



Young women from Maiya School during consultations  
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## World YWCA's Feminist Consultation Methodology



A methodology for engaging with women, young women and girls (or other marginalised communities) through evidence gathering that is rooted in community-driven, feminist, accountable, and decolonised approaches, and that tackles power imbalances preventing women, young women and girls (or other marginalised communities) from 'knowing and claiming their human rights and achieving their full potential.'

*from World YWCA's Theory of Change*

The Feminist Consultation Methodology (FCM) provides a new and much-needed approach for engaging communities. Within, **research is framed as the spark for transformative justice**. Anchored in a diverse, democratic, and decolonised approach, this Methodology is designed to **centre girls and women in all their intersecting identities**. A crucial focus is placing power into the rightful hands of women and young women to be the leaders of their lives and futures. Co-created by and for young women using the same participatory approach described therein, the Methodology is an authentic reflection of innovative, feminist leadership. Power is shared with research participants who are engaged as co-researchers, and with communities who are engaged in community-led data collection and analysis. This Methodology considers language, tone, and power dynamics by fostering intergenerational knowledge sharing, self determination, and agency. The FCM will be used for advocacy of the movement and to scale impact. The data and insights produced by the Methodology will dictate the focus of and generate collective action, including philanthropic and multilateral support of women's rights efforts.

The FCM aims to address several systemic challenges that prevent women and young women (and other marginalised communities) from achieving their true potential as agents of change in their communities. Firstly, it aims to address gender inequity - and the enormous gap in resources that have historically reached feminist or women-led movements (less than 1%). Further, this guide aims to provide an alternative method for research and data collection to traditional methodologies based in colonial practices and aims to redress power imbalances through an emphasis on co-creation and co-ownership by those most impacted and often most marginalised and underrepresented.



[Download the \*\*Feminist Consultation Methodology\*\*](#)





## How it works

The Feminist Consultation Methodology is grounded in a six-step process: **Plan, Design, Implement, Sense Make, Learn, and Iterate**. Throughout various research methods, tools, questions for reflection, and potential challenges to prepare for, such as identifying unconscious biases, are offered. The Methodology also gives insights into the role of the researcher advising users to reflect on their position of power, how to be an ally, how to safeguard research participants and more. An appendix at the end of the guide offers tools and templates that emphasise shifting power, co-leadership and co-ownership and applying a feminist lens to the research process. Research teams are encouraged to move through the stages at their own pace, ensuring enough time is given during each to be intentional and to protect the participants of the research project.

**The six-step process enables researchers or evidence collectors to plan, implement, learn and improve from a feminist, value-based perspective with focus on community agreements, trust building, consent and inclusion and leadership of and by those the evidence is meant for.**

The primary goal of the FCM is to bring research methodologies and evidence gathering processes closer to the people and communities that are impacted by them. It outlines the process of engaging with young women and girls through adopting non-extractive, empathetic human and equity-centred approaches and applying a feminist lens. In addition, the six-step process and tools within centre the needs of participants - calling for the voices of young women to be at the heart of any consultation process, and for diversity, equity, access, and inclusion to be prioritised. The Feminist Consultation Methodology also offers ways that researchers can contribute to decolonising research, for example through finding opportunities to include a diverse range of voices, through looking to alternative sources of information rather than relying on academic literature which is dominated by Western perspectives) such as oral histories and songs, and by considering the language used.

Since developing the Methodology, it has been applied for use in four research projects in the Asia region, for example in Rohingya camps in Bangladesh (see *next page*) where a team of young women is leading research into reproductive rights and health services (see next page for more information). In another case, the FCM has been employed in Nepal by women to work with young female parliamentary decision-makers to address gender issues. Most recently the FCM helped Big Six youth organisations to co-develop a proposal and pitch for a multi-million dollar grant by and with youth from around the world. The FCM has also been used by World YWCA internally in the design of several tools and processes, for example to co-design, with young people, an intergenerational leadership tool.

