

# WOMEN AND PHILANTHROPY

**O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs  
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**Author:** Saleh Aloufi and Candler Weinberg

Women's contributions to philanthropic work have clear impacts across various fields. The relationship between women and philanthropy has evolved over hundreds of years. Aiding troops and their families during times of war and disaster was a popular early cause among women. During the 1800s, women assisted widows and children, particularly poor children, by volunteering and donating money. The Association for the Relief of Poor Widows with Little Children was an early example of such an organization. It was founded in 1797 in New York and incorporated in 1802 and was managed entirely by 16 women. By 1816, their philanthropic work supported 200 women and 500 children. Another early example is The Female Moral Reform Society, founded in the early 1800s under the leadership of Lydia A. Finney to help the impoverished and care for the needy. (Tomson & Martin, n.d.)

In the modern era, as more women joined the workforce and pursued higher education to elevate their social, economic, and intellectual standing, women became better able to work together to advance the influence and interests of women. They have supported establishments where formal education takes place, from preschools and kindergartens to colleges and universities, and have had a significant impact on establishments and gatherings that support informal education, from museums and churches to nonprofit organizations (Walton, 2005). There are also economic effects. Research on the economic impact of women's nonprofit entrepreneurship and market activities conducted through voluntary associations reveals the important roles played by elite and middle-class women in creating wealth to sustain their services (McCarthy, 2001). Thus, the accessibility of financial resources enabled women to get involved in charitable activities.



Figure 4: The Gender Gap in Access to Finance

A large body of empirical research that examines the relationship between gender and giving

has shown that women are more charitable and give more to charity than men (Mesch, D. J. (2009). In terms of religious giving, Kamas et al. (2008) found that women gave more in anonymous giving across all religious denominations and that high-income women gave significantly more than high-income men. While some research has noted that women give more to secular causes and to help those in need, other studies find that females are more likely to give to religion.

According to other research, women are more likely to say philanthropy is a way to demonstrate human caring and to express their moral beliefs (Newman, 1995), feeling a strong responsibility to help those who have less. In terms of the likelihood of giving, women appear to be significantly different from men.

Indeed, women have shaped careers as philanthropists and educators, used education to foster social change, and played a crucial role in establishing and maintaining a wide variety of institutions where education takes place. They have done this by volunteering their time and giving gifts as well as money.

For example, Oprah Winfrey, the American global media leader, producer, actress, and dedicated philanthropist, has made various philanthropic contributions. She established the Oprah Winfrey Charitable Foundation (OWCF) to support those in need in the United States and abroad. Some of her charitable contributions focus on education because of her belief that education is the key to freedom, thus providing a better future for everyone. The Oprah Winfrey Endowed Scholars Program provides financial assistance, leadership development opportunities, and service opportunities to students who have demonstrated financial need, high academic potential, and an interest in and commitment to community service in the United States and abroad.

Through her private charity, Oprah has given hundreds of grants to organizations that support the education and empowerment of women, children, and families in the United States and around the world. As a result of Oprah's charitable contribution, 400 million dollars have been donated, 72,000 people have been educated, and 75 million meals have been served.

MacKenzie Scott is another American philanthropist who has left her mark on the philanthropic world (Church, 2021). She is widely known for her significant contributions to the nonprofit sector, specifically in the United States. In 2020, Scott made history by donating over \$4.2 billion to 384 nonprofit organizations across the United States, making her one of the most generous philanthropists in history (Harold, 2021). Her contributions were aimed at addressing systemic inequalities in education, racial injustice, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmental protection, among others. Scott's donations have been a game-changer for many nonprofit organizations that were struggling to make ends meet due to the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scott's philanthropic efforts have been notable for their emphasis on empowering the organizations that receive donations. Rather than imposing her own ideas or agenda, Scott has

let the nonprofits use the funds as they see fit, recognizing their expertise in the fields in which they work. She has also prioritized supporting community-based organizations that are often overlooked by traditional philanthropic institutions. Scott's contributions have brought much-needed attention to these organizations and the work they do, inspiring others to support them as well. Overall, Scott's contributions have made a significant impact on the nonprofit sector, particularly in advancing social justice and equity.

Women philanthropists make significant charitable contributions due to their development status as independent entities within the social structure. Through their involvement in philanthropy, women have developed social and civic networks over time and become more actively involved in public issues, playing a significant role in the growth of the nonprofit sector in a number of areas, including education, social, health, psychological, and economic services, by donating their time, dedication, and support.

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