IWDA
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

FEMINIST RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

UPDATED 2022

INTRODUCTION

IWDA commissions and conducts feminist participatory research as part of our contribution to vibrant feminist movements. We aim to transform discourse on feminist issues, and leverage our locational power as an Australian based organisation, in order to advance systemic change towards gender equality for all.

IWDA strives to observe the highest ethical standards in our research. We recognise that research requires careful consideration of the ethical concerns that can arise in different contexts, including with the added layers of feminist and decolonial research practice.

To support staff, consultants and those undertaking ethical, feminist, decolonial research and evaluation we have developed two tools:

• IWDA Feminist Research Framework
• IWDA Feminist Research Manual

The IWDA Feminist Research Framework is an external document which provides a conceptual overview of IWDA's research philosophy and the key ethical and research principles that inform our research approach. In this Framework, we define and unpack key concepts and outline the key stages of the research cycle. It is not intended to provide advice on how to *conduct* research or evaluations.

This Framework builds on the previous Feminist Research Framework (FRF) (2017) and reflects shifts in how we understand the different roles that we can, and should, take when creating, sharing and using new knowledge and the feminist and decolonial approaches that inform our work.

This Framework sits underneath the (forthcoming) *IWDA Decolonising Solidarity Guidance Note* and alongside the IWDA Knowledge Translation Framework, Feminist Movement Strengthening Framework (FMSF), Communications Strategy and the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework. Overlaps and synergies between these that have practical implications for IWDA's research are noted throughout this document.

The IWDA Feminist Research Manual is an internal document which provides operational guidance and step-by-step information for IWDA staff, consultants and collaborators when commissioning, designing and conducting feminist research. It also details IWDA's process for assessing and approving including IWDA's process for assessing and approving ethical research proposals. The manual is complementary to this updated Framework.

IDENTIFYING AND UNPACKING KEY CONCEPTS

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY RESEARCH?

Research is a way to collect and analyse knowledge about the world we live in. The Research for Development Impact Network defines research as *"an original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge, understanding and insight,"* including evaluation of programs and policies.[1]

Research is one form of knowledge creation, under the broader banner of *knowledge translation*.

IWDA's Knowledge Translation Framework defines knowledge creation as: *"the generation of new evidence and ideas through research and evaluation activities. This evidence may be drawn from different knowledge systems, including indigenous and decolonial forms of cultural and intellectual property* [2] *as well as Western academic sources."* [3]

The framework commits IWDA to prioritise decolonial research approaches, including in consideration of the topics we pursue, the partnerships we form, and the approaches we take.

Evaluation activities are included in IWDA's definition of research and will also be guided by the values and suggested practice of IWDA's Feminist Research Framework in line with the priorities of the organisations IWDA partners with, and project/program participants.

BOX 1: WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION?

IWDA conducts knowledge translation activities to advance systemic change towards gender equality for all. We understand knowledge translation to consist of a series of distinct, but inter-related, actions to create knowledge, move evidence and feminist concepts into the hands of people who will use it, and to support its use by policy-makers, funders, and women's rights organisations (WROs).

We consider knowledge to include both academic and non-academic forms of knowing. We are careful about perpetuating hierarchies of knowledge that discount or diminish the *knowing* that comes from lived experience. We recognise that transforming entrenched, gendered power imbalances is challenging, long-term work involving complex change at many levels. A holistic approach to tackling these challenges requires evidence that makes visible the underlying causes of gender inequality, the identification of policy and programmatic solutions, and advocacy for the adoption of these solutions.

IWDA Knowledge Translation Framework, 2021

BOX 2: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENDER-SENSITIVE RESEARCH AND FEMINIST RESEARCH?

Feminist research differs from taking a gender-sensitive approach to research. Feminist research aims to understand, and ultimately transform, the systems of power that perpetuate inequality including patriarchy, colonialism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia, racism, capitalism, and others.

Feminist research is concerned with power, both as a topic of research and how it influences the way in which the research is designed and conducted. In contrast, gender-sensitive research aims for gender balance and tries to capture the similarities and differences in the experiences of people based on their gender.

CORE RESEARCH VALUES

The IWDA Feminist Research Framework is underpinned by two value sets: IWDA's values; feminist, accountable, collaborative and transformative, and the '3S' framework introduced in IWDA's Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023.

