

# Collective for Research and Training on Development – *Action*

## Annual Report 2006

[www.crtdd.org](http://www.crtdd.org)

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## Introduction from the Board of Trustees

The year 2006 has been a particularly difficult and challenging one. The July 2006 Israeli aggression on Lebanon killed more than 1400 people, displaced over a million people, devastated the country, and destroyed much of its infrastructure.

As **CRTD.A**, we had never thought that we would take up emergency relief work once again. During the months of July and August 2006, our team was involved in dispensing emergency relief assistance to internally displaced people around the country. With the help and support of our friends and partners in Lebanon and abroad, we were able to provide assistance to more than 9000 households. We chose to work with women in an effort to mitigate the gender impact of the conflict. After the cease fire, we began working with women who were returning to their homes and villages in attempt to contribute to speeding up the process of women's economic recovery.

The bloody events of the summer notwithstanding, we are happy to note that this year has been both productive and dynamic.

*The Arab Women's Right to Nationality Campaign* has made headway in most countries of the region with the submission of legal petitions, the realization of numerous awareness raising events, the signing of nation-wide petitions, and the organization of a number of high profile activities and public events. We are happy and encouraged with the reform of the nationality law in 3 Arab countries, notably Egypt, Algeria and Morocco. We do hope that Lebanon will join in not so long.

*The Women Economic Empowerment Project* is now assisting more than 10 rural cooperatives focused on women in Lebanon and preparing for an innovative marketing initiative. The project has served as a basis and as an inspiration for our region-wide initiative entitled *Sustainable Economic Opportunities for Women* which covers 5 countries in the Machreq/Maghreb region. I hope you have had the opportunity to visit the exhibition stand of the rural women's cooperatives at the *Marathon Village* this year and to taste the variety of products made by women from the Bekaa region.

Our *leadership programme* continues to develop, and we are now planning for a second *regional leadership training institute* to be held in Beirut. In addition, our first full-fledged *regional leadership e-course* is in place, designed to enhance our offerings of leadership training courses which are organized around the year in various sites.

In the interest of effective and efficient communication, *The Lebanon Development Gateway* will hopefully become fully operational in 2007 as we

seek to streamline all the publications, studies, research papers and newsletters (notably *al Majal* and *GAD E-Brief*) that we have been producing over the past few years.

This year was also marked by a number of public events, including the second *Regional Gender, Citizenship and Governance Course* organized jointly with the Royal Tropical Institute (April 2006), the *Active Citizenship and Gendered Social Entitlements Conference* (May 2006), and the *Gender and Trade Conference* (June 2006). We have also taken part in a number of international events, namely the *Partners Transnational Meeting* organized by the Women Learning Partnership (Washington, September 2006), the World Bank/IMF meeting (Singapore, August 2006), and the AWID Money and Movements Forum (Mexico, November 2006). Together with our partners and friends at the Women Learning Partnership, we have now launched the Arab Women's Right to Nationality Campaign internationally at the John Hopkins University in Baltimore. **Claiming Equal Citizenship: The Campaign for Arab Women's Right to Nationality** -- Read the campaign blog and sign the petition of support at: <http://www.learningpartnership.org/citizenship/>

As we reflect on the eventful year that is drawing to a close, we realize how rooted our commitment is to gender equality and social justice as conditions *sine qua non* for development.

On behalf of all the **CRTD.A** community, we want to thank all our friends, supporters and donors for their trust and continuous sustenance, and to commend and salute the **CRTD.A** team members and volunteers for their hard work and their commitment to our mission.

We hope you will find this report interesting and informative about all our progress and work this year, and we wish our staff, supporters and friends best wishes for a productive and peaceful 2007.

**Mishka Mojabber Mourani – CRTD.A Board Member**



## **CRTD.A – An Introduction**

**CRTD.A** (The Collective for Research and Training on Development – Action) is based in Beirut and was launched in 1999. Since then, its brief has been to tackle social development issues with a gender focus, on both a local and a regional level.

By forming partnerships with other NGOs, both locally and internationally **CRTD.A** works to develop areas such as capacity building, skills development and training, networking, gender mainstreaming and research throughout the MENA region, particularly in Lebanon, Yemen, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Bahrain, Tunisia and Algeria. By working together, organisations in all these countries are able to share knowledge and experience, in order to work more effectively and bring about development and change in many areas.

### **CRTD.A's main projects are:**

ACGEN (Active Citizenship and Gendered Social Entitlements)

WEEP (Women's Economic Empowerment Project)

SEOW (Sustainable Economic Opportunities for Women)

The Arab Women's Right to Nationality Campaign

LDG (Lebanon Development Gateway)

IRIS (Independent Resource and Information Services)

MACMAG-GLIP (Machreq/Maghreb Gender Linking and Information Project)

In addition to this work, **CRTD.A** responds to the situations around it, as was demonstrated in July 2006 when Israel's war on Lebanon caused an dramatic crisis, and **CRTD.A**, along with other local and international organisations, worked to provide relief to those people, particularly women, affected by the violence.

This report will look at the four main areas of **CRTD.A's** work, and the projects that fall within each area. It will then focus in detail on each specific project, giving some background information as well as an update of the main developments during 2006. It will also give contact information for the projects so that further information can be obtained about projects if required. Also, some highlights will be given about **CRTD.A's** main plans and aims for 2007.

