Global Giving Circles

Jason Franklin & Jessica Bearman
Who is in the Zoom?
Why are you interested in this research?
What is a Giving Circle?

- Members pool their donations
- Donors decide where the money goes
- Social and/or learning aspect
Overview & Methodology
Thank you to our advisors!

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How was the research conducted?

- Global advisory group helped frame research approach
- Review of network lists, GC reports, and web research (English & Spanish) to establish master list of global GCs
- Survey distributed to 426 identified GCs and networks (84 responses, 63 included sufficient data for analysis, final sample = 14.8%)
- Semi-structured interviews with select GCs to develop in-depth profiles

Thank you to Leena Mangrulkar, Aaron Yore-VanOosterhout, & Aaron Scheffler for your invaluable help with this report!
2018 Global Estimates

426 circles outside the US

$45.74 million in grants

42,200 members
Where are global GCs located?

- **North America** (241 – Excludes US)
- **Europe** (65)
- **Middle East & North Africa** (17)
- **Asia & Pacific Islands** (85)
- **Sub-Saharan Africa** (1)
- **Latin America & Caribbean** (13)
- **Virtual** (4)
How much did they give?

- 2018 Giving
  - Survey Data - $5,583,474 via 529 grants
  - 2018 Average - $107,374
  - Projected 2018 Total - $45.74 million

- Lifetime giving - $21,733,268 via 2608 grants

- 53/63 respondents provided giving data
How many members do global GC’s generally have?

Projected total = 42,200 members

Average membership per circle = 99 people
How new are global GCs?

8% founded in 2010 or before
21% founded from 2011-2013
40% founded from 2014-2016
31% founded from 2017-2019

92% have been founded in the last decade

n=62 for this question in our survey
Membership
Who are involved in GCs?

Gender Identity

- Male
- Female
- * Transgender & Other Identities less than 0.2%

Ethnicity

- Includes ethnically marginalized
- Does not include
- Prefer not to answer

Age

- Under 25
- 25-40
- 41-64
- 65+
- Don’t know
● 44% formed around a shared identity, most often women’s circles

● 80% drew their membership from their local community

● Religion not a major factor

● Identity beyond gender not a major driver
“Our members come from all walks of life, and introduce and recommend each other through connections,”

Yizhong Fund
Shanghai, China
Structure & Networks
How are GCs structured?
How are they networked?

75% were connected to one of five global GC networks
- 100 Who Care Alliance
- Awesome Foundation
- Impact 100
- Social Venture Partners
- The Funding Network

Other networks including Amplifier & Philanos have some non-US affiliates, but none completed this survey.
How are admin costs paid for?

- Some donors make extra gifts to cover admin costs
- Outside source donated admin costs
- Donors give in-kind gifts
- Host covers admin
- Percentage of general contribution applied to admin
- All donors contribute to admin (beyond grantmaking)
- Not applicable, group has no administrative costs
- Other
When it comes to admin costs…

“We’ve got no money, so how shall we do this?”

Bath Women’s Fund
Bath, England
Giving & Engagement
How do GCs structure giving?

- 80% have a minimum donation to participate
- Average minimum donation = $322
- Nearly half had a minimum donation level of 100 units of local currency
- Only about 35% asked for donations above $100 and only 4% above $1,000
- Almost two thirds have a single standard giving amount
- 32% raise funds beyond their membership
How does commitment & meeting frequency vary?
How are decisions made?

Administration

Grantmaking
“There’s this big moment, and it’s always just so very exciting… It’s the excitement of a soccer game! There’s tears and just excitement!”

100+ Women Who Care
San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
Grantmaking
What issues do GCs fund?

- Not issue-specific (43%)
- Education (35%)
- Human services (35%)
- Women & Girls (32%)
- Health (29%)
- Public affairs/society benefit (27%)
- Environment and animals (24%)
- Arts, culture, and humanities (22%)
- LGBTQ (14%)
- Race & Ethnicity (8%)
- International affairs (6%)
- Religion-related (2%)
- Other or Don’t Know (3%)
What else do GCs prioritize in their giving?

