



MOVEMENT FOR  
NEW ASSYRIA

# From Aid To Trade

An Economic System for  
Assyrian National Revival



## A Path to Self-Reliance

The Movement for New Assyria sprung out of the realization that Assyrians have been stuck in the false belief that our future depends on others. That is why we have worked to spread the concept of national self-reliance among the Assyrian public since our inception in 2018.

In this report, we are introducing a concept through which impactful Assyrian self-reliance can be practiced. We are suggesting an economic system that leverages our collective economic power for the advancement of our national goals. We believe this system has the potential to spur new momentum for our nation and we invite everyone to become part of it.

Hiruthaydan b'idan – Khirutan b'idan – ܚܝܪܘܬܐܝܕܢ ܒܝܕܢ – ܟܝܪܘܬܐܝܕܢ  
Movement for New Assyria

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## Pinpointing the Problem – Identifying the Real Reason For Our Decline

Most Assyrians will agree that our mass emigration to the west is jeopardizing our nation's future. But few have tried to pinpoint the main driver of this emigration and even fewer have suggested how to stop it.

Assyrians have been emigrating from all parts of Assyria for more than one hundred years. The exodus has been relentless and all attempts aimed at halting it have been fruitless. While wars, attacks and systematic oppression are often times mentioned as being the main reasons for the exodus, the facts point in another direction.

### **Economic hardship – the real driver of emigration**

While there's no denying that different forms of oppression have contributed to the exodus of Assyrians from their land, we claim that the economic factor has been the real driver. But While economic

hardship has driven the bulk of the emigration it has received far less attention than attacks and violence.

This same economic hardship has pushed millions of Arabs, Turks, Kurds and others to also emigrate, groups that, unlike Assyrians, are in majority and are not exposed to the same oppression and attacks Assyrians have been exposed to. To make the point even clearer; Kurdish groups have ruled Northern Iraq since almost four decades but the Kurdish emigration from the area is among the highest in the entire Middle East.

There is no denying that some of the economic hardship has been purposefully engineered by occupying powers to diminish the Assyrian presence, as is evident in Northern Iraq. But such schemes still do not account for the bulk of the exodus over the decades.



## Local Emigration – the Elephant In the Room

One type of emigration from Assyria that is seldom highlighted is what could be called local emigration. It consists of Assyrians emigrating from their ancestral villages and towns to other parts of the occupying state, or nearby states in search of better opportunities.

The Assyrian population in the Turabdin region for example is estimated at only 2-3 thousand individuals. Meanwhile, the Assyrian population in all of Turkey is estimated to be more than 20 thousand. The Assyrians living in cities like Istanbul are there mainly as a result of lack of economic opportunities in Turabdin. Similar patterns existed in Iraq, where more Assyrians were living in Baghdad than in the Assyrian region.

Similarly, millions of Kurds have migrated from the south east of Turkey in search of jobs in other Turkish regions.

This local emigration pattern is further proof that, far from popular belief, it is economic hardship, rather than attacks and oppression, that is the real enemy. Acknowledging that the economy has been and continues to be the main driver of Assyrian emigration is the first step in addressing this issue which is so decisive for the future of the nation. Unlike oppression and outright attacks that may be difficult to protect ourselves against, economic hardship is an enemy Assyrians are increasingly well equipped to combat, as this report aims to show.



## The Lack of Results Speak for Themselves

How have Assyrians tried to halt the exodus from Assyria? The answer, since many decades, has been to send aid to our fellow countrymen back home.

Aid based work has been a feature of the Assyrian national movement since its inception. It was among the first endeavors of the early Assyrian diaspora communities from the start of the 1900 century. This beautiful tradition of benevolence has continued since then and increased as the ranks of the Assyrian diaspora has swelled. Today, a number of well-established

Assyrian organizations operate, implementing projects of different sizes, domains and geographic parts of the Assyrian homeland.

Yet, despite more than a century of Assyrian aid, there is very little results to show for it. If the aim of the aid has been to stem the tide of emigration it has proved to be mostly inadequate and insufficient. The fact that Assyrians have continued to emigrate despite an increase in aid projects over the past decades serves as proof. In fact, it appears that some of the villages receiving the most aid have also experienced some of the highest emigration rates.



# Why Aid Can Never Solve the Problem

It is relevant to ask why aid work has proven insufficient in halting the emigration. The answer has to do with the nature of aid itself.

