



The House of Hope in Vieux-Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium

by Loredana Marchi

Dar al Amal was set up after several years' work in a blue collar district of Brussels with a high density of migrants among the population. *Dar al Amal*, which means "house of hope", was intended as a sign of hope in a new concept of work with women migrants.

Dar al Amal, like other social centres in similar districts deals mainly with young women who have access to the conventional activities in migrant circles. Centres like *Dar al Amal* organise literacy courses for young semi-literate women or remedial classes for those who are still attending school. It promotes cultural activities as well as theatrical groups.

Dar al Amal does not intend either to impose Western culture or to reproduce one culture to the detriment of another. It works with Muslim women who live in a Western context.

In view of this general framework their work always takes into account respect for the original culture and encourages solidarity among women. Training cooperatives in cooking, weaving, sewing, cutting have been set up in order to provide the young women with a vocation that will help integrate them into the community.

Source: Translated from the French by the Language Service, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland.