

Palestine Refugees Today

No. 116



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A recent study indicates a continuing decline of infant mortality among Palestine refugees.

Cover photo: Refugees from Ein el-Sultan camp, near Jericho in the West Bank, work on a Jordan Valley farm. See pages 6-8.



Palestine Refugees Today

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

UNRWA News

Donors review three-year plan

An informal meeting of UNRWA's major contributors in May reviewed a three-year plan for Agency operations. The plan, which contains programme objectives, methods of programme evaluation and projected financial needs to operate UNRWA's health, education and welfare services from 1987-89 was received enthusiastically by meeting participants.

Commissioner-General Giorgio Giacomelli said that a number of useful recommendations came out of the meeting which he called "the beginning of a process of consultations among governments on UNRWA, rather than an isolated event". There was general recognition at the meeting, said Mr. Giacomelli, that education should continue to be UNRWA's highest priority. Delegates also suggested an expansion of the Agency's vocational training programme.

A background paper, "UNRWA: Past, Present and Future", prepared for the meeting, traces the development of UNRWA's programmes in response to changing needs of refugees since the founding resolution of December 1949, from the original relief and works projects to the current emphasis on education and training, supplemented by health services and relief/welfare activities. The paper indicates the need for a link between the international community's expectations of the Agency and funds provided to it.

All delegations speak-

ing at the meeting agreed on the need to keep UNRWA in operation until a settlement of the Palestine problem has been reached. And delegates paid tribute to Agency staff, both past and present, for their dedication to duty, often under difficult and dangerous conditions.

In addition to major donors, meeting participants included members of UNRWA's Advisory Commission and the General Assembly's Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA. The 25 delegations represented: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States and the European Community.

The first budget under UNRWA's new three-year plan is currently being prepared for 1987. Funds permitting, the following improvements will be made in Agency programmes:

- no class will have more than 50 pupils;
- the number of special hardship cases will be raised from 106,000 to 122,000;
- women's activities will be expanded;
- additional medical personnel will be hired to reduce workloads; and
- laboratory and dental facilities will be expanded.

Contributions news

AGFUND, the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organisations, has approved another grant to UNRWA, this one of \$ 600,000 for building more classrooms in the

Gaza Strip. Since UNRWA became an AGFUND beneficiary in June 1985, the Fund has granted a total of \$ 1.7 million for building three schools in the West Bank and upgrading school sanitary facilities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Near East Council of Churches (NECC) has donated \$ 30,000 for rebuilding unsafe classrooms in the Gaza Strip. This brings NECC contributions to school building in Gaza this year to \$ 122,500.

The OPEC Fund has confirmed a fifth grant to UNRWA for equipping vocational training centres. The latest grant is of \$ 546,000. The OPEC Fund has previously contributed more than \$ 4 million to UNRWA's vocational training programme.

The Government of Finland has added 1 million Finnish markka (\$ 194,000) to its 1986 regular contribution to UNRWA, bringing its total contributions for the year to 5 million markka, or just under \$ 1 million.

Third centre for disabled established

The U.S.-based Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has agreed to pay the running costs of a new community centre for the disabled at Husn (Martyr Azmi Al Mufti) camp in Jordan for three years beginning 1 January 1987.

The centre will be modelled on those already run by UNRWA, with financing from OXFAM (U. K.) at Suf and Jarash camps. The current Project Co-ordinator, Mr. Aziz Daoud, will be responsible for the new centre, assisted at first by an expatriate from MCC who will be based in nearby Irbid.

Greeting cards, 1987 calendar

UNRWA greeting cards and the 1987 calendar are now available from UNRWA's Public Information Division, Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 700, A-1400 Vienna, Austria.

The greeting cards include "Season's Greetings" in English, Arabic, French and German. Five new designs are available with scenic views of the Holy Land and traditional art forms. A limited number of last year's cards are also available.

The 1987 calendar is one of UNRWA's contributions to the International Year of Shelter with drawings by refugee children on the theme of shelter.

Community nursing extended

An experiment in community health nursing introduced at Jarash and Marka (Hittin) camps in 1983 has been extended to all Palestine refugee camps in Jordan.

Traditionally UNRWA has provided a visiting nursing service but the new programme goes beyond visiting the known sick (see *Palestine Refugees Today*, October 1984, p. 2). It aims at promoting community health by educating families on healthy living, prevention of disease and home treatment of minor ailments. Through home visits, UNRWA's nursing staff has also been able to uncover cases of disability and chronic diseases which were not being treated.

In carrying out their duties, the more than 100 UNRWA community health nurses in Jordan act as bridges between the community and the health care system.

(continued on p. 11)

Economic squeeze hits refugees in West Bank, Gaza

When UNRWA's West Bank field office recently advertised that it *might* soon have vacancies for guards, kitchen workers, sanitation labourers, doorkeepers, cleaners and school attendants, the response was overwhelming. More than 1,000 applications flooded in. The work would pay 94 Jordanian dinars (US\$ 270) a month, and require only a ninth-grade education, but there were applications from high school and university graduates. The Agency had to issue a second notice advising that no more than 20 vacancies were realistically expected to occur and that applicants' "chances of employment must be considered remote".

This clamour for jobs is seen as an indication of the increasingly hard economic times faced by people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where UNRWA provides education, health and relief services for almost 800,000 Palestine refugees.

Conditions of virtual full employment prevailed in the two Israeli-held territories until recently. Some 90,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, including refugees, found regular work in Israel. Nearly half the Arab labourers employed in Israel traditionally worked in construction, but this has been hit by the economic recession; official Israeli statistics report a 17 per cent fall-off in new construction from 1984 to 1985.

An April 1986 report by the Bank of Israel (central bank) said that an annual 2.9 per cent growth rate in the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, combined with the effects of recession, had produced the first significant signs of unemployment in the occupied territories. It gave figures of 5.3 per cent unemployed (13,300 persons) in the two territories combined in the first nine months of 1985, compared with 3.7 per cent in 1984.

This may not seem high by European standards, but most Palestinians employed in Israel do not

register with government labour exchanges, preferring to seek daily casual employment. Arab workers say that if they registered for "official" work, 20 per cent of their wages would be deducted for national insurance, although, according to the 1986 report of Israeli researcher Meron Benvenisti's "West Bank Data Base Project", they do not receive the same fringe benefits or social-security coverage as Israelis.

The 50,000 Palestinians in the "unofficial" labour pool work mostly for daily wages in unskilled jobs, as municipal labourers in Israeli towns or as cleaners, gardeners, waiters or dishwashers. Competition for jobs has heightened as the Israeli recession has worsened. Refugees and other Palestinians report that, whereas they could once find work six days a week, now they are lucky to do so three or four days a week.

