



# IGNITE FUND IMPACT REPORT 2019–2020

# The Ignite Fund: Supporting families and communities across Ireland

The €550,000 Ignite Fund was made possible by Rethink Ireland in partnership with several private philanthropists and the Department of Rural and Community Development via the Dormant Accounts Fund. On opening the Ignite Fund, Deirdre Mortell, CEO of Rethink Ireland said;

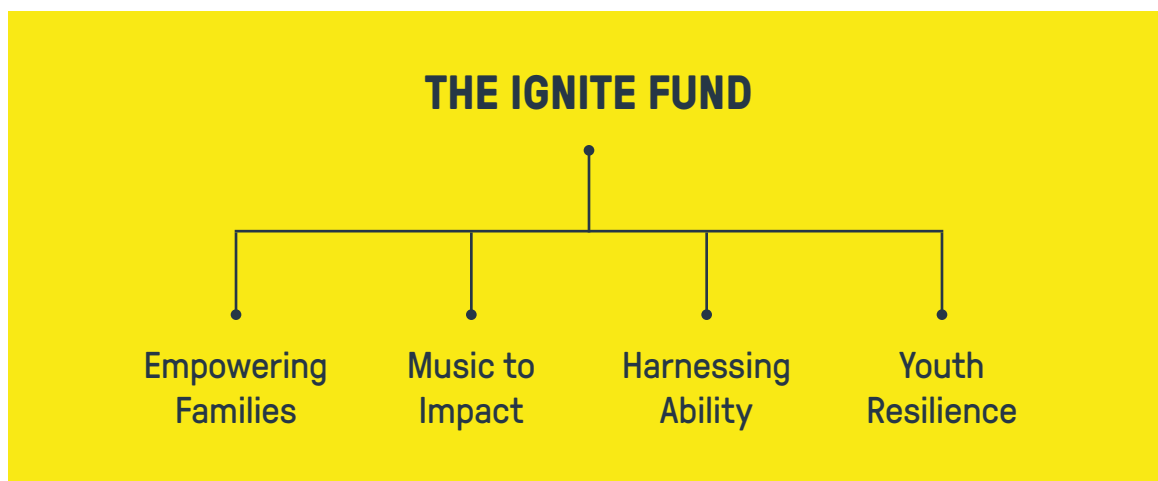
“Through the Ignite Fund, we are delighted to partner with a number of ambitious Irish private philanthropists who want to support non-profit organisations in Ireland addressing a range of social issues we face today”

The objective of the Ignite Fund was to set meaningful social impact in motion in communities across Ireland by providing support to some of the most innovative charities and social enterprises. This report showcases the impact of the Fund on the successful Awardees and on the participants who benefitted from the projects funded. The data presented in this report is sourced from the Rethink Ireland July-December 2019 impact survey and from a complimentary Ignite Fund impact survey issued for the January-June 2020 period.

The Ignite Fund is kindly supported by donors – W2 Foundation, Ralph & Maureen Parkes, and anonymous donors.

# Supports package: Ignite Fund Awardees

The Ignite Fund opened for applications in April 2019 and received a total of 121 applications. In September 2019, Rethink Ireland selected 6 exceptional projects. These Awardees are spread across 4 separate categories under the themes of 'Empowering Families', 'Youth Resilience', 'Harnessing Ability' and 'Music to Impact'.



The 6 Awardees were:

**Northside Family Resource Centre CLG**

**Barnardos Republic of Ireland CLG**

**The Shona Project CLG**

**Royal Irish Academy of Music**

**Community Centre for Music and the Arts CLG**

**Peter Bradley Foundation CLG**

The Awardees work across the health and social inclusion sectors. From delivering family support to victims of domestic violence to facilitating emotional resilience training for teenage girls, the Ignite Fund Awardees work to deliver social impact to Ireland's young people, families and communities.

