



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

DOCUMENTS FOR EWL BOARD CAPACITY BUILDING MEETING 14- 15 October 2023 – Brussels, BE

4.3. Young Women Engagement Plan

To: EWL Board of Administration
For: Discussion
Agenda item: 4.3.



DRAFT EWL YOUNG WOMEN ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2026

INTRODUCTION

The EWL aims at bringing in younger and more diverse voices into its work, creating stronger links with young feminists within our membership, fostering an intergenerational dialogue allowing for mutual learning. This priority was confirmed in our 2022-2026 Strategic Framework. In contrary to other EWL operationalization and implementation Plans, this Young Women Engagement Plan is not an update, but will be newly developed. In addition, because AGORA could not take place in its original form between 2019 until 2023, the Plan needs to be updated along the way through learning and exchange of experience and good practice.

The reviewing and updating of the implementation of the Framework is a core priority area of the EWL **Work Programme 2023**.

“Developing a Young women’s engagement plan that will set out how EWL will ensure young feminist women have increased within the EWL movement; and a plan to organise Young women’s summer school in 2023 firmly rooted in EWL’s values and positions.

In 2019 and 2020, the EWL Secretariat carried out various consultations with EWL members and staff in relation to its current and new Strategic Framework and annual work programmes. The findings of these efforts feed into the development of this strategy.

EWL VISION, MISSION and VALUES

MISSION: We represent an inclusive, fearless, loud, independent feminist voice and bring the voices of women and girls into the European political arena. We act as a catalyst connecting different actors to bring transformational change at both national and European level. Representing the diversity of the women’s movement across Europe, we build consensus and mobilise our members’ collective experience and expertise to work on major issues affecting women and girls. We strive to realise women’s rights, equality between women and men and social justice, leaving no woman and girl behind.”

Values



Principles



Please note that the Young Women Engagement Plan also aims at recognizing the economic contribution of women to society.

This document is updating the EWL collective reflection on more effective ways to engage young women within the EWL to reach the political goals set out by the membership in our “Strategic Framework - Women Changing Europe: Building a Feminist Vision for the Future of Europe (2022-2026)”.

Building the strength and resilience of EWL members. The strength of EWL comes from their members working together across Europe to bring the voices and experience of women and girls to decision makers in order to achieve transformative political change. We will continue to strengthen the resilience and the capacity of EWL Members to drive political change through effective advocacy, campaigning, communications and resource mobilisation.

...and the **strategic objective**

“Lobbying : Lobby the EU institutions, monitor the implementation of legislation, policies and programmes, and support our members’ lobbying activities at national level, to ensure that human rights and equality of women and girls is achieved in all aspects of life.”

“Collective: Engage and work collectively, we strive to be participative, inclusive and transparent in the ways we work. We remain open to new ideas, creative solutions and alternative approaches to continue strengthening our collective work.

The Young Women Engagement Plan aims at highlighting the necessity to expand its Lobby activities, supporting the specific needs of young women on EU-wide level.

Consequently, the Young Women Engagement plan will thus go beyond actions set out by the strategic framework to young women to reflect better the changing realities in Europe for young women inflicted by the Ukrainian war, climate and energy crisis.

“ To end all forms of gender stereotyping and male violence against women and girls, ensuring access to their sexual and reproductive health and rights and a life free from sexual exploitation.”

The **external and internal actions** defined by members are:

External Action 1.3. "To promote feminist transformation of economy based on equality, well-being, social justice and as a universal collective need and responsibility of both women and men." Through "Analyse and prevent the feminisation of poverty and 'precarity' (particularly for older, younger women, migrant women and girls, minority women, Roma women and girls with disabilities, women working in care sectors)"

External Action 3.2 "Advocate for a comprehensive legislative framework at EU level to address the continuum and all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual exploitation and online violence."

Internal Action 2.4 "Create positive actions and enable mechanisms for young women's meaningful and full participation, ensuring their leadership is embraced and mainstreamed throughout all EWL's work & structures."

To a lesser extent the here presented plan will also touch upon related objectives outlined in the strategic framework that are dealt with in other strategies and plans more in-depth.

THE PROCESS:

Based on the strategic objective and actions as outlined by the membership in the Strategic Framework, and along with the results of multiple webinars and surveys that have been implemented in this context, the EWL shares here this outline and draft for the Young Women Engagement Plan.

