

# PHILANTHROPY IRELAND

Issue One  
October 2024

Innovate.  
Collaborate.  
Activate.



Page

**06**

A Passion for Giving Back

Page

**08**

Transactional to Transformative

Page

**18**

Professional Advisors in the  
Philanthropy Ecosystem

Page

**20**

Corporate Philanthropies:  
Mission to Drive Equity

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**Welcome to  
the Philanthropy  
Ireland Magazine**

**Issue One**



# About Philanthropy Ireland

Philanthropy Ireland is a dynamic membership organisation dedicated to advancing philanthropy in Ireland. Our aim is to cultivate a thriving community of philanthropic entities, fostering collaboration and innovation to address the most pressing societal challenges.

Established in  
**1998**

**40+**  
Collaborations

**50+**  
Members

**20+**  
Partnerships

Visit [www.philanthropy.ie](http://www.philanthropy.ie) to explore membership opportunities, learn more about philanthropy and access philanthropy support.

## Contents

**04**

Ireland's Philanthropy  
Community

**05**

Welcome to the  
Philanthropy Ireland  
Magazine

**06**

The Story of the  
5Ten Trust

**08**

From Transactional  
to Transformative:  
Enabling Philanthropic  
Impact in Ireland

**11**

Taking the Long  
View: Why Futures  
Thinking is Essential  
for Philanthropy

**13**

Global Impact,  
Local Focus

**15**

Ireland's First National  
Philanthropy Policy

**18**

The Vital Role for  
Professional Advisers  
in the Philanthropy  
Ecosystem

**20**

Medtronic:  
On a Mission to Drive  
Equity in Ireland

**22**

The Future of  
Philanthropy

# Ireland's Philanthropy Community



**Note from**  
Éilis Murray, CEO of  
Philanthropy Ireland

## Welcome to the inaugural issue of The Philanthropy Ireland Magazine!

It is with great enthusiasm that I 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. As we embark on this journey together, I am curious to explore the themes Innovate, Collaborate, Activate — the

guiding principles that inspire and drive our collective efforts in the philanthropic community and the theme of the 2024 Philanthropy Ireland's annual Philanthropy Symposium.

Innovation is at the heart of philanthropy. In an ever-changing world, our members continue to seek out new and creative solutions to address the complex challenges facing our society. From pioneering initiatives that tackle climate change to groundbreaking projects that empower marginalised communities, innovation in philanthropy is about more than just funding; it is about fostering new ideas, supporting experimentation, and being willing to take risks to achieve meaningful impact. In this issue, we highlight stories of innovative approaches that are not only making a difference today, but are also paving the way for lasting change.

Collaboration is the cornerstone of our work at Philanthropy Ireland. We know that no single organisation or individual can solve the pressing issues of our time alone. It is through collaboration that we can pool resources, share knowledge, and amplify our impact. Together we can be better. Our members and partners exemplify the power of working together, whether through cross-sector partnerships, community-driven initiatives, or global networks. This

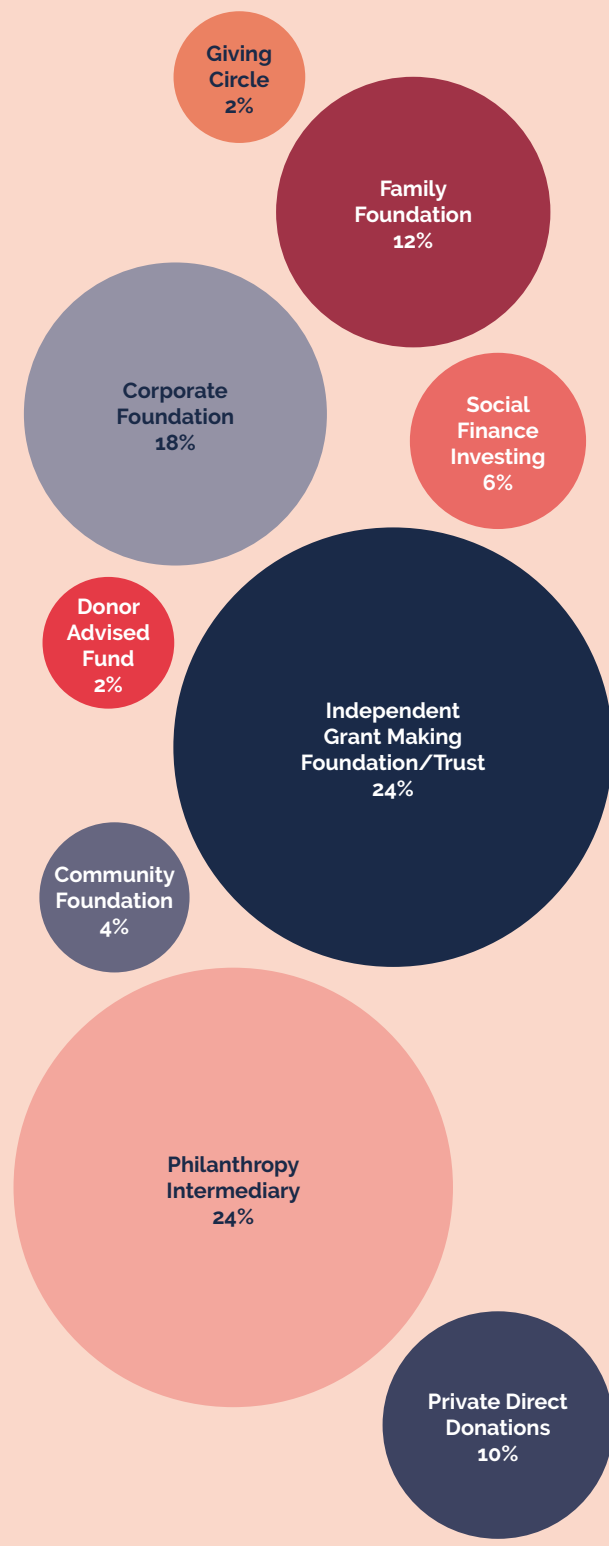
magazine will feature insights from philanthropists and partners who have embraced collaboration as a key strategy for achieving their goals. Their experiences and perspectives serve as a testament to the power of collective action.

Activation is where innovation and collaboration come to life. It is the moment when ideas are put into motion, and visions are transformed into reality. At Philanthropy Ireland, we are committed to activating change through strategic investments, advocacy, and engagement. Our members are not just funders; they are active participants in the social change ecosystem. They are driving initiatives that not only address immediate needs but also create sustainable, long-term impact. In this issue, you will read about the ways in which our members are activating change across Ireland and beyond.

As you explore the pages of the Philanthropy Ireland Magazine, I hope you will be inspired by the stories of innovation, collaboration, and activation that define our community. Together, we can make a difference - one idea, one partnership, and one action at a time.

Thank you for being a part of this journey with us.  
Warm regards,  
**Éilis Murray, CEO,**  
**Philanthropy Ireland**

## Our Philanthropy Community



## Join our Community



Knowledge & Insights



Collaboration



Events & Networks



Support & Advice



Unified Voice

Become a vital part of the philanthropic movement in Ireland by joining Philanthropy Ireland's philanthropy community as a Member, Associate Member, or Partner. Engage with like-minded individuals and organisations dedicated to making a positive impact through strategic giving and collaboration.

### Member

As a Member, you will have the opportunity to gain valuable insights, and be part of a network committed to driving social change.

