

**THE ATLANTIC PHILANTHROPIES
IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
(1987-2014)**

The
ATLANTIC
Philanthropies

July 2015

The Atlantic Philanthropies in the Republic of Ireland

An Overview in Numbers

Total Investment (1987-2014)

\$1.2 billion

Grant Count

1,029

Average Grant Amount

\$1.2 million

Top 3 Grantees

1. University of Limerick Foundation	\$177.6 million	86 grants
2. Trinity Foundation	\$160.5 million	91 grants
3. Dublin City University Educational Trust	\$128.2 million	69 grants

First Grant

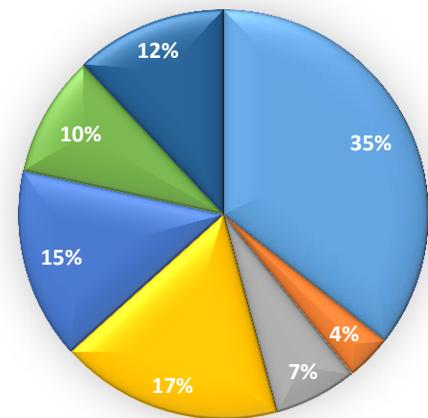
\$250,000 to Irish American Partnership (1987)

Capital Grants

\$609.6 million 153 grants

Historic and Current Programme Areas	Grants	Total USD (millions)
Higher Education	310	\$553.0
Ageing	110	\$197.8
Children & Youth	122	\$172.4
Reconciliation & Human Rights	214	\$129.1
Founding Chairman	11	\$78.1
Other	57	\$42.6
Health	11	\$25.8
Nonprofit Sector/ Voluntarism/ Philanthropy	108	\$17.4
Evaluation	29	\$8.7
Pre-Collegiate Education and Teacher Development	30	\$4.7
Community Development and Civic Engagement	27	\$2.9
Total	1,029	\$1,232.3

ROI Grants - Key Themes*



*Based on preliminary analysis of grants data. Subject to change.

The Atlantic Philanthropies in the Republic of Ireland (1987-2014)

Key Grantee Achievements

1. Ireland transformed into an innovation driven economy through Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) — over \$1.3 billion leveraged from government, 45+ world-class research facilities, 1,000 research positions, 1,600 new postgraduate positions among Irish universities, and potential commercial impact of \$1.4 billion over the next 4-5 years
2. National Centre for Biomedical Engineering Science at National University of Ireland, Galway transformed into a centre of excellence in biomedical engineering with approximately 100 Principal Investigators, 140 Post-doc and 180 PhD students
3. Establishment of the National Centre for Sensor Research at Dublin City University; it has generated research income of more than \$196 million and been referenced in more than 1,500 journal articles
4. A 14-fold increase in ageing-related researchers at the Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing at St. James's Hospital and Trinity College Dublin, and over \$150 million for ageing research projects
5. The first and most comprehensive Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) compiling 10+ years of data on a cohort of 8,500 Irish people ages 50+ has leveraged \$20.3 million from government and other donors and over \$5.4 million through national and international research grants
6. 32 acute hospitals implementing Hospice-Friendly Hospitals' programme standards, 35 healthcare sites participating in piloting the new audit system, and nearly 3,000 staff trained to improve the provision of quality hospice/specialist palliative care; placing Ireland fourth in the world for end-of-life care by The Economist Intelligence Unit in 2010
7. Voices of 15,000 people with dementia in nursing homes and acute hospitals amplified through peer advocacy
8. Ireland's first National Dementia Strategy in 2014, transforming the way dementia is viewed and treated for 50,000 people – a number that is expected to triple by 2041
9. 26 Age Friendly Cities and Counties established through the Ageing Well Network of top executives from 75 organisations, providing age-friendly policies and services for ROI's 500,000 older adults
10. 90,000 children and young people, 24,000 parents or caregivers, 4,000 professionals and 39 partner agencies benefited from 52 evidence-based programmes in prevention and early intervention
11. Nearly 200% increase (49% to 95%) in the number of four year olds attending pre-school, as a result of the new free universal pre-school for children offered by government since 2010
12. Passage of the Civil Partnership Act 2010 and the Marriage Equality Referendum in 2015
13. Closure of St. Patrick's prison to 16 year olds and improved prisoner rights and prison policy such as establishment of the Office for Inspector of Prisons
14. 17,000 parents of Irish-born children permitted to legally remain in Ireland and significant reductions in wait time for citizenship from up to five years to six months
15. Over 27,000 people directly assisted by Free Legal Advice Centre and thousands more received their free legal services online.

Context and Environment

Entrepreneur Charles F. Feeney, the founder of The Atlantic Philanthropies and a third-generation Irish-American, is legendary for uncovering bold investment opportunities in underappreciated or undervalued places, for many years under a cloak of anonymity. Mr. Feeney visited Ireland in 1971, staying with his family at Dromoland Castle in County Clare. By the mid-1980s, scanning for business opportunities, he began spending more time in Ireland, and, in 1985, invested in Ashford Castle, a 700-year-old home once owned by the Guinness family that had been converted into a luxury hotel. He had a deep affinity for his country of ancestry, and believed that Irish-Americans like himself should be doing more to help Ireland¹.

But what he found during his initial opportunity scan was a country that was “pretty down at heel and depressed,” said John R. Healy, the first Atlantic staff member in the Republic of Ireland and later president and chief executive of The Atlantic Philanthropies. “Those memories stayed with him.”

