

NEWS

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ANERA

AMERICAN NEAR EAST REFUGEE AID

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Overcoming Difficult Conditions in the West Bank and Gaza

The people of the West Bank and Gaza have been through difficult times before. Today they are enduring the most severe humanitarian crisis since 2000. Pregnant women and sick patients have great difficulty getting to clinics and hospitals; family members often cannot travel to funerals; businessmen and farmers are prevented from moving their products; and if students don't have a nearby school, their formal education stops.

Sadly, this crisis will not end soon.

Exacerbating the situation is the reality on the ground that all sources are experiencing a cash flow shortage. With the government unable to pay salaries, thousands of households are plunging into poverty. Those affected include doctors, nurses, teachers and public service employees responsible for drinking water and sanitation.

Experts at the World Bank predict that by the end of the year, income in the Palestinian Territories will decline by 30 percent, unemployment will increase to 40 percent, and poverty levels could climb to as much as 67 percent.

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In Gaza, a restriction on the entry of goods has caused periodic shortages of bread and dairy products, which are staples in the local diet. Few, if any, trucks carrying supplies to Gaza are allowed to cross the border—which nowadays is closed more than it is open. Children's malnutrition rates are expected to soar. The lack of funding to support the health care system is jeopardizing the health and well being of thousands of people. Hospitals and clinics have reduced

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Scholarship Program Profile: *Abdullah from Dar El-Yateem*

Abdullah was just seven years old when he came to live at the Dar El-Yateem orphanage in Tulkarem, West Bank following his mother's death. His father, an out-of-work laborer, could not support Abdullah nor his five brothers and sisters.

Abdullah is an ANERA Scholarship Program recipient since 1999, and will enter his final year of high school this fall.

One of Abdullah's scholarship donors recently traveled to the Middle East. Paul, who lives in Albany, New York, was in Hebron, so he contacted ANERA to arrange a visit to Dar El-Yateem. Travel restrictions made that visit impossible, but ANERA staff arranged for Paul and Abdullah to each travel to Ramallah.

After waiting for three hours, Paul was met by the Dar El-Yateem staff person only. Abdullah had passed through numerous check points, but was turned back before arriving in Ramallah. Everyone was disappointed, but Paul and Abdullah were able to exchange gifts. Abdullah had created a portfolio of art for Paul. Coincidentally, the gift Paul had for Abdullah was a package of art supplies.

"Through ANERA," Paul said, "our hands can at least reach out in friendship."

More than 200 Palestinian, Lebanese and Jordanian children, ages 5-18, benefit from ANERA's Scholarship Program. The financial assistance helps cover the costs of tuition, books, school supplies, food and medical expenses for students in seven schools in the Middle East. For more information about how you can help a child in the Scholarship Program, contact Nancy Nye, Scholarship Program Director, at 202-842-2766, ext. 20 or nnye@anera.org.

Children have less food to eat, clinics and hospitals have less medicine to treat patients, and school teachers have no salary on which to live.

Difficult Conditions in the West Bank and Gaza

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services because medicines for treatment and surgery are no longer available.

In human terms, this dismal situation means the quality of life for nearly everyone is rapidly declining—children have less food to eat, clinics and hospitals have less medicine to treat patients, and school teachers have no salary on which to live.

And yet, despite the difficult conditions and the restrictions on movement, ANERA's experienced staff continues to work and even expand its relief program.

ANERA is very aware of and continues to comply with US law regarding the restrictions on assistance to the Palestinian Authority. In this humanitarian emergency, ANERA is permitted—and indeed encouraged—to provide assistance directly to the Palestinian people. With that in mind, ANERA works with Palestinian charities to maintain a significant relief program in Palestine with an emphasis in Gaza, where the need is greatest.

Specifically, we are focused on two very effective humanitarian projects that will have immediate impact. In the Milk for Preschoolers program, we deliver fortified milk and fortified biscuits to 15,000 preschoolers at 150 schools in Gaza every school day. A reduced version of program has been extended to continue through the summer months—but it needs additional funding.

Second, we will continue to deliver basic medicines and health supplies to dozens of clinics and hospitals. Through our partnerships in the region, we recently helped deliver 200 wheelchairs to disabled children (see *Mobilizing the Disabled* on page 3). ANERA recently received \$3 million in pharmaceuticals and medical supplies and expects to distribute additional shipments valued at \$13 million during the summer.

ANERA supporters make these humanitarian projects possible. We appreciate your generosity and continued support.

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.

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To make sure our email reaches you, please remember to add us to your contact list!

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Please remember ANERA in your will as:

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For more information about ANERA's Legacy Society or about a gift from your estate, contact Nina Dodge (ndodge@anera.org), tel: (202) 842-2766.

Mobilizing the Disabled

ANERA works with Hope Haven Ministries to provide wheelchairs to disabled Palestinians

By Basem Awad

This spring, 35 disabled Palestinians living at Four Homes of Mercy in Bethany were fitted with wheelchairs of their own thanks to the coordinated effort between Hope Haven Ministries and ANERA.

