

# From Closing the Gap to Setting the Standard:

## The State of Philanthropic Giving in the Indian American Diaspora

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Prepared by



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in the Indian American Diaspora

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# The Indian American Diaspora's giving potential has surged since 2018; but has our philanthropic giving increased to match this potential?

## ◆ In 2018, we found that Indian Americans were donating far below their potential.

Seven years ago, Indiaspora and Dalberg launched the first formal effort to study the Indian American Diaspora's (IAD) philanthropic giving patterns.<sup>1</sup> This study found many strengths, including that Indian Americans volunteer nearly twice as many hours as the US average. However, the finding that drew the most attention was that Indian Americans donated significantly less than the US average (when adjusted for income levels), resulting in a "giving gap" of \$2-3 billion per year.

## ◆ Since that initial study, the giving potential of the Indian American Diaspora has increased significantly.

Since 2018, the Indian American Diaspora has added over 1 million members, and now numbers over 5.2 million people.<sup>2</sup> The median annual income of IAD households has increased by over a third in the same period, rising from \$110,000 to more than \$151,000. And there are now 12 Indian-origin billionaires in the United States, more than any other country.<sup>3</sup> The Indian American Diaspora has an outsized and growing economic influence in the United States, and indeed, despite making up only 1.5% of the U.S. population, Indian Americans contribute 5-6% of all US tax revenues.<sup>4</sup>

## ◆ Yet efforts to understand how this increased potential has translated to philanthropic giving have been limited.

There have been several studies of Indian giving patterns published in recent years, but these have focused on high-net-worth individuals and/or philanthropic patterns in India.<sup>5</sup> To our knowledge, there has not been a broad-based assessment of philanthropic giving among Indian American donors since our 2018 study.

## ◆ We launched the 2024/2025 Indian American Community Engagement Survey to fill this gap.

The India Philanthropy Alliance (IPA), Indiaspora, and Dalberg surveyed 400+ Indian American donors across the US to understand how giving attitudes, behaviors, and barriers have evolved since 2018. This survey was disseminated through extensive outreach efforts led by IPA, Indiaspora, and countless partner organizations. As a result, rather than being a representative sample of the broader Indian American Diaspora, the survey represents the donor community.

<sup>1</sup> Indiaspora and Dalberg, *Putting our money where our hearts are: The Indian American Community Engagement Survey*, 2018

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau tabulations of the 2021-23 American Community Survey (ACS)

<sup>3</sup> Forbes, *America's Richest Immigrants 2025*, 2025

<sup>4</sup> Indiaspora, *Small Community, Big Contributions, Boundless Horizons: The Indian Diaspora in the US (2024 Indiaspora Impact Report)*, 2024

<sup>5</sup> These include Bain and Dasra's 2025 "*India Philanthropy Report*", AIP and BCG's 2024 report "*Wealth with Purpose - a Report on Private Indian Philanthropy*", Indiaspora, Give, and Bridgespan's 2023 report "*Pathways To Unlock Transformative Giving By Indian Diaspora In The United States*", reports from the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) at Ashoka University and Worldpanel Division of Kantar's ongoing longitudinal study: "*How India Gives, 2021-22*" and "*Motivations and Barriers to Household Giving in India*", OECD's 2019 report "*India's Private Giving: Unpacking Domestic Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility*", Gates Foundation and Dalberg's 2017 report "*Diaspora Giving to India*", Intelicap and MacArthur Foundation's 2016 study "*Strengthening philanthropic giving and impact investing for development in India*", Bridgespan and Dasra's 2015 SSIR article "*Giving Back to India*", IPA's articles "*Diaspora Philanthropy 3.0*" and "*How and Why to Achieve a Breakthrough in American Philanthropy to India*".

This report summarizes our findings on giving patterns, challenges, and opportunities facing Indian American donors. Recognizing that the IAD donor community is not a monolith, this study also dives deeper into key donor groups that exhibit significant variance in their giving patterns and needs, including segmentation by FirstGen and NextGen donors (we define FirstGen or first-generation Indian Americans as those who immigrated to the US, and NextGen or next-generation Indian Americans as those born in the US) and by self-rated knowledge of philanthropy (e.g., novice and expert donors).

Overall, our findings show that significant progress has been made since 2018. Our hope is that the data and recommendations included in this report will catalyze even more, better, and more strategic giving, and help shift our collective focus from closing the giving gap to setting and achieving a new standard for sustained, transformative philanthropy.

◆ **It has been a privilege to conduct this study, and it would not have been possible without the community's support.**

We extend our deepest thanks to the Sehgal Foundation, the Neera and Deepak Raj Family Foundation, the Ujala Foundation, and the Indiaspora donor community for their commitment to understanding and strengthening diaspora philanthropy and for supporting this report financially. We are deeply grateful to the IAD community members who generously shared their valuable time and perspectives with us. And lastly, we thank you for reading this report. We look forward to hearing your reflections in the coming weeks and months.



We have much to celebrate: our giving has increased significantly, giving is increasingly aligned with our values, and we continue to be prolific volunteers.

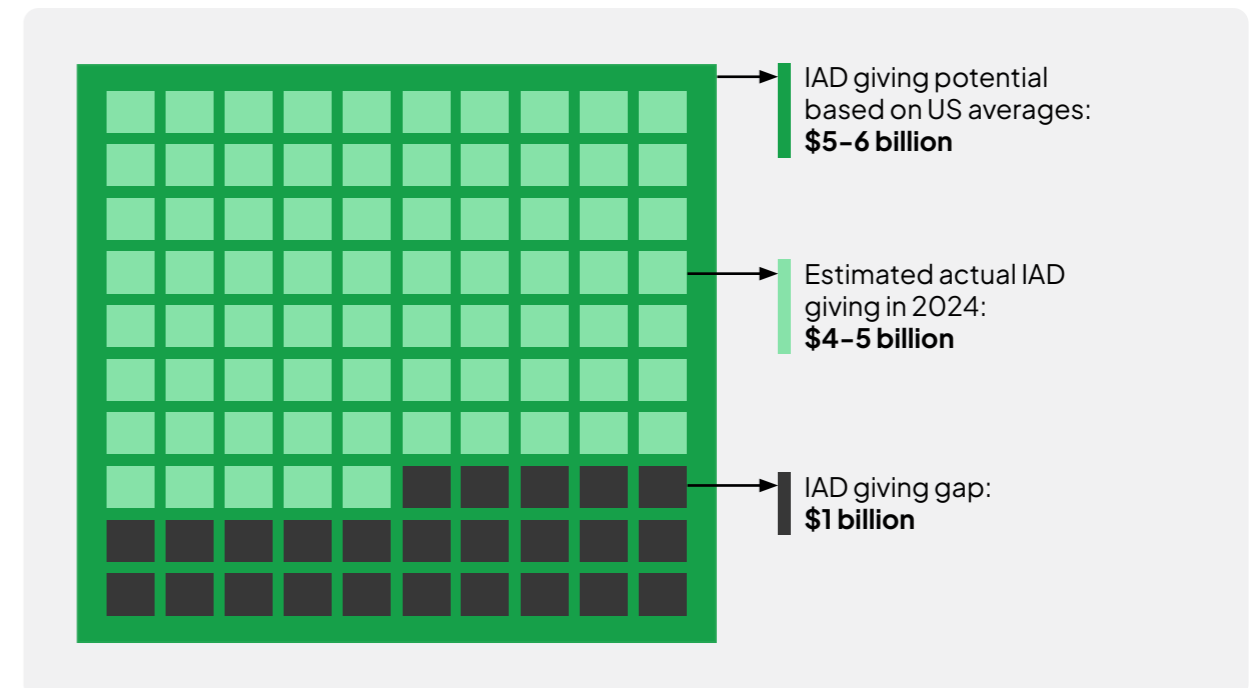
◆ Giving has increased significantly, especially among higher-income donor households.

