

Theory of Change

Facilitating Reform

Vision & Mission

Established by a group of young social activists in 2012, REFORM is an independent, secular, non-partisan Palestinian NGO that strives for a society where everyone has the capacity to participate effectively, individual and collective rights are respected, and pluralism is ensured in an independent Palestinian state. REFORM adopts a strategy of sustainably empowering marginalised groups, in particular youth and women from hard-to-reach communities, through establishing safe acting platforms, encouraging community-led development processes and shaping a more inclusive governing system that is responsive to people's needs. In this way REFORM addresses various social fault lines and enhances the individual and collective abilities of women and youth, contributing to the formation of a fairer society where women and youth take a leading role in public life and governing bodies actively practice needs-based policy making.

Strategic directions

- **Strategic goal 1:** Empower marginalised and disadvantaged groups, especially youth and women, to facilitate social transformation.
- **Strategic goal 2:** Enhance good governance and develop public sector responsiveness to citizens' needs.
- **Strategic goal 3:** Engage in sustainable development processes and develop alternative production patterns.
- **Strategic goal 4:** Strengthen REFORM's human and institutional capacity.

Guiding principles

Participation

We believe that empowering social groups, especially marginalized groups, towards full participation in society is a prerequisite to improving the living conditions of Palestinians.

Transparency and Accountability

We hold that access to information is an inviolable right for every Palestinian, supporting transparency and accountability throughout society.

Ownership

We champion a needs-based approach, strengthening local capacities to lead community development.

Sustainability

We are committed to ensuring the sustainability of our interventions; based on the needs of our beneficiaries and building on their skills and talents, we empower REFORM participants to continue being active beyond our interventions.

Integrity

We foster a learning environment at REFORM that mirrors our vision of a fairer society; we seek to enhance our human and institutional capacity with the aim of ensuring effectiveness and transparency in everything we do.

REFORM's Aims

- What essential changes does REFORM want to see in Palestine?

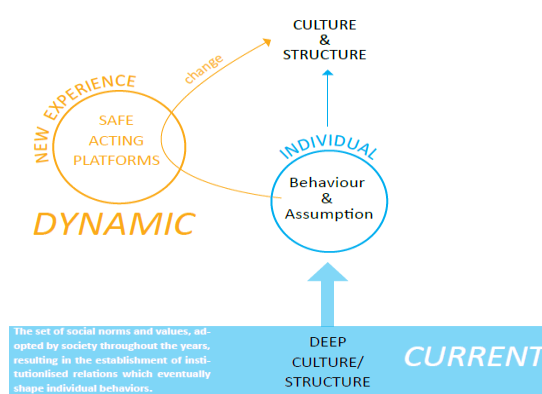
REFORM seeks to enhance solidarity and social cohesion among different groups within Palestinian society, crosscutting divisions of age, class, ability, gender, skin colour, social status, citizenship, place of residence and access. Alongside this, REFORM aims to increase the participation of civil society actors in social and political processes, with particular attention paid to women and youth. REFORM recognises that in order to maintain a diversity of participation in public life, it is necessary to heighten the responsiveness of the state's bodies to the needs of more marginalised and less represented groups in Palestinian society, thereby increasing their access to public services and justice. This will encourage the development of more inclusive and needs-based policy making processes, whilst reinforcing the individual and collective rights of Palestinian women and youth.

- What methods does REFORM currently apply to make these changes occur?

