

# Global Giving Circles


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Dorothy A. Johnson Center  
FOR PHILANTHROPY

A decorative graphic featuring a large, light blue dashed circle that frames the central text. The background is white, and the design is accented with various colorful geometric shapes: a large lime green circle in the top-left corner, a smaller green circle with a white center and a blue circle below it, a large orange circle in the bottom-left corner with a small pink circle next to it, a large yellow circle in the top-right corner with a small pink circle above it, and a large orange circle in the bottom-right corner with a teal circle below it.

Who is in the  
Zoom?

A decorative graphic featuring a large, light blue dashed circle that frames the central text. The background is white, and the design is accented with various colorful circles and shapes. In the top-left corner, there is a large cyan ring, a smaller solid cyan circle, and a dashed cyan circle. In the top-right corner, there is a large lime green circle, a smaller solid lime green circle, and a dashed lime green circle. In the bottom-left corner, there is a large green circle with a white center, a smaller solid green circle, a dashed green circle, and a small orange circle. In the bottom-right corner, there is a large orange circle, a smaller solid orange circle, a dashed orange circle, and a small pink circle. The central text is in a black, monospaced font.

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!



- Alison Taylor, Centre for Social Impact
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- Megha Jain, Dasra
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- Sondra Shaw Hardy, Women's Giving Circles International
- Susan Phillips, Carleton University
- Traci Richards, 100 Who Care Alliance
- Vera Dakova, Mott Foundation
- Wendy Scaife, AU Centre for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Studies

Thank you also to the  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation!



