

wbg WOMEN'S
BUDGET
GROUP

OUR STRATEGY

2023-

2028

ABOUT US

WE PUT FEMINISM INTO ECONOMICS AND ECONOMICS INTO FEMINISM.

The UK Women's Budget Group is a feminist think tank that raises awareness of and provides evidence for a gender-equal economy.

We occupy a unique position, acting as a link between feminist academics, the women's voluntary sector and the social policy world of think tanks. We draw on a network of pro-bono experts from these areas, who work alongside our staff team.

OUR VISION IS OF A GENDER-EQUAL SOCIETY

This is based on a transformative model of substantive gender equality, based on human rights, which goes beyond equal treatment to require:

Redress material and social disadvantage – allowing for different treatment of women and men, and different groups of women and men, to counteract disadvantage.

Counter stigma, prejudice, humiliation and violence – ensuring mutual respect for human dignity.

Transform social and institutional structures – recognising the gender inequality is structural and tackling it requires a redistribution of power and resources.

Facilitate political participation and social inclusion – ensuring the diversity of women’s voices are heard in public life and when decisions are made, allowing everyone to fully participate in society.

This model recognises there are interactions and possible tensions between these four dimensions of gender equality.

Our mission is to advance gender equality in policymaking through feminist approaches to economics.

THEMES AND PREVIOUS WORK

Over the last few years we have:

Analysed the impact of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis on women's economic circumstances.

Developed a new vision for a caring economy out of the work of our Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy, a care-led recovery from Covid-19, and a green and caring economy out of our Feminist Green New Deal work.

Costed and detailed alternative models for early years education and childcare and social care in the UK.

Worked with local and international partners to build their capacity to analyse policy and influence economic debates.

Established the Early Years and Childcare Coalition, which brings together over 30 organisations.

EXTERNAL CONTEXT AND OPPORTUNITIES

Our last strategic plan was agreed in 2019 and updated in 2020 in the light of the Covid pandemic. The last few years since have been extremely turbulent, politically and economically. We have identified challenges and opportunities in the following areas:

Devolution

An on-going and changing process which creates policy divergence across the four nations of the UK. It provides challenges and opportunities for research and policy analysis, and influencing work.

Brexit

Having left the European Union, there is uncertainty over workplace, consumer, environmental and human rights on which women particularly rely. The UK is now responsible for its own trading arrangements with the rest of the world, with significant gendered implications.

Climate emergency

There is an urgent need for humanity to address the climate emergency but a general lack of ambition from governments, including the UK. There is a strong civil society movement and public concern about this issue.

Politicisation of women

There has been a growth in feminist and other equalities activism, but continued and provoked polarisation of positions and difficulty of dialogue particularly around sex/gender identity and prostitution/sex work.

A new government by 2025

There will be a General Election before 2025, with current polls showing a clear Labour lead (but potentially a hung parliament or coalition government).

A shift towards a more progressive economics agenda

Recent policy developments in the EU and US, with big public spending commitments around the green and equalities agendas, are an opportunity. There are also debates around measuring economic performance beyond GDP, with countries and the ONS looking seriously into wellbeing as an economic goal.

OUR VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

HUMAN RIGHTS

We will ensure that we work in line with the sort of society we want to see; based on substantive equality and respect for human rights, where care is valued and shared and which allows everyone to live in dignity, reach their full potential and fully participate.

FEMINISM

We recognise that gendered structures of inequality intersect, including those based on class, race, and disability. While our primary focus is on gender equality, we will reflect the intersectional nature of inequality in our work.

INTERSECTIONALITY

We will ensure that we work in line with the sort of society we want to see; based on substantive equality and respect for human rights, where care is valued and shared and which allows everyone to live in dignity, reach their full potential and fully participate.

PRINCIPLES FOR OUR WORK

PARTNERSHIP AND INTERNATIONALISM

We believe that we can achieve more via collaboration. We will work in partnership with organisations and individuals who share our aims and values. We recognise that gender equality is an international struggle, and we will play an active role within wider feminist movements both in the UK and internationally.

EXPERTISE AND LEARNING

We will ensure our work is academically robust, that our analysis and policy proposals are evidence-based and that we are always open to learning as an organisation. We recognise that expertise, knowledge and opportunities to learn come in many forms and include front-line and lived experience as well as academic research.

