



PalThink

LINKING KNOWLEDGE WITH PROSPERITY

Pal-Think For Strategic Studies

Pal-Think Achievements in 2008

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Pal-Think Achievements in 2008

PalThink was founded in March 2007. Since PalThink has sought to address some of the core issues facing the Palestinian community. Palthink is in the forefront of supporting national reconciliation, social and civic responsibility and promoting ideas of prosperity and free enterprise in Gaza.

Here are some of the key issues PalThink achieved in 2008:

- PalThink became a co-publisher of the Economic Freedom of the World Report, published by Fraser institute. PalThink was the first institute to publish the 2008 report in Palestine.
- PalThink has developed a network of youth who have become active in debating economic and social issues.
- PalThink was the first local institution that produced a road map for the national reconciliation while the other 17 major proposals were developed either by countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen or by political parties. PalThink proposal was developed entirely through active participation of grassroots, youth, academics, journalists, and business people.
- PalThink was leading in involving the grassroots in the political debates. PalThink organized series of workshops and meetings with various community grassroots such as; unemployed people, households, females' students and youth.
- PalThink partnered with three local institutions to research and write three working papers, addressing the consequences of conflict on the court system, social fabrics, and the public sector. The production of the working papers followed several tools and methodologies such as; revision of the previous efforts, carrying out face-to-face interviews with key people such as; lawyers, judges, journalists, and the two political parties as well as organizing focus group discussions with various community leaders. Within this project, more than 12 round table discussions were organized representing social and political parties, and concerned citizens. The final three papers were presented in one day conference. The researchers and authors of three working papers have made serious efforts to be neutral, scientific, and balance accurate reflection of the all point of views.
- PalThink organized a one day conference in September, 2008 in Gaza called "Toward sustainable National Reconciliation". The conference addressed the consequences of the internal conflict where the three papers were presented. The conference was attended by 130 representatives from various community sectors including; intellectuals, social and political parties.

- Pal Think was the first NGO to produce a policy paper on reconciliation. PalThink hosted representatives of various political parties to meet face-to-face to address challenging issues facing their respective communities.
- PalThink succeeded, in short period, in building solid reputation as an independent research institution. Recently, PalThink was asked by Fredrick Ebert to develop a paper outlining vision and scenario of possible Palestinian state.
- PalThink hosted a meeting with the Greek Consul General Mr. Sotiros Athanasios, and Mr. Christos Margaritis, Deputy Consul General, in October, 2008.

Pal-Think involvement on the efforts towards national reconciliation:

The involvement of Pal-Think in the efforts towards the national reconciliation passed through various phases, here are some key examples:

First: The Production of policy paper "Emerging from the present Palestinian crisis: A Road map towards exit;

In July 2007, Pal Think for Strategic Studies started to organize a series of lectures and meetings with journalists, academics, and political leaders as a response to social and political turmoil between political factions. These meetings led to the production of the policy paper for Reconciliation: Emerging from the present Palestinian crisis: A Road map towards exit. The proposal aimed to bring the two political parties to discuss issues vital to the Palestinian people. The paper upon its publications was circulated and used by journalists, civil society, and political parties due to its objective and independent nature. Copies of the paper were sent to all concerned parties including the Palestinian President. Furthermore, the paper was used by many local leaders and some Arab countries to develop other initiatives. PalThink has achieved some of its key objectives in 2008; however, there are many challenges ahead. The initiative led to the second phase of the project with the support of the Representative office of Switzerland to the Palestinians Authority in Ramallah.

