



Achievements Report 2024

Delivering on the ICPD for the people of the

GCC countries      



FOREWORD

2024 has been a year of significant progress for UNFPA in the GCC region, notably through our leadership in several high-level regional and national forums and summits, and the implementation of enhanced innovative partnership approaches towards UNFPA's Strategic Plan.

The UNFPA's Strategic Plan aims to ensure that no one is left behind. It calls for the protection and promotion of human rights for all, especially the most vulnerable, with a view to further synergistically reducing preventable maternal mortality, unmet need for family planning and gender-based violence.

A strengthened partnership with the GCC countries, starting with the Sultanate of Oman as the host country of the UNFPA Office since 2006, is key to accelerating the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

In line with UNFPA's Strategic Plan, the Office has invested in population data and analysis to better inform and contribute to the development of social policies that are evidence-based, with rights-based and gender transformative approaches to accelerate progress and ensure that no one is left behind.

In 2024, a series of «*Jalsat Shabab*» gatherings were launched, embodying the principle of «*for the youth, by the youth.*» Facilitated by young people, with support from UNFPA and GCC government entities in charge of youth affairs,

these gatherings provided a platform for young people to exchange knowledge, discuss challenges, and collaboratively develop solution-oriented suggestions addressing issues aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This initiative aimed to foster increased youth participation, moving beyond general vision implementation to focused, youth-driven action.*

In 2024, UNFPA worked towards a strengthened inter-agency partnership, contributing firstly to the development of the UN Cooperation Frameworks in Bahrain and Kuwait and the implementation of the UN Cooperation Framework in Saudi Arabia, and secondly to the strengthening of relations and joint activities with UN agencies present in Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

The 2024 Annual Report presents the main results and impacts of activities carried out with our partners in the 6 GCC countries covered by the UNFPA Office.

As we celebrate our achievements, we recognise that there is much more to be done. The unfinished business is a call to step up our efforts and investments through strengthened partnerships to ensure that every person in the GCC region can exercise their rights and fulfill their potential, accelerating the path towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in each and every GCC country.

Jocelyn Fenard

*Representative in Oman,
Head of the Sub-Regional Office
for the Gulf Cooperation Council.*

OVERVIEW



UNFPA’s mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA’s 3 Transformative Results



Ending Unmet need Family Planning



Ending Preventable Maternal Death



Ending Gender-based violence

In the GCC, UNFPA collaborates with the 6 member states and the Gulf Cooperation Council to improve the well-being of all people, particularly women, adolescents, youth, older persons, and marginalized groups in a high-income development setting.

UNFPA offers policy advice and technical support in demographic intelligence, population and development, gender equality, and reproductive, maternal, and adolescent health to support evidence-based policies and informed decisions. This includes building institutional capacity in data analysis and revising national documents such as ministerial strategies and reports like Voluntary National Reports and Human Rights Reports.

KEY INDICATORS

	 Bahrain	 Kuwait	 Oman	 Qatar	 Saudi Arabia	 UAE
 Total population in millions	1,588,670	4,913,271	5,166,000	3,119,589	32,175,224	9,516,871
 Population aged 10 to 24	284,699	816,048	1,083,187	482,559	7,359,096	1,348,207
 Population aged 65 and older	61,454	151,729	141,701	40,664	861,849	177,543
 Percentage of Youth aged (15-19) in the GCC- GCC Atlas 2024	22.10	18.20	24.00	24.50	26.60	27.00
 Maternal mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 live births)	11.10	8.00	17.5 (40.7)	-	15.90	3.00
 Neonatal mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	4.40	-	5.10	3.20	2.24	3.60
 Proportion of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods	68.80	N/A	62.10	75.40	0.56	67.20
 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	7.17	1.86	7.00	6.80	7.40	4.50
 Proportion of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 18	4.52	N/A	4.00	4.20	N/A	N/A

GCC atlas 2024 from GCCSTAT.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

UNFPA works on advancing women's rights and gender equality through strategic partnerships, events, and campaigns aimed at raising awareness and promoting equality.

This involved high-profile initiatives to empower women economically and address gender-based violence, fostering dialogue and action among key stakeholders.

What is at stake

Women in the GCC face barriers to achieving their full social rights, including limited access to financial resources and underrepresentation in leadership. In addition, Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive issue, disproportionately affecting women and girls across the region.

