

## Editorial

# AL-RAIDA

## A Platform for Change

The sufferings of battered women in Lebanon have gone beyond the pages of **AL-RAIDA** (Spring/Summer issue (#65/66, 1994). Activists, social workers, concerned humanitarians, as well as otherwise silent victims have voiced their intention to come out together and join the newly established organization for battered women in Lebanon which was announced in the above issue. Battered women in Lebanon may have been given a chance to get heard and the importance of sustaining efforts at raising awareness on the matter has been stressed. The File on "Battered Women in Lebanon" turned out to be an inspiration for more articles and coverage in the local newspapers. Hence, *L'Orient Le Jour* (8/10/94) and *Al-Arwar* (30/10/94) two leading dailies, published a lengthy article, each, about battered women's plights in Lebanon. The File was also reviewed in *Campus*, a rather unconventional weekly for Lebanon's University Community and a publication that successfully reaches the highest number of students. For added emphasis and for your information, we include the United Nations Declaration for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, in this issue.

**AL-RAIDA** is an active and responsible platform for change dedicated to improving the quality of women's lives in the Arab World. You can be a part of this development and submit addresses, individual and institutional, for greater networking. You can write to **AL-RAIDA**, suggest issues and topics that you feel need to be addressed by Arab women. You can also contribute articles, photographs, and of course in spreading **AL-RAIDA** around.

We invite women, scholars and activists from the Arab World to respond to our call for networking. A regional scope is a must if effective change is to be achieved. We invite those who have important information, data, stories about Arab women to share them with the world through **AL-RAIDA**. Future files will address Arab Women and Education, Arab Women in Agriculture, and Income Generating and Credit Facilities for Arab Women. Join us in our journey.

The present FILE discusses women's health in Lebanon. It includes the testimony of a very close and dear friend of the Institute who suffers from breast cancer. Evelyne Accad shares her experiences with you. "Women know very little about their health. I want to discuss my story because I think it is important for them to know about the dangers of cancer." she said over and over again as she sat writing the article on our Macintosh. The other articles in the file discuss the spread of HIV/AIDS in Lebanon and the Middle East, and the results of a questionnaire that examines health awareness among Lebanese Women. The FILE also contains Arab reactions to the Cairo Conference on Population and Development that took place in September 1994. Non-File articles include the usual variety of topics and, new in this issue, an international calendar of conferences until the Spring of 1995 (excerpted from the Conference Calendar distributed by the International Women Tribune Center).

— Randa Abul-Husn

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## About (IWSAW)..

**IWSAW** - The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World was established in 1973 at the Beirut University College. It began with a grant from Ford Foundation with Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr as its Director.

**Objectives of IWSAW:** To serve as a data bank and resource and advance a better understanding of Arab women and children. To promote communication among individuals, groups and institutions concerned with women and children in the Arab world. To improve the quality of life of Arab women and children through educational and development projects. To enhance the Lebanese American University (Formerly BUC).

### **IWSAW projects:**

**Conferences:** The Institute organizes local, regional and international conferences, seminars and lectures to discuss issues of concern to women in the Arab world.

### **Women's Documentation**

**Center:** IWSAW houses the Center, in the Stoltzfus Library of BUC. It holds books and international periodicals.

**IWSAW publications** on women include books, and the status, development and conditions of Arab women in addition to Al-Raida. Eight children's books with illustrations and two guides, one for setting up children's libraries and the second for writing and illustrating children's books have also been published.

### **Income Generating Project**

consists of workshops and job assistance to women in war-stricken families.

### **The Basic Living Skills**

**Projects** is a non-formal integrated educational program for semi-literate women to be used in development projects.

**Additional projects include:** **The Rehabilitation Program for Children's Mental Health; Teaching for Peace; and The Portable Library Project** that received the Asahi- Reading Promotion Award in 1994.