Raising awareness on the risks of irregular migration and promoting positive alternatives:

IOM Egypt launches an information and advocacy campaign for the protection of minors

IOM Egypt launched a new Information and Advocacy Campaign in cooperation with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), the Egyptian Ministry of Education and Save the Children. The campaign fits within the framework of the project "Education and Training for Egyptian Youth in Fayoum Governorate: Activities to promote Regular Migration and Positive Alternatives," funded by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. Similar events will also be organized in the Governorates of Alexandria, Beheira and Aswan.

The project is a sustainable and protective response to the worrying level of irregular migration of Egyptian minors to Europe and in particular to Italy. It is part of a wider strategy aimed at addressing the root causes of migration and creating safe environments for children to grow up in. The project is in line with the European Commission's Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2012-2014) and 2011 Agenda for the rights of the child, which addresses the protection of children in vulnerable situations, including unaccompanied children.

Building upon previous outreach experiences, this campaign aims at raising the awareness of youth and their families of the hazards of irregular migration, informing them about procedures for legal migration and advocating for positive alternatives to irregular migration by showcasing the model that has been created by the *Fayoum Advanced Technical School for Hotel Management and Tourism Services.*

It is based on the notion of children's rights, particularly the right to education and to develop as individuals under the protection of their families. By enhancing their access to education and knowledge, youth from these communities will be empowered and will have better awareness of their rights. More importantly in communities where minors emigrate due to cultural and economic pressures, this campaign promotes positive alternatives so that youth have the opportunity to develop their skills and can eventually take advantage of eco-

Participants to the event © IOM 2012

nomic opportunities both at home and abroad as informed young adults.

Addressing the socio-economic development of local communities, and providing sustainable education and training paths conducive to effective employment, is not only a preventative measure against the emigration of minors, but also creates an environment that offers real possibilities for the reunification of Egyptian minors within their family, provided it is determined to be in their best interest.

The first event of the campaign was held on the **29th of November 2012** in the Fayoum School and brought together students between the ages of fifteen and eighteen years old from different schools of the Governorate of Fayoum, their families, governmental authorities and representatives from the private sector. The event was interactive, following a peer -to-peer approach and included activity corners such as infor-

mation about job opportunities, CV writing and career building, cooking sessions and artistic workshops.

Prior to the event, IOM conducted three preliminary discussions inviting local community leaders, religious leaders, governmental authorities at the local level, local NGOs, representatives from private sector and student's families. These discussions were organized to identify specific needs at the local level and to strengthen the impact of the campaign with a tailored intervention.

The event also provided an opportunity for selected students of the Fayoum School to share their experience of training in Italy in partnership with the Italian Tourism School Elena Cornaro of Jesolo-Venice. These students, selected according to their academic results and their motivation, travelled to Italy for forty-five days to learn specific technical skills and complete trainings in specific sectors.

For more information, please contact Piera Francesca Solinas at IOM Egypt. Email: pfsolinas@iom.int