Because Palestinians from the occupied territories are not permitted to sleep overnight in Israel, they must leave home daily in search of work. They have to pay the cost of transport to and from prospective jobs or informal labour markets, whether they find work or not. In Gaza, tens of thousands of men gather before dawn to take buses, taxis, vans, pickups and trucks into Israel, where they will wait on street-corners hoping to be hired for the day by Israeli contractors. Similar scenes occur daily in the major West Bank towns—Heb-

ron, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin—as workers head for the nearest Israeli cities in search of work. In Jerusalem, workers assemble near the Damascus Gate, waiting for contractors to select them for a day's labour.

The average wage these daily-paid workers can expect is between \$5 and \$10 a day. And official Israeli reports substantiate claims by Palestinian workers that these wages are deteriorating. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, average daily wages declined between 1984 and 1985 by 5.3 per cent for workers from the West Bank and 13 per cent for workers from the Gaza Strip.

Impact on UNRWA

Growing unemployment, underemployment and wage erosion in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have direct implications for UNRWA. Graduates from the Agency's four training centres in the occupied territories often cannot find jobs locally in their areas of specialisation. According to the Jerusalem-based Arab University Alumni Club, some 8,100 Palestinian university and community-college graduates — 5,400 from the West Bank and 2,700 from Gaza — were among the unemployed in 1985. The Engineers' Association in the West Bank said that nearly a third of its members — some 200 engineers — were unemployed in 1985.

Younger students in UNRWA schools are affected by their elder



UNRWA welfare workers, who must recertify hardship cases annually to ensure only the most needy get help, increasingly face pressure in the West Bank and (here) Gaza from refugees desperate for assistance.

siblings' demoralising quests for work. "Some students, particularly from poorer families, see university graduates without work and they feel discouraged," says an UNRWA relief officer in Gaza. "This year more than 2,000 pupils have dropped out of school."

The economic squeeze is causing more and more refugees to seek free treatment and medication under UNRWA's basic health care programme. Moreover, UNRWA medical officers in the West Bank and Gaza report an increase in psychological and psychosomatic complaints, particularly from heads of families who are under heavy pressure to provide for their households.

UNRWA hopes to raise the ceiling for special hardship cases next year, as funds permit, so that more refugee families may benefit. However, the Agency, like the refugees themselves, views education as the best hope for the future. Qualified Palestine refugees can still find jobs abroad, and UNRWA regularly adapts its vocational and teacher training programmes and its placement services for graduates to make the best opportunities available to them.

For example, 359 university graduates are involved in a trainee-teacher programme in the Gaza Strip to qualify them for the certificates needed to find work in the Arab Gulf states. New courses are

being added at UNRWA training centres to keep up with the demands of the market place. Courses to be introduced in the 1986-87 academic year will include one for physiotherapists at Ramallah Women's Training Centre and one each for construction technicians and land surveyors at Kalandia Vocational Training Centre, both in the West Bank. Computer courses are displacing older disciplines such as shorthand in the business/office practice courses at UNRWA training centres. Courses are being expanded for laboratory technicians and assistant pharmacists, specialisations for which there is still demand in the Gulf states.

Some of these trade or profes-



Outside Jerusalem's Damascus Gate, Palestinians wait to be hired for daily-paid work.



Palestinian women in Gaza, many from refugee camps, join the crowds waiting for transport to daily jobs in Israel. Some work as farm labourers, others in factories.

sional courses are supplanting sections previously allocated for teacher-training, as UNRWA's own demand for teachers levels off. UNRWA placement officers report a continuing demand from Saudi Arabia for teachers, as well as for doctors and nurses, some engineers and mechanics, despite the recession facing the oil-producing Gulf countries. But Arab professional associations based in Jerusalem predict that 40,000 skilled Palestinian workers will have their contracts terminated in the Gulf this year. This is likely to add thousands to the ranks of the unemployed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Refugees are increasingly applying on medical grounds for welfare assistance under the Agency's limited relief programme for "special hardship cases". At the time that UNRWA suspended general rations in 1982 to channel dwindling financial resources into education and health programmes, almost all refugees who sought employment were able to find it. Employment, or the capacity for it, were not included in the criteria set up to determine which refugees (about 5 per cent of the total) would continue to qualify for food rations and other assistance on grounds of special hardship (widows, orphans, the aged, the chronically ill). Families with an able-bodied male of working age do not qualify, whether the male members are working or not.

The direct impact of unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is being felt by UNRWA staff who must determine which refugee households qualify for special hardship assistance, and who have to go into the camps and villages to re-investigate those cases every year to make sure that assistance continues to go to the truly needy. In both fields, UNRWA welfare workers and camp or refugee services officers have faced acts of intimidation and threats of violence from those demanding assistance. In acts of desperation, refugees have sought to block distribution of rations to needy families, on the grounds that the assistance should go either to all or none. Refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip say unemployment and economic conditions are so severe as to make them all eligible for special consideration.

Slump may hit graduates

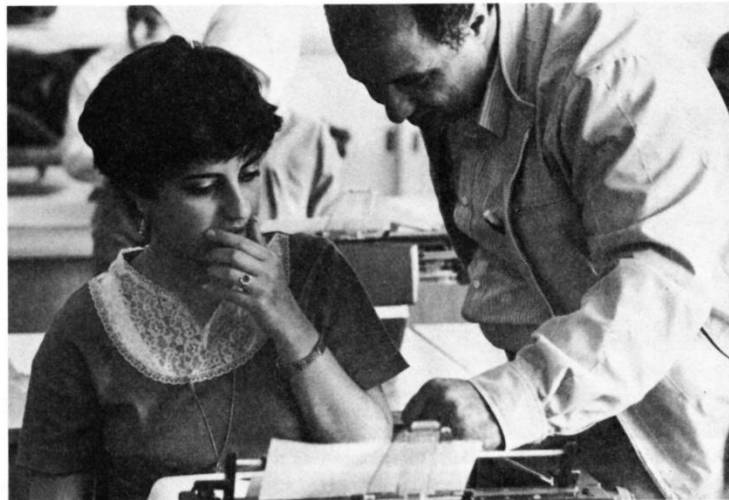
UNRWA pioneered the concept of vocational training in the Middle East. Since the Agency's first vocational training centre opened in 1954, more than 30,000 Palestine refugee men and women have graduated. Most of them have found employment in technical and mechanical trades in the region, notably in the Arab Gulf states. UNRWA has also trained more than 12,000 teachers since its teacher training programme began in the early 1950s.

The pioneering days are long past. And, according to a recent UNRWA internal study, some

changes in the vocational training programme may be in order.

Although UNRWA vocational training graduates maintain a high reputation, many countries in the Middle East are now operating vocational training programmes of their own, and there is greater competition for skilled jobs.

Moreover, with the recent 60-per-cent drop in the price of crude oil, recession has hit the Gulf economies, and those of neighbouring countries which have benefited from the oil boom through the repatriated earnings of their own citizens working in the Gulf.



These countries are having to scale down their economic development plans, and this is causing a shrinkage of job opportunities.

