



in this issue

1-2

From the Shell, a Thousand Seeds

3

By The Numbers:
Planting Seeds of Hope

3

Why I Believe in Anera's Legacy
Society
by Janelle Blenhyne-Gaillard

4-5

Empowering Lebanon's Next
Generation of Nurses

6

Psychosocial Healing in Gaza

Photos: Rana began with a single hot plate and now leads a team of 12 women. With support from Anera, they've kept cooking throughout the war and siege on Gaza—feeding displaced families and patients, and nourishing their community against all odds.

Creating the conditions for recovery, growth and lasting impact

Pomegranates, with their tough outer shells and abundance of seeds, have long symbolized strength and renewal. Like the communities Anera serves, they are not easily broken. Even in the harshest conditions, they endure and, eventually, the seeds burst forth and grow.

This summer, as the people of Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan continue to navigate extraordinary hardship, we reflect on the strength that binds us together. In times of war, no shell can fully shield a community from harm – but through the care of donors, staff, and partners, we offer what protection we can. **Together, we scatter seeds of hope and help cultivate the conditions where life might one day grow again.**

Our Anera community sows seeds everywhere.

In Gaza, they appear in the hands of Rana (*pictured above*), who began cooking on a single hot plate and now leads a team of 12. With Anera's support, Rana gained the tools, training, and supplies to launch a business. And, when war broke out, she and her team didn't stop. Anera delivered firewood and ingredients, enabling them to keep cooking under fire and siege – feeding displaced families and patients. In the midst of destruction, these women are nourishing their community and sowing seeds of hope.

continued on page 2

credits

The Anera newsletter is published quarterly by Anera (formerly American Near East Refugee Aid), 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 Board Officers

Joe Saba, Chair

Teresa C. Barger, Vice Chair & Treasurer

Dr. Alfred Khoury, Secretary

Sean Carroll, President & CEO

Editors: Liz Demarest and Dan Riley

Contributing Writers:

Liz Demarest, Steve Fake,

Jainelle Blenhyne-Gaillard, Dan Riley

Contributing Photographers:

Steve Fake, Jainelle Blenhyne-Gaillard,

Hisham Moustapha, Ibrahim Zanoun

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

Did you know...

in Souf Camp, one of Jordan's oldest Palestinian refugee camps, Anera equips young people with vocational skills like carpentry, agriculture and digital literacy — opening doors to jobs and dignified futures.

From the Shell, a Thousand Seeds *continued from p. 1*

In Lebanon, seeds of hope take root in young women like Maryam. She always dreamed of working in a hospital but lacked the means to pursue that path, until she received a scholarship through Anera's nursing scholarship program. "When I heard about this opportunity, I didn't hesitate," she says. Today, Maryam is one of the top students in her class. With determination and support, she's not only building a career, she's helping to cultivate seeds of hope through practicing her healing skills.



In the West Bank, we see seeds growing in the story of Abdelrahman. After surviving a nighttime bombing in the northern West Bank that took both his legs, Abdelrahman, 19, faced an uncertain future, but thanks to Anera's support, he received two custom prosthetic legs at no cost – a gift his family could never have afforded on their own. With determination and the support of his father and medical team, Abdelrahman began walking again. Though life has changed, his ability to move through it with strength and dignity remains.



In Jordan, Basil has found a new purpose through Anera's rooftop garden project. With guidance from Anera's agricultural engineer, he learned sustainable farming techniques that he now shares with students, neighbors and fellow gardeners. What began on his family's rooftop has grown into a community effort, where he works to inspire children to connect with the earth and help new families start gardens of their own. By combining education and cultivation, Basil is planting seeds in more ways than one.



Though the past year has brought unimaginable suffering, it has also revealed a deep well of strength that is rooted in the refusal to give up. The work continues – wherever, whenever, and however it's needed – driven by purpose and powered by people.

Not every seed falls on fertile ground. Some land in dry, cracked soil, while others may fall among stones. But **with the right care, and the right conditions, even the most unlikely, damaged places can bloom.** At Anera, we see this every day in war zones, refugee camps, on rooftops and in rubble. **Our work, powered by your generosity, helps shape the environment so that possibility can take root.** Together, we clear the stones, tend the soil and shelter the seedlings. With every act of solidarity, we plant something new. And with time, care, and courage, it grows.

BY THE NUMBERS: PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE

Because of your support...

65.3+ Million Meals Delivered in Gaza¹

Sowing sustenance under siege – meals prepared and distributed through local kitchens and bakeries.

79 Rooftop Gardens Installed in Jordan²

Turning concrete into gardens – empowering families and communities to grow their own food.

65 Nursing Scholarships Awarded in Lebanon³

Opening pathways for young people to pursue careers in healthcare and serve their communities.

50 Evergreen Trees Planted in Saida, Lebanon⁴

Planting lasting symbols of renewal – a greener tomorrow rooted in today's actions.

