



**Conclusive Report
Scientific Workshop**

**Mentor International Foundation/ Dubai Police Enforcement Agency
“Working for Effective Prevention from Drugs”**

**Dubai Police Social and Cultural Club
December 2nd and 3rd, 2004
Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

As an initiative from Mentor International Foundation for drug prevention among children and youth, and in cooperation with the Dubai Police Enforcement Agency, the scientific workshop entitled “Working for Effective Prevention from Drugs “ was held on the 2nd and 3rd of December, 2004. Participants included numerous representatives of the Arab governments, private and civil sectors, youth and family organizations, and specialists, academics and reporters in the field of drug prevention and representatives from the United Nations organizations. The workshop has identified the following goals:

1. Introducing Mentor Foundation and its international projects in the field of drug prevention among children and youth, identifying ongoing projects in the Arab region on this topic and recognizing the governmental and private sectors operating in this field.
2. Identifying the roles and future projects of Arab and international organizations operating in the field of drug prevention.
3. Specifying and evaluating the Arab region’s needs in the field of drug prevention and the major challenges that restrain prevention efforts.
4. Discussing the proposed plan of action, which is to be executed through the cooperation of Mentor Foundation with their counterparts in the Arab region, in order to present it to the Mentor board of Trustees.

This workshop took on the structure of a general assembly for sharing, discussing and learning from the experiences of Arab nations and international organizations in the field of drug prevention, because the workshop coordinators acknowledge and emphasize the importance of investing time in learning from past experiences in order to mobilize prevention efforts. In addition, participants were assembled into working groups in order to formulate the recommendations and propose a plan of action to launch a branch of Mentor Foundation in the Arab Region.

Opening Session

Lieutenant General Dahi Khalfaan Tamim, the General Director for the Dubai Police Enforcement Agency commenced the opening session for the scientific workshop on the morning of Thursday, December 2nd, 2004. After a few segments of the Quran were read, the participants stood for a moment of silence in memory of His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nihyan. Lieutenant General Dahi Kalfaan delivered his welcoming speech to the attending delegates and Mentor International Foundation representatives, in which he stressed the urgency of synchronization

between Arab and International agencies in the field of drug prevention, which has become a critical threat to millions of Arab youth. He also expressed the dedication of Dubai Police to adapting all the recommendations produced at the scientific workshop and stressed the agency's established devotion to this field in coordination with several regional and international counterparts.

Mr. Jeff Lee, Mentor's Executive Director, began his statement by directing appreciation to Lieutenant General Dahi Khalfaan and his entire staff for their support to the foundation and their exceptional efforts for the organization and preparation of the workshop. Mr. Lee also articulated the goals of the workshop, bolstering the foundations efforts to establish a branch in the Arab region, which will reinforce collaboration between the groups devoted to the field of drug prevention.

Afterwards, Dr. Farida Allaghi, the representative of His Royal Highness Prince Talal bin AbdulAziz al-Saud and member of the Mentor Executive Committee, began her speech by expressing her gratitude to Lieutenant General Dahi Khalfaan and his staff for their total support of the workshop, then continued on to welcome the guests. She conveyed HRH Prince Talal's sincere wishes for success and expressed his determination to follow up with the results of the workshop and to pay special attention to continuing the Arab collaboration with Mentor Foundation and the establishment of its branch in the Arab region in order to fill the gaps in the projects and services directed towards drug prevention.

The opening session was concluded by Mr. Mohammed AbdulAziz, the regional representative of the UNODC, by citing the hazardous international situation in relation to drug addiction and distribution. He continued on to describe the regional office's current projects and its cooperation with the government and private sectors, stressing its enthusiasm to cooperate with Mentor Foundation and the Dubai Police Headquarters in their services for protecting Arab children and youth from drug abuse and addiction. Mr. AbdulAziz also expressed his gratitude to Lieutenant General Dahi Khalfaan's continuous support for the regional office and Mentor International Foundation.

