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UNFPA GCC OFFICE SPONSORS THE ICT ENTREPRENEURSHIP PATH EVENT AT SQU



UNFPA GCC staff member Mr. Mustafa Al Laban distributes UNFPA leaflets to the female students participating in the event

Backed by its mandate and vision to empower youth, ensure gender equality and strengthen young people engagement in the development and decision making process, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, Sub-Regional Office for the GCC countries, sponsored a flagship event in co-operation with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and Youth for Change (YFC) Program of the Bibliotheca Alexandria. The event was held on 28th of November 2016, at the Grand Hall of the Cultural Center at SQU. The attendants were a total of approximately 400 people; young female and male students from several universities in Oman, SQU employees, UNFPA GCC staff members, teaching board members from universities located in several governorates, school teachers and pupils and interested public.

The one-day congress was launched by a speech given by Dr. Rahma Al Mahrooqia - SQU Deputy Vice Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies & Research, who stressed on the importance of youth engagement by opening a dialogue with them, while establishing for the learning and knowledge values in the education process. This was followed by a panel discussion in which Mr. Salah Al-Saleh - UNFPA GCC Programme Analyst and current Officer In-Charge (OIC), discussed as a panelist the agency's mandate and vision. He spoke about Social Entrepreneurship and pinpointed UNFPA's efforts to build platforms and support youth networks such as the Y-PEER, Youth Education Peer Network, from which young people can

benefit from through national, regional and international experience exchange and trainings. Aim is to strengthen the linkage between youth empowerment and social entrepreneurship, create synergies and adopt teamwork spirit to achieve the sought goals; while focusing on demand-driven projects. The panel also hosted another speaker from the private sector; Dr. Feras Al Abdwani - CEO of Hossam Tech Company, who spoke about his entrepreneurship journey and challenges faced in the past 10 years since he established the communication company. The panel discussion was facilitated by Dr. Ali Al Shedhani - Director of Information and Communication Technology Research - The Research Council of the Sultanate of Oman.

In order to showcase the capabilities of the students from the different Sultanate universities, the event hosted an exhibition where 12 ICT projects were showcased. To create those projects, the youth used their knowledge and imagination to come up with innovative and creative small need-based ventures. Some of those projects were about creating IT systems for restaurant supply chain management, library management, scouts tracking and communication tool and a unified medical record platform. Other projects were about environmental recycling, and controlling water consumption through an ICT mobile application. Furthermore, the four YFC regional winner teams from Oman exhibited their projects.

Mr. Al-Saleh gave the closing speech of the event in which he thanked the SQU, its staff and the young students who organized the event. “We would like to thank the dedicated university staff members and the ambitious youth who organized such great event,” said Al-Saleh. “I wish that this programme to be the first of a long term co-operation with Sultan Qaboos University and the other academic entities in the country,” he added.

In conclusion, Prizes were awarded to the 3 student winners of the Code Race. Other trophies, supplied by UNFPA, were also given to the best 3 ICT innovative projects, which reaped most of the votes casted by the attendants in the evening, “It is amazing time for all of us. We are glad that we were able to display our Mobile App and its benefits,” said Thuraya Al Ebri, a student who co-designed the Master Library project.

In recognition of UNFPA GCC office’s efforts and sponsorship, the SQU awarded a trophy to the office which was received by Al-Saleh.



Asila Al Harrasi, UNFPA GCC Y-PEER talks about UNFPA’s mandate to the event’s participants



Salah Al-Saleh, UNFPA GCC programme analyst talks to Muscat Daily reporter about ICT entrepreneurship and UNFPA GCC sponsorship to this event.

The Brand Identity Specialist at the Research Council of Oman gives a presentation to UNFPA programme staff on Youth Leadership

To pave the way to include new partners in Oman, UNFPA GCC invited the Brand Identity Specialist, Ms. Umaima Said Al Mahdhori, the Brand Identity Specialist at the Research Council of Oman to give a presentation on the Youth Leadership Development (YLD) situation in the country.

The presentation was based on a research paper developed by Ms. Al Mahdhori, who accomplished her MSc degree in Organizational Leadership and conducted her final year research on “youth leadership development in Oman”. She gave information about her research process and some of the recommendations of the newest approaches worldwide to develop Youth Leaders based on her comparative study methodology subject to other countries’ benchmarks set in this field.

