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Impressions From Lebanon's Camps

Hani AlMadhoun, ANERA Director of Donor Development

On my first day visiting ANERA's projects in Lebanon last month, my colleagues and I drove to Shatila camp, five minutes away from the center of cosmopolitan Beirut. It may as well have been a world away.

Shatila is a maze of dank, dark alleyways between ramshackle apartment blocks that are stacked so close to each other the sun never makes it through the windows. Webs of wires and cables hang overhead and kids play in sewage.

I am originally from Gaza and thought that nothing could be worse than conditions in the camps there. But the night after I went to Shatila, I could not sleep. Believe me, I tried. But what I saw in Shatila was so hopeless. My stomach was upside down. I felt like an only child who had just discovered that all along he had a big family who spoke just as he spoke, valued what he valued, and who lived not too far from where he had lived.

The great majority of the Palestinian refugees I spoke to come from northern cities and villages of historic Palestine. Every little kid can say what town their family came from. Every single one of them told me names...Nazareth, Akko, Safad, Tayyrah, Haifa, Al Dahryah, Alkhalssah, Marj Bany Ammer...

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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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COVER PHOTO: A boy from Syria who is now living in a tent colony set up in Ein El Helweh refugee camp in Lebanon: a camp within a camp.

Louise Le Marie, photographer

Impressions From Lebanon's Camps

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Shatila has little to offer its 15,000+ desperate Palestinian refugees but hundreds still continue to arrive – fleeing the violence in Syria. These newcomers find themselves trapped in a paradox where they have to start again from zero in a place that has virtually nothing to give.

I visited a school named after the Palestinian city of Ramallah where classes are running in shifts to reach all the children and where ANERA is working with students, parents and teachers to treat and control lice, which runs rampant in the overcrowded conditions.

The next day I went up north to Nahr El Bared where metal trailers are serving as homes for Syrian and Palestinian families. These boxes were installed as temporary shelters seven years ago in the wake of military clashes that left most of the camp destroyed. Now, rusted and disintegrating, they provide poor protection from the cold, heat or rain. I met a handicapped Syrian man who found shelter there. Even though the community has little, locals collected a mattress, blankets and kitchenware to give to his family. ANERA-sponsored plumbing students installed a new bathroom in his trailer that he can use with ease – something that restores some dignity in his life.

Residents of Nahr El Bared take pride in speaking their home village dialect, the only thing they have left from Palestine.

In southern Lebanon I visited the largest camp, Ein El Helweh, home to 70,000. There I met Palestinian refugees from Syria who feed themselves by dumpster-diving and collecting rotten produce from the local market. They are among 60 families living in a camp-within-a-camp in makeshift tents. I talked to a father of four whose family was pleased to receive quilts and other relief supplies from ANERA. A blacksmith back in Syria, he wondered where he could find work in Lebanon to support his family over the longer term.

Walking through the camp, I saw Ahmed, a six-year-old from Syria, who was collecting flowers. When I asked why, he said, "For Auntie Sahar, my teacher!"

Despite all the destruction and uncertainty, this youngster still finds a way make people smile. He, like others I met on my journey around Lebanon's camps, was positive and resourceful in spite of nearly impossible conditions. But, for how much longer?

Edward M. Karkar,

member of the ANERA Board and Advisory Council for many years, died in December 2013. Mr. Karkar came to the United States as a refugee in his youth, was educated at Stanford and UC Berkeley and founded Karkar Electronics. He was especially devoted to cultural programs for Palestinian youth. ANERA extends condolences to his family and appreciation for the many gifts that were given to ANERA in his memory.

The portion of Lebanon's population made up of refugees from Syria – projected by the end of 2014:

38%

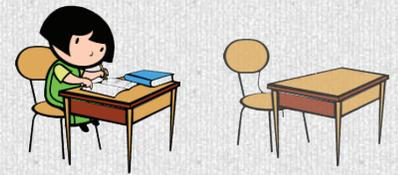


77%
of refugees from Syria are in debt



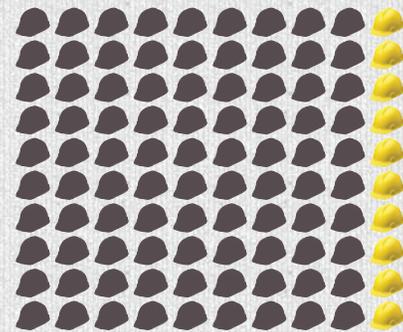
2x

Food and shelter cost more than twice the average family's income



75%

of Syrian refugee children are not in school



10%
of Palestinian refugees from Syria have found employment in Lebanon

A vital part of ANERA's work is delivering critical supplies to people in need. Whether it's medicines to under-stocked pharmacies in Gaza, wheelchairs to people with disabilities in the West Bank or hygiene kits to refugees in Lebanon's camps, ANERA delivers. You are the key to our ability to do this.

Here's how it works...

Generous partner organizations donate millions of dollars' worth of supplies. Local partners get the most urgently needed supplies to the people who need them the most. But this all costs – to ship, to clear customs, to sort, to store, and to distribute. **All these expenses are covered entirely by donations to ANERA from caring individuals like you from around the world.**

Your generosity also helps us bring in additional vital donations from partner organizations, which means we can help even more people in need. Imagine this: a donation to ANERA can help deliver many, many times its value in relief supplies!

