

## IWSAW Activities, 1991

**Women's** institutes all over the world are familiar with the rush involved in administrating workshops for women in development not to mention the sense of achievement afterwards.

This past year has been just that for us here at IWSAW. The Director, Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr and Project Manager, Mrs. Anita Nassar had us running all over the place preparing and following up eight Income Generating workshops for displaced Lebanese women, and preparing a book fair for children on behalf of the Lebanese chapter of the International Board on Books for Young People (LEBBY), among other projects in addition to the daily routine of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World.

### **The Income Generating Project.**

The Income Generating project has been in the

making for years. It started in 1989 when IWSAW felt a responsibility and obligation to answer the painful cry of needy families, especially, displaced women who had no formal education or skill to earn a living or support their families.

The Income Generating Project started with a market study to examine products and commodities that were in demand and could be produced by these women, in their homes. Knitting, embroidery, arabesque wall frames, and other folkloric handicrafts were found to be marketable. Consequently, IWSAW conducted preliminary training sessions for approximately sixty women, supplied them with the raw material, and upon completion of the work marketed and sold the products. The products turned out to be so impressive, they were purchased by some of the leading retailers in the city. Consequently, in less than a year, the Income Generating Project hosted more than one-hundred and twenty



*IWSAW's Income Generating Workshop*

displaced women.

In 1990-91, The Income Generating Project was expanded and given a new perspective. This time, the goal was to include young displaced girls who were only three years old when the war broke out and, consequently, had been denied proper schooling. Hence, now at eighteen they are illiterate and do not have any skills, or hope of earning a living. Therefore, IWSAW studied the possibility of conducting workshops to teach them alphabetization, basic living skills and knowledge and to provide specialized training and job placement.

The team of the Income Generating Project conducted a number of surveys to get a current update on the needs of the displaced women and girls, to identify job demands in local markets and secure ready job opportunities. Training personnel and training centers were located. Then the candidates were screened carefully to place the right person in the right workshop.

Another unique characteristics of the workshops is the incorporation of IWSAW's Basic Living Skills Program (BLSP)(1) for semi-literate women in the form of a half-hour lesson at the end of each day. The lessons covered elements in nutrition, child care home management, family planning, civic education, environment and legal rights for women.

Starting December 1990, IWSAW launched eight workshops simultaneously. Two Sequin embroidery workshops were given at the Institute, hosted sixteen participants. A Flower arrangement workshop was also conducted right here in IWSAW's offices for eight participants. Furthermore, IWSAW assisted and cooperated with the Ministry of Social Affairs and provided fundings for material and trainers for workshops in additional sequin embroidery and Facial and Make-up technician workshops. One participant is getting on-location, live training in hair-dressing in a Beauty Salon. IWSAW's training in knitting which recruited sixty women in the past is now offered to an additional forty women. The new participants are trained in knitting skills as well as in the marketing of the finished goods and in bookkeeping. The women meet with our social workers in small groups in the homes of some of the participants. A workshop to teach women skills in operating factory sewing machines is still in progress for a period of six months, under the auspices of the "Mouvement Sociale". There are five participants in this workshop.

### Children's Book Fair

IWSAW's concern for women includes support





*Photo : The Participants of the IWTC Workshop*

and assistance in child care, proper education and gender socialization. Hence, IWSAW administers, supports and participates in a number of projects for promoting proper care for children. Books, the importance of reading and play are the primary goals of IWSAW's activities for children. Therefore, support and assistance is sought and received from international, regional and global groups, in addition to volunteer work and contributions of women from the Lebanese community.

In cooperation with the Lebanese Board on Books for Young People (LEBBY), IWSAW organized a children's Book Fair on the campus of Beirut University College (BUC) on Saturday May 18 and Sunday May 19, 1991. The Fair included a book exhibition of selected books, a puppet theater, story-telling and story-reading and seven educational games. LEBBY members, IWSAW and BUC student volunteers all worked to set-up the fair on campus. IWSAW's Puppet Theater Project was responsible for preparing the script, the music and the training of the actors. The children loved the play which was shown twice a day. The book fair was a successful event which brought together a number of children, who had been denied safe outdoor activities for the past sixteen years, on a sunny spring weekend on the beautiful campus of BUC.

The earnings of the fair are to be channelled into the expansion and promotion of IWSAW's Portable Library Project. So far, twelve portable libraries have already been distributed to various concerned groups and organizations throughout the country and more are being produced and prepared.

As a summer activity, LEBBY is opening the children's library of IWSAW to the community two afternoons a week. Women from the community volunteer to read and tell stories to children. The children are taught to respect and love books, learn to use the library, do individual readings and group story telling and story reading.

#### **IWTC Women's Computer Desktop Publishing Workshop**

IWSAW is particularly grateful to The International Women's Tribune Center in New York for the opportunity it gave us to expand our knowledge and skills in using our computer for desktop publishing. This issue of Al-Raida is a fine example of IWTC Women's Computer Desktop Publishing Workshop's contribution

For two weeks, the Editor of Al-Raida was gener-

ously received by the staff of IWTC, who kindly hosted nine women from women's institutes in the Caribbean, Pacific, Africa, The Middle East and Asia. We were introduced to various desktop publishing programs, word processing, data base, and spreadsheets for Macintosh.

The entire staff of IWSAW has benefited from this workshop. We have acquired additional knowledge and skills using our Macintosh and will soon be adding an additional terminal and starting a computer network in the office. Al-Raida and IWSAW thank IWTC and its staff for their generous contribution to the improvement and development of desktop publishing techniques for women in the world. •

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(1) In the early 1980s IWSAW designed a Basic Living Skills Program (BLSP). The BLSP consists of a comprehensive information kit addressing the needs of illiterate and semi-literate women in health, nutrition, child care home management, family planning, civic education, environment and legal rights. Social workers are trained to give the lessons in the simple forms designated by the manual of instructions.