

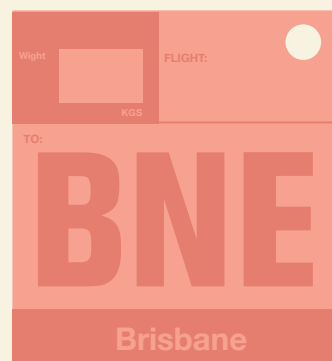
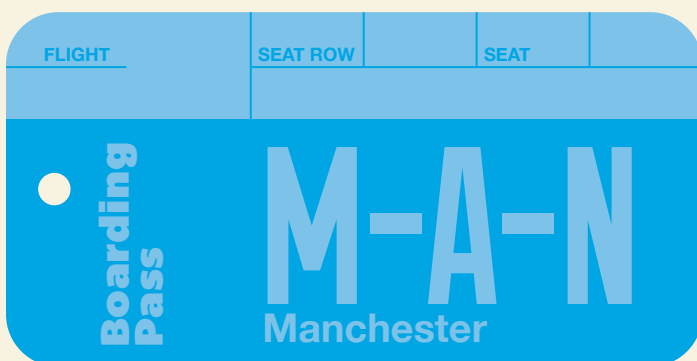
HOME

IS WHERE THE

HEART



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REPORT ON CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

A CONFERENCE ON RETURN MIGRATION FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for national voluntary youth work organisations in Ireland. It represents and supports the interests of voluntary youth organisations and uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

WWW.YOUTH.IE

Author: **Marie-Claire McAleer**

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

Disclaimer: This report outlines the views expressed during the conference, and does not necessarily reflect the views of NYCI or the conference sponsors, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS...

A CONFERENCE ON RETURN MIGRATION FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

REPORT OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

WRITTEN AND EDITED BY
MARIE-CLAIRE MCALEER

Dublin Castle

Tuesday 16th September 2014

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To view a recording of the entire conference proceedings online, go to
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“I GUESS ONE THING THAT STRIKES ME IS THE LEVEL TO WHICH INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES RECRUIT IRISH GRADUATES TO WORK ABROAD. YOU KNOW THEY COME TO IRELAND, HOST JOBS FAIRS, PROVIDE ALL THE INFORMATION PEOPLE NEED IN TERMS OF VISAS, AND HOW TO SETTLE IN ABROAD, AND I GUESS IF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT ARE COMMITTED TO INITIATING THIS RETURN MIGRATION WAVE, WELL THEN I THINK THEY NEED TO SHOW THAT SAME LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO GETTING IRISH EMIGRANTS BACK. . .”

(YOUNG IRISH EMIGRANT SPEAKING AT NYCI CONFERENCE HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2014).

BACKGROUND & CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

BACKGROUND

The National Youth Council of Ireland's research on youth emigration¹ highlighted the need to invest in a strategy to facilitate return migration of the current wave of young emigrants leaving Ireland. A significant proportion of young Irish people who participated in the study highlighted their desire to return home in the future, provided there are jobs for them and there are more sustainable public policies in place.

The Irish Government needs to maximise the rate of return of emigrants when the economy starts to improve. Such return is essential in the recovery of Ireland's economy. Such investment makes economic sense and is vital for the future economic growth and for the social fabric of Irish society.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The objective of the conference was to bring together a broad range of stakeholders with a particular expertise, knowledge and experience on issues related to migration and facilitation of return migration.

The conference aimed to provide a forum to share and exchange knowledge on the key questions for discussion, and to provide solution-based responses to help inform the development and formulation of public policy in this regard. The focus of the conference was to explore how to incentivize and facilitate return migration of young Irish emigrants in the future, when there are jobs in the Irish labour market.

It was envisaged that the deliberations from the conference would serve to generate important questions, solutions and responses to the issues under investigation and to highlight challenges that policymakers must consider and respond to, in the context of the review of the Global Irish Diaspora policy in 2014 - 2015.²

The conference explored the following questions:

1. What are the attitudinal and structural barriers to young emigrants returning to Ireland at present?
2. How can we support young emigrants to return in the future?
3. How can we avoid the permanent loss of valuable skills from the Irish economy, and compete internationally to incentivize young emigrants to return to Ireland in the future?
4. What components need to be included in a strategy to facilitate return migration?

To view a recording of the entire conference proceedings online go to

www.youth.ie/homeheart

¹*Time to Go? A Qualitative Research Study Exploring the Experience & Impact of Emigration on Ireland's Youth*, published in May 2013.

²The Global Irish Diaspora Policy was published and launched 6 months after the NYCI Conference on 3rd March 2015.

**“...IF THERE WAS SOME WAY THAT YOU
COULD PROVIDE MAYBE A FINANCIAL
INCENTIVE TO GO HOME IN FIVE YEARS TIME,
TO SAY WE KNOW YOU’VE BEEN ABROAD BUT
WE’VE SET UP ALL THESE AREAS SINCE YOU’VE
BEEN GONE, TO COME BACK”**

(YOUNG IRISH EMIGRANT, TIME TO GO? STUDY, 2013).

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

MS. MARY CUNNINGHAM, DIRECTOR OF NYCI

Plenary session 1 was chaired by Ms. Mary Cunningham, the Director of NYCI.

Ms. Cunningham welcomed the Minister and the audience (both present in the conference centre and viewing through the live-stream) to the NYCI conference. She spoke about the issue of youth emigration and referenced the NYCI research and advocacy work to date on the issue. She also provided a social and economic context to the topic of return migration.

Before introducing the Minister, Ms. Cunningham acknowledged the significance and importance of the new Ministerial appointment in responding to and connecting with emigrants abroad. She spoke about the strong links between NYCI and the Minister over a period of time, starting with his former Ministry in Arts. She warmly welcomed the Minister to the podium in his new capacity as Minister of State for Diaspora Affairs.

Following the Minister's address, Ms. Cunningham then introduced the next speaker to the floor – Ms. Marie-Claire McAleer, Senior Research & Policy Officer in NYCI.

Following Ms. McAleer's address, Ms. Cunningham closed the session.

MS. MARY CUNNINGHAM, NYCI



WELCOME AND OPENING FROM MS. MARY CUNNINGHAM, NYCI

Good morning ladies and gentleman. My name is Mary Cunningham and I am the Director of the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). NYCI is the umbrella organisation for national youth work organisations throughout Ireland and we represent youth organisations and youth issues in Ireland. I am delighted to welcome you here today for this NYCI Conference entitled *Home is Where the Heart is A Conference on Return Migration from a Youth Perspective*.

As many of you will be aware, NYCI has been actively working on the issue of youth emigration since the publication of *Time to Go? A Qualitative Research Study Exploring the Experience & Impact of Emigration on Ireland's Youth*, launched in May last year. The study explores the social and economic impact of youth emigration, and considers the policy implications of sustained youth emigration from Ireland, in the future.


The research reveals the positive and negative aspects of emigration. Many of the young people interviewed, spoke of their experience as being a rich and positive one tinged with some sadness which emerges from time to time at various periods in their journey. Some experience great heartache leaving home while others experience difficulty once they arrive in their host country or at various periods throughout their stay. Of particular significance, is the fact that whilst many looked on their journey so far as both a necessity and an adventure, in the long-term many see themselves returning home eventually and that is what today's conference is about.

In keeping with today's theme, we have invited the artist David Monahan to exhibit his photographs of young emigrants outside the conference room. The pictures capture the human dimension of emigration very well and we would encourage you to take time to view the work when you are networking during the coffee break and lunch break. For more information about David and where you can view or buy his work please see the conference programme.

The GAA tops scattered throughout the room are to represent the empty chairs of young people from every county in Ireland, who have emigrated from Ireland, but who we hope are tuning into today, through the livestream.

We will start the proceedings with inputs from Minister Jimmy Deenihan, Minister of State at Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs and Trade with special responsibility for the Diaspora who will formally open the conference and provide an opening address and then I will invite my colleague, Ms. Marie-Claire McAleer, to make her address. After Marie-Claire presents her paper, we will hear short pre-recorded inputs from young emigrants from different parts of the world. We will hear some inputs before the coffee break and then we will hear some more after the coffee break.

Without further ado, it is my absolute pleasure to introduce Minister Jimmy Deenihan.



“THE LOSS OF THE YOUTH OF OUR COUNTRY WILL CREATE PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE AND IT IS NECESSARY TO ADDRESS THIS NOW. WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE THESE YOUNG PEOPLE, ARMED WITH THEIR NEW SKILLS, THEIR EXPERIENCE, AND THEIR NEW-FOUND CONFIDENCE, TO RETURN TO IRELAND TO JOIN IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KIND OF SOCIETY THAT WE ALL ASPIRE TO LIVE IN”

(MR. JIMMY DEENIHAN, MINISTER OF STATE FOR DIASPORA AFFAIRS, 16TH SEPTEMBER 2014).

OPENING ADDRESS FROM MINISTER OF STATE FOR DIASPORA AFFAIRS

MR. JIMMY DEENIHAN T.D.

Ladies and gentlemen,

My message here today is a simple one – we want to provide opportunities for our young people to come home.

It is my great pleasure to be here with you this morning and to open this National Youth Council Conference on return migration.

As Ireland's first Minister for the Diaspora I would like to congratulate the National Youth Council for organising this conference which will provide further ideas and suggestions for our emigration strategy review.

In the last few years we have witnessed huge numbers of our young people leave these shores, some because they felt they had no other choice, some to enhance their experience and to improve their options and others because they sought new challenges. Recent figures from the CSO show that emigration fell in the last twelve months for the first time in seven years. While this reduction is welcome, it is interesting to note that 47% of those who left were third level graduates and most were either in employment or education.

Some would say that this exodus has helped the country to get back on its feet by reducing the numbers seeking employment. The statistics indicate that many of those who left were already in employment and left jobs here in search of better opportunities. The reality is that many of our young people are now overseas.

The loss of the youth of our country will create problems in the future and it is necessary to address this now. We need to encourage these young people, armed with their new skills, their experience, and their new-found confidence, to return to Ireland to join in the development of the kind of society that we all aspire to live in.

In order to encourage these people back, we need to provide them with opportunities in their chosen fields and professions. The Government has made job creation its number 1 priority over the last few years and this is bearing fruit. Although still unacceptably high, unemployment is falling – down from a peak of 15.1% in early 2012 to the most recent figure of 11.2% last month. Entrepreneurship is being fostered and nurtured and home grown industry is developing. Credit is finally attainable with banks beginning to lend again. We have weathered the worst of the austerity years and can now see that this fiscal adjustment, although painful, has paid off.

The Government, through its Departments and Agencies, is thinking more creatively than ever on how to develop indigenous industry, how to encourage Foreign Direct Investment and how to maintain and grow the economy on a sustainable basis. Successive Action Plans for Jobs ensure cross-government focus on the tasks at hand and have ensured that job creating policies are at the heart of Departmental agendas.

One example of this is the soon to be launched Year of Irish Design 2015. This initiative, which was created at the last Global Irish Economic Forum, is now firmly rooted in the 2014 Action Plan for Jobs and will soon be ready to launch. It is an exciting endeavour which puts Irish design, across a very broad spectrum, in the spotlight both nationally and internationally. This year, we will showcase all aspects of Irish design in new and creative ways, with a firm focus on developing the sector, embedding design in industry and creating new and sustainable jobs.

In tandem with job creation, every effort has been made to re-train and re-skill those who have lost their jobs and to support, often difficult transitions, from one sector to another. "Skills to Work" is the Government's campaign to make it easier for jobseekers and employers to know what Government skills initiatives are available to them.

Educational reform and the realignment of the skills base required to meet the jobs market is also high on the Government agenda. The changes to the points system giving bonus points to those taking higher level maths has already encouraged significantly more students to take this on. Recent Leaving Certificate results show an increase in the numbers taking Higher Level maths since this was introduced with 27% taking the higher option in 2014 compared to just 16% three years ago. Given that there is a projected skills shortage in ICT and other STEM careers, not just in Ireland but throughout the EU, this is an encouraging development.

Losing so many of our young people to emigration is a huge blow to our society. We lose their innovation, their creativity and their capacity to challenge established norms and ideas. It is vital that we encourage as many of these back to Ireland as possible. We need their fresh thinking.

It is inevitable that some will put down roots in the adopted homes and they, like many Irish before them will contribute to Irish communities around the world. This too provides a valuable support to Ireland.

We have been fortunate to have Irish people all over the world who never forget where they came from. Many of these people work quietly on behalf of Ireland, supporting the vulnerable, promoting Ireland as a place to visit or to do business. Some have made a lasting contribution to peace on our island while others have made substantial financial donations to help the Irish health and education sectors. Many of our Diaspora regularly assist our Embassy network and State Agencies in their day-to-day work including helping with Trade Missions and particularly around the St Patrick's Day period.

Following the first Global Irish Economic Forum in Farmleigh in 2009, the Global Irish Network was established. This Network now has approximately 350 of the most influential Irish or Irish-connected people in the world based in almost 40 countries. This is an enormous resource

available to the country and one which we fully appreciate. One gap in the Network has been the lack of young voices and I want to see how I can remedy that. The current gender imbalance in the Network also needs to be addressed.

Many of the young people who have emigrated recently have joined many of the other Irish networks around the globe, be they business, sporting, cultural or social gatherings. These networks provide a strong support base to newly arrived migrants, providing them with a welcome, a friendly face and in many cases business or job opportunities. I am delighted to see thriving networks such as those for Irish teachers in the UK, the Wild Geese which provides a network for Irish scientists, the Irish International Business Network and the Irish Network USA among others. Some of these networks will help develop the next generation of the Global Irish Network providing a stable continuum of support and expertise available to Ireland.

One vital network overseas, particularly in recent years, has been the GAA. The GAA has been close to my heart all my life and it has proven itself to often be the first port of call for many new emigrants when they arrive in an unfamiliar place. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been able to partner, through the Emigrant Support Programme, with the GAA to help them to grow and develop the supports, both sporting and social, that the Association provides to emigrants at all stages in their life journey, but particularly to our young people. I am delighted that we now have GAA teams across the globe, not just in the traditional areas where Irish people tend to be, but also in more far-flung destinations – we now have teams such as the Myanmar Celts and the South Africa Gaels!

It is also very welcome that the GAA, through the Gaelic Players Association, have brought the issue of mental health and the need to take care of your mental health to the fore. Their “We wear more than our county colours” mental health campaign for county players highlights the fact that mental health problems can affect anyone and it encourages young people to seek help if they are struggling with such issues. I am also looking forward to seeing the results of Crosscare Migrant Project's recent survey on Irish emigrant mental health and commend them for taking on this initiative.

The Emigrant Support Programme provides funding to organisations around the world that provide support to Irish people. These organisations range from pensioners groups in London to the Irish Canadian Immigration centre in Toronto, to a group supporting Irish Families in Perth. Each of these groups, and a myriad of organisations in between, provides a vital support network for Irish communities. We are very conscious of the need to support organisations that provide assistance to young people who may be feeling isolated or vulnerable in their new surroundings. A number of the programmes we fund are aimed specifically at supporting young people and young families as they adjust and integrate into their new homes for however long they choose to stay there.

It is important that we think strategically, and ensure that we do everything we can, to stay in touch with our young people and to encourage them to return to Ireland. There is no doubt that the Government must communicate effectively with our young people who have grown up in the Information Age. This is true in Ireland and around the world. Change has been so swift that, in a

way, we have not kept pace with it. We will improve our communications with young Irish people overseas. To do this we must communicate with them in the ways that they communicate with each other.

Our aim, when people decide to make the move home is to make the transition as welcoming and as smooth as it can possibly be. We are examining all areas of this process including; providing access to information and services, social welfare entitlements, regulations around residency, exchange of driving licenses, and recognition of skills and qualifications. While it may not be possible to change some of the regulations that are in place, we will challenge each of the obstacles and remove barriers where possible. I am happy to report that following work by our Embassy in Canada, the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport and the Road Safety Authority, the first of these challenges is in the process of being removed with progress on the recognition of Irish driving licenses in place in some provinces in Canada, with similar arrangements to follow in other Canadian jurisdictions. These practical issues are important for those looking to emigrate, and those planning to return. I want to know more about these issues, and to resolve them where I can. When I look around the room here in Dublin Castle today it is very encouraging to see so many experts who are here to give their time and voice to such an important topic. I encourage you to share your views and opinions frankly. We are currently reviewing the Government's Diaspora policy and I look forward to being able to incorporate some of the views, ideas and suggestions that come out of today's conference. By opening this discussion we are beginning a conversation that would not have been possible a few years ago. As a nation we have shown our resilience and our strength as we endured a very difficult period. We can now look to the future, welcome home many of those who left and look forward to working with those who will remain abroad as they become the next generation of the Irish diaspora.

This is the beginning of a necessary conversation. It will not end today, but I want to be part of it. The return of young Irish emigrants is an issue of national importance – it is achievable – let's make it happen.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh go leir.

“THERE IS SO MUCH STRESS, PRESSURE AND INDEED RISK INVOLVED, IN MANAGING A RETURN TO IRELAND. IT IS QUITE AN ISOLATING PROCESS, FILLED WITH ADMINISTRATIVE AS WELL AS EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES. TO HAVE SOME SORT OF GOVERNMENTAL ASSISTANCE WOULD CERTAINLY BE A STEP TOWARDS SUPPORTING, ENCOURAGING AND INDEED WELCOMING RETURN MIGRANTS HOME”

(YOUNG IRISH EMIGRANT, SPEAKING AT NYCI CONFERENCE HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2014).

MS. MARIE-CLAIRE MCALEER



HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS . . .

EXPLORING THE ISSUE OF RETURN MIGRATION

MS. MARIE-CLAIRE MCALEER

Good morning Minister, ladies and gentlemen and hello to the many Irish emigrants tuning in from across the world through the live stream. I am delighted to be addressing you today as we start to explore the issue of return migration of the current wave of new young emigrants from Ireland.

Ireland has gone through and is still working through extremely challenging economic times. As we all know the impact of recession and austerity has had a devastating impact on Irish society. As a result, over the last 5 years we have seen increased unemployment and large-scale emigration from this island which has been particularly profound amongst young people. Many young Irish people have left this small island and gone abroad since the start of the recession for a mixture of reasons. Some for adventure, others to escape unemployment and limited opportunities at home, some for the possibility of pastures new, better job opportunities abroad, greater career prospects, better salaries and a better standard of life. Regardless of the reasons for their departure, we know that many left with an intention or desire to return home in the future.

Many watching or observing this discussion today, may wonder why we are exploring the issue of *return* migration. Yes, the recent figures on employment published by the CSO look promising and the numbers leaving the country are down *slightly* in the last year up to April 2014, but surely it is too soon to be encouraging recent emigrants to return back home? After all, a significant 33,500 young people aged between 15 – 24 years of age (Irish and foreign nationals) still left the country in this period.

In response, we would argue that now, when the economy is starting to show signs of recovery, it is precisely the time when Government needs to be considering strategies to facilitate return migration in the future. It is now that Government need to forge closer links and greater connections with young Irish emigrants who are leaving, and who have already left. It is now that Government needs to adopt a more long-term approach to facilitate return migration in the future, when there are jobs in the Irish labour market.

Why is facilitation and support for return migration so important?

Although emigration of young people from Ireland is not a new phenomenon, this time around, with a more sophisticated global market and strong international competition for particular skills, there is a question mark over whether or not this wave of young Irish emigrants will return.

Maximizing the rate of return of the current wave of young Irish emigrants when the economy starts to improve is critical. In the last year, there has been a decline in the number of Irish nationals returning to Ireland. Failure to attract young emigrants back in the future has serious

social and economic policy implications for Ireland. The social cost of emigration is reflected in terms of the impact on the family, the impact of an alteration in Ireland's age structure, and the emergence of a youth generation gap.

In economic terms, return migration will help to play a significant role in the recovery of Ireland's economy. Such investment makes economic sense and is vital for future economic growth, and for the social fabric of Irish society. The most recent data from CSO, revealed almost half of all emigrants were third-level graduates, and the majority of those leaving in the last year were either employed or students prior to leaving. Any future upturn in the economy requires a pool of well-educated and skilled young people to attract investment and stimulate and sustain economic growth. In the context of a more competitive global market, we can no longer assume automatic return of migrant workers will happen organically.

It is really important that we act swiftly and invest in a plan now, because as we all know, once it is time for people to return (when the Irish economy has fully recovered), these young people may have put down roots in another place they call home. Once this happens it is much harder and less likely that they will return!

