

QUB Improving Children's Lives

Since 2004, Atlantic Philanthropies has made significant investments in Northern Ireland as part of its Disadvantaged Children and Youth programme (DCY). The aim of this programme has been to improve the lives of disadvantaged children by encouraging a shift in children's service provision towards early intervention and the commissioning of services that have a proven impact.

To assist with the delivery of the DCY, a grant of £1.4m was awarded to Queen's University Belfast to help create the Improving Children's Lives (ICL) initiative. Since 2008, this initiative has offered support to organisations across NI and beyond that wish to adopt an outcomes-focused, evidence-informed and rights-based approach to the design, delivery and evaluation of services for children and young people.



Impacts and Successes

ICL has promoted **interdisciplinary research** and has helped support and extend a **strong network** of 70 academic and research staff in schools across QUB, including Law, Medicine and Education

ICL has offered an **effective platform** for academics at QUB to increase the **profile of their work**, encourage **collaborative research** and **develop new relationships** with external stakeholders

ICL has delivered 39 events, including 11 research events, six capacity-building events and five public lectures. These were attended by people from voluntary and statutory bodies, policymakers and QUB staff and students

ICL researchers have been involved with 89 research proposals, 36 of which have successfully secured £3,085,630 of funding. 28 papers have also been successfully published or are in press in high quality peer reviewed journals

Sustainable Practices

The need for time

Even within an established institution, creating an interdisciplinary programme of work is challenging. This has required significant time and effort to build effective relationships and develop mutual understanding across the various academic disciplines within QUB.

The need for institutional support

Part of this was obtained during the original stages of the Atlantic grant, by aligning the overall programme of work directly with core university business. ICL was originally envisaged as not only undertaking research but also having a strong advocacy role, as well as providing ongoing support to wider organisations in the development and provision of services.

The need for financial flexibility

The business plan for the sustainability of ICL required an upfront and recurrent investment by QUB of £418,000 per year. This enabled the appointment of the four lecturers across the MSc Programmes and continual funding for the project manager and the administrator, as well as the provision of £40,000 annually to support ICL activities.

Through its applied programme of research, dissemination and advocacy activities, the long-term impact that Improving Children's Lives seeks to achieve is lasting improvements in the lives of disadvantaged children and young people in Northern Ireland and overseas

Improving Children's Lives
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improvingchildrenslives.org