

NEWS

no. 157 • summer 2007

ANERA

AMERICAN NEAR EAST REFUGEE AID

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First Responders in Emergency Relief

Fighting in Gaza and Tripoli has grabbed the world's attention in recent weeks, highlighting the fragile nature of the region. The full impact of the conflicts was not known at the time of this writing, but reminds us of other recent crises in the Middle East, which have already been documented.

The election of Hamas to the Palestinian National Authority leadership last year led to a devastating reduction in foreign assistance by the international community. Since then, public sector employees including teachers and doctors, have received their salaries only periodically causing an alarming reduction in critical services. And despite a withdrawal from Gaza, Israel applied an embargo in 2006. Crossing points into Gaza were closed most of the year causing a significant decline in commercial activity. Approximately 39 percent of the workforce is unemployed.

Gaza families responded by reducing the consumption of meat, fish and fruits. Not surprisingly, rates of anemia in women and children have risen. More than 80 percent of Gaza's 1.3 million-population now receives food packages provided by international donors. The percentage of people living below the poverty line has exceeded 50 percent.

Last summer, Israel and Hezbollah fought a devastating war in southern Lebanon. The 34-day conflict led to numerous civilian deaths, massive population displacement and tremendous economic losses throughout Lebanon. Over 1,000 were reported killed during the fighting, 4,000 injured and nearly one million Lebanese were displaced from their

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A Lebanese woman receives assistance through ANERA's Southern Agriculture and Business Recovery Program.

Scholarship Program Profile: *Annual Drawing Contest*



For the past ten years, ANERA has held a drawing contest for students in the seven scholarship schools. Children from ages 5 to 17 are given the opportunity to submit their artwork.

The contest provides the children with an outlet to express their hopes and dreams for the future, and encourages them to share their artistic creativity. Gerry Shawa, Director of the Atfaluna School in Gaza, says, "We wish to thank ANERA for having had the vision to realize the importance of initiating a wonderful, creative activity for the children. This yearly event does a lot to encourage and give hope to the kids in the midst of the gloom and doom here."

A different theme is chosen each year based on ideas submitted by the students. *When I Grow Up* is this year's theme. Multiple prizes are awarded in three age groups, and include certificates to the winning artists, and a selection of art supplies for each of the participating schools.

Encouraging art education is a small part of ANERA's Scholarship Program. An annual donation of only \$175 a year or \$15 a month will help support a student for an entire year. Current individual donations assist over 200 children in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan who otherwise could not afford the cost of education.

For more information about the Scholarship Program, contact Cindy Ajamian, Scholarship Program Coordinator, at (202) 842-2766, ext. 13 or cajamian@anera.org.

Benefit Concert Supports Milk for Preschoolers Program

ANERA and The Jerusalem Fund for Education and Community Development hosted a benefit concert on April 12 at the Rosslyn Spectrum Theatre in Arlington, VA. Lebanese pianist, Rami Khalife, and Syrian clarinetist, Kinan Azmeh, donated their talents to publicize awareness of ANERA's Milk for Preschoolers program through a musical performance that reflected a delicate posture between the composed and the improvised. The concert was attended by an attentive audience of approximately 100.

Anchoring their music in the traditions of their countries of origin, Rami and Kinan, both internationally acclaimed, Julliard-trained musicians, improvised on themes that explore the wider Arab musical landscape and the world musical scene.

ANERA was pleased to host an event that drew greater attention to Palestinian children's need for a source of regular nutrition. Staff laid out flyers and posters during a pre-concert reception to provide details about the program. ANERA's Milk for Preschoolers Program currently benefits 20,000 children in 200 preschools. Additional materials at the concert recognized the Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation's Habilitation Preschool in Lebanon's Mar Elias refugee camp, a project of the Jerusalem Fund.

There are many ways to support humanitarian projects, including through the shared gift of music. ANERA thanks the musicians for donating their time and talents.



Lebanese pianist Rami Khalife and Syrian clarinetist Kinan Azmeh perform for ANERA's Milk for Preschoolers Program at the Rosslyn Spectrum Theatre.

