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**"P. C. H. S. Newsletter No. 2", a Bulletin Issued by the Popular
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POPULAR COMMITTEES FOR HEALTH SERVICES

اللجان الشعبية للخدمات الصحية

P.C.H.S. Newsletter No. 2



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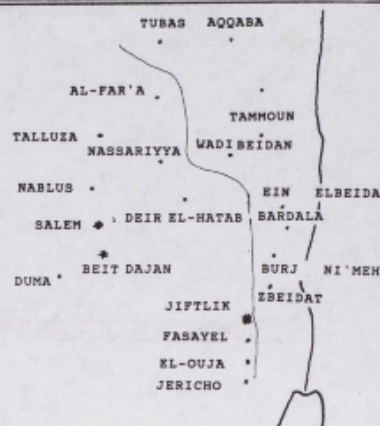
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EDITORIAL

TOGETHER

WE COULD MAKE

A DIFFERENCE.



The North Valley lies in the East stretch of Palestine. It borders Jordan from the East, and forms the longest stretch of frontline from Jericho to Tiberias. This area historically has been the frontline for the 1948 and 1967 wars between the Arab States and Israel. Even in 1973, this stretch of land was strategically important because it ties Jabal El-Sheikh with the Syrian borders.

This Eastern valley, especially Jericho is one of the oldest towns of Palestine. Its population varies seasonally from 25,000 to 38,000 inhabitants, the majority of which are farmers. The largest communities are Marj Na'jeh, Jiftlik, Nassariyyah, Fasayel, Deir El-Hatab, Wadi Beidan, Bardala and Ein El-Beida. The average distance from any of those communities to Nablus or Jericho varies from 30 - 40 Km. Public transportation linking Nablus with the Jordan Valley is practically non-existent.

A baseline survey for some of those villages has been carried out by P.C.H.S. concluding the following findings:

Name of Village	No. of Popul.	P U B L I C S E R V I C E S				
		Schl.	Nurs.	Wells	Electr.	Health
1- Marj Na'jeh	700	Elem.	-	1	No	No
2- Zbeidat	1,200	"	1	1	Yes	No
3- Jiftlik	2,000	Elem/Sec	-	2	No	P.C.H.S.
4- Fasayel	700	Elem.	-	1	No	No
5- El-Auja	2,000	Elem.	-	1	No	U.P.M.R.C.
6- Nassariyyah	2,000	Elem.	-	-	No	P.C.H.S.
7- D. El-Hatab	1,500	-	-	-	No	No
8- Ein Elbeida	1,000	-	-	-	No	No
9- Wadi beidan	1,500	Elem.	-	-	No	P.C.H.S.
10- Bardala	700	-	-	-	No	No

When found, schools offer only elementary education, forcing students to go to Jericho or Nablus for higher school education. The percentage of illiteracy is relatively high, compared to the general illiteracy rate in Palestine. Most of the farmers living in this area rely mainly on animal husbandry. This area is surrounded by a belt of Israeli settlements, who have diverted the water resources to their own use. Spring water available is environmentally contaminated because of use by animals, causing serious dissenter problems in the area. Besides, the desert-like weather leading to recurrence of dehydration especially amongst newborns, malnutrition and lack of health awareness are the typical problems of those communities. Other chronic diseases being brucellosis, anaemia, and hypertension.

Primitive medicine which scientifically has serious implications is still the practice in those communities.

Is it possible to have an area with a population of 30,000 inhabitants with no basic human services, most importantly health, education and even basic nutrition ?? the infant mortality rate is 80 per 1,000, due to severe anaemia and dehydration amongst newborns.

Through its mobile clinic visits, P.C.H.S. has been offering its limited health services since 1986. Three clinics have been established in Jiftlik, Wadi Beidan and Nassariyyah. We would like to appeal to all our friends and supporters to help us upgrade the health services in this area, to include laboratory services, pharmacy and at least one MCH unit. This comes in line with a comprehensive health program that P.C.H.S. aspires for those outlined villages and communities. The area as a whole constitutes a stretch of 150 Km. with no ambulatory, emergency, lab or hospital services. Let us all join hands to offer our people a healthier future.

!!! TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE !!!

P.C.H.S. HEALTH STUDIES

A Health Survey In The Gaza Strip

During May 1989, the Gaza P.C.H.S. branch prepared a survey on the health services in the Gaza Strip. Findings of the study revealed that health services are provided at four levels:

1. Primary Health services such as UNRWA and Maternal-Child Health services
2. Secondary Health services which are the governmental and private hospitals in the area
3. Tertiary Health services such as private institutions providing limited rehabilitative services
4. Health services provided by voluntary grass roots health organizations such as P.C.H.S.

Results of the survey concluded that there is a definite need for primary health care services in the area particularly preventive medicine and health education which are not only lacking in quantity but more importantly in quality. There is also a need for health services for specific sectors of the population at risk, such as school children, child bearing mothers and the elderly.

Finally recommendations were made to:

1. Increase the number of health care institutions in rural areas of the Gaza Strip.
2. Increase the number of specialized health services.
3. Coordinate among existing health care institutions, agencies and voluntary committees working in the region.

