



# Membership Brochure

**A QUICK GUIDE ON WHO WE ARE,  
WHAT WE DO, AND HOW YOU BELONG**

# Welcome to COFEM

The Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (COFEM) is a global feminist advocacy collective working to end violence against women and girls (VAWG), also referred to as gender-based violence (GBV).

We bring together feminist activists, practitioners, researchers, and advocates from diverse regions and movements who are working in humanitarian and development settings.

COFEM exists as a political and relational space – a place to think together, care for one another, and act collectively.

***“You are not joining an institution. You are joining a feminist community: small, growing, and deeply committed to solidarity and collective care.”***


We are glad you are  
here.



## Why COFEM Exists

COFEM was created in 2016 in response to shared concerns and limitations many feminists experienced in institutional, siloed, and depoliticized spaces.

Members wanted a space to:

- Question dominant approaches
  - Challenge power and harmful norms
  - Centre women’s and girls’ lived realities
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## COFEM exists to:



### Foster a safe, feminist space

for connection, reflection, solidarity, and collective care in challenging and often difficult work.



### Mobilize collective feminist action

to advance strategies that ensure women and girls remain at the centre of all efforts to end VAWG.

**Collective care, trust, and accountability are foundational to how we work.**

# What Makes COFEM Feminist

COFEM is grounded in feminist principles that shape how we organise, how we relate, and how we act.

At our core, we are committed to:



Centering the Voices of Women & Girls



Sisterhood



Feminist Activism



Non-Hierarchical Leadership



Accountability to Women & Girls



Collective Action & Learning



Listening & Inclusion

These principles guide both what we do and how we do it.

Our full Feminist Guiding Principles and Guidelines can be found in Annex 1.

# Who is COFEM for

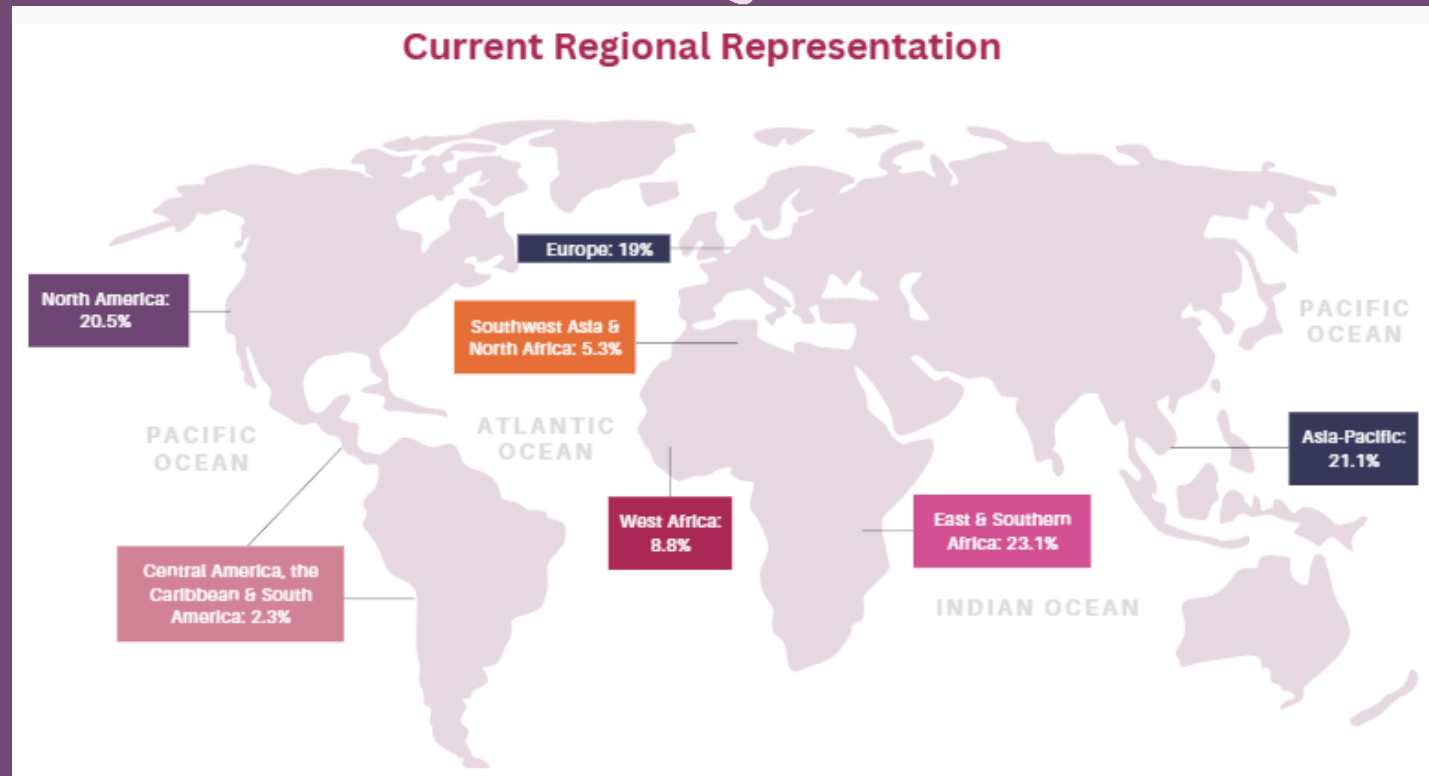
COFEM membership is **individual-based**.

As of 2025, COFEM has 350+ members globally, with representation across regions and movements. This distribution reflects both COFEM's reach and ongoing opportunities to strengthen regional balance and inclusion.

COFEM members are:

- Individuals working on VAWG in any capacity
- Feminists who identify as women, in all our diversities

This focus supports accountability to women's and girls' lived realities and feminist movements.



Individuals, organizations, groups, or networks who support COFEM's mission but do not meet the membership criteria – or who prefer lighter engagement – may join Friends of COFEM and receive a quarterly newsletter.

COFEM is committed to mutual respect, confidentiality, and collective care. Members are expected to keep others' membership confidential unless explicit consent is given.

Members may leave COFEM at any time by emailing [cofem.hq@gmail.com](mailto:cofem.hq@gmail.com). The Coordinator may follow up to learn from your experience, should you wish to share.

# How Membership Works

Becoming a COFEM member is simple and values-based:

1. You complete a short [membership questionnaire](#)
2. The Coordinator reviews for alignment with COFEM's feminist principles and advocacy objectives
3. You receive a welcome email and onboarding materials
4. You choose how, and how much, to engage

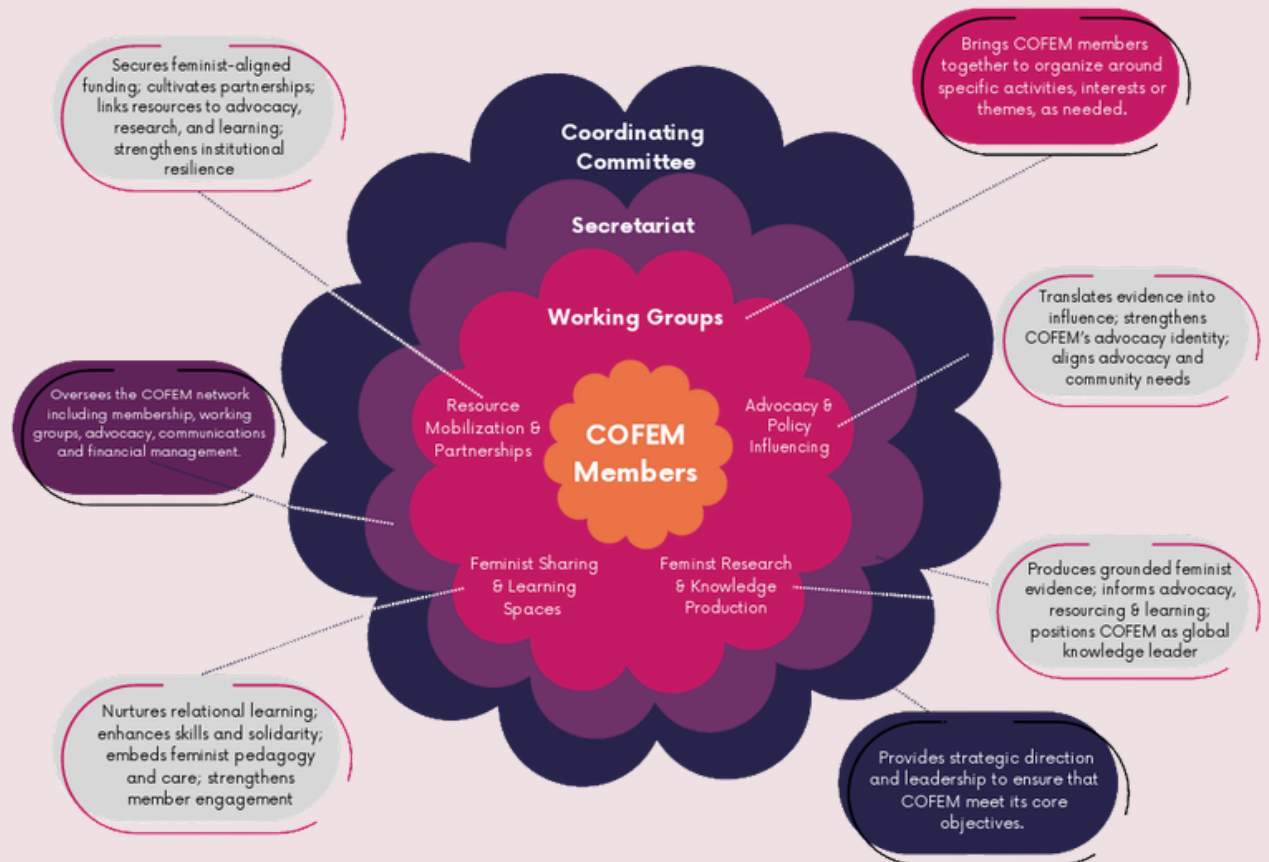
Membership is voluntary, flexible, and shaped by your capacity and interests. Members are also welcome to recommend others to apply through the [membership questionnaire](#) on our website.

