



unrwa framework for quality analysis and implementation of curriculum

In 2011, UNRWA embarked on an Education Reform aiming to transform teaching and learning in its schools and ensure that the UNRWA education programme “develops the full potential of Palestine refugees to enable them to be confident, innovative, questioning, thoughtful, tolerant and open minded, upholding human values and religious tolerance, proud of their Palestinian identity, and contributing positively to the development of their society and the global community.”

Key to this vision for UNRWA education, and central to the Reform, is ensuring that the curriculum taught in UNRWA schools supports the type of quality teaching and learning that UNRWA strives to achieve.

Through the current Medium Term Strategy (2016-21), UNRWA education programme strives to embed, sustain and enrich the Reform policies, practices and

principles, including continuing to ensure that the curriculum taught in UNRWA schools continues to develop UNRWA students as critical, creative thinkers, and global citizens.

Curriculum in UNRWA schools

UNRWA has used the Host country curricula in its schools since its establishment, to both enable its students to take state examinations at the end of each cycle and to transition to the Host country secondary and tertiary education. As a UN Agency, and a direct service provider of education, in its five Fields of operations, UNRWA has always worked to ensure that the delivery of education to its more than 530,000 students aligns with the broader UN development goals and reflects the values and principles of the UN. UNRWA therefore works to enrich the Host Country curricula in each of its Fields of operations to ensure that the curricula taught in UNRWA schools reflect its educational approach, including critical thinking.

UNRWA Curriculum Framework

In 2013 UNRWA put in place the UNRWA Framework for Analysis and Quality Implementation of the Curriculum (Curriculum Framework), to support curriculum delivery in its schools, in line with the Education Reform vision. The Framework was developed with the active engagement of all Fields, facilitated by international curriculum development specialists from UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education (IBE) and with UNRWA HQ Education staff, as well as with the support of the Legal Affairs, Gender and Disability internal officers.

The Curriculum Framework emphasizes the importance of reflecting the UN values, such as neutrality, human rights, tolerance, equality and non-discrimination with regard to race, gender, language and religion, throughout the teaching and learning process in UNRWA schools. It also aims to ensure that the curriculum taught in UNRWA does acknowledge the Palestinian heritage and culture of the students,

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and meets their learning needs, too. The Framework includes tools to guide review and enrichment of Host country curricula, textbooks, and other learning material. It also serves as the UNRWA policy reference document on curriculum in UNRWA schools, and as a framework to support the professional development of teachers.

Principles

The UNRWA Curriculum Framework includes ten key principles for the delivery of curriculum in its schools. These principles reflect the UNRWA vision for education, such as the need for the curriculum to be relevant to students' lives, to promote active learning and deep understanding rather than memorization, to be inclusive and free from bias, and to reflect UN values.

Student competencies

The Curriculum Framework enables the education staff in the Fields, in particular teachers and School Principals, to develop key life competencies in their students:

- Critical Thinking
- Constructive Learning
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Citizenship

Cross-cutting issues

There are two cross-cutting issues of particular importance for curriculum delivery in UNRWA schools: inclusion and gender equality. The inclusive approach to education seeks to ensure that the curriculum meets the individual needs of all students through enrichment, differentiation and adaptation of curriculum content, materials, methods and assessment. To achieve gender equality in the curriculum, UNRWA education programme addresses attitudes, teaching practices, textbooks and other materials that may enforce gender stereotypes and bias.

Cross-curriculum themes

The Curriculum Framework also emphasises cross-curriculum themes that provide connections between subjects and ways in which subjects can be made relevant to students' lives. The UNRWA cross-curriculum themes are:



- Environmental Education;
- Human Rights Education;
- Health and Life Skills;
- Palestinian Culture and Heritage;
- Information and Communication Technology.

Rapid review of newly issued textbooks

In addition to undertaking regular Curriculum Framework reviews, UNRWA staff conduct rapid reviews of any newly issued textbooks in any of its five Fields of operations as required. Here, the textbooks are reviewed against three key criteria, related to the UN values in the UNRWA Curriculum Framework: 1) Neutrality/Bias, 2) Gender and 3) Age-appropriateness. The findings of the detailed reviews are shared with the relevant Fields, alongside support as to how to address identified issues in the classroom.

Making a positive difference

The implementation of the Curriculum Framework will help UNRWA in making a positive difference in teaching and learning in all its schools. It is key in establishing the same quality standards for curriculum delivery in all Fields so that all UNRWA students can be provided with a rich and stimulating curriculum that develops their thinking and life skills, and helps them to think critically about various issues and to be aware of other perspectives.

For more information

Please contact your Chief Field Education Programme, or UNRWA HQ Education Department on: info.education@unrwa.org.



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 is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5,094,886 registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.