An Overview of the Health Situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip:

In June 1989, a paper on the general health situation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip before and during the Intifada was presented by one of our P.C.H.S. members in the NGO meeting in New York. The paper thoroughly discussed the measures that the occupation authorities have taken against the health sector during the Intifada. A general appeal was raised to all NGO's to empower all the grass root organizations. Coordination between local health organization was also emphasized. The emergency situation described called on all health organizations to respond immediately.

Health Conditions in Ansar III Detention Centre : An Affidavit

A study of the general health conditions of prisoners in Ansar III was prepared by one of the P.C.H. members in July 1989. The paper discussed all aspects of environmental health including the weather conditions, personal hygiene, water and sanitary conditions, sleeping accommodations, food and water supplies, and the medical care services available for the prisoners.

In short this study revealed that all prisons especially Ansar III are ver inhumanly and poorly maintained, where prisoners are denied every basic right to live as a dignified human being.

Medications and health services are hardly available and when offered it was only after continuous pressure by the prisoner's lawyers, and after the long bureaucratic process of inspection by the prison administration. The endless delay in this process has led to substantial suffering of prisoners, causing the spread of serious infectious diseases and other side effects.

A Study of Brucellosis in Nablus

A pilot study on Brucellosis was prepared by the Nablus P.C.H.S. branch in May 1989. The sample population included 68 patients between the ages of 2 to 86 years of age from the Nablus area who were randomly tested. Blood samples were used to diagnose patients for Brucellosis Abortus and Brucellosis Melitensis. 59 out of 82 samples tested had positive B.Melitensis agglutination and 54 positive for B.Abortus. The results of this study encouraged P.C.H.S. to do further investigations of a larger population sample in the Nablus region. Those findings have also urged P.C.H.S. to launch a Health education campaign concerning the disease and the methods of prevention.

FOCUS ON P.C.H.S. LINKS

Delegations And Visitors:

Several delegations have visited the P.C.H.S. in the last few months. A substantial number of those delegations and volunteers have accompanied P.C.H.S. in their mobile clinic visits and offered their services in several permanent clinics according to their different specialties. Pediatricians, physiotherapists and other specialized doctors and health workers have spent few weeks in the clinics of Jabalia and Al-Shate' Refugee Camp clinic in Gaza. Others have volunteered in some of the Nablus clinics.

P.C.H.S. has also organized field visits to several hospitals, clinics, health centres, villages and refugee camps for groups that were interested specifically in health projects in those areas. Several future plans have been developed, and a special committee is now following up with those plans.

The United Nations Meeting on the Question Of Palestine in Vienna: August 1989.

Three delegates represented P.C.H.S. in this meeting. The study about the health situation in Ansar III was massively distributed to individuals and organizations who found this study interesting and informative. The issue of coordination amongst all the health organizations and committees was highlighted again in this meeting.

A special interest group was held to discuss the general health problems and needs in the Occupied Territories. Several new and improvised ideas have been suggested to cope with this emergency situation.

!IMPACT!IMPACT!IMPACT!

P.C.H.S. On The Go

Throughout 1989, 82 mobile clinic visits have been done in several villages, refugee camps and remote rural areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. 9,545 patients have been diagnosed and treated. 15 of those visits specialized in MCH care, Pediatric and Epidemiological diseases.

In the beginning of September 1989; lab technicians and doctors carried a blood typing survey of the population in Jenin. In Nablus, all the mobile clinic visits are still carried on by the United Committees for Health Services, relying on the ambulatory services of the Red Crescent Society of Nablus.

Ongoing P.C.H.S. Activities

1. Permanent Clinics:

Due to increased repression by the Israeli Occupation Authorities, and an increase in the number of Palestinians injured, the need for popular health services has increased substantially in 1989. P.C.H.S. has responded to those needs by healing the wounds of the injured who do not dare visit hospitals for fear of being arrested, but at the risk of being arrested and beaten themselves. The Israeli army continues to harass our health team in their clinics. The Israeli army broke into Karayoun clinic in Nablus in May 1989, beating the doctor and smashing all the medical supplies. That is only one sample of the daily repressions that all our health team encounters.



IMPACT/IMPACT/IMPACT

P.C.H.S supervises presently 33 operational clinics through its 9 branches through-out the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. 53,612 patients have been treated in those clinics, 20% of which have been Intifada victims or social cases and thus treated for free. On the average, the clinics have operated 22 days a month inspite of the long periods of closures, curfews and sieges.

2. The Preschool Health Program

P.C.H.S supervises 34 preschools run by women committees in the Occupied Territories. At the beginning of this school year tooth brushes and tooth paste have been distributed to 250 children in four different preschools teaching them cleaning techniques. This incentive programme will continue throughout 1989 to cover all preschools. Monthly check-ups are regularly carried by the physicians. Several educational pamphlets have been distributed to the mothers of the children and the teachers in those pre-schools.

3. Why a School Health Program !!

With a lot of pleasure and excitement the health program at the four Al-Aqsa schools in the Old City of Jerusalem has been revived in April 1989 with the opening of schools. This very specialized educational program covers 3,200 student between the ages of 4 to 14.

