



SYMPOSIUM REPORT

Innovate. Collaborate. Activate.

Philanthropy Ireland presents

PHILANTHROPY SYMPOSIUM 2024



The Philanthropy Symposium 2024 brought together a dynamic mix of thought leaders, philanthropists, corporate representatives, policymakers and academics to discuss the evolving landscape of philanthropy in Ireland. Through two insightful panels "Innovate," and "Activate," participants explored how philanthropy can address both immediate needs and broader systemic change. The interactive "Collaborate" session facilitated by the Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies provided a platform for attendees to imagine the future of philanthropy and examine the barriers and accelerators to this future.

This year's Symposium emphasised the power of partnership, transparency, and strategic impact, highlighting both traditional and innovative approaches to giving. As Ireland moves toward a future where philanthropy is integrated into daily life and societal structures, these discussions provide valuable insights for everyone involved in the sector.

Emerging Themes:



Systemic
Collaboration



Strengthening
Partnerships



Youth
Engagement



Inclusive
Philanthropy



Visibility and
Cultural Shifts

Innovate

The spark that ignites change

The Innovate panel featured established philanthropists and advisers who are pioneering new ways of giving back. The panel highlighted a vision for philanthropy that is both responsive to immediate needs and strategically focused on long-term societal shifts—from local communities to global platforms.



PANELLISTS

Ondřej Liška (Porticus): Philanthropic strategist focused on social impact and systemic change.

Louise McElvaney (5Ten Trust): HR expert and founder of a regional trust supporting youth resilience in education.

Tom Clinch (Clinch Wealth Management): Wealth management leader with a deep commitment to arts philanthropy.

MAIN THEMES

Localised and Inclusive Philanthropy

Louise McElvaney spoke to “community-centered giving” through the 5Ten Trust, a regional fund supporting resilience programs for young people in Inishowen. She highlighted the importance of focusing geographically to build trust and donor engagement by showing clear local impact.

Catalyst for Social Change

Tom Clinch's work exemplifies how philanthropy in the arts can drive social impact. Clinch spoke on leveraging his connections and resources to empower arts initiatives and encouraged public engagement in arts philanthropy to promote visibility and influence. Louise also added the benefit of their strategic focus of 'pay it forward', supporting the young beneficiaries of their grant making to look at how they can pay it forward to others in the community now and in the future.



**Pay it
Forward**

Find out more from
Louise [here](#)

Systemic Philanthropy for Greater Civic Impact

Ondřej discussed a systemic approach to philanthropy that goes beyond financial grants, encouraging partnerships, collective impact, and empowering grantees. He stressed the importance of deep listening, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and fostering an environment where nonprofits can openly share challenges.

Visibility and Cultural Shifts in Philanthropy

The panel touched on the tension between visible and private philanthropy. Tom discussed the value of public philanthropy to inspire others, encouraging others to use their networks to inspire social change and Ondřej added the need to operate in ways that reflect core values like transparency and inclusivity.

Philanthropy's Role in Strengthening Democracy and Communities

Ondřej raised concerns about the rise of authoritarianism in Europe and how "philanthropy can counteract misinformation" and distrust. He encouraged collaborative funding models to strengthen democratic values and civic engagement. On a more local level Tom and Louise showcased how their philanthropy is not only providing financial support but strengthening their communities- geographically in Inishowen and thematically in the Arts sector.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Strategic Community Impact Philanthropy can be transformative when focused on specific communities (of interest or geographical) and transparent outcomes.
- The arts hold unique power to connect communities and encourage collective investment in cultural projects, that expands beyond the artistic remit.
- Building Ecosystems: Sustainable philanthropy requires a layered approach—financial support, capacity building, and partnership—to foster long-term impact.
- Democratic Resilience: Funders must be aware of their potential role in defending civil society and actively work to support democratic resilience and social cohesion.

A Passion for
Giving Back



Check out the [new edition](#)
of the [Philanthropy](#)
[Ireland Magazine](#), for
more insights!

