



Leitrim County Council
Comhairle Chontae Liatroma

Connecting Leitrim's Global Community 2019-2023 Diaspora Strategy



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Introduction

Leitrim has a community that stretches across the globe and this strategy sets out how Leitrim County Council will connect with that global community and engage with our Diaspora.

Diaspora can be defined as the dispersion or spread of any people from their original home but this can be multilayered. It can include people who were born here but who now live somewhere else as well as people who were born somewhere else, either in Ireland or overseas, but who have Leitrim roots, even if those roots go back a few generations.

Our aims are to strengthen the Leitrim Global Community socially and economically, to provide a connection for members of our Diaspora and assist in addressing the needs of those who wish to return. We are working with many Leitrim groups to achieve this, both within the county and beyond.

Background

The development of the Diaspora Strategy brought together Longford, Leitrim, Roscommon and Sligo County Councils, with Leitrim acting as the lead/co-ordinating Council. The aim was to develop four County-specific Strategies whilst simultaneously identifying and developing appropriate cross-Council synergies and areas of joint-working. The process was also governed by these working principles:

- The Strategies reflect the analyses and development frameworks provided by the Counties' Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs)
- The Diaspora is seen as 'both an asset and a responsibility', with a two-way dynamic between the Diaspora and 'home' sought
- There is no single 'type' of Diaspora: it is cross-generation and multi-layered and the modern Diaspora is not always fixed but is instead often flexible and fluid
- Social media is now central in building and maintaining links, but the power and importance of personal/face-to-face connectivity also endures



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- Emotion remains powerful in the context of the Irish Diaspora
- There is a need not to over-raise expectations and to focus on practical, pragmatic actions which will deliver tangible results
- The process is not starting from a zero-base but builds on/incorporates existing Diaspora-related initiatives and projects

The Strategy development process in Leitrim involved the following steps:

- Planning meetings with all four partner Councils
- Desk research into the nature and extent of the County's Diaspora and into Irish Diaspora issues generally
- A questionnaire survey of relevant Leitrim organizations to establish the nature and extent of their inter-action/work with the Leitrim Diaspora
- Meetings of the Leitrim Diaspora Working Group and the hosting of a facilitated planning workshop
- Hosting of facilitated cross-County workshops on the role and potential of social media and digital connectivity and exploring diaspora focused websites
- Ongoing liaison with Council officers and others

The Leitrim Diaspora Working Group includes representatives from Leitrim County Council, Leitrim Tourism, Leitrim LEO, Library Services, Leitrim Genealogy Centre; journalism and the private sectors. It is intended that group membership will be revised on an annual basis to ensure that we are reflecting our Diaspora's interests and engaging with them effectively. The working group included in the action plan supporting this strategy to emphasis its importance in engaging with our Diaspora.



Our Diaspora: Who, How, Why, When and Where?

Diaspora and Ireland

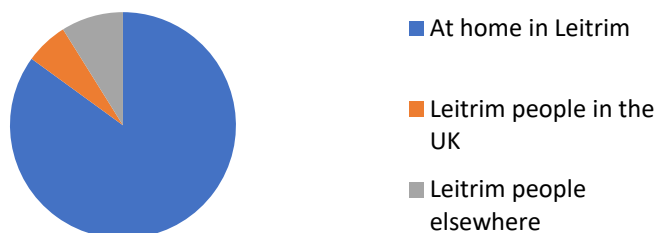
Island or not, Ireland has never been insular. It has instead been a place where, over the centuries, people have constantly come and gone. Since the mid-1700s there have been significant if varying out-flows of people, mostly though not exclusively, to English-speaking parts of the world. One result is that an estimated 70m people around the world claim and cherish Irish ancestry and heritage. Another is that in 2011, 602,000 people who were born in Ireland were then living in England, the equivalent of 10% of the then population of Ireland.

Those people all form the Irish Diaspora. Our Diaspora is not a static thing but one that is constantly changing yet is equally underpinned by legacy issues dating back centuries.

