Resource Guide: "Including Gender Equality in Youth Volunteerism: Tips, Concepts, and Methodologies"

CB 4 VOL

WIDE+
Feminists Transforming
Sustainable Development

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1. Introduction

This resource guide provides a brief introduction to enable you to include a gender equality perspective into youth volunteer programmes. It gives suggestions, references and examples to go deeper into the topic that can be of aid for anyone setting up a volunteer project or programme on gender inclusion with young people. Young people in this guide is roughly taken as between 18 and 30 years of age, following the EU definition for youth, while excluding minors. There are specific responsibilities for adult workers when working with legally underage volunteers, which is best addressed in other specific guides.

This resource guide is structured into four sections, each providing a selection of references and questions that can help someone or a team to get started or improve its plan through reflection. The provided information does not pretend to be exhaustive, but with all links given, we believe it will give the reader the opportunity to come to a sufficient understanding of the issues at hand.

The first section focuses on how to attract youth volunteer and keep them engaged. The second section provides insights on how to attract youth volunteers on objectives around gender equality. The third section aims to provide a basic introduction to gender concepts with the aim to create an understanding that different concepts have different end goals on what to achieve around 'gender equality'. It includes a brief glossary for concepts based on those provided by multilateral institutions. The last section is on feminist methodologies for (youth) trainers.

This resource guide is developed for the project: "Across borders: strengthening youth volunteering to fight for gender equality and social inclusion", also known by its acronym, CB4VOL. This project is a collaboration between four partner associations which are working together for the first time as consortium, consisting of Asticude in Nador, Morocco, YWCA in Jerusalem, Palestine, Alianza por Solidaridad in Madrid, Spain, and WIDE+ in Brussels, Belgium. As four partners, we are working towards achieving CB4VOL's main objective which is to strengthen the capacity of the partner organisations to develop volunteering programmes and to promote youth participation in their local communities with an increased awareness and knowledge about gender equality and inclusion.

The guide is written from the perspective of 'we', a collective effort of the WIDE+ secretariat that reflects on the shared knowledges and experiences of the network. We have chosen this perspective to highlight the importance of reflectivity and context that is part and parcel of knowledge production among feminist activists. In other words, we believe our contribution for this guide is not the absolute final authority, even if we are quoting from official UN bodies and other feminist organisations, but it represents our subjective views
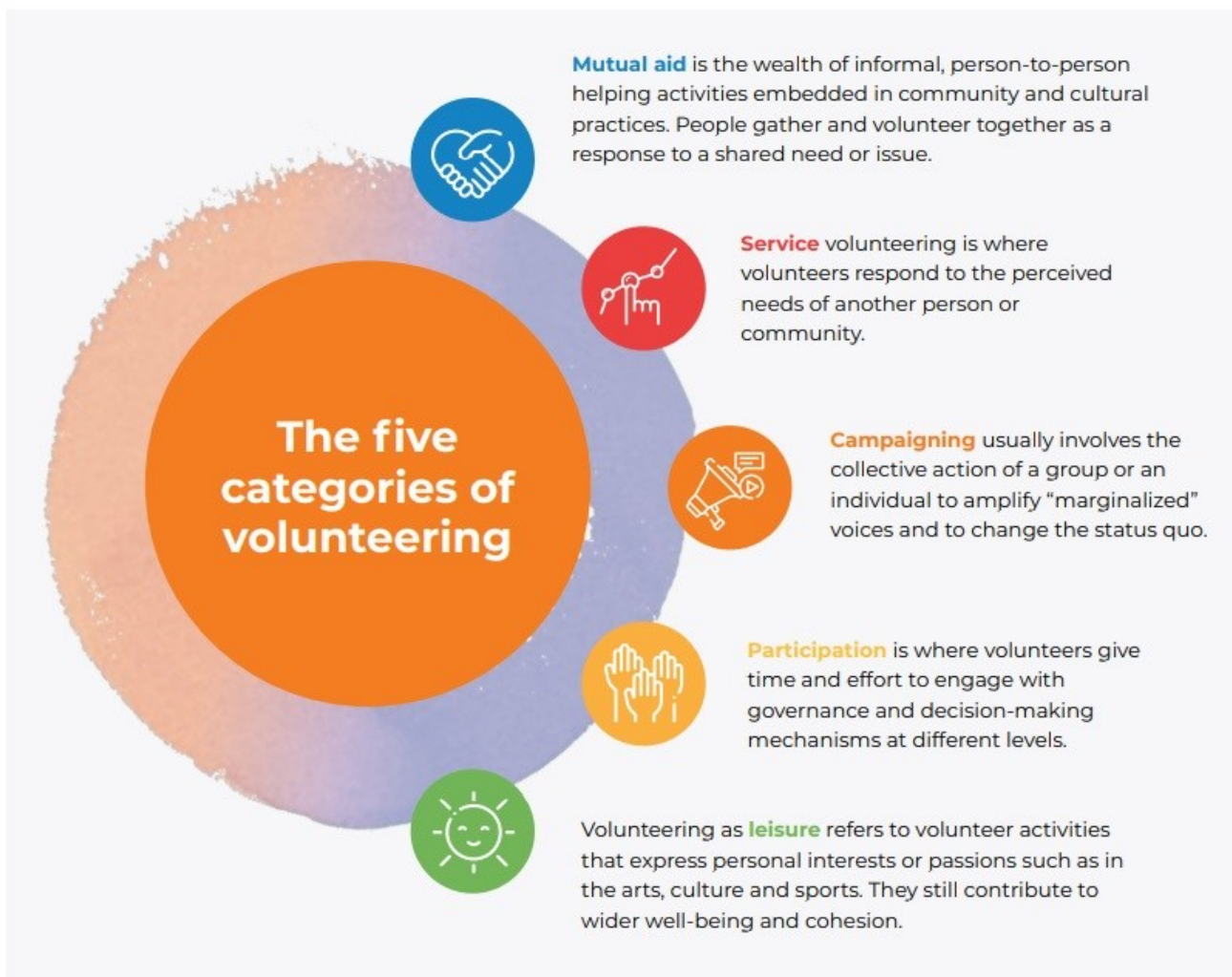
and perspectives based on collective experience. We want to promote a reflexive practice with the reader in which all provided ideas and insights should be critically evaluated. Another reason for writing from our subjective perspective is that we want to provide an accessible, easy-to-read guide, which is more difficult to achieve if the writing is academic with intensive referencing and layered with complex arguments and linguistic style.

The authors of this guide have extensive experience on the topics addressed. Gea Meijers has been volunteering throughout her youth, starting as a teenager. She has taken different roles including leadership roles in a national youth organisation and taken part in different representation spaces for young volunteers. She co-founded in 2001 an international youth network promoting the rights of young atheists and humanists that are in many countries part of minority groups. In her role as the first president, she co-developed the network into one with several teams of volunteers across different countries. She joined WIDE+ in 2006 and has promoted feminism through WIDE(+)'s collective action for more almost 15 years. In this capacity she gained a deep understanding of the feminist landscape in Europe and beyond, including in policy making.

Nurhidayah Hassan is currently supporting the migration and gender working group of WIDE+ as programme coordinator, working directly with issues not only on gender equality but also inclusion of groups that face multiple discrimination. Before moving to Europe, she had several years of experience as a project manager and a university lecturer. She has been teaching courses on gender equality under the department of sociology at Singapore University of Social Sciences. She is also an active member of AWARE Singapore (Association of Women for Action and Research), a women-led organisation that promotes gender equality in Singapore. She has advanced degrees in sociology, public policy, and international development, with specialisation in gender issues, such as gender-based violence and migrant women's rights.

For references and examples, Lynn-Marie Watzka provided research and summaries. She is doing an internship with WIDE+ in the scope of her Gender and Diversity Bachelor program at the international University of Applied Science Rhine Waal in Cleve, Germany. Her extracurricular engagement includes a climate online course with Navdanya and a certification as Educator for sustainable development by the Federal State of North Rhine Westphalia, Germany. Lynn has a background in political awareness raising, feminist organizing and climate justice activism. She has been engaged in community services and volunteering herself for example in a one-year voluntary service at the local organization Human Wave based north of Kolkata, India.

Figure 1.2. Categories of volunteering

Mutual aid is the wealth of informal, person-to-person helping activities embedded in community and cultural practices. People gather and volunteer together as a response to a shared need or issue.

Service volunteering is where volunteers respond to the perceived needs of another person or community.

Campaigning usually involves the collective action of a group or an individual to amplify "marginalized" voices and to change the status quo.

Participation is where volunteers give time and effort to engage with governance and decision-making mechanisms at different levels.

Volunteering as **leisure** refers to volunteer activities that express personal interests or passions such as in the arts, culture and sports. They still contribute to wider well-being and cohesion.

The five categories of volunteering

Taken from Page 19 of the 2022 State of the world volunteerism report on Building Equal and Inclusive societies.

1. How to attract young volunteers

"The value of volunteering in youth work is beyond doubt, and is linked to the intrinsic motivation and strong identification of volunteers with the mission, values and principles of the organisation or movement."