## 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

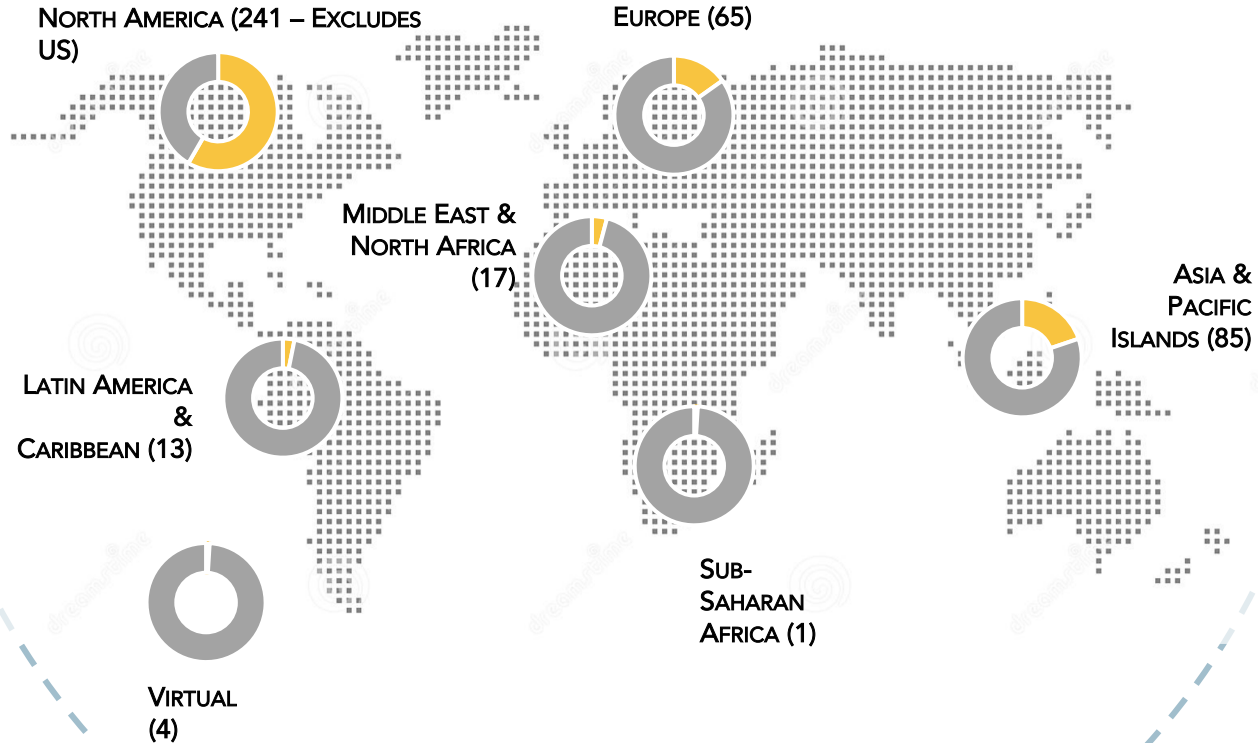
426 circles outside the US

\$45.74 million in grants

42,200 members



# Where are global GCs located?





## 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?

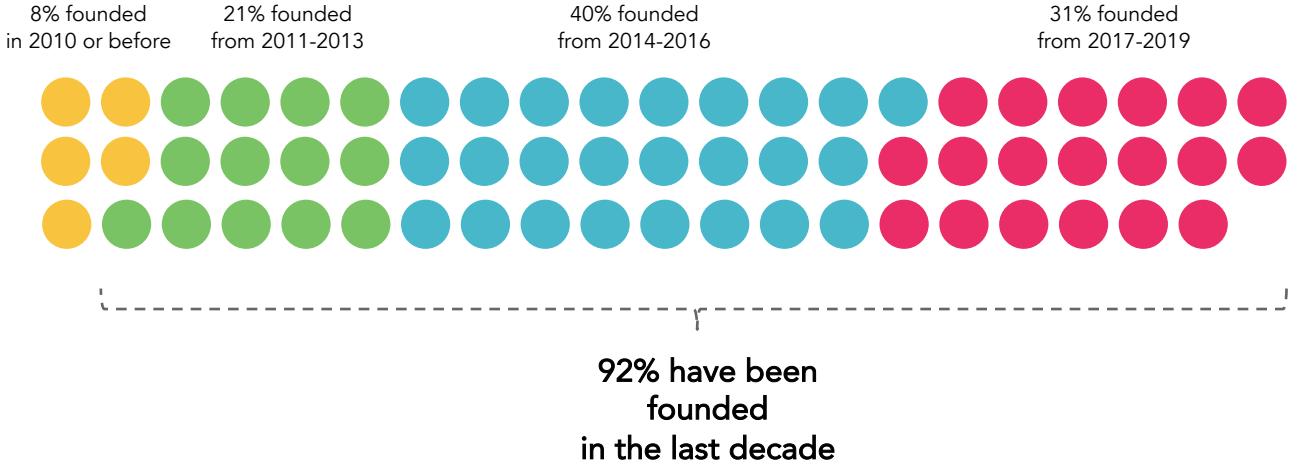
Projected total =  
42,200 members

Average  
membership  
per circle =  
99 people



- Fewer than 25
- 26-50
- 51-100
- 101-250
- More than 250

# How new are global GCs?



*n=62 for this question in our survey*

