

CEO

Masterclass Series

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As the newest addition to our suite of offerings, The Leadership Academy will be piloting a **CEO Masterclass Series** for leaders in our sector.

The Masterclass series is designed to provide a well-rounded and holistic programme of learning objectives for **both new and experienced CEOs in the nonprofit sector**.

We spent the summer liaising with trainers from across Ireland and the UK to curate a series of **ten Masterclasses** delivered by **ten experts in their fields**, each one falling within **four stages of your Leadership Journey**:

	STAGE 1	LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS
	STAGE 2	STRATEGIC VISION & CLARITY
	STAGE 3	LEADING PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONS
	STAGE 4	MASTERING TOOLS & RESOURCES



STAGE 1

LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS



Wellbeing for Leaders

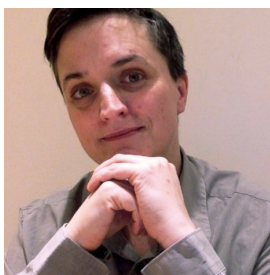
Preventing Burnout in You and Your Team

9 October
2025

This reflective Masterclass supports nonprofit leaders to identify systemic and individual contributors to burnout, and explore organisational strategies that support psychological safety, sustainability, and wellbeing in practice. A guidebook will be provided to all participants.

Following this Masterclass, senior leaders will be able to:

1. Recognise signs of burnout and understand the systemic drivers that contribute to it.
2. Design organisational wellbeing systems and supports that align with their organisation's values and culture.
3. Build a sustainable leadership model that balances high performance with staff wellbeing & long-term health.



Aoife (Dermody) Nic Dhiarmada

Co-CEO and Co-Founder, Quality Matters

Aoife has extensive leadership experience in non-profit service delivery, academia, non-profit consultancy, and political organising, preceded by a decade in front-line service provision in homeless, addiction and community education services. Aoife has researched, taught and supported implementation in evidence-based leadership, organisational culture change, trauma-informed practice, and intercultural and LGBTIQ+ affirmative approaches.

Why Good People Make Bad Decision

Leadership, Governance, and Ethics

6 November
2025

Why do intelligent, experienced and well-meaning leadership teams and boards make bad decisions? This Masterclass explores how even the most conscientious leaders can fall into patterns of poor judgement. Drawing on real-world examples from both the charity sector and the commercial world, this session will challenge charity leaders to examine how different factors can undermine effective decision-making, and most importantly how to minimize these risks. This interactive session will provide practical tools to strengthen leadership and create a culture that reduces the chance of well-intentioned failure.



Aoife Kelly Desmond

CEO of Community Law & Mediation (CLM)

Aoife Kelly-Desmond is CEO of Community Law & Mediation (CLM), an independent law centre and charity providing legal, mediation and education services to communities across Ireland. A solicitor and not-for-profit leader, she is committed to promoting access to justice and challenging inequity through the law.



STAGE 2

STRATEGIC VISION & CLARITY



Understanding Strategy

for Purpose Value and Implementation

4 December

2025

70% of projects/strategies fail at implementation according to research. This is particularly true for our sector as our focus is on social good and purpose rather than building profit. planning implementation at the beginning and ensuring the systems and structures are in place are essential or the implementation and ownership of strategy will fail. Taking a case study approach from within the sector, this workshop will focus on these elements; understanding the purpose of strategy and culture, how to harness buy in and engagement, and then a plan for implementation and monitoring.



Tracey Monson

CEO, Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services

Dr Tracey Monson has been a successful CEO in the nonprofit sector for 7 years and a senior manager for 15. Tracey has lectured on the level 8 degree in management in early years in DKIT on strategy, has led on implementation of 3 organisational strategies and has recently completed an MBA, with the focus of her strategic project being the implementation of a digital transformation strategy in her organisation.

Design Your CEO Agenda for 2026

Strategy, Culture, and Leadership

8 January

2026

This highly interactive Masterclass will enable CEOs and senior leaders of non-profits to design a top-line strategic agenda for 2026 – one that aligns organisational culture, leadership priorities, and bold moves for impact. Grounded in McKinsey's Six Disciplines of Non-Profit Leadership Excellence, participants will work from targeted pre-work insights, peer exchange, and practical planning tools. The session will clarify where their greatest opportunities and challenges lie, boost their confidence in leading the charge to close the gaps in 2026, and equip participants to hit the ground running in the new year, with a renewed sense of purpose, ambition, drive and confidence.



