# Organisational analysis and impact review Q1-2 FY 21-22

The QQQ Community Foundation

Connecting people who care with causes that matter

# Community Foundation for Northern Ireland Our 5 Year Strategy ~ 2019-2024



In a society where everyone can prosper and live in peace; the Community Foundation encourages and supports those who want to give and empower the local community to effect change.

Over the next 5 years we aim to achieve: -

- £30m raised to support local charities
- A stronger, more sustainable, more innovative community sector
- Local communities who have been helped to find their voice and use it
- Safer, stronger, confident individuals and communities who can move forward leaving the past behind them
- A safer NI for people living on the edge

### Our <u>Theory of Change</u>



Describes the change we want to make and the steps involved to make that change happen.

The Community Foundation has impact on grantees (through funding approaches etc) and beneficiaries, (through the activities that they fund).

We also have direct impact on a social problem and on making communities, local areas and Northern Ireland a better place to live in, moved, and/or return to, through our grants plus and programme work.

#### Our long term goals:

- <u>Communities have</u> realised their potential to change, <u>leading</u> to a more peaceful, shared, prosperous and socially just society
- Donors have invested more in communities and contributed to delivering a more just and equitable society
- Communities, particularly those on the margins, have been supported to have a voice and influence policy over the issues and decisions that affect them

**External voice** 



**Knowledge and practices** 

# **Enabling Factors**

**Funding and programmes** 

**Connections and collaborations** 

#### **Our Team**

We are lucky to have a fantastic team of staff who are passionate about making a difference to local people in Northern Ireland.



We regularly see examples of our staff 'living' our values of Generous, Thriving and Together.

Generous - We encourage generosity in everything we do; we look out for each other; we deal with everyone with compassion, empathy and understanding. We are flexible in how we work with staff, donors and grantees.

Thriving - We see the potential within both our staff and the communities we work in and are committed to help both reach their full potential.

Together - We will only make the change we want to see together. We value participation, working with others and bringing people together.

Over the past year, we have continued to focus on these values and embed them in our culture. We expect a lot from our staff, so we look after them as well as we can, by offering good terms and conditions of employment, encouraging professional development and supporting staff to look after their health and wellbeing. We are very proud of the way our team has worked together, particularly during the Coronavirus Crisis, to connect people who care to causes that matter and support the most disadvantaged communities in Northern Ireland.

### Funds and programmes

Between April 2021 and September 2021 we received 802 grant applications (653 fewer than FY 20-21) 215 of which were from new applicants



Total amount requested

£18,750,997

405 grants awarded (839 in FY 20-21) Approval Rate 54%

(60% FY20-21)

Total amount awarded

£18,788,854 (FY 20-21 £4,289,265)

£4,937,497 of which was awarded to new applicants

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supported

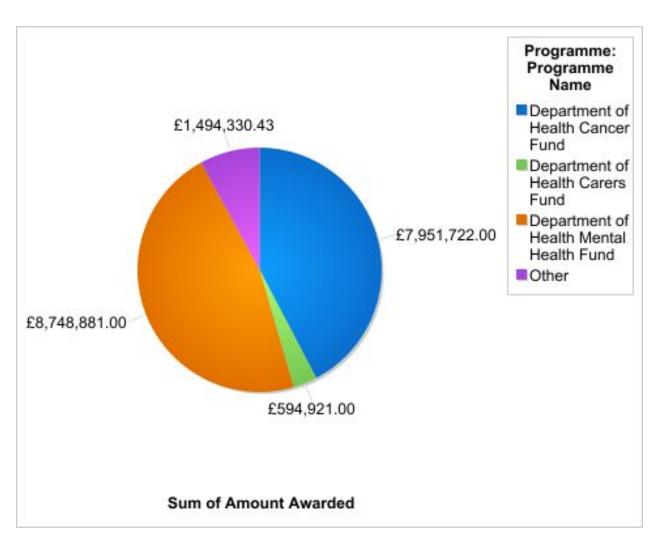
We processed 791 grant applications (1429 in FY 20-21)

# Awards 1st April to 30th September 2021





# Grants awarded by programme





Average grant £46,275

**External voice** 



**Knowledge and practices** 

# **Activities**

**Funding and programmes** 

**Connections and collaborations** 



### **Encouraging generosity**

- £3.7m in new income generated
- 8 new funds negotiated for the sector
- Seeing is believing visits organised for donors and grantees virtually and face to face
- All Island Fund Piloted and evaluated for further development
- New Opportunities progressed with individuals, corporates and Charitable trusts
- Filming completed for legacy match fund launch
- Facilitated meeting of philanthropy network
- Philanthropist of the Year awarded
- National Fund lobbying, PR and Comms development
- Revitalising trusts development