In other words: "*Volunteer-based youth work is more 'driven by the heart' and associated with 'sharing the passion', 'being accepted and developing a sense of integrity and belonging to the community'.*" (Page 22 and 10, report European Youth Forum on volunteer youth work, 2022)

Reflecting on how to attract and keep youth volunteers committed into one's project or association can best start with the fundamental question: "What gives us happiness and content?". There are many handbooks and manuals available on how to promote (volunteer) youth engagement in policy

and associations, which outline a detailed list of steps to follow (see references). This process orientation follows the question of purpose. It comes down to finding a good answer to the question on why people choose to freely devote their time to an activity that does not provide instant gratification (leisure time) or a direct benefit (paid work). It is 'freely' provided work or labour.

What gives us meaning and fulfilment? What will motivate young people to give free time? Most volunteer work is driven by a person's compassion and desire to contribute to positive change in own's surrounding and society. Often such altruistic motives are mixed with more 'selfish' motives that range from being satisfied when volunteering, learning new skills and knowledge, being able to access new opportunities, feeling useful and/or part of a group that is important for the person (feelings about one's own identity). Sometimes we have encountered people whose main motivation is to get to

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some place better for themselves, a certain job or other opportunity. However, these are the minority and not the ones who keep up this volunteering for a long time.

Our conclusion is that committed volunteering usually comes from a place of compassion or deep wish to change society for the better, wanting to belong and be relevant for others and to contribute to a bigger purpose. Not uncommon is an interest to have fun, make friends, get inspired and have a learning experience. Thus, we would describe volunteerism as an activity that is a form of enlightened altruism. This means that organisations that want to promote volunteering should offer: a compelling business-case of impact that emotes volunteers, a feeling of belonging and recognition, and clear structure to engage in an increased and decreased way (keeping it free). The perspective of gaining skills, certain benefits, or having more chances to access certain opportunities will be additional pull factors that can make the volunteer work more attractive.

> *"The majority of the research participants agree that the volunteer-based youth work gives a lot to both the community and the youth workers themselves. It is based on intrinsic motivation; 'the individual's inclination and a longing for change', rather than on 'external motivating factors'. Therefore, it can respond effectively to the needs of young people on the ground due to its greater flexibility. Furthermore, volunteering in youth work contributes to active citizenship, individual and social change. It boosts youth representation by allowing young people's needs to be heard, facilitating their participation and helping youth to take responsibility for their lives".* (Page 9, report European Youth Forum on volunteer youth work, 2022)

While developing a volunteer programme includes several institutional steps, it is essential to begin by reflecting on your organisation's purpose, culture and way of communication (we call on this reflection again in Section 4). That is the starting point. You need to be able to answer the questions - What impact does your association (could) have towards your community, society, region or worldwide? What kind of change are you aiming for? And how do you do this? In order to attract volunteers, it is important that you can explain this briefly.

The method of the elevator pitch is useful for this reflection: imagine you are in an elevator with an unknown person (a volunteer, for example), how would you convince him, her, or they, in less than one minute why this person should engage in your association and not another one? The message of your impact and why someone should engage, should be short, if possible, concrete and easy to communicate. **A good pitch gives a person a direct idea of how to engage in the specific project or organisation you are pitching for**. When a pitch is there, multiple forms of communication can be used to get the message out.

Efforts to communicate with potential volunteers clearly and actively should extend in the phase of introduction. We have experienced that, when possible, a personal introduction works best. This is not only about meeting each other, but also about discussing each other expectations, assessing what the volunteer programme can and cannot provide for and vice versa.

These seem like all very basic questions. Still too often there are teams providing non-profit work that hindered by unconscious biases and stereotypes and have not reflected on what they bring to the table and what they can do to attract volunteers. Volunteer work is a space and possibility for truly connecting with others as an external motivation such as getting paid is much less important. It is for sharing moments for fun and celebration as well. Thus, your culture of community is in particular important compared to paid work.

We have witnessed with some regularity self-fulfilling prophecies that keep associations or teams from finding new volunteers. For example, people stating they want volunteers to come in, but do not believe it is possible, so unconsciously set themselves up for failing by not really trying and torpedoing any brainstorm idea of reaching out. "Othering" is also too common, which leads to team members unconsciously reaching out and responding more positively to the ones that are like them. This labelling and stereotyping are well researched and impact those groups marginalized the most, especially if there are multiple discriminations. Even if it is well-intentioned, such othering can create barriers for people to engage.

When new volunteers join a group, active and more experienced volunteers can 'forget' that new people have other ideas and perspectives that are valid and that they will not be open to sharing initially (active listening). More experienced volunteers may also believe that since they have been longer with the association or in that field of work that their solution is automatically better. They might forget to explicitly share about how they or an existing group

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Example 1: A Business case for unemployed youth to volunteer

During the IAVE world conferences 2012, there was an expert session on this topic: IAVE Dialogue on Youth, Volunteering and Employment. Building on their experience and on documented examples participants in the London Dialogue confirmed that unemployed people indeed are willing and often anxious to volunteer. They confirmed six clear benefits to unemployed *people of any age who volunteer. From the report (page 6):*

1. *"People who volunteer report **feeling better, both physically and emotionally** [proven by research].*

2. *Volunteers report **increased feelings of self-worth** and a sense of being of value to others.*

3. *Volunteer work sustain social connections. For many people, the workplace is a primary source of social connections. When they no longer have those work-based connections, many people feel isolated and miss the regular interaction with others. Volunteering gives them a new location and a **new way to build and sustain social connections.***

4. ***Volunteers develop employment-focused networks**. Many people find their jobs through people they know, not through formal job search processes. Volunteering gives many of them a new path to helpful networks".*

5. *and 6. You **build skills and learn** about new working environments.*

For youth there are these additional potential benefits:

"1. Initial exposure to the world of organized work. Often, especially in emerging and depressed economies, most young people have never been exposed to organized work.

2. Development of "employability skills." Along with exposure to the world of organized work, volunteering can help develop the tacit knowledge required to succeed in a job – an understanding of the attitudes and behaviours.

3. Documented work experience. Volunteering offers young people what often is their first opportunity for some kind of work experience that can be documented".

A second part of this process, is to reflect on the community that you offer and how easily accessible it is. This is about **a reflection of your organisation's culture in values and norms.** This reflection involves asking questions like: 'Is your team or association welcoming? Do you have the capacity to guide a volunteer programme or individuals? Are you, your team, or leaders collaborating with the new volunteers willing to self-reflect and change? How open and diverse are you at the moment? What diversity are you willing to tolerate?'

behaves, for example in making decisions, expecting that it will be commonly understood. All these examples of defence mechanisms to trying something new, biases and barriers can be entrenched in a team or institutionalised in an association, so that new volunteers are not recruited, or that people interested in volunteering quickly leave, even if there is a proper institutional setting to volunteer.

Each group, team and/or organisation has its own culture of what is normal behaviour, and new people might have other norms to what is normal, what can cause conflict. This conflict is a normal part of an organisation's life and a source for re-evaluating the culture of a group. Promoting diversity is healthy, though it is about balancing the level of diversity with the norms and values you want to uphold. We want to promote this reflection on culture, context, stereotypes and biases, so that you know what kind of diversity in identity and behaviours you are aiming for and what are your limits. For example, many women's led associations choose to keep their leadership positions only or mainly accessible to women for a multitude of reasons. Similarly, there are many women's groups making sure different voices are represented, in order to avoid that mainly the older aged women of the majority group in that society are having voice in that group.

Resources Youth and Volunteering

The **Council of Europe** (which is not the same as the European Union) has an extensive youth programme. The Council of Europe brings together 50+ countries including Morocco and Palestine as PACE members (for the democracy programme).

An overview to their programmes can be found on this website. It includes a whole series of resources, including toolkits on a series of topics and their assessment tool on youth policy by governments. It provides an *Online Library of other publications on youth work, youth policy and youth research*, bringing together in total 586 documents in 42 languages (per July 2022). Finally one can subscribe to a monthly *"Think Youth" E-Newsletter.*

The **European Youth Foundation** is a Fund set up by the Council to provide financial and educational support for European youth activities. Only youth NGOs from the 46 Council of Europe member states, as well as the European Cultural Convention Signatories: Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Holy See, and the Russian Federation, can apply to the Foundation. For those who cannot access the programmes, it still provides a lot of *in-house training materials and NGO materials.*

- What is in interesting to check out is the *Training Kit for youth trainers*. It consists of 5 training modules:
  i. A reflection on the questions of trainers' values, ethics, roles, well-being, as well as competences.
  ii. Training in teams looks at the challenge of working not just in a team, but in a multicultural team of trainers.
  iii. Section 3 is about educational and logistical planning, from needs assessment to session design and evaluation (including online and blended options) and tries to provide a framework for making the organisational side of things as painless as possible.
  iv. 'Training in action' concentrates on the processes which emerge during an activity and what they mean for individuals, the group and the topic.
  v. 'After training' deals with the issues of transfer and multiplying, and how participants can integrate their learning from the training course into their professional (and personal) lives.

