

Bahrain

Drugs awareness

● Support urged for novel

BAHRAIN'S youth are the focus of a long-term drug awareness campaign being launched at the end of this month by the Lions Club of Riffa.

The campaign, which will target the whole society, is being supported by the ministries of Cabinet Affairs and Information, Labour and Social Affairs and Health.

The campaign will be announced officially at a gala dinner to be held at Le Royal Meridien Hotel on May 29, under the patronage of Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala.

Members of the public and companies have been urged to support this campaign in order for it to meet its objectives.

Head of the campaign committee Kamilia

By AMIRA AL HUSSAINI

Ahmed said the project, which is educational in nature, means to promote awareness among members of the community and "not to scare people".

"The message will be spread in an educational tone. We will not be saying anything which has not been said before, but we will word it in a way which suits our environment and our needs," she said.

Ms Ahmed added Bahrain was not suffering

from a drug problem in the extent other societies were suffering from and therefore, a different approach had to be taken to address the issue.

"We are not a drug-infested society, but it is important to draw the attention of youngsters to the vices, which could lure them into a web of self-destruction and suffering to their family members and society at large," she said.

Ms Ahmed said the committee had specially drawn up material for the campaign as ready campaign packets, from the UK and US, were not

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Bahrain

campaign targets young

scheme to highlight addiction dangers

suitable for the situation in Bahrain.

"In those societies there is an actual drug problem and campaigns are meant to scare youngsters. However, the society here is safe and protective, but a large number of youngsters leave the country to study abroad," she said.

"These people, who leave the 18 years' experience of this protective community to study abroad need to learn how to avoid falling into the trap of addiction to any type of drug as well as avoid peer pressure when the message is negative."

Ms Ahmed said the campaign would target all types of drugs starting with hard drugs like cocaine and heroine to alcohol and tobacco.

She said work was currently progressing on the production of a 15-minute video presentation, which would identify all types of abuse, their harm and level of damage on the human body and the lifestyle of the affected person.

The video will be addressing people, aged nine onwards and will be shown in schools.

Alongside this audio-visual programme, the

committee has completed drafting six different leaflets in Arabic and English, which will address a number of important issues related to drug abuse.

Ms Ahmed said thousands of brochures containing information explaining the causes, symptoms, behavioural patterns, preliminary precautions, role of family towards the suspect or addict, primary care and rehabilitation, would be distributed, free of charge, in schools, colleges, health centres, social centres and public functions.

"Some of the brochures will address youth while others will be targeted towards parents and teachers. At the end of the day, our objective is to make people understand the health hazards of using drugs so that they may adopt responsible attitudes towards this problem," she said.

The topics for the brochures were selected by a psychologist.

"There are more issues we want to address, but our resources are limited. If we get more support for the campaign from individuals and organisations, we will then be able to address other issues," said Ms Ahmed.

She said it was better to educate youngsters and prevent addiction from the start rather than wait for it to become a disaster, which would threaten the individual's life as well as bring misery to his/her family.

Ms Ahmed said the Health Ministry and other medical organisations in the country had taken long strides in addressing addiction issues.

"We are only trying to focus all efforts and increase awareness among youngsters," she said.

Interested members of the public could support the cause by simply attending the gala dinner, said Ms Ahmed.

The night, which starts at 7.30pm, costs BD12,500 for a sit down dinner, which also includes a silent auction of some works of art donated by leading Bahraini artists and a raffle.

Appealing

Both activities are expected to raise funds to support the campaign.

The night will also witness the announcement and unveiling of the drug awareness campaign logo, which Ms Ahmed described as "very appealing visually." She said interested companies could take an active part in spreading the campaign by stamping their mail with the project's logo.

The evening will also have a large display of productive families' products, which will be offered for sale.

Ms Ahmed said almost half the 300 tickets for the gala night had been sold off.

"It would really be a good start for our campaign if all the tickets are sold," she said.

"It will just show how keen and interested the public is in supporting humane and social issues."

For tickets and further information, contact Ashfaq Khajoorwala on 213911 or Kamilia Ahmed on 225148.