

# GLN

Global Limerick Network



## REPORT ON THE LIMERICK DIASPORA SCOPING STUDY AND SURVEY

2014

**Sarah Gibbons**

February 2015





# REPORT ON THE LIMERICK DIASPORA SCOPING STUDY AND SURVEY

2014

**Sarah Gibbons**

February 2015



COLÁISTE MHIURE GAN SMÁL | MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE  
~OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH~ ~UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK~



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

© Sarah Gibbons, 2015  
All rights reserved.

## Foreword

As Ireland makes its way through the final decade of its first century of statehood, there is understandably much reflection taking place on the factors that have shaped that first century and, even more critically, on what we want the next 100 years to look like for us as a country. By any standards, one of the key defining features of that first century has been emigration and its impact here at home in Ireland and on those who left. That impact has been so profound that it is only in relatively recent times that we have begun as a country to address it in a more concerted, engaged way.

In Limerick, we have been considering the issue of emigration from our perspective as a city, county and region, and in particular the nature of our relationship with those who have left, and their descendants – the large Limerick diaspora around the world. Two projects in particular have provided the context for that consideration. Firstly, there was the Gathering Ireland 2013, a national project which saw the people of Ireland issue an invitation to its kin around the world to return home for Gatherings which were organised around the country. Over 5,000 Gatherings were held and the project marked a new moment in the growing engagement of Ireland with our diaspora. The second project was even closer to home – Limerick's designation as Inaugural National City of Culture. Throughout 2014, Limerick became the venue and host for a first-ever, national year-long focus on culture and the arts. It was a huge success and a great tribute to the arts community and people of Limerick and the region. Among the tens of thousands of visitors during the year were many from our Limerick diaspora around the world.

In the course of 2013/14, and building on the concepts behind the Gathering and the National City of Culture projects, a group of people came together to explore whether the time was right for Limerick to undertake a new engagement with its diaspora around the world. We gave the project the working title, the Global Limerick Network (GLN) and a Working Group was set up under the auspices of Limerick City and County Council, chaired by Dr Pat Daly, Director of Economic Development and Planning, and with Tim O'Connor as Vice Chairman (Tim, who is from West Limerick, was also Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Gathering Ireland 2013 and Vice Chairman of Limerick National City of Culture 2014). This Working Group was drawn from a wide range of organisations and individuals with an interest in diaspora engagement, including the three higher education institutions in the Limerick region, University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College and Limerick Institute of Technology (A full list of the Members of the GLN Working Group is at *Appendix 3*).

The Working Group first met in September 2013 and one of its early decisions was to undertake a scoping study on emigration and diaspora more broadly in the Ireland context, with a view to seeing how Limerick fitted into that. As part of that study, we decided to undertake a survey of the attitude of Limerick people around the world, to Limerick, their connection to it and how they would like to see that relationship evolve and develop in the future. We are very pleased and honoured now to publish this scoping study and the findings of the survey. We hope that this document will serve to make a further contribution to the conversation that is taking place in Ireland and among Irish communities overseas about our relationship and how we can best support each other.

In broad summary terms, the three key findings were that most people surveyed reported that, wherever they may now be around the world, Limerick remains a key part of their identity and something important in their lives. Second, they want a closer engagement by way of information and communication about and from Limerick and thirdly they want positive stories about Limerick.

The survey provides much food for thought and we will now be considering its findings very carefully in the months ahead with a view to taking the next steps towards a deeper engagement with our diaspora. The message is clear that this is all about relationships and we will be working forward on that basis. In particular, we thank everybody who took the time and effort to contribute to the survey – you have helped us hugely and we are deeply grateful. We also draw attention to the fact that the study and survey include the “affinity diaspora” – people who have no blood connection to Limerick but are bonded to it in other ways – perhaps through studying in Limerick or who lived there previously.

We also wish to acknowledge the important work at national level being done by successive Presidents and Governments over the last 20 years or so on promoting a closer engagement with the diaspora issue. We see the insertion into the Constitution by Referendum in 1998 of a clause declaring that the Irish nation cherishes its affinity with the diaspora as particularly significant in that regard. The creation of the Irish Abroad Unit at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2004 was another key milestone and it has done much good work in the interim. We wish to acknowledge with thanks its support for our efforts, including financially for this Study. We also strongly welcome the appointment by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, of the first-ever Minister for Diaspora Affairs in Jimmy Deenihan. Jimmy Deenihan has long cared passionately about this issue and is also a great friend of Limerick and we are honoured that he has agreed to launch our study. We wish him well in his vital work, and with the Statement of Diaspora Policy which he and his team are currently working on and to which we hope our study and survey can be a contribution.

We also acknowledge the strong support for our work from the Limerick members of the Irish Government, Michael Noonan TD, Minister for Finance and Jan O’Sullivan TD, Minister for Education. In particular, we thank the Members of Limerick City and County Council, and Chief Executive, Conn Murray, for giving us the opportunity and support to explore this critical issue.

Our particular thanks to Mary Immaculate College, through Geraldine Brosnan, for its support, financial and academic, for the study. Geraldine, who is a key member of our Working Group, has overseen the project as a real labour of love. We also acknowledge the support of Prof. Michael Healy, Vice-President Research and Prof. Michael Breen, Dean of Arts, at Mary Immaculate College.

Great credit is due to the author of the study and co-ordinator of the survey, Sarah Gibbons. Sarah is a fine scholar and as somebody who lived abroad for six years she also brought a personal dimension to the work that has added significantly to it also. Her dedication in drawing such a fine piece of work together is something we will always be grateful for. John King of the Irish Ancestry Research Centre was the other member of the ‘core’ research team that had detailed responsibility for the survey and we thank them for their work.

We also wish to thank our fellow members of the GLN Working Group for the great enthusiasm, knowledge, dedication and insight they bring to the project. Thanks also to the George Boutique Hotel, Limerick and the Certificate of Irish Heritage for sponsoring prizes for the survey. We also appreciate the support of Sensorpro as our survey platform.

Finally, we hope that the establishment of the GLN and the publication of this study and survey can help to deepen consciousness around emigration and our relationship with the huge Irish diaspora around the world which has resulted from it. The GLN is an attempt by one place, Limerick, to show we are not powerless in how we engage with the issue, despite its many complexities, and that it is important to make a start.

In doing so, and while there is an exploratory dimension to what we are seeking to undertake, it is also the case that there is nothing new under the sun and Dr Liam Chambers' fascinating historical perspective inside shows that Limerick has been here before and has a long and ancient connection with the issues of Irish emigration and diaspora. And therefore we also undertake this journey with a desire to offer a Limerick contribution to the wider national debate and conversation that are now underway on a matter so central to what we want Ireland to look like in its second century of statehood.

We hope that our research prove helpful to that vital work.

Dr Pat Daly

Chairman, GLN Working Group

Tim O'Connor

Vice Chairman, GLN Working Group

January 2015

## About the author

*Sarah Gibbons is a highly-skilled and dynamic professional working across a broad range of social and educational research, policy development and evaluation in Ireland. Sarah spent a number of years in Australia as a senior policy advisor for a number of government departments. Prior to policy development she worked in the area of social research and has a strong background in research methods and evaluation. Sarah came to this work as a returned emigrant with professional and family connections to Limerick.*

## Contents

Foreword .....	1
About the author .....	4
List of Figures .....	7
List of Tables .....	8
Summary of survey findings .....	9
Historical context of Limerick's migratory patterns .....	17
1. Introduction .....	18
2. Methodology .....	19
2.1. Aim of scoping study .....	19
2.2. Survey design .....	19
2.3. Study limitations .....	19
2.4. Survey response .....	20
3. Literature Review .....	21
3.1. Introduction .....	21
3.2. What is a 'diaspora'? .....	21
3.2.1. Defining a diaspora .....	21
3.2.2. Determining a diaspora .....	22
3.2.3. Globalisation and Diaspora .....	25
3.3. Ireland's recent emigration profile .....	26
3.3.1. Irish constitutional recognition of diaspora .....	26
3.3.2. Recent Irish diaspora profile .....	26
3.4. National diaspora policy in Ireland and recent national diaspora events. ....	28
3.4.1. Irish diaspora policy .....	28
3.4.2. State support for Irish emigrants .....	29
3.4.3. Recent Irish diaspora activity .....	29
3.5. Considerations when planning diaspora engagement strategies .....	33
3.5.1. The emergence of diaspora institutions .....	33
3.5.2. Diaspora policies and Diaspora strategies .....	35
3.5.3. Considerations when engaging diaspora .....	36
3.5.4. Developing a diaspora engagement plan .....	37
3.6. An Irish approach to engagement .....	40
3.7. Conclusion .....	42
4. Findings - Global Limerick Network on-line survey .....	43
4.1. Introduction .....	43
4.2. Section 1: Profile of respondents .....	43
4.2.1. Gender .....	43
4.2.2. Age profile .....	44
4.2.3. Level of education .....	45
4.2.4. Children .....	45
4.3. Section 2: Connection to Limerick .....	46
4.3.1. City and county affiliation .....	46
4.3.2. Time away from Limerick .....	47
4.3.3. Last trip to Limerick .....	48
4.3.4. Connection to Limerick .....	48
4.3.5. Reasons for moving away from Limerick .....	49
4.3.6. Attraction to current place .....	50
4.4. Section 3: Strength of connectivity to Limerick .....	51
4.4.1. Strength of links with Limerick .....	51
4.4.2. Strongest links to Limerick .....	51
4.4.3. Weakest links to Limerick .....	53

4.4.4.	Concern about Limerick’s future .....	55
4.4.5.	View of Limerick .....	57
4.5.	Section 4: (Re)Connecting to Limerick .....	58
4.5.1.	Communication with Limerick.....	58
4.5.2.	Creating connections .....	60
4.5.3.	Preferred method of communication to provide information about Limerick.....	64
4.5.4.	Suggestions to assist Limerick developing communication with Limerick people living outside Ireland.....	64
5.	Key messages and conclusions of the scoping study.....	68
5.1.	Introduction .....	68
5.2.	Who responded to this survey? .....	68
5.3.	How connected are the Limerick diaspora to Limerick? .....	68
5.4.	How do the Limerick diaspora view their strength of connectivity to Limerick?.....	69
5.5.	How can GLN support the Limerick diaspora? .....	70
5.6.	Concluding comments.....	73
	References .....	74
	Appendix 1.....	77
	Appendix 2.....	79
	Appendix 3.....	84



## List of Figures

Figure 1: Gender of survey respondents .....	44
Figure 2: Age of respondents .....	44
Figure 3: Highest level of education of respondents.....	45
Figure 4: Children.....	46
Figure 5: Number of children .....	46
Figure 6: Respondents connection to Limerick city or county .....	47
Figure 7: How long respondents are gone from Limerick .....	47
Figure 8: Respondents last trip to Limerick.....	48
Figure 9: Connection to Limerick .....	49
Figure 10: Why respondents moved away from Limerick.....	50
Figure 11: Attraction to the place respondents are living now .....	50
Figure 12: Strength of current links with Limerick .....	51
Figure 13: Strongest links to Limerick .....	52
Figure 14: Weakest links to Limerick.....	54
Figure 15: Concerns about Limerick and its future .....	56
Figure 16: Concerns about Limerick's future .....	56
Figure 17: How do respondents view Limerick .....	57
Figure 18: Interest in receiving information about Limerick .....	58
Figure 19: What information about Limerick would interest respondents .....	59
Figure 20: Creating better connections with Limerick .....	61
Figure 21: Best way to provide communication about Limerick .....	64
Figure 22: Comments to assist developing communication with Limerick people outside Ireland.....	65

## List of Tables

Table 1: Source of survey responses by country .....	20
Table 2: Common features of a diaspora .....	23
Table 3: Ideal types of diaspora .....	24
Table 4: Examples of identifying goals for developing a diaspora engagement plan .....	38
Table 5: Examples of mapping diaspora for developing a diaspora engagement plan .....	39
Table 6: Examples of mapping trust for developing a diaspora engagement plan.....	39
Table 7: Examples of mobilising the diaspora for developing a diaspora engagement plan.....	40
Table 8: Suggestions for Irish diaspora engagement .....	41
Table 9: Strongest links to Limerick by category .....	52
Table 10: Strongest links to Limerick by category and sub-category .....	53
Table 11: Weakest links to Limerick by category .....	54
Table 12: Weakest links to Limerick by category and sub-category.....	55
Table 13: Concerns about Limerick's future.....	57
Table 14: How do respondents view Limerick .....	58
Table 15: What information about Limerick would interest respondents? .....	59
Table 16: What information about Limerick would interest respondents? Sub-categories .....	60
Table 17: Suggestions to assist Limerick developing communication with Limerick people living outside Ireland.....	67

## Summary of survey findings

### Introduction

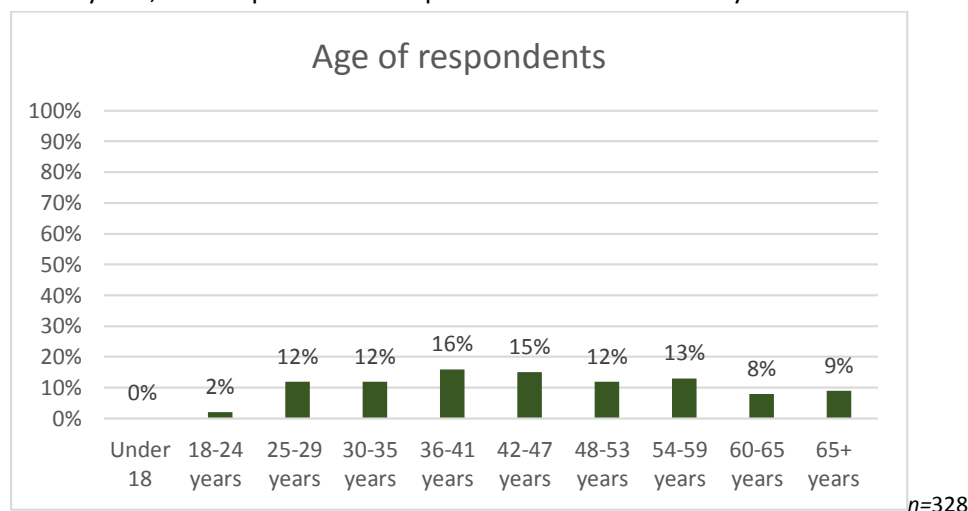
- The Global Limerick Network (GLN) Working Group commissioned a scoping study to gain a greater understanding of diaspora activity in Ireland and overseas, as well as examining potential interest amongst the Limerick diaspora and affinity diaspora to create or improve communication channels.
- The design of this research was undertaken in the absence of a sampling frame to identify and statistically target members of the Limerick diaspora. As a result the circulation of the survey was targeted and therefore the data lacks statistical validity and generalisability.

### Survey findings

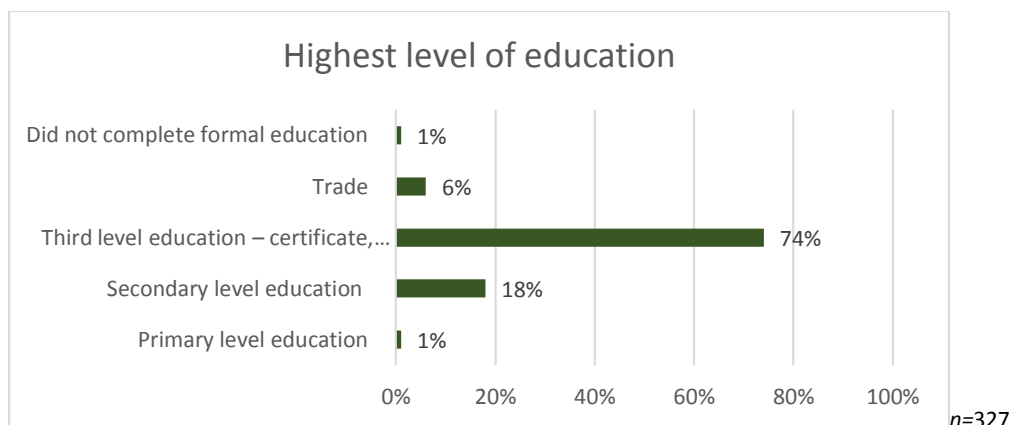
- The online GLN survey yielded 364 responses and the information provided by participants is outlined in four sections: 1) *Profile of respondents*; 2) *Connection to Limerick*; 3) *Strength of connectivity to Limerick*; and 4) *(Re)Connecting to Limerick*.

#### *Profile of respondents*

- More women than men responded to the online survey; 56 per cent female as against 44 per cent male.
- The age-profile of respondents shows 31 per cent between 36-47 years; 25 per cent between 48-59 years; and 24 per cent of respondents between 25-35 years.



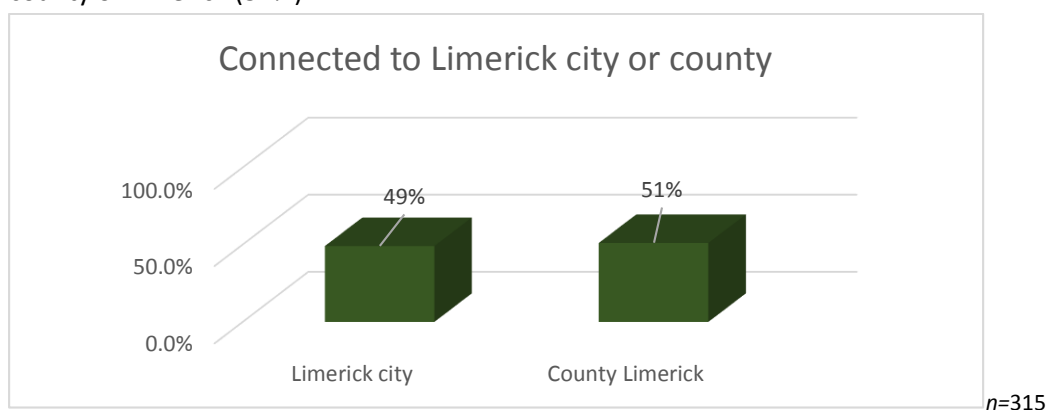
- The education level of respondents is predominantly third level education (74%); secondary level education (18%) and possession of a trade (6%).



- Respondents were also asked to specify their occupation and a clear connection could be seen between the high level of third level education amongst respondents and very high levels of professional occupations cited.
- Fifty-eight per cent of respondents have children; the majority of these have two children (47%); three children (22%), and one child (19%).

#### *Connection to Limerick*

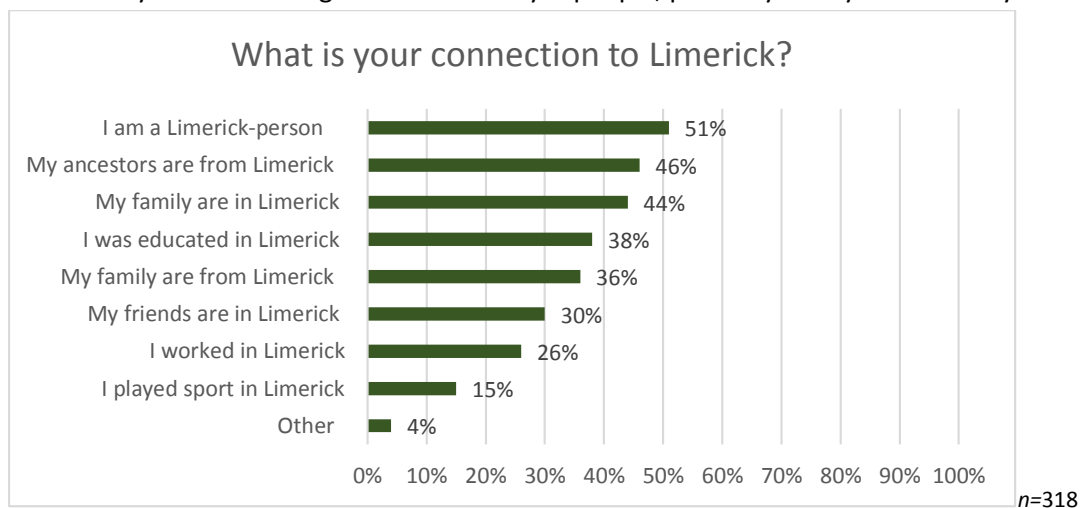
- There is a well-balanced division between those affiliated to the city of Limerick (49%) and county of Limerick (51%).



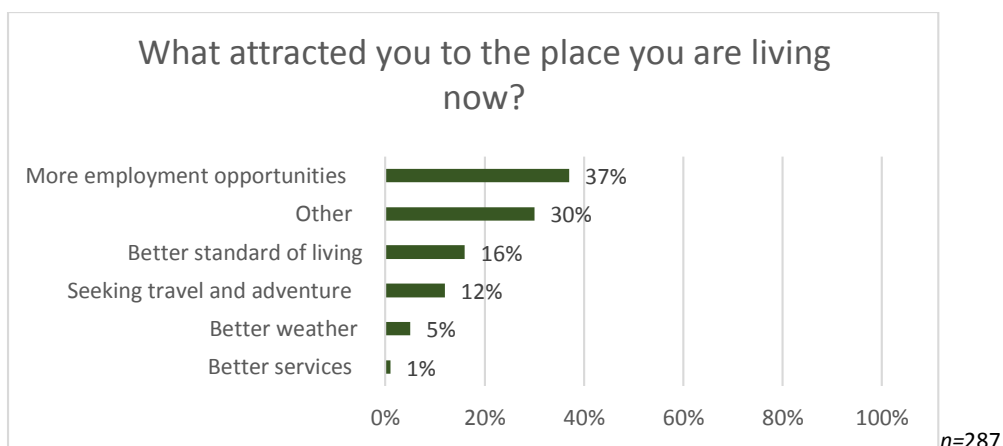
- Thirty-six per cent of respondents have been living outside Limerick for more than ten years; 33 per cent are connected to Limerick but have not lived in Limerick; 17 per cent have been away from Limerick 1-5 years; 9 per cent are living outside Limerick 6-10 years and 5 per cent less than one year. The high level of connectivity to Limerick without ever living in Limerick would indicate a high level of affinity; these respondents consider Limerick a place of significant connection for them. The quarter of respondents who departed Limerick in the last 1-10 years aligns with national trends and the economic recession experienced in Ireland.
- Fifty-five percent of respondents have visited Limerick in the last year; 22 per cent have visited in the last 1-5 years, and 13 per cent have never visited Limerick. These are significant figures as 77 per cent of respondents are engaging with and visiting the city and county as members of the Limerick diaspora or affinity diaspora; there is a motivation to visit Limerick.



- The highest rated connection to Limerick is being a Limerick person (51%); 46 per cent of respondents indicated their ancestors were from Limerick; 44 per cent have family in Limerick; 38 per cent were educated in Limerick; and 36 per cent have family from Limerick. It is noteworthy that the strength of connectivity is people, primarily family and ancestry.