What We Did

- ▶ Partnered with the Muscat Stock Exchange in Oman to launch the **«Ring the Bell» initiative** on International Women's Day. This high-profile event provided a platform for women leaders to share their experiences and advocate for increased investment in women.

Impact



The **«Ring the Bell» initiative** generated significant media coverage, raising awareness about women's economic empowerment and sparking conversations about gender equality.



- ▶ Collaborated with the Ministry of Social Development and Academia (Nizwa and Sohar Universities) to organize interactive dialogues in Universities during the **16 Days of Activism campaign**.

The **16 Days of Activism campaign** successfully reached a wide audience, generating significant media attention and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. These efforts highlighted the importance and need to bolster initiatives in raising awareness on the safeguards in place as well as the role of community based approaches to tackle the issue.



Youth Engagement and Participation

UNFPA works on enhancing GCC youth engagement and participation in decision-making and leadership.

What is at stake

Young people in the GCC, representing a significant portion of the population, are vital to the region's future. However, they often lack sufficient platforms to voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes and develop soft / life skills.

What We Did

- ▶ UNFPA launched the «**Jalsat Shabab**» initiative, a series of youth gatherings held across Oman, Bahrain, UAE, and Qatar, served as the primary means to foster dialogue among young people, enabling them to share their perspectives and link their priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national visions, alongside UNFPA's support for developing youth-led organizations through leadership and advocacy training.

Impact



«**Jalsat Shabab**» has successfully empowered youth by giving them more opportunity to express their voices, develop leadership skills, and actively contribute to shaping their future. The gatherings have led to the launch of several youth-led initiatives focused on addressing critical social issues, demonstrating the tangible impact of youth engagement.

Noor Ali, The United Nations Youth Advisory Group member who represented the Kingdom of Bahrain in the High Level Meeting on Youth #Learning2earning sharing her experience at the Jalsat Shabab.





Reproductive Health and Rights

UNFPA works to address reproductive health non-communicable diseases, focusing on cervical cancer in Oman.

What is at stake

Cervical cancer presents a public health challenge in the GCC and beyond, with significant implications for women's health and well-being. In Oman, the national HPV vaccination program was initiated following advocacy and technical support efforts provided by UNFPA, helping to address a previously unprotected population.

What We Did

- ▶ In close collaboration with the Ministry of Health in Oman, UNFPA supported a comprehensive Cervical Cancer Study to build a strong evidence base for advocating the inclusion of HPV vaccination in the national immunization program by creating an enabling environment through high-level advocacy, providing technical input, engaging with the technical team on the study's outline and verification, and ensuring a scientifically rigorous approach aligned with international standards.

Impact



While the national vaccine rollout is in progress, substantial strides have been made. The Cervical Cancer Study has provided critical data for policy advocacy, and the Ministry of Health is now better equipped to implement a successful HPV vaccination program. This program has garnered national attention, and the groundwork has been laid for a national vaccination program.



Data for Informed Policies

UNFPA works on strengthening the capacity to generate and utilize data to inform policies and effective programming and services. In 2024 the focus was on older persons. This involved developing elderly country profiles to analyze the situation of older persons and co-organizing events to promote data-driven planning and knowledge exchange.

What is at stake

The GCC region needs robust data to address the needs of older persons and ensure their inclusion.

What We Did

- ▶ Developed elderly country profiles of Bahrain and Oman, analyzing policies, laws, programs, services, and data for older populations.
- ▶ Co-organized a side event at the GCC data forum in Sharjah in partnership with GCCSTAT on the role of data in shaping effective programs and services for older persons.

Impact



The profiles provided evidence-based insights to guide policies for older persons in Oman and Bahrain, highlighting the gaps in social inclusion, health, etc.



The side event at the GCC data forum reinforced the importance of data-driven planning and programming for older persons and facilitated learning through GCC cross-border knowledge exchange.



Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Response

UNFPA supports efforts to strengthen services for survivors of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

What is at stake

Lack of awareness, current social norms that contribute to exacerbate gender-based violence (GBV), and low level of coordination mechanisms among services in the region.

What We Did

- ▶ UNFPA supported **Shamsaha**, a Bahraini NGO, in developing and launching a mobile application to improve coordination and access to support services for survivors of violence against women and girls in the Middle East.