### Associated Member

Join us as an Associate Member to support and enrich the philanthropy community through your organisation's expertise and resources.

### Partner

Partner with us to demonstrate your strong commitment to advancing philanthropy in Ireland and create lasting impact together.



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# The Story of 5Ten Trust: A Passion for Giving Back



**Louise McElvaney,**  
Trustee of the 5Ten Trust

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In the remote and picturesque peninsula of Inishowen, Co. Donegal, an inspiring story of community-driven philanthropy has unfolded. Louise McElvaney, alongside her childhood friend Sean McDaid, co-founded the 5Ten Trust during the pandemic. Their mission is clear: to support children and young people in the Northwest by fostering resilience and providing opportunities for those who need them most while incorporating a 'Pay it Forward' ethos, supporting the Trust's beneficiaries to continue to share the impact of the funding initiatives with the wider community.

## **A Pandemic-Driven Vision**

Louise's journey into philanthropy didn't begin in a conventional way. "Like many, I had always been busy with work, but the world changed during COVID," Louise shared. Through her work in HR, she witnessed firsthand the struggles that people faced, particularly in maintaining their mental health and resilience. She realised that the pandemic was especially tough on children and young people.

"Children weren't going back to school; their mental health was suffering," Louise explained. Motivated by the statistics and stories in the media, she and Sean decided to act. "We knew we wanted to do something to support people and make them more resilient, but we had no idea how to go about it."

## **From Idea to Action**

The decision to start the 5Ten Trust wasn't an easy one, particularly since neither Louise nor Sean had previous

experience in philanthropy. "We knew we could raise money, but we didn't know the governance, how to set it up, or even what to set up," Louise recounted. They reached out to Philanthropy Ireland for advice, which marked the beginning of their journey.

After exploring options such as giving circles and foundations, even sitting in on an Irish giving circle meeting in action, they decided that setting up a trust was the best route for them. "We wanted to make an impact in our local area, so a trust felt right for us." In 2020, the 5Ten Trust was born, with a focus on improving educational outcomes and building resilience in the young people of Inishowen.

## **Building Resilience and Opportunity**

One of the first initiatives the 5Ten Trust undertook was creating a bursary program for students facing financial barriers to attending third-level education. Louise learned that many students in the area were either deferring their studies or not pursuing higher education due to financial constraints. "We realised that even small amounts of financial aid could make a big difference," she said.

The bursary programme started modestly, with just a few recipients. Today, it supports 15 students, with more being added each year. "The students tell us that the bursary has allowed them to take courses they wouldn't have considered otherwise," Louise said, noting how the funding enables students to study in cities like Dublin, Galway, and Belfast, and even internationally where students can access the education they are interested in and not just what is available locally.

## **Holistic Support: Beyond Financial Aid**

But the work of the 5Ten Trust goes beyond financial support. Louise and Sean wanted to take a holistic approach, offering more than just monetary aid. They worked with local schools to implement programs that would develop young people's mental resilience and life skills.

One such initiative was the introduction of the Shona Project to local schools, a program focused on empowering teenage girls. "We didn't even know school refusal was a thing," Louise admitted, but through the Shona Project, they've seen real progress in helping young girls build confidence and resilience. Louise especially felt the impact of this work when her own daughter came home from school speaking about how empowered she felt attending the workshop and

**Right** 6th year students who took part in and completed the 2023 very successful Peer Tutoring Programme, supported by the 5Ten Trust.



“

**We had no idea what we were doing in the beginning, but people were incredibly generous with their time and expertise. Don't be afraid to reach out to others who've been in philanthropy for advice.”**

sharing her insights with the whole family, all while having no idea her mother was the one encouraging schools to engage with initiatives like the Shona Project.

They've also supported peer tutoring programs, where older students tutor their peers in subjects like math and science, building leadership and communication skills in the process. “It's not just about education; it's about helping these kids stand up and lead,” Louise emphasised.

### Learning by Doing

Reflecting on her philanthropic journey, Louise has gathered valuable insights for anyone thinking about starting their own giving project. “Don't be afraid to make mistakes,” she advised. “Some things won't work, but that's okay. It's all about learning what works and what doesn't.”

Louise also emphasised the importance of asking for help. “We had no idea what we were doing in the beginning, but people were incredibly generous with their time and expertise. Don't be afraid to reach out to others who've been in philanthropy for advice.”

### The Power of Partnership

The work of the 5Ten Trust is very much a partnership between Louise and Sean, as well as the local community. “We work closely with the schools to understand what the kids really need,” she said. This collaborative approach has enabled the Trust to tailor its support, ensuring it meets the needs of students and teachers alike.

Looking ahead, the Trust plans to expand its initiatives into primary schools, fostering resilience from an even younger age. “It's about catching them early, giving them the tools to navigate life's challenges before they reach secondary school.”

### Conclusion

For Louise, the most rewarding part of her work with the 5Ten Trust has been seeing the ripple effect that their efforts are having in the community. “It's not just about helping one child; it's about building a better future for everyone connected to them,” she said.

As the 5Ten Trust enters its fourth year, Louise and Sean's commitment to making a difference in their community remains stronger than ever. Their story is a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when passion, purpose, and philanthropy come together.

### Key Takeaways for Aspiring Philanthropists:

- > Start small, but think big: Small steps, like offering a few bursaries, can lead to larger, community-wide impact.
- > Ask for help: Don't be afraid to reach out to experts or those who have already been down the philanthropic path.
- > Be patient: Setting up a trust takes time and effort, but the rewards are worth it.
- > Embrace failure: Some projects may not work, but each experience is a learning opportunity.
- > Partnerships are key: Collaborating with schools, educators, and professionals enhances the impact of philanthropic work.

Louise's journey offers valuable lessons for anyone considering a foray into philanthropy—showing that with determination and the right support, community-based trusts can make a profound impact.

# From Transactional to Transformative: Enabling Philanthropic Impact in Ireland



**Left** OKC's Managing Director Mary O'Kennedy leading a session on 'Bringing the 'S' in ESG to life' at a Charities Institute Ireland event.

Philanthropy is a powerful force for social impact. The Irish philanthropy landscape has evolved significantly over recent years and is now backed by Ireland's National Philanthropy Policy, along with support from various grant-making organisations and advocates like Philanthropy Ireland.

Since 2002, OKC has been working across the not-for-profit sector to enable philanthropic impact. We are passionate about driving social transformation through philanthropy and providing

values-led, impact-driven counsel for our clients. As we look to the future of philanthropy, traditional giving models are being reimagined. Today, innovation in philanthropy is focused on impactful partnerships rather than just transactional gifts. It's about fostering deeper relationships and embracing collaboration, shared knowledge and learnings. For philanthropists, this new approach offers a way to create sustainable, meaningful impact, using both expertise and funds.

## **The Shift to Relationship-Based Funding**

One piece of advice we always share with not-for-profits is to prioritise friend-raising over fundraising. This relationship-based approach is becoming equally important for philanthropists and corporate partners. What may have been seen as a transactional process is evolving into something transformative. Relationship-based funding fosters long-term connections built on trust, mutual respect, and a shared vision. Donors are no longer solely





**Left** OKC's Director of Strategy and Development Oonagh O'Donovan with Tom Clinch, MD and principal owner of Clinch Wealth Management at an OKC workshop for Arts and Business Northern Ireland.



financial supporters; today, they are engaged as valued stakeholders in an organisation's mission. Similarly, charities aren't just asking for money—they now also see the value of external expertise.