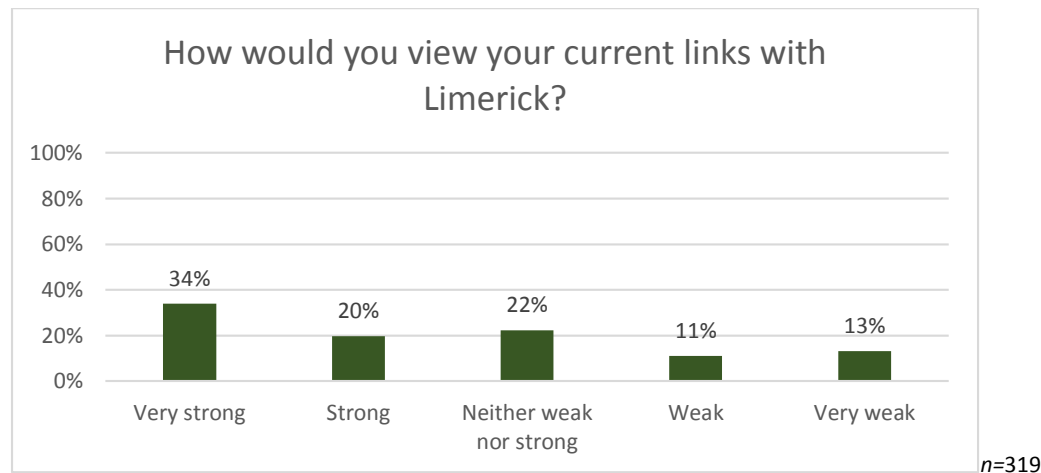


- When asked why people moved away from Limerick, 53 per cent of respondents chose 'seeking better employment opportunities' followed by 25 per cent seeking travel and adventure; and 20 per cent sought a better standard of living.
- Participants were asked what attracted them to the place they are residing in now. The highest response was 'employment opportunities' (37%), better standard of living (16%) and 'seeking travel and adventure' (12%).

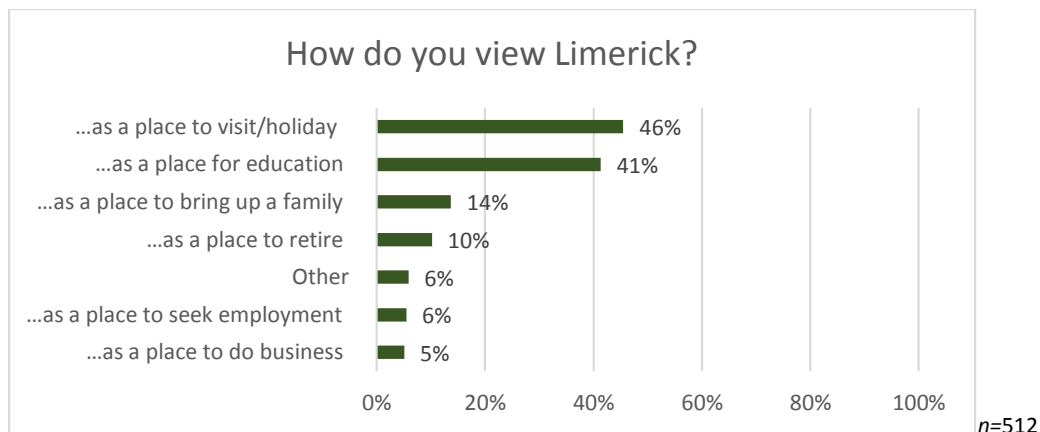


### *Strength of connectivity to Limerick*

- Fifty-four per cent of respondents rated their current links to Limerick as being very strong or strong; 22 per cent did not consider their links particularly strong or weak; and 24 per cent viewed their current links as either weak or very weak. It is clear that respondents' connection to 'people', in whatever composition, strongly define their identification and connection to Limerick.

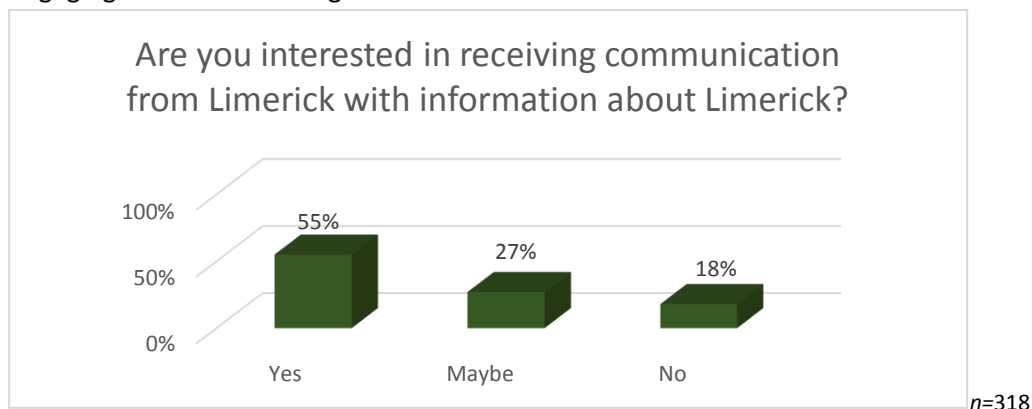


- Overwhelmingly the primary strength of connection to Limerick was connectivity to 'people'. The dominant people-connection is family, followed by 'extended family were/are from Limerick'; friends; immediate family; ancestry and genealogy.
- Respondents weakest connections to Limerick are due to Limerick's economic status; lack of connectivity to people in or from Limerick; and distance from Limerick. Further weaknesses are a sense of disconnection to Limerick; the negative profile Limerick is perceived to have; poor services and limited information from Limerick.
- When asked about Limerick's future, 38 per cent of respondents do not have concerns about Limerick's future however 28 per cent of respondents do have concerns about Limerick's future and 34 per cent have some concerns.
- The key concerns expressed by respondents about Limerick's future centre around job opportunities; crime, and unemployment. This is followed by concerns about quality of healthcare; emigration and housing. Additional commentary from respondents included concerns about Limerick's social issues; spatial and planning issues, and what was referred to as 'Limerick's unfilled potential'.
- Limerick is primarily viewed by respondents as a place to visit or holiday and as a place for education but not necessarily one to work and live at present.



*(Re)Connecting to Limerick*

- Over half (55%) of all respondents expressed an interest in receiving information from Limerick about Limerick, and a further 27 per cent are open to the idea of receiving a form of communication. This indicates there is a significant cohort of people enthusiastic about engaging with and receiving communication from Limerick.

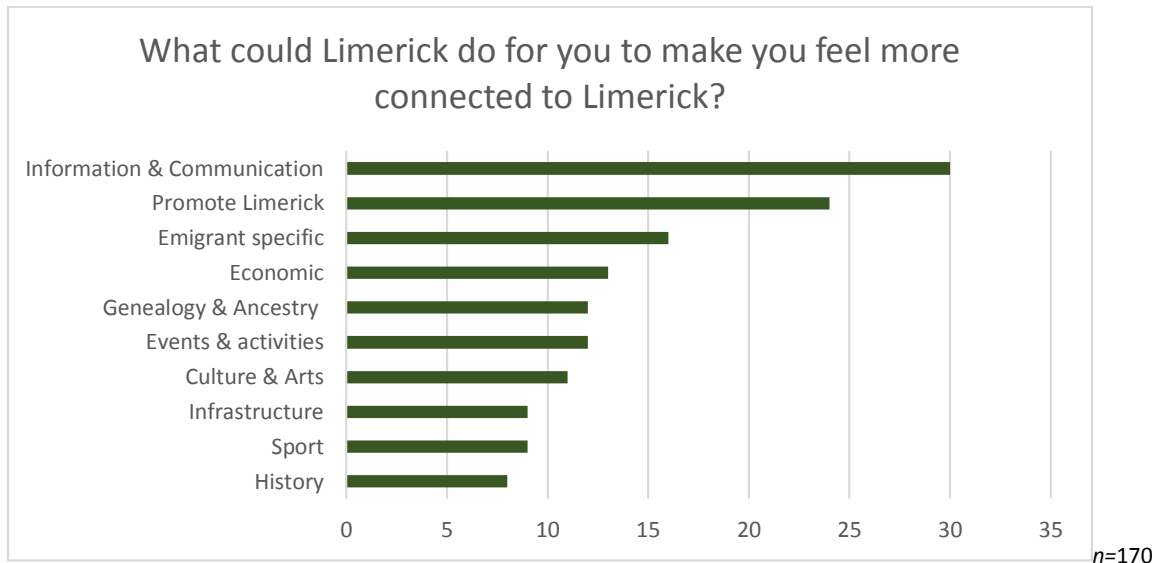


- Respondents provided a wide range of suggestions about information they would prefer to receive from Limerick. The top requests included information about:
  - Limerick's economic activity,
  - Broad information about Limerick,
  - Events and activities occurring in Limerick,
  - Guidance and advice on genealogy and ancestry, and
  - Information about Limerick's progress.

Information was also sought about Limerick's economic activity specifically employment opportunities; business and investment opportunities; economic development and property market information. Broad information was requested about Limerick which would include 'any information or news about Limerick'; positive news about Limerick; political and current affairs; food in Limerick; retirement information; and agriculture. Information about events and activities occurring in Limerick was sought as well as accessibility to genealogy and ancestry connections. Information about Limerick's future and public plans for progress is also of interest, specifically major changes to the city and county; future plans for Limerick; tourism and showcasing Limerick.

- Suggested approaches to make emigrants feel more connected to Limerick focus on:
  - Information and communication,
  - Promoting Limerick,

- A range of emigrant-specific suggestions,
- Limerick's economic status,
- Genealogy and ancestry,
- Events and activities, and
- Culture and arts



- The top three suggestions provided by respondents to make them feel more connected to Limerick are:
  - Information and Communication**
    - Information and communication was a key area highlighted as a potential connector with Limerick. The information being sought by respondents included general news items from Limerick city and county including headline developments in Limerick; significant events in Limerick's calendar with lead in time to plan trips to Limerick; feature articles about Limerick, for example historical insights; accessing local newspapers online; and Limerick's sporting updates.
    - The communication platforms suggested included weekly or monthly emails and newsletters; a forum on which people can discuss what is happening in Limerick; further development of the Global Limerick Network in creating a virtual Limerick; the use of email, Facebook and online networking groups which would capture relevant news to an international audience; a new online newsfeed from Limerick, and the development of online social networks.
    - Enthusiasm to visit and stay connected with Limerick can be seen in these respondents' comments: *"Newsletters and advice about upcoming events preferably 12 months out so that I can organise flights from Australia."*  
*"Well the GLN would be a great thing, it would get people connected who maybe feel disconnected because they are living away from home. Like a virtual Limerick. That can only be good....the sooner the better..."*  
*"Online networking groups, social media outreach, roundup of internationally interesting local news (i.e. not the most detailed local happenings, but more big-picture events / news that would impact knowledge & thinking of Limerick when living outside the country)."*
  - Promote Limerick**



- Another area of particular awareness for respondents is the need to have greater intensity surrounding the promotion of Limerick, both in Ireland and to the overseas market. There is a sense that Limerick needs to work harder to promote a positive profile which will entice people to the city and county including incentivising people to visit and return to Limerick.

*“Create more positive, front-foot communication to build Limerick's image. Limerick county is underplayed for its history, heritage, tourism opportunities; while Limerick city which has evolved so much in last 10-20 years doesn't broadcast enough positive messages to overcome the negative ones about crime, drugs and gangs.”*

- Suggestions were made about increasing the marketing of all of Limerick's tourist attractions for example, the Milk Market; making greater use of venues such as Thomond Park for large events; having Limerick host large-scale events; the provision of accommodation packages and travel offers to invite people to Limerick while also looking to other Irish cities to learn from their marketing successes. Limerick city centre was noted as a place that needed more work to encourage people to visit and socialise. It was suggested that at times of large sporting events other activities should be co-scheduled in Limerick to improve Limerick's profile. Examples included decorating Limerick more strategically for sporting occasions, flags at the train station greeting visitors and positioning tourist/cultural ambassadors in Limerick when large events occur.
- Findings from the survey noted a need for greater publicity of what occurs in Limerick with particular reference to the success and positivity surrounding the City of Culture 2014. Events such as those organised throughout the City of Culture for example, free gigs in the People's Park gave people reason to return and reconnect with their community.

*“More events like those developed during the city of culture- weekend events, free gigs and training in the People's Park. Gives people a reason to return and reconnect with the local community.”*

- It would be opportunistic to use the positive momentum of the City of Culture to continue reconnecting community links. One respondent's view of connecting was to provide:

*“anything to show that there is a sense of vision and dynamism about the place (Limerick).”*

### **iii) Emigrant-specific suggestions**

- Some suggestions provided by respondents were emigrant-specific and sought to create connections, networks and links with fellow Limerick people as well as being able to articulate the emigrant experience and supports required while living away and in returning to Limerick.

*“A positive way of remaining connected would be to have a platform for those abroad to share their experiences with those they've left behind. It is often hard to explain the experiences you've faced and survived after leaving home. The issues around disconnection are complex and have fundamental impacts on Irish people abroad in many and varied ways. Nonetheless, home / Ireland / Limerick is always on my mind and still informs much of my day-to-day and identity but within a very different framework. Any cultural exchanges or opportunities to remain linked would be hugely welcome as*

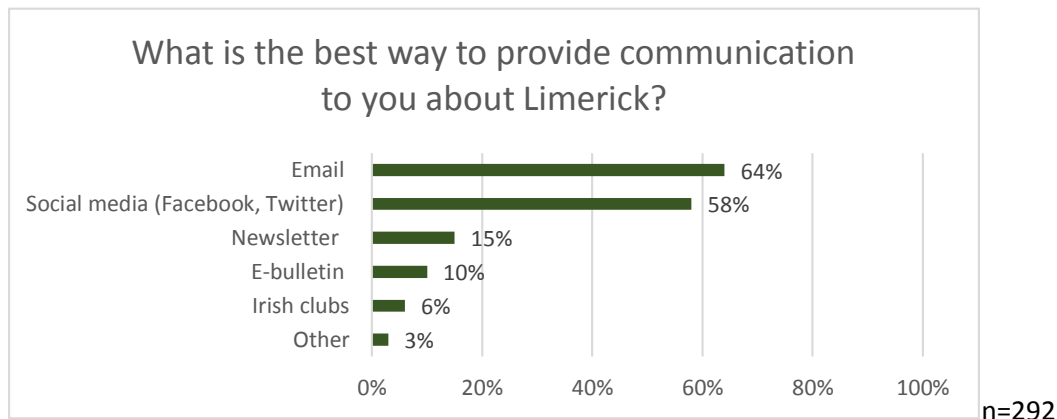
*would the potential to return and contribute skills and experience - if only temporarily (a skills and cultural cross-exchange / reconnection)."*

- Respondents sought varying levels of network establishment which included building a Dublin- Limerick community; a London-Limerick network; a diaspora network which could facilitate and assist movement back to Limerick; dedicated exile events and a platform to share experiences with people left behind to try and provide insight into the complexities of disconnection. It was suggested that students should be provided with insight into the successes and pitfalls of international business and living outside Ireland to help offset their permanent departure from Limerick.
- Recognition and acceptance of emigrant opinions is important as well as the provision of support for returning emigrants. Connectivity to local communities in Limerick was sought and reaching out to the diaspora through a network such as GLN was supported.

One respondent requested:

*"A Diaspora network, agency to get people to come back to Limerick for employment housing etc., help with all these areas."*

- Email and social media were the dominant methods of communication chosen by respondents; communication formats such as newsletters, e-bulletins and Irish clubs featured much less.



This scoping study sought to ascertain whether an appetite for connection with Limerick existed amongst its diaspora and affinity diaspora. It is evident from the findings of this survey that it would be worthwhile and opportune to proceed in this space. There are clear markers that a dominant proportion of the Limerick diaspora and affinity diaspora have a desire to connect which is an encouraging and exciting platform for the Global Limerick Network to embark on its plans.

## Historical context of Limerick's migratory patterns

*The history of Limerick, like the history of Ireland more generally, is inextricably bound up with inward and outward patterns of migration. Limerick's past is marked by striking examples of immigration and settlement: from Scandinavia in the ninth and tenth centuries; from England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; from the German Palatinate in the early eighteenth century; from the Russian Empire in the late nineteenth century; from Hungary after the rising of 1956. Limerick's history is even more marked by mass emigration. Indeed, the Treaty of Limerick (1691) which ended the 'War of the Two Kings' was an iconic migrant moment. The treaty permitted 15,000 Irish soldiers, along with 4,000 dependents, to leave for France from Limerick and other southern Irish ports in the winter of 1691-2. Romanticised as the 'Wild Geese', they were part of a much larger movement of tens of thousands of Irish men, women and children who left for France, Spain and other destinations in continental Europe in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Soldiers enlisted in the armies of Spain, France, Austria and other European powers. Students, priests and intellectuals attended the great centres of European learning and created a network of Irish Colleges on the continent. Irish merchants, bankers and professionals created a chain of mercantile communities in Ostend, Bruges, Nantes, Bordeaux, Cadiz and elsewhere. While historians have paid them less attention, women and the poor migrated in large numbers too and across Western Europe Irish migrant communities emerged. By the later eighteenth century, Irish migration patterns were already changing, as more and more Irish Catholics sought opportunities across the Atlantic and in the British Empire, paths already taken by Ulster Presbyterians and other Irish Protestants. Of course, Limerick featured strongly too in the mass migrations of the nineteenth century and beyond. The emigration which Ireland experienced in the 1950s and again in the 1980s was the latest in a long history of mobility, which has created the 'Irish Diaspora' found around the globe today. If we are to understand that diaspora, and indeed the stories of those who have arrived in Ireland in recent decades, then our migration history is the essential starting point. Given Limerick's long experience of migration – in both directions – it is an ideal base from which to study this enduring subject.*

Dr Liam Chambers

Senior Lecturer & Head of the Department of History

Mary Immaculate College

Limerick

## 1. Introduction

The Global Limerick Network (GLN) Working Group commissioned a scoping study to gain a greater understanding of diaspora activity in Ireland and overseas, as well as examining potential interest amongst the Limerick diaspora and affinity diaspora to create or improve communication channels.

There are four key sections included in the literature discussion to inform the Global Limerick Network scoping study:

1. Discussion about 'diaspora'; its definition, characteristics; and global positioning;
2. Ireland's recent emigration profile;
3. National diaspora policy in Ireland and recent national diaspora events; and
4. Considerations when planning diaspora engagement strategies.

An online survey was designed to ascertain the level of connectivity diaspora and affinity diaspora have with Limerick and gain insight into their interest in improving lines of communication. This survey also aimed to determine what type of communication respondents would be interested in receiving about Limerick. There were 364 responses to this survey and the information provided by participants is outlined in four sections:

1. Profile of respondents;
2. Connection to Limerick;
3. Strength of connectivity to Limerick; and
4. (Re)Connecting to Limerick.

The last section of this report discusses key messages and conclusions to inform the next phase of the Global Limerick Network's vision.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Aim of scoping study

The aim of this scoping survey was to gauge whether the Limerick diaspora and affinity diaspora have a connection to Limerick, how they view that connection and if there was interest in creating further connections with Limerick city and county.

Investigating these engagement levels with the Limerick diaspora and affinity diaspora was done with an approach which encompassed social, cultural and economic components of Limerick.

### 2.2. Survey design

The Global Limerick Network online survey was informed by survey instruments targeting emigrants, immigrants and diaspora in Ireland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. The design of this research was undertaken in the knowledge that there is an absence of a sampling frame to identify and statistically target members of the Limerick diaspora. The lack of reliable data on diasporas is frequently identified by governments as an obstacle to developing effective diaspora policies and programs. Census data do not usually capture out-migration very well, as they offer only a snapshot of people residing in a country at the time of the census so governments must rely on destination countries to collect data on the place of birth and ancestry of residents. (Agunias & Newland, 2012: 28). At national levels it has been acknowledged that estimating the size of a diaspora is complicated as there are layers of contributing factors to determining a diaspora e.g. birthplace; point of emigration; self-identification. (Ratha & Plaza, 2011: 48)

Membership of the Global Limerick Network Working Group at the time of survey design and circulation represented public, private and educational sectors with access to extensive networks nationally and internationally. It was through these networks that the survey was circulated. Due to the targeted nature of this circulation the survey responses cannot be considered representative to the Limerick diaspora or affinity diaspora as there is an implicit bias to the data collection which affected reliability and validity.

### 2.3. Study limitations

- First national diaspora survey with a specific regional focus.
- Absence of a sampling frame.
- Targeted nature of survey circulation cannot provide data validity and generalisability.
- Duration of the online survey, July and August 2014, summer time in the northern hemisphere which may affect response rate.

- Limited public knowledge of the Global Limerick Network.

## 2.4. Survey response

The Global Limerick Network (GLN) online survey received 364 responses during July and August 2014.

In the absence of a sampling frame and resources to develop such, there has been full disclosure about the targeted nature of the survey. None the less the responses and insights provided by respondents have provided a wealth of information and direction for the Global Limerick Network.

Source of survey responses by country;

Australia	New Zealand
Belgium	Puerto Rico
Canada	Qatar
Finland	Spain
France	Switzerland
Germany	Turkey
Hong Kong	United Arab Emirates
Ireland	United Kingdom
Namibia	United States
Netherlands	

Table 1: Source of survey responses by country

Of the 364 responses, the location of 261 is known. Known locations of respondents shows that 84 per cent of responses were from outside Ireland and 16 per cent were within Ireland and outside Limerick.

### 3. Literature Review

Mary Robinson in the early 1990s, declared a wish to ‘represent’ the ‘vast community of Irish emigrants’ (Robinson 1994), signalling that, ‘those who leave do not always feel cherished’ (Robinson 1995) (cited by Gamlen, 2012: 238). This public statement by the then Irish president was indicative of a worldwide shift to develop a more positive relationships with emigrants than had previously existed.

#### 3.1. Introduction

Understanding diaspora composition is complex throughout the world but diasporas possess energy, capability, adaptability and determination which give them a distinct composition. There are four key sections included in this discussion to inform the Global Limerick Network scoping study:

- Discussion about ‘diaspora’; its definition, characteristics; and global positioning;
- Ireland’s recent emigration profile;
- National diaspora policy in Ireland and recent national diaspora events; and
- Considerations when planning diaspora engagement strategies.

#### 3.2. What is a ‘diaspora’?

##### 3.2.1. Defining a diaspora

The concept and lived reality of diaspora has existed at least as far back as 586 AD with the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The composition of diasporas has evolved through historic events and passing of time. Some modern day diasporas fit into clearly defined categories of what their diaspora associates with, is characterised by and what their composition is, but other diaspora groups possess more complex components.

