

INSIGHT SESSION GIVING CIRCLES

Growing giving together in the UK
Webinar with Emma Beeston and Isobel Michael,
founders of Bath Women's Fund



What is a giving circle?

- Members pool their donations
- Donors decide where the money goes
- Social and/or learning aspect





How many are there?

2018 global estimates:
426 circles outside the US
\$45.74 million in grants
42,200 members

Thanks to: [Bearman, J. and Franklin, J. Global Giving Circles](#)

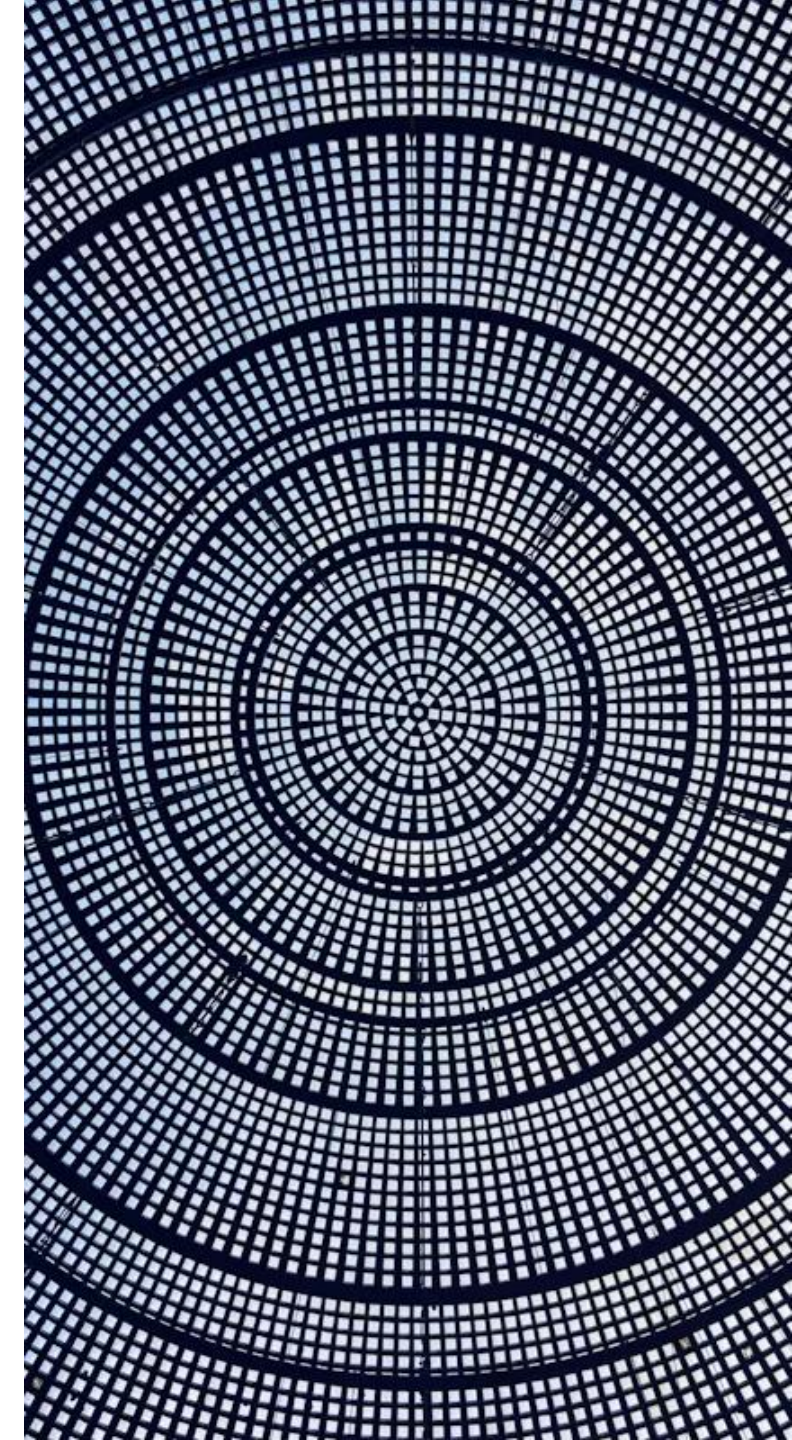
It's a growing movement

4,000
Collective giving
groups in the
U.S.

