> "UNDP sees building resilience as a transformative process which draws on the innate strength of individuals, communities, and institutions to prevent, mitigate the impacts of, and learn from the experience of different types of shocks – whether they be internal or external; natural or man-made; economic, political, social, or other"
>
> Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator

PALESTINE RESILIENCE CONFERENCE 2016

FROM SUMUD TO TRANSFORMATIVE RESILIENCE
24-25 November 2016 | Amman | Jordan

Sumud, Transformative Resilience, and the Changing Face of Aid in the State of Palestine

The term 'resilience' has rapidly been gaining traction in the development and humanitarian aid language. Utilized in such diverse fields as ecology, psychology, and business, there are numerous competing and contradictory definitions. The simplest of these, and most ubiquitous within the aid sphere, defines resilience as 'the ability of individuals, households, communities, and institutions to anticipate, withstand, recover, and transform from shocks and crises.'[1]

Before delving into any analysis of resilience definitions, frameworks, and applications, it must be noted: 'the real task is how best to understand people's long-term vulnerability and then how to help make future suffering less likely and people better able to make life choices'.[2] In other words, the task is to empower communities to self-determine, a factor that is particularly important in the Palestinian context. Keeping this critical consideration at the core of any discussion of resilience or resilience programming will help direct efforts in a meaningful and tangible manner.

With the widespread and crippling refugee crisis in the Middle East ongoing, there has been much regional debate on the applicability of 'resilience' as a framework to improve conditions in a protracted crisis. The forced displacement of unprecedented numbers of people has led to a crisis, unparalleled in terms of scale, violence, and destruction, highlighting the shortfalls in the existing aid structure.

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[1] USIP. *Rebuilding Societies: Strategies for Resilience and Recovery in Times of Conflict*. Washington: Atlantic Council, 2016, 7.
[2] ODI, 'How to support resilience in 10 not-so-easy steps.' 3rd July 2014. Accessed 10th October 2016. < https://www.odi.org/comment/8547-support-resilience-10-not-so-easy-steps>

After over five years of ongoing crises and recurrent, proliferating humanitarian disasters, relevant actors seek a better solution to the ongoing challenges. While we will not deal with the regional crisis, it is pertinent to understand the urgency of changing the global aid narrative, which is unable to deal with a catastrophe that has now created the highest number of refugees in history.[3]

There has been substantial debate in recent years on the relevance and applicability of the term 'resilience' to programming in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). After almost 50 years of protracted occupation, limited developmental progress, socio-economic stagnation or deterioration, and political deadlock, donors and other stakeholders have been questioning the efficacy of the current aid paradigm and its applicability to the State of Palestine, where a unique situation of recurrent humanitarian crises and urgent development needs, sometimes termed as 'de-development[4],' persist. These otherwise mutually exclusive spheres often impact the same geographic area and even the same group of vulnerable people. Key stakeholders question if there is **another way to more effectively deliver humanitarian and development interventions, which see real on-the-ground change that empowers individuals, communities, and institutions to become less vulnerable to shocks?**

We supplement this overarching question and delve further, asking:

- What is resilience – theory and practice?
- How can resilience-based approaches support the Palestinian project of self-determination against Israeli occupation and blockade?
- How can resilience be built and integrated into existing aid policy and programming?
- How can we measure the impact of resilience-based aid programming?
- How does resilience thinking relate to the Palestinian narrative of *Sumud* (steadfastness)? What are the links and how can they be harnessed for concrete solutions for Palestinians?

In looking for answers to these questions, we have congregated key national and international actors, stakeholders, policy-makers, academics, and advisors for a discussion on 'resilience' in the Palestinian context. In doing so, we seek not only to gain clarity on these pressing questions, but also to provide an opportunity for knowledge-sharing, open dialogue and debate, and collective learning. Resilience-based strategizing holds the promise of bringing together an otherwise scattered pool of stakeholders to *think-plan-deliver* effectively and efficiently to reduce the vulnerability of people within the oPt.

We will consider the definition and relevance of 'resilience', its much-vaunted **role as a bridge between short-term humanitarian assistance and long-term development,** the definition and history of the Palestinian indigenous narrative of *Sumud* and its linkages to resilience, resilience's applicability to the Palestinian context under occupation, and finally, practical areas of intervention in the oPt.

