



RECENT & UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- Muscat Festival, 30 Jan—28 Feb
- International Day for Zero Tolerance of FGM, Feb 6
- ASRO RCM, March 4-6
- International Women's Day, March 8
- ED Visit to KSA, March 9-10

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Supporting Marginalized Youth

On Saturday the 2nd of March, a day long symposium convened in the city of Salalah under the Auspices of H.E Sheikh Khalid Omar Al Marhoun, Minister of Civil Service. This symposium, under the title of "Juvenile Delinquents: Between Reality and Ambition", was the initiative of the Middle East Centre for Social Studies and Research with the support of Salalah Methanol Company, and the UNFPA GCC Office.

The Symposium focused on the accountability, legal aspects, rehabilitation and reintegration of juveniles that have been incarcerated or have lost focus. The symposium drew light on the various aspects of stigma and discrimination as well as the opportunity to rehabilitate these youth and return them to building society through plenary sessions and



GCC office representative Asr Toson's welcoming speech is broadcast to the audience in the Southern city of Oman, Salalah, where dozens gathered to discuss the pressing issue of Juvenile Delinquents

panel discussions.

The GCC Office Representative Mr. Asr Toson gave a welcoming speech that was recorded and played to all those in attendance, since he was away on mission at the time. The sessions consisted of 2 plenaries which focused on the aspects mentioned and ignited

a colourful debate from those working on the field and with youth, from lawyers and social workers to teachers and police officers, in an attempt to work through the reality to achieve the ambition of a nation without stigma for successful rehabilitation.

Finalizing the AWP

The first quarter of the year kicked off with meetings with all partners in Oman to plan out the year ahead.

The meetings were with all government, and non-governmental counterparts to discuss ongoing programmes, how to build from them, and programmes needed in 2013.

As per the UNFPA strategic plan, the focus this year is on youth, and reproductive health, and so is the focus in the GCC region. In Oman, there are exciting programmes planned with the Birth Spacing initiative and the HIV section of the MOH, and youth activities planned with the MOSD including youth in the family con-

text in general, with a focus on gender equality and empowering women and girls. There are also new collaboration with the private and non-governmental sector with a similar focus, and strengthening the popular Y-PEER network and expanding it in neighboring countries.

Y-PEERs Make Their Mark at Muscat Festival



Y-PEERs spread awareness at Naseem Gardens

The annual participation of the UNFPA and its supported Youth Peer Education Network, the Y-PEER, took place from the 14th of February at Naseem Gardens. This year the UNFPA aimed to establish new partnerships with government counterparts and expand the mandate of the Y-PEER network, which focusses on issues most relevant to youth, by partnering with the National Committee for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances housed at the MOH along with their implementing arm, a group of young volunteers led by a Y-PEER Alumni and initiator of the UNFPA supported "Hayati Hua Qarari", a network of youths specializing in raising

awareness on substance abuse, who work closely with the MOH.

The participation spanned 2 weekends, and was met with enthusiasm, especially from youth who were eager to learn more about the network and what they are about. The participation, which was within the MOH awareness tent in Naseem Gardens, was alive with the Y-PEER "Edutainment" methodology, and found young and old alike interacting with the activities the Y-PEERs had set, ensuring that the network expands and flourishes to all corners of the nation as visitors flocked to Naseem Park. The activities focused on raising awareness on the network and

UNFPA in general, highlighting its presence in the GCC and how the public can get involved to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

This collaboration is following successful collaborative programmes taking place throughout 2013 between the MOH Narcotics division and the UNFPA, and following a successful volunteer training by the MOH for the Y-PEERs to ensure they impart accurate information on the drug abuse situation in Oman, and how to deliver this message successfully and without stigma to their fellow peers.

ASRO RCM a Success for All

The UNFPA Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) hosted the annual Regional Consultation Meeting (RCM) in Hammamet, Tunisia, in early March this year. The meeting

brings together programme officer, admin and finance officers, as well as office heads and representative of all the country offices in the Arab States Region.

All programmes were discussed, giving a chance for all Country Offices to showcase and highlight successes, challenges, and ways forward, with feedback from colleagues and lessons learnt.

