

2012

A Year in Review

ICPD Beyond 2014 and Youth: An Active Participation

After almost 18 years from holding the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, the international community is stirring up a process for reviewing achievements made and conveying commitments for the ICPD Beyond 2014 agenda.

Through a series of processes including a common survey, a global ICPD review is being conducted that touches on all topics covered in the Cairo conference. This will also serve as an assessment of the progress made by various countries in the areas related to reproductive and sexual health, gender equality and empowerment of women, and population and development. In Lebanon, and under the guidance of UNFPA, the Ministry of Social Affairs has taken on the lead and responsibility for completing the survey in consultation with various stakeholders. Since young people are considered to be key partners in the process, a consultation meeting was organized on October 30 where youth from different entities met and





pro-actively engaged in discussion about various aspects in relation to ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) with a focus on areas that affect young people's well-being. Through working groups, the participants had the chance to discuss different aspects of the survey and plug in their feedback which fed into the consolidated ICPD Beyond 2014 country report to accompany the survey.



To highlight youth participation even more, five young people from Lebanon representing active civil society organizations that are youth led/working on youth related issues were identified based on several criteria and became members in the Arab Regional Youth Coalition Network. Indeed, Lama Srour (Lebanese Red Cross-Youth Department), Patricia Khorshidian (Armenian Relief Cross), Mira Faddoul (Kafa – Enough Violence and Exploitation), Lama Ajrouch

(Amel Association), and Cedric Choucaire (Economic Youth Forum) all participated in a meeting in Cairo, November 27-29, that aimed at gathering youth led and youth serving institutions from the Arab States to establish a youth civil society coalition to participate in the ICPD PoA review



process. The meeting was also meant to discuss the sustainability of the coalition as a regional youth mechanism for coordination and policy-advising to the UN system for the post-2015 development goals. Y-PEER Lebanon's very own focal point Nadim Abu Alwan acted as a facilitator for the sexual and reproductive session in the above meeting and getting across key recommendations from the

working group. The Lebanese delegation came back filled with enthusiasm and is ready to set up a plan of action with UNFPA to enhance youth participation in the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process. UNFPA country office will be relying considerably on the youth coalition as well as selected members of the Y-PEER network throughout the ICPD Beyond 2014 activities.



Results-Oriented Community Based Advocacy

In response to the recently endorsed national youth policy by the Lebanese Council of Ministers on April 3 and launched by President Michel Sleiman on December 1, UNFPA supported a project on enhancing youth institutional capacity on advocacy with focus on health and high risk behaviors. Within the various sections of the national youth policy emerges a necessity to increase young people's knowledge and information in health-related topics as well as social integration and civic engagement. More so, one effective mean to enhance a meaningful youth participation in the public sphere is acquiring the skill of advocacy and lobbying.

It is thus within this context that the joint collaboration between UNFPA and Masar association took on developing the capacity of 11 eager young minds from different regions in Lebanon (Al Qa'a in Bekaa, Old Sidon and Zibkheen in the South, and Tripoli in the North). The training conducted on 7-8 July included topics such as negotiation skills, team work, setting advocacy campaign objectives, budgeting, and planning. Towards the end of the training, participants were asked to submit proposals for communal advocacy campaigns in their respective communities which might get the chance to be funded and implemented by the youth themselves. Indeed this is exactly what happened where four proposals – out of six - were funded and participants got the chance of a life time to get a hands-on experience to put into practice all that they have learned in the training into their respective projects.

All four proposals contained an advocacy component that included conducting meetings with key decision makers in the community such as the mayor, member of the municipality, etc. These meetings facilitated the implementation of the campaigns because they opened a mutually clear channel of communication and means of cooperation between the community gate keepers and the young leaders throughout the different phases of the implementation process. The campaigns took on different topics in different communities where the focus was substance abuse prevention in Old Sidon and Al Qa'a with the latter organizing another campaign on sexual health education. Zibkheen opted to address the different elements of reproductive health and Tripoli highlighted the issue of youth civic engagement. Almost 1,000 young persons were reached cumulatively through all the campaigns whether through awareness sessions, rally papers, role play, etc. Parents were also targeted with 100 getting actively involved in the campaigns. A total sum of 4,000 mobile sms messages were sent to promote healthy behavior among youth in the above mentioned communities. Innovative and relevant material were produced and distributed to young people and parents and supported by the community gate keepers. UNFPA will explore the possibility to build on this successful experience and further enhance the young people's capacities to become lead advocates on youth related issues.



