

GIVING THROUGH A GENDER LENS

A Guide for Donors
Philanthropic Solutions

Inside

Why does gender matter in philanthropy?	2
Gender analysis in action	3
Incorporating gender analysis into your philanthropy	5
Using gender to design effective strategies	6
Resources	8

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Why does gender matter in philanthropy?

Making a real difference through philanthropy requires an understanding of context — an appreciation of the people, places or issues on which you are choosing to have an impact — and an ability to view problems from diverse perspectives. The better you understand how a particular group experiences a situation, the greater your ability to design, identify or fund programs that meet the needs of your target population.

Men and women are often affected differently and disproportionately by social issues such as poverty, health, domestic violence or education. Gender is a fundamental characteristic that shapes not only our identity but also our experiences and perspectives. When addressing social concerns, donors therefore must consider the impact that gender has on the particular issue. This guide is intended to help you increase the impact of your philanthropic giving by helping you become more aware of the important — and sometimes nuanced — influence that gender has on the success or failure of a particular program and a philanthropic strategy.

Gender is a powerful predictor of opportunities and outcomes in society.

Gender explains those differences between men and women that are socially created, as opposed to biologically based. Every society has assumptions about, and expectations for, men and women. These social structures — implicit and explicit — often cause women and men to experience the same situation in different ways, which over the long term may result in very different life experiences.

Gender equity rejects the universal “one-size-fits-all” approach.

Gender equity does not mean “sameness.” It is not about providing the same programs, treatment and opportunities for women and men. Rather, it is about providing meaningful opportunities that are appropriately targeted to each gender in order to achieve maximum impact. In the case of gender, equity can mean treating people differently to accommodate their differences. For example, a study of youth development programs for urban teenagers found that “universal” programs in which women and men are treated the same often do not succeed. The more effective ones consider gender in program design and operation.¹

Gender analysis means asking questions.

Gender analysis asks: “How do girls/women experience this situation? How do boys/men experience this situation?” There are likely to be different answers to those questions and thus a need to design different approaches. Gender analysis also looks at outcomes by gender and uses this information to refine the approach to more effectively respond to gender needs.

¹ Molly Mead, *Gender Matters: Funding Effective Programs for Women and Girls*, June 2001.

Gender analysis in action

“Girls tend to stop going; boys get told not to come back.”

Dropout rates for boys are higher than those for girls, and therefore dropout prevention programs tend to focus on boys. These programs often ignore the significant number of girls who fail to graduate from high school. In 2009, local foundations in Colorado funded a research study that broke down the problem of school dropouts in the state by gender.² It asked: “Are there factors peculiar to girls that signal or predict their dropping out of school? And do those factors differ from those predicting boys’ failure to graduate?” The study found a number of significant gender differences:

Behavior — Boys are more likely to be disruptive, which can result in their being suspended or expelled from school. Girls are more likely to “drift away.” If they are disengaged, they will stop coming to school and get dropped for poor attendance.

Caregiving — Girls are expected to cook and clean and take care of relatives. Boys may be expected to earn money.

Pregnancy/parenting — Pregnancy is a significant factor in girls’ leaving school, and they are likely to have primary responsibility for parenting.

Safety — Girls may be kept home if school safety is a concern.

Based upon this analysis, the study recommended the development of flexible programs that respond to gender needs. It also advocated the development of separate messages regarding the importance of high school graduation that appeal to the different needs and interests of boys and girls.

² *A Report on Gender and the Dropout Problem in Colorado Schools*, National Center for Student Engagement and Johns Hopkins University, October 2009.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY NATURAL DISASTERS

In the wake of natural disasters, women and children account for more than 70 percent of displaced persons, according to the World Health Organization.³ Beyond the universal impact of natural disasters, women become vulnerable to reproductive and sexual health problems and increased rates of sexual and domestic violence. In addition, gender roles generally mean that women become the primary caretakers for those most vulnerable after a disaster, including children, the elderly and the sick.

To be effective, disaster-relief funding must consider gender patterns—including women's vulnerable status and their caretaking responsibilities. Beyond making sure that women benefit from aid programs, it is important to include women in the decision-making processes around these programs. Using women as distributors of aid helps to ensure that women's needs are recognized.

