

Patterns in the Tapestry:

A Typology of Collective Giving Groups



Dorothy A. Johnson Center
FOR PHILANTHROPY



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STATE UNIVERSITY



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Together

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A Message From the Authors

The phrase, “If you know one giving circle, you know one giving circle,” is a standard refrain appropriately applied to describe the vast collective giving movement. When a group of people comes together — even under the same general model — they inevitably shape their approach to fit their own needs, impact goals, culture, and perspectives. What makes collective giving so powerful is that it builds on the essential truth that collectively we are stronger than we are alone.

As the giving circle movement has grown exponentially over the past decade, so too has the variety of its organizational forms. In the report, *In Abundance: An Analysis of the Thriving Landscape of Collective Giving in the U.S.*, Loson-Ceballos and Layton (2024) found that there are nearly 4,000 giving circles with 370,000 people in the United States alone and through that growth, patterns are surfacing within the tapestry mosaic. This typology framework was developed to capture patterns in the diverse structures and models emerging within the movement.

At Philanthropy Together, we’ve built relationships with hundreds of giving circles globally and we work directly with new leaders eager to start their own collective giving group. This typology is a synthesis of those learnings (the origin stories, identities, size, and aspirations) from existing groups, alongside the questions, confusion, and challenges of those just starting out.

At the Johnson Center for Philanthropy, we have been inspired by the passion and commitment of our partners at Philanthropy Together and the power and scale of the movement. So much so that some members of our team now participate in a local giving circle and have incorporated participation in a pop-up giving circle as part of their teaching. We hope that in reading this and our other reports on collective giving, you too are inspired to join the movement, if you haven’t already.

We hope this report offers you new layers of understanding and practical wisdom to apply to your own giving circle journey. Together, we can continue to approach this work in the most thoughtful, intentional, and impactful way, amplifying all our collective efforts.



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What is Collective Giving?

Collective giving involves individuals pooling their resources, knowledge, and networks to support a cause (or causes) collectively chosen by the group. It typically includes shared or democratic decision-making, community connections, learning, and engagement, all aimed at achieving amplified impact and empowering communities. Central to all such giving models is the practice of collective action and the cultivation of trust, where communities unite to effect change using various resources and forms of support. A distinctive aspect of collective giving is that for many groups philanthropy implies mobilizing all 5Ts: Treasure, Time, Talent, Ties, and Testimony.

This glossary clarifies definitions of terms as used in this report for the collective giving ecosystem:

- **Collective Giving Groups:** Collective giving groups are made up of leaders and individual members who pool resources to support nonprofit organizations, individuals, and/or causes. (To explore existing groups, search the [Global Giving Circle Directory](#).)
- **Giving Circle:** A specific model of collective giving where members decide together where and how to allocate their pooled donations. In contrast, a nonprofit-led circle is operated by and for a single nonprofit. Giving circles are the most represented model of collective giving in this research.
- **Leaders:** Individuals who initiate or lead, host, facilitate, and, in general, keep a collective giving group running.
- **Members:** Individuals who participate in a collective giving group by contributing their resources, regardless of amount or frequency of contributions.
- **Resources:** The forms that donations can take, often referred to as the 5Ts: Time (volunteering), Talent (expertise), Treasure (money), Testimony (spreading the word), and Ties (relationships).
- **Gifts:** The donations themselves. In traditional philanthropy, these would typically be referred to as donations or grants.
- **Networks:** A community of collective giving groups with shared affinities, interests, and/or geography that provides support and resources to their members.

PREFERRED CITATION

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Introduction

The collective giving movement has seen remarkable growth across the U.S. in recent years, both in participation and impact. Between 2017 and 2023, nearly 4,000 collective giving groups engaged over 370,000 members, mobilizing \$3.1 billion to support various causes (Loson-Ceballos & Layton, 2024, p. 1). These figures underscore the scale and scope of this dynamic movement. While all collective giving groups share a commitment to democratic processes for mobilizing and allocating resources for social impact, their structures, composition, and practices vary widely. By understanding and appreciating these differences, we can better grasp how collective giving is transforming philanthropy and driving social change.

The purpose of this report is twofold. First, it presents a typology that serves as a framework to categorize collective giving groups. Second, it applies that framework to develop seven archetypes of collective giving groups.

A typology is a systematic framework used to classify or categorize a set of objects, ideas, or, in this case, organizations, based on a set of criteria that identify their key distinguishing characteristics (ScienceDirect, n.d.). A typology provides a structure for understanding complexity and making distinctions among organizations, enabling us to make sense of diversity and variation within a field. In the case of collective giving groups, these distinctions include aspects such as the motivations of a group's membership and its size. Utilizing a typology to identify and discuss the range of characteristics visible in the collective giving movement facilitates better analysis, comparison, and decision-making by highlighting both commonalities and differences across groups.

This report uses the term archetype to describe recurring models that emerge from the typology, capturing the combinations of features often found together in collective giving groups (Library Fiveable, n.d.). An archetype functions similarly to a recurring motif in music or literature. Just as a motif is a recognizable pattern that helps audiences understand and appreciate underlying themes in a work of art, an archetype reveals familiar, shared elements within a field while simultaneously clarifying the distinct features that differentiate one archetype from another. This dual function makes archetypes especially useful for identifying both the shared elements and the distinguishing characteristics of various models of collective giving groups.

The typology framework shared in this report provides a systematic method for organizing collective giving groups. The seven archetypes described here are derived from assessing where groups fall on the spectra of key characteristics of the typology's three core dimensions. Each archetype represents a distinct model within the collective giving field and serves as an illustrative example of choices made by these groups.

It is important to note that the seven archetypes are not exhaustive representations of all the models of collective giving. Groups can and do make other choices along the three dimensions and among the corresponding criteria. Moreover, it is possible for a group to adapt and evolve its choices over time in response to shifting needs, values, or circumstances. The goal of this report is not to prescribe fixed categories, but to illustrate and highlight some of the most common choices

made by collective giving groups today. These archetypes serve as a tool for understanding the diversity and range of models within the movement and for exploring how different configurations address varying needs, values, and contexts.

To support the practical application of the typology, this report includes a Typology Worksheet as Appendix A. This tool is designed to help giving circles assess their own structures and characteristics, understanding how they might align with the most relevant archetype. For founders, the tool can help them clarify what options they have in creating and organizing their collective giving group. By using this worksheet, groups can define and refine (or establish) their organizational models, enhance their impact, and strengthen cohesion among their members. The Typology Worksheet serves as a resource for nascent, new, and existing groups to navigate their place within the broader framework and make informed decisions about their strategies and practices.

Together, the typology and seven archetypes showcase the diverse approaches shaping the collective giving movement, while highlighting their contributions to expanding the reach and amplifying the impact of collective giving across the U.S.



Typology and Archetypes of Collective Giving Groups

This typology is intended to serve as an overview of the variety of ways that collective giving groups organize themselves. As the movement has grown, a number of models and methodologies for operating have emerged. Given the scope of the field today, it was imperative to create a typology of collective giving groups that could serve as a guide to the sector and as an organizing framework for new collective giving groups.

Drawing upon more than a decade of experience working with collective giving groups and recent research from the report *In Abundance*, Isis Krause, chief strategy officer at Philanthropy Together, developed and published the following typology and archetypes in the aforementioned report (Loson-Ceballos & Layton, 2024, pp. 7-18). Presented here in a lightly revised and expanded version, this framework offers a systematic conceptualization of the variety of models of collective giving groups.

