



WORLD YWCA

FEMINIST CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

A methodology and guide to 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

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.



World YWCA's **Feminist Consultation Methodology** (FCM) provides a new and much-needed approach for engaging communities. Within this Methodology, 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 of the Methodology 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 Methodology 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 multi-lateral support of women's rights efforts.



World YWCA's website



Feminist Consultation Methodology

BACKGROUND

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.

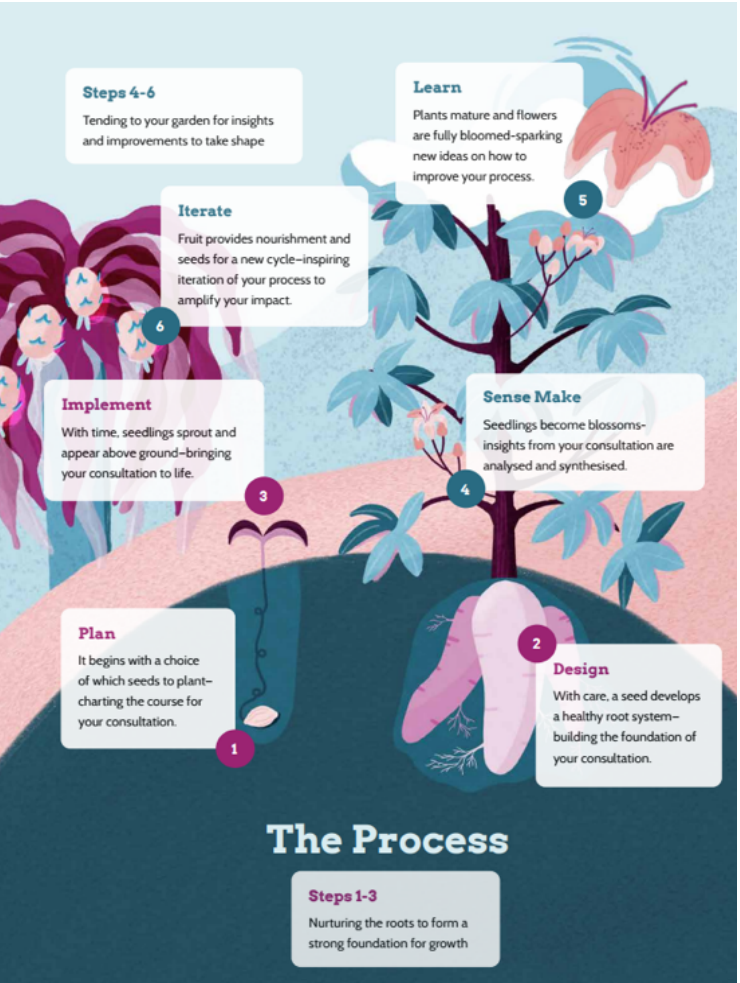


HOW IT WORKS:

The Feminist Consultation Methodology is grounded in a six-step process: Plan, Design, Implement, Sense Make, Learn, and Iterate. Throughout the stages, 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. Examples of some of the tools included are templates for conducting surveys, for storytelling, for interviews, for monitoring the progress of a research project, for collecting consent to publish images and/or recording and templates for evaluating the findings of a research project. 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 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.



The FCM's Six-Step Process
from *World YWCA's Feminist Consultation Methodology* (pg. 29)

TWO EXAMPLES OF THE TEMPLATES FOUND WITHIN THE METHODOLOGY:

Action Plan Template

Consider presenting the action plan to participants for feedback. This encourages full participation in the process.

Actions	What information do we need?	Where can we get it?	By when?	Open dialogue and reflection <small>Are we doing what we said we'd do? How are we doing?</small>
Planning and implementation issues	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
Objectives	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
Impact on participants/co-researchers	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			

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Evaluation Checklist Template

Project name _____

Date _____

Evaluate the big picture

- How might the findings advance knowledge?
- How might the findings and implications be framed as newsworthy? How can the insights be amplified?
- How might the findings be used to inform the wider feminist movement or other movements?
- How might this Methodology be used again in the future?
- Are there other people who could benefit from the insights the research team uncovered? Who might they be and how might you engage them?
- How might the findings be shared more broadly?

Evaluate the experience of your participants

- Did they feel included and valued at all stages?
- Did they feel uncomfortable or disengaged at any stage?
- Did they think the research methods chosen were the right ones?
- What changes would they recommend in future?
- Did they need additional support or help that they didn't get?
- Did they understand the value of their input and how the findings will be used?

