

Evaluation of The Atlantic Philanthropies Migration Programme

Summary Report

Emma Disley, Daniel Schweppenstedde,
Emily Scraggs, Jennifer Rubin



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This evaluation was prepared for The Atlantic Philanthropies. Over 35 years, Atlantic has made grants totaling \$8 billion to advance opportunity, equity and human dignity.

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Introduction

Over the course of the 1990s, Ireland saw a substantial increase in migration, which reached a peak in 2006/2007. During this period, migrants as a percentage of the total population in Ireland rose from 10 per cent to 20 per cent, one of the largest percentage increases recorded in countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Such a change in the make-up of the population placed pressures on the existing legislative framework regulating rights to work, reside and use services. It also put demands on government departments and services, and had implications for community cohesion. Many researchers, practitioners and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) working in the migration field in Ireland felt the national asylum and immigration system was slow to adapt to these changes and the evolving needs of the population. Following the economic crisis in 2008, the trend reversed with a sharp decline in immigration that reached its lowest point in 12 years in 2012.

The Atlantic Philanthropies is a grantmaking foundation, established in 1982. Atlantic has made grants totaling \$8 billion to advance opportunity, equity and human dignity. As part of their Reconciliation and Human Rights Programme, a migration funding stream was launched in Ireland in 2004 with the aim of bringing about lasting improvements in Ireland's ability to manage migration and in the experiences, life chances and outcomes for arriving migrants.

Atlantic's ambition was not simply to support individual organisations providing services to migrants, but to strategically develop a field of actors and organisations working in migration. Atlantic hoped that the legacy of the Migration Programme would be a strong and capable set of civil society actors operating in Ireland with a common objective of improving the lives of migrants. Atlantic's approach to developing the migration field in Ireland involved:

- Providing long-term, multi-annual core funding to its grantees
- Building capacity and advocacy capability
- Funding collaborative and complementary efforts between and across organisations
- Building an evidence base.

Between 2004 and 2014 Atlantic committed \$40 million in funding to 18 civil society organisations. Twelve of these worked domestically in Ireland and six operated at the European Union (EU) level. While the activities of these organisations were diverse – including delivering services and support directly to migrants and undertaking advocacy to change policy and practice – they were each selected because Atlantic believed their work would further the strategic objective of bringing about lasting change.

The 14 Atlantic grantees included in this evaluation:



AkiDwA works on specific issues faced by migrant women in the areas of gender-based violence, discrimination and employment.



Centre on Migration, Policy and Society is based at the University of Oxford. Its research is focussed on deepening the understanding of the relationship between migration and societal change.

Coalition Against the Deportation of Irish Children

Coalition Against the Deportation of Irish Children brought together Irish NGOs that campaigned for a transparent and fair residency renewal and family reunification process for immigrant parents of Irish-born children. The main coalition work ended in 2007.



Doras Luimní is an organisation run primarily by volunteers. It works with migrants in the Limerick area providing direct support services and undertaking campaigning and integration planning.



European Council on Refugees and Exiles is a pan-European alliance of 85 NGOs advocating for the protection of the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons.



European Programme for Integration and Migration is an initiative of 13 European foundations, which aims to support vulnerable and undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers through their work with civil society organisations.



Forum on Migration and Communications worked on 'strengthening the voices of migrants and NGOs in the migrant sector by using collaboration, creative arts, digital media and storytelling as catalysts for social change, advocacy and educational transformation'.



Immigrant Council of Ireland is a nonprofit Independent Law Centre. It uses a legal advocacy approach for securing improved rights and protections for Irish citizens, migrants and their families.



The Integration Centre focused on the integration and inclusion of migrants by developing and implementing integration plans at the local and national level, monitoring the level of integration and providing an information and advice service for migrants. It was based in Dublin, and is now integrated with the Immigrant Council of Ireland and the Irish Immigrant Support Centre.



The Irish Immigrant Support Centre works in the area of family reunification and campaigns for wider changes to the migration system at a national level.



Irish Refugee Council works with and for refugees in Ireland. It delivers legal support to asylum-seekers, supports and protects children and young people in the immigration system, provides public awareness and carries out capacity building among organisations in the asylum system.



Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is a Dublin-based charity that advocates for children's rights and provides services for children in need.



Migrant Rights Centre Ireland is a campaign and advocacy organisation. Its main aim is to advance the rights of migrant workers and their families in Ireland.



Migration Policy Group is an independent nonprofit organisation providing strategic thinking and undertaking research on topics including equality and mobility.