Clarke (2010: 232) writes about the diaspora as a defined group who are geographically dispersed and continually define and redefine in the context ‘of social-economic and political indices of migrant status.’

Agunias and Newland (2012: 15) believe that at a ‘minimum, “diaspora” implies a distinct identity relating to a community of origin. It is increasingly common to use the term to refer to migrants who have left their countries only recently and perhaps temporarily as well as to refer to settled communities.’ Diasporas may also be identified through connectivity to a state of mind; Brinkerhoff (2009), defines diaspora as ‘the psychological belonging to a collective culture, hostland or homeland.’

The U.S. State Department defines diasporas as ‘migrant groups that share the following features: dispersion, whether voluntary or involuntary, across sociocultural boundaries and at least one political border; a collective memory and myth about the homeland; a commitment to keeping the homeland alive through symbolic and direct action; the presence of the issue of return, although not necessarily a commitment to do so; and a consciousness and associated identity, expressed in diaspora community media, the creation of diaspora associations or organizations, and online participation’ (Ratha and Plaza, 2011: 48).

It is evident that membership and participation of a diaspora creates a hybrid identity, ‘it is this connection with ‘over there’ which empowers the sense of what it means to be ‘here’” (Clarke, 2010: 235).

Another very significant group of people connected to diaspora groups are those referred to as ‘affinity diaspora’. A group of people who have connection to a place for reasons other than birthplace, ancestry or genealogy. Ancien *et al.* (2009: 8) define affinity diaspora as ‘a collection of people, usually former immigrants and tourists or business travellers, who have a different national or ethnic identity to a nation state but who feel some special affinity or affection for that nation state and who act on its behalf, whilst resident in the state, after they return home, or from a third country.’

### 3.2.2. Determining a diaspora

In attempting to rationalise what a diaspora consists of, Cohen (2008: 15) outlines four tools of social science to determine the existence and qualification of a diaspora group. These include emic/etic claims (self-declaration), the time dimension (strong or renewed ties to the past or a block to assimilation in the present and future), common features (outlined in Table 2) and ‘ideal’ types of diaspora (victim, labour, imperial, trade and deterritorialized) detailed in Table 3.

#### Common features of a diaspora

These features are an attempt to characterise diasporas on their identification with one or multiple features. It is likely that diasporas associate with multiple features of those listed below.

Common features of a diaspora
1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;



2. Alternatively or additionally, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3. A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, suffering and achievements;
4. An idealisation of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
5. The frequent development of a return movement to the homeland that gains collective approbation even if many in the group are satisfied with only a vicarious relationship or intermittent visits to the homeland;
6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, the transmission of a common cultural and religious heritage and the belief in a common fate;
7. A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;
8. A sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement even where home has become more vestigial; and
9. The possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.

Table 2: Common features of a diaspora

(Cohen, 2008: 17)

### Ideal types of diaspora

Cohen (2008) further expands what he deems to be 'ideal' types of diaspora which gives a typology and classification of diasporas, without ignoring commonalities, but to highlight distinct characteristics (Cohen, 2008: 16).

<b>Main 'ideal' types of diaspora</b>	<b>Main examples</b>	<b>Also mentioned and noted under typology</b>
VICTIM - scattering of people away from an ancestral or established homeland after a decisive event.	Jews, Africans, Armenians	Also discussed: Irish and Palestinians. Many contemporary refugee groups are incipient victim diasporas but time has to pass to see whether they return to their homelands, assimilate in their hostlands, creolize or mobilise as a diaspora.
LABOUR - movement or migration from a homeland in search of work.	Indentured Indians	Also discussed: Chinese and Japanese; Turks, Italians, North Africans. Many others could be included.
IMPERIAL - migration from a homeland to further expansionist ambitions.	British	Also discussed: Russians, colonial powers other than Britain. Other synonymous

		expressions are 'settler' or 'colonial' diasporas.
TRADE - migration from a homeland in pursuit of trade and development.	Lebanese, Chinese	Also discussed: Venetians, business and professional Indians, Chinese, Japanese.
DETERRITORIALIZED	Caribbean peoples, Sindhis, Parsis	Also discussed: Roma, Muslims and other religious diasporas. The expressions 'hybrid', 'cultural' and 'post-colonial' also are linked to the idea of deterritorialization without being synonymous.

Table 3: Ideal types of diaspora

Cohen (2008: 18)

Whereas Cohen goes a long way in conceptualising the 'types' of diaspora based on specific experiences and events, it would be difficult in modern day global movement to neatly segment diasporas into only one category.

It has become evident that by the nature of diaspora connectivity and maintenance of elements of home-country identity, that diasporas live across two or more domains. These domains are not lived equally but have connections to more than one culture or place. Ben-Rafael (2013: 842-853) observes that for the most part diasporas insert themselves in their new environment and over time 'build institutions and expand networks that become foci of cultural, social, and political activity' and are capable of 'dual homeness' which can be seen through physical entities such as 'Little Italy' or 'Chinatown' in the United States. The existence of multiple diasporas in large developed cities all over the world have a substantial collective influence on host countries socially, culturally, politically and economically in ways that are more than just bridges between 'original and new homelands' and are much more closely viewed as drive belts (Ben-Rafael, 2013: 852). A drive belt is essential connectivity for the functioning of the greater entity.

More accessible and affordable transport and improved technological communication means that for some, the days of migration being final, brutal and sad is not at bleak as it once was notwithstanding that these emotions are still true of emigration. 'For possibly the first time in history, absence no longer automatically equals exile and geography no longer dictates identity. People are leading 'hyphenated' lives and living 'here and there' (Aikins and Russell, 2013: 26).

Under the structure of the 'ideal' types of diaspora noted in *Table 3*, Ireland is categorised in the 'victim diaspora'. One of the defining features of the victim diaspora according to Cohen's typology is a 'break event'. For the Jewish diaspora this was Jerusalem and the razing of its Temple in 586 AD; in Africa it began with Atlantic slavery (14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries); and in Armenia it was defined by the 1915-1922 massacres. Ireland's 'break event' has been cited as the migration period following the famine 1845-1852. There has been contention amongst some Irish historians as to the significance of this period in history as a catalyst for transatlantic migration. Additional qualification is weighted on Ireland's categorisation to the 'victim' diaspora alongside Jewish, African and Armenian diasporas because during the Irish famine, the 'British government had a hidden agenda of population control, the modernization of agriculture and land reform' (Cohen, 2008: 3). Modern-day Ireland could fit across a number of the categories posed in Cohen's typology if consideration was given to all of its historical events over time.

### 3.2.3. Globalisation and Diaspora

Diasporas have become 'newly emerging actors in the international arena' (Kunz, 2012: 103) which is a shift in outlook from a stage in history where some countries viewed expatriates as traitors. Mexico have been working in the space of diaspora policy since the 1980s and during his presidency Vincente Fox (2000-2006) reframed migration; 'migration is not a problem, it's an opportunity for both countries, in order to turn the future to our favour' (Kunz, 2012: 104).

Cohen (2008) aligns features of globalisation and features of diaspora groups which impact on the mobilisation of diasporas. They include:

- '*A globalized economy* that permits greater connectivity, the expansion of enterprises and the growth of new professional and managerial cadres, thereby changing but creating new opportunities for diasporas;
- '*New forms of international migration* that encourage limited contractual relationships, family visits, intermittent stays abroad and sojourning, as opposed to permanent settlement and the exclusive adoption of the citizenship of a destination country;
- The development of *cosmopolitan sensibilities* in many 'global cities' in response to the multiplication and intensification of transactions and interactions between the different peoples of the world; and

- The *revival of religion* as a focus for social cohesion through dispersal, renewed pilgrimage and translocation resulting in the development of multi-faced world religions connected in various and complex ways to the diasporic phenomenon' (Cohen, 2008: 141).

Van Hear (1998: 195-231) views diasporas as possessing qualities which mean they can be 'made and unmade' reflecting the contemporary movement of people and not being contained by boundaries. This alludes to a diaspora's ability to disperse to many places; a diaspora can move once, many times, regroup, settle and resettle. This fluidity shares characteristics with the globalised world and in turn aligns diasporas with opportunities to 'emerge, re-emerge, survive and thrive' (Cohen, 2008: 141).

The framing of this literature when discussing the construct of diaspora suggests an identity metamorphosis, collectively and individually. There is a movement, however large or small, from whole identity with people or place, to experiencing a displacement or loss of that identity, and eventually reconfiguring that identity through adjustment, be it forced or chosen, to a new country. There is a transformation from one place of identity to another which carries the culture of 'home' while blending with the culture of 'new home.'

### 3.3. Ireland's recent emigration profile

#### 3.3.1. Irish constitutional recognition of diaspora

The Irish constitution recognises the existence of and significance of the Irish diaspora.

'It is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of the Irish Nation. That is also the entitlement of all persons otherwise qualified in accordance with law to be citizens of Ireland. Furthermore, the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage' (Article 2 of the Irish Constitution).

#### 3.3.2. Recent Irish diaspora profile

From 2005, the pre-crisis period in the Irish economy, through the economic recession, to March 2013, there was an increase of nearly 400% in gross emigration (Glynn *et al.*, 2013: 29). The Central Statistics Office (CSO) Ireland report that the order of concentration of Irish migrants globally are in the United Kingdom; Australia; the United States and Canada (Kennedy *et al.*, 2014: 3).

The Emigre research *Irish Emigration in an Age of Austerity* has contributed significantly to profiling who has left Ireland in more recent years and their circumstances (Glynn *et al.*, 2013). This research concentrates on the period between 2006 and 2013 and used a mixed-

methods approach combining data from the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), online and jobs fair surveying, and qualitative interviews.

Characteristics, as determined by the Emigre research, of emigrants leaving Ireland today include:

- The dominant age profile of emigrants who have left Ireland since 2008 is the 15-24 and 25-44 age groups; the largest percentage of emigrants are in their 20s (over 70%).
- The UK and Australia are the two most popular destinations for emigrants. The US, New Zealand and Canada also feature and the Middle East has become more popular.
- Educational levels of recent migrants are higher than the national average. From the QNHS, 62 per cent of emigrants had a third level education. Similarly, a high percentage of emigrants are skilled and have experience as professionals.
- Emigrants are no longer from predominantly rural areas even though there is still an over-representation of emigrants from rural areas who are connected to agriculture.
- Female emigration is comparatively high in Ireland against international trends and therefore provides a more balanced representation of emigration rationale and experience.
- A high proportion of emigrants were in full-time employment before moving from Ireland and a high level of emigrants were dissatisfied with their job prospects before leaving Ireland.
- Emigrants who were employed part-time and underemployed left to find employment and gain experience.
- The top reasons for departure were ‘to travel and experience another culture’; and ‘to find another job or to attain professional experience not available to them at home’ (Glynn *et al.*, 2013: 29-48).

The Clinton Institute recent research undertaken for the Irish Government’s *Emigrant Support Programme* (ESP) has provided further insightful findings about Ireland’s emigration. Kennedy *et al.* (2014: 1-2) detailed a range of findings from this work, some of which are outlined below;

- There is a fluctuation in the needs of diaspora communities depending on context, for example, elderly Irish, Irish travellers in Britain, undocumented Irish in the USA and young families in Australia and Canada.

- Culture and heritage need to balance the traditional welfare focus of the ESP and play a larger part in reaching out to the diaspora, particularly second and third generations.
- There is potential to expand diaspora engagement through educational and business networks.
- Issues relating to pre-departure preparation and returning to Ireland are significant for emigrants.
- Irish emigration is moving beyond the traditional destinations of Britain, the USA, Australia and Canada to other destinations where there can be wide cultural gaps.
- There is evidence and concern about intergenerational gaps for the Irish diaspora at community and leadership levels.
- Young female professionals have emerged as a diaspora cohort of significance.
- The impact and use of social media since 2008 is substantial amongst diaspora communities but there is an underutilised potential in Ireland connecting with those communities. There is an interest amongst the diaspora in creating platforms to share experience and knowledge.

This research recommends that diaspora engagement on the part of the Irish government should be undertaken through an ‘ethics of care...based on recognition, respect and reciprocity.’ (Kennedy *et al.*, 2014: 2)

### 3.4. National diaspora policy in Ireland and recent national diaspora events.

#### 3.4.1. Irish diaspora policy

At the time of this study’s publication the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) were undertaking a review of Irish diaspora policy to ‘examine all elements of our engagement with the Irish abroad’ (DFAT Consultation Paper, 2014: 1) with recognition that an estimated 70 million-person diaspora worldwide could claim Irish descent. It is expected that the Minister for Diaspora Affairs, Jimmy Deenihan TD, will announce a new policy statement on Irish diaspora based on that review.

This distribution of Irish diaspora around the world is attributed to waves of large scale emigration over more than 150 years. Whereas emigration is part of Ireland’s profile historically, there are significant waves of emigration including the post-famine period in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the late 1950s, the late 1980s and from circa 2008.

### 3.4.2.State support for Irish emigrants

In 2002, *Ireland and the Irish Abroad: Report of the Task Force on Policy Regarding Emigrants* recommended the provision of more resources to Irish emigrants living in other countries, as well as support for those who wish to return. The 2002 taskforce report was written at a time when Ireland was economically progressive and whereas there has been a regression in the economic climate in Ireland the main areas of emigrant support being advocated remain valid:

- First, *pre-departure services* (government and voluntary) based on ‘informed choice and (people) are properly prepared to cope with the challenges and opportunities they will face abroad.’
- Secondly, *recognition of Irish abroad* who have provided ‘exceptional or distinguished service’ and similarly *support to vulnerable Irish abroad* for example older emigrants.
- Thirdly, for returning emigrants there are people who will require *assistance coming back* to live in Ireland (Task Force on Policy Regarding Emigrants, 2002: 4).

### 3.4.3.Recent Irish diaspora activity

There has been purposeful and strategic diaspora engagement in Ireland in the last decade. These activities have produced economic, social and cultural dividends for Ireland as well as the Irish diaspora. Two main events during this time have been the Global Irish Economic Forum (2009; 2011; 2013) and The Gathering 2013.

#### The Global Irish Economic Forum (GIEF)

##### The concept

The concept of the Global Irish Economic Forum focuses on the global Irish and was operationalised by the Irish Government in 2009. Participants were identified by Ireland’s network of diplomatic missions and the main economic State agencies. The inaugural forum was convened with two broad objectives: 1) to explore how the Irish at home and abroad, and those with a strong interest in Ireland, could work together and contribute to overall efforts at economic recovery; and 2) to examine ways in which Ireland and its global community could develop a more strategic relationship with each other, particularly in the economic sector (DFA, 2009: 3). The response and commitment by those invited to this forum demonstrated very high levels of international goodwill towards Ireland.

The inaugural forum identified the need to develop a ‘value proposition’ for Ireland, a marketing term to develop feature(s) to make a product attractive to customers. The

importance of Irish culture in this promotion was strongly encouraged as a recognised and tangible commodity.

At the GIEF 2009 the key themes which emerged included:

- Build a Diaspora Network

Form a Global Irish Network from the forum participants and work to build additional links with leading diaspora business people.

- Brand Ireland

Bring greater focus and clarity to Ireland's brand abroad.

- Strategically focus on specific markets

Select and target specific markets and align Ireland's skills base and investment in research and development with these specific markets.

- Provide a single interface to stakeholders

Provide a single point of access for those doing business in Ireland.

- Focus engagement on Asia

Be more visible and active in Asia, an area of massive growth and potential markets.

At the GIEF 2011 the key themes which emerged were: Re-envisioning Ireland; Re-establishing our Reputation; Re-engagement; Re-energising Ireland; and Reforming Ireland.

- Re-envisioning Ireland

Develop a vision as to the type of country Ireland will be to live in, to engage with, and what is perceived as the role Ireland will have with the world. Sense of community is a vital resource for example, 'the parish' which has been long utilised by the GAA, *The Gathering* and *Ireland Reaching Out*. Recognition of the importance of 'sense of place' and cultural space are necessary.

- Re-establishing reputation

The cultural re-envisioning of Ireland and the reestablishment of a reputation overseas is seen as an 'advance party' for commerce.

- Re-engagement

Re-engage with Ireland's friends overseas as an important next step. Specifically noted was the need for structured mobilisation of Ireland's diaspora.

- Re-energising

Three particular sectors were identified as having potential for reenergising: tourism; internationally-traded financial services; and food.



- Reform

Reform is seen as the foundation for re-envisioning, re-establishing reputation; re-engaging; and re-energising Ireland (UCD Michael Smurfit School of Business, 2011: 3-7).

At the GIEF 2013 the key themes which emerged from the working groups were:

- Enhancing support for indigenous Irish companies, entrepreneurs and exporters, education and training, scaling, mentoring, competitiveness and enhancing entrepreneurial spirit.
- Strengthening our tourism product

*The Gathering* demonstrated Ireland as a world-class tourism destination and requires further attention on opportunities for Ireland in new and developing markets, opportunities in niche sectors and how to generate greater business tourism for Ireland.

- Ensuring Ireland maintains a world-class financial services environment
- Marketing Ireland as a global leader in agrifood and sustainable development.
- Maximising the impact of our cultural and design sectors

Greater exporting of Ireland's arts and design is heavily supported with the centenary of 1916 viewed as a potential platform to demonstrate Ireland's arts and design ability.

- Reinforcing the links between Ireland and our diaspora.

The momentum, capacity and outcomes from the GIEF has heightened the Government's relationship with the most successful members of the diaspora. Continued engagement is required specifically identifying who and where the diaspora are and how best to engage each cohort (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2013: 14-17).

#### Learnings from *The Gathering 2013*

*The Gathering* (2013) in Ireland was designed as a mechanism to increase numbers of tourists to Ireland as a response to poor levels of activity in the Irish tourism industry. The concept came broadly from Scotland's *The Homecoming* (2009).

The focus of this initiative were the Irish diaspora globally as well as those with affinity to Ireland. The highest proportion of Irish ancestry is in the United States followed by Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and a number of European countries (The Gathering Final Report, 2013: 8).

Over 5,000 Gathering events were held throughout Ireland, with estimated incremental tourists of at least 250,000 to 275,000 tourists amounting to a conservative revenue generation of €170 million.

In overall terms the strategic intent behind The Gathering was achieved and surpassed and the momentum that was created through this event has been considered an overwhelming success.

A number of key factors were noted as particular enablers in The Gathering's successes:

- Ownership  
Irish people at the local and community level took charge of engagement activity which generated commitment and buy-in.
- Volunteering  
Adoption of The Gathering initiative in localities and particularly rural Ireland introduced a level of volunteering that was unexpected.
- Personal invitations  
Significant power was associated to the extension of personal invitations from people in Ireland to the diaspora and affinity diaspora.
- The model for citizen and community activation, local authorities and Gathering Coordinators worked very well and could be adopted to a regional setting (See Appendix C: The Gathering Final Report, 2013).

Broader observations unique to The Gathering included:

- The potential of *social media and digital communications* to micro-target key diaspora groups in a cost-efficient manner.
- The high proportion of *in-kind support* as a very large part of the overall cost of The Gathering and instrumental to its success circa €8 million. (The Gathering Final Report, 2013: 6). Irish Public Bodies (IPB) provided €1 million sponsorship which was matched by the Irish Government, thereby creating a €2 million Community Fund for the Gathering. This fund was used to provide micro-support for individual Gatherings around the country, enhancing the scale of the overall initiative.
- *Cross-governmental support* championed by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and continued through political and executive levels of government.
- Consideration to *not repeating* The Gathering and focusing instead on the sustained and on-going development of the legacies of the 2013 Gathering (The Gathering Final Report, 2013: 52).

The Gathering Ireland 2013 Final Report (2013: 6) noted local authorities as 'best placed to lead out on locally-based community tourism initiatives.' The success of The Gathering on a

national level and with a tourism generating objective is the result of strong collaboration and successful processes. Lessons to take from this success which can be applied at regional levels is the importance of ownership by a locality, the impact of personalising engagement with the diaspora and affinity living outside an area. Of key importance was mobilising the population of an area or region in Ireland as key actors to the agitation and sustainability of relationships with Irish emigrants.

#### The ConnectIreland job creation model

The ConnectIreland job creation model was presented at the 2011 Global Irish Economic Forum with the purpose of creating jobs, through foreign direct investment. The model sought to generate public interaction aimed at bringing foreign direct investment to Ireland by mobilising the Irish diaspora at home and abroad. The initiative became part of the Government's *Action Plan for Jobs 2012*. The initiative is administered by the IDA under a programme called *Succeed in Ireland* and ConnectIreland implements the programme on behalf of the IDA.

ConnectIreland's goals and objectives are to attract foreign companies that are expanding internationally to Ireland. The Irish Government financially reward those that introduce new, sustainable jobs into the country with a payment of up to €1,500 per job (maximum 100 jobs). The condition to this is that people register as a connector on the website, refer a company that is considering an international expansion and ConnectIreland will contact the company to explain the advantages of establishing in Ireland. If the company chooses Ireland the connector benefits from the reward.

After two years, ConnectIreland, in partnership with IDA Ireland, has facilitated the location of over 30 new companies in Ireland and has secured over 1,000 new jobs for Ireland.

ConnectIreland has over 40,000 individuals or "connectors". The ConnectIreland job creation model has been recognised by FDI Intelligence as one of the Best FDI initiatives across the globe which is published annually through the Financial Times (Connect Ireland, 2014).

### 3.5. Considerations when planning diaspora engagement strategies

#### 3.5.1. The emergence of diaspora institutions

Responsibility, allegiance and connections to diasporas fall into a grey area 'between domestic politics and international relations' (Gamlen *et al.*, 2013: 2) and yet there are many home countries who have set up institutions for diaspora engagement.

Formalising diaspora relationships have become a more common occurrence in more recent times but informal diaspora relationships have existed for much longer, a common example of this is remittances. The World Bank estimated that 'in 2009 global remittances (around \$320 billion), from over 200 million migrants around the world (who make about 3 per cent of the world's population), exceed as much as three times the overseas development assistance' (Filipovic, Devjak and Ferfila, 2012: 18).

The profile of diasporas has changed considerably in a globalised world and technological advances have greatly improved modes of communication, travel and co-location.

Simultaneously diasporas have gained reputations as 'senders of remittances...but also as investors, philanthropists, innovators, and first movers in the growth of important sectors such as tourism and in the development of human capital.' (Agunias and Newland, 2012: 3).

Diaspora institutions are formal diaspora engagement institutions created by home-states that are dedicated to emigrants and their descendants (Gamlen *et al.*, 2013). These institutions have been developed with a range of purposes dependent on the home country's motivation for connecting with their diaspora. A study examining the motivation behind developing diaspora institutions consisting of 144 states, observed over 20 years, found the following three trends through their analysis:

- Tapping
- Embracing
- Governing

'Tapping' is diaspora connectivity which assists with a struggle that is fighting or mediation; support to diplomatic and consular initiatives; and/ or 'agents of economic cooperation and development.' The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 'Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals' (TOKTEN) programme has assisted states in areas such as the Caribbean, Southern Europe, and Asia in attempting to off-set 'brain drain', 'by attracting professional emigrants back as short-term consultants on development issues' (Gamlen *et al.*, 2013: 7-8).