Impact



The updated Shamsaha app, launched in March 2024, has achieved over **120,000 downloads** demonstrating its reach and potential to empower survivors by providing a secure platform for information, support, and reporting.



UNFPA GCC's former Representative, **Karl Kulesa**, launched the partnership with the Shamsaha team in Bahrain



download the Shamsaha app
حملي تطبيق شمسها

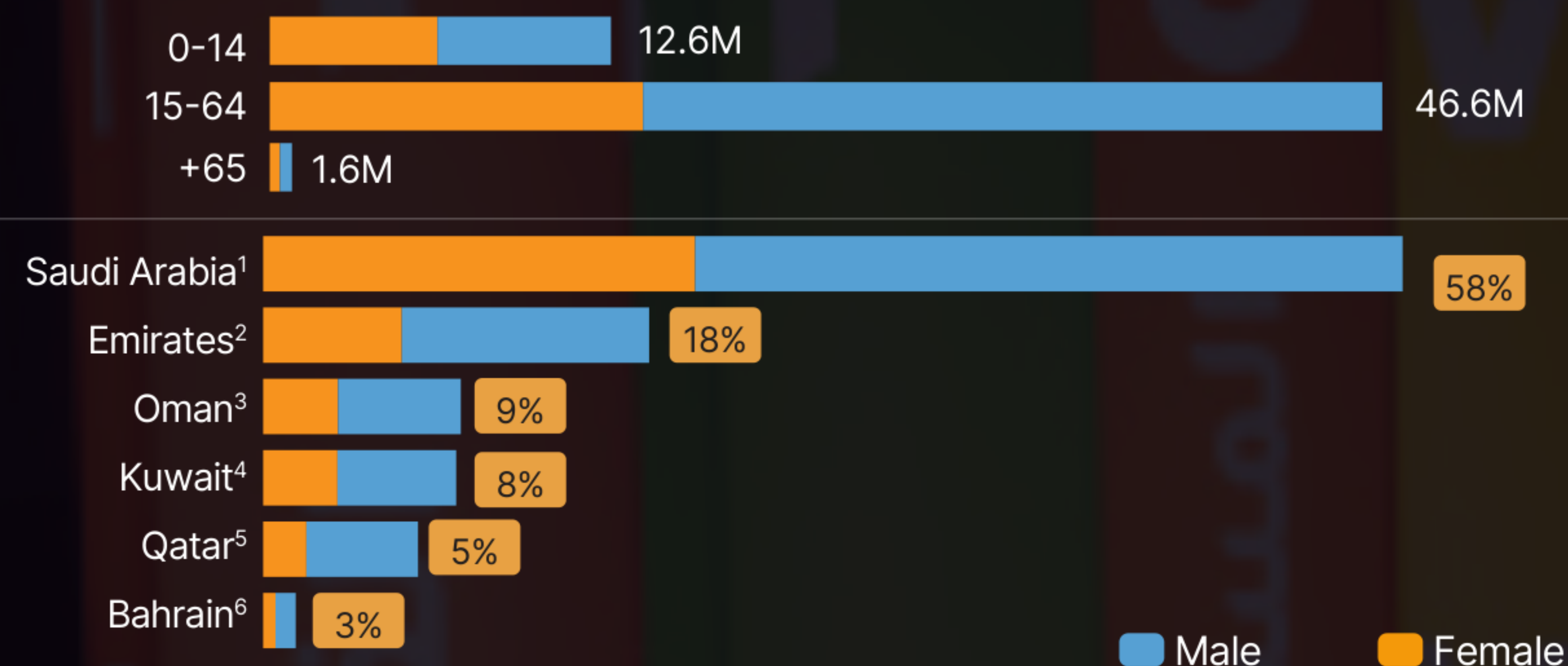


Population Dynamics and Data

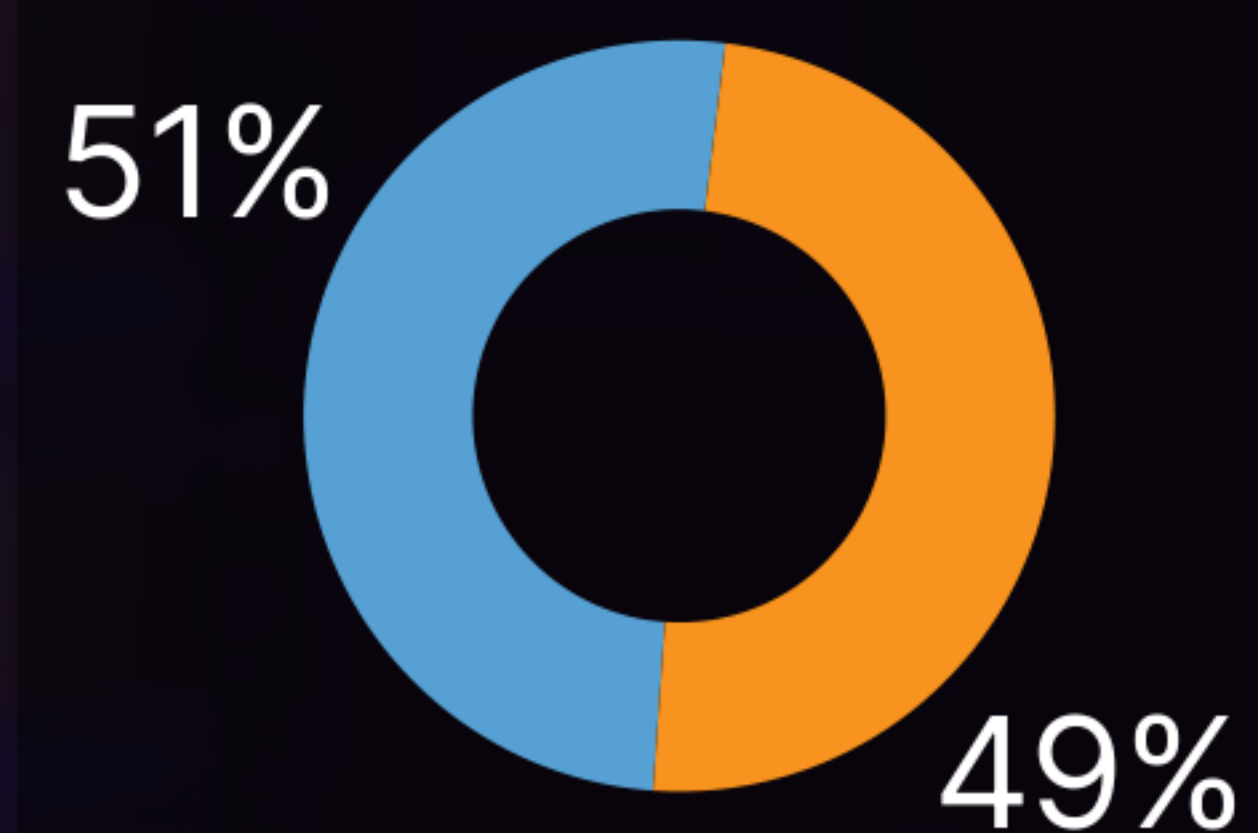
Population
60.7 M

Men
63%

Women
37%



Children (Age 0-9)



Youths (10-24)