This summary report outlines findings from an independent evaluation of the Migration Programme commissioned by Atlantic and conducted by RAND Europe between 2012 and 2014. Of the 18 organisations funded by the Migration Programme, 14 organisations receiving funding up to 2014 were covered in the evaluation.¹ The evaluation focuses on the impacts that the Migration Programme has achieved in law, policy and practice in Ireland, and the lessons that might be drawn for other grantmakers and grantees.

Findings are described in more detail in the [main evaluation report](#). Promising practices for grantees are set out in four case studies, produced alongside and complementing the information available in this summary and the main report. The evaluation was based on

¹ The other four organisations/initiatives that were funded but are not included in this list are: Refugee Information Services (RIS); Integrating Ireland (II); European Cultural Foundation (ECF) EU; MPI (Migration Policy Institute) EU.

extensive, qualitative data collected from grantees through interviews and the completion of a questionnaire submitted to the research team every six months during 2013 and 2014.

Evaluating the impact of advocacy on policy and practice is challenging. Advocacy by civil society organisations, like those supported by Atlantic, is one source of pressure for change, but this might have to coincide with, for example, political will, favourable public opinion or domestic or European court rulings, in order to result in actual policy change. Recognising this grantees were encouraged in their reporting to the evaluation team and in interviews to explain how their work *contributed* to such changes.

More information about the research process, along with limitations of the approach taken, can be found at the end of this summary report and in the main evaluation report.

A Field-Building Approach

Atlantic began developing its migration strategy in 2001 during an economic boom in Ireland when migration for job opportunities and the number of people claiming asylum was rising rapidly. A number of limitations to the sparse legal framework had been noted by migration experts and researchers, as well as by the Irish government which had committed to reform of the system

In the early 2000s, there were few civil society organisations in Ireland providing support to migrants or advocating for migrants' rights (The Irish Refugee Council was the main organisation in Ireland working on migration-related issues). However, in response to a growing need for service provision and an appropriate legal framework, the sector started to develop. For example, in the following years the Immigrant Council of Ireland was established (mainly concerned with the need for more robust legislation to protect the rights of migrants) and the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland was created, focusing on vulnerable migrants, workers' rights and exploitation in the workplace.

Following a period of analysis and mapping, Atlantic concluded there was a relatively weak 'field' in 2004 in terms of organisations providing support and advocating for policy and legislative change. Key challenges identified by Atlantic included:

- NGOs did not have enough traction on migrant issues.
- Available research and evidence regarding the challenges faced by migrants was not authoritative and sometimes conflicting.
- Approaches to advocacy and providing support that had been proven to be ineffective were repeatedly used.
- NGOs were too distant from decision-making processes, not working strategically, and were focussed on problems rather than solutions.
- NGOs were thinly spread and sometimes divided among themselves.
- There was a need to connect the local, national and international dimensions of issues relating to migration.

Based on this assessment, Atlantic undertook to implement a 'field-building' approach to advocacy grantmaking in order to achieve long-term, systemic change. In essence, philanthropists and other funding organisations can engage in

building and supporting a field by coordinating the efforts of a range of diverse actors pursuing a common goal over an extended period of time, while at the same time combining a set of strategies targeting a variety of dimensions of the field and the problem at hand.²

Atlantic's grantmaking from 2004 to 2014 in the migration field in the Republic of Ireland represented an effort to strategically build a field for achieving systematic and societal change that improved access to justice and services for migrants in Ireland.

As Atlantic's migration work in Ireland progressed, it became clear that changes in Irish immigration policy were inherently connected to the EU migration framework. As such, Atlantic and its grantees recognised that they would also need to work at the EU level, connecting it to the national level and creating synergies between the two.

What the Field Accomplished

The evaluation found that there was a more robust and professional network of organisations, working to achieve a common goal of improving the lives of migrants in Ireland in 2014 than in 2004. This is evidence of the success of the field-building approach with a diverse range of actors pursuing a common goal over an extended period of time and combining a set of strategies targeting a variety of dimensions of the problem.

Policy and Practice Advances

There has been a shift in grantee organisations from service delivery to policy advocacy and a more strategic approach to addressing the challenges faced by migrants. The organisations that were funded all existed prior to the Migration Programme but at the end of 2014 they were more focused on advocacy than service delivery and case work. The logic of this shift towards advocating for policy change was to increase the capacity of the wider system to serve the needs of migrants and to reduce demand for services or mainstream service provision.

