



# Global Trends and Strategic Time Horizons in Philanthropy 2022

ROCKEFELLER  
Philanthropy  
Advisors

# About this Report

This publication is part of a multiyear initiative that examines the inner workings, trends, practices, and challenges of global philanthropy through a time horizons lens, which determines the length of time for which a philanthropic organization chooses to be active. The report includes a global exploration of various dimensions of strategic time horizons and examines strategies and operations, as well as perceived advantages and disadvantages of different philanthropic timeframes. This is the only global research about philanthropy that includes views not only on reasons for giving, but on causes, geographic flows of funding, giving timeframes, decision-making and next-generation involvement. Through the insights from this research, we hope to create resources for funders that advance the field and practice of philanthropy. We are grateful to The Atlantic Philanthropies for their support of, and contributions to, this work.

Visit <https://www.rockpa.org/strategic-time-horizons/> to learn more about this topic and read the full range of publications.



# Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Methodology	6
1.2 Research Limitations	6
<b>2. RESPONDENT PROFILE</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. GLOBAL TRENDS IN GIVING: KEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Funding Flows	11
3.2 Motivations for Giving	12
3.3 Top Causes & Issues	13
3.4 Measuring Effectiveness	14
3.5 In Focus: Family Philanthropy	15
3.6 In Focus: Corporate Philanthropy	16
<b>4. STRATEGIC TIME HORIZONS IN PHILANTHROPY: KEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1 In Perpetuity	19
4.2 Time Limited	19
4.3 Determinants of Time Horizons	20
4.5 Impacts of Challenges of 2020-2021	22
<b>5. THROUGH THE TIME HORIZONS LENS</b>	<b>24</b>
5.1 Motivations for Giving by Time Horizon	25
5.2 Top Causes & Issues by Time Horizon	25
5.3 Measuring Effectiveness by Time Horizon	26
<b>6. PERSPECTIVES ON IMPLICATIONS AND BENEFITS OF TIME HORIZONS</b>	<b>27</b>
6.1 Why Time-Limited	28
6.2 Drivers of Considering Time-Limited Model	30
6.3 Reasons for Deciding Against Time-Limited	30
6.4 Perceived Effectiveness of Time Horizons	31
<b>7. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>35</b>

# Executive Summary

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors' second biennial survey examines global trends and strategic time horizons in philanthropy. Based on responses of 150 participants from many countries across six continents several key findings emerged:



## The Global Challenges of 2020-2021 Affected Philanthropic Timelines

Half of responding organizations reported that the global challenges of 2020-2021 prompted them to either accelerate their spending (34%), consider revising philanthropic timeframes (12%), or switch to a time-limited approach (3%).



## Impact is Key Reason for Adopting Time-Limited Model

Organizations that have adopted a time-limited model indicated they were driven by desire to make a greater impact by narrowing their focus (43%), desire to see impact during the founder's lifetime (33%), and urgent need or opportunity (24%).



## Founder Intent Determines Strategic Time Horizons

The respondents' strategic time horizons—the length of time for which a philanthropic organization will remain active—were most often defined by the founder's intent (52%). Bylaws, articles of incorporation, or charter of an organization (26%) also played a significant role in determining time horizon.



## Funders are Motivated by Desire for Social Change, Giving Back

About three-quarters of all respondents (76%) cited desire to influence social change as their top motivation for philanthropic giving, followed by desire to give back to society (64%), address urgent needs (57%), and put values into action (56%). Although there was some variation in motivations across geographies, giving back to society emerged as one of the main reasons for giving globally.



## Growing Adoption of Time-Limited Giving

Although in perpetuity remained the dominant model for the majority of respondents (74%), findings showed a growing adoption of time-limited philanthropy in the past two decades. Of the responding philanthropies established since 2000, almost one quarter (23%) were established as time-limited, representing an increase of 22 percentage points.



## Evaluations are Leading Way of Assessing Effectiveness

In assessing effectiveness of philanthropic interventions, many organizations relied on evaluations of entire program areas and/or initiatives (69%), or individual grants (58%). Thirty-nine percent adopted performance metrics, and 35% conducted grantee satisfaction surveys. North American organizations were much more likely to cite evaluation of individual grants as the preferred assessment approach than those in other regions.



## Education, Community & Economic Development are Top Program Areas

Most organizations surveyed (85%) supported multiple programmatic priorities. More than half of responding organizations (55%) cited education as a top area of philanthropic focus, followed by community and economic development (45%) and health (36%). Other leading areas of focus included political, civil, and human rights (28%), arts and culture (27%), environment/conservation (27%), and climate change (23%).



## 2nd and 3rd Generation Dominate Family Philanthropy Leadership

A majority of family-led foundations (54%) reported being led by the second generation of the family; 38% by the third generation; 33% by the first generation; and 12% by the fourth or later generation. Most family-led respondents reported that the next generation of family members were either actively (58%) or somewhat (25%) involved in philanthropic efforts. In contrast, 13% of the respondents noted that the next generation was not involved in family philanthropy. More than 9 in 10 respondents employed tactics to actively encourage next generation's involvement.

# 1 | Introduction



# 1. Introduction

Since the January 2020 publication of our [inaugural reports](#) examining trends and strategic time horizons in global philanthropy, the world, and accordingly the philanthropic sector, have been transformed. The COVID-19 pandemic, political turbulence, increased recognition of systemic inequities, and a growing focus on social justice have all played a part in creating significant societal shifts. Our second biennial survey, carried out in 2021, sought to measure how these profound changes impacted philanthropic practices, including the size and flow of funding, motivations for giving, programmatic focus, and strategic time horizons.

Exploring, analyzing and sharing global insights related to strategic time horizons in philanthropy—the length of time over which a donor or foundation seeks to engage in philanthropic giving—is particularly important in today’s world. This is because whether funders choose to respond to calls for urgent action by dedicating maximal resources in the finite term (time limited) or to address ongoing social issues over the long arc of history (in perpetuity), the consideration of time horizon is essential to acting strategically and responsively, and creating meaningful change. Through our research, we seek to enable funders to reexamine their philanthropic time horizons and assess related implications for strategic objectives, operating models and approaches, and thus to achieve greater impact.

This newest publication reflects an expanded survey reach, capturing the viewpoints of a more geographically diverse set of participants with larger representation from Europe, South America, Africa and Asia-Pacific. We hope this latest collection of insights will help inform and hone the work of the broader philanthropic ecosystem, including funders, partners and communities served.

## 1.1 Methodology

This survey was designed and conducted by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) with the support of NORC at the University of Chicago. The survey was disseminated via RPA’s networks, including funders, media, academic institutions and philanthropic service organizations around the world. Outreach efforts included email, newsletters, personal contact, and social media with a brief description of the study and a link for participation.

Responses for this survey were collected between June and December 2021 in English and via the Internet. The survey was designed to be taken by a representative of the organization with knowledge of its operations and philanthropic functions. In total, 150 respondents from 30 countries completed the survey. The responses are anonymous to ensure confidentiality and candor. Responses cannot be linked to any information about the respondents’ identities or names of institutions they represent in the survey.

The full survey can be viewed online at <https://www.rockpa.org/strategic-time-horizons/>. For more information, please email [info@rockpa.org](mailto:info@rockpa.org).

## 1.2 Research Limitations

The survey does not represent a random sample. While attempts were made to distribute the survey as broadly as possible, the results are subject to unknown biases and the responses given may not be representative of all philanthropic organizations. The survey features a self-selected sample of participants who chose to respond on a voluntary basis, which may have led to a self-selection bias potentially favoring those more engaged in philanthropy and not representing the entirety of philanthropic approaches and practitioners. Although the survey is global in the sense that organizations from six continents took part in it, the majority of the responses are from North America and Europe. Additionally, the regional samples do not include all the countries within these regions or a representative mix of respondents amongst the countries included. For these reasons, the findings should be viewed as only illustrations of the general philanthropic landscapes and trends regionally, rather than exhaustive findings. Finally, while the survey was a follow-up to the 2020 reports, the wording of some questions was changed in order to improve understanding and applicability. As such, making direct comparisons for some data points is challenging.

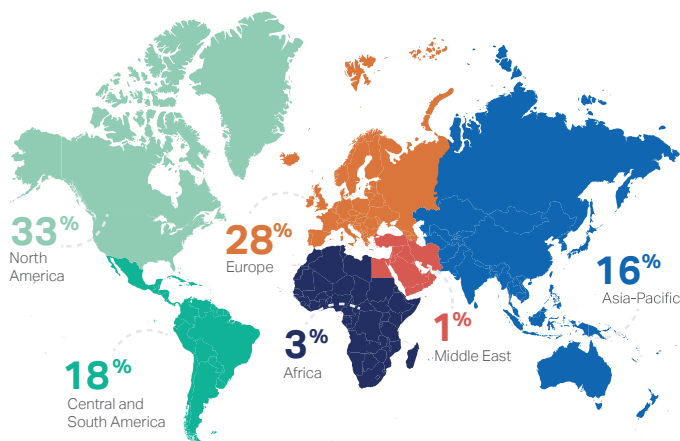
## 2 | Respondent Profile

## 2. Respondent Profile

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to provide general background information, including the organization's location, type, age, endowment size, grantmaking budget, operational approach, and number of employees. Respondents were also asked about the number of years they personally have been in the field of philanthropy.

Respondents represented organizations from six continents across the world. The largest proportion of participants surveyed came from North America (33%), followed by Europe (28%), Central and South America (18%), Asia-Pacific (16%), Africa (3%), and Middle East (1%). Organizations located across multiple regions constituted 1% of respondents.

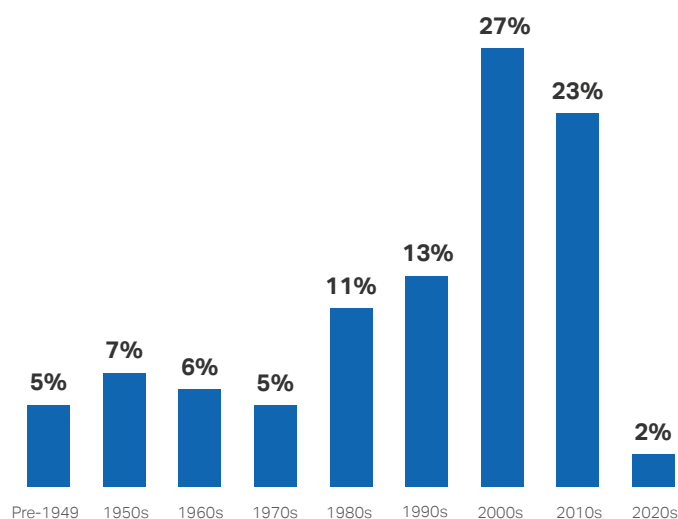
**Figure 1: Geographic Distribution of Respondents (n=146)**



Thirty-two percent of all reporting philanthropies were family-led and 31% were independent/privately endowed foundations. Corporate and community-based foundations constituted 11% respectively, and private business vehicles comprised 3% of respondents. Twelve percent classified their organization as other.

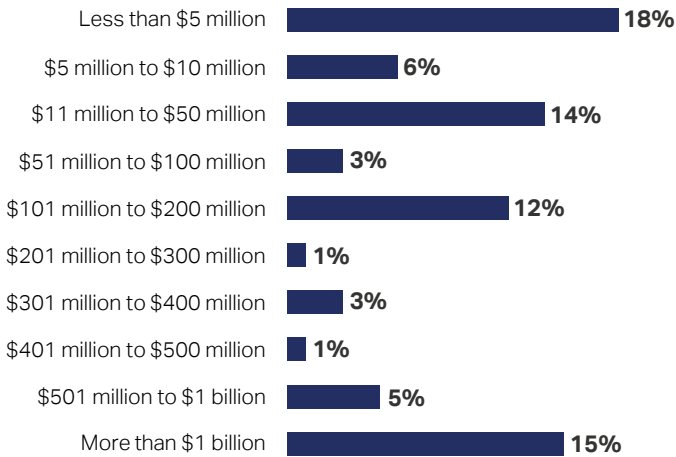
Responding organizations spanned a wide range of ages. A majority were established in the 2000s or later, with about a quarter of organizations established prior to 1980. Most organizations based in Asia-Pacific (67%) and North America (54%) were established in the 21st century, while more of those in Central and South America (56%), and Europe (55%) were established before the year 2000.

