

Coalition of Feminists for Social Change

Our Work
~ 2023-2024 ~



Who we are

The Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (COFEM) is an advocacy collective of thought leaders, activists, practitioners and academics working globally to end violence against women and girls (VAWG) in humanitarian and development settings.

Through our network, launched in 2017, COFEM is building a community and fostering collective action that promotes intersectional feminist analyses and women-centered approaches in all efforts to prevent and respond to VAWG in development and humanitarian settings globally.

COFEM Objectives

Build solidarity and a safe space for discussion, problem solving and advocacy to advance feminist strategies for ending VAWG

Undertake collective advocacy to promote feminist-informed and women-centered efforts to end VAWG

COFEM's Advocacy & Action Agenda

COFEM has several core concerns that drive our advocacy. We are committed to ensuring:



Women and girl-led movements and activism are at the forefront of efforts to end VAWG and this is reflected in GBV initiatives, programmes and research.



Feminist experts working to address VAWG are engaged in national, regional and global decision-making processes around GBV funding, policy, programming and research.



Men and boys are engaged in work to end VAWG in ways that are accountable to women and girls and support structural change to achieve gender equality.



The language of 'gender' as well as 'gender-based violence' focuses on the political project of ending structural gender inequalities that perpetuate VAWG.



Practitioners; researchers, donors and policy-makers recognize the distinct drivers and impacts of VAWG and insist on specialized programming, services and responses to address this violence and support gender equality.

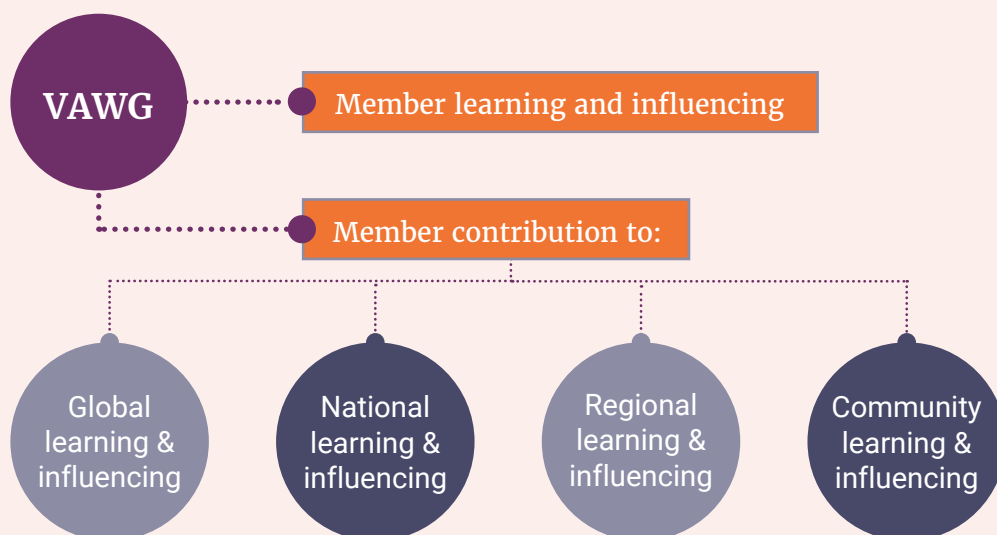


Partnerships are formed with those working to end other forms of violence to cultivate collective action rather than victimhood competition.

What makes COFEM unique?

COFEM is a feminist movement committed to reasserting feminist-informed efforts to end VAWG.

There is tremendous value in creating space for the development of thought leadership on VAWG. Over the course of the next few years, we will be zoning in on what sets us apart – creating a safe space for reflection about VAWG practice in national and regional networks and collaborations, and using this to inform regional and global advocacy.