One thing is certain, however, without return migration, we as a country are at a significant loss - socially, culturally and economically.

Importance of long-term policy planning

To date, the formulation of many Irish social policies have tended to react to situations and challenges that arise. I would argue strongly that we rarely plan for the future needs of society, and often fail to take account of demographic time bombs waiting to go off. Ireland has not been very good at formulating policy which incorporates long-term planning. Policy should not just consider short-term measures, but should also encompass the medium to long-term perspective, and plan for likely scenarios. In the case of emigration and consequences of losing a significant proportion of the population, the State needs to be considering ways of attracting these people back to Ireland in 3, 5 or even 10 years time.

It is vital that the state develops a long-term plan which is responsive to changes in migration and demography, and responsive to the needs of the current wave of young emigrants to enhance the prospect of their return. Furthermore, we need to ensure when Irish social policies are being formulated, that consideration is given to the impact on young Irish people at home and abroad.

Barriers to Return

Undoubtedly there are many factors at play when it comes to return migration. One of the key factors, is of course, the availability of employment and better job prospects, but there are other policy issues that influence one's decision to return as well.

In advance of this conference, I interviewed many young emigrants from various parts of the world, to capture their thoughts on the barriers to return to Ireland at present. I asked them for their views

on what Government should do, to connect and engage with the Irish emigrant community and to support and facilitate a process of future return to Ireland. Some of them spoke about attitudinal barriers, others identified structural barriers.

Some of the key deterrents to returning to Ireland at present, identified by the emigrants I spoke to, ranged from:

- poor infrastructure,
- precarious working conditions and poor salaries,
- lack of career opportunities and limited career progression options in Ireland,
- the inability to have a career outside of Dublin,
- lack of affordable quality housing,
- a prohibitive and high cost health care system with costly health insurance,
- the prevalence of high taxes,
- the increasing cost of living,
- difficulty accessing school places, for those returning with children, and the high cost of childcare, which also serves as a disincentive to return.

As one young emigrant told me recently, despite the strong yearning and emotional ties drawing her back, she felt managing a return to Ireland after a few years abroad is challenging.

She said:

“There is so much stress, pressure and indeed risk involved, in managing a return to Ireland. It is quite an isolating process, filled with administrative as well as emotional challenges. To have some sort of governmental assistance would certainly be a step towards supporting, encouraging and indeed welcoming return migrants home.”

Another emigrant told me that although he really wants to come home in the future, he is concerned about not being able to use the skills, capital and expertise acquired whilst abroad, in the Irish labour market.

He said:

“One of my main struggles now is thinking about what I should do when I go back. I have developed skills and knowledge here that have been so useful and valuable, but I’m not sure if they have a place in Ireland. In fact, I’m not entirely sure what kind of job I would get in Ireland, because one of the major consequences of moving away was making myself marketable in this economy rather than the Irish one. It begs the question whether the Irish economy is creating the kind of jobs that allow emigrants to come back or whether it is creating its own kind of economy of very different or niche jobs?”

Many emigrants have had to work very hard to adapt to a new environment and different labour market once they emigrate, to secure employment and progress in their careers. Moving back to Ireland would invariably mean going through the same process of readapting, but this time to Irish

working styles and culture. There is also the added worry of not being able to tap into the Irish labour market because the skills acquired whilst abroad are not relevant to the Irish economy.

One of the positive aspects of emigration is that many young people who go abroad to work acquire skills, knowledge and capital. The improved skills and expertise they gain has the potential to provide a significant return to the Irish State, and this needs to be acknowledged and acted upon.

In addition, there are often many attitudinal barriers to overcome, for a return migrant. Many writers and commentators have written about this experience - when the emigrant returns home, but finds that home is no longer the home they identified with before they emigrated. They feel lost between two worlds and have now become so adjusted to their new culture, that the old culture they left at home has become somewhat alien to them. They view the home they left, differently now than before. They view home as an emigrant, and not as a native. Oberg described this experience as 'reverse culture shock' or 'return culture shock.'

The writer Joseph O'Connor captures this experience so well, in a paper he delivered to *Ireland in Exile*, when he describes a visit home to Dublin after living for a period of time abroad. The experience starts with a strong desire to be home and to experience the comfort of home amongst friends. The next experience is the feeling of being an outsider amongst friends, and not being able to relate completely to their lives or the conversations taking place. O'Connor describes the feeling of uneasiness, and lastly the dawning realisation that he is in fact an emigrant.

Another well-known Irish writer, Maeve Binchy, in one of her last interviews, said of emigration - "*it is so part of the Irish experience, that we've actually minimised it.*" Coming home after over 10 years living in London, she describes meeting a school friend in the supermarket, whose greeting after her period of absence from Ireland, was somewhat nonchalant, "oh – you've been away?"

More recently, I am glad to say that we have started to talk about the realities of emigration and acknowledge that it exists. The absence of a political appetite to acknowledge 'emigration' for so long, served as an insult to many emigrants compelled to leave Ireland. For some, it felt that there was almost an inherent apathy towards emigration, and those who were emigrating. To use the words of one emigrant who participated in NYC1's *Time to Go?* research study, he said, "*it feels very much like, you are gone now, goodbye and good luck and nobody really cares.*" Another emigrant talked about a "*kind of benign neglect of emigrants abroad.*"

I think these sentiments reflect the level of emotion and strong feeling about the issue of emigration, which is an extremely complex and emotive issue, arousing many different feelings, emotions and perspectives. It also reinforces the need to acknowledge it at a political level, and enhance the level of engagement and connection between Ireland and its emigrants, when they are abroad.

Progress has been made...

It is important to acknowledge that some progress has been made on a number of key issues since May last year when we launched *Time to Go?*, which was, at the time, the first piece of qualitative research exploring the experience and impact of the current wave of emigration on Ireland's youth.

At the time, we identified the challenges many emigrants experienced once they emigrated. We proposed 7 policy recommendations where action was required. We looked for a Minister to connect and engage with the Irish abroad, a policy response with an action plan to meet the needs of the current wave of young emigrants, we called for better data to profile and track the current wave of emigrants, and we also highlighted the need to enhance the linguistic skills of young Irish people at second level, to equip them to compete for work nationally and internationally. Another recommendation in the study was the need for an agency to provide better information prior to departure, and the need to provide a range of websites and social media facilities to support young emigrants before departure.

We are delighted to see the recent appointment of a new Minister of State for the Diaspora. We believe his appointment provides the opportunity for the political system to respond in a practical and sensible manner to the issue of youth migration and related matters. It also has the potential to enhance and sustain the link between Ireland and its emigrating youth.

Another development which has happened since May last year, is the improved data provided by the CSO in the *Annual Population and Migration estimates*, which now provides data on the level of educational attainment and economic status of migrants at the point of migration. Again, this is very welcome and useful for policy-makers and needs to be developed and continued to provide greater insights into the profile of emigrants. Such data is essential in the development of policy to adequately respond to the issue of emigration, and to facilitate return migration, when the economy starts to recover.

The announcement of a strategic review of diaspora policy is also a significant development. We believe such a strategic review of policy has the potential to respond to the changing needs of both young and old Irish emigrants throughout the world. A new strategic policy approach, however, requires sufficient resources to ensure it is fully implemented and rigorously reviewed and monitored, to ensure it is effective.

While we are encouraged by these developments, when one reflects on the significant number of young people still emigrating from Ireland, it reminds us that there is no room for complacency. Substantial work remains to be done to stem the tide of young people having to leave Ireland at present and to provide the opportunities for them to return in the future.

It is important that Government seizes the opportunity to ensure that those who have left, and who continue to leave, are not forgotten about, and are supported to return in the future, if they wish to.

We look forward to working with the new Minister to achieve these aims, and hope the outcomes of today's conference will help to inform and influence the development of a new strategic approach to meeting the needs of young Irish emigrants.

Engaging with young emigrants

As we once again witness significant numbers of young Irish people emigrating from Ireland, it is important to recognise that there are tremendous social and economic benefits to be derived from maintaining a closer relationship between Ireland and its young emigrants. This relationship, however, must be a two way relationship. A relationship that supports those who have succeeded and excelled whilst abroad, and those who struggled whilst abroad and longed to be back home in a working Ireland.

In relation to the importance of engaging with the emigrant community, it is interesting to see what other countries are doing to engage with their Diaspora and to facilitate return migration. There are many examples from across the world of initiatives that we can draw from in this regard. In the next plenary session, our guest from Lithuania, will appraise us of steps taken in Lithuania to facilitate return.

Conclusion

To conclude, I wish to say that the objectives of today's conference are to:

- explore the current barriers to return migration and identify ways to address these,
- explore how we can reduce the risk of a permanent loss of valuable skills from the Irish economy and incentivize return migration, and
- identify the components required in a strategy to facilitate return migration.

There are some excellent presentations to look forward to throughout the day, and at each plenary there is significant time for interaction with the audience and to take questions from the floor. We want to hear your ideas, proposed solutions, and comments so we would encourage you to participate actively throughout the day.

I look forward to the deliberations from today's conference. I now leave you with the voices of some young emigrants from around the world, who I spoke to recently about their current situation, their intentions for the future, and their thoughts on return migration to Ireland.

Thank you.

INPUTS FROM YOUNG IRISH EMIGRANTS LIVING ABROAD

The following case studies tell the stories of five young Irish emigrants who made inputs to the conference about their current situation, their intentions for the future and their thoughts on return migration to Ireland.

The key points and emerging themes generated from these testimonies and the key outcomes from the general conference discussion are incorporated in the analysis of the conference deliberations.

CASE STUDY 1

"I have both American and Irish citizenship. I have voted in more American elections than I have in Irish ones because of the fact that I can do postal voting from Ireland to the US. Now I can't do the opposite as it stands now as an Irish citizen in the US. So I feel like in many ways that buy in, that kind of, like sense of appreciation from the Irish political system just isn't there and I feel like that would really go a long way for people feeling like, yeah I still am a part of Ireland too, I haven't just, you know, cut the rope and gone somewhere else and gone off on my own jolly way...that there is a sense of inclusion there with the diaspora"

(Mr. Eoin Hayes, from Co. Limerick, living in Manhattan, New York City, USA).

PROFILE

Name: Eoin Hayes

Gender: Male

From: Limerick City

Current location: New York City

Occupation: Management Consultant

PRESENT SITUATION:

I currently work as a management consultant in New York City. I'm a dual citizen of Ireland and the US. I became a US citizen after living here for a few years when I was much younger, so I don't have visa worries. I live with 2 Irish lads and have a good amount of Irish friends in the city, some of whom I met in college in UCC.

INTENTIONS TO RETURN HOME:

I do intend on returning home for a variety of factors. The main reason for wanting to return to Ireland is a desire to get into politics. I want to get involved in Irish politics because I think I can make a most positive impact there. What has happened to our country in the past few years is horrifying and I want to be part of the changes we need to make to our political culture, political system, and public consciousness.

I have lived in a few other places other than Ireland and despite the negatives of Irish life, there is no other people in the world I would rather call my neighbours and friends. America leaves a good bit to be desired in that department. We like to say everyone has a bit of 'craic' in them, but it is a bit more than that. Ireland and its people have a kind of magical mischief. I miss that more than nearly anything else - even a hot chicken roll and club orange for lunch.

MAJOR PUSH AND PULL FACTORS TO RETURN:

PULL FACTORS

- Family
- Friends
- Irish culture
- Long-term career goals
- Europe (I feel safer in Europe, generally, than I do America)
- A more sane political environment

PUSH FACTORS:

- Opportunity for work and advancement
- Money
- Easy access to world-quality leisure and entertainment (for example theatre, beaches, concerts, etc.)
- Money

CASE STUDY 2

"In September 2015, our daughter Clíodhna is due to start school, so for us, that in a sense has become a type of deadline to us and that is the time we would like to see ourselves coming home. However trying to organise schooling for her from abroad is definitely, you know quite difficult. It would certainly be a barrier. Also housing and employment, they are certainly, you know barriers, obstacles that we would need to overcome. You know without employment there is no viable way of us returning home. Also trying to secure housing is certainly another barrier that is in place"

(Ms. Anna Cunniffe, from Co. Dublin living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo).

PROFILE

Name: Anna Cunniffe

Gender: Female

From: Dublin, Ireland.

Current location: Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Occupation: Researcher. Currently working as a University Tutor.

PRESENT SITUATION:

In November 2012, my husband was offered a position in human rights law within an international organisation in Sarajevo. He was, at the time, working for a law firm based in Dublin but human

rights was an area he wanted to pursue. He felt the opportunity to gain experience in Bosnia and the direct exposure to human rights issues would be a valuable asset to his career and worth the move. As I was on maternity leave after the birth of our second child, we felt the time was right to leave Ireland given the girls were still young. In any case, I had been thinking of taking some time out of the working environment to focus on child rearing. In January 2013, we moved as a family to Sarajevo and have been there ever since.

INTENTIONS TO RETURN HOME:

We are very much enjoying all the positive benefits that come with living abroad; discovering a new culture, a new language, broadening perspectives, making many new and interesting friends and of course the beautiful summers and snowy winters. There is, however, still a yearning for home. As we come towards the two year mark, we are more and more beginning to think of returning to Ireland. Family and close friends cannot be replaced. As we all grow older, away from home, we have become more aware of mortality and the preciousness of time and memories. We want the girls to grow up knowing their grandparents and even their great grandmother, particularly now, as her days are numbered.

As an Irish speaking family, there is added pressure as we cannot send the girls to a local Naonrai. We have no support from the Irish speaking community, bar via online forums. Apart from the cúpla focail of the Irish expat community here, we are the only ones (along with Dora on TG4 via RTE Player) the girls hear speaking Irish on a daily basis. After a recent visit home where we spent some time in the Kerry Gaeltacht, we realised how much we actually miss our own heritage and culture.

BARRIERS TO RETURN:

In September 2015, our firstborn is due to start school and that has become, in a sense, a deadline for us in terms of when we would like to see ourselves coming home. Having a great interest and commitment to the Irish language, we have registered her with a Gaelscoil in Dublin. It seems, however, almost impossible to secure a place. Having been abroad, we have missed out on the opportunity to send her to the pre-school Naonrai, (as well as the benefit of the free ECCE year) which is in many cases a prerequisite for Gaelscoileanna. In terms of schooling, the options appear quite limited. Many parents have suggested the need to register children with several schools in order to be certain of securing a place. This is quite a timely and indeed costly process as many schools now require a deposit. Not being currently resident in Ireland is also to our disadvantage.

Housing is also a major obstacle to our return. Up until our departure from Ireland, we had always rented. It seems we have now missed the housing price low and prices are yet again on the rise. To know we will have to return to Ireland with two small children and find suitable accommodation, is not something we are looking forward to.

In the unlikely event that we do find affordable housing to buy, we will still need to rent for a period of time to acquire bank confidence, as we have been out of the country for a period of time and without an Irish income.

Employment is of course the most pressing issue in relation to returning to Ireland. Without suitable employment, the ability to return to Ireland is simply not feasible.

PROPOSAL:

An incentive scheme from Government for returning migrants, would be very much welcomed. There is so much stress, pressure and indeed risk involved, in managing a return to Ireland. It is quite an isolating process, filled with administrative as well as emotional challenges. To have some sort of governmental assistance would certainly be a step towards supporting, encouraging and indeed welcoming return migrants home.

CASE STUDY 3

“When I was living there (in Ireland), I was working and getting very little reward for taking on extra responsibility. My career did not seem to be going anywhere. I was locked in a job, which I thought had been a career which turned out, seemed to be just a job. High taxes, poor infrastructure, Dublin infrastructure isn't set up that you can work and commute the way you can in London. You know living in Ranelagh, Rathmines is expensive for poor quality accommodation. They would be the things immediately for me that would be off putting to go home”

(Ms. Leona McHugh, from Co. Donegal living in London, United Kingdom).

PROFILE

Name: Leona McHugh

Gender: Female

From: Donegal

Current location: London, United Kingdom

Occupation: Corporate Banking, Barclays Bank.

PRESENT SITUATION:

I am from Lifford, Co. Donegal but currently living in London and working in Barclays Corporate Banking. After graduating in 2004, I moved from Donegal to Dublin – pushed initially by of the lack of jobs in Donegal but also pulled by the desire to live in the big smoke! Dublin quickly became home and I lived there until 2011 (with a break to go travelling in 2007-2009) whilst working for AIB. I left Dublin in 2011 to relocate to London where I have been living since.

My reason for moving to London was the lack of opportunities afforded within the Irish Banking sector. After two years of increased responsibility, less pay and deteriorating job satisfaction working in Ireland, I decided to make the move across the water. The jobs market in London had improved by then and I was lucky to secure a job before I left.

I would love to return to Ireland but at the moment, from talking to friends still working within the sector, things haven't improved much. Without hesitation the pull factor for me is family and friends – it is hard missing out on key life moments. Trips home, phone calls and Skype chats all help but are no substitute for the real thing. I also miss the GAA, the craic at home and the beauty of an Irish summer!

BARRIERS TO RETURN:

There are many things, at the moment, which would deter me from going back to Ireland. These include, high taxes, increasing costs of living, cost of healthcare, poor infrastructure, and the need to live in Dublin to have any career opportunity. I would rather live in Donegal but this would be extremely difficult. Also, my partner is Australian and a primary school teacher so without Irish it would be difficult for him to find work.

In all honesty, if I was to return home, there is little I'd miss about London other than the sheer choice of amenities and the ease of the public transport system!

CASE STUDY 4

"My sense from meeting other Irish people (here) is that many do want to move back or they see that as...their choice within the next few years but at the same time I think it would be difficult for people to move back unless they have something significant to move back to and while...there is recovery in the Irish economy. You know it is not really enough to inspire people to move back unless there is something more concrete..."

(Ms. Elaine Kearney, from Co. Cork living in Toronto, Canada).

PROFILE

Name: Elaine Kearney

Gender: Female

From: Cork

Current location: Toronto, Canada

Occupation: PhD Student (Speech-Language Pathology) – full-time

I first moved to Toronto in January 2012, having graduated from my undergraduate degree to little job prospects in Ireland. I initially travelled on a one year IEC visa before transitioning to a study visa in my second year. At this stage, I feel well settled in Toronto and see myself staying for another 3-5 years, but ultimately plan to move back to Ireland, or at least the UK/Europe, where Ireland is only a short flight away.

PRESENT SITUATION:

At present, I'm pursuing a PhD at the University of Toronto, with my research based at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute – a leading rehabilitation facility. It was not part of my original plan, before I came to Toronto, to pursue further study, but in my first year here, I was offered a fully funded place in the PhD programme. It was an offer I couldn't refuse. Since joining the programme, I have been exposed to opportunities and experiences that I would never have had the chance to take advantage of at home. The opportunity to access resources and cutting-edge technology, to travel to international conferences, to work with experts in the field, and to collaborate with people from other disciplines, has made my time in Toronto a unique experience. My PhD is definitely the driving 'push' factor for me to stay in Toronto. I am aiming to graduate by summer 2017, and I anticipate that being an organic decision-making time regarding moving home. I could stay in Toronto/ North America to secure a post-doc position, or return to Ireland/UK in search of a post-doc or lecturer position.

Beyond studying, Toronto has many other positive factors. It is an incredibly progressive, diverse place to live, where people are extremely open-minded and are much less bothered by other people's business. There is an accessible high standard of living and free healthcare (with work benefit packages also being the norm). While the long winters are challenging, most people embrace it with winter sports and ski-slopes only a couple of hours from the city.

Unsurprisingly, the major 'pull' factor for me to return home is definitely my family. All of my immediate family still lives in Ireland. While they have supported me wholly on my journey in Canada, they are the biggest aspect I miss from home life. In Toronto, I have made some really great friends, but nothing really compares to having family relatively close by when it comes to a support system. As time goes on, I am also acutely aware that my parents are getting older, and I'm anxious not to miss too many of these years with them either.

Other attractive home factors for me include the Irish culture, the 'craic', the beauty of the landscape and easy access to the coastline. In general, I find in Ireland that people strive for a work-life balance (with greater annual leave time as well when compared to Canada) and that is a mindset that I miss. Toronto is a work-intense city, with nobody batting an eye-lid to people working long hours for 6/7 days a week. I have a much harder time switching-off in Toronto. I'm sure it is a culmination of the city pace-of-life, a demanding work life, and not having immediate family support.

Overall, it will not be an easy decision to return, when the time comes to make it. My career will be central to the decision-making process, and fingers crossed there will be greater opportunities in another few years. If that is the case, Ireland would be a clear-cut choice for me.