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[3] BBC. 'Refugees at highest ever level, reaching 65m, says UN.' *BBC News* 20 June 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-36573082>.
[4] Roy, S., 1987. The Gaza Strip: A Case of Economic De-Development. *Journal of Palestine Studies,* pp. 56-88.

What is Resilience?

The multiplicity of definitions of resilience vary widely between sectors, but in general include some mention of the 'capacity to recover', or endurance, a 'degree of preparedness',[5] and a sense of 'flexibility'. Some sectors focus strongly on the term 'agility', which is often associated with concepts of *change*. Like resilience, agility is also related to **flexibility,** but more so in **the sense of change or *transformation.***

As the concept has developed within the aid world, the definition has transmuted from an '*outcome* that can be measured and monitored', and instead constitutes a more practical *ability* 'to deal with adverse changes and shocks'.[6] It is not within the remit of this paper to analyse these definitions in any detail, but it is suffice to say that this construction of resilience as an *'agile ability'* informs our definition of resilience,[7] and its potential to redirect aid in the State of Palestine, by focusing more on the transformative *process* rather than the outcome itself.

We have noted that many conceptions of resilience focus on 'the ability of systems to function in the face of disturbances or hazards.'[8] While systems are a critical component of building resilience in crisis situations, a well-rounded analysis must also consider the ability of individuals, households, and communities to *become resilient*, how this resilience is built and later manifests, the interactions between these groups, and how they impact one another. Furthermore, systems-thinking removes the individual from the centre of discussion, and does not take into account inequities, inequalities, and internal power dynamics that may impact how resilience will affect the well-being of the people or community in question.[9]

Elements of Resilience

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) proposes that the efficacy of resilience relies on the following four elements: 1) **Exposure** (the severity of the problem and the likelihood of impact); 2) **Vulnerability** (how badly they will suffer); 3) **Coping and adapting** (the different things that people do to maintain an acceptable level of well-being); and 4) **Recovery** (people's ability to return to previous level of welfare).[10] While these four elements are critical to gaining an understanding of what an actual threshold of resilience might be (when does an individual, community, institution, or system become resilient?), this paper posits that a fifth element of *'transformation'* **must occur, where people return not only to their previous level of welfare, but transcend this to become empowered**.

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[5] Institute of Development Studies (IDS). *Resilience: New Utopia or New Tyranny.* Sept 2012. < http://www.reachingresilience.org/IMG/pdf/resilience_new_utopia_or_new_tyranny.pdf>, 10.

[6] Ibid, 11

[7] 'The ability of individuals, households, communities, and institutions to anticipate, withstand recover, and transform from shocks and crises.'

[8] ODI, *Supporting Resilience in Difficult Places: A critical look at applying the 'resilience' concept in countries where crises are the norm.* London: ODI, 2014. P.3.

[9] IDS, 14

[10] ODI, *Supporting Resilience in Difficult Places: A critical look at applying the 'resilience' concept in countries where crises are the norm,* 3

Becoming resilient then will not only help to reduce the vulnerability of individuals, communities, and systems, but will take a step further in proactively empowering those who are now resilient to **move beyond mere coping and adapting, to transforming**.

The success of the resilience framework lies in its potential **to address the root causes of vulnerabilities or the existing balance of power.** If correctly addressed, **'resilient' people, communities, systems, and institutions will be empowered to transform themselves to no longer be vulnerable to existing or future risks.** Without this final stage, returning to 'equilibrium' or the status quo, which began with its own set of socio-cultural norms, risks embedding the existing political, economic, and socio-cultural power structures within that society. During instances of shock or stress, the most vulnerable within a society are usually the hardest hit. If a return to the norm was the goal, then resilience cannot stand as a successful framework for reducing vulnerability in the society as a whole, but rather only the already powerful. It is therefore essential to include transformation as the absolute goal of building resilience, although this does not negate the entrenched value of the other resilience capacities. This suggests that resilience is a spectrum, a continuous, incremental process, along which it can be claimed that some level of resilience is better than no resilience at all.

In other words, on one level, resilience can help communities to 'bounce back' to the existing norms prior to the shock. The next level, however, is the capacity to transform to a new system that allows communities to bounce back from more disruption, or 'bounce beyond', if you will. Transformative resilience does not fall into the pattern of 'when things return to normal' but rather creates a **new normal**. In other words, the capacity to create a fundamentally new system when, economic, social or political conditions make the existing system untenable.

