



## unrwa research in progress: 2016 perceptual survey findings

### Overview

Efforts continue across the UNRWA education programme to advance the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Education Reform Strategy (ERS, 2011-2015) and the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS, 2016-2021), which seeks to 'embed, enrich and sustain' the Reform policies, principles and practices.

Research plays a key role in helping to strengthen the understanding of key education stakeholders towards evidence based decision making. To this effect, the Agency has developed a number of tools to enable it to monitor the breadth and depth of the education programme achievements and challenges. Three key studies are undertaken every two to three years: the Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA), the Perceptual Survey and the Classroom Practices Study. The baseline for each of these studies was determined early on in the reform, between 2012 and 2013.

### The perceptual survey 2016

The Perceptual Survey explored the perceptions of 29,000 UNRWA students (Grade 4 and 8), teachers and School Principals from the UNRWA five Fields of operation. The Survey contained 46 questions across five subscales: Education in Emergencies, Violence Free Schools, Inclusive Education, Human Rights Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT) and Teaching Practices. The Survey items (questions) were constructed as Likert-style response items, ranging from 0 to 3, where '0' represents a 'very negative perception', '3' represents a 'very positive perception' with 1.5 being neutral.

### Key findings

#### Agency-wide findings

- Stakeholders had a positive perception of UNRWA education provision in 2016 (mean score of 2.13), with over three-quarters of responses indicating 'agreement' or 'strong agreement' to the Survey questions. Agency-wide, perceptions overall and of comparable subscales were generally more positive in 2016 than in 2013.
- Overall, students were positive about going to school, and teachers liked teaching there - this should be taken as a good indication of the overall quality and ethos of UNRWA schools.
- Items perceived relatively positively by stakeholders – such as many aspects of teaching practice, feeling safe in the classroom, teachers liking teaching, teachers stopping disrespectful or violent acts, teachers paying attention to all students in the class – are often related to key aspects of the Education Reform Strategy and to its professional development programmes specifically.
- Perceptions varied across the different stakeholder groups: School Principals responded the most positively, followed by teachers and finally students. Female respondents were more positive than males and Grade 4 students and teachers were more positive than those from Grade 8.
- In Gaza, Jordan and Syria, the overall perceptions, and of comparable subscales, were generally more positive in 2016 than those of 2013.

## Subscale findings

- **Teaching Practices:** The overall perception of the teaching practices used in UNRWA schools was positive, having improved since 2013 in particular with regards to perceptions regarding teachers enjoying teaching at the school. This reflects positively on the teacher motivation aspects of the UNRWA Education Reform and its professional development programmes.
- **Inclusive Education:** Within the Inclusive Education subscale, there are three smaller clusters which focus on health, recreational activities and general issues. Stakeholders were more positive towards health and general aspects than to the provision of recreational activities. Although stakeholders perceived inclusive education in UNRWA schools positively in 2016, in comparison to 2013, the overall positive perception of inclusive education has decreased slightly.
- **Education in Emergencies:** The perceptions of the Education in Emergencies subscale, and its individual items, were quite positive, but with some variation between Fields and stakeholders. Perceptions of student safety on the way to school were generally positive, but challenges are faced in some contexts, with female students less positive than males and Grade 8 students less positive than those in Grade 4.
- **Human Rights Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT):** The perceptions of the HRCRT programme were generally positive across stakeholder groups with the mean having slightly increased since 2013 at Agency-level. Stakeholders had a positive perception of teachers discussing human rights in their lessons, however the overall attitude towards gender equality (the idea that girls and boys should have equal rights) has worsened since 2013. School Principals were slightly more positive than students and teachers. Bullying appeared to be an issue in many schools, but here the perceptions may have been more than the reality.
- **Violence Free Schools:** Overall, stakeholders had positive perceptions (to varying degrees) regarding Violence Free Schools. Stakeholders were positive about teachers stopping any disrespectful or violent act and in knowing to whom to report any such act. Students were also positive about feeling they could talk to someone (teacher, School Counsellor, School Principals, UNRWA staff member) about any concerns. Perceptions of safety

at school were generally positive, however challenges remain, with 15% of all stakeholders (students, teachers and School Principals) feeling unsafe in their classroom/office, 20% feeling unsafe in the playground and 26% feeling unsafe going to the toilet.

## Way forward

- The Full Perceptual Survey Report, a Summary document (Executive Summary and Conclusion from the full report) and Field-specific Briefs were circulated in June 2018. It is intended that there will be discussions as to what the findings suggest and how these link to other findings whether they be qualitative or quantitative.
- The next Perceptual Survey is planned for 2020 as it will be implemented in tandem with the next Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA), to allow more time for UNRWA to fully analyse and address the findings of the 2016 Survey.



## For more information

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for palestine refugees in the near east

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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.