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Donor Engagement Of Women  
in Canada:

# Insights on Fundraising Programs and Practices

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Thank you to the incredible people who shared time with me as **interconnectors**, supporting the outreach to identify key informants, as well as the **key informants themselves who took part in interviews and the focus group**. Your work is inspiring. May this research contribute to your and others' work - and I look forward to collaborating to keep this conversation deepening.

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And the eight amazing women I interviewed who are **donors** and volunteers - among many other roles in their lives: your time and passion are appreciated!

### **Juniper Glass**

*Principal, Lumiere Consulting, and independent researcher*

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# Introduction

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*Philanthropy for social change and gender equity have been two of my professional passions.*  
.....

My ears perk up when I hear about anything related to women and philanthropy. But more and more I heard the same conversation in Canada, about how women and men tend to give somewhat differently and about the positive potential of women's growing wealth and financial decision making power. These are interesting insights and exciting trends. But what can social change organizations do with them?

I was inspired to create this research project by these practical questions: How are Canadian nonprofits working for social and environmental well being and justice engaging women and donors? And what are they learning from their practice?

There is much to be done to improve gender analysis, equity and empowerment in the fundraising field. I believe that a better understanding of gender and other aspects of diversity in donor engagement is a lever to improve professional fundraising practice. I hope that this study will provide nonprofits working towards healthy communities and environments with useful knowledge and inspiration.

Feminism is about shifting the way things are done, not just quantitative representation of women and other groups marginalized in our society. Collaborative, power- and privilege-aware, humble, inclusive, equitable, supportive, holistic and healthy workplaces, relationships and methods are possible in the field of philanthropy, and that is just what I and many of the key informants are working towards.

Stay tuned for more articles I will release later this year that explore Canadian fundraisers' insights about feminist approaches to fund development.

## GOALS OF THE RESEARCH

- » Shine light on women-focused donor engagement methods across Canada
- » Disseminate the learning and challenges faced by fund development professionals implementing these various methods of engagement

## Context

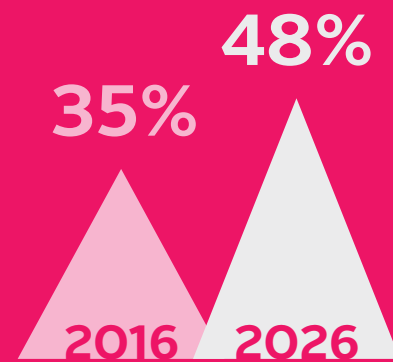
.....

*Canadian women are quickly gaining wealth. Over the next decade, women will have more assets and power to make decisions about philanthropic and investment contributions than ever before.*

.....

**\$900**  
BILLION

Estimate of inherited assets that will flow to Canadian women in the next 10 years<sup>1</sup>



Proportion of personal wealth in Canada held by women<sup>2</sup>

**This shift in wealth “will be driven by greater participation rates of women in the workforce, higher employment and investment incomes and significant inheritances by women in the wealthiest segments.”**

**~Strategic Insight, 2018**

<sup>1</sup> T.D. 2017. Time, Talent and Treasure: Canadian Women in Philanthropy: 2017 addendum.

<sup>2</sup> Strategic Insight. 2018. Donor-advised Funds: The Intersection of Philanthropy and Wealth Management.

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*At a time when Canadians in general are reducing their financial support for charities (Imagine Canada, 2018) and #MeToo is raising awareness of pervasive gender inequity (Rech, 2019), it is imperative that donor engagement practices keep with the times.*

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The expanding power and resources of women as donors has been a subject of interest to the fundraising profession, especially in the last ten years, giving rise to initiatives such as the Association of Fundraising Professionals Canada's 2013 forum on Women and Philanthropy in Ontario. Across the country, "women and philanthropy" continues to be a popular topic for panels and webinars (for example, those recently hosted by Canadian Association of Gift Planners, 2017; Carleton University, 2014; and Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2018).

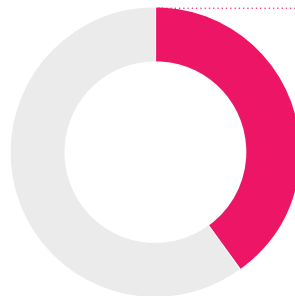
And yet, what do we know of how women donors are being engaged by Canadian nonprofits and charities?

There has been little documented about donor engagement models and practices that effectively involve women (Mesch & Pactor, 2016). The one exception is a number of studies on giving circles, a specific practice in which several people pool donations and select the recipients together (Eikenberry, 2008, 2009, 2011; Ray, 2013). Giving circles are growing around the world and are predominantly made up of women. For example, there are now 119 chapters of 100 Women Who Care and 47 chapters of 100 Men across Canada (100 Who Care Alliance, 2019), each a volunteer-driven giving circle in which donations are collected and directed towards local organizations.

## Key findings from the literature

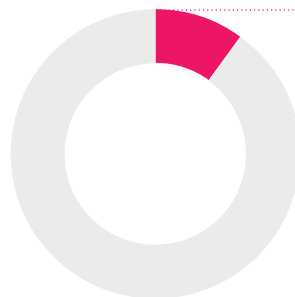
*What can fundraisers learn from past research on gender, giving and donor engagement? Here is a summary of key findings that I found most relevant for nonprofits that want to increase their engagement of women donors. The full references are found at the end of this report.*

### Fund development strategies focused on women are underused among nonprofits



One survey of large US-based nonprofit organizations found that fully **40%** were not paying particular attention to women as donors.

*Di Mento, M. 2014. Lack of Women in Top Roles Hinders Nonprofits, Female Nonprofit Workers Say. Chronicle of Philanthropy.*



A study of American co-ed colleges and universities found that from 1989 to 2009, **fewer than 10%** had implemented fundraising strategies focused intentionally on women.

*Mesch, D. and Pactor, A. 2009. Women's Philanthropy on Campus. Women's Philanthropy Institute.*

## Women believe that nonprofits have an important role in society

Women are significantly more likely than men to agree that charitable organizations make communities better places to live, and that it is in their power to help improve the welfare of others.	Marx, J. D. 2000. "Women and Human Services Giving." <i>Social Work</i> 45(1): 27–38.
High net worth women had statistically significant higher levels of confidence in nonprofits to solve societal problems versus men.	Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. 2011. The 2011 study of high net worth women's philanthropy.
Women are more likely to trust charities and social trust increases as giving to charitable causes increases, leading to a mutually reinforcing cycle.	Bekkers, R. 2003. Trust, Accreditation, and Philanthropy in the Netherlands.
Canadian women were somewhat more likely than men to agree that charities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very good at helping people,</li> <li>• very good at spending money wisely,</li> <li>• better at understanding the needs of Canadians,</li> <li>• and better meeting those needs, than governments.</li> </ul>	Lasby, D. and Barr, C. 2013. Talking about Charities 2013.

## Women seek to be well-informed donors

Canadian women rate information about the programs and services that a charity delivers slightly more importantly than men (83% of women thought it was very important vs. 79% of men when assessing a charitable organization).	Lasby, D. and Barr, C. 2013. Talking about Charities 2013.
Women display more confidence than men when deciding on causes to support and how much to donate.	Fidelity Investments. 2015. Money Fit Women Study.
Millennial men are more uncertain than women of the same generation about where to go for advice on making charitable donations.	Fidelity Charitable. 2016. Women and Giving: The Impact of Generation and Gender on Philanthropy.



## Women donors highly value results and impact

When Canadian women are assessing a charitable organization, they tend to rate information on impact as more important than men (64% vs. 58%).	Lasby, D. and Barr, C. 2013. Talking about Charities 2013.
When female philanthropists concentrate their giving to certain charities, it is out of a desire for more impact, and to establish a close relationship with those organizations.	T.D. 2014. Time, Talent and Treasure: Canadian Women in Philanthropy.
Compared to men, women of high net worth are significantly more likely to indicate that their giving decisions and strategies are driven by issues and to be taking action to deal with pressing issues of our time.	U.S. Trust and the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. 2016. The 2016 U.S. Trust Study of High Net Worth Philanthropy.
More than men, women are more driven to give because they care about the issues and causes.	T.D. 2017. Time, Talent and Treasure, 2nd addendum.

## Canadian women want to give more

Female Canadian philanthropists would like to see more women giving to the charitable sector.	T.D. 2014. Time, Talent and Treasure: Canadian Women in Philanthropy.
In Quebec, women are more likely than men to state that they want to increase their donation amount next year.	Asselin, D. and Bourque, C. 2018. Étude sur les tendances en philanthropie au Québec en 2020.

## What practices work well to engage women donors?

<p>Many practices considered standard or best practice in fundraising in North America today have their roots “in the 1960s when the prototypical donor was a white, straight male... These included competition, deadlines, recognition, board positions and peer pressure to raise funds.”</p>	<p>Loehr, K. 2018. Gender Matters: A guide to growing women’s philanthropy. Page 29.</p>
<p>Women look to experts to inform their decision making around giving, while men are more likely to seek advice from peers or family members.</p>	<p>Fidelity Charitable. 2016. Women and Giving: The Impact of Generation and Gender on Philanthropy.</p>
<p>Female Canadian philanthropists value strong relationships with charity staff, site visits and meaningful communication to stay engaged.</p>	<p>T.D. 2014. Time, Talent and Treasure: Canadian Women in Philanthropy.</p>
<p>Women highly appreciate donor education sessions to assist them to be more informed donors as well as recruiters of other potential donors.</p>	<p>Krotz, J.L. 2009. Making Philanthropy Count: How Women Are Changing the World.</p>
<p>Many women report that first-hand involvement in an organization is necessary to motivate them to give more.</p>	<p>Mesch, D. et al. 2015b. Where Do Men and Women Give? Gender differences in the motivations and purposes for charitable giving.</p>
<p>Far more than men, women are motivated to give to an organization for which they volunteer on a board or committee.</p>	<p>Mesch, D. et al. 2015b. Where Do Men and Women Give? Gender differences in the motivations and purposes for charitable giving.</p>
<p>Many women enjoy giving in groups. Giving circles have expanded greatly across North America and around the world, mainly volunteer led. The majority of giving circle members are women, and their main practice is meeting to make giving decisions collectively. Additionally, many giving circles also prioritize funding to issues that affect women and girls.</p>	<p>See, for example: Caster, 2008; Eikenberry, 2008, 2009, 2011; Eikenberry &amp; Breeze, 2014; Ray, 2013</p>
<p>Common elements in women’s engagement programs at US universities: membership in a group, annual gifts, gateway events to inform and inspire potential donors, occasions to hear directly from beneficiaries, and volunteer leadership opportunities.</p> <p>However, university-based women donor engagement programs sometimes resulted in women being treated as a niche group leading to limited sustainability, and programs focused mainly on engagement often did not result in an increase in giving.</p>	<p>Loehr, K. 2018. Gender Matters: A guide to growing women’s philanthropy.</p>

## Study methodology

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*This was an exploratory study to identify trends, patterns and insights in the practice of donor engagement of women in Canada.*

*Data gathering was conducted in phases over the course of 2019, with the program scan largely completed first, then interviews with fundraisers, then interviews with donors and finally a co-analysis session and focus group with experts in the field.*

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To generate leads on women donor engagement programs and fundraisers involved in this practice, I used a LinkedIn post and emails to my professional networks as well as information circulated by AFP Canada and the Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership program at Carleton University, my alma mater.

