THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CHARITABLE GIVING & YOUR WEDDING

How Your Wedding Day Can Make a Big Difference

VOW Couple: Kristen and Jonathan / Photo Credit: David Casas at Full Spectrum photography
Welcome!

We heard you’re getting married. Congratulations! We’re so glad you’re here and thinking about supporting a charity with your wedding. From locations to photographers to what to eat and what to wear, there are so many choices to make when planning your wedding. Considering supporting a charity or nonprofit with your wedding is a big step and we’re here to help.

At VOW for Girls, we help millions of girls around the globe choose love on their own terms. We’re honored to help you plan your wedding on your own terms too. We hope that you find this guide useful in your wedding planning journey and we welcome your feedback at any time.

Our goal for this guide is to walk you through the entire process so that you can make an informed decision that feels right to you. Supporting a charity shouldn’t be a struggle or feel like an obligation. Our best piece of advice is to do what works best for you and your wedding. Support a charity that is meaningful to you because you believe in their mission!

With gratitude,

The VOW for Girls team

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Why Should We Support a Charity With Our Wedding?

When it comes to choosing a charity, nonprofit, or cause to support with your wedding, it can be tough to know where to start. Everything from opting for charitable donations in lieu of wedding gifts or favors to hiring wedding vendors are opportunities to support a charity with your wedding. However, in getting started, there are so many things to consider and different ways to do it that it can feel a little overwhelming.

Reasons to support a charity:

- You are looking to add even more meaning to your wedding day
- You feel that you have everything you need and are not looking to ask for gifts from guests
- You are looking for viable alternatives to favors that feel a little more sustainable
- You want to be intentional with how you spend your dollars while planning your wedding
- You want to include a give back element to your celebration that will go beyond your wedding day itself
- You want to start off your married life together on an even more positive note
6 Questions to Ask When Finding a Charity for Your Wedding

1. Is there a cause close to us or our family?
   Many of us have been impacted by things in our lives. Is there a cause related to something that has impacted our life?

2. Do we have a personal connection to a charity?
   Were we supported by a charity, maybe through a scholarship or program, in some way throughout our life?

3. What social causes do we care about as a couple?
   What are global and local issues that we care about where you want to make a difference?

4. Does this cause feel like a good fit for our wedding?
   Does this align with our wedding and does it easily fit into my wedding planning to-do list?

5. Are there easy ways we can incorporate this charity into my wedding day?
   Is the organization we want to support set up to receive individual donations and will it be easy for guests to navigate?

6. Where does the money go?
   What is the funding model and what kind of programs are we supporting?

“We chose VOW because we wanted to do more than what is normal, and give back! There are kids in the world that deserve justice, and every little bit of proceeds helps. We couldn’t pass up an opportunity like VOW!”

VOW COUPLE: MORGAN & D’VANTE
Why Support a Charity With Your Wedding Registry

Ah the wedding registry. No matter where you fall on the subject, wedding registries and gift lists are a part of wedding planning for many couples. It's a love/hate part of wedding planning between engaged couples and guests. Many couples love a registry because it's a chance for them to pick out the gifts that they would like to receive and guests know the couple will love their gift. However, many couples are uncomfortable asking for gifts and may feel that they have everything they need already and would rather use this moment to support a cause.

Today, **wedding registries with a charitable component** also take different forms based on the couple's needs. For the couple **with an existing registry** (and their eye set on a stand mixer) adding a charitable option for guests to "round up" their gifts or provide a meaningful alternative when the gift list is fulfilled is a great way to avoid a guest going rogue.

Alternatively a **charitable wedding registry** could be a perfect option for a couple who has it all (or lives in a city-sized apartment), is not looking to receive gifts, and wants to make a positive impact with their wedding.

Whether adding to an existing registry or setting up a charitable wedding registry only, VOW is tailor made to suit your needs.

"Ryan and I felt strongly from the beginning that in lieu of gifts we wanted our wedding guests to put their money somewhere it would truly make a difference. When we came across VOW for Girls and the incredible work the organization does, it felt like the perfect cause for us to support."

**ELSA & RYAN**

$2550 raised in lieu of gifts
4 Ways to Include a Cause in Your Wedding

Create a Charitable Wedding Registry
Don’t need or want any gifts? Ask your guests for donations in lieu of gifts. Set up a dedicated VOW donation page and easily link it to your wedding website, or include the url in your invitation suite. Looking for a shorter url? Simply email us at weddings@vowforgirls.org and we can provide one!
Set up your Charitable Registry

Replace favors with a donation in your guests’ names
Add even more meaning to your celebration and support girls’ futures by making a donation to VOW in honor of each guest instead of purchasing favors. Did you know $181 can cover school fees for a girl for a year?
Donate at vowforgirls.org

Shop VOW Products
Find the perfect gift for the events surrounding your wedding - from welcome bags, bridesmaids gifts, registry items, and more - and in doing so support girls around the world to choose love on their own terms. A portion of proceeds from all partner products supports VOW.
Shop options at vowforgirls.org/shop

Add VOW to Your Existing Registry or Gift List
Have an existing wedding registry or gift list? You can easily add VOW as your charitable option to most registries/gift lists as a cash fund and donate the funds to VOW after your wedding. This is a great option for when guests wish to “round-up” their gift or for when your list is fulfilled to avoid guests purchasing items not on the list and receiving an unwanted gift.
Learn How to Add VOW to your existing registry/gift list.

