

## EU Support to Egypt's National Population Strategy

Newsletter April 1 – June 31

### Pope Tawadros II signs declarations to support family planning and combat FGM and violence against women with the EU, UNFPA



Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria, and Patriarch of the See of St Mark signed three declarations to support family planning and combat female genital mutilation (FGM) as well as confirm a zero tolerance approach to all forms of violence against women in an event under the European Union (EU) Support to Egypt's National Population Strategy project.

The event took place on April 15 at the Seat of the Coptic Orthodox Pope, St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral and was chaired by Pope Tawadros II, Pope of the Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark and HG Bishop Yoliou, the Bishop and director of the Bishoprific of Public, Ecumenical, and Social Services (BLESS).

The signing also brought together President of the National Council for Women Dr Maya Morsy, Secretary General of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood Dr Sahar al-Sonbaty, Ambassador Christian Berger, Head of the European Union Delegation to Egypt, Head of Development and Business Cooperation at the Norwegian Embassy in Cairo Counsellor Arild Oksnevad, and UNFPA Representative Mrs Frederika Meijer.

*"In its declaration, the Coptic Orthodox Church recognized the importance of family planning, condemned FGM as "an evident violation of human rights," and rejected all forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence against women and girls. The Church also stipulates that all women have the right to healthy and safe lives free from all forms of violence whether at home, at work or in public spaces.*

The declarations were circulated among the public, as well as posted around 120 churches.

Under the EU Support to Egypt's National Population Strategy project, UNFPA partners with faith-based organizations such as the Bishop and director of the Bishoprific of Public, Ecumenical, and Social Services (BLESS) and Al-Azhar University's International Islamic Center for Population Studies and Research to engage religious leaders to amplify the project's mandate among their communities.





## INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC CENTER FOR POPULATION STUDIES AND RESEARCH LAUNCHES POPULATION CURRICULUM UNDER EU PROJECT

Al-Azhar University's International Islamic Center for Population Studies and Research (IICPSR) and UNFPA launched the Population Education Curriculum and the Family Planning and the Opinions of Contemporary Imams of Jurisprudence manual, with the support of the EU on June 27. The event took place at Al-Azhar Conference Center in the attendance of Dr. Nazir Ayad, Secretary-General of Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy, Dr. Gamal Sorour, Director of IICPSR, UNFPA Representative in Egypt Frederika Meijer, and Ambassador of the EU to Egypt, Christian Berger.

The Population Education Curriculum was updated by a group of experts headed by Dr. Sorour and will be used as a curriculum for the first time. It will be taught in more than 56 faculties related to sciences and religion.

Its chapters tackle the demography, economic and water resources in the Islamic world as well as human development. Other chapters tackle population and health, reproductive health and family planning as well as religious perspective on population issues including violence against women and harmful practices.

The manual on the other hand brings to light the Islamic perspective on family planning from the most prestigious religious leaders in Egypt. It will also be used by religious leaders from the Ministry of Endowments and students from al-Azhar University.

*Both the curriculum and the manual are important tools that can be used by religious leaders, policy makers, researchers, civil society and development agencies, not only Egypt and Arab States region, but also other countries with Muslim populations.*

## Ministry of Health and Population, UNFPA continue training of service providers, with EU support

The Ministry of Health and Population and UNFPA continued building the capacity of physicians and nurses from different governorates during the second quarter of 2021, to ensure the efficient provision of family planning methods, under the EU Support to Egypt's National Population Strategy project. One hundred and four physicians from 12 governorates were trained on the latest medical eligibility criteria for contraceptive use, and clinical techniques for insertion and removal of subdermal implants "Implanon NXT."

The training brought together physicians from Assiut, Beheira, Giza, Daqahliya, Sharqeya, Fayoum, Menufiya, Minya, New Valley, Damietta, Kafr al-Sheikh and Matrouh.

Twenty-eight other physicians from Beheira, Cairo, Daqahliya, Giza, Qena, and the Red Sea were also trained as trainers on the insertion and removal of subdermal implants "Implanon" and related eligibility criteria to ensure the sustainability of on the job trainings.







Moreover, family planning nurses from 17 governorates were trained how to offer better counseling for women, and offer advice on how to avoid pitfalls related to contraceptives. The nurses were also trained on infection control and management of family planning clinics.

The training brought together 591 nurses from Assuit, Alexandria, Beni Suef, Beheira, Cairo, Daqahleya, Damietta, Fayoum, Gharbeya, Giza, Kafr al-Sheikh, Minya, New Valley, Qaliubiya, Sharqeya, South Sinai and Suez.

