



Celebrating the first female football match in Khan Eshieh camp in Syria © 2018 UNRWA

monthly updates on gender issues in unrwa and the region

update of the month february 2019 | issue no. 100

Welcome to the 100th edition of the UNRWA Gender Bulletin! We would like to use the opportunity to thank you as readers for your continuous interest in our work, expressed not only in high numbers of views but also frequent inquiries and inputs from our network. This support is highly appreciated, particularly during last year's financial curtailing and respective impact on the Agency's overall operations as well as its work on gender mainstreaming and gender-based violence.

stories from UNRWA

Female football players confront gender norms in Khan Eshieh camp

The first female football team has been created in Khan Eshieh Camp in Syria. Already their first match that took place in October aroused great interest. While the initiative came as a surprise to the community and the owner of the stadium, it immediately attracted a high number of women who were keen to try their technical skills in handling the ball - they even had to enlarge the teams to 16 players on each side to allow everyone to participate. While the first match took place in a rather unstructured way, the team has subsequently professionalized its endeavor, even being equipped with bodices. Persistence allowed the implicated women to overcome skepticism and social barriers they faced. Through playing football, they tackle traditional gendered norms that relegate women to their homes and

team has sparked further interest in recreational activities and the female residents of the camp are now keen to join the newly founded Aerobic Club. The new opportunities for physical activity



can contribute to reduced anxiety, improved mood and increased body-awareness and self-esteem of the currently 60 implicated women. For the future, the participants wish to be able to hold mixed-gender football matches, bringing together all members of the community.



have previously designated the playground as an exclusively male domain. However, over time the female footballers' husbands and other community members have become their fans and supporters. Games now take place regularly and have become part and parcel of the camp life. In general, the initiative of the female football

UNRWA Gender Section shares its experiences with aspiring humanitarian professionals in Bilbao

UNRWA's Head of Gender Section introduced UNRWA's gendered approach to emergency situations to students of the NOHA (Network On Humanitarian Action) Master's Degree in Deusto University in Bilbao in November 2018. The two-day training session on "Intercultural and gender approaches in humanitarian action" was organised by the Global Citizenship Education Department of UNRWA Spanish Committee to highlight how the Agency considers gendered dimensions in its service delivery to Palestine refugees.



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inspiring story

Acknowledging grassroots activism for gender equality in Afghanistan

Award-winning 22-year-old activist Gharsanay IbnulAmeen from Afghanistan has dedicated enormous efforts to promote girls' education and leadership through initiating and participating in various projects. As a Special Assistant to the President of Afghanistan, H.E. Dr. Ashraf Ghani, she is advocating for women's participation amongst others in the peace process, security, poverty reduction, administrative reforms and combating terrorism, extremism and corruption. To increase school enrollment of girls she co-founded the Afghan Girls Sustainable Education Project in Jalalabad. Coordinating the Young Women's Leadership Conference for girls aged 14-19 she also engages in capacity-building for female leadership in community-building and peacemaking in addition to her work as Team Ambassador in the Everywoman Everywhere Project as part of which she is developing the first international Treaty on Violence Against Women. In reward for her activism, she has now been selected for the 2019 Women of Distinction Award presented by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women/NY. You can hear IbnulAmeen's keynote upon reception of the award during the NGO CSW63 Forum for which you can register [here](#). In her words, "It will be a representation of the strength of Afghan women and an opportunity for their voices to be heard across the world".

events of interest

Develop your skills as gender equality trainer
Applications for the Professional Development Programme for Gender Trainers offered by the UN Women Training Center and KIT Royal Tropical Institute are open now. Since the Beijing World Conference in 1995, gender training has become a key instrument for gender mainstreaming, in a way becoming a cure-all for various challenges. Thus, this training aims to critically engage with its opportunities and limitations and couple it with feminist practices of reflexivity on knowledge making and power. The six-month certificate programme that lasts from 20 October 2019 until 24 April 2020 uses a blended learning approach with online and face-to-face elements. It aims to sharpen understanding of and critical engagement with gender and development concepts, enhance training skills and methods in learner-centered pedagogy and emphasizes the potential to reclaim gender equality's transformative potential and feminist critical edge. If eligible, apply by 15 March 2019 to be considered for a scholarship, or otherwise by 29 June 2019.



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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 5.4 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.

regional news

Regional: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and ESCWA have jointly launched a study on Gender Justice and the Law in the Arab States Region, constituting a baseline assessment of laws and policies affecting the realization of gender equality and the protection from gender-based violence. The report includes an overall summary as well as 18 country profiles mapping key legislative provisions. [Read more.](#)

Tunisia: On 23 November, the Tunisian cabinet officially endorsed a draft law establishing equality in inheritance as had been announced by President Beji Caïd Essebsi in August 2017. The amendment of the Personal Status Code that has been developed by the Individual Freedoms

and Equality Committee has now been referred to parliament for further discussion and approval. [Read more.](#)

Pakistan: The Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights in Pakistan has approved a draft bill to raise the minimum age for marriage to 18 years and introducing punishments. According to Senator Sherry Rehman, 40 per cent of females are married below the age of 18 and these marriages are one of the main reasons of early death, often related to maternity-related complications. The bill is now pending hearing by the parliament and submission to the federal cabinet for approval. [Read more.](#)

reports & resources

Progressing towards higher protection from GBV in Emergencies

The Progress Report 2017 on the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies has recently been published. Concluding that important strides have been made especially regarding coordination of humanitarian work at the global and field level, the report emphasizes amongst others that leadership of local civil society and women's organisations needs to be increased, that further efforts need to be directed towards linking gender equality and GBV, and that a broader buy-in on the policy and partnership level is imperative. Read more on achievements and challenges [here](#).

2018 – The year's achievements for gender equality

UN Women has published a timeline of noteworthy steps for women's rights and gender equality around the world in 2018, highlighting the continuing inspiring momentum created by the #MeToo movement and ranging from legal

achievements in terms of justice for survivors of wartime sexual violence in Kosovo and feminist strikes in Spain for International Women's Day on 8 March, to land rights of Sulaliyyate women in Morocco and decriminalization of homosexuality in India. Have a look at these and other important developments of 2018 [here!](#)

Index unravels extent of gender-discrimination in social institutions

The OECD Development Centre recently published the fourth edition of its Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), a cross-country measure of discrimination against women in social institutions across 180 countries. While the 2019 index shows improvements in political commitments, reforms and programmes, discriminatory social institutions prevail, intersecting across all stages of girls' and women's life, restricting their access to justice, rights and empowerment opportunities and undermining their agency and decision-making authority over their life choices. [Read more.](#)

facts of the month

32%

is the global average gender gap according to a recently published World Economic Forum Report. [Read more.](#)

200 million

girls and women globally are estimated to have undergone some form of Female Genital Mutilation. [Read more](#) on the global campaign to end this practice and the International Day of Zero Tolerance observed on 6 February.

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