### **I) Program scan**

I conducted a scan of grey literature, websites, and referrals from my networks to identify 72 examples of initiatives that specifically engage women donors across Canada. These included a variety of different organization types, including nonprofits working in many different issue domains, community foundations, United Ways, and women's funds. I reviewed documentation about these programs, mostly websites and some internal documentation shared by key informants. In some cases, I filled gaps in information through email follow up with representatives of the programs. I categorized the main engagement methods, issue domains, geographic scope (see Appendix for the list of 72 organizations identified). I also collected information about minimum donation size and commitment length, however this information was not available for all programs so not documented in this report.

### **II) Interviews with fundraisers**

I conducted interviews with 16 fundraising professionals across Canada who were actively involved in a women-focused donor engagement program, or had been in the past. Interviews were conducted in both French and English.

A shortlist of potential interviewees was generated through the program scan of 72 initiatives and through referrals from my professional networks. Interviewees came from different organizations and multiple provinces and were selected for either 1) visibility of the program in the field (it was recommended to me by other practitioners) or 2) diverse representation of geographic location, issue domain, type of organization and type of donor program. See the table below for characteristics of interviewees' organizations.

### **III) Interviews with donors**

I conducted interviews with 8 women donors, half of whom were involved in women-specific donor engagement initiatives and half who were not. The shortlist of potential interviewees was generated through outreach to my professional networks and through referrals by the fundraisers I interviewed. Donor interviewees were selected for geographic and issue domain interest representation.

### **IV) Expert focus group**

The final step in data collection was a focus group by videoconference with 8 people with expertise in gender, philanthropy, inclusion and donor engagement. The focus group participants were different than the individuals interviewed earlier in the research process. They were selected for their prominence in the field and for their level of expertise in women's and inclusive philanthropy in Canada. The focus group helped verify and deepen my understanding of the data and generate new information and insights.

## Data collection methods

Method	Sample	Purpose
<b>Program scan (website review)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72 Canadian examples of initiatives hosted by nonprofit organizations to specifically engage women donors</li> <li>• All initiatives that met the above criteria were included</li> <li>• Did not include volunteer initiatives not based at a nonprofit (e.g. independent giving circles)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and categorize programs that engage women donors</li> </ul>
<b>Semi-structured interviews with fundraisers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 fund development professionals</li> <li>• From different organizations and multiple provinces, who have an active program to engage women donors</li> <li>• Selected for either               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. visibility of the program in the field (recommended by other practitioners) or</li> <li>2. diverse representation of geographic location, issue domain, type of organization and type of donor program)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about what works and what doesn't in donor engagement of women</li> <li>• Explore feminist approaches to fundraising</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews with donors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 women donors</li> <li>• Giving significant gifts</li> <li>• Selected for diverse representation of geographic location, issue domain interest and whether or not involved in women-focused donor program (half involved, half not)</li> <li>• Some referred by fundraiser key informants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand motivation and benefits for donors of participating in women-focused engagement programs</li> <li>• Explore ways to improve the engagement of women donors</li> </ul>
<b>Focus group with experts in gender and philanthropy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 fund development professionals</li> <li>• Selected for visibility in the field (recommended by other practitioners) and expertise in women's and inclusive philanthropy</li> <li>• Different than the 16 interviewees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine and validate initial study results</li> <li>• Discuss questions arising from data</li> <li>• Consolidate insights on women-focused donor engagement practices and feminist fundraising approaches</li> </ul>

### Interviewees' organizations (fund development professionals, n=16)

Head office		Issue domain	
BC	3	Arts and culture	1
ON	12	Social services	4
QC	1	Advancement of women and girls	3
Geographic scope		Environment and animal welfare	1
Local	9	International development	2
Provincial	2	University (education)	1
National	5	Hospital (health)	1
		Community foundation (multiple issues)	2

### Limitations of the study

The sampling method for key informants relied largely on professional networks and referrals by others (snowball sampling). The data revealed a number of patterns and the findings should be considered a general portrait of key issues faced in the donor engagement of women in Canada. I believe that the same study with a different set of key informants would have produced slightly different but largely resonant results.

I am certain that I have missed some women donor engagement programs from the program scan. The study was limited to those programs that had information available on a website and which were identified by basic internet searches or from direct

referrals by key informants and my professional networks. I hope that the list continues to grow and that the information and websites compiled in the Appendix will be inspirational and useful for nonprofits seeking to discover specific models and practices employed at other organizations.

I did not include volunteer-led initiatives such as independent giving circles that were not based at and hosted by a nonprofit organization. There is a growing number of such giving circles, a positive trend for Canadian society, however they were not the focus of this research.

# Findings: Women donor engagement programs in Canada

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Insights on practice:  
Key challenges in women donor engagement

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Insights on practice:  
What works in donor engagement of women

## Findings: Women donor engagement programs in Canada

### Motivations for focusing on women donors

When Canadian nonprofits embark on women-specific fundraising strategies, what are their motivations for doing so? Key informants stated their organizations had many reasons for initiating programs focused on women donors.

They often sought to grow donations and broaden the donor pool of the organization. In some cases, the women donor engagement initiative aimed to raise funds for the organization's general needs while in others, women donors were specifically selected because there was a need to raise funds for gender equity or women-focused programs within the organization.

Another common experience was realizing existing and potential women donors were not as fully engaged as they could be. Key informants expressed a sense of lost potential if they did not better meet the needs of women supporters, both in terms of active advocates for their cause and in terms of donations.

About one third of key informants reported that their engagement programs were spurred on by female donors and volunteers themselves being proactive. In these organizations, women had expressed their desire for more involvement because they wanted to contribute more to causes and organizations that they cared about.

Several organizations also reported that they had developed their women's donor engagement initiatives in response to generational shifts. In many cases, the traditional donor pool is growing older, resulting in a need to engage those women in new ways to respond to their situation, be it pulling back from active involvement, or, in some organizations, providing more opportunities for older women to mentor and share their hard-earned skills and knowledge. Some organizations also saw a need to engage younger women – both to fill the gaps left by older generations and because younger women are interested in different types of engagement than their mothers and grandmothers' generations. Many of the key informants spoke of the intergenerational nature of their donor engagement programs being a feature that members appreciated.



**When we started to investigate, who are our donors; who have this capacity; who could invest in our advocacy priorities research. In our sector, we discovered: 70% of the leadership are women and the majority of donors are also women. But hadn't been engaged fully yet. It became clear who would be the focus for our first leadership giving circle.**

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*-Fund development professional*

**Volunteers are harder to come by. Volunteers that were happy to jump in before are now in their 80s. The organization was started by an incredible community of women. But as they are getting older, they are feeling it's time to hand over things. Some younger women are stepping in and they have other ways of approaching community.**

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*-Fund development professional*

**We have seen a rise in givers under 40 years old. More and more younger women are getting involved. It is because of what is going on in the world: #MeToo, and Trump. Women are saying: I need to be part of a formal thing to address gender equity.**

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*-Fund development professional*

**When I started to look at the trends and the research, it struck me that we weren't meeting the needs of women donors. I thought, rather than talking about how to engage the 20 year-old potential donor, we could talk about how to engage women of all ages! I was also interested in how to engage mid-range donors. It struck me that doing something to bring women closer to the foundation would be a good idea. We need to battle the notion that community foundations are just for white wealthy men. This is not the case. It shouldn't have to be the case.**

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*-Fund development professional*

## WHY DO CANADIAN NONPROFITS START WOMEN DONOR ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS?



To grow donations and donor pool



Realized that women donors were not as engaged as they could be



Women were proactive: they asked for more engagement and involvement in the organization or cause



Generational shifts produced a need to engage younger donors (and older donors in new ways)

## Prevalence and type of donor engagement programs

There is a long history in Canada of women-only groups working to raise funds for a particular cause or nonprofit organization. For example, many universities have had associated “women’s clubs” since their inception. Many such clubs continue to exist today, some limited to social and networking activities but some with a focus on fundraising. “Ladies auxiliaries” have been common in Canadian hospitals for over a century. Such historical models, however, are facing difficulties if they do not adjust to changing culture. One key informant observed that many women’s auxiliaries in healthcare are becoming less engaged in philanthropy, losing their volunteer leadership and no longer have seats on the board of their respective hospitals.

Today, donor engagement programs focused on women are found at a wide variety of Canadian nonprofits, including universities, hospitals, private schools, and charities that work in a variety of fields or issue areas. Of the 72 women-specific donor engagement programs identified during the program scan, more than half were at social service (33%) or health organizations (19%), and a much smaller percentage at education (11%), international development (8%), environment and animal welfare (8%) and arts and culture organizations (6%).

In the analysis, organizations dedicated to the advancement of women and girls were categorized separately. Fourteen percent of the Canadian women donor engagement programs identified in the scan were hosted at organizations which had a primary focus on the advancement of women and girls. However a much larger proportion, fully 46% of the 72 donor programs, were dedicating the funds raised for gender equity or girls and women-related programs within their organization. This includes

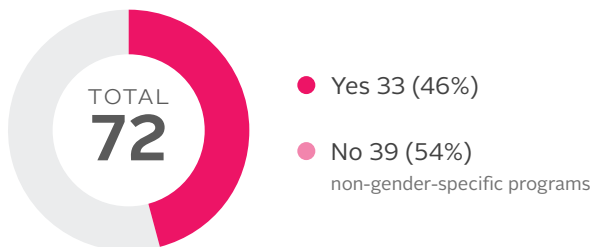
international development organizations or hospitals, for example, in which some, but not all, activities are focused on girls or women. The reasons for this high proportion could be that either organizations are leveraging their women donor engagement programs to generate funds for gender equity work, that women donors are highly interested in the gender equity aspect of an organization's work, or, most likely, both of these factors are intersecting.

Two-thirds (66.7%) of the women donor engagement programs were located in organizations with a local scope, 9.7% in organizations with a provincial scope, and a quarter (23.6%) at organizations with a national scope (including international development charities).