A majority of grantees could show accomplishments related to strategic shifts in policy, such as changing the way in which the law is applied or the way that administrative decisions are taken by public bodies. Examples at the EU level included the European Council on Refugees and Exiles' (ECRE) contribution to the development of a Common European Asylum System, adopted in 2013, in which asylum is granted to people fleeing persecution or serious harm in their own country who are in need of international protection. ECRE's advocacy – together with those of its partners – contributed to the adoption of the Joint EU resettlement Programme in March 2012 which provides EU member states with additional funding for the reception and integration of resettled refugees in local communities. Domestically, the campaigns of the Coalition Against the Deportation of Irish Children (CADIC) contributed to the establishment of the Irish

2 Petrovich, J. (2013) 'Building and supporting sustainable fields: Views from philanthropy—A study for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation' *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton NJ*.

Born Child scheme where all families of Irish children can apply for residence through a fair and transparent system. Lobbying efforts by the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland contributed to the development of a Bridging Visa scheme that allows undocumented migrant workers to apply for temporary residency permit.

Shaping legislation and application of the law

The evaluation also found a number of examples of grantees contributing to shaping legislation and the application of the law in Ireland. These examples include:

- Cases taken by the Immigrant Council of Ireland to the Irish High Court led the European Court of Justice to make a ruling in 2008 that resulted in reform to Irish regulations relating to residence and free movement, and a review of decisions taken by the Irish Government to refuse residency. This resulted in the majority of applicants receiving residency status.
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) campaigns and advocacy helped to shape the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Act 2013 – in particular, provisions relating to forced labour – which made elements of the EU Directive on Human Trafficking part of Irish law.
- The MRCI also joined an International Trade Union Confederation global campaign calling for governments to ratify the International Labour Organisation Convention C.189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. MRCI's campaign efforts were pivotal in ensuring the ratification of the Convention by Ireland in 2014. The Convention provides guidance on the regulation of working time for domestic workers, and calls for measures towards ensuring that domestic workers enjoy equal treatment with workers generally in relation to normal hours of work, overtime compensation, periods of daily and weekly rest, and paid annual leave.

Another notable legislative change was the passing of the Female Genital Mutilation Law in 2012. Since 2008 AkiDwA had campaigned for the creation of a law against female genital mutilation in Ireland. The organisation's approach engaged policymakers in Ireland and secured support from champions, such as members of the Irish Parliament and a former Irish president. The new law made female genital mutilation an illegal practice and provided greater protection for young migrant women.

Changes to Direct Provision and the passing of the new Immigration Residence and Protection Bill – specific changes that Atlantic and its grantees hoped to achieve – were not secured, but grantees have contributed to the momentum for change. Under Direct Provision asylum seekers are housed in state-provided accommodation while they wait for their applications to be processed. During this time applicants receive an allowance but their access to other benefits is restricted. It was originally envisaged that asylum seekers would live under Direct Provision for no more than six months. However, in September 2015 the average length of stay was 40 months.³

3 Reception and Integration Agency (2015). Monthly Statistics Report September 2015
<http://www.ria.gov.ie/en/RIA/RIA%20Monthly%20Report%209-2015.pdf/Files/RIA%20Monthly%20Report%209-2015.pdf> retrieved 4 March 2016

The calls for and attempts to reform national migration law in Ireland in 2004, when the Atlantic Migration Programme was starting, are still ongoing in 2016. There has been reform of Irish law relating to migration over the period in which the Migration Programme was providing support, although the pace has been slow and the changes not as wide-ranging as some had hoped. Several grantees made submissions to inform developments and undertook advocacy with key stakeholders.

Making use of strategic litigation

Atlantic grantees also achieved legal and policy change at a national level through strategic litigation, which involves pursuing cases in the higher courts whose outcomes could set a precedent, result in changes to the law and thereby affect larger groups of service users.

In one example, the Immigrant Council of Ireland successfully challenged the Irish Government's policy of refusing residence permits to international students whose children were attending public schools. A decision by the Irish High Court required the government to phase the implementation of changes and clarified the administrative processes. Students who had become undocumented as a result of this policy were re-registered and had their immigration status renewed, which allowed them to complete their studies and return to part-time work.

Increased Public Awareness and Understanding of Migrant Issues

Media engagement, public debate and awareness were important elements of all grantees' work. Atlantic funded support for grantees to do this through the Forum on Migration and Communications (FOMACS), which worked with NGOs, migrants and others to enable them to communicate effectively in their advocacy work. Grantees' experiences indicate some promising practices and unusual ideas for media and public engagement.

