



## UK GADN Annual Report 2007-08

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## 1. Introduction

Since its founding in 1985, the Gender and Development Network has enabled gender and development practitioners to voice their concerns, lobby government and provide expert advice and critique on national and international policy and practice. Publications, research, and advocacy tools commissioned by the network form the basis of GADN advocacy activities and in the long-term, feed into government and institutional policy and practice around key gender issues. GADN research is also disseminated to partners and networks in the south, ensuring that critiques of international development institutions, international agreements and processes are widely read by southern NGOs working directly to address poverty, women's empowerment and gender equality.

2007/2008 has been a successful year for the GAD Network and the details of our work can be found below. We believe that our increased impact and effectiveness is supported by the growth in the Network's membership. This has allowed the GADN to strengthen its communication between members, partner organisations, international networks, and especially between GADN members and the UK Government, in particular Department for International Development.

The publication of our report, 'Women's Rights & Gender Equality, the New Aid Environment and Civil Society Organisations' was also timely and has raised the profile and reputation of GADN internationally.

At the end of the report you can find an outline of our plans for 2008-2009 including our proposed survey of member services, planned events and our objectives and strategic aims for the coming year. We are sure you will agree that it looks set to be an exciting year.

## 2. GADN Finance

Over 2007-2008, GADN received a total of £9290 in subscription fees, a significant increase from the previous financial year. GADN also received core funding from ActonAid (£5,000) Christian Aid (£5,000), Skillshare (£3,000) and Oxfam (£3,000). We are grateful that our funders have committed to continued funding over three years which will allow GADN to make long-term strategic internal and external advocacy plans.

GADN continues to encourage its larger members to fund the GADN allowing us to continue to be an effective voice for gender and development concerns at national and international level. More information on GADN plans for recruiting new members and improving member services can be found below.

## 3. GADN Members

Although the organisations and individuals that make up the GADN membership fluctuates, the income derived from membership has increased from the last financial year and we have been successful in retaining most of our members as well as being joined by many new members including Women Working Worldwide, the Zimbabwe Women's Network and Akina Mama Wa Afrika. For more information on planned changes to member services please see GADN 2008-2009.

### Meetings

The GADN holds quarterly thematic meetings open to all its members, bringing speakers with specific expertise on issues relating to the work of the GAD Network and its members' interest. The meetings provide a space for debate and analysis of current issues affecting gender equality and women's rights and empowerment. The meetings offer to non-members (general public and members of government) a space for sharing information on debates and good practice in relation to gender and development. For many staff with responsibility for gender from UK development agencies the GADN is a place for sharing experience and gaining insight into how to address gender more effectively within their organisations.

In 2007-08 GADN Members' meetings focussed on:

Gender and Climate Change (April 2008)

New Aid Modalities Report Launch (January 2008)

Gender indicators and research methodology (Oct 2007)

New Aid Modalities Research Update and UN Reform Debate (Feb 2007)

### Newsletter

The GADN produces a monthly electronic newsletter on issues related to Gender and Development both at national and at international levels. Feedback from members receiving the newsletter has consistently been positive and is recognised as an important service to its members, enabling them to share their information widely. The monthly information round-up has also directly contributed to the increase in GADN's membership. For more information on plans to change the information round up see GADN 2008-2009.

## 4. Campaigning/Advocacy work

During 2007, the GAD Network was actively lobbying and campaigning for key figures and representatives of the UK government and others to address pressing issues on gender and development. Here is the list of main communications and outcomes of the work of the network:

### **GADN Report: Women's Rights & Gender Equality, the New Aid Environment and Civil Society Organisations**

The report '*Gender Equality, the new aid environment and Civil Society Organisations*' was researched and written by the Gender and Development Network because of a growing concern about the fast changing aid structures, such as direct budget support, pooled funding schemes for supporting civil society and other forms of donor alignment and their possible implications for work on gender equality and women's rights issues, in the Global North and South.

In many countries Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) play a crucial role in working towards gender equality and women's rights through representing, supporting and defending vulnerable groups of women; keeping gender equality and women's rights issues on policymakers' agendas; fighting for women's rights at a legislative level; and holding governments and other stakeholders to account over their implementation of gender-related commitments. Understanding how they are faring under the new aid mechanisms becomes critical in understanding whether current funding is supporting or inhibiting the commitment to gender equality and women's rights present in so many policies.

The report highlights some of the key questions emerging for civil society around the way the new aid systems promote, marginalise or exclude gender equality and women's rights issues, as well as developing themes for future targeted research. The report reflects the voices of organisations working for gender equality and women's rights from around the world. It conveys the diversity and complexity of the issues around the new aid modalities and how these differ across countries and continents; it also shows some of the unintended consequences of new aid modalities. Above all, it reveals that many women's organisations and those focused on challenging gender inequality feel threatened as the focus of funding moves in the direction of larger grants, tighter, short term targets, demonstrable and 'scaled up' results, and intensive administration.

