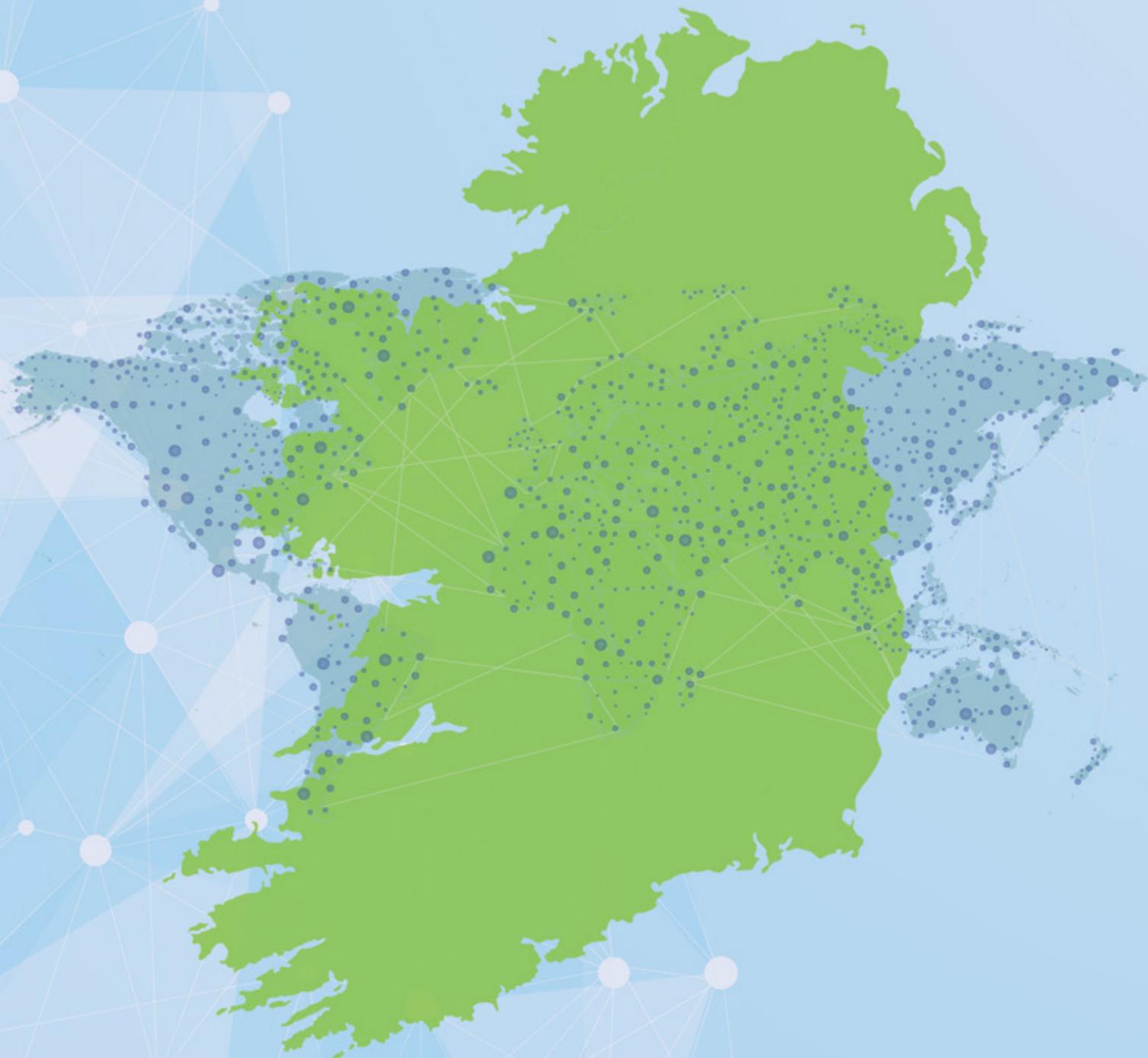


LOCAL DIASPORA TOOLKIT

Commissioned by the Minister for Diaspora Affairs



UCD Clinton Institute



Office of the Minister For
Diaspora Affairs

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Professor Liam Kennedy & Dr Madeleine Lyes

UCD Clinton Institute

2015



Office of the Minister For
Diaspora Affairs



FOREWORD BY MINISTER FOR DIASPORA AFFAIRS, MR JIMMY DEENIHAN, TD



Jimmy Deenihan TD

When I was appointed Minister for Diaspora Affairs I was very conscious of what could be achieved by building links with Ireland's diaspora from local and community level.

This is reflected in our first ever Diaspora Policy, ***Global Irish – Ireland's Diaspora Policy***, which recognises that Irish people have a keen sense of attachment to their place of origin. For many Irish people abroad, it is not just a question of being from Ireland, but which county town and even townland a person is from.

The production of this Local Diaspora Toolkit follows on from a commitment in the Diaspora Policy to develop a practical guide for local authorities and local and community groups to assist in the development of strategies for local diaspora engagement.

What has become clear from the research carried out by Professor Liam Kennedy and Dr Madeleine Lyes is that there is a wealth of local diaspora engagement initiatives already underway throughout the country.

While this Toolkit doesn't contain an exhaustive list of these initiatives, it profiles some of the best and most successful and identifies common elements for success. It identifies a clear leadership role for local authorities and gives clear guidance for the development of strategies at county and local level.

As Minister for Diaspora Affairs, I am delighted to present this first Local Diaspora Toolkit which I have no doubt will be of great interest and benefit to local authorities and indeed anyone who is involved in, or wishing to develop, diaspora initiatives in their locality.



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INTRODUCTION

With a global diaspora estimated to number near seventy million people, Ireland has a remarkable global family. At local as well as national level throughout Ireland there is a growing understanding of the importance of this asset to our collective futures.

The publication of *Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Strategy* in March 2015 was recognition of the important role that our diaspora has played, and continues to play, in this country's overall economic, social and cultural development. This Strategy clearly identifies that as well as reaching out to the diaspora at national level there is potential for local communities and counties in Ireland to reach out to their own diasporas and build new relationships, to benefit local and regional development.

In recent years, initiatives such as The Gathering have demonstrated clearly how local communities can be mobilised to make connections globally, tapping into the emigrant's strong attachment to county, town and even townland that often passes from generation to generation. This Toolkit has been produced to provide a resource to assist in the development of strategies and initiatives for local diaspora engagement. It is a resource that will be of benefit to local authorities and anyone at county and community level who wishes to develop links with their local diaspora.

Irish people are world-class diaspora connectors. Across the country, in small towns and parishes, we are developing innovative ways to link with our communities abroad. These links are made and sustained in recognition of a mutual relationship, a connection which contributes positively to our national identity and our sense of our place in the world. The people running and supporting diaspora engagement projects know that we as Irish people exist in a networked world and that we are privileged to have access to many different experiences of Irishness around the world. The work done by these projects, often on a voluntary basis, is driven by personal motives and emotional connections, by pride in Irish life – past, present, and future.



ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This Toolkit, commissioned by the Minister for Diaspora Affairs at the Department of the Taoiseach, Mr. Jimmy Deenihan, TD, was developed by researchers at the Clinton Institute at University College Dublin. It is the result of a nationwide consultation with representatives from diverse project and community groups, local authority representatives, local enterprise offices, and members of the business community.

The Toolkit has been developed primarily for use by local authorities and project leaders who are engaging local diaspora. Its purpose is to highlight the impressive diversity of the local diaspora engagement landscape in this country, and to share with those who are involved in this work, or who wish to start a new project, the wisdom of their fellow project leaders. While not a comprehensive survey, the Toolkit endeavours to give a much fuller picture than we have had to this point of the variety and number of projects stretching across the country, and to share some concrete suggestions for the successful initiation and development of many different kinds of diaspora engagement work.



The Toolkit begins by defining diaspora engagement and giving some idea of the scope and diversity of diaspora engagement projects currently running. It then provides advice, gathered from many different project leaders across the country, on how to get your project started – how to plan, how to define and locate your own segment of the diaspora, and different ways to work with them. We then give some tips on engaging your diaspora, thinking about a strategy for your relationship with them, and how to maintain good communications. Finally, the Toolkit offers some ideas on how to expand an established project and give it a solid platform for the future.



WHAT IS DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT?

Diaspora

A group of migrant origin living in a host country, who maintain strong cultural and connective links with the country of origin.

Engagement

The means by which local people, groups, and organisations reach out to the diaspora to build and maintain relationships.

Diaspora engagement is about making deeper connections with the global Irish community. Irish diasporas are groups of people of Irish origin living abroad who still feel a sense of connection to their country of origin, and diaspora engagement works to forge deeper relationships between the Irish at home and Irish communities overseas.

At a national level, the Irish government have been active in organising diaspora engagement, with large-scale initiatives like The Gathering involving hundreds of different community, social and business groups across the country, and drawing thousands of diaspora visitors to Ireland. There's an increasing awareness, however, that a lot of the great work being done in diaspora engagement is happening at local level, and that such work deserves recognition.

