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The ANERA Difference

At a time when bad news is constantly streaming out of the Middle East and donors are overwhelmed by the many organizations doing good work in the region, you may be asking yourself what makes ANERA different from all the rest.

Not just promises

“12 years ago I visited a community near Qalqilia [West Bank],” says Naser Qadous, agricultural programs manager in Palestine. “A farmer approached me and said, ‘Look son, first the English came and said they’d build us a bridge to connect the two sides of our village. But they didn’t do it. Then the Jordanians came and said they’d do it. But they didn’t. Then the Palestinian Authority came and said they’d do it. But they didn’t. You know who did it? ANERA did! You made our village whole.’”

Commitments that are made are commitments that are honored. ANERA can point to the proof in hundreds of communities across Palestine and Lebanon. Real change and not just promises: that’s the ANERA difference.

Deep roots

Mohammed Abu-Rajab, the director of ANERA’s Hebron office, was overseeing renovations to a high school a few years back. The work done on the facilities inside the building alone would have made a big difference for the 780 boys who studied there. But it wasn’t enough for Abu-Rajab.

ANERA NEWS

The ANERA newsletter is published quarterly by American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), a non-profit agency established in 1968 and dedicated to providing development, health, education and employment programs to Palestinian communities and impoverished families throughout the Middle East.

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Editor: Liz Demarest

Contributing Writers:
Bill Corcoran, Liz Demarest,
Laurie Kassman

Contributing Photographers:
Nada Dajani, Liz Demarest,
Rania Elhilou, Felipe Jacome

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ANERA
1111 14th Street NW, #400
Washington, DC 20005
Tel: 202-266-9700
anera@anera.org • www.anera.org

COVER PHOTO: The bridge ANERA built to make a Qalqilia village whole. Photo taken soon after the bridge was completed in 2006.

The ANERA Difference

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He knew of a nearby landowner who was selling his property for development. Abu-Rajab had noticed the beautiful olive grove there that would almost certainly be destroyed. So he asked the landowner if he would be willing to relocate the trees to the school's front yard to provide much-needed shade for the students. The answer was "yes." ANERA's community of donors bought the trees—a symbol of hope and perseverance for Palestinians—at a very reasonable price and they were transplanted to the school. Today, they continue to thrive, providing shade and welcome greenery for the kids at the school and the whole neighborhood.

This simple yet important addition to the project was only possible because Abu-Rajab is from the community where he works. He and ANERA's other 90 Middle East staff have deep roots that allow them to find uniquely local solutions to local problems. Donations from a passionate community of people like you make these solutions possible. This is the ANERA difference.

Respect & credibility

"I'm honored when people I visit in the camps call me Jackie ANERA.' It means *khallas*—you're good, you're solid. It's a mark of respect," says Jackie "ANERA" Atwi, program manager in Lebanon.

In the Palestinian camps of Lebanon, where conditions are deplorable, many residents view the interventions of international organizations with cynicism. "Especially right now, with the Syrian crisis, so much money is being pumped into Lebanon. More and more non-profits measure their success in numbers. And when the money runs out, the organizations leave. ANERA's in it for the long haul—and people know that."

This often translates into smaller scale projects, but such projects respond to the real needs that ANERA staff like Jackie hear and take seriously.

"ANERA's fingerprints are all over in the places where we are committed to making a difference. And the difference we make is not always about money," says Jackie. "Today, in Beddawi camp I was talking to a hairdressing instructor who told me that when the women started her training program they were so shy. They were just there to learn some skills. Then she said, 'I'm so proud that a number of the women are working and now they're stronger and more independent.' The training scholarships ANERA provides are small in terms of dollars and scope, but huge in terms of the potential impact they have on people's lives. This is the ANERA difference."



Olive tree being planted in the yard at a West Bank high school (2010).



ANERA has donors in **each of the 50 states.**

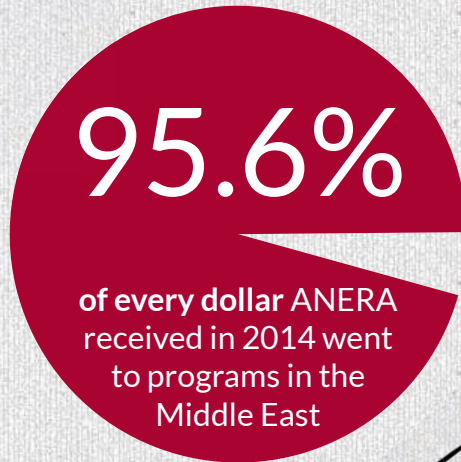
\$400,000,000

worth of donated medicines, health care supplies and other necessities delivered to Palestine and Lebanon since 1968.



