

UN WOMEN COUNTRY OFFICE FOR JORDAN AND SYRIA

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Friday Notes

EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to launch the second issue of UN Women Jordan and Syria *Friday Notes* that comes full of new projects and activities, which have taken place during the last two months.

Firstly, I would like to highlight an important achievement for our office, which is the establishment of the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG). The first meeting took place last June 19th and gathered the 12 members of the group and UN Women staff. Without a doubt, the establishment of the CSAG responds to one of the priorities of UN Women in Jordan and will become the main vehicle of engagement with civil society.

In this *Friday Notes*, the response of UN Women to the Syrian refugee crisis remains a central focus. The launching of an important assessment report on Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection among Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a Focus on Early Marriage, or the continuous work within Jordanian hosting communities are some of the projects you will find in this number.

I very much hope you enjoy the reading and look forward to your feedback.

Warmly,
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

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Civil Society Advisory Group

First Meeting of the Civil Society Advisory Group

One of the priorities of UN Women globally and UN Women in Jordan is the engagement with civil society and civil society organizations to advance women's human rights. To this aim, UN Women Jordan has established a Civil Society Advisory Group (CSG) composed of 12 civil society actors. CSG Members will provide advice to UN Women Jordan senior management on issues referring to the political and economic empowerment of women, based on their personal experience and knowledge.

The first meeting of the Civil Society Advisory Group took place in Amman on June 19, 2013 and It was attended by all the CSG Members and UN Women staff.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Giuseppe Belsito, UN Women Country Representative, who highlighted the importance of the meeting, marking the launching of the CSAG and the establishment of an adequate framework to institutionalize civil society participation and address civil society priorities in Jordan.

Furthermore, the CO Representative emphasized the importance of the Civil Society Group in the context of the development of the new Strategic Note for Jordan.



During the meeting, Mr. Belsito presented the Country Office programs which were discussed by the new members of the Civil Society Advisory group.

Different issues were highlighted, including participation of youth and a long-term vision that takes into account the empowerment of the future generations. Another important issue discussed was



the engagement with the private sector, the development of small and medium enterprises and promoting an entrepreneurship culture in academic institutions, across all disciplines.

In the closing remarks, the Regional Director of UN Women, Dr. Sameera Al-Tuwaijri emphasized the importance of the collaboration with civil society as civil society actors are essential to shape public opinion.

The CSAG, agreed to hold the next meeting in the Governorate of Mafraq next September with the support of the Jordanian Women's Union.

More information about the CSAG will be soon available in the UN Women Website.

Emergency Response Strategy to Syrian Crisis in Jordan

Syrian Women Refugees: Dignity Never Surrendered

A jovial atmosphere surrounds the premises of the Jordanian Women Union (JWU) located in Amman, Jordan. The sounds of women and children fill the place with much needed enthusiasm that rises to the occasion. The graduation of Syrian women refugees residing in Hittin and Al Hussein camps from computer, tailoring and hairdressing courses is not an issue to be taken lightly. For this purpose, the main reception area at JWU is divided into two parts; the first is filled with women graduates sitting on chairs while the second is used to exhibit the handmade products of embroidery, soap, accessories, and artcrafts.

The faces of women are filled with anticipation, but a forlorn longing can be sensed. If further investigated, it will lead to a unanimous declaration of nostalgia to their homeland: Syria.

“I even miss our tap water! There is a constant ache in my heart but I still have faith in a merciful God who will grant our return back home,” says Fatima (34). A Syrian refugee woman who lives in Al Hussein Camp, Fatima fled Syria with her family and has been living in Jordan since July 2012. Having four children and an unemployed husband urged her to go on an undertaking to change her living conditions and improve her chances.

“I took a course in computer which opened my eyes to a world I was completely oblivious to that intimidated me. I can now use the computer with ease and will enroll in another course as advised by my instructor who sensed my enthusiasm and willingness to absorb the newly acquired information!”

The learning process did not stop for Fatima at this point. She also enrolled in a hairdressing course aiming to work in a beauty parlor to earn a living.