The World Health Organization developed a set of questions to ask in designing disaster-relief programs with a gender lens, including:

- How are women and men/girls and boys differently affected by the disaster?
- What are the implications for the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, in terms of need and access to assistance?
- Are there particular vulnerabilities or difficulties that result from the disaster for women, for children and men? What about pregnant and parenting women?
- How do gender norms of the community affect aid-seeking behavior and/or access to aid? Does the location of water points or latrines put women at risk?
- Are women and men involved in decision making and employed as aid workers at all levels?

OTHER LENSES TO CONSIDER

Of course, gender is only one lens to consider in grantmaking. Race, class and ethnicity are also important determinants of your life experiences. For example, the educational experience of black men in the U.S. is different from that of white and Asian men. According to a recent study, the 2012–13 school year estimates indicated a national graduation rate of 59% for black men, 65% for Latino men and 80% for white men.⁴ In 2013, among young adults (ages 25 to 29), the percentage of white men who had attained at least a bachelor's degree (40 percent) was two-and-a-half times that of Hispanic men (16 percent), and twice that of black men (20 percent).⁵ More than one-third (37 percent) of black male dropouts between the ages of 20 and 34 are behind bars—a rate that exceeds the share of young black male dropouts who have jobs.⁶ Research has shown that black men benefit from positive, credible, admirable, black-adult-male role models to emulate, and that black men are successful in schools with a clear sense of purpose and high expectations for the success of all of their students.⁷

Class is another critical determinant of one's life experiences. Girls who are born into poverty generally have very different opportunities and experiences from those of girls from more affluent families.

³ *Gender, Women and Health: Gender and Disaster*, World Health Organization, 2014.

⁴ *Black Lives Matter: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males*, 2015.

⁵ Child Trends Data Bank, U.S. Census Bureau, *Educational Attainment in the United States*, 2013.

⁶ *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility*, Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010.

⁷ Pedro A. Noguera, *The Educational Crisis Facing Young Men of Color: Reflections on Four Days of Dialogue on the Educational Challenges of Minority Males*, College Board, 2010, and *The Trouble With Black Boys: And Other Reflections on Race, Equity, and the Future of Public Education*, 2008.

Incorporating gender analysis into your philanthropy

How can considerations of gender differences improve the effectiveness of your giving? Below, you will find some questions that can help you develop a strategy that considers gender and identifies organizations that effectively incorporate gender considerations into their work.

CHOOSING A FOCUS AND STRATEGY — QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. What is my vision for the change I would like to see in the world?
2. What are the most important problems/barriers that need to be overcome to achieve my vision?
 - What gender-specific information is available on the problem?
 - What other lenses are critical to understanding this issue — for example, race, class, culture and socioeconomic factors?
3. What interventions or programs can address the problem? For each:
 - How does it account for the special circumstances, strengths, resources and needs of women and men?
 - What are the likely outcomes for women and men?
 - How does it respond to available research and promising practices?
 - Have the perspectives of the target populations been taken into account? What was the level of participation of the affected groups of women and men in identifying the intervention?

SELECTING GRANTEES — QUESTIONS TO ASK ORGANIZATIONS

1. Do the program design and operation consider gender?
 - Is the program responsive to the needs, strengths and resources of target populations?
 - Do program schedules accommodate the life circumstances of target populations?
 - Are needed supportive services (such as child care or counseling) available?
2. Does the program include stakeholders as active decision makers?
Does it empower stakeholders to think about and take action on needed change?
3. Are the desired program outcomes gender sensitive?
Are there monitoring or evaluation systems in place that collect data by gender?