CASE STUDY 5

"If the millions of Irish emigrants are not engaged, they will not bring the links, benefits and investment to Ireland of which they are capable... The aim of the Minister for Diaspora should be to engage Irish emigrants abroad on their terms - the ultimate benefits for the millions of emigrants and for Ireland are innumerable"

(Mr. David Garrahy, young Irish emigrant living in Brussels).

PROFILE

Name: David Garrahy

Gender: Male

From: County Clare

Current location: Brussels, Belgium

Occupation: Youth NGO Coordinator

Irish people abroad are highly sought by employers - we are seen as sociable, hard-working, great communicators, but the chances abroad are balanced by a great desire in us to "come home". For me, Ireland's community life is by far the best place to live, raise children and grow old. The "pull" home never diminishes. An acquaintance and a recently-retired Irish EU official, who lived for nearly 50 years in Brussels, and worked in the Commission since Ireland joined the EU, moved home last year, despite having few remaining roots or opportunities there. It was not a logical or perhaps wise choice, but it was always his dream to come home. The pull of the homeland is deep within Irish people - Brendan Behan got it right, in my opinion, when he said others having a nationality while the Irish and the Jews have a psychosis.

Yet there are millions of Irish abroad, who see big obstacles to coming home. I am currently considering opportunities to progress in my career (mostly outside Belgium), but right now Ireland is not on my list of possible destinations. The biggest reason is the lack of career opportunities in Ireland in my area of work. It is true that if you are lucky enough to work in the ICT, pharmaceutical, banking and a few other sectors, there are opportunities available. In many other sectors, however, many young people exploring the next steps in their careers, may not be able to take those steps in Ireland because of limited opportunities.

Though the employment barrier is probably insurmountable, other obstacles for me are smaller and are exemplified by a kind of benign neglect of emigrants abroad. The Irish Government is only slowly waking up to the needs of emigrants, as well as the opportunities emigrants can bring to Ireland. A great example of this was the “late entry premium” for those over the age of 35 who take out health insurance for the first time, signed into law in July by then Minister for Health Reilly. Provision was made for the unemployed since the financial crisis and a grace period was put in place for those currently uninsured. There was no consideration given to emigrants who may come back in the future, and this means that health insurance will cost 2% more for them than the population in general. I don't think the Government intentionally went out to target emigrants. I just think nobody thought about them in the drafting of this law.

Another manifestation of this, is the taking away of the emigrant's right to vote when they move abroad, which is an unjust punishment for people that may be forced to emigrate. Emigrants from other countries are not just “cut loose” like this by their governments. Most can not only vote in national elections, often Consular Representatives are elected by emigrants to fulfill their needs in that country. Irish Embassies, by contrast, don't even keep a list of Irish citizens resident in their countries. If the millions of Irish emigrants are not engaged, they will not bring the links, benefits and investment to Ireland of which they are capable. Hopefully the appointment of a Minister for the Diaspora will bring real change, both in mainstreaming emigrant's issues and in extending voting rights in all elections to Irish citizens abroad.

The vast majority of emigrants over the last number of years have emigrated to other EU countries. EU-based emigrants have different needs and difficulties, for example visas or work permits are not a problem, but given their proximity to Ireland - physical, administrative and cultural links are even more important. It is time to acknowledge that emigrants are not just “away” but are living different and separate existences. The aim of the Minister for Diaspora should be to engage Irish emigrants abroad on their terms - the ultimate benefits for the millions of emigrants and for Ireland are innumerable.

“WE HAVE VERY LITTLE CONNECTION WITH OUR COUNTRY. WE HAVE THIS EMOTIONAL CONNECTION AND I THINK SOMETIMES THAT IS RELIED UPON BY THE IRISH GOVERNMENT AND IT IS NOT ENOUGH”

(YOUNG IRISH EMIGRANT, SEPTEMBER 2014).

DR. MARTIN RUSSELL



THE CHALLENGE OF RETURN – THE EXPERIENCE OF RECENTLY RETURNED MIGRANTS

DR. MARTIN RUSSELL

Good morning, can everybody hear me ok? I always get nervous when I get an introduction like that because people expect something profound. Before I begin I just want to say hi to everybody that is tuning in online. I believe some of the people that I spoke to for the research project with Dr. Madeleine Lyles and Professor Kennedy at the Clinton Institute are online. Just to prove that we actually did something, here it is!

First of all I want to thank the National Youth Council of Ireland for their invitation to speak. It is always dangerous putting an academic up early in the morning because we tend to be boring! So what I want to try and do, is keep it light and entertaining for you, with some insight hopefully. I want to tell you a couple of related stories along the way.

So if you can stick with me for a couple of minutes when I do the boring academic stuff, then we will get into the stories and we can hopefully get some discussion from that. In the spirit of the conference and in line with the comments from Minister Deenihan, the great thing about today's conference is that, first of all, we are identifying the issue of return migration as a problem that needs to be solved. I think, in line with that and in conjunction with my work with Kingsley Aikins from Diaspora Matters, I will try to offer the beginnings of a solution to that problem.

So if you have any questions along the way feel free to stop me - my Cork accent can be strong! One of the best pieces of advice I ever got as a very young PhD student at the Clinton Institute was from Professor Liam Kennedy. Believe me, I used to speak a lot worse and I used to write a lot worse before I met Liam. So Liam said I'd a tendency to create my own words but I'm sticking by this one - 'agencification.' I put that up to Liam, he knows what it means!

The boring academic part, and advice, is that we need to be very careful about how we use words and how we talk about migration and how we talk about the diaspora. If the Minister was still in the room I could say, it is like Cork and Kerry, very close, but not quite the same! The same applies for return. One of the things we need to be conscious of (given the phenomena that is happening in terms of migration at the minute), is that we need to figure out whether we are talking about permanent return, temporary return or this whole concept of mobility. Migration is seen as much more circular nowadays.

Where I see the real value and the opportunity for Ireland, (because it is down to the work of organisations such as the National Youth Council of Ireland, and the Irish Abroad Unit) is that we

are good at diaspora engagement. I'm going to say something controversial that people don't like to hear - the Irish Government is good at diaspora engagement. We are seen in the top 5 in the world in this area. We have India, Israel, Ireland (the 3 'I's'), then China and the Philippines. Mexico is doing incredible work at the minute as well and they are quickly catching up on us, so we need to keep going.

So migration and diaspora as I said - there are differences. If there is any young researchers in the room, write a policy paper on this then it will make your career and sell it in the European context. The first challenge is defining diaspora. Migration and diaspora are very closely related but they are not the same - diaspora is a looser term. I would selfishly say it is a better term, because I work in the area! We need to be conscious of what we actually mean by who is in the diaspora and what we mean by diaspora, because migration tends to be a narrower framework in terms of first generation migrants.

There are differences between the terms migration and diaspora. People may have heard the shocking announcement last night by the IOM, of the migrant boat from Egypt that was purposely struck with 500 migrants dying - that type of discussion generally doesn't tend to come up in the diaspora discourse. So there are different responsibilities between the two, in terms of how you use the words.

In the Irish context, I think we are actually quite innovative in terms of how we frame diaspora in two sentences. One, we have a very good definition. I'm paraphrasing Joe Hackett (a former director of the Irish Abroad Unit). He said if you feel Irish, you are Irish and I think that works for what we have, particularly in the context of culture. In another way we are quite innovative in what we do, in that we provide a lot of access points for people to engage through the diaspora.

If people want to learn more about this, look internationally. One thing we have to be conscious of is that we don't look solely at the Irish example, and we place it in a wider context. If you look at the initiatives such as the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, and the Global Forum on Migration and Development, what you quickly find out is that diaspora is being attached to the migration framework. So they are quite attune at policy level particularly to the distinctions between migration and diaspora. Ireland can take leadership in this and I think we need to.

Section 1 – Ask the Right Questions: How not Why

We are coming to the first story now which is funny as it entails me making a fool out of myself, looking at 'how' not 'why.' The wide debate - why we should facilitate return, encourage return, is actually a controversial argument. I think the answer ultimately lies in what I say is about *looking in before looking out*. It means getting your own house in order before you go looking out. So conferences like this, is where we explore that idea. I think we can actually look to the US quite strongly in terms of how we do that.

We have quite an orthodox or traditional view of diaspora in Ireland in the sense of how we envisage our diaspora as people that are out there. We have a lot of diaspora communities in

Ireland that need to be part of this discussion. The US State Department has taken an incredible lead in how to engage diaspora communities here as well (as in the US). It is not particularly sold into the return dimension here but it is something that is worth noting.

So the interesting question for me and Dr. Madeleine Lyes, when we conducted the research was, the 'how' question. So what does that mean, it is basically the same questions that the Minister, and Marie-Claire McAleer raised in their inputs earlier this morning. It is about how we actually, not only facilitate return, but look after people and make sure that they are able to return if they want to or even if they don't want to - that they still feel connected.

One of the great myths of Irish diaspora engagement is that 70 million people want to be engaged - they don't. I think we need to be conscious of that. So how do we actually get through to that *how* question? I think we do it by bridging research experience, practice and policy. I think we need to work together and this point was reaffirmed by the Minister, when he spoke earlier about the importance of cross departmental engagement.

From my PhD work and research I have done on the *Supporting the Next Generation of the Irish Diaspora* report, I think there has been a movement recently in terms of making migration or diaspora studies more prominent. They are again two different things. Actually, diaspora studies, I argue, is not fit for purpose. We have a relatively poor record on diaspora studies in Ireland but globally it is kind of at a critical juncture point. The general realisation or consensus is that we actually need to move towards the issue of function.

So where did I learn this, right, I want to bring you on a journey. I was researching my PhD, I was a very young researcher, nervous from Cork as you are (!) sitting in the office of the recently deceased Congressman Donald Payne. He was the first, I believe, the first African American congressman in his district of New Jersey and heavily involved in the Northern Ireland Peace Process. So when I was looking at this and came across this, I was saying to myself I have to figure out why - if I answer that question it will make my PhD!

So sweating nervously in the office in Washington DC, in comes Congressman Payne. I come out an hour later nearly in tears. I did not get the answer to that question. So I listened to the interview again that night in the hotel. I came back to Ireland about 6 months later and listened to it again. He actually told me how he got involved. He said he was not overly interested in the *why*. He was heavily involved in civil rights issues in the US given his background, and that is probably more *why*. His involvement stemmed from his involvement at a community level in Northern Ireland. He spent a lot of the time with the churches in Northern Ireland and at the end of the day he was telling me, the 'how' was more important than the 'why.' I think that is where we are in diaspora at the minute and particularly regarding return.

Section 2 – Narratives of Return: Structural/Attitudinal

So academics love two words at the moment: narrative and neoliberalism. So I put this in diaspora narrative because obviously the emigrant's words themselves are more impactful than what I can say.

In terms of what we did for the research, we held focus groups, one in Dublin for folks that returned from across the world. We also held focus groups with emigrants out in the field. I think we felt it was very important with our colleagues (with the Irish Abroad Unit), to actually get into the field.

One thing that has been hinted here today is the notion of a distinction between urban and rural, and I think that is real. I think the GAA is the flagship organisation in this. If you look at the work that they are doing with 'Connect Ireland' in this regard it is important because I think the expectations are different and the experiences of emigration are different from these regions. So just to give you kind of a sample outline of what the people said. This is a difficult one! The core element of effective diaspora engagement, if you want to use the lingo, is that it is critically important to have trust. At the minute, the trust levels, I think we have to be honest about it, in terms of the Irish communities abroad, particularly with government, but also with kind of sectors where they could return into, it is just not there.

I think the trust could be established again but the most important thing to realise is trust is not an event - it has to be earned. So there are tools and strategies to put in place to do that. Related to that, is this notion of 'Diaspora Loyalty.' People when they move away, they are in a conflicting state of identity and almost flux, and sometimes they find it quite difficult to figure out who or what to be loyal to. Should they be loyal to Ireland or should they be loyal to their new homeland? It can have an impact on people and it comes up quite a lot.

I think communication is important with the diaspora communities abroad. I see Ciara Kenny here from Generation Emigration (Irish Times). They deserve special recognition for what they do. I think diaspora media and what they do is critically important, but I think Generation Emigration leads the way in doing it in a responsible way. I think it is important that we get the message right. Some recent articles elsewhere haven't been to the right tone.

Opportunity – it is critically important. I'll come back to the question of the Government later. It cannot be the sole occupancy of the Government. Familial - the ties with family are critically important and it ties into the next point of what I call 'reactionary return.' When people were talking about coming back to Ireland sometimes due to family illness and things like that or issues particularly very close to home, the return becomes almost reactionary. It is unplanned and they are beginning to fall into vulnerability brackets. These were issues we had to address in the report.

Digital Media and Global Citizenry – it is a controversial argument. I honestly believe through education we should be preparing our students to become global citizens. It basically comes down to what Gabriel Sheffer, (who in my opinion, is probably the best in diaspora studies) calls being at home abroad which is the ultimate diasporic aim in terms of return - we want them here.

So to story 2, I was going to give extracts but I don't think I need to go into that in too much detail in terms of what is being said already because we have had visual representation of that (from emigrants earlier in the conference). I want to tell you one story about cows and one of the

great lessons of 'The Gathering.' I think it is that, first of all we need to understand that diaspora engagement on one level needs to be fun. I think the most important lesson from 'The Gathering' is that maybe it is not even about a connection to Ireland. It is about a connection to a place and I think this extract actually kind of brings it up.

So a lady that we had in the focus group said:

"I would say it is not so site specific in terms of coming back, I totally agree with the sea element. I'm from Roscommon, I have no experience of the sea, but there was something so important about seeing the Dublin/Wicklow Mountains, the sea and the cows. I am from a farming background and I never thought that, maybe it is getting older, that they will be so important to me. But, I will be taking the train to Limerick and looking at those beautiful beasts, you know. So there is something there, you know."

We can be quite hard in the rhetoric we use around engaging Diasporas but we need a much more softer tone as well. We need to be conscious of that. How you bring the two together? I'm not quite sure and feel free to offer suggestions.

The structural dimensions relate to a myth we have about diaspora engagement. The idea that Government should lead it - they should not. Government (it is established across the globe, I think we have to be conscious of global context and global examples), should facilitate. We looked at this quite closely in the *Global Diaspora Strategies Toolkit* (available to download free at www.diasporamatters.com). It found that the Government needs to be in a facilitator role because it basically creates more listening levels and access points for the Diaspora to shape the agenda, not only shape the agenda but hopefully take a leadership in the agenda. There is a critical distinction there.

Section 3 – Return in Practice

I'll come back to this point later when I talk about connecting with your diaspora and mobilising your diaspora. The two, again are very closely related but different things. In the report, a key finding was the need to do more pre-departure information. To keep people informed, which in turn, will help the later process of keeping engagement with them when they are abroad, and hopefully help to facilitate their return in the future.

I think the pre-departure stuff is not just for emigrants going. I think it is for the people that stay as well, because one of the issues that came up quite strongly in the focus group is that people sensed the feeling of alienation when they came home. People coming back from London said, it is incredible how the tube works and Dublin bus doesn't work to the same effect!

One lady from Germany spoke in terms of how the transport system works over there and the response from people back home is - *don't you be coming back here with your ideas telling me. You know it is a typical Irish response, right?*

I think the National Youth Council of Ireland is on the cusp of something really important today. In that we have a thematic issue, such as youth. If you look at the conference programme, in plenary

session 3, there is a very sector sensitive engagement. I think bridging those two things hasn't happened before, not to my knowledge. People might do it informally but structurally, and putting it on a public platform hasn't happened. The more you can do that, the better the outcome I would suggest.

Return Ruptures - this kind of ties into the structural side of things because they can be financial. In the report, we looked very closely at the issue of vulnerability. The indices of vulnerability are changing daily within the Irish diaspora. So, just to give you a couple of examples: at the community level, while people are abroad there is a lack of intergenerational engagement, which is an issue, in terms of how people gather knowledge while they are abroad. It can raise issues and I'll give you an example in Canada. People don't know enough about the visa system when they get to Canada. They are not engrossed enough in the system to make a permanent residency. They might then begin to over stay their visas, so issues of return then become problematic.

Obviously **economic** - it is a harsh reality, we might as well be truthful about it, emigrating costs money. It is a financial burden for people. Other issues include identity issues, as I mentioned, and the reintegration when emigrants come home. One possible solution to this, I think would be creating, 'a culture of return,'- *what does that mean?* I think it related to 3 areas - the '3 E's,' as I call it. Not to take the tag line of the IOM and their "engage, enable and empower," but I argue for a culture of return in enterprise, education, and entrepreneurship. I think we have a good start in those areas but I think they could work closer together. Again it is probably looking at bringing back the more successful than the vulnerable, so we need to be conscious of that, in terms of how we progress it forward. We must also look after the vulnerable.

Section 4 - Networking

So this is the 'how' question, and relates to my work with Diaspora Matters. I suppose one of the great things for us, and again its due to the work of other people as well, is that we get approached quite a lot by people across the globe to figure out what Ireland is doing in this area. So we have been trying to think about how we can actually tackle that 'how' question.

So we have come up with a methodological approach that we can put into action which is fascinating. Research, cultivate, solicit, and steward is our 4 step process. We unveiled this in more detail in the article, *Diaspora Capital: Why Diaspora Matters for Policy and Practice* (available on-line for free, so feel free to read it). I'm going to bring you through the methodology employed, and at the end I'm going to give an example. I think in Donegal last week, the Tip O'Neill award was awarded. I'm going to give you a story at the end to show how diaspora networking had an impact in the Northern Ireland peace process by getting Tip O'Neill and Margaret Thatcher to work together in a very creative way, and what Irish person doesn't like a story about Maggie Thatcher!

Research: We see these 4 stages as interconnected. Research is about who they are, where they are and what they are doing, and about building your knowledge base in terms of who is out there. It was mentioned by one of the speakers previously and kind of correlates to mapping. There

is precedent out there in terms of mapping. Jamaica at the minute is doing a massive mapping project. I know in Lithuania, NamSor did some data mining work through mapping. What it basically comes down to, is trying to figure out this question: you have to understand what your diaspora can do, rather than what they will do - two very different things. So what it is at the end of the day, is about making sure the engagement is authentic rather than assumptive. Again, not everybody will want to be engaged. So you need to try to understand their expectations, their motivations and be realistic about it.

When you are engaging diaspora whether it is on the issue of return, don't promise something that you cannot do, because it comes back to that trust dimension. So a way we kind of phrase that, is the notion of capacity and propensity. I think the leading organisation in the globe in terms of philanthropy that does this to the best effect is the 'Ireland Funds.'

To **cultivate** - this is an interesting part. We honestly believe that diaspora engagement is about relationships. Again, it is the kind of softer rhetoric, but it is important and it takes time. It takes money and it takes effort too. What you are basically trying to do is, (and it has context in this sense) take it from an impulsive relationship to a long-term relationship. A lot of people will tap into a network when they are abroad and tap out very quickly, but we need to make sure that we keep them engaged.

So we are making habitual, thoughtful, strategic and inspirational engagements for people. I mentioned previously the notion of listening levels, and that is critically important. The phrase we use quite a lot is access points, and the idea of access points is that you are giving. This is not just for Government; this is for organisations such as the National Youth Council and the work that they do. It is about giving people a voice and listening to them.

Of course, politically you give them a voice through voting, but there is more to it than that. So you need to provide enough access points across the spectrum of your interests and the interest of return, to make sure that it is viable.

Understand concerns, interests and hopes, and set goals/objectives. Don't be afraid to do that. One of the missing links and I'll close with it later, is that we actually don't tend to measure diaspora engagement. I mean we have statistics but they don't tell us a lot and that is heart-breaking as I'm a mathematician in a previous life! I think the trust part, the trust dynamic actually gets developed here in that vacuum. That makes sense because you are building partnerships through collaboration with the diaspora. You are not telling them to do something, you are asking them to do something.

Solicit - this is another really interesting part. We are currently organising a forum at University College Dublin (in Oct 2014) and I'm slowly learning this skill of asks and tasks. I mean don't be afraid to ask something of your diaspora once you have the first two stages done - setting the task and goal. Key diaspora members need to be engaged in small groups with specific projects over limited periods of time, in this case, for potential return.

