



## **NETWORKING AND THE DIASPORA.....a key piece of Ireland's recovery**

What made China the world's greatest manufacturer? What made India a major technology hub? What made Israel the world's number two country for venture capital and what brought peace to Northern Ireland? The answer to all these questions is the same.....networking their diasporas in the United States. Finally, people and governments are recognising that diasporas are big business. In inward investment and trade, philanthropy and remittances, tourism and education and a host of other areas there is growing recognition that diasporas are formidable sources of support for home countries but also that by putting in place smart strategies they can have huge impacts.

The numbers are impressive. There are now 215 million people living in countries other than the one they were born in and that includes 80 million Europeans. That's about 3 per cent of the world's population and is a number that has tripled in the last 40 years. We are truly living in an era of great migration and a time when travel and communications is dramatically increasing the connectivity and interaction between home and host countries. Perhaps for the first time ever geography does not dictate identity. In a world of hyphenated existences you can live in one country, be totally committed to it and yet be deeply involved with another.

Kingsley

[www.networking-matters.com](http://www.networking-matters.com)

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Kingsley Aikins was born and educated in Dublin and is an economics graduate from Trinity College. Previously he worked for The Irish Trade Board and IDA Ireland and spent 8 years in Sydney representing those two bodies. He also worked for 21 years for The Ireland Funds and was worldwide CEO of that organisation for 17 years until the end of 2009. During that time over a quarter of a billon dollars was raised for 1200 non profit organisations in Ireland, North and South. Kingsley has written and spoken extensively on the areas of Philanthropy, Diaspora and Networking and authored a number of publications in these areas. In May of this year he produced a

Global Diaspora Strategies Toolkit that was part of the Hillary Clinton Global Diaspora Forum in Washington. This Toolkit looked at how a series of different countries have developed strategies to connect with their Diasporas. In addition he put together an extensive website [www.diasporamatters.com](http://www.diasporamatters.com). He believes that networking with the Irish Diaspora will be a key piece of Ireland's economic recovery and is encouraging all companies, organisations and individuals to develop specific Diaspora strategies to take advantage of the unique resource that Ireland has globally. The Irish Diaspora, made up of over 70 million people, offers opportunities in the areas of philanthropy, inward investment, trade promotion, education, culture, tourism and sport and Kingsley is an acknowledged world expert in what countries, regions and cities can and should do in this area.

Kingsley also established a company earlier this year called Networking Matters that consults to companies and advises on how to establish networking strategies. This is based on a belief that companies have strategies for marketing, advertising, communications and PR but not for networking which he has found to be the most important element of all in business development. We live in a world where it is no longer what you know or even who you know but who knows you. He believes that we all have to develop strategies that combine online and offline approaches that put networking and the development of long term hearts and mind relationships front and centre of all we do.

Kingsley lives in Dublin, is married to Claire and they have 3 children. He is a member of the Institutes of Export, Marketing and Linguists (French and Spanish), represented Leinster at rugby and was awarded a CBE in 2009 for his work in British - Irish relations.