1,093 Greenhouses Cultivated in Palestine and Lebanon⁵

Restoring life to the land – families rebuild livelihoods and grow fresh produce in the harshest conditions.

42,456 Medical Treatments Delivered in Jordan in 2025⁶

Providing life-saving care to refugees and vulnerable families when access is most limited.

1,030 Patients Served in One Day at Gaza Health Clinics⁷

Offering healing and care in the heart of destruction.

1. Since the start of the war on October 7, 2023 – Anera internal program data, July 2025
2. January–May 2025 – Anera Jordan Situation Report, May 2025
3. 2023–2025 – Anera program data, Nurses for Lebanon initiative
4. June 2025 – Anera Lebanon Activity Log, June 2025
5. 2010–2025 – Anera agriculture program records
6. January–May 2025 – Anera Jordan Situation Report, May 2025
7. June 30, 2025 – Anera Gaza Response Log

Why I Believe in Anera's Legacy Society

When people think of legacy giving, they often think about the future. And that's true — **these gifts help ensure Anera can continue delivering aid, building programs and supporting communities for generations to come.** But I also think about the present.

Right now, families in Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan are facing crisis after crisis. And still, they keep showing up for each other — cooking meals under siege, planting gardens in crowded cities, learning new skills and finding ways to care for their neighbors. That kind of strength and determination deserves our commitment, not just for today but for the long haul.

That's why I believe in the Legacy Society. It's a way to say: I believe in this mission, and I want to help carry it forward. **A legacy gift is more than a future contribution, it's a lasting gesture of solidarity with the people we serve and a powerful statement of hope.**

If you feel the same, if Anera's work speaks to something in you, I encourage you to reach out. I'd love to talk with you about how a legacy gift, in any amount, can help build lasting impact and keep this important work going strong for years to come.

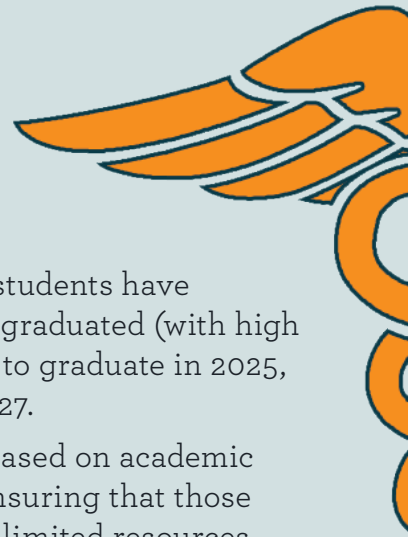
You can contact me directly at jgaillard@anera.org or 202-266-9721. I'm always happy to connect and answer any questions. Let's plant something lasting together.

Learn more about Anera's Legacy Society at anera.org/legacy

by Jainelle Blenhyne-Gaillard
Deputy Director of Annual
and Planned Giving



EMPOWERING LEBANON'S NEXT GENERATION OF NURSES



Lebanon's healthcare system is under immense strain, with a shortage of supplies, outdated infrastructure, and an increasing number of professionals leaving the country for better opportunities abroad. In the face of these challenges, passionate young nurses are stepping up to meet the need. Anera's nursing scholarships make this possible, offering financial support to students who otherwise could not afford to pursue their education.

Since 2013, Anera has helped 65 young Lebanese and Palestinian men and women complete their technical nursing studies. Most graduates have already secured jobs, proving that investing in education is investing in Lebanon's future.

In recent years, Anera, with the support of Alfred and Dina Khoury, expanded its impact through the Nurses For Lebanon program, providing scholarships for university students pursuing

nursing degrees. So far, 13 students have enrolled—two have already graduated (with high GPAs!), while seven are set to graduate in 2025, and the rest in 2026 and 2027.

Scholarships are awarded based on academic merit and financial need, ensuring that those with the most potential but limited resources receive the support they deserve. This support is especially critical as Lebanon faces a growing shortage of experienced nurses.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, 19 students continued their education, with three graduating in June 2024. The students, predominantly female and from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, are a testament to the program's transformative impact. For the 2024-2025 academic year, nine students will continue under the full scholarship program and three new students will be selected in September 2025 through a rigorous selection process.

Most graduates have found training opportunities and are now employed in renowned hospitals across Lebanon, reinforcing the country's healthcare workforce. These young nurses will contribute to the Lebanese healthcare system for decades to come, filling critical gaps in an ever-challenged sector.



