

NEWS

no. 149 • summer 2005

ANERA

AMERICAN NEAR EAST REFUGEE AID

Inside

Wadi Gaza Gets Clean Water Around the Clock	2
Scholarship Profile: Qwais and Raiyan, Dar El Yateem.....	2
The Ladies of Ingerra.....	4
In Honor Of	5

Seeing Clearly in Lebanon

By Adrian Loucks

I arrive at the YMCA in Beirut, Lebanon hoping to meet one of the recipients of intraocular lenses donated by ANERA and the Catholic Medical Mission Board. The lenses are surgical implants to help people with cataracts see again. The small office buzzes with activity and its walls proudly display multitudes of photos from many YMCA projects across Lebanon.

From the doorway, I can see the back of a woman sitting in an office. I am led into the office and introduced to Nina Shemali, a recipient of two intraocular lenses. The lenses were shipped to the YMCA in Lebanon as part of ANERA's medical in-kind program, which distributes donated medical supplies, equipment, and medicines to health facilities in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, and Jordan.

A petite woman, Nina greets me with an engaging smile and shakes my hand. She lives in Aish'out, a village about 28 miles (45 km) from Beirut. After I thank her for traveling so far to talk to me, she quickly responded, "it is worth it to meet the people who helped me see again. I wanted to thank you."

Nina taught French and Arabic for 18 years at a charitable primary school in Lebanon's mountains. She enjoyed it because she loved children so much. "Even in town," she recalled, "they would run up to greet me when I was walking around."

Nina's vision prior to surgery was very painful. "My eyes had a lot of pressure." Already near-sighted, Nina had developed cataracts. "I used to have a vision of three degrees, then it changed [to 22 degrees] in one year because of the cataracts," she remarked.

Dr. Sharbil Fahid, Nina's physician, participates in a network of physicians and health facilities that receives donated medical supplies, equipment, and medicines from the YMCA. He explained to Nina that she was a good candidate for intraocular lenses and recommended she have the surgery. Surgery for a cataract involves removing the natural lens of the eye, responsible for allowing the eye to focus, and replacing it with an artificial lens called an intraocular lens implant.

When Dr. Fahid first told Nina about the procedure, she was a little worried. "I told him I could not afford it. I

continued on page 3



ADRIAN LOUCKS

Qwais, left, and Raiyan.

SCHOLARSHIP PROFILE: Qwais and Raiyan, Dar El Yateem

On her recent trip to the Middle East, Scholarship Program Director Adrian Loucks sat down to have some cookies and conversation with two students from Dar El Yateem Orphanage in Tulkarem, West Bank. Qwais is receiving an ANERA scholarship for the first time this year, and so is Raiyan's little brother, Hammad.

Like most students living at Dar El Yateem, Qwais and Raiyan are from families too poor to care for their children. Not surprisingly, both boys shared stories about their favorite things to do after school and their dreams for the future. Raiyan, for example, wants to get an education and a job so he can provide a home for all his brothers.

But imagine Adrian's surprise when she told the boys she worked for ANERA, and they described ANERA to her! How do they know about ANERA? "We have an activity to learn about somebody who helps people in Tulkarem," Raiyan said, "and our teacher always talks about ANERA."

Dar El Yateem, an orphanage for more than 100 boys and girls, is just one of seven institutions that receives scholarship funds from donors through the ANERA Scholarship Program. Scholarships help cover the costs of tuition, books, school supplies and medical expenses for 210 students in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan. For more information about how you can help a child in the Scholarship Program, contact Adrian Loucks, Director, Scholarship Program, at (202) 347-2558 or adrian@anera.org. ▶

Wadi Gaza Gets Clean Water Around the Clock

By ANERA Staff

Three years ago, Ayisha Abu Aysia and her family drew water from a neighbor's agricultural well five times a day. "My daughter and I went with our neighbors to bring the water, we carried it in small containers that we balanced on our heads," she says with a smile. "What else were we to do?"

Then one day, Ayisha no longer had to fetch water; she and the other 6,700 residents in Wadi Gaza began receiving fresh water pumped into their homes through a local network. Recently the town's municipality partnered with ANERA to build a new domestic well and water reservoir. The well was part of ANERA's Village Service Program (VSP), a project funded by USAID addressing the basic needs of people in rural areas by strengthening community infrastructure.

Wadi Gaza is a productive agricultural region located in the middle area of the Gaza Strip. The landscape is marked by citrus groves, greenhouses, and olive trees.

