

This thesis, which was accepted by the University of Saragossa, was dedicated to the International Red Cross. It was submitted with a preface by Professor Garcia Arias in which he gives a detailed account of the steps which led to the drawing up of the First Geneva Convention in 1864, the basis of all subsequent developments of humanitarian law.

H. C.

---

**UNRWA Newsletter, Geneva, No. 40, 1965.**

The United Nations' Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) was founded in December 1949 by the United Nations. Assisted by governments of host countries, the Agency fulfils a dual mission: on the one hand, it provides refugees with food, accommodation, social and health services; on the other hand, it educates Palestinian children and adolescents.

For hundreds of refugee women and girls, UNRWA's Women's Activities Programme has been a means of extending their horizons and of benefiting from the social revolution that is taking place as the status of women undergoes a significant change. In the past, Arab women have traditionally led secluded lives. Widespread illiteracy among women has been a major barrier to the reception of new ideas, for until recently, education for women was the exception rather than the rule.

In many parts of the Arab world, however, the old traditions are rapidly changing. Today, almost as many refugee girls as boys are attending UNRWA-UNESCO elementary and preparatory schools, and an increasing number are continuing on to secondary school.

But for a large number of refugee women and girls, this recent revolution in education has come too late. They had either never gone to school or had dropped out at an early age, and they could not now go back to school. However, thanks to the Women's Activities Programme, many of them have not been left behind.

The Women's Activities Programme aims to help refugee women and girls, primarily those with little or no education, to extend their horizons and thinking beyond their restricted refugee environment, and to give them an opportunity to acquire new skills and interests. Through a variety of educational, social and recreational activities the programme raises the standards of many refugee women, and thus contributes towards raising the general level of enlightenment of the communities in which they live.

## BOOKS

The programme was started on an experimental basis with two centres in 1962. The refugees were so enthusiastic that more centres were started, and now there are 14 women's activities groups : six in Jordan, five in the Gaza Strip, two in Lebanon and one in Syria. The centres have a total registration of more than 800 women and girls, most of them in their late teens or twenties. The groups meet every afternoon, using the premises of the UNRWA Sewing Centres, which operate only in the mornings. The members attend whenever they can, and many come every afternoon.

---