

Children's Literature as a Means of Promoting Intercultural Understanding

A seminar on "International Perspectives in Literature for Children and Young People" was held in Denmark, August 29-September 2, 1977, by the Danish National Commission for Unesco.

A comprehensive report about the seminar is in preparation and will be ready in early 1978 but the recommendations made by the participants have been condensed by the drafting committee for the report, and here we publish them as they were reproduced in the copy received by Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr, Director of the IWSAW, who attended the Seminar.

Resolved: that the Unesco's regional centers for book development give due consideration to the value of fictional literature for

children and young people, for education and for the general endeavour to heighten the quality of life;

...that model collection of children's books for kindergartens, schools, and public libraries be established, above all, in connection with Unesco's regional centers.

...that existing international, regional and national institutions and organizations, governmental and non-governmental, be encouraged toward increased cooperation, aiming at a wider distribution of monographs and serial publications for children.

...that the number of fellowships for teachers and children's librarians be increased with a view to promote studies on the effect

of fictional literature for children and young people, aiming at enhancing their knowledge of other cultures and influencing their attitudes towards these ends.

The following points were also emphasized:

1 - The promotion of literature dealing with contemporary conflicts in a way that promotes intercultural understanding.

2 - The need for books for the handicapped child and books about different handicaps in order to increase understanding by others.

3 - The importance of avoiding discrimination and cruelty by a careful selection of folk tales and modern tales for children.

Impact of War on Lebanese Children and Youth



This social topic was discussed at a conference organized by the Lebanese Child Welfare Association and suggested by Mrs. Zahia Salman, Head of the Association. It was held in Beirut on the 7th and 8th of December, 1977. A large number of organizations participated in the panel by presenting studies and lectures on the topic or by joining in the discussions which followed. Some of those organizations present were "The Educational Center for Research and Development", "The Lebanese Red Cross", "Beirut University

College - IWSAW", "International College", "American University of Beirut" and "Lebanese Family Planning".

The representative panel ended with a large number of recommendations which may be summarized as follows:

1 - Promotion of health conditions by the modernization of basic health services; application of the U.N. charter concerning the "Rights of Children"; carrying out a permanent cleanliness campaign throughout the country; pro-

ducing complete statistical information on the number of the handicapped and war victims; and adopting a plan for effectiveness against drug addiction.

2 - Promotion of the mental health of children by developing their creative powers and meeting their need for joy and recreation; awakening their national feeling through the production of suitable radio and television programs; popularization of sports and folk arts and the elimination of films which incite to crime and violence.

3 - Promotion of social justice by recognizing the importance of a well integrated and all-inclusive plan of social reform.

4 - Promotion of education by adopting an educational plan based on a thorough study of the needs of Lebanese society; provision of modern, well-equipped school buildings; raising the quality of textbooks; providing better training for teachers; and the preparation of good reading material for children and youth.