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Summary of the most important events and activities of the UNFPA-Iraq for the year 2013

In this issue of the UNFPA-Iraq newsletter, we review the most important events and activities the UNFPA did over the year.



Contact Information:

Phone: + 962 - 6- 5549864 /5
Fax: + 962 - 6- 5548476
PO BOX 143671, Amman 11814 Jordan
E-mail: Feedback.iraq@unfpa.org
Website: <http://iraq.unfpa.org>



State Minister for Women Affairs Heads a Meeting on Integrating VAW Strategy in Sectoral Plans

UNFPA organized a meeting headed by Dr. Ibtihal Kasd Al-Zaidi State Minister for Women Affairs, on integrating the national strategy to Combat Violence Against Women (CVAW) in Iraq in sectoral plans of the ministries of Health, Labor and Social Affairs, Education, Interior, and State Ministry for Women Affairs. The minister started the meeting by a speech focused on the importance of the ef-

forts of the experts in the preparation of action plans that are being presented to the various ministries in order to be modified and finalized during this year to be implemented during 2014-2017. From her side, Ms. Dina Zorba – Programme Coordinator - Head of UNFPA Baghdad office, said that UNFPA have worked on the production of the CVAW strategy within its program of CVAW in Iraq,

and trained national experts on the ways of integrating it within sectoral plans of selected line ministries. She also added that UNFPA over the past years was able to work on producing four guidelines for the service providers of MOH, MOLSA, MOI, and NGOs to support the women survivors of violence in these fields. During the meeting, presentations were made on the strategy and its action plans for each sector and were discussed with the members of the ministries joined the meeting. It was also agreed to have a full day session for each sector before the end of the year in order to finalize the plan of actions to be implemented in the coming years. The meeting was attended by the experts from Baghdad and Al Mustansiria Universities as well as Al Kindy College of Medicine, ministries' experts, and UNFPA concerned staff in Baghdad.

Integration of Reproductive Health in the National Health Policy in Iraq

under the leadership of the two Ministries of Health (MOH), (federal and KRG), UNFPA with AUB and Iraqis Experts from Universities Technical Assistance organized three days consultation meeting aims to develop and validate the framework (Strategic, process and operational levels) to define and establish the plan to integrate women and reproductive health and rights in the prospected National Health Strategy. This strategy to be developed by MOH with the World Health Organization (WHO), in the context of Iraq Public Sector Modernization and Health Sector Reform component. This constitutes the first step in the process of reviewing existing Reproduc-



tive Health policies and program management and agreeing with concerned stakeholders on a road map for the coming phase. The proposal and all results will be validate by MOH and discussed with WHO to be integrated in the National Health Policy.

Master Plan for Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EMONC) in Iraq

As part of the Iraqi Ministry Of Health efforts to reduce Maternal and newborns mortalities and morbidity and to enhance quality a consultancy work shop have been conducted from 1-4 July, 2013 in Erbil, to finalize the methodology of EMONC assessment at the national level including all maternities (Hospitals and Primary Health Care). The workshop was attended by EMONC steering committees from Bagdad and Erbil, Kurdistan Regional Statistical Office (KRSO), UNFPA and UNICEF. Two experts from AMDD Columbia University presented international guidelines



used in other countries and worked with Iraqi team for adaptation.

This assessment activity comes under the Iraq Public Sectors Modernization (I-PSM) programme/ Health

Sector Reform. It is also part of efforts to reach the MDGs 4 &5. The workshop was conducted in partnership with UNFPA and specialized center in Colombia University from USA (AMDD).

Strengthening the Capacity of the Staff at the Women Social Center in Domiz Camp on “First Response” (Kurdistan, Iraq)



In the process of building the capacity of Syrian women volunteers working at the Women Social Center supported by UNFPA in Domiz camp for Syrian Refugees, a full two days on-the-job training followed by half day planning session have been conducted for the volunteering staff at the center from 8-10 July 2013. The training objective was to equip the staff with the basic tools on how to deal with the women survivors of violence who approach the center seeking support. During these two days, sessions varied from refreshment on some basic information with

more in-depth illustrations on Gender Based Violence (GBV) core concept and themes, to special focus on building the women's skills on the effective listening skills, and then mapping the service providers and how to do referral within the referral pathway after obtaining full consent of the women who approach the center to seek its support. By the end of the training an action plan was developed to organize the work of the center on monthly bases with clear division of labor to distribute the tasks and line of responsibilities among the volunteering staff.