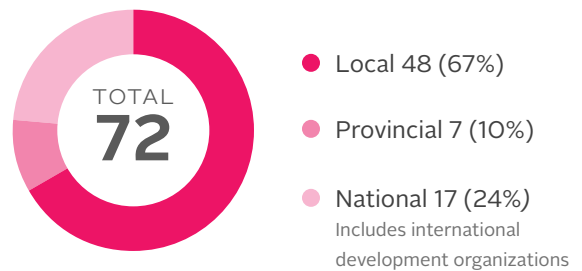
### Program scan of women donor engagement initiatives across Canada (n=72)

(see Appendix for list of programs identified in the program scan)

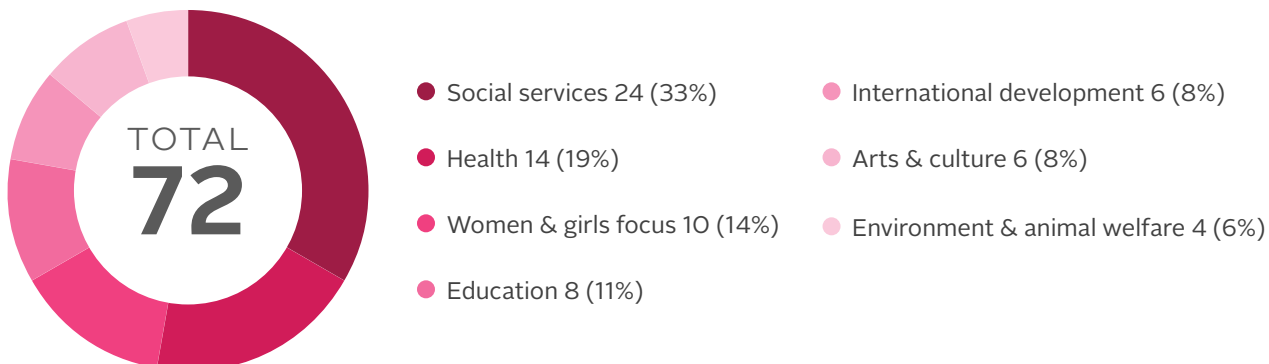
#### DO DONATIONS FUND PROGRAMS SPECIFIC TO WOMEN & GIRLS?



#### ORGANIZATION SCOPE



#### ISSUE DOMAIN



## Program models

The scan of the Canadian landscape reveals two broad approaches to improving the donor engagement of women. Women-focused programming is the most common, while mainstreaming the adoption of a gender lens throughout a nonprofit organization, including the fundraising function, is far less common.

### Women-focused programs

Women's philanthropy programs are becoming more and more prevalent in Canadian nonprofits, according to key informants. In some cases, nonprofits have chosen to work with a smaller number of major donors, taking them on a "learning journey" in which they explore the issues in the company of like minded women. In some programs, the organization staff support donors to become more active advocates and leaders on the issue.

The most common type of program has a more open membership and requires less commitment on the part of women who participate: a modest but meaningful annual donation, a sense of joining a member group, and opportunities throughout the year to engage lightly in volunteering, networking and learning events.

The popularity of the "giving circle" model is apparent in Canada, in which donors decide together on where their funds will be dedicated. While many giving circles are independent and volunteer-led, this study found that the giving circle model is also being used by nonprofit organizations, inviting women donors to take part in making decisions about which internal projects or priorities to support as a group. Community foundations are one context in which giving circles are becoming popular. An example is Vancouver Foundation's Giving Well, in which women donors are invited to contribute a minimum donation of \$1000 and participate in a group meeting in which they hear about three gender equity-related projects recently reviewed and approved by the Foundation. Donors get to hear more about the projects and then collectively

choose how much to give to one as a bonus grant. The function of a giving circle at a community foundation is often to generally support women's philanthropy, as well as to create a sense of relationship and engagement between the donor and the foundation that may foster future giving. Giving circles are also a program model used by individual nonprofits to generate a sense of enthusiasm and involvement among women donors towards the organization. However in these cases of the choice of program areas that women's donations support collectively is pre-determined by staff and donors will vote or discuss until agreement is reached.

Another model which is somewhat prevalent in the Canadian landscape is the one-time fundraiser that mobilizes women specifically to support an initiative. An historical example was The Penelopiad Circle in which nine Canadian women each made a major donation to the National Arts Centre to support a production of a play by Margaret Atwood. Another example was a time-limited fundraiser to generate resources to conduct a gender-based analysis of an organization's programs to alleviate and reduce poverty. In these cases, a sense of urgency and solidarity as women is activated to bring to life an initiative – usually gender-equality focused – that might not otherwise come to be.

## Gender mainstreaming

The second approach to better engaging women donors, much less common than the first, is to mainstream gender equity within an organization. This involves applying a gender equity and inclusion lens through all fundraising processes – such as adapting and tailoring communications, events, database, and fundraising team skills and makeup to meet the needs of diverse women and men – as well as paying attention to broad organizational issues such as the gender representation on the board, executive and leadership. Such an approach was found mainly at organizations that were focused on gender equity as their organizational mission, such as Canadian Women’s Foundation, OXFAM Canada, and YWCA chapters.

Some key informants reflected on how their approach to women’s donor engagement is actually an intersectional approach to diverse donor engagement. In order to do their work better, they do their best to get to know donors in all their diversity rather than make assumptions based on their country of origin, occupation or race, for example.

### COMMON APPROACHES TO INCREASING DONOR ENGAGEMENT OF WOMEN

#### Mainstream gender equity throughout the organization



Adapt communications, events, database, team makeup, board and executive gender representation, etc. to meet the needs of diverse women and men



Intersectional approach to understanding the diversity of donors

#### Women-focused programs



Historical models: women’s auxiliaries & service organizations



Volunteer leadership and advocacy: “help us move this issue forward”



Annual donation, membership, opportunities to network



One-off fundraisers: “as women we need to mobilize to make this project happen”



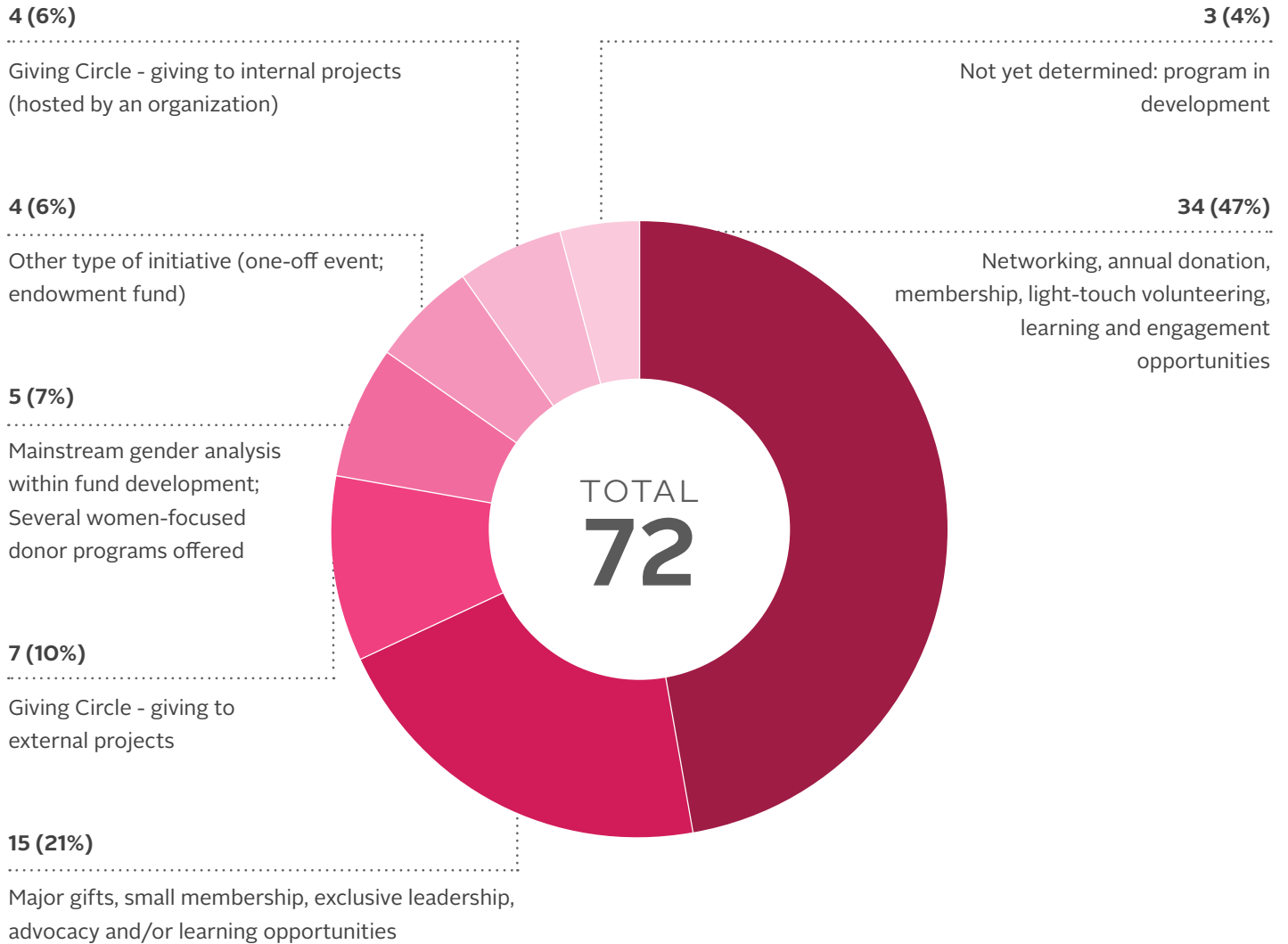
Exclusive group, major gifts, curated learning and engagement experiences, build relationships with women with similar values



Giving Circles: “contribute an amount and, together, help select the recipient” (recipients can be internal or external projects)

**Women donor engagement programs in Canada: Main program type (n=72)**

(see Appendix for list of programs identified in the program scan)



## Donation levels and commitment

This study looked a little closer at the 16 organizations that were represented among the key informants (interviewees and focus group participants) that were currently operating a women's philanthropy program. There was a wide range of annual minimum giving levels as well as the minimum years of commitment asked of women who wanted to get involved. However, a clear pattern emerged: for those programs with large donation expectations, greater than \$10,000 per year, longer commitments were requested, from 4 to 10 years. For smaller annual donations, up to \$5000, there was only a 1 year commitment expected. This likely reflects a split between those lighter-touch engagement programs in which any number of women can take part and the more exclusive and intensive programs for major donors.

As for the types of activities offered to women donors in these 16 programs, networking and community building opportunities with other women was by far the most common. The vast majority also offered donors the chance to learn more deeply about the social or environmental issues being addressed, about the organization's impact, and sometimes about skills in engaged philanthropy. A smaller number supported women donors to be active advocates on the issue, to volunteer in leadership roles, or to make decisions about which specific initiatives their donations would support.

### Donation levels and length of commitment: Key informants' programs (n=16)

	Annual minimum giving levels		Minimum years of commitment				
			not yet determined	1	4	5	10
<b>0-\$999</b>	2			2			
<b>\$1000-\$4900</b>	6			6			
<b>\$5000-\$9999</b>	0						
<b>\$10,000-\$19,999</b>	1						1
<b>\$20,000+</b>	3				2	1	
<b>to be determined, or no minimum</b>	4	4					

### Main engagement activities: Key informants' programs (n=16)

	Yes	Partial	No	Not yet determined
Community & networking	15	-	1	-
Learning (about the issues & organization)	13	-	3	-
Advocacy engagement	4	2 - opportunities for those interested	8	2
Volunteering & leadership (in the women's philanthropy program, mentoring, committees, or board)	2	3 - if suitable opportunities for individual members	11	-
Decision making about which programs donations will support	2	2 - donor members decide between projects curated by staff	10	2

### Program branding and practice sharing

Most Canadian nonprofits that have developed women donor engagement programs are doing so independently. They are testing and learning as they create the activities and branding for their programs, but many key informants observed that there have been too few opportunities for fundraisers to share their practices and learn from others.

Some women's programs – such as Tiffany Circle of the Red Cross and the Lions of Judah of Jewish philanthropic organizations – have branded and expanded internationally including into Canada. Another notable example is United Way, which offers Women United, an engagement and philanthropy program for women in 165 locations globally, including 13 Canadian communities. These international connections facilitate learning about what works, give individual chapters new ideas, as well as offer donors a sense of being part of a network or movement of like-minded women beyond Canada.



# Findings: Women donor engagement programs in Canada

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Insights on practice:  
Key challenges in women donor engagement

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Insights on practice:  
What works in donor engagement of women

## Insights on practice: Key challenges in women donor engagement

“ We would like to incorporate more advocacy into the program. We have created a lot of social media messages, a key message tool kit, training in the 101 of the organization, but the members don't really do anything with it. Members [of the major donor group] all want more one-pagers and videos, like an insatiable need! They always ask for it but there is not a lot of uptake.

*-Fund development professional*

“ What I like about [this donor group] is it is smaller, more intimate, we can get to know each other personally. The feeling of exclusivity, if you will. It sort of works because it makes you feel special; I liked that idea of being a founding member, a pioneer. There is a sense of community, human connection.

*-Donor*

“ When we first started, women were sheepish about the idea of a women's giving circle. Many said, why not open doors to men? It took us putting out an anonymous survey and asking, why did you join the group? The answer was clear: they wanted to be involved because it was “women” and because it was “leadership” on the issue. Yet they were also not confident at the beginning in the gender-specific focus.

*-Fund development professional*

What hurdles do Canadian nonprofits face when working to activate the potential of women donors? This section presents key informants' insights about the challenges they have grappled with in women-specific donor engagement programming.

### Challenges in overall design and strategy

#### Lack of intention in strategy

Occasionally organizations create a women's committee or philanthropy initiative “just because.” That is, they have a sense that they should do something for or with women donors, and have a general idea that it would be beneficial, but there is not enough planning, strategy or intention behind the initiative to produce momentum or results. As more and more nonprofits are creating women's donor programs, it may seem like a given that each organization ought to start one. One variation of this challenge is when increasing philanthropy is a hoped-for result but fund development is not emphasized clearly enough for members to take it up. For example, a university alumni program for women could sell itself to new members as mainly a networking and mentorship opportunity; because the fundraising aspect of the group was not made explicit, members may enjoy the events and relationships they are building without contributing meaningfully to fund development for the host organization.

#### Difficulty meeting donors' expectations and requests

On the other hand, challenges can also be faced when donors are invited into a program with the promise that they will be full collaborators, active players in deciding the group's activities or direction. When donors are engaged to the point of feeling a sense of ownership, it builds their commitment to the organization. However, this can also lead to donors asking too much of staff or expectations beyond their role, such as directing strategy. The main challenge of donors “asking too much” is the use of limited staff time.

Several key informants observed that donors can be very enthusiastic about supporting advocacy on the focal issue, but often do not follow through. This may be because of lack of time, but can lead to staff responding to requests for greater involvement – such as producing videos and social media guides for donors to promote the issue – that then go underused.

“ A lot of people want to be part of the group that can't meet the donation threshold. We respond, if you support this cause but this donor circle is not the right opportunity, we will happily engage you as a donor in other ways. We offer a pre-conference in which everyone can take part. They can network with [the leadership donor circle] and this encourages people to enter. At first there was pressure to change the criteria to let more women in. This created confusion with the original purposes of the donor circle. We had to remind members: anybody can be a donor and contribute and engage, but this level is necessary to secure the future. We had to stay strong.

*-Fund development professional*

“ When we first started, women were sheepish about the idea of a women's giving circle. Many said, why not open doors to men? It took us putting out an anonymous survey and asking, why did you join the group? The answer was clear: they wanted to be involved because it was “women” and because it was “leadership” on the issue. Yet they were also not confident at the beginning in the gender-specific focus.

*-Fund development professional*

### Who is included in the group?

Key informants grappled with questions about exclusivity and inclusion in their women donors engagement programs. There are benefits to maintaining a minimum donation level, mainly to ensure that fund development is kept as a central goal. Some donors in the study also observed that keeping group size relatively small gave them a sense of community and uniqueness that they appreciated.

The idea of engaging “women leaders” poses challenges as well, since those in traditional leadership roles, for example executives, are often very busy and cannot invest as much commitment as donors in other professional positions. As one key informant pointed out, focusing on women with a big commitment to the issue or organization, rather than on women with big titles, has produced better results.

And what is the role of men? Should the group be exclusive? Many key informants described their discussions within the organization or within the donor group, questioning the value of a women-only initiative. Most came to the conclusion that there was enough value in women-focused initiatives to keep them that way.

The main solutions to these challenges offered by key informants was to offer a range of events and opportunities for involvement for donors that were not part of the women-focused program. For example, those who could not meet the donation level can be provided with clear options to be involved in the organization in other ways. Certain events throughout the year could be open to all donors, men and women, members of the women's philanthropy initiative and those who were not.

### CHALLENGES IN OVERALL DESIGN AND STRATEGY

- » When you create a women's committee “just because”
- » Not emphasizing philanthropy in mandate; members do not prioritize fund development
- » When “ownership” goes too far; donors expect or ask for too much
- » Excitement – but not uptake – for advocacy role
- » Neglect those that can't meet donation level
- » Focus on women with big titles rather than big commitment to the issue or organization
- » What is the role of men? Questioning a women-only group

“ Women usually want to be more than just donors. But this [engagement program] is not voluntourism - they can't just roll up their sleeves in a developing country.

-Fund development professional

“ In fundraising, we are now in an environment where storytelling is the most important. I used to sometimes take housing insecure clients with me to donor meetings. I learned to look for someone who likes to talk, who finds it healing, who has spent lots of time already recovering. However, we made mistakes and sometimes this could trigger shame, create problems for clients. As time went on, I felt uncomfortable: why in the name of program, do we have to have a woman tell her addiction story to white, privileged people? Are we reinforcing the idea that philanthropy will solve a systemic problem?

-Fund development professional

“ We apply a real participant-centred lens on everything that we do; as a fundraising team, we keep this front and foremost. We work with program staff closely, and the frontline manager will approach participants when they believe the benefits of public speaking will outweigh any potential conflict for the woman. When done in the right way, program participants will often want to share their testimonials about the impact of programs for their lives. At the events, a program manager is present to support, and donors engage and ask questions. This is very popular among women donors. It's a chance to see first hand the benefit of their donation.

-Fund development professional

## Challenges in program implementation

### Donors' desire for direct volunteering or contact with beneficiaries

A number of key informants observed that women often seek direct experiences in the organizations and causes they care about. This can sometimes result in a desire to meet or volunteer directly with beneficiaries. Coordinating such volunteering can be difficult for nonprofits, and in many cases, it is not possible. Meeting with the people who benefit from an organization's work can also pose ethical challenges as they are often in a position of precarity and difficulty and, from a social justice perspective, donors' desires and needs must not precede those of beneficiaries.

Key informants had several strategies for addressing this challenge. First, many make it clear that certain kinds of volunteering are not part of the women's engagement program. Second, they will often direct donors to other programs where they can do direct volunteering or mentoring, which have the capacity to train and support them. Finally, some organizations have developed refined methods, informed by a feminist and empowerment approach, to creating safe spaces for exchange between donors and those who have benefitted from the charitable programs. For example, in one organization that supports low income women, fundraisers work closely with program delivery staff to plan and prepare willing program participants to share their stories at donor events.

### How far and how fast to expect donors to be educated on social justice?

Most donor engagement programs include some educational elements: providing donors with information and experiences to advance their understanding of the issues. A few key informants said they hoped to deepen donors' sensitivity to social justice and systemic issues and analysis. At the same time, this was recognized as a challenging thing to do. There is a tension between social justice education, which shines light on privilege and power differences, and encouraging and supporting donors to feel good about their donations and involvement in an organization.

### Expectation that donors will invite other donors

Many donors interviewed for this study expressed hesitation about getting involved in philanthropic groups where they were expected to reach out to their networks. Past research has found that women are more relational in their giving behaviours (Women's Philanthropy Institute, 2015). This study indicates that Canadian women donors do have a strong desire for a sense of community and attraction to philanthropic groups for the opportunity to meet others with similar values. However, it does not necessarily mean that they will bring along their friends and family to

“ Many women donors value the learning. In some ways we are speaking to the converted, but there is a slice of our group members that are kind and caring but wouldn't have heard of social justice, really. They live in the suburbs and never come downtown; they are not very aware of the issues. We have to be very careful not to open a can of worms if we are not able to follow up. Talking about privilege is not something you can do in just one hour! But I hope by exposing donors to a whole range of things, reinforcing some key messages, it allows questions to rise up and they have the opportunity to go a little further in their learning than if we were not there with them.

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*- Fund development professional*

“ I did not do a call out to my family regarding the fund, I'm not comfortable with that. I like to bring friends to informational events, but it's awkward when I have to include the donation level, it's not an inexpensive thing to be involved in and that is an obstacle for me.

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*- Donor*

women's donor groups. In fact, some donors interviewed said that their interest in getting involved in group philanthropy was because they were not finding resonance with their values and interest in contributing to social change among their families. Some fundraisers in this study had good experience with donors recruiting women from their networks into the donor engagement program, but donors interviewed said they very rarely got close friends or family involved. Often this was because they did not want to exhaust their close networks with financial requests or to complicate their personal relationships with philanthropy. This indicates that when building a program, outreach and cultivation strategies for new donors cannot rely solely on the expectation that current donors will do that work. In addition, it may be advisable to support existing donors to have a meaningful experience before requesting that they reach out to their personal networks.

### **Lack of planning for long term engagement**

Some programs are ongoing, allowing women to come in and out as they like, while other programs have multi-year time frames, usually 3 to 5 years. Some key informants observed enthusiasm by women donors at the beginning, but then a lack of interest over time. The three-mark appears to be a crucial moment when donors consider moving their philanthropic commitments to other organizations or causes. Key informants offered certain stewardship strategies for countering waning commitment, including surveying or conversing with donors annually about what they seek from the initiative, involving donors in discussing the next phase early enough that they get enthusiastic about the future, and accepting a certain natural level of turnover in members of the group. Donors that stick with the organization over the longer term bring deep value and newcomers can replace those lost through attrition.

## **CHALLENGES IN PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

- » Donors' desire for direct volunteering or contact with beneficiaries
- » How far and how fast to expect donors to be educated on social justice?
- » Expectation that donors will invite other donors
- » Lack of planning for long term engagement

“ Our leadership is male, and when this initiative started, they just didn't know what to do with it! We had to justify it all the time. Because they were not involved in it or engaged, the leadership measured the program's success by the bottom line. That has changed in the last couple of years. Women in philanthropy conferences are now popping up all over the place. When the leadership saw that our organization already had this, they were pleased. There was more interest then.

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*-Fund development professional*

“ Is the women's engagement initiative part of a strategic direction plan vs. a business plan initiative? At a strategic plan level, those are the things that the boards look at. An operating business plan, it's the day-to-day, the women's program might just be a subset of an annual program. If it is truly at a strategic level, then resourcing and board engagement might be different.

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*-Fund development professional*

“ It's still worth it despite the staff time – though I guess all programs feel that way! It's worth it because of the donor stewardship and economies of scale. We are often meeting with multiple donors at the same time, they are being invited to more activities than if we were trying to steward them individually. We are saving on HR on that end, so I think it balances out. And if this was a side-of-the-desk program, women would smell that right away – they would sense that it was only for the sake of raising more money, not meaningfully engaging them in this cause.

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*-Fund development manager*

## Organizational challenges

Not enough support within the organization or from male leadership  
 Several key informants encountered challenges within their organization when developing a women's donor engagement initiative. In a few cases, this was due to internal silos and competition, when other staff saw the initiative as taking away from their adjacent fundraising work. Most often however, this was due to lack of understanding and support from male leadership: executive directors, presidents or board members questioned why a women-specific program was needed and did not offer adequate support.

Key informants offered various strategies for circumventing challenges with lack of leadership support. In certain cases, if the board is open to women's engagement as a priority, it can help to get that direction embedded into the strategic plan to secure adequate resources to implement. In cases where there might be resistance from the board but the head of the organization is supportive, it can be strategic to simply start the initiative without waiting for “approval,” as one leader stated.

### Commitment of staff time

A frequent challenge is the labour intensive aspect of donor engagement. One key informant wondered if initiatives focused on women donors did indeed take more time than other fundraising initiatives precisely because of the nature of many female donors: their need for involvement and information, which tends to be greater than male donors.

To address this challenge, some key informants were working towards greater volunteer leadership in the women donor group. Their hope is that as donors step forward to take on certain functions coordinating and leading the group, the time commitment from staff can be gradually reduced. Others had a practice, when they found themselves de-prioritizing the women's donor initiative in their daily work, of acknowledging the many benefits of the initiative – such as strengthening ties with multiple donors at the same time and building a group of ambassadors for the organization. Some organizations had instituted, or were considering instituting, a transparent accounting of the coordination costs, sharing this with donors, and reserving a portion of the donations for operating the women's initiative.

“ There was a lot of resourcing the fund development team on the back end to make sure this was a high touch experience. Sometimes I wonder if we have done the sector [a] favour or not by giving our major donors so many engagement opportunities (maybe too many for this price tag).

-Fund development manager

“ It's not easy trying to generate a sense of community for donors, but without killing our staff with events! The request from donors is always for more events. Large or small, events take so much time to organize. But our desire is to create an incredible donor experience and multiple opportunities to be engaged.

-Fund development manager

“ The individual fundraiser makes a difference. One organization I won't go back to because they had inconsistent fundraisers. Fundraisers switch jobs so often! I have a long bond with [fund development professional] at [organization]. If she were to leave, it would change how I relate to that organization.

-Donor

“ You need very skilled relationship managers. With women donors, the relationships become more personal.

-Fund development professional

### Continuity and skills of staff

Both the fundraisers and the donors that contributed to this study pointed out the vital importance of fund development staff. Certain skills – flexibility, clear communication, authentic relationship building – seem to be especially needed for making a women's donor initiative work well. When donors were asked what made for their best experiences getting involved with an organization, almost all spoke about the qualities of the fundraising or executive staff that they met: respect, knowledgeable, dedication, responsiveness, and a sense of true personal connection.

Turnover was seen as a major barrier to success by both fundraising and donor key informants. Once donors connect with individuals working in an organization, they want to continue to communicate with that person. One key informant was having a challenge because the members of the women's donor group had seen several different staff assigned to their group in recent years, and by the time she had been hired into the position, involvement by members had dropped very low.

### How to demonstrate impact?

When does women donor engagement “pay off?” This was a question that many key informants grappled with, especially those organizations that had lower minimum donation thresholds for women's participation in an initiative. New programs can be labour-intensive to start, and, as we have seen earlier, donor engagement of women requires a certain level of staff time investment. Some key informants had organization leadership or boards asking for information on the return on investment for the women's initiatives. Higher-donation-level programs found it easy to demonstrate impact, but many of the lower donation-level-programs found the question harder to answer.

In response, some organizations have put the brakes on expanding their women's philanthropy initiatives until they can demonstrate an upswing in donations. Other key informants had created indicators of success beyond simple dollars raised, such as the level of satisfaction of women volunteers and an increase in participation in committees and the board by women donors. Some fund development professionals have persisted despite difficulty demonstrating a quick impact, by insisting that meaningful engagement will pay off in time.

“ There is a kind of internal socialization the team has to have if you want to approach donor engagement differently. Our program has been very emergent and collaborative with the women. Staff had to feel comfortable about going forward without all the elements baked.

*-Fund development professional*

“ One of our major success factors is long standing staff. Many have been here 10 plus years. We know our donors very well. Other organizations have staff turning over every 18 to 24 months! I think staff retention intersects with feminist values in the workplace. This organization gives more flexibility compared to others: we can have a meaningful work life and have children and do other things, so we are loyal and give it our all when we are here.

*-Fund development professional*

“ I remember when one board member said to another, “You have spent decades cultivating white male donors, and did not count how many resources that took. Now the first question when we want to focus on women is, what is the pay off? when it is going to fund itself?” I realized that this is not going to be linear: it's not going to be this specific person comes to this women's event, then makes a larger donation.

*-Fund development manager*

“ Sometimes we open events up to more groups. When our events are about larger, educational topics we invite women's groups and their members and donors to join in. I believe strongly that to have collaboration and a continuum, a unified voice, we will be stronger. This collaboration is working to a moderate degree.

*-Fund development professional*

### **Working with other women-focused events and organizations: collaboration and competition**

Some key informants had faced questions about how to work with potential competitors, that is, other women-focused organizations and philanthropy initiatives. As the interest in women donor engagement grows in Canada, women may receive more and more invitations to participate.

Fundraising professionals in smaller cities especially did their best to be aware of what other women's organizations and initiatives were planning, coordinating their events so as not to conflict. Several key informants had a strategy of collaborating on certain events with other organizations to bring in the membership and audience of each. This was also seen as a labour-saving strategy because more engagement opportunities could be offered to donors without having to organize them all.

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES**

- » Commitment of staff time
- » Need for staff continuity and refined skills
- » Not enough support in organization: due to silos, competition or lack of understanding from male leadership
- » How to demonstrate impact? When does women donor engagement “pay off”?
- » Working with other women focused events and programs: collaboration and competition



# Findings: Women donor engagement programs in Canada

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Insights on practice:  
Key challenges in women donor engagement

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Insights on practice:  
What works in donor engagement of women

## Insights on practice: What works in donor engagement of women

### Getting started: Creating and refining an initiative

#### Internal research

“ We explored, who are our donors, who has the capacity? We realized the vast majority of donors were women but they hadn't been fully engaged yet.

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*-Fund development professional*

“ We discovered 20 to 30 women from our donor base who were really interested and able to do different things than in the past. Our focus is on reconnecting with those women.

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*-Fund development professional*

“ When there was a lot of buzz about women and philanthropy circulating (like how women like to be more involved, to see what they are giving to, to have deeper discussions about the work), and we heard about the giving circle concept, we thought it would be a neat idea to come up with something that works for our organization.

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*-Fund development professional*

“ Don't be afraid to ask donors for feedback. I often share, “Would this work? Here's what I am thinking. What do you think?”

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*-Fund development professional*

The majority of fundraisers interviewed spoke about the importance of doing their homework before embarking on a donor engagement program. While donor research is important in most fundraising, there are a few unique aspects when applying a gender focus. Often organizations have not yet completed a gender analysis of their donor pool, which can be complicated by factors such as rigid databases, or those that have been set up assuming a male head of household.

Many key informants also gained great inspiration for their start up phase from reading research on women and philanthropy, the success of the giving circle model globally, and ideas for programming from other practitioners that had already created women donor groups. Key informants often referred positively to the research of TD on women and giving in Canada, Kathleen Loehr's work, and the research from The Women's Philanthropy Institute at Indiana University.

#### Engage women donors in creating the program at the beginning, and as you go along

While some pre-planning is necessary within an organization, many key informants had great success engaging donors early in the process. Working with current donors to help co-create the women's engagement initiative is a way to create buy-in and enthusiasm but also to gather useful information to ensure that the new initiative meets the needs of those who will participate. Many fundraisers used methods for checking in with members of the donor group including: one to one calls, lunch meetings, group discussions and surveys. This helped them keep the pulse on the initiative and allowed them to adapt the program as they went along, as donors' or the organization's needs and interests changed.

Some donors also spoke of their appreciation for being included early on and for being part of the evolution of the women's engagement initiative over time, as they felt listened to and like a true collaborator.

“ We started with an initial group of ten women: We explored, what would a collective fund look like, and a bigger initiative? What does it mean to increase the capacity of women philanthropists? We gave a lot of time to clarifying our principles and goals. What would make this initiative stand alone and use the strength of our host organization?”

*-Fund development professional*

“ Staff at the organization often invite me to go out for lunch and talk about an idea. I like that a lot. I am sometimes in focus groups, but I don't do that as much. I am beyond wanting to do that because I am already involved in so many groups.

*-Donor*

“ It's important not to pigeonhole women and assume they want to fund gender issues or women only. A donor I've worked with was tired of always being asked to support women and children's programs. Her main interest was in mental health with a broader lens.

*-Fund development professional*

### **Consider engaging women on your focal issue, even if it is not gender equity**

As the program scan demonstrated, 14% of existing women donor engagement programs in Canada were operated by organizations with a primary focus on girls' and women's well being. Fully 44% of the engagement initiatives at all types of organizations were raising funds for projects and programs related to women, girls or gender equity. However, fundraisers, as well as donors, pointed out that women donors are eager to take action to impact many issues, not just gender equity. It seems likely that women are under-solicited for support and leadership in certain fields. The idea of women raising funds for girls' and women's advancement will continue to be relevant, especially given the major gender inequities that still exist in Canada and around the world, but it is not the only way that women donors seek to contribute to society.

## **Program elements**

### **Create space for community building**

A common feature of all key informants' women's engagement programs was the creation of a community of like-minded women. Donors also greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet other women who shared passions and interests related to making the world a better place. More than that, the sense of working together, joining funds and efforts is central to many women donors' experience of group initiatives.

In some programs with an intergenerational aspect, the opportunity to speak with women of many ages is highly appreciated by members. One key informant spoke of recognizing older women as trailblazers and giving them recognition for their knowledge. They often value a platform to share what they have learned.

I get a lot of satisfaction from the friendships I make in these groups. You begin to know the people very well that you share this initiative with. We're all in it to make a change.

*-Donor*

Through the group, I get a chance to meet others that I might not have had a chance to meet. We all come from different organizations and walks of life, amazing people. Seeing them many times again, I start to get to know them. We get real relationships, not just meet once and you're done.

*-Donor*

When I came on board, I started reestablishing stewardship with our networks of women volunteers and donors. What I discovered was this ache for community. They missed that.

*-Fund development professional*

Our program is national, and we have found that Canadian women like to meet those from other cities. It attracts a certain type of woman: globally curious, willing to embark with women they have never met before. They do not necessarily have the same backgrounds but they have values in common. Many have said they are disappointed that their family and friends have not engaged in the organization, but they find community with new women they meet.

