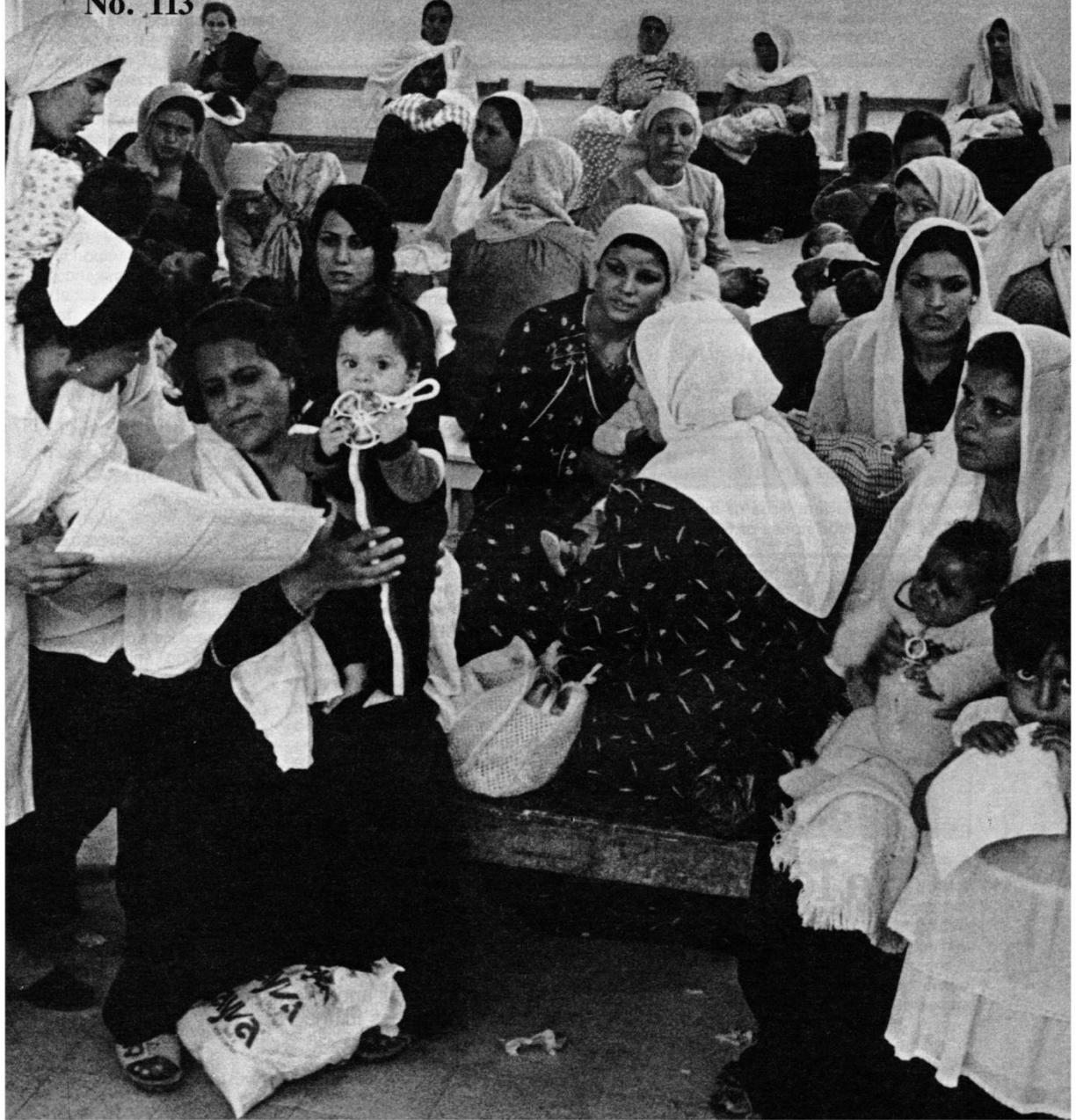


Palestine Refugees Today



No. 113





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The first issue of this Newsletter appeared in November 1960. Excerpts of some of the major stories of Newsletter No. 1 appear in this issue, No. 113.

Cover photo: UNRWA's 98 health units receive over 4.5 million patient visits a year.
See articles on UNRWA's health care programme, pages 4-7.



Palestine Refugees Today

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United Nations Relief and Works Agency
for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UNRWA News

Children lost 57 school days in Beirut area

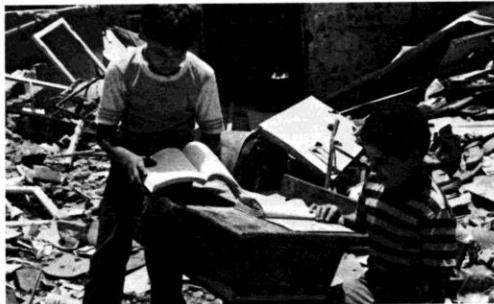
During the 1984/85 school year in Lebanon, of 182 scheduled school days, the Baqa'a and Tripoli areas lost 14 and 10 days respectively while the Tyre, Saida and Beirut areas lost 47, 54 and 57 school days respectively. The losses were due to the security situation in Lebanon. The school year was extended in all areas except Beirut where some schools opened early to complete the 1984/85 syllabus. However, a number of schools in the Beirut area were unable to open in September because of continued fighting in the city.