The **European Youth Forum** is a network of over 100 national and international youth organisations in Europe: https://www.youthforum.org/. Its website provides a lot of resources. It provides information about the work of their members, institutional spaces for youth activism, and available measures put in place by governments to support youth volunteers or the lack thereof. Some recommended publications for this briefing are:

- A *Research on volunteer-based youth work*, published in 2022. This research based on desk research and interviews with youth representatives and youth workers explores the concept, current status and recognition of volunteer-based youth work and to look into the opportunities and challenges relating to education, training and career development of volunteers in youth work.

- This *Advocacy Handbook* from 2022 is developed by young advocates for other young advocates with contributions from different youth organisations. It provides a practical to-do guide on setting up an advocacy action, starting with the formulation of an advocacy target.

- *A Toolkit on Quality Standards for Youth Policy* provides a lot of visual and easy to use tools to assess policy on the inclusion of youth, whether it be a public institution or NGO. While it is developed for youth organisations, it is recommended for anyone interested to assess youth policy in a certain context. The toolkit is also in other languages available besides English: Lithuanian, Spanish and Portuguese.

The European Union also has its own youth portal. However it is focused on allowing youth in the EU to engage and get inspired, without much online resources.

- One of the few resources that is useful and relevant is a handbook **"*Youth work and quality systems and frameworks in the European Union, Handbook for implementation*".** The handbook provides the youth work sector with an easily accessible and concrete model for continuous, systematic and knowledge-based quality development. Its writing style is for a general audience and the handbook is freely accessible online.

UN Volunteers is a knowledge portal on volunteering by the UN and has a section dedicated to youth and volunteering: https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/youth-and-volunteering:

- It doesn't include much resources on youth volunteering, but provides a lot of research and thus understanding on different aspects of volunteering from a global perspective, including an annual 'State of the world volunteerism report', in which the 2022 report is focused on *Building Equal and Inclusive societies,* looking that volunteer-state relationships (available in all the 6 UN languages).

The **International Association for Volunteer Effort**, https://www.iave.org/, doesn't provide many resources online, but it brings together all kinds of organisations through regular (youth) world conferences and other events.

Alianza Por Solidaridad has online training courses that are available in Spanish, English and French, including on Youth Volunteerism: Formaciones de Alianza por la Solidaridad | Formaciones de Alianza por la Solidaridad.

2. Youth Volunteerism and Gender Equality

In this section, we will go deeper into how to attract youth volunteers on objectives around gender equality and what it means to be inclusive. It will reflect on promoting inclusion of marginalized groups, looking at how to involve young women and/or women's rights advocates. We think the intersectional approach that is used by many feminist organisations and anti-discrimination policy in different regions is a useful concept to reflect on what inclusivity means. All EU anti-discrimination policy, including its Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, promote an intersectional approach.

Intersectional feminisms acknowledge that multiple layers of power inequalities exist in our societies and are tied to aspects of people's identities, such as age, gendered expression, color, sexual orientation, religion, etc. The perspective allows us to address and take into account individual experiences that are the result of structural inequalities, perpetuated by different discriminatory power systems. This sounds quite abstract. In lay terms it is the acknowledgement that we are not only men, women or non-binary, that we are not only young or old, or belonging to a certain etnicity and rooted in a particular cultural background. Each of us harbors many kind of identity markers. Each person is unique as yougng/old + man/woman/gender nonconforming + etc.

In terms of policy or an organisational approach this means that we should think in multiple categories. When it comes to gender equality policy, it will be too crude to think that a particular measure will benefit all women (equally). Kimberlé Crenshaw, credited as the author of the term "intersectionality", coined this term to draw attention to the way that black women's experience with gender-based discrimination remains buried under the experiences of white women in the US. She analysed how her racial experience remained hidden under stories of racist attacks that black men experience, therefore being silenced and overlooked on two levels. So, in sum the white feminism in the US was exclusive to black feminists.

With an intersectional approach, leaders of civil society and public institutions are not only pushed to reflect on how diverse their leadership and membership is in terms of gender, age, culture, colour, etc. It is also a framework to think about layers of power. Gender equality also means that groups of women have for example less political or economic power compared to groups of men, and that certain groups of women have much less power than other groups of women. Having a lot of power means being able to have most of the say in what is decided, or which views are considered to be more valid.

A good framework outlining differential power relations is the "matrix of domination", a theory coined by sociologist Patricia Hill Collins in her book, "Black Feminist Thought and the Politics of Empowerment" (2000). This theory explains how different domains in society (structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal) organise the power relations that shape human action. When it comes to social inequality, **people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. All oppression is linked.** See the diagram, the "intersection onion" by Edvina Bešić below.
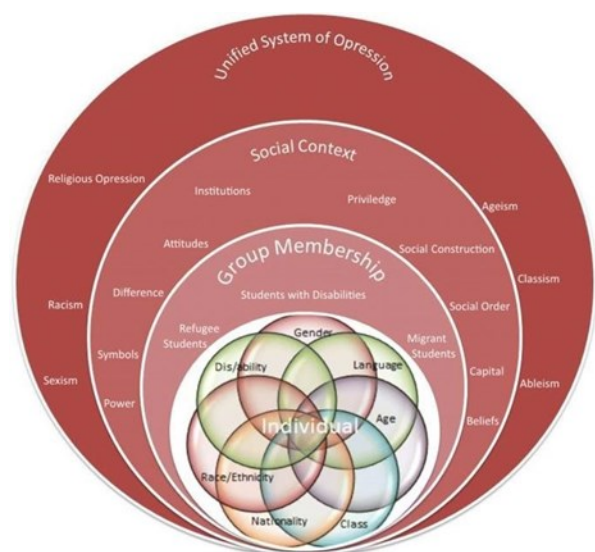
Source: Bešić, E. Intersectionality: A pathway towards inclusive education? Prospects 49, 111–122 (2020).

In sum, each interaction of people in this world is interwoven with layers of power that is structural and cultural and linked to unique mixes of age, gender expression, race, sexual orientation, religion, ability, location, etc., producing different impacts on different bodies. What does this mean for a youth volunteer programme that wants to promote gender equality? When we use terms such as youth volunteering or gender equality, we need to be mindful that a) we might have knowledge or biases about certain characteristics about categories of people concerning their situation or behaviour, and b) we should not translate this into absolute generalisations.

For example, many activists make the remarks that young people do much more with social media compared to older people. There might a be factual truth to this observation. An intersectional approach suggests that we need to consider this as contextual truth. Not all young people will be more adept to online communication. With using an intersectional lens, we might find certain groups of young people, like mi-

grant women (including refugee or trafficked women), are much more cut off from social media than others. Similarly, not all migrant women are the same.

Although it comes across as paradoxical, we suggest to, at the one hand, try to find out and understand how people's multiple identity aspects influences a person, group or category of people in multiple ways. Thus learn about issues particular to a certain group. And at the other hand, learn to be able to look pass this and avoid labelling people. People are different and similar at the same time. The excerpt in example 2 gives an insight on how labelling can be experienced by in this example minority youth.

The key understanding in approaching youth volunteers around gender equality objectives, especially if you aim to work with a minority group of young women, is to go back to the familiar feminist slogan that the political is also personal. In other words, if we want to change the world, we need to start with ourselves and acknowledge that each of us also holds limited knowledge and has unique privileges and power next to barriers and discriminations. We need to be willing to ask ourselves uncomfortable questions. Our own identity, views, and position is embedded in processes of exclusion and dicrimination. Feminists came with this slogan when reflecting on the ongoing divions of care work in households, which is a prime example of how societal structures and norms connect to the very interpersonal relations between people. It stresses how important it is for men, women and gender-nonconfirming persons to reflect how each contributes to a certain often unequal division and how each is impacted by and reacting to societal patterns. Similarly, in many feminist associations there are ongoing reflections on the power structures within their group, to question if it representation in leadership and participation is inclusive and diverse enough.

When we want to increase youth volunteerism around gender equality and be inclusive, it is in particular important to reflect on possible own biases and labels and the power they hold in our society. Gender inequality is something very cultural as well, in which there are worldwide all kinds of at times subtle assumptions that make people, especially younger men, hold discriminatory perspectives to women. In the UN Gender Equality attitudes study 2022 it was reported that based on surveys done in 20 countries, almost half of the men aged 20-34 agree that men are better political leaders than women. Similarly, there are

varying cultural views on youth and their ability to lead. In countries where ageist norms and values are deeply entrenched in the society, it will be much more difficult for a young person to be taken as seriously in civil and political participation compared to an older person.

