

# Worksheet 2: Choosing Your Social Impact Vehicle's Lifespan

This worksheet helps you clarify the desired lifespan of your philanthropic purpose and social impact vehicle. There are three primary options for lifespan: 1) giving while living, 2) creating a limited lifespan philanthropic vehicle, or 3) creating a perpetual philanthropic vehicle.

There are no right or wrong answers in the worksheet, including being undecided. As you consider your answers, note that each generation will last an average of 25 years. We encourage you to share your answers with people you wish to involve in your philanthropy, especially trusted advisors, staff, and family members.

## 1. Set Context for Your Decision

Think about how conditions might change in the future. What responses to those conditions feel right for the causes and communities you serve, your philanthropic strategy, and you and your family?

**Consider the causes you support now. How might they benefit from sustained funding in the future? How might they benefit from an infusion of support over a shorter amount of time?**

**Consider the geographic areas you support now. Is there new wealth being generated that can give to or invest in those areas in the future? What might happen if you stop supporting them?**

**If you see your philanthropy continuing after your lifetime, who will be ready and willing to steward your philanthropic intent in the future? Will your family or other individuals you trust understand and share your vision?**

**Do you want to instill a sense of generosity and civic responsibility in future generations? What education or experiences might be beneficial to support your heirs in this goal?**

## 2. Choosing Preferences

This checklist can help you develop or revisit your preferences about strategic lifespan of your philanthropic purpose and philanthropic vehicle.

	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
1. I prefer taking the long view on opportunities and challenges facing society. Patience is important.			
2. It isn't a priority to see the full impact of my philanthropy during my lifetime.			
3. Giving the most I can during my lifetime won't prevent or diminish future problems in the communities or causes I've prioritized.			
4. There won't be enough other funders or resources in the future to support the communities or causes I care about.			
5. It is very important to ensure future generations have the same amount or more philanthropic resources available that I do now.			
6. Other people I've invited to decision-making roles would agree with my answers to questions 1-5.			
7. Involving family, friends, or others in my philanthropy after I die is very important to me.			
8. If I answered "agree" to question 7:			
a. I'm confident they'll have the desire and time to continue the work.			
b. I'm confident they'll honor my philanthropic wishes or donor intent OR I trust them to alter those purposes over time.			
c. I'm not concerned about the potential for conflict damaging the group.			
<b>Add the number of boxes you checked in each column</b>			

### Answer Key

You can remedy some challenges identified above with a disciplined focus on effective governance and impact strategies. And, there are always exceptions in individual donors' experiences. However, in general:

- If you had more "agree" answers, consider a multi-generation or perpetual time horizon.
- If you had more "disagree" answers, consider giving while living or a short-term time horizon.
- If you had more "unsure" answers or a mix of answers, don't choose perpetuity as a default. Instead, consider a vehicle that doesn't commit you to a time horizon. You likely have more research to do to clarify your philanthropic purpose and/or more conversations to have with people you'd like to involve.

## 2. Your Decision About Lifespan

Now it is time to document your decision, or at least your current preference, by checking one of the options below. Advisors may be able to help you translate your wishes into estate or financial planning documents.

### How long do you want your philanthropic work and resources to last?

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Lifetime:** I want to maximize the difference I make while I live and not ask others to continue my philanthropy after I die.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Period of Time:** I want other people to spend all my philanthropic resources in this timeframe \_\_\_\_\_. (e.g., 20 years after the second spouse dies or “by 2050”)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Generation(s):** I want my heirs or others to continue my philanthropy through this generation \_\_\_\_\_. (e.g., my grandchildren’s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Perpetuity, Flexible Spending:** I want the resources to be endowed and last for many generations. However, I empower future generations to spend as much as necessary in any year to meet evolving opportunities and needs. The value of the endowment can fluctuate and/or decline.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Perpetuity, Minimal Spending:** I want the resources to be endowed and last for many generations. Maintaining and growing the value of the endowment over time is very important.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Undecided:** I haven’t decided yet or I want to wait to see how things go for a while before deciding.

**Why did you choose that answer? What benefits or goals do you see in the choice and/or what negative consequences are you hoping to avoid?**