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UNFPA GCC Office Supports the IUCD Skills Development Workshop



One of the strategies in the current five year action plan for women's health is to work on birth spacing by introducing a new contraceptive method to the present five. Implanon was selected to be the new method of contraception.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) in Oman plans to conduct a pilot study on this contraceptive in a few clinics to test its acceptance. In order to accommodate the government's plan and provide the required support, the UNFPA GCC Office conducted in May 2013 a national wide review of the existing Birth Spacing Programmes. This was followed by a Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop in Cairo for

the Department of Family and Community Health of the MOH in Oman, which the GCC office supported and organized, in collaboration with the Regional Center for Training (RCT), Cairo. The department nominated six midwives who were sent to Cairo for a study tour to upgrade their knowledge on IUCD technology, insertion and removal skills. These midwives were exposed to practical skill training, lectures, brainstorming sessions and group discussions.

The trained midwives returned to the Sultanate and transferred their skills to a further 25 midwives through a 10 days' workshop from 27th October till the 7th of November. The training was held in a local polyclinic and focused on the IUCD technology, insertion, removal skill development, use of Implanon and the importance of birth spacing. The skilled midwives exhibited the theoretical and practical training they obtained in Cairo under the supervision of the national trainer Dr. Noor

Al- Mandhari. After successfully conducting the training, these midwives were certified as Master Trainers in IUCD technology. The workshop was as well attended by 16 doctors from different areas in Oman to exhilarate the knowledge sharing on a national scale. The country office provided its logistical support for the training in Oman in close collaboration with the MOH.

Through this capacity building workshop, the Ministry aims to form national Omani trainers who can continue training other midwives on the IUCD techniques and introduce the Implanon method all over Oman.



International Day of Non— Violence

October 2 is the International Non-Violence Day and the birthday of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, known as Mahatma Gandhi, The Father of India. According to the United Nations General Assembly, the International Day of Non-Violence is an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness". The resolution reaffirms "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence". On this note, Rajayoga Center for Self Development, one of UNFPA GCC Office's

main partners, hosted an event on Non-Violence and self-reflection.

The event was commemorated by various dignitaries from the Ministries and Embassies including the Indian Ambassador to Oman. B.K Jayanthi who is the Director of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University and the representative to the UN, made a special appearance and spoke about non-violence and unity. She praised the local community on how friendly and affectionate they are towards the foreign citizens in their country. The event also saw a short theatre performance by Alden Theatre of Culture and Art.

International Women's Day

March 8 marks the International Women's Day, a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. As we commemorate it, UNFPA released a speech stating that women gender equality, women's empowerment and sexual and reproductive health and rights should be delivered once and for all to all women and girls everywhere. In 2014, this celebratory occasion happens to be two days before the fifty-eight session of the Commission on the Status of Women which started on the 10th of March focusing on the access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to employment and decent work. Following the International Conference on Population and development (ICPD)

review led by UNFPA, many points have shown that despite the enormous development gains over the past two decades, there are still persistent inequalities and discrimination that continue to undermine the human rights of far too many women and girls. Thus, on this International Day, UNFPA reiterates its commitment to helping realize gender equality and women's rights with an emphasis on the most marginalized, particularly adolescent girls.

UNFPA launches its Regional Strategy on the Prevention & Response to Gender Based Violence (GBV)

November 28, 2013 marked the official launch of the UNFPA Regional Strategy on the Prevention and Response to GBV in the Arab States.

The launching which was held in Rabat, Morocco saw the participation of the Minister of Education, HE. Mr. Mohammed El Wafa, the Regional Director Mr. Mohammed Abdel Ahed and UNFPA Morocco Resident Coordinator, Mr. Bruno Pouezet. The Forum reiterates UNFPA's main messages: gender-based violence - be it sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment,

female genital mutilation and cutting or child marriage - is evitable. It is a violation of the fundamental human rights of women, men, girls and boys in the Arab world and a serious threat to their health and well-being that must come to an end through effective partnerships. The forum was successfully concluded in the presence of Mrs. Bassima Hakkaoui who is the Minister of Solidarity, Woman, Family and Social Development, UNFPA Arab States Regional Director and the UNFPA Arab States Gender Advisor. The UNFPA GCC office was represented by Mr. Salah Al-Saleh at the forum.

UNFPA GCC Office takes part in the Regional Planning Meeting in Jordan

A regional planning meeting

took place March 3-6, 2014 in Jordan gathering all UNFPA head of offices, programmes and finance teams in the region. The main purpose was to go through the status of implementation of the previous regional meeting recommendations focusing on five regional priorities. The different sessions of the meeting also aimed at advancing the vision in the Arab States Region through the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014- 2017.

A particular focus was given to Youth in the post 2015 Development Agenda in addition to ICPD positioning and engaging in humanitarian settings and fragile contexts.

The meeting ended with detailed explanation on change in management related to UNFPA Human Resources and Resource Allocations, Communications, Funding System and Country Needs and evaluation.

A Delegation from the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia visits UNFPA in Oman

A Delegation

from the Ministry of Education in KSA visited UNFPA in Oman during the third week of February 2014 over three days. The visit aimed at introducing UNFPA's Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER) and its activities in Oman. It also involved meetings with the Y-PEER Oman members to learn more about the network's approaches and activities as well as UNFPA's counterparts especially governmental partners who are collaborating with Y-PEER and using peer education as a communication and educational tool.

UNFPA's partners emphasized on the success of the Y-PEER methodology and its flexibility when it comes to selecting a particular topic for peer education. UNFPA representative and programmes team accompanied the delegation in visits in both Muscat and Buraimi area, 400 km away from the Omani capital. Different techniques including puppetry and shadow performance were presented by students and Y-Peer educators .

