

## ANERA'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



*Development means a better future for young farmers like this boy from Wadi Foukin.*



*Livestock cooperative members with ANERA consultant Kamal Kheraisheh, bottom right.*

We write frequently in the Newsletter about ANERA's health, education, and relief projects. In this Newsletter, we wish to take a moment to discuss the components of economic development and ANERA's role in promoting it.

ANERA operates under two broad development objectives in formulating and executing its program in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. First, we attempt to assist the local society develop its ability to increase income and jobs. Second, we seek to help the society develop and strengthen its institutions and its people gain added control over their own lives.

The first, income and jobs, is one of the major and most basic measures of the improvement of an individual's and his/her family's well being. The second objective derives from the basic philosophy whereby if people have greater control over their lives, they are better off psychologically, economically, and politically. Self-sufficiency builds self confidence which has many positive ramifications for the entire community. Likewise, as the local institutions grow and strengthen, they are in a better position to serve the individuals and groups within the society and give them more opportunity and ability to control their local affairs.

Due to limited resources, ANERA has selected only a few sectors through which these broad objectives are translated into specific programs and projects. First, in a modest way, we have over the years focused much of our efforts on both the inputs and the outputs of the agricultural process. Namely, we have helped farmers improve their agricultural production as well as their utilization and marketing of the produce. Second, in a limited number of towns and villages, again in a modest way, we have attempted to

help the economic infrastructure of the community, i.e., enhance the community's ability to create and sustain jobs and increase incomes.

The specific projects under these broad programs are developed and implemented only with local institutions. ANERA does not implement any projects itself, nor do we undertake projects with individuals. We work only with local institutions which wish to undertake the projects and contribute substantially to them. The reasons for this strong emphasis on working with local institutions are manifold. First, fostering institutions helps to strengthen the fabric of the society. Second, the institution will have a memory beyond the lifetime or participation of the individual. In this manner, we

believe that the development effort will live after ANERA leaves, that it will enjoy sustainability. Third, institutions allow for projects or activities on a larger scale than projects with individuals. Fourth, institutions allow the individual to have better access to decision makers and, perhaps more importantly, resources. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip where there is no self-government for the population we serve, this emphasis on locally controlled institutions becomes even more important with respect to strengthening the society and increasing people's ability to control their own lives.

Below are examples of ANERA's development projects which illustrate these elements of development work.



*Lance Matteson, ANERA's Middle East Representative and Ibrahim Matar, Deputy Representative and Economist pose with a tractor used in land reclamation.*

## **AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS**

Over the years, ANERA has addressed a number of problems with respect to agricultural inputs. A brief list would include: land reclamation mechanized units, large and small mechanized units with various sized cooperatives, irrigation systems, introduction and improved use of fertilizer, pesticides, and appropriate technologies, a tree seedling nursery, improvement of agricultural extension systems, a poultry feed unit, and animal feed lots.

A few years ago, ANERA helped two cooperatives—Tarqumiya and Nablus—set up tractor and mechanized units to reclaim bad land and improve marginal fields. The land reclamation units are highly appreciated. In every case, the cooperative members explain their intensive use and benefit for the farmers. It is pleasing to see that many of the small tractor units are used deep within the rural areas of the West Bank. The front loader belonging to the Khan Younis cooperative in Gaza is also fully utilized in their unique style of agriculture for a form of soil renewal.

In conjunction with the land reclamation, the Tarqumiya cooperative in Hebron established an olive seedling nursery. Aside from meeting the demands for these seedlings, it had the effect of lowering their price on the West Bank by 50%. The technology has spread and now the West Bank sells a sizable portion of its seeding production in Jordan and Israel.

Another form of improved inputs in agriculture is the provision of modern irrigation technologies. In several villages, we have helped the cooperatives improve the flow of the village springs or wells and the storage of water. Then, the cooperative helps members replace flood irrigation with drip or sprinkler systems on their individual fields. The conservation of water and increase in production are dramatic as is the consequent increase in farmer income.

Another example is the Ramallah Poultry Cooperative, which, with ANERA's assistance, established a feed mill unit which has been very active. The coop in a second project is now expanding the size of its operations with additional help from ANERA. It consistently supplies high quality food to local



*ANERA's projects encourage the growth of small businesses. Here a young artist handpaints ceramics for sale in a local shop.*

chicken farmers. Its example has required other suppliers to raise their standards. All of this in turn means additional profits for the farmers. The feed mill also provides employment.

In order to improve the use and profits from agricultural production, ANERA helps with food processing as in the olive oil press in the Hebron District, soap factory in Beit Jala, olive oil canning in Ein Sinya and Deir Sharaf, and dairy processing in a number of locations. All the projects are based with cooperatives.

## **PROJECTS FOR TOWNS AND VILLAGES**

As with the agricultural projects, ANERA's two broad development objectives of increasing income and employment and promoting local institutional growth and local empowerment are directly evident with respect to our modest economic infrastructure projects: rural electrification, light industrial complexes and other municipal efforts.

During past years, ANERA assisted several village cooperatives to establish new or expand already extant auto-generation systems which would supply electricity during the day. While there is a social benefit—lights for school, electricity for the local clinic, as well as the home—the real motive for the projects was to produce power so that light industry etc. could be established in the village. Namely, with power, individuals may establish shops to cut and finish stone, make metal window frames, work wood, process food, run irrigation pumps, etc. When one visits any electrified village as opposed to a non-electrified one, the existence of such industries is very apparent. The projects contribute to increased employment as well as the establishing or strengthening of the local cooperative.

In a number of towns, we have undertaken a variety of projects which again build up the local economic infrastructure. In Beit Jala, the light industry complex provides proper



*This young farmer displays the result of modern farming techniques.*

facilities for industrial shops as well as promotes the establishing of new ones. In Halhul, the wholesale fruit and vegetable market will help the farmer realize a better price for his product. All of these projects generate income for the municipalities. Beit Jala is receiving 10% of its total revenues from the complex and Halhul is receiving 45% of its revenues from the market. These added funds as well as the service provided give the various municipalities a greater degree of financial independence and strength within the community.

Finally, the Gaza City rainwater conservation project is unique. It will not directly generate funds, but it will strengthen the municipality as it removes storm water from the streets. More importantly, the water percolating into the ground from

the project's artificial lake will in a modest way help to improve the deteriorating quality of the Gaza water supply which is used for both drinking and irrigation. The project has significant economic import, as irrigation is the only method by which the Gazans can cultivate the land.

Through these examples the nature of our work in development is clear. Our efforts in agricultural production and utilization of crops and our projects within the towns and villages have sought to improve the society's ability to increase employment and income while expanding the opportunities of the individual within the society. All of these projects have the necessary component of community pride which sustains them in the struggle for a better future.

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*This issue of the ANERA Newsletter was written by Peter Gubser, ANERA's President and Janice Murphy, ANERA's Vice-President*



1522 K Street, N.W., #202  
 Washington, D.C. 20005

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