

# When Aims and Objectives Rhyme

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How Two of Ireland's Largest Foundations Found Common Ground  
and Built a Shared Portfolio of Nearly €60 Million  
Without Compromising the Features That Make Them Distinct

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## Executive Summary

Collaboration between foundations — the coordination of grants for shared purposes, pooling of expertise, and investment of time and money in complementary ways — is a virtue more honoured in academic literature and conference speeches than in practice. While a few large funding pools and

foundation roundtables have received admiring attention in the philanthropic trade press, overall evidence of sustained cooperation among funders has been comparatively small and peripheral. Even in the academic literature, most articles have been long on the virtues of collaboration but short on descriptions of how it actually works — how foundations manage to overcome their natural centrifugal tendencies and achieve things that they could not have achieved by working separately.

*Most articles are long on the virtues of collaboration, but short on descriptions of how it actually works. This case offers an example of how two real foundations overcame natural resistance and practical obstacles to get important things done together.*

For several years, two of the largest foundations in the Republic of Ireland have worked together in support of roughly a dozen grantees, despite taking significantly different approaches to grantmaking and pursuing slightly different goals. The Atlantic Philanthropies, Ireland's largest private grantmaker at €47 million a year, and The One Foundation, with between €8 million and €9 million in annual grants, both devote major portions of their programme to services for children and youth and to the pursuit of equal rights and opportunity for immigrants and children. Under those two headings, the foundations have invested some €60 million in their

common grantees between 2004 and 2010, while also pursuing other interests and programmes separately. This report describes the main elements of their partnership, the challenges and obstacles it has faced, and how both staffers and grantees assess its value.

## Unwritten but real: A partnership built on opportunity, not formalities

Although the relationship is not formalised in any written agreement, it has been reviewed by both foundations' Boards and is the basis of extensive interactions between the two staffs. It is noteworthy not only because it is a rare example of sustained cooperation between two grantmaking institutions, but because those institutions are strikingly different in their operating styles and philosophies of grantmaking. The One Foundation is a 'high-engagement' funder — an approach also known as 'venture philanthropy,' in which the Foundation takes a direct, assertive role in what it describes as 'supporting grantees to reach their goals in growth and impact, including involvement in governance and management selection.' Atlantic, like most foundations, generally stays at arm's length from grantees' organisational decision-making and concentrates instead on particular programme interests and strategies such as testing and demonstrating service models and supporting advocacy campaigns. Although there is ample overlap between the two foundations' interests, the differences in their methods of operation could easily have kept them at a respectful (perhaps even wary) distance from one another. Instead, they have formed routine, albeit informal, channels of communication, mutual consultation, coordinated funding, and shared monitoring that have come to define their relationships with some of their largest grantees.

The partnership was not the result of any deliberate attempt to demonstrate the virtues of collaboration. It arose, instead, mainly from a calculation that philanthropy in Ireland represents a tiny percentage of the resources affecting children and immigrants, and that foundations are much more likely to influence large public systems by working in concert than by pursuing separate, unrelated agendas. Both institutions hope to improve the effectiveness of public expenditures on services for children, youth, and families; both aim to formalise and strengthen the legal rights of children and migrants; both seek to expand the reach of the most successful programmes and services for these target populations. And both of them have reckoned that Atlantic's expertise in programme strategy and evaluation, combined with One's keen eye toward organisational management and effectiveness, will accomplish more on all these fronts if exercised in a coordinated way than either foundation could have accomplished separately.

That reckoning does not depend on, nor does it result in, a complete agreement about what course is best for any given grantee, or about the most important need in a given field at a given moment. Nor does it require that the two foundations use the same kinds of analysis in choosing their grantees or the activities they will support. Each foundation still follows its own separate procedures for considering proposals and making grants; there are no formal attempts at joint decision-making, and none are contemplated. Until recently, their relationship has not even entailed any common application or reporting process. At the time this is written, only one grantee submits an identical report to both funders, though reporting regimens in some areas of work may become more similar

*The two institutions are strikingly different in their operating styles and philosophies of grantmaking. Yet they have formed routine channels of communication, mutual consultation, coordinated funding, and shared monitoring.*

in the future. Foundation staffs still meet separately with the grantees much of the time, covering different issues and emphasising different priorities.

Personal relationships between the two staffs are warm and open but not necessarily close. The two foundations' goals are more similar in the field of migrant rights than in children and youth, so staff interactions in that field tend to be more frequent and the sense of camaraderie may be greater. But most interaction remains what one staff member described as 'opportunistic,' meaning that staffers consult one another when major issues arise or when an idea or opportunity might inspire some joint action. Otherwise, they may not see each other for weeks, even months, at a time.

### **The grantees' view: Benefits and drawbacks**

Grantees describe the Atlantic-One collaboration with a mixture of appreciation and occasional frustration. On one hand, organisations with multiple sources of support nearly always chafe under the conflicting demands or competing priorities of their funders, and these joint grantees are no exception. The partnership between One and Atlantic has relieved some of those pressures, but far from all of them. (In Ireland, where the number of foundations is especially small, grantees may not

*Receiving a joint endorsement from two independent, demanding institutions lends credibility to grantees' images.*

be as accustomed to juggling the demands of multiple funders as they might be in the United States or Great Britain, where foundations are more numerous.) Most of the One-Atlantic joint grantees can list half a handful of issues on which they wish one of the two foundations was more like the other, or on which they believe the grant requirements are needlessly duplicative. Most say that the partnership between the two institutions has made it easier to negotiate solutions to these problems, but it has not eliminated the inconsistencies and conflicting priorities entirely. On the other hand, nearly every grantee has experienced some benefit from the collaboration — particularly the ability to plan programme strategy and advocacy with influential backers who have different skills but share a common vision. Receiving a joint endorsement

from two independent, demanding institutions also lends powerful credibility to the grantees' images, most believe. The great majority feel that they, and their fields, are better off for having funders who try to cooperate with one another, at least much of the time.

### **The lessons, in brief**

Comments from staff members at One and Atlantic and from leaders of grantee organisations suggest at least six basic rules that may be useful to other funders in deciding whether to work together and in confronting some common challenges they are likely to encounter along the way:

- 1. The goals of collaborating institutions do not need to be identical, but they should be similar, especially on fundamental principles.** Collegiality, goodwill, and a desire for allies are not sufficient without the galvanizing force of specific shared goals and at least a general agreement about some elements of strategy. In general terms, collaboration is likely to be only as strong as the strategic interests that the participating foundations have in

common. The more their goals intersect, the greater the potential for a close, consistent, and consequential partnership.

2. **Commitment to the partnership needs to come not only from top executives and the Board, but from the people who make the major tactical decisions at the front lines.** Collaboration ‘doesn’t save time,’ one foundation staffer said, ‘it makes work. It is an additional relationship you have to manage.’ Programme officers will not shoulder the additional burdens that collaboration imposes — at least not for very long — unless they believe that (a) their success within their own institution will be judged partly by their fidelity to the partnership, or (b) the collaboration brings material benefits to their work that could not be obtained in any easier way. Their commitment will obviously be greatest if both conditions are true. Conversely, if employees don’t see a significant value from collaboration — either to themselves or to the programmatic goals they are trying to pursue — the relationship will quickly atrophy.
3. **Synchronised funding is comparatively easy; the real benefits — and the real challenges — of collaboration lie in the shared intellectual capital, not the finances.** It takes relatively little effort for two institutions to decide to write checks to the same grantees at more or less the same time. But the benefits of doing only that are likely to be negligible. The greatest value of the Atlantic-One collaboration, a staff member said, lies ‘not just [in] common funding, but common learning.’ As another put it, ‘What defines the collaboration is the flow of information: market intelligence, access to networks, sharing of skills and expertise.’ Some of this kind of exchange may be formal, as with joint conferences, work groups, or other learning exercises. But the real engine of common learning is peer-to-peer interaction — habits of communication and consultation that take time to build and that depend as much on trust, openness, and mutual respect as on the amount of time spent.
4. **It is helpful to spell out some distinctions in roles, interests, and responsibilities between the participating foundations.** Collaboration between foundations can be made easier on grantees and more efficient for the cooperating institutions if peers can work out some general areas where each side takes a lead role and thereby saves the other side (and the grantee) some needlessly duplicative work. The division of labour may need to evolve over time. It is not necessary, and may not be realistic, to try to spell out a formal set of responsibilities for each partner at the outset. But the value of the collaboration will increase significantly if it becomes a basis for sharing burdens, streamlining procedures, and eliminating duplication.
5. **Collaboration depends at least as much on trust as on formal agreements; collaborators should therefore behave toward one another as allies, confidants, and colleagues.** The most sensitive, and often the most important, work in philanthropy takes place in conversations that are at least partly confidential. To cooperate fully and confidently with someone from another institution, it is necessary to feel sure that the other party’s private conversations are generally respectful and supportive of the partnership. If that trust is weakened, the collaboration will start to disintegrate. ‘If I thought that they were working with me in my office and undermining me elsewhere,’ one foundation employee said, ‘it would naturally be very hard to share information or ideas with them.’ Conversely, a belief that people from the other institution are truly ‘on the same team’ inspires the kind of collegiality that leads to a greater sharing of knowledge, insight, and judgment. To reiterate

an earlier principle on this list: It is the intellectual exchange, more than the money, that is the real currency of collaboration.

6. **There will be discord; be prepared to repair and re-engage.** Sooner or later, a stark disagreement about the wisdom of an investment, the capacity of a prospective grantee, or even the merits of a given social goal are nearly certain to arise between independent funders trying to work together. Unlike disputes in the corporate world, most of which emerge from purely business calculations, conflict in philanthropy can cut dangerously close to people's values and their sense of right and wrong. Mending such rifts may therefore be a more delicate task in philanthropy than in business, and the effort to do so may need to be greater and more deliberate. The test of an effective collaboration is not whether such disagreements are entirely avoided, but whether they can be overcome when they occur.

Collaborative arrangements, whether formal or not, cannot eliminate the likelihood of disagreements, missed signals, and lapses in communication between funders. But they can significantly raise the benefits of overcoming these occasional tensions and working jointly on common opportunities and goals. As one foundation officer said, referring to the Atlantic-One partnership, 'The whole point of this thing, really — apart from the extra money involved — is that these are two different organisations that come at the world from different perspectives, and have different skills and ways of thinking about problems. If we didn't disagree some of the time, that whole theory would seem a little dubious, wouldn't it? So they don't like this grantee and we do, or they want to move in that direction and we don't. Fine — that's exactly what you'd expect. But that's all sub-plot; we can't let it turn into the main story.'

