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GDC strategic outlook DRAFT

Based on strategic meeting in Wellesley March, 2025

March 2025

1st Draft Report on June 2025 by Dani Paredes based on collective notes.

Revised by Alka, Patri, Peggy

GDC Strategy

01

Executive Summary: For Our Core & Leadership

🔑 Importance

The Global Decentre (GDC) is at a key moment. We're ready to turn our vibrant, interdisciplinary vision into a more structured, lasting, and impactful reality. Our recent two-day meeting showed a deep shared commitment to **joy, creativity, hope, and challenging traditional knowledge structures** through new ways of organizing. We want to build new connections across regions, bring in diverse members, and ensure everyone feels safe and supported.

However, we face real challenges: **limited resources (money and time)**, **commitments** and an **uneven workload**. The core issue is balancing GDC's desire to be decentered and flexible with the need for accountability, ongoing engagement, and practical operations. We want GDC to be seen as both a producer of valuable knowledge and a relevant force

for social change. This means clearly defining our mission and finding practical ways to fund our work and organize ourselves internally.

🎯 Purpose

Summarize March 2025 meeting, write down path, outline steps forward

🔭 Scope

This strategy outlines a phased approach for the next 12 months, 3 years, and long term. It focuses on **strengthening how we work internally, finding diverse ways to get resources, improving communication, and creating clear paths for mentorship and leadership**. All of this will uphold GDC's core values: **respect, interdisciplinarity, equity, and decentered collaboration**.

02

Meeting Recap: Key Insights & Actions

21 of us met at Wellesley campus funded (mostly) by the Wagner Center at Wellesley college for 3 days. It was wonderful to re/connect! We discussed in our known working groups [Migration, Epistemology, Arts & Culture] and (some) new committees [Communication, Membership, Fundraising]. We closed with a spring ritual, flower 🌺 🌹 🔥 bringing in our diverse backgrounds from around the world.

We brought physical and immaterial offerings to make commitments to each other and the GDC as a whole.
Overall there is much love and care for the GDC! We want to continue to exist and some of us want real concrete projects and others have interest in a more loose and flexible structure that facilitates dialogue but is not too narrowly focused on specific goal-oriented outputs. We can do better at planning, accountability and redistribution, bearing in mind the variety of needs that have been expressed!

💡 Key insights

1. **Shared Core Values:** Strong agreement that GDC is a space where **joy and creativity can flourish, & hope is nurtured**. 🌱
2. **Diverse Connections:** We are keen to build "new geographies of exchange" through bringing diverse members in conversation with each other (from multiple fields, regions, backgrounds, languages).
3. **Balance Freedom & Structure:** Need to balance "open, flexible network" with "formal face," "accountability," & "structure" for goals & sustained engagement.
4. **Resource Scarcity Critical:** Lack of **money & time** causes burnout, frustration, members dropping out. Most urgent challenge. 🚩
5. **Uneven Workload:** Younger members often do too much. Need to share tasks fairly & broaden leadership. Practice our decentering by walking the talk !
6. **Knowledge & Action:** GDC wants to produce rigorous knowledge & be politically relevant, useful for social movements & applying it for justice-driven goals and impact. ⚖️
7. **Vision Statement Refinement:** first draft sparked talks on wording (e.g., "unsettling" vs. "overcoming" **hegemony**), balancing "being" & "doing," & clearly showing GDC's diverse community. "About Us" section needed.
8. **"Human Element" Matters:** Strong desire to build **emotional bonds**, mentor new members, create **an environment** for communication & accountability that feels clear, **safe, kind.** 🗣️💬
9. **Proactive Funding:** Traditional funding may not fit; so we need to find **creative ways to access and use conventional funding & proactive fundraising while ensuring our objectives and values are not compromised**. 🧠

10. **Continue our `decentering' practice:** rethinking academic practices and institutions ; decentering `ideas' through transforming knowledge production; decentering ourselves.

GDC strategic meeting

03

Strategy

🏛️ Strategic pillars, our big dreams

This plan balances GDC's unique de-centered spirit with the need for structure and sustainability. It recognizes we're a volunteer organization and aims to reduce burnout.

