

WAND UK Strategy

2015-2018

WAND: WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
FOR NETWORKING
AND DEVELOPMENT

Empowering women to become
agents for their own change



Executive summary

WAND UK is doing valuable work with women across six London boroughs, delivering services in mental health & well-being, sexual & reproductive health and addressing domestic violence.

Our users rate our interventions highly, both in terms of its quality and in terms of their willingness to recommend it to others.

However, both the financial and social environment in which our users live and the funding and competitive environment in which WAND UK operates are increasingly challenging. Central and local government funding reductions have been unprecedentedly large, they hit public services of great importance to disadvantaged and vulnerable women and their full impact will continue to unfold over the coming year or more. Simultaneously, the funding environment has placed great strain on the voluntary sector and particularly on smaller voluntary and community organisations - including WAND UK - that support women.

This three-year strategy considers the current state, upcoming trends, threats and opportunities and the resulting desired target state across a range of dimensions: our users, our market position, our services, our approach, our organisation, our funding, our governance, our communications, our evaluation and our systems.

Taking this comprehensive view into account, four strategic aims emerge for WAND UK for 2015-2018:

1. To support and empower women at sustainable scale across the area's in which we operate;
2. To marshal and maintain the resources needed to deliver our mission;
3. To organise our resources and activities to maximum effect for those we serve;
4. To become a widely sought-after and valued partner.

These strategic aims and the objectives within them must be managed closely through the period, with Trustees reviewing on a quarterly basis. In the immediate term, the staffing objective - to fund and hire two full-time central staff members - within strategic aim (2) must take priority, as realistic pursuit of all remaining aims and objectives depends on it.

WAND UK at a glance

WAND UK was founded in 2004 on the initiative of a group of West African women who had been involved in a similar organisation in Sierra Leone. WAND is an independent charity that addresses the problems facing women in isolated and excluded communities through Drop-in Sessions, Outreach Services and Networking Events. WAND was set up to work predominantly with African female asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

Since 2005, WAND UK has supported women across sexual health, including HIV prevention, computer literacy, mental health and well-being and domestic violence. It has also organised cultural activities for women to meet and strengthen their social networks. Over the years WAND UK has strengthened its expertise in sexual health and well-being and conducted needs-assessments to ensure its interventions responded to women's needs and gaps in service provision.

WAND UK's approach is founded in empowerment and enablement. We support users' holistic health and well-being. This empowering, holistic approach looks not just to address existing issues but to build internal resources that reduce the incidence of issues and allow users to deal with issues more effectively when they do arise - it is a path of prevention. The internal resources that we help users to build must be anchored in a supportive environment, so our work is community-based and takes into consideration community context - including social and cultural dimensions - to make change sustainable. Finally, as part of strengthening users' resources, we support their awareness of and access to other services.

In the past year, WAND UK, based in St. Charles Centre for Health and Wellbeing in northwest London, has worked with 300 women of diverse ethnicity - with 60% black and 30% Asian - across six north-London boroughs. Our services are highly rated by users, with greater than 90% of evaluation respondents saying they would recommend it to others.

WAND UK funding comes through a mix of grant and contract awards. The largest current sources are The Zurich Foundation, The Dalgarno Neighbourhood Fund and the Big Lottery's Awards for All.

We work in close partnership with local and national bodies, and deliver our services through volunteer-led interventions.

Mission, Vision, Values

Our Vision

Our vision is a world free from discrimination and oppression, where people respect and value differences, and where every woman and man enjoys all their human rights and has the opportunities to realise their full potential.

Our Mission

In pursuit of our vision, our mission is to contribute to female empowerment by supporting women to become agents of positive change for themselves, their families, their communities and the society at large.

Our Values

Equality, inclusion and fairness

WAND UK is committed to equality and non-discrimination. It will ensure that the activities and services it provides are inclusive, accessible and respond to women and their families' diverse needs and specificities.

Individual centred and holistic

WAND UK's support takes into account all aspects of women's lives, including physical, emotional, social and economic well being.

