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# Giving to Women and Girls

WHO GIVES, AND WHY?



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## **Abstract**

Within academic research, individual philanthropy directed to women's and girls' causes has been understudied. This study highlights new data to understanding who gives to women's and girls' causes and their motivations for support. We conducted a two-part, mixed-methods study in the United States. First, we fielded a brief survey among a nationally representative survey panel. Second, we conducted seven focus groups among United Way and women's fund donors who actively funded women's and girls' causes as well as donors who focused on other areas in their giving. In the survey, we find that among people giving to charity, half of women and 40 percent of men self-report giving to at least one cause that primarily affects women and girls. Women are both more likely to give to women's and girls' causes and give larger amounts to these causes, and are more likely to report giving to domestic violence organizations, women's centers, LGBT rights, cancer care and research, and economic opportunities for women and girls. In the focus groups, women report giving to women's and girls' causes based on their personal experiences, including experiencing discrimination and having children, and because they believe giving to women and girls provides the best social return. Barriers to giving to women's and girls' causes include the complexity and scalability of women's issues, the sex-segregated nature of women's giving, and the connection to political issues which are often embedded in women's causes. While this study provides valuable new research, more research is needed to understand generational differences among donors and how organizations focusing on women and girls can increase donor support.

## Study Highlights

- Current national surveys on philanthropic giving do not examine giving to women and girls as a distinct category of support. Therefore, knowing the amount of such giving has been difficult to estimate. Further, women's and girls' causes appear in many of the traditional charitable subsectors, such as human services, health, education, and international causes.
- To date, women's funds and foundations, as well as designated grant-making by foundations, have been the one area of philanthropic giving where estimates for giving to women's and girls' causes are available. Research estimates only 5 to 7 percent of all foundation funding is specifically directed to women's and girls' initiatives (Foundation Center & WFN, 2009; Shah, McGill & Weisblatt, 2011).
- This study finds female survey respondents are more likely than male respondents to give to women's and girls' causes. Considering women's likelihood to give to women's and girls' causes, women also give larger amounts to these causes.
- Female respondents are more likely than male respondents to give to some specific women's and girls'-related causes, including: domestic violence; women's centers; lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights; cancer research, diagnosis, and support (breast, ovarian, etc.); and economic opportunities for women and girls.
- Age (as age increases) and higher income levels are the most likely determinants of giving to women's and girls' causes; other control variables do not affect giving to a similar extent.
- A majority of donors (56 percent) report that they do not focus their giving on women and girls. Among donors, 14.6 percent report giving to a particular area that impacts women and girls and 29.4 percent give to an organization that in part, focuses on women's and girls' issues.
- Respondents who give to women's and girls' causes are more likely to indicate that women's rights and community development are social issue priorities to them, and are less likely to indicate that tax policy is a priority for them.
- Donors who concentrate their giving on women and girls tend to have a more focused approach to their giving as compared to donors who support a wide range of causes.
- Donors who support causes for women and girls expressed motivations in terms of their personal experiences and the belief that funding women's and girl's initiatives leads to societal progress.
- Donors to women's funds saw these organizations as having particular expertise and trusted them to distribute grants effectively.
- Donors seek a range of opportunities to support children especially through multiple channels including sex-specific initiatives as well as initiatives that benefit all children so that no child is ignored.

## I. Introduction

In the past 40 years, giving to women and girls has become an active funding area for individuals, foundations and corporations. Moreover, there is growing acceptance of the idea that making investments in women and girls promotes a ripple effect of change throughout families, communities, and even entire countries (Duflo, 2011; Foundation Center & Women's Funding Network [WFN], 2009); women have even been called "the most powerful engine of global growth" ("A guide to womenomics," 2006). Today, more than 100 women's funds in over 30 countries make grants to further women's economic security and reproductive health and justice among other causes (WFN, 2015). Individual donors are active as well, with 237 members of Women Moving Millions collectively contributing over \$600 million to issues affecting women and girls. One such donor, Sara Blakely, founder of hosiery company Spanx and a billionaire signatory of the Giving Pledge, wrote, "I pledge to invest in women because I believe it offers one of the greatest returns on investment. While many of the world's natural resources are being depleted, one is waiting to be unleashed – women" (Blakely, 2013).

Blakely's and other donors' commitments to women and girls are reflective of two broader trends taking place worldwide: the increasing educational, income, and wealth attainment of women, and the global focus on investing in the rights and well-being of women and girls to improve development and address poverty (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011; Chaaban & Cunningham, 2011; Friedberg & Webb, 2006). Gender equality is central to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, as it was to the previous Millennium Development Goals, and academic research has shown that economic development alone will not raise women's status, and that a focus on gender equality is essential (Duflo, 2011). Gender equality has also been the focus of key philanthropic campaigns such as the Girl Effect movement (Girl Effect, 2015). While women's and girls' issues have been an important area for public policy research and global development, giving to women and girls is understudied in philanthropy and donor behavior. In fact, we know very little about the donors who support such causes.

Current national surveys on philanthropic giving, such as the Philanthropy Panel Study in the United States, do not segment giving to women and girls as a distinct category, making the amount and presumed growth of such giving difficult to estimate, particularly among individuals. To date, scholars who have studied philanthropy directed toward women and girls have paid greater attention to social movement-specific funding, particularly among foundations. In the U.S. a number of women-specific social change funds were established beginning in the 1970s in order to decrease the gender gap in philanthropic funding, and established a formal network (now The Women's Funding Network) in 1985 (Brilliant, 2000; Ostrander, 2004; Rose, 1994). Giving by women's funds has grown exponentially during that time, dispersing an estimated \$60 million a year in grants both in the U.S. and internationally (Foundation Center & WFN, 2009). This is particularly notable as researchers estimate that only 5 to 7 percent of all foundation funding is specifically directed to women's and girls' initiatives (Foundation Center & WFN, 2009; Shah, McGill, & Weisblatt, 2011). Many of the women's funds are organized as public charities or are funds within community foundations, meaning they receive donations from a range of individuals, private foundations, and corporations. Understanding who is giving to women's foundations and to women's and girls' causes is particularly important if we are to continue to make strides in achieving gender equality worldwide.

In order to understand who gives to women's and girls' causes and what motivates such giving, we conducted a sequential, mixed-methods study in the United States. In the first phase of the study, we fielded a survey using a nationally representative panel to establish baseline knowledge about giving to women and girls. We find that among people who give to charity, half of women and 40 percent of men report supporting at least one cause that primarily affects women and girls. In the second phase, we conducted seven focus groups with donors who were actively funding women's and girls' causes as well as with donors who focused on other philanthropic issues to better understand key differences in donors' motivations and experiences. This paper proceeds in four parts. First, we offer a review of the literature on giving to women and girls, as well as research on other aspects of philanthropy focused in this area. Second, we present our methodology for both the survey and focus groups. Third, we present the results of the survey, followed by the qualitative themes from the focus groups. Finally, we offer a discussion of implications and suggest questions for future research.

## II. Background and Related Literature

In studies of philanthropic giving, it is not uncommon for researchers to focus on a specific charitable sector, such as giving to human services (e.g. Marx, 2000) or education (e.g. Rooney, Brown, & Mesch, 2007) to better understand donors to that particular area. However, to date, no known surveys of philanthropic behavior have specifically categorized giving to women and girls. Large-scale surveys such as the Philanthropy Panel Study (PPS), conducted by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, do not provide a specific category for the purpose of women and girls. Instead, the PPS asks respondents to group their giving into eleven broad categories, specifically: religious purposes; combination organizations (e.g., United Way, community foundations); human services; health; education; youth and family; arts and culture; community organizations and service clubs; environment and animals; international; and other. Tracking “movement-specific” funding, such as giving to women and girls, poses a greater challenge for researchers to understand and study as giving is spread across multiple subsectors. One can easily understand how giving to a women’s college would be categorized differently from supporting a domestic violence shelter, or women-specific health care, or supporting women’s economic development in India. Yet while researchers have not categorized such individual giving based on interest areas to date, giving to women and girls has become a dedicated funding priority, highlighted by the work of women’s foundations and a few key individual philanthropists.

Beginning in the 1970s, a number of women-specific social change funds were established that aimed to decrease the gender gap in philanthropic funding (Brilliant, 2000; Feminist Majority Foundation, 1991; Ostrander, 2004; Rose, 1994). The Women’s Funding Network (WFN), originally the National Network of Women’s Funds, formed in 1985 to serve as “an umbrella organization for an identified women’s funding movement” (Brilliant, 2000, p. 555), and provides advocacy, training, technical assistance, and visibility as well as an annual conference for its member funds (Brilliant, 2000; Rose, 1994). Researchers contend that a women’s fund is different from other foundations: “Women raise the dollars and decide how they’re spent; grants and allocations support programs that assist women and girls in overcoming racial, economic, political, sexual, and social discrimination” (National Network of Women’s Funds as cited in Rose, 1994, p. 230). In many ways, women’s funds are one branch of a “social movement industry” and alternative funding movement that includes Asian American funds, Latino funds, African American funds, gay and lesbian funds, and even environmental funds. They were established in response to the dissatisfaction of women working in more mainstream philanthropic institutions who witnessed the lack of philanthropic dollars directed toward women’s and girls’ organizations and programs (Brilliant, 2000; Rose, 1994). These funds are also likely to be headed by women, have a majority of women on their board of directors, and have an expressed commitment to diversity (Rose, 1994). Today, the WFN includes more than 100 member women’s funds in more than 30 countries on six continents that “define fund-raising and fund allocation as a strategy for empowering women and achieving social change” (Brilliant, 2000, p. 554; WFN, 2013).

Little academic research has taken place on women’s funds since 2000, and the existing research has focused more on organizational development and culture, external factors, and social movement theory than on the motivations and behaviors of individual donors to these funds. While little studied, it is thought that women’s programs and organizations are supported by individual women far more than male donors. These can include national women’s rights



organizations; professional women's groups and caucuses; women's labor groups; organizations serving women of color; women's studies programs and centers; feminist publications and media; global women's groups; and women's services such as rape crises centers, battered women's shelters, family planning clinics, and women's legal defense funds. In an early report, the Feminist Majority Foundation (1991) found that over 85 percent of the National Organization for Women's and the Fund for the Feminist Majority's donors are women, and over 60 percent of direct mail gifts to women's organizations come from women, but these figures have not been updated. Who is giving to support women's and girls' causes today?

While previous research has not significantly explored who gives to women's and girls' causes, some charitable giving surveys have asked respondents to prioritize social issues, including women's rights. In a previous working paper, the Women's Philanthropy Institute found that in both a general population sample and a high net worth sample<sup>1</sup>, single women are more likely to prioritize women's rights as a social issue than single men (Mesch, Osili, Ackerman, & Dale, 2015). When the samples of married or cohabitating couples are divided by the type of decision-making model they use (husband or wife solely decides, jointly decide, separately decide), they also find general population couples where the wife solely decides are also more likely than jointly-deciding couples to prioritize women's rights (Mesch et al., 2015). Yet, existing data does not allow researchers to determine how these issue preferences translate into specific giving priorities.

Based on the prior research on women's foundations and the results of large-scale survey research, we seek to understand which individual donors are supporting women's and girls' causes and what motivates such giving. Specifically, our research questions are:

1. Among the general donor population, who supports women's and girls' causes?
  - a. What demographic patterns are present?
  - b. What is the relationship between giving to women and girls and other established charitable subsectors?
2. What do donors to women's and girls' causes express as their motivations for giving? How might these experiences be unique among this donor population?
3. Why might donors not give to women's and girls' causes? What barriers exist to growing such support?