Immediately following the release of our initial study in 2018 – which found that Indian American donors gave less than the US average at every income level – an Indiaspora member challenged the IAD: "Let's triple our giving." Survey data shows that we delivered: **total giving among the IAD reached an estimated \$4–5 billion in 2024**, translating to an average of \$7,000 – \$7,500 per IAD donor household. This is due in part to a significant increase in median IAD household income, which rose from \$110,000 in 2016 to \$151,000 in 2023.<sup>6</sup> But the primary driver was an increased commitment to giving, with IAD donations as a percentage of income rising from 1–2% in 2018 to 4–5% in 2024.<sup>7</sup> This increase was particularly strong among higher-income donor households who now give significantly more than the US average (see Figure 4).

The primary driver of increased donations was a greater commitment to giving, with IAD donations as percentage of income rising from 1–2% in 2018 to 4–5% in 2024.

**Figure 1: The giving gap — the difference between giving potential (if Indian Americans gave at US rates) and actual donations**

Comparison of potential IAD giving (based on US averages) and estimated actual giving in 2024, US dollars



**Sources:** (1) IPA, Indiaspora, Dalberg Indian American Community Engagement Survey 2024-25; (2) IRS, Statistics of Income Division, Table 2.1, 2022  
**Notes:** (1) n = 280; (2) Given that giving potential is a highly subjective term, we compared the Indian diaspora population to the broader American population. (3) We estimated the order of magnitude of the giving gap as follows: **Giving gap = Donation capability – Actual donations**, where:  
**Donation capability** = Number of IAD households (source: American Community Survey) x Mean gross IAD household income (source: American Community Survey) x Donor rate (source: Lily School of Philanthropy's 2021 Philanthropy Panel Study) x Share of gross income donated by American donor households (estimated using IRS statistics of income data);  
**Actual donations** = Number of IAD households x Mean gross IAD household income x IAD donor rate (assumed the same as US donor rate) x Share of gross income donated by Indian American donor households (estimated from IAD sample)

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau tabulations of the 2015-16 and 2021-23 American Community Surveys (IPUMS)  
<sup>7</sup> The methodology for estimating the giving as a percentage of income among the IAD has changed slightly since the 2018 study to reflect changes in the 2024 survey questionnaire made to capture larger donations among the IAD. While in the 2018 survey, we offered ranges for formal giving up to \$10K+, respondents in the 2024 survey were allowed to choose ranges up to \$500K+ when reporting their formal giving. Regardless, there was a significant increase in giving as a percentage of income even when adjusting for this change.

◆ **We continue to be prolific and highly skilled volunteers.**

Volunteering continues to be a strength for the IAD donor community, with survey respondents averaging 200 volunteer hours a year, nearly three times the national average of 70 hours.<sup>8</sup> This represents a slight decline in IAD volunteering since 2018 and mirrors an even larger decline in the national volunteering rate from 96 hours a year in 2017 to 70 hours in 2023.<sup>9</sup>

The top five IAD volunteer activities included in-person volunteering such as park clean-ups or working in a soup kitchen (54% of volunteers), serving on nonprofit boards (43%), fundraising (40%), teaching, tutoring or mentoring (36%), and offering pro bono professional expertise (34%). It is notable that so many members of the IAD practice skills-based volunteering, whether by donating professional expertise such as legal advice or medical assistance, or through their board service. The former is highly valued by nonprofits, replacing expensive services that they would otherwise have to pay for out of pocket, while the latter demonstrates that many IAD members are not just financially supporting nonprofits, but taking active leadership roles in the organizations that they believe in.

◆ **Our passion-giving gap is shrinking as we align our dollars with our values.**

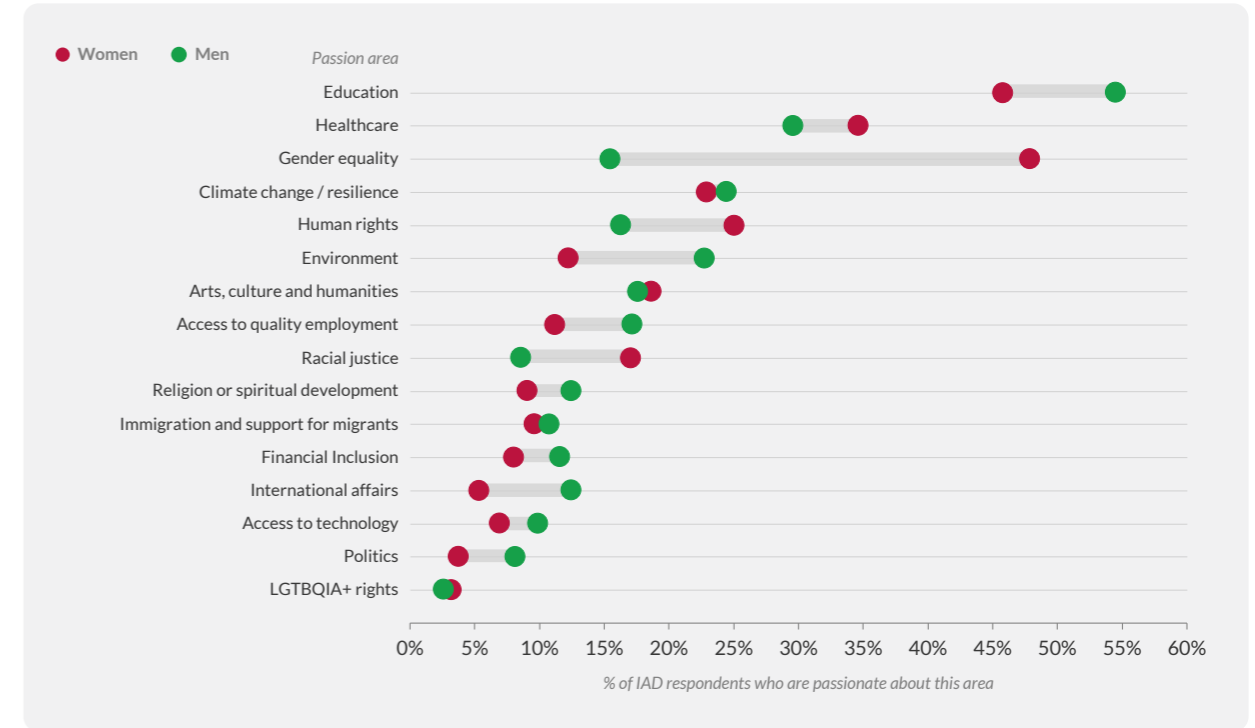
The IAD continues to be passionate about a diverse range of issues. The top ranked passion area for members of the IAD remains Education (cited by 51% of respondents), followed by other traditional social impact areas including Healthcare (32%), Climate Change (23%) and Arts, Culture and Humanities (18%). Interestingly, members of the IAD, and in particular NextGen members, are also passionate about several progressive impact areas including Gender Equality (30%), Human Rights (21%), and Racial Justice (12%). And similar to our findings from 2018, respondents were less passionate about religious causes (11%) than the US overall, where religious organizations received 23% of all US donations in 2024.<sup>10</sup>