This document is developed along the following process:

- **Executive Committee Coordination:** The framework of the Strategy is shared in January 2023 with the Executive Committee
- **Draft Development:** Collaboration between the former EWL ExCo member, Christiane Ugbor, and the Membership and Governance Coordinator, Magdalena Kurz, in the further drafting process.
- **Board Breakout session:** The Breakout session during the EWL Board meeting allows for presentation and discussion of this plan (see below).
- **Agora Experience and Research:** The draft is further developed after the "Agora Experience" and analyses of the "EWL Young Women Engagement Herstory". Following the adoption of the Young Women Engagement Plan, the EWL will plan discussions at the 2023-AGORA meetings. The set out detailed implementation process will be completed after the 2023-AGORA experience.
- **Board discussion:** The draft is discussed at the Capacity Building Meeting in October 2023. The Board expresses its recommendation and/or approval of the draft.
- **Final editing:** The ExCo and staff will proceed with the final editing round, integrating the comments from the Board meeting.
- **Vote for all members in written procedure:** All full members approve the plan in 2024

BOARD FEEDBACK

The EWL Board discussed the Draft Plan 2022 – 2026 during the EWL Board meeting on 18 February 2023 in Brussels. The main takeaways from the discussion were already reflected in the draft plan and are summarized in the extract of the minutes below:

“2.6. Young Women Engagement Plan: Chair of Session Executive Committee Member Christiane Ugbor: Members discuss the importance of engaging young women for diversity purposes and for sustainability of the organisation. Members discuss the importance of getting information on the actual challenges that young women face nowadays and to analyse what their challenges are for them to engage and participate in our organisations. In order to ensure we are inclusive to young women, we should provide adequate support to allow their participation for example, taking into account that care responsibilities are preventing women from participating in leadership and developing leadership roles. Mentoring/leadership programmes are one way of engaging young women, but it is better if the exchange flows in two ways/intergenerational. As tools for engagement: Agora’s participation is also discussed. Some members feel that young women participating at Agora should be aligned with the values and policy positions of the organisation. The option of getting young women to participate as observers to the GA is raised; also the opportunity and need to involve young women in specific campaigns such as the elections (young women voters, etc.).”

THE MILESTONES

In November 2019 EWL hosted a workshop on the EWL Young Women's Engagement Strategy for 29 participants including EWL Board Members, members of national coordination's and Europe-wide organisations, AGORA alumnae, EWL staff, as well as individual participants. The objective of the workshop was to review EWL's engagement with young women thus far and put forward suggestions for the ways in which the EWL can collectively and strategically work with and for young women. **The recommendations from this workshop feed into the below list of possible tools to foster young women engagement.**

DATA COLLECTION

We propose the initiation of a comprehensive data collection initiative focused on young women's participation and involvement within EWL. This aims to gather empirical insights into the extent of their engagement, identifying key areas of contribution, as well as potential challenges faced within the network.

In addition, the data collection initiative aims at encompassing the identification of pertinent topics of concern for young feminists in Europe. This component is crucial in ensuring that the gathered information is not only comprehensive but also reflective of the specific issues and interests that resonate with this demographic group.

The data collected will serve as a crucial foundation for evidence-based decision-making and targeted actions in the future, facilitating the development of initiatives that effectively empower and amplify the voices of young women within the organization. We aim to tailor EWL's approach to better address the unique needs and aspirations of young feminists,

ultimately fostering a more inclusive and impactful platform for their active participation and advocacy within the organization.

Tools: Possible tools are Membership Surveys or public questionnaires and relevant topics. Membership Demographics on members participating in EWL meeting, committees and working structures. This could also be done through focus group discussion or interviews, and feedback and exchange with collaboration partners.

SUPPORT GROUP: YOUNG WOMEN

After the data collection and mapping exercise the concept for the formation of an informal body of young women shall be developed. This “contact pool” of young feminists from the membership (and/or beyond) shall be established to champion and guarantee active involvement in the execution of the EWL Strategy, reflecting the changing realities in Europe for young women. Subsequently, assessment of the EWL need and capacity to establish a durable framework within the EWL, dedicated to fostering enduring and meaningful engagement with young women, ensuring their sustained influence and contributions.

QUOTAS

The 2019 Workshops results suggest that it is recommended to create a space to hold an informed discussion on young women quotas.

Proposing the implementation of quotas within the decision-making structures of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) stands as a proactive measure to foster inclusivity and amplify underrepresented voices. These quotas would not only target young women but also extend to encompass other marginalized groups of women who are presently underrepresented within EWL's organizational framework. This deliberate step towards balanced representation ensures a more diverse and reflective leadership, ultimately enriching the perspectives and experiences that inform EWL's strategic decisions. By establishing these quotas, we are committed to creating an environment where all women, regardless of age or background, have an equal opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of gender equality and women's rights. This initiative is a significant stride towards a more inclusive and representative EWL that resonates with the diverse realities of women across Europe.

Others may argue that instead of quotas, it is more prudent to adopt measures that focus on targeted outreach, mentorship programs, and capacity-building initiatives to empower and prepare women from all backgrounds to actively participate in decision-making structures. This way, the emphasis remains on meritocracy while still striving for greater diversity and inclusivity within the European Women's Lobby. Quotas could potentially overlook individuals who are well equipped to contribute significantly to the advancement of gender equality but may not fall within the specified demographic criteria.

Tools: Consider incorporating the question on the effectiveness of quotas within EWL structures in a membership survey. Additionally, organizing a related webinar or workshop during a statutory meeting would offer an opportunity to delve deeper into this discussion.