An individual with no job and poor financial means lacks many things – not one thing. Handing out bags of food every now and then, Christmas presents to their children once a year, and fixing the village generator is welcome relief – but it changes nothing in the fundamental situation of the individual. He or she will remain stuck in economic hardship and feelings of despair.

Such one-off targeted interventions can never substitute for economic

agency where the individual has the means to earn his or her own income and take care of their own needs. In some respect, aid work deprives people of their agency, turning them into passive receivers.

Aid organizations, no matter their resources, can never sustain all the needs of an entire population. Aid organizations always need to make difficult choices as the needs are always much bigger than the available resources. And in the case of Assyrians, the aid resources are miniscule compared to the enormous needs. It is no wonder then that the Assyrian exodus has continued unabated throughout the decades despite all aid efforts.

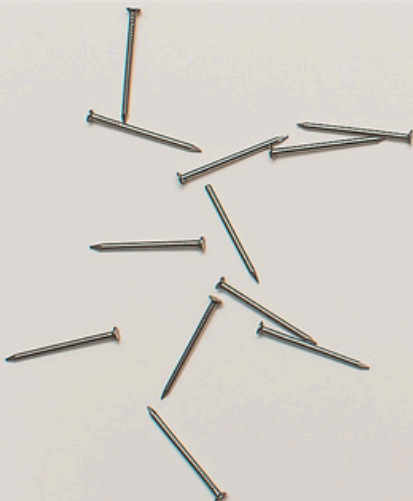


## For Someone With Only a Hammer, Everything Looks Like a Nail

The willingness of Assyrian organizations to do something for the nation is enviable, but the means should change to something that has real potential. The truth is that no amount of aid work will be able to halt the exodus. Yet, despite this simple and self-evident fact, we as a collective continue down this dead-ended path. New initiatives pop up each year aimed at implementing aid projects. It seems as if Assyrians are unable to think of another way despite the evident failure of the current paradigm. The saying “for a man with only a hammer, everything looks like a nail” is fitting to convey the one-dimensional approach Assyrians have committed themselves to for more than a century.

In reality, Assyrians are not limited to one tool, for we have at our disposal much more powerful and adequate tools for solving the problem of emigration. All that is needed of us is to question old ways and think creatively about the solutions.

Instead of doubling down on aid work, we urge existing actors to begin developing mechanisms and systems suggested in this report that will enable Assyrians to put in place truly effective measures that have a real potential of halting emigration and reviving Assyrian life in Assyria. The Assyrian national movement, with all its political parties, groups, associations and prominent individuals, is invited to reflect on this issue and reevaluate its current actions.



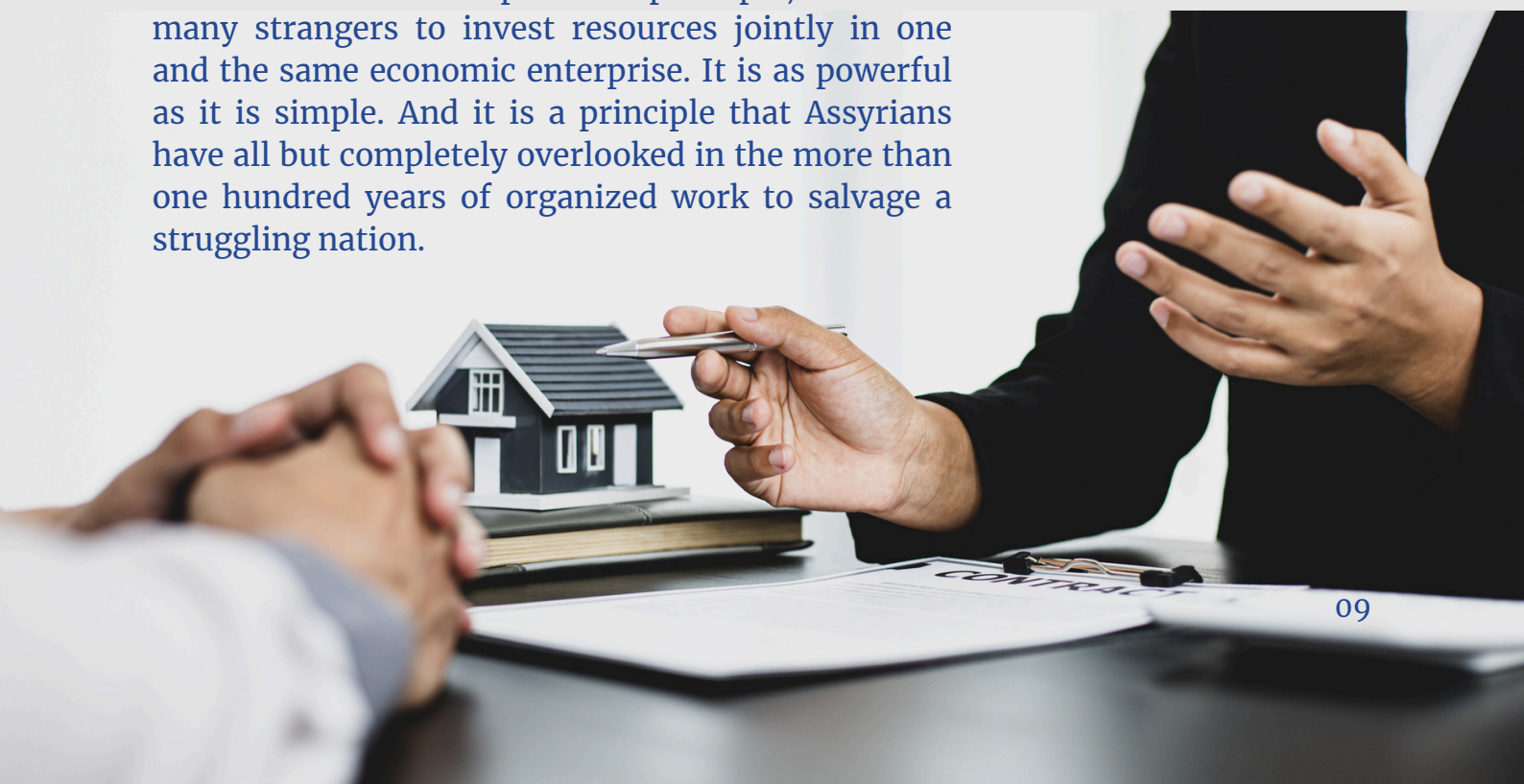
## The Solution – Trade Instead of Aid

A big part of the solution to halting, and potentially reversing, Assyrian emigration from Assyria consists of an economic system that leverages a far greater portion of what has been called the Assyrian national economy – than the aid system.

We call this the **Assyrian National Economic System**, or **ANES**. It builds upon universal economic principles that have been used around the world for centuries, fueling the growth of kingdoms, states and empires.

These systems are all around us and most people use them directly or indirectly through pension funds, stock markets, capital funds, bank loans and the like. It is economic instruments like these that enable modern economies to grow, factories to be built and skyscrapers to reach for the sky.

The economic instruments that make up this system are all based on a simple basic principle; to enable many strangers to invest resources jointly in one and the same economic enterprise. It is as powerful as it is simple. And it is a principle that Assyrians have all but completely overlooked in the more than one hundred years of organized work to salvage a struggling nation.

