

Over the past decade, IOM the Netherlands facilitated over 800 assignments for Diaspora experts via its programme Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN), funded by The Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The programme offers a window for diaspora professionals to contribute to the social and economic development of selected countries by facilitating the temporary return of qualified nationals residing in the Netherlands (or other EU countries). The project focusses on capacity building in sectors and areas identified by nine target countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Cape Verde, Georgia, Ghana, Iraq, Morocco, Somalia and Sudan.

In these countries there is a great need for skills, expertise and experience in a variety of sectors, such as agriculture, health and education. The TRQN project makes the required knowledge and skills available by providing temporary return assignments to qualified nationals.

Through this transfer they also have an added value as catalysts for long term change. In this way diaspora engagement can help with an effective capacity building of local organizations. The TRQN project also offers internships and training opportunities for selected staff of host institutions and government officials.

In the Summer of 2015, IOM will publish a brochure with personal experiences from TRQN participants, Host Institutions and receiving governments. For more information: <http://www.iom-nederland.nl/en/migration-and-development/temporary-return>

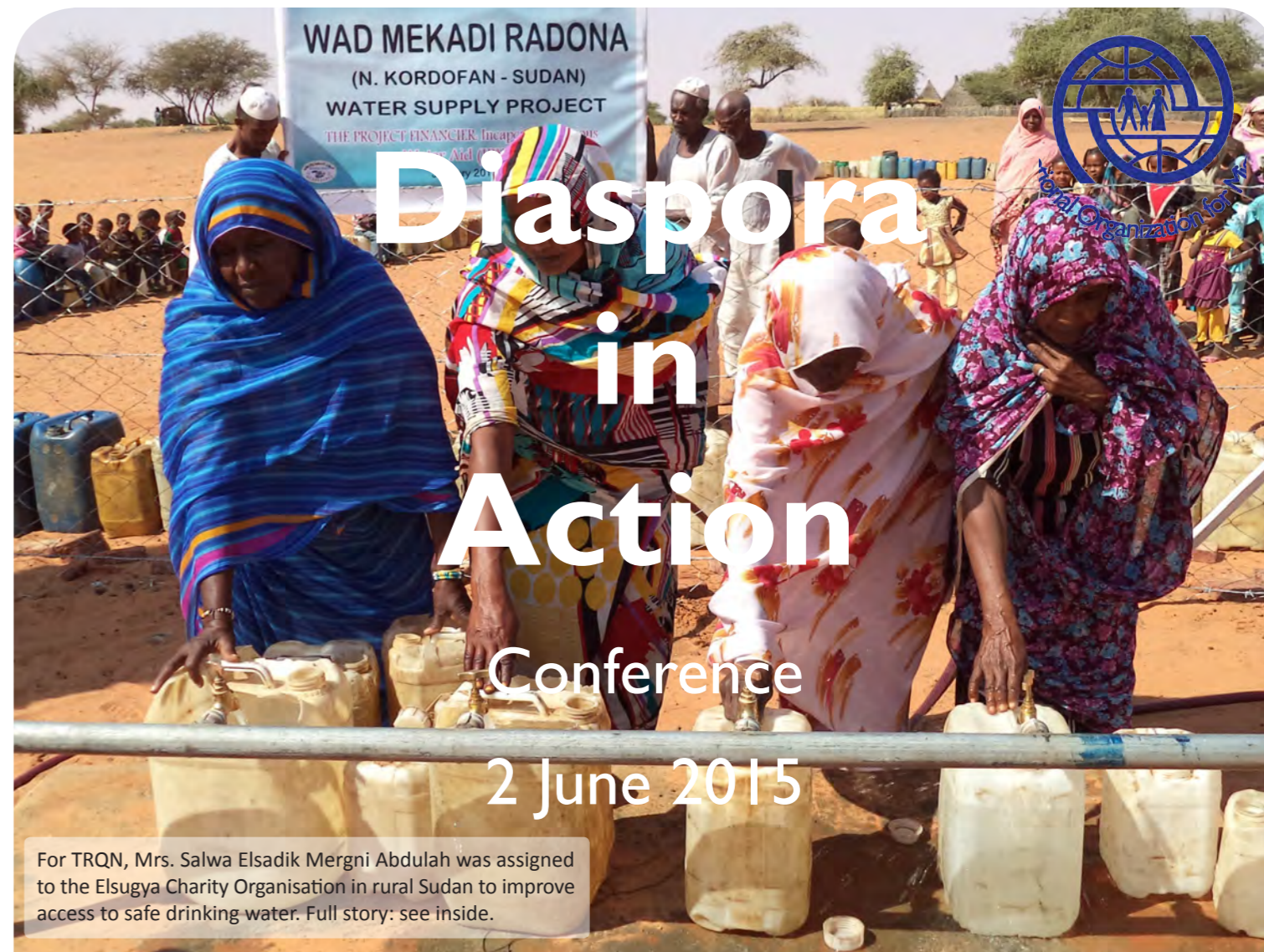
The Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN III) project has a three year duration and runs until 30 November 2015. IOM the Netherlands coordinates the project in close cooperation with IOM offices and governments in the target countries.