# How COFEM is Organized

COFEM is a member-led network supported by light, feminist coordination structures. Our activities aim to link women's movements and conversations primarily across the Global Majority, identify emerging issues, and build our global movement.

At a glance:

- Members are the heart of COFEM
- Working Groups are where learning, advocacy, research, and collaboration happen
- The Secretariat supports coordination, care, and sustainability.
- The Coordinating Committee (CC) provides collective strategic guidance and accountability.



Leadership in COFEM is shared, non-hierarchical, and collective. As of 2026, the Coordinating Committee consists of six members who receive an annual stipend and act as an advisory body to the COFEM Secretariat:



The Secretariat is a small team of eight members that currently includes:



*Coordinator*

*Strategic  
Advisor*

*Communications  
& Advocacy  
Lead*

*Collective Care  
& Wellness  
Lead*

*Thematic lead*

*Thematic lead*

*Thematic lead*

# Strategic Focus Areas

COFEM's work is guided by a feminist strategy co-created by members. Our strategic focus areas reflect where our collective energy, politics, and care are most needed, and where we believe feminist intervention can shift the EVAWG field.

Across all areas, we move from fragmented efforts toward collective power, shared learning, and visible influence.



## Feminist Research & Knowledge Production

We strengthen and connect feminist research on backlash, TFGBV, localization, prevention, and alternative justice.

- Co-create research and storytelling
- Join peer learning and review circles
- Translate evidence into feminist advocacy tools



## Advocacy & Policy Influencing

We coordinate collective feminist advocacy grounded in evidence and lived realities.

- Shape campaigns and messaging
- Represent COFEM in advocacy spaces
- Use COFEM materials in their own organizing



## Feminist Learning & Sharing Spaces

We prioritize fewer, deeper learning spaces that nourish feminist practice and collective wellbeing.

- Co-create and facilitate learning spaces
- Join learning circles and care spaces
- Share skills, questions, and feminist practices



## Resource Mobilization

We build financial and organizational sustainability in ways that are ethical, transparent, and feminist.

- Share opportunities and partnerships
- Contribute to feminist offerings and proposals
- Help safeguard COFEM's values as we grow

# Ways to be a COFEM Member

There is no single way to be a COFEM member. All forms of participation are valued, and we also ask members to engage actively in ways that feel possible for them.

You might:

- Join Working Groups to listen, reflect, or share
- Contribute analysis or resources
- Co-facilitate learning circles or skill-sharing sessions
- Collaborate on advocacy, research, or writing (blog post, reflection article, learning brief, statement, toolkit, etc.)
- Connect informally with other feminists across regions or themes

Members are encouraged to use COFEM materials and act as feminist advocates in their own spaces, without needing to “seek permission”. The Secretariat is always available to support where possible.

# Collective Care, Safety & Accountability

COFEM is committed to creating spaces that are safe, respectful, and accountable.

All members are expected to uphold COFEM's:

- Feminist Guiding Principles (Annex 1)
- Safety and Confidentiality Guidelines (Annex 2)
- Communications Guidelines (Annex 3)

If concerns arise, COFEM follows a clear and care-centred resolution process outlined in the COFEM Charter (Annex 4).

You can reach the Secretariat at [cofem.hq@gmail.com](mailto:cofem.hq@gmail.com) or share feedback anonymously.