This framework builds upon, and applies a feminist lens to, the Research for Development Impact Network's four core ethical research values (respect for human beings, justice, beneficence, research merit and integrity).[11]

ACFID/ RDI NETWORK ETHICAL RESEARCH PRINCIPLES
Respect for human beings, beneficence, research merit & integrity, justice.

+

IWDA VALUES
Feminist, Accountable, Collaborative & Transformative

+

3S FRAMEWORK
Stepping up, Standing with, Stepping back

=

IWDA'S FEMINIST RESEARCH FRAMEWORK
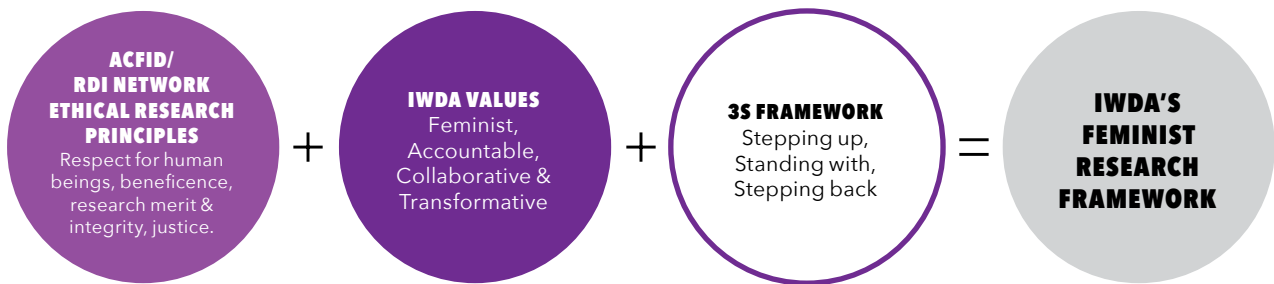
IWDA'S VALUES

Feminist Our research builds feminist and decolonial knowledge of the circumstances of people based on gender

Accountable We are accountable for how our research is conducted

Collaborative Our collaboration is ethical

Transformative Our recommendations transform the root causes of gender inequality

THE 3S FRAMEWORK INTRODUCED IN IWDA'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-23

Stepping up to use our power to leverage resources and access for women's rights organisations, and make our own contribution to feminist movements

Standing with feminist movements in solidarity and amplifying the work of Majority World actors

Stepping back when others are better placed to take the lead.

FEMINIST

Our research builds feminist and decolonial knowledge of the circumstances of people based on gender. Our research draws out individual and collective knowledge to generate new understandings about the systems of power which perpetuate gender inequality, and other forms of marginalisation. Our research aims to add evidence as to how ideas of gender and gender identity are formed, lived and upheld in order to understand the way that gender

norms operate, how they interact with power, and ultimately, how they can be transformed. Our research seeks to generate knowledge and evidence to support the decoloniality of development and feminist work.

We know that the structural distribution of opportunities and resources associated with gender is just one of many different factors that can influence our life experience. Systems of power associated with disability, nationality, race, sexuality and age – amongst other

factors - intersect with gender. Integrating an intersectional analysis into our research projects – from the questions we ask, to the people we talk to and partner with, to the analytical frames we use to understand and interpret the data – is vital. Our research seeks to understand the ways that these experiences differ based on the convergence of intersectional identities, and the way that systems of power which drive marginalisation and privilege interact and sustain each other.

ACCOUNTABLE

We are accountable for how our research is conducted. Accountability to research participants, as well as women's rights and feminist organisations and movements, is first and foremost. We aim for the highest standards of transparency with research participants to best manage risks associated with participating in, or conducting, research in line with a do no harm approach. We are also accountable to the users of our research, and aim to design research that is inclusive and accessible and which meets the needs and priorities of diverse women's rights and feminist organisations and movements. Accountability also means ensuring that IWDA's own advocacy and development practice is informed by our research, and the research of other feminist movement actors.

We prioritise decolonial approaches to research and use feminist and inclusive participatory research methods (both quantitative and qualitative) wherever possible. We hold ourselves to rigorous standards, while challenging the academic hierarchy of knowledge which devalues the knowledge and experience of women, trans, non-binary and gender diverse people, especially Indigenous and Majority World voices, and those with intersecting identities such as women with disabilities. We ask questions about our values and locational power as a researcher/research collaborator/research commissioner as a feminist development organisation in the Minority World, and how these impact on the research process – in framing the questions to be answered, in developing methodological approaches, in analysing the data and communicating results.

COLLABORATIVE

We are committed to ethical collaboration. IWDA's research overtly interrogates the power dynamics of the research relationship and our

role as researchers and research-commissioning agents. A decolonial approach to our research practices and partnerships requires us to engage with the locational power held by IWDA as an Australian organisation working in partnership with Majority World feminist movements, including the power held by staff and consultants via their own identity and/or association with IWDA. For example, we are conscious of the power differences between:

a. IWDA and the Majority World organisations we partner with;

b. researchers and participants (individuals; intersectional characteristics);

c. participants (individuals; intersectional characteristics, and; organisations);

d. people who choose to participate and people who decide not to participate or who are not asked to participate; and

e. other people working in the same community or country context.

We are committed to ethical collaboration and prioritise transparent research relationships where power is equitably shared between all research stakeholders. We follow transparent processes to ensure ethical engagement with research partners at all stages in the research project.

TRANSFORMATIVE

We conduct research to advance systemic change towards gender equality for all. IWDA views research and knowledge creation as part of the knowledge translation spectrum. Our research generates evidence, analysis and insights on the systems of power we need to transform in order to move towards gender equality for all.

Sharing and disseminating research is critical to ensuring that new evidence and ideas are translated into action. To be most effective, this means research outputs and communications materials are accessible and targeted and tailored to particular stakeholders, from women's rights organisations and feminist movements, to allies and influencers, and ultimately to power holders, with a focus on uptake and use.

IWDA prioritises research which responds to the needs of IWDA, the Majority World organisations we partner with, and the broader feminist movement. Our research and evaluations aim to improve the effectiveness of policy, programs

and resource allocations focused on women's rights and gender equality. We seek to transform discourse, contributing to societal-wide shifts in the consensus around understanding ideas and norms and possibilities for acting on gender equality for all. We also conduct advocacy based on evidence generated by our research, and the research of others.
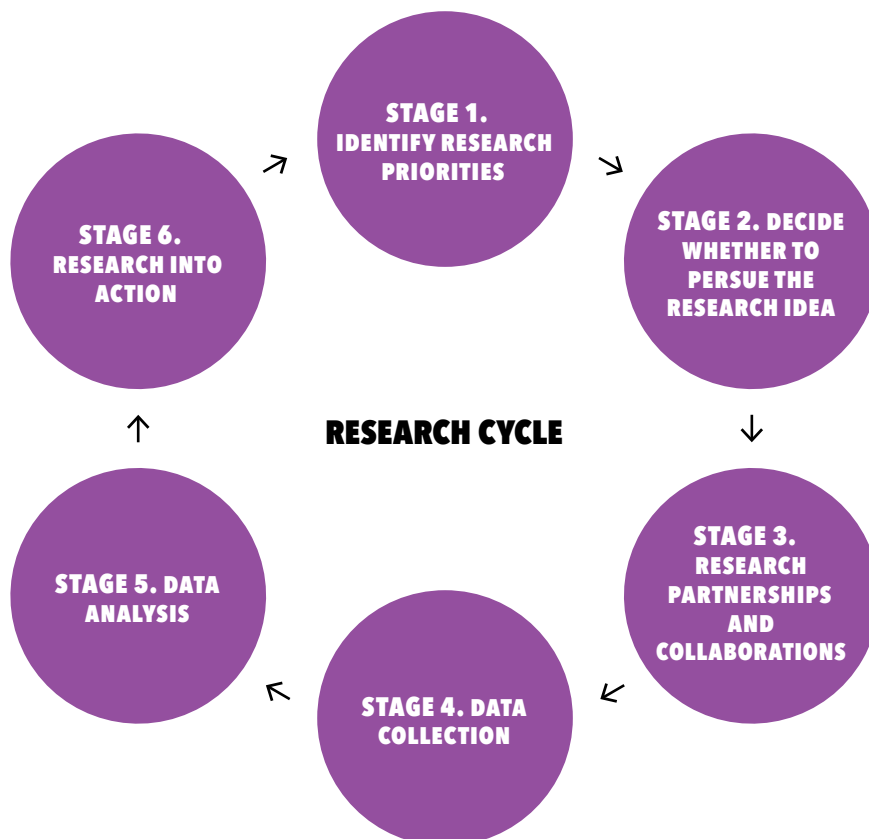
APPLYING IWDA'S FEMINIST RESEARCH PRINCIPLES ACROSS THE RESEARCH CYCLE

Research is rarely a linear process, so it's important at the outset of any project to know the key issues for consideration at each stage in the research cycle.