UN Women’s response strategy to the Syrian Refugee crisis covers the communities in Jordan where Syrian refugees are hosted, with a focus on the less serviced areas in the middle and south of the country. The areas covered include Irbid, Madaba, Deir Alla, Hitteen and Hussein Refugee camps. UN Women in cooperation with JWU provide psychosocial services to minimize the impact of stress, trauma, and Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV). Women are referred to shelters, health and other service providers when needed. Additionally, UN Women provides recreational, social and information activities to facilitate peer to peer support, social interaction and venting as well as raise their awareness about their rights.

Izdihar (27) is still hopeful despite the dreary conditions she is living. A mother of four and the fifth on the way, she fled Syria in January 2013 with her children leaving her husband behind. Without any source of income, she goes through the days in Hittin Camp keeping an eye on her children and the other on the Syrian borders waiting for a long promised reunion with her husband.

“To be able to feed my kids, I sold all my jewellery and I am only left with this bracelet which I am keeping for extremely desperate times. I am always on the lookout for opportunities to earn a living, so I enrolled in a tailoring course. Now I have the chance to work in a tailoring workshop but I am waiting for the owner to get back to me.”

Income generating activities enable the Syrian refugee women to overcome their own and their families' income vulnerability and rely on themselves to provide the basic needs and protect themselves. UN Women utilizes a capacity development strategy whereby JWU is supported to provide services that ensure sufficient outreach to the communities to assess and identify needs, build trust and enable a response.

"These courses help us maintain our dignity by earning a living. We have lost a lot in this conflict, except our dignity because it was never surrendered!" concludes Fatima with tears in her eyes, while proudly holding her graduation certificate.

Launching of “Inter-Agency Assessment of Gender-based Violence and Child Protection among Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a focus on Early Marriage”

On July 16th it was held the launch of the Interagency Assessment of Gender-based Violence and Child Protection among urban Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a focus on Early Marriage Assessment which had a large reception and gathered more than 70 people.



Under the leadership of UN Women and the coordination umbrella of the Gender-based Violence and Child Protection sub-working groups mwhich includes the participation of UNFPA, UNHCR, International Rescue Committee, UNICEF, Jordanian Women's Union, Zenid, Un Ponte Per and Save the Children, the interagency assessment took place during the first three months of 2013. This study was conducted by the Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID) and funded by the Government of Finland.

The Ambassador of Finland along with representatives of the UN Agencies in Jordan and Jordanian organizations were present at the launch.

The Interagency assessment can be checked online at: <http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Report-web.pdf>

French Ambassador visits Women and Girls Oasis at Zaatari Camp

Last July 25th, UN Women “Women and Girls Oasis” at Syrian Refugees Camp in Zaatari received the visit of the French Ambassador, Miss Caroline Dumas. During the visit, Miss. Dumas had the opportunity to chat with women refugees and staff and to learn more about UN Women projects in the camp. The ambassador, who was enthusiastic about the Oasis activities, met with the tailors who gave her a girl's dress and



baby clothes as a present. The visit concluded at the Women saloon and Miss. Dumas assured she will contribute to the saloon with makeup items.

A Joint Agreement between Norway and the United Nations in Jordan Secure More Services to Survivors of Gender Based Violence

A signing ceremony of a joint agreement between the Government of Norway and three United Nations Agencies in Jordan, UNFPA, UNICEF AND UN Women, was organized on June 20th at the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) in Zarqa. The ceremony took place in the presence of the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Espen Barth Eide , and Ms. Reem Abu Hassan, the Jordanian Minister of Social Development.

Endorsed and signed by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway in Jordan, Mr. Petter Ølberg, the agreement stipulates availing 1.3 million dollars to UNFPA, UNICEF and UN WOMEN. The monetary assistance will support the implementation of a one year joint project, on addressing the needs of Gender Based Violence cases, identified by the three UN organizations.

This joint agreement comes under the efforts exerted to ensure the increased access of Gender Based Violence survivors, both Syrians and Jordanians, to comprehensive lifesaving protection services including, reproductive health, psychosocial and legal services in three Jordanian governorates (Mafrq, Irbid and Zarqa).

