gender section
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gender bulletin



monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

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update of the month

Following the Gender Taskforce Meeting, and an inception visit where consultations were carried out with fields, headquarters, programmes and management, the Gender Section has been working on finalizing the Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2021. Additionally, the different Gender Action Plans are also currently being finalized.

stories from UNRWA

Support Groups in Lebanon

UNRWA Lebanon recently established community-based support groups under the supervision of gender-based violence (GBV) caseworkers. This is part of the ongoing efforts of the Agency to strengthen GBV prevention programming. In the support groups, participants discuss protection concerns in their communities, identify positive coping mechanisms and strengthen community-based psychosocial support and protection interventions.

Feedback of the pilot phase demonstrates that participants are developing communication and life skills, as well as feelings of empowerment by their involvement in the activities. For instance, 70 per cent of participants report that they feel that they can often cope with difficult situations and come up with positive solutions for themselves and their community after having participated in the sessions, compared to 57 per cent stating so before participating in the groups. These are important indicators that the community groups contribute to the empowerment of participants and help build the self-confidence and agency of participants, most notably adolescent girls.

The support groups were set up in partnership with the ABAAD Resource Centre for Gender Equality and are hosted by various Palestinian NGOs. Over 300 community members will be involved in the initiative over the coming months.

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Psychological Group Sessions in Syria

After identifying adolescent GBV survivors who experienced psychological pressure and child survivors of GBV who were suffering from enuresis (involuntary urination), the Alliance Family Support Office in Syria offered three psychological sessions for GBV support groups in April.

To enable survivors to better cope with the adversity they experienced and to open up communication, various exercises were conducted. Techniques included showcasing films about persons who have gone through the same experiences as the survivors and stress management exercises. The support groups for GBV survivors resulted in 13 individual follow-up sessions, during which additional psychological support and services have been delivered.

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Building Safety Update

As part of its strategy to strengthen Gender-Based Violence (GBV) preparedness, prevention and response, UNRWA is in the process of developing an e-learning course on GBV taking into consideration the specificity of the context in which UNRWA operates. Building on the needs assessment findings, the e-learning course outline is currently being designed.

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Inspiring Story

Running without restrictions

Every morning when the sun rises, Inas puts on her running shoes. In Gaza, girls do not often participate in sports, and if they do it is behind closed doors. Inas Nofal (15) is Gaza's only competitive female runner, and she has decided to run the streets. In spite of the verbal abuse she faced at first, she kept on running every morning. The support of her family and her father, who drives alongside her in his car, have contributed to changing attitudes. Now, people admire Inas. "I love my four daughters and I see the life through them. Inas has chosen to be a runner, so I am standing with her till the end," her father said. Inas has previously been denied participation in sports events and cannot always attend competitions due to travel restrictions. Despite it all, she continues running. Read more

Events of Interest

23-24 May 2016 – Istanbul

The World Humanitarian Summit, taking place in Turkey this month, will include events about gender-based violence and a roundtable that will focus on including women and girls in crisis decision-making. Many events can be followed online. Read more

2 June 2016 – World

The Anna Lindh Foundation for Inter-Cultural Dialogue has launched the ninth edition of their literary competition 'A Sea of Words' for persons aged 18-30. The theme is 'Gender Violence and Discrimination'. Stories can be submitted until 2 June 2016. Read more

22 July 2016 – World

The Gender and Education Association is looking for papers for their issue on 'Neoliberalism, Gender and Education Work'. The paper should touch on topics such as migration, schooling, sexuality and the body in the neoliberal curriculum. Papers should be submitted by 22 July 2016. Read more

Regional News

Syria

A new analysis by the Brookings Institution reveals that mental health and psychosocial (MHPSS) problems of Syrians largely remain unaddressed in spite of an increased need for MHPSS care due to the ongoing conflict. In Syria, only one mental health hospital is partially operational. Meanwhile, aid workers in neighbouring countries are faced with a lack of funding and resources for MHPSS care for Syrian refugees. Read the article

Jordan

Recently, the Jordanian Cabinet decided to adjust Penal Code Article 308. The result was the removal of a clause that allows rapists to escape punishment by marrying their survivors. However, if the rape survivor is a girl aged 15-18, then the perpetrator can still marry her. Many legal experts call for the complete removal of Article 308 as it is "faulty" and allows perpetrators to get away with the rape of children. Read the article

Reports & Resources

Norwegian Refugee Council

Harassment, discrimination, exploitation, movement restrictions and a lack of opportunities dominate the lives of refugee, displaced and local youth across Syria's neighbouring countries. The study 'A Future in the Balance' draws on experiences of over 500 youth and identifies gender-based violence as a main protection concern. Read the report

UN Women

'Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace' is a global study on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, which urges actors to increase the participation of women in all UN peace and security efforts, among other things. Read the report

UN Women

'The Economic Participation of Women in Poverty Pockets in the Mafraq Governorate, Jordan' discusses the participation of women in small enterprises, their social status, and the challenges they face in furthering their economic status. Read the report

CAWTAR, UNDP, UN Women

Three organizations launched an e-platform that aims to promote gender equality by improving access to legal information on women's rights. The database compiles laws related to gender and human rights in 20 Arab countries. Currently the online portal is only available in Arabic, but an English mobile application will come soon. Read more

Bridge: Development, Gender

The briefing 'Gender, Age and Migration' gives insight into the gendered and age-related impacts of migration. The briefing scrutinizes policies and strategies, initiatives, and programmes in relation to gender and age and gives recommendations for policymaking and implementation. Read the report

Girls Not Brides

The report 'Taking Action to Address Child Marriage' provides sector-specific information on how to incorporate and measure child marriage prevention and response in their approaches. Read the report

Facts of the month

In the oPt **83%** of women **victims of homicide** were murdered by **family members** between 2013 and 2014. Read more

Every **10** minutes somewhere in the world **an adolescent girl dies** as a result of **violence.** Read more

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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, protection and microfinance.

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