Third emergency relief operation in Lebanon

In early October, UNRWA mounted another emergency relief operation in Lebanon. The Agency provided food rations, bedding and household equipment to 2,800 refugees who fled from fierce fighting in Tripoli to the nearby Beddawi and Nahr el-Bared refugee camps. UNRWA provided similar supplies to 1,500 refugees found sheltering in a basement in the city.

During two weeks of fighting, six Palestine refugees were killed and 15 wounded, among hundreds of other casualties. UNRWA's clinic in Tripoli and area office had to relocate during the fighting but both have now returned to their regular premises.

This was the third emergency relief operation



mounted by UNRWA in Lebanon during 1985. In April and May, UNRWA provided emergency relief to 45,000 refugees who fled from Sidon-area camps during factional fighting, for 30,000 who fled from Burj el-Barajneh and Shatila during the May-June "camps war" in Beirut and for the thousands who remained trapped in the two Beirut camps.

Grants for home repairs in Lebanon

Grants to refugees whose homes were damaged by fighting around Sidon in March and April were distributed in early September. In Mieh Mieh camp, 184 homes were damaged and 90 destroyed. In Ein el Hilweh, 169 homes were damaged and 12 destroyed. During the Beirut "camps war" in May and June, almost 900 homes were damaged or destroyed in Shatila camp and almost 1,500 in Burj el Barajneh. Cash grants were distributed to refugees in the Beirut area in the autumn. In addition, 97 homes were damaged or destroyed by an Israeli air raid on Tripoli-area camps in July.

New grant from AGFUND

In addition to its grant of \$909,000 to build two schools in the West Bank,

AGFUND (Arab Gulf Programme for UN Development Organizations) is contributing over \$500,000 to build and equip a third school in the West Bank to replace crowded, rented premises.



New Commissioner-General Giorgio Giacomelli (right) in New York with former Commissioner-General Olof Rydbeck (left) and United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

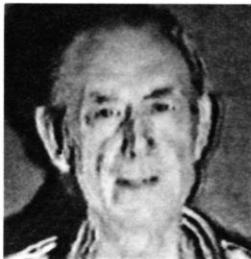


Giacomelli visits Middle East

Before going to New York to attend the 40th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Commissioner-General Giorgio Giacomelli visited UNRWA's field of operations in the Middle East. Photo shows the new Commissioner-General visiting UNRWA installations in Jordan. Mr. Giacomelli took over November 1 from Olof Rydbeck who was UNRWA's Commissioner-General from July 1979 to October 1985.

Collett still held

Alec Collett, UNRWA's information consultant in Lebanon, has been held captive for over nine months (at time of going to press). Mr. Collett was kidnapped south of Beirut while on a writing assignment for UNRWA on 25 March 1985. There has still been no news of his whereabouts, despite a visit by his daughter to Lebanon, appeals by his wife, his colleagues in the press, his neighbours and by UNRWA. Personal appeals have also been made by U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and by Dr. David Owen, leader of Britain's Social Democratic Party while he was visiting the Syrian Arab Republic. The accompanying photos show Mr. Collett before his kidnapping and afterwards, on a video tape sent to his wife in May 1985.



\$157 million in cash needed to finance 1986 operations

UNRWA needs \$157 million in cash to finance its education, health and relief services in 1986, says

a financial supplement to the Agency's 1984-85 annual report.

Cash income for 1985 was just over \$150 million including special contributions of \$13 million. Regular contributions for the year amounted to only \$137 million in cash, the lowest in more than four years.

In 1986, education will take 67 percent of the total budget, health services 22 percent and relief 11 percent.

Expenditure deferred

UNRWA began 1985 with a gap of \$67 million between estimated expenditure of \$231 million and estimated income of \$164 million (in cash and kind). Budget cuts and savings in unfilled posts, totalling \$43 million, cut this to \$24 million; special contributions cut the gap by another \$13 million to \$11 million and currency exchange rate changes saved about \$6 million. This left a gap of \$5 million which cuts into the Agency's working capital, already less than one month's cash requirements.

Over half of the reductions represented deferral of purchase of much-needed supplies and equipment and the putting off of maintenance and construction of installations. The remaining cuts were made by deferring previously agreed salary increases.

To maintain its services to refugees, UNRWA will have to reinstate many of these budget items.

Despite the financial problems and repeated disruptions in Lebanon, most UNRWA programmes operated normally during the reporting period of the Commissioner-Ge-

neral's annual report (July 1984-June 1985). In reviewing the Agency's programmes, the report gave the following statistics:

a) **Education:** During the 1984/85 academic year, 345,844 pupils (3,599 more than in 1983/84) were enrolled in the Agency's 640 elementary and junior secondary schools, served by a teaching force of 10,163. Seventy-four per cent of the schools (475 schools) were on two shifts with two sets of teachers and pupils sharing one school building. Vocational and technical training places available to young refugees numbered 3,812 and pre-service teacher training was provided for 1,166 students in UNRWA's training centres.

b) **Health:** A total of 796,666 refugee patients made 4.6 million visits to UNRWA, government and other health centres during the year. Most outpatient care was provided at UNRWA's 98 health units. For refugees needing hospital care, UNRWA subsidised about 1,400 beds at government and private hospitals. In the year ending 30 June 1985, some 62,000 refugee patients were admitted to these hospitals.

c) **Relief:** The number of refugees registered with the Agency on 30 June 1985 was 2,093,545 compared with 2,034,314 a year earlier. Of these, 32.25 percent (737,957) live in 61 refugee camps.