## AREAS OF WORK

**CRTD.A** works in four key thematic areas. These are:

1. Gender, economy and trade.
2. Gender, citizenship and governance.
3. Gender and leadership.
4. Knowledge and IT for social development.

### ***Gender, Economy and Trade***

Promoting women's economic rights and full participation are crucial to challenging gender inequalities within societies and to improving the lives of women, their position and decision making capacities. Through gaining economic independence women are empowered to make decisions and exercise greater control over their lives and households and as a result to improve their well-being and that of their families. In the Machreq/Maghreb region women, particularly those from poor and low-income backgrounds have minimal access to education and training and are therefore unable to take advantage of the few available financial services and resources.

**CRTD.A's** work in this area includes the Women Economic Empowerment Project (WEEP, [www.crtdd.org/weep](http://www.crtdd.org/weep)), where the project seeks to equip women with knowledge, skills, economic literacy and other tools of economic empowerment to enable women to participate actively in implementing ideas and projects in their local area, forming women's groups to provide a space for networking, solidarity, gathering resources, exchanging ideas and learning. A marketing initiative was initially intended to start during the summer of 2006 in support of all the rural women cooperatives. Partially delayed as a result, the marketing initiative will now be implemented in 2007.

WEEP has recently served as a basis and inspiration for an expanded initiative throughout the Machreq/Maghreb region as the Sustainable Economic Opportunities for Women project (SEOW-MENA). Also the war in Lebanon has led to the expansion of the WEEP to more areas of Lebanon, particularly the South.

However, work on women's participation in the economy takes on additional level of intervention as **CRTD.A** is involved in regional action research on the gendered impact of trade agreements and the emerging opportunities and challenges for women.

**CRTD.A** has recently joined the International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN [www.igtn.org](http://www.igtn.org)) as the antenna for the Middle East and Gulf region. Collaboration with IGTN has included the participation of an IGTN representative in **CRTD.A's** conference on Gender and Trade (Beirut, June

2006) as well as the participation of **CRTD.A** in the World Bank/IMF meeting held in Singapore in September 2006.

### Gender and Trade Conference – Beirut, 22-23 June



**CRTD.A** held a conference in collaboration with the Heinrich Boll Foundation, entitled **“Gender and Trade in the Machreq and Maghreb Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Women’s Livelihoods”**. The conference was attended by more than 60 participants representing active NGOs in the region who have been working on the gender and/or trade issues. Representatives were also present from international networks on gender and trade, local associations involved in gender and economic issues, and members of public and private sector, and multilateral organisations.

The goal of the conference was to share and learn from experiences about the impact of trade liberalisation on gender in order to formulate a clear action plan for the region for further developments. This was done through exchanges of tools and mechanisms used to mainstream gender within trade initiatives, reviews of challenges and obstacles faced, dialogue with key stakeholders in trade policies in the region, and a detailed analysis of regional case studies.

The conference included a series of panel presentations from international NGOs about work experiences in the areas of gender and trade. Strategies to address the impacts of trade initiatives on gender and approaches to counter problems were discussed. Each presentation was followed by a question and answer session for participants discuss in greater detail issues arising from the presentations. A short film, reinforcing the discussions, produced by WIDE (Women in Development, Europe) entitled “Chips, Basmatris and Bananas” was also shown.

The second day of the conference focused around a presentation by the World Bank, which offered participants a range of different perspectives on gender and trade issues. This was followed by a series of regional case studies looking at the effects of globalisation and trade liberalisation on women in Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco and Syria.

The conference concluded with a session to discuss strategies and priorities for the next steps for the region in these areas. These include: the establishment of social safety nets, a greater level of NGO involvement in negotiation and decision making processes, improvements in communication between NGOs and universities, particularly in the sharing of strengths and weaknesses, and in research and studies.

Overall this conference was very positive. The range and quality of presentations was excellent, and the resulting discussions were productive, providing a good base for future development in this important area.

### ***Gender, Citizenship and Governance***

Citizenship provides the key to social, political and economic participation and determines the citizen's relationship with their state and the mechanisms with which women and men actively claim and access their basic rights and social entitlements such the right to vote, the right to work, healthcare, education and social benefits.

One of the main issues of citizenship in the Machreq/Maghreb region is the denial of nationality rights to women, who are unable to pass their nationality to their husbands and children. As well as denying women their basic rights, this inequality impacts hugely on the children of these mixed nationality marriages as they often find themselves growing up in countries that do not recognise them as citizens.

**CRTD.A's** work in this area includes the Arab Women's Right to Nationality Campaign which focuses on the need to change current nationality laws throughout the MENA region. Working with partners in the different countries **CRTD.A** monitor the developments in law, and works to raise awareness of the issues involved.

#### **Nationality Campaign – Launch in USA**



In September 2006 **CRTD.A**, in association with the Women's Learning Partnership, launched the Arab Women's Right to Nationality Campaign in the USA. This was done through a panel discussion, held at the John Hopkins University in the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), in association with the SAIS Dialogue Project. The panel discussion was chaired

by Azar Nafisi, writer and Director of the SAIS project, and included participants from Lebanon, Iran, Jordan and Morocco.

As well as the panel discussion, the events included a series of presentations and a question and answer session and were an important first step in the launching of the campaign in an international arena.