'Embracing' is connectivity with a diaspora which can be based around nationalistic identity and solidarity and such institutions can facilitate 'transnationalism'. This is likely to occur when the home-country is more democratic and will channel emigrant opinion, for example, issues such as home-country politics.

‘Governing’ a diaspora and migration policy is the responsibility of new-countries and no-one from home-countries sought out or tracked who left. Diaspora institutions can facilitate a ‘notional authority over ‘lost’ emigrants’ (Gamlen *et al.*, 2013: 10) and internationally this is a preferred approach because it shares responsibility between home and new countries.

This study also noted that half of the United Nations member states have a formal diaspora institution. Policy experts advocate the establishment of institutions to manage migration multilaterally as opposed to globally.

### 3.5.2. Diaspora policies and Diaspora strategies

Diaspora engagement studies advise that diaspora engagement activity should not take the part of developing policies which are directive and authoritarian, but develop strategies which plan for outcomes. ‘A strategy is a plan to do things a certain way to achieve a desired outcome, while a policy is a rule designed to ensure consistency in governance and to avoid undesirable outcomes’ (Filipovic, Devjak and Ferfila, 2012: 10). The role of public institutions in developing diaspora engagement should be ‘to create enabling conditions in which diaspora and the home country develop a partnership for example, encourage connections; establish situation-specific managerial practices; and necessary resources’ (Filipovic, Devjak and Ferfila, 2012: 9).

The development of some diaspora strategies are reported to have taken the approach of a diaspora dichotomy which is one of either ‘assistance’ or ‘exploitation’. The assistance component is the provision of assistance to diaspora in their new countries, for example, providing supports or lobbying for political or welfare rights. Alternatively, there is also an approach which exploits the diaspora to economically assist the home country.

Engaging with diaspora, particularly where previous effort has been limited, can give rise to home-countries developing new approaches towards diaspora engagement. However, evidence suggests that building on existing diaspora initiatives with varying partners is a much more successful approach than those that are new and government driven (Agunias and Newland, 2012: 35).

Similarly central to the development of this relationship is what Boyle and Kitchin (2008: 7) advocate for through an ethos of ‘*helping each other*’. They advocate ‘building networks of support, sharing advice, creating new ventures...all benefit and nobody is exploited.’

A key learning from the development of diaspora strategies around the world is that sustainability occurs where people voluntarily participate in diaspora activity and are not co-opted into activities. The role of the State should not be one that centrally runs or manages

schemes but grows in partnership with individuals, organisations and networks. This approach is preferable for four main reasons:

- 1) It will sustain and create more organic networks and schemes that are more likely to be sustainable into the future,
- 2) It will enable flexibility and avoid overly formulaic and heavily structured schemes that constrain and co-opt rather than enable and encourage participation,
- 3) It will enhance and produce relationships that are of mutual benefit as no one party is dominant, and
- 4) It will reduce the costs and administrative burden for all parties (Boyle and Kitchin, 2008: 8).

The approach towards all diaspora partnerships should balance social, cultural and economic with equal value and importance.

Kennedy *et al.*, (2014: 2) recommend that diaspora engagement should ‘involve an ethics of care on the part of Government, based on recognition, respect and reciprocity.’ This ethos should be extended to any diaspora engagement approaches being developed.

### 3.5.3. Considerations when engaging diaspora

There are approximately 70 million Irish diaspora around the world but the extent of mobilisation amongst this cohort is varied. Not all members of the Irish diaspora will seek connectivity, and levels of connectivity are influenced by the size of the community surrounding emigrants and the level of ‘patriotism/interest/commitment to Ireland’ (Boyle and Kitchin, 2008: 4). This level of Irish diaspora connectivity is strongly influenced by:

- Lives lived in Ireland prior to departure,
- Conditions in destination region and processes of integration/assimilation or conflict,
- Political conditions in Ireland through time, and
- Wider cultural processes promoting an interest in heritage and memory (Boyle and Kitchin, 2008: 4).

#### Regional approach

It is documented that diasporic ‘*contributions tend to be geared toward their places of origin*’ (Agunias and Newland, 2012: 35). The sense of ‘place’ for diaspora is primarily identified by country of origin but within that, individual diaspora members often associate with a place, region, town, townland or village, which is much smaller. Diaspora contributions, monetary or otherwise, tend to focus on their locality and place of origin so it is reasonable to look to regional and micro centres as points of diaspora engagement. National policies and initiatives to engage diaspora are driven by national governments but a role can be created to focus on smaller geographic areas and their engagement with the diaspora.

#### 3.5.4. Developing a diaspora engagement plan

Aikins and White (2011) developed a *Global Diaspora Strategies Toolkit* to coincide with the Hillary Clinton Global Forum in Washington in mid-2011. This toolkit comprises an audit of diaspora strategies by category and country. The approach of this audit is global with a greater emphasis on learning from programmatic approaches than specific country approaches. It is noted that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to diaspora engagement. Some basic approaches in understanding where to start with diaspora engagement planning include:

- Seek to build mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with diasporas through initiatives such as 'formal mentoring programs, investment and trade programs, and cultural initiatives.'
- Create networks and mobilise individuals for the benefit of diasporas and the home country.
- Diasporas act as important conduits in the two-way flow of capital be it 'human, social, intellectual, cultural or financial.' (Aikins and White, 2011: 3)

Agunias and Newland (2012) compiled a *Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development* for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Migration Policy Institute (MPI). The IOM and MPI have over ten years experience of diaspora engagement and have developed a model to promote reciprocal engagement between governments and their diaspora.

Technology is an obvious mechanism to put at the centre of diaspora institution development. It facilitates communication with foreign embassies, consulates, immigration bureaucracies as well as the ability to collect data. Data collection can aid identification of who could facilitate diaspora engagement for a home country (Gamlen, 2006).

The roadmap which has been developed to engage with a diaspora has four key strands;

1. Identifying the goals of diaspora engagement,
  2. Mapping the location and characteristics of the diaspora,
  3. Building trust between diasporas and government institutions, and
  4. Mobilizing the diaspora to act as partners in the development of the country of origin.
- (Agunias and Newland, 2012: 9).

These four strands of diaspora engagement are expanded below.

##### 1. *Identifying the goals of diaspora engagement*

The key components involved in determining goals of diaspora engagement include:

- Identifying the goals being pursued in establishing or extending diaspora engagement; goals should reflect dialogue between home and new countries.
- Awareness of the resource commitment that will be required to achieve stated goals, for example, administrative support, financial investment etc. An understanding should be reached as to who will bring what resources to the diaspora engagement plan. How much can partners support engagement; what can the host country provide; what capacity have the diaspora; and what may need to be sought from external sectors.
- Consulting with diaspora members is more likely to produce manageable and sustainable goals. Goal-setting for diaspora engagement should be an integral component of national development planning and not tokenistic or experimental.

(Agunias and Newland, 2012: 25-26)

Country examples of developing diaspora goals are noted in Table 4.

Examples of identifying goals
Philippines: One of the goals of the Filipino government has been to reduce unemployment and maintain remittance income by developing a strategy of large-scale contract labour deployment to other countries.
India and China: India and China focused their diaspora engagement goal-setting around encouraging 'diaspora entrepreneurs and highly skilled professionals to develop activities in their countries of origin.'
Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China: Diaspora engagement success for governments such as the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China harnessing diaspora talent occurred as a result of development strategies to 'invest in education, promote science and technology, build infrastructure, and foster entrepreneurship.'
Mexico: Mexico has the Consultative Council of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (CCIME) which is primarily made up of leaders elected by diaspora communities. The CCIME makes recommendations to the Mexican government about its diaspora policies through dialogue with Mexicans living in other countries.
Switzerland: In Switzerland support has been given to a 'structured dialogue' between Kosovars resident in Switzerland and their municipalities of origin in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. This has provided insight into the topics of greatest interest to the diaspora.

Table 4: Examples of identifying goals for developing a diaspora engagement plan

(Agunias and Newland, 2012: 26-27).

## 2. Mapping the location and characteristics of the diaspora

The key components of mapping the diaspora include:

- All-inclusive data about the diaspora is required for planning including 'mapping the location of the diaspora; compiling inventories of diaspora skills and experience; and engaging a wide range of diaspora members in listening exercises to understand what the diaspora has to offer, what it is willing to offer, and what it expects from the



government in turn. It is crucial to acknowledge the diversity of diaspora agendas, interests, and strategies' (Agunias and Newland, 2012: 27).

- Factors which will influence the remit of diaspora engagement include the quantity of people who belong/associate with a diaspora; if they are located in limited or multiple countries; what skills and qualifications they possess; their history and how they have integrated into their host countries.

Country examples of mapping the diaspora are noted in Table 5.

Examples of mapping diaspora
India: A High-Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora analysed 'the location, situation, and potential development role of the estimated 20 million non-resident Indians and persons of Indian origin. The information resulting from this two-year exercise led to a new direction in diaspora policy, including the creation of a Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in 2004.'
Ghana: The government of Ghana is 'directing resources to the management of migration data and to creating profiles of diaspora members in particular.'

Table 5: Examples of mapping diaspora for developing a diaspora engagement plan

(Agunias and Newland, 2012: 28-30).

### 3. *Building trust between diasporas and government institutions*

Some diasporas have experienced opposing expectations from home and new countries. Home countries can perceive their diaspora as economic props and new countries can 'see diaspora groups demanding support on the basis of weak capabilities to deliver on mutual objectives' (Agunias and Newland, 2012: 29). The key to engagement with a diaspora is a relationship that is reciprocal and balanced.

Country examples of mapping trust are noted in Table 6.

Examples of mapping trust
Mexico: Mexico has been committed to gaining the trust of the diaspora since the 1990s. The creation of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2002) was the result of efforts across 56 consular offices in North America. The Tres por Uno (3x1) program is a world-recognised diaspora initiative which sees three levels of government (local, state and federal) match the contributions of migrant organisations to infrastructure projects in their communities of origin. The anonymity of the Consultative Council of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (CCIME), which facilitates critical commentary of government positions, has built trust amongst the diaspora community.
Israel: Israel developed 'an increasingly autonomous, quasi-governmental Jewish Agency for Israel. Its institutions and programs are governed jointly by government and diaspora representatives... <i>Israel's Partnership 2000</i> is a prime example of building trust through twinning between Israeli municipalities and Jewish diaspora communities around the world...[t]his allows for the voice and influence of both diasporas and government representatives in key efforts such as identifying needs, setting priorities, and allocating resources.'

Table 6: Examples of mapping trust for developing a diaspora engagement plan

(Agunias and Newland, 2012: 30).

#### 4. Mobilizing the diaspora to act as partners in the development of the country of origin

When diaspora engagement goals have been articulated, trust between the diaspora and government is established, when diaspora data is gathered and understood, then initiatives to mobilise the diaspora can be extended.

Country examples of mobilising the diaspora are noted in Table 7.

Examples of mobilising the diaspora
Senegal: Senegal is viewed as a forerunner in diaspora inclusion when in 1993 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs included oversight of the Senegalese abroad including fiscal advantages for corporate investment in Senegal from outside the country. Increasingly migrant-origin countries are creating ministries dedicated to diaspora issues.
Israel: Israel's use of an independent and accountable mechanism for transferring philanthropic funds from the diaspora to the homeland has continued success. Governance of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee is by the diaspora and receives over US\$1 billion in philanthropic contributions annually.
India: High-profile events have been used by India as diaspora mobilising strategies, for example, India's annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas ("non-resident Indian day") brings together 'high-profile Indian diaspora members for a conference attended by most of India's senior politicians, alongside Nobel Prize winners of Indian nationality or descent'.

Table 7: Examples of mobilising the diaspora for developing a diaspora engagement plan

(Agunias and Newland, 2012: 33).

### 3.6. An Irish approach to engagement

Boyle and Kitchin (2008: 9-14) suggest a diaspora strategy for Ireland that fosters four types of reciprocal relationships. They are:

1. Ireland and the Irish diaspora,
2. The Irish Diaspora and the Irish Diaspora,
3. Ireland and the New Irish, and
4. The Irish Diaspora and the New Irish.

The first two sets of reciprocal relationships; Ireland and the Irish diaspora, and the Irish diaspora and the Irish diaspora, are most relevant to Ireland's current emigration profile. The second two sets of relationships which specifically reference the 'new' Irish were more relevant during the Celtic Tiger and in pre-recession Ireland but nonetheless provide useful and practical suggestions for diaspora relations.

Relationship	Suggestions for diaspora engagement
Ireland and the Irish diaspora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional supports for vulnerable, young Irish abroad (to date programmes seem to have concentrated mainly on the elderly.)</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes of cultural exchange; expansion of overseas cultural programmes.</li> <li>• Summer schools for higher education students (especially those in Irish studies programmes) with a scheme to maintain the relationship into the long term.</li> <li>• Develop school curriculum materials concerning Ireland and the Irish diaspora suitable for school projects abroad.</li> <li>• Exploring new social networking technologies as a means to engage children and young adults beyond traditional activities such as GAA and dancing clubs.</li> <li>• Irish 'Business Ambassador' programme where Irish business people mentor members of the diaspora business community and vice versa.</li> <li>• Develop supports for entrepreneurial Irish citizens abroad who are interested in growing small businesses and potentially investing in Ireland in the long term.</li> <li>• Develop a programme of research that engages with the diaspora and in particular founds and populates community archives, undertakes oral histories, and examines present-day life of the diaspora as a means to stimulate interest in Irish identity and culture.</li> <li>• Invest in and develop genealogical supports for those researching their family tree as it is a significant practice of identity formation and production.</li> </ul>
The Irish Diaspora and the Irish Diaspora.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer-to-peer relationships would be a sound investment for the Irish state as they help globalise Irish business and cultural interests.</li> </ul>
Ireland and the New Irish. The New Irish are characterised by the development of schemes to recruit talented migrants to Ireland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplement schemes for recruiting 'talented' migrants with schemes aimed at resolving 'underutilised talent' in Ireland (such as foreign-trained teachers working as cleaners, etc.)</li> <li>• They could also be supplemented by schemes aimed at developing an affinity diaspora. The New Irish are encouraged to continue to represent and work for Ireland if they return to their home country or when they move onto other places.</li> <li>• Ambassador and Alumni programs should work with other countries to build mutually productive relationships so that both countries diaspora strategies dovetail as much as possible.</li> </ul>
The Irish Diaspora and the New Irish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is in the interest of the Irish state to help establish schemes that could foster such relationships as it is to the long term benefit of Ireland (better preparing people for life in Ireland, developing business in Ireland, and expanding the economic potential of Irish citizens abroad).</li> </ul>

Table 8: Suggestions for Irish diaspora engagement

Boyle and Kitchen (2008:9-14).

### 3.7. Conclusion

The origin, development and on-going evolution of any diaspora has been, and continues to be, influenced by historical events and globalised movement. The Irish diaspora has formed through events in Ireland's history as well as the Irish propensity to travel and work outside the country. An estimated figure of 70 million Irish diaspora exists around the globe but there is very limited data and detail about what characterises this group.

Two of the more recent economic and cultural diaspora-events in Ireland were the hosting of the *Global Irish Economic Forum* (2009; 2011; 2013) and *The Gathering 2013*. These events sent clear messaging to Ireland that the Irish diaspora and affinity diaspora have a positive disposition to being involved in Ireland's economic recovery and cultural appreciation. This diaspora involvement also points to potential for greater connectivity if arrangements were developed to facilitate more structured engagement.

Engaging with a country's diaspora has become increasingly widespread and a variety of diaspora 'entities' have been established around the world. Key to engagement with a diaspora are considerations of a *reciprocal* relationship between the home and new countries to avoid negative perceptions of motivation and to engage all layers of a diaspora; a *partnership* approach between diaspora institutions and the diaspora to avoid imposing rules and foster ownership; and building on grassroots and *cultural connections* already established in countries.

## 4. Findings - Global Limerick Network on-line survey

### 4.1. Introduction

The Global Limerick Network (GLN) online survey was designed to ascertain the level of connectivity diaspora and affinity diaspora have with Limerick and gain insight into their interest in improving those lines of communication. This survey also aimed to determine what type of communication respondents would be interested in receiving about Limerick. There were 364 responses to this survey and the information provided by participants is outlined in four sections: 1) Profile of respondents; 2) Connection to Limerick; 3) Strength of connectivity to Limerick; 4) (Re)Connecting to Limerick.

As outlined in the methodology section this survey is not representative of Limerick diaspora and affinity diaspora as a sampling frame for such is not available. The distribution of this survey was targeted and therefore has inherent bias.

Source of survey responses by country:

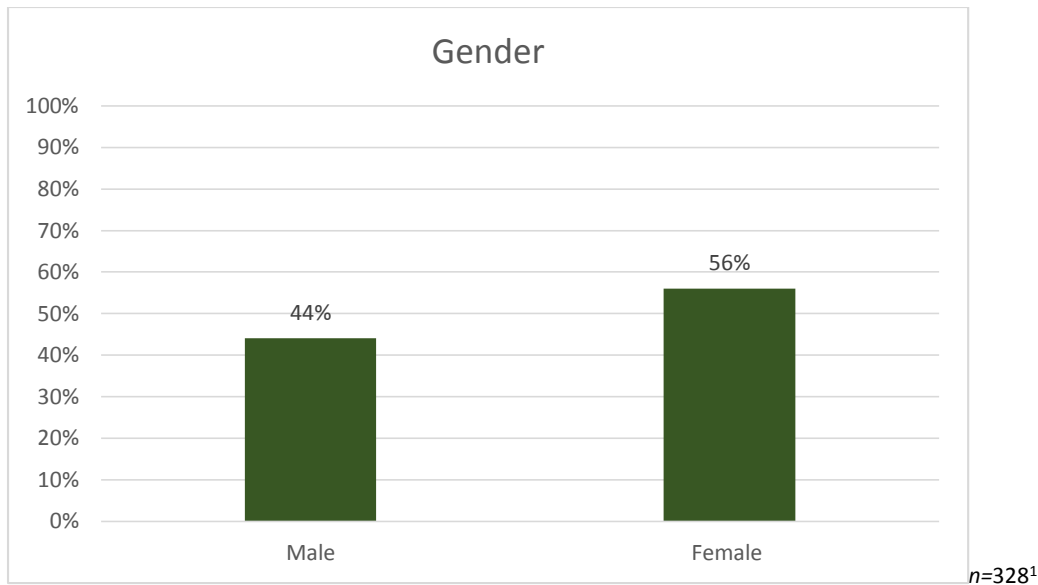
Australia	New Zealand
Belgium	Puerto Rico
Canada	Qatar
Finland	Spain
France	Switzerland
Germany	Turkey
Hong Kong	United Arab Emirates
Ireland	United Kingdom
Namibia	United States
Netherlands	

### 4.2. Section 1: Profile of respondents

To gain insight into the profile of respondents who completed this survey, participants were asked to identify their gender; age group; level of education; occupation and whether they had children.

#### 4.2.1. Gender

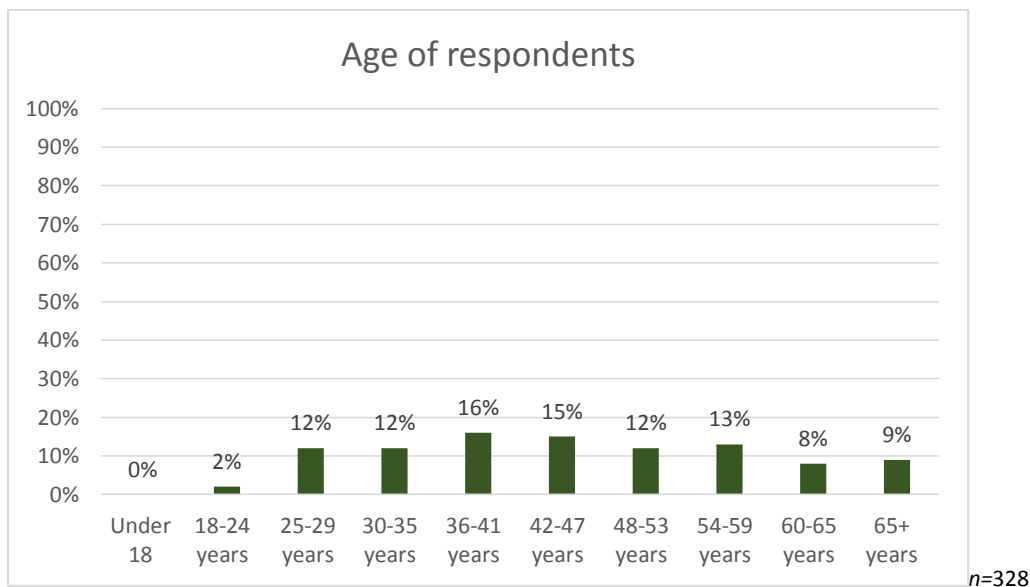
More women (56%) than men (44%) responded to this survey but there is still a good representation of both sexes to provide insightful gendered experiences where relevant.



**Figure 1: Gender of survey respondents**

#### 4.2.2. Age profile

The dominant age profile of respondents clustered around three main groupings; 31 per cent of respondents were 36-47 years; 25 per cent were 48-59 years; 24 per cent of respondents were 25-35 years, and 17 per cent were over 60 years of age. This is a good representation of age categories encompassing varying experiences of emigration.



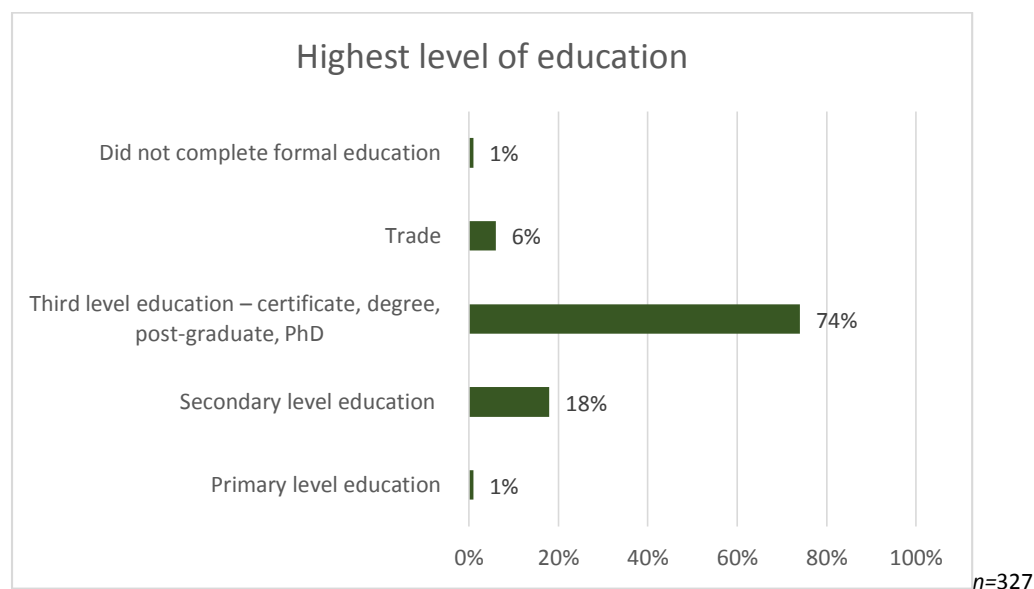
**Figure 2: Age of respondents**

<sup>1</sup> This number (n=328) represents the number of respondents who provided a response to this question and is provided throughout the findings for context and validity.

