

Peace Building and Resilience

Strengthening the Influence of Palestinian Refugees on their Living Conditions (PART)

Background and Objective

The future of Palestinian refugees remains one of the core unresolved challenges of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Currently, there are more than 5.7 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Approximately 1.7 million of the Palestinian refugees live in refugee camps in the region in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. In the context of ongoing conflicts and violence, they have hardly any possibilities to influence and shape their living conditions for the better. Psycho-social support is not readily available to Palestinian refugees.

PART (short for PARTicipation), cooperates with UNRWA and other strategic partner organisations on:

Implementing reforms in the fields of psycho-social support and social participation: The project supports UNRWA and host government institutions in Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon in their reform and political processes. The main goal is to improve the structural framework conditions to empower Palestinian refugees to increase their influence and improve their ability to act, as well as to be part of the decision-making processes in their own communities and host societies.

Project name	Strengthening the Influence of Palestinian Refugees on their Living Conditions (PART)
Commissioned by	The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Gaza, West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria
Partners	UNRWA, host governments, NGOs, CBOs
Duration	October 2018 - December 2021

Empowering young Palestinian women and men to shape their living conditions: Through networking platforms and qualified local organisations, PART supports to interconnect youth and empowers them to develop and implement innovative initiatives for improving living conditions (including socio-economic engagement). At the same time, host government institutions in Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon are provided with in-depth expert advice. The project supports them in increasingly including the expertise and interests of young Palestinian women and men in decision-making processes.

Networking and knowledge transfer between regional stakeholders: PART aims to connect more closely with stakeholders in the region as well as on the national and international levels to strengthen their influence and agency. The PART team provides advisory services on strategy and policy processes to strategic partners in creating and organising networks as well as in assuming more effectively a role as multiplier. Also, funds are made available to exchange the skills and know-how and introduce them in international platforms.



Vision Workshop on International Youth Day, 12.08.2019, Amman: refugee youth jointly plan and visualise initiatives to increase their social participation in host communities



On the left: Community Radio, 2020: Youth from Palestinian refugee camps present and discuss current and important topics regarding their situation.

On the right: 2020, Ramallah: trainings on policy papers development for improved engagement with decision makers.

Approach

The project applies a tailor-made conflict transformation method. The project thus improves psycho-social support on the one hand and social participation, i.e., influence, on the other. Better possibilities of influencing and shaping their own living conditions can have a positive effect on the psycho-social well-being of Palestinian refugees. Conversely, the willingness and ability to play an active role in society and participate in shaping their living environment often requires a certain degree of psycho-social stability and the capacity to act. The two approaches are therefore mutually re-inforcing and, in this way, an essential part of the applied conflict transformation method.

Achievements

- Improved provision of psycho-social services in all 58 Palestinian refugee camps in the region through restructuring UNRWA RSS and Education departments and training of 790 social workers and school counselors.
- Support of staff care and counselling systems for over 538 UNRWA staff members, including Senior Management, increased culture and practices of well-being in all UNRWA locations.
- Institutionalised channels and application of Accountability and mediation in UNRWA through, i.e., the establishment of an Ombudsperson.
- Improved representation, exchange, and coordination between the Host Governments on a regional level.
- 2,000 youth improved the living conditions in their communities and facilitated constructive community involvement within power structures through more than 100 self-organised initiatives.
- Facilitated public policy dialogues and roundtable discussions with approximately 3,500 participants improved dialogue and and relationship

between refugees and decision-makers, service providers, civil society and local communities in Gaza.

- The establishment of youth councils and committees with more than 30 elected youth representatives increased the involvement of youth in decision-making processes on all levels of governance in Gaza and West Bank.

Covid-19 Response

- Mitigation of socio-economic impacts of the pandemic to over 13,250 households in the West Bank and Lebanon through provision of food and hygiene items.
- Re-opening of 96 schools under proper health measures guaranteed the access to education and improved psycho-social well-being of 46,000 children in the West Bank.
- Improved access to psycho-social support in most vulnerable communities in Gaza through operating 5 mobile clinics.
- Upgraded response capacities of the overburdened health systems in Gaza and Lebanon through additional trained medical staff, isolation centres, in- and outpatient capacities as well as expanded testing programme.

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