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ANERA *25* years of service Newsletter

American Near East Refugee Aid

Number 110 Summer 1995



Palestinian boys and girls throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip increasingly participate in summer camps like this one sponsored by the YMCA.

UN Agency and ANERA Aid Palestinian Agriculture

ANERA recently received an initial grant of \$3 million from the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to provide material and technical support to Palestinian agricultural organizations during the crucial transition to self-rule. The grant will be used over the next three years to expand ANERA's existing programs and projects in this area and create new ones which will offer much needed jobs and economic prosperity. If additional funding becomes available, the program will be extended to other areas of the West Bank as they achieve self-rule.

Not only is agriculture an extremely important part of the local economy, it is a fundamental part of the traditional Palestinian way of life. Unfortunately, it has suffered drastic set-backs in employment and revenue since 1967 due to loss of land through confiscation, lack of access to water, and obstructions to foreign markets. By drawing on ANERA's expertise in working with the Palestinian agricultural sector, IFAD hopes to reverse these trends.

The program is expected to reach an estimated 14,000 poor and rural Palestinian

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SUMMERTIME FUN: *Palestinian Youth Projects Flourish*

Close to one million Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are under 16 years of age, that is over half the population. With so few outlets for recreation, one has to wonder where and how so many children spend their time.

Throughout the *intifada*, the combination of violence in the streets and in-house curfews made simple activities like playing outdoors, trips to the beach, or even school field trips difficult, if not potentially dangerous, for Palestinian children. With the gradual withdrawal of the Israeli Army, much of the fear and uncertainty associated with the threat of violence is now gone, allowing children the freedom to make up for lost time. But

one can only wonder what impact these restrictions have already had on an entire generation of children. Eager to heal the wounds of the past five years, sports and recreational projects for children have been some of the first to be initiated under self-rule by the Palestinian authorities and international and local charities.

One of the largest such projects is ANERA's work with the Gaza Soccer League. Although Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have played soccer throughout the military occupation, with their leagues competing annually in Jordan, they have been severely hampered by lack of funds and equipment.

In 1994, the late Merle Thorpe, Jr.,

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founder of the Foundation for Middle East Peace, and long-time ANERA board member, initiated a project to rebuild the Gaza Soccer League. Through his efforts and the generous support of other contributors, ANERA made an initial grant of \$22,500 this winter to the Palestinian Soccer League in Gaza to buy uniforms and equipment, and begin clearing a dirt field which had been used as a dumpsite in recent years. Another ANERA donor has recently added a generous gift of \$10,000 to these efforts.

According to Isam Shawwa, former coordinator of ANERA's Gaza office, "In any one soccer game in Gaza more than 4,000 spectators crowd the only soccer field shared by 30 clubs. The soccer league aspires towards perfecting a team to compete internationally. Hundreds of thousands of young men will benefit significantly from being helped out of the great vacuum created in their life during 27 years of occupation. Filling their time with a useful and much desired sport will make them feel like other youth in the world."

~

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Over the past year and a half, Palestinian teams have received French and Jordanian teams in Jericho and Gaza. Soccer is enormously popular in Gaza, and provides a long-awaited sense of pride and positive international recognition to the area.

As a way to reach the entire community of deprived children, ANERA will also provide \$31,500 worth of soccer and other sports equipment this year to all of the public and United Nations (UNRWA) administered schools in Gaza, making sports more accessible to both boys and girls.

Similar youth programs are flourishing in the West Bank as well. With a



Palestinian youth now enjoy playing soccer in the Gaza Strip.

\$5,000 grant from a generous Maryland donor, ANERA was able to provide support to the Palestinian Youth Union, located in the northern West Bank towns of Nablus and Tulkarem. Established in 1992, the Union offers children's music classes using a variety of instruments, holds training sessions for both children and women in various sports, and administers summer camps for deprived and Bedouin children between the ages of 5 and 12. If additional funding becomes available, their plans are to open a children's library and to provide additional programs that involve and empower women.

Other long-established programs for youth, including those offered by schools which participate in ANERA's child scholarship program, report increased opportunities over the past year to organize field trips, conduct classes outdoors, and send children to summer camp. Teachers and parents have repeatedly stressed the positive effects that such opportunities have on even the most profoundly depressed, traumatized, or handicapped children.

"My family is from Jerusalem and my children have lived and attended school in Jerusalem all their lives," said one mother of a student at Dar El Tifl school. "But of my five children," she continued, "only my two youngest were able to go on field trips in their own city because of concerns for their safety. Now they run home and tell me what they did at school. They get so much more out of their lessons when they experience it for themselves."

Youth programs like these can be relatively simple to set-up and manage, and the results can last a lifetime. Over the past year, ANERA has received proposals from several grassroots organizations seeking our assistance in creating similar programs. If you would like sponsor any of the projects mentioned here, or if you would be interested in learning about other projects for needy Palestinian youth, please call us for more details. ■

Thank You, Campaign Donors!