**Figure 2: Date Established (n=150)**

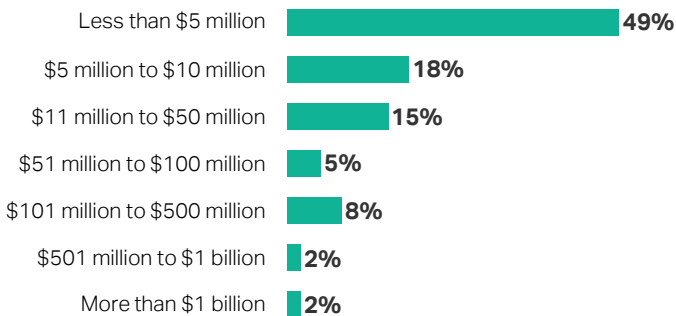


There was also a significant diversity of endowment sizes among the participating organizations, ranging from less than \$5 million to more than \$1 billion. Most of the responding organizations (79%) self reported as endowed foundations. Roughly one quarter (24%) reported an endowment of less than \$10 million, followed by 18% with an endowment of \$11 million to \$100 million, and 17% in the \$101 million to \$500 million range. Twenty percent reported an endowment greater than \$501 million, including 15% that reported an endowment greater than \$1 billion.

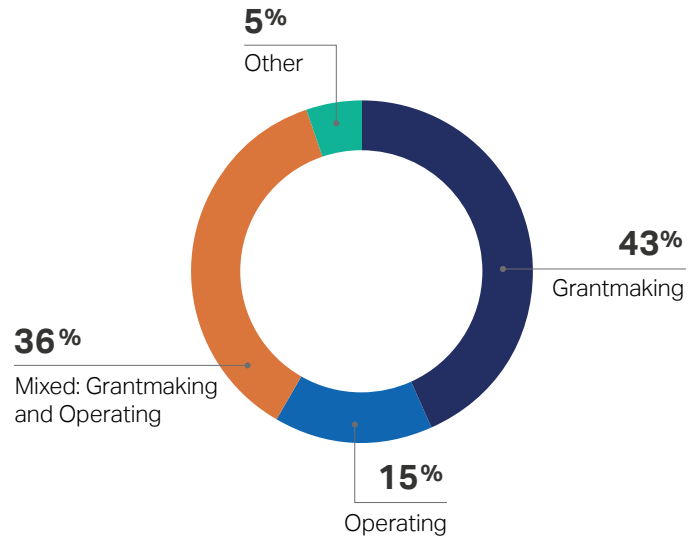


**Figure 3: Endowment Size (in USD) (n=103)**

Half of all grantmaking organizations surveyed reported an annual grantmaking budget of less than \$5 million, and 83% reported \$50 million or less. Twelve percent noted a grantmaking budget greater than \$100 million.

**Figure 4: Annual Grantmaking Budget (in USD) (n=133)**

Seventy-nine percent of respondents were grantmakers, either fully or as a mixed grantmaking and operating philanthropic entity. Fifteen percent of organizations reported being fully operating foundations, and 5% classified themselves as other.

**Figure 5: Grantmaking or Operating (n=132)**

In terms of staffing, 97% of surveyed organizations reported having full-time staff dedicated to their philanthropic efforts. Among these respondents, 46% had fewer than 10 employees, 25% had 11-49 employees, 10% had 50-99, and 19% had more than 100 employees.

Those who responded on behalf of their organizations held senior roles and a range of philanthropic experience. Seventy-six percent were executive officers, board members, presidents/chief executives, or founders. The remaining quarter of respondents identified themselves as program or operating staff, or as having some other role.

Twenty percent of respondents reported less than five years of experience, 26% reported between five and 10 years, 32% reported between 11 and 20 years, and 21% reported more than 20 years of experience in the philanthropic sector.

# 3 | Global Trends in Giving: Key Findings

### 3. Global Trends in Giving: Key Findings

This section provides a general overview of how responding institutions think about and engage in philanthropic giving. It covers where they fund philanthropic activities, motivations for giving, causes supported, and how they measure effectiveness. The section also provides a more in-depth look at family-led and corporate philanthropic organizations.

#### 3.1 Funding Flows

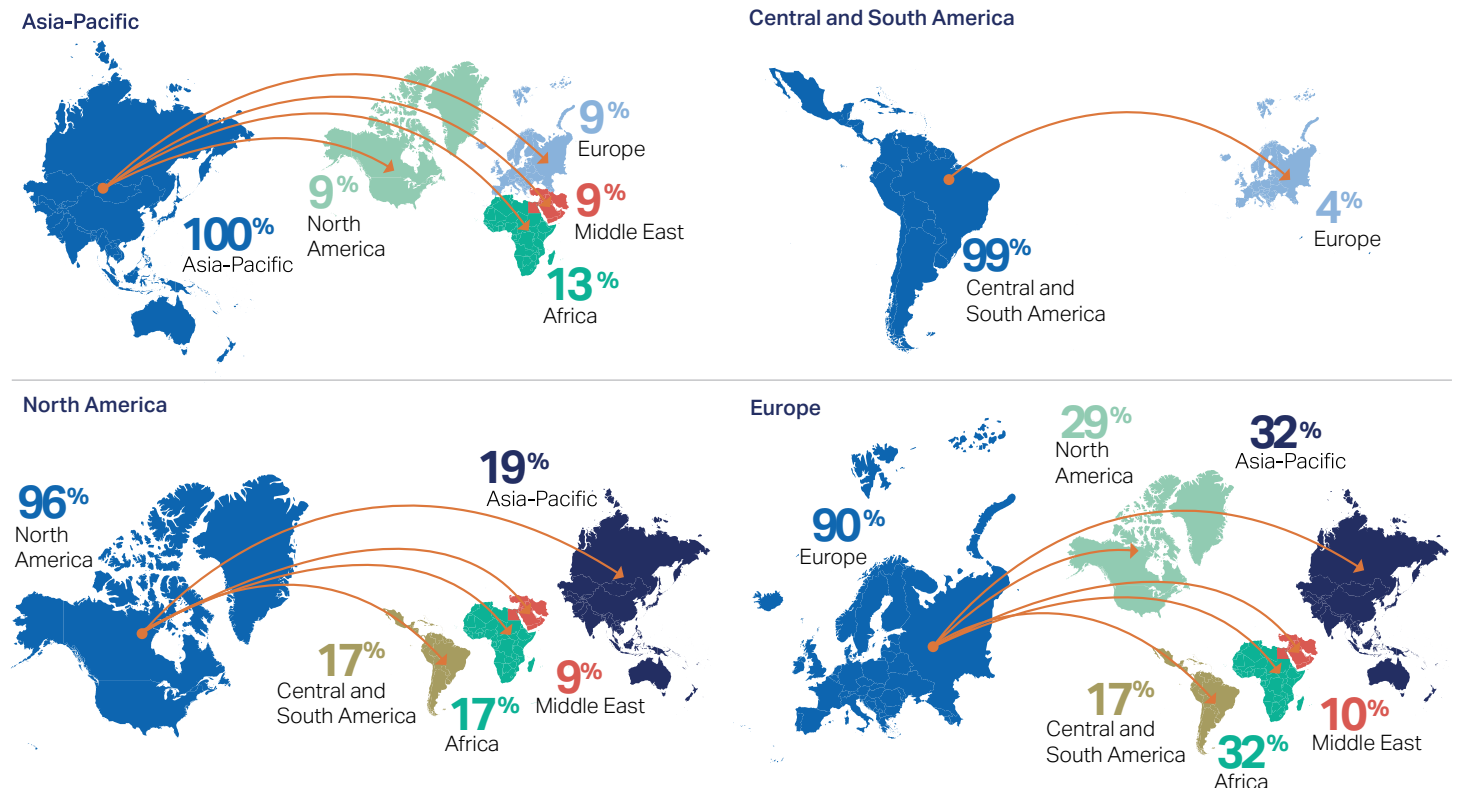
##### **Most organizations carried out their philanthropic activities in their home regions.**

Organizations were asked about their flows of philanthropic giving, i.e., where they carry out their philanthropic activities. Overall, organizations tended to give in regions where they

were headquartered. For example, 96% of North American organizations gave within North America, and 90% of European organizations gave within Europe. 99% of the Central and South American organizations gave within their own region, and 100% of Asia-Pacific organizations gave within their own region.

Funding flows outside of the headquarters region varied by the location of respondents. Central and South America-based philanthropies were least likely to give outside of their region, followed by those located in the Asia-Pacific region. Europe-based entities were most likely to give outside of their region, with Africa and Asia-Pacific as the top recipient regions. North America-based organizations were next most likely to give outside of their region, but by a significantly smaller percentage of organizations compared with those based in Europe.

**Figure 6: Location of Giving by Region**



### 3.2 Motivations for Giving

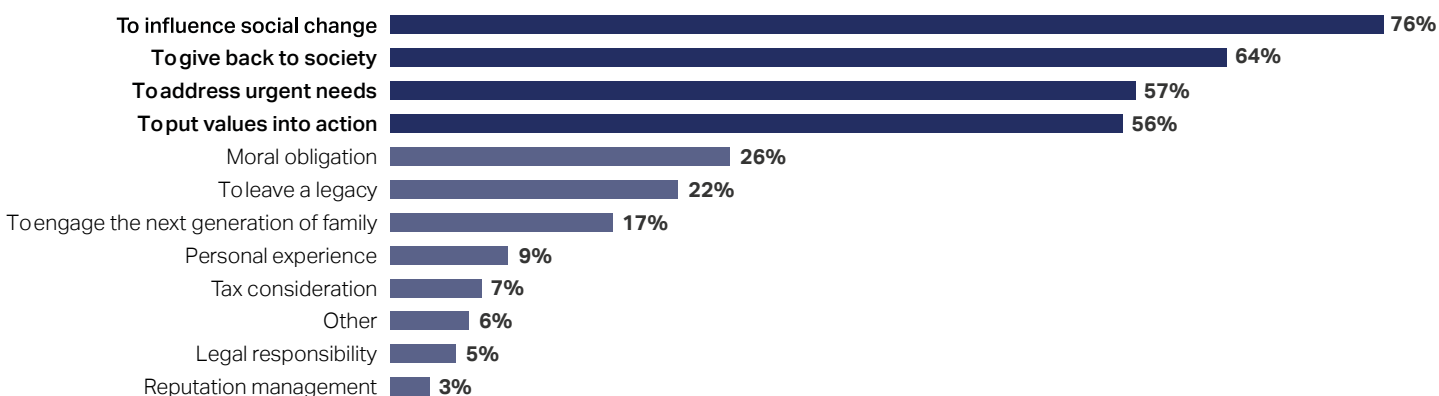
#### Influencing social change and giving back were top motivations for philanthropic giving.

When asked about the main motivations behind their giving, 76% of organizations specified the desire to influence social change, 64% to give back to society, 57% to address urgent needs, and 56% to put values into action. The fifth top motivation was moral obligation, expressed by 26% of respondents.

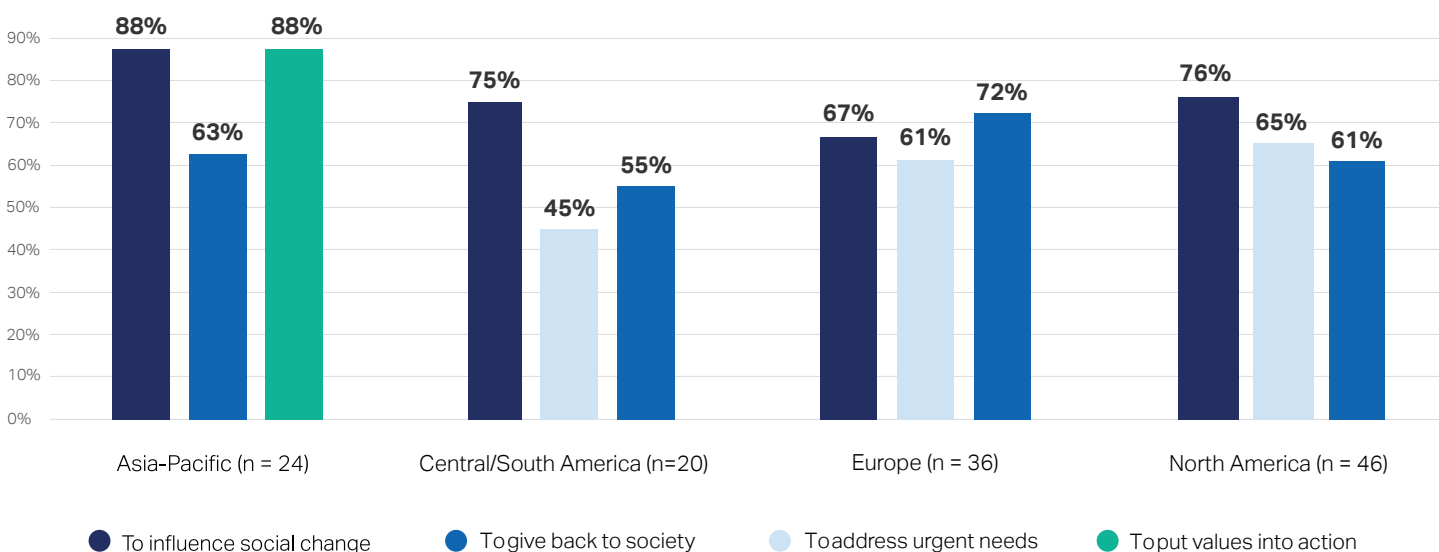
When viewed through a regional lens, the survey revealed slight differences in the hierarchy of motivations. In North America, Europe, and Central and South America, to influence social change, to address urgent needs, and to give back to society were the top three motivations for engaging in philanthropy.