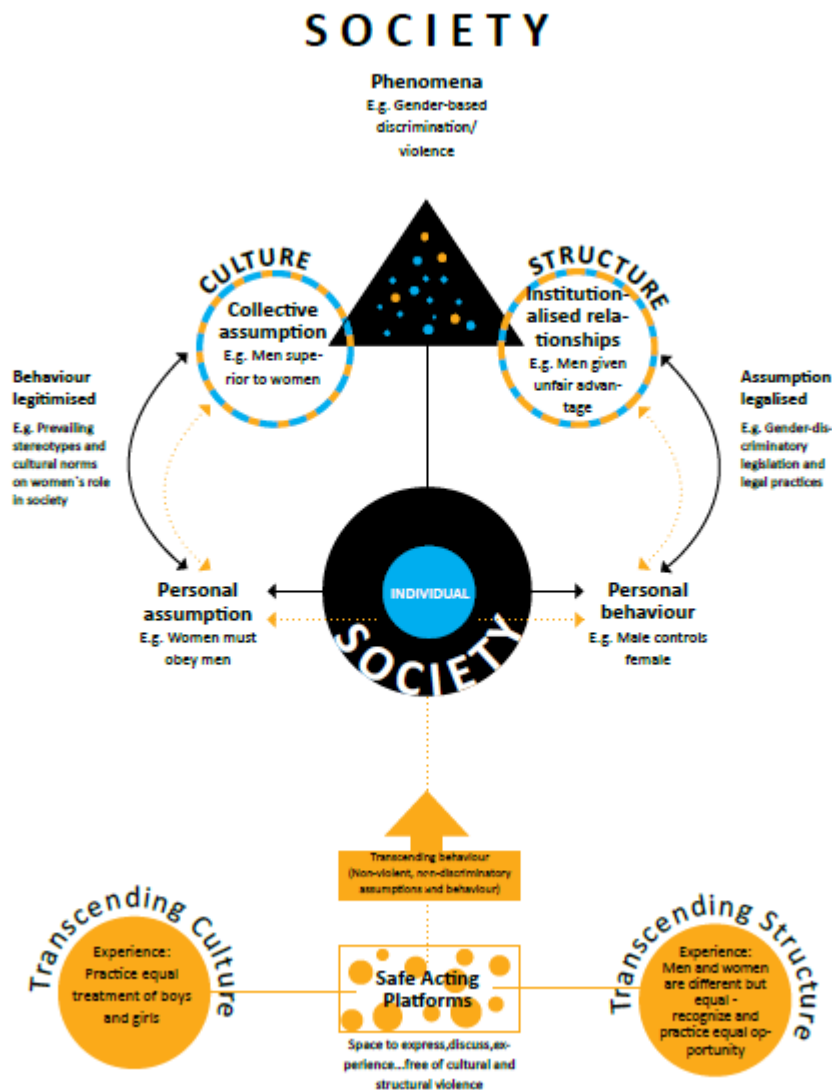
REFORM employs a holistic method of combining socio-cultural and economic development through grassroots mobilisation, empowerment of women and youth, and encouraging community enterprise. As part of a strategy to affect long-term, sustainable change in the form of greater social cohesion, increased participation of youth and women in public life and a more responsive governing system, REFORM engages participants in a self-reflexive process involving the deep analysis of Palestinian cultural values and the historical development of structure in Palestinian society (informed by popular interpretations of religion, law, gender relations etc). Inspired by Johan Galtung's 'Transcend' methodology, Adaptive Action methodology and Geert Hofstede's 'Cultural Dimensions' theory, participants learn tools to understand and creatively re-imagine society in ways that challenge prevailing attitudes and behaviours in order to address unequal treatment, unfair practices and unrepresentative policies premised on assumed power hierarchies of money, prestige and gender. As an effect of this process, an enabling environment is developed as a social incubator for the developmental process.

- What platforms does REFORM currently utilise to make these changes occur?

REFORM is committed to establishing safe and inclusive spaces - physical and virtual - as platforms for the establishment and sustenance of community-led initiatives. REFORM's pioneering 'Innovation Hub', set up in summer 2015, exemplifies this commitment as a space where people can come together to think through ideas, network with potential business partners, access technical assistance, and test out projects on a supportive and experienced audience before refining them and implementing them in the real world. Organisational pages on social media sites including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube complement the Innovation Hub by providing online open platforms in which anyone with an interest in community development and community enterprise can exchange information and share ideas and experiences to build strong professional networks and grow a momentum locally and globally around community-led development and community enterprise in Palestine.



Theory of Change: A Visual Representation



- Why are these methods preferable to affect the desired change?

REFORM believes that building relationships of trust and respect between different groups starts with the establishment of safe and inclusive spaces where people from all backgrounds can come together and receive equal access to resources. The empowerment of marginalised groups through skills-based training, practical and theoretical workshops and on-going reflection is essential to the grassroots mobilisation of Palestinian civil society through developing a highly capable network of women and youth with the skills, knowledge, ambition and networks necessary to take leading roles in public life. By merging social and economic processes through encouraging community enterprise, using the Innovation Hub as a nodal point, REFORM participants are encouraged to establish community-led solutions to local problems. This holistic and inclusive approach to development helps protect development processes, combats polarisation within Palestinian society and contributes to the establishment of an enabling culture that respects and ensures the participation of women and youth in development processes and enhances their political participation.