## **A Note on Sources**

Except where otherwise cited, the information and opinions reported here come from roughly two dozen interviews with staff and grantees of The Atlantic Philanthropies and The One Foundation conducted in Ireland in October 2010. To give respondents the freedom to speak candidly about colleagues, funders, or grantees, every interview was conducted on condition that no quotation would be attributed or used in a way that could be traceable to its source. Some quotations in the following pages are therefore abridged or superficially altered, solely to conceal the speakers' identity. A list of those interviewed appears in an appendix.

Patrick Sabol, a Master's Degree candidate at the Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, conducted the literature scan and provided valuable background research. Data on grant commitments and outlays were furnished (with great patience and goodwill) by Orla Kelly of The One Foundation and Natalie Kilroy and Clare Skelly of The Atlantic Philanthropies.

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IN 1988, when Peter C. Goldmark was chosen as the tenth president of the U.S.-based Rockefeller Foundation, he paid a round of visits to several experienced executives at other foundations, seeking their advice on how to lead a large global charity. Among the people he consulted were two lions of 20th century American philanthropy who, he said, 'both told me, flatly, "Don't waste your time on collaboration."' Joining forces with other foundations, they warned him, would be time-consuming, frustrating, and distracting, with little benefit to compensate for all the trouble.

Twenty years later, Hodding Carter III, former president of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, a large American philanthropy headquartered in Florida, described essentially the same point of view, in terms little different from those that had been used with Mr. Goldmark: 'At all times and in all ways,' Mr. Carter said, 'the various pressures of just doing your own business, focusing just on your own mission, your own staff's capabilities, your own opportunities — all that is hard enough.' Making the extra effort to learn the interests and predilections of other funders, negotiating and compromising with them over methods and priorities, adjusting the purposes and timing of grants to accommodate other grantmakers — all of that was, in Mr. Carter's succinct judgment, 'just an unnatural act, frankly.'<sup>1</sup>

Although collaboration is routinely praised in the professional literature of international philanthropy, it is less honoured in practice, for all the reasons these foundation presidents describe.<sup>2</sup> To be sure, it is common for several foundations to make grants to a single organisation, with the expectation that the funds will then be blended to good strategic effect. But that is usually regarded as a step or two short of actual collaboration. The reason is that, in those cases, each contributing foundation typically makes its decision independently, setting its own terms and conditions on its grant, seeking its own particular ends, and relying on the grantee to combine its funds responsibly with those of other donors. 'Collaboration,' as commonly used in philanthropic parlance, entails some additional degree of joint decision-making among the foundations involved, or at least close

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<sup>1</sup> Comments from Messrs. Goldmark and Carter are taken from interviews conducted in February 2009 and reported in 'Common Effort, Uncommon Wealth: Lessons from Living Cities on the Challenges and Opportunities of Collaboration in Philanthropy,' Tony Proscio (unpublished manuscript prepared for Living Cities, May 2009), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> It is even more rarely studied. A literature survey unearthed fewer than a dozen papers devoted to the topic, all but four of which contained praise for collaboration but little or no analysis of how it works. See the bibliography at the end of this report.



consultation on key decisions.<sup>3</sup> And that kind of shared effort remains, at least among large foundations, far more admired than imitated.

One of the best known and most elaborate examples of formal funder collaboration is Living Cities, a pooled public-private fund for urban redevelopment involving some 20 U.S. foundations and corporate charities. Founded in 1991 as the National Community Development Initiative, the programme has funnelled more than \$600 million into low-income American neighbourhoods, linking diverse funders whose primary interests involved health, education, child welfare, housing, economic development, and community organising.<sup>4</sup> A newer funding pool, formed by members of the Network for European Foundations in 2006, is the European Programme for Integration and Migration, of which the Atlantic Philanthropies is one of eleven participating donors. EPIM is now in its second phase of grantmaking, with roughly €3.5 million in pooled funds.<sup>5</sup> But instances of collaboration at that scale and level of complexity are so exceptional that they all but prove the critics' case: While the benefits of combining resources may seem compelling — including the ability to make larger grants and to weave together multiple kinds of expertise — the demands of doing so tend to overwhelm all but the most determined efforts at large-scale collective philanthropy.

### **Improvised Alliances: Cooperation Without Binding Agreements**

Only slightly more common is the kind of flexible collaboration in which two or more foundations set out, without formal structures or agreements, to coordinate their support for certain grantees or to adopt interlocking strategies to govern a common body of work. In these cases, the participants avoid the burdens of pooled funding, joint administration, and binding decision-making. But they still make a concerted effort to adjust the timing, amounts, recipients, or purposes of their grants so as to make the most of one another's resources and expertise. The partnership in these circumstances may be ad-hoc and variable, but it is intentional, mutual, and deliberately accommodating.

Despite the relative informality of such arrangements, the difficulties involved in implementing them should not be underestimated. For large foundations in particular, any departure from normal procedures, approved strategies, standard funding timetables, selection mechanisms and criteria, or reporting routines can impose hours of extra staff time and effort on the employees who have to make the adjustment. Yet any effort to combine one foundation's funding with another's will almost always require one or more of these kinds of adaptation from at least one of the parties, and often from both. Programme officers may also feel they are sacrificing some of their independence and flexibility when they are obliged to coordinate their work with that of other funders. Before they decide to make the sacrifices and exert the extra effort, most foundation staffers would need a significant incentive. If their employer hasn't contractually bound them to cooperate with their peers through some written agreement or membership in a formal roundtable, then there are just two other forces that would be likely to drive them to shoulder the burdens:

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<sup>3</sup> For a close examination of the various components and definitions of philanthropic collaboration and partnership, see 'Philanthropies Working Together: Myths and Realities,' Robert Hughes (The Foundation Center, February 2005), available at [www.fdncenter.org/for\\_grantmakers/practice\\_matters](http://www.fdncenter.org/for_grantmakers/practice_matters)

<sup>4</sup> Significantly, Peter Goldmark and Hodding Carter were both seminal figures in Living Cities. Mr. Goldmark founded the initiative and Mr. Carter was its third chair. Referring to the foundation leaders who had warned him away from such arrangements, Mr. Goldmark simply said, 'On this point, I didn't take their advice.'

<sup>5</sup> 'European Programme on Integration and Migration,' Network of European Foundations Web site, accessed 11 November 2010, <http://www.nef-europe.org/content/18/european-programme-integration-and-migration>.

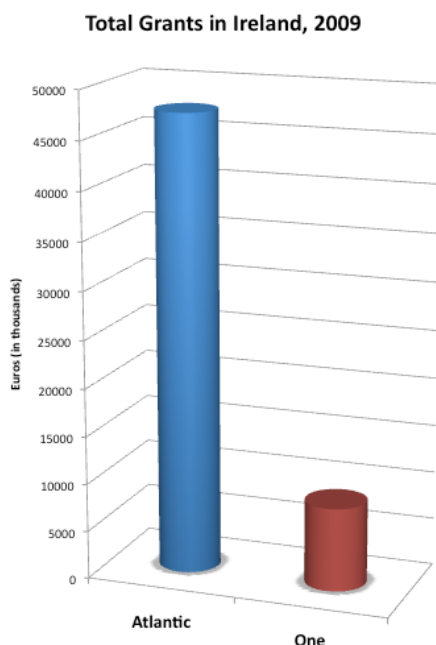
- They would have to be directed from above, as part of their job description or as a condition of winning grant approvals; or
- they would have to see, firsthand, a compelling advantage for their own grantmaking — for example, a chance to bring additional capital and leadership to their field, a way of helping grantees diversify their funding, a way to spread the message and share the lessons of their grantees' work, or some combination of such benefits.

Either way, the choice would need to be explicit and deliberate, and the effort to make it succeed would have to be sustained over many years. Even leaders of formal collaborations, where members are nominally obligated to take an active role, sometimes complain about participants' waning enthusiasm and diminished energy over time, or the inability of some overworked partners to live up to their full responsibilities as members. That risk is obviously greater when there are no formal structures to hold people accountable for working together. In the more ad-hoc, voluntary arrangements, collaboration either needs to be enforced from above or driven by some powerful motivation, within each staff member's individual set of values, to continue soldiering on.

There are also some subtler impediments to this kind of collaboration. Although foundation officers rarely admit it, even the most self-effacing charities feel at least somewhat competitive toward one another. Each wants to achieve more, reach farther, accomplish something more important. That sort of individual distinction becomes less likely when other institutions share the decision-making, the effort, and the credit. Collaboration may have real and obvious benefits for most philanthropic purposes, but at some level, it also triggers many forms of natural resistance and even goes against some ordinary human impulses.

To all of these barriers, caveats, and disincentives, the partnership in Ireland between The One Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies stands as a noteworthy counterpoint. It constitutes that still-rare case of two prominent institutions overcoming the usual obstacles and informally — but

deliberately — aligning their grantmaking on a carefully defined range of issues over several years. This report examines their relationship with a particular focus on how the joint grantmaking actually works in practice, a subject largely neglected in the scant literature on philanthropic collaboration. The following pages describe how the partnership came about, how it has affected the work of foundation employees, what challenges it has posed, what benefits it has produced, and how it has led the two foundations to persevere for several years in what, to most of their peers, would still seem 'an unnatural act.'



### Two Distinct Approaches to Philanthropy

Declan Ryan and Deirdre Mortell created The One Foundation in 2004, with assets drawn from Mr. Ryan's business ventures, including Ryanair. Their earliest aim for grantmaking in Ireland was to improve the opportunities of disadvantaged children and youth, though they were exploring a short list of other interests as well. By that time, the Atlantic Philanthropies had already been making grants to benefit Irish children and youth, among several

other goals, for nearly two decades. Formed in 1982 by the American retail entrepreneur Charles F. Feeney, a founder of the international Duty-Free Shoppers Group, Atlantic's annual grant expenditures in Ireland were more than €47 million in each of 2008 and 2009. The One Foundation's total grants were less than one-fifth that amount, at €8 million in 2008 and €8.7 million in 2009.

