



Annual Report 2007

Collective for Research and Training on
Development – *Action*
www.crtda.org.lb

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A word from the Board of Trustees

Dear friends, colleagues and readers,

I am happy to share with you **CRTD.A**'s annual report for 2007.

As you are all aware, this year was quite trying both for Lebanon and for our region. Insecurity, violence and the global degradation in the economic situation threatening the livelihoods of many communities are but some of the features of that year.



Despite all odds, **CRTD.A** continued its work locally, regionally and internationally.

In this annual report, we share with you the progress of our regional and nationality campaign as we celebrate the formidable reform of the nationality law in Morocco and the success of our sisters there. We hope that Lebanon and other countries will follow suit in the near future.

Our Women Economic Empowerment Programme continues its trajectory both locally and regionally. In Lebanon, **CRTD.A** continues to work with women and rural women cooperatives to reconstitute their economic activities following the July 2006 war. I am happy to report that our Women Community Centres in Mashta Hammoud, Aarsal, and soon in Siddikine, are active in hosting activities and training for women. Through our SEOW-MENA programme, we have been working regionally in building capacity towards creating sustainable economic opportunities for women. With our friends and colleagues at WLP-International, we have been able to provide Leadership training, ICT training and Arabic e-courses to hundreds of women. Our K4SD programme continues to produce and disseminate knowledge with a view to harness it through our forthcoming Lebanon Development Gateway.

All this would not have been possible without collaborative action. **CRTD.A** took part in the annual WLP-International Trans-national Partners Meeting (Istanbul, June 07). This annual event is a formidable opportunity for sharing and building knowledge amongst the WLP partnership and developing collective action. As a member of WLP-International, **CRTD.A** strives to contribute to an exceptional form of collaboration!

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We were also at the AWID's Where is the Money Forum held in Queretaro in Mexico and in the WIDE 07 Annual Conference held in Spain.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our team of staff and volunteers for their dedication, hard work and creativity!

Working with our regional partners has been, as always, a source of learning and inspiration. Our Regional Partners' Meeting of 2007 was, yet again, an opportunity to reflect, review, and plan our work ahead.

I hope you find this report useful and I wish you all the very best for 2008.

Marie-Christine Moujabber Mourani
On behalf of the **CRTD.A** Board of Trustees


II. Executive Summary

Despite the political and security turmoil both in Lebanon and in the region, the year 2007 witnessed several achievements.

The increased polarisation, both political and social, in Lebanon resulted in a number outbreak of violence notably in the Naher el Bared camp. Parallel to that, the country and its citizens had yet to recover from the aftermath of the July 2006 Israeli aggression amidst a global and local economic crisis as a result of soaring prices of basic consumer goods.

This annual report will highlight the main landmarks of 2007, progress in programme implementation, challenges and the way ahead for 2008.

Women's Economic Empowerment Project (WEEP)

 Workshops and training continued in the Aarsal and Mashta Hammoud Women's Centres established in 2006, reaching out to women community members of all ages. In addition, the work of the project was expanded to reach out to women in the Bekaa and South regions, particularly in areas that were severely economically affected by the 2006 war.

The Marketing Unit was launched in July 2007 helping to promote the rural women's co-operatives and increase the visibility and sales outreach of their products. A number of public events were held by the Marketing Unit in an effort to visibilise and promote rural women's economic and public participation and challenge obstacles to market access.

Trainings and seminars were also held on the Sustainable Economic Opportunities for Women (SEOW) Project. In June 2007, a seminar was held to discuss micro-finance opportunities for women in Lebanon.

Finally, CRTD.A continues with its post-conflict economy recovery programme which aims at reconstituting women and rural women's coops livelihoods which were affected by the July 2006 war.

Leading to choices

The implementation of the Leading to Choices training programme continued to grow within the framework of the WLP International Partnership. As the LTC is further integrated into all aspects of CRTD.A's programmes, the international partners meeting held in Istanbul provided the space for sharing, solidarity and exchange as well as joint planning for furthering the partnership collaboration.

Nationality Campaign

جنسيتي



حق لي ولا سرتي

In concert with its local and regional partners, **CRTD.A**'s Nationality Campaign continued its work to secure women's and their family's right to full and inclusive citizenship through the reform of current nationality laws. The most significant achievement of the campaign in 2007 was undoubtedly the reform of the nationality code in Morocco on January 18, 2007.

The reform of the legal code in Morocco followed that of Algeria (2005) and Egypt (2004).

The Campaign also increased its outreach capacity by leveraging new media tools, specifically Web 2.0 to help spread its message and garner support for the Campaign. Its Facebook Nationality Group has allowed **CRTD.A** to reach out to concerned parties of the Lebanese diaspora as well as in other countries who are attempting to address similar gender and citizenship issues.

Finally, increased media coverage with the My Lebanon Documentary Spot has helped **CRTD.A** and the Campaign to increase social awareness of its objectives and activities.

Citizenship and action research

Training, capacity building and field level data collection continued for both the Active Citizenship and Gendered Social Entitlements (ACGEN) and the newly launched Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) Project. Public events for both projects were held as a means to communicate the process and learning of these initiatives, share knowledge with stakeholders and build interests and partnership for the subsequent phases.

As preliminary findings and outputs are beginning to emerge, **CRTD.A** is beginning the process of looking into the possible implications of these outcomes at the level of knowledge dissemination and policy dialogue.

2008: The Year Ahead

In 2008, **CRTD.A** will begin the process of organisational review in full speed. This will entail a review of internal systems and process, programme review, and building research and knowledge capacities.

This challenging, complex and timely process will hopefully allow **CRTD.A** to develop its forthcoming plan and begin to address the critical issues of sustainability and resources mobilisation based on a programme constructed within a solid conceptual framework.

