Gender and Development Network Strategy 2020-23

This strategy was agreed in January 2020 by the Board of Trustees. Since then the COVID pandemic has occurred which affects all our work, and will continue to do so in the longer term. Our strategy has provided the basis on which we have shaped our response.

Introduction to GADN strategy 2020–23

Our vision is of a world defined by social justice and gender equality: one where women and girls everywhere are able to claim their rights, freed from discrimination and prejudice.

Our goal is to promote gender equality and the rights of women and girls in the global south who face intersecting discriminations, putting their voices and priorities at the centre of policy making.

Our understanding is that change happens not just by challenging those with power, but also by building our own collective, positive, power by working in alliances. GADN therefore aims to be a cooperative and respectful part of global feminist movements: working collaboratively, recognising our key strengths, and using our influence where it is most effective.

GADN also recognises that power shapes women’s lives in different ways as a result of the intersecting discriminations they face; whether it is their class, race, age, religion, caste, disability or health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or whether they are cis or trans women. In particular we need to address the way in which colonialism has shaped the UK context in which we work.

We pursue our goals in four ways:

We support, enable and constructively challenge our members
GADN is primarily a network of UK based NGOs, many of whom have significant reach and influence. We support our members to collaborate and share learning to improve the quality of both their programme and advocacy work, and act as a critical friend encouraging members to continuously improve their work on gender equality and women’s rights.

We work with our members and allies to influence decision-makers and shape policy debates
As gender has risen up the international agenda the need to hold decision makers to account, and to promote alternative policy, has never been greater. Given our UK base, we have a particular responsibility and ability to improve the influence of the UK Government. We also work with allies internationally – including women’s rights organisations – to target some of the most powerful international institutions. We do this particularly through our REFRAME project where we work with allies globally to promote a feminist reframing of macroeconomics, recognising the central role economic policies play in shaping gender equality and women’s rights.

We work collaboratively as part of growing global feminist movements
We recognise that change will only be sustainable and transformative if we work together, building feminist alliances globally to boost our collective strength, so we can hold decision makers to
account. As part of this movement building we promote feminist alternatives to current unequal power structures and practices - demonstrating that change is not only necessary but possible.

We build a progressive and effective network
As a network we strive to live our feminist values, constantly listening to and learning from others, and recognising the power relationships that surround our work. We aim to model best practice and to maximise our positive impact by working strategically in alliances, rather than just by increasing the size of our membership or secretariat. Specifically, in response to women of colour members who have articulated their need for a transformed sector that engages constructively with power and privilege, we will support moves towards creating safe spaces for women of colour to thrive and collaborate in a decolonised development sector.

GADN strategy 2020 – 23: Aims and objectives

Aim 1: To support, enable and constructively challenge members to deliver effectively on gender equality and the rights of women and girls in international development

1.1 To increase the quality and impact of members’ work by enabling the exchange of knowledge and best practice, and providing information, analysis and thought leadership in our priority areas.

1.2 To increase the effectiveness of members’ advocacy by facilitating and encouraging them to share learning and work collaboratively, supporting the development of joint strategy and advocacy positions and by facilitating their access to DFID and other decision makers.

1.3 To facilitate and encourage shared learning and respectful collaboration by our members with feminists and women’s rights movements globally
1.4 To engage strategically with senior leadership among our members to encourage them to prioritise, and work effectively and collaboratively on, women’s rights and gender equality.

1.5 To identify, and fill, gaps in policy work to complement the work of our members.

**Aim 2: To influence and challenge decision makers to promote gender equality and the rights of women and girls**

2.1 To provide DFID with technical expertise on gender equality and women’s rights including by creating space for our members, and feminists internationally, to engage with the department.

2.2 To strengthen UK Government commitment, policy and practice towards achieving women’s and girls’ rights and gender equality in its international work, holding them to account in implementing policies and promises.

2.3 To strategically influence international development processes and debates that shape the discourse around gender equality and women’s rights where we have expertise on priority issues, working with international allies who have leverage and expertise on those processes or institutions.

**Aim 3: To contribute to and support global feminist movements**

3.1. Listen to, learn from and collaborate with, feminist allies particularly in the global south.

3.2 Create and share political space for feminist allies including by using our influence with decision makers and wider economic and social justice networks.

3.3 Support the building and promotion of positive feminist alternatives to current unequal power structures and practices, based on power analysis that recognises the intersectional nature of discrimination and oppression and the post-colonial context in which we operate.

**Aim 4: To build a progressive and effective network that is part of global feminist movements**

4.1 Maintain and develop a membership base that works together effectively to promote GADN’s aims.

4.2 Secure sufficient, appropriate, funding and ensure that these funds are raised and spent cost-effectively in line with donor commitments.

4.3 Maintain an effective and transparent management and governance structure for the network.

4.4 Continue to build our reputation as a knowledgeable actor on gender equality and women’s rights among target audiences by ensuring our outputs are strategic, accurate, relevant, and rooted in feminist analysis.

4.5 Become more feminist and progressive by listening to and learning from others, developing our understanding of feminist alternative strategies and building new alliances with feminist organisations in the UK and internationally, recognising, analysing and adequately responding to the intersecting nature of oppressions that govern women’s lives and prioritising practices that decolonise our work, given the context of the international development sector in which we operate.

4.6 To model best practice and encourage others in the sector by leading by example.