**The passion-giving gap fell by half, from an average of 8% in 2018 to 4% in 2024.**

The quality of our giving has improved since 2018, as the IAD has become better at translating our passions into targeted donations. The passion-giving gap — the difference between IAD members' passion areas and their actual giving — fell by half from an average of 8% in 2018 to 4% in 2024 (see Figure 3). The gap shrank the most in healthcare, employment, financial inclusion, and access to technology. Additional research is needed to understand the specific actions that enabled this shift, so that similar tactics can be applied to issues where the passion-giving gap remains significant.

8 US Census Bureau, *U.S. Volunteerism Rebounding After COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2024  
 9 US Census Bureau, *New U.S. Census Bureau and AmeriCorps Research Tracks Virtual Volunteering for First Time*, 2024  
 10 Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, *Giving USA 2025: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2024, 2025*

**Figure 2: The Indian American diaspora's passion areas**  
 Percentage of respondents by issues they are most passionate about, by gender



**Source:** IPA, Indiaspora, Dalberg Indian American Community Engagement Survey 2024-25  
**Notes:** (1) n (women) = 188, n (men) = 233; (2) Respondents were asked to select up to three areas they were most passionate about

Gender equality was the top ranked passion area for women, while education was top ranked for men. Gender equality is the issue with the greatest gender gap, with nearly 50% of women ranking this as a top issue compared to less than 20% of men. More work is needed to educate men on gender equality issues which remain pervasive in both India and the US.



Despite this progress, we still have room to grow as a leading philanthropic community: large passion-donation gaps persist, and a reduced but still significant \$1B gap remains.

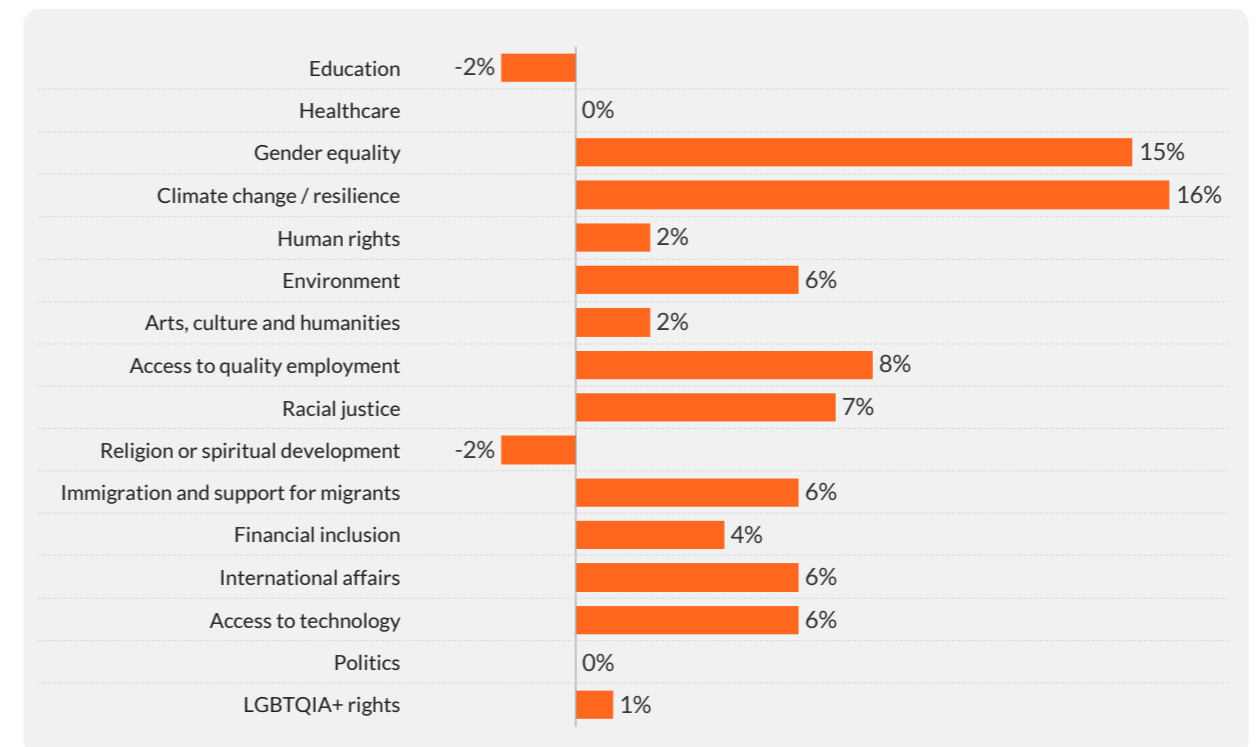
◆ Significant passion-donation gaps remain in key issue areas.

Gender equality and climate change continue to show large passion-donation gaps, and the gap for gender equality has actually widened since 2018. The persistence of these gaps likely reflects how difficult donors find it to engage with these important causes. More traditional causes such as education and healthcare have well-developed and accessible philanthropic infrastructure, where donors can easily find reputable organizations and assess the impact of their dollars. There are three improvements that the IAD can undertake to start to close these gaps:

- **Make it easier to identify effective organizations:** 59% of climate-passionate respondents seek verified lists of credible organizations, indicating they struggle to identify trustworthy climate organizations to support. Studies show that this is a common challenge facing climate funders and recommend engaging in established climate collaboratives and intermediaries as a way to more quickly achieve high-impact giving.<sup>11</sup> IAD-serving organizations can facilitate this by sharing lists of trusted climate collaboratives with members.
- **Make it easier to learn from peers passionate about the same causes:** Gender-passionate respondents are the most interested in joining cause-specific giving groups or circles (27%). IAD-serving organizations can prioritize gender equality as a key issue area when launching these groups in the future.
- **Better understand and meet the needs of women donors passionate about gender equality** Gender equality ranked as the top passion area for women (selected by 48% of respondents) but was also the top passion-donation gap for women (26%). The magnitude of this gap suggests that a dedicated initiative is needed to better understand the specific barriers restricting giving and launch targeted solutions that support women members of the IAD to channel their passion into support for this important cause.

