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unrwa

monthly updates on gender issues in unrwa and the region

update of the month

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In 2019, UNRWA finalized the Building Safety Project on gender-based violence (GBV), conducted the end line study for its GBV prevention work, and drafted a transition plan to further mainstream GBV in its programmes. In terms of advocacy, UNRWA marked International Women's Day, participated in the review of Beijing +25, and organized a myriad of activities for the 16 days of activism campaign. In 2020, UNRWA looks forward to reinforcing the implementation of its Gender Equality Strategy (2016-21).

stories from unrwa

16 Days of Activism Against GBV

UNRWA participated in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence under this year's theme: "Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against All Forms of GBV." UNRWA organized and conducted around 120 activities across all five field of operations, with a special emphasis on the systemic use of the TV mini-series "The Shop of Engineer Lina's Father." In Gaza, GBV survivors organized a food bazaar, and students at Rimal prep school created a hand-printing mural to raise awareness about GBV. The West Bank Field Office coordinated a youth initiative activity that conveyed messages about GBV prevention through a play created and acted by youth. In Lebanon, the school counsellors implemented various activities including marches from "safe havens" in the community, art sessions, and open forum discussions on GBV. At the closing ceremony at Yarmouk School, UNRWA students performed theater plays and exhibited artwork related to ending GBV. UNRWA organized ceremonies to celebrate the campaign. The Syria Field Office facilitated workshop on women's rights and family laws for 81 women and 9 men and rolled out puppet show to 1,500 children to raise awareness about violence and harassment.

Closing the campaign, the Gender Section in HQ Amman and the gender team in Jordan Field Office organized the Fourth Gender Forum on "Generation Equality Stands Against Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse." Five Palestine refugee youth shared their touching personal stories and reflections about generation equality, gender equality, gender-based violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse. The youth, Rania, Dania, Fatima, Abdullah, and Eyad (students from UNRWA Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts) directed questions to professional panelists and asked for support on gender equality for Palestine refugees youth. The panelists, Christian Saunders (UNRWA Acting Commissioner General), Reham Jaffal (head of health in Zarqa Area JFO), Arafat Awad (NGO Activist and Youth Advisor), and Wafa Al Khadhra (Dean of Faculty of Languages and Communication, American University of Madaba), shared the ongoing endeavors and future implications of their work in addressing the root causes of gender based violence, the support to the empowerment of youth from both sexes, and the zero tolerance in UNRWA to sexual exploitation and abuse.



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inspiring story

A group of thirty men in Gaza have succeeded in preventing the early marriage of girls under the age of 18, from 50 different families, thanks to a training programme supported the UN Women. One of them, **Mossa Abu Taema**, a doctor by profession, said that child marriage cannot be consensual. "As a medical doctor, I couldn't bear the negative effects that early marriage brings to a young girl's health." He convinced the father of a 16-year-old in one of the most conservative villages in eastern Khan Younis, a border town in the Gaza Strip, to cancel her wedding and allow her to continue her education. More [here](#).

events of interest

[ZeeArts](#) is calling Women Artists for its 4th iteration, "**Art Connects Women-International Exhibition**" from 5th to 8th March 2020 — once again bringing Women Artists from all over the world to laud the creativity, strength and passion with which they express themselves through a piece of art. Throughout history, the paucity of women-artist representations has been an impediment in the bid towards diversification within the art world. As attempting to realign the skewed perspectives of gendered narrations in the institution of art, ZeeArts has put together a compendium of women artists on a global scale across 5 continents. Their commemorative pursuits alongside International Women's Day seek to empower and provide opportunities for female artists to reflect upon the entrepreneurial adversities they face while revising their strategies throughout the promotion of gender parity. In line with this initiative, More [here](#).

regional news

Saudi Arabia ends gender segregation in restaurants. It used to be mandatory for all restaurants to have one entrance for families and women, and another for men on their own in Saudi Arabia. The restrictions had already been quietly eased in practice, with many restaurants, cafes and other meeting places no longer enforcing segregation. In Dec 2019, the Saudi ministry of municipalities announced that restaurants would no longer need to maintain sex-segregated entrances. Instead it would be left up to businesses to decide. More [here](#).

Sudan Sovereign Council and cabinet approved a bill ending the notorious public order and public morals law, which used to regulate women's clothing and public morals by punishing violators with flogging. Launching the 16 days campaign, Minister of Labor and Social Development Lena El-Sheikh, pledged to combat all forms of violence against women, to review or abolish existing laws and legislation restricting women's freedom, to guarantee women's basic legal and political rights and to provide them with security. More [here](#).

reports & resources

Gender Justice and Equality before the law in Arab State
This report marks the culmination of an ambitious four-year project that engaged governments, civil society organizations and UN agencies in 19 Arab states, as well as regional agencies. The report focuses on the laws and law enforcement practices that matter most for women and girls: protection from violence, rights within the family, property rights and rights at work. The report points to examples of good practice from across the region and encourages sharing of experiences and cross-fertilization of ideas. More [here](#).

Gender Equality and Violent Extremism
UN Women, Monash University and its partners have conducted extensive research across the Libya, Maghreb, and Tunisia over the past two years. The reports explore how social constructions of masculinity and femininity, and gender dynamics are manipulated by violent extremist groups through their recruitment strategies. It also examines the strategies women in North Africa have employed to prevent the spread of violent extremism. It is found that protecting women's rights in North Africa is key to ending violent extremism. More [here](#).

facts of the month

10%

Women earn only 10% of the world's income

6 countries

Only 6 countries give women equal legal work rights as men



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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.

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