Figure 1 provides an outline of the different stages in the research cycle. You may find that you iteratively move back and forth between stages to refine research priorities, activities and approach as you move through the process.

Formal assessment of the ethical risks and benefits associated with your research design should come after you have planned out all the states of the research project, because the research approach and activities will inform the types of possible risks and mitigating strategies you choose to implement. However, thinking about ethics at every stage when planning, designing and implementing your research project is important.

FIGURE 1. CONTINUAL CONSIDERATION OF ETHICS ACROSS THE RESEARCH CYCLE

RESEARCH CYCLE

STAGE 1. IDENTIFY RESEARCH PRIORITIES

STAGE 2. DECIDE WHETHER TO PERSUE THE RESEARCH IDEA

STAGE 3. RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

STAGE 4. DATA COLLECTION

STAGE 5. DATA ANALYSIS

STAGE 6. RESEARCH INTO ACTION

STAGE 1. IDENTIFY RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The first step when planning any research project is to collaboratively identify research priorities and design the research question.

For evaluative activities, relevant questions should be explored with the organisation(s) leading the project in question, and consultant(s) who have been contracted for the evaluation. For other research activities, relevant questions should be explored with IWDA colleagues and external research stakeholders.

There are **three** main considerations when identifying research priorities. The **first** is whether the research fits within IWDA's current strategic priorities. All research proposed and conducted by IWDA should align with the current IWDA strategic plan and organisational goals.

The **second** consideration is how the research aligns with the four elements of this framework: feminist, accountable, collaborative and transformative. When you are identifying research priorities, it is useful to align this with your advocacy priorities. What are you trying to change in policy and/or practice and what evidence do you need? IWDA has also developed an advocacy planning tool Plan Your Power which may assist you here.

The **third** consideration is an ethical question about whether the research is necessary and well-justified, taking into account the overarching risks and benefits associated with pursuing the research topic.

Section 2.1 of the IWDA Feminist Research Manual sets out questions for consideration against each of these elements that can help you to identify your research priorities.

STAGE 2. DECIDE WHETHER AND HOW TO PURSUE THE RESEARCH IDEA

After identifying the research priority and research question, consider whether IWDA is appropriately placed to 'step up' to lead on this topic.

IWDA's research is informed by decolonial research approaches, which guide our reflection on – and appropriate use of – our power as a non-Indigenous, Australian based women's rights organisation. This includes consideration of what topics to pursue, or not to pursue, informed by what else is happening in our ecosystem. For example, who else is already working on these issues (particularly people with lived experience of the issue at hand) and whether our positionality as a Minority World organisation means others might be more appropriately placed to undertake the research. In some instances we may be better able to achieve our goals by 'standing with' and resourcing/enabling others, including promoting their projects through our networks, or 'stepping back' from elements of the topic by narrowing our research focus.

The IWDA Knowledge Translation Framework describes the different types of roles IWDA can play in knowledge creation, including when we step up, stand with, or step back in regards to research. Reference to the Knowledge Translation Framework can help to determine our role in research (Box 2).

STAGE 3. PARTNERING AND COLLABORATING FOR RESEARCH

After confirming that IWDA is appropriately placed to commission and/or conduct the research idea, the next step is to determine whether and how IWDA will collaborate with others to design and conduct the research.

Trusting relationships are critical for resilient, vibrant feminist movements and for ethical feminist research practice. Whilst there are instances where IWDA is well-placed to 'step up' and lead and implement research projects independently, most IWDA research is conducted collaboratively and in partnership with other research stakeholders.

The way IWDA partners with others in research has implications for how power is distributed amongst those involved. This is particularly important when working in Majority World context, and includes how power is distributed between IWDA, Majority World organisations and researchers, community representatives, research participants and those not involved in the research. The distribution of power amongst research stakeholders can have an impact on how research is implemented and used.[4]

CASE STUDY: STEPPING UP IN RESEARCH ON FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

In 2020-21, IWDA undertook a research project looking at the pathways different countries have taken to securing commitments on feminist foreign policy (From Seeds to Roots: Trajectories towards feminist foreign policy). In identifying this research topic, we considered a number of different gaps in the global evidence base on feminist foreign policy. This included knowledge gaps about the impact that feminist foreign policies have in the Majority World, particularly for diverse women. However, we determined that IWDA would not be well placed to lead on a research project that explored the impact of feminist foreign policies without engaging in a collaborative research process with Majority World organisations, which would need to be enabled by significant resourcing.