In Asia-Pacific, to give back to society, to put values into action, and to influence social change were in order the top three motivations. In Africa, to influence social change, to give back to society, to put values into action, and moral obligation were the top motivations.

**Figure 7: Top Motivations for Giving (n=132)**



**Figure 8: Top Motivations for Giving by Region**

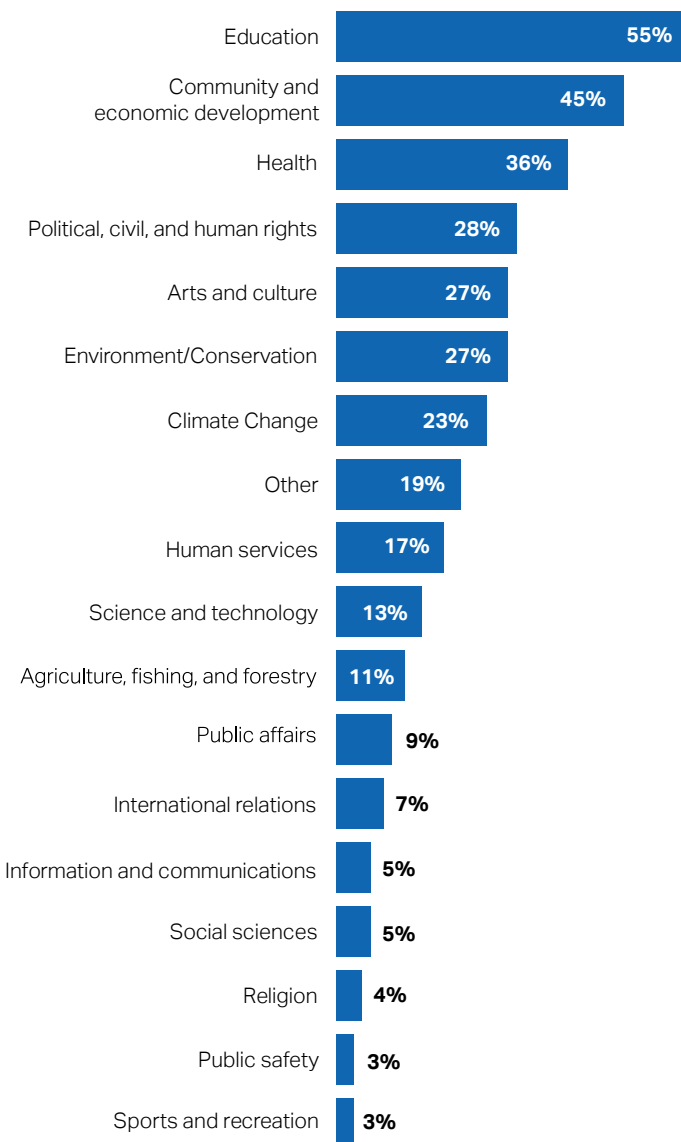


### 3.3 Top Causes & Issues

#### Education was a primary focus area for more than half of the organizations surveyed.

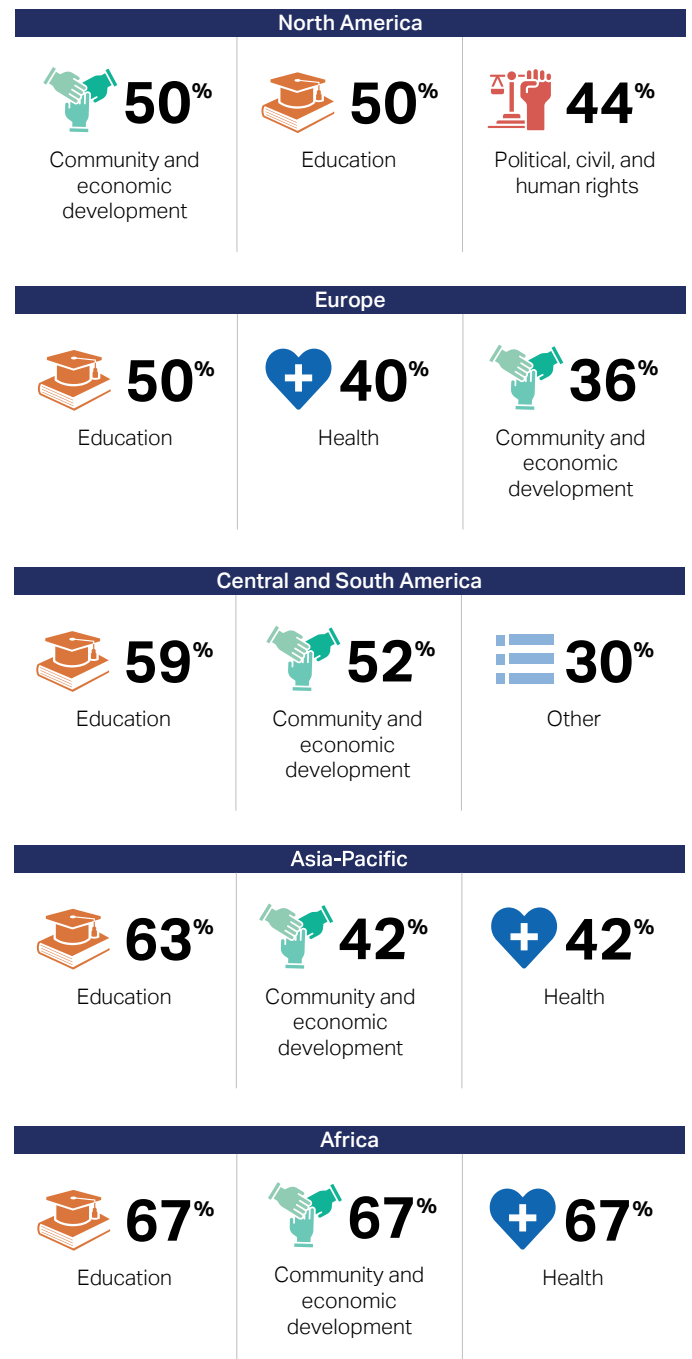
Survey participants supported a wide range of philanthropic programs. Fifty-five percent of respondents said education was their primary focus area, followed by community and economic development (45%), and health (36%).

**Figure 9: Top Causes & Issues (n=149)**



Instead of focusing on a single issue, the vast majority of respondents (85%) supported more than one program area. Globally, education was the top or tied for the top cause supported. Community and economic development was one of the leading two causes in all regions except Europe, where it stood in third place behind education and health.

**Figure 10: Top Causes & Issues by Region**



3.4 Measuring Effectiveness

The vast majority of organizations had systems in place to measure the effectiveness of philanthropic efforts.

When asked how they assessed the effectiveness of philanthropic efforts, most organizations cited evaluations of entire program areas (69%) or individual grants (58%). Fewer adopted performance metrics (39%), conducted satisfaction surveys with their grantees (35%), or assessed their entire program on an annual basis (35%). Five percent did not measure the effectiveness of their philanthropic efforts.

The top assessment approach cited (evaluations of entire program areas and/or initiatives) was consistent across all regions, with the exception of North America. There,

organizations cited evaluation of individual grants as the top way they assessed effectiveness.

Findings were similar when viewed by organization type. Every organizational type conducted evaluations of entire program areas and/or initiatives, except for private business vehicles. More than half of community foundations (56%) measured effectiveness by assessing the entire philanthropic giving program on an annual basis, whereas this type of assessment was used much less frequently by other organization types. Approximately half of community foundations, corporate foundations, and private business vehicles conducted satisfaction surveys with their grantees, while a much lower percentage of other types of organizations reported using the same method.

Figure 11: Assessing Effectiveness of Philanthropic Efforts (n=148)

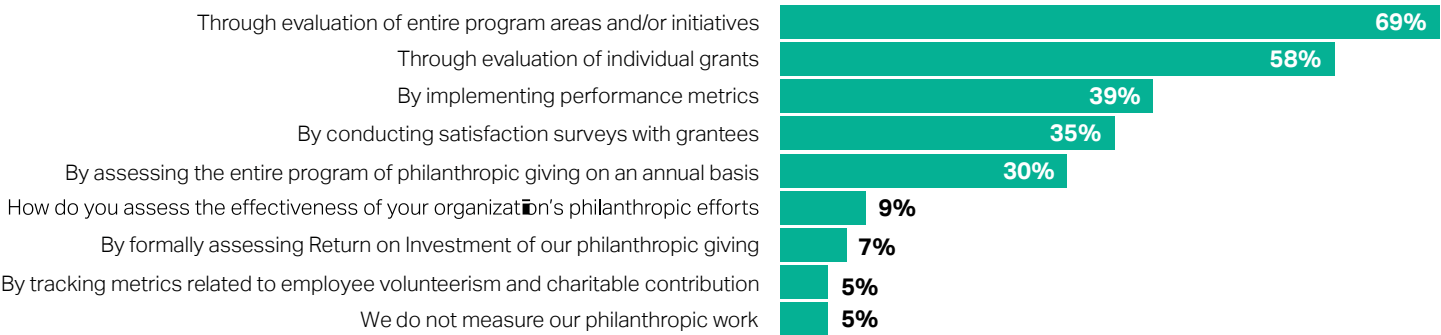


Figure 12: Assessing Effectiveness of Philanthropic Efforts by Organization Type

Community foundation (n = 16)	Corporate foundation or corporation (n = 16)	Family-led philanthropy (n = 48)	Independent or private endowed foundations (n = 46)
Through evaluation of entire program areas and/or initiatives (69%)	Through evaluation of entire program areas and/or initiatives (69%)	Through evaluation of entire program areas and/or initiatives (71%)	Through evaluation of entire program areas and/or initiatives (67%)
Through evaluation of individual grants (63%)	By conducting satisfaction surveys with grantees (50%)	Through evaluation of individual grants (60%)	Through evaluation of individual grants (67%)
By assessing the entire program of philanthropic giving on an annual basis (56%)	Through evaluation of individual grants (44%)	By implementing performance metrics (33%)	By conducting satisfaction surveys with grantees (37%)
	By implementing performance metrics (44%)	By conducting satisfaction surveys with grantees (33%)	

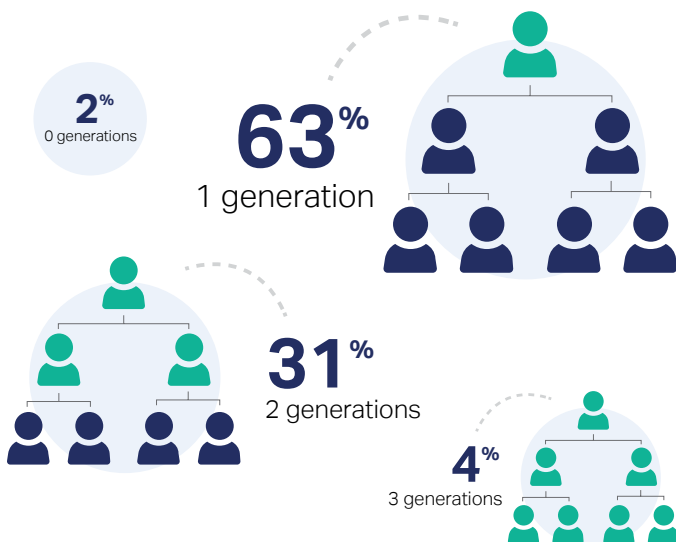
### 3.5 In Focus: Family Philanthropy

This section provides a detailed look at the 48 family-led philanthropic organizations that responded to the survey.

The family-led philanthropic organizations represented in this survey had a long track record in philanthropic giving. Nearly nine in 10 had been involved in philanthropic giving for more than 10 years, including 54% who had been involved for more than 25 years.

Most of the family-led philanthropic organizations were led by one generation. Thirty-five percent reported that at least two generations of family members were involved in the oversight of the family's philanthropic management.

