

Women Deliver's 2025–2030¹ Strategy

An Evolved Catalytic Organization for the Gender Equality Ecosystem²

The Current Moment

By 2025, the systems that had housed decades of progress on gender equality were crumbling. Movements had secured extraordinary gains within them, but those systems were not built to serve the majority of girls, women, and gender-diverse people. Too often, priorities were shaped by donors, accountability flowed upward rather than outward to people, and locally led movements remained under-resourced. As funding contracted and political opposition intensified, these underlying weaknesses became impossible to ignore.

This disruption also creates an opportunity to reshape the gender equality ecosystem. Women Deliver's 2025–2030 Strategy responds by deepening our role as a catalytic organization: connecting diverse actors around a shared political vision and helping translate that alignment into sustained collective action.

The need is urgent. Nearly one in four governments reported backlash against women's rights in 2024. Official Development Assistance (ODA) fell by 23 percent in 2025 — the largest annual contraction on record — and is projected to decline further. Multilateral institutions are also under growing strain as States redirect resources toward defense and anti-rights actors and autocrats increasingly use global spaces to advance their agendas.^{3,4,5,6} With the Sustainable Development Goals entering their final years and no successor framework agreed, gender equality risks being weakened or sidelined in the post-2030 agenda.⁷

The ecosystem already has strong movements, evidence, ideas, and leadership. What is needed is greater connective capacity: sustained relationships and structures that align efforts across issues and geographies, strengthen coordination, and reinforce a unifying political vision: that civil society has the power and space to

¹This strategy builds on the work Women Deliver began in 2025 and 2026, including WD2026 and the co-creation of the Melbourne Declaration for Gender Equality. It sets our direction through 2030.

²We use "gender equality ecosystem" to describe the wider field of movements, institutions, actors, and policy spaces working to advance gender equality worldwide. This includes feminist movements, women's rights organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ organizations, youth-led and youth-serving organizations, grassroots and locally led groups, governments, multilateral institutions, development agencies, philanthropy, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), researchers, advocates, service providers, policy actors, and allies. These actors do not hold the same power, but together they shape what becomes possible for gender equality globally.

³Policy Center for the New South, "The Crisis of Multilateralism Viewed from the Global South," 2023.

⁴OxJournal, "Power Dynamics and Inequality Between Countries in the United Nations and the Effect on Diplomatic Problem Solving," 2024.

⁵ODI Global, "Advancing Gender Rights at the Human Rights Council in Times of Backlash," 2026.

⁶Council on Foreign Relations, "The Great Aid Recession: 2025's Humanitarian Crash in Nine Charts," 2025.

⁷UN Women, Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing, March 2025; OECD, "International Aid Fell Sharply in 2025," 9 April 2026; UN DESA, "Beyond 2030: The Committee for Development Policy's Vision for Development," February 2026.

shape political direction and hold States and institutions accountable.^{8,9} These are the conditions Women Deliver will help create.

Women Deliver: An Evolved Catalytic Organization

Complex challenges cannot be addressed by individual organizations acting alone. Catalytic organizations create the conditions for an ecosystem to act with greater alignment, shared purpose, and collective power. They strengthen the relationships, political direction, and shared structures that move diverse actors from fragmented efforts to sustained action.

Since our founding 20 years ago, Women Deliver has continually evolved — from a Conference organizer focused on maternal health, to a strategic convener with a broader focus on gender equality, to a supporter of young and emerging gender equality advocates, and to an advocacy organization focused on global spaces, with the bodily autonomy of adolescent girls as our litmus test.

Our evolution accelerated following our reckoning in 2020 and a period of profound disruption across the gender equality ecosystem that began in 2025. Over the past year, we have reshaped our programming, structure, and goals and begun operating intentionally as a catalytic organization. The co-creation and launch of the [Melbourne Declaration for Gender Equality](#) demonstrates this role in practice: bringing diverse actors together around a shared political vision, building alignment around that vision, and creating the conditions for collective action. This strategy builds on that foundation, deepening and expanding the catalytic role Women Deliver is already playing across the gender equality ecosystem.