Don't go too big too soon in a sense. Have a focus - a notion of stake holding. People like to use these phrases but stake holding comes through community and institutions. It is about giving the diaspora ownership of their relationship with home. If you do that, again it is not easy to do that, but if you manage to do that, they tend to be a lot more sustainable in terms of what they will do, and potentially in terms of return and the likelihood of return will increase.

Steward - this is the part that is critically important. It is like the art of making a deal. My colleague at the Clinton Institute recently referred to me as 'Del Boy,' you know from *'Only Fools and Horses.'* 'Del Boy' loves deals, anything you know. The great thing about 'Del Boy,' is that he always looks after the after sales service. So once off transactional relationships are sustainable in the long-term. In other words, just because you have connected and mobilised them - don't let your diaspora go or take them for granted.

The most important thing that you can do for a diaspora community is make them feel important, in line with the area that you are working in. This will help you hopefully to avoid failure. It builds diaspora retention, because particularly important and one of the things that is fascinating about today and the people that have spoken via the video, is that there is an awful lot of talent in the Irish diaspora. If we don't retain access to that talent at home, we are a lot worse off, particularly if we are in a position now or further down the road, to facilitate return.

It came up when I was abroad, particularly in Canada, where there is an incredible amount of talent. Gender specific engagement is also important. We do not do enough in terms of helping the female Irish diaspora across all ages. They have varying vulnerabilities, but they also have varying talents and we need to do more in that regard. The most important thing is to give all our diaspora a pat on the back. The two most important phrases in life are, 'well done' or 'thank you,' everybody loves to hear it so don't be afraid to say it!

The story - I know we have representation from the US Embassy so I'll give you a little bit of context on the story. Tip O'Neill, is one of the unsung heroes of the Northern Ireland Peace Process in the history of it. I think people generally know the impact he had so I want to show you how diaspora networking can actually impact heavily in terms of that. So I want to talk about 2 people. One is an Irish American lawyer in Washington and the other was an advisor for Tip O'Neill; the two individuals were close friends.

So in the early 1980's in terms of the conflict in Northern Ireland, you had the New Ireland Forum. It was a lead way into the Anglo Irish Agreement in the end. People remember Maggie Thatcher's famous *'out, out, out'* speech in response to the New Ireland Forum, right? Well the story goes that the night of Thatcher's speech, John Hume was in a pub in Washington. He was obviously upset and this lawyer was with him and he said, 'don't worry John, don't worry John, we can bring her on a journey'. So, this is Maggie Thatcher we are talking about - right? Mrs. Intransigence. So the Irish mind got thinking. So the chap got in touch with his colleague in Tip O'Neill's office. The Social Security Reform Package or something to that effect was coming up for discussion in the US. There was a private dinner with President Reagan and Tip O'Neill coming up. The idea was

that they would get Tip O'Neill to mention the issue of the '*out, out, out*' speech. I think the phrase he used which kind of made me laugh at the time was that Maggie Thatcher was not "responding correctly."

So that was the challenge that Tip O'Neill was sent for. So the way the story goes, Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill had one on one time at the White House that evening and they were smoking their cigars and having their glass of brandy after dinner. So it was brought up and this was the idea. Before Margaret Thatcher, the last person to address the Joint Sessions of Congress was Winston Churchill. So the idea was next time Maggie Thatcher was going to be in the US she would get an invite to address the Joint Sessions of Congress, you know, first since Churchill, significant. So Tip O'Neill brought this up and Reagan, paraphrasing here, said "I get it Tip, I get it." So a couple of weeks later they were up in Camp David, you had Maggie Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. So he brought up this idea and of course at the end of the conversation Ronald Reagan leaned in to Margaret Thatcher and said obviously I can't invite you - that would be the Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neill. So Margaret Thatcher took a pause, had a think about it and started laughing. Shortly afterwards, the Anglo-Irish Agreement was in effect. There is something to it, right, it works. Again I know its digital at this stage but that story is off the record!

Again, in terms of diaspora networking and this kind of process, it is started by people. We have to be conscious about the Diaspora as well. Diasporas can be, (this is going off topic a bit) but Diasporas can be detrimental to what you are trying to achieve as well. I think that is important to say. In relation to the Maggie Thatcher story, the people that were involved in building that, (obviously through Tip O'Neill and his influence) but those two people through their connection with home, had a realistic insight on what was happening in the North and were responsibly working to change that. Again, John Hume's role was also influential. Previously, the Irish Diaspora has a detrimental role in the work towards peace too.

So what I'm trying to say with that story is, that it does work, and you don't need a lot of people to make it work. That is the beauty of diaspora engagement.

Section 5 - Conclusion

So, in conclusion, because I have probably bored you enough! No one size fits all. Keep that in mind. Don't think because return worked in this context that it will work in a different context. Think of the role of government as a facilitator rather than implementer. Engagement has to be mutually beneficial, and that means it has to work for the Diaspora as well as people at home.

Minister Deenihan correctly noted the importance of having different Government Departments taking this on board and different organisations such as the National Youth Council of Ireland. We call that 'diasporize.' We want every company in the world, we want every government department in the world to have a diaspora portfolio. Why not? It works.

Access and information is critically important. You need to network better. The irony is that it is very sad that there is an assumption out there of the Irish - that we are very good networkers, but I sense we are very good storytellers, and need to be better at networking. They are very different skills, and we have very few universities, in fact I don't think there is any university in Ireland, or the world, that teaches networking. When you are talking about engaging your diaspora, networking is critically important.

In relation to the tools, Diaspora Matters (I'm putting on my Diaspora Matters hat here!) produced a toolkit which includes: collaboration as network momentum, capital harmonisation and capital realism. A lot of these organisations are border voluntary, and they have limited resources. We should try and get them working together. We should measure this work. Connecting and mobilising are different and we should work towards sustainable platforms. I also refer you to the work of 'Connect Ireland,' who is leading the way in this.

I have covered authenticity already and this is a key one - High tech and high touch - we live in a digital age. It is not enough just to connect to them that way, we need the high touch. The *Supporting the Next Generation of the Irish Diaspora* report is available on the UCD Clinton website, feel free to download it. The most important thing, be critical of it. We want feedback!

I just want to thank Marie-Claire McAleer, for the work she is doing and the National Youth Council of Ireland. Thanks to UCD Clinton Institute colleagues, Professor Liam Kennedy, Dr. Madeleine Lyes and Catherine Carey. I hope I did not misrepresent your work, which is important. The presentation was developed in association with Mr. Kingsley Aikins, and if you want to contact me please do (via www.diasporamatters.com).

Thank you.

MS. DOVILE ŽVALIONYTĖ



RETURN MIGRATION STRATEGIES – THE LITHUANIAN EXPERIENCE

MS. DOVILE ŽVALIONYTĖ
PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
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Good morning. I am really pleased to be here and want to thank the National Youth Council of Ireland and Marie-Claire McAleer in particular for the opportunity to talk at this conference. I am speaking about migration policy and migration management strategies in Lithuania and you might not know that we in Lithuania are usually looking up to Ireland.

It would not be an overstatement to say that nearly every study that has been published on Lithuanian migration over the last 10 years in Lithuania, mentions Ireland as an example of good practice in keeping links with its diaspora.

Moreover after reading a very interesting NYCI research report on Irish youth emigration, (Time to Go?), I have realised how much Ireland and Lithuania have in common in terms of current migration trends and the effects on both countries. By the impact of migration patterns, I am referring to intensive youth emigration and rather limited return migration resulting in changes in population size and age structure as well as possible workforce depletion and brain drain.

Therefore I thought that you might be interested to hear about some structural and attitudinal barriers to return migration and about a successful policy programme in Lithuania aimed at lowering those barriers for returning young professionals.

But before starting to talk about barriers and policies, let me just set the scene briefly. So during the last 2 decades, the emigration from Lithuania was very intensive because the economic situation in the country has been difficult. People sought to exploit opportunities to earn better income abroad. More than 700,000 Lithuanians or up to 20% of the population of Lithuania in 1989 are likely to have experienced emigration from 1990 up to now.

The annual emigration from Lithuania increased after the country joined the European Union in 2004. The rate of declared return migration has begun to grow since 2011 and keeps increasing as the most recent data shows that in 2013 more than 20,000 people came back. Return migration to Lithuania, however, was still only half of emigration even in 2013. It might be interesting for you to know as well that Ireland has been among the top destination countries for emigrating Lithuanians since Lithuania joined the EU. Around 15% of Lithuanian returnees have lived in Ireland at one time.

Most of emigrants are very young, mostly in their 20's, whereas returnees are on average slightly older - in their early 30's. So when we speak about migration, for the most part we speak about youth migration.

The first barrier to return and successful integration in the home country's labour market is under use of returnee's skills and knowledge acquired whilst abroad. Last year my colleagues and I conducted a representative survey of return migrants in Lithuania. It showed that as many as 8 out of 10 migrants who have returned to live in Lithuania improved some of their skills while abroad.

For the most part these are foreign language skills and cross cultural communication skills. They also, however, increase their professional knowledge and IT skills. The most important source of increase of skills is non-formal learning, mostly in the work place.

It should be noted that frequently migrants who have lower levels of education (that is non university education or jobs that do not match their qualifications) also gain new knowledge or skills. More than half of the migrants who have returned to live in Lithuania had expectations that they would be able to use the knowledge or skills acquired while abroad. Amongst all returnees holding a job in Lithuania, however, only 9% regularly used the knowledge acquired abroad, 27% used it often and more than 60% used it rarely or never. Data analysis also revealed that under use of your knowledge is a particularly strong factor in repeat migration. As shown by the findings of our research, the more returnees believe that their experience acquired abroad is not properly applied and rewarded in Lithuania, the higher the chances that they will consider migrating again. As you can see from this second graph on the slide (see powerpoint presentation), many returnees don't feel adequately rewarded.

The second barrier to return is the perception of the value of the migration experience in the home country of returnees in Lithuania. Regardless of how much human capital return migrants bring from abroad, the successful integration of returnees is unlikely if their migration experience is not considered as an asset by the home country's labour market.

As our research showed, the Lithuanian labour market unfortunately is not very 'returnee- friendly.' In assessing if the migration experience helped returnees in their employment in Lithuania, it was frequently stated by the returnees that their emigration experience had no effect. While 7% even thought that it was a disadvantage. Reflecting on returnee responses associated with those of employers surveyed in 2013, over 60% of employers indicated that migration experience would have no effect on their choice of employee and 1 in 10 employers stated that this would be a disadvantage.

As many as 8 out of 10 Lithuanian employers also indicated that when hiring a new employee, they would choose one with work experience and education acquired in Lithuania rather than abroad.

One of the explanations for why migration experience is generally not recognised in the labour market is the widespread suggestion among employers and the broader public that return is a signal of failure. More than half of employers in Lithuania and almost half of the population of Lithuania agree with the statement that usually those who have failed abroad return to Lithuania. You can see the data on the graph.

So return is like a signal of failure and employers who support this opinion are more likely to assess the migration experience as a disadvantage rather than an advantage. It should also be noted that the association of return with failure is more characteristic to those individuals who have less exposure to migrants. For example those who themselves do not have migration experience compared to those who did have such experience. This implies that the negative assessment of return often stems not from direct experience but is formed by their environment, for example from the media and therefore is not necessarily justified. Among the various reasons for return identified by returnees, failure was regarded as of secondary importance and mentioned by not more than a third of returnees.

It cannot be denied that some returnees failed to be open in identifying the real factors which determined their return. Recurring trends observed in many studies in Lithuania and abroad revealed that people return because of their family and relatives and because they wish to live in their own environment. In order to increase return migration and ensure sustainability, much more attention should be paid to the integration process of returnees, in particular to increasing the demand for their experience and human capital in the labour market of the home country.

In the second part of my presentation I am going to present one successful policy initiative implemented in Lithuania that addresses all 3 barriers to return that I have talked about. In 2012, State agencies 'Invest Lithuania' and 'Enterprise Lithuania' in partnership with the Lithuanian Government launched a junior professional programme called 'Kurk Lietuvai,' which means 'Create for Lithuania'.

The programme aims to attract young professionals who have graduated from universities abroad to come back to Lithuania in order to work in the public sector. It is a one year work placement programme. The selected returnees are offered paid internships in more than 25 various institutions of the public sector. This year the programme was also extended to municipality level and 20 municipalities agreed to host the participants of the programme.

How is the programme implemented?

Each year a select team of 20 young professionals are chosen to work on strategic governmental projects and to participate in a high level decision-making process. Every 4 months they move to a new institution. Three separate 4 month rotations in the public sector are tailored in accordance to the intern's experience and preferences. At the end of each rotation the young professionals present their projects to the Lithuanian Government as well as to the public.

As a result of the programme, the returnees get an opportunity to apply their knowledge to initiate changes in public institutions. Participation on the internship programme also ensures participants develop their professional network and build their CVs. For participating institutions, they gain new insights and ideas from the young professionals, improve their public image and promote cooperation between the Lithuanian diaspora and the public sector.

The 'Create for Lithuania' programme has attracted a lot of attention amongst young Lithuanian professionals abroad. According to the managers of the programme, they have received more than 400 applications over the last 3 years. Only 20 applicants are selected for the programme each year and the selection process is highly competitive - around 6 or 7 applications per place.

The participants of the programme have come back from all over the world to participate - from more than 30 different countries so far. As you can see from the graph the most popular countries are the United Kingdom and the United States. Around 30% of the participants have returned from Ireland.

The young professionals are well educated, most of them have master's degrees and some are PhD students. According to the participants, the programme was instrumental in their decision to return to Lithuania after graduation. 99% of them stated that they would not have returned, if the programme was not in place. It seems that programme has also facilitated integration after return as well. Nine out of ten participants have stayed in Lithuania after finishing the programme. Around a third of them kept working in the public sector while others found jobs in the private sector - most often in prestigious local or international companies.

The programme resulted in a number of innovative governmental projects and policy changes. For example, the participants have designed a national system to collect, recycle and cover packaging wastage, launched open data and governmental initiatives and initiated important changes in immigration and youth employment policies.

The success of the programme depends greatly on the support provided by the political leaders and the heads of the participating institutions. The programme has been continually supported by the President of Lithuania as well as by the Government.

Another important success factor was good and targeted publicity. The programme is well known and regarded in Lithuanian society, especially amongst educated young people. The programme managers use all kinds of social media - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and so on - to advertise this opportunity to young professionals. The participants of the programme also engage in a variety of social actions that attract media attention.

The programme itself achieved international recognition last year. In 2013, the programme was acknowledged by the Guardian as a model of best practice to encourage young professionals to return home. It will also be presented as a good practice example in a forthcoming publication of the United Nations on talent development and retention. That makes the programme attractive to well-educated talented young people.

Speaking about some of the challenges, the managers have mentioned that the participants are bright but also very young. The average age is 25 years. As a result, some of them have no work experience. Nevertheless, they are expected to act as policy advisors to much more experienced civil servants during the programme and that is not easy sometimes.

Another challenge is remuneration related. While participating in the programme, participants receive a market-based level salary and benefits - usually higher than the average wage in similar positions in the public sector. If they stay in the public sector after the programme, their remuneration goes down. Therefore, most of the participants chose to work in the private sector after completing the programme.

Despite some of the challenges, the programme managers advise young Lithuanians graduating from universities abroad to keep calm and apply for the programme 'Kurk Lietuvai.'

To conclude, the Lithuanian experience shows that well focused and well-designed interventions such as the junior professional programme 'Create for Lithuania' may lower structural and attitudinal barriers to return migration, as participants get to use the skills and knowledge acquired whilst abroad.

The migration experience was a great advantage to them and they were introduced to others as very successful young people, not failures. Such programmes, however, usually target relatively small groups of highly skilled migrants such as the young or not so young professionals, researchers and so on. Therefore, the key policy question and issue which remains is how to design and tailor such programmes to reach the rest of the return migrant population. Thank you very much.

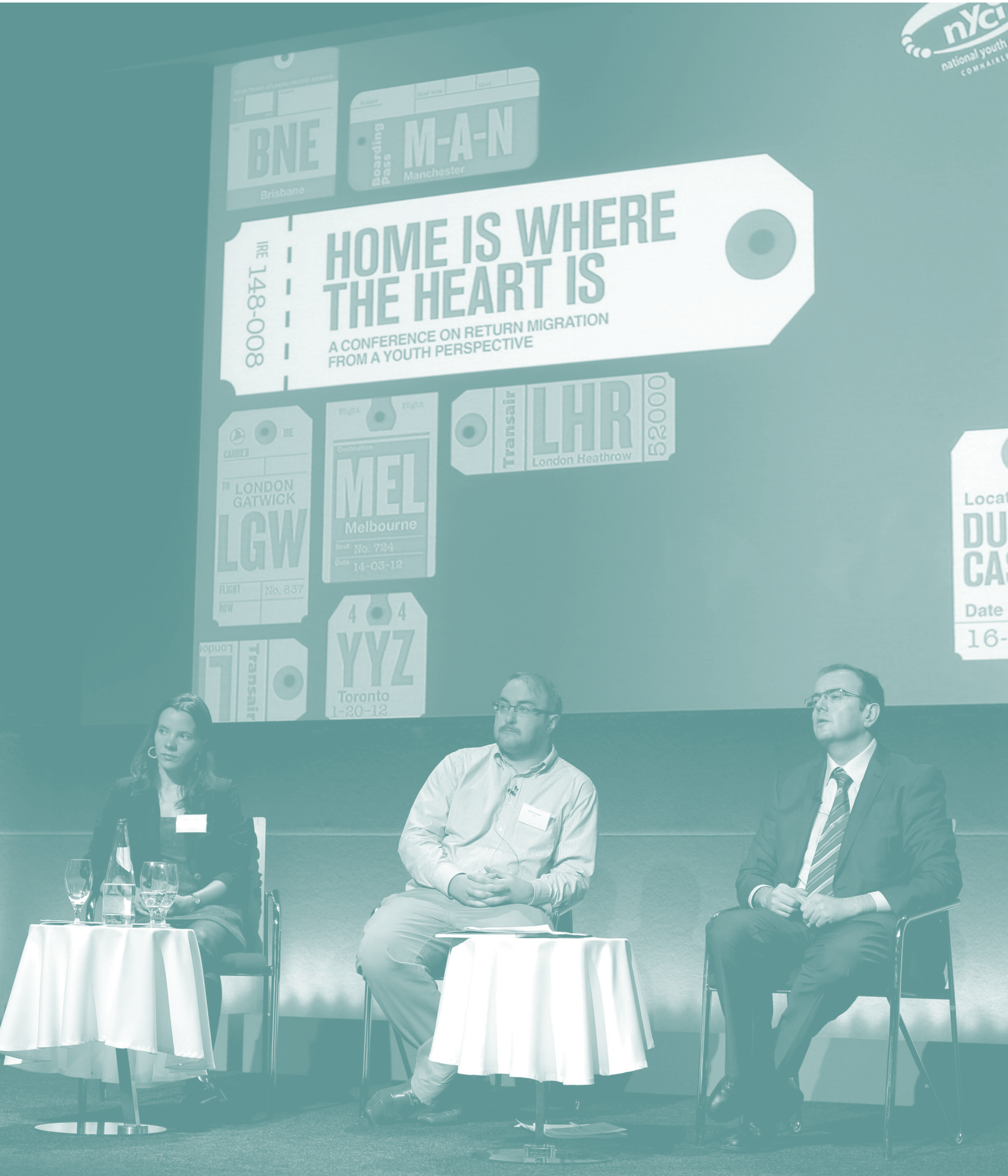
PLENARY SESSION 2

BARRIERS TO
RETURN MIGRATION

“I THINK IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT START TO CONSIDER THE BARRIERS TO RETURN MIGRATION THAT CURRENTLY EXIST AND START TO DEVELOP PUBLIC POLICY TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS OF YOUNG IRISH PEOPLE ABROAD. YOU KNOW EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT PEOPLE LEAVING IRELAND BUT YOU KNOW THERE ISN'T SO MUCH EMPHASIS PUT ON PEOPLE RETURNING TO IRELAND WHICH IS CERTAINLY A BIG FACTOR”

(YOUNG IRISH EMIGRANT SPEAKING AT NYC I CONFERENCE HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS, 16TH SEPTEMBER 2014).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION - MS. DOVILE ŽVALIONYĖ, DR. MARTIN RUSSELL AND MR. JAMES DOORLEY.



INTERACTION WITH THE AUDIENCE – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

Plenary session 2 was chaired by Mr. James Doorley, Deputy Director of NYCI. Before facilitating the interaction with the audience and opening the discussion to the floor for questions and comments, Mr. Doorley thanked Dr. Russell and Ms. Žvalionyte for their very interesting and informative inputs to the conference. He stated that they raised some very important issues for further consideration and discussion, examples of practical measures and best practice to draw upon.