Youth in Emergencies: A Reliable Resource

In light of the ongoing crisis affecting Syria, as well as its impact on neighboring countries like Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey, UNFPA in Lebanon decided to focus on a target population that is usually ignored in emergency settings, young people. It is the latter, however, who can reach out to their peers and for that reason UNFPA partnered yet again with the Y-PEER network to initiate peer education activities in humanitarian settings targeting young people living in conflict/post conflict situation in crisis settings.

The very first step was to equip young people involved directly or indirectly in emergency situations with the needed skills, tools and approaches. Thus young people from few Arab countries met in Amman July 2-7 and took part in a training workshop on “Peer Education on Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH), Empowerment and Life skills for Young People in Humanitarian Settings”. The Lebanese team consisted of eight young people selected by NGOs

– based on established criteria - who are currently involved in working with youth in humanitarian issues, more specifically with refugees of various nationalities i.e. Palestinians, Iraqis, and Syrians. Mays Sabah Al Amilie, Ali Qays Al Hadeeti, and Jannat Qays Al Hadeeti from Makhzoumi Foundation, Lama Ajrouch and Genwa Samhat from Amel Association, Theresia-Martine Akiki from World Vision International, as well as Farah Ahmad Moustafa and Ghazi Mousbah Al Omari from Beit Atfal Soumoud constituted the Lebanese team

who participated in the regional workshop. The training aimed at developing the capacity of these peer educators to design and deliver high quality peer-to-peer education on issues affecting young people, including adolescent SRH, gender-based violence, empowerment, youth-adult partnership, and life skills.

Upon their return from Amman fully equipped with the acquired skills and know-how, UNFPA partnered



with the University of Balamand / Faculty of Health Sciences (UoB/FHS), for providing the overall guidance, coordination and support to the young trainees and their respective NGOs for rolling out the activities in fragile communities.

UoB/FHS and UNFPA along with the participating NGOs identified key topics that would be of interest to young refugees and sure enough the issue of stress management surfaced out as a main priority area of concern to refugee/displaced young people substantiated in different studies and assessments. As such, a training module was developed and tested in a workshop with the objective to develop the capacity of nine peer educators on stress management and how

to address it to young refugees/displaced. In parallel, the field was eagerly awaiting some action from the peer educators and so outreach plans of action were developed by the young trainees and targeting young Syrians, Palestinians, Iraqis and Lebanese in host communities. The themes to be covered included HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and reproductive tract infections, gender-based violence, early marriage, and stress management. A total of 38 sessions were conducted reaching out to almost 1,200 young persons whereby some of those sessions were found to be an opportunity for marking the International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women as well as the International Human Rights Day. The young peers got very creative in transferring key messages to their peers whether through interactive tools, discussion, role plays, poetry contest, poster competition, etc. Informative leaflets were produced as supporting material to peer educators on an all topics discussed in their respective sessions where the take-home messages were well highlighted.



When Information and Services Finally Meet

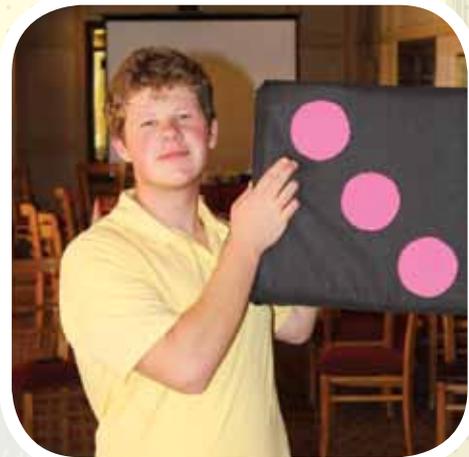
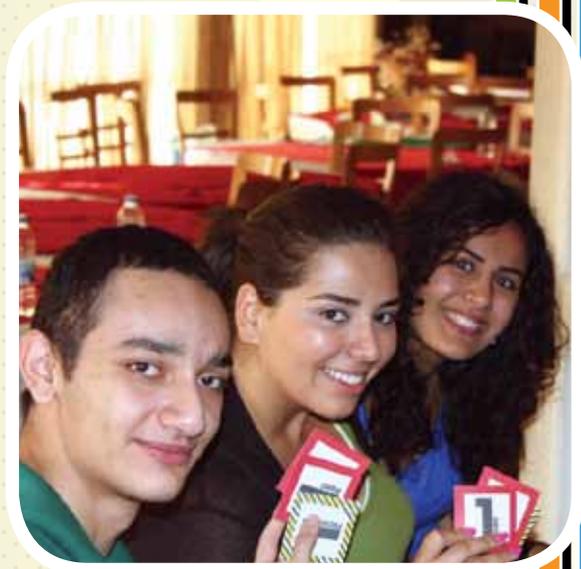
There has been considerable amount of material produced on various health issues that concern adolescents and youth in a friendly manner where the information is age appropriate displayed in an attractive style. However little has been accomplished when it comes to complementing such youth friendly information with similar services that cater to young people's needs without any form of discrimination. Well this thought is indeed HISTORY as they say. In 2012 UNFPA in collaboration with UNICEF and with the implementing partnership of Centre Universitaire de Santé Familiale et Communautaire (CUSFC) at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ), officially kicked off a project aiming at Operationalizing Child Protection and Adolescent/Youth Friendly Services. With many intersecting components, youth participation was key to the success of the project and so it was no surprise that the target population, i.e. young people themselves, were also the main partner. A young project coordinator, Aimee Ghanem, was recruited to bring forth emerging youth needs to the active discussion table. Aimee also worked closely with the youth focal point Sima Antabli who was recruited to closely follow up the activities of the young people in their respective centers. Guided by the project manager Ms. Hiyam Kahi, Director at CUSFC, the youth component rolled out with numerous activities.