Assuming Ireland's overall Diaspora reflects Leitrim's proportion of Ireland's 2016 population (0.68%), there are likely to be at least:

- 476,000 people overseas with Leitrim roots
- 2,300 Leitrim-born people currently living in the UK
- 3,350 Leitrim-born people currently living overseas in places other than the UK

Where 'Leitrim-born' People Live

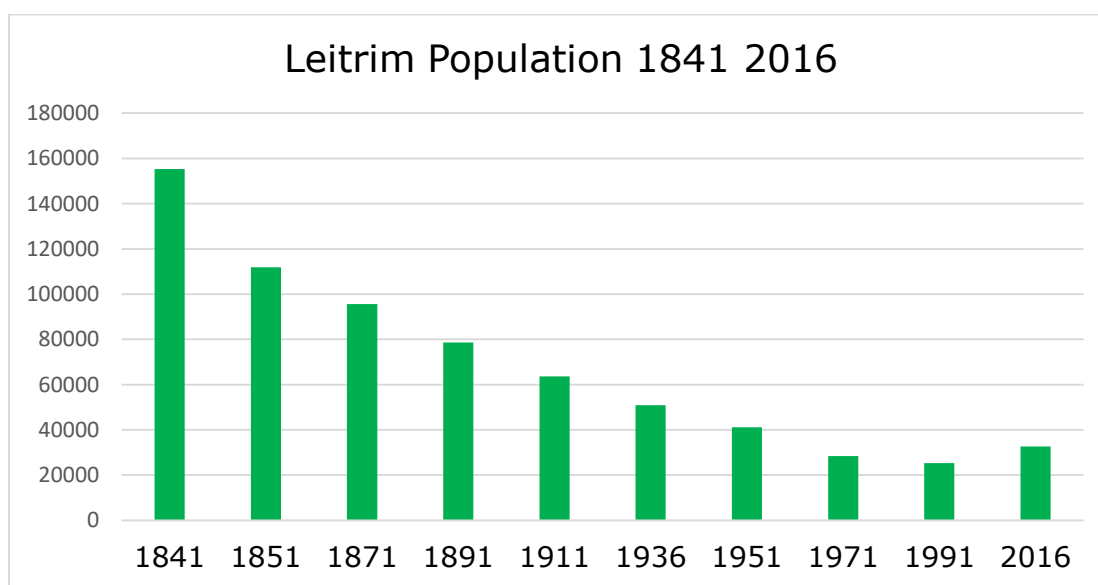




Crucially however, being statistically a part of the Diaspora does not necessarily mean a commitment to the Diaspora or to Leitrim.

The Dynamics of Emigration

Emigration has traditionally been seen as negative and debilitating, sucking our youngest, brightest and best out of their home places. Its impact on Leitrim has been amongst the starkest in Ireland, with an emigration-driven century-and-a-half of post-Famine population decline reversed in 2002 only. At its lowest point, in 1991, Leitrim's population had shrunk to a mere 16% of its 1841 peak.



People leave Ireland and Leitrim in good times and in bad and whilst many of our past emigrants are returning they're still outnumbered by those who are leaving. The EU, excluding the UK, is now the main destination for Irish emigrants, attracting about a third of all leavers followed by the UK (attracting a fifth), Australia (one-in-ten), the USA (8%) and Canada (6%). The remaining 22% go to other Countries. In the UK the Irish 'centres of gravity' remain Greater London, the West Midlands and Greater Manchester.



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Now nearly half Ireland's migrants are aged 25-44: twenty years ago, the 15-24-year-old age group dominated our emigrant population. Dramatic social and technological changes mean our current and most recent migrants form the best-educated and best connected-with-home Diaspora we've ever had. The internet provides the opportunity for people to leave Ireland while maintaining a strong connection to 'home'.

The growing pull of greater Dublin is also increasingly impacting on Counties like Leitrim, as is commuting/moving to locations such as Sligo which attracts 1,470 Leitrim people daily.

A relatively new phenomenon is the 'Affinity Diaspora', people from other (largely EU) Countries who immigrated here to work, but who have since returned home or may do so in the future. These people have a particular connection with Leitrim and are also part of the wider 'Leitrim family.' 'Non-Irish nationals' currently make up 11% of Leitrim's population.

The Nature of 21st Century Emigration

Irish Emigration and the Irish Diaspora are complex, but research and analysis have shown:

- Emigration is now less permanent and more 'circular', with many people moving back and forward between different countries and locations.
- When our people leave they tend to go to join other *people* (who they already know) rather than go to live in other *places*: this 'people connectivity' is central to the Irish Diaspora experience
- The great majority of those emigrating (70%+) leave a job in Ireland when they emigrate: although the 'quality of life' elsewhere is a major pull-factor, our emigration levels remain highly correlated with our economic performance at home
- The majority of emigrants tend to leave rural Ireland to seek out urban places elsewhere: if/when they return, they tend to travel the reverse journey, ie from an urban setting elsewhere back to rural Ireland