Iraq: Parliamentarians and Activists Discuss the Violence against Women from Cultural Perspective with support from UNFPA

UNFPA supported a workshop chaired by Mrs. Intisar Jubouri - Head of Family, Women, and Child Committee at the Iraqi Parliament on the study of "Violence against Women from Cultural Perspective". Mrs. Jubouri opened the workshop highlighting the importance of the mentioned study specially that Violence against Women in Iraq is reaching to 76% of Iraqi Women at different levels of educational and cultural backgrounds. The workshop was attended by parliamentarians, activists, media, and UN experts and discussed the study in order to support and advocate for the importance of changing legislative or modify the

legislation on women's equality, equity and to raise awareness about the cultural heritage rooted deeply in the Iraqi society, which deepens the gap between men and women, taking advantage of misconception of religion. The study is descriptive study adopted the focus groups methodology to collect and analyze information from the governorates of Erbil, Baghdad, Najaf and Basra. This study was prepared by Dr. Asmaa Jameel from the Arab Heritage Institute at the University of Baghdad and it comes as part of UNFPA support to Dar Al Salam Center under the program of Combat Violence against Women in Iraq.



Training on GBV Core Concepts, Outreach and Activity Planning for Volunteers of Kawargosk, Darashakran and Basira Camps

4 GBV trainings were provided by UNFPA to 90 volunteers of ongoing UNFPA's women centers, 3 in the camps of Kawargosk, Darashakran and Basira as well as, one to 30 volunteers of 3 selected areas of Erbil (Kasnazan, Rajan and Bahraman). It aimed to help build volunteers' knowledge

and understanding of gender-based violence, its causes, and its consequences so that they can begin to use these knowledge to develop effective interventions for preventing and responding to GBV in emergencies, such as in refugee camps. The duration of the training was 3

days while the third day was devoted to the development of the outreach and social activities planning for each women center. The training enabled the different groups to understand the importance of preventing GBV and how to refer cases to protection's actors.



Training Course on Enhancing Youth Volunteers' Capacities in Project and Activity Management in Domiz Camp

UNFPA Organized a training course on enhancing youth capacities in project and activity management for volunteers and activists in the youth-friendly spaces and cultural houses in Duhok. The training was held with the participation of sixteen (ten girls and six boys) of the Syrian refugees volunteers working in youth-friendly spaces and Iraqi youth working in the cultural houses in Dohuk.

The training was conducted through the technical support provided by the community outreach unit in the College of Health Sciences at the American University in Beirut whom UNFPA Iraq has signed a cooperation agreement with.

Due to the importance of youth participation and to strengthen this participation, especially during the humanitarian crises, the training was held in order to enhance the capacity of volunteers in project and activity management and to ensure better management of these youth-friendly spaces and cultural houses. The training was designed to be implemented

in number of phases. In the first phase, the training was focused on project management skills, planning and organizing these projects, then to be followed by the phase of practical work by youth under the supervision of national advisers and international consultants, and then the last phase shall be training on the project implementation skill, monitoring and evaluation.

It is worth to mention that UNFPA is supporting youth activities in the youth-friendly spaces in Domiz camp. These spaces are managed by Syrian volunteers with the help of Iraqi youth from the General Directorate of Culture, Arts, Sports and Youth in Duhok. The main responsibilities of the volunteers in these space are managing and organizing peer education sessions in addition to artistic and sports activities. In addition to that, the Iraqi youth are participating in managing and running the cultural houses which are independent structures supported financially by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

Integrating Competency Based Approach into Midwives Curricula in Iraq

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Higher Education (Faculties institutes of nursing) with the support of the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) and implementation of Zhian health organization a workshop on the integration of competency-based approach in the educational system and

the Platform for the training of midwives in Iraq and the Kurdistan region.

The technical support from the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and Montreal University and the American University of Beirut. This project is important because of the role of midwives in the appointment of the



health conditions of the maternal and neonatal health, as well as to achieve MDGs 4 and 5.