To close this section, it may come as no surprise that speaking from a relatively less powerful position, facing much more different discriminations, young women's rights activists are keen to promote another kind of power structure in their

Example 2: Excerpt from the paper "Minority Youth in Europe: a state of play", published by Youth of European Nationalities (YEN), 2021, Page 11:

*"For a minority identity, the main feature is its pluralism as it is built upon many intersections, such as ethnicity, culture, language, gender, sexuality, ability, education and many more. At the very least, minority youth may identify with three markers to form and continuously develop their unique **pluralistic identity**: being part of a majority, being part of the minority, and being young. To self-identify is part of becoming a confident, empowered human being. It is a constant process of change and growth within new contexts and developments.*

However, there is not only the process of self-identification, as others and society at large will identify and label a person too. It is often that minority youth find themselves in an environment that lacks understanding and awareness of the possibility of possessing various identities at the same time. An environment that is eager to label an individual as either/or, and not taking into consideration the complexities and multiple layers of identity. A minority youth member is reminded about their own identity on a daily basis, in many common situations where they have to contemplate whether they can or cannot express their identity and whether they will or will not be accepted for it. Minority youths are often faced with the assumption of the majority that belonging to an ethnic minority and national identification are mutually exclusive. "I feel uncomfortable when people want to put me in a box or want me to choose which nationality I like more," or "I never have an exact answer for the question: where are you from?" These are just some of the powerful illustrations provided by YENies about their every-day struggles regarding their pluralistic identity. The social pressure to identify as either or causes that minority youth frequently feel that they are not completely belonging to either of the spheres. "I am too Slovenian to be Italian, and too Italian to be Slovenian," one of the individuals expressed".

http://www.yeni.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/YEN_S.O.P_SingleRBG.pdf

societies, one in which they challenge themselves and those around them, and embrace an intersectional approach. Example 3 highlights the collective voice of many young feminists worldwide that came together during the Generation Equality Forum organized by UN Women in 2021.

Example 3: The Young Feminist Manifesto, see: https://gefyouthmanifesto.wixsite.com/website

Young Feminist Leadership

All over the world, youth are leading transformative social change. Youth are not only more than half of the world's population – we are unlocking progress against some of the world's most entrenched problems and inequities. We do this while up against significant risks and challenges; one of which is ageism. In an ageist world, young people's experiences, voices, and knowledge are less valued and are often not taken seriously. As a result, youth face exclusion from processes that are essential to our lives and our future. We believe in youth leadership as a means to dismantle entrenched ageist beliefs and practices. When youth are at the table, we shift power dynamics, and spark deep social transformation...Our roles should include decision-making, leadership, strategizing and co-ownership of the development and shaping of [policy], so that we can move from descriptive to substantive representation of youth….

Feminist Leadership

As (young) feminist leaders in [this policy space], we are responsible for actively using our power more inclusively, and we demand others who partake in the process to do so as well. Feminist leadership aims at the explicit and intentional redistribution of power and responsibility in a way that is inclusive, participatory, and mindful of issues of gender, age, race, social class, sexual orientation, ability and other intersecting identities. This involves a continuous commitment to keep vigilant about – and challenge – the (re)production of practices and behaviours that deter collaboration, proactive listening and that benefit a few at the expense of others….

Intersectionality

As intersectional feminists, we incorporate an intersectional lens to our work, shedding light on the multidimensionality of lived experiences in which multiple axes of oppression intersect. We believe that whilst there has been a rhetoric of diversity and inclusion within [this policy space], this has not resulted in equity within the process – and too often we have observed that intersectionality is used as a synonymous to diversity. Intersectionality examines the intersections of the three most important global systems of domination: racism, colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, among others. An intersectional approach means recognizing and analysing prevalent power dynamics and systems of inequality, and meaningfully and intentionally working to counter them. Borrowing from Dr. Emilia Roig's perspective, "Intersectionality is not just a theory, it's a political project, it's a tool for analysis, transformation, liberation and visualisation. Visibilizing those who have been left out of feminist movements, exposing the multiple intersections of discrimination, and liberating all of us collectively from systemic oppression."

Resources around Gender Equality and Volunteering

The **Council of Europe** and its **European Youth Foundation** (EYF) have in their youth sections a lot of resources on gender equality:

- *The Council has published the second edition of* "Gender Matters*" (2019), which is a manual on gender-based violence affecting young people*. It provides practical methods and resources for education and awareness-raising activities with young people (in English and French).
- At the EYF there is an overview of all the policy documents and resources on Gender equality in youth projects the Council. It includes a section of publications developed by (youth) organisation in including gender equality, sex education, inclusion of LGBTQI* persons in youth work. It is important to stress that each publication will have it particular ideological lens connected to the association publishing it.

The **International Forum on Development Service** offers resources and publications on the intersection of volunteering with several topics such as gender but also decolonizing or climate action, see: https://forum-ids.org/forum-research/:

- One relevant paper answers the research question: *"How do current trends in development and volunteering intersect with Gender?*". Of importance may be the second chapter which offers insight into the organisation's internal practice of gender mainstreaming as well as chapter six on key learnings and future trends.'

Gender and Volunteering by UN Volunteers has an online introduction section with some resources. It answers questions such as what is the issue and why is it relevant to volunteering, what are the challenges and opportunities: https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/gender-and-volunteering:

- UN volunteers provides a *3 steps interactive toolkit for promoting gender equality and volunteering in national policy frameworks*. In a comprehensive way the following guideline is offered: 1. Consider how volunteering can support efforts towards gender equality. 2. Integrate gender concerns into national volunteering frameworks, strategies or plans. 3. Understand how to work with policymakers to promote volunteering as a tool for gender-equal socio-economic development.
- *Feminist & Gender Sensitive Principles applied to volunteering by UN Volunteers* gathered the main findings of a global dialog on the question "What would volunteering look like under a feminist social contract?" It presents 5 main principles, which ensure a feminist and gender sensitive volunteering program.

Plan International is a development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. They have published a lot of resources on promoting equality for girls and assessing the situation of girls globally:

- For example they publish annual State of the World's Girls reports, in which the 2022 report is focused on *girls' and young women's political participation worldwide*. It explores girls' attitudes towards, and experiences of, political and civic participation as well as political institutions. This report was based on a large-scale survey of almost 29000 females aged 15-24 from 29 countries, spanning all regions. It includes in-depth interviews as well.
- They have published a youth manifesto as well: https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/09/Plan_IDG_Manifesto_English.pdf.

Alianza por La Solidaridad has online training courses that are available in Spanish, English and French, including on gender equality.

- Here you can find the Guide of 'Gender perspective in the management of the EU Aid Volunteers'. It is also written in English: El enfoque de género en la gestión de la iniciativa EU AID Volunteers - EU Aid Volunteers | Alianza por la Solidaridad

Intersectionality:

- The feminist hiking collective created **a safer guide that provides an outline for holding an intersectionality inclusive space.** The framework could easily be transferred to a volunteering program and may provide helpful insights for how an intersectionality practice can look like and how to collectively create safety for everyone.
https://feministhikingcollective.org/safer-space-guide
- The toolkit on **intersectional mainstreaming for organisations, volunteers and allies** by SALTO is a guidance for mainstreaming intersectional perspectives, organizational cultures and work practices:
-https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/toolbox_tool_download-file-2429/
-Toolkit_on_intersectional_mainstreaming.pdf
- This website gathered the main conclusions of an online meeting on the application intersectionality in the youth field. At the end of the page further links to resources and toolkits are listed: https://phirenamenca.eu/applying-intersectionality-in-the-youth-field/
- **AWID provides a clear and concise introduction into the concept of an intersectional feminist approach.**

3. Understanding Gender Equality for your Organisation's Identity

The following section outlines different perspectives on gender equality goals to help you formulate more concretely your own vision on gender equality for an association or programme. There is quite a diversity in objectives around promoting women's empowerment and/or gender equality. Already in this section, there are four kinds of different concepts introduced– **gender aware, gender sensitive, gender responsive** and **gender transformative** – that can lead to completely different kinds of gender programmes. We will provide some practical examples to enable a grasp of these differences.

This section ends with a glossary of concepts. With introducing key concepts we aim to build a common understanding for having a dialogue and reflection on gender-related policy. Not all proposed policy is automatically an effective or very efficient approach to realize gender equality. Approaches and understandings of what one aims to achieve and how one analyses inequalities can be diverse, so finding consensus in the terminology will be important for the collaboration in any project. The goal of shining a light on these concepts is to provide your organization with practical guidance in shaping youth volunteer programmes. We hope this section will help you start a reflection on what terminology defines your work and identity, why you would use these words and description and not others.

Differences Between Gender Aware, Gender Responsive and Gender Transformative Approaches

Does your organisation aim for gender transformative changes, or does it work with a gender responsive or gender aware lens, in order to achieve gender equality?

Gender aware, gender sensitive, gender responsive, and gender transformative, they all sound good. In practice, they actually suggest an ordering in terms of ambition and focus. Let's begin with the concept of gender aware. Gender aware is an approach that acknowledges the different needs of women, men, boys, and girls and acknowledges gender power dynamics but does not necessarily address these, other than to try and integrate an understanding of these dynamics within programme design. A gender aware policy or action only aims to increase understanding, without encouraging people or institutions to change their behaviour. Often gender awareness raising does intend to promote change in behaviour as a consequence of the newly learned information. However, if this is not explicitly part of the objectives and process of a proposed action or policy, we suggest to consider the objective to be to create gender-awareness.

