPA at World Economic Forum , Dubai



UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, addresses the World Economic Forum in Dubai (Archive)

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin participated at World Economic Forum (WEF) summit, held in Dubai during 7th to 12th of November, 2014. The Summit is considered as one of the world's largest global brainstorming events; bringing together the most relevant thought leaders of the WEF's Network of Global Agenda Councils. Comprised of more than 80 groups of experts from Academia, Business, Civil Society and Government, the Councils aim is to advance knowledge and jointly explore critical issues shaping the regional and global industrial agendas.

The summit is committed to improving the state of the world in line with UNFPA's mandate. The Summit brought over 900 members in Dubai together to explore

UNFPA delegation led by Dr. Babatunde was accompanied by the Arab States Regional Director, Mr. Mohamed Abdel-Ahad, GCC Representative, Mr. Asr Toson, who conducted advocacy and awareness on UNFPA's mandate on the sideline of summit.

On 8th of November, delegates met with the UAE UN Resident Coordinator (RC), Mr. Sayed Aqa, and discussed the mission's objectives to assure a harmonized UN approach in regard to the respective donor institutions. Further on, discussions took place to formalise UNFPA GCC as a Non-Residential Agency within the UAE UN Country Team (UNCT). It was also agreed to host the launch of the Status of World Population Report (SWOP) in Abu-Dhabi.

the latest developments in business, technology, and fundamental transformations impact- ing our world. On 11th of November, delegates held a meeting with Ambassador Khalifa S. Almerree, Director, Department of International Co-operation (MICAD), Ministry of Foreign Affairs. MICAD is the UAE designated entity with the mandate for international cooperation with the United Nations and allocation of foreign assistance. During the meeting UNFPA GCC reiterated on the mandate of UNFPA and its humanitarian role within the UN team, especially in Gaza and Syria.

During the mission, a meeting also took place with Mr. Hameed Bin Salem, Member of the UAE Federal Parliament and Secretary General of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the UNFPA delegation expressed its support of the implementation of the UAE vision 2021 "Best countries in the world". Members of Parliament (MP) participating in the UNFPA MPs forum in Tunisia and Sweden and ICPD post 2015 were Present.

The UAE Mission also served as a first instance to set up strategic contacts with key counterparts and network with potential partners for future collaborations and resource mobilisation. UNFPA continues the dialogue to assure establishing the basis for a strong and effective partnership.

CEDAW- Oman working towards women empowerment

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1976. It is often described as the international bill of rights for women. In Oman, CEDAW was ratified in May 2005 and its initial report was presented on 4th of October, 2011. The CEDAW Committee in Oman, established by the Ministry of Social Development, is committed to working towards the empowerment of women and UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, GCC office has supported its activities.

As part of the technical assistance (TA) UNFPA provides to the government it assisted the CEDAW Committee in Oman in the completion of its declaration and is currently providing support for its awareness campaign. UNFPA's most

recent collaboration with the CEDAW Committee has been to provide technical assistance in the design and development of all materials related to the national campaign, including a plan of action and a website that is linked to the Ministry of Social Development's website, with an emphasis on cultural sensitivity and local norms.

The UNFPA is in continuing advocacy efforts to implement the provisions of the CEDAW and with its technical support, Ministry of Social Development, report writing workshop was conducted by the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). 25 officials participated from the various departments of the Ministry of Social Development participated in the national capacity building activity.

OHCHR supported the Ministry of Social Develop-

ment, Sultanate of Oman, in facilitating a report writing workshop to the Ministry in preparation for the CEDAW report. Within the framework of the regional office of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Middle East to strengthen the capacity of the relevant national bodies in the international mechanisms for the promotion and protection of Human Rights.

The three day workshop commenced from 8th and continued up to 10th

December 2014, and was inaugurated by His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Said bin Saif al Kalbani, Minister of Social Development, at Child Care Center, Muscat. The training component focused mainly on providing the participants with technical guidance on how to analyze the information and write up the

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Panel discussion during the workshop

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skeleton of the report as initial step in the process as per the recommendation of the first report.