The Active Citizenship and Gendered Social Entitlements (ACGEN) project also falls into the area of Gender, Citizenship and Governance, working to increase women's active citizenship and access to social entitlements. This primarily research project looks at how NGOs that provide health, education and welfare services implement their activities and how these activities in turn contribute towards women's active citizenship.

In May 2006, the ACGEN project held a conference in Lebanon which was attended by more than 120 participants from civil society organisations, public institutions and other stakeholders. This was part of the ACGEN outreach activities to promote policy dialogue amongst stakeholders around issues related to gender and citizenship.

Finally, and as Gender, Citizenship and Governance is an emerging topic in the region, **CRTD.A**, together with its partner, the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT, Amsterdam) have organised a Second Regional Training Course on Gender, Citizenship and Governance (GCC II, April 2006, Beirut). Twelve representatives from public institutions, NGOs, international organisations and research centres from Algeria, Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen and Lebanon took part in this event which addressed the issues of gender, good governance, and the role of social institutions.

## ***Gender and Leadership***



Working in partnership with the Women Learning Partnership (WLP), this area of **CRTD.A**'s intervention looks at an alternative concept and practice of horizontal and participatory leadership for change. The aim is to view

leadership as a communicative learning process that empowers women in their households and communities. Patriarchal institutions, laws and customs often exclude women from leadership positions, and although aware of this exclusion many women lack the resources to challenge it. **CRTD.A** and WLP carry out workshops and capacity building programmes in order to help women realise their potential as active and powerful actors in their households and communities.

Working on Gender and Leadership also involves a review of methodologies, tools and materials for training and capacity building as well as ensuring an outreach for this work.

Through the Regional Middle East/Gulf Leadership Institutes and the Arabic E-Courses, **CRTD.A** and the Women’s Learning Partnership seek to promote women’s public participation as well as the practice of horizontal and participatory leadership where knowledge, learning and access to IT and information are key.

#### Synopsis of Leadership Workshops held in 2006

| Date          | Location                       | # of participants |
|---------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| February 2006 | Beirut                         | 24                |
| March 2006    | Nahr el Bared<br>North Lebanon | 18                |
| March 2006    | Bourj Brajneh- Beirut          | 25                |
| April 2006    | Ain Helweh<br>South Lebanon    | 25                |
| April 2006    | EI Buss – South Lebanon        | 24                |
| May 6, 2006   | Beirut                         | 30                |
| June 2006     | Al Ain                         | 20                |
| July 2006     | AMIDEAST                       | 24                |

#### **Transnational Partners Meeting – USA – September 2006**

In September 2006, WLP organised a transnational partners meeting in Washington grouping the WLP International partnerships from Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Morocco, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Egypt, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Malaysia and India.

The transnational meeting is an opportunity for reflection, evaluation, and further development of work methodologies and approaches.

## **IT for Social Development**

**CRTD.A** realises that information is essential to achieving gender equality and social justice and uses internet, library resources, information technology and publications to make its areas of interest and developments available to all.

The projects in this area include the Lebanon Development Gateway (LDG [www.crttd.org/ldg](http://www.crttd.org/ldg)) and the Independent Resources and Information Services (IRIS). The LDG was initiated in 2003 and is one of 55 country gateways worldwide that use Internet and Communication Technologies (ICT) to contribute to and promote gender equality and social development. It works to establish a knowledge portal to promote social and economic development, and provide up to date information about development information, services, products and resources within Lebanon. The project also provides training to promote the awareness and use of IT within the country, particularly targeting women.

### **IT Workshops.**

Throughout 2006, a series of IT workshops have been held in North Lebanon and the Bekaa with support from Microsoft and the WLP.

The courses, which followed a format and curriculum set by Microsoft, to provide an all round familiarity and training with a variety of areas of computer and IT skills and programmes, including word processing, design software packages, internet and others. These courses were run for both men and women, and were held at a variety of venues, including **CRTD.A**'s women's centre in Aarsal.

In North Lebanon 3 courses were held, 2 at a beginners level and one at an advanced level. 41 participants took part in these 3 courses. In the Bekaa 4 courses were held, 3 at beginners level and 1 at intermediate level, targeting a total of 61 participants.

These training sessions have been hugely successful and have generated significant interest in IT on many levels. There has been great demand for further IT training from both young men and women in the areas targeted. In addition, there has been a rise in the demand for IT services, which allows the centres involved to consolidate their community activities in these areas.

This project is of particular importance when considered as part of the bigger picture of IT provision and knowledge in the areas concerned. The courses have taken place in centres that are the only such places for women within their communities. In addition these centres are the only ICT centres in the areas concerned, meaning they are a valuable resource, not only for the women who use the centres, but also for their communities as a whole. Another key issue is that this is the only community initiative that is run by women and focuses on IT, and this gives it particular significance in the development of women's roles within their community.

It is hoped that this project will develop further and that more support will be available for these Computer Teaching and Learning Centres, to enable them to broaden and strengthen their efforts to train women within their communities, with both further formal IT courses and also with the provision of training for IT trainers to allow knowledge and skills to be dispersed.

IRIS (Independent Resources and Information Services) engages with public institutions, NGOs and international organisations on issues of poverty, social development and gender equality in Lebanon. It facilitates the exchange and flow of information and promotes co-operation and co-ordination between related projects and initiatives within the NGO community. These activities happen through the publication of monthly bulletins, an interactive website, training workshops, research and an extensive library of books, reports and other publications in Arabic, French and English. This library service is available directly and online to NGOs, researchers, practitioners, students and to Lebanese universities.