III. CRTD.A – An Introduction

The Collective for Research and Training on Development – Action (CRTD.A) is based in Beirut and began its work in 1999. It was officially registered in 2003. Since then, its mandate has been to address economic, social and political development issues with a focus on gender on both a local and a regional level. CRTD.A seeks to contribute to the social development of local communities and organisations in order to create a more equitable environment.

By forming partnerships with other non-governmental organisations, both locally and internationally, CRTD.A works to enhance their capacities through targeted skills development and training, networking, gender mainstreaming and action-oriented research throughout the MENA region, particularly in Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Algeria and Bahrain. By working together, organisations in the region are able to share knowledge and experience that enables them to work more effectively on many levels.

CRTD.A works in four key thematic areas:

- Gender, Economy and Trade
- Gender, Citizenship and Governance
- Gender and Leadership
- IT for Social Development

Since CRTD.A's establishment, however, projects have developed and evolved within and across these thematic areas. This report will look at CRTD.A from a project as well as a thematic perspective, outlining a brief history of each project and looking at the main developments in each during 2007. In addition, the report will highlight some of the activities and objectives planned for 2008.

IV. CRTD.A –Themes and Projects

IV.1 Gender and Citizenship

IV.1.a Nationality Campaign



Women's right to transmit their nationalities is seen as a cornerstone and condition *sine qua none* for full citizenship rights. It is with this conviction that CRTD.A launched its Nationality Campaign as early as 2002 to help secure Arab women's rights to full, equal and active citizenship. The Campaign, carried out in collaboration with local and regional civil society organisations and women's groups, is a comprehensive effort to address the legislative, social and economic hardships borne by women who are not able to claim their right to citizenship in their respective countries.

The Campaign continues to be fully active in six Arab countries: Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, and Lebanon, where it is strategically lobbying governments, leveraging public opinion, engaging and mobilising concerned women, public opinion and media institutions for the reform of the nationality code. The activities of the Nationality Campaign are supported by following beliefs:

- Arab women have an unconditional right to equality and to full and active citizenship;
- Constitutional rights and frameworks must exist to ensure full equality among citizens;
- There must be endorsement and ratification of international treaties and conventions (Human Rights Declaration, CEDAW, CRC, etc.)

Since 2002, the Campaign has enjoyed successes on many different levels, most significantly the reform in the legal code Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco.

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Country	Date of Reform	Highlights of the Reform
Egypt	July 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective as of July 2004 • Egyptian women can grant nationality to children only • For children born before the law, restrictive procedure, including payment, applies
Algeria	March 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retroactive effect granted • Algerian women can grant nationality to their husbands and children • No discrimination against any nationality or religion • Implementation procedure disseminated within Algeria as well as its Consular representation worldwide
Morocco	January 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retroactive effect granted • Moroccan women can grant nationality to children only • No discrimination against any nationality

In 2007, given that the overall context in the MENA region was hardly conducive for a reform or an overhaul of the concept and practice of citizenship rights, the regional campaign has opted to continue and step up its current efforts and activities, both locally and regionally.

During 2007, the Nationality Campaign succeeded in meeting many of its key objectives in a number of partner countries, the most significant of which was undoubtedly the reform of the nationality code in Morocco on January 18' 2007. This code was approved by parliament and entered into force in April 2007. Although progress has been uneven at the local level, strong partnerships, solidarity and cross-cutting initiatives have meant that the Nationality Campaign has retained its regional coverage, was able to mobilise a larger pool of civil society actors and has sustained media and public interest.

The Nationality Campaign in Lebanon was publicly re-launched following the war with Israel in the summer of 2006 despite the ongoing political instability and the security situation within the country. This has had some impact on the Nationality Campaign's awareness and advocacy activities that started in 2006 and continued through 2007. Although many awareness raising activities have taken place and support has been growing for the issue,

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including amongst politicians and especially within the media, there has been little opportunity to capitalise on this support within the House of Parliament or other public institutions which have been by and large ineffectual during the period under review.

Throughout 2007, the political and security situation in Lebanon remained uncertain, culminating in a political vacuum as a result of a failure to reach consensus over the election of a new president. CRTD.A repeatedly stressed, through press coverage, that it is vital that the political situation in Lebanon not be made an excuse for allowing discriminatory laws to go unchanged. In the absence of any real government, however, it has been impossible to make significant progress in official circles.

Because of the ongoing instability, CRTD.A took a different approach to the Campaign in 2007. Instead of concentrating on changing the laws, the emphasis through this year has been on addressing the needs of concerned women, and increasing their knowledge and awareness of handling problems that they face as a result of discriminatory citizenship laws.

Legal Consultation Services

Because of discriminatory citizenship laws, Lebanese women married to non-nationals face particularly challenging legal problems often on a day to day basis. CRTD.A decided to document these women's stories in order to establish lessons learned that could be used in other contexts, both locally and regionally. In view of the importance to record these cases and to identify replicable solutions, CRTD.A signed a memorandum of agreement with the Adel bila Houdoud (Justice Without Borders) NGO in April 2007 to provide direct legal support to women who are facing hardships. This intervention is designed to achieve the following:

- 1) Providing immediate legal assistance to key test cases of women being denied the right to transmit their nationality;
- 2) Documenting the legal test cases;
- 3) Furthering the understanding of and addressing gender based obstacles to the progress local women groups;
- 4) Initiating and establishing a policy dialogue with relevant policy and governance institutions; and,
- 5) Mobilising young women lawyers to act as advocates for the reform of the nationality law in Lebanon.

Through the period April – August 2007 the preparation stages took place. CRTD.A worked to establish partnerships with other NGOs, find lawyers interested in getting involved with the work, and make contact with women seeking legal assistance.

The next phase of the project involved a series of activities aimed at capacity building and awareness raising, including:

- 1) A training session for lawyers and advocates to establish interest in working with the Campaign;
- 2) Additional training for interested lawyers on the legal and social aspects of the denial of nationality rights;
- 3) Training sessions held for interested and effected women to raise their awareness of the legal issues relevant to their situation;
- 4) The production of a flyer, giving simplified and clear information about the legal situation, concerns and problems faced by women married to non-nationals; and,
- 5) The provision of legal awareness training for the nationality team to build their capacities.