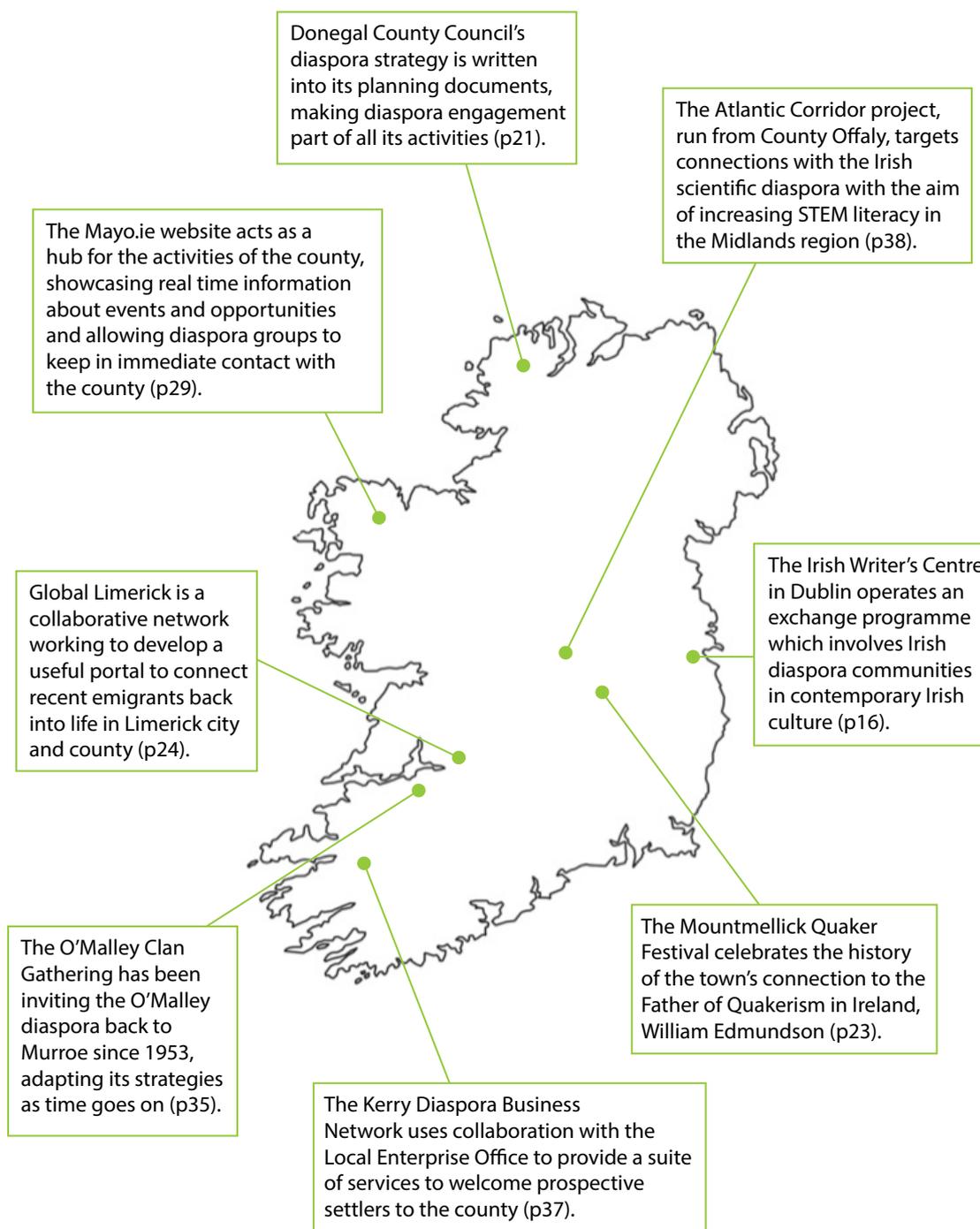
A group in Waterford organising a clan gathering, a local enterprise officer planning a diaspora strategy for the area, a radio station in Roscommon planning a diaspora outreach programme, or an organisation in Offaly inviting recent emigrants back for work – these are all part of the same big picture of diaspora engagement at local level in Ireland. This Toolkit draws on their experiences and builds a new picture of engagement work nationally today.

“It's not rocket science, it's relationship building”



DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN IRELAND

The range and variety of diaspora projects across Ireland deserve far more attention. Below are just a handful of projects which highlight, in different regions and with different aims, the many ways Irish communities are making connections with our diaspora.





WHY ENGAGE YOUR DIASPORA?

Diaspora engagement, whether for local authorities or project groups, can become a valuable asset in community development in a number of different ways, strengthening local community and opening it up to the wider world.

Local Development

Diaspora engagement, if embedded in a local area's strategic plan, can do much to enhance sustainable development. Because it starts locally, diaspora engagement is a singularly effective connector, and local authorities can build on already existing networks and activities in the area, acting as coordinator and facilitator to deepen engagement in a way that reflects local priorities.

“ Everything we are doing with diaspora engagement is contextualised in that space of economic development, to raise the county's profile nationally and internationally ”

Aideen Doherty, Donegal County Council

Local Connectivity

Diaspora engagement projects, with their broad remit, can act as a way to draw together local actors to create links between pre-existing groups. Such projects offer opportunities to local actors to forge valuable relationships with their own communities and histories. A successful diaspora engagement project can enrich the lives of those who run it. As a project develops, it often expands its connection to the wider local community, and can involve local schools, other local groups, and the business community. This leads to greater cohesion in the area and a tangible sense of pride in its identity.

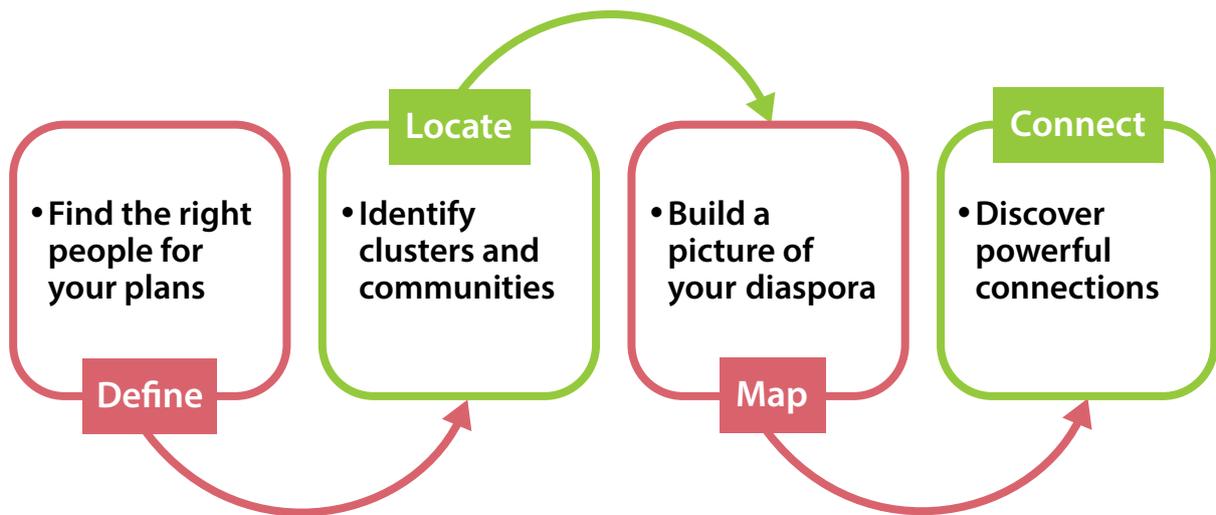
Global Collaboration and Innovation

Because so much of diaspora engagement is about finding common roots and connections between local and emigrant groups, projects offer opportunities for multiple forms of global collaboration in business, tourism, and education. Diaspora engagement can add value to areas of investment and innovation that are important to community and economic development, bringing impact in areas such as support for SMEs, local enterprise and job creation (see p37).

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IDENTIFYING YOUR DIASPORA

Before you engage your diaspora you need to identify – define and locate – it. There are many different approaches you can take when planning how to make a connection with your diaspora.



To get started from scratch, you might draw on the resources of your group or community. Who are your own personal diasporas? In almost every project we researched, groups began by building a contact list of their own friends and relatives, putting out calls via business acquaintances and social networks. In many cases, valuable sources of further contacts emerged through these early strategies.

Before anything can properly be launched, however, any serious group will set aside some time to decide which particular element of the broad grouping of Irish diaspora will be their focus.

Define Your Diaspora

It is not always feasible or productive to cast a very wide net – some projects are most successful when they identify a particular sub-set of their area’s diaspora and work to develop a relationship with them. Diaspora researchers have developed different ways to segment the diaspora, and it may help to consider these different sectors of the diaspora in planning your approach.

Lived Diaspora	Those born in Ireland now living overseas
Ancestral Diaspora	Those whose ancestors were born in Ireland
Next Generation Diaspora	Younger members of the diaspora, under 35
Returning Diaspora	Those who have lived overseas and come back
Affinity Diaspora	Foreign nationals who worked or studied in Ireland

Segmenting your diaspora can be very helpful as you build a strategy and plans for diaspora engagement. It allows you to consider which diaspora target audiences might best help you to reach your ambitions for your project and your area.¹

Locate Your Diaspora

The unique history of the Irish nation has meant that there are Irish communities of many different generations, numbers, and needs now living in every corner of the globe, from the long-settled descendants of Famine-era emigrants in the United States to the new families of the post-Celtic Tiger migration wave now living in Toronto, Perth, and Dubai.