370,000
People engaged
in collective
giving in the U.S.

\$3.1B
Given through
collective giving
groups from
2017-2023

Thanks to: [Loson-Ceballos, A., & Layton, M. D. \(2024\). In abundance: An analysis of the thriving landscape of collective giving in the U.S. Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University and Philanthropy Together](#)



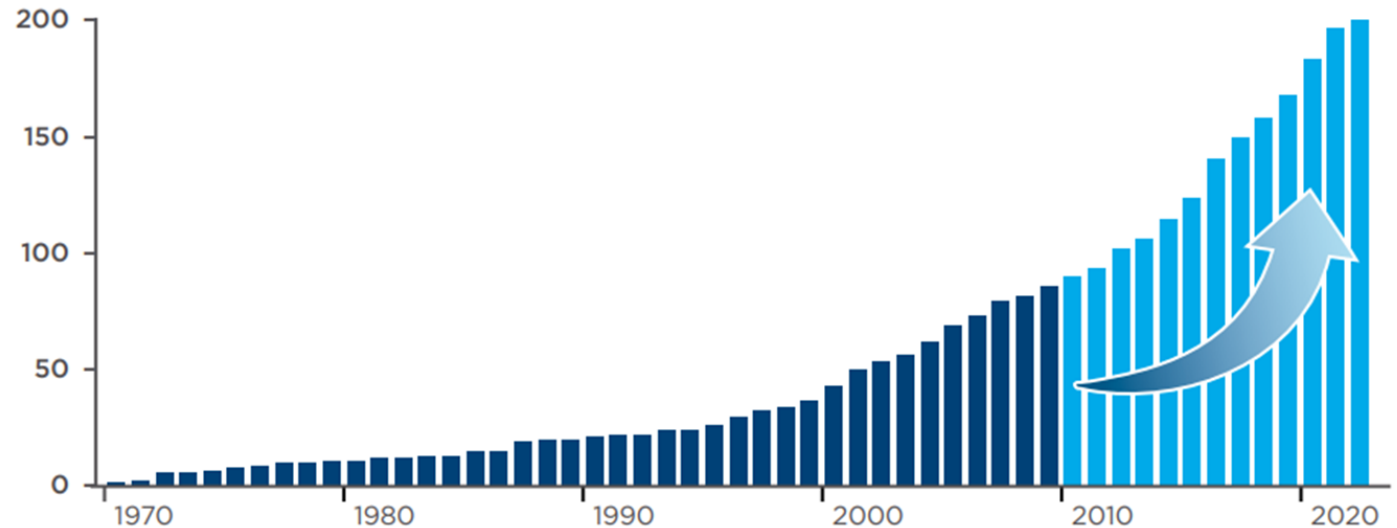


Rise in collaboration

The number of funder collaboratives has been surging, with more than half having been founded since 2010.

More than half of philanthropic collaboratives have been founded since 2010

Total number of funds



Note: n=192; information based on formation date of funds surveyed.

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2022 global survey of philanthropic collaboratives.