Interaction with the Audience – Questions and Answers Session

Mr. Doorley opened the discussion to the audience by inviting questions or comments from the floor and through the conference twitter feed.

The following inputs from conference participants and responses from panellists during the remainder of plenary session 2 were transcribed verbatim.³

Intervention from Mr. Paul Galton, Youth Work Ireland

Hello and first of all thank you very much to NYCI for producing the *Time to Go?* research report, which informed this conference. I think it is very timely and there is a great need to support returning migrants. As you can all probably tell I have one of the more common Irish accents, it is called east Leitrim. I have experienced immigration first hand because I grew up as a son of immigrants in England. I have actually found this quite painful. In fact very painful and I also have a deep sense of anger in some ways and it is very difficult. I was thinking through what has been going on here and listening to those young people. I heard that language 50 years ago as a child, from the Irish immigrants then. I heard those dreams and aspirations to return then.

This weekend, I met a man on a beach in Sligo who had returned after a lifetime in England. He has been back in this country a year. The more common pattern for returnees is in fact, young people leave and come back once they have reared their children abroad - that is a strong reality. I was also reminded of a man called Tomas Gilmartin, who had a huge impact on this country upon his return as a migrant to Ireland. I was actually harrowed by the experience of listening to his son on Irish television speaking about his father's experience. So I think there is a lot we need to do in terms of looking at what the return means.

I grew up believing I was Irish and I came back here and at times people would say to me, well you are English, when English is the last thing I could ever be. If any of you have ever lived in England, you will know for a fact that someone who is an immigrant in England cannot be English. I could be British possibly but not English and I have always thought of myself as Irish.

³In order to provide an accurate reflection of the inputs from the audience and the general discussion, the comments/questions from the audience and some of the responses have been transcribed verbatim. Minor editing has been done to avoid repetitious text or lack of clarity in the Conference Report.

One of the things I found coming back, is what you were talking about - is that conflicted personality because I obviously grew up in both countries. I grew up in England and in Ireland. The sadness for me is that my grandmother left Sligo in 1913, my father left Ireland in the 1950's, my cousins left in the 1980's. The next generation of cousins have left now.

I think as well, in looking at the return of migrants, we have to look at how we stop the problems of migration and look to building a strong economy here, because that is what will serve both returning migrants, and also young people living in Ireland at present.

Intervention from Fr. Bobby Gilmore

I have been working in emigration for about the last 30 years or so. The big issue that I see over the years is how you translate the language from the academy to the language of the migrant high street. That is the big problem because at the end of the day, emigration is a human heart and a journey of hope. I remember in the late 1970's, early 1980's, we ran conferences and information programmes in Britain with regards to return migration, and it is extremely difficult to break through that barrier because immigration operates on anecdotal information.

The other damning thing about return is that the vast majority of people who think about return, do so after coming back from holidays during the summer time. When everything is fine, everything looks good, and people seem to think that there is tremendous affluence and everything else.

I think this is an important conference and I think the NYCI Research Report, *Time to Go?* is absolutely important but I think the greatest challenge is how you get your information down to the high street. How do you get objective information about pre-departure and about return, down into the high street?

Also the other thing is, let's face it, diaspora, Irish diaspora is something new. When we were with our backs to the walls in Britain in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, the Diaspora, the affluent, the articulate and the artistic were pretty well silent on the Diaspora. With regards to the issues of justice and human rights etc. So I'm delighted that the Diaspora is beginning to emerge, and beginning to emerge in a supportive role, and also that it has been recognised as a resource by the Irish Government and vice versa.

Intervention from Mr. Johnny Sheehan - a return migrant

Mr. Sheehan asked both panellists to respond to a number of questions on how to remove attitudinal barriers to support return migrants.

Questions posed:

How do you think the returning migrants can be supported?

In what ways can they be supported in terms of overcoming those attitudinal barriers like stigma or the lack of empathy from people around them?

How do you create those conditions rather than just simply providing good jobs, and what role do you think the Government should be playing in facilitating that?

Responses from Dr. Martin Russell

Dr. Russell stated that he agreed empathy is critically important. He stated that empathy is one part of the strategy and it was essential to communicate the emigrant's story. He argued that there is an education process that is required for people that stay behind as well. He stated that there is definitely a 'disconnect' between the people that emigrate and their perception of emigration and the people who stay behind. This theme emerged in the research he conducted with recently returned migrants. Education is important in addressing this disconnect and communicating the emigrant's story as well.

In terms of how the Government support return migrants, Dr. Russell stated that he felt this support needed to come from the communities with financial support from the State through the Emigrant Support Programme.

He also stated that it was important to create a 'culture of emigration' which is narrated through the organisations themselves or emigrants.

Further Intervention from Mr. Johnny Sheehan

Mr. Sheehan stated that he agreed that it needed to be done within communities but communities needed sufficient financial assistance from the State to be able to do this effectively.

Intervention from Dr. Mary Gilmartin, NUI, Maynooth

I think it is very timely that we are having a discussion about return migration because it is clear from CSO estimates and even from earlier periods, from GA transfer statistics that there is a crisis of return migration. The numbers of people with Irish nationality returning to Ireland are at the lowest figure they have been for decades.

We have some indication of what barriers to return migration and the barriers experienced by return migrants are from previous return migrants. We have extensive studies of the experience of return migrants in the past but Marie-Claire McAleer touched on some very interesting points in her presentation. I think is very important that we actually address them.

One of the key barriers to return migration is the structural barriers that have been created as a result of austerity. One of the main ones of those, as far as I can see, is the public sector recruitment ban, and the deterioration of work conditions in the public sector. That is an issue that has created a real barrier to return migration for skilled migrants, particularly female migrants outside Ireland.

We have other issues too, that are creating contemporary barriers to return migrants, related to quality of life, access to housing, access to childcare, access to schools. These are issues that are being faced, not just by return migrants, but by people who are resident in Ireland. They are issues

being experienced by immigrants who are living in Ireland, who are remarkably absent from many of the discussions that we are having about contemporary migration.

One of the reasons I think that return migration is at an all-time low, is because of the kinds of issues of inequality and social justice and injustice that are resulting from the consequences of austerity. The effects of austerity mean that we are creating a society that not many people want to return to.

So I think there is an imperative on those of us who remain, as well as those of us who leave Ireland, those of us live in Ireland and who call Ireland home (regardless of nationality or citizenship), to think very carefully about the kind of society we want. We need to listen very carefully to the way in which statistics about migration, (both immigration and emigration) are being used right now to tell a particular story which is a story that is masking the inequalities that are making this a more difficult and more unfair society to live in.

Intervention from Mr. Joe O'Brien, Crosscare

I work with Cross Care Migrant Project. In one form or another we have been working with Irish emigrants since the 1940's. We are one of the Irish based organisations funded by the Emigrant Support Programme in the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade. Firstly just to thank the National Youth Council for actually making this a debate. It is something we have worked on for many years ourselves, with people who are returning but it has never really been debated in the public domain, bar some issues with older Irish emigrants returning and access to welfare.

Cross care provides pre-departure information and support service to Irish emigrants and I suppose with the advent of the internet that has allowed us to reach multiples of the amount of people we reached before. We have about 40,000 to 50,000 people accessing pre-departure information on our website every year.

We also work with returning migrants as well, but with a focus possibly on those who are in more vulnerable situations, people returning back with no family connections. People are possibly facing homeless situations as well and experiencing difficulty accessing welfare.

In two weeks, we will be presenting a proposal for an emigrant register and this is a very practical suggestion in terms of facilitating return migration. It is a very simple idea which entails creating a database on emigrants abroad. You get the emails of Irish emigrants who are abroad or who are leaving or who are thinking about it. The Irish State would collect these contacts and start to address the issue that has been raised in many research reports in recent years.

The NYCI research report *Time to Go?* published last year and the UCC research report highlighted the issue of a data deficit (on the profile of emigrants from Ireland). If this data base was created, the Irish State would be able to connect with a whole range of people in a variety of countries, for a variety of reasons. More practically speaking of course, it could tell people about job opportunities coming up.

Finally just to thank NYCI again, for making this a public debate.

Intervention from a young immigrant from Argentina

From the point of a migrant, I was born outside Ireland, in Argentina. I have been living here 12 years.

Migrants also need to be brought more into this debate. It took me 11 years to get my citizenship under the old process and a lot of the times I nearly had to leave the country due to financial reasons regarding the visa, mainly because the Government did not really help much on that process.

The opportunities for young people here are not very good. Sometimes it feels that as a migrant, as an expat and a return migrant, it is hard to reintegrate to life in Dublin.

Panel Discussion resumes, facilitated by the Chair – Mr. James Doorley, National Youth Council of Ireland

The chair asked Ms. Žvalionyte if she would like to elaborate on the initiatives in Lithuania to address attitudinal barriers experiences by return migrants in Lithuania.

Response – Ms. Žvalionyte – Public Policy and Management Institute, Lithuania

Ms. Žvalionyte referred to a new initiative - a network of professionals which is called the Global Lithuanian Leaders. It aims to build positive image of emigrants and returnees, and to encourage emigrants to participate in Lithuanian public life or in various initiatives. There is a network around 500 high level professionals. She stated that she thought such initiatives helped to build better image of migrants and returnees as a group.

The networking is a non-governmental initiative, but is supported by the Lithuanian Government and Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is responsible for the links with Diaspora. It is a good initiative.

Mr. Doorley asked Dr. Russell to comment on attitudes of employers to returning emigrants and the stigma attached to returning migrants, which Ms. Žvalionyte highlighted in her presentation on the Lithuanian experience.

Martin Russell – UCD, Dublin.

Dr. Russell stated that there is still a stigma and this view was supported by the qualitative research he conducted with return migrants. He stated that attitudinal barriers still existed in communities and there were definitely elements of antagonism prevalent in Irish society.

Voting Rights for Irish Emigrants

Before drawing the discussion to a close, the chair raised the issue of voting rights for Irish emigrants abroad. The issue of voting rights is a recurring theme emerging from the conference discussion online and through social media. Panellists were invited to give their opinion or thoughts on extending voting rights for Irish emigrants abroad.

Response from Dr. Martin Russell

Dr. Russell stated that voting was important in terms of giving people a voice. He also stated that he felt voting rights for emigrants in the Presidential Elections should be supported but was not sure if that would actually happen.

He stated that if one considers the dynamics of voting, in terms of voting outside of the country, it was important to examine how the Irish define diaspora, because it would be necessary to put a limit on who can vote in terms of identity. More work is required to explore the feasibility of how votes for emigrants in Presidential elections would work in practice.

Response from Ms. Dovile Žvalionytė

Ms. Žvalionytė agreed that emigrants should have a right to vote, as long as they have citizenship, but stated that participation in the elections among emigrants is rather low in Lithuania.

The chair thanks the panellists and the audience for a lively and engaging discussion and draws the plenary session to a close.

**“I DON’T SEE MYSELF STAYING HERE FOREVER,
BUT I WOULD LIKE TO PUT DOWN A FEW
YEARS HERE BUT YOU KNOW, CAREER WISE,
WOULD THERE BE AN OPTION TO GO HOME
TO? I DON’T KNOW”**

(YOUNG IRISH EMIGRANT, TIME TO GO? STUDY, 2013).

PLENARY SESSION 3

Plenary session 3 was chaired by Ms. Mary Cunningham, Director of NYCI, and the three panellists were Mr. Sean Downey representing the Construction Industry Federation, Ms. Moira Leydon representing the ASTI and Ms. Phil Ni Sheaghda representing the INMO.

Plenary session 3 explored the impact of youth emigration on the labour market and the consequent skills loss. It focused on a cross section of professions that have been particularly affected by youth emigration from Ireland in recent years.

The discussion focused on the impact of the prevailing brain drain from Irish society of young highly skilled and educated people. The session addressed key challenges facing young people in particular professions at present. Each panellist proposed sector specific solutions to avoid the permanent loss of valuable skills from the Irish economy and to incentivize young emigrants to return to Ireland in the future.

Each panellist provided:

- a brief description of the impact of youth emigration on their profession,
- their views on the key challenges young professionals face at present, and the measures required to address these,
- their opinion, on how they think young emigrants could be attracted, encouraged and facilitated back to Ireland in the future, to avoid permanent skills shortages.

MR. SEAN DOWNEY



INPUT FROM THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION

MR. SEAN DOWNEY

“We need to convince young people that we really have turned the corner, that we really have sustainable growth in the economy and that the wage rates will be there” (Mr. Sean Downey, CIF).

Thanks very much Mary. Like you explained I'm kind of here by default but I suppose it is one of these events that I'm really delighted to be asked to speak at because I have, I'd like to think, a lot of experience in this area. I would be able to add a lot of my own personal experience to the debate.

I'll give you a brief run down first on my own background and the path that I have taken in the construction industry and how things have developed over the last 10 to 15 years here. I will then address some of the issues that we are dealing with at the moment, and where we see those being resolved in the medium-term.

So as the accent suggests, yes I'm from the North. I have to say very quickly I'm from Derry, I'm not from Donegal just in case. I see a few Dublin jerseys around the room there, in case there is anything thrown at me. My father was a contractor and I started in Derry. I was encouraged to go along the route of maybe not necessarily following the trade but going towards the professional side of construction, into management. I identified a degree in building surveying – that is what I really wanted to do. It was all encompassing and I saw it as a flexible programme that allowed me to, maybe not necessarily define exactly what I wanted to do at the age of 17/18, but allowed me plenty of options.

The construction industry as a profession, allows people to go into a certain path. It allows those working in the sector flexibility, in terms of the type of projects they can work on. It also allows them complete flexibility in terms of the location that they are going to work in. I noticed the cover slide that you had up earlier, with the airport codes. I think I have been through most of the terminals that are up there - either through most of the terminals or I worked for employers that are based in those locations.

I went to college in Scotland which has a very similar attitude I suppose to the North and similar issues. It also has a good education system and a lot of people from Northern Ireland go there mainly because of the fact that it is a chance to get away from home. It is a chance to experience a slightly different setup and a slightly different culture. You are getting away to university. There was a huge Irish population in Dundee, in Edinburgh, in Glasgow and in Aberdeen and I found my feet there quite well and completed my programme there.

During the summer, I mean everyone would have gone to London - that was really the thing. That is where you were guaranteed work and that is where, if you went for the summer you were guaranteed work. The first couple of summers, I worked on the London underground, on the new Waterloo Station on the Jubilee line extension (those types of projects), and that was 10 years before we were even really talking about the Dublin Port Tunnel here in Dublin.

I got great experience across a range of projects that were not necessarily happening here in this country. I worked in London every summer in between and then went back to college. I developed different skill sets. I then worked as a commissioner engineer specialising in building services, specialising in the commissioning of projects, and what really happens at the tightest end of the job, just before you are supposed to be handing over to the client. I got to understand a lot of the contractual issues and a lot of complexities and conflicts that happen on jobs, which helped me to develop specialisms in construction contract law.

I got a job over the internet. I had an interview on the phone and got a job working as a cost estimator. It was one of the first jobs I had out of college. I also priced an extension to LAX - the new international terminal. I priced the City of Angels, LA Cathedral. I tell that story to people because you see it in a lot of the movies. It is brilliant to know that you are a part of that.

Yes, I do wake up a lot of mornings when it is raining here in Dublin, and look out and think, you know, when I go back to my 24 year old self, and think of the reasons why I left California. But that is the thing and it is great to be able to look back. You take messages from different people the whole way through your career and the most important thing is to try and just make the decisions that are based on where you want to go eventually. Don't worry about what is happening right now. It is something that is very important for people that are out there thinking about moving home or even thinking about, how long they will stay in Perth or how long they will stay in Chicago - it doesn't matter, don't worry about it. Don't worry about thinking that, you know you are here and you are setting down roots, because the world is such a mobile place.

Our industry in particular, construction is such a mobile industry, that if you are developing skills then you will be of value to the Irish economy. You will be of value to even our neighbouring economies and that allows you to think about moving home at some stage and that is one of the most important messages that I will give people.

I eventually came back to London after my stint in America, worked in social housing and on the local authority side, contracts, and looking at capital regeneration projects. In 2000, I moved to Dublin and got married. I landed just right at the height of the absolute boom and I came across for a job. The role really was facilitating the National Development Plan. So in 2000, it was my job to meet all these foreign companies that were coming to Ireland and to try and help the Irish economy develop this National Development Plan.

I started working for the Construction Industry Federation back in 2000. I met 96 different delegations from every single country you can imagine across the world. I met the Koreans, the

Chinese, and some European countries that had absolutely no interest in coming into Ireland but it was my job to welcome them and to try and set up links so that they could look at PPP and joint ventures with Irish companies. They would bring the labour, they would bring the men and women that would do the work and we would provide the management structure here. The Irish Government had this aspiration to develop €8 billion worth of capital investment within a 6 year programme and they had to do it. They were concerned that there would be this escalation of prices in Ireland, and the Irish economy would not have the capacity to do it, so that was my role at that time.

I was there for about 3 years and then I left to go back into industry and develop my skills because I felt I wanted to get back to the hard skills of actually technical standards, which is what my building surveying degree was all about. So I worked in technical control, technical standards on the commercial side, ranging from smaller housing schemes, large housing schemes to big commercial projects of €50/60 million and delivering those as a project manager.

So you can see from the days when I was looking at it, thinking God, you know I'd really like to have a programme like a degree that gives me a bit of flexibility, that I have had quite a number of different roles. You don't need to worry about the specifics of the module descriptor that you have been given as part of your degree or even your apprenticeship programme or what are you likely to be at the end of it.

I am working with a lot of the big mechanical and electrical companies and some of the other trade contractors at the moment. When they look for people that they are going to identify for a route to management, they are looking for people that have come through the trade. They are looking for people who have come through the apprenticeship route because they know the contract and they know what needs to be delivered on projects.

I would also say to people - don't worry about the definition of that qualification that you are going to get handed after 4 years, after 5 years because it is really up to you where you set your own goals and aspirations. You can move on to management, you can move on to any other sector in the construction industry. Your qualification is really a passport - it is a passport to the industry. You can work in any part of the world and you can work in any sector in our industry.

Looking at where we are at the moment, what are the risks and what are the issues that we face, we do face a serious skills shortage and that is going to become evident now in the next 12 to 18 months. There are already some pressures out there in certain sectors, particularly in the high-skilled engineering sector. There will be pressure to try and find people of mechanical and electrical backgrounds, even in the trades and in the management side for all the Foreign Direct Investment projects that are being developed. There will be more pressure even in the wet trades (things like floor and wall tillers, plasterers, painters etc).

The big issue is that we had this traditional skill set that was developed. You had a lot of senior people in the industry that really had the core skills. There were a lot of people that came through the apprenticeship system from 1998, 1999, 2000 onwards, and that was good because we

had this mass of young people that were moving into the industry. After really 2006/2007, it just collapsed and we lost those people. The greatest difficulty is going to be trying to get the message out there that there is an industry again and there is a sustainable industry and long-term future in construction in Ireland. It is not just about talking about the huge demand for housing in Dublin at the moment. Yes, that is one part of it but it is really about what the Capex projects are going to be. We would expect that there will be positive announcements coming in the next 12 months. Yes, it is likely to be biannual targets that they talk about. They are likely to talk about public expenditure reform. The Office of Public Works (OPW) is talking about something in the order of between €8 and €10 billion over the next 20 to 30 years for flood relief works right across the country. There are also the Irish water projects that are going to start really ramping up now over the next 12 to 18 months. They are nice regional projects where people can look at Cork, Limerick, Galway, even the midlands - *wherever they are from!*

So I would say that one of the biggest issues is trying to convince young people to come back. It is really about trying to give them a commitment that there will be a stable enough economy. We need to convince young people that we really have turned the corner, that we really have sustainable growth in the economy and that the wage rates will be there. The fact that there is no registered employment agreement in construction anymore has created a huge degree of uncertainty for people. They just don't know what their wages are going to be on a weekly basis. They don't know what certainty of tenure there is, in relation to things like - will they be directly employed, will they be employed through a sub-contractor that might have work for 6 months, might they have to move to another city after 3 or 4 months?