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- Once in those other places, Irish people stick together and connect in with their Irish/cultural roots: this is particularly the case for our younger people, our ‘Millennials Diaspora’ (essentially people born in the 1980s and 1990s)
- Irish sport is a powerful linking factor with the GAA an especially strong and vibrant influence: this was especially evident through Leitrim GAA’s 2018 Championship trip to New York when up to 5,000 Leitrim people (15% of the County’s population) travelled to the game in an unparalleled example of a ‘home/Diaspora’ engagement
- Social media now totally dominates our migrants’ means of communication (though Leitrim’s potential here may be constrained, given that the 2016 Census showed that 4,104 of the County’s households (33%) have no computers and 3,402 (27%) have no internet)

Our migrants are now much more ‘pulled in’ by the lifestyle appeal of other places than ‘pushed out’ by harsh times at home

- Construction-related work remains the single most important destination of our migrants, though increasingly on the technical/professional as opposed to the trades side
- Most migrants (eight-in-ten) intend to come back home and when they do they prefer to come back to their ‘home/roots’ part of Ireland
- Economic factors alone don’t pull people back to Ireland as family ties, social services, schooling, housing and community are all major considerations
- Over the past decade, around 30% of those returning come back from the UK, 20% come back from Australia and 10% come back from the US
- Most government-driven migrant return policies have failed, (which has been recognised in research carried out in recent years acknowledging the barriers our Diaspora face when deciding to relocate to Ireland. Indeed, the Global Irish Diaspora Policy (2015) includes a section on addressing the barriers and established an inter-departmental working group to



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work on them), although the ‘temporary and time-limited’ The Gathering in 2013 was a major success with over 90 events held in Leitrim alone

Note: In the absence of detailed Leitrim-specific figures, it is assumed all these patterns above apply equally to Leitrim’s emigrants.

Linking with and Returning to Home

For an overwhelming majority of the Diaspora physical connectivity with Ireland/Leitrim is as tourists rather than as permanent returners or significant investors. This tourism tends to fall into two categories:

- **‘Heritage tourism’** driven by a wish to discover ancestry and heritage
- **‘Festival tourism’** created by people travelling back for important events and festivals such as Easter, Christmas, weddings and christenings

The ‘mechanics’ of coming back home permanently – securing housing, sorting out car-related issues, opening bank accounts, getting insurance, obtaining PPS numbers/logging back into social security systems and ‘validating’ non-Irish spouses/partners – present difficult barriers for many emigrants.

Very few (6% in 2016) returning emigrants live alone/are single-person households. That means that attempts to entice people back need to focus on the needs and aspirations of families and households rather than on the needs and aspirations of individuals. Central to this is people’s aspirations for their children, how they’ll be educated and how they’ll grow up.

Our Home Place, Leitrim: A Summary View

Leitrim’s People

Leitrim has Ireland’s smallest population with 2016 figure of 32,044 people, 4,000 of whom live in Carrick-on-Shannon and approx 6,000 in the County’s smaller towns.



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Demographically the County is healthy, with births exceeding deaths between 2011 and 2016 by 822 but net out-migration simultaneously totalling 648. In 2016, 44% of Leitrim people moving house moved to a new house outside the County, the highest rate in Ireland. At least 4,200 people, a third of the workforce, travel out of Leitrim each day for work. The Irish 'habit of going away' is therefore deeply embedded here. One consequence is a 2016 Leitrim '65+ Dependency Rate' of 27%, well above the State's average of 20%.

The Movement of People and Leitrim

The reality that all Leitrim young people going on to Third Level education leave the County to do so helps establish/reinforce this 'habit of going away'. The absence of Third Level provision within Leitrim also means the County cannot directly capitalise on the strong potential of hosting overseas students (Ireland ranks as the world's ninth-best attractor of US students).

In 1841, 155,297 people lived in Leitrim but by 1851 this had fallen to 111,897: over the following decade 16,500 people left Leitrim, 15% of its population, or one-person-in-seven

Life in Leitrim: What People Do

Leitrim remains a vibrant County with a strong entrepreneurial spirit (95% of its enterprises are micro-enterprises, i.e. have fewer than 10 employees), a robust work ethic, vibrant communities and a powerful attachment to and pride in place. Its jobs are underpinned by Health and Social Work (14%), Wholesale/Retail (12%), Industry (12%), Education (9%) Agriculture (9% - double the national average) and Public Administration (8%). Manorhamilton, with a population of 1,450 it is Leitrim's second-largest town after Carrick-on-Shannon, acts as a strong manufacturing hub.

Disposable incomes in 2014 stood at 95% of the State average but the cost of living in Leitrim is also below the national average.