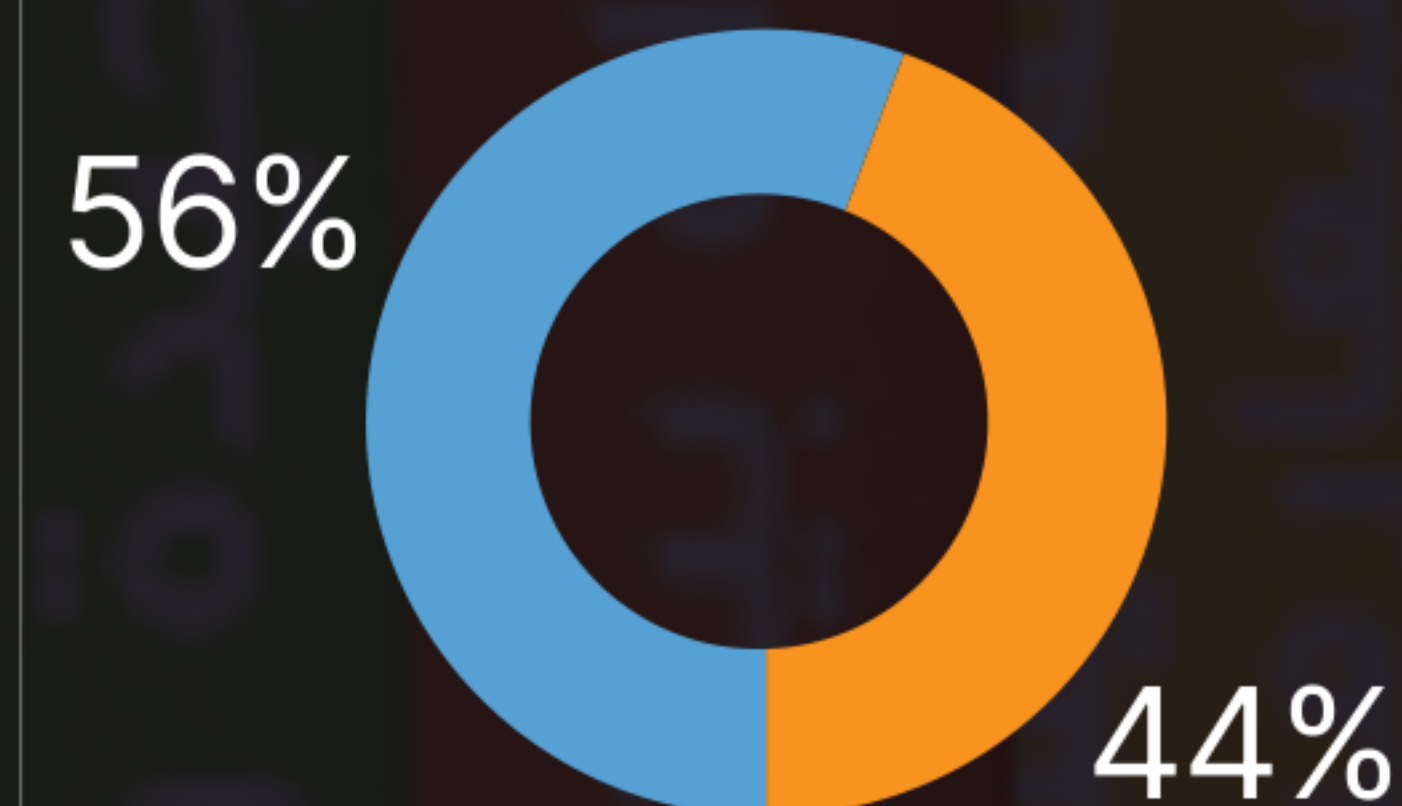
12.7 M

Adults (25-64)

38.0 M



Elderly (Age 65+)



What is at stake

The GCC region is experiencing rapid demographic shifts, including an aging population and increasing diversity, demanding precise and timely data for effective policy formulation.

UNFPA provides strategic advice and technical assistance to national statistical offices to enhance institutional capacity for data collection and analysis in population data, statistics, and for the use of AI in censuses. This involves active participation and co-organization of national, regional, and international platforms to share expertise and foster collaborative data initiatives.

What We Did

- Elderly country profiles were developed for Bahrain and Oman in partnership with HelpAge International, offering an analysis of the existing policies, laws, programs, services, and data for their older populations. Furthermore, a side event was co-organized with GCCSTAT at the GCC data and community development forum in Sharjah to discuss the role of data in shaping effective programs and services for older persons. Governmental data sources across the GCC region were leveraged to support efforts that reflect the goals of the ICPD within the broader framework of the sustainable development goals.

Lessons learned



Contributed to enhancing the region's capacity for evidence-based policy making. The data collection and analysis initiatives have improved the quality and availability of demographic data, while the reports on older persons have provided actionable insights for policy development. By supporting the development of programs and policies that address the specific needs of marginalized groups, we have contributed to a more inclusive and equitable society.



This data-driven approach enabled the creation of a dynamic tracking tool that not only monitors the progress of each GCC country against ICPD

What We Did

- ▶ UNFPA engaged in and co-organized events providing platforms for governments to share expertise on data including the 5th Arab High-Level Conference on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Sharjah (UAE) GCC Data and Social Development Forum, the Qatar National Population Day where UNFPA delivered the keynote address, and the Doha Data Forum where UNFPA facilitated a panel discussion and contributed to knowledge management through North-South Cooperation, inviting the Statistics Team from Moldova to present their EU experience related to AI and Census Analysis.
- ▶ UNFPA also presented the developed GCC country profiles at the Beijing+30 regional review and facilitated substantive sessions in the high-level review meeting of the Arab States Older Persons Strategy.