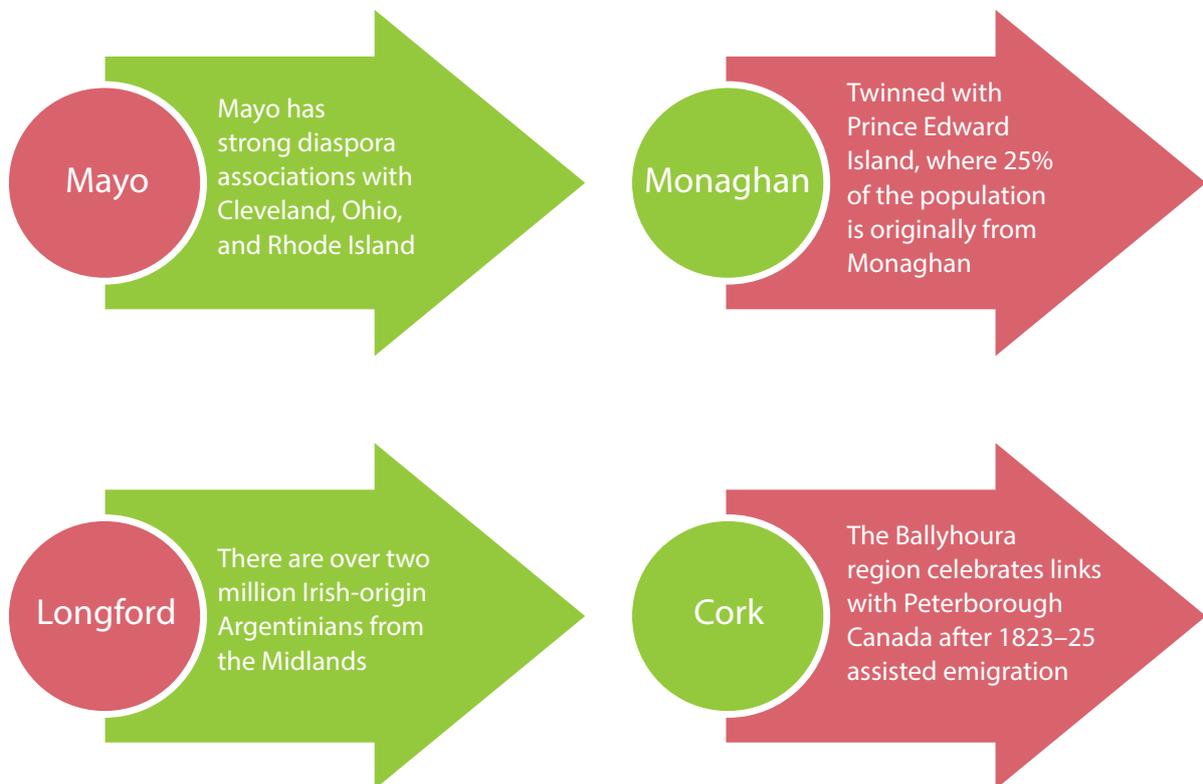
One of the most common questions asked by groups interviewed during the development of this Toolkit was around how to go about locating and contacting their chosen diaspora. There is no comprehensive database of Irish people around the world, and no centralised resource to consult in order to find them. There are a number of strong projects working to develop such resources (see Ireland Reaching Out, p16) but at the moment, making contact with some of the tens of millions of Irish-origin people abroad may seem a difficult task.

- ▶ **Identify existing diaspora networks and organizations.** These may be either generated from within your local area or linked to it from elsewhere. Some of these may be accessed to increase the capacity of your diaspora outreach. What are the scale, purpose, quality and impact of these networks or organizations? How might you best collaborate with them? Project groups looking for ways to reach out don't always have to start from scratch to build up an audience. There are many Irish networking groups and community organisations worldwide, whether run from within Ireland or by Irish communities overseas. You may, for example, seek out contacts among the most successful amateur sporting organisation in the world – the GAA – and its many clubs across the globe. Irish Network USA helps Irish and

¹ This graphic is based on information in Kingsley Aikins and Nicola White, *Global Diaspora Strategies Toolkit* (Dublin, Ireland: Diaspora Matters, 2011), p11.

Irish-American professionals across the United States to connect with their peers and develop business ventures, and on a county level, many Irish county associations are still thriving, particularly in the US, UK, and Australia (see Resources p42).

- ▶ **Identify clusters of Irish emigrant communities.** Local knowledge, supported and enhanced by research, shows that there are often distinctive patterns of emigrant movement and resettlement from a specific area, so that you can find clusters of communities which have significant populations from a particular area in Ireland. A key step that projects around Ireland have taken is to research – through historical records and local history experts – where people from their areas have emigrated over the years. Identifying a pocket of migrants can be an important step in planning your diaspora engagement strategy. Location-to-location connections are crucial because they identify communities elsewhere which are already animated to reach out to the home place, making the relationship much easier to establish. Some examples:



“ Location to location is where you’re going to make an impact ”

Amanda Slattery, Ballyhoura Development

Case Study: Irish Writer's Centre

The Irish Writer's Centre in Dublin (www.irishwriterscentre.ie) works to foster and promote the work of living authors in Ireland. It is a non-profit organisation with the remit of promoting Irish writers and literature at home and abroad. The Centre first developed its diaspora outreach programme through internal networking – an arrangement with the highly successful Listowel Writer's Week Festival led to their collaboration and a connection into the diaspora engagement landscape in Ireland. The Centre's current work in the area revolves around writer exchange, making connections with Irish literary communities in the UK and the USA particularly, in order to set up tangible links for the exchange of ideas and culture. With a powerful history of renowned emigrant authors who have represented the Irish past, the Centre's work is interesting for its focus on living authors who can act as ambassadors for a living Ireland, adding new life to the profile of Ireland abroad. "Living writers are here," says Valerie Bistany, the Centre's director. "They're doing great work, and we're at the cusp of it." Crucially, the idea of exchange also allows for an opening up of the Irish community to new influences, a two-way street which brings advantages for both sides. This is a facet of diaspora engagement which deserves more attention, and which is often most powerful in cultural projects.

Map Your Diaspora

To "map" your diaspora means to use maps and advanced mapping analysis to provide a comprehension of the geographical dispersal of your local diaspora, its clusters and networks, and its forms of identity (factors such as gender, age, level of education and labour force status of diaspora members), and so enhance your strategic planning for diaspora engagement.

- ▶ **Ireland Reaching Out** (IXO) is a volunteer-based, non-profit initiative that builds links between the global diaspora and parishes of origin in Ireland. IXO is based on a simple idea – reverse genealogy - instead of waiting for people of Irish descent to trace their roots, Ireland XO volunteers are networking with people of Irish descent, connecting people with the home parishes of their ancestors. More than 500 parishes are now tracing their diasporas and encouraging people to become involved. The IXO website has evolved into a highly sophisticated resource, using the latest in community engagement software and interactive mapping features. It offers every community in Ireland an enhanced "parish

profile” and platform from which to reach out to the global diaspora, and also offers training in genealogy to its volunteers and other forms of support to develop and enhance local diaspora engagement. Today, IXO has more than 3000 volunteers in Ireland and abroad.

- ▶ **Ireland’s Call** – to return its diaspora home. This “story map” was created by Rosita Mahony at SPACEial North West for Donegal County Council’s Diaspora Project. (Note - story maps combine maps with narrative, images and multimedia content, they do not require coding skills but can be effectively produced to showcase and market your diaspora story). The aim is to reach the diaspora with relevant information for those contemplating returning to Ireland and so connect with job opportunities at home. Considerable data mining and mapping was involved from many sources to produce a multi-layered approach to connecting diaspora communities with information on “global job prospects,” “competitive house prices,” “healthiest towns” and “shortest commute.” It promotes a Donegal Diaspora Global Skills Locator which invites information from those with an interest in return.

What Connects Us

There are multiple modes of engagement which have proven to have special resonance with both local audiences and the Irish abroad. They are all drawn from particular aspects of Irish life, the priorities we share, and the interests demonstrated by our diaspora.

CULTURE & HERITAGE

Culture is the glue of diaspora and the local environment contains many cultural resources that can hold appeal for the diaspora. It is a therapeutic connection that creates a shared sense of identity. The heritage all Irish people inherit is also shared with our diaspora, and projects which explore the heritage of their local areas and local histories can very powerfully enhance pride of place for those at home and give a sense of rooted identity to those now living abroad. (See Quaker Festival case study, p23)

GENEALOGY

Genealogy helps us to trace lines of descent both in time and space, and it is our genealogical history which connects us by blood to Irish communities across the globe. It is an unavoidably tangible connection, and many different diaspora engagement projects today trace that connection in written records, granite headstones, and, increasingly, DNA results. See Ireland Reaching Out (p16) and the Historic Graves project (p42) for examples of projects using genealogical resources to connect.

SPORT

Among the established networks in the Irish diaspora the one that has most significantly flourished is the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). As the Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. points out, "The GAA is almost the perfect organisation because it has got the local, county, national and international connection. And why is that? Because the jersey covers everybody – big, tall, short, small or whatever – it covers everybody." The GAA is highly distinctive if not unique in its engagement with all segments of the global Irish.