It is hoped that the legal consultation services will provide much needed and practical support to women facing legal obstacles in Lebanon.

Nationality Campaign on Facebook¹

With the rise of the Facebook phenomenon in Lebanon, the Nationality Team at **CRTD.A** decided to capitalise on the popularity of the site and started a Nationality Group. As a global resource, the Facebook Group is a fantastic way of spreading information about the Nationality Campaign to people all over the world. It has proved a great success with over 9500 members already joining the group and sharing their experiences and positions on the issues. In addition, a focus group has been launched, where individuals can provide their input on ways of expanding the Campaign to the Lebanese Diaspora. The idea and inspiration for the Facebook was a direct outcome of the WLP-International's partners meeting held in Istanbul in April 2007 where the potentials of using IT applications for advocacy were debated and tested.

¹ For more information see:

http://apps.facebook.com/causes/17486?m=0a62c&recruiter_id=1848821

Nationality Campaign in Schools



One way in which the Nationality Campaign is working to increase awareness of its message on a social level is by introducing the Campaign in schools. CRTD.A was invited by teachers at the International College in Beirut to give a talk about the work of the campaign to a class of nine year olds. CRTD.A used the Nationality Campaign as a way of introducing school children to NGOs and their work. This

presentation focused on CRTD.A as an example of an organisation that is working on identifying needs in communities, finding gaps where those needs are not being met, and working towards fulfilling those needs in a responsible and sustainable manner.

The presenters found that the children really connected with the issues and were interested in discussing their implications. They also discovered that the children were much more open to discussion than university students, who tend to have more fixed political ideas. This experience inspired CRTD.A's staff to think about participating in similar events in the future, and has sparked dialogue about how such ideas and discussions on social issues might be able to be integrated into the school curricula.

CRTD.A on TV - My Lebanon Project

CRTD.A is involved in the "My Lebanon" Project which is working with ten Lebanese NGOs, each focusing on different thematic areas and having different expertise. Each NGO is the subject of a 12-15 minute documentary highlighting its work. These documentaries were then aired on different TV stations in Lebanon, in the region and in Europe.

Everywoman - Nationality



The Nationality documentary is depicted in three parts. The first part focused on specific cases where women have been denied their right to pass on their nationality. It included interviews with lawyers discussing the specific legal problems these women are facing,

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including access to education and health care, the need to apply for residency permits, etc. The second part of the film was an interview with a politician who supports the campaign, looking at the relationship between gender, citizenship and policy, particularly in relation to women's rights in Lebanon. The third part of the film was an interview with **CRTD.A** about the Campaign and its achievements to date. It is hoped that this documentary will increase awareness of the organisation, the Campaign, and the issues and obstacles faced by those affected.

The nationality campaign at the international level

Launching the International Campaign for Women's rights to Nationality



In partnership with the Women Learning Partnership (WLP), "The International Campaign for Arab Women's Right to Nationality" was launched internationally on Sep 6, 2006.

CRTD.A had presented some benchmarks of the regional Campaign in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, and Lebanon at the panel discussion on Women as Equal Citizens: Advocating for Change

in Muslim-Majority Societies. More info: www.learningpartnership.org The international campaign continues in full blast with the **new English blog for the nationality Campaign - The Arab Women's right to Nationality campaign**

As a result of launching the campaign internationally, a new blog on the Arab Women's right to nationality, was launched and is a model of partnership between partner organizations for national campaigns in Lebanon and Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Bahrain, Algeria.

<http://www.learningpartnership.org/citizenship>

The site includes various topics such as information on the national campaign in every state, laws and research on the right of citizenship, live testimonies of concerned women in the Arab countries in addition to highlighting the most important news and events in this framework; not to mention that the site launching is supported by WLP, the website was announced officially in the sixth of September 2006

The nationality campaign in the media

Al-Akhbar newspaper: Lebanon prevents women's rights to nationality.

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/ar/node/28839>

Al-Mustakbal newspaper: Nationality campaign's regional meeting: Moroccan women were being granted their right to nationality

<http://www.almustaqbal.com/stories.aspx?StoryID=227175>

Assafir: success stories in Morocco, Algeria and Egypt, whereas Lebanon is politically charged country

<http://www.assafir.com/Article.aspx?EditionId=611&ChannelId=13291&ArticleId=1019>

L'orient Le Jour: DROITS DE LA FEMME : « Ma nationalité, un droit pour moi et ma famille » appelle quatre gouvernements arabes à amender la loi

<http://www.lorient-lejour.com.lb/page.aspx?page=article&id=339164>

Daily Star: Arab women bring campaign for greater equality to fundamental front: the right to share one's nationality

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=81398

Claiming Equal Citizenship: The Campaign for Arab Women's Right to Nationality

<http://www.learningpartnership.org/news/enews/2006/iss14/claiming>

Interview with Lina-Abouhabib – CRTD.A director on women's right to nationality

<http://www.learningpartnership.org/advocacy/campaign/labhinterview>

Lebanon:

"Women's Day underscores citizenship rights proposal"-The Daily Star

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=22809

Nationality Law and gender discrimination – Al-Akhbar Newspaper – Oct 06

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/ar/node/9777>

IV.1.b Active Citizenship and Gendered Social Entitlements (ACGEN)



Active Citizenship and Gendered Social Entitlements (ACGEN) is a regional action-research project undertaken in partnership with IDRC and was designed to operate over a two-year period. The project seeks to increase women's active citizenship and access to social entitlements, specifically health, education and social services. The project employs a variety of research methods that contribute to building knowledge base and guide the development of an action plan for capacity building of the relevant government institutions and NGOs/CSOs. The ACGEN project is operational in Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine.

