



Realising the Power and Potential  
of Women's Philanthropy  
An Introduction to The Women's Fund



# The Women's Fund

*"Inspiring Women, Supporting Women"*

## Mission Statement

When women and girls prosper, entire communities succeed. The Women's Fund fuels change in our communities by supporting the most innovative and positive solutions to the issues facing women in Ireland today. Our mission is to encourage philanthropy among women, improve the lives of women through social change grantmaking, and educate the entire community about the benefits to society when the potential of women is realised.

## Introduction

In April 2010 a major seminar on women's philanthropy took place in Dublin. It was during this landmark event that The Women's Fund was launched by The Community Foundation for Ireland.

## The Journey

There is a rarely heard but rich history of women's philanthropy and feminism in Ireland. Women who saw what needed to be done to improve society went out and did it and their legacy is immense.

The **first wave** in the 1800s saw women from Catholic, Protestant and Quaker backgrounds tackling major issues related to social deprivation including the establishment of orphanages, new charities such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and political change through, for example, the Dublin Women's Suffrage Organisation. The work of women philanthropists was so important in the 19th century that they were essentially the founders of the Irish welfare state.

The **second wave** began in 1970s Ireland with the creation of organisations that are now household names such as Rape Crisis Centres, The Well Woman Centre, Irish Family Planning Clinics, Women's Aid, the Council for the Status of Women, which later became the National Women's Council of Ireland and many others.

In 1972 the Ms. Foundation for Women in New York was established. Still going strong today, it is thought to be the first dedicated women's fund in the world. Since then the concept has blossomed and funds have been established throughout the world - some are local in focus, others are national and still more are global. In the Ireland of today, it is clear that change is needed in both our economy and society and it is essential that women are at the heart of that change. The Women's Fund is an opportunity for women to innovatively tackle the many issues that affect women's daily lives and society as a whole. So a third **wave** begins...

## The Case for Investment in Women

*“When women are fully involved, the benefits can be seen immediately: families are healthier; they are better fed; their income, savings, and reinvestment go up. And what is true of families is true of communities and, eventually, whole countries”.* **Kofi Annan**

Women’s Funds transform individuals and tackle community problems. Women play a crucial role in creating and sustaining strong communities but there are often barriers which prevent their participation or engagement with local opportunities, or stop them fulfilling their potential to play a role within the broader community. They may struggle to get their voice heard in order to influence decisions that affect them, their families and communities.

Today the need to establish new sources of funding for initiatives for women in Ireland is critical, in part as a result of reducing public sector subsidies. With the new Women’s Fund for Ireland, we are creating a unique opportunity for donors to provide financial support to benefit women’s initiatives in Ireland now and for generations to come.

## Some Distinctive Problems Faced by Women in Ireland Today

- One in four women have experienced some form of domestic or sexual violence, and one in ten have been raped.
- Girls are more likely to get a third level qualification but go on to earn 17% less than men.
- Only 8.1% of board members of large corporations are female.
- Only 14% of Irish TDs are women compared with an average representation in national parliaments for EU 27 countries of nearly 24% in 2009.
- 96% of lone parents relying on the One Parent Family Payment in Ireland are women.

## Objectives of The Fund

Women’s funds seek out initiatives that offer the greatest potential for lasting impact on issues from poverty to women’s representation in business or politics. The Women’s Fund for Ireland will invest in target areas identified by its committee and donors, and based on information from the not-for-profit sector. While we expect the grant-making priorities will evolve as needs change and the fund grows, some immediate strategic priorities have been identified and are outlined as follows:

### 1. Preventing Violence against Women

The Women’s Fund will make grants through the following five measures:

- a. The development of community based approaches
- b. Early childhood interventions

- c. Working with men and boys on changing gender norms
- d. School based interventions
- e. Influencing policy.

## **2. Empowering Women to Take Leadership Roles**

The Fund will support groups who work with women towards affecting change by raising awareness of women's inequality. Building women's understanding of why things are the way they are in an unequal society is an important first step in the process of promoting women as leaders. The Women's Fund will make grants through these three measures:

- a. Developing the capacity of locally based women's groups to set a clear agenda and influence decision-making processes, including building women's understanding of an equal society
- b. Build solidarity and support amongst young women from different backgrounds and communities
- c. Promotion of the inclusion of young women as leaders in communities and at political level.

Donors who are passionate about other areas affecting women and who have the capacity to make large donations to the Fund can also be facilitated to grant-make to these areas and should consult with The Community Foundation to discuss this further.

In the early stages, smaller projects will be supported but over time, as the Fund grows, there will be a focus on 'systemic' solutions in a more long-term strategic manner. Case studies of projects supported by the fund are available in a separate Grants Updates document.

## **Grant-making Process**

The Community Foundation advertises publicly for projects. Applicants will complete and return an application form to The Community Foundation, based on the specific criteria (as per objectives above). A Grants Officer at The Community Foundation will undertake an initial review. Grants that meet the criteria will then be reviewed by a dedicated sub-committee of the Board. A member of The Women's Fund committee will sit on the dedicated sub-committee for the assessment of applications to The Women's Fund. All grant applications will be recorded in The Community Foundation's database and all applicants will be notified by The Community Foundation of the outcome of their application. Feedback reports will be requested from the successful charities and these will be made available to donors. Grants will typically range between €1,000 and €5,000.