Focusing on relationships creates values-aligned partnerships where organisations can learn and grow from donors' insights. This transforms philanthropy from a one-way street into a collaborative journey, where both sides work together toward a shared goal.

### **Connecting Great People to Great Causes**

At OKC, we are committed to connecting great partners with great causes to enable great impact. One of the most powerful truths in philanthropy is that people give to people. Behind every philanthropic gift lies a personal story, connection, or shared belief that drives support for a cause. Donors must feel their values,

passions and aspirations align with the organisations they support, fostering deeper commitment and sustained impact.

One example of this is OKC's recent support to a small group of high-impact donors whose passion for equine therapy and its benefits to children's health, alongside their wish to create a fitting memorial to Jack de Bromhead, resulted in the creation of the Jack de Bromhead Equine Centre at ChildVision. These donors provided both their expertise on the build and their financial support to create an extraordinary new space for visually impaired and neurodiverse children to access life-changing equine therapies.

To align with our values and commitment to the sector, OKC has also established the OKC Fund, managed through Community Foundation Ireland. Focused on supporting the research and infrastructure required to underpin

philanthropic development, our Fund reflects our belief that smart philanthropy not only supports individual causes but also strengthens the broader social, economic and cultural ecosystem.

OKC's Philanthropy team, led by Mary O'Kennedy (Managing Director) and Brian Hatton (Philanthropy Consultant), are here to support individuals, families and businesses to maximise their philanthropic impact and ensure long-term results by facilitating introductions to values-aligned causes and philanthropic intermediaries who can support their grant-making.

### **Driving Change with Corporate Philanthropy**

In terms of corporate philanthropy, particularly in the increasingly important ESG context, businesses are looking at how they align their social investments with their business expertise and values. >>



## Who We Are

Since 2002, OKC has been working across the not-for-profit sector to enable philanthropic impact. We are passionate about enabling social transformation through philanthropy by providing values-led and impact driven counsel for our clients. **We are committed to connecting great people to great causes to enable great impact!**

## Our Services

Strategic Planning | Grantmaking Advisory  
 | Impact Assessment | Guidance on  
 Philanthropic Priorities | Collaboration  
 | Facilitation | Governance & Board  
 Development | HR & Recruitment

**If you too are passionate about enabling social impact through philanthropy, we'd love to chat! Please email [oonagh@okennedyconsulting.ie](mailto:oonagh@okennedyconsulting.ie) to arrange a conversation.**



**OKC has assisted the Vodafone Foundation in evaluating charitable projects. The experience has been truly professional... Always a pleasure to work with"**

- Vodafone Foundation Ireland

» In this regard, Vodafone Ireland Foundation is at the forefront of innovative philanthropy, addressing the digital divide through partnerships with charities that have the expertise to make meaningful impact. OKC works with Vodafone on its Hi Digital programme, which provides training in partnership with ALONE and Irish Girl Guides, to bridge the digital gap for those aged 65+. This values-driven collaboration fosters inclusion, inter-generational engagement and well-being among Ireland's older population.

Hi Digital exemplifies ESG-focused corporate philanthropy by leveraging technological expertise to address social issues, and tackling immediate challenges while building a more inclusive future. This initiative shows how values and goals-aligned philanthropy can drive lasting change.

### A New Era of Philanthropy

The future of philanthropy is being shaped by those willing to innovate, reimagine relationships, and embrace collaboration. At OKC, we are passionate about being part of this evolution, supporting charitable organisations to ensure they have the skills and resources to partner with philanthropy effectively while also enabling great people to connect to great causes! Whether it's working with Vodafone to bridge the digital divide, advising a board on embedding a culture of philanthropy in their organisation or planning a capital campaign for a transformative initiative, the opportunity of contributing to a healthier and more inclusive society is incredibly rewarding. Together, we can turn innovative ideas into transformative action. ■

**We are proud to support  
 Philanthropy Ireland's Symposium.**

# Taking the Long View: Why Futures Thinking is Essential for Philanthropy



**Hanna Stähle** is Head of Foresight and Innovation at Philea – Philanthropy Europe Association, leading the Anticipate team. She developed the strategy for Philea's Futures Philanthropy initiative and co-authored Futures Philanthropy: Anticipation for the Common Good publication.



As part of Philanthropy Ireland's Philanthropy Symposium 24, attendees will explore potential futures for the Irish philanthropy community and examine ways to support social impact through strategic giving by conducting a Foresight Laboratory led by the Copenhagen Institute of Foresight. Philanthropy Ireland is bringing this initiative to the Irish space with the hope to build on the fantastic work from Philea. Hanna Stähle, Head of Foresight and Innovation at Philea explains why they so passionately believe in the potential to use the futures thinking methodology to support a strong, responsive and innovative philanthropy sector in Europe.

Foresight is not an established practice in philanthropy. If only it was, philanthropic qualifications for doing so would be striking. Here I will try to explain the reasons why taking the long view and integrating futures thinking is essential for funders and philanthropy networks, and even more essential to provide capacity building to civil society organisations and charities.

