A Time for Community

For a second year, Muslims around the world are now celebrating the holy month of Ramadan under the unusual restrictions created by the pandemic. This is a month when the observant fast from dawn to dusk, as a reminder that the material world is temporary and to focus on the spiritual. The usual gatherings in mosques and public spaces and with loved ones are impossible for many families this year. COVID-19 cases have surged to new heights in Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan in recent months, even as people in many wealthier nations are feeling more hopeful as mass vaccination campaigns ramp up.

Worse, the restrictions necessitated by the coronavirus have led to new economic hardships for many who can least afford it. Poverty in the West Bank likely doubled last year. In Gaza, 64% of people are now impoverished. At the same time, many governments are continuing to decrease international aid.

As longtime Anera supporters know, every year during Ramadan we assemble food parcels with an array of pantry essentials for hungry families. In Gaza, we’re doing things a little differently this year. Instead of parcels, we will be providing food assistance vouchers to 1,000...
A Time for Community  continued from page 1

As part of our Ramadan response in Lebanon, families are coming to our cooking site in Tripoli to pick up falafel sandwiches, funded by Falafel Inc. They bring their own containers, to minimize waste.

vulnerable families. With support from IRUSA, we will serve a total of 5,400 people. The vouchers are redeemable at local shops, giving families the freedom to buy the food items that are the most appropriate for their needs. One food voucher for a family in Gaza costs $70, allowing them to purchase groceries to prepare nutritious iftar meals — when Muslims break their fast at sunset — throughout the month.

According to the UN, the unemployment rate in Gaza is the highest in the world. These vouchers will help keep local markets in business, which means access to quality foods at reasonable prices and jobs for those who live in the community.

In Lebanon, soaring inflation has become an additional burden to families struggling to make ends meet. Since Ramadan last year, the cost of a typical iftar meal has tripled. Fights break out over a bottle of milk or a loaf of bread. Samar El Yassir, Anera’s country director in Lebanon, says “We’ve been through years of civil war, and yet I still haven’t seen it this bad.”

All of this makes distributing food parcels extra important this Ramadan. Breaking the fast to enjoy a healthy, filling meal means so much to families in need. We are grateful that Anera’s generous community of supporters will help struggling families have a more festive and joyful Ramadan.

WHY I SUPPORT ANERA | CONNECTING TO MY GRANDPARENTS’ LEGACY

By Ruth MacFarlane Hunter

In the early 1900s, both of my maternal grandparents emigrated from Lebanon to the United States. They met and married in Massachusetts, where my mother and I were later born. My support for Anera connects me to their legacy in ways that are very special. I first became aware of Anera’s work more than 30 years ago when I was working as an engineer for the federal government and saw Anera on the list of charities participating in the Combined Federal Campaign. What caught my attention was Anera’s youth vocational training programs in Lebanon, since my Sitto (grandmother) was a lifelong supporter of education.

Now retired, I primarily make my donations to Anera through a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from my individual retirement account (IRA). Donating this way allows me to give larger donations than I would otherwise be able to, because of the tax benefits it offers and my IRA’s positive stock market performance. This has allowed me to qualify for the Anera Leadership Circle at the Karam Circle level ($5,000-$9,999). Being a member of the Anera Leadership Circle has deepened my connection with and understanding of Anera’s work. I love being able to see the impact of my support for Anera through special webinars and updates, and attending events and meetings with Anera’s program staff and participants. 

I try to give in a way that makes an impact. I choose to donating to Anera for its strong track record of achievement. I have been inspired by the stories I hear from Anera’s teams in the field and by the stories of the people they serve.

I am grateful to be a part of Anera’s family. Learning more about the impact of my support for Anera is a source of pride and joy for me, and I look forward to many more years of giving to Anera.