Domiz Syrian Refugees Camp Youth Space

Peers Educators training and activities



UNFPA Organized two parallel peer education training 5 (days) from June 30th to July 4th 2013 with the participation of 34 of the Syrian refugees and four women volunteers who work in the women Social Center, among them 27 girls and 11 boys.

Basically, the training was aiming to educate refugees on the topics of violence, discrimination, ability for anger management, sexually transmitted diseases, and integration in society, involve the youth in volunteer work and to develop their knowledge regarding the youth attitudes, and skills, and make them responsible for their health protection.

The training conducted in coordination and logistical support from IRC (International Rescue Committee).

UNFPA through the establishment of the youth center are working to pay more atten-

tion to the youth in Domiz refugees camp, in term of that 6 youth have been identified as a committee to manage the space, the management committee consisted from 4 Syrians youth refugees and two staff from the directorate of Culture and Youth, accordingly, the participants in the peer education training were selected through field survey conducted by the volunteers working in the youth centre. The training conducted and completed successfully due to the high desire and motivation of the participants for daily attendance and their active participation in daily activities as well as it was indicated through the evaluation report of trainers. On the other hand the training resulted in dividing and distributing the young into small groups working to develop initiatives and proposals to be implemented in the youth space.

Iraq: Special Training Course on Civic Engagement for Youth Parliamentarians



and participation, noting that this is the second training that UNFPA conducted in cooperation with MOYS. These two trainings were held in Basra Governorate for about 100 young parliamentarians and included role playing, working in groups and designing social campaigns. Young participants divided themselves as four groups under the topics of (early marriage, racism, education, and Violence) through their groups they designed their proposals for community engagement and advocacy. Following the success of these two trainings, MOYS is now willing to continue additional advanced Civic engagement training in 2014.



UNFPA in cooperation with Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) organized special training for youth parliaments on the topic of Civic Engagement. The training was made of five working days and was done in coordination with Action Aid. This training has been organized under the objective of youth mobilization

Iraq: Need assessment of Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Services at National level

The Iraqi Ministry of Health of Federal Government and Ministry of Health in Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) with support from Colombia University, American University in Beirut (AUB) and UNFPA conducted a six days workshop to train trainers for Needs Assessment for EmONC service in Iraq during the period 26-31 October 2013

The workshop was attended by number of medical staff and officers who have experience in training and involved in EmONC services program in both ministries, beside university consultants from Baghdad and Erbil/Hawler medical universities and representa-



tive form UNICEF.

During the workshop, the international consultants from Colombia University jointly with audience reviewed the steps to train the data collector's requirements and preparations. They also plan for four regional training (Kirkuk, Baghdad, Najaf and Basra) for Iraq and in KRG they plan to implement training in each governorate in the region.

This is the first time that the Ministry of Health will organize such assessment at the national level (using international methodology and tools). The results will provide the ministry with inputs to develop long term plan.



Live painting and performance in Kawargosk and Domiz camp

16 days of activism



As part of 16 days of activism, this year UNFPA with the support of implementing partners organized 2 art activities in order to raise awareness on SGBV and Early marriage within the refugee community (men and women) and highlight/remind its importance to camp actors. The organization of artistic performance such as painting and drama performance by artists among Syrian refugees was

an opportunity to address this concern differently and in a more impactful way.

Thus in 25 November 2013, a live painting along with a drama play was held in Kawargosk with the support of UNDP. More than 100 women men girls and boys from community attended the event as well as officials from DVAW and camp actors. The artists performed bril-

liantly and encouraged the community to participate to the performance which was very successful. In Domiz camp, the similar event took place on 4 December 2013 at the Youth space of UNFPA. The artist from Duhok, Mas-soud and Haron achieved 2 paintings, each of them representing bride and groom, the third canvas was devoted to community comments and thoughts on early marriage.



