



in this issue

1-2

Reflections from my
Recent Visit to Gaza
by Sean Carroll,
Anera President & CEO

3

Anera's Humanitarian Aid to Gaza
Since the War's Start
as of January 2, 2025

3

Life Through Community:
Anera's 2024 Annual Dinner

4-5

Anera's Healthcare Clinics in Gaza

6

Rebuilding Lebanon:
Anera's Response to Winter, War
and Recovery

Photo: Two young Palestinian children
climb the rubble of a building destroyed
by Israeli military operations in Gaza.
| Sean Carroll, December 3, 2024

Reflections from my Recent Visit to Gaza

by Sean Carroll, *Anera President & CEO*

In early December, I visited Gaza over three days to meet with Anera's staff, see first-hand our life-saving work in action, and bear witness to the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe. The scenes were harrowing — a near-apocalyptic landscape everywhere I traveled, north and south. And, on this trip, I could not even go to the completely wiped-out city of Rafah nor the North Gaza Governorate. Yet, despite the death and destruction everywhere, and the unimaginable exhaustion and trauma facing everyone in Gaza, the determination of Anera staff, partners, and many I witnessed striving to survive and rebuild remains unyielding.

Crossing Into Gaza

We entered Gaza through the Karam Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) crossing — a critical lifeline for aid. I watched as a Palestinian truck loaded with diapers began its journey along the arduous path of aid. 94 trucks of aid entered Gaza that day, far below the 500 trucks needed daily pre-war. Each delivery is a triumph over immense obstacles—ranging from political pressures against aid and a lack of urgency to move goods faster and at greater scale, to nonsensical logistics, border delays, and safety and security risks for trucks and drivers.

Inside Gaza: A Journey Through Destruction

The route from Karam Abu Salem was haunting. Bombed-out buildings and flattened UN schools marked the path. Groups of young men gathered roadside, desperate for aid — a stark reminder of how scarcity has forced many into survival mode.

In Khan Younis, the contrast between “yellow zones,” where some infrastructure stands, and “red zones,” reduced to rubble, was striking. Even in these precarious areas,

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 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:

Sean Carroll, Liz Demarest,

Steve Fake, Dan Riley.

Contributing Photographers:

Sean Carroll, 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...

that in 2024, **Anera donors come from 141 countries and all 50 US states.**

Recent Visit to Gaza

continued from p. 1

families cling to hope, attempting to rebuild amid immense challenges.

The Netzarim Corridor, dividing Gaza's north and south, is a desolate buffer zone, heavily controlled by occupying Israeli forces, and marked by complete destruction.

Anera's Impact in Action

We visited a psychosocial activity day in Khan Younis, where 100 children and families engaged in games, songs, and laughter. These sessions, of which Anera has now conducted nearly 500, provide brief moments of relief from the constant trauma of war.

At Anera's primary health clinic in Mawasi, built with wood recycled from aid pallets, professional staff provide vital services, including wound care, maternal health, and nutrition, to nearly a million displaced people. The clinic embodies resourcefulness amid dire conditions.

In Gaza City, hygiene kit distributions provided essential supplies to women enduring inhumane hardships amid untenable and unsanitary population density. On December 4, Anera distributed 4,000 kits, each containing necessities like soap and sanitary pads. These kits help restore dignity and promote health.

Anera's distribution center in northern Gaza was stocked with aid, including blankets, clothing, and water. Teams were preparing packages to support displaced families. I brought winter coats back from the north to the south for distribution.

The Human Toll

The devastation in Gaza City was overwhelming. Sami, our lead response coordinator, traveling north for the 10th time from the south, where he and his family are displaced and living in tents, noted that the destruction was far worse than during his last visit two months ago. Our driver, returning to his hometown of Gaza City for the first time since the war began, was moved to tears by what he saw. Once vibrant streets are now choked with rubble, and buildings lie in ruins. The tense atmosphere was heightened by an encounter with Israeli soldiers who briefly detained us. Yet, despite the fear and destruction, life persists.