One hundred and forty service providers also attended workshops in 15 hospitals in Daqahleya, Gharbeya, Qaliubiya and Sharqeya to build their capacity on the effective provision of immediate postpartum contraception at hospital level, including trans-C-section IUD insertion. Participants were also trained on the medical eligibility criteria for family planning methods suitable immediately after delivery.

The trainings aim at strengthening reproductive health and family planning services provided by the Ministry of Health and Population, and enhancing the capacities of service providers to provide quality services.



## Integrating family planning in maternal and neonatal service delivery points

Integrating family planning in maternal and neonatal service delivery points is important to avoid unwanted pregnancies. To that end, 398 primary healthcare and immunization nurses from 194 service delivery points in Qaliubiya were trained on family planning issues in May and June.

The trainings relied on a comprehensive training package that includes information for women during antenatal care visits about the importance of birth spacing, and the importance of immediate postpartum contraception.

Such information is dispensed during postnatal visits, and during the immunization of newborns.

**INTEGRATING FAMILY PLANNING COUNSELLING IN MATERNAL AND NEONATAL SERVICE DELIVERY POINTS HELPS IN AVOIDING UNWANTED PREGNANCIES**, where women are informed during their last trimester of pregnancy and during newborn immunization about the importance of seeking immediate postpartum contraception. New and expectant mothers are also informed about importance of birth spacing both for the physical and mental health of the mother and her newborn.

## Outreach workers trained on disseminating family planning information

A total of 1205 outreach workers affiliated with the Ministry of Health and Population were oriented with different skills and knowledge in order to disseminate information about family planning within their communities, including through door-to-door visits.

The trainings, which took place between April and June, brought together outreach workers from 16 governorates including Alexandria, Beni Suef, Beheira, Cairo, Daqahleya, Damietta, Fayoum, Gharbeya, Giza, Kafr El-Sheikh, New Valley, Qaliubiya, Sharqeya, Ismailia, Minya, and Port Said.

The workshop enhanced their knowledge on the importance of promoting family planning services, disseminating family planning messages, the risks of repeated pregnancy and the importance of birth spacing, appropriate contraceptive methods for postpartum period, and dispelling misconceptions around family planning during the postpartum period.

The workshop also honed outreach workers' communication skills to be able to communicate relevant messages effectively.

## Enhancing youth friendly services provision

Providing young people with necessary information and encouraging them to seek youth-friendly services (YFS) is essential in enabling them to make responsible and informed reproductive health decisions.

In order to enhance the provision of reproductive health services in Primary Healthcare Units, 299 staff members from 248 service delivery points attended workshops orienting them on using training manuals to better provide effective reproductive health services to young people.

The manuals focused on reproductive health and family planning needs of young people as well as girl empowerment.

The trainings took place in Kafr al-Sheikh, Fayoum and Daqahleya in April and May.

One of the EU project's main objectives is to educate young people and people in reproductive age and raise their awareness on family planning and the value of smaller family size.

*Youth-friendly services are offered in an inviting way to encourage young people to seek assistance when needed without fear of discrimination and stigma.*

## Family planning clinics' accreditation system introduced in Matrouh

Eight more governorates were oriented on the family planning accreditation system "Al-Wessam" during the second quarter of 2021, where 16 four-days training workshops were held for 260 family planning directors, nurse supervisors, and statisticians.

Al-Wessam is an accreditation system where family planning units across Egypt are assessed based on a set of indicators and criteria set by the Ministry of Health and Population, and awarded based on their score.

The participants were trained on automated registration, effective supervision, and analysis of quality indicators in workshops that took place in Beheira, Cairo, Menufiya, Fayoum, Gharbeya, Kafr al-Sheikh, Red Sea and Qalubiya.

The Ministry of Health and Population also held an orientation session in the Red Sea in April, where 14 participants were briefed on the system, the quality indicators, and the importance of quality assurance in family planning service provision.

An additional 10 family planning clinics in Beni Suef governorate were awarded the logo of excellence "Al-Wessam" after evaluating their performance against the quality measures for the provision of family planning services.



## Family planning campaigns reach remote communities

The Ministry of Health and Population's Family Planning Sector, in collaboration with UNFPA, held another round of the quarterly "Your Right to Plan" campaign in 2021.

*The campaign aimed to provide access to family planning and reproductive health services, raise community awareness and increase demand for family planning services through fixed and mobile clinics, and maternal and child health centers.*

It reached a total of 313,105 women with family planning counseling, services and methods.

Community-based distribution campaigns via mobile clinics were also held to increase access and use of family planning services, particularly in the under-served rural areas. The campaigns reached 13,577 women with family planning methods in nine governorates; Assuit, Sharqeya, Beheira, Qaliubiya, Giza, Menufiya, Damietta, Fayoum and Minya.

Over 750 awareness sessions were also held on the importance of family planning and birth spacing, reaching 12,826 beneficiaries.