So, as the supply of skilled labour increases, demand is declining. The 2,000 Palestine refugees graduating annually from UNRWA's eight training centres may no longer be assured of automatic employment in their areas of specialisation.

To investigate this problem and come up with possible responses to it, UNRWA sent a three-member job survey team to Saudi Arabia and Jordan last April and May, following up a similar mission carried out in 1984, when employment conditions were much different.

The team, from Headquarters Amman and Vienna, talked to government and business leaders, educational institutions, banks, embassies and other organisations in the two countries. Their report, issued recently, concludes: "It is no longer sufficient for UNRWA just to train. It now has to convince employers that its graduates are the best on the market." The report makes a number of specific recommendations for reshaping UNRWA's training programme to keep up with the changing job market.

The team found that most of the skills taught at UNRWA VTCs — building, mechanical and electrical trades, surveying and architectural draughting, paramedical specialisations and business and office practice — are still in demand. But the economic climate is changing.

"A recent report by the higher education authorities (in Saudi Arabia) indicates that the graduates of the major trades courses will have limited opportunities during the period 1986–90," the UNRWA team found. For example, their report quotes an official Saudi forecast that one million expatriate jobs will disappear from the Saudi economy by 1990. Although the Saudis have always made special efforts to recruit Palestine refugees, particularly UNRWA VTC graduates, they may naturally be expected now to give priority to their own graduates.

Jordan has no oil wealth of its own, but has been a major provider of skilled personnel to the Gulf states. Despite a planned scheme to create up to 30,000 new jobs a

year, unemployment is expected to rise with the return of Jordanian workers from the Gulf. "UNRWA's graduates will be competing for scarce opportunities," the UNRWA report says.

Some bright spots

There are some bright spots, particularly for graduates of semi-professional and teacher-training courses at the UNRWA centres. Massive expansion of the road, communications and health-care networks in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states will continue to provide job opportunities, the survey team found. Between December 1985 and February 1986, for example, more than 300 medical and paramedical staff were recruited from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jordan by the Saudi employment attaché in Amman, and a further 19,000 health workers are expected to be recruited in the coming five years.

UNRWA's Placement Office in Amman has also found that the need for teachers in Saudi Arabia — both men and women — will continue because of the growth of the school system. A Saudi official said that more than 1,000 teachers were being recruited from Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza for the 1986/87 school year, and one Riyadh newspaper had advertised positions for several thousand women with teacher training.

Many opportunities, therefore, exist in Saudi Arabia for male and female teachers who have the Jordanian comprehensive diploma, although male teachers require two years' experience before they can be recruited and the females have to be accompanied by a husband or a close male relative.

Opportunities exist, the team found, for male (but not for female) teachers in Jordan also while there are very few male or female teaching positions available in the West Bank.

In recommending a re-appraisal of UNRWA's teacher-training priorities, the report notes: "Present Agency policy is to limit the intake of the teacher-training programme to the estimated new teacher requirements of the Agency." This is different from the approach adopted for all other vocational courses, where the Agency trains refugees in

marketable skills once it is assured that the market for these skills exists, the report says.

Turning to UNRWA's vocational training specialisations, the team made a number of recommendations. Mechanical, technical and commercial trainees should be taught rudimentary economics and management techniques. The most advanced equipment should be included in the syllabuses of the office-machine maintenance and radio/TV courses. Tool-making is a field of increasing demand and UNRWA should reinstate it as a subject. There is also demand for aviation mechanics, oxygen welders, maintenance technicians, electricians and Arabic-language computer operators, among others.

The team found that nurses, particularly male nurses, will be much more in demand in future and recommended expansion of the nurses' training programme. The report also suggested introduction of courses in hotel management, agricultural technology, men's hairdressing, and non-traditional trades for women such as office-machine or radio/TV repair. More theory should be introduced in courses, and the level of English-language training should be improved to ensure a complete grasp of technical materials.

The importance of more active marketing of UNRWA graduates was also stressed by the team. Their report recommends an expansion of the placement programme, which now operates through a supervising officer based in Amman and placement officers in each field who monitor advertisements and other job-vacancy notices, and who maintain contacts with potential employers.

A member of the job-survey team and compiler of their report, Financial Policies and Systems Officer John Fennessy, emphasises that UNRWA's past success in furnishing well-educated graduates forms a solid basis for continued success in the vocational training scheme's two goals: providing training for Palestine refugees, and contributing to the development of the region. "UNRWA's training is of a high standard," he says, "and with the quality of our education we're bound to continue to contribute on both fronts."

Jericho is the site of the world's oldest city.
The life style is traditional . . .



. . . and the surrounding area is filled with
5th Century Greek Orthodox monastery of

JERICOHO

More than 60,000 Palestine refugees lived in the Jericho area of the West Bank in the early 1950s — 50,000 of them in the three camps established after 1948: Aqabat Jabr, Ein el-Sultan and Nuwei'meh. Most of the refugees, caught in the crossfire of the 1967 war, fled across the Jordan River to the East Bank and took refuge in the sprawling "emergency" camps in Jordan, such as Baqa'a and Amman New Camp (Wihdat), which exist today in sizes comparable to the old Jericho camps.

Today, only some 3,000 Palestine refugees remain in Aqabat Jabr and 700 in Ein el-Sultan. Nuwei'meh's remaining residents moved to one of the other two camps after 1967. UNRWA continues to provide education, health and relief services to the camps, and to nearly 6,000 other refugees in the Jericho area, including Bedouin of Sudanese origin in the Duyub and Awja areas.

UNRWA operates three schools for 1,500 pupils in the Jericho area — and they are among the few co-educational schools in the Agency system. Three clinics in the area are served in rotation by a medical officer and staff nurse. Supplementary feeding centres, for pre-school and undernourished children, daily serve some 400 refugees at Aqabat

Jabr and 140 at Ein el-Sultan. Many of the camp residents are elderly, and 176 families, with 600 members, qualify for relief assistance from UNRWA on grounds of special hardship. A youth activities centre at Aqabat Jabr has a popular sports programme, while an UNRWA-employed carpentry instructor teaches the elements of woodworking to youths from the camp at a training centre run by the Agency's welfare department.

Many of the refugees in Jericho, men and women, are employed as farm labourers in the fertile Jordan Valley. Although they are themselves landless, they keep the agricultural heritage of their forebears alive, whether working as day labourers, seasonal gatherers or pickers of crops, sharecroppers on

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Left: Some camp residents work as labourers on Jordan Valley farms.



Jericho is the site of the world's oldest city. The life style is traditional . . .



. . . and the surrounding area is filled with historic sites, such as the 5th Century Greek Orthodox monastery of St. George in Wadi Qilt.



Only some 3,000 Palestinians remain in Aqabat Jabr and 140 at Ein el-Sultan. Many of the camp residents are elderly, and 176 families, with 600 members, qualify for relief assistance from UNRWA on grounds of special hardship. A youth activities centre at Aqabat Jabr has a popular sports programme, while an UNRWA-employed carpentry instructor teaches the elements of woodworking to youths from the camp at a training centre run by the Agency's welfare department.