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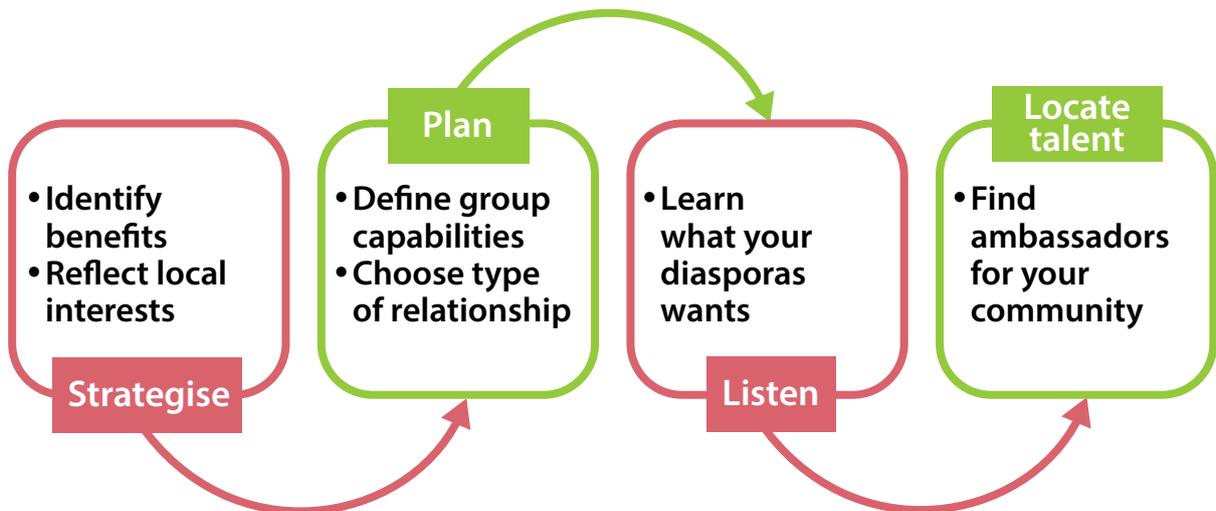
ENGAGING YOUR DIASPORA

Once you have decided who your particular segment of the diaspora are, and have begun to plan ways to contact them and initiate a relationship, the next step is to ascertain what kind of interaction your area or group are best suited to, and how best to manage interactions over the short, medium, and long-term.

When beginning to build a project or to design an outreach strategy for your local area, it is crucial to take stock at an early stage of your resources, capabilities, and ideal outcomes.

“ We did a phenomenal amount of whiteboard work before establishing our plan of action ”

Brian Cleary, Tipperary Chamber International Network



Create a Diaspora Strategy

Both local authorities and local project groups seeking to develop their diaspora engagement profile should devise a diaspora strategy which contributes to the wellbeing of their region. The strategy should:

- ▶ address potential social, cultural, or environmental benefits of the work to the local area
- ▶ reflect the local authority's existing priorities, and how to add value to them

- ▶ audit existing forms of engagement in your area
- ▶ reflect local histories and geographies
- ▶ respect the interests of your diaspora
- ▶ be a realistic estimation of capacities and capabilities, based on a consideration of strengths and weaknesses
- ▶ clearly define organisational or committee structures to get the best out of the project or strategy. Who should establish, manage and evaluate diaspora engagement?
- ▶ embed evaluation and learning at key stages of diaspora engagement – this will be very useful in establishing an evidence base for future work

There are no quick fixes or “magic bullets”. Diasporas can be the source of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity, yet they are also diverse and have different needs. A good diaspora strategy respects the unique nature of both home community and diasporas; to some extent it relies on serendipity, while actively seeking to coordinate and shape the conditions for this. A diaspora strategy must draw on the knowledge, experience and input of different sectors within a local authority or project group. Collaboration and joined-up thinking are crucial to successful implementation of a strategy.

Forming a Strategic Plan: A strategic plan should examine the different characteristics of your group or organisation, and examines a wide range of possibilities for action before narrowing down to the actions that best suit your group’s resources. It helps you to decide how to spend your time and effort.



Case Study: Donegal Diaspora Project

Some local authorities have developed strategies that are now relatively mature. Donegal launched the Donegal Diaspora Project (www.donegaldiaspora.ie) in 2012, building on a long-term plan that is still evolving. The Project is led by Donegal County Council working in partnership with stakeholders in the county. This has enabled a coordinated approach to diaspora engagement, so that, as the Council's Director of Service Michael O'hÉanaigh explains, "there is broad buy-in" from all sectors and "diaspora is written into the preparations of economic and community plans."

This strategising has combined business and education networking, with a particular focus on targeted segments of the diaspora in the United States. Aideen Doherty, who manages the Project, comments: "Our engagement with American diaspora is very targeted, very strategic and based on individual relations with people...we have nurtured relations with key personnel in politics, business and education."

A range of interlinked initiatives have built strong bridges between Donegal and Massachusetts. An annual Golden Bridges Awards and Showcase, inaugurated in 2008 and held in Boston in partnership with Derry City Council and the Irish Echo newspaper, promotes a platform for Donegal to engage with stakeholders in New England. The event builds cooperation and collaboration in areas of third level education and research, renewable energy development, ICT development, tourism and investment. Conferences and seminars in Donegal maintain a flow of talent between the local and diaspora communities in the US, and the annual Tip O'Neill Award lends profile to this work, linking diaspora leaders to Donegal. There is also significant outreach to diaspora youth in the United States via the Institute of Study Abroad Ireland, which has been based in Donegal since 2001.

Plan Diaspora Engagement

Whether you are working on a diaspora strategy at local authority level or running a group project, taking time to assess key factors in engagement work will be important:

- ▶ **Building on pre-existing projects and expertise** means you can further develop the strengths of your area. Diaspora engagement projects can act as a way to draw together local actors to create links between pre-existing groups. North Kerry Reaching Out, which developed its programme model from the larger Ireland Reaching Out organisation, built their programme of events into the pre-existing festival strengths in the town. This widened their pool of volunteers and organisers, and helped visitors to integrate better with the area once they arrived.
- ▶ **Think about what kind of project you would like to run.** What are the interests and capabilities of your group or organisation? What are your resources? Who can you call on for help?
- ▶ **Decide what kind of relationship structure you want with your diaspora.** Do you want to have long-term, on-going communication (do you have the resources for this?) or would you prefer to arrange a more sporadic “check-in” relationship, such as an annual event. It is important that you consider this relationship as a two-way street, one which may be enjoyable and beneficial for your own community and that of your chosen diaspora.
- ▶ **Set up timeframes.** These will help you measure progress and may also be useful in instigating points or review or evaluation. Projects or programmes of long duration should have interim goals to deliver “short-term wins” that will help you to realise the longer term objectives.
- ▶ **Identify local icons.** It can help to have an iconic local figure, group, or product to rally around, to use as your banner to help gain recognition for your project:
 - ◀ The O’Malley Clan of Murroe, Co. Limerick trace their lineage back to the pirate queen Grainuaile, a legendary figure with wide appeal.
 - ◀ Global Limerick plan to organise events for the Munster Rugby worldwide supporters clubs, to connect with the hordes who return to support the Munster rugby team each year.
 - ◀ County Kerry’s diaspora engagement strategy stemmed originally from its site as home of the Rose of Tralee festival, which has given them a platform to link into Irish communities across the world for over fifty years.

Case Study: The Quaker Festival in Mountmellick, Co. Laois

The Quaker Festival of Mountmellick celebrates the life of William Edmundson, known as the Father of Quakerism in Ireland. An initiative of the local Heritage Society and the Mountmellick Development association, the Festival first came about when a visiting archaeologist did some research on local gravestones and identified the illustrious Edmundson and his connection both to the town and to the worldwide Quaker movement. After connecting with the Heritage Society, links were discovered with the descendants of Edmundson, and local groups realised how important this figure was to their community. Determined to revive the link both to the town's own past and to today's Quakers in Ireland and beyond, the Heritage Society decided to form a committee to develop a festival. Drawing on new connections, the Society reached out through the existing Edmundson family to issue an invitation to the Society of Friends in Ireland and to tap into this network across the globe. Visitors came from the USA, Australia, the UK, Canada and Ireland, including people who had left Mountmellick and were now living elsewhere. Financial support came from the Heritage Council and the Irish Community Diaspora Tourism grant, which was crucial, along with local fundraising and volunteer time. The programme played to the strengths brought by the committee, featuring a summer school, walking tours, and lectures, and the Festival has since become a yearly event which celebrates a unique history and a new set of diaspora connections.

Listen to Your Diaspora

An important early step in engaging your diaspora is listening to them, that is, finding out not only who and where your diaspora are but also what their views, interests and expectations are. This is a valuable step in engaging a diaspora with a sense of place. Do some early outreach to find out more about your chosen diaspora group. Don't assume that you know what they want from a connection – you need to find out. Any groundwork you do at this stage will lead to a richer connection later.

