

## NEW FUNDING GRANTS \$8,000 TO INTERNATIONAL ROMA WOMEN'S NETWORK

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AdvocacyNet

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London, UK, June 1, 2004: The International Roma Women's Network (IRWN) has received approximately \$8,000 from The Funding Network (TFN), a London-based group of funders that has pioneered an innovative new approach to supporting social change.

This is the first grant for the IRWN, which was established on May 8, 2003 by Roma women activists from 18 countries. The Advocacy Project has provided advice and training for the network.

TFN members meet regularly to review a limited number of proposals, which are presented in person by activists. The latest TFN meeting, held at a medical center in London on May 27, raised \$41,000 for five groups, including the IRWN. 18 TFN members contributed a total of \$8,000 to the IRWN.

The IRWN presentation was led by Catherine Beard, Campaign Coordinator for the IRWN and Secretary of the (UK) National Association of Gypsy Women, and Iain Guest, director of the Advocacy Project. Ms. Beard explained how the IRWN uses its e-mail distribution list to keep members informed and lobby governments. Over the past year the IRWN has lobbied the governments of Germany and the UK, the UN and the European Commission on behalf of Roma women.

The TFN funds will improve communications between the IRWN's five committee members and expand the IRWN's e-mail lobbying. The project will also pay for an IRWN website, to be designed by a Roma web designer from the Roma Information Project (RIP). RIP began in 2002 with support from the Open Society Institute and Advocacy Project, and registered as an NGO in Bulgaria earlier this year.

It is hoped that the TFN grant will also attract the attention of other funders to the IRWN, and make it possible for the IRWN's 18-member network to meet, formalize a constitution, and develop a long-term campaigning strategy.

Meanwhile, TFN is receiving publicity and praise in the UK for making it possible for individuals to support social change while engaging directly with those seeking funds. According to one newspaper article, TFN turns charitable giving into a 'more collaborative and collective experience, and (makes) giving as enriching to the donor as to the recipient.'

Since it was set up in 2002 by Frederick Mulder, a UK-based philanthropist, TFN has raised over \$500,000 for scores of community-based initiatives that would otherwise find it extremely difficult to raise money. There is interest in establishing offshoots of TFN in several UK cities, and even Australia.

- Learn more about the [Funding Network](#) through email: or write to The Funding Network by visiting their [website](#).