

UN WOMEN COUNTRY OFFICE FOR JORDAN AND SYRIA

May 2013
Issue 1



Friday Notes

EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first edition of UN Women Jordan and Syria Friday Notes, which includes our activities from January to May 2013. This first issue aims to provide information about all UN Women country office current initiatives.

We would particularly like to highlight the successful organization of the Sixth National Technology Parade, which just took place on the 7th of May, in Karak. Under the “Achievement Equality in the ICT Sector” UN Women project, this annual parade sought to support female students and provide them with the necessary technical skills required by the labor market in order to boost their participation in the ICT sector.

Furthermore, it is important to mention the celebration of the Women Film Week, which took place in Amman from the 8th to the 14th of March 2013 on the occasion of the International Women’s Day. It was, undoubtedly, a challenging and successful event, which gathered hundreds and hundreds of people. We will definitely seek to repeat the event again next year.

The strategy of UN Women to respond to the Syrian Refugee crisis is unquestionably one of our main concerns. Each month, through the development of the “Women and Girl Oasis” at the Syrian refugee camp of Za’atari, more than seven hundred women have been involved, until now, in the different activities such as tailoring, hairdressing, drawing or English classes, mosaic, handcraft workshops or football for girls. The Oasis has not only become a focus point for many refugees in the Camp, but an important safe haven for women growth, at personal and social levels.

We invite you to read, enjoy and share your thoughts with us.

Sincerely,
Giuseppe Belsito
Representative
UN Women Country Office for Jordan and Syria

“We simply can no longer afford to deny the full potential of one-half of the population. The world needs to tap into the talent and wisdom of women. Whether the issue is food security, economic recovery, health, or peace and security, the participation of women is needed now more than ever.” –Michelle Bachelet, former Executive Director / UN Women

Inside this issue

- Women’s Economic EmpowermentPage 2
- Increasing Accountability in Financing Gender EqualityPage 3
- Enhancing Women’s Leadership Role and Political Participation ProgramPage 4
- Violence against WomenPage 5
- Emergency Response Strategy to Syrian CrisisPage 6
- Other Activities Page 8

Women's Economic Empowerment Program

Gender Equity Seal

UN WOMEN's support to Gender Equity Seal (GES) participating companies

As part of UN Women's continuous support and follow up with the nine participating companies in the Gender Equity Seal (GES) project, UN Women organized a 5-days mission by the Projects' Team Leader Consultant to meet with the companies and discuss their progress in the action plans. The meetings were fruitful in a way that all companies showed commitment and readiness for the pre-audit phase.

Several success stories have been highlighted. There is evidence that in some companies the percentage of female employees has increased significantly, especially in the high level positions. Additionally, trainers that undertook the Training of Trainer (TOT) Workshops related to Human Resources, Training and Marketing are now capable of giving the training to all the employees in their company. Participating companies have provided the employees with a clear message about the importance of gender equality within the working environment. Some companies have already

finalized their internal HR documents (job descriptions, appraisal forms, employee handbook..) and ensured it was gender sensitive. Furthermore, companies took pride in implementing the GES initiative by putting the Seal in all promotional materials, online and offline communications. By the end of March all companies were ready for the pre-audit phase.



Achieving E-Quality in the ICT Sector

New Successful Gathering at The Sixth National Technology Parade

Under the slogan **"The Industry and Universities: Innovation for Future Challenges"**, UN Women has celebrated the Sixth National Technology Parade in cooperation with Mutah University, Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship and a national steering committee encompassing several Jordanian universities, inta@j Association and the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology.

This consolidated Annual Technology Parade falls under UN Women "Achieving E- Quality in the ICT Sector" project which is funded by USAID in cooperation with CISCO, the Jordanian Ministry of Communication & Information Technology and the Jordanian universities. One of the main goals UN Women seeks by exerting its

efforts towards sustaining this annual parade is to support female students and provide them with the needed technical skills required by the labor market and boost their participation in the ICT sector.