#### **Gender and Development E-brief**

An important part of **CRTD.A**'s information distribution is the GAD e-brief, which is produced approximately every 3 weeks, in partnership with Frederich Ebert Stiftung. The e-brief is produced in both English and Arabic and is distributed to an email list of supporters and subscribers.

The e-briefs are compiled in part by a review of newspapers and other publications from which relevant articles, reports and stories are taken.

During 2006, 23 editions of the GAD e-brief were produced. Each issue covers three or four categories of information; events and opportunities, including job vacancies within NGOs or the gender field, upcoming training opportunities and workshops. It also includes news about gender related issues, recently published reports, books and articles that may be of interest, and information about available resources.

MacMag-GLIP is another central division of **CRTD.A**, dealing with gender issues within development, providing a forum for debate, learning and exchange of ideas and information for interested parties throughout the region. It has built a strong network of NGOs and gender groups and has a range of experience and expertise in gender training and mainstreaming.

### Training on Media and Gender



In October and November 2006, **CRTD.A**, in association with Maharat, an organisation of young media students and professionals, held series of training workshops entitled “The Relationship Between Gender and the Media”. The seminars were attended by 24 participants, both male and female, both students of journalism, and established journalists from a range of Lebanese daily newspapers.

The seminar worked to familiarise the media participants with the key concepts of gender, notably the distribution of roles and resources that reinforce the capacities and the participation of women in society and the strategies and mechanisms necessary to include gender as an issue in all development plans. It also discussed the impact of development work on both men and women and established link between gender and the media to begin to break the gender stereotypes and determine a role for the media on a new level.

A variety of methods were used to present the ideas and to promote discussion. These included: group work, films, speeches and plenary discussions. Materials were adapted to tackle the media needs and were distributed to the participants. It is hoped that sessions such as these will strengthen the relationship between NGOs and the media, and their understanding of gender and development issues and that as a result the media will play a positive role in gender work.

## **CRTD.A's PROJECTS**

### **ACGEN**



#### **Background**

The ACGEN project is a regional action-research initiative in partnership with IDRC (International Development Research Centre - Canada), working in Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine. The research focuses on the relationships between the state, NGOs and citizens and looks at ways the gender gap within societies can be bridged in key areas such as health, education and social services. The research aims to produce a large body of information, mapping NGOs and assessing their relationships with the state and their client communities, which will play an important role in policy dialogues in gender and social entitlements.

#### **Main Developments in 2006**

The ACGEN partners (Panorama in Palestine and the Forum for Women in Development-FWID in Egypt) held one of their regular meetings early in the year in Amman to discuss and plan the next phase of the project. This includes a review of NGO and government services, leading to field research and outreach projects. Following the review, it is intended that community samples will be extracted and from these, a capacity building and training programme in areas such as gender, leadership and PRA techniques will be embarked upon working with NGOs and individuals from these communities in order to enable them to carry out their own the planned field research. An independent consultant began a review of services in April, and although delayed by the war in July, this work has since continued, and is now also incorporating a post-war perspective to include changing requirements since the war.

ACGEN held a series of meetings with NGOs working in the area of citizenship, and other related initiatives. These meetings, with 31 different organisations, aimed to introduce ACGEN and its work, and to develop the debates on citizenship beyond political and civil rights to include social rights as well.

#### **ACGEN workshop – Beirut, 12-13 May 2006.**

Over 100 women and men from a variety of different organisations and backgrounds took part in the ACGEN workshop in Beirut in May 06. Overall over 50 organisations were represented, working in the fields of women's

rights and human rights as well as international and official organisations and researchers and academics. The purpose of the workshop was to address the issue of Active Citizenship and Gendered Social Entitlements in Lebanon, and it aimed to strengthen the dialogue between the different parties attending in order to find common working grounds to achieve enhanced citizenship, social entitlements and gender equality.

The seminar presented the ACGEN project and its principles and sought to mobilize interest and collaboration in these areas as well as to develop an action plan for policy dialogue and to begin to form a national collective advocacy platform on women's citizenship rights. Four specially commissioned papers were presented in the areas of: Women and Health, Women and Citizenship, Women and Education and Women and Social Safety Nets. These papers were followed by question and answer sessions and workshops were held to discuss the issues raised further with NGOs, policy makers and researchers. The workshop results were then presented and discussed and recommendations for future work and strategies were developed by the participants.

The general recommendation to come out this workshop included the need to develop a better understanding of the overall situation through further research and studies. Also a greater a level of networking and co-operation between NGOs, policy makers and activists was called for to begin to work on amending discriminatory laws, eradicating legal illiteracy, and to agree common objectives and specific work plans. The importance of improving the understanding of the concepts of gender education and the inclusion of human rights education and awareness-raising was also highlighted.

The important role of the media was also discussed and it was agreed that training should be provided for journalists in order to build a better relationship between experts and journalists and to enable the base to be laid for future media campaigns to mobilise public opinion.

It was also decided that the organisations involved should work closely together on follow-up activities, exploiting fully the expertise of every organisation, forming a committee and holding workshops throughout Lebanon to communicate the findings and discussions to the many different communities in the country.

