

Writing for GADN

July 2016

As a membership network representing a broad range of UK non-governmental organisations, practitioners, consultants and academics, GADN needs to present itself in a way that is coherent, consistent and easily understood. A clear and comprehensible style that can be replicated across our publications will help GADN attract readers to its resources, minimise staff time spent on editing and formatting, and promote a strong identity for GADN as an organisation.

Wherever possible, GADN publications should use clear, non-specialist language and sentences; be structured and easy to follow; use complete and uniform referencing; and use language that avoids discriminatory, objectifying or victimising tropes.

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A-Z style notes

The following list contains answers to common questions about spelling, grammar, punctuation, abbreviation and other concerns relevant to writing for GADN. For any further queries, please get in touch with the GADN Secretariat.

A or an before h? Use *an* only if the *h* is silent: *an hour, an heir, an honest woman*; but *a hero, a hotel, a historian* (though don't change a direct quotation!)

Abbreviations First mention should be written in full with abbreviation in brackets following: *Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)*. It is not necessary to explain or write out well-known abbreviations: *UN, CIA, USA*.

Do not use full stops or spaces with abbreviations or acronyms: *BBC, mph, eg, 4am, 6kg, No 10, PJ Harvey, WH Smith*. Never use an apostrophe to make an acronym plural: not *NGO's*, but *NGOs*.

Avoid over-use of *ie, eg* and *etc*. Where possible, avoid excessive use of all acronyms and short forms, which can be jargon-y and confusing. Avoid informal contractions unless quoting direct speech: *won't, can't, don't*.

Acronyms – see **Abbreviations**.

American spellings – See **Spelling and grammar**, below.

Ampersand (&) Never use in text except for quotations, sparingly in abbreviations, or as a stylistic device in headlines and titles.

Boxes Use to provide additional information such as illustrative examples or definitions without interrupting the flow of writing and argumentation. Use sparingly to enhance points.

Brand names Avoid unless necessary – photocopy, not *Xerox*; tablet, not *iPad*. Where brand names are necessary, always write according to brand's own usage: *Coca-Cola, LinkedIn*.

Brackets If the sentence is logically and grammatically complete without the information contained within the parentheses (round brackets), then the punctuation stays outside the brackets. (A complete sentence that stands alone in parentheses starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.)

“Square brackets,” the editor said, “are used in direct quotations when an interpolation [a note from the writer, not uttered by the speaker] is added to provide essential information.”

Bullet points The line leading into a series of bullet points should end with a colon and the first letter of each point should always be in lower case if the bullets are sentence fragments. Do not end individual bullets with semi-colons:

- this is an example of how to write bullet points
- all but the last point should be left without punctuation
- the last bullet point closes with a full stop.
- However, if your bullets are lengthy and contain punctuation such as commas, semi colons and full stops, you need to end them differently. In this case, the bullet starts with a capital letter and every one ends with a full stop.
- Be aware, however, that the point of bullets is to express ideas simply and quickly, so the use of complete or long sentences is best avoided.

Collective nouns Should be written in the singular: *the family is, the government has*.

Contractions Avoid informal contractions unless quoting direct speech: *won't, can't, don't*.

Compass points Regions do not have capital letters: *the north, the south of England, southwest Scotland* (note all lower case and all one word). The same applies to geopolitical areas: *the west, western Europe, far east, southeast Asia, central America*. Note that this is slightly different for the Global South, which is usually capitalised.

Currency Other than pounds sterling, currency should always be presented with a sterling, euros, or dollars equivalent (depending on the audience) in brackets: *55 rupees (£1)*.

When written out in text, do not abbreviate: *£5 million, US\$12 billion* (note space between figure and amount). On tables, ranges are written as *£5,000-6,000* (note no spaces and just one pound sign). Use US\$ for dollars, not simply \$.

Dates Write them as follows: *25 January 2008*. Dates should only be abbreviated in charts, graphs and tables; in that case, write them as *25.01.2008*. Never use *th* or *st* for dates. Date ranges are written out when used in-text: *from 25 to 27 June, or between 25 June and 25 July 2006*. When ranges appear in graphs or tables, use a hyphen at the earliest point possible: *25-27 March 2015, 25 June-25 July 2012*. See also **Decades**, below.

Decades Use *1990s* to describe a decade, not *Nineties* or *'90s*. Never use an apostrophe.

Ellipses Use ellipses (three dots) to indicate an omission, without a space between the last letter of the preceding word and the first dot or after the last dot, unless it begins a new sentence: *on the right...of the wall*.

