gender section
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gender bulletin



UNRWA Panel Discussion **© 2017 UNRWA Photo by Gina Bylang**

monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

december 2017 | issue no. 86

update of the month

UNRWA attended the annual meeting of the Inter-Agency Network on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment between 13 and 16 November 2017 in Geneva. The meeting focused on the UN-SWAP as a mechanism to ensure accountability on Gender Equality within the UN system. Participants reviewed the achievements of the past five years and prepared for the next Action Plan (UN-SWAP 2.0) and its indicators.

stories from UNRWA

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

Every year from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (GBV) campaign heightens global awareness about the issue of gender-based violence. UNRWA marked the campaign through a panel discussion on GBV in Amman, in addition to various field activities in the oPt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

The panel discussion, which took place in Amman on 6 December, addressed the recent regional changes in legal frameworks related to GBV. During 2017, countries such as Jordan and Lebanon repealed so-called "marry the rapist" laws in their penal codes which allowed perpetrators to evade prosecution for rape by marrying the victim. As these changes in legal frameworks are happening, it is relevant for UNRWA to understand how they can help prevent GBV and respond to it appropriately when it does occur. Against this backdrop, UNRWA invited Adam Coogle from Human Rights Watch (Jordan), Manal Benkirane from UN Women (Regional Office in Cairo), Suad Abu-Dayyeh from Equality Now (Jordan), Samar Muhareb from the Arabic Renaissance for Democracy & Development (Jordan) and Wafa Al-Khadra from the American University of Madaba to discuss the potential effects of these changes on the work of UNRWA in the area of GBV programming and the implementation of the GBV Prevention Framework.

Subjects of discussion were the interaction of changes in legislation with changes in society, findings of recent studies such as the IMAGES study conducted by UN Women on perceptions of masculinity, experiences from the field, and challenges identified by UNRWA staff and panelists working on GBV.

In the five fields of operation of UNRWA, various activities were carried out under the slogan "Five Roads and One Destination: End Gender-Based Violence". The theme is inspired by the context-based roadmaps which UNRWA is implementing to prevent GBV in all its areas of operations.

The Gaza field office organized workshops and trainings on different topics ranging from legal courses on the right to education and human rights to debating and presentation skills. Additionally, radio episodes addressing GBV were created and disseminated through Al Aradaa Radio. Lebanon, as well as The Syria field office, focused on the issue of child marriage and conducted theater plays, film screenings and drawing workshops in order to raise awareness. The West Bank field office in turn emphasized the role of social media in GBV, whereas Jordan field office (JFO) addressed the issue of social stigma attached to GBV survivors through trainings and awareness raising sessions. One of the highlights of JFOs campaign was a day of wall painting where students from UNRWA schools came together to draw slogans addressing GBV onto the wall of a school.

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Inspiring Story

Palestine's Youngest Female Mayor

At just 26 years-old, Yousra Badwan is Palestine's youngest female mayor after being elected to the post in the Azzun municipality of the occupied West Bank earlier this year. Despite the rarity of young women in politics, Badwan does not see her achievement as unique amongst Palestinian women. "Palestinian women are symbols of heroism, sacrifice, perseverance and creativity. (…) They continue to fight in all aspects of life and have proven themselves successful in various positions. They are capable of change and ingenuity." Read more.

Regional News

oPt
In Ramallah, Palestinian Artist Yasmeen Mjalli has started the art project "I am not your sweetheart" that addresses the issue of sexual harassment, seeking to give a voice to Palestinian women who face harassment and to raise awareness. The art project includes a book telling stories about sexual harassment that Palestinian women have shared with Mjalli. Additionally, an exhibition in Ramallah will open, displaying paintings that portray the issues of harassment and abuse women in Palestine face. Read more.

Jordan
Women activists and representatives from over 60 civil society organisations in Jordan released a position paper that offers more solutions for victims of rape and other forms of violence, including allowing abortion in cases of rape and incest. The paper aims to tackle discriminatory laws that fail to offer protection for women and children in various ways. Read more.

Lebanon
On 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the Lebanese president unveiled a statue dedicated to all women who have faced gender -based violence. The statue, a joint project of the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs, the National Commission for Lebanese Women and the women's rights NGO ABAAD, is supposed to raise awareness and to be a small step of many towards eliminating gender-based violence. Read more.

Global
UN Women and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) launched a regional project to estimate the cost of violence against women as an instrument for policy reform and advocacy. Adding the economic perspective is expected to provide a new and powerful angle to assess the legal and health consequences, and to advocate for action. Read more.

Reports & Resources

World Economic Forum: The Global Gender Gap Report 2017
The Global Gender Gap Report benchmarks 144 countries on their progress towards gender parity across four thematic dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. In addition, this year's edition also analyses the dynamics of gender gaps across industry talent pools and occupations. Read more.

United Nations: Urgent Call to Address Gender-based Violence in Syria
The United Nations is calling for greater action to address gender-based violence and its prevention in Syria. According to the 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview released on 21 November, gender-based violence, particularly verbal harassment, domestic violence (including family violence against women and girls), child marriages and the fear of sexual violence, including sexual harassment, continues to pervade the lives of Syrian women and girls inside and outside the home. Read more.

UNICEF: Gender Action Plan 2018-2021
The Gender Action Plan specifies how UNICEF will promote gender equality across all of the organization's work at the global, regional and country levels, in alignment with the UNICEF Strategic Plan. It elaborates the gender dimensions of the programmatic results across the outcome areas of the Strategic Plan along with the relevant indicators for measuring success. It also specifies the steps UNICEF is undertaking with regard to institutional effectiveness in implementing the programmatic work on gender, through commitment of resources and strengthening of staffing, capacity and systems. Read more.

Events of Interest

Beirut International Women Film Festival (BWFF)

13—18 March. Beirut, Lebanon.

BWFF is an annual event held in Beirut under the theme "Women Empowerment". Gathering filmmakers and cinema lovers from all over the world, BWFF tackles issues such gender equality, sexual identity, domestic violence among others through the power of cinema. Read more.

International Labour Organisation + UN Women: Training of Trainers for Gender Equality for UN Women Staff

15 January—31 March. E-Learning.

This training offers UN Women staff the opportunity to update and enhance facilitation skills and includes a face-to-face workshop from 15 to 18 January at the UN Women Training Centre's house in Santo Domingo. Application deadline is 31 December 2017. Read more.

Facts of the Month

About 70 per cent
Out of the world's 130 million out-of-school youth are girls. Read more.

At least 29 per cent
of men in the Middle East and North Africa think there should be more women in positions of political authority. 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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