



# PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

## *An UNRWA Newsletter*

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HOME ECONOMICS INTRODUCED IN GAZA

... page 1

## CONTENTS

Home Economics Introduced in Gaza .....	1
First Teachers Graduate from Sibling Institute .....	4
A Roof Over Their Heads .....	44
Danish Government Makes \$100,000 Technical Assistance Grant .....	6
In Brief .....	7
<p>Slides Set on Ramallah Issued. UNRWA Receives \$16,000 from "International Piano Festival" Income. Visitors. Donations.</p>	
International Work Camp Held in Gaza .....	10

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The cover picture shows Halima Hallak and her classmates learning to cook, as part of the new home economics programme introduced recently in UNRWA girls' schools in the Gaza Strip.

All photographs in this Newsletter, and other pictures of the work of UNRWA, may be obtained from the Public Information Office, UNRWA, Museitbeh Quarter, Beirut, Lebanon.

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## HOME ECONOMICS INTRODUCED IN GAZA

At an age when most girls are at their mothers' elbows learning to cook, Halima Hallak is giving her mother and grandmother a few tips on planning and preparing the family's meals.

Halima, a pretty 13-year-old refugee girl who lives with her family in Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, is one of almost 3,000 girls benefiting from a new programme of home economics at UNRWA girls' schools in the Strip. (The cover picture shows Halima (centre) and some of her classmates learning to cook). The programme, the first such scheme operated by UNRWA, is now in full swing with the opening of the last of 16 new home economics units constructed at girls' preparatory schools.

The home economics training is designed to teach refugee girls like Halima to run their homes and raise their future families as well

BELOW: Instruction in sewing is included in the home economics course





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as possible under the poor and sometimes primitive conditions in which most refugees live. In an area where many older women are illiterate, and where many mothers still use the traditional methods of food preparation and child care that were handed down from their mothers and their grandmothers, the introduction of modern practices of infant care, hygiene and home management is a significant innovation.

Twice a week, Halima and her classmates leave their school desks and go to the home economics unit, a two-room building adjoining the school. There they learn the elements of nutrition, putting into practice what they are taught about food values and balanced diets by planning and actually preparing a variety of meals in the unit's kitchen. In the field of health education, the girls learn basic first aid, the care and feeding of infants, biology and hygiene.

As in all of the training, the instruction in sewing and needlework is geared to the conditions of the area and the needs of the girls. In addition to dressmaking and the production of clothes for infants and children, the girls are taught mending, patching and darning.

This year all girls in the first year of preparatory school (i.e. in the age group 12-13) are receiving the home economics training. Next year, it will be extended to the second year. In 1967, when girls in all three years of the preparatory curriculum are receiving training, about 9,000 girls will benefit. In the third year, additional home economics units will be constructed, bringing the total number of such units to 29. Long-range plans call for the training to be extended eventually to other women in the camps.

The home economics programme is directed by a Swedish specialist, Miss Marta Gip, of Karljedtskatan, who has a staff of two supervisors and 32 teachers, all refugees. A second group of 30 teachers is now at UNRWA's Ramallah Women's Training Centre in Jordan, where they are undertaking an intensive six-month training course.

Halima lives in a humble shelter in a crowded refugee camp, like most of the girls now taking part in the home economics training.

The eight members of her family live in the two small rooms of their concrete block hut in the middle of Jabalia camp - a vast, sprawling sea of tiny huts crowded together on the sand, giving shelter to some 37,500 refugees. Like Halima's family, most live in conditions of extreme poverty, relying on UNRWA's assistance for their day-to-day existence.

Raising families and running homes under such conditions is at best an arduous struggle. A basic knowledge of home economics will make this task easier for tomorrow's wives and mothers, with immeasurable benefit to the next generation, who will be brought up in a more enlightened fashion.

Today's wives and mothers are benefiting too---learning, like Halima's mother, from their daughters.

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The home economics training is part of a health and education project in the Gaza Strip made possible by a generous technical assistance grant from the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA).

