

Infusing Hope with Tangible Projects

Observations for the Syrian Diaspora

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Motivation: What First Movers from Diaspora Can Do

Padraig O'Malley of the Irish diaspora develops a peace process project.

In 1997, with funding from the [Ireland Funds](#) and with the endorsement of Nelson Mandela, the negotiators from *all* the warring factions of the Northern Ireland were brought to South Africa for a week-long deliberation with the negotiators from *all* the parties from South Africa that had reached South Africa's historic settlement in 1994. The trip to South Africa and the dialogue there – South Africans sharing their experiences and Northern Ireland identifying with different aspects of those experiences and sharing their own created a bond between the two, facilitating an open line of communication, and thus a process of indirect negotiations between the Northern Ireland factions. This conference and the ongoing behind the scenes dialogue that followed were a contributing factor to the Northern Ireland peace agreement in 1998.

Top Skilled Emigration Countries

Stock of tertiary-educated foreign-born residents in OECD (2005)

Rank	Country of birth	Number of expatriates
1	India	1,660,952
2	Take a Guess	1,199,823
3	Philippines	1,179,475
4	China	1,002,269
5	Mexico	774,991
6	Russia	684,337
13	USA	323,493
14	Taiwan	301,822
27	Ireland	186,460
41	Argentina	117,027
87	Syria	43,297

Egypt: a Case of Institutional Reform

Coptic Orphans: transforming traditional charity

- After visiting Coptic orphanages in Egypt, an Egyptian American began fundraising among US Coptic Churches with unexpected success... and founded Coptic Orphans
- Innovation transfer through existing network:
 - Program to pair volunteer women from the local community with younger girls, who receive financial assistance.
 - Introduced de-institutionalization through support of at-risk families
 - Quality control of assisted kids, capacity building, financial reporting.
 - Established offices in Cairo, Australia, Canada and US, funding directly hundreds of local Coptic Churches in Egypt.
- Leveraging heterogeneity through commonalities:
 - Egypt: Trusted institution, global network, shared values, clear needs
 - Diaspora: Financial capacity, search for identity, will to “share fortune”

Creating quality in tertiary education

Ashesi-University, Ghana:

- Ghanaian-American Microsoft Millionaire moved back to Ghana in order to establish an Ivy-league quality university
- Systematic use of home and residence country search networks: Feasibility –study realized by UC-Berkeley MBA's, Funding from foundations, well-established Ghanaians on advisory board
- First mover: “ *The old way of the state providing tertiary education for everybody who wants is obviously not sustainable* ”

Potfolio approach: Diasporas elaborate projects with various degrees of risk and impact

- Low risk- low impact: Traditional charity and cultural agenda. “Painting churches”. Giving away money and going home. Conferences and talks.
- Medium risk- medium-impact Talking development policy. FDI, skill transfers, export linkages, image building, investment climate, support for educational and health reforms.
- High risk – high impact Agent of change. High impact projects. Taking the risk. Being a first mover.

Some conclusions...

Exclusiveness

Nourishing

Accept and
learn from failure

Small group of dedicated Champions

Tangible Projects

Institutionalisation

Venture Capital Logic:
Support a Portfolio of projects :

Sources of Good Practice for Syria

Ireland Funds (Kingsley Aikins, former
CEO_
Good practice in the Middle East
(Diaspora program at GWU, G.
Brinkerhoff, Director)