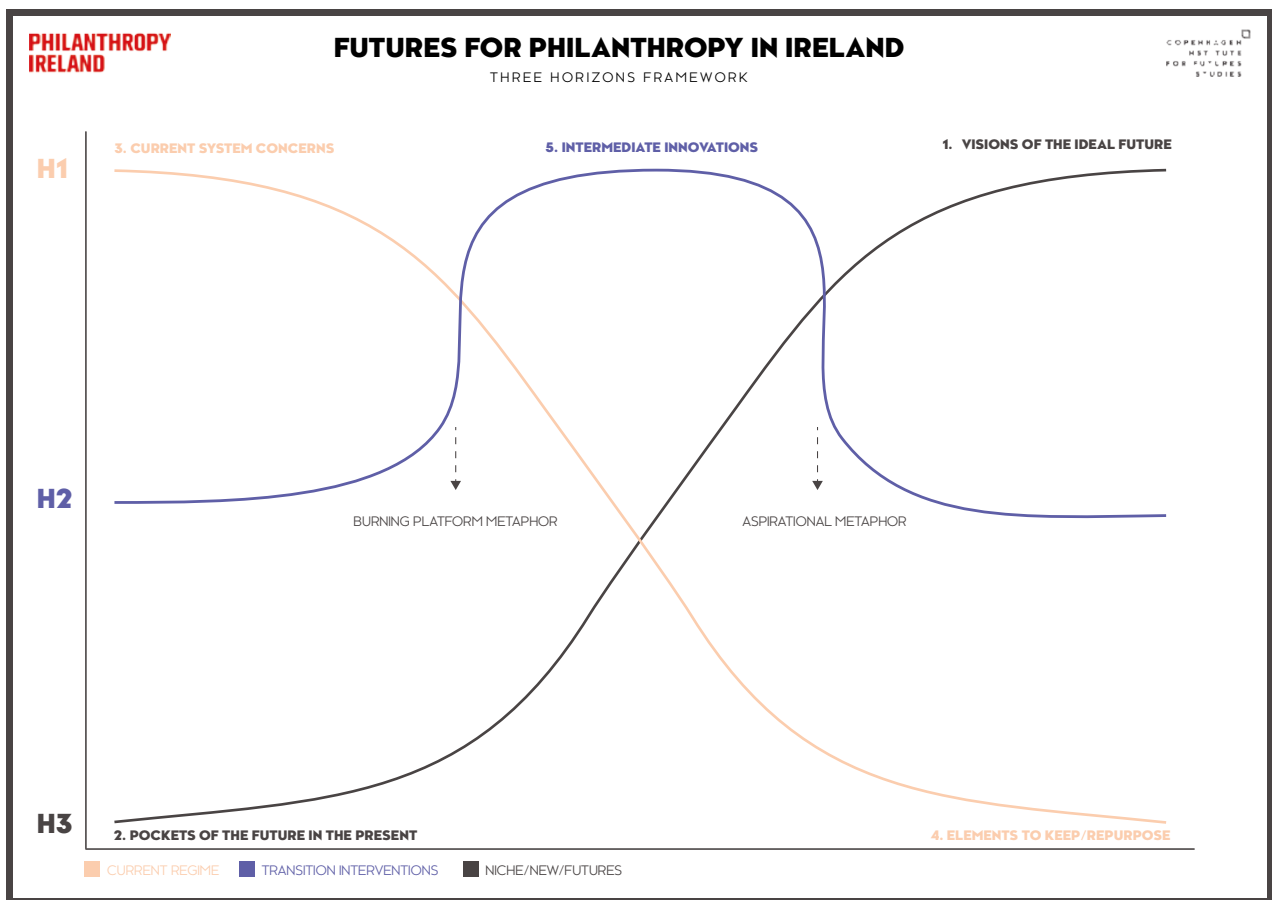
**The World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Risks Report** warned of a "new era of low growth, low investment, and low cooperation" over the next decade, threatening to reverse decades of human progress. This could lead to heightened poverty, hunger and inequality, exacerbating the already existing wealth gap within and between nations, and signs of these changes are already everywhere. The Report identifies five of the top ten global risks as being climate-related, including failure to mitigate and adapt to climate change, natural disasters, biodiversity loss and resource shortage. Vast areas of the planet may become uninhabitable, leading to mass migration. In addition, the social contract appears fractured, as societies struggle with the heavy burden placed on future generations.

These are also the findings of the Philea "**Exploring 21st century philanthropy**" survey conducted in 2023 among public-benefit foundations, philanthropy networks, civil society organisations, thinktanks, research institutions, businesses and media. Among the top five megatrends that have impact at the global level are climate change and environmental degradation; AI and automation; concentration of wealth; climate migration; and the rising influence of new governing systems. These are complex challenges where cause and effect are often unclear, leaving many unsettled about the future. What is more, well-intended programmes and interventions addressing these challenges can lead to unintended consequences.

Unsurprisingly, many of the traditional frameworks we have long relied upon to navigate change do not bring the results we want to see. This requires philanthropic organisations to stay open and flexible and expand the toolbox with new approaches and practices to cope with uncertainty and unpredictability. Having hope about the future - and constantly validating this hope - is essential to be able to shape positive change - and this is a crucial role philanthropy needs to play today. Anticipation and futures thinking offer us a new lens to see some of the wicked problems from a different perspective, but also give us the tools to imagine alternative pathways and solutions.

Philanthropy is well positioned to harness the benefits and insights of foresight that, if done right, is deeply connected with what philanthropic organisations are trying to do at the core: providing the long view, >>

**Below** The three horizons framework developed to support the Philanthropy Ireland community to imagine its potential.



» building bridges between different stakeholders and facilitating dialogue, integrating diverse perspectives and thinking, focusing on discovery. Foresight is never done in isolation; the best insights are provided from participatory processes of large, diverse groups with various experiences. Philanthropy can inspire change and help build this much-needed collective capacity not only to react to the current challenges, but also to develop a flexibility to adapt and anticipate possible risks and opportunities. Foresight is sometimes mistaken for a silver bullet, which will give all the answers. It is not a silver bullet. Foresight is hard work and collaborative effort.

Philea's and Copenhagen Institute of Foresight recent publication, "**Futures Philanthropy: Anticipation for the Common Good**", explores how and why philanthropy could play a role in fostering anticipation for the common good and what anticipation looks like when it is put in the service of society and common interests. It offers an overview of foresight tools adapted specifically to the philanthropic context. The Report provides practical insights into how to embed a futures mindset and apply futures tools, such as scenario planning, horizon scanning, causal layered analysis, futures triangle and others, to strategy, grantmaking practices, collaboration, evaluation of impact and even

investments. This publication, a polyphony of voices from across the European philanthropic community and its living practice, is replete with examples and case studies that can provide clues as to how foresight can be adopted to (y)our own context.

Embracing foresight and futures thinking is critical for funders and philanthropy networks in times of uncertainty, when strategy development and programme design become an ambiguous exercise. Foresight which is built on evidence, diverse perspectives and collaborative efforts, is aimed at providing a kaleidoscope of views of and insights into what is possible and at challenging our assumptions, which can often become stuck in the present or the past. ■

Join the growing movement of Philea's futures philanthropy community of funders and networks and take part in ThinkLab sessions and open house events, inspiring gatherings of leaders, research and learning series such as the War and Peace scenario planning co-designed by CENTRIS, Evens Foundation, Mercator Foundation Switzerland and Philea.



# Global Impact, Local Focus



**Juan Guillermo Castañeda,**  
Chair of the Foundation

“  
**Our  
overarching  
goals are  
centred  
around  
creating  
lasting  
positive  
change in the  
communities  
we serve.”**

Corporate philanthropy plays a critical role in addressing societal challenges and driving sustainable change. As businesses increasingly look to align their profits with purpose, philanthropic foundations like Smurfit Westrock’s Charitable Foundation offer valuable insights into how companies can make a tangible difference. In an exclusive interview with Juan G. Castaneda, Chair of the Foundation, we explore the Foundation’s approach to engagement with local communities, the lessons learned, and advice for other corporate entities. Currently known as the Smurfit Kappa Foundation, the Foundation is in the process of updating its name to reflect the recent merger of Smurfit Kappa and USA-based WestRock.

### **Creating long-term impact through adaptability and decision making with communities at the core**

Smurfit Westrock’s Foundation is deeply committed to creating long term positive impact and supporting the communities it operates in. The Foundation’s primary areas of focus include education, health, and basic care, with an emphasis on helping underprivileged populations. Castaneda shared, “Our overarching

goals are centred around creating lasting positive change in the communities we serve. By focusing on areas such as education, health and nutrition, and basic care, we hope to see transformative change that not only improves quality of life but also cultivates inclusion and belonging.”

A critical element of the Foundation’s success lies in its decision-making process. Projects are selected based on their ability to tackle global issues that resonate locally, ensuring relevance and measurable impact. “We engage with local stakeholders to ensure our support is both relevant and impactful,” Castaneda explains. This approach allows the Foundation to remain closely aligned with the needs of the communities, resulting in sustainable impact that contributes to global outcomes.

The global philanthropic landscape is ever-evolving, and corporate foundations must adapt to stay effective. One trend influencing Smurfit Westrock’s Foundation is the focus on sustainability and digital solutions. Castaneda highlighted this shift: “We have embraced technology to support our processes, and a few years ago, we adjusted our funding criteria to include alignment with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.” By aligning with global priorities, the Foundation ensures that its efforts remain relevant and impactful.