We are not seeking to improve the capacity of Palestinians to simply live with existing challenges, but instead to develop a system, which can change and transform itself in new ways, morphing into something new. When resilience capacity is tested, a new normal is created. Transformative resilience, then, requires some capacity to anticipate future events, or at least the capacity to see the implication for a future of unexpected disruption.

Figure 1 represents resilience capacities as three manifestations along a spectrum. *Absorptive*, coping with shocks in order to return to equilibrium; *adaptive*, or adjustment to shocks; and *transformative*, or actual change, is the capacity to cross thresholds into new development trajectories, moving beyond the existing model. The vulnerability will not be reduced by absorptive or adaptive capacities alone, but requires transformative change for real empowerment to take place.
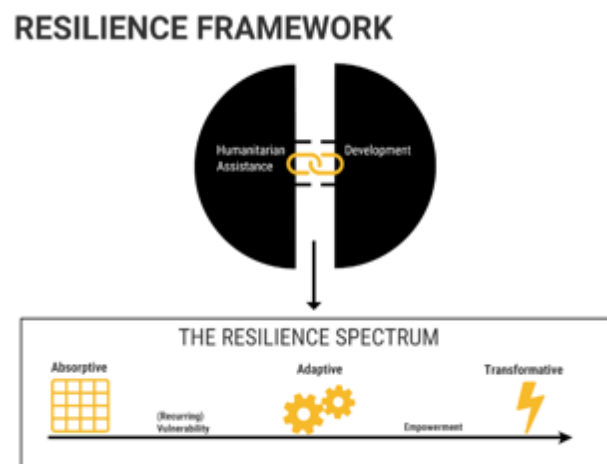

Figure 1 Resilience Framework

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Bridging the Gap Between Humanitarian Assistance and Development

The rise of resilience theory has brought back a long-term debate that questions the structure of international aid, specifically the assertion that humanitarian aid and development are discrete, mutually exclusive areas. Aid and development have been conceptualised as a linear continuum where short-term humanitarian aid transitions to long-term development once the crisis is over,[11] each with its own set of tools, objectives, and outcomes. After decades of aid implementation, it is apparent that the lines between conflict and post-conflict (or crisis and post-crisis) are rarely so clearly demarcated that it is easy to infer when one must move from humanitarian assistance to development interventions.[12]

With the incidence of protracted and recurrent crises globally rising, the efficacy of the existing aid structures is predictably in question. Following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon proposed that we 'tear down the divisions between humanitarian and development work.'[13] This proposal has faced much criticism from the international community, which has noted that a proposal to change the structures of aid requires much more nuance. ODI has proposed an alternative model that seeks not to tear down the divisions, but to increase communication between the two spheres: two-way 'linking relief, rehabilitation, and development' (LRRD).[14] This model recognises that crises rarely function in neat, linear lines, but instead can move back and forth between peacetime and wartime, can recur, or be cyclic. It encourages two-way communication between the sectors, and notes that it might be necessary to move between relief, rehabilitation, and development in a non-linear manner, focusing on 'reconciling the fundamentally different institutional cultures, assumptions, values, structures, and ways of working'[15] of these two different aid communities/paradigms. Resilience has emerged as a framework that can work with the LRRD framework by acting as a bridge between these two areas, or an 'integrating discourse'[16] that brings together actors from the humanitarian and development arenas by providing a unified goal of reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.

In the Palestinian case, the LRRD model provides an effective alternative to the existing system, principally because communities often have both humanitarian and development needs simultaneously. The United States Institute for Peace (USIP) explains: 'Resilience-based interventions are meant to go beyond humanitarian relief and invest, from day one, in local capacities and resources so that the affected communities and institutions can deal with both their immediate and long-term needs.'[17] By working on both levels, a long-term and achievable strategy can be shaped to help prepare people and institutions against ongoing shocks and crises. This approach can help Palestinian communities to improve their capacity for resilience to *absorb*, *adapt*, or *transform*, in order to stay steadfast under protracted occupation.

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[11] Mosel, Irina and Simon Levine. 'Remaking the case for relinking relief, rehabilitation, and development: How LRRD can become a practically useful concept for assistance in difficult places.' 2014, *3.*

[12] USIP, 37.

[13] DuBois, Marc. 'Don't blur the lines between development and humanitarian work.' *The Guardian* 12 May 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/may/12/dont-blur-the-lines-between-development-and-humanitarian-work>.

