Gender and Development Network, GADNET and the sub-network Gender and Development in Practice, GADIP

Final report 2009

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Background

The national research network on Gender and Development (GADNET) aims at supporting, encouraging and connecting Swedish gender and development researchers from different disciplines and universities in order to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of gender and development issues amongst researchers, students, the public and practitioners within development cooperation.

The stated objectives of GADNET are:

- to support, encourage and connect Swedish gender and development researchers from different disciplines and universities;
- to be a channel for researchers in developing countries to participate in dialogues with Swedish researchers;
- to promote conceptual, theoretical and methodological discussions and development across disciplines;
- to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of gender and development issues amongst researchers and other scholars, students, an interested public and practitioners within development cooperation.

GADNET was established in 2004 with 25 members. Today the network successfully includes 100 members from 20 universities and university colleges in Sweden, which confirms the great interest in and need for such a network. GADNET is multidisciplinary by nature and the members define themselves within the research field of gender and development even though their affiliation might be in social science, technology, or humanities.
In the decision on support for a second period (2007-2009) Sida/SAREC pointed at the importance of bridging the gap between researchers and practitioners. GADNET has taken this challenge seriously and in 2007 a sub-network, Gender and Development in Practice, (GADIP) was established. GADIP aims at facilitating exchanges of knowledge and experiences between researchers and practitioners - for example by translating academic discourse into NGO language and telling academia about needs of NGOs in relation to research. It is a forum for dialogue between practitioners and researchers, where practitioners have the possibility to be updated on latest research within their areas of interest, and where researchers are confronted with experiences in the field. GADIP is a democratic organization in which practitioners and scholars co-operate and learn from each other, implying a reflexive dialogue. It includes more than 60 practitioners from 33 different organizations and a number of academics from different universities in Sweden. To our knowledge, this sort of network is unique in the Swedish context.

The themes of the networks

During 2004-2006, GADNET had Negotiating Gender Justice as an overall theme for its work. The theme for 2007–2009 was Globalisation and Gender Justice. The theme corresponds to the Swedish government’s emphasis on equality and women’s involvement in development processes. Globalisation has different meanings in different contexts, but everywhere global power relations affect the relations between state, civil society and individual women and men. As the last decades of criticism has put forward, an unreflecting “we” can not form the basis for inclusive feminist theories and practices. Thus, to GADNET it is important to be attentive to power relations within feminist contexts and to engage with them critically.

Six sub-themes or research areas were defined in a consulting process and by a special working group with national representation. These are “Political Restructuring and Gender Justice: Citizenship and Agency”; “Body Politics: Sexual and Reproductive Rights”; “Gender, Violence and Conflict”; “Religion and Human Rights”; “Livelihoods, Resources and Technology”; and “Global Feminist Knowledge Production”. Poverty has been a crosscutting theme in the gender and development sub-themes. The research areas all constitute crucial themes in the current international academic debate within the field of gender and development. The theme Body politics became a main theme in the international conference
organised in cooperation with the Africa Gender Institute at University of Cape Town in February 2009. Sub-themes were Citizenship, Livelihoods and Knowledge Production.

The theme for 2010 spring national conference, *Understanding gendered migration*, was defined by the last node-meeting in 2009 and the second conference theme will be decided by suggestions from members or nodes and a decision on that will be made by conferring with the nodes.

**Organisation, working forms and activities 2004-2009**

**GADNET – organisation and working forms**

Two coordinators are working part time at the secretariat organising, administrating and developing the network activities. The secretariat is located at School of Global Studies (SGS) at the University of Gothenburg (GU).

GADNET collaborates with about 20 so-called nodes i.e. contact persons at different Swedish universities and university colleges. Their function is to facilitate contacts between the network and their respective institutions. Node meetings are held twice a year. During 2009 one node-meeting was held in April in connection to a seminar on Gender and trade, and the second one in connection to the conference/dreamcatcher workshop *Gendered Resistance at Times of Economic Crisis*. Both were held at SGS, University of Gothenburg. During the meetings past and future activities and working forms were discussed. Bi-annual node-meetings are also planned for 2010. The nodes have been encouraged to apply for smaller funding from GADNET for activities at their institutions, which they have done a number of times, e.g. in Lund, Uppsala, and Gothenburg.

