



in this issue

1-2

Want to Give Peace a Chance?
Invest in Women.

3

50 Years: Growing Roots. Making
a Difference.

3

Dedicated to Anera:
New Orleans Donor
Rana Ottallah

4-5

Anera Then and Now

6

In Case You Missed It:
The Latest From Anera.org

Want to Give Peace a Chance? Invest in Women.

BY ANERA VICE PRESIDENT OF PHILANTHROPY MAGGIE FORSTER SCHMITZ

Throughout the seven-year Syrian war and the many attempts at peace negotiations, Syrian women have continuously called for their inclusion at the table. As steps are now being taken to draft a new Syrian constitution, these voices are also demanding to be involved in the proceedings.

And there's good reason to listen. When women are active participants in peace talks, the likelihood that the ensuing agreement will last longer than 15 years rises by 35 percent. In fact, women's participation at every stage of peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction is critical to sustainable peace, democracy, the rule of law and economic recovery.

The international community has long recognized, on paper, the need to include women in resolving and preventing conflict. Since 2000, the UN Security Council has passed eight resolutions on women, peace, and security, including recognizing the outsized impact that armed conflict has on women and girls, ending impunity for sexual violence during war, calling for gender-specific frameworks in post-conflict

continued on page 2

credits

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.

Material in this newsletter may be reproduced without prior permission, provided credit is given and a copy of the publication in which the item is used is sent to Anera. Subscriptions are free of charge. Any inquiries should be sent to the address below.

Anera's Officers

David Nygaard, Chair
Robert Mertz, Vice Chair
Bob Trice, Treasurer
Sanaa Abouzaid, Secretary
Sean Carroll*, President
Liz Demarest*, Vice President
Donna Lee Diane*, Chief Financial Officer
Ellen Giordano*, Vice President
Maggie Forster Schmitz*, Vice President

* *Ex Officio Board Member*

Editor: Liz Demarest

Contributing Writers:

Hani Almadnoun, Liz Demarest, Maggie Forster Schmitz, Dan Riley

Contributing Photographers:

Nada Dajani, Rania Elhilou, Bayan Itani, and Mohamed Zaanoun

Anera never rents or sells our list.

ISSN 1966-3584

Anera
1111 14th Street NW, #400
Washington, DC 20005
202.266.9700

anera@anera.org
anera.org

Anera News Cover Photo:

Bayan Itani, photographer

Volunteers in Lebanon's Nahr El Bared refugee camp are ready to meet members of the community who are coming by to pick up their Anera recycling bins.

Invest in Women *continued from page 1*



Students from Anera's catering classes in Lebanon show off their beautifully set table.

public services, and bringing more women and women's civil society organizations into the creation of their nations' new judicial structures. A number of governments have also created their own national action plans that outline steps to mainstream gender into national security and international development policies.

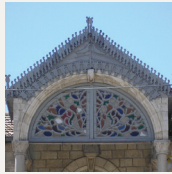
Equally strong is the evidence that investments in education, economic and health opportunities for girls and women have a multiplier effect and transfer positive benefits to their families, communities, and countries, ensuring stability, democracy, and economic growth in post-war Syria and other countries affected by conflict. Envisioning a Middle East in which all members of society feel safe and included, Syrian refugee women are developing skills they can use now and in the future, once they are able to return home and begin rebuilding their country. Women and girls must be included so that they can also be part of the long process of reconstruction and recovery.

Anera's youth economic empowerment program has been working with Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon for more than four years. One component is our remedial education courses and job skills training for marketable trades. Over sixty percent of participants are young women, and this is key, given that ensuring women's economic participation will be critical to fomenting post-conflict stability in Syria.

UN Security Council Resolution 2122 states that the "economic empowerment of women greatly contributes to the stabilization of societies emerging from armed conflict." When hostilities in Syria cease, the long process of rebuilding the country will begin. Women and girls are agents of change and their full participation in all sectors and at all levels of a nation is needed more than ever before.

50 YEARS

Growing Roots. Making a Difference.



1976: The year Anera opens its first Middle East office. Now there are 12 across Lebanon and Palestine.



\$558 million: The value of medical and relief supplies Anera donors delivered in the Middle East over five decades.



10%: The percentage of preschools Anera donors have renovated in Palestine over the past eight years.



7,200: number of women entrepreneurs who borrowed from the Gaza Women's Loan Fund, which Anera started in 1995.

DEDICATED TO ANERA



Rana (far left) with her team of volunteers

Rana Ottallah was born and raised in Palestine, but now New Orleans is home. “Though we are not rich, my family and I have everything we need. I was always thinking of the families living in refugee camps in Gaza and Lebanon who don’t always have basic life necessities. Images of hunger, poor housing and lack of appropriate education haunted me. I knew that I had to do something, but didn’t know where to start.”

The 2014 bombardment of Gaza galvanized Rana. She sold black ribbons at a dollar apiece to show solidarity with the victims of the attacks in Gaza. The money she raised helped Anera to buy hygiene kits for families who lost everything.

