Introduction

Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, once observed: “Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”

This philanthropy field guide explores the levers that drive progress toward gender equality and provides a framework for understanding the types of programs that make a difference in the lives of women and girls.

Whether they live in wealthy societies or in poverty, women and girls do not have the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities compared with men and boys.

This philanthropy field guide was developed by Geneva Global in partnership with The Philanthropy Centre at J.P. Morgan.

COVER PHOTO: Girls ride bicycles between home and school in central Vietnam.
INTERIOR: Children play on a sand dune in the town of Erbent, Turkmenistan.
WHY FOCUS ON WOMEN AND GIRLS?

No country has yet achieved gender equality. Whether they live in wealthy societies or in poverty, women and girls do not have the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities compared with men and boys. Because gender inequality has become ingrained in societal, economic and political structures, it is a systemic issue that is not easily or quickly solved. Many issues from a century ago remain poignantly relevant today: Women and girls still lag behind men and boys in terms of basic legal protections, land and inheritance rights, access to education, control over health and reproductive decisions, protection from violence and sexual harassment, and assurance of safe and fair workplaces.1 Due to gender inequality, women earn 10%-30% less than men for the same work, and they make up 60% of the 907 million people worldwide who lack basic literacy skills.2

GENDER EQUALITY BENEFITS EVERYONE

Gender equality delivers economic and development dividends for not only women and girls, but also boys, men, families and entire communities. Countries that do not foster equality tend to experience slower economic growth and more persistent poverty.3 There is a direct correlation between gender equality and GDP per capita, and mounting evidence shows that empowering women leads to more efficient use of a nation’s resources and human capital, and that reducing gender inequality improves productivity and economic growth.4 By advancing women’s equality, an estimated $12 trillion could be added to global GDP by 2025.5

INTRODUCTION

GENDER EQUALITY DELIVERS ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT DIVIDENDS FOR NOT ONLY WOMEN AND GIRLS, BUT ALSO BOYS, MEN, FAMILIES AND ENTIRE COMMUNITIES. COUNTRIES THAT DO NOT FOSTER EQUALITY TEND TO EXPERIENCE SLOWER ECONOMIC GROWTH AND MORE PERSISTENT POVERTY. THERE IS A DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN GENDER EQUALITY AND GDP PER CAPITA, AND MOUNTING EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT EMPOWERING WOMEN LEADS TO MORE EFFICIENT USE OF A NATION’S RESOURCES AND HUMAN CAPITAL, AND THAT REDUCING GENDER INEQUALITY IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. BY ADVANCING WOMEN’S EQUALITY, AN ESTIMATED $12 TRILLION COULD BE ADDED TO GLOBAL GDP BY 2025.

POLITICS

The percentage of women in national parliaments around the world has doubled in the last 20 years. However, this only translates into around 23% of total parliamentarians today.

WAGES

Fifty percent of the world’s working-age women (15 or over) are in the labor force, compared with over 75% of working age men. However, globally, women earn 24% less than men.

VIOLENCE

In 1993, the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women provided a framework for action. However, more than 20 years later, one in three women still experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner.

A FRAMEWORK FOR ADVANCING WOMEN AND GIRLS

Three critical levers need to be pulled to achieve equal opportunity, status and representation for women. Successful approaches are those that ensure women’s participation in and leadership on issues that impact their lives.

• **Mindset change**: How a society perceives and values women and girls is a key factor in gender parity in every institution, from schools to courtrooms. Attitudes and social norms hinder efforts to achieve equality and are difficult to shift. Breaking down gender roles and social norms dictating how boys and girls should act is a critical step, as is learning to include women and girls in the stories that matter to each society and recognizing their contributions.

• **Institution building**: Governments and organizations must implement policies, create and enforce legislation, and carve out supporting budgets to address gender bias and discrimination. Changing mindsets may drive revisions to policies that govern economic, social and political structures. Conversely, institutions may “set the tone” for appropriate behaviors and attitudes.

• **Targeted interventions**: While mindset change and institution building address gender inequality in the long term, targeted interventions seek to mitigate the circumstances that arise from inequality in the short term. For example, where women and girls are under threat, such as because of trafficking, these types of programs can save lives and reduce harm.

EQUALITY, EQUITY, PARITY… WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

Many terms are used to describe gender dynamics. **Gender parity** refers to the ratio of females to males for any given indicator. For example, governments may look at gender parity in primary education by viewing the ratio of girls to boys in school. **Gender equity** is the concept of ensuring fairness between women and men according to their needs. This can mean both equal treatment and different treatment that is considered equal in terms of rights, opportunities or obligations.

