



Diasporas in Action

Working together for peace, development
and humanitarian response

Diaspora Learning Network Conference

26-27 September 2018, University of Melbourne, Australia

The *Diasporas in Action: Working together for peace, development and humanitarian response* conference will be held in Melbourne, Australia, on 26-27 September 2018 and will bring innovative ideas and fresh perspectives from Australia and internationally about the ways in which diasporas contribute to peace-building, development and humanitarian responses.

The first ever diaspora conference in Australia – “*Diasporas in Action: Working together for peace, development and humanitarian response*” was convened in 2016 by the Diaspora Learning Network and raised awareness about why diasporas are engaged in peace-building, humanitarian and development work and the distinct role they can play. A [conference report](#) was published following this event, and the outcomes of the conference have also informed a series of seminars that will be held throughout the first half of 2018.

This second diaspora conference will focus on the ways in which diasporas support peace, reconciliation, humanitarian action and development goals. Bringing together diaspora representatives, NGOs, academics, government, donors and others, the conference will explore how diasporas contribute to peace, reconciliation, development and humanitarian efforts in multiple contexts such as their countries of origin, sites of displacement and third countries. Exploring mechanisms and strategies for action, the ultimate aim of the conference is to enhance understandings of diaspora engagement and improve partnerships between diasporas and donors, international organisations and affected communities with the overall goal of improved responses.

Diasporas are significant players in peacebuilding, reconciliation, development and humanitarian crisis responses contributing in a number of ways through transferring skills, knowledge and remittances. However, these actions have both intended and unintended impacts. Strategies used by diaspora to influence outcomes in their country of origin or host countries reflect complex intersections of nationality, ethnicity, religious/political affiliations, gender, professional networks, and trajectories of displacement. As a result, research suggests that strategies used by diaspora groups to influence peace, development



and humanitarian outcomes are dynamic and contextual. These issues will be discussed over the 2-day conference through:

1. Presentations of Diaspora Learning Network seminar findings and recommendations;
2. Diasporas presenting their engagement in countries of origin, transit and Australia;
3. Academic perspectives on opportunities and challenges of working with diasporas;
4. Discussion on how to enhance diaspora contributions, including in collaboration with cross-sector actors; and
5. Perspectives of international organisations on working with diasporas.

Conference streams include:

- Methods and modalities utilised by diasporas to contribute to peace, development, humanitarian response - how do they create change in countries of origin and what is different to other actors? (e.g. remittances, political influence, operating through personal contacts and family structures, etc)
- Ways in which diaspora link with existing peacebuilding mechanisms, humanitarian or other emergency assistance e.g. lobbying to influence policies/interactions between countries of destination and origin
- Factors impacting/ influencing diasporas mobilisation – collective identity, origin country context, national and transnational structures for engagement, enabling/inhibiting factors in the places where diasporas reside and maintain connections.
- Opportunities for constructive/proactive engagement and cooperation (including risks and pitfalls) between diasporas and other actors

Key note speakers

Cindy Horst – Research Director at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

Mingo Heiduk Tetsche – Head of Unit, Diaspora Global Unit, Danish Refugee Council

Fadi Al-Dairi – Country Director, Hand in Hand for Syria.

Call for papers

Speakers are invited to submit geographic or thematic submissions for consideration.



Sponsorship

The conference organisers are seeking expressions of interest from organisations who wish to sponsor the 2018 Conference. For further information on sponsorship options please contact Denise Goldfinch ed@diasporaaction.org.au

Location and timing

The conference will be held at the University of Melbourne on 26 - 27 September 2018.

For more information

Contact: conference@diasporaaction.org.au

Diasporas in Action: Working together for peace, development and humanitarian response