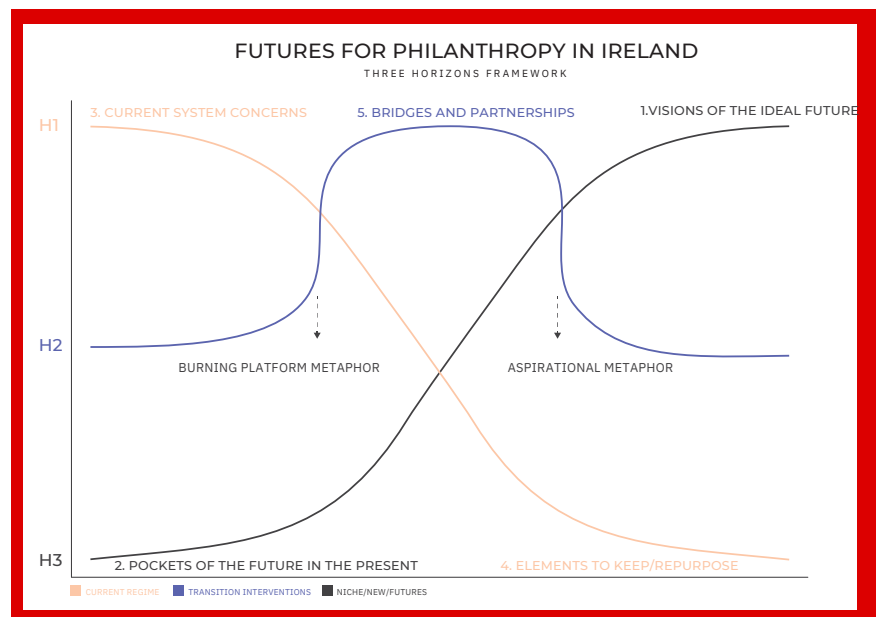


Collaborate

The key that unlocks doors to new possibilities

The Future of Philanthropy in Ireland: Insights from The Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies

In October 2024, the Philanthropy Ireland Symposium brought together thought leaders, philanthropists, and community organizers to explore the future of philanthropy through the lens of Bill Sharpe's 3 Horizons framework. The Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies was delighted to facilitate the Collaborate session. This session was based on our work published earlier in the year- Futures Philanthropy – Anticipation for the Common Good, made in collaboration with Philea – Philanthropy Europe Association.



This approach enabled participants to come together to explore futures of philanthropy in Ireland toward 2030. In the session, participants identified current trends reflecting future potential and recognised the barriers that philanthropy faces today in Ireland at large.

This reflection, made for the Symposium Report, synthesizes some of key insights and serves as inspiration for the more in-depth futures thinking workshop to be held in January 2025.

TOWARDS YEAR 2030

The visions for 2030 see philanthropy as an integrated and mainstream part of society, characterised by a culture of giving that spans all socio-economic levels. It will be embedded in education from early years through adulthood, fostering a pay-it-forward mindset and a shared sense of social responsibility. The philanthropic ecosystem will be dynamic and collaborative, supported by streamlined regulations and transparent practices, with an informed public that understands its purpose and impact. Strengthened partnerships between government, private donors, and non-profits will enable impactful, long-term investments focused on systemic change and innovation. Philanthropy will be democratized and inclusive, embracing trust-based and participatory practices as the standard. A strong framework will guide strategic, mission-driven efforts, contributing to societal well-being, sustainability, and empathetic approaches to addressing critical social challenges.

Pockets of the Future in the Present

Several manifestations of the future in the present were already emerging within the Irish philanthropic landscape, reflecting a shift towards collaboration and innovation. There is a noticeable increase in networking among philanthropists actively seeking connections and sharing experiences, as seen in initiatives like the Porticus Partners network.

New government policies and frameworks, such as the EU Manifesto, and the National Philanthropy Policy, are paving the way for a more structured approach to philanthropy, fostering a growing societal appetite for impactful giving. This shift is accompanied by a rising awareness of the need for systemic change, with greater emphasis on education about philanthropy and its true meaning, moving beyond merely filling gaps left by government.

As a result, a more empathetic and engaged community is developing, with diverse philanthropic models emerging that could prioritize long-term, strategic investments in local issues while promoting collaboration across sectors.



Current Barriers and Concerns

The current philanthropic landscape in Ireland faces several challenges and barriers that limit its potential for maturation, growth and impact. A key concern is the lack of government understanding and support for philanthropy, which often leads to a misalignment in policy and public perception. This is compounded by a culture of mistrust towards philanthropists, where negative narratives overshadow positive contributions.

Additionally, the regulatory environment is perceived as cumbersome, with one-size-fits-all regulations that poorly accommodate the diverse needs of various philanthropic initiatives. There is also a significant gap in long-term strategic thinking; many philanthropic efforts remain short-term and reactive, lacking the necessary commitment for sustained impact. Issues of competition over collaboration create silos, hindering the potential for innovative partnerships and collective action.

Finally, the fear of failure and risk aversion among funders, coupled with the stigma surrounding high-net-worth individual giving, limits the willingness to engage in more impactful, albeit riskier, philanthropic endeavors.

Together, these factors create a complex landscape that necessitates a shift towards greater collaboration, transparency, and long-term commitment to fully realize the potential of philanthropy in addressing societal challenges.