The next section explains how we designed the current study.

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<sup>1</sup> For the referenced study, high net worth is defined as annual household income of \$200,000 or more, and/or net worth of \$1 million or more, excluding the value of the primary residence.

### III. Methodology

As this study investigated new research questions, we chose a sequential mixed methods research design to gather multiple kinds of data about individual giving to women and girls. In the first phase, we conducted a survey of the general U.S. population to provide initial quantitative data on giving to women's and girls' issues to specifically address our first research question: who supports women's and girls' causes? Because data about such giving had not been collected previously, we partnered with GfK to field an eight-question survey as part of the GfK KnowledgePanel Omnibus (KPOmni) survey. The KPOmni survey provides a national, representative sample of the U.S. population. The survey included key baseline questions from the Philanthropy Panel Study (PPS) in order to benchmark results. Respondents were asked specifically about their charitable giving to women's and girls' issues and were asked to rank a series of social issue priorities. The survey is in Appendix A.

In the second phase, we conducted a series of focus groups in three cities across the U.S. to address research questions two and three – what draws donors to direct charitable support to organizations serving women and girls? Building on prior charitable giving research, focus groups have several strengths. Burgoyne, Young and Walker (2005) write, “First, [a focus group] emulates the process of discussion that takes place when people are forming opinions, with an opportunity for views to be challenged by other group members, thus providing deeper insights into underlying assumptions and beliefs. Second, it typically yields a rich source of data that has the potential both to inform policy and to generate hypotheses for future research.” While surveys provide quantifiable data that can be tested, qualitative data helps researchers uncover meanings and experiences. Together, quantitative and qualitative data provide enhanced rigor and multiple data points (Creswell, 2013).

We partnered with United Way agencies and member agencies of the Women's Funding Network to host a focus group of donors in three metropolitan areas: one city on the East Coast, one in the Midwest, and one on the West Coast. Specific cities were selected based on the research team's relationships with key organizations, as well as a desire to conduct focus groups with geographic diversity. Working within two established organizational networks also provided consistency among our research partners. These organizations were chosen because we wanted to include donors who actively gave to women's and girls' causes as well as donors who supported a more general set of causes. By hosting a focus group of donors from each umbrella organization, we were able to examine the role of donor selectivity, comparing and contrasting responses from donors who self-identified as supporting women and girls and those who are active philanthropically, but support a more general set of community needs. We asked partner agencies to invite donors who gave at least \$1,000 annually, with a goal of recruiting six to 12 participants per organization. We encouraged organizations to invite their donors using a randomized method, although a lack of response required some organizations to use more personalized recruitment. The researchers were not involved in participant selection beyond providing overall guidance to partner organizations on donor characteristics and randomized methods.

We conducted a total of seven focus groups with 51 participants. Each focus group had between six and eight participants and ranged in length from just over one hour to one hour and 20 minutes. We held one focus group at each organization's headquarters, with the exception of the Midwestern United Way where we had 15 participants arrive and divided participants into two separate focus groups. Participants were asked to begin the focus group by introducing

themselves and the top three or four organizations they currently support. The moderator then asked a series of questions about motivations for giving, giving to women’s and girls’ causes, and making giving decisions. In each focus group, the moderator also distributed a list of 15 causes that related specifically to women’s and girls’ issues to prompt participants’ reactions. This was the same list of causes that appeared in the KPOMni survey. The interview protocol and list of causes are in Appendices B and C, respectively.

All focus group conversations were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Comments were not attributed to individual participants beyond the introductions as the conversation was viewed as the product of the group. Each organization was identified with a specific code, detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Focus Group Codes

| Organization              | Code       |
|---------------------------|------------|
| United Way – East Coast   | UWE        |
| United Way - Midwest      | UWM1, UWM2 |
| United Way – West Coast   | UWW        |
| Women’s Fund – East Coast | WFE        |
| Women’s Fund – Midwest    | WFM        |
| Women’s Fund – West Coast | WFW        |

Following a modified version of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), two researchers independently engaged in open, line-by-line coding of two transcripts, one from a United Way and one from a women’s fund. The researchers then convened to compare codes and developed a working list of codes to use for the remaining transcripts. In total, the researchers identified 122 codes. Codes were then grouped into 15 larger categories which were used to construct themes; a list of these codes and categories is in Appendix D. As the focus group conversations touched on many topics in addition to giving to women’s and girls’ causes, not all themes are presented in this paper.

While the sequential, mixed-method design of this study is a strength, both the survey and focus groups represent single points in time. Moreover, the focus groups did not represent a general population sample, but a group of donors already giving and involved in charitable organizations. A final challenge in this research was defining and isolating giving to women’s and girls’ causes as such giving can also be thought of as giving to human services, basic needs, education, etc. To address this, we used a defined list of women’s and girls’ causes in both the survey and focus groups to help prompt respondents.

## IV. Results

### *A. General Population Survey*

Key findings:

- Overall, female respondents are more likely than male respondents to give to women's and girls' causes. Considering women's likelihood to give women's and girls' causes, women also give larger amounts to these causes.
- Single women are more likely than single men to give to women's and girls' causes, and married women are marginally more likely than married men to give to women's and girls' causes.
- Female respondents are more likely than male respondents to give to some specific women's and girls'-related causes, including: domestic violence; women's centers; lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights; cancer research, diagnosis, and support (breast, ovarian, etc.); and economic opportunities for women and girls.
- Age and income are the most likely determinants of giving to women's and girls' causes; other control variables do not affect giving to a similar extent.
- Respondents who give to women's and girls' causes are more likely to indicate that women's rights and community development are social issue priorities to them, and are less likely to indicate that tax policy is a priority for them.

We first present the results of the KP Omni survey data, which includes 999 total observations. Around 70 percent of all households surveyed indicate that they gave to charity in calendar year 2014, slightly higher than the 58 percent of households reporting giving in the 2013 Philanthropy Panel Study (but closer to the 63 percent average over seven waves of PPS data). Women reported giving at a higher incidence (72.1 percent of women compared to 66.9 percent of men); however, men reported giving higher average gift amounts. When examined separately, married or cohabitating couples were more likely to give compared to single female- or male-headed households, and gave higher average amounts. Descriptive statistics, based on gender, are shown in Table 2 below. It is important to note that these are summary statistics and do not include any controls for variables such as education, income, or other household demographics. When asked specifically about giving to women's and girls' causes, 28.9 percent of respondents indicated that they donated to these causes (or 42.3 percent of donors). Women reported giving to women and girls at a higher incidence, 33.3 percent of all female respondents compared to 24.2 percent of all male respondents (or 46.7 percent of all female donors, compared to 37.1 percent of all male donors).

Table 2: GfK KnowledgePanel Summary Statistics

|                    | Fraction of Total Households                  | Incidence of Giving              | Total Observations |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Male Respondents   | 48.6%   | 66.9%                            | 486                |
| Female Respondents | 51.4%   | 72.1%                            | 513                |
| <hr/>              |   |                                  |                    |
| Couples            | 62.4%   | 75.0%                            | 623                |
| Single Male        | 18.5%   | 55.7%                            | 185                |
| Single Female      | 19.1%   | 65.4%                            | 191                |
| <hr/>              |   |                                  |                    |
| Total              | 100%  | 69.6%                            | 999                |
| <hr/>              |   |                                  |                    |
|                    | Average Giving Amount (Conditional on Giving) | Observations of Donor Households |                    |
| Male Respondents   | \$ 2,012                                      |                                  | 305                |
| Female Respondents | \$ 1,254                                      |                                  | 355                |
| <hr/>              |   |                                  |                    |
| Couples            | \$ 1,930                                      |                                  | 446                |
| Single Male        | \$ 999  |                                  | 94                 |
| Single Female      | \$ 870  |                                  | 120                |
| <hr/>              |   |                                  |                    |
| Total              | \$ 1,605                                      |                                  | 660 <sup>2</sup>   |

***Research Question 1: Among the general donor population, who supports women’s and girls’ causes?***

Our first research question asks, generally, what type of person tends to donate to women’s and girls’ causes? Table 3 below provides overall results for the incidence and amount of giving to women’s and girls’ causes. For the incidence of giving, we provide results for all women’s and girls’ causes combined. Because women’s general health and cancer research may be confused with more general forms of giving, we conducted the analysis for incidence of giving excluding these two smaller purposes within giving to women and girls.

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<sup>2</sup> While 69.6 percent of responding households indicated that they gave to charity in the previous calendar year, some of those respondents did not subsequently provide information about the dollar amount they gave to charity, which is why the total observations for the amount of giving (660) does not equal 69.6 percent of the 999 total respondents.

Table 3: Giving to Women's and Girls' Causes

|                              | Incidence (Probit)          |                                   | Amount <sup>3</sup> |                      |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|                              | All Giving to Women & Girls | Excluding Cancer & General Health | OLS (Donors only)   | Tobit (Full sample)  |
| Female                       | 0.252**<br>(0.0985)         | 0.239**<br>(0.104)                | -49.86<br>(126.4)   | 203.6*<br>(111.5)    |
| Couple                       | -0.0586<br>(0.115)          | -0.0543<br>(0.122)                | 75.53<br>(74.22)    | -10.74<br>(99.54)    |
| Age                          | 0.0195***<br>(0.00360)      | 0.0152***<br>(0.00385)            | 3.041<br>(4.375)    | 17.52***<br>(5.407)  |
| Race: Non-White              | 0.156<br>(0.118)            | 0.155<br>(0.123)                  | 19.87<br>(144.8)    | 153.9<br>(134.1)     |
| Education: Bachelors or More | 0.0591<br>(0.106)           | 0.110<br>(0.111)                  | 50.68<br>(179.0)    | 56.32<br>(133.5)     |
| Income                       | 0.169**<br>(0.0659)         | 0.101<br>(0.0696)                 | 81.87<br>(114.9)    | 206.5**<br>(93.32)   |
| Children <18                 | 0.138<br>(0.116)            | 0.120<br>(0.123)                  | 189.9<br>(196.9)    | 189.7<br>(143.7)     |
| Employed                     | -0.0423<br>(0.105)          | -0.0574<br>(0.109)                | 67.75<br>(171.7)    | -15.04<br>(120.6)    |
| Constant                     | -3.533***<br>(0.740)        | -2.837***<br>(0.777)              | -871.2<br>(1,353)   | -4,184***<br>(1,334) |
| Observations                 | 959                         | 959                               | 268                 | 950                  |
| R-squared                    |                             |                                   | 0.037               |                      |

Notes: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ . Robust standard errors in parentheses. In addition to control variables included above, all specifications control for geographic region.

Table 4 below provides results for the incidence of giving to specific subsets of women's and girls' causes. Data on the dollar amounts given to women's and girls' causes was only asked of survey respondents for their overall giving to such causes; therefore we have only results for incidence of giving (and no results for amount of giving) to these specific subsets of causes.

<sup>3</sup> The OLS regression coefficient is interpreted as the effect of a variable (sex, age, etc.) on the amount given. The Tobit regression coefficient is interpreted differently, as the combination of (1) the change in amount given for those who give to women's and girls' causes (2) weighted by the change in probability of giving to women's and girls' causes. In other words, Tobit regression analyzes the amount given, taking into account that some respondents do not give.

