

Vision in Philanthropy

**Collaborating to  
Create a Culture  
of Philanthropy**



Philanthropy Week 2011

# Vision in Philanthropy

## Collaborating to Create a Culture of Philanthropy

### Philanthropy Week

*More than 200 people took part in seven Philanthropy Week events which marked a watershed in the process of embedding a modern-day culture of philanthropy in Northern Ireland. Despite the prevailing economic circumstances the level of interest proved that there is demand for philanthropy advice and widespread interest in the development of the philanthropy market. Philanthropy Week served to dispel the myth that people do not want to talk about or plan their charitable giving - rather it exposed the lack of opportunity to do so. We were privileged to hear inspiring stories from people describing their own philanthropy journey; discussed how philanthropy is becoming mainstream amongst professional advisers; and learnt about innovative ways of giving that ensure philanthropy is fun and fulfilling. Philanthropy week has raised the level of discussion and the Vision in Philanthropy partnership is committed now to maintaining this momentum and identifying the leadership and organisational support required to continue to develop the philanthropy market.*

### Background

Philanthropy Week was organised by the Vision in Philanthropy Partnership which comprises representatives from Arts & Business NI, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, Heritage Lottery Fund, Lloyds TSB Foundation for Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Assembly, and Ulster Community Investment Trust. Kevin Roland, acting US Consul General, speaking at the Philanthropy Week launch reception, referred proudly to the origins of the Vision in Philanthropy partnership at a US State Department sponsored Boston College study visit.

He congratulated the alumni for continuing to work together to promote philanthropy and offered on-going support from the US Consulate.

With assistance from the Building Change Trust, The Vision in Philanthropy Partnership was able to commission research on the state of the local philanthropy market and to use that to inform a week of activity which aimed to raise the level of discussion on philanthropy, by hearing from philanthropists, raising awareness of opportunities and addressing some of the perceived barriers.

### Understanding Philanthropy

The Vision in Philanthropy partnership understands philanthropy as being planned charitable giving with defined strategic purpose. It is a form of charitable giving characterised by being:

- **Self-initiated,**
- **Sustained,**
- **With intent and engagement**

Philanthropy is therefore a sub-set of the universe of general charitable giving, which embraces everything from spontaneous response to appeals, through to volunteering.

## The Northern Ireland Philanthropy Market

Research conducted by RSM McClure Watters during 2011, involving consultations with stakeholders, donors and advisers, concluded:

- Northern Ireland has a giving culture but not a strategic giving culture, consequently there is potential for growth. Individual giving is a very personal and private issue. Furthermore there is somewhat of a cultural taboo against public philanthropy as it suggests ostentatious display of wealth.
- The key motivations behind philanthropy highlighted were personal connections between the donor and the cause and the social impact of giving.
- Philanthropy is not embedded in the Northern Ireland culture. There is no joined up approach to philanthropy in Northern Ireland and it is not effectively promoted.
- Northern Ireland lacks the critical mass of a peer group of philanthropists which could encourage more regular / strategic giving.
- The philanthropy advice market in Northern Ireland appears to be weak. There is a lack of detailed knowledge surrounding revenue flows linked to philanthropy services and an unwillingness to 'ask' clients about their interests in strategic giving.
- Approximately half of all advisors felt that support organisations are more reactive than proactive in terms of delivering a service to clients and the offering could be enhanced by offering specialist philanthropy advice within firms.
- The corporate sector is an increasingly strong driver of philanthropic growth, with business leaders becoming advocates for philanthropic involvement, both to their corporate peers and to the community at large.

- While the supply side has been limited there are weaknesses too on the demand side. Fundraising professionals have had limited training in private fundraising. Whilst there are some notable exceptions the culture is one that is uncomfortable and unskilled in private philanthropy.

### The RSM McClure Watters research led to the following recommendations:

- **A co-ordinated strategy is developed to enhance philanthropy in Northern Ireland. To ensure the strategy is realised it will require organisational and personal leadership and effective communications. Philanthropy champions should be identified and their stories heard and celebrated.**
- **Peer and professional support networks for philanthropists should be created.**
- **The various methods for giving and specialist philanthropy advisory services should be promoted to the wider community.**
- **Efforts should be made to promote corporate philanthropy in Northern Ireland including: the promotion of the benefits of workplace giving, executive giving circles; and corporate foundations.**
- **Charities should create a value based proposition, connecting their needs to the interests of donors and utilise on-line tools as appropriate.**

**Philanthropy Week attempted to take into consideration the conclusions above and to make a first step towards responding to the recommendations.**

## Embedding a Culture of Philanthropy in Northern Ireland

Mervyn McCall, Chairman of the Institute of Directors (IoD) set the tone for Philanthropy Week when formally announcing it at an event held in the Reform Club. 'IoD members – individually and in their business worlds have a critical role to play as drivers of philanthropy. During economic hardship thinking about philanthropy must become more acute – resources are more scarce and needs greater. So Philanthropy Week is timely and it is important that people take the opportunity to engage with it and explore the win-win of philanthropy' he said.