Continuous Goal Alignment Reminders: 🧭

→ 1. 🧭 **Strengthening our internal ecosystem (people & processes):** Create a thriving, fair, & accountable internal environment that supports well-being and effective teamwork. 🌱

→ 2.🧭 **Amplifying decentered knowledge & impact:** Systematize how we produce, share, and use our unique knowledge, ensuring it's politically relevant and reaches far. 📣

→ 3. 🧭 **Building sustainable resources:** Diversify our funding and resources in ways that match GDC's values, to do more of our dreams & reduce reliance on individual volunteer effort from people in precarious situations. 🔄

04

Action Points

Action Point (Detailed) 📌	Timeframe 🗓️	Responsible 👤
I. Governance & Internal Operations (Pillar 1)		
1.1 Draft & Circulate Revised GDC Vision Statement for final feedback (incl. "About Us" section describing	**Immediate (send by October, finalize by November 2025)**	👤 **Mayke** (Lead) + Vision Revision Group (3-5 members)

members' diversity, mission & values)		
1.2 Reactivate Strategic Meeting participants and establish and onboard core members that were not in Boston for 4 key committees: **Fundraising, Communications, Planning, Membership**	**By 31 Dec, 2025**	👥 **Steering Committee / Belen, David, Patricia** (Initial Leads)
1.3 Each newly formed committee to draft a 12-month operational plan with specific goals and assigned responsibilities	**August 31, 2025**	👥 **Each Committee Lead + Members**
1.4 Develop and implement a formal **"Drop-out Mechanism" / Communication Protocol** for members to signal hiatus/inactivity.	**September 30, 2025**	👥 **Membership Committee**
1.5 Conduct an initial **Workload Audit** within Working Groups to identify and propose redistribution of tasks.	**October 31, 2025**	👥 **Steering Committee + Working Group Leaders**

1.6 Draft GDC History/Archive timeline (bullet-point style with links/pics), engaging a historian, real or honorary, and 2 founding members.	**December 31, 2025**	👥 **Steering Committee + designated Historian** (Álvaro? Nora?)
1.7 Develop clear processes for project initiation, progress tracking, and follow-up, balancing flexibility with accountability. Document this for institutional memory.	**March 31, 2026**	👥 **Steering Committee**
II. Knowledge Production & Impact (Pillar 2)		
2.1 Launch a revived, (annual?)**GDC Newsletter** for internal and external updates, calls, and member spotlights.	**September 15, 2025**	👥 **Communications Committee**
2.2 Identify and pilot 1-2 Working Group projects for accelerated completion/publication, showcasing diverse	**By November 30, 2025**	👥 **Steering Committee + relevant Working Groups**

GDC Strategy

05

ROADMAP TIMELINE

Next 12 Months:
Building Foundations & Immediate Wins

🚀 **Goals:**
→ Set clear **operational routines**
→ **Share** responsibilities **fairly**
→ Secure initial, varied **funding** to show we can last

3RD QUARTER (JUL-SEPT)

INTERNAL SETUP

- Form **Committees** (Fundraising, Communications, Planning, Membership) with **clear roles**. 👥 → Steering Committee / Initial Leads
- **Vision Statement Revision** led by Mayke, with quick feedback. 👥 → Mayke + Vision Group
- **Task Audit** across Working Groups to spot workload issues. 👥 → Steering Committee
- Launch **"GDC History / Archive"** project. 👤 → Alvaro Lima

Q4 (OCT-DEC)

RESOURCES & ENGAGEMENT

- Fundraising Committee develops **Initial Fundraising Plan**. 👥 → Fundraising Committee
- Communications Committee launches **Revived GDC Newsletter**. 👥 → Communications Committee
- Steering Committee implements **Workload Redistribution**. 👥 → Steering Committee
- Membership Committee drafts **"Drop-out Mechanism"** protocol. 👥 → Membership Committee

Q1 (JAN-MAR)

PILOTS &

Next 3 Years:
Solidifying & Growing Influence

🚀 **Goals:**

→ Achieve **stable operations**, **consistent funding**
→Become recognized partner in **de-centering knowledge**

YEAR 2 (2026-2027)

Institutionalize & Deepen Network

- Secure **consistent funding** for operations & admin roles.
- Implement **Rotating Leadership Model**.
- Develop **GDC-wide flagship projects**.

Long-Term Vision

🚀 **Goal:**
GDC is a **financially stable**, **self-sustaining ecosystem** for **de-centered knowledge**, **action**, & **community**.