Focus Group discussions of refugee community in the camps of Kawargosk and Darashakran



In order to prevent GBV from issues and respond to needs of women and girls in the camp recently set up, UNFPA with its implementing partner AL Massala, launched a need assessment through several focus group discussions (FGDs) to better target the specific needs and issues of this group. In Kawargosk, from Sunday 17 to Wednesday 20 November, 4 FGD 12 participants in each (disaggregated by women, men, boys and girls) were held in

the Women Social Center. The report issued showed concerns of vulnerable populations, such as domestic violence, unemployment, early marriage as one of the consequences of precariousness, access to vital services etc. These findings will enable UNFPA to establish prioritization among the several needs of refugees. The following days (21 to 24 November), the same need assessment was achieved in Darashakran with similar issues encountered.



Successive GBV training for medical staff

Gender based violence training was organized by UNFPA for 23 doctors and paramedical staff in Erbil Governorate. The training was followed by a workshop held on 24 November 2013 where 12 representatives of different departments attended, including key government actors from Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Interior, DVAW and 2 national NGOs.

The objectives of the sessions were to emphasize the actions needed to set up effective and coordinated prevention and response to GBV at regional level.

The training for medical staff was composed of GBV core concepts and how to carry for survivors of GBV, while the workshop was devoted to understanding the importance of all actors to be

committed in such principles and increasing knowledge of multi-sectoral and inter-agency action for prevention and response, as well as the need for well-coordinated action. At the end of the workshop participants were aware of the importance of multi-sectorial approach involving coordinated action, and were able to identify the needs and challenges that they will face for implementing such action.

World population Day 2013

Analysis and recommendation

“Girls Adolescent Early Marriage and pregnancy in kurdistan statistics..laws ..and Health and Educational consequences”

Kurdistan High Council for Women's Affairs and in coordination with the General Directorate of Coordination, Development and Cooperation (Ministry of Planning) and other governmental sectors, as well as a group of academic researchers organized a study session on the girls' adolescents' early marriage and pregnancy. This event has been organized on the occasion of the «World Population Day» activities and in partnership with United Nations Populations Fund UNFPA, Erbil Office .

The session has commenced by speech from Ms. Pakhshan Zangana, the Secretary General for Kurdistan High Council for Women's Affairs KHCW, as well as speech of Representatives from the Ministry of Planning and UNFPA who unanimously affirmed the priority of this issue and the need to be analyzed in- depth and to find ways out to reduce the phenomenon of girls adolescent marriage and pregnancy.

In all, five research papers were presented during the session and prepared by university researchers and specialists and they were on the following topics:

1. The current situation and the Kurdistan Regional Statistics about Adolescents Early



Marriage and Pregnancy: the researcher has shed the light on the reality and in figures as follows: - The proportion of girls adolescents married under the age of 18 is 24 % - The proportion of girls adolescent married under the age of 15 is 6 % - Adolescents birth rate ages 15-19 years is 80 per 1000 births .



effects in the long run.

2. The Legal Situation: The analysis showed that, according to Iraqi law, the marriage capability is the completion of the mind and reaching the age of 18, but the law provides that the judge can authorize the marriage of girls at the age of 15 (16 years old in the Kurdistan Region) if her physical eligibility and ability of mind, are proved and for sure with the consent of the guardian. The research found that the existence of legitimate and legal basis will encourage increasing the phenomenon in the country and thus reversing its negative

3. Health Consequences: the research paper shed the light on the dimensions and the health effects of the girls' adolescents' early marriage and pregnancy and from the following aspects: - Mental health problems associated with their psycho - social development. - Sexual development problems. - Reproductive health problems (teenage pregnancy), maternal diseases and deaths. - Sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS. - Accidents and injuries. - Drug addiction, smoking and alcoholism.

- Public health problems.
 - Nutrition problems.
 - Some communicable diseases like tuberculosis, intestinal parasites and schistosomiasis.
4. Educational Consequences: the research paper shed the light on bad consequences and negativity of early marriage, as follows:
- Drooping out from the school
 - Delay schooling
 - Postpone the study
 - Intermittent communicate in the study.
 - The trend to join evening classes
 - Orientation towards external examinations (at puberty)
 - Increasing the proportion of women incompetent and unqualified that leading to decrease their chances of find proper jobs, or move towards unskilled labor
 - Increase the unemployment rate among the women
 - The impact of poor education of women for generations to come.
 - And there is also a negative consequence in the field of psycho-social during the schooling period.