Involving

WAND UK believes that everybody can positively contribute to community life and to the society. WAND UK therefore works in partnership with a range of charities, grassroots informal organisations and faith-based organisations for a better future for women and their families. WAND UK also involves women in the design of its activities and provides them with opportunities to engage in activities as volunteers.

Users

Women from a vast array of backgrounds and ethnicities face a multiplicity of problems, discrimination and inequality. These include:

- Gender and ethnic discrimination, particularly for asylum seekers, refugees and migrant women;
- Poverty and social exclusion;
- Discrimination at work and when seeking job;
- Housing, particularly for large families;
- Lack of participation in political decisions and community life;
- Difficulties to sustain constructive and supportive relationships;
- Health, including reproductive sexual health, and the lack of knowledge in accessing health, social and education services.

WAND UK recognises how the intersection of these inequalities maintains women in poverty and sustains a low-level of self-confidence. It also understands how relationships, discrimination and housing access directly relate to poor mental and physical health.

From housing provision to childcare support to domestic violence services and police funding, the decisions being made by local councils affect women in more than any other section of society¹. Recent research and statistics² show that it is women who are increasingly unemployed or taking underpaid work; women who are losing money for childcare and other basic needs through welfare cuts; and women who are losing vital support from voluntary and community organisations which have closed due to lack of funding. Many of the reforms that have been announced by central government will be phased in over the next two or three years.

WAND UK has traditionally worked with African women in London but has been widening its reach. WAND continues to pursue this extension to be more inclusive and work with women across all backgrounds and ethnicities. Additionally, WAND is extending some of its activities to families, in an attempt to work with children and men. Refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, women living positively with HIV, female heads of households and single mothers will be particularly targeted by WAND's activities.

WAND UK focuses its work across six London boroughs - Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, Islington, Hackney and Camden.

¹ Dr Claire Annesley (2011), Budgeting for Gender Equality: is government economic policy fair to women? Gender Institute and Department of Sociology Discussion. London School of Economics.

² Women's Resource Centre (2012). Women and the Cuts. Fact Sheet.

Current situation

In the past two years, WAND UK has worked with approximately 300 users. Registration information indicates that, ethnically, our user base is approximately 60% black, 30 % Asian and 10% other.

The period ahead

We see the opportunity for growth, bringing our support to a greater proportion of our target audience in the boroughs in which we operate. We will identify and target outreach on multiple 'points of entry' for service need / prevention - school leavers, expectant or new mothers, recently unemployed, returners to work, retirees.

Continued misunderstanding of equalities legislation by grant makers and commissioners could lead them to look unfavourably on WAND UK and other women's charities due to our gender focus. We will continue to educate this group where necessary with respect to our compliance with equalities legislation.

Desired end state

By the end of this strategy period, WAND UK will operate in the same boroughs in which it now does, but we will work with more women, girls and their families, supporting users with a greater range and volume of activities.

Market position

WAND UK operates in a crowded charity market. As a small charity, it has struggled to find its place among bigger local or national charities in the health and social sectors. Nonetheless, through its community outreach interventions and partnership building with institutional partners it has set its work at the interface between women and other service providers, making the link between services and users in order to change lives.

Current situation

Anecdotally, WAND's users report that WAND is well known in the areas in which it operates for helping women. WAND is also well known and well regarded by its partners and by organisations that have funded WAND's programmes over recent years. We have developed partnerships with local charities, GP surgeries and institutional partners

such as the NHS. However, we are perhaps less well known among commissioners, grant-makers and 'lead partners' more generally.

The period ahead

With ever-greater competition for funds and a trend toward procurement and contracts replacing grant-funded services (see Funding, below), there is a risk that WAND UK and other small providers will be marginalised by large charities and companies that capitalise on commissioners' wish to deal with fewer, multi-service contractors.

Alongside this risk, WAND has an opportunity to 'be the face' of local, community-anchored services, of prevention and of holistic empowerment. Such recognition will take concerted networking and communications work, alongside continuing to provide excellent services for users, but the result can be a much stronger position within the market and the distribution of resources and responsibilities for serving its users.