Through the Ignite Fund, Rethink Ireland supported each of the 6 Awardees through cash grants, business supports and a place on a world-class Accelerator Programme. Awardees received a share of:

**€320,000 in cash grants**

**€90,000 in non-financial supports**

Individually, the Awardees received:

**Cash grants of between €40,000 and €60,000**

**€15,000 non financial support budget**

# Empowering Families Award

Sponsored by a private donor

The Empowering Families Award supports two innovative projects that work with families experiencing disadvantage. These projects provide training and support to parents/guardians of children aged 6-12 years, in order to develop their parental capacity.



## COMMUNITY & FAMILY SERVICES, NFRC

The Community & Family Services project addresses the impact of trauma as a result of living in deprivation and poverty for children and their parents. This essential support is enhanced by the Ignite Fund through the recruitment of a Theraplay Therapist who supports parents to take control of their own parenting reducing dependency on agencies and becoming their child's 'therapist'. The process is empowering; ensuring the child and parent are central in all decision-making.

## TLC KIDZ, BARNARDOS

Barnardos supports children whose wellbeing is under threat, by working with them, their families and their communities. TLC Kidz is a 12-week group evidence-informed programme for children and mothers in recovery from domestic abuse, developed in Canada and delivered by Barnardos. The Empowering Families Award enables Barnardos to develop their trauma-informed response to this silent issue within families.



# Music to Impact Award

Sponsored by a private donor

The Music to Impact Award supports two creative projects who use music as a means to enhance wellbeing or promote social inclusion for children, young people or adults.



## LE CHÉILE, ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Le Chéile is led by the Royal Irish Academy of Music in partnership with Ulster University. Le Chéile is a series of music ensembles for young disabled musicians in every province in Ireland culminating in the foundation of the Open Youth Orchestra of Ireland (OYOI), the first national youth orchestra for disabled musicians in Ireland. These ensembles bring together disabled and guest non-disabled artists in groups, comprising of 8-12 participants each. The work of Le Chéile goes beyond the ensembles and orchestra by developing a national framework for bringing musical composition and performance to young disabled artists.

## ST. AGNES' COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR MUSIC AND THE ARTS

St Agnes' Community Centre for Music and the Arts (CCMA) is an intergenerational centre that is embedded in the Crumlin community and offers affordable access to high-quality arts programmes. St. Agnes' Community Centre for Music and the Arts (CCMA) offers music tuition to people of all ages across a number of instruments. It is an intergenerational, grassroots project that aims to bring all members of the community together to enjoy affordable music classes and other music and arts activities. It engages and serves the community by providing an opportunity for friendship, personal development, engagement and empowerment.



# Harnessing Ability Award

Sponsored by the W2 Foundation and Ralph & Maureen Parkes

The Harnessing Ability Award was created to support organisations whose mission is to create economic opportunity for adolescents or adults with disabilities through innovative programmes that enhance skills, drive leadership potential and provide job opportunities.



## STEP AHEAD, ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

Step Ahead is Acquired Brain Injury Ireland's new vocational assessment service to help young people affected by brain injury return to education, training or work. This is a national service offered free of charge to brain injury survivors aged between 18 and 29 years old. Step Ahead is based in Dublin and Cork. Each centre provides one-to-one assessments led by a senior occupational therapist and supported by vocational facilitators. Step Ahead also provides essential information and education for employers, tutors and trainers who are supporting people affected by brain injury. The Harnessing Ability Award is supported by W2 Foundation and Ralph & Maureen Parkes.

W2 Foundation



# Youth Resilience Award

Sponsored by the W2 Foundation and Ralph & Maureen Parkes

The Youth Resilience Award supports innovative projects focused on the mental health of young people in Ireland in the context of increasing social and digital media use.



