gender section
unrwa

gender bulletin



monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

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update of the month

As part of a monitoring mechanism and also ensuring the sharing of experience among field offices, UNRWA is working on the development of an Agency-wide report which gathers inputs and reflections from field offices on progress on the implementation of field-specific Gender Action Plans.

stories from UNRWA

Mapping Child Marriage in the West Bank

In 2015, the West Bank Field Office (WBFO) former Gender Task Force recommended the mapping of child marriage among Palestine refugees in the West Bank. The mapping represents the first attempt by UNRWA WBFO to collate and document information and data on this issue at the field level.

It aims to identify trends in child marriage, current best practice, and areas for improvement regarding documentation and monitoring of cases, along with prevention and response measures undertaken by the Agency. As part of field research for the report, several interviews have been conducted with survivors of child marriage from among UNRWA beneficiaries.

The following is an excerpt from an interview with a woman from Askar refugee camp, whose story sheds light on the generational changes taking place regarding attitudes towards the practice of child marriage:

"I married off my youngest daughter when she was 16 years old."

Now she has two daughters and a son and says, "I will never marry my daughters when they are young. Not until they finish university. I don't want to repeat my mother's mistake and my mistake."

The report on mapping child marriage will also be accompanied by a short film, both of which are scheduled to be published in November 2016 during the @16dayscampaign.

For more information, please contact: t.hanley-moyle@unrwa.org

Female-Headed Households in the Collective Shelters in Syria

UNRWA collective shelters, formerly UNRWA schools, host thousands of Palestinian refugees displaced by the war in Syria. Within these shelters, UNRWA has noticed an increase in the number of female-headed households (FHH) over the past two years, an issue which has been closely followed up on in an effort to better understand intersecting risk factors and how they may cause increased vulnerability in the collective shelters.

2014	**77 FHH**
2015	**137 FHH**
2016	**249 FHH**

For many FHH, the challenges vary from a lack of privacy for their families to overcrowding in the centre.

UNRWA has provided support to FHH inside and outside collective shelters by providing women with basic services such as separation in rooms and toilets, monthly food and better participation opportunities in shelter local committees.

For more information, please contact: d.hilliss@unrwa.org

'Building Safety' Update

As the work progresses on revising the manual on addressing sexual violence, currently under development as part of the 'Building Safety Programme', UNRWA is working to ensure synergy with the other capacity-building components of the project. The roll-out of the manual will be part of a wider undertaking to increase the organizational capacity to address gender-based violence (GBV), specifically focusing on sexual violence during times of emergency.

For more information, please contact: s.chirizzi@unrwa.org

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Inspiring Story

Swimming her Way to the Olympics

Yosra Mardini was a talented swimmer in war-torn Damascus who was professionally backed by the Syrian Olympic Committee. Eventually, Mardini and her sister Sarah decided to leave Syria, travelling through Lebanon and Turkey before trying to reach Greece.

Thirty minutes into the journey from Turkey, the motor on the boat began to fail as it could not handle the extra passengers. Most of those on board could not swim, so Yosra and her sister, with the help of two other swimmers, jumped into the open sea and swam for over three hours to stop the boat from capsizing. Mardini recently competed in the Summer Games in Rio for the Refugee Olympic Team in the Women's 100 m Butterfly and Freestyle.
Read more.

Regional News

Tunisia
Ines Boubakri became the first Arab woman to win an Olympic fencing medal. She dedicated her bronze to "our youth, all Tunisian women, the Arab woman...you must believe that women exist and they have their place in society.".Read more.

Gaza
Women's leadership has dramatically increased in the startup sector in Gaza as a result of the work of Gaza Sky Geeks. After creating one of the world's most inclusive startup communities, with 50 per cent women's participation in all activities, they also launched an initiative to inspire the next generation of female entrepreneurs through workshops and leadership training.
More info.

Egypt
Sara Ahmed also made history as the first Arab woman to win a bronze in Olympic weightlifting. She is Egypt's first female medalist! Read more.

Amendments have been introduced to the legal provision penalizing female genital mutilation in Egypt. The change has removed Article 61, which exempted the perpetrator if they were forced by necessity to do it. Read more.

Jordan
Since 2011, the suicide rate in Jordan has been on the rise and is more common among women and girls according to The Sisterhood Is Global Institute.
Read more.

Events of Interest

15 November 2016 – Online
The DCA Academy's 'Miss Africa Initiative' is announcing a seed fund for tech initiatives in Africa. Small grants will support women and girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to launch or expand their own initiatives that will increase digital opportunities in IT-related training, jobs and leadership roles. Applications must have a tangible impact for women and girls in science and/or STEM–related fields.
Read more.

1-2 December 2016 – Texas, USA
The International Conference on Reproductive Health will be held in Texas, with a focus on topics covering gender-based violence, gender equality and legal implications on sexual rights. Read more.

5-8 December 2016 – Haiti
The first International Conference on Gender Equality of the Haitian Red Cross will take place, with the aim of accelerating the objectives of equality for men and women in preparing for and resolving situations resulting from natural or caused disasters.
Read more.

Reports & Resources

UN Women
In an effort to evaluate its own work and share good practices and lessons learned, UN Women has created TRANSFORM – the magazine for gender-responsive evaluation.
Read the 8th issue here.

UNFPA
The publication 'Adolescent Girls in Disaster & Conflict: Interventions for Improving Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services' features new case studies on reaching adolescent girls in humanitarian situations.
Read the report.

Women's Refugee Commission
The WRC has put together recommendations in their report 'A Girl No More: The Changing Norms of Child Marriage in Conflict'. This resource urges donors, governments, policymakers, and programmers to ensure the basic needs of families are met, amongst other things.
Read more.

World Health Organization
WHO has launched three new publications to help countries improve their data on stillbirths and maternal and neonatal deaths. A current lack of this data from many countries means effective and timely actions to prevent babies and mothers from dying are not in place.
The publications are available here.

In an effort to bring together available data on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) health and health-related indicators, WHO has also released the 2016 World Health Statistics. It focuses on providing a comprehensive overview of the latest annual data in relation to the health-related targets in the SDGs.
Read the report.

Gender Violence Article
Jemma Tosh draws on intersectionality theory as she analyses privilege, power, and oppression in problematizing the gender binary, moving away from conventional analyses of gender violence.
Read the article here.

Facts of the Month

1/2 Of human trafficking victims are adult women

120 million women and girls worldwide have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting.

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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.

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