He talked also of 'embedding a modern-day culture of philanthropy here in Northern Ireland that we can be proud of, where talking philanthropy becomes the norm - amongst financial and legal advisers; with colleagues in the Boardroom or by the water cooler; over the dinner table with family and friends'.

## Inspirational Stories

During Philanthropy Week, Helen KcKeever, Fund Development Manager with the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, provided an overview of the role of the Community Foundation in facilitating philanthropy, in particular through the establishment and management of donor advised funds. She introduced philanthropists Eric Jenkinson, John Agnew, and Michael McKibbin who offered reflections on their own philanthropy journeys, highlighting their motivations and practice.

Eric Jenkinson, Managing Partner at Moira-based Jenkinson Consulting said 'Social responsibility is embedded into our company's corporate values and is built into our business strategy. I would encourage anyone from our business community who is toying with the idea of beginning their philanthropic journey to embark immediately'. The strong, faith-based

motivation driving John Agnew's giving was articulated in his typically modest fashion and his description of the far from modest achievements of his philanthropy was an inspiration to all.

Michael McKibbin described how, after deciding to give something back to the community in his parents' memory, he found himself lost as to how this was done. He got help from the Community Foundation who outlined the different types of fund options available, the various areas of need and examples of groups and organisations working in these areas. He said; 'Having control of the process gives a real feeling of ownership. Our fund does not hold vast amounts of money, but it allows us to support four or five key projects each year, which is very rewarding, particularly when we see the results!'

## Philanthropy - Good for Business?

Professional advisers gathered for a breakfast seminar on the topic 'Philanthropy – Good for Business'. Emma Turner, Director, Client Philanthropy Services, UK & Ireland Private Bank, Barclays Wealth referred to two pieces of research which have been carried out in recent years by her company, which identified the need for more advice from professional wealth advisors to promote the concept and understanding of philanthropy. She highlighted the fact that there is evidence of a reluctance on behalf of advisers to initiate discussion around philanthropy due to a variety of reasons that included:

- **Wrong time to introduce the topic**
- **Too personal a topic**
- **Not enough knowledge of the charitable sector**
- **Concern that business will be lost if clients are referred to other sources for advice**
- **Already doing enough, not a part of my job, not getting paid to provide this advice**
- **Limit on how much of this discussion can be had in a meeting in which the time is being paid for by the client - opportunity cost**

Sir George Bain responded stating that he would consider it negligent of his advisers should they not raise the matter as part of financial planning discussions. Michael Graham, Cleaver Fulton Rankin and NI secretary of Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners commented that economic uncertainty was contributing to a resistance to giving.

Emma then reflected on the business benefits of providing philanthropy advice. Whilst she recognised that it requires time and relationship building, a commitment from senior executives in the company, along with preparedness to 'walk the walk', she also pointed out that it can contribute to retaining and attracting new clients and bring new business opportunities.

Other matters arising in the panel discussion included:

- **The fact that the language of philanthropy can be a barrier**
- **The need for infrastructure to improve communication and understanding**
- **The need to instil a "habit of giving" from an early age to encourage a "lifetime of giving"**
- **Client concern about excessive bureaucracy and lack of transparency can be addressed through offering analysis of the performance of charities and how efficient and effective they are at using their funds**

Raymond Mulligan, Director Johnston Campbell Financial Advisers, who does include philanthropy in his discussions with clients, commented 'what marks the importance of philanthropy, is that it is not simply the act of handing over cash for charitable purposes – it is a long term relationship where change is witnessed'.

## Offer Solutions not a Begging Bowl

While the focus of Philanthropy Week was on the supply side, there was some reflection on the need for charities to 'up their game' in how they engage with private donors. The Arts & Business Fundraising Masterclass was addressed by Emma Turner from Barclays Wealth, who combined experience as a fundraiser and a philanthropy adviser, and Philip Spedding from Arts & Business.

Key messages included:

- Charities must move away from sense of entitlement and describe succinctly, what they do; how effective they are; and what difference a donation will make.
- There is a need to re-shape 'the ask' to fit the donor potential and to move away from begging bowl to development of relationship.