Mr. Feeney didn’t have an explicit strategy for engaging with Ireland, but rather (as was typical of his entrepreneurial approach) a sixth sense that opportunities abounded, and that he could simultaneously seize them for his business interests and help Ireland develop a better future. He began travelling quietly about the country to examine such opportunities with the help of a young Irishman, Pdraig Berry, who had studied at the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University — Mr. Feeney’s alma mater.

Over nearly three decades—despite a tumultuous economic environment characterised by the 1980s recession, followed by the booming Celtic Tiger, then an even more dramatic economic downturn beginning in 2008—Mr. Feeney and Atlantic staff would play a catalytic role in Ireland, from stimulating a knowledge economy by re-invigorating the higher education system, to protecting and expanding human and civil rights, to fundamentally transforming the design and delivery of services for children, older adults and people with disabilities. The key to Atlantic’s impact was strong working relationships with government and nongovernment organisation (NGO) partners to change the way disadvantaged people’s needs were perceived and met.

This memorandum describes the foundation’s investments in people, institutions and policy changes in the Republic of Ireland that transformed the lives of disadvantaged people and the country as a whole—perhaps more so than in any other geography where Atlantic has been active.

¹ Chuck Feeney’s remarkable life story is told by Conor O’Clery in *The Billionaire Who Wasn’t*, (PublicAffairs, 2013).

The Early Years (1987-2002): Higher Education as Economic Linchpin

The recession of the 1980s affected most Irish workers—the country’s human capital—and their families. One of five adults was out of work. Three of four graduates were leaving the country as soon as they finished their qualifications. While Ireland had a long history of mass emigration, this was different. This Irish exodus included people from all segments of society, including those with university and graduate degrees who were leaving because they saw few prospects for a bright future in their country. This brain drain had potentially devastating implications for Ireland’s future, but universities had little cash to invest in their infrastructure, faculty or students. What’s more, public money that universities had could only be spent for narrowly defined purposes.

For all its challenges, Ireland was also a country with enormous talent, resilience and potential. Its higher education system included visionary academic entrepreneurs trained at home and in the United Kingdom, United States and Europe, and government had an array of smart, committed civil servants.

In 1987, Mr. Feeney recruited Mr. Healy, then director-general of the Irish American Partnership, to set up and run Atlantic’s philanthropic operation in Ireland. At the time, Atlantic was operating under the cloak of anonymity and Mr. Healy, who initially thought he had agreed to work for a consulting company, only learned about the real scope of his new job after he accepted the offer.

Building a Knowledge Economy

A chance meeting between Mr. Feeney and Ed Walsh, the head of the then Limerick Institute of Higher Education, led to Atlantic’s initial philanthropic investments in Ireland. Limerick was a new institution, not yet of university status, and was held in less regard than established universities, noted Colin McCrea, a former Atlantic senior vice president. In short, it was the underdog of the Irish academic world. Mr. Feeney was impressed with the cocky attitude and intolerance for bureaucracy of Limerick’s leadership. Believing, from his own experience at Cornell, that higher education was a stepping stone to economic growth and upward mobility, Atlantic and its Founding Chairman had already made substantial investments in higher education in the United States; funding in Ireland (and later elsewhere) was a natural outgrowth of that hypothesis at work.

Atlantic’s initial funding in Ireland was for physical capital, with the first significant donation of approximately \$14.8 million in 1990 for the Foundation Building, an

advanced research, conference and cultural facility at the University of Limerick. Mr. Walsh successfully lobbied government to match it, starting a pattern of leverage for subsequent Atlantic funding of facilities and programmes in Ireland, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Viet Nam and Australia.



Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, 2014 (Credit: P. Seawright)

Mr. Feeney and Atlantic broadened their investments in higher education, building facilities at every university in Ireland and supporting research, academic programmes, student housing and enriching campus environments, as Atlantic had done at Cornell. The intent was to make Irish colleges and universities more attractive to top-quality students and faculty to keep them in Ireland. Investments included new student accommodations to create or augment the residential nature of university life, offices, libraries and athletic and cultural facilities to serve the universities themselves and surrounding communities. In the first seven years, Atlantic invested \$251 million in Irish higher education, becoming the sector's largest private funder.

"Chuck's whole thing was that we have to enhance the university experience for students," Mr. McCrea said. "They need playing fields, offices for student organisations, good dorms, academic buildings and a nice ambiance."

At Limerick, Atlantic funded the first Olympic-sized swimming pool in the country, a state-of-the-art library and new student accommodations, and purchased land to create

an entirely new campus bridging both shores of the River Shannon. Expansion on the north shore included the University Arena and the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance.

Dublin City University (DCU), established as the Institute of Higher Education, Dublin in 1975 and elevated to university status in 1989, was another young, underdog institution sought out by Atlantic. Among DCU's first grants from Atlantic was one to assist in the purchase of a 35-acre lot for a new sports ground.

Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions

Atlantic's early grants for educational infrastructure laid the groundwork for a more ambitious programme focused on graduate-level education, training and research. Mr. Feeney and foundation staff believed that Ireland's future prosperity depended on its ability to create new knowledge and new opportunities that university research could generate. Atlantic also had a conviction about the role of education in cutting unemployment, which was near 16 per cent in the early 1990s.

Following the sale of Duty Free Shoppers in 1997, Atlantic had an influx of capital. Having had a positive experience in leveraging government support for university facilities, Mr. Feeney and Atlantic turned their sights on strategic co-investment, which was the Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLTI). At the time, the government was only spending 11 per cent of the European average on basic research. Ireland's top researchers were leaving the country to go to better funded universities.