### **Working with partners to achieve sustainable and enduring solutions**

One of the most significant challenges in philanthropy is ensuring that efforts are sustainable. Temporary solutions might address immediate needs, but the Foundation prioritises projects that lead to knock on and long-term benefits. Castaneda emphasised this point: “We focus on supporting projects designed to create enduring benefits such as lasting change or self-sufficiency. Our aim is to create a legacy that continues to benefit communities >>



**Above left** El Colegio in El Salvador was enabled to offer kindergarten education to over 600 children through a donation of \$139,000.

**Above right** The Foundation's €192,000 donation supported the transformation of an abandoned bus station to a vibrant cultural hub in Finale Emilia, Italy.

» long after our initial support has ended." The Foundation invests in capacity-building initiatives to ensure that the infrastructure, skills, and knowledge remain impactful over time.

Choosing the right partners is essential for impactful philanthropy. Smurfit Westrock's Foundation looks for partners that not only align with its values but also demonstrate transparency and accountability. "We seek partners who share our values and have a strong commitment to the communities they serve," says Castaneda. A notable example is the Foundation's collaboration with El Colegio in El Salvador, where a holistic approach to improving education for over 600 children has created lasting positive change. The Foundation invested \$139,000 to help improve infrastructure needs and support teacher training, ensuring the children had a safe place to learn with effective teachers.

### The power of community engagement and accountability in corporate giving

In his role as a philanthropic leader, Castaneda has learned that community engagement is key to successful partnerships. "Partnering with, listening to, and understanding the



needs of the community is never to be underestimated," he notes. Equally important is ensuring that funds are used as intended, with the Foundation conducting thorough due diligence and following up on its investments.

For other corporations considering philanthropy, Castaneda advises approaching it with genuine intent. "My advice to other companies is to approach philanthropy with a commitment to making a difference," he says. "Engaging with communities to understand their unique needs and challenges is crucial, as is transparency and proper governance."

### Conclusion

Corporate philanthropy, when done strategically and with a focus on sustainability, can drive transformative change in communities around the world. Smurfit Westrock's approach offers a blueprint for other businesses seeking to align their charitable efforts with both local needs and global priorities. As Castaneda wisely advises, "Creating positive social change is the desired outcome." For businesses looking to engage in philanthropy, this commitment to genuine impact is the key to success. ■

# Ireland's first National Policy on Philanthropy



Philanthropy Ireland has advocated for a National Policy for many years to support the philanthropy community, stimulate further philanthropy, and promote the impact philanthropy is having in communities across Ireland.

Philanthropy Ireland has linked closely with the Department of Rural and Community Development in creating the Policy, through extensive research and consultative process. The Policy was formally launched in December 2023. Philanthropy Ireland interviewed Bairbre Nic Aongusa, Assistant Secretary in the Department of Rural and Community Development to get an update on the implementation of the Policy and plans for the future.

**The entire philanthropy community was delighted to see the launch of the first National Policy on Philanthropy in December 2023, can you share the original vision behind the Policy? What specific challenges or opportunities in Ireland's philanthropy landscape led to its creation?**

The Policy stems from the Department of Rural and Community Development's Statement of Strategy, which sets out the vision, mission, and strategic goals that

guide the work of the Department. One of those goals is to 'Enable the community, voluntary, charity, philanthropic and social economy sectors to contribute fully to civil society'.

From our contacts with the sector, we were aware that there were a range of impediments to philanthropic giving in Ireland. These need to be addressed if the philanthropic sector is to contribute fully to society. So it was in this context that the Department committed in its Strategy to developing a National Philanthropy Policy.

Our vision for this Policy was to create a culture of philanthropy in Ireland, where the concept is understood by all, the important role it can play in society is appreciated, and Government plays its part in encouraging and fostering the right environment for philanthropy to grow and flourish.

The publication of the Policy on 13 December 2023 was the culmination of years of collaborative work between government and the wider philanthropic sector.

We are delighted that the Policy has been received so positively by the sector and are excited about the challenge of implementing it over the next few years. >>

**Above** Bairbre Nic Aongusa, Assistant Secretary in the Department of Rural and Community Development speaking at the launch of the National Policy on Philanthropy.



» **How did you approach the development of the policy? Who were the key stakeholders involved, and how did their input shape the final document?**

As anyone who has ever been involved in policymaking would know, it was a lengthy but necessary and ultimately rewarding process!

Our journey commenced back in 2019 with philanthropists, representatives from the sector, beneficiaries, colleagues from across government departments and local government, academia, and international representatives.

Since 2019, a huge amount of work has been completed; we commissioned research, published reports and organised workshops. We established a National Advisory Group and a number of sub-groups, whose roles have been instrumental in the development of the policy.

While it might seem like a long period of time, each of those steps was essential to the advancement of the policy and to ultimately produce a document we could all get behind.

We also carried out a public consultation, which was a key element of the policy development. It was important for us to ensure that the process was as open and transparent as possible and as such, opened the consultation process to ensure that everyone with an interest in the policy could make their voices heard. All of this was the combined effort of a huge cohort of people, working together, with the common goal to produce a document that would positively contribute to enabling and advancing philanthropy to support a more equitable, sustainable and just society.

**What are the primary goals of the National Philanthropy Policy? How do you see it transforming the philanthropy sector in Ireland?**

The policy's main purpose is to deepen understanding and knowledge, create an enabling environment and accelerate engagement with philanthropy in Ireland for social good.

In order to do that, five key objectives have been identified, with specific actions to be carried out under each one.

More specifically, the policy looks at increasing the understanding and awareness of the value of philanthropy; collecting and utilising data and research to inform decision-making; identifying opportunities to encourage and increase giving, including through fiscal incentives; promoting understanding and collaboration between philanthropy and government; and building and supporting the capacity of philanthropy stakeholders. In addition, the successful delivery of the policy will support the philanthropy sector to strengthen its capacity to contribute to the Sustainable Development

Goals. Philanthropic organisations are already playing an increasingly prominent role in supporting the international sustainable agenda, and delivering on the key objectives of the policy will ensure that we move towards a more joined-up approach that supports and recognises the important role of philanthropy in policy development and delivery.

**Since the policy's launch, what progress has been made in its implementation?**

Our first step has been to establish an Implementation and Monitoring Group (IMG), which I chair. The IMG is composed of key actors of the sector, representatives from national and local government and academia. Its purpose is to oversee, advise and monitor the overall implementation of the Policy, with a particular focus on progressing the 5 objectives set out in the policy.

We have established five sub-groups, in line with the key objectives of the policy. Each sub-group is chaired by a member of the IMG. The sub-groups are tasked with delivering the policy actions under each of their objectives, and as a first step, they have each been asked to develop a work plan, detailing the steps they will take to deliver each action.

We ensure that the chairs of the five sub-groups meet as necessary, to ensure cross communication and identify early potential duplication of work or synergies between objectives.

While it is early days in the implementation of the policy, we were pleased that some proposals in relation to fiscal measures put forward by the sub-group on Stimulating and Incentivising Philanthropy were taken on board by the Minister of Finance and formed part of the recent budget announcement.