## THE SHONA PROJECT, ONLINE COMMUNITY

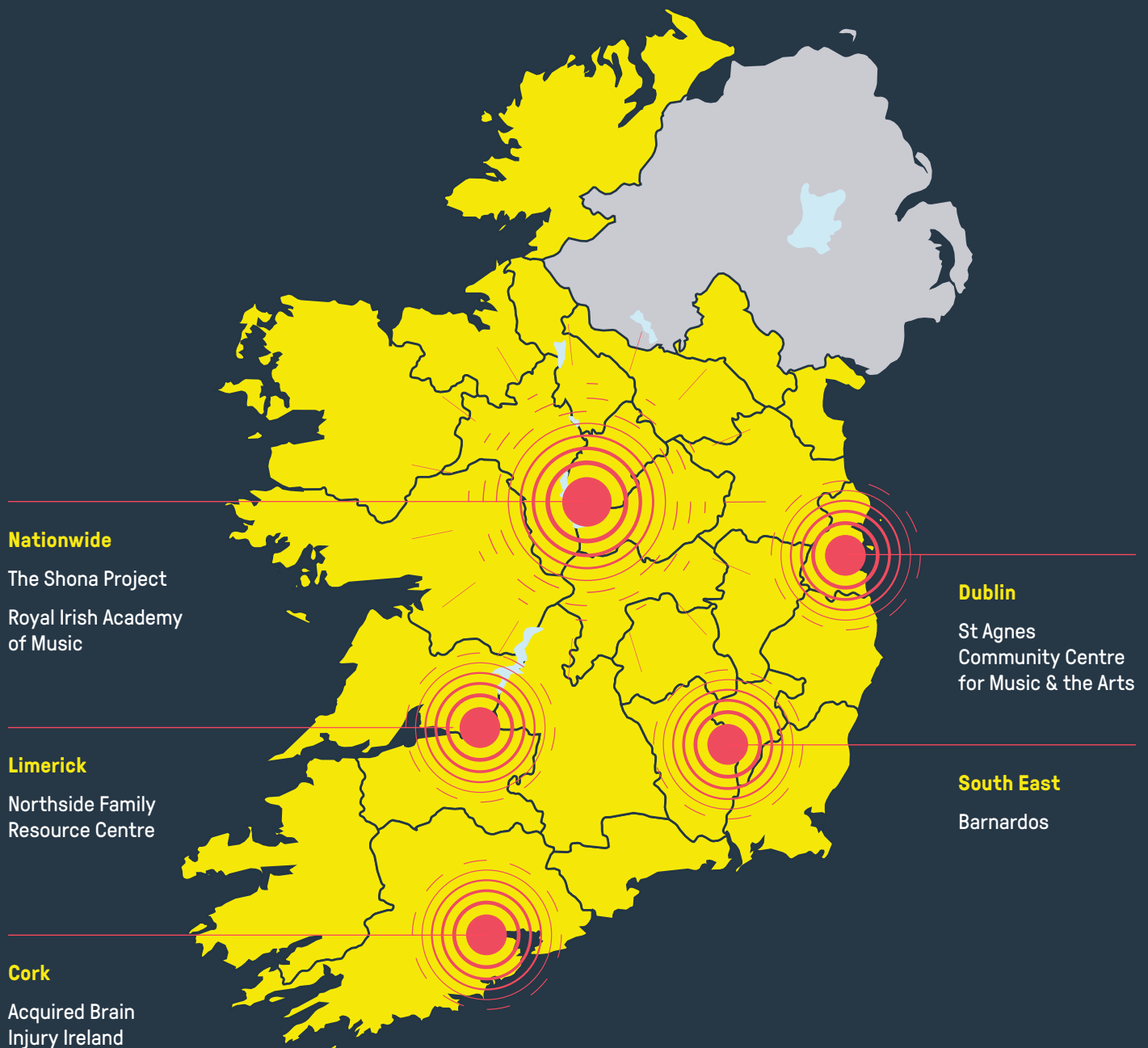
The Shona Project aims to educate, empower and inspire today's Irish girls to become tomorrow's strong, confident and curious young women. To complement their school's programmes, they built an online, interactive platform that provides girls with information, advice and a sense of community. Girls are able to interact with the platform in their own home and in their own time. The fund allows The Shona Project to conduct further research into the needs of the user, the possibilities available in terms of functionality, conduct robust tests and evaluations and to build a bespoke system that works.