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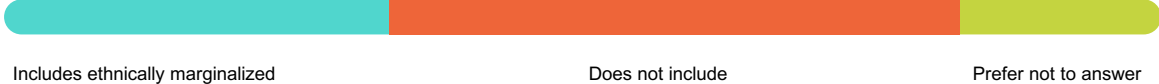
# Membership

# Who are involved in GCs?

## Gender Identity

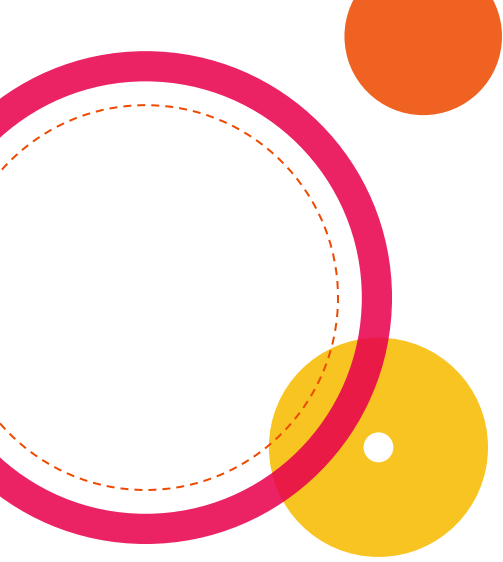


## Ethnicity




## Age





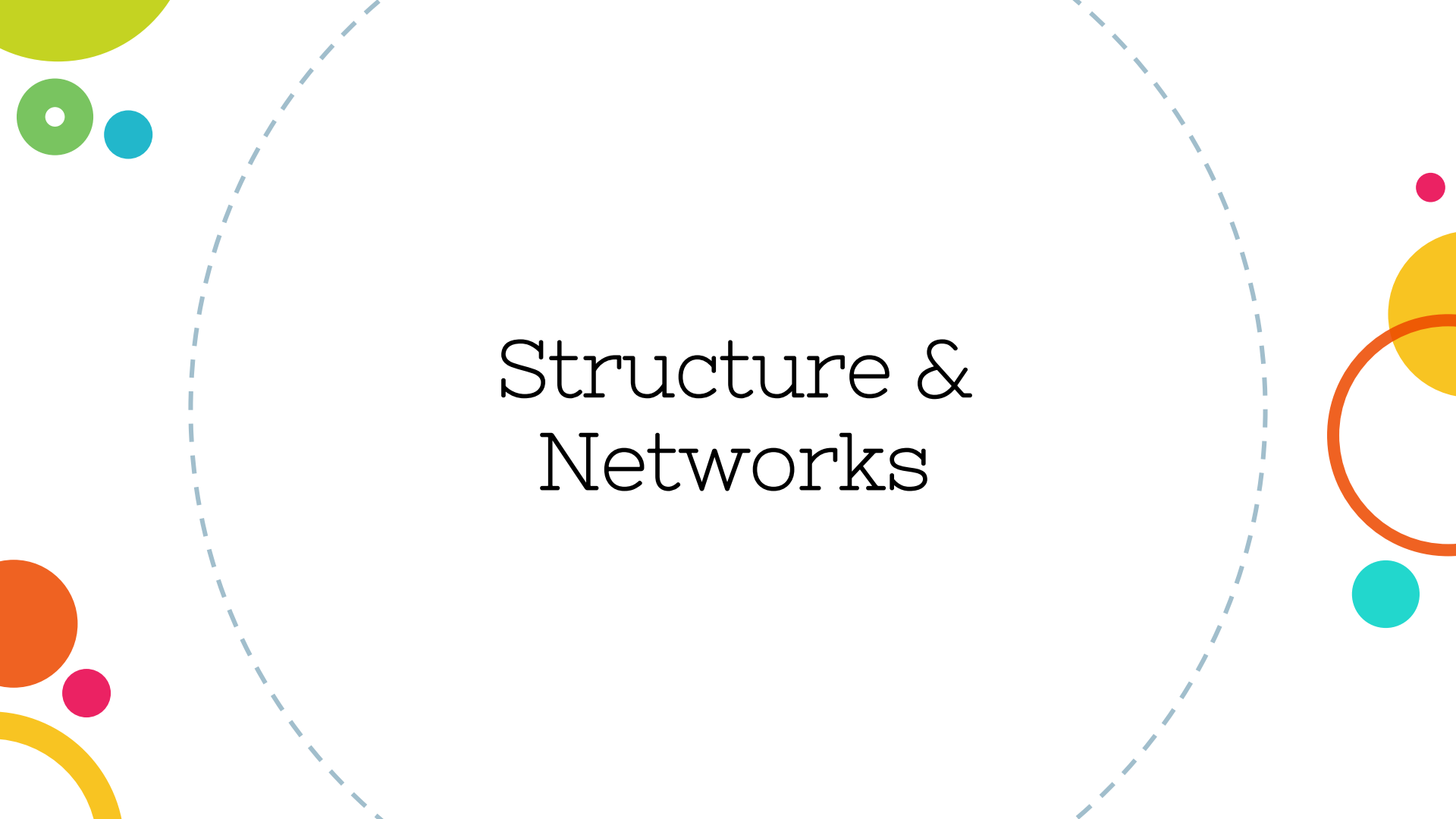
- 44% formed around a shared identity, most often women's circles
- 80% drew their membership from their local community
- Religion not a major factor
- Identity beyond gender not a major driver



*“Our members come from all walks of life, and introduce and recommend each other through connections,”*

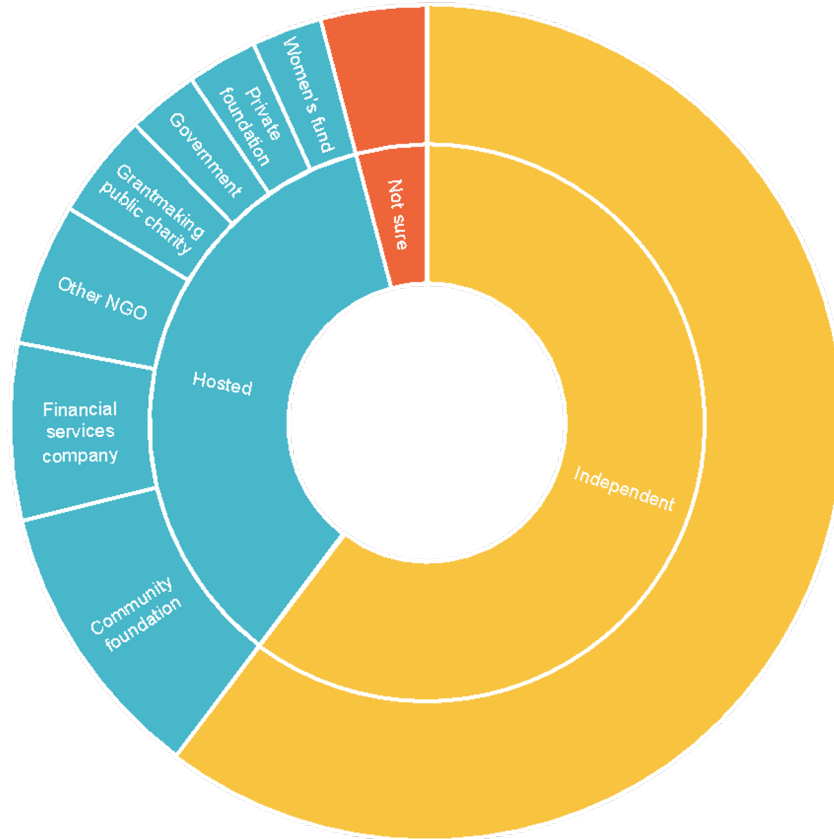
Yizhong Fund  
Shanghai, China



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# Structure & Networks

# How are GCs structured?





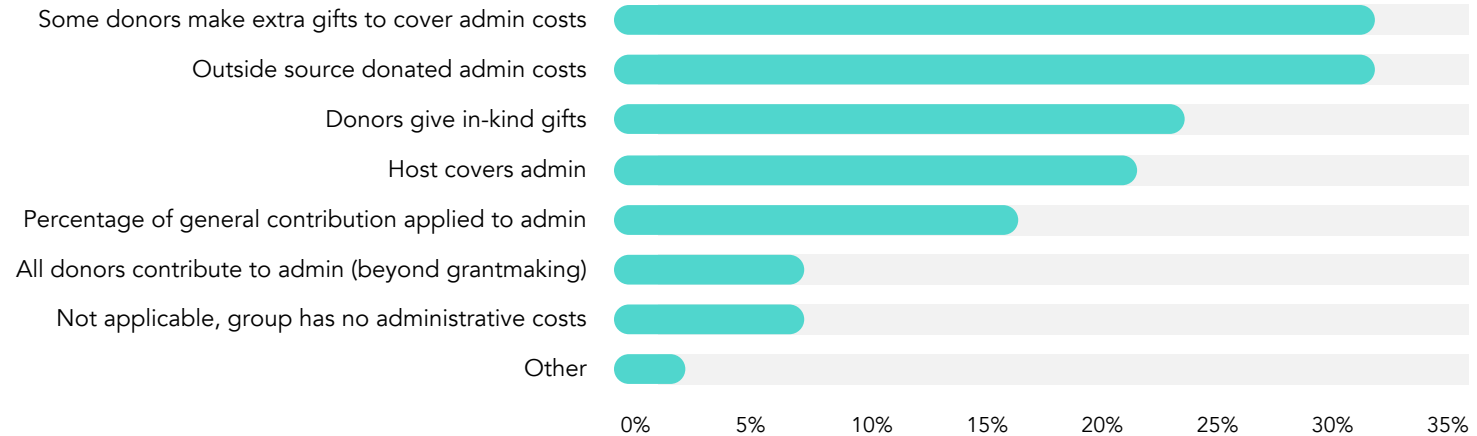
## How are they networked?

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?





When it comes to admin costs...

*"We've got no money, so how shall we do this?"*

Bath Women's Fund  
Bath, England

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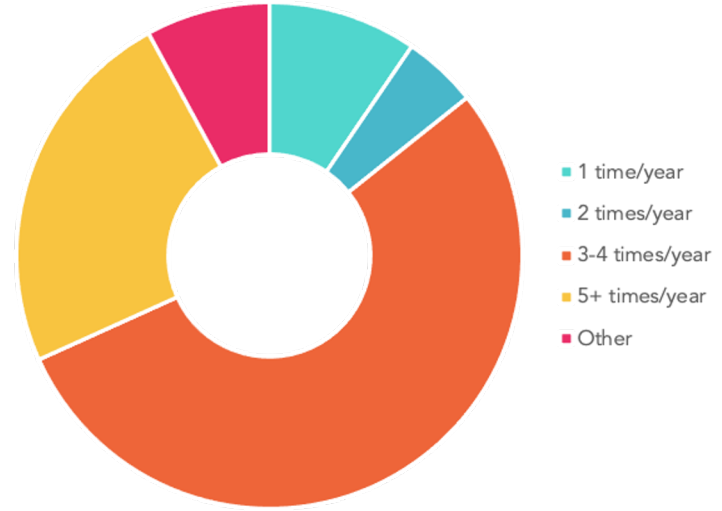
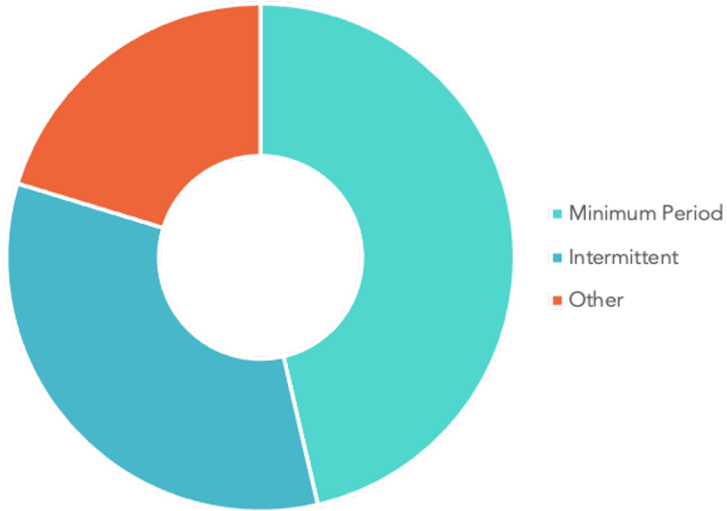
# Giving & Engagement



## 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

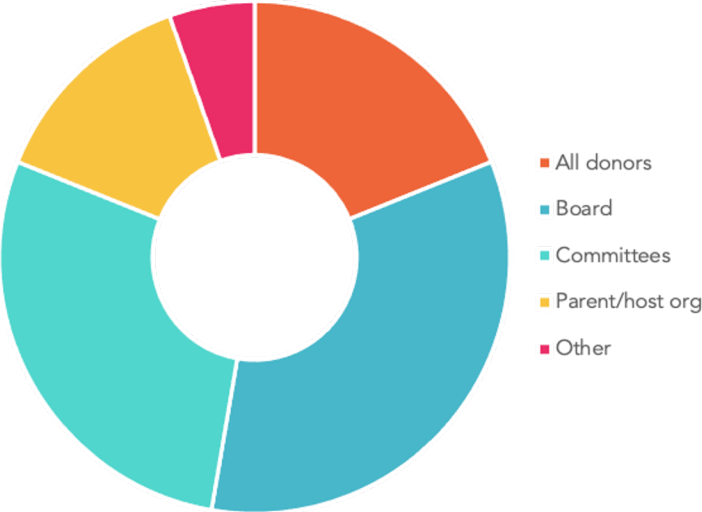
# How does commitment & meeting frequency vary?