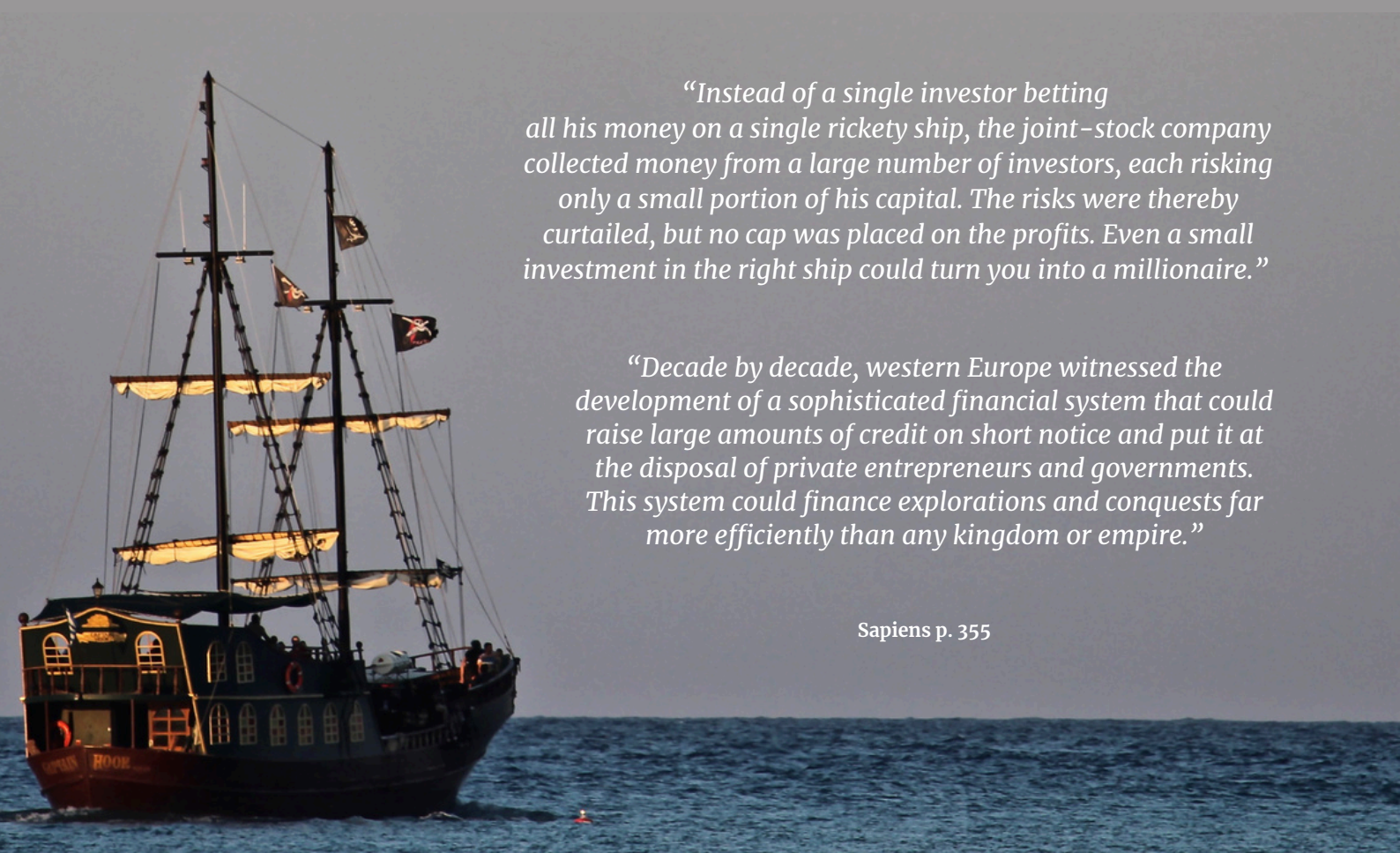


# The History of Joint Economic Investments

In the 16th century Europe started to develop quickly and gain prosperity. Europeans had developed a secret formula that, among other things, propelled their domination of the world. Their secret was the invention of the legal entity known as a **joint-stock company**. It was a simple yet genius concept that enabled business growth and prosperity on a whole new level. The new credit system, enabled by joint-stock companies, opened up the door to two important things that were difficult to achieve previously; raising large amounts of capital to put at the disposal of entrepreneurs, and spreading the risk among many.

The Dutch and British empires, the colonisation of the world, western scientific discoveries, the Industrial Revolution – behind most of this western development was the financial credit system that enabled investments by the masses and through the spread of risk among many investors.

Today, these financial instruments and systems power the global economy and joint investments are ubiquitous. No country can prosper without a financial system enabling joint investments and financing in different forms.



*“Instead of a single investor betting all his money on a single rickety ship, the joint-stock company collected money from a large number of investors, each risking only a small portion of his capital. The risks were thereby curtailed, but no cap was placed on the profits. Even a small investment in the right ship could turn you into a millionaire.”*

*“Decade by decade, western Europe witnessed the development of a sophisticated financial system that could raise large amounts of credit on short notice and put it at the disposal of private entrepreneurs and governments. This system could finance explorations and conquests far more efficiently than any kingdom or empire.”*

## The three key components

The suggested system consists of three basic components and a number of economic instruments. The components are the **trusted intermediary**, the **investor** and the **business owner**.

### The trusted intermediary

An important component of the system is the trusted intermediary. In ordinary life, this is the bank, pension fund manager, or any other institution that enables secure investments to be made. In the Assyrian National Aid System, this intermediary could be an organisation, like Assyrian Aid in Australia or Assyrians Without Borders, that helps to connect Assyrian investors with Assyrian business owners and entrepreneurs in Assyria.



## **Types of investment forms or instruments**

There are three main ways to enable joint investments. Each has its own set of specific conditions and feasibility in an Assyrian context.

### **Equity-based investment**

Investors buy a share in the business and receive dividends or a return based on profits.

### **Debt-based investment (Lending model)**

Investors lend money to a business and receive repayment with interest over time, alternatively they issue an interest free loan.