Leitrim's Heritage and Culture

The County enjoys a rich social, community, heritage and cultural infrastructure. Key assets here include:

- The Seán Mac Diarmada homestead at Kiltyclogher, the home of one of the 1916 Signatories and now the location of an annual Summer School in his memory
- The Shannon/Erne navigations and Blueways, Fowley's Falls, Glencar, Lough Gill, Lough Allen and the Lough Rinn rowing facility
- Literary/cultural heritages via John McGahern, WB Yeats, 'Ballroom of Romance'
- Carrick-on-Shannon's Purple Flag accreditation (Purple Flag status marks towns as entertaining, enjoyable, safe and diverse places to visit/stay in)
- A strong organic movement, local food/drink hubs and the O'Rourke heritage
- A thriving creative/arts sector, manifest in the creative industries, a craft trail and in vibrant arts facilities in Carrick-on-Shannon, Manorhamilton (including a Sculpture Centre), Carrigallen and Ballinamore: a County Culture and Creativity Plan is in place
- Unspoilt natural surroundings and environment
- Leitrim has the highest percentage of artists in Ireland and thriving participation in the arts among young people e.g. involvement in youth theatre is five times the national average

The GAA is very strongly rooted in Leitrim, with 24 Clubs in place, one for every 1,300 people. It provides a particularly strong Leitrim bond and on a five-year rotation the County travels to play New York and London in the Connacht Senior Football Championship. It is estimated that anything up to a remarkable 10% of the County's population travelled to the New York v Leitrim game in May 2018.

There are four branches of Comhaltas in Leitrim: Ballinamore, Drumsna, Drumshanbo and Glenfarne.



Tourism and Leitrim

Leitrim has significant visitor potential, and already attracts an estimated 144,000 visitors per annum (39,000 international, 70,000 domestic and 35,000 from Northern Ireland). The Leitrim Tourism Strategy sets a 2021 target of 296,000 visitors. Most of Leitrim's tourist accommodation is in the south of the County, a reality which any Diaspora visitors' strategy needs to reflect.

Ireland West Airport, Knock, links into 24 destinations, 13 of which are essentially holiday destinations 'from' Ireland and nine are in Britain. Those British links offer significant potential for connecting in with the Leitrim Diaspora, with 425,000 inward seats to Ireland West offered each year. In 2017 some 52,500 Leitrim passengers used the Airport.

What's Happening Already

Significant Diaspora-related work is already underway in/beyond Leitrim, some examples of which include:

- **Ireland West Airport's** new Visitor Centre opening in October 2018 which will feature information on events, attractions, activities and visitor experiences across the region, including special live and interactive experiences throughout the year, important holiday dates and a series of County weeks, where Leitrim will have an opportunity to showcase its experiences
- **Leitrim County Council Arts Office** is examining the potential of touring the Leitrim Equation production to Canada
- **Leitrim GAA's** spectacular engagement with **New York** in 2018
- Various social and cultural events by well-established **Leitrim Associations** in **Boston, Dublin, London, Luton** and **New York**
- **Leitrim Genealogy Services/Leitrim Roots** offers a comprehensive family history research



service for people with Leitrim roots

- **Sports and community** in Leitrim provide vibrant and rich examples of engagement with our Diaspora
- Actions in the **Leitrim LECP** aiming at delivering Diaspora-related events each year and improving connectivity with the Diaspora
- **Leitrim County Council's** regular promotional events beyond the County and hosting of events like The Gathering
- Leitrim County Council is part of the **Upper Shannon Erne** Future Economy Project to drive regional job creation with the Diaspora
- **Leitrim Tourism's** 'Leitrim Ambassador/Advocate' initiative
- The **'Play Your Part'** initiative which used the GAA networks in and beyond Leitrim, Cavan, Longford and Roscommon to connect with the Diaspora
- **Western Development Commission's** ongoing Diaspora-related events and activities and its LookWest online guide to living, working and doing business in the West, including Leitrim
- Leitrim forms part of the **Atlantic Economic Corridor**, which sees business and agencies in nine counties stretching from Kerry to Donegal joining forces to drive interest in the west coast as a great place to live and work, and attract further investment to the region
- In 2006, 2007 and 2013 Leitrim ran a week-long **'Roots Festival'**. The Festival was of great interest to people whose ancestors came from Co. Leitrim or people who were born in Co. Leitrim. It included guided tours to different historic and beautiful areas in the county. There were lectures on roots-related topics and evenings of traditional entertainment, with Irish music, song and dance.