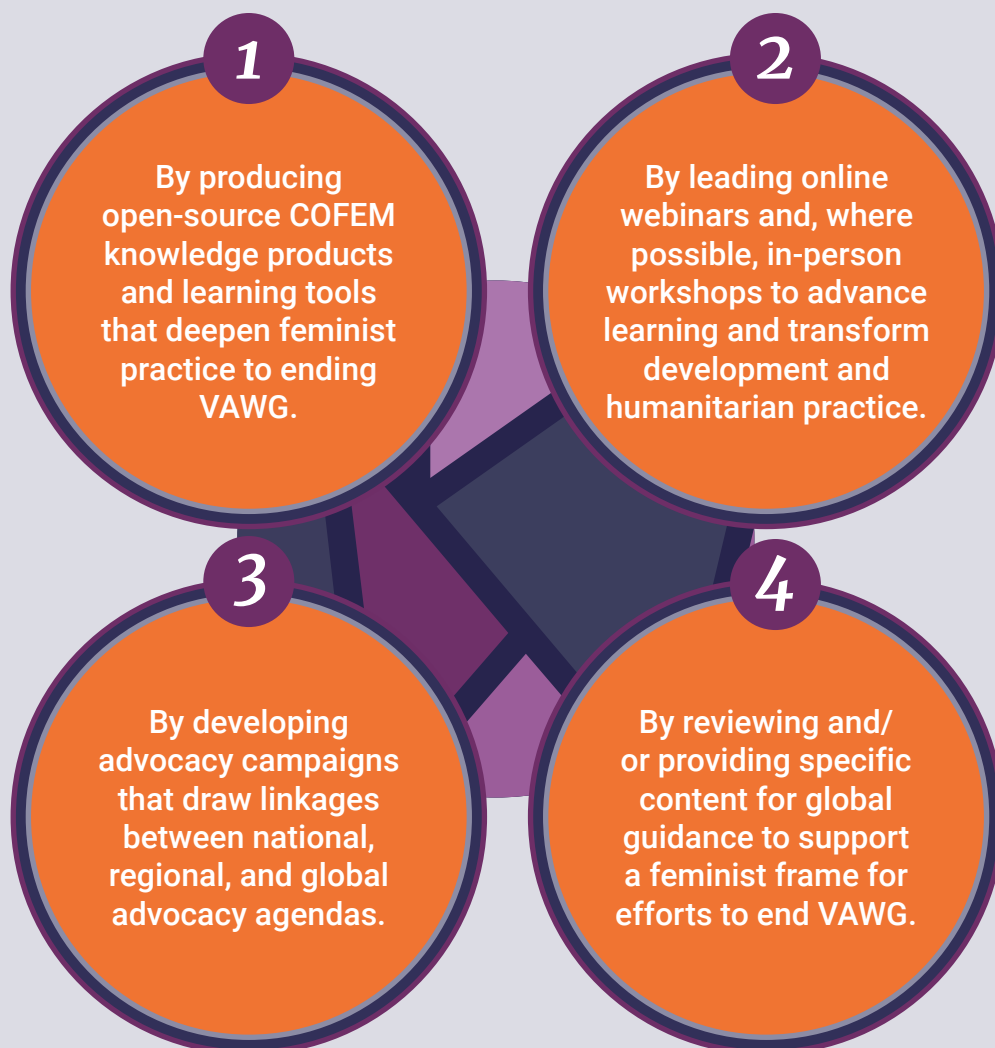
Through a process of iterative influence, we want to join the dots between how a woman's individual story of violence is linked to stories at community, national, regional and global levels. VAWG interventions at each of these levels must be situated and specific. At the same time, there is a need for the flow of information and sharing between the different levels to develop thought leadership in the ecosystem.

How do we work?

After COFEM was formed, much effort went into growing membership, developing internal systems, and developing and implementing a strategy to provide support to members to influence thinking about VAWG. We used this to inform our advocacy. Since then, we have come a long way. In the journey ahead, we will strengthen and continue to build our movement, with a key focus on:



How will we do this?



Thematic areas of focus over the next few years



Building movements of feminist practitioners to end VAWG

Existing research shows that feminist movements have made a significant contribution to social, programmatic and policy change on VAWG. We will use COFEM's membership - which consists of a diverse range of VAWG practitioners, donors, researchers, and more - as a platform to enhance sharing and uptake of prevention and response to VAWG.



Building and advocating for a feminist research tool

There is little guidance on the integration of feminist principles in research planning and implementation practice. Together with the *We All Count Project for Equity in Data Science*, we developed a tool that aligns feminist values and principles in all stages of the research processes. We will pilot the tool, refine it, and advocate for its uptake. Knowledge is inextricably linked to power and we want to ensure that the ways in which we produce knowledge promotes equity.



Wellness among VAWG practitioners and researchers

Many of us working on VAWG have experienced both direct and vicarious trauma. Keeping those working on VAWG well is part of our political agenda. Within a feminist political frame, we will contribute to addressing the structural drivers that exacerbate trauma and, in so doing, enhance programming on VAWG.



Ensuring accountability to women, girls, and feminist movements from the male engagement movement

Ending VAWG requires working with men and boys as allies, partners, and activists to address gender inequality and patriarchal structures. We want to make sure this is done in ways that centre women and girls and deepens horizontal accountability across movements



Feminist research on VAWG in humanitarian and development settings

Taking a feminist approach to conducting research on ending VAWG in humanitarian and development settings is associated with risks and challenges for researchers. COFEM partnered with the SVRI on a study on Feminist Research on VAWG in humanitarian and development settings. We plan to disseminate this work, centering the voices and needs of those leading this research, and subsequently engage in advocacy to address some of the challenges and risks outlined.



Application of feminist principles in humanitarian response

Furthermore, COFEM is supporting the GBV AOR HelpDesk with the commissioning of a study that seeks to explore the application of feminist principles in humanitarian response. COFEM will support the development of the study, leverage members' expertise to deepen the study's insight and support the launch of the study to deepen feminist practice in humanitarian contexts.

Get in touch

To learn more about COFEM, inquire about membership or support our work, please visit us online or contact us via the email address provided below



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