The roll-out of the UNRWA Gender Equality Strategy has continued on track. During the month of July, the Strategy was presented to field management teams in Gaza and Jordan. Furthermore, discussions on gender marking have also begun as part of the implementation of the Strategy. The UNRWA Gender Equality Strategy can be accessed here in both Arabic and English.

**stories from UNRWA**

**UNRWA Summer Activities in Gaza Prioritize Gender Equality Awareness**

The annual Summer Fun Weeks (SFWs) kicked off at the UNRWA Gaza Field Office (GFO) on 8 July. The SFW programme is one of the Agency’s responses and interventions to help alleviate the negative psychological effects of frequent cycles of conflict and the difficult living conditions resulting from the decade-long blockade. As part of the 2017 SFW objective to provide recreational opportunities and promote children’s right to play, ‘Equality and Equity’ was selected as the 2017 area-specific theme in the North Governorate.

In cooperation with the GFO Gender Unit, the SFW teams are implementing gender equality awareness activities in line with the 2017 SFW theme in the North Governorate. This area-specific activity will reach approximately 35,557 children registered in the North Governorate.

Through games, the activities aim to encourage UNRWA students to reflect on and challenge socially defined gender roles in their lives and communities.

To ensure that gender concepts are well understood by the relevant SFW location teams involved in delivering and supervising this activity, the GFO Gender Unit trained 63 location managers, activity managers and animators, as well as the area-specific activity coordinator and two assistants on gender concepts and delivering gender activities introduced in the SFW programme.

From 8 to 27 July, SFW activities took place in all five governorates, reaching over 186,000 children between 7 and 15 years old. For more information, please contact s.abu-nasr@unrwa.org

**Female Students in UNRWA Schools in Lebanon Achieve Highest Scores**

Last July, UNRWA celebrated 335 distinguished students for their scores on the Lebanese Brevet (Lebanon’s official exams for grade 9), and 130 distinguished students for the Lebanese baccalaureate. Fifteen-year-old honour student, Bayan Mohamad Abed El Wahab, attained a 95 per cent score on the Lebanese Brevet, placing her first among students enrolled in UNRWA schools, second among students in Lebanese national schools in the south area and sixth nationally.

Bayan attends Nimrin School and lives in Buss camp, located in the Tyre area in south Lebanon. With regard to her outstanding achievement, Bayan said: "The best way to overcome the difficulties in order to achieve breakthrough success is a strong will that will make you determined on what you want and also patience to face obstacles in order to reach your goal."

Bayan adds that she could not have achieved anything without the support of her parents, teachers and school.

For the Baccalaureate, Safa Nazem El Hajj Naser of Amqa School was the highest ranking student, having achieved 87 per cent or 506 out of 580. She was ranked first among students in UNRWA schools, fourth among students in all north-area schools (including UNRWA, public and private schools) and thirteenth nationally.

In a message to UNRWA staff, the Director of UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon, Claudio Cordone, said, "Education is of fundamental value to everyone in the Palestine refugee community. We congratulate those who have succeeded, but we also support those who did not pass this time, as well as those who have left school and need to be helped back in education. Everyone counts.” For more information, please contact n.said1@unrwa.org
A Woman’s Self-Defense Studio in the Middle East

Lina Khalifeh began teaching self-defense to two women in Amman in 2010 and now owns and manages her own studio, SheFighter, which has 5,000 members. She also owns other studios in Egypt and Palestine. Her students include women and girls such as 18-year-old Clarissa Leite, who was impelled to join SheFighter after being sexually assaulted. Lina has also caught the attention of public figures like actress Emma Watson and was invited to the White House by former US President Barack Obama. The physical and psychological training workshops her company provides help to dramatically increase the confidence of women and girls and empower them to take a stand against aggression. Read more.

Regional News

OPT
Multiple women’s committees staged a sit-in to demand equal pay between men and women in Gaza. The protest comes at a time of sharp unemployment and the continuing blockade of the Gaza Strip. With a woeful unemployment rate of 41 per cent, the rate of unemployment for women in Gaza is a staggering 64 per cent. In 2015, it was reported that women earn an average daily salary of ILS 90 (US$ 26) compared to the daily salary of ILS 108 (US$ 31) for men. Read more

Jordan
The Jordanian Lower House of Parliament voted to repeal Penal Code 308, which had allowed rapists to escape punishment by marrying their victim. This has come after years of mobilization by women’s activists and civil society on the need to abolish the law in its entirety. Read more

Lebanon
While Lebanon has a quota system guaranteeing that women fill 30 per cent of the seats in Parliament, this is not implemented in practice. Currently, women hold only 4 out of 128 seats in Parliament. Lebanon is also a signatory of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Read more

Events of Interest

#Mesh_Basita, KIP Project, AUB
Mesh Basita is a campaign against the normalization of sexual harassment that calls for legislative reform around these issues in Lebanon. The campaign, which is held in partnership with the Office of the Minister of State for Women’s Affairs, encourages people to share photos, videos and text using the hashtags #Mesh_Basita #شمس_بلدنا to highlight that sexual harassment should not be tolerated. Read more.

Call for Proposals to support greater gender equality in the Southern Mediterranean Audiovisual Sector, SouthMed WiA
Deadline 15 September 2017

The objective of this call by SouthMed WiA, a project funded by the EU, is to support projects addressing weaknesses and issues related to gender equality and the under-representation of women in the audiovisual sector in seven Southern Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia. Read more.

Reports & Resources

UN WOMEN
The Status of Women in the United Nations System report addresses the status of women in the staffing of the United Nations, highlighting the wide-ranging challenges to achieving gender parity and providing trends and statistical data concerning the representation of women in the UN system. A total of 35 UN entities supplied the data presented in the report to UN Women. The publication considers the representation of women, disaggregated by level, entity, location and nationality; highlights issues pertinent to selection, appointments and career advancement, as well as realities within the organizational culture; and proposes steps that will lead to gender parity in the UN system. Read more

UN Women’s Annual Report 2016-2017 highlights the UN Women’s support for women and girls worldwide through a results-driven approach to implementing the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report also presents key results and programmes that guide their strategy to achieve gender equality: leading the way towards political inclusion, ending violence against women, and planning and budgeting for empowerment and equality. Read more

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
EIGE published a Glossary of Definitions of Rape, Femicide and Intimate Partner Violence presenting internationally identified definitions of rape, femicide and intimate partner violence. The collection of definitions attempts to provide a basis for a comparison of scope and trends among parties to EIGE, which will help guide EU policy development concerning violence against women. Read more

International Labour Organization (ILO)
ILO’s Women, Gender and Work: Social Choices and Inequalities, Volume 2 is a collection of articles containing the insights of economists, sociologist and lawyers concerning gender and country-specific issues. The publication builds on the first volume and focuses on practical strategies, as opposed to an emphasis on theory. The essays cover a broad range of topics. Read more

Facts of the Month

1 in 5
women globally live with a disability. Also, up to three quarters of people living with disabilities are women in low- and middle-income countries. Read more

32
countries have different procedures for obtaining passports for men and women. Read more

For more information, please contact t.abunafiseh@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 million registered Palestinian refugees. Its mission is to help Palestinian 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.