By the end of the reporting period, UNRWA's assistance programme for the neediest refugees (mainly families with no male breadwinner) was benefitting 103,857 persons in the Agency's five fields of operation (Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank and Gaza Strip).

Self-support hits a snag

A new initiative to help destitute Palestine refugees become self-supporting has run into trouble for lack of outside financial help.

Because UNRWA lacks expertise in mounting self-support projects, the Agency last year employed a consultant to devise a plan for income-generating projects to help some of the neediest refugees get on their own feet in economically sound employment. The project, funded by a non-governmental organisation, was specifically aimed at helping Palestine refugees in Lebanon whose lives and fortunes have been repeatedly shattered in recent years of fighting.

The project co-ordinator, John McKenzie, went to Lebanon in March 1985 but had to be evacuated a few days later because of the security situation there. As an interim measure, Mr. McKenzie was reassigned to two other Agency fields of operation, West Bank and Gaza, where he looked at UNRWA's current, small-scale projects for needy refugees and made suggestions for new ventures.

In Gaza and West Bank, he found only a few of the special hardship cases mentally and physically capable of becoming self-supporting. But he found many who could earn some income to supplement welfare aid from UNRWA, if their status as hardship cases was not threatened. He also suggested that, because of rising unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza, an additional type of project be implemented to cover all refugees. This would entail advising individuals how to prepare proposals for income-generating projects that they would submit to a bank or credit institution for a loan. It would also entail training in such skills as marketing and book-keeping.

Further development in this aspect of promoting income-generating projects has now been slowed down as funding for the consultant ran out at the end of September. UNRWA is actively pursuing alternative sources of financing to build on Mr. McKen-



The above photos show some of the income-generating projects supported by UNRWA.

1. Watch repair shop, Baqa'a camp, Jordan.
2. General store, Gaza
3. Stationery shop, Gaza
4. Home knitting, Gaza

See also *Palestine Refugees Today*, April and July 1984 for other reports on income-generating projects.

zie's proposals and develop UNRWA's capacity to deal with income-generating projects. But meanwhile a number of projects have been identified in Jordan, West Bank and Gaza and work is going ahead on some of them.

Success in Jordan

For several years, UNRWA has, on a very limited scale, been helping refugees to start up small businesses and workshops. Examples of these include disabled refugees in Jordan who have been given seed money to start up small shops or services (grocery, bicycle repair, watch repair, shoe repair) and a brush-making enterprise. "We've started slowly helping a small number of people to get established, the idea being that success will breed success," says Mr. McKenzie.

In Jordan several families have become self-supporting through seed money from UNRWA and they have been taken off the welfare rolls.

Aimed at welfare cases

The income-generating idea is aimed at refugees who qualify with the Agency as "special hardship cases"—that is, the neediest members of the refugee community. These are generally the aged, the disabled, widows and orphans, the chronically ill—people who for one reason or another cannot pursue regular employment. UNRWA provides limited welfare help including food rations to these refugees. It has been found that some of these people have skills which they could again put to use if given the means with which to start.

Among the special hardship cases on the Agency's rolls, "there are bound to be a certain—even if small—number of people capable of helping themselves," says Mr. McKenzie. These will be people who have previously had trades and skills and who have had to rely on UNRWA because of hardship conditions. They would welcome the opportunity of being able to revive their skills and would much prefer to be self-supporting than to take assistance from the Agency."

Ideas from refugees

Ideas for possible self-support schemes originate not with UN-

RWA or the Projects Co-ordinator, Mr. McKenzie stressed, but with the refugees themselves. Potential beneficiaries are invited to make their proposals known to their area and field welfare officers, who then draw up specific proposals for Agency consideration.

"The people come to us with their own ideas and these can vary enormously," says Mr. McKenzie. "We might be helping a widow with three children by providing her with a sewing machine so that she can set up a small business at home making dresses and earning a small income. We might be helping a young man with skills in sign-making—indeed we are helping a man to set up a workshop making shop signs and neon signs: he already has two years' experience and we believe he may earn a substantial income from this activity."

UNRWA's contribution to the start-up of such projects is usually in the forms of seed money, generally dispensed in stages to pay for renting premises, or buying equipment or raw materials. This way, says Mr. McKenzie, the projects pick up momentum and the beneficiaries gain confidence on their own.

Other ideas that have been put forward include chicken-butchering and a sheep-fattening scheme under which the Agency would help to purchase sheep and feed. In this case, the refugee already has facilities for raising and fattening them to make them more attractive on the market.

Some of these projects are a faint echo from UNRWA's early day, 35 years ago, when the Agency's mandate was to devise works projects so that the first wave of refugees could become self-supporting. Insufficient funds and resistance from refugees and local governments to anything that would "resettle" refugees outside Palestine ended the concept. In the years since then, UNRWA's education and vocational training programmes have given refugees the knowledge and skills to support themselves.

