

WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP: A REPORT

Dear ANERA Supporter:

Having recently returned from a project inspection tour in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, I thought it might be useful to share with you some of my observations on a few of the ANERA projects which I visited. Let me say initially that the Palestinians who are undertaking these ANERA supported projects are vitally and actively interested in them. Each attempts to assist the people through the provision of education, the enhancement of income, the creation of jobs, the improvement of health care, and the strengthening of local control over their own lives. Now let us turn to some specific projects:

- **Nassariya Dairy Cooperative** — The members of this small West Bank cooperative came from around Haifa during the 1948 war. With them, they brought their dairy cows and traditional milk, cheese, and yogurt processing skills. Their ANERA assisted project is designed to increase considerably their production of milk and, hence, cheese and yogurt, as well as modernize their processing facilities. To date, they have built a large cow shed and purchased a number of improved milk cows. The farmers own this project collectively. Individually, they also own cows, usually of the local variety which produce less milk. One of the aims of the project is to help the individual farmer learn how to improve his cow husbandry and, thus, enhance his income. An ANERA consultant is helping the cooperative select the "appropriate technology" dairy facility. Once it is in place and a couple of people are trained to use it (training will be provided by ANERA), the consultant will be available for a period of time to help make sure it runs smoothly. ANERA intends to replicate this project using both cow and sheep milk in 5-6 other locations.
- **Jenin Livestock Cooperative** — In the West Bank, there is a distinct shortage of meat, which is imported in considerable quantities. Expansion of traditional sheep growing methods is problematic due to the limit of available pasturage. The limit arises for purely natural reasons, i.e., lack of extra land, and because the Military Government authorities have closed off considerable pasturage area which was traditionally used for forage. A local answer to this demand for meat is the establishment of feed lots, very much in the model found in the United States, but more modest in size. In this project, ANERA is assisting the cooperative to build sheds and start its feed lot operation.



PETER GUBSER
ANERA's President



- In the villages of Kufr Malek, Ein Yabroud, Nassaria, and Beit Nuba, and the agricultural town of Tulkarem, we visited newly established **cooperative based mechanized units** which, as a rule, consist of a tractor and implements. A number of the farmers came to me and said this series of projects is the best service ANERA could provide. Not only does it increase significantly the mechanized power available to the farmer, but also improves the quality of this service on the farmers' fields. This is because the farmers actually control the cooperative which provides the service. Also, the non-coop providers of such service must now meet the

new standards. Another benefit of these projects is an additional stimulation of the local economy, namely, almost all of the farm implements are locally manufactured. It is worth noting that the Jordan Cooperative Organization has provided a couple of mechanization specialists to help work with these projects. This organization now has about 50 personnel in the West Bank, providing a variety of technical services for the cooperatives and their members.

■ **Dar El-Tifl and Rawdat El-Zuhur** — We visited both Dar El-Tifl and Rawdat El-Zuhur, the two Jerusalem schools supported by our "Flowers and Children" scholarship program. Miss Hind Husseini and Miss Elizabeth Nasir, the heads of the two schools, while up in years, are still vibrant leaders of their institutions. The children are bright-eyed, enthusiastic, and obviously eager to learn. At Rawdat El-Zuhur, Ibrahim Matar (the ANERA Economist and Deputy Representative) and I sang Arabic and English songs with a class full of 8-9 year olds. The major problem facing these schools for the poor and orphaned, as well as for many other schools, universities, and charities, is funding. The economic downturn in the Arabian (Persian) Gulf, the precipitous drop in the price of oil, and the Iran-Iraq War have jointly worked to dry up funds which once flowed to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This severe shortage, I fear, will continue for at least five years. Consequently, schools like Dar El-Tifl and Rawdat El-Zuhur are facing lean years.



