



monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

update of the month

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The roll-out of integrated capacity-building for protection from gender-based violence (GBV) in emergencies will commence in July (10-12) with the launch of the UNRWA GBV Prevention Framework as part of the larger project, *Buidling Safety: Mainstreaming GBV Interventions in Emergency Preparedness Prevention and Response*. The July workshop will be followed by a full week of training in August to address the training manual that field teams will utilize on how to work on GBV and sexual violence. For more information contact j.uccellatori@unrwa.org

stories from UNRWA

Interview Series: UNRWA Women in the Workforce

This interview series highlighting the experiences, challenges and successes of the UNRWA female workforce continues with the latest edition featuring Haifa Alwhaidi, the Area Relief and Social Services Officer for the South Amman area. Haifa pursued a degree in sociology at Al-Karak University and simultaneously received a diploma in the Arabic language at Amman College University. She began her career at UNRWA in 2008 after having amassed a broad range of compelling experience.

Please describe your past occupation(s) and years of experience.

Initially I began teaching for a period of three years before pursuing a degree in sociology. I then encountered challenges finding a job. Eventually I became a secretary before becoming involved with and working at a hostel for female students for a total of nine years. This preceded the start of my career at UNRWA approximately a decade ago. My decision to pursue a career at the Agency was twofold: I love working with refugees (I myself am a Palestine refugee), and UNRWA is an impressive, reputable organization. I am very grateful for my family's unwavering support and encouragement.

Why, in your opinion, is it important to have more women in senior positions?

In light of a diverse range of social obligations, women encounter a number of challenges in their daily lives; for

example, balancing work, home and familial responsibilities. A woman holding a senior position encapsulates the essence of 'super-woman': she ably prevails over a unique set of circumstances.

What are the main challenges of being in a leadership position, particularly for women?

One challenge emanates from our own local communities: There exists a percentage of community members - family, friends and colleagues alike - who do not accept women in leadership positions or posts with a substantial amount of responsibility. As a leader, there is an impetus to lead and inspire others, including those unwilling to accept such a profoundly important role for women. Jordan, however, is better than other geographical contexts. In addition, UNRWA confronts this major challenge as it does not discriminate between men and women and is a massive proponent of gender equality.

What advice would you give to women trying to establish their career?

The obstacles and challenges that women encounter are many. Put these hurdles behind you - keep fighting, keep thinking and be strong. My message to the Palestine refugee community is have a foot in this life! Show the world who you are. Do not depend on anyone but yourself. I wish all women will have the opportunity to improve their lives and take whatever accomplishments they achieve and use them to earn the respect they deserve.



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Inspiring Story

Director of Operations for a Day

Fourteen-year-old ninth-grader Reem Yaghy took the reigns as Director of UNRWA Operations (DUO) in the West Bank for a day. Reem's busy schedule began with inaugurating 'DUO for A Day' as an annual event. With West Bank DUO Scott Anderson, Reem also met with area chiefs of the health and education programmes where challenges encountered by both programmes were discussed. Herself a school parliament leader from the Aqbat Jabr UNRWA Basic Girls School, Reem and Scott visited the UNRWA Girls School in Jalazone refugee camp to meet with student parliamentarians. Reem commands an impressive GPA and is head of the UNRWA school parliament for the central and south West Bank region. [Read more](#)

Regional News

oPt

A One-Service-Centre was opened in Ramallah to provide protection, privacy and dignity to women and girls who are victims of violence. With an aim to improve access to security and justice services, the Family and Juvenile Protection Unit within the Palestinian Civil Police spearheaded the effort to establish the centre with the support of UN Women/UNDP Joint Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law in Palestine. [Read more](#)

Jordan

Five Jordanian women have returned from Nepal after undertaking the first of four expeditions there to prepare for their April 2018 summit of Mount Everest. The team, RISE - Jordan Women's Everest Expedition 2018, aims to become the first all-female team from the Middle East and North Africa region to summit the world's highest peak. [Read more](#)

Syria

The UN Women Regional Office for Arab States launched an audiovisual storytelling campaign, 'It Takes a Woman', to enhance the voices of Syrian women activists and their profound contributions to in ongoing peace initiatives. The conflict in Syria has exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities, increasing the risks women and girls face without many of the resources they need to protect themselves. [Read more](#)

Lebanon

Eighty-one-year-old Zeinab and her fellow female neighbours are undertaking a robust effort to clean up and manage their village's trash disposal. The cadre of volunteers, called 'Call of the Earth', hope to inspire a greater sense of respect and responsibility for the earth, even in the face of indifference by political leaders. [Read more](#)

Reports & Resources

UN WOMEN

The *International Legal Accountability Mechanisms: Palestinian Women Living Under Occupation* study aims to enhance the understanding of the effects of occupation of Palestine, especially on women's welfare and rights. Despite its massive impact on all Palestinians, its effect on women are not widely or comprehensively documented, profoundly ignoring an entire segment of Palestinian society. [Read more](#)

Women's Refugee Commission (WRC)

A report titled *Vulnerability- and Resilience-Based Approaches in Response to the Syrian Crisis* examines resilience-based approaches to determining the design of humanitarian programmes, such as emphasizing skills, strengths and assets, compared to vulnerability considerations. The report proposes actions that aim to reinforce the resilience of women, children and youth with disabilities and are implemented in programming. The findings and recommendations are relevant to other humanitarian contexts beyond Syria. [Read more](#)

No Lost Generation (NLG)

The *No Lost Generation 2016* report presents findings, challenges and achievements from that year. NLG is led by UNICEF, Mercy Corps, Save the Children and World Vision. It aims to provide children with uninhibited access to quality education and protection services and ensure that they supported in order to contribute to social cohesion and resilience in their communities. The initiative's programmes are operational in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey in response to the conflicts in Iraq and Syria. NLG aims to enhance the voice of adolescents and youth and invests in resources to advance youth empowerment and security. [Read more](#)

Oxfam

Now Is the Time: Research on Gender Justice, Conflict and Fragility in the Middle East and North Africa examines the effect of conflict on gender justice and women's rights. The study is part of a wider project promoting the needs of women in conflict. It explores this premise in the contexts of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Egypt, Yemen and Iraq. [Read more](#)

Events of Interest

Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality Programming - Online course

An e-learning course that endorses a holistic approach to achieving gender equality and examines concepts such as masculinity, patriarchy and intersectionality. The course aims to determine how men and boys can act as change agents to achieve gender justice. The course will focus on key topics such as gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, and the economic empowerment of women. [Read more](#)

Gender Responsive Budgeting - Online course

The course introduces participants to gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) - concepts, principles and practical examples. GRB is a tool that implements a gender-sensitive approach to transform budget programmes and close gender gaps. Case studies will be utilized to see how practitioners employ GRB along with recommendations for dealing with GRB deficits. [Read more](#)

Facts of the Month

155

of 173 world economies have at least one law impeding women's economic opportunities. [Read more](#)

Only 2

countries have women representing 50 per cent or more of their parliaments. [Read more](#)



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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 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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