

# Catalyzing Change: Giving *to Women's and Girls' Organizations*

A report by  
the Indiana University  
Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

GS DAF

# The Opportunity

Supporting organizations focused on women’s and girls’ causes is one strategy to advance gender equity – which means respecting all individuals, regardless of their gender, without discrimination.<sup>1</sup> Many of these organizations aim to achieve equal access to better health, education, and economic opportunities for women and girls across society.

Support for women’s and girls’ organizations has been interwoven among all traditional nonprofit categories (i.e., health, education, environment, human services, the arts, etc.) and it was difficult to determine how much funding these organizations received. The release of the inaugural **Women and Girls Index** (WGI) in 2019 defined the field with a database of more than 50,000 organizations, and quantified charitable giving in this area.

**Philanthropic support for women’s and girls’ organizations has remained below 2% of overall giving since 2012, the first year for which the WGI data is available.**

Prospective donors are likely **aware** of issues facing women and girls but may not have translated this awareness into **actual giving** to these organizations. The data provides a compelling case for the impact of charitable support in this area.

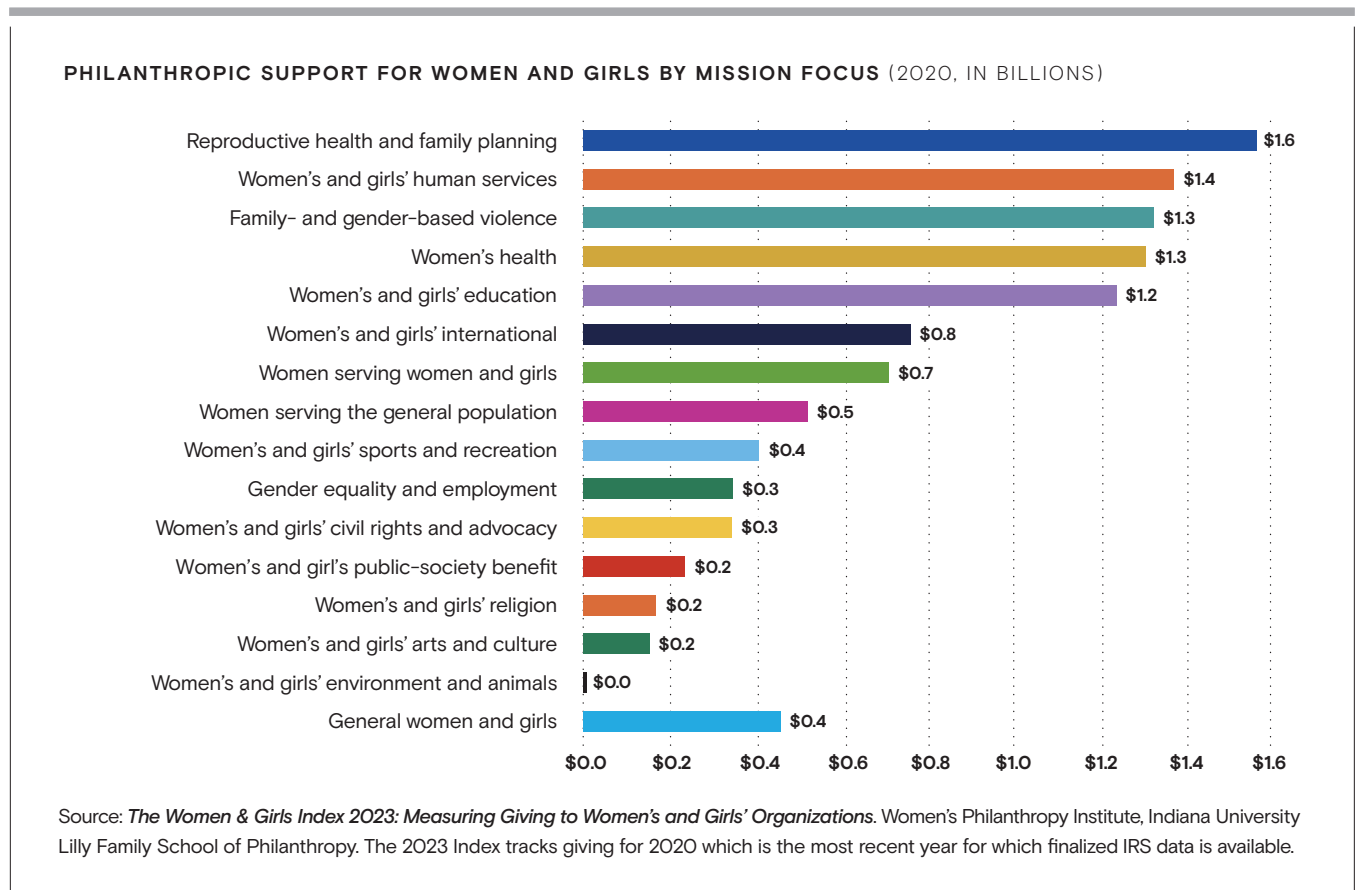
<sup>1</sup> Gender equity definition is from the United Way of the National Capital Region. What Does Gender Equity mean? <https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/what-is-gender-equity/#:~:text=Gender%20equity%20means%20respecting%20all,opportunity%20based%20on%20their%20gender>.

This material has been researched, written, and produced by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (“Lilly School”) in connection with a grant from the GS Donor Advised Philanthropy Fund for Wealth Management (“GS DAF”) and is intended for informational purposes only. The research and findings are not those of Goldman Sachs or the GS DAF and neither Goldman Sachs nor the GS DAF represent that the information in this message is accurate, complete and/or up-to-date and accepts no liability if it is not. No part of this material may be i) copied, photocopied, or duplicated in any form, by any means, or ii) redistributed without the Lilly School’s prior written consent.

# The Landscape

The WGI examines the current funding landscape and where gaps exist for donors to make an impact. Although issues affecting women and girls (i.e., the gender pay gap, sexual harassment and assault, etc.) have received increased attention in recent years, charitable giving to organizations focused on these issues remains low.

Not only are women’s and girls’ organizations found in all traditional nonprofit sectors, but they are also categorized by mission focus as shown in the chart below.



This material has been researched, written, and produced by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy ("Lilly School") in connection with a grant from the GS Donor Advised Philanthropy Fund for Wealth Management ("GS DAF") and is intended for informational purposes only. The research and findings are not those of Goldman Sachs or the GS DAF and neither Goldman Sachs nor the GS DAF represent that the information in this message is accurate, complete and/or up-to-date and accepts no liability if it is not. No part of this material may be i) copied, photocopied, or duplicated in any form, by any means, or ii) redistributed without the Lilly School's prior written consent.

# Consider *and* Reflect

As you think about the questions below, the mission focus chart on the previous page may help you reflect on the causes about which you care deeply or provide ideas for causes you may wish to support.

What motivates you to support women’s and girls’ causes?
Are there a few WGI focus areas that resonate most with you? How do these areas fit within your current philanthropic portfolio?
Have your own or others’ experiences with gender inequity influenced your interest in supporting this area?
How might you leverage your network to increase giving in this area and achieve greater impact?

**IMPACT OF DONOR SUPPORT** *Testimonials like the one below help confirm the impact of supporting WGI organizations.*

*“We expanded our programming, which helped us tap into new funding sources and grow our donor base. We also launched... more advocacy and culture change initiatives as well, beyond direct services.”<sup>2</sup> – Deborah Singer, Former Chief Marketing Officer, Girls Who Code*

<sup>2</sup> The Women & Girls Index 2020: Measuring Giving to Women’s and Girls’ Organizations. Women’s Philanthropy Institute, Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

This material has been researched, written, and produced by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (“Lilly School”) in connection with a grant from the GS Donor Advised Philanthropy Fund for Wealth Management (“GS DAF”) and is intended for informational purposes only. The research and findings are not those of Goldman Sachs or the GS DAF and neither Goldman Sachs nor the GS DAF represent that the information in this message is accurate, complete and/or up-to-date and accepts no liability if it is not. No part of this material may be i) copied, photocopied, or duplicated in any form, by any means, or ii) redistributed without the Lilly School’s prior written consent.

# The Research

The WGI shows women’s and girls’ organizations are the fastest growing area of philanthropy based on financial measures such as revenue and expenses, indicating they are maturing as a nonprofit sector.

Philanthropic support for these organizations totaled \$8.8 billion in 2020 (1.8% of overall charitable giving). Giving to WGI organizations increased 9.2% from 2019–2020, but this was still lower than the growth of overall charitable giving (11.3%) during the same time period.