■ **Belt Jala Municipal Light Industry Complex** — This ANERA supported facility, I am pleased to report, is completed and operational. It contains 32 standard

units 6 garages, and 1 cafeteria. They house carpentry shops which make doors, furniture, olive wood boxes, etc., welding facilities, machine shops, cabinet making factories, and food processing works. The garages are for both cars and trucks. At this time, all of the shops are rented. Aside from stimulating employment and economic activity, the municipality (the owner of the facility) will realize \$50,000 in rent during the first year. After 3 years, this amount will increase to \$75,000. The Beit Jala Municipality will use these funds to improve the services it provides to its citizenry.



■ **Agricultural Engineer's Cooperative.** This coop, whose membership is made up of West Bankers with agricultural degrees, has a series of projects. It trains new graduates with agricultural degrees, giving them practical hands on experience which most did not enjoy at the university. In addition, it has a sheep feedlot where it is experimenting with Assaf sheep. The results of this experiment which should be known shortly will be fed into our projects described above. Because there is now a sufficient quantity of vegetables grown in the Jordan Valley due to the introduction of modern technology, some are seeking out new crops. In this vein the Agricultural Engineer's Cooperative is experimenting with date palms and animal fodder. The former enjoys an excellent market in the Middle East and the latter is needed in the developing feed lots. Other new or specialty crops, such as avocados, are under experimentation by the cooperative. ANERA has helped the cooperative to establish its system for delivering water to the coop's fields.

■ **Patients Friend Society, Hebron** — In the future, the society plans to build and run a hospital, which is

direly needed in Hebron District where there are only 100 beds for a population of 250,000. In the meantime, we are working with them on a more modest project. This is to assist them in the upgrading of their already fine diagnostic clinic in the center of Hebron and to help the society establish four satellite diagnostic clinics (not as sophisticated as the one in Hebron) in four large villages to serve sub-regions in the Hebron District. This project is being coordinated with the Red Crescent Society of Hebron which has a series of mother/child health care clinics and an ambulance service (to be improved) and another agency's nutritional and health education program.



■ **Patients Friend Society, Gaza** — This society, like its sister in Hebron, provides diagnostic and regular clinical services. At its request, we recently made an in-kind donation of pharmaceutical materials to it. When we visited the society, we were told that the staff would clear the donation from the airport the following day. Recently the society added a new unit to its operation, an eye examination clinic. It also intends to upgrade its modest equipment in the near future.

As the above indicates, despite the turmoil around them, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are actively and positively building and improving their society. With your help, ANERA is able to work with them in these important efforts. It is your support which makes it all possible.

■ **Khan Younis Agricultural Cooperative, Gaza** — This cooperative, after 4-5 years of requesting, was finally allowed to reactivate. About 1 year ago ANERA received permission to undertake its 4-5 year old project with the cooperative. Its aim is the establishment of a mechanized unit which, due to the unique style of agriculture in the region, requires the use of a front-loader. Next to the Mediterranean Sea coast, the farmers till the soil about 18 inches above the water table which they then use for natural irrigation. Even though partial supplementary irrigation is employed when seeds are planted, the farmers do realize considerable financial savings from the sharply diminished need to provide continuous irrigation water. A front-loader is needed to move the level of sand up and down as the water table moves and also to renew sand when it becomes too saline. The newly spread sand is like virgin soil and very productive. These farmers represent one of the better organized groups in the Gaza Strip. In the future, ANERA intends to work with them on a second project involving the improvement of marketing agricultural produce.

Sincerely yours,

Peter Gubser
President

The last issue of the ANERA Newsletter, "UNWRA — A Commitment to Palestinians," was written by Margaret Bay, Executive Assistant.

IN HONOR OF:

ANERA ■ Sam Asper, M.D. ■ Mario D'onofrio ■ the caring and courage of the Hon. Paul Findley ■ Jesus Christ ■ Jordan ■ Jennie Michael ■ Grace Netti ■ the One God in All ■ all Palestinians ■ the struggle for national liberation.

THE BIRTHDAY OF:

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A special thanks to all who gave in memory of Ruda K. Daniel

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This issue of the ANERA Newsletter was written by Peter Gubser, ANERA's President

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