Putting the Pieces Back Together

Bridges and roads have been destroyed. Schools and houses are decimated. Shells of burnt-out cars are scattered along the road. Signs warn residents of unexploded ordnance and land mines. This was the portrait painted by Ellen Siegel, the vice chair of ANERA's Medical Committee, who recently visited some of the hardest hit areas during last year's war in Lebanon. One young woman told her "the area was on fire." It was no exaggeration.



Ellen with a pharmacist in Beirut.

This tragic evidence of the bombing in Lebanon reveals staggering economic and human loss. It will take years to recover.

In response to the war and with generous support from donors, ANERA provided hygiene kits for children, hot meals to displaced families, and medi-

cines to village clinics. It also supported Lebanese partners who coordinated to provide emergency services and carry out relief activities.

In her travels, Ms. Siegel, a registered nurse who provided medical support to refugees during the 1982 Sabra and Shatila camp massacre, saw firsthand the war's damaging effects as well as ANERA's response. A clinic in Kham displayed an x-ray unit damaged beyond repair when a bomb exploded nearby. The center is now back in operation thanks to support from ANERA. Its mobile clinic and first aid team visits outlying villages where local residents cannot take off from their agricultural work to travel to the clinic for treatment and diagnosis. In Beirut, Ms. Siegel visited the Children's Cancer Center, where poor children suffering from leukemia receive chemotherapy and bone marrow transplants thanks to a grant from ANERA. She also spent time in a school for deaf children in Mount Lebanon which, with ANERA's support, hosted displaced families from the south seeking refuge from the fighting.

"This is one of the most fragile parts of the world," commented Ms. Siegel, sadly shaking her head. "Besides addressing the chronic health needs of the people, anything can happen anytime. ANERA always needs to be ready to respond, like it did last summer."

Emergency Relief

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homes. The damage to civilian infrastructure totaled almost \$3.6 billion and lost business opportunities for the country are estimated at \$15 billion.

ANERA responded quickly to both humanitarian crises. Through appeals to donors, we mobilized resources to help alleviate the extreme suffering of affected populations. An overwhelming response enabled ANERA to provide immediate relief in the form of cash grants and donations of food, medicine and medical supplies.

For example, with its Lebanese NGO partners, ANERA delivered approximately 30,500 infant care hygiene kits to displaced mothers and implemented a hot lunch program to displaced Lebanese families. We also delivered more than \$5 million in medical supplies for needy Lebanese and Palestinians. Additionally, we mobilized to secure a major USAID grant to finance recovery for hundreds of farmers and dozens of rural communities after huge war losses.

These tragic events highlighted an important role ANERA plays – as a first responder in times of emergency. No one can predict when conflict may occur, but in the Middle East that is all too often.

ANERA is in an excellent position to respond to emergencies. For 40 years we have been "on the ground" in Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinian territories. Due to our long history of working in the area and excellent local staff, we are familiar with disadvantaged and at-risk communities who increasingly look to ANERA for help.

Our partnerships working alongside local groups and other NGOs providing humanitarian assistance enable us to direct our efforts to places where no one else is working. This maximizes the value of every dollar we receive. Finally, we have an infrastructure capable of providing a rapid response: experienced staff, offices in multiple locations and warehouses to handle medical and relief shipments.

The impact of last year's crises continues and connects with the latest disasters in Tripoli and Gaza. Each year we say it can't get any worse and it does. Sadly, there is no way to tell when another event will require an extraordinary emergency response.

Our long-term projects in education, health and nutrition, and community development serve people in the Middle East throughout the year. ANERA stands ready to help people restart their businesses, rebuild homes and look after the health of mothers and children. But we also need to respond quickly when sudden, dire events occur.

We need every tool at our disposal for the fragile region. We appreciate the many donors whose generosity makes these crucial programs possible.

Improving Children's Nutrition with Multivitamins

At first glance, the Antonian Charitable Society kindergarten of Bethlehem could be found anywhere in the world. Children play with toys in a bright room. Two girls rock together on a play-horse while another plays nearby with a ball. The kindergarten is well-run and in a new building, adding to the perception that all is fine.

But a closer look reveals something less pleasant. Virtually none of the children smile or laugh. Many look gloomy and pale with dark rings under their eyes. Growing up poverty-stricken in the West Bank is difficult, and its sad effects are easy to see. Most children come from poor families, and need financial assistance to attend kindergarten.