### **Revenue-sharing agreements**

Investors receive a percentage of the business's revenue until a target return is reached.

## **Types of investment structures**

There can be many different types of investment structures. Here, we present only three types to help convey the basic idea.

### **Micro angel syndicates**

Small groups of diaspora investors come together to fund and mentor a single entrepreneur in a personalized and mentor-driven way.

### **Crowd investment platform**

Digital platforms where multiple small investors can contribute to fund businesses or business projects.

### **Investment fund**

A registered and professionally managed investment fund dedicated to investing in Assyrian owned businesses in Assyria.

# An Example of Equity-Based Investment

1

Assyrian farmers in Nahla who own land get together and form a joint stock company registered in Iraq.

2

They reach out to Assyrian investors through an intermediary organization like the Shlama Foundation.

3

Through this scheme, the Assyrian-owned joint stock company in Nahla offers Assyrian investors abroad to buy stocks through a legal entity in Iraq controlled by Shlama Foundation.

4

Assyrian investors buy stocks - giving the Assyrian farmers in Nahla a substantial economic injection so they can buy more and better farming equipment enabling them to double their yields.

5

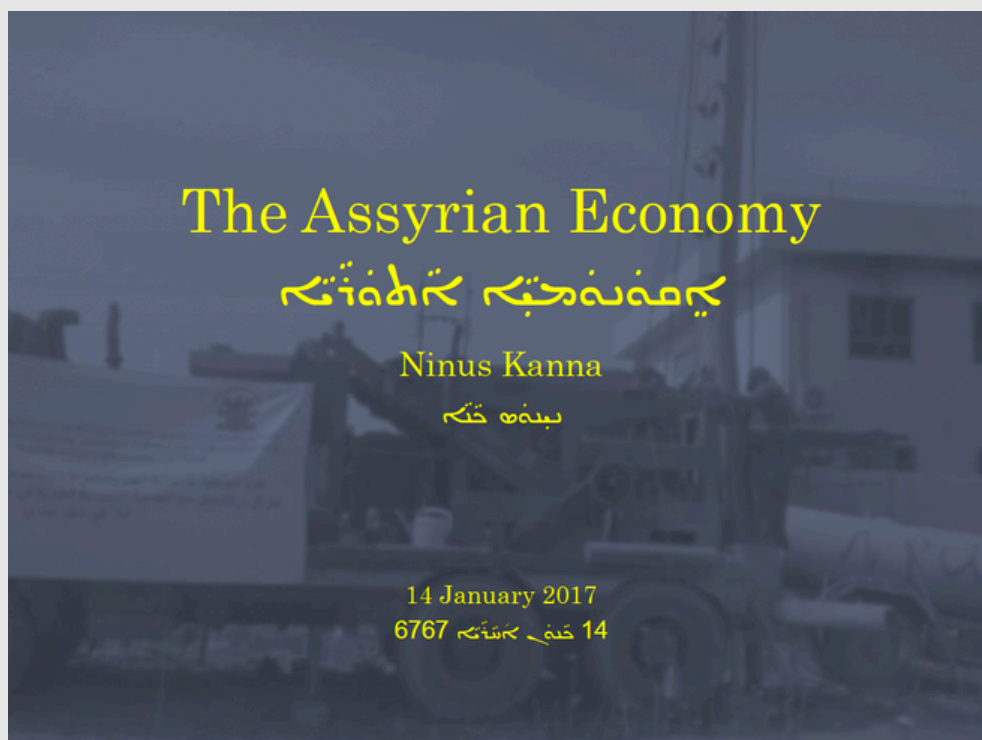
The Assyrian investors receive dividends on an annual basis based on the performance of the company. The legal entity controlled by Shlama foundation represents the investors at the annual meeting of the Nahla joint stock company, carries out any legal duties and transfers the revenues to the stock owners abroad.

# The Economic Potential of the Assyrian Nation to Power Such a System

In his short study “The Assyrian Economy”, the young Assyrian Ninus Kanna set out to show that if the economy of the dispersed Assyrian communities were to be added together, Assyrians would have a national economy of 23 to 45 billions USD, equaling that of a country like Serbia or Jordan.

Whatever one might think of Kanna’s calculations, his core idea – that Assyrians possess considerable economic resources, is valid and true. In fact, today's Assyrians have never before in history been as economically wealthy as today as the majority of us live in wealthy societies in the west.