People used to bring water from an area north of their community. However, the Israeli settlement Netzarim now prevents Palestinian access to the main road that people used to travel to that area.

Salem Abu Ayada, Wadi Gaza's mayor, notes the dramatic difference in access to clean water after constructing the well. "Before the well, we pumped water eight hours a day from an agricultural well," he explains.

continued on page 3



ROBYN LONG

Ayisha and her family in their orchard.

Seeing Clearly

continued from page 1

had been a teacher and had to quit working to take care of my sick parents,” she explained. Dr. Fahid told her that she would not have to pay for the surgery, and the lenses were donated from the U.S. After being reassured about the procedure, she had surgery on one eye in June and experienced a remarkable difference. She agreed to surgery for the second eye the next month.

I ask her if she plans to go back to teaching. She explains that currently she is looking for a part time job but that is difficult right now because of the poor economy and unstable political situation. She adds that she also used to tutor privately, but most families cannot afford it anymore.

When I ask her what her life is like now, after the surgery, she describes the difference as amazing. “I have almost perfect vision now, and the pain is gone.”



Nina Shemali

Wadi Gaza

continued from page 2

ROBYN LONG



Salem Abu Ayada, Wadi Gaza's mayor.

“There was a limited amount and people [had to] carr[y] it away. Some families would load the water onto a donkey cart and carry it back to their homes.”

The municipality purchased the water from private land owners for \$.33 cubic meter and sold it to the community for \$.44 per cubic meter.

Many people could not afford this fee. “People have lost a lot of work because of the [Israeli] closures; many have not been able to pay their water or electric bills,” Salem states. “We wanted to make the situation easier for people and bring them clean water, so we approached ANERA to support this project.”

ANERA’s VSP projects created additional employment for communities. Construction of the new Wadi Gaza well and reservoir took seven months and provided daily employment for 6–7 workers. The municipality now employs one person full-time to monitor the pump’s pressure and the water’s quality. Every two weeks the town provides the Palestinian Water Authority with samples to confirm the water’s quality.

“Now there is always water since we keep the reservoir full. We pump the well only for six hours a day and provide the entire community with clean water—piped directly into their homes,” Salem explains.

Families in Wadi Gaza use the water for drinking, cleaning, and laundry. Some utilize the water for small home gardens and animal herds. Ayisha’s family, for example, has two sheep and a donkey as well as ¼ of an acre of land with olive, fig and pomegranate trees. Ayshia describes how her eight children are particularly grateful for the new convenience, “Now we have more time for working on our land. We do not have to worry about when we will take breaks to bring the water.”

Ala, Ayisha’s oldest son of 27 years, confirms, “Our situation has improved. I know the new water quality is better. I can taste it. And since water comes through the network it’s available around the clock.”

The Ladies of Ingerra

By Adrian Loucks

Ingerra, a small Bedouin village southeast of Amman, Jordan, appears small and quiet. You might drive by and not see it if you did not know where to look. But a group of women in Ingerra is breaking new ground in traditionally conservative communities.

Led by Samia Jabbour, a dynamic woman with a welcoming smile, the Sayadat Al Ingerra (Ladies of Ingerra) represent the epitome of what women can accomplish when given the opportunity.

“I was 25 years old [in 1994] and working as a secretary. Me and [twenty-four] other women had nothing to do in the afternoons. So, we decided to set up a kindergarten,” recalls Samia. “Later we transformed the kindergarten into a children’s club. Now we also have awareness workshops for women about things like health, women’s rights, and family violence.”

Samia’s organization is participating in a women’s empowerment training program, called Balkis, offered by ANERA and the Middle East Partnership Initiative of the U.S. Dept. of State. The program is helping hundreds of women improve the capacity of their grassroots organizations to serve their communities. The program offers a series of training courses in which participants learn very useful information and skills,

– continued on page 4



Samia, left, and two of the Ladies of Ingerra.

ANERA DVD

ANERA has created a short DVD about our work in the Middle East. If you would like a copy, you may either fill out and mail the form below, or email us at anera@anera.org with your name, address, and the number of copies you would like, and please type “ANERA DVD” in your subject line.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

DVD quantity: _____

PLANNING AHEAD?

Please remember ANERA in your will as:

“American Near

East Refugee Aid”

1522 K Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20005

Federal Tax ID # 52-0882226

For more information about ANERA’s Legacy Society or about a gift from your estate, contact Nina Dodge (ndodge@anera.org), tel: (202) 347-2558.