Lessons learned

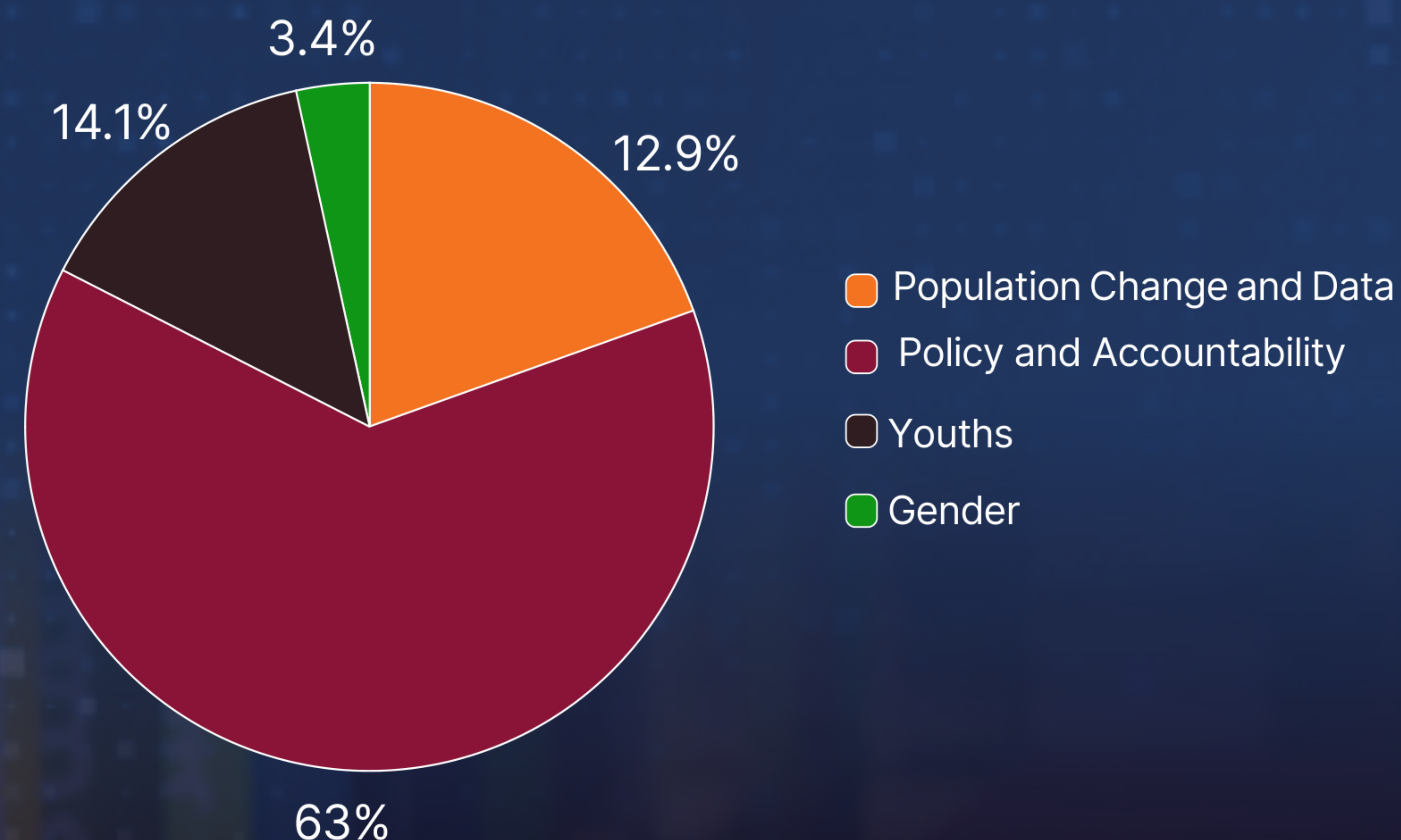


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OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES

Key Expenditure Overview



Achievements report Acknowledgement

UNFPA acknowledges with gratitude the significant support provided by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, which has been fundamental in enabling UNFPA's crucial work across the GCC region in 2024.

The continued collaboration with the other Governments of GCC countries, the Executive Office of the GCC and GCC-STAT is also deeply valued.



United Nations Population Fund

Gulf Cooperation Council

