



Palestine

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Research Site: East Jerusalem, Palestine

WHEN I take part in a funeral I become more angry, especially when I come across the sad mother of the martyr ... My mother talks with me about life and how I should be careful. She gives me hope for the future.

— Palestinian boy

Context and Risk Factors:

OUR research site in the Palestinian Occupied Territories is East Jerusalem and Gaza. Palestine is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the west, and by Syria and

Jordan to the east. Palestine is considered the Holy Land for Muslims, Christians and Jews. The population in the Occupied Territories is 2,895,683; 61% (1,733,203) are youth (citizens aged 0-29).¹

AFTER five years of the Intifada (Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation), unemployment has skyrocketed - with a total unemployment rate of 70% in the Gaza Strip and 60% in the West Bank. Since the beginning of the Intifada, more than 500 Palestinian children have been killed and 9,000 have been injured and are living with disabilities.² Primary and secondary health care centers lack equipment and medical staff are subject to enforced restrictions. Many children exhibit signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which affects their ability to cope with continuing major life stressors. Daily adversities faced by youth include death and injury to family and friends, crime, poverty,

malnutrition, frustration and fear, imposed curfews, and home confinement.

Participants: 122 youth from Palestine participated in the study, of which 34% (41) were female and 66% (81) were male. The average age of participants was 16 years, ranging from ages 13 to 21. Most youth who participated in the study were in grade 11, but education levels ranged from grades 7 to 12. The communities of the participants saw the youth as coping well, based on culturally appropriate norms for their behaviour.

What does resilience mean in Palestine?: Qualitative interviews, consisting of nine 'catalyst' questions, were conducted with youth considered by the community to be 'coping well with adversity'. In East Jerusalem and Gaza, youth inside and outside refugee camps were interviewed. All continue to witness clashes between the Palestinian people and the Israeli armed forces. Two young males explained the adversities they face and what it means to be resilient in Palestine. Amid the turmoil, youth have created their own ways to cope with drug addiction, abuse, death and martyrdom including weeping, involvement in youth clubs, searching for support and compassion from their families, and negotiating participatory roles for themselves in community building. Palestinian youth told us for example:

"When I take part in a funeral I become more angry, especially when I come across the sad mother of the martyr. This situation makes us think of death, but since we fear God and feel sorry for our families, we realize the importance of continuing our education and rely on another sort of struggle that is education. My mother talks with me about life and how I should be careful. She gives me hope for the future." (Palestinian boy)



WHAT is the International Resilience Project (IRP)?:

The IRP is a mixed-methods, culturally sensitive approach to understanding how youth around the world effectively cope with the diverse challenges they face. The IRP now has partnerships with researchers and community-based organizations on six continents in over 25 communities. The IRP is currently bringing to a close the first three-year phase of research, in which data were collected with over 1500 children in 14 communities worldwide. East Jerusalem and Gaza, in Palestine, were among those communities. Youth there told us of how they are using diverse methods of communication and coping to give voice to their fears and create positive change in Palestine.



For further information:

For a full discussion of the *International Resilience Project*, please see the accompanying Project Report contained with this package or visit us at our website www.resilienceproject.org

For copies of this report, please contact:

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Studying Resilience:

Teams of international researchers created the content for the **Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)**, a 58-item instrument administered across all 14 research-sites. Local research teams added 15 to 20 contextually and culturally specific questions to the CYRM during its administration in their communities. Questions were scored from 1 (do not at all agree) to 5 (agree a lot) by the youth themselves.

Sample of Palestine CYRM Mean Scores

(Highest, lowest, and largest variance when compared to overall CYRM mean)

Order	CYRM Question listed by Mean Score	Site mean	Global mean	Variance	Color codes
1	Are you proud of your ethnic background? (CYRM 25)	4.8	3.87	0.93	■ ■
2	Is getting an education important to you? (CYRM 10)	4.7	4.35	0.35	■ ■
3	Do you strive to finish what you start? (CYRM 22)	4.5	3.95	0.55	■ ■
4	Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you? (CYRM 24)	4.4	3.13	1.27	■ ■ ■
5	Do you participate in organized religious activities? (CYRM 46)	4	2.71	1.29	■ ■ ■
6	Does your family have a ritual or routine around mealtimes? (CYRM 19)	3.7	2.93	0.77	■ ■ ■
7	Do the teachers and other students make you feel you belong at your school? (CYRM 37)	3	3.61	-0.61	■ ■ ■ ■
8	Are boys and girls both treated fairly in your community? (CYRM 56)	2.6	3.36	-0.76	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
9	Does the older generation understand and tolerate the ideas and strong beliefs of people your age? (CYRM 5)	2.5	2.87	-0.37	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
10	Are members of your family or community who do unacceptable things accepted afterwards? (CYRM 39)	2.2	3.07	-0.87	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
11	Are you comfortable with how you express yourself sexually? (CYRM 18)	1.5	3.31	-1.81	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Overall Mean across 58 CYRM questions		3.54	3.4	0	

