

# FEMINIST MODERATION Partners' training

November 2023, Munich  
ESF and WECF



# SOLIDARITY PRINCIPLES

## EUWES CONSORTIA



01/

**Be present**

I will not multi-task, I value the space set up.

02/

**Engage fully**

I am here, because I want to be here, and I have valuable things to add.

03/

**Make space**

And take space. I will take a step to the side if I'm talking more than others.

04/

**I will expect the best of people**

If something is not clear, I will ask people what they mean.

05/

**Attack the issue**

I will attack the root issue, not the person. I will respect people who are telling me their truth. I will use a structural analysis.

06/

**No discrimination**

I respect human rights. I will seek to tackle systems of discrimination. That means I will keep an eye on my own privileges.

## Table of contents

- 1- A feminist approach to knowledge
- 2- Collective production of knowledge
- 3- Creation of safe and accessible discussions
- 4- Feminist moderation techniques



## 1- A feminist approach to knowledge

How do dominant knowledge practices disadvantage women\*?

- ◆ **Excluding** them from the knowledge creation process.
- ◆ Denying their **authority** to participate.
- ◆ Denigrating **other cognitive styles** (i.e. exposing feelings).
- ◆ Producing theories that **represent women\* as inferior**, or significant only in ways that serve male interests.
- ◆ Producing theories about social phenomena that **invisibilise women\*** or gendered power relations.
- ◆ Producing knowledge that **reinforces gender and other social hierarchies**.

Can each of you think of examples to these situations?



## 1- A feminist approach to knowledge

### Agreement within feminist knowledge theories

- ◆ Need for a **greater presence of women** in knowledge (object and subject).

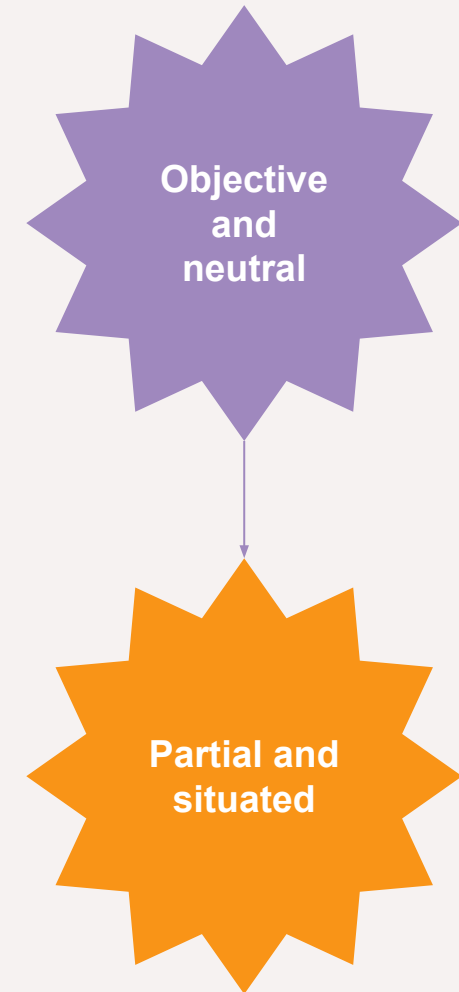
But why do you think that we need more women in knowledge spheres (as in our trainings)?



## 1- A feminist approach to knowledge

### Why more women? (Different contributions)

- ◆ To reduce gender bias and assure a objective and neutral knowledge (feminist empiricism).
- ◆ Because subaltern groups can offer a purer and broader perspective than dominant groups (feminist standpoint theory).
- ◆ Because the partiality of our knowledge makes a plurality of perspectives necessary (postmodern theories).





## 2- Collective production of knowledge

- ◆ Producing knowledge in a collective way can **imply a transformation and improvement of reality.**
- ◆ For instance, Aliança contra la Pobresa Energètica



Can you think of similar situations? What conditions made them happen?



### 3- Creation of safe and accessible discussions

What is a safe space?



#### ◆ Before the meeting

- Select a comfortable format and environment
- Create a safe space team and protocol
- Try to get a list of participants and scan where conflict might arise.

#### ◆ During the meeting

- “This is a safe space for dialogue, please suspend judgment”
- Go through the solidarity principles
- Inform whom and how to contact the safe space team
- Pay attention to who is mostly speaking and try and call on speakers who have not yet said anything.

