



UNRWA Gaza Field Office

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Equality in Action

UNRWA introduced the “Equality in Action” programme to address the needs of Palestinian girls and women in the Gaza Strip. This comprehensive initiative is designed to improve the capacity of women to exercise freedom of choice, take advantage of opportunities for personal and professional development and to address inequality at all levels of social, economic and political life.

Why a Gender Initiative in the Gaza Strip?

Not all women in Gaza today attain or realize their basic human rights. Women’s crucial rights, responsibilities and entitlements are set down in key international instruments such as: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Political Rights of Women; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women; the Beijing Platform for Action; and the third Millennium Development Goal. It is essential that UNRWA fully addresses these rights.

How Women will Benefit

“Equality in Action” activities are designed to:

1. improve access to and opportunities in the labour market for women;
2. raise awareness of domestic violence and to provide women with the skills to prevent it and to protect themselves;
3. provide women with spaces for social interaction and recreation;
4. foster women’s “right to freedom of opinion and self-expression”, including their ability to “seek, receive and impart information and ideas through media” as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Local Outreach

Extensive and ongoing community outreach ensures that the initiative is implemented practically and effectively at a local level:

- focus groups – rural women, young women, women with disabilities, employed, self-employed women, and women in the home, discuss their needs and concerns;
- surveys – women, including UNRWA female staff, provide their thoughts and suggestions about internal organisational matters;
- engagement of local community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations;
- establishment of an “Equality in Action” Steering Committee.

Action Plan

“Equality in Action” is an inclusive initiative that responds directly to the self-stated needs of Palestinian women in the Gaza Strip. The following are the focus for action:

- reversing the current rising rates of abuse within the home, by implementing projects that address prevention of and protection from domestic violence;
- maximising employment opportunities for women of all abilities and capacities in the UNRWA Job Creation Programme and the Graduate Training Programme;

About UNRWA

UNRWA provides education

Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. UNRWA employs more than 28,000 staff, the vast majority of whom are Palestine refugees, including 20,000 educational staff and 4,000 health workers.



- strengthening workers’ organisations so that they are better able to equip women with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to deal with the issues in their workplaces and to defend their interests;
- creating space for girls and women to engage in social and recreational activities;
- supporting the development of a radio station for women that enforces their “right to freedom of opinion and self-expression” (Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights);
- building the capacity of organisations for women and foster their co-operation;
- implementing the UNRWA organisation-wide gender mainstreaming strategy;
- building on and strengthening UNRWA’s successful Microfinance and Micro-enterprise programme for women and men through the implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy.

These activities will collectively reinforce UNRWA’s vision of human development for all Palestine refugees: the realisation of individual, familial and community potential; productive participation in socio-economic and cultural life, and the defence and protection of human rights.