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Pal-Think
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES
بال ثينك للدراسات الإستراتيجية
مؤسسة تفكير وعمل فلسطينية
A Gaza-Based Palestinian Think and Do Tank

The Challenges of Reconstruction and Recovery:

The Day After the War and the Future of Youth in Gaza

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Project:

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PalThink Academy for Democracy and Human Rights

ifa Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

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Introduction

Palestinian youth constitute a vital segment of society, representing approximately 22% of the total population. They live under the weight of chronic political deadlock, a dependent economy, and shrinking civil space. In other words, they are stuck in a constant struggle to redefine their identity and status according to the balance of power and the imposed political reality. In the Gaza Strip in particular, where the burden of the blockade that has been in place since 2007 coincides with modern colonial domination and internal political marginalization, a new generation has grown up knowing nothing but political isolation and division. This generation, which is ambitious and highly educated (unemployment among university graduates reached about 74% before the war), found itself shackled by a stifling economic reality and a political dead end, which eroded its confidence in the political system and its traditional structures. These circumstances produced a strong tendency toward "individual salvation," with about 37% of young people seriously considering emigration in search of dignity and opportunities lost at home. The recent war, which has been waged on the Gaza Strip since October 2023, was not merely a military escalation, but a systematic military operation aimed at destroying both infrastructure and society, exacerbating existing crises to catastrophic levels. The 2023 war transformed the situation from a chronic crisis to one of total destruction of the urban, educational, and social infrastructure, with hundreds of thousands of displaced persons, the destruction of most universities and schools, and the emergence of the largest generation of people with disabilities in the modern history of Gaza. Thousands of young people have fallen victim, living under the weight of unprecedented collective psychological trauma and educational disruption that threatens to squander human capital. This tragic situation has transformed the issue of youth from a mere developmental challenge to a matter of national, social, and existential security.

The paper starts with a question that seems simple on the surface but is complex in substance: What does "the day after the war" mean when we look at it from the perspective of young people in the Gaza Strip specifically? What economic, political, and social future awaits this generation after losing their homes, universities, job market, and public space all at once? How does war, as the culmination of colonial and military violence, reshape young people's relationship with national identity, Palestinian leadership, and the outside world? The question of the day after is not limited to governance and administration arrangements, but encompasses the fate of an entire generation and the direction of Palestinian society for at least a decade. Finally, what are the policy recommendations needed to respond to complex political, economic, social, and value-based challenges, including those specific to youth with disabilities, and to ensure their active participation in decision-making? How can the Palestinian environment be transformed into one that attracts young people rather than repels them, through the formulation of a new social contract that enshrines justice and dignity?

This paper seeks to answer all these questions, assuming that addressing the challenges faced by young people requires a fundamental change in policy approach. The traditional focus on rebuilding physical infrastructure alone, while ignoring economic, social, and psychological dimensions (such as unemployment, trauma, and disintegration), will keep the younger

generation in a state of sustained fragility and inability to invest their energies, increasing their tendency to emigrate or even explode into extremism. In contrast, a comprehensive and participatory approach that integrates political reform (such as renewing legitimacy through elections and involving young people in decision-making centers) with economic development and social cohesion, and directly involves young people in decision-making, implementation, and oversight, is the only approach capable of transforming them from passive victims into central actors in stabilizing and rebuilding society on the basis of dignity and justice.

An overview of the post-war situation

Before the 2023 war, young people in Gaza were living in a state of limbo, which manifested itself in various ways (waiting for job opportunities, travel permits, or a political breakthrough that never came). Unemployment among young people and graduates reached some of the highest levels in the world, the economy was besieged, outlets were almost closed, dependence on aid was widespread, and nearly half of the population consisted of children, meaning that a huge mass of young people was moving toward a job market that was already unable to absorb those who had preceded them.

Politically, most young people have never experienced general elections or the actual practice of representation and accountability. The political system is divided into two powers, traditional leaders have held decision-making positions for more than a decade and a half, and party and election laws hinder the emergence of new youth forces. Conversely, the gap between official national discourse and young people's daily experience of unemployment, repression, and poor services has widened. Many young people have shifted part of their activity to the digital sphere, where they engage in politics as symbolic expression and digital protest, rather than as an organizational act capable of influencing the structure of power.

Socially, there has been a mixture of civic solidarity and volunteer initiatives on the one hand, and psychological exhaustion and the search for individual escape on the other, in addition to growing dreams of emigration, studying abroad, or working remotely via the internet, which have become psychological compensation for the lack of prospects at home. This background is important because the war did not fall on a stable generation, but rather collided with a generation that was already reeling between education that did not lead to work, inadequate work, and dissatisfaction with a closed political structure.

