gender section
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gender bulletin



UNRWA Amman New Camp © 2017 UNRWA Photo by Amneh al-Farhat

monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

october 2017 | issue no. 84

update of the month

UNRWA adopted the Human Resources (HR) Gender Parity Action Plan geared towards the implementation of UNRWA Gender Equality Strategy and the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity. The goal is to reach gender parity at the level of senior leadership by the end of 2021. For more information, please contact Nadine Kaddoura: n.kaddoura@unrwa.org

stories from UNRWA

UNRWA Back to School Campaign to Raise Awareness on Combatting Child Marriage

Jordan - In the Jordan Field Office, an awareness-raising campaign about the dangers of child marriage started at the end of September and will continue until mid-October.

Emphasis lies on the right to and importance of education of girls and women, even when they are married at a young age. Child marriage often means the end to a girl's formal education. Compared to the reasons boys give for dropping out of school, females are more likely to report early marriage as a major reason for dropping out.

While stressing the importance of continued education, the campaign further raises awareness about other negative impacts such as health risks related to early pregnancy.

The campaign comprises 40 different activities at schools, Women Programme Centres (WPCs) and other locations across Jordan, targeting predominantly girls of different age groups, but also parents and young boys as allies. Altogether over 5000 people will be targeted with this campaign.

Activities include plays, drawing, awareness-raising sessions on education, health and the Jordanian law, the distribution of brochures, video screenings and discussion sessions.

For more information on the campaign, please contact
For Gaza: h.el-arabi@unrwa.org
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Gaza - Under the title, "Girls Not Brides - End Child Marriage" (in Arabic: لا لـتزويج القاصـرات), the Gaza Field Office Relief and the Social Services Programme in Gaza recently completed the implementation of an advocacy campaign in cooperation with WPC.

Similar to its counterpart in Jordan, the campaign highlighted the negative effects of child marriage and additionally called for amending the minimum age of marriage for girls under Palestinian Law to 18 years.

Feedback from participants attending awareness-raising sessions and a seminar, as well as from those listening to radio spots broadcasted on Al-Quds station, stressed the importance of regular awareness-raising campaigns, specifically on the consequences of child marriage, the importance of quality sexual and reproductive health education and leadership programs for young girls.

Moreover, participants stressed the importance of supporting continued education even when girls get married, and ensuring harmful practices are condemned, especially by traditional leaders and tackling poverty which is seen as exacerbating factor for child marriage.

A total of 527 community members, including traditional leaders and representatives from local organizations, benefited from these activities.

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Inspiring Story

Female Arab Cartoonists Challenge Authority

Riham El Hour, the first Moroccan woman to join the Union of Moroccan Professional Caricaturists, is one of a few female Arab cartoonists who challenge stereotypes about Arab women by drawing caricatures on controversial issues. Sexual harassment and abuse are recurring themes. Riham uses her cartoons to thematise the issue of male guardianship laws. Omayya Joha, a Palestinian cartoonist who won the 2001 Arab Journalism Award, addresses the daily life of Palestinians under occupation in her caricatures. Read more.

Events of Interest

Conference: Feminism in Crisis? Gender and The Arab Public Sphere, by the American University of Lebanon

19—20 January. Beirut, Lebanon.

Against the backdrop of the popular uprisings in 2011 and subsequent developments, this interdisciplinary academic conference asks, "What can feminism accomplish?", by focussing on a number of contexts, including civil society, political economy, media and war. Contributions of different forms (papers, panel sessions or roundtable discussions) can be submitted until *5 November 2017.* Read more.

Gender Academy 2017 by the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation (ITC ILO)

13 — 24 November. Turin, Italy.

ITC ILO offers a two-week course with ILO experts, academics and practitioners from all around the world on gender equality in work, particularly in a development context. Read more.

Regional News

oPt

Palestinian women and men successfully protested the exclusion of female candidates' names in some of the candidate lists for the upcoming municipal elections. Female candidates' names had been replaced with 'wife of', 'sister of' or just the women's initials. Following protest, particularly on social media, the material was eventually changed. However, critics note that this shows that full political participation of women, a right granted under Palestinian law, is still not a matter of course. Read more.

Lebanon

By asking women to share their experiences on social media, the Lebanese Knowledge is Power (KIP) project on Gender and Sexuality is trying to raise awareness about sexual harassment. Additionally, posters and stickers and a campaign video have been disseminated throughout Beirut. Currently, there is no legislation specifically dealing with the issue of sexual harassment in Lebanon. Read more.

Jordan

UN Women Jordan looks back at a successful first phase of the HeforShe campaign, a solidarity movement for gender equality developed by UN Women to engage men and boys as advocates and agents of change for the achievement of gender equality and women's rights. Ten student volunteers were trained in gender equality and women empowerment. Subsequently, a total of 25 campaigns and two trainings were organised in order to raise awareness. Read more.

Saudi Arabia

At the end of September, Saudi Arabia has finally lifted the ban on women driving. According to a royal decree, women would be allowed to drive starting in June 2018. From that point on, women will no longer need permission from a legal guardian to get a license and will not need a guardian in the car when they drive. Read more.

Reports & Resources

Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

For The *General Recommendation (GR) No. 35 on gender-based violence against women,* more than a hundred civil society and women's organisations, states parties as well as academia, UN entities and others provided their views and comments. GR 35 is an update of recommendation No. 19 that was adopted by CEDAW in 1992 and is considered to be the international normative framework for combatting gender-based violence against women. For example, it includes a new definition of violence against women and a recognition of intersectionality. Read more.

ABAAD, Resource Center for Gender Equality

Abaad released an application, as well as a mini-website, promoting youth education on gender equality. Both target 8-12-year-olds. The website, called "Playing for Gender Equality", provides an extensive collection of educational resources developed and tested in the Middle East. It comprises guides, videos, games, posters and much more. With the application "Save me", children can educate themselves interactively about topics such as partnership, gender and protection. The application is available in both Arabic and English. Read more.

The Sphere Project

The Sphere Project is working on further integrating gender into the next edition of The Sphere Handbook, the most widely known and recognized set of common principles and universal minimum standards for humanitarian response. A group of technical experts has developed recommendations on how to further integrate the gender dimension in different sectors such as health, food security, shelter and sanitation. Read more.

Facts of the Month

1 in 3

women worldwide were married before 15. Read more.

1 in 4

people living in the EU say rape may be justified under "certain circumstances". 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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