



STARTING NEW BRANCHES

Established branches exist only in larger cities. Some are not interested in becoming any larger; others are inactive or have a low activity level. There are potential members who could be recruited, but no existing branch has a programme which meets their needs.

In situations like these, starting new branches can be an excellent recruitment strategy. New branches provide an organization with wider geographic representation, meet a greater range of member needs and offer additional leadership opportunities.

- ❑ New branches can be started in cities where one does not yet exist or can link women graduates in two or more nearby towns or in rural areas. With today's electronic communication technology, branches can even connect women together in cyberspace.
- ❑ New branches can also be formed in places where one already exists. In large cities where a branch holds its activities in the city centre, additional branches might meet the needs of members in peripheral areas or suburbs. If an existing branch has activities targeted at an older membership, creating a second branch might more easily attract younger members.
- ❑ Existing branches can be valuable partners in helping to start new groups. Encouraging older branches to mentor new ones can be an excellent way of overcoming any perceived threat of competition. Existing branches can promote new branch formation by establishing satellites in nearby communities or towns. When a satellite group attracts enough members, the existing branch can help launch the new one. The new and older branches can plan joint activities, complementing and reinforcing each other to the benefit of both.
- ❑ Dual membership should be made possible and encouraged to allow members to take part in the activities of more than one branch. Members from existing groups can bring considerable experience to a newer branch, while personally benefiting from the programme diversity and new energy. To facilitate this, the national organization can set up a mechanism that will allow national and international membership fees to be paid only once.
- ❑ Initiating new branches should be encouraged by working through the strategic planning modules provided at the start of this guide and choosing a project around which to centre activities in the initial phase. Ideally the project should be one which will produce measurable results within a relatively short period of time, to give the group a feeling of accomplishment on which to build.