The parade took place on 7th May 2013 under the Patronage of HRH Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan. This UN Women initiative is meant to be an annual technological event with the participation of Jordanian Universities' students to urge participating students to unveil their creative talents and skills in research and development. The parade which went through an intense day of projects showing, experiences exchange and different panel discussions, allowed students from Jordanian universities exhibited their projects under the umbrella of eight areas: Gaming, Intelligent, Industry, Renewable, Green, Robotics, ICT, and Health.

Female students participating into the parade presented a large variety of innovative projects. From initiatives such as an Electronic Hospital Management System creating a mobile application that deals with patients' information, other project concerned about the lack of time for mothers to take care of the children and creating a project named Baby Care Assistant System (BCA) to a very useful project which aims to design and build absorptive appliance using herbs to reduce the transmission of radiation from cell phones.

When it comes to the awards to the best projects nominated by the Parade Evaluators, the success of women contribution was unquestionable. We highlight the 1st prize of Green Environment thematic area regarding zinc extraction from electric arc furnace dust by thermal treatments with Plastic material and also the ICT 1st prize with the project "Wireless Arabic Sign Language Translator", WASLT (Communicate in Arabic) created by a group of four high motivated young ladies from University of Jordan. Under the slogan of "Speak through hands, Hear through eyes, they came up with the idea of building a device that would help deaf

community to communicate better. "We started with the project over one year ago. We visited many deaf centers in Jordan to understand about the challenges they face. There's a massive miscommunication gap in our culture which separated the deaf from the rest of the society", one of the members said.



"Deaf girls are the ones that suffer the most. Their families are ashamed of them. As engineers and girls we thought we had to do something to contribute solving this problem", they concluded.

Increasing Accountability in Financing Gender Equality

Cost analysis of the Jordanian National Strategy for Women (JNWS)

UN Women hired a consultant to conduct a cost analysis of the Jordanian National Strategy for Women (JNWS). After reviewing the National Strategy for Women in all its components and after conducting interviews and meetings with key stakeholders, the regenerative programmes were all assessed individually and their attending costs more realistically and accurately re-estimated. The budget associated with some programmes was subsequently increased or decreased. Some other programmes were also canceled on the basis that their objectives can be achieved through other similar projects by the National Committee for Women or other institutions that share common goals. One additional new project

was proposed in order to enable the Jordanian National Committee for Women to achieve the gamut of its objectives.

The increase or decrease in the budget allocated to the individual regenerative programmes was not proposed only based on the respective programme's compatibility with the goals of the strategy, but also on the optimal outreach/size of those and the real cost of their activities within the proposed time frame that would achieve their goals within the strategy component they fall under.

It is worth mentioning that the budget allocated to the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2013-2017) is JD 7,218,000, whereas the recommended budget based on this analytical study is JD 4,140,000.

Capacity Building on Gender Responsive Budgeting

Capacity of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) network was created to enable the members (a network composed by women advocates, representatives from the Jordanian different Ministries, civil society organizations and members from Jordanian universities) to advocate for gender equality.

This was achieved through organizing a three days training workshop that provided the participants with tailor-made training program to enhance their knowledge and information on the importance of GRB and to equip them with good analysis tools to promote and advocate for GRB.



The **General Budget Department (GBD)**, developed child budgeting in the year 2012.

In conjunction with Fiscal Reform Project II, the GBD reviewed, analyzed, and adjusted the strategic plans, programs, projects, activities, and performance indicators of four pilot ministries: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Social Development

The assessment was made in order to better assist these ministries in presenting child appropriations in their budgets. GBD is also working on developing child budget forms, and conducting training courses to relevant staff to upgrade their capacities in this regard.

Enhancing Women's Leadership Role and Political Participation Program

Supporting Women Participation in the National and Local Elections

In January 2013, the Jordanian parliamentary election was held and women have secured 18 seats out of 150 seats representing 12% of the total seats. UN Women developed and launched a programme, "Women Political Leadership and Participation" which included different phases. The first phase was implemented in supporting women participation in the this election as both voters and candidates. It involved the establishment of a National Coalition among key women organizations to progress women's participation in politics and public life to provide technical and policy support to women, both candidates and members of the National and Local councils.

