



WorldYWCA



AWARENESS | AGENCY | ADVOCACY | ACCOUNTABILITY

# Harnessing the Transformative Power of Young Women

HOW THE WORLD YWCA WORKS WITH  
YOUNG WOMEN THROUGH THE YW4A INITIATIVE TO NURTURE  
A GLOBAL INTERGENERATIONAL  
FEMINIST MOVEMENT.

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# About the World YWCA

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As the largest organisation of its kind, World YWCA engages millions of women, young women and girls globally, across cultures and beliefs, to transform their lives and the world for the better.

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With a presence in over a hundred countries, World YWCA's work is grassroots-driven, grounded in local communities, and rooted in the transformational power of women.

World YWCA provides support and opportunities for women, young women, and girls to become leaders and change-makers who not only protect their rights and impact their communities, but inspire their peers to do the same.

World YWCA is focused on building a strong, intergenerational network of women leaders, with programmes led by and for women in response to the unique needs that they see in their communities.

From advocating around reproductive rights to promoting participation in peace processes, World YWCA supports women's individual and collective power to champion social change.

# World YWCA's Goal 2035

*“By 2035, 100 million young women and girls will transform power structures to create justice, gender equality and a world without violence and war; leading a sustainable YWCA movement, inclusive of all women.”*

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This bold, transformative goal affirms World YWCA's foundational belief in centering young women and girls, establishes a clear objective for the sustainability of the YWCA movement, and directly reflects its commitment to the future.

World YWCA envisions a fully inclusive world where justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom, and care for the environment are promoted and sustained by women's leadership.





# Goal 2035 and YW4A

The Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy, and Accountability programme (YW4A) is a large-scale initiative led by the World YWCA that contributes to achieving Goal 2035.

Grounded in successful World YWCA leadership resources such as *RiseUp! Transformative Leadership Manual*, *the Safe Spaces Guide*, *the Storytelling Manual* and *the Young Women's Feminist Consultation Methodology*, YW4A enhances young women's transformative feminist leadership, individually and collectively. The initiative connects them to strategic decision-making spaces and amplifies their advocacy strategies to hold decision-makers accountable for women's rights.

The YW4A initiative uses an interdisciplinary and intergenerational approach to address barriers to leadership and SGBV issues. Through collaboration with progressive allies and targeting power structures that obstruct young women's rights, World YWCA collaborates with YWCA member associations and development and faith actors.





# Agency and leadership in YW4A

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A key pathway in the initiative strengthens young women's leadership to effectively engage in collective action and decision making in public, private and civic spaces.

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World YWCA through the YW4A initiative strengthens young women's leadership by encouraging intergenerational collaboration, offering safe spaces where they can significantly impact decisions in public, private, and civic domains. This enables young women to extend their advocacy against SGBV beyond their local environments, ensuring they are central to shaping policy.

The programme pathway breaks down barriers like masculine and ageist biases by cultivating partnerships within and between women's rights organisations and other entities, empowering young women to spearhead changes in societal and legal norms. This promotes individual agency and builds social capital.

# Meaningful Engagement

## Principles and Practices in the YW4A Initiative

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The World YWCA developed a standard operating procedure (SoP) to ensure meaningful engagement of young women in advocacy and dialogue spaces.

Through a merit-based process, young women from Kenya, Egypt, Palestine, and South Sudan are selected for participation in various advocacy platforms. They are tasked with thorough preparations, active participation, and knowledge transfer to their peers upon their return.

These procedures ensure sustainability and information cascading, aligning with principles of accountability, empowerment, and inclusion in social change efforts, guided by key principles outlined in the SoP.

Young women actively participate in planning and decision-making, ensuring their voices are central to discussions. Guided by the SoP, accountability is established through discussion and agreement on clear expectations for young women and programme partners, promoting commitment to the programme objectives.

The YW4A partners provide necessary support and resources, enabling young women to contribute actively to advocacy efforts. Inclusivity is prioritised through diverse representation in the selection process. As a result, the World YWCA creates an empowering environment for young women to drive meaningful change and promote gender equality.





# Story-telling and Evidence-building

## Understanding Young Women's Diverse Realities

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The YW4A Initiative builds young women's storytelling capacities through the World YWCA Feminist Consultation Methodology and the Storytelling Guide.

Storytelling contributes to generating evidence on the diverse realities and challenges young women face. Using skills gained, young women play a crucial role in consultations and story collection, providing first-hand narratives that can inform advocacy processes.

Evidence on young women's diverse realities and challenges generated and used for policy, legal, and social norms transformation.

Under the YW4A initiative, young women have shared their realities and narratives, contributing to social change by sharing experiences.



# Trauma-informed Care

## Doing No Harm

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Trauma Informed Care in YW4A is an approach that recognises that some of the young women reached are likely to have a history of trauma. This approach acknowledges the negative impact that trauma has on young women's lives and in realising their rights.

Integrating the Trauma Informed Care approach into the YW4A programme entails:

TRAINING YOUNG WOMEN FACILITATORS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

ENSURING THAT ALL ACTIVITIES INCORPORATE PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG WOMEN THROUGH THE PRESENCE OF TRAINED PFA FACILITATORS OR PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS DURING PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

MAPPING OF REFERRAL PATHWAYS IN EVERY COUNTRY, AT LOCAL LEVELS

PROVIDING SAFE SPACES OR REFERRALS TO SAFE SPACE PROVIDERS FOR YOUNG WOMEN

IMPLEMENTING MEASURES THAT ENSURE SAFEGUARDING AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND HARASSMENT

# Referral Pathways

## Survivor-centred Approaches

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The YW4A initiative uses a location-specific approach to developing and operationalising referral pathways to assist survivors of violence, ensuring a survivor-centred approach.