Using gender to design effective strategies

JUVENILE JUSTICE

The problem through a gender lens

Girls make up the fastest growing segment of the juvenile justice system. In recent years, while arrest rates for both girls and boys have slowed down, a 2015 report found that for young girls, the trend is going in the opposite direction. The proportion of girls in the system has increased at every stage of the process over the last 20 years, from arrests to detention and probation.⁸

There is an overrepresentation of girls of color in the juvenile justice system: Black girls are placed in the juvenile justice system over three times as often, and Native American girls over four times as often as white girls.⁹

Girls are arrested for less serious offenses than are boys. Girls are predominantly arrested for nonviolent status offenses, such as truancy and running away.⁹

Girls in detention tend to be younger than their male counterparts. Many girls enter the juvenile justice system with histories of abuse and experience further victimization while there. Girls in the system may be three times more likely than boys to have been sexually abused. In fact, being abused is consistently identified as the first step along a girl's pathway into the juvenile justice system.¹⁰

Research has shown that programs for girls are more successful when they focus on relationships with other people, and offer ways for girls to master their lives while keeping these relationships intact. Programs for boys are more successful when they focus on rules and offer ways to advance within a structured environment.¹¹

⁸ *Girls Are the Fastest-Growing Group in the Juvenile Justice System*; www.mothersjones.com, 2015.

⁹ *Getting the Facts Straight about Girls in the Juvenile Justice System*, February 2009.

¹⁰ *Getting the Facts Straight about Girls in the Juvenile Justice System*, February 2009, and *Girls and Juvenile Justice*, Girls Incorporated, August 2002.

¹¹ Barbara Bloom and Stephanie S. Covington, *Effective Gender-Responsive Interventions in Juvenile Justice: Addressing the Lives of Delinquent Girls*, 2001.

EXAMPLES OF GENDER-BASED INTERVENTIONS

PACE Center for Girls, Inc. was launched in 1985 in response to a call for gender-responsive prevention, diversion and early intervention for at-risk girls. PACE created a new method for meeting the needs of at-risk girls. The first program was housed in the basement of a downtown Jacksonville, Florida, church and served 10 girls. PACE now has centers and outreach programs statewide that have served over 21,000 Florida girls.

Over 50 percent of the girls who come to PACE are the victims of physical or sexual abuse, and many are failing or have dropped out of school. PACE understands the relationship between victimization and delinquency in girls, and helps girls turn their lives around through education, counseling and career planning. The results are that girls stay in school and substantially reduce their chances of being involved in crime or entering the costly juvenile justice system. PACE was recognized by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Girls Study Group as the most effective program in the nation for keeping adolescent girls out of the juvenile justice system.

The Juvenile Rights Advocacy Project (JRAP), based at Boston College Law School, supports girls who are in the delinquency system and uses research and policy advocacy to reduce the use of incarceration. JRAP provides legal representation to system-involved girls and also seeks to empower girls to advocate for themselves. JRAP has piloted gender-responsive programming, including access to health care and experiential education through visual arts.

Girls Circle is a model program used by government and nonprofit organizations across the country. Girls Circle offers gender-responsive, structured support groups for female adolescents.

In Sonoma County, California, the Probation Department offers Girls Circle programs for every female juvenile offender in order to “work smarter, not harder, with girls.”

LEARN MORE

For more information about how U.S. Trust can help you achieve your philanthropic goals, contact your advisor.

Resources

ADDITIONAL READING ON GIVING THROUGH A GENDER LENS

Clear Sighted: A Guide to Using a Gender Lens, Chicago Women in Philanthropy, cwiponline.org/site/page/112124_1007.htm.

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Getting the Facts Straight about Girls in the Juvenile Justice System, The National Center on Crime and Delinquency, February 2009.

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Juvenile Rights Advocacy Project, Boston College, bc.edu/schools/law/jrap.

PACE Center for Girls, pacecenter.org.

Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities: Foundations Working to Improve Life Outcomes for Black Men and Boys, Association of Black Foundation Executives, abfe.org.

Trauma among Girls in the Juvenile Justice System, National Child Traumatic Stress Network Juvenile Justice Working Group, 2004.

Black Lives Matter: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males, 2015, blackboysreport.org/2015-black-boys-report.pdf

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Your wealth is not measured by numbers alone, but by the extraordinary opportunities and complex challenges that define your life. At U.S. Trust, we apply our deep insight and broad expertise to help you make the most of the things that matter most to you.

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