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First of its type, a new development center to empower women in Homs

On 14 February 2017, a new women’s development center has been inaugurated in partnership between Aoun for relief and development and UNFPA, in Al-Idikhar neighborhood at the western area of Homs city. It’s a crowded area where a big number of displaced people are located including a high percentage of women householder.

The center aims to empower women and support them to fulfill their potentials, involving them as positive change agents in their community. This will take place through a range of services such as, legal counseling, psychological support and vocational training. The center is the first of its type in the area to provide literacy, languages and computer classes.

“I was delighted to participate in the opening of the center, and I am also proud to visit Homs for the first time,” Dr. Natalia Kanem, Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA stated at the center’s inauguration.
First of its type, a new development center to empower women in Homs

Dr. Kanem indicated that “UNFPA is always working to empower women to fulfill their potential”. She also expressed her happiness that the center included a plot of land to produce cash-crops for the center’s sustainability and as a training location on agriculture. It is important to note that livelihoods activities will be conducted in the center through partnership with FAO (the UN Food and Agriculture Organization).

This important partnership will equip women with increased knowledge about agriculture which in turn will support their economic independence as well as contribute to improvement in the nutrition of the whole family. Women can use the products of the agricultural activities in cooking or market them.
First of its type, a new development center to empower women in Homs

“The opening of the center is itself a message to empowering women and expanding their options aiming to provide them more opportunities on the economic level,” Dr. Luay Shabaneh, UNFPA’s Director for the Arab region, on the other hand said.

The center will have also two mobile teams in order to reach more women in the surrounding areas as well as to implement workshops and awareness raising sessions. The center seeks to fulfill women’s needs regardless of their age, and focus on younger cohorts, whom in some cases were married off at an early age.

The center furthermore aims to provide economic and cultural support, where volunteers from different professional backgrounds put their efforts to efficiently manage the center and implement recovery projects.
During 11-16 February 2017, the Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Natalia Kanem completed a 4-day visit to Syria, accompanied by UNFPA’s Director for the Arab region, Luay Shabaneh.

The visit aimed to support UNFPA’s operations in Syria, including by reiterating the organization’s commitment to responding to the needs of women and adolescent girls primarily through its partnerships with UN agencies, and international and local entities, such as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) the Syrian Family Planning Association (SFPA) and many more.

“This is the first high level visit by a UNFPA official to Syria during the Syria crisis.” said Massimo Diana, UNFPA Representative in Syria.
“Working in Syria has many challenges, but we are here to stay by the thousands of women and girls whom we reach through our programs.” he added, referring to numerous services in maternal and reproductive health, preventing and responding to gender based violence as well as supporting and promoting youth empowerment and participation as critical for effective social reconciliation, cohesion and resilience of communities.

The UNFPA delegation engaged with key partners where they met senior government officials and consulted with key partner NGOs including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the Syrian Family Planning Association and carried out field visits to the reproductive health clinics, safe spaces and women empowerment projects supported by UNFPA in Damascus and Homs.
The delegation met also groups of several Syrian youth organizations including Y-PEER & TEDx.

The young Syrians presented the challenges and key needs besides the leading role of young women was quite pronounced as a reflection of the drastic demographic shifts that the society is undergoing.

“We will convey the image of the Syrians’ suffering to the UN and we will continue working to ensure that no Syrian woman or young girl is left behind”, Natalia Kanem stated at the completion of her visit to Syria.
Women in Syrian Northern Eastern village tail dresses and spread messages of empowerment

Damascus-Syria

Women can be as productive as their male counterparts if they are given equal opportunities and support. Rabiaa’s story portrays a story of strong woman who didn’t yield to the hard times. Rabia’a is a woman who stood still for her rights and the rights of other women to encourage them to think and act out of the box.

Rabia’a is 28 years old who lives in a village called “Rahyat Al souda”, Al-Hasakah governorate. She dropped out of school when she was still a young girl due to social norms and tradition; however, that didn’t stop her from pursuing her dream.

Rabia’a’s older sister is a tailor. “I used to sit for hours in my sister’s work space to watch her sewing beautiful dresses,” Rabia’a says. I wanted to do the same and see my touches in what people are wearing in the village.
Women in Syrian Northern Eastern village tail dresses and spread messages of empowerment

8 Years later, Rabia’a learned every trick in sewing clothes and became one of the best tailors in the village. Everybody in the neighborhood wanted to wear Rabiaa’s designs. She didn’t stop at the point of generating income to support her family, she continued to spread the knowledge that she has and taught her skills to other 15 young girls in her village.

“I’m proud to sell my pieces to different villages and know that I’m building a brand outside my community, I am reaching nearby local markets with 100 pieces produced weekly. It gives a feeling of pride to be financially independent and that is what I want for all other girls in my village,” Rabia’a expresses smiling

Rabia’a was a model to be followed to her counterparts in the village where UNFPA initiated the first training of its type in Tal hamees through holding the first training workshop in the village to encourage other young girls and teach them self-independence through knowledge.
Our Services in Numbers

Reproductive Health

- Ante-Natal Care: 43,837
- Deliveries: 5,971
- Family Planning: 78,513
- Post-Natal Care: 8,522
- Post-Abortion Care: 1,145
- Awareness Sessions: 64,136
- Other Services: 266,649

(January-February)
Our Services in Numbers

Gender Based Violence

- Awareness Raising Activities: 17,868
- Individual and Group Counseling: 6,862
- Legal Services for Survivors: 1,123
- Recreational activities: 15,306
- Referral to medical services: 6,802
- Specialized psychosocial support: 2,040
- Vocational Training: 1,943

(January-February)
UNFPA is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.

While UNFPA assistance must remain concerned with saving lives and safeguarding human dignity, preparing Syrian people for future recovery, reconstruction, reconciliation and stability, is equally a priority.

UNFPA Syria focusses on:

● Improving access to high-quality reproductive health care.
● Scaling-up gender-based violence prevention and response.
● Enhancing youth participation and inclusiveness.
● Supporting capacities to collect and use gender-and age-disaggregated data for tailoring response and recovery programming.

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