Elements to Keep and Repurpose

The current philanthropic landscape in Ireland contains several vital elements that should be maintained or repurposed to enhance future effectiveness and impact. Key components include the necessity for government support through grants and salaries for charities, alongside promoting schools' involvement in philanthropy education.

There is a strong emphasis on building collaborative structures that leverage Ireland's manageable size to foster connections among stakeholders.

The importance of tax relief for both corporate and individual donors remain a critical aspect, ensuring sustained financial contributions to charitable initiatives.

Peer networks, provide valuable internal support and should be further linked with researchers and donors to amplify impact.

Furthermore, promoting transparency and effective communication about the positive impacts of philanthropy is essential for building trust and encouraging broader participation.

Lastly, the establishment of a dynamic and flexible regulatory framework will enable innovation and collaboration, allowing philanthropy to adapt to emerging societal needs and effectively address pressing issues.

Bridging to the Future

Several innovative approaches and partnerships were emphasised as emerging in the philanthropic sector, which show promise for reshaping its landscape in Ireland. A key focus is on fostering collaboration between corporates and philanthropic entities, particularly through the establishment of partnership and match funding models, which enhance resource sharing and project impact.

There is also a strong advocacy for place-based giving, which prioritizes local issues and community needs, alongside a commitment to ongoing education about philanthropy that starts from an early age in schools.

The importance of transparency and open communication is highlighted, encouraging a culture that not only celebrates philanthropic efforts but also systematically addresses pressing social issues.

Additionally, the emphasis on co-funding strategies among government and philanthropic bodies aims to create a more streamlined approach to addressing societal challenges, particularly those requiring urgent attention.

The potential for leveraging technology and digital platforms to enhance engagement and support for philanthropic initiatives is also acknowledged, reflecting a shift towards innovative solutions that resonate with a new generation of givers.

Ultimately, these emerging practices promote a more inclusive, democratic approach to philanthropy, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and commitment to collective goals.



WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ON THE 23RD OF JANUARY...

Through this session, the Philanthropy Ireland Symposium 24 highlighted the value of collective visioning, and speculation around futures as commons. It too opened the conversation about the role philanthropy plays in stepping up to the challenges faced in the 21st century, while initiating a more inclusive, transparent, and impactful philanthropic landscape in Ireland toward 2030.

While challenges remain, the symposium illuminated paths forward, underscored by collaboration, innovation, and learning. By harnessing these insights, philanthropy in Ireland can work together to transform the future of philanthropy, ensuring that it serves as a powerful force for good in society, driven by a shared commitment to social responsibility and systemic change.

**PHILANTHROPY
IRELAND**

COPENHAGEN
INSTITUTE
FOR FUTURES
STUDIES



Join Us for an **Exclusive One-Day
Workshop** Exploring The Future of
Irish Philanthropy

Philanthropy Ireland, in
collaboration with the
Copenhagen Institute for
Futures Studies, invites you to
a unique workshop exploring
the evolving landscape of
philanthropy in Ireland.

📅 23rd January
🕒 10 am - 4pm
📍 Dublin City Centre
✉️ RSVP to
events@philanthropy.ie



Whether you are a foundation, adviser, philanthropy supporter or simply passionate about giving, this dynamic workshop is your opportunity to shape the future of philanthropy in Ireland, as we explore emerging trends in the future of philanthropy. Discuss the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the Irish philanthropic sector and collaborate on innovative strategies to drive meaningful impact and sustainable change.

LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE!

Activate

The force that propels ideas into action



The Activate panel explored the themes of next generation philanthropy from both a family and a corporate philanthropy perspective. This session underscored the significance of both individualised approaches and cross-sector collaboration to maximize philanthropy's impact across family, corporate, and societal levels.

PANELISTS

Kate Symondson
(Symondson Foundation):
Leads her family's structured foundation with a focus on impact-driven philanthropy.

Nicole Parkes O'Callaghan
(Parkes Family Fund):
Manages philanthropic efforts part-time, focusing on family-led giving within a structured fund.

Stuart McLaughlin (Google Ireland): Represents Google's global philanthropy, focusing on advocacy, strategy, and corporate social responsibility.

MAIN THEMES

Structured v's Flexible Family Giving

Kate's family shifted to a structured foundation model to create a sustainable, impact-driven approach. In contrast, Nicole's family leverages a partnership with Rethink Ireland, benefiting from government-matched funding and simplified administration, which enables targeted impact without full-time management. Both approaches highlight different strategies for families balancing dedication and flexibility in their philanthropy, providing tangible examples of the journey a family can take through their philanthropy.