The Ministry of Social Development had developed this program on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reporting mechanisms to the Committee for monitoring the implementation and application of the Convention.

Based on the outcomes of the

workshop, the Ministry will submit a revised report by October 2015. The workshop involved representatives from relevant governmental bodies and members of the Omani CEDAW committee.

Oman has submitted its first report considered by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in October 2011. UNFPA had provided TA for the

translation of the national report. The agreement was followed by discussion of the report the Committee's concluding observations, which included recommendations regarding the withdrawal of reservations legislative side, the need to provide adequate statistics, requirement to develop national plans to address some of the issues and awareness programs on various different items of the Convention.

Glimpse at Population and Development activities in the Sultanate of Oman: Beyond 2014

The ICPD Beyond 2014 Review provided a generation opportunity for governments, civil society and UN partners to review the progress, gaps and emerging challenges in the delivery of promises made twenty years ago at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. Then, in 1994, governments agreed that the focus of population policies should be on the quality of peoples' lives, not the quantity of people in the world. They committed to sustainable development poli-

cies that would provide a once in everyone, but especially women and girls, with environments in which they could make free and informed decisions about their lives and family formations. With the ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) they set out a 20 year plan to deliver on that vision. In September 2014, gov-

At a special session of the United Nations General Assembly, they reaffirmed their original vision and signed up to the new Framework for Action that would deliver the vision of the ICPD in the context of 21st Century challenges and opportunities. This glimpse presents the status the population in the



governments agreed that the focus of population policies should be on the quality of peoples' lives, not the quantity of people in the world.

They committed to sustainable development poli-

ernments gathered again at the United Nations General Assembly to review the findings of a three year comprehensive review of data on progress, gaps and challenges in delivering the commitments set out in

Sultanate of Oman and the evolution of the Sultanate with regard to the subject of International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo 1994, where Oman was among the first countries

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to commit to the implementation of the recommendations of the conference and to take actions to reach the targets set.

The report indicates few of the achievements of Population and Development activities in Oman: Beyond 2014. The population of Oman amounted to 2.77 million, according to the census in 2010, had risen to about 3.62 million people in the middle of 2012. The Omani society (Omanis and Expatriates), a young community where the proportion of the population aged less than 15 years is about 22% and 48% of the population aged from 15 to 34 years and 28% are at the age of 35 to 64 years and only 3% is at age 65 and above.

By studying the age distribution of the population, we find that the young age distribution enjoyed by the Omani population indicates that Oman is undergoing a demographic window that allows it to achieve major development boom, if the young population is included in the development processes.

In this context, focused on the education of the Sultanate, where it developed clearly in enrolment and reducing illiteracy rates, as the ratio significantly reduced from 31% in 1993 to 13% in

2010. The net enrolment rate in grades 1-6 increased from 87% in 1993 to 95% in 2010, and enrolment in grades 7-9 increased from 49% in 1993 to 84% in 2010.

It's proved, that young people are the key factor in the development of any country, so in Oman, where 35% of the population represent Children and Youth. Oman's Government focused on raising enrolment rates among these groups, where net enrolment ratio in grades 10-12 increased from 34% in 1993 to 55% in 2010. The female education enrolment rates have raised and faded the gap in enrolment in basic education between males and females. In secondary education the female net enrolment even surpassed that of their male counterparts.

The Government of Oman also pursues the omanisation of jobs and created employment opportunities through the various establishments, to increase the carrier opportunities for young Omanis. Women's participation in the labour force has risen; where the proportion of female Omani women in the labour force increased from 9% in 1993 to three times the value in 2010, reaching 27% of the total female working age.

A decrease of the Omani work-force unemployment rate from 14% in 2003 to 12% in 2010 was achieved.

These measures and achievements, targeting mainly young people and women to participate in the labour force has led to a rise in the proportion of job seekers among young Omanis from 15% in 1993 to 38% in 2010.