Table 4: Giving to Specific Subsets of Women's and Girls' Causes

|                              | Domestic violence    | Mothers/ child care/ well-being | Women's centers      | Immigrant / refugee women | Human trafficking / sexual abuse | Rehab. of women offenders | Gender equality/ women's rights | Lesbian, bisexual & trans-gender rights | Female genital mutilation | Advocacy for sexual/ reproductive rights | General health (incl. mental health) | Cancer (breast, ovarian, etc.) | Reproductive health | Maternal/ infant health | Economic opportunities for women and girls | Other               |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Female                       | 0.316**<br>(0.130)   | 0.103<br>(0.132)                | 0.322**<br>(0.156)   | -0.0207<br>(0.201)        | 0.0819<br>(0.191)                | -0.0603<br>(0.264)        | 0.424<br>(0.259)                | 0.442**<br>(0.217)                      | 0.392<br>(0.405)          | 0.0754<br>(0.201)                        | 0.0262<br>(0.153)                    | 0.260**<br>(0.117)             | 0.0434<br>(0.189)   | 0.0224<br>(0.162)       | 0.316**<br>(0.157)                         | 0.110<br>(0.230)    |
| Couple                       | -0.0327<br>(0.157)   | -0.0554<br>(0.158)              | -0.00730<br>(0.169)  | 0.0444<br>(0.214)         | -0.0668<br>(0.216)               | 0.261<br>(0.284)          | -0.0342<br>(0.246)              | 0.213<br>(0.315)                        | -0.340<br>(0.343)         | -0.262<br>(0.224)                        | -0.272<br>(0.187)                    | 0.0481<br>(0.137)              | -0.376*<br>(0.220)  | -0.413**<br>(0.186)     | -0.195<br>(0.197)                          | 0.540<br>(0.414)    |
| Age                          | 0.0138***<br>(0.005) | 0.0101**<br>(0.005)             | 0.00735<br>(0.005)   | -0.00279<br>(0.006)       | 0.00540<br>(0.007)               | 0.0325***<br>(0.0099)     | -0.00349<br>(0.008)             | 0.00328<br>(0.012)                      | 0.0781***<br>(0.025)      | 0.0108<br>(0.008)                        | 0.0160**<br>(0.006)                  | 0.0204***<br>(0.004)           | -0.00380<br>(0.007) | 0.0109*<br>(0.006)      | 0.0174***<br>(0.006)                       | 0.0284**<br>(0.014) |
| Race: Non-White              | 0.265*<br>(0.139)    | -0.154<br>(0.171)               | 0.247<br>(0.172)     | 0.227<br>(0.199)          | 0.0178<br>(0.216)                | -0.0464<br>(0.413)        | -0.324<br>(0.254)               | -0.419<br>(0.268)                       | 0.132<br>(0.346)          | -0.0727<br>(0.298)                       | 0.0963<br>(0.179)                    | 0.169<br>(0.137)               | 0.0388<br>(0.191)   | -0.0716<br>(0.183)      | 0.325*<br>(0.181)                          | 0.300<br>(0.340)    |
| Education: Bachelors or More | -0.0108<br>(0.142)   | 0.00894<br>(0.147)              | 0.00177<br>(0.161)   | 0.0735<br>(0.216)         | -0.0666<br>(0.189)               | -0.233<br>(0.293)         | 0.262<br>(0.239)                | 0.378<br>(0.277)                        | 0.645<br>(0.411)          | 0.179<br>(0.211)                         | -0.134<br>(0.180)                    | -0.176<br>(0.124)              | 0.197<br>(0.210)    | 0.0922<br>(0.179)       | 0.0160<br>(0.168)                          | 0.528*<br>(0.279)   |
| Income                       | 0.102<br>(0.0836)    | 0.0777<br>(0.0997)              | 0.165<br>(0.133)     | 0.147<br>(0.116)          | -0.0707<br>(0.0913)              | -0.0840<br>(0.128)        | -0.0185<br>(0.105)              | 0.359*<br>(0.216)                       | 0.0864<br>(0.240)         | 0.0430<br>(0.126)                        | 0.134<br>(0.100)                     | 0.245***<br>(0.076)            | 0.0580<br>(0.145)   | 0.0541<br>(0.119)       | 0.207**<br>(0.098)                         | -0.171<br>(0.130)   |
| Children <18                 | 0.106<br>(0.164)     | 0.189<br>(0.170)                | -0.213<br>(0.163)    | -0.120<br>(0.227)         | 0.121<br>(0.178)                 | 0.239<br>(0.292)          | -0.139<br>(0.251)               | -0.422<br>(0.378)                       |                           | -0.170<br>(0.254)                        | 0.0429<br>(0.226)                    | 0.206<br>(0.143)               | 0.0583<br>(0.224)   | 0.388*<br>(0.204)       | 0.148<br>(0.212)                           | 0.362<br>(0.297)    |
| Employed                     | -0.126<br>(0.135)    | -0.227*<br>(0.130)              | 0.00280<br>(0.150)   | -0.121<br>(0.194)         | 0.520**<br>(0.230)               | -0.132<br>(0.299)         | 0.0897<br>(0.246)               | 0.0509<br>(0.292)                       | 1.461***<br>(0.474)       | -0.272<br>(0.181)                        | -0.0211<br>(0.167)                   | 0.0545<br>(0.125)              | -0.0391<br>(0.205)  | -0.0704<br>(0.162)      | -0.101<br>(0.160)                          | -0.0575<br>(0.312)  |
| Constant                     | -3.311***<br>(0.951) | -2.858***<br>(1.104)            | -4.008***<br>(1.532) | -3.496***<br>(1.339)      | -1.736**<br>(0.871)              | -3.680**<br>(1.460)       | -1.774<br>(1.172)               | -6.403**<br>(2.568)                     | -9.545***<br>(2.316)      | -2.669**<br>(1.300)                      | -3.996***<br>(1.169)                 | -5.094***<br>(0.858)           | -2.016<br>(1.596)   | -3.006**<br>(1.355)     | -4.946***<br>(1.012)                       | -3.228*<br>(1.859)  |
| Obs.                         | 959                  | 959                             | 959                  | 959                       | 959                              | 959                       | 959                             | 959                                     | 655                       | 959                                      | 959                                  | 959                            | 959                 | 959                     | 959  | 959                 |

Notes: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ . All specifications use Probit to analyze incidence of giving to a specific subset of women's and girls' causes. Robust standard errors in parentheses. In addition to control variables included above, all specifications control for geographic region.

Table 3, above, indicates that female respondents are more likely than men to give to women's and girls' causes, holding all other factors constant. Taking into account that women are more likely than men to give to women's and girls' causes, women also tend to give higher amounts to women's and girls' causes. Table 4 indicates that female respondents are also more likely than male respondents to give to a number of specific purposes within women's and girls' causes: domestic violence; women's centers; lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights; cancer research, diagnosis, and support (breast, ovarian, etc.); and economic opportunities for women and girls. It is important to note that these results include both single-headed and married-couple households, and examine gender differences based on the sex of the survey respondent, rather than just single male and single female households.

Because of a limited sample size, we did not conduct regression analyses for the single or coupled donor households alone. However, we did perform basic one-tailed t-tests to determine differences between smaller portions of the sample.<sup>4</sup> Note that t-test results do not control for other variables such as income, age, etc.

T-tests confirm the regression findings above, showing that overall, female respondents are significantly more likely to give to women's and girls' causes than male respondents, and they are more likely to give to a number of particular issues. Further, these t-tests also indicate that single women are more likely to give to women's and girls' causes than single men, and married women are marginally more likely ( $p < 0.1$ ) to give to women's and girls' causes than married men. These findings hold true for a number of specific subsets of giving to women and girls. Single women are more likely than single men to give to mothers/child care/child well-being; cancer research, diagnosis, and support (breast, ovarian, etc.); and economic opportunities for women and girls; and are marginally more likely to give to gender equality and women's rights, and human trafficking/sexual abuse and exploitation. Married women are more likely than married men to give to domestic violence and women's centers, and are marginally more likely to give to gender equality and women's rights.

Finally, we examined coupled households divided by charitable decision-making style (husband or wife solely decides, jointly decide, separately decide) and find no overall difference in the likelihood of giving to women's and girls' causes between couples based on decision-making style. However, we do find some differences for specific subsets of women's and girls' causes. Jointly-deciding couples are marginally more likely ( $p < 0.1$ ) to give to domestic violence. Households where the wife is the sole decider are more likely to give to cancer research, diagnosis, and support (breast, ovarian, etc.) and to economic opportunities for women and girls.

### ***Research Question 1a: What demographic patterns are present?***

We use the same Tables 3 and 4, above, to look in more detail at who gives to women's and girls' causes, by focusing on the survey's demographic control variables. First, we find that married and cohabitating ("coupled") households are not statistically significantly more likely to

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<sup>4</sup> T-tests determine whether a difference between two numbers is likely due to chance or due to a certain factor. For example, here we use t-tests to determine whether the proportion of female respondents giving to women's and girls' causes is higher than the proportion of male respondents giving to those issues because of a gender difference or because of chance. We use one-tailed t-tests in this case because we assume that the difference in giving will only be in one direction. In other words, we assume that if there is a gender difference in giving to women's and girls' causes, it will be in the direction of more women giving than men.



give to women's and girls' causes compared to single-headed households, holding other factors constant. This finding is mirrored in Table 4: when we look at specific subsets of women's and girls' causes, we find very few types of causes where couples' giving differs from that of single-headed households. Married and cohabitating households are actually less likely to give to maternal and infant health; and are marginally less likely to give to reproductive health.

Age is a significant demographic variable, both for incidence and amount of overall giving to women and girls (Table 3) and for specific subsets of such giving (Table 4). As the age of the respondent increases, the respondent is more likely to report giving to women's and girls' causes. Further, the Tobit analysis indicates that, taking into account that likelihood of giving increases with age, older people (of both sexes) also tend to give higher amounts to women's and girls' causes. Age is also a significant predictor of giving to specific subsets of women's and girls' causes. As age increases, respondents become more likely to give to most subsets of these causes (nine out of the 16 total categories). Of note is that age is not significant among giving to human trafficking; reproductive health and advocacy; and lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights—causes which may appeal more to younger donors.

Income is also significant in some cases. In Table 3 above, as a respondent's household income increases, the household is more likely to give to women's and girls' causes, holding other factors constant. This effect may be due in part to more general types of giving to women's health-related causes, as when those more general causes are excluded, household income loses its significance. The Tobit analysis also indicates that, taking into account that income affects the likelihood of giving, those with higher incomes also tend to give higher amounts to women's and girls' causes. In terms of specific types of giving to women and girls, in Table 4 we find that as income increases, respondents are more likely to give to cancer research, support, and diagnosis (breast, ovarian, etc.); they are also more likely to give to economic opportunities for women and girls, and are marginally more likely to give to lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues.

While key control variables do have a significant relationship with giving to women and girls, variables that are not significant also provide some interesting context. Race, education level, the presence of children under 18 in the household, and employment status do not appear to impact the incidence or amount of giving to women's and girls' causes. While some of these variables do have a relationship with specific types of giving to women and girls, this is much more limited than other variables mentioned above. Respondents who are non-white are marginally more likely to give to domestic violence and economic opportunities for women and girls. Families with children under 18 in the home are marginally more likely to give to maternal and infant health. Finally, households where the respondent is employed are more likely to give to human trafficking/sexual abuse and exploitation, and female genital mutilation, and are marginally less likely to give to mothers/child care/child well-being.