Email/web addresses Do not use a full stop at the end of the address when mentioned in-text.

Endnotes – See section on **Referencing your sources**, below.

Font Use Calibri, Arial or Helvetica in 12-point size. Italics should be used for titles of publications and sparingly for emphasis.

Footnotes – See section on **Referencing your sources**, below.

Foreign words and phrases At first mention these should be given in italics and translated in brackets afterwards or otherwise explained: *we saw their tukuls (homes)*.

Fractions Always in word form, without hyphens: *two thirds, one quarter*.

Government Always all lower case in all contexts and all countries, unless it is the beginning of a sentence.

Grammar – See *Spelling and grammar*, below.

Headings and titles For clarity, limit headings to a main title, section headings, and sub-headings, particularly in shorter briefings. Further subdivision of sections is confusing to the reader. Numbered headings should use Arabic (non-Roman) numbers: *1, 2, 3*, etc.

All titles take sentence case; that is, they only have a capital letter at the beginning of the first word and on any proper nouns.

Images All pictures must be credited in the format *photographer or agency/GADN* (note no spaces). If the photo has been taken by a member of staff, it should simply be credited as *GADN*. Never leave an image uncredited; this includes photos and artworks, as well as charts, tables and graphs that are taken from other sources. The photo credit appears in brackets after any caption for the image. It is the author's responsibility to ensure that permissions to use copyrighted images have been obtained and verify this with the Secretariat.

For briefings and position papers, images should be formatted according to the existing templates. Images appearing in reports will be formatted to fit the report layout and handled by the Secretariat.

Initials – See *Abbreviations*, above.

Jargon Avoid where unnecessary. This includes unfamiliar or superfluous short forms or technical terms. Jargon obfuscates your message and risks turning off your readers, no matter who they are.

Job titles Always use lower case for titles mentioned in passing: *the director of GADN spoke, the prime minister said*. Use upper case when the name is mentioned: *GADN Director Jessica Woodroffe, Prime Minister Jeremy Corbyn*.

Numbers Spell out from one to nine; anything 10 or above goes in figures unless it comes at the start of a sentence, in which case it is written out in full. If a sentence has a mix of numbers above and below 10, make them all figures. Write round numbers over one million as follows: *25 billion*. (If you do use the shortened version, it comes immediately after the number, if written out, leave a space.) Always use a comma with numbers over one thousand, placing it between each three digits: *3,200* or *10,438*. See also **Ordinal numbers**, below.

Ordinal numbers Spell them out up to ninth: *first, second, seventh*, etc. Then: *10th, 21st* (unless it's a date, when it is always in numerals). See also **Numbers**, above.

Orientate/orient Use orient, not *orientate*: *Our work is oriented towards the development sector*.

Oxford comma Avoid where possible, but include where it clarifies the meaning of the sentence.

Parentheses – See *Brackets*, above.

Percentages Should be written as *25 per cent* (note space) with the exception of tables, charts and graphs where use of the percent sign (%) is acceptable.

Pictures – See *Images*, above.

Pressurised/pressured Use *pressured*, not *pressurised*: *We will be pressuring the government.*

Quotations Each quotation should be preceded by a comma. Use double quotation marks, not single. If the quotation forms a full sentence, the full stop is inside the closing quotation mark. If it is not a full sentence, punctuation goes outside the closing quotation mark. Thus: *Gordon Brown said that, "When a decision has been made it will be announced through the normal channels."* Try to avoid quoting passages longer than three lines. Consider paraphrasing your source instead.

Referencing – See section *Referencing your sources*, below.

Registered charity number We are legally obliged to make the fact that we are a registered charity clear on all material that persuades readers to give money or property to GADN, including memberships. This information is included in GADN's publication templates, but in the event that it is needed, include the following text: *The Gender and Development Network is a registered charity (number 1140272).*

Spacing After final punctuation in a sentence, add a single (not double) space. At the end of a paragraph, leave a space before the next paragraph begins, either by pressing the Enter/Return key twice OR formatting the document to leave a space.

Spelling and grammar As a rule, GADN uses British spellings and grammatical rules according to the Oxford English Dictionary. Thus, use *realised*, not *realized*; *organisation*, not *organization*; *programme*, not *program*; *centre*, not *center*. Beware of overzealous spellcheckers that are often set to American English as default.

The exception to the rule is when quoting other sources or referring to official organisations that use US spellings in their names: *World Trade Organization, Center for Public Concern, World Health Organization*. We do not change quotations or the spelling in the names of official institutions.

Subheadings – See *Headings and titles*, above.

Templates – See section *Layout* below.