Our strategic focus is to build on our trusted role as a convener and our partnerships across the gender equality ecosystem to deepen our role as a catalytic organization in the current political context.¹⁰

Evidence on how catalytic organizations advance change, together with our own interviews with key partners and stakeholders, points to four strategic assets that position Women Deliver to play this role:¹¹

- **Connective advantage with political direction.** Catalytic organizations need trust across diverse actors and a clear political direction. Women Deliver's relationships position us to bring actors together, build collective ownership, and align action around a shared political agenda and vision for transformation.
- **Strategic clarity.** Our partnerships across actors, networks, movements, issue areas, and geographies give us a broad view of the ecosystem — including its goals, tensions, power dynamics, and windows of opportunity.
- **Relational legitimacy.** Women Deliver has credibility with actors holding different interests and forms of power. WD2026 [demonstrated this strength](#). Despite a challenging global context, approximately

⁸ Stanford Social Innovation Review, "How Field Catalysts Galvanize Social Change," 2018.

⁹The Bridgespan Group, "Equitable Systems Change: Funding Field Catalysts from Origins to Revolutionizing the World," 2023.

¹⁰Many catalytic organizations are "evolved"—meaning they began as standard nonprofits or community projects but later pivoted their business models once they realized systemic coordination was the missing piece needed to achieve their ultimate goal. The Bridgespan Group, "Field Catalyst Origin Stories: Lessons for Systems-Change Leaders," 2023.

¹¹Stanford Social Innovation Review, "How Field Catalysts Galvanize Social Change," 2018; The Bridgespan Group, "Equitable Systems Change: Funding Field Catalysts from Origins to Revolutionizing the World," 2023; Stanford Social Innovation Review, "Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact: Part 1," 2012; Community Development, "Expanding Our Understanding of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact Initiatives," 2018.

US\$1.8 billion in financial commitments were announced at the Conference. The [Melbourne Declaration](#) also received almost 1,000 endorsements from organizations and individuals, alongside 11 country-level endorsements. Together, these outcomes demonstrate our ability to unite civil society, governments, philanthropy, and other actors around a shared agenda and translate convening into political and financial commitment.¹²

- **Convening power.** Women Deliver’s expertise and recognition as a convener provide a proven platform for catalytic change. Well-designed convenings spark imagination, build shared purpose, and turn individual insights into collective action. The relationships, political alignment, and momentum they generate can extend beyond the gathering itself and sustain action over time.^{13, 14, 15, 16}

Women Deliver’s evolution into a catalytic organization responds to what this moment demands. We know that:

- **The gender equality ecosystem must evolve to survive and become more effective.** This requires changes in relationships, power, accountability, incentives, funding models, and the role of transnational and global institutions so that change is led by national and local actors, feminist movements and civil society have greater power, and States are held accountable for fulfilling their obligations.^{17, 18, 19}
- Catalytic and backbone organizations can help build the architecture needed for complex systems change.²⁰ Women Deliver’s relationships, political clarity and convening power position us to play this role within the gender equality ecosystem.^{21, 22}
- The cost of inaction is high. Without a stronger, more coordinated ecosystem, authoritarian and anti-rights actors will continue to roll back rights, dismantle progress, and establish harmful policies and norms for generations to come.^{23, 24}

The evidence base for catalytic organizations is growing, although much of it comes from different geopolitical contexts. Women Deliver will test and adapt proven methods, learn collectively with partners from successes and failures, and assess our contributions as the ecosystem evolves.

¹² SEEK Development, Women Deliver Conference 2026 — Political & Financial Commitment Tracking: Final Report, June 2026; Women Deliver, WD2026 Post-Conference Report, June 2026.

¹³ Stanford Social Innovation Review, “The Power of Convening for Social Impact,” 2016.

¹⁴ Stanford Social Innovation Review, “Four Strategies for Large Systems Change,” 2018.

¹⁵ PLOS ONE, “United on Sunday: The Effects of Secular Rituals on Social Bonding and Affect,” 2021.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7840012/>

¹⁶ British Journal of Psychology, “Joint Attention, Shared Goals and Social Bonding,” 2015.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4849556/>

¹⁷ Stanford Social Innovation Review, “Beyond USAID,” 2026.

¹⁸ ODI Global, “Confronting Efforts to Dismantle Gender Equality and Inclusion,” 2026.

¹⁹ Women Deliver, “The Melbourne Declaration for Gender Equality,” 2026.

²⁰ Stanford Social Innovation Review, “Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact: Part 1,” 2012.

²¹ SEEK Development, Women Deliver Conference 2026 — Political & Financial Commitment Tracking: Final Report, June 2026; Women Deliver, WD2026 Post-Conference Report, June 2026, sections on political commitments and partnerships.

