WIDE+ Narrative and Report 2015-2017
This report gives a brief overview of WIDE+ activities since its formal establishment in 2015. It starts with a brief introduction into WIDE+.

Introduction

WIDE+ is a European feminist network of women’s rights advocates, gender specialists, women’s rights organizations and development NGOs. It works through interlinked strategies of analysis, capacity building, movement building and advocacy informed by a feminist perspective. Its work is based on an ethos of acting from the perspective of, and promoting solidarity with women’s rights organizations in the global South and grassroots women’s rights groups in Europe. WIDE+ wants women to have control over their lives and livelihoods, to decide over their own bodies, and to participate equally in all socio-economic processes.

The protection of women’s human Rights is WIDE+ key objective. Therefore members call for gender justice in combination with social justice: gender justice in Europe and globally can only be brought about if intersecting unequal power relations are addressed. WIDE+ also strongly
believes that women are a not homogeneous group and that without respect for the multitude of feminisms, we can’t build agency. WIDE+ aims to take into account women’s multiple identities -being women in western and Eastern Europe, the Global South, migrants, of colour, LGBTQ - and the intersection of different regimes of power and oppression. That is why WIDE+ is a European network that works in solidarity with women’s rights organizations in the Global South and other associations in the North, such as grassroots groups or migrant networks. An intersectional critical perspective that stands for a diversity of feminisms and also for a participatory, empowering and holistic approach- that is what a feminist vision means to WIDE+.

For more about WIDE+ vision and mission, one can go to: https://wideplus.org/about/wide-vision-and-mission/

WIDE+ started as an informal network in 2011 and it has been active from the start. WIDE+ has organized since 2012 international workshops and conferences –at minimum once a year- that have contributed to greater awareness on a) gender inequalities in development and trade relations between Europe and the Global South and b) on challenges towards achieving women’s rights in Europe. It has developed social and online media channels with resources that are regularly updated; it has developed critical feminist analysis and it is doing advocacy work. It has also established itself as a formal network in 2015, in Belgium.

When WIDE+ was founded, the members reflected deeply on what a ‘feminist leadership’ in a network means in practice and the result was a network structure that is guided by feminist principles. It works to keep a good balance among the four key principles of its network:

- WIDE+ is governed by its members. This collective is articulated through democratic, decentralized, inclusive and transparent decision making processes in which members have ownership of the network.
- WIDE+ seeks ways create and maintain a participatory, fluid and open network.
- WIDE+ is committed to ensure that the mission and vision is a continuous guide in all the work that is carried out.
- WIDE+ is governed in a way to sustain financial and organizational viability.

Participants express their solidarity with the women and men in Poland and Ireland fighting for abortion rights during the 2016 International Conference
Activities 2015-2017

This report presents the WIDE+ achievements of the past years, categorized according to different kinds of strategies. While several activities aim to contribute to more than one strategy, each activity is mentioned only once.

A. Increase the visibility of Feminist Voices

Feminist voices Visible online and in policy Spaces

WIDE+ has been consistently active on social and online media. It has been publishing regularly its newsletter to its 2000 subscribers between 2013 up to 2015, and since 2016 it has been publishing less often newsletters, but more regularly news through its Facebook FeministWIDE, currently 500 followers), e-mail-lists and twitter account: @feministWIDE. Its website (wideplus.org) is of course regularly updated. The site includes a selection of WIDE(+) resources.

WIDE+ in policy spaces

WIDE+ provides feminist recommendations and analysis during public spaces, such as feminist spaces, and policy or public spaces. Among others:

- WIDE+ participation and position paper with recommendations to World Bank Group’s Gender Strategy in 2015;
- WIDE+ workshop at the AVID Forum 2016 (WIDE+ also participated in 2013);
- WIDE+ participation in EU-CELAC Seminar on Gender Equality and Women’s economic Empowerment, 7-8 March 2016
- WIDE+ at the 11th Asian European People’s Forum in Summer of 2016.
- WIDE+ spoke during the INTA Committee reflecting on a new EP study done on the EU trade and gender (blind) policy in 2015, and during the expert hearing for Expert Hearing for the INTA and FEMM committee in 2017.
Promoting the Rights of female refugees and migrants

WIDE+ has been advocating for a better integration of women's human rights in migration policy, in particular highlighting the situation of female refugees. Members are very concerned about the vulnerable situation of women refugees in Europe and in Turkey. In spring 2016, WIDE+ asked UN High Commissioner for Refugees and UN Women to check how gender sensitive measures are implemented. And the movement of female refugees and migrants that has resulted in a humanitarian crisis due to inadequate political responses in Europe was one of the key topics during our 2016 International conference.

