gender section
unrwa

gender bulletin


Gaza City. © 2016 UNRWA Photo by Tamer Hamam

monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

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update of the month

A workshop was held in July (10-12) on the roll-out of the UNRWA GBV Prevention Framework as part of the larger project, 'Building Safety: Mainstreaming GBV Interventions in Emergency Preparedness Prevention and Response'. The workshop was attended by various personnel from each field office and HQ Amman, where development of a Road Map for the prevention of GBV tailored to each field office was undertaken and implementation plans for delivering action in the Road Map were articulated. For more information contact s.jelassi@unrwa.org

stories from UNRWA

Interview Series: 'UNRWA Women in the Workforce' presents Wafa'a Nuwwara, Area Relief and Social Services Officer

The latest edition of the interview series, which aims to highlight the experiences, challenges and successes of the UNRWA female workforce, features Wafa'a Nuwwara, the Area Relief and Social Services Officer for North Amman. Wafa'a earned a degree in sociology at the University of Damascus before completing a degree in pedagogy. Her career at UNRWA began in 1997, working in Syria in the dual roles of social worker and community development social worker. Her devotion to working with and identifying the needs of families in need of assistance and indefatigable work ethic have shaped her experience as a social worker now assisting Palestine refugees in Jordan.

Please describe your past occupation(s) and years of experience.
My career started as a social worker and community development social worker, developing social safety nets for Palestine refugees in Syria. My responsibilities included visiting families to determine who required any form of assistance, such as rehabilitation, shelter or aid. After approximately four years working in Syria, I transferred to Amman New Camp and spent the next nine years there, acting for three years as Officer-in-Charge and the remaining term as an Area Relief and Social Services Officer. In 2009 I transferred to my current post as a case manager in North Amman, where I have served in various capacities pertinent to the Department of Relief and Social Services (RSS).

Why, in your opinion, is it important to have more women in senior positions?
It is important to have more women in senior leadership positions to challenge an enduring mindset that devalues women's potential as leaders. We must acknowledge the profound contribution that women make to the mission of UNRWA. Also, certain areas, such as the Education and Health Departments, would be well-served if led by women. As the health and education domains have a particularly salient effect in the lives of women and girl refugees, women in leadership positions respective to these areas would give them a more far-reaching voice.

What are the main challenges of being in a leadership position, particularly for women?
There are certain positions that have historically been the preserve of men, such as leadership roles in education and health. The traditional image of women as incapable of many rigorous tasks and lacking resolve and power must change. Women have many responsibilities that require a prodigious, daily effort to fulfill.

What advice would you give to women trying to establish their career?
Work tirelessly to develop your skills and talents. It is important to study fastidiously and not be afraid, especially not afraid to try. Nurturing yourself and actively building on your experience is crucial to your success. Most importantly, never give up! Taking care of yourself and building on your successes will pave the way for a rich career.
For more information, contact t.abunafiseh@unrwa.org

united nations relief and works agency
for palestine refugees in the near east

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Inspiring Story

Gaza's Only Fisherwoman

Mornings for 22-year-old Madleen Kullab's are quite unlike those of most girls her age. Every morning she hits the water in her boat, beginning her workday as Gaza's only fisherwoman. Following in her father's footsteps, she took up the job when she was 13 and now braves the morass of Gaza's formidable waters. While the profession has traditionally been a male-dominated domain, Madleen's enthusiasm for fishing – while challenging traditional gender roles – provides a critical form of sustenance for her family and community. Despite her hard work and experience, she earns as little as US$ 135 a month. However, she is hopeful that the path she has forged will inspire other women and girls to pursue their aspirations, irrespective of institutional societal norms pertaining to gender. Read more

Events of Interest

Monitoring Women's Rights - Online Course

An e-learning course that introduces participants to documenting and monitoring women's human rights and gender equality. It aims to critically analyse the gendered dimension of violations of women's human rights. Among other objectives, the course will consider how to improve respect, protection, prevention and realization of human rights for women. Read more

Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programmes - The Netherlands/ Online Course

A capacity-building course offered both in the Netherlands and as an e-learning course to expand participants' ability to engage with gender issues. Among the aims of the course are implementing gender analyses in project cycle management, doing gender impact assessments, and developing objectives to produce sustainable change. Read more

Regional News

Jordan

A recent panel of media executives in Jordan concluded certain practices in some media institutions discriminate against women and that there is a 'patriarchal mentality' that continues to pervade the media industry in the country. Panelists championed a capacity-building approach whereby women will receive greater support for their career endeavours. The News Publishers' Women in News programme is a multinational effort to address gender inequalities in the media in Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Egypt. Read more

Syria

Concomitant with the ongoing war in Syria, several women's organizations have been established in order to develop women's skills and enrich their livelihoods. Many of these associations, like Woman Fingerprint and the Women Commission for Supporting Women and Children, have sprung up in areas of intense hostilities. Read more

The Syria Humanitarian Fund and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are supporting efforts to expand the accessibility of critical health services for women and girls, especially survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Aid from both organizations has contributed to the building of a pharmacy and gynecology and reproductive health points where beneficiaries are able to receive essential clinical help not widely available in war-torn Syria. Read more

oPt

Yusra Mohammed, 25, is the youngest female mayor in Palestine, having been elected in May in the town of Azzun. Family and friends encouraged her to run for the office; however, unfavorable online posts have taken exception with a female heading a municipal government. Read more

Reports & Resources

UN WOMEN

Making the SDGs Count For Women and Girls with Disabilities illuminates the need to mainstream disability in United Nations efforts to achieve gender equality and empower women; end poverty and make greater investments in healthy lives for women and girls with disabilities; and close the gaps in data on gender and disability. The brief aims to prioritize the needs of women and girls with disabilities, who encounter more formidable societal pressures. Compounded by existing gender inequality and discrimination, difficulty in accessing resources, and social stigma against individuals with disabilities, women and girls with disabilities are in a profoundly disadvantaged state. The publication seeks to address these circumstances in the context of working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Read more

Women's Refugee Commission (WRC)

The Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies aims to reshape the gender-based violence (GBV) response in emergencies to better provide safe, immediate and all-inclusive services to those affected by GBV and mitigate the occurrence of GBV the early phases of emergencies. The report presents the findings of three field assessment missions testing the efficacy of the 'Call to Action Road Map'. Lebanon features as one of the field assessment missions; acute instances of violence overwhelmingly affect the country's large refugee population, where residual feelings of victim-shaming occur. Services are also severely limited. Thus, there is a significant need to enhance and expand the services to beneficiaries in emergencies. Read more

Amnesty International UK (AIUK) & Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

The *Syria Response Consultations on the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* report provides recommendations to the UK and broader international community to ensure Syrian women and girl's political participation, enact mechanisms to properly safeguard women and girls from violence, and provide expanded aid and services to refugees fleeing the conflict. Read more

Facts of the Month

5,000

so called 'honour'-related killings occur every year globally. Read more

2152

the year women will finally reach pay equity with men consistent with the current rate of progress. 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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