Seventeen young people were selected from the participating health centers being Social Development Center (SDC) of Mazra'a, SDC of Baalbeck, SDC of Rashaya, Armenian Relief Cross Health Center in Burj Hammoud, and Imam al Khoumayneh Health Center in Tyre. Those young people were actively present during the development of action plans for each center where they voiced out the youth needs and aspirations in their respective communities. An action packed peer education training was organized targeting the 17 youth from the centers from August 30 till September

3. The training included sessions on human rights, gender equality and prevention/response to gender-based violence, prevention of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, as well as a whole section on life skills (i.e. decision making, negotiation, self-esteem, and communicating with peers). The training did not stop here but also introduced the new peer educators to interactive tools that they could make good use of when reaching out to their peers with the right information and knowledge. The training was a great success for it brought young people from different communities together for one purpose being the establishment of youth friendly services that fully address their needs. They left the training fully energized to share with their peers the information they have acquired and inform them about the newly established package of services for youth. Plans were thus developed that included an outreach component and in-center sessions. A total of 100 young persons were reached and informed about the new service package which included counseling, treatment, and referral to issues related to nutrition, mental health, sexual and reproductive health, child protection, and violence.

Full youth participation continued towards the closing of 2012 where the young peer educators took part in the evaluation and planning meeting for 2013. They were very articulate about how their activities can be even more relevant, focused, and effective for the upcoming year. They also brought forth ideas on enhancing youth-adult partnership such as the creation of a youth board in each center. With enthusiasm like this, there is nothing that these young people can't do to create a positive impact in their lives and the lives of their peers.



Our New FPC is here... Hurrayyyy!

During the second half of 2012, the Y-PEER network in Lebanon welcomed its new Focal Point in Charge (FPC) Ms. Sima Antabli. Not only does she come with a great smile but also as an active advocate for emerging youth issues. She showed interest in Y-PEER after being closely involved with the peer education approach in her work as a social animator and youth focal point at the youth friendly services project with CUSFC (see above). She also comes with great enthusiasm to assist members of the network in further developing their capacities and putting them on the international map of Y-PEER since she will be the main communication medium between the local network and the international one. Her first official exposure to Y-PEER was during the Global Advisory Board (GAB) meeting that was held in Tunisia October 5 - 11. The GAB annual meeting gathers FPCs from all around the globe to set the plan for the upcoming year and decide on priority areas. The meeting was just the right dose to put Sima in the right Y-PEER spirit. Welcome Sima to the Y-PEER family and all the best for all the adventures to come.



Manuals in the Making

Both Carla Daher, Y-PEER Coordinator, and Marya Abdul Rahman, Y-PEER focal point, took part in regional consultation meetings for the development of manuals targeting youth in two surfacing youth issues being “employability” and “youth in emergency settings”. In partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO), UNFPA Regional Office is developing an exercise manual targeting young people who are getting ready to enter the work field. The exercise manual introduces youth to the labor market through various themes such as career counseling, labor law, active citizenship, entrepreneurship, etc. The two day consultation (September 23-25) meeting that took place in Amman, Jordan aimed at reaching a consensus with Y-PEER focal points from Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Palestine on the content of the exercise book and how it can be made good use of. The consultation meeting held in Cairo (July 2-7), on the other hand, witnessed the development of a different kind of manual that addresses youth emergency settings. As such, the Cairo meeting aimed at finalizing the final draft of the already developed manual based on feedback from Y-PEER master trainers upon piloting it in Jordan, Tunisia, and the Philippines.