Evaluate your findings

- Have you summarised the findings?
- Are the findings clear and concise? Easy to understand?
- How do the findings reflect the original objectives of the research?
- How have you shared the findings with participants?
- How do the findings resonate with participants?
- Are participants requesting any modifications? If so, to what data?
- What is your plan for sharing the findings in a digestible format (internally with your organisation, with the community, etc.)?
- What innovative ways do you plan to use the findings beyond the scope? For example, obtaining participant permission to share their quotes and images on social media, newsletters, and websites, or creating videos or podcasts.
- What is your plan for ensuring the findings are key to your organisation's goals? For example, how might they be embedded as learnings for planning and goal setting.
- What are some of the research team's learnings? What worked well? Anything the team found particularly challenging? What would the team do differently next time?

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APPLYING THE METHODOLOGY IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS AND PROCESSES

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 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 Methodology has 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.

05

THE FEMINIST CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY IN ACTION: HEALTHCARE ACCESS RESEARCH IN (COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH)



BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, the Feminist Consultation Methodology is being used to take a deep dive 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. The YAP is comprised of ten adolescent girl students from Maiya School passionate about making a difference that formed the core research team. The research focused on feminist principles, designing 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, a total of 50 women under 50 years old were consulted by the YAP to understand the lived experiences of the participants in the community, in line with the research questions. Following various sampling techniques, 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. Using the FCM enabled them to become researchers in their community, strengthen accountability of the data and evidence, and ensured that ownership lied within the members of the community.



Young women from Maiya School during consultations. Image used with permission from World YWCA

REFLECTIONS OF THE RESEARCHERS:

'The adolescent girls were confident but if we want to improve, we should give more training about how they can ask follow up questions, keep the conversation on track, to get more knowledge and insight from the participants. How to get precise answers from the participants, using subtle techniques.'

Another researcher remarked,

'The consultation was very 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. Some key learnings are: 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.'



HOW IS DYNAMIC ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICED?

01 PLANNING

Steps 1 - 3 guide users of the Feminist Consultation Methodology through the process of planning a research or evidence gathering process that is grounded in **meaningful engagement** with the women, young women and girls (and their communities - including those that historically been marginalised) impacted by the work. The Methodology was not only designed for women and young women, but together with a diverse group of women and young women (including beta testing by more than 1800 women and young women) to ensure that it reflects their unique perspectives.

02 DOING

Steps 4 - 6 of the Methodology provide useful information on how to carry out a research process, while ensuring that activities are done in a way that is inclusive, feminist, empathetic, protective of those subjects of the research project, and that redresses power imbalances in traditional research methods by fostering co-leadership and co-ownership.

03 LEARNING

As stated in the guide, this Methodology is a 'continual learning journey' and thus invites users to share their learnings, stories, or experiences of their consultation process so that these may be used to inform future iterations of the guide.

04 IMPROVING

The FCM was created to form a basis for designing and implementing a research process with the intention that users can adapt and improve the process, tools and templates to suit their unique conditions and contexts over time.

HOW IS POWER SHIFTED?

Rather than research and evidence generation that is solely representative of reality, the FCM proposes a methodology that reverses the evidence gathering process to 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 to those communities, communities are able to use this evidence to hold power holders to account, advocate for their rights and improve their lives.

In the case of World YWCA, which works for and with women and young women, through engaging women and young women to dismantle traditional power structures that have shaped research and evidence gathering, and through supporting young women to become leaders, World YWCA hopes to advance justice and gender equality.

WHY IS THIS APPROACH GETTING BETTER RESULTS?

Through the initial research projects conducted with the FCM, the World YWCA has demonstrated that fostering a community of empowered young women researchers can serve to advance the organisation towards their Goal 2035 of a more just, equitable world without violence and war achieved through empowering women and girls to drive the process of transformative change.

In the communities involved in the first research projects guided by the FCM, results have shown that research and advocacy led by and for women, young women and girls can inform community, regional and global advocacy. These experiences have demonstrated that the Methodology has not only enabled 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 FCM is 'based on the foundation that the processes have to be led by the people who are engaged as the community you are trying to research and this makes that research closer to the people. What we are getting as feedback after these processes and use of the FCM is that it just doesn't stop at conducting the research. The evidence becomes co-owned by the community, there is a massive focus on community agreements, consent taking, with a massive focus on simplifying research methodologies and languages which is why there is high sustainability of these tools and mechanisms beyond the duration of a project.'

Dr. Suchi Gaur from the Dynamic Accountability Dialogues (May 23, 2023)



2023 Dynamic Accountability Dialogues session: Dynamic Accountability in Practice (40:00 - 47:50)



World YWCA's Goal 2035: Theory of Change