

Realising the power and potential of women's philanthropy in Ireland

Setting the scene—Presentation by Deirdre Mortell

Dublin, 14 April 2010

Key Questions

1. What do we know about philanthropy in Ireland?
2. What do we know about women and philanthropy - internationally?
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What do we know about philanthropy in Ireland?

- Until last year – very little (McKinsey & Forum on Philanthropy research)
- Philanthropy is worth about €570m annually in Rep of Ireland
 - 80% given by individuals
 - 15% by trusts / foundations – about €85m
 - 4% by corporate.

Compared to other countries make it more interesting. We see ourselves as a nation of givers – but are we?

It depends on how you look at it...

- As % of population we rank very highly – 89% of adults give (cf UK 58%, Germany 40%)
- But as % of disposable income we are half way down the list – below many European welfare states e.g. Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, UK; and the amount we give has dropped significantly relative to our incomes over the last 10 years. Celtic Tiger giving has not kept pace with rises in our disposable incomes or wealth.
- And we like to give spontaneously – only 12% of us will even sign up to a monthly SO.
- Our companies rate very poorly on corporate giving – the numbers are embarrassing.
- The bulk (83%) of our trust and foundation giving is from a small number of limited life philanthropies.

So we have a platform of philanthropy but “there is room to improve”!

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So what do we know about women and philanthropy?

- The average Irish donor is female and age 55-74 years
- Women's philanthropy has a long tradition internationally and is growing for several reasons
 - Intergenerational transfer of wealth will disproportionately benefit women (70% of the \$41 trillion expected over the next 40 years) – Boston College Centre for Wealth & Philanthropy
 - Women everywhere are earning more and living longer so have greater wealth
 - Women in USA control more than half of the private wealth AND make 80% of the purchasing decisions (watch out corporate philanthropy in IRL!!)
 - Women are more inclined to give than men. A Barclay's Wealth study called "Tomorrow's Philanthropist" from 2009 showed that women in USA give 3.5% of their wealth away whereas men give half that. Philanthropy UK even dedicated a Special Report to Women and Philanthropy in 2008 and noted that women philanthropists lack both the profile and recognition that is more typical of male counterparts.

We do know that women and men do pick different causes to support – e.g. New Philanthropy Capital study of their clients showed that women clients' top 3 causes were refugees, mental health & domestic violence (all "hard to fund" causes) while men picked cancer, truancy & exclusion, and child abuse.

What do we know about women and philanthropy in Ireland?

Is there a tradition that we can build on? What does it look like? What has it achieved?

Focus on 19th century Ireland which has a fascinating story to tell: (Maria Luddy, "Women and philanthropy in nineteenth century Ireland")

THERE IS A TRADITION AND IT WAS HIDDEN FROM ME AT LEAST

Maria Luddy of the University of Warwick concluded that "Philanthropy became the principal, if largely unpaid, occupation of a great number of middle class Irish women in the 19th century."

- all religions - Catholic, Quaker and Protestant
- focused on poverty
- led to some political activism e.g. suffrage movement
- but remained local and narrow (not focused on scale!)
- led to career in social work for women in early 20th century.

Developed a more scientific approach to philanthropy in the 1860's through active involvement in the

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National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences – women philanthropists presented papers and debated social and philanthropic issues including causes and solutions such as Anne Jellicoe, philanthropist, who presented a paper on the Irish convict system and later went on to found Alexander College in 1866, a key institution in promoting access to 2nd & 3rd level education for girls.

Achievements

- Charitable provision for women and children much more developed than for men by end of century
- Welfare improvements across all institutions e.g.
- Hundreds of schools for children esp. girls
- Reformed nursing in workhouses

Three profiles of women philanthropists from the 19th century to give you a feeling for who they were and what they did (and why) –

Rosa Barrett, Protestant

- Established the Dublin branch of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, having earlier founded the Cottage Home for Little Children (1879) in DL, with a group of Protestant women. Now run by Barnardos – day services.
- Cottage Home took infants up to 6 years; its first 100 admissions were due to a crisis in the family (like Barnardos today); had accepted 182 children over the 12 years to 1894
- And later 5 crèches for the children of working women, recognizing that women needed to work to support families and that childcare was not available or affordable. Thus families were not split up.
- She was involved in setting up a whole range of organisations such as the Philanthropic Reform Organization (campaigning for changes in the workhouse system with regard to children), Lady Aberdeen's Irish Home Industries Assoc (social enterprise providing jobs for women), and later the National Women's Health Association (heighten public awareness of disease prevention esp. TB), and the Dublin Aid Committee which became the ISPCC and was determinedly non sectarian.
- She was also active in campaigning for votes for women. All we know about her life is that she was born in Jamaica but lived in Dublin from 1860's on, was unmarried, lived in DL, travelled extensively to Canada, Sweden, South Africa. She also wrote several pamphlets on the status of children in the 1890's.