But the contrast between the two foundations involved more than age and size. There were substantive, strategic differences as well. For example, although The One Foundation started with an interest in improving the well-being of disadvantaged children — a mission that Atlantic shared — the two institutions approached the topic in different ways. Since 2004, Atlantic's main interest, in its programmes for children and youth, had been in testing innovative service models in the hope that the most effective ones would later be adopted widely by government and private agencies. More particularly, whereas Atlantic's approach to policy reform was focussed on demonstration programmes and evaluation, One's was primarily on pursuing policy change and improved service through investments in organisations and delivery mechanisms. Atlantic's Children and Youth Programme focused on building a culture of *evidence-based practice* among both practitioners and policy-makers, and increasingly on *the advancement of rights* by and on behalf of children and young people. On the other hand, One's goal was to build *stronger, more productive organisations* that could deliver better services more efficiently to more people and could advocate for and implement better public policy. Consistent with its desire to promote evidence-based models, Atlantic tended to take a long-term approach to evaluation by funding rigorous, multiyear studies — including randomised, controlled trials — of the models and causes it supports. The One Foundation, with its emphasis on efficiency and performance, took an approach that had less to do with social science than with management and entrepreneurship. It emphasised measurable growth in impact and quarterly performance tracking as a way of measuring near-term progress toward longer-term goals. For this purpose, One typically used the Balanced Scorecard, a performance-management tool first developed for the tech industry and now widely used in both business and nongovernmental organisations.

When The One Foundation expanded, around 2005, into programmes that support the integration of immigrant communities, similar differences quickly became apparent. In this field, Atlantic had sought both to create durable, expert forces for national immigrant-rights advocacy and to mobilise and empower immigrants to advocate on their own behalf. While these goals clearly depended on building strong organisations, Atlantic's overriding concern was in charting strategic direction, identifying opportunities for improving law and policy, and funding both expert and grassroots efforts to bring about those changes. The One Foundation shared these goals, but placed much more emphasis on supporting or creating well-run, performance-driven organisations that were capable of charting their own strategies, delivering measurable services to immigrant families, compiling data from these services to argue for policy change, and demonstrating near-term results. One's executives readily acknowledge that they entered this field with little in-house expertise on the technicalities of human-rights law and policy. So while Atlantic was deeply involved in sorting through and promoting particular *lines of advocacy*, One wanted mainly to build the *organisations* that could conduct such advocacy effectively, or could provide services and information to struggling migrant families — or, in most cases, both. The two approaches were obviously complementary and interlocking. But they grew out of sharp differences in philosophy and methods.

Whereas Atlantic had taken a more arm's-length approach to philanthropy, leaving grantees broad latitude to govern and manage their organisations, One firmly embraced the principles of 'high-

engagement’ or ‘venture’ philanthropy, in which foundations function much like venture capitalists. Venture philanthropists view their grants as investments in an organisation, and require detailed information to identify the return on that investment, in terms of social change. Consequently, the Foundation begins each relationship by supporting a detailed business plan for the prospective grantee. The typical business plan starts with a ‘Theory of Change’ that postulates explicit causal connections between the organisation’s planned activities and the results it intends to produce. From there, the plan goes on to project concrete performance benchmarks and timelines, usually calling for substantial growth in both operating scale and management sophistication. It then aligns the projected growth targets with corresponding changes that will be needed in resources and revenues, staffing, systems, technology, management, and governance — the standard components of organisational ‘capacity’ — and sets benchmarks and timelines for these as well.

In these cases, if the funder/investor finds the plan credible and sufficiently ambitious, and if it feels it has formed a relationship of trust with the organisation’s leaders, it will invest significantly in both the organisation’s core capacity and its programmatic expansion. If not, the relationship will end with the completion of the plan, and the grantee and funder will part ways. The process, as a grantee of The One Foundation described it, ‘can be very unforgiving. It’s all-consuming, exhausting, will probably keep you up nights. But when it works, you then have a very strong, generous partner to help you reach your goals.’

Roughly half of The One Foundation’s investments have included a requirement that the Foundation take a seat on the grantee’s board, at least for a time. If senior managers are to be hired, One will usually request a seat on the selection committee. One Co-Founder Deirdre Mortell estimates that, of the 25 current grantees, a Foundation representative has participated in the selection of nearly half the past or current CEOs. The One Foundation meets regularly with the heads of grantee organisations — typically several times a year — to scrutinise growth and performance data, examine unmet targets or other signs of trouble, and adjust expectations where necessary. The meetings are not courtesy calls. One grantee, after a particularly troublesome period in which its performance had been sluggish, described the One Foundation review as ‘an experience that could leave you in tears.’

Atlantic, by contrast, is willing to support business planning and places a high priority on organisational capacity, often with sizeable grants. But whereas The One Foundation puts a premium on expansion — measured by increased services, greater impact, or both — Atlantic tends to emphasise quality, preferring to refine a service model for better outcomes before expanding it to reach more beneficiaries. Particularly in its Human Rights Programme, Atlantic has invested heavily in grantees’ organisational capacity, often on equal terms with The One Foundation. Yet even there, Atlantic normally avoids the specifics of organisational planning and governance in which One sometimes takes a role. ‘We take a very wary view of getting mixed up personally in grantees’ organisational affairs,’ a senior Atlantic officer said, in describing how the two foundations differ. ‘We will never accept a board seat, for example. ... And anyway, our interests in working with a grantee often have to do with just one programme or one aspect of their business, where we really don’t want to be involved in everything else. For The One Foundation, on the other hand, tackling the organisational mechanics is exactly what they want to do, and they’re good at it. It’s kind of a *raison d’être* for them. It just wouldn’t work for us.’

Atlantic does, on the other hand, keep a close eye on grantees’ programmatic affairs, at least in the areas where the Foundation is financially involved. As a way of tracking progress, Atlantic typically

requires them to report according to a Logic Model that sets out their intended inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. But although the Logic Model is similar in some respects to One's Theory of Change, it is more often limited to a specific initiative or goal. Even when, as in the case of general support grants, a Logic Model encompasses the grantee's overall programme, it usually focuses more on programmatic integrity and outcomes, along with general good governance and management, than on the details of how the organisation is run. It is an overstatement to say, as some observers tend to do, that 'One focuses on organizations and Atlantic focuses on programmes.' In reality, Atlantic's general support grants are aimed squarely at strengthening organisations — particularly in the Human Rights field, where many key organisations are still relatively new and fragile, and where government funding is often not an appropriate survival strategy. And One's investments are chosen primarily for the sake of spreading effective programmes by building organisations capable of bringing those programmes to more people and advocating more effectively for policy change. But it is generally accurate to say that One's preeminent focus, and most of its staff's expertise, is concentrated on building high-performance, high-impact organisations, whereas for Atlantic, those considerations are means to some other goal.

One source of the difference between the two foundations' approaches to organisational monitoring and oversight may have to do with staffing: A typical Atlantic programme executive is responsible for nearly twice as many grant relationships as is a One Foundation staff member, thus limiting the amount of 'high engagement' that Atlantic officers could take part in, even if they chose to be more deeply involved in grantees' day-to-day management.

The differences between the two foundations extend even into the realm of style and atmosphere. The One Foundation prides itself on a quick, informal mode of operation, where top executives roam among the staffers' desks and are deeply involved in day-to-day activity. As a result, frontline programme officers, called Portfolio Managers, can consult with superiors, seek major policy decisions at any time, and change course hour-by-hour as circumstances require. Atlantic, by contrast, is a global institution with nearly 130 employees in seven countries; its programme staffers in Dublin are governed by more-elaborate procedures, subject to more levels of review and management, and answerable to a team of senior executives who are located, with one exception, five time zones away. Even to the naked eye, the two foundations seem to dwell in different worlds: Atlantic's Dublin staff works in hushed, private offices on multiple floors of a pair of adjoining Georgian townhouses. The One Foundation occupies converted industrial space with desks arranged on an open plan, where it is possible to address the entire staff simply by raising one's voice.

### **Intersecting Concerns and Shared Incentives**

Yet for all their differences in size, age, interests, and style, the two foundations had, from the beginning, several critical features in common. Most obvious was geography: Both operated in the small Republic of Ireland, population 4.5 million, where they were among the largest charitable institutions in the country, and were certainly the most visible. (Ireland, with the smallest number of foundations per capita in Europe, has only three large-scale private funders, one of whom operates anonymously and apparently donates considerably less than the other two.<sup>6</sup>) Being the only two large funders operating openly in a small country, one observer suggests, may have raised the odds that

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<sup>6</sup> 'Philanthropy in the Republic of Ireland: An Assessment of the Current State and Future Potential of Philanthropic Giving in the Republic of Ireland,' McKinsey & Company, July 2009, p. 8.

they would eventually end up working together. Perhaps, he speculated, ‘being the only ones at scale is mutually attracting.’

Atlantic and One also share some core charitable purposes: Both concentrate a major part of their philanthropy on children and youth, albeit with somewhat different aims and priorities. Within its first two years of operation, One also came to place a strategic emphasis on integrating Ireland’s “new communities” of immigrants, an area where Atlantic had a related set of goals and relevant experience. Both foundations are committed to making sizeable grants that can significantly raise the scale at which their grantees operate and can produce results powerful enough to change the fields and systems in which they work.

There were also some personal connections between the two foundations: Mr. Ryan’s and Ms. Mortell’s professional partnership began as leaders of an Atlantic Philanthropies grantee, when they were chair and development director, respectively, of Ireland’s preeminent charity for children, Barnardos. As a personal philosophy, Mr. Ryan admired the time-limited approach to philanthropy, known as ‘Giving While Living,’ championed by Atlantic’s founder, Chuck Feeney. Indeed, The One Foundation would adopt an even more accelerated grantmaking schedule than Mr. Feeney’s, setting out to complete its work in a single decade (Atlantic’s projected lifespan will be close to 30 years) and closing in 2013, some seven years sooner than Atlantic. Though the two men are not personal friends, Messrs. Ryan and Feeney — respectively, an Irishman with a pronounced admiration for American business, and an American businessman with a close attachment to his ancestral Ireland — brought a similar enterprising spirit to their philanthropy, in which both men have remained personally engaged.