The ACGEN project is unique in its design and implementation in that it does not seek to solve all problems in a vacuum. Instead it uses a multi-dimensional approach to address the issues related to active citizenship. In order for citizenship to be effective it must be able to be used as a means to realise social, political and economic participation within society, and it must imply a reciprocal relationship between citizens and the state. The project also focuses on the mechanisms by which men and women actively claim and access their basic rights and social entitlements.

Through 2007 ACGEN focused on data collection in seven geographical areas of Lebanon. This data is currently being collated into reports. This data collection also took the form of focus groups on education, health and social

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safety nets which took place starting 2007. In Egypt, a similar process has also taken place and the reports are now being finalised. In Palestine, the difficult political situation led to a series of communication problems that has delayed data collection; however, work is continuing and progressing with a view to finalising it by early 2008.

Training workshops took place throughout Lebanon with over 100 participants. These workshops looked at the Participatory Rapid Assessment, which is a method of conducting research while simultaneously building the capacity of your community subjects. Of these participants, 67 engaged in data collection for the project.

IV.1.c Faith Based Organisations (FBOs)

The Faith Based Organizations (FBO) action research project proposes to analyze the work of confessional FBOs operating in Lebanon. The project aims to identify the impact FBOs have on public policy dialogue and formulation in Lebanon, specifically in matters related to education and health. It also examines the attitudes of these organizations towards governance, citizenship and gender equality, and considers their potential to inform public and political discourse on these issues.

This action research builds upon and complements the mapping of regional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the assessment of their service delivery methods and attitudes towards active citizenship and gender. This mapping was implemented within CRTD.A's Active Citizenship, Gendered Entitlements (ACGEN) research in partnership with the IDRC.

Achievements in 2007

1. A literature review was prepared about the related project concepts, the debate in the international development agenda and the role of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) in Lebanon.
2. An outreach seminar was held in December 2007 to introduce the project, define key concepts and network with interested parties. A total of 31 civil society activists, researchers and academics attended the seminar.
3. The process of mapping of the FBOs community began, focusing on their role in the provision of health and education services

Next Steps

1. *Conducting the field research of FBOs:* During the months of June-July 2008, it is expected that the FBO team will carry out an extensive internal review of the management and program structure of FBOs as well as their work and interventions. This research will direct the subsequent case

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study work that will feed into the forthcoming FBO web page as well as the implementation of other dissemination strategies and outreach/policy work.

2. *Outreach & Policy Dialogue*: Given the extended lifespan of the project, CRTDA will be seeking to increase the impact of the project by initiating policy dialogue on the issue of action research as a necessary strategy for civil society organizations and NGOs.
3. *Final Validation Seminar*. This seminar will provide a forum to disseminate and discuss the research findings and recommendations as well as the outcomes of outreach and policy dialogue initiatives.

Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) Seminar

A seminar was held in Beirut on 30 November 2007 to introduce the research project "A Study of the Role of Faith Based Organisations in Influencing Public Policy in Lebanon". The seminar was aimed at practitioners, researchers and organisations. Its purpose was to introduce the project, discuss related key issues and promote networking amongst those present.

IV.2 Gender, Economy and Trade

IV.2.a Women's Economic Empowerment Project (WEEP)



The Women's Economic Empowerment Project (WEEP) was launched by **CRTDA** in 2000, with the support of the British Embassy in Beirut, and the Global Fund for Women. Subsequent funding has been provided by Kvinna till Kvinna, Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, Oxfam Quebec, Oxfam GB and the Japanese Embassy. WEEP operates primarily in Lebanon but does include capacity building and action research activities in other countries in the region. Most importantly, a leadership and IT component has been mainstreamed into the WEEP programme in partnership with the Women Learning Partnership.

The WEEP Project seeks to equip women with knowledge, skills, economic literacy and other tools of economic empowerment to enable women to participate actively in implementing projects and activities in their local area. It supports women who choose to work outside the home, but also promotes the visibility and economic significance of work within the home as an essential economic contribution to the family and society. In addition, WEEP works to create better gender relations and encourages women to be socially and economically independent.

The project involves working with women to encourage and facilitate local organising and collective action. The project supports and accompanies women through capacity building and hands on training and seeks to establish women run community centres. These activities are taking place in North Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley, and the South. Throughout the life of the project these centres and co-operatives have evolved and developed to meet the needs of women within their communities.

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The project now reaches some 18 co-operatives predominantly in the Bekaa but also in North Lebanon and the South.

The co-operatives provide an important support network for the women as well as opportunities to bring participants together for training in areas such as gender and leadership. In addition, by working together, the women can plan and develop marketing strategies and ideas for increasing the sales of their products.

Rural Women's Co-operatives

- There are around 70 Rural Women's Co-operatives operating in 70 local communities throughout Lebanon. In 2007, CRTDA has reached out to more than one third of this number with plans to increase outreach in 2008.
- Over 1500 individuals benefit from working in these co-operatives, with approximately the same number again benefiting indirectly from the business they generate.
- The co-operatives produce healthy, natural, traditional produce with no additives.

The Women's Economic Empowerment Project has been very active throughout 2007, working on both new and ongoing projects.

Women's Centres – Aarsal and Mashta Hammoud

Following the women's centres in Aarsal and Mashta Hammoud becoming independent women's organisations in 2006, work has continued and many activities have taken place throughout 2007 especially as both centres were integrated in the IT4SD programme implemented in partnership with the WLP-I.

In Aarsal, children were a key focal point. A series of children's clubs were formed, culminating in a summer camp for 170 local children, aged between 6 and 12 years. Funded by CIDA via Oxfam Quebec, the camp offered the children a wide range of activities including arts and crafts, games, environmental education, and trips to the zoo and the local army headquarters. The importance of the Centre within the community was again demonstrated with a grand closing ceremony for the camp, attended by the whole community.

Other activities in Aarsal this year included a series of workshops focusing on training teachers in the use of the arts, particularly puppets, in education, holding workshops tackling children's issues, and raising awareness of the importance of recycling.

