



IOM MENA celebrates International Youth Day

On International Youth Day on 12 August IOM, along with United Nations (UN) agencies, hosted events across the Middle East and North Africa. IOM Morocco and IOM Tunisia marked the day to emphasize their commitment to youth protection and empowerment.

The theme of this year's International Youth Day is mental health. Good mental health is not only the absence of mental disorders, but "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (WHO 2002).

In 2014, IOM Tunisia has been working with Tunisian youth to raise awareness of the importance of well-managed and informed migration, through national consultations, targeted support, increasing participation of the young women and men already active in civil society organizations, and creating employment opportunities. The involvement and empowerment of youth is a priority in the prevention and protection against the dangers of irregular migration, while supporting youth involvement in democratic processes and local development will affect positively decisions to migrate or invest in their home country ([click here](#) for more information on IOM Tunisia and Youth).

Also on 12 August, 100 young people from the 24 governorates of Tunisia gathered in Bizerte to discuss development questions that matter them, as expressed in young Tunisians' contributions to the UN "[The World We Want](#)" initiative. This consultation – "[Youth and post-2015 Sustainable Development Objectives](#)" – was organized by IOM together with UN Agencies as part of the general consultation taking place in Tunisia this summer to define the development goals the country will strive towards in the next decade.

In a regional project "[Solidarity with children of Maghreb and Mashreq](#)" (SALEMM) funded by the European Commission, IOM Morocco and IOM Tunisia are helping to reduce youth and



A group picture of the young participants in the celebration of the International Youth Day

children's vulnerability to irregular migration from North African countries to Europe. In this project, youth is both target and actor of the activities. For example, in Tunisia, young Tunisian are empowered through media training, and are themselves producing audiovisual awareness materials on migration issues.

In Morocco, beneficiaries of the youth empowerment project FORSTAY ("Favorable Opportunities to Reinforce Self-Advancement for Today's Youth") celebrated International Youth Day in Tangier and Tetouan by raising awareness among stakeholders of the crucial role youth can play in their own development and that of their communities. Among the goals of this USAID-funded project are enhanced civic engagement of marginalized youth and greater opportunities for socio-economic inclusion.

The celebration began with lectures and debates under the theme of "Youth and Mental Health", organized by the four partner civil society associations of the project, Raouabit Assadaka and Chifae in Tangier, as well as ATIL and Al Amal in Tetouan. The participating youth also benefited from a series of workshops on ways of self-expression through the arts to highlight issues relat-

ed to mental health through acting and drawing. The day was an opportunity to start looking at at-risk youth positively and address their needs for mobilization and participation. In so doing,



the project is creating a space for youth to be involved in community life, and to voice their opinions about issues that matter to them.

For more information, please contact: IOM Morocco: Hajar Benfaïda, hbenfaida@iom.int +212 (0)539949282 - IOM Tunisia: Baptiste Amieux, bamieux@iom.int