

## The Way it Evolved ...

No title could have been more suitable for IWSAW's quarterly publication than *Al-Raïda* (The Pioneer), since IWSAW was the first institute dedicated to women's issues in the Arab world. After its establishment in 1973, the Institute's directorship was entrusted to Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr who, from 1973 to 1997, succeeded in maintaining its pioneering role, thanks to her long-term vision and relentless efforts.

It was three years after its foundation that the Institute decided to publish, both in English and Arabic, an eight-page newsletter. The first issue, which was stenciled, appeared in May 1976; its editor was Rose Ghurayyib, who remained in this post until 1983, and continued to contribute to *Al-Raïda* until 1993.

With time, *Al-Raïda* has developed in content, size, and appearance. Between 1976 and 1983, its table of contents included profiles of women, interviews, conference reports, summaries of studies, articles, as well as book reviews. In the mid-1980's, it started publishing research-based articles in addition to the previous sections. In the late 1980's, due to censorship, the limited number of subscribers in the Arab world, and financial constraints, the Institute stopped publishing the Arabic version of *Al-Raïda*.

In 1994, another significant change took place: *Al-Raïda* started featuring a file focusing on a specific pressing theme, with its usual sections also revolving around it.

In addition, the eight-page newsletter has expanded into issues that vary between 48 and 100 pages, depending on the material in hand. A deliberate effort was also put into improving its layout and appearance.

Another major development occurred in the early 1990's: an *Al-Raïda* advisory board was established. It consists at present of eight members from various disciplines and kinds of institution (academic, NGOs, UN agencies). Its contributors come from a wide range of nationalities, specializations and backgrounds.

It is worth noting that *Al-Raïda*'s subscribers are mainly Western university libraries, women's studies centers, NGOs, and individual researchers. Furthermore, since 2002, it has become available on-line in both English and Arabic, serving researchers and various international organizations.

IWSAW's next objective is to make *Al-Raïda* into a refereed journal. Although this objective will require a tremendous effort, we at the Institute are confident that we will be able to meet this new challenge.

**Mona Chemali Khalaf**  
 Director  
 Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW)  
 Lebanese American University

## Letters to Al-Raïda

Die. 16. Jul 2003 11:11  
**From:** Kadinin İnsan Hakları-Women for Women's Human Rights/NEW WAYS <elaanil@wwhr.org>  
**To:** <al-raida@lau.edu.lb>  
**Date:** Freitag, 9. Mai 2003 5:00  
**Subject:** copies of "Sexuality" issue

Dear Myram Steir,

Hello from Istanbul. I am writing to you from Women for Women's Human Rights - NEW WAYS. We've received the "Sexuality" issue of Al-Raïda (in which there's an article by my colleague Pinar) - the whole issue is absolutely wonderful! Many thanks and congratulations to everyone who has put effort into it.

We will be holding a workshop on "Sexual and Bodily Rights as Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa" at the end of month and we think it's a great opportunity to distribute the "Sexuality" issue of Al-Raïda. Can you advise us as to how we can obtain about 30 copies?

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Wishes,  
 Elif Arsl  
 Kadinin İnsan Hakları Projesi (KİHP) - NEW WAYS  
 Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) - NEW WAYS

**Subject:** to the editors of al-Raïda  
**Date:** Tue, 26 Sep 2000 18:37:23 GMT  
**From:** "Lynn Welchman" <lw10@soas.ac.uk>  
**Organization:** S.O.A.S.  
**To:** [inara@icjnl.lau.edu.lb](mailto:inara@icjnl.lau.edu.lb)

Dear editors and assistant editors of Al-Raïda

... May I express enormous appreciation for the work on Al-Raïda, which is extremely useful in many different ways. I have received some copies from a friend, Emma Playfair (director of INTERRIGHTS in London) and we are now in the process of sorting out a subscription, which should reach you soon. To introduce myself briefly, I am director of the Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law (CIMEL) which is part of the Law Department at the School of Oriental and African Studies, at London University in the UK.

... I am preparing a new masters course here in the SOAS Law Department, entitled Law and Society in the Middle East and North Africa, ... I am in the process of preparing reading material for the students, and would like to ask your permission to reproduce (by photocopy) the al-Raïda 'files' from two past issues:

1. Al-Raïda Volume XV nos. 80-81 Winter/Spring 1998, pages 11-52 (Arab countries and CEDAW); and
2. Al-Raïda Volume XIV no.76 Winter 1997 pages 8-2 (Women in the Arab family)

...If you don't feel that you can agree to this, I will of course understand. Anyway, sorry to have taken so long in this email! And I do look forward to your response with thanks

Lynn  
 Dr. L. Welchman  
 Director  
 Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law  
 Dept. of Law  
 SOAS

**choisir**  
 La cause des femmes  
 Fondé par Gisèle Halimi et Simone de Beauvoir  
 GH/AM  
 Paris, le 3 avril 2003

Merci chère Mona pour ta lettre et l'envoi des très intéressants numéros de votre revue « Al Raïda ». Ils « tournent » entre les mains et les yeux des responsables du Bureau de CHOISIR.

J'ai gardé moi aussi le meilleur souvenir de notre rencontre et j'espère que nos échanges accroîtront notre coopération.

Donnez-nous de vos nouvelles.

Très cordialement,

La Présidente  
 Gisèle HALIMI  
 lettre dictée et signée en son absence

*Gisèle Halimi*

le 2 Mai 2000  
 Mme Chemali Khalaf

"... J'ai lu quelques numéros de la Revue *Al-Raïda*. De qualité scientifique internationale, elle est d'un grand intérêt. Pour mon propre projet de recherche, les numéros sur les droits humains (74 -75) et sur CEDAW (80-81) comportent des informations et des analyses précieuses. ..."

Denise Couture  
 Professeure agrégée  
 Faculté de théologie  
 Université de Montréal