

THE DONEGAL DIASPORA PROJECT

The Donegal Diaspora Project is an exciting new initiative led by Donegal County Council in conjunction with Donegal County Development Board. Through the County Strategy 'An Strateis', the Diaspora is defined as 'The community of Donegal living in the County as well as those with a connection to, or interest in Donegal – no matter where they live'.

This Donegal community is scattered across the Globe, some people have recently left their homeland, while others have yet to return from second or third generation emigration. Many of our Diaspora act as proud ambassadors in a wide variety of roles, even more would like to find a way to stay connected with the county and promote their identity as citizens of Donegal. Whatever the background, maintaining that link to 'Home' is a fundamental impulse no matter how near or far you are.

This Diaspora project has been established to act as resource for the economic, social and cultural development of Donegal and will work in an innovative, cross-sectoral way to connect the North West with our global Diaspora family, creating linkages that develop skills, experience, networks and resources for the County. A huge amount of work is underway and will continue to grow, gathering strength and momentum through connecting people and informing them of all we have to offer and where we want to go.

The Donegal Diaspora Project hit the ground running at the start of the year, when renowned consultant Kingsley Aiken joined County Manager Seamus Neely and the Mayor of the County Noel Mc Bride to deliver a workshop to over fifty prominent Donegal citizens in the Radisson Hotel, Letterkenny. Accompanied by his colleague, Dr. Edward Kelly, the session focused on harnessing the power of Diasporas and Social Capital with a review of best practice and the potential for Donegal. Kingsley Aikins was a founding director of The Australian Ireland Fund and for two years served as Executive Director responsible for the growth of the Fund in Australia and setting up The Ireland Fund of New Zealand. In 1993, he took over as Executive Director of The American Ireland Fund, and in 1995, Chief Executive of the Worldwide Ireland Funds. He now runs Diaspora Matters, a consultancy company based in Dublin and is co-founder of Networking Matters with Dr. Kelly. He writes and speaks extensively on Philanthropy, Diaspora Issues and Networking.

Our website is under development and will be launched in the next few weeks. This website will act as a dynamic, interactive platform for the project, a hub of information that will engage and inform. The Donegal Diaspora Project is for Donegal and from Donegal - we want to hear from you, where-ever you are.

To keep in touch, log onto www.donegaldiaspora.com now and enter your details to join our database. Alternatively you can contact Project Co-ordinator, Sally Murphy by email: info@donegaldiaspora.com