[14] Mosel, Irina and Simon Levine*,* 3.

[15] Ibid, 6

[16] IDS, 12

[17] USIP, 12

Reforming the Aid System?

These discussions on resilience provide an opportunity to re-assess the ways in which aid is planned, distributed, and evaluated, and by whom, when, where, why, how, and how much. Already reflecting on its role in bridging humanitarian and development work, there is now scope to investigate 'the asymmetrical nature of the structure of international cooperation.'[18] Both academics and practitioners have commented that a system embedded in the very power structures that it seeks to redress is unlikely to be very effective. An area that merits further research of its own, it is worth mentioning that the resilience model has the potential to transform the way in which aid is delivered, by reimagining the purpose of charitable 'help' to actual empowerment. In this way, it can overturn the existing structure from north to south, west to east, top-down to bottom-up, and centralised to decentralised. Instead, the international aid paradigm must encourage resilience-based growth that is locally owned, grassroots-driven, decentralised and as far as possible, detached from overtly political motivations.

What is *Sumud*?

Thinking and connecting this concept of 'resilience' to the context of ongoing occupation in the oPt is critical in shaping a new era of a humanitarian-development intervention. The United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP) proposes understanding global resilience discourses through the prism of the powerful indigenous Palestinian narrative of *Sumud*, or 'steadfastness.'

Sumud is an ideological theme and strategy that first emerged among the Palestinian people that aims to foster perseverance 'through the dialectic of oppression/resistance'[19] in the wake of the 1967 Six-Day War.[20] Since 1967, the conception of *Sumud* has transmuted into two principle forms. The first, static *Sumud*, is more passive, even resigned[21], and is defined as the 'maintenance of Palestinians on their land.' The second, resistance *Sumud* (in Arabic, *Sumud muqawm)* is a more dynamic ideology whose aim is to seek ways of building alternative institutions to resist and undermine the Israeli occupation of the

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[18] Ibid

[19] Nassar, Jamal Raji and Roger Heacock. *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*. New Yotk: Greenwood Publishing, 1990, 28.

[20] Ibid

[21] Ibid

Palestinian territories.[22] Today, *Sumud* is seen differently once again, moving beyond the symbolism of the land struggle and the ubiquitous olive tree.

The prevailing discourse surrounding *Sumud*-based resistance sometimes introduces this dichotomy of acquiescence versus hatred (or passivity versus violent action). While these two forms still persist, Raja Shehadeh, the Palestinian lawyer who introduced the Arabic word *Sumud* into English-language discourse, suggested what is commonly known as 'the third way,'[23] between submission ('passive') and violence ('active'). This third way is instead seen as the 'agency of everyday acts.'[24] These are forms of nonviolent non-cooperation that actively celebrate Palestinian identity, dignity, and life. Taraki explains: 'A new conception of resilience has been taking root, one that is not based on an ascetic denial of frivolity, joy, or entertainment, but rather renders the very pursuit of happiness, a manifestation of resilience and of resistance at the same time.'[25]

The fluidity of *Sumud* suggests that it can include various intersecting dimensions: 1) **Holding fast to social and human relationships in the face of fragmented and destroyed communities;** 2) **Fighting for self-sufficiency despite the Israeli domination on the Palestinian economy;** 3) **Embracing a life lived in dignity, despite the everyday challenges of the occupation;** and finally, 4) **Inspiring personal action and feeling, beyond just a theoretical concept.**[26] *Sumud* encompasses not only the symbolic 'staying on the land' but also 'commonly shared psychological and social dimensions' that suggest *Sumud* is more about 'a lengthy, patient perseverance to preserve…Palestinian identity and rights in a colonial context.'[27] **Grounded in today's conceptualisation of *Sumud*, the third way encourages what we can term transformative resilience**.

Transformative Resilience

In their seminal discussion on *Sumud*, Alexandra Rijke and Toine van Teeffelen note: '…all actions [of *Sumud*]… remind of another concept often associated with Palestinians and close to *Sumud* in its meanings: resilience.'[28] Resilience-based theories crosscut principles of *Sumud* and therefore provide a conceptual framework for policy and programmatic interventions to learn and borrow from. Given the protracted nature of the Israeli occupation, resilience-based programming offers opportunities to help re-invest in formal and informal systems to better secure, protect, and develop Palestinian capacities.