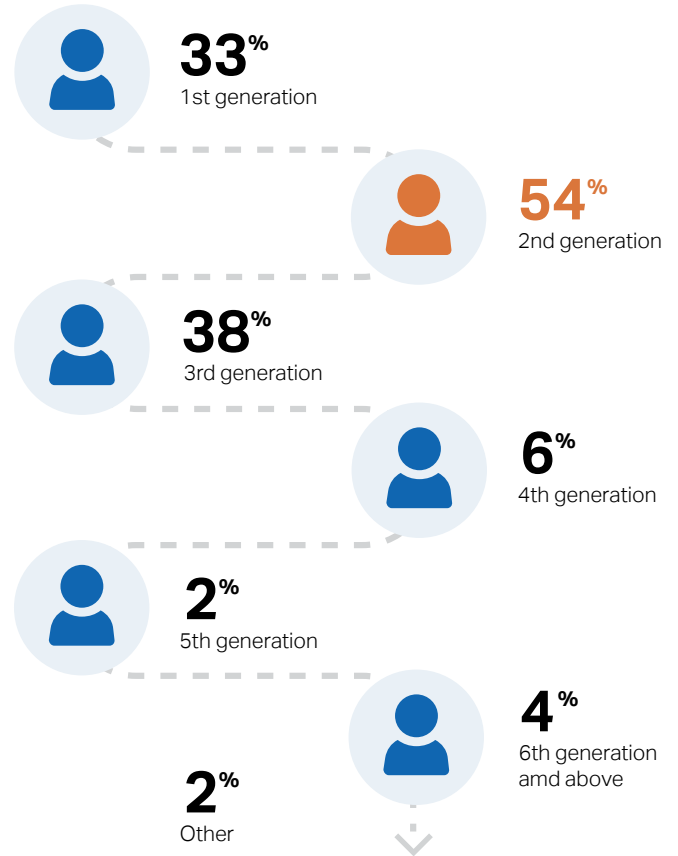
**Figure 13: How Many Generations Manage Family Philanthropy (n=48)**



For a majority (54%), the second generation of the family oversaw the family's philanthropy. Thirty-three percent were led by the first generation and 38% were led by the third. Twelve percent were led by the fourth or later generations.

In terms of next gen (or next generation) more broadly, the survey defined the "next generation" as "the latest generation to whom the family's wealth has been or will be transferred."

**Figure 14: Current Generations Managing Family Philanthropy**



Most family-led organizations surveyed reported active involvement among next generation family members. Fifty-eight percent said the next generation was actively involved on a regular basis and another 25% were somewhat involved. In contrast, 13% of the respondents noted that the next generation was not involved in those efforts at all. Four percent did not report having a next generation of family members.

Family-led organizations that have a next generation used several different tactics to encourage an interest in philanthropic giving. More than eight in 10 said that they actively engaged next gens in the organizations' philanthropic work. Nearly seven in 10 sought to instill philanthropic values and a sense of moral responsibility in the next generation. Six in 10 created opportunities to transfer intergenerational knowledge and experience. Thirty-five percent educated the

next generation about world challenges, and 5% used other tactics. Eight percent did not actively encourage the next generation's engagement.

Figure 15: Engaging Next Gen in Philanthropy (n=40)



These findings are somewhat in line with the 2020 survey report, [Global Trends and Strategic Time Horizons in Family Philanthropy 2020](#). There, 42% said that the next generation was actively involved in the family's philanthropy, while 39% noted they were somewhat involved. The most popular strategies families reported to encourage the next generation's interest in philanthropy were to instill in them a sense of moral responsibility (65%), actively engaging them in the organization's philanthropic work (55%), and to create meaningful roles for them (38%). In terms of how the next generation members most often engaged in their families' philanthropy, serving on boards (45%), conducting site visits (28%), and developing grants (24%) were at the top of the list.

3.6 In Focus: Corporate Philanthropy

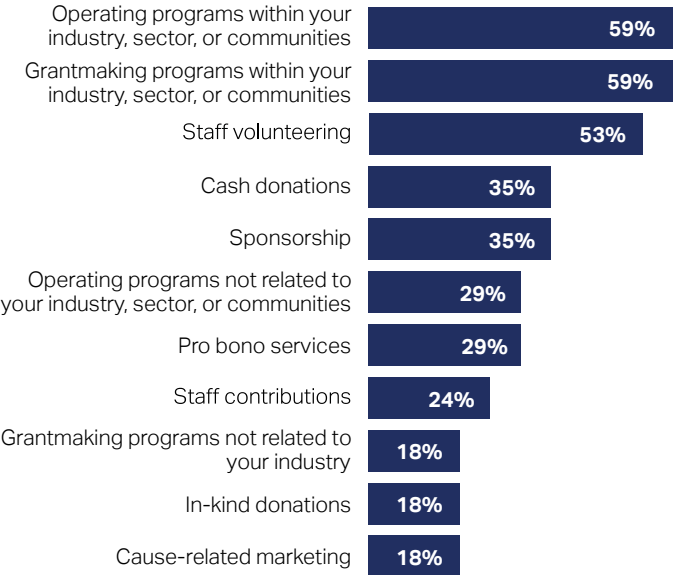
This section provides a detailed look at the 17 corporate philanthropies that responded to the survey.

Corporate philanthropic programs represented a small but important group in this study. Their years of involvement in philanthropy varied. Almost half said their corporation's philanthropic programs began in the last century, while the rest said their corporation's philanthropic programs began in the new millennium.

Corporate respondents engaged in a range of philanthropic efforts. More than half operated own programs within their

industry, sector, or communities (59%), conducted grantmaking within their industry, sector, or communities (59%), and ran volunteer programs (53%). More than one third (35%) provided cash donations or sponsorships. Twenty-nine percent implemented operating programs outside of their industry or delivered pro bono services. Fewer engaged with staff contributions, grantmaking programs outside of their industry, in-kind donations, and cause-related marketing.

Figure 16: Corporate Philanthropic Efforts (n=17)

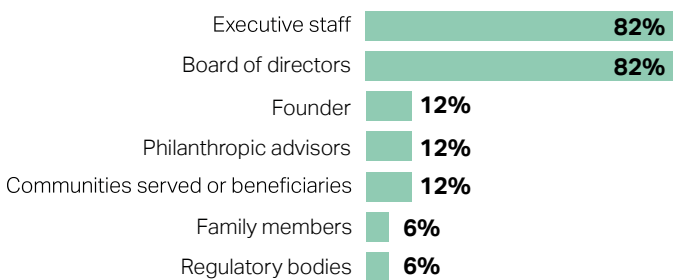




When it came to how corporations structure their philanthropic functions, 71% said their philanthropic entity had a legal structure separate and distinct from the corporation, and 29% percent said their philanthropy was part of the corporate social responsibility program.

Respondents were asked about the main decision makers in determining the corporation's philanthropic strategy. The vast majority said they were guided by executive staff and/or the board of directors. Fewer said strategic decisions were guided by the founder, philanthropic advisors, the communities served or beneficiaries, family members, or regulatory bodies.

**Figure 17: Corporate Philanthropic Strategy Decision Makers (n=17)**



In terms of how philanthropic efforts were funded, 41% of corporate respondents said it was via an endowment, 29% were funded annually by a percentage of profits, and another 29% said efforts were funded in some other fashion, such as member contributions, donations, and corporate budget planning.

The main motivations driving corporate giving varied. Seventy-six percent said they wanted to give back to society, and 71% said they wanted to influence social change. Just over half (53%) said they wanted to put their values into action and 47% said they had a moral obligation to engage in philanthropy. Six percent respectively said they are participating to counteract past harmful effects of their industry, for tax considerations, or out of a legal responsibility.

In terms of programmatic focus, most corporate respondents (65%) cited community and economic development. Just under half (47%) said their focus was on health, education, or climate change.

# 4 | Strategic Time Horizons in Philanthropy: Key Findings

## 4. Strategic Time Horizons in Philanthropy: Key Findings

### 4.1 In Perpetuity

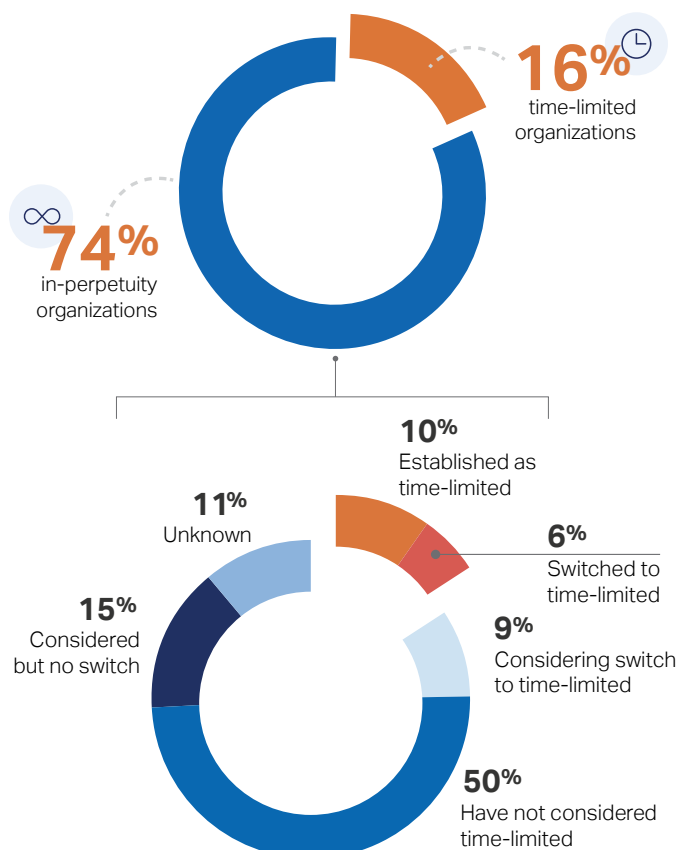
#### Most philanthropic organizations remain in perpetuity.

Seventy-four percent of participants identified as in-perpetuity organizations, while 16% reported being time-limited.

Among those that adhere to an in-perpetuity strategic time horizon, 67% stated that their organizations had never considered adopting a time-limited model, 20% said they considered but later decided against the switch, and the remaining 12% reported that they were actively considering switching to a time-limited horizon.

Among time-limited organizations, 62% were established as such from inception, while 38% started as perpetual organizations but later switched to a time-limited model.

**Figure 18: Respondents by Strategic Time Horizon (n=133)**

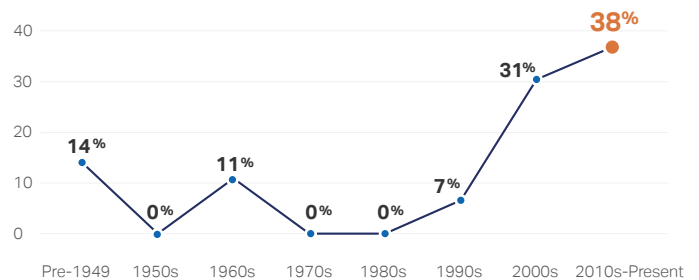


### 4.2 Time Limited

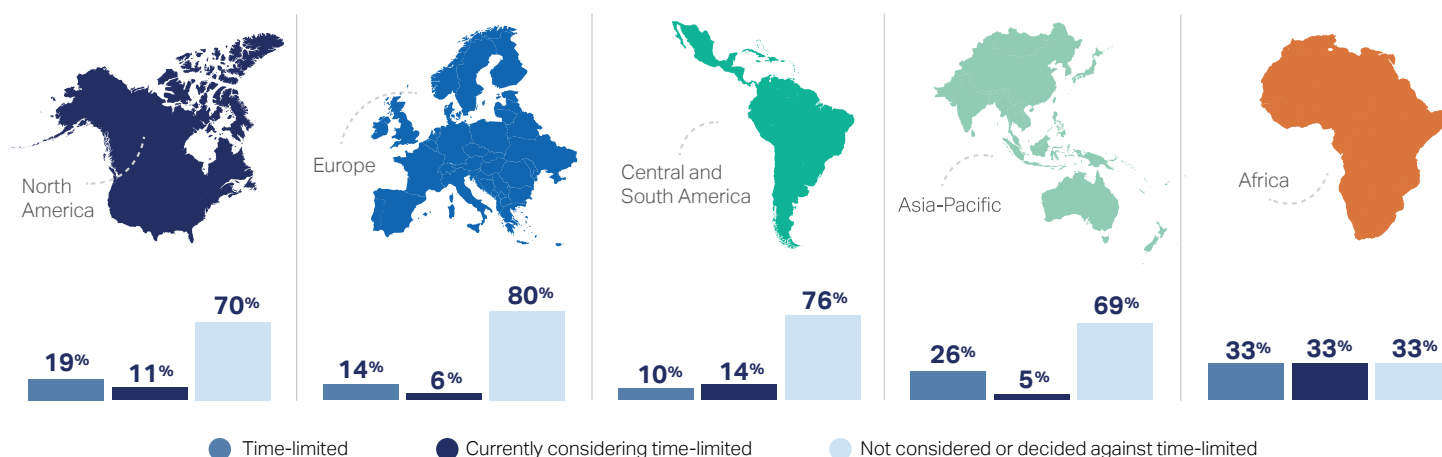
#### The time-limited model is becoming increasingly popular.