**How has the policy impacted the relationship between the government and the philanthropic community? Do you envision an increase in collaboration or new partnerships as a result?**

The development, and subsequent implementation, of the policy has helped us to build on existing partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders. Indeed, it is recognised that effective collaboration is key to the achievement of the policy objectives. The policy itself provides a framework for Philanthropy, Government and Beneficiaries to work more collaboratively and effectively. This approach is now more important than ever, as our society continues to create vibrant and integrated communities while responding to emerging challenges.

**How is the impact of the policy being measured? What indicators are being used to assess its success?**

Measuring the impact of the policy is very important and is a key element for us in the Department. While



drafting the policy, we wanted to ensure that it was a strong document and that it would serve its purpose, which is to enhance collaboration between the sector, beneficiaries, and Government to put in place an environment where philanthropy can grow. So now, making sure it is implemented effectively is paramount.

As part of their work plan, each sub-group has to agree on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each of the actions and sub-actions they have to deliver. Those KPIs will let us know what success looks like and help us track the progress of all actions.

The Department will also publish annual updates on the progress of the Policy. The first Progress Report will be published in Q1 2025.

### **How does Ireland's approach to philanthropy policy compare with other countries? Are there international models or practices that influenced the Irish policy?**

There is no single definition of philanthropy internationally. However, in developing our policy, we sought to ensure that there was a detailed analysis and consideration of emerging themes, both national and international.

By way of example, the National Advisory Group which supported the Department in producing the policy, included international representatives, from both a policy and philanthropic background. They shared their knowledge and experience of philanthropy outside of Ireland and brought an invaluable perspective to the work.

We are aware that since its publication, Ireland's National Philanthropy Policy has been talked about across Europe and is being seen as a benchmark, and its collaborative process as a model to follow in other countries, which we are very proud of.

We have also been contacted by countries much further afield, embarking on their own journey to develop philanthropy.

The impact of this policy from our small island has gone far beyond what any of us had expected and we are delighted to be in a position to assist and guide others by sharing our own experience of the process.

### **What would you like to see from Ireland's philanthropic community to further support the goals of the National Philanthropy Policy? How can philanthropists and organisations contribute to its success?**

We'll always encourage philanthropists, and the wider philanthropy community, to engage in the process by either talking to us directly, or via organisations that represent them such as Philanthropy Ireland.

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**We are aware that since its publication, Ireland's National Philanthropy Policy has been talked about across Europe and is being seen as a benchmark.”**

People and organisations have been very proactive in coming forward to support us in the implementation of the policy, which is extremely positive; it shows the appetite of the sector in delivering our objectives and their belief that those actions will bring real change.

While the overall responsibility for policy co-ordination rests with the Department, all the actors of the wider philanthropy sector have a role to play in its implementation. We are acutely aware that collaboration is key to achieve the objectives of the policy and we will continue to build and maintain strong relationships with all involved.

With this policy, we want to send a clear message about the value placed by Government on philanthropy and its positive role in society. The Philanthropy Policy has been developed with, and, for the sector. So we say - keep the conversation going, submit your ideas, come talk to us.

### **Is there anything else you would like to add or to communicate to the philanthropy community?**

The National Philanthropy Policy 2024-2028 is one of a suite of policies produced by the Department of Rural and Community Development in recent years - for example, the National Volunteering Strategy and the National Social Enterprise Strategy - which are focussed on supporting communities and strengthening civil society. Together these form a strong policy framework, providing a full range of appropriate supports to improve the capability of organisations that deliver services to individuals and communities, and contribute to a fairer and more inclusive society.

Through the implementation of our policies, we keep working towards the Department's vision for a sustainable society with individual and community wellbeing at its heart, supporting thriving rural communities, and where all communities, urban and rural, have opportunities to grow and develop economically, socially and culturally. ■

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# The Vital Role for Professional Advisers in the Philanthropy Ecosystem

Philanthropy in Ireland is undergoing a quiet transformation, with increasing numbers of individuals, families, and businesses expressing a desire to make a meaningful impact on society through charitable giving. As these donors embark on their philanthropic journeys, professional advisers are uniquely positioned to play a pivotal role in guiding them. Financial advisers, lawyers, tax experts, and estate planners are often the first to be approached by clients contemplating charitable donations or long-term giving strategies. For these advisers, engaging deeply in the philanthropy community is not only beneficial for clients but a vital support in shaping sustainable, impactful social change.

## Why Professional Advisers Should Engage with Philanthropy Deepening Client Relationships

Clients increasingly seek to align their wealth with their values, and philanthropic giving can be a key avenue to achieve this. Many donors seek to make a positive impact, but they may not know where to start, how to structure their giving, or how to ensure their donations are being used effectively. By understanding the nuances of philanthropy and its benefits, professional advisers can provide tailored advice that strengthens client relationships. When an adviser helps a client think through their philanthropic goals, it goes beyond financial or legal advice—it demonstrates a deep understanding of the

client's personal values, aspirations, and legacy.

## Holistic Wealth Management

Philanthropy is more than a transaction; it's a strategic decision that involves careful planning. Whether it's setting up a charitable trust, structuring a bequest, or creating a donor advised fund, charitable giving has financial, tax, and legal implications. By integrating philanthropy into broader wealth management, professional advisers can offer a holistic approach that maximises both the financial benefits and social impact. Advisers can guide clients on how philanthropy fits into their estate planning, tax strategies, or investment decisions, ensuring their giving is both meaningful and efficient. By understanding Ireland's philanthropy community, advisers can sign post clients to philanthropy intermediaries that provide many of these bespoke supports.

## Enabling Legacy and Succession Planning

Many clients, especially high-net-worth individuals, see philanthropy as a way to leave a lasting legacy. It's a way to pass down values to the next generation, engage family members in shared causes, and ensure that their wealth is used to make a difference long after they are gone. Professional advisers can play a crucial role in helping clients articulate these goals and implement structures that ensure that their philanthropic legacy



is sustainable. Engaging with philanthropy enables advisers to add significant value to their client relationships by addressing this increasingly important aspect of wealth and succession planning.

## Professional Advisers as Catalysts for Social Change

Professional advisers are not just facilitators of transactions; they are also catalysts for social change. By advising clients on how to effectively channel their resources toward addressing societal challenges, they become part of the philanthropy ecosystem, contributing to meaningful impact on a broad scale.

Here's how professional advisers can directly support and enhance the broader social change mission:

## Maximising Impact

Philanthropy is most effective when it is strategic. Advisers can help clients identify areas of interest, research organisations, and ensure their donations are making a tangible difference. Clients often trust their advisers to provide insights into how they can



## PHILANTHROPY IRELAND

have the most significant social impact. This includes advising on the most effective giving vehicles, offering due diligence on charities, and helping clients define clear objectives for their philanthropy. By being informed about social issues, the philanthropy landscape, and opportunities for impact, advisers can help clients move from ad-hoc donations to strategic, high-impact philanthropy.

### Guiding Clients Through Complexity

The world of philanthropy can be complex. There are myriad causes to support, ranging from global challenges like climate change to local community issues. Additionally, new forms of giving, such as impact investing and venture philanthropy, are evolving alongside more traditional methods. Clients may also be interested in collaborating with other donors or seeking innovative ways to leverage their giving for greater impact. Professional advisers can provide the expertise to navigate these complexities, offering clients clear, thoughtful pathways through the myriad opportunities and challenges of the philanthropic

landscape. Similarly, they can develop relationships with other philanthropy support organisations to support their clients in answering some of their questions.