Whilst REFORM focuses on building the capacity of participants to lead community change, attention is also paid to ensure participants are equipped with skills and knowledge in advocacy to develop relevant campaigns that capture the public's imagination and build movements to develop responsive policies and lobby for specific actions with the clear objective of influencing more responsive governance. The method of engaging participants in deep analysis of culture is vital to help participants understand and thus engage with unfair attitudes and practices such as gender based discrimination, class based privilege and nepotism.

REFORM's Strengths

REFORM goes beyond awareness raising and capacity building, recognising the importance of engaging participants in a process of deep analysis and critical enquiry, as well as leadership training and long-term mentoring to establish sustainable community enterprises that meet local needs whilst supporting women and youth to attain leading roles in public life. REFORM goes further still, combining economic and community development in a process of value change whereby principles of entrepreneurship, innovation and experimentation are encouraged among Palestinian society to ensure a flourishing and self-sustainable society and economy.

REFORM's Programmes

I – Local Development (*TAMKEEN*)

The *TAMKEEN* programme operates to empower and enhance the capacity of marginalised groups in order to ensure equal access to opportunities via development processes and public services by strengthening their participation in the public sphere, especially in socio-economic development and decision making processes. REFORM believes that unequal power relations represent the main obstacle hindering marginalised groups from participating in public life. In order to address and overcome this obstacle, we have developed a three-dimensional approach which encompasses the dialectical relationship between target groups' needs, available opportunities and mechanisms to foster more responsive governing bodies:

- 1) Identify the needs of the target group through action-oriented participatory research.
- 2) Analyse the social structures that regulate the relationships between various social components in order to define a comprehensive development vision.
- 3) Develop appropriate and effective intervention strategies that engender participatory mechanisms and strengthen community ownership of development processes.

Taking this holistic approach to development, *TAMKEEN* strengthens the individual and collective capacities of marginalised groups, especially women and youth, through enhancing their knowledge, skills and providing safe acting platforms. In order to maximise on the programme's impact, *TAMKEEN* also seeks to grow an awareness of the need for sustainable development processes within Palestine by strengthening community partnership and local ownership of development processes. Finally, *TAMKEEN* works on the institutional level to influence the policy system and structural frameworks governing local communities by forming systems and policies capable of responding to the needs of the public; supporting marginalised groups to lead development planning processes; and developing the current production systems to promote innovative community enterprises that address local social and environmental needs.

II – Governance & Public Policy

REFORM sees that current public policy does not address the needs of the majority of Palestinian society. In order to redress this deficiency, REFORM is calling for the renewal of the social contract, engaging both civil society and official actors in a process of reforming structural relations shaped by public policies and practices which frame relationships between individuals, their communities and governing bodies. With the establishment of the National Palestinian Authority following the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s, the nature of the social contract changed and Palestinian society underwent a political, economic and social paradigm shift for which it was largely unprepared. This dramatic shift produced new forms of structural and partisan systems which benefited a minority of Palestinians. As participatory mechanisms became more exclusive, new systems arose that were inconsistent with the needs and expectations of the Palestinian public and as a result a vacuum formed between decision makers and the general public.

To address this situation, REFORM's governance and public policy programme seeks:

- 1) To strengthen the Palestinian public's capacity to participate in decision-making processes
- 2) To hold decision-makers accountable
- 3) To increase the representation of marginalised groups, especially women and youth, in decision-making processes
- 4) To bridge Palestinian jurisdiction gaps
- 5) To enhance good governance among civil society organisation

REFORM seeks to review and reform how policies are formulated, ensuring broad participation at all levels of governance and a needs-based approach to affect more relevant and inclusive policy making practices. Through this programme, REFORM promotes public consultation in regulatory processes, raising awareness among the general public of the importance of participating in decision-making processes. Based on public consultation and informed by applied research, REFORM also makes recommendations to decision makers through the submission of advisory papers as well as through face-to-face meetings. In addition to traditional advocacy activities, REFORM has initiated the 'weekend solution', that allows community members together with decision makers, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations to come up with innovative solutions to daily challenges, consolidating the abilities of all stakeholders into one 'change pot'.

III – Social Transformation

REFORM's Social Transformation programme aims to increase social cohesion and solidarity between the different components that make up Palestinian society, specifically focusing on bridging the gap between polarised groups. To this end, REFORM seeks to promote an agenda of national harmony through the establishment of safe acting platforms which encourage broad-based participation grounded in the principle of intellectual pluralism: "I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it!" (Voltaire). REFORM teaches participants how to apply practical research methodologies in order to address conflict/crisis situations within Palestinian society, focusing on finding common ground between the conflicting parties. This programme is undertaken with the aims of:

1. Combating discrimination and racism within Palestinian society.
2. Enabling marginalised groups, especially women and youth, to engage in deep analysis of the root causes of crises within and between various components of Palestinian society, thereby equipping them with tools to transform it.