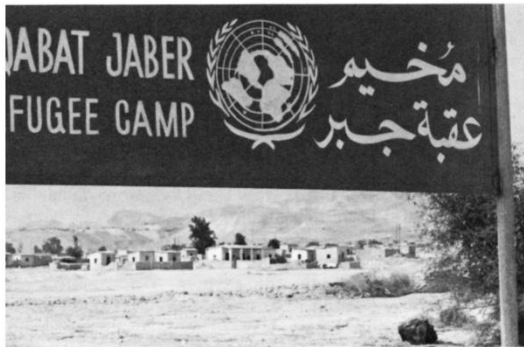
Many of the refugees in Jericho, men and women, are employed as farm labourers in the fertile Jordan Valley. Although they are themselves landless, they keep the agricultural heritage of their forebears alive, whether working as day labourers, seasonal gatherers or pickers of crops, sharecroppers on

Arab-owned farms or even in Jewish settlements in the Valley.

Because of the priority given to agriculture, water for domestic use is scarce—even in this famous Biblical oasis with its lush tropical vegetation. Water comes to the Jericho camps from two UNRWA-built systems. One draws water from Ein el-Qilt, an ancient spring tapped more than 100 years ago by Mohieddin al-Husseini, a prosperous Jericho farmer. The pumps and channels he built move the water along the edge of the precipitous Wadi el-Qilt gorge. Just above Aqabat Jabr, near the site of a reservoir built by King Herod 2,000 years ago, a pumping station stores the water in one closed and three open reservoirs built by UNRWA in 1959 with a grant from the Swedish govern-

ment. For two hours in the morning and one in the evening, water pumped from these reservoirs to Aqabat Jabr camp, where connections built by the refugees, as well as communal water points, make available for camp residents.

The water supply for Ein el-Sultan is even more historic. The name of the camp itself refers to Prince's Spring, the traditional Arabic name for Elisha's Well, where the Waters of Jericho, according to the Bible, were "made wholesome by Elisha, disciple of the prophet Elijah (II Kings 2: 10-22). The spring is at the foot of Tel el-Sultan, the mound where Dame Kathleen Kenyon's excavations in the 1930s revealed the walls of ancient Jericho. Next to the tel is Ein el-Sultan, where the first tents of the



Some camp residents work as labourers on Jordan Valley farms.





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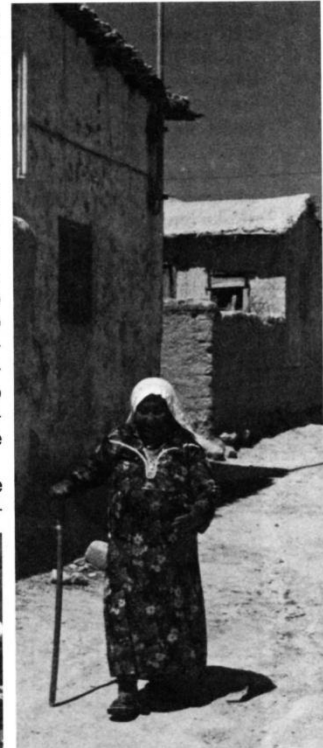
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the fighting in the Jerusalem area
and beyond.

Elisha's Well, with a displace-
ment of 1,000 gallons a minute, has
been a water source throughout re-
corded history. In the early 1950s,
UNRWA, in agreement with the
Jericho municipality, built a pump-
ing station there to supply Ein
el-Sultan and Nuwei'meh camps.
Water is pumped from the well to
Ein el-Sultan twice a week for two
hours daily. The spring also pro-
vides water for domestic and agri-
cultural use to Jericho town and to
the garden plots of date palms, ba-
nana trees and citrus groves in the
surrounding area.

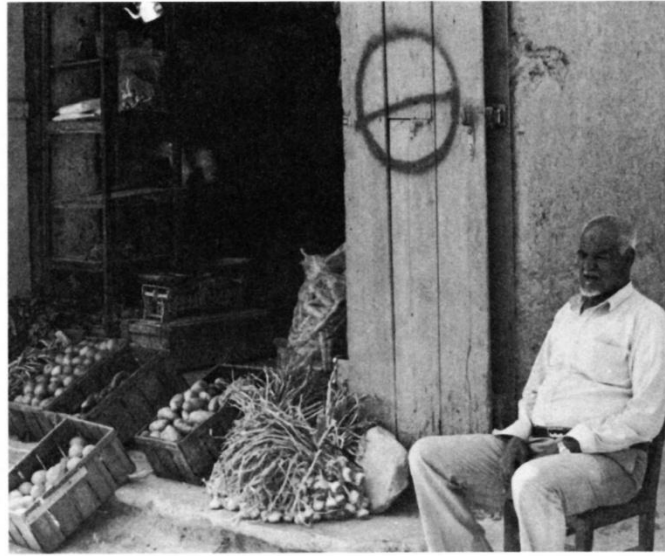
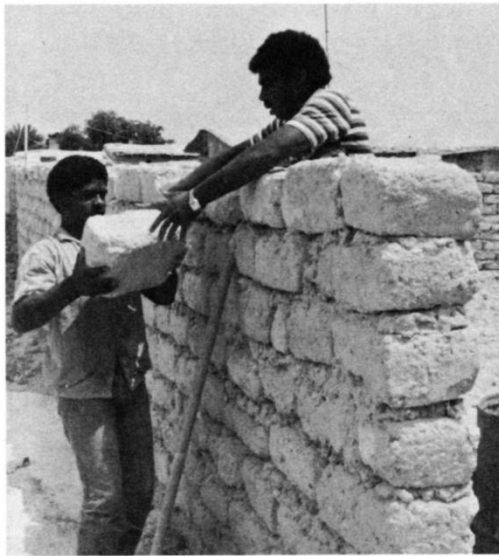
A somewhat sleepy atmosphere
prevails in the Jericho camps; situ-



Many of the residents of the
Jericho area are elderly.



Left: Main Street, Aqabat
Jabr camp.



ated at the lowest point on earth, 250 meters below sea level, the Jericho area has a hot climate: in winter, daytime temperatures seldom go much below 20°C, while in summer they can reach 45°C. Nights are cool in winter and balmy in summer. At Aqabat Jabr, almost all the refugee houses (most of them dating from the 1950s) have electricity. In Ein el-Sultan, the 200 resident refugee families share power from several privately owned generators.

In 1985, thousands of unused and largely derelict structures in Nuwei'meh, Ein el-Sultan and Aqabat Jabr camps were demolished, and the area was cleared for possible future UNRWA use. This followed negotiations between the Agency and the Israeli authorities,

who have occupied the area since 1967.

Agency installations at all three camps, and all structures at Ein el-Sultan and Aqabat Jabr used by residents for any legitimate purpose (including lean-tos and abandoned buildings used as sheep pens or for storage) were marked with prominent red-painted symbols and were preserved. The clearing of the two inhabited camps was carried out under the watchful eyes of Agency local and international staff.