#### 4.2.3. Level of education

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education. The vast majority of respondents possess a third-level education (74%) followed by secondary-level education (18%) and then a trade (6%). It is evident from this statistic that there is an over-representation of respondents with tertiary education which is likely to be a result of the targeted nature of this survey.

Respondents were also asked to specify their occupation and a clear connection could be seen between the high level of third level education amongst respondents and very high levels of professional occupations cited.

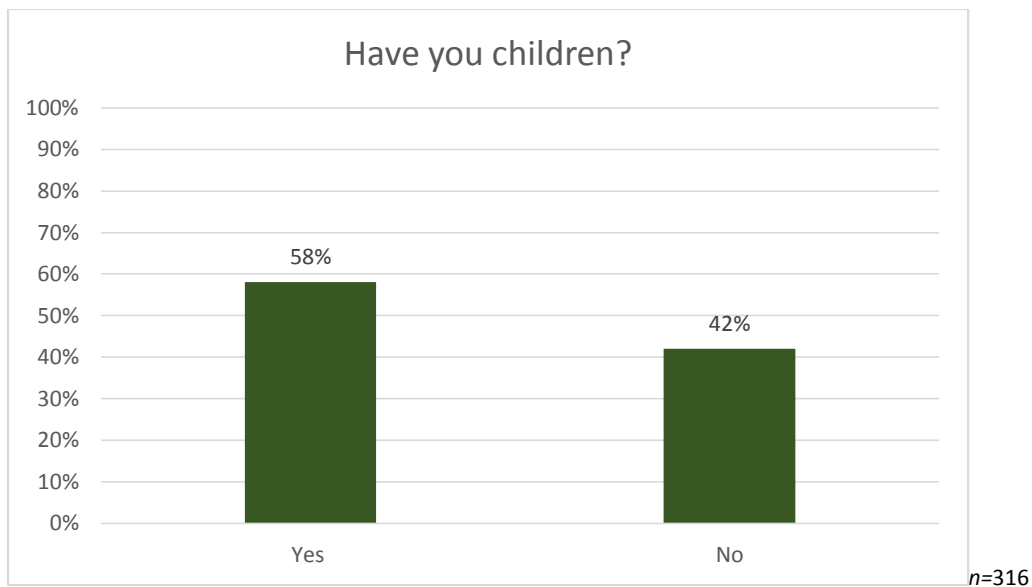


**Figure 3: Highest level of education of respondents**

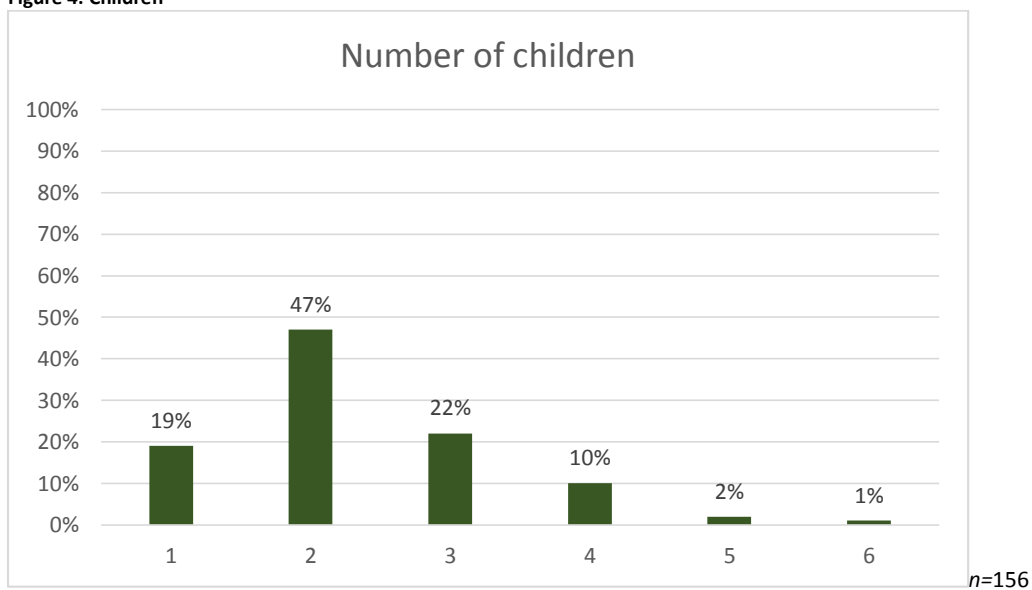
#### 4.2.4. Children

Respondents were asked if they have children and 58 per cent answered that they do and 42 per cent do not.

From the 58 per cent of respondents who do children, the majority have two children (47%) followed by three children (22%) and one child (19%).



**Figure 4: Children**



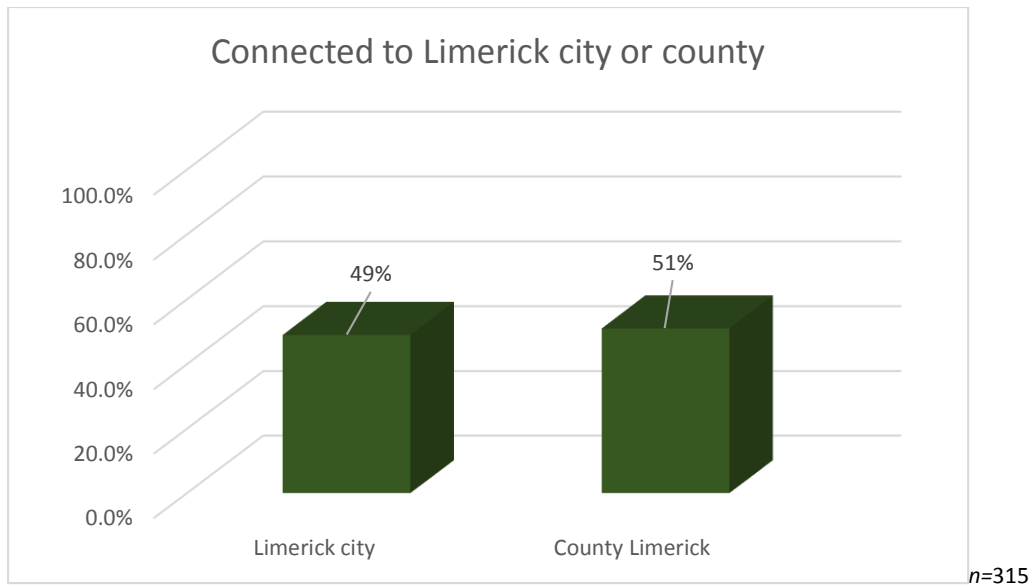
**Figure 5: Number of children**

#### 4.3. Section 2: Connection to Limerick

##### 4.3.1. City and county affiliation

Respondents were asked whether their affiliation with Limerick was to the city or county. There is a well-balanced division between those affiliated to the city of Limerick (49%) and county of Limerick (51%).

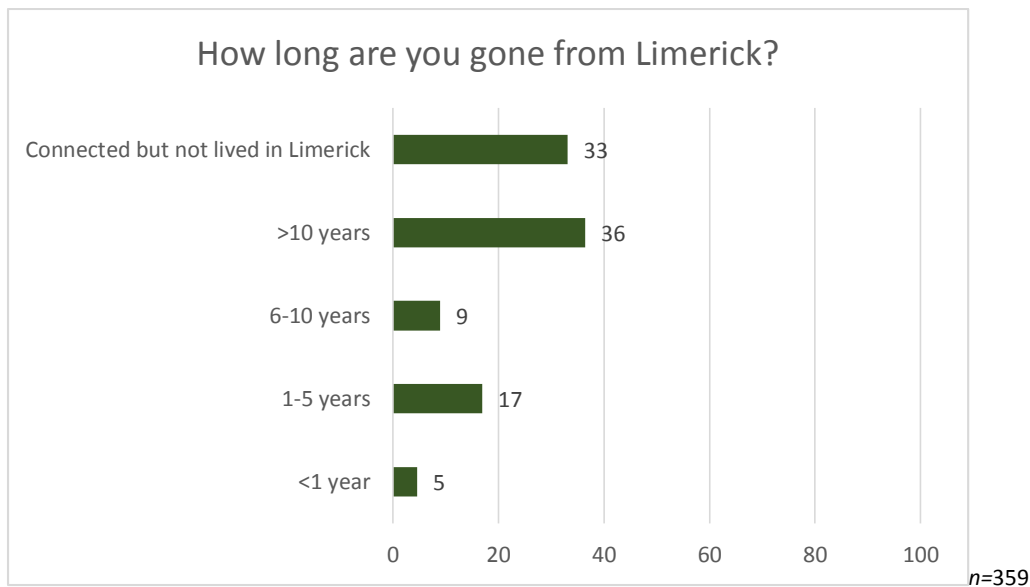




**Figure 6: Respondents connection to Limerick city or county**

#### 4.3.2. Time away from Limerick

Respondents were asked how long they have been away from Limerick. This provided information about how many years respondents have been away from Limerick or if they have a connection to Limerick but may not have necessarily lived in Limerick. Thirty-six per cent of respondents are living outside Limerick for more than ten years; 33 per cent are connected to Limerick but have not lived in Limerick; 17 per cent have been away from Limerick 1-5 years; 9 per cent moved 6-10 years ago and 5 per cent less than a year ago.



**Figure 7: How long respondents are gone from Limerick**

#### 4.3.3. Last trip to Limerick

Respondents were asked when they last visited Limerick or if they had been to Limerick at all. Findings show that 55 percent had visited Limerick in the last year; 22 per cent had visited between 1 and 5 years ago; 13 per cent had never visited Limerick; 5 per cent visited 6-10 years ago; 4 per cent visited more than ten years ago and for 2 per cent it has been over 20 years.

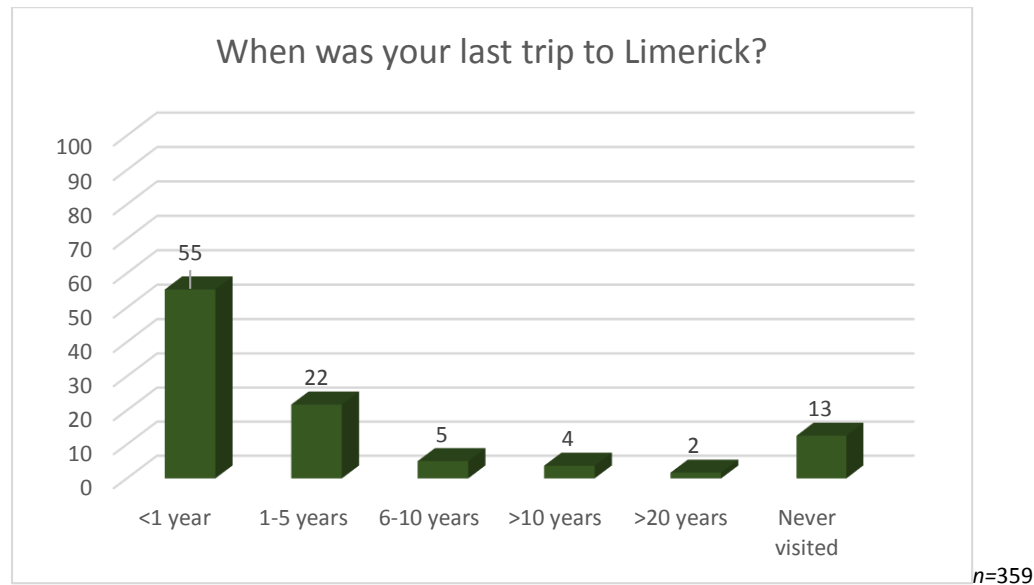
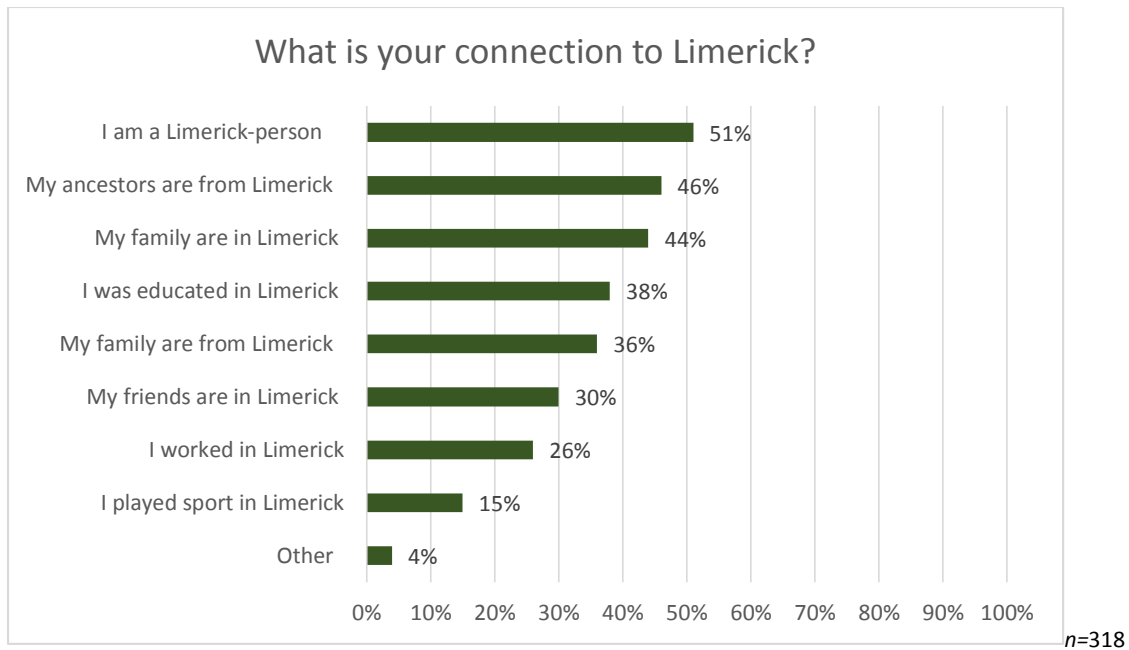


Figure 8: Respondents last trip to Limerick

#### 4.3.4. Connection to Limerick

Respondents were asked to share what they consider to be their connections to Limerick and select as many connections that were relevant to them. The highest rated connection was 'I am a Limerick person' (51%); 46 per cent of respondents indicated their ancestors were from Limerick; 44 per cent have family in Limerick; 38 per cent were educated in Limerick; 36 per cent have family from Limerick; 30 per cent of respondents have friends in Limerick; 26 per cent worked in Limerick and 15 per cent played sport in Limerick. Additional connections respondents offered included having been born in Limerick but being moved elsewhere with their family, and also feeling a connection to Limerick as a result of multiple visits as tourists.

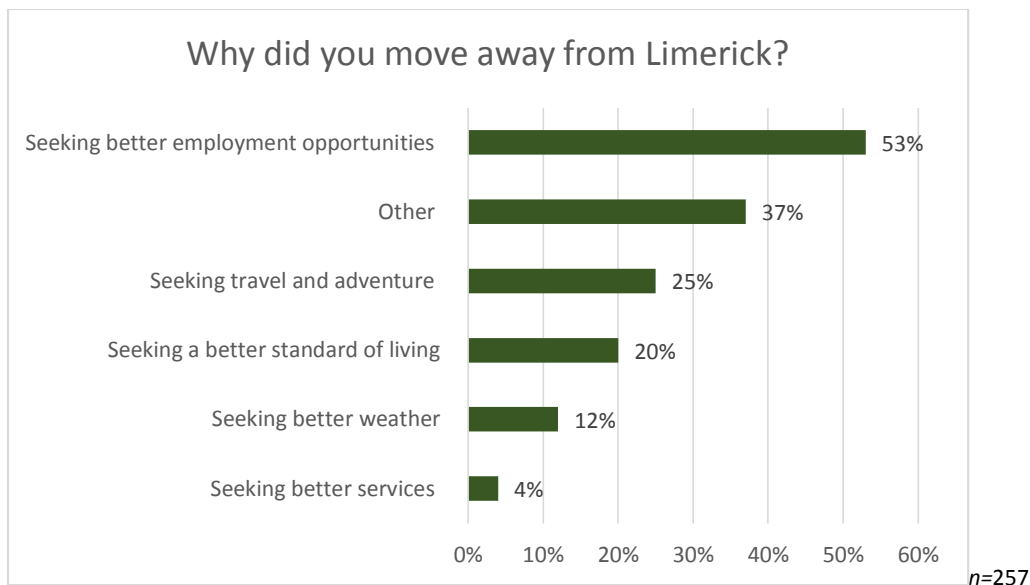


**Figure 9: Connection to Limerick**

#### [4.3.5.Reasons for moving away from Limerick](#)

When asked why people moved away from Limerick, 53 per cent of respondents chose 'seeking better employment opportunities' followed by 25 per cent seeking travel and adventure; 20 per cent sought a better standard of living; 12 per cent sought better weather and 4 per cent sought better services.

A high volume of respondents ( $n=65$ ) offered additional information to this question. Some respondents inferred there was no conscious decision or control in moving away from Limerick, for example family relocation within Ireland or emigration; being adopted from Ireland to another country; marriage; leaving Limerick for educational purposes; and employment offers elsewhere. Others who are connected to Limerick through ancestry noted a departure by their relatives as far back as the 1600s.

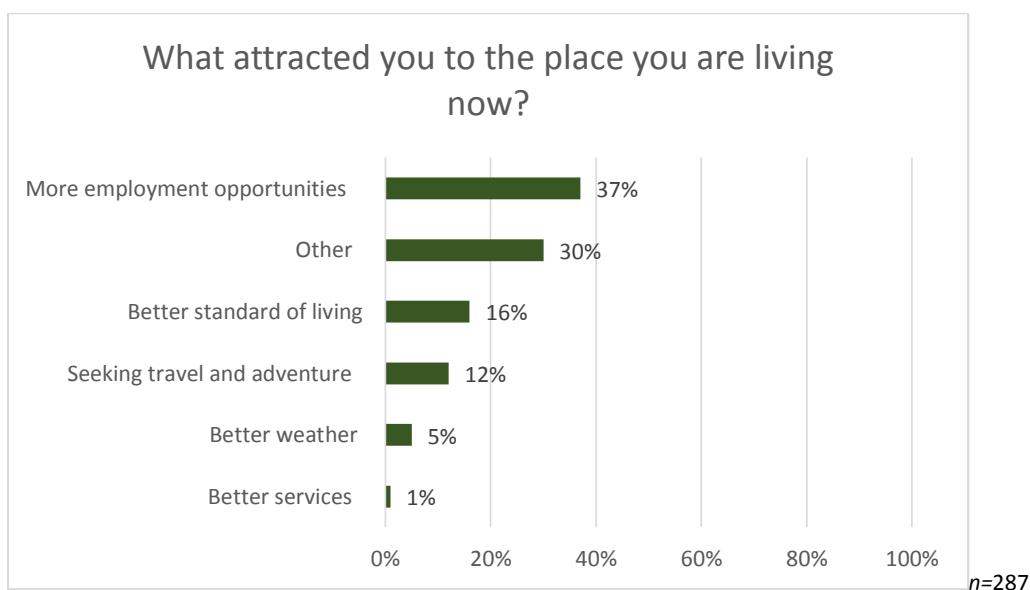


**Figure 10: Why respondents moved away from Limerick**

#### 4.3.6. Attraction to current place

Participants were asked what attracted them to the place they are residing in now. The highest response was 'employment opportunities' (37%) with better standard of living at 16 per cent and seeking travel and adventure at 12 per cent. Better weather and better services were chosen at 5 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.

Additional information from respondents indicated other reasons for living where they currently are which included marriage; adoption; having citizenship of another country; having Limerick ancestry but being born outside Limerick; retirement; and location of employment.

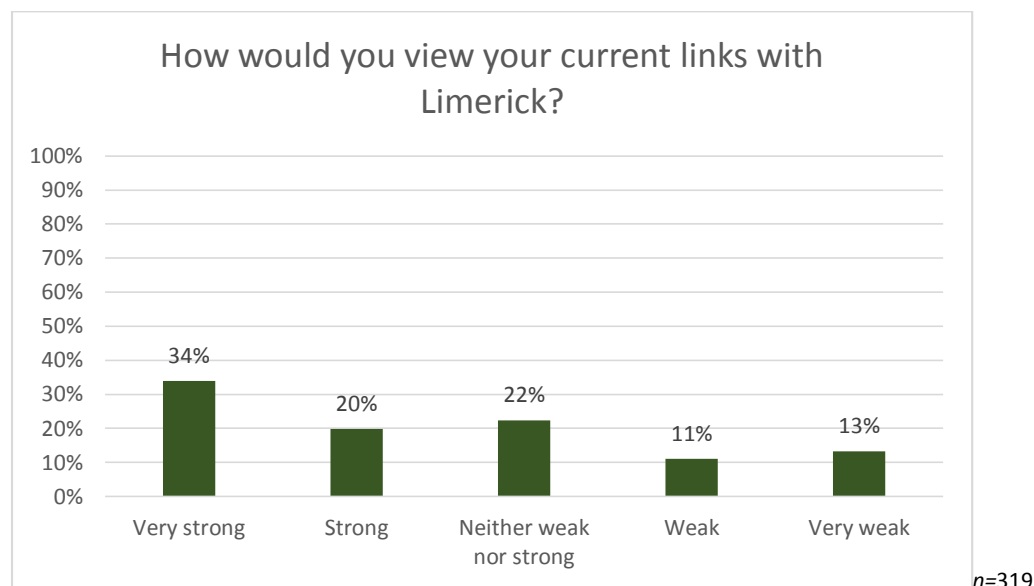


**Figure 11: Attraction to the place respondents are living now**

#### 4.4. Section 3: Strength of connectivity to Limerick

##### 4.4.1. Strength of links with Limerick

Respondents were asked how they viewed the strength of their connectivity to Limerick on a five-point scale from 'Very strong' to 'Very weak'. Findings show that 54 per cent of respondents rated their current links to Limerick as being very strong or strong; 22 per cent did not consider their links particularly strong or weak; and 24 per cent viewed their current links as either weak or very weak.



**Figure 12: Strength of current links with Limerick**

Respondents were asked what they would specifically consider their strongest and weakest connections to Limerick to which they offered 377 combinations of their strongest links to Limerick and 147 combinations of their weakest links.

##### 4.4.2. Strongest links to Limerick

Respondents were asked what they considered their strongest connection to Limerick. Respondents offered 377 combinations of what they viewed as their strongest links to Limerick. Five main categories represent the information provided and a percentage breakdown plus additional detail is provided in Tables 9 and 10 below.

Overwhelmingly the primary strength of connection to Limerick was connectivity to 'people'. Following this, in significantly smaller quantities was 'place' and 'sport' which had equal representation followed by 'education' and then 'employment'.

The 'people' category comprises 11 sub-categories which provides a deeper understanding of respondents' connectivity. The dominant connection noted by respondents is family, followed by 'extended family were/are from Limerick'; friends; immediate family; ancestry and genealogy;

humour; people; friends in current country are from Limerick; former colleagues; neighbours; and online communication.

Subcategories for place; sport; and education are also provided to further the understanding of the strength of links to Limerick.

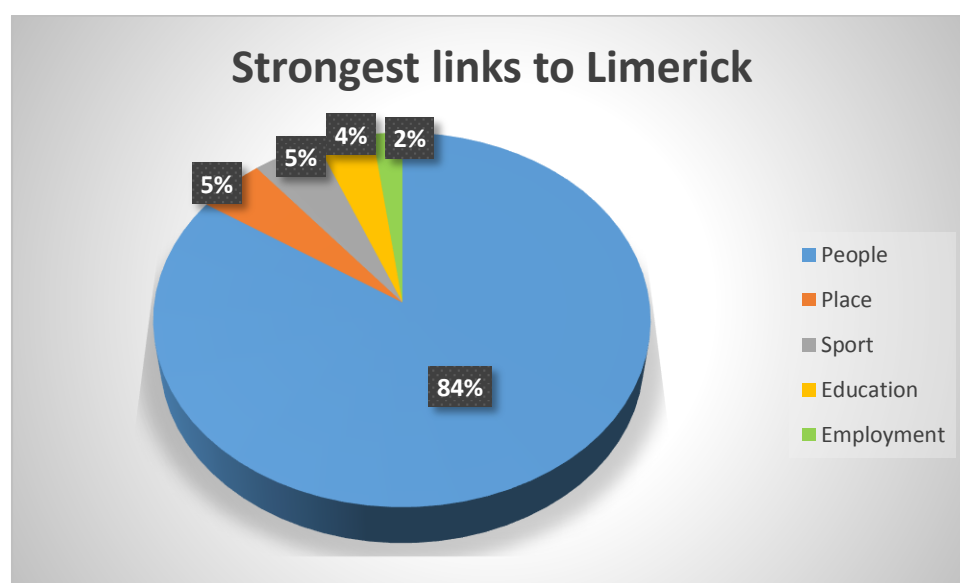


Figure 13: Strongest links to Limerick

Strongest links to Limerick by category	N	%
People	318	84.4
Place	18	4.8
Sport	18	4.8
Education	15	4.0
Employment	8	2.1
Total	377	100

Table 9: Strongest links to Limerick by category

Strongest links to Limerick by category and sub-category			
Categories	Sub-categories	N	Total
People			
	Family	159	
	Extended family were/are from Limerick	47	
	Friends	43	
	Immediate family	40	
	Ancestry and Genealogy	20	
	Humour	3	
	People	2	
	Friends in current country are from Limerick	1	
	Former colleagues	1	
	Neighbours	1	

	Online communication	1	318
Place			
	Uses (Limerick address) as home address	3	
	Visited Limerick	3	
	Own property	3	
	Music	2	
	Physical similarities of place to Limerick	1	
	Love of Limerick	1	
	History	1	
	Heritage	1	
	Food	1	
	Radio	1	
	Community	1	18
Sport			
	Sport	8	
	Rugby	5	
	GAA	3	
	Hurling	2	18
Education			
	UL	7	
	Education	4	
	LIT	2	
	UL Alumni	1	
	School	1	15
Employment			
	Employment	8	8
Total			377

Table 10: Strongest links to Limerick by category and sub-category

#### 4.4.3. Weakest links to Limerick

Respondents were asked what they considered their weakest connection to Limerick. Respondents offered 143 combinations of what they viewed as their weakest links to Limerick. Ten categories represent the information provided and a percentage breakdown plus additional detail is provided in the tables 11 and 12 below.

Respondents note Limerick's economic status; their connectivity to people in or from Limerick; and their distance from Limerick as their weakest connections. Further weaknesses are a sense of disconnection to Limerick; the negative profile Limerick is perceived to have; poor services and limited information from Limerick.

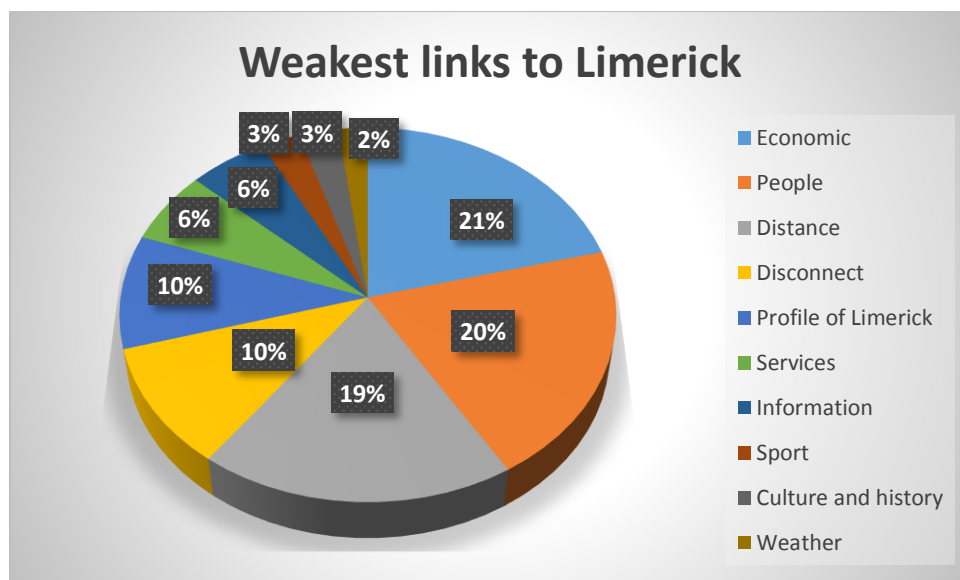


Figure 14: Weakest links to Limerick

Weakest links to Limerick by category	N	%
Economic	30	21.0
People	29	20.3
Distance	27	18.9
Disconnect	15	10.5
Profile of Limerick	14	9.8
Services	9	6.3
Information	8	5.6
Sport	4	2.8
Culture and history	4	2.8
Weather	3	2.1
Total	143	100.0

Table 11: Weakest links to Limerick by category

Weakest links to Limerick by category and sub-category			
Categories	Sub-categories	N	Total
Economic			
	Employment	29	
	Economy	1	30
People			
	Friends have moved away from Limerick	7	
	No remaining family	7	
	School friends	6	
	Ancestors	5	
	Social life	3	
	Passion	1	29
Distance			
	Distance from Limerick	27	27
Disconnect			



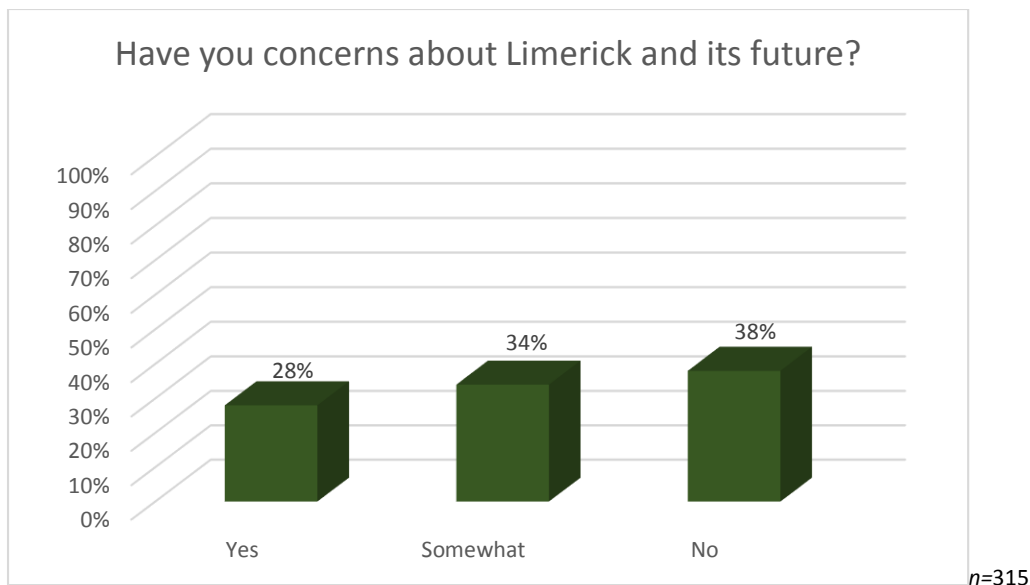
	Lost contact with friends	6	
	Lost connection because of emigration	4	
	Limited business links/contacts	4	
	Lost contact with family	1	15
Profile of Limerick			
	Poor city aesthetics	4	
	Lack of safety	3	
	Bad reputation	3	
	Media	1	
	Gangland crime	1	
	Lack of events to draw people to Limerick	1	
	Tourism	1	14
Services			
	Shopping	2	
	Infrastructure	2	
	Accommodation	1	
	No direct flight to Shannon	1	
	Poor restaurants	1	
	Hospitals	1	
	Facilities	1	9
Information			
	Information	5	
	Everyday news	2	
	Trying to return and finding it difficult	1	8
Sport			
	Sport	4	4
Culture and history			
	Culture and history	4	4
Weather			
	Weather	3	3
Total			143

Table 12: Weakest links to Limerick by category and sub-category

#### 4.4.4. Concern about Limerick's future

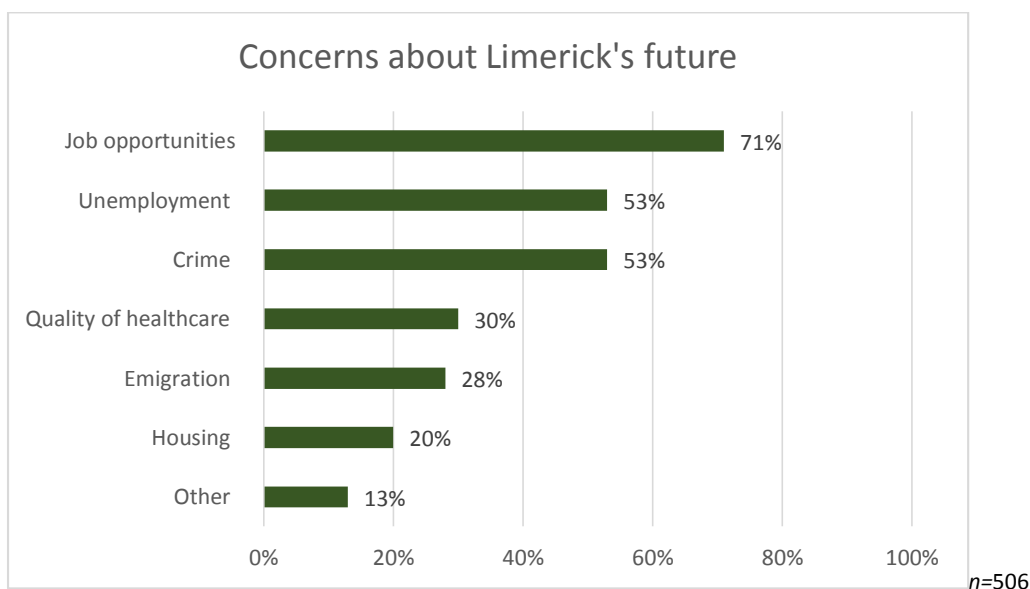
Respondents were asked whether or not they have any concerns about Limerick's future.

Encouragingly, 38 per cent of respondents do not have any concerns; however 28 per cent of respondents have and 34 per cent of respondents having some apprehension about Limerick's future.



**Figure 15: Concerns about Limerick and its future**

Respondents were asked to provide information on what concerns them most about Limerick's future. The key concerns expressed by respondents about Limerick's future centre around job opportunities; crime, and unemployment. This is followed by concerns about quality of healthcare; emigration and housing. Additional commentary from respondents included concerns about Limerick's social issues; spatial and planning issues, and what was referred to as 'Limerick's unfilled potential'.



**Figure 16: Concerns about Limerick's future**

Concerns about Limerick's future	N	%
Job opportunities	134	26.5
Crime	101	20.0

Unemployment	100	19.8
Quality of healthcare	56	11.1
Emigration	53	10.5
Housing	38	7.5
Other	24	4.7
Total	506	100

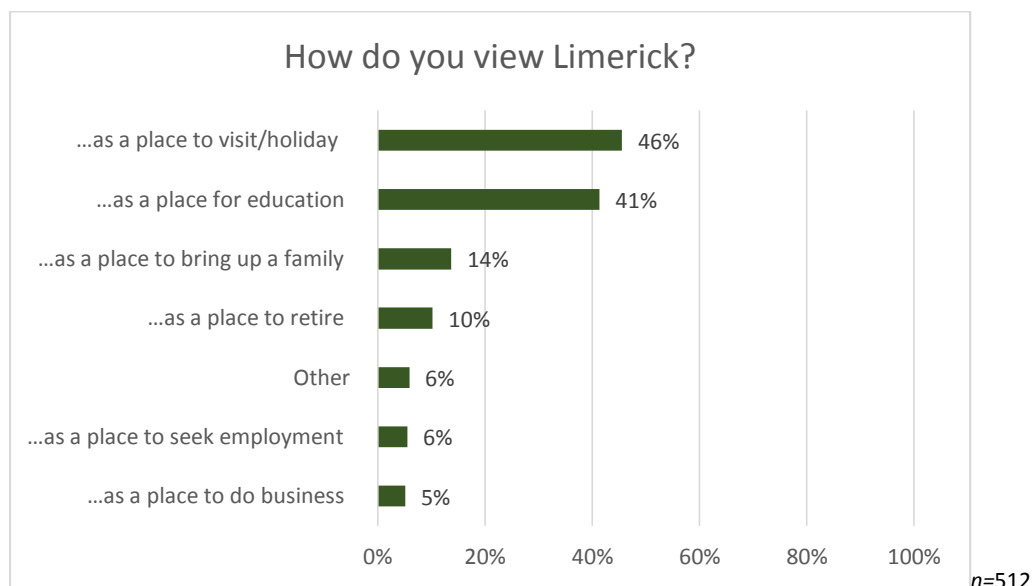
**Table 13: Concerns about Limerick's future**

#### 4.4.5. View of Limerick

Respondents were asked how they viewed Limerick in relation to their engagement with, or perception of, the city and county.

Limerick is primarily viewed by respondents as a place to visit or holiday and as a place for education. In lesser quantities respondents view Limerick as a place to bring up a family; and a place to retire. It is consistent with other question responses that Limerick is not viewed as a place to seek employment or do business.

Additional information provided by respondents about their view of Limerick included considering Limerick as 'home'; the location of family and friends; a place of ancestors; a sporting destination; and a place of culture.



**Figure 17: How do respondents view Limerick**

How do you view Limerick?	N	%
...as a place to visit/holiday	233	45.5
...as a place for education	73	14.3
...as a place to bring up a family	70	13.7
...as a place to retire	52	10.2
...as a place to seek employment	28	5.5

...as a place to do business	26	5.1
Other	30	5.9
Total	512	100

Table 14: How do respondents view Limerick?

#### 4.5. Section 4: (Re)Connecting to Limerick

##### 4.5.1. Communication with Limerick

Respondents were asked whether they would be interested in receiving information from Limerick about Limerick. For those who were interested in receiving information, they were asked what would interest them.

More than half (55%) of all respondents expressed an interest in receiving information from Limerick about Limerick which is very encouraging and 27 per cent are open to the idea of receiving a form of communication.

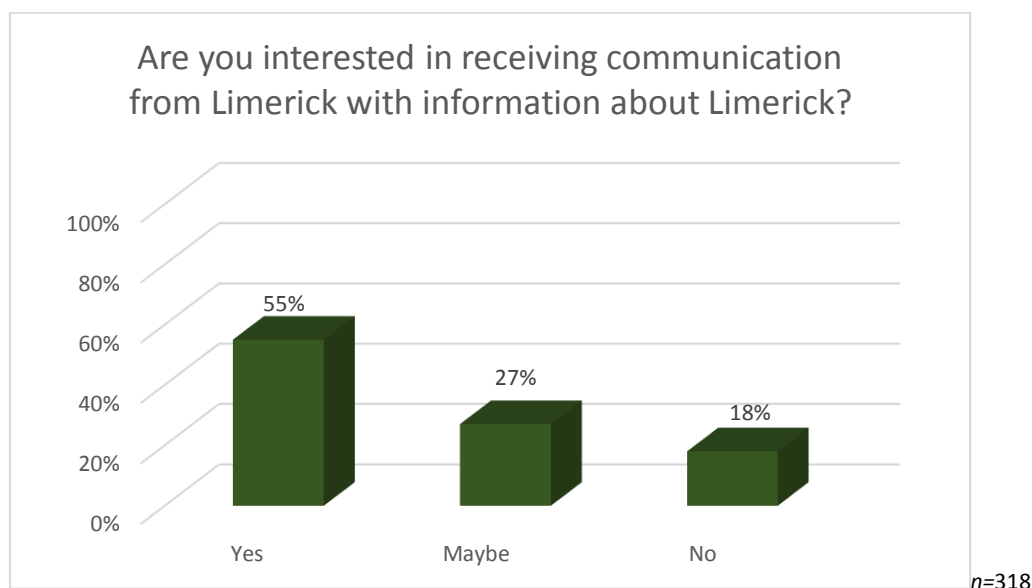


Figure 18: Interest in receiving information about Limerick

Respondents provided guidance on the type of information they would be interested in receiving, categorised in Tables 15 and 16 below.

Primarily, respondents are interested in information pertaining to Limerick's economic activity; broad information about Limerick; events and activities occurring in Limerick, and guidance and advice on genealogy and ancestry.

Information about economic activity included employment opportunities; business and investment opportunities; economic development and property market information. Broad information requested about Limerick included 'any information or news about Limerick'; positive news about

Limerick; political and current affairs; food in Limerick; retirement information; and agriculture. Events and activities occurring in Limerick and genealogy and ancestry connected to Limerick were also important to respondents.

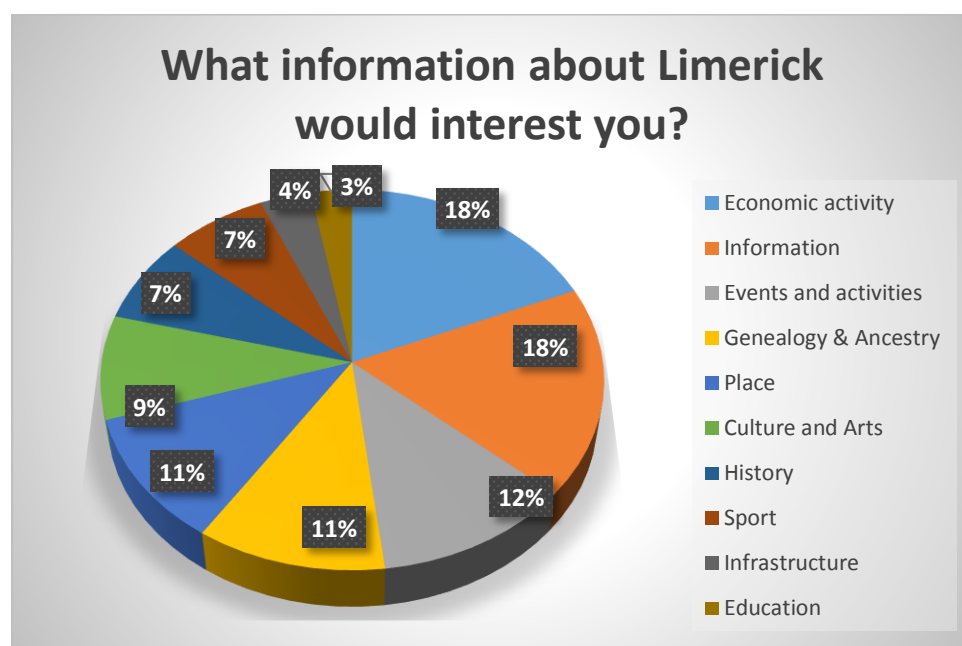


Figure 19: What information about Limerick would interest respondents

What information about Limerick would interest you?	N	%
Economic	63	35.4
Information	60	17.7
Events and activities	40	11.8
Genealogy & Ancestry	38	11.2
Place	37	10.9
Culture and Arts	30	8.8
History	25	7.4
Sport	24	7.1
Infrastructure	12	3.6
Education	10	2.9
Total	339	100

Table 15: What information about Limerick would interest respondents?