Thanks to all the donors for helping us meet and surpass our goal of \$300,000 for ANERA's fiscal year 1995 ANNUAL FUND, which ended May 31, 1995!

Campaign Albums

In appreciation for the many generous donors who contributed to ANERA's 1994-1995 25th Anniversary Campaign, commemorative albums listing donor names will be placed on display at the ANERA offices in Gaza and in Jerusalem. If you plan to be in the area, please make arrangements to visit our offices!



Various ANERA agricultural projects. Clockwise: Gaza fishermen; Gaza greenhouse used to grow vegetables for the local market; Jericho farmer using a cooperative-owned tractor.

households in the autonomous zones of Jericho and Gaza. Almost 80% of the funding will be used to assist Gaza-based projects which are in much greater need. In the long-term, the program is projected to strengthen the local economy in both locations by providing stable employment and economic growth, thereby creating greater self-reliance. The program also offers an alternative source of income to thousands of Palestinians who cross into Israel on a daily basis to find temporary, unreliable work.

Working in close coordination with the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PEC-DAR), ANERA's professional staff of economists, business consultants, and agricultural experts will directly manage the program with the recipient Palestinian

organizations. The program will target four areas of agricultural development: farm development, fishery development, income-generating activities, and management, institutional support and training for agricultural organizations.

Cooperative organizations, traditionally a central focus of ANERA's work, will receive much of the funding and technical assistance. Fruit and vegetable farmers, bee keepers, fishermen, women entrepreneurs, and others are all welcome to apply for membership with their local cooperatives. The cooperatives, in turn, offer the members marketing and technical advice, give them access to large, expensive equipment such as computers or tractors, and most importantly, provide small to medium size loans, no larger than \$8,000, to qualified

members. Some specific types of projects which these loans will assist include:

- * Loans to individual farmers to purchase modernized irrigation pumps or construct greenhouses to increase crop yields.
- * Loans to fisherman through the El-Tawfik Cooperative Society for Fisherman in Gaza City to repair and purchase boats, nets, or fishing gear.
- * Loans to women entrepreneurs to start-up small businesses, such as dairy, fruit or vegetable production or processing. ANERA consultants will also offer advice in marketing the products in the refugee camps and local towns.

Although banks are starting to open in the area, these cooperative loan programs are often the only source of credit available to Palestinians, especially women. The loans are repayable in stages, and provide much-needed funds to begin or expand a business. Because the cooperatives elect their leaders democratically and involve the entire community in their work, they also help to strengthen the community for the time when Palestinians will assume greater self-government.

Initial phases of the program have already successfully begun, with Palestinians of all social and economic backgrounds enthusiastically participating. After 27 years of occupation, these hard-working men and women are eager to take part in projects which can improve their lives and that of their children. Palestinians also hope that by achieving greater economic self-sufficiency, they will strengthen the prospects for peace and prosperity in the region. ■



YES, I want to help ANERA's projects in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Lebanon

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 and above: Builders | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 to \$999: Sustainers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 to \$9,999: Benefactors | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 to \$499: Creators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 to \$2,499: Sponsors | <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to learn more about funding a special project through ANERA. |

Contributions of \$250 or more to this year's Annual Fund will be recognized by category in ANERA's Annual Report (FY95). Further recognition opportunities exist for large, special project gifts.

- General Programs
- Gaza Renewal Fund
- Lebanon Relief Fund
- Scholarship:

I would like to provide a one year scholarship (\$100 per child) for a:

- Palestinian child
- Lebanese child
- School where need is greatest

Sponsors receive a photo of the child and letters from the child's school during the year.

\$200 \$100 \$75 \$50 \$35 \$25 Other

Name:

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City, State, Zip

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Appreciated Stock Gifts to ANERA

We would like to thank our donors who have recently made transfers of stock to ANERA. Such gifts are invaluable to our work and have major tax advantages for the contributor. Gifts of appreciated stock can be arranged by check or direct bank transfer. If you would like to make a gift of appreciated stock to ANERA, please contact Nina Dodge, Director, Major Gifts, for further details.

Transitions . . .

We would like to express our sorrow at the passing of long-term ANERA Medical Committee member Dr. Samir Amin Azzam of Fairfax, Virginia on May 27, 1995. Dr. Azzam, an internationally recognized specialist in Hematology/Oncology, was devoted to his practice, to his many medical students at AUB Medical Center in Lebanon and in the United States, and to charitable activities. We deeply appreciate his many years of generous support of ANERA's work.

In Honor of . . .

Mrs. Edna D. Davis ■ Mary & Joseph ■ Albert A. Najjar ■ Dr. H. A. Yeni Komshian ■

In Memory of . . .

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ANERA

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