

Women's Empowerment and Strengthening of the Family Institution in Iran

(A report on objectives, programs and activities of an Iranian NGO)

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Prepared for:
Human Right Council
August 2009

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Abstract:

1- This report is prepared respectfully by "Healthy Family Center", an Iranian non-governmental organization, about its activities and programs in the course of women's empowerment, making healthy families and improving families' fundament in I.R. of Iran.

2- Family is basis of the society and main center of growth and sublimity for human. Reaching to a healthy society needs nurture of humans with healthy body and spirit in normal families. It will not achievable without appropriate policy making and planning inspired from monotheistic perspective and for the families' sublimity and interests, and implementing programs by participation of the peoples and cooperation of civic institutions. Certainly, creating of a normal and dynamic family requires that spouses and children have multilateral life skills and training.

3- In the direction of women's empowerment, Office of Women Affairs in Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with Center of Women Participation Affairs of Presidency Organization and other related organizations in 2002-2003, provides minimum trainings for married women of Tehran, with implementing "Healthy Family Plan" as a training package in three main and essential parts; women's rights ,effective communication skills and sexual & reproductive health and rights, in order that they were capable of preventing damages inside families by obtaining personal skills and improve quality of their lives. Results of the evaluation demonstrate success of the plan.

4- After success of the plan, main core of establishing a non-governmental institution, with the same name, create by some of professors, advisors, experts of the plan and other interested ones; after changing of government and policies and new programs of Office of Women Affairs in Ministry of Interior and Center of Women Participation Affairs of Presidency Organization, considering women's needs in the society, program continuous by a non-governmental institution, "Healthy Family Center", which has been started its work officially by receiving legal certificate with the aim of multilateral health and welfare of families since 2005.

Key words:

5- Following words are included in the study: Family, Women's rights, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (with respect to Islamic-Iranian culture and regulations) and well-being, women's empowerment and etc. according to their international concepts.

Introduction of Organization:

6- Healthy Family Center is a non-governmental, non-political and non-profit organization with official permit of I.R. of Iran's Ministry of Interior, which has been started its activities since 2003 informally and formally in national level since 2005.

7- Objective of establishing such center is improving multilateral health and welfare of families to reach to healthy families and societies. This objective fulfills by following activities:

- Identification and explanation of information, training, investigation and servicing needs of the families about well-being
- Necessary trainings for families
- Development of related investigations with multilateral well-being of the families
- Efforts towards recognition of the families' harms and prevention of them
- Efforts towards providing necessary services of the clients
- Advocacy for participation and cooperation of governmental organizations in related fields
- Attracting for public participation, non-governmental organizations and voluntary powers in related fields
- Advocacy for participation and cooperation of related international organizations to guarantee families' well-being

8- Activities have been done by the center are as follows:

- Cooperation in implementing plan of healthy family with a training package, including three parts of women's rights in the family, communication skills for women and reproductive and sexual health and rights (together with Ministry of Interior, Tehran Governor's Offices, Tehran municipal regions, all of Tehran's Governorships and some of the country's provinces)
- Cooperation in implementing investigation of "Healthy Family Project"
- Holding advisory-specialized meetings of related governmental and non-governmental organizations for introducing healthy family plan and results obtained by implementation of it
- Holding meeting for the reason of National and International Family Day in different years
- Cooperation in compiling training book of healthy family together with Office of Women Affairs in Ministry of Interior

- Membership and cooperation in Iran's Reproductive Health Network (UNFPA project in Iran)
- Holding training courses on Gender analysis, reproductive and sexual health/ sexuality education in different organizations
- Establishing Healthy Family Center's web log
- Cooperation in training, investigating and implementing projects of the country's governmental and non-governmental organizations and international organizations
- Participation in seminars, fairs and specialized meetings in relation to women and family
- Planning related projects with women and family

9- Healthy Family Center is capable of:

- Planning and holding training courses
- Planning and implementing investigation projects
- Providing advisory services
- Holding specialized meetings and national and international seminars about family and women issues
- Publishing books, articles and specialized press

10- Training courses that the center is prepare to implement them in national level (Iran) and in Muslim countries of the region such as Afghanistan, Tajikistan and so:

- Course of gender analysis and women's empowerment
- Course of reproductive & sexual health and rights
- Training course of confronting with Domestic and gender based violence training
- Training course of sexuality and sexual education
- Training courses about health issues for different addressee groups in family (women, youths, girls, middle aged, men and so)
- Training course of life skills and effective communication skills
- Training course of rights and regulations of women and family
- Training course of cooperative family
- Training course of social-cultural issues (entrepreneurship, social participation, familiarity with internet)
- Others

Methodology:

11- Considering religious, social and cultural circumstances of Iran, this center planned for its activities and programs and implements them.