***Research Question 1b: What is the relationship between giving to women and girls and other established subsectors?***

To explore Research Question 1b, we analyzed the relationship between giving to women's and girls' causes and giving to other subsectors in a number of ways, including through correlation matrices and regression analyses. As with key analyses above, we conducted the analysis using all subsets of women's and girls' causes, and also excluded giving to women's general health, and cancer research, because giving to these causes may be confused with more general forms of giving. We find consistently through multiple types of analyses that the

relationship between giving to women’s and girls’ causes and giving to any other subsector is highly significant. These results are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Giving to Women’s and Girls’ Causes and Giving to Other Causes

|                  | Incidence                   |                                   | Amount (Log+1)              |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                  | All Giving to Women & Girls | Excluding Cancer & General Health | All Giving to Women & Girls |
| Religion         | 0.242***                    | 0.216***                          | 0.293***                    |
| Combination      | 0.319***                    | 0.279***                          | 0.335***                    |
| Basic Needs      | 0.444***                    | 0.380***                          | 0.483***                    |
| Health           | 0.412***                    | 0.211***                          | 0.436***                    |
| K-12 Education   | 0.261***                    | 0.239***                          | 0.282***                    |
| Higher Education | 0.199***                    | 0.169***                          | 0.194***                    |
| Youth/ Family    | 0.320***                    | 0.253***                          | 0.320***                    |
| Arts             | 0.240***                    | 0.225***                          | 0.266***                    |
| Neighborhood     | 0.291***                    | 0.182***                          | 0.305***                    |
| Environment      | 0.249***                    | 0.179***                          | 0.257***                    |
| International    | 0.277***                    | 0.270***                          | 0.304***                    |
| Other            | 0.137***                    | 0.113***                          | 0.184***                    |
| Observations     | 959                         | 959                               | 950                         |

Notes: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ . All specifications are pairwise correlations. Amount of giving to particular women’s and girls’ causes was not measured.

Results in Table 5 report pairwise correlation coefficients on the relationship between giving to women’s and girls’ causes and giving to other causes or charitable subsectors. These results reflect the fact that “women and girls” is not a distinct subsector, but is linked to other subsectors. All coefficients are highly significant, which may not be surprising given that collinearity is a concern for this analysis. In other words, giving to women and girls is closely related to giving to health, basic needs, education and other subsectors. In general, giving to any one sector is likely to be highly correlated with giving to any other sector because the same factors influence that giving, such as income and wealth.

We find significant correlations between giving to women and girls and the incidence and amount of giving to all subsectors. However, the magnitude of the correlation does vary, and looking at the differences in the coefficients can indicate which relationships are strongest. Across all columns in Table 5 (two measures of incidence of giving, and amount of giving), giving to basic needs has the strongest correlation with giving to women and girls. The incidence and amount of giving to all women’s and girls’ causes is also linked to health, youth and family, and combination organizations. When key general women’s health categories are excluded, basic needs has the greatest correlation with the incidence of giving to women and girls, followed by combination, international, and youth and family organizations.

### *Additional Findings on Giving to Women and Girls*

In addition to the key research questions above, the KPOmni survey also asked about *how* donors prioritize giving to women and girls. The survey asked whether respondents: give to areas that specifically impact women and girls; give to organizations that focus in part on women and girls, but not to a specific “women’s and girls” issue; or do not focus giving on women and girls, but support other issues. We found that 14.6 percent of respondents report giving to an area specifically impacting women and girls; 29.4 percent give to organizations that focus on women’s and girls’ issues in part, but do not give specifically to an issue in our list; and the remaining 56.0 percent do not focus their giving on women and girls. When we analyzed this data with a gender lens, we found no significant differences; women and men are equally likely to select one response or another.

Finally, we also explored whether there is a relationship between the incidence of giving to women’s and girls’ causes, and indicating the importance of a particular social issue; the results are displayed in Table 6 below. There is a positive, significant relationship between giving to women’s and girls’ issues and prioritizing women’s rights, and a negative, significant relationship between giving to women’s and girls’ issues and prioritizing tax policy. In other words, respondents who give to women’s and girls’ causes are more likely to indicate that women’s rights are a social issue priority to them, and vice versa for tax policy. As in previous analyses, we also present results excluding two women’s health-related causes. Additionally, when these causes are excluded, respondents who give to women’s and girls’ causes are more likely to prioritize community development, and are marginally more likely to prioritize animals and animal rights; the positive relationship with prioritizing women’s rights and the negative relationship with prioritizing tax policy remain significant.

Table 6: Giving to Women's and Girls' Causes and Social Issue Prioritization

|                          | All Women's & Girls' Giving | Excluding Cancer & General Health |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Animals/ animal rights   | 0.0147<br>(0.131)           | 0.255*<br>(0.140)                 |
| Arts/ culture            | 0.252<br>(0.163)            | 0.146<br>(0.179)                  |
| Community development    | 0.205<br>(0.158)            | 0.371**<br>(0.167)                |
| Crime/ criminal justice  | -0.151<br>(0.141)           | -0.233<br>(0.160)                 |
| Disaster relief          | 0.0363<br>(0.138)           | 0.0777<br>(0.152)                 |
| Economy/ federal deficit | -0.157<br>(0.117)           | -0.143<br>(0.129)                 |
| Education                | 0.166<br>(0.106)            | 0.155<br>(0.119)                  |
| Environment              | -0.0673<br>(0.115)          | -0.00328<br>(0.127)               |
| Health care              | 0.0786<br>(0.103)           | -0.0634<br>(0.112)                |
| Human rights             | -0.0574<br>(0.120)          | 0.133<br>(0.130)                  |
| Improving infrastructure | 0.0770<br>(0.141)           | 0.248<br>(0.152)                  |
| Income inequality        | 0.102<br>(0.137)            | 0.193<br>(0.149)                  |
| International issues     | 0.0819<br>(0.176)           | -0.103<br>(0.220)                 |
| LGBT rights              | 0.00157<br>(0.150)          | 0.166<br>(0.161)                  |
| National security        | -0.0471<br>(0.119)          | -0.217<br>(0.131)                 |
| Poverty                  | -0.0592<br>(0.111)          | -0.0729<br>(0.123)                |
| Race/ cultural relations | 0.121<br>(0.180)            | 0.176<br>(0.188)                  |
| Tax policy               | -0.287*<br>(0.150)          | -0.477***<br>(0.181)              |
| Veterans' affairs        | 0.0960<br>(0.119)           | 0.0515<br>(0.131)                 |
| Women's rights           | 0.242*<br>(0.136)           | 0.442***<br>(0.146)               |
| Observations             | 959                         | 959                               |

Notes: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ . Robust standard errors in parentheses. Each cell represents a separate regression. All specifications are in Probit and control for sex, marital status, age, race, education, income, children under 18, employment status, and geographic region.

## Million Dollar List Gifts to Women's and Girls' Causes

We conducted a separate descriptive analysis of the Million Dollar List to add to our information about giving to women's and girls' issues. The Million Dollar List (MDL) is a database of publicly announced million-dollar-plus charitable donations from U.S. donors. Data on donations are collected from public announcements and other publicly available sources, and supplemented with tax data when available. For this analysis, we use MDL data on donations made or announced from 2000 to 2014. Looking at this data allows provides insights into the very largest gifts directed specifically to women's and girls' issues.

To isolate gifts to women's and girls' causes, we searched the database for gifts whose notes included key words such as "girl," "woman," "reproductive," "maternal," "gender," and "trafficking" (including variations of these words). We hand-coded these gifts to remove gifts that did not apply.

We identified 1,226 gifts worth \$6.22 billion that were directed specifically to women's and girls' causes. These gifts comprised 1.6 percent of all MDL gifts, and 1.2 percent of the total value. Example MDL gifts to women's and girls' causes include:

- \$1.15 million given in 2007 from the Naples Children and Education Foundation to the PACE Center for Girls in Florida, which provides educational opportunities for underprivileged young women
- \$3.17 million given in 2007 from the NoVo Foundation to Women for Women International, an organization that assists women in war-torn countries
- \$3 million given in 2008 from the Nike Foundation to the Adolescent Girls Initiative, which teaches job skills to young women in developing countries
- \$25 million given in 2012 from the Ford Foundation to Girls Not Brides, a UK-based nonprofit seeking to end child marriage
- \$3 million given in 2013 from Google for the Global Human Trafficking Hotline

We further explored the broad donor types giving to these issues. Of the 1,226 gifts to women's and girls' causes on the MDL, the vast majority (76.0 percent) came from foundations (including private foundations and not only women's foundations); 12.6 percent came from individuals, and 11.3 percent from corporations. When individual donors were further divided by sex, no clear patterns emerged. Couples, single female, and single male donors all gave about the same number of gifts to women's and girls' causes. While we might have expected single women to give more gifts to these causes, it is important to keep in mind that the MDL is a record of the top-value donations, which are not given equally by men and women; moreover, we cannot control for wealth or income in this sample.

Next, we examined the subsectors where gifts to women's and girls' causes were directed. Of the 1,226 gifts to women's and girls' causes on the MDL, the largest portion was directed to human services (404 gifts, or 33.0 percent of the gifts to women's and girls' causes), followed by the international subsector (14.5 percent), higher education (13.6 percent), and health (12.7 percent).

Finally, we explored the trend in MDL gifts to women's and girls' causes from 2000 to 2014. The number of gifts as a percentage of all gifts on the MDL fluctuates from a low of 1.1 percent in 2004, to a high of 2.7 percent in 2012. These percentages should be interpreted with caution as the number of gifts made in a particular year fluctuates based on other factors, such as economic trends.

## ***B. Focus Groups***

### Key Findings:

- Donors who concentrate their giving on women and girls tend to have a more focused approach to their giving as compared to donors who support a wide range of causes.
- Donors who support causes for women and girls expressed motivations in terms of their personal experiences and the belief that women's equality leads to societal progress.
- Donors to women's funds saw these organizations as having particular expertise and trusted them to distribute grants effectively.
- Donors seek a range of opportunities to support children especially through multiple channels including sex-specific initiatives as well as initiatives that benefit all children so that no child is ignored.

As mentioned above, focus groups are a way of collecting qualitative data through engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion around a topic or issue. Instead of asking questions of each participant, the moderator facilitates discussion and the "interaction between participants is a key feature of focus group research" (Wilkinson, 2003, p. 185). For our research on giving to women's and girls' issues, focus groups allowed participants to explore their motivations for giving, experiences as donors, and ideas about particular charitable causes. One of the particular advantages of using focus groups is that other individuals can help elicit participants' thoughts, opinions, and understandings through triggering memories, stimulating debate, and facilitating disclosure. However, it is important to understand that focus group findings are not generalizable as samples are small and do not represent all viewpoints (Wilkinson, 2003).

Overall, the 51 focus group participants represented a diverse group of donors; however one key exception was the women's fund donors, who were all female. At the conclusion of each focus group, participants were asked to complete a short demographic survey. Table 7 shows a description of the participants, divided by participant organization. Twenty-nine participants attended United Way focus groups, including 17 women and 12 men. They ranged in age from 29 to 83 years old. Among the United Way donors, 21 participants identified as white and eight as Black or African American. The majority of participants were married, had one or more children, and had annual household incomes above \$100,000.

The participants in the women's funds focus groups were more similar to one another and yet represented more racial diversity. All 22 participants were women. Seventeen participants identified as White, four as Black or African American, two as Hispanic or Latino, and one as other, with two participants selecting multiple categories. Participants ranged in age from 37 to 88 years old. The majority of participants (18) were married, and all had been married at some point in their lives. Only two participants did not have children. All participants had graduated from college and had household incomes above \$100,000 a year.