The survey results show an upward trend in the popularity of time-limited giving. While only a small fraction of organizations established prior to the 1990s considered a shift to a time-limited model, organizations established more recently have shown a growing interest in this approach by either switching to a time-limited horizon, considering switching, or establishing as time-limited entities from the outset.

**Figure 19: Current Percentage of Time-Limited Organizations by Establishment Period (n=133)**



In terms of the popularity of different time horizons across regions, a slightly larger proportion of respondents in Asia-Pacific and North America have adopted or started considering time-limited approaches compared to other regions.

**Figure 20: Thought Given to Time Horizons by Region (n=115)**

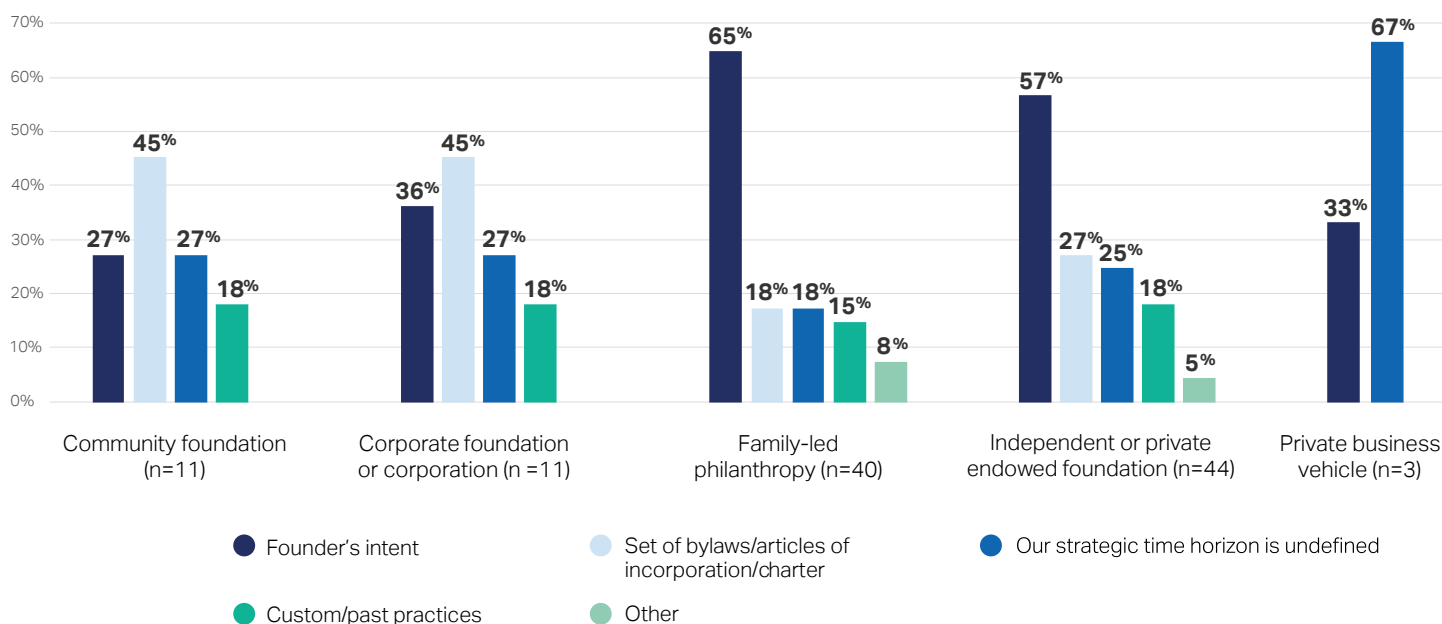
### 4.3 Determinants of Time Horizons

#### Strategic time horizons tended to be defined by the organization's founder.

Fifty-two percent of organizations said their strategic time horizons were defined by the founders' intent. Fewer said their organization's timeline was defined by their organization's bylaws, articles of incorporation, or charter (26%), by custom or past practices (16%), or by something else (6%). Twenty-four

percent of organizations noted that their time horizon was not yet defined.

The factors that determined strategic time horizons varied across organization types. For community and corporate foundations, bylaws and articles of incorporation most often defined strategic time horizons, followed by the founder's intent. Family-led philanthropy and independent/private endowed foundations cited the founder's intent as the single most important factor in determining strategic time horizons.

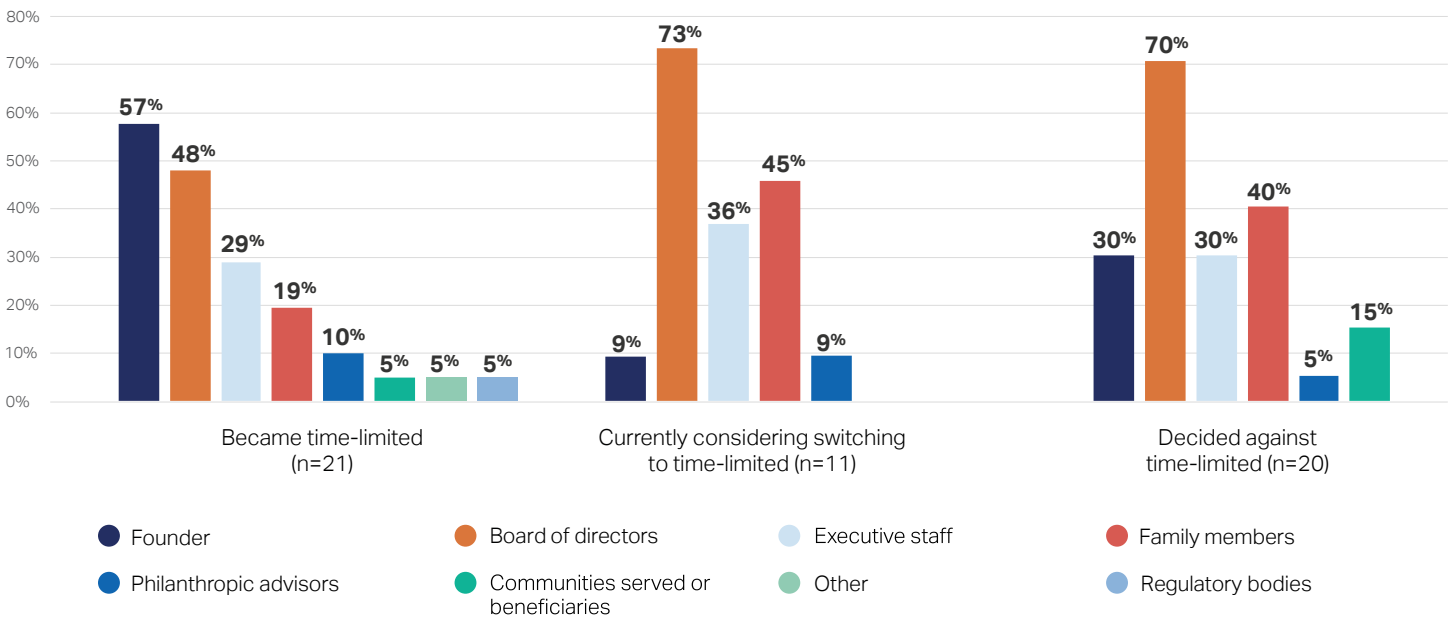
**Figure 21: Determinants of Strategic Time Horizons by Organization Type**

Among organizations that adopted a time-limited model (n=21), the founder of the organization (57%) and the board of directors (48%) were the most influential voices in the decision. Twenty-nine percent of organizations also noted the influence of executive staff and 19% cited the influence of family members. Fewer said that philanthropic advisors (10%), communities served (5%), regulatory bodies (5%), or something else (5%) influenced the decision.

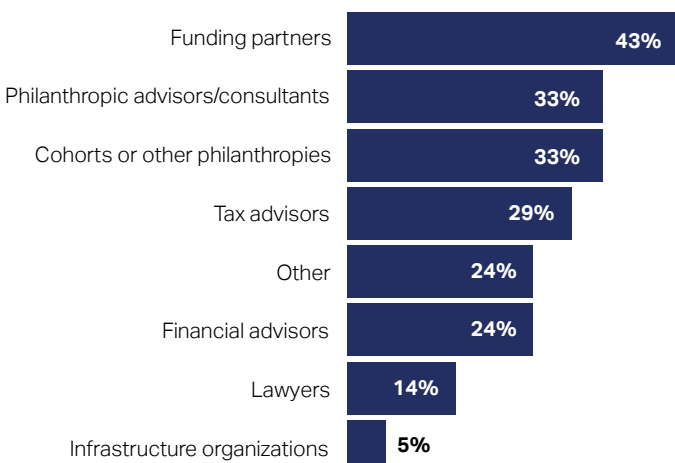
For in-perpetuity organizations that were actively considering time-limited models (n=11), the board of directors (73%) was the main decision maker. Family members (45%) and executive staff (36%) were the two other main decision makers.

Among those organizations that considered but decided against the time-limited model (n=20), the board of directors and the founder were instrumental in the decision.

**Figure 22: Main Influencers in Time-Horizon Decisions**



**Figure 23: Who Was Consulted in Adoption of Time-Limited Model? (n=21)**

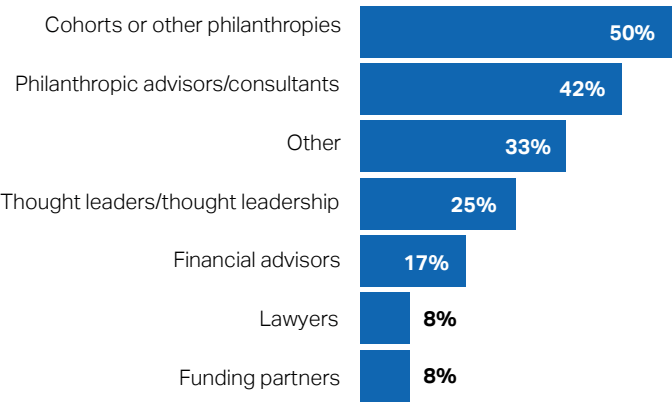


Seventy percent of these organizations reported the board of directors decided against the switch, while 40% said family members decided against a time-limited model. Fewer said the founder (30%), the executive staff (30%), the communities served (15%), or the philanthropic advisors (5%) were the main voices against the decision.

In weighing the decision to adopt a time-limited model, 43% of time-limited organizations consulted funding partners and one-third consulted philanthropic advisors or other philanthropies. About one quarter consulted their tax and financial advisors.

Those who were considering switching to a time-limited model at the time of the survey most often consulted with peer cohorts, other philanthropies, philanthropic advisors or consultants.

**Figure 24: In Considering a Time-Limited Model, Which of the Following Have You Consulted? (n=12)**

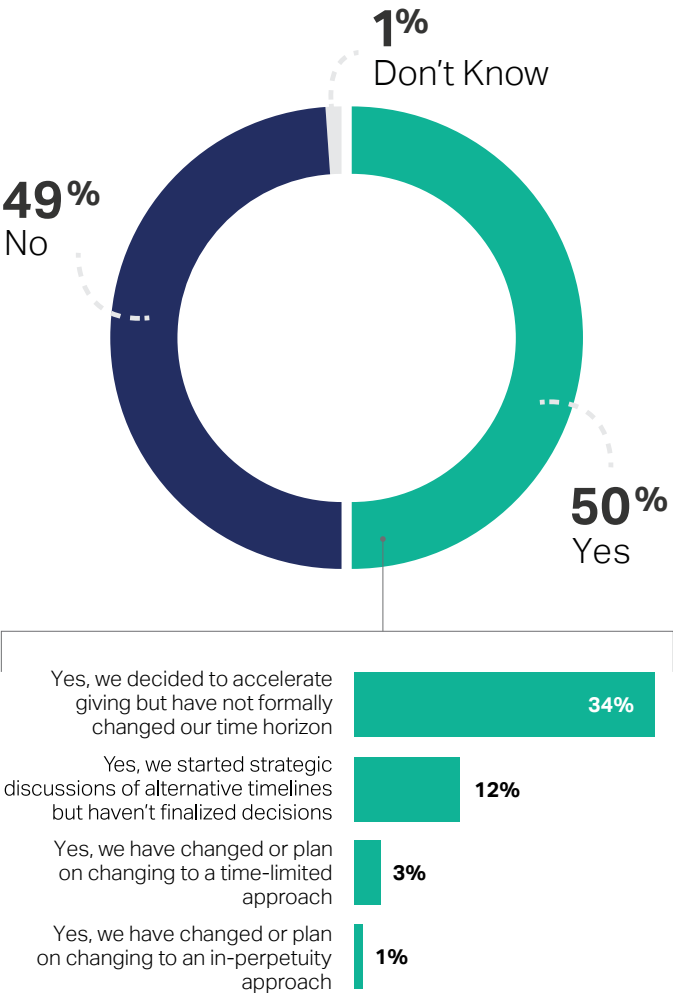


4.4 Impact of Challenges of 2020-2021

**World events of 2020 and 2021 affected philanthropic timelines.**

Half of respondents said that the challenges faced globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other events during 2020-2021 influenced their philanthropic timelines. Thirty-four percent reported an acceleration of their philanthropic giving without formally changing their strategic time horizons. Twelve percent said they started strategic discussions about altering their spending timeline. Forty-nine percent said the societal challenges did not influence their philanthropic timelines.