"Now," says Mr. McKenzie, "we're giving people a means to apply their training, a means to apply their skills. It does not prejudice their refugee status."

Improvement evident but malnutrition continues

UNRWA's supplementary feeding programme has markedly improved the health status of Palestine refugee children, but chronic malnutrition continues to be a problem among Palestine refugee children and UNRWA has been urged to expand its midday meal for pre-school youngsters.

The recommendation is made in the recently published findings of a nutrition survey conducted by the Agency.

The survey was carried out in 1984 by nutrition experts from UNRWA and the World Health Organization (WHO) in Jordan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, three of UNRWA's five fields of operation. The sample included over 6,000 children, aged from the newborn to three years (five years in Jordan), as well as 665 pregnant women and over 1,800 nursing mothers. The results were compared with previous surveys conducted by UNRWA and WHO in 1974, 1975 and 1978.

According to WHO expert Dr. W. Keller, "The nutritional status of pre-school children in the three fields has continued to improve since 1978 so that now only particularly disadvantaged individuals seem to be acutely malnourished"—that is, underweight for their height. However, Dr. Keller reported, the rate of slowed growth among these children—the prime indicator of chronic malnutrition—has remained unchanged since 1974.

Stunting

Lower than average height for age is known by nutritionists as "stunting" and a normal well-fed population might show 2.3 per cent below-average-height children in the age range studied in the survey. A report on the WHO survey by Dr. Adib Jabra, Chief UNRWA's Nutrition and Supplementary Feeding Division says that the percentage of "stunted" children found in the survey (average of three fields) ranged from 9.5 per cent in the 0-5 month age group to 21.7 per cent in the 12-23 month age group. The over-

all rate for all the children studied (0-59 months) averaged 17.8 per cent.

"This indicates that chronic malnutrition is a problem in all fields and in all age groups," says Dr. Jabra's report.

In Jordan, the only field where children aged 36-59 months were studied, there was evidence of a second increase in the percentage of stunted children after the age of two. This, says Dr. Keller, indicates that "chronic malnutrition" of some degree is a problem not only in young children (but) may well extend into school age, an age group that has not been included in any of the surveys so far.

Wasting

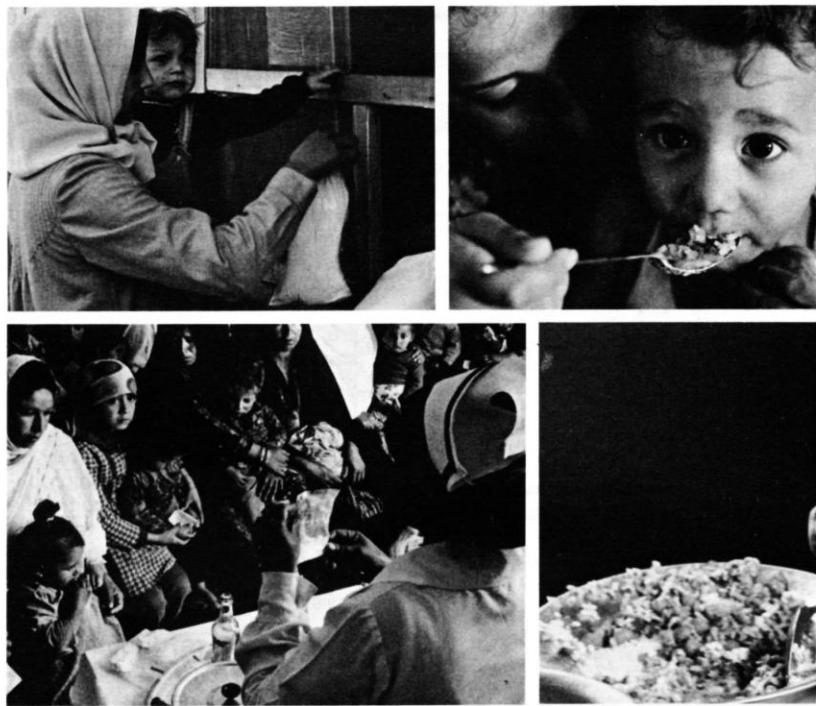
The leading indicator of acute malnutrition, low weight-for-height, is known as "wasting". The survey found that "the percentage of 'wasted' children slightly exceeds the expected level (2.3 per cent) in the age group 6-23

months, which coincides with the weaning period". For other ages, the rates were well below expected levels, averaging 1.9 per cent overall for the full 0-59-month age-group sample. In both Jordan and the West Bank, the rate was below 2 per cent. In Gaza however, where harsher economic and living conditions prevail, the rate was 2.5 per cent among the 0-35-month age group studied, and reached 3.8 per cent among children from 6-23 months of age. "In other words," says Dr. Jabra's report, "there is a problem of acute malnutrition in Gaza."

Marked improvement

The experts agree that UNRWA's supplementary feeding programme has had a marked beneficial effect on Palestine refugee children. Under this programme, in operation since UNRWA started its work in 1950, pre-school-age children get a hot midday meal six days a week, while milk powder is distributed to infants and extra food rations go to pregnant women, nursing mothers and tuberculosis outpatients.

