

ATFALNA

FOREWORD

by Dr. Manoncourt, UNICEF Egypt Representative



I am delighted to introduce you to the first issue of our newsletter *Atfalna* or 'Our Children.'

UNICEF has been supporting Government and civil society partners in Egypt for more than 55 years but

we can't take for granted that our friends and partners always know what we do - as we evolve and change over time. This year marks the start

of our new five year Country Programme and therefore we thought it important to reflect and share highlights of our work.

The purpose of the newsletter is to provide a snapshot of our activities over a six-month period by focusing the spotlight on children's issues, highlighting achievements, profiling different partners, signaling current and future events and informing you on staff movements. We hope you find this publication useful in getting to know us better. We look forward to your suggestions and comments.

AVIAN INFLUENZA

On the 17th of February 2006, the Avian Influenza outbreak in domestic poultry in Egypt started. On the 17th of March, the first human death occurred. By June 2007, 37 human cases had been confirmed, of which 15 have been fatal. Among these infections, children are very vulnerable to the epidemic due to their weaker immunization system and habit of playing with birds and animals. Egyptian children accounted for 18 of the infections and 3 deaths.

In regard to this situation, UNICEF, the UN organization leading communication for behavioral change around the issue of avian influenza, undertook a number of community education interventions in 7 high risk governorates with the "Raidat" programme of the Ministry of Health and Population.

In late 2006, a community survey was conducted to determine knowledge, attitudes and practices

related to avian influenza, successfully interviewing approximately 3,300 households. Findings reveal that the Egyptian population has good general knowledge, although there are visible differences according to economical and educational status, as well as geographical location.

"This survey really helps us refine our interventions on avian influenza. It gives us the opportunity of understanding the situation in a systematic manner based on scientific data, which was impossible previously," said Dr Sahar Hegazi, UNICEF Programme Communication Specialist. "The findings clearly show us that the government's campaign has been positive. Nevertheless, UNICEF, the Ministry of Health, and other partners need to work together to fine-tune our communication and strengthen the role of mass media in order to bridge the visible gaps in practices."

THE SUCCESS OF THE NEONATAL RESUSCITATION TRAINING PROJECT

The Ministry of Health and Population, in partnership with the United Nations Resident Coordinator office, the American Academy of Pediatrics, UNICEF, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the Latter Day Saint Charities, organized a successful Neonatal Resuscitation Training Course in January 2007 in Ain El Sokhna.



Participants during the Ain El Sokhna workshop

UNICEF, along with partners, provided technical, operational and financial support to this much-needed training course, recognizing that one million babies worldwide die each year due to breathing difficulties at birth and that the infant mortality

rate in Egypt is estimated at 33 per 1000 live births. (DHS, 2005)

This initiative, which aims at training a sufficient number of delivery personnel to ensure that every delivery is assisted by one qualified staff trained on neonatal resuscitation, was organized in three training courses. The last one, held in Ain El Sokhna, was composed of 150 doctors from Egypt and the region who were successfully trained. The same training events will continue this year under the umbrella of the Government's Perinatal Care Program focused on Upper Egypt, a region where addressing perinatal deaths is a priority need.

EGYPT STATISTICS

- **73 Million** Egyptians
- **32%** of the population is **under 15 years old**
- **29%** of the population is illiterate
- **11% of children** between the ages of 6 and 18 years old **never enrolled in basic education**
- Life Expectancy at birth is **71 years old**

Source: CAPMAS, 2006
Census

Inside this issue:

- UNICEF's partnerships with the private sector to further development **2**
- Khaled Abol Naga appointed Goodwill Ambassador **3**
- Alexandria's unique Child Protection Mechanism **3**
- About UNICEF **4**
- Fresh progress towards the elimination of FGM/C in Egypt **4**

UNICEF's PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

EFG-Hermes and Street Children

In Egypt, the presence and safety of street children is an issue of major concern. Up to one million children, with an average age of 13, live on the streets in its major cities. Underlying problems that force children onto the street are poverty, high drop out rates, and the breakdown of families in conjunction with the absence of a strong social care system.

