The Secret to Social Change
Whether they are giving or receiving philanthropic capital, women of all ages may be the key to a better world.

Here’s something you might not know: If you want your philanthropic dollars to have the greatest impact, give them to organizations that benefit women and girls. “Research shows that’s one of the most effective ways to change the world,” says Gillian R. Howell, Managing Director, Philanthropic Solutions group, U.S. Trust. “Improving the life of a female creates benefits and opportunities for her extended family, future generations and even the larger community in which she lives. That, almost by definition, is high-impact philanthropy” — in other words, just the kind of focused, effective effort that many wealthy donors favor today.

There are several reasons that gifts to women have disproportionate impact. One is that women and girls today generally suffer more deprivations than men do — so even a small amount of aid can have an outsized benefit. “According to the World Food Program, for example, while women make up a little more than half of the world’s population, they account for more than 60% of the hungry,” Howell says. “And among females aged 15 to 44, acts of violence cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined.”¹ (For more information on conditions for women, see Female Hardships in Global Terms.)

EDUCATION AND MORE
Another reason gifts to women can be so effective is closely tied to the historical role of women as primary caregivers. Says Howell: “Research by the World Bank shows that women worldwide reinvest an average of 90% of their available resources in food, education and healthcare for their families, while the reinvestment rate for men is 35% to 40%. In this way, women can help create a permanent path out of poverty.”²

What’s more, a focus just on girls’ education can have a long-term positive influence far beyond an individual and her family. “The Girl Effect campaign, created by Nike in 2008, found that when a girl has seven or more years of education, she will marry four years later than girls without that much education and have two fewer children, thereby limiting her economic burden,” Howell says. “And when 10% more girls go to secondary school, the country’s economy grows by 3%.”

PHILANTHROPY WITH PASSION AND PURPOSE
This workshop, exclusively for female clients, centers on women’s charitable giving. Claire Costello, a workshop leader, describes the experience:

The workshop is designed to help women understand how well their current giving or volunteering is in sync with what they truly care about. It asks whether their time and money are being allocated to that which matters most to them. Once they’re equipped with that inner knowledge, we help them use it to inform their generosity and guide their giving.

Some attendees come to realize they are engaging disproportionately in obligatory giving — giving to something that is not really of interest to them — often because their peers have asked them to or for “social reciprocity.” We help women strike a more sustainable and rewarding balance with their giving — a balance that is predicated on their personal values and interests.

If need be, we’ll help them create a mission statement or personal credo, a governing compass that helps them stay on track — and be more effective and ultimately more personally fulfilled — in their giving.

Research shows that women in this country control more wealth and are more generous than men. So harnessing the power and potential of the generosity of women is critical to the well-being of our communities and the world beyond. Philanthropy with Passion and Purpose aims to do just that.

For more information on Philanthropy with Passion and Purpose, please contact Claire Costello at claire.m.costello@baml.com.
From a U.S. perspective, it may be hard to understand how a mere seven years of education could have such significant impact. Yet, education was among several factors Secretary of State Hillary Clinton highlighted in a recent speech to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women: “When women are given the opportunity of education and access to healthcare, their families and communities prosper. And when women have equal rights, nations are more stable, peaceful, and secure.”

**WOMEN AND GIVING**

Here’s something else you might not know: Women give more to charity, on average, than men do—in some income groups, almost twice as much. They also tend to have very different motivations for philanthropy, preferring to focus more on empathy and care than on such advantages as tax benefits.

“So we are faced with an intriguing juxtaposition,” says Claire M. Costello, National Practice Executive, Philanthropic Solutions group, U.S. Trust. “Women are at the forefront of philanthropy in this country. And at the same time, they are disproportionately affected by harmful social and environmental conditions around the world.”

As it happens, giving to women and girls is growing at a faster pace than overall foundation giving. Howell notes that opportunities for giving to women have expanded greatly since the country’s first women’s fund, Ms. Foundation for Women, was founded in 1972, and today “there are almost 150 women’s funds in the Women’s Funding Network, a network dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls,” she says. “There are also hundreds of women’s giving circles around the world, most of which focus on issues affecting women and girls.” Of course, not all women give to women and girls. “Many do, in my experience, but many also choose to give elsewhere,” Howell says. “Indeed, the decision on where to focus one’s philanthropy is highly personal. It relates to one’s passions, values, interests and beliefs.”

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**FEMALE HARDSHIPS IN GLOBAL TERMS**

(data most recent and rounded)

- **50%** of the global population is women.
- **57%** of children not attending primary school are girls.
- **10%** of income is earned, and 1% of property is owned, by women.
- **30%** of women are physically, sexually or otherwise abused.
- **60%** of those who go hungry are women.
- **14%** of women (in some countries) die in pregnancy or childbirth.
- **64%** of adults who cannot read or write are women.
- **50%** of human trafficking victims are women.

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**WOMEN’S WORKSHOP**

If you think your giving could use more of the kind of personal passion Howell underscores, her colleague offers a unique opportunity. “We created a customized workshop exclusively for our female clients, called Philanthropy with Passion and Purpose,” says Costello. “Many participants come away more connected to that which matters most to them and in turn become more effective and impactful givers.” (For more on the workshop, please see Philanthropy with Passion and Purpose.)

“For some, finding philanthropic focus can be difficult,” Howell says. “The important thing is to get started.” If you would like more information, please call your Financial Advisor and ask for these brochures: Guide to Giving Through a Gender Lens and High-Impact Giving to Women and Girls: A Guide for Donors.
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