### Promoting Sustainable Giving

Sustainable philanthropy is about ensuring that resources continue to flow to important causes over time, not just through one-off donations. Advisers can help clients establish long-term giving plans that take into account their financial needs while maximising their charitable impact. By helping clients set up foundations, trusts, or other vehicles that can exist in perpetuity, advisers can ensure that social change is supported for generations. Additionally, advisers can guide clients in building a sustainable giving strategy that is adaptable to changing circumstances and challenges.

### Building a Bridge Between Wealth and Social Good

Professional advisers are in a unique position to bridge the gap between private wealth and public good. They can connect their clients to philanthropic networks,

introduce them to causes that align with their values, and create opportunities for collaboration with other philanthropists. By engaging deeply with the philanthropy community, advisers can facilitate meaningful connections and partnerships that enhance both individual and collective giving efforts. They are often uniquely positioned to open the conversation.

### Becoming a Key Player in the Philanthropy Ecosystem

To be truly effective, professional advisers must become active participants in the philanthropy ecosystem. This means staying informed about trends in philanthropy, building relationships with philanthropic organisations, and understanding the broader societal challenges that their clients may wish to address. It also involves recognising that their role extends beyond transactional advice to becoming trusted partners in their clients' philanthropic journeys.

In today's complex and interconnected world, philanthropy is not just an act of generosity; it is a strategic tool for the deployment of resources to drive social change. Professional advisers are critical to this process, serving as both trusted guides for their clients and key players in the broader philanthropy ecosystem. Philanthropy Ireland encourages professional advisers to seek out opportunities for learning and engagement within the philanthropy community. This could involve joining networks, such as Philanthropy Ireland as an Associate Member or forums where advisers and philanthropists collaborate, attending conferences or workshops on strategic giving, or simply staying up to date with research and best practices in the field.

Supporting clients in their philanthropic efforts is not just good practice—it's an opportunity to help shape a better future for all.

# Medtronic: On a Mission to Drive Equity in Ireland



**Alma Curran,**  
Government Affairs Director

In 2024, Medtronic celebrates 75 years in operation. Part of a fast paced and ever-changing industry, one thing has remained steadfast for decades - our mission: to alleviate pain, restore health, and extend life. This guiding principle drives everything we do and reflects our commitment to transforming healthcare for the better.

Medtronic is more than just a medical technology company; we are a global leader in healthcare solutions, touching the lives of millions of patients



**Above** Empowering employee volunteers: From on-site meal packing events to paid time off to respond to natural disasters, employees are empowered to make a difference.

**Below** The Midlands Science Festival supported by Medtronic.



# Medtronic

each year. Our pioneering spirit and relentless pursuit of innovation have led to groundbreaking therapies that improve the quality of life for patients facing some of the most complex and challenging health conditions. From cardiac care and diabetes management to spinal and neurological disorders, we are at the forefront of delivering innovative solutions that change what's possible in healthcare.

Our promise to “engineer the extraordinary” is not solely about technological advancements. It's also about how we leverage our expertise and resources to make a broader social impact. Our commitment to corporate citizenship and philanthropy is an extension of our mission and a reflection of our values. We believe that everyone, regardless of their location or socioeconomic status, should have access to the healthcare they need. This belief drives our efforts in global health equity, education, and community support.

In Ireland, a significant country in Medtronic's global operations, our presence has fostered innovation, economic growth, and a strong commitment to





**We believe that by investing philanthropic efforts in the well-being and opportunities for our communities, we can create a ripple effect that leads to broader societal benefits.”**

community development. Medtronic employs more than 4,000 people across sites in Galway, Athlone and Dublin in a variety of manufacturing, R&D, commercial and corporate roles.

We believe that by investing philanthropic efforts in the well-being and opportunities for our communities, we can create a ripple effect that leads to broader societal benefits. Our local initiatives are designed to address the unique needs of each community we serve, whether through direct support, volunteerism, or partnerships with local groups.

#### **Medtronic Foundation STEM Equity Grants**

From 2022- 2024, the Medtronic Foundation enabled us to reach more than 12,000 young people in Ireland through partnerships that remove barriers to access quality Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education and create opportunity for economic advancement. Underserved and underrepresented communities face deep and continual challenges with economic stability. Providing opportunities for equitable STEM education is one of the ways the Medtronic Foundation has worked to reduce barriers to achieving health, well-being and prosperity.

Alma Curran, Director of Corporate Affairs for Medtronic Ireland said: “Our STEM grants go far beyond funding. We bring Medtronic employee volunteers, nonprofits, and communities together, and in doing this, we're able to amplify our impact and create lasting change.”

#### **Rise Against Hunger- It Starts with a Meal**

With high levels of employee engagement in volunteering, Ireland was selected to participate in a global volunteering series sponsored by the Medtronic Foundation. The partnership engaged Medtronic employees from seven countries in volunteer events on behalf of Rise Against Hunger, an international humanitarian organisation growing a global movement to end hunger by empowering communities, nourishing lives, and responding to emergencies.

The Rise Against Hunger meal packing event combined a food packing process with an educational experience to make a global impact worldwide and touch the lives of our volunteers.

In Galway, 258 Medtronic employees volunteered their time with the charity to pack more than 60,000 nutritious meals for people facing food poverty around the world-enough to feed 280 children for a full school year.

#### **Medtronic Mission Makers**

We actively support programmes that promote health education, awareness, and early intervention. This year we launched a Fund with The Ireland Funds - Medtronic Mission Makers. As a mission driven company, Medtronic will support ten charities in Ireland to deliver their own mission to improve lives by funding patient awareness activities.

Employees nominated, reviewed and selected diverse and impactful projects from Irish charities including Croi, The Irish Cancer Society, The National Women's Council, Diabetes Federation and the Dillon Quirke Foundation. These partnerships raise awareness about chronic diseases and will empower individuals with the knowledge and resources to manage their health proactively.

Medtronic employees play a crucial role in all of these efforts. Through programs such as the Medtronic Foundation Volunteer Grants, Matching Grants or skills-based volunteering initiatives, our team members are encouraged to contribute their time, skills, and resources to causes they are passionate about.

Achieving our mission requires the power of diverse perspectives to challenge our thinking, spark innovation, and reinforce our shared values. Diversity isn't just a priority—it's integral to our business strategy. It drives the creation of fresh ideas, fosters product innovation, and ultimately enables us to better serve our patients.

In Ireland, Medtronic employs individuals from more than 65 nationalities. Since 2023, Medtronic has been engaged in a five-year Signature Innovation Partnership with the University of Galway. A key goal of this partnership is to enhance Medtronic's reputation as a premier destination for students of all backgrounds. We are dedicated to promoting a culture where all employees feel they belong, are respected, and feel valued for who they are. Our philanthropic and volunteering opportunities are a key part of this offering.

As we continue this journey looking to the next 75 years of Medtronic, we are inspired by the extraordinary resilience and strength of the patients and communities we serve. Every life touched, every barrier overcome, and every innovation realized is a testament to the power of what can be achieved when we come together with a shared purpose. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded organisations such as Philanthropy Ireland and individuals who share our commitment to a healthier, more equitable world.

# The Future of Philanthropy

Philanthropy Ireland will continue to play a pivotal role in the evolution and advancement of philanthropy across the country, fostering a culture of giving and promoting impactful, sustainable change. Looking ahead, our plans for the coming years are grounded in a commitment to expanding and enhancing the philanthropic ecosystem in Ireland, with a strong emphasis on collaboration, knowledge sharing, and strategic action.