### People on the edges

- Cara-Friend successful with application to the Comic Relief Social Change Programme to support work which focuses on young people going through a trans-gender process. In addition to this work support being given to The Rainbow Project to develop an application that builds on their important Listening Ear project.
- Enhanced engagement with number of organisations across two western council areas that have facilitated three meetings with Irish Travellers in Enniskillen, Omagh and Derry, these scheduled for November. This is an encouraging development which it is hoped will generate a range of initiatives during 2022/23.
- Continued engagement with NRPF Stakeholder Forum and a useful meeting held with Minister Hargey which focussed on the housing issue. The Foundation continues to engage with the Refugee & Asylum Forum nad during the period has invested in their work on advocacy around the New Plan for Immigration.
- Our internal DEI work continued with the establishment of a dedicated Task and Finish Group.
   Staff also engaged in Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Awareness training which will be the first of a series of training sessions that will contribute to our own commitments to make the Foundation diverse, equitable and inclusive



### Thriving after the conflict

- Many of the communities & organisations we support have continued to provide vital support to communities as we work our way through the pandemic and tensions related to Brexit and the Protocol
- We are glad to have been able to undertake more face to face engagement and there
  are lots of events and meetings that e've planned and been invited to over the coming
  quarter
- Year two of our leadership programme is now underway and we look forward to getting
  to know the 15 participants, their organisations and their communities better over the
  coming year. We are excited to be able to finally have a residential for both year 1 and 2
  participants
- 5 of the year one leadership participants are continuing their journey with us and are doing their Level 5 in Coaching & Mentoring



### **Building sustainable communities**

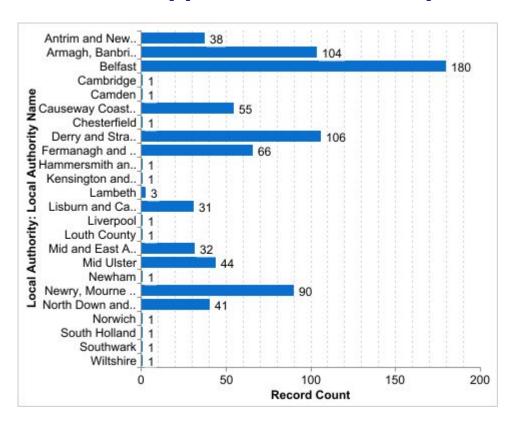
- Climate Change: Task and Finish group established with a number of initial actions planned including external input at staff meeting and an action planning session in November.
- Lived Experience: Our Grantee Network for the quarter focussed on Lived Experience with two excellent presentation on how this shaped early development and decision making. On the day demand exceeded availability of zoom places and there is a commitment to running another session in Q3. It is good to see the high level of interest in such an important topic.
- Time To Say Thanks: This was the formal closing event for the Comic Relief Community Support Programme. Held through zoom this was the Foundation's opportunity to thank the groups and their communities for working with us through the Programme. A fuller explanation of the event in posted in the case studies section
- Micro-Community Investment Fund (with BOI) Using Assets Based Approach to grant making
  where the focus is on what is good, how can it get even better, who in the community can help and
  how can the Foundation invest in making the community and even better place to live in.
- From Practice to Policy is the key evaluation tool for the Comic Relief Community Support
  Programme. With the support of JSM consulting the groups have worked through a Story Mountain
  approach which has produced deep dive insights into their work, the difference it has made, what
  more needs to be done and by whom. With the Programme now formally closed the work to finalise
  this report will quicken apace and be ready for distribution and dissemination by the end of
  November



