

Member driven initiative ideas

Below is a set of initiatives that participants at Jusoor's First Annual Conference developed given their areas of interest and passion. They will each be driven by different members of the Jusoor community, rather than the Jusoor Leadership Team. We encourage our membership base to sign up to participate in one of these projects. If you are interested in joining one of these teams, please complete **this form**, and we will connect you to the project's leadership team.

Theme One: Investing in our youth

Project 1.1: Online Teacher Assessment Tool

Overview: One of the main challenges/issues identified by the group on education was related to teachers and the lack of "respect" that goes with being a professional school educator. To solve one aspect of this big problem, the group suggested the creation of a social online platform that allows students and parents and peers to rate teachers in schools. The platform should be independent from any educational institution and would function as a mechanism to allow for transparency and information sharing within the community - as opposed to each school separately - it also incentivises teachers to excel at their jobs in order to achieve high ratings which should lead to better teacher performance and overall general improvement of the perception related to being a teacher.

Project Leaders: Ayham Ahmad, Lana Awad, Nour Nourallah, Ali Hamoudeh, Majd Yassin, Yarah Bedawi, Ihsan Kaadan, Marya Al Saheb

Project 1.2: Mobile Education Trucks

Overview: The idea behind this project is to bring education to the home. The program would involve a couple of trucks -- one for elementary school, others for high school -- to help reinforce basic reading and math skills. The trucks would be manned by community teachers and local volunteers. Local communities around the world would support this program by raising money to buy the trucks as well as educational materials such as school books and computers.

Project leaders: Suha Mahayni, Rania Saghir

Project 1.3: Adopt a School

Communities in different parts of the world would adopt a school in Syria and could support the school in many different ways: financially to provide physical needs like school supplies, uniforms, books, computers and by helping to develop the curriculum (e.g., language, extracurricular programming) and mentoring students. Each year, the community adopting the school could do a needs assessment with the school's principal and local advocates. In addition, the community adopting the school to reach out to local schools in their own areas to see if they also wanted to jointly adopt the schools in Syria.

Project leader: Suha Mahayni

Project 1.4: Teacher Engagement for Refugee Camps

Project overview: The objective of this program is to help Syrian children in refugee camps continue their education and to work closely with them to help them recover from the troubling conditions they experienced in their homes before fleeing to the camps and the harsh living conditions in the camps. In order to achieve this, we will focus on training teachers -- either individuals who were previously teachers before leaving Syria or individuals who had completed 3-4 years in university already. The working committee will work with the teacher volunteers to select the curriculum for the program. In order to achieve its objectives, the program will require at least 20 laptops for teachers to use, to make the program as engaging as possible for the children. The idea of collaborating with NuVu Studioon this project was discussed.

Next steps: Select a refugee camp in Turkey and begin by identifying teachers to work with in the camp.

Program leaders: Fahed Alhaj Mohamad, Maya Alkateb, Jerry Doyle

Project 1.5: Research Outposts

Overview: Creating research outposts in various cities throughout Syria with the involvement of think tanks/research institutes from around the world but to not only produce research but to benefit and involve the local Syrian community in the form of internships and research fellowships. This collaboration would create an exchange of information. The research partner or institute would commit to coming to the outpost and making their research available in addition to providing fellowships, mentorships and internships. These research outposts would also teach critical thinking to Syrians how to doubt and challenge ideas and not take them as given.

Next Steps:

- Contact established institutes and think tanks, liaison with these institutes and those on the ground in Syria interested in creating such research outposts.
- Funding would also be a critical first step to fund the project, funding would come from companies, foundations and universities.
- Find a local partner/NGO: find a location, no state involvement this should be a completely independent institution/NGO/partner.

Project Leaders: Zainab Abjerf, Bochra Kurabi, Nour Daoud, Tarek Al-Hariri

Theme Two: How the global Syrian community can support the country's economy**Project 2.1: Brain Trust**

Overview: Any future Syrian government will face the insurmountable challenge of rebuilding a country that has been devastated by a lengthy and ravishing war. Moreover, there is a lack of necessary expertise in the country due to the “brain drain” phenomenon that Syria has suffered from in the past few decades.

