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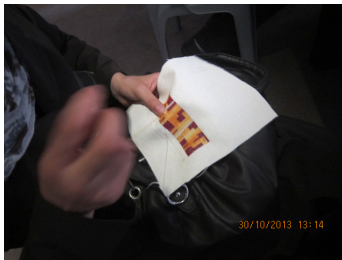
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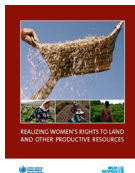
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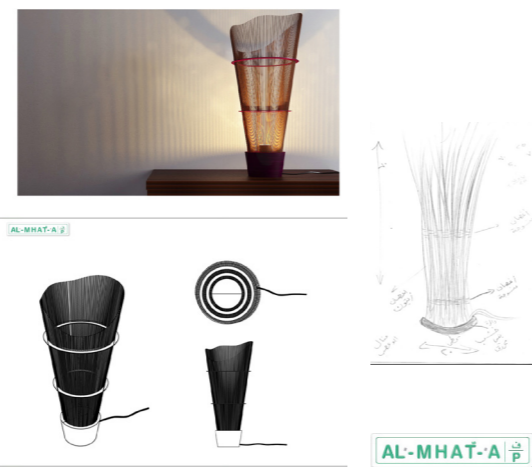
IN FOCUS - Spring Forward Programme

The Spring Forward Programme, a joint regional EU-UN Women Programme, aims to support national and regional stakeholders to empower women in the context following the changes brought by the Arab Spring. In Palestine, the Programme focuses on promoting access and effective participation of marginalized women in economic and public life, by addressing the barriers that have impeded the access and engagement of marginalized women in these areas. UN Women's strategic partner for the Programme is the Ministry of Women's Affairs, together with the Women's Affairs Technical Committee, the General Union of Palestinian Women, the Central Elections Commission and Al Mahata Gallery.

Women's Economic Empowerment

Innovation in crafts design and production

Under the Spring Forward Programme, Al Mahata is implementing the "marketable handicrafts" project, which aims at enhancing designs for Palestinian traditional handicrafts, mainly made by women. Under this project, Al Mahata has been training 43 women and men in the West Bank. The project encourages innovation in crafts' design and production while seeking to promote the continuation of traditional skills to ensure that handicrafts remain relevant, valuable and marketable in today's society. Handicrafts industries provide employment opportunities for many marginalized groups of Palestinians, including unemployed women, retirees and people with special needs. According to an assessment study by MAS in 2005, there were around 4000 women working in embroidery and making traditional Palestinian costumes.



Sample of Al Mahata work under the Spring Forward Programme. Photo courtesy: Al Mahata Gallery.

Enhancing Leadership and Political Empowerment

The Central Elections Commission and UN Women partner to empower women in elections

The UN Women office in Palestine and the Central Elections Commission (CEC) have signed an agreement on 15 November 2013, under the Spring Forward Programme, to formalize their collaboration in working on women's political empowerment and elections. Under this agreement, the CEC will conduct a BRIDGE workshop on legal reform to the electoral law for 50 women and men advocates (25 in the West Bank and 25 in the Gaza Strip) drawn from civil society, political parties and government.

Meeting with Palestinian political parties

The General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) met with leaders of the political parties of the PLO on 22 October 2013, in Ramallah, to present and discuss their plans and activities in regard to the Spring Forward Programme with the aim of ensuring the commitment of PLO members to the programme and its goals. Discussions centered around the challenges and obstacles preventing women from participating in politics, as well as how to build media, advocacy and lobbying strategies based on actual women's needs.

ZOOMING IN ...

What's BRIDGE?

Developed in 2000, BRIDGE is a governance and political participation training curriculum designed for CSOs, political parties and electoral officials. The full curriculum includes 24 modules coupled with a facilitator accreditation programme. BRIDGE was created through a partnership of five organizations: the Australian Electoral Commission, the UN Electoral Assistance Division, UNDP, the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES), and International IDEA.

One year ago, UN Women organized a 4-day BRIDGE Workshop on Gender and Elections. The workshop was one of the first activities organized under the Spring Forward Programme and aimed at responding to the needs expressed by the Palestinian women's movement for training modules focused on women's participation in electoral processes.