**Figure 3: The passion-donation gap — the difference between causes Indian-Americans care about and where their money goes**

*Difference between the share of respondents who are passionate about a specific issue and the share who give to that issue*



**Source:** IPA, Indiaspora, Dalberg Indian American Community Engagement Survey 2024-25

**Notes:** (1) n = 433; (2) Respondents were asked to select up to three passion areas they were most passionate about. Some respondents declined to answer

<sup>11</sup> Bridgespan, *Winning on Climate Change: How Philanthropy can Spur Major Progress Over the Next Decade*, 2023

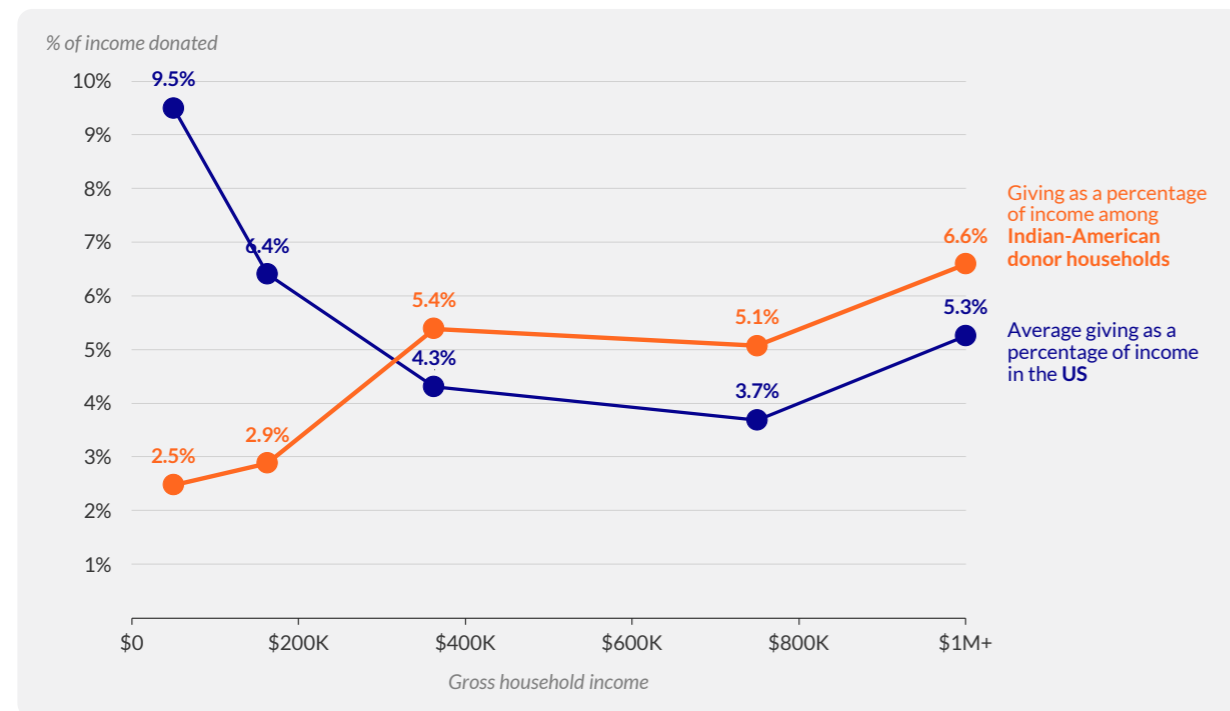
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◆ **We still have a significant giving gap, which manifests primarily in lower- and middle-income IAD donors.**

Despite an overall increase in giving, IAD donors still donated ~\$1 billion less than their philanthropic potential in 2024. This is because giving as a percentage of income actually declined for IAD donors earning less than \$200,000 a year, mirroring national trends where giving declines have been the sharpest among “everyday donors” who face significant cost of living challenges. IAD donors earning less than \$100,000 gave 2.5% of their income compared to the US average of 9.5%. Similarly, those earning \$100,000 – \$200,000 contributed 2.9% versus the national average of 6.4%.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 4: Indian-American giving compared to average US giving as a share of income**

Average of donations as a percentage of gross household income, by income bands, for IAD donors and for US donors



**Sources:** (1) IPA, Indiaspora, Dalberg Indian American Community Engagement Survey 2024-25; (2) IRS, Statistics of Income, Table 2.1, 2022

**Notes:** (1) n for IAD households = 280; (2) US estimates are based on national averages for charitable giving as a percentage of gross household income across different income bands, computed using IRS Statistics of Income’s (SOI) data on returns with charitable deductions; (3) These percentages represent income donated by donor households only, and excludes non-donor households; (4) The methodology for estimating donations as a percentage of income among the IAD has changed slightly since the 2018 study to reflect changes in the 2024 survey. In 2018, our top giving category was defined as \$10,000+ per year. In 2024, we expanded giving categories and defined the top category as \$50,000+. While this affects direct comparisons of the data, trends held even when we accounted for the difference in methodology; (5) Given the 2024 IAD sample was disproportionately wealthy, we applied population weights across income bands (i.e., proportion of IAD in different income bands, based on computations from 2022 ACS survey).

| **IAD donors donated ~\$1B less than their philanthropic potential in 2024.**

<sup>12</sup> Estimates are based on national averages across different income bands computed using IRS Statistics of Income’s (SOI) data on returns with charitable deductions (Source: IRS, Statistics of Income Division, *Table 2.1: Returns with Itemized Deductions: Sources of Income, Adjustments, Itemized Deductions by Type, Exemptions, and Tax Items*, 2022)

Historically, most IAD donor engagement efforts by nonprofits have focused on supporting higher-income and FirstGen donors, and as noted above these efforts have been highly successful. But closing the remaining giving gap will require fresh approaches that better meet the unique needs of lower- and middle-income donors, many of whom are NextGen or newer to philanthropy. This is a strategic imperative not just to increase donations in the short-term, but to ensure the long-term sustainability of IAD giving, as many of these newer or NextGen donors stand to earn or inherit significant wealth and become the major donors of tomorrow. It is critical that we start supporting these donors on their giving journeys now, and better understanding these segments is a primary focus of the next section of this report.

The India Philanthropy Alliance (IPA) has made NextGen engagement a priority through its *Youth Essay Competition*<sup>13</sup> (which just completed its sixth year) and its requirement that all organizations on its board recruit someone under the age of 35 to their governing bodies.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, it has published detailed guidelines for effective outreach to youth and young professionals, which were summarized in an article in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*<sup>15</sup> and is available upon request. More efforts like these are required.