W2 Foundation





# Geographical Spread of Awardee Impact



# Impact Overview

DURING THEIR TIME ON THE IGNITE FUND, THE AWARDEES COLLECTIVELY ACHIEVED THE FOLLOWING:

8,901

**PARTICIPANT  
LIVES IMPACTED**

5,902

**TEENAGE  
PARTICIPANTS  
REACHED**

20

**COUNTIES  
IMPACTED**

€117,589

**FOLLOW-ON FUNDING  
SECURED**

# Impacting the lives of young people through the Ignite Fund

Being involved in the projects through the Ignite Fund makes a meaningful difference to the lives of participants. Participants who are supported by the The Shona project said:

“The Shona Project has empowered me as a young woman and has helped me to learn more about myself and others, and ways I can make a difference.”

DAISY

“It’s important for young women to feel like they matter, that their opinions matter, that their achievements matter – the Shona Project gives young women that platform to equality, positive representation and making their voices heard.”

KATIE

“The Shona Project gave me the opportunity to speak out and share my battle with anorexia with the public. It was my first time being completely open about my experience and I felt safe doing it as Shona is such a welcoming and supportive environment.”

MEGAN



Katie (above) and Megan (right), The Shona Project participants. Permission to reprint these photos has been approved by The Shona Project.



# Beyond the cash grant: Impact of the non- financial supports

Ignite Fund Awardees were awarded a place on a world class Accelerator programme which included the following key areas;

**Theory of Change & impact measurement**

**Strategic planning**

**Communications & pitching**

**Leadership**

**Wellbeing**

The Rethink Ireland Accelerator Programme enables Awardees to learn new skills and receive short-term supports that will lead to that step-change in impact and prepare them for the next stage of growth. The Accelerator was credited by Awardees as having a deep impact on their projects success.

**ACCELERATOR SATISFACTION RATE: 92%**

**84/100 = Deeply impactful.**

(Awardees feedback rating of the impact of Accelerator on the successful development of their project.)

“The Acceleration course was amazing, as a clinician I did not have the necessary business and strategic skills to run the project to its best potential. I will continue to use these skills throughout my working life across different roles.”

– Project Lead, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

“We had access to the expertise of several consultants through the accelerator programme. This included an opportunity to develop a Theory of Change, put a strategic plan in place and improve on our skills in promoting our project to possible funders through different communication methods. These webinars and coaching sessions will also be of great benefit for future projects.”

– Northside Family Resource Centre staff

**The one-to-one consultant support provided to Awardees was cited as impactful for the projects, the staff and the organisations. Feedback from the Awardees included:**

“The strategic business training and consultant support was critical to optimising the project’s potential. I feel I have acquired the language and terminology to use effectively in negotiations, and project planning. ”

– Project Lead, Royal Irish Academy of Music

“The process of building a five-year Strategic Plan was insightful. As we drilled down into each minute detail of the project in our Theory of Change with Caroline Gardner, or re-examined how we presented TLC Kidz to funders with Alistair Hodgett, we were at each stage asked tough questions, and this was very valuable. As well as the Strategic Plan, the process also informed the production of a National Standards Framework for the rollout of the project, which will ensure high quality standards wherever TLC Kidz is implemented. The five-year Strategic Plan itself has already been shared with a prospective funder who is considering investing in TLC Kidz in South Dublin.”

– Barnardos staff member

“The mentoring is vital, both from accomplished consultants but also the peer network has really helped, being connected to others in the sector helps us all to succeed.”