20 Palestinian women participated to the workshop. Ranging from Naseem, 32, from Dura village in Hebron, who was preparing to run in the local council elections, to Rudaina, an elected member of a local council, who managed to overcome the obstacles to her effective participation in the local council decision-making, the exposure to the experiences of other women around the globe, helped to inspire and empower participants to tackle the challenges and obstacles they encounter. The workshop did not only provide them with deeper knowledge but also more self-confidence, motivation, support and encouragement from others. In addition, the networking that took place throughout formal and informal workshop activities has now been consolidated through social media - a Facebook group was created by workshop participants- to contribute to stronger ties between different women's organizations working for promotion of women's political participation and leadership.

NEWS & PROGRAMMES UPDATES

Peace and Security

UN Women support to OCHA in the HPC

UN Women has been providing support to OCHA in their work to implement the IASC Gender Marker in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) vetting process. The Gender Marker is a tool that helps to determine whether humanitarian projects are designed to ensure that women and men, boys and girls, will benefit equally from proposed projects and whether the projects have the potential to advance gender equality.

A NEW RESOLUTION ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE

By unanimous vote on 18 October 2013, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2122, which renews the Council's determination to put women's leadership at the centre of all efforts to resolve conflict and promote peace. The Resolution falls directly within the scope of UNSC resolution 1325, putting in place a roadmap for a more systematic approach to the implementation of existing commitments on women, peace and security. It sets in place stronger measures to enable women to participate in conflict resolution and recovery, and puts the onus on the Security Council, the UN, regional organizations and member states to dismantle the barriers to, and create space at the table, for women. The resolution recognizes more specifically that the impact of conflict on women is exacerbated as a result of inequalities. For example, because of unequal citizenship rights and a lack of access to identity documents, women and their children may be rendered stateless, they may lack access to basic services for survival or lack the ability to reclaim land and property, post-conflict.

Ending Violence Against Women

UN Women to conduct Gender Mainstreaming Trainings under the UNDP HIV/AIDS Project

In October, UN Women signed an agreement with UNDP for the development and implementation of a gender sensitive training programme as part of a UNDP-led project under the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The training programme, which will target members of the Ministry of Health, the National AIDS Committee, health NGOs and UN agencies, aims to reduce stigma, increase understanding of the link between gender inequality and sexually transmitted diseases, provide a basic understanding of gender mainstreaming, and identify areas of strength and achievements as well as difficulties and challenges and the way to overcome them.

Mehwar Centre Project: Project evaluation finalized

The final evaluation of the Mehwar Project, funded by the Government of Italy, looks at the period of 2008-2012 and assesses the impact of the Centre's services on the primary target group of women and children victims of violence; the impact of the Centre on the development of systems and knowledge hubs for the protection of violence against women and girls; the impact of the Centre on the creation of quality standards for shelter services and the impact on project partners, particularly, the Ministry of Social Affairs. The evaluation report is expected to be published in December 2013.

Economic empowerment



Sustainable infrastructure by and for women

At the beginning of November 2013, the Bardalah Women's Association received the keys of their women's centre built under the Human Security Trust Fund project in the Jordan Valley. The centre constitutes the second of three mud-brick centre being built under the project. During the construction, 9 women of the Bardalah area directly worked on the construction of the centre, after having been trained by UNESCO on the mud-brick building techniques. This represents a clear success and encouraging step in supporting the work of women in non-traditional economic sectors. The centre will benefit the 130 already registered members of the Bardalah Association and its future new members following the establishment of the centre.



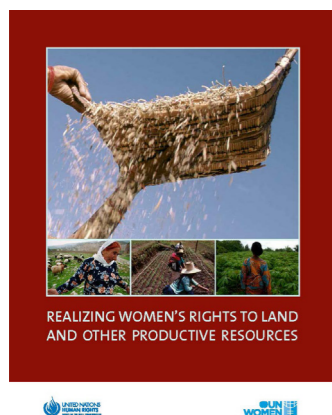
Working with FAO: Green houses for women in Aqrabanieh

The greenhouse units established, furnished and provided through a UN Women and FAO partnership are part of an income generating project under the Human Security Trust Fund project in the Jordan Valley. The Aqrabanieh Women's Association received two greenhouse units in November this year that will help sustain the women centre as well as provide a monthly income to about 10 women. FAO is currently consulting and providing technical support to the women in Aqrabanieh to identify the agricultural produce relevant for the area and the setting up of the irrigation system.