After the opening session, the participants took a tour of the exhibition, organized by several non-governmental agencies from the United Arab Emirates, the Emirate Women's Union, the Dubai Police Enforcement Agency and various regional organizations in the field of drug prevention.

General Working Sessions

The workshop carried out seven working sessions and there was a total of 29 speakers, representatives from governmental agencies and regional non-governmental organizations presented and discussed their policies, projects and experiences in the field of drug prevention. This was

accompanied by the presentations of international experts, United Nations specialized agencies such as the UNODC, the World Health Organization and Mentor International Foundation.

Working Groups

The participants were divided into seven groups to discuss several questions, key among them:

- What are the Arab region's primary needs in the field of prevention?
- How can we work together and help each other?
- How can Mentor Foundation help us?
- How can we coordinate collaboration and support between the United Nations agencies, non-governmental agencies and governmental sectors in the field of preventing children and youth from drug abuse.

General Recommendations

After viewing and considering the recommendations in the working groups' reports, they were discussed in the general sessions and categorized as follows:

FIRST: The Institutional Framework:

- A. The appeal to establish the Mentor Foundation branch in the Arab region.
- B. Identify a unified Arab plan in the field of drug prevention based on the region's needs and guided by its successful experiences.
- C. Identify national plans for protecting children and youth from drugs, with special focus on budgets dedicated for implementing prevention efforts.

SECOND: Coordination:

- A. Supporting organization and coordination between the governments, the civil society sectors- including the scientific and religious establishments- opinion leaders, regional and international youth organizations and United Nations Agencies; this international coordination is an essential element for supporting national prevention efforts.
- B. Establishing a network of non-governmental Arab organizations in the field of substance abuse prevention.
- C. Reviving cooperation between NGOs in the region, supporting general private organizations active in the field of prevention and allowing them necessary independence.

THIRD: Training and Capacity Building:

- A. Establishing national and regional foundations specialized at capacity building for educational, medical, social and media groups involved with youth and development in the field of drug prevention.
- B. Inviting Mentor Foundation to establish a training network for youth in the field of prevention in coordination with responsible sectors.
- C. Adopting scientific methods to avoid improvisation in training and capacity building.

FOURTH: Information and Data Base:

- A. Identify a national information basis, which is inclusive of supply and demand information on substance abuse with focus on youth prevention and childhood reports.
- B. Promoting information exchange between the Arab nations and encourage the United Nations organizations to assist the Arab nations by providing information on substance abuse and prevention.
- C. Assembling and analyzing the dispersed studies and reports produced by independent institutions in order to gain perspective on the gravity of the issue in each of the Arab nations.
- D. The importance of filling the statistical gaps in order to understand the magnitude of the crisis and maintaining transparency in this issue.
- E. Establishing multi-dimensional, specialized centers for substance abuse research, which should function in accordance with international organizations, United Nations organizations and the Arab Federation.
- F. Translating the Mentor Foundation website in Arabic.

FIFTH: Evaluation and Follow-up:

- A. Identifying measure for evaluation and follow-up in order to conduct regular evaluations, highlight, support and publish the positives and shun the negatives in order to guarantee continuity.
- B. Establish a directory to assist the working efforts in this field.
- C. Convene regular conferences in the Arab capitals to review the recommendations that have been put into effect.

SIXTH: The Role of Childhood and Youth in Substance Abuse Prevention:

Childhood and youth play a major role in the process of prevention and their responsibilities are depicted through the following:

- A. Training youth groups in communications, problem solving and debate skills and to how face feelings of negativity and social pressures.
- B. Using these groups to spread the message of prevention among children and youth.
- C. Empowering the youth through collecting sufficient health and scientific information and supporting them to freely express their thoughts and feelings.