Since then, camp residents have used rubble from the demolitions to expand and enclose their shelters. "We've encouraged them to build walls around their compounds to protect themselves, and some are adding kitchens or other rooms to their houses," says

Jerusalem area officer Rashid Areikat, himself a refugee from Jericho and a long-time sub-area officer there.

UNRWA has installed blue and white metal signs bearing the UN emblem around the perimeters of all three camps as an extra measure of protection of the land, which, though privately owned, remains at the Agency's disposal. The UN flag has been hoisted prominently above all Agency installations and at the entrances to the camps.

Under the UN flag, life goes on for the refugees in the Jericho area. Agency services operate at their usual level. The community works together, with the Agency's support, to make life more bearable while awaiting a solution of the Palestine question.



Above left: Mud bricks first used to build shelters 36 years ago are recycled to build walls around compounds or to add rooms to shelters.

Above right: Shops in the camp were among buildings marked for preservation.

Left: An Agency welfare worker visits some of the 600 special hardship cases who receive special assistance from UNRWA.

Change of environment contributes to maturity

"When I was asked if I wanted to go to the UNRWA summer camp again this year", recalls Najwa Ali Yousef, an 11-year-old Palestine refugee girl from Jordan, "I said yes right away. The camps are lots of fun, and I wouldn't turn down a chance to go a third time either!"

The three-week camp, held from 17 June to 4 July 1986 at UNRWA's Amman Training Centre, was organised jointly by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and UNRWA. Summer camps in Jordan for boys were started in 1972, but financial and administrative difficulties delayed the opening of a girls' camp until 1977. Fiscal problems continue to plague the girls' camp — in 1982 and 1984, it had to be cancelled. The 1986 camp was made possible by a contribution from the United Nations Women's Guild (UNWG) in Vienna, whose \$4,040 paid almost half the cost of the girls' camp. Although the girls' and boys' camps have separate budgets, the 67 girls and 120 boys selected from poor families in 10 Jordan refugee camps participate in the same activities. Mrs. Nimreh Tannous, head of the committee in charge of the girls camp, noted also, "The girls were provided with the same items and services as the boys — two sets of clothes, shoes, and personal items such as towels, tooth-brushes and soap."

The joint summer camp was supervised by some 70 instructors and counsellors, 55 for the boys and 15 for the girls. All instructors were volunteer teachers and social workers from UNRWA schools and the Amman Training Centre. Some of the counsellors were orphans themselves who had graduated from previous summer camps and who also volunteered to pass on some of their knowledge and experience to the new-comers.

Camp activities include arts and

crafts, reading, singing, educational games, sports and first aid scheduled in rotation so that each child can participate in each activity.

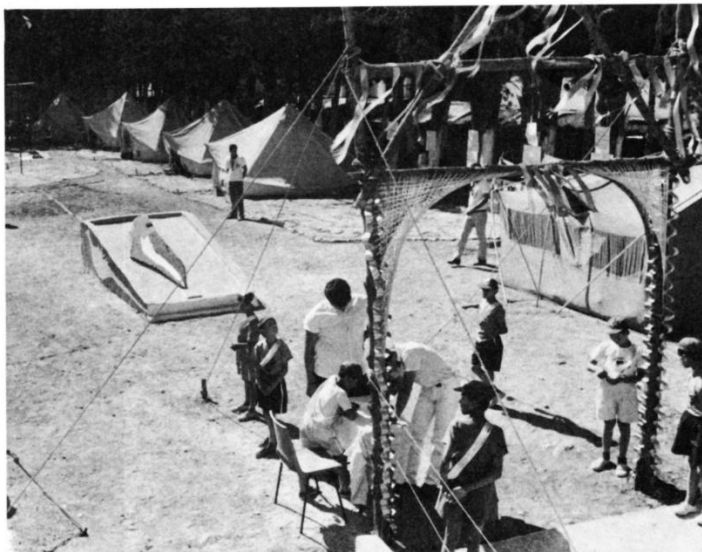
Mr. Ali Abbas, the summer camp director, notes that the camps provide orphan children with the chance to build their self-confidence and self-reliance through participation in group activities, making new friends and developing their talents. He stresses that the change of environment is a positive factor which contributes to the children's development; many cannot pursue normal childhood activities in the refugee camps where they live. "The excitement of trying something new, together with the encouragement, love and support they receive during their stay, have positive effects on the children's personalities," he says.

Dr. Ahmad Turk, a Viennese paediatrician and child neuropsychiatrist sent by UNRWA's Department of Health to study the health and psychological needs of the orphans, said that the children already have well-developed and sensitive personalities. "Aggressive behaviour is virtually absent," he reported, "and the children are mild-mannered and highly sociable. Despite some psychosomatic symptoms, they are happy and healthy while in the camp."

Ahlam Ghaleb Ali Haija is an example of the orphans' early matur-

ity. This 10-year-old girl from Zarqa camp is intelligent and self-disciplined. Her average grade in the fifth elementary class was 92%, but she was not content with her reading skills. "I spend a lot of time reading short stories in the library," she recounted, "and my reading has improved a lot." But, of course, while at camp, Ahlam had no time to read — "I'm too busy playing sports, singing in the choir and dancing." Ahlam was delighted when the orphans travelled by train to the Jordanian Phosphate Mining Company near Zarqa . . . "I have always wanted to ride on a train, and the camp has fulfilled my wish. It was terrific!"

The camp closed with a day of exhibitions of the children's activities and a ceremony under the patronage of Mr. Per Hallqvist, Director of UNRWA Affairs, Jordan. The orphans' families, and UNRWA and YMCA officials, were entertained by folkloric dances and songs performed by the children. Mr. Alex Ghammachi, Director of YMCA Projects, and Mrs. Tannous thanked all those who contributed toward the costs of the camp, Mrs. Tannous singling out the UNWG for special commendation. As Mr. Hallqvist distributed certificates to the children and the 70 volunteer instructors and counsellors, many of the orphans — including Najwa and Ahlam — were already dreaming of next year's camp.



