

# Family-Planning Week, Organized by the Lebanon Family Planning Association

THE SIXTH FAMILY-PLANNING WEEK, 1-7 DEC. 1980,  
DISCUSSES FAMILY PLANNING PROSPECTS FOR THE EIGHTIES

Founded in 1969, readily affiliated with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), which provided it with financial aid, the Lebanon Family-Planning Association (LFPA) was able to gain full recognition within a few years.

In 1970-71, it produced an important field study covering the social, cultural, demographic and economic status of the Lebanese family, including the average percentage of fertility and birth rate, the information about contraceptives, their uses and the reactions they aroused among the respondents(1). A large number of publications were issued by the Association, reporting on its activities in the regular family-planning clinics and others outside, and on the conferences and workshops it organized for the training of leaders and volunteer social workers.

Its latest activity has been the organization of the 6th Family-Planning Week, including a Seminar, 1-3 December, and the direction of the Third Conference of the Non-Governmental Societies in Lebanon, on the Fifth of December, 1980.

The Seminar brought together delegates of about 20 government and private institutions involved in social welfare. Seven lecturers, representing various fields of sociological study, treated the demographic, economic, educational and legal aspects of family-planning. They showed its relationship to government policy and local administration, and expounded the role that women should play in its implementation.

Dr. Abdul-Rahman Labban, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, inaugurated the Seminar with an address in which he said: "Overpopulation is now a world problem. During the last 25 years, the world population has increased at the appalling rate of 60%. Birth control has become a necessity; contraceptive methods should be used, but we prefer the indirect methods of raising the standard of living and promoting women's education and involvement in social activities."

The same topic was treated by Dr. Adnan Mroweh, President of the Lebanon Family-Planning Association, who gave statistics on the future world problems resulting from overpopulation and shortage of food and energy during the coming 20 years. He pointed out the dangers threatening particularly the developing countries where the birth rate is highest and production lowest.

Mr. Toufic Osseiran, general secretary of LFPA, gave a brief report on the nature and objectives of the IPPF which consists of 106 associations disseminated as follows: 18 in Africa, 16 in the Indian Ocean region, 21 in Europe, 12 in

the Middle East and North Africa and 33 in the two Americas. The Federation is mainly financed by Europe, (excluding France) the United States and Japan.

Some details were presented by Mr. Osseiran regarding the latest activities of the Association. First, it has tried to extend its relations to include more of the intellectual elite interested in social change. Second, it has expanded its family-planning services outside the regular clinics. Third, it has followed up its information programs through the various information media. Fourth, it has established contacts with the Coordination Committee of Private Lebanese Organizations with the aim of creating a higher social planning unit, capable of including family-planning in its proposed plans. Fifth, it has developed closer relations with "The Educational Center for Research and Development" as well as a number of ministries, public services and municipal councils, in view of securing effective cooperative action.

Its last field study, made in 1980, covered the village of Ankoun in South Lebanon. It presented in 8 tables, the educational and economic status of the villagers, their birth rate, the information they received on family-planning and how they responded to it. The results showed that 70 - 80% of the inhabitants were favorable to birth control, that 70% had received some information on family-planning through the Association and other media, and that the families with the lowest income (14 in number) and the highest proportion of illiteracy, had the largest number of children: 10 or more per family. The proportion of illiteracy is 39% for women, 21% for men. The ideal number of children per family as reported by the study was the following:

- 18% considered 3 children the ideal number.
- 34% considered 4 children the ideal number.
- 8% considered 5 children the ideal number.
- 6% considered 6 children the ideal number.

The study showed, among other things, a growing positive attitude toward family planning, induced by the LFPA's activities and those of social workers and information media.

The lectures which followed dealt with family planning prospects during the eighties, and were adequately commented on by qualified delegates. It is hoped that some of the lectures and resolutions of the Seminar will be condensed in future issues of Al-Raida.

(1) Al-Raida. Vol. III, no 11, Feb. 1980, p.5