Atlantic began working directly with the government to transform Ireland's capacity for world-class research and, by doing so, to build a knowledge economy. Those negotiations with the government were delicate because it was the first time either had considered entering into such a formal co-funding arrangement, and further complicated by Atlantic's insistence on anonymity. Atlantic began a dialogue with Don Thornhill, a highly respected government official who was chairman of Ireland's Higher Education Authority.

When Atlantic began funding higher education in Ireland, the government was only spending 11 per cent of the European average on basic research. Ireland's top researchers were leaving the country to go to better funded universities.

In 1999, Atlantic agreed to fund 50 per cent of the first cycle of PRTLTI. It ultimately contributed to two more cycles for a total of \$262 million, equivalent to 30 per cent of these three cycles. Government went on to fund a total of more than \$1 billion with a

further two cycles, the last of which is scheduled to conclude in 2015. PRTLTI investments included:

- ***Globally Recognised Centre of Bioengineering in Galway.*** The National University of Ireland, Galway has been transformed into a globally recognised university known for its expertise in biomedical engineering. With matching Atlantic grants, the university was able to build the National Centre for Biomedical Engineering Sciences, the Environmental Change Institute and the Moore Institute for Research in the Humanities and Social Studies as well as embark on a major expansion of marine sciences.
- ***Innovation in Cork.*** University College Cork's Tyndall National Institute is now the country's largest research institute, with 450 researchers and 50 principal investigators. The university has been able to buy land and erect the BioSciences Institute, build a postgraduate library and extend the Tyndall National Institute. That institute has created more than 200 partnerships with global companies and earned many high-level patents. Tyndall National Institute is also responsible for significant inventions, including junctionless transistors, broadband optics communications and technologies for making pain-free micro-needles.
- ***New Centres for Groundbreaking Research in Dublin.*** PRTLTI funds provided for the construction of the Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience, now a worldwide leader in brain research. Dublin City University established the National Centre for Sensor Research with funding from Atlantic. The Centre has generated research income of more than \$196 million and been referenced in more than 1,500 journal articles.

"We have helped create research institutions in Irish universities that can stand up to the best in the world," Mr. Healy said. "Atlantic enabled a generation of university leaders to dream dreams that they never thought were possible."

According to evidence cited by the European Commission, PRTLTI was "integral to the transformation of Ireland to an innovation driven economy." All told, these investments better placed the Irish higher education system to provide the graduates, faculty and researchers who helped stoke the engine for the emerging Celtic Tiger economy of the late 1990s.

In 2001, Atlantic began a similar higher education joint initiative in Northern Ireland, the Support Programme for University Research, described more fully in a companion paper on Atlantic's investments in Northern Ireland.

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- PRTLTI has been integral to the transformation of Ireland to an innovation driven economy. It has led, *inter alia*, to a range of world class research facilities (45+ centres and initiatives), high quality research, institutional emphasis on research, a build-up in research capacity (both Irish and international researchers), made Ireland an attractive place to pursue a research career and attracted FDI.
 - Published output of the Irish research base has grown rapidly, more than doubling between 1998-2007, much faster than comparator countries. While output volume was small, the output was cited more than average, and the quality and impact of the research was good, particularly in areas such as Pre-Clinical and Health, Mechanical Engineering and Chemical Engineering.
 - A case study published in 2011 focusing on the direct commercial and economic impacts from investment in the period 2000-06 showed a threefold increase in the research base, and in 50 companies where impact has been validated, a commercial impact of €754m [\$964.4m] resulted. Potential future commercial impact in the next 4-5 years identified by industry was €1.108bn [\$1.4bn].
 - International collaboration is rising.

European Commission

Early Investments in Human Rights, Children and Older Adults

While most of Atlantic's funding (93 per cent) during these years went to universities and academic organisations, Atlantic also made several small investments that planted the seeds for what would become core priorities in the next phase of the foundation's work in the Republic of Ireland. Under a frame called Equality, Rights and Justice, staff pursued work on civil liberties, gay and lesbian equality, and migrant rights, as well as support for a few organisations focused on children and youth and older people.

For example, during these early years Atlantic invested in a Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland, Galway that became a player in the foundation's subsequent effort to foster human rights in Ireland. A similar grant to University College Dublin supported the creation of an Institute of Criminology and Penology, which became central to an Atlantic programme at the time that focused on prisoners' rights. These projects were not top-down dictates from Atlantic, but were inspired by Mr. Feeney's requests to university presidents for their funding priorities.

New Programmes (2002-2014): Transforming Services and Civil Society

Charting New Directions

As Atlantic emerged from a cocoon of anonymous grantmaking and announced, in 2002, that it would conclude grantmaking and close its doors by 2020, its Board and staff began a systematic process of strategic assessment of global opportunities where Atlantic could have the greatest and most immediate impact in changing trajectories for disadvantaged and marginalised people, communities and nations. The Atlantic Board adopted, in 2003, a simple statement of purpose which soon became its mission statement, "to bring about lasting changes that will improve the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people." Atlantic's plans for the remainder of its limited life would be driven by a philosophy articulated by Chuck Feeney as Giving While Living and rooted in a passionate belief that investing more, and sooner, in "big and neglected" social problems might prevent those problems from becoming more entrenched in the long term.

In 2003, the Board adopted four global programme areas, three of which were implemented in the Republic of Ireland: *Ageing, Children & Youth*, and *Reconciliation & Human Rights*. Partnership with and influence of government policies and practices—following Atlantic's success with PRTL—would become the foundation's hallmark. Through its grantmaking strategies, Atlantic sought to:

- Ensure quality services for those most in need
- Bring evidence to bear on policy and practice
- Strengthen the voices of the most marginalised communities.