#### **Innovation & voice**

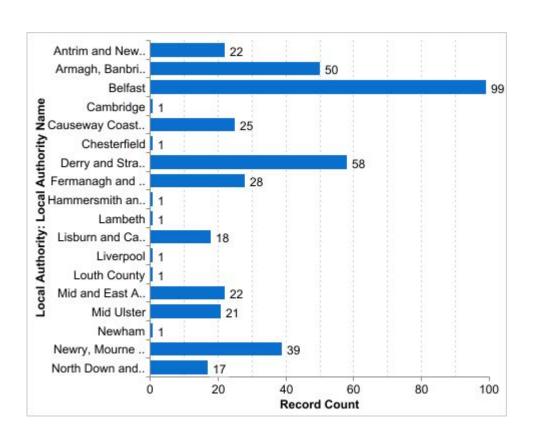
- Housing & Homelessness Innovation & Voice Programme this new programme, funded by a £937,327 grant from Oak Foundation, commenced with an initial grants round aiming to support innovative solutions addressing root causes. Alongside this a Steering Group has been set up with experts by experience and key organisational reps. A public survey was launched in September to identify challenges that will form the basis of an innovation process that precedes the next round of grants.
- **Techies in Residence** the fifth cycle of the programme was completed with 7 projects completing their prototype digital products. At our showcase event each project pitched for a share of a £65,000 Seed Fund and 5 grants of £12,000 2 grants of £3500 were awarded..
- **Civic Innovation** The 7 Civic Innovation projects are ongoing and have begun engaging different communities and sections of the public on issues including climate change, educational provision, natural asset management and peacebuilding. Projects will continue until Sept 2022.
- **Pressure Group Fund** 11 applications were received during the quarter with 6 being offered a grant of £1000 each

#### Number of applications received per Local Authority



<sup>\*</sup>Note the UK mainland Councils reflect the Local Authority the applicant organisations are based in.

#### **Approved applications per Local Authority**



Top Council for receipt of applications: Belfast

Bottom Council for receipt of applications: Lisburn and Castlereagh

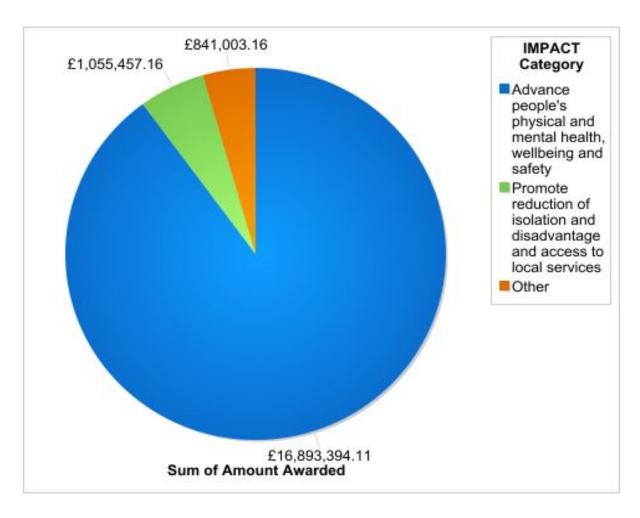
**Top Council for successful applications:** Mid and East Antrim

**Bottom Council for successful applications:** Fermanagh and Omagh



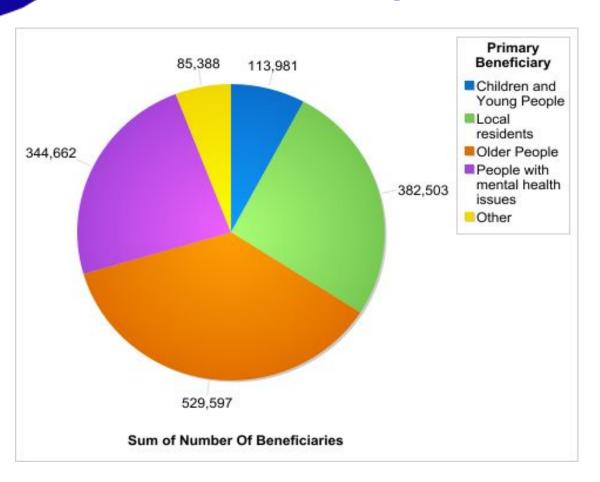
## **Outcomes**

# Awards per impact category



### The QQ Community Foundation

#### 1,456,131 anticipated beneficiaries



### Primary outcomes



247 projects will advance people's physical and mental well being

31 projects will improve life skills, education, employability and enterprise

33 projects will strengthen community cohesion and capacity

39 projects will promote reduction of isolation

41 projects will connect people with the arts

9 projects will reduce isolation for individual people

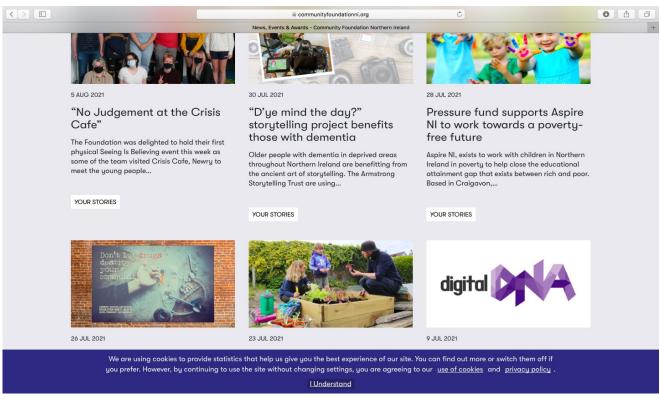
5 projects will transform access to public spaces