Since then, Rana has hosted some amazing events in New Orleans. In 2016 and 2017, she put on iftars that brought together 600 guests and raised funds for distributions of Ramadan food parcels in Gaza and Lebanon. Last month, Rana and her team hosted an event called Jerusalem Fest that brought together 400 families from around Louisiana’s East Bank to support Anera’s work in Jerusalem (though she is from Al Bireh!). They included a maktuba competition and grape leaf rolling contests that were a big hit for the little ones.

“Our NOLA community,” says Rana, “has welcomed Anera’s work with open arms, supporting its causes and showing up to every event. The city and the people who understood the meaning of giving back stepped up and embraced Anera’s work...One thing we really appreciate is that Anera always provides stories, pictures and stats from the work we fund.”

Anera is honored to have Rana’s wonderful support. We thank her and the great group of volunteers who help to advance the well-being of Palestinians in Lebanon and Palestine.



2007: Anera shored up a ravine in Jericho, West Bank.

10 years later: Though rains in Jericho are infrequent, when the ravine is needed it's really needed!

During the rainy season in the Jordan Valley, rain can come hard and fast, causing flooding and wreaking havoc in communities by disconnecting people from their workplaces, schools, and health care services. In 2007, Anera built gabions to shore up the sides of a ravine in Jericho. Ever since, rainwater has safely traveled to the Jordan River and depleted aquifers.

THEN



2007: Najwa took part in Anera's preschool teacher training program in Gaza.

2018: Najwa is director of a Gaza preschool and says the 2007 training is "still alive in her mind" and the school's policies.

Najwa says she wouldn't be as successful today if she had not participated in Anera's training back in 2007. The special awareness sessions were part of Anera's Milk for Preschoolers program. "I learned how to identify kids with symptoms of anemia and advise parents how to refer them to local clinics for proper treatment," Najwa explains. Because of her dedication and professionalism, she is now a preschool director.

In the early 1990s, Anera invested \$110,000 in Hebron University to help establish the soil and water lab. Today in 2018, the lab is one of the busiest in the department of agriculture. Not only do students and professors use it to help with their work and research, but it's also open to the local community so farmers can run tests on soil and water samples.

1992: Anera invested \$110,000 in Hebron University to help establish the soil and water lab.

2018: The lab is one of the busiest in the department of agriculture at Hebron University.



+ NOW

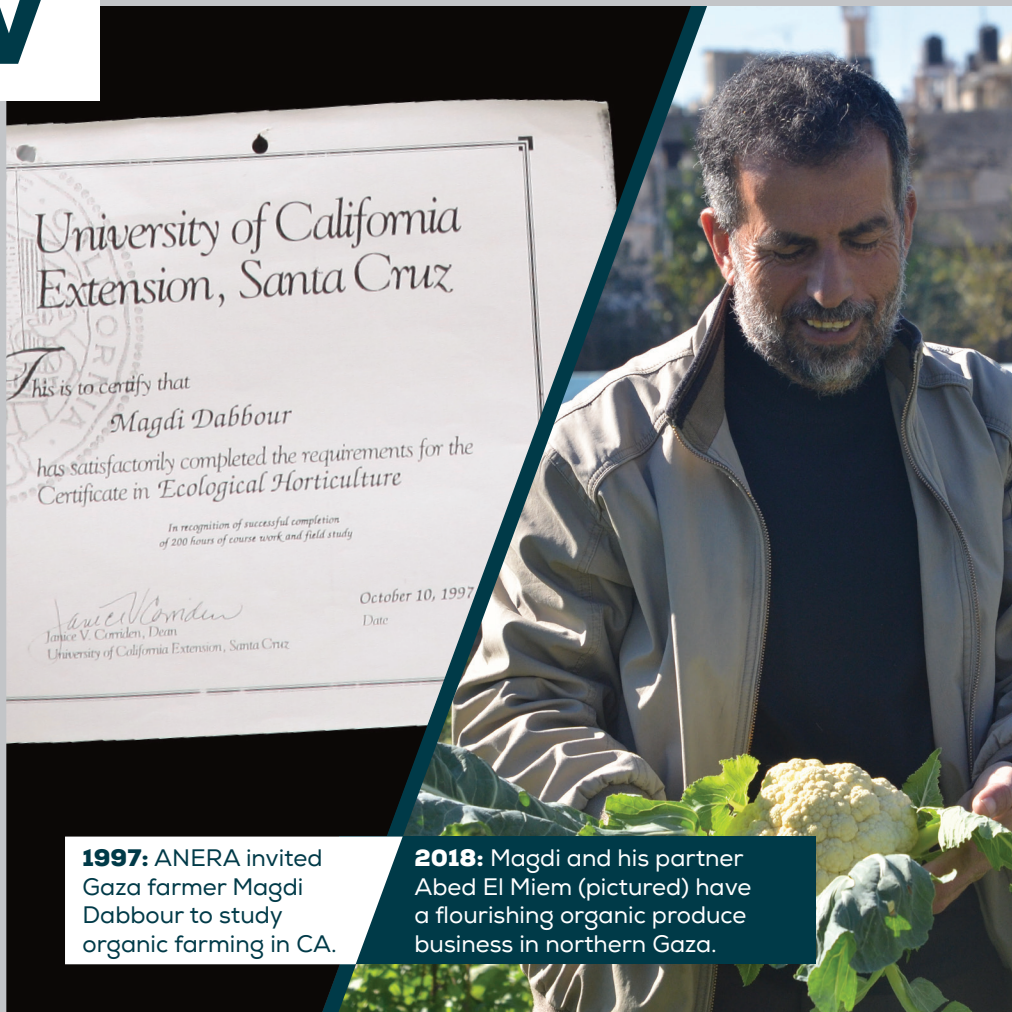
Twenty years after Anera's small role in Magdi's life (the invitation to study organic farming in California), his organic farm in Gaza is thriving and he is a mentor to other farmers. Anera also has just installed a large pond to collect water for drip irrigation on his farm. "A great thing about organic farming is that water resources are better managed," says Magdi.