Overall this workshop was a great success, although unfortunately due to the postponement of all projects during the war in July and August, much of the follow-up work has had to be abandoned due to time pressures on the ACGEN project as a whole.

[www.crttd.org/acgen](http://www.crttd.org/acgen)

Another part of the ACGEN project is looking at confessional and faith-based organisations in Lebanon to determine the impact they have on public policy dialogue and formulation in the country. It is also looking at the organisation's capacity to mobilise public opinion and popular support for their political agendas. It will also examine their attitudes towards governance and citizenship and analyse their potential to inform public and political discourse on these issues.

This project is currently in its first phase, of information gathering and formulating the methodology for the project. A literature review is also taking place. The project will build upon and complement the mapping of regional NGOs and the assessment of their service delivery methods and attitudes towards citizenship and gender taking place through other areas of the ACGEN programme.

### **Plans for 2007**

Through 2007 ACGEN will work primarily in the area of training. A series of Train the Trainer workshops will be completed early in 2007 both in Lebanon and in Egypt and Palestine, and these will enable a team of field researchers to work with local NGOs and people in local communities to gain the views and opinions at a grass root level, of the provision of services in health, education and social welfare. These areas will be considered from the perspective of quality, accessibility, government grants, the obstacles, and the relationships between the state and NGOs.

This field research will be analysed at both a local and a regional level, and will form the base of an advocacy platform for future work and development. The current funding for the ACGEN project finishes in July 2007 so this advocacy platform will then be in place to be incorporated into all future works and projects.

### **WEEP**



### **Background**

The WEEP programme began in 2000-01 with support from the British Embassy in Beirut and subsequently the Global Fund for Women. Subsequent funding has been provided by Kvinna till Kvinna, Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, Oxfam Quebec and the Japanese Embassy. The programme operates, predominantly in Lebanon, with the aim of creating better gender relations and empowering women to make their own choices, whether that is to work within the home, or externally, and to build their capacities. It works to raise the importance of work within the home as an essential economic

contribution, as well as encouraging women's economic independence outside the home. The project involves working with rural women cooperatives as well as with women to form local organisations to provide training and support, through Women's Centres, in North Lebanon and the Bekaa area.

## **Main Developments in 2006**

### **Rural Women Co-operatives**



One central area of WEEP is the 18 rural women co-operatives, 4 in the North of Lebanon and the rest in the Bekaa. Through 2006 the work with the co-ops has focussed on increasing women's participation within the co-ops, and on building in previous training workshops. These trainings have concentrated on areas such as gender and leadership training and also developing the marketing side of the co-ops business. Central marketing of the co-ops produce is increasing and the groups are working together to increase sales and promote their merchandise. This progression through the year culminated with a stand for the co-ops at the Marathon Village in November, where produce was displayed and sold to visitors to the exhibition, and those registering for the race.

Another important development for the co-ops has been the opening of a new centre in Mhaydsseh, in the West Bekaa. This centre, funded by the Oxfam-Quebec, allows women from the co-op in Mhaydsseh a space to work outside their homes, giving them more opportunities to work together, sharing ideas and resources. The funding has been divided into 3 areas: construction, appliances and training. It is hoped that this centre will be a great success in improving the production and work of this co-op.

[www.bekaacoops-lb.org](http://www.bekaacoops-lb.org)

### **Bekaa Valley – Women's Community Centre in Aarsal**

At the Women's Centre in Aarsal, a series of workshops was held on recycling, aimed at raising environmental and ecological awareness, by educating women about ways of using and reusing every day items in their homes to reduce waste, and around 300 women participated in these workshops. Health workshops and discussions were also held, tackling issues of sexual and reproductive health, as well as relationship problems, to encourage women to be more aware of their own health needs and to

promote discussion of difficult issues. The Ministry of Health were also involved in facilitating these sessions.

In addition a series of longer term trainings took place, with the women being offered IT training, and language teaching in both French and English. These classes took place between March and June and around 100 participants took place in the sessions, with many women attending classes in all 3 subjects. This training has established the Centre in Aarsal as the main place for IT knowledge and provision in the area, and as a key resource not only for the women, but for the community as a whole, cementing the importance of the centre.

A series of arts education workshops, delayed by the war, have now begun, training teachers in ways of using the arts, particularly puppetry, in an educational context. These workshops will continue in 2007.

Alongside these activities, the everyday work of the Centre has continued, including the provision of childcare enabling women to attend training sessions in the Centre, or to work outside, knowing their children are safe.

### **North Lebanon – Mashta Hammoud Women’s Centre**

The main development in 2006 in Mashta Hammoud was the official opening of the new Mashta Hammoud Women’s Centre with the presence of more than 400 visitors including the Canada Fund and Kvinna till Kvinna. The Women’s Centre gives greater resources to the women, and allows more space for IT, vocational training and employment as well as income generating activities. IT trainings took place with 39 participants, both male and female youths, as well as women, in addition to a series of sewing workshops, where participants worked with a trainer to develop skills in sewing items such as bedcovers. Orders for purchases have started to pour in. These workshops as well as the productive activities will continue throughout 2007.

At both centres, in Aarsal and Mashta Hammoud, training in gender and leadership took place, as well as workshops to develop women’s skills to start their own businesses. In addition, during the war in July, women at both Centres worked to provide food, shelter and basic needs to displaced people. Following the war, the WEEP programme was expanded into the South of Lebanon, working with women who had lost their businesses during the war. This element of the project is discussed in detail in the relief and recovery section of this report.

