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Photo:

*The Anera team interviews girls in
Akkar, Lebanon, who are at an age when
they vulnerable to early marriage.*

Reducing Rates of Early Marriage in Lebanon

Despite decades of progress, many women and girls are still denied the fundamental human rights of health, education, economic opportunities, and a life free from violence. In response, **Anera recently launched a two-year program in Lebanon to address one of the most pervasive hurdles to gender equality today: child, early, and forced marriage.**

The pilot initiative is titled The Sama Project. Sama is both an acronym for Safeguarding Adolescents through Meaningful Assistance, as well as an Arabic word meaning 'sky.' The choice of this name underscores the program's core belief: **the sky's the limit for all young girls.**

The Sama Project is funded by the Forth Foundation, a private charity, which turned to Anera to design and implement the program. Forth also enlisted Dr. Anju Malhotra, an internationally known expert on child marriage, and principal visiting fellow at the UN University's International Institute for Global Health, as project advisor.

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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.

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ISSN 1966-3584

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Did you know...
55% of the Palestinians who have been vaccinated in Lebanon came through Anera's vaccine awareness campaigning.

Reducing Rates of Child Marriage in Lebanon *continued from p. 1*

“We are sadly living in a world where the childhood of millions of girls is lost and the possibility of their having a healthy and prosperous future is stifled because they are married during their teen years,” says Malhotra. “Making sure that these girls have a chance at a real future is so critical, not just to protect their rights and well-being, but also to ensure that the next generation is not a lost generation.”

There are an estimated 650 million child brides worldwide. In Lebanon, this problem is particularly acute among displaced populations. **Some 40% of Syrian refugee women aged 20-24, for instance, are married before the age of 18.**

Global and regional evidence shows that the most effective way to combat child marriage is through providing conditional cash for schooling. Since girls are often considered an economic burden on families, economic assistance tailored to exclusively support the education of girls is essential to break the cycle of dropping out of school and child marriage. Anera’s new initiative is designed to do just that.

Lebanon’s recent economic collapse has greatly increased unemployment rates, especially among Syrian refugees. Facing unprecedented economic hardships, families view early marriage as an opportunity to decrease their financial burdens and help girls meet their own needs for survival. Sama will directly benefit at least 600 girls from refugee and host communities in the Akkar region of northern Lebanon.

“Far too many girls are forced into marriages because their families are desperate, especially during times of economic crisis like we are seeing now,” says Samar El-Yassir, Anera’s country director in Lebanon.

The Sama Project is a unique, holistic and multi-dimensional initiative that combines education support to families benefiting from a poverty-reduction program with the engagement of advocates from the community to change the norms in Lebanon.

To ensure the long-term success of this intervention, Anera is engaging members of the community and training groups of community influencers on the importance of girls’ continued education, with the goal of eventually changing community norms that promote child marriage.

“ I see my dreams through the eyes of my daughter wearing her graduation gown and getting ready to succeed by bringing down barriers and restrictions.”
— a mother interviewed for inclusion in the Sama Project

By the Numbers: The Sama Project *pp. 1-2*

13 to 16
AGE RANGE of the girls in Lebanon who are participating in the project, as they are the most vulnerable to early marriage

51%
of **EXTREMELY POOR HOUSEHOLDS** in Lebanon are located in the Akkar governorate, which is the area Sama targets

3 in 10
FAMILIES IN LEBANON have cut expenses on education because of the collapsing economy. Girls are often forced to leave school.

\$200–\$250
MONTHLY STIPEND for 650+ families in Akkar – to offset costs of basic necessities – reducing the pressure to marry off daughters

SUPPORTING PALESTINIAN CHILDREN THROUGH STOCK GIVING

by Anera donor Howard Hallengren



Because of my time in the Gulf, where I travelled a lot for work, I met a great many people in Kuwait, the Emirates, and Bahrain who were from Palestine and had had to relocate because of the events of the 1940s. One could not help but be sympathetic when people told their stories about how they’d had to leave their businesses or had their homes taken from them. I heard these stories many, many times over the years.

I really like to support the various projects Anera runs. Supporting children, in particular, is important to me. Even if I can’t see them in person, seeing pictures of the kindergartens I’ve helped make happen is extremely rewarding.

For those who have investments in the stock market, I encourage you to look at those stocks as a source of your gifts to Anera. There are some big financial advantages in stock giving, since the US government permits you to take the full market value of any stock that you give as a deduction on your annual income tax.