Definitionally, collective giving entails a group of values-aligned people who gather together, give, and collectively decide where their gift goes. They often engage above and beyond their financial gift for amplified impact. Like most civil society organizations, collective giving groups have a diverse array of membership compositions and operational structures, reflecting a diversity of size, age, and orientation. Collective giving groups choose from a range of options in their organizational processes, typically emphasizing flexibility, strategy, and impactful support to organizations striving to make a difference in their communities. This typology, therefore, focuses on three core dimensions of collective giving groups:

1. Who and Why: Membership Characteristics and Purpose of the Group
2. What and Where: Giving Focus, Levels, Decision-Making, and Recipients
3. How and When: Processes, Structures, and Supports

These three dimensions each consist of seven key characteristics, represented as ranges. These ranges illustrate the choices available to collective giving groups as they decide how to organize their work. The options at each end of each spectrum highlight the most noticeable differences between the two approaches, based on research data and field experience; however, many groups fall somewhere in the middle or beyond the spectrum entirely. In addition, while some groups have adopted options that persist for years or even decades, some evolve over time.

Understanding these dimensions and their associated characteristics provides a clearer picture of the collective giving movement and the diversity of individual groups and networks that compose it. Some key findings from the research correspond with key facets of the typology to illustrate the prevalence of different characteristics. The data cited in Figures 1, 2, and 3, are results of a survey of the leaders of collective giving groups presented in the *In Abundance* report (Loson-Ceballos & Layton, 2024). For a one-page table comparing the archetypes, please refer to: Appendix B: The Seven Archetypes and Their Key Characteristics. For a quick guide to the networks and groups that exemplify the archetypes, please see Appendix C: Guide to Networks and Groups by Archetypes.

ninety-nine girlfriends // Photo Credit: Andrea Lonas Photography



1. Who and Why: Membership Characteristics and Purpose of the Group

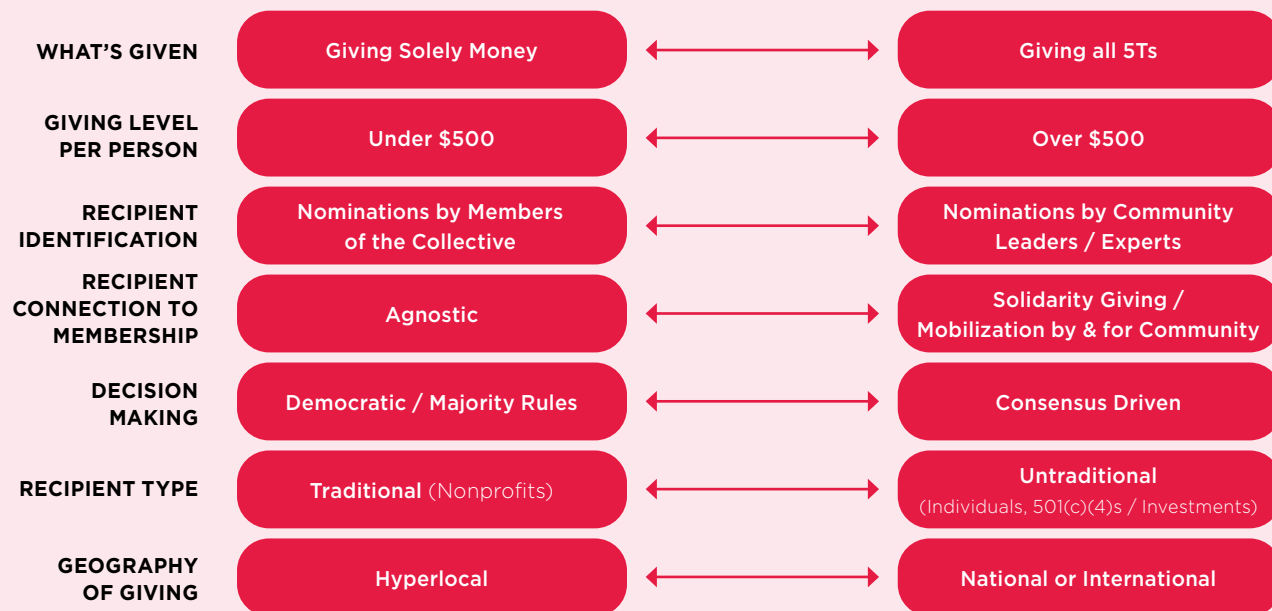
Figure 1: Who and Why: Membership Characteristics and Purpose of the Group



- **Community:** Many groups emphasized a sense of belonging (e.g., 74% of participants joined to form connections within their community), while others sought to network for a cause.
- **Membership Inclusion:** 58% of groups drew members from the same locale and 77% reported a shared identity (gender, race, religion, profession, etc.). Others purposefully spanned multiple identities.
- **Origin:** Most groups were created independently, often drawing from a specific community, but 7% were groups led by and serving specific nonprofits.
- **Size of Group:** 34% of groups had less than 25 members (good for consensus decision-making and relationship building) and 38% had more than 100 members (good for networking).
- **Source of Gift:** Almost all members gave individually — 95% reported donations to their own groups over the past 12 months. Donor organizing was a particular focus for some — 18% fundraised additionally for their collective giving group and 13% fundraised on behalf of their group’s recipients.
- **Learning:** Many groups offered learning opportunities to their members — from educational workshops to site visits, guest speakers, and more. 77% of members reported a positive impact on their learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Impact intention:** A commitment to “change not charity” was shared by 80% of participating collective giving group members, citing their desire to address issues and communities overlooked by mainstream philanthropy. Others tended to support more traditional, service-oriented nonprofits.

2. What and Where: Giving Focus, Levels, Decision-Making, and Recipients

Figure 2: What and Where: Giving Focus, Levels, Decision-Making, and Recipients



- **What's Given:** 60% of members reported an increase in time volunteered. Two-thirds reported making additional non-monetary contributions to their groups' grant recipients.
- **Giving Level, Per Person:** Groups reported that 50% of members made annual contributions on average below \$500.
- **Recipient Identification:** 34% asked their members to find and/or nominate potential recipients, 16% researched potential recipients, and 10% had nominations from community leaders and/or experts.
- **Recipient Connection to Membership:** 70% of groups identified serving the same communities from which their members came as important in selecting funding recipients.
- **Decision-Making:** 53% of groups operated based on majority rule, while 27% of groups made funding decisions through consensus. A smaller number delegated decision-making to a committee or host organization.
- **Recipient Type:** 95% of groups funded nonprofit organizations, 501(c)(3)s, while informal groups and/or movement efforts were funded by 10% of groups.
- **Geography of Giving:** A preponderance of groups funded within their city/town/county, with smaller percentages funding nationally (5%) or internationally (2%).

3. How and When: Processes, Structures, and Supports

Figure 3: How and When: Processes, Structures, and Supports



- Longevity:** Some groups operated as a one-time collective giving experience, some were time-bound efforts. Most groups reflected long-term efforts — with the average length of membership at 7.5 years. 52% met once a year to make grant decisions, and 26% met quarterly.
- Giving Approach:** Collective giving groups engaged in a mix of frameworks, including both “restricted philanthropy” and “trust-based philanthropy.” 72% offered general operating and/or unrestricted funding, while 63% focused on project or program support.
- Host Influence:** The majority of groups owned decision-making themselves, but for 2% of groups, decisions were made by the host organization and/or network.
- Governance:** 52% had a host organization, 22% were part of a network, and 7% were affiliated with a nonprofit. The connection to a host can influence the group’s decision-making.
- Money Management:** 45% of collective giving groups were hosted by either a community foundation or women’s fund, which managed donations and disbursements; 24% were hosted by technology platforms which have emerged as an accessible, low-cost alternative.
- Staffing:** 47% of groups had paid-staff support, indicating a dedicated resource allocated to manage operations, while the remainder were run by volunteers.
- Meeting Format:** 35% of groups primarily met in person, while 43% opted for a hybrid format (in-person and online), and 22% exclusively met online.