Desired end state

By the end of the strategy period, WAND will be a catalyst for north-London small provider co-operation and will be a well-known voice for the defining elements of its approach (see Approach, below) to supporting users.

WAND will be front-of-mind for commissioners, grant-makers and large, 'lead providers' in the services that support WAND's mission in the areas in which it operates.

Services

WAND UK engages with women both individually and in groups, to support them to take control over their own lives, to improve their health and well-being, to increase their self-esteem and to make their voices heard. WAND strives to reach out the most vulnerable women in communities. By putting the individual at the centre of its interventions.

WAND UK's current service areas: Mental health & well-being, Sexual & reproductive health and Addressing Domestic Violence.

Current situation

WAND's users regard our services highly. Evaluation data from the Happy Healthy Family Club shows that 97% would recommend it to others and that 75% rated the information as Excellent (with the remaining 25% rating it as Satisfactory).

Our Mental Health Awareness video sessions had 92% of respondents say that it captured the issues well and gave useful information. Over 97% said it should be shown to others.

Our Domestic Violence Awareness video sessions had 59% of respondents say that it captured the issues well and gave useful information - a further 29% left the answer to the question blank. Over 68% said it should be shown to others - a further 24% left the answer to the question blank.

Feedback from other activities is qualitatively very positive but does not lend itself to quantitative analysis.

A potential weakness of current services is that they only access a relatively small audience relative to the enablement / empowerment needs in the areas we serve.

The period ahead

At current volumes, there is a risk that WAND has insufficient contact to maintain a deep understanding of community needs and sufficient expertise to meet those needs. WAND has an opportunity to build on its services (or to expand activities within current services) to access and support a broader user base (e.g. mentoring / buddying).

Desired end state

By the end of the strategy period, WAND UK will have expanded the volume and range of activity and deepened its expertise in existing services and will have expanded into select related services, for example back-to-work support and mentoring/buddying.

Approach

WAND UK engages with women both individually and in groups, to support them to take control over their own lives, to improve their health and well-being, to increase their self-esteem and to make their voices heard. WAND strives to reach out the most vulnerable women in communities. By putting the individual at the centre of its interventions, WAND's overarching goal is to empower women and help them to become agents of their own change through education.

The organisation first and foremost addresses the rights and wellbeing of women from ethnic minority backgrounds and in doing so it recognises that women are likely to reduce their dependence on formal health services and to better participate in and contribute to the community, both socially and economically, ending the cyclic nature of their disadvantaged circumstance.

WAND UK believes that by changing and transforming women's lives it can not only positively impact on individuals, families, but also on communities and on the whole society.

Current situation

WAND's approach is founded in empowerment and enablement. We support users' holistic health and well-being. This empowering, holistic approach looks not just to address existing issues but to build internal resources that reduce the incidence of issues and allow users to deal with issues more effectively when they do arise - it is a path of prevention. The internal resources that we help users to build must be anchored in a supportive environment, so our work is community-based and takes into consideration community context - including social and cultural dimensions - to make change sustainable. Finally, as part of strengthening users' resources, we support their awareness of and access to other services.

The period ahead

WAND UK will be mindful of the success of this approach and will not be distracted by short-term temptations to veer from it. Instead, we will seek to better articulate it, further champion it and use it as a source of distinctiveness in the funding and partnership markets.

Desired end state

At the end of the strategy period, WAND UK will continue to work with its current approach, will have been more widely recognised for the approach and will have made the approach into a source of distinctiveness.

Organisation

WAND UK is a volunteer organisation. We have a few long-term, experienced volunteers in each of the areas in which we operate, and we assemble other volunteer resources to meet specific project needs.

Current situation

WAND UK has very capable, experienced and committed central leadership from its chief executive. We also have long-term volunteers with good intervention and user group knowledge.

However, WAND's central resources are currently too thin and too reliant on the chief executive to carry out the fundraising, administration, communications, project management and evaluation of a vibrant, growing community charity.

