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MORE THAN 300 CHARITIES FACE IMMINENT CLOSURE AS PERFECT STORM OF RISING DEMAND FOR SERVICES AND FALLING DONATIONS DRIVES THEM TO THE WALL

Miller Philanthropy launches Goodwill Exchange as a pro bono skills bank to link small charities with professionals willing to donate their specialist skills and time

Donors and philanthropists urged to 'give smarter, not just give more' as funding drought forces smaller charities onto the ropes

Over three hundred¹ small, UK grassroots charities face imminent closure without a radical overhaul in the way that people give, according to Miller Philanthropy, the charitable foundation, which is urging people to 'give smarter, not just give more', as it launches the **Goodwill Exchange** to provide smaller charitable organisations access to a skills bank of professional volunteers.

The **Goodwill Exchange** (www.goodwillexchange.co.uk) is the UK's first not-for-profit forum where professionals, such as accountants, lawyers, marketing specialists, business leaders and other skilled professionals can register in their area of expertise to provide small charities support on a project basis.

Despite the fact the UK currently gives around £11billion² a year in individual charitable donations, just 901 of the UK's 161,649 charities generate 56% of the sector's income³, leaving many smaller charities struggling to attract the money they need to undertake their vital work. This lack of funding also limits their access to a wide range of other resources necessary for their sustainability and to allow them to concentrate on their charitable works, according to Miller Philanthropy.

Miller Philanthropy founder Gina Miller believes individual and corporate charitable donors, and Philanthropists need to explore ways of giving differently to charities if smaller charities are to continue to survive. In the present debate over charitable giving, Miller says that we need to go back to basics and remember that philanthropy is about more than donating money, it is about giving skills, time and other resources.

Gina Miller, Miller Philanthropy says, "There is an army of people, particularly women who have stepped out of their careers, along with an increasing number of skilled, educated and unemployed people who are rich in skills, experience and training and who all have time they could give to

charities. It is my belief that connecting this untapped skills resource with small charities will prove a win/win situation for all parties, which is why we have established the Goodwill Exchange”.

Netmums founder Siobhan Freegard said, “Mums are Britain's untapped skills bank. From multi-tasking to project management, we can do it all. When a woman becomes a mother, we find she often wants to become more involved in her local community and charities and the Goodwill Exchange will let mums do just that. It's a fabulous opportunity for good causes to benefit and mums to keep their hand in the world of work.

“At Netmums we encourage our members to help our charities and back their local community as part of our United Kindmums campaign - so we are delighted to support this new service.”

Gina Miller continues,“UK people are incredibly generous; the £11billion a year given in this country is a huge amount, yet many smaller charities are under greater pressure than ever before and many will not survive.The issue isn't just that we need to give more, we need to give smarter and in many cases that doesn't just mean giving money, skills can be just as transformational to small charities.”

David Hines, founder of the National Victims' Association says,“Small underfunded charities such as ours face countless challenges and one of the most difficult, is to attract skilled volunteer help. The Goodwill Exchange is a simple but powerful idea, and one that matches philanthropic expertise with need. We are delighted to be part of this initiative and are deeply grateful to all involved.”

Gina Miller concludes,“Many big firms will release staff to spend a day helping clear a playground or paint an old people's home, vital work but not always the best use of their professional skills.We are asking professionals to give their expertise and experienceso smaller, grassroots charities can use this to help them cut their administration cost so more of their money goes to the invaluable charitable work they undertake.”

Linda Walker, Executive Director, Chernobyl Children's Project UK says, “Our charity could not function without all the brilliant volunteers who give their time, skills and energy to support the children of Belarus. They are worth their weight in Gold! We would be delighted to find more professionals who would like to donate their expertise to support our work.”

Miller Philanthropy has decided to launch the **Goodwill Exchange** as it believes charities are facing a 'perfect storm' of falling donations and rising demand for their services, driven by the austerity and the increased hardship that many people are now under. At the same time, unemployment is rising within the professional and skilled workforce as a result of the recession.

At launch 14 small, community charities will have signed up to the **Goodwill Exchange**, with 20 professionals so far offering their services through the forum, ranging from accountants, lawyers, PR consultants, journalists, builders and board directors.

Volunteering will be on a project basis so there is a definite time frame to their volunteering. All projects proposed by the charities will also be assessed to ensure the skills being requested are appropriate for both parties.

The scale of the problem facing charities was outlined by the NCVO (National Council for Voluntary organisations) UK Civil Society Almanac 2012 which revealed that charities lost over 70,000 staff in the past year and were hit by £2.3 billion in rising costs purely as a result of inflation between 2008 and 2010. The report also highlighted that during the height of the recession in 2010, voluntary organisations spent 99 per cent of their income (£36.3 billion out of £36.7 billion) in order to keep pace with rising costs and expand their services to cope with demand.

- Ends -

Notes to editors:

1. Charity Commission: 265 charities with a turnover of more than £500,000 closed or merged in the year ending 31 December 2011, while over 1,600 charities closed in coalition's first year
2. www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/news/funding/over-million-more-give-charity-over-last-year-yet-total-donations-stay-flat
3. Charity Commission report, 31 December 2011

To register with the Goodwill Exchange go to:

www.goodwillexchange.co.uk

@MPhilanthropy, #goodwillx

About Miller Philanthropy

The Miller Family Foundation was established in October 2009 by Gina Miller who has been fortunate both in terms of birth right and success in business. The Miller family have been active supporters of charity both in the UK and abroad; and are passionate believers that communities working together can achieve workable, practical solutions. By applying sound, common sense principles in choosing the most effective smaller programmes that can achieve sustainable change, we hope to help transform fates and improve lives.

Miller Philanthropy offers donors an opportunity to give with impact and to make their donations go further. The foundation is 100% underwritten so 100% of all donations reach small, heroic charities that undergo rigorous due diligence. All donors receive reports on the projects and charities supported on a six monthly basis.

We see giving as a social activity; it is about investing in society for our children and thereby committing an act of love. www.millerphilanthropy.com

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