Backed by its mandate to support young women in the region and equip them with the required skills to sustain their employability and engagement in decision making process, UNFPA GCC held a joint activity, on 19th of June, with the Resident Coordinator Office in Bahrain under the current work plan of 2019 “Capital Governorate Volunteering Pass initiative”, which was attended by ca. 25 Bahraini young women and men. The initiative’s theme this year is dedicated to supporting the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and its objective is to provide youth with opportunities to serve the community and spread the spirit of social responsibility, actively deepen the concepts of voluntary work and prepare them to act as change agents in their communities.

In response to this vision, UNFPA invited Oman Y-Peer focal point and leader Ms. Asila Al Harathi to talk about her experience as a volunteer in the network. She had the opportunity to give an interactive presentation addressing the volunteerism concept, how the Y-Peer network changed her life and views, the importance of gender equality, and the opportunities she had thanks to her engagement. She gave a brief summary on the history of the flagship Y-Peer initiative of UNFPA in Oman. She also highlighted the skills she gained out of her participation in the network’s events and workshops such as leadership skills, communication abilities and organizational competences.

The event, which was held online, was a good opportunity to highlight the UNFPA mandate, history and the current preparations ahead of the ICPD25-Nairobi Summit. It was kicked off by a short introduction given by UNFPA GCC’s programmes and communication coordinator addressing the importance of the ICPD25 to accelerate the promises toward women and adolescent girls. Through the discussion, it was noted that this year marks the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, where 179 governments adopted a landmark Programme of Action which set out to empower women and girls.
Ahead of Nairobi Summit ICPD@25: UNFPA GCC accelerates the promises for women and adolescent girls in Oman by building the national capacities to promote healthy lifestyle and combat NCDs

On 9th of April 2019, the department of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) of the Ministry of Health in Oman (MoH) with the support of the United Nations Population Fund, the Sub-Regional Office for GCC countries (UNFPA GCC), conducted a one day Annual National Forum on NCDs programmes review of the entire governorates in the country.

Dr. Ali Bin Taleb Hinai, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Planning Affairs, Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA GCC representative, other high level dignitaries of MoH from all governorates and representatives from other relevant ministries, attended the Forum. The attendants showed commitment to the ICPD agenda and its pillars related to ensuring welfare of women and adolescent girls by detecting and studying the causes of the NCDs that affect them in the country, aiming at developing health related programmes that can enhance the quality of their lives.

In his speech, UNFPA GCC Representative said that “this year marks 25 years of the adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Therefore, UNFPA is accelerating the promises made to women and adolescent girls, which focus on providing the required health services so they can enjoy their lives to the maximum, achieve their goals, be more empowered and fulfil their potentials”.

In the forum a presentation was introduced by the School and University Health Department of MoH highlighting the characteristics of adolescence stage of life and the importance to expand the healthy-lifestyle programmes targeting particularly young women. An exhibition was also held on the sideline of the forum where the directorates of MoH in other remote governorates displayed art works reflecting the programmes they are undertaking to address NCDs in the Sultanate.
One-week workshop with Ministry of Social Development of Oman on gender mainstreaming approach

UNFPA GCC held a one-week multi-stakeholders workshop in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), the Department of Women Affairs from 7th to 11th of April 2019.

The workshop was attended by key staff members of the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, the National Center for Statistics and Information (NCSI), Oman Commission for Human Rights, and staff of the Omani Women Association.

“The workshop, which includes more than 45 participants, marked an important year for UNFPA since the Fund is planning to celebrate 25 years after the adoption of the Cairo Declaration in 1994, by holding a high-level global conference co-convened by UNFPA to further galvanize partnerships and direct our collective efforts to advance the UNFPA objectives,” said Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA GCC representative in his opening speech launching the workshop.

“The anticipated Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 will be held in Kenya in November 2019, therefore this joint workshop came in consistent with the pillars of the ICPD in relation with enhancing women empowerment process in the country and considering the needs of the disadvantaged groups through evidence-based programmes”, he added.