As a result, we narrowed our research focus to look at the pathways to securing feminist foreign policy commitments. This topic was an appropriate area for a Minority World organisation to 'step up' (given that most commitments at the time were from Minority World countries), was well aligned to the skill sets and networks of the team and could therefore be pursued without the need for external funding, and had a clear pathway to uptake and use in our own advocacy as well as that of the global feminist movement. In our knowledge translation activities around this research, we continue to emphasise the need for funding to support research into the impact of FFPs on Majority World women as a potential future research topic.

BOX 2. STEPPING UP, STANDING WITH AND STEPPING BACK IN KNOWLEDGE CREATION

STEPPING UP	• Lead research activities and projects which aim to transform discourse on our priorities, or relate to existing programming (such as a project/program mid-term review) • Deepen organisational feminist and decolonial analysis • Apply feminist, gender sensitive and decolonial frameworks and tools in particular contexts, and • Generate evidence about the value and importance of such approaches
STANDING WITH	• Convene and resource spaces to collaborate with Majority World WROs and others in the movement to conduct research; • Support and resource Majority World WROs to conduct project evaluations which meet their learning and accountability needs, and balance feminist approaches with donor requirements • Support the use of feminist materials, toolkits and resources for analysis; • When requested, work with Majority World WROs to strengthen their research capacity • Turning to and learning from other knowledge systems (including Indigenous knowledge systems in Australia, Asia and the Pacific)
STEPPING BACK	• Support Majority World WROs to lead their own research through providing funding, resources and logistical support, including identifying their own research partners and research priorities beyond IWDA. • Seek resources to support South-South intersectional feminist knowledge creation. • Support the organisations IWDA partners with to lead evaluativeactivity design, consultant selection and participate in a sense-check of preliminary findings and/or co-development process for recommendations

Adapted from: IWDA Knowledge Translation Framework, 2021

Transparent research relationships where power is equitably shared between research stakeholders can improve the quality and utility of research findings, by facilitating community ownership over and trust of, the research and willingness to be actively involved in implementing and sharing research findings.[5]

In feminist participatory research, the extent to which IWDA and research partners, stakeholders and communities control and actively participate in research can occur across a spectrum, and may change over time. For example:

- Research might be controlled by Majority World organisations, who manage research funding and may decide to contract IWDA and/or local researchers and consultants to carry out research, or provide technical expertise, resources or advice to support them to implement research activities.
- Research might be jointly controlled and managed between IWDA and Majority World organisations and involve more equal power sharing in research decision-making and equitable sharing of research resources.
- Research where IWDA controls the funding and contracts Majority World organisations and/or researchers to co-design the research and to implement the research.

The ways in which Majority World organisations and other research stakeholders are involved and the level of control they have over their involvement in research, is influenced by their interest, willingness and capacity to be involved, which may change over time. It is important that different ways of partnering, and the implications of these, are discussed.

The Research for Development Impact Network resource "How to partner for development research"[6] provides in-depth guidance about effective approach to collaboration and partnership in international development research and evaluations. Regardless of the approach you choose, power-sensitive collaboration and engagement with diverse women and girls and trans, non-binary and gender diverse people, the women's rights organisations and feminist networks IWDA works with should be a core consideration in how you conduct your research and use the research findings.

Section 2.3 of the IWDA Feminist Research Manual contains research partner checklists that can help you to identify research partners and collaborators and establish minimum requirements for research partnerships.

STAGE 4. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the process of preparing and collecting the information and data that will answer your research questions and inform your findings.

There are different types of data: **primary data,** original data you have collected yourself for a specific purpose for example, responses to a survey you have sent out, and/or **secondary data:** data that has been collected by somebody else for another purpose, for example, a book or article.

Data can be **quantitative** (e.g. numerical data used to measure variables), **or qualitative** (e.g. more in-depth data, focused on describing and understanding phenomenon rather than measuring). IWDA recognises the value of both: there is value in enabling research participants to share their knowledge in qualitative settings and of collecting quantitative data to convince decision makers of the need for change. When used together in **mixed methods research** qualitative methods can dig deeper to understand the specifics of a trend revealed in quantitative data collection, and/or quantitative methods can help elevate the prevalence of themes identified in qualitative research so that they can be communicated as generalisable findings.