Developing Archetypes of Collective Giving Groups from the Typology

Looking across the field of collective giving, a set of archetypal models emerges. In the following section the seven common archetypes that have dozens or even hundreds of groups aligned to that model are explored. Key aspects of each archetype — based on survey responses — are plotted on the typology framework to provide a shorthand for these groups' characteristics.

These archetypes are meant to describe common features; individual collective giving groups can differ on any one of the typology characteristics. As collective giving models and philanthropy as a sector continue to rapidly expand and morph in form and function, the following is a snapshot of archetypes that are most prominent today. Each archetype is followed by a profile of a group or network that exemplifies it. The profiles are based on publicly available information from the websites of these groups. The archetypes include, in no particular order:

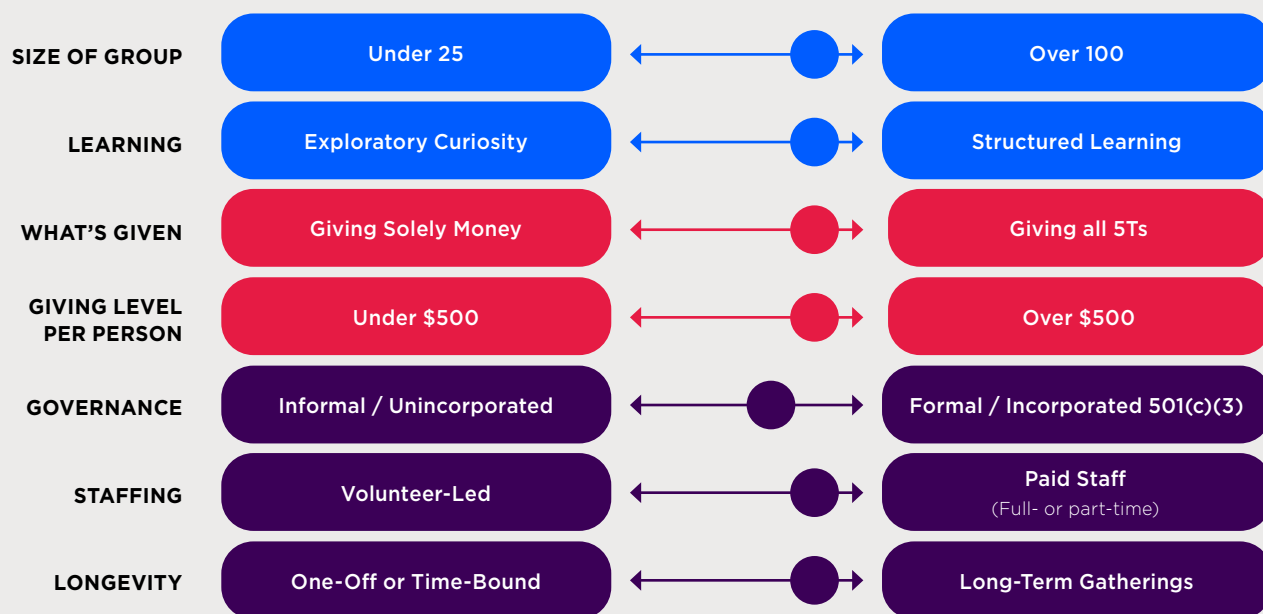
1. **Women Giving Big**
2. **Crowd Granting Networks**
3. **Belonging Through Identity**
4. **Organizing for Social Change**
5. **Community Project Micro-Granting**
6. **Live Crowdfunding Experiences**
7. **Host-Supporting Groups**

New Generation of African American Philanthropists (NGAAP) // Photo Credit: Alvin C. Jacobs, Jr.



ARCHETYPE 1: WOMEN GIVING BIG

Figure 4: Key Typology Mapping for Women Giving Big



Women Giving Big is one of the earliest recognized forms of collective giving groups, profiled in 2005 research on collective giving (Banducci). In this model, larger communities of often more than 100 women come together to form a new collective giving community. Members tend to give \$1,000 or more a year (though pushes for inclusivity are removing required minimums), generally equating to larger pooled gift amounts for nonprofits. The women also tend to volunteer, join boards, and advocate for the nonprofits they fund. Given the higher-dollar collective gift made, these groups tend to focus on restricted giving, though many are pushing trust-based philanthropy practices (Trust-Based Philanthropy Project, n.d.). These groups often have some paid-staff support and some are incorporated as independent 501(c)(3)s. This formality enables long-term impact through active leadership succession planning, though it also brings a layer of complexity and administrative obligation, which may in some instances limit flexibility. (See Figure 4.)

Several networks have started over the years. **Impact100** has groups of 100+ women each pooling \$1,000+ dollars; **Philanos** has dozens of affiliates all over the U.S. and in select countries globally; and **Together Women Rise** has a particular focus on international investments.



ARCHETYPE 1: WOMEN GIVING BIG

PROFILE: WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE OF HOWARD COUNTY



The Women's Giving Circle of Howard County has been serving the needs of their community, nestled between Baltimore and Washington, D.C., since its formal launch in 2002. Hosted at the Community Foundation of Howard County and operating with a paid staff of one executive director, the Women's Giving Circle (WGC) of Howard County is an incorporated 501(c)(3) with a multi-dimensional approach to collective giving. WGC has given away \$1.2 million to nonprofits in Howard County that support women and girls.

The group created an endowment through their local community foundation when they began, and now have ongoing, multi-year partnerships, as well as opportunities for new funding. They administer a \$1.3 million endowment from 1,700+ donors, which ensures support for women and girls in perpetuity. Annually, a Grants Committee undertakes due diligence to look at grantmaking, data and partnerships, and then their Advisory Board votes on the grants made from the endowment. Their work is informed annually by the State of Women and Girls in Howard County report, which the group publishes and routinely updates.

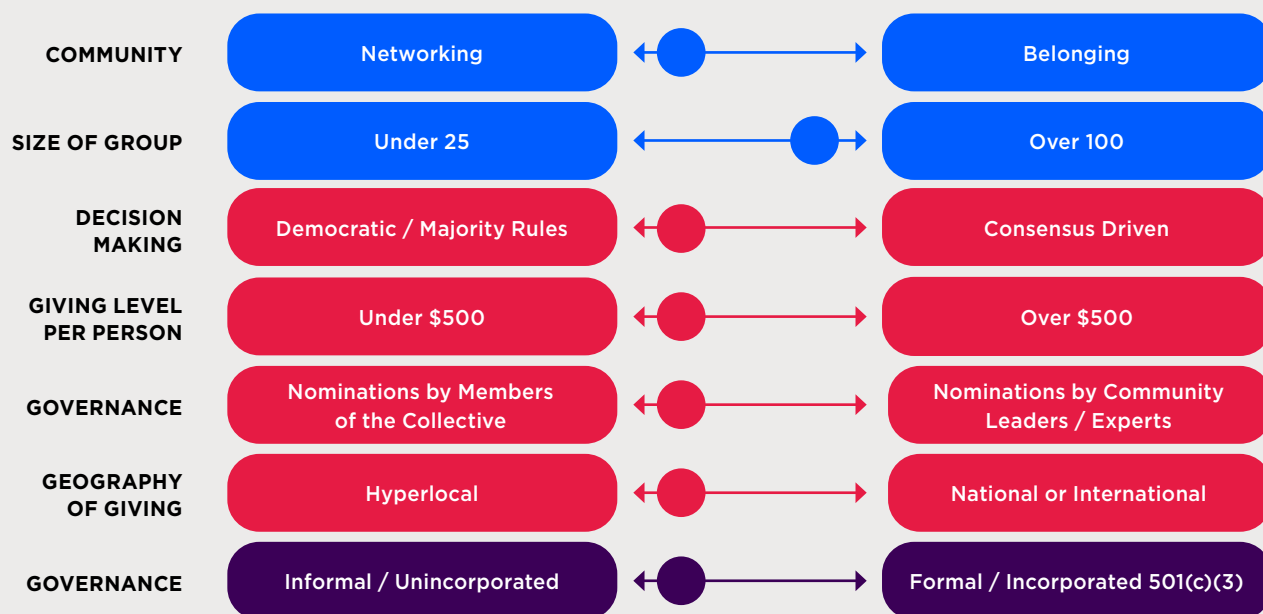
Additionally, the group hosts a more traditional giving circle that holds educational opportunities and a Big Give event that has raised \$20,000 per year each year 2021 to 2024, to support three nonprofits that WGC Big Give members vote on. Women can individually give \$1,200 to participate or up to four women can come together as a team to give that amount and share a vote.