The event aimed at providing the staff members of the targeted Ministries and other entities with the required tools to analyze gender-based needs, develop responsive programmes according to these needs and provide mechanisms for evaluation considering women and adolescent girls’ social roles and expectations.

The training improved participants’ ability to undertake special interventions to heighten community awareness, enhance gender equality and mainstream gender equity through designing, implementing and monitoring the planned development projects. The course covers practical strategies and skills for gender mainstreaming— including utilization of gender planning frameworks; tackling SDG 5 indicators, and using quantitative tools to address gender issue. The course integrated active and participatory learning approaches, with an emphasis on reflective and collaborative learning methods, while it allowed sharing professional and personal experiences in an interactive and interesting manner.
On 23rd of April, 2019, United Nations Population Fund, the sub-regional office for GCC countries (UNFPA GCC), held a joint press conference with Ministry of Health, represented by Ms. Faiqa Al Sinawi from the School and University Health Department of the Ministry, to launch the World Population Report (SWOP) for 2019 titled “Unfinished business: the pursuit of rights and choices for all”. The press conference was attended by editors and journalists from the major media outlets in Oman.

In his statement to the journalists, the UNFPA GCC representative Mr. Asr Toson stated that “The ‘State of World Population 2019’ suggests that the global reproductive rights movement which began in the 1960s transformed the lives of hundreds of millions of women, empowering them to govern their own bodies and shape their own future. Also, the efforts of the reproductive rights movements have dramatically reduced the number of unintended pregnancies and maternal deaths, and have cleared way for healthier, more productive lives for untold millions”. “It has been 50 years since UNFPA began operations as the first United Nations agency to address population growth and reproductive health needs. It is also the 25th anniversary of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), where 179 governments called for all people to have access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare, including voluntary family planning, and safe pregnancy and childbirth services. However, reproductive rights are still out of reach for too many women, including the more than 200 million women who want to prevent a pregnancy, but cannot access modern services,” he added. He also noted that 2019 will witness the Nairobi Summit which is co-convened by UNFPA. The summit is expected to have high level delegations to accelerate the promised made by millions of women and girls allover the world and to create a political and financial momentum to complete the unfinished business of the endorsed ICPD Programme of Action.

On her side, Ms. Al Sinawi praised UNFPA for its ongoing co-operation with the Ministry, particularly her department. She stated that UNFPA GCC has been always providing the Ministry with valuable technical assistance to enhance the capacities and enrich staff’s skills. “We place adolescent girls at the heart of our work plans, to ensure the implementation of the internationally endorsed SDGs, particularly SDGs 3 related to health and 5 on gender equality”, Ms. Al Sinawi said.
UNFPA expert successfully concludes a three-month mission at Qatar’s Planning and Statistics Authority

Under the current signed Trust Fund and the long co-operation framework between UNFPA and Qatar Planning and Statistics Authority (QPSA), UNFPA GCC assigned a media expert, who concluded a successful mission in Doha. The assignment which took up to 3 months and ended in April 2019, aimed at undertaking the task of training and implementation of the approved Communication Strategy and adjust it to fit for the applicable population policy of the country and Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030).

The communication training was interactive and included three sessions, the first of which was designed for the Media Team of the QPSA and the contents were based on the population policies. The second was designed for the Public Relations Team. The content of the workshop was solely based on QNV 2030. The third workshop was added to the schedule and designated for the Working Groups from other ministries who liaise with QPSA on population and development issues. On 6 March a ceremony was held at the Ministry’s auditorium for all the participating groups. Certificates of participation were presented to all participants.

The adviser also presented a detailed program on the field work and implementation of the plan to ensure sustainability of the communication strategy. The program was implemented through the last two months of the consultancy, in order to ensure that the priorities set by the Authority to be communicated to the public are addressed, including “Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022”, “QNV 2030” and “Qatar Census 2020”.