The period ahead

The degree of our reliance on our chief executive is a risk to the charity. Also, the strength of our work-based relationship with our long-term volunteers could atrophy if our activity levels / impact are insufficiently high.

We have an opportunity to fund and secure dedicated central resource to kick-start a virtuous circle of capacity, capability, funding, activity and impact. We need a coordinator / fundraiser and a community links worker to significantly increase our fundraising, communication, management and evaluation capacity and capability.

Desired end state

At the end of the strategy period, WAND UK will be a robustly managed volunteer organisation - with a combination of core, long-term volunteers and a growing set of newer volunteers, many of whom have been users of WAND services. The activities of these volunteers will be effectively woven with those of a full-time community links worker to reach and help users in our areas of work. WAND will have both capacity and increased expertise to successfully access funding through grants and contracts, and we will have capacity and recent success in maintaining a richer, more impactful communication programme with users, partners, funders and other stakeholders.

Funding

The rationale for working with marginalised women seems more important than ever and is supported by legal and policy frameworks, yet the charity and third sector is also being impacted by budget cuts. More than 80% of the government funding received by charities is now in the form of contracts for delivering services rather than grants to support their work, compared to 49% in 2000/01. The value of grants fell by 14.5% in 2011/12, while the value of contracts fell by 7.4%, so the shift from grants to contracts observed over the last decade continued in a time of austerity.³

In particular, Women's organisations have faced a number of challenges. "One in 5 women's organisations have closed and many more face an uncertain future"⁴, and research has shown "that women's organisations felt that being women-only made it more difficult to access funding"⁵. The increased generalisation of government procuring services from voluntary organisations (as opposed to providing grants) also raises concerns over the independence of the sector. Women's organisations tend to be small charities which often lack the capacity or the turnover threshold to bid for funding in an increasingly competitive market.

Additionally, this move from grants to contracts will leave charities facing bills for VAT, specialist tax advice and preparing bids for work. The procurement process of offering and awarding

³ <http://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac14/how-has-the-funding-mix-changed/>

⁴ Women's Resource Centre (2012). Women and the Cuts. Fact Sheet.

⁵ Women's Resource Centre (2012). Women and the Cuts. Fact Sheet.

contracts for work is "enormously expensive and it tends to destroy collaboration, local community ownership and ends up in a worse service than you had before using grant aid".⁶

Current situation

WAND UK's five year income and expense summary is at Appendix A. In the most recent reported year - FY 2014/15 - WAND UK had £42.8k income from seven sources, with the largest source - Zurich - constituting 29% of the total. Over the past five years, the average annual income has been £42.4k, from an average of seven sources per year, with the largest giver per year averaging 39% of the total. In total, over the five-year period, WAND has received funds from 21 entities, as well as a small amount from retail donations.

WAND UK's funding is predominantly project-specific, making it difficult to resource the central staff that are currently a critical shortage (see Organisation, above).

The period ahead

The trustees of WAND UK have made funding and diversity of these funding sources of the organisation a priority. Critical to pursuing this priority are: a) a comprehensive fundraising strategy that identifies priority targets and approaches to each and b) securing sufficient resource, with sufficient expertise, to systematically execute the strategy.

There are opportunities to tap into 'alternative' funding pools: funds for older people, for prevention-focused activities, for refugee support, for improving social inclusion/cross-cultural awareness, for 'grassroots' programmes, for increasing volunteering. The investigation of these sources and the best approaches to access them is a major piece of work.

There is an opportunity, once internal resource is in place to take advantage of it, to access external (pro bono) expertise in bidding best practice. With sufficient guidance, WAND might also more significantly involve volunteers in fundraising efforts.

⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-23620898>

Desired end state

At the end of the strategy period, WAND UK will have well-established core funding on a rolling three-year basis. We will have an annually updated fundraising strategy, with dedicated resource to pursue it. WAND will have a growing track record of successful execution of this fundraising strategy, evidenced by annual income of £100k+ and commensurately expanded activity and impact. Our income will be from a wider set of sources - including a mix of directly-accessed grants and sub-contracts as partners within larger consortia. Our reliance on any one source will be no greater than it is today.