The limited life of the two foundations was another factor driving the two to work together. By the time they cease operations, both hope to leave behind a permanently altered landscape in the fields where they work. Lasting change of that kind might come through the creation of strong, growing organisations that can carry on the cause, or through the creation of durable movements and tested programmes that persuasively alter the way services, rights, and opportunities are conceived and pursued. But the two foundations reason that it will take both kinds of change to make a lasting difference: credible programmes and models championed by influential and growing institutions. So the most likely way for each foundation to succeed in making real systemic change during its limited life would be to combine its own particular strength with that of the other institution, in as coordinated a way as possible.

‘We have an aligned analysis, at this stage, of how change can be delivered’ says Deirdre Mortell. ‘And we add value in different ways according to our strengths, trusting the other organisation to add value on their particular focus: One on building high-performance organisations that can do service growth, systems change, or advocacy, and Atlantic on programme selection, programme technical supports, and evaluation, as well as advocacy methodologies in the Human Rights Programme.’

Alongside all these points of tangency, there was an even more compelling reason for One to join forces with Atlantic on areas of common strategic ground: Both had designed their programmes with goals that included advancing children’s rights and well-being by transforming the way significant parts of Irish government and civil society function. Yet Atlantic’s resources amounted to barely one-tenth, and One’s closer to 4 percent, of the budget of just one Irish government ministry

that funds children's services.<sup>7</sup> Even after the start of a historic retrenchment of government funding beginning in 2009 (or, perhaps, *especially* in the midst of such a retrenchment), the two foundations would need every advantage of scale and credibility they could muster, if they were to have any hope of influencing the direction of national policy, practice, and expenditures across the Republic. They had much more chance for exerting that kind of influence working together than they would have separately.

### **The Grantees: A Common Portfolio of Differing Investments**

Ultimately, One and Atlantic came together on two broad areas of common interest. The first was in improving services to young people and promoting and protecting children's rights. Here, One classifies its grants in two clusters that it describes as being, respectively, for disadvantaged children and families and for young people's mental health. Atlantic's programme interests for children and youth are segmented differently, with one cluster aimed at promoting preventive services and early intervention and another at advancing children's rights. Either way, combating disadvantage and advancing rights are crucial elements of both foundations' strategies, and mental health is one area of concern in Atlantic's programme, even if it doesn't occupy a category of its own.

A second area of joint effort involves the needs and rights of Ireland's growing immigrant population, which has multiplied since the 1990s due to an unprecedented level of inward migration and a sharp rise in asylum applications. Atlantic's Human Rights Programme has for several years taken a keen interest in these issues, attempting to advance both better immigration policy and a stronger voice for immigrants in advocating for their own rights and opportunities. By late 2005, One was beginning to adopt similar goals, partly as an extension of its own work among disadvantaged children and youth, many of whom live in immigrant communities, and partly, as Deirdre Mortell puts it, 'because of the issues the co-founders could see on Dublin's city streets and neighbourhoods.' In the area of immigrants' rights, the two foundations' overall aims are now closely aligned: Both have set out to help immigrant communities understand their rights, organise and advocate on their own behalf, and make use of all the public and private resources available to them.

Starting with the two foundations' programmes for children and youth, six grantees made up the bulk of their joint effort:

**Barnardos** is the largest children's service organisation in Ireland, reaching more than 5,000 children and families a year in 40 centres, with programmes focused on early learning and healthy emotional development, plus advocacy for policies to combat poverty and structural disadvantage. Both One and Atlantic have provided core support to Barnardos to implement a business plan whose development One helped to fund. (An earlier strategic planning process was funded by Atlantic.) Atlantic has also provided a larger, separate grant for demonstration projects aimed at testing and evaluating particular programme models. Declan Ryan, when he was chair of the Barnardos board, led the recruitment of the organisation's current CEO, a process in which Atlantic was also involved. Atlantic's total contributions to the organisation since 2004 have been roughly

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<sup>7</sup> In 2010, the budget of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs was approximately €350 million ('Estimates for Public Services and Summary Public Capital Programme,' Dept. of Finance, Republic of Ireland, 9 December 2009, p. E.86.) This does not include the many other children's services funded by, for example, the Ministries for Education, Health, Community Affairs, Social and Family Affairs, or Arts, Sport, and Tourism. Atlantic's annual commitments in 2009 were about €35 million; One's were €13.5 million.

one-third larger than One's investment (€10.1 million and €6.6 million, respectively), but given the difference between the two foundations' budgets in Ireland, their proportional commitment to Barnardos is approximately equal.

**Foróige** is Ireland's largest youth-serving organisation, reaching more than 50,000 young people through more than 400 youth clubs and scores of special projects. (Its constituency is older, on average, than Barnardos's, ranging mainly between ages 10 and 18.) Foróige is also home to Ireland's **Big Brothers Big Sisters** programme and the Irish branch of the international **National Foundation for Teaching and Entrepreneurship (NFTE)**, each of which is also separately supported by joint One-Atlantic grants. Atlantic and One provide core support to Foróige, though for slightly different purposes. Atlantic's core grant is aimed at helping the organisation design and deliver evidence-based programmes, whereas the One grant is primarily for dramatically expanding the reach of Foróige's services and building the capacity of the organisation (especially its fundraising) to support that expansion. For Big Brothers Big Sisters, the two foundations worked closely together to help Foróige plan and launch the programme, and have provided roughly equal amounts of support for it. Atlantic's grant, however, is partly reserved to pay the considerable cost of a randomised, controlled trial of the programme's effectiveness in Ireland, whereas One's grant is devoted to developing and expanding the service. The two foundations' support for NFTE started when the programme was first imported from the United States; when it later became clear that NFTE was unlikely to succeed as an independent venture, Atlantic and One jointly supported the programme's integration into Foróige, a complicated merger that has drawn extensively on One's expertise in planning and management.

**The Children's Rights Alliance** is a coalition of 80 organisations concerned with the rights and welfare of children and young people. Its preeminent goal is to secure the full implementation in Ireland of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the government ratified in 1992 but has not fully put into practice. Implementing the Convention and building a strong voice for children's rights in Ireland is an express interest of both foundations, and their five-year grants to CRA are consequently nearly identical in size, purpose, and duration. Atlantic has also provided smaller project-specific grants for CRA's advocacy for implementing the Convention. One co-founder Deirdre Mortell was on the selection committee that recruited the Alliance's current CEO. In 2010, CRA became the first (and, as of this writing, still the only) grantee to negotiate a uniform format for submitting reports to the two funders.

**Inspire-Ireland** is the Irish branch of an international programme that started in Australia. Its main activity is **ReachOut.com**, an online information resource and social networking site where Irish young people can share thoughts and experiences on their mental health, encourage one another, and team up to become involved in their communities. The One Foundation supported the establishment of Inspire-Ireland in 2009 and both foundations have provided equal grants of €1 million each over three years, though not at the same time. One has taken a much more direct role in the organisation's creation, executive recruitment, and early planning, consistent with its high-engagement approach to philanthropy and the fact that the model was already developed and demonstrated in Australia. Atlantic, by contrast, has concentrated more programmatically on the ReachOut Web site and the strategies with which the site engages and influences young people. The two interests, although quite different, clearly fit together, and the grantee views them as neatly complementary.



**Headstrong** is a service design and advocacy organisation whose primary goal is to draw together the many disparate mental health services that are theoretically available to Irish young people, and unite them into a more cohesive and effective whole. The organisation is essentially a creation of The One Foundation in concert with Headstrong's founder, Dr. Tony Bates. One's financial investment and personal involvement in Headstrong are therefore significantly greater than Atlantic's, and are aimed at giving the organisation a secure start and growing it into a nationwide force for revolutionising mental-health services for youth. Atlantic has nonetheless given Headstrong a significant endorsement, with a three-year €1 million grant approved at the end of 2009. The Atlantic grant is aimed specifically at expanding Headstrong's work in promoting community advocacy and youth leadership. The grant will unquestionably help with Headstrong's overall growth and organisational development, as well as its general mental-health mission, but in contrast to One's support, those are not Atlantic's core purposes. Headstrong has also taken part in a large Atlantic-sponsored demonstration project in the sprawling Ballymun housing development of northern Dublin, a step that places the organization at the core of one of Atlantic's signature projects for children and youth.

**SpunOut.ie** is another youth-oriented Web site, slightly older than ReachOut.com, but aimed more broadly at personal and social development, civic engagement, and advocacy. SpunOut originally attracted One's interest in 2007 under the rubric of young people's mental health, because the Web site was Ireland's first online source of information for adolescents and young adults on social and psychological well-being. It featured articles and discussion threads about thorny issues like drugs and sexuality and provided a virtual community to help users overcome social isolation. The One Foundation started with a small, trial grant for elementary business planning in 2007, then followed with a larger core investment from 2008 through 2010. But in the meantime, SpunOut came to attract Atlantic's interest for quite different reasons, having mainly to do with youth organising and advocacy. As SpunOut became more about activism than about mental health, One's interest waned while Atlantic's grew. In a sense, then, this is less a case of collaboration than of passing the baton: As this report is being written, One's grant is ending just as Atlantic's is beginning, and the two institutions have not sought any common vision for their separate lines of support.

In their approach to Ireland's 'new communities' of migrants and asylum-seekers, investments in five organisations make up the common body of work.

**The Irish Refugee Council** is Ireland's leading nongovernmental organisation, and its most authoritative independent voice, in the field of refugee protection and asylum rights. Despite the high regard with which the organisation is held, both in Ireland and internationally, it has suffered in recent years through a chain of management and governance crises and at least two wrenching strategic realignments. Throughout these episodes — which resulted, among many other things, in sweeping staff redundancies and a disruptive turnover in chairs and CEOs over a tumultuous five-year period — Atlantic and One stuck with the IRC, in close consultation with one another. Each has invested approximately €250,000 a year in core support and become heavily involved in guiding the organisation through its struggles — far more directly, in Atlantic's case, than is typical. Both foundations were convinced that the organisation was too precious to lose, and that it could be preserved and strengthened with a common show of support and confidence from its two main private funders. That show of confidence helped the IRC restructure its board, recruit a distinguished barrister as CEO, and assemble an expert staff, all the while avoiding any lasting damage to its reputation and credibility, which are its most potent assets. Although the IRC relationship has been anything but smooth sailing for the two foundations, their joint effort on its

behalf may demonstrate the advantages of funder collaboration better than any other example on this list.