Those who need the food supplement most are those who most



regularly turn up at UNRWA's 90 supplementary feeding centres, the survey found. It shows that the incidence of malnutrition, using both the "stunting" and "wasting" criteria, was higher among children who participate in UNRWA's supplementary feeding programme (average 25.4% stunted and 3.1% wasted) than among the children in the survey who do not (average 17% stunted and 2.1% wasted).

Many of these children come from the most disadvantaged families and WHO experts are looking further to see what social factors may account for the higher malnutrition rate among the supplementary feeding recipients.

A number of survey findings demonstrated that social and hygienic conditions among Palestine refugees influence growth and nutritional status:

for example, higher rates of "stunting" were found among children from larger families or whose houses do not have their own water connections; higher rates of both "stunting" and "wasting" were found among children of illiterate parents (only 28 per cent of the mothers and 15 per cent of the fathers in the sample) or whose

houses do not have private toilets (only 2 per cent of the families in the sample).

Breast feeding helps

Breast-fed children were less stunted than non-breast-fed ones. Children breast-fed for more than 15 months were heavier and less stunted. The survey found that 84 per cent are breast-fed for six months, one-third for 18 months and 10 per cent for two years. "The tendency to prolong breast-feeding is probably the outcome of (UNRWA's) intensive health education programme," the survey report says, "but is also possibly the result of the increasing economic difficulties in the area."

Pregnant women and nursing mothers studied in the survey showed evidence of nutritional anaemia, perhaps due to a diet deficient in iron and folic acid. The haemoglobin levels of both pregnant and non-pregnant women were found to be at or just below what the WHO considers the borderline of anaemia.

As part of the mother-and-child health care programme available at UNRWA health centres, pregnant women and nursing mothers are given iron folate tablets and infants receive food supplements of fruit juices or cereal mixtures.

The survey report says the women in the sample "appeared to be rather better nourished than female populations in some neighbouring countries" and it attributed this "in large part to the well-developed pre-natal care services that are available."

The report recommends that iron-rich foods should be provided to refugee children and mothers and that a more effective iron preparation with minimal side effects should be found. Overall, it concludes: "There can be little doubt that should UNRWA services be withdrawn or reduced in a major way, the situation will deteriorate."

Expansion recommended

Specifically, the survey report urges: "The supplementary feeding programme should be maintained and be expanded to reach as many pre-school children as possible in order to combat the prevailing state of malnutrition in all fields. More emphasis should be put on the ages

6-24 months and the socially disadvantaged persons. Any curtailment in the supplementary feeding programme may have a detrimental effect on the health of the vulnerable groups."

UNRWA's Director of Health, Dr. John Hiddlestone, says the Agency is taking the report's findings and recommendations seriously. "We need to do something to keep supporting these people," he says. "If after a programme that's been going so long we've still got these problems, then we've got several points to look at: is the food all right, are the right people getting the food and are we missing people who are in need?"

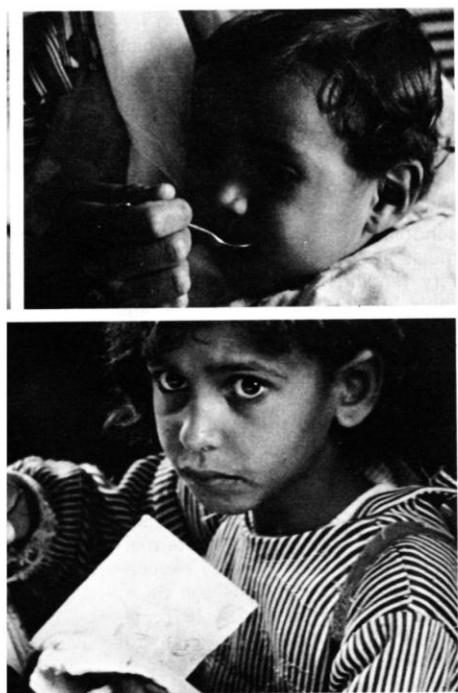
For UNRWA, the challenge will be to follow the survey team's recommendations within the Agency's ever-tightening financial constraints, says Dr. Hiddlestone. The supplementary feeding programme, he notes, used to be underwritten entirely by the European Community. The EC still provides most of the foodstuffs, but UNRWA has had to pick up more and more of the staff costs of the programme from its now over-stretched budget.

"The long-term answer is not just a matter of the supplementary feeding programme," says Dr. Hiddlestone. "The long-term answer is the successful re-establishment of these people out of their refugee status."

More refugees using UNRWA medical services

Economic difficulties in the Middle East are prompting Palestine refugees to make greater use of the free medical services offered by UNRWA, according to the latest annual report of the Agency's Health Department.

In 1984, clinic visits for medical consultations totalled more than 2.5 million—including first visits and subsequent repeat visits. That is over 10 per cent more than in 1983. There was also an increase in reported visits for other out-patient services, such as eye, skin and dental treatment, during the year for a total of over 4.6 million patient visits



to clinics. "This increase in demand for UNRWA services in all fields is attributed to prevailing economic difficulties," the Health Department's annual report says.

Some 1.8 million Palestine refugees, out of the more than 2 million registered with UNRWA, are eligible to call on the health services operated by the Agency in its five fields of operation: Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Basic preventive and curative medical services are provided at 124 health units—98 operated by UNRWA, 25 run by governments and one run by a voluntary agency.