There is no one size fits all way of doing research. The nature of gender and social power social relations is complex, embedded in multiple social, cultural, economic and political structures and institutions. We often need to use multiple frameworks, methods and tools, working in a complementary fashion.

Regardless of the type of data you collect, within feminist, participatory research it is important to consider **who** will be actively involved in carrying out data collection activities and how responsibility for these activities will be shared amongst research partners. IWDA has, and can, play a range of different roles in data collection for research that seeks to transform discourse on our organisational priorities or inform our existing programming, depending on whether it is most appropriate for IWDA to 'step up', 'stand with', or 'step back'.

TABLE 1. IWDA'S ROLE IN COLLECTING DATA WHEN STEPPING UP, STANDING WITH, AND STEPPING BACK

	ROLE IN DATA COLLECTING DATA
STEPPING UP	IWDA collects data, for example through conducting literature reviews, qualitative interviews (e.g. From Seeds to Roots research) or quantitative surveys and data collection tools, to transform discourse on our organisation priorities or to inform our existing programming (e.g. a program mid-term review). IWDA designs new methodologies for data collection to set feminist standards for quality data (e.g. Equality Insights).
STANDING WITH	IWDA collaborates with research partners and/or research stakeholders to collect data (e.g. Pathways towards women's leadership and Public perceptions of women's leadership research projects). This could involve being requested to resource partners with financial and technical support to strengthen their capacity to conduct research and fund their active involvement in data collection activities and to conduct project evaluations which balance feminist approaches with donor requirements.
STEPPING BACK	IWDA commissions - and when requested, supports - Majority World WROs to lead their own research and collect their own data through providing funding, resources and logistical support, including to identify their own research partners and research priorities beyond IWDA (e.g. Creating equitable south-north partnerships: Nurturing the Va and Voyaging the Audacious Ocean Together). IWDA seeks resources to support intersectional feminist knowledge creation between Majority World stakeholders and supports the organisations we partner with to lead evaluative activity design, consultant selection and participate in a sense-check of preliminary findings and/or co-development process for recommendations.

Section 2.4 of the IWDA Feminist Research Manual provides more guidance about types of data and data collection activities that may be appropriate for your research. When designing data collection activities, it is important to consider how IWDA will ensure that risks to participants, community groups, research stakeholders and researchers are minimised and addressed during data collection activities.

STAGE 5. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of analysing the evidence (data) you have collected in order to answer your research questions and inform your findings.

It is important for intersectional, feminist analysis of issues to be co-created between research stakeholders. At this stage, it is important to consider how IWDA will interpret and make sense of the data, whilst also reflecting on the influence of our organisational and personal values, and the power dynamics within the research team on and during this process. Remember to check-in consistently to understand how your own values - personal and organisational - are informing the analysis and review.[7]

There are a variety of roles IWDA can play depending on whether we are stepping up, standing with, or stepping back during data analysis and findings formulation. These are briefly outlined in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2. IWDA'S ROLE IN ANALYSING DATA WHEN STEPPING UP, STANDING WITH, AND STEPPING BACK

	ROLE IN ANALYSING DATA
STEPPING UP	• IWDA leads the process of data analysis, using collaborative approaches, and seeking input from research participants and research stakeholders to sense check and validate our research findings. • IWDA applies feminist, gender sensitive and decolonial frameworks and tools to help us interpret our research findings and we generate evidence about the value and importance of such approaches
STANDING WITH	• IWDA facilitates processes and enables space for movement actors, particularly those from the Majority World to co-create their own feminist analyses. • IWDA co-leads the process of data analysis and jointly analyses data with research partners.
STEPPING BACK	• Research partners take the lead on data analysis, especially where IWDA's standpoint, worldview or approach risks imposing colonial knowledge systems or undermining the political perspectives and agendas of Majority World women and movement actors. • IWDA does not actively participate in data analysis, but might contribute towards sense checking data or sharing views upon request

STAGE 6. RESEARCH INTO ACTION

IWDA conducts research to advance systemic change towards gender equality for all. We recognise that transforming entrenched, gendered power imbalances is challenging, long-term work involving complex change at many levels.