For an overview of County Leitrim's profile please refer to the Appendix.



The Vision and Aims of our Diaspora Strategy

Our Vision

Our 'Diaspora Vision' for Leitrim is:

Connecting our Global Community to celebrate, sustain and develop Leitrim

Our strategic aims therefore are to:

- Develop and deliver a Leitrim narrative that helps build the Leitrim brand and deliver a strong sense of belonging for Leitrim people everywhere so that economic, community and personal well-being can be improved
- Build long-term, two-way relationships with our Diaspora so that they can help their home area/village/town/County and that 'home-based Leitrim' can equally help them: our Diaspora is therefore seen both as an asset and a responsibility
- Recognize the efforts of Leitrim's Diaspora by engaging with them practically and strategically and create a welcoming environment for their engagement
- Drive forward joined-up thinking, integration and collaboration between those working with our Diaspora
- Constantly recognize that we are part of and contribute to Irish Diaspora work generally (Global Irish, Irish Abroad Unit)

Our Diaspora Strategy is set out under four main Themes:

- **Economic and Job Creation**
- **Arts, Heritage and Culture**
- **Tourism and Genealogy**
- **Sport and Community**



Actions are identified under each Theme, with enablers and timeframes.

The Strategy is deliberately based on a ‘less is more’ approach. It is short and focused because we want and need something that is deliverable, and which will make a difference. It must also be deliverable within what are limited resources and must avoid duplicating what many groups and organizations are already doing. For example, the Strategy does not focus on how things can be made easier for emigrants to slot back in to daily living here as those issues must be addressed at the national level however we will promote the information that is available on a national level through our Diaspora activities. This strategy aims to contribute to and complement the work ongoing through the Economic and Community Plan, by other development strategies and by groups such as the Local Enterprise Office (LEO).

Our Diaspora Strategy

Strategic Approach to Leitrim’s Diaspora

Whilst our Strategy is built around four main Themes, it also includes some strategic cross-cutting elements.

Our Goal

Our core task is to brand Leitrim as a welcoming place that’s accessible and merges the best of the new/modern with the best of the old/traditional. We want to build ‘tír grá/pride in place’, seeking a core output of getting as many of the Diaspora as possible to visit here. It’s also vital that we strengthen our sense of ‘Leitrim Family’, so that our Diaspora always maintain that sense of belonging and never feel abandoned or cast adrift. One key way of doing this is by engaging with those members of the Diaspora’s families who remain here in Leitrim.



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Action Plan

Action	Who	Timeframe
Build a Diaspora specific web presence to highlight related activities and promote opportunities	Leitrim County Council	Year 1
Develop a Leitrim Diaspora database and maintain interaction with the various Leitrim Associations (currently Boston, Dublin, London, Luton and New York).	Leitrim County Council	Year 1
Create presence at international events and festivals to target and engage with Diaspora	Leitrim County Council	Year 2
Showcase Leitrim's culture, arts and heritage and link to the annual calendar of events to include an annual 'Leitrim Day'.	Leitrim County Council	Year 3
Leitrim Diaspora Award to recognize Diaspora-related work	Leitrim County Council	Year 3
Ensure the Leitrim Diaspora is referenced at Leitrim civic events and occasions where possible	Leitrim County Council	Ongoing
Develop a 'Leitrim Pin' that will be promoted to Leitrim Diaspora	Leitrim County Council	Year 2
Include a Diaspora element in the Leitrim County GAA Centre at Annaduff	GAA	Year 1



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Promote Ireland West Airport, Knock, as an access point to Leitrim	Leitrim County Council Leitrim Tourism	Ongoing
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Economic and Job Creation

Our Goal

People no longer emigrate simply for work reasons and neither will the availability of jobs alone bring them back to Leitrim. Nonetheless economic activity and jobs lie at the heart of people's lives, regardless of where they live. Key areas of focus here include bringing investment back to Leitrim (and the region), improving opportunities here in Leitrim, raising awareness of Leitrim-produced goods and services and easing business flows between Leitrim and our Diaspora.



Action Plan

Action	Who	Timeframe
Target Leitrim's Ireland-based Diaspora with the messages that Leitrim is 'open for business' highlighting supports through the Council and LEO.	LEO USEFE	Year 1
Develop a 'Back Home to Business' support package, e.g. business premises (such as The Hive) and high-quality broadband available and is an accessible, low-cost but high-quality place to live), even if people work elsewhere	LEO USEFE	Year 2
Promote Leitrim 'business winners and brands', highlighting the County's track record in business innovation and achievement, all within a clean, unspoiled County.	LEO	Year 1
Learn from the 'KiltyLive' initiative as a means of attracting Diaspora and others to live in Leitrim	LCC	Ongoing

A Diaspora-Relevant Strategic Alliance

In July 2017 **Ireland West Airport** and **Stewart International Airport** in **New York** established the first Sister Airport Relationship, forming a strategic alliance to facilitate the exchange of information and promote and develop air access between the Airports.