Many also suffer from poor nutrition with a diet lacking essential vitamins and minerals. Rates of anemia, which is caused by a lack of iron in the bloodstream, are increasing because parents can't afford healthy food that is rich with vitamins, minerals and iron. Nor are supplementary vitamins the answer because families can't afford them. What is especially sad is that many of these kids ate a balanced diet not too long ago. But deteriorating economic conditions have changed that.

That is why ANERA's assistance is so welcome. Thanks to a special donation of 500,000 chewable multivitamins by a U.S.-based company, made especially for children, ANERA has been able to distribute multivitamins in the areas of Jenin, Nablus and Bethlehem. Kindergartens and poor families with infants and small children can now fight the effects of poor nutrition.

When the vitamins arrive at the Bethlehem kindergarten, the teacher, Nahed Thaljeh, makes her way around the room to show the children. The first child is suspicious until he learns that it tastes sweet. After swallowing a sample, he promptly asks for another. "Only one per day," Nahed explains.

The other children eagerly swallow their vitamins that not only taste good but improve their health as well. The jar is colorful and attractively designed with cute dinosaurs. When parents come to pick up the students that afternoon, they will each receive a jar with 60 tablets for their children. They may look like small things but they offer badly needed nutrition to these children for two months,

which is a good start. With the support of generous donors like you, whose financial contributions pay to ship the vitamins to the school, ANERA hopes to distribute more in the West Bank.

These tablets won't solve the problem of malnutrition. A real solution will require more than a few vitamins. But in the short term, it gives children something until the situation improves. The next time a visitor stops by the new kindergarten, not only will the building look clean and fresh. The kids will be healthier.



A child benefits from receiving healthy multivitamins at school.

Rates of anemia are increasing because parents can't afford healthy food that is rich with vitamins, minerals and iron....What is especially sad is that many of these kids ate a balanced diet not too long ago. But deteriorating economic conditions have changed that.

ANERA Annual Dinner

Friday evening, September 28, 2007
Fairmont Hotel, 2401 M Street, NW
Washington, DC

Mark your calendar!



HOPE BEGINS WITH HEALTH

*Funds raised will support ANERA's
health care projects in the Middle East.*

SPECIAL HONOREES:

Peter Gubser, ANERA's president from 1977-2007
ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic
and Social Services) – Detroit, MI

Individuals: \$125
Tables for ten: \$1,500

Dinner Sponsors:

Silver \$2,500
Gold \$5,000
Platinum. \$10,000

Reservations can be made on the ANERA web site after August 15.

For additional information contact Cindy Ajamian
at (202) 842-2766, ext. 13 or at cajamian@anera.org.

Send us your email address!

ANERA's e-newsletter *ANERA Today* introduces you to the people directly impacted by your support. If you would like to receive *ANERA Today* and other updates, please sign up online at www.anera.org, or fill in your name and email address in the box below and mail it to us in the enclosed envelope.

Name: _____

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ANERA's Monthly Giving Program

Help people in need:

- ✓ gain access to education, employment and health care
- ✓ increase their opportunities for a better future

Help ANERA:

- ✓ reduce administrative costs

Help yourself:

- ✓ distribute your contribution throughout the year
- ✓ save the trouble of writing checks

Use the coupon below or visit our website at www.anera.org to start helping today!

Minimum monthly donation: \$10 or more

YES, I want to join ANERA's Monthly Giving Program

Here is my **monthly** gift of:

\$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 Other _____

I authorize the transfer of the amount above from my account each month. A record of each contribution will appear on my statement and serve as my receipt. I understand that I may stop my contribution at any time by contacting ANERA at (202) 842-2766.

Name

Address (/ /)

Phone Number Date (mo/day/year)

I have enclosed a voided check for my first monthly contribution. (Please be sure to select a box above for the appropriate dollar amount.)

I want these donations to be charged to my credit card:

Visa MasterCard Discover American Express

Card Number Expiration Date (mo/year)

Signature

ANERA

AMERICAN NEAR EAST REFUGEE AID

The ANERA Newsletter is published quarterly by American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), a non-profit agency established in 1968 and dedicated to creating opportunity and hope for people in the Middle East by improving health care and education and stimulating job creation.

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ISSN 1966-3584

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First Responders in Emergency Relief

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