Gender-sensitive policies aim to address the particular circumstances faced by women. For example, during the COVID pandemic there were governments that opted for additional (temporary) cash transfers that targeted women. This provided a direct support to the women as many either lost

their job or had to face more risk at work of contracting COVID-19 (women work more often in public (health) sector and hospitality). These policies may improve living conditions and help to avoid extreme poverty. Without other measures, the policies do not aim to change the power balances between men and women.

A more advanced approach on the gender equity continuum is gender responsive. A gender-responsive policy considers and addresses the different situations, roles, needs and interests of women, men, girls, boys and queer persons. It includes specific action to try to reduce gender inequalities. For instance,

in social programmes that provide training for jobs, one barrier that women typically hold back from participating in training is unpaid care work – and this results in more men gaining skills and network to enter the labour market. To help women overcome this structural barrier (as more women are expected to provide unpaid care work), organisers can provide safe childcare services. (See UNICEF and UNFPA guide, "Gender Responsive and/or Transformative Approaches", 2021).

The figure below, figure A, illustrates the gender equity continuum to reflect at which level your organisation operates when it comes to aiming for gender equality.

FIGURE 1: The gender equity continuum[3]
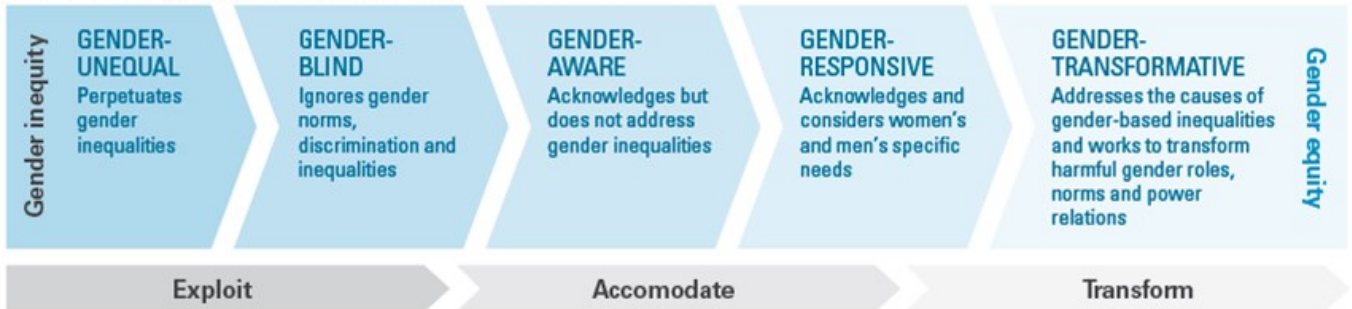
Source: "Technical Note on Gender-Transformative Approaches in the Global Programme to End Child Marriage", UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, January 2020 , https://www.unfpa.org/resources/technical-note-gender-transformative-approaches-summary-practitioners

At the end of the gender equity continuum is the gender transformative objective. A gender transformative approach tackles the root causes of gender inequality and reshapes unequal power relations. It goes beyond individual self-empowerment of women and girls and instead seeks to redress power dynamics and structures that reinforce gender inequalities.

Gender aware and gender responsive approaches tend to work within the structural barriers that govern gender norms and power dynamics (what we sometimes say, "business as usual"). A gender transformative approach breaks new ground, views women and men as agents of change to transform existing social structures that perpetuate and reproduce inequalities. Gender transformative approaches have to begin with a strong gender analysis that is grounded in local realities, and has long-term objectives, meaning that efforts need to be sustained over a period of time.

An example of a gender transformative approach is placing girls and women at the centre of programming actions, where they can build not only their skills, but also a strong sense of agency and leadership. This includes educating women and girls about their rights, and information for them to access services like healthcare and education. Another example is engaging with boys and men so that they recognise male domination in society, and how it oppresses everyone, not just women, learn positive masculinity and become change agents for gender equality. Working toward transformative change like challenging and redefining gender norms and ending male domination is not only the responsibility for women and girls, but also men and boys. (See Plan International's

blog post, "Our Gender Transformative Approach: Tackling The Root Causes Of Gender Inequality").

We would like to add that ambition levels can be more easily distinguished in public policies through the shape of the programme. Governments and institutions are usually of such a size in terms of (financial) capacity that they are able to implement by design. The gender equality objective of a government is in the end a political choice. Non-profit Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) engage with limited capacity on gender equality in their societies and need to be creative and contextual responsive. Strategies that seem at first sight befitting a gender-sensitive approach can actually be part of a gender-transformative objective. As example, during COVID-19 in countries when the government failed to help under-resourced groups sufficiently, the direct political protest of NGOs and CBOs has been in service delivery. As they were one of the few groups that remain around to help certain groups in the population and in this way try to change the exclusion. Similarly advocacy towards political change can be more or less transformative; a common debate among feminists is if direct engagement in a certain policy area of their government or at international level is contributing to governments using gender as window-dressing or tokenism or is it truly promoting significant change.

Questions to ask in order to make an assessment on your ambition level is: 'What kind of change do I want to see in 50 years' time and how does my programme or project contribute to this?', What are my target groups and how are they impacted?'. The theory of change model is an excellent tool to map out and understand one's envisioned change.

IWDA THEORY OF CHANGE
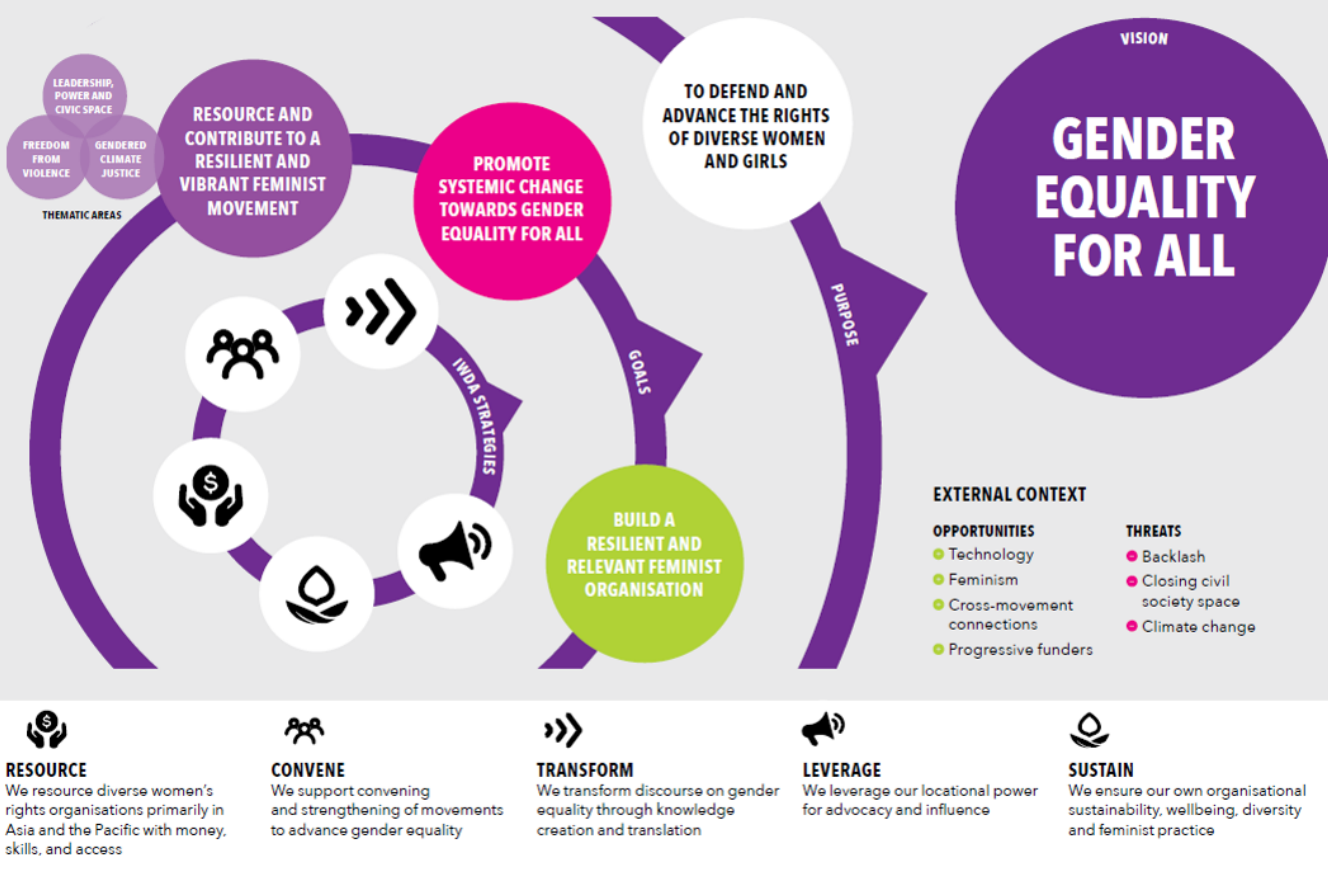
An example of a feminist fund's Theory of Change, see for more: IWDA: https://iwda.org.au/what-we-do/iwda-strategic-plan-2020-2023/

Understanding 'Gender' versus 'Sex'

The terms 'sex' and 'gender' are often used interchangeably or assumed to mean the same thing. Actually, they have different meanings that can lead to different policy implications.