Moreover, to ensure that the National coalition and partner local organizations are better able to progress women's participation in local and national politics a training team was set up to provide support to the candidates of the national and local elections. A networking meeting was also held for

the members of the coalition with the participation of the Prime Minister and other women's groups from various parts of the country. Women organizations worked collaboratively on three regional advocacy campaigns; the media campaign was implemented in different districts taking into consideration north, middle and south of the Kingdom, during the electoral period . Women candidates' capacity was strengthened to compete and succeed in elections through holding three training programs in different districts in the field of Communication and Dealing with the Media and also on how prepare their candidacy programs. Eight training programs were also conducted to the candidates and the directors of campaigns by 13 trainers from the national team of trainers in different districts. Some of the programs were conducted with cooperation of the **I n d e p e n d e n t Commission for Elections**.



New steps forward on UN Women project

As part of the pluri-annual program on supporting women in the national and local elections UN Women is now starting the second phase of the project which will encompass two components. The first one regarding post national election in which UN Women is planning to continue developing the capacities of the new elected members of the Parliament (MPs) specially women MPs. The project will focus on performing their legislation role, including human rights and specifically women rights and gender issues within the context of economical and political reform the Jordanian government is developing.

The second component of the project will focus on the upcoming municipality elections (local elections) to be held next August 2013. As in the previous phase UN Women with the Jordanian National Commission for Women and other members of the Coalition will support skills and capacity development for the candidates. Training, which becomes a focal point in the project, will include different aspects such as communication skills (public speech, medial and public campaigning), among others. Likewise, support will also entail building capacities of the members of the Parliament as legislators on gender mainstreaming and international gender agreements and treaties as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Violence against Women

Strengthening Local Capacity to Protect Women's Physical Integrity and Human Rights

On the 19th of March UN Women Jordan team organized along with its partner, The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), a meeting of the SHAMA'A (candle in Arabic) network to fight violence against women to present the members with the results of a mapping and evaluation exercise conducted in order to identify the gaps that need to be filled in order to strengthen the network. Different options of coordination mechanisms were presented and discussed. The members agreed on a progressive approach that would include implementing three of the proposed mechanism over a duration of 5 years. Also members agreed to hold network meetings every month.



Empowering Youth to Advocate for Women's Human Rights through Volunteerism

UN Women project which engages young volunteers to take action for women's rights and to influence policy in legislation for the implementation of the **Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** in Jordan, just started its second year of implementation.

One of the project goals is to build youth network to become the future advocates for women rights in their societies.

One step towards this achievement was the idea that each volunteer brought one friend to join the project creating a new team called "**The friend's team**".

In March 10th all the team, a total of 48 volunteers, were invited for a five days CEDAW workshop in Amman. The purpose of the training workshop was that both teams could share their experiences. For the new members it was the best occasion to get a historical background about the project and also an introductory session on CEDAW and learning methodologies and techniques on how to advocate for it.

Emergency Response Strategy to Syrian Crisis in Jordan

Syrian Women Refugees Stitch Together Trust and Hope

The sound of women laughing and making jokes are all one can hear standing outside the Tailoring Workshop container at the Women and Girls Oasis in Zaatari refugee camp located in the Jordanian Governorate of Mafraq, close to the Syrian border.

The Tailoring workshop takes place in an open area of the camp surrounded by nine large white port containers where women take part in various stages of clothing production. Opening the door of one of the containers, one enters a brightly lit space where some smiling women sit behind eight sewing machines working on colourful fabrics. There are four rows of sewing machines, two in each row. The remaining empty space is occupied by other women waiting for their turn to get behind the sewing machines and finish the pieces they are working on.

Two very eager women, Fatima (36) and Hajar (36), welcome visitors and are very open about sharing their work and stories.

“My husband is an injured military defector. He cannot work so I took it upon myself to help provide for him and my three kids. By mere chance, a woman told me about UN Women’s oasis and the tailoring workshop and here I am. It is the best thing that ever happened to me since we fled Syria three months ago,” says Fatima, beaming while Hajar nods her head in agreement.”

At the Syrian refugee camp of Zaatari, UN Women Jordan is supporting the establishment of a “safe space” named “Women and Girls Oasis.” The “cash for work” programme enables Syrian women refugees who are professional tailors and hairdressers to work six hours a day in the workshops and earn a living. The tailors sew newborn outfits for babies that are delivered at the hospitals operating within the camp.