Committed to spurring lasting change during a limited life, Atlantic's grantmaking during this period was complicated by two factors:

1. ***Economic downturn.*** The programmatic phase of Atlantic's engagement in the Republic began as the Celtic Tiger was at full roar, with Ireland becoming a powerful magnet for people and capital. In 2008, however, Ireland entered the most severe economic recession in the history of the state, with impacts across multiple dimensions: banking, fiscal, economic, social and reputation. The context created significant challenges for the government, as it cut public sector budgets and staffs, and as funding sources dried up for grantee organisations.
2. ***Limited philanthropic partners.*** During this period, three philanthropies accounted for 85 per cent of private funding in the Republic of Ireland: One Foundation (also limited life, it closed in 2013), JP McManus Foundation and Atlantic, with Atlantic providing the lion's share of investments. Dependence on Atlantic's resources created tough realities for grantees (and foundation staff) to face in the final grantmaking years and the longer term.

Three philanthropies accounted for 85 per cent of private funding in the Republic of Ireland.

Ageing

In the early 2000s, even at the height of the Celtic Tiger period, supports for Ireland's ageing population were weak and little research focused on the needs of older people,. To meet Atlantic's overall goal of improving the quality of life for older adults, Atlantic spent \$198.3 million between 2004 and 2014 on strengthening the ageing field and informing more effective application of government and nongovernmental resources to better meet the needs of older adults and their families.

Data, Research and Clinical Infrastructure

To effect a step change in the quantity and quality of ageing-related evidence available to planners, policymakers and advocates, Atlantic funded eight key centres or initiatives in the Republic of Ireland. Among them were:

New Institute for Ageing. The Mercer Institute for Successful Ageing was a longtime dream of Professor Davis Coakley, one of Ireland’s leading gerontologists, but had languished for years for lack of a strong advocate or financial backer. St. James’s is the largest university teaching hospital in Ireland and, as a public hospital, serves many who are poor, including older people. Atlantic helped further conceive the Institute, which promotes healthy and successful ageing. The foundation’s commitment of \$26 million toward building expertise and a state-of-the-art facility combining prevention, clinical care, and training and research facilities helped persuade Professor Rose Ann Kenny, one of the world’s leading thinkers on ageing, to return from England to her home country of Ireland. She joined Trinity College and St. James’s Hospital in 2005 as head of the Department of Medical Gerontology, Director of the Falls and Blackout Unit, and Director of Mercer’s Institute.



LAMP Project at Mercer’s Institute of Successful Ageing, 2014 (Credit: D. Wylie)

“There was little to no activity in Ireland with respect to ageing research or counteracting ageism or substantial policy in the ageing space at the time,” Professor Kenny said. “But there was a huge willingness.”

Since Professor Kenny’s return, ageing research and services at St. James’s and Trinity and indeed throughout the Republic of Ireland have been transformed. In 2003, Trinity College Dublin had just 10 people working on ageing-related research. Today, there are more than 140 Trinity researchers actively engaged across all ageing-related subjects.

Since 2006, Trinity has secured more than \$300 million in funding for ageing research projects.

First Irish Ageing Longitudinal Study. Among the largest and most ambitious of Atlantic's efforts to encourage more focused research has been the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA), which is compiling 10-plus years of data on a cohort of 8,500 Irish people age 50 and older, including a wide range of information on their health, medical care and socio-economic status over time. TILDA is the most comprehensive ageing study ever to be undertaken in Ireland and aims to gain a better understanding of the lives of older people so that policy, research and resources can target the greatest needs. The most significant aspect of TILDA is that it pairs the participants' self-reported health information with periodic, independent medical examinations. Longitudinal research on older people previously relied only on self-reports. Early stages of the TILDA work showed the value in pairing this information, as self-reports differ in key ways from the results of medical tests. For example, the first wave report showed a significant discrepancy between self-reported and objective measures of hypertension: 58 per cent of men and 49 per cent of women with objective evidence of hypertension are undiagnosed.

"We are now considered at the cutting edge of longitudinal research," said Professor Kenny, who leads the study. "And because it's a longitudinal study we can track every two years the impact of policy on older people."

Atlantic's championing and \$20.6 million in support of TILDA since 2006 has leveraged government and other commitments of \$20.3 million in addition to more than \$5.4 million to date won through competitive national and international research grants.

The first phase of TILDA ends in 2016. Achievements to date in translating findings into policy have ensured continuation of TILDA beyond then. In 2014, Atlantic made a final grant of up-to \$6.7 million to support TILDA through December 2018. Nearly half of the grant was made contingent on government commitment to provide at least \$13.5 million to fund TILDA 2 for five years (2017-2021).

First Centre for Social Gerontology in Ireland. The National University of Ireland, Galway's Centre for Social Gerontology focuses on the social and economic aspects of ageing, for a holistic view of growing older. Through Atlantic's support, it has provided an evidence base for ageing policy and practice, most notably through contributions to the National Positive Ageing Strategy published in 2013. The Centre also played a critical advisory role in the rollout of an Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme; its close collaboration with Atlantic grantees has led to an innovative

programme of civic engagement for older people. Civic engagement means that older people are active agents in decisions affecting their lives rather than passive recipients of services. To encourage civic engagement, Atlantic has funded training, lobbying, campaigning and research.