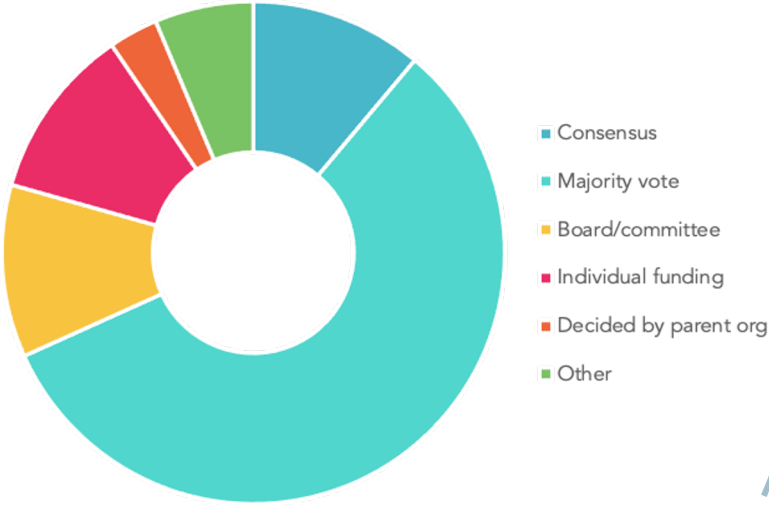


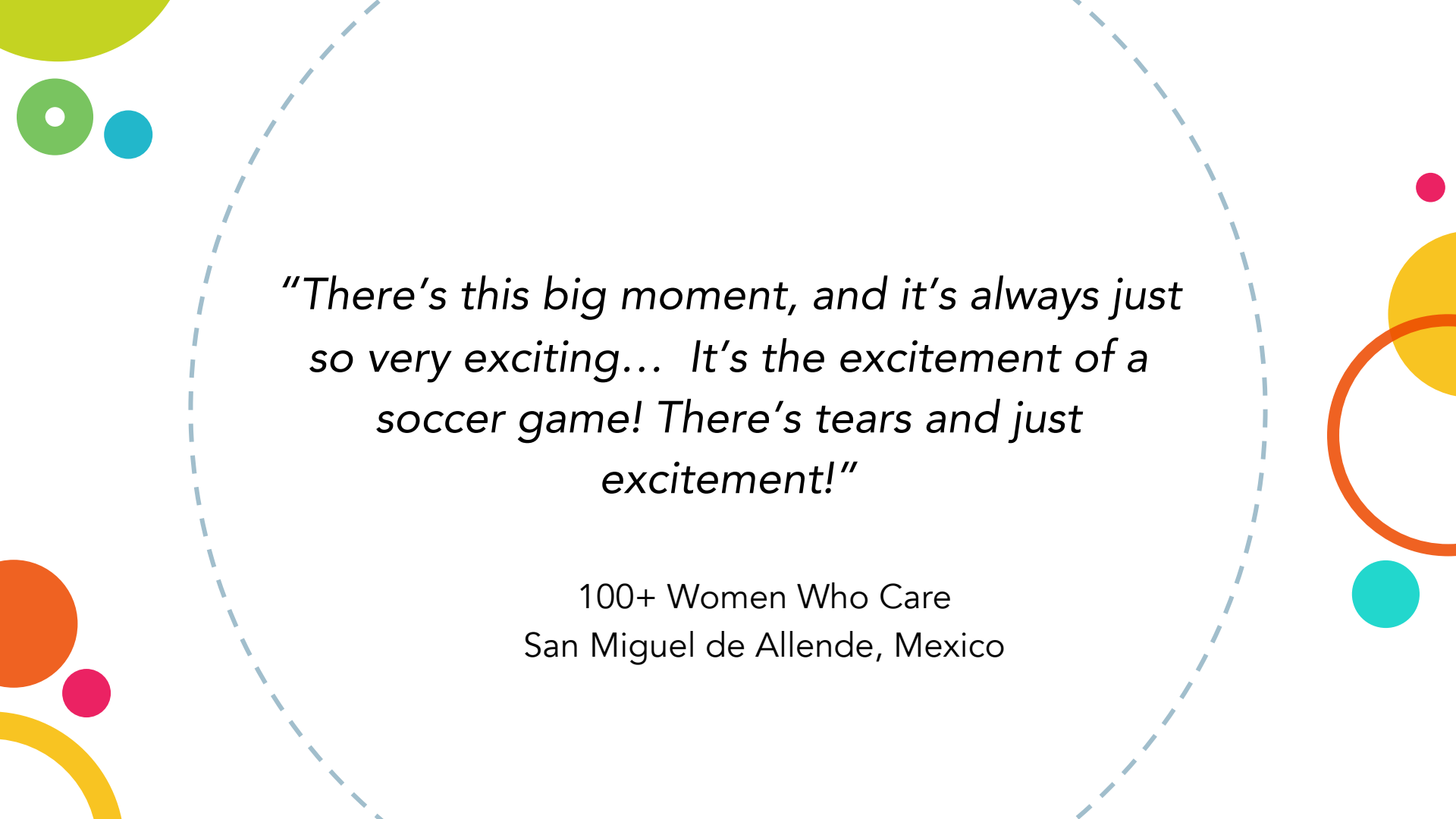
# How are decisions made?