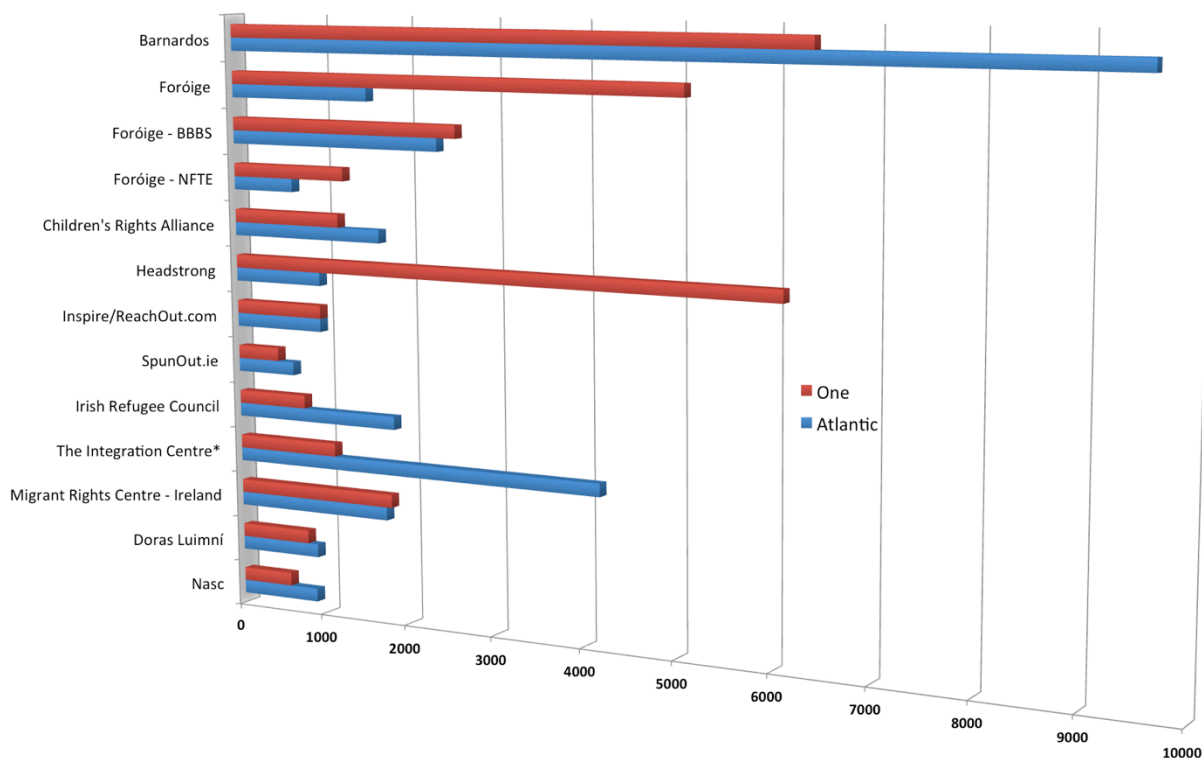
**The Integration Centre** of Ireland (originally called the Integration and Social Inclusion Centre) is the result of a merger in 2010 between two smaller organisations. The first was **Refugee Information Services**, an Atlantic-only grantee that helped local community information services deal with immigrants' needs. The second was **Integrating Ireland**, which started in 2000 as a programme within another organisation. It received support from Atlantic since 2002, and three years later became a joint grantee, which provided enough support to allow it to become independent. Integrating Ireland was formed as a membership organisation, a kind of peer-support network in which more than 200 immigrant-rights organisations could share information, get training and advice on common problems, and forge a stronger platform for advocacy across the field. The One Foundation started its relationship with Integrating Ireland in typical fashion: by supporting a business planning exercise, taking a seat on the board, and joining a recruiting panel to choose a new CEO. Its involvement focused mainly on strengthening the organisation's management and governance, while Atlantic's aimed at the challenges of network-building and advocacy, seeking to overcome the fragmentation and philosophical differences that had long kept the field from coalescing around a more nationwide approach to integrating newcomers. By 2006, Integrating Ireland had come to believe that the field had too many organisations operating at the national level, and that it needed a large and influential leadership body focused squarely on integration — to draw and hold the field together across the country. To fill that role, Integrating Ireland began seeking merger partners and eventually teamed up with Refugee Immigration Services. Like most mergers, the combination encountered many speed-bumps and suffered through periodic spells of discouragement and frayed nerves. Once the two organisations agreed to merge, it took more than nine months to bridge their differences and develop a single, blended mission — while also tackling the many administrative challenges that any merger is bound to pose. In this process, Atlantic and One took pains to give the merging organisations consistent signals and to provide complementary forms of financial support. Consistent with its interest in organisational engineering, One paid most of the cost of the merger process and provided ongoing core funding to the new organisation. Atlantic provided technical advisers to ease the merger along and covered the ongoing costs of the two organisations' separate activities while they merged. Atlantic then provided additional core support, amounting to roughly 44 percent of the new organisation's budget. In the end, some two-thirds of the cost of operating the merged organisation from 2010 through 2015 will come from the combined investments of One and Atlantic.

**Migrant Rights Centre – Ireland** was one of the earliest joint investments by Atlantic and One, and the two foundations' goals in supporting it have remained closely aligned. MRCI is a national community development organisation offering services and advocacy support to migrant workers and their families. It was a fledgling operation with one paid staff member when One and Atlantic first teamed up to support it, and now has a staff of 15 and a national reputation in the top rank of immigrant-rights groups. Both foundations have provided core operating support in roughly equal amounts, and both have aimed at helping MRCI manage its rapid growth, expand its range of advocacy and services, and account for its progress along the way. Yet the two funders have pursued these matching goals and types of investment with characteristically different emphases: Atlantic has pressed for a rigorous, independent evaluation of the organisation's long-term impact, while One has relied on the Balanced Scorecard to monitor ongoing growth and near-term accomplishments. The One Foundation served on the MRCI board for a time, but stepped off when it determined that its presence was no longer necessary.

**Doras Luimní** is a Limerick-based organisation that helps migrants and refugees solve common problems, assert their rights and interests, and take full part in their community. The One Foundation first made a small investment to help the organisation build its management and finances, followed by a larger grant for Doras Luimní's core operations. Atlantic joined with a similar-size grant a year or so later. Each foundation has provided core support of around €250,000 a year over the past three years. During that time, the relationship between funders and grantee was tested by a difficult leadership transition, when a CEO departed after only a short tenure and the foundations began to notice weakness in board-level governance. In a carefully coordinated intervention, Atlantic provided additional support for board development and One nominated a representative to the committee recruiting a new CEO. Since the completion of this transition, Doras Luimní has received new funding from the European Refugee Fund, an apparent vote of confidence in the executive leadership and strengthened governance.

**Nasc** (the Irish word for 'Link') is also known as the Irish Immigrant Support Centre. Like Doras Luimní, the Cork-based Nasc is a regional support organisation for immigrants and asylum-seekers. Also like Doras, Nasc began with a small planning grant from One, then received larger infusions from both foundations, and later suffered through a period of executive turnover and uncertainty about its future. Here, too, Atlantic and One coordinated their support and stuck with the organisation as it re-stabilised.

**Joint Grantees - Total Commitments 2004-2009**



Overall, the two foundations' basic goals are more closely aligned in immigrant rights and integration than in children and youth. Partly for that reason, the collaboration has been closer and more deliberate on the immigration front. Though their programme strategies are far from identical, One Foundation Senior Portfolio Manager Eoghan Stack and Atlantic Programme Executive Brian Kearney-Grieve have struck a close working relationship and have provided similar kinds and amounts of support for the five immigrant-rights groups on this list. They tend to describe their goals in similar terms, though each emphasises slightly different aspects of their work. They meet regularly with one another and jointly with their grantees, most of whom regard them as a team.

Among the Children and Youth grantees, on the other hand, both the staffing relationships and the programme goals have been more variable. Although One Portfolio Manager Vicky Brown now manages several of the joint investments in this area, One's deputy CEO Emma Lane-Spollen has sometimes taken a leading role in these relationships, as have Deirdre Mortell and Eoghan Stack. In this field, One's primary interests, including expanding direct services to disadvantaged children and families and improving mental-health services for youth, are not as closely matched with Atlantic's interest in developing and demonstrating evidence-based service models and grassroots advocacy movements, even though they agree broadly on the advancement of children's rights. Consequently, the interactions between The One Foundation and Atlantic's Children and Youth executives, Tom Costello and Jane Forman, have been more intermittent, depending on the issues and opportunities that happen to present themselves at any given time. Staff from each foundation tend to have a different interpretation of what the joint-funding relationship means to them, and what value it adds to the six organisations they both support, though both consider the relationship worthwhile and strategically important.

The fact that the two institutions have different underlying goals and strategies is understandably borne out in their different approaches to the collaboration. But there are also other factors that govern how the relationship works and the degree to which it benefits both the grantees and the funders in each case. The next two sections examine the particular forms that collaboration has taken between One and Atlantic and the costs and benefits associated with their association — first from the perspective of foundation personnel, and second in the opinion of the organisations in which they jointly invest.

### **How Collaboration Works (Part I): The View from Inside the Foundations**

Much of the literature on foundation collaboration, scant as it is, concentrates mainly on formal institutional partnerships and funding pools, in which the terms of cooperation are spelled out in written agreements or at least carefully negotiated understandings. One of the things that makes the relationship between Atlantic and One unusual is that there are no such preordained terms of engagement. Their collaboration, though extensive, is essentially informal and case-by-case, so its particular manifestations depend on the individual interest and inclinations of each of the staff members involved, and on the opportunities presented by each prospective joint grantee at any given moment. Although both foundations have made a senior-level commitment to working together, including board-level reviews of the partnership at both institutions, it remains what one senior officer described as 'a classic Irish arrangement: revered but undefined.'

Even the way the relationship is described can vary substantially, not only between the two foundations, but also from one person to another within the same institution. What one participant described as 'a relationship of trust, where there's not just common funding, but common learning,'

a different participant called ‘a case of leverage, fundamentally — my job is to do everything I can to get extra funding [for grantees], and they bring a significant amount of extra funding.’ Both speakers were in the same organisation — and when given the chance, each person also agreed with the other (‘Oh, yes, there’s learning involved, too’). But their primary terms of description, before they were prompted, pointed in somewhat different directions — one at intellectual and strategic interaction, the other at financial benefits. Between the two institutions, too, different semantic patterns hint at different attitudes toward the partnership. Whereas One Foundation staff routinely refer to the ‘leverage’ resulting from Atlantic’s support for a given organisation — meaning the increase in financial resources that comes from joint investment — Atlantic staffers more often describe the two institutions’ grants as ‘complementary’ or ‘different.’ The first suggests a cumulative value and the second a breadth or diversity of values. Again, the differences are not stark, and there are exceptions to the pattern on both sides. But there is enough of a pattern to suggest a slightly different view of what the partnership is for, and why it’s worth preserving.

It is also possible to discern a difference in approach to the collaboration depending on the speaker’s position in the organisational hierarchy. At top executive levels of both foundations, attitudes toward the collaboration tend to be more unambiguously enthusiastic. Said one top officer: ‘We’re both large, smart organisations that do large grants and are prepared to do core funding, and we’re aligned on both those things. My impression is that where we are distinct, we work those distinctions in ways that add super-value; they leverage each other.’ Another said, ‘We’re different in many ways, but no two foundations are alike, so there’s nothing unusual about that. What makes us work better together is that, first of all, we have a lot to offer each other: different skill sets, different perspectives, different networks — those are all things that are just automatically going to be better when you put them together. And second, we care about some similar things in a small country where there aren’t many other people who do what we do. In a sense, if we *weren’t* collaborating, you’d have to say, “What’s wrong with you people?”’

Closer to the front lines, however, the differences between the two institutions’ strategic priorities, their operating styles, and their professional backgrounds become more of a day-to-day reality, and occasionally lead to frustration. Staff from each side will occasionally zero in on a point of difference (especially one that has arisen recently) with a comment equivalent to, ‘We’re concerned about a very important matter, and they just don’t get it.’ Speaking of a difference in programmatic emphasis with one particular grantee, a staffer from one of the foundations said, ‘Their money isn’t really as critical to me as it might seem, because they’re not really funding [what we’re funding] — it’s some whole other thing.’ Speaking of the same situation, a staff member from the other institution said, ‘They’re not really funding what we consider a critical part of this; so we’ve had to cover 100 percent of that.’

The point is not that the relationship is less successful at the front lines than top executives would like it to be. On the contrary, frontline employees generally agree that it succeeds in most of the ways that upper managers want it to, and that it produces valuable results that would otherwise not have been achieved. But that success is not primarily because of inherent ‘synergies’ or ‘alignment’ between the two institutions. It is because the staff members see a value in working together (even if they don’t necessarily see the *same* value), and they exert the considerable effort it takes to bring that value to fruition, at least much of the time. Because the relationship is neither automatic nor easy, it sometimes slips; but those occasions are noticeable precisely because both sides go to some trouble to avoid them. One programme staffer summed it up this way: ‘Look, collaboration takes extra time. It doesn’t save time, it makes work. It is an additional relationship you have to manage. ... I listen to

[them], I hear what [they are] saying and I work out how to try and influence [them]. A lot of my time is spent advocating to the other partner. I'm not saying it's not worth it. Of course it is. But it's a lot more work.'

Said another: 'The critical element in collaboration relies on the relationship between programme staff officers. There's where it really happens. We either trust each other or we don't; we either spend time together and work on bringing each other along, or we're just making separate grants and calling it "collaboration." To be honest, we get those relationships right a lot of the time, but not always. And some times, frankly, it's never going to be right, and all we'd do is waste a lot of time pounding the square peg over the round hole.'

Although, as an executive put it, 'no two foundations are alike,' staff members at One and Atlantic are quick to point out that the gap between their respective operating styles and priorities is wider than average. The methods of venture philanthropy, which are integral to The One Foundation's *modus operandi*, are not merely different from those of the more established approaches to strategic philanthropy like Atlantic's. They were *designed* to be different, as a deliberate reaction against a perceived weakness in the way most foundations deal with the organisational and management challenges that nonprofit or nongovernmental organisations face. Debates about the relative merits of standard and venture philanthropy still produce heated exchanges at foundation conferences, for understandable reasons: The two models draw from different ideas about what matters in civil society, what constitutes value, and what skills are the most important in pursuing charitable goals.

And yet when employees of Atlantic and One discuss their differences, signs of such fundamental philosophical conflict are rare, even as they acknowledge the contrasts in their tactics and techniques. While staff members may occasionally slip into caricatures of each other's approach ('They're all about evaluations, and we're about getting things done,' or 'They spend months on business plans while we're worrying about outcomes'), the speakers nearly always catch themselves and re-balance their comments. Even when promised anonymity and invited to give unvarnished opinions, employees of both institutions eventually stress the complementary virtues of the two approaches and cite examples of how each adds value to the other. One typical comment: 'I'm not always interested in what they're doing, and they probably think I'm wasting my time on some of [my work]. But when you look at it all as a whole, we're doing more than either of us would ever have done separately, even if we had the same amount of money to spend.'

In practice, the difference between venture and regular philanthropy tends to matter much more when dealing with children and youth programmes than with immigrants and refugees. With children and youth, Atlantic tends to place its focus squarely on government policy and funding. It presumes that government programmes for children, especially in disadvantaged communities, will always dwarf those of private charities, and therefore that the best way to improve the lives and opportunities of young people is to improve the public systems that serve them. That, in Atlantic's view, demands a compelling body of evidence on what services produce the best results for children — hence the emphasis on rigorous, long-term evaluations. It also calls for a closer working relationship with government than with individual community-based organisations. Though The One Foundation doesn't disagree about the importance of public policy, it prefers to concentrate on building a significantly larger and stronger body of service organisations — better managed, better funded, serving more people, and more sophisticated in their communications and advocacy — that will, in turn, be better equipped to influence the Irish government, among other things. The result of these divergent philosophies is a series of distinctions in the kinds of issues on which they focus

their funds most intensely: evaluation vs. performance measurement, rigor vs. scale, ideas vs. operations.

In supporting migrants' rights, however, government funding is somewhat less of a factor, and the two approaches lead to more-similar conclusions. Human rights organisations do not, as a rule, draw most of their support from government (although organisations that help migrants settle and integrate do). Success, for rights organisations, therefore depends on roughly similar kinds of accomplishment, regardless of which approach to philanthropy a funder may take. For both Atlantic and One, many critical goals entail supporting strong advocacy organisations and seizing near-term opportunities for lasting change in the way migrants' rights are recognised and enforced. While One invests more heavily in direct services for migrants in order to build an evidence base for policy change, and Atlantic concentrates more on legal battles and advocacy campaigns, both foundations see the most far-reaching challenges as lying in the next few years, when many fundamental policy arguments on immigration will be either won or lost. Even assuming that philanthropy will grow in Ireland after One and Atlantic are gone, it will probably not be large enough to sustain indefinitely the level of immigrant-rights work that these two foundations have set in motion. That work must therefore succeed soon, with enduring improvements in the way immigrants' rights and opportunities are ensured in Ireland, or else much of the cause will be lost, at least for many years.. The foundations' basic agreement on this set of challenges has meant, in the words of one participant, that 'there is a much better dynamic between One's Integration Programme and Atlantic's Human Rights Programme than has happened on the children's side.'

One example of the foundations' relative strategic harmony in human rights has been in their work with the Migrant Rights Centre – Ireland. Because MRCI's work is rooted in grassroots community development — bottom-up decision-making, self-determination, with each migrant community defining its own needs and priorities — it was not at first an easy fit with The One Foundation's emphasis on business planning and centralised performance measurement. Nor did the organisation initially take warmly to what it perceived as Atlantic's insistence on influencing the overall strategic direction of the field. (From Atlantic's perspective, its goal was simply to avoid funding duplicative activity. But the result of that goal was a keen attention to which of its grantees were pursuing which strategies, a form of funder scrutiny that can feel intrusive to grant recipients even when that is not the intent.) Because MRCI was an early joint grantee, the two funders were not yet used to one another's priorities and methods, and they sometimes dealt with MRCI in conflicting ways. Yet over time, both the foundations and the grantee have come to view the relationship as close, constructive, and relatively smooth. Atlantic and the grantee both value the capacity and management improvements that have arisen from the relationship with One; One and the grantee speak approvingly of Atlantic's leadership on legal advocacy and communications. And the two foundations praise MRCI's willingness to question their judgments and work out its own solutions to problems, rather than simply acquiescing to funders' wishes. It is primarily because the basic goals of all three organisations are essentially the same that they can take different approaches to issues, disagree sometimes, and yet arrive with comparative ease at conclusions that satisfy all three of them.

To be sure, the collaboration on children and youth grants also draws appreciative assessments from staff at both foundations, even if not in quite as enthusiastic terms. For example, both staffs seem proud of their joint work with the Children's Rights Alliance, where each institution feels that the other has contributed both strategic insights and technical skills that would otherwise not have been available. There, of course, it helps that both funders have a priority interest in the same things:

promoting a Children's Rights Referendum in Ireland and bringing the country into full compliance with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. But alongside favourable examples of that kind, discussions with the two foundations' staff members also elicit many examples of interactions gone awry, or purposes not falling into alignment. In several cases, accounts from each foundation include both beneficial effects of the joint funding and elements of disagreement, crossed purposes, or misunderstanding. As one participant summed it up: 'The two approaches really are complementary far more often than they're conflicting. But they do conflict sometimes, and there may not be any way of getting round that. We're not in most of these grants for the same reasons, even though our reasons are usually compatible.'

Among the children and youth grants, both foundations cite one case in particular that they believe represents their greatest failure to find common ground. It involved an organisation that neither institution wishes to name in print, preferring to focus the story on the funders' missed signals rather than on the strengths or weakness of the grantee. It was a fledgling organisation in which The One Foundation saw some key organisational and managerial flaws that needed to be — and, in its view, could be — quickly corrected. The grantee disagreed. Atlantic recognized these weaknesses but believed they could be addressed over time; it was eager to help the organisation get started and was prepared to work on management improvements along the way. Though the organisational issues undoubtedly posed some risks, Atlantic regarded those as worth taking in the interest of developing and testing an attractive service model that might eventually be brought into the main stream of government funding. For One, on the other hand, confidence in the organisation and its leadership is a *sine qua non* for any investment. Lacking that, One saw little basis for proceeding, and some on its staff were disappointed that Atlantic would not back their position. Atlantic ended up increasing its support to the grantee to make up part of the lost funding from One's departure. To this day, each side describes the events of the story and the other side's concerns in different terms.