The importance of this program is that it targets an age group which is very receptive and continuously developing. The children will assist the introduction of those health standards in their own homes and social settings. Through the children P.C.H.S. hopes to reach their families and to a larger extent the society at large. The program consists of three parts:

1. School Health services.
2. Environmental Health.
3. Health Education program.

The student population in Palestine constitute 1/6 of the total population. Students spend at school a long enough time to go through a substantial health education program in a setting which is experimental physically, psychologically and socially. Children at school are susceptible to all kinds of diseases and their immunity towards infectious diseases are relatively low. This age group is the most active and thus a victim of injuries and accidents. Due to the importance of this matter, P.C.H.S. created first aid centres in four schools, to expand at a later stage to include as many schools as necessary.



4. The Health Education Program

Dental Health education ,dental care and hygiene have been the focus of P.C.H.S. in 1989. This very important field has been neglected by the health sector at large. P.C.H.S. has issued a special pamphlet on the subject discussing dental and gum diseases and offering a detailed guideline of cleaning techniques and oral hygiene. The pamphlet is addressed to a wide spectrum of readers and it has been massively distributed. Several lectures have been offered during which tooth brushes and tooth paste were distributed for children who participated in this program.

It has become apparent lately that tooth decay is becoming the primary problem amongst children especially in the Gaza Strip. In a special survey initiated in the Strip, more than 50% of the school children tested randomly suffered from tooth decay and other chronic gum diseases. The most important factors leading to those problems have been summarized as follows:

1. Lack of general health awareness and knowledge of tooth care and cleaning techniques.
2. Malnutrition due to the deteriorating economic conditions in the Gaza Strip. Health services are secondary where survival is at stake.
3. The deficiency of the flouride component in the drinking water available.

Besides this specialized health program P.C.H.S. has published ten educational pamphlets during the last nine months of 1989, covering the following topics:

1. Poisoning of children.
2. First Aid (bruises, fractures, and burns).
3. Tear Gas poisoning: its effects and treatment.
4. Pregnancy: problems in pregnancy and natural delivery.
5. Pneumonia and Bronchopneumonia.
6. Child care and vaccines.
7. Pertusis
8. Nutrition for diabetics.
9. Back-pain.
10. Dental care and dental hygiene.

NEW OUTLOOK GETTING READY FOR MORE

Al Quds Medical Journal

We believe we can do better and more for our members and all health professionals at large. Al Quds Medical Journal is our dream come true. P.C.H.S. takes pride in providing the first Palestinian Medical Journal for a professional population of 5,800, 1,800 of which are doctors and the rest health workers. This journal will encourage health professionals to do their own experiments and publications. The founding board is now collecting the materials to be published in the first medical journal.

Medical Library

In the local Palestinian Universities of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, medical schools are inexistence as a specialty. This community medical library will support all health services and promote a brain pool for health professionals. The objective is to equip it with periodicals and journals and audio-visual aids.

The West Bank and the Gaza Strip until this date suffers from the deficiency of a medical resource library. Foreign resources are expensive and unaffordable for the large majority of health professionals.

Educational Fund

P.C.H.S believes that it is time to explore and build more on its human potential. Presently one member of P.C.H.S. is specializing in neuro-surgery in Paris. Five areas of specialty have been identified as priority areas:

- 1- Community medicine.
- 2- Public health in all its divisions, MCH, Dental, Family Care and Environmental Hygiene.
- 3- Physiotherapy outreach.
- 4- Dermatology.
- 5- Pediatrics.

Special efforts are geared towards securing scholarships at University of California in Los Angeles, Canada, Britain, and East Germany. Special focus is set now to ensure that physicians specialize in those areas to meet the long term needs of the community.

!!! WE BUILD BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE !!!

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

IF INTERESTED: in further information and want to offer assistance, please indicate your choice(s):

- 1- _____ Want to receive all P.C.H.S. publications on regular basis, please include me on your mailing list.
- 2- _____ Would like to visit P.C.H.S. projects in the West Bank and/or Gaza Strip. Date _____
- 3- _____ Would like to volunteer my services for P.C.H.S. for the following date(s) : _____ as of _____
_____ as of _____
- 4- _____ Would like to sponsor a visit, speaking tour, meeting for _____ P.C.H.S. members or friends in _____ starting on _____

Name: (Personal or Organization)

Address : _____

Telephone: Office _____ Home _____

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

I would like to contribute to the work that P.C.H.S. do in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by supporting one or more of the following areas:

- _____ General Support
- _____ Permanent Clinics
- _____ Mobile Clinic Visits
- _____ Emergency Medical Supplies & Kits
- _____ Educational Materials
- _____ Scholarship Fund
- _____ Any Other.

Name : _____
Address: _____

Mail to
P.O.Box 21856 BH
East Jerusalem

POPULAR COMMITTEES FOR HEALTH SERVICES

اللجان الشعبية للخدمات الصحية



HEALTH EDUCATION
in Jenen Camp



Cousultation in Kalandia health center
(Kalandia Camp) by physicion.