520,000 lab tests

UNRWA's own financial difficulties have made it harder to keep these services going, but the Health Department has actually managed to make modest improvements. In the past year, it supplied additional equipment and replaced old equipment where necessary, including X-ray machines, laboratory and dental equipment, refrigerators and sterilizers. Some improvement and expansion of installations was also possible.

New dental clinics were completed in Lebanon and Jordan, bringing the total to 30. The number of laboratory tests made by UNRWA

field health staff in 1984 was nearly 520,000, an increase of 13 per cent over the 1983 figure of 460,000 tests.

The major component of UNRWA's health programme continues to be monitoring the health of pregnant women and children and providing extra food to the most vulnerable members of refugee society.

More than 37,000 pregnant women registered in 1984 for maternal care—an increase of over 16 per cent from 1983. These mothers-to-be get regular health supervision, as well as extra dry food rations and iron-folate tablets during pregnancy and the nursing period. The immunization of pregnant women with tetanus toxoid, already routine in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, is being extended to UNRWA's other fields.

Not all expectant Palestine refugee mothers report to UNRWA clinics, and of those who do, not all deliver their babies with the assistance of UNRWA doctors, nurses or trained midwives. The 36,255 deliveries reported by the Agency in 1984 meant a 16 per cent increase on 1983—but still represented only about half the number of births that would be expected in a population of this size.

Nearly four out of ten deliveries

take place at home, most of them attended by Agency-supervised **dayas** (traditional midwives). "But many women nowadays prefer deliveries in hospitals," the annual report says. "Even the figures from Gaza field, which is the only field that provides maternity services as part of the camp health services . . . show that 44 per cent of the deliveries took place in the government hospitals, whereas 32 per cent took place in the camp maternities and 24 per cent in the home."

250,000 shots, 7.5 million vitamin pills

Palestine refugee children up to the age of three receive regular supervision and immunization at UNRWA child-health centres. In 1984, the number receiving such attention was over 113,000, a 6 per cent increase from 1983. In addition to regular weighing and measuring to monitor their growth, these infants are routinely immunized against tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio and measles. In 1984, more than a quarter of a million immunizations were administered in UNRWA's maternal and child health care programme. Infant diarrhoea is quickly and effectively treated through the oral-rehydration method—mothers are given a special rehydrating formula pioneered by UNRWA which they can administer at home—and underweight or stunted children get special attention in nutrition clinics established in most UNRWA health centres.

An average of more than 40,000 children a day, mostly preschoolers, received hot mid-day meals at UNRWA's 94 supplementary feeding centres in 1984. Another 75,000 infants up to the age of three received extra dry milk rations. Each child also got a vitamin tablet: 7.5 million of these were doled out in 1984.

UNRWA and the World Health Organization conducted a nutrition survey during the year of children up to the age of four in Jordan and up to age two in the West Bank and Gaza. This showed that acute malnutrition has been virtually eliminated, except for a few cases in Gaza, since the last survey in 1978, although the number of children with stunted growth, an indication of chronic malnutrition, has not



changed since 1974 and the rate among refugee children is slightly higher than accepted norms. (See malnutrition report on preceding page.)

Infant mortality halved

As measured in one field, the West Bank, the infant mortality rate among Palestine refugee children has dropped from 83.7 per thousand in 1975 to 37.7 per thousand today. The main causes of infant death have changed in the same period, from gastro-intestinal and respiratory infections to prematurity and congenital malformations.

UNRWA's preventive and environmental health programmes continued to show success in keeping disease down, despite overcrowded conditions. There were no cases of cholera, only one imported case of malaria, nine cases of a skin disease carried by sandflies and 45 cases of an intestinal disease caused by tainted cheese. The incidence of chicken pox, infectious hepatitis, measles and mumps increased, while that of whooping cough, polio and tuberculosis decreased.

Basic sanitation services—water supply, waste-disposal, insect and rodent control and garbage removal—are provided by UNRWA to the 738,000 refugees living in 61 camps. The Agency set aside \$1.5 million for self-help schemes in the camps, and most of this was used in 1984 in south Lebanon, where refugee communities paved pathways, built drainage ditches, laid sewers and built or repaired family latrines. "The enormous community effort, in the rehabilitation of waste water disposal system and other reconstruction activities, helped immensely in the prevention of epidemics," the annual report says.

UNRWA's health staff of just over 3,000 includes 274 doctors, dentists and pharmacists, 542 nurses and midwives, 639 feeding and milk centre employees and nearly a thousand sanitation labourers. Senior staff are seconded from the WHO. The Health Department budget in 1984 was some \$44 million, almost a quarter of UNRWA's total budget, which is paid for almost entirely out of contributions from governments plus several voluntary organisations.

West Bank profiles

Beginning with this issue, **Palestine Refugees Today** will be carrying a series of portraits on some of UNRWA special hardship cases: the 100,000-plus destitute refugees who qualify for welfare assistance. The first two are from West Bank.

In an old stone house near the entrance to the ancient city of Hebron, Palestine refugee Abdel-Qader Mohammad al-Bustami lives alone. Except for a brother living in Abu Dhabi, from whom he never hears, Abdel-Qader is the sole survivor of 13 children; the rest died in childhood.