■ Highest Site Scores on CYRM ■ Largest Variance Below Global Mean (-)
■ Lowest Site Scores on CYRM ■ Largest Variance Above Global Mean (+)

Palestine CYRM Results:

- Across all 58 measures of the CYRM, Palestine's mean (3.54 out of a possible 5) was higher than the global sample mean. Youth in Palestine placed particular importance (gave the highest scores) to CYRM questions: 25 'Are you proud of your ethnic background?'; 10 'Is getting an education important to you?'; 22 'Do you strive to finish what you start?'; and 24 'Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you?'
- Palestinian youth gave the lowest scores to CYRM questions: 56 'Are boys and girls both treated fairly in your community?'; 5 'Does the older generation understand and tolerate the ideas and strong beliefs of people your age?'; 39 'Are members of your family or community who do unacceptable things accepted afterwards?'; and 18 'Are you comfortable with how you express yourself sexually?'
- When compared to the global sample, Palestinian youth showed the most **positive variance** (scoring higher than the overall mean for youth globally) on questions: 25 'Are you proud of your ethnic background?'; 24 'Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you?'; 46 'Do you participate in organized religious activities?'; and 19 'Does your family have a ritual or routine around mealtimes?'
- Palestinian youth showed the largest **negative variance** (scoring lower than the overall mean for youth globally) on CYRM questions: 37 'Do the teachers and other students make you feel you belong at your school?'; 56 'Are boys and girls both treated fairly in your community?'; 39 'Are members of your family or community who do unacceptable things accepted afterwards?'; and 18 'Are you comfortable with how you express yourself sexually?'

Endnotes

1 Context and risk factors provided by IRP site partner PYALARA (Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation), Palestine.
 2 Palestinian Occupied Territories At a Glance. Unicef. Retrieved November 3, 2005 from Unicef Website: <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/oPt.html>

Palestine Site Specific Question Mean Scores

Site Specific Questions	Mean/5
SSQ 7. Do you think that Palestinian children are carrying responsibilities and grievances bigger than they can handle?	4.3
SSQ 2. Do think that the Israeli Occupation increased the dropout from school?	4.2
SSQ 1. Do think that the Israeli Occupation is an obstacle in your way to achieve your ambition?	4.1
SSQ 6. Do you think that the occupation has created apartheid among the Palestinian people?	4.0
SSQ 4. Is the siege implemented by the Israeli Occupation an obstacle to your connections with friends and relatives in other areas?	3.9
SSQ 5. Do you think Occupation increases delinquency among Palestinian youth?	3.9
SSQ 8. Do you think the separation wall increased the feeling of frustration among the Palestinian youth?	3.9
SSQ 13. Do you think that only military action is the best solution to get rid of the occupation?	3.6
SSQ 3. Did the Israeli Occupation influence your family's economic situation?	3.5
SSQ 20. Do you feel that you become more nervous (violent) because of the current political situation?	3.4
SSQ 14. Do you think that your belonging to a club or to a youth organization is a means of positive struggle against occupation?	3.3
SSQ 19. Did you find new ways to communicate with friends and relatives despite the presence of the checkpoints?	3.2
SSQ 17. Do you consider writing a means of describing your feelings towards the political situation?	3.0
SSQ 10. Do you think that an "I don't care" policy helps you to bear situations created by the occupation?	2.8
SSQ 11. Do you think that participation in marches and throwing stones helps in decreasing your anger?	2.8
SSQ 12. Do you think that negotiations and a peace solution is the only way to get rid of the occupation?	2.7
SSQ 16. Do you think smoking or drugs are means of escaping the political situation?	2.5
SSQ 18. Did you ever think of changing residence or immigration because of the present political situation?	2.5
SSQ 9. Do you think the Israeli Occupation increased your individuality and self-centeredness?	2.4
SSQ 15. Did you have to work because of the miserable conditions?	1.7

The mean score, across all site-specific questions, for the Palestinian site was 3.29 out of a possible 5, which was lower than their overall mean on the 58 globally administered CYRM questions (3.54).

Understanding the Results "Ecologically":

The IRP team reached a consensus that the 58 global CYRM questions could be separated into four unique and important aspects of resilience: *individual traits and characteristics*, *relationship factors*, *community contexts*, and *social and political aspects of culture*. Of the 58 CYRM questions, 23 related to individual traits and characteristics, 7 related to relationship factors, 15 to community contexts, and 12 related to aspects of culture. Focus on these four areas of resilience shows which aspects are most relevant to children's success in difficult contexts. One can see from the chart below which aspects of resilience are more or less important to Palestinian youth when compared to youth across all 14 research-sites.

Four-part Ecological Model:

Gender Comparison of Palestinian Site Means with Overall Sample Means (All Sites)

Ecological Model (Aspects of Resilience)	Site	Global	Girls		Boys	
			Palestine	Global	Palestine	Global
Individual Aspects	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Relationship Aspects	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.3	3.3
Community Aspects	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5
Culture Aspects	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.3