#### ◆ After the meeting

- Feedback mechanism



### 3- Creation of safe and accessible discussions

#### How can we create accessible discussions?

- ◆ Consider the accessibility of the **building**.
- ◆ Ask in advance what **people's needs** are and cater for them (regular breaks, adequate time, adequate duration, etc.)
- ◆ **Transport**, are there accessible options?
- ◆ When talking to someone with an assistant, **make sure you speak to the person** and not to the assistant (same to people with interpreter).
- ◆ When you use acronyms, make sure you spell them out in full. **Avoid using jargon or slang**, as this is difficult for non experts or non fluent speakers to understand.
- ◆ Use **inclusive language** (gender sensitive).

## 4- Feminist moderation techniques

### Suppression practices acknowledgement

- ◆ **Making invisible:** not listened to when they speak, not followed-up
- ◆ **Ridiculing**
- ◆ **Withholding information:** address issues when they are not present
- ◆ **Double punishment**
- ◆ **Blaming and shaming**
- ◆ **Objectifying:** comment on appearances
- ◆ **Violence and threats of violence**
- ◆ **Projection method:** not holding responsibility
- ◆ **Stereotype method:** label based on gender, race, age, disability...
- ◆ **Compliment method** (to use them)
- ◆ **Hierarchy method**
- ◆ **Time method** (based on experience)
- ◆ **Self-inflicted suppression:** belittle yourself “I’m not sure it makes sense...”
- ◆ **Tone policing:** “You should be nicer”
- ◆ **Affinity bias:** favour people who share similar interests, backgrounds and experiences.

## 4- Feminist moderation techniques

### Eco chambers in discussions

- Hanne: I think we should maybe be stricter on immigration
- Lucille: I am not so sure. I disagree with immigration in general but sometimes it can bring benefits
- Margaret: What benefits? you see on the news all the time about the dangers of immigration
- Ahmed: and I read online recently that immigration is a bigger problem now than ever before
- Lucille: That is quite scary
- Hanne: A solution would be to be really strict with who you allow into the country
- Ahmed: I personally think we shouldn't let anyone in unless they were born here
- Margaret: Yes especially considering all the dangers, a total ban on immigration would be good
- Lucille: I agree

## 4- Feminist moderation techniques

### Eco chambers in discussions

- Hanne: I think we should maybe be stricter on immigration
- Lucille: I am not so sure. I disagree with immigration in general but sometimes it can bring benefits
- Margaret: What benefits? you see on the news all the time about the dangers of immigration
- Ahmed: and I read online recently that immigration is a bigger problem now than ever before
- **Moderator intervention:** Can you think of any particular news websites that you have read this on? Are there particular facts or figures you want to use to back up your points? I would encourage you all to rely on these to back up your discussion points.

It is important that people have facts or sources to back up their points, and to ask for them when appropriate.

## 4- Feminist moderation techniques

### Polarisation

- Madiha: I know that if we even see a 1.5. degree increase of the earth's temperature, we will see more extreme weather and heat waves - we need to work together and plan for the future
- Savanna: I am not sure I believe that, people keep saying we have more extreme weather now but I have not noticed it
- Madiha: I can't believe you would think that - climate change is a huge problem
- Savanna: I just think there are more important things we could focus on

## 4- Feminist moderation techniques

### Polarisation

– **Moderator intervention:** You are both coming at this from different perspectives, so it's natural that you would see it differently. I think this is a really important issue that we need to talk through openly. From Madiha's perspective, this is about stopping a rise in global warming, whereas Savanna has shared their experience of not noticing extreme weather. Why don't you both share an experience that reflects your points? Madiha you go first - and remember to listen to each other before you share.

Summarise and aim to reach a common ground or solution in the middle. It is important to focus on values and validate people's feelings to encourage empathy



## 4- Feminist moderation techniques

### Other useful techniques

- ◆ **Active verbal communication:** verbally spot conflictual dynamics.
- ◆ **Allow silence when needed:** it allows space for reflection.
- ◆ **Use restatements:** make sure you have not misunderstood.
- ◆ **Personal space and body language:** Removing from physical space when necessary; avoid offensive body language
- ◆ **Focus on feelings** to stop a conflict from escalating.



Thank you!



Partners:



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them.