Another way for women to engage is through their Emergency Response Network. Since its inception, the WGC of Howard County has provided a way for women to directly meet the needs of other women and girls. In partnership with local nonprofits, they find out about emergency needs and post opportunities in a confidential manner. Some women only give to the Emergency Response Network, while others also participate in the giving circle or give to the endowment.

Their mission has been and continues to be to build “a community of philanthropists to address the needs of women and girls in Howard County.”

ARCHETYPE 2: CROWD GRANTING NETWORKS

Figure 5: Key Typology Mapping for Crowd Granting Networks



Crowd Granting Networks are one of the most common models of collective giving. **100 Who Care Alliance** and **Grapevine Giving Network** have popularized this approach, where 100 or more members come together, each giving \$100/quarter (for a total of \$400 annually). Members nominate nonprofits and then select grantees through a majority vote. These relatively informal collective giving groups give without any strings attached to the nonprofits selected, and most often give locally. Rather than drawing on a pre-existing community, they create a group that focuses on networking with new contacts for a shared cause. (See Figure 5.)

Metro Phoenix Women for Good



ARCHETYPE 2: CROWD GRANTING NETWORKS

PROFILE: 100 WOMEN WHO CARE NORTH SUBURBAN CHICAGO



100 Who Care Alliance is a giving circle network with nearly 800 chapters around the world. One example is **100 Women Who Care North Suburban Chicago**. Quarterly, this giving circle hosts meetings where members nominate and vote on local charities to support. With more than 100 members, each person commits to donating \$100 per meeting, resulting in a significant pooled donation for the selected nonprofit. Meetings are both in-person and virtual, ensuring broad participation.

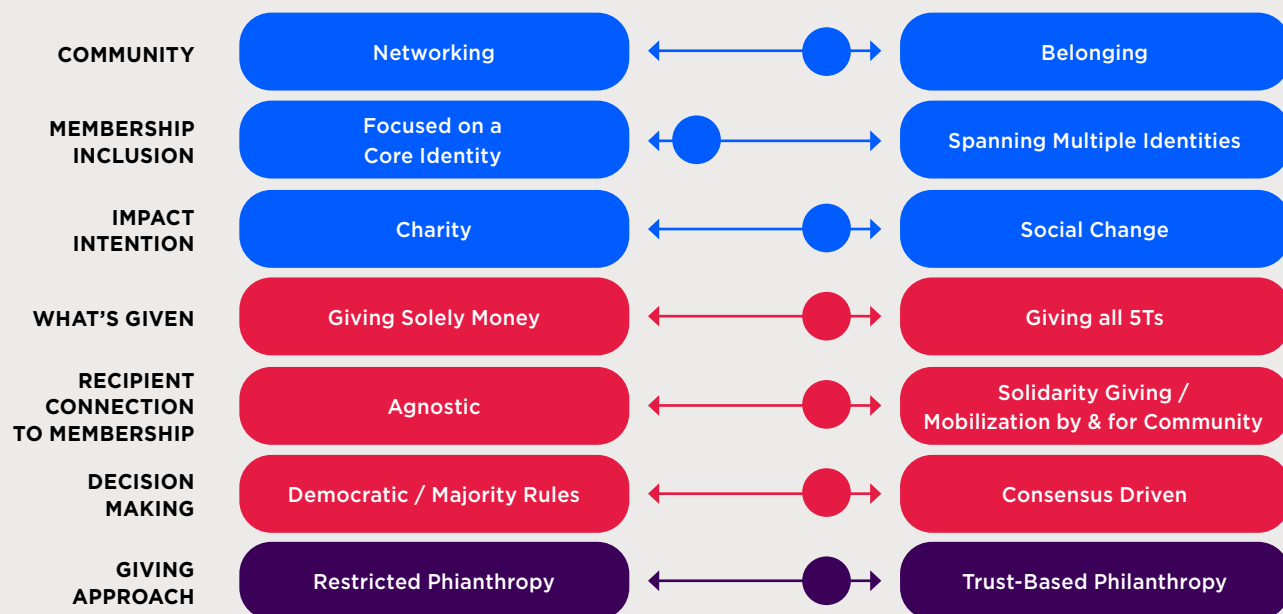
Established with the mission to harness the power of collective giving, 100 Women Who Care North Suburban Chicago focuses on supporting local nonprofits and initiatives. Since its inception in 2013, the group has donated \$706,684 to various organizations in Lake County and/or north suburban Cook County.

Members play an active role in nonprofit nominations, presentations, and voting. At each quarterly meeting, three nonprofits are randomly selected from the nominations submitted by members. Each organization has five minutes to present to the group and an additional five minutes to answer questions. After the presentations, all active members vote to determine how funding will be allocated. The organization with the most votes receives the majority of the funds raised, while the other two nonprofits each receive \$500. All gifts are unrestricted, allowing recipients to use the funds as needed.

Through its straightforward and effective model, 100 Women Who Care North Suburban Chicago continues to make a significant positive impact, demonstrating the power of collective philanthropy in addressing community challenges.

ARCHETYPE 3: BELONGING THROUGH IDENTITY

Figure 6: Key Typology Mapping for Belonging Through Identity



The archetype of **Belonging Through Identity** applies to many diverse collective giving groups and their networks that create belonging for a particular identity — often those historically marginalized — such as race/ethnicity or minority faiths. These groups are often small. Members often give all 5Ts and give specifically to groups that mirror their identity (e.g., a Black women's collective giving group giving to Black-led and -serving organizations focused on women and girls). Given the tight focus on identity and belonging, members often meet in person and have a strong emphasis on building trust and relationships with the groups they fund. (See Figure 6.)

Networks aligned by race/ethnicity include **Community Investment Network**, **AAPIP Giving Circle Network**, and **Latino Giving Circle Network® at the Latino Community Foundation**; groups organized by faith include **Amplifier** and **Honeycomb** (Jewish values-inspired giving circle networks), and the **American Muslim Community Foundation**. A tight geographic focus can also act as a form of identity cohesion, such as **Giving Project Vermont** and the many local collective giving groups that are hosted by a community foundation. Another subset of groups under this archetype are **family giving circles**, which create space for family connection, inter-generational learning, and, often, healing.

Amplifier

AMPLIFIER

ARCHETYPE 3: BELONGING THROUGH IDENTITY

PROFILE: STANISLAUS LATINO GIVING CIRCLE



The **Stanislaus Latino Giving Circle**, part of the Latino Community Foundation’s Latino Giving Circle Network® (LGCN), was established in 2018 to address disparities in Stanislaus County, California. This initiative brings together Latinx community leaders, business owners, and other local stakeholders in Stanislaus County to pool resources and support impactful projects.

With fewer than 25 members, this tight-knit group pools resources and collectively decides where to make a gift. Since its inception, the Stanislaus Latino Giving Circle has awarded more than \$100,000 in grants to 11 organizations. Their funding priorities include civic engagement, youth power building, and leadership development. Members of this circle are heavily involved with their partners through board service, volunteer work, and lifelong connections to the organizations and their programming.

