
UPA: a Profile

Mission

United Palestinian Appeal, Inc. is a non-profit, non-political, tax-exempt American charity, independent of any political affiliation or ideology. Its mission is to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians, particularly those in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the refugee camps of Lebanon, and to contribute to the long-term socio-economic and cultural development of Palestinian society. UPA maintains its independence and integrity by not accepting funds from political groups or from any source that may attach unacceptable conditions to its contributions. Donations to UPA are tax-deductible in accordance with applicable laws. UPA's federal tax-exemption I.D. number is 11-2494808.

Since its establishment, UPA has developed numerous programs to assist Palestinians in the fields of health, education, child services, community development, and emergency relief.

Each year, UPA implements a variety of fundraising strategies, including direct mail campaigns, individual solicitations, corporate appeals, community outreach, and distribution of hand-made Palestinian artwork and embroidery. When needed, it also conducts emergency campaigns to address urgent humanitarian crises. UPA is proud to have contributed over \$15 million towards the development of Palestinian society, and we look forward to strengthening that development in the future.

History

- UPA was established in 1978 in the State of New York by a group of Palestinian-Americans from the business and professional communities who shared the objective of creating an efficient and professionally managed charity that would assist needy Palestinians.
- In 1980, UPA was granted tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.
- In 1985, UPA became the first Palestinian-American charity to be registered with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as a Private and Voluntary Organization (PVO).*
- In 1985, UPA began funding the construction of a \$2.4 million nursing college on the Mount of Olives affiliated with Makassed Hospital. Thanks to a \$1 million grant from King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, UPA was also able to greatly expand its assistance programs in the areas of health care, education, children's services, community development, and emergency relief.
- In 1986, UPA initiated its Child Sponsorship program.
- Between 1985 and 1987, UPA sent nearly half a million dollars worth of emergency medicines and supplies to Palestinian refugees in Southern Lebanon.
- In 1987, with the outbreak of the first intifada, UPA shifted its funding priorities to emergency medical relief for intifada-related injuries.

* Registration does not imply endorsement.

- In 1989, UPA became the first Palestinian-American charity accepted by the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the national organization allowing for charitable solicitation of federal government employees.
- In 1990, al-Makassed/UPA Nursing College in East Jerusalem was completed, the first modern, four-year nursing college in Palestine offering training to meet the increasing health care demands of the Palestinian population.
- In 1991, UPA was accepted as a participating member agency by the Independent Charities of America (ICA), a nationwide consortium of approved charities soliciting state, federal and local public employees.
- In 1994, with the signing of the Oslo accords, UPA re-focused its grant making on programs aimed at the long-term socioeconomic recovery and development of Palestinian society in the West Bank and Gaza.
- From 2000 onwards, UPA responded to al-Aqsa intifada by giving priority to emergency medical relief.
- In 2002, UPA was awarded a \$2.7 million grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement a job creation and infrastructure development program for two years throughout the West Bank and Gaza in cooperation with the Welfare Association in East Jerusalem. The program represented an emergency response to devastating economic collapse, including an unemployment rate of over 60 percent.
- In 2003, UPA and its partner, Nour Foundation sent over \$424,000 worth of medicines and supplies to West Bank hospitals and clinics.
- In 2004, UPA successfully completed the USAID funded Emergency Employment Generation Project. It also shipped, with its partner, Nour Foundation, over \$1 million in medical supplies, including hygiene kits, supplemental feeding formula, blankets, and clothing, to UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) offices for distribution to hospitals, clinics, and schools in West Bank and Gaza.
- In 2005/2006, UPA partnered with Project Harmony in implementing the MEDIA Youth Leadership Exchange Program funded by the State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Linking Individuals, Knowledge, and Culture Initiative between the US and Jordanian/Palestinian students. UPA was subcontracted in the amount of \$59, 206 and provided over \$14,000 of in-kind services to the program.
- In 2006, UPA facilitated two pharmaceutical shipments to the Gaza and Lebanon: 1) a shipment of \$6.5 million worth of pharmaceuticals to the United Nations Reliefs and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) for refugees and non-refugees in Gaza in over 15 of the UNRWA Health Centers, to aid over 35,000 needy Palestinians; and 2) a \$1.5 million pharmaceutical shipment to the Hariri Foundation to aid Palestinian refugees and people of Lebanon.

2007 Activities

1. Arab Women Union (Ramallah) – Elderly Home

UPA granted \$5,000 to the Arab Women Union (AWU) in Ramallah for construction of an upper floor of an elderly home, an ongoing project to benefit a needy segment of the community while also providing jobs in construction.

2. El-Amal Society for Children Care (Gaza) – “Distribution of Backpacks & Clothing”

UPA granted \$10,000 to El-Amal Society for Children Care to distribute an in-kind donation of 1,000 articles of clothing and 200 backpacks to children ranging in age from 4 to 10 years old. They called the project "basma" -- Arabic for smile. For 700 children under the care of the El-Amal Society in Gaza's Khan Yunis refugee camp, school bags and clothing purchased with UPA assistance have meant one less worry for their families -- and one reason to smile. For us at UPA, it's one modest way of showing that the children of Gaza, now more besieged than ever by the realities around them, are not forgotten.