Sex refers to biological differences between males and females (e.g., gonads, sexual organs, chromosomes, hormones). Sex is usually assigned at birth (there are examples when it is assigned later, when sex characteristics do not clearly indicate the sex of the baby, for example in the case of 'intersex' people). (See Council of Europe's page on "Sex and Gender").

Gender on the other hand, is a social, psychological and cultural construct and it is developed in the process of socialisation. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, a gender non-conforming person or child, as well as relationships with each other. Different societies and cultures may therefore have different understandings of what is 'masculine' or 'feminine'. Societies create norms and expectations related to gender, and these are learned in the course of people's lives – includ-

ing in the family, at school, through the media. All of these influences impose certain roles and patterns of behaviour on everyone within society. Importantly, gender is also an analytical category – a way of thinking about how identities are constructed – and a political idea which addresses the distribution of power in society. And as a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.

Patterns of inequality are embedded our culture (language, cultural perspectives, etc.) and in our structure (economic position, access to education, etc.). If we do not choose to change these patterns they will continue to be reproduced. And these patterns are to be found in all domains of society. The concept of gender inequality helps more easily to focus on the societal and transformative nature of gender inequality.

Gender equality can be focused on more than 2 sexes. The other gender related identities, such as transpeople, queer or non-binary persons can be part of the analysis and comparison. Often it means in practice the equality between men and women -or girls and boys. Different countries have in

recent years become more inclusive in their policy and language towards other genders, while in other cultures there has been less of a tradition to define people into two binary categories, compared Western countries. According to a recent article, between 1 and 5 % of Americans regard themselves other than male or female (see pewresearch.org 7 June 2022). This highlights that biological sex is not clearcut. While there are many men and women that look, have characteristics, and feel men or women, there is a group of people for which these elements are diffuse and different.

In programming that includes gender equality objectives, practical arguments can be made for both concepts to be used. Some development associations want to talk about women and girls, because if their programming becomes focused gender equality gender mainstreaming, targeted programmes for women and girls might get lost.

In public debate and policymaking, the different concepts have started to become politized and used by political movements. Ultra-conservative groups and political parties have attacked the concept of gender; this is a process that is ongoing at United Nation level but for example also within the European Union. Behind this attack is a narrative in which 'men' and 'women' are considered naturally different, which is also used to justice traditional roles for women and push back on other kinds of family structures.

Major International Conventions to promote gender equality

There are a set of international conventions and agenda's focusing on gender equality that can help you in local, regional or national advocacy to hold governments accountable for women's rights protection and addressing gendered discriminations. The most prominent one is the CEDAW. There are relevant ILO Conventions that are included as decent working standards in trade agreements between countries and part of ILO related case law.

And a lot of the existing conventions usually have a gender component, or a different gender impact. A full overview of these conventions and their inclusion of gender would be a topic for another publication.

CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the only international convention that is ratified by a majority of states worldwide to combat inequality between men and women (188 of 193 UN Member states have ratified the CEDAW). The CEDAW is used in international trade agreements and in national policies to promote overcoming different kinds of discrimination women face. States commit themselves to monitor the situation of inequality. The CEDAW and its Optional Protocol is also used by women's rights groups to seek justice and improved measures to address gender inequalities (https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw).

The most prominent tool of the CEDAW is the obligation of states to provide every four year a monitoring report. Women's rights groups often produce shadow reports to highlight issues that their government is less likely to report on. Through international naming and shaming governments can become encouraged to take action. It is also possible for an individual or groups to make a claim to CEDAW Committee if a state has ratified the Optional Protocol. However the process is very complex and one must have completely exhausted national possibilities to litigation. It is therefore really challenging to use the protocol.

Sustainable Development Goals

A current major international agenda that many states actively implement is the Sustainable Development Goals. Goal. The Sustainable Development Goals, in short SDGs, is a globally agreed set of goals to which all 193 UN Member States have unanimously committed to politically in 2015. The SDGs are recognized as an international framework/agenda for achieving development. The SDGs commit donor countries of ODA (Official Development Assistance) to allocate budgets that will further the targets and it commits all countries to implement the framework of goals in their national policies. Among the 17 Goals, Goal 5 is completely dedicated to promoting gender equality. Each goal has a set of measurable indicators, on which progress reports can be found (https://sdgs.un.org/goals).

The over 25 years old Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is an international agenda completely dedicated to women's rights. Though its political relevance has diminished over the years. It is still being used by women's rights advocates as an international milestone. In 2021, the 25 years of the Declaration was celebrated with six action coalitions (see: https://forum.generationequality.org/home) that provided policy and action suggestions for governments, donors and civil society to voluntarily implement.

Istanbul Convention against Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence

The Istanbul Convention against Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, in short the Istanbul Convention, is an ambitious convention signed by the member states of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe brings together 50+ countries, including Morocco and Palestine as PACE members for the democracy programme. The Istanbul Convention sets out overarching minimum standards to protect from violence. It brings together different policy areas and provides an intersectional perspective. While many states have ratified the

Convention, in past years there have been a roll-back. Different states have rejected the Convention, most recently Turkey. Despite this resistance, it remains an important tool for women's rights advocates to promote. And countries that have adopted the Convention have reported on progress (see: https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/home?).

a convention it becomes in force. There are 190 Conventions, of which the last two adopted are of particular relevance to women. Some are considered to be 'core labour standards' that regulate the basic workers' rights and some are considered outdated (see for more: https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/lang--en/index.htm)

ILO Conventions

Several of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions focus on issues that are particular relevant for women workers. The conventions are more and more used by states in trade agreements to create a fair and equal playing field for trade in which worker's rights are respected.

States can ratify a convention and, in this way, commit to it. If more than a certain number of countries have committed to

The following Conventions are relevant for women:

ILO Convention 100, Equal Renumeration (in force)
ILO Convention 111, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) in force)
ILO Convention 189, Domestic Workers (not in force)
ILO Convention 190, Violence and Harassment (not in force)

Glossary of Concepts relating to Gender Equality

CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the only international convention that is ratified by a majority of states worldwide to combat inequality between men and women (188 of 193 UN Member states have ratified the CEDAW). The CEDAW is used in international trade agreements and in national policies to promote overcoming different kinds of discrimination women face. States commit themselves to monitor the situation of inequality. The CEDAW and its Optional Protocol is also used by women's rights groups to seek justice and improved measures to address gender inequalities (https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw).

Gender

Social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as to the relations between women and those between men. EIGE's Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus (https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus).

Gender-Based Violence

Under the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Istanbul Convention, in short Istanbul Convention, gender-based violence against women differs from other types of violence in that the fact that these are perpetrated against a woman is both the cause and the result of unequal power relations between women and men that lead to women's subordinate status in the public and private spheres which contributes to making violence against women acceptable. The Istanbul convention is a major human rights treaty establishing comprehensive legal standards to ensure women's right to be free from violence. This European legal instrument was negotiated by its 47 member states and adopted on 7 April 2011 by its Committee of Ministers (https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/key-facts).

Gender Equality

It refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development (https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1168).

Gender Equity

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. Fairness is ensured when strategies and measures consider and compensate for women's social disadvantages that prevent women and men from being at a level playing field. An important element of promoting gender equality is focusing on redressing power imbalances and providing tools and solutions for women to be empowered, independent and having agency. Simply put, gender equity leads to gender equality (https://www.unfpa.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions-about-gender-equality).

Gender Gap

A gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits (https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1178).

Gender Impact Analysis

Gender impact assessment has been defined as an ex ante evaluation, analysis or assessment of a law, policy or programme that makes it possible to identify, in a preventative way, the likelihood of a given decision having negative consequences for the state of equality between women and men (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment/what-gender-impact-assessment).

Gender Justice

Terms used by feminists to describe goals of an intersectional feminist approach. Third Wave defines Gender Justice as a movement to end patriarchy, transphobia, and homophobia and to create a world free from misogyny. As gender justice activists, we recognize that gender oppression is tied to classism, racism, ageism, and ableism, so gender justice can only truly be achieved when all forms of oppression cease to exist (https://www.thirdwavefund.org/what-is-gender-justice.html).

Gender Mainstreaming

Systematic consideration of the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of women and men in all policies and actions (https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1185).

Sex

Biological and physiological characteristics that define humans as female or male (https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1361).

Sex-Disaggregated Data

Data collected and tabulated separately for women and men allows the measurement of differences between women and men in terms of various social and economic dimensions and are one of the requirements to obtaining gender statistics (https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1366).

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Sexual and Reproductive rights are part of human rights among others the right to health. Women should have access to sufficiently provided and good quality health care services free of discrimination. The access to medical treatment should be free of economical and physical barriers. Sexual and reproductive rights maintain and support women's bodily autonomy (https://www.ohchr.org/en/node/3447/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights).