# Case Studies

### **Encouraging generosity**



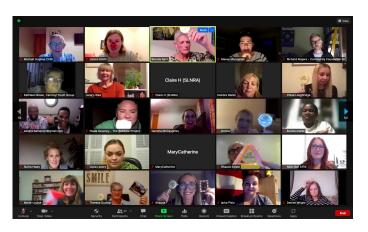


Philanthropy Fortnight
Leadership in sport funded through philanthropy
Utach Fund supports Irish Language and appoints Irish Language assessment skills
Community Voice Podcast

# Building Sustainable Communities

The Community Foundation

 Time to Say Thanks - Living Out Our Values in Real Time





This case study showcases our own practice and values in taking the time to appreciate, acknowledge and thank the groups and the communities we have invested in for their work and involvement with the Comic Relief Community Support Programme. Saying thanks is a small thing but a hugely important action to take, as we recognise that without the commitment of so many groups, staff and volunteers, the societal change we as a Foundation aspire to would and indeed could never take place.

With party packs, conversations around the campfire and a feel good factor it was a fitting end to the CRCSP and a fine example of how we do care for and appreciate our grantees. Thanks to all the staff involved in making this happen and to everyone who attended.

#### **Innovation and Voice**





The **Holistic Mums** project, funded with a grant of £9968 through our Community Innovators' Programme, aims to offer early intervention health and wellbeing support to mums in the perinatal period. Through the Community Innovators programme, the group devised a range of holistic wellbeing activities and initiatives which included a 10 week programme, accompanied by a Handbook & Journal, that was written and designed by individuals with lived experience and in partnership with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.. The project, managed by Lagmore Community Forum also supported the design of a website and a range of peer support activities include a walking group and online connect sessions.

The **Future Schools** project, delivered by the Integrated Education Fund and Ulster University with £60,900 funding from our Civic Innovation Programme is off to a great start, engaging more than 1700 parents, school governors and education stakeholders in dialogue about future educational provision in their local area. Using a 'Community Conversations' toolkit the project aims to support communities to identify realistic and sustainable solutions to school provision in specific rural localities.



### People on the edges:



BAMECCNI (Black Asian Minority Ethnic Children in Care Northern Ireland) was established in 2018 to address the needs of BAME children in care in Northern Ireland. The group had identified cultural inequalities existing within the care system for BAME children in the main not as a result of racial disparity rather due to lack of knowledge of the needs of the children in care.

Through a targeted approach to the group via the Comic Relief Community Support Programme, the Foundation discovered at a very early stage that this was a group built on very solid foundation of the lived experience as the founders of the group who were from a BAME background were carers themselves. From this very personal perspective and their encounters with other foster carers and social workers it became clear to them that there were many within the caring sector who were constantly searching for materials to assist them in meeting the needs of BAME children in care in Northern Ireland but with little success.

Given this deficit the group was established to raise the quality of the care experienced by BAME children Through a range of training/support materials and practical advice. This training includuded the exploration of cultural and ethnicity which need to be taken into account when caring for children from the BAME community so that the experience for both the child and the foster parents is positive, enriching and rewarding. By creating a better caring environment the group also hope that this will expand into the wider community with the child feeling a greater sense of inclusion and acceptance at a time when his/her family connections have been disrupted.

Our knowledge of the group and its work was further enhanced through a virtual Seeing is Believing visit where we had the opportunity to listen and learn from their practice and have the privilege to hear from beneficiaries of their programmes. From the engagement it was very clear that there are many cultural differences that not only foster carers/professionals but also wider society need to be aware of when working with children from the BAME community such as leaving your shoes at the door or getting up early to do work. Personally I found this very enlightening and I am sure for a foster carer encountering this for the first time, it would have been a very strange experience but with the support of the group and its growing number of lived experience volunteers there is an expectation that such cultural and ethnic differences will be viewed as characteristics of an enriching caring experience rather than one that is met with fear, worry and anguish