Gender equity has at times been used to perpetuate stereotypes about women’s lesser status in society by implying that separate and distinct gender roles are normal, so biased treatment is “fair” to women and men alike. Hence, many organizations prefer the idea of **gender equality**, which ensures males and females have equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities. Gender equality is not a “women’s issue,” but rather an issue that concerns men and women alike.

MANAGEMENT

Twenty-one women CEOs lead Fortune 500 companies today, compared to only one in 1998.

However, this is a mere 4% of all CEOs on the list.

MATERNAL DEATH

There are 44% fewer maternal deaths worldwide than in 1990.

However, 830 women still die every day from preventable pregnancy-related causes. Of these deaths, 99% occur in developing countries.

LITERACY

The adult literacy rate has risen to 85% from 76% in 1990.

However, women account for over 60% of the world’s illiterate.


Note: Data compiled by the United Nations from various sources in years ranging from 2012 to 2016.

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GLOBAL TARGETS: COMING TOGETHER TO REACH GENDER EQUALITY

There has been an ongoing global push to increase the rights, opportunities and participation of women and girls in all spheres of life. In 2015, more than 190 countries committed to achieving gender equality as one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). World leaders prioritized gender equality as a global goal, setting broad and inclusive targets such as “end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.” Prior to the announcement of the SDGs, in 2012 an initiative known as Family Planning 2020, or FP2020, brought together governments, the private sector and philanthropists to drive progress toward family planning targets.

IN THE NEWS: TRENDS IN ADDRESSING WOMEN’S AND GIRLS’ NEEDS

The global dialogue is growing louder and more diverse as girls such as Malala Yousafzai and women such as Sheryl Sandberg use their voices to draw attention to gender inequality. While the dialogue has focused on giving women and girls agency by demanding gender equality across political, economic and social spectrums, the role of men and boys is also part of the conversation. For example, the UN’s #HeforShe campaign encourages men and boys to champion gender equality.

Women philanthropists in particular are leading a growing community of supporters who recognize the need to advocate on behalf of women and girls and, where possible, amplify the voices of female activists and leaders. Partnerships joining together philanthropists, global entities like the UN, businesses, governments and civil society organizations are becoming powerful catalysts for change by fostering collaboration and shared expertise. Girls Not Brides and Every Woman Every Child are examples of these types of global partnerships.

Thanks to grassroots and social media movements, advocacy for laws, policies and regulations that promote gender equality and protect the rights of women across all sectors is also growing. For example, in the private sector, media campaigns that promote the accomplishments and capabilities of women and girls are on an upward trend, such as Nike’s Girl Effect campaign or the Always #LikeAGirl campaign. Philanthropists, investors and leaders are increasingly viewing their overall work through a gender lens to ensure equality is a consideration no matter the focus area.
WOMEN’S RIGHTS | LEGAL MILESTONES AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS ESTABLISHED BY THE UNITED NATIONS

Only recently have women’s legal rights been defined and agreed to by members of the United Nations. Documentation of rights is a critical step in progress toward gender equality, as is prioritizing gender equality as one of several global goals for development.

INTRODUCTION

Convention on the Political Rights of Women
1952

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
1979

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
1967

Division for the Advancement of Women
1999

Declaration of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
2000

Millennium Development Goal No. 3 on Gender Equality
Security Council Resolution No. 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security
1974

Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict
2015

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
1993

Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 on Gender Equality
2015

Gender-based violence is one of the most persistent, yet least recognized, human rights abuses.

Opportunities for Impact

Reaching gender equality requires “bottom-up” approaches, which empower communities and individuals to demand equality, as well as “top-down” approaches, which address structural barriers.

Both approaches often target men and boys—in addition to women and girls—in interventions that aim to change mindsets and reduce discrimination.
ENSURE WOMEN’S RIGHT TO HEALTHCARE AND ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Women and men alike face infection, chronic illnesses such as heart disease and mental health issues. In addition, girls and women require specialized care to maintain their sexual and reproductive health; for those who have children, this includes their maternal health. Whether women and girls receive healthcare depends on their legal rights, the quality of their community’s healthcare infrastructure, and if services exist and are accessible.