After nearly fifteen months of war, the youth of Gaza find themselves in a fragmented reality with no hope for the future or the present. Statistics show that more than 70,000 Palestinians have been killed in this war, with young people accounting for a quarter of the victims (24%). Tens of thousands have been injured and left with permanent disabilities, with approximately 80,000 cases of disability among the injured. In addition, more than 1.9 million people have been internally displaced, and a large proportion of homes have been destroyed or damaged. The educational process in schools and universities has been halted, with the complete destruction or damage of university buildings and the majority of school buildings in the sector.

In this context, young Gazans have been transformed from actors seeking education, work, and initiative into survivors chasing water, food, and shelter. Individual psychological trauma has accumulated into long-term collective trauma, manifested in patterns of acute fear, sleep disorders, and an inability to plan for the future. and tension in family and community relationships. This psychological and social structure is not marginal to economic and political analysis, but rather central to it, as it directly influences young people's behavior toward public participation, migration, and the choice of survival strategies.

A Critical Policy Reading of War-Time and Post-War Challenges: Economic Challenges, the Education System, and Capacity Building

The economic challenges facing young people in the Gaza Strip after the recent war cannot be reduced to a high unemployment rate or destruction percentages in reports. Rather, they form an entire structure of accumulated economic violence. For many years, Gaza's economy has operated under what could be called a *besieged economic model*: low productivity, commercial activity subject to the volatile conditions of crossings, exhausted agricultural and industrial sectors, and a widespread dependence on aid and remittances-along with a persistent fragility in the labor market. The war then pushed this model to its extreme limit; whatever remained of physical capital has literally turned into rubble, and the remaining young human capital is now dispersed among displacement, injury, and the complete loss of income sources.

From a political economy perspective, what we are witnessing today is a transition from a fragile economy to something resembling a *"*permanent emergency economy.*"* Basic infrastructure (electricity, water, roads, telecommunications) has suffered massive destruction, and small and medium enterprises-the natural incubator for youth entrepreneurship-have either exited the economic equation or are operating at minimal capacity. The young Gazan enters this phase carrying the legacy of chronic pre-war unemployment, only to face an almost total collapse of both formal and informal employment opportunities. This means that unemployment is not merely a shortage of jobs, but rather an expression of the Palestinian economy's position within a division of labor dominated by a colonial system that controls resources, borders, and crossings.

The most alarming dimension emerges in the intersection of this trajectory with what has been termed *"*scholasticide*,"* the systematic destruction of universities and schools. The disruption of education for two years or more does not only constitute the loss of academic time; it represents the collapse of an entire process of preparing a generation of skilled individuals. A young person who has lost their university or technical education enters the post-war labor market with diminished knowledge resources, making them more likely to be confined to manual or low-wage jobs with no pathway for professional advancement. This produces a new form of cognitive-economic marginalization in which youth pay the price of war twice: once in their bodies and spaces, and again in their skills and human capital.

The challenge of capacity building is not a matter of short-term technical training; it is fundamentally a strategic question: *Will the youth of Gaza be reintegrated into an economy built on knowledge, innovation, and regional connectivity, or will they once again be pushed into the role of cheap labor within short-lived reconstruction projects?* If "capacity building" is reduced to superficial courses disconnected from real opportunities, it becomes a mechanism for managing frustration rather than addressing it. But if it is linked to alternative learning pathways, structured educational compensation, and vocational programs aligned with reconstruction needs and the broader labor market, it can become a tool for restructuring the economic contract surrounding youth.

From a political sociology perspective, these economic challenges directly affect the social fabric and the possibility of building internal peace. An economy based on aid and short-term "cash-for-work" programs creates unbalanced power relations: the entity controlling distribution gains symbolic and material authority, while young beneficiaries become captive to networks of clientelism and favoritism. In such an environment, the gap widens between those with access to funded projects and those excluded from them. Local and familial tensions deepen, and the sense of economic injustice becomes fuel for social anger.

On the Other Hand**,**Community peacebuilding in Gaza cannot be imagined within an economy that continually reproduces such hierarchies. Peace here is not merely the outcome of a political agreement; it is equally the product of a tangible sense of justice in how losses and gains are distributed after the war. In short, when a young person feels that reconstruction is happening *above* them-while funding contracts circulate between capitals and closed offices, leaving them stuck in unemployment or precarity—then all discourse on "recovery" becomes nothing more than noise. Conversely, when youth see that they have guaranteed participation in the labor market through real local-content policies, that their education is being restored through serious programs, and that their entrepreneurship is supported with financing and legal protection, the reconstruction process becomes a lever for internal social peace, which in turn builds a more solid foundation for any external political peace.