²² WD2026 Catalytic Impact Report: From convening to sustained collective action, Women Deliver, 2026.

²³ International Feminist Journal of Politics, “The Damages Done by the ‘Anti-Gender Movement,’” 2024.

²⁴ Journal of Gender Studies, “Gender Danger: Mapping a Decade of Research on Anti-Gender Politics,” 2025.

The next phase of our work calls for boldness, learning, and adaptation. It will help us respond to the current moment, counter efforts to roll back rights, and deliver for girls, women, and gender-diverse people globally. The risks of maintaining the status quo are too great to accept.

The Melbourne Declaration: Early Evidence of Women Deliver's Catalytic Role

In 2025, as the gender equality ecosystem came under growing political and financial pressure, Women Deliver worked with partners to co-create a clearer, shared vision for change. Building on two decades of convening and relationships across the ecosystem, we brought together more than 900 people from every region of the world to shape the [Melbourne Declaration for Gender Equality](#).

Launched at WD2026, the Declaration calls for a rebalancing of power, accountability, and rights across the gender equality ecosystem. Its development — alongside efforts to build political alignment, mobilize partners, and generate commitments around its vision — formed the foundation of this strategy.

Almost 1,000 endorsements from organizations and individuals, alongside 11 country-level endorsements of the related States Declaration, point to strong demand for a shared vision and a way forward. See the [WD2026 Post-Conference Report](#) for these figures.

Women Deliver's role now is to help turn that alignment into action: connecting partners, strengthening coordination, sustaining political attention, and tracking whether commitments lead to changes in funding, policy, and institutional practice.

The Melbourne Declaration is intended to be a living document. As the political context and the ecosystem itself evolve, its principles will continue to be interpreted and applied across different issues, regions, and movements.

Our vision, mission, and core functions

Our vision: A gender-just world where all girls, women, and gender-diverse people have control over their bodies and lives.

Our mission: Catalyze and convene the gender equality ecosystem to spark political imagination and encourage systemic change aimed at:

- Reorienting the ecosystem’s work around States’ obligations to all people — especially girls, women, and gender-diverse people — by moving away from approaches that substitute for national governments and toward collective action that holds States accountable for their human rights obligations.
- Rebalancing the ecosystem so that feminist movements and civil society with direct links to those most affected by injustice have the space, safety, access, legitimacy, and power to hold States and institutions to account. This must include:
 - Coming together around a shared political vision and creating durable structures for collaboration so all actors can effectively work together to achieve it.
 - Changing funding and institutional practices that drive donor-led agendas, territoriality, and competition — dynamics that weaken movements and reduce their political power.
 - Building alliances across diverse sectors, borders, regions, and issue areas — working together toward shared justice.

With the Melbourne Declaration for Gender Equality²⁵ as the current expression of our vision for ecosystem change, we will focus our efforts on three interconnected core functions:



²⁵The Melbourne Declaration for Gender Equality comprises the Declaration, the Guide, and the States Declaration.

Our Role: Women Deliver as a Catalytic Organization

Women Deliver's evolution into a catalytic organization shapes how we contribute to the broader transformation of the gender equality ecosystem and provides a throughline across the pathways in this framework.

Our leadership is relational and political rather than directive, representative, or managerial. We do not seek to set the ecosystem's agenda, represent its full range of actors, or manage its activities. Instead, we draw on two decades of relationships, convening power, political insight, and connections across otherwise fragmented parts of the ecosystem to help diverse actors find common purpose, build political will, and advance collective action while respecting their autonomy.

This catalytic role also requires Women Deliver to continually align our own structures, partnerships, processes, and ways of working with the principles of the transformation we seek. In this way, our organizational evolution supports — rather than constitutes — the broader outcomes set out in this strategy.