More than 45,000 lives have been lost, and 805,000 people in Gaza's middle area struggle amid crumbled infrastructure. Khan Younis, now the most densely populated area in Gaza, hosts over a million people made up mostly of displaced families.

Anera's Staff: Heroes on the Ground

Seeing Anera's staff in action was inspiring. Despite enduring trauma themselves, they remain steadfast, delivering aid, running clinics, and finding ways to rebuild. Their work is nothing short of heroic.

However, their resilience should not be romanticized. No one should endure such suffering. The international community must do more to demand a ceasefire, open crossings, increase aid, and address the root causes of this tragedy.

Why Anera is in Gaza

At a crossroads between the ruins of El Bureij and Nusairat camps, I watched workers clear rubble to repair a water main serving 15,000 people. It's a small but meaningful step toward restoring essential services.

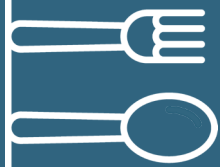
The task ahead is monumental. Clearing Gaza's rubble could take decades, but with more resources, equipment, and the necessary political will or pressure, progress could be faster. Anera's work, supported by our partners and donors, remains a vital part of this recovery.

Even amid unimaginable hardship, the people of Gaza persist with courage and hope. It's our duty to stand with them.

Read the full text and see Sean's videos at: anera.org/gaza-reflections

By the Numbers: Anera's Humanitarian Aid to Gaza Since the War's Start

as of January 2, 2025



58,287,279
meal servings



53,194
blankets

7,117
tents



1,331
truckloads of aid



1,750,693
gallons of water

474
psychosocial sessions



52,511
hygiene kits



859
free health clinic days



71,239
menstrual packs

33
learning spaces



LIFE THROUGH COMMUNITY | ANERA'S 2024 ANNUAL DINNER

On October 4, 2024, Anera's Annual Dinner at the Ritz Carlton in Washington, DC, brought together 520 guests, **raising more than \$3 million to support humanitarian and development initiatives** in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and Jordan.

The theme, "**Life Through Community**," symbolized the resilience and hope that Anera and its global network foster, inspired by the miraculous birth of Hayat ("Life"), daughter of Ibrahim Zanoun, Anera's photographer in Gaza.

The evening featured inspiring speakers, including MC Hala Taha of the Young and Profiting Podcast, human rights attorney Noura Erakat, and political commentator Mehdi Hasan. They celebrated Anera's donors, including one who doubled their contribution to \$1 million and an anonymous matching donor, while honoring the unwavering dedication of Anera's staff, who continue delivering aid despite personal hardships.

A soulful performance by Palestinian artist Nibal Malshi added cultural depth to the night.

Sean's address highlighted the urgent need for unrestricted aid to Gaza, while Anera Palestine Country Director Sandra Rasheed shared powerful stories of staff perseverance amid immense challenges.

Thanks to sponsors like the Embassies of Qatar and the UAE, the event broke records, reaffirming the power of collective action in **building a future of hope for the region's most vulnerable communities**.



Anera country director of Palestine, Sandra Rasheed, speaks at Anera's Annual Dinner.

Anera's Healthcare Clinics in Gaza



Anera's **NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CLINICS**, located in Khan Younis as part of Anera's field healthcare center, and in Deir Al Balah, provide essential care for displaced families with chronic conditions like hypertension and diabetes. These clinics offer free screenings, follow-up care, and medications, ensuring that patients receive vital treatment even amid the ongoing war.

Anera's **WOUND MANAGEMENT CLINICS** in Khan Younis and Deir Al Balah, provide essential care for injuries sustained from the war. These clinics offer wound cleaning, dressing changes, fracture treatment, and pain management, helping prevent infections and support healing in Gaza's most affected communities.



Anera's **MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH CLINIC** in Khan Younis provides essential care for the most vulnerable, offering pediatric checkups, obstetric and gynecological services, and nutritional support for mothers and children. The clinics also create safe spaces for therapeutic activities, helping children navigate the emotional toll of war.