Case Study: Global Limerick

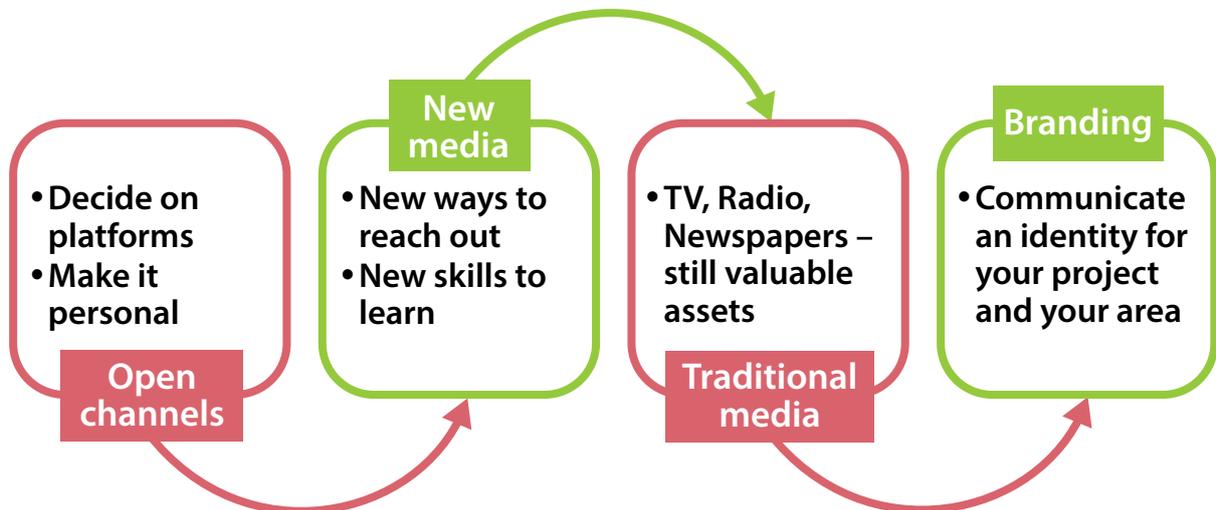
The Global Limerick project is an impressive example of the power of preparative research and planning in developing an effective initiative at county level. Global Limerick has its roots in a research project initiated in the wake of The Gathering and Limerick's designation as the first National City of Culture. A committee was set up to explore how to better manage a relationship between key Limerick institutions and communities and the county's diaspora, deciding to begin by undertaking a wide survey of Limerick people worldwide, to find out more about the perceptions and attitudes of these groups. Since that survey, which uncovered the very positive news that the majority of Limerick's diaspora still feels a tangible affinity to Limerick as a home place, the Global Limerick committee has been working to design an online site to develop and manage this relationship. They discovered that the Limerick diaspora are eager to hear news of home, particularly good news and useful information, and that they are interested in hearing from other Limerick diaspora groups elsewhere in the world. Armed with this information, the Global Limerick team are developing a platform for people from Limerick to meet, re-establish and build new relationships, to learn about their communities, exchange information, network, and share ideas. The committee, funded by Limerick Council, meets regularly to assess progress and keeps an open mind about the future direction of the work they are building. Their commitment to developing a project which is responsive to the proven needs and desires of the people of Limerick worldwide ensures that their work will find an appreciative audience.

Identify Diaspora Talent

Identifying local or local-origin ambassadors for the area or for a particular project can be an important way to make connections with your intended audience. If strategizing ways to make an impact in a particular diaspora community, it may be useful to seek out diaspora talent, people with high personal credibility who can make a difference in activating initiatives, bring new ideas into their places of origin, provide access to networks and resources, and act as champions, ambassadors or scouts for the local area. The key is to keep in constant contact and make your diaspora talent feel part of the local decision-making processes.

Digital networks and fora, physical events and conferences can be all useful in making connections, but the key is to create meaningful discussions and actions that illuminate mutual interests. Common approaches include:

- ▶ invite a select group of diaspora talent to join a local organisation or institution in an advisory or more instrumental capacity
- ▶ organise focused workshops on topics important to local development and invite diaspora speakers
- ▶ create institutional platforms to formalise existing diaspora interactions
- ▶ create joint projects between home and diaspora organisations and communities.



Open Channels

Local authorities and project groups should carefully consider the different options available for communicating with their chosen diaspora. Initiating, building, and maintaining open communications channels with constituencies outside Ireland – often in numerous geographical locations – is challenging, and yet it is central to any diaspora engagement work. Most local authorities have comprehensive communications strategies in place. It would be important to integrate any diaspora communication emanating from local authorities with these strategies for the purpose of resource and budget planning, consistent messaging and to ensure that all target audiences are exploited.

Key steps:

1. **Consider which media and communications platforms are best suited** to engaging your diaspora. What media do your diaspora use? Younger generation diaspora will often be most comfortable with social media platforms, whereas older groups may focus more on traditional media.
2. **What information will diaspora users want from your organisation?** Are you reaching out to share information on business opportunities, invitations to events, local good news stories, or in-depth reflections on changes to your area?
3. **What is the best use of certain forms of communication?** Many projects will use more than one form of communication, and should plan carefully how to utilise each method. A resource like Twitter, for example, may be best for short bursts of information, or to provide links to more in-depth information elsewhere. A

newspaper advertisement or article will highlight a particular project launch or milestone, and may draw in new constituencies.

4. **Plan ways to share information and to solicit information and ideas in return.** Communication should never be a one-way street: you need to talk, and you need to listen. Whatever the platforms or networks you prioritise, connectivity and reciprocity are the essence of coherent diaspora engagement.
5. **Tell the story of your local area.** Research shows that diaspora groups want to know about the good things happening in the cities, towns and villages they've left behind. Among the types of communication most sought out by diaspora groups are news about local events, opportunities for business, photos of local places, stories which develop the emotional connection with the home place, and news of other members of the diaspora worldwide.
6. **Consider your timing.** It is important to consider the frequency and timing of any communications to maintain interest and avoid information overload. It may be a good idea to plan a calendar of events and relating communications activities for a 12 month period.
7. **The Personal Touch:** While virtual networks will be crucial in diaspora practices of the future, they must not be developed at the expense of interpersonal engagement. Legitimate concern exists around the capacity of virtual networks to provide the kind or degree of support offered by face-to-face communications. One of the key findings in interviews conducted with project leaders and local authorities advised that the personal touch was the most effective way of reaching out.

“ People were amazed when I picked up the phone ”

Aine Collins, Cork Foundation

“ People do business with people they know. It's about the concept of the friendly face ”

Brian Cleary, Tipperary Chamber International Network

“ You pick up the phone and you ring people. There is no shortcut – all the Eventbrites and the email and that stuff didn't work ”

Trudi O'Sullivan, Killorglin Chamber Alliance

Using New Media

The virtualisation of diaspora networks presents new opportunities for diaspora engagement. Technology has made a crucial difference to the kinds of relationships possible between diaspora groups and the homeland. Online networks and other communications technologies are being adapted by migrant communities worldwide in many different ways, helped by the many new applications and the tools they offer.

Facebook, Twitter, and Skype are everywhere. For professional communities, LinkedIn is being harnessed to help Irish business people use national connections to create new networks around the globe. Social media also offers the opportunity to build links with other groups/agencies and projects of interest by 'following' and re-using content on areas of common interest, in addition to access to individual membership benefits. Access to traditional media is also part of these changes: Irish communities all over the world now use online applications to watch Irish media. Within Ireland, new media represents an opportunity, and a challenge.

“The internet has moved the goalposts”

John Ganly, Longford Argentina Association

The internet can be used as a tool to make engagement more tangible, even though it is digital. John Tierney of Historic Graves tells of people sharing images and details of local family gravestone markers with relatives across the globe on the same day the information has been collected. There is an immediate feedback, and an immediate connection.

Both local authorities and projects will need to carefully consider the kind of communications engagement that will best serve the interests of their chosen Irish community abroad and which will be feasible to develop within their resources. Should the local authority have a central web portal for diaspora focused initiatives and communications in the region? What ought to be hosted on the site? How can it be financed, promoted and sustained?

“You need some kind of tool to connect with your people”

Martina Hughes, Mayo County Council

Looking to the future, it will be important to develop mechanisms and forums to allow for dialogue with the diaspora. At county level, where a local authority needs to develop a diaspora communications strategy, it needs to be considered whether this dialogue should be facilitated through the local authority itself, by another group such as the local enterprise office, or whether this could be managed at regional level.

Several regions have established websites with a diaspora business focus. The Western Development Commission created LookWest.ie, a website that provides information for individuals setting up a business or looking to relocate to the West. Wexford County Council run a website called WexfordMeansBusiness.ie, which is designed to keep in touch with Wexford natives overseas and let them know what is happening in the county.

It is wise to consider the following when contemplating the creation of a website for your area or project:

- ▶ A website can be an unparalleled tool for establishing the identity of your project or local area. There are many platforms available which allow for a relatively simple initial setup for those wishing for a basic “home” for their project online.
- ▶ Most websites require maintenance to keep up to date and provide fresh content, and this can be a significant time commitment. Groups should carefully assess whether they have the time and personnel resources to build and maintain a website, and what message it should bring to their chosen diaspora.
- ▶ A useful guide to the basics of setting up a website has been compiled by the Dublin Local Enterprise Office (see Resources, p45).

Case Study: Mayo.ie

Mayo County Council has developed and resourced a media strategy to support diaspora engagement. At the heart of this is their website, Mayo.ie, which acts as a hub for several media formats and platforms. Mayo.ie has (September 2015) 13,000 followers on Facebook and Twitter and has partnered with Irish Television in order to expand its media outreach. The thinking behind the project is relatively simple according to Mayo County Manager Peter Hynes: “If we can get these people talking to each other, connections will be made and good things will arise from those connections in the form of business, commerce and tourism.” He says the project is not a hard sell but an attempt to kindle interest and business will stem from this interest in due course. The project has been developed in collaboration with the Western Development Commission and Mayo County Community Forum. Maintaining the social network means establishing champions in Mayo communities worldwide who will act effectively as ambassadors for Mayo and who will keep the community website for their location up to date and maintain contact with the community on the ground. These champions are typically young, committed, tech-savvy people who will have emigrated recently. They are based in locations as far flung as Japan and Buenos Aires, as well as destinations more typically associated with Irish emigrants.

Using Traditional Media

Particularly as tools for raising awareness of a project within Ireland, radio, television and newspapers cannot be ignored. Traditional media consumption is still very high at local level, and local newspapers and radio are still how the majority of the population of a particular area find out about issues and events in their own communities. At the same time, the digitalisation of media industries and platforms means much traditional media content is now available globally online.

Radio has a strong presence in Ireland and most Irish radio stations can be accessed globally over the Internet with many stations making apps available. In the UK, RTE Radio 1 can be accessed via Longwave 252, but this service is currently under review.

Perhaps more important in terms of local diaspora engagement, Irish community radio is also providing valuable outreach to the diaspora via online platforms. Often with strong volunteer bases, they act as a conduit between the local community and diaspora.