Learn more about donating from your IRA at anera.org/anera-qcd

Ruth MacFarlane Hunter

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Here’s how you can help this Ramadan

$15 = 1 COVID-19 vaccine for a refugee in Lebanon

$38 = 20 blood bags for Gaza’s blood bank

$70 = 1 food voucher for a family in Gaza

$80 = 1 food parcel + hygiene kit for a family in Lebanon

Donate at anera.org/give4ramadan

 Did you know... that the combined value of in-kind donations thatAmericares has given to Anera in our 30-year partnership makes thatorganization the largest single donor to Anera?

Thank you for your ongoing support, Americares!
Are you on social media? Do you follow Anera?

If you are, great. Please share our content with friends and comment on our posts. If you aren't, you're missing out! We post regularly on all the major channels, sharing news items, success stories, and just plain fun stuff. On these pages, we feature some of our most popular posts from the last quarter.
THE LATEST FROM ANERA.ORG

Sewing Students in Lebanon Find Hope — and an Income

“The thank God I found this course. It saved us. I was able to pay back my debts and now I can afford food and shelter for me and my family. I also learned a new and useful profession.”
— Hassan (pictured)

Like Hassan, many Syrian refugee youth are out of school and need the skills to find decent jobs. With the pandemic and the economic collapse in Lebanon, they are trying to survive through a financial drought. Thanks to the support of UNICEF, youth participating in Anera’s sewing courses are learning new skills and earning a wage while making much-needed face masks.

Anera remains committed to helping youth in Lebanon continue to learn, produce and thrive. Our staff are all committed to reviving hope in these youngsters’ hearts, because we truly believe that we are not well, unless we are all well.

Wafaa Finds Hope and Cheer in Raising Sheep

Wafaa and her family are from Silwad, a town located northeast of Ramallah, in Palestine. “I am a housewife with five kids,” she says. “My family is poor.” Her husband, 56, is unemployed and struggles with mental health issues.

Recently, Wafaa began a sheep-raising project through Anera’s Women Can program. With the sheep’s milk, Wafaa can make cheese for sale. One kilo of cheese sells for $8 to $10 in the West Bank. Because of COVID-19 and the current harsh economic situation, she says this project has come at just the right time.

“We badly need to have a source of income — even a small one.”

Anera’s Women Can program supports income-generating activities for women who are the primary breadwinners in their families. Wafaa completed Anera’s initial training course which provides small-business entrepreneurs the skills they need to manage their businesses.

New Water Connections Make Niveen’s Life Much Healthier

“It was a big change in our lives when our water connection was fixed. Now that we can rely on a water supply at home, with good water pressure too, we can keep the children and the house clean. And we can wash our produce. A lot of times I had to spend a good deal of money on water.”
— Niveen, pictured at left with her daughter, lives in the Sabra neighborhood in Gaza City and is the breadwinner for a family of nine.

With support from Islamic Relief USA, Anera upgraded and repaired the water network in Sabra, replacing decayed, undersized steel pipes with new PVC pipes. Niveen’s family and 471 others in Sabra now have a reliable, strong connection to water supplies. As part of Anera’s water and sanitation work in Gaza, public health educators conduct awareness sessions about water-borne disease and proven good practices for avoiding them.

The Leadership Circle recognizes the generosity of Anera’s most dedicated donors.

Various levels of membership are available and each comes with a variety of special privileges.

When you join the Anera Leadership Circle, you invest in communities. Your support helps vulnerable refugees, families, and communities overcome conflict, poverty and displacement.

Have questions about the Leadership Circle or want to learn more about how you can get involved? Contact Christina Andeweg at candeweg@anera.org or (202) 266-9718.

DID YOU KNOW if you’re 70.5 or older, you can create a tax-advantaged gift from your IRA? These gifts reduce your future tax burden, and make an immediate impact on the health and well-being of refugees making a better life for themselves.

Visit anera.org/anera-qcd to get started.

In Case You Missed It

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New Water Connections Make Niveen’s Life Much Healthier

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A Time for Community

Anera donors are providing the funding needed to purchase 40,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, sufficient to vaccinate 20,000 Palestinian refugees residing in Palestinian camps across Lebanon.