Therefore, this committee will be working on establishing a Brain Trust that brings together a select group of the brightest minds of the Syrian diaspora, with diverse professional backgrounds and proven track records in their fields of expertise. The group will act as an advisory board to the government on the issues of rebuilding the economy, educational system, healthcare, infrastructure, and government institutions and services.

Next steps: The Brain Trust working group formed at Jusoor's First Annual Global Conference will be continuously meeting until May 2013. We aim to fully define and articulate the Brain Trust's mission, goals, and its operational guidelines in that time period, and to establish the Brain Trust itself with minimal delay.

Project Leaders: George Saghir, Fadi Al Batal, and Abdul Barazi.

Project 2.2: Job Creation Investment Fund

Overview: Establish a \$50 million investment fund to support job creation in Syria. The investments would be made according to different objectives--ranging from investments that are largely focused on creating return for investors to investments that purely drive social benefit.

All investments would be done with the objective of driving job creation in Syria, through a combination of support to large enterprises and SMBs. The fund's primary opportunities will be in the support of existing businesses that have been historically successful, but are in need of immediate capital infusions. We believe that working with existing companies will be the fastest method of bringing back jobs that already existed.

Next steps: The idea is to draw up a viable structure and governance model for the fund over the coming month, and begin fundraising thereafter from the Syrian expatriate community. The fund will only begin making commitments once the situation in Syria has stabilized.

Project Leaders: Mark Saadine and Omar Jabri

Project 2.3: Creating an online forum to link Syrians

Overview: Create a database to facilitate the objective of Syrians helping each other in various ways. This database would allow Syrians to register their profiles and backgrounds and how they would be interested in helping other Syrians. Those searching for job, new connections, or expertise / consultation, could then search the database by profession, location, expertise, etc. to identify individuals who might be able to help them. The group discussed several important considerations that need to be taken into account in planning this project. First, it is very important to find a way to protect the personal information of those signing up to the database. Second, in addition to the development of the database, a team needs to be put in place to monitor it and maintain it. The final consideration was around how the database would differ from existing social networks that we might tap into.

Project Leaders: Omar Shaya, Fadi Al Batal

Project: 2.4: No to Corruption

لا للفساد

الفساد هو ظاهره اجتماعية اصبحت وللأسف حدث يومي مقبول لدى جميع طبقات وفئات الشعب السوري.

الفساد يتضمن الرشوة والواسطة.

فلا حرية مع الفساد

ولا اقتصاد ناجح مع الفساد

ولا تقدم بالعلم مع الفساد.

الشعب كله سواسيه. لافرق بين غني أوفقير، مسؤول اومزارع، بائع او موظف،

الكل عليه واجبات وله حقوق على الجميع احترامها.

السؤال هنا؟ كيف تغير مجتمعا بكامله.

الكل يقول هذا مستحيل.

وانا اقول بعدما رأيت الشعب السوري يقف تحت زخ الرصاص امام المخابز ينتظر دوره، بان الأمل كبير.

رابطات التواصل الاجتماعي هي الوسيلة الأسهل لتحقيق هذه المبادرة الأهم.

اقترح

تشكيل جمعيه عبر شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي تتألف من مليون سوري يؤمنون بانه لا حرية ولا تقدم الا بمجتمع يرفض الفساد.

سوف أتقدم باقتراح بعد التشاور مع ذوي الخبره الاجتماعية لتحديد المسار

Project Leader: Bashar Succar

Theme Three: Building a Strong Expatriate Community

Project 3.1: Engage as many Syrians as possible in Jusoor's mission

Overview: Syrians are dispersed around the world, and we need to find a way to reach as many of them as possible with our message and to engage them. There are several ideas on how we might do so, including:

- Sustained outreach campaign targeting different expatriate communities in different countries/regions with tailored models.

- Using facts and figures about our achievements and exploit the fact that Syrians like to do what other Syrians do.
- Exploit mouth to mouth + media
- Buying ads
- Meetings in colleges and reaching out to student councils that can contribute for specific events.

The key enablers identified to making this work are: (1) defining a clear message and remaining very transparent, (2) partnering with other Syrian expatriate organizations, (3) promoting volunteerism among our membership, (4) ensuring the website is extremely clear and easy to navigate.

Next Steps: This working group will partner with Jusoor on outreach and membership expansion efforts.

Project Leaders: Munif Atassi and Haifaa Awad