1

out of ANERA's **90 staff** in the Middle East is not from the Middle East



95.6%

of every dollar ANERA received in 2014 went to programs in the Middle East

USAID partnerships with ANERA, since 1972, have reached **millions of people.**



Aref Jabr seemed to know about ANERA from its earliest days. His wife Barbara says that as he became more involved with the organization he knew that he would make a bequest. It had a lot to do with his beginnings.

Born and raised in Jaffa before the state of Israel was created in 1948, Aref came to the United States and earned a law degree from Washington College of Law at American University. His career was at a law book publishing company in St. Paul, Minnesota, but his devotion remained with the Palestinian cause.

Aref recognized the important work ANERA did in development and humanitarian assistance and was active for decades, serving on the ANERA board and advisory council. In 1997 he and Barbara joined other ANERA board members on a trip to the West Bank and Gaza.

"We were struck by the incredible hospitality that was shown to us by the Arab communities wherever we went," Barbara said. "We were so proud of the wonderful projects ANERA was implementing but were saddened by the difficult conditions in Gaza, which have only worsened since then."

Aref passed away a few years ago, but his legacy and commitment to the Palestinian people continues through his bequest. "ANERA always meant so much to him and to me," Barbara says, "And that is why he decided to leave ANERA his largest charitable gift."



Barbara & Aref Jabr in Jerusalem in 1997 during ANERA's board trip

Some People You Help



Teacher Inshirah Haitham & student Aisha in their ANERA-renovated classroom
Karamesh preschool in Rafah, Gaza

Hasan & his sister, Palestinian Refugees from Syria and recipients of aid packages from ANERA
Beddawi refugee camp in Lebanon



10-year-old Mufid Abu Masoud at a new ANERA park
Al Bireh, West Bank



New Projects Getting Started

It's another busy winter for ANERA in Palestine and Lebanon. Harsh weather and prolonged displacement translate into misery and desperation for tens of thousands of families. **In addition to the ongoing winterization and relief work that ANERA's community of donors is making possible,** there are some exciting new projects starting that will have a long-term impact on people's lives.

In Lebanon a new education program will be reaching youths, aged 14-18, whose school years have been interrupted by the civil war in Syria. Many came to Lebanon three years ago and have been trying to acculturate to a new education system. They are falling behind and dropping out of school and society.



Students from Nahr El Bared and Beddawi camps in Lebanon. Their classroom is at the National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training, long-time ANERA partner and one of the sites where the new education program will be conducted.

This new program will reach more than 11,000 youths with non-formal education and life-skills training, including hygiene promotion, and innovative sports activities that mitigate conflict and develop interpersonal skills.

Similar to Lebanon, the situation in Gaza remains unstable and uncertain. Building materials are not getting in and reconstruction efforts are stalled. **In the meantime, thousands of families are cut off from reliable**

sources of drinking water. In the next months, ANERA will be restoring water supply lines to homes in Gaza communities damaged by bombs. We also will repair or replace damaged rooftop water storage tanks. PVC piping made from recycled plastics as well as new and salvaged materials available within Gaza will be used to restore water access for 8,000 people.

Another area that needs attention is farming. The northern areas of Gaza, where the biggest farms are located, were ripped apart by bombs. Farmers' livelihoods were destroyed and families across Gaza are suffering from shortages of affordable fresh fruits and vegetables in markets. **ANERA is starting a land restoration project that will clear debris and level out 87 acres of farmland.** We also will fix irrigation systems that were destroyed.

In addition to generous grants from UNICEF and Islamic Relief USA, these projects are made possible by the thousands of individuals who make up ANERA's donor community.

Thank you!



Leave a legacy.

Include ANERA in your will.

Through bequest gifts, you can demonstrate your commitment to ANERA's work and set an example for others. These gifts mean ANERA will be there tomorrow, so people throughout the Middle East may live with the dignity we all deserve.

For more information about making a gift from your estate, please contact:

Nancy Nye

nnye@anera.org or 202-266-9720

anera.org/legacy

ANERA

Improving Lives in the Middle East

Since 1968

American Near East Refugee Aid
1111 14th Street NW, #400
Washington, DC 20005

The ANERA Difference

ANERA NEWS

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Dear Friend of ANERA:

War and destruction in Gaza...unrest and animosity in Jerusalem and the West Bank...overwhelming numbers of refugees from Syria in Lebanon...

These are some of the challenges that 2014 brought in the areas where ANERA works. And we continue to respond to them as we enter the new year. It's just one of the things that sets ANERA apart. We're in it for the long haul. When building supplies aren't getting into Gaza, we don't give up. We find ways to work with what's available. When one source of funding for a valued job skills program in Lebanon ends, we find another. We don't just end the program. When changing regulations make it difficult to bring in-kind donations into the West Bank, we keep trying till we find a solution that works. Because we know people's lives depend on it.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. It features some of the ways that ANERA is different, thanks to you.

Bill Cowser
ANERA President