Governance

WAND's 2012-2015 strategy included the objective to strengthen our governance, and we will continue our work to do so in the next strategy period.

Current situation

WAND has enjoyed relatively strong continuity within the board over the past three years, and we are currently looking to add several important functionally-aligned trustees.

Yet, WAND has yet to get the most from its trustees either the operational level or in support of fundraising. Also, WAND has little formal risk management in place.

The period ahead

The collapse of Kids Company highlights the risks associated with the small reserves and thin margins on which charities operates. It also likely increases the scrutiny with which authorities and the public will view charities.

While improving trustees' ability to review and manage risk, there is also the opportunity to involve trustees in WAND's central challenge - accessing funds in a difficult landscape.

Desired end state

At the end of the strategy period, WAND UK will have a board with significant continuity with today's, but also with new functional expertise to help WAND's organisational development and with stronger relationships that serve as fundraising assets. Trustees will even more actively employ both their expertise and their relationships in service of WAND's aims.

WAND and its trustees will have an improved risk management regime and improved mechanisms to review and direct progress on the strategic objectives identified in this 2015-2018 Strategy.

Communications

Tighter funding, more formal bidding procedures and greater competition drive a premium on communication of WAND's proposition and impact.

Current situation

WAND has recently produced new branding materials for users and potential users of its services.

WAND does not have a communication strategy of a set of ready-made materials to support its engagement with partners (especially potential lead-bidders for large contracts) and funders.

The period ahead

There is a risk that, despite its good work in communities, WAND may fail to 'pop onto the radar' of important potential partner or funding stakeholders due to lack of communication or communication that fails to adequately articulate the distinctiveness of the contribution that WAND can bring to funders' aims or to consortia.

There is an opportunity to create a core set of materials that convey WAND's distinctive approach and the impact that WAND achieves.

Desired end state

At the end of the strategy period, WAND UK will have a well-honed set of communication materials, refined over three years of use with stakeholders, tailored to stakeholder groups (small charity partners, large partners / lead bidders, commissioners, grant funders). We will have an annual process for reviewing and updating these assets.

Evaluation

The difficult market and funding environment discussed above (in Market Position and Funding) place a premium on a) continuously improving the impact of our services and b) being able to demonstrate and communicate the impact of our interventions.

Current situation

Historically, WAND's monitoring and evaluation processes have been informal and ad hoc. We are currently undertaking project work in Pqasso (for organisational quality improvement) and in the monitoring and evaluation of our interventions.

The period ahead

There is a risk that potential funders and 'senior' partners will require quantitative proof of impact in their bid formats that WAND is not well-placed to provide or that shows WAND in a weaker bid position than others whose measurement, analysis and communication outshine ours, even if we know 'in our heart of hearts' that our impact is superior.

There is an opportunity to standardise our feedback collection formats, to improve our consistency of collection, to systematise the collation of our data, to extract greater learning from our feedback and to more professionally measure and communicate our impact.

Desired end state

At the end of the strategy period, WAND UK will have well-understood tools and well-established habits and routines for measuring, analysing and communicating impact

and for collecting, analysing and incorporating learning from feedback. Trustees will routinely review, understand and helpfully challenge both impact reporting and continuous improvement progress.

Systems

Strengthening management, governance, monitoring and evaluation, while growing services - especially with limited central staff capacity - requires getting the most from pragmatic use of today's simple organisational technology.

Current situation

WAND UK has a number of desktop computers running Microsoft products on a local network and server. The Pqasso project provides access to an online quality management tool. We have recently entered the data from 3-years-worth of paper registration and evaluation forms into a password protected Excel file.

WAND UK does not have an integrated database of volunteers, users, projects, partners and other stakeholders or a tool to manage communication campaigns.

The period ahead

There is a risk that, without moving operations onto digital / online platforms, WAND UK will be unable to either drive and control growing operations or measure their effectiveness and impact. As mentioned above, this would likely have significant negative impact on fundraising ability.