What information about Limerick would interest you?	Sub-categories	N	Total
Economic			
	Employment opportunities	24	
	Business and investment opportunities	17	
	Economic development	15	
	Property	7	63
Information	Any information or news about Limerick	37	
	Positive news about Limerick	10	

	Political and current affairs	6	
	Food in Limerick	4	
	Retirement information	2	
	Agriculture	1	60
Events and activities			
	Events and activities	40	40
Genealogy & Ancestry			
	Genealogy & Ancestry	38	38
Place			
	Major changes to the city and county	8	
	Future plans for Limerick	9	
	Tourism	18	
	Showcase Limerick	2	37
Culture and Arts			
	Culture and Arts	30	30
History			
	History of Limerick	25	25
Sport			
	Sport	24	24
Infrastructure			
	Accommodation	6	
	Better services and infrastructure	6	12
Education			
	Educational options	10	10
Total			339

**Table 16: What information about Limerick would interest respondents? Sub-categories**

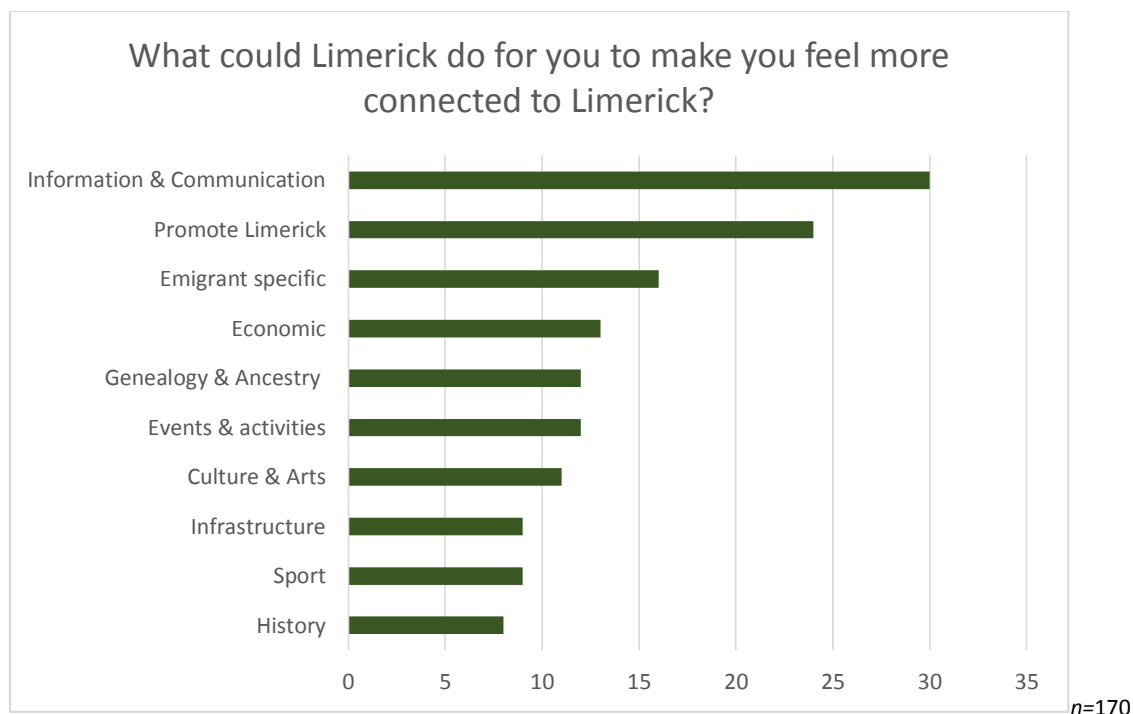
#### 4.5.2. Creating connections

Respondents were asked an open-ended question seeking their opinions on what Limerick could provide to diaspora and affinity diaspora to make them feel more connected to Limerick.

Suggestions are categorised below and a selection of comments from the categories below are provided at *Appendix 1*.

There are ten categories of responses representing 170 contributions about how Limerick could connect to those living outside Limerick. The concentration of interest is:

- Information & Communication
- Promoting Limerick
- Emigrant-specific suggestions
- Economic status
- Genealogy & Ancestry
- Events & activities
- Culture & Arts



**Figure 20: Creating better connections with Limerick**

### **Information and Communication**

Information and communication was a key area which respondents highlighted as a potential connector with Limerick. The information being sought by respondents included general news items from Limerick city and county including headline developments in Limerick; significant events in Limerick's calendar with lead in time to plan trips to Limerick; feature articles about Limerick e.g. historical insights; accessing local newspapers online; and Limerick's sporting updates.

The communication platforms suggested included weekly or monthly emails and newsletters; a forum on which people can discuss what is happening in Limerick; further development of the Global Limerick Network to create a virtual Limerick; the use of email, Facebook and online networking groups which would capture significant news of relevance to an international audience; a new online news feed from Limerick, and the development of online social networks.

Enthusiasm to visit and stay connected with Limerick can be seen in one respondent's comment *"Newsletters and advice about upcoming events preferably 12 months out so that I can organise flights from Australia"*.

### **Promote Limerick**

Another area of particular awareness for respondents was the need to have a greater intensity surrounding the promotion of Limerick, both in Ireland and to the overseas market. There is a sense

that Limerick needs to work harder to promote a positive profile which will entice people to the city and county including incentivising people to visit and return to Limerick.

Suggestions were made about increasing the marketing of all of Limerick's tourist attractions for example, the Milk Market; making greater use of venues such as Thomond Park for large events; having Limerick host large-scale events; the provision of accommodation packages and travel offers to invite people to Limerick while also looking to other Irish cities to learn from their marketing successes. Limerick city centre was noted as a place that needed more work to encourage people to visit and socialise. It was suggested that at times of large sporting events other activities should be co-scheduled in Limerick to improve Limerick's profile. It was also suggested that Limerick decorate more strategically for sporting occasions e.g. flags at the train station greeting visitors and positioning of tourist/cultural ambassadors in Limerick when large events occur.

Findings from the survey noted a need for greater publicity of what occurs in Limerick with particular reference to the success and positivity surrounding the City of Culture 2014. Events such as those organised throughout the City of Culture for example, free gigs in the People's Park gave people reason to return and reconnect with their community. It would be opportunistic to use the positive momentum of the City of Culture to continue reconnecting community links. One respondent's view of connecting was to provide: *"anything to show that there is a sense of vision and dynamism about the place (Limerick)."*

### **Emigrant-specific suggestions**

Some suggestions provided by respondents were emigrant-specific and sought to create connections, networks and links with fellow Limerick people as well as being able to articulate the emigrant experience and supports required while living away and in returning to Limerick.

Respondents sought varying levels of network establishment which included building a Dublin-Limerick community; a London-Limerick network; a diaspora network which could facilitate and assist movement back to Limerick; dedicated exile events and a platform to share experiences with people left behind to try and provide insight into the complexities of disconnection. It was suggested that students should be provided with insight into the successes and pitfalls of international business and living outside Ireland to help offset their permanent departure from Limerick.

Recognition and acceptance of emigrant opinions is important as well as the provision of support for returning emigrants. Connectivity to local communities in Limerick was sought and reaching out to the diaspora through a network such as GLN was supported.



One respondent requested *“A Diaspora network, agency to get people to come back to Limerick for employment housing etc., help with all these areas.”*

### **Economic status**

The economic suggestions provided by respondents ( $n=13$ ) were primarily focused around employment and business opportunities. There is a desire for information about improving and increasing employment opportunities in Limerick; an awareness of employment situations improving for people living in Limerick; availability of business contacts, and knowledge about the cost of living.

### **Events and activities**

Connection to Limerick through events and activities happening in Limerick are important for Limerick people overseas. Updates and information on what is on in Limerick; awareness of activities in Limerick which people can plan visits around; and the establishment of a website to promote this activity.

### **Genealogy & Ancestry**

There is an interest amongst respondents in furthering their understanding and connectivity to their ancestry in Limerick. Assistance is sought on how to source this information, access records and facilitate connecting to family links both past and present.

### **Culture & Arts**

Culture and the arts featured for respondents as a means of connecting to Limerick specifically music, art and the Irish language. The provision of more cultural activities were requested but it was not clear if that was in Limerick or overseas.

### **Sport**

Sport is mentioned by many respondents as a form of connectivity. Specific detail referred to watching GAA and rugby games online and Canada was specifically mentioned as a country where this can be difficult to access.

### **Infrastructure**

A broad range of references were made to Limerick's infrastructure which include;

- Better air routes from Shannon.
- Alerts about activities related to urban regeneration particularly the city centre.
- Discussion about health care.
- Improve city centre parking, encourage more craft markets and improve security image and improve jay-walking.
- Make Limerick more of a family city where you want to go to, instead of going there because you have to see family.

- Play areas for kids.
- Make it safe again.

## History

A number of respondents noted the history of Limerick as an important connector, no further detail on specific elements of Limerick's history were provided.

### 4.5.3. Preferred method of communication to provide information about Limerick

Respondents were asked what communication method they would prefer if they wanted to receive communication from Limerick. Respondents could choose multiple answers.

Email and social media were the dominant methods of communication chosen by respondents; communication formats such as newsletters, e-bulletins and Irish clubs feature much less. Alternative options offered included Google Hangouts / Skype; LinkedIn; online newspapers and word of mouth.

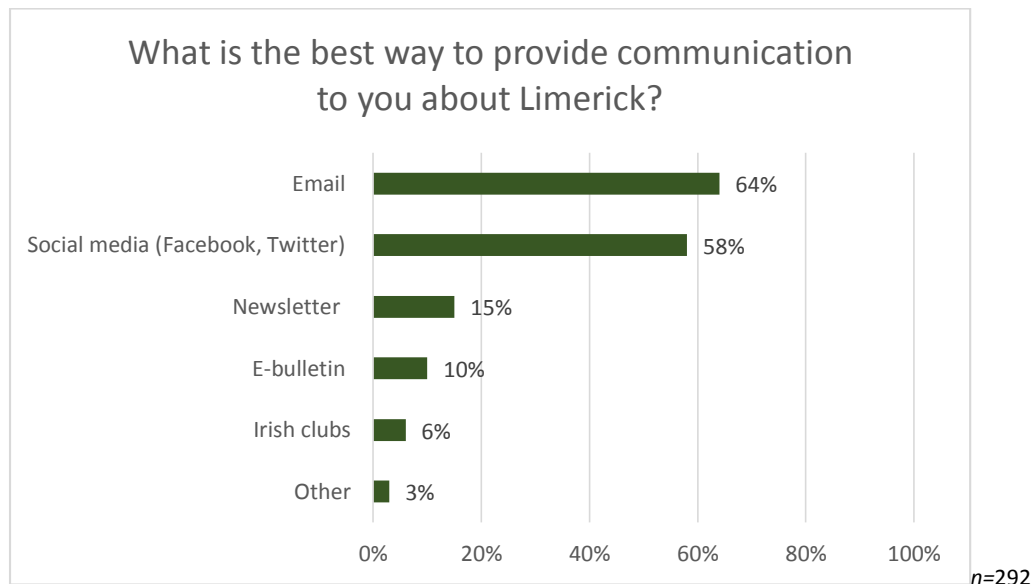


Figure 21: Best way to provide communication about Limerick

### 4.5.4. Suggestions to assist Limerick developing communication with Limerick people living outside Ireland

Suggestions were provided by participants as to how Limerick could develop communication with those living outside Limerick. There is a collection of suggestions across all of the age-groups represented in the survey. A synopsis of suggestions by age category is provided below and a full selection of comments by age category is provided at *Appendix 2*.



**Figure 22: Comments to assist developing communication with Limerick people outside Ireland**

<b>Age group</b>	<b><i>Suggestions to assist Limerick developing communication with Limerick people living outside Ireland</i></b>
18-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sign-up database to receive newsletters/alerts.</li> <li>• Encourage youth exchanges/transnational initiatives.</li> </ul>
25-29 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Diaspora network, agency to get people back to Limerick and help with employment, housing etc.</li> <li>• Different Limerick Chapters - a New York Chapter, Sydney Chapter, London Chapter etc. Chapters could organise events/talks etc. promoting Limerick and creating connections. Meet annually in Limerick for a summit to discuss what each chapter has been doing over the year and plans for the year ahead.</li> <li>• A monthly email update on what's going on which would include sport, entertainment, employment opportunities, good news stories only.</li> <li>• Know where other people from Limerick live elsewhere in the world.</li> <li>• More communication between GAA teams abroad and at home.</li> <li>• Play to Limericks strengths, humour and a strong sporting culture.</li> <li>• Advertising events for the City of Culture has been fantastic on social media, this is the way forward.</li> <li>• Social media updates.</li> <li>• Social media is very efficient, easy access is key to communicating.</li> <li>• PR through social media, online media outlets, etc.</li> </ul>
30-35 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider what's interesting to people who do not live in Limerick and might not for a long time. Many visitors are first generation and are more likely to move and invest there.</li> <li>• Internet marketing, Facebook and Google Ads, Irish Embassy cultural events, Irish company abroad newsletters (Kentz, SEPAM, Murphy etc).</li> <li>• A newsletter (every 2 months) outlining positive aspects of Limerick.</li> </ul>
36-41 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Television ads similar to Discover Northern Ireland; deals to convince families to visit and redevelop the city centre.</li> <li>• Create a contact list for different areas around the world.</li> <li>• A Twitter page for specific areas around Limerick with updates on events.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel proud of the fact that you initiated this survey and simply continue to make efforts to connect with the diaspora. We are proud of where we are from and want to stay connected with our home.</li> <li>• Set up a page on Facebook.</li> <li>• Remind us of all the good things we have experienced there, of our friends, our schools and our childhoods.</li> <li>• There are many social/sporting clubs that have Limerick connections that could be reached out to.</li> <li>• Avoid communicating information for the sake of it; consider recipients and the value of each item shared.</li> </ul>
42-47 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the GLN communicate when something is worth saying the contact with the diaspora will have more resonance e.g. a breakthrough positive story or a call to action/ a request for help a business /entrepreneur / arts etc.,</li> <li>• Creating a strong bond of community; Limerick is a hidden gem with a lot of negativity, we need to show the world how unique Limerick is in Ireland and throughout the world.</li> <li>• Establish Limerick clubs in big UK cities.</li> <li>• Perhaps an online forum where people could connect and arrange meet-ups.</li> <li>• A forum like Generation Emigration in the Irish Times.</li> <li>• Social events, being able to meet up or able to connect through social media and just having that connection to Ireland.</li> <li>• The City of Culture outcomes are magnificent. Are there marketing type materials that can be shared and used to show a perspective of Limerick that is modern, open minded and adventurous?</li> <li>• Website.</li> <li>• The City needs to be given better media coverage.</li> </ul>
48-53 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cement connections between the people of Ireland and the diaspora through personal connections. When you communicate regularly with a real, living person, you automatically feel more connected to the whole area, it becomes more real in your mind and heart. Online forums and bulletin boards where people could make friends.</li> <li>• Options for Limerick people living outside of Ireland to stay in touch i.e. an Irish Magazine or an Irish site where Limerick people can connect to.</li> <li>• A robust website with links based on interests and connecting generations.</li> <li>• Would be nice to see a mini-expose on how those of us who left could share our success and experiences.</li> <li>• Hesitation to nominate as Irish as we are aware we are not actually Irish but do acknowledge as having Irish heritage. It would be nice to know that (or if) the Irish in Ireland welcome us in our attempts to celebrate our heritage.</li> </ul>
54-59 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Channelling the local media to provide a once a week snapshot of major local news stories and issues in the city.</li> <li>• Maybe a quarterly newsletter for people abroad keeping them updated about events, changes, news etc.</li> <li>• It would be nice to share stories about our lives, why we left, how often we go back, how much it (Limerick) has changed over the years.</li> <li>• Provide information about parishes and townlands.</li> <li>• Advertising and a magazine that could be bought abroad could be called Limerick Abroad or Limerick people.</li> </ul>
60-65 years	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Limerick people living away saw that the city was working constructively to solve some of its many social and economic issues/problems it could help significantly, and start making us exiles proud to be connected with the place.</li> <li>• Be bold, imaginative and creative in what you do. Do not just follow and repeat what others do.</li> <li>• More historical records online.</li> <li>• Develop Limerick social media sites.</li> <li>• Encourage more use of Shannon Airport.</li> <li>• A type of printed newsletter for all of Limerick, both City &amp; County.</li> </ul>
65+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genealogy is very popular hobby - USE it to promote travel.</li> <li>• Newsletters celebrating local people, families.</li> <li>• Use social media, Facebook, etc.</li> <li>• Produce a daily comment on activities happening.</li> </ul>

Table 17: Suggestions to assist Limerick developing communication with Limerick people living outside Ireland

## 5. Key messages and conclusions of the scoping study

### 5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this scoping study was to examine relevant literature relating to diasporas, their composition and how connection to diasporas has been occurring in Ireland and in other countries. The study also sought to acquire information from the Limerick diaspora about their identity, connection and potential for communication with Limerick. An online survey was distributed through a targeted approach to people who identify with Limerick. The countries of residence represented by respondents was worldwide, of those that could be identified they include ; Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

### 5.2. Who responded to this survey?

More women (56%) than men (44%) responded to this survey and interestingly Ireland has higher rates of recent female emigration when compared against international emigrations trends.

The age group answering the Global Limerick Network (GLN) survey is slightly older than the documented profile of emigrants leaving Ireland which shows that 70 per cent of recent emigrants are in their 20s (Glynn *et al.*, 2013). The online survey reported 56 per cent of respondents between 36-59 years and 24 per cent between 25-35 years. This older demographic may be explained by the survey cohort comprising of recent and longer-term emigrants, people with affinity to Limerick as well as those with connections to Limerick through ancestry.

Education levels were high amongst respondents, 74 per cent hold a third level education and this trend correlates with findings amongst recent Irish emigrants monitored through the Emigre study (Glynn *et al.*, 2013).

A high proportion of respondents have children (58%) which is likely to have impact on decision-making about where to settle, live and raise a family. Starting a family outside Ireland may influence the desire to be closer and/ or feel connected to family and culture.

### 5.3. How connected are the Limerick diaspora to Limerick?

Respondents to the survey were evenly balanced in their connection to the county (51%) and city of Limerick (49%), providing an even urban and rural representation.

A high proportion of respondents have been living outside Limerick for over ten years (36%); 33 per cent have a connection to but have never lived in Limerick; and 26 per cent left Limerick in the last 1-

10 years. The high level of connectivity to Limerick without ever living in Limerick would indicate a high level of affinity; these respondents consider Limerick a place of significant connection for them. The quarter of respondents who departed Limerick in the last 1-10 years aligns with national trends and the economic recession experienced in Ireland.

A high proportion of respondents visited Limerick in the last year (55%) and a further 22 per cent visited in the last 1-5 years. These are significant figures as 77 per cent of respondents are engaging with and visiting the city and county as members of the Limerick diaspora or affinity diaspora showing a motivation to visit Limerick.

Respondents' dominant connections to Limerick are identifying as a Limerick-person, and having family living in Limerick or family who are from Limerick. It is noteworthy that the strength of connectivity is people, primarily family and ancestry.

The reasons why people left Limerick correlate with those found at the national level (Glynn *et al.*, 2013); to seek better employment opportunities, and travel and adventure. In correlation with reasons for departure, respondents have reported that they are attracted to where they are residing due to employment opportunities (37%) and a better standard of living (16%).

#### 5.4. How do the Limerick diaspora view their strength of connectivity to Limerick?

The majority of respondents consider their connection to Limerick as being strong or very strong (54%) and a further 22 per cent view their connection as neither weak nor strong, a neutral pool who may consider strengthening their connection to Limerick.

The dominant reasons for strength of connection to Limerick is due to 'people'; family, extended family, friends, ancestry and genealogy. Reasons for weak connections to Limerick include Limerick's economic status; lack of connection to people in Limerick and the physical distance respondents are from Limerick. It is clear that respondents' connection to 'people', in whatever composition, strongly define their identification and connection to Limerick. For those whose connections are weaker and not focused around people, there is scope to create other channels to reconnect with Limerick.

Those living away from Limerick hold some concerns about Limerick's future focusing on job opportunities; crime; and unemployment which align with the recent economic recession and gradual recovery that Ireland is experiencing. Limerick is viewed by respondents as a place they would visit or holiday, and as a place of education but not necessarily one to work and live at present.

### 5.5. How can GLN support the Limerick diaspora?

Over half (55%) of all respondents expressed an interest in receiving information from Limerick about Limerick, and a further 27 per cent are open to receiving a form of communication. This indicates there is a significant cohort of people enthusiastic about engaging with and receiving communication from Limerick.

Respondents provided a wide range of suggestions about information they would prefer to receive from Limerick. The top requests included information about Limerick's economic activity; broad information about Limerick; events and activities occurring in Limerick, guidance and advice on genealogy and ancestry; and information about Limerick's progress. Information was also sought about Limerick's economic activity specifically employment opportunities; business and investment opportunities; economic development and property market information. Broad information was requested about Limerick which would include 'any information or news about Limerick'; positive news about Limerick; political and current affairs; food in Limerick; retirement information; and agriculture. Information about events and activities occurring in Limerick was sought as well as accessibility to genealogy and ancestry connections. Information about Limerick's future and public plans for progress is also of interest, specifically major changes to the city and county; future plans for Limerick; tourism and showcasing Limerick.

Email and social media are the preferred methods of communication as noted by respondents.

The top three suggestions provided by respondents to make them feel more connected to Limerick are:

#### ***Information and Communication***

Information and communication was a key area highlighted as a potential connector with Limerick. The information being sought by respondents included general news items from Limerick city and county including headline developments in Limerick; significant events in Limerick's calendar with lead in time to plan trips to Limerick; feature articles about Limerick, for example historical insights; accessing local newspapers online; and Limerick's sporting updates.

The communication platforms suggested included weekly or monthly emails and newsletters; a forum on which people can discuss what is happening in Limerick; further development of the Global Limerick Network in creating a virtual Limerick; the use of email, Facebook and online networking groups which would capture relevant news to an international audience; a new online newsfeed from Limerick, and the development of online social networks.



Enthusiasm to visit and stay connected with Limerick can be seen in these respondents' comments:

*"Newsletters and advice about upcoming events preferably 12 months out so that I can organise flights from Australia."*

*"Well the GLN would be a great thing, it would get people connected who maybe feel disconnected because they are living away from home. Like a virtual Limerick. That can only be good....the sooner the better..."*

*"Online networking groups, social media outreach, roundup of internationally interesting local news (i.e. not the most detailed local happenings, but more big-picture events / news that would impact knowledge & thinking of Limerick when living outside the country)."*

### **Promote Limerick**

Another area of particular awareness for respondents is the need to have greater intensity surrounding the promotion of Limerick, both in Ireland and to the overseas market. There is a sense that Limerick needs to work harder to promote a positive profile which will entice people to the city and county including incentivising people to visit and return to Limerick.

*"Create more positive, front-foot communication to build Limerick's image. Limerick county is underplayed for its history, heritage, tourism opportunities; while Limerick city which has evolved so much in last 10-20 years doesn't broadcast enough positive messages to overcome the negative ones about crime, drugs and gangs."*

Suggestions were made about increasing the marketing of all of Limerick's tourist attractions for example, the Milk Market; making greater use of venues such as Thomond Park for large events; having Limerick host large-scale events; the provision of accommodation packages and travel offers to invite people to Limerick while also looking to other Irish cities to learn from their marketing successes. Limerick city centre was noted as a place that needed more work to encourage people to visit and socialise. It was suggested that at times of large sporting events other activities should be co-scheduled in Limerick to improve Limerick's profile. Examples included decorating Limerick more strategically for sporting occasions, flags at the train station greeting visitors and positioning tourist/cultural ambassadors in Limerick when large events occur.

Findings from the survey noted a need for greater publicity of what occurs in Limerick with particular reference to the success and positivity surrounding the City of Culture 2014. Events such as those organised throughout the City of Culture for example, free gigs in the People's Park gave people reason to return and reconnect with their community.