The programme provides a step-by-step guide, connecting survivors to essential services such as medical, emotional, legal, and social support. By mapping out available services and disseminating information within the community, YW4A ensures accessibility and awareness of services.

This includes supporting women's rights and faith-based organisations to maintain a comprehensive referral database, establishing partnerships with specialised organisations, and developing clear referral protocols. The pathways emphasise informed consent, effective coordination, regular follow-up, and feedback mechanisms. Through this collaborative effort, YW4A ensures survivors receive prompt, appropriate, and compassionate care, minimizing re-victimisation risks and providing comprehensive support.



# Impact

## Young Women Leading Advocacy Processes

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### EGYPT

- **Legal Empowerment:**
  - Young women trained in legal knowledge, leading advocacy on political awareness and legal reforms.
- **Policy Advocacy:**
  - Policy briefs disseminated for deeper legal engagement.
  - Campaigns and discussions on domestic violence and law reforms.
- **Safeguarding Policies:**
  - Updated SEAH policies and discussed partnerships with FBOs.



### PALESTINE

- **Capacity Building:**
  - Young women trained in leadership, media advocacy, and UN mandates.
- **International Engagement:**
  - Participation in international forums like ICCPR and CEDAW.
  - Collaboration with Hurra Coalition for regional advocacy.
- **Digital Advocacy:**
  - Leveraged online platforms for amplifying advocacy efforts.





## KENYA

- **Advocacy:**
  - Collaborated with county governments for gender policy development.
  - Active involvement in policy forums and gender bill advocacy.
- **Media Engagement:**
  - Used media and social platforms for gender issues and human rights advocacy.



## SOUTH SUDAN

- **Policy and Legal Reform:**
  - Achieved ratification of the Maputo Protocol and advocacy for education bills.
- **Legislative Insights:**
  - Monitored bill progress and engaged with key institutions.
- **Individual Initiatives:**
  - Participated in political consultations, radio talk shows, and ensured programme sustainability.







# Young Women's Self-Initiated Activities

## Economic Empowerment in Kenya

- Feminist Empowerment spaces (FEMspaces) Initiatives:
  - Nguruna, Migori County: Wanashujaa FEMspace started a handmade floor mats business using funds, later leasing land for sweet potato farming.
  - Umoja FEMspace, Kisii County: Young mothers supported by CECOME gather to address community challenges, contribute to a savings scheme, and venture into soap-making and blended juice businesses.
  - Young women use business profits to cover household expenses, reducing dependence on spouses.

## Advocacy and Community Engagement in Migori County

- Young women and WROs campaign for operationalising safe shelters due to early marriage and FGM.
- Training workshops equip young women to engage effectively with local authorities and community leaders.

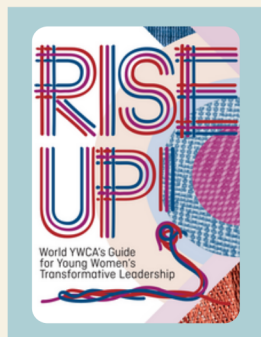
## Growth and Leadership

- Growth in confidence and leadership among young women.
- Activities range from clean-up exercises and advocacy against child marriage to leadership roles in village Savings and Loaning Associations.

## Post-Women Deliver Conference 2023 Initiatives in Egypt & Palestine

- Interactive Sessions on gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, advocacy, intersectionality, and gender justice with peers.
- Palestinian Initiatives:
  - Artistic advocacy, used to promote gender equality and women's rights.
  - Highlighting success stories and facilitating discussions via social media.
  - Experienced advocates mentoring other young women.
- Egyptian Initiatives:
  - High School Sessions: Focused on leadership, self-autonomy, and women's political participation.
  - Addressing Female Genital Mutilation and filmmaking workshops to empower other young women and women.

# World YWCA Tools in YW4A



## The RiseUp! Leadership Model

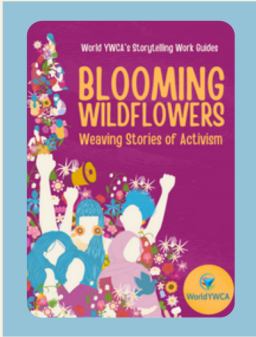
This leadership peer education model empowers young women to challenge and reshape power dynamics for gender equality. It legitimises diverse leadership styles, promoting collaboration and breaking traditional boundaries. By providing essential skills, knowledge, networks, and confidence, it supports young women in their leadership journeys.

Within YW4A, the Rise Up! model is central to leadership development across various levels—from individual to community and decision-making spaces. Using a 'Train the Trainer' approach, young women gain leadership skills to advocate for their rights and mentor others. It builds community support for young women's leadership agendas, addressing issues such as SGBV, (political) leadership and harmful practices. It encourages leadership in both public and private spheres, formal roles, and informal activism, employing collaborative, consultative, and transformative approaches to drive meaningful change.



## The Feminist Consultation Methodology

Developed by young women, the Methodology revolutionizes research by involving young women at every stage. It captures evidence and facilitates ongoing analysis of their priorities, leadership barriers, and preferred interventions within YW4A. Led by young women, this approach ensures their active engagement in identifying topics, posing questions, analysing responses, and drawing conclusions.



## The Storytelling Manual

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## The Safe Spaces Guide

Safe spaces are essential platforms for young women to discuss SGBV and leadership issues, guided by principles like accessibility, safety, and trust-building. Central to YW4A's work, they support leadership development both on the ground and digitally. Through training, young women and WROs enhance their engagement and leadership skills to address GBV challenges and influence policy and norms.

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**These tools and resources are available on the  
World YWCA website.**

<https://www.worldywca.org/about-us/resources/>

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ngWomen**Transform**

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[www.yw4a.org](http://www.yw4a.org)