### **Plans for 2007**

Through 2007 WEEP will continue with its sessions of workshops and trainings with the co-ops and the Women’s Centres. It is also hoped that the

work will be expanded to cover trainings on entrepreneurship and also to build and develop the co-ops along the HACCP international food hygiene standards. This will involve obtaining new materials and holding training sessions in order to set and maintain this standard.

More importantly, WEEP's Marketing Initiative is expected to be fully launched in 2007 and as such, move the work with the rural cooperatives into the next level where access to markets will become a key focus.

Further plan for initiating a post-conflict livelihoods initiative targeting women essentially in South Lebanon but also in other parts of the country which have been affected by the July war are now in discussion with Oxfam Quebec.

## **SEOW**

### **Background**

SEOW is a new project, launched in 2006, and supported by the European Union. The project aims to extend and develop the parameters of the WEEP project over a regional scope. Working in Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon and Syria, the project is working to promote and build women's economic participation throughout the region by increasing both individual and community awareness of the issues involved. The project will run over a two year period.

### **Work so far**

The first assessment phase included preliminary assessment visits to each of the countries involved to meet with organisations in order to review the current position of women economically within the country, and to establish potential project partners. This, combined with desk research will provide a solid assessment of the infrastructure in place within the countries and identify areas that need further development.

In 2007, the second phase of this project will be to work with women and organisations to introduce initiatives to establish better long term economic opportunities for women. This will include working with organisations to provide long term training and support for the women and their businesses is available to ensure greater success and sustainability. This training will include awareness-raising for all stakeholders about the importance of the female economic contribution, as well as work to strengthen individual women's entrepreneurial skills.

In addition to the research side of this project, it has also been important to establish the project and inform partners and interested bodies of its progress.

In June 2006 there was a meeting of all the partners involved in this section of EU funding. The partners met in Cairo, in a meeting organised by the British Council, and each of the 5 projects was presented and discussed. In November SEOW was also represented at a Euromed meeting in Istanbul, where brochures and materials about the project were displayed and a formal presentation given.

### **SEOW Conference – Cairo, 5-6 December.**

A conference on “Sustainable Economic Opportunities for Women” was held in Cairo, by FWID. The main aims of this conference were to bring NGOs working in and about Egypt together to discuss ways of finding common ground within civil society work, solutions for some of the main obstacles faced and to present a wider look at the opportunities both existing and developing in the country for women to participate in economic growth.

The first day of the conference was made up of a series of presentations and seminar sessions. It began with a background session, providing up to date information about the position of all people, and particularly women, in Egyptian society. The main areas discussed were: lack of social, economical and health services offered by the state and the current inefficient policies within the country that are decreasing, rather than increasing, economic opportunities for all citizens, especially women. Strategies to begin to solve these issues were discussed, and highlighted. These include the importance of micro-credit development, beyond merely a financial aid system, but expanded to include essential concepts of training and capacity building as an integral part of the lending process. In addition it is important to link micro-credit in with other development projects, in order to develop group, rather than purely individual working. Women’s rights were also discussed, and the importance of awareness of rights was highlighted as a serious issue, again linked with training and capacity building, as well as a clear development strategy focussed on human rights in order to develop people’s knowledge of their rights and ability to defend them.

A paper on “Women’s Economic Participation in Egypt – Facts & Problems” was presented, highlighting the particular issues of the country. The main obstacles to women’s economic participation in Egypt are weaknesses in the legal and educational sectors that make it difficult for women to enter both education and the workplace. This is exacerbated by a general increase in unemployment within the country and a strong level of wage discrimination between the sexes.

Overall it is important that the distinction between formal and informal work be recognised and informal and domestic work needs to be considered as a productive and economic contribution when reviewing employment statistics. Also, training and education must be provided for women, both at a basic

level of reducing the very high levels of female illiteracy and to develop skills and knowledge to allow them to work and enter professions on a level with men.

Sessions were also held to form coalitions between civil societies, human rights NGOs and lawyers in order to produce a clear base from which to work and develop strategies to tackle the issue of women's economic needs.

Day two of the conference included a presentation on the SEOW project. In addition the participants were divided into workshop groups to look at issues facing major groups of women in Egypt, and to highlight the problems and obstacles as well as the opportunities they face, and to look at priorities and activities to be implemented. These sessions provided an opportunity for all the participants to share ideas and experiences.

### **Plans for 2007**

In 2007, SEOW MENA will start up its second phase which will include 4 categories of activities namely:

- Training and capacity building
- Support to selected pilot economic initiatives for women
- Knowledge and information
- Preparation for advocacy and policy work

### ***Nationality Campaign***



The Nationality Campaign, headed by **CRTD.A** in Lebanon but supported and fronted by other NGOs in countries throughout the region, tackles the issue of a woman's right to her own nationality. The laws in countries throughout the MENA region do not allow women to pass on their nationality to their non-national husbands or their children. This leads to a situation where husbands, and particularly children, are forced to apply for residency status in a country where they have been born and raised, and have no automatic rights to education, health care, social services or even employment within that country. In cases where the father dies or abandons the family this situation is further exacerbated as children can be left effectively stateless.