Theresa Nanigian

Executive Coach

Theresa Nanigian has been training and coaching leaders and executives in the nonprofit and private sectors for over 8 years. Her executive training and coaching is backed by years of leadership experience, running a division as a Senior Vice President at American Express, management consulting at McKinsey & Company and driving strategy at GlaxoSmithKline. Learn more about Theresa's coaching and executive training at www.tnexecutivecoaching.com

Narrative Power

Reframing Your Mission for Influence and Support

12 February
2025

Master the art of organisational storytelling to influence stakeholders, inspire funders, and rally teams. This practical session helps CEOs sharpen their pitch, refine messaging, and align internal and external narratives around the core purpose of your organisation in a way that unites, amplifies and inspires all stakeholders. Participants will understand how to craft a compelling organisational narrative that connects hearts and minds across funders, staff, and stakeholders, understand strategic brand positioning around purpose and access storytelling templates, message houses, and board briefing tools to support alignment and influence.



Lisa-Nicole Dunne

Founder, Mantra Strategy Impact Creation Consultancy and Leadership Institute.

Lisa-Nicole Dunne is founder of Mantra Strategy Impact Creation Consultancy and Leadership Institute. Mantra co-creates organisation, funding and communications strategies that unify teams and stakeholders. Lisa-Nicole has raised over €80 million for organisations through philanthropy, partnerships, and fundraising innovation and has won Irish Fundraiser of the Year. Former Adjunct lecturer on MBA programme at DCU Business School and former chair of CIL.



STAGE 3 __ LEADING PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONS __



Future-Proof

Succession Planning & People Development for the Next Generation
of Nonprofit Leaders

5 March
2026

What happens when a great leader leaves? Too often, the answer is confusion, burnout, or a leadership vacuum. In Ireland's nonprofit sector—where mission matters, and resources are stretched—succession planning is not a luxury, it's a necessity.

This highly interactive Masterclass tackles the twin priorities of succession planning and people development, blending practical tools with strategic foresight. CEO's will:

1. Assess their organisation's leadership pipeline and identify key gaps.
2. Understand the difference between emergency cover and long-term succession strategy.
3. Explore frameworks for identifying, mentoring, and retaining emerging leaders.



Jennifer McConnell

Founder, Living Legacy

Jennifer McConnell is the founder of Living Legacy, which helps leaders in non-profits future-proof their work through succession planning, crisis preparedness, and legacy building. With over 25 years' experience spanning leadership, HR, and crisis management, Jennifer brings both global expertise and lived experience to her work. She is passionate about guiding people and organisations to ensure smooth transitions, strengthen resilience, and protect what matters most across generations. Further details are available at www.livinglegacy.ie

Creating a Culture of Development

Coaching and Mentoring for Nonprofit CEOs

2 April

2026

In today's complex nonprofit environment, the most effective leaders are those who not only lead—but who develop others.

This Masterclass will explore how strategic coaching and mentoring approaches can strengthen culture, improve retention, support succession planning, and enhance board and executive team relationships.

Designed specifically for CEOs, Chairs and senior leaders in the sector, this Masterclass will focus on:

- Building a leadership culture where coaching and mentoring are embedded, not bolted on.
- Understanding when and how to use coaching vs mentoring vs directive leadership.
- Applying coaching approaches in performance management, delegation, and futureproofing the team.

Participants will leave with both insights and tools to support them as they develop their own coaching and mentoring skills for the benefit of their team and their organisation.



Jackie Clifford

Learning & Development Specialist, Facilitator, Coach, and Author

Jackie Clifford is a learning and development specialist, facilitator, coach and co-author of *The Coaching Handbook* (Kogan Page). With over 30 years' experience in L&D, one element of her work is helping organisations create cultures where learning via coaching and mentoring can become part of everyday working life. Jackie supports leaders to design practical, people-centred systems that work for their context.



