



@2020 UNRWA photo by Relief and Social Services Programme.

monthly updates on gender issues in unrwa and the region

october 2020

issue no. 120

update of the month

UNRWA participated from 19 to 21 October in the UN-SWAP 2.0 annual conference. The conference organized remotely by UN-Women aimed at revitalizing the UN-SWAP focal points and creating a space to share knowledge and best practices. The participants discussed successes and challenges in meeting the requirements of the UN-SWAP 2.0 and ensuring that it captures how gender is mainstreamed in the COVID-19 response.

stories from unrwa

Success stories from UNRWA Gaza Field Office: Disability is No Barrier to Success

Ms. Hanadi Kasseh is a Palestinian refugee living in Beit Lahia, located in the north of the Gaza Strip. She was born with hearing impairment and, like most people with disabilities, she has suffered from discrimination and inequality, unemployment, and marginalization, resulting in lower social and economic status. Despite these challenges, Hanadi has always believed that her disability will never prevent her from being accomplished in all spheres of her life.

In August 2020, Hanadi became an art teacher at the school of Jabalia Community Based Rehabilitation Center (CBRC), which has a long-standing partnership with UNRWA and works towards providing education to children with disabilities. When signing her contract, she said: "I am speechless. I have worked as a volunteer in the Center and received a lot of training that contributed to building my capacity. Thanks to this employment, things are different for me. I am more confident in my role and my contributions as well".

Hanadi empowers individuals with hearing impairments through art. Considering COVID-19 pandemic, a WhatsApp group has been created, allowing individuals to exchange their drawings and paintings. Hanadi has also made short videos in sign language for individuals with hearing impairments to be aware of the guidelines and safety measures pertaining to the pandemic.

UNRWA currently supports seven CBRCs across the Gaza Strip. Jabalia CBRC has received funding on grant-based modality to implement UNRWA's inclusive education policy, that is its commitment to the realization of the universal right of all children to education. This support includes, among others, monitoring educational frameworks and special instructional support services.

UNRWA is, indeed, committed to work with and help all Palestine refugees achieve their full potential. UNRWA strives to respect, promote and protect the needs, priorities and rights of Palestine refugees with disabilities in all its programmes and services.



united nations relief and works agency
for palestine refugees in the near east

www.unrwa.org

inspiring story

Rural women as hidden heroes during COVID-19 pandemic: In the wake of COVID-19, rural women have been leading, often hidden from the public eye, in sustaining and recovering their communities. They are farmers, but also entrepreneurs, workers, teachers, etc. and are crucial to developing resilient, peaceful and sustainable societies. 'They live in rural settings, but their contributions nurture entire nations.' On 15 October, which marks the International Day of Rural Women, UN Women underlined the 'urgent need to build rural women's resilience in the wake of COVID-19 by strengthening their livelihoods and well-being.' For more information, click [here](#).

events of interest

HREA Gender-focused Online Certifications: The HREA, an international non-governmental organization that supports human rights education, is currently offering three English-taught online certificate courses on gender. The certifications on Gender & Transnational Justice and on Gender-based Violence will take place from **4 November to 15 December, 2020**. The certification on Gender and Data will be held from **18 November to 15 December**. These courses are open to individuals working in inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as (under)graduate students, humanitarian practitioners, gender focal points and other candidates interested in gender equality, gender and justice. These certifications will enable the participants to promote gender equality throughout their work. More [here](#).

october celebrations

11 October: International Day of the Girl Child
15 October: International Day of Rural Women
October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

regional news

Saudi Arabia

In just a few years, the legal rights of Saudi women have significantly changed. The anti-harassment law of May 2018, which criminalizes any form of sexual harassment, including on social media, has enabled Saudi women to enjoy more freedom, particularly concerning their professional aspirations. Other reforms have also entitled women to the right to choose a place of residency and leave their house unaccompanied. It is estimated that 5.5 million Saudi women over 21 have

already benefited from these reforms. More [here](#).

Egypt

In August, a lawsuit against a student for sexual assault triggered the start of a #MeToo movement across Egypt. The trial started this month, and in a country where 99 per cent of women said they had experienced sexual harassment, this case is a turning-point to open a debate about sex crimes. More [here](#).

reports & resources

Report on Innovating to Address Gender-Based Violence

The International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA) published a report about Innovating to Address Gender-Based Violence. This collaboration platform includes a variety of actors, from civil society organizations to philanthropic donors and gender experts, who made a list of new ways to address these issues, especially during the pandemic. This list looks at how a range of innovations, including science and technology, can be a driving force to achieve gender equality. More [here](#).

UN Secretary-General report for Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls

In this report, the UN Secretary-General recalls that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has already reached one third of its timeline, having been implemented for since 2015. Target 5.2 is about the elimination of all forms of violence against women, and the Goal number 5 is about achieving gender equality. The Secretary-General points out discrepancies in national recovery plans regarding COVID-19, the need to adapt prevention strategies, but also advances on eliminating sexual harassment. More [here](#).

facts of the month

Only **1 in 8 countries** have set up measures to protect women against the negative social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Globally, **70%** of health workers are women.

At **28%**, the gender pay gap in the health sector is higher than the overall gender pay gap.



united nations relief and works agency
for palestine refugees in the near east

www.unrwa.org

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.7 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