International Conference: Geographies of Aid Intervention in Palestine

Recent scholarship has highlighted the little effectiveness of the aid industry in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territories, and even its complicity in sustaining the Israeli occupation. A blind faith in economic development to keep alive the “peace process”, as well as the dominant “post-conflict” framework that has shaped most developmental interventions since the Oslo accords, have contributed to bury the root causes and socio-political realities of the Palestinian colonial context. Less research has been done about the developmental micro-geographies of aid intervention and the ways in which these practices are negotiated, implemented, and contested. The aim of this conference is thus to critically explore the ways in which aid intervention reshapes the socio-political, spatial, economic, and environmental relations, in addition to thinking about alternative forms of aid that respond to Palestinian needs and rights not only in the West Bank and Gaza Strip but beyond.

Dates | 27/28 September 2010
Venue | Said Khoury Development Studies Hall – Birzeit University
Location | Birzeit, Occupied Palestine
Organizers | Middle East and North Africa Research Group (Ghent University) 
Center for Development Studies (Birzeit University)
Supporter | Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - University Development Cooperation (VLIR-UOS)
Conference Program

Monday 27th September 2010

8:15 – 8:45 | Registration

8:45 – 8:50 | Opening Remarks
Dr. Khalil Hindi - Birzeit University President

8:50 – 9:00 | Opening Remarks
Samia Botmeh, Director of the Centre for Development Studies, Birzeit University
Sami Zemni, Director of the Middle East and North Africa Research Group, Gent University

9:00 – 9:30 | Keynote address
Sara Roy, Harvard University
Perspectives on Palestinian (de-)development

9:30 – 11:30 | Session One: The legacy of Aid in Palestine’s colonial present
Reema Hamami: Birzeit University

Jamil Hilal, Independent Researcher
Civil society in the context of settler-colonialism and the establishment of the PA
Islah Jad, Birzeit University
NGOs and the Depolitization of Palestinian Social Movements
Jalal Al-Huseini, IFPO
The refugee aid industry during Oslo
Rina Jabareen, ADalah
Aid and subjugation: Palestinians inside Israel

11:30 – 11:45 | Coffee break

11:45 – 13:45 | Session Two: Palestine as a humanitarian space
Penny Johnson: Birzeit University

Didier Fassin, Princeton University
The humanitarian politics of testimony
Ilana Feldman, George Washington
Naive humanitarians, exemplary victims, and the limits of humanitarian space
Hassan Jabareen, ADalah
The discursive and spatial performativities of law
Numan Kanafani, University of Copenhagen
The political economy of food aid to Palestine

13:45 – 14:45 | Lunch break
14:45 – 16:45 | **Session Three: Development, Neoliberalism and Security**  
**Nader Said-Fuqahaa: Arab World Research and Development**

- **Mandy Turner**, University of Bradford  
The limits of peace building under Occupation: an analysis of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan
- **Dawood Hamoudi**, Stop the Wall Campaign  
Donor money and Israel’s economic vision
- **Aisling Byrne**, Conflicts Forum  
The development of neo-colonial structures under the guise of state-building
- **Eileen Kuttab**, Birzeit University  
Building a neoliberal citizen: education and the reproduction of aid.

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**Tuesday 28th September 2010**

9:00 – 9:30 | **Keynote address**

- **Patrick Bond**, University of Kwazulu-Natal  
Post-liberation aid, finance and neoliberal public policy: The case of South Africa

9:30 – 11:30 | **Session Four: The political logics of donors (and recipients)**

- **Abed AlRahim Al-Shaikh**, Birzeit University

  - **Khalil Nakhleh**, Independent researcher and writer  
  Development mythology in Occupied Palestinian Authority Areas
  - **Benoît Challand**, the New School for Social Research, New York  
  Foreign donors and the power to promote and exclude
  - **Guy Burton**, Birzeit University  
  Revenue without a cause: Arab financial assistance in Palestine
  - **Ayman Abdel Majeed**, Birzeit University  
  Perceptions of Palestinians towards international aid

11:30 – 11:45 | **Coffee break**

11:45 – 13:45 | **Session Five: Development under occupation**

- **Linda Tabar**: Researcher

  - **Raja Khalidi**, UNCTAD  
The economic dimensions of prolonged occupation: continuity and change in Israeli policy towards the Palestinian economy
  - **Ziyaad Lunat**, EWASH  
  Charting the rapids: The water and sanitation sector under occupation
  - **Hassan Ladadweh**, Birzeit University  
  Facing Palestine’s uneven development
  - **Fathy Khdirat**, Jordan Valley Solidarity  
  The “Eastern Border”: developing Area C
13:45 – 14:45 | Lunch break

14:45 – 16:30 | Session Six: Encountering and contesting the aid regime

Ala Alazzeh: Birzeit University

Iyad El Riyahi, Bisan – Palestinian NGO Network
Palestinian development between sovereignty and dependence – the case of industrial zones in the West Bank.

Ingrid Jaradat Gassner, Badil
Political advocacy: reverting and challenging the neutrality of the aid paradigm

Nora Lester Murad, Dalia
Indigenous resource mobilization for Palestinian-led social change & development

16:30 – 16:45 | Coffee break

16:45 – 17:45 | Session Seven (roundtable discussion): Imagining alternative

Omar Jabari Salamanca: Gent University – Belgium
- Map: Reaching CDS from the University’s Western entrance.