A women-run restaurant in Al Dyuk: a new business opportunity

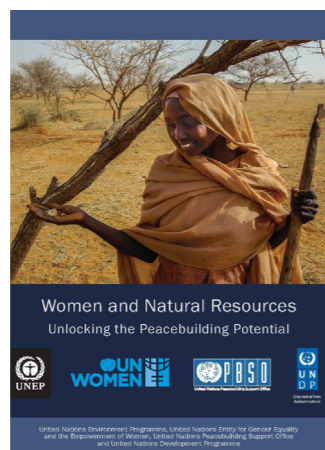
Following the finalization of the women centre of Al Dyuk, and based on a thorough feasibility study on income-generating activities, UN Women is supporting the development of a new business for the Al Dyuk Women centre through the establishment of a restaurant. Adjacent to the centre, the restaurant will serve the centre in supporting its running costs and provide work opportunities and regular income for at least 12 women. The restaurant, which faces the Mount of Temptation, hopes to attract tourists visiting the region and will have a capacity of 50 seats. Ma'an Development Centre is supporting the implementation of this activity and has already initiated the building and furnishing of the restaurant.

PUBLICATIONS



Realizing women's rights to land and other productive resources

The UN Women-OHCHR publication is intended as a tool to guide and supports the adoption and effective implementation of laws, policies and programmes to ensure women's access, use and control over land and other productive resources. The publication addresses a range of issues, including security of tenure, inheritance and marital property, legal pluralism, and land law and policy, as well as the international and resolution legal and policy framework and a human-right based approach. It sets out recommendations, together with explanatory commentaries, good practices and case studies from countries.



Women and Natural Resources in Peacebuilding: Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential

The UNDP, UNEP, UNPSO and UN Women joint research focuses on the relationship between women and natural resources in conflict-affected settings, and discusses how the management of natural resources can be used to enhance women's engagement and empowerment in peacebuilding processes.



The Global Gender Gap report 2013

The report benchmarks national gender gaps of 136 countries on economic, political, education- and health-based criteria. The Global Gender Gap Index was developed in 2006, partially to address the need for a consistent and comprehensive measure of gender equality that can track a country's progress over time. Palestine is not part of the ranking. Click [here](#) for an inter-active heatmap illustrating global gender gaps.

GLOBAL CALLS AND OPPORTUNITIES

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

From 25 November to 10 December 2013, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Al Muntada, Amal Coalition and others organizations will hold events across the West Bank and Gaza Strip to join the Global 16 Days of Activism to Combat Gender Violence.

This year, UN Women is supporting the Ministry of Women's Affairs' campaign, including activities with media, civil society and national actors, and Amal Coalition for the organization of an evidence-based conference on gender-based violence, organized by the GUPW and Amal Coalition in the Gaza Strip.



Perspectives from abroad - Spring Forward in Jordan



In implementing the Spring Forward Programme in Jordan, UN Women partners directly with ministries, governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations and community based organizations, as well as others service providers.

2013 has been an active election year in Jordan, with Parliamentary elections in January and municipal elections in August. In Jordan, the law establishes electoral quotas for women in parliament (10%) and local councils (25%), but women's political participation continues to remain low.

Under the Spring Forward Programme this year, the UN Women office in Jordan has invested in a number of activities to ensure women's full access to elections and elected positions. The programme has supported the establishment of a national coalition, gathering all concerned institutions (governmental and non-governmental), to provide technical and policy assistance to female candidates. UN Women also supported a major public and media campaign, including a website, SMS messages, flyers and brochures, on the importance of women participation in decision-making at all levels.

With the election of 18 female candidates to the parliament (15 through quota and 3 by direct competition), raising the percentage of female MPs to 12% (compared to 6% in 2005 according to a World Bank Report) and with women holding now 35% of the seats in municipal councils, one particular strength of the programme has been its capacity to ensure that the mechanisms established in time of elections can continue to support the women who have been elected. In this regard, the programme will support the coalition of female MPs and maintain core trainers that will support female MPs and members of municipality councils when needed.

At the economic level, through micro-finance, capacity building and income-generating schemes, the programme aims to support the economic empowerment of excluded women of the Al-Mafraq Governorate, one of the poorest areas of Jordan. UN Women is currently conducting needs and capacity assessments to ensure that all the interventions are demand-driven.