

Young Writers

Youth Rresearch Papers
within "Civic Education Corps" Project

Gaza - Palestine

May 2023

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The opinions in the research papers express the point of view of the authors only, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Pal-Think for Strategic Studies

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Introduction

First and foremost, I am pleased to present a new intellectual production made by youth to be added to the many publications that PalThink for Strategic Studies released over the years. Entitled “Young Writers,” this publication addresses prominent youth-related topics, as part of the “Civic Education Corps” (2021-2022). During the two years of the project, young men and women were educated on concepts of democracy, human rights, civic education, and research writing, enhancing their skills and developing their abilities in critical thinking and writing about issues that concern them. The project helped them express their issues and concerns using the proper scientific methodologies.

PalThink worked on forming the Civil Educator Corps, comprising some of those who received the necessary training, and helped them express their ideas to their peers using various tools and methods, including meetings and dialogues across the Gaza Strip, especially in marginalized areas, with the objective of reaching all youth groups.

In addition to these dialogues, our young intellectuals discussed pressing issues in Palestinian society, especially issues related to youth, in workshops and radio episodes. The final outcome was the production of five research papers, which were presented and discussed in workshops with experts, researchers, and civil society organizations. Subsequently, these papers were published in this book titled "Young Writers."

With this youth intellectual production, PalThink continues to enhance the role of youth in society and empower them to participate in decision-making.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to the training teams who worked with PalThink in the Civic Education Corps project, as well as all partner institutions in the Gaza Strip, who played a fundamental role in reaching all youth groups in marginalized areas, wishing the Palestinian youth a better future.

Omar Shaban

Director of PalThink for Strategic Studies – Gaza

Poverty Among Women in Gaza: Between Economic Reality and Lack of Gender Justice

By: Alqasem Said Afanah

Poverty among women is one of the most complex social phenomena, as it involves physical, political, cultural, and psychological dimensions, and it is subject to changing social, political, and cultural conditions.

Those who are unable to meet their basic needs or enjoy their human rights suffer from poverty. A poor person is a person who cannot satisfy or access their basic needs, including food, housing, shelter, education, and clean water. There are also deprived of creativity, freedom, and dignity.

According to the World Bank, a person is considered poor if their income is less than \$1.90 a day. Other factors affect the standard of living, such as the unequal distribution of wealth and resources, conflicts and wars, environmental and health conditions, and discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, ethnicity, or nationality.

One of the groups most affected by poverty is women, especially in societies where difficult political conditions prevail such as the Gaza Strip. The ongoing crises in the Gaza Strip, which negatively affect the lives of its residents in general, exacerbate the challenges facing women.

This leads to a decline in gender justice indicators for women and makes the possibilities of recovery from this phenomenon in the future very difficult and costly at the societal level. The prolonged economic crises always create scars that are difficult to treat in the near future and weaken women's ability to face challenges and risks that threaten their safety, security, and dignity.

The Role of the Palestinian Media in Political Change

By: Abdullah Al-Baba

The media is a bridge between decision-makers and the public; a source of knowledge and education; a tool to influence participation in the affairs of society; and an effective means of changing public opinion, mobilizing the public, and broadcasting ideas and events. It plays a crucial role in political change. In Palestine, the media is one of the most important means used by the Palestinian national movement to influence public opinion at the local and international levels, and thus political change. The Palestinian press has seen great development over time, which is supposed to represent the Palestinian cause internationally and convey internal Palestinian events locally and respond to the needs of society and political conditions.

Considering the complex political situation in Palestine caused by the continued Israeli occupation and the Palestinian division, the role of the media becomes more important and vital in changing the political landscape and bringing about the required change, especially in light of the tremendous development in the media and the flow of information to which the Palestinian society is exposed. This requires finding a media formula that is compatible with these circumstances and achieves its goals effectively. This can be done by strengthening the role of the national media in spreading Palestinian awareness, culture, and identity; mobilizing public opinion in favor of the Palestinian cause; and facing the challenges and risks that threaten the rights of the Palestinian people.

The Development of the Work Civil Society Organizations in the Gaza Strip and the Repercussions of the Division

By: Ashraf Sukkar

Civil society organizations play an important role in the Palestinian political and societal life, contributing to their development and improving services, exercising control over the PA and demanding transparency and integrity. It also participates in the promotion of democracy and peaceful and constructive communication with the authority, which is one of the most important elements of democratic construction. However, these institutions face major challenges that hinder their work and sustainability because of the blockade and restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation as well as the division, which has affected the freedom of opinion and expression and the societal work of these institutions, especially in the Gaza Strip.

Civil society organizations also face difficulties in establishing and registering, due to the existence of conditions from the parties to the division in the West Bank and Gaza. The authorities demand conditions that complicate financial procedures. There is also a state of politicization by political parties and movements that try to control the work of these institutions. Therefore, important reform interventions are required by civil society and Palestinians to free the civil work agenda from these restrictions and obstacles, and to return it to the national path it used to pursue.

The Contribution of Social Media Sites to the Development of Political Practice among Young People in the Gaza Strip

By: Nour Ahmed Abed

Social media is an important tool for measuring political awareness, solidarity, and awareness, and contributes to the formation of independent political identity and free expression of opinion. Although there are restrictions on freedom of expression in some politically complex areas such as the Gaza Strip, the participation of young people in political affairs through these platforms is considered a form of political practice and the activation of freedom of expression and criticism.

In some cases, social media may be the only or main platform through which young people can participate in public affairs, in addition to contributing to popular monitoring. Social media is particularly important among young people in the Gaza Strip, as it is an interactive and dynamic space that allows them to access political information and analysis, interact with issues and problems that concern them, and express their opinions freely.

These platforms allow them to follow developments and events related to the conflict with Israel, the split between Fatah and Hamas, and the popular movement to resist the occupation and the seizure of their rights. It also allows them to learn about different opinions and positions by political, media or intellectual figures or activists from inside or outside Palestine. In doing so, social media sites contribute to raising the level of awareness and political culture among young people, increasing their interest in the Palestinian cause, and forming a critical and strategic vision for this cause.

In a remarkable development, youth in Palestine have used social media through activating community initiatives aimed at ending the division, improving social conditions, and supporting initiatives for some marginalized groups in society, in addition to digital diplomacy with the aim of addressing the international community and overcoming political, security, technical, technological, and other challenges.

Freedom of Expression in the Gaza Strip: Between Legal Guarantees and Application

By: Asil Safi, Hind Mukdad

This paper examines the reality of freedom of expression in the Gaza Strip, focusing on the legal framework and its practical implementation. It relies primarily on local and international human rights reports and open sources that monitor the state of freedom of opinion and expression. Additionally, the paper incorporates interviews with experts, academics, media activists, and human rights defenders, with the aim of identifying the constraints on freedom of opinion and expression and their negative effects on Palestinian society. The paper recommends the implementation of the legislation pertaining to freedom of opinion and expression, curbing violations and restrictions, and creating a democratic and pluralistic atmosphere in Palestinian society.