Ultimately, the economic challenge facing youth in Gaza after the war is a question about the *type of economy* that is intended to be built: Will it be a crisis-management economy that keeps young people at the margins of value creation and decision-making? Or an economy grounded in rights and opportunities-one that redefines reconstruction as a shared entitlement and a space for economic justice? The answer to this question will determine whether Gaza, in the coming decade, becomes a space that pushes its young people toward the sea, the borders, and the crossings, or a space that allows them to stay, live, work with dignity, and participate in redefining their relationship with the world from a position of agency rather than permanent victimhood.

Social and Value-Based Challenges: From Emergency Solidarity to the Risk of Social Fragmentation

The social and value-based challenges youth in the Gaza Strip face after the war extend far beyond psychological exhaustion or material hardship. They constitute a deeper crisis concerning the very meaning of living together. In the first days and weeks of the war, an intense form of *emergency solidarity* emerged: families opened their homes or tents to the displaced, neighbors shared bread, water, and medicine, young men organized bread lines and food distribution in schools and shelters, and small initiatives appeared to resist chaos and cling to the idea that the community was still capable of protecting its members. Yet as the war dragged on-alongside mounting hunger, cold, and fear-and with large segments of the population feeling abandoned to their fate by the world, this solidarity gradually eroded. In its place emerged quiet tension, disputes over scarce resources, and a growing sense of injustice within the community itself.

From a political sociology perspective, this shift can be read as a movement from positive social capital-characterized by trust and cooperation-towards a form of social capital weighed down by suspicion and bitterness. Familial and clan-based ties remained strong in many cases, but the wider bonds at the level of the camp, neighborhood, or city entered a long and difficult test. When young people in certain areas feel that others are receiving more aid, or that specific groups have greater access to organizations or officials, implicit narratives begin to form about *who was saved and who was left alone*. These narratives do not always appear in public discourse, but they permeate everyday memory, shaping how individuals view one another and influencing their willingness to offer support during future crises.

Within this context, waves of hate speech and heightened emotional aggression have intensified, particularly in the digital sphere, which has become a projection space for all this unprocessed anger. Young people who have lost their homes, loved ones, or educational futures experience a compounded sense of humiliation and abandonment-by the occupation, the international system, and internal leadership alike. Sometimes this sentiment is expressed as conscious political critique; at other times, it manifests as insults, generalizations, and mutual accusations of betrayal among supporters of different factions, between residents of different areas, or between those who remained in Gaza and those who were forced to leave. Digital platforms amplify this tension, facilitating the formation of internally aligned "bubbles" that employ ever harsher language toward the outside, thereby reproducing a symbolic division that mirrors the political fragmentation on the ground.

The transformation does not stop at the level of discourse; it extends into the very structure of everyday values. A generation that has grown up witnessing death and destruction repeatedly, and coexisting with images of corpses and rubble as part of its daily news cycle, is at risk of normalizing violence and losing sensitivity toward it. At the same time, the meanings of dignity, masculinity, and survival are being reshaped. A young man who cannot protect his family from hunger or displacement experiences a deep sense of helplessness-one that may push him toward exaggerating narratives of vengeance, or withdrawing from any collective

obligation that no longer provides him with a sense of self-respect. The gap widens between a parent generation trying to preserve traditional modes of patience and restraint, and a younger generation that feels this language no longer corresponds to the magnitude of destruction they are living.

This value fragmentation also manifests in trust in community institutions. The teacher who can no longer teach, the doctor working under impossible conditions, the aid worker standing between immense needs and scarce resources-all face unbearable moral pressure. Youth view these institutions with a dual lens: appreciation for their role on the one hand, and sharp questioning of the fairness of their performance on the other. Any misstep in aid distribution, or any hint of nepotism in selecting beneficiaries, becomes further evidence that the social system itself is unjust. When such questions are left without open and transparent discussion, the image of a society living a "war of all against all" over resources becomes entrenched, and the nearby other is redefined as a competitor rather than a partner.

