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The Forum for Cities in Transition: An Initiative of the Moakley Chair of Peace and Reconciliation

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The Forum for Cities in Transition

an initiative of the Moakley Chair of Peace and Reconciliation
McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies
University of Massachusetts Boston

Background

The Forum for Cities in Transition (FCT)

FCT is an international network of mayors, councillors, municipal officials, business people, and representatives of the voluntary and community sector.

The Forum works on the principle that cities that are in conflict or have emerged from conflict (divided societies) are in the best position to help other cities in similar situations.

The Forum for Cities in Transition was founded by Professor Padraig O'Malley as an initiative of the John Joseph Moakley Chair of Peace and Reconciliation at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Approaches and Methods



FCT Women's Forum

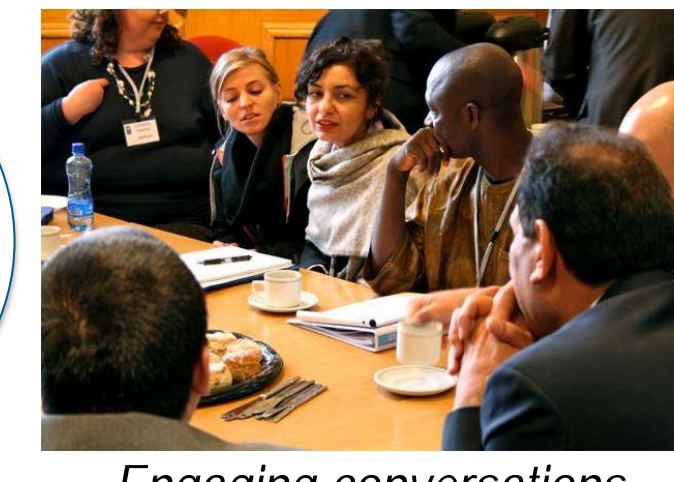


FCT Youth Forum



Site Visit to a local utility company (also to schools, business centers, religious/cultural centers, historical sites)

Tangible Outcomes At Conferences



Engaging conversations



Workshop Sessions

Impacts

Outcomes

The forum is grounded in their being tangible outcomes at each conference, a commitment made by each city to carrying out a project that will further transition, reconciliation, and development in the city itself or one of its sister cities where its expertise in a particular area can be of significant benefit to that city or make reciprocal arrangements with one or a number of other cities to carry out joint projects.

Over 20 projects pledged at 2012 Conference

Types of Outcomes Include:

- Business regeneration and Investment opportunities
- Police and security trainings
- Strengthening community engagement
- Education and cultural exchanges

Participant Reflections

Derry~Londonderry: "Presence of people from cities with significantly greater problems than our own. In NI I think we can lose perspective on our own challenges without realizing that others face much greater ones."

"I heard many stories from individuals, which were similar to my own, from cities that I had only knowledge of from news briefings. The issues are, by and large, the same and to know that I have not gone through this in isolation is satisfying."

Belfast: "Listening to other cities describe their situation helped me to appreciate how far we have progressed in NI but also highlighted the cultural and political differences and complexities in other divided cities"

Tripoli: "When people discovered that there are a lot of common issues within other cities, it challenged us to analyze more what are the specifications of the conflict in our city. And going again to the others, we discovered that the expression of the issues may be different but the core of the conflict is quite alike, the thing that gave us the opportunity of having the feedback that usually does not exist or lightly exists when we analyze our own context"

Core Activities and Defining Principles

FCT's Core Activity: An Annual Meeting

Each city, on a rotating basis, hosts its sister cities, to share where it was during the phase of conflict, where it is now and what its aspirations are for furthering reconciliation among its previously warring communities during the ongoing process of transition. The **goal** is to establish **tangible outcomes** at each annual meeting.

Defining Principles of FCT's Activities:

1. People from divided societies are best positioned to help people in other divided societies;
2. Cities which are/were at epicentre of conflicts in their countries are in a special position to assist each other;
3. Securing the initially established peace can be fostered by citizens of divided cities working together;
4. A reciprocal process: Cities on higher rungs of transition can assist those on lower rungs; helping sister cities is reminder of own processes of transition and reconciliation – guided by the past, present, future.

FCT is an OUTCOMES BASED APPROACH, not a series of conferences

May 2010, 1st Annual Conference, Mitrovica:

9 cities (75 people): Nicosia, Mostar, Beirut, Kirkuk, Jerusalem, Haifa, Belfast, Derry~Londonderry, and Mitrovica.

May 2011, 2nd Annual Conference, Derry~Londonderry:

9 cities continuing, Ramallah, Mitte (Berlin) and Kaduna (Nigeria) join (12 cities total)

October 2012, 3rd Annual Conference, Kirkuk, Iraq:

12 cities continuing, Baghdad and Tripoli (Lebanon) join (14 cities total)

October 2013, 4th Annual Conference, Kaduna, Nigeria



Derry-Londonderry, 2nd Annual Conference



Telling their stories, voices of hope

References and Resources

FCT's Website: www.citiesintransition.net

FCT's Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/citiesintransition>

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