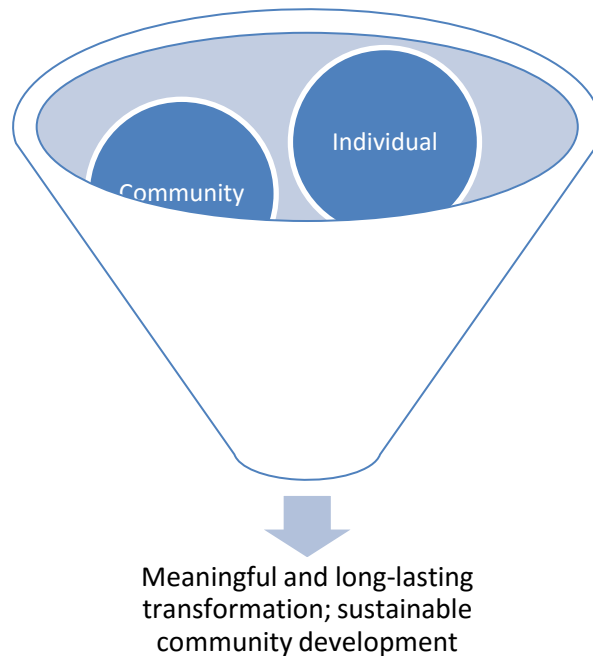
3. Contributing to the formation of an enabling and supportive society capable of understanding how structure affects the development of Palestinian society and therefore capable of transcending it.

REFORM's Social Transformation programme teaches participants and community members to deal with difference and to at least see the value of listening to voices that do not necessarily represent their own views. It engages participants in a process of deep cultural analysis and rethinking prevailing values. In doing so, the Social Transformation programme works towards developing a social incubator for local development processes through identifying major social fault lines, which could jeopardise the rights and needs of marginalised groups, and bridging gaps between them.

REFORM's Impact

REFORM works to affect sustainable change for the benefit of society, and the most marginalised in particular, on the individual, community and institutional levels. Through a combination of awareness-raising, capacity building, training and mentoring, women and youth participants are engaged in a long-term process of transformational change whereby they are equipped with tools to critically analyse their own attitudes and behaviours and that of their communities, and acknowledge the forces that inform and reinforce these patterns of interaction or social structures. Through the application of this newly acquired knowledge, participants are able to influence their wider community as a network of change agents capable of challenging prevailing norms based on unfair structures of hierarchy. REFORM supports its network of change agents to sustain this process of transformation at the community level through establishing open spaces where people can freely express their opinions, challenge others' opinions and have their own opinions challenge in a safe and inclusive environment.

REFORM has a policy of actively reaching out to communities with a particular need of safe spaces for women and youth where protection threats are relatively high and access to services is limited, such as in Area C, E1, East Jerusalem, refugee camps, Gaza Strip and the 'seam zone' beside the segregation wall. Moreover, REFORM supports communities to lead local development through establishing viable community enterprises in their communities to meet local needs and enhance the self-sustainability of their communities. To ensure the viability of interventions on the individual and community level, REFORM recognises the importance of institutionalising value shifts occurring on the grassroots level and seeks to influence the institutional level by advocating for policy reform and building coalitions to build on momentum and replicate successful models for change through information sharing and the exchange of experiences.



REFORM measures the appropriateness of its strategy and the success of its interventions through an on-going process of evidence-based monitoring and results-based management, focused on the outcome and impact level of interventions in order to measure actual outcomes in comparison with expected or planned outcomes. Specifically, REFORM uses RoC (Reflection on Changes) methodology to assess the effectiveness of its approach and interventions. The RoC methodology consists of the following steps:

- 1- Before the project has begun: We develop a baseline together with the participants/potential participants of the project using methods of participant action research (PAR).
- 2- 3 months into the project: We allow participants to reflect on changes that they see and feel in their personalities and among their community.
- 3- 6 months into the project: We allow external evaluators to reflect on the changes that they see in the target groups and their surroundings.
- 4- 3 months after the first year of the project: We track personal and societal changes and document observations by undertaking action research if needed.

The Reflection on Changes (RoC) methodology is a unique monitoring and evaluation framework that was developed by REFORM with supervision by GIZ to adequately reflect the needs of the organisation and its beneficiaries as well as the contexts in which REFORM works.