### **UN Reform/GEAR**

The GAD Network has been lobbying the UK government and others to ensure that the UN reform process currently underway includes provisions for the creation of a fully funded, independent, UN women's entity that will be responsible for driving forward the UN's work to promote gender equality and women's rights and to ensure effective 'mainstreaming' of gender equality across all of the UN entities.

Our lobbying in the last 6 months has included:

- Joint work with European women's rights advocates (WIDE, EWL and others) as part of a broader coalition of activists lobbying under the umbrella of the global GEAR (Gender Equality Architecture Reform) campaign - GAD continues to participate actively in the European Working Group on the GEAR campaign. Recent activities have included: lobbying members of the European Parliament

and Permanent Representatives of EU Member States to the UN to encourage support for our campaign demands; raising the profile of the campaign amongst other European NGOs and encouraging others to sign up in support of its aims; and lobbying the UN Ambassadors responsible for chairing General Assembly negotiations on UN reform.

- GAD members have been encouraged to link with their partners in the South on this issue and to press their own governments to lobby for a stronger UN gender equality machinery
- GAD Network has written to various government ministers in the last 6 months to urge them to support the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on UN reform, including Gordon Brown (as Chancellor and as PM), Ruth Kelly (as former Minister for Women), Harriet Harman (current Minister for Women), Douglas Alexander and Mark Malloch-Brown, in addition to Sir Emyr Jones-Parry, UK Ambassador to the UN

**Responses:** WK has received one response to date from Ruth Kelly in March assuring us that the UK government were fully supportive of the High-Level Panel's recommendations and were doing everything they could to champion the new gender equality entity at the UN.

In late August 2007, we wrote to Lord Malloch Brown, the new Foreign Minister for Asia, Africa and the UN, to congratulate him on his new post and gain his support for a stronger UN gender equality architecture. We urged him for the government's continued support to form a separate gender entity at the UN, and expressed our fears that the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) component of the UN's High-Level Panel's report will be delayed by the deliberation of the rest of the report. In the letter we urged the UK government in particular to move the GEAR forward as soon as possible, to ensure that the new women's organisation would have a strong 'operational' mandate and that it has the capacity to deliver (e.g. adequate financing) and to promote the accountability within the organisation.

G8 Summit

In April 2007 we wrote to Tony Blair urging him to ensure the G8 Summit addressed gender equality and women's rights as a matter of priority, in line with the Gender Equality Duty that should also be applied to the UK government's efforts overseas in developing countries. In particular we pointed toward areas such as health, trade and climate change where improvements would particularly benefit women. Tony Blair replied saying that the UK government would encourage a focus on the gender dimensions of HIV and AIDS, women's economic empowerment and ensuring that gender equality is central to all partnerships with national governments.

### **World Bank Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**

The GAD Network wrote to Hilary Benn in April 2007 to express concern about the direction of World Bank policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, in particular since the removal of key indicators on contraceptive prevalence from the Madagascar Country Assistance Strategies. Referring to his own opening statements in the 2004 DFID position paper, in which he committed the government to support countries and partners to uphold sexual and reproductive rights, we ask the UK government to insist that the Bank uphold its commitments to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, family planning, contraception etc. We received a positive response from Hilary Benn in May 2007 saying that the UK government had got assurances from the World Bank that improving sexual and reproductive health and rights remained a crucial aspect of the Bank's policy.

### **Response to DFID's draft copy of the International Poverty Reduction PSA Delivery Agreement**

In June 2007, we wrote to Mark Lowcock from the DFID in response to the draft copy of the International Poverty Reduction PSA Delivery Agreement, which outlines the goals DFID will be responsible for over the next three years. We expressed disappointment over this document's lack of reference to gender equality. Gender equality had been described as a theme and not had reducing gender inequality been expressed as a specific goal of all of DFID's work with specific indicators to track progress. Furthermore, we criticised that the document did not include proposals for Departmental Strategic Objectives and indicators, which should be remedied by creating indicators for gender equality for each DSO as well as a separate DSO on gender equality.

### **Submission to the International Development Select Committee**

In July 2007, we prepared a submission to international development select committee inquiry on DFID's annual departmental report with a focus on (a) DFID's gender equality action plan, (b) budget support (brought in initial findings of NAM's research) and (c) governance (need for greater emphasis on measures to strengthen gender equality).

As a result, in November 2007, the select committee presented the report with a chapter dedicated to gender, for the first time, mentioning the GAD Network and the issues raised in the submission. Mr Malcolm Bruce, Chairman of the select committee, highlighted in the press release part of the evidence presented in the GAD Network submission. The committee expressed their concern that DFID does not have in place adequate measures to achieve the promotion of gender equality.

