

Vol 28 No 1, Re-imagining International Development

In March 2020, *Gender & Development* will examine the theme of **Re-imagining International Development**. G&D is a unique journal: a forum for the sharing of analysis and experience between feminist activists involved in development research, policy, and practice. For more information on the journal and its aims, visit www.genderanddevelopment.org.

International development is under fire. In 2019, in a post #AidToo world where patriarchal power and privilege are being called out by feminists and anti-racists in humanitarian response and development interventions, can international development rise to the profound critiques of it and reform to become the force for good that so many working in the sector want it to be? What insights can activists offer to re-imagine international development and humanitarian work that delivers economic, social and political justice?

The concept for this edition of the journal emerged from an online conference held in September 2018, Healing Solidarity: Re-imagining International Development, which set out to envision how international development can be re-imagined. The conference involved feminists and activists from all over the world considering how to heal ourselves and our organisations, both from inequalities in our visions, policies and practice, and from work that places change – and change agents - at risk of backlash, burn-out and exhaustion.

This issue of *Gender & Development* will explore an intersectional feminist analysis to re-imagine the sector and consider what doing so would mean for our practice. The voices of feminists in development challenge the sector. We see ever more corporatised processes and decision-making detracting from grassroots activism and knowledge. Top-down, inequitable decision making shuts out the people the sector is supposedly committed to help. Fundraising practices that exploit people and perpetuate inequity are being challenged by feminists committed to finding innovative and better ways of working.

There are many good ideas for how we might do things differently, but they tend to get subsumed by the powerful language and narratives of the international development 'machine'. Yet critique and suggestions for internal reform are crucial to any potential for international development to re-form itself.

In particular, we would like to look at leading by example, sharing power and decision-making in more meaningful ways; addressing the post-colonial roots of development and challenging the racism, colonialism and sexism in our organisational 'deep cultures', structures and ways of working; developing new ways of communicating our messages, working in genuine solidarity rather than 'extractive' partnership, paying due attention to the need for healing and wellbeing as part of our practice and diversifying the sector and its approaches. These are critical issues for the sector at this time.

If you are an activist, practitioner, policymaker or researcher with experience to share, please send a paragraph outlining your proposed article idea. Ideas for articles include the following, but please suggest others!

- Decolonising development: outing and addressing racism in development. Addressing the colonial legacy that still impacts our practice and transforming it in to a genuine solidarity with change led by the poorest and most marginalised
- Approaching power constructively - questioning ourselves about how we use power and thinking through using it responsibly, in service of social justice aims and values.
- Deconstructing the narrative - how might we overturn the stereotype of the 'good humanitarian'/development worker, and be more honest about the messy nature of our work? How can we communicate that publicly?
- How can the rights-based vision of human development and internationalism be reclaimed in the face of rising challenges including extreme inequality, racism, xenophobia and right-wing populism? Case studies of campaigns and initiatives to build trust and movements, from grassroots to international levels.
- #AidToo & structural inequity - why policies and procedures on 'safeguarding', sexual harassment or bullying aren't sufficient to end abuses of power: we need a systemic approach.
- Walking the talk on inclusion and transformation: how can we address the striking lack of diversity in many of our organisations, and the undervaluing of lived knowledge and expertise?
- Developing genuinely equal partnerships - case studies or research about how these can be rooted in genuine solidarity rather than an extractive relationship
- Organisational culture - how might cultures of care support more equitable working practices as well as more effective work? How internal and 'deep' cultures need to change, as well as the way in which our work is presented publicly.
- Valuing collective knowledge and power – why 'heroisation' detracts from collective solidarity and shared approaches to achieving social justice internationally
- Participatory grant-making – how can decision making by those affected become standard practice? How might funders decolonize their approaches and make them more equitable?
- The end of 'projectisation' - what are the alternatives to our 'project' culture? And why might it be time to take them seriously?

Please send a paragraph outlining your proposed idea for an article for this issue, in an email (no attachments please) to csweetman@oxfam.org.uk by **31 March 2019**. Commissioned articles (of around 7,000 words) will need to be completed for a deadline of **15 July 2019**. Guidelines for contributors can be found at www.genderanddevelopment.org, but please note we look for writers with first-hand research or experience to share, and our articles aim to blend simple accessible language with essential references. The Editor can offer support to achieve this balance for writers who haven't yet written for a journal!