Since 2003, UNICEF, together with the Government and various NGOs, has initiated and supported projects that aid street children, providing them with services such as temporary housing, vocational training, education and ultimately reintegrating them with their families. After a 2006 assessment of

NGOs which confirmed that the NGOs required institutional support to adequately confront the increasing problem of street children, a long-term institutional strengthening programme was initiated in partnership with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM).

In support of this programme, UNICEF collaborated with EFG-Hermes. This is a partnership with the Arab World's premier investment banking firm and the market leader in securities brokerage, asset management, investment banking, private equity and research, established in 1984.

With a pledge of \$500,000, EFG-Hermes' support is vital to the maintenance of the programme, which aims to prevent children from living in the street, to protect, monitor, advocate for street-children; and to reach over 146,000 children per year, primarily in schools and at reception centres for street children.



Children singing at the HIV/AIDS Campaign Launch in 2006

The Coca-Cola Company and Unite for Children against HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C

Egypt, which remains a country with low HIV prevalence in the general population, has seen an exponential rise

in the reported number of HIV cases since 1990. Recent evidence shows that Egypt might already be facing a concentrated epidemic among most-at-risk populations.

UNICEF and The Coca-Cola Company have a global cooperation agreement and have successfully been working together on Polio Eradication efforts in Egypt since 2001 and on HIV/AIDS since 2003.

In 2006, UNICEF and The Coca-Cola Company, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Population, launched the five-year Unite for Children Against AIDS and Hepatitis C Campaign in Egypt. The objective of the UNICEF-Coca Cola partnership is to address HIV/AIDS through prevention and education by breaking the stigma related to HIV/AIDS.

As part of this partnership, the Coca-Cola Company has conducted several activities such as employee education sessions, the development of information, education and communication materials, the promotion of voluntary confidential testing and counseling, and a series of awareness concerts starring famous Middle Eastern artists. The campaign was a ground breaking initiative to tackle mass communication through radio spots, TVC productions and outdoor advertisement, all targeting youth and promoting awareness about HIV/AIDS.

ExxonMobil and the Adolescent Development Programme

In Egypt, young people between the ages of 10 and 24 constitute 31% of the Egyptian population and they often face many obstacles when it comes to their participation and development. In support of Egyptian adolescents, UNICEF and ExxonMobil, one of the largest oil and gas companies in the world, announced their partnership and ExxonMobil's support of UNICEF's Adolescent Development Programme, through its donation of 60 computers to two NGOs based in Alexandria. These computers, which will be used in youth centres in seven governorates, symbolize the beginning of a long-term partnership between ExxonMobil and UNICEF for the future of Egypt's youth.

As Dr. Manoncourt, UNICEF Egypt Representative, stressed, "The importance of the large number of youth in Egypt, and the implications it has for this country's growth and development, underscore the need for the active participation of corporate citizens such as ExxonMobil Egypt."

Mariott hotels Egypt partner with UNICEF for Egypt's children

Mariott hotels in Egypt will launch a campaign starting in July to raise awareness among their clients about the issues facing Egyptian children. Mariott Egypt will focus on the need for quality education, adolescent development and prevention against HIV/AIDS, through the presentation of information cards and posters in its hotels and advertisements in national newspapers.



Goodwill Ambassador Khaled Abol Naga with UNICEF Egypt Representative Dr. Erma Manoncourt

KHALED ABOL NAGA APPOINTED GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

The star of numerous Egyptian movies as well as a top personality on television and radio, Khaled Abol Naga joins some 200 celebrities from around the world who work voluntarily with UNICEF to highlight children's issues and concerns.

"This is a role I have wanted for so long," Mr. Abol Naga said following a briefing by senior UNICEF staff at the agency's Cairo office. "I believe that, because of my position, I can speak out on issues that we find hard to talk about, like HIV/AIDS and Fe-

male Genital Mutilation." Mr. Abol Naga said he hoped to be able to reach young people in particular, "to release the untapped energy that the younger generation have, that just needs to be channeled."

Even before his formal appointment, Mr. Abol Naga had been working to help Egyptian children. For instance, he was part of UNICEF's Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS and Hepatitis C Campaign, which was launched in November, 2006.

ALEXANDRIA'S UNIQUE CHILD PROTECTION MECHANISM

Alexandria has always been known as a city of development initiatives and progress but the Governorate took this vision a step further when the city declared itself child-friendly in 2005. As part of this new approach, 24 governmental agencies, 9 NGOs and 8 youth centers, in cooperation with UNICEF and the Arab Urban Development Institute in Riyadh, initiated the institutionalization of the Child Protection Mechanism. It was implemented in three districts of the city in 2006 and aims at identifying, monitoring and protecting children at risk.

On the 19th of June 2007, UNICEF Egypt Representative Dr. Manoncourt met with the governor of Alexandria and attended the quarterly meeting of the "Government Child Protection Committee" in order to assess the programme's

achievements after a year of implementation.

The participants, including NGO representatives and governmental actors, all applauded the success of the Child Protection Mechanism, highlighting its importance as a model for Egypt and the Middle East, as its realization led to the inclusion of a "Child Protection Committee in each Governorate and District" in the modified draft child law to be presented to parliament in November 2007.

This mechanism achieved additional tangible results, including: a quantitative survey assessing the socio-economic situation of children in eight squatter areas; the identification of 5513 children at risk, providing them with preventive and protective measures; the awareness raising of mothers and community

members on childcare and protection; the building of capacities of governmental and non-governmental partners on technical and managerial issues; and the development and empowerment of 1008 adolescents through constructive recreational activities.

All participants asserted that a lot of work still lay ahead and that it was important to build on this success to develop the programme and expand it. "In order for the Mechanism to achieve sustainability, partnerships with the private sector are indispensable. We need to advocate for Child rights as the collective responsibility of State and society," said Nivine El-Kabbag, UNICEF Egypt Protection Officer.

PROFILE



Our featured partner this issue is Mr. Alaa Abdel Khaleq, Director of the National Foundation for Family and Community Development (NFFCD), Advisor to the Protection Programme in Alexandria, and ex-Head of the Alexandria Solidarity Directorate. This long-time partner of UNICEF has extensive experience in social development, and is widely reputed for building alliances and enhancing networks.

The NFFCD is a foundation that falls under the supervision of Ministry of Social Solidarity and provides quality services to children, families, the elderly and communities while managing the Child Protection Mechanism in Alexandria.

As Mr. Abdel Khaleq said, "Children are not private properties that belong to their parents, but they have a complete set of rights that should be fulfilled without delay. The partners in implementing the Child Protection Mechanism are all working together to establish a protective environment that empowers children and that generates effective citizens who positively participate in development."

GOOD NEWS!!

WHO and UNICEF recently announced that Egypt is now out of the list of Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus (MNT) Endemic countries. This is the successful outcome of the MNT elimination programme, which started in 2001, under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Population.

In May 2007, the Ministry of Health, in partnership with UNICEF, USAID, Rotary International and the Japanese government, conducted National Immunization Days (NIDs) for Polio, vaccinating 11 Million children under-5, in order to sustain Egypt as a polio-free country. Reminder: Egypt was declared Polio-free in 2006.

Bon voyage!

To Roumiana Gantcheva, our former Monitoring and Evaluation specialist, who left the UNICEF Egypt country office to take up the position of Monitoring and Evaluation Senior Specialist in the UNICEF South Africa office.

To Simon Ingram, our former Chief of Communications, who left the UNICEF Egypt Country office to take up the position of Chief of Communication in the UNICEF Laos Office.