When speaking of resilience, actors often make the distinction between the resilience of 'hard' and 'soft' systems. Hard systems generally deal with problems that are more easily quantifiable, referring to resources or infrastructure, including economic, human, physical, and natural capital.[29] Soft systems are not easily quantifiable or measurable, referring to lines of communication, interconnectedness, and 'soft' skills, and are usually in the realm of social capital. Likewise, within *Sumud*, there are 'tangible

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[22] Ibid

[23] Rijke, Alexandra and Toine van Teeffelen. 'To Exist is to Resist: Sumud, Heroism, and the Everyday.' *Jerusalem Quarterly* 59 (2015): 86 - 99., p 89

[24] Ibid, p. 92

[25] Quoted in Marie, 63

[26] Ibid

[27] Ibid, p. 94

[28] Ibid, 90

[29] IA, 24

resources' (such as infrastructure for basic needs) and 'intangible resources' such as belief systems, religion, and family support.[30] The parallels between the two concepts suggest that '*Sumud* translates as the social ecological idea of resilience.'[31] Both 'soft' and 'hard' resilience is needed in order to have both the empowerment and resources necessary to 'act as reserves on which communities can draw in times of crisis.'[32]

Based on this paper's conceptualisation of resilience, as a transformative process to reduce vulnerability through empowerment, and *Sumud*, as everyday acts of agency, we find at the heart of both concepts lies the notion of finding means for individuals to live in dignity. Within the global resilience framework, community empowerment, dialogue, and local ownership are crucial aspects of resilience interventions; these seek to empower otherwise marginalised individuals and communities to have a voice in local and national decision-making. Likewise, within *Sumud,* one of the focal points for Palestinians was the notion of social cohesion, bringing together otherwise fragmented and dislocated communities due to the geographic, political, economic, and social split. Developing 'agency' is critical to living a life in dignity, in spite of the humiliations of living under occupation, a concept that underpins both resilience and *Sumud*. Thus, building social ties, agency, and dignity are particularly important for uniting the populace, in order to develop transformative resilience.

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[30] Marie, 63
[31] Marie, 64
[32] IA, 24

Limited experience with measuring the impact of resilience has meant that there is still limited understanding of the potential for unintended outcomes of resilience programming. Interventions grounded in resilience can risk leaving communities to merely learn to cope or adapt to a long-term crisis situation, without aiming for any real structural change.[33] In tandem, *Sumud,* at surface level, can risk being treated as a concept that encourages Palestinians to just live with the ongoing occupation, forced displacement, and annexation of their territories. It is therefore necessary to reiterate that **transformative resilience seeks not to help individuals or communities to endure under the prevailing circumstances, but to learn to thrive utilising the resilience capacities laid out above** (absorptive, adaptive, and transformative).

'There are a wide range of coping mechanisms, or adaptation strategies embedded deeply'[34] in the strategies of *Sumud.* Based on our conceptualisation of resilience, practices of *Sumud* can be both absorptive and adaptive. Examples of absorptive capacity can include: the preservation of Palestinian identity, art, culture, music, and attachment to the land.[35] Likewise, it can be seen in the Palestinian insistence to stay on the land, to replant olive trees, and to rebuild homes, despite frequent attacks.

Adaptive capacity can be seen in Palestinian conviction to *adapt* to the restrictive occupation policies that have limited their normal way of life. This can include utilising solar energy in areas that have been cut off from the central grid, or establishing mobile clinics to access areas that have been isolated by checkpoints and barriers. These are well-known examples of *Sumud*, which constitute organic, locally owned, and grassroots-driven practices that have proven successful as absorptive and adaptive capacities, demonstrating internal Palestinian 'resilience' over almost 50 years of occupation.

Building on *Sumud* however, we find new, innovative approaches within the Palestinian economy to transform existing practices. Palestinian businesses have been innovating to introduce home grown goods into the economy, of equal quality to Israel, and without any dependency on the occupation economy, in order to foster self-sufficiency in the Palestinian context. Businesses like Nakheel have repurposed land in Area C of the Jordan Valley to grow dates through six date groves, which have become so successful they are now exported internationally. In this example, we find a private company that has created jobs in an extremely marginalised area, works closely with existing farmers to build their capacity, and created high-quality goods that are competitive in international markets. These are the kinds of transformative processes we seek today.