Let me give you an example. Let’s say you give 100 shares of Apple that you originally bought at \$100 per share, and each of those shares is now worth \$1,000. If you sell those shares, you would have to pay capital gains tax on the appreciated amount of \$9,000. However, if you donate them to charity, you will avoid paying the capital gains tax, and you can claim the full appreciated amount as a tax deduction on your annual tax return. So it’s a win-win situation, not to mention the impact you will have on the people you help.

If you’ve benefited from recent capital gains, there are real tax incentives to giving appreciated securities to support the great work that Anera does. **>>> anera.org/give-stocks**

F2F

Farms to Fosool (Classrooms)

Anera's F2F program delivers healthy, fresh breakfasts to Gaza preschoolers every school day in a way that encourages **sustainable, long-term community partnerships** among farming families, working women and schools.

Agriculture

Farmers participating in Anera's greenhouse program earn income by selling produce to women's cooperatives for meal preparation.



Women's Livelihoods

Members of women's cooperatives use their cooking skills and earn an income preparing fresh, healthy breakfasts for preschoolers.



Schools & Nutrition

Preschoolers from schools in Anera's early childhood education program eat daily breakfasts that improve their health and mental development.



The Impact of F2F

Farmers and women at cooperatives **generate income and create value chains** by meeting local demand with local labor and produce. Business owners and their workers benefit as they provide agricultural equipment, packaging, food, and other materials necessary for program activities.

Anera **installs water purification systems and solar paneling** on schools and cooperatives. Preschoolers and cooperative members therefore have access to drinkable tap water and reliable electricity. As they save money on water and electricity, these vital community centers can invest more into services for the children and women who rely on them.

Support for farming families encourages the **wise use of natural resources**. Solar panels run irrigation systems, for instance, and greenhouses and hydroponics limit water waste.

Gender-based isolation is common in Gazan society. F2F encourages mothers – while their children are at school – to take advantage of the **safe, public space that cooperatives offer women to socialize** outside of their homes.

Breakfasts **combat children's malnutrition and bolster mental and physical development** during their most formative years. In schools where this program exists, attendance is nearly 100%.



In Case You Missed It

THE LATEST FROM ANERA.ORG



Supporting Education for Vulnerable Students in Amman

The emergence of the pandemic has impacted learning worldwide and forced many classrooms into remote education. The disruptions to in-person learning have particularly impacted vulnerable young students in Jordan.

Together with Thaki, Anera launched a 12-month after-school, non-formal educational pilot program, which addresses gaps in the education system by providing needed and accessible enrichment materials that complement and fill the gaps in the formal education sector in the Middle East.

In July 2021, we distributed Thaki's educational laptops to the after-school classes, involving 15 teachers and 99 students in all.

FULL ARTICLE
anera.org/thaki-jordan



Preparing for Winter in Shatila Palestinian Refugee Camp

Lebanon might be facing one of the harshest winters yet. That's less a reflection of weather forecasts than of the deepening hardships that so many are now experiencing. The current electricity cuts and fuel shortages make it hard for people to stay warm.

Today, well over half of the population is living under the poverty line, and those who were already struggling are now faced with the life-threatening temperature drops in winter.

Anera has organized vocational sewing courses that train young Palestinian refugees in new skills while employing them to make warm clothes for residents of Shatila camp.

FULL ARTICLE
anera.org/shatila-clothes



A Decade of Anera's Work in Deir Qaddis

After more than 50 years of working in Palestine, it's fair to say that Anera projects have touched virtually every community here. Any given town or village may have many examples of Anera's interventions through the years. Deir Qaddis is one of those villages.

Deir Qaddis is located ten miles northwest of Ramallah. Most of the 2,500 residents depend on agriculture, livestock, and small businesses for their livelihood. Over 90% of Deir Qaddis falls within Area C. Like many other villages in the West Bank, the local municipality struggles to maintain good public services for its residents.

In 10 years, Anera has helped Deir Qaddis in many ways.

FULL ARTICLE
anera.org/deir-qaddis

Want an **easy way to show your support** for Palestinian and Syrian refugees in the Middle East in 2022?



By putting Anera in your will, you create a lasting legacy that will help hope find its way in the Middle East. Legacy gifts cost nothing today but their impact will continue to create a brighter future for generations to come.

Write a legal will for free! Visit anera.org/will

Reducing Rates of Early Marriage in Lebanon

ANERA NEWS, ISSUE 215 | **WINTER 2022**

Anera delivered burn injury treatment kits to the Beirut Fire Brigade in December. Direct Relief donated these kits in the wake of the tragedies and wildfires that have struck Lebanon in the last two years.

Hisham Mustafa, photographer