Second: Engaging the community into the process of reconciliation;

Accordingly, Pal Think began a second process that focused on "How to take this initiative to the community to gain broader support". The Switzerland Representative office in Ramallah responded quickly to Pal Think through a grant of US15, 000 that aimed to engage the community into the process of reconciliation. The new partnership between the Switzerland Representative office and Pal Think was initially for three months. Form January-April 2008, the partnership aimed at integrating new community sectors to the process of reconciliation. Within this joint project various community groups were brought into the debate on how to empower the community towards national reconciliation. At this stage, the 2nd phase of the project, the following sessions were carried out:

| No | Audience/ target group | No. and type of attendees |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Politicians , journalists & PLC s | 20 of journalist, PLCs and intellectuals |
| 2 | Youth | 17 of youth |
| 3 | University students | 40 of university students |
| 4 | Businessmen | 25 of businessmen & journalists, |
| 5 | Women | 80 women and households |

| | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|
| 6 | Unemployed people | 39 of unemployed people |
| 7 | Hamas movement | 15 of journalist, politicians, & academics. |
| 8 | Fattah movement | 25 journalists, businessmen & academics |
| 9 | A session with intellectuals | 25 journalists, politicians and academia |
| 10 | Yemeni initiative | 21 academics, politicians |
| 11 | Lawyers and judges | 20 lawyers and judges |

Third: Continuing efforts towards reconciliation" Touching on core issues:

With full realization that reaching into a national reconciliation requires continuous efforts and building on the achieved success on the previous involvement, Representative office of Switzerland continued its partnership with PalThink by implementing the second phase of the project: Continuing efforts towards reconciliation" Touching on core issues which started in May and was completed in December 2008 with a grant of US\$20,500. The project's objectives were to: developing proposals that outlined ways to overcome some of these challenges.

Project implementation

The implementation of the project went through the following four phases:

1. Production of the three working papers/proposals
2. Presenting working papers/proposals to the public in a conference
3. Printing working papers/proposals
4. Distributing copies of the proposal to political leadership, civil society, and media.

A) Production of the working papers

PalThink in partnership with three local institutions researched and developed three working papers/proposals. Each, addressing the consequences of the conflict on the court system, social fabrics, and the public sector. The production of the working papers followed several tools and methodologies such as; revision of the previous efforts, carrying out face-to-face interviews with key people such as; lawyers, judges, journalists, and government employees. PalThink and its partner's

organized focus group discussions with various community leaders to include their concerns and input in the project.



B) Organizing a One day conference to present the Working Papers/Proposals:

PalThink organized a one day conference in September, 2008 in Gaza, called "Toward sustainable National Reconciliation, addressing the consequences of the internal conflict" where the three papers were presented. The conference was attended by 130 representing of various community sectors, intellectuals, journalists, and political parties. The Conference Proceeded as follow:

C) Printing 300 copies of the working papers;

After careful revision of the papers' contents, 300 copies were printed with photos for the audience and the presenters.



D) Distributing the conference book;

PalThink compiled a list of 150 key community figures who received copies, This list included all political parties, journalists, civil society members in Gaza, West Bank and Jerusalem. PalThink plans to send additional copies to key Arab institutions.

Other Achievements of PalThink for Strategic Studies in 2008:

- Pal Think was the first NGO to produce a policy paper on reconciliation. PalThink hosted representatives of Palestinian political parties to meet face-to-face and address issues of concern to the people.
- Pal Think was the leading NGO to publicly discuss the Yemeni initiative and to present a prescription for its implementation.
- Many observers and journalists have noted that the Egyptian proposal for reconciliation made huge benefits from Pal Think paper on reconciliation which was issued in October 2007. The Egyptian proposal used same terms and words. Moreover, one journalist who was actively part in producing the paper commented that; Pal Think paper was even more comprehensive, realistic, and mature because it emphasized that both sides should create positive and encouraging environment before starting the dialogue which is not addressed by the Egyptian proposal.
- Pal Think was nominated to be a member in "The National Committee to Support the dialogue and the reconciliation". The committee was established in October 2008. The aim of the committee is to mobilize the community to put pressure on the political parties to resume dialogue. The committee will organize series of activities in support of the dialogue.
- It is time for Pal Think to become more visible with its efforts and its three policy papers in particular. Pal Think is the first institution which tackled the core issues and provided proposals to overcome the consequences of the partition.
- PalThink succeeded, in very short period in building solid reputation as independent research body. Recently PalThink, as independent institute was asked by Fredrick Ebert to develop a paper outline a vision and scenarios of possible Palestinian state.
- The activities of PalThink in general and its involvement in the efforts towards achieving the reconciliation were pointed out many times by journalists and community leaders.

Activities Photos