If utilised to the best of its potential, *Sumud* can re-energise people to work collectively towards resisting the impact of protracted occupation. By applying a discourse that is designed to self-liberate and self-determine, transformative resilience holds the promise of changing current processes and systems that have slowly eroded the status and capacities of Palestinians. The emphasis now is on how to build the transformative capacities of systems and communities.

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[33] Bekdache, Nathalie. 'Resilience in the face of crisis: Rooting resilience in the realities of the Lebanese experience.' 2015, 49.
[34] Marie, 64
[35] Rijke, Alexandra and Toine van Teeffelen, 91

Transformative Resilience Under Occupation

Aid to the State of Palestine: Where are we now?

For the past 25 years, aid assistance to the Palestinians can be summarized as *ad hoc*, limited, and politically constructed to foster peace, security, and state building. After almost three decades of engagement, it is time to revisit existing strategies and revamp efforts for a long-term and holistic approach to aid in the State of Palestine.

Prior to the creation of the Palestinian National Authority, in the early 1990s, national and international development organisations viewed development as a means for fostering peace, within the paradigm of 'development for peace.' With the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, a new era in policy and aid emerged to establish new protocols on the ground. The Accords replaced the previous paradigm, shifting focus to system- and institution-building motivated by a vision of a future, independent Palestinian state.

Since the events of the second Intifada in 2000, donors have re-directed focus on humanitarian assistance, with limited long-term developmental programming to address chronic poverty and systemic inequality facing Palestinians. In 2002, construction of the 708 km Separation Barrier began, of which over 60% has been completed, reducing freedom of movement, isolating communities trapped in 'seam zones[36],' and causing untold psychological damage as a visible reminder of occupation.

From 2008 onwards, Israel and Gaza have engaged in three wars that have left Gaza's infrastructure almost completely destroyed. The uniquely devastating situation has led Gaza to enter a state of what is now termed 'de-development' of its people, institutions, and infrastructure. Simultaneously, Area C of the West Bank[37] (~60%) remains under complete Israeli civil and military control. The continually expanding settlements, alongside Israeli bypass roads, military roadblocks, and the Separation Barrier, continue to contribute to the deteriorating psychological, economic, social, and political status of Palestinians.

Faced by both the external challenges of the Israeli occupation, and the internal discord caused by the political split, the current development and rights situation in the State of Palestine is continuing to deteriorate. Under such duress, donors and practitioners are at a loss of how to proceed and continue to engage in this protracted conflict.

Areas of Intervention

Despite the bleak picture of the current situation in the State of Palestine, there remain areas of fruitful intervention with the potential to make change. Resilience can be utilised to reframe aid from providing services to 'passive recipients' to engaging with and empowering 'active constituents', as well as changing the notion of success from project-based outputs to actual social change.

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[36] Seam zones are a land area in the West Bank located east of the Green Line and west of Israel's separation barrier, in which some Palestinian communities are trapped with unclear jurisdiction, little to no economic opportunity, and both physical and psychological isolation from other Palestinians.

[37] The West Bank was splintered into Areas A, B, and C after the 1993 Oslo Accords. Area A is under full Palestinian military and civil control; Area B under Palestinian civil control; and Area C (~60%) under full Israeli military and civil control. This further complicates the development situation.

Critical to this approach **is not *what*** programmes are delivered, **but *how*** they are delivered, which actors they involve, what methods are used, and why. For a strategic, resilience-based approach to be successful, there are certain elements that must be taken into account when formulating an intervention based on transformative resilience. While these recommendations are not new in the aid sector, they are new in being connected to a resilience-based approach, which can act as a useful framework for implementation. In brief, these are:

Problem Analyses[38] (rather than needs assessment): When planning for a new intervention, actors must consider the problem in-depth to understand the root causes of vulnerability. Relevant factors include whether the root causes are external (for example, from the occupation) or internal structural challenges (for example, inadequate governance, socio-cultural norms, poor economic growth, etc.). While a 'needs assessment' approach can also be useful, the focus on 'needs' rather than 'causes' meaning they lead to interventions that only tackle the short-term symptoms of a larger problem.

Flexibility[39]: Resilience-based programming requires flexibility from both donors and implementers, with a willingness to change the objectives, activities, or planned outcomes of projects if circumstances change, to ensure actual efficacy, rather than mere project-based success.

Long-term vision: The two prior considerations lead directly into a demonstrable need for long-term strategic planning that tackles the structural causes of vulnerability and is flexible in its approach, in order to make transformational change in the context. Transformation cannot happen through stand-alone projects without cooperation between important stakeholders.

