

Thesis explores the status of Moroccan women

■ A graduate student finds that women do better in villages working with a non-governmental organization

By Serena Markstrom
Oregon Daily Emerald

For the planning, public policy and management department's final Geographic Society meeting, Rose Armour presented her research findings after spending nine months in Morocco shadowing and surveying women for her masters thesis.

Armour spent time in four rural Moroccan villages looking at leadership, education, health and income generation activity, comparing her field study results with the findings in a 1997 UNICEF survey.

Since 1997, the Modular approach of the Near East Foundation, a New York-based non-governmental organization that promotes sustainable development has been in place in two of

the villages. Armour's research compared NEF villages to non-NEF villages.

In the two NEF villages literacy rates were 20 percent or higher, but in non-NEF villages none of the women could read and write.

Jeffrey Magoto, director of the Yamada Language Center, spent 1978 through 1980 in Morocco as a Peace Corps volunteer and said he was surprised that the NEF had so much success in improving literacy rates.

"It shows what they were trying to do was working," Magoto said.

The main source of income in the southern Moroccan villages is weaving, with some women spending as much as eight hours per day at the task. The men do not weave but they have complete control of selling the product in markets. Part of the NEF program is increasing the amount of voice women have in village decisions.

"They have no control over the marketing of their product," Armour said, adding that women earn about five cents per hour for

each rug, which take about two weeks to weave.

Elizabeth Wartluft, a doctorate student in anthropology who also spent time in Morocco as a Peace Corps volunteer in the late 80s, said she was impressed that women in NEF villages are gaining decision-making power.

"That women are getting input on council is astonishing," she said.

When Armour surveyed the men, they told her that since the NEF arrived in 1987, the women have increased their levels of self-confidence and are more optimistic about their futures than in non-NEF villages.

Because of the nature of the culture, Armour could not conduct her surveys alone with the women. At first this bothered her, she said, but it ended up being an advantage.

The group setting worked as a check system because if one woman said, for example, her average workload per day for a particular task, another woman



Catharine Kendall Emerald
Rose Armour presents her graduate thesis research in 'Empowering Women Through Rural Gender Developments' to the Geographical Society Tuesday evening.

would say whether she was exaggerating.

"It made it more honest that they had to do it in a group," Armour said.

Armour also shadowed one woman in each of the four villages, often conducting inter-

views in the kitchen because it was the only place she and her hired interpreter could be alone with the women.

"They had never been asked about this stuff," she said. "The women were overwhelmingly eager to talk."

Registering

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For young men born in 1980 who are now 19 and 20 years old, the average age for college freshman, the compliance rate is about 83 percent, Brodsky said.

A state-by-state survey issued by the agency showed some large states had low registration levels among men — California with 79 percent and Texas at 77 percent. New Hampshire, by contrast, ranked highest with 95 percent.

The law requires all young men living in the United States to register with the Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. That includes immigrants and non-citizen residents of the United States.

The names are gathered in case a national emergency should require a military draft. The last actual draft was in 1973 near the end of the Vietnam era.

Failure to register can cost young men their chance at financial aid from the Free Application

for Federal Student Aid, government loans and grants, job training, government jobs and citizenship for male immigrants.

It is also a felony punishable by up to five years in jail or prison and a fine of up to \$250,000, but such cases are rarely prosecuted. The last prosecution was in 1985, according to agency officials.

ROTC Major Kevin Bolan said that a person in the ROTC program couldn't be drafted. The ROTC contracts people to serve full-time as active duty Army offi-

cers or pursue a career and serve part-time with the National Guard or Reserves.

"We will probably try to increase awareness of our students to make them aware of this through our classes because most of our students are not in the ROTC program, and they need to comply with those guidelines and register," Bolan said. "My recommendation is that people go ahead and comply."

Assistant Director of Student Financial Aid Jim Gilmour said that

male students at the University do need to submit their names to Selective Service in order to receive financial aid. He said that there have only been a handful of students over time at the University who couldn't receive financial aid because they were too old and couldn't register for the draft.

"In general, our students are registered for Selective Service and therefore are qualified to receive financial aid," Gilmour said.

The Associated Press contributed to this article.

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