



Gender Forum on cash assistance and gender equality. © 2018 UNRWA Photo

monthly updates on gender issues in unrwa and the region

update of the month

september 2019 | issue no. 107

Phase II of the “Building Safety” project was closed by the end of August 2019, ending nine years of funding for UNRWA GBV interventions. UNRWA finalized a GBV transition plan to mainstream GBV under its main programmes in September and its implementation will start in the coming weeks.

stories from unrwa

Gender Forum on Cash Assistance and Gender Equality in UNRWA Jordan Field Office

On 7 August UNRWA held its second Gender Forum, focused on gender and cash assistance. A pilot intervention jointly implemented by OCHA GenCap and CashCap was presented and its results were discussed. The UNRWA Jordan Field Office, specifically its relief and social services programme, partnered with OCHA GenCap and CashCap, with support from Mey Ahmed, JFO Gender Advisor to implement a tool aimed at measuring the impact of cash assistance on gender dynamics. The Gender Forum invited GenCap adviser Madhumita Sarkar and CashCap adviser Fe Kagahastian to present and discuss their findings.

The tool uses qualitative data through focus group discussions and was tested over eight focus group sessions with UNRWA beneficiaries from Jabal Hussein and Marka Palestine refugee camps. The focus groups included a diverse subset of beneficiaries, including persons with disabilities, women-headed households and Palestine Refugees from Syria.

The findings of the assessment are that cash assistance gives both men and women greater freedom to buy what they need, improved flexibility and dignity, improved living situations, increased access to markets, clinics and education and increased positivity and confidence.

However, cash helps beneficiaries meet some of their basic needs. Therefore it was found that cash assistance does not lead to an increase in assets.

Women were impacted more than men regarding mobility.

Women reported that thanks to the cash assistance, they had greater independence and increased interaction with others. They also had increased access to transportation out of camps. It was found that women, more than men, felt that cash increased their participation in social activities. Additionally, women had a greater say in financial matters related to children’s education, food, rent and purchase of big-ticket ideas. However, the decision-making role of men with regard to major decisions, such as marriage, remained the same. Relatedly, child marriage and divorce remain highly prevalent in beneficiaries with access to cash assistance; though cash was sometimes used to send girls to school or vocational training, it did not prevent child marriage in most cases.

Despite these positive findings, *cash did not necessarily reduce domestic tension in the household*. Especially in families with addiction or alcoholism problems, or when the wife and the husband did not agree on how to spend the cash, tensions were heightened. Furthermore, the assessment found that there was no strategic effort by UNRWA to link cash with other services, such as legal or medical services. Nonetheless, men and women reported that cash reduced negative coping strategies such as harmful work and child labor, and that there would be big risks to halting cash assistance.

inspiring story

A tribute to Aya Aghabi

Aya Aghabi, a 28-year-old Jordanian woman known for her activism for women's rights and people with disabilities, passed away. Aya realized that she had to cancel many of her plans because of a lack of disabled facilities. In September 2017, she founded the "Accessible Jordan" initiative and website, which includes a guide to all places accessible around Amman and other tourist destinations in Jordan that have ramps or elevators for easy access. Aghabi was active in lobbying the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) public transport authority to become more accessible. She was the first to use the GAM bus with a ramp. Read more [here](#).

events of interest

Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting

On 29-30 October, UN Women and UNECE will hold a forum to review the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action ahead of the 2020 global Beijing+25 review. 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the fourth World Conference on Women, in which participating states adopted a platform that highlighted 12 areas that need greater attention to achieve gender equality. The regional review meeting in October will assess challenges to implementation of the platform as well as the platform's contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The assessment will be based on reports submitted by participating countries, which can be found [here](#). Topics covered include women and climate resilience, women in leadership and financing for gender equality. Government representatives will be joined by civil society members and other stakeholders.



united nations relief and works agency
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regional news

Jordan is training women as plumbers

Jordan is training female citizens and refugees as plumbers, a chance for many of the country's long marginalized women to realize a form of economic self-sufficiency. This initiative aims at lowering unemployment among women and mitigate water scarcity. The programme aims also to combat gender discrimination by preparing Jordanian citizens and Syrian refugees to join a field often associated with men. Over

four hundred women in Jordan have been trained as plumbers. Read more [here](#).

Conference Approaches to Women's Empowerment

The Jordan Minister of State for Media Affairs Jumana Ghunaimat stressed that societies will not achieve their aspirations if they do not empower women in all fields. The conference aimed to identify and advance key issues that affect women's daily lives and to amplify the voices of women leaders in

reports & resources

The Cost of Gender Inequality

The World Bank published a report on the cost of gender inequality, estimating the global economic cost to be US\$ 160.2 trillion. These costs are due to the lower human capital wealth of women, a result of lower labour force participation rates, fewer hours worked and lower pay. Read more [here](#).

Climate Change and Land

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a special report on climate change, food security and sustainable land use. Among its key findings are that empowering women benefits

household food security and sustainable land use. Such empowerment can mean involving women in decision-making regarding tools to combat climate change or including women in land management and tenure. The report's contents are found [here](#).

Pro-WEAI

Pro-WEAI, or Project-Level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, is a set of 12 indicators of women's empowerment in agriculture. The index can be used to assess development programs and monitor a project's outcomes. Further explore the index [here](#).

facts of the month

38 per cent

of human capital wealth is attributed to women. Men account for the other 62 per cent.

US\$ 1.4 trillion

could be added to the global GDP if refugee women were employed and paid like host populations.

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.5 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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