### Thriving after the conflict



- £4,932 awarded to the Turn Around Project through the Social Justice Fund, towards an advocacy and voice building programme with those excluded as a result of imprisonment
- £15,000 awarded to Cairde Turas through the Maurice Healy Social
  Justice Fund, towards celebrating and capturing the work of Turas
  across their 10 years in existence including animation. archiving and
  events challenging the misconceptions of the Irish Language within the
  PUL community
- £14,995 awarded to Creggan Community Collective through the Maurice Healy Social Justice Fund, towards meeting costs towards community engagement programmes, laptops and running costs, to support human rights, and social justice areas in the Creggan area

# Vital Issues and Thinking

- Throughout the first two quarters of this financial year we have mainly been focusing on the rollout of the Department of Health Funds. The funds have received great interest; with the Mental Health Fund being significantly oversubscribed. This has led to a very high rejection rate and lots of disappointment and challenges from those who have not been successful. We think this is a result of the high profile raised for the funds, as well as the high level of funding, which includes much needed core costs. Our experience suggests that government funding is perhaps more open to challenge.
- We have had to be particularly strict with supporting documentation for the Health Funds which has meant that our ethos of being more flexible as a funder has not been paramount. We have had to develop much stricter processes around pre assessment due diligence, and with our assessment, to ensure that reasons for rejection are clear and appropriate. Peer reviews of assessments have proved particularly beneficial.
- We have stricter financial due diligence for those who have been successful through the DoH funds. This has also included the need for us to ask for more monitoring reports, to enable us to monitor the impact of the work we are funding. Whilst all of this is needed in order to manage these funds well, it does add more complexity for both Foundation staff and grantees. It is something to be considered when we agree to manage funds on behalf of others, if we wish to be more flexible and risk taking as a grant making organisation. We should continue to try and encourage donors and funders to allow us to determine the level of complexity for funding support. This should, however, be flexible and considered depending on the demand for particular funds that may be difficult to shortlist.

# Vital Issues and Thinking

- The ongoing evaluation of the DoH funds will start in the coming weeks, with the appointment of Siobhan Kearney and Jane Turnbull. We think this will be a really helpful way to monitor the impact of the funding from the very beginning of the projects, and we anticipate good learning for both ourselves, the Department and other relevant stakeholders.
- Mental Health is clearly an issue that is becoming more significant in Northern Ireland. We have
  written to the Minister to request additional funding to meet the demand of the Mental Health Support
  Fund. It is anticipated that the ongoing evaluation of the funding will support the Foundation to feed
  into future plans and strategies and potentially influence the funding direction of other Trusts and
  Foundations.
- Applicant feedback continues to outline the need for funding for core costs, and we are pleased that many of the new funds we have developed this quarter are offering this support in the coming months.
- Our flexible approaches continue to be of benefit to our grantees and this has enabled applicants to reduce the level of information that they need to submit for our funds, however, it proves more of a challenge when assessing, if funds are heavily oversubscribed.
- The Grantee Network continues to be of interest to our grantees. The last session focused on lived experience as an emerging theme. We hope to build on this with a calendar of events and activities for the next calendar year, to strengthen networking, knowledge sharing and dialogue among our grantees.

# Vital Issues and Thinking

Our grants continue to benefit organisations based in more urban areas, however, we have had more success in Mid and East Antrim and Antrim and Newtownabbey. These Local Authority areas have continued to have had low success rates in terms of receipt and approved applications over the last few years. We are pleased to see this trend change in recent times, and we will continue to reach out to Support organisations and target projects in areas where we receive and approve low numbers of applications. If we are to target any future applications for any funds, it might be useful to consider projects outside of the main urban areas of Belfast and Derry and Strabane Council areas, where possible.

- We have held a number of Seeing is Believing visits in recent times and these have proved really impactful and encouraging. A number of donors have continued to invest in one or two projects in the long term as a result of these visits. When restrictions ease we should develop more opportunities for the Foundation to bring donors to projects to see and hear the impact of the work. Donors who have smaller amounts of funding to offer could be encouraged to invest in one or two organisations and to offer relatively unrestricted funding.

- Based on conversations we have had with the sector, there is a high demand for core costs and some support for operational and strategic development and time to reflect post covid. We have been liaising with other key stakeholders to influence the direction of external funding programmes. We may wish to consider our direction of funding over the coming twelve months and supporting the sector to reflect and learn from what has happened during the pandemic, and support costs to enable that space for thinking. An example fund that we have had in the past that enables that space is the Oak Transformation and Growth Fund and we have been in discussions around thoughts about establishing a fund that supports organisational development. This may also link to plans to develop a Tech Fund to support the sector. In the meantime encouraging donors to support this opportunity for development of the sector would be helpful.

Connecting people who care with causes that matter