**Figure 25: Did 2020-2021 Challenges Influence Your Philanthropic Timelines? (n=145)**

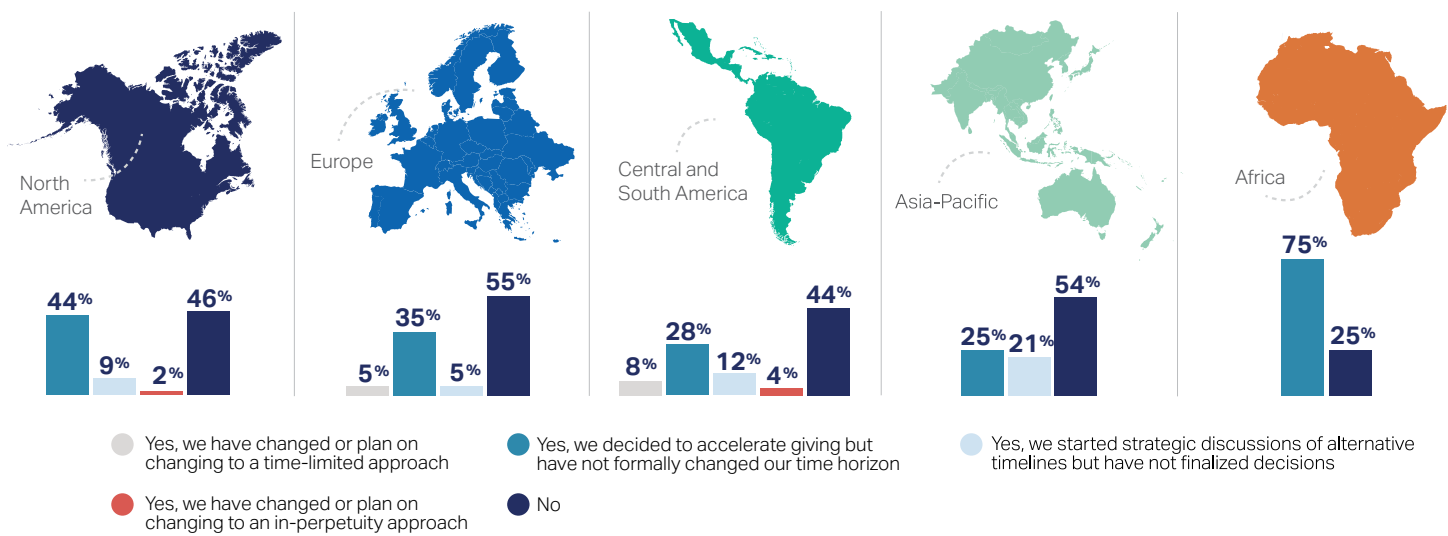


These findings were similar across organization types and philanthropic timelines.

In terms of regional distinctions, more than half of respondents from Africa, North America, and Central and South America said they have at least considered changing their philanthropic timelines due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related

challenges. Similarly, just under half of respondents from Europe and Asia-Pacific said they have at least considered changing their philanthropic timelines.

**Figure 26: Impact of 2020-2021 Challenges by Region**



# 5 | Through the Time Horizon Lens



## 5. Through the Time Horizon Lens

### 5.1 Motivations for Giving by Time Horizon

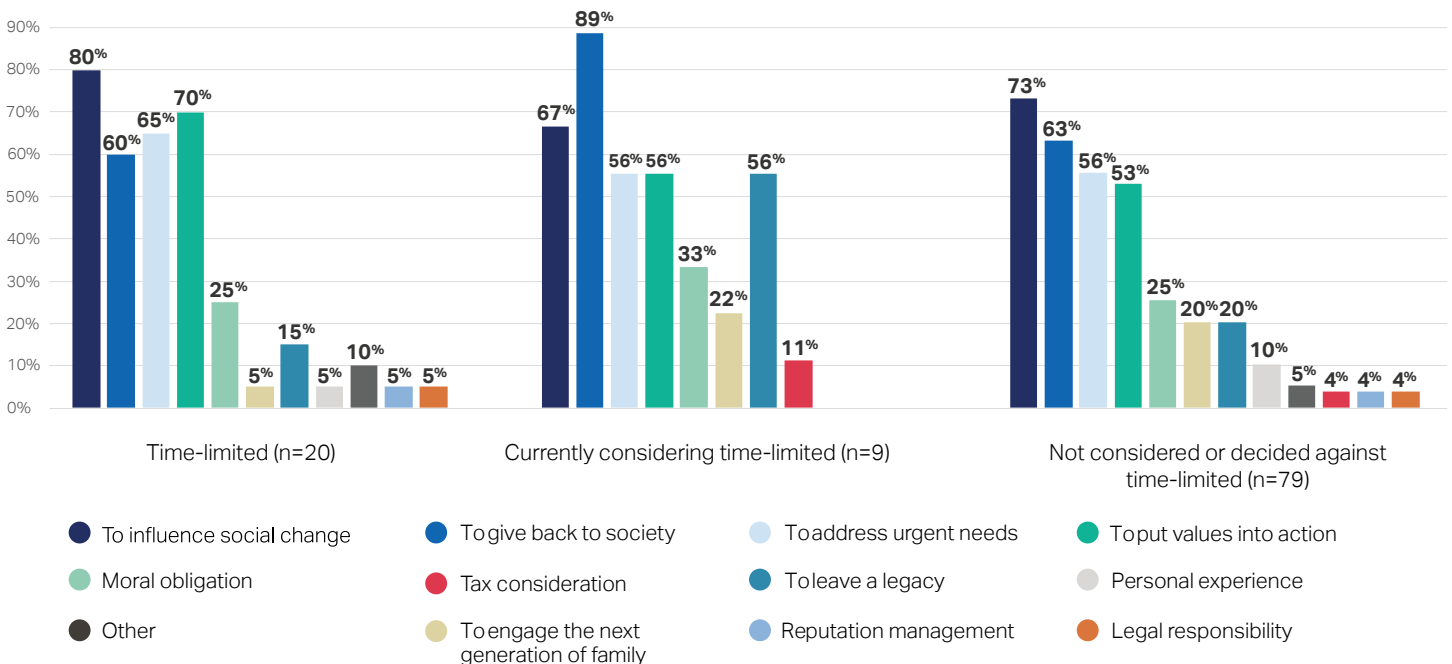
Main motivations for engaging in philanthropy were similar among respondents adhering to different strategic time horizons. Across time-limited organizations, those considering the time-limited approach at the time of this survey, and those that had not considered or decided against the time-limited model, the top motivations cited were “to give back to society,” “to influence social change,” “to address urgent needs,” and “to put values into action” were cited as the top motivations. For organizations that were currently considering a time-limited model, “to leave a legacy” was tied as the third leading motivation.

### 5.2 Top Causes & Issues by Time Horizon

The top two program areas—education, and community and economic development—were the same across different strategic time horizons. One notable difference was that political, civil, and human rights was cited as the third leading area of programmatic focus among organizations considering a time-limited model, fourth for time-limited respondents, and fifth for in-perpetuity organizations.

Interestingly, political, civil, and human rights was not among top five programmatic priorities in the 2020 survey, [Strategic Time Horizons: A Global Snapshot of Foundation Approaches](#). This significant change potentially reflects how philanthropy responded to societal challenges of 2020-2021.

**Figure 27: Main Motivations for Engaging in Philanthropy by Time Horizon**



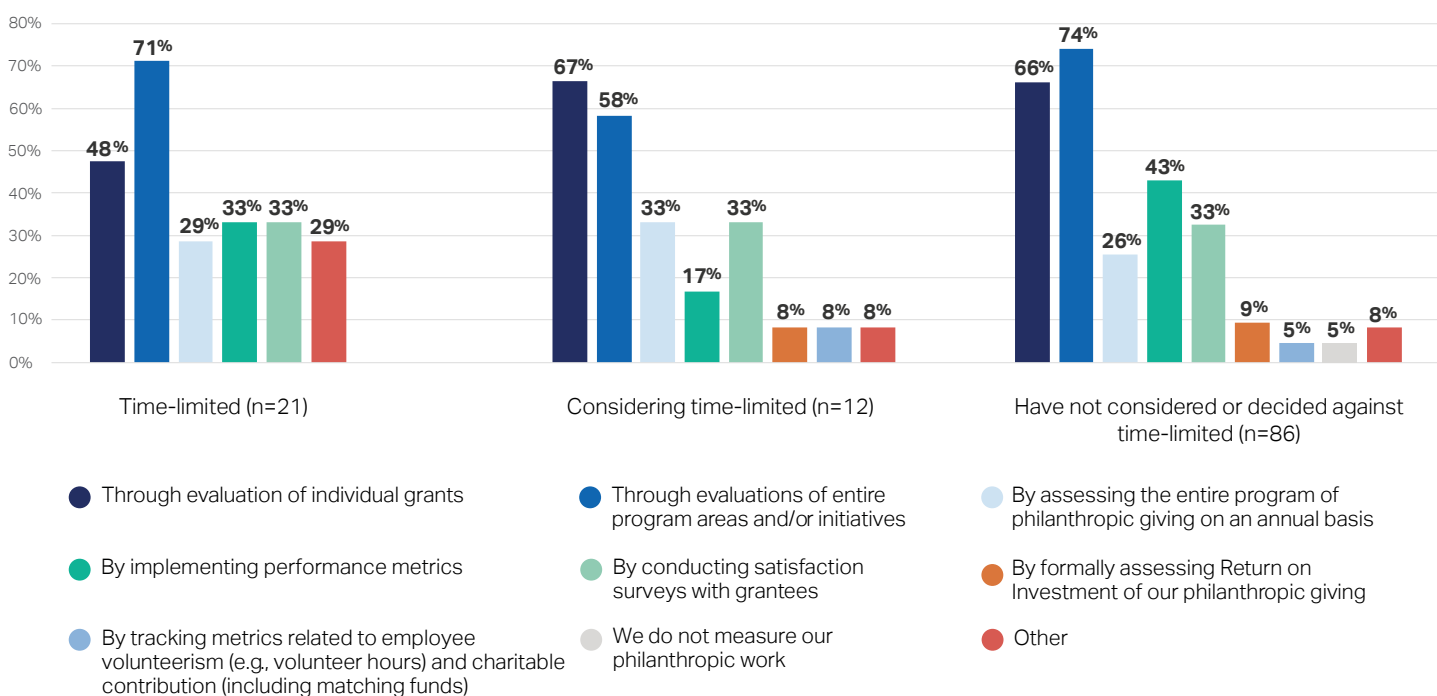
**Figure 28: Top Program Areas by Time Horizon**

 Time-Limited Organizations (n=21)	 In-Perpetuity (n=86)	 Organizations Considering Time-Limited Model (n=11)
1. Education (62%)	1. Education (52%)	1. Education (64%)
2. Community and economic development (38%)	2. Community and economic development (43%)	2. Community and economic development (55%)
3. Health (33%)	3. Health (37%)	3. Political, civil, and human rights (45%)
4. Political, civil, and human rights (33%)	4. Arts and culture (31%)	4. Climate Change (27%)
5. Environment/Conservation (29%)	5. Political, civil, and human rights (27%)	5. Human Services (27%)
	6. Environment/Conservation (27%)	

### 5.3 Measuring Effectiveness by Time Horizon

In assessing effectiveness of philanthropic interventions, organizations employing different strategic time horizons primarily relied on evaluations of entire program areas, initiatives, and/or individual grants. Philanthropies considering

time-limited horizons were more likely to cite evaluation of individual grants as the preferred measure, whereas a significantly higher proportion of time-limited organizations and those that decided against the time-limited model used evaluation of entire program area and/or initiatives (71% and 74%, respectively).