The literature on community peacebuilding suggests that external peace based on political arrangements cannot endure in societies experiencing this level of internal tension. Peace is not an abstract slogan, but rather a web of daily practices: people's ability to trust their neighbor, their willingness to cooperate with those who differ from them politically, and their sense that the injustice they have endured is acknowledged and recorded rather than denied or reduced to official rhetoric. In post-war Gaza, much of the future relationship with the world hinges on the community's ability to repair its internal fabric. Young people, in particular, are at the center of this process-they are the most affected by the war, the most active in digital spaces, and the most capable of becoming either bridges between different groups or fuel for new waves of symbolic and physical violence.

From this perspective, social and value-based challenges cannot be treated as secondary consequences of war that can be postponed until after physical reconstruction. They are part of the stability equation itself. If anger is left without pathways for recognition and redress, it manifests in rising domestic violence, escalating family disputes, hardened factional identities, and declining willingness for internal compromise. However, if genuine community dialogue processes-led also by youth-are invested in, alongside collective psychosocial support programs and cultural or artistic initiatives that allow expressions of pain outside the logic of revenge, this generation can shift from carrying an open wound to carrying a critical memory capable of producing new values of solidarity.

In short, the challenge is dual: protecting what remains of the initial spirit of solidarity that emerged in moments of extreme danger, and opening new spaces for renegotiating shared values away from weapons and mobilizing rhetoric. Without this, any reconstruction effort risks being built atop fractured social ground, in a community more tense and more prone to division-even if the buildings stand once again. But if these challenges are placed at the heart of any vision for the "day after," reconstruction can become an opportunity to redefine the meaning of *"we"* for young people-not only in relation to an external enemy, but also in managing their internal differences in a more just and humane way.

Civil Society Between the Compensatory Role and Political Constraints

Civil society in Gaza emerged during the war as one of the last and most significant lines of defense for the human meaning of everyday life. Small local organizations, spontaneous youth initiatives, and neighborhood and camp-based volunteer groups mobilized to provide food, water, medicine, psychosocial support, and to organize daily life in schools and shelters at a time when official governing institutions were paralyzed. Young people stood at the core of this movement-cooking in communal kitchens, organizing beneficiary lists, documenting violations, and using their phones as symbolic lifelines to an external world following Gaza's images from afar.

However, the compensatory role of civil society operates within a suffocating political and economic structure. A large segment of organizations functions under the weight of the project economy: conditional funding, short timelines, technical reporting language, and performance indicators that reduce people's lives to quantifiable metrics. In this context, youth are redefined as beneficiaries or participants rather than partners in agenda-setting. Projects take precedence over ideas, logical frameworks overshadow broader political and ethical questions, and many youth initiatives find themselves trapped between the need for funding and the demands for political neutrality. As a result, they are pushed toward a softened discourse that speaks of empowerment and resilience without naming the structures that produce violence, poverty, and repression.

From a political economy perspective of civil society, this environment generates an intermediary class of actors-NGO administrators, experts, proposal writers-who possess the language of donors and the tools to negotiate with them, in contrast to a youth base that executes activities on the ground. This dynamic reveals how unequal access to funding, knowledge, and influence produces inequality within the civil society field itself. Youth working as volunteers or on short-term contracts across consecutive projects experience a form of "civil proletariat": intense presence in implementation, weak presence in decision-making, and high replaceability once a project ends. Thus, civil society-often unintentionally-becomes yet another space where social and political hierarchies among youth are reproduced.

Beyond donor pressures, additional constraints emerge from various Palestinian authorities. NGO laws, licensing procedures, security vetting, and informal pressures on organizations addressing sensitive issues all shrink the public space available for independent youth initiatives. Young individuals considering the establishment of advocacy groups, student movements, or critical research collectives encounter questions about legal coverage and accountability, especially if their activities are perceived as threats to the existing order. This creates a harsh paradox: a society in dire need of youth energy to hold power accountable and reimagine the national project simultaneously places administrative, security, and political barriers that render participation risky.

Traditional youth spaces-cultural centers, clubs, universities, public parks-were destroyed or turned into shelters during the war. Many of these spaces had served as partial breathing rooms

for dialogue, expression, and interaction across diverse currents. After the war, youth find themselves confined to tents, temporary housing, or overcrowded neighborhoods, with no real space to practice collective action beyond relief work. In this vacuum, the digital sphere expands to become the primary arena for youth presence. Social media transforms into an alternative public sphere: a platform for solidarity campaigns, a space for documenting crimes, and a tool to critique authorities, donors, and factions.