## Impact Philanthropy

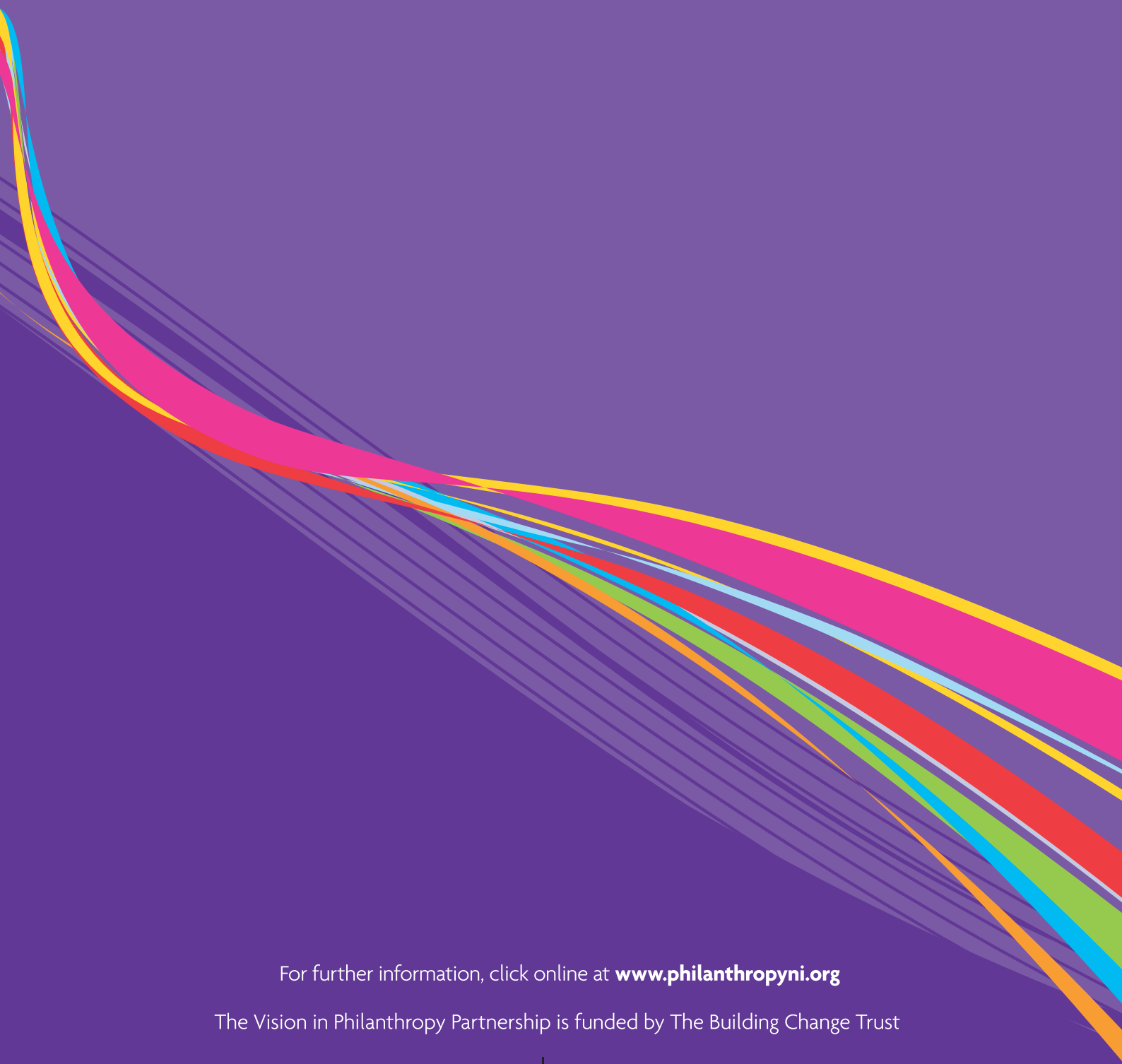
The Northern Ireland Trusts Group Open Forum, supported by The Lloyds TSB Foundation for Northern Ireland, examined Impact Philanthropy - looking at the role that Trusts and Foundations can play in offering support in addition to grant-making and how social impact can be measured. Sandra Kelso Robb, Executive Director of the Lloyds TSB Foundation for Northern Ireland presented the findings of the application of a Social Return on Investment tool to its 'Creating Change Programme'. She described how this enabled both beneficiaries and funders to realise and articulate the full value of their financial investment.

At the same event James Magowan, Association of Charitable Foundations, presented research findings on behalf of the Institute for Voluntary Action Research which analysed the experience of 30 trusts and foundations in providing non financial support, referred to as 'Funding Plus'. This identified that while this presented challenges in respect of commitment, time, cost, and skills it could produce positive outcomes for funder and grantee providing there was good knowledge of grantees; strong relationships and communications; and coherence between purpose, design and delivery.

## Innovative Approaches

Sandra Kelso Robb co-founder and chair of Give Inc described how this, the only giving vehicle of its kind in Northern Ireland, works and reflected on the evolution of giving circles in the States. Currently Give Inc involves some 15 members giving £1 per day and since its establishment the giving circle has awarded grants in excess of £20,000.

She encouraged others to join or to set up their own giving circles and to realise the value of pooling financial resources and to engage in the fun of philanthropy while being both thoughtful and strategic in their giving.



For further information, click online at [www.philanthropy.org](http://www.philanthropy.org)

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