

The World Academy for the Future of Women (WAFW) Evaluation Project

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1. BACKGROUND & KNOWLEDGE GAP

The World Academy for the Future of Women (WAFW), founded by Jerrie Ueberle, is an organisation which aims to develop young women for global leadership roles that will fulfill the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Academy currently operates at university campuses in China, Nepal, and Bangladesh, with hopes to expand to Kenya, Brazil, and more. This distinct aim of empowering women whose backgrounds would not previously have allowed for empowerment formed the crux of the investigation, with the central focus of changing mindsets, building character, and strengthening leadership capacity.

Research Question: How can the growth of young global women as leaders and individuals be facilitated through the World Academy for the Future of Women?

Aims:

- Understand and become familiarised with the Founder's vision for the WAFW
- Evaluate current practices of the WAFW
- Analyse existing research and discourse with selected thematic focuses and an emphasis on women of colour
- Develop new content for WAFW in line with research findings and WAFW vision

2. METHODS

Achieving the research aims involved two main areas of focus: WAFW-specific and general/thematic methodologies.

WAFW-specific:

- Semi-structured interviews with Jerrie Ueberle, the CEO of WAFW
- Focus groups with WAFW alumni
- Review and analysis of WAFW strategies, resources, and content

General/Thematic:

- Literature reviews around module themes: Women's Bodies, Confidence, Personal Finance, Mental Health, Personal Relationships, Violence Against Women, and Allyship
- Discourse analysis exploring country-specific representation of women in popular culture, media, and cultural beliefs/practices

3. RESULTS/OUTPUTS

The assessment of the current practices of the World Academy, along with the theoretical and thematic secondary research informed the creation of six modules for the Women's Academy, one companion Men's Academy module on allyship, and the development of a WAFW Growth Journal to support members' attainment and progression. All modules revolve around self-management, relationship management, and navigating issues faced by women, in the context of the SDGs.

Newly Developed Modules:

- Women's Bodies
- Confidence
- Personal Finance
- Mental Health
- Personal Relationships
- Violence Against Women
- Allyship (Men's Academy)

WAFW Growth Journal: Designed to prompt self-reflection and provide space for members to document their journey through the World Academy.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Scholarship around women of colour and young women shows that "...internalised conceptions... are deeply influenced, if not defined, by mass media and popular culture."¹ The discourse and norms concerning women's role in society serves as one of the primary factors limiting women's empowerment and liberation. The World Academy's approach of inquiry-based learning, reflection, and critical thought, along with an emphasis on the articulation of one's ideas, values, and identity are crucial to ensuring young women can be the catalysts of their own empowerment. The contributions of this research serve to bolster the impact of the World Academy, in turn supporting countless women in realising their potential.

5. REFERENCES

1. Zhang, M. (2012) 'A Chinese beauty story: how college women in China negotiate beauty, body image, and mass media', *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 5(4), pp. 437-454. doi: [10.1080/17544750.2012.723387](https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2012.723387).



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