★ **Women philanthropists in the Indian American Diaspora**

IAD women are highly engaged in philanthropy, especially as volunteers. Mirroring broader US trends, 73% of female respondents volunteered in the past year compared to 57% of male respondents. But despite this strong engagement, women respondents gave 40% less than men as a percentage of income. This is in contrast with US averages, where women donors have historically donated more as a percentage of income than men.<sup>16</sup>

Women respondents report not being satisfied with this status quo and want to give more (30% are satisfied with their current giving levels vs. 47% of men). However, they disproportionately face two barriers to doing so: first, they are more resource constrained and have other priorities in their lives (20% of women vs. 11% of men). This is consistent with broader US trends following the pandemic, which disproportionately impacted women’s employment and placed increased burdens on their time.<sup>17</sup> Second, too many IAD women are simply not asked to give to causes they care about (18% of women vs. 9% of men). As organizations implement the recommendations included in this report, they should make sure to design solutions in ways that address these disparities (e.g., prioritizing engaging women in new outreach initiatives and in the creation of new giving circles).

<sup>13</sup> IPA, *6th Annual Youth Essay Competition*, 2025

<sup>14</sup> IPA, *Criteria to join the network*

<sup>15</sup> IPA, *How Nonprofits can better engage young people*, 2022

<sup>16</sup> Women’s Philanthropy Institute, *Do Women Give More? Findings from Three Unique Data Sets on Charitable Giving*, 2016

<sup>17</sup> Women’s Philanthropy Institute, *Women Give: 20 Years of Gender and Giving Trends*, 2024

Knowledge and strategic giving practices unlock giving for all IAD donors, and newer donors in particular are asking for support to help them become better givers.

- ◆ While every donor has room to improve the quality and quantity of giving, we identified two dimensions that drive the greatest variance in giving rates, barriers, and enablers among IAD survey respondents.

These dimensions are **knowledge level** (e.g., did the respondent self-identify as a novice, knowledgeable, or expert on philanthropic giving) and **generation** (e.g., did the respondent identify as first-generation or next generation). Critically, these dimensions also correlate with income, with novice and NextGen givers more likely to fall into lower-income brackets where the giving gap is greatest. Understanding these dimensions (see Table 1 and 2) can help practitioners develop targeted solutions that address the unique needs of different donor segments and enhance our understanding of how we can all become better givers. This analysis largely confirms and is consistent with the distinctions between the sophistication of donors described in an article IPA contributed to the Stanford Social Innovation Review titled "[Diaspora Philanthropy 3.0.](#)"

**Table 1: Profiles of self-identified novice, knowledgeable, and expert givers**

	Novice Givers	Knowledgeable and Expert Givers
<b>What are their giving patterns?</b>		
How does their giving compare with the IAD average?	Novices give less than 10% of the IAD average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledgeable givers give in line with the IAD average</li> <li>• Experts give more than twice as much as the IAD average</li> </ul>
How much do they give to In-dia?	40% give to India	64-67% give to India
How satisfied are they with their level of giving?	23% are satisfied with their level of giving	46-54% are satisfied with their level of giving
How many have a defined strategy and budget for giving?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33% have a giving strategy</li> <li>• 28% have a budget for giving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72-84% have a giving strategy</li> <li>• 56-79% have a budget for giving</li> </ul>
<b>What are they most excited to learn about?</b>		
	Identifying high-quality nonprofits (Novices and Knowledgeable: 59%, Experts: 44%)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning about key issue areas (41%)</li> <li>• Understanding the financial / tax benefits of giving (25%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging NextGen or family in giving (35-37%)</li> <li>• Developing a strategic giving plan (20-24%)</li> <li>• Integrating values and giving goals in wealth management plans (18-21%)</li> </ul>
<b>What supports are they most likely to ask for?</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verified lists of non-profits organizations (Novices: 54%, Knowledgeable: 55% Experts: 36%)</li> <li>• Issue/geography-based funds that allocate funds directly organizations (Novices: 24%, Knowledgeable: 23%, Experts: 21%)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and resources (16%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philanthropic donor speaker series (21-25%)</li> <li>• Giving groups / donor networks organized by issue or geo (18-19%)</li> </ul>

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## ◆ Knowledge unlocks giving.

Knowledge of giving practices is highly correlated with IAD giving, consistent with similar findings from research on donation patterns more broadly.<sup>18</sup> Self-identified ‘novice givers’ donate less than 10% of the IAD average, whereas ‘expert givers’ donate more than double the IAD average. There is a desire for more donor education across the board, but specific learning topics and methods vary significantly by key segments:

- **Across the board:** The top issue that all donors would like to learn about is how to identify high-quality nonprofits. This challenge is so pervasive that even 44% of expert donors cite it as a top priority. In the absence of this learning, donors would like trusted intermediaries to help identify these high-quality nonprofits for them, whether via verified lists of quality nonprofits or funds that allocate donations directly to quality nonprofits in a chosen issue or geographic area. India Giving Day’s process for vetting quality organizations for its annual fundraising drive is beginning to meet this need, but more is required. [GivingPi](#) by Dasra is another positive initiative addressing this issue
- **Novice donors:** Newer donors are more interested in learning about the fundamentals of giving, with over 40% interested in learning about key issue areas and over 25% interested in better understanding the financial and tax benefits of donating. These donors would benefit from expert-led “Giving 101” trainings and resources that equip them with enough knowledge to get started on their philanthropic journeys.
- **Knowledge and expert donors:** More experienced donors are interested in how to give more effectively and in line with their values, with over 35% interested in better engaging family in giving and nearly 20% interested in learning how to integrate their giving goals into wealth management strategies. These donors prefer peer-to-peer learning, either via donor speaker series or giving groups.

## ◆ Strategic giving practices can help us better align our giving goals and our donations.

Applying this knowledge via strategic giving practices is also linked to both greater and higher quality giving. For example, a 2024 survey by Vanguard Charitable found that donors who create a giving budget give up to three times as much as other donors.<sup>19</sup> And this is corroborated in our survey findings: only 28% of IAD novice givers with lower giving rates have a giving budget vs. 79% of expert givers that donate more. Similarly, only 33% of novice givers have a strategy for their giving, compared to 70–80% of more experienced donors. Giving strategies play a critical role in aligning donations with priority issue areas, and indeed, survey respondents who have a giving strategy nearly eliminated their passion-donation gap, with only a 1% gap compared to a 4% gap for all donors.

**IAD donors who had a giving strategy nearly eliminated their passion-donation gap, with only a 1% gap compared to a 4% gap for all donors.**

<sup>18</sup> Yale Center for Consumer Insights, *Understanding Donor Behavior: Insights for Increasing Engagement and Charitable Giving*, 2024, and Harvard Magazine, *Making Charitable Giving More Competent*, 2024  
<sup>19</sup> Vanguard Charitable, *New Survey: American donors who budgeted for charitable donations gave nearly 3 times more money, on average, over the past 12 months than those who did not budget*, 2024

Helping IAD donors develop giving strategies and budgets – focusing on providing ‘101’ level tools and resources to novice donors and facilitating peer-to-peer sessions to share how these tools have helped more advanced donors – will enable donors to direct more of their money to the causes and organizations they care most about. While there are many other things that can be done to improve the giving experience for IAD donors, this represents one of the most actionable measures that could significantly increase the quantity and quality of IAD giving in the near-term.