Anera's nursing scholarships offer more than just financial support – they open doors to opportunity and help build a healthier Lebanon. **A full three-year tuition for a nursing scholarship at a vocational institute costs \$5,500.**

Learn how you can support this important work:

Contact **Skylar Lawrence**
at slawrence@anera.org
or **1-202-266-9729**



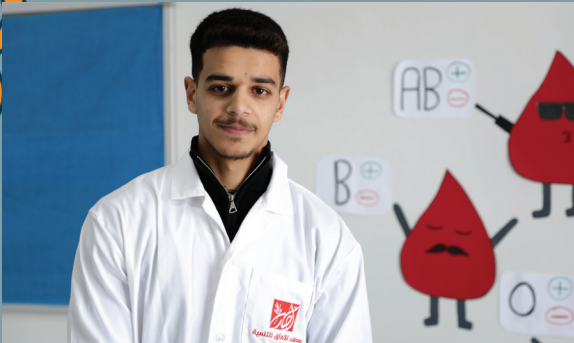


BEHIND EVERY NUMBER, THERE'S A REAL PERSON...



Meet Hassan

"My late mother was always my role model," says 17-year-old Hassan El Shami. "She was an exceptional nurse, and I used to accompany her to work. I was deeply moved by how she cared for patients and contributed to their recovery. I always dreamed of following in her footsteps, but I had no idea how I would continue my education without this scholarship."



Meet Adnan

For many, financial hardship stood in the way of their dreams. Adnan Al Ahmad, 22, recalls, "I couldn't complete my academic education because I didn't have the funds. When I heard about this nursing scholarship, I applied immediately. Today, after three years of study, I am determined to finish my education and pursue my dream in nursing."



Meet Abdelaziz

Abdelaziz Nabil Al Hassan, 20, was inspired to become a nurse after caring for his father during his battle with COVID-19. "When my father passed away, I became responsible for my family and had to leave school. This scholarship gave me a second chance – not just at education, but at fulfilling my calling."



Meet Maryam

The program isn't just shaping careers – it's strengthening Lebanon's entire healthcare system. Maryam Dahaini, 19, always dreamed of working in a hospital. "When I heard about this scholarship, I didn't hesitate. Today, I'm among the top students in my class, and this opportunity has changed my life."



Meet Ruqayya

At just 16, Ruqayya Ibrahim took a leap into vocational education. "No one encouraged me to study nursing, but after seeing the dedication of nurses during the COVID-19 crisis, I knew this was what I wanted to do. Without this scholarship, I don't know if I would have been able to continue my education."

Psychosocial Healing in Gaza

In Gaza, war has stolen so much: homes, schools, loved ones. But perhaps the deepest wounds are the ones we can't see.

Since the war began in October 2023, nearly every child in Gaza has experienced trauma. Within weeks of the first strikes, Anera began responding — not only with food and shelter, but also with something just as vital: emotional care.

Our psychosocial support work began just three weeks into the war. In shelters overcrowded with families who had fled bombed-out homes, Anera teams created spaces where children could feel safe again. More than 30,000 young children participated in activities like music, movement, painting and games. These simple routines became a powerful antidote to chaos, offering children joy, release and a moment to just be children.

For older youth and adults, Anera has provided more structured support: storytelling circles, drama, art therapy and safe spaces to talk about the unspeakable.

Our staff has also provided hundreds of parents with psychological first aid and guidance in positive parenting, crucial tools in times of overwhelming stress.

As the violence has raged on, our programs continue offering something beyond a momentary escape — they offer healing. Evidence shows that psychosocial activities are critical in the early stages of emergency response, helping children and others begin to process trauma and build up strength. In an environment of fear, uncertainty, and profound loss, these moments of connection and routine are nothing short of lifesaving.

Anera is currently operating in 12 locations across Gaza, reaching more than 10,000 children, teens and adults.

These stories — of recovery and laughter — are only possible because of those who believe that even in the hardest of times, children deserve dignity, care, and a chance to heal.

Thank you for supporting this important work!



Our theme "From the Shell, a Thousand Seeds" honors the enduring power of life in the face of the harshest realities. Each seed carries a story, a dream, a future. Grounded in Anera's values of compassion, renewal and collective purpose, we will be gathering to pay tribute to what has been lost and to renew our commitment to what we can still grow, together.

Join us!

Annual Dinner

Friday, October 3, 2025

Washington, DC

Stay
updated
with event
news



questions?

202-266-9718

hgerlofs@anera.org

sponsor or donate

anera.org/dinner



From the Shell, a Thousand Seeds



In Loving Memory of Mahmoud Rassrass

Psychosocial Support Coordinator in Gaza

As our psychosocial support coordinator, **Mahmoud Rassrass** led Anera's efforts for 18 months to help children and families in Gaza cope with the unimaginable trauma of war. He offered care and comfort every day in a place that sees little peace. **Those who knew him best said his smile could "heal traumatized souls."**

Tragically, Mahmoud and two of his sons, 7-year-old Nidal and 5-year-old Ward, were killed on June 17th when an Israeli drone fired on the tent where they were sleeping. **His death is a profound loss. For Anera. For Gaza. For Palestine. For the world.**

FROM THE SHELL, A THOUSAND SEEDS

ANERA NEWS, ISSUE 229 | **SUMMER 2025**



Anera's water trucking distributions, as shown here in Nuseirat, Gaza, have been a lifeline. Even under siege and blockade, they've continued to sustain families across the region.