Philanthropists may support work to combat diseases that primarily affect women, such as breast, ovarian and cervical cancers. Breast cancer, for example, is the most common cancer among women globally; in 2011, an estimated 508,000 women worldwide died from this disease. Incidence rates are increasing in low-income countries, where lack of awareness of symptoms, limited resources and stigma often lead to late diagnosis. Chronic diseases and cancers impact women at every stage of their lives. Investments in research and development that look at how specific diseases affect women, as well as investments in service delivery systems to ensure women can access existing treatments, can reduce that impact.

A range of interventions can both improve the health of women in their reproductive years and also empower them to make informed decisions. Sexual health education—both in and out of school—can equip adolescent girls with knowledge of their bodies and confidence in setting their physical boundaries. Ensuring that contraceptive supplies are available is also critically important: As many as 214 million women worldwide want contraception, but lack access. Partnerships such as FP2020 can amplify the voices of health advocates globally and work with governments to set milestones toward sexual and reproductive health goals.

Every day, approximately 800 women worldwide die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. For pregnant women in low-income countries, education about birth risks and access to transportation, as well as training of skilled healthcare providers, are essential. Tools such as birthing kits and solar lights also make deliveries safer. In high-income countries, interventions often focus on issues of access, such as building health clinics in rural areas or providing services at a reduced cost to women and girls living in low-income neighborhoods. At a systems level, policies that promote healthy pregnancies, family leave and work-life balance are gaining attention and support.

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9 Global Fund for Women. Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights. Available at: https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/sexual-reproductive-health-rights/#.WbGnmCiGNPY
10 Global Fund for Women. Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights. Available at: https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/sexual-reproductive-health-rights/#.WbGnmCiGNPY
Philanthropists working to improve the health of women and girls should take their lead from the communities they seek to influence. To be effective, programs must be acceptable to the community, culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of women and girls. When supporting interventions that increase the demand for health services and supplies such as contraception, philanthropists may consider coordinating with other initiatives to ensure the availability of services and supplies, and hence the sustainability of the investment.

**PROMOTE GIRLS’ ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, RELEVANT EDUCATION**

Education is one of the most powerful instruments for improving gender equality. Promoting girls’ education is about ensuring that girls learn and feel safe at school; gain the skills and competencies they need to compete in the workforce; learn the socioeconomic and life skills they need to navigate and adapt to a changing world; and acquire the agency to make decisions for themselves as well as contribute to their communities and societies.

In regions where girls are expected to earn an income or provide childcare for siblings, programs that engage parents in their daughters’ educations and make the case for school attendance are critical. Financial incentives and support, such as conditional cash transfers or scholarships to subsidize school fees and associated costs, help make education more affordable. In cases where parents must weigh the value of education against their daughters’ contributions to the household economy, financial interventions can be game changers.

Girls in low-income countries face additional challenges when they reach puberty. For example, the stigma of menstruation and the need for menstrual hygiene are major barriers to school attendance. Philanthropists can fund innovators who are helping to solve this universal hygiene issue. Sanitation interventions, such as adding gender-segregated latrines to schools, can also make a significant difference by giving girls a safe and private place to care for themselves.

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In low- and high-income countries alike, pregnancy or early marriage may force girls to drop out of school. These adolescents are poorly equipped for success. Philanthropists can support programs that provide out-of-school girls with specialized training, alongside life skills education, to increase their eligibility for skilled employment.

Globally, education programs that build girls’ leadership skills are on an upward trend. For example, philanthropists interested in advancing girls’ leadership in traditionally male-dominated fields may work to increase the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) curriculum for girls in primary and secondary schools, then provide scholarships for advanced studies in coding, chemistry, robotics or similar fields.

Successful interventions in girls’ education address the root causes that keep girls out of school. Research is critical to better understanding girls’ lives and to designing interventions that affect the specific dynamics of each community. Programs that target girls may be included in broader initiatives that seek to strengthen education for all, such as by improving curriculum or school infrastructure.

ABOVE: In a Hong Kong classroom, girls and boys learn how to code their own games and apps. This technology program teaches children about computer science concepts, user-centric design, and mobile app development.
INCREASE WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND PARITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Improving gender equality contributes to growth and economic development. However, around the world, women are more likely than men to work in the informal economy and in low-paying or undervalued jobs. A woman’s economic potential—either independently or in a partnership—is subject to the same political, social and economic dynamics that impact other aspects of her life.