Further References and Glossaries

The European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE)
Glossary Search Engine A-Z (in a multitude of languages): https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus.

- Glossary of terms and concepts by UNICEF (English) https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/1761/file/Gender.
- Gender Equality Glossary by the Council of Europe (English and French) https://edoc.coe.int/en/gender-equality/6947-gender-equality-glossary.html.

EIGE provides also a bunch of toolkits for Gender Mainstreaming for example a Gender Equality Training guide: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits

A summary of good practice examples in the EU
- https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices, developed by NGOs and institutions.
- https://eige.europa.eu/publications/good-practices-gender-mainstreaming,developed by EIGE.

4. Feminist Methodologies for Training of Youth Volunteers

We want to introduce feminist perspectives on training volunteers, reflecting on methodologies that WIDE+ members have embraced for training, such as **feminist popular education**.

As a feminist network, these feminist ideas and methodologies are deeply embedded in our work and actions. However, for other organisations many questions can come up in terms of the relevance of feminist ideas to your work, how it can align with your organisations' values, and some practical ideas to apply some of these principles.

Why use a Feminist lens when it comes to volunteering?
First, it is important to understand that feminism is (in our view) about: "consciously understanding and dismantling unfair and unjust power relations that keep women, gender groups and any other group marginalized, excluded and oppressed in diverse ways. The dismantling is done with the aim to create societies, institutions and processes that are inclusive, diverse, participatory and respectful of human dignity and rights". See: https://globalchange.center/en/2021/10/06/what-would-volunteering-look-like-under-a-feminist-social-contract/.

of how people interact within systems and possibly offer solutions to confront and eradicate oppressive systems and structures. Feminist theory considers the lived experience of any person/people, not just women, with an emphasis on oppression (see 'Model of Feminist Theory' below which can be applied to development of training programmes).

There are many potential ways to utilize this model in research and practice. First, trainers/volunteers can consider what systems of power exist in their environment, school, or district. They can question how these systems are working to create discrimination and exclusion. By considering existing social structures, they can acknowledge barriers and issues inherit to the system. They can disrupt such systems so that change and understanding can begin. Feminism is about changing our society as well as ourselves and the groups we belong to. In the context of an organisation it can be part of the mission and vision, but also the organisational process.

Source: "Theoretical Models for Teaching and Research", Joy Egbert and Mary F. Roe, 2020. https://opentext.wsu.edu/theoreticalmodelsforteachingandresearch/front-matter/theoretical-models-for-teaching-and-research/

Figure 1
Model of Feminist Theory
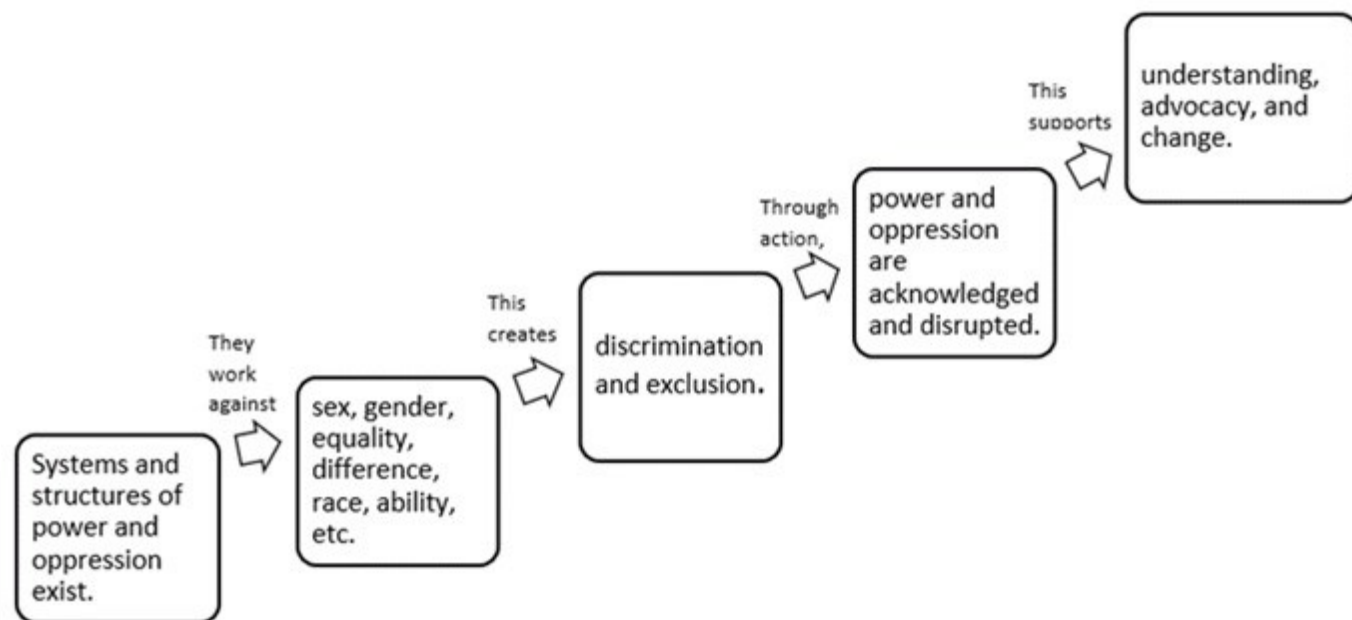
With this vision, feminist groups, like WIDE+, work to generate alternative and sustainable responses to systemic gendered inequalities, based on the recognition that everyone has rights, agency and voice. As an analytical lens, a feminist perspective can be used to assess a diverse range of issues like trade and migration, and also provides a value system on how to work.

The purpose of using a feminist lens is to enable the discovery

In terms of a feminist process a question is how to create a participatory and equitable space for volunteers. Building horizontal and participatory spaces is an important aspect of a feminist approach. Young people, especially, have creativity, energy, and ideas, and we should co-create initiatives with them where they are able to exercise agency and leadership.

In the area of social justice, many volunteers come from marginalised groups. There are many groups of marginalized people that provide necessary support while this is not visibilised in the public arena. As most of us know, volunteering is also a gendered activity. Being involved in unpaid and at times unrecognised work such as volunteering tend to increase the precarity of women and adds burden to lives in challenging circumstances. Therefore, a feminist lens helps to inform a more equitable and sustainable approach to volunteering.

Using a feminist lens when it comes to volunteering, it concretely means we, as NGOs and CBOs working on important social issues, have to:

- Ensure that our volunteers are rewarded, whether symbolically, formally (through certification) or financially (token sums, or meals and travel for instance).
- Recognize that every volunteer has skills, agency and voice when it comes to contributing to a project. Volunteering is not the work of "un-skilled" individuals, but rather is an expression of active citizenship, caring and socio-political activism.
- Develop processes and use methodologies (such as feminist popular education) to engage volunteers. Such methods need to be participatory and bottom-up, where possible. Active listening and collaboration are crucial to create a space where volunteers can participate, especially for volunteers that have different capabilities.

What is Feminist Popular Education?

According to a WIDE/IGTN resource published in Vienna, Austria, in May 2003, "Popular education resources: A gender-based compilation of resources for the WIDE/IGTN training of trainers", feminist popular education developed in the early 1980s as a critique of the male-biased popular education that was dominant in social movements in different parts of the world. **Feminists started developing different educational approaches on how people can learn and be able to affect change in society**. Their interest was to design and facilitate educational and organizational events that maximise participation in defining and carrying out activities. And that were aimed at changing situations or relationships experienced as repressive. Some started to focus on educational practices and processes, others recorded work with specific constituencies or on issues and with different methodologies. They all agreed and suggested that if educational methodologies are to be transformative and effective, they must be critically rethought and reframed within the existing educational models.

Feminist popular education is the struggle against gender oppression and the integration of all aspects of power inequalities that are structured along with social identities. **It is a participatory, democratic, non-hierarchical pedagogy that encourages creative thinking that breaks through embedded formats of learning.** It valorises local knowledge and works collectively to produce knowledge. It's about the principle of starting from where people are situated and working from there to develop a broader understanding of structures and how these can transform. It strives to foster both personal and social empowerment. For us it is also a methodology and pedagogy that uses the body, emotions and actions, participatory processes based in activism and reflective feminist approaches deriving from democracy, equality, care and transparency.

The outcome of popular education is meant to show the participants how to use collective reflection as a tool of transforming societies of which they are part in pursuit of justice and equity. In some forms of feminist education, creative arts, theatre or movement is used; we do not reflect on this any further here due to space. We do want to mention this to make clear it doesn't need to be all about talking.

The Spiral model

The feminist popular education can be summarised through the spiral model (see figure 2 at next page). The spiral model gives a clear picture of how to understand the desired learning process we want to achieve through using a feminist lens on volunteering. It can be directly applied to actions such as training of volunteers, gender equality training, etc.