Table 7: Focus Group Participant Demographics

| Summary Statistics |  | United Way | Women's Funds | Total |
|--------------------|--|------------|---------------|-------|
| Gender             | Male                                       | 12         | 0             | 12    |
|                    | Female                                     | 17         | 22            | 39    |
| Age                | Range                                      | 29-83      | 37-88         | 29-88 |
|                    | Average                                    | 56         | 59            | 57    |
| Race               | Black or African American                  | 8          | 4             | 12    |
|                    | Hispanic or Latino                         | 0          | 2             | 2     |
|                    | White                                      | 21         | 17            | 38    |
|                    | Other                                      | 0          | 1             | 1     |
|                    | Multiple                                   | 0          | 2             | 2     |
| Marital Status     | Single                                     | 6          | 0             | 6     |
|                    | Married                                    | 16         | 18            | 34    |
|                    | Living with a domestic partner/civil union | 1          | 1             | 2     |
|                    | Divorced                                   | 5          | 2             | 7     |
|                    | Widowed                                    | 1          | 1             | 2     |
| Children           | 0  | 10         | 2             | 12    |
|                    | 1  | 3          | 2             | 5     |
|                    | 2  | 9          | 9             | 18    |
|                    | 3  | 6          | 4             | 10    |
|                    | 4 or more                                  | 1          | 5             | 6     |
| Education          | High school, associate's, or some college  | 2          | 0             | 2     |
|                    | Bachelor's degree (BA/BS/AB)               | 11         | 6             | 17    |
|                    | Master's degree                            | 8          | 9             | 17    |
|                    | Doctorate or professional degree           | 8          | 7             | 15    |
| Household Income   | \$50,000 - \$74,999                        | 6          | 0             | 6     |
|                    | \$75,000 - \$99,999                        | 1          | 0             | 1     |
|                    | \$100,000-\$149,999                        | 3          | 3             | 6     |
|                    | \$150,000-\$199,999                        | 4          | 6             | 10    |
|                    | \$200,000-\$499,999                        | 11         | 9             | 20    |
|                    | \$500,000-\$999,999                        | 2          | 1             | 3     |
|                    | \$1,000,000 or more                        | 1          | 3             | 4     |

***Research Question 1: Among the general donor population, who supports women's and girls' causes?***

Donors in both types of focus groups supported a wide variety of causes and charitable organizations, from churches and synagogues to educational institutions, human services nonprofits, and health organizations. Despite such variety, however, the focus groups yielded two very different groups of donors with respect to supporting women's and girls' causes: donors

who often had giving to women and girls as a focus of their philanthropy and donors who broadly directed their giving to a range of causes, with no particular focus on women and girls. Among the United Way participants, donors identified 100 organizations as the focus of their philanthropy during their introductions; only six of these organizations primarily served women and girls. These organizations included a local women's fund, Girls Inc., a women's homeless shelter, a sorority, Dress for Success, and the Girl Scouts of America.

In comparison, the women's fund participants identified 83 organizations in their introductions, of which 36 primarily or exclusively served women and girls. In addition to the local women's funds in each city, donors supported reproductive rights organizations, international organizations for women, all girls' K-12 schools, women's colleges, women's arts organizations, women's social service organizations, sororities and membership organizations, national women's funds (i.e., Ms. Foundation), organizations for young women, and organizations for women in sports. In their introductions, six of the 22 women's fund participants only named organizations that supported women and girls, and three more donors supported at least two organizations that focused on women and/or girls as their top philanthropic priorities. Several of these donors were extremely focused in their philanthropy, saying, "I've really spent a lot of time thinking about being very, very focused, incredibly focused in my giving as a way of saying no... and I have really decided it's all about women and girls. There are other areas that we're involved in, but for me and my energy, it's all about women and girls" (WFE, 102) and "[I'm here] on a rainy Monday, and I'm doing three other events this week that are all women and girls. All women and girls" (WFE, 104).

***Research Question 2: What do donors to women's and girls' causes express as their motivations for giving? How might these experiences be unique among this donor population?***

Donors who supported women and girls, primarily through the women's funds, but also by giving to other organizations, expressed two key motivations in the focus groups: 1) giving based on personal experience, including discriminatory experiences as well as having children, and 2) a belief in the relationship between supporting women's equality and societal progress. In general, research has found that donors, and especially women, are often motivated to give based on personal experience; however, the personal experiences expressed in these focus groups were unique. Giving to more closely link advancing women's equality and relating it societal progress is a new finding. In the following sections, focus group participants explain their motivations and experiences.

***Motivation 1: Giving based on personal experience***

A number of donors to women's and girls' causes linked their giving to their personal experiences of being a woman; experiencing gaps, disparities and/or discrimination in society; or were motivated to give because of their children. Several participants described "giving to what they know" and knowing and experiencing bias and discrimination first-hand:

I think when you talk about the girls' issues, my bias where I would give more to a women's cause than if it was a man's is when it comes to the economic opportunities just because of the gaps and the disparities as it relates to salaries and things like that.  
(UWM1, 44)



I focus a lot on organizations that benefit girls and women. [...] I faced my share of discrimination given when I was born and when I was growing up. [...] I graduated college in '67 and in those days the help wanted ads were segregated; men wanted, women wanted. And the only things in the women's columns were secretaries, nurses, teachers, and occasional PR. And you couldn't apply for the jobs in the men wanted columns or the management trainees because they wouldn't talk to you and there was no law requiring them to do. So I felt that constraint on my opportunities. (WFE, 23, 25)

Another key personal experience several women expressed was the motivation to give to women's and girls' causes as a result of having children. At times, just having children motivated women to fund organizations that supported women's and girls' rights and opportunities, wanting to create a more equitable world for their daughters.

Being a girl myself wasn't enough to kick me over the goalpost of supporting women's philanthropies until I had two daughters, and that was really the turning point for me, was thinking about the world they were going to inherit, and how that world in many ways is different from the world I inherited and not all to the good. (WFM, 50)

I'm the mom of three daughters and a son and the grandma of two grandsons now, and I really care that these kids come up and these people come up with equal opportunities, and I don't think they do. (WFW, 43)

Part of my support of women's and girls' organizations is to help girls "get it." You know, I need them to recognize a little bit earlier their strength and the important roles that they play. [...] They can play sports or they can wear lipstick. Or they can do both, and it's okay. And so having daughters of my own and learning who I am has had me wanting to support women's and girls' organizations. (WFM, 52)

Having children was also a motivating factor for donors in the United Way focus groups as they responded to the list of women's and girl's causes used in the discussion.

I personally think these are really important issues, and actually even just looking at this list and conversations I've had with my husband, I do think we should be more thoughtful about where we give and the causes, and then think about whether we're dealing with kind of short-term issues or long-term issues. And I'm pregnant with my first child so I think some of these [issues] really will speak to me a lot more in the next few years than they have in the past. (UWW, 123)

Another source of personal experience was through one's employer or profession. This could be a positive experience, as one women's fund donor described how she began supporting women's and girls' causes through her banking career, as financial institutions began reaching out to female customers after the Equal Credit Act. From this first-hand experience she learned, "investing in women and girls is both a good thing to do and a profitable thing to do" and then felt that she could support change that was consistent with her values (WFE, 67). However several women described more negative experiences in business and seeing inequalities first-

hand. Two participants described the personal experience of being the only woman “at the table” in their professions and feeling that women were unequal or had fewer role models. This experience transcended generations as one woman talked about her experience in the 1970s and ‘80s, while the second woman talked about her present-day experience in 2015.

[O]ne of the things that has drawn me to women and girls’ organizations is, [...] in my corporate life I was the only woman executive. That was a time in the late ‘70s, early ‘80s, which was quite different for women in business. So I think what draws me is the fact that the girls’ and women’s organizations are underfunded, they’re the underdogs, and I’m very drawn to supporting things to lift them up. (WFM, 51)

I am often the only female on my team or in leadership, and I can’t believe this far down the line that it’s that way. And so I’ll look around and [ask], who am I going to go to for support? And it wasn’t until I got involved in women’s organizations that I was like, oh, I can actually pick up the phone and call somebody now. So I want to be able to give to those organizations so other women can get what they need in a safe environment. (WFM, 52)

One woman, who had helped establish the local women’s fund in the early 1990s described that her involvement was motivated by the fact that women’s issues were often hidden from public conversation and were underfunded.

Way back in the olden days when we were talking about having a Women’s Fund [...] women’s issues had not evolved the way they are now. Women hid those things. You wouldn’t have heard them talking about a lot of the things that are on this list. They just dealt with them, themselves, individually, as best they could. And so our intent at the very beginning was what was so obvious at that time, was how women and girl issues were underfunded. That was what motivated us and got the Women’s Fund started. So it’s very exciting to see how the Women’s Fund has responded as everything has evolved and how they have addressed so many of the issues that are on this list and will continue to see the next new thing that women or girls are dealing with and then how can they support that. (WFM, 81)

### ***Motivation 2: Belief in the link between women’s equality and societal progress***

While personal experiences were a strong motivator for many women to give, including experiencing discrimination or witnessing inequality first-hand, a number of donors to women’s and girls’ causes expressed their charitable support as motivated by the need for women to have equality of opportunity at a societal level, which can address other societal issues. Both current donors and non-donors explained they were motivated to support these causes because of research showing that investing in women and girls yields greater social return, including addressing underlying issues such as poverty and a lack of education. First, several participants described both personal experiences and societal motivations around women’s rights:

[The] AAUW (American Association of University Women) gathered research and created a book called “Short-Changing Girls, Short-Changing America,” and that really

became my focus. I have brothers and sisters, and I could see in my own birth family, and then having [my] own family of two boys and a girl, after I read that I became more sensitized to how [boys and girls] were treated. I saw in educational opportunities and certainly in athletic opportunities the expectation was different for the boys than it was for the girls. And then academically in many ways it was, too. [My daughter] was more interested in the sciences than the boys were. And I just realized that when we short-change girls, we do short-change America. [...] I think, you know, rising tides lifts all boats, and so when girls are better off, then boys will be better off. It's not to the detriment of boys that I want girls to be raised. I want everyone to be raised. You know, it's not about power, it's about empowering. (WFM, 67)

I think parity in all walks of life is so important. And that women have an equal footing. Until that happens then my donations will be to groups that serve women and girls. (WFW, 67)

I was raised in an extremely feminist household. [...] I am struck positively by how many women's and girls' issues we talk about now that have gone on for decades, probably centuries, and beyond that we didn't talk about. But I'm also so depressed by where we are in 2015 with women's issues around the world, so that's what continues to motivate me. The fact that there are places where girls aren't educated, the fact that we have so much domestic violence still going on, and on the one hand, there's so much public pressure to make things better for women and girls in business and sports and so many things, but the fact that the [domestic violence shelter] is more full than ever, and the fact that we still have girls growing up thinking that it is all about how they look, their bodies and all those kinds of things and getting pregnant, and some of that we've solved and some of it we haven't. So I find the women's and girls' issues incredibly motivating both by how far we've come and how depressingly not far we've come in 2015. (UWM2, 37)

Second, several other participants, in both women's funds and United Way focus groups, expressed how research and statistics support the premise that investing in women and girls yields a greater social impact, and that such research informed and supported their own philanthropic decisions.