Hajar, another participant, opens up and speaks with incredible candor about the hardships she has faced: “I have been through a lot and did not expect my life to turn out the way it did. I fled Syria with my five children because I received threats on my son’s life. I left everything behind, my house, my husband and all my belongings and embarked on a trip to the unknown. I reached the camp already depressed with very few words to exchange with others. At some point, my words got stifled by sadness, the smile left my face and tears became a permanent companion.”



However, Hajar says her grief started to gradually dissipate after learning about the Tailoring Workshop. As a professional tailor, she became involved, in the activities taking place in the Oasis, along with some 300 women and teenage girls. They do tailoring, hairdressing, drawing, English classes, mosaic and handcrafts as well as learning gymnastics.

The impact of the Oasis goes far beyond a mere source of income for these women. The growing bonds and trust formed with the Oasis’ staff and other women have encouraged many to speak out about taboo subjects such as gender-based violence in the private sphere. They exchange stories, and no longer shy away from sharing their experiences about psychological and emotional violence they face in their homes.

Consultation meetings

As part of the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the activities at the “**Women and Girls Oasis**” at Zaatari camps, during the month of March, three consultation meetings were conducted with the Oasis’s beneficiaries.

The meetings were conducted by UN Women and facilitated by INTERSOS, UN Women partner in Zaatari.

During the sessions many important issues were discussed which included the needs for the center to be more effective, the material missing and also new suggestions to introduce to the Oasis such as the creation of a section to help mothers to deal with traumatized children who have lived a war.

As well, it was also given attention to the challenges the Oasis faces and it was stressed the problem with electricity at the camp’s area where the Oasis is located which affects the productivity of the ongoing activities.

It is worth mentioning the discussion that took place regarding the situation of men in the camp and how joining the Oasis and receive some training could be useful and positively for them.

The Oasis has allowed refugee women to take advantage of this safe haven and experience a different and unexpected role in the camp’s social life, as well as within their own family structure. They have become the breadwinners and their contribution to their households is well recognized by their husbands, as Fatima indicates. The Oasis is considered an intervention that has brought smiles back to the faces of Fatima and Hajar.

“We have hope now! We feel safe, and are looking forward to the day when we go back to a peaceful and stable Syria,” Hajar concludes.

It is estimated that more than 70,000 people have been killed and more than three million displaced both within and outside of Syria since the uprising against President al-Assad began in March 2011.^[i] This week, [the heads of five United Nations agencies](#) called on political leaders to meet their responsibility to the people of Syria and to the future of the region.^[ii] According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 432,263 Syrian refugees had fled to Jordan as of 15 April.^[iii] Half of them are now living at the Zaatari camp.^[iv]

[i] UN News Centre <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=44635&Cr=syria&Cr1=#.UW1g3qLqzng>

[ii] UN News Centre <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=44658&Cr=syria&Cr1=#.UW1ggKLqzng>

[iii] UNHCR <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>

[iv] UNHCR <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/settlement.php?id=176&country=107®ion=77>



Other activities

Women's Film Week succeeds in Amman

In order to celebrate the International Women's Day on Friday the 8th of March 2013, UN Women Jordan Office organized the "Women Film Week" from the 8th to the 14th of March 2013.

During a week, UN Women, in partnership with the local not-for profit organization, Aat Network of Women Artists and the Royal Film Commission, screened 18 films in three different venues (Al-Balad Theatre, the Royal Film Commission and the Rainbow Theater) downtown Amman.

Films (both fiction and documentary films) dealt with women issues. UN Women invited the different embassies present in Jordan to submit a film of their choice. Eleven embassies eventually contributed to provide twelve films. Along with Aat and UN-Women's own films, a total of 18 films were screened during the event .



First Donor's meeting Event

The First ever Donor meeting organized by UN Women in Jordan took place in Amman on 4th February. The event was attended by representatives of the donors community working in Jordan. It provided a unique opportunity for the country office to illustrate the initiatives is planning to implement in Jordan and Syria.