If only a small portion of this collective wealth was to be put to use for nationalistic purposes through the suggested system, Assyrians would be able to quickly create the kind of change in their ancestral homeland that generations have dreamt of.



# An Economic Perspective

Based on our self reliance report from 2024, the total amount of money donated to Assyrian aid organizations is far less than 1 percent of the total wealth owned by Assyrians world wide.

In other words, the aid based system is able to tap into only a tiny amount of available resources.

The economic system suggested in this report, on the other hand, has the potential to tap into a much larger share of available resources.

We believe that far more Assyrians are willing to invest than donate. More importantly, the individual amounts in the economic system would be much higher than in the aid system. The reason is simple, although patriotism is able to drive some motivation on its own, it becomes much more potent when coupled with personal self interest.

By presenting Assyrians with the option to both do good for the nation and themselves - a powerful incentive is created that has the potential to unlock many millions of dollars that can be used to fuel Assyrian self reliance in Assyria.

**Patriotism  
+  
self-interest  
=  
Bigger amounts  
made available**

## The Gozarto Example – How Investments Halted Emigration

Assyrians had been emigrating from the Gozarto region in droves since the 1970s, not because of oppression but solely because of economic hardship. Then, suddenly in 1991 Syria enacted Investment Promotion Law No. 10. It opened up the door for investments by Syrian expatriats. Soon, Assyrians started establishing **joint-stock companies** and investing in the Gozarto region, slowly at first and then in a frenzy. Diaspora and local Assyrians invested, launched companies and re-invested their revenues to start new companies.



The Izla Tours bus company was the first one launched, turning out to be a great investment. Soon, others followed and by the mid 2000's the Assyrian economic boom in this part of Assyria was a fact. Although it built mostly on joint investments by families and friends, it still grew into a considerable economic force. The Ishtar canned food company, the Akkad aluminum frames company, a burgul company and many other



Assyrian-owned companies sprung up like mushrooms.

The chronic emigration stream dried up as peoples economic situation improved. Assyrians quickly became a rich ethnic group in Gozarto, perhaps even the richest, and their numbers started increasing again. Unfortunately, the Syrian civil war halted most of this boom in 2011.

The Gozarto example shows how a poor Assyrian community with chronic emigration was transformed into a prosperous one with near zero emigration in less than two decades – not through aid projects, but through Assyrians pooling their resources and investing in businesses. It proves the kind of quick transformation economic investments enable.

# An Assyrian Investment Fund?

Investment funds offer a convenient way for individuals to invest money in businesses and assets around the world.

In an ideal situation, Assyrians worldwide would have the option to invest in one (or several) Assyrian investment funds that would be dedicated to investing in Assyrian owned businesses in Assyria.

Such an entity would of course need to be set up in accordance with all legal and judicial requirements in the country it would be registered in.

An investment fund of this kind would offer patriotic minded Assyrians an easy way to put their money where their mouth is, allowing them to invest money in the revival of Assyria with just a few clicks.

Such an entity would offer a simple and convenient way to quickly invest any amount of money by anyone at anytime in the revival of Assyria.

Only time will tell if some economy savvy Assyrians will be able to make this a reality in the future.



## A Call for Change and Action

Everything starts with knowledge and insight. By producing this report and spreading knowledge about this concept, we hope to ignite new hope and aspirations among key Assyrian groups.

At the very least, it is our hope that this report will nurture a mindset centered on investments and business instead of one only focused on donations and aid work.

To make this economic system a reality we need everyone to contribute to its development in their own unique way. We hope that it will take shape through several initiatives and cooperations. And we believe that existing Assyrian aid organizations, with their existing networks and organisational infrastructures, are uniquely positioned to spearhead this work.

Let us not waste another century on concepts and ideas that yield poor results, instead, let us unleash the power of the Assyrian national economy for a more prosperous Assyria!

*we need everyone to  
contribute to its  
development in their  
own unique way*





## Who we are

The Movement for New Assyria was conceived in 2018 by a group of young Assyrians who saw the need for a complete change of the way Assyrians act in response to our national cause.

## What we do

The mission of the MNA is twofold: to bring about a mental change in as many Assyrians as possible and to leverage the new mentality to create real change on the ground in Assyria.

### Mental change

Our primary mission is to create change by fostering a new mindset. We do this by addressing the root cause for the prevalent defeatism among Assyrians.

### Practical change

Our secondary mission is to create change on the ground in Assyria on a massive scale. We do this by mobilising and organising as many Assyrians as possible.



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