## Administration



## Grantmaking





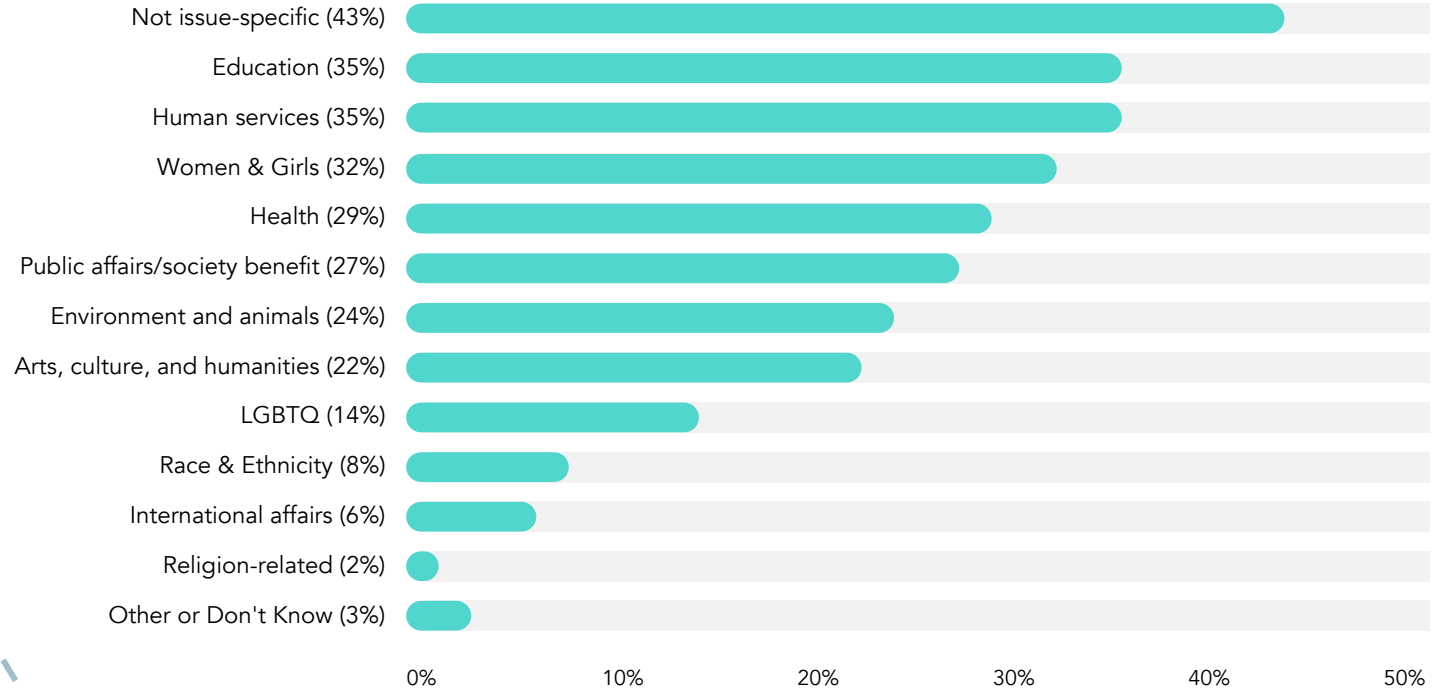
*“There’s this big moment, and it’s always just so very exciting... It’s the excitement of a soccer game! There’s tears and just excitement!”*