A main Centre initiative is the Rural Ageing Observatory, whose staff examines issues of ageing in rural areas—a neglected sphere in research and policy. The first of its reports focused on key demographic trends and issues facing rural older people. The second report summarised evidence relating to income, poverty and deprivation of Ireland’s older rural population.

After a decade of funding by Atlantic, a January 2014 evaluation by Social Research and Evaluation Services stated that “the Irish ageing research infrastructure has been dramatically transformed as a result of the significant and diverse Atlantic-funded academic activity.”



Marymount Hospice, 2014 (Credit: D. Roiom)

Health and Community Services

Atlantic funded community-based supports to enable older people to age successfully at home, as well as to address the complex needs of those at end of life, recovering from stroke, and living with arthritis. Lately, the principal focus has been on the challenges posed by dementia for individuals, families and carers, and for health and social care systems. Among these initiatives were:

Hospice and Palliative Care Services. A 2001 government policy directed that end-of-life or palliative care be provided for all, but an Atlantic-funded study found that too few people near death received appropriate hospice and palliative care. More than 60 per cent of all deaths in Ireland took place in acute hospitals, yet less than 25 per cent of the country's large hospitals had a full specialist team dedicated to palliative care. Fewer than half of Ireland's counties had inpatient hospice units. The baseline study provided evidence used by advocates and providers to raise awareness about palliative care services and to influence the government on palliative care provision.

To address critical inequalities in access to palliative care, and the absence of recognised models of excellence, Atlantic invested \$34.5 million in facilities, advocacy and professional development. Among the outcomes of that investment was a state-of-the-art hospice building in Cork, which has informed other hospice facilities in Ireland, and the Hospice Friendly Hospitals programme, which embeds end-of-life care as central to hospital practice in 80 per cent of acute settings and has trained nearly 3,000 staff to improve palliative care for patients and families.

An evaluation found that Atlantic's end-of-life programme had made Ireland a world leader in advancing palliative and hospice care.

An evaluation by Trinity College Dublin found that Atlantic's end-of-life programme had made Ireland a world leader in advancing palliative and hospice care (though regional inequities persist across the country). The Republic of Ireland was ranked fourth in the world in providing end-of-life/palliative care by *The Economist's* Intelligence Unit in 2010.

Advancing Dementia Research and Services. In 1999, Professor Eamon O'Shea of the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology at NUI Galway published a baseline study on dementia that described the parlous state of dementia research and treatment in a country in which the population of people with dementia was growing rapidly. A decade later, the same challenges remained largely unaddressed. In 2010, Atlantic offered to fund a new baseline study as a pre-cursor to a national plan. The resulting study, *Creating Excellence in Dementia Care* by Suzanne Cahill, Eamon O'Shea and Maria Pierce was published in 2012. It found that more people in Ireland have dementia than

cancer or heart disease, yet dementia has been a largely invisible and underfunded health issue. That report contributed significantly to Ireland’s first National Dementia Strategy, published in 2014, which sets out key principles to underpin the provision of care and supports for people with dementia.

Atlantic also funded services to test and demonstrate new ways of caring for people with dementia. Genio conducted demonstrations at four community sites that reached 3,000 people with dementia, their carers and agencies to reform supports and services. Among others in this nationwide collaboration, Trinity College is developing interventions that combine external brain stimulation, cognitive training and pharmaceuticals to halt or slow cognitive decline, especially in high-risk, socially disadvantaged older people. Atlantic’s investments also helped amplify the voice of people with dementia through support of peer advocacy for more than 15,000 people with dementia in nursing homes as well as acute hospitals.

“Atlantic has had an immeasurable impact in this field—on the ground they have changed thousands of lives by transforming services so that they are much more individualised and cost effective and therefore more sustainable,” said Madeleine Clarke, executive director of Genio. “They are changing the whole way we respond to people with dementia in this country.”

“[Atlantic’s investments] are changing the whole way we respond to people with dementia in this country.” – Madeleine Clarke, Genio

The field of dementia research, policy and services in the Republic of Ireland has reached a tipping point with the creation of the National Dementia Strategy. This strategy established a set of principles and goals promoting the active inclusion of people with dementia in community life and commitments to delivering evidence-based services that promote independence and dignity of older adults. To help ensure that those commitments are translated into action, Atlantic made a \$16 million investment to support the National Dementia Strategy Implementation Programme. Jointly funded by Atlantic and the Department of Health/Health Service Executive, this initiative will drive implementation across multiple agencies and regions. As it begins to implement the national strategy, Ireland joins just a handful of countries in the world with an official, nationwide approach to the growing challenge of dementia.

Giving Voice to Older People

Atlantic sought to strengthen the voice of older people, particularly in influencing government decisions, by funding two complementary organisations: Ageing Well Network and Older & Bolder. Older & Bolder was established by Atlantic in 2006 to

develop and strengthen the advocacy and policy capacity of NGOs focused on ageing issues. Older & Bolder's advocacy contributed to the designation of a Minister of State for Older People, a public commitment by government to develop a National Strategy on Ageing, and a successful grassroots campaign to protect the level of state pension provision.



Ageing Well Dundalk, 2012 (Credit: P. Macarthy)

Atlantic provided funding to establish the Ageing Well Network in 2007 to complement Older & Bolder, as a collaborative of top executives from 75 organisations representing all elements of government, business and civil society. The primary aim of the Ageing Well Network was to act as a hub and think-tank in the ageing sector, where leaders could learn from each other and from national and international thinkers and practitioners. A key accomplishment of the Ageing Well Network was the development of Age Friendly Cities and Counties. In each of the 26 counties in Ireland, age-friendly policies, services and structures are commonly designed to enable older people to “age actively” in their communities—that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society. As a result, Ireland's Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme is now internationally regarded as the most developed and holistic in the world.