Yet it's clear that, when staff members discuss the joint funding arrangements overall, their attention to missed signals and disagreements is actually a sign of how close the working relationship is, and how important each side considers it to be. Both foundations plainly see further potential in the partnership that is still to be realised, and they are sometimes impatient with the occasional lost opportunity. Yet in each discussion, when some story unfolds about differing priorities or conflicting decisions, the conclusion nearly always circles back to how the outcome might have been better, and how the lessons might be applied to the next interaction. Three final comments are typical:

'When it works, it can be really good. And when it doesn't work it is frustrating, because it is almost always a missed opportunity. But the tool sets can line up, and we have demonstrated that they do complement very well.'

'We're learning and kind of feeling our way through this. They're learning; we're learning. I suspect there are things we'd both look back on and say, "We could have handled that better, and got a better result." And at the time, it probably looked like the whole problem was their fault. So you learn and you do better on the next one.'

'The really sad thing is, in a few years we're probably going to have this thing really swimming along. And then [we both] go out of business.'



## How Collaboration Works (Part II): The Grantees' View

In two respects, grantees' assessments of the Atlantic-One partnership closely track the judgments of foundation employees. First, there is a noticeable difference between the way migrant-rights organisations view the partnership and the way children and youth groups view it. The former tend to see the two organisations working virtually in tandem. (One grantee, for instance, routinely refers to Mr. Stack and Mr. Kearney-Grieve simply as 'the lads.' Another described them, only somewhat jokingly, as 'able to finish each other's sentences.') The children and youth groups see a more complex and evolving partnership, with points both of tangency and of divergence.

The second theme that arises both from grantees and foundation staffers is that the differences between the two institutions tend to be complementary, when handled wisely, and that Ireland's nongovernmental sector is better off for having the influence of both kinds of institution. 'There are concerns you have about running an organisation that you don't normally talk to a funder about,' one grantee CEO said. 'But those are things that One Foundation wants to hear about and likes to be involved in. They're less involved with the government and policy and the dynamics of the field and all that, but that's where Atlantic really stands out. So you've got two kinds of allies for two kinds of needs, and that's great. It's not absolute; they overlap. But you've got two sets of strengths where you'd otherwise have only one.'

Yet even among those who most value the two institutions' interlocking strengths, long-time observers note that the harmony and complementarity between One and Atlantic were not always so tight. An employee of a migrants' rights group, after noting the close partnership of Atlantic and One programme staff, was quick to point out that the partnership had taken more than a year to jell. The differing methods of standard vs. venture philanthropy, for example, proved hard to reconcile at first. And staff members in both institutions needed time to get to know and trust each other before they could comfortably adapt their work to one another's strengths. The grantee's recollection is worth quoting at length:

In the earlier years, the first year or two, I thought it was quite contradictory. You had Atlantic insisting on this long-timeframe kind of strategy, and this really big focus on evaluation, and then you had One Foundation absolutely wedded to this performance-monitoring system called Balanced Scorecards. As an organisation, as a director trying to run an organisation, to be effective achieving change and impact and all of that, the two requirements just didn't meet up. Running an organisation, you'll always be thinking, *OK, how do we monitor what we're doing?* And we need to be evaluating the impact of that. Right. All of that is fundamental. But we had to work really hard to make these two completely different things work in a way that had any actual meaning for us, and that didn't take up all of our time.

One Foundation wanted to make the Balanced Scorecard work properly, and they didn't really care about the evaluation. Well, obviously they had an interest in it, but they didn't really care. And Atlantic didn't really care about the Scorecard. They cared about evaluation, full stop. Well, those were two completely different kinds of demands on us! There was hardly any overlap between them. So I had to work extra hard to bring the two things together. An awful lot of time was spent in the early days on those separate requirements by the two funders. I think we must have successfully managed it, because later, a lot of organisations were coming to us to say, 'How did you do it?'

... Now, since then it has become much easier for us, because there's less obsessing about either the evaluations frameworks or the Balanced Scorecard. [The two systems] are much more in their rightful place, I think — as a tool to support organisations achieving change and impact. They're a *tool* now, as opposed to something you have to get right before you can do anything else. At first, I don't think either one of [the foundations] understood what the other one was doing, or even thought the other one was doing anything very important. Now they understand each other better and they understand us better, and they respect us more. And when I meet with them, whether it's separately or together, I feel like I'm saying the same things and they're hearing me in the same way, or close to the same way. I don't have to split myself down the middle to deal with them.

Among organisations serving children and youth, the picture is more mixed, though it also suggests that the relationship has grown closer and more effective over time. 'Here's the thing,' the head of one youth organisation said after reflecting on the partnership and generally praising its effectiveness. 'Have we ever been in the same room, all of us? Certainly not as a meeting; never had a meeting with both of them at once, never. ... And that's fine, really — it's not like I've ever asked for it, either. But I've no idea really what both of them think about when they talk about us, assuming they do talk about us together. And I've no idea whether what they want from us is the same thing or two different things. A little of both, probably.' Yet even without joint meetings or a set of common expectations, the same grantee concluded that 'I get different things from each of them, things that I really value, quite apart from the money. And the very fact that they're both backing us, even in their different ways, has a kind of logic to it that I'm assuming they've deliberately worked out.'

One children's grantee who did meet with both foundations in the same room found the result well worth the effort of arranging it. 'When we got down to the end of our business plan, which we'd been working on with One, then Atlantic introduced us to their Logic Model, which we hadn't been using. So we had to get a specialist in to help us with defining that down. So the deliverables were going to be different that we were giving to the two organisations. ... It got to where we were reporting at different times and in different styles and with different formats to both funders. Atlantic was one month off the quarterlies, and we were doing a Balanced Scorecard for The One Foundation, and we were doing our Logic Model for Atlantic. Even the tone of the writing had to be different. For an organisation so small, it was crippling us.' Without knowing whether the problem could really be solved, the grantee asked for a meeting with both foundations together and was pleasantly surprised that they not only instantly agreed, but committed nearly five hours to working out a consolidated reporting regimen. 'We came up with a new grid, and we report against that grid and we now have joint meetings with both funders in the room. ... I would say it happens three times a year. I have coffee with them now and then separately; they don't want to be in on every conversation together, and there's no need for that. But we still have the funders' meetings jointly.'

One reason that children and youth organisations see the foundations' relationship less coherently than the migrants' rights groups may be that the latter is a newer field with younger organisations that have few preconceived expectations. Ireland's children's-services groups have a longer history built on decades of established practices and relationships. Atlantic has been around for at least two of those decades and is a familiar presence in the field. When The One Foundation appeared, with its performance metrics and business plans and return-on-investment calculations, many older

organisations bristled. Said one: ‘I remember the very first engagement with The One Foundation. ... We were working on a quite different understanding of the world and what it takes to change the world than The One Foundation. Yet they liked us, they liked what we did, they heard good stuff about it, and that’s what they do: They back people they think will be effective. But we were used to dealing with Atlantic, with their kind of hands-off style. So it took us a while to get used to One and to build up the level of trust you need.’

Most grantees, when asked whether the differences between the two institutions were a strength or a weakness, expressed some ambivalence. Conversations usually started, as the last several quotations have done, with the grantee expressing unease about conflicting requirements, unsynchronised reporting systems, or a perceived failure of the two institutions to unite around some particular issue on the organisation’s mind at the moment. But before long, nearly every interview zeroed in on the positives. Several respondents pointed out that different funders nearly always have different interests and requirements, and that this is simply part of any nongovernmental organisation’s reality. ‘If someone right now came and offered us another big, new funder, but that funder had all kinds of new and different hoops we’d have to jump through, would we be interested? We’d be falling over each other to beg them to come in! ... The reason any of us complains about One and Atlantic having different this or different that is precisely because they do have so much in common. That’s a luxury, and everyone would like more of it. And some of us can see some easy ways they could be more on the same page. But to call that “complaining” is to miss the whole point. It’s a problem most other NGOs would kill to have.’

One question asked of nearly every grantee seems to prove and expand on this last commenter’s point: *If you could have the same amount of money from just one funder, rather than from Atlantic and One separately, would that be better?* A few organisations started by acknowledging that a single funder would be more convenient to deal with: one report, one set of requirements, one definition of impact. But without exception, grantees preferred dealing with two institutions rather than one. Not all offered exactly the same reason for the choice, but virtually every respondent made one or more of these arguments:

- Two institutions confer, in a sense, two separate seals of approval. ‘They double your credibility,’ as one grantee director put it, by identifying and certifying different kinds of excellence.
- Two funders bring two ways of looking at the world, thinking about problems, and conceiving solutions. ‘You get more creativity from hearing different points of view than from everybody having the same point of view.’
- A single funder of such a size would have a disproportionate, and probably unhealthy, influence over all but the strongest grantee organisations. ‘If we got half a million a year from a single funder, they’d own us. And let’s be honest: Two funders can also put a check on each other’s wilder fantasies, whereas it’s harder for a grantee to say to any major source of money, “That’s crazy.” We can do that, but we don’t dare do it often. And a smaller organisation might not be able to do it at all.’

Besides preferring more than one funder, a majority of the joint grantees interviewed for this report put a particular value on the combination of these two funders in particular, largely because they were willing to blend their different skills and predilections to some degree. (It is worthwhile to restate that all respondents were guaranteed anonymity; they were under no discernible pressure to make favourable comments.) Two concluding quotations represent the prevailing views:

‘There are days I want to tear my hair out: Why can’t this one be more like that one? or Why can’t they both work with me on this issue? But I would have those days with any funders. What’s more interesting is the number of days when I can call one of them and say, “Listen, your colleagues over there want X and you want Y and it’s making trouble for us,” and they’ll actually try to work it out between them. Or they’ll work with me to solve the problem. We sometimes take that for granted, but they don’t have to do that, and plenty of funders wouldn’t. If you’re going to get money from two totally different foundations, I’d much rather do it this way.’

‘They don’t always sing off the same hymn sheet. But I have to ask myself: Overall, would I be happier if they were colluding on every single thing? Definitely not. They’re supporting us to do things that we believe in and want to get done, and One works on some bits and Atlantic works on some bits, and some bits they do together. There’s a balance there, and most of the time, it works pretty well.’