Gaza's healthcare system, already strained for years, is now near collapse due to the war that began on October 7, 2023. With destroyed hospitals, killed or arrested healthworkers, scarce supplies, and limited services, the situation is beyond dire. Anera's teams are on the frontlines, delivering life-saving care to those in urgent need.



The **GENERAL SURGERY CLINIC**, part of Anera's field healthcare center in Khan Younis, provides vital consultations and surgical care to those in urgent need. This clinic addresses a wide range of medical conditions, including trauma cases resulting from the ongoing war, as well as chronic conditions that require surgical intervention.

Located in Anera's field healthcare center in Khan Younis, the **PHYSIOTHERAPY CLINIC** supports individuals recovering from injuries or surgeries. The clinic provides essential rehabilitation services to help patients regain strength and mobility. These services are vital for restoring function and improving quality of life amid the ongoing conflict.



The **EAR, NOSE, AND THROAT CLINIC**, at Anera's field healthcare center in Khan Younis, provides specialized care for hearing issues, sinus infections, and respiratory conditions. It offers expert diagnosis and treatment for a variety of health concerns affecting vulnerable populations.

Rebuilding Lebanon | Anera's Response to Winter, War and Recovery

As Lebanon tries to recover from the recent war with Israel, compounded by economic collapse, **Anera has stepped up with an innovative and comprehensive response to urgent humanitarian needs.** The recent ceasefire is a hopeful turning point, but the challenges ahead remain immense. Anera's on-the-ground team is meeting these challenges with creativity and determination, ensuring that assistance reaches those who need it most.

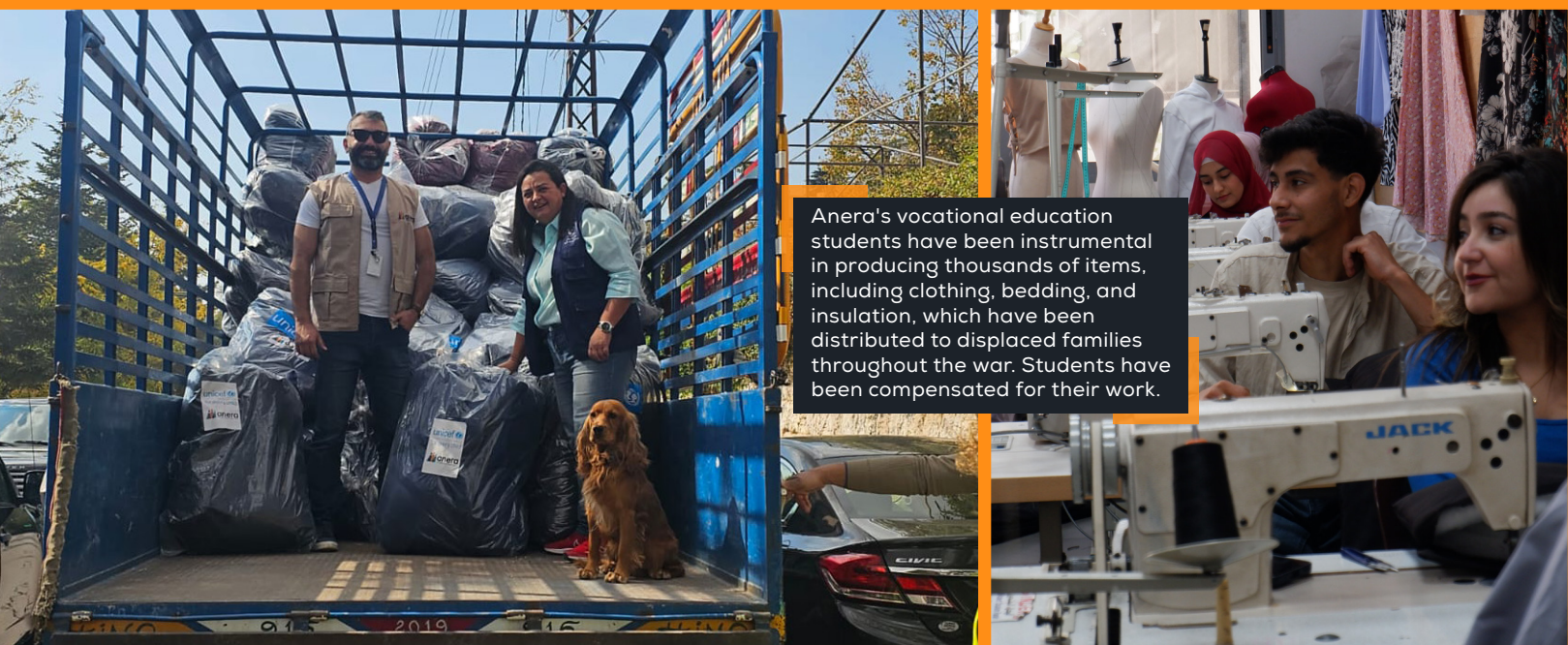
Winter has amplified the hardships for families, especially in high-altitude regions like Akkar and the Bekaa Valley, where temperatures drop below freezing. Recognizing the urgency, Anera has mobilized efforts to provide winter kits, warm clothing, and blankets to families enduring these harsh conditions. In partnership with local organizations and international donors, Anera is also distributing hygiene kits tailored to the specific needs of women and girls, safeguarding dignity amidst the turmoil.