The Age Friendly Cities and Counties programme migrated to the mainstream in 2013, led by Ireland's local authorities. By 2016, all local authorities will have age-friendly

structures, including Older People's Councils with active nongovernmental organisation involvement. In late 2013, Atlantic awarded \$2.4 million to fund the Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme through December 2016.

“Atlantic has played a critical role in policy for older people,” said Anne Connolly, former director of the Ageing Well Network. “They saw the potential of bringing together all the leaders, the decision-makers and the resource allocators right across the sector. They were prepared to make a long-term bet that if you brought those people together you deepened their insight and their understanding about ageing issues and quality of life for older people that would have very sustained benefits over a long period of time.”

Children & Youth

When Atlantic conducted scoping to inform its Children & Youth Programme strategy in Ireland, staff learned that early childhood programmes were relatively few and standards were highly variable. Thus, Atlantic committed to establish and grow efficient, cost-effective preventive services for children and young people and promote policy change to make these services universally available. The strategy had three components: (1) strengthening direct service providers, (2) making the child- and youth-serving field more stable and durable, and (3) engaging in advocacy to amplify the voice for children. From 2004 to 2014, Atlantic invested \$172.4 million to change the way that children receive services in the Republic of Ireland. The strategy and key achievements are described below.

Prevention and Early Intervention Services

Atlantic funded multiple frontline demonstration sites that could provide evidence of the difference that prevention and early intervention services make in the lives of children. To serve as credible advocates for change, Atlantic grantees needed to build a track record of service provision, so Atlantic funded 52 interventions to deliver evidence-based services to children and youth across the island of Ireland. The interventions focused on areas, including early childhood learning, child health and development, child behaviour, parenting and promoting inclusion. The Centre for Effective Services estimates that 90,000 children and young people, 24,000 parents or caregivers, and 4,000 professionals benefitted from the programme between 2006 and 2013.

Among the proven programmes is Preparing for Life—a five-year home visitation programme in Dublin to improve outcomes by intervening during pregnancy and working with families until the children start school. Evaluation findings show that

children at two years of age who participated in the programme exhibited stronger cognitive development and problem-solving skills and had fewer behaviour problems. Participating children were also healthier and less likely to have asthma or a chest infection.

“Our whole goal is to increase the capacity of parents. We see them as the crucial players in their children’s lives and if the parents are helped to get it right then things will go well for the child,” said Noel Kelly, programme manager, Preparing for Life. “Prior to Atlantic coming into Ireland we peripherally worked with kids in after-school clubs and summer camps and all that but we never tried to change what was happening in the family home, and kids are in the family home 24/7. They’re only with the other services for a small period.”



Preparing for Life, 2007 (Credit: Audra Melton)

Research to Determine Effective Services

Atlantic’s investments supported both university-based researchers and service providers to identify evidence-based programmes and evaluate their effectiveness. With Atlantic funding, children’s organisations carried out research and commissioned evaluations of their work, typically through needs assessments to gain a clear picture of how children were faring and what they

“Atlantic really enabled us to look at what we were doing and whether what we were doing was really meeting the needs of children.” – Suzanne Connolly, Barnardos

and their families needed. They also gained expertise in how to commission and use evaluations. In some cases, grantees made changes based on what they learned, even if they learned that their programmes weren't working as expected. Organisations discontinued programmes based on negative evaluation findings.

"Atlantic really enabled us to look at what we were doing and whether what we were doing was really meeting the needs of children," said Suzanne Connolly, director of children's services at Barnardos. "What was revolutionary about that for us was that it really helped us question what might have been taken for granted."

To ensure that grantees' learnings reached others who could benefit, Atlantic and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs together launched the Centre for Effective Services (CES) in 2009. Working in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, CES helps service providers and policymakers make better use of evidence of what works, and what doesn't.

Shifting Government Priorities

In 2010, the government began providing a free year of pre-school, in part as a result of advocacy and compelling demonstrations of the effectiveness of such early intervention by Atlantic's grantees. The proportion of four year olds in pre-school education has risen from 49 per cent, when Atlantic began its investments, to 95 per cent today.

Research and demonstration work commissioned by Atlantic, with the guidance of CES, and in response to grantees' advocacy also helped spur a decision in 2011 by the government to create a separate Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). That agency has an ambitious reform agenda and seeks to systematically shift public funds into prevention and early intervention.

To capstone Atlantic's efforts to improve services for children, final investments have focused on working with government to mainstream effective and proven approaches. A final grant, totalling \$20.4 million, leveraged 1:1 support from the Irish government for the Area Based Childhood Programme, which will continue evidence-informed interventions to improve

"Atlantic's partnership with the Irish government in creating the Centre for Effective Services and its transformative support for the Child and Family Research Centre at NUI-Galway are direct responses to what a senior civil servant described as a 'real lack of data and science,' in Irish policy making. Neither institution is intended solely to inform government decisions, but both are meant as a close collaborator that could increasingly guide decisions about both public policy and provider practices." – Tony Proscio, Internal Review of Atlantic's Work in ROI (2011)

the long-term outcomes for children and families living in areas of greatest disadvantage. This partnership—overseen by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs—builds on learning from Atlantic’s investments to break the cycle of child poverty where it is most deeply entrenched. Interventions include many services that Atlantic grantees piloted, including early childhood learning, child health and development, child behaviour, parenting and promoting inclusion. Up to 10 of Ireland’s most disadvantaged communities are being funded, in addition to the three already supported by Atlantic. Furthermore, a \$13.7 million grant in 2014 to Galway University Foundation is helping the staff of the new Child and Family Agency, Tusla, create systemic change in children’s services, through evaluating, implementing and spreading effective prevention and early intervention services.