Inequality also affects women in better jobs. Women who work in the formal economy, even in leadership positions, earn on average 24% less than men. For example, in Germany—a country with more women-supportive employment policies compared to the global average—a woman earns only half as much income as a man over her lifetime. Closing the wage gap requires advocacy to incorporate equal pay for equal work into the corporate ethos and into the policies that regulate business. In addition to wage inequality, philanthropists may focus on fields with higher proportions of women workers where their skills are often undervalued (such as childcare, nursing or teaching), family leave policies or other areas where policies have reinforced unequal gender roles and responsibilities.

GENDER PAY GAP | DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEN’S AND WOMEN’S PAY

GLOBAL AVERAGE

Average Gender Pay Gap

- 10%–19%
- 20%–29%
- 30%–39%


In countries where agriculture is an economic driver, land and inheritance rights are critical to women’s ability to generate a livelihood. In many countries, however, women’s land and property rights are systematically denied or undermined. When a woman cannot own the land she cultivates or the home she lives in, her ability to produce food for her family is weakened, she relies on her husband, boyfriend, or male relatives for shelter and may have less control over her sexual relationships, and she experiences a greater risk of violence. Successful interventions promote women’s ability to secure land ownership and accumulate assets. For example, private funding can support advocacy for women to gain land rights; where these rights exist, funding of legal aid helps women file claim to their land. Philanthropists have many opportunities to pair land rights-based programs with agricultural development and microfinancing interventions to help women increase their income potential.

Programs that seek to improve women’s economic autonomy are most successful when they take into account the many dynamics that influence women’s choices in the workforce. For example, in low-income countries, mothers and their daughters care for the youngest in the household in more than 50% of families; by contrast, one in three children in high-income countries are cared for by their mothers or by a female sibling. Hence, economic solutions may be designed to disrupt existing gender roles and help chart a new path with greater equality, or they may work within existing constraints to generate incremental change.

PROTECT WOMEN’S AND GIRLS’ HUMAN RIGHTS, AND WORK TO ELIMINATE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, slavery and human trafficking, and early or forced marriage, all of which are violations of their human rights. Objectification of women and girls fosters the dynamics that can lead to these abuses. Philanthropy can be a powerful tool for helping to end these violations by ensuring that women and girls receive the protections afforded by their human rights.

Gender-based violence is one of the most persistent, yet least recognized, human rights abuses. Globally, it is estimated that one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes: The majority of this violence is committed by an intimate partner. Interventions that foster safe intimate relationships and promote gender equality, coupled with education and economic empowerment programming for women, have proven to be effective. In regions of conflict, women are particularly at risk of rape, sexual assault and intimate partner violence. Access to latrines, construction of well-lit roads and provision of legal services are interventions where private funding can improve women’s safety.

Every year, almost 15 million girls are married before their 18th birthdays. Child marriage, also known as early marriage, is the primary driver of childbirths to girls under age 18. Early marriage greatly reduces the likelihood that girls will complete secondary school and reduces their future earnings by 9%. Successful programs in this area are holistic, focusing on changing mindsets to elevate the value of girls within their families and communities, while integrating messaging with education and health services. Advocacy programs can work with policymakers to change the legal age of marriage and recognize the rights of married girls and women.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE HAPPENS EVERYWHERE

In the memoir Girls Like Us: Fighting for a World Where Girls Are Not for Sale, Rachel Lloyd illuminates the sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking of children.

Hear from women in Roraima, Brazil, as they share their experiences of domestic abuse—and the often inadequate police response—in this video by Human Rights Watch (2:51).

Gain insight into the language used to talk about violence, how gender roles can foster aggression, and men’s roles in stopping violent acts in this TED Talk titled, “Violence Against Women—It’s a Men’s Issue” (19:06).

Marriage is also tied into the trafficking of women and girls, who comprise over 70% of victims. According to the UN, women and girls are trafficked primarily for marriage and sexual slavery. Philanthropists can support interventions that seek to prevent trafficking by strengthening women’s and girls’ autonomy and financial stability, or that work with women and girls who have been trafficked to rebuild their lives. Legal aid and advocacy for more informed laws and policies are also critical, as are initiatives aimed at traffickers or those that solicit services from girls and women.

At the root of many rights-based issues is the question of value. Objectification is the process in which women and girls are valued as objects to satisfy a need rather than as complex individuals. Unconsciously seeded in childhood through gender roles and amplified in the way women are portrayed in the media, objectification shapes both men’s and women’s perceptions of what it means to be successful and reinforces gender stereotypes that limit women’s choices. For example, the 2011 documentary Miss Representation illustrates how the media characterizes women and girls in disparaging ways. Interventions that target behavioral and mindset changes are needed, along with institutional changes, particularly within the media, to portray women as leaders and decision makers.

**GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM: MOVEMENTS BY AND FOR GIRLS**

**Girl Up** is a grassroots initiative of the United Nations Foundation that enlists adolescent girls to empower each other; it raises awareness and funds to support programming for women and girls globally. The initiative also boasts the participation of high profile champions such as Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan and Priyanka Chopra, a former Miss World.

**The Girl Generation** is an Africa-led coalition with the goal of ending female genital mutilation (FGM). Partners challenge the social norms surrounding FGM and aim to accelerate social change through compelling communication campaigns and sharing stories of change.

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FOSTER WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

Women’s leadership in public and private spheres is critical to achieving gender equality in social, economic and political institutions. Around the world, however, women’s leadership and political participation are restricted, from the local level all the way to the global level. Structural barriers, such as discriminatory laws and institutions that limit women’s options to run for office, along with prejudices, hostile attitudes and gender stereotypes, hold women back from participating or leading in political life.

The private sector has seen a positive correlation between having women in corporate leadership roles and better business performance. Yet, as of 2017, there are only 32 female CEOs leading the 500 highest-earning companies in the United States, and this is the highest number of female CEOs in the 63 years that these companies have been tracked. Globally, proportions vary among countries: Norway, Latvia, Slovenia and Bulgaria have at least 20% female representation in senior executives and board members, whereas Japan and Austria have less than 5%. Philanthropists can promote interventions focused on encouraging and supporting women’s engagement in politics, including running for office; establishing mentorship programs for both girls and women; and working for the advancement of women in corporations and on corporate boards.

Increasing women’s leadership is a long-term effort, and change is often incremental. Philanthropists working on this issue should consider their timeline for support and be prepared to celebrate “small wins” on the path to larger goals. In many cases, increasing women’s and girls’ participation in leadership positions conflicts with standard gender roles and social norms. Hence, effective interventions often target both men and women to foster changes in mindset, with the goal of changing norms around female leadership and reducing resistance, whether overt or subtle. Further, philanthropists who are raising the profiles of girls and young women in their communities and beyond should have child protection policies in place.

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27 UN Women. Women’s leadership and political participation. Available at: http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation
29 Fortune. These Are the Women CEOs Leading Fortune 500 Companies. June 2017. Available at: http://fortune.com/2017/06/07/fortune-500-women-ceos/
How a society perceives and values women and girls is a key factor in gender parity in every institution, from schools to courtrooms.

Leading Private Funders

Governments, corporations, universities, private foundations, global movement groups and women’s regional funds are developing policies and initiatives to advance gender equality and address women’s and girls’ issues.

The following private donors are leaders in this sector.
AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND
awdf.org
The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) works for, by and with African women to advance their rights and equality. AWDF supports the movements and initiatives of women who do not ordinarily have access to mainstream sources of funding, using a grantmaking model that is innovative, flexible and creative. The foundation grants to organizations working in three areas: body and health rights; women’s economic security and justice; and leadership, participation and peace.

BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION
gatesfoundation.org
The foundation takes an international development approach to women’s and girls’ issues. The foundation’s strategy for helping women has two focus areas: family planning and maternal health. In addition to leadership in FP2020—a partnership initiative to bring contraception to an additional 120 million women in low-income countries by 2020—the foundation has committed to closing what it has identified as a “gender data gap,” i.e., the significant lack of data on women and girls throughout the world. The foundation also focuses on K-12 education and postsecondary success in the United States for both boys and girls.

CHILDREN’S INVESTMENT FUND FOUNDATION
ciff.org
The Children’s Investment Fund Foundation’s (CIFF) effort in child protection—one of CIFF’s three priorities—focuses on ending child marriage and slavery, and stopping sexual violence toward girls. CIFF’s strategy is to raise awareness about violence toward girls and then catalyze change, especially by giving voice to children while also working with governments to enact laws that protect girls and supporting local organizations.

FORD FOUNDATION
fordfoundation.org
The foundation funds programs that expand the rights and agency of women and girls. Within this initiative, the foundation prioritizes building the base of support for sexual and reproductive justice as part of a broader social justice strategy. Foundation funding is deployed globally to strengthen organizations, build networks, and develop leadership. The foundation also funds programs across issue areas—such as inclusive economies, youth opportunity and learning, and equitable development—to support integrated platforms that achieve justice for women and girls.