Commitment: Key stakeholders must be willing to make real, long-term commitments to resilience-based strategising and programming, moving away from project-based interventions, in order to actually build transformational individual and community resilience.

Taking risks but demanding accountability: A willingness to take greater risks is critical for new and innovative approaches to be found that can lead to actual change. However, at the same time, rigorous accountability must be demanded from implementers to measure change. Measuring resilience is still a new area that must be further explored, as the fluidity of resilience cannot easily be measured quantitively. Instead of using inappropriate, standardised monitoring and evaluation processes, analysis must take into account not just an objective view, but also the subjective view of participating community members.

Local ownership: For resilience to lead to transformation, local ownership is vital to increase the adequacy, efficiency, and sustainability[40] of interventions. Local actors, organisations, and government must be engaged and empowered, in order to ensure a genuine local stake in proposed interventions. Communities must believe in the proposed interventions to be mobilised to participate in a meaningful manner. This also helps the process of moving away from the current aid structure that reifies existing power structures, and tends only to empower the already powerful.

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[38] ODI, *Supporting Resilience in Difficult Places*, 22.
[39] Ibid, 15
[40] USIP, 26

Areas where resilience-based programming can potentially make a long-term sustainable impact include sustainable economic aid, psychosocial support, and community dialogue. At the same time, it is important for resilience to include intersectional approaches, which take into account other factors such as age, gender, race, marital status, economic background, disability status, religion and so on. This is because the vulnerabilities faced within a community will impact people differently, dependent on how they are already vulnerable or marginalised within that community itself. Resilience-based programming must take this into account, because the process of increasing resilience capacity, particularly in 'soft' systems, may vary widely from group to group. Achieving greater resilience may look different and encompass different elements when taking into account intersectional vulnerabilities.

Sustainable Economic Aid

Due to the 1994 Paris Protocol[41], the Palestinian economy has been integrated into the Israeli economy with an absence of 'economic borders.' With restrictions on construction in Area C of the West Bank, and the blockade on Gaza, economic growth is severely hindered by the Israeli occupation. While this has bred some economic innovation and entrepreneurial success across the State of Palestine, the lack of opportunity means that unemployment rates are staggeringly high, with youth and women the worst affected. It has also forced a number of Palestinians to seek work in Israel (legally or illegally), on illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, or to emigrate out of the country for better opportunity and standard of living. This has led to a 'brain drain' in the oPt.

Economic growth continues to be hampered by the fact that the 'Palestinian economy is dependent on its Israeli counterpart and faces internal and external challenges that impede economic development and threaten economic sustainability.'[42] The complete dependency on the Israeli economy caused by the Paris Protocol, lack of a Palestinian currency, and vast trade and movement restrictions, mean that

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[41] Betselem. *The Paris Protocol.* January 1, 2011. http://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/paris_protocol.
[42] International Monetary Fund. *West Bank and Gaza: Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee*. Ramallah: InternationalMonetary Fund, 5 April 2016, 4.

Palestinians, especially youth, face compounded vulnerabilities, such as poverty, food insecurity, and lower living standards. Transformative resilience programming would focus on 'developing self-sufficiency structures and a decrease in dependency on the Israeli economy, especially in the strategically important countryside with Israeli settlements emerging everywhere and a Palestinian agriculture struggling to survive.'[43]

A dual solution is required here to both increase Palestinian access to economic opportunity, by focusing on interventions to improve self-sufficiency and putting pressure on the Israeli and Palestinian governments to reach a political solution. These interventions could include investment in agriculture, vocational training, and focused livelihood responses, with a strong focus on young women, whose participation rates in the economy are extremely low. The overall goal is to move away from the occupation economy. By improving self-sufficiency and making efforts to diversify income streams, the economy will become resilient and better able to deal with recurrent shocks.

Transformative resilience programming must include interventions in the education sector, at school and university level, as currently these are failing to prepare people for the challenging labour market, leading to a problem of both demand and supply. Were this to change, the Palestinian economy would have a better skilled workforce to become self-sufficient by bringing new ideas for innovation and entrepreneurship. Education programming should include local curriculum development, which includes an understanding that school is an 'important socialization space that should model what a peaceful, democratic, and pluralistic community looks like.'[44] This would also help to provide the necessary basis

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[43] Rijke, Alexandra and Toine van Teeffelen, 88
[44] USIP, 20

for improved psychological health and greater tolerance, which would lay the groundwork for better social cohesion. For young people to make choices that can help transform the economic sector (and society in general), this must begin from encouraging critical and innovative thinking from a young age.

