gender section

unrwa

gender bulletin



Gaza © 2014 UNRWA Photo by Guillaume Petermann

monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

february 2017 | issue no. 76

update of the month

A video conference will take place in February, bringing together all UNRWA field offices, in addition to gender focal points at HQ with reference to the Agency-wide reporting on gender mainstreaming. The challenges, opportunities and lessons learned from the implementation of Gender Action Plans during the second half of 2016 will be discussed.

stories from UNRWA

UNRWA Marks International Women's Day 2017

Interview Series: UNRWA Women in the Workforce

UNRWA will join the rest of the UN system in marking International Women's Day (IWD) under the 2017 theme, 'Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50:50 by 2030'. As part of our activities to mark IWD this year, the Gender Bulletin is launching a new temporary section on UNRWA women employees' journeys to their current role. This initiative aims at highlighting the experiences of the UNRWA female workforce and in so doing emphasizing the inextricable link between having a more diverse workforce and the advancement of our work on providing equitable and inclusive assistance and protection to all Palestine refugee women, men, boys and girls.

This month kicks off with Kholoud Homsi, Chief of Relief and Social Services Division (RSSD) at HQ Amman.

Kholoud began her working career with UNRWA in 1996 as a Relief Services Assistant at RSSP HQ. She was very much inspired by her RSS Director, Angela Williams, who believed in Kholoud's capabilities. Kholoud won a Chevening Scholarship from the British Council to pursue a Master's degree in Social Policy and Social Development from the University of Manchester in 1999. She also has a BA in English literature and a minor in Sociology from Jordan University. In 2002, Kholoud was promoted to the post of Social Development Specialist. In 2010, she became a Relief Services Officer and in 2013, she was promoted to the post of Deputy Chief Relief Services at the Jordan Field Office. From 2017, she has been in her current post of Chief of RSSD at Amman HQ.

Why, in your opinion, is it important to have more women in senior positions?

It is important to hire competent and qualified men and women to ensure that UNRWA services are provided in an effective manner. It is important to have more women in senior positions as they will be participating in the decisions that affect women's lives, since women account for almost 51.6 per cent of the Agency's total workforce.

What are the main challenges of being in a leadership position, particularly for women?

UNRWA has made great strides in hiring competent women for leadership positions over the past ten years. However, there are still some challenges and gaps in senior-level positions, such as field directors, chief area officers, or chair of staff unions, which is still male dominated. We need to address the stereo- typing of such posts to ensure that at the decision- making level, both male and female staff are heard and taken into account.

What advice would you give to women trying to establish their career?

Individuals, be it women or men, should set clear objectives and work hard to achieve those objectives. I myself, have been honoured and privileged to serve Palestine refugees.

'BUILDING SAFETY' UPDATE

Following advancement on the work to develop the Guidelines for the Mainstreaming of GBV Mitigation in UNRWA Emergency Response, the Building Safety Programme is progressively developing the content of the e-learning programme in an effort to create synergy between these two components, both of which include a strong focus on GBV risk mitigation.
For more information, please contact: s.jelassi@unrwa.org

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Inspiring Story

Ballerinas of Cairo

Ballerinas reclaim the streets of Cairo in this photo project documented by Mohamed Taher. The photos are stunning snapshots of Cairo's vibrant culture in motion with the dancers pirouetting, leaping and posing their way through the capital. Posing for the photos gave the dancers room in the street where they felt empowered to take up space without fear. Egyptian women face danger on a daily basis due to sexual harassment on Egypt's streets. A 2013 United Nations report calculated that 99.3 per cent of women in the country had experienced sexual harassment on the streets, which has sparked initiatives, giving women a way to fight back, such as the Ballerinas of Cairo project. Read more

Events of Interest

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The Red Cross online learning platform is a global learning community. It is easy to register and consists of hundreds of free, short and high-quality courses. There are several courses related to gender that can be found by searching 'gender' in the search tab. Gender- related options include:
- Gender in Food and Nutrition Security
- Gender Equality, UN Coherence and You
- Different Needs – Equal Opportunities: Increasing Effectiveness of Humanitarian Action for Women, Girls, Boys and Men.

Read more

Why We Care About Care

The UN Women Training Centre is running an online course that aims to provide a global perspective on care, care work, and care economy. With the aim to advance human development, gender equality and women's empowerment, the course seeks to provide the skills and tools for analyzing and identifying types of interventions and policies for a fair and equal social organization of care. It also aims to enhance awareness and knowledge on the critical place care work occupies in development. Read more

Regional News

Yemen

A former child bride gets a second chance. In Yemen, Shukria was married off at 9 years old to a man of 50 to settle a debt her family owed and she was forced to drop out of school. After her husband divorced her and she failed to get the family house back, Shukria came to the Yemeni's Women Union, a UNFPA partner, for support. The Union aims to economically and socially empower vulnerable women. Shurika, now 55, is in her second year of university majoring in Guidance and Psychosocial Support. She will not let her daughters go down the same path. Read more

West Bank

A demonstration was held outside the Ramallah Appeal Court demanding harder sentences for gender-based violence killings, in particular for the case of Suha Aldeik, who was allegedly murdered by her husband in 2014. The court accepted Suha's husband's claim that he had killed his wife in a state of rage as she had 'violated' their so-called family honour, and his sentence was reduced. The public prosecutors appealed the court's decision and is awaiting the outcome, as the case is ongoing. Suha's father states that the murder was pre-meditated and it did not happen in a fit of rage. Women's groups continue to put pressure on harsher sentences and demand that the court adheres to Palestine's new obligation under The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Read more

International

UN Women has created an interactive timeline, 'Women's Footprint in History'.
Women hold half of the world's potential, but great steps still need to be taken for sustainable progress towards an equal world. Click on the link below to explore a selection of women throughout the world who have blazed the trail for generations ahead. Read more

Reports & Resources

SPHERE

The Sphere Training package (designed for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation during humanitarian response) has been customized to the Syria response. It aims to support the integration of international standards and coordination mechanisms into organizations that work in Syria. A new session on gender was developed for this training package, and gender is also mainstreamed throughout the four sectoral modules. It can be downloaded in Arabic. Read more

UN ESCWA (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia)

In September 2015, governments worldwide adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Arab Sustainable Development Report written by the UN attempts to answer the following questions: Where does the Arab region stand with respect to those global goals? How can the region successfully implement the Agenda?
The report also looks at the many complex factors shaping the region, such as the occupation of Palestinian and other Arab lands, ongoing conflicts and human rights deficits. The report highlights that urgent action is needed at the national and regional levels. Read more

ActionAid

How taxes are spent and raised matters to women -- sometimes more than to men.
The report *Making Tax Work For Women* highlights the fact that tax and women's rights are interlinked, and there is a lot of potential for tax to bring about positive changes in women's lives. Corporate tax revenues in developing countries are much lower than they could be. Women are disadvantaged relative to men by nearly every global measure. One of the key ways to end gender inequality is to provide more and better quality public services. Read more

Facts of the Month

Only 22.6%

of women make up all parliamentarians globally. Read more

Less than 0.03% of GDP

in developing countries are spent on ministries that are focused on women's rights and empowerment. 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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