

The Hanan Mother, Child Health and Nutrition Project: Increasing Skills, Improving Results at Patient Friends Benevolent Society (PFBS) Clinic in Gaza

“Our system works better now. Our services are better. We treat more patients and they are happier. Best of all we believe these changes will last,” says Dr. Ibrahim Basayneh, Head Physician at PFBS’ Delivery Unit

Political and economic instability make Gaza one of the most vulnerable and resource-limited areas in the world. Lack of security and poverty severely restrict healthcare access for many families, particularly for mothers and children.

To address this situation, USAID launched the Hanan Project in 2005. Implemented by JSI Research and Training Institute, the Project aims to improve the quality and availability of maternal and child health and nutrition (MCHN) and emergency services in the West Bank and Gaza. Through collaborative partnerships with local clinics and hospitals, Hanan has ensured that over 250,000 women and children receive better quality care.

In 2006, Hanan began a partnership with the Patient Friends Benevolent Society (PFBS) Delivery Unit in Gaza City, a well-known and trusted resource in the community. As with many Gaza clinics standard clinical protocols were not in place and procedural knowledge varied widely among PFBS staff members, mainly because they had received training in different countries using different guidelines. PFBS lacked tools and other resources to address these inconsistencies, and as a result service quality suffered.

To address this challenge, Hanan trained PFBS staff members on all aspects of antenatal care, delivery and postnatal follow-up, using approved national protocols. Hanan also provided complementary training on case record keeping and helped clinic managers to rework their medical records and other operational systems. Finally, Hanan provided PFBS with medical records forms and selected items of medical equipment, which are essential to providing a high quality service and which were lacking in the clinic.

Since the beginning of the partnership, services have noticeably improved. Dr. Ibrahim Basayneh, Head Physician at the PFBS Delivery Unit, explained, “Before the protocols, we relied on our own approaches to each health issue. Now we all refer to the protocols, so we know we are practicing safe medicine and our patients know what to expect. The manuals we now use will be here to guide us long after Hanan has ended. For us, gaining knowledge is the purpose for our partnership with Hanan, knowledge that we can apply long after the Hanan project is over.”

Hanan also helped clinic staff learn more effective management strategies and assisted midwives during ward rounds when health situations could be immediately discussed and new protocols tested. Dr. Adnan Qirshally, Resident Doctor of the PFBS Maternity Ward, believes one of the greatest benefits from the Hanan partnership was the increased confidence of PFBS staff: “The presence of Hanan not only gave us the image of a great clinic for clients but also more confidence. Because we trusted Hanan’s knowledge and could immediately practice what we learned we feel we are a more competent team. We continue to use the systems we developed together.”

As a result of increased standardization of procedures and practices, PFBS delivered more than double the number of babies by October 2007. PFBS’ Board Chairman Dr. Faisal Abu Shahla summarizes that, “The Hanan partnership has assisted us in raising the quality of services and client trust and satisfaction. This is seen in the increased the number of clients attending the hospital, which has also contributed to solving the chronic problem of budget shortage. Now the society is in a good position to support staff and serve the community. ”



Hanan’s Dr. Aula Al-Salmi stands with Dr. Ibrahim, Head Physician at PFBS. Behind them is one of Hanan’s wall-charts depicting neonatal resuscitation protocols.