About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in 155 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

In Egypt, UNICEF has been working with the Government and people of Egypt since 1954 to protect and nurture the nation's children. UNICEF currently supports Egypt in various ways as the country strives to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals. The new 2007-2011 Country Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Egypt guides the organization's work in areas such as Child Protection, Young Child Survival and Development, HIV/AIDS, Adolescent Development and Education.

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Fresh progress toward the elimination of female genital mutilation/cutting in Egypt

The momentum to completely eliminate female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in Egypt accelerated at the end of June with the passage of a ministerial decree and an anti-FGM/C statement by the country's top Muslim institution. A decree was issued by the Minister of Health and Population on the 28th of June, fully criminalizing FGM/C while Al-Azhar Supreme Council of Islamic Research, the highest religious authority in Egypt, simultaneously issued a statement saying FGM/C had no basis in core Islamic law or any of its partial provisions and that it was a harmful practice that should not be practiced.

Fresh action was initiated on several fronts after the FGM/C-related June death of a 12 year-old girl in Upper Egypt in. During the Third Regional Conference on Violence against Children, First Lady Suzanne Mubarak dedicated a minute of silence to the recent child FGM/C victim. She announced the launch of a national campaign aimed at drawing more attention to the harmful practice and accelerating efforts to legally ban FGM/C. The First Lady also announced the amendment of the Child Law 1996, which in addition to banning FGM/C also addresses other child rights issues.

"UNICEF will fully support the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood, the Ministry of Health and Population, and all partners to help fully implement the strengthened law and educate people on its meaning. The law could serve as the mechanism for members of communities to report violators and bring a quick end to this extremely harmful practice," said UNICEF Egypt Representative Dr. Erma Manoncourt.

Since 2003, and under the leadership of National Council of Childhood and Motherhood, UNICEF has been active in the FGM/C issue in Egypt by promoting education and awareness-raising and other activities. A key element of UNICEF's effort is to assist the government in institutionalizing and implementing policies and strategies to eliminate FGM/C. UNICEF will continue supporting the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood, and the proposed related Child Law amendments, and the Ministry of Health and Population in educating the medical professionals and the public in general about the dangers of FGM/C.

Who's Who at UNICEF EGYPT?

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An estimated three million girls and women are subjected to FGM/C each year on the African continent, including Egypt. FGM/C is an explicit violation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which turns 18 this year. In Egypt the vast majority of FGM/C procedures are performed by trained medical personnel, according to the 2005 Egypt Demographic and Health Survey.

Minya, June 2006: Reda's Story

Looking in her eyes you can easily feel the horror she was going through that day. As Reda Hassan recounted the moment which unalterably changed her life, she stared with an empty look into space. "My mother called a daya (village midwife) over to our house, because she said I needed to be purified. Then it all happened. I couldn't sleep at all that night. I was scared, shocked and cried for help".

When she was "circumcised" as the practice is called in Egypt, Reda was only 12 years old. Many women, like Reda, here in Minya about 250 kilometers south of Cairo, are changing their minds about female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). In Minya, UNICEF supports the Better Life Association for Comprehensive Development (BLACD), a local NGO.

The Programme is based on an innovative community mobilization strategy, using individuals who have already chosen to stand against FGM/C, and who have found a new positive path for themselves and their families by rejecting the practice. They are called "positive deviants" and they undertake awareness-raising activities within their community to educate people on the harms of FGM/C and persuade them to abandon the practice. Reda's daughter, Sabrin, is one of them. She was also the one who convinced her mother against the practice. "I don't want my girls to suffer what I suffered", said Reda, when asked why she decided not to circumcise her daughters.

Upcoming Events 2007:

- World Breastfeeding Week— 1st to 7th of August
- International Literacy Day— 5th of September
- Pan-African Conference on Child (Cairo-plus 5) - October (TBC)
- World Poverty Day/ World Food Day—17th of October
- UN Day—24th of October
- 18th Anniversary of the CRC and Universal Children's Day—20th of November
- 2nd Anniversary of Unite for Children Campaign—23rd of November
- Launch of the State of the World's Children Report—11th of December