

# Katharine Howard Foundation

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## Overview of the organisation

The Katharine Howard Foundation (KHF) is an independent Foundation focused on improving the lives of young children and their families. Our work is underpinned by a commitment to equality and overcoming disadvantage and to promoting equality of opportunity for all children. We work with others in identifying their needs, building on existing programmes, making strategic grants and sharing the learning. KHF aims to contribute to the development of policy and practice, particularly in the early years and family support sectors. KHF has established many philanthropic collaborations in order to maximise the potential of social impact.

## The 'Children's Promise' grants programme

The 'Children's Promise' grants programme is a funding programme within Katharine Howard Foundation. KHF particularly focuses on prevention and early intervention initiatives, to support the best life outcomes for young children. This grants programme is a collaboration with Community Foundation Ireland. The 'Children's Promise' grants programme aims to support community-based organisations working with young children and their families in disadvantaged areas in Ireland, who may not reach their potential due to the corrosive impact of poverty. The programme is a promise from KHF to provide financial and other supports to selected organisations, to support and develop the potential of the children engaged with the organisations. It aims to build on the powerful work taking place at statutory and community-level to address child poverty.



## Impact Highlights

A number of key projects and social issue areas are being addressed through this grants programme, including:

- A grant to the Ballinrobe Family Resource Centre To deliver a suite of supports and activities to support the essential needs, creativity, play and improved health and wellbeing of children and their Parents, with a particular focus of including families from the Direct Provision Centre into the events and services.
- Support for the Bedford Row Family Project to increase the number of children accessing play therapy service. They have identified that the children who went to first year during COVID are struggling with confidence and anxiety and now their aim is to assign a family support worker.
- A grant for East Cork Travellers aiming to directly target parents in the Traveller Community who are a minority group facing major disadvantage in terms of education and health services and development of a new project focusing on establishing a support group and network for parents with young children.

To see a full list of the grantees and impact visit 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme - Katharine Howard Foundation:



## Learnings and reflections on collaborative grant programmes

KHF has a long-standing tradition of engaging and collaborating with other philanthropy organisations. Philanthropy Ireland caught up with KHF CEO Dr Cliona Hannon to gather some of the learnings and insight from these collaborations to support others who are thinking of joining forces to strengthen the impact of their philanthropic giving.



## Key Learnings:

- **Leverage Expertise:** Collaborations can unite different foundations with unique expertise. By combining knowledge, like the strategic focus of the Katherine Howard Foundation with the broader reach of Community Foundation Ireland, programmes can be more effectively tailored to address issues like childhood poverty and early years' intervention.
- **Shared Learning:** Joint funding efforts foster a community of practice among both funders and grantees. For instance, the Children's Promise program has introduced report cards to track grantee impact, allowing funders to refine and adjust their strategy over time. This shared learning is key to improving outcomes and measuring long-term success.

## Successes:

- **Increased Funding:** Partnerships open new doors for securing additional funding. In the Children's Promise programme, strong results led to more opportunities for further investment from outside sources, highlighting how a well executed collaboration can attract further support.
- **Strength in Numbers:** Collaborative funding amplifies impact, creating larger pools of money to fund broader or more strategic projects. For grantees, having multiple funders also boosts their credibility, enhancing their chances of securing additional resources for future work.

## Challenges:

- **Governance and Clarity:** Effective collaborations require clear terms of reference. It is vital to establish governance structures early, such as how funds will be managed, who reviews applications, and how accountability will be maintained.
- **Balancing Responsibility:** While partnerships can help lighten the load for individual funders, defining each partner's role can be complex. Establishing a Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference for each collaborator can support relationships and clearly establish expectations.

## Advice for Others:

- **Clearly Define Your Pitch:** Organisations should be clear on how collaboration adds value compared to solo efforts. Understanding what each partner can bring and how their priorities align with your own is crucial.
- **Focus on Long-term Impact:** Effective collaborations extend beyond short-term projects. Building relationships with complementary organisations can lead to ongoing support and innovative funding models.
- **Common Application Infrastructure:** Reducing the application burden for grantees by creating common systems across multiple funders can streamline the process and ensure that high-potential projects receive the funding they deserve.

By thoughtfully approaching collaboration, philanthropists can achieve greater results, support more sustainable initiatives, and foster innovation in tackling societal challenges.