For me it's the women and the early childhood that I've kind of honed in on as one of the ways that you can make a difference in society. [...] There's all those kinds of statistics about how women are doing in society is how society is doing, or how young children are doing is how they do later in life. [...] So I think that's the idea of just where can I have that impact and where can we as a whole make a big impact for years to come. (UWM2, 18)

There is no doubt in my mind that all of the research, if you have a more equal society, you have political and economic stability. [...] So that's what drew us initially to women and girls. I truly, truly believe there is no place else you can put your funding. (WFE, 71)

This idea was also voiced by those who were not currently giving to women and girls but would consider doing so in the future. One United Way participant said, "I've read convincing things

that suggest that when women get more access to education and reproductive rights, then that's good for the population as a whole, economically" (UWW, 97). Another participant said,

[T]here's a fair amount of evidence that supports that if we strive to empower and educate the female sector of the world, many of these things get remedied, not remedied, but many of these things get addressed in that process because an empowered female, an educated female, tends to overcome the pitfalls that many of these things suggest. (UWW, 101)

On a more specific level, some women's fund donors saw supporting women and girls as breaking a cycle of poverty.

I'm focusing [on women] because I think the women are key to making those girls important as they grow up and be women that we don't have to support. (WFE, 94)

I think the thing that really draws me to the Women's Fund is [...] that as women go, so goes society. Because so often and increasingly with so many single parent families that are led by a woman, you know, it's going to rise or fall there, and you hear the thing 'if mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy.' Well, if mama's not able to provide for herself and her family then we've got a huge segment of society that is not going to be able to provide for themselves either, and most of those are children, and so that's my biggest draw for it. In a sense it's purely selfish from a societal standpoint. We have to have women who are empowered and have economic stability to be able to provide all the next generations with that. (WFM, 49)

Finally, one participant talked about supporting women's and girls' causes because it supports the kind of world she wants to live in.

I have spent an awful lot of time doing work with the Women's Fund and the Girls' School and what I've noticed, again at the risk of sounding sexist, is that women and girls do things differently. They are incredibly collaborative. They are, for the most part, incredibly compassionate. They are more likely to fuss with an issue [...] and try to see it from many different facets before they go forging ahead. And I'm not judging whether or not that's good or bad, but that's the world I want to live in and that's where I'm putting my energy into is really nurturing and building those women and girls because I think they just do have a different world view. (WFW, 45)

### ***Motivation 3: Organizational effectiveness and leadership***

Both United Way and Women's Fund focus groups explored what would encourage participants to support women's and girls' causes and/or increase their support if they were already donors. Among current donors, participants identified a number of organizational characteristics that served to keep them as donors and increase their financial support over time. These included a strong mission, vibrant leadership, a commitment to advocacy, and a belief in the organization's future. Donors to women's funds also viewed the fund as a locus of expertise that could help direct their philanthropic gifts effectively.

I came back into [the women's fund] after a number of years of being away simply because of its strong mission for women and girls and the leadership that I saw in the executive and the board. (WFW, 14)

I appreciate the Fund and have kind of given more and then a little less, and now I'm giving much more again because I appreciate the collaborative pool giving they do and vetting that they do to all of the great organizations that are doing great work that I can't know about all of those groups, and I really appreciate their knowledge and understanding of particular grassroots groups working with underserved women and girls. (WFW, 46)

All of my women's and girls' giving is through the Women's Fund, personally, because I believe they have the best connections and know the best ways who's doing what – just such a broad knowledge that there's so many out there. When you sit in a grants committee meeting for Women's Fund, you learn about tiny little mom and pop shops and the big huge ones. (WFM, 48)

So I give to the Women's Fund, which is in trust that they will do the right thing, and so far I'm always impressed with the decision making. (WFE, 137)

Many participants in the United Way focus groups said that even though they do not currently make philanthropic gifts that are directed to women and girls, they would view a request for an organization favorably and would consider making a gift in the future. Several participants in one United Way focus group managed retail stores and led employee giving campaigns. They discussed how a charitable campaign around women's issues would be favorably received among employees and/or shoppers, many of whom are women.

You get bombarded with requests for anything and everything, right. And I think people do look through it through a lens of how important is it, how necessary is it versus just nice to have, and so I think people would view women's issues as a necessity, right? I would feel compelled to assist in that manner. (UWE, 67)

A participant in a different focus group mentioned the importance of how the cause was marketed. In some instances, donors shared that they were not currently giving to women's and girls' causes because of a lack of visibility and/or knowledge. As one participant said, "Sometimes you need a shocking statistic in order to be able to give, like you need a like, 'Oh, wow.'" (UWW, 150).

In another focus group, a male participant discussed the importance of his wife's interest in the cause in order to convince him to become a donor.

Would I be the one to think of it? Probably not. But if my wife says, "This is an important thing; let's give to it," it would be "Fine, you want that? We will go with that and, you know, I'll stay giving to the symphony or to the museum of art or whatever." (UWM1, 83)

Another participant talked about his wife's support for Planned Parenthood and how they make decisions about giving:

My wife is very pro-choice, and so we have supported Planned Parenthood in the past. [...] I make most of the decisions about giving, but my wife is fully on board with everything that we do, and she is a full partner. She doesn't tell me, "Don't give to that." [...] So I'm also involved in the reproductive rights and so on. (UWM2, 23).

Despite the interest in supporting women's and girls' causes, even among non-donors, participants also raised several concerns about directing their philanthropy in this way. We address each of these themes in our final section, the barriers to increasing support for women's and girls' causes.

***Research Question 3: Why might donors not give to women's and girls' causes? What barriers exist to growing such support?***

Participants in both focus groups described three distinct themes that made it difficult for them to support women's and girls' causes philanthropically. The first theme related to donors' feeling as though many of the women's issues we raised were complex and required solving root problems to address. Second, several participants raised concerns that they did not want to prioritize support for women and girls over men and boys, who they felt also needed charitable sector support. Finally, some participants acknowledged that political issues were embedded within women's issues, such as reproductive rights and LGBT issues, which made it difficult to cultivate broad-based support and linked such giving to a political stance as well as a charitable one.

***Barrier 1: Complexity and scalability of women's issues***

One rationale for not supporting women and girls was the idea that solving issues like women's equality and domestic violence are complicated and are unable to be separated from many other issues in society. When faced with such significant problems, donors often choose among two approaches: making a difference for even just one person or trying to effect large-scale systems change. But even these approaches can produce tension. Participants who felt some connection to women's causes expressed concern over how to appropriately direct their philanthropy. One solution some participants supported was trying to address the root causes that lead to particular women's issues. A United Way participant said,

[A] lot of these things resonate with me, but they are so huge, and I tend to be a person that [asks] what is the root cause? So if we were going to prevent domestic violence, what would we do? Well, we might educate. We might make sure people have enough food and have jobs. In other words what – where will a gift to a human trafficking program help? Or how could it help greater than making sure those girls are in school? (UWM1, 84)

Another participant commented, “I just think for these [issues], they’re very large, they’re root cause-based in terms of how to solve issues, and maybe through some of the other giving we’re helping some of those root causes, and that for me is my best way of helping this list” (UWM1, 85). Even the CEO of a community organization that serves girls talked about the limitations of what her organization could do.

We do help young women from all kinds of backgrounds, but they’re mostly children of color, who really need guidance from adults and other women that we call together. [...] What I’m struck by these days is that it’s not enough and what we’re missing is [...] talk about really root causes of problems. And really root causes have everything to do with just the complete lack of morality in our culture. (UWM2, 17)

Similarly, a women’s fund donor expressed that, while she supports women’s and girls’ causes, it was not the only approach she took to solving social problems: “I’d say it’s important, but it’s not critical. If someone said it deals with women and girls, I’d probably say, ‘Well, I’m interested.’ I’ll go for the next one as opposed to something where I knew nothing. But I’m certainly open to a lot of other things to make change” (WFE, 94).

In contrast, other donors favored approaches that focused on the individual people affected. A United Way donor, reflecting on the list of women’s and girls’ issues we shared, described the difficulty of selecting which issues to address and considering where her own individual philanthropy could have the greatest impact, ultimately favoring education and individual empowerment.

I’m already contributing to several organizations that address these, to be sure, some of them more critically than others. [...] So where can my modest dollars – where should I plug them in in order to make that happen? But these are all legitimate issues, and then it kind of goes back to that whole notion of if you can empower people and you can educate people, so much of this gets addressed in the process, directly or indirectly. (UWW, 124)

Finally, a United Way donor, who was commenting on the book *Half the Sky*, talked about the importance of understanding how issues like sex trafficking impact individual people and his or her desire to spread their giving out broadly instead of focusing it on an individual issue.

[Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn] brought a lot of these issues down to a very personal level, and you mentioned some very specific places that were doing good work. I find in some ways the statistics help some people, and other people the statistics just are so overwhelming that you just don’t feel like you can go anywhere. [...] I think ultimately it comes down to wanting to make sure that what we’re giving to makes a difference. And I think that’s personally one of the reasons we give to such a broad spectrum is because it’s so hard to narrow down to just one thing, and feeling like you then at least touch a little bit on a whole bunch of things. (UWW, 171)

### ***Barrier 2: Giving to women excludes men as recipients***

For some donors, giving to women and girls was no more of a priority than helping men and boys. In other words, despite societal inequities between men and women, both nationally

and globally, some donors preferred to support initiatives addressed to both sexes, particularly when children were involved. This attitude was expressed by both male and female participants, and was more dominant among participants in the United Way focus groups.

I'm sitting between two really important girls' initiative people, but I will say that I'm always skeptical about girls' initiatives because I guess, even though I am a girl, I think about [how] I have tutored so many boys who need so much support and as much as girls. So I wouldn't be turned off, but I would need to hear a lot of information to understand why is it the girls' initiative and not a children's initiative. (UWM2, 35)

[R]ehabilitation of women offenders, well, I don't see that more important than rehabilitation of men offenders. You know, there are so many wonderful causes. (UWW, 125)

Other donors raised the issue that, in some spheres, such as college graduation rates, women were doing better than men and felt that men needed specific philanthropic initiatives as well.

Well, as you talk about education for empowerment, women graduate from high school more than men. It's like 55 percent, 45 percent, and in college it's even more so. Even in the professional schools, doctors, lawyers, CPAs, women are now graduating more than men, and only in engineering are there still more men. [...] So I don't know, empowering women? I think we need to empower the men or light a fire under them or something. (UWW, 156)

Other participants described that just as girls have flourished with the increase in sex-specific programming, boys need to have programming that is specific to their needs.

The boys absolutely need character development. They need people telling them what it means to be not just a man, but a good man, you know? And those are not always the same thing. [...] You have to educate both genders about how to be positive contributing responsible members of our society, really good parents to their children. (UWM2, 42)

Even some women's fund donors had shifted their priorities from funding women and girls to focusing on initiatives that support all children.

I don't do as much specifically for women as I used to, but a lot for kids in my community. [...] I'm looking for those little small things that feed my community back and so half of those people [who benefit] are probably girls and half of them are probably boys, but I don't do anything specific for women and girls anymore. (WFW, 34)

Two participants expressed that their giving was not sex-specific and preferred to give to anyone who needed help.

[A]ny hesitation I have of donating to a girls' organization I would feel the same about donating to a boys' organization. It just seems like the whole world needs help. (UWM2, 49)



My giving is in five areas, [...] but I think everything I give to in those five areas impacts women and girls because it all impacts humans. (WFM, 35)

Related to the concept of women's funding as exclusionary was the idea that addressing women's issues whether domestic violence, or health, also needs to have the involvement of men in order to succeed. The implicit idea expressed in the following focus group conversation is that organizations that focus on women's and girls' causes will not be as successful without also educating men and, at times, involving them in service provision.

UWW, 105: I think it's hard to say that-- I mean, not being an expert in any of these things, but you can't just isolate the work to the women even though that's the goal of what you're doing. If you don't involve the men in their life--domestic violence, you can have domestic violence programs for shelters but unless you address the relationship problems.

