

Grand Bargain in 2018:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

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(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than 3 pages in total – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2018?

In 2018, UNRWA continued to strengthen cash based programming in the different fields of operation, with the aim to provide refugee families with greater dignity and choice in assistance. During 2018, an “Evaluation of UNRWA’s transition to the e-card modality in the Jordan, Lebanon and the West Bank Fields” was conducted by an external consultancy firm, commissioned by UNRWA, in order to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the roll out of cash-based social protection programming. Overall the evaluation found that the transition to cash was the correct decision. However, changes introduced are incomplete and cannot achieve optimal outcomes without additional clarity of programmatic purpose, better casework support and linkages to other services, programme budget adjustment to protect the real value of the transfers, and partnerships to improve learning and efficiency. Based on these recommendations, UNRWA decided to increase the value of the social transfer to Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP) population in the three fields according to changes in consumer price indices, effective 2019.

In 2018, a multi-disciplinary study on “Social Transfers in Gaza” was commissioned by UNRWA and conducted by an external consultancy firm. The objective of the study was to review current social transfer options, notably UNRWA’s extensive food assistance programme, with regards to effectiveness and efficiency in achieving programme objectives compared to other transfer modalities (vouchers, cash) and in light of the social, economic and political realities of the Gaza Strip. The study identified a number of factors that may pose significant risks with regards to any transitioning of UNRWA’s food operation to cash based transfer schemes. These related to the state of market (dis)functionalities in Gaza, including the volatility of the market supply chain, taxation on private sector goods, reliability of private sector suppliers, food price instability, monopolistic market structures, and limited local agricultural capacity. The study also identified shortcomings related to the cash economy in Gaza including authorization of cash imports and cash shortages among others. In 2019, UNRWA will continue to prioritize the provision of in-kind food assistance in Gaza.

During the reporting period, UNRWA continued to implement measures to increase its cost effectiveness, a central element of UNRWA’s Medium Term Strategy 2016 – 2021 (the “MTS”). In 2018, UNRWA continued to roll out and use electronic management information systems for its two main programmes (education - EMIS, and health - eHealth). By the end of 2018, the student module of the EMIS system was in place across all UNRWA fields and other modules (teachers and premises) were being rolled out. eHealth was in place in all health centres, except for a few in Syria. UNRWA will continue working to ensure that the eHealth approach is implemented in all facilities. In October 2018, UNRWA completed a review and reform of its Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to ensure continued efficient, effective and high - quality support for substantive programmes in Headquarters and Field Offices in the areas of procurement, travel management, mail and pouch services and other general administrative services.

Question 2: Please explain how the outcomes/results will lead to long-term institutional changes in policy and/or practice.

Building on lessons learned and recommendations provided by the evaluation study conducted in 2018, UNRWA will continue to adjust the cash transfer values of the SSNP implemented in Jordan, Lebanon and the West Bank, which is a practice to be applied every two years.

UNRWA will continue to pursue greater cost efficiency through reforms aimed at achieving greater impact with the resources entrusted to it; and will continue to improve its services further professionalizing its workforce. Following systematic reforms of its education and health services in recent years, in 2019, UNRWA will begin to implement reforms in its relief and social services programme, adopting a family-based approach that sees families as the entry point for casework interventions.

Question 3: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment¹ in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results). Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

UNRWA’s commitment to the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment is enshrined in its Gender Equality Policy (2007) and the Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2021 (GES) that are being implemented in tandem with the MTS 2016-21. Building on a ‘dual-track’ approach that focusses on changes in both organizational culture and front line service delivery, in 2018, the Agency advanced GES implementation through individual field office gender action plans that focused on: (i) the provision of staff capacity development on a broad range of protection issues including gender mainstreaming, GBV, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and gender-sensitive school curricula; and (ii) gender-sensitive programming and affirmative action that included the incorporation of a gender perspective in relation to shelter rehabilitation, involving both men and in pre-conception care and family planning, addressing female school-drop out through awareness raising sessions, and promoting female economic participation through vocational training. Field efforts in support of gender equality and women's empowerment were complemented by the following 2018 UNRWA-wide initiatives: (i) the incorporation of gender-related risks and responses in audit processes, e.g. in assessing recruitment processes in furtherance of a more gender-balanced workforce; (ii) the introduction of a gender marker for all project proposals²; (iii) the development of a gender training programme that will be delivered to Agency in 2019; and (iv) joining UN-wide celebrations in support of International Women’s Day that included a series of gender awareness-raising initiatives. These interventions also supported the implementation of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).³ In 2018, UNRWA received positive feedback for the 2016-2017 UN-SWAP implementation period. In this regard, the Agency met or exceeded 80 per cent of all performance requirements, an

¹ Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

² The gender marker is a tool that is designed to track resources dedicated to gender mainstreaming. Introduced in 2017 in relation to programme budget funded activities, use of this tool was expanded to include project funded activities in 2018. An introductory training on how to apply the gender marker has been developed and will be rolled-out for relevant staff in 2019.

³ Please see <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability>. In 2012, spearheaded by UN Women, the United Nations agreed on the landmark UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. For the first time in UN history, the UN-SWAP enabled gender issues to be mainstreamed systematically and measurably into all major institutional functions of the UN system entities.

increase of 20 per cent against the first reporting cycle in 2012. UNRWA's 2018 performance against the increased requirements under UN SWAP 2.04 are pending assessment by UN Women.

Question 4: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?

Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

SDGs are central to UNRWA work and constitute the basis of the Agency's Medium Term Strategy 2016-2021. Across its five fields of operation, UNRWA is operating in environments where its humanitarian operations are delivered in parallel with human development activities. In practice, there is not so much of a humanitarian – development divide. In operational terms, UNRWA constantly shifts between humanitarian and development modes, using its infrastructure and assets as the vehicle for humanitarian programmes and adapting its human development services to meet the needs of those affected by crisis.

During the reporting period, UNRWA also continued to strengthen emergency preparedness with a particular focus on emergency management capacities and contingency planning at field level.

⁴ Please see <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability>. Upon expiry of the initial UN-SWAP duration, a second generation of the UN-SWAP was developed with widespread consultation across UN system entities and launched in 2018. It updated and expanded UN-SWAP 1.0, building into it refinements and lessons learned, as well as aligning it with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its focus on results. While the first phase of UN-SWAP implementation focused on gender mainstreaming and planning, the second phase is designed to focus on results, and includes monitoring activities and outcomes for gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results.