

Sunflower Charitable Foundation Fund

Impact Report May 2022- December 2023



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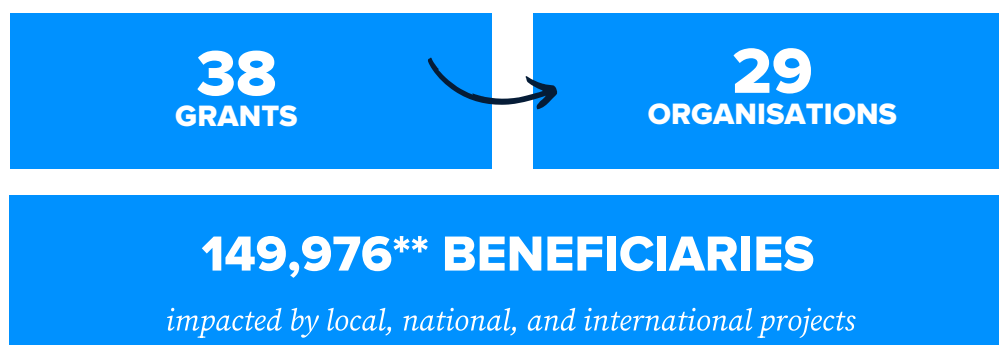
Introduction

This report covers the period from May 2022 to December 2023, detailing grants made by the Sunflower Charitable Foundation Fund during this time. Prior to May 2022 grants were made by a separate Sunflower Fund predating the establishment of the Sunflower Charitable Foundation Fund. The data in this report is collected from grant applications, interim reports, and outcome reports submitted by our grantees.

This report sets out, firstly, to provide an overview of Sunflower Charitable Foundation Fund grant-making for 2022 and 2023. Secondly, the report outlines the impact so far of the Fund's grant giving for that period. The information provided is necessarily limited by the grant reports available to date, given that the Foundation Fund is only in existence for two years. Impact reporting can be developed further going forward as more grant reports become available.*

Sunflower's three pillars for grant-making are Environment, Community Resilience, and Global Giving, and newer grants falling under Place-Based Giving. Because Sunflower chooses grantees and projects holistically, there is often overlap across its pillars which is reflected in this impact reporting particularly where a grant might fit under more than one pillar.

HEADLINE FIGURES



IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



Comprehensive support responding to the Ukraine crisis across housing, education, and mental health, and including key support for the Ukraine Civil Society Response Forum- which has resulted in the forum attending Oireachtas briefings, briefings with various political parties, engagement with 83 civil society organisations working with Ukrainians, and a successful positive media campaign of including Ukrainian voices. This has helped in connecting into the State's emergency response structures, and providing national coordination of civil society and community responses.



410 people who can now access clean water through 4 boreholes, through support for Trocaire under the [Global Giving](#) pillar. Significant development partnerships were developed with SeeBeyondBorders (Cambodia) and GOAL and Vita in sub-Saharan Africa.



Key policy position taken with Children's Rights Alliance funding to support educational reform. Extensive supports provided to NGOs working across youth mental health, early childhood and family hubs, education access and child poverty through the [Community Resilience](#) pillar.



Five research projects funded in the [Environment Sustainability](#) pillar, including the AICBRN Map and Gap report which was used to leverage funding for Trinity to headquarter the multi-million euro Climate+ Co-Centre, referenced in policy submissions to government and accessed regularly on their website by academics for similar purposes.

*Reports for 1 year grants are requested at 6 months and one year. Reports for multiannual grants are requested annually.

**Beneficiary figures are included for direct-service grants only. Where direct beneficiary figures can not reliably be calculated (e.g research projects, advocacy etc.) they are not included.

Environment Sustainability

Sunflower's impact in the environment area covers key pieces of research, educational and community programmes, scoping on the suitability of Co. Mayo for a place-based Sustainability Fund, and most recently major multi-annual commitments to climate resilience projects in sub-Saharan Africa. Taken together, this area of grant-making addresses immediate needs in areas hardest hit by climate change, while using research and education to lay the foundations for cohesive community climate action in the future.



- Funded [AICBRN](#) Map and Gap report which was used to leverage funding for Trinity to headquarter the multi-million euro Climate+ Co-Centre, referenced in policy submissions to government and accessed regularly on their website by academics for similar purposes.
- Four [Irish Research Council](#) studies underway include Irish Fens and Boglands, another on soil microbiome and crop health and two on different aspects the interaction of nature and urban communities. These will provide valuable insights into environmental and social issues and our understanding of the environment and well-being.
- Pilot Junior Certificate Short Course on Climate Action created and being tested by the [Irish Second-Level Students' Union](#), allowing students and their teachers to understand climate action and how to take it. The pilot paves the way for widespread dissemination of the programme.
- [BurrenBeo Trust](#) supported with core funding to deliver its 25 programmes connecting people to place and protecting the Burren environment.

“ We are particularly proud of the achievements of the Hare's Corner and Burren Pine Projects [...] to date there have been 90 mini-woodlands, 10,000 native trees, 50 new ponds for biodiversity and 100 new mini-orchards.

BurrenBeo Trust

“ The Sunflower seed funding for the Policy Rapid Response Unit was really important in leveraging significant Science Foundation Ireland funds for the Climate + Biodiversity and Water research programme. Thanks very much for your support to date.
Yvonne Buckley AICBRN & Climate + Co-Centre

Grantee Partners

- AICBRN
- Irish Research Council
- Irish Second-Level Students' Union
- BurrenBeo
- Community Foundation Ireland's Biodiversity Fund
- Irish Emergency Alliance



Image: The Burren

Global Giving

Sunflower's Global Giving pillar aims to support sustainable development programmes which seek carbon reduction solutions and empower local communities. The work is informed by the protection of human rights and dignity, the strengthening of local communities and the development of long term relationships with partner agencies and communities. In 2023, Sunflower launched a Climate Resilience grants programme for sub-Saharan Africa with three-year commitment to two major projects.

While it is not yet possible to assess the impact of this pillar, given the majority of grants have been made in 2023 with no reports submitted yet, The Fund's investment in Global Giving has the potential to empower local communities in countries in the Global South to build capacity and opportunity using their own resources, networks, and assets.



- Positive impact on the education system in Cambodia, improving organisational capacity and advocating for increased funding streams to Cambodia through [SeeBeyondBorders](#)
- Providing clean water to 410 people in Zimbabwe through 7 boreholes through [Trócaire](#)
- Rapid support for disaster relief campaigns in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Syria-Turkey Earthquake through the [Irish Emergency Alliance](#)
- A successful call for applications to the Climate Resilience programme in sub-Saharan Africa which has resulted in 2 grants to [GOAL](#) and [Vita](#) over 3 years.

“We are delighted about this development in our community. In most instances we had to wake up early to go and queue for water. In some cases, the pump would break down because of the pressure and demand for water by the community. In summer there was also low water yield, and we would have to wait for water to recharge.”

The borehole is assisting a lot of people to access water for growing a lot of crops even some to sell. It is a blessing to us at a time when we are faced by these droughts. We have already established a 35-member nutritional garden which will be a source of nutrition and income”

Siphiwe, Farmer
Matobo District Zimbabwe
Trócaire

Grantee Partners

- Trócaire
- SeeBeyondBorders Ireland
- Irish Emergency Alliance
- GOAL
- Vita
- Brighter Communities



Image: GOAL

Community Resilience

Sunflower has had a strong focus on Community Resilience work, both at home and abroad. The pillar supports all age groups, with a particular focus on children and young people. The Fund pivoted in 2022 to dedicate the majority of its resources to support Ukrainians and other migrants into Ireland. This pillar, combined with national initiatives in education and youth, provides multi-tiered support to marginalised children and families across Ireland and shows clear, tangible benefits.