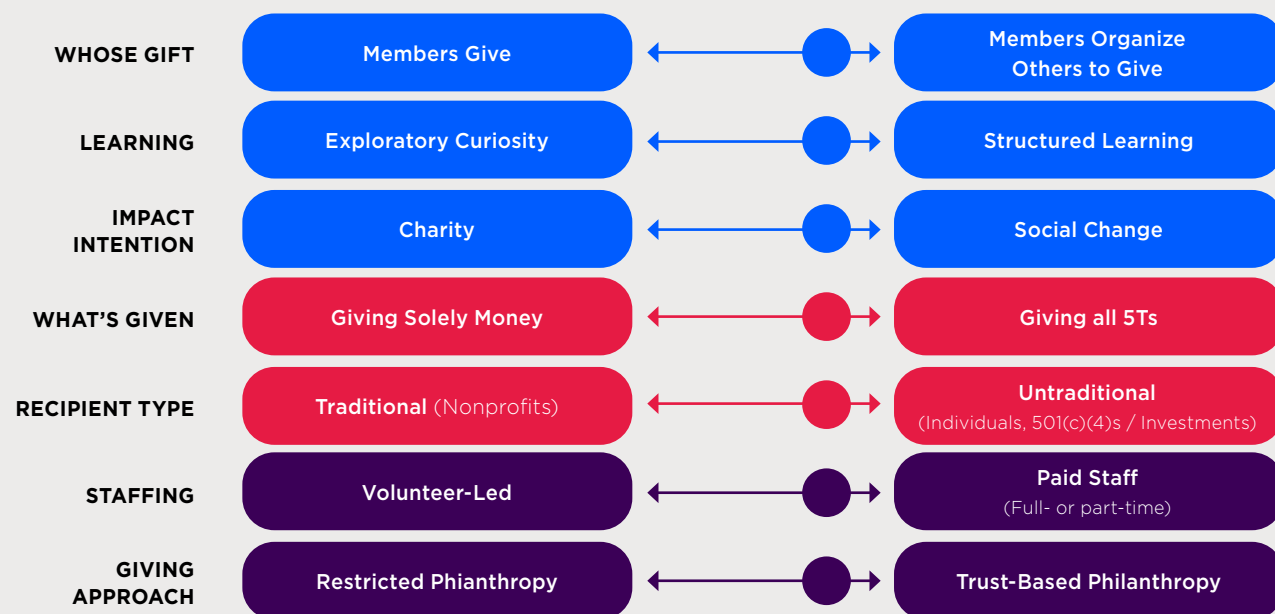
Throughout 2022, the Stanislaus Latino Giving Circle engaged the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors, pushing for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support farmworkers and undocumented families with bonus pay and legal services. Their efforts, including a petition with around 400 signatures, culminated in March 2023 with the allocation of \$1 million to establish the county’s first farmworker resource center.

Members participate in socials and network-wide events, such as the LGCN Retreat, to strengthen their connections and enhance their philanthropic impact.

By focusing on local leadership and collective giving, the Stanislaus Latino Giving Circle continues to make significant contributions to improving opportunities and outcomes for Latino communities in Stanislaus County.

ARCHETYPE 4: ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Figure 7: Key Typology Mapping for Organizing for Social Change



Organizing for Social Change groups and networks have a primary focus on using collective gifts and efforts for social transformation, with a focus on equity, justice, and shifting power. These groups often purposefully bring together a collective that spans multiple identities (e.g., across race/ethnicity, class, age), engage in structured learning or experiences (often led by paid facilitators), and aim to mobilize giving from individuals and groups beyond their immediate membership. These groups often give beyond the standard nonprofit structure to emerging leaders or 501(c)(4) groups leading policy change efforts, and fund with the highest standard of trust-based philanthropy practice. Funding decisions are commonly made by community leaders rather than group members. The **Giving Project Network**, **Social Venture Partners International**, and the **States Project** are example networks that support this archetype of giving circles. There are also many examples of independent giving circles like **CoThinkk**, **Radfund**, or **Vital Little Plans** that align with this archetype. (See Figure 7.)



ARCHETYPE 4: ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

PROFILE: COTHINKK



Founded in 2014, **CoThinkk** is a social change philanthropy organization that is structured as a giving circle led by Black, Indigenous, Latine, and Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander leaders - People of Color (BIPOC) and supported by aligned co-conspirators. Members use their resources to address structural challenges, systems change, racial equity, and complex social issues facing BIPOC communities in Western North Carolina. Their four strategic pathways - Collective Healing, Access to Resources, Capacity Building, and Systems Change - are designed to support catalytic and transformational change initiatives led by BIPOC leaders.

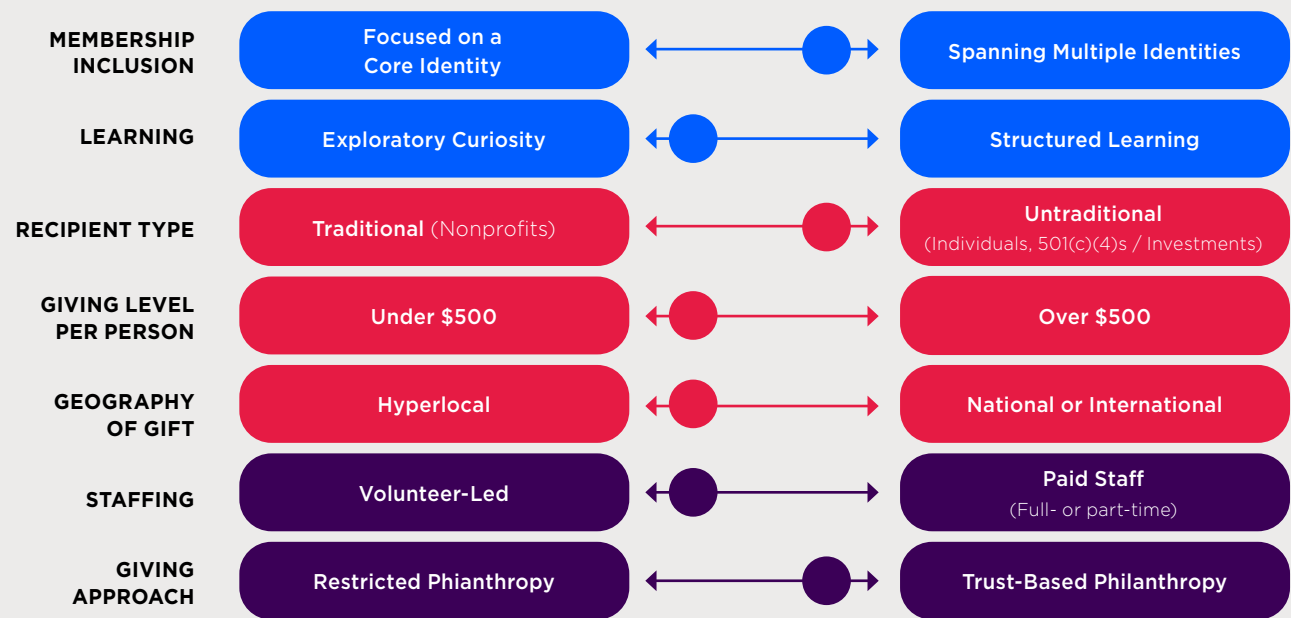
CoThinkk supports a dynamic network of multi-racial, multi-generational, and multi-issue leaders and change agents of color through strategic grant-based community investment, courageous and brave space building, leadership development, advocacy, capacity building, coaching, consultancy, and service as a provocateur.

In 2023, CoThinkk gave \$249,000 to 52 organizations across Western North Carolina. To date, they have given out close to \$1 million since 2014 through grants, self-care stipends, capacity building, and coaching support. CoThinkk awards support to organizations led by and supporting people of color, whose work is cross-cutting and intersects with issue areas like community economic development, public health, education, peer-to-peer healing, educational equity, food justice, health equity, youth, healing, culture, media, entrepreneurship, and leadership development. Eligible organizations can submit an application using CoThinkk's innovative video application process.