Conversely, when civil society succeeds in redefining its role with youth-from service provider to partner in the struggle over meaning and policy-new possibilities emerge. Youth-led memory documentation initiatives, horizontal dialogue platforms connecting different regions and political currents, research and policy programs where young people are producers rather than subjects of study, and cultural spaces that host political debate rather than fear it-all of these transform civil society into a laboratory for a new social contract. Such practices do not create peace in its missionary sense; rather, they build collective capacity to manage disagreement and anger without tearing society apart internally.

At its core, the issue is not simply expanding youth participation as a slogan, but redistributing power within the civil society field itself. Who sets priorities? Who writes the project? Who negotiates with donors? Who determines the shape of activities? If power remains concentrated in the hands of a small elite, youth will continue to revolve around the margins of implementation. But if internal structures are reshaped to allow diverse youth leadership to emerge, and if real links are created between physical and digital spaces, civil society and youth spaces can become among the most important drivers of political and social reconstruction in Gaza-not merely a humanitarian appendage to a world governed from above.

Youth and the Discourses and Plans of the "Day After":A Critique of Governance and Reconstruction Frameworks

A critical reading of the forthcoming reconstruction process-when examined through the lenses of political economy, political sociology, and peacebuilding-reveals a complex picture of a deep gap between the "day after" discourse and the lived realities of youth in tented life. As the effects of the war persist and as international and regional discussions intensify around future governance arrangements in Gaza-from a "revitalized" Palestinian Authority, to international or Arab transitional administrations, to local technocratic or clan-based committees, or even the repackaging of existing modes of control in new forms-most of these visions are crafted behind closed doors. They position young people as "populations," "aid beneficiaries," or "potential labor" within reconstruction schemes, without recognizing them as rights holders and political actors. Much of this discourse treats reconstruction as a technical engineering and financial file detached from questions of authority, accountability, and representation, thereby turning it into a contractual process between donors and elites, rather than an opportunity to rebuild the social contract on more just and inclusive foundations-especially for youth.

From a political economy perspective, the persistence of current economic structures-characterized by external dependency and the structural constraints imposed by the occupation-will only reproduce the economic marginalization of young people. There is a real danger that reconstruction could slide into a form of "disaster capitalism" that channels massive funds toward powerful political actors and large contracting companies operating through patronage networks. In such a scenario, youth are employed at low wages in temporary work, while the opportunity to transform reconstruction into a catalyst for decent, sustainable, and locally productive employment is lost. The absence of strict local-content policies in reconstruction contracts-requiring the hiring and training of a specified proportion of local youth and women-keeps the Palestinian economy trapped in structural unemployment and turns the emerging state into an environment that pushes its human capital outward. Frustrated young professionals migrate, and society loses its most valuable resource. This underscores the idea that stability cannot be separated from "peace through bread"-that is, linking the physical rebuilding of infrastructure to the redistribution of opportunities and income in favor of the younger generations, as producers and partners rather than cheap labor.

At the level of political sociology, youth face a profound legitimacy crisis vis-à-vis the Palestinian political system: 57% believe no one represents them politically, and 74% do not trust existing political parties. Continued stagnation and the absence of elections reshape social discontent into a destructive force. Instead of channeling anger into a collective national project, many young people shift toward individualized identities centered on personal survival, while internal fragmentation and hate speech expand along regional, partisan, or class lines. This internal marginalization intersects with colonial military violence-through the destruction of educational institutions, control over the digital narrative, and the normalization of the Palestinian as an object of surveillance and aid rather than a political agent. Thus, youth find themselves trapped between the hammer of occupation and the anvil of internal exclusion; their collective identity is pushed toward fragmentation in favor of secondary or fluid, and at times extreme, identities.

From the perspective of peacebuilding literature, any reconstruction plan crafted from above without addressing collective trauma and social wounds inevitably leads to fragile stability that is bound to erupt. Peace cannot be reduced to agreements among political or security elites; it must be socially grounded, rebuilding horizontal trust among people and repairing the social capital shattered within camps and destroyed cities. Neglecting psychosocial dimensions, and ignoring the need for a genuine transitional justice pathway to redress the harm inflicted on young victims-those who lost limbs, family members, or homes-leaves behind a dense legacy of anger and grievance, easily mobilized in future crises. At the same time, excluding youth voices from reconstruction planning contradicts the UN's own principles regarding the role of youth in sustaining and building peace. It risks producing a future stability that is externally imposed or guarded by old elite interests, rather than rooted in the will of the younger generations who will bear the actual burden of Gaza's and Palestine's future.