## ★ HNWI novices are particularly interested in resources to help them better align giving actions with aspirations.

In general, novice givers are not satisfied with their current giving levels and are eager to access foundational trainings from trusted sources, build their giving expertise, and become better givers. This is particularly true for the 29% of novices that are high net worth individuals (HNWI) with assets over \$1 million.

The majority of these HNWI novices gave less than \$1,000 in the past year, and only 30% of them are satisfied with this giving level. HNWI novices have needs similar to novices overall and are actually more interested than other novices in accessing supports like verified lists of nonprofits, training and resources, and funds that allocate donations directly to nonprofits.

The number of these ‘newly wealthy donors’ is expected to increase significantly in the coming decades, as Indian Americans are forecast to earn or inherit trillions in wealth. Helping these individuals match their giving to their goals represents both a significant near-term opportunity to close the giving gap, and a long-term opportunity to set a new standard for sustained, transformative philanthropic giving.



NextGen and FirstGen donors have distinct giving patterns, and tailored strategies are needed to support each group individually, and to help bring these groups together.

**Table 2: Profiles of first and next generation donors**

	First generation donors (i.e., immigrated to the US)	Next generation donors (i.e., born in the US)
<b>What are their giving patterns?</b>		
How does their giving compare with the IAD average?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give slightly more than the IAD average</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives less than half as much as the IAD average</li> </ul>
How much do they give to India?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>76% give to India</li> <li>40% give to IAD causes in the US</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>41% give to India</li> <li>40% give to IAD causes in the US</li> </ul>
What barriers are they most likely to face in general?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough evidence on the operational efficiency of non-profits (30%)</li> <li>Not enough trustworthy non-profits to support (18%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competing life priorities and resource constraints (24-26%)</li> <li>Not asked to donate to causes they care about (24%)</li> </ul>
What barriers are they most likely to face when giving to India?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough reliable information on nonprofits working in India (First gen: 31%, Next gen: 38%)</li> <li>Don't know whether Indian organizations are creating meaningful impact (22%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't know which causes or organizations in India to support (31%)</li> <li>Don't know how to donate to organizations in India (16%)</li> </ul>
What supports are they most likely to ask for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue/geography-based funds that allocate donations directly to quality nonprofits (21%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving groups or donor networks organized by issue or geography (24%)</li> <li>Support developing strategic giving or values-aligned wealth management plans (19-21%)</li> </ul>

◆ **NextGen donors are increasingly ambitious in their giving aspirations but need help translating this into action.**

NextGen donors represent the future of IAD giving as they continue to grow their share of IAD population and wealth. This will only accelerate as this group inherits trillions of dollars of wealth over the coming decades as part of “The Great Wealth Transfer”, presenting a rare opportunity for transformative impact. However, today NextGen donors give less than half the IAD average and exhibit large 15-30% passion-donation gaps in priority issue areas including gender equality, human rights, climate change, and racial justice. Better supporting this important donor segment to give more, and more strategically, will be critical, both to close the giving gap in the short-term, and to unlock sustained giving in the long-term.

**24% of NextGen respondents haven't been asked to donate to causes they care about.**

The good news is that NextGen donors would like to give more, with only 40% satisfied with their current level of giving. However, this segment faces three barriers to doing so: First, they are still building their careers and families and have less time and fewer resources to devote to giving, so they need the process to be as easy and efficient as possible. Second, they aren't being asked, with 24% of NextGen respondents noting that they haven't been asked to donate to causes they care about. And third, they aren't being engaged, with less than 33% of NextGen respondents having interacted with the largest IAD philanthropic support organizations over the past year.

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Nonprofits and the philanthropic community can better support NextGen givers by prioritizing NextGen outreach, engagement, and learning. One solution that NextGen respondents were particularly excited about that accomplishes all three are donor networks organized by issue area or geography. These groups, which sometimes take the form of giving circles, bring together small communities of peers to learn about and give to new issue areas and organizations, and have played an important role in driving donor engagement, education, and giving in other donor communities. This idea particularly resonated with NextGen women, 33% of whom were excited to participate vs. 24% of NextGen overall. A significant number of NextGen donors are also interested in developing more strategic giving and wealth management plans and are asking for trusted and efficient support to help them get started.

◆ **FirstGen donors face barriers finding quality organizations, which trusted intermediaries can help resolve.**

FirstGen donors give slightly more than the IAD average and are responsible for much of the increase in giving rates over the past decade. However, over half of this group would like to give even more to causes they are passionate about, but struggle to find organizations to donate to that they trust and that have a strong track record of operational efficiency. Trusted intermediaries could play an important role here by providing lists of verified nonprofits that include key metrics that align with FirstGen priorities. As mentioned above, India Giving Day has started to address this issue over the last three years, and its continued growth is an important opportunity to more deeply meet this need. Over 20% of FirstGen donors were also interested in ways to outsource selection of trusted nonprofits entirely, through issue or geography-focused funds that allocate donations directly to quality nonprofits.

◆ **Both generations have critical roles to play in supporting Indian and IAD causes, but face unique barriers in doing so.**

IAD donations to India are crucial, as the IAD contributes ~40% of all foreign donations to Indian NGOs.<sup>20</sup> This giving is led primarily by FirstGen donors, who give to India at almost twice the rate of NextGen donors. However, evidence suggests that NextGen donors still feel a strong community connection to India as they support IAD causes in the US at the same rate as FirstGen donors. Anecdotally, many NextGen donors report that they would like to give more to India, but struggle to do so given competing demands on their time and their limited knowledge. This is supported by the survey data, which shows that NextGen donors struggle to understand which causes and organizations to support in India, and how to navigate the process of donating to organizations to India. This is particularly true for NextGen women, 37% of whom report not knowing enough about which causes or organizations to support in India, and 45% of whom report not feeling like they have enough reliable information about organizations working in India.

While NextGen donors primarily face a knowledge gap, FirstGen donors primarily face a trust gap. Providing FirstGen donors with more reliable information on the impact created by Indian nonprofits could help spur greater giving to India and help close the passion-giving gap in key impact areas. Ideas discussed in the previous section to address the trust gap, including verified lists of nonprofits organized by issue area and focused funds, could also be developed that focus specifically on India to help mitigate this barrier.

<sup>20</sup> Rajya Sabha, Starred Question 304 on Foreign Funds Received by NGOs between 2016-20, 2021

◆ **Both first and next generation donors would like giving to be more of a family affair.**

While there are several opportunities to support NextGen and FirstGen donors in giving to India, there is also a broader strategic question of how the giving patterns of these two groups can complement one another. If NextGen donors are ultimately more interested in ‘giving where they live’ by supporting causes in their communities, then perhaps FirstGen donors will need to be more proactive in increasing their giving to India, or in setting up long-term giving strategies to ensure continuity of giving to India. These are highly personal decisions, and there is no right answer. But given the significant differences between FirstGen and NextGen giving priorities, the important thing is that these conversations are happening and that families are working together to create complementary giving plans.