Other activities

Gender in Humanitarian Action Training

The IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) Gender Capacity Project (GenCap) piloted the *Gender in Humanitarian Action* training in Jordan as one of the strategies to build the capacity of the humanitarian sectors responding to the Syrian crisis through the incorporation of gender equality measures.

Global GenCap Adviser, Linda Pennells, and Jordan's GenCap Advisor, Merrin Waterhouse, customized and co-facilitated the three-day training that took place last June 10-12, 2013. The GenCap Advisors spoke with service providers and refugees in Amman (Jordanian Women's Union and Care Jordan); Za'atari Camp (facilitated by WFP and UNHCR camp management); and Irbid in registration and distribution sites (facilitated by IRW, Islamic Relief Worldwide). The objective was to provide local examples of humanitarian work and gender issues.

The training, which gathered 27 participants from UN Agencies, National and International NGOs, focused on

gender in International Law; gender analysis using sex and age disaggregated data; the IASC Gender Marker; gender in coordination; gender in communication and development the network's action plan.



As a result of the training, participants agreed to support their sectors to incorporate Gender Equality measures in their programming, including the use of the Gender Marker.

UN Women Jordan in My World UN Campaign



The "Mark A Difference" campaign was launched by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team in Jordan last May. The campaign is a communication tool to promote the MY World global survey, which allows people across the world to tell the UN, and in particular, the Secretary General's High Level Panel, the most important issues they would like the post-2015 agenda to address. The campaign uses creative online and offline tools.

Volunteers of the UN Women project "*Empowering Youth to Advocate for Women's Human Rights through Volunteerism*", have agreed to support the dissemination of the initiative. A total of 48 local volunteers from the Jordanian cities of Madaba, Irbid and Jerash will distribute ballots among the beneficiaries, collect votes and promote MY World survey through social media.

Other activities

UN Women funded film “Horizon”, awarded with the Audience Prize

The Jordanian film “Horizon” directed by Zain Duraie and fully funded by UN Women was awarded with the Audience Prize within the Short film competition of the 19th Franco-Arab Film Festival held in Amman during the last week of June.

“Horizon”, which is the first movie of this 23 years old woman, is a short fiction film which depicts the progressive empowerment of a Jordanian woman.

During the Falcon Awards closing ceremony organized by the Institut Français and the Royal Film Commission, the Representative of the UN Women Country Office, Giuseppe Belsito, presented the award to the young director.



The French Embassy and UN Women Sign Agreement to Protect Women’s Physical Integrity and Human Rights in Jordan

As part of combating violence against women and enhancing their human rights, an agreement between the Government of France and the UN WOMEN Jordan Country Office was signed on 21st July 2013. As per the agreement, the Government of France will contribute 20,000 Euros for the continuance of the project “Strengthening local capacity to protect women’s physical integrity and human rights in Jordan” within the Violence Against Women programme.

In partnership with the National Center for Human Rights the contribution will allow for the implementation of activities designed to ensure the protection of women’s rights and dignity during arrest and detention processes in Jordan. An assessment will be conducted in order to better comprehend the situation of women in detention in Jordan and to adapt future initiatives and activities to improve the services provided to the detained women.

USAID Meeting

On June 30th UN Women Country Office for Jordan and Syria organized a bilateral meeting with USAID which it was attended by UN Women CO Representative, Giuseppe Belsito, USAID Mission Director, Beth Paige and technical staff of both organizations. During the meeting the attendees discussed the potential synergies and propose areas of joint programming between UN Women Country Office’s programs and the strategy of USAID-Jordan, specially several opportunities between the two parties in promoting together the gender quality and women’s empowerment agenda in Jordan.

As a result, USAID will explore the possibility of funding some of the UN Women Country Office projects, as they are not only critical in furtherance and support to UN Women’s efforts to work for the best interest of women and girls in Jordan, but also in expanding their impact as they proved successful and in high demand from the Jordanian civil society.