Beyond immediate relief, during the war, Anera addressed the unique needs of displaced communities in innovative ways. **We empowered vocational trainees to produce sleeping bags, combining skill development with tangible aid production.** And we enlisted displaced barbers to provide free haircuts in shelters, restoring a sense of normalcy and dignity.

Anera's holistic approach during wartime also included **ensuring access to safe water and promoting hygiene education.** By testing and distributing clean water to shelters and holding cholera prevention sessions, Anera helped mitigate health risks in overcrowded living conditions.

Every one of **Anera's efforts in Lebanon is infused with a deep understanding of local needs,** facilitated by Anera's staff there and their collaboration with grassroots partners. From hot meal distributions in Saida to community health sessions in Baddawi, Anera's work reflects a commitment to rebuilding not just homes but lives and communities.

Your support enables this vital work to continue, providing warmth, safety, and hope to families across Lebanon. Join us in these recovery efforts by visiting anera.org/lebanon-emergency. Together, we can help Lebanon heal and rebuild.



Anera's vocational education students have been instrumental in producing thousands of items, including clothing, bedding, and insulation, which have been distributed to displaced families throughout the war. Students have been compensated for their work.

MORE WAYS TO GIVE

Planned Giving

By including Anera in your estate plan, you can empower vulnerable communities in Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan for generations to come. Visit anera.org/legacy to learn more.

Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Giving

IRA giving is a powerful way to help hope find its way in the Middle East, and it may be to your financial benefit. Visit anera.org/IRA to learn more and get started on an IRA gift.

Workplace Giving

Anera meets most company eligibility requirements as it is a registered 501(c)3 organization. Contact your personnel department at work to find out whether your employer matches charitable donations of employees. **Anera's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 12076.**



WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A HUMANITARIAN WORKER IN THE HEART OF GAZA?

"Sami" offers a poignant glimpse into the life of a father, husband, and aid worker on Gaza's frontlines. Since Israel's ground invasion in October 2023, Sami has faced daily traumas while continuing to serve his community. This powerful short film highlights his personal reflections, family moments, and the harsh realities of life in Gaza.

Scan the QR code to watch now >>>
or visit: anera.org/sami-film



REFLECTIONS FROM MY RECENT VISIT TO GAZA

ANERA NEWS, ISSUE 227 | WINTER 2025



These children in Gaza, gathered in a temporary learning space, hold their Hayya Naqra (Let's Read!) bags with pride. Each bag, provided by Anera, is filled with essential educational materials, bringing a sense of hope and normalcy amid the disruption of a lost school year.