In May, UNRWA Chief of Staff Ugochi Daniels conducted a field visit to Lebanon Field Office, where she met Marwa Abo Jamous. © 2021 UNRWA photo

monthly updates on gender issues in unrwa and the region

update of the month

In the next coming months, UNRWA will be evaluating its Gender Equality Strategy (GES) 2016-2021, which aims to achieve more inclusive and equitable services for Palestine refugees through organizational and programmatic changes. The results of this evaluation will be used to develop the next gender equality 2023-2028.

stories from unrwa

The UNRWA Youth Unit’s Innovation Labs and KFW Cash for Work Program in Lebanon enable Palestine refugee youth to alleviate the burdens of the economic challenges they face.

Marwa Abo Jamous

Marwa Abo Jamous, a 24-year-old Palestine refugee from Lebanon, graduated from Siblin Training Centre (STC) with a semi-professional diploma in Systems and Networks. “Thanks to the Employment Service Centre (ESC) and the KFW Cash for Work project, I was offered short-term employment which allowed me to find a fixed job with the same employer. This opportunity allowed me to improve my skills, improve my network in the labour market and find a job. After my experience, and based on my discussions with other youth, I have a few suggestions: to extend the age group for beneficiaries, and to extend the employment period, especially for fresh graduates”, she says.

Marwa joined the UNRWA’s KFW Cash for Work Youth Employment Program in 2020, and, thanks to her strong knowledge of computer systems, she was recruited as an administrative assistant at the Women’s Programme Centre, a community-based organization. She also received life skills for employability training, and, after the completion of the 40 working days, Marwa retained her job.

july celebrations

11 July: World Population Day
15 July: World Youth Skills Day
18 July: Nelson Mandala International Day
30 July: International Day of Friendship
30 July: World Day Against Trafficking in Persons
inspiring story
I am Generation Equality: Souhaila Nassar, Changing the Image of Refugees
Palestine refugee Souhaila Nassar was born in the United Arab Emirates and moved to Burj Barajneh refugee camp in Lebanon when she was three years-old. Although Souhaila dreamed of studying at the American University of Beirut (AUB), she couldn’t afford it. Instead, she studied biochemistry at a local Lebanese University. When she graduated, she saved up enough money to get her Master’s degree at AUB, where she is currently working on her thesis. Souhaila emphasizes the importance of education in young girls’ lives, and is committed to pursuing a career in which she can provide equal opportunities and quality learning for young refugee boys and girls. Learn more about Souhaila’s story here.

events of interest
Annual Meeting of the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative, 24 November 2021
The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)’s Gender Responsive Standards Initiative aims to strengthen the use of standards and technical regulations to attain Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality, integrate a gender lens in the development of these standards and technical regulations, and elaborate gender indicators and criteria that could be used in standards development. Annual meetings for this Initiative bring together gender experts, women’s rights activists, policy makers, NGOs, academics, and other UN organizations. Find out more about this event closer to the date here.

Mental Health Network: Adopting a Gender Lens to Mental Health, 24 November 2021
Diversity Council Australia (DCA) is an independent, not-for-profit body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace. In this event, DCA will explore the gendered differences observed in mental health conditions. The session will highlight evidence supporting these gender differences, as well as formulate recommendations to help workplaces adopt gender lenses in their approaches to mental health. Learn more about this event here.

reports & resources
Diapers and Rags: Lebanon Crisis Plunges Women into Period Poverty
Due to the financial crisis, women in Lebanon can no longer afford sanitary pads and are being forced to make their own using diapers, rags, newspaper, and toilet paper. Although the Lebanese government has subsidized some essential goods, they have not included sanitary pads in this category. To support women suffering from poverty, the DawratI (My Period) initiative was launched in 2021 and provides women with free menstrual products. In Shatila Palestine refugee camp in Lebanon, NGOs Days for Girls and WingWoman Lebanon are also teaching women how to stitch reusable sanitary pads out of cloth. Read about this here.

Displaced, Refugee Women’s Stories: A Testament to Failing Global Leadership
This article highlights stories from displaced and refugee women from Lebanon, Palestine, Kenya, and Nagorno-Karabakh, whose lives have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crises, and political instability. Palestinian refugee women and girls interviewed speak of the psychological challenges they face, the disruptions they have experienced in their education, their experiences with gender-based violence, and the ways in which they manage to provide for their families. Read more about these women’s stories here.

Financing Gender-Inclusive Peace: Gaps in Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda
Significant gaps in financing are a challenge to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) commitments. This report underlines strategies to address these gaps, including the adoption and strengthening of a mandatory ‘gender marker’ for all peace and reconstruction funding, the in-country monitoring of all gender provisions of peace agreements, and the tracking and evaluation of gender-responsive investments. Read this UN Women Research Paper here.

COVID-19, Gender, and Disability Checklist: Preventing and Addressing Gender-Based Violence Against Women, Girls, and Gender Non-Conforming Persons with Disabilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic
Not only do women and girls with disabilities experience the same forms of gender-based violence as do their counterparts without disabilities, they also face unique forms of violence related to their disability. Because the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these vulnerabilities, UN Women has provided this checklist to help states, GBV support service providers, and other stakeholders prevent GBV and protect the most vulnerable during recovery efforts. Read more on this here.

facts of the month
Globally, over 2.7 billion women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men

Women with disabilities are at least two or three times more likely than other women to experience violence, including by family, intimate partners, caregivers, and institutional facilities

United Nations Relief and Works Agency
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