The GADNET secretariat has created a [homepage](http://www.globalstudies.gu.se/english/genderstudies/cooperation/gadnet/), which is continuously updated and an important platform for communication of information (e.g. newsletters, protocols, published papers, activities and reports) for researchers as well as a wider public. In order to strengthen the cooperation between individual GADNET members and to demonstrate the broad capacity and knowledge of Swedish researchers in gender and development issues, the secretariat has created a database consisting of members and information about their research. The database is continuously updated and intended to serve as a resource base for Sida and Swedish development researchers and others. A [newsletter](http://www.globalstudies.gu.se/english/genderstudies/cooperation/gadnet/) has been delivered
regularly since 2005 to all members with information about activities inside and outside the academia, such as conferences, seminars, research grants. The newsletters are distributed to both Gadnet and Gadip networks and published on our homepage. During 2009 eight newsletters were delivered. These can all be found at the homepage.

**GADIP – organisation and working forms**

GADIP’s activities are organized by its members through the advisory committee consisting of an equal number of practitioners and academics. The GADNET secretariat is responsible for the administration and coordination.

The first GADIP meeting between academics and advocates was held in 2007. In 2008, two GADIP-workshops were arranged in Gothenburg. The theme of the first workshop was *Gender and Globalisation*. The keynote speakers were academics who talked about challenges to gender equality in relation to religious revitalisation, sustainable development, HIV prevention, human rights, and gender violence. During GADIP’s following-up meeting, the practitioners and scholars exchanged experiences and contributed democratically to the evolution of GADIP. The theme of the second workshop was *Gender and Sexuality in Theory and Practice*. In 2009, the first workshop was held in March on *Masculinities in a Global Perspective*. The workshop speakers have been internationally renowned researchers, policy makers and activists\(^2\). All the events have been very successful with generally more than 50 participants from both civil society and academia. More information can be found at the homepage.

**Conferences 2004-2009**

GADNET strives at disseminating research findings through workshops and seminars, which will also be the main activities for 2010. The network has arranged workshops, seminars and international conferences highlighting the significance of discussing gender justice at meetings where all regions of the world are represented. One conference *Negotiating Gender Justice*, held in Gothenburg, Sweden in 2005, had invited participants from three continents.

\(^2\) E.g. Ass Prof Signe Arnfred (Roskilde University), Anna Runeborg (Sida/DESO/Tema), Dr Edmé Dominguez, Dr Elisabeth Abiri (all University of Gothenburg), Dr Marie Nordberg (University of Karlstad), Soleyman Ghaseiani (Nätverket mot hedersrelaterat våld) and Stefan Laack, former project leader for Young Men as Equal Partners, (RFSU).
Two conferences have been located in the South: *A World in Transition: New Challenges for Gender Justice* in New Delhi, India in 2006, and *Gender Justice and Body Politics* in Cape Town, South Africa in 2009. GADNET thereby increased the possibilities for Southern researchers to participate at the events. In 2006, GADNET produced a film in cooperation with the School of Film Directing at the University of Gothenburg attempting to share the experiences from the conference in New Delhi in new ways.

*Conference in Cape Town 2009*

GADNET and the African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town arranged a conference “Gender Justice and Body politics” in Cape Town 4th – 6th February 2009. The conference was first initiated within the research programme “Contested body politics: the crafting of women’s citizenship in Lusaka and Cape Town”, which is a joint programme between Global Gender Studies, SGS, and the Cape Town University supported by the Scientific councils in both countries. Sophie Oldfield and Elaine Salo visited Global Gender Studies as guest researchers in June last year, making it possible to have a joint meeting between the South African and the Swedish conference committees.