*-Fund development professional*

Members are so recognizant of other women in the room. Younger members have said, it's fantastic to have someone I can ask questions to. The retired and older women have said, it's great to see the up-and-comers, to give advice. Older women who had to break down those walls appreciate the opportunity to pass on what they have learned.

*-Fund development professional*

We realized we can build on this need of younger women to ask questions, get advice, seeking confidence from older women. What we seem to have in our donor base are a lot of donors from retirement age and up and a lot who are younger, in their 20s and 30s, but not a lot in the middle (they are probably taking care of older and younger family members). When the generations are in a room together, they ping off each other in a nice way.

*-Fund development professional*

“ Members can opt in and opt out of any activity. We provide them with opportunities to get further engaged, ask them to blog, ask for a quote, ask to come and speak to our board or AGM. They like that.

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*-Fund development professional*

“ We realized that engagement opportunities don't always have to involve the whole group. We can build off of each person's expertise and offer individualized opportunities to volunteer or mentor, for example.

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*-Fund development professional*

### **Flexibility: multiple opportunities to take part and contribute**

Several of the programs that key informants were operating provided a range of options of activities for donor-members. This allowed women to tailor their participation. Fundraisers recognize that women have busy lives and seek varying levels of involvement. The balance of group activities and individual contact with staff seems important, especially with major donors. Some organizations were able to offer individualized opportunities for donors to get involved, such as arranging mentorship meetings with students or beneficiaries, or inviting certain active members to advocacy-related meetings with stakeholders. One way to offer more activities than less, and keep the workload for staff reasonable, is to collaborate on events. Internally, certain events could be open to all supporters of the organization, including members of the women donor group. Externally, collaboration with other organizations could help offer, for example, skills workshops in leadership or estate planning.

Some key informants said that a regular annual schedule of events created continuity and rhythm that women donors appreciated, while others were finding participation in recurring events lagging. One key informant described “the importance of nimbleness. Don't stay static. This event, we tried it, we may never do it again!”

## Examples of engagement opportunities offered to women in donor groups

<p><b>Networking, education and learning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Exclusive small teas, breakfasts, lunches, cocktails or dinners</li> <li>» Large celebration or educational events open to all</li> <li>» Workshops on skills of interest to women donors, e.g., estate planning, creating your philanthropic plan, women in governance, or public policy advocacy</li> <li>» Education sessions on the issues, with guest speakers, films, program staff</li> <li>» Multi-day conferences</li> <li>» Invitation to events hosted by collaborating organizations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regular donor group meetings, in person or by videoconference</li> <li>• Group videoconference meetings with the CEO, development or program staff</li> <li>• Frequent email updates from the CEO or senior staff</li> <li>• Site visits as a group, local or international</li> <li>• Opportunities to hear directly from people who have benefitted from the work of the organization</li> <li>• Opportunities to attend conferences on the issue, with staff and other members; local, national or international</li> </ul>
<p><b>Volunteering and leadership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to join the board</li> <li>• Committee participation</li> <li>• Chair or co-chair the women donor group</li> <li>• Individual decision making about where to direct donations (within internal priorities)</li> <li>• Vote or collective decision making on which internal priorities or projects to fund (giving circle)</li> <li>• Discuss future activities with staff, as a group or one-on-one</li> <li>• Work with staff to plan events</li> <li>• Support staff to recruit new donor-members</li> <li>• Individualized volunteering in programs or as a mentor</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advocacy and communications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide quotes or testimonials about the organization</li> <li>• Support to create and distribute member newsletter</li> <li>• Opportunities to speak about their experience as donors and advocates</li> <li>• Action alerts or key messages to circulate in their networks</li> <li>• Join staff on meetings with key stakeholders</li> </ul>

### Combine learning with opportunities to take action

Several key informants spoke of the need for a deep experiential component in women donor engagement initiatives. Just as many women are craving community and connection with others of similar passions and values, they are also seeking a sense of efficacy – the ability to make a difference. Many organizations offer women donors opportunities to learn more deeply about the issues and some even teach about the policy environment or the ecosystem of organizations working in the field. Some organizations support women donors to attend conferences and meetings on the issue or training in key messages and advocacy skills. One key informant organized public speaking and reflection workshops which helped donors “to use their voice more confidently as philanthropists.”

“ We need to rethink women's role in [this issue]. Why there are so many women in this sector? There is the idea of women being more helping and I think that is something to embrace. We can be nurturing, and we can also go out and fight and make a difference. Kindness is strong. Women have the power, now we have to go and use it, be the ones who speak up.

-Donor

“ Many women donors are wanting to have a larger voice. They are seeking to contribute in other ways beyond their donation.

-Fund development manager

“ We get our women donors group together with people who are really preeminent in our field. Some of our members have said, “I can't believe you include me with these leaders. It's an honour to be part of the group.”

-Fund development manager

“ In our experience, the curated [learning and advocacy] opportunities tend to filter for a certain type of woman. It doesn't attract every type of woman that has gotten involved in charity, but it brings women out that may be flying under the radar. They are keen to understand what is really going on and to be more involved.

-Fund development manager

**Going deeper: Honest communication about systems change strategy**

Some key informants found that certain donors are hungry to discuss the organization's strategies to address root causes. They want to know the advocacy and policy aspects of the issues, as well as the organization's challenges, barriers and top priorities.

On the other hand, some organizations identified women donor initiatives as an opportunity to generate deeper understanding and commitment to their systemic change work. Often it is challenging to get funding for core operations and systems change tactics such as policy advocacy, research and national field building. Some key informants are having success working with women donors to educate them on the strategies and tactics to generate more deep and long lasting change on their focal issues. Women tend to appreciate frank talk.

“ I think women go for social change in a different kind of way. I have a feeling that women's philanthropy heads more towards changing the social order than mainstream philanthropy. I can't verify this but that's what I have observed so far across a few different groups.

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*-Donor*

“ Our messaging to women donors is that this is an opportunity to make a real difference [on this issue]. This is a chance to invest in bolder ambitions and get [this issue] on the national agenda. But everyone needs to understand the long term requirements to make these changes happen.

We present [the women's donor group] with investment options based on our strategic plan – working on root causes and policy advocacy. Once per year we give an update of what we are working on next year, and the group gets the opportunity to vote where their money will go.

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*-Fund development manager*

“ We have real conversations with donors. If they have an idea of what they want to support and it doesn't make sense, we are willing to gather additional information, have an iterative conversation and help them see priorities. Then they hear our real needs.

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*-Fund development manager*



## Program implementation

### Group structures: flat or leadership?

Women donor initiatives in Canada have many different structures. Some are non-hierarchical, with group discussion and decision making. Others have structures similar to a board of directors with chairs, co-chairs, vice-chairs and committees working on different aspects. A benefit of a group with volunteer leadership is that it allows those who are very keen on the issue to take a more active role. Leadership structures can also relieve staff of the organization from some of the coordination and facilitation of the group. Some key informants felt that there was a different feeling of sharing and group membership when the structure was flat, fostering the experience of community that some donors deeply appreciated.

“ I would make an argument that we shouldn't create hierarchies within giving structures - this is a pretty male approach. Most women like a flat structure, equalness, everyone to be on equal footing. I think when you create hierarchies, you actually attract different women who create different disruption.

*-Fund development professional*

“ We are considering options [for structuring a women's donor group]: maybe no leadership council but keep it a smaller group. Maybe we will ask women to each host an event and serve as a champion. We can't be nimble if all decisions need to be made by committee, so maybe we will get informal input from a select group, rather than a formal structure.

*-Fund development professional*

### Ground rules and values in the group

Some key informants encountered diverse opinions among the members of a donor group which could occasionally cause tension. They recommended establishing ground rules and discussing values in the group, for example, values of listening, humility, collaboration, respect and solidarity with beneficiaries. Fundraising staff can model these values. For certain questions, such as changing the structure or membership of the group, anonymous surveys can help to gather information that the group can then look at more objectively. One organization provides a manual to all women as they join, which encourages them to agree to the same principles.

“ As the group grows, there are more and more views and opinions. Those who come on board later can have different expectations from the initial goals.

*-Fund development manager*

“ This is a controversial issue. There have been disagreements within the group. You have to expect certain pressure points when people go from one end to the other of the spectrum of understanding of an issue and how it should be addressed. We insist on respectful discourse, and we also have to respect wherever people are at in their journey.

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*-Fund development manager*

### **Talk openly about women, philanthropy, gender and giving**

Both donors and fundraisers observed that often women donors in Canada are not comfortable talking directly or in public about their giving. This seems to be shifting gradually, however, and some organizations are engaging their donors in discussing issues surrounding women in philanthropy. Several organizations had used research reports or concepts about women, giving, gender and generational differences as a jumping off point for conversation within the women donors group. Intimate conversations in a safe environment of peers seems to assist donors to be more at ease with their contributions and to want to inspire other women to get involved.

“ Our donors don't like to blow their own horns. But by building giving circles, by giving people background on gender and giving, it has allowed them to talk about philanthropy openly. Now they are talking about it with pride, and this increases philanthropy.

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*-Fund development professional*

“ I am creating workshops for women donors to reflect on: “Ok, what do I have, what do other people have, how can we each share? We are more powerful together!” I want people to realize that creating these synergies adds to your empowerment. If we make it fun, not such a big group, then women develop the trust and are willing to share ideas and contacts to help grow the organization.

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*-Fund development professional*

### **Inform about progress and results**

It is not surprising that a key element of most women donor engagement is communicating with donors about progress. Both donors and fundraisers confirmed that success stories and news about the organization's impact in the field was highly valued by women donors. Each organization was experimenting with ways to deliver and share information, but also to engage with and respond to women's questions about the work. A key finding from this study is that for any program elements, including communicating impact, testing various methods and getting feedback from women donors was necessary – because there is no one size that fits all in the practice of women donor engagement.

“ At one point, it was enough to know you did good. Now, many women want solid proof of results. We found that it is important that donors: 1) felt connected to the impact of their individual donation and 2) learned where there were opportunities to do more.

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*-Fund development manager*

“ All donors want to know what we are doing. Women do their research, they like to do their fact checking. They want to know how the [beneficiaries] are doing. We developed a short newsletter for major and monthly donors with stories from the field.

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*-Fund development manager*

# Promising practices and innovation

## Promising practices and innovation

*The following are some of the areas of innovation and promising practice that emerged from this study.*

### **Culture shifting and feminist leadership**

As I spoke to fundraisers and donors across the country, I heard incredible passion for expanding the impact of women's giving. There is deep work happening, reflection within individual people active in this space and reflection among groups of women, and sometimes men, who are working to support donor engagement of women. On the surface, we are talking about fundraising tactics, but very often our questions (about how to do what we do better) take us to another level of reflecting on culture, values and how we work with each other.

*How can each of our actions – as donors, fundraisers, leaders, activists, collaborators, researchers, consultants and advisors – embody the change we wish to see in the world?*

Ultimately, reflecting on the purpose of women's philanthropy – and the actions taken by organizations and individual fundraisers to support it, even my work in various roles as strategic advisor, consultant and researcher – leads us to consider what is really needed to change society. How can each of our actions – as donors, fundraisers, leaders, activists, collaborators, researchers, consultants and advisors – embody the change we wish to see in the world?