COMMUNITIES OF DONORS COMMITTED TO ADVANCING WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women Moving Millions is a community of more than 250 donors who have committed to large-scale investment in women and girls toward the goal of ending gender inequality.

Maverick Collective is an initiative of Population Services International. This donor collective seeks to address poverty by investing in women and girls.

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Global Fund for Women @GlobalFundWomen
Malala Fund @MalalaFund
Paradigm for Parity @p4parity
UN Women @UN_Women
Women Deliver @WomenDeliver


GRAÇA MACHEL TRUST
gracamacheltrust.org
The trust is a Pan-African organization focused on child health and nutrition, education, women’s economic and financial empowerment, leadership and good governance. Through advocacy efforts, the trust seeks to influence decision makers to adopt the change-making policies and practices needed to create societies that value social justice, and promote and protect the rights of women and children.

NOVO FOUNDATION
novofoundation.org
The foundation focuses on two areas that affect women and girls: rights of adolescent girls in the United States and Global South, and violence against girls and women. It supports programs that work directly with women and girls and improve the systems that affect them, incorporating female voices and experiences to shape strategy. Within the United States, the foundation works to advance the rights of women and girls of color. Worldwide, the foundation provides support for communities affected by sex trafficking, conflict, systematic economic injustice, and domestic violence and abuse.

OAK FOUNDATION
oakfnd.org
The foundation’s gender equality portfolio focuses on combating the violence and exploitation faced by women and girls around the world. It supports rights-based laws and policies that protect children and correct the social norms that harm women. The foundation funds women’s organizations that take a rights-based approach, collaborate with women and holistically consider women within their environments.

UN WOMEN FUND FOR GENDER EQUALITY
unwomen.org
The fund is a global grantmaking mechanism that approaches women’s and girls’ needs through a strategy centering on the economic and political empowerment of women worldwide. It supports women-led civil society organizations in Africa, the Americas, the Middle East and Asia. In partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the governments of Australia, Ireland and the United States, the fund’s flagship program is “Making Every Woman and Girl Count,” which is an initiative to increase the availability and accuracy of information about gender equality and women’s rights.

“I raise up my voice—not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard... we cannot succeed when half of us are held back.”
- Malala Yousafzai
Summary

Tackling gender equality is complex. While a holistic approach is critical, there are many opportunities for philanthropists to have an impact. We recommend considering the following to find the right approach:

01 **ASSESS YOUR INTERESTS AND CONCERNS TO IDENTIFY PRIORITIES**

A good first step is to apply a gender lens to current philanthropic work. Starting with the communities that benefit from programs, philanthropists may find it meaningful to ask: Are we reaching an equal number of girls and boys or men and women? Exploring why a program has not achieved gender parity can uncover hidden barriers to participation. Another approach is to assess interventions for gender bias. For example, if an economic empowerment program offers men and women different types of training, a philanthropist may ask how that decision was made.

02 **EXPLORE WHETHER TO BUILD ON EXISTING PROGRAMS OR PILOT A NEW PROGRAM**

Philanthropists can identify opportunities within their existing portfolios to advance gender equality, or they can choose to build a separate philanthropic portfolio focused on the advancement of women and girls. A meaningful program can be built or expanded around a range of interests. Some philanthropists may find that their interests are aligned with a particular issue area, such as economic empowerment or human trafficking. Others may be most interested in working with a specific population, such as adolescents, rural women or men.

03 **DECIDE WHAT KIND OF IMPACT YOU WANT TO HAVE AND FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS**

The three levers for achieving gender equality are mindset change, institution building and targeted interventions. Philanthropists can launch programs to pull each of these levers or focus primarily on one. That choice will help determine whether the program seeks to generate system-level change or to improve the lives of people living in a specific community. In some approaches, philanthropists support programs locally with the intention of creating a groundswell that reaches the national level.

04 **CONSIDER WHAT YOU CAN DO BEYOND MONETARY SUPPORT**

Monetary support is not the only way to have an impact. Philanthropists can also assess policies in the organizations and companies they are involved with (either through an ownership stake or board representation) for gender inequalities. For example, philanthropists can assess the leadership pipeline, C-suite and board membership for female representation or ensure that paid family leave policies are in place.

RIGHT: A mother and her two children walk home.
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