Philanthropy Women
A Home for News and Conversation on Women Donors

The BitGive Strategy to Support Women Via Crypto-Philanthropy

Editor’s Note: This interview in our Feminist Giving IRL series features Connie Gallippi, Founder and Executive Director of the BitGive Foundation, which supports cryptocurrency-driven philanthropy.

Connie Gallippi, courtesy of Connie Gallippi
1. What do you wish you had known when you started out in your profession?

Prior to founding BitGive, I worked in another profession for 15 years. It was another world, so to speak. Entering the budding Bitcoin industry in its early years (2013), I wish I had known more to expect the challenge of aligning the perspectives of those in finance and tech with a vision of revolutionizing global philanthropy.

In my previous career, I worked with environmental nonprofits in California, advocating within the California legislature, and state and regional agencies. It was a challenge, but eventually we were able to get them to see the benefits of investing in natural resources. Shifting the perspective of tech- and finance-driven people to see how we could dramatically improve philanthropy, and to then take action and invest in our innovative approach, has been more of a gap than I anticipated; however, we are making great strides with our work and through our partnerships, and I can see a significant shift in sight!

2. What is your current greatest professional challenge?

After building our team, products, partnerships and reach for over seven years, we are now well poised for growth as a team, as well as scaling our GiveTrack platform globally. During the challenging times of a global pandemic and the surrounding circumstances, it is difficult to grow with sustainability in mind, as well as scale globally.

As a global community, we must first address the critically important issues at hand, and we are running a number of COVID relief campaigns. As challenging as these times are, we still aim to grow and scale, as these are precisely the type of global challenges we strive to help solve.

3. What inspires you most about your work?
The reason we are here and put in the hard work every day is ultimately to support NGOs and the important work they are doing on the ground to help people and causes around the world. The real impact we see in people’s lives and improving communities and the environment is what it’s all about for us. We have built tools to help the impact NGOs are having growth through efficiencies and donor engagement, to move the needle on big issues. We also love to see the excitement that our NGO partners feel for the potential of bitcoin, cryptocurrency and blockchain technology to truly revolutionize philanthropy and help them ultimately reach their goals.

4. How does your gender identity inform your work?

Every day, I see in many ways how women and young girls are not treated equitably, not just in developing countries and disadvantaged communities but even at the highest ranks in the world’s most developed countries. Sadly, we still have a lot of work to do to turn the tide and reach gender equality in many respects. From child marriage, to women not receiving education or birth control, to rampant sexism in certain cultures and industries, there is a lot more we can do to ensure women and girls rise up and have the opportunities in life that they deserve. All of this informs our work at BitGive, from how we build our team, to the partners we choose and the projects we support. You’ll see a common trend throughout our work — that we employ, support, fight for and work to empower women and young girls all over the world.

5. How can philanthropy support gender equity?

Philanthropy can support gender equity in every way. This very important issue can be approached from many angles; through supporting women and girls directly, and supporting the organizations that work to provide women and girls with economic independence, healthcare, education, safe havens from violence and abuse, food, shelter, childcare, and more. In addition, philanthropy can help by supporting access to technology and opportunities to learn, all the way to hiring and promoting more women, supporting female-led initiatives, supporting more women serving on boards and
speaking on stages, giving women leaders more exposure, and directly investing in women entrepreneurs and social impact leaders.

6. In the next 10 years, where do you see gender equity movements taking us?

Ten years seems like a long horizon... in that timeframe, I would hope to see significant progress, especially given the recent increased awareness and action being taken towards bringing us to a more equitable place for women, and all underrepresented groups. However, as I reflect more on how slowly these issues tend to shift, over generations, I think ten years is a short horizon. If we as a human race and global community could come together as one, and we were all together on this, we could turn this around — no question. Unfortunately, there are mountains to move first in cultural, religious and other entrenched perspectives in order to bring us together on solving this once and for all.

More on Connie Gallippi:

In 2013, Connie Gallippi founded BitGive, the first Bitcoin 501(c)(3) nonprofit. She is the first female founder in the cryptocurrency space and an advocate for diversity and equal opportunity, working to advance the rights of women in the tech industry.

Previously, she worked with environmental nonprofits in California for 15 years, in a variety of roles. Gallippi is a frequent public speaker on crypto-philanthropy, internationally. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Sierra Business Council and as a volunteer for several other organizations. She holds a B.S. in Natural Resource Management from Virginia Tech.

This interview has been minimally edited.
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