Financial Independence
Robust, diverse funding for core contributions, equity, & reduced burnout.

True Decentralized Governance
Effective, transparent, resilient distributed leadership, intergenerational leadership for continuity.

Global Praxis Hub
GDC as vital center for scholars, artists, & activists to create & apply knowledge for social justice, de-hegemonizing power worldwide.

Self-Sustaining Knowledge Commons
Dynamic, growing collection of de-centered arts, practices, & vocabularies

Committee Descriptions

Key Committees and members

Fundraising Committee

For many years, the GDC has undertaken various projects. Some have been successfully completed, some are slowly developing, and some have been left on the drawing board. Throughout this process, these projects have been shaped and nurtured by members from diverse backgrounds, trajectories, and affiliations. Not everyone is in the same economic or employment situation. Many have had to drop out due to the social and economic ups and downs experienced by those of us who work in knowledge construction in different parts of or trembling world. Although the committee cannot solve these global issues, this group proposes working together to find strategies regarding funding, mainly by staying alert and applying to calls for proposals, and connecting possible members of the GDC to potential calls. The acquisition of fundings would allow us to advance projects that have been in the pipeline for years. After years of sowing seeds and implementing ideas to decentralize our research practices, teaching, and contributions to knowledge, this would be a significant and collective step forward.

Its core members are:

Jens Schneider*

Stephanie Kim

Adrian Favell

Mayke Kaag

Helen Ku

Anahi Alviso Moreno

Celka Straughn

Belen Lopez

Faten Khazaei

Rania Jaber

Communications

There is a lot of activity taking place both collectively and individually within the GDC. It is important to communicate this activity both within and outside the network. This is not only to showcase the great work to the community at large, but also because the GDC's spirit has always revolved around expanding and strengthening networks. This is a constantly growing and transforming group, so communication channels are necessary for us to get to know each other better. In this sense, this committee was formed to strengthen the network, stay updated on activities carried out by each group and GDC members internally as well as promoting work externally to reach out to new members and other partners (including funding)

Its core members are:

Patricia Lepratti

Nick Dreher

Andreja Siliunas

Kerstin Scheid

KC Kian Chow*

David Cook-Martin

Daniela Paredes Grijalva

Membership

Many questions often arise when adding potential members. What type of people does the network need? How many people can we incorporate? What criteria does the network look for in new members? What are the procedures for adding a new member? This committee seeks to develop common parameters and standardized, shared procedures for those who make up the GDC network. This will help maintain an incorporation format that does not exclude or disorient interested participants. At the same time, the committee seeks to maintain the network's growth through networking efforts.

Its core members are:

Peggy Levitt*

Luciana Denardi

Alka Kumar

Amin Mohamed

Monica Sassatelli*

Elhalm Shahsavarz

Alvaro Lima

GDC strategy 2025

06

Still to work/think/feel

Topics we couldn’t cover 🤔

Possible way to do it 🛠️

1. Welcoming **new members, emotions**

→ Explore deeper strategies to foster genuine connection & belonging, especially for new & diverse members. Nurture this type of organizational culture.

1. Key focus for Membership Committee to develop **"Onboarding Program"** or checklist, templates, emphasizing personal connections

2. Nodes: new **geographies of exchange**

→ Establishing local "nodes," choosing locations, & defining roles.

2. Task for membership committee to research & propose 2-3 **pilot node locations and some guidelines** within 12 months

3. Decentering beyond theory & **knowledge-making in-house.**

→ Move from concept to GDC's *operational application*. How does "decentered organization" truly function?

3. Integrate into the steering committee's mandate.

💭 **Consider workshop** on "Practicing Decentering: Operational Models."

4. Connecting Knowledge Production with **Political Relevance**

→ Clarify balance & synergy between scholarly output & direct political impact. How GDC's knowledge actively supports social movements.

4. Discuss & draft **guiding principles** for all Working Group projects & steering committees when evaluating activities & partnerships.

5. Clarifying **political stance** & risks

→ Clearly define GDC's political positions without endangering members. How to navigate censorship & diverse political landscapes.

5. Sensitive & complex; requires careful deliberation on risk & messaging.

💭 **Consider: Dedicated discussion** led by Steering Committee or small, trusted working group.