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monthly updates on gender issues in unrwa and the region

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As in previous years, UNRWA has activities in all its fields of operations to mark International Women's Day (IWD). UNRWA activities under the theme "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights" celebrated women and girls' social, political, and economical achievements while recognizing the challenges that persist. For the occasion UNRWA Acting Commissioner-General sent a message to all staff placing gender equality at the core of the Agency and the services provided to Palestine refugees women, men, boys and girls.

stories from unrwa

UNRWA Acting Commissioner-General joins the International Gender Champion

International Gender Champions is a leadership network that brings together female and male decision-makers determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence and was launched at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, July 2015.

In 2020, Acting Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Christian Saunders braced the International Gender Champion Parity Pledge. As a champion, the Acting Commissioner-General made two individualized commitments that pertain to achieving gender equality; UNRWA will ensure compulsory e-learning on awareness of gender-related frameworks for all senior managers and will reach 40 per cent of women in the P-5 and above staff category by the end of 2020.

Resilience is womanly

UNRWA Spanish Committee organised on the 7th of March in the Circulo de Bellas Artes in Madrid a public debate on women and resilience, presenting among

others the Spanish version of the UNRWA study "How Does She Cope?" on women survival strategies in the Gaza Strip. The debate hosted by Spanish journalist Yolanda Alvarez hailed various experts that discussed with the public the situation of Palestine refugees' women and girls, their resilience, and their coping mechanisms. Artist María Ortiz (pictured above) made a dramatized reading of the history of a woman Palestine refugee from Gaza.

Yoga Session at Gaza Field Office for International Women's Day and Happiness Day 2020

On the occasions of the of International Women's Day (IWD) 8 March, and International Happiness Day (IHD) 20 March, the Gaza Field Office conducted four yoga sessions for 90+ women. This event acknowledged staff efforts and commitment as well as advocate for a better wellbeing. Feedback was very positive, with several requests to continue similar stress-relieving activities in the future. One staff member noted that it was the first time she went home after working without being excessively stressed. With COVID-19 crisis and measures of confinement in place, similar activities in HQA and other fields were postponed.



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inspiring story

UN Secretary-General António Guterres delivered a major policy speech on gender equality, titled "Women and Power." Speaking to faculty and students at The New School, a university in New York City, the UN Secretary General declared himself a proud feminist and called for men everywhere to support women's rights. The speech highlighted areas where the power balance needs to shift, such as in political representation, inclusive economies, the digital divide, climate, and conflict. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres stressed that the 21st century must be the century of women's equality, in a call to transform the world by ensuring equal participation of all.

events of interest

Women's Empowerment 2020 Art Exhibition

Starting from 21st of March 2020, Art4you along with IRC Gallery Sharjah are hosting a women art exhibition "Women's Empowerment 2020" for ten days. Art4you includes diverse artist such as Jesno Jackson and Rengi Cherian. The women's day event comprises of much more fun activities throughout the month with art exhibition, art workshops and live art.

Webinar | Set priorities for change: How to strategically frame gender equality policies and set priorities for change at your university?

Gender Equality Academy is organizing a webinar on April 23, 2020 at 13.00 (CET) on the importance of priority setting and strategic framing to achieve gender equality in Universities. This webinar aims at presenting different discursive frameworks for gender equality in research and higher education. More [here](#).

regional news

Saudi Arabia launched its own Women's Football League (WFL), as part of the Kingdoms various efforts towards advancing women's rights in society. Starting in March, the WFL competition for women over 17 will be staged in Jeddah, Riyadh and Dammam. It will involve preliminary rounds, leading to regional winners competing for a WFL Champions Cup, with a total prize money of 500,000 riyals.

Accor Middle East & Africa has announced the launch of a partnership with She is Arab, the first dedicated global speakers'

platform for Arab women designed to elevate female leadership development and drive women's economic empowerment and advancement in the workplace. As part of the partnership, a series of dialogues and discussions will roll out throughout the year in **Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and the UAE**, including panels, roundtables, fireside chats, in addition to training and coaching sessions focused on leadership skills, public speaking, personal branding and media interaction.

reports & resources

International Gender Champions Annual Report

ICG launcher their Annual report highlighting some of the impactful work in achieving gender equality accomplished globally by the International Gender Champions. International Gender Champions seeks to catalyse those links and mobilise that change. Committed leaders can generate momentum at the highest levels to create meaningful change and facilitate strong cross-cutting links for great potential impact.

Human Development Perspectives report on Tackling Social Norms: a game changer for

gender inequality

The UNDP Human Development Report Office (HDRO) launched their annual Human Perspectives report. The report includes the Gender Social Norms Index and builds on the 2019 Human Development Report on Inequality. This index captures how social beliefs can obstruct gender equality along multiple dimensions – politics, economic, education and physical integrity. It includes figures for 75 countries, covering 81 per cent of the world's population; and trends over time for 31 countries - Egypt is not yet one of them.

facts of the month

23 per cent

Women earn
23 per cent less than men
globally

15 million

Every year 15 million girls
under the age 18
are forced into marriage



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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 5.6 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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