



Refugee Girls at SFO Painting a Mural © 2019 UNRWA Photo by Anita Thamam

monthly updates on gender issues in unrwa and the region

update of the month

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The United Nations has begun preparing for the review of the Beijing+25, marking the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), which called for removing the barriers to gender equality in twelve areas of concern. UNRWA is an active participant in the different processes of reform and is reviewing the results of its contribution in the areas of the BPfA that are aligned with its mandate.

stories from unrwa

Building Self-Protection Methodology in WBFO
After piloting the "Building Self-Protection Methodology" in the Jordan Field Office, UNRWA in the West Bank adapted this participatory protection assessment to be used with students and parents to enable the community to take measures to address protection concerns with a focus on GBV. The methodology was modified by the Child and Family Protection Programme to accommodate the WBFO context. The WBFO version of the methodology focuses on identifying local community safety mechanisms for children, parents and Child and Family Protection (CFP) committees, strengthening self-protection mechanisms and linking them to GBV, as well as involving CFP Committees for their important role in preventing and reducing GBV incidents, including in emergencies.

Self-Protection group activities were planned to reflect a wide range of topics related to GBV, such as gender roles, sexual violence, self-protection and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). A total of 22 support groups were established, which consisted of eight mothers groups and 14 peer groups (students in 8th and 9th grades). The total number of participants in the self-protection groups was 284, consisting of 169 students and 115 mothers. They were joined by 40 participants representing seven child and family protection committees.

During the sessions, the groups came up with various products with messages addressing the issues faced in each camp. The products and messages devised by the participants aimed to mitigate GBV risks and build self-protection strategies. Examples include spotlights installed in places considered unsafe, games focused on GBV and gender roles designed for children and their mothers, and artwork. A digital display board featuring messages related to GBV and gender roles was installed at the camp's entrance. Framed embroidered messages produced by the mothers were also distributed in UNRWA clinics and schools.

The same messages were also produced in printed materials like posters and school stamps containing messages and stories regarding children's rights and protection from SEA and GBV that will be used in UNRWA schools in the upcoming school year.



inspiring story

Hend Sabry Becomes First Arab Woman Judge at the Venice Film Festival

Hend Sabry, an acclaimed Egyptian-Tunisian actress, has become the first Arab woman to judge at the Venice Film Festival, the oldest film festival in the world. Sabry has been named among the 100 most powerful Arab women, is a celebrity ambassador for the WFP and is outspoken on social issues like women's empowerment. As an actress, she plays strong female characters, and her performances have won her acclaim, such as being named the most influential Arab actress by Forbes Middle East. The Venice Film Festival, which began 25 August, marks the next step in her professional journey.

campaigns of interest

17 Days of Activism

The Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) is launching its annual 17 days of activism campaign for the empowerment of rural women leaders and their communities. This year's theme is "The Right to Development as a Woman's Right." The campaign aims to mobilize support for the improvement of the quality of life in rural areas and to urge governments to adopt conventions such as UNSCR1325, which calls for a gender perspective in conflicts and conflict resolution, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The 17 Days Empowerment toolkit for 2019, which can be found [here](#), includes information and resources on each of the seventeen themes, which revolve around women's rights in development. These themes include the right to safe water, adequate housing, and financial autonomy, among others. The campaign will last from 1-17 October.



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regional news

Saudi Arabia: The Saudi government announced a set of new regulations loosening restrictions placed on women by the guardianship system. Women will be able to travel and obtain family documents from the government without a male relative's permission, effective the end of August. In addition, the government placed a ban on employment discrimination, meaning that employers cannot require a woman to obtain her guardian's permission to work.

Jordan: A delegation from Zonta International, an NGO dedicated to advancing the status of women worldwide, began its official visit to Jordan on 31 July. The organization has partnered with UN Women and other national women's organizations to support female refugees in Jordan, donating money in support to UN Women projects. In addition, the delegation visited UN Women resilience and empowerment centers for refugees as well as a center for GBV survivors.

reports & resources

Beyond Boundaries: A Response to Domestic Violence in the Arab Region

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia published a [report](#) that analyses Arab states' legislation on domestic violence protection orders. Among its recommendations are that states must provide domestic violence survivors with unrestricted access to criminal and civil protection orders.

Sexual Violence in Conflict

ACLED, a data project which gathers and analyses data on political violence, published a [factsheet](#) on

sexual violence in conflict. Since the beginning of 2019, ACLED has documented a rise in sexual violence, the main perpetrators being militias and state forces. Sexual violence is one form of political violence against women, a broader topic which ACLED has also covered in its May 2019 [report](#).

OECD Gender Data Portal

This data portal is a selection of indicators on aspects of gender equality, such as women in politics, violence against women and science performance. Access the portal and read more on gender equality [here](#).

facts of the month

84 per cent

of homeless women have experienced physical or sexual abuse.

603 million

women live in countries where domestic violence is not considered a crime.

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.

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