For example, the Educate Together project — which focused on issues of family reunification — was based on experiences and stories of real people but was animated, thus protecting their identities. The project enabled the challenges faced by families to be presented in an easily understood format. This animation was subsequently integrated into the mainstream education system via the national curriculum on integration issues.

In addition, in 2010, FOMACS supported a public campaign called Turn off the Red Light to combat sex trafficking. This was a large, multi-component campaign, one part of which included a photography exhibition, 'Not Natasha', which told the stories of female survivors of trafficking. It was located in an empty retail space in a high-traffic shopping area. This 'shop window' style of communication meant people passing by could engage with the topic.

The project gained considerable public attention and attracted international reviews. Grantees felt that the campaign contributed to an indication by the Minister for Justice in Ireland in November 2014 that a forthcoming Sexual Offences Bill would include provision for criminalising the purchase of sex. However, it is challenging to evidence the contributions of communication and media activities to improved knowledge or awareness, or into changed views or attitudes.

Grantees also played a role in mainstreaming approaches by providing training to lawyers,

police detectives, statutory agencies and bodies, health care professionals and migrants themselves to make them aware of migrant issues. For example, AkiDWA provided training to more than 3,000 health care professionals to improve their ability to help migrant women who suffered from female genital mutilation. While grantees reached a variety of audiences, they were not able to evidence whether those receiving the training had implemented what they had learned, or whether this had impacts for migrants.

Development of an Evidence Base

Grantees made important contributions to the evidence available for use in advocacy and to inform policymaking. Debate around migration can be based on misconceptions about migration levels and trends, as well as a lack of knowledge about the experiences of migrants. Providing better evidence to the public, practitioners and policymakers about issues such as migration levels, the experiences of migrants, or the challenges they face in accessing services and justice is a potentially powerful advocacy tool.

The evaluation found many examples of grantees capitalising on their service delivery activities to gather first hand, in-depth information about the lives of migrants and the challenges they face. Access to this kind of information meant grantees could make valuable contributions to discussions around policy and practice. Other grantees positioned themselves to collect international, comparative statistics on migration and integration. While it can be difficult to show that the provision of information has directly led to policy change or influenced decision-makers, the evidence shows that information was at least received by the intended audiences.

One example of this was the work of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) in developing the Asylum Information Database (AIDA), which is a compendium of information about asylum procedures, reception conditions and detention across a number of European countries. ECRE reported that the European Commission and other stakeholders valued the information available in AIDA. ECRE's growing reputation as a source of reliable evidence has precipitated meetings with other key European organisations.

Growth of Networks and Collaboration

There was evidence of increased collaboration and networking among grantees. Competition for funding is acute among civil society organisations. Through providing multi-annual core funding the Migration Programme created space for collaboration among grantees. Most reported some change to their network through new interactions with other Atlantic-funded organisations and an increase in collaborative projects, studies and activities that they undertook with partners.

Building collaborative relationships with other advocacy organisations that work at the EU level enabled national organisations such as the Immigrant Council of Ireland and the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland to better understand the European agenda and more effectively use that understanding in their national efforts.

In addition, this connection allowed organisations to harness a European network to raise awareness of the challenges faced nationally. Many of the grantees said ECRE and the European Programme for Integration and Migration fulfilled this network function.

For example, ECRE undertook advocacy to influence the development of EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), which was created following a restructuring of EU funding. ECRE's aim was to ensure that AMIF targeted the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers and addressed challenges faced by NGOs receiving EU funding for asylum and migration activities. ECRE's advocacy resulted in changes to the design of the AMIF including raising the EU co-financing from 50 per cent to 75 per cent and expanding the target group for integration activities (migrants *and* refugees).

The Migration Policy Group, meanwhile, established a portal called the Migrant Integration Policy Index, which is an online tool and quick-reference guide that compares and assesses integration policies in 31 countries in Europe and North America. Grantee organisations pointed to the value of better understanding the comparative situation in other European countries and noted that the valuable work of the Migrant Policy Group allowed them to access comparative data easily.

Contributions to Capacity Building

Capacity building activities delivered alongside multi-annual core funding benefited grantees. During the lifetime of the programme grantees developed their leadership, strategic planning and internal governance and management as a result of capacity building from Atlantic. Advice and mentoring by Atlantic staff on an informal basis generated a constructive and supportive relationship. Grantees confirmed that longer-term, core funding from Atlantic had allowed them to focus on their objectives, rather than on fundraising to keep their organisations running. A number of grantees said that their organisations were able to directly fund or attract additional staff thanks to the duration of funding.