In Mashta Hammoud, a particularly disadvantaged area in the Bekaa, workshops included skills workshops such as ICT training, English and French language classes for children, youth and women. The Centre also concentrated on teaching practical needlework with a series of workshops teaching women how to make textiles such as sheets and bedcovers.

Post-conflict economic recovery work in South Lebanon and the Bekaa

CRTD.A was involved in re-establishing women's small businesses and economic activities in the South of Lebanon as well as the Bekaa and North Lebanon following the 2006 war. This included the reconstitution of economic and productive assets such as raw material, equipments and livestock as well as the formation of a women's group and a Women's Centre in Sidikeen near Tyre. This Siddikine premises are intended to provide a space to enable the women to work productively and supportively together, as has happened in Aarsal and Mashta Hammoud. The Centre will provide training courses in areas such as ICT, leadership, accounting, and gender. Feasibility studies will also be provided.

Since the 2006 war, WEEP has continued to work with families affected by the fighting. Around 138 women were assisted. Examples include:

- In Aita Al-Shaab area, a small grant allowed seven cows to be given to families with handicapped children who had lost their livestock.
- In Chebaa and Hasbaya Area women put together around 600 relief boxes, all using produce from the local co-operatives.

Marketing Unit



WEEP's work with the Rural Women's Co-operatives expanded with the launch of the Marketing Unit in July 2007.

The aim of this new unit is to serve the rural women's co-operatives and

production groups by:

1. Facilitating identification of and access to sustainable local and regional markets;
2. Profiling and publicising the work and products of the co-operatives;
3. Mobilising solidarity and support networks amongst women's organisations to ensure their sustainability; and,
4. Promoting fair trade practices for women producers.

In parallel with the opening of the Marketing Unit, a regular news brief was also launched to provide regular updates on the co-operatives and their work.

The Unit also acts as an outlet for the sale of the women's produce within Beirut.

Following the launch of the Marketing Unit, **CRTD.A** organised a series of events with the Rural Women's Co-operatives to build on the publicity and interest aroused and raise further awareness of the products. In October, a bazaar was held in the Gemmayze Café, where the Rural Women's Co-operatives displayed their products, sold items and answered questions about their work. On December 9th, also at the Gemmayze Café, the co-operatives hosted a lunch called "**A Taste of Tradition**". Attendees enjoyed a traditional Lebanese lunch using local and age-old ingredients. Women prepared Christmas and Ramadan baskets as well for both occasions.

Documentary Film

The documentary on **CRTD.A** focused on the Women's Economic Empowerment Project (WEEP). The WEEP section was filmed in the Bekaa and the north of Lebanon in the co-operatives and Women's Centres. The documentary showed women participating in courses and workshops, reflecting **CRTD.A's** approach of addressing both the social and economic aspects of development and illustrating the impact of **CRTD.A's** work on their lives.

Discussion Seminar

Post Conflict Challenges and Opportunities for Rural Women's Co-operatives



Held in Beirut on 7 September 2007, this seminar was part of the Livelihoods Project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency / Oxfam Quebec and launched in July 2007. The aim of the seminar was to engage multiple stakeholders in the debate about the challenges and opportunities facing the Rural Women's Co-operatives within a post conflict context. It focused on the constraints that women face and how these were exacerbated by the 2006 war. The discussion reinforced dialogue between the co-

operatives and the stakeholders in rural development and looked at the prospects for the future. In addition, the seminar identified, addressed and raised awareness of the problem of unequal gender relations in rural and agricultural contexts and its impact on the viability and sustainability of the rural women co-operatives.

The discussion focused on:

- Problems caused by the 2006 war that left many co-operatives in debt;
- The role of the state in providing support and good governance to allow co-operatives to develop and remain active after the war;
- The need for support from NGOs and international agencies to be more co-ordinated, i.e. focused on a wider platform, including counselling, accompaniment and management training, not solely funding.
- Marketing problems, including the need to establish more selling points, the establishment of more centralised procedures, quality control, a website and marketing strategies.
- The importance of co-operatives as social, rather than purely commercial organisations.

The seminar was very successful with the attendance of around 150 participants including co-operative members, governmental and non-governmental organisations, international agencies and the media.

IV.2.b Sustainable Economic Opportunities for Women (SEOW)

The Sustainable Economic Opportunities for Women (SEOW) project was launched in 2006. SEOW is an extension of the WEEP project and is supported by the EU with the aim of increasing individual and community awareness of the issues involved in promoting and building women's economic participation. The project's main objectives are to provide a sustainable framework to assist and support women in five countries: Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria.

The traditional patriarchal nature of the society within the MENA region, works to institutionalise gender inequality and preserves both *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination between men and women. Women are often constrained in their economic opportunities by social and legal issues and particularly by social norms which discourage them from entering the workplace.

Increasing women's access to employment, their conditions within the workplace, and attracting visibility to their contributions to their country's economy are all important factors in promoting women's economic

participation. Women must be supported in their family responsibilities so as to enable them to balance their home and work commitments. In addition, their role within the family as wives and mothers must be recognised as economic contributions. Women are a significant unexploited resource within the economies of the MENA region which can only benefit from increasing and improving their employment opportunities.

Seminar on Micro-Credit and Women



CRTD.A, in collaboration with Al Majmoua, organised a seminar on micro-finance services for women on 19 June 2007 in Beirut. The objectives of this seminar were to identify key issues concerning micro-credit and discuss knowledge and information about micro-finance schemes in Lebanon. This included focusing on the effectiveness of these schemes, the opportunities they provide, and ways in which such schemes can be better adapted to suit the needs of women.


One of the key points to come out of the discussion was the importance of backing up micro-finance schemes with training and empowerment. Women stressed the need for capacity building, management training, increased dialogue and development programmes to be implemented alongside the financial support provided to ensure that women can effectively use the finance given and to sustain their livelihoods.