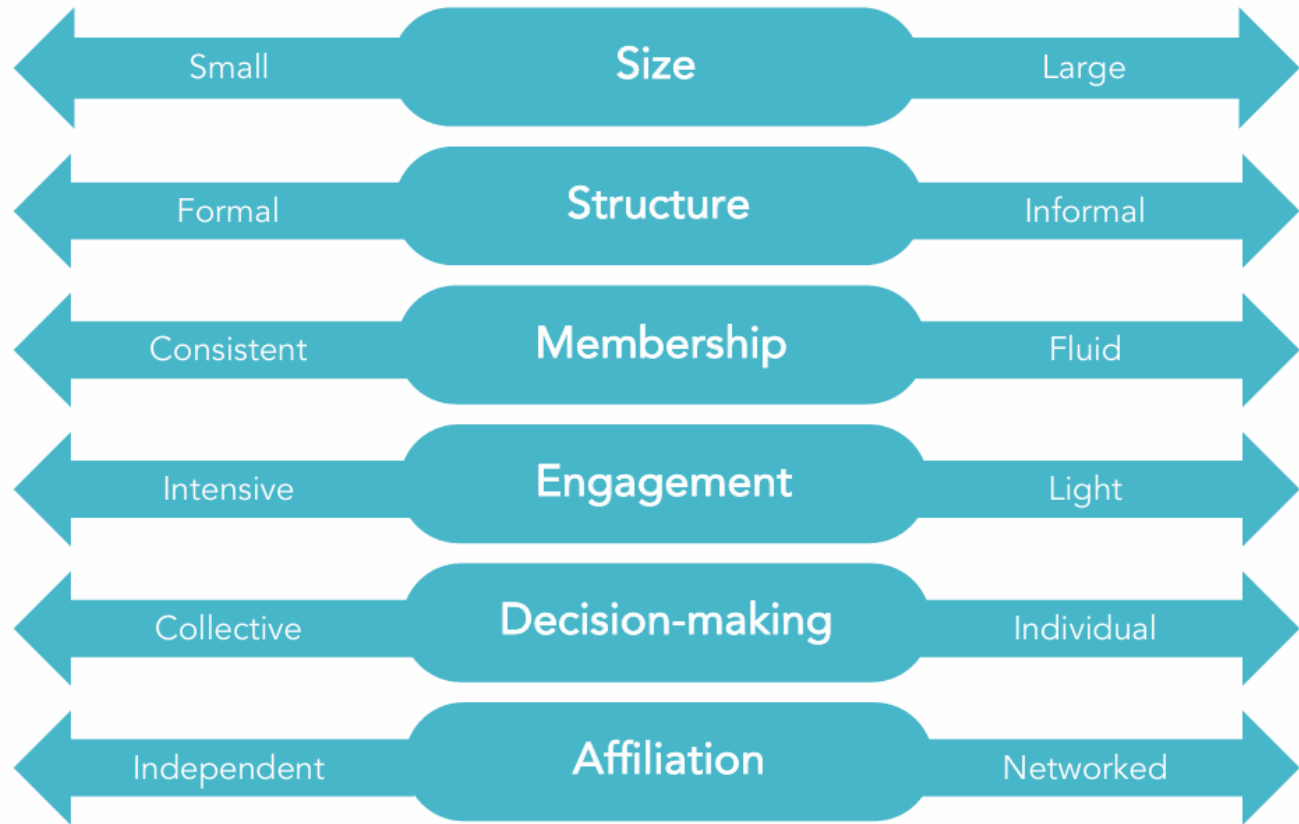
Long history



Image: <https://medium.com/@raundtablez/rotating-savings-groups-different-name-same-benefit-608b453301d1>



They vary – *a lot*



Thanks to: [Bearman, J. and Franklin, J. Global Giving Circles](#)

Are often women-led

“Among group leaders, 84% reported that more than half of their membership consisted of women: with 60% of groups entirely composed of women.”

Thanks to: [Loson-Ceballos, A., & Layton, M. D. \(2024\). In abundance: An analysis of the thriving landscape of collective giving in the U.S. Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University and Philanthropy Together.](#)





Many benefits

- Give more
- Give more strategically
- Give to more progressive causes
- Engaged in the community
- Increase their knowledge

Thanks to: Eikenberry, A., Bearman, J., Han, H., Brown, M. and Jensen, C. (2009) The Impact of Giving Together: Giving Circles' Influence on Members' Philanthropic and Civic Behaviors, Knowledge and Attitudes, *Public Administration Faculty Publications*

Wider benefits

- Encourage new donors
- Increase diversity
- Normalise giving
- Educate philanthropists
- Increase the effectiveness of giving

Thanks to: [Eikenberry, A. \(2016\) Could giving circles rebuild philanthropy form the bottom up?](#); [Eikenberry, A. and Breeze, B. \(2015\) Growing philanthropy through collaboration: the landscape of giving circles in the United Kingdom and Ireland, Voluntary Sector Review](#)





Democratising

“We do not have to wait for the large foundations or wealthy individuals to make the gift; we can come together and do it ourselves as a collective and have a good time doing it.”