A holistic approach to tackling these challenges requires evidence that makes visible the underlying causes of gender inequality, the identification of policy and programmatic solutions, and advocacy for the adoption of these solutions.
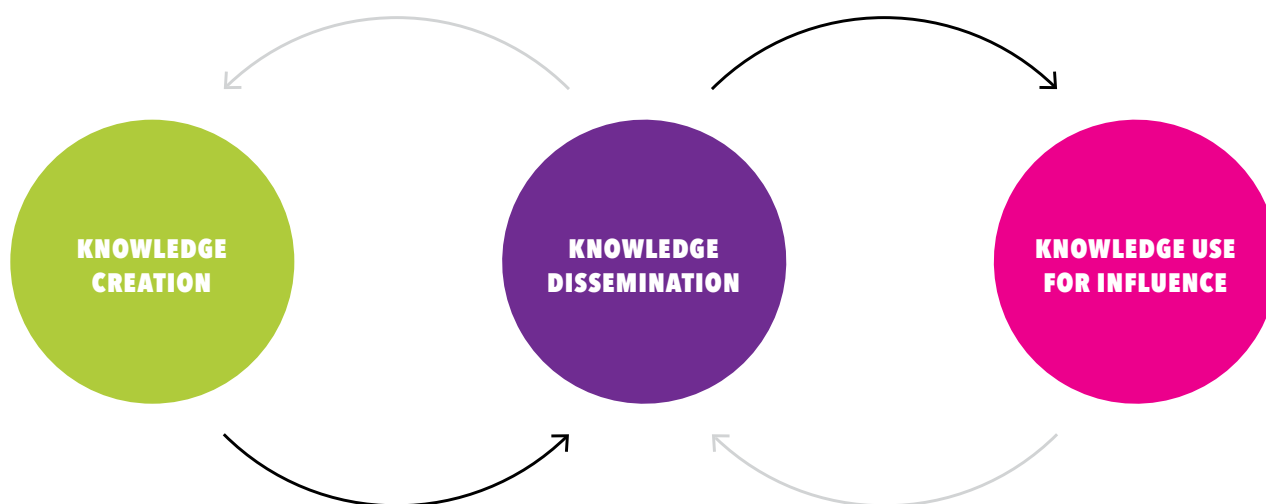
The IWDA Knowledge Translation Framework describes our approach to sharing and disseminating our research findings, and ensuring they are used for targeted influence, and provides illustrative examples and guidance around our role when stepping up, standing with, and stepping back. Figure 2 is a visual representation of IWDAs approach to ensuring that our research is translated into action towards achieving our organisational goal.

From the outset, the change the research project is planning to contribute to should be clearly identified – this should be considered when determining your research priorities – and the research proposal should consider how research findings will be disseminated internally and externally and used to advocate for targeted influence.

Section 2.6 of the IWDA Feminist Research Manual and the IWDA Knowledge Translation Framework provide detailed guidance on research into action.

FIGURE 2. OVERVIEW OF IWDA'S APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

KNOWLEDGE CREATION

KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

KNOWLEDGE USE FOR INFLUENCE

Source: IWDA Knowledge Translation Framework

STAGE 7. ASSESS THE RISKS AND BENEFITS ACROSS ALL PHASES OF THE RESEARCH

Ensuring that your research planning and execution has thoughtfully considered the risks and benefits, and that the benefits outweigh the risks of research, is at the
heart of ethical research. IWDA is committed to ensuring that:

- neither our research participants nor our researchers are harmed by the research
- that the benefits of building feminist knowledge for transformative gender equality impact outweigh any risks
- that we carefully and rigorously manage any perceived risks of the research

Some examples of the types of risks that might arise in research include risks to participants and researchers that are directly related to their involvement in the research, as well as risks associated with conducting culturally insensitive or non-feminist research. Many of the risks that you might identify can be addressed through the use of feminist participatory research methodologies and careful consideration of the possible risks that might arise during participant recruitment, seeking informed consent,

participant privacy and data confidentiality, complaints procedures, safety in the field, issues associated with translation and research on sensitive topics.

IWDA has an internal ethical review and approval process that is designed to ensure that all research conducted and commissioned by IWDA complies with ethical principles. IWDA's approach to ethical review is grounded in the guidance provided by ACFID and the Research for Development Impact Network,[8] which applies relevant Australian ethical research standards to the work of international development agencies.[9] IWDA's ethical review process is also designed to be responsive and accessible to staff and streamlined within existing approvals processes.