UWW, 106: Yeah, I think that's a great point. I mean like with the gender equality, having paternity leave available for men is a big way to promote gender equality, but then it's a family issue, not a women's issue.

UWW, 116: I'd like to go back to your core question. I think it's got to be everything. It can't be just female-empowered organizations; it can't just be major philanthropic organizations like United Way. It got to be a combination of everything striving for a common goal of empowering women and teaching equality, because you can't stop or decrease domestic violence if you aren't educating men as well.

Similarly, a participant in a different focus group reiterated the idea of needing to bring men to the table:

I'm a mother of boys now, and I think that's part of my involvement still with women and girls' issues though is trying to raise feminist boys at home and show them, you know, what all these issues are. But you're right, it's absolutely a two-way street, and how much women can be empowered, but on the other hand how much you need both genders working toward both. (UWM2, 43)

### ***Barrier 3: Political issues are embedded in women's causes***

The final barrier participants expressed around giving to women's and girls' causes was the relationship between many women's issues and larger public policy questions, many of which are contested social issues. In a time of political polarization, several participants noted that giving to women and girls could not be separated from its political and advocacy-related components. While the politics surrounding issues such as reproductive rights or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights may serve to increase support among some donors, it can also serve to turn other potential donors away. As one United Way donor explained,

The philanthropic conversation about reproductive rights or women's centers or immigrant services is not just about the philanthropy; it's also about the public policy and the attitudes, and you can't separate them, not and have a realistic conversation about the funding, the financing or the community supports for those. I think that makes it a challenge because we can't have a political conversation about anything. But that is part of that environment in moving some of that forward and trying to find a common ground for that, because the risk is that the philanthropy becomes politicized because the issue is. (UWM1, 86)

Political issues are not just contentious in the larger society, but at the family level as well. One participant mentioned how different generations within the same family may view issues differently which can lead to difficulty in bringing up certain philanthropic priorities.

I look at some of these things differently than my parents did and I know my kids look at them differently than I do. Some of the things like the lesbian, bisexual, transgender rights is a perfect example. [...] Some of these are very valued-loaded conversations for people, and that makes it difficult sometimes to talk about the issue or the problem or the challenge. (UWM1, 82)

While these views were not a central part of the focus group conversations, these comments highlight the tension inherent in many women and girls-related issues, let alone the difficulty in raising funds. In fact, one participant highlighted that "the women and girl issue gets very conflated into the feminist movement," which has and continues to experience schisms today (WFE, 172).

## V. Discussion and Implications

Over the past decade, there has been growing interest in the impact of investing in women and girls among the public, philanthropic foundations, and the media, but little attention has been directed to the donor side of the equation – who is funding investments in women and girls, and why? This study provides the first academic research examining who gives to women and girls, how and why individual donors support such causes, and differences in donor preferences among donors and non-donors to this specific area.

The mixed method design of this study provides a valuable assessment of donor motivations and behavior as it relates to funding women's and girls' issues. The survey, using a nationally representative sample, and the focus groups, with two different groups of participants, provide both a broad-based and in-depth perspective, which combined yield a robust initial picture of donor support for women's and girls' causes. The survey showed that overall, female respondents are more likely than male respondents to give to women's and girls' causes and also give larger amounts, though the differences are not as great as might have otherwise been expected. Women were more likely to report giving to domestic violence organizations, women's centers, LGBT rights, cancer care and research, and economic opportunities for women and girls. Single women, older individuals of both sexes, and individuals with higher household income were associated with an increased likelihood of providing philanthropic support for women and girls. However, race, having children under 18, educational level and employment status were not found to have a significant effect, with the exception of a few specific categories of giving, such as maternal/infant health, domestic violence, and economic opportunities for women and girls.

The subsequent focus groups allowed us to explore the survey findings in greater detail and provided two key groups of donors for initial comparison. While the overall sample of focus group participants was limited to 51 donors and is not broadly representative, our findings suggest opportunities for continued research, along with new questions to investigate.

***1. Many donors to women's funds and causes reported supporting these causes based on their personal experiences.*** This finding affirmed previous research that women donors in particular are likely to support causes with which they or a close family member have had a personal connection (Burgoyne et al., 2005). In our focus groups donors identified the connections through an experience of discrimination, the birth or raising of a child, a family member or the donor herself experiencing a health issue, or a professional context. Donors identified these experiences as central to their initial decisions to give and/or volunteer for these causes. The identification of personal experience as motivating philanthropic work for others was unique among the women's fund donors—all of whom were women—and is representative of social identification theory (Schervish & Havens, 2002). This theory, which acknowledges the presence of self in the philanthropic relationship, is distinct from theories of altruism, guilt, or noblesse oblige in identifying with the needs of the recipient. This motivation also stands in contrast to the decision to support organizations with which one was affiliated, such as a religious congregation or educational institution, where the donor also receives some personal benefit by virtue of their support.

***2. Some women donors expressed their motivations to give based on their desire for gender equality in society.*** This is a more complicated motivation, as it represents both a value and belief. More research is needed to determine whether this finding is cross-generational, since the average age of the participants in both focus groups was between 56 and 59, and include

many women from the Baby Boomer generation who came of age during the women's rights movement in the United States. While participants in both focus groups ranged in age from 29 to 88, exploring this finding with respect to generational cohort may illuminate how pervasive this motivation is, particularly among younger women.

**3. *The inclusion of the United Way donors, most of whom did not support specific organizations whose missions focused on women and girls, revealed the challenges in increasing donor support.*** Some donors were conflicted about the most effective way to “lift all boats,” and the focus group conversations revealed that some donors were re-evaluating their strategies to address efforts that support all children rather than only girls or only boys. It is not clear from this initial study what may affect such donor decisions or drive these changes in donor giving. The concern over exclusionary or targeted philanthropic support may be related to the inability to separate women's causes and issues from larger political debates and the complexity of social problems—two other barriers identified in our research.

While philanthropy offers donors many avenues to pursue their goals and objectives, the landscape also is constantly changing as certain issues gain more traction as a result of economic, social, cultural, or political developments locally and globally. It is essential for nonprofits that fund programs for women and girls to scan the landscape regularly and to find ways to keep their missions current, relevant, and in the public eye and to market opportunities to give with these barriers in mind.

**4. *Our research showed that existing donors were highly complimentary of the women's funds they supported, seeing them as a locus of expertise in their communities with the ability to make both local and systemic changes.*** Donors confirmed that the women's funds—many of which are entering their third or fourth decades of operation—are established and well-run organizations that are deserving of significant support. Participants in the women's fund focus groups suggested that they are intentional about their giving, seek specific impacts, and trust the women's funds to deliver desired results.

This finding further indicates that women's funds are an effective way to increase giving to causes for women and girls, particularly among those funds with strong leaders at the helm. The lack of aggregated data about past and current donors to women's funds is one factor hindering researchers' ability to quantify the impact of women's funds on donor motivations and giving behavior. For example, has the number of donors to women's funds increased over time? Has the level of giving by those donors increased and, if so, what interventions facilitated that growth? Has the donor base diversified? Are more men contributing to the women's fund, perhaps as a result of diversifying the board to include men? Analysis of such data would enrich understanding of donor behavior focused in this area.

**5. *Finally, we found support among both donors and non-donors that the data and language used to motivate giving to women and girls has become increasingly sophisticated and has successfully connected women's causes to broader societal issues.*** In particular, both women's fund and United Way donors expressed the message that by supporting women, donors can impact families, neighborhoods and communities, and even entire societies. Several donors reported that the evidence that investing in women and girls has greater societal impact informed and buttressed their philanthropy. In their early years, women's funds' language centered on “funding for women and girls.” Today, women's funds use phrases such as “advancing leadership” and “economic security,” a centerpiece of the new Prosperity Together campaign created by a cohort of women's funds designed to elevate the conversation and create larger-scale impact. This is a notable development.

Using more sophisticated language provides opportunities for nonprofits working in this arena to reach new donors, possibly those interested in the bigger issues such as economic security who may not be focused on funding for women and girls as a mechanism to reach that goal. This language also reflects the evolution of the women's funds as they claim space in mainstream philanthropy.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Understanding giving to women's and girls' issues represents a new area of charitable sector research that has previously been unexplored. While these findings draw on a significant, nationally-representative survey and in-depth focus groups, both data sets were collected in a single point in time and do not show longer-term trends. Further, the definition of "women's and girls' issues" remains amorphous and open to interpretation. Our findings raise as many questions as they do answers, yet this research is the first step in understanding how individual donors think about and contribute their philanthropy with respect to causes concerning women and girls. We anticipate that academics and practitioners will increasingly engage with these questions and continue documenting the pathways, trends, and motivations of giving in this area. If as Sara Blakely says, investing in women "offers one of the greatest returns on investment," (Blakely, 2013) we hope this research can contribute to bolstering that effort.

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**Appendix A:  
GfK KnowledgePanel Omnibus (KPOmni) Survey Questions on Giving to Women’s and  
Girls’ Causes**

**Background**

The following set of questions are being asked by Indiana University for research purposes. This specific set of questions should take 5-7 minutes to answer. This set of questions is voluntary; there is an option to skip the questions.

The next few questions ask about donations of money to charitable organizations.

**Charitable organizations** include religious or nonprofit organizations that help those in need or that serve and support the public interest or advance their values and beliefs. They range in size from very large organizations like the United Way and the American Red Cross down to local community organizations. They serve a variety of purposes such as helping people in need, health care and medical research, education, arts, environment, international aid, and religious activity (including churches and congregations). Our definition of charity **does not include** political contributions.

**Donations** include any gifts of money, assets, or property or goods made directly to the organization, through payroll deduction, on the Internet, or collected by other means on behalf of the charity. The questions below are limited to donations made during the year 2014.

1. **During the year 2014**, did you or anyone in your household **donate** money, assets, or property or goods, with a combined value of **more than \$25** to religious or charitable organizations?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Refuse to respond

2. During 2014, did you or your household make a donation to any of these causes? For each choice, please estimate the total dollar value of household contributions in 2014.

|  | Did not donate in 2014 to this cause | Estimate of total household contributions in 2014 |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| For <b>religious purposes or spiritual development</b> ? (e.g., a church, synagogue, mosque) Do not include donations to schools, hospitals, and other charities run by religious organizations. | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| To organizations that serve a <b>combination of purposes</b> ? (e.g., United Way, United Jewish Federation, the Catholic Charities, or your local community foundation)                          | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| To organizations that <b>help people in need of food, shelter, or other basic necessities</b> ? (e.g., American Red Cross, Salvation Army, or homeless shelter)                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| To <b>health care or medical research</b> organizations? (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, mental health facilities, cancer, heart and lung associations, or telethons)                           | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| For <b>K-12 educational purposes</b> ? (e.g., grade schools, PTAs, libraries, after-school programs, scholarship funds) Please do not include direct tuition payments.                           | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| For <b>higher educational purposes</b> ? (e.g., universities, colleges, university scholarship funds) Please do not include direct tuition payments.   | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| To organizations that provide <b>youth or family services</b> ? (e.g., scouting, boys' and girls' clubs, sports leagues, Big Brothers or Sisters, foster care, or family counseling)             | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| To support the <b>arts, culture, or ethnic awareness</b> ? (e.g., museum, theatre, orchestra, public broadcasting, or ethnic cultural awareness)   | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| To organizations that <b>improve neighborhoods and communities</b> ? (e.g., community associations or service clubs)   | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| To <b>preserve the environment</b> ? (e.g., conservation efforts, animal protection, or parks)   | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| To organizations that <b>provide international aid or promote world peace</b> ? (e.g., international children's funds, disaster relief, or human rights)   | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |
| For causes or organizations <b>other than those mentioned previously</b> ? Please specify the main purpose or cause supported by that organization: _____.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/>             | \$  |

Refuse to respond

We've just asked about charitable giving to specific areas. There are many causes that affect individuals today. Our next few questions are about organizations addressing issues that affect women and girls.