This is something that both first and next generation donors want. Today, 25-33% of donors make philanthropic decisions together with their family members, and 25% of both generations would like support in how to better engage their family in giving decisions. Family can play an important role in addressing the knowledge and trust gaps discussed earlier, and trusted intermediary organizations can play an important role in providing the resources, examples, and safe spaces for these conversations to take place.



Our findings show that IAD donors want to give more, and more strategically; NGOs and the philanthropic sector have a critical role to play in translating this aspiration to action.

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### Launch targeted initiatives to engage the next generation as donors, members, and leaders.

NextGen donors represent the future of IAD philanthropy, and IAD-serving organizations need to do more to prioritize them as donors, members, and leaders. There have been several promising initiatives launched in recent years focused on cultivating next generation leaders, including Indiaspora's [DiasporaNEXT](#), IPA's [Youth Leadership Council](#) and [Youth Essay Competition](#), and AIF's [Banyan Service Fellowship](#). The next step is to scale these efforts to ensure that all IAD serving organizations have dedicated NextGen leadership and outreach programs. Other diaspora groups have enabled this change by launching intermediaries focused specifically on supporting NextGen giving. One example focused on youth giving is [Honeycomb](#), an organization that creates tools, curricula, and trainings to help organizations and philanthropic professionals better reach Jewish youth and engage them in strategic grantmaking.



### Develop resources and trainings that demystify giving for novice donors who want to give more.

Over the next few decades there will be a significant increase in novice IAD donors that have the means to be major givers, but don't yet know how. [GivingPi](#) is addressing this challenge for 400 leading Indian philanthropic families by offering masterclasses on philanthropic giving fundamentals and access to philanthropic advisors, among other resources. There is a need for a similar set of supports for novice Indian American donors, ranging from foundational trainings and resources that are available to all, to more bespoke 1:1 or cohort-based advisory support for newly wealthy donors that need help developing more robust strategic plans and budgets to support their giving goals.



### Create trusted giving communities that allow donors to learn and give alongside peers.

While novice donors are seeking knowledge, NextGen and female IAD donors are searching for giving communities. Philanthropy can be intimidating, but giving circles – which tripled in number from 2016 to 2023 – create safe spaces for like-minded peers to learn together and pool their resources to create impact at scale.<sup>21</sup> They are also highly effective in helping participants become better givers: 86% of participants say they improved their understanding of the focus issue or community, 72% improved their understanding of philanthropy, and 63% increased the amount they give. There are over 4,000 giving circles in the US, but to our knowledge there is only one IAD-focused giving circle: AIF's [Circle of Hope](#), which brings together communities of women donors to fund projects that support women and girls in India. We need more giving circles and other forms of donor networks, so that every potential IAD donor has access to a community that meets their needs – whether that's shared identity, geography, or passion areas.

<sup>21</sup> Philanthropy Together, [In Abundance: An Analysis of the Thriving Landscape of Collective Giving in the U.S.](#), 2024



## Build information infrastructure that makes it easier for donors to give confidently, especially to India.

The most asked for resource across all segments was “verified lists of high-quality nonprofits in key issue areas in the US and India.” IPA is starting to address this by vetting quality organizations for India Giving Day, but a more systematic, year-round solution is needed. Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) addressed this barrier by launching [HipGive](#), a digital platform that makes it easy for Hispanic donors to identify projects, organizations, and giving circles, sorted by geography and issue area. A similar platform customized to reflect IAD donor priorities – including impact and efficiency data for Indian nonprofits, lists of quality organizations organized by issue area, and clear guidance on how to give to India – would allow IAD donors to give more to the causes and geographies they care most about.



## Support family giving initiatives that bring FirstGen and Next-Gen donors together.

Nearly 30% of respondents want more support engaging their families in philanthropy, and this holds across both FirstGen and NextGen donors. This support is typically provided by wealth managers, but as described in “[Meet the Integrator](#)” by Sharon Schneider, traditional wealth management approaches to family giving generally fail to create safe spaces to share philanthropic goals of different family members, discuss how to adjust giving strategies to align with these goals, and/or ensure that every family member has some degree of control over giving decisions. Diaspora networks can play an important role in supporting more effective family giving. For example, [Jewish Funders Network](#) offers consultations with seasoned philanthropic professionals focused on NextGen philanthropy training and creating family philanthropic legacies that center Jewish values, and a cohort-based community focused specifically on families navigating family foundation transitions. IAD families are asking for similar supports, and a helpful starting point could be asking family members to attend future Philanthropy Summits and other donor events together and then creating space for family giving workshops to begin facilitating these important conversations.



# Our call to action: Let's use this decade to set a new standard for philanthropic giving.

# 7

## ◆ Over the last decade, we've shown our capacity to close the giving gap.

Our track record speaks for itself: In just seven years the Indian American Diaspora has rallied to nearly triple our giving from \$1–2 billion in 2018 to \$4–5 billion today. Higher income IAD donors significantly increased their giving as a percentage of income and now give significantly more than the US average. And not only did we increase the quantity of our giving, but we increased the quality of our giving as well, cutting the passion-donation gap in half and sending more support to the causes we care most about.

We know what it will take to close the remaining \$1B giving gap: Creating tailored strategies to reach, engage, and educate NextGen and Novice donors who are early on their philanthropic journeys. Building trusted giving communities organized around shared identity, geography, and/or passions. Investing in infrastructure to make it easier for IAD donors to give to the causes they care about, especially those in India. And supporting families in having courageous conversations around values-aligned family giving. Accomplishing this will be hard work, but we know we can do it. We've done it before.

## ◆ But why stop there? Our community has the privilege and the opportunity to set our sights even higher.

The giving potential of the Indian American Diaspora is set to increase even more in the coming years. There are already 12 Indian-origin billionaires in the US — more than any other country — worth over \$50 billion, and we expect these figures to grow significantly.<sup>22</sup> As this generation contemplates their philanthropic legacies (e.g., through the [Giving Pledge](#)), we hope and expect new and large commitments emerging to match this scale of wealth, whether through the establishment of major philanthropic foundations or by giving substantial portions of their estates toward charitable causes.

By 2030, wealth held by UHNWI members of the IAD is expected to exceed \$1 trillion.<sup>23</sup> If they donate just 0.5% of their wealth, that alone represents \$5 billion in annual giving. Over the next two decades, Next-Gen members of the IAD stand to inherit nearly \$2 trillion as part of "The Great Wealth Transfer". If they increase their giving to just 1% of wealth annually, that would represent \$20 billion in annual giving. For context, it took \$20 billion to nearly eradicate polio; and in 2024 alone, the Gates Foundation granted \$8 billion, Warren Buffett contributed \$5.3 billion, and Bloomberg Philanthropies gave \$3.7 billion.<sup>24,25,26,27</sup>

These are of course just projections, but they serve to illustrate the transformative impact our community is capable of. Imagine the breakthroughs in science, the increased access to quality health and education, the progress on decarbonization, and the increase in gender and racial equality we could unlock. Imagine the new wave of foundations and institutions we could build to power the next chapter of human progress. Imagine the better world we could create, together.

