

Finding specific female focus for feel-good philanthropy

By Lauren Foster

Published: August 24 2007 15:51 | Last updated: August 24 2007 15:51

Melissa Berman, president and chief executive of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, says there are three strategies or ways to think about funding with a “gender lens”:

- Giving to women: in other words, to organisations that are directly helping women and girls. For example, Afghan Women Leaders Connect (www.afghanwomenconnect.org), which funds non-governmental organisations that help women and girls and are led by women
- Giving with women in mind: this involves giving to certain kinds of institutions or causes that are likely to have an impact on women. For example, microcredit, health issues and nursing. “Most nurses are women and nursing care is what all of us hope we will have at [the] end of our lives,” says Ms Berman
- Funding as a woman: using perspectives and thinking we typically associate with how women act in the world. “We often think of women as more attuned to community, collaboration and co-operation,” she says. “For example, there’s a woman hedge fund manager we work with who’s a strong supporter of teachers, like many donors. But as a woman, she really values mentoring and peer networks, and funds those programmes for teachers.”

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