So all those questions remain and that is where I think, we as an industry, we as a body that represent contractors, intend to work with the different Government Departments. We will work with Solas, and the Education and Training Boards to try and convince young people to get back into our industry and to select construction as a career. It is important to convey to young people that construction as a profession, affords people mobility, and this sort of work allows one to experience life in France and to work in Germany. You should be able to do it in your trade or discipline. Go off and develop your skills.

I think it is hugely important that we allow people and encourage them to go abroad and it is not just about the sandwich year. Let them go off and let them build their professional experience. Let them experience how they interact with different cultures. Let them experience how contracts work and how fair payment works in other jurisdictions. I think that is very important. Let them build their expectations and let them bring it back here.

I think that youth emigration is an opportunity for us to grow our skillset, but it is very important that we get the message right and altogether we try and give people the comfort that there is a sustainable industry being developed again and encourage them to return. It is important that the message is communicated to young people that the opportunities will be there for them to return and not just to Dublin but right across the country. Thank you.

MS. MARY CUNNINGHAM, MINISTER JIMMY DEENIHAN, AND MS. MARIE-CLAIRE MCALEER



MS. MOIRA LEYDON



INPUT FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY TEACHERS, IRELAND

MS. MOIRA LEYDON

"If we want our teaching graduates to return to Ireland, if we want to encourage graduates to return, particularly graduates in teaching, we are going to have to look at the nature of the employment opportunities open to them..." (Ms. Moira Leydon, ASTI).

Thank you Sean - that was a great story. It really was and I think anybody listening, particularly outside the country, will really take hope from that.

I'm also very pleased to be here today as a trade union official. I think it is really important that the voice of organised labour (to use an old fashioned phrase), but the voice of workers, (public, private sector, irrespective) the voice of the people who are keeping this country afloat is heard in arenas like this.

People primarily emigrate because of the economic push and pull factors. It is all about economics. I think trade unions are a vital agency in any of the debates about economics but particularly about the debate about how our model of recovery will be.

I also think that teachers unions have a particularly important mission in the public arena. We work with young people day in day out. Primary school teachers work with our children over an 8 year period. Second level teachers work up to a minimum of 5 or 6 years with young people. 92% of our young people in Ireland complete the Leaving Certificate, (the senior cycle education). It is the second highest in the OECD.

When our second level teachers talk about young people and they talk about life chances, they are talking about people they know intimately. They are with them on that life journey. All of us who are parents will know from the age of 13 to 18, it is never an easy journey. It is often a rocky road. When we talk about emigration and talk about the particular challenges for teachers in their profession, we are also very mindful we are talking about young people who have been educated, supported by their families, and nurtured by their communities. They are the people who are abroad, and teachers have a very vital and enduring interest in their future, particularly in their wellbeing.

I suppose I take the view that at the end of the day the economics is the nexus between the push and the pull. The attractiveness of other opportunities in life and the push of the home country, and economics I think is that nexus.

Some time ago a Government Minister made a statement to the effect that emigration was for some, a life style choice. We had a huge spectrum of response to that, which I think illustrates that kind of constantly changing dynamic between the push and pull of migration.

If I can digress for a moment, when I was drafting this presentation I thought, yes, I could feel my own visceral response to what another government said over almost 30 years ago, to the effect that this island was too small to sustain a large population. Therefore, we had to emigrate as a matter of course. So you know the discourse may have become more sophisticated, it may have become broader, it may have become more informed, but it is an old discourse in Irish public life. Unlike the old adage that getting into teaching is a good steady job, it is a decent enough wage, you have good holidays etc., - that is no longer the case. Teaching is not like that any longer unfortunately.

I think what has happened in teaching is probably a warning tale to what may also happen and what is happening in other employment situations. It is not often a well understood story because the story of employment and the labour market is significantly different actually from the story of the labour market at primary level. Unfortunately the labour market for primary school teachers is now beginning to go down the road of second level teachers.

Unfortunately I can't give you statistics about the number of second level teachers who emigrate. Not because I haven't done my research, but actually the statistics don't exist. Neither the Teaching Council (which is the regulatory body), nor the Department of Education & Skills has these statistics. I think one of the key recommendations in the NYCI's own research was the need for better statistics. We need this data - we need to know who is going, why they are going and the profile of emigrants.

The Higher Education Authority does an annual report called the first destination of graduates and it is really worth looking at. It is a snapshot, a year after graduation of where graduates are. For the last 15 years, it has fluctuated but between 5 and 11% of graduates, one year after qualification, are working abroad. That might seem quite a low number and the problem is, I can't say if that is a reflective number, because we don't have anything to compare it against.

We do have one piece of research and again thanks to Marie-Claire for directing me to this. Professor Louise Ryan of Middlesex University published a report under the Irish and Britain series about recently arrived Irish teachers in Britain. It was quite a small sample, (114 teachers) but based on my professional knowledge and experience of the field, I think reflects the reality. For example 68% of these teachers left Ireland because they couldn't get work here at home. Of those who left, only 26% were working as teachers before they left Ireland, and I think is a highly credible statistic and we can extrapolate from that.

So what's causing the unemployment crisis among teachers? It is quite complex and it is complex because it is a complexity which had proceeded austerity, which is what I think makes it particularly challenging. Austerity has compounded it, but it hasn't caused it.

Since 2009, there have been lots of budget cuts, freezing school management positions, etc. The crude fact of the matter is that by increasing the pupil teacher ratio, over 1,000 teaching posts were lost in second level education. There are approximately 750 second level schools in Ireland, so every school lost at least one teaching post.

For those of you who are parents, who are interested in what that means, a teacher on full-time hours, on a full-time contract will teach 33 classes per week. So when you lose a teacher in a school, you have to cover 33 classes. You can't suddenly say, oh we are not going to do geography or we are not going to do history. The school has to redeploy those classes among the existing staff.

Austerity has led to a phenomenon of the intensification of work for teachers. It also has had an impact on the students, who are being taught in an environment which is less than satisfactory. Off course, that is not my brief today but I think it is an important point to make.

The ASTI has spent quite a bit of money over the last 3 years commissioning Millward Browne Lansdowne to do research on our behalf. We have found that between 2009 and 2014 (that is the last year we did it), the average loss of posts per school was between 1 and 3 posts, when you factor in the pupil-teacher ratio plus the loss of teachers for DEIS schools, teachers of students who don't speak English, and special needs teachers etc.

Austerity has reduced job opportunities for teachers and caused the underemployment of teachers. The Department of Education and Skills, in its discussion with the unions under the Haddington Road Agreement, conceded in 2013 that almost a third (29%) of second level teachers is employed on fixed-term contracts or part-time contracts. What that actually means is that almost a third of the teachers in second level schools are employed in jobs which are actually not full-time jobs.

For example at the moment, we have the huge emphasis on STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths education. Of course, we need to increase the status of those subjects and the perception of these subjects by young people. We also need to do more of them and we need to do more of them better and we have various initiatives to do that. The problem is, the school wants to put on chemistry but because of the imposition of a pupil-teacher ratio, the school cannot employ a chemistry teacher. So what do you do, you employ a chemistry teacher for 7 hours per week. That poor teacher could be in that job for 7 hours a week, for 2 or 3 years. Now that is the nature of second level teacher employment at the moment. There is no security of labour in second level teaching.

To quote some international statistics, the OECD has a study called *Teaching and Learning International Study* (TALIS). The first TALIS in 2008 found, that in Ireland, under 75% of secondary school teachers were in permanent positions compared to 84% in comparative countries. In 2012, TALIS found that 93% of Irish teachers with 2 or 3 years less teaching experience had a fixed-term contract compared to 59% of their OECD counterparts.

Interestingly amongst teachers who had more than 2 years teaching experience in Ireland, 52% of teachers on fixed-term contracts with more than 2 years' experience had between 3 and 10 years teaching experience. So in other words when you get beyond the difficult 2 years after college, you are still in a labour market where you have only a 50% chance of getting a full-time job.

If the teaching profession is so downgraded in the public discourse, so poorly paid, and doesn't offer secure employment (in fact offers precarious employment), we are not going to get the graduates that we want.

I'm a great believer in looking at what the big guys are doing and the big guys in the education world are the OECD but also the other big guys are the McKinsey Consultancy, the Pearson Consultancy, and the McBirr. All of these global consultancies have a profound impact on government's education policy. They are bringing out reports which basically are advising governments, 'if you want to avoid a crisis in the recruitment and the retention of teachers, you've got to treat teachers well'.

For example, in 2010 McKinsey brought out a report with a title, *'Closing the talent gap, attracting and retaining the top third graduates to careers in teaching.'* What they are all saying, whether they are coming from the intergovernmental perspective or the private consultancy perspective, is that if you want to improve your educational outcomes, you have to improve the quality of teaching.

There are two messages about improving the quality of teaching - obviously good initial teacher preparation and good teacher learning, and good incentives for teachers to perform better and good school leadership. They are saying - if you also want to improve the quality of teaching, then you pay teachers well. You give them job security. You give their profession a status in society. The ASTI is extremely concerned about the erosion of the working conditions of teachers. Apart from the austerity wage cuts, we are concerned about the erosion of employment security, the erosion of the status of teaching, and the casualization of the profession. We are deeply concerned that unless those labour market characteristics are addressed, teaching is not going to be an attractive career.

I want to just go on to 1 or 2 points before I conclude. So I think I have kind of communicated that I think this is an important moment. If we want our teaching graduates to return to Ireland, if we want to encourage graduates to return, we are going to have to look at the nature of the employment opportunities open to them. They are not going to come home to a job where you teach 7 hours a week in one school and you might get 3 hours a week in another school. No graduate is going to come back to that.

To go back to my key statistic this afternoon, 29% of second level teachers are not in full-time jobs. The unions are actively engaged (through the whole process of social dialogue and partnership) with the various agencies, and the Department of Education and Skills to try to rectify these matters. For example, under the Haddington Road agreement, we have had an expert working group to look at this very issue and I think it is important to make that point.

GAA JERSEYS ON DISPLAY AT THE CONFERENCE, TO SIGNIFY THE LOSS OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF IRELAND, AS A RESULT OF EMIGRATION.



Finally, I think we have reached a tipping point in Ireland on this matter, with huge discontent among the teaching profession. In 2013, the HEA did an analysis of CAO, first preference applications right across the board, but looking at education it showed for the first time a consistent downward trend in applications. For example in 2009, 11.6% of candidates indicated a second level education programme as their first preference compared to 9.2% in 2013. At primary level the figures were 6.5% in 2009 and they are down to 4.8% in 2013 and that is unprecedented - teaching is now not the top of the list for graduates.

Marie-Claire, I think your research report, *Time to Go?*, and the warning that you gave at the end of it, that we can't be complacent about return migration, I don't think we can be complacent. I think if we want to have return migration of teacher graduates, teacher employment is going to have to be rationalised. It is almost like a free market in labour among 4,000 employers. There are 92,000 registered teachers in the state, paid for by society. It cannot be the case that their employment, their labour market is so deregulated that a third of them almost end up in non-full time employment. We have to address that.

To conclude, I suppose the broader issues are that the push and the pull of migration are always in the economic space. If we want return migration, we have to address the economic space. We have to address the attractiveness of certain professions, and I also think it was quite interesting to hear some of the reasons that those really articulate young people communicated to us in this morning's plenary session. I mean transport, the cost of housing, the cost of health insurance, the cost of child care, the commute, the lack of social housing. I kind of said to myself, yeah that annoys me too, you know. It annoys all of us. They are the challenges for Government. It is a social challenge, it is not just the migrant who is out there and they will come home one day and once again add to a kind of an economic cycle of greater prosperity.

I think we all have to look at what kind of society we want and I think trade unions have a vital voice in creating that society.

Thank you.

MS. PHIL NI SHEAGHDHA



INPUT FROM THE IRISH NURSES AND MIDWIVES ORGANISATION

MS. PHIL NI SHEAGHDHA

"It is not a bad thing to go abroad, it is a good thing. You learn skills, with a view to bringing them home and enhancing your own service. We have always relied on returning emigrants to enhance our systems and now we are making it more difficult for them to return. When they do return, we treat them like second class citizens - that is absolutely wrong. It is an incorrect policy that will not serve society well" (Ms. Phil Ni Sheaghda, INMO).

Thanks very much. Good afternoon everybody. My name is Phil NiSheaghda and I work with the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO). We represent nurses and midwives who work in the Irish public health service and in the private health service in Ireland. I suppose the trends that we have seen over the last number of years are very similar to the trends in other public service professions like teaching and medicine.

The main issue I think that we really need to look at is our Government's policy in respect of public services or public health service, from the point of view of what type of a society we want to live in. At the moment, we have an overcrowded and understaffed public health service, and that appears to be okay except for those who work in it. You will hear the government saying continuously there are no real problems, yes, the trolley count is going up but that is just about how we shape it, as opposed to how many beds are available.

We started counting trolleys in accident and emergency units as a policy. We decided to count them on a daily basis, almost 13 years ago. The figure has increased every single year. So regardless of who is in power, regardless of what policy changes, the reality is, there are not enough beds for those that need them.

We also have a very real problem where we are training enough graduates but we are making it impossible for them to stay in this country. We train about 1,500 nurses every year, between midwifery, psychiatry, intellectual disability and general nursing - a broad spectrum of training. We are very lucky because young graduates from our secondary schools still find it a very attractive profession to enter. There are always more applicants than places, which is good news. So what happens, we give them a really good training, funded by the Government until their final year where they work and they get paid 50% of what a full-time employee would get. Then there is absolutely no path from that point onward, except emigration. Their biggest criticism of the country that trains them is you give us no hope. You train us, we love what we do, and there is a requirement for us clearly (we have an aging population). We are always going to need nurses to replace those that retire but we have to emigrate. It is our only option to begin with, and surely that is the wrong message for graduates.

Last year, the Government took a decision to introduce a graduate placement programme, *that is what they called it*, what it was basically was a 15% wage cut by another name. The graduates responded by emigrating and very few of them, in fact less than 300 have taken up the places. The Government set aside 1,000 places and why they did this is very interesting. It was in reaction to the public service moratorium. The public service moratorium was introduced in the Irish public health service in November of 2009. Certain grades at that point were given a status which did not include them, for example consultants and other social care workers who were deemed to be essential to the service. From that time until now we have lost just over 4,700 nursing posts from the Irish public health service. What that means is when posts become vacant, they are not replaced. Year on year our agency cost has gone up. Last year, the cost of employing agency nurses was €80 million, which is an extra cost on the system purely to get by the public service moratorium - it makes no sense! Anybody who looks at it, including government ministers, including civil servants, including the HSE, they all agree, we know it is costing us more money to maintain the public service moratorium and in the meantime we have a graduate placement which is focusing in on not being included in the moratorium. So we all know what the problem is. The problem is the moratorium.

We need to ensure that it is not costing us money to continually put in place a system which discourages employment. So if the public service moratorium was not in place for nursing posts, the country would save money and that makes a lot of sense.

I have some advertisements that I looked at last night. There are advertisements for Manchester. They are recruiting new graduates from Ireland. They are coming to Dublin and doing interviews. They will provide a salary of £30,251 sterling. They will also provide a bursary if you stay for a year, of just over £1,000 sterling, and if you stay for 2 years, you will get a bursary of £3,000. Similar contracts exist in the United States, in America, all over the United States, Canada and in the Saudi Arabian countries.

So our graduates are very employable in most of the English speaking countries. They are educated to degree level and the statistics show that when nurses are educated to degree status, the patients actually have better outcomes. So we know there is a world-wide shortage of nurses and we know we are training enough for our needs. Yet our public policies are ensuring that other countries benefit - that doesn't make any sense.

It also makes it very difficult to re-enter nursing in Ireland as a return migrant. The point that our graduates who go abroad make, is that they don't know what we are coming back to. If you come back into the public service you are going to be considered a new entrant. You have a different pension scheme and a lower salary. So therefore you are constantly working in a 2 tier system, even though you are doing exactly the same job - so all of that is very unattractive. These are government decisions that could easily be rectified.

In addition to that, the debate has to be broader I think than the trade unions. This week, we are joining with some patient groups and we are starting meetings in various parts of the country. Tonight we are in Limerick, where we are asking the public, *what do you actually want from a public health service? Do you want a public health service that is going to be there when you need it, when you are old?*, because at the moment that is not going to happen. You have a system where you are forcing your nurses and doctors to emigrate.

The point is, when we train our own citizens to do a job, if they go abroad, they get the benefit, in medicine and in nursing. It is not a bad thing to go abroad, it is a good thing. You learn skills, with a view to bringing them home and enhancing our own service. We have always relied on returning emigrants to enhance our systems and now we are making it more difficult for them to return. When they do return, we treat them like second class citizens - that is absolutely wrong. It is an incorrect policy that will not serve society well.

The unions are always accused of having a special interest. We make absolutely no apology. We do have a special interest in what happens to nurses and midwives but we also have a very special interest in what happens to the public health service. We believe fundamentally that Ireland benefits from having a public health service that puts the needs of the patients before profit and we don't think that any other system would match that. If the whole point of providing a public service, providing a public health service is to save money, then that definitely will not serve Irish citizens.

In the public service, the service plan for health is on a yearly basis. Now I'm presuming that all of you who work in various industries will know that it is very difficult to plan on a yearly basis. Particularly with costs that are not identified in advance. For example, how many people haven't subscribed to private health insurance over the last number of years? What health services are available? The public health service is available. So you never know how many people are depending on your public health service.

Therefore you have to ensure that the public health service will be available when it is required, both for our young, our middle aged and our now aging population. The current model will not serve us well, considering the nursing students we are training are emigrating and providing their skills to other jurisdictions. Other countries, however, are planning ahead and they are making it very attractive for our graduates to go and work there.

In the mid-1980's to 1990's, we had a real crisis in nursing and midwifery and we had to go abroad and recruit from the Philippines and from India. Our health service was basically bailed out by nurses who came from those countries to work here. Many of them still work here and the Irish Government did not think there was anything wrong with going to countries like India, who had real shortages within their own population of those skills and recruiting them to our country.

I suppose the fundamental point is the policies of Government, when they are based on finance, will only lead to very negative outcomes. Not just for the workers in this case, but also for those that are relying on the public health service. Ireland as a society must decide if we want to continue with a public health service that has fairly fundamental values of putting the patient first and putting patient's needs before finance. If this is the sort of model we want, then it has to be properly funded. The current model of funding obviously needs to be looked at.

I think from the point of view of the young nurses whom we represent, what they say to us is, I'd love to work in Ireland, I'd love to consolidate my training, it is the best way to do it but there is no hope that I will ever get a full-time permanent job in Ireland. There is no hope that I can have a life and I can plan further education, which will benefit the employer ultimately, and that is not right. The will is there, they want to do it but it is the policies that are coming against them.

So I'll take whatever questions you have. I think that is enough bad news for this session. Thank you.

SPEAKING TO THE CONFERENCE THROUGH THE LIVESTREAM, MS. ELAINE KEARNEY, A YOUNG IRISH EMIGRANT CURRENTLY LIVING IN TORONTO, CANADA. ALSO IN THE PICTURE IS MS. DOVILE ŽVALIONYTĖ, DR. MARTIN RUSSELL AND MR. JAMES DOORLEY.



INTERACTION WITH THE AUDIENCE – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

Before facilitating the interaction with the audience and opening the discussion to the floor for questions and comments, Ms. Mary Cunningham thanked the 3 panellists for their really powerful inputs. She said all 3 inputs highlighted the complexity of the policies that impact on the lives of the current wave of young Irish emigrants.

The cross sectoral inputs highlighted the need to adopt a more integrated, cross-cutting policy approach to respond to the needs of emigrants. It is not just about providing supports for those overseas but also about addressing national policy deficits which encourage people to emigrate and deter young emigrants from returning to Ireland in the future.

The chair opened the discussion to the audience by inviting questions or comments from the floor and through the conference twitter feed. The following inputs from conference participants and responses from panellists during the remainder of plenary session 3 were transcribed verbatim.⁴

Intervention from Mr. Damian Owens – Engineers Ireland.