Five week siege of Beirut camps

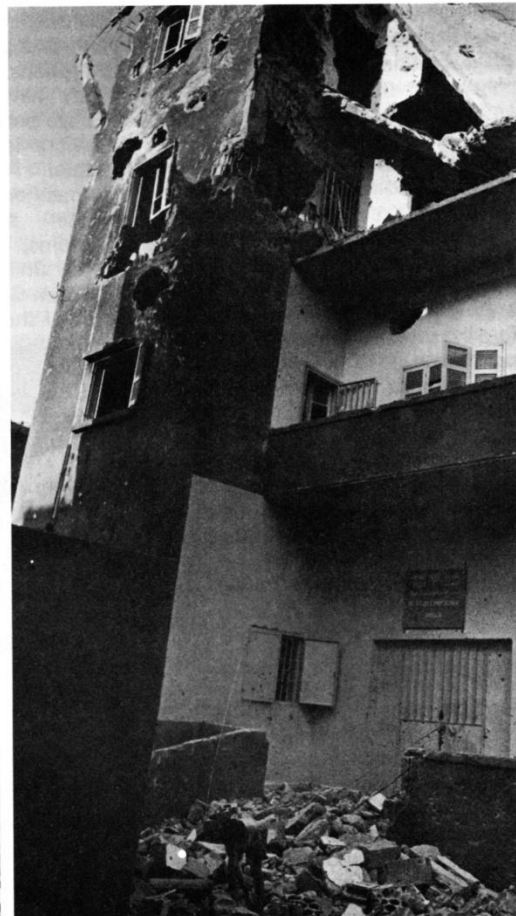
UNRWA was able to begin delivery of relief supplies to residents of Shatila and Burj el-Barajneh camps in Beirut during the first week of July after a five-week siege of the camps and nearby refugee neighbourhoods. Goods delivered included flour, sugar and other basic food commodities as well as medicines.

Damage to housing and UNRWA installations was extensive and unofficial estimates put the number of refugee casualties at 77 dead and 600 wounded. The fighting forced some 7,000 refugees to flee to various safer locations in Beirut and over 3,000 to flee to other areas of Lebanon. During the siege, UNRWA distributed food and relief supplies to the displaced refugees.

The accompanying photos from Shatila and Burj el-Barajneh show the scene when UNRWA officials were first able to enter the camps after the weeks of fighting.

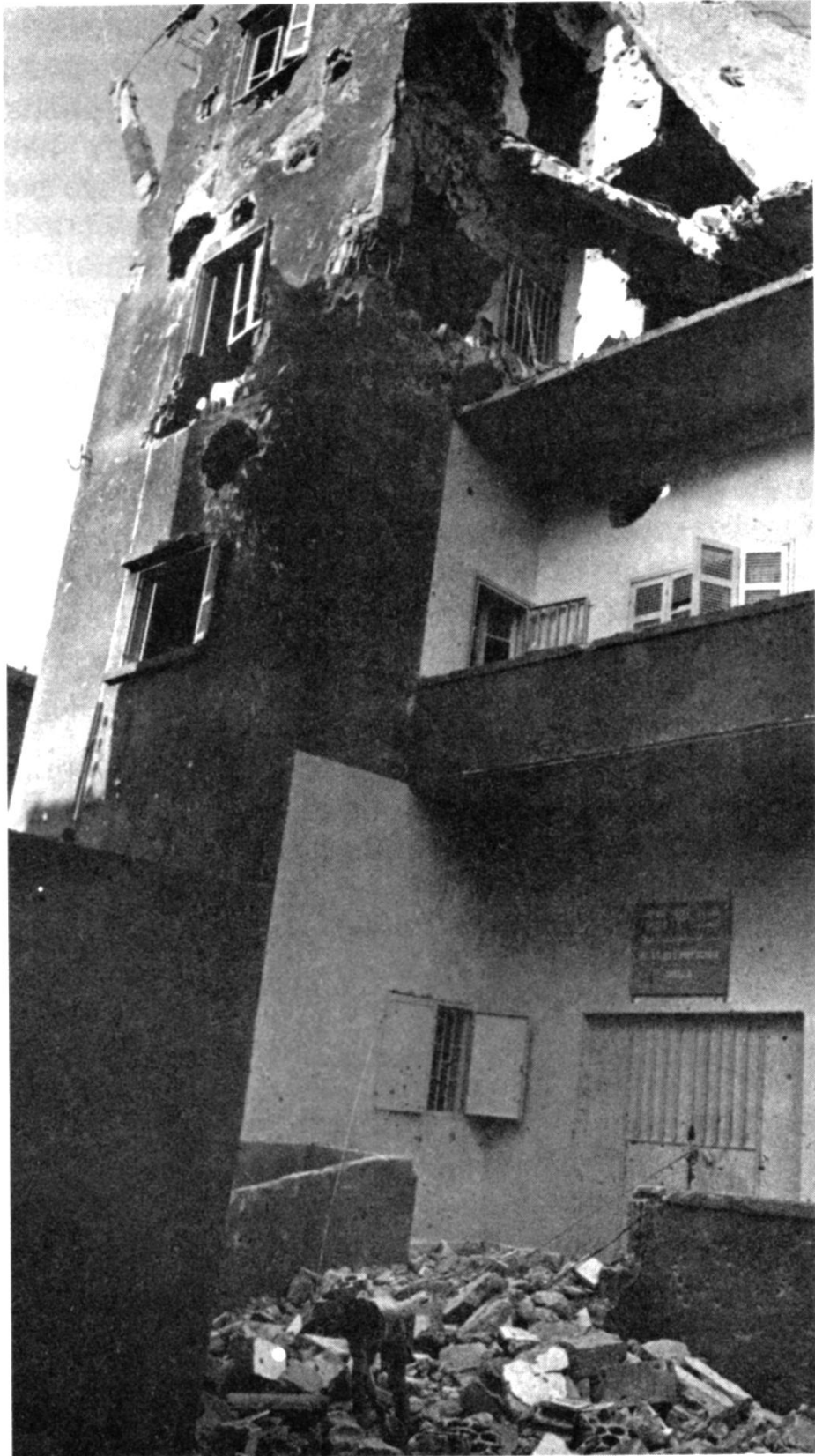


1. Help arrives, Shatila
2. Burj el-Barajneh
3. Shatila
4. UNRWA school, Shatila









UNRWA News
(continued)

**Risking their lives
to get to the office**

UNRWA's Lebanon Director Robert Gallagher describes the conditions which some of the UNRWA staff in Beirut have been facing in making their daily journey to work in the Lebanon Field office.

"Each workday morning at 6:45 a small group of Agency staff gathers on a corner in Badaro. They stay close to the walls of the buildings because this is an area where stray bullets are common and recently, on most days, firing can be heard not far away. The group is like any other representative group of Agency employees, teachers, medical professionals, office staff and drivers but they are different in one respect: almost every day they risk their lives to come to work. They are the Agency staff

who live in East Beirut and work in West Beirut. To get to and from their work they must cross the Green Line dividing the City.