Around 100 participants took part in the seminar, including representatives from NGOs focusing on related issues (women, micro-credit, children, disabled and others), international agencies, academics and the media.

SEOW provided a series of training workshops and needs assessments through 2007 in Tyre, Hasbieh, Baalbeck and Byblos. These workshops focused on business management and relationship issues such as accounting, personal capacity building, writing CVs, marketing and gender and leadership training.

Also throughout 2007, two major regional capacity building events were held in Beirut. The first, a regional training of trainers, grouped some 30 trainers from the 5 countries of the project. The week long training was intense and included training methodology as well as content focus on gender and socio economic empowerment. Of the participants, only the best were selected to continue with a follow-up write-shop which constituted the basis of the collective development of the project's master training guidebook.

Furthermore, in 2007, a number of regional and local activities were conducted namely the development of country information sheets, knowledge material, as well as the start of the developing assessment and training notes on women's invisible work.

<p>SEOW.-MENA highlights...</p> <p>Building and strengthening partnerships Syria</p>	<p>Repeated field visits were organized to Syria either by the project manager or the regional training coordinator following the issuance of the official clearance to carry out the project activities within Syria. Meetings were held with officials as well as the with the General Women's Union and other stakeholders in preparation for the first training events to take place within Syria.</p> 
<p>SEOW.-MENA highlights...</p> <p>Training and capacity building workshops -- Morocco</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 local workshop targeting local women's groups in Tetouane - 1 local workshop targeting staff and practitioners in local micro credit organizations in Tetouane - 1 local advanced workshop targeting national micro credit organizations in Casablanca - 1 local training targeting women members of women organizations in Rabat - Preparation for additional capacity building and media seminars (selection of material, programme, participants, etc..)
<p>SEOW.-MENA highlights...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 training/CB with members of women groups in Algiers - 2 training/CB events with members of

Training and capacity building workshops -- Algeria	local, women, HR and other organizations in Tizi Ouzou
SEOW.-MENA highlights... Training and capacity building workshops – Lebanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 local writeshop to develop and review local training material with local trainers - 2 economic literacy training in South Lebanon - 2 advanced economic literacy training in South Lebanon - 3 training/capacity building workshops with women producers in Byblos - 3 training/capacity building workshops with women producers in the Bekaa 

Activity Highlight

CRTD.A Hosts Debate Session on Women’s Participation in Gender Budgeting

Thursday, 8 March 2007

The Collective on Research and Training on Development Action (CRTDA) celebrated International Women’s Day by hosting a discussion on “Women’s Participation in Gender Budgeting. The event was held in collaboration with the British Council Lebanon and took place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Hamra.

The overall objective of the conference was to present gender mainstreaming in the national budget as an approach to national budgeting from a gender-sensitive perspective, as a participatory mechanism that brings together civil society activists and policy makers in order to work towards gender equality and to improve standards of transparency and accountability. It is hoped that the introduction of gender considerations in the national budget will function as a mechanism for its social acceptance and serve as a fundamental step towards the realization of social justice and gender equality.

The key speaker was Ms. Georgina Ashworth, Co-Founder of the Women's Budget Group (WBG) in the United Kingdom. Ms. Ashworth led off the forum

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with her presentation on the past experiences of the Women's Budget Group in introducing gender considerations into the National Budget. She also presented some general guidelines for preparing gender sensitive budgets, highlighting the major elements contributing to the formation of policies sensitive to gender issues and of planning mechanisms for the development of national budgets. Ms. Ashworth then engaged the participants in an analysis of various national plans in Lebanon.

Ms. Ashworth's presentation was followed by that of Dr. Wadad El Ali, the Director of the Department of Budget and Expenditure Management at the Ministry of Finance. Dr. Wadad's presentation centered on the mechanisms and involved in preparing the national budget in Lebanon and the general principles that guide this process, namely unity, annual issue, completeness, balance and lack of privatization.

Approximately 90 regional Lebanese civil and non-governmental organizations, in addition to some international donor organizations and government bodies (Ministry of Finance, Council for Development and Reconstruction) participated in the Conference. H.E. the British Ambassador to Lebanon attended, as did a number of journalists from several Lebanese publications: Assafir, Al Moustaqbal, Al Akhbar, The Daily Star, L'Orient Le Jour, and El Mouna Magazine.

IV.3 Gender and Leadership: Leading to Choices

.IV.3.a Leadership training

"Leading to Choices" is a capacity building programme that has been one of the longest running CRTD.A projects. The provision of these workshops has played a part in all of CRTD.A's projects from its inception in 2002. The workshops started as part of GLIP, and have played an important role in the Nationality Campaign, and WEEP. They have also helped bring CRTD.A to a wider audience as the courses are offered to other interested people and NGOs.

The workshops aim to help participants build their leadership skills and challenge traditional perceptions of leadership, changing long held ideas of authority and shifting to co-operation, teamwork and effective communication.

Ten different types of trainings were held during 2007, eight “Leading to Choices” workshops, an E-course and an ICT/TOT for social change.

Feedback from participants at these workshops has been invariably enthused; very positive and seeking further learning and interaction. Participants generally felt that their ideas of effective leadership were altered considerably, and that their self esteem and self confidence were increased. They also felt more empowered to mobilise and act, as both individuals and communities, and were more confident and able to encourage others to mobilise as well. People also felt that the workshops had a positive effect on both their work and home lives, and that in many cases the participants felt that as a result their families gained a greater understanding of, and were able to get more actively involved in their work and lives.