Our Impact Framework

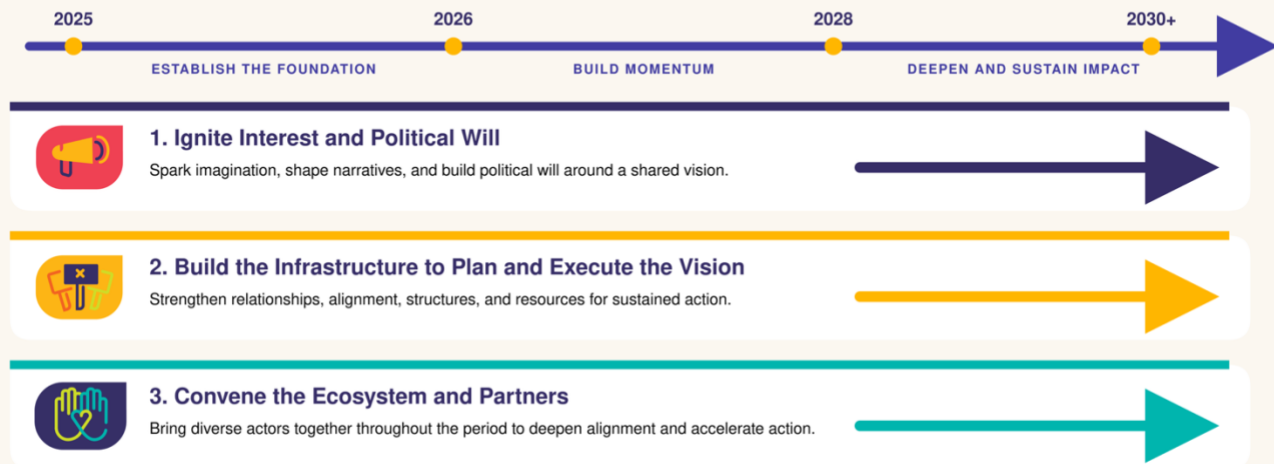
Our impact framework builds on the work that began with the Melbourne Declaration, translating our vision into concrete outcomes for 2026–2030. It organizes the three core functions into a framework that can be measured and tracked over time. The framework builds on the foundations laid in 2025–2026 to co-create and launch the Declaration. The next phase focuses on expanding and embedding that work and translating it into sustained, accountable, ecosystem-wide transformation, with Women Deliver's evolution into a credible catalytic organization as its connective core.

The framework is organized around three interconnected core functions — Ignite Interest and Political Will; Build the Infrastructure to Plan and Execute the Vision; and Convene the Ecosystem and Partners — alongside a foundational outcome focused on Women Deliver's organizational identity.

Each pathway below connects what we achieved in 2025–2026 with what we aim to achieve in the 2026–2028 immediate horizon and by 2030, with the overall goal of transforming the gender equality ecosystem as set out in the Melbourne Declaration. The work is grounded in partnership, a co-created vision, and shared development with diverse actors across the ecosystem, building on the learning and foundations of the first phase.

Three Pathways for Catalytic Change

All three pathways run throughout the strategy period and reinforce one another. Convening creates recurring opportunities to deepen alignment and accelerate action.



Pathway 1: Ignite Interest and Political Will

The Ignite Interest and Political Will pathway aims to spark imagination, rally new and existing partners, and build the momentum needed to shift narratives, strengthen political will, and inspire collective action around the Melbourne Declaration's vision. We will also work with partners to demonstrate what that vision looks like in practice across issues such as adolescent girls' rights, global health, and climate, showing how the Declaration can be translated into issue-specific agendas and collective action. We will build and sustain momentum through compelling narratives and clearly defined goals, creating connections that help actors across the ecosystem see themselves in this work and understand their role within it. Women Deliver Conferences, smaller convening moments, and other global spaces will serve as key moments to come together (see Pathway 3).

In 2025–2026, Women Deliver set out to:

- Co-create a clear and stronger articulation of the collective vision for the ecosystem.
- Achieve better political alignment and commitment on the vision, principles, and issues critical to that collective vision.
- Launch a co-designed, multidimensional campaign that advances the vision and puts it into action.

That work culminated in the Melbourne Declaration itself, co-created with more than 900 people across every region of the world and launched at WD2026 with almost 1,000 endorsements, including more than 350 organizational endorsements.

Pathway 1 will carry that momentum forward. In the immediate term, success means that we have:

- Increased the reach and resonance of the Melbourne Declaration by deepening engagement with the allies who co-created it while bringing new partners into the ecosystem and advancing its agenda.
- Strengthened and sustained momentum at catalytic moments to advance shared agendas and collective action.

- Strengthened the translation of the Declaration's vision into concrete, issue-specific agendas and collective action, such as adolescent girls' rights, global health, and climate.

