



SEEKING MIDLANDS SCIENTISTS & ENGINEERS AROUND THE GLOBE

Minister for Diaspora Affairs, Mr. Jimmy Deenihan T.D. recently launched a new Local Diaspora Toolkit or practical guide for Local Authorities and local and community groups to assist in the development of strategies for local diaspora engagement. The Toolkit seeks to develop the potential for communities and counties in Ireland to reach out to their own local diasporas. It will facilitate the building of new relationships with the global Irish to benefit local and regional development and it profiles some of the best and most successful initiatives already underway throughout the country.

Earlier this year, local development company Atlantic Corridor launched a new diaspora-based framework for the midlands and in keeping with its overall strategic aims, the focus will be placed upon trying to create a two-way diaspora dialogue and build global connections within the scientific and technology community.

Speaking about the launch of this toolkit, CEO of Atlantic Corridor, Jackie Gorman said,

‘I was delighted to see Atlantic Corridor featured as a case study in the new Local Diaspora Toolkit. We are already actively engaged in forging partnerships internationally and will be increasingly focused on leveraging the growing population of expatriates who wish to connect with local development. Our primary emphasis here will be on the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and on the promotion of STEM skills, which can be used as an excellent economic development and marketing selling point for this region. This is a key focus for our work and we are pleased to note that plans are already afoot to bring Dr. Mary Guinan of the University of Nevada to Ireland next year promote the value of STEM education in local development.’

The ability to engage globally with scientists who have a connection to Ireland could represent significant potential for the work Atlantic Corridor is already trying to do in partnership with Science Foundation Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, NUI, Maynooth and other academic and corporate partners in the Midlands region.

Jackie Gorman continued,

‘Irish people are making vast ongoing contributions in all fields of science, technology, engineering and maths around the world and as the positive messages about Ireland’s economic recovery spreads internationally, we are working to source STEM professionals with a Midlands connection. We want to drive and foster their desire to make a difference back home and our plan is to facilitate introductions that can draw upon their experience and expertise in a

more coordinated way that will benefit skills and research in the region. Our aim is to grow our network of scientists in order to be able to facilitate discussion and improve the quality and content of events that we roll out throughout the year such as the successful Midlands Science Festival and our range of programmes in schools and public events. The Midlands has a rich heritage in STEM through mathematicians such as Gerald Gardner and astronomers such as Kenneth Edgeworth, who was actually the first person to propose that Pluto wasn't a planet. Great discoveries have come from the Midlands in the past and this past provides a firm basis from which to market and grow development in the region now and in the future, through skills and education.'

If successful, Atlantic Corridor would like to see members of this group becoming mentors to Irish students and also promoters of the achievements of Irish and Midlands scientists globally by contributing to skills, education outreach and research links in the region. If you have an interest in being involved in the development of this network, please get in touch by phoning 05793 23902 or emailing jgorman@atlanticcorridor.ie

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