

Ireland's First Women's Fund Launched at Landmark Symposium on Women in Philanthropy

President Mary McAleese addresses Symposium

- **First fund in Ireland dedicated solely to women's causes launched**
- **Renowned US Philanthropist, Ellen Remmer highlights the potential to develop women's philanthropy in Ireland**

To coincide with a landmark Symposium on Women in Philanthropy, which was held in Dublin today (Wednesday April 14th, 2010), The Community Foundation for Ireland launched the first ever Women's Fund for Ireland. The Fund, which is dedicated solely to supporting women's causes, is the first of its kind in Ireland.

The Symposium "Realising the Power and potential of Women in Philanthropy" was held in The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland in Dublin and included a special address by President Mary McAleese. The event, which was co-hosted by The Community Foundation for Ireland and Philanthropy Ireland with support from Ulster Bank, set out to highlight the role and involvement of women in philanthropy in Ireland, to showcase some leading Irish women and their approach to philanthropy and to identify how the potential of women's philanthropy can be realised in Ireland.

The newly formed Women's Fund will tackle problems facing women and girls in Ireland today, addressing critical issues such as poverty, violence, and improving access to healthcare and education. It will also target areas such as trafficking and prostitution, integration of new communities, women in the arts, literacy, and support for carers. It will support these issues by giving small grants to enable positive change at the grassroots level to tackle women's inequality at its source.

The key note speaker at the Symposium, renowned US philanthropist Ellen Remmer, President and CEO of Boston-based The Philanthropic Initiative, Inc., spoke about the special power that can be harnessed by women in making a real difference in the lives of less fortunate women in society.

This is the basis on which the new Irish Women's Fund has been established: a fund developed by women to support women.

Here in Ireland,

- 1 in 5 women experience domestic violence in their lifetimes
- 85% of lone parents are female
- 84% of cases reported to the Rape Crisis Centre are female
- Only 14% of TD's in Dáil Éireann are female (EU average is 24%)

However,

- Women are one and half times more likely than men to include a donation to charity in their wills, and
- Recent research shows that women in the U.S. give an average of 3.5% of their wealth to charity, while men give an average of 1.8% and may be more likely to fund harder causes

The Community Foundation for Ireland has pledged €100,000 as a challenge grant towards the fund. For every €1000 raised for endowment by an individual, family, business or organisation, a matching amount of €500 will be provided by The Community Foundation. The Fund is being supported by *Irish Tatler* magazine, who have nominated it as their charity of the year for 2010. The first grants from The Women's Fund for Ireland will be made on International Women's Day in 2011.

Speaking at the Symposium, Jackie Harrison, Chief Executive of Philanthropy Ireland said: "Today's Symposium on Women in Philanthropy is an important step in mapping out the future role of philanthropy in Ireland. Focusing on the role of women and understanding the distinct contributions they make gives us a clearer picture of the potential impact philanthropy and planned giving can have in the more sober and challenging, post-Celtic Tiger Ireland of today."

Speaking at the Symposium, Tina Roche CEO of the Community Foundation for Ireland said "Women are playing, and will play, a crucial role in the development of philanthropy in Ireland over the coming years for a number of reasons. Women are becoming more independently wealthy than ever before, are living longer than men and many women now have the capacity to help make real social change in Ireland through their wealth, skills and energy. This is why we think the time is right to establish Ireland's first ever Women's Fund and we look forward to seeing this develop and grow over the coming years."

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For Further Information please contact:

Una O' Murchu
The Community Foundation for Ireland
Tel: 01-874 3821
Mob: 086 780 8762

Jackie Harrison
Philanthropy Ireland
Tel: 01 6708939
Mob: 087 2940842

Editors notes:

Further Information on the Event

The Symposium was held at the Royal College of Physicians in Dublin and was also addressed by Chantal McCabe, Irish Philanthropist of the Year in 2009 and Deirdre Mortell, Co-founder, The One Foundation. The event also included a Panel Discussion with a number of high profile participants from the business and NGO sectors including Lorraine Sweeney, Business woman; Mary Nally, Third Age Foundation; Sandara Kelso Robb, Lloyds TSB for Northern Ireland; Rory Quinlan, HSBC; and Noelle Spring, Katharine Howard Foundation.

The Community Foundation for Ireland

The Community Foundation for Ireland is a philanthropic and grant making organisation and works with donors to help them connect with and support the causes they care about and also supports community groups around the country.

Philanthropy Ireland

Philanthropy Ireland is the Association of independent philanthropic organisations in Ireland and aims to contribute to and inspire an effective and robust philanthropic sector in Ireland, so that there is a significant increase in private philanthropy that delivers benefits across many areas of society in Ireland and internationally.

Interesting Facts around issues facing Women Worldwide

Women are half the population of the world but are disproportionately affected by many of the world's most serious problems. Just take a look at some of these statistics:

- Worldwide, women constitute about 70 percent of the absolute poor—those living on less than a dollar a day.
- 75% of the refugees and internationally displaced in the world are women who have lost their families and their homes.
- Worldwide, 18.3 percent of the adult population (800 million people) is illiterate. Almost two-thirds of them (64 percent) are women
- Of 137 million illiterate youths in the world, 63% are girls
- Each year, an estimated 800,000 people are trafficked across borders, 80 per cent of them women and girls.
- There is no country in the world where women's wages are equal to those of men.