SEVENTH: The Role of Society, Family and the Schools in the Field of Prevention:

- A. Respecting human rights and ethical principals, with children's rights at the forefront, treating addicts like patients that must be supported throughout their treatment phase and return to society and paying special attention to the issues and troubles of young girls.
- B. Supporting the family in order to enable it to provide necessary protection for the children and instilling the habit of discussion within the family in order to understand the problems faced by their youth and to implement children's rights within the family structure.
- C. Enhancing the responsibility of the governmental and civil sectors at monitoring the schools' disciplinary roles and strengthening human relationships and communication between the teachers and the youth, which encourages them to articulate the problems they are facing.
- D. Including children's rights and life skills in the educational curriculums.
- E. Focusing on physical and cultural activities in the schools.

EIGHTH: Media and Prevention:

- A. Identify a national Arab strategic media plan to protect the youth from substance abuse.
- B. Training the media groups in modern, yet subliminal methods of prevention.
- C. Portraying the issue of substance abuse in a dramatic and indirect manner, without illustrating methods of drug intake and the lavish lifestyles of drug dealers.

- D. Utilizing all media channels, whether they be television series or educational entertainment programs, to market drug prevention on a wide degree and encouraging arts and sports celebrities to participate in spreading the message.

NINTH: Prevention Programs:

- A. Involving youth in all the lectures, programs and process of brainstorming, evaluation, execution and problem solving in the field of prevention.
- B. Identifying awareness programs within the schools' curriculums for various educational levels and implementing them independently from the classroom as extra-curricular activities through social and psychological specialists.
- C. Directing prevention programs to the illiterate persons- both male and female, who constitute a large sum of the Arab societies, addressing their minds and avoiding emotional approaches.
- D. Observing the habits of drug intake and exchange within the school and family environments.
- E. Carrying out carefully designed media and social awareness campaigns.
- F. Utilizing all communications channels to spread the message of prevention and conducting arts, sports and youth exhibitions, activities and children's programs.
- G. Nationalizing the role of civil society organizations in the field of prevention and diminishing dependence on the police force in the field.
- H. Establishing an early-warning system to improve prevention efforts through monitoring the behaviors of children and youth.

Specified Recommendations

The workshop participants adopted the following procedural recommendations:

- 1) Forming a small follow-up committee composed from the workshop members, which must gather within a month from now, with the responsibility of mainstreaming and preparing execution tactics for the workshop's recommendations within the frame of a specific strategic implementation plan between Mentor Foundation, governmental and private sectors and international agencies to be developed in cooperation with the Arab region.

- 2) Emphasizing the significance of conducting these meetings between governments and international, non-governmental and private organizations and supporting joint efforts between them.
- 3) Conducting annual forums in order to present the successful Arab and international experiences, the media and the awareness efforts in the field of prevention.
- 4) Developing collaboration between Mentor International Foundation, the Arab projects and programs on both national and regional levels.
- 5) Committing Mentor Foundation to support and participate in “The Future’s Protectors”, the Dubai Police Headquarters’ regional and international project, which trains student groups in schools and universities to spread awareness to their peers and within their environments.
- 6) Appealing for international cooperation between security agencies to diminish the farms and laboratories producing drugs and addictive substances.

The Closing Session

The workshop was concluded in a session that joined its participants with the board members of Mentor Foundation. Her Majesty Queen Sylvia presided over the session and began by expressing her joy in visiting Dubai and partaking in these sessions, in which the workshop participants presented the board members with their experiences and needs of the Arab region in the domain of preventing children and youth from substance abuse. Her Majesty the Queen also articulated her gratitude to HRH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al-Maktum, the Crown Prince of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates’ Minister of Defense, for hosting the Mentor Gala Dinner on the fourth of December. She also thanked Lieutenant General Dahi Khalfaan Tamim, the General Director of the Dubai Police Enforcement Agency, for his support of the scientific workshop, the board members’ meetings and the gala dinner.

Afterwards, a selection of Arab Projects were presented including:

- The Dubai Police Project
- National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in Egypt
- Umm Innoor Foundation in Lebanon
- Grass project in Kuwait

In conclusion, specialist Dr. Mona Sawwaf shared her experience in Saudi Arabia and Miss Fatma Darwish from Qatar spoke in the name of the youths participating in the workshop, describing their vision of substance abuse issue and prevention efforts.