



Staying in Touch

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Caritas Jerusalem Newsletter goes to a quarterly format

Dear friends and partners,

We wish to thank everyone who has given us feedback on the newsletter. Many have found it to be a positive development in our communications strategy. We look forward to continuing to develop it and our overall strategy to better inform our friends and partners about our ongoing work. As it is our desire to improve it, we have made some decisions regarding the frequency of the newsletter. Now that our newsletter is entering its third year, we have evaluated that it is more effective for us to move to a quarterly format for our newsletter. Thank you for your continued interest and support.

Caritas Jerusalem Staff

Gaza Sewage Flood – March 27 Caritas is there



Thanks to our partners support of the SOA 9/2006 program, Caritas Jerusalem was able to offer assistance to 139 families affected by the sewage flood in Gaza on March 27 2007.

Caritas Jerusalem continues to reach out to the sick and the vulnerable through the SOA 9/2006 program – Focus on surgical interventions - Gaza

Caritas Jerusalem had the honor of taking part in the Second Australian Humanitarian Mission. This program brings doctors to Gaza to perform multiple surgeries on many patients at one time. Through this particular intervention, 43

patients were assisted (41 were children) with complicated medical procedures. By bringing these doctors to Gaza and doing these surgeries there, the cost savings were huge. In addition, there would be no guarantee that the patients could ever even leave Gaza anyway. Caritas Jerusalem contributed directly to 20 of the surgical interventions through the SOA 9 2006 program.



An Australian doctor meets a child in Gaza (Photo: Caritas Jerusalem)

Caritas Jerusalem sends help to Nablus

Caritas Jerusalem has sent a humanitarian donation of 200 food parcels to poor families in the Old City of Nablus at the beginning of March. This donation came due to the very bad situation there following one of the worst incursions into Nablus in the last three years.



Humanitarian goods for Nablus

Recent Job Creation interventions



Construction work on the Jalboun Secondary School Sanitary Unit (Photo: Caritas Jerusalem)



Completed shell of the new sanitary unit for the Jalboun Secondary school. (Photo: Caritas Jerusalem)



Al Qara project in Gaza - Painting pavements and cleaning roads. (Photo: Caritas Jerusalem)

Caritas Jerusalem's Cash for Work program Reaching out to needy families

While the problems present here in Palestine require serious political actions, coupled with these must be the development of economic opportunities. Having employment flourish is a key sign of a healthy society. With employment, the society can develop, people can advance in their lives, the young can marry and care for their families, the government can function better, and society can be improved.

While the current economic and political situation is very difficult, even in this environment, we believe that it is essential to continue to focus on community building targeting meaningful work and development while providing people with short-term employment opportunities. This is the essence of our Cash for Work program: Allowing people to earn a living with dignity while helping themselves and their communities at the same time.

In our Job Creation actions, we have focused on the following interventions that give short and long-term benefits. These actions include:

- **building retaining walls for roads and schools**
- **cleaning cemeteries**
- **renovating schools**
- **planting trees**
- **cleaning roads**
- **building sidewalks**
- **constructing rain water drainage canals**
- **building a sanitary unit at a school**

As our resources for this program are limited, we have had to prioritize our focus. We have selected to work in the neediest areas of Gaza, Jenin and in the marginalized areas of Ramallah with our larger Cash for Work interventions.

Recent Program Highlights - Jalboun

Jalboun is a village located in the Jenin district. It is a very poor area. The population suffers greatly due to the isolation of the Jenin region from the rest of the West Bank. This is because of movement restrictions put in place on the population by the Israeli army and also due to the construction of the wall, which has totally cut off all employment opportunities for the residents of the Jenin district inside Israel.

Through the SOA project, 400 working days were created for the unemployed workers of Jalaboun benefiting 132 family members. The project involved building a new sanitary unit for the Jalboun Secondary Boys School, which benefited 310 students. In addition, a retaining wall for the main road in the village was also constructed with support from the project.