The health aspect of the project includes the establishment of a health centre in Gaza town, the operation of "in-service" training courses for UNRWA medical staff, and the conducting of health education at UNRWA clinics throughout the Gaza Strip. The health centre, which is due to be opened later this year, is designed primarily to serve refugee mothers and children. It will include a small maternity ward, a maternal and child health clinic, a pediatrics ward, and a rehydration/nutrition centre to treat infants suffering from severe diarrhea and vomiting. The health centre will be completed by a general medical clinic, added at UNRWA's expense. The centre will also serve as the focal point for the in-service training courses and for the health education programme.

The Swedish donation covers the cost of constructing the health centre and the home economics units, of operating the entire programme for three years, and of providing the services of a Swedish doctor and nurse to direct the health side of the project.

#### FIRST TEACHERS GRADUATE FROM SIBLIN INSTITUTE

Diplomas were presented in mid-June to 85 young refugee men -- the first class of teachers to graduate from UNRWA's Siblin Technical and Teacher Training Institute, near Sidon in Lebanon.

The graduates had all completed a two-year course, having been among the first to enter the Institute when it was opened in 1963. They included 16 handicraft instructors and 25 young men who had received special training in the teaching of English.

The Siblin Technical and Teacher Training Institute, which has a capacity of 264 trainees, was established by UNRWA with a technical assistance grant from the Government of Sweden, which also covers the operating costs. Trainees in the other courses at the Institute (telecommunications mechanics, health inspectors, vocational training instructors and industrial foremen) will graduate in August, as will refugees in UNRWA's nine other training centres in Lebanon, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Gaza Strip.

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#### A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS

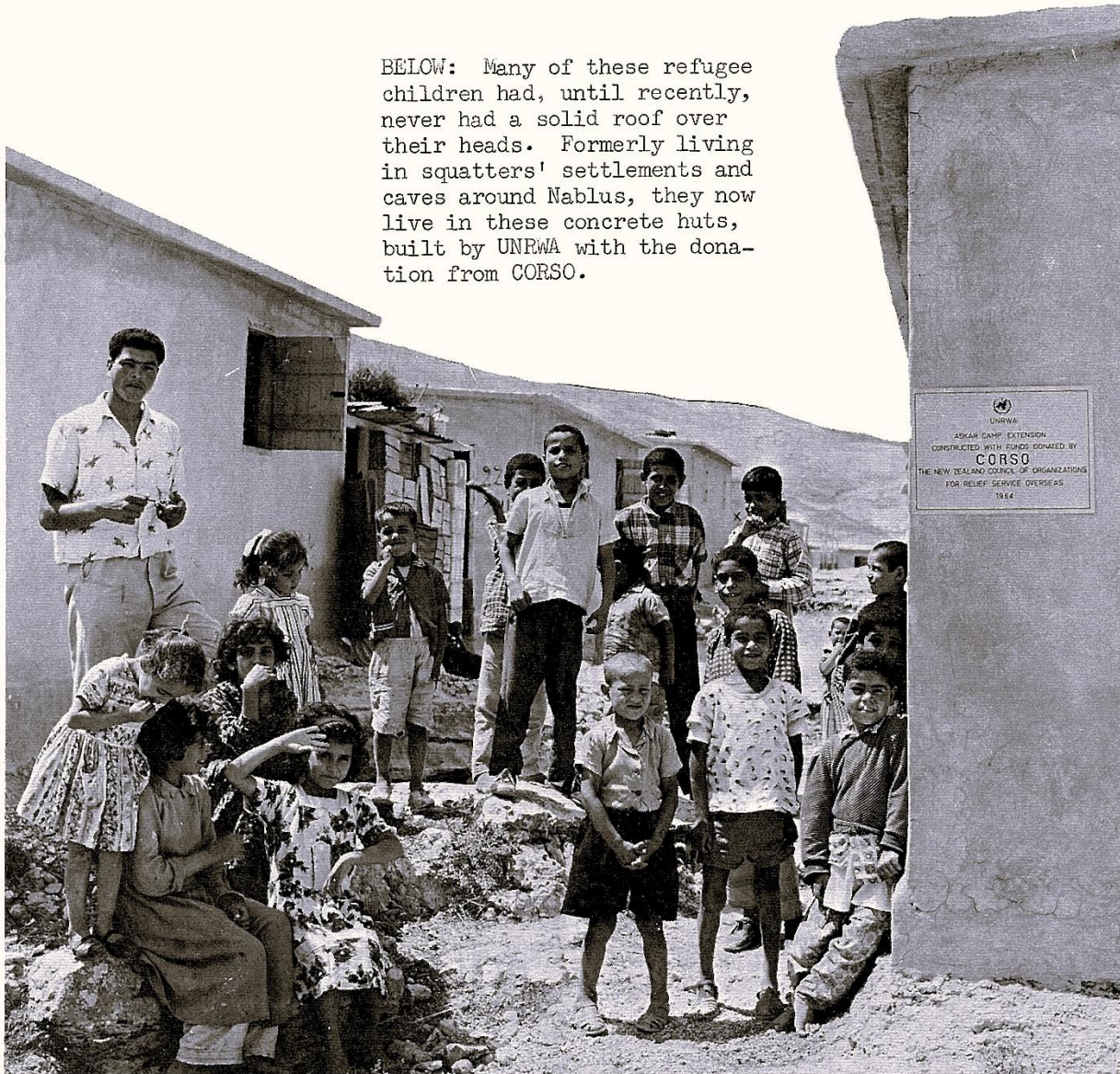
When the winter rains come this year, 500 more refugees families in Jordan will have a solid roof over their heads -- some of them for the first time in many years.