Putting the tumultuous year of 2020 in context, some women’s and girls’ organizations experienced changes likely due to the pandemic, such as an increase in contributions to women’s and girls’ human services organizations, and a decrease in contributions to women’s and girls’ sports and recreation.

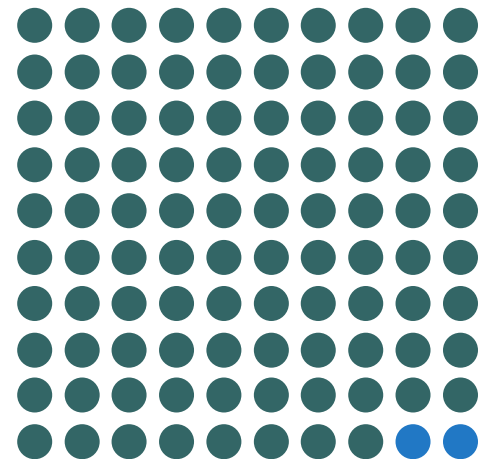
The five women’s and girls’ mission areas that received the least funding were: **Public society benefit, Environment and animals, Arts and culture, Religion and General.**

## PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT FOR WOMEN’S AND GIRL’S ORGANIZATIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL GIVING IN 2020 (IN BILLIONS)

2020

**\$486.3B**

IN TOTAL CHARITABLE GIVING



**\$8.8B (1.8%)**  
TO WOMEN’S AND GIRLS’ ORGANIZATIONS

Source: *The Women & Girls Index 2023: Measuring Giving to Women’s and Girls’ Organizations*. Women’s Philanthropy Institute, Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. The total giving amount of \$486.3 billion is from Giving USA 2023.

This material has been researched, written, and produced by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (“Lilly School”) in connection with a grant from the GS Donor Advised Philanthropy Fund for Wealth Management (“GS DAF”) and is intended for informational purposes only. The research and findings are not those of Goldman Sachs or the GS DAF and neither Goldman Sachs nor the GS DAF represent that the information in this message is accurate, complete and/or up-to-date and accepts no liability if it is not. No part of this material may be i) copied, photocopied, or duplicated in any form, by any means, or ii) redistributed without the Lilly School’s prior written consent.

# Trends Over Time

The Women and Girls Index (WGI) adds valuable data and insights to a growing body of research on how and why gender matters in philanthropy. The WGI focuses primarily on **organizations** that support women and girls. Other research has analyzed **donors** who give to these causes. Together, the research illuminates the expanding ecosystem in which organizations for women and girls have the potential to flourish.

Women's and girls' organizations tend to be **smaller than other nonprofits**, in terms of both finances and human resources.

Donors to women's and girls' causes include both men and women, although **women are more likely to give**, and give in greater amounts, to these causes.<sup>3</sup>

From 2012–2019, WGI organizations **supporting gender equality** and employment **experienced the largest increase** at 119.4%, although they receive a smaller amount of charitable giving.

In most years since 2012, WGI organizations dedicated to **reproductive health and family planning** have received the **greatest amount of support**.

Wealthier donors are also more likely to give to women's and girls' causes, including about 20% of high-net-worth households.<sup>4</sup> Forty percent of high net worth donors cited the belief that **supporting women and girls is the most effective way to solve other societal problems** as the primary reason for their giving.<sup>5</sup>

**Donors who give to women and girls through a donor-advised fund are generous.** Women's and girls' organizations received approximately 3.1% of donor-advised fund grant dollars between 2012 and 2015. This percentage is almost double the 1.6% of total philanthropic support WGI organizations received in 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Dale, E. J., Ackerman, J., Mesch, D. J., Osili, U. O., & Garcia, S. (2017). Giving to Women and Girls: An Emerging Area of Philanthropy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 47(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764017744674>

<sup>4</sup> Charitable Giving by Affluent Households. The 2023 Bank of America Study of Philanthropy. Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

This material has been researched, written, and produced by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy ("Lilly School") in connection with a grant from the GS Donor Advised Philanthropy Fund for Wealth Management ("GS DAF") and is intended for informational purposes only. The research and findings are not those of Goldman Sachs or the GS DAF and neither Goldman Sachs nor the GS DAF represent that the information in this message is accurate, complete and/or up-to-date and accepts no liability if it is not. No part of this material may be i) copied, photocopied, or duplicated in any form, by any means, or ii) redistributed without the Lilly School's prior written consent.

# Take Action

Data, which provides a clear picture of giving to women’s and girls’ causes, can inform individuals’ giving. For example, one study found 8.2% of households that gave to women’s and girls’ causes indicated they were motivated after hearing these causes receive less than 2% of all giving.<sup>6</sup> Here are some ways to put the data to work in your own giving.

Determine the subsector(s) that best align with your values.

Consider how you might structure your giving in this area at the local, national, and international level for maximum impact (e.g., during the pandemic, many donors chose to give locally).

Conduct a personal landscape scan by reviewing the **organizations in the WGI**. Use features such as keyword, category, and geographic location to narrow your search.

Seek out like-minded philanthropists for opportunities to collaborate, learn from, and expand your network in funding women’s and girls’ organizations. Review the **Women’s Funding Network membership roster** to see if there is an organization in your area that addresses gender equity. Meet their leaders, engage with the organization, and make an initial gift.

Join the board of a women’s and girls’ organization that aligns with your passion and work together with like-minded leaders to advance social change in this area.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

This material has been researched, written, and produced by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (“Lilly School”) in connection with a grant from the GS Donor Advised Philanthropy Fund for Wealth Management (“GS DAF”) and is intended for informational purposes only. The research and findings are not those of Goldman Sachs or the GS DAF and neither Goldman Sachs nor the GS DAF represent that the information in this message is accurate, complete and/or up-to-date and accepts no liability if it is not. No part of this material may be i) copied, photocopied, or duplicated in any form, by any means, or ii) redistributed without the Lilly School’s prior written consent.

WGI data provides an objective resource to help donors become more strategic and have greater impact with their charitable giving. The additional resources below will help donors deepen their understanding of ways they can catalyze change for women and girls.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Giving with a gender lens

Along with race, class, and ethnicity, gender shapes our identity, experiences, and perspectives. Considering the impact of gender on an issue helps donors identify, design, and fund programs and projects that will impact women and girls across all nonprofit subsectors. In your grantmaking, assess whether the organization and/or specific program design considers gender. For more information check out this resource from Candid: ***Grantmaking with a Gender Lens***.

### Collective giving

Organizations in which women come together and pool their knowledge and resources to accelerate a gender-equal world are often called collectives. ***Women Moving Millions***, the ***Women Donors Network***, and ***Maverick Collective by PSI*** are examples of groups of high net worth women philanthropists who learn, study, share, and fund in this area.

The ***Women's Funding Network*** is a membership association of more than 120 women's funds and foundations across 13 countries dedicated to advancing gender equity and justice.

Read *The Moment of Lift* by Melinda French Gates. Through stories about women she has met in her work, French Gates suggests that when we lift up women, we lift up humanity.

*The majority of the data included is from the Women & Girls Index, published by the Women's Philanthropy Institute at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. To review the reports, visit [equitablegivinglab.org](http://equitablegivinglab.org).*

The GS Donor Advised Philanthropy Fund for Wealth Management ("GS DAF"), Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC, and its affiliates and subsidiaries (together, "GS") do not provide legal, tax, or accounting advice to their clients or donors. Clients and donors are strongly urged to consult with their own advisors regarding such matters. Tax results may differ depending on a client's individual positions, elections or other circumstances. This material is intended for informational and educational purposes only. While it is based on information believed to be reliable, no representation or warranty is given as to its accuracy or completeness and it should not be relied upon as such. Concepts expressed are current as of the date appearing in this material only and are subject to change without notice. No part of this material may be (i) copied, photocopied or duplicated in any form, by any means, or (ii) redistributed without the Lilly School's prior written consent.

The links to certain internet sites ("sites") are sponsored and maintained by third parties and have been provided for informational purposes only. The fact that GS has provided a link to the site does not constitute an endorsement, authorization, sponsorship, or affiliation by GS with respect to the site, its owners, or its providers.

Contributions made to GS DAF are irrevocable. Assets contributed to the GS DAF and invested in the investment options are owned and controlled by GS DAF, and are not part of a client's portfolio assets held at Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC.

Please see the GS DAF Program Circular for more details on the fees and expenses associated with each separate GS DAF account.