



Palestinian Camps Support Campaign

This campaign is funded solely by donations from Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA supporters. Since it began in 1997, over \$78,000 (an average of \$6,000 per year) has been raised for this ongoing program.

The campaign supports medical care for elderly and disabled Palestinian refugees in the Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp. This assistance may include supply of medical and therapeutic products, financial support for urgent medical tests and access to medical services when patients are immobile. Other activities include supplying *Iftar* ('breaking the fast') meals during Ramadan and special outings.

Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA supports its long-term partner organisation in Lebanon, the Palestinian Women's Humanitarian Organisation (PWHO), to implement the Camps Support Campaign, which provides vital health services and medical care for elderly camp residents.

Soha Moatasem

Soha is a mother of eight children, four of them are still in school. Her husband is a day labourer, so the family's income is very limited.

Soha has stomach cancer and has had several surgeries. She has frequent medical tests, and has recently started chemotherapy treatment - even though she is still weak from her previous treatments. With each subsequent treatment she becomes weaker, so she depends on her eldest daughter to take care of the family.

With your donations, PWHO was able to help Soha pay for several of her medical costs, including the cost of surgery and her most recent chemotherapy treatment - a huge relief to a family who was already struggling financially before her cancer was diagnosed. With this support, Soha has regained hope that life for herself and her family will improve.

A day trip for the elderly

The elderly in Burj el Barajneh camp are often the most marginalised, often because their limited mobility finds them confined to their houses, rarely able to leave the camp. One sunny, spring day, PWHO organised a riverside picnic day-trip for 100 elderly

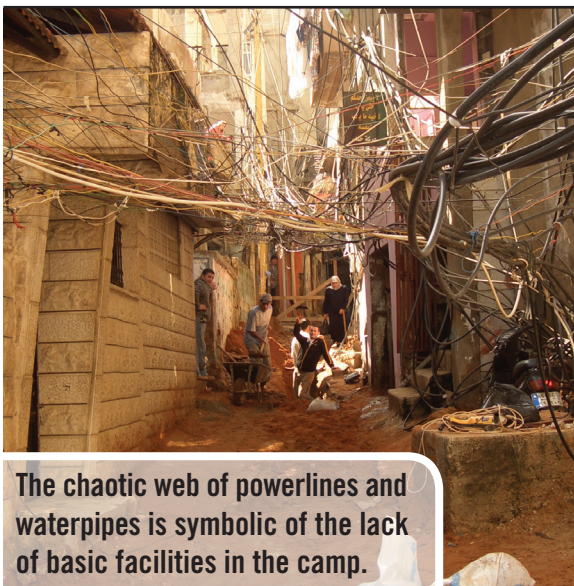
community members, allowing them a break from their confined lives in the camp. An enjoyable time was had by all, with people able to work together to prepare lunch in small groups, to chat, enjoy the fresh air and relax with the riverside view.

Ramadan Iftar

One popular annual activity with the elderly has been to cook and eat an Iftar meal together. Every year, PWHO ask the elderly to run this activity as it gives them a chance to socialise outside their homes and to contribute to the community in a meaningful way. This year, 90 elderly participated in the event, either through cooking or sharing in the celebration. The attendees are grateful for the opportunity to socialise and share their stories and experiences with each other.

Medical support

PWHO supports many people in the camp suffering from chronic diseases. Over the past year, 89 elderly and 3 children received support with their medical costs and therapeutic products. Campaign funds allowed PWHO to assist with the surgery costs of a woman requiring breast cancer surgery, an elderly woman requiring eye surgery, and a baby who needed a mouth tumour removed. ■



The chaotic web of powerlines and waterpipes is symbolic of the lack of basic facilities in the camp.

Conditions in the Burj al-Barajneh Refugee Camp

The League of Red Cross Societies established the Burj al-Barajneh camp in 1948 to accommodate refugees who fled from the Galilee in northern Palestine. The camp is in the southern suburbs of Beirut, near Beirut International Airport.

Burj al-Barajneh suffered heavily throughout the Lebanese civil war. Refugees' property was badly damaged and nearly a quarter of the camp's population was displaced.

Men from the camp generally work as casual labourers in construction, and women work in sewing factories or as cleaners.

It is the most overpopulated camp around Beirut, with over 20,000 people living in an area little more than one square kilometre. Living conditions are extremely poor. The camp has narrow alleyways, an old sewage system, and is regularly flooded during winter.