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"Activating our hidden asset, the Latvian diaspora"

The Latvian nation has seen several waves of emigration, in the past due to occupation and political reasons, but during the past 15 years due to economic opportunity many emigrees are economically active and educated people.

One hopes that many will return and bring their skills and experience back, but they can be useful even if they become permanent diaspora.

Regardless, their involvement is critical for innovation, education and research, since one of the key drivers of innovation is the sparking of new ideas and it is well known that a diversity of experience, education and influences fosters more innovation.

As TechHub has become known as a center for technology innovation, we have been contacted by many members of diaspora who want to help, remain connected and/or do more business with Latvia.

We should take advantage of these opportunities in an active way.

Our role model should be the Israelis - their willingness to support other members of the diaspora is one of the keys to their success.

The first basic issue is to overcome the Latvian's natural reticence to active networking and to strengthen the network among the diaspora and Latvians who are working internationally - we see at TechHub that a simple focus on connecting people is creating new opportunities that will drive new innovation.

I would support wholeheartedly the initiative being pursued by our new Special Assignments Ambassador on Latvian diaspora issues: to create an online network of the global Latvian diaspora.

My suggestion as someone representing the new wave of technology industries is to do what startup companies do best - use platforms that are already in place rather than reinventing the wheel.

LinkedIn is the globally dominant platform for business networking - it is a ready-made platform for building a Latvian diaspora group that can unearth opportunities for us to help each other.

For academics, other tools may also be useful, including ResearchGate and Academia.edu.