– The Shona Project CEO

# Follow-on Funding: A continuing success story from Ignite Awardees

In December 2020, the Royal Irish Academy of Music had an opportunity to pitch for a share of follow on funding provided by our Innovator's Circle<sup>1</sup>. The project wowed the judges with their inclusive approach to music education and orchestra for people with disabilities and was awarded a sum of:

€4,000



“This is a fabulous initiative, giving youths with disability independence and equality and giving some respite to their families”

– Innovator's Circle Member

Other follow on funding achievements include:

€95,304

FOR BARNARDOS  
(FUNDER: TUSLA)

€18,285

FOR THE SHONA PROJECT  
(FUNDER: MIX OF PRIVATE PHILANTHROPY  
AND CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP)

<sup>1</sup> The **Innovator's Circle** is a group of individuals and companies who support Rethink Ireland's strategic mission and engage strategically with both Rethink Ireland and our Awardees.

# The Ignite Fund as a community of practice

**A community of practise and strong network of peers developed as part of the Ignite Fund programme. These relationships between Rethink Ireland and Awardees, between the Awardees themselves and between the consultants and Awardees were a key part of the success of Ignite Fund. Below, the Awardees share feedback on what it means to be a part of the Rethink Ireland Ignite Fund programme.**

“In this really challenging time, our relationship with Rethink through the Ignite Fund has been hugely important to us. So many social enterprises are struggling, and the support that Rethink has given us has really helped us to connect with our peers, to ask for help and advice when we need it, and to renew our confidence that our work is important, and needed now more than ever. While we didn’t get to create the impact we hoped due to the challenges of 2020, we have been able to innovate and rebuild, which will allow us to come back bigger and stronger than ever before.”

– The Shona Project

“This Fund has allowed our organisation to offer vocational assessment and recommendations to those with acquired brain injury. These people have often lost their job or are struggling at work or education because of their brain injury. Engaging in our services has facilitated specialist assessment identifying strategies and solutions to overcome their individual challenges to participate in work or education to their best ability [...] The flexibility that philanthropy funds offers facilitates meeting the needs of the community, this is evident with the wide age range of individuals requiring the service.”

– Acquired Brain Injury Ireland



“The Sunshine Families project has benefitted from the Ignite Fund through a number of channels. In January 2020 we began building on integrating trauma-informed and resilience-building practices into the centre. These include parenting supports, afterschool services, quality childcare services, psychotherapy creative therapies for children and adult education.”

– Northside Family Resource Centre,

“The financial support enabled us to get TLC Kidz off the ground in the South East, and to be able to prioritise domestic violence supports in a year in which there was a dramatic increase in domestic violence nationwide.”

– TLC Kidz Staff, Barardos

# A thank you to our donors

**From Rethink Ireland and from the Awardee organisations, we would like to thank the donors of the Ignite Fund – W2 Foundation, Ralph & Maureen Parkes and those donors who chose to remain anonymous. It is your kind and generous support that makes Awardee impact possible.**

“A heartfelt THANK YOU! Each client who engages the service is thankful for your kind and generous donations that have allowed the service to run. These are individuals who in an instant their life was changed forever with their brain injury. Your funds have allowed them to engage in education, employment, and given purpose to their day. These benefits far extend beyond the financial and education benefits, most individuals want to feel a part of society, have the social inclusion of work/education and regain control over their life.”

– Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

“We are eternally grateful for the financial support, but also for the confidence that we received from being chosen for this fund. Whilst Covid-19 has slowed us temporarily, without this support we simply wouldn't be here now, and we now have plans to scale in a way we didn't think possible. We are so proud of what we have achieved together, and full of hope for the future. We are changing the lives of the girls we work with, for the benefit of themselves, their families, and their communities. Thank you!”

– The Shona Project

“We would like to thank W2 Foundation and our donors who wish to remain anonymous. This Fund will transform and ignite worthy projects across the country. We are so grateful to our donors who have made this Fund possible.”

– Deirdre Mortell, CEO Rethink Ireland

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