The session has included an extensive discussion of the above mentioned research papers and many recommendations came out by the end of the discussions that included three levels: the strategic level, programming and services.

Finally it was agreed to compile the research papers in a special booklet that will be printed and used in special meetings with the decision makers in order to activate the specific recommendations to mitigate this phenomenon.



UNFPA Iraq Support Establishing National Base for service providers to women survive from VAW

UNFPA in Iraq in collaboration with the Ministries of Health, Interior and non-governmental organizations has organized 10 workshops in the federal government and the province of Kurdistan to train more than 350 Iraqi so far. The Fund during the past year trained number of Iraqis in the ministries of health, MOLSA, MOI, & the NGOs to work according to toolkits promote the skills of trainers in combating VAW against women. The UNFPA hired regional experts including CAWTER Center.

During the last year UNFPA has supported producing 4 toolkits dedicated to family protection departments at the Ministry of Interior to help its members to detect cases of violence against women and to distinguish them from other cases. It covers communication skills with battered women and collecting information and conduct interviews of investigation for cases of violence against women in particular. And a toolkit dedicated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and other toolkit to the NGOs those have the themes of communication and negotiation skills among family members in cases of domestic violence for social workers, humanitarian and feminist organizations involved in combating violence against women. As well conduct advocacy campaign to support establishing shelters for women survive from VAW. The fourth toolkit is to strengthen the capacity of health providers for women survivors of violence in Iraq.



Women Reproductive Health in Domiz: Supporting Deliveries and New Beginnings in the Camp

The family of Abu Mohammed used to live in Damascus, he and his wife Um Mohammed, had two lovely kids Rojin who is five years old and Mohammed who is two and half years old.

With the violence reaching Damascus in the summer of 2012, the family decided on leaving to Kurdistan, they made their move late in August of 2012, around the same time Um Mohammed discovered that she is pregnant. Knowing that she exceptionally frightened, since that her last two pregnancies were very complicated and the deliveries were accompanied by heavy bleeding and blood loss.

After a month and a half in Domiz, she was advised to have antenatal care, and around that time the Reproductive Health Clinic, part of the intervention of the Department of Health in Duhok, was newly established and was supported with UNFPA RH kits. Um Mohammed got two antenatal care visits and the pregnancy was followed up by the staff supported by UNFPA.

On the 14th of April, at 7:00 AM, a Sunday morning, Um Mohammed started to feel some contractions, she reached the clinic at 8:00 AM where she was seen by the midwife who confirmed that Um Mohammed was in labor, the ambulance was contacted and the midwife was ready to head to the hospital with Um Mohammed for delivery.



Meanwhile, the Gynecologist arrived and immediately he made his judgment that the Um Mohammed is in the second stage of labor and that the lady can't be transferred to the hospital.

In no time one of the rooms inside the clinic was transformed into a makeshift delivery room, using RH kits 6A that was provided by UNFPA, the doctor and the midwife assisted the delivery and by 9:30 a new beautiful baby boy came to life. The new born and his mother are in very good health, the mother

took advantage of the family planning services offered at the clinic and she is now an advocate of health services provided at the clinic.

This is one of many touching stories of Syrian women who get the services they need from the Reproductive Health Clinic supported by UNFPA in Domiz Camp. This clinic is receiving about 100 women daily who are seeking reproductive health information and services related to Family Planning, Antenatal and Prenatal Care and Gender Based Violence.



Joint programs: Kurdistan Regional Government and UNFPA (United Nations Population Funds)

Organized by the General Directorate of Coordination and Development Cooperation (KRG, Ministry of Planning) in partnership with the line ministries and UNFPA, a meeting to review programs supported by UNFPA in the region. Participated in the meeting: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Culture and Youth and the High Council for Women

The UNFPA presentations covered 4 components with the main achievements and futures plans of action: Reproductive health program, youth program, Population and

Development Programme and the Gender Equality programme. UNFPA also presented programs for youth (life skills and employment) proposed for co-financing.

Participants concluded several recommendations and systematic follow-up and sustainability of all programmes. The final documents will be disseminated to all participants. It was agreed also to follow up some special programs and the proposed programs for cost-sharing with UN agencies and Line ministries.

