gender section

unrwa

gender bulletin



monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

march 2016 | issue no. 65

update of the month

On 22, 23 and 24 March 2016 UNRWA organizes the Annual Gender Task Force Meeting in Amman to discuss the draft of the new UNRWA Gender Strategy. A roundtable 'SDG5 And Women Refugees: Mechanisms To Step It Up' will be part of the meeting's programme in light of International Women's Day.

stories from the field

Including Men in Family Planning Awareness Sessions

Family planning is a core component of addressing women's health outcomes, socioeconomic security and overall physical and mental well-being. Traditionally, family planning efforts have solely targeted women and excluded men from the process. The health programme in Gaza works towards including men in family planning and aims to improve equal decision-making in family planning among the refugee population. In December 2015, the UNRWA health programme held 24 awareness sessions for 509 people (244 males and 265 females).

The sessions provided information on what is available in terms of family planning in UNRWA health centres, including the advantages and side effects of different contraceptive methods. The sessions also highlighted the importance of family planning for overall health outcomes and avoiding unwanted pregnancies, as well as screening and treating sexually transmitted infections. Sessions were conducted by UNRWA senior staff nurses, who in some health centres were joined by medical officers. The health programme has received positive feedback from the community, including men, and is planning on continuing to carry out similar activities in the future.

For more information, please contact: h.diab@unrwa.org

Raising Awareness in Syria: Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Workshop

Thirty women from local organizations, in addition to volunteers from the local community, participated in a focus group workshop in Dera'a, Syria, in February 2016. The workshop aimed at raising awareness on GBV and sharing information on available services in an effort to encourage survivors to come forward and seek help. Sixty-six per cent of the women who participated in the session reported facing GBV, specifically highlighting domestic violence as a major issue. Eighty per cent of the participants suffered from psychological abuse. The workshop focused on raising awareness in terms of GBV through collaborative efforts exerted by teams that aim at reaching a wide spectrum of survivors.

In an effort to track the impact of these sessions, pre- and post-questionnaires were handed out. These revealed that 80 per cent of the women know about the services UNRWA provides, but are afraid to seek support due to cultural issues. Participants agreed to work on the development of an action plan that is to be implemented in their local communities to target as many women as possible. This action plan includes, among other things, a workshop for men to involve them in participating in the intervention to end GBV.

For more information, please contact: z.alhroub@unrwa.org

Building Safety Update

The inception phase for the GBV prevention framework, currently under development as part of Building Safety Programme, is now finalized. During this phase, the methodology for the development of the GBV multisectoral framework was refined based on consultation with staff representatives at both the HQ and field level. This project component is progressively moving towards the accomplishment of the mapping of existing gaps, challenges and opportunities in relation to GBV prevention that would be the pillars for the development of the framework. For more information, please contact s.chirizzi@unrwa.org

Events of Interest

22 March 2016 – Amman
UNRWA is organizing the roundtable 'SDG5 And Women Refugees: Mechanisms To Step It Up' to mark International Women's Day. The roundtable will take place in the landmark hotel from 3-4.30 p.m. For more information, please contact s.jelassi@unrwa.org

23 March 2016 – Damascus
The UNRWA Syria Field Office is organizing the event 'A Ray of Hope' in the Damascus Opera House to mark IWD. The event includes a monologue and a documentary film, among other things. For more information, please contact a.takhzant@unrwa.org

March-June 2016 – Brussels
The European Parliament's Visitors Centre in Brussels is hosting the exhibition 'Displaced', photographed by Marie Doringny to provide an insight into the plight of female refugees and migrants across Europe. Read more

Regional News

Lebanon
Many Syrian refugee women in Lebanon have taken on, what they call, 'traditional male roles' in their struggle to survive. They are now lorry drivers, electricians or painters. Amira Hassan al-Bdroun (31) is originally from Syria. She now works in a gas station in Baalbeck, Lebanon. "When you practice this kind of job, you have the feeling you are empowered," she tells *Al Jazeera*. Read the article

Gaza
Heads turn when they cycle past. Four Palestinian women started cycling in Gaza despite the unwritten rule that bars women past puberty from riding a bicycle. Because "women have the right to freedom," says Amna Suleiman (33), leader of the cycling group. Suleiman and her three friends are among the first women in years that publicly ride their bicycles in Gaza. Read the article

Reports & Resources

UNRWA
The report 'UNRWA Experience in GBV Programming: Lessons from the First Five Years' reflects on the Agency's experience in building gender-based violence (GBV) referral systems in the five fields of UNRWA operations. Read the report

Amnesty International
The Amnesty report 'Lebanon: 'I Want a Safe Space' documents how reduced UN support due to a lack of international funding and increased living costs have led to a high-risk situation for refugee women in Lebanon. Read the report

UNHCR, UNFPA and WRC
The 'Initial Assessment Report: Protection Risks for Women and Girls in the European Refugee and Migrant Crisis' describes risks for refugee women in Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It finds that the current political and humanitarian response is failing to protect women and girls. Read the report

UNESCO
The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) published 'Narrowing the Gender Gap: Empowering Women through Literacy Programmes'. This collection of case studies describes promising literacy and numeracy programmes around the world that seek to empower women. Read the report

Women's Refugee Commission (WRC)
WRC has published 'Mean Streets: Identifying and Responding to Urban Refugees' Risks of Gender-Based Violence', which analyzes protection challenges and opportunities afforded by urban settings. Read the report

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
In a recommendation published on International Women's Day, CEDAW calls for a focus on the rights of rural women. In many countries their specific needs are not addressed in laws. Read the report

Facts of the month

69 claims of **sexual violence** were registered against **UN Peacekeepers** from 21 countries in 2015. Read more

More than **700** **million** women alive today were married **before age 18**. Read more

unrwa الاونروا
united nations relief and works agency for palestine refugees in the near east

www.unrwa.org

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.

For more information, please contact t.abunafiseh@unrwa.org