Regional advisers also had a chance to lay out the focus areas for the year to come, which are youth and Reproductive Health, with a strong focus on communication both within the organization and externally, to ensure that the

UNFPA deliver as one, and the broader UN family as well.

Another focus is the countries in the region which are experiencing crisis situations, and more emphasis needs to be given to pooling resources and expertise to these regions, including skilled staff on detailed assignments to these areas.

The meetings spanned 3 full days, often going into the late hours, as the committed member of the UNFPA team hashed out the year ahead, ensuring the mandate and goals of the UNFPA were fulfilled and addressed in each country in the region.

A panel session focused on the importance of communicating as one throughout UNFPA



UNFPA Executive Director Visits Saudi Arabia



In a fruitful mission, the UNFPA Executive Director, Dr Babatunde Osotimehin along with the GCC Office Representative, Mr. Asr Toson, and ASRO Regional Director, Mr. Mohammed Abdel Ahad, visited the

UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to discuss ongoing and future collaborations as well as introducing the mandate to future partners.

The mission spanned 2 full days of back-to-back meetings with high level officials in various government entities and the leading non-governmental organization, in an attempt to increase collaboration with UNFPA and contribute their resources to UNFPA priority countries, which include communities in crisis.

A particular focus was given to youth,

and partners in KSA were very interested in the UNFPA initiated Y-PEER network, which has proved to be successful in the gulf already. This network will be explored and introduced through the most relevant youth bodies, but used in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Education and Labour to promote soft skill development to increase marketability, youth and adolescent health issues including HIV, and Peer-Peer education through the public education system.

Another focus is advancing the ICPD agenda, especially as the 20 year anniversary of the landmark conference fast approaches, and the UNFPA is developing a strategy for post 2014.

The campaign will be a landmark initiative for the region, and a showcase of Oman's progress for Women

CEDAW Moving Forward

In an exciting collaboration with the MOSD, the national campaign to raise awareness on the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is in it's final planning stages, and set to launch in the second quarter of this year.

The international CEDAW committee has hailed Oman on its progress towards women's empowerment in general, and limited discrimination in specific, with unprecedented empowerment of women in the Sultanate like no other nation in the region. This campaign will help reinforce this,

and further demonstrate the nation's commitment to women and girls.

The number one advertising agency, The Agency (formerly SABCO Art) has been awarded this campaign and are planning a truly unique and visually appealing take on the CEDAW.

Gender/RH related

Write article here. 150-200 words.

Add caption for the picture here

Accelerate Zero-Tolerance Towards GBV Through the AIDS Response

Gender based violence is a global epidemic, and it is the most brutal manifestation of gender inequality. According to UNAIDS, at least one in three women is beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused by an intimate partner in the course of her lifetime. In some countries, up to 45% of girls under the age of 15 report their first sexual experience



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as forced. Tackling violence against women and girls is key if their vulnerability to the HIV is to be reduced. Women can be forced to have unwanted and unprotected sex and they can face violence if they reveal that they are living with HIV. Research in South Africa has shown that young women subjected to intimate partner violence are 12% more likely to become infected with HIV. Married women in India who experience both physical and sexual violence from their partners are three times more likely to be living with HIV than women not subjected to attacks at all. Cases of coerced sterilizations and abortions undertaken on women living with HIV without their informed consent are widespread and documented in many countries.

Representatives of civil society shared

community perspectives of how HIV and gender-based violence are intimately linked. Jennifer Gatsi, from the Namibia Women's Health Coalition, stressed the negative consequences suffered by women living with HIV.

According to the UNAIDS Director, Rights, Gender and Community Mobilization, Mariangela Simao, making real strides against gender-based violence is a core goal for effective HIV responses, as reflected in the UNAIDS Strategy 2011-2015.

Lynn Collins, a UNFPA HIV advisor who moderated a panel at the event said, "We at UNFPA have welcomed this opportunity to bring together a range of voices, united in the call to end violence in all its heinous forms through education and other means of empowerment, legal reform and redress, and rights-based sexual and reproductive health and HIV services."



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