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Tourism and Genealogy

Our Goal

It is now widely accepted that a key way of building and maintaining a Diaspora's sense of belonging is to facilitate them visiting their home place. Visiting alone is not enough however as we want our Diaspora to engage with and be part of their County. That means creating for and delivering to them a memorable 'Leitrim experience', one that includes a strong genealogical offer. Very often the momentum for a Diaspora-related visit to the County has its origins in a 'remote' request for genealogical information. Genealogy not only helps build a 'Leitrim common bond', but also bolsters our County's tourism industry.



Action Plan

Action	Who	Timeframe
Promote Leitrim as a conference location	LEO LCC	Ongoing
Create and promote a Leitrim Diaspora Trail which sets out/explains Leitrim's 'Diaspora story' and links into regional Diaspora sites and facilities and build stories around 'Famine Leitrim', using <i>'The Dead Buried by the Dying'</i> book	LCC Heritage Officer Leitrim Tourism	Year 4
Encourage an initiative where participating tourism businesses offer discounts to visiting Diaspora e.g. develop 'Back Home to Leitrim' weekend/short-break packages, including a focus on visiting Leitrim at off-peak times of the year	LCC	Year 3
Host a biennial Diaspora Festival, to include a two day conference which will showcase Leitrim 'Ambassadors'	LCC	Year 2
Develop County genealogy family-tracking services	Leitrim County Council	Year 3
Promote Leitrim brands, particularly in the areas of artisan food, beverages and crafts	LEO	Year 1



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Arts, Heritage and Culture

Our Goal

Knowing ‘Who we are and Where we are from’ are central to personal and community well-being and if anything, tend to be highly-valued by our Diaspora. Arts, heritage and culture are central to what differentiates us and therefore need to be central to our Diaspora work. Leitrim is underpinned by a series of strong heritages and enjoys thriving arts, cultural and creative industries sectors. Our culture provides an important link to our Diaspora as it is a way to connect and reach out.

‘Leitrim Equation’: Bringing Life to Who We Are and Where We’re From

“The Leitrim Equation production looks to a long tradition of Leitrim music to trace a wider history full of colour, of love and loss, and of leaving and coming back. From the hills of Sí Beag and Sí Mór and the pits of the Arigna mines to the music of Irish communities of London and New York; the show describes how landscape shapes us, and the extent to which place, time and events influence who we are.

The film is the culmination of a residency in Leitrim over two years by Eleanor Shanley, Dave Sheridan, Padraig McGovern and John McCartin who researched and sourced Leitrim music and song, and together with Dónal Lunny they have presented beautiful arrangements of these tunes, some of which have not been played for over 100 years in a cast completed with poet, playwright and broadcaster Vincent Woods and the captivating footwork of Seán Nós dancer Edwina Guckian.”

www.leitrimequation.ie



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Action Plan

Action	Who	Timeframe
Continue the publication and promotion of the annual calendar of Leitrim events aimed at attracting Diaspora back to visit the County and promote Diaspora related events from Dock Theatre, Glens Centre etc	Arts office, Tourism, Leitrim County Council	Ongoing
Promote Leitrim based artists and musicians to Diaspora and link to tours outside of Leitrim (Rest of Ireland and Internationally)	Arts Office	Year 2
Encourage and promote the recording or live streaming of key Leitrim events (festivals, GAA games, conferences, launches, commemorations, etc), using, where possible, existing platforms such as LiveTrad	USEFE	Year 3
Continue to on Diaspora outreach element of the 'Leitrim Equation' initiative	Arts Office	Ongoing
Promoting festivals such as Iron Mountain & Joe Mooney to Diaspora while building upon existing Diaspora engagement through community events	Arts Office Tourism Office	Ongoing



Commercial Media Resources for the Irish Diaspora

IrishCentral is a New York-based Irish digital media company providing political, current affairs, entertainment, and historical commentary to the Irish throughout the world. It is dedicated to connecting the Irish throughout the world and creating an online platform where all Irish can feel at home at:

<https://www.irishcentral.com>

The business caters to 34 million Irish Americans and 70 million Irish Diaspora with 3.5 million unique visitors per month, 500k Facebook followers, 33k Twitter followers, and 13k followers on Instagram. The website also enjoys a newsletter subscriber base of 250k.

