OUR PURPOSE AND AMBITION

We strive to advance children’s rights and equality for girls in the EU’s external action.

Through our actions, we will contribute to ensuring 100 million girls learn, lead, decide and thrive.

We seek to achieve changes at EU level which address the barriers preventing children, particularly girls, realising their rights and fulfilling their potential.

Working with young people and partners, we aim to:

- Contribute to the global girls’ rights movement, strengthening girls’ leadership and voice
- Ensure all children have the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to succeed
- Secure more, better, pro-poor aid, with a focus on girls
Driven forward with a renewed sense of both urgency and optimism, we have adopted a bold new purpose:

**We strive for a just world that advances children’s rights and equality for girls.**

This new purpose is inspiring greater focus and ambition in our work to transform the lives of the world’s most marginalised and excluded children, and guides all our work at EU-level.

Over the course of 2016-17, we have set about implementing this purpose and ambition. In a challenging context which has seen the EU place increasing focus on its own security and self-interest, often at the expense of human rights and development, we have continued to push for changes which address the barriers preventing children realising their rights and fulfilling their potential.

Through evidence-based advocacy and bold, impactful communications, we have helped secure a stronger focus on children and youth, particularly girls, in key policies which will guide the EU’s external action for years to come. We have supported our colleagues in Country Offices, and the children and young people they work with, to raise their voice on the issues which matter to them. And we continued to push for robust and principled EU external aid, calling out contradictions between commitments and actions.

As we pursue the results we seek for children, we have demonstrated Plan International’s value as a reliable and, when necessary, critical partner for the EU institutions and services. We will continue to build on this in the years to come, pushing the EU to take the lead in the global fight to reduce poverty and inequality and end injustice.

Tanya Cox  
Plan International EU Representative a.i

Monique van ’t Hek  
National Director Plan Nederland
ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL

We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it’s girls who are most affected.

As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, founded 80 years ago, we work alongside children, young people, supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing marginalised and excluded children, especially girls.

We support children’s rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity.

WHAT WE DO

EDUCATION
We promote free, equal access to quality education for all children — from early learning to secondary education.

SKILLS AND WORK
We increase young people’s access to financial services, financial literacy and entrepreneurship, and employment skills training.

YOUTH ACTIVISM
We enable children to understand and defend their rights and encourage them to join the girls’ rights movement.

SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS
We increase access to quality sexual health services and eliminate harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and early and child marriage.

EARLY CHILDHOOD
We help vulnerable and excluded children, particularly girls, grow up equally valued and cared for and free from discrimination.

ENDING VIOLENCE
We work with communities, families, schools and governments to protect children from harm.

EMERGENCIES
We build communities’ resilience and support children’s right to dignity and protection before, during and after disasters and conflicts.
We are supporting Plan International offices worldwide to secure and implement quality EC-funded projects for children and their communities.

The European Commission (EC) is one of Plan International’s primary institutional donors, and Plan International EU Office acts as the organisation’s Global Account Manager for the EC. In this capacity, we coordinate the work of Plan International’s European National Organisations and Country Offices across Africa, Asia and Latin America, to ensure high quality projects which deliver maximum impact.

**TOTAL VALUE & NUMBER BY REGION**

- **ASIA**: €14.9m, 20 projects
- **WEST AFRICA**: €11.7m, 27 projects
- **EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**: €38.4m, 32 projects
- **LATIN AMERICA**: €25.9m, 12 projects

**WORLD MAP**

- **DEVCO**: €46m
- **HUMANITARIAN AID**: €45m
- **TOTAL VALUE OF EC PROJECTS RUNNING IN 2016-17**: €91m
- **PROJECTS RUNNING**: 91
- **NEW PROJECTS STARTED IN 2016-17**: 22

**Total value of EC projects running in 2016-17**

- **Development Cooperation**: €46m
- **Humanitarian Aid**: €45m

**Total value & number by region**

- **Asia**: €14.9m, 20 projects
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**World map**

- **Bangladesh**
- **Benin**
- **Bolivia**
- **Brazil**
- **Cambodia**
- **Cameroon**
- **Central African Republic**
- **China**
- **Colombia**
- **Dominican Republic**
- **Egypt**
- **El Salvador**
- **Ethiopia**
- **Egypt**
- **Ethiopia**
- **Guatemala**
- **Ghana**
- **Guinea Bissau**
- **Haiti**
- **Honduras**
- **India**
- **Indonesia**
- **Kenya**
- **Laos**
- **Lebanon**
- **Liberia**
- **Malawi**
- **Mali**
- **Mozambique**
- **Myanmar**
- **Nepal**
- **Nicaragua**
- **Niger**
- **Nigeria**
- **Pakistan**
- **Paraguay**
- **Peru**
- **Philippines**
- **Rwanda**
- **Senegal**
- **South Sudan**
- **Sudan**
- **Sri Lanka**
- **Tanzania**
- **Timor-Leste**
- **Togo**
- **Uganda**
- **Vietnam**
- **Zambia**
- **Zimbabwe**
DRIVING POLICY CHANGE

We are driving change in policy, practice and action at EU and national level, so that all children can realise their full potential.

EU GUIDELINES ON CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

The revised EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, adopted by EU Member States in March 2017, set the EU’s overarching strategy to defend and promote all children’s rights in the world. We worked intensively with the External Action Service (EEAS) during the drafting of the revised Guidelines, advocating for a systems-strengthening and child rights-based approach, focusing on the four General Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the core guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to “Leave no one behind”. “These Guidelines go further than ever before and will lead to better outcomes for all children,” said Tanya Cox, Plan International’s EU Representative (a.i.), speaking at the official launch event in Geneva.

A NEW EU CONSENSUS ON DEVELOPMENT

The new European Consensus on Development, “Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future”, was adopted by EU Member States in May 2017. It sets out an ambitious and comprehensive vision to translate the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into tangible, equitable progress for all. Empowering women and girls is at the heart of this vision. We worked with the Maltese Presidency and other Member States to ensure strong recognition of the role of children, youth, girls and women as positive agents of change and development. However, the Consensus could have made a much greater contribution to reducing poverty and inequality, fighting injustice and protecting the environment, if a new more comprehensive approach to evaluating and measuring progress based on well-being had been proposed.

“CHILDREN’S RIGHTS ARE EVERYONE’S BUSINESS. IF WE THINK ABOUT IT, EVERY SINGLE SECTOR AND ALMOST EVERY POLICY HAS AN IMPACT ON CHILDREN EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY.”

Interview with Eileen Gonnord, Child Rights Expert at the EEAS

PROTECTING CHILD MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

In 2016, the number of people who were forcibly displaced was at its highest since records began. We coordinated Plan International’s position calling for EU leaders to take urgent action to protect the rights, and lives, