UNRWA successfully launched the 16 Days Campaign Against Gender Based Violence (GBV). There are more than 110 activities related to protection and prevention of GBV carried out across the five UNRWA field offices; including the 4th Gender Forum and screening of the TV series “The Shop of Engineer Lina’s Father.” More details about the campaigns and activities will be presented in the January Gender Bulletin.

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Stories from UNRWA

Painting training for women in Khan Esheih Camp, Syria

As part of the Agency’s Gender Equality Strategy, Relief and Social Services Programme in Syria, organized a vocational training for women in Khan Esheih Camp. In the past, these trainings were only available to men, now UNRWA has expanded its outreach to female community members.

This training course were advertised among female community members in Khan Esheih community-based organizations. Although it was an unprecedented initiative, it received positive responses by both men and women.

When contacted prior to the event, the painting trainer initially did not take the issue seriously because the trainees are all women. He anticipated only around 8 women. However, on the day of the training, some 22 women were present — surpassing expectations of program organizers.

During the course, the trainees were introduced to the fundamentals of painting such as mixing colors, cleaning the walls, fixing cracks, and preparing painting equipment. After learning the theories, the female participants also had a chance to practice their painting skills under the supervision of the trainer.

Participants provided highly positive feedback about the activity. One participant shared, “This training is useful because we don’t have to wait for our husbands to paint the walls in our homes anymore.”

Trainees concluded the course by creating a slogan: “We can do it.” The course received high praise from all those involved, including community members and participant families, which encourages UNRWA to implement more of the likewise activities in the future.

For more information, please contact s.sahli@unrwa.org
UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.5 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

**inspiring story**

Sarah Minkara, founder of Empowerment Through Integration

Minkara became legally blind when she was 7 years-old and experienced a safety net of support for her disability through government and private institutions growing up in the U.S. Sarah realized when she visited Lebanon that these privileges were not afforded to blind children in developing countries. The Empowerment Through Integration works with blind children in Lebanon to instill confidence in them, teaching life skills like how to walk with a white cane or how to use a computer. ETI also runs a summer camp for both blind and sighted children. Sarah was featured in Forbes 30 under 30.

**regional news**

Amman Governments, civil society organizations, and youth representatives from across the Arab States region met to agree on priorities for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment, in the light of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA). As an outcome of the conference, member States adopted an Arab declaration which reaffirms the principles enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and agreed on priorities for gender equality in the coming five years. More [here](#).

UAE: The UAE Central Bank has asked banks and financial institutions in the country to treat male and female customers equally in all banking transactions including giving loans and credit facilities. The UAE leadership has been strongly emphasizing the increasing role of women in the development of the country and financial institutions and improving gender parity in all walks of life. More [here](#).

**events of interest**

Aswan International Women’s Film is the first international women’s film festival in Egypt, established by Mohamed Abdel Khaled. Following the three successful annual editions since 2017, the fourth edition of the festival will be held in the late February 2020. The main theme of this year will focus on Egyptian women’s participation in politics. This year’s festival will include for the first time a competition for Egyptian short films and animated films for children that incorporate awareness of women’s issues, and the list of awards to be presented during the festival include “Lady of Aswan” “Artistic Journey”, an award for “Youth” filmmakers. The ‘Nut Forum for Women’s Issues’, which are social forums integrated with the festival’s activities, will focus on combating marriage of young girls in cooperation with Aswan’s civil society, in addition to discussing the challenges facing female filmmakers. More [here](#).

**reports & resources**

The “Women in politics: 2019” map. This infographic, created by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women, depicts global rankings for women in the executive and parliamentary branches of government as of 1 January 2019. The map shows progress towards gender equality in these areas at regional and national levels. It is found that only 6.6% of the heads of state are women. The Middle East and North Africa’s regional average of women in parliament was 18.1%, marking the lowest representation rate of women in parliament compared to other regions. More [here](#).

Women in Gaza face multiple layers of violence and discrimination. Recent study shows the negative impact of the blockade on women's conditions in the Gaza Strip. The protracted humanitarian crisis in Gaza and its impact has exacerbated Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in all its forms, including sexual violence, domestic violence and child marriage. UNFPA reported that more than 148,000 women are exposed to GBV in Gaza. This is also due to the shortfall of funding. Only 6 M$ of protection projects were funded out of 35.9 M$ required under the Humanitarian Response.

**facts of the month**

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<th>3 million</th>
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<td>Women and girls in Yemen are at risk of GBV. There is no legislation that specifically protects them.</td>
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| 1% |
| Women own less than 1% of the world’s property |