



Students show the products of activities within the Building Self-Protection Methodology. © 2018 UNRWA Photo by Duha Awdallah

On 7-10 July, the Gender Section attended the regional core group workshop “Reproductive Health and GBV Project.” Over three days, participants from UNRWA health and education programs and all 5 fields discussed the curricula to be used to improve awareness and protection for issues related to reproductive health and GBV.

 stories from unrwa

Building Self-Protection

UNRWA school counsellor Youssef Hawandeh, referring to the Building Self-Protection initiative, remarked that “the methodology helped me...to build trust with students so they see me, and the UNRWA school, as a safe haven for them.” As part of the Agency’s Building Safety initiative, Jordan Field Office devised and implemented the Building Self-Protection methodology, which aims to build capacity for self-protection within communities and enhance community safety mechanisms by assessing safety risks and possible solutions with UNRWA students, parents and teachers.

Facilitated by UNRWA GBV focal points, the methodology began with UNRWA students mapping out areas in the school and community that posed safety risks and pinpointing characteristics or situations that can increase vulnerability. Students then identified children who were not able to attend school and the reasons for this. Students, parents and teachers specified assets in the community that could help them to overcome or mitigate the protection concerns identified. The result of these activities is a protection roadmap, which responds to one of the GBV or child protection risks identified using the available assets mapped through the involvement of the community.

Participants in the JFO implementation commended the initiative.

Ows Basil, an UNRWA student, said that the activities helped him and other fellow students to identify security challenges and sources of support.

He also noted, “We learned how to protect ourselves from different types of abuse.” Tala Omar, another UNRWA student, emphasized how the activities shed light on “which vulnerabilities increase the level of risk.”

The parents and school counsellors who were interviewed also praised the methodology for raising awareness about types of abuse, such as “sexual harassment through social media,” as father Mahmoud Khater said, and for informing them on the avenues through which they can uphold the well-being of their children and students. Khater explained that the initiative counselled him on how to help his children avoid bullying and gave him crucial information on the criminal electronic unit and on how to report sexual harassment cases. “The methodology empowered me to create a safer environment for my children,” he said. Duha Adawallah, a school counsellor, said that the methodology gave her the tools to “support the psychological and social well-being of the students.”

A total of 45 Protection Roadmaps, comprising 180 self-protection activities, were implemented in 26 UNRWA schools in Jordan. For more information, please contact z.piniella@unrwa.org.



inspiring story

Arab Women at Work: Simone Fattal
Simone Fattal is a Syrian sculptor and painter who grew up in Lebanon before moving to the U.S. Her works, numbering 247, are featured in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City until 2 September. They reflect her experience, conveying themes of displacement, conflict and the revitalization of ancient Middle Eastern civilizations. Fattal is also aware of the impact of her gender on her life and work. In an interview with Barbara Nimri Aziz, Fattal replied to a question about women in the arts by saying, "We can pick up and move on from adversity maybe more easily than men can, perhaps because we fall from a less elevated place."

events of interest

Voices in Action Conference
On 16-19 September, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) will be hosting a conference in Washington, D.C. Titled Voices in Action, the conference will highlight numerous topics pertaining to domestic violence, including human rights, advocacy skills, behavioural health, a survivor focus and male survivors. The keynote speaker is Jamira Burley, an American activist who has focused on issues of gun violence and youth engagement in politics. Her speech will focus on the intersection of domestic violence and gun violence as well as youth activism. The conference will also include panels, awards, and a lobbying event targeting members of Congress, and will present awards to individuals and organizations who have significantly contributed to combating domestic violence. Register or read more [here](#).

regional news

World: On 21 June, the ILO adopted a binding instrument on GBV in the workplace in a 439-7 vote. The convention is the first global tool dedicated to combating violence and harassment in the workplace. It also recognizes that vulnerable groups face higher rates of GBV. Governments that ratify the treaty must pass national laws that prohibit workplace violence and take preventive measures. Governments must also provide services to survivors.

Saudi Arabia: Unemployment in Saudi Arabia fell to its lowest level in more than two years, in part fueled by an increase in women's participation in the workforce. In particular, Saudi Arabia witnessed a significant decline in female youth unemployment. Female labour force participation reached 20.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2019. Furthermore, women now make up 23 per cent of the Saudi workforce, an increase of 7 per cent since 1998, the largest increase among the G-20 states.

reports & resources

The Social Institutions and Gender Index published a [report](#) measuring how discriminatory laws and social norms affect the lives of women. Though discrimination through social institutions is 5 per cent less than the global average, discriminatory social norms and practices still hamper women's empowerment opportunities and gender equality. Formal and informal laws as well as social norms restrict women's economic empowerment and thus induce an income loss of 7.5 per cent. This is due to discriminatory social institutions such as child marriage, discriminatory workplace legisla-

tions and norms reducing women's labor-force participation in entrepreneurship. The main concern for Eastern Europe and Central Asia is discrimination in the family, particularly women's restricted physical integrity.

The **Institute for Women's Policy Research** published the [factsheet](#) "A Woman-Centered Economic Agenda," which lists 8 policies that increase economic opportunities for women and boost the overall economy. Such policies include improving access to childcare and sick days and supporting female entrepreneurs.

facts of the month

17.8 per cent

of women in West Asia and North Africa marry before the age of 18.

36 million

girls aged 5 to 14 perform at least 21 hours of unpaid domestic work each week.



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

www.unrwa.org

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.

For more information, please contact s.jelassi@unrwa.org