PRESS RELEASE

UNRWA Launches Final Report on Education Reform in Celebration of World Teachers' Day



A teacher works with her students in an UNRWA school in Arroub camp, West Bank. © 2015 UNRWA Photo by Alaa Ghosheh

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East Jerusalem

On World Teachers' Day on 5 October, UNRWA officially launched the final report on its Education Reform to celebrate the achievements of the Agency's 19,000 teachers in transforming teaching and learning practices in its 692 schools.

The Education Reform, which was implemented from 2011 to 2015, was designed to meet the needs of the twenty-first century for innovative, critical and creative thinkers. The Reform addressed the needs of the UNRWA education programme in an integrated way, incorporating teacher professional development, curriculum, student assessment, inclusive education, technical and vocational education, research, and data.

The Education Reform Report describes the successes of the four-year Reform and highlights how the targets were exceeded. Overall, the Reform resulted in greater efficiencies in the UNRWA education system; student survival rates (which measures how many children successfully complete basic education) increased to the highest point in five years, while dropout rates fell to their lowest point over the same period. The Report also highlighted the important role of UNRWA teachers in realizing these achievements and emphasized that their commitment and dedication will continue to be essential in ensuring quality, inclusive and equitable education for all Palestine refugee children and as UNRWA works to embed and sustain the principles and practices of the Education Reform.

"The UNRWA approach to transforming education was an approach which recognized that in order to change children's learning experience, you have to change the whole system," said Caroline Pontefract, the UNRWA Director of Education. "Our approach and achievements have been recognized by key education stakeholders in host countries, the region and even at a global level. World Teachers' Day therefore provides an ideal opportunity to officially launch the final Education Reform Report and to thank UNRWA teachers for their key role in the success of the Reform."

Every year on 5 October, UNRWA joins the international community in celebrating World Teachers' Day, which seeks to recognize the vital contributions that teachers make to education and development. The UNRWA education programme is one of the largest non-governmental school systems in the Middle East and is supported through generous contributions from donors, including the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Japan.

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Background Information

UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions and financial support has been outpaced by the growth in needs. As a result, the UNRWA Programme Budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall. UNRWA encourages all Member States to work collectively to exert all possible efforts to fully fund the Agency's Programme Budget. UNRWA emergency programmes and key projects, also operating with large shortfalls, are funded through separate funding portals.

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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