The theme of the conference “Gender Justice and Body politics” was framed so as to incorporate GADNET’s general theme of gender justice and a new perspective in gender studies; body politics. The conference explored the material and socio-cultural dimensions of the multiple spaces that make up southern cities and the contestations about their social and cultural meanings.

The keynote presentation on the theme *From Feminist Fieldwork to Collaborative praxis: Can Analytical Frameworks Travel Across North/South Borders?* was delivered by Richa Nagar from the Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies unit, University of Minnesota. 45 researchers from South Africa, Sweden, Mozambique, Malawi, India, USA, Germany, Kenya, Lesotho and Brazil participated in the conference. A comprehensive report is found on our homepage.  Issue number 13 of the journal *Feminist Africa* (University of Cape Town) is based on the conference with a selection of papers focusing on women crafting their citizenship in peri-urban areas. Further more, a volume, *Body politics and women citizens*, containing papers from the conference is published in the series *Sida Studies.*

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3 [http://www.globalstudies.gu.se/english/genderstudies/cooperation/gadnet/activities/](http://www.globalstudies.gu.se/english/genderstudies/cooperation/gadnet/activities/)
4 Open access to the full text at [www.feministafrica.org](http://www.feministafrica.org)
5 [http://www.sida.se/Svenska/Om-oss/Publikationer/](http://www.sida.se/Svenska/Om-oss/Publikationer/)
Dreamcatcher workshops – 2004-2009

To keep the network intellectually inspiring, GADNET has recurring Dreamcatcher workshops, which function as think-tanks for the networks’ scholars. The workshops also intend to develop research and to strengthen contacts with international researchers in the forefront. Two such workshops will also be organised during 2010. The speakers at the workshops have included internationally renowned scholars and activists. In 2004 the Dream-catcher focused on Citizenship, Rights and Gender Justice. The report from the seminar is published as a Working Paper no 1, 2004. In 2005 the second Dream-catcher workshop New Challenges to Gender Justice: Fundamentalism, Markets and Rights was held in Uppsala in co-operation with Development Studies and the Nordic Africa Institute. The report is published as a Working Paper no 13, 2005. In Gothenburg 2007, GADNET hosted another Dreamcatcher workshop called Persisting Poverty. In 2008, a Dreamcatcher was arranged in Lund on the theme Gender, Religion and Development. This theme was chosen to investigate the influence of religious fundamentalism on gender and development.

Gendered resistance at Times of Economic Crisis – Joint GADNET/GADIP Dreamcatcher workshop, October 2009

In October 2009 GADNET/GADIP arranged a joint workshop on the theme Gendered Resistance at Times of Economic Crisis in cooperation with WIDE. The theme of the event was linked to the Swedish EU presidency and ongoing economic developments. Four invited speakers, both researchers and practitioners, presented their thoughts on this issue. The speakers were Hameeda Deedat, researchers and activist from South Africa, Ewa Charkiewitz, from the Feminist Think Tank in Poland, Sara Spånt from Sida, Sweden, and Maria Hernández Padrón from SGS, Göteborg University, Sweden. Group discussions among the workshop participants followed. Read more about the workshop on our homepage. In connection to this workshop a GADNET node-meeting was also held, as well as a GADIP steering group meeting.

6 E.g. Shahrah Razavi (UNRISD, Geneva), Prof Saraswati Raju (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi), Ass Prof Diana Muliniari (Lund University) and Prudence Woodford-Berger (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Prof Ursula King (University of Bristol).

7 http://www.globalstudies.gu.se/english/genderstudies/cooperation/gadnet/activities/
International networking

Many academics and practitioners from the global arena have shown interest in the network activities and in being members of GADNET/GADIP. The secretariat has close contacts with the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, Brighton. A capacity building trip to Brighton was made in September 2009. In order to channel contacts between North and South, GADNET has also actively engaged in networking with other networks and international organizations such as WIDE, DAWN and AWID.