Using a shared leadership model, community members have a voice in determining funding priorities and selecting grant recipients. This model, which places equity, systems change, and "CoThinking" at its core, serves as a guiding "north star" and brings diverse perspectives together to focus on solutions as co-architects and for members to see themselves as a part of a broader social change ecosystem that amplifies transformational change.

ARCHETYPE 5: COMMUNITY PROJECT MICRO-GRANTING

Figure 8: Key Typology Mapping for Community Project Micro-Granting



Community Project Micro-Granting groups focus on community projects, seed creative ideas, art projects, and emerging leaders — all with the express intention of supporting those outside the traditional nonprofit structure. Groups most often include members eager to learn about new and creative ideas in their community and each member gives a modest personal donation. These groups are informal in structure and, given how far outside the nonprofit structure they typically operate, their giving is particularly rooted in trust and community connection. The **Awesome Foundation** and **Sunday Soup** are two networks leading in this approach. (See Figure 8.)

The Awesome Foundation



ARCHETYPE 5: COMMUNITY PROJECT MICRO-GRANTING

PROFILE: AWESOME FOUNDATION NYC



Awesome Foundation NYC is a chapter of the global Awesome Foundation network. Chapters support local or issue-specific initiatives and projects through micro-grants. Founded on the principles of community-driven philanthropy and grassroots support, the NYC chapter has been making waves since its inception, empowering individuals and groups to turn their creative ideas into reality.

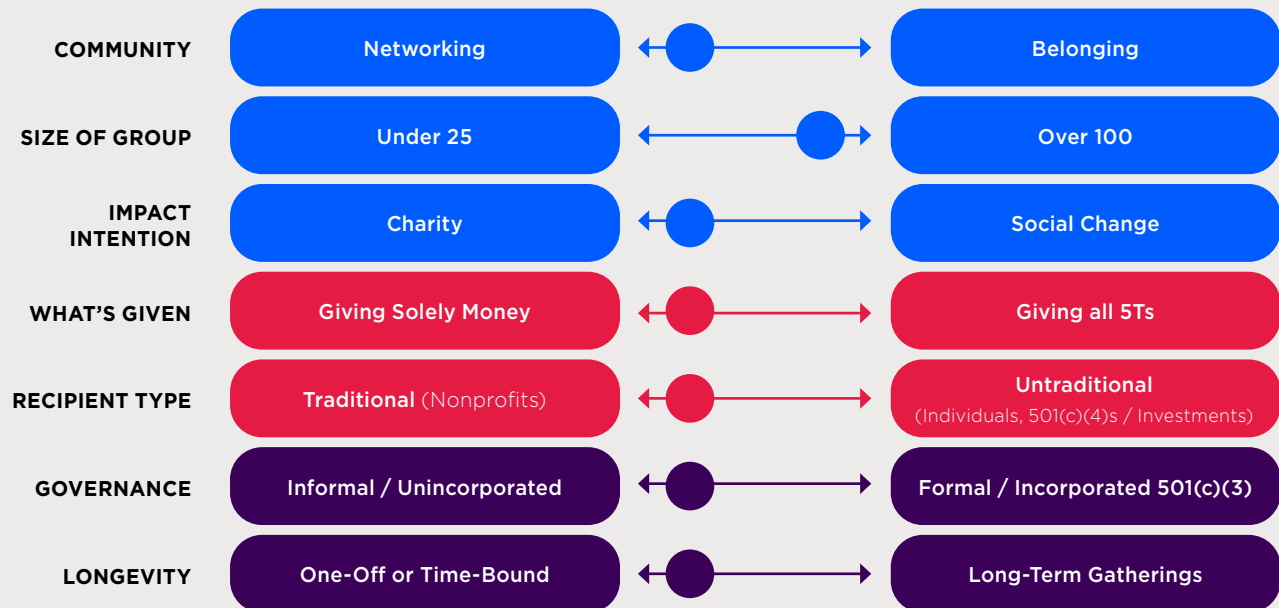
Operating as a decentralized network of volunteer trustees, each contributing to a monthly grant pool, members of this chapter span multiple identities with a diversity of backgrounds and industries represented. What unites them is a shared passion for fostering creativity, innovation, and positive change within the city's vibrant communities.

Awesome Foundation NYC adopts a bottom-up approach to grantmaking, prioritizing inclusivity, accessibility, and impact. The application process is intentionally lightweight to encourage a wide range of potential proposals. The Awesome Foundation asks for the basics about the project, applicant, and use of funds, as well as their trademark question, "How will this actually make your community more awesome?" which simplifies and encourages a delightful and expansive framing about impact. Each month trustees review between 100-200 proposals and screen them based on creativity, feasibility, community impact, and importantly, if \$1,000 will make a meaningful difference. Successful applicants receive a micro-grant with no strings attached, allowing them the freedom to bring their ideas to fruition without bureaucratic hurdles or financial constraints.

Since its inception in 2010, Awesome Foundation NYC has awarded micro-grants to a myriad of projects spanning arts, technology, education, sustainability, and beyond — from pop-up art installations and community gardens to youth mentorship programs and civic engagement initiatives. Beyond financial support, Awesome Foundation NYC fosters a sense of community among grant recipients, trustees, and supporters through networking events, workshops, and collaborative projects. They also maintain a listserv that chronicles the latest updates on grantees and awesome happenings in NYC.

ARCHETYPE 6: LIVE CROWDFUNDING EXPERIENCES

Figure 9: Key Typology Mapping for Live Crowdfunding Experiences



Live Crowdfunding Experiences are typically formed as one-off events that bring together large groups of people for in-the-moment giving. Participants are often asked for monetary gifts during the event and are not expected to come together as a giving group again. These convenings are informal and often use a technology platform to facilitate giving. **Amplifier** innovated the “pop-up giving circle” model where participants run through the core aspects of a giving circle in just a few hours, and **The Funding Network**, a network in the U.K., focuses exclusively on these live crowdfunding events. University instructors are also using this model to introduce students to the giving circle experience. Valparaiso University in Indiana and Grand Valley State University in Michigan are two examples. (See Figure 9.)

The Funding Network // Photo Credit: Chris Ison



ARCHETYPE 6: LIVE CROWDFUNDING EXPERIENCES

PROFILE: THE FUNDING NETWORK



The Funding Network // Photo Credit: Daniel Lewis

The Funding Network (TFN) is a unique collective giving initiative that hosts events to raise funds for small nonprofit organizations driving social change. Established to democratize philanthropy, TFN connects engaged donors with impactful grassroots projects working across the spectrum of need in the U.K. and around the world.

TFN organizes five flagship events annually, and approximately four with partners funding specific causes, such as Black Funding Network and City for LGBT+. At the events, selected nonprofits present their projects in a timed pitch format. Each event features a live crowdfunding session, enabling attendees to donate or offer pro-bono support. The events bring hundreds of donors together. They are designed to be engaging and inclusive, encouraging participation from both members and non-members. Nonprofits can raise up to £10,000, and oftentimes more.

