

Question 1

What is included in this new strategic plan?

Our new strategic plan describes our commitment to achieving global gender equality through three core action areas: **giving, learning, and community building**. Our goal is to **triple** the amount that we are investing in grants and partnerships, while becoming more strategic and issue-oriented in our grant making. Key to this plan is continued chapter and member growth, in more diverse and inclusive ways, which will allow us to increase our impact while ensuring our long-term sustainability. Equally important are the exciting plans we have to build a more connected community among our members and women around the world, and to deepen our learning of the issues affecting global gender equality. The new mission and vision statements and gender equality beliefs that we are announcing are important first steps.

Question 2

When will we start seeing some of the new strategic plan being implemented?

We've already begun working behind the scenes! The board began the strategic planning process in 2018. Throughout late 2019 and early 2020, board members, staff, and national volunteer leaders have been reviewing and discussing the plan and are starting to bring it to life. We aimed to roll out the elements you are seeing now this past March, but amid COVID-19, we put those plans on hold to focus on urgent shifts to grant making and support for chapters. We are excited to share this plan with you now, including our new mission and vision statements, and gender equality beliefs. In early 2021, we will roll out our new name, tagline, and logo – a new set of tools that will put our impact and mission front and center, and another boost for our organization as we grow.

Question 3

Why are we changing our mission statement? Are we changing our mission?

We have long focused on uplifting women and girls to help them pursue their dreams, reach their goals, and better their communities, and **this will continue**. Our focus on gender equality is in the fabric of everything we have accomplished to date and everything we hope to achieve in the future. But too often, we talk about *how* we raise money, not *why* we exist and what we are trying to achieve. With this new mission statement, our purpose and impact are much clearer. We will now be better able to describe our work to others and help get new DFW allies on board, positioning us for long-term growth and deeper impact.



Question 4

Will we continue to support women and girls in low-income countries?

Yes, our grants will continue to support women and girls in low-income countries. In fact, our goal is to be able to do even more of this work that we all care so deeply about, and that is so needed today. Through increased member and chapter growth, we want to triple the amount that we are investing in grants and partnerships, which will significantly increase the women and girls we are impacting!

Question 5

Isn't ending poverty still DFW's goal?

Since DFW began, we have *always* been focused on improving the lives of women and girls internationally. In the early years, our focus was on investing in women and girls as the best way to end global poverty. This is still true, but over the years, it became clear that eradicating poverty isn't enough to allow women and girls to reach their full potential, and the benefits of achieving gender equality go beyond just poverty alleviation. Harmful ideas and practices like gender-based violence, early and forced marriage, menstruation taboos, and lack of access to education and economic opportunities still stand in the way. DFW has been ahead of the curve for many years by supporting grassroots organizations that have addressed all of these issues. Now, we are clearly stating that global gender equality is our guiding star. By doing so, we will be better able to make meaningful progress on helping women live freely and pursue their dreams, *while also* contributing to a healthier, safer, more peaceful, and economically just world.

Question 6

How do you plan to grow grant making?

The past few years have brought significant growth to DFW as we reached 500 chapters for the first time in our history. This has allowed us to increase the number and size of our Sustained Grants. Over the next five years, we want to continue to grow our chapters and membership which will allow us to raise more funds and invest more in our grants and partnerships.

Question 7

How will our Grants Program change?

We do not expect our grant selection criteria to change significantly. We will still be funding the same types of grassroots organizations that we all love. We want to invest more funds and be a more strategic grant maker, with the goal of creating broader change on specific issues related to global gender equality. We also want to work with our grantees as partners, rather than recipients of our funds. The leaders of our volunteer Grant Selection Committee and Oversight Committee are currently working on how we can remodel our Grants Program that will allow us to deploy more funds and create greater change in the world for women and girls. We will be sharing more information about this work as it moves forward.

Question 8

Will we be funding projects here in the U.S.?

No, we do not intend to fund grants for projects here in the United States. DFW has always focused on funding projects in low-income countries around the world and this will continue. While we are aware that gender inequalities exist here in the U.S., funds are needed more in low-income countries around the world. Less than 5% of U.S. philanthropy goes to global issues, and less than 1% of this goes to global issues affecting women and girls.

Question 9

Why do you talk about equality and not equity?

In DFW's work, equity are the actions (i.e. our grants) that must be taken in order to reach gender equality. The UN, Women Deliver, and other global leaders, as well as most of our grantees, use the term gender equality. We will use gender equality-focused language, even while working to promote understanding and action around the concept and core value of equity in an intersectional way. We know that to be successful, our movement must understand the ways that inequity and injustice of all forms are linked together, including racism, classism, environmental injustice, and oppression of women and girls.

Question 10

Is DFW getting more political?

At DFW, we come together as a community dedicated to ensuring that women and girls all over the world can live freely and pursue their dreams. This means access to education, safety from violence, and opportunities to rise out of poverty. The issues that affect global gender equality transcend politics. Achieving global gender equality is good for everyone.

Question 11

Will we be inviting men to our meetings now? Will they be welcome in our organization?

Men are already part of many DFW chapters. While we will not be marketing specifically to men, they will continue to be welcome at DFW because men and boys are essential partners and allies in achieving global gender equality. In fact, the necessity of partnering with men and boys is one of our core gender equality beliefs! Everyone is welcome, including men, transgender, and gender non-conforming individuals. Regardless of how you identify, DFW is a home for all who want to build collective power to uplift women and change the world. To fully achieve global gender equality, we need everyone taking action together.

Question 12

Will we be funding projects for boys now?