The refugees, numbering more than 2,500, have recently completed the move into new shelters built by UNRWA with funds donated by the New Zealand Council of Organizations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO). CORSO's contribution of \$25,000 (approximately \$70,000) enabled UNRWA to undertake two rehousing projects, providing new accommodation for many refugees in a small village near Jerusalem, and extending a refugee camp near Nablus to shelter refugees who had been living in caves and squatters' settlements around the town.



The 125 refugee families who moved into new shelters in Ain Arik village had been among the most poorly-housed refugees in Jordan, living in makeshift mud huts near the village. Most of the huts were less than six feet high, with no windows, and were in such bad condition that they afforded little shelter from rain or sun. The refugees assisted UNRWA by demolishing their old shelters, and then lived in tents supplied by the Agency while the new huts were being built.

BELOW: Many of these refugee children had, until recently, never had a solid roof over their heads. Formerly living in squatters' settlements and caves around Nablus, they now live in these concrete huts, built by UNRWA with the donation from CORSO.



UNRWA  
ASKAR CAMP EXTENSION  
CONSTRUCTED WITH FUNDS DONATED BY  
**CORSO**  
THE NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF ORGANIZATIONS  
FOR RELIEF SERVICE OVERSEAS  
1964





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The second rehousing project is in the area of Nablus, the town that forms the centre of Biblical Samaria, 30 miles north of Jerusalem. Nablus, like most towns in Jordan, received a large influx of Arab refugees during and immediately following the 1948 conflict. As the years passed, most were able to find adequate shelter, either in refugee camps or in the town itself. But others remained in extremely bad living conditions. Many refugees lived until recently in squatters' settlements of makeshift shacks patched together from cardboard, flattened oil drums or whatever material they could find, and a number had lived for years in the caves in the rocky hills around Nablus.

The donation from CORSO enabled UNRWA to extend its Askar refugee camp near Nablus, providing concrete huts for 377 refugee families.

With only limited funds at its disposal for shelter construction, UNRWA tries to improve the living conditions of those in greatest need. However, the need is always greater than the available funds, making the donation from CORSO particularly valuable.

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#### DANISH GOVERNMENT MAKES \$100,000 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

The 200 young refugees due to enrol at UNRWA's Men's Teacher Training Centre at Ramallah, Jordan, later this year will have reason to be doubly grateful to Denmark.

They will be "adopted" by the Government of Denmark through a \$100,000 technical assistance grant announced at the beginning of July. The grant will provide scholarships for the 200 young men to cover the cost of their first year's training. And many of them would not have the opportunity of attending the centre, had it not been for a contribution of \$145,000 from the Danish Refugee Council in 1962, which enabled UNRWA to double the capacity from 200 to 400 trainees.

The Men's Teacher Training Centre, located at Ramallah, 15 miles north of Jerusalem, was established by UNRWA in 1960. The young men who graduate after completing the two-year course are in great demand, for there is a serious shortage of qualified teachers, both in UNRWA schools and throughout the Arab world.