This model believes that learning begins with the experience and knowledge of the participants as well as analysing those experiences using a pattern. It encourages the use of theories to develop and create new knowledge and to practise new skills on what they have learned, as well as make strategies for a plan of action, applying them to their daily transactions.

This model values the knowledge of the 'outsider' and that of the participants. Everybody learns and teaches in a collaborative way of creating new knowledge. This is unlike the expert model where the teachers teach, and the student learns. Here, education leads to action for social change by challenging ideas and practices that support inequality, rather than reproducing the status quo as more often the case of the expert model.

We see that this model has been recommended and is very successful because it helps us to work with creative tension. It clarifies the differences between theories and practices. Theories have always been considered as abstracts and not relative, but in this situation, it sees theories as uncovering the reality that we all theorize. It helps to minimize the tension between action and reflection and the tension between participants' knowledge and new input.

Summary:

1. **Start with people's experience:** It suggests that learning starts with the experiences or knowledge of the participants, in this case our volunteers.

2. **Look for patterns**: After volunteers have shared their experiences, trainers/organisers, together with the volunteers can start to look for patterns to analyse the commonalities and differences between their experiences.

3. **Add new information and theory**: Add on to the knowledge and experiences of the group to avoid the limitation of knowledge only on people's experiences.

4. **Practice skills, strategize and plan for action:** Volunteers need to practice skills and plan for action.

5. **Apply in action:** After the volunteers have completed the training, they need to put the strategies and plan of action into practice in their daily lives or organizations.

Example of a Feminist Approach in Practice

Below we have summarised key elements of a Feminist Approach to Training developed by UN Women that might be of additional use:

Key Elements of a Feminist Approach to Training:

Participatory and horizontal

Balancing theory and practice

Empathetic and sensitive to cultural, social and economic contexts, adapting to these differences

Incorporates monitoring and evaluation as part of any process

Adapted from "Feminist Pedagogies in Training for Gender Equality" (UN Women Training Centre, 2019)

Participatory and horizontal: What this means is that volunteers are treated as active agents in the construction of knowledge (hence the use of the spiral model, as shown above). We should ensure that spaces are co-created and shared across managers, trainers and volunteers, and that any power imbalances are acknowledged and addressed. For example, in meetings, ensure that there are tools and mechanisms put in place for people to contribute ideas, actively listened to, and contribute to the shaping of knowledges.

Balancing theory and practice: Knowledge is empowering, at the same time, applying that knowledge is key to learning. Therefore, include practical examples from past experiences of volunteers to build on the theories that are taught in the training. This will encourage volunteers to connect theories to their own lives and their interests.

Empathetic and sensitive to cultural, social and economic contexts, adapting to these differences: Being aware and accommodating differences aid the development of safe spaces for learning and exchange. Some practical examples of being inclusive is having translators at meetings, creating non-mixed meetings where women volunteers feel safe to share their experiences, organising meetings with accessibility features, or having hybrid (in-person and online) to accommodate volunteers with disabilities, etc.

Incorporates monitoring and evaluation as part of any process: After a training or a meeting, think about the follow-up to those activities. For instance, training sessions should have evaluation forms so that future ones can be improved, or follow-up can be done to further support the learning of the volunteers. The evaluation methodology can (and should) also reflect feminist principles - the questions can be short, written clearly, allow for anonymous responses, and finally to make the findings of the evaluation transparent so that it becomes a shared knowledge production, rather than simply about data collection. For example, managers/trainers can share the findings of the evaluation and allow time for people to respond to the findings with ideas, comments, feedback on a collective platform (like google jam board, etc).

Spiral Model
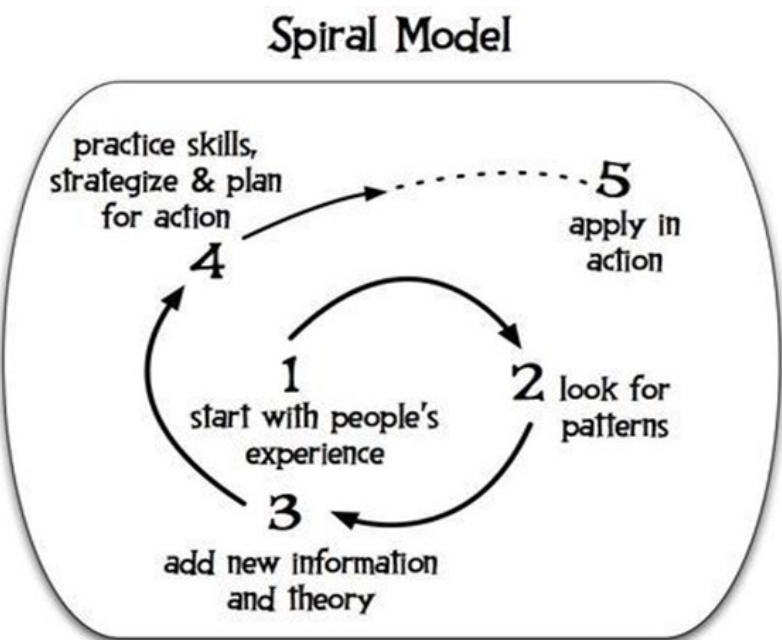
Resources Feminist Methodologies for training of Youth Volunteers

There are many resources online, some from WIDE+ partners, which provide guidelines, theories, and best practises around feminist pedagogy, leadership, and methodologies:

- **Feminist Pedagogy in Gender Equality Training by UN Women**
  UN Women presents how to integrate feminist pedagogical principles into the theory and practice of gender equality training. The guide shares how to achieve a 'participatory, non-hierarchical, and power-sharing learning' experience:
  https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/RESOURCES_LIBRARY/Resources_Centre/02%20Feminist%20Pedagogies%20.pdf

- **Feminist Mentoring by CREA**
  The feminist organisation CREA has developed a guide for feminist mentoring and leadership building. Feminist leadership is essential for transformation at the individual level, as well as organizations and movements. The first part introduces the theory, the second the practice and the third the stories. All three manuals are linked on the website below:
  https://creaworld.org/resource/feminist-mentoring-guide-for-feminist-futures-part-3/

- **JASS Movement Building Initiative methodology**
  JASS (https://justassociates.org/) is an organization with a vision of strong feminist movements. Their work wants to empower women as a collective, provide resources for capacity building and feminist organizing with a regional focus on Mesoamerica, Southeast Asia, and Southern Africa. JASS has developed a methodology for rebuilding feminist movements. The published document shares knowledge on:

  - Strengthening and diversifying women's leadership by deepening women's political skills and analysis to better engage communities, to respond to fast-shifting power dynamics, and to negotiate agile alliances.

  - Reconnecting effective grassroots organizing strategies with policy advocacy and broader systemic change strategies at national and global levels.

  - Increasing the visibility and legitimacy of women's critical, transformative role in communities, families and society and broaden the appeal of gender equality.

  - Contributing to the substance of women's rights agendas and strategies integrate different types of rights (economic, social, cultural, civil and political) at regional and global levels with inspiring long-term visions of hope and change.

  - Generating fresh knowledge about the what and the how of women's citizenship, women's rights and movement-building from an intersectional perspective across differences.

    Link to JASS's methodology: https://justassociates.org/all-resources/jass-mbi-methodology/

- **JASS Methodology on Power**
  In any feminist movement building context it is important to talk about power. JASS differentiates between dominating power and positive and transformational power. According to JASS "creating change requires power – which means understanding it, navigating it, challenging it, transforming it." Therefore, the organization has provided a guide for integrating critical reflections on power and harness it for promoting just change:
  https://justassociates.org/all-resources/mch3-power-concepts-for-revisioning-power-for-justice-equality-and-peace/

- **JASS World Making Game: Building a just future**
  JASS developed an interactive play methodology to help understand how to transform power and oppressive systems in the pursuit for a liberated world. All material for the game is provided on JASS's website linked below: https://justassociates.org/all-resources/building-just-futures-a-worldmaking-game/

- **Newshub "Political Education for Transformation: Feminist Methodologies"**
  The website Capire is a feminist communication tool that connects feminists from all over the world and provides great content and resources. The tool makes lived alternatives, resistance and struggles of woman from all over the world visible. An article by Nalu Faria published on the website gave a great summary of political education as a feminist methodology:
  https://capiremov.org/en/analysis/political-education-for-transformation-feminist-methodologies/

- **Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR)**
  The FPAR academy provides free online courses on Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) which is in their words "a conceptual and methodological framework that enables a critical understanding of complex oppressive structures and relationships that undermine social justice. The origins of FPAR can be traced back to Kurt Lewin's work on Action Research in the aftermath of WWII, when he developed social research methodologies for empowering minority groups to take action for change. […] FPAR integrates key feminist notions into the process through the following key dimensions as articulated by Reid and Frisby (2008, p. 93):

  * centering gender and women's experiences while challenging patriarchy;
  * accounting for intersectionality;
  * honoring voice and difference through participatory research processes;
  * exploring new forms of representation;
  * reflexivity; and
  * honoring many forms of action."

  The academy's website provides many resources and courses: https://www.fparacademy.com