

News from the region



Tbilisi – Launch of the new EC/UNFPA Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucasus (RHIYC)

On 13 June 2006, the United Nations Population Fund held an official launch event in Tbilisi for its three-year regional project Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucasus (RHIYC). The Project is funded by the European Union, UNFPA and EPF. RHIYC is a large scale multi partner project, developed through active participation of youth in three Caucasus countries. The project aims to build national capacity and regional partnerships to improve the sexual and reproductive health status of youth in the South Caucasus. The successful implementation of the project will be a step forward towards bringing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the South Caucasus closer to international standards. By achieving its goals, the project will assist countries in reaching the Millennium Development Goals and contribute to the agenda of European integration.



Brainstorming the new youth friendly SRHR materials to reach young people in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

A regional meeting to develop youth friendly information materials about sexual and reproductive health took place in Tbilisi on 18-21 September 2006. Representatives of NGOs, scientific research centres, EPF and youth organizations participated in the meeting, which was arranged by UNFPA offices within the framework of RHIYC Project. Youth-friendly materials on puberty, childbirth, fertility regulation, STIs, HIV/AIDS, gender equality and gender based violence will be developed. The participants also concentrated on strategies in reaching vulnerable groups and internally displaced persons in the region.



Training of SRHR for Peer Educators in Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan

Within the framework of the RHIYC Project Peer Educator trainings have been conducted in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. After reviewing the participation, 15 finalists have been selected in Armenia. In Azerbaijan, 35 young peer educators from 30 different countries (Arab States, Africa, Europe and Central Asia) gathered in Baku to share knowledge of responsible behaviour. In Georgia 20 young people have participated in 5 day intensive training. The training of 200 Youth Peer Educators on SRHR issues will be finished by December 2006 in Georgia.

News from Armenia

Mapping for 32 prospective youth friendly health services centers

In August –September 2006, within the framework of the RHIYC, the Pan Armenian Family Health Association conducted a mapping exercise for 32 prospective youth friendly health service centres. 20 new centres are planned throughout Armenia with 20 more centres will be opened in the capital city of Yerevan. In each of the 10 regions, one centre will be attached to a healthcare institution, and another established within the education sector.

News from Azerbaijan

Acting Centre of Young People - Communication network of young people to improve the situation of SRHR in Azerbaijan

The Acting Centre of Young People (ACYP) is an interactive communication network of young people from NGOs and UN-operated youth coordinating agencies in Azerbaijan that have the goal of improving the situation of sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people in Azerbaijan. Facilitators of the centre assist in advancing and coordinating discussions such as reproductive health issues, gender equality, elaboration of the national condom brand, etc. Created in early August 2006 within the framework of RHIYC, ACYP currently comprises more than 150 members, and the number of young people involved is increasing from day to day. More than 20 different sessions on RH-related issues have taken place. Among them: a) active involvement of civil society and government stakeholders in the problems of youth, b) right reflection of youth related concerns by media, c) contributing to establishing youth friendly health services environment, d) raising awareness of young people about their S&RH

News from Georgia



and rights, e) social marketing of affordable contraception, f) gender equality, etc.

UNFPA and State Department of Youth Affairs under Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sports cooperate in SRHR Issues for youth

On 9 August, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the State Department of Youth Affairs under Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sports (MoC) of Georgia signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Sagarejo. This event marked the beginning of cooperation between UNFPA and MoC in raising awareness of youth about their sexual and reproductive health and rights and promoting healthy lifestyle. The educational activities foreseen by the Memorandum will be carried out in the framework of the EU co-funded RHIYC project.

12,000 young people in Georgia become aware of SRHR.

Training in Youth Summer Camps in Georgia

In order to educate youth on their sexual & reproductive health and rights a special "Youth Patriotic Summer Camp program 2006" was developed within the framework of RHIYC to carry out a special training programme for young people in 7 different summer camps (Bazaleti; Lagodexi; Sagaredjo; Bakuriani; Vartsixe; Skhuri and Khelvachauri). The training was organized by the Department of Youth and Sport of Georgia in cooperation with UNFPA. In total more than 12,000 young people became aware of issues related to safer sexual behavior, STI and HIV/AIDS. Camp visitors are 15 to 25 year old students, school pupils, orphan youth and children with disabilities (deaf). Some of them are national minorities (Armenian; Russian; Ossetian; Ingilo).