Oman also made many achievements in the area of health; developing health policies and programs aimed at improving the health care system with a focus on child health. They achieved coverage almost close to the set targets, increased qualified service providers of health care, along with the required number of doctors and the number of hospital beds per 100,000 population, and implemented various immunizations for children. .

The result of these policies is a decrease in infant and child mortality to 2/1000 in 2012 from 7.6/1000 in 1990. Furthermore, the life expectancy was increased to 76 years (stand: 2012).

In addition maternal health care was improved, resulting in reducing maternal mortality rates to 18/100,000 in 2012, in comparison to 22/100,000 deaths 1995. Oman has also taken several measures to ensure the health and

social care for its population with special needs and the elderly. In the area of social welfare the Ministry of Social Development, Department of Child Affairs and the Department of Women's Affairs cater the needs to improve the status of child and women. The government provides social security services for elderly and disabled, which provides them with a variety of services ranging from monthly

financial pension and financial grants.

These results show on one hand that Oman has made great strides towards achieving the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development, and on the other hand that there are still challenges yet to be met.

The ICPD Beyond 2014 review of Oman, looked at

the substantial achievements made, unequal progresses taking place, new challenges & opportunities to be faced, fragmented implementation, and reaffirmed the ICPD PoA as a core message to invest in individual human rights, capabilities and dignity across the multiple sectors and throughout the life-course as a foundation of sustainable development.

UNFPA GCC Annual Retreat

In December 2014 the GCC office held its annual retreat day under the motto 'Team

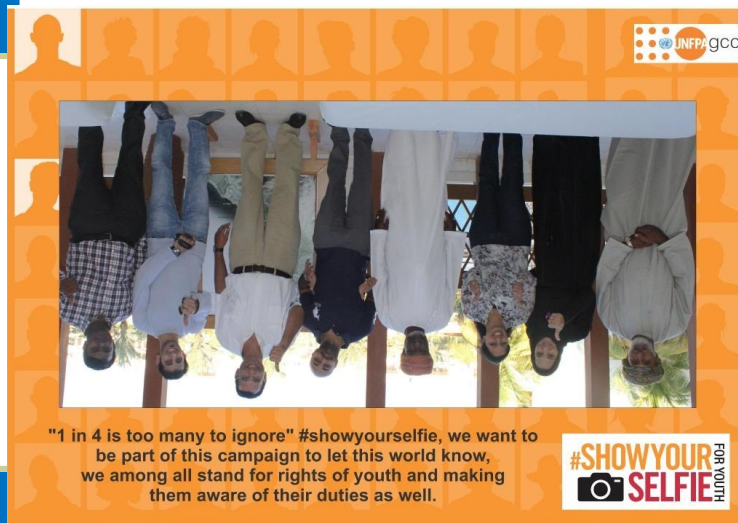
answer sessions.

During the GCC retreat

submitting an 'UpsideDownfie'.

SHOWYOURSELFIE is a UNFPA Global Campaign to end violence and harmful practices against youth. It's a petition with a difference and the message that 'your selfie is your personal signature, showing world leaders that the needs and rights of young people must be a priority'.

During the GCC retreat, team members, raising thumbs to "Show your selfie" Campaign aiming to ending violence and harmful practices against youth, especially adolescent girls.



Building'. The retreat, facilitated by an external Professional, adopted diverse methodologies which included teaming exercises, competitions, plenary presentations, discussions, and question and

members raised thumbs to the "SHOWYOURSELFIE" Campaign that aims to end violence and harmful practices against youth; especially adolescent girls, by lending voice to the movement and

Violence and sexual assault are daily threats for young people, and the risk is even greater in crisis-affected states. Shifting the selfie around with an 'UpsideDownfie' - an upside down selfie is to express 'NOW' 'is the time to turn violence against girls and women on its head.



United Nations Population Fund
Sub-Regional Office for GCC Countries

UNFPA, The United Nations Population Fund: Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA—Because everyone counts!

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