

Moroccan Women Take to Vocational Training⁽¹⁾

A training project, started by the Moroccan Ministry of Work, now allows women to study electricity, electronics, industrial art, architectural design and commercial studies.

The training program, originally created by Amidst (American Middle East Teaching and Training Organization) in Dar-el-Baida and Fez (Morocco), at first, admitted only men to its classes. Since 1979, training centers in both cities have been admitting women. The project will be financed by the International Development Agency of the U.S.A. until September 30, 1984. Its director, Dr. Sameera Harfouche, declares that trainees have been encouraged by their parents to register as students and have grown increasingly more enthusiastic and positive about the Program. Because of space limitations only 177 candidates were accepted for the first term of 1980. Candidates asking to join architectural design or commercial studies classes are required to have had at least 12 years of school training while those wishing to study electricity, electronics and industrial art are required to have had at least nine years.

Six Amidst experts have joined the project since 1979 and have been actively assisting in directing, advising and improving technical training methods.

A survey is being prepared for the purpose of determining the work opportunities open to the women graduates and the skills needed by the work market. The response of employers to women's employment has been very encouraging.

In the near future, six Moroccan women studying vocational training, economics and psychology in U.S. universities, will be asked to serve as consultants for this project. "Emigration of male technicians and experts into the oil countries", says Dr. Harfouche, "is a chief reason for the women's engagement in training which will prepare them to serve as substitutes. The participation of women in the labor force will help to develop their personalities and lead them to take more independent decisions in social, economic and psychological questions.

(1) Abridged article by Diane MacDonald, published in *Al-Majal*, n. 141, December 1982, pp. 23-25.