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Margaret Aylward, Catholic

Maria Luddy says that "Within Dublin at least, women played an important role in the battle for children's souls".

- Aylward and her helpers at the Ladies Assoc of the Charity of St Vincent de Paul to provide Catholic schools for children who would otherwise end up in Protestant ones including "rescue", providing food, clothing, training & employment for the poorest children from the poorest parts of the city - 6 schools by 1870.
- Also established the St Brigid's Orphanage in Dublin in 1856 with a goal of 500 children! Aylward controlled it completely to the distress of the clergy and she regularly turned down children referred by them. It was a fostering system, with strict regulation, well paid foster families, and unannounced visits, with regular removal of children from homes that did not meet her standards. The children were to maintain contact with their birth family. She handled 2717 children over 32 years from 1857!
- Hard to know if physical or spiritual danger was the biggest concern...
- Note Ms Aylward was an exception as in general the growth of the female religious orders generally left little space for lay Catholic women in philanthropic life over the nineteenth century.

Anna Haslam, Quaker

- Born into a Quaker family in Youghal, Co Cork in 1829. Established a lace making industry in the town as a means of skilled employment for girls, built on by the Presentation Sisters in the town later.
- Married Thomas Haslam and established the Dublin Women's Suffrage Org in 1876, active in the Ladies National Assoc, and on member of English Exec Committee, suffragette, activist. Both she and her husband campaigned on the rights of women through both legal change and access to education as well as the vote.

Luddy concludes that "The extraordinary range of women's philanthropic involvement reveals that, in 19th century Ireland, the development of a comprehensive welfare system was to a large extent due to the work of women."

Moving to the 20th century – is there any evidence of a continuing tradition?

I want to take a look at the resurgence of the women's movement in 1970's - 1980's Ireland ("second wave feminism"). Where did the funds come from?

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All kinds of organizations that are household names today were set up during this period - Rape Crisis Centres, Well Woman Centre, Irish Family Planning Clinics, Open Door Counseling, Women's Aid, Cherish, Gingerbread etc.

Linda Connolly of UCC discusses "the mobilisation of resources and collective action strategies from within" which led to the resurgence of the women's movement in Ireland from 1970s onward."

"Resources from within" –like what?

It is my theory that these were funded by middle class women coming together to contribute their own funds, raise funds from family and friends to address urgent women's issues in Ireland. I have some but limited data to support this.

- Nuala Fennell, with Mary Bannotti, Nora Owen and others founded Women's Aid in 1974 with their own funds, their own sweat, and raising funds from middle class friends and family. This was middle class women contributing their own funds, and raising others to their own cause. I hear that there are similar stories for the Rape Crisis Centres and others. The beginnings of a women's fund?
- Irish Countrywomen's Association, a national network of 700 local guilds which is 100 years old this year, established its own craft and education centre at Termonfeckin, Co. Meath with the "egg and butter money" of its members - it's still a thriving centre, offering courses in anything from basket weaving to cookery, mindfulness to mending...but was also the key lobby on rural water supply and rural electricity as well as bringing the credit union movement to rural Ireland.

Connolly's conclusion - "...*key resources* in the 1970s facilitated the rapid advancement of the women's movement..." Another stage in the development of women's philanthropy in Ireland – middle class women, not just wealthy women, giving and mobilizing funds.

CONCLUSION

All the indicators show that women philanthropists will grow as a species!

- Increased access to wealth – own and inherited
- Likely to translate into giving
- There IS a tradition to look to and build on in Ireland.

In fact, Maria Luddy concludes that women philanthropists work was so important in the 19th century that they were essentially the formers of the Irish welfare state. If that is the bar we are to aspire to in the 21st century, it is set pretty high!

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Giving the Allen Lane Foundation Lecture in 1992 (an English foundation founded in the 19th century by the family of the Allen Lane publishing group, and which funded grassroots women's organizations in Ireland for about 15 years to about 1990), Mary Robinson stated "We have - in women, in their organisational abilities, in their creative approach - a major resource. It is not being fully used."

But back to today, Forbes in August 2009 concluded "it's not just who gives that is changing [i.e. women] but its how they are giving and to whom that is *redefining contemporary philanthropy*".

Bring it on.