

# Conference sessions and panel overview

## Panel Overview

Panel 1: Diaspora success stories: How other Diasporas have organized to support economic development

This panel will focus on the track record that other diaspora communities have had in supporting economic and social development in their homelands. During the course of the discussion, we will examine particularly successful case examples. We will also examine why diaspora engagement has traditionally been so challenging to do effectively. Key discussion questions for this panel will include:

- What can the global Syrian community learn from successful diaspora models around the world?
- How have other countries, including India, China, and Mexico, been able to leverage their expatriate base to support economic, social, and political development?
- What are best practices for facilitating investment in the homeland (beyond simply remittances) and engagement?

### Moderator:

Hazami Barmada, President and CEO, Al Mubadarah

### Confirmed Panelists:

Dr. Yevgeny Kuznetsov, Economist, World Bank

Panel 2: Enabling and Empowering Syria's Youth: Laying the Foundation for a Stable and Prosperous Present and Future

Syria's young people are the country's greatest asset. They constitute the majority of the population, they are talented and creative, and yet have always been restricted. Poor quality education, low access to the job market, an unsupportive environment for entrepreneurs, and marginalization in political and social life are just a few of the obstacles many young Syrians have been facing. The recent situation has put even more obstacles in the way of young people—disrupting the education and employment of an entire generation of young Syrians. This panel will focus on ways we can collectively support Syria's youth in building a democratic and prosperous Syria, looking particularly at:

- What can be done to address the education crisis unfolding on the ground in Syria today? How can we leverage the internet and global partnerships to support the millions of young Syrians whose education has been disrupted?

- What skills and training can we provide young people in Syria with in order to play a bigger role in reconciliation and peace building? What can we learn from other successful models around the world?
- What can be done to create an enabling environment for young people's genuine political, social and economic participation

**Moderator:**

Professor Nasser Rabbat, Aga Khan Professor, MIT

**Panelists:**

Dr. Rim Turkmani, Astrophysicist, Imperial College London

Mr. Nawaf Zeidan, Director, SKILLS Syria

**Concurrent Panel Two: Rebuilding Syria's Economy: Where do we start and how can we help?**

The economic challenges ahead for Syria are massive. The economy has ground to a halt over the past 18 months. The country's infrastructure and cities have been badly damaged. And perhaps most worrying, the country is experiencing massively accelerating brain drain. This panel will explore and lay out the challenges we face and the priorities we must keep in mind as we begin to rebuild the country. We will also explore models that other post conflict countries have pursued to rebuild their countries. What can we learn from those who have been most successful? What signals and actions are most important for Syria to pursue in the immediate aftermath of the conflict? What type of institutions will be most important for Syria to develop? What role can the global Syrian community play to support the economic recovery? How can we partner with leading global companies and institutions to overcome the challenges the country faces?

**Moderator:**

Professor Omar Dahi, Assistant Professor of Economics at Hampshire College

**Panelists:**

George Saghir: Portfolio Manager

Dr. Zaher Sahloul: President, Syrian American Medical Society

## Working groups

The last segment of the conference will feature 3 concurrent working sessions. The objective of these discussions will be to brainstorm ideas for how the global Syrian community can partner with non-profit organizations and global corporations to affect real change for Syria, both in the short-term and long-term. Some of the ideas generated in these sessions may become Jusoor programs, others may be pursued by other participating organizations at the conference. In other cases, the ideas generated will become part of a body of literature for the type of programs and initiatives we can pursue and will be built on over time by other change agents. Participants will have the opportunity to sign up to participate in the working group focused on the topic they are personally most passionate about.

### WG #1: Using the internet and technology innovation to address the education crisis unfolding in Syria

Experts:

- Mr. Gerald Doyle, Vice Provost, Illinois Institute of Technology
- Ms. Massa Mufti, Education Expert, Syria

This working group will explore ways in which innovative technology can be used to address the challenges facing the millions of students in Syria whose education has been impacted by the current situation. Participants will discuss the following questions: What are the current challenges facing students in Syria today? What are the most pressing priorities to address? Which models have worked effectively in other countries? How can we create and distribute a solution in Syria that has real impact?

### WG #2: Building leadership and conflict resolution skills among Syria's youth

Experts:

- Dr. Rim Turkmani, Astrophysicist, Imperial College London
- Mr. Anas Darkaoui

This working group will explore what programs we can put in place to build trust and unity among the youth in Syria. Participants will discuss the following questions:

- What is the nature of the challenge emerging in Syria? How worried should we be?
- Which programs have been most effective in other countries facing similar conflicts?
- How can we scale these initiatives and efforts?
- With which organizations can we partner?

### WG#3: Mobilizing the global Syrian community to support an economic recovery in Syria

This working group will explore ways in which the global Syrian community can support Syria's economic recovery. The group will also talk through when it makes sense to launch a campaign to support the economy in light of different scenarios around how the current conflict may evolve. Participants will discuss the following questions:

- At what point, can and should we begin to support the economy in Syria? What if the conflict continues on in a perpetual state rather than coming to a decisive resolution?
- What are the most high impact ways the global Syrian community can support economic recovery in the 90 days after the end of the conflict?
- Which global organizations and institutions should we partner with to drive maximum impact?