"Last week I joined them on the corner. There had been very heavy fighting overnight in Burj el-Barajneh and Shatila camps and heavy explosions of artillery, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades could be heard along with the staccato of heavy machine guns and the rattle of automatic fire. At the crossing place itself however there was no shooting so the Agency buses were on their way. We exchanged a few words while waiting for the city bus on which the staff normally rode to the entrance to the Franciscan school. I was told that a bullet had broken a window in the building beside us when they were waiting yesterday. Someone remarked on how few other people were crossing that morning, explaining that

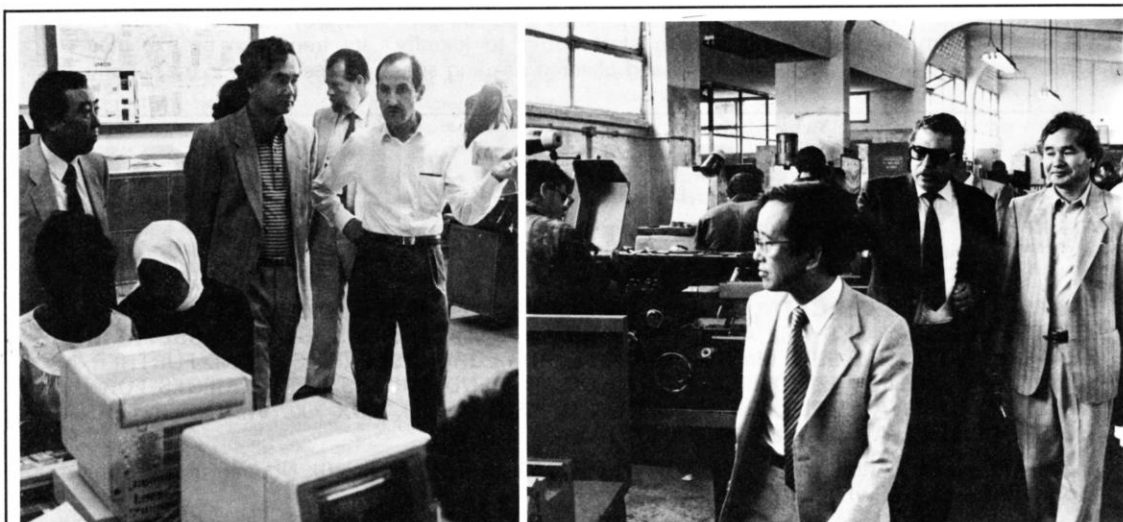
the noise of the heavy firing discouraged most people from crossing. All of them were nervous. They had good reason. People are regularly killed while crossing. Snipers who are alleged to fire 'dum dum' bullets fire at those crossing quite often. Three weeks ago the driver of the Agency bus was shot in the chest and one of the passengers was injured by bullet fragments during the crossing.

"The bus did not arrive. On top of everything else there is a petrol shortage in Lebanon and on that day there were no buses. We decided to walk the kilometre or so to the crossing point. Just on the other side of the checkpoint we found the two Agency buses parked. It is not a safe spot, exposed to fire from two known sniping positions which were pointed out to me along with the information that a policeman had been shot there a few days ear-

lier. Most of the people crossing have to walk two kilometres across the dusty track of the Beirut race course (where, incongruously, two horses were being exercised), through the gate and along the Kaskass road to the next checkpoint. The whole route is wide open to sniping fire. We insist that our staff not walk but ride in the Agency buses to minimise the amount of time exposed to sniping.

"As the buses pulled out one of the staff members said 'Pray for us, Mr. Gallagher'. They crossed safely. Later in the morning two people were killed by snipers and the crossing was closed but we were able to get our buses through for the return journey before two in the afternoon.

"Many staff in the Lebanon Field risk their lives to come to work. This group is slightly special in that they risk their lives twice each day."



Japanese officials visit UNRWA installations

Two Japanese officials who visited UNRWA installations in Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip recently showed particular interest in the Agency's vocational training programme. Since 1985, the Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA) has awarded scholarships to UNRWA vocational training instructors and specialists to attend three-month advanced courses in Japan. In the photo above, left, Mr. Chihiro Tsukada, Minister in the Japanese Embassy in Vienna, (centre) with Mr. Isao Dekiba, Deputy Director, UN Policy Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (left) inspect the computer section of the business and office practice course at Ramallah Women's Training Centre, West Bank. In the photo, right, the delegation visits the Gaza Vocational Training Centre.

Infant mortality continues to fall

Infant mortality among Palestine refugees continues to decline, according to statistics compiled for 1985. The three fields studied — West Bank, Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan — had infant mortality rates, respectively of 35.8, 46 and 39.5 deaths (within the first year of life) per thousand births.

Dr. Fathi Mousa, Senior Medical Officer for Statistics and Planning at UNRWA Headquarters (Vienna), cautions that these figures, especially the rate for Jordan, could be somewhat uncharacteristic. What may be observed, however, remarks Dr. Mousa, are trends. Jarash and Suf camps in Jordan have significantly different infant mortality rates, but the trend since 1982 (when monitoring began) is the same: "a substantial decrease in the rate of infant mortality". The rate in Jarash fell from 66 to 47 deaths per thousand births, while in Suf the rate fell from 54 to 32 per thousand.

The differences in infant mortality rates between individual camps and fields are the result of climatic, socio-economic and demographic diversity, according to Dr. Mousa. Availability of hospital beds and the ratio of UNRWA health staff to the population also influence the rates. In Gaza, overcrowding and limited health facilities result in a rate higher than in UNRWA's other fields. But even in Gaza, infant mortality has fallen by half in the last 25 years. Syria's 1985 rate of 46 deaths per thousand births in 42 per cent lower than the 1975 rate, and 72 per cent lower than the 161 deaths per thousand recorded in 1954, when such data were first gathered.

In the West Bank, birth statistics have been closely monitored for over two decades. The 1985 infant mortality rate of 35.8 per thousand compares with 84 per thousand 10 years ago. This drop may be attributed to the improved care refugee mothers and babies receive at birth and immediately afterwards.

More and more Palestine refugee babies are being born in hospitals — two-thirds in the West Bank, and a smaller but increasing number in other fields. In addition, UNRWA has been conducting a risk-assessment programme for the past six years which enables Agency health staff better to identify mothers and children needing spe-

cial attention (such as nutritional care, and thorough medical investigations with follow-up).

According to one specialist involved in the West Bank study, a further two-thirds of the deaths between the ages of one month and one year could be prevented, mostly if already available immunisation and sanitation services were able to reach more of the refugee population requiring special attention. The risk assessment programme, as it increases in accuracy, will allow UNRWA — by pinpointing the children at greatest risk — to counteract at an early stage the gastro-intestinal, respiratory and other diseases which kill infants.

The infant mortality rate is considered one of the best indicators of a community's health, and compared to the rest of the developing world, the Palestine refugees are very healthy. The World Health Organization (WHO) target for developing countries by the turn of the century is 50 deaths per thousand births, a target Palestine refugees in four of UNRWA's five fields have already reached and passed. The successful battle against infant mortality has been one of the best features of UNRWA's health programme. And, says Dr. Mousa, "the infant mortality trend can be expected to decrease further in the coming years".

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT UNRWA . . .