# Staying Connected

COFEM members connect through:

- Members' WhatsApp Group
- Monthly bulletins
- Member hub meetings and learning circles
- LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook (private group).



Members choose how and where they engage. We grow through the care, courage, and commitment of our members.

## Amendments

This is a living document and will be regularly updated by the COFEM Secretariat to reflect current opportunities for involvement and any modification to principles and guidelines as agreed upon by COFEM members.

Any member is welcome to input into the ongoing evolution of this document by sending feedback to the COFEM Secretariat at [cofem.hq@gmail.com](mailto:cofem.hq@gmail.com) or by reaching out to the Coordinator or another Secretariat member directly.

# Welcome to COFEM!



# Annex 1: COFEM's Guiding Feminist Principles

COFEM is meant to be a safe and supportive community. Our desire is to create and work within spaces that are supportive, inclusive and respectful, and that uphold a commitment to collaboration and mutual accountability. The following values and principles serve as the foundation for COFEM membership and functionality, and inform all COFEM activities and processes. By joining this group, all COFEM members commit themselves to safeguarding these values and principles.

## **A. Centered on the Voices of Women and Girls**

Through its network, COFEM aims to build a community and foster collective action in which feminist-informed theory and practice on oppression, discrimination and violence are the core of efforts to address VAWG. COFEM strongly believes such efforts must prioritize women and girl-centered and women and girl-led initiatives, and be grounded in intersectional feminist analyses and approaches to transformation. This applies both in the work COFEM supports through its membership, as well as in the functioning of COFEM itself as a network.

## **B. Sisterhood**

Whereas patriarchal power structures position women in competition with one another, feminist networks work to transform the power dynamics between women so that they may pursue equitable relationships that enhance collective potential within teams. Supporting collaboration, network-building, and supporting and lifting one another up is critical to ensuring that women can work together to dismantle traditional systems of oppression that may seek to pit them against each other. COFEM strives to create specific opportunities for young leaders, especially those who are frequently underrepresented.

## **C. Accountability to Women and Girls**

COFEM is committed to ensuring accountability to women and girls is reflected in all COFEM initiatives, learning, research, decision-making, and internal governance. COFEM seeks to promote accountability by:

- Promoting and supporting women's leadership and decision-making within COFEM and in all partnerships;
- Learning from and acting on the voices and experiences of the diverse membership;
- Recognizing intersecting oppressions among members, and actively challenging systems of privilege across all levels;
- Stressing the importance of building strong women's movements and prioritizing women's and girls' voices in all COFEM advocacy.

## **D. Feminist Activism**

Feminist activism is central to the realization of women's human rights and justice worldwide, and inspires the work of COFEM members in ending VAWG and promoting gender equality. COFEM is committed to supporting members in their feminist activism, both internal and external to the network, in line with COFEM's principles and priorities that reinforce a feminist approach in all work to end VAWG. Recognizing that some members may work for organizations that may not support overt feminist activism, all COFEM members agree to keep others' membership in COFEM confidential, unless otherwise indicated.

## **E. Non-Hierarchical Leadership**

In exploring new ways of working, feminist networks have highlighted the importance of collectivity as both a principle and a practice for advancing social justice outcomes. Feminist governance is not only about securing women in leadership roles; it is about capacitating women to lead differently and to prioritise feminist values and ideologies to work toward social justice for all. COFEM's governance structures reflect this idea by actively encouraging members to have the opportunity to lead – whether within the Secretariat, Working Groups, or the Coordinating Committee. Collective and transparent decision-making is fundamental to COFEM's functioning, as well as ensuring that decision-making processes are as consultative, respectful, and encouraging of diverse views as possible.

## **F. Collective Learning and Action**

Feminist principles prioritize an environment of collaborative learning that puts women at the center of collective action, enabling them to build their personal and social power, and practice political solidarity. In moving away from traditional competitive structures that focus on vertical leadership, COFEM is investing in collective action and the horizontal structures, processes, and practices that disable patriarchal norms and foster collective accountability, by supporting skills development and learning among the Secretariat, Working Groups, Coordinating Committee, and members alike.

## **G. Listening and Inclusion**

Supporting diversity is foundational to feminist governance and helps to legitimize the lived experiences of women, particularly those who are the most marginalised and/or for whom multiple layers of oppression intersect. COFEM acknowledges the intersectionality of different forms of oppression females experience (i.e., based on race, color, sexual orientation, ethnicity, political beliefs, religion, disability, health status, etc.).

COFEM is inclusive of all self-identifying women and is committed to promoting a membership culture of mutual respect and appreciation of diversity of thought, without discrimination in regard to race, color, sexual orientation, ethnicity, political beliefs, religion, disability, or health status. COFEM seeks to build listening and inclusion into all COFEM spaces and encourages members to recognise and value diversity within the network. COFEM is committed to supporting members who otherwise might have less voice to speak out, and to encourage those with power and privilege to reflect on their role in building inclusivity within COFEM and as part of the larger VAWG community (see Annex 4 for examples of COFEM commitments in support of listening and inclusion). COFEM is also committed to integrating attention to intersectionality as part of the learning it promotes.

## *Annex 2: Safety & Confidentiality Guidelines*

In the spirit of building a feminist sisterhood, members are encouraged to reach out to other COFEM members via the COFEM webpage, Facebook page, LinkedIn, and Instagram handle to seek support and share information on VAWG-related issues, events, and other opportunities for feminist advocacy. In order to maintain membership safety and confidentiality, some key principles apply:

- First and foremost, it is up to each member to decide how public or private they wish to be about their membership.
- Respect member confidentiality. Keep others' membership in COFEM confidential in order to protect those whose jobs may not support overt feminist activism. Only ever reference other COFEM members' participation in COFEM if they are already public about their participation, or if you have directly sought their permission. This includes including them in non-COFEM-related correspondence.
- Be thoughtful when reaching out to any member with any contact information they provide. Information found on individual member profiles is for the purpose of connecting members across the world to facilitate networking among those with common interests and areas of focus. They may use this information (including name, location, email address, and social media information) to invite members to relevant events, or reach out for collaboration or information, provided they have contacted them individually first.
- The use of member information provided on each member's profile under the member list (including name, location, email address, and social media information) for any commercial or political purpose is prohibited. This includes cold calling, solicitation for business purposes, broadcast emails, and fundraising activities.

# Annex 3: COFEM's Communication Guidelines

COFEM is a closed group that originated with a group of women from diverse backgrounds. COFEM aims to include equal representation of and voice to all members. COFEM does not tolerate any form of offensive, discriminatory, or derogatory language or action. Please find detailed guidance within [COFEM's Communication Guidelines](#), developed by COFEM's previously operational Internal Communications and Diversity Working Group.

COFEM also seeks to provide a safe space for members to express their views on feminist thought and practice, which includes a diversity of views and positions. COFEM is not aligned to a particular school of feminist theory, and the views of all members should be respected, unless they vilify or attack other members or undermine COFEM's Feminist Guiding Principles.

Members of the Internal Communications and Diversity Working Group and the Secretariat will do their best to monitor COFEM membership spaces consistently, including social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram or WhatsApp. Formal Communications Guidelines agreed upon by members of this Working Group are forthcoming. However, as a member-led network, each member of COFEM is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe space.

# Annex 4: COFEM's Conflict Resolution

Disagreements or problems between COFEM members may arise if the aforementioned COFEM Principles and Communications Guidelines are not followed. All members must adhere to these principles and guidelines. To protect other COFEM members when there has been a breach of these principles, all members involved in the issue may be suspended from COFEM platforms, if relevant, until the resolution process has been completed.

If a member does not adhere to these principles, the following resolution process will be enacted:

- A member experiencing a problem should first contact the Coordinator (via [cofem.hq@gmail.com](mailto:cofem.hq@gmail.com)) or a Coordinating Committee member as per grievance processes outlined earlier in the document. Members may also anonymously submit a concern to the [COFEM Virtual Comment Box](#). This form is checked by the Coordinator, who may, if relevant, inform the Coordinating Committee, who support the Secretariat in monitoring challenges arising among members in COFEM spaces (ex: Facebook Group, WhatsApp, virtual meetings, etc.).
- The Coordinating Committee will be advised of the grievance, and two people will be nominated by the Coordinating Committee to speak with the member(s) involved to understand the problem and work to resolve it in a timely manner. Those involved in this process may be the Coordinators, Strategic Advisor, Coordinating Committee member, or another member as designated, as appropriate to the issue.
- All relevant COFEM guidelines and publications should be referred to in the resolution process.
- Those involved in addressing the complaint will report back to the rest of the Coordinating Committee on the problem/issue raised and how the matter is to be resolved.
- COFEM will ask members to leave if this is necessary to maintain the safety and basic premise of this network, which is to allow for open sharing and generative and constructive dialogue by and between members. No member shall be removed without an opportunity to be heard and provide an explanation if they so choose, and notice of a Coordinating Committee meeting to discuss the action shall be given to the member at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. A decision of removal is made by a majority vote of the Coordinating Committee.