3. Does your household's charitable giving affect women and girls by focusing on any of the following causes? Please mark all that apply.<sup>5</sup>
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence                               | <input type="checkbox"/> General health services (including mental health services) by women |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mothers/child care/child well-being             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer research, diagnosis, and support (breast, ovarian, etc.)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women's centers                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Reproductive health   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrant and refugee women                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Maternal and infant health  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human trafficking/sexual abuse and exploitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic opportunities for women and girls                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitation of women offenders               | <input type="checkbox"/> Another cause that affects women and girls (please specify: _____)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender equality and women's rights              | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights        | <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse to respond   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female genital mutilation                       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy for sexual/reproductive rights         |  |
4. In general, how would you describe your household's charitable giving and how it relates to causes affecting women and girls? (Mark only one option.)
- I give to one or more of the issue areas mentioned above that specifically impact women and girls.
  - I give to organizations that focus in part on women and girls, but I don't give to a specific issue like those mentioned above.
  - I do not focus my giving on women and girls; I support other issues I care about.
  - Refuse to respond

---

<sup>5</sup> Choices were randomized except the last three options (another cause; none; and refuse).

5. Thinking about your household's giving to causes that impact women and girls (see list below for reference), about how much did you donate to organizations serving these causes in total in 2014?

• \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I don't know

Refuse to respond

- Domestic violence
- Mothers/child care/child well-being
- Women's centers
- Immigrant and refugee women
- Human trafficking/sexual abuse and exploitation
- Rehabilitation of women offenders
- Gender equality and women's rights
- Lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights
- Female genital mutilation

- Advocacy for sexual/reproductive rights
- General health services (including mental health services) by women
- Cancer research, diagnosis, and support (breast, ovarian, etc.)
- Reproductive health
- Maternal and infant health
- Economic opportunities for women and girls
- Any other cause impacting women and girls

6. Thinking about your household's giving to causes that impact women and girls, please list up to five specific organizations you have donated to in the past (in any year, not just 2014) that serve those causes:

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

Can't list any

Refuse to respond

7. Thinking about your household's overall giving in 2014, how were charitable decisions typically made? (Mark only one option.)<sup>6</sup>

I am the sole decision-maker.

We (my partner/spouse and I) make charitable decisions jointly.

We (my partner/spouse and I) make charitable decisions separately.

We (my partner/spouse and I) make charitable decisions separately but confer with each other.

Refuse to respond

---

<sup>6</sup> Asked only of married/partnered respondents.

8. Please select the three issues that currently matter the most to you, whether or not you fund them directly. (Mark only three.)<sup>7</sup>

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and culture            | <input type="checkbox"/> International issues                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community development       | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime and criminal justice  | <input type="checkbox"/> National security                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster relief             | <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The economy/federal deficit | <input type="checkbox"/> Race/Cultural relations                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax policy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans' affairs                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health care                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's rights                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify: _____)                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving infrastructure    | <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse to respond                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Income inequality           |  |

---

<sup>7</sup> Choices were randomized except the last two options (other; and refuse).

## **Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Protocol**

[Please note that the following interview protocol was developed for the focus groups hosted by the United Way affiliates in study cities. The protocol remained roughly identical for focus groups hosted by the women's funds in study cities, though some questions were modified to provide a more focused discussion on giving specifically to women's and girls' causes.]

Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion to help us better understand your charitable giving. We're conducting research on what draws donors to support the causes they fund. We also hope to learn how donors view giving to women's and girls' issues.

Today, we want to talk with you about your experiences as a donor, so we'll be asking about what causes you support and how you make giving decisions. If you make decisions with someone else in your household, feel free to let us know about that too.

Before we begin, let me suggest some things to make our discussion more productive. Because we'll be recording for an accurate record, it is important that you speak up and that you only speak one at a time. We don't want to miss any of your comments.

We'll only use first names here. No reports will link what you say to your name or the organizations you support. In this way, we will maintain your confidentiality. In addition, we ask that you also respect the confidentiality of everyone here. Please don't repeat who said what when you leave this room.

During the time we'll be here, I will ask you questions, and I will listen to what you have to say. I will not participate in the discussion. So please feel free to respond to each other and to speak directly to others in the group.

We want to hear from all of you. We're interested in both majority and minority viewpoints, common and uncommon experiences. So I may sometimes act as a traffic cop by encouraging someone who has been quiet to talk, or by asking someone to hold off for a few minutes.

I. Let's begin with introductions.

A. Please tell us your first name, and the top 3 or 4 charitable organizations that you currently support.

II. Now that we know a little about you, I'd like you to think back to when you first became a donor to one of these organizations.

A. Why did you choose to support that organization?

1. Was there anything else that motivated your charitable support for that organization?

2. Why is that particular cause important to you?

B. We are passing around a list now of some causes related to women's and girls' issues. Does any of your charitable giving, now or in the past few years, relate to causes like these?

1. For those of you who do support one of these causes, what drew you to support these organizations?
  2. For donors who do not support causes like these, how would you view a request to support these types of causes in comparison to causes you already support?
- C. Even if you have not supported women's and girls' issues previously, would you consider supporting these issues in the future? Why or why not?
1. What would it take for women's and girls' issues to become a philanthropic priority for you?
- III. We are interested in whether you give directly to these organizations, or through another organization, like an intermediary organization like the United Way, or a foundation or giving circle. How do you usually give to support charitable causes?
- A. For those of you giving directly to an organization, how would you describe your relationship to the organization?
  - B. For those of you giving through an intermediary, what led you to give in this way?
  - C. For those of you giving through a giving circle, how is that group organized and how does it determine where the funds go?
  - D. For those of you giving to a foundation, is it your own foundation or a public foundation? For public foundations, how do you stay informed about how it grants its funds?
  - E. How satisfied do you feel giving in this way?
  - F. Do you tend to make your giving decisions on your own or in consultation with others? If so, who?
- IV. We have mostly focused on donations of money. Think about the organizations that you support financially. Do you also volunteer for any of them? If so, for which organization and in what capacity? This can be volunteer activity ranging from office work, service provision, fundraising or a board position.
- A. Are there any organizations you volunteer for that you do not support financially? If so, what organization, and in what capacity?
  - B. Is there any other volunteering you have done for an organization supporting women's and girls' issues that you haven't already discussed?
- V. Finally, as I told you at the beginning, the purpose of this study is to get information about how donors make charitable giving decisions, especially as it relates to issues impacting women and girls. Is there anything about your charitable giving that we left out?
- VI. Thank you so much for your time this evening. We have a brief demographic survey for each of you to complete so that we can accurately describe the makeup of our focus group participants. This focus group is one of a series we are holding across the country, so any suggestions you could make for improving it would be very helpful. Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this discussion.

**Appendix C:**  
**List of Women's and Girls' Causes**

- Domestic violence
- Mothers/child care/child well-being
- Women's centers
- Immigrant and refugee women
- Human trafficking/sexual abuse and exploitation
- Rehabilitation of women offenders
- Gender equality and women's rights
- Lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights
- Female genital mutilation
- Advocacy for sexual/reproductive rights
- General health services (including mental health services) by women
- Cancer research, diagnosis, and support (breast, ovarian, etc.)
- Reproductive health
- Maternal and infant health
- Economic opportunities for women and girls



**Appendix D:  
Category and Code List from Focus Group Transcript Analysis**

| <b>Category</b>                                 | <b>Codes within Category</b>  |
|---|---|
| Benefits of giving                              | Affiliation or recognition<br>Tax benefits  |
| Culture of giving                               | Challenging others to give<br>Learning to give<br>Role modeling<br>Role modeling – others as role models<br>Role modeling – setting an example of giving<br>Youth involvement   |
| Giving to specific causes (not women and girls) | Giving for advocacy<br>Giving internationally<br>Giving to animals<br>Giving to children’s causes<br>Giving to church or faith-based causes<br>Giving to education<br>Giving to health care<br>Giving to human services<br>Giving to your children’s school<br>Giving to social justice<br>Giving to the arts<br>Giving to the environment<br>Technical support, capacity building                        |
| Giving to United Way                            | [no sub-codes within this category]   |
| Giving to women and girls                       | Aging issues<br>Breast cancer<br>Domestic violence<br>Donating blood, organ, tissue<br>Economic opportunities<br>Education for women<br>Empowerment<br>Heart issues<br>Immigrant women<br>International women and girls<br>LGBT<br>Mental health<br>Mothers, child care, child well-being<br>No particular emphasis on<br>Reproductive rights<br>Sex trafficking<br>Women offenders<br>Women’s Foundation |
| How you give                                    | Ease of giving<br>Family foundation   |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
|                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving circle</li> <li>Giving directly</li> <li>Giving through intermediary</li> <li>Monthly donor</li> <li>Transactional giving</li> </ul>   |
| Impact of giving               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping one person</li> <li>Leveraging small gifts</li> <li>Quality of life</li> </ul>  |
| Motivation to give             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building a strong organization</li> <li>Giving as civic responsibility</li> <li>Giving as expression of faith</li> <li>Giving back</li> <li>Giving to the common good</li> <li>Giving to the community</li> <li>Personal connection</li> <li>Personal connection – being asked by friend or family</li> <li>Personal experience</li> <li>Personal experience – facing discrimination</li> <li>Personal experience – life course changes</li> <li>Personal experience – life course changes – empty nester</li> <li>Personal experience – life course changes – retirement</li> <li>Reciprocity</li> <li>Seeing a need</li> <li>Warm glow</li> </ul> |
| Negative experiences           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excessive solicitation</li> <li>Lack of follow-up</li> <li>Recognition error</li> </ul>   |
| Nonprofit accountability       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating nonprofits</li> <li>Mission</li> <li>Organizational trust</li> <li>Outcomes and results</li> <li>Vetting nonprofits</li> </ul>   |
| Organizational characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inventiveness, creativity, risk</li> <li>Organizational knowledge and expertise</li> <li>Organizational leadership</li> <li>Organizational partnerships</li> <li>Organization’s reputation</li> </ul>   |
| Organizational involvement     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being asked by organization</li> <li>Board service</li> <li>Board service – United Way</li> <li>Connection to work or business</li> <li>Connection to work or business – on behalf of employer</li> <li>Donating time</li> <li>Donor engagement</li> </ul>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>Learning about organizations</p> <p>Long-term donor</p> <p>Membership organization</p> <p>Nonprofit employment</p> <p>Reaching out to nonprofit</p> <p>Stewardship</p> <p>United Way campaign</p>                     |
| Strategy for giving                     | <p>Being focused in giving</p> <p>Not giving to well-funded organizations</p> <p>Planned giving</p> <p>Prioritizing needs</p> <p>Researching nonprofits</p> <p>Saying no</p> <p>Seed funding</p> <p>Teaching to fish</p> |
| Values around women's and girls' issues | <p>Generational differences</p> <p>Politics and public policy</p>  |
| Who you give with                       | <p>Alone or solo</p> <p>Disparate interests within marriage or family</p> <p>Jointly with spouse</p> <p>Jointly with spouse – talking about giving</p> <p>With other family member</p>                                   |