WIDE+ deepened an analysis of what is needed to improve the situation for female refugees and migrants (including undocumented workers, etc.) with its "European Open Space to analyze, strategize, and (re)claim rights of female Refugees and Migrants", that was held on 14 November in Brussels, Belgium, 2016. This open space was part of an European advocacy and strategy workshop with close to 50 women's rights associations and representatives from migrant and refugee groups and associations that WIDE+ co-organized with the European Women's Lobby (see report and video).

WIDE+ members started end 2016 their two year project promoting gender equality, migration, security and democracy through adult education. WIDE Austria (project leader), CEIM (Spain), Le Monde selon les Femmes (Belgium), GADIP (Sweden) and Karat Coalition (Poland) organized 4 trans-national partnership meetings to exchange with and learn from local organizations and national workshops. Most of the meetings and workshops have taken place in 2017 and the rest of the project, including a public session in the European Parliament and a publication will be done in 2018. WIDE+ is also undertaking a new project ‘Strengthening Innovative Solutions to protect Female Migrant and Refugee Rights’.

Annual WIDE+ members delegation during UN CSW

WIDE+ members have been annually organizing themselves as informal delegation during the UN Commission on the Status of Women, sharing strategies and information at European level. WIDE+ members aim at influencing the governmental process. See for example, 2016: 2016, and 2015 (WIDE+ members did not organize something in 2017, but again WIDE+ was present in 2018).

WIDE+ supports CSO statements, campaigns and positions itself publicly

WIDE+ joins and support statements for the promotion of women’s rights and for economic and social justice. WIDE+ has in the past years signed on, among others, to statements that called for a critical approach to the DOHA round at the World Trade Organization and its declaration on women’s economic empowerment, against the TTIP negotiations, a recommendation for a CEDAW article on development initiated by WIDE Austria, the global call for a binding Treaty on Transnational Companies, in opposition to the US Global Gag Rule that President Trump reinstated, and for more support to women’s rights associations in the global South within the Dutch FLOW programme.
WIDE+ also develops its own statements and petitions. In 2015 and 2016 WIDE+ presented recommendations towards the UNHRC on the protection women’s rights in families and on UNSCR resolution review 1325. WIDE+ expressed with many others its condemnation of the murder of indigenous leader Berta Cáceres in Honduras. CAWN and WIDE+ called on European Parliamentarians to pressure El Salvador to end ban on Abortion. WIDE+ initiated a petition to condemn the unlawful arrests of Diyarbakir’s Co-Mayors Gültan Kışanak and Fırat Anlı and demanded their immediate release in 2016. WIDE+ and members urged Guatemalan Embassies to demand a full investigation into fire in state home killing dozens of girls, in 2017. On 28 September 2017 WIDE+ members and many others celebrated and marched for International Safe Abortion Day (March in Brussels and: http://www.september28.org/)

B. Contribute to Feminist Movements Building

International Conference enhancing Feminist strategizing on global issues in Europe

A big action for 2016 was the organizing of the international conference: “Movements, Borders, Rights? Feminist Perspectives on Global issues in Europe” that took place in Brussels, Belgium, at 24 and 25 October, 2016. WIDE+ initiated the conference and was its main organizer with collaboration of EWL, and in cooperation with Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (RLS).

The conference offered a space for civil society, women’s rights experts and activists and policymakers to reflect from a feminist perspective on challenges that are effecting women globally and which are threatening European democracy and development: migration, neo-conservative/rightwing backlash and neo-liberal macro-economic policies. The conference proved an excellent space to bring many feminists together and showed that there is a need for European feminists to meet and reflect on common challenges and lessons learned, such spaces are lacking. Close to 200 gender rights activists, professionals and academics from 31 countries came together across generations and continents and also online with twitter the conference made an impression, being a trending topic during the conference. The room could only hold 200 people, so more participants could not be invited.