## ◆ Over the next decade, let's commit to setting a new standard for philanthropic giving.

We know from our survey and conversations with donors that most members of the Indian American Diaspora want to give more, and want to give more strategically. And that even more of us dream of creating a better world that reflects our shared values. The next decade is when we match that ambition to action, set a new standard for giving, and show the world that transformative philanthropic giving is still possible.

<sup>22</sup> Forbes, *America's Richest Immigrants 2025*, 2025

<sup>23</sup> Indiaspora, Give, and Bridgespan, "Pathways To Unlock Transformative Giving By Indian Diaspora In The United States", 2023

<sup>24</sup> Global Polio Eradication Initiative, "Historical Contributions"

<sup>25</sup> Gates Foundation, *Annual Report*, 2024

<sup>26</sup> Forbes, *Warren Buffett Just Gave Another \$5.3 Billion To Charity*, 2024

<sup>27</sup> Bloomberg Philanthropies, *About Us*, 2025

## Methodology

### ◆ How we conducted this study

We conducted a survey to examine giving patterns, motivations, barriers, and needs among members of the Indian American Diaspora (IAD) to answer the question: **Are Indian Americans better givers in 2024 than they were in 2018?** This survey builds on our 2018 study, expanding its scope to capture additional gaps and opportunities in philanthropic infrastructure for the IAD.

The survey consisted of 42 questions covering:

- **Giving practices**, including passion areas, motivations for giving, and contribution amounts. Additionally, we explored informal giving and assessed the proportion of US giving directed towards India and IAD causes.
- **Giving behaviors**, including channels and platforms used for giving, sources of information, criteria for selecting nonprofits. We also asked whether respondents have a defined budget or strategy for their giving.
- **Barriers to giving**, both general barriers and specific barriers to giving to India.
- **Learning areas**, which most excite donors and **resources** they would find most valuable in supporting their giving.

The survey was conducted online via SurveyMonkey. Invitations to respond were disseminated through Indiaspora, IPA, and Dalberg's extensive networks. We collected 433 complete responses. Although our dissemination strategy maximized our reach within the IAD, it is important to note that the sample is not representative of the entire diaspora: for example, our respondents are disproportionately older, high-income and engaged in philanthropy. That said, we did collect a sufficient number of responses across several key dimensions to allow for meaningful analysis.

**Table 3: Demographic profile of our respondents**

Demographic	Distribution
Generation	• 76% of respondents were first-generation Indian Americans
Income	• Median annual gross household income for the sample was around \$300,000 • 46% were high net worth individuals (HNWIs), i.e., reported collective assets worth over \$1M
Age	• 61% of the sample were aged 50 years or higher
Gender	• 54% of respondents were male, 43% were female, and 3% were non-binary or declined to state their gender
Years in the US	• 82% of respondents had lived in the US for over 21 years
Education level	• 78% of respondents held a master's degree or higher
Giving practices	• 88% of respondents were donors

The survey design and dissemination methods introduced some limitations that must be considered when interpreting the findings:

- **Our sample mostly comprised of IAD members who are donors**, which likely overrepresents giving levels and practices compared to the broader IAD population.
- **Comparing the current survey results with our 2018 study is limited.**
  - **Our respondents had higher incomes** than in our previous study. To adjust for this, we used population weights for income bands (i.e., proportion of IAD in different income bands, based on computations from ACS survey), which the 2018 study did not do.
  - **We asked about giving differently:** In 2018, our top giving category was defined as \$10,000+ per year. In 2024, we expanded giving categories and defined the top category as \$50,000+ to better capture larger donations. While this affects direct comparisons of the data, trends held even when we accounted for the difference in methodology.
- **Our estimates are not directly comparable with others.** In our calculations, we used gross household income (not disposable income as many other studies do). Therefore, our estimates are not directly comparable with others, such as Giving USA giving rates.

Despite these limitations, our findings provide valuable directional insights into IAD philanthropic trends. However, future studies would benefit from more representative sampling methods to better understand the full spectrum of IAD giving behavior, including perspectives from non-donors who were underrepresented in our current sample.

## ◆ Giving gap methodology

In order to calculate the giving gap, we used the same methodology as the 2018 study. Given that giving potential is a highly subjective term, we compared the Indian American diaspora population to the broader American population. We used a simplified method to estimate the order of magnitude of the giving gap. First, we used the survey to identify approximately what percentage of their income sampled Indian Americans donors were giving. We asked respondents to select from a set of options that reflected (a) level of donations and (b) household income. In both instances, respondents were asked to select ranges, not enter an explicit number. We then calculated the giving gap as follows:

### Giving gap = Donation capability – Actual donations

**Donation capability** = Number of IAD households<sup>28</sup> x Mean gross IAD household income<sup>29</sup> x Donor rate<sup>30</sup> x Share of income donated by American donor households<sup>31</sup>

**Actual donations** = Number of IAD households x Mean IAD gross household income x Donor rate x Share of income donated by Indian American donor households.<sup>32</sup> Since we do not have data on the IAD donor rate, we have assumed it to be the same as the average US donor rate.

28 Estimated by dividing the population of Indian Americans (based on U.S. Census Bureau tabulations of the 2021-23 American Community Survey) by average size of a household (assumed as 4)

29 U.S. Census Bureau tabulations of the 2021-23 American Community Survey

30 Lily School of Philanthropy, *The Giving Environment: Giving During Times of Uncertainty. Data on US Household Giving in 2020, 2024*

31 IRS, Statistics of Income Division, *Table 2.1: Returns with Itemized Deductions: Sources of Income, Adjustments, Itemized Deductions by Type, Exemptions, and Tax Items, 2022*

32 Estimated from IAD sample

## About Us



The India Philanthropy Alliance (IPA) is a coalition of nonprofit, philanthropic, and charitable organizations dedicated to mobilizing people and funding in the United States (and elsewhere) to foster development and alleviate poverty in India. Our journey began in late 2017 when leaders from various nonprofits based in the United States, sharing a common vision for humanitarian and developmental goals in India, began to meet informally. In October 2019, the IPA formally announced itself to the public.



Indiaspora is a nonprofit organization that unites global leaders of Indian origin from diverse backgrounds and professions who are committed to inspiring the diaspora to be a force for good by providing a platform to collaborate, build community engagement, and catalyze social change.

## Dalberg

Dalberg Advisors is a strategic advisory firm that combines the best of private sector strategy skills and rigorous analytical capabilities with deep knowledge and networks across emerging and frontier markets. We work collaboratively across the public, private and philanthropic sectors to fuel inclusive growth and help clients achieve their goals.



# From Closing the Gap to Setting the Standard:

## The State of Philanthropic Giving in the Indian American Diaspora

Prepared by