STAGE 4 MASTERING TOOLS & RESOURCES



Data-Driven Decision Making

Using Insight to Improve Impact and Performance

30 April

2026

This Masterclass supports CEOs in non-profits and charities to lead with insight by embedding data use in strategic decisions, performance management, and communications. It will explore the principles and practices involved with data-driven decision making and introduce various types/sources of data available, including public data, organisational data, and evaluation data. It will introduce practice tools, frameworks, and resources tailored to the sector. A guidebook will also be provided to participants.



Philip Isard

Chief Operating Officer, Quality Matters

Philip has significant experience in non-profit research, impact measurement, data strategy, and organisational development. Philip is an accredited Social Return on Investment practitioner and is an Associate Faculty Member at National College of Ireland. Philip has worked on several large data-driven projects, where he helps create accessible data systems and turning complex information into actionable findings and recommendations for organisations.

Leveraging AI Opportunities

Helping Irish non-profit CEOs

28 May

2026

The Irish nonprofit sector stands at a critical juncture. With donor expectations evolving, operational pressures mounting, and digital transformation accelerating, AI offers unprecedented opportunities to amplify impact whilst managing resources more effectively. This Masterclass provides the strategic framework CEOs need to navigate AI adoption responsibly and successfully.

Participants will gain the ability to demystify AI technologies in nonprofit contexts, identifying realistic applications while separating hype from practical reality, explore how to develop responsible AI governance structures appropriate to organizational size, addressing risks around data protection, bias, transparency, and regulatory compliance and learn skills to create strategic AI adoption plans with realistic timelines, resource requirements, and success metrics.



Joe Houghton

Author, Educator, and AI Trainer

Joe Houghton is an author of eleven books, educator, and AI trainer. Assistant Professor at UCD Smurfit Graduate School of Business, he advises organisations on harnessing AI responsibly. With over 1,500 talks delivered worldwide, Joe equips Irish non-profit leaders with practical tools to unlock AI's potential for social good.

Fuel Your Mission

A Simpler Path to Philanthropy

25 June

2026

Philanthropy is supposed to fuel your mission - but too often it feels slow, unpredictable, and exhausting. You're going from one project to the next, scrambling for small donations, navigating endless gatekeepers, and burning out trying to keep it all going. The process is too complex, too time-consuming, and too reliant on who you know - and it never feels like enough.

We'll show you a simpler, proven path to philanthropy.

Participants will discuss where we find the philanthropists and discuss the most effective approach to identifying donors and getting in front of them as well as how to take the awkwardness out of asking for money with the Art of the Ask.

You'll walk away inspired about what is possible and equipped with practical tools you can get started with straight away to build your pipeline and secure meetings.



Darren Ryan

Founder, Onwards Philanthropy

Darren is the founder of Onwards Philanthropy. He provides philanthropy consultancy, coaching and strategy development for leaders of non-profits. He was previously the CEO of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland and Director Ireland for The Ireland Funds. He is currently on the board of Philanthropy Ireland and is a Founding Director of SERI (Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland).

What is the Timeline?

The Masterclasses will run from October 2025 until June 2026, taking place on Thursday mornings from 9am until 1pm every four weeks with a break for Christmas.

Who is this for?

This Masterclass series is designed for the CEO's or Executive leader of Irish nonprofit organisations; community, voluntary, charitable or social enterprise organisations. It will be useful for both new CEO's and those more tenured who are looking to refresh and update their knowledge of concepts pertinent to a senior leadership role. We will confirm with all participants that they are currently the most senior person in their organisation before they are confirmed on the course.

What is the investment?

As this is a pilot scheme, we are doing a special introductory offer of **€950 for members** of The Wheel, **€1,450 for non-members**. This is the fee for the full Masterclass Series of ten expert-led Masterclasses over the year.

Can I just attend one session?

We have chosen the ten Masterclasses with a holistic view; they are designed to complement one another and cover a wide spectrum of topics pertinent to the role of Nonprofit leaders. As such the Series is designed to be attended as a whole.

We are also keen for attendees as leaders in our sector, to connect meaningfully with their peers through regular engagement which is why the Series can only be attended in its entirety.

Who can I contact?

If you have any further questions please contact **Sharon Hughes, Leadership Academy Manager - Sharon@wheel.ie**

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*Please note, Masterclass contents and dates may be subject to change as a result of unforeseen circumstances.