gender section
unrwa

gender bulletin



monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

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update of the month

UNRWA will be joining the rest of the UN system in reporting on the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN-SWAP, based on common performance standards for the gender-related work of all UN entities, ensuring greater coherence and accountability.

stories from UNRWA

'My Story, Our Voices'

A Series of Films by the Community, for the Community

As part of its ongoing initiative to address child marriage, the UNRWA West Bank Field Office (WBFO) has produced a series of short films titled 'My Story, Our Voices', highlighting the voices of child marriage survivors and their communities as they share their experiences and speak out about the causes and impacts of child marriage in the context of the West Bank. Amid a backdrop of factors that contribute to this harmful practice – including poverty, overcrowded camps, insecurity and the other negative consequences of nearly 50 years of military occupation. These compelling personal stories explore the effects that child marriage has on the health, education, and life opportunities of women and girls.

These stories echo the findings of the recent mapping exercise by WBFO, which found that child marriage is the main cause for school dropouts and a factor that contributes to an array of health and social problems. One UNRWA beneficiary who suffers health problems as a result of being forced into marriage at an early age reflects: ''When a girl gets married at a young age her body and her womb are still growing and she still doesn't understand a lot of things about life. They took me out of school and put me in my husband's house.'' Another survivor, highlighting the important role education plays in empowering women and girls to make healthy decisions for themselves and their future, says, "I'd like to say to today's generation: study. Study-it's the key to life, and afterwards you can get married''.

While these films focus on the experiences of women and girls in the West Bank, they offer UNRWA staff in all fields a chance to reflect on the important role that the Agency's core services of education, health and relief play in prevention and response to child marriage in the communities that we serve. The films were launched to the public on 8 December 2016 in Amman, as part of the UNRWA HQ symposium marking the end of the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender -Based Violence Campaign. The three films, on education, health, and poverty are available to view and share via UNRWA's YouTube channel (click on the hyperlinks above to view).

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'BUILDING SAFETY'

The two-year programme, 'Building Safety', is going to continue in 2017, focusing on the finalization of the main components and products. Following the finalization, work will ensue to roll-out the products to the different field offices, with an emphasis on building the capacity of staff to integrate the guidance material into their work.

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Inspiring Story

A New Dawn

Following the conflicts in Gaza, buildings have been destroyed and left in terrible conditions, with the blockade preventing building materials from entering Gaza.

Sixteen-year-old Ansam Raed Saleh al-Wadiyah paints on the walls of the destroyed buildings. Her murals, which have attracted a number of visitors, include architectural shapes, nature scenes and cartoon characters. Visitors can relate to the paintings as they reflect their culture and landmarks, offering a feeling of comfort and calmness. Her mother Sahar is her biggest supporter and gave her a painting kit to develop her skills. Last year, Ansam, who dreams of becoming an international artist, participated in the 2016 Human Rights Competition in eastern Gaza City, where she won first place for her painting, 'Jerusalem'. Every year, the UNRWA education programme conducts Human Rights Competitions in its schools in all five areas of Gaza to support and reinforce the human rights culture among students. Read more

Events of Interest

Invitation to Submit Projects for the 2017 Human Rights Fund and Shiraka Programme

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has renewed its commitment to further assist Jordan in its endeavours to improve human rights and good governance. Organizations can apply for the Human Rights Fund and/or the Shiraka Social Transformation Programme. Women's rights and improved gender-sensitive policies are one of the themes that activities can relate to. Activities are to be implemented in Jordan and for the Shiraka Programme; only local non-profit organizations can apply. Proposals have to be submitted by **1 March 2017** at the latest. Read more

15 February 2017 (5 p.m. – 6 p.m. Jordan time) - Online

The UN Global Compact (the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative) is offering a webinar titled 'Applying a Gender Lens to Responsible Business Practices in Conflict-Affected Areas'. It will explore why it is important to apply a gender lens to responsible business practices in high-risk areas, as well as tools on making positive contributions to the rights of women and girls. More information

Regional News

Gaza

The Women's Affairs Centre was established with the aim of promoting gender equality and improving the view of women's rights in the community. The Centre works with victims of violence and those whose rights have been violated. The Centre is currently recruiting men to help fight for women's rights in the society. Read more

Lebanon

Following regular campaigns by the ABAAD Centre for Gender Equality in Lebanon, the government is in the process of amending the clause that allows perpetrators to escape punishment by marrying their victims. The bill is set to criminalize all forms of rape with no exceptions to marital rape. Read more

Also, in Lebanon and in line with the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Queen's University, together with ABAAD, are conducting a study to determine elements that lead to child marriage among Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Better coping alternatives are set to be offered through community-based programmes. Read more

Egypt

Women have been gaining more employment opportunities as security and police officers, but not yet as female bodyguards. Hind Wajih has been able to break through this gender stereotype wall by being Egypt's first certified female bodyguard in the Middle East. She developed her passion by attending defense classes and urges women to follow their passion despite community barriers associated with it. Read more

Reports & Resources

UN WOMEN and UNESCO

The Global Guidance on Addressing School-Related GBV (the result of the combined expertise and leadership of UNESCO, UN Women and other partners) is aimed at stakeholders to assist in the comprehension of what school-related GBV is and the circumstances where it occurs. *The Global Guidance* comprises of the key principles and practical strategies intended to educate institutions to help in the elimination of GBV in schools. Read more

CEDAW for Youth is a youth-friendly version of CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women). It is an international legal instrument that requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promote equality. Read more

UNFPA

The Maternal Health Thematic Fund Annual Report 2015 (MHTF) demonstrates the importance of the Thematic Fund in contributing to the reduction of maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity. The MHTF is the flagship programme of UNFPA for accelerating improved maternal health. The report aims to highlight the significance of Thematic Funding towards the mitigation of maternal deaths and the fulfilment of women's and girls' rights. Read more

SPHERE

Sphere was initiated in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross. Their aim was to improve the quality of their actions during disaster response and be held accountable for them. The 'Using the Sphere Standards in Urban Settings' guide is part of the *Sphere Unpacked* series, which discusses the use of the Sphere standards in specific situations. It sheds light on the importance of putting in place good programme design in shelters as a way of mitigating gender-based violence (GBV). Read more

Facts of the Month

39,000 girls marry prematurely each day. Learn more

200 Million women and girls have undergone some form of female genital mutilation/cutting worldwide. Learn 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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