3. Elderly Home Charitable Society (Jenin) – “Bakery Project”

UPA granted \$5,600 to the Elderly Home Charitable Society in Jenin for the materials needed for a woman to set up a Bakery. Ms. Samaher Ibrahim and her family, including two disabled children, were provided with an electric oven, grill, microwave, packaging and pasting machines, raw materials, and a salary for her work in preparing the food for the elderly and disabled community served by Elderly Home Charitable Society. This is another example of a small-scale project to address unemployment while also feeding needy sectors of society.

4. Hope Fund (Lexington, VA) -- Scholarships

UPA granted \$5,055 to the Hope Fund in Virginia to pay for the travel expenses for 6 Palestinian refugee students to study in the United States. The Hope Fund links high performing Palestinian students living below the poverty line with American colleges and universities willing to provide them with full scholarships. In 2007, students from Bethlehem, Ramallah, Gaza, and Deheisha refugee camp near Bethlehem were given full scholarships to attend Hollins, Guilford, Roanoke, Swarthmore, and Bridgewater College. UPA's grant paid for airfare from the Middle East as well as travel costs within the U.S., and associated costs such as visa fees.

5. Land Research Center (Hebron) – “Home Gardens Project”

UPA granted \$10,000 to the Land Research Center (LRC) in Hebron to implement a project for agricultural crop production by housewives. This Home Gardens project provided the necessary tools and training for 8 women to grow their own crops to sell in the market, despite the destruction of agricultural land in their villages. The women selected all were provided with a complete watering system in addition to fertilizers, plants, and seeds needed to grow the crops, including cauliflower, eggplants, cucumbers, and tomatoes. The LRC then provided technical help and training on the management of home gardens, skills that can be utilized by the women for years later. Eight households with a total of 43 members benefited from the home gardens in a neglected area of the West Bank, the Soreef district in Hebron province. The Home Gardens provide a basic necessity, food, for 43 people's survival, as well as employment and income-generation for the vegetables sold in the market, and a sense of empowerment. Finally, this project fosters the growth of green areas in the Palestinian Territories, an environmental goal often forgotten in large development projects.

6. Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), (Gaza) – “Women's Health Center”

UPA granted \$15,000 for the Palestine Red Crescent Society's (PRCS) Women's Health Center in Gaza, which helped the Center to stay open for 4 months. This Center was already functional, but badly needed additional funding to serve the community in Gaza. Funds were used for salaries, equipment and supplies, as well as other basic needs like electricity. Salaries were paid for health workers, a doctor, a psychosocial counselor, a midwife, nurses, and cleaners, among others. Equipment and supplies included birth control, an ultrasound machine, and workshops for women in the community. Basic needs like electricity, water, and telecommunications are all vital to the running of this health center, and were often in short supply in the Gaza Strip in 2007.

7. Rawdat El Zuhur – “Music Education”

UPA granted \$3,500, with a matching grant of \$3,500 from the Kamel Salam Fund, for music education at the Rawdat El-Zuhur school in Jerusalem. Talented children were encouraged to learn to play different instruments, while others learned to read notes. In addition, the Dabkeh teacher taught children how to dance Debkah to traditional Palestinian folk music.

8. Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) (Al Shyokh) – “Egg-laying Chicken Farms”

UPA granted \$10,000 to the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) to provide the materials and training to ten families in Al-Shyokh Village (in southern West Bank northeast of Hebron) to raise egg-laying chicken farms. These families were chosen based on their need, with priority given to large families, those with disabled members, women-led households, and those lacking another source of income. The project is meant to both feed the families and provide a source of income and employment, as they sell the eggs in the marketplace. The UAWC distributed cages, chickens and feed, as well as following up with regular field visits, including with a veterinarian for medical check-ups. This is another small scale project aimed at empowering women and the poor in general to learn one form of subsistence farming as well as a trade, rather than continuing the cycle of providing mere hand-outs to the hungry.

9. Welfare Association (Gaza Strip) – Food Drive

UPA granted \$225,000 to the Welfare Association to implement a Food Drive in Gaza. Welfare Association provided 1,000 children in 13 kindergartens with daily hot meals for six months. The kindergartens were located in 5 different geographic areas in the Gaza Strip. The Food Drive provided the dual benefit of providing basic food aid to the neediest in Gaza while also benefiting a starving economy. Food was purchased from local Palestinian producers and suppliers and distributed in the community. Over 32,000 individuals directly benefited from the program. In addition to the hot meals for 1,000 preschoolers, the program provided food packages for 5,000 needy families (30,000 individuals), and food supplies for 1,000 needy persons in orphanages and elderly homes.

10. In-Kind Donation of Textbooks for Palestinian University Students

Working with US-based Sabre Foundation, UPA sent more than \$600,000 worth of academic textbooks to the West Bank in November. The more than 8,000 books -- covering topics in science, technology, and medicine -- were selected by Palestinian educators at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. The shipment came as Palestinian universities and their students faced tightening budgets and ever-scarcer resources.