*"More events like those developed during the city of culture- weekend events, free gigs and training in the People's Park. Gives people a reason to return and reconnect with the local community."*

It would be opportunistic to use the positive momentum of the City of Culture to continue reconnecting community links. One respondent's view of connecting was to provide:

*“anything to show that there is a sense of vision and dynamism about the place (Limerick).”*

### **Emigrant-specific suggestions**

Some suggestions provided by respondents were emigrant-specific and sought to create connections, networks and links with fellow Limerick people as well as being able to articulate the emigrant experience and supports required while living away and in returning to Limerick.

*“A positive way of remaining connected would be to have a platform for those abroad to share their experiences with those they've left behind. It is often hard to explain the experiences you've faced and survived after leaving home. The issues around disconnection are complex and have fundamental impacts on Irish people abroad in many and varied ways. Nonetheless, home / Ireland / Limerick is always on my mind and still informs much of my day-to-day and identity but within a very different framework. Any cultural exchanges or opportunities to remain linked would be hugely welcome as would the potential to return and contribute skills and experience - if only temporarily (a skills and cultural cross-exchange / reconnection).”*

Respondents sought varying levels of network establishment which included building a Dublin-Limerick community; a London-Limerick network; a diaspora network which could facilitate and assist movement back to Limerick; dedicated exile events and a platform to share experiences with people left behind to try and provide insight into the complexities of disconnection. It was suggested that students should be provided with insight into the successes and pitfalls of international business and living outside Ireland to help offset their permanent departure from Limerick.

Recognition and acceptance of emigrant opinions is important as well as the provision of support for returning emigrants. Connectivity to local communities in Limerick was sought and reaching out to the diaspora through a network such as GLN was supported.

One respondent requested:

*“A Diaspora network, agency to get people to come back to Limerick for employment housing etc., help with all these areas.”*

The remainder of the suggestions provided by respondents which focus on economic status; events and activities; genealogy and ancestry; culture and arts; sport; infrastructure; and history are documented in the findings section.

## 5.6. Concluding comments

The range of information provided through this scoping study has presented an insight into the understanding and mechanics of a diaspora; diaspora approaches that are in use around the world and at a regional level; primary research about how the Limerick diaspora and affinity diaspora view their relationship with Limerick and how they would be willing to see that develop.

This scoping study sought to ascertain whether an appetite for connection with Limerick existed amongst its diaspora and affinity diaspora. It is very evident from survey findings that the Limerick diaspora have a desire to connect, engage and communicate with Limerick across multiple sectors. Initial connection would appear to be best placed in a technological medium. It is evident from the survey findings that it would be worthwhile and opportune to proceed in this space. The positive survey markers for engagement with the Limerick diaspora and affinity diaspora is an encouraging and exciting platform for the Global Limerick Network Working Group to embark on their planning.

Future work of the Global Limerick Network should consider that diaspora engagement has worked most effectively in reciprocal, engagement-based approaches, and with existing diaspora entities to build-on and expand. Respect of diasporas is central to the development of any and all layers of communication. Connection to people and connection to community is an emotive space and the development or extension of communities should recognise the individual and collective journey. In that context, and given that effective relationship-building takes time, the process of engagement with the Irish diaspora needs to have a long-term vision.

The contents of this report presents a roadmap for Limerick to develop a strategic plan to engage with Limerick's diaspora and affinity diaspora. Developing a plan in Limerick, for Limerick's diaspora and affinity diaspora, has the potential to develop and collaborate across multiple layers of social, cultural and economic engagement. This approach can be pursued secure in the knowledge that there is an appetite amongst members of the Limerick diaspora and affinity diaspora to develop and extend relationships with Limerick.

## References

Agunias, D.R and K. Newland (2012) *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries*, International Organization for Migration (IOM): Washington and Migration Policy Institute (MPI): Geneva.

Aikins, K and M. Russell (2013) *Diaspora Capital: Why Diaspora Matters for Policy and Practice*, *Migration, Policy, Practice* Vol. 3 Issue 4: 26-30: IOM.

Aikins, K and N. White (2011) *Global Diaspora Strategies Toolkit*, Diaspora Matters: Dublin  
<http://diasporamatters.com/publications-resources-2/>

Ancien, D, M. Boyle and R. Kitchin (2009) *Exploring Diaspora Strategies: An International Comparison*, Workshop report, NUI Maynooth: Department of Foreign Affairs and the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions.

Ben-Rafael, E (2013) *Diaspora*, *Current Sociology* Vol. 61: 842-861, UK: Sage Publications.

Boyle, M and R. Kitchen (2008) *Towards an Irish Diaspora Strategy: A Position Paper*, National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA): NUI Maynooth.

Brinkerhoff, J (2009) *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clarke, L (2010) An examination of the mental health of Irish migrants to England using a concept of Diaspora, *Advances in Mental Health* Vol. 9: 231–242: eContent Management Pty Ltd.

Cohen, R (2008) *Global Diasporas: An introduction 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, Taylor and Francis e-Library.

Department of Foreign Affairs (2002) *Ireland and the Irish Abroad: Report of the Task Force on Policy Regarding Emigrants*, Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs.

ConnectIreland (2014) Provided by ConnectIreland, unpublished.

Department of Foreign Affairs (2009) *Global Economic Forum 18-20 September 2009*, Dublin: Irish Government.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2011) *The Report of the SECOND GLOBAL IRISH ECONOMIC FORUM Dublin Castle, 7- 8 October, 2011*, Dublin: Irish Government.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2013) *Report of the THIRD GLOBAL IRISH ECONOMIC FORUM Dublin Castle, 4 – 5 October, 2013*, Dublin: Irish Government.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2014) *Review of Ireland's Engagement with the Diaspora Consultation Paper* 18 March 2014 <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/the-irish-abroad/diaspora-policy-review/>.

Filipovic, J, S. Devjak and B. FerFila (2012) *Diaspora Engagement Strategies and Policies*, *Administration* Vol. X Issue 2: 7-26. University of Belgrade, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Serbia.

Gamlen, A, M. Cummings, P.M. Vaaler and L. Rossouw (2013) *Explaining the Rise of Diaspora Institutions*, International Migrant Institute, Working Papers 78: University of Oxford.

Gamlen, A (2012) Creating and destroying diaspora strategies: New Zealand's emigration policies re-examined, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* Vol. 38: 238–253: Royal Geographical Society.

Gamlen, A (2006) *Diaspora Engagement Policies: What are they, and what kinds of states use them?* Centre on Migration, Policy and Society: Working Paper No. 32, University of Oxford.

Glynn, I, T. Kelly and P. MacEinri (2013) *Irish Emigration in an Age of Austerity*, UCC: The Irish Research Council.

Kennedy, L, M. Lyes and M. Russell (2014) *Supporting the Next Generation of the Irish Diaspora*, Clinton Institute, UCD: University College Dublin and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Kunz, R (2012) The Discovery of the Diaspora, *International Political Sociology* Vol. 6 Issue 1: 103-107 March 2012, International Studies Association.

Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School (2011) *Annex 2 Report of Working Group Discussions*, Global Economic Forum 2011, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Dublin.

Robinson, M (1994) from 'The inaugural speech' in Donovan K, Jeffares A N and Kennelly B (eds) *Ireland's women: writings past and present*: London.

Robinson M 1995 'Cherishing the Irish diaspora' *Address to the houses of the Oireachtas* by Mary Robinson on a matter of public importance, 2 February 1995.

Van Hear, Nicholas (1998) *New diasporas: the mass exodus, dispersal and regrouping of migrant communities*, London: UCL Press.

## Appendix 1

Note: The following comments are verbatim participant feedback and have not been altered.

<b>Age group</b>	<b><i>Suggestions to assist Limerick developing communication with Limerick people living outside Ireland</i></b>
18-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sign-up database to receive newsletters/alerts.</li> <li>• Encourage youth exchanges/trans-national initiatives.</li> </ul>
25-29 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Diaspora network, agency to get people back to Limerick and help with employment, housing etc.</li> <li>• Different Limerick Chapters - a New York Chapter, Sydney Chapter, London Chapter etc. Chapters could organise events/talks etc. promoting Limerick and creating connections. Meet annually in Limerick for a summit to discuss what each chapter has been doing over the year and plans for the year ahead.</li> <li>• A monthly email update on what's going on which would include sport, entertainment, employment opportunities, good news stories only.</li> <li>• Know where other people from Limerick live elsewhere in the world.</li> <li>• More communication between GAA teams abroad and at home.</li> <li>• Play to Limericks strengths, humour and a strong sporting culture.</li> <li>• Advertising events for the City of Culture has been fantastic on social media, this is the way forward.</li> <li>• Social media updates.</li> <li>• Social media is very efficient, easy access is key to communicating.</li> <li>• PR through social media, online media outlets, etc.</li> </ul>
30-35 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider what's interesting to people who don't live in Limerick and might not for a long time. Many visitors are first generation and are more likely to move and invest there.</li> <li>• Internet marketing, Facebook and Google Ads, Irish Embassy cultural events, Irish company abroad newsletters (Kentz, SEPAM, Murphy etc).</li> <li>• A newsletter (every 2 months) outlining positive aspects of Limerick.</li> </ul>
36-41 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Television ads similar to Discover Northern Ireland; deals to convince families to visit and redevelop the city centre.</li> <li>• Create a contact list for different areas around the world.</li> <li>• A twitter page for specific areas around Limerick with updates on events.</li> <li>• Feel proud of the fact that you initiated this survey and simply continue to make efforts to connect with the diaspora. We are proud of where we are from and want to stay connected with our home.</li> <li>• Set up a page on Facebook.</li> <li>• Remind us of all the good things we have experienced there, of our friends, our schools and our childhoods.</li> <li>• There are many social/sporting clubs that have Limerick connections that could be reached out to.</li> <li>• Avoid communicating information for the sake of it; consider recipients and the value of each item shared.</li> </ul>
42-47 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the GLN communicate when something is worth saying the contact with the diaspora will have more resonance e.g. a breakthrough positive story or a call to action/ a request for help a business /entrepreneur / arts etc.,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a strong bond of community; Limerick is a hidden gem with a lot of negativity, we need to show the world how unique Limerick is in Ireland and throughout the world.</li> <li>• Establish Limerick clubs in big UK cities.</li> <li>• Perhaps an online forum where people could connect and arrange meet-ups.</li> <li>• A forum like Generation Emigration in the Irish Times.</li> <li>• Social events, being able to meet up or able to connect through social media and just having that connection to Ireland.</li> <li>• The City of Culture outcomes are magnificent. Are there marketing type materials that can be shared and used to show a perspective of Limerick that is modern, open minded and adventurous?</li> <li>• Website.</li> <li>• The City needs to be given better media coverage.</li> </ul>
48-53 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cement connections between the people of Ireland and the diaspora through personal connections. When you communicate regularly with a real, living person, you automatically feel more connected to the whole area, it becomes more real in your mind and heart. Online forums and bulletin boards where people could make friends.</li> <li>• Options for Limerick people living outside of Ireland to stay in touch i.e. an Irish Magazine or an Irish site where Limerick people can connect to.</li> <li>• A robust website with links based on interests and connecting generations.</li> <li>• Would be nice to see a mini-expose on how those of us who left could share our success and experiences.</li> <li>• Hesitation to nominate as Irish as we are aware we are not actually Irish but do acknowledge as having Irish heritage. It would be nice to know that (or if) the Irish in Ireland welcome us in our attempts to celebrate our heritage.</li> </ul>
54-59 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Channelling the local media to provide a once a week snapshot of major local news stories and issues in the city.</li> <li>• Maybe a quarterly newsletter for people abroad keeping them updated about events, changes, news etc.</li> <li>• It would be nice to share stories about our lives, why we left, how often we go back, how much it (Limerick) has changed over the years.</li> <li>• Provide information about parishes and townlands.</li> <li>• Advertising and a magazine that could be bought abroad could be called Limerick Abroad or Limerick people.</li> </ul>
60-65 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Limerick people living away saw that the city was working constructively to solve some of its many social and economic issues/problems it could help significantly, and start making us exiles proud to be connected with the place.</li> <li>• Be bold, imaginative and creative in what you do. Don't just follow and repeat what others do.</li> <li>• More historical records online.</li> <li>• Develop Limerick social media sites.</li> <li>• Encourage more use of Shannon Airport.</li> <li>• A type of printed newsletter for all of Limerick, both City &amp; County.</li> </ul>
65+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genealogy is very popular hobby - USE it to promote travel.</li> <li>• Newsletters celebrating local people, families.</li> <li>• Use social media, Facebook, etc.</li> <li>• Produce a daily comment on activities happening.</li> </ul>



## Appendix 2

**Note:** The following comments are verbatim participant feedback and have not been altered.

<b>Age group</b>	<b><i>Suggestions to assist Limerick developing communication with Limerick people living outside Ireland.</i></b> <small><b>Note</b> These comments are provided verbatim from survey respondents and have not been edited for spelling, grammar or accuracy.</small>
18-24 years	A sign up database to receive newsletters/alerts.
	Employ people of different cultures. Encourage youth exchanges/trans-national initiatives (Erasmus+ projects)
25-29 years	Social media updates
	It would be nice to know where other people from Limerick live elsewhere in the world. This would be a factor that I would take into consideration if I was moving to a particular place. Also more communication between GAA teams abroad and at home would be nice.
	Play to limericks strengths, good sense of humour and strong sporting culture.
	A Diaspora network, agency to get people to come back to Limerick for employment housing etc, help with all these areas.
	Setting up different Limerick Chapters" around the globe- a New York Chapter, Sydney Chapter, London Chapter and so on. These groups could then organise events/talks etc in their chapter cities throughout the year, promoting Limerick and creating connections. The idea would be that people from each chapter would meet annually in Limerick for a yearly summit to discuss what each chapter has been up to and plans for the year ahead."
	The advertising for events for the city of culture has been fantastic on social media. I believe this is the way forward. Keeping up to date is easy with twitter (local newspapers tweeting news)
	Social Media is very efficient. Easy access is key. I'm sure many of us would love to hear about new developments in city and county.
	PR through social media, online media outlets, etc. (for example, I am living in the US and found this initiative through a Facebook post from Irish Central)
	A social media page would assist with developing communication. Additionally a monthly email update on whats going on which would include sport , entertainment, employment opportunities, good news stories only.
30-35 years	Consider what's interesting to people who don't live there and might not for a long time. Don't go all Tourism Ireland with green-tinted glasses looking for money all the time, or base decisions on perceptions of 'Americans' or 'Europeans' coming over. Many visitors, are 1st gen too, and they are more likely to actually move & invest there!
	Internet marketing, Facebook and Google Ads, Irish Embassy cultural events, Irish company abroad news letters (Kentz, SEPAM, Murphy etc). People with clip boards in Shannon airport would have easy pickings...
	To promote the renovations and to show the amazing scenery county Limerick and city both have to offer
	Targeted and tailored communication
	A newsletter every 2 months outlining positive aspects of Limerick.
	Social media, arts, culture
36-41 years	Family links and friends
	Having a greater presence on the internet would be fine, but it's all really good as it is. Good job, and keep it going.

	Email and social media are the easiest means to stay up to date with County Limerick
	Television Ads try and mimic discover NI and get deals and try and convince families to visit and re develop the city centre a real disgrace for the 3 biggest city in Ireland
	Please feel proud of the fact that you initiated this survey and simply continue to make efforts to connect with the diaspora. We are proud of where we are from and want to stay connected with our home.
	Ask people to forward this survey to their friends/ relations who are no longer living in Limerick.
	Set up a page on Facebook
	Remind us of all the good things we have experienced there, of our friends, our schools and our childhoods.
	connect with Facebook or any other form of social media
	Make communication channels as easy as possible to access and clutter free, avoid communicating information for the sake of it. Consider recipients and value of each item shared.
	use of social media, on line newspapers of interest
	We at Limerick City Community Radio would love to assist in all communications you are trying to promote, we are your city, your station, your voice
	A twitter page for specific areas around Limerick with updates on events.
	There are many social/sporting clubs that have Limerick connections that could be reached out to
	Create a contact list for different areas around the world.
	Build restaurant / city culture / continue to embrace the river. Drive and incentivise people to live in the city centre.
	Specific web forum (not just social media, which can become far too spammy, i.e. too many tweets).
42-47 years	A forum like generation emigration in Irish Times
	A Facebook page would be great. Perhaps an online forum where people could connect and arrange meet ups.
	Please use a neutral form for this Not Facebook, sure links to facebook are ok but not everyone wants to be on there. I find it intrusive....
	Establish Limerick clubs in big UK cities
	Social media is probably the way to go
	Social events, being able to meet up or able to connect through social media and just having that connection to Ireland.
	Great idea to connect people!
	Website
	Connecting through culture and sport is always popular
	News from home is always good. However, news and information to draw people back to Limerick would I think be really great.
	The city of culture outcomes are magnificent. Are there marketing type materials - images and such, that can be shared and used to show a perspective of Limerick that is modern, open minded and adventurous. Things for people to be proud of.
	The world we live in, is noisy to say the least via multiple social media platforms & if the GLN do not constantly interrupt via email with a million links and instead interrupt when it has something worth saying. The contact with the diaspora will have more resonance. We don't need to know about the opening of an envelope

	but we do need to know when there is a breakthrough positive story or a call to action/ a request for help a business /entrepreneur / arts etc.,
	An initiative starts this but a specific campaign targeted for Limerick county and city?
	Non-judgement and open forums to share experiences would be great.
	By creating a strong bond of community. Limerick is a hidden gem with a lot of negativity. We need to show the world how unique Limerick is in Ireland and throughout the world
	Posts on Facebook because my generation are a bunch of facebook fanatics. Lol!!!
	Online blog with rss feeds. Website where members can go and talk openly without being censored.
	A social media platform such as a Facebook group
	Would love to visit Ireland!
	Limerick needs to become more idealistic . Above all it needs leaders. Leaders foster communication. Good PR skills help. Don't leave it to chance. Get in the professionals.
	The City needs to be given better media coverage, we always hear of the bad things that happen in Limerick and never all the good that is being done.
	better communication about it as a tourist destination the city of culture was a fiasco and it didn't show limerick in a good light
	information about Limerick people living abroad and where they might meet up
	Keep in touch
48-53 years	Provide options or means for Limerick people living outside of Ireland to stay in touch ie. Irish Magazine or an Irish site where Limerick people can connect to. Perhaps doing something like The Gathering in 2013 but for Limerick only.
	A robust website with links based on interests and connecting generations. For example, I was resident in the 1970's and part of the great diaspora of the early to mid 1980's.
	good online links
	Regular Email stories
	Ask me Later
	Just promoting ur website thru facebook & twitter.
	I think the best ways to cement connections between the people of Ireland and the dispora is through personal connections between people. When you actually communicate regularly with a real, living person, you automatically feel more connected to the whole area -- it becomes more real" in your mind and heart. It may sound old fashioned, but maybe something as simple as modern versions of pen pals. I would suggest online forums and bulletin boards where peoele could make friends. This would be very popular with people in the US, I believe. Many people in the US are desperate to make a solid connection with the home of their ancestors."
	It really depends on what you want to achieve from that communications. If it's to repatriate then greater drives and incentives to international businesses. If it's just a news update then email and social media. Would be nice to see a mini expose on how those of us who left could share our success and experienced with the sh look leavers if today.
	a buddy who can access family history records in Limerick
	social media updates

	To be honest a lot of us would hesitate to nominate as Irish (we are a little different to the US in that way) as we are aware we are not actually Irish but do acknowledge as Irish heritage if asked or on St Pats Day (lol). I guess we don't want to offend the real Irish. It would be nice to know that (or if) the Irish in Ireland welcome us in our attempts to celebrate our heritage.
	Online forum with news and general interest
54-59 years	More people from Limerick to make friends with
	google ads and facebook ads to people with other Irish connections in their facebook likes
	Well done on this - we need it!
	Channelling the local media to provide a once a week snapshot of major local news stories and issues in the city.
	Maybe a quarterly newsletter for people abroad keeping them updated about events, changes, news etc
	This website is a good start.
	News of what is going on in the City, and it's history.
	As I say, I am not a Limerick person. I am from Clare and live in England. Most of us are in our fifties now and starting to feel quite isolated. For example there is no Irish club where I live, so not sure how to meet up with other Irish people.
	It would be nice to share stories about our lives, why we left, how often we go back, how much it has changed over the years.
	not sure at the moment
	I love websites like Ireland reaching out, all the counties and history of the counties.
	maybe provide information about parishes and townlands
	Advertising the great city via social media.
	I get it through the papers
	Advertising and a mag that could be bought abroad could be called Limerick Abroad or Limerick people.
	Just do it, Limerick has a bad rap and we need to change that. Thanks
60-65 years	More historical records online
	I am not from Limerick, and do not know much about it. From the videos and pictures I have seen, I know it is a beautiful place and would love to visit it. Maybe there could be more travel contests for a trip there for a long visit. Time to explore the beauty, and history.
	More updates on what is going on
	Develop Limerick Social Media sites
	Encourage more use of Shannon Airport. Continue to speak and write positively about Limerick
	Be bold, imaginative and creative in what you do. Don't just follow and repeat what others do. Best of luck!
	Have a bulletin board where people can post their connection to Limerick.
	A type of printed News Letter for all of Limerick, both City & County
	Provide accurate information on news and current events
	all of the above
	Probably too many to list here, but I believe that if limerick people living away saw that the city was working constructively to solve some of its many social and

	economic issues/problems it could help significantly, and start making us exiles proud to be connected with the place.
65+ years	Who is the point of contact?
	Genealogy is very popular hobby - USE it to promote travel
	We have good contact through Facebook but a regular newsletter and 'hands across the sea' to help with far flung families.
	Listing of Limerick people living near my current address
	The Limerick Association in NYC should open up the Association to make it easier and inviting for other Limerick people to join and be involved.
	regular info & updates of what's going on
	Use social media, facebook, etc.
	would possibly visit in the future and seek relatives
	Produce a daily comment on activities happening,
	Newsletters celebrating local people, families,
	Facebook is useful and Ancestry.com

## Appendix 3

### **Global Limerick Network (GLN) Working Group Membership**

- Dr. Pat Daly (Chairman), Director Services, Economic Development & Planning, Limerick City & Co Council.
- Tim O'Connor, Chairman of the Advisory Board to the Gathering Ireland 2013, and Limerick City of Culture Board member.
- Lavinia Duggan, VHI.
- John King, CEO, Irish Ancestry Research Centre.
- Dr. Fergal Barry, Limerick Institute of Technology.
- Amanda Slattery, Ballyhoura Development.
- Dr. Eileen Humphreys, University of Limerick.
- Dr. Geraldine Brosnan, Mary Immaculate College.
- Paul Gleeson, Turas Consulting.
- Raymond Sexton, Tangible Ireland.
- Pat Carroll, Touch Communications.
- Paul Ryan, PAR Solutions.
- Dave O'Hora, Southern Advertising.
- Josephine Cotter Coughlan, Director, of Community, Arts, Culture and Emergency. Services Limerick City & Co Council.
- Stephen O'Byrnes, MCK Communications.