**Figure 29: Assessing the Effectiveness by Time Horizon**

# 6 | Perspectives on Implications and Benefits of Time Horizons

## 6. Perspectives on Implications and Benefits of Time Horizons

This section explores the reasons organizations chose to switch to a time-limited model and how that choice impacted their philanthropic giving. It also looks at the driving factors behind considering the switch, and the reasons why some organizations did not consider a time-limited model. General views on the perceived and anticipated benefits, opportunities, and challenges associated with each time horizon are also detailed.

### 6.1 Why Time-Limited

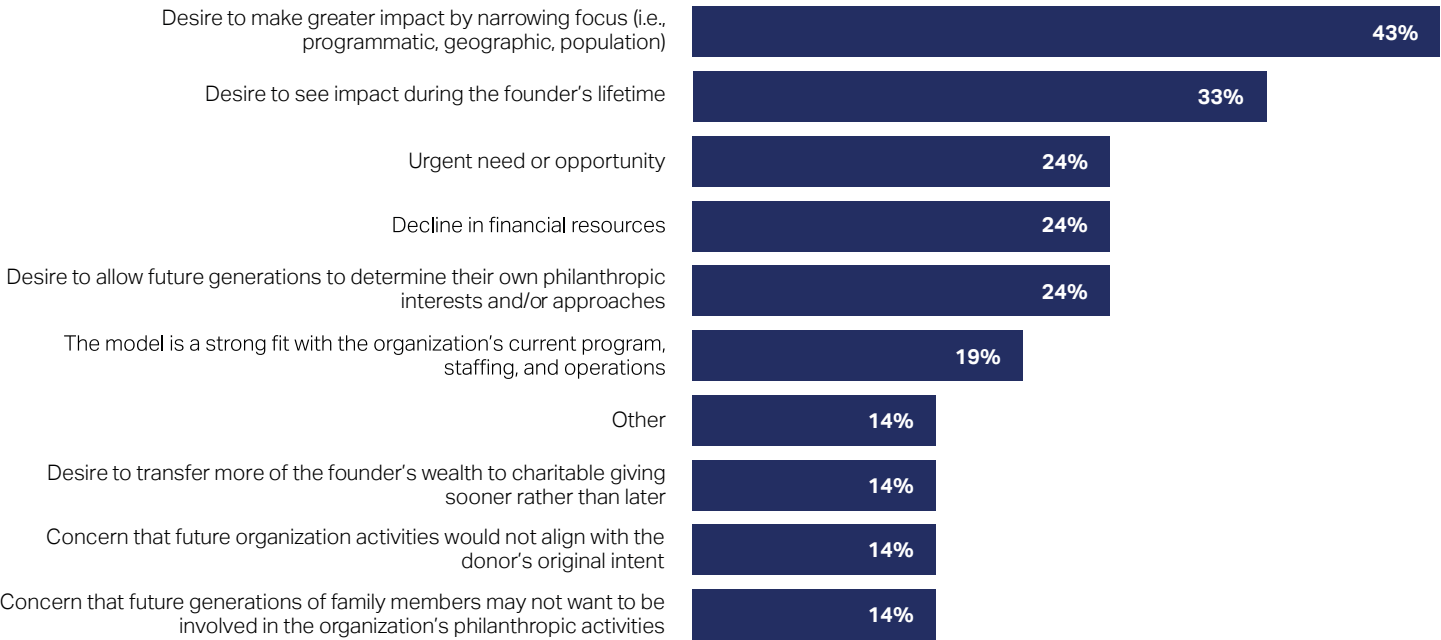
**The reasons for adopting a time-limited model are varied.**

Of the 21 philanthropic organizations that adopted a time-limited model, 43% did so to make a greater impact by narrowing their focus (e.g., programmatic, geographic, population). One-third wanted to see the impact of efforts during the founder’s lifetime, 24% respectively adopted a time-limited model due to an urgent need or opportunity, a decline in

financial resources, and a desire to allow future generations to determine their own philanthropic interests and/or approaches. Fourteen percent of organizations, respectively, adopted a time-limited model out of concern that future generations of family members would not want to be involved in the organization’s philanthropic activities or that future organization activities would not align with the donor’s original intent. These findings reflect a slight change from the 2020 survey, [Strategic Time Horizons: A Global Snapshot of Foundation Approaches](#) where the top three reasons for adopting a time-limited model were desire to transfer more of founders’ wealth to charitable giving sooner rather than later (38%), desire to make greater impact by narrowing focus (31%), and desire to see impact on beneficiaries during founder’s lifetime (31%).

Many organizations reported that adopting a time-limited model led to improved operational efficiency. Nearly half said it had led to a greater strategic clarity and focus. Thirty-eight

**Figure 30: Main Reasons Adopted a Time-Limited Model (n=21)**

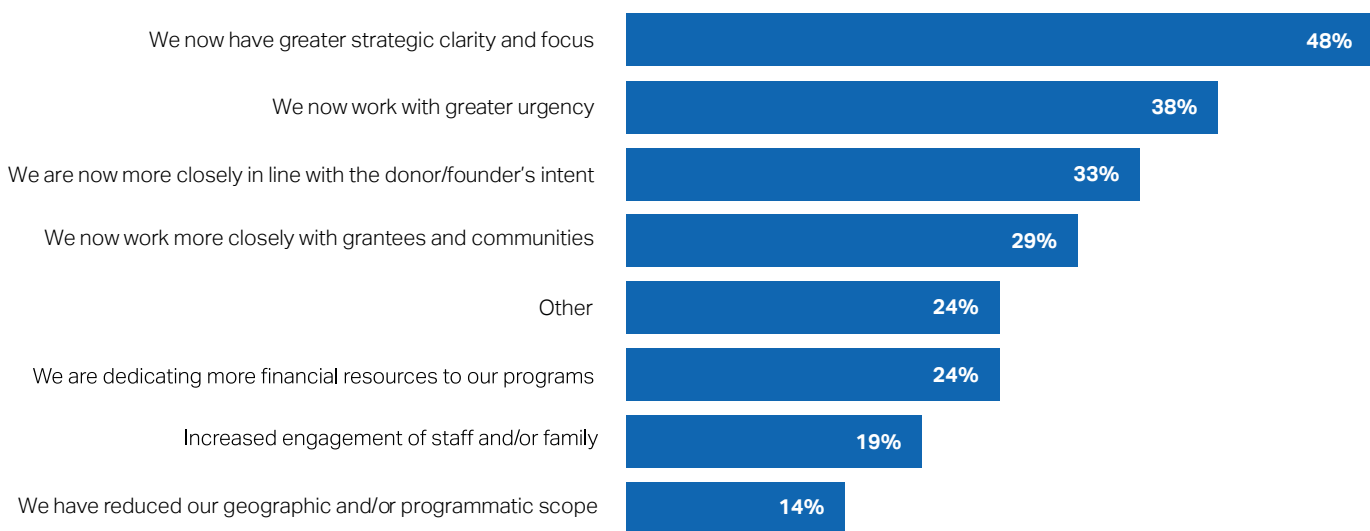


percent said they worked with greater urgency, 33% said their work was more aligned with the donor/founder's original intent, and 29% said they worked more closely with grantees and communities. In fact, none of the organizations reported that the switch had not improved the efficacy of their philanthropy in at least some way.

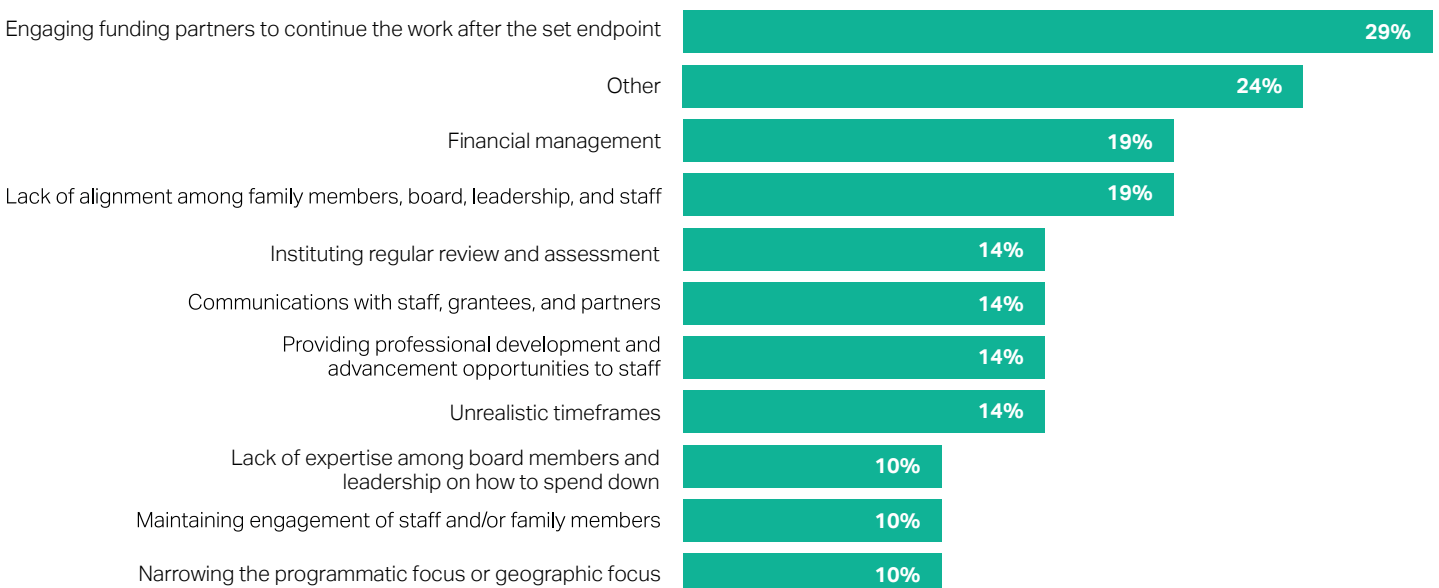
most common challenges included engaging funding partners to continue the work after a set end point (29%), lack of alignment among family members, board, leadership, and staff (19%), and financial management (19%).

At the same time, organizations that switched to a time-limited model dealt with a variety of challenges in the process. The

**Figure 31: How Did Adopting to a Time-Limited Model Make Philanthropy More Effective? (n=21)**



**Figure 32: Biggest Challenges to Implementing Time-Limited Model (n=21)**



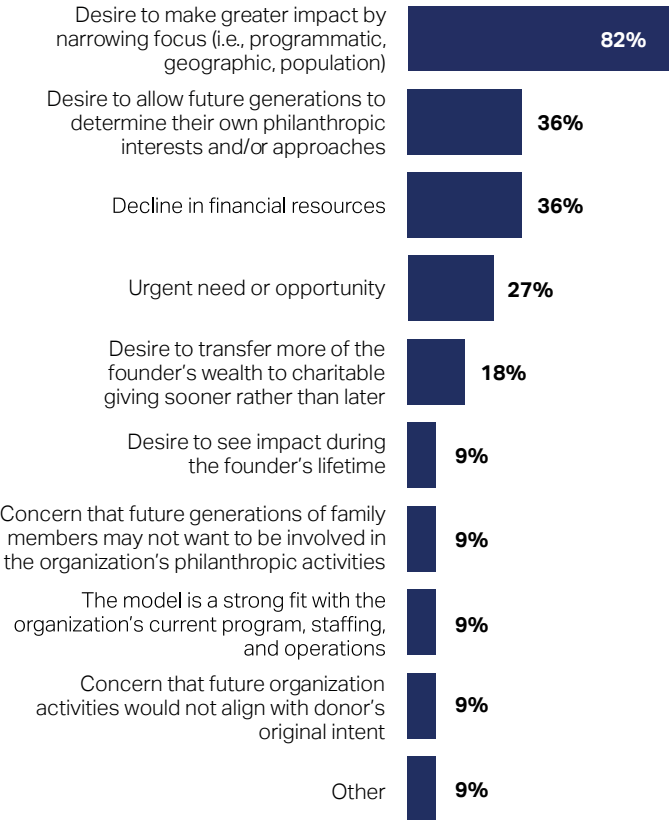
## 6.2 Drivers of Considering Time-Limited Model

### Organizations considering time-limited model were driven by a desire to make an impact.

Among the 11 respondents considering a switch, 82% cited a desire to make greater impact by narrowing focus. Other reasons included an expectation to allow future generations to determine their own philanthropic interest or approaches (36%).

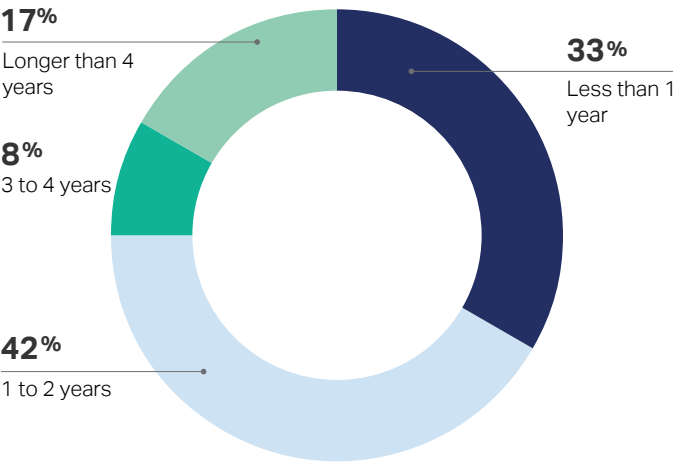
Thirty-six percent also cited as a reason a decline in financial resources; this is notably higher than the 2020 survey, [Strategic Time Horizons: A Global Snapshot of Foundation Approaches](#), in which no respondents mentioned declining financial resources as a reason for considering a switch.

Figure 33: Main Reasons for Considering a Time-Limited Model (n=11)



The length of time these organizations spent weighing the potential switch varied. Of the 11 respondents, four had discussed the switch for less than a year, five for one to two years, and three had discussed the option for more than three years.

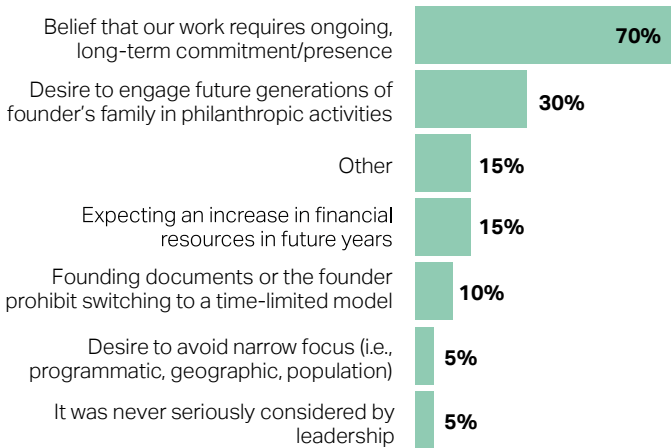
Figure 34: Length of Time Leadership Discussed Switch to a Time-Limited Model? (n=11)



## 6.3 Reasons for Deciding Against Time Limited

### Most organizations that decided against a time-limited model said it did not align with their long-term goals.

When asked about factors that prevented the organization from switching to a time-limited model, 70% said they believed that their work required an ongoing, long-term commitment or presence. Thirty percent of organizations reported it was due to a desire to engage future generations of the founder's family in philanthropic activities. These findings are similar to the 2020 survey, [Strategic Time Horizons: A Global Snapshot of Foundation Approaches](#) in which responded also cited desire to make impact on beneficiaries over multiple generations (63%), desire to engage future generations of founder's family members in the organization's philanthropic activities (37%), and the expectation of an increase in financial resources in future years (14.8%) as reasons for deciding against the switch.

**Figure 35: Main Reasons for Deciding Against the Switch to Time-Limited Model (n=20)**

Nearly half of the organizations that decided against switching to a time-limited model said they took it under consideration in order to make a greater impact by narrowing focus, and 41% said an urgent need or opportunity presented itself. Fewer mentioned a desire to transfer more of the founder's wealth to charitable giving sooner rather than later or a concern that future generations of family members may not want to be involved in the organization's philanthropic activities.

This was similar to the findings in the 2020 survey, [Strategic Time Horizons: A Global Snapshot of Foundation Approaches](#), in which respondents who decided against the switch cited desire to make greater impact by narrowing focus (33.3%), concern that future generations of family members may not want to be involved in the organization's philanthropic activities

**Figure 36: Main Reasons for Considering Time-Limited in the First Place (n=17)**

(25.9%), and decline in financial resources (22.2%) as top reasons for considering a time-limited model in the first place.

## 6.4 Perceived Effectiveness of Time Horizons

### Both the time-limited and the in-perpetuity models of giving are viewed as effective.

The survey asked respondents to agree or disagree with general statements about each model of giving. Among all organizations surveyed, more than eight in 10 agreed or

strongly agreed that organizations following a time-limited model work with greater urgency (86%) and that they were more likely to spend their resources according to the donor's philanthropic intent (83%). Seven in 10 agreed that time-limited organizations were motivated to use a greater allocation of funds toward charitable giving. More than five in 10 agreed that time-limited models enabled organizations to establish closer relationships with grantees and communities, or encouraged donor's family members to be more engaged in their philanthropy.

Organizations generally shared similar opinions about the time-limited model. However, in-perpetuity respondents were less likely than their time-limited counterparts to say the time-limited

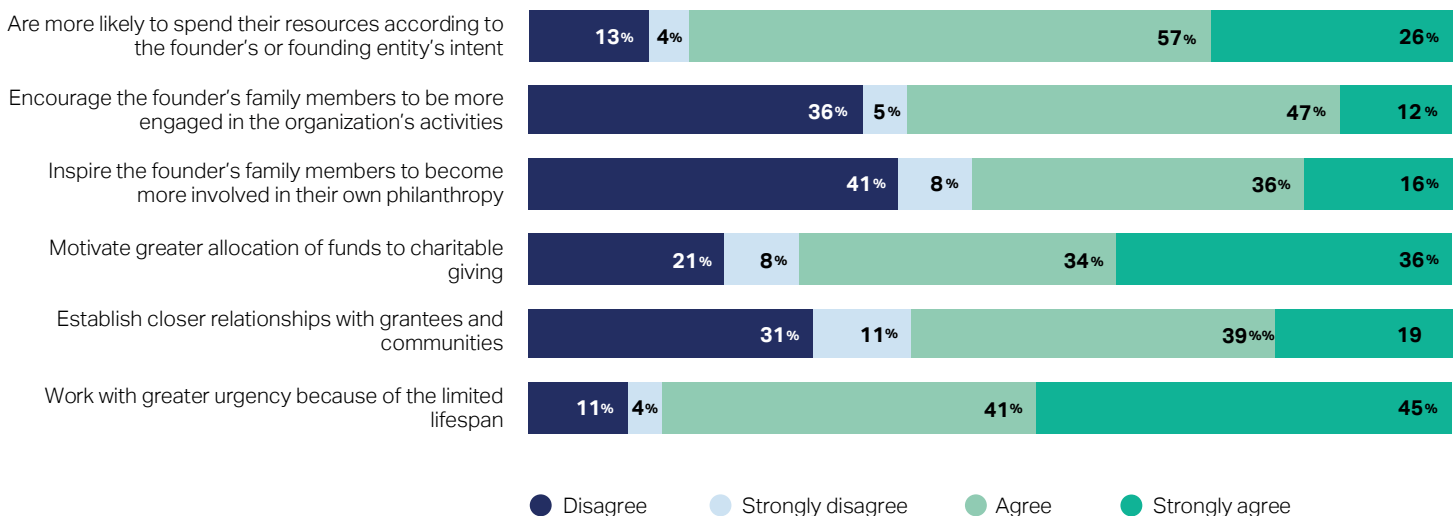
model encouraged the donor's family to be more engaged in philanthropic efforts and establish closer relationships with both grantees and communities.

When it came to perceptions of effectiveness of in-perpetuity time horizons, all responding organizations expressed high levels of agreement with each statement. More than nine in 10 agreed that the in-perpetuity model enabled future generations

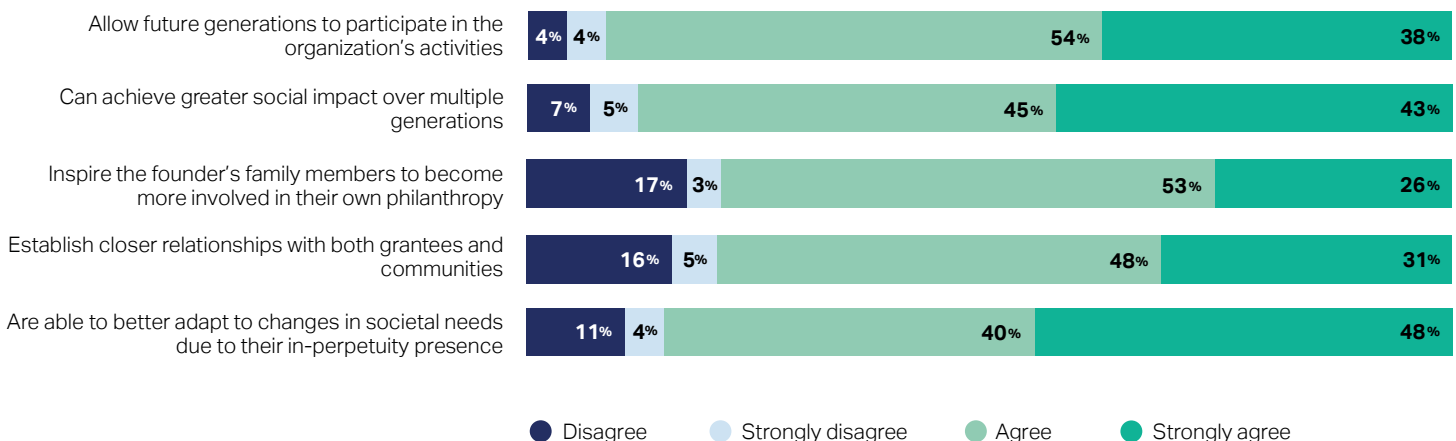
of family members to participate in the foundation's work. More than eight in 10 agreed that the model enabled social impact over multiple future generations, and allowed for the adaptation to changes in societal needs over time. Nearly eight in 10 said this model established closer relationships due to the longer time horizon and inspired the donor's family to become more involved.

Attitudes about the in-perpetuity model do not differ significantly by respondents' time horizon. However, a larger fraction of respondents from in-perpetuity organizations agreed with the positive statements about the model than their time-limited counterparts.

**Figure 37: Philanthropic Organizations that Follow a Time-Limited Model... (n=140)**



**Figure 38: Philanthropic Organizations that Follow an In-Perpetuity Model... (n=142)**





# 7 Conclusion



## 7. Conclusion

This latest iteration of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors' research on trends and strategic time horizons in global philanthropy seeks to understand philanthropic organizations' strategic and operational practices, including the decision-making driving strategic timeframes for giving. That respondents from six continents contributed insights to our report, despite the lasting havoc of COVID-19, suggests that global philanthropy has grown even more thoughtful, intentional and strategic about how it accomplishes its mission to create meaningful social change, give back to society, and address pressing needs.

As the world's challenges become increasingly urgent and complex, philanthropists benefit from periodic analyses of strategy to inform their vision, goals, and optimal use of available resources. For an increasing number of organizations, this calculus includes a discussion of strategic philanthropic timeframes. Funders engaging in this introspective analysis might want to consider the following:

- What is your motivation for engaging in philanthropic giving?
- How do you define impact and how does your family or organization's focus areas and approaches drive impact?
- How does your family or organization measure success and is grantee input a part of the evaluation process?
- Who are the decision makers and stakeholders consulted in considering your philanthropic timelines?
- How will global challenges (specifically the challenges of 2020 and 2021 as well as those in the future) impact your priorities and level of giving, as well as your time horizons?

Additionally, the salient trends and insights captured in our previous survey have been expanded on in this study, including:

- Time-limited philanthropy continues to grow as a strategic consideration and adopted model.
- Clearly defining success, focus area, and vision is crucial to philanthropy's successful implementation of its mission, vision, and goals.

- As the world continues to change rapidly, it is crucial to engage in re-assessment of philanthropic timelines. Whether it reaffirms your philanthropy's current approach or sparks the decision to pivot, this process can help you achieve sharper strategy and greater impact.

The diversity of location, size, decision-making structures, and programmatic focus of the organizations surveyed for this report clearly illustrate the wide range of philanthropic efforts and approaches leveraged to benefit the world. As a result, the answer to the questions raised here will differ from funder to funder. Moreover, each philanthropy may have different historical, personal or cultural reasons for selecting certain approaches over others. Thus, it is important to remember that it isn't the choices themselves, but rather the thoughtful, strategic conversations and analysis that lead to making these choices that are critical to maximizing impact. We hope our research plays an important role in informing and honing such strategic decision-making.



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