There are four main steps in IWDA's ethical review and approval process. The **first step** is to assess whether the research needs ethical approval, and whether IWDA will give that approval. Not all research requires ethical approval; for example, literature reviews or evaluations that meet the following three criteria:[10]

1. Routine or ongoing data collection using well-established procedures that does not address sensitive topics, involve vulnerable groups, or use large amounts of participant time. (Consideration must be given as to whether the proposed evaluation activity poses any risk for participants beyond those

routinely experienced in the environment where the research is being conducted.)

2. Where data being collected and analysed for the sole purpose of maintaining standards or identifying areas for improvement, and

3. Where data cannot be linked to individuals.

When IWDA partners with a university, the research will be subject to the university's ethical review process.

The **second step** is to assess levels of risk associated with the research. All research projects that require ethical review must complete a detailed risk assessment template, describing the potential risks and harm which could be caused to participants, researchers/evaluators, and participating organisations. Based on an evaluation of the potential impact and likelihood of this risk occurring, and the strategies/controls in place to minimize it, a risk rating is applied to each potential risk associated with the research. An overall assessment is then made based on the template of the overall risk level of the research/evaluation, (for example, negligible, low, or high), which determines the level of ethics committee oversight and approval/delegation process needed during project implementation.

The **third step** is to seek ethical approval for the research. All research/evaluation proposals which meet the criteria for ethical review must be submitted to the IWDA Internal Research Ethics Committee using a proposal template which covers questions on each stage of the research cycle outlined above, with particular focus on ethical considerations like privacy, confidentiality and informed consent.

The **fourth step** is to manage the risks associated with the research throughout implementation.

Detailed information about IWDA's ethical review and approval process can be found in Section 1 of the IWDA Feminist Research Manual.

WHERE TO NEXT?

The IWDA Feminist Research Manual provides operational guidance for IWDA staff, consultants and collaborators when designing and commissioning feminist and participatory research across all stages of the research cycle.

In addition to step by step guidance, it contains annexes and templates, including links to other resources and we encourage readers to search for additional resources to guide their research practice.

These resources are available to external individuals and groups upon request. Please email research@iwda.org.au for a copy of for more information about the IWDA research tools.

ENDNOTES

1   Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and Research for Development Impact Network (RDNI) 2017, Principles and Guidelines for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development, retrieved 19 October 2017, https://acfid. asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/ACFID_RDI%20Principles%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20ethical%20 research12-07-2017.pdf p 2.

2   A Guide to applying The AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research outlines these sources as including all aspects of indigenous people's cultural heritage, such as laws and philosophies, cultural expressions and materials, performances, connections to land and sacred sites, and many more.

3   IWDA. 2021. Knowledge Translation Framework. https://iwda.org.au/assets/files/IWDA-Knowledge-Translation-framework. pdf

4   Minkler, M. (2004). "Ethical challenges for the "outside" researcher in community-based participatory research." Health Education & Behavior 31(6): 684-697., Banks, S., A. Armstrong, K. Carter, H. Graham, P. Hayward, A. Henry, T. Holland, C. Holmes, A. Lee and A. McNulty (2013). "Everyday ethics in community-based participatory research." Contemporary Social Science 8(3): 263-277.

5   Long, J. W., H. L. Ballard, L. A. Fisher and J. M. Belsky (2016). "Questions that won't go away in participatory research." Society & natural resources 29(2): 250-263, Walsh, C. A. (2018). "Ethical issues in conducting community-based participatory research: a narrative review of the literature." The Qualitative Report 23(2): 369-386.

6   Winterford, K. (2017). How to Partner for Development Research, Research For Development Impact Network, Canberra, Australia

7   Guidance about practicing researcher reflexivity is available in the IWDA Feminist Research Manual.

8   Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and Research for Development Impact Network (RDNI) 2017, Principles and Guidelines for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development, retrieved 19 October 2017, https://acfid. asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/ACFID_RDI%20Principles%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20ethical%20 research12-07-2017.pdf p 19.

9   NHMRC (2007, updated in 2015) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research; NHMRC (2007) Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research; NHMRC (2014) Ethical Considerations in Quality Assurance and Evaluation Activities; Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2011) Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies.

10 ACFID Guidelines (2017, 3),

11 In turn, the ACFID RDI Network definitions are based on the National Health and Medical Research Council Statement, May 2007. Accessed 19 October 2017, https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/e72

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