By 2030, we intend for this work to contribute to changes in narratives and broader collective mobilization. Diverse partners across movements, institutions, and States will be speaking and acting differently because of it. We also aim to build stronger co-ownership and relevance that sustains collective commitment and bold action over time, alongside a greater collective ability to influence norms and agendas in ways that advance the Melbourne Declaration's vision.

Pathway 2: Build the Infrastructure

The Build the Infrastructure to Plan and Execute the Vision pathway is where past pledges meet implementation. It takes the collective commitments of the Melbourne Declaration and builds the mechanisms needed to advance them across the gender equality ecosystem. Women Deliver is uniquely positioned to help build this connective infrastructure. Two decades of trusted relationships across civil society, governments, philanthropy, and multilateral institutions are among our clearest and most valued assets. This relational foundation is critical to creating the conditions for effective coordination. The pathway aims to build and resource the structures and systems needed to gather and share learning, improve alignment, and strengthen accountability across the ecosystem. Success will be measured by whether these structures help create a shared understanding of what ecosystem transformation looks like.

Women Deliver's contribution is to strengthen political coordination and alignment across the ecosystem. We will co-design these structures with partners so that they are non-hierarchical, politically purposeful, and flexible enough to adapt, reflecting the values and transformation the Melbourne Declaration seeks to advance.

Our approach to engagement in global policy and decision-making spaces has evolved alongside this catalytic role. We will continue to engage where norms and standards are central to advancing the Melbourne Declaration's political ambitions, including where issue-specific applications of the Declaration can strengthen collective action and implementation. We will concentrate our efforts on the multilateral processes most closely aligned with our catalytic role and where we can make the greatest contribution to realizing the Declaration's ambitions.

In 2025–2026, Women Deliver cultivated stronger relationships with like-minded partners to foster collective ownership, political alignment, and broader commitment to the Declaration. This work established the relational foundation that the pathway now seeks to strengthen into durable structures for collaboration.

Building the **infrastructure** to plan and execute the Declaration's vision will turn these committed partnerships into a more durable system. In the immediate term, success means that we have:

- Worked with partners to develop the strategies and structures needed to put the Melbourne Declaration into action within issues such as adolescent girls' rights, global health, and climate.
- Co-developed the broader structures and mechanisms for collaboration, including shared learning, alignment, and accountability mechanisms.
- Served as a convener and cross-movement weaver across other priority thematic areas and networks.
- Increased prioritization and alignment within the ecosystem around the priority norms and standards that advance the Melbourne Declaration's commitments.

By 2030, effective and well-resourced structures will support the broader transformation of the gender equality ecosystem. They will strengthen crisis coordination, shared learning, and accountability. Solidarity, imagination, and collective ambition will have strengthened across the ecosystem, making the whole greater than the sum of its parts. The ecosystem's collective ability to influence norms in global spaces in support of the Declaration's commitments will also have grown.

Pathway 3: Convene the Ecosystem and Partners

The Convene the Ecosystem and Partners pathway is a central expression of Women Deliver's convening power and amplifies the other two pathways. We bring diverse partners together at powerful, defining moments that advance the Melbourne Declaration's political goals, inspire lasting imagination and commitment, and help accelerate transformation at catalytic moments.

We convene at three levels:

- Women Deliver Conferences are where the ecosystem comes together to commit, imagine, and act.
- In other global spaces, we engage strategically to ensure the Declaration shapes the norms and agendas that matter.
- Through targeted thematic and regional convenings, we will keep momentum alive and relationships strong between major moments.

What success will look like in 2030

If this strategy succeeds, the gender equality ecosystem will be more connected, politically aligned, and able to act collectively. By 2030, we aim to see:

- **Greater political power and accountability.** Feminist movements and civil society — especially those with direct links to people most affected by injustice — will have greater power, resources, access, and legitimacy to shape decisions and hold States and institutions accountable.
- **Stronger alignment around a shared political direction.** Diverse movements, institutions, States, funders, and allies will be better able to align around the Melbourne Declaration's vision while preserving their distinct roles, expertise, and autonomy.
- **Durable connective infrastructure.** The ecosystem will have stronger, well-resourced structures for coordination, shared learning, crisis response, and accountability, enabling partners to sustain collective action between major political moments and convenings.
- **Greater collective influence.** Actors across the ecosystem will be better able to influence funding, institutional practices, norms, agendas, and political commitments in ways that advance gender equality and the rights of girls, women, and gender-diverse people.