Grantees also used provided capacity building for migrant groups. For example, the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) formed migrant action groups through which migrants affected by an issue were supported to get involved in campaigns, take action and work towards common collective policy goals. More than 3,000 migrant workers participated in advocacy and campaign actions.

One example is the Domestic Workers Action Group, which MRCI has supported since 2003. It is made up of migrant women working as child-minders, au pairs, cleaners, housekeepers and carers in Ireland. MRCI worked with this action group in a campaign that led to the introduction of protections for household staff employed by diplomats. MRCI reported that the impacts of the campaign have been:

- Empowerment of domestic workers and increased capacity of this action group to campaign and take action
- Safeguards put in place for household staff in diplomatic households
- Mainstreaming of this approach — the Department of Foreign Affairs is now taking responsibility for the issue
- Measures taken by the state to protect employment rights, entitlements and enforce standards of work for household staff in diplomatic households.

Exiting the Field

While benefits of field-building activities have been evidenced in the period leading up to 2014, it is not clear whether these benefits, and the field itself, can be sustained and continue to develop in the future where no funding from Atlantic is available (as a limited-life foundation, Atlantic completed its grantmaking in 2016, and will cease operations by 2020).

The majority of the grantees felt that they faced an uncertain long-term future. Alternative funding sources were limited, posing a risk that the staff skills and organisational capacity developed during the Atlantic years could be lost. Despite long-term notice that Atlantic was a limited-life foundation, the efforts to develop capacity and requirements for grantees to secure matched funding in some instances, the organisations struggled to see where alternative funding could be sought.

Conclusion

The evaluation found that the Migration Programme successfully implemented a field-building approach as a result of which there was a more robust and professional network of organisations working to achieve a common goal of improving the lives of migrants in Ireland. The civil society organisations supported by Atlantic operated more strategically, collaborated and cooperated more – including with European organisations – and evidenced improved leadership, strategic planning, and internal governance and management.

While evidencing the impacts of advocacy is challenging, Atlantic grantees described numerous contributions to changes in practice, policy and law in Ireland that directly impacted the lives of migrants and asylum-seekers during the period between 2012 and 2014, the period of concern for this evaluation. Some of these impacts – namely those that changed law – are clearly sustainable and long-term. Others – which changed policy – are not guaranteed to persist (since policy can be amended by future governments and administrations), but have directly improved the experience of migrants. Other impacts might yet be realized, as the effects of changes in law and policy take time to translate into day-to-day practice.

Research Methods

A number of research methods were used for this evaluation. These are fully described in the final report and summarised here:

A brief literature review was undertaken at the start of the project to provide a core understanding of the policy context within which the grantees were delivering their work.

A review of documentation to map the impacts of each grant. The research team developed an inventory of documentation produced by and about each of the funded projects. This included a wide range of materials such as research reports, publications, advocacy materials and other outputs, grantees' own evaluations and progress/final reports that grantees prepared for Atlantic. This inventory was kept up to date during the evaluation. All these documents were reviewed to identify evidence of impacts and

effects on migration policy, practice and on the lives of migrants. A list of documentation reviewed for each grant is provided in the final report.

Semi-structured interviews with grantees were undertaken with 13 of Atlantic's current and former grantees in 2013 and with 12 of these again in 2014.

Semi-structured interviews with 10 EU and seven domestic stakeholders. The purpose of these discussions was to gather expert views on the context in which the grantees have been operating and in which they will be operating over the coming years, and to gain insight into the perceived impact, if any, of grantees' work.

A workshop held in Dublin in October 2014 including participants from Atlantic grantees and representatives from the foundation. The purpose of the workshop was to encourage each organisation to showcase a particular policy impact they had achieved and share learning among organisations about how those impacts were realised. The workshop also provided an opportunity to elicit views about the overall impact of Atlantic's Migration Programme funding, and to reflect on Atlantic's field-building objectives.

Key limitations of the evaluation include:

- Reliance on grantee-provided information about their activities, outputs and impacts. In some instances grantees lacked the tools, time and budget to fully describe and assess their work. The evaluation team mitigated this by requesting grantees to provide evidence to support any assertions of impact. Only outcomes and impacts for which grantees could provide some evidence have been included.
- Linking the many activities of grantees to changes in policy in practice. This report uses the language of 'contribution' – recognising that grantees were one, often important, element in achieving change.
- Some wider impacts may only materialise in the long term after this evaluation has been conducted and could therefore not be fully captured within the evaluation's time frame.

For further information about this report or the evaluation, please contact:

Emma Disley, Associate Group Director
RAND Europe

edisley@rand.org

www.randeurope.org