
Dr. KILIAN KLEINSCHMIDT



Expert on Humanitarian Aid
Social Entrepreneur

Kilian Kleinschmidt is an experienced crisis worker and negotiation expert. He has worked for the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR for many years. As the "Mayor of Saatari", he has become known to a broad public by helping the Syrian refugees of Saatari in Jordan to live a dignified life far from home. With his start-up "Innovation and Planning Agency" (IPA), he aims to make the untapped resources and modern technologies of the 21st century available to the world's poor.

Kilian Kleinschmidt (*1962) found his passion in development aid during a motorbike trip through the Sahara after graduating from high school. For more than 22 years he worked as a development aid worker for the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Somalia, Rwanda and Pakistan, among other places. He coordinated refugee return for the UN on the ground in the Kosovo conflict and discussed the Kosovo conflict in the Stability Pact for Europe together with Hans Koschnick, Bodo Hombach and Markus Ederer. In the process, Kleinschmidt advocates against the deportation of Roma - against the will of the German Conference of Interior Ministers. From 2013 to 2014, Kilian Kleinschmidt managed the Saatari refugee camp in Jordan near the Syrian border as "Senior Field Coordinator". As the "Mayor of Saatari" - as SPIEGEL called him - he managed to bring peace, order and human dignity to the 120,000 refugees by treating them like citizens of a city and not refugees. Saatari has become a symbol for the new and innovative concepts of refugee aid. Kilian's work in emerging cities and in the field of urbanisation is recognised worldwide. In 2015 and 2016, the former UNHCR expert was an advisor on refugee issues to the Austrian government and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

In 2020, Kilian Kleinschmidt hit the headlines as a whistleblower: He uncovered the Russian-backed activities of Jan Marsalek, COO and board member of Wirecard, in Libya and also testified on this in 2021 in the Wirecard Investigation Committee of the German Bundestag. At the time, Marsalek wanted to implement a refugee project in Libya and in 2017 commissioned the renowned expert Kleinschmidt to develop a concept. Since 2019, Kilian Kleinschmidt has been living and working in Tunisia. As a social entrepreneur, he implements various economic and social projects in Tunisia and Libya with his startup IPA SWITXBOARD. He successfully combines economic projects with social and environmental impact and represents various environmentally friendly technologies, such as renewable energy or water desalination, from European companies in North Africa.

Kilian Kleinschmidt is a modern adventurer and tireless philanthropist. The much sought-after and field-tested speaker has already appeared at TEDx in Hamburg, among other events. In his keynotes - full of anecdotes - he shares his observations on international conflicts as well as the limits of development aid. As an insider, he reports authentically on the world's crises and shares personal stories, fates and political assessments with his audience. His insights and behavioural psychological techniques are also helpful for everyday business.

Topics (Selection):

- Management of Complex Structures and Crisis Situations
- Leadership and Teambuilding
- The Linkage of Private and Public Players
- Innovative Concepts for the Global Challenges of the 21st Century
- Cities of the Future
- Urban development and Slums
- Humanitarian Aid, Development Policy, Migration and Refugees, Human Rights
- Migration and Integration