IOM has over 30 years of experience with programmes aimed at temporary assignments of qualified nationals in countries of origin. IOM the Netherlands builds in particular on its good results gained during the first and second phase of the TRQN project. In addition, IOM the Netherlands coordinated other migration and development projects such as a health focused project in Ghana (MIDA Ghana Health III) and diaspora engagement in Cabo Verde (Diaspora for Development of Cabo Verde).

For TRQN, ICT specialist Evans Boadi from the Netherlands introduced a secure wireless network and an effective management system in the hospital in the Brong Ahafo Region in Ghana.

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For TRQN, Mrs. Salwa Elsadik Mergni Abdulah was assigned to the Elsugya Charity Organisation in rural Sudan to improve access to safe drinking water. Full story: see inside.

Maximizing the positive relationship between migration and development has long been a focus of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). It is especially relevant now, in this era of unprecedented mobility.

Engaging diaspora communities with their countries of origin is an important aspect of the global work of IOM. Migrants and their descendants are connected to their country of residence, but also to their country of origin. They can become humanitarian actors in crisis situations, entrepreneurs in business, trade and innovation, as well as international experts. This makes them powerful actors of social and economic development of their country of origin. Governments are aware of this and are increasingly developing a diaspora policy to facilitate the contributions of migrants.

IOM has over 30 years of experience with programmes involving temporary assignments of members of diaspora communities in their country of origin.

With the project Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN), IOM the Netherlands acts as facilitator and mediator between the diaspora and institutions in the countries of origin. The project aims to embed the knowledge and expertise of migrants and their descendants for the reconstruction and development of their country of origin. Through the continued involvement of these experts, even after their assignments, bridges between institutions in the Netherlands and the countries of origin are built and linkages are maintained.

Personal stories from TRQN participants living and working in the Netherlands about their assignments in the nine participating countries.

The Fine Arts are Flourishing

Fine Arts in Afghanistan used to face many difficulties due to internal political conflicts. More recently, an interest in national culture and Fine Arts is becoming more popular. Professor Sharif Azizyar established a master curriculum for the Fine Arts faculty of Kabul University.

“During my assignment, I trained 42 Master students and the majority graduated the following year. Thanks to the TRQN project, this is the first time in the history of Afghanistan that students graduated from the Fine Arts faculty with a Master’s degree.”

Afghanistan

Sharif Azizyar,
Professor in Fine Arts
Host institution:
Kabul University

Hope and Relief in Emergency Situations

Over 1, 5 million internally displaced persons are searching for safety in the Kurdish region of Iraq. Hundreds of refugee camps are situated in cities like Erbil and Dohuk as violence continues throughout the country. The majority of these families are in urgent need of medical care, food, shelter, and relief supplies. However, the medical facilities cannot cope with the large numbers of people.

Dr. Zhian Sarraj feels responsible to set an example for other colleagues to follow. Mrs. Sarraj provided health care services to the displaced population and trained local health workers. Furthermore, she taught western doctors how to interact with refugees, so they got a better understanding of Middle Eastern patients.

Iraq

Zhian Sarraj,
Occupation Health Specialist
Host institution:
Ministry of Health



Water Management in Rural Sudan

Access to clean water presents a critical humanitarian gap in Sudan, particularly in rural areas. Officially, 30 percent of the population does not have access to clean water, but these percentages are much higher for the rural population. Mrs. Salwa Elsadik Mergni Abdulah was assigned to the Elsugya Charity Organisation to improve access to safe drinking water. Salwa provided training on water quality assessment, water quality protection and monitoring. Through knowledge transfer, Mrs. Elsadik Mergni Abdulah could give something back to her country of origin.