The nature of community development and building resilience at local level is such that consistent integration and outreach activities, in addition to bespoke schemes are essential to social inclusion. The shift in focus to Ukrainian migration into Ireland continues to support communities of marginalised children, young people and families across Ireland.



Top: Foróige
Left: Mid-West Simon Community
Right: Sanctuary Runners

Community Resilience

EDUCATION, SOCIAL INCLUSION, AND MENTAL WELLBEING

The Fund supports key educational and social initiatives aimed at removing barriers and providing equal opportunities across the socioeconomic divide. There has been a strong focus in 2023 on key initiatives for youth mental health and wellbeing with a wide reach and strategic changes that will fundamentally increase access, reduce barriers and change how young people interact with mental health and wellbeing programmes.



Impact Highlights

- Strong support for disadvantaged families and children in the Limerick region through innovative programmes provided by [Simon Community](#) and [Barnardos](#)
- Supporting two [access programme](#) students through four years of university allowing them to focus fully on their studies
- Key policy position taken with [Children’s Rights Alliance](#) funding to support educational reform. Extensive supports provided to NGOs working across youth mental health, early childhood and family hubs, education access and child poverty.
- Assisting [Foróige](#) to return to volunteer-led programming after the COVID break to services allowing young people to socialise and improving their wellbeing.
- Significant network building through the interagency approach taken by the [Changing Lives Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Community Fund](#)

“

I would like to express my gratitude for this scholarship. It has been really helpful with taking the stress off the cost of rent in college. Once I finish my degree, I hope to work in the area here in Ireland or I’d even love to work abroad for a year or so. I am extremely grateful for this scholarship, and just wanted to write this email to thank you sincerely.

University of Limerick Access Student

“

We would like to thank Patricia and Michael Byrne for taking the time to visit our Islandgate centre. Our Project Leader was delighted to meet them and really valued the opportunity to speak to them about the work. She appreciated how respectful they were of the service user Ciara and her story. A nice update here is that Ciara was so encouraged by this experience that she will now speak to the entire Barnardos board at their next meeting in Dublin.

Barnardos, Limerick

Grantee Partners

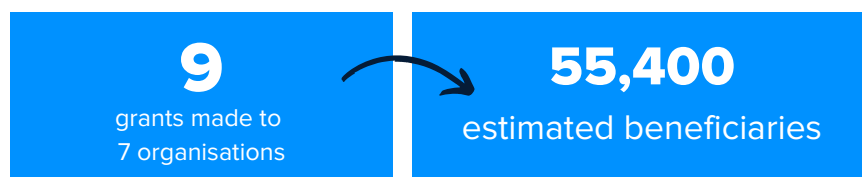
- Foróige
- St Vincent de Paul Ozanam House
- University of Limerick Foundation
- Barnardos
- Changing Lives Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Community Fund
- Midwest Simon Community
- Dublin University Boat Club
- ISPCC
- Jigsaw
- Children’s Rights Alliance

Community Resilience

UKRAINE CRISIS RESPONSE

At the start of 2022, the Sunflower Charitable Foundation Fund had planned to focus the Community Resilience pillar on child poverty. In light of the Ukraine crisis, however, the Fund pivoted to a crisis response to make a positive impact on the lives of people fleeing Ukraine to live in Ireland and the communities supporting their integration. The Fund supported various initiatives, providing comprehensive support in three key areas: Supporting national civil society organisations; Supporting Ukraine-led organisations; and Supporting young people.

Following Sunflower's Ukraine response grants, the Foundation will consider how to continue supporting in this area in 2024 and beyond.