Women donors and fundraisers alike want to see more feminist leadership styles embedded in our groups and organizations – transparent, collaborative, humble, strengths-based, honest, practical, and courageous in the face of the challenges our society faces. Both women and men can take action and lead in these ways, but it is also important for women to take up more leadership roles in the nonprofit sector. Even today in Canada, there is a significant pay gap between male and female nonprofit executives and boards of directors of the larger organizations are often led by men (Charity Village, 2019).

Rather than keep women's philanthropy in a box or as a program on the side of a desk, there is a small but growing effort to mainstream the use of a gender equity and analysis lens throughout the work of an organization. Mainstreaming is deep and broad work that involves asking questions, listening and adjusting – not just once, but with a mindset of continuous improvement. Mainstreaming a gender lens touches many areas of an organization, including governance, strategic planning, strategic priorities, issue definition and framing, team management, human resources, program implementation, internal communications, external communications, and organizational systems. As women's leadership and application of gender

analysis expands, organizations are transformed. The hope and promise of mainstreaming a gender lens is that the organization will contribute even more effectively to realizing the change it seeks to achieve in society.

### **Intersectionality, equity and inclusion**

Many of the discussions of women and philanthropy in Canada to date have not touched on other dimensions of equity and inclusion. Some key informants are applying an intersectional lens to their work – considering how factors such as race, class, Indigeneity, immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity intertwine in the lives of staff, donors, partners, and beneficiaries. They are also exploring how to make their organizations more inclusive, not just based on gender equity, but recognizing the many ways that power, privilege and marginalization get played out.

The benefit is that, in casting a wider net beyond the usual prospects, new sources of support for the organization and the issue can be discovered.

**What if we entirely change the model of how we do business? What if, with every dollar we spend, we make sure that there is every effort possible to hire women-led and owned businesses? Every filter should be gender.**

**How are we creating a culture at our organization? Does our internal practice reflect what life is really like for women? For example, I have 2 kids under 5 hungry at the end of the day! We want to be more transparent about salary bands. We know that women of colour and other discriminated communities can face barriers in negotiating fair compensation. We need to apply good practices and spread these practices.**

*-Fund development manager*

**In terms of how we address class within our work, our donors are just like you or I. We don't have a fancy gala or any big ticket events like that. Our management team is very informed about the class and race nuances. We have policies that name the potential sensitivity to a person involved in a program, what it means for them to share their story.**

**Our core client group is single mothers and their children. Many staff and donors are also mothers. Our staff includes former program participants that went on to be employed here. We don't view clients as less than us.**

*-Fund development professional*

One of the things we've been doing, because so often we are invited to moderate panels or fill panels, I always try to make sure it's 2 women and 1 man, rather than the other way around, and that the speakers are culturally diverse. We are trying to get the faces of new philanthropy out there as much as possible in largely white rooms. It makes a difference.

*-Fund development professional*

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*-Fund development professional*

For more inclusive fundraising, people are often looking for the silver bullet, but there isn't one. It requires cultural shifts within an organization to see all constituent groups as important. Equity and inclusion affects everything I do as a fundraiser. I look at, who are the people already invested in work but not engaged on philanthropic side, and why are they not engaged? What kinds of stories do we tell, who are the people we feature in our marketing collateral, which impact do we talk about? I try to use more nuanced language around giving. When I don't know someone's cultural practices, values, beliefs around giving, I am cautious to have a conversation about giving right away. I need to get to know them better before asking.

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*-Fund development manager*

We are conscious of putting out content that demonstrates credible female leadership. Our marketing team takeaway is that, in everything they are doing, if women are not seeing themselves in their marketing, they will not want to get close to the organization.

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*-Fund development manager*

I want us all to think more of the intersectionality piece. For example, I recently heard a discussion in an organization about how do we create safe spaces for trans women? Are these initiatives truly inclusive of all women, particularly those who identify as trans and racialized women? Many specific ethnocultural groups come together in ethnocultural ways. Those may not always seem obvious when we're looking at things with only a gender lens.

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*-Fund development professional*

“ Taking more of a systems view has resonated well with the women we've engaged. We give them the bigger picture and how we're moving the dial on changing the system rather than individual impact in a project.

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*-Fund development professional*

“ Women have real potential in this space of undesignated donations. Our current campaign is for undesignated contributions, and I think women can get there if you give them the chance to learn about why it's relevant.

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*-Fund development professional*

## Donor engagement and education: towards solidarity and systems change

The donor engagement process holds opportunity for deepening the knowledge of donors about the issues that the organization addresses. Women donors may be an important source of financial support for organizational priorities that are difficult to get funded otherwise, such as policy and systems change work. Some key informants had great success orienting the women's initiatives towards such strategic priorities. Women donors expressed that they liked to get the inside scoop, to understand an organization's strategy and to be invited to support a higher order of change. Sharing the organization's evolution and real needs is a way to get women donors excited about making donations that are designated to overall operations or can be used flexibly to advance the organization's goals.

Another area of transformational learning that is possible through women donor initiatives is advancing a social justice analysis: understanding the root causes of the challenges faced by the organization's clients. Sometimes fundraising practice creates divisions between giver and recipient, stories that reinforces class or race hierarchies, for example. This study shows that donor engagement of women offers an opportunity to create donor education and fund development strategies that build a sense of solidarity and respect for clients or beneficiaries.

## Fund development streams

A key finding of this study is that women donor engagement initiatives need to be developed with a good grounding in the needs and interests of both the host organization, and the women who support it. There is no one size fits all for a women's engagement program, and not all tactics will work in every case. This also reflects a finding of Kathleen Loehr, an expert in growing women's philanthropy, that each organization needs to go through its own process of learning, exploring, goal setting, testing and adapting to develop both a culture and the tactics that will expand donor engagement of women.

That means that an organization may establish multiple fund development streams that focus on or involve women in a meaningful way. In addition to the ongoing group philanthropy program models that have been the focus of this study, I was interested to hear of a few other promising streams: one-time fundraisers and estate planning, which can have specific meanings and functions in women's philanthropy.



“ I think the future is bequests. Where are we working with women in gift planning? What amazing journeys could we create with women? I have a number of women over 75 who have now left to us in their will.

.....  
*-Fund development professional*

### **Meaningful one-offs**

While most organizations are seeking sustainable revenue streams, there can also be emergent needs or opportunities that can benefit from an infusion of resources. I discovered several examples where women who may not normally have donated to an organization were mobilized by a call to action. Especially in these times, when the environment, knowledge and needs of society are changing quickly, I believe there is a real role for meaningful one-off fundraising, and women donors are keen to support opportunities to rapidly move the needle or fill gaps.

### **Bequests**

As women gain more financial power and decision making, and live longer, some organizations are considering how they can shift their approach to legacy gifts. Often there are stories and motivations in the lives of older women that have been ignored, by society and also by fundraisers. Asking questions and listening to these stories is important, as is creating opportunities for elder women to give back, a theme that many key informants hear from the women involved in their donor groups.

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## Appendix: List of women donor engagement initiatives in Canada

Organization Name	Donor Program Name	Main Location	Issue Domain	Website
National Arts Centre	Inspiring Women Fund	Ottawa, national	arts and culture	<a href="https://nac-cna.ca/en/foundation/event/fr/stories/story/our-stories-are-medicine">https://nac-cna.ca/en/foundation/event/fr/stories/story/our-stories-are-medicine</a>
Soulpepper	Top Women	Toronto, ON	arts and culture	<a href="https://soulpepper.ca/support/ways-of-giving/top-women">https://soulpepper.ca/support/ways-of-giving/top-women</a>
Art Gallery of Ontario	Women's Art Initiative	Toronto	arts and culture	<a href="https://ago.ca/support/Women's-art-initiative-ago">https://ago.ca/support/Women's-art-initiative-ago</a>
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts	Cercle Forces Femmes	Montreal, QC	arts and culture	<a href="https://www.mbam.qc.ca/cercle-forces-femmes/">https://www.mbam.qc.ca/cercle-forces-femmes/</a>
National Arts Centre	The Penelopiad Circle	National	arts and culture	<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Penelopiad">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Penelopiad</a>
McMichael Canadian Art Collection	Women's Arts Council	Kleinberg, ON	arts and culture	<a href="http://mcmichael.com/Women's-art-council/">http://mcmichael.com/Women's-art-council/</a>
Polytechnique Montréal	Cercle des femmes GÉNIales	Montreal, QC	education	<a href="https://fondation-alumni.polymtl.ca/nouvelles/le-cercle-des-femmes-geniales-mobilise-pour-le-genie-au-feminin-polytechnique-montreal">https://fondation-alumni.polymtl.ca/nouvelles/le-cercle-des-femmes-geniales-mobilise-pour-le-genie-au-feminin-polytechnique-montreal</a>
Seneca College	King Township Women of Influence	King Township, ON	education	<a href="https://www.senecacollege.ca/king/giving-circle.html">https://www.senecacollege.ca/king/giving-circle.html</a>
Athena Leadership	Leader of Tomorrow	Winnipeg, MB	education	<a href="http://www.athenaleadership.ca/visionmission">http://www.athenaleadership.ca/visionmission</a>
McGill University	Women, Leadership and Philanthropy Initiative	Montreal, Toronto and New York	education	<a href="https://myalumni.mcgill.ca/s/1762/gid2/interior-connect.aspx?pgid=447&amp;gid=2">https://myalumni.mcgill.ca/s/1762/gid2/interior-connect.aspx?pgid=447&amp;gid=2</a>
Canadian Federation of University Women, St Catharines		St Catharines, ON	education	<a href="http://www.cfuwstcatharines.org/giving-circle/">http://www.cfuwstcatharines.org/giving-circle/</a>

Organization Name	Donor Program Name	Main Location	Issue Domain	Website
Lakefield College School	Women of Lakefield	Lakefield, ON	education	<a href="https://www.lcs.on.ca/support-lcs/giving-opportunities/why-give-to-lcs/women-of-lakefield">https://www.lcs.on.ca/support-lcs/giving-opportunities/why-give-to-lcs/women-of-lakefield</a>
Brescia University College	Lead With Us	London, ON	education	<a href="http://brescia.uwo.ca/giving/">http://brescia.uwo.ca/giving/</a>
Nature Conservancy of Canada		National	environment and animal welfare	<a href="http://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/blog/the-future-of-conservation-is-female-1.html#.XcGi1oVKiMK">http://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/blog/the-future-of-conservation-is-female-1.html#.XcGi1oVKiMK</a>
Humane Canada	Women for a Humane Canada	National	environment and animal welfare	<a href="https://www.humaneCanada.ca/women_for_humane_canada">https://www.humaneCanada.ca/women_for_humane_canada</a>
Nature Canada	Women for Nature	National	environment and animal welfare	<a href="https://naturecanada.ca/defend-nature/building-a-nature-community/women-for-nature/">https://naturecanada.ca/defend-nature/building-a-nature-community/women-for-nature/</a>
Raincoast Conservation Society	Women in Conservation event	BC	environment and animal welfare	<a href="https://www.raincoast.org/2018/10/a-night-to-celebrate-women-in-conservation/">https://www.raincoast.org/2018/10/a-night-to-celebrate-women-in-conservation/</a>
University Hospitals Kingston Foundation	Kingston Women's Giving Circle	Kingston, ON	health	<a href="http://www.uhkf.ca">www.uhkf.ca</a>
Health Services Foundation of the South Shore	Shore's Women's Giving Circle	Bridgewater, NS	health	<a href="https://www.healthservices-foundation.ca/special-events/diamond-giving-circle">https://www.healthservices-foundation.ca/special-events/diamond-giving-circle</a>
Joseph Brant Hospital	In development	Burlington, ON	health	
Sick Kids Foundation	In development	Toronto, ON	health	