Youth

New Focal Points in charge in Serbia for the Global Advisory

Board meeting

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 Buza-boon were selected as the new FPCs from Oman and Bahrain.

The new FPCs from all over the world gathered for the Global Advisory Board (GAB) meeting,

which was hosted in Belgrade, Serbia from the 28th till the 31st of October. This gave the newly elected members a chance to meet with their colleagues from the different regions, exchange experiences about their activities and put forward creative ideas.

Ahlam Al-Maqbali who represented the Oman network, presented to the other focal points in charge and the International Y_PEER coordinators the work of Y-PEERS in Oman. Their activi-

ties implemented in Muscat and Al-Buraimi were showcased about the level of youth involvement and participation in Oman. She also spoke about how supportive the Omani government is in terms of providing them with the needed technical and logistical support. She also stated the various future activities that are planned for 2014.

Y- PEER Activity on Road Safety



The second week of
March 2014 witnessed the Gulf

Traffic week whereby each State in the Gulf carried out events and activities to raise awareness on road safety. In Oman, the non-governmental road safety organization Oman Road Safety Association (ORSA) organized a road safety aware-

ness day targeting more than 600 students, their parents and the school faculty. More events were planned as well by different agencies in the country.

Al Nawras communications provider invited the Y-Peers in order to lead on an activity as part of their campaign "Safety is our Goal". Two Y-Peer educators and 5 other volunteers organized interactive shows at Muscat Grand Mall on March 11, 2014 to raise awareness among visitors with a particular focus on youth about the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving. Presentations included silent acts and short theatre sketches that all pointed out to how likely it is for a driver to have an accident when he/ she is busy texting or answering a mobile phone.

Muscat Festival 2014

Since its inception in 1998, Muscat Festival has proved to be more than just a celebratory, cultural and artistic event, or merely an entertaining forum in which civilizations come together, involving multilingual activities. The Festival which started January 23rd 2014 and lasted one month, buzzed with live performances, shows, concerts, international exhibitions and creative workshops. Naseem Garden is one of the 2 major locations of *Muscat Festival*, the other being Amerat Park. During this festive month, UNFPA and Y-Peer supported the Ministry of Health in raising awareness on HIV/ AIDS and providing information to visitors particularly youth on transmission and prevention modes. Y-PEERS used fun, active and participatory techniques to draw the attention of people to their stand and thus be able to give more explanation.

Y-PEER was present at the Muscat festival in 2008 for the first time and has been taking part since to sensitize the public on different issues related to road safety, reproductive health, environment, drugs and HIV/ AIDS.



Campaign

10 Days of Activism



Y-PEER

volunteers success-

fully launch and implement the 10 Days of Activism campaign. December 1st celebrated two main events. First, World AIDS Day; a day to stop, reflect and analyze how much one has done to reduce the encounters of HIV/AIDS and the positive impact of the number of campaigns led by youth groups, charity organizations, sister UN agencies, Ministries etc.

It also marked the launch of 10 Days of Activism (10DOA); an activity that is spanned for ten full days where the volunteers of Y-PEER (Youth Peer Education Network) implement activities based on topics such as HIV/AIDS, women and youth

empowerment among others.

This international event is also organized in 40 other countries worldwide. Launched in 2010, the event has been very successful and now is in its 4th year of implementation. The Y-PEERs of Oman planned, designed and are successfully executing activities in the Muscat and the Al-Buraimi regions. One of the key areas of focus for the Y-PEERs of Oman is to educate young people on reproductive health through

'edutainment' (Education + Entertainment). The campaign is themed every year based on set focus points. 2010 which was the inaugurating year was themed as "Our Year, Our Voice". For 2013, the Y-PEERs have themed the year as "A World We All Want" focusing on the world that the youth today dream of.

On that note, the youth volunteers of Y-PEER Oman kicked off their activities at the Zainab Bint Khuzzaimah Secondary School, at Al-Buraimi. The volunteers discussed sensitive subjects such as reducing discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, modes of HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention with grade students. Y-PEER

volunteers made sure they rectified misconceptions that young students had about HIV/AIDS. The Y-PEERs are known for their creativity and thus, applying their innovativeness, the volunteers organized role plays that explained, both positive and negative aspects that the people with HIV face in their day to day lives. This activity was much enjoyed by students as they got the chance to play as well as learn something new.

(To be continued on the next page)



The following days, the volunteers continued their activities in both Muscat and Al- Buraimi regions. In Al-Buraimi, they conducted activities in the Mahdhah Basic Education School where students were excited to experience and learn new topics. One of the activities that the volunteers organized was 'fill in the blank' asking young students to fill in the blank of a template with one word which would express the world they aspire for.

Similarly, in Muscat, the volunteers engrossed themselves into spreading the word about the mandates of Y-PEER and UNFPA in a fun way. They walked around the streets of Souq Mutrah during peak hours which caught the attention of not only the locals but also the tourists who were very delighted to witness the youth of Oman partake in socially responsible activities. This clearly proved that, the future of Oman is indeed in the hands of bright, smart and civic engaged youth. Continuing their successful activities, the volunteers spoke to the general public about Y-PEER, their closely knit, friendly network and their activities earlier at

Al-Buraimi fort. They also gave away Y-PEER promotional items, which included information brochures, USBs, with edutainment video clips. The campaign was implemented for 10 days in both Muscat and Al – Buraimi regions stressing on the theme “A World We All Want.”



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