So, the next time you read how ANERA delivered soccer balls to kids in refugee camps in Lebanon, medicines to cancer patients in Gaza or beds to hospitals in the West Bank, please know that it is thanks to you and ANERA's worldwide community of donors.

\$800,000 in donations
from ANERA donors
shipped \$45 million
in donated medical and
relief supplies to the
Middle East last year.

ANERA's Relief Work



2,600 dignity kits for women, including dresses, scarves and underwear

500 heaters with gas canisters

49,000 handmade quilts

4,800 baby care kits with blankets, cloth diapers, hygiene supplies, clothes and caps

LEBANON

Hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria continue to flood into Lebanon. New families are arriving in impoverished and overcrowded camps with nothing but the clothes they are wearing. They struggle to find even the most basic supplies.

ANERA's community of supporters continues to respond to the crisis with much-needed funds that deliver food, clothes, quilts, household supplies, hygiene items, baby care kits, heaters, school materials and medicines.

ANERA is one of the few international organizations responding in Lebanon's Palestinian camps and, as the crisis continues for the long-term, our staff will work closely with local organizations to reach as many people in need as possible.

in Lebanon and Gaza

2013-2014

GAZA

The past year in Gaza has seen a flood, a continuation of Israel's strict limits on what is allowed into the area, the closure of the border with Egypt, and the destruction of the tunnels between Egypt and Gaza – a lifeline for food, household supplies and fuel. Work is scarce, stocks are depleted, and electricity is intermittent. Every day is a crisis in Gaza.

Funds from ANERA supporters delivered warm clothes and cleaning supplies to flood victims, Ramadan food parcels for needy families who could not afford *Iftar* meals, new shoes to thousands of children, and medicines to treat parasite infections.

While media attention is focused elsewhere, the humanitarian crisis persists in Gaza. Our 20 staff work tirelessly to respond to the many problems that families continue to face.



6,500 children and parents learn about parasite prevention

60 preschool renovations

1,100 hygiene kits for families to prevent the spread of intestinal parasites.

TOMS Shoes fitted onto each child's feet at 130 preschools, protecting against soil-transmitted parasites

Keeping Kids Healthy

This winter ANERA spearheaded two major health interventions in schools in Lebanon and Gaza. The focus of the programs has been two-fold: treating children and educating parents.

Lice in Lebanon

Health officials have tracked a serious outbreak of lice infestations in Lebanon's overcrowded refugee camps, with so many new refugees crammed into substandard shelters. In one camp alone, twice as many cases of lice infections were identified compared to the previous year.

To fight both the health and social implications of lice infection, ANERA is supporting a lice treatment and prevention program in UNRWA schools in the Palestinian camps of Lebanon. ANERA is screening more than 20,000 UNRWA elementary school students for lice and treating any identified cases. Some 70 health tutors in all of UNRWA's elementary schools of Lebanon received training on screening, counseling, prevention and treatment of lice infections.



The cover of the lice and scabies booklet ANERA gave to parents and teachers in Lebanon

Intestinal Parasites in Gaza

Intestinal parasites are the primary cause of anemia among Gaza's children, most often resulting from environmental pollution, contaminated soil and water, and lack of sanitation services.

ANERA already has treated 6,500 children in 52 preschools across Gaza for parasites. Treatment alone is not sustainable, so we also used our network of preschools to provide awareness sessions for parents to learn more about detection, methods of eradication and good hygiene practices. Participants also received hygiene kits, brochures, TOMS Shoes and medicine for treatment.

Islam Al-Atrash, an ANERA staff member in Gaza, trains a group of mothers from Al Mosadar village on the different types of parasites that can infect their children.



They may not
be in the news.

But they still need
your help.

Let them know
they are
not forgotten.

Donate using the
enclosed envelope.



Early Childhood Development
in the West Bank and Gaza

ANERA
Improving Lives in the Middle East
Since 1968

ANERA Reports
on the ground in the Middle East
Volume 5 | January 2014

Have you read
our new report ?

anera.org/reports

Save the date!

ANERA's 2014 Annual Dinner & Fundraiser

when: Friday evening, October 17

where: Omni Shoreham Hotel
2500 Calvert St NW
Washington, DC 20008

Reservations for the event can be made
on ANERA's website after June 1.

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ANERA NEWS

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Dear Friend of ANERA:

With so many troubling developments throughout the Middle East, a sense of hopelessness and despair is often hard to avoid. Violence continues to spiral out of control in Syria sending more refugees into Lebanon. Tensions between Egypt and Hamas have made living conditions in Gaza miserable for families who have been suffering for years under a crippling blockade.

As someone who cares about the plight of Palestinians, refugees and other poor communities in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, you deserve to know about the positive change that is happening in people's lives – that the compassion of someone thousands of miles away is felt by children in Lebanon's camps, by teachers in Gaza classrooms and by poor farmers in the West Bank.

The success stories in this newsletter would not be possible without donations from people like you. Thank you!

Bill Cowan
ANERA President