Did You Know?
$1,735 USD can cover the costs for one young woman to receive job training or help her start a small business.
FAQs About Weddings & Charitable Causes

Q: How do we inform our guests that we will be supporting VOW for Girls?
A: There are multiple ways to inform your guests that you will be supporting VOW. You can include a message on your wedding website or invitations, add a note in your wedding programs or place cards (see sample), have your DJ or host make an announcement - contact us at weddings@vowforgirls.org for assistance for ideas and suggested language!

Q: Are there other days besides our wedding day that we can support VOW for Girls?
A: Yes! You can support VOW in celebration of your engagement, bridal shower, anniversary, birthday, holidays, and more.

Q: Are there other ways that couples can VOW their weddings?
A: Yes! There are a variety of ways couples can VOW their weddings and we love when couples get creative. For example, VOW couple Hope & Nick (right) incorporated a dollar dance into their wedding reception and all of the donations were dedicated to VOW. They told their guests about the dance in their wedding programs and raised over $300!

Q: Why does VOW work with engaged couples and the wedding industry?
A: Every year, millions of couples celebrate their love by getting married and millions of their family and friends celebrate with them. VOW thinks: what if we could share this love to do something bigger? The U.S. alone spends billions on weddings each year. VOW is engaging this tremendous industry to help end child marriage and be the charity of choice for engaged couples and the wedding industry globally.

Q: I want to support VOW but am not in a place to support financially. Are there other ways to contribute?
A: Yes! There are many ways to support VOW aside from donating. You can follow VOW on social media @vowforgirls and share with friends and family and visit vowforgirls.org to sign up for our newsletter for updates on VOW’s work and future campaigns. Or perhaps consider VOW as a way to celebrate your future anniversaries together.

Q: How do I find vendors who support causes I care about?
A: You can look at their social media, website, about page or simply ask! We also encourage you to check out our list of wedding professionals/vendors who support VOW at vowforgirls.org. By working with them, you are supporting VOW.
Dos and Don’ts of Supporting a Charity With Your Wedding

**Do** find a charity or cause that is important to you.

**Don’t** support a charity just because you feel obligated or someone told you that you had to do it.

**Do** tell your guests a little bit about the charity that you’ve chosen to support and why you picked it—this helps raise awareness within your friends and family and creates more impact.

**Don’t** shame or guilt your guests into supporting your charity; it’s their choice too.

**Do** be open to other wedding events such as showers, bachelor & bachelorette parties to show support.

**Don’t** limit yourself to only using your wedding as a way to support a charity.

**Do** find unique ways to show your support, such as hiring vendors who also care about issues you care about.

**Don’t** limit yourself to donations being the only way to support a cause important to you.

**Do** consider charitable options within your planning to-do list

**Don’t** think that supporting a charity with your wedding will add stress and additional tasks to your to-do list.

“We didn’t want gifts and instead wanted people to support a cause that was important to us. We both work everyday towards mentoring women and providing opportunities for women to enter STEM fields. In some countries, this isn’t even an option... this is why VOW resonated with us.”

VOW COUPLE: KIMBERLY & CARLA

Photo Credit: Michelle Walker
How Your Wedding Can Help Girls Choose Love on Their Own Terms

As you plan your wedding you have the opportunity to be intentional with every choice along the planning process and add even more meaning to your celebration. If you are still looking for a charity that makes an impact and ties in with your wedding - VOW for Girls may be the option for you.

**VOW’s vision is simple: a world where no child is ever a bride.**

As you celebrate choosing each other you can help millions of girls around the world choose love on their own terms. **VOW for Girls is uniquely positioned as the only nonprofit that is specifically designed to align with engaged couples and the global wedding industry.**

VOW gives you simple ways to add a charitable element to your wedding without adding to your wedding planning to-do list. By “VOWing” your wedding, your celebration can be part of the solution to end child marriage in our lifetime.

**Meet Mariama**

Did you know? 76% of girls are married before the age of 18 in Niger. **VOW is supporting efforts to change this.**

16 year old Mariama participates in a program that one of VOW’s grantee organizations runs in Niger that helps build girls’ confidence and leadership skills. The grantee organization also helps Mariama with her school fees so she can stay in school and follow her dreams of becoming an accountant or the head of a bank — instead of becoming a child bride.
Count to three. 1…2…3… A child just became a bride. **VOW’s vision is a world where no child is ever a bride.** Together with engaged couples, wedding industry professionals, brands and everyday supporters, we are growing a global movement to end child marriage

**100% of funds raised** are invested in effective yet underfunded local efforts that advance girl’s rights. Efforts include providing education, job training, and vital life skills so every girl can live a life she love. To date, VOW has supported over 175 community-based organizations in six countries and 85% of those grantees are women-led organizations.

We hope this guide serves as a helpful tool in supporting a charity with your wedding, and we hope VOW is your charity of choice. We welcome your ideas, questions and feedback. You can reach the VOW team at **weddings@vowforgirls.org**