In a country where the disabled receive inadequate attention and support, charitable organizations like Four Homes of Mercy are committed to meeting the needs of the disabled. Nearly 100 patients with neurological disorders live and receive services at Four Homes, which relies on support from organizations abroad.

“These are great wheelchairs,” said Hamzi Rdeide, an employee at Four Homes whose responsibilities include wheelchair maintenance. “Before, we had a lot of wheelchairs that didn’t meet the needs of the patients, and yet we had to use them because we didn’t have anything else.”

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“Before, we had a lot of wheelchairs that didn’t meet the needs of the patients ... we didn’t have anything else. I know the patients will be more comfortable and happier with these.”



L: Mark Richard, director of operations at Hope Haven; R: Volunteers help fit wheelchairs to their new owners.

Education without Borders

Al-Quds University Offers Remote Audio-Visual Lecture Halls to Meet the Needs of its Students Limited by Checkpoint Restrictions

When it comes to health education in Palestine, Al-Quds University is the clear leader—even in spite of the current conflict and the challenges. A major challenge resulting from the conflict is the severe restriction on mobility, which most Palestinians experience due to military checkpoints and the construction of the separation barrier throughout the West Bank. In addition, travel between the West Bank and Gaza is not allowed. Simply getting to class is sometimes impossible for Palestinian students. Even Diaa', one of two members of the Palestinian Student Medical Society, who lives in Jerusalem, sometimes has trouble getting to the university because it is located in Abu Dis, a suburb of Jerusalem on the other side of the barrier. "Before the wall was constructed, it took me 15 minutes to get to the university. Now it takes at least an hour," he says.

In response to the problems created by the restriction on movement, the School of Medicine, in collaboration with the Foundation for the Al-Quds University Medical School (UK) and ANERA, has created an innovative solution – audio-visual lecture halls that connect the School of Medicine based in Abu-Dis with

its affiliated programs in Al-Najah University, Nablus and Al-Azhar University, Gaza.

"The latest technology enables medical students in Gaza and Nablus to attend our lectures. They can see the teacher and classroom in real time, and can fully participate in class discussions," said Dr. Hani Abdeen, Director of Medical Education at the university. "Without this advancement, it would otherwise be difficult—if not impossible—for the students in these areas to participate in our program."

The audio-visual lecture halls at Al-Quds University School of Medicine are just one example of ANERA and partner organizations collaborating to provide practical and innovative support to institutions in the region. Dr. Abdeen says with pride, "Despite all odds, we have created and sustained this school. We are training Palestinian doctors at a Palestinian institute, and are helping the entire Palestinian community in the field of medical education."

Al-Quds University School of Medicine is prospering and growing. To date, 130 students have been awarded MDs from the school, and 350 medical students are currently enrolled—60 percent of whom are female. The students take internationally recognized medical examinations and consistently receive above average marks.

ANERA is proud to be a long time supporter of Al-Quds University School of Medicine, especially in the area of professional health education. In 1979, ANERA was instrumental in providing core foundational support for the Arab College of Medical Professions, the only Palestinian four-year college training nurses, which eventually became a part of the university. Al-Quds (Jerusalem) University also created other important health related centers and departments including the School of Medicine in 1994, which is the first in Palestine.



Students attend class remotely at an Al-Quds audio-visual lecture hall.

Mobilizing the Disabled

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I know the patients will be more comfortable and happier with these.”

Hope Haven specializes in constructing, distributing and fitting wheelchairs for the disabled in poor nations. Volunteers came to fit the users to their new wheelchairs.

“A lot of patients need to change their position periodically, because if they don’t, they’ll get sores,” said Mark Richard, director of operations at Hope Haven. “These wheelchairs allow for that, which is a great help to both the patients and their caretakers. We have special chairs for all sorts of conditions. Some of the chairs can adjust as the child grows.”

Richard has been bringing teams to Palestine to distribute and fit wheelchairs since 1999. “We used to have problems getting the wheelchairs cleared,” he said. “But since we partnered with ANERA, we’ve had no problems getting them through.”

ANERA worked in coordination with Hope Haven Ministries to deliver an in-kind shipment of 200 wheelchairs to disabled Palestinians.

ANERA’s 2006 Silent Auction

SEPTEMBER 15, 2006

Exquisite clothing • Beautiful traditional pottery •
Gorgeous handmade jewelry • Original artwork
....other fine collectibles from the Middle East.

Don’t miss this opportunity to bid on—and win—as many as 50 different items! All auction items will be available for viewing online in August.

Please visit www.anera.org and place your bid.
Your online bid must be received
by midnight September 12.

Proceeds from the silent auction will help fund
ANERA’s Milk for Preschooler’s program.

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 I want these donations to be charged to my credit card. (MC, Visa and AmEx only)

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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.

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