100+ Women Who Care  
San Miguel de Allende, Mexico

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# Grantmaking

# What issues do GCs fund?

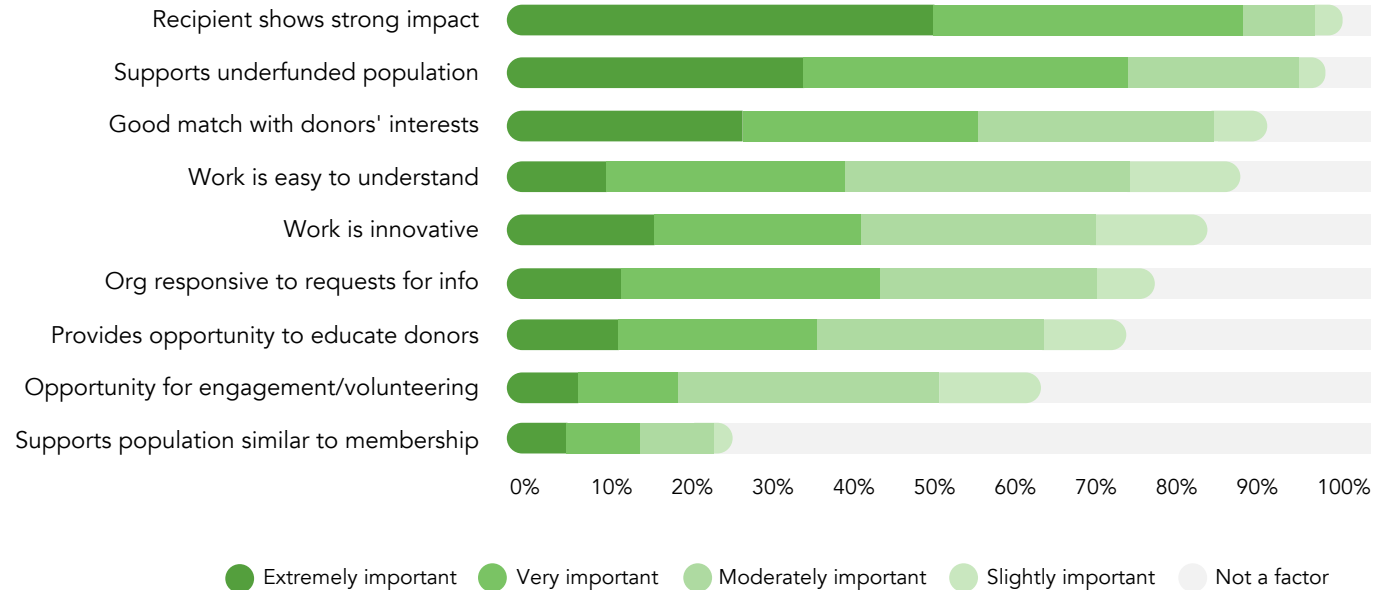





## What else do GCs prioritize in their giving?

- 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?





*“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

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# Beyond Grantmaking



# How else do Giving Circles support groups?

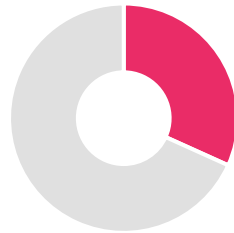
Technical Assistance



Fundraising Support



In-Kind Support



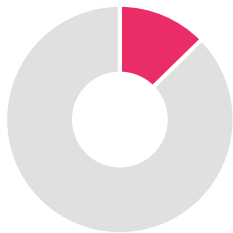
Other Volunteering



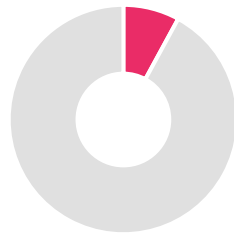
Additional Money



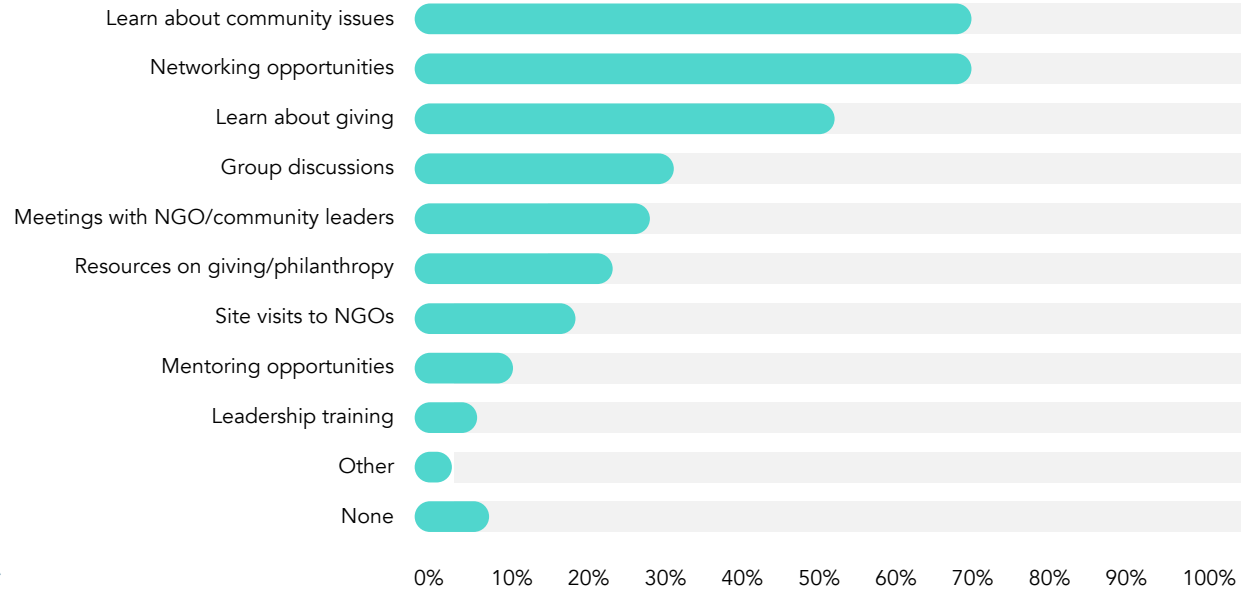
Board Service




Other



# What activities/opportunities are provided?





*“[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

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# Changes over Time

# How have GCs changed in the last 3 years?

35% report a change



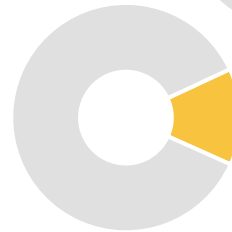
Of those reporting a change:



41% changed how grant decisions are made



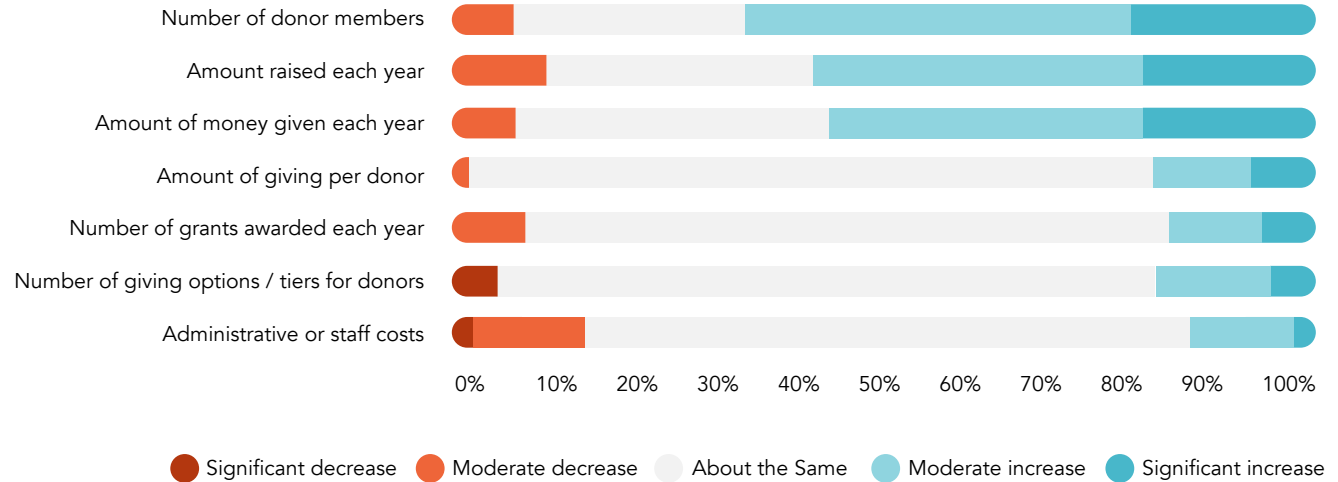
23% changed giving focus or priorities




14% affiliated with a host organization

\* 23% reported various other types of changes

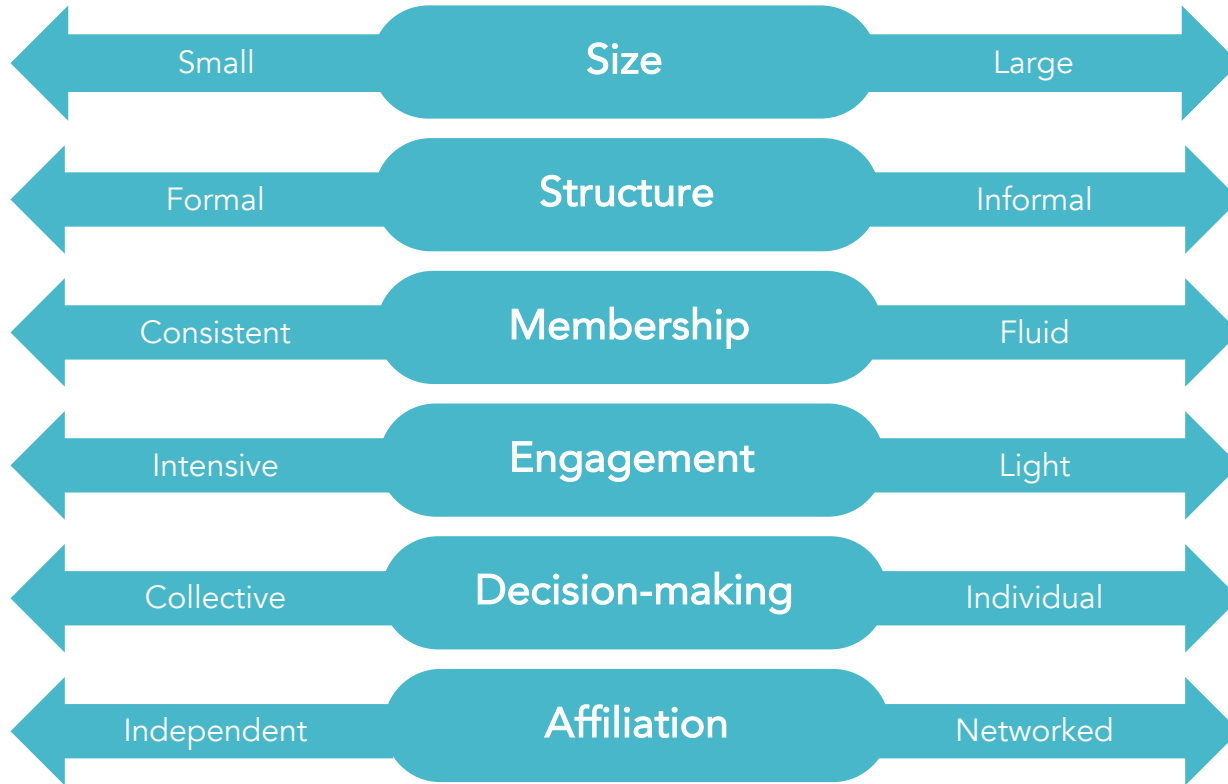
# What has changed over the life of a GC?



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# Reflections & Implications

# Operational Models: Six Key Dynamics







## 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](#)

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Thank You!