One of the core pillars of our ongoing work is our engagement with the National Policy on Philanthropy and the Department of Community and Rural Development. This Policy provides a roadmap for strengthening philanthropy in Ireland and is a vital framework for shaping the future of giving. Our commitment to progressing this policy remains steadfast, as we believe that a structured, well-supported approach to philanthropy can unlock enormous potential in addressing critical societal challenges. Through close collaboration with governmental bodies and stakeholders, we aim to continue aligning national strategies with the goals of the philanthropic sector, ensuring that philanthropy is recognised as a key driver of social and community development.

In addition to this policy work, we are actively progressing our **Membership Networks** designed to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange among funders and philanthropists.



**Above** National Philanthropy Policy Launch.

These networks include:

- **All-Island Network**, which aims to bring together our members and philanthropic organisations from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This network promotes cross-border collaboration and encourages the sharing of best practices to maximise impact across the island.
- **Climate Funders Network**, which addresses one of the most pressing issues of our time — climate change. This network brings together philanthropists who are focused on environmental issues, fostering collaboration and supporting initiatives that promote sustainability, climate resilience, and environmental justice.
- **Network for Social Finance and Impact Investing**, aimed at promoting the use of financial tools to generate positive social outcomes. This network connects philanthropists, impact investors, and social entrepreneurs, offering a platform for exploring innovative financial models that create both financial return and social good.

These networks serve as key platforms for members to collaborate, share insights, and learn from each other, helping to create a more connected and impactful philanthropic community.

In parallel, we will continue to deliver **Philanthropy in Practice** events, which are designed to support best practices in philanthropy and encourage knowledge sharing across our membership. These events offer a space for funders to come together to discuss key issues, share case studies, and explore new approaches to giving. By showcasing real-world examples of philanthropic success and challenges, we provide valuable learning opportunities for both new and experienced philanthropists.

A vital part of our future strategy involves expanding our **Membership Hub**. This online platform, facilitated by our partners SmartSimple will undergo updates to provide members with even more resources, tools, and connections to support their philanthropic efforts. This will include enhancements to our **Philanthropy Map**, a dynamic tool that showcases the breadth and diversity of philanthropic activity in Ireland. By providing updated data and insights, we aim to highlight emerging trends, identify gaps, and celebrate the contributions of funders across the country. This resource is crucial for fostering a sense of community among philanthropists and for guiding potential funders towards areas of need.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to announce the delivery of a **Futures Workshop** that will build on the momentum generated at the Philanthropy

Symposium 24. This event will focus on the future of philanthropy, examining what the landscape could look like in 2030 and exploring the steps needed to get there. The workshop will bring together thought leaders, philanthropists, and sector experts to explore the future direction of giving, what will be needed, looking at strategies required to foster meaningful and strategic philanthropy collaborations. The insights generated will be vital for shaping the next decade of philanthropy, ensuring that our sector remains responsive, innovative, and impactful.

In conclusion, looking to the future, Philanthropy Ireland is firmly committed to supporting innovation, collaboration and strategic activation. By engaging with the National Policy on Philanthropy, expanding our membership networks, knowledge sharing, delivering impactful events, and fostering future-focused conversations, we are committed to supporting the growth of a robust, sustainable and engaged philanthropic community. Through these efforts, we aim to unlock the full potential of philanthropy to address the social, environmental, and economic challenges facing Ireland and beyond.

# PHILANTHROPY IRELAND

Early 2025 Dublin City Centre

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

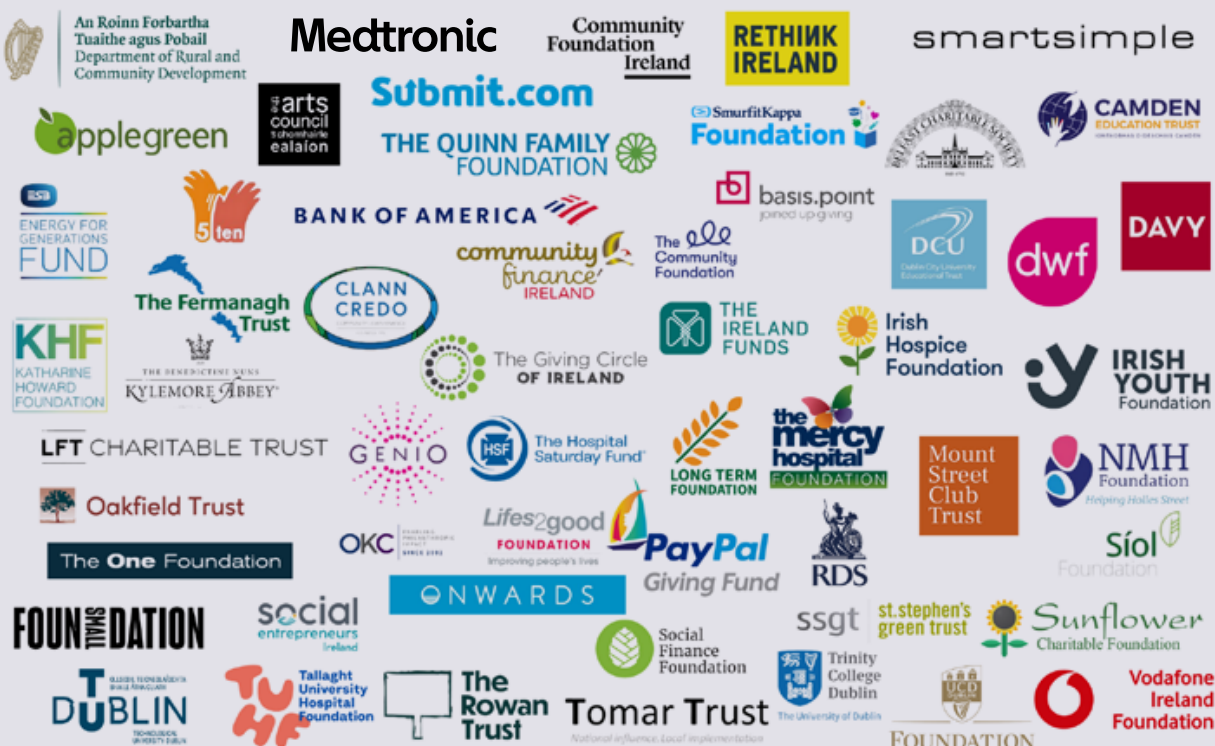
Philanthropy Ireland, in collaboration with the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies, invites you to a unique workshop exploring the evolving landscape of philanthropy in Ireland.

This dynamic event will bring together thought leaders, philanthropists, and changemakers to explore emerging trends shaping the future of philanthropy. Discuss the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the Irish philanthropic sector. Collaborate on innovative strategies to drive meaningful impact and sustainable change.

Whether you are a foundation, adviser, philanthropy supporter or simply passionate about giving, this workshop is your opportunity to shape the future of philanthropy in Ireland.

Limited spots available - email [events@philanthropy.ie](mailto:events@philanthropy.ie) for full details and be part of the movement that's redefining the power of giving in Ireland.

## Thank you to our inspirational philanthropy community including our members and partners



Partners:



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

**Medtronic**



**Smurfit  
Westrock**



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