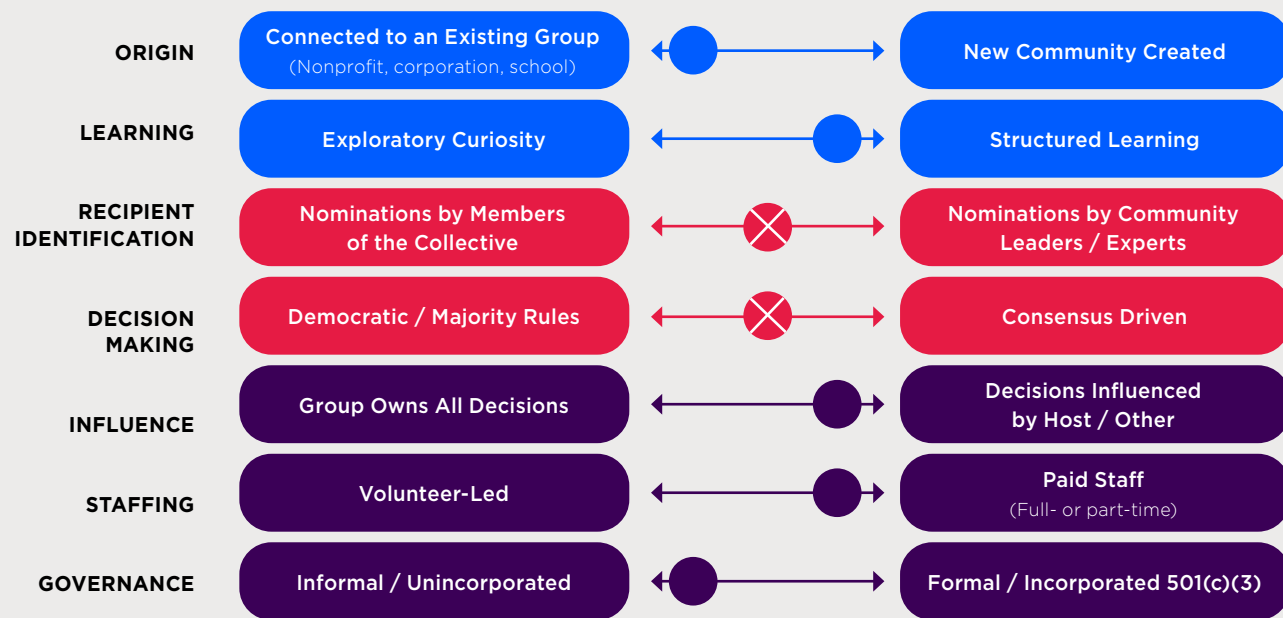
These events are informal and there is no expectation for donors to attend all events or even donate, though it is encouraged. Through its dynamic event-based model, TFN continues to empower donors and raise awareness for the power of small charities in bringing about change.

The Funding Network // Photo Credit: Daniel Lewis



ARCHETYPE 7: HOST-SUPPORTING GROUPS

Figure 10: Key Typology Mapping for Host-Supporting Groups



Host-Supporting Groups are created by an existing entity looking to fundraise or build community. These groups are most often created by nonprofits, alumni associations, chapter-based organizations, women’s funds, or corporations. Given the intimate connection to an existing organization, the focus of this model of collective giving is less on the group itself identifying and democratically deciding what to fund (hence the crossed-out elements of the typology above), and is instead more about a structured learning experience and fundraising opportunity for the host. Most often these groups leverage the governance, fiscal structures, and paid staff of the host to start, lead, and run the group. (See Figure 10.)

There are not yet networks of this archetype, but there are hundreds of collective giving groups. Sometimes called “**fundraising societies**” or “**nonprofit-led circles,**” many of these groups are now expanding from passive fundraising efforts to more community-focused groups to create stronger connections between the host and its supporters.

DIFFvelopment Program Alumni



ARCHETYPE 7: HOST-SUPPORTING GROUPS

PROFILE: MERCY CORPS' WOMEN'S CLIMATE ALLIANCE



The Women's Climate Alliance (WCA) is a nonprofit-led circle committed to supporting Mercy Corps, a global organization working on the frontlines of crisis to support communities – and the most marginalized within them – to build towards a more inclusive, resilient future. The WCA harnesses collective philanthropy to invest in women as leaders in climate adaptation work globally. By pooling their resources, the WCA is piloting innovative solutions, disrupting power imbalances, and laying the foundation for empowered women around the world.

WCA members commit to multi-year contributions to Mercy Corps' Women and Climate Fund in an amount that is meaningful to each individual. Through virtual quarterly meetings, members deepen their understanding of humanitarian issues and support programs that empower women in climate-vulnerable regions. Every other year, members are invited to visit a global program and learn about issues first-hand.

The group's first gift supported the POSSIBLE program, which aids female farmers in Senegal and Benin by helping them access solar panels and solar irrigation, increase their financial literacy and business skills, and improve their yields, income, and standing within the community. The POSSIBLE program exemplifies the WCA's impact, improving food security and economic opportunities for women farmers through renewable energy and sustainable practices.

The WCA has set a goal to raise \$50 million for the Women and Climate Fund, where Mercy Corps' team of local experts directs the most innovative, impactful, and women-led programs across the organization.

Recommendations

This report is intended to serve as a tool for all giving circle leaders and hosts, as well as those who support – or are considering supporting – the collective giving movement. Archetypes can help with creating and assessing the vision and design of a circle. See Appendix B for a one-page comparison of each of the seven archetypes. Below are recommendations to leverage this framework.

For new or emerging interested leaders:

Use this framework to inform your design and early planning:

- Ask yourself (or you and a group of founding team co-leaders) the various typology questions to start to shape your vision. Do you want a circle that can fit around your table and engage in deep conversations? A circle that embraces local social change? A circle that enables lots of networking and meeting new people? There is no wrong answer ... it just has to be the right answer for your circle. (See Appendix A: Typology Worksheet)
- You could draft several different visions based on the design parameters and compare them side-by-side. Do your choices align with any of the archetypes? This can help your founding team arrive at a shared understanding of where they are starting and where they want to go.
- Think ahead to operations, structure, and fees to help your group sustain in the long run.

For existing groups and leaders:

Use this framework to assess how your collective giving group operates and how you might want it to change:

- Map where you currently see your circle fitting.
- Facilitate a conversation within your collective giving group's leadership (or full group!) to discuss your future vision and plans. Are the focus and scope of your group where you want them to be? Are there elements of the typology that help you identify practices of your collective giving group that you might want to adjust or drastically change moving forward?



For new, emerging, and potential field builders, networks and funders:

Use this framework to facilitate and support the growth of collective giving

- Do the elements of the typology illuminate aspects of collective giving groups that you had not considered? Are those insights helpful in developing your support of the movement?
- Reflect on the archetypes that are emerging. How might you support or fund new and stronger ecosystems of collective giving across specific archetypes? What is needed in the infrastructure to support those models?

Conclusion

Our motivation in publishing this report is to provide a resource for all those involved in collective giving – members, leaders, networks, and funders. By developing seven archetypes of collective giving groups and specifying their key characteristics, the report enables readers to identify the key characteristics of their groups or explore new models that align with their values and objectives. Whether addressing local challenges, mobilizing resources for social change, or fostering a sense of belonging within identity-based communities, leaders and supporters can use the archetypes as both a map of the collective giving landscape and a tool for informed decision-making.

The report is particularly valuable for current and aspiring giving circle leaders. Through its Typology Worksheet, leaders can assess their group's operations and align their vision with relevant archetypes. This resource empowers groups to refine their strategies, strengthen their sense of shared purpose, and amplify their impact. Furthermore, the insights into dimensions such as membership characteristics, funding focus, and governance models equip stakeholders with actionable knowledge to navigate the complexities of collective giving, ensuring their efforts remain intentional and effective.

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Appendix A: Typology Worksheet

Complete this worksheet to discover which collective giving archetype is most aligned with your values and giving goals. Each question corresponds to key characteristics of each of the three dimensions of collective giving groups:

1. Who and Why: Membership Characteristics and Purpose of the Group
2. What and Where: Giving Focus, Levels, Decision-Making, and Recipients
3. How and When: Processes, Structures, and Supports

As you answer each question, each end of the spectrum will highlight the most noticeable differences between the two approaches; however, it is likely that you may fall somewhere in the middle or beyond the spectrum — that is the beauty of collective giving!