- Collaborated with Community Foundation donors to provide wide-ranging strategic supports, focusing on wellbeing, integration, and capacity-building, supporting organisations of all sizes from grassroots to large national organisations across short- and medium-term projects. Supports included mental health counselling, referrals, information, and access to recreational activities.
- Key support for [Ukraine Civil Society Response Forum](#) which has resulted in the forum attending Oireachtas briefings, briefings with various political parties, engagement with 83 civil society organisations working with Ukrainians, and a successful positive media campaign including Ukrainian voices. This has helped in coordinating civil society and community responses, and connecting into the State's emergency response structures.
- Key support for [Helping Irish Hosts](#) which has opened a helpline for hosts, matched more than 2,000 guests to host homes, launched an information website, gathered data from hosts and submitted information to government. This has helped with emergency accommodation provision and provided safe, welcoming homes for refugees.
- [Schools of Sanctuary](#) have engaged with over 20,000 pupils and students around creating a safe and positive environment for refugees in schools laying foundations for promoting social inclusion and diversity.

“

Getting a job at MyMind at a time when I was so anxious and confused, when I had no idea how to live in Ireland, was a real anchor for me. I felt like a professional again, which gave me back my confidence and self-respect, and also supported my family financially.

I have been working as a psychotherapist for more than 10 years, but so far I have not experienced such severe consequences in so many people...I am very pleased that MyMind is making efforts to inform the target group about their services and I am very grateful for this.

Pavlo

Ukrainian Psychotherapist, MyMind

Grantee Partners

- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Irish Refugee Council
- Foróige
- Association of Ukrainians in Ireland
- Helping Irish Hosts
- Places of Sanctuary
- Sanctuary Runners
- MyMind

A Note on Place-Based Giving

Place-Based Giving sits outside of the three current pillars but overlaps with them nevertheless. Sunflower has commissioned a place-based giving study entitled “Scoping study on the suitability of Mayo for a Sustainability Fund”. This work is nearly at its conclusion. The report will outline the feasibility and need for a Sustainability Fund in Mayo and will inform future work.

Sunflower has also supported Place-Based Giving through the Community Resilience pillar, with a grant to the Changing Lives Dún Laoghaire Rathdowne Fund (the “DLR Fund”). The DLR Fund is another donor-advised fund at Community Foundation Ireland comprised of local community members with backgrounds in social services delivery, and its aim is to engage a wide range of DLR residents in addressing inequality in the area through support for carefully selected programmes and projects. Sunflower has committed funding to the DLR Fund which is listed in the Community Resilience grants section.

Mayo Sustainability Fund

- Following on from the Scoping work that Sunflower commissioned UCD to carry out into the suitability of Mayo for a Sustainability Fund, Sunflower have begun to make grants in this category with the first grant going to Edible Landscapes in December 2023.

Grants to date:

- Scoping study on the feasibility of a Sustainability Fund in Mayo
- Grant to support Edible Landscapes



Conclusion

Sunflower's mission is to focus on the growth of resilient communities and environmental sustainability in Ireland and globally. In its first two years of operations, Sunflower has contributed to this mission by supporting a comprehensive suite of grants that illustrate, through their impact, the interconnectedness of Sunflower's pillars.

Sunflower's approach lays the foundations for change through its support for innovative new ideas, filling key gaps in research, and its backing of educational programmes that build a pipeline of changemakers for the future. At the same time, Sunflower's grants also create change in real time by funding key programmes and projects that respond to immediate and emerging needs in communities both at home and abroad. Sunflower tackles challenges from every possible angle: through research, advocacy, and movement-building on a systems-change level, and through direct services and crisis response that improve people's lives right now.

While the long-term impact of Sunflower's grants may not be understood for some time, with only two years of grant-making complete there is already tangible evidence that its work has strengthened individuals, families, communities, and the charitable sector. Through projects that have provided crucial mental health counselling for marginalised communities, improved access to and quality of education, funded urgent humanitarian aid, and supported organisations in building capacity and momentum, Sunflower's impact is real, concrete, and growing.

In the coming years, Community Foundation Ireland will support Sunflower to build on this work, with a view to developing longer-term relationships with the charities that demonstrate the strongest impact. As the current grantees report back on their deliverables, Sunflower will have a growing pool of information about the impact of its giving which can inform its future direction.



Community Foundation Ireland

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30 Merrion Square North
Dublin
D02 VE40