Complementing this long-term initiative, Atlantic provided a three-year, \$13.5 million grant to the Katharine Howard Foundation to oversee the strategic reform of universal health and well-being services for children from birth to age two and their families and develop a blueprint for the development of early childhood services and investment in the coming decade.

Reconciliation & Human Rights

When Atlantic developed its Reconciliation & Human Rights Programme in the Republic of Ireland, it had two core objectives: (1) to strengthen the human rights infrastructure, and (2) to increase access to justice for selected disadvantaged groups. Atlantic selected populations with which it believed it could make a difference within the life of the foundation and leave a lasting legacy after Atlantic was gone. Based on those criteria, staff focused resources on protecting and expanding the rights of immigrants, people with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Between 2004 and 2014, Atlantic invested \$129.1 million in human rights in Ireland.

Strengthening Key NGOs to Protect and Promote Rights

Core support to two anchor organisations—Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC) and the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)—was supplemented by support for innovative approaches and the use of the law to advance a human rights agenda. “The Irish programme showed that funding human rights works,” wrote Brian Harvey, who conducted an evaluation of the programme in 2014. “It is possible for a funding programme in human rights to make progress, achieve distinct gains and contribute to the ‘good society’ where human rights are valued. This programme left a permanent legacy in its contribution to the new human rights infrastructure and other instruments

of accountability from which there should be no going back.” Key accomplishments included:

Legal Advice to Improve Access to Rights and Services. FLAC provides access to legal clinics for those unable to afford legal advice. It also campaigns for broader social change using the law and often finds its test cases through its advice lines. In 2013 alone, it assisted more than 27,000 people with legal queries either over the phone or face-to-face in an advice centre, and thousands more through its website.



Free Legal Advice Centres, 2008 (Courtesy of FLAC)

Improved Accountability. ICCL introduced sophisticated techniques of lobbying through its “shadow” reports on the occasions of Ireland’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the United Nations of its adherence to human rights norms. Human rights NGOs made presentations to UN and governmental officials in Geneva and New York so as to prompt more informed questioning of Irish government officials, reinforced by ongoing commentaries and media events. The most recent UPR had 127 recommendations, 90 per cent of which were accepted by the Irish government, many having been originally suggested by Atlantic grantees.

Enforcing and Reinforcing Rights through Strategic Litigation. Atlantic grantees have made use of strategic litigation to specify and enforce legal rights for large groups of marginalised people, by creating and pursuing test cases that encompass human rights

issues and bringing them to court. For example, FLAC represented Lydia Foy, a transgender woman who had been seeking a birth certificate recognising her gender as female. FLAC won the Foy case before Ireland's High Court by arguing that the State's position ran contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This groundbreaking judgement was the Irish judiciary's first-ever declaration of incompatibility between Irish law and the ECHR. In addition, three of the top five leading commercial law firms in Ireland have joined the Public Interest Law Alliance, a pro bono referral scheme.

Stronger Government Human Rights Agency. In 2008, the government decided to reduce the status and funding of the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Agency and to merge the two agencies. A quickly convened Equality and Rights Alliance, funded by Atlantic, organised a campaign to save those agencies from further cuts. The Alliance provided a road map for the re-establishment of a merged agency that would conform to international best practice. A new and arguably stronger Human Rights & Equality Commission was re-established through legislation in 2014.

Better Conditions for Prisoners. The Irish Penal Reform Trust persuaded policymakers to take on unpopular issues of prisoners' rights by investing in research that showed practical, cost-effective alternatives to the high costs of prisons, such as early release to community service. Its advocacy led to several changes for prisoner rights and in prison policy. Government came to recognise that prisons were too crowded, that long incarceration and substandard prison conditions increased recidivism and that incarceration should not mean the loss of the right to petition. An Office for Inspector of Prisons was established in 2007 and in 2012 government introduced an independent prisoner complaints system. St. Patrick's prison was closed to 16 year olds in 2012—a longstanding goal of the Irish Penal Reform Trust—and plans for a super-prison were abandoned.

Access to Rights and Justice for the LGBT Community

Two Atlantic-supported groups, GLEN and Marriage Equality, were influential in the passage of the Civil Partnership Act 2010, a significant milestone in the advancement of LGBT rights following the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1993. In 2015, the Republic of Ireland was the first country in the world to put the issue of marriage equality to a public vote in a referendum that was carried by a margin of 62 per cent to 38 per cent.

The Republic of Ireland was the first country in the world to put marriage equality to a public vote on 22 May 2015.

“Atlantic’s commitment allowed GLEN to follow its strategy of building a majority from a minority and delivering transformative change for lesbian and gay people in Ireland,” said GLEN director Brian Sheehan.

The Transgender Equality Network Ireland, together with FLAC and Amnesty International, meanwhile, spearheaded a process that led to the passage of the Gender Recognition Bill in 2015.

Access to Rights and Justice for People with Disabilities

Atlantic funding built the research and legislative base and demonstrated effective practice leading to policy and service reform. The Centre for Disability Law & Policy at NUI Galway helped change proposed legislation affecting people with cognitive impairments, moving from a paternalistic approach of decision-making *for* them to presuming that they would be able to make *their own* decisions about essential activities of daily living, such as managing money, seeking medical treatment and living with others. This Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill, has effectively removed legislative obstacles for Ireland to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability.