#anera then and now



1997: ANERA invited Gaza farmer Magdi Dabbour to study organic farming in CA.

2018: Magdi and his partner Abed El Miem (pictured) have a flourishing organic produce business in northern Gaza.



In Case You Missed It

THE LATEST FROM ANERA.ORG



Mashha Village Tackles Lebanon Trash Crisis

The Syrian war deeply affected Mashha, which lies along the Syrian border and is located in Akkar, Lebanon's poorest region and "home" to thousands of Syrian refugees. Mashha now hosts 3,000+ Syrians; more than half the population of the town. Like many rural villages in Lebanon, Mashha struggles to accommodate the needs of refugees and local residents. One of its biggest challenges they had was coping with trash disposal.

In cooperation with Mashha's municipality, and with funds from Ajram Family Foundation, Anera has brought a comprehensive and sustainable waste management program to the town. The project includes community activities to raise awareness about the importance of recycling, as well as the establishment of sorting and composting facilities to treat waste properly. The new facilities also help the municipality generate income and save on dumping fees.

READ MORE
anera.org/mashha



Dura's Only Charitable Medical Center

There is no hospital in Dura, and the population of 36,000 all depend on a charitable clinic that operates 24/7. The immense need for medical care and the excellent work the center does has pushed the Municipality of Dura to allocate a newer and bigger building to house the center.

"The donations the center receives from Anera make up a large percentage of their in-stock medications, so it relies greatly on us to provide treatment for their poverty-stricken patients," explains Anera In-kind Field Coordinator Muhammad Atieh. "When a center in such high demand does not have to put money aside to provide medications, it can focus more on providing the best care for their patients, and addressing their problems well. Thanks to our in-kind donors, this center has been able to expand its services and grow."

READ MORE
anera.org/dura



Positive Parenting for Gaza Preschoolers

In a room full of mothers, early childhood development (ECD) trainer Suad addresses the most pressing issues for children their wonder years. "The wonder years," according to Saud, "is when children begin to gain the skills that will shape their future personalities. These are some of the most important years for development in the human life span. It all comes down to good caring and loving parents."

"These early years are crucial for parents. We need to deepen connections with our children and make their routines fun," says mother Kifah Ghaben from Sawarha village in Gaza. Through each ECD training session, values of positive parenting are underscored.

Positive parenting sessions give parents information about the characteristics, problem-solving abilities, strengths and weaknesses of their children in order to deal with them appropriately.

READ MORE
anera.org/parenting

Don't miss these upcoming events in commemoration of Anera's 50th anniversary

#SERVEHOPE RAMADAN REGIONAL IFTARS

Portland – May 29 | Seattle – May 30

Richmond – June 1 | Charlotte – June 2 | Chapel Hill – June 3

Washington – June 5

This Ramadan season, Anera will be hosting iftars between May and June in six different cities to raise funds for our programs as well as engage our community of donors. This year's iftars will feature Palestinian-American chef & blogger Abeer Najjar. As a Palestinian-American from Chicago, Abeer strives to inspire an appreciation for food and the culture it comes from, viewing traditional Palestinian food with pride. She is known for her at-home cooking show, hosting underground supper clubs, and being featured on publications such as Teen Vogue.



ANERA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

September 28

Reserve your seat at a beautiful table for our 50th Anniversary Dinner. Come mingle with old and new friends. This fun and inspiring evening will take you on a journey through five decades of Anera's work in Palestine and Lebanon.

Together, we'll also lay the foundation for delivering future impactful programs, building better lives so hope finds its way.



Please visit anera.org/events

Do you want to host an event in your city or community?

Contact Hani Almadhoun at (202) 266-9711 or halmadhoun@anera.org.

1111 14th Street NW, #400
Washington, DC 20005

Want to Give Peace a Chance? Invest in Women.

ANERA NEWS, ISSUE 200 | **SPRING 2018**



Volunteers in Lebanon's Nahr El Bared refugee camp are ready to meet members of the community who are coming by to pick up their Anera recycling bins.