The participants and speakers all pointed to a clear agenda for feminist in Europe: Feminism must be more political in confronting the current multiple crises, meaning that feminists should make their voices and analysis heard in policy and public debates and not stand on the side line. The very powerful outcomes were worded in a Summary statement, available in English, German and Portuguese (and all videos and reports).
Feminist Economic Literacy toolkit

In 2015, WIDE+ members published a useful toolkit: “Economic Literacy across Europe: Exchange and Cooperation to Promote a Feminist Approach in Adult Education”. After WIDE+’s first public Conference workshop that was held in Madrid, 4 July, 2013, several members collaborated in the context of WIDE+. After a series of workshops together with other member associations and individuals, the associations KULU in Denmark, Le Monde selon Les Femmes in Belgium, WIDE Austria, WIDE Switzerland and Centro de Estudios e Investigación sobre Mujeres (CEIM) in Spain brought together their work with the publication of this toolkit that showcases a multitude of tools used to educate people on economy from a feminist perspective.

Alliance building

Part of feminist movement(s)building is building strong ties and collaborations with other networks and associations, within the women's rights movement(s) and across social justice movements. WDE+ and WIDE+ members meet regularly with other civil society networks.

WIDE+ has/is been working together with:

- International and regional women’s rights networks like AWID, EWL, ENOW (European Network of Migrant Women) and WIDE+ keeps ties with women’s rights networks in other regions.
- Global women’s rights spaces around the Post-Development 2015 Agenda’s such as the Women’s Major Group on Sustainable Development and the CPDE Feminist Constituency: WIDE+ is an active member of both groups.
- CONCORD, the development network towards European policy makers and trade related networks, such as the International Trade Union (in the WG gender and trade WG) and the alliance for a binding human rights treaty for Transnational companies.

Sustain WIDE+ as a democratic, financial viable and participatory network

In order to enable members and others to contribute easily to activities, WIDE+ operates through Ad Hoc thematic and project Working Groups (WGs). The General Assembly meets once a year and the caucus sets the strategy for the network together with the board, which also has the responsibility of the financial and daily management. WIDE+ has worked with freelance consultants in the past years and a volunteer reimbursement, and is aiming to hire a part time employee in 2018. WIDE+ was a reliable implementer of the projects it has raised funds for, and has sustained and managed the network in accordance to Belgian law and with its feminist principles.

C. Knowledge Building and Advocacy

2015 WIDE+ Conference develops proposals for a new women’s rights paradigm

WIDE+ 2015 Conference on “Women’s Human Rights and Gender Justice in the Post-2015 era: role of WIDE+ and feminist organizations” was held in Barcelona, Spain, on 17 and 18 June, financed through the Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (ACCD) in collaboration with the Agencia Española de Cooperacion Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID) through the Plataforma 2015 y más. It brought together feminist experts and
advocates from across Europe that reflected on the need for a new paradigm around women's rights in development. As a result of the conference, WIDE+ published its proposals to revitalize an encompassing women’s rights agenda available in English, Spanish and Catalan.

**Influencing European decision makers to promote women’s rights**

WIDE+ is an active member to the Working Group of the Women’s Major Group (WMG) for development that has jointly advocated in Post-2015 Development Agenda’s: the Financing for Development (FfD) process and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). See final position on FfD. And the Women’s Major Group Position Paper 2017 for the UN High-Level Political Forum.

And WIDE+ is the European coordinator of the feminist Constituency in CPDE (Global Civil Society Coordination Group around post Aid Effectiveness Agenda). WIDE+ as member of the CPDE Feminist Constituency called for a stronger implementation of gender equality and women’s rights within the Global Partnership in Development. Further information and the statement of Feminist Constituency towards the High level Meeting 2 (HLM2) that took place in Nairobi on 28 November 2016.

The **WIDE+ Gender and Trade Working Group** did a lot of work to get a feminist position heard in the European Parliament process to come to the first effective resolution to include gender in EU trade policy (as EU trade policy is gender blind). After a year of preparation the Working Group published its Position Paper on “How to transform EU trade policy to protect women’s rights”. And after is publication, WIDE+ advocated with different political groupings for its positions, bringing together other women's rights networks and trade unions. Among others, it sent out a letter to the rapporteurs of European Parliament for the planned motion on gender in EU trade agreements.