Psychological Support

The psychological impact of long-term exposure to trauma under occupation, in all its manifestations, internal fragmentation, religious and societal conservatism and challenges suggest that it is particularly vital to build the resilience of Palestinian communities. Palestinians have already proven their 'psychological hardness'[45] in the face of ongoing occupation and its recurrent and new challenges. However, this has been very much focused on coping mechanisms, both positive and negative, under circumstances of occupation – there are few examples of transformational change to help communities become less vulnerable. It is therefore critical for interventions to include psychosocial support to go beyond coping mechanisms, and instead foster transformational capacities. This can only occur through the true empowerment of individuals in a holistic manner, including economic empowerment, real engagement with decision-makers, and alternatives to unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Furthermore, psychosocial support 'is crucial not only to an individual's well-being but also to the functioning and resilience of a society as a whole, directly impacting its social capital and the possibility of achieving social cohesion.'[46]

It is critical therefore to provide and expand accessible gender-sensitive psychosocial support, integrated into other health services, in order to help overcome societal stigma, especially for the most vulnerable groups. This is a critical step in building resilience, as psychological hardiness and fortitude are necessary to go through a process of transformational change at an individual, community, and systematic level.

Community Dialogue and Social Cohesion

Both the concepts of *Sumud* and resilience are predicated on the need for social cohesion and strong community links, dialogue, and agency within society. As described in the previous section, psychosocial support is necessary to create the conditions for future social cohesion. It is a critical component to developing the open-mindedness, tolerance, and respect for diversity needed for effective community dialogue. Within the State of Palestine, the long-running political split between Fatah and Hamas has manifested in greater fragmentation and a lack of Palestinian unity, in terms of both vision and implementation. Separate and divided governance, has led to economic, political, psychological and, ultimately, social fragmentation.

For transformative resilience to be fostered in the State of Palestine, there needs to be a unification of aims, methods, and plans across the territory, and for all Palestinians (including those in the international diaspora) to feel part of an overall Palestinian community. Without doing so, marginalised groups are left vulnerable to radicalisation and unhealthy coping mechanisms. There therefore needs to be a greater effort to bring in marginalised groups, particularly those who feel powerless, into the mainstream political sphere, especially women, youth, and Bedouin communities.

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[45] Rijke, Alexandra and Toine van Teeffelen, 87
[46] USIP, 17

Therefore, 'investing in local mechanisms for community dialogues and conflict mediations will not replace the need for comprehensive resolution of violent conflicts but will help prevent some more localized forms of violence.'[47] This is an important perspective in reaching internal reconciliation within the State of Palestine, without which transformation on a political and overall state level would not be possible.

Conclusion: Next Steps

This paper brings together the global framework of resilience with the indigenous concept of *Sumud*, to posit a new aid approach, bridging humanitarian and development interventions, that is grounded in transformative resilience. '**The longer that local populations remain in survival mode, the smaller the chance of them becoming resilient later in the process.**'[48] In the State of Palestine, the local population has been in survival mode since 1967, and while there has been consistent aid coming in, there has been little on-the-ground change to improve the lives of Palestinians under occupation. It is time for a new aid paradigm to be enacted, which will empower Palestinians to develop their resilience capacities beyond coping and adapting to **real transformation**. Resilience approaches not only act as a bridge between humanitarian and development interventions, but also between different programmatic areas. An individual must have access to livelihood, education, and healthcare, psychosocial support, and feel part of a wider community with a voice of their own. Resilience provides a framework with which to holistically consider all of these aspects, and build interlocking interventions that demonstrate an understanding of how these factors interact.

This paper and conference acts only as a starting point for change. Donors and other key stakeholders now must make long-term commitments to resilience-based programming, policies and advocacy in order to see real change. **Transformative resilience, anchored in *Sumud*, provides a real national connection to the overarching concept of resilience, and a lens through which Palestinian and international resilience actors can act in a transformative manner**. We hope that the **collective learning, open dialogue,** and **knowledge sharing** from this conference will help us to develop a new roadmap for aid, utilising the framework of transformative resilience.

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[47] USIP, 23
[48] USIP, 12

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