UNFPA GCC represented by its Programme Analyst Mr. Salah Al-Saleh, and Programme Co-ordinator Ms. Shaima Aly, attended the presentation. The Brand Identity Specialist demonstrated the purpose of this research including exploring YLD situation in Oman, highlighting the available efforts, identifying potentials to enhance these efforts to fill the gaps of the academic studies and legislations in this field. She also reviewed the possible approaches to achieve better results in YLD including interventions in education and replicating the best lessons and programmes from other countries.

During the session, the lecturer stated that the leadership development is a continuous process to enhance learning and performance in a certain context in order to achieve the planned goals. She also showcased the case study highlighted in her research with a focus on the Omani culture, religion, youth legislation...etc. Ms. Al Mahdhori stressed on the role of sports, community and scout activities in YLD. Furthermore, it was indicated that it is important to mainstream the ways to enhance YLD under the current sustainability and development visions of the Sultanate, including Oman 2020 vision and the Health Vision 2050 as well as Oman Vision 2040 to build the future.

At the end of the presentation, UNFPA GCC staff thanked Ms. Al Mahdhori for the great initiative, hoping to be piloted and implemented in the country and to have UNFPA’s assistance in future in this aspect, since youth development lies at the center of UNFPA’s mission.



UNFPA GCC programmes team with Ms. Umaima Said Al Mahdhori, the Brand Identity Specialist at the Research Council of Oman

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IN OMAN MARKS THE WORLD AIDS DAY

World AIDS Day is held on the 1st December each year, which is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died due to this disease.

To mark this day, the National Aids Programme of the Department of Communicable Disease, at the Ministry of Health in Oman held the “HIV in Primary Care Workshop” at the Grand Hyatt Muscat Hotel. The aim of this workshop was to strengthen the role of the primary care physicians in HIV care. UNFPA GCC, represented by its Officer in Charge (OIC) Mr. Salah Al-Saleh, participated in this workshop. UNFPA promotes integrating HIV responses with sexual and reproductive health care in the country, as part of an overarching strategy for universal access to HIV prevention, care and treatment services. UNFPA also supports the empowerment of key populations, women and girls, and young people to live healthy and fulfilling lives and to access the services they need, free from stigma and discrimination and all forms of gender-based violence, through several programmes with its national counterparts.

The workshop was attended by HE. Dr. Mohamed Bin Saif Al Hosni, Ministry of Health Undersecretary of Health Affairs, Mr. Osama Makkawi, Representative of UNICEF Oman, Ms. Ruth Mabry, Technical Officer of WHO Oman, along with several Director Generals, Directors, Head of Departments and physicians from the Ministry of Health.

The participants had the opportunity to discuss the HIV stigma and discrimination amongst healthcare providers, HIV situation in Oman, HIV related stigma in Oman based on a national survey result, the HIV testing in primary care, mother to child HIV transmission from the primary care perspective as well as the role of the primary healthcare physicians in HIV care and medication.

By the end of this workshops, the attending participants were able to discuss the impact of stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings on the HIV epidemic, describe the HIV epidemiology, natural history and various HIV testing models, and identify the primary care physicians in HIV care.



Ministry of Health Undersecretary of Health Affairs gives a speech on this day.

UNFPA GCC CELEBRATES THE UN STAFF DAY 2016

UN Staff Day was first observed in 1953 but has not been marked in recent years. The decision to reinstate the observance was aligned with an appeal from staff representatives to revive the venerable tradition, which acknowledges and celebrates the work of UN staff.

On 25 October 2016, the family of UNFPA sub-Regional Office for Gulf Co-operation Council Countries gathered at its duty station in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman in celebration of the courage, commitment and sacrifice of the men and women who have answered the noble call to become international civil servants.

On this day the Secretary-General said: “I have witnessed first hand the high level of professionalism, dedication, and know-how that exists throughout the United Nations [among] the able and courageous men and women who serve this Organization around the world every day, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances”.

UNFPA GCC staff members celebrated this special day by standing to take a memorable group photo which was promoted widely on UNFPA GCC social media pages and on UN Staff Day 2016 Facebook page dedicated to showcase pictures from all UN offices.

The office team, led by Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA GCC Representative, discussed their aspirations and programmes that will close the year in a cheerful and encouraging atmosphere.