Titles – See *Headings and titles, Referencing* or *Job titles*, above.

World Bank Do not abbreviate no matter how many times you mention it.

Referencing your sources

Properly referencing all information that is included in GADN’s briefings, position papers and reports helps to make them authoritative and improve GADN’s reputation in the sector. Wherever you use information or ideas that are not your own, you must reference the source. This makes the information you use traceable and reinforces the validity of your argument, but it also represents ethical and sound research and writing practice. GADN’s house preference is for endnotes rather than footnotes – see **Endnotes**, below.

Using endnotes

The superscript endnote reference should always go after punctuation, not before, and should appear at the end of a sentence wherever possible. Never place two superscript references side by side; instead, put both sources into a single endnote, separating items with a semicolon.

Direct quotations When quoting someone else’s work word-for-word, place the text between double quotation marks and indicate the source (including page number) with an endnote. It is never acceptable to use a source’s exact words without using both referencing and quotation marks. See also **Quotations**, above.

Indirect references When including information or ideas from a source, but expressing them in your own words, do not use quotation marks but do include an endnote indicating the source (including page number).

How to format references

As a general rule, the references in endnotes are written in sentence case in the following order with whatever information is available and applicable for that source (note spaces and punctuation):

Surname, FirstInitial. Year. ‘Article/Chapter/BriefingTitle’, *Book/Report/Periodical/Website Title*, edited by Editor, PageSpan, Series/Workshop/Conference, DayMonthForPeriodicals, PageNumber. PlaceOfPublication: Institution/Publisher. URL

Abbreviating references Later references to the same source may be abbreviated to an author name, year of publication and page number – see below. Documents with three or more authors can be shortened to the first author’s last name plus *et al*. For clarity and traceability of references, avoid using *ibid* and *op cit*. Shortened references should look like this:

Surname YearofPublication, PageNumber.

Author names The preferred format is surname, comma, first initial, full stop. For publications with multiple authors, list the first author as shown above and subsequent authors with their first initial followed by surname: *Woodroffe, J., E. Esplen and R. Stokes*.

Chapter titles and authors Only list the title and author of a chapter if it is part of an edited collection where each chapter is written by a different person or group. Otherwise, reference the entire book or report.

Dates of publication For periodicals, online sources, speeches and presentations, list the year after the author's name, with the day and month of publication at the end of the reference (preceded by a comma) but before any page number or web information. For books, major reports and entire websites, list only the year.

Online sources Always add the date of publication online if available and the web address as above.

Page numbers Including page numbers is not optional – they can only be excluded when the source in question does not have them or the information can legitimately be attributed to the source as a whole. The page or pages on which the referenced information can be found should be indicated at the end of the reference (preceded by a comma) but before any web information. Page numbers should be written as *89, 45-51, 101-9, 246-67*, etc. (note no *p* or *pp*, but these may be used if a page number is referred to in sentence form: *See table on p. 8 of...*).

Titles Source titles are presented in sentence case, regardless of how they are shown in their original form. All titles should end with a full stop, unless the original source shows it ending with a question mark. Generally, major titles like books, reports, periodicals, paper series or entire websites should be italicised. Titles of shorter or subsidiary publications (chapters in edited collections, articles or briefings) should appear in single quotation marks.

Examples

The following examples illustrate how to present the sources of information that you use in briefings, position papers and reports for GADN.

Batliwala, S. 2012. 'What does transforming economic power mean?' *openDemocracy*, 18 April. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/srilatha-batliwala/what-does-transforming-economic-power-mean>

Capraro, C. 2014. *Taxing men and women: why gender is crucial for a fair tax System*. London: Christian Aid. <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/taxing-men-and-women-gender-analysis-report-july-2014.pdf>

Cornwall, A. 2014. 'Women's empowerment: what works and why?' UNU-WIDER Working Paper WP/2014/104. http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/2014/en_GB/wp2014-104/

Perrons, D. 2015. 'Gendering the inequality debate', *Gender & Development* 23.2, 207-222.

Young, B., I. Bakker and D. Elson. 2011. *Questioning financial governance from a feminist perspective*. London: Routledge.

Representing GADN in print

Maintaining and advancing GADN's public profile is central to the network's role as a source of expertise for the UK development sector and government departments. For that reason, it is important to present GADN in a consistent manner. This will make our publications – and thus GADN itself, as an umbrella for its members and working groups – readily recognisable and promote GADN's reputation as an authoritative voice across the development sector.

Identity

Clear guidelines for how to use the main elements of GADN's identity are essential for making the network an identifiable and memorable brand.