There is also a risk that, with records stored on paper, in individual computer files and on physical hard drives, some or all of the data is lost or stolen. Very few data breaches happen through online hacking or centralised databases - the vast majority are through physical theft or loss of paper or computers.

There is an opportunity to investigate leading online database options (Salesforce, Dynamics, ZenDesk and others) for inexpensive or free versions in which to consolidate and organise WAND's operations. Similarly, we can choose a leading cloud storage

option (Dropbox, Box, GoogleDrive, OneDrive and others) on which to move our document and file storage.

Desired end state

At the end of the strategy period, WAND UK will have a fit-for-purpose database through which its operations, communications and evaluation are managed. We will also store our documents and files digitally online.

Our staff and volunteers will be trained on the relevant aspects of the system's use, and their routines and habits will fit comfortably with that use.

Strategic Aims & Objectives

Based on the analysis above of WAND UK's current position, likely trends, opportunities and threats over the period ahead and the resulting position WAND UK aims for by the end of the strategy period, WAND UK's strategic aims for 2015-2018 are:

5. To support and empower women at sustainable scale across the area's in which we operate;
Why? - To increase impact by doing more for more women, to increase community connection through greater points and types of connection, to increase expertise by learning from greater interaction, to increase competitiveness and standing in a crowded and competitive environment;
6. To marshal and maintain the resources needed to deliver our mission;
Why? - At current resource levels, the organisation is unable to perform on all the fronts demanded in today's funding and operating environment;
7. To organise our resources and activities to maximum effect for those we serve;
Why? - Today's environment demands consistent employment of business-calibre tools and processes for management, learning and communicating.
8. To become a widely sought-after and valued partner;
Why? - More robust funding and operational partnerships are critical to achieving viable scale and impact in today's environment.

We will manage these strategic aims and the objectives below (with priority level in parentheses) and report progress to trustee's quarterly, updating aims and objectives annually, as necessary.

1. Support and empower women at sustainable scale.
 - a. Increase outreach with women and girls. (1)
 - b. Selectively add services (e.g. back-to-work support or mentoring/buddying) to increase reach and impact. (2)
 - c. Increase activity levels (workshops, events, classes) in both existing and new services. (2)
2. Marshall and maintain resources.
 - a. Fund and hire two full-time core staff members: coordinator/fundraiser and community links worker. (1)
 - b. Pursue funding through all reasonable grant and contract routes with which WAND UK shares a relevant dimension (prevention, community based, women, older people, holistic health, and empowerment) to secure three-year rolling core funding and overall annual funding of at least £100k. (1)
 - c. Pursue pro bono support for procurement bid writing. (2)
 - d. Continue to recruit trustees with relevant functional expertise and fundraising connections. (2)
 - e. Develop more users as volunteers. (3)
3. Organise resources and activities.
 - a. Put in place a fit-for-purpose Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to manage operations, communications and evaluation. (1)
 - b. Create and maintain a simple monitoring and evaluation plan and process that allows continuous learning and accurate, robust measurement of WAND UK's impact. (1)
 - c. Construct more active roles for trustees to play in both fundraising and organisation development. (2)
 - d. Institute and maintain a robust risk management approach that gives trustees (or a subset Audit and Risk Committee) at least quarterly visibility of a 'living' risk matrix. (2)
 - e. Institute and maintain a robust organisational performance process to manage and report on progress on the Annual Business Plan. (2)
4. Become a valued partner.

- a. Make WAND UK's approach a true source of distinctiveness that can be forcefully communicated and backed with robust measurement of impact. (2)
- b. Develop a suite of communication 'assets' (core text, templates, testimonials, quantitative impact results) based on audience analysis of key stakeholder groups (users/prospective users, volunteers, project-level partners, strategic partners, grant funders, current/potential lead partners of large service consortia, commissioners). (1)
- c. Deepen / develop relationships with target partners and funders. (2)
- d. Create, maintain and continuously refresh impact evidence set to draw from for relevant specific conversations. (1)