Once complete, find which archetype most closely resembles your responses and consider some final questions. Take your answers and plot them along the characteristics spectra of each dimension. Do you see a similarity between your answers and those of any of the archetypes?

For new and emerging groups:

- How well do your choices align with one or more of the archetypes?
- Does this pattern feel like the right combination for you?
- Did any of the questions spark new ideas for how you might structure the group?
- Do you see an opportunity to connect with a network or another group for mentorship or peer learning?

For established groups:

- How well do your choices align with one or more of the archetypes?
- Does this pattern feel like the right combination for you, or so you see an opportunity to adjust your choices in order to strengthen your group?
- Do your choices align with a network or another group that you were not aware of? Is there an opportunity for connection or peer learning?

This worksheet is a helpful tool for new or interested leaders to start to shape their vision for starting a giving circle. Existing groups can use this worksheet to assess how your collective giving group operates and how you might want it to change.

1. Who and Why: Membership Characteristics and Purpose of the Group

COMMUNITY

Does your collective giving group emphasize networking for a cause or a creating a sense of belonging within the group?

Networking

Belonging

MEMBERSHIP INCLUSION

Is your membership focused on a core identity (gender, race, religion, profession, etc.) or does it span multiple identities?

Focused on a Core Identity

Spanning Multiple Identities

ORIGIN

Is your group connected to an existing group (e.g., nonprofit, corporation, school), or is it a new community created by the giving circle itself?

Connected to an Existing Group

New Community Created

SIZE OF GROUP

Is the size of your group under 25 members, fostering close-knit connections, or over 100, leveraging strength in numbers?

Under 25

Over 100

SOURCE OF GIFT

Do members give solely by contributing their own resources, or do they organize others to give on behalf of the group as well (e.g., a yearly fundraising event or crowdfunding campaign)?

Members Give

Members Organize Others to Give

LEARNING

Does your group lightly follow its curiosity to learn more or participate in structured learning activities to deepen knowledge?

Exploratory Curiosity

Structured Learning

IMPACT INTENTION

Is the impact of your collective giving group primarily focused on charity (organizations that provide direct services to those in need) or on driving social change (organizing people to promote policy and systems change)?

Charity

Social Change

2. What and Where: Giving Focus, Levels, Decision-Making, and Recipients

WHAT'S GIVEN

Does your group give solely money, or do you mobilize all 5Ts (Time, Talent, Treasure, Ties, Testimony)?

Giving Solely Money

Giving all 5Ts

GIVING LEVEL PER PERSON

Does the average annual contribution per member fall under or over \$500?

Under \$500 annually

Over \$500 annually

RECIPIENT IDENTIFICATION

Are your group's funding recipients nominated by members of the collective or by community leaders or outside experts?

Nominations by Members

Nominations by Community Leaders / Experts

RECIPIENT CONNECTION TO MEMBERSHIP

Is your group open to funding all communities or do you select funding recipients within a specific community that is reflective of your membership or the group's desire to give in solidarity?

Agnostic

Solidarity Giving / Mobilization by & for Community

DECISION-MAKING

Is your funding decision-making process democratic/majority rule, or do you make decisions by consensus, or a combination?

Democratic / Majority Rules

Consensus Driven

RECIPIENT TYPE

Does your group typically fund traditional nonprofits or non-governmental organizations (NGO), or do you also fund untraditional entities like individuals or 501(c)(4)s in the United States?

Traditional

Untraditional

GEOGRAPHY OF GIVING

Does your group fund projects locally (within your city, town, or county), or do you have a national or international funding focus?

Hyperlocal

National or International

3. How and When: Processes, Structures, and Supports

LONGEVITY

Is your group designed as a one-off or time-bound event, or do members gather multiple times over a period?

One-Off or Time-Bound



Long-Term Gatherings

GIVING APPROACH

Does your group engage in restricted philanthropy (focused, goal-driven giving), or adopt a trust-based philanthropy approach?

Restricted Philanthropy



Trust-Based Philanthropy

HOST INFLUENCE

Are decisions made solely by your group, or are they influenced by a host organization or external entity?

Group Owns All Decisions



Decisions Influenced
by Host / Other

GOVERNANCE

Is your group informal/unincorporated, or does it operate as a formal, incorporated entity, such as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the United States?

Informal / Unincorporated



Formal / Incorporated
501(c)(3)

MONEY MANAGEMENT

Is your group managed through a technology platform (e.g., Grapevine), through a host institution (e.g., community foundation), or informally through writing checks?

Technology Platform



Host Institution

STAFFING

Is your group entirely volunteer-led, or does it have paid staff (full- or part-time)?

Volunteer-Led



Paid Staff
(Full- or part-time)

MEETING FORMAT

Does your group meet primarily in person, virtually, or through a hybrid of the two?

In-Person Meetings



Virtual Meetings

Appendix B:

The Seven Archetypes and Their Key Characteristics

Archetype	Who and Why: Membership Characteristics and Purpose of the Group	What and Where: Giving Focus, Levels, Decision-Making, and Recipients	How and When: Processes, Structures, and Supports
Women Giving Big	Larger communities of often more than 100 women, high-dollar giving, volunteering and advocacy focus.	Restricted philanthropy, larger pooled gifts, focuses on women/girls-focused organizations.	501(c)(3) incorporation, formal governance, long-term impact.
Crowd Granting Networks	100+ members, networking focus, informal structure.	Quarterly meetings, \$100/member, majority vote decision-making.	Not incorporated, no paid staff, pooled giving model, often uses a tech platform.
Belonging Through Identity	Tight-knit groups, identity-focused (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion), strong emphasis on belonging.	Supports identity-aligned organizations, deep trust-based funding.	In-person meetings, strong relationship building, focus on identity and culture.
Organizing for Social Change	Multi-racial, multi-issue, social equity and systems change focus.	Funds BIPOC-led initiatives, emphasizes trust-based philanthropy and systems change.	Shared leadership, equity-driven, simplified application process.
Community Project Micro-granting	Community-driven, small groups, seed creative ideas and emerging leaders.	Focuses on non-traditional recipients, creative community projects.	Decentralized, monthly micro-grants, simple application process.
Live Crowdfunding Experiences	One-time events, informal, large group participation.	Supports small nonprofits, live pitch sessions, unrestricted gifts.	Event-driven, technology platform support, no ongoing membership.
Host-Supporting Groups	Supports goals of the host, limited autonomy. structured learning experiences.	Supports goals of the host, limited autonomy. structured learning experiences.	Host-driven, often formal governance, staff-supported.

Appendix C: Guide to Networks and Groups by Archetype

The table below cites networks and examples of collective giving groups that are included in this report. The networks cited represent many groups that correspond to the noted archetype.

Archetype	Networks	Examples of Collective Giving Groups
Women Giving Big	Impact100, Philanos, Together Women Rise	The Women's Giving Circle of Howard County
Crowd Granting Networks	100 Who Care Alliance, Grapevine Giving Network	100 Women Who Care North Suburban Chicago, Metro Phoenix Women for Good
Belonging Through Identity	Community Investment Network, Asian American/ Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) Giving Circle Network, Latino Giving Circle Network®, Amplifier, Honeycomb	Stanislaus Latino Giving Circle
Organizing for Social Change	Giving Project Network, Social Venture Partners International, The States Project	CoThinkk, Radfund, Vital Little Plans
Community Project Micro-granting	The Awesome Foundation, Sunday Soup	Awesome Foundation NYC
Live Crowdfunding Experiences	The Funding Network, Amplifier pop-up events	Universities offer students this experience (Valparaiso University in Indiana and Grand Valley State University)
Host-Supporting Groups	No known networks	Mercy Corps, alumni associations, and corporations