Cleaning the Cemetery in Gaza City



Cash for Work in Beit Hanoun



**Cash for Work in Beit Hanoun
(All Photos: Caritas Jerusalem)**



Workers cleaning roads in Khan Younis in the Southern Gaza Strip. (Photo: Caritas Jerusalem)

Recent Program Highlights -Gaza

Caritas Jerusalem has been very active in the last three months in Gaza creating job opportunities for the unemployed. Through our Cash for Work programs, we have provided 289 unemployed workers with short-term job opportunities throughout Gaza. We have undertaken Cash for Work activities recently in:

- **Beit Hanoun**
- **Al Qara**
- **Khouza**
- **Khan Younis**
- **Al Bureij**
- **Gaza City**
- **Beit Lahiyah**

The activities in the current programs have focused on providing dignified work for the many jobless people.

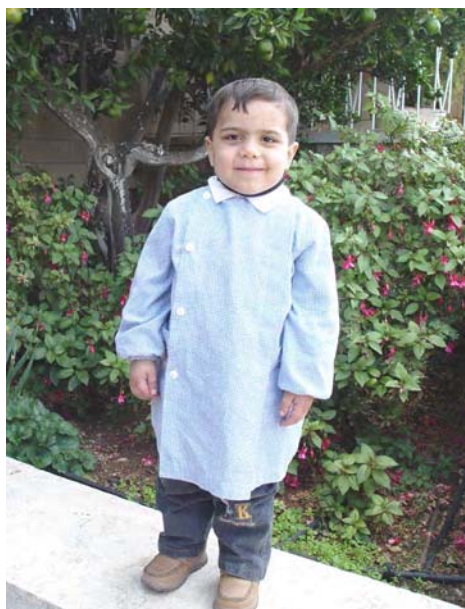
Caritas Belgium and Development and Peace support youth development in Palestine

Caritas Jerusalem continues to believe that it is important to support the spirit of youth volunteerism and community based youth involvement and participation. Since 2005, we have been undertaking a development program for Palestinian youth focusing on volunteerism. This very successful program has mobilized a group of youth volunteers numbering almost 100 persons (with the group projected to grow to almost 150 young people this year with new youth volunteer committees commencing work in Bethlehem and Jerusalem). This project has received an important vote of confidence recently from our colleagues at Caritas Belgium and Development and Peace in Canada who have agreed to support this program for two years. We wish to thank them for their support of this important sector in Palestine.

Academic help – Keeping open the educational door of hope

Caritas Jerusalem continues its work of helping students move forward in their education. This includes all segments of the population from university students to children in school. We give special attention to those most vulnerable segments of the population who traditionally would be helped by a functioning government sector.

Rula and Munjid (pictured below) are two such children who we have helped recently. They are brother and sister and are both deaf. They are from Gaza, but they live with a host family near Bethlehem and attend the Pope Paul VI Ephpheta center for deaf children in Bethlehem. There is no such center in Gaza for them to attend and they would have little chance to have an education there. As the situation in Gaza has worsened, families have reached out for assistance for their vulnerable children. Through the Caritas Jerusalem Social Department, we work to help these vulnerable children get a much-needed education.



Munjid, a deaf child from Gaza, can attend a special school in Bethlehem supported by Caritas Jerusalem. (Photo: Caritas Jerusalem)

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Working in Palestine continues to get harder and on some occasions can be dangerous

Each day the situation of conducting work here in Palestine becomes more difficult. We can mention the many checkpoints, barriers and restrictions on movement as well as the onerous permit system that we have to deal with to move around the country to access our projects. Now we have to couple all of this with the danger of violence and even kidnappings.

As the security situation has deteriorated, some people have taken the law into their own hands. This has meant problems have multiplied and no person or agency has been immune from this situation.

A good example of this issue involves an action we undertook in the Al Faraheen area of Khan Younis providing water storage tanks for homes. One of the local people, whose name was not included on the initial list of the beneficiaries, discharged a weapon (a fully automatic Kalashnikov rifle) near those who were assembled to receive their water tanks. The most important point to mention though is that no one was injured or hurt in this incident. Later an apology came from the heads of his clan, the local mukhtars (village leaders) and the whole community. In addition, an official apology was given by letter, it was also published in the local newspaper, and the extended family of the perpetrator of the violence restored the price of the damaged items.

What we are seeing there is a disintegration of the social order and a return to tribal thinking and systems of justice. Safety is becoming more of an issue today.



The above photo is from one of the damaged water tanks that Caritas Jerusalem was distributing to needy families in the Al Faraheen area of Khan Younis. (Photo: Caritas Jerusalem)