## **Conclusion: Lessons and Principles**

Although the advantages of collaboration by two of Ireland’s largest foundations would seem nearly obvious in concept — especially given their common interests in children, youth, and migrants — in practice such collaboration is never easy. That is particularly true for institutions whose fundamental approaches to the way philanthropy is conducted are so markedly different. Yet together Atlantic and One have provided close to €60 million to a roster of joint grantees since 2004, working together on common goals that include strengthening the management and governance of the grantee organisations, enriching their quality of services and their ability to defend the rights of vulnerable populations, and building a wider advocacy movement for broader changes in policy and practice across the country. The experience of Atlantic and One in building that record, along with the reflections of their staff members and grantees, suggests at least six lessons on what it takes for foundations to work together, what obstacles they can expect to encounter along the way, and the pluses and minuses they will have to weigh in deciding how broad and deep a collaboration to pursue.

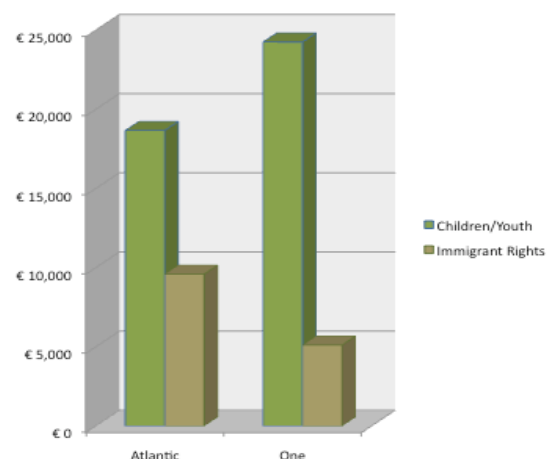
**1. The goals of collaborating institutions do not need to be identical, but they should be similar, especially on fundamental principles.** The collaboration between One and Atlantic has been strongest and most consistent in the area of migrant rights, mostly because the two institutions’ understanding of what they want to accomplish has been more similar there than in the fields of children and youth. It is interesting that many observers from outside the foundations believe that the high level of mutual consultation and cooperation on immigration grants is because of a unique personal friendship between the respective programme staffers who work on them. But the staffers themselves disagree. They believe that their collegial relations have been more a consequence than a cause of their institutions’ strategic alignment in this field. In children and youth — where One has placed a much greater emphasis on mental health than Atlantic has, and where Atlantic’s interest in rigorous, long-term evaluation far outstrips One’s — the working relationship has still been friendly and significant, in most observers’ judgment. But it has not been as consistent from year to year or from grantee to grantee as has the immigration work. Nor has it produced as much joint deliberation with grantees as in immigration. Again, there are personnel explanations for some of this — changing staff assignments at One, a period of strategic review at Atlantic that disrupted workflow for a time — but both sides believe that the collaboration could be significantly closer (and, indeed, is becoming significantly closer) only in areas where their interests are particularly well aligned, such as in promoting a Children’s Rights Referendum in Ireland. In general terms, the principle is that the

collaboration is likely to be only as strong as the shared strategic interests of the two foundations. The more the goals intersect, the greater the potential for a close, consistent, and consequential partnership.

**2. Commitment to the partnership needs to come not only from top executives and the Board, but from the people who make the major tactical decisions at the front lines.** A relationship is unlikely to accomplish much if the only real commitment to collaboration is among the institutions' top ranks, and if senior frontline officers regard it as burdensome or distracting. 'It doesn't save time,' a staff member said of collaboration; 'it makes work. It is an additional relationship you have to manage.' The person making this observation immediately followed by affirming that the extra time has been worth the trouble, and this belief has ensured that the necessary investment of time and energy has in fact been made. If, on the other hand, the staff members were to believe that managing 'an additional relationship' is just a drain on limited resources, they would go through the motions, but little actual coordination and joint thinking would result.

**3. Synchronised funding is comparatively easy; the real benefits — and the real challenges — of collaboration lie in the intellectual capital, not the finances.** If joint funding were the heart and soul of collaboration, any two institutions that write a check to the same organisation at approximately the same time could be said to be collaborating. In reality, as a staff member said, the value of the Atlantic-One relationship lies 'not just [in] common funding, but common learning.' This is perhaps another reason why many people perceive the immigration work to be more deeply collaborative than the children and youth work. In immigration, the two institutions are asking similar questions, seeking similar kinds of insight, and trying to exert similar kinds of influence. Yet judging from finances alone, one might have surmised that children and youth would have been the area of closest relationship: Atlantic has given twice as much to the joint grantees in that field as to the ones in immigration; for One the ratio has been five to one. But in reality the cash balances are not an index for the depth and significance of the relationship. As a staff member at one of the foundations put it, 'What defines the collaboration is the flow of information: market intelligence, access to networks, sharing of skills and expertise.' Some of this kind of exchange between Atlantic and One has been deliberate and formal, as when Atlantic held a workshop on knowledge-gathering for both staffs. But the real engine of common learning is peer-to-peer interaction — habits of communication and consultation that take time to build and that depend as much on trust and mutual respect as on the amount of time spent. The one recommendation that nearly every observer has made for how to derive more benefit from the two foundations' collaboration is to devote more time to common reflection, at the staff level, on what is being learned. Some foundation officers affirm that such discussions are in fact becoming more common. (This report is arguably also one step in that direction.)

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**4. It is helpful to spell out some distinctions in roles, interests, and responsibilities between the participating foundations.** The divisions of labour between collaborating institutions can

probably never be as rigid or formal as they are between departments of a single organisation. Each funder will, to some extent, want to be involved in all the activity that is important to that funder's grant, regardless of what any other institution may be doing. But cooperation between foundations can be made more easy on grantees, and more efficient for the cooperating institutions, if peers can work out some general areas on which each side can take a lead role and thereby save the other side (and the grantee) some needlessly duplicative work. For One and Atlantic, some rough separation of effort has taken place between strategic and business planning (The One Foundation) and long-term evaluation (Atlantic), for example. But the separation is far from absolute, given that Atlantic often supports strategic planning and sometimes takes a consultative role in the development of business plans in which it later plans to invest. Still, the two staffs make a conscious effort to divide some responsibilities, even if in rough and approximate ways. 'For example,' an Atlantic staffer explains, 'we have supported and participated in business planning, but not as directly as The One Foundation, preferring to participate at key reflection points in the planning process rather than in all stages.' Some observers — both among staffers and grantees — think a more deliberate assignment of roles and responsibilities might enrich the relationship further, and ease some of its burdens. But others argue, persuasively, that this is already happening in a natural way, with varying arrangements that correspond to differing needs and circumstances, and that a more ambitious or prescriptive effort to delineate responsibilities may well be unrealistic, given the significant organisational differences between the two foundations.

**5. Collaboration depends at least as much on trust as on formal agreements; collaborators should therefore behave toward one another as allies, confidants, and colleagues.** This is a point raised by only a few participants, perhaps because it veers away from the bright lines of management and organisation into the murkier realm of psychology. But its inherent logic is hard to dispute. Foundations have many private conversations, some of them highly consequential. When foundation officers discuss strategy with a grantee, messaging with advocates, or potential policy and funding with public officials, their discussions usually take place behind closed doors, where it can be easy to be secretly dismissive of another institution's concerns or points of view. 'It is in our strategic interest,' one foundation officer said about Atlantic and One, 'to speak well of each other, especially in public, but also in private.' Added another, 'If I thought that they were working with me in my office and undermining me elsewhere, it would naturally be very hard to share information or ideas with them.' Atlantic and One appear, by most accounts, to have struck a mutually supportive, confidential, and candid relationship. And that, as much as any agreements about money, meetings, or reporting protocols, has been the basis for most of the collaboration that has occurred.

**6. There will be discord; be prepared to repair and re-engage.** This report describes a few circumstances in which One and Atlantic took conflicting approaches or, in the worse and rarer case, took steps that the other foundation considered misguided. Each side has taken pains not to dwell on these — not only because, in the total scope of the relationship, they have not been all that disruptive, but more important, because the two foundations consider it necessary to move beyond these instances to continue building the relationship. This point, like the last one, is partly psychological, but it is also strategic. A stark disagreement about the wisdom of an investment, the capacity of a prospective grantee, or even the merits of a given social goal is nearly certain to arise. Unlike disputes in the corporate sector, most of which emerge from purely business calculations, conflict in philanthropy can cut dangerously close to people's values and their sense of right and wrong. When that happens, rifts become harder to mend. That means that, in practice, mending them may be a more delicate task for partners in philanthropy than in business, and the effort to do so may need to be greater and more deliberate.

Still, as one participant in the partnership noted, such effort is not merely necessary, it is part of what makes the collaboration interesting and valuable: ‘The whole point of this thing, really — apart from the extra money involved — is that these are two different organisations that come at the world from different perspectives, and have different skills and ways of thinking about problems. If we didn’t disagree some of the time, that whole theory would seem a little dubious, wouldn’t it? So they don’t like this grantee and we do, or they want to move in that direction and we don’t. Fine — that’s exactly what you’d expect. But that’s all sub-plot; we can’t let it turn into the main story.’

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**Colin McCrea**, Senior Vice-President

**John A. Healy**, Director, Impact Assessment and Global Learning

**Tom Costello**, Programme Executive, Children and Youth

**Jane Forman**, Programme Executive, Children and Youth

**Brian Kearney-Grieve**, Programme Executive, Reconciliation and Human Rights

**Catherine Byrne**, Special Advisor to the Senior Vice-President

### One Foundation

**Declan Ryan**, Co-Founder and Chairman

**Deirdre Mortell**, Co-Founder and CEO

**Emma Lane Spollen**, Deputy CEO

**Vicky Brown**, Portfolio Manager

**Eoghan Stack**, Senior Portfolio Manager

### Grantees

**Tony Bates**, Headstrong

**Seán Campbell and John Cahill**, Foróige / Big Brother Big Sister Ireland

**Fergus Finlay**, Barnardos

**Fiona Finn**, Nasc

**Elaine Geraghty**, Inspire – Ireland / ReachOut.com

**Liavan Mallin**, NFTE-Ireland

**Ruairí McKiernan**, Community Creations/SpunOut.ie

**Pat Montague**, The Integration Centre

**Siobhán O'Donoghue**, Migrant Rights Centre – Ireland

**Sister Ann Scully**, Doras Luimní

**John Stanley and Siobhán Mullaly**, Irish Refugee Council

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