The Role of Public and Corporate Philanthropy

Kate and Stuart highlighted the value of "public visibility" in philanthropy to inspire others, though each noted cultural reservations around discussing wealth and giving openly. Stuart emphasised Google's large-scale contributions as a means to encourage corporate responsibility, noting that more advocacy is needed to drive other companies towards impactful giving rather than merely fulfilling CSR requirements.

Evolving Corporate Philanthropy in Tech

Google's philanthropy model, grounded in a 1% annual revenue pledge, has evolved to focus on "AI, education, and online safety". Stuart discussed Google's new "Data Commons" platform to aid nonprofits in accessing and visualizing data and highlighted efforts to support NGOs with technology to improve their operational efficiencies.

Youth Engagement and the Next Generation of Philanthropists

Nicole advocated for introducing philanthropy to youth through education rather than "marketing," emphasizing that younger generations are key to fostering sustainable giving cultures. She and Kate both pointed to the importance of collaboration across generations and building networks that offer a sense of community among new and emerging philanthropists.



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Customized Family Philanthropy: Family foundations can operate with varying levels of formality, from hands-on management to delegated partnerships, allowing flexibility based on family capacity and strategic goals.
- Companies like Google set an example by integrating philanthropy into their corporate missions. There is a pressing need for more companies to view philanthropy as part of their corporate impact rather than a checkbox.
- Technology's Role in Philanthropy: Corporate support in technology can empower nonprofits, especially through data management and AI integration, to improve effectiveness and transparency.
- Fostering Early Philanthropic Awareness: Education on giving should begin with youth, encouraging a culture of philanthropy that grows with future generations.

Hear from
Kate on her
highlights of the
Symposium!



The 2024 Philanthropy Symposium

...was a testament to the potential of philanthropy to shape the future of society in Ireland. From fostering local initiatives to leveraging global technology, the conversations highlighted the transformative impact of intentional, collaborative philanthropy. As the sector moves toward an inclusive and sustainable future, these insights can help guide Ireland's philanthropic landscape into one that is forward-thinking, resilient, and impactful.

Philanthropy Ireland was also delighted to announce two exciting initiatives at the Symposium, in response to needs highlighted by our dynamic philanthropy community.

First Edition of the Philanthropy Ireland Magazine

We are delighted to introduce this new platform, dedicated to showcasing the remarkable work of the Irish philanthropy community, who are united by a shared commitment to creating a more equitable and sustainable future.



Impact Exhibition

Philanthropy Ireland's Impact Exhibition is a celebration of the transformative work being carried out by our Members through meaningful philanthropy. This exhibition highlights the profound contributions and initiatives that are making a real difference in communities across Ireland and beyond. From supporting vital social causes to driving positive change in education, health, and the arts, the showcased projects represent the collective power of philanthropy in shaping a more equitable and sustainable future. Join us as we explore the stories, partnerships, and lasting impacts of this generous giving.

Community Finance Ireland

Community Finance Ireland is a not-for-profit organisation that provides financial support to community organisations across Ireland. It was established in 1997 and has since then supported over 1,000 community organisations with a total value of over €100 million.

Supporting the Future of the Arts through Philanthropy

Community Finance Ireland has supported the arts sector in Ireland for over 20 years. It has provided financial support to a wide range of arts organisations, including theatres, dance companies, and music ensembles. This support has helped to ensure that the arts continue to thrive in Ireland and provide a source of inspiration and entertainment for all.

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OKC

The Transformative Power of Philanthropy in the Arts - OKC's delivery of the RAISE Programme

OKC (The Organisation for Cultural Knowledge) is a not-for-profit organisation that provides financial support to cultural organisations across Ireland. It was established in 1997 and has since then supported over 1,000 cultural organisations with a total value of over €100 million.

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The Rowan Trust

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Medtronic

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Small Foundation

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Katharine Howard Foundation

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Mount Street Club Trust

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Social Finance Foundation

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Oakfield Trust

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Clann Credo

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St Stephen's Green Trust

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Charitable Foundation Social Impact 2012-2023

Charitable Foundation Social Impact 2012-2023 is a report that provides an overview of the social impact of the Charitable Foundation over the past decade. It highlights the foundation's commitment to social impact and the progress it has made in achieving its goals.

Our Contribution

€15.1m
€260.30

Our strategic priorities

53 + 92 + 115 = 260

Our areas of impact

64
95
37

What we were proud to deliver

6
34
4
5
15
15

Our 2023 contributions

€2.8m
61 + 5 = 21

[View Whole Exhibition Here](#)



Thank you to our Philanthropy Symposium 24 Partners



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



Smurfit
Westrock



Medtronic

OKC

20 YEARS OF
ENABLING
PHILANTHROPIC
IMPACT

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Philanthropy Ireland