- ▶ Mary Lennon of Athlone Community Radio noted that, “families abroad want to hear stories about local people and events and now we can broadcast online and reach emigrant communities across the world....our podcasts are proving popular.”
- ▶ Garrett Wyse at Tramore Community Radio is developing a programme which will highlight stories and experiences of the Tramore diaspora, hoping to forge connections which will enliven the relationship between the town and its overseas community.

Television now reaches many segments of the Irish diaspora due to the digitalisation of the industry and online dissemination of programming and there is evidence of demand among Irish communities globally to access television from Ireland. There are now public and private providers connecting international, national and regional audiences.

- ▶ RTE, TG3, TG4 and UTV Ireland all have online playback services, while RTE have launched their RTE Player International service on the global iOS app platform. RTE has also partnered with the GAA to create GAAGO, an online streaming service for Gaelic Games outside of Ireland.

There are also several new television broadcasters that have emerged to cater for the Irish diaspora. These include:

- ▶ Irish TV, based in Westport, Co. Mayo, promotes itself as “Ireland’s first international TV channel” – its motto is “Local Stories – Global Audience”
- ▶ An Lár is an Irish Community TV channel that is also an internet TV channel addressing the Irish diaspora.
- ▶ Today’s Ireland, based in Washington D.C., is a “global content initiative” of MHz Networks, designed to make a public service nationwide television platform available to American audiences

- ▶ Donegal TV is a free to air and public service initiative with the mission of “expanding public awareness about the NW of Ireland with a wide Irish and internationally minded television and digital media audience.”

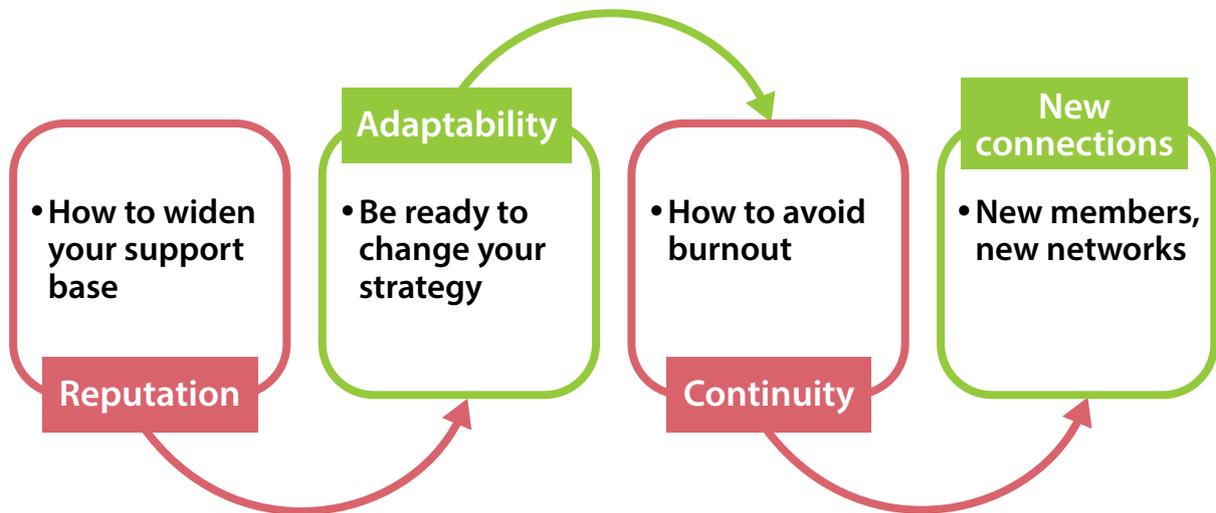
Newspapers are, in concert with radio, still the best way to circulate targeted information about events in a particular area. Although many have declined in circulation in the past decade, they are still widely available and offer the strongest opportunity for access to stories, notices and issues most pressing to local people. They are also an important archive of local activity and culture, and many projects working on digital communications tools are trying simply to replicate the effectiveness of the local newspaper beyond the local area.

- ▶ National Irish newspapers all have online editions, so providing daily Irish news to global audiences. The *Irish Times* has an on-line blog “Generation Emigration” that allows emigrants to tell their stories and addresses issues of diaspora/homeland connectivity.
- ▶ Irish diaspora newspapers all have websites, which are becoming their primary sources of readership. These include the *Irish Voice*, the *Irish Echo* and the *Irish Emigrant* in the US, the *Irish Echo* in Australia and the *Irish Post* and the *Irish World* in Great Britain.
- ▶ Local newspapers in Ireland can be powerful in spreading awareness of a particular project or new strategy, and are invaluable for soliciting help from a particular community. Local newspapers are also an effective method of spreading word about project milestones.

Building a Brand

Building a regional brand for diaspora engagement involves the strategic presentation of a local area with the aim of creating both material and emotional investments. This depends on clear consistent messages being effectively communicated.

- ▶ **Consider the brand vision of your area** as already promoted by tourism and other offices. How does this synch with your diaspora strategy? What are the strong messages about your local area? How might they be marshalled to appeal to the diaspora? What stories and images best promote the best qualities of the area? How do you promote the brand to the diaspora? Do all stakeholders contribute to the brand promotion and align their messages accordingly?
- ▶ **Signature cultural events** can be strategically promoted to enhance branding. For example, the Rose of Tralee Festival in Kerry has, according to local authority Tourism Officer John Griffin, given the county “a platform to link into communities across the world for over 50 years.” Another example is Mayo Day, inaugurated on 2nd May 2015 as an annual celebration of the county both at home and abroad via coordinated events aimed at targeted audiences. Such events can showcase cultural resources and business opportunities.



Project and strategy development should be a carefully planned step-by-step process, with both short-term and long-term aims and objectives, and based on research on the local diaspora – its constituencies, capacities, and needs. Foreign direct investment is probably not a realistic short-term objective, better to develop short-term projects first that have the potential to lead to this, what one interviewee called

“ slow burner stuff, incremental activities that can aggregate into more substantial results ”

Mícheal Ó hÉanaigh, Donegal County Council

Depending on the nature of your engagement, making tangible progress in connecting with your diaspora and realising your goal to foster a closer relationship with them may take time. Many council officials and project leaders acknowledged that their outlook was a long-term one, with a slow and steady build in output being their objective.

Once you are up and running, your diaspora engagement may need to make a new set of plans for expansion or simply successful continuation. This stage can be just as intense as the beginning of the programme or project, and can require a significant amount of planning and research to help it grow into the future.

Reputation

As your engagement matures, work to build your reputation. Your project or organisation will need to widen its support base in order to continue to be successful. There are a

number of ways to approach this, depending on the type of work you are doing:

- ▶ Media outreach can be crucial, whether through traditional channels (local news and radio) or online media (see p26 for ideas on communications strategies).
- ▶ If you hold regular (yearly, quarterly, etc) public events, schedule them at recognisably regular times – the last weekend in June, for example – to help build awareness.
- ▶ Do not forget word of mouth; local people can spread the word through their own family emigrants via phone and social media. Let local companies know what you are doing – they too have alumni.
- ▶ Keep records of those who attend each year to ensure they know when something is happening again. They may not come back every year but it can keep the relationship going and they may return in the future.
- ▶ Celebrate successes, to both profile your work, mark progress in relation to project timelines, and motivate participants.

Adaptability

- ▶ Think carefully about the developing leadership of your group. This role may evolve naturally, but you may wish to reshuffle things a little – the person best suited to starting a project may not be the best person to take it to the next stage. Within local authority structures, with the possibility of promotion or reassignment, careful consideration needs to be given to questions of leadership succession.

“ Without someone being appointed, nothing would happen. You need someone directing the traffic ”

John King, Global Limerick

- ▶ Be prepared to change your plans, if you spot new opportunities or if the model you have is not working as well as it might. The Longford Argentina Association, founded in 1989, had a long-standing outreach model which involved bringing tours of Longford natives over to Argentina to visit Irish communities there. With the arrival of cheaper travel, their trips became less popular and the Association’s working model was threatened. They decided to reformulate their project, and focused on bringing Irish-Argentinian experts to Longford to keep alive the bonds of history between them, and developed a subscription model of funding around a yearly “Asado,” a traditional Argentinian barbecue feast, to be hosted by the Association every summer.

Continuity

It is crucial to nurture the relationships and assess the duties of the different members of your team, in order to ensure they are content in their roles. Any long-running or very intense project will encounter issues around burnout, when your project team may experience fatigue after an especially involved stage in project development or implementation. In research, we found this to be a particular issue after a big expansion of energy by a project, whether in organising and hosting a major event, putting together a publication or report, or after any significant stage in the lifecycle of the project. Groups can anticipate this issue, and develop some coping strategies:

- ▶ Do not let your event/milestone be the last time your committee meets. Schedule a wrap-up meeting well in advance, and include it as part of the timetable.
- ▶ Plan to celebrate your achievements as a group. Dispersal of committee and volunteers after a milestone event is to be avoided – instead, plan an informal event of your own to reward everyone’s hard work and swap stories and pictures.
- ▶ Acknowledge particular hard work or successes among your group. Give public recognition to outstanding service within your project group.
- ▶ Take a break after a big milestone achievement. Working intensely leading up to the event and during it can cause tensions and tiredness; a little break from each other to recover before meeting again to discuss the outcomes can help.