Transitions Project - Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency, 2013 (Courtesy of Genio)

Atlantic also supported grantees to develop and test new models of person-centred service delivery, consistent with espoused government policy. Between 2010 and 2013, Genio, a key grantee, supported almost 200 projects designed to introduce personalised supports to people with disabilities through innovation grants. These projects impacted approximately 14,000 lives and provided nearly 4,500 people with disabilities with personalised services. Evaluation evidence from these projects suggest that they are producing better outcomes for people with disabilities and at a lower cost than congregated settings or group homes. The approach is being mainstreamed through a new Social Reform Fund in the Health Service Executive co-funded by Atlantic and government.

Access to Justice and Services for Migrants

Fuelled by the Celtic Tiger, Ireland saw a massive influx of job-seekers starting in the early 1990s coming from the newly expanded EU and Africa. During this period, migrants as a percentage of the total population in Ireland doubled from 10 per cent to 20 per cent—one of the largest percentage increases recorded across the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. This growth of immigrants and migrants overwhelmed a government that was not prepared for it. The situation became particularly dire when the Irish government made a policy decision that being the parent of a child born in Ireland would no longer be the basis for residency. Thousands were immediately put at risk of deportation. The Atlantic-resourced Coalition Against the Deportation of Irish Children advocated with the government for a change in that policy, thus allowing 17,000 parents of Irish-born children to remain in the country legally. Immigrant groups secured other important rights for migrants as well, such as reducing the lengthy waits for citizenship from up to five years to approximately six months. For example, grantee the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland successfully campaigned in 2009 against a government decision to tighten the work permit system for migrants. The campaign also led to introduction of the bridging visa process allowing undocumented migrant workers to apply for temporary residency permits.

Despite the progress noted, Ireland's immigration system remains arbitrary and difficult to navigate for tens of thousands of migrants who reach or seek to reach Ireland's shores. Atlantic supported frontline services for migrants through the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), which between 2003 and 2011 recorded more than 56,000 information requests about Ireland's immigration system to their helpline. Two recent complementary grants were designed to influence pending migration legislation and its implementation and to sustain the essential work of grantees towards landmark immigration reform.

Conclusion: Lasting Legacy

In late 2011 and early 2012, Atlantic began to prepare diligently and strategically for the end of its grantmaking programmes in keeping with the foundation's limited life time horizon. In the Republic of Ireland, where the effects of its planned departure would be particularly acute, Atlantic focused on continuing and enhancing its close work with government to embed the successful service models it has helped fund, and to provide support to strengthen and build capacity among nongovernmental organisations to hold government to account for providing critical services, particularly to those who are marginalised and disadvantaged. The grantmaking plan for Atlantic's final years in Ireland included narrowly defined programme objectives and major co-investments with government that leveraged millions of dollars.

By the time of Atlantic's final programme investments in Ireland in 2014, economic recovery had finally begun. Unemployment was down from 15.1 per cent to 10.5 per cent, economic growth was expected to be the highest in the EU in 2015, and the fiscal austerity that had handcuffed government was easing.

In recognition of this contribution to Ireland, in 2012, the universities of the Republic and Northern Ireland came together for the first time to confer an honorary Doctorate of Laws on Chuck Feeney – an unprecedented honour. Chancellor of University of Dublin and former president Mary Robinson said, "Honorary degrees were a way of recognising the achievement of individuals who had truly made a difference to society," and Mr. Feeney's and Atlantic's contributions have had a transformative effect on higher education in Ireland and breaking down society's barriers.



Chuck Feeney is honoured with an honorary Doctorate of Laws, 2012 (Courtesy of National University of Ireland)

“We owe a great debt to Atlantic, and Chuck Feeney, for their generosity in so many ways to Ireland,” said Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

The tangible examples of the transformative effects of Atlantic’s engagement with the Republic of Ireland are legion. But leaders in Ireland have also cited a notable intangible effect: building an entire nation’s self-confidence that it could think and act differently, and succeed. “What Atlantic has enabled us to do is to see things differently, and enabled us to think about a different way of solving problems,” said Preparing for Life’s Noel Kelly.

Genio’s Madeleine Clarke put it similarly: “We wouldn’t have been able to do any of the work that we are doing without the confidence that Atlantic placed in us... People are having much better lives as a result of what we are doing, so that’s a real privilege to have this kind of impact.”

Speaking of Atlantic’s groundbreaking partnerships with government and its method of fostering change in policy and practice, Ireland’s Minister of State for Primary Care, Mental Health and Disability Kathleen Lynch, said: “They recognised in us something we didn’t know we had. They’ve made us do extraordinary things, but we wouldn’t have done it without their hand on our back pushing us forward all the time, while continuing to say to us: ‘We’re there for you if you stumble.’ Talk to the people in Ireland and they will tell you how good this partnership has been.”

“Atlantic’s footprint in the Republic of Ireland is striking,” said Mary Sutton, country director. “People tell me stories about a grant that enabled something to be done, that enabled relationships to be created, that enabled a field to move forward. I think the sheer scale of the foundation’s engagement over three decades is just remarkable.”

Atlantic’s final investments, in partnership with government and NGOs, build on achievements of the prior 25 years to embed the progress made in and beyond the programmatic fields. Bringing to fruition Atlantic’s mission of “lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people,” these investments and innovations will continue to pay dividends in policy and practice for generations to come.