Denmark's connection with the centre extends also to the day-to-day operations, for the Danish Government made a previous grant towards the cost of providing the services of two Danish teaching specialists to supervise the training.

The new technical assistance grant is in addition to the Danish Government's regular annual contribution to UNRWA, now \$72,000.

Denmark is one of four countries to make technical assistance grants to UNRWA's education and training programmes, for the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland have also made such contributions, recognizing that the young refugees who benefit from UNRWA's education and training programmes form a valuable source of educated and skilled men and women who are much needed in the developing Arab world.

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#### IN BRIEF

##### Slides set on Ramallah issued

UNRWA has issued a set of coloured slides (transparencies) telling about the Ramallah Girls' Training Centre. The set, entitled "Focus on Ramallah", comprises 50 slides of 35mm. size, together with a printed commentary. The set illustrates the work of the Ramallah centre within the contexts of the changing role of women in the Arab world and of the difficulties that refugee women face in making homes for their families in the camps. The courses offered at Ramallah are pictured, and some of the first graduates are seen at work, putting to good use the training they received at Ramallah. The "Focus on Ramallah" set is available from any of the addresses listed at the end of this Newsletter, at a cost of \$7 (50/-). The commentary, avail-



able at present in English, will also be issued in French and German shortly.

"International Piano Festival": UNRWA Receives \$16,000 -- Record Presented to the President of Lebanon

UNRWA has received \$16,000 from the proceeds of the sales of "International Piano Festival", the United Nations gramophone record in aid of refugees. A cheque for this amount was presented in Geneva recently by Mr. Felix Schnyder, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), whose Office produced the record, to the Director of UNRWA's Liaison Office for Europe, Mr. Raymond Courvoisier.

In mid-July, a copy of the record was presented to the President of Lebanon, Mr. Charles Helou, by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Michelmore. President Helou made a personal donation of 1,000 Lebanese pounds (approx. \$325) to the fund.

The funds transferred to UNRWA by UNHCR will be used to provide training scholarships for a class of 16 young Palestine refugees for two years at an UNRWA vocational training centre.

"International Piano Festival" has been issued by the UNHCR to assist refugees throughout the world, including the Palestine refugees. The record has already established itself as the fastest-selling classical record of all time in Europe. It brings together six renowned pianists: Claudio Arrau, Wilhelm Backhaus, Alexander Brailowski, Robert Casadesu, Byron Janis and Wilhelm Kempff. The artists have donated their talent for the benefit of United Nations programmes of assistance to refugees. More than 120,000 copies of "International Piano Festival" had already been sold in Europe and Japan prior to the recent introduction of the record in Canada and the United States.

Visitors

Mr. Cliff Carr, Executive Secretary of the New Zealand Council of Organizations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO), spent five days in

the Middle East in July, during which he visited UNRWA installations, including some CORSO-financed projects in Jordan, and paid a visit to Beirut.

Miss Elizabeth Reid, editor of the Catholic publication "International Grail" and United Nations correspondent for the Catholic press, spent almost a month in UNRWA's area of operations, touring extensively in Jordan, the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, visiting Pontifical Mission projects for the refugees as well as UNRWA camps, training centres, schools and clinics.

The Reverend John Schauer, a senior official of Church World Service (United States), visited UNRWA camps in Lebanon during his brief stay.

Miss Elsie Needham, Associate Director of the Australian Council of Churches, saw a number of refugee camps and UNRWA installations in Jordan.

Mr. Derek Savage, Area Secretary for the East Anglia District of the Christian Aid Department of the British Council of Churches, visited Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, where he saw UNRWA's operations.

#### Donations

Zonta International has contributed another \$10,000 to provide vocational training scholarships for refugee girls at UNRWA's Ramallah Girls' Training Centre in Jordan. Zonta, a world-wide women's organization, has adopted support of the Girls' centre as its international project and has made regular donations to sponsor trainees at Ramallah. This latest donation brings the total amount contributed by Zonta to almost \$79,000. Twenty-two refugee girls at Ramallah will receive training scholarships as a result of the recent donation. Each \$500 scholarship pays for one year's training for one girl.

The United Kingdom Federation of Business and Professional Women has donated \$1,500 to provide three scholarships for girls at the Ramallah centre. Business and Professional Women's Federations throughout the world have also made donations to sponsor an entire class of girls in the secretarial course at Ramallah.