New connections

As your project develops, you should work to make it more embedded in your local community and in diaspora engagement networks throughout Ireland. There are a number of different approaches you can take:

- ▶ **Open up the membership of your group.** Be prepared to bring in new people. After an initial development phase, many groups will find that they need to restructure their membership in order to bring in some new people, to gain fresh perspective and keep the project open to the community. Accept that some people will need to move on from direct involvement in the project.
- ▶ **Reassess the work being done by different members** of your committee and determine if changes should be made. It is important to make sure that the duties and responsibilities of the work are being evenly distributed and that each person’s aptitudes are being catered for. Take some time to discuss different people’s abilities and interests, and find a way to play to their strengths.
- ▶ **Connect with diaspora engagement projects in your area.** For projects, your local authority should have a good overview of activity in your area, and can point you towards useful connections. For local authorities and LEOs, it will be a good idea to reach beyond county borders to make connections with other diaspora engagement strategists in authorities across Ireland.

- ▶ **Consider if your project could be replicated** elsewhere in Ireland. Could you spread the word and help another project group get off the ground? Is there scope for developing a network of similar projects which might collaborate and support one another into the future?

Case Study: O'Malley Clan Gathering

The O'Malley Clan (www.omalleyclan.ie) has been running gathering rallies for the clan since 1953, under the banner of their most famous ancestor, Grace O'Malley, or Gráinne Mhaol. Starting their project first meant contacting the direct relatives of the local committee, sending handwritten letters overseas to those who had, in many cases, grown up in Murroe and left to find work elsewhere. They are members of the Clans of Ireland organisation, which provides legitimacy and recognition to clans across the country. Their remarkable longevity as a project is due in no small part to a clever governance rule – every year, the Clan (with membership all over the world) elects a new Chieftain to steer the clan events for the year. This ensures openness, avoids cliques, and gives a time limit to more intense involvement for its volunteers. “You need continuity and you need renewal,” says Denis O'Malley, the clan's current chieftain. They run their gathering every year on the last weekend in June in order to provide continuity, and their core committee of ten people swells to twenty in the run-up, when preparation is most intense. Over the years, the Clan have accessed different kinds of financial support to develop different aspects of their project, from the Gathering funds to LEADER funding, and most recently support from the Diaspora Engagement Fund. The project also keeps innovating – they have recently become involved in genetic genealogy, using services like YSDR DNA testing and Family Finder to help them map the genetic history of their local community.



FUNDING AND INVESTMENT

Resourcing diaspora engagement will be a challenge for all project or local authority agents. Clearly, the form of engagement undertaken - the scale, content and reach – must be adequately resourced to be attainable and sustainable. And so, locating suitable resources and preparing a budget in relation to strategic or project planning becomes an important component of diaspora engagement.

Resourcing diaspora engagement is not only a matter of sourcing suitable funding for programmes or projects, it also entails the broader opportunities for funding and investment that can support economic and social development. This includes diaspora-focused initiatives in business networking, skills and knowledge transfer, philanthropy, and recruitment.

Resourcing Your Initiative

Throughout our research it became apparent that many projects function on lean budgets, relying a good deal on the energy and imagination of those driving the projects. Several interviewees noted the need to be “creative” in resourcing and budgeting their plans for diaspora engagement. They also noted that without suitable financial planning funding issues become more pressing as projects move from their initial phases.

There are not many direct sources for local diaspora engagement initiatives. The Government has introduced two funding paths:

- ▶ **The Community Tourism Initiative for the Diaspora** was established in 2014 as a partnership between Failte Ireland, IPB Insurance and 31 local authorities to fund local diaspora tourism projects. It is intended to support the legacy of the Gathering Ireland 2013 and will provide an annual fund of one million euros over three years.
- ▶ **The Local Diaspora Engagement Fund** was established in 2015 by the Minister for Diaspora Affairs, Mr Jimmy Deenihan T.D., to promote diaspora engagement at a county, local and community level. Funding of 200,000 euros was made available under this grant scheme in 2015.

These are promising to be valuable paths of funding to help ignite or catalyse local projects, but sustainable projects will need longer-term resourcing and alternative plans to source funding. Possible sources:

- ▶ **Crowdfunding** is the practice of funding a venture by raising monetary contributions via many donors using an online platform. (See Resources for examples, p42).

- ▶ **EU funding** may be a source for groups with sufficient scale and suitable criteria. In particular, LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions pour le Development d'Economie Rurale), a rural development programme that provides supports to community groups and innovative small businesses throughout Europe.

Diaspora Business Networking

There are strong local as well as national imperatives to promote and secure business into and from Ireland and diaspora engagement can play an important role in this. Across the country there are formal and informal networking arrangements that range from social activities to active business promotion. Diaspora business engagement can take several forms, from stimulating awareness of investment opportunities to linking local businesses with diaspora business leaders. Support is provided by:

- ▶ **Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)** were launched as a nationwide system in 2014 with the intent to spur local recovery by providing access to Government support and advice for all categories of business. The LEOs are particularly well placed to engage local diaspora business networks and so facilitate programmes and projects aimed at investment and recruitment to the benefit of the region. They can provide the sort of robust support that is crucial to both the sustainability and the credibility of diaspora business networks.
- ▶ **The Western Development Commission (WDC)** was set up as a statutory body in 1997 to promote both social and economic development in the Western Region of Ireland. It has led to the establishment (in 2012) of a new business network, RE:CONNECT Western Regional Business Network, to help foster contacts between businesses in the west of Ireland and individuals and businesses abroad, with a particular focus on businesses in the UK that are owned or managed by people from the region.

Case Study: The Kerry Diaspora Business Network

The Kerry Diaspora Business Network was established by Minister Jimmy Deenihan & KMPG partner, Kerry woman Keelin Kissane, in 2009. The network has set up units in New York, London, Silicon Valley and Dublin with a Global membership. Very successful business meetings have been organised in all these cities. The network has also organised seminars in Dublin and Tralee with a number of positive outcomes. At the moment, the network has a membership of 300, all connected through LinkedIn. In addition, it has a global database of over 500. To ensure the sustainability of the network, Minister

Deenihan felt that it was critical to involve the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) in Kerry County Council. The LEO has assigned one of their office staff (Lisa Carroll) to provide regular updates on developments in Kerry for the network. Members of the network played an important role in two recent successful fundraising events in New York and London for the Kerry GAA Centre of Excellence. Also, members of the network have made substantial investments in property in the county. The fact that they were connected to the County through the KDBN no doubt was a contributing factor in their decision to invest. The network has been used by companies based in Kerry for recruitment purposes, such as the JRI (Japanese Research Institute) and Kerry Group. The Kerry Global Business Network arrangement is a model that could be replicated in other counties. It can involve many individuals who are not members of the Global Irish Network and who would be prepared to make a contribution to their respective counties.

Diaspora Skills and Knowledge Transfer

Research shows that diasporas play key roles in accelerating technological exchange and innovation in many national economies. More and more there is an emphasis on “brain circulation” rather than “brain drain.” While return of diaspora talent is not always feasible it can be leveraged through the development of networks to facilitate engagement between highly skilled expatriates and home country organisations and institutions.

Case Study: Atlantic Corridor

Atlantic Corridor is a local development company based in the Midlands, which works on a range of business and education projects with national and international partners, with a mixture of funding supports from the public and private sector. They have a strong focus on STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths] issues.

A new aspect of the project’s work has been to begin development of a database of Midlands expatriates who are currently at work in the fields of science and technology. Their aim is to use this network to make connections for education links, public engagement, and

research development. Jackie Gorman explains that the concentration on STEM topics “allows us to focus our resources in an area where we already have a lot contacts, competence and experience. It also allows us to manage our own expectations and those of stakeholders. We see the links we can develop in STEM diaspora providing valuable international links and best practice in a sector that still needs help in our region, as we have experienced long-term educational disadvantage until relatively recently.”

The projects aims are long-term, which can be challenging. It also focuses on skills and education, which are levers for investment decisions, as opposed to creating investment links directly. Says Gorman, “we also feel the relationships that are developed should be respectful and reciprocal – we believe STEM gives us an opportunity to do this as those involved in STEM have a public engagement focus now in most cases and those in the diaspora are keen to give something back to their communities of origin. We believe this way of approaching diaspora issues is a unique and will yield benefits in skills and education, which will benefit economic development here. It also contributes to branding and media profiling for the region in an interesting way.”

Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility

Internationally, there is growing understanding of “diaspora philanthropy” as a distinctive field of giving and investment, shaped by the strong ties between diaspora and homeland. In Ireland there are emerging initiatives in the field of philanthropy as local authorities address matters of community development in innovative ways. For example:

- ▶ **The Cork Foundation**, a high-level and well-connected diaspora engagement project first conceived by Cork North-West TD Áine Collins, began with the aim of raising €5m from Cork’s diaspora community for business in the area. The project has recently reformulated its aims and is now registered as a charity - it focuses on a platform of social innovation, identifying local organisations and initiatives, such as the Simon Community’s current back-to-work scheme, and channels diaspora investment funding in support of these.
- ▶ **The County Mayo Foundation** has been established in 2015 as a legal entity, incorporated in New York and with a US-based Board of Directors, with a view to providing a platform for charities and not-for-profit organisations in Mayo that are seeking to fundraise.

