

Contributions of the Turkish Diaspora in the United States

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Abstract

Meryem Senay Ataselim looks at current trends in philanthropic giving to Turkey among the Turkish diaspora community in the United States and the motivations behind this giving. Her research is set against the backdrop of recent increases in the number of Turkish diaspora organizations in the United States, the pace of development of Turkey's nonprofit sector, and the perception that contributions from the Turkish diaspora are an important funding source for this development.

The objections most often cited by Turkish donors for not giving to Turkey include: difficulty in identifying appropriate organizations and monitoring their performance; lack of accountability and transparency, and professionalism in Turkey's nonprofit sector; the fact that donations do not always go to the projects for which they were given; and that gifts to Turkey often do not qualify for tax deductions.

Ms. Ataselim maintains that Turkish diaspora organizations will need to address these objections if they wish to put down roots and to tap the giving potential of the Turkish American community. Her recommendations to the organizations include:

- Give preference to projects that are replicable and that reflect community needs;
- Take advantage of electronic technologies to network and reach out to donors;
- Provide donors with information about the organizations and the results of the projects they support;
- Ask for money—despite a cultural shyness about the subject, asking for money is critical; and
- Practice due diligence to ensure that donor dollars are spent wisely toward the projects for which they are intended.

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