



# GENDER

## PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND BUILDING AN EQUAL WORLD FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

### OUR CHALLENGE

Many violations of children's rights have their roots in gender-based inequality, exclusion and injustice. This injustice especially affects the lives of girls and women from infancy to adulthood. Discrimination against girls and women is one of the main underlying causes of child poverty. Girls and boys have the same rights, but they face different challenges in accessing them. Other factors such as race, class, ethnicity, disability, language, sexual orientation and gender identity also intersect with gender-based discrimination and stereotypes exacerbating exclusion. Girls often face the most significant barriers to exercising their rights among excluded groups. For example, a girl with a disability faces double discrimination, with the World Health Organisation estimating that only **42 per cent of girls with disability complete primary school**. This is why gender equality and girls rights remain a distinct priority for our work. While gender norms and stereotypes tend to privilege boys and men, they can also serve to limit their own options and lead to barriers to the realisation of their rights. The importance of linking gender equality with sustainable development is recognised in the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**.

### OUR RESPONSE

As a child rights organisation Plan International believes that investing in the promotion of gender equality, promoting gender justice, realising girl's rights, and fostering an inclusive society significantly contributes to poverty reduction and the realisation of child rights. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are corporate directives and have been articulated as part of Plan International's **rights based child-centred community development approach** for over a decade.

Plan International's commitment to gender equality is

based on the international standards established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as relevant soft laws and the global ambitions set out in the Sustainable Development Goals. The importance of linking gender equality with sustainable development is recognised in the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**.

Plan International's Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion (2017-2022) and guides the work of Plan International Australia. The global policy requires the active promotion of gender equality and inclusion in Plan International's programs, policies, partnerships, communications and internal operations. Through its programs, advocacy and engagement with a range of stakeholders, including all levels of government, Plan aims to promote gender equality and inclusion, through actively addressing gender based discrimination, harmful social norms and unequal power relations between men and women, boys and girls and other genders, as well as exclusion based on multiple factors, in the interest of promoting the rights of all children.

Plan International's global campaigning, strives to create a

**About 1 in 3 girls in the developing world are married before the age of 18 -United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

**Adolescent girls and young women make up 76% of young people who are not in school, training or employment (ILO 2016)**

world that values girls, promotes girls' rights and ends injustice. Plan's campaigning empowers girls, boys, and young people to become agents of change. Putting children's and young people's voices at the centre of

Plans social movement building is a core belief that underpins Plan International's work and its desire to create long-term sustainable change.

## OUR PROGRAMS – AFRICA AND ASIA

Plan International Australia (PIA) works to promote the equal rights of women, men, girls and boys and other genders in programs, policies, partnerships and operations. This involves taking a both a mainstreaming approach to ensure gender and inclusion is actively considered and promoted in all our work in addition to the development of explicit strategies and targeted initiatives to support the empowerment of girls and women in order to close existing gender gaps and address gender based inequality, discrimination and stereotyping. Plan aims to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and exclusion, particularly unequal gender power relations, discriminatory social norms and legislation in our work. Our approaches include work to address the practical needs of women and girls as well as addressing their status in families, communities and society; supporting girls and women's agency and voice in issues that affect their lives and choices; and working in partnership with boys and men to promote gender equality and positive forms of masculinity.

The following are examples of PIA's promotion of gender equality within programs:

### **Gender Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**

**Monitoring Tool (GWMT):** PIA has invested in developing the GWMT, to enable local program staff and government partners to explore and monitor gender relations with women and men to promote gender equality as part of WASH related activities. Over the past few years PIA has supported WASH project teams and government partners in **Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam** to locally adapt, pilot and use the GWMT. We have also supported other Plan WASH programs to use the GWMT in WASH programs in Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ethiopia and Zambia. . Plan International Australia has recently begun implementing a Water for Women Project in Indonesia which aims to improve health, well-being and gender equality in Indonesian communities through WASH.

**Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD):** In recognition that the foundations of gender equality or inequality are laid in early childhood, PIA is continuing to strengthen gender in ECCD programming, including through supporting the ongoing development and implementation of a self-assessment tool to promote gender equality in Plan's ECCD programs. The self-assessment tool has been piloted in a number of Plan ECCD programs across countries in Asia and Southern and Eastern Africa and has been important for identifying a range of common challenges and opportunities for strengthening gender equality in the ECCD programs. This work is being shared with the broader ECCD sector to influence and support practice change that contributes to strengthening gender equality in ECCD. Plan International Australia's recent work in ECCD includes a focus on the role and engagement of fathers in caring work and in initiatives to address gender inequality and exclusion in early childhood development.

### **Safer Cities for Girls**

The Safer Cities for Girls programme is a Plan International global programme, developed in partnership

between Plan International, UN-HABITAT, and Women in Cities International to address the increased risks and opportunities for adolescent girls in cities, and their role in urban governance. The program is based on Plan International research that showed while adolescent girls living in cities had more opportunities, they also experienced sexual harassment, exploitation and insecurity navigating urban environments and were excluded from urban planning processes. The overarching program goal is to build safe, accountable and inclusive cities with and for adolescent girls (13-18 years) through increasing their safety and access to public spaces; increasing their autonomous and safe mobility in the city; and increasing their active and meaningful participation in urban development and governance. Preventing and addressing gender-based violence and harassment in public spaces and transport sectors is a key focus for the program. Program strategies include Plan's Champion of Change for Gender Equality and Girls' Rights - a communitywide strategy for promoting gender equality and social norm change through youth engagement and peer-to-peer mobilisation. It includes a training curriculum for adolescent girls on gender equality, empowerment, and safe and inclusive cities, and a training curriculum for adolescent boys to challenge and transform harmful gender norms, and build a social movement for the promotion of gender equality and new models of masculinities. The global programme is currently being implemented in ten cities, including: Delhi, India; Hanoi, Vietnam; Assiut, Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt; Kampala, Uganda; Nairobi, Kenya; Lima, Peru; Asuncion, Paraguay; and Honiara, Solomon Islands. Plan International Australia support the programs in Vietnam, Uganda and the Solomon Islands and contributes to the ongoing development of the global program, including through gender and inclusion technical support and through the development and piloting of tools based on digital technology. For example the Free to Be digital mapping platform co-designed by PIA, young people, Crowd Spot.

## OUR KEY PARTNERS

PIA's gender equality and inclusion advisor is part of Plan's global Reference Group that provides thought leadership and technical guidance and support for the implementation and monitoring of Plan's Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion and annual monitoring reports to the Plan International Board. Plan International Australia also has a Gender and Inclusion Advisor to guide and support our humanitarian work and an advisor to guide and support gender equality and inclusion in our workplace. The advisors also work with Plan's global network of gender and inclusion advisors and focal points in Country Offices at the national and international level. Within Australia PIA is represented on the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Gender Equality Working.

## OUR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

PIA prioritises investments in research and innovation. Continuous learning and improvement is key to promoting and strengthening approaches to gender equality.

### **Adolescent Girls in Crisis; Voices from Sudan**

Plan International most recently commissioned research report *Adolescent Girls in Crisis; Voices from Sudan* draws on research conducted with girls and members of their families and communities in multiple sites in South Sudan and Uganda. It explores how adolescent girls within two age brackets (aged 10-14 and 15-19) understand and respond to the unique impact their country's crisis has upon them. It seeks to amplify their voices and their perceptions of the crisis, and presents their views on how the humanitarian sector might respond. The research is a collaboration between Plan International Australia, Monash University Gender, Peace and Security research centre and Plan International.

#### **Institutional Donors**

As an accredited NGO with the Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) many of PIA's projects are supported by Australian Aid through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program' (ANCP).