‘Irish Times Abroad’ offers a significant web-based Diaspora-focused resource for Irish-connected people around the world at:

<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad>

The resource presents ‘Generation Emigration’ first-person stories and cameos featuring the Irish Diaspora, has a specific working abroad section, offers access to a Diaspora network, includes specific Australia, Canada, Gulf States and New Zealand sections and sets out an ‘Everything-you-need-to-know-about-returning-to-Ireland’ list of advice and supports.

Sport and Community

Our Goal

Research makes it clear that sport provides one of the most common bonds within our Diaspora beyond Leitrim and between our Diaspora and Leitrim. The County’s remarkable engagement with its 2018 Connacht Championship trip to New York is very clear evidence of the powerful forces at work here.



Action Plan

Action	Who	Timeframe
Develop and deliver a multi-layered, multi-faceted 'Leitrim Links' programme as part of Leitrim GAA's five-yearly Connacht Championship visits to London and New York, including building on the work already done by/for the Leitrim County GAA Centre in reaching out to and building links with the Leitrim Diaspora	LCC GAA Business groups High level advisory groups	Year 2
Link with school reunions and Third Level alumni projects and source funding for clan gatherings (perhaps 3 to 5 events per year)	LCC PPN Schools and colleges	Year 3
Investigate the potential of bringing overseas GAA Feile Explain teams to the County	GAA	Ongoing
Celebrate Leitrim's Affinity Diaspora to grow and foster Leitrim's connection with them, demonstrate we are open and welcoming to all, and highlight the contribution and importance of the 'new Leitrim' communities	LCC	Year 2
Show welcome and inclusivity to Leitrim's hosted Diasporas by including phrases on our websites in their own languages and provide basic classes for Leitrim people in other languages	LCC	Year 3
Develop links and connections created through the Lough Rinn Rowing Centre and regatta	Leitrim County Council	Ongoing



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Cross-County Work

Our Goal

This Diaspora initiative emerged on foot of collaboration between Leitrim, Longford, Roscommon and Sligo County Councils. It was also always believed that some aspects of our Diaspora work could best be taken forward at a cross-County and -regional level. Accordingly, some strategic joint-working will create a synergy across our separate County Strategies. It will also help strengthen the position of the four county councils in bids for potential resources.



Action Plan

Action	Who	Timeframe
The four partner counties will meet once a year to share experiences and report on progress	USEFE	Ongoing
Develop shared response to macroeconomic influences to build opportunities for the region	USEFE	Year 1
Regional sharing of ideas on issues that affect Diaspora which could lead to regional events e.g. hosting an annual Roscommon/Leitrim/Longford/Sligo/Cavan 'Diaspora Summit' with different themes each year	USEFE	Year 2
Work with Connacht GAA and the other Connacht Counties to ensure Leitrim has an involvement in every year's GAA Championship trips to London and New York (and not just in the years in which Leitrim is directly involved)	Leitrim Sligo Roscommon Connacht GAA	Ongoing
Encourage cross-County Diaspora engagement by promoting Diaspora-relevant sites, projects and initiatives in our partner Counties, ensuring that any Diaspora Trails identified all link in with each other	USEFE	Ongoing
Develop a signposting service for sources of advice and support for Diaspora moving back to Ireland hosted on each partner counties' .ie website and coordinated on a regional basis to avoid duplication	USEFE	Ongoing
Joint organisation of trade missions to relevant destinations	USEFE	Ongoing
Joint organisations of job expo events	USEFE	Ongoing
Streaming of events – cultural and sporting	USEFE	Ongoing

Taking the Strategy Forward

The Actions for taking forward the Leitrim Diaspora Strategy are:

- Implement the Action Plan to keep to four-year timeline
- Identify a specific Council Unit to lead on Diaspora Initiatives
- Host an annual 'Upper Shannon Erne Future Economy project Regional Summit' which would review progress, disseminate good practice, identify key actions and initiatives for the following year and keep a focus on good communication and interaction between the stakeholders
- Undertake a midterm review
- Undertake an end of term review

Digital Connectivity and Our Leitrim Diaspora

The most fundamental fact about the Diaspora is that they are ‘there’ and we are ‘here’. Communication between us is critical and digital/social media is now by far the most appropriate and effective way to progress that. This is also an obvious area for cross-Council collaboration between Leitrim and the Longford, Roscommon, Cavan and Sligo County Councils. The following framework for digital connectivity with the Diaspora is proposed:

Step 1: Define the Council’s core Diaspora Audiences (for example by Age, Gender, Location, Type of Work)

Step 2: Determine the ‘Call(s) to Action’ (Agree the one/two/three outcomes that are sought here ... eg ‘Come back to visit’, or ‘Come back to stay’, or ‘Invest back home’ or ‘Keep your Leitrim County faith’)

Step 3: Identify the ‘Content Pillars’ (Scope out the messages, information, stories and reports that are going to be used to convey those ‘Calls to Action’: make sure the Content includes pieces relating to the ‘partner Counties’)

Step 4: Select the key Social Media Platforms (List out what platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Websites – are going to be used to convey which Content Pillars to which Audiences, reflecting the realities, for example, that LinkedIn is the key way to reach corporate/business audiences whilst Facebook’s most active user group is women aged over 45)

Step 5: Establish a Plan/Timetable of Action (Draw up timetables – at least quarterly – setting out What Content is going out When, on Which Platform and aimed at What Audience to deliver Which Call to Action)

Step 6: Identify and Allocate the Resources Needed (Work out and allocate the resources – largely Human – that will be needed to make Steps 1 - 5 and Step 7 happen)

Step 7: Implement, Monitor and Review (Ensure Step 5 is implemented and constantly assess its effectiveness, largely through talking to the Leitrim Diaspora and getting their feedback)

Sources:

Figures and findings quoted are sourced from CSO Census Reports; 'Global Diaspora Strategies Toolkit', Diaspora Matters 2011; 'Global Irish, Ireland's Diaspora Policy'; 'Global Irish Making a difference Together', The Ireland Funds; Indecon Report on 'Addressing Challenges Faced by Returning Irish Emigrants' 2018; Ipsos MRBI/Irish Times 'Generation Emigration Survey' 2016; Leitrim LECP 2015-21; Library Ireland; Social Policy Research Centre 'Irish Community Statistics, England and Selected Urban Areas Report for England 2011 Census'

APPENDIX County Leitrim Profile

Land Mass	158.885 ha
% of Ireland	2.26%
Population Density (2016)	20.17 persons per sq km
Human Resource	
County Population 2016	32,044
Population Change (2011-2016)	0.8%
Top Centres with Population over 600 (2016)	
Carrick-on-Shannon (Leitrim and Roscommon)	4,062
Manorhamilton	1,466
Kinlough	1,032
Ballinamore	914
Drumshambo	902
Mohill	855
Dromahair	808
Highest level of Education (2016)	
Highest level of education completed by persons whose education has ceased (%)	
No Formal/Primary (15.7%)	
Secondary (46.6%)	
Third Level (37.7%)	
Natural Resources	
Average Farm Size (2010)	25.1 ha
Farming, Fishing & Forestry workers (2016)	1,091
Employment	
Employed (2016)	12,728
Employment Change (2011-2016)	6.3%
Labour Force participation Rate (2016)	59.3%
Numbers Employed by Sector (2016)	
Total	12,728
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	1,091 (8.6%)
Industry & Construction	2,154 (16.9%)
Services	8,810 (69.2%)
Agency Assisted Employment (2015)	
Employment in Agency Assisted Irish Owned Companies	720
Employment in Agency Assisted Foreign Owned Companies	423
Income & Output	
Net Output per Person Engaged (2012)	€99,473*
Avg. Wage in industry (2012)	€36,168
Avg. Disposable Income per Capita (2015)	€18,285
* There are some limitations associated with Net Output figures which relate to the	

ownership of companies and transfer pricing arrangements which may be applied	
Tourism (2015)	
Number of Overseas Tourists	57,000
Revenue Generated by Overseas Tourists	€15m
Enterprise (2015)	
Number of Active Enterprises	1,819
Percentage of Micro-Enterprises (10 or fewer employees)	94.7%
Percentage Change in Number of Enterprises (2011-2015)	-0.9%
Labour Catchments in County Leitrim (2006) *	
Carrick-on-Shannon labour catchment	7,785 (2016), 6,632 (2006)
Manorhamilton labour catchment	1,270 (2016), 1,234 (2006)

* The labour catchment of a town is that area from which it draws most of its workforce. These figures are the number of workers living in the catchment areas of these towns

Sources:

Western Development Commission; CSO Census of Population 2016; Failte Ireland, Regional Tourism Performance 2015; CSO Business Demography 2015; CSO Labour Catchments 2016