Countries throughout the MENA region are involved in this campaign, although developments between each vary as each country has different laws, and the changes in these laws happen at different times. During 2006 the campaign has gained further impetus, and is now acknowledged as a key innovative campaign both within the region and internationally due to extensive communication and networking by **CRTD.A**.

Overall, the key developments in the campaign through 2006 have been a high and sustained level of media coverage and profiling, extensive campaigning to parliamentarians, religious groups and public officials, and a great increase in the supporters and stakeholders in the project. These supporters include the media, NGOs, local and international women's groups, MPs, lawyers, academics, and also more and more women married to non-nationals and affected by the laws are getting involved in the campaign, seeing it as the best way of improving their situations.

As changes in the laws happen in different countries their situation changes and now the status of the campaign in each country is very different. This necessitates a review of strategies and work in each country in order to progress at individual paces whilst still maintaining a cohesive and significant regional campaign. This is important as each development can be used as an example to promote change in other countries, and policies can be reviewed as to their effectiveness in order to help the campaign progress in the best way possible.

[www.crttd.org/wnr](http://www.crttd.org/wnr)

### **Main Events and Developments this year, by country.**

#### **Algeria**

Algeria is the only country to have radically reformed its nationality laws. This reformed nationality code, which allows children the right to their mother's nationality and non-national spouses the right to their spouse's nationality, is forming the model for the regional campaign. The amendment has also been made retrospective so covers all effected people. The campaign partners continue to monitor the interpretation and implementation of the law.

#### **Bahrain.**



The campaign partner in Bahrain, the Bahraini Women's Society have developed a comprehensive file of legal, constitutional, rights-based and humanitarian arguments for law reform

to encourage the King and the government to take action in this area.

Over 1,500 women married to non-nationals are now involved in the campaign and a high level of media coverage has been maintained through the year.

Meetings were also organised with members of parliament, political figures and officials of the Ministry of Interior to introduce the campaign and the proposed law amendments.

The King of Bahrain did grant nationality to over 300 children, and although this was seen as an encouraging move, it highlighted the need for nationality to be seen as a right for all citizens, not something to be granted as an individual favour.

### Egypt

The year has seen a positive development in Egypt and nationality can now be granted to children born of Egyptian mothers and non-national fathers, providing they meet certain criteria such as consistent residency in Egypt for at least 10 years. However, this law is still discriminatory and FWID, **CRTD.A**'s partner in Egypt, is busy both fighting for further reforms and monitoring the administration of this law. For example, it has been found that children of certain national fathers (Sudanese and Palestinian) have greater problems attaining their citizenship rights, even when they meet all the relevant criteria, and the high expense of the procedure to obtain nationality discriminates against poorer families.

### Lebanon



amendment.

Early in 2006 there was effective communication with decision makers within the Lebanese authorities on the nationality issue, including leading politicians and the Women and Children's Rights Parliamentary Commission. These resulted in some MPs pledging to give support to the issue where possible, although others remain adamant of their opposition to any law

A group of Lebanese women married to non-nationals have founded an organisation, with the support of **CRTD.A**, to bring women together and to provide a forum for them to discuss the issues they face, and to come up with a coherent strategy of objectives for nationality. This alliance is very active in implementing all areas of the campaign within Lebanon.

Media interest in the campaign has been growing. Following a press conference held in February where progress of the campaign, and achievements that have led to law reform in other countries were discussed, **CRTD.A** has been able to establish a list of media contacts, and this has led to extensive media coverage of the campaign throughout Lebanon, including a television interview with **CRTD.A**.

**CRTD.A** took advantage of International Women's Day and launched a campaign targeting the universities, setting up stands and organising panel discussions to raise students'



awareness of the issues involved in the campaign and collecting large numbers of signatures in support. Following this the campaign also went on tour around the regions of Lebanon meeting interested people, collecting further signatures and raising more support. Websites have also been launched both by **CRTD.A** and their partner WLP to provide an information source on the campaign's progress.

The nationality campaign was put on hold due to the war in the summer, but was re-launched in the autumn. The first big event was the Beirut International Marathon for which nearly 700 people registered to run / walk 10km in the name of "My nationality is a right for me and my family". In addition to this huge show of support, and with the support of the Dutch Embassy in Beirut, **CRTD.A** also had a special Citizenship and Nationality Campaign stand in the Marathon Village, which was visited by other marathon participants.

### Morocco



In Morocco, despite a period of high expectation when the King requested parliament to revise the nationality laws, little progress has been made, and the principle of gender equality is being largely disregarded in these amendments, which are happening very slowly. The local campaign partner, ADFM have issued a series of communications to the parliament reminding them of their promises in the area of nationality and asking for the process of reform to be made a priority.

A series of sit-ins were organised in front of the parliament building with hundreds of people, including women married to non-nationals, participating. Since these measures were taken a special committee has been formed with the authority to prepare a new law, and the campaign partners are continuing to monitor the progress of this reform to ensure an effective law amendment and gender equality.

### Syria

In Syria, the campaign has become a well known initiative and the subject of much debate in official and non-official circles due to extensive campaigning and coverage. For the first time a law petition has been developed on the subject of nationality and this has been endorsed by the constitutional council, the Ministry and Justice and the Awqaf Council. This petition is currently with the Legislative Council, where it is hoped it will soon be endorsed.

