

WOMEN AND DISABILITY

The Lebanese American University, Byblos campus in collaboration with the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) held a panel discussion dealing with women and disability. The moderator was Mrs. Mona Khalaf, Director of IWSAW. The speakers participating were Sylvana Laqqis, President of the Lebanese Sitting Handicapped Association; Zoya Rouhana, Coordinator of the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women; Deputy Nayla Moawad, and Lawyer Violette Qmair. Laqqis discussed the discrimination practiced against disabled women in light of her experience at the Lebanese Sitting Handicapped

Association. She also talked about the obstacles disabled women face within the family and in society at large. Rouhana tackled the subject of violence against disabled women and reported real life cases and live testimonies. Moawad, on the other hand, explained how the government deals with the subject of disability. She also suggested several very important measures to be taken by the government in order to improve the situation of disabled women. Qmair talked about the legal standing of the disabled in the Lebanese law and shed light on a recent draft law presented to Parliament to render more rights and privileges to the disabled.

IWSAW CELEBRATES THE INTERNATIONAL WOMAN'S DAY

This year IWSAW celebrated the International Woman's Day by launching its study entitled "Female Labor Force in Lebanon". The speakers were Dr. Nabeel Haidar, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Lebanese American University, Mrs. Mona Khalaf, Director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Lebanese American University, and Dr. Kamal Hamdan, Consultation and Research Institute.

Haidar gave a historical overview of the university and explained that IWSAW is the first institute of its kind in the Middle East. He also discussed future plans to open a center for civic responsibility and leadership. Hamdan discussed the methodology his team adopted in executing the study, the sample chosen, the difficulties they faced etc. and finally Khalaf presented the findings of the study.



WOMEN AND DEMOCRACY

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and the Guidance Office hosted Deputy Nayla Moawad who gave a talk on Women and Democracy. Mrs. Mona Khalaf, Director of IWSAW welcomed Moawad who talked about the effective role women can play in politics and decision making. She also highlighted the important role civil society plays in enabling women to reach decision making positions. Moreover, she encouraged women to participate in the municipal elections to affirm the active role women play in the public and political arena.

WOMEN IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) and the Continuing Education Program (CEP) organized a panel on Women in Islam and Christianity on May 28, 1998. Mrs. Maria Mroueh, Director of CEP gave the word of welcome followed by an introduction to the panel. Mrs. Mona Khalaf, Director of IWSAW introduced the speakers: Archbishop George Khodr, Greek Orthodox Archbishopric of Mount - Lebanon, Mrs. Rabab Al-Sadr, President of the Imam Al-Sadr Philanthropic Institution, Dr. Mary Mikhael, President of the Near East School of Theology, and Dr. Farida Banani, professor of Law from the University of Morocco. Archbishop Khodr in his presentation explained how Christianity abolished discrimination between the sexes, while Mikhael shed light on the status of women during the times of Jesus Christ. Al-Sadr talked about the position of women in Islam, quoting the Quran especially the verses where women are portrayed as equal to men and elaborated on the spiritual value that Islam endows to women and to human relationships. Banani, on the other hand, criticized the male medieval Islamic religious scholars for imposing their own one-sided interpretations of the prophet's tradition (Hadith) in order to undermine women's position in Islam.