Five young refugees, four enrolled at the Ramallah Girls' Centre and one at UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Centre, have benefited from a further donation from Viscount and Viscountess Astor (United Kingdom). Their donation of \$2,600 has provided training scholarships for the four girls, and for the young man training to be a builder at Kalandia.

Miss Christine Naupert (Finland) has donated \$1,000 to sponsor one trainee at UNRWA's Men's Teacher Training Centre in Ramallah during his second year of training, and one girl in the preparatory nursing course at the Ramallah Girls' Training Centre. She had also sponsored these trainees last year.

Vocational training scholarships of \$500 each have also been donated by Mrs. Helvi Sipilä (Finland), Lady Margaret Charles, Dr. J. S.H. Lodge and Mr. Leslie Colls (United Kingdom), and by the American Friends of the Middle East and NAJDA (United States).

Director Elmar Warning of the Board of the Bayerische Vereinsbank, Munich, has sent UNRWA \$1,000 to sponsor a trainee in the Business and Office practice course at UNRWA's Sibling Vocational Training Centre for two years, and has undertaken to employ him after graduation at the office of his Beirut representative.

Other donations of vocational training scholarships from Germany have come from Dr. Herman Abs, Chairman of the Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, Siemens-Halske AG, of Munich, and Bayerische Motoren Werke (BMW), also of Munich. Dr. Abs had previously donated three scholarships, and Siemens-Halske had given a scholarship last year.

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#### INTERNATIONAL WORK CAMP HELD IN GAZA

Thirty three young men from the refugee camps of Jordan and the Gaza Strip and from Canada, the United Kingdom and France spent 10 days in July repairing a road and building a bridge.



The road led from the market place to the UNRWA school in Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. But the bridge went further, for it was a bridge of international friendship and understanding, established during the International Work Camp organized jointly by the YMCA and UNRWA, as part of UNRWA's Youth Activities Programme.

The Gaza Work Camp was the first of three to be held this summer, bringing together young YMCA volunteers from several countries to work, to play and to live with young refugee men.

Each Work Camp has a specific project: in the Gaza Strip, the road in Rafah camp was levelled and surfaced with crushed stones, and, with the help of the families concerned, cess pits were dug in 36 camp shelters. In Jordan, the participants will build a basketball court at UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Centre, and in Lebanon they will level and pave the area round the UNRWA clinic in Ein el Hilweh refugee camp near Sidon. But more important than the work projects are the opportunities for young refugees to exchange views with young men

BELOW: Members of the Work Camp at work on the road in Rafah refugee camp.



BELOW: Members of the Work Camp at work on the road in Rafah refugee camp.



from abroad, and for the YMCA volunteers to learn at first hand the problems facing young Palestine refugees.

The participants in the Gaza Work Camp included six young men from Canada, one each from the United Kingdom and France, 10 representatives of UNRWA Youth Activities Centres in Jordan, and 21 refugees from the Gaza Strip. They spent their mornings working side by side in Rafah Camp, and the afternoons in programmes of discussions and recreation, ending the day around the camp fire.

On the second day, the International Work Camp turned into a play camp for hundreds of refugee children in Rafah, which is the largest refugee camp in the Middle East, with a population of 43,800. Drawn by the activity on the road, about 200 curious children gathered to watch on the first day. The members of the Work Camp decided to send a three-man team to organize recreation for the children, and by the end of the 10-day period, up to 600 children were coming to take part in the games.

The participants in the first International Work Camp returned to their homes and to their refugee shelters with a deeper understanding of the obligations and opportunities that are common to young men throughout the world, and of the particular problems and needs of young Palestine refugees.

\* \* \* \*

BELOW: The day ended around the camp fire.





The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a special, temporary, nonpolitical body established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1949.

In cooperation with the "host" governments (Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Republic), it carries out its two-fold task: first, to provide food, health and welfare services and shelter for the refugees; second, to provide education and training to refugee children and young adults, including general education, vocational and teacher training and university scholarships.

UNRWA began work in May 1950; its current mandate expires on 30 June 1966.

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Further information may be obtained from

UNRWA Liaison Office  
United Nations  
New York

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