These developments in Syria are hugely positive, as not only is it hoped that the nationality laws may soon be amended, but also because the campaign has broken new ground by being the first example of a local women's group establishing a place where women's voices can be heard, directly by the government.

### **Plans for 2007**

Through 2007 the campaign will continue to work to reform the nationality laws in all partner countries. Although the reforms in some countries are very positive steps there is still a lot of work to be done to bring all countries to the same level and also to ensure that there is a fair and just interpretation of the reforms, and that appropriate and accessible implementation mechanisms are in place to ensure the law is properly administered.

## ***RELIEF and RECOVERY WORK***

### **Relief Work**

With the outbreak of the war with Israel on July 12<sup>th</sup> thousands of people within Lebanon were displaced and NGOs, including **CRTD.A** worked to provide shelter, food and basic necessities to the families affected. Working in partnership with the Sanayeh Relief Centre as well as other local and international organisations and public institutions, **CRTD.A** visited schools and other buildings around Beirut that were housing IDPs to assess the needs. It was found that generally there was sufficient provision of food and water, but there was a lack of other basic provisions particularly in the area of health and hygiene. It was therefore decided that **CRTD.A** would compile and distribute hygiene kits including detergents, soaps, mops, buckets and cloths as well as more specific items such as nappies, powdered milk, sanitary products and underwear.

Teams of **CRTD.A** staff and volunteers worked to obtain donations, both cash and in-kind, purchase items needed, compile kits and then to distribute these kits, with supplies for 2/3 weeks, around the families affected. Overall, circa 8500 families were assisted at relief centres in Beirut and other areas. Women from the centres in Mashta Hammoud and Aarsal also worked with IDPs in their area.

In addition to the field relief work a website was set up ([www.crtdd.org/relief](http://www.crtdd.org/relief)) to document the war and the events within Lebanon, and to receive pledges and donations from supporters. This website, updated daily, was vital in documenting to receipt and distribution of aid.

### **Recovery Work**

Following the ceasefire, relief centres quickly emptied with IDPs returning to their homes and villages. **CRTD.A** found that they had remaining funds and after discussion with donators it was agreed that these funds could be spent on recovery efforts and projects working with previously displaced people in the South. The first stage of this project was to follow people back to their homes in the South, and review their needs for further support, focussing particularly on women's economic needs as an extension of the WEEP

project. It was discovered that one area that had suffered a lot during the war was women's small businesses. These businesses, operating out of people's houses, or small shops premises, or reliant on agriculture, suffered greatly because of the war in two ways – either the premises for the business or the equipment used were physically destroyed, or the capital or savings used to run the business had to be used to finance the day to day family needs as there was no alternative income.

The types of business affected were a wide range. In rural villages many families depend on agriculture for their income. Women and often children work in the highly labour intensive job of picking tobacco. These crops were affected in a range of ways – crops were destroyed, or left uncollected depriving families of the income. Also many fields were left inaccessible due to the danger of unexploded cluster bombs, making it impossible for people to enter the fields to harvest the crops. Other businesses include small trade enterprises operated from home or a small shop, textiles work such as embroidery or dressmaking, hairdressing or manoushe shops.

From the villages visited, a selection was made of which villages to target. The choices were made based on a range of criteria. It was important to choose villages where, although businesses were affected badly, the overall infrastructure was in place to ensure that people were returning and living in the villages, and that a market would be available for the businesses. Also villages where **CRTD.A** had contacts and some local knowledge were targeted, to ensure greater success for the project. The villages selected are in the Tyre Caza, including MajdelZoun, Zibkine, Siddikine and Jbeil el Botom, the Nabatiyeh Caza, including West Zawtar and Kfarroumane, and also some villages in the Bekaa including Baalbek and Ain.

The women submitted assessments of their businesses, looking at the costs involved in either starting up or re-establishing their businesses. Overall around 200 women in the South and in Baalbeck received support to replace and reconstitute their productive assets and as such, resume their pre-war activities.

**CRTD.A** also supported rural women cooperatives in the Bekaa in purchasing raw material and processing it into food parcels to be distributed to women returnees.

Overall this project has been hugely successful. Working for the first time in the South of Lebanon, **CRTD.A** has found the response from women to be excellent. They are very keen to help themselves, and are interested in the ways that they can be helped and supported to do this, but are often surprised that this support turns out to be effective. **CRTD.A** has found that, as a result of the war, women are speaking out and mobilising to a greater extent than before. They are more eager to tackle women's issues and do not want to be marginalised. This new confidence, combined with being given the means to enable them to re-establish and develop their businesses, has made a great impact on this area.

## **CRTD.A's Partners**

***Our 2006 international partners including supporters of the relief initiative in July 2006:***

- Women Learning Partnership
- Oxfam Quebec
- European Union
- Kvinna till Kvinna
- Global Fund for Women
- Heinrich Boell Foundation
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- IDRC
- British Embassy Small Grants Programme
- Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
- Oxfam Great Britain
- The Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam (Holland)
- United Nations Development Programme / Programme of Governance in the Arab Region
- Agence Francophonie Pour le Développement
- Dutch Embassy in Beirut
- Japanese Embassy in Beirut
- International Gender and Trade Network
- Oxfam Canada
- Urgent Action Fund
- Madre
- CHI
- Women in Development / Europe (WIDE)
- Association of Women and Development (AWID)
- The British Council – Egypt
- Middle East Gender Studies Institute