### **DFID's Gender Equality Action Plan**

In August 2007, we sent Douglas Alexander a letter welcoming him into post and emphasising GADN's mission and strong partnership with DFID. We expressed the hope that he would give us a high level of support and leadership as the key way to ensure the fulfilment of the Gender Equality Action plan. Beyond DFID, the letter goes on, DFID must expand its commitment to gender equality in the international arena, such as supporting a new gender entity as part of the current UN reform and assuring that the recently established Gender Equality Duty would also apply to the UK governments' actions abroad. In September, we received a reply from Shriti Vadera, the Minister with lead responsibility on DFID's gender equality policy, underlining DFID's commitment to playing a leadership role.

## **5. Main GAD Network Activities 2007-08**

### **Events**

#### **CSW 2008 - 52nd Session 25 February to 7 March 2008**

GADN Chair and Steering Group members represented the network at the Commission for the Status of Women 52 Session in New York. The report was presented at a number of side events, including a capacity building workshop organised by UNIFEM, AWAID and WIDE which received such demand that it was repeated. The report was widely distributed and has aided women's organisations not familiar with new aid modalities debates to gain greater awareness.

#### **International Women's Day March 2008**

We celebrated International Women's Day on 4 March 2008 by bringing together leading experts to discuss women's rights and the global economy. Sarah Montague from the Radio 4 Today Programme chaired a panel including Gita Sen, Professor from the Centre for Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Douglas Alexander the Secretary of State for International Development and Brita Fernandez-Schmidt. Video speeches were also given especially for the event by Gordon Brown, UK Prime Minister and Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, pioneering environmental activist and Founder Green Belt Movement. Over 100 people attended the event which launched a series of seminars and roundtables on key issues that the GADN hope to work closely with DfID on over the coming year including gender and climate change, violence against women and aid effectiveness.

#### **WIDE/AWID Conference Ottawa International Consultation of Women's Organizations and Networks and Aid Effectiveness**

GADN Chair, Brita Fernandez-Schmidt presented the GADN research on new aid modalities at the International Consultation on Aid Effectiveness which took place between 31 January and 1 February 2008. We were pleased to note that many of the conclusions from the research were reiterated in the final recommendations of the consultation.

#### **GADN New Aid Modalities Report Launch 15 January 2008**

The launch for the GADN research project on new aid modalities (see below for more information on the report) was held at Portcullis House. Around 60 individuals joined speakers Ellen Wratten, Head of Profession of Social Development at the Department for International Development, and former Head of the Aid Effectiveness Team, the Brita Fernández Schmidt, Chair of the UK Gender and Development Network and Baroness Northover, member of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Debt, Aid & Trade.

The event provided a chance to begin dissemination of the report and share the report findings with our members and other colleagues. We continue with targeted dissemination of the report including presentations of the conclusions at CSW 2008 and WIDE/AWID conference in Ottawa 2008 (see below).

## **6. GADN 2008-2009**

#### **GADN Member Services Assessment**

In 2007 we began an assessment process of its member services which will continue in 2008. Starting in April 2008 we will undertake a phone survey of our current members asking them for their opinions on current member services and proposed additions to services. Following an examination of current member services we believe that we could provide one or more of the following extra services:

- **Support/mentoring group - gender focal staff.** To establish a support/working group for 'gender focal staff' and consultants. This could be modelled on BOND's Learning Action Sets (i.e. representatives from member organisations meet several times a year to discuss confidentially some of the issues they face in their organisations and explore ways to address those problems. They bring in outside expertise as and when relevant.)
- **Data base of experts.** To establish a database of experts within the GAD network to facilitate sharing of experience and mentoring and responding to requests for information

We also hope to receive input from current members about any other services they feel would be useful. The GAD Network hopes to continue to increase its membership through targeted invitations but will ensure that increased membership does not lead to a reduction in quality of services provided. We at the GAD Network feel that a wider range and diversity of member organisations will serve to improve the networking and information sharing opportunities for existing members.

We also hope to make low-key changes to its information round-up which has been presented in the same format for over two years. With volunteer support and member input, GADN hopes to make the information round up more accessible, concise and broad-reaching.

### **GADN External Advocacy**

We are currently finalising its work plan for 2008-2009. Currently its objectives for 2008-09 are:

- Continue to influence DfID for improved resources for gender equality and women's rights work
- Support and work towards the establishment of a stronger, ambitiously-funded, independent UN gender entity, led by an Under Secretary-General, which can enable the UN to deliver more for women's rights and gender equality at the local level and worldwide
- To explore the subject of climate change to achieve greater understanding within the UK gender and development sector of the relationship between gender and climate change

Our planned activities include:

- Use GADN aid modalities research to influence international debates on Financing for Development starting with the High Level Forum in Accra which will review the Paris Declaration
- Work with WIDE and UNIFEM to ensure women's organisations are well informed and their voices are heard in these processes.
- Jointly host a roundtable event to raise awareness within DfID of violence against women and how as a sector we can work together to eradicate it.
- Continued engagement and support with the GEAR campaign and be a point of contact in the UK for them
- Lobby UK Government for funding of a new UN gender entity
- Maintain and improve relations with other gender and development networks
- Work as Woman in Development Europe (WIDE) UK Platform and support them in their activities