gender section

unrwa

gender bulletin



Gaza © 2013 UNRWA Photo by Guillaume Petermann

monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

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update of the month

Following the launch of the booklet and short film *In Their Own Words* during the UNRWA HQ award ceremony to mark International Women's Day, a dissemination project is underway. The booklet is being disseminated to various establishments in Amman such as research centres, educational and cultural centres, language schools, and cafes, as well as UN agencies in Jordan, to shed light on Palestinian women's stories of resilience. To view the booklet click here.

stories from UNRWA

Interview Series: UNRWA Women in the Workforce

Following the February Gender Bulletin, we are continuing with the new initiative highlighting the experiences of the UNRWA female workforce. This edition focuses on Raj'a Omar, Head of the Inclusive Education Unit at Headquarters (HQ) in Amman. Raj'a graduated in Educational Psychology and Literature and has always had an interest in education, with a particular interest in inclusive education. She joined the Jordan Field Office in 1994 and started the special education programme in UNRWA for children with learning difficulties. Raj'a then joined HQ in 2009 as an Education Adviser (for special education).

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

Women are half of the society and half of life and therefore should represent half of all positions, including senior posts! Having women in senior positions will help other women to see this as a possibility. I used to always draw my children's attention to women in senior positions. The sky is the limit for everyone!

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

There may be challenges at the beginning as women may not fit the perceived stereotype of what an image of a leader is and therefore have to prove themselves. Women leaders should see themselves as a leader (not a female leader, but a leader) and be noticed for the qualities that they bring, not their gender. A further challenge can sometimes be the lack of encouragement from both men and women. We need to encourage all staff members, including women. A balance of both male and female leaders is better for everyone and for the future of our children.

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

Know yourself well. Know your abilities, your message, and what you want to do and what you want to be. Never think of a specific job as only for men or only for women. You can become whatever you believe in by building your capacity and skills. We need to be open-minded as much as possible, and women still need to bear the pressure of being an example for other women, as we still have a long way to go to reach the goal of gender equality.

All Female Training of Trainers for Women's Security

The 'Women Security Awareness Training' Training of Trainers (WSAT ToT) took place in Amman in March 2017. The WSAT is a UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) programme that aims to bring UN women staff together in order to explore the specific vulnerabilities and needs of women UN staff in the context of safety and security. Security plans and risk assessments often do not take into account the specific needs of women staff, which must be implemented when the Agency carries out its programming.

The training was delivered over five days, with the first three days focusing on enhancing knowledge on facilitation topics and the final two days delivering the actual WSAT course to participants/volunteers from the United Nations in Jordan. The training programme is a joint effort led by UNDSS New York and supported by UNDSS Jordan, UNICEF and UNRWA. A number of UNRWA staff attended the ToT training, including colleagues from Gaza, Jordan and HQ, with the objective being to cascade the training to at least 100 women staff, with a focus on front-line area staff in Gaza and Jordan this year. The training includes a variety of modules, such as gender-based human rights issues, cultural awareness, residential security for women, surviving as a female hostage and violence against women. UNRWA plans to roll this training out to the other three fields of operations in the coming years.

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Inspiring Story

Soufra Food Truck Rolls into Beirut

Palestinian women from Burj Barajneh camp launched the Soufra Food Truck, the first manifestation of their aspiring food catering enterprise. Despite social, economic and medical hardships, these women are employing their culinary talents to provide a welcome taste of Palestinian cuisine. As part of the Women's Program Association, which provides an opportunity for Palestinian women to share their culinary expertise, Soufra has become the first enterprise of its kind – as a business led by refugee women – to apply for a commercial food truck license in Lebanon. The vision of these women is creating profound economic opportunities and inspiring more women to pursue their dreams in the face of adversity. Read more

Events of Interest

Open Online Lecture Series on Care Economy, May-June

The UN Women Training Centre is offering a series of open webinars that aim to enhance awareness and understanding concerning the creation of policies necessary to produce a social organization of care that advances human development, gender equality and women's empowerment. Four of the webinars will be in English and four in Spanish. The series complements the Centre's work on the care economy. Read more

Gender Mainstreaming (Gender Equality - Advanced Course) - Online course

An e-learning course that aims to enhance knowledge of gender mainstreaming and gender analysis. While the course incorporates case studies, it focuses on lessons learned in gender mainstreaming in several UN agencies, INGOs and governments. The deadline to apply is 1 July. The course will run from 6 September to 21 November. Read more

Regional News

Jordan

The government approved the removal of Article 308 of the Penal Code, which stipulates that rapists are spared from punishment if they marry their victim and remain with them for at least five years. The proposed amendment seeks to intensify the prosecution of criminals indicted for sexual violence/assault. The recommendation to amend the law was based on a series of recommendations proposed by the Royal Committee for Developing the Judiciary and Enhancing the Rule of Law. Read more

In other news in Jordan, women members of parliament (MP) demanded an apology after a fellow male MP proclaim, "women are the only thing that has wrecked our society." While an apology was made, the sentiment underscores discriminatory social/cultural norms that persist against women's participation in politics. This episode came as MPs were discussing a domestic violence bill aimed at protecting women and children. Read more

Lebanon

Dozens of wedding dresses were strung above Beirut's sea front in protest of the country's law on rape, which allows rapists to marry their victims without facing legal prosecution. There is a proposal to abolish Article 522 dealing with rape, forced marriage and sexual violence that is set to be voted on this month. Read more

Syria

The EU hosted an international conference in Brussels on 4-5 April titled 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region'. It highlighted the issues Syrian women and girls encounter in the face of perpetual conflict and displacement. Read more

Reports & Resources

UN WOMEN

Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, analyses the challenges encountered in implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and is the product of a one-year project. The study emphasizes how to achieve sustainable peace through participation, protection, justice and prevention. It highlights gaps, challenges, good practices and priorities for action. Read more

OHCHR

A recent report titled *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* focuses on addressing trafficking in supply chains based on the efforts of multi-stakeholder initiatives and industry coalitions. Challenges such as detecting human trafficking are highlighted in the report. A series of recommendations are made that consist of improving the detection of human trafficking and legislation that more effectively combats human trafficking in their supply chains. Read more

ILO

The study *Towards a Better Future for Women and Work: Voices of Women and Men* considers global attitudes towards women and work based on data from the 2016 Gallup World Poll. The report illuminates factors that will contribute to greater gender parity in the workplace. The results are a summation of interviews with nearly 149,000 people spanning 142 countries. Read more

HRW

Your Destiny is to Stay with Him: State Response to Domestic Violence in Algeria is a recent Human Rights Watch report that documents cases of physical and psychological violence against women in Algeria. Considered in the report are the factors that compound women's vulnerability in the face of domestic violence. HRW recommends a series of profound structural changes to protect women's livelihoods. Read more

Facts of the Month

170

years until full gender equality is reached, according to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. Read more

3 in 4

part-time positions are held by women, three times the rate of men. 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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