



© 2019 On the winds of hope in Gaza by Majdal Nateel

monthly updates on gender issues in unrwa and the region

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UNRWA has just received the annual assessment of its performance on Gender Equality through the United Nations System Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN-SWAP 2.0), a framework of 17 performance indicators that measures progress on commonly adopted approaches related to gender equality. The Agency 'Meets' or 'Exceeds' for 44 per cent of performance requirements as compared to the 57 per cent average in the UN.

stories from unrwa

How does she cope? Women pushed to new limits in the Gaza Strip:

The UNRWA Relief and Social Services Programme published a study on women's experience in September 2019 in light of the current crisis in the Gaza Strip. Over a hundred women, from different areas and across the social spectrum, were consulted and participated in discussion forums, interviews and home visits with the aim of understanding better the impact of crises specifically on women and girls and specifically assess the impact of protracted emergency conditions in Gaza on social relations and intra household power dynamics and gender roles.

The study documents through oral narratives the very specific context for women in Gaza today. Increasingly, women in the Gaza strip support their families while men are absent or jobless. Many live with extended families and

struggle to make an income because of economic limits but also due to rigid ideas about what is appropriate for women. Community assistance is stretched too thin, and a high level of education rarely translates into valued employment. Yet with mouths to feed and often debts to pay, women find ways to cope.

The study has documented the levels of resilience expressed by women and girls in Gaza while at the same time portraying the exceptional circumstances they are being faced with as women to making ends meet in a society dominated by patriarchal power relations and precise social expectations about women's lives that have lost their meaningfulness in the context of deteriorating economic and human security conditions.

The results of this study are to serve as a reference material for working with women in the Gaza Strip understanding better aspirations and limitations affecting their lives.



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inspiring story

Dr. Charlotte Karam, Director of the Knowledge is Power (KIP) Project on Gender and Sexuality

Karam is one of the brains behind the #NotYourAshta campaign in Lebanon. Aimed at tackling sexual harassment in the country. Ashta is a common word used to harass women and girls. This project initiated both men and women to share their stories, and sent out a powerful message against sexual harassment. She is interested in examining the intersection of gender-related issues, management of organizational behavior and corporate responsibility with regard to opportunities for workplace, socio-economic, and national development. Read more [here](#).

events of interest

High-Level Conference on Progress Made in the Implementation of Beijing after Twenty-Five Years: On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the League of Arab States, and the Arab Women Organization will be holding a “High-Level Conference on Progress Made in the Implementation of Beijing after Twenty-Five Years”, on 28 November 2019 at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon. A final document will be adopted at the end of conference, reaffirming the principles enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and setting the priorities for action areas for the future. This document will be submitted on the 64th session to the United Nations Commission to reflect the Arab position on the Beijing Review 25 years later. Read more [here](#).

regional news

Is Lebanon Ready for Beijing Plus 25? Five hundreds NGOs gathered in the Tunis Forum for Gender Equality to begin a preparation process that will culminate in a Global NGO Forum. The aim of the 2020 convening is to give a new life and impetus to the Beijing Platform for Action. This Global NGO Forum, now referred to as Beijing plus 25 is expected to produce a document which will reflect the aspirations of women worldwide in the form of a new roadmap towards rights and equality. Until now in Lebanon,

there have been few signs of serious preparation for or a robust feminist agenda. Read more [here](#).

Honor Killing: the death of Israa Ghrayeb, 21-years-old from Beit Sahour near Bethlehem, sparks outrage and calls for women's protection in the Middle East and in the world. Palestinian activists are protesting toxic masculinity, patriarchy and the killing of women in the name of 'honour'. They are asking for more protection from the authorities. #WeAreAllIsraa began to trend on Arabic [tweets](#).

reports & resources

Women's rights and sustainable development.

A [study](#) published by BMJ Open (an online, open access journal) suggests that countries with strong women's rights had better health outcomes than countries with moderate or poor women's rights. Even in countries with below-average healthcare resources, but strong women's rights, health outcomes were better than average. Though this observational study cannot establish a causal link, it suggests that gender equality is a developmental issue, not just an issue of women's rights.

Women's rights to work. A [study](#) conducted by the World Bank has highlighted the countries where the restriction on women's right to work are most severe. Of the 187 economies included in the study, countries in the MENA region are ranked lowest overall for providing equal opportunities for women who want to work. KSA places more restrictions on a woman's right to work than any other country in the world. Nevertheless, 274 reforms to laws and regulations increasing gender equality, especially protecting women from sexual harassment have been implemented in the last 10 years.

facts of the month

13 per cent

of countries don't permit women to confer their nationality to their children.

12 million

girls under the age of 18 enter into child marriages each year.



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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 5.5 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.

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