



Policy Brief: Ensuring Diversity in Board Directors

Purpose

This brief provides guidance to the GDN Board of Directors to ensure diversity and inclusion when recruiting new directors, in alignment with the GDN statutes. It outlines principles, evaluation criteria and recommended processes, to foster a globally representative, inclusive, and strategically balanced board.

Statutory Guidance

According to the GDN Statutes, the Board should preferably consider Founders, Patrons, and Signatories who:

1. Contribute financially to the Foundation, and/or
2. Contribute to Board diversity, taking into account:
 - Sectoral representation: data providers, custodians, and owners, as well as international associations in education and other parties as identified in Principles for Diversity for Board Recruitment.
 - Geographic spread: representation across continents.
 - Diversity and inclusivity: ensuring varied perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences among Directors.

Principles of Diversity for Board Recruitment

1. Stakeholder Representation – To ensure balance across key constituencies/interests :
 - Data providers (e.g., academic and research institutions)
 - Data custodians (e.g., depositories, archives)
 - Data owners (e.g., student or learner representative bodies)
 - International education associations
 - international experts and researchers
 - Leaders with longstanding experience with running not for profits



2. Geographic Inclusion and Balance – Facilitate and enable representation across all continents, with particular attention to underrepresented regions.
3. Diversity and Inclusivity – Go beyond geographic and institutional categories to consider gender, race/ethnicity, cultural diversity, professional backgrounds, and generational diversity.
4. Commitment to Contribution – Prioritize candidates who actively support the Foundation through financial and/or other contributions that advance its mission.

Recommended Processes for Recruitment

1. Structured Call for Nominations – Clearly state diversity objectives in calls; encourage nominations from underrepresented sectors/regions.
2. Diversity Mapping – Maintain a “Board Diversity Matrix” to track representation across stakeholder roles, geography, and demographics.
3. Targeted Outreach – Partner with associations and networks to reach diverse candidate pools, including student/youth-led bodies.
4. Transparent Evaluation Process – Establish clear evaluation criteria, weighting diversity alongside financial contributions and expertise.

When presented with 2 equally “eligible” candidates, then make a selection based on the broader principles of diversity and inclusion outlined above.

Implementation Timeline

- Short-term (next recruitment cycle): Adopt a Board Recruitment Committee to develop a Diversity Matrix, finalise the Policy Brief and Criteria and update recruitment language.
- Medium-term (1–2 years): Track progress annually, adjust outreach strategies.
- Long-term (3–5 years): Ensure sustained representation across statutory categories and measurable inclusivity gains.

Conclusion

By embedding diversity and inclusion as core principles and criteria of recruitment, the GDN’s Board will strengthen legitimacy, enhance global relevance, and ensure that a plurality of voices guide its mission. Adhering to statutory requirements while proactively addressing inclusivity will position the Foundation as a leader in equitable, inclusive and transparent governance.



Board Diversity Matrix – Template

Category	Representation Criteria	Current Board Members	Gaps / Underrepresented Areas	Notes / Action Points
a. Data Providers	Institutions (e.g., universities, research centers)			
b. Data Custodians	Depositories, archives, infrastructure organizations			
c. Data Owners	Representative student/learner bodies			
d. International Associations	Membership associations active in education			
e. Geographic Spread	Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, North America, Oceania			
f. Diversity & Inclusivity	Gender, race/ethnicity, culture, age, disability, professional background			
G. evident competence in past board work and/or leading large scale not-for-profits	Competency diversity, skills diversity, professional background and knowledge			



H. Evidence of any perceived or actual conflict of interest	See companion policy			
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How to Use the Matrix

1. Update annually before each recruitment cycle.
2. Populate the “Current Board Members” column with present representation.
3. Identify gaps in underrepresented categories, regions, or demographics.
4. Translate gaps into action points in solicitation and outreach.
5. Review progress yearly to ensure compliance with statutes and inclusivity goals.