NEW FORMS OF GIVING IN A DIGITAL AGE:
Powered by Technology, Creating Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE STUDY

Technology is influencing every aspect of society—the way people connect with one another, how they work and earn incomes, how they make purchases, and the content they consume. Philanthropy is no exception: technology enables people to give more easily; to learn about causes, organizations, and projects they may never have considered; and to connect with one another around giving through virtual communities.

However, the same advances that reduce barriers and costs to giving also introduce challenges to the sector. How do organizations cultivate trust with their online donors? To what extent should platforms hand-pick causes to receive more attention? What is the right balance between the ease of measuring dollars given and the importance of being generous with more than money? And how can donors and nonprofits foster a sense of community when giving is increasingly taking place online?

Women Give 2020 builds on research that shows broad gender differences in how women and men use the Internet and social networks, and how they give. By focusing on technology, this study seeks to understand how women's greater use of social networks and greater presence in key online spaces might influence philanthropy. No one report can capture all aspects of such an expansive topic. This study takes a novel approach, using data from four partner organizations to provide case studies of how women and men use these platforms and apps—and how organizations are working to use technology for good in ways that rise to meet these challenges.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Key themes are based on four datasets from online donation platforms and apps that, combined, include more than 3.7 million gift transactions. The first three themes draw from multiple case study datasets to provide an overarching view of how women and men use technology to give.

1. *Women give more gifts than men, and contribute a greater proportion of dollars than men.* Across all four case studies, women give greater numbers of gifts than men (nearly two-thirds of gifts, across platforms). While average gift size is relatively equal, and in some cases men's gifts are slightly larger, women's greater number of donations means they are giving more dollars than men through each platform studied (53%-61% of dollars, depending on the case study).

2. *Women give smaller gifts than men, and give to smaller charitable organizations than men.* Across three of the four case studies, women give smaller gifts than men. Women's gifts also tend to go to smaller charitable organizations compared to gifts from men, which are more likely to go to large organizations.

3. *Women's and girls' organizations receive substantially more support from women donors than from men donors.* Three of the four case studies allowed for analysis of funding for women's and girls' causes, with women giving between 60% and 70% of dollars to women's and girls' organizations, depending on the dataset.

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RESEARCH THAT GROWS WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY

Each of the themes below draws on one or two case studies in particular to demonstrate the challenges that organizations face when integrating technology and giving.

4. *Broadly defining philanthropy goes hand-in-hand with engaging diverse donors—and both appeal to women donors.* A case study on GivingTuesday shows that expanding the definition of philanthropy to include more than money can help a movement spread globally, in particular to a more diverse group of women donors.

5. *Technology enables donors to give in the way they would like and to organizations that align with their values and interests; platforms can also support donors by identifying causes they might prefer and by building trust with donors.* GlobalGiving, an online platform for giving to grassroots NGOs, provides a case study of how to curate these choices for donors.

6. *To appeal to women donors, platforms and organizations must build community online and continue to support in-person connections for donors.* While technology means giving is increasingly taking place online, case studies from Givelify (an app for giving to religious congregations) and Growfund (a $0-minimum donor-advised fund for individuals and giving circles) show that in-person community is essential for engagement in philanthropy.

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Despite the different goals and audiences for the platforms in this study, patterns emerge that provide an overarching understanding of the intersection of gender, technology, and giving. Women use these tech platforms more than men, and give more than men. Women also tend to give more than money, using their time, expertise, advocacy, and networks, to apply all of their resources to work for good. Emphasizing an expansive definition of philanthropy resonates with women donors. Women tend to give a greater number of small gifts, and sometimes give strategically; tech for good must provide women with the tools that align with their giving preferences. Finally, women are generally interested in collective giving or in the community that results from philanthropy. Technological innovation that augments, but does not replace, the in-person giving experience will serve women—and all donors—well.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How do I use technology to support my giving? What digital platforms or tools could I be using in my philanthropy?
- How am I creating community around my charitable giving—online and offline?
- How can my organization become more accessible to donors and potential donors online?
- How can my organization use digital platforms and tools to connect with donors and strengthen offline relationships?
- Since women engage online more frequently, how can my organization use our digital platforms to connect with women donors effectively and authentically?

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- GivingTuesday, via Charity Navigator
- GlobalGiving
- Givelify
- Growfund, a tool from Global Impact