Sudan

Salwa Elsadik Mergni Abdulah,
Water Management Expert
Host institution:
Elsugya Charity Organisation

Zero Tolerance towards Female Genital Mutilation

Somalia has the highest number of cases in which female genital mutilation (FGM) is documented. According to the World Health Organization, 98 percent of the female population between the age of 15 and 49 is circumcised. Initially, the Ministry of Health proposed a strategic plan to introduce a less harmful form of FGM. However, Mrs. Jihan Salad advocated for a zero tolerance approach. “I explained to the Ministers why a zero tolerance approach is more effective in order to tackle health problems related to female genital mutilation. I was able to convince health workers and Ministers of this approach. I adjusted the initial strategic plan which has been approved by the Ministry of Health.”

Somalia

Jihan Salad, Public Health Specialist
Host institution: Ministry of Health

Bringing Education to the Next Level

Schools in Cape Verde are introducing innovative teaching methods. With the help of Angela Gomes, three ‘Digital Education’ projects were introduced. “The focus is on the students between the age of six and sixteen, but the teachers are also the focal point of the project,” says Mrs. Gomes.

Her contribution to the development of Cape Verde aims for two levels. Looking at the short term effects, students are trained how to make use of computers and the internet. “Nowadays we live in a digital world. It is our duty to prepare the children to take part and get the most out of it,” explains Angela Gomes.

Cape Verde

Angela Gomes,
Communication Specialist
Host institution:
Happy Children Foundation



Advising About Management Identity

Abdelilah Boulal is on a fourth assignment contributing to the improvement of youth detention centers for girls between the age of twelve and eighteen. With his knowledge and expertise in pedagogy Mr. Boulal facilitated trainings for the staff of the detention centres. Also, he trains teachers to get the girls back on track through vocational education. When girls reach the age of eighteen, they can no longer stay in youth detention. But a continuation of their care remains and may prevent the girls from falling back into their old habits.

Most detainees have little or no contact with their parents. By getting parents involved in the rehabilitation process contact with the families can often be restored. The ‘International Day of the Parents’ which was introduced as a result of this project serves as an example of their involvement.

Morocco

Abdelilah Boulal,
Advisor, Trainer, Consultant
Host Institution: Ministère
de la fonction publique

“This has been a wonderful experience”

Healthcare-associated infections (HAI) pose a major public health problem. Annually, hundreds of millions of patients are affected by healthcare-associated infections worldwide.

According to Dr. Olga Ohanjanyan: “the frequency of HAI is two to three times higher in lower-middle-income countries such as Armenia than in high-income countries as the Netherlands. This is mostly due to limited availability of data.” Mrs. Ohanjanyan trained epidemiologists from three hospitals to reduce the number of HAI. “This has been a great experience. It is special being able to do something in return.”

Armenia

Dr. Olga Ohanjanyan, Epidemiologist
Host institution: Ministry of Health

Equal Access to Health Care

The regional hospital in the Brong Ahafo Region is situated in the capital Sunyani. Since the number of patients continues to grow, the hospital is in need of a secure wireless network and an effective ICT management system. ICT specialist Evans Boadi advises the hospital on improving the ICT system, a firewall and a proper back-up system. “I am currently searching for Dutch

Ghana

Evans Boadi, ICT specialist
Host institution:
Regional Hospital Sunyani

ICT companies and hospitals that would like to support assignments to Ghana via TRQN.” For Mr. Evans Boadi, access to health care is one of the primary reasons why he enjoys participating in the TRQN project: “I want to make health care accessible for both poor and rich Ghanaians.”

Georgia

TRQN participant: Rusudan Graham, English teacher
Host institution: Ministry of Education and Science

Making Teaching more Effective

Not only qualified diaspora members residing in the Netherlands can apply for the TRQN project. IOM the Netherlands has also facilitated assignments for migrants living in other EU countries.

“I could share the knowledge and experience that I gained in the UK through the Master’s programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The participating teachers gained new skills and insights which will make their teaching more effective and fruitful. I was delighted to witness the teachers rapidly improving their professional skills over the course of the training programme.”