Thanks to: Rob Meiksins quoted in Layton, M. (2021) *Giving Circles: A Way Forward for Democratizing Philanthropy*. Dorothy A. Johnson Center on Philanthropy, Grand Valley State University.

Image - Valaida Fullwood in Tarisai Jangan (2021) *Sister, brother- or just someone who cares. How Giving Circles celebrate the power of giving and reclaim what it means to be a donor*

Why start a giving circle?

To learn more about ideas and issues

To gather with friends, making new friends

To create a community of your own making

To be more intentional and strategic in your giving

To make systemic change happen

To develop leadership and facilitation experience

To make a difference on something you care about

To build and share power

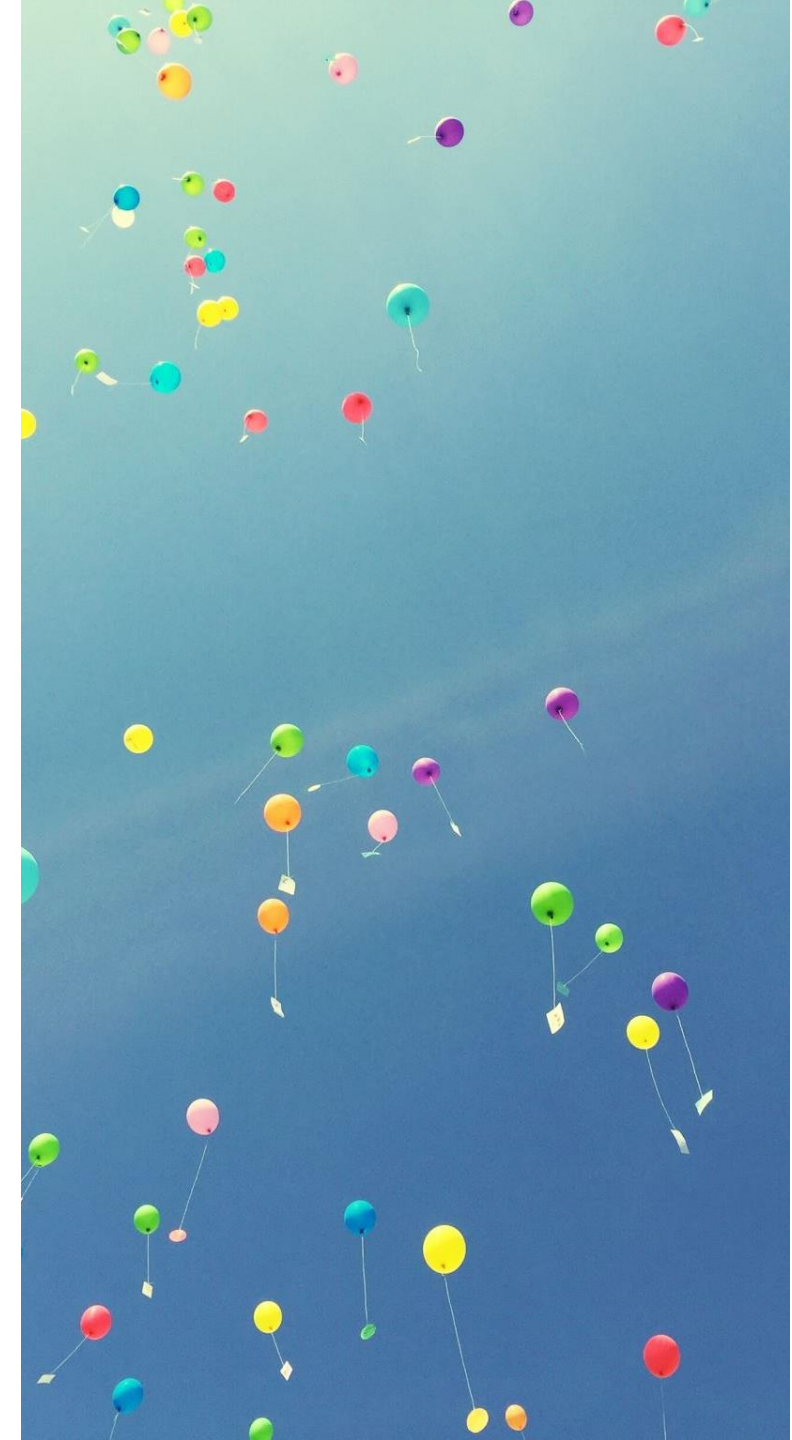
To have fun!