<i>Workshop</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Place</i>
Leading to Choices	Najdeh Association	Beirut – Shatila Camp
Leading to Choices	Najdeh Association	Saida – Ain el Zelwi Camp
Leading to Choices	CRTD.A Concerned People of the Nationality Campaign	Beirut
Leading to Choices	Social Advancement Association	Beirut
Leading to Choices	CRTD.A & RDFL – Concerned Women of the Nationality Campaign	Saida
E course	CRTD.A + WLP	Online

<i>Workshop</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Place</i>
Evaluation	Imam El Sader Foundations & NAVTTS	Tyre
Evaluation	Arsal Women Association	Baalback
Evaluation	Najdeh Association	Beirut – Shatila Camp

.IV.3.a Leadership e-course / Arabic

The Arabic Leadership E-Course was originally piloted in 2005, but has since expanded, and is run through the Regional Middle East/Gulf Leadership Institutes, CRTDA and WLP. The E-Course is a distance course on developing participatory leadership skills, seeking to promote women's public participation through knowledge, learning and access to IT and information.

The central idea of the course is to approach leadership as a process that leads to greater choices for all by promoting communication amongst individuals, encouraging them to learn from each other and to reach common goals. The course enabled participants to identify and hone communication, negotiation and coalition building skills, exploring new models and styles of leadership, ethics of leadership, gender differences and personal leadership styles.

The latest round of this course started in October 2007 and ran over ten weeks, involving participants from six countries: Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Algeria and Iraq. Each week, messages were uploaded about empowerment, choices and other relevant subjects. There was also space for a forum discussion, where messages were sent by email to all members of the group to allow the interchange of ideas.

25 participants from six different countries (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Algeria and Egypt) took part in the eCourse that was held from September 3rd till December 15th, 2007. Participants come from different backgrounds, education, and type of work.

Four facilitators from Egypt, Syria and Lebanon were helpful in providing, facilitating and providing orientation and guidance during the process.

CRTDA hopes that these e-courses will continue to develop to allow more people to participate in them, particularly those who are unable to attend more traditional courses.

IV.4 Knowledge and ICT for Social Development

IV.4.a Making IT our own

The first ICT Institute was held in Beirut in December 2007 in partnership with WLP-International. 16 participants from Lebanon and Syria took part in this groundbreaking training facilitated by Usha Venkatechallam from WLP. The workshop introduced women trainees to IT tools, applications and software which they can use for training others as well as for social and economic empowerment purposes (advocacy, access to knowledge on women's rights, e-commerce, etc...).

In addition to the knowledge gained by participants, the workshop opened doors as to the significant potentials that ICT provides for furthering women's rights.

The CRTD.A team immediately put in practice the skills gained. This included the de-centralisation of the ICT training for women in rural areas (planned for 2008), furthering the ICT campaign outreach of the nationality campaign and using the tools and applications learned to boost communications on projects and activities.

In 2007, **CRTD.A** has additionally conducted a series of IT training workshops in a number of local areas in Lebanon (Akkar, Middle and North Beqaa). These workshops were held in conjunction with the start up of 2 ICT local centers (access points) in two, otherwise disadvantaged and remote areas in North Lebanon and West Beqaa. Fully operated by local women, these access points-to be are equipped with the needed IT hardware, software and tools. These access points are being prepared to play a role in creating sustainable job opportunities for women.

Another training series entitled "How to Become an IT Trainer" started in late 2007 with the organisation with the TOT in Beirut in December 2007. The next one in line is to be held in June 2008 in Baalback.

The project also focused on maximizing the use of IT applications for knowledge creation and dissemination particularly targeting contexts where such access to IT generated knowledge is poorly accessible.

Through this project, **CRTD.A** started producing and disseminating knowledge and information for supporting women's rights, public participation and livelihoods. **CRTD.A** consolidated its multi-dimensional information and knowledge network, where electronic gender and development bulletins and newsletters are being issued and disseminated widely on a monthly basis.

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Focusing on gender equality, social justice and social and economic development, information, news, and analysis were produced in order to design and disseminate e-briefcases containing web-blink, e-resources, tools and applications covering various development sectors including women's rights, agriculture, culture, health, youth and children, educational programmes, and other topics of relevance to the current access points.

Finally, **CRTD.A** in collaboration with Microsoft – UP, organized a press conference in November 2007. The date was chosen to coincide with the short visit of the Dubai-based Microsoft director for the MENA region Mr. Cherif Saddik. The event was heavily attended by more than 70 guests, many of whom representing the local media as **CRTD.A** deployed all its contacts and resources to ensure the success of the event which aimed at introducing the partnership agreement between **CRTD.A** and Microsoft, and launching the new phase of the “*Knowledge Networks*” Project – with the support of Microsoft – UP.

Daily Star:

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=86695

Al-Akhbar: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/ar/node/53529>

Al-Mustaqbal: <http://www.almustaqbal.com/stories.aspx?StoryID=260746>

L'Orient le Jour: coverage is annexed.

IV.4.b IRIS



The Independent Resources and Information (IRIS) Project is an autonomous, innovative initiative associated with **CRTD.A** that engages with government agencies, NGOs, and international organisations on issues of poverty social development and gender equality in Lebanon. The aim of IRIS and its partners is to help build a vibrant, effective and co-operative civil society within the rich NGO community in Lebanon. This community plays an essential role in addressing the country's social and economic problems, both independently and in association with government initiatives.

Despite the effectiveness and success of the NGOs few mechanisms exist to enable the consistent exchange and flow of information between them and to provide a base of co-operation and co-ordination between related projects. This gap in communication and information seriously hinders the effectiveness and impact of NGOs in Lebanon. IRIS seeks to address these

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problems and to contribute to the capacity building of NGOs by disseminating news briefs and analysis, promoting dialogue, information exchange and debate, increasing coverage of NGOs and their issues in the media, and mainstreaming gender awareness in social development. This is achieved through an ongoing process of interaction and involvement with NGOs and development agencies, which provides an essential channel of information.

This dissemination of information occurs through the publication of a monthly bulletin, an interactive website, training workshops, research. IRIS also hosts an extensive library collection, the NGO and Social Development Resource Library. The Library is comprised of over 3,175 titles in Arabic, English and French focused on social and political development, civil society, women and gender. This library service is available directly and online to NGOs, researchers, practitioners, students and Lebanese universities.