Women in Development Europe (WIDE) is a European feminist umbrella network that monitors and influences international economic and development policy and practice from a feminist perspective. WIDE has an extensive network, which advocates gender equality and social justice and lobby policy makers on gender, trade and development (i.e. in the EU, UNCTAD, WTO). Within WIDE, GADNET/GADIP create synergies and cooperate with researchers and activists based in other parts of Europe. Through the membership of WIDE, GADIP is also a member of CONCORD which is a confederation representing European NGOs for development at a European level. It represents around 1 600 NGOs that are supported by millions of European citizens. WIDE has entrusted GADIP the role of the Swedish platform in its network. Anja Franck was the GADIP representative in the WIDE Steering Group between 2007-2008. Maria Malmström then replaced her in the Steering Group, with Ann Schlyter as suppleant. At the 2008 GA Anja Franck was elected to the Board of WIDE (personally elected and not representing GADIP). Ann Schlyter worked with the preparation of the WIDE statement on Aid Effectiveness to the Accra conference, and has now also replaced Maria Malmström in the Steering Group.

A yearly international conference is organised by WIDE’s secretariat in collaboration with national platforms. The WIDE Annual Conferences allow women from Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe and the global South to come together and not just share experiences, but critically think through alternatives, actively learn, and network in a supportive space. The theme of the conference in Basel 2009 was e.g. “Care Economy and Care Crisis”.

DAWN (Development of Alternatives with Women for a New Era) is a network which GADNET collaborates with. DAWN consists of scholars and activists from the South
who engage in feminist research and analysis of the global environment and are committed to working for economic justice, gender justice and democracy. DAWN works globally and regionally in partnership with other global NGOs and networks.

**AWID (Association of Women’s Rights in Development)** is an international feminist membership organization committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. It is a dynamic network of academics, activists, business people, policy-makers and funders that GADNET cooperates with. Representatives from GADNET have also participated at AWID’s international forum *How Does Change Happen?* in Bangkok 2005.

**Planned activities 2010**

The project has received one more year of funding, but is administered as a new project. Remaining funds from the earlier project may also be used until end of August 2010. During this last year of funding we hope to strengthen and develop the debate about gender and development in fruitful interaction with academics and activists in Europe and the South. It will also consolidate the cooperation between GADNET and GADIP, bridging the gap between researchers, practitioners and policymakers.

**GADNET/GADIP combined biannual workshops**

During 2010 we will arrange two combined GADNET/GADIP national workshops with invited international guests (i.e. both networks have their own workshops but they are scheduled as parallel sessions). The first workshop in May 2010 will be on the preliminary theme *Understanding Gendered Migration*. Migration transgresses clear-cut boundaries between South and North and it often influences both gender relations and economic and political developments in sending as well as receiving countries. Global migration flows thus interact with many pressing issues related to economic and social justice that Sida prioritises: women’s political rights, women as economic agents, women and security. The complex causes of migration, either forced or “voluntary”, are moreover important to investigate.

The theme of the second workshop during autumn 2010 is still open and a call for suggestions from members and nodes has been made. The decision on the theme will be made in collaboration with the nodes.
Contribution to WIDE annual conferences

The topic of the WIDE conference 2010 will be migration which is in line with the activities of our networks that year. The intention of GADNET/GADIP is to offer members some financial contribution to attend this conference. With participants from the South this also gives an opportunity to further strengthen our networking with researchers and practitioners from the South.

WIDE Capacity building

WIDE offers capacity building for their national platform representatives, and other members, such as within the themes of Aid Effectiveness, Microcredit, Financing Development, Economic Literacy, Gender mainstreaming, Economic Justice, and Financial Crisis and Gender. GADNET/GADIP will offer their members some financial contribution to attend these capacity building events during 2010.

Networking and planning of activities

Activities and overall themes of the networks are to a large extent initiated by members, two meetings are planned both for GADIP advisory committee, as well as for the GADNET Nodes. Nodes and members of the committee are also important means to strengthen the networks, to reach new members and arrange events.