



Webinar Outcome Report

## Putting a Gender Lens on COVID-19: How Philanthropists Can Ease the Disproportionate Effects on Women & Girls

Virtual Majlis Series

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## The Issues

- Only a **minor fraction of funding (3%) is pledged towards women's causes<sup>1</sup>** in the United States. Globally, this number is even lower. Data demonstrates that even when the total amount of global philanthropic funds are scaled, the percentage towards women still stubbornly hovers around the same rate.
- There is a **lack of data and research** on the exact ways that women have been negatively affected by the pandemic. Investing in this research can help drive solutions and evidence-based policy changes.
- In the MENA region, there has been significant growth amongst youth communities. Young women face double the problem – being both young and women, they **need more access to jobs** in the formal economy.
- Philanthropists are more inclined to giving smaller sums and fund sporadically in the MENA region due to the lack transparency on part of the NPOs.
- Often times, there is an inherent **power dynamic between a funder and a non-profit organisation (NPO)**, where the latter is not given the flexibility to be creative or innovative. NPOs need more **transparency in reporting** to attract more consistent funding that allows for more creativity and innovation. Further, this has the potential to lessen the power dynamic between NPOs and funders.

## What Can Philanthropists & Non-Profit Organisations Do?

- A **gender lens needs to be taken at the design-stage of programme delivery**, instead of retrospectively, in order for non-profits to effectively tailor responses to best aid women and girls who are disproportionately affected.
- There is a need for philanthropists to **scale giving** in the Gulf Region and move away from philanthropy for the sake of religious duty. Philanthropy needs to be tailored on the needs of the wider community and its challenges at a given time. Additionally, it needs to be strategic and impact needs to be committed to with a long-term outlook.
- The philanthropic community needs to **begin data-mining** and digging deeper into analysis to truly understand what the community-based needs are for certain populations.
- Leaders on the grantee side need to take risks to better understand what works through learning. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has given all players an opportunity to **test and be innovative. Risk taking** will help serve the needs of the beneficiary.
- When women of high-net worth bring their wealth together with a focused agenda, and when this community is nurtured as a safe space, this creates opportunity for pooled giving and **collective action**. Through learning and sharing information, the impact of these funds grows exponentially and advances strategic grant-making.
- Real impact rarely occurs or is measurable in the short-term. Funding cycles should occur in **multi-year grants** if there is an expectation of real impact.
- Through **capacity building**, NPOs can be strengthened. This can be done through multi-year funding, which provides NPOs with security, and through the provision of operational / overhead / general costs instead of only to programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> There are a variety of statistics on this ranging from 1 - 7%. The most recent data from a 2019 report from the Women's Philanthropy Institute at the University of Indiana reported that U.S.-based organizations focusing on women and girls received 3.3% of charitable organizations, and approximately 3.1% of donor-advised funds.  
(<https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/21011/wgi-report.pdf>)