It was a very thought provoking session this afternoon, I really appreciated it. We recently undertook a survey of our members and 25% of them who are overseas indicated that they went there because of economic need. Over 50% went by choice to further their career or see the world. I concur totally with what Sean (CIF) was saying about the skill shortages, the impending and looming skill shortages. I mean we need to ask ourselves who has created the skill shortage in this particular incidence. The answer I would suggest is because when the economy imploded a few years ago, particularly in the construction sector, we all said to our children or it was said to our children, don't go into the construction industry and don't go for any courses there. Four years down the road, there are few people graduating in the sector and tons of jobs in those particular sectors. We need to learn this lesson. We have been here before in the dot com era of 2000 when the IT industry crashed. We said the same messages to our young people - don't do IT courses and we had a skill shortage 4 or 5 years later. So I think we need to learn as a nation. We are quite young as a nation. We have never had a boom time except for the last one. We need to learn that, just as booms end so do recessions and we need to instil in our young people that they need to develop a number of skills for different careers for life. Young people need to develop transferable skills and continue skills development throughout their career to smooth out the troughs and peaks of economic activity and carry us through it. Maybe we should see the glass more as half full than half empty when we hit those road bumps. Thank you.

⁴ In order to provide an accurate reflection of the inputs from the audience and the general discussion, the comments/questions from the audience and some of the responses have been transcribed verbatim. Minor editing has been done to avoid repetitious text or lack of clarity in the Conference Report.

Intervention from Mr. David Burns – Founder of ‘We are Coming Back’

The first thing I'd like to do is thank the National Youth Council of Ireland for inviting us here. We are a youth group that advocates for emigrant voting rights. I was fascinated hearing your presentations. I was wondering whether you maintained links with young Irish nurses that might have a facebook page, say in Australia, to gain a list of their demands or issues that they feel encouraged them to depart, and a list of things that might encourage them to return?

From my perspective, it seems that communication is possible now more than it ever was before and it is something that should definitely be explored. One of the most interesting points raised today was the Minister's acknowledgement of the need to address the lack of a youth element in the Global Irish Network and to redress the gender imbalance.

Responses from Panellists**Ms. Phil Ni Sheaghda – Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation**

We maintain links with nurses who emigrate and we have a student officer who communicates with students prior to qualification and post graduation. They have a facebook page which has a lot of traffic, a lot of it looking for employment opportunities and enquiring about the current status. We invite students who are home or graduates who are home to speak at our conference every year. Last year we had a chap who is living in Australia and he gave his opinion and his experience. It is, you are absolutely right, it is really important that we do that as a trade union. We are not the employer. As far as I know the Department of Health or the HSE don't have a system like that, but we certainly do keep in touch, and it is very important, you are absolutely right.

Ms. Moira Leydon – ASTI

The ASTI has started a pilot project with one college and has set up a young student network to track where student teachers are going. The student teacher network is a network to try to engage with this cohort and find out where they are going to go, whether they are going to go abroad or stay here. I think it is really important that social agencies like trade unions do that.

Mr. Sean Downey – Construction Industry Federation

In terms of the construction, the main thing we are involved in is trying to give people information on the industry as regards projects and where the demand is likely to be. The main stream vehicles at the minute are LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.

Intervention from Mr. Alex Layden – Young Fine Gael

We heard quite a bit on what appears to be the primary obstacle for returning migrants - the economic conditions here. Obviously that is a challenge our country faces generally. Apart from that, are there any other obstacles that you can foresee in your particular industries, if and when the labour market for those industries becomes more favourable? I'm thinking along the lines of the transferability of training that emigrants might get overseas. *Are there any other sorts of issues that you can foresee or that exist at the moment?*

Response from Phil Ni Sheaghda – Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation

Some of it is the moratorium in recruitment for those grades that are subjected to it, and the atypical contracts, the fixed-term contracts, the part-time contracts, and the agency contracts. Nobody is going to give up a permanent job in the UK to come home to have an atypical contract that doesn't guarantee hours. It is just not sustainable.

The issue of affordable quality child care also needs to be addressed.

Response from Mr. Sean Downey – Construction Industry Federation

There are lots of reasons why you would say there are lots of barriers to return. It is an expensive place to live.

I think it is absolutely critical that when you look at the different stakeholders that are all involved, everybody is identifying different barriers - be it conditions of employment, the security of wages or a security of a living wage.

A coordinated approach at Government level is required, to address the multifaceted barriers to return which currently exist, and to build a stable economy, to encourage the current wave of young Irish emigrants to return.

Intervention from Dr. Olga Cleary – Institute of Public Health Ireland

I just want to say thanks to NYCI. I found it a really stimulating day and I have a lot of comments but I'll stick to 2 that I think are particularly pertinent in terms of the health realm. The first one is really just to qualify the idea or the notion of an aging population. I have heard it mentioned several times today and in and of itself, an aging population is not problematic. I think what is problematic is the proportion or the ratio of unwell or sick people in our society compared to the proportion that are actually healthy.

I think we need to start thinking about health drain out of society and social drain out of society. The youth that are emigrating and the healthy emigrants that we are sending abroad contribute invaluable to our society in terms of social support, for mental health, in terms of caring for older people in society, such as siblings and other family members. I think we just need to appreciate the broader dimensions of our emigration. It is important to try to attract those types of people home and to balance out that health drain.

The other thing that I would just point to is the importance for future policy proofing and particularly in the health realm. We are now looking towards the introduction of a health insurance life time rating which will punish people returning from abroad, if you haven't already been paying into health insurance. We don't have any mechanism for addressing those types of future policies. We need to start looking across government and at all of these different policies. We need to start thinking about planning for our future policies. Not just the current barriers. Thank you.

Closing comments from Chair

The consistent message from the discussion arising from plenary session 3 is that policy planning in the medium to long-term is imperative. The other recurring theme is the need to adopt a cross-cutting policy approach to respond to the needs of the current wave of young Irish emigrants, and encourage and facilitate them to return to Ireland in the future.

The chair concluded the session.

CONFERENCE SYNOPSIS AND KEY OUTCOMES

The Home is Where the Heart... A Conference on Return Migration, sought to explore:

- the current barriers to return migration and identify ways to address these,
- how to reduce the risk of a permanent loss of valuable skills from the Irish economy and incentivize return migration,
- the components required in a strategy to facilitate return migration.

There were 3 plenary sessions throughout the day. The conference was designed in such a way to provide a forum that was interactive and engaged the audience (present at the event and viewing online through the livestream) in the discussion. The event was live streamed and promoted through various different Irish organisations and networks at home and abroad in advance of the conference.

OVERVIEW OF PLENARY SESSIONS

Plenary Session 1

The day started with a welcome and introduction from Ms. Mary Cunningham, Director of NYCI. Ms. Cunningham provided a context for the event and chaired plenary session 1. She formally introduced Minister Deenihan, who officially opened the conference and provided an opening address. The second speaker of the day was Ms. Marie-Claire McAleer. Ms. McAleer presented a paper entitled *Home is Where the Heart is – Exploring the issue of Return Migration*, which outlined the social and economic context, and migration trends during the recession. In her paper, Ms. McAleer highlighted why facilitation and support for return migration was so important. She also emphasised the need for Government to develop a long-term policy plan, responsive to changes in migration and demography, and responsive to the changing needs of the current wave of young Irish emigrants.

Ms. McAleer highlighted current structural and attitudinal barriers to return, identified by young Irish emigrants. She concluded by introducing video recorded interviews with some young Irish emigrants, currently living in New York, Sarajevo, London, Toronto and Brussels, about their current situation, their intentions for the future and their thoughts on return migration to Ireland. The inputs from young Irish emigrants from different parts of the world provided very important insights, which helped to inform the discussion.

Plenary session 2

Plenary session 2 was chaired by Mr. James Doorley, Deputy Director of NYCI. During the plenary session, the current structural and attitudinal barriers to return migration were identified. Following the pre-recorded inputs from young Irish emigrants from across the world, presentations were provided by Dr. Martin Russell and Ms. Dovile Žvalionytė (from the Public Policy and Management Institute in Lithuania). Dr. Russell's paper addressed the challenges of return - drawing on his

research on the experience of recently returned migrants to Ireland. Ms. Žvalionyte's presentation focused on Lithuanian experience of return migration strategies.

After the presentations, the chair opened the discussion to the audience and invited comments or questions from the floor. A lively discussion ensued on how to address barriers to return, and how to facilitate and encourage return migration to Ireland. Conference delegates also gave their reactions to the presentations.

Barriers identified by emigrants

There were many barriers to return migration identified during the conference. One of the key factors identified was the availability of employment and better job prospects for young Irish emigrants to return to. There were other policy issues identified by emigrants as well.

Some of the key deterrents (identified by emigrants) to returning to Ireland at present ranged from:

- poor infrastructure,
- precarious working conditions and poor salaries,
- lack of career opportunities and limited career progression options in Ireland,
- the inability to have a career outside of Dublin,
- lack of affordable quality housing,
- a prohibitive and high cost health care system with costly health insurance,
- the prevalence of high taxes,
- the increasing cost of living,
- difficulty accessing school places, for those returning with children and the high cost of childcare, which also serves as a disincentive to return.

One young emigrant stated that despite the strong yearning and emotional ties drawing her back, she felt managing a return to Ireland after a few years abroad is challenging.

She said:

"There is so much stress, pressure and indeed risk involved, in managing a return to Ireland. It is quite an isolating process, filled with administrative as well as emotional challenges. To have some sort of governmental assistance would certainly be a step towards supporting, encouraging and indeed welcoming return migrants home" (Young Irish Emigrant, September 2014).

Another emigrant stated that although he really wants to come home in the future, he is concerned about not being able to use the skills, capital and expertise acquired whilst abroad, in the Irish labour market.

He said:

"One of my main struggles now is thinking about what I should do when I go back. I have developed skills and knowledge here that have been so useful and valuable, but I'm not sure if they

have a place in Ireland. In fact, I'm not entirely sure what kind of job I would get in Ireland, because one of the major consequences of moving away was making myself marketable in this economy rather than the Irish one. It begs the question whether the Irish economy is creating the kind of jobs that allow emigrants to come back or whether it is creating its own kind of economy of very different or niche jobs?" (Young Irish Emigrant, September 2014).

Concern was expressed about whether or not the skills and expertise emigrants acquired abroad could be leveraged in the Irish labour market.

"You get skills and you work at different levels in your professional life that may not be relevant in Ireland...I would have to go in at a different level to find a job in Ireland. I know for example if I was working in ICT or Pharmaceutical or banking sectors, there are a lot more opportunities for Irish people to come home, but you know in a sector like this, I see the opportunities being mainly in the international context" (Young Irish Emigrant, September 2014).

The view was also expressed that closer connections needed to be forged between Ireland and the current wave of young emigrants to encourage return migration. In terms of how this should happen, it was argued that the current Government had a key role to play in enhancing the links between Ireland and its young emigrants abroad and in attracting them back to Ireland in the future.

The following quotations from emigrants who inputted into the conference, conveys the need for the Irish Government to have an active role in engaging and connecting with the current wave of young emigrants from Ireland in a meaningful way.

"I think the Irish Government needs to keep in touch with us. Now keeping in touch with us isn't just a one way communication, it needs to be both ways. We need to feel like when we cross the border we are not just forgotten about..." (Young Irish Emigrant, September 2014).

It was felt that there needed to be more done to engage with emigrants and to keep better records of Irish people living abroad.

"We have nothing, there isn't even a list of emigrants in a country kept by the Irish Embassy in Belgium. We have very little connection with the countryside, with our country. We have this emotional connection and I think that is sometimes relied upon by the Irish Government and it is not enough" (Young Irish Emigrant, September 2014).

What should Government do to connect and engage with young Irish emigrants?

Emigrants abroad expressed the view that, if the Irish Government is serious about attracting emigrants back to Ireland in the future, then they need to initiate a commitment to this project, and put in place practical measures to attract them back.

One emigrant stated:

"I guess one thing that strikes me is the level to which international companies recruit Irish graduates to work abroad. You know they come to Ireland, host jobs fairs, provide all the information people need in terms of visas, and how to settle in abroad, and I guess if the Irish Government are committed to initiating this return migration wave, well then I think they need to show that same level of commitment to getting Irish emigrants back – whether it is connecting with them through emigration centres or online. Potentially they could set up like a data base of skilled workers abroad, so that if there is job creation within a certain area that could be met by targeting that area specifically" (Young Irish Emigrant, September 2014).

"My sense from meeting other Irish people (here) is that many do want to move back or they see that as...their choice within the next few years but at the same time I think it would be difficult for people to move back unless they have something significant to move back to and while...there is recovery in the Irish economy. You know it is not really enough to inspire people to move back unless there is something more concrete..." (Young Irish Emigrant, September 2014).

Given the myriad of complex issues highlighted by emigrants, as barriers inhibiting their prospects of return to Ireland in the future, a common response emerging during the conference deliberations, was the need for across departmental, whole of Government response.

Plenary session 3

Plenary session 3 was chaired by Ms. Mary Cunningham and the three panellists were Mr. Sean Downey representing the Construction Industry Federation, Ms. Moira Leydon representing the ASTI and Ms. Phil Ni Sheaghda representing the INMO.

Plenary session 3 explored the impact of youth emigration on the labour market and the consequent skills loss. The session focused on a cross section of professions that have been particularly affected by youth emigration from Ireland in recent years.

The discussion focused on the impact of the prevailing brain drain from Irish society of young highly skilled and educated people. It addressed key challenges facing young people in particular professions at present. Cross sector specific solutions were proposed, to avoid the permanent loss of valuable skills from the Irish economy and to incentivize young emigrants to return to Ireland in the future.

Plenary 3 provided for a lively and engaging discussion which raised a number of key issues around barriers to return, in a variety of professions, and how to address these barriers at a policy and practical level.

A recurring theme emerging during the discussion was the need for Government across a number of departments, to work to address the barriers to return, and to develop a strategy to facilitate return migration.

Emphasis was placed on the need to start thinking about, what one conference delegate called, the “health and social drain out” of society, arising from the prevalence of youth emigration, and consequent loss of the healthy emigrants, who are travelling abroad. These young emigrants contribute invaluablely to our society in terms of social supports, in terms of caring for older people in society, caring for siblings, and caring for other family members. It was argued that the State needs to recognise the broader dimensions and impact of youth emigration. In this regard, it is vital that Government acknowledges at a policy level, the importance of trying to attract these young emigrants back home.

During the conference, many examples were given of policy decisions taken or policies developed, that did not consider the impact on young Irish emigrants abroad. For example, the Minister in his opening address referred to the situation of a returning migrant losing their no-claims bonus for car insurance. Another example cited by an emigrant tuning in online, related to problems arising from lack of recognition for credit history, all of which caused unnecessary hassle when they returned home.

Another example that emerged during the conference related to health insurance. In the context of the introduction of a health insurance life time rating, consideration must be given to the impact on young emigrants who will be penalised returning from abroad, if they haven't been paying into health insurance during their period of absence. Furthermore, we need to ensure when Irish social policies are being formulated, that consideration is given to the impact on young Irish people at home and abroad. The discussion reaffirmed the importance of future policy proofing across a range of policy areas that may impact on the lives of young emigrants.

The absence of data on the number of skilled workers who have left Ireland since the start of the recession, was raised as an issue of concern during the conference. Although there has been an improvement in the data the CSO collects in recent months, the point was made that Government should establish a data base of emigrants, which would include the occupation and destination of the emigrant. Such data collection and profiling is integral to future policy planning and the maintenance of good links with our citizens abroad. The data would be very useful for connecting with the Diaspora and facilitating return migration to Ireland in the future.

CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM CONFERENCE

Recommendation 1:

- Given the current review of policy on the Diaspora, it is important that provision is made within the new policy framework to develop and implement a strategy to facilitate return migration. This strategy to facilitate return migration requires a coordinated and cross-cutting policy approach to address the current barriers and obstacles to return. It also requires an action plan with adequate resources to implement the actions and to incentivise, support and facilitate young Irish emigrants to return to Ireland, as the economy starts to recover.

Recommendation 2:

- Under the new Diaspora Policy framework, a cross Government Departmental group should be established, to initiate policy-proofing of Irish social policies that impact negatively on emigrants, before and after they leave Ireland, and to make recommendations on how these issues can be addressed.

Recommendation 3:

- Sufficient resources are required to ensure the Diaspora policy is fully implemented, and provision should be made for rigorous review and monitoring, to ensure it is effective.

Recommendation 4

- Stimulate investment and foster employment in the regions, (outside the major cities) to encourage young Irish emigrants to return home.

Recommendation 5

- Establish a register or database of skilled Irish emigrants abroad to facilitate emigrants to return, if there is job creation within a specific area that relates to their occupation or field.

Recommendation 6

- Foster closer connections between Ireland and its young emigrants through continued investment in immigration centres abroad and through online mechanisms.

Recommendation 7

- Extend voting rights to emigrants in Irish Presidential elections.

SUMMARY OF CROSS SECTOR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS (ARISING FROM PLENARY SESSION 3):

Construction Profession

- A coordinated approach at Government level is required, to address the multifaceted barriers to return which currently exist, and to build a stable economy, to encourage the current wave of recent Irish emigrants to return.

Teaching Profession

- Adopt a model like the Scottish system, where every young teacher is given a guaranteed placement of one year to complete their induction.

Nursing Profession

- Remove the public sector moratorium and penalties that exist for returnees re-entering the nursing profession after a period abroad, and give recognition to years of service worked.
- Widen the debate about the impact of emigration to include a cross section of social partners, interest groups and professions, to inform the development of relevant public policy.
- Provide work place crèches subsidised by the employer to ensure affordable quality childcare.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES



IRE 148-008

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

A CONFERENCE ON RETURN MIGRATION FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE



Location
DUBLIN CASTLE

Date
16-09-14



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**DUBLIN
CASTLE**

Date / time

16-09-14
9:30-15:30

Printworks Conference Centre, Dublin Castle

09.30	Registration and networking
10.00	<p>Plenary Session 1 - Welcome and Opening</p> <p>Chair: Mary Cunningham, Director, National Youth Council of Ireland</p> <p>Opening Address Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister of State at Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs and Trade with special responsibility for the Diaspora</p> <p>Home is Where the Heart is – Exploring the issue of Return Migration Marie-Claire McAleer, Senior Research & Policy Officer, National Youth Council of Ireland</p> <p>Inputs from young Irish emigrants living abroad</p>
11.00	Break
11.15	<p>Plenary Session 2 - Barriers to Return Migration</p> <p>Chair: James Doorley, Deputy Director, National Youth Council of Ireland</p> <p>Inputs from young Irish emigrants living abroad continued</p> <p>The Challenge of Return - The Experience of Recently Returned Migrants Dr Martin Russell</p> <p>Return Migration Strategies – The Lithuanian Experience Ms Dovile Žvalionyte, Public Policy and Management Institute, Lithuania</p> <p>Interaction with the Audience – Questions and Answers Session</p>
1.00	Buffet Lunch
2.00	<p>Plenary Session 3 – Emigration – The Economic Cost</p> <p>Chair: Mary Cunningham, Director, National Youth Council of Ireland</p> <p>Panel Mr. Sean Downey, Construction Industry Federation Ms Moira Leydon, Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland Ms. Phil Ni Sheaghda, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation</p> <p>Interaction with the Audience – Questions and Answers Session</p>
3.15	<p>Closing remarks Mary Cunningham, Director, National Youth Council of Ireland</p>



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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Mary Cunningham, Director, National Youth Council of Ireland



Mary Cunningham is Director of the National Youth Council of Ireland, a post she has held since 2002. Prior to this she had a varied career working at senior level in the NGO sectors in both Ireland and Northern Ireland, having started her professional career in teaching. She has been a member of a wide range of boards and strategic committees, including the National Youth Work Advisory Committee, the National Assessment Committee for the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund and the North/South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work. Earlier she was Co-Chair of the Children and Young People's Participation Partnership Committee at the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and Board member and Chair of the Audit Committee of the Office of Tobacco Control. Ms Cunningham holds an MBA from the University of Ulster.

Jimmy Deenihan, TD, Minister of State for the Diaspora



Jimmy Deenihan, TD was appointed to this role as Minister for the Diaspora on July 11, 2014, having previously served as Minister for Arts, Heritage & Gaeltacht Affairs. He has continuously served in Dáil Éireann since first being elected in 1987. Prior to that, from 1982- 1987, he was a Taoiseach's nominee to Seanad Éireann.

Minister Deenihan was previously a member of Kerry County Council from 1985 to 1994, and a member of Kerry County Vocational Education Committee from 1985 to 1991. From 1992 to 1994 he was also a member of the Kerry County Enterprise Board and was re-elected to Kerry Council in June 1999.

A member of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Minister Deenihan won All-Ireland football medals with Kerry in 1975, 1978, 1979, 1980 and in 1981, the year he captained the team. He received a GAA All-Star Award in 1981.