The participants agreed to support programs and to hold a meeting later in order to analyze the results.

Ministry of Health in KRG integrating health services to Women Survivors of VAW into Health Centers and Hospitals

Ministry of Health in Kurdistan Region and in cooperation with United Nations Populations Fund UNFPA organized the first training workshop for health sector staff on providing health care for women survivors of violence inside health centers and hospitals. A total of 25 staff comprising on 11 doctors and 14 health support staff from Erbil, Duhok and Sulaimaniyah governorates. The workshop was centered around providing techniques on reception, psychological support, examination, treatment, case management and guidance. Worth mentioning the training materials used in the workshop were taken from the specific training manual has been developed by national experts and Center for Arab Women for Training and Research CAWTER. The workshop was implemented by ZHIAN organization an Erbil based local NGO specialized in health field.



Supported by the UNFPA

From a battered housewife, to an activist and a psychologist for the survivors of domestic violence.

My name is Shatha, an Iraqi woman in my thirties. I lived in a moderate family, until I married my cousin and started our life journey together with its better or worse. My husband worked as a laborer in the strenuous construction industry. I was a housewife and a mom of five. My eldest was 6 years old, which left me no space to think of using my degree in Law and Political Sciences. When my husband was killed in one of the terrorism movements in Iraq, I suffered even more with his parents who will support my kids. The non-stop grief and problems brought me to ashes. From this struggle, I decided to recourse to the Women for Peace Organization WforP (NGO) to ease my self-struggle, and just maybe, to find a light of hope or help, to ease my pain from people I barely knew. One of the ladies working in WforP welcomed me and asked me to speak freely, to speak my mind and let it all out. I said: "The grandparents of my kids abused me, they dared to hit me after giving me daily insults. I want to work, I want to find a solution...I might study, go back to my parents house... or...I could commit suicide...I don't know...". WforP offered me a job with them, "Shatha, you have to decide what you want and take a hold of your own life", my answer was: "I don't know...maybe..".

This was just the beginning, I started working with WforP with working hours that were suitable to my family situation, the payment may have been humble but it provided some of the basic needs of my children, and created a hope for me in

having humanitarian missions and rights towards myself, my children and my community. I can help other women who are like me, through consulting sessions and through small projects the WforP provided in cooperation with my city's local council. Since then, my passion and interest towards this work increased and I decided to work as a feminist activist to help women like me, devoting myself to serve women who suffered like I did. But, I lacked experience, because this type of work needs someone with skills in Psychology.

When the WforP with the support of the UNFPA, arranged training workshops for working women who survived from the violence, and with the UNFPA preparing the special guide to deal with the violence against women cases who recourse to the organizations of the civil community to ask for possible help and after the UNFPA contributed in training Iraqi experts to help them train in this, I was one of the beneficiaries from those workshops. This training was in the program of combating Violence Against Women CVAW, which goal is to support the workers in many sectors (health, education, labor and police) and to support the NGOs in dealing with the survivors of violence in the legal and psychological listening centers.

When I joined one of these workshops to expand my experience in this field, I was able to learn interviewing skills, how to use the guidance skills in helping a battered woman speak about her problem, specially the listening skills, asking questions, dealing with

silence, dealing with sadness, and dealing with fighting back and manipulation. I used to lack all these skills, and I learned how to measure the danger each battered woman is facing in her environment, through a group of indications and proofs that can help with the evaluation of this danger, and how to deal with it in a practical way, through role-playing during workshops. After that, I started the practical implementations in practicing these skills in the center where the survivors of violence are welcomed, and even in WforP, which deals directly and repeatedly with the survivors.

The UNFPA helped me and my colleagues when they provided training opportunities and the materials needed to grow our professional skills, which helped us develop the capabilities of other women.

The mission of the UNFPA in providing such opportunities and national expertise did not stop when the workshops ended; on the contrary, they took it to themselves to follow up with violence cases like mine.

With all this support, I became distinguished in my humanitarian activities and I started working in the law field in one of the courts, to guide the women who are on the verge of divorce, providing services, supporting them and introducing them to their options. And with this I became an efficient activist, who was able after the training, to provide psychological guidance to the survivors of domestic violence, becoming an example of success and change for the better.