UNFPA GCC staff members celebrate the UN Staff Day 2016

**STATEMENT BY DR. BABATUNDE OSOTIMEHIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNFPA,
THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, ON WORLD AIDS DAY, 1 DECEMBER
2016**

It is past time to get serious about HIV prevention. We cannot hope to end the AIDS epidemic when every day almost 6,000 people are infected with HIV.

Progress on prevention has stagnated. Since 2010, the annual number of new infections among adults has remained unchanged.

Antiretroviral treatment has reached more than 18 million people in 2016 and has saved millions of lives and reduced the risk of new infections. But treatment alone cannot stop the spread of HIV.

We know what to do, and we know how to do it better: governments, communities and international partners must scale up investments in behavioural, medical and policy interventions, which together can dramatically bolster prevention.

But prevention goes beyond access to services. It must include actions that reduce risk among vulnerable populations, such as adolescent girls. A girl who is protected from child marriage, has access to comprehensive education and is empowered to finish her education is at less risk of HIV infection. This contrasts with a girl who is forced to partner with an older man, who is kept out of school and remains poor and has no access to information about her body. Actions that lead to more inclusive societies can reinforce prevention efforts by eliminating the fear some groups may experience in seeking prevention services.

Through the Sustainable Development Goals, the international community committed to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. This target will be reached only with a concerted and strengthened focus on prevention. On this World AIDS Day, UNFPA commits to mobilizing partners and resources for a global scale-up of comprehensive prevention efforts in 2017.

OMAN Y-PEERS PARTICIPATE IN THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE ARAB STATE REGION : A CONSULTATION AND HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE

On 26th of December UNFPA sub-Regional Office for the Gulf Co-operation Council Countries hosted a workshop included a presentation given by UNFPA GCC Y-Peers Ms. Mazoun Al Zadjalía, Ms. Aza Al Salmia and Ms. Aila Al Hrasia about their experience after attending the Youth, Peace and Security in the Arab States Region: A consultation and high level dialogue which was held in Cairo on 4-6 December 2016 and attended by the three female Y-Peers from Oman.

The presenters stated that it was a very interesting event since they received very enriching information about several relevant topics, including the Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) in December 2015, which urges Member States to increase representation of youth in Decision-Making at all levels.

The Y-Peers stated that it was a great opportunity for them to discuss the potentials and shortfalls of this resolution and come up with recommendations on the way forward and areas of improvement to engage youth in the peace process.

The participants added that it was a good opportunity for them to learn from their counterparts in other countries of humanitarian contexts. “I think we have now a chance as Y-Peers in Oman to do more activities in this area,” Ms. Hrasia said. “When Oman does not have a humanitarian crisis, it does not mean that we do not have a role as Y-Peers in the country, rather we learnt that conflict prevention mechanisms have to be adopted to ensure sustainable and peaceful community,” she added.

At end of the workshop, Ms. Shaima Aly, UNFPA GCC Programme Analyst thanked the presenters for their valuable inputs.

UNFPA GCC Y-PEERS PARTICIPATE IN ToT ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (RH) OF YOUTH IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

UNFPA GCC Y-Peers Ms. Jumana Al Baloushi and Ms. Marwa Al Toubi participated and represented Oman in a Training of Trainers held in Amman, Jordan on 26th of November to 1st of December 2016.

UNFPA GCC office invited the participants and asked them to share the knowledge they gained from this training to their peers in the network. A small size workshop held at the office on 11th of December 2016, where the female participants shared their experiences and the information they had in this matter.

During this workshop attended by UNFPA GCC programme team work, Mr. Salah Al-Saleh Programme Analyst and OIC and Ms. Shaima Aly, Programmes Associate, the Y-Peers stated that the training was very information and enriching for them since Oman is a country that does not have such humanitarian contexts, so it was very helpful to get a close glance on this theme. They added that they learnt about the definitions of humanitarian contexts, how to plan for Y-Peers educational programmes in humanitarian contexts, and how they can respond to the reproductive health needs of the youth in those countries.

They also highlighted the fact that youth are the most vulnerable category in these contexts, since they are affected by their separation from their friends and families. Also, lack of formal education and health services make it difficult for them to gain the proper information on reproductive health, in addition to unavailability of consultations and treatments of RH related diseases.

The participants also stated that nowadays there are almost 8 million young displaced persons who are less than 25 years old. Every minute, 6 young people less than 25 years get HIV infection. Moreover, being subject to Gender-based-violence, they are prone to suffer from psychological issues.

At end, UNFPA GCC team thanked the participants for their valuable presentation.





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