The Ladies of Ingerra

continued from page 3

such as government regulations for running a non profit organization, women's rights, proposal writing, project planning, and fund raising.

In 2000 the Ladies of Ingerra decided to start making dairy products, primarily cheese. Families from 50 different farms regularly deliver their goats' milk to the dairy. But it is difficult for the farmers to keep the milk fresh, especially in the summer, when they must deliver it at night, surrounded with ice-blocks.

Making use of their Balkis training, the Ladies of Ingerra submitted a proposal for and were awarded a small grant from Balkis to purchase a refrigerated van to collect and transport the milk from the farmers, and distribute their dairy products to local markets. The van helps them collect the milk regularly and safely. They also requested a large milk processor from Jordan's Ministry of Agriculture that would increase their production by 700%, and potentially feed 30,000 people in the surrounding district.

The Ladies operate a small shop where they sell cheese and two kinds of yogurt, as well as other food items, such as butter, pickled vegetables, and bread. The Ministry of Health monitors product quality through routine visits to the dairy and health certification for the workers. The quality of their products has spread by word-of-mouth, and people from all over the area come to buy their cheese.

Growing in membership over eleven years, the Ladies of Ingerra now number 200. Even men have begun working for Samia, an unusual development for a Bedouin community. They want to work for her because she has proven herself a successful leader for the village, gaining respect throughout the community. Indeed, over 15% of Ingerra's population works for the organization.

The Ladies are reinvesting their dairy profits into their community. Recently they purchased a small bus for the children's club and built the ground floor of the club's building.

But Samia's plans go beyond the dairy. She turns to point to a small structure and declares, "There we will grow and sell mushrooms. And over here," she turns again and points to a small building nearby, "this will be a new kindergarten." It seems Samia and the Ladies (and Gentlemen) of Ingerra have only just begun. ▀

IN HONOR OF

Sami Said
Mrs. Yvonne Moossy
Rashid Khalidi
Mrs. Margaret S. Armstrong
Dr. John Davis
Mrs. Helen Yeni-Komshian
Pamela Mertz's birthday
Mr. Murray Gart
Mr. Jerome Jos. Podemski
Chau Pho Tung
Hanna & Tanya Nasir
Mr. John Ovall
Hilda Zeibak Mallick
Yitzhak Rabin, Anwar Sadat and Palestinian refugees
Dr. Edward Said
Rabbi Erik Ascherman
The late Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri
Martha S. Reed
Peter D. Pelham
Adel Rizk

ADRIAN LOUCKS



Samia explains how the dairy operates.

ANERA's Monthly Giving Program

Help people in need:

- ▷ have access to education, employment and health care.
- ▷ increase their prospects for a better future.

Help ANERA:

- ▷ reduce administrative costs.
- ▷ plan for future projects.

Help yourself:

- ▷ by giving incrementally.
- ▷ by making the world a better place for all of us.

Use the coupon below or visit our website to start helping today!

Because of the increased cost of processing these transactions, we ask that all monthly transactions total \$5.00 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 1522 K St., NW Suite 202, Washington, DC 20005-1270, (202) 347-2558, or my bank.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

- I have enclosed a check for my first monthly contribution, made payable to ANERA.
 I want these donations to be charged to my credit card. (MC or Visa or American Express)

My account number is: _____ Exp. Date: _____

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 reducing poverty and relieving suffering in the Middle East.

Material in this newsletter may be reproduced without prior permission, provided credit is given and a copy of the publication in which the item is used is sent to ANERA. Subscriptions are free of charge. Any inquiries should be sent to the Editor at the address below.

ANERA Officers 2004-2005

Les Janka, Chair
Curtis W. Brand, Vice Chair
Fawzi A. Kawash, Vice Chair
Peter Gubser, President
Philip Davies, Vice President
Nina Dodge, Vice President
Jane W. Schweiker, Treasurer
Alfonso Wright, Assistant Treasurer
Taichi Yamamoto, Secretary of the Corporation

Editor: Adrian Loucks

ANERA does exchange our mailing list with similar humanitarian organizations. We never rent or sell our list. If you wish not to have your name exchanged, please let us know in writing.

ISSN 1966-3584

ANERA

1522 K Street, NW, Suite 202
Washington, DC 20005-1270
Tel: (202) 347-2558 • Fax: (202) 682-1637
anera@anera.org • www.anera.org

ANERA

AMERICAN NEAR EAST REFUGEE AID

1522 K Street NW, Suite 202
Washington, DC 20005-1270

Seeing Clearly in Lebanon

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 8530
Washington, D.C.