



ANERA News

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A Shoe-in for Gaza

Years of blockade and economic hardships in Gaza mean that many children are forced to walk to school barefoot or in sandals and other flimsy shoes.

But this year, that reality was dramatically altered for thousands of children, thanks to ANERA's new partnership with TOMS Shoes. This US-based company's mission is to provide a new pair of shoes to a child in need for every pair purchased.

"I can't wait to show my shoes to my mother and my two brothers," young Mohammad exclaimed when he saw his new TOMS Shoes. "I am so happy with them. I'll be able to run very fast and play football."

His excitement was echoed by his classmates and children at more than 100 other preschools across Gaza who were fortunate to receive the wonderful and very useful gifts.

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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COVER PHOTO: Children at Al Wejdan Preschool in Gaza love their new TOMS Shoes. Rania Elhilou | ANERA

by the Numbers Children in the West Bank & Gaza

Percentage of children enrolled in preschool: **30%**

Percentage of Palestinian society under 18: **48.2%**

Percentage of children under 5 years who suffer from diarrhea, a water-borne disease, in 2010: **12.8%**

Stats from ANERA's Emergency Water & Sanitation Program (2008-present, USAID-funded)

Number of classrooms built: **1,342**

Number of students who now enjoy upgraded water and sanitation facilities at their schools: **2,882**

Number of people who now have access to potable water in their homes: **311,212**

Number of health facilities upgraded: **18**

Building Parks in the West Bank

Is there a more wonderful sound than the squeals of delight that come from children enjoying a playground?

Thanks to a project spearheaded by Bank of Palestine and long-time ANERA donors Basem and Muna Hishmeh, delightful sounds will be heard at playgrounds and parks built by ANERA in the coming years.

The first *Al Bayyara* (orange grove) park, a project that will build scores of playgrounds as funds are generated, was opened in Ramallah on July 2.

Basem and Muna Hishmeh, who have lived in the United States since leaving Ramallah some 50 years ago, said: "We wanted to create and build playgrounds where children can gather and play safely. It was also important for Palestinian families to have a place where they can relax and take a break from the everyday tensions they deal with."

Thank you to the Hishmehs, the Bank of Palestine and to all donors who will make this exciting project a reality for Palestinian children and families.



Sign at the first of the Al Bayyara parks, located in Ramallah, West Bank.

A Shoe-In for Gaza (continued from page 1)



Mohammad, at El Wejdan Preschool, demonstrates his old "talking shoes" and shows off his very first pair of brand new shoes, donated by TOMS Shoes.



ANERA staff sort through the boxes of shoes to find the right size for each child. The order was based on measurements carefully documented at each of the schools.

Translating a dream into a reality for the Gaza preschoolers took a lot of coordination by ANERA's dedicated staff.

First, ANERA field monitors collected information about the children, from shoe size to age and gender. Once TOMS prepared and shipped a custom order of appropriate size shoes, our in-kind team handled the shipment's clearance, arrival in Gaza and final distribution after carefully reconfirming the inventory. The field monitors took charge of distributing the shoes in the five Gaza governates, ensuring they got to the participating schools without any mishaps.

Gaza Warehouse Manager Mostafa Al Ghosain said coordination and quality control were a challenge. "The large number of children and the scattered locations of the preschools make it a challenge because we want to make sure each and every child gets exactly the shoes he deserves."

Ahlam Sheeber, director of one of the preschools that received new TOMS Shoes, appreciates the

difference the shoes can make. "Almost all the preschoolers live nearby and have to walk every day in streets filled with filth and dirt. I feel bad when I see a child come to school with dirty feet. I also worry that they could cut themselves," Ahlam said.

One mother, Nawal Safi, described the need for TOMS Shoes: "My husband is unemployed. I have five children and I have to provide them with all of life's basics. I tell my son, Saleh, to wear socks with his sandals during winter time to keep his feet warm, but that's not the best solution, because when it rains heavily, his socks get wet and he gets colds frequently."

Without TOMS, Saleh would have spent the winter the same way. "He has never gotten a new pair of shoes," his mother sighs. "It is the first time ever in his life."

That joy will be repeated every year among preschoolers in Gaza, thanks to TOMS.

TOMS is being honored at ANERA's 2012 Annual Dinner in recognition of their generous contribution to improving the lives of Palestinian children.