Marie-Claire McAleer, Senior Research & Policy Officer, National Youth Council of Ireland



Marie-Claire McAleer works as a Senior Research & Policy Officer for the National Youth Council of Ireland. She works on a broad range of policy issues affecting the lives of children and young people and has published reports in the areas of educational disadvantage, youth unemployment and youth emigration.

Marie-Claire is a former member of the National Economic and Social Forum, the European Youth Forum Working Group on Alcohol and was a board member of the National Education and Welfare Board from 2008 – 2013. She is actively involved in the Alcohol Policy Youth Network and is a member of the End Child Poverty Coalition.

Marie-Claire is a graduate of University College Dublin and holds a Masters degree in Social Science and a Bachelor degree in Social Science.

James Doorley, Deputy Director, National Youth Council of Ireland



James Doorley has been Deputy Director of the National Youth Council of Ireland since 2006. Prior to NYCI, he worked with a number of community and disability organisations in the North East.

James is a member of the National Economic and Social Council in Ireland and a Trustee of the Carnegie UK Trust. He is a former Vice President of the European Youth Forum and was a member of the National Forum on Europe from 2001-2008.

He has a BA in Applied Social Studies and a Diploma in Community and Youth Work from NUI Maynooth and a Higher Diploma in Corporate Governance from UCD. He is currently studying law part-time at Dublin Institute of Technology.

Dr Martin Russell



Martin Russell is currently an associate of Diaspora Matters. He was previously an Irish Research Council Post-Graduate Scholar at the UCD Clinton Institute of American Studies. He co-authored the "Supporting the Next Generation of the Irish Diaspora", funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2014. He is a forthcoming Visiting Research Fellow at the United Nations University (UNU-MERIT).

Martin served as Senior Research Assistant on the Global Diaspora Strategies Toolkit launched in May 2011 in conjunction with then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's inaugural Global Diaspora Forum. He has written on a range of topics relating to diaspora strategies including issues centred on the role of government in diaspora engagement, representation rights, diaspora media, diaspora networking, and conflict transformation.

Dovilė Žvalionytė, Research Manager, Public Policy and Management Institute, Lithuania



Dovilė Žvalionytė is a qualified policy analyst with 9 years of experience in researching various public policy issues. As a research manager at Public Policy and Management Institute (www.ppmi.lt), she has worked on a range of research and consultancy assignments to national and international authorities including the European Commission and its agencies. Her main research interests focus on migration policy, labour mobility, employment and social inclusion as well as (quasi)experimental research methods. Concerning migration research, Dovilė has been involved in a number of studies that focused on measures fostering return migration of economic migrants; the migration of the scientists and other highly qualified workers; the effectiveness of the Lithuanian migration policy; the scale and patterns of the circular migration of Lithuanians. The latter research resulted in a co-edited monograph "Vicious Circle? Return and Repeat Migration of Lithuanians" and a follow-up research project on the reintegration of return migrants into the labour market and society in Lithuania.

Dovilė is also a last year doctoral candidate and a lecturer at Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University (www.tspmi.vu.lt/en/).

Sean Downey, Construction Industry Ireland

Sean Downey works for Construction Industry Federation, as Director, with responsibility for Specialist Contracting. He handles all queries relating to specialist contractors for the Federation. Specialist contractors include both traditional master crafts contractors under the Alliance of Specialist Contractors Association and the specialist engineering contractors of both MEBSCA and ECA. Sean is also a registered building surveyor.

Moira Leydon, Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

Moira Leydon is an Assistant General Secretary with the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland. The ASTI is the second –level teachers union representing teachers across all school types. Her role is Education & Research which includes responsibility for developing ASTI policy across all education areas such as curriculum, teacher education, school leadership, children and youth. She represents the ASTI on the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the statutory advisory agency to the Minister for Education and Skills. She also represents the ASTI across a range of other education agencies.

Moira coordinates the ASTI's work at international level and is currently the Chairperson of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' Global Solidarity Committee. She also serves as the Chairperson of national aid agency - Irish Aid - Development Education Advisory Committee.

Moira is a graduate in Sociology and Political Economy from the National University of Ireland – Dublin and also holds a Masters' Degree in Equality Studies from that University.

Phil Ni Sheaghda, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation

Phil Ni Sheaghda works for the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) as Director of Industrial relations. She has been in this post for six years. Prior to that, Phil worked as Industrial Officer with the INMO from 1998. Prior to working in the INMO, she worked as an intensive care specialist nurse in Ireland, the UK, New York and Sydney. She originally trained as a general nurse in Dublin at Jervis street hospital qualifying in 1988.

David Monahan, Artist

The photographic exhibition today, is by the work of David Monahan. David is a graduate IADT Dun Laoghaire and has worked for many years as a photographer to cultural institutions like the National Library, the National Photographic Archive and the National Museum of Ireland.

Cultural slowdown (2009/2010) left him with some time to concentrate on personal projects and he has put over four years of work into his current project "On Leaving". It has been shown in Siamse Tíre in Tralee Co. Kerry and following the publication of the upcoming book in October next, the work will tour to The USA, stopping in Washington, Chicago and Reading, Pennsylvania.

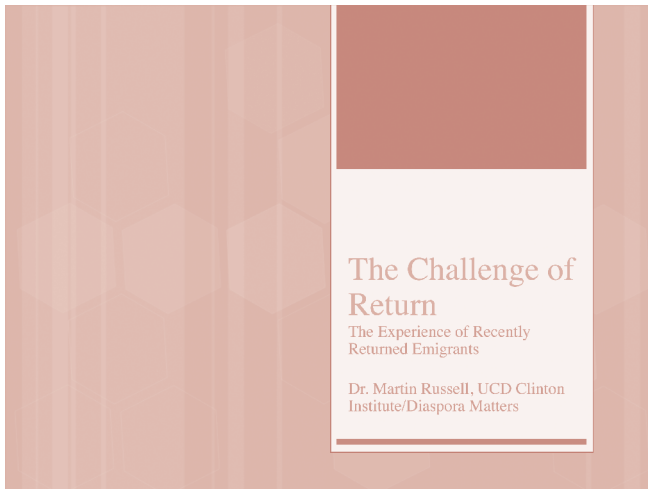
The goal of the work is to add to the dialogue in and around the subject of emigration by showing the personal. "Leaving Dublin", a component part of the work has already shown in Dublin, Donegal, Melbourne and had its debut in an international same day projection in 13 cities worldwide on St. Patrick's Day 2012. The book is available now as a pre-order at www.onleaving.com and you can see all of the works at

www.davidmonahan.eu. Further information on each individual shot in the series is available at <http://thelillipution.blogspot.ie/>

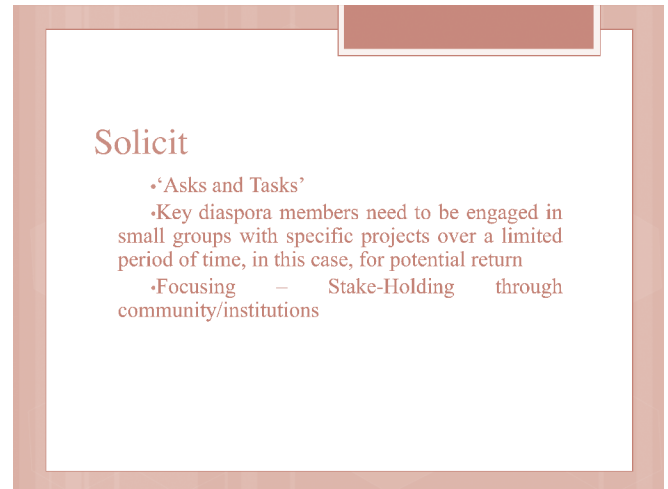
NYCI gratefully acknowledges the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



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

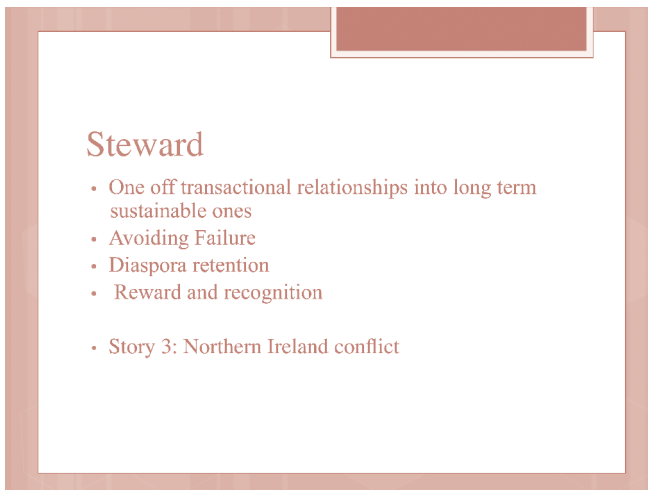


The Challenge of Return
The Experience of Recently Returned Emigrants
Dr. Martin Russell, UCD Clinton Institute/Diaspora Matters



Solicit

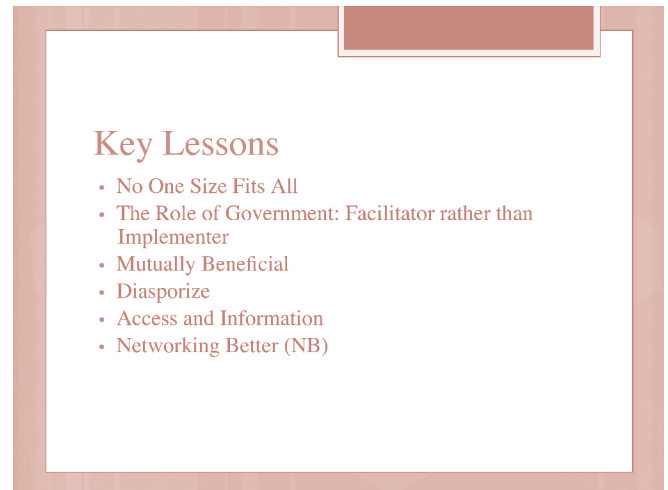
- 'Asks and Tasks'
- Key diaspora members need to be engaged in small groups with specific projects over a limited period of time, in this case, for potential return
- Focusing – Stake-Holding through community/institutions



Steward

- One off transactional relationships into long term sustainable ones
- Avoiding Failure
- Diaspora retention
- Reward and recognition

- Story 3: Northern Ireland conflict



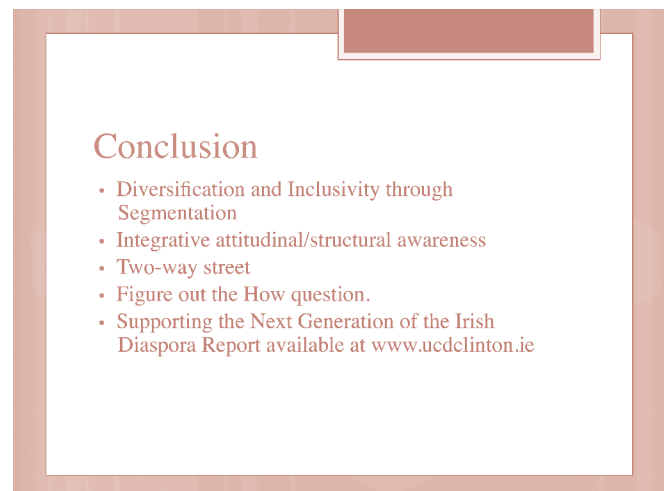
Key Lessons

- No One Size Fits All
- The Role of Government: Facilitator rather than Implementer
- Mutually Beneficial
- Diasporize
- Access and Information
- Networking Better (NB)



Tools

- Collaboration as Networked Momentum
- Capital Harmonization and Capital Realism
- Measurability (DEMs)
- Connection and Mobilization
- Sustainability – Connect Ireland
- Stake-holding: Authenticity
- High Tech and High Touch
- At the start, ask the simple questions!



Conclusion

- Diversification and Inclusivity through Segmentation
- Integrative attitudinal/structural awareness
- Two-way street
- Figure out the How question.
- Supporting the Next Generation of the Irish
Diaspora Report available at www.ucdclinton.ie

Research

- Who, where, what
- Mapping
- 'can' do rather than 'will' do – authentic vs assumptive
- diasporic “capacities and propensities”

Cultivate

- Time
- Impulsive to relationship
- Habitual, thoughtful, strategic, inspirational
- Listening levels - OECD's 4 C's
- Concerns, interests, and hopes
- Goals/objectives
- Trust – partnerships/collaboration

Acknowledgements

- Thank you to Marie-Claire McAleer and NYCI.
- Thanks to UCD Clinton Institute colleagues, Prof Liam Kennedy, Dr. Madeleine Lyes, Catherine Carey.
- This presentation was developed in association with Kingsley Aikins, CEO Diaspora Matters.
- www.diasporamatters.com
- Contact at martinrussell01@yahoo.com or LinkedIn

The Importance of Definition and Vocabulary

- What type of return
 - Permanent
 - Temporary
 - Mobility
- Migration/Diaspora Differences
 - Defining Diaspora
 - Irish context: Innovatively Broad
 - UN High Level Dialogue, Global Forum on Migration and Development

How and Not Why – Return in Irish and Global Context

- The “Why” Debate
 - Looking In before Looking Out
- The “How” Question – Departing the “Why” Debate
 - Bridging research, experience, practice and policy
 - Operationalization from attitude and structure
- Context: Story number 1 – Learning the importance of How

Diaspora Narratives: Returned Emigrant Focus Group

- Dublin
- Returned emigrants from regions including USA, UK, Europe, Australia
- Tools: Listening Levels
- Also focus group with residing emigrants in Toronto from urban and rural Ireland
 - GAA/Connect Ireland

Narratives: Sample Attitudinal

- Trust, Diasporic “Loyalty”
- Communication
- Opportunity
- Familial
- “Reactionary Return”
- Digital Media and Global Citizenry: Being “here and there”
- Story 2: Extract

Structural

- Role of Government
 - Facilitation/Implementation
 - Listening Levels – Consultation Process
 - When to engage: Pre-departure
- Thematic/Sector
- “Return Ruptures” – Vulnerabilities, Community, Economic, Identity, Re-integration
- A “Culture of Return” – Enterprise, Education, Entrepreneurship

Bridge Building for Youth: The How Question

- Methodological Approach
- A) Research
- B) Cultivate
- C) Solicit
- D) Steward

See Kingsley Aikins and Martin Russell, ‘Diaspora Capital – Why Diaspora Matters for Policymakers and Practitioner, Migration, Policy, Practice’ – International Organization for Migration, Sept, 2013.

PPMI

Thank you for your attention!

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Emigration and return migration of Lithuanians

PPMI

is among top destination
15% of returnees lived in fore

Most migrants are young – under 35 years

Barriers to return: underuse of returnees' skills

PPMI

- 8 out of 10 returnees feel that they have gained new skills and knowledge abroad, even if they worked in low-skilled jobs
- Most returnees expect to use their human capital acquired abroad after return

Source: representative survey of return migrants (N=804) carried out by PPMI in 2013 (research grant awarded by the Research Council of Lithuania (contract No. MIP-020/2013))

Barriers to return: perceived benefit of migration experience

PPMI

Returnees' answers whether their migration experience was an advantage in job search after return

Employers' answers whether they would see migration experience as an advantage when hiring new people

Source: representative surveys of return migrants (N=804) and Lithuanian employers (N=1000) carried out by PPMI in 2013 (research grant awarded by the Research Council of Lithuania (contract No. MIP-020/2013))

Barriers to return: attitude towards return migration

PPMI


Do you agree that usually those who have failed abroad return to Lithuania?

Source: representative surveys of Lithuanian population (N=1930) and employers (N=1000) carried out by PPMI in 2013 (research grant awarded by the Research Council of Lithuania (contract No. MIP-020/2013))

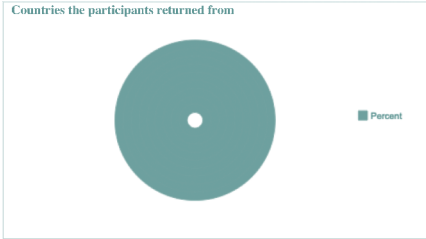
Programme „Create for Lithuania“ – young professionals coming home

PPMI

- Started in autumn 2012
- Target group – graduates of universities abroad
- Aims at attracting young highly skilled returnees to Lithuanian public sector
- More than 25 government institutions participate
 - + 20 municipalities have become involved this year
- Duration: one-year -> three four-month rotations
- Work on strategic governmental projects

„Create for Lithuania“: participants 


- Over 400 applications in three years
- 60 participants coming back from more than 30 different countries
- Most of the participants have master's degree, some are doctoral candidates



Countries the participants returned from

99 % of the participants say that they wouldn't have come back in the absence of the programme

90 % have stayed in Lithuania after finishing the programme (1/3 in public sector)

„Create for Lithuania“: success factors and some challenges 

Results: a number of innovative projects / policy changes successfully implemented

Success factors:


- High-level political support
- Good and well targeted publicity
- Social media
- Social actions
- International recognition (The Guardian, ...)



With the President of Lithuania – Dalia Grybauskaitė

Some challenges:

- Paradox: young professionals with no or limited work experience
- Remuneration-related issues




Working at the Office of the Lithuanian Government

Conclusions 



- Well designed policy programmes might lower structural and attitudinal barriers to return migration
- However, they usually target relatively small groups of highly-skilled migrants such as (young) professionals, researchers, and etc.

• Key policy question:



Return Migration Strategies – The Lithuanian Experience

Dovilė Žvalionytė

APPENDIX E – TWITTER FEED – FEEDBACK AND DIALOGUE

Huge thank to @nycinews for #homeheart yesterday - fantastic to see emigrant perspective included. @JimmyDeenihanTD pic.twitter.com/wxLi7IsBLP

These emigrants explain the barriers that are keeping them from coming home #homeheart (via @thejournal_ie) <http://jrnl.ie/1673424>

Great day at #homeheart! Well done, @nycinews on a good, inclusive event! Thanks @danieldunne for the heads up.

'Losing so many to emigration is a huge blow to our society' #homeheart <http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/generationemigration/2014/09/16/share-your-views-on-return-migration/#>.
VBIIBCtMKMY.twitter ... via @IrishTimes

Congrats to the brilliant @nycinews on their return migration conference today. Great to see practical policy proposals being put forward.

One key point made at #homeheart conference. A lot of what needs doing now is good for emigrants AND for us - Mary Cunningham of @nycinews

Huge disincentive for nurses to return is inequality in pay & prof recognition between nurses & other health pros @nycinews #homeheart

Well done to @nycinews for today's #homeheart event. Hope it's the start of a more inclusive conversation about migration.

Young people should be encouraged to choose whatever career path they want to @nycinews #homeheart

.@nycinews #homeheart conference explored the supports and strategy needed to facilitate return migration pic.twitter.com/vJ4f3ib47o

These emigrants explain the barriers that are keeping them from coming home #homeheart (via @thejournal_ie) <http://jrnl.ie/1673424>

Thanks @nycinews for videolink to conference on emigrants' return where @JimmyDeenihanTD said Ireland needs their fresh thinking. #homeheart

.@nycinews #homeheart conference explored the supports and strategy needed to facilitate return migration pic.twitter.com/vJ4f3ib47o

@EngineerIreland to panel: we shouldn't have discouraged young from getting into construction/IT - upturn brings opps pic.twitter.com/mBv9GzwGtv

.@JimmyDeenihanTD congratulated @nycinews for organising #homeheart conf which will provide further ideas for our emigration strategy review

PRINT MEDIA

Conference Promotion

<http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/generationemigration/2014/09/01/how-can-ireland-attract-emigrants-back/>

<http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/generationemigration/2014/09/09/is-home-where-the-heart-is/>

Conference Press Coverage

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/return-emigrants-face-everday-barriers-when-settling-home-30591223.html>

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/encouraging-emigrants-back-is-issue-of-national-importance-1.1930660>

<http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/generationemigration/2014/09/20/we-need-a-strategy-on-return-migration/>

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/over-22000-irish-have-settled-in-australia-since-2009-30785053.html>

National Radio

Newstalk Breakfast – 16 September 2014

Today FM – The Last Word - 16 September 2014

http://www.todayfm.com/player/podcasts/The_Last_Word_with_Matt_Cooper/The_Last_Word_with_Matt_Cooper/20161

RTE 1 – Drivetime – 16 September 2014

RTE Radio 1 - Today with Sean O'Rourke – 1 October 2014 <http://www.rte.ie/radio/utills/radioplayer/rteradioweb.html#!rii=9%3A20657611%3A0%3A%3A>



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