DIVERSITY

We believe that diversity of backgrounds and perspectives strengthens our work and we will seek to promote diversity at all levels within the organisation.

PRINCIPLES FOR OUR WORK

PLURALISM AND RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE

We believe that diversity of backgrounds and perspectives strengthens our work and we will seek to promote diversity at all levels within the organisation.

INTEGRITY

WBG will work in an open, honest, accountable and transparent way with staff, volunteers, members and other stakeholders.

POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

WBG does not affiliate to or support any political party. We seek to influence all parties to adopt policies that promote women's equality, gender budgeting and feminist economic principles

IN THE LONG TERM, WE WANT TO SEE:

Economic, social and policy structures allowing everyone to lead prosperous, healthy and safe lives.

Women enjoying substantive equality and economic independence.

A green and caring economy that has wellbeing as its key goal.

Care work recognised as an essential part of life and the economy and provided to a high standard to all those who need it, redistributed between families and society fairly, and between women and men equally.

A solid commitment by the UK government to fund these economic changes through progressive taxation and borrowing levels based on need, rather than arbitrary fiscal rules.

In the UK and internationally:

Public bodies adopt gender responsive budgeting (GRB) and other feminist policymaking tools in policymaking.

Diverse feminist organisations regularly participate in economic debates.

Mainstream economic think tanks, policy-makers and media outlets adopt feminist approaches to economic policy.

IN THE SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM, WE WANT TO SEE:

A shift to public policies that contribute to equality, prosperity and wellbeing:

Plans to revise the UK **social security system** according to feminist principles.

A workable system of **maternity, paternity, and parental leave** in the UK that encourages parents to share care.

A gender-sensitive and just green transition that recognises care sectors as key to achieving the wellbeing and sustainability of planet and people.

A move to **early years and childcare** and **adult social care systems** that are free / affordable, high quality, universal and comprehensive

A revision of the UK's taxation system and plans to make it more progressive and a revision of fiscal rules to allow borrowing based on need.

In the UK and internationally:

A growing number of **public bodies** develop gender-inclusive processes and use feminist tools in policymaking.

A growing number of diverse **feminist organisations**, regularly participate in economic debates and policymaking.

A growing number of mainstream **economic think tanks** adopt feminist approaches to economic policy.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Our strategy is based on four pillars upon which we structure our work. Below we list our core objectives and our immediate objectives for the current strategic period.

Research and Analysis



Communications and Influence



Capacity Building and Partnerships



Organisational Sustainability



OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



| RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND POLICYMAKING

Provide evidence of the gendered impacts of economic policy.

Support development of gender-responsive policies.

Build on and extend our reactive analysis of the impact of economic policy on different groups of women, highlighting overarching themes.

Recognise different forms of expertise, including that gained through lived experience.

Recognise and reflect the intersection of gender inequality with other structures of inequality.

OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES



| RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND POLICYMAKING

- **Analyse and influence governmental budgets** and financial statements.
- Continue research on **early years and childcare** in collaboration with the EYC Coalition.
- Research challenges facing our **social care workforce**.
- Develop detailed recommendations on UK **maternity, paternity and parental leave policy**, in collaboration with our Policy Advisory Group members and partner specialist organisations.
- Continue to provide the latest evidence on gendered and intersectional impacts of **social security changes** since 2010.
- Work closely with the Training and Capacity Building Team to improve the **Local COL Project model, involving more feminist grassroots organisations** in the UK and provide the required research and policy support they need.
- Work closely with the Training and Capacity Building Team to establish an **international research and policy support programme** similar to the one for UK grassroots groups.
- **Share our research and policy work with, and learn from,** our international partners.
- **Ensure space for emerging issues** (e.g. AI, trade policy, etc) so that we can respond to a rapidly changing economic and policy environment.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



| COMMUNICATIONS AND INFLUENCE

Communicate this research to policymakers, the media, and civil society organisations to influence debate and policymaking.

Become the first port of call for policymakers and the media for analysis of the gender impact of economic policy.

Increase our influence and strengthen our relationships with political, media, academic, third sector, and other stakeholders.

Grow, strengthen and diversify our network of pro-bono experts, and develop the next generation of experts.