For 15 years, he lived in an old, run-down house with his aged parents. Then, last January, his 70-year-old mother was burned to death in a household fire. After that, his blind, 80-year-old father was moved to a nursing home near Jerusalem. Abdel-Qader, who cannot work full-time because he is partially blind and has a crippled hand, was left on his own for the first time: at age 52, he depends on UNRWA for support. At one time, the Bustami family was one of the richest and best-known families in Ramleh, near Jaffa, where Abdel-Qader was born. "For over a thousand years, we farmed in that area. We farmed land belonging to the *waqf* (religious trust). A third of the produce went to the poor, and the rest to us," he recalls.

With the creation of Israel in 1948, the Bustami family, like nearly three-quarters of a million other Arabs in Palestine, lost their home and their means of livelihood. They became refugees, fleeing to the West Bank, and they applied for assistance when UNRWA began operations in 1950. Abdel-Qader al-Bustami and his parents became what UNRWA calls "special hardship cases": the neediest refugees, those who, for one reason or another, cannot provide for themselves. From UNRWA, these refugees receive food rations, blankets, clothing, token cash aid and other assistance.



Despite his handicaps, Abdel-Qader al-Bustami has occasionally done odd jobs as a gardener or casual labourer. He was pruning trees in a neighbour's garden when his mother had her fatal accident at home. Occasionally now, he buys vegetables or seeds from farmers in the Hebron area and sells them in the city's marketplace, using a cast-off child's pram which he has converted into a street-vendor's cart. In this way, he scrapes together money for his basic needs for food, clothing and shelter. (He pays 8 Jordanian dinars, about \$20, in rent annually for his house, which is without electricity; since the death of his mother, he takes his meals outside, often near the ancient Ibrahim mosque in Hebron where he goes to pray.) For Abdel-Qader al-Bustami—disabled, jobless and alone—UNRWA's continued help and support are essential.

Bare lightbulb illuminates cave-like room

The room in which Palestine refugee Fatima Mohammad Harb al-Azzeh lives, deep in the old city of Hebron, probably dates from Ro-

man times. It has the atmosphere of a cave, the walls and vaulted roof blackened by smoke; this stone room, with a single small opening requiring a visitor to bend over double to enter, is cool in summer and warm in winter. It is very dark, lit only by a single bare lightbulb by the door, connected to a neighbour's electricity supply. But sounds and smells and voices are more important to Fatima Mohammad, for she cannot see. At the age of 80, blind and crippled by rheumatism, she lives alone in this room. There are friends and neighbours who provide her basic needs, but Fatima Mohammad is one of 21,000 Palestine refugees in the West Bank who receive special care and assistance from UNRWA.

Since she was born, around 1905, Fatima has been mostly alone. Her father died before she was born and she had no brothers or sisters. She married once, and had two daughters and a son, but the children died in infancy and her husband died shortly after. She was from the Azzeh clan, one of the biggest in the area of Ajjour, 25 kilometres north-west of Hebron, in what is now Israel. She came to Hebron after the 1948 war, but declined to be taken in by other members of her clan.

When she first came to live in this room, she still had some sight and could move about, but her health has deteriorated over the years. Day and night, she remains in her bed, occasionally sitting up to receive visits from her neighbours, who bring her food and water, bathe her once a week, wash her clothes and look after her. When UNRWA distributes food rations to special hardship cases in the Hebron area, another refugee, who is also blind, fetches Fatima's share for her. Like some refugees, she sells her flour ration to buy bread because she cannot bake her own; she does, however, make coffee and tea for herself.

Fatima Mohammad Harb al-Azzeh believes that "God will provide". She feels that she will probably never return to her home in Ajjour. "From here, I am going only to God," she says.

Newsletter marks 25th Anniversary

This issue marks 25 years of publication of the UNRWA Newsletter, **Palestine Refugees Today**. The first issue, published in November 1960 (when UNRWA was already more than 10 years old), highlighted the 1959-60 Annual Report submitted to the United Nations General Assembly the previous month outlining the Agency's plans for the following three years. In that report, UNRWA Director Dr. John H. Davis (who would later become Commissioner-General, the title by which UNRWA's chief executive has been known ever since) proposed to build five vocational training centres for young Palestine refugees by 1963.

UNRWA's second vocational training centre, at Wadi Seer in Jordan, had just been opened by King Hussein on 24 October 1960, with an enrolment of 200 trainees. Dr. Davis' proposal envisaged the number of refugees receiving vocational training at Agency centres increasing from 500 in 1960 to 2,500 annually. "Regardless of how or when the refugee problem is solved," he said in his annual report, "the necessity to train refugee youth for jobs in an era of technological progress will exist, and the longer the solution to the refugee problem takes, the greater will become this need." Today, 25 years later, UNRWA has over 5,000 trainees in eight centres. Dr. Davis' proposals drew praise in editorials in American, British and Canadian newspaper, the first issue of the Newsletter reported.

The New York Times said in an editorial on 11 October 1960 that "properly trained, the gifted young among the Arab refugees could help lead the Middle East toward peace and plenty—to the benefit of

all involved." UNRWA, the paper said, "has done much" and "can do more to prevent idle hours, vanished hopes, wasted talents and thwarted lives."

