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Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Decade for Women

PROJECT DOCUMENT

Impact of Women Representatives in the
National Legislative Bodies Professional and Trade Unions

(Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Democratic Yemen)

84-0445

PROJECT DOCUMENT

Title : Impact of Women Representatives in the National
Legislative Bodies, Professional and Trade Unions

Project Number:

Estimated Starting Date : February 1985

Duration: 11 Months

Countries : Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Democratic Yemen

Primary Function : Institution Building

Secondary Function : Human resources

Sector : Government, Trade Unions, NGOs

Executing Agency: ECWA

VFDW Inputs : US \$ 85,000

Part I. A. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The project aims at promoting the representation of women at the decision-making levels in the legislative, professional and labour unions and developing the institutional frame-work for their effective participation.

Part I. B. IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

The following constitute the immediate objectives of the project:

1. To determine the present size of women assuming responsibilities in the legislative bodies (Parliaments, Consultative Councils), Professional Unions, trade unions and its development over the last ten years.
2. To identify policies adopted for encouraging women to be eligible for such posts and to increase their number.
3. To assess the actual impact of women in these bodies and to delineate development areas and issues of their concern.
4. To identify difficulties and obstacles confronting the fulfillment of these participatory roles.
5. To formulate proposals for meeting obstacles encountered by women in their equal access to and effective functioning in these public institutions and for widening the general participation of women in these bodies.

Part I. C. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The issue of the participation of Arab women in the legislative bodies of their countries was raised as early as 1919 in Egypt, with Syria and Iraq, thereafter upon the emergence of the first indications of a possible parliamentary system. It is, however, important to note that the cumulative effect of a number of historical events collectively played an important role in initiating the trend towards the right of women to public offices; among them:

1. The struggle of the Arab people for independence in the early twenties of this century
2. The cultural, political, and educational contacts with western civilizations and its institutions.
3. The general process of modernization within the Arab region.

4. The emergence of trends for democratization of power and representation by the people.

5. The education of women which also led to their entrance into the labour force.

6. The birth of the women movement in the early twenties initially as a pressure political group and later as an organized group for women's rights.

These factors were influential in raising the consciousness of women, and making them aware of themselves as citizens with responsibilities and privileges. They highlighted the need for the participation of women in the decision-making and implementation levels as an integral part of their citizenship responsibilities and as a human right that requires their involvement into the mainstream of national life. There was also a realization of the need to create institutions for the conduct of decision-making for the society as a whole and for special occupational groups. Though women were active in public duties and occupied public offices, their participation remained limited in the present institutions. Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, for example, witnessed the emergence of the women movement for political and feminist issues, yet they still face a limited participation role for women at the various levels. Within this frame of reference there is a serious need to assess the movement of women's participation in the influential national institutions, namely, legislative bodies, professional unions, and trade unions.

With the end of the United Nations Decade for Women, the need arises for assessing the movement of women in these public institutions. The proposed case studies would utilize in their data collection official records, published materials, questionnaires, group discussions, and interviews. The combination of these methods would allow not only the collection of raw data (which is rare in this area) but also documentation of the obstacles of the public life of the women involved. A workshop of about thirty-five women to be selected from these national bodies would fulfill a main requirement for examining the access, status and impact of women at the decision-making level, identifying obstacles encountered in rendering their duties, and formulating a guideline recommending measures and means for increasing and intensifying the role of women in the decision-making taking process.

The study will attempt to answer inter alia questions related to the position of women in the above-mentioned bodies:

1. The size and proportional representation of women in the legislative bodies professional unions and trade unions, and trends therein during the last ten years;

2. The nature, level, and scope of responsibilities to which they are entrusted;

3. Manner by which they assumed their membership and/or posts (election/appointment), the characteristic of their constituents, cycles of representation;

4. The social economic and occupational background of these women;

5. Personal and societal factors that led to their participation in public life;

6. Obstacles they encountered during their early efforts and other which they meet in their present situation;

7. Their relationship with their male-majority colleagues;

8. Their efforts to draw more women into these bodies;

9. Policies, legislations, programmes available for increasing women in these bodies;

10. Their role/effort/impact in promoting policies, legislations, programmes for women;

11. Their proposals for promoting the participation of women in these bodies.

Part E. OUTPUTS

The following outputs are expected:

1. Five case studies of the status obstacles, and impact of women in legislative bodies professional and trade unions in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Democratic Yemen.

2. A workshop for 35 women representing legislative bodies and professional and trade unions.

3. A guideline for increasing women's participation in the decision-making levels.

Part II. F. ACTIVITIES

The following activities are necessary for producing the above outputs:

1. Identification of five consultants for each of the case studies.
2. Preparation of the detailed outline of case studies and the relevant data collection tools.
3. Organization of the workshop
4. Preparation, adoption, and printing of the guideline.
5. Distribution of the Guideline to governments, members of legislative bodies, professional unions and trade unions, and NGOs.

Part I. G. INPUTS

It is proposed that the VFDW provide assistance for the following:

1. Consultants
2. Participants travel expenses
3. Printing of guideline
4. Administrative support for consultants in their own counties.

Part I. H. OUTLINE OF WORK PLAN

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Starting Date and Duration</u>
1. Preparation of case study outline and questionnaires and general structure of the interviews	February - March 1985 (two months)
2. Collection of data and information and preparations of case studies in each country	April - August 1985 (5 months)
3. Preparation of regional trends and <u>Guideline</u>	Septemeber 1985 (one month)
4. Organization worksshop	October 1985
5. Printing of <u>Guideline</u>	November 1985
6. Distribution of <u>Guideline</u>	December 1985

Part I. I. COST PLAN

<u>Category</u>	<u>US Dollars</u>
Research/consultants (20 wm)	40,000
Participants travel and DSA	50,000
Printing costs	10,000
Administrative support costs (Sundry)	10,000
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Grand Total	\$110,000