## Lessons Learned

Reversing the evidence gathering process will enable a research process that is not only a real representation of the community that is the subject of the research project, but also owned by the community.

When evidence is owned by communities, and based on issues that matter them, communities are able to use this evidence to hold power holders to account, advocate for their rights and improve their lives.

Research and advocacy led by and for women, young women and girls can inform community, regional and global advocacy.

By enabling women and young women to design and lead research projects on issues that impact them, it has also led to sustainable outcomes in communities in terms of collective knowledge ownership and collective action.



## THE FEMINIST CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY IN ACTION: Health Care Access Research in Rohingya Communities in Bangladesh



In Bangladesh, the Methodology is being used to take a deep examination into healthcare access for adolescent girls residing in the Rohingya camps of Cox's Bazar and for adolescent Rohingya girls living in Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh. In October 2022, World YWCA partnered with Maiya School for a research consultancy with Rohingya young women and girls. Maiya School engaged over ten adolescent girls in their Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) to identify key issues that they face, and plan and conduct a research project that addresses these topics using the FCM as a guide. Ten adolescent girl students from Maiya School, passionate about making a difference, formed the YAP's core research team.

The research process was designed according to feminist principles and designed for clear language and safety, with a key focus on the use of empowering terminologies, confidentiality and do no harm principles. The team chose to examine issues that affected them as young women and girls in their communities like domestic violence and sexual harassment before selecting healthcare access as the key focus. **Based on initial consultations, the research team selected three topics to deep dive:** (1) **Poor treatment or lack of sensitivity for Rohingya women** in health clinics, (2) **Limited women, especially Rohingya, working at clinics**, and (3) **Poor SRHR services or unequal distribution of services**.

Using focus group discussions and interview techniques, women under 50 years were consulted to understand the realities on ground by the core YAP group. A total of 50 people were consulted to understand the realities in line with the research questions. Following a variety of sampling techniques including snowball sampling given the camp realities, the evidence collected showcased the data from a young women and girls perspective. The FCM provided Rohingya girls with an opportunity to design, engage and create research along with having their concerns heard during the process. The focus of use of FCM on enabling them to become researchers in their community helped ensure that **accountability of the data and evidence, along with ownership, lay within the members of the community**.

### Reflections of the researchers

'The consultation was perfect. Because in every single thing everyone consent was taken and no one was treated badly and not interrupted and accepted everyone consult. So, I felt really good with the consultation. I would request to follow the rules that maintained in this consultation.'

'There were so many learning things to me.... attitude, way to take consent, respect, priority and value everyone consent, no interrupt when talking, listen carefully and attentively and encourage to talk etc. How might I apply the learnings to another part of my work? I think and understand now that these things are very important learning which all should maintain at our family and job.'



**World YWCA** is a grassroots-driven global women's rights organisation that engages millions of women and young women around the world each year, across cultures and beliefs, to transform lives and the world for the better. World YWCA provides support and opportunities - with programmes led by and for young women in response to the unique needs they see in their communities - for them to become leaders and change-makers.

## DYNAMIC ACCOUNTABILITY GUIDEBOOK

The Dynamic Accountability Guidebook is practical guide for organisations on their journey towards becoming more dynamically accountable - no matter their starting point. It offers a simple introduction to dynamic accountability - what is it and why organisations should practice it - plus a series of case studies demonstrating how different organisations are putting dynamic accountability into practice.



Accountable Now is a global membership platform that supports civil society organisations to be more transparent, responsive, impact-focused, and community-led. For more than 15 years, we have been working to shift power, champion equity, and embed dynamic accountability into everyday practices.

Our work focuses on supporting civil society organisations to continuously reflect, learn, and adapt to strengthen or embed new ways of working grounded in processes of inclusive, participatory and meaningful engagement with all stakeholders. It goes beyond monitoring & evaluation, due-diligence and compliance, driving accountability as a dynamic process that centres communities' voices, feedback, and preferences.

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