Policy Recommendations

1. Renewing Political Legitimacy Through a Transformative Path that Places Youth at the Center of Governance

Rationale:
Addressing the "generation in waiting" is impossible without opening the political system itself. What is required is a gradual transformation process that links the day after the war to rebuilding legitimacy from the bottom up.

Operational Directions:

- Adopt a sequenced roadmap for elections (local councils, student and professional unions, followed by legislative and presidential elections), with mandatory quotas ensuring no less than 30% representation of youth and women in candidate lists and leadership bodies.
- Establish youth advisory councils at the governorate level and within reconstruction funds, with meaningful representation of Gaza's youth-including those with disabilities-to participate in setting reconstruction priorities and monitoring contract implementation.
- Review party and NGO laws to facilitate the emergence of new youth-led platforms and lists, and remove administrative and security barriers that prevent young people from organizing politically and civically.

2. Transforming Reconstruction into a Lever for a Rights-Based Opportunities Economy-Not a Model of "Disaster Capitalism"

Rationale:
Reconstruction must serve as an entry point for redistributing opportunities, not entrenching new forms of dependency. Every dollar flowing into Gaza should be evaluated on the basis of its contribution to youth employment and the strengthening of a local productive base.

Operational Directions:

- Adopt mandatory local-content policies in reconstruction contracts (through governmental or joint fund directives) that require:

▪ A defined quota for employing youth, women, and persons with disabilities in every project.

▪ Priority for local small and medium enterprises, with tenders segmented into packages to prevent monopolization.

- Establish a national program for green jobs and community-based reconstruction targeting youth-ncluding recycling, renewable energy, urban agriculture, and rehabilitation of educational and health facilities-with fair wages and social protection.
- Condition international funding on two clear requirements:

▪ Enhancing local productive capacity (beyond concrete rebuilding).
▪ Publishing transparent data on reconstruction contracts, implementing agencies, and the number of youth employed in each project.

3. A National Emergency Plan to Confront "Scholasticide" and Rebuild Human Capital

Rationale:
What happened to universities and schools is not a temporary disruption; it is the destruction of an entire generational development trajectory. The response must rise to the level of an "educational rescue plan," not mere physical repairs.

Operational Directions:

- Design and implement a multi-track educational compensation program for Gaza's youth, including:
  ▪ Intensive alternative university pathways (in-person and low-cost digital).
  ▪ Technical and vocational tracks directly linked to reconstruction needs and regional labor markets.
- Establish an emergency scholarship and education fund for Gaza's youth, internationally financed and independently governed, linking scholarships to commitments from beneficiaries to contribute to research or community projects post-graduation.
- Develop a resilient, shock-proof university model: distributed campuses, strong remote-learning capacity, partnerships with Arab and international universities for joint accreditation, and specialized programs ensuring the inclusion of youth with disabilities.

4. A National Youth Program for Social Cohesion and Bottom-Up Peacebuilding

Rationale:
No genuine stability is possible without addressing social wounds and collective trauma. Youth are the most affected-and the most capable of leading new community reconciliation pathways.

Operational Directions:

- Launch a national youth-led program for community dialogues, implemented by independent local organizations, bringing together youth from different regions and backgrounds to discuss war narratives, justice, and the contours of a new social contract.
- Integrate collective psychosocial support into all youth programs (education, employment, community initiatives), and train youth cadres as community facilitators capable of leading dialogue circles and safe debriefing mechanisms.
- Establish youth-led symbolic transitional justice initiatives: documenting testimonies, building digital archives, producing artistic and literary works, and organizing memorial events that acknowledge victims and injustices-reducing the risk that anger transforms into internal violence or unregulated extremism.

5. Redefining the Role of Civil Society and Youth Spaces as Incubators for a New Social Contract

Rationale:
Civil society cannot remain a service provider alone; it must become a space where youth learn to practice politics as a critical, participatory endeavor-in both the physical and digital spheres.

Operational Directions:

- Redesign governance structures within civil society organizations so that:

▪ Internally elected youth councils or decision-making committees are established.

▪ Annual transparency reports are published on resource distribution and youth representation, along with disclosures on mechanisms for selecting volunteers and staff.

- Support the establishment or rehabilitation of multifunctional youth spaces in Gaza (cultural centers, digital labs, civic clubs) that serve as platforms for open political dialogue, learning, and volunteer work.
- Allocate a portion of donor funding to micro-grant youth initiatives with minimal bureaucracy-enabling young people to test ideas in community monitoring, civic journalism, digital advocacy, and local policy innovation, while providing basic legal protections for young human rights defenders.