Meet The High-Net Worth Female Philanthropist

For our latest study at the Women’s Philanthropy Institute, we spoke with 23 high-net-worth women who give $1 million or more to causes that benefit women and girls. Here’s what we learned.

**She learned philanthropy young.**
The majority of our participants did not grow up wealthy, but most had early experiences with philanthropy - and were “taught to give what they could,” often by parents and religious institutions.

**She believes wealth comes with responsibility.**
The participants who came into wealth later in life described a common sense of responsibility to share their financial resources with others. One said: “My first step in coming to terms with my inheritance and working with it was through philanthropy.”

**She educates herself.**
Participants believe it’s critical to thoroughly educate themselves before making funding decisions. Education comes in the form of conversations with other women donors, research, joining women’s funding groups and more.

**She takes risks.**
Contrary to conventional wisdom, the women we spoke with expressed a willingness to take risks with their philanthropy, funding experimental initiatives rather than just known solutions. Many of these women have also started their own business or enterprise.

**She’s all about ROI.**
Participants give to women and girls because they know it’s a smart investment. One described funding for women as a “nexus” for many other issues, including poverty, climate change and wealth inequality.

**She invests in systems level change.**
When giving to women and girls, many of the participants expressed a preference for investing in organizations focused on systemic change rather than direct service. One participant said: “I was really interested in funding organizations that went upstream and try to address the root of the problem.”

**She’s empathetic.**
When it comes to supporting women and girls, participants were motivated in part by their own gender-based experiences with discrimination, inequality, reproductive health and education. One said: “I have stayed in this field because I understand it.”

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https://philanthropy.iupui.edu/GenderGiving

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