In some instances diaspora engagement is being established as a component of corporate social engagement. As noted above (p36), IPB Insurance has partnered with Fáilte Ireland and 31 local authorities to create the Community Tourism Diaspora Initiative. IPB views this as a “model of social engagement through public private partnership.”²

Diaspora Investment and Recruitment

In the age of rapid globalisation of companies and workforces, diaspora can provide much-needed resources, as investors or agents of foreign direct investment, as highly skilled workers, and as knowledge leaders. Research shows that networks of diaspora workers and entrepreneurs can transfer know-how and skills faster and more effectively than multinational companies.³

Local authorities can play an important role in seeking out and promoting diaspora talent (see p24) while partnerships in education, innovation and economic development are becoming a common, efficient means of engaging diaspora talents and resources. At both national and local levels there are initiatives to incentivise diaspora investment and recruitment.

- ▶ **Connect Ireland** was established as part of the Government’s Action Plan for Jobs in 2012 to motivate people to recommend Ireland to companies abroad that are seeking to expand internationally. It has received strong marketing and other support from the airports and airlines, the GAA and the IRFU. A successful referral that results in job creation in Ireland will lead to a payment of between €4,500 and €150,000 depending on the number of jobs created. More than 50,000 connectors are currently registered and to date over 1,200 jobs have been created, with many of these in areas that would not typically receive foreign direct investment. Connect Ireland works hand in hand with county councils and community groups throughout Ireland with a view to attracting jobs to regional areas.

Multinational companies based in Ireland are showing keenness to attract skilled diaspora employees and some are now proactively seeking same. Radox Laboratories, for example, with its Irish base in Dungloe, has taken a strategic approach to attracting diaspora workers. “Our key message is one of partnership, harnessing the power of the community and the diaspora is the key to help this company grow,” says Dr Peter Fitzgerald, founder and managing director of Radox Laboratories.⁴

² “New Community Tourism Initiative,” (17 April 2014), http://www.ipb.ie/cse/news_and_events,34.html.

³ AnnaLee Saxenian, *The New Argonauts: Regional Advantage in a Global Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007)

⁴ “Radox Teoranta Sets Out New Vision With Dungloe 2020,” <http://m.radox.com/article/radox-teoranta-sets-out-new-vision-with-dungloe-2020>



WHAT WORKS: FOUR ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT PROJECT





RESOURCES

In this section we list a number of different kinds of resources which may be of value to local authorities and project groups.

Expertise

This section gives detail on a number of national projects which are diaspora-oriented and which offer training and information to local groups interested in reaching out to the diaspora via heritage, genealogy, and business.

- ▶ **Ireland Reaching Out** builds links between the global diaspora and parishes of origin in Ireland. Ireland XO volunteers worldwide are networking with people of Irish descent in their local areas, connecting people with the home parishes of their ancestors. [www.irelandxo.com]
- ▶ **Connect Ireland** aims to motivate people to recommend Ireland to companies abroad that are seeking to expand internationally. Connect Ireland works hand in hand with county councils and community groups throughout Ireland with a view to attracting jobs to regional areas. [<http://www.connectireland.com>]
- ▶ **Historic Graves** is a community-based heritage initiative which works with local groups, training them to take high-tech field surveys of historic graveyards and recording their own oral histories. The database maintained by the project is building into a national resource and is fully searchable. [<http://historicgraves.com>]

Funding

This section lists a number of potential funding sources. Funds directly relating to diaspora engagement:

- ▶ **Community Tourism Diaspora Initiative** supports local community-based events and festivals on a yearly basis. A joint partnership between IPB Insurance and Fáilte Ireland, it is administered by each of the thirty-one local authorities. For details and applications (usually in Spring each year), visit your local authority website.
- ▶ **The Local Diaspora Engagement Fund** promotes diaspora engagement at a county, local and community level. Funded (€200,000 in 2015) and administered by the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs, further information can be found here: <http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/>

Other sources of funding which have been identified by interviewees as useful:

- ▶ **LEADER** (Liaison Entre Actions pour le Development d'Economie Rurale) funding is aimed at the development of rural economies across Europe. It is delivered through the medium of Local Development Strategies by Local Action Groups. In order for a project to be funded, it will need to be consistent with the needs that are identified in the Local Development Strategy for its area. Any communities wishing to apply for funding for projects should apply to the Local Action Group for their area.
- ▶ **The Heritage Council** supports the preservation and management of Irish heritage in the public interest, and provides grants to aid in this work: <http://www.heritage-council.ie/>
- ▶ **The Community Employment Scheme** creates part-time and temporary jobs based within local communities, to work with projects which meet an identifiable community need. <http://www.citizensinformation.ie/>
- ▶ **LinkedFinance** is an Irish crowdfunding company that focuses on investment in SMEs in Ireland and has a particular focus of diaspora funders. www.linkedfinance.com
- ▶ **Fund It** provides a crowdfunding platform for artists with creative ideas to attract funding in Ireland and across the world. www.fundit.ie
- ▶ **Worldwide Ireland Funds** is a philanthropic association founded in 1976. It aims to support “programmes of peace and reconciliation, arts and culture, education and community development.” www.theirelandfunds.org
- ▶ **The Western Development Commission** promotes both social and economic development in the Western Region of Ireland, with a €32 million fund to provide loans and equity to business and local communities in the West. www.wdc.ie/reconnect-western-regional-business-network
- ▶ **Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur** is a competition which seeks innovative business ideas and encourages Irish diaspora applicants. www.ibye.ie
- ▶ **The Startup Gathering** is aimed at attracting international startups to relocate to Ireland and recognising that the diaspora have a role to play in the building of a vibrant startup ecosystem across Ireland. www.startupgathering.ie

Networks

The connections listed below are all active networks of Irish and diaspora groups who may be helpful in reaching out to different segments of the Irish community abroad:

- ▶ **The Gaelic Athletics Association** has 439 GAA clubs outside Ireland, providing strong connections between the diaspora and home. www.gaa.ie

- ▶ **Irish Network USA** is based in US cities and connects newly arrived professionals with the Irish community. www.irishnetwork-usa.org
- ▶ **Irish International Business Group** works to facilitate greater communication and connectivity between successful Irish business people all over the world. www.iibn.com
- ▶ **Ireland INC** promotes Irish business interests worldwide through partnerships with key international markets. It connects international and Irish executives with sector specific network groups. www.irelandinc.com
- ▶ **Irish Pubs Global** is a global community of Irish hospitality business owners, managers and their suppliers. www.irishpubsglobal.com
- ▶ **WildGeese Network of Irish Scientists** is an all-Ireland professional network enabling connection, communication and collaboration of the Irish scientific, technological and engineering diaspora. www.wildgeesenetwork.org
- ▶ **Irish Technology Leadership Group** is a non-profit organization comprised of high-level global technology leaders who are Irish or Irish-American. www.itlg.org
- ▶ **Network Irlande** is a business network for French and Irish professionals and companies. www.networkirlande.com
- ▶ **Northern Irish Connections** is a network for anyone with an affinity to Northern Ireland to connect together and learn more. www.niconnections.com

Media

This section lists a number of media outlets whose content is directed towards Irish diaspora communities worldwide:

- ▶ **“Generation Emigration”** is an *Irish Times* project which develops diaspora-related content and has both an Irish and diaspora readership. <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/generation-emigration>
- ▶ **Irish Central** is the largest Irish website in the United States. www.IrishCentral.com
- ▶ **Leading Irish diaspora newspapers** all have websites: the *Irish Voice* (USA -<http://www.irishcentral.com/news/irishvoice/>), the *Irish Emigrant* (USA - <http://www.irishcentral.com/topic/boston.html>), the *Irish Echo* (USA – www.irishecho.com), the *Irish Echo* (Australia - www.irishecho.com.au), the *Irish Post* (UK – www.irish-post.co.uk), the *Irish Voice* (UK - <http://www.theirishvoice.com>)

Research

Below are some suggestions for groups in the early stages of developing their diaspora engagement strategy, who are seeking to learn more about their own area’s diaspora and

local history:

- ▶ **Ancestry Online** is the largest amassed collection of worldwide emigration records online. Subscription costs apply. (<http://ancestry.com>)
- ▶ **Irish Genealogy** is an official website hosting historic church and civil records, recording births, marriages and deaths in Ireland, and the records of the 1901 and 1911 census. The website also has advice on how to begin genealogical research and who to go to for further advice. (<http://irishgenealogy.ie>)
- ▶ **Griffith's Valuation** is the main property valuation group in Ireland between 1848 and 1864 provides detailed information on where people lived in mid-nineteenth century Ireland and the property they possessed. The National Library of Ireland also lists other record sources along similar lines: <http://www.nli.ie/en/griffiths-valuation.aspx>
- ▶ **Bureau of Military History** is an archive of primary source material for the revolutionary period in Ireland from 1913 to 1921. (<http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie>)
- ▶ **Website building:** for support on building a website for your project or area, your local enterprise office will have advice: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/DublinCity/Start-or-Grow-your-Business/Knowledge-Centre/eBusiness/How-to-Set-Up-a-Website/>
- ▶ **Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Policy** (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015). <https://www.dfa.ie/media/globalirish/global-irish-irelands-diaspora-policy.pdf>
- ▶ **Supporting the Next Generation of the Irish Diaspora** (UCD Clinton Institute, 2014) <http://ucdclinton.ie/>
- ▶ **Global Diaspora Strategies Toolkit** (Diaspora Matters, 2013) <http://diasporamatters.com/publications-resources-2/>
- ▶ **Report on the Limerick Diaspora Scoping Study and Survey** (Sarah Gibbons, 2014). http://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/global_limerick_network_scoping_study_report_0.pdf
- ▶ **A Study of the Social and Community Impacts of the Gathering in Counties Kerry and Westmeath** (Ziene Mottiar and M. Quinn, 2014). <http://arrow.dit.ie/cgi/view-content.cgi?article=1019&context=tfschhmtrep>



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