CEDAW on women's health in Georgia

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women considered during its 56th session the second and third combined report of Georgia. The Committee recommended that the Georgian government put in place a broad framework for health services in line with its General Recommendation on women and health. The Committee requested the government of Georgia to include in the next report such information on women's health as contraceptive prevalence rate, abortion rate and access to family planning services. It also requested information on marriages involving girls under 18. (Source: Astra Newsletter, www.astra.org.pl)

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/36sess.htm>

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/7031690.html>

Law on domestic violence

A law on Domestic Violence was adopted in Georgia in May 2006. It includes provisions which may prove to be an important tool to combat domestic violence. The law recognizes crimes committed within the family as crimes, not as disturbances. The law allows police to issue 24 hour restraining orders on the scene of the incidents. The victims are also provided with the right to appeal to administrative courts for protective orders that can last up to three months. Although both orders prohibit the abuser from contacting the victim they are not criminal sanctions. This may prove effective to defend the victims who often hesitate to criminalize the case. The law created room for improved budgetary allocations on gender issues. The government agreed to allocate funds for this from 2008. (source UNFPA Global Survey on Parliamentarians activities to implement the ICPD Programme of Action, www.astra.org.pl)

News from the European Union

MEPs participate in EU 2007 Budget Talks

Negotiations are currently underway between the European Commission and the European Parliament over the 2007 EU Budget. MEPs have suggested language clarifying the issues of sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS within the European Union's Neighbourhood and Partnership financial cooperation. The European Neighbourhood policy is a new policy of the European Union, which will enter into force starting from 2007 and will provide the framework of cooperation with the EU neighbouring countries, including the three South Caucasus Republics. A key element of the European Neighbourhood Policy is the bilateral ENP Action Plans mutually agreed between the EU and each partner country. Currently the ENP Action Plans are under negotiation with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and will be delivered in the late autumn. http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm

Members of the European Parliament and Members of Georgian Parliament discuss the situation of the public health care in Georgia

On 11-12 September Members of the European Parliament visited the Georgian Parliament within the frames of EU-Georgia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee. Among the issues of institutional reforms, protection of human rights, development of the civil society, development of judiciary system etc, the Members have discussed the situation of the public healthcare in Georgia, based on the Statement, prepared by Mr. Tsereteli MP, the Chair of the Healthcare and Social Affairs Committee and EPF Member. The Final Statement and Recommendations, adopted unanimously by MPs and MEPs highlights the importance of the further improvement of the healthcare system and development of human resources.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/euro/pcc/dsca/recommendations_en.htm
<http://www.healthministry.ge/eng/strategy.php>



Young Decision Makers Conference in Helsinki a Success

The Conference of Young Decision Makers from Europe and Asia devoted to the issues of Population and Development took place on 7-8th of September prior to ASEM 6 meeting. The Conference was arranged by Västoliitto together with the European Parliamentary Forum (EPF) on Population and Development under the patronage of the Finnish All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development. 61 participants attended the Conference as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, UNFPA and PAI.

From Azerbaijan, the Young Decision Maker, Mr. Fuad Muradov, MP participated, informing the participants about the situation of reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention of young people in Azerbaijan. The participants discussed the ways to influence the improvement of SRHR legislation situation in their countries.

A Declaration by Young Decision Makers was delivered to the Prime Minister of Finland (Chair of ASEM). In the ASEM meeting the Prime Minister of Netherlands took up the issue of sexuality education for young people as a crucial tool in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

<http://www.asem6.fi/>

European Commission presents results of Eurobarometer on HIV/AIDS

The survey looks into public awareness and citizens' behaviour in the context of the AIDS epidemic. Although the level of awareness regarding HIV/AIDS is generally high, citizens from the Member States which joined the EU in 2004 tend to provide less correct answers. On average, most Europeans are aware of the risks of sharing needles, receiving infected blood or having unprotected sex. Most respondents also declare this led them to take precautions when having sexual intercourse, and seeking stability in the choice of partners. However, misconceptions still remain: for instance, only 40% of respondents know it is not possible to be infected by HIV when kissing on the mouth.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_publication/eurobarometers_en.htm

News from United Nations

A Passage to Hope. Women and International Migration. State of World Population 2006

The report published by UNFPA examines the impact of female labour migration on source and destination countries, the female migrants' contribution to the budgets of their families and communities in home countries and discusses the benefits of globalization as well as its dark sides. The report is available at <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/swpmain.htm>,

Russian version at: http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2006/pdf/ru_sowp06.pdf

Of note...

Youth's Voice - young people talk about their sexual and reproductive health and rights

ASTRA Youth, a network of youth sexual and reproductive health and rights advocates in the CEE and Balkan regions, prepared a report on the status of SRHR of young people. The countries covered by the report include Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovakia. The report is based on the surveys during which the respondents in these countries had been asked about their knowledge and practices on S&R rights, the role of parents, church and school in sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention. Apart from the statistics, each country report presents the information on the status of sexual education in school curricula. The countries overwhelmingly reported a severe lack of such programs in schools. Only 24% of all respondents answered that their school has sexual education lessons. 61.2% of Georgian respondents and 38.8% of all participants do not know that it is possible for a woman to become pregnant during menstruation. Lack of knowledge contributes to the fact that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is growing rapidly in CEE region among young people, especially among girls. Youth's Voice, The report is available at: http://www.astra.org.pl/youth_report.pdf

Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in South Caucasus

The views expressed in the newsletter do not reflect those of the European Commission

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