Name GADN should always be named in writing as *the Gender & Development Network* (note capitalisation and ampersand) or *GADN* (note N and lack of spaces or full stops). In all official publications, avoid the use of any other abbreviations.

Logo GADN's logo is available in indigo on a white ground or vice versa. It appears in the top banner of the briefing templates and should be included in all official GADN publications. Please consult the Secretariat with any further queries about accessing and using the logo.

Publication types

GADN produces a number of print resources via its Secretariat, thematic working groups and outside consultants. These publications fall into three main categories, depending on their length, subject matter and intended audience:

Briefings Short, informative pieces that are usually no more than 12 pages and focus on a specific topic. Do not represent an agreed GADN position, and contain a disclaimer stating that contents do not necessarily represent all GADN members. Generally available to the public on GADN's website.

Position papers Discussion, framing, policy, and position papers that act as submissions to external bodies such as government ministries and international institutions. May be produced by the Secretariat or by one or more working groups. Represent agreed GADN positions. May or may not be made public on GADN's website.

Reports Periodically, GADN produces major thematic reports with input from its membership and working groups. The writing and editing process for these reports will be managed by the Secretariat.

Letters Letters in GADN's name go from the network as a whole and do not list all members. (These can go either from the GADN Director or Working Group chairs.) No member's name should be used without explicit permission.

Other types publications may come up as needed; commissioning, formatting and editing them will be handled by the Secretariat on a case-by-case basis.

Layout

Templates are available for both briefings and position papers, which should make it easy for individual authors to produce publications in the same style and format. These templates include the GADN logo at the top, a mission statement, contact information, a legal disclaimer and GADN's registered charity number. They also include space for co-branding logos if needed. These templates are available in the closed portion of the GADN website.

Layout for other publications, including major reports, will be handled by the Secretariat on a case-by-case basis.

See also the following in the section ***A-Z style notes*** above: ***Font, Headings and titles, Images, Quotations, Registered charity number, Referencing, Spacing.***

Writing about gender

GADN's publications tackle gender injustice in their content, certainly, but they also confront harmful stereotypes and tropes in their language. The inequalities embedded in our culture and language can make damaging language of all kinds habitual, but by writing thoughtfully and carefully we can challenge inequality and discrimination on the basis of gender, as well as race, sexuality, class, ability and age.

Sexist language

Avoid the masculine form as a default, as well as other unnecessarily gendered descriptors: thus, not *chairman* but chair or chairperson; not *fireman* but firefighter; not *businesswoman* but business owner. Plurals can be used to avoid assumptions of gender: *farmers sell their crops*.

Likewise, it is important to avoid referring to women or girls by their appearance, marital status or number of children unless that information is immediately relevant.

More broadly, avoid language that frames women as a monolithic group, and particularly as a minority or a vulnerable group. Language that denigrates women's work or social position or otherwise perpetuates sexist representations should also be avoided.

Language to use (or not to use – and what to use instead!)

Here's a list of terms to avoid, along with suggestions for preferable framings. Some of these terms appear in official GADN publications, depending on considerations like collaborating with partners who use this language, but these guidelines nonetheless establish GADN's general preference.

Female Wherever possible, avoid describing women as *females* or using it as a qualifying adjective. Thus, instead of *female labour force participation*, use *women's labour force participation*.

GBV While this a matter of some debate, our concern is to highlight the specific characteristics and prevalence of violence in the lives of women and girls. Thus, GADN's general preference is for *violence against women and girls (VAWG)*. Use of GBV is acceptable when co-authoring with partner organisations that prefer this language.

Housework Minimises the time and labour women provide to the reproductive economy. Use *unpaid care work* instead.

Mankind Positions men's lives and experiences as globally representative. Use *humankind* or *humanity* instead.

Third world Associated with negative stereotypes of helplessness, dependency, and being 'third rate'. Instead, use *developing countries* or *global south*.

Transwoman or **transman** Avoid the prefix *trans* unless it is immediately relevant; use *woman* or *man* instead. Use gendered pronouns according to how an individual presents her- or himself, or according to stated preference where relevant.

Victims Avoid wherever possible, especially in relation to VAWG, sexual violence, or HIV and AIDS. Instead, people are *survivors of sexual violence* or *living with HIV*. Can be used sparingly in certain emergency situations.

Women and children Avoid picking out the number of women affected by a given situation or phenomenon unless it is directly relevant. For example, if 120 people were killed in an attack, adding *including 75 women* implies they are especially vulnerable or susceptible to suffering. Presenting that number alongside children infantilises women.