12- Healthy Family Center uses providing experiences and documents to state its plans and activities.

13- Healthy Family Center arranges and implements its programs considering I.R. of Iran's laws and their contents.

14- This center is attentive about different health indexes in Iran and countries of the region and Millennium Development Goals (MDG), especially indexes of women and family health in its programs and studies.

Survey of Laws:

15- Principle 21 and principle 10 of Constitutional Law emphasize on maintaining family institution and intellectual rights of women.

16- Principles 3, 29 and 43 of Constitutional Law emphasize on health of Iranian society.

17- In the Country's Fourth Program of Development, special preferences are considered for women. According to Article 111 of the program, government have to take actions (as mentioned in the Appendix) with the aim of improving women role in the society, development of opportunities and widening of their level of participation in the country.

18- Right charter and responsibilities of women in Islamic Republic of Iran regime delineate a wide outlook.

19- Non-governmental organizations in I.R. of Iran are active according to Executive by Law of establishment and activity of non-governmental organizations.

20- Iran has remarkable advances in reaching to developmental objectives, particularly in health.

Opportunities and Challenges:

21- The center has the following opportunities:

- have legal activity permissions in Iran
- Membership of some of women managers and specialists in board of trustees and board of directors of the center
- Access to expert and trained human resources
- Have appropriate training packages
- Need of the society to the center's activities
- Welcome in provided trainings in the society
- Success in programs and obtained experiences

22- Challenges are as follows:

- Sensitivity of the issues of the center in Islamic society (women, rights, reproductive and sexual right, sexual health and rights and so)
- Perspective and support of governmental organizations that are involved in women and family affairs to non-governmental organizations and their position in the country, following the governments changed
- Financial problems, procure charges and equipments of the center

Recommendations and Approaches:

23- Healthy Family Center expects from Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights Council to reinforce participation approaches and presence of civic organizations on the structure and processes of the Council.

24- According to the needs of the families to modern trainings of life skills and importance of activities of the center in reaching to better indexes, Healthy Family Center of responsible organizations of women affairs, family, health, and youths in I.R. of Iran's government expects more support from nongovernmental organizations that are involved in health of the women, family and society.

25- It is hoped that civic organizations' participation in implementing programs of women's empowerment and strengthening of family institution reinforced in national and regional levels.

Conclusions:

26- Non-governmental organizations could be executive power of governmental sector in family programs and society-oriented.

27- “Healthy Family Project” could be implemented as a successful pattern for Muslim and the region countries together with cultural and religious homogeneous.

28- Identify and introduce active non-governmental organizations in rights of women, family and human rights affairs in different countries to international donors, for receiving technical-specialized assists and attraction of financial resources to promote their programs, could be very helpful.

Acknowledgment:

Appreciation of participation and invaluable efforts of the following in the Healthy Family Center:

Fakhrosadat Mohtashami Pour, Monireh Zareh, Masoumeh Ebrahimi Tavani, Fatemeh Rahmati, Ashraf Gerami Zadegan, Roghayeh Mohammadi, Ashraf MehmanNavazan, Fatemeh Hajian Moghadam, Tahereh Fazl, Zahra Razfar, Narges Lankarani and so.

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- 5- Documents of healthy family program, Office of Women Affairs in Ministry of Interior of I.R. of Iran, 2003
- 6- Healthy family book, Office of Women Affairs in Ministry of Interior of I.R. of Iran, 2005
- 7- Documents of specialized meetings of Healthy Family Center, 2003-2009
- 8- Documents of training courses of Healthy Family Center, 2003-2009
- 9- Documents, brochures, legal permissions and certificates of the Healthy Family Center

Appendixes:

- Law file
- Images file
- Other documents