The new Al Bayyara playground (story on page 2) in Ramallah is a big hit with the children of the neighborhood.

Samar is happy to have learned from ANERA how to detect and treat parasites in her children.

A student in Gaza practices on one of the pianos ANERA delivered to her music school.

Under the *Let's Read* program, ANERA gave bags filled with children's books to thousands of Gaza preschoolers.

Faces of the Future
Celebrating the children who inspire ANERA's work.
Since our earliest days, ANERA has been delivering programs to the Middle East that benefit children of all ages, directly or indirectly. Whether it's building schools, installing community reservoirs, delivering vital medicines, renovating hospitals, encouraging arts education, training teachers or helping families become food secure, ANERA's programs touch the lives of hundreds of thousands of children. They inspire us to improve their prospects for a brighter future.



Face-painting at an ANERA-coordinated festival in Lebanon promoting rational use of medicine.



A newborn in his mother's arms at the ANERA-renovated postnatal ward at Holy Family Hospital in the West Bank.



With ANERA's help, youth in Lebanon's Nahr El Bared camp planted home gardens with vegetables and trees.

Building a Dream in Lebanon



At 19, Rana Mohamad Dalou has accomplished a lot. She has just finished a two-year program in engineering at the UNRWA Sibliin Vocational Training School in Lebanon, where she excelled. She wanted to pursue a higher degree at a university but she lacked the funds.

Rana knows engineering is not a traditional career for a woman but she is determined. "I always wanted to be an engineer," she explains, "and my brothers have been very supportive." Especially, she says, her older brother who is himself an engineer. "They don't question my choice and they give me the freedom to choose my own career."

Perhaps her determination comes from being the only girl among seven brothers. Her parents are supportive too. Her father helped her find an internship with an engineering company currently working on a project to rehabilitate Nahr El Bared. She's helping out with drawings and other responsibilities.

Rana grew up in Nahr El Bared refugee camp, which was destroyed in 2007 during fighting between outside militants and Lebanon's army. Reconstruction of the camp has been slow due to bureaucracy and the lack of funds. Some 70,000 Palestinian refugees were displaced by the destruction and live in temporary housing on the outskirts of the camp or in nearby gatherings. Rana is one of them but she longs to return home to the camp.

While she finishes up her internship and looks for full-time employment, Rana is taking classes at the National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training,

located at Nahr El Bared. The comprehensive vocational program includes graphic design, plumbing and sanitary work and AutoCAD.

ANERA partnered with ROTA (Reach Out To Asia) to enhance non-formal education for youth in Nahr El Bared to give them marketable skills that can help them find better jobs. Many, like Rana, are complementing their current studies to gain more skills. Others, who dropped out of school at an early age, find that vocational education gives them self-confidence and faith in the future.

Rana hopes to find a job to help support herself and her family, but she has a bigger dream: "My dream is to find a job that will benefit my community that was destroyed and needs help to rebuild."



Rana in her classroom at NISCVT for her course in AutoCAD.



Reconstruction of Nahr El Bared after the 2007 conflict is on-going and slow. This photograph is from May 2012.

ANERA Annual Dinner

October 5, 2012

Renaissance Washington Hotel
999 Ninth Street NW
Washington, DC

Make a reservation
or contribute to ANERA's work
with children by going to
www.anera.org/dinner.

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Faces of the Future

Celebrating the children who inspire ANERA's work.

When their basic needs are met, children thrive. This year, ANERA is raising funds to continue delivering life-changing programs to the most vulnerable children in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. Every child deserves to be happy, healthy and safe.



Palestinian Refugees
in Lebanon

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A Shoe-in for Gaza



from the desk of **Bill Corcoran, President**

Dear Friend of ANERA:

When their basic needs are met, children thrive. That's why many of ANERA's programs target youth growing up in some of the toughest places in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon.

The impact of ANERA's work truly becomes apparent through the personal stories of the young people impacted by the programs you have funded.

Children like Mohammad walked to school in the same worn-out shoes until, along with thousands of other preschoolers, ANERA gave him a new pair of TOMS Shoes. Teenagers like Rana spent her childhood in the bleak environment of Lebanon's Nahr El Bared refugee camp, hoping for a better future. ANERA is helping her realize her dream of becoming a structural engineer.

Every child deserves to be happy, healthy and safe. As our programs continue to reach children across the region, we look forward to more inspiring stories like the ones in this newsletter.

Bill Corcoran