Gender and Development E-brief and Al Majal

An important part of **CRTD.A's** information distribution is the GAD e-brief, which is produced approximately every three weeks, in partnership with Frederick Ebert Stiftung Foundation. 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. Each issue covers three or four categories of information, events and opportunities including job vacancies within NGOs or the gender field and 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.

Al-Majal is one **CRTD.A's** of first publications and a unique source of information and analysis on NGOs/CSOs, development and social policies and aid monitoring covering Lebanon. Used as a resource for practitioners, activities and scholars, Al Majal continues to appear electronically and in Arabic. Al-Majal requires a meticulous tracking and analysis of data and information published in the official gazettes, key newspapers and well as published reports.

In 2007, 15 issues of GAD e-brief were released, and translated into Arabic, similarly 13 issues of Majal were issued and circulated widely through IRIS local and regional e-lists.

IV.4.d MACMAG GLIP



The Machreq/Maghreb Gender Linking and Information Project (GLIP) was the first step CRTD.A made towards developing unique expertise on gender, and its development preceded the formation of the organisation as a whole. This project is a regional social change network that promotes gender equality throughout the region. Through this network, GLIP aims to strengthen and sustain institutional capacity and dialogue as well as lend support and solidarity to women and community groups working on key gender issues.

GLIP has developed a core group of local gender trainers, facilitators and resource people throughout the region who are focused on training, capacity building and field level mentoring. These human resources are respected and admired throughout the region for their vital contribution to gender mainstreaming and knowledge of gender relations within the region. The Project has been made possible by funding from the EU, Oxfam, the Spanish Fundacion Promocion Social de la Cultura, the Women's Global Fund, the Women's Learning Project and the Global Opportunities Fund through the British Embassy in Beirut.

The Project's original aim was "to build and sustain a free and safe space to provide opportunities for analysis, learning and exchange on Gender and Development (GAD) amongst local groups, organisations and networks in the Arab region, in order to strengthen and sustain institutional capacity and policy dialogue on GAD within the Middle East/Maghreb region". The concept of a free and safe space is particularly important within this region in which

personal freedoms, particularly for women have traditionally been very limited due to the autocratic nature of regimes that have characterised many of the countries within it. As these countries begin to democratise it is critically important that support be given to women's movements to expand upon the limited freedoms that women now have. They then need forums in which they can analyse gender relations within their own societies and to communicate their knowledge, exchange strategies and give support and solidarity to each other.

GLIPs Gender Resource Library has become a valuable resource for original research, literature and training on gender and development with over 2,000 titles in Arabic, English and French and has also generated several other projects. The resources available help to increase the availability of analytical and practical gender tools that can be employed by various agents of change throughout the region. They have also translated publications from Oxfam-UK, which have been produced as newsletters, journals and books. GLIP has also developed a popular website with around 1 million hits a year and communications system and now produces a monthly e-Development on line.

In 2007, the following publications were released:

1. Early Marriage in Yemen – a base-line study to combat early marriage in Hadramout and Hodeida governorates

This publication is prepared by the Gender Development Research and Studies Center – Sana'a University – Yemen and Produced by **CRTD.A**

2. Disability, Equality and Human Rights – a training Manual for Humanitarian and Development Organizations in partnership with Oxfam GB and the Action on Disability and Development

3. Where is the Money for Women's Rights and electronic book along with the second Fundher Report in collaboration with AWID

IV.4.d The Lebanon Development Gateway

The Lebanon Development Gateway (LDG) started as part of the worldwide expansion of linked technological systems or "gateways" which were intended to be independent, yet linked sources of information conveyed through different forms of media. The project was initially generated within the IRIS programme, but is autonomous in having its own board and system of governance from the outset. However, political and circumstantial changes have substantially reduced the funding for the project, which has removed it

from the worldwide network, and has delayed the generation of information output.

Despite these difficulties, however, the LDG links with the national e-strategy and has taken part in events in Lebanon related to two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, using these to generate awareness of the potential of information technologies for civil society in Lebanon. LDG has also contributed to the activities of other **CRTD.A** programmes, by arranging IT training programmes as part of the WEEP programme, as well as for municipalities and local NGOs.

The LDG is one of 55 country gateways worldwide that use the 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 to provide up to date information about development, services, products and resources within Lebanon. The project also has a strong training element, and provides training to promote the awareness and use of ICT within Lebanon, particularly targeting women.

Finally, it is to be noted that all of **CRTD.A** information channels are now being consolidated so as to feed into the Lebanese Knowledge for Development Gateway LK4DG national hub. This national hub will act as a support to the local access points in the region, as well as to local associations who run IT centers in the region. It is worth noting that the LK4DG is currently in its final stage where the prototype of the portal is set and ready to be launched soon.

.V. CRTD.A – Plans for 2008

The upcoming year poses critical challenges for **CRTD.A** as most on-going projects will come to an end.

Indeed, the ACGEN research projects finishes in 2008 whilst the SEOW-MENA project closes in September. In addition, the post-conflict project funded by Oxfam GB will be completed by October 2008 and the Oxfam Quebec Livelihoods Project will follow shortly in early 2009.

This raises the critical issues of sustainability and mobilisation of resources for core support and continuity. As such, **CRTD.A** will be investing time and effort in the organisational review initiative.



.VI. Strategic partnerships

CRTD.A's work is particularly strengthened and consolidated through the interaction within the **Women Learning Partnership International (WLP-I)** partnership and collaboration.

CRTD.A is active within a number of international networks namely IGTN (as **CRTD.A** is the IGTN MEG antenna) as well as WIDE-Europe.

Our 2007 programme has been funded by:

- The Global Fund for Women
- International Development Research Center - IDRC
- Kvinna till Kvinna
- Heinrich Boell Foundation
- European Union
- Microsoft
- Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (via Oxfam Quebec)
- Oxfam GB
- Japanese Embassy