EWL AGORA

Revitalize and advance the EWL AGORA Feminist Summer Camp, reinvigorating its impact and offerings after a four-year hiatus. This includes enhancing content, expanding participant engagement, and ensuring the camp's sustained relevance within the evolving feminist landscape.

EWL AGORA aims to create a space for young women to exchange, bridge gaps, inspire and be inspired, strengthen connections, reinforce skills and hear the voices of other young feminists. Our objective is to empower young women feminists in Europe to be activist leaders in a changing world by giving them a space to share experience, knowledge and ideas.

More concretely, EWL aims at....

- Revitalize and strengthen the engagement of young European women in activism.
- Unite diverse young feminists to exchange insights, foster connections, and share experiences.
- Establish an innovative platform for budding feminist change-makers to cultivate their activism.
- Foster unity, embolden emerging feminist leaders, and collaborate internationally to enhance the inclusivity of feminism and magnify the influence of European feminist networks.
- Delve into the dimensions of feminist leadership and influence.
- Enhance the EWL's comprehension of the preferences, requirements, and undertakings of the youth.

Agora shall equip and empower you as young feminists with confidence, skills, experience and a network to become change-makers in your communities.

NATIONAL AGORAS and TRAININGS

Supporting the development of AGORA-inspired trainings and events at various levels, both internationally and nationally. These initiatives serve as dynamic platforms to cultivate a vibrant young constituency, fostering a deeper understanding of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the broader feminist movement, and the international mechanisms that drive gender equality. Through these trainings, participants gain invaluable insights into how to effectively leverage these mechanisms to advocate for gender equality on different scales.

Tools: By enabling contact between Agora participants and (national) Members, these encounters serve as conduits for reporting and fostering potential collaborative efforts. Additionally, the compilation and dissemination of diverse event formats for akin trainings promise to enrich the learning experience, providing a tapestry of approaches to draw inspiration from. Furthermore, the creation of toolkits tailored for young feminist events stands as a testament to the commitment towards nurturing vibrant and impactful gatherings. Through these initiatives, we embark on a journey of shared knowledge and collective empowerment, equipping both current and future advocates with the resources they need to drive meaningful change within the feminist movement.

AGORA ALUMNI NETWORKS & EWL ENGAGEMENT TOOL KIT

EWL is dedicated to nurturing enduring connections among participants of the EWL AGORA, recognizing the value of these networks in bolstering the voices of young feminists. To this end, the organization will continue to encourage the creation of Alumni networks for each edition, providing a platform for participants to fortify the bonds forged during the intensive 5-day program.

However, it is imperative for EWL to assess its capacity and commitment to effectively engage and facilitate the development of these distinct Alumni networks. The focus of the EWL efforts would remain on creating synergies between the Agora participants and EWL members.

Tool: The EWL will develop a process to conceptualize an Alumni Tool kit or Guidebook, or Youth Ambassador System for member's engagement with Agora Alumni's. This shall be done on bases of AGORA evaluations and reports, capacity assessments, membership involvement surveys, and feasibility analyses. Additionally, seeking insights from other summer schools' alumni network development strategies is advised.

YOUNG WOMEN MENTORING

Mentoring proved to be a tool for fostering empowerment of young women. Various mentoring formats and concepts exist, ranging from traditional one-on-one in-person mentoring to cyber-mentoring, group mentoring, and peer-to-peer arrangements. Each format presents distinct advantages and unique challenges. Several EWL members can share great success stories, reporting about well-functioning mentoring programmes, buddy-systems and similar structures.

EWL will initiate a reflective process towards establishing a comprehensive mentoring framework, with the aim of fostering intergenerational dialogue and creating a platform for mutual learning and exchange. The ideal format needs to be defined in a common effort. A possible approach is support pledges of Board members to Agora participants from their member organization.

Tool: EWL shall collect the expertise on Mentoring Projects within its own structures and reach out to stakeholders that have implemented successful mentoring programs. The finding may feed in to the development of a Mentoring tool kit or guidebook, mapping different concepts and formats of mentoring. Additionally, based on a common reflection process, EWL could develop a Mentoring Project.

CONSULTATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

EWL will reach out to and exchange with other European Platforms (e.g. Youth Forum, Young feminists Europe, Leadership Academy) that are working on youth involvement or have experience with mentoring projects, summer school, Alumni Networks or youth ambassador concepts.

CONSULTATION OF INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Engaging with pertinent internal stakeholders, including WAGGGS and YWCA, is an essential step in the process. Another approach is to identify the youth networks within EWLs national platforms and inviting them to participate in the debate. These channels will play a pivotal role in shaping actions, processes, and initiatives to ensure they align with the needs and perspectives of the younger generation.

CONCLUSION

Following the adoption of the Young Women Engagement Plan, we will work on developing the tools and resources necessary for successful implementation of the Strategy which will need to be finalised, approved and made available in 2024. Moreover, the EWL will implement yearly monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the implementation process, as well as adjusting of implementation timelines and methods if the need arises. In January 2027, a final report, analyzing the success of the strategy, outlining the lessons learned and providing guidance for the drafting of the next cycle will be launched.