Many of our past projects have included educating men and boys about gender equality, and this will continue. One of the projects we funded with our Peace Corps partnership was the Men as Partners project, which worked to shift attitudes so that men become advocates for gender equality. One of our most recent Featured Grants – Kids Play International – focused on creating supportive boys, in addition to empowering young girls. We believe strongly that men and boys are essential partners and allies in achieving global gender equality.

Question 13

Are these initiatives to change our language, our name, and logo taking money away from our grantees?

This is not taking money away from our grantees. This plan was under way prior to COVID-19, and we are just now rolling it out to our membership. In the long run, this plan will help us to invest even more in grants and partnerships which will expand our impact. It will also ensure the long-term sustainability of DFW as an organization. We're committed to growing Dining for Women because we want to make sure that we'll still be helping women and girls thrive for many years into the future.

Question 14

How will our monthly chapter meetings change?

Our chapters will remain the foundation of our organization, and chapter meetings will continue to be a place for members to gather, build meaningful relationships with fellow change makers, learn about issues facing women and girls, and take action together to further gender equality around the world. Amid the unforeseen events of 2020, we are so proud and inspired by the ways that DFW members all over the country have found creative ways to meet, connect, and continue to support women and girls. As we move ahead, we see the need – *and the opportunity* – for supporting a range of ways that members can get involved and forge connections with each other. Our chapter model will remain flexible so that each chapter can tailor their meetings to fit the needs and preferences of its members. Whether members gather over a potluck dinner or in a Zoom meeting, the key elements will remain the same – connecting, building community, learning, and changing the world together through our collective donations and voices.

Question 15

Are we moving away from in-person meetings?

No. Our mission relies on the collective power of gathering in person to learn together, share a sense of community and, in many cases, a delicious meal. This will always be a part of our program! We must recognize, however, the need to protect the health and safety of all of our members. When the pandemic hit in March of this year, we all had to learn how to “Zoom” and transitioned to virtual chapter meetings. We have learned a lot from our experiences so far this year. We have learned that DFW's community is strong, and that we can gather and learn together in many different ways. By meeting virtually, members have been able to directly interact with our grantees more than ever before. We are excited about the possibilities of where this can take us in the future. These new ideas do not mean replacing our traditional chapter model, but *expanding the options* for more people to join our community and help achieve global gender equality.

Question 16

Will DFW still be a giving circle?

We will continue to focus on collective giving and actions. We will not be using the term “giving circle”, however, because we have grown beyond the traditional giving circle model.

Question 17

What was the process and who was involved in developing these changes in the strategic plan?

The process has been collaborative from its start. As far back as the spring of 2018, we engaged members, funders, grantees, and staff at our National Conference, and followed this up with targeted consultation sessions and a member survey last fall. You told us about the many things you love about DFW and how you would like to see us increase our impact and make more people aware of the great work we are doing together. All of this feedback was incorporated into the board's strategic plan.

Question 18

How will this improve DFW?

The changes we're rolling out in the strategic plan are designed to align with our purpose, and to position us for growth so that we'll still be around helping women and girls thrive for years to come. A refined external presence will help us grow more easily, opening the door for even more powerful opportunities to expand our impact. We're being thoughtful about our plans for ensuring the organization's future, so we can chart a solid path ahead to continue changing the world.

Question 19

Have our founders been involved and how do they feel?

As a member of our board of directors, Barb Collins has been engaged in every step of this process. Barb is eager to see DFW move into this exciting new phase of growth. By celebrating and honoring who we are at our core, we'll be able to deepen our impact and ensure long-term sustainability of our organization.

Question 20

What is the best way for me to help support Dining for Women's growth?

Please continue to stay engaged with your chapter and with DFW – especially during this time of global crisis. If you are able, please sign up to be a monthly recurring donor. And spread the word! A key goal of our new plan is to build new chapters and expand our membership to help us deepen our impact for women and girls across the world. Tell your friends about DFW and invite them to chapter meetings, whether they are in-person or virtual. Or, encourage them to engage in other ways such as our book club or advocacy chapter.

Question 21

Will you be changing the name and logo? If so, when will this be happening?

Yes, in early 2021, we will be rolling out a new name, tagline, and logo – all of which will bring DFW into an exciting new stage of growth and position us for increased impact and sustained success over the long-term. Our new name, tagline, and logo will serve to better communicate and express who DFW is and what we seek to accomplish in the world: global gender equality. *This new look is designed to match who we are on the inside, not to change it.* It's time for who we appear to be on the outside to match up with the great impact and strong sense of connection we have with one another – and we want the whole world to see that.

Question 22

Why do we need to change our name?

You, our members, know the power of our impact. You've told us that you want the world to see us as the effective and powerful organization that we are. We want our name to reflect why we exist, rather than how we raise funds. The word "dining" depicts a certain sense of privilege, which is inappropriate given the fact that our grant recipients often don't have enough food or proper nutrition. We also want to move away from the "we" and "them" that has been part of our mission statement and our name. To help with this aim, in early 2021, we will roll out an exciting new image for DFW – one that will honor our organization's history, communicate the full impact of our work, and set the organization up for continued growth in our organization's member base and our impact for women and girls.

Question 23

How is a new name being selected?

We are engaged in a very thoughtful and collaborative process, seeking input from DFW volunteer leaders, members, and grantees. We have also partnered with a consultant that specializes in creating nonprofit brands and has a long history of working on issues, including international poverty alleviation, gender equality, and global education and awareness. Ultimately, our board will approve a new powerful name, tagline, and logo that speaks to who we are today and where we are heading in the future.