## The Women's Fund for Ireland - Steering Committee Members

The Women's Fund has a dynamic and energised Steering Committee to guide the development and focus of The Fund. Our Steering Committee comprises a group of fantastic, dedicated women who aim to ensure The Women's Fund inspires and supports women all over the country.

**Helen Collins**, (Committee Chair) Lawyer and former partner in McCann FitzGerald

**Jessie Collins**, Editor, Tatler Magazine

**Fiona Farrelly**, Director, Mediamarket

**Caroline Keeling**, Group Managing Director, Keelings

**Deirdre Lynam**, Marketing and Information Consultant

**Chantal McCabe**, 2009 Philanthropist of the Year

**Susan McKay**, Chief Executive, The National Women's Council of Ireland

**Yvette Monahan**, One half of seanandyvette photography and founder/manager of South Studios, Dublin.

## The committee is aided by staff at The Community Foundation:

**Tina Roche**, Chief Executive

**Niall O Sullivan**, Head of Fund Development

**Moira Horgan**, Marketing Manager

**Helen Beatty**, Grants and Donor Services Executive

## Supporting The Women's Fund

The Community Foundation for Ireland seeks to inspire donors and provides a number of opportunities to make a real difference to the lives of women through The Women's Fund.

### Building an Endowment for the Future

Successful Women's Funds worldwide seek to build an endowment. We ask that you consider supporting the endowment fund as this will provide a guaranteed means to support projects in the years ahead - in good times and bad. The endowment for The Women's Fund got off to an excellent start and within a few short months the Fund received three donations totalling €225,000. We now seek to multiply this in the months and years ahead. By way of example, based on a 4% return, a €5million fund would be capable of making grants of approximately €200,000 annually - forever!

The Community Foundation has challenged early donors to support the endowment with a challenge grant. Therefore, a donor making a donation of €50,000 could potentially generate a further €25,000 as a result.

The endowment fund could also be an excellent option for people who may choose to support issues affecting women through their will.

### **Building an Annual Fund**

Some donors may prefer to make a once off or annual commitment to support the Fund. Whilst the endowment is growing, this will help ensure that as many projects as possible are supported immediately. It is anticipated that The Annual Fund will make grants at least twice a year. It would be wonderful to receive sufficient donations to make a minimum of €100,000 per annum in grants in the early years, rising significantly in the years ahead.

### **Memorial Fund Opportunities**

As part of the Women's Fund, some donors may like to establish 'In Memoriam Funds'. When a loved one passes away, a person could set up a fund in, for example, her or his mother's, sister's or friend's name. This can be a powerful way of supporting great projects and ensuring that a person's name lives on in a profound and meaningful way, helping to improve the lives of women, now and in the future.

### **Partnering with Companies**

The Women's Fund may provides a wonderful opportunity to companies that wish to make a real difference to the lives of women in Ireland.

### **Partnering with other Grant-makers**

Since 2009 the OLC Ireland Trust Fund has been managed by The Community Foundation for Ireland on behalf of The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity. The Fund supports projects from organisations working with women tackling addictions, prostitution and trafficking, violence and abuse. Since 2009, well over €100,000 has been made in grants to groups throughout Ireland to educate, develop and enhance the lives and dignity of marginalised women. We would welcome the opportunity to partner with other religious orders or grant-making organisations seeking to support women.

### **How else can you help?**

You could host an event or lunch or help to establish a Giving Circle that is affiliated to **The Women's Fund**. Please contact The Community Foundation to discuss these options further.

## How to Give

Donors can support The Women's Fund with donations of cash or shares. Commitments may be once off or over a period of years. The Community Foundation for Ireland is a recognised charity and tax benefits for individuals or companies that donate to this fund will apply. The Women's Fund is also an excellent option for people who may choose to support issues affecting women through their will. Full details on donating and the tax benefits available can be provided by The Community Foundation for Ireland.

## Governance Issues and Fund Management

The Women's Fund will operate under the wider umbrella of The Community Foundation for Ireland (an established grant-making foundation with an asset base in excess of €27 million) which will assist with the grant-making, governance, investment and operational issues of the fund.

### Fund Management and Fees

Monies donated for the **permanent endowment** will be pooled with other funds at The Community Foundation for investment purposes but will be designated as *The Women's Fund*. Interest / earnings from the fund will be used to support grant-making. The Community Foundation retains a fee annually of 1% of the fund value to cover costs associated with this work.

Donors can choose alternatively (or additionally) to put money into an **annual fund** for more immediate distribution. The Community Foundation retains a fee of 5% of the value to cover costs associated with managing the grants process from this fund.

Note: Details of The Community Foundation's board, its policy on investing and other information is available on our website: [www.communityfoundation.ie](http://www.communityfoundation.ie)

## About The Community Foundation for Ireland

The Community Foundation for Ireland seeks to inspire donors and support charities and community groups. Established in 2000 we have made grants on behalf of donors of almost €7million, mostly in Ireland. We also have a number of significant permanent donor endowment funds that will allow us to grant-make forever. By 2011 the pooled value of all endowments was in excess of €27 million.

Individuals, families and other organisations can establish their charitable fund at The Community Foundation. In so doing, we facilitate consistent, thoughtful, planned charitable giving. The experience of grant-making since 2000 has provided us with a unique insight into the causes and groups which are most deserving of funding on a local and national level and helps us to provide a great service to donors. The Patron of The Community Foundation for Ireland is President Mary McAleese.

## For further information please contact

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