BELOW, AN ABRIDGED CATALOGUE OF UNRWA PRINTED AND AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS. PRINTED PUBLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE; FILMS, SLIDE/CASSETTE PROGRAMMES AND SLIDE SETS MAY BE BORROWED OR PURCHASED (PRICES AND FURTHER INFORMATION ARE IN THE COMPLETE CATALOGUE). SEND ORDERS (OR REQUESTS FOR DETAILS) TO: **UNRWA PUBLIC INFORMATION DIVISION, P. O. BOX 700, VIENNA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, A-1400 VIENNA, AUSTRIA.**

Languages used are Arabic (A), English (E), French (F), German (G), Italian (I), Norwegian (N), Spanish (Sp), and Swedish (Sw).

Regular Publications

Palestine Refugees Today

Quarterly newsletter covering news and human-interest stories of UNRWA operations, with occasional photo essays. E, A, F, G, Sp.

UNRWA News

Fortnightly bulletin on current events in the area of operations. E, A.

UNRWA Report

Quarterly briefing paper for governments, legislators and NGOs. E, A, F.

Occasional Publications

Survey

Describes UNRWA operations with black and white photographs and brief historical background. Reprinted 1986. E, A, F, G, Sp.

UNRWA 1986

Edited and illustrated version of the UNRWA Commissioner-General's Annual Report to the United Nations General Assembly 1985-86. E, F.

Brief History: 1950–1982

292-page narrative of UNRWA history and its change of emphasis over 32 years from relief to education. Includes resolutions on UNRWA's mandate adopted by the UN General Assembly. 1982. E.

PB 9 UNRWA: Past, Present and Future

A paperback narrative published in May 1986, based on a briefing document prepared for a conference of major donors, bringing the **Brief History** up to date. Deals also with historical background to the founding of UNRWA and its development over 36 years. E, F, A.

Leaflets

PL 12: UNRWA — What is it?

Basic facts about UNRWA. Two-colour with black and white illustrations. E, A, F, G, I, Sp.

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

PL 13: Education for Refugee Children E, A, F, G.

PL 14: Training Opportunities for Palestine Refugees E, A, F, G.

PL 15: Health Care for Palestine Refugees E, A, F, G.

Posters, Wallsheets

PX 27: UNRWA. Full-colour wallsheet with photos showing UNRWA's education and health services and the relief/welfare aid that it has been rendering to refugees in hardship and those displaced by fighting in Lebanon. Includes a map of UNRWA's area of operations, and 1986 statistics. E only.

PX 28: Shelter. Colour poster marking the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. E, A, F, G, Sp.

PX 29: Education. Colour poster on UNRWA's education programme. E, A, F, G, Sp.

PX 30: Vocational Training for Refugee Women. Colour poster on vocational training courses for young refugee women. E, A, F, G, Sp.

Map of UNRWA's Area of Operations. Includes statistics on refugee locations. E, A.

Films

Palestine Refugees Today E, A, F, G; 16 mm, 14 min, colour
Introduction to UNRWA's services to the Palestine refugees. The film shows UNRWA relief, education and health programmes at work in all five fields, and surveys the life of Palestine refugees in today's Middle East.

Caring E, A, F, G, J, N; 16 mm, 16 min, colour

The story of an underprivileged Palestine refugee who put himself through school and is now helping orphaned refugees as a service to the community. 1985.

Long Journey E, A, F, G; 16 mm, 14 min, colour

This film highlights UNRWA's work in providing medical services to the Palestine refugees from their first exodus until the present time.

What Sort of Life? E, A, F, G; 16 mm, 27 min, colour

Ein el-Hilweh was the most seriously damaged refugee camp in Lebanon after the 1982 Israeli invasion. This film documents life in the camp, through the clearing operations and rebuilding of refugee housing. The film also shows the effect on camp residents of the absence of thousands of men, held until November 1983 in Ansar detention camp.

Lebanon 82* E; 16 mm, 12½ min, colour

Shows the impact of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon on Palestine refugees and UNRWA's emergency relief programme. After a brief impression of the Shatila massacre, the film ends with young refugees back in school, a positive sign symbolising their determination for survival. Unsuitable for children.

Shelter (1983)* E, A, F, G; 16 mm, 12½ min, colour

A follow-up to "Lebanon 82" featuring repair of houses in refugee camps, and the resumption of education for young Palestine refugees. UNRWA provided raw materials and sometimes cash to

help refugees repair their shelters. The film shows scenes of camp life, a family living in a newly built shelter, and school classes housed in large tents at Ein el-Hilweh camp.

* These two films are also available together in English on one VHS video cassette.

Education for Palestine Refugee Women E, A, F, G; 16 mm, 8½ min, colour

An example of the impact of education on Palestine refugee women, Maha, a girl of 20, is seen studying to become an architectural draughtsman (traditionally an occupation for men in the Middle East) at UNRWA's Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre in Jordan.

Born Homeless E, A, F, G; 16 mm, 18 min, colour

UNRWA services are introduced through a Palestine refugee family. The film shows busy market streets, health care, and other aspects of life in a refugee community.

Slide/Tape Programmes

ST 3: Through the Eyes of Ibrahim E, F, G, Sw; 80 35 mm slides, cassette (10 min), teaching notes, maps and poster.

The programme follows a typical refugee schoolboy in class and in his family's modest house at Marka, Jordan. Accompanying notes provide a geographical and historical perspective.

ST 4: The Palestinian Odyssey E, A, F, G; 65 35 mm slides, cassette (8 min)

Traces the Arab-Israeli conflict in Palestine from 1897 to the present. The programme documents United Nations involvement and its efforts to solve the conflict as well as its services to Palestine refugees.

ST 5: A Ray of Hope E, A, F, G; 80 35 mm slides, cassette (11 min)

The story of a 20-year-old girl from a Palestine refugee camp in the Gaza Strip studying arts and crafts at UNRWA's Ramallah Women's Training Centre north of Jerusalem. Through her course work and class field trips, the programme shows traditional Palestinian design, needlework, pottery and other crafts. Home life in Gaza and at the training centre are also shown.

ST 6: Emergency E, A, F, G; 77 35 mm slides, cassette (8 min)
Impact of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 on Palestine refugees living there. Also a profile of the international emergency aid provided through UNRWA to war victims.

ST 7: Hope Deferred E, A, F, G; 66 35 mm slides, cassette (8 min)

Profile of an unemployed teacher in Gaza. Scenes of home life and an UNRWA Youth Activities Centre.

ALL THE ABOVE PROGRAMMES ARE SUITABLE FOR AUTOMATIC SOUND/SLIDE PROJECTOR OR FOR ANY MANUAL PROJECTOR AND A NORMAL CASSETTE PLAYER.

Slide Sets

Palestine Dresses

27 35 mm slides of Palestine dresses from various districts. Descriptive notes in E, A, F, G.

Palestine Refugees

20 35 mm slides covering UNRWA services provided to Palestine refugees. Descriptive notes in English.

ALL 16 mm FILMS, SLIDE SETS AND SLIDE/TAPE PRESENTATIONS CAN BE SUPPLIED ON VIDEO TAPE. DETAILS IN AUDIO-VISUAL CATALOGUE.

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