- Two thirds support local grassroots/community groups
- Almost 20% provide support directly to individuals
- GCs most commonly provide grants for specific programs or services (73%) followed by general operating or unrestricted support (44%)
- Over 70% make grants to groups in their local community
What factors impact GC donor decisions?

- Recipient shows strong impact: Not a factor
- Supports underfunded population: Slightly important
- Good match with donors' interests: Slightly important
- Work is easy to understand: Moderately important
- Work is innovative: Very important
- Org responsive to requests for info: Not a factor
- Provides opportunity to educate donors: Slightly important
- Opportunity for engagement/volunteering: Not a factor
- Supports population similar to membership: Slightly important
“One of the things that NGO’s are excited about is that we fund problems that a traditional corporate fund or family foundation will not.”

Social Venture Partners
Bangalore, India
Beyond Grantmaking
How else do Giving Circles support groups?

- Technical Assistance
- Fundraising Support
- In-Kind Support
- Other Volunteering
- Additional Money
- Board Service
- Other
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Learn about community issues</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking opportunities</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learn about giving</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group discussions</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Meetings with NGO/community leaders</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Resources on giving/philanthropy</td>
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<td>Mentoring opportunities</td>
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<td>Leadership training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“[GiveOUT Day] gives them the opportunity to give away ten, fifteen thousand dollars… [enabling] them to feel powerful in those moments around the change that they’re trying to make.”

GiveOUT
Australia
Changes over Time
How have GCs changed in the last 3 years?

35% report a change

Of those reporting a change:

- 41% changed how grant decisions are made
- 23% changed giving focus or priorities
- 14% affiliated with a host organization
- *23% reported various other types of changes*
What has changed over the life of a GC?

- Number of donor members: Moderate increase
- Amount raised each year: About the Same
- Amount of money given each year: About the Same
- Amount of giving per donor: About the Same
- Number of grants awarded each year: About the Same
- Number of giving options / tiers for donors: About the Same
- Administrative or staff costs: About the Same

Legend:
- Significant decrease
- Moderate decrease
- About the Same
- Moderate increase
- Significant increase
Reflections & Implications
Operational Models: Six Key Dynamics

- **Size**
  - Small
  - Large

- **Structure**
  - Formal
  - Informal

- **Membership**
  - Consistent
  - Fluid

- **Engagement**
  - Intensive
  - Light

- **Decision-making**
  - Collective
  - Individual

- **Affiliation**
  - Independent
  - Networked
Getting Started

- Individual champions play a significant role
- GC networks and exemplars based in US and UK provide inspiration, support, and connection
- Hosts are crucial for starting or sustaining many GCs
- Transitions from founding leaders is a key inflection point and challenge
What challenges do these GCs face?

- Building a philanthropic mindset
- Lack of time for busy professionals
- Balancing visibility/accessibility and “specialness”
- Building membership that reflects full community
- Maintaining momentum
- NGOs inexperience in raising funds
“...unless you’re pulling new people in, the groups aren’t able to grow.”

100+ Women Who Care
Halifax, Canada
What are opportunities for new research?

- Additional baseline research, especially in languages beyond English and among non-networks GCs
- Explore other collective giving models rooted in different traditions and approaches
- Understand dynamics of capitalism & colonialism in promoting western philanthropic models
- Deeper analysis of differences in GCs in parts of the world with different philanthropic traditions
- Study the impact of participation in GCs on donor giving and civic engagement
- Examine the impact of COVID on GCs and collective giving
Resources Going Forward

**Philanthropy Together**
- Global Giving Circle Directory (forthcoming 2021)
- Launchpad - Start a new GC
- Directory of GC Networks - Overview of 15 networks (& growing) including networks with a major global presence like 100 Who Care Alliance, Awesome Foundation, Impact 100, Social Venture Partners

Connect with other global GC Networks
- Women’s Giving Circles International
- The Funding Network
Thank You!