The Boston-based **Christian Science Monitor** said on 18 October 1960 that "the more fortunate parts of the world should give generously" to an expanded vocational training programme. "There is little room for these youths as unskilled or agricultural workers in the Middle East; but with training they can be made valuable to the lands where they reside or in lands nearby."

In Britain **The Guardian** said on 19 October 1960 that Dr. Davis' proposed three-year programme "will not solve the Palestine refugee problem, but it will go some way towards solving 2,500 personal problems." And Canada's now-defunct **Montreal Star** said on 17 October: "UNRWA may only have a three-year life expectancy, but it is a moral certainty that the Palestine refugees will have to be cared for much longer than that. It is just as much a certainty that their future care can be lightened only by multiplying the number equipped to make places for themselves."

World Refugee Year

The first issue of the UNRWA Newsletter 25 years ago also noted that UNRWA's programmes, including vocational training, were deriving special benefit from donations under "World Refugee Year" in 1960. An article in the Newsletter recalled that in 1956, a young English journalist, Timothy Raison, had visited the Palestine refugee camp of Aqabat Jabr near Jericho in the West Bank, where some 40,000 refugees lived at that time. Two years later, he published an article in the political journal he was then editing, **Crossbow**, entitled "Wanted: A World Refugee Year". The idea was adopted by the world community, and, in 1960, Timothy Raison and his journalistic collaborators on the **Crossbow** article were honoured with the Nansen Medal, given each year for outstanding services on behalf of refugees, at a ceremony at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

Today, the Rt. Hon. Timothy Raison, MP, is the UK's Minister for Overseas Development.

UNRWA Publications

GENERAL

What is UNRWA? (PL 12)

Printed Leaflet (Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish).

Map of UNRWA's area of operations with refugee location data (Arabic, English).

Survey (PB 1002)

Brochure of facts and figures (Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish).

PROGRAMME LEAFLETS

Education (PL 13 — Arabic, English, French and German).

Vocational Training (PL 14 — Arabic, English, French and German).

Health (PL 15 — Arabic, English, French and German).

Relief (PL 16 — Arabic, English, French and German).

Palestine Refugees in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A series of five leaflets covering UNRWA's five fields of operation (English and Arabic).

POSTERS

Palestine refugee children

Three black and white posters featuring refugee children at school, in a war-damaged clinic and in a camp street. Text in English, French, German or Spanish.

IYY Wallsheet (International Youth Year)

A full-colour, folded wallsheet showing UNRWA youth activities centres. Text in Arabic, English, French, German, Spanish or Swedish.

Women's Decade Wallsheet

A full-colour, folded wallsheet on Palestine refugee women. Text in Arabic, English, French, German, Spanish or Swedish.

AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTIONS

Slide/tape presentations:

ST 1003 — Through the Eyes of Ibrahim, a 10-minute slide/tape presentation in English, French, German or Swedish. Kit with map, posters and teaching notes included. Available on loan or purchase at \$ 45 per set.

ST 1004 — Palestinian Odyssey. A history of the Palestine problem from the early 20th century to the present. Commentary in English, French, German or Arabic. Complete with English booklet with text and reproductions of each slide. Available on loan or for purchase.

ST 1005 — A Ray of Hope

The story of a 20-year-old from a Palestine refugee camp in Gaza studying arts and crafts at UNRWA's Ramallah Women's Training Centre. Available on loan or for purchase. Commentary in English, French, German or Arabic.

ST 1006 — Emergency

The impact of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon on Palestine refugees. Also a profile of aid provided through UNRWA. Eight minutes, 77 colour slides with tape commentary in Arabic, English, French or German.

ST 1007 — Hope deferred

Profile of an unemployed teacher in Gaza to mark International Youth Year. Scenes of home life and an UNRWA

Youth Activities Centre. Eight minutes, 66 colour slides with tape commentary in Arabic, English, French or German.

Palestine Dresses — A set of 27 colour slides showing Palestine dresses from various regions. Included is a descriptive note in Arabic, English, French or German.

FILMS

Caring

A young Palestine refugee returns as a counsellor to the camp for orphan children he attended as a child. 16 minutes, 16 mm, colour with optical sound. Commentary in Arabic, English, French, German, Japanese or Norwegian.

Born Homeless

A 20-minute, 16 mm colour film showing the work of UNRWA through a refugee family in Baqa'a camp, Jordan. Available for purchase or loan in Arabic, English, French or German.

Lebanon 1982

A 15-minute, 16 mm colour film on the 1982 Lebanon emergency. Available for purchase (\$ 165) or loan. Also available on video cassette at about \$35 — please specify type of video system required. English commentary only. (Not suitable for children.)

Shelter

A 12-minute, 16 mm colour film on Lebanon showing restoration of UNRWA services after the 1982 war and provision of shelter for bombed-out refugees. Available for loan or purchase and on video cassette (as above, Lebanon 1982). Commentary in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish.

What Sort of Life?

A 25-minute, 16 mm colour film on Ein el Hilweh camp, Lebanon from the 1982 Israeli invasion through clearing operations and rebuilding of refugee housing. Commentary in Arabic, English, French and German.

Long Journey

A 12-minute, 16 mm colour film on UNRWA's health programme from 1950 to the present. Includes historical footage of original camps and UNRWA services. Available for loan or purchase in English, French, German or Arabic.

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