MELBOURNE WOMEN'S FUND



- Each member gives £25 each month (or £20 plus Gift Aid) to build our collective grant pot so we can award one main grant together each year and two smaller grants - currently £15,000 and £4,000
- Each member votes to choose the grant-making theme each year and votes on which organisation will receive the main grant
- 2024 theme: 'Increasing the resilience of women and/or girls facing barriers such as health issues, mental health difficulties, poverty, or addiction'



1. GRANT THEME SELECTION

The Grants Group (Bath Women's Fund member volunteers) select three potential grant themes from local identified needs and suggestions in the annual member survey. Bath Women's Fund members vote on these three choices to select the new grant theme. The vote closes and theme is announced at the December event.



2. GRANT PROGRAMME LAUNCH

The Grants Group updates the process and documents to reflect the feedback from previous grant programme. New grant programme opens to Expressions of Interest on the website in January and Bath Women's Fund members are encouraged to share with local organisations. Promote the funding available through newsletters, social media, 3SG and other networks.



3. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORMS

Local groups read the Bath Women's Fund grant programme criteria and guidance. If they feel they are a good fit, applicants complete and send in their Expression of Interest form by the deadline in late February. The Expression of Interest form just asks for the information needed for the first stage assessment.



4. INITIAL SHORTLISTING

Bath Women's Fund members volunteer reviewers read the Expression of Interest forms and review them against the criteria. The Grants Group meets and, with the input from our volunteer reviewers, decides on the shortlist in March. Successful groups are invited to complete a full application form. The unsuccessful applicants are notified of the decision with feedback.



5. FULL APPLICATION FORM STAGE

Groups are asked to complete a full application form by late April to provide more details about their work and what they would use a grant from Bath Women's Fund. The information provided by groups at the Expression of Interest phase is used so that groups do not have to repeat anything but can update it.



6. SELECTING THE FINAL THREE

A group with lived experience review the full applications and share their insights. The Grants Group meets in May and, with the lived experience input, assess and decide on the final three groups. Each group then matched with a mentor, a Bath Women's Fund member volunteer who supports them with their presentation. The unsuccessful applicants are notified of the decision with feedback.



7. GRANTS AWARD EVENING

Written summaries from the final three shared with Bath Women's Fund members. The three groups present at the Grants Award Evening in June, alongside the main grantee from the previous year. Members vote (on the evening or in advance if not able to be there) to decide which group will receive the main grant of £15,000. Outcome announced at the event with the other two groups awarded grants of £4,000.



.. and then the annual process starts again with the member survey to seek feedback and suggestions for the new grant theme



- Potluck Picnic events every two-three months
- Insight events, walks
- Annual Grants Award Evening

Together, Bath Women's Fund members have now given grants of £77,500 to twelve local groups:



In June, we will award our next three grants, bringing our collective giving to over £100,000

Key resources



philanthropytogether.org

- resources
- directory
- training
- We give summit



Sara Lomelin

Your invitation to disrupt philanthropy



Rebecca Darwent

How to fund real change in your community



Key resources



IUPUI WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY INSTITUTE
LILLY FAMILY SCHOOL OF PHILANTHROPY