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Heart and Stroke Foundation	Heart and Stroke Young Leaders Committee	Ontario	health	<a href="https://www.heartandstroke.ca/what-we-do/leadership/the-heart-and-stroke-young-leaders-committee">https://www.heartandstroke.ca/what-we-do/leadership/the-heart-and-stroke-young-leaders-committee</a>
Scarborough Health Network Foundation	Scarborough Women of Philanthropy	Scarborough, ON	health	<a href="https://shncouncils.ca/scarborough-women-of-philanthropy/">https://shncouncils.ca/scarborough-women-of-philanthropy/</a>
Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation	Women In Action	Thunder Bay, ON	health	<a href="https://12149.thankyou4caring.org/womeninaction">https://12149.thankyou4caring.org/womeninaction</a>
Baycrest Foundation	Women Friends of Baycrest	Toronto, ON	health	<a href="https://www.baycrestfoundation.org/Ways-to-Give/Campaigns/Women-Friends-of-Baycrest">https://www.baycrestfoundation.org/Ways-to-Give/Campaigns/Women-Friends-of-Baycrest</a>
Providence Healthcare Foundation	Women in Philanthropy for Providence (WIPP)	Toronto, ON	health	<a href="https://providence.on.ca/foundation/get-involved/women-philanthropy">https://providence.on.ca/foundation/get-involved/women-philanthropy</a>
Women's College Hospital Foundation	neWCHapter	Toronto, ON	health	<a href="http://womenscollegehospital-foundation.com/Get-Involved/Young-Leaders-neWCHapter.aspx">http://womenscollegehospital-foundation.com/Get-Involved/Young-Leaders-neWCHapter.aspx</a>
BC Women's Hospital + Health Care Foundation		BC	health	<a href="http://whri.org/about-us/support-us/">http://whri.org/about-us/support-us/</a>
Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation	Lois Hole Hospital Women's Society	Edmonton, AB	health	<a href="https://www.royalalex.org/ways-to-give/join-lois-hole-hospital-Women's-society/">https://www.royalalex.org/ways-to-give/join-lois-hole-hospital-Women's-society/</a>

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Canadian Cancer Society	Run for the Cure	National	health	<a href="https://www.cancer.ca/en/get-involved/events-and-participation/find-an-event-near-you/cibc-run-for-the-cure/?region=on">https://www.cancer.ca/en/get-involved/events-and-participation/find-an-event-near-you/cibc-run-for-the-cure/?region=on</a>
Queensway Carleton Hospital	Women In Philanthropy	Ottawa, ON	health	<a href="https://qchfoundation.ca/ways-to-give-to-qch-foundation/women-in-philanthropy/">https://qchfoundation.ca/ways-to-give-to-qch-foundation/women-in-philanthropy/</a>
The Canadian Red Cross	Tiffany Circle	National	international development	<a href="https://www.redcross.ca/donate/other-ways-to-donate/join-the-tiffany-circle">https://www.redcross.ca/donate/other-ways-to-donate/join-the-tiffany-circle</a>
UNICEF	Women Unlimited	National	international development	<a href="https://www.unicef.ca/en/womenunlimited">https://www.unicef.ca/en/womenunlimited</a>
PLAN Canada	Equality Collective	Toronto, ON	international development	
Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan	Breaking Bread	National	international development	<a href="https://www.cw4wafghan.ca/support/breaking-bread">https://www.cw4wafghan.ca/support/breaking-bread</a>
CARE Canada	CARE Councils	National	international development	<a href="https://care.ca/councils-for-care-canada/">https://care.ca/councils-for-care-canada/</a>
Oxfam Canada	Several initiatives	National	international development	
Federation CJA	Women's Philanthropy Campaign - Lion Of Judah	National	social services	<a href="https://www.federationcja.org/en/get-involved/join-a-group/Women's-philanthropy/#campaign">https://www.federationcja.org/en/get-involved/join-a-group/Women's-philanthropy/#campaign</a>
YWCA Kitchener-Waterloo	Club 84	Kitchener-Waterloo, ON	social services	<a href="https://www.ywcakw.on.ca/club-84/">https://www.ywcakw.on.ca/club-84/</a>



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Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation	Women's Collective Endowment Fund	Ottawa, ON	social services	<a href="https://ojcf.ca/programs/Women's-collective-philanthropy-program">https://ojcf.ca/programs/Women's-collective-philanthropy-program</a>
Jewish Foundation of Manitoba	Women's Endowment Fund	Manitoba	social services	<a href="https://www.jewishfoundation.org/initiatives/women's-endowment-fund">https://www.jewishfoundation.org/initiatives/women's-endowment-fund</a>
Jewish Federation of Winnipeg	Women's Philanthropy	Winnipeg, MB	social services	<a href="https://www.jewishwinnipeg.org/Women's-philanthropy">https://www.jewishwinnipeg.org/Women's-philanthropy</a>
Morden Area Foundation	Women's Giving Circle	Morden, MB	social services	<a href="https://mordenfoundation.ca/Women's-giving-circle/">https://mordenfoundation.ca/Women's-giving-circle/</a>
Brandon Area Community Foundation	Women's Endowment Fund	Brandon, MB	social services	<a href="http://bacf.ca/100-women-who-care/">http://bacf.ca/100-women-who-care/</a>
The Stop Community Food Centre	Claiming Spaces	Toronto, ON	social services	<a href="https://www.thestop.org/claiming-spaces/">https://www.thestop.org/claiming-spaces/</a>
SOS Children's Village BC	In development	BC	social services	<a href="https://www.sosbc.org/what-can-you-do/what-you-can-do/">https://www.sosbc.org/what-can-you-do/what-you-can-do/</a>
UJA Federation Greater Toronto	Women's Philanthropy	Toronto, ON	social services	<a href="https://jewishtoronto.com/womensphilanthropy">https://jewishtoronto.com/womensphilanthropy</a>
The Steinbach Community Foundation Inc.	The Chrysalis Fund	Steinbach, MB	social services	<a href="https://www.endowmanitoba.ca/community-foundations/the-steinbach-community-foundation/">https://www.endowmanitoba.ca/community-foundations/the-steinbach-community-foundation/</a>
Centraide du Grand Montreal	Women United (Elles centraide)	Montreal, QC	social services	<a href="http://www.centraide-mtl.org/fr/donateurs/elles-centraide/">http://www.centraide-mtl.org/fr/donateurs/elles-centraide/</a>
United Way Calgary and Area	Women United	Calgary, AB	social services	<a href="https://calgaryunitedway.org/do-local-good/women-united/">https://calgaryunitedway.org/do-local-good/women-united/</a>

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United Way East Ontario	Women United	Ottawa, ON	social services	
United Way Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington	Women United	Kingston, ON	social services	<a href="https://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/womenunited/">https://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/womenunited/</a>
United Way Niagara	Women United	St Catharines, ON	social services	<a href="https://www.unitedwayniagara.org/news/article/women-united">https://www.unitedwayniagara.org/news/article/women-united</a>
United Way Greater Victoria	Women United	Victoria, BC	social services	<a href="https://uwgv.ca/ways-get-involved/women-united/">https://uwgv.ca/ways-get-involved/women-united/</a>
United Way Windsor-Essex County	Women United	Windsor, ON	social services	<a href="https://www.weareunited.com/servlet/eAndar.article/79/Women-United">https://www.weareunited.com/servlet/eAndar.article/79/Women-United</a>
United Way Chatham-Kent	Women United	Chatham, ON	social services	<a href="https://uwock.ca/womenunited/">https://uwock.ca/womenunited/</a>
United Way Hastings & Prince Edward	Women United	Belleville, ON	social services	<a href="https://unitedwayhpe.ca/events/women-united-leadership-event/">https://unitedwayhpe.ca/events/women-united-leadership-event/</a>
United Way Perth Huron	Women United	Stratford, ON	social services	<a href="https://perthhuron.unitedway.ca/get-involved/women-united/">https://perthhuron.unitedway.ca/get-involved/women-united/</a>
United Way Simcoe Muskoka	Women United	Midhurst, ON	social services	<a href="https://uwsimcoemuskoka.ca/women-united/">https://uwsimcoemuskoka.ca/women-united/</a>
United Way Thompson Nicola Cariboo	Women United	Kamloops, BC	social services	<a href="https://www.unitedwaytnc.ca/get-involved/womenunited/">https://www.unitedwaytnc.ca/get-involved/womenunited/</a>
United Way Peel, Toronto and York Region	Women United	Peel, Toronto and York Region, ON	social services	<a href="https://www.unitedwaygt.org/womenunited">https://www.unitedwaygt.org/womenunited</a>

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Indigenous Women's Fund of Canada		national	women and girls	<a href="https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/indigenous-womens-fund-of-canada/">https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/indigenous-womens-fund-of-canada/</a>
Match International Women's Fund	Equality Fund	National	women and girls	<a href="https://matchinternational.org/equality-fund/">https://matchinternational.org/equality-fund/</a>
Toronto Foundation	Trust Collective	Toronto, ON	women and girls	<a href="https://torontofoundation.ca/women-philanthropy/">https://torontofoundation.ca/women-philanthropy/</a>
Hamilton Community Foundation	Women 4 Change	Hamilton, ON	women and girls	
YWCA Hamilton	Turning Point Giving Circle	Hamilton, ON	women and girls	<a href="https://www.ywcahamilton.org/get-involved/">https://www.ywcahamilton.org/get-involved/</a>
Vancouver Foundation	Giving Well	BC	women and girls	<a href="https://www.vancouver-foundation.ca/give/individuals-and-families/women-philanthropy">https://www.vancouver-foundation.ca/give/individuals-and-families/women-philanthropy</a>
Women Moving Millions		International	women and girls	<a href="http://www.womenmovingmillions.org/events-and-programs/programs/">http://www.womenmovingmillions.org/events-and-programs/programs/</a>
Minerva Foundation for BC Women	Circle of Friends	BC	women and girls	<a href="https://minervabc.ca/minerva-launches-circle-friends/">https://minervabc.ca/minerva-launches-circle-friends/</a>
Canadian Women's Foundation	multiple initiatives	National	women and girls	<a href="https://www.canadianwomen.org/girls-fund-donors-partners/">https://www.canadianwomen.org/girls-fund-donors-partners/</a>
A Celebration of Women Foundation Inc.	Women of Action	Toronto, ON	women and girls	<a href="http://acelebrationofwomen.org/">http://acelebrationofwomen.org/</a>
YWCA Vancouver	The Next 125 and other initiatives	Vancouver, BC	women and girls	<a href="https://ywcavan.org/next125">https://ywcavan.org/next125</a>

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