Build and strengthen relationships with our sister organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

| COMMUNICATIONS AND INFLUENCE



- **Increase our influence** and strengthen our relationships with:
 - political stakeholders and decision-makers
 - the media
 - academics (new and established)
 - third sector stakeholders (in key policy areas)
 - employers / lobby groups
 - the women’s voluntary sector
 - progressive economics think tanks and campaign groups
 - WBG network (subscribers / members)
 - wider public (feminists, women of all demographics, parents, carers, workers in key sectors)
- **Assess and review the impacts** of key messages, concepts, and policy recommendations more effectively.
- Work with the Chair and the **Policy Advisory Group** to amplify their work, undertake new or updated research and analysis in their areas of expertise, enable them to steer our work, and establish agreed policy positions.
- **Increase the number of people adopting feminist approaches** to economics and social policy among those early in (or changing) their careers, build their capacity to influence policymaking, and facilitate the longer-term sustainability of WBG and feminist economics in the UK.
- **Increase and diversify our audiences** through a strong and recognisable brand, effective media and social media engagement, diverse spokespeople, and accessible content that speaks to and represents a diverse audience.
- Create and use **platforms and channels for disseminating thought leadership**, such as blogs, briefings, events, media placements etc.
- **Collaborate with our sister WBGs** to exchange learning, evidence and intelligence to levy WBG presence and influence more widely across the UK.
- **Respond to opportunities and risks as they emerge**, in line with our strategic objectives, mission and vision.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



| TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Build women's capacity to participate in economic debates and use our work in their campaigns and advocacy.

Build partnerships with grassroots organisations including those representing marginalised women.

Build the capacity of public bodies and influence them to undertake gender-responsive budgeting and use other feminist policymaking tools.

Play an active role in international debates and promote feminist analysis of economic policy.

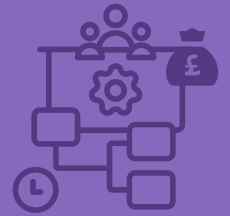
OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES



| TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Develop a **training and capacity building hub**.
- **Build our reputation** as a feminist organisation providing robust training and consultancy on gender, data and feminist policymaking tools (e.g. gender-responsible budgeting, equality impact assessments, etc).
- **Develop training materials** that are adaptable for UK and international contexts.
- **Develop a one-year programme** for feminist grassroots organisations to take them from data finding to policy influencing.
- **Continue to offer ad hoc support sessions** to local and international civil society groups.
- **Offer (paid) training services to public bodies** on gender data and feminist policymaking tools.
- **Promote and hold spaces for knowledge and best practice sharing**, particularly in-person events.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



| ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Build a sustainable organisation which reflects our values.

Continuously review our governance structures, policies and procedures to meet the needs of a developing organisation and support increased diversity within WBG.

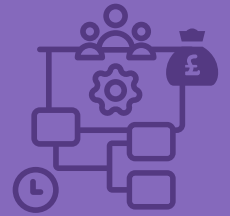
Ensure we have sufficient income from diverse sources for organisational stability.

Develop new funding streams, including for regional work.

Build and diversify our staff and pro-bono capacity to fulfill the other objectives.

OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

| ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY



Internal Communication

- **Strengthen links between teams** while clarifying responsibilities and division of labour.
- **Mainstream processes for communicating**, including regular meeting audits, and set principles for storing information to increase accessibility and efficiency.

Training and Development

- Introduce **peer skill sharing** and continue to provide opportunities for external training for staff development at all levels.
- **Continue to review and update processes for appraisals, PDPs, one to ones, and inductions** to ensure they are as effective as possible.

Income Generation

- **Increase our Core income and diversify our sources of income** to maintain and improve our internal policies such as sick leave and maternity pay.
- **Build fundraising capacity** through use of external contractors or the creation of a fundraising post.

Human Resources

- **Develop a staff retention plan** to minimise turnover.
- Commit to regularly **reviewing efficiency and productivity** and experimenting with new approaches, including exploring the potential of AI.
- Ensure **managers have the skills to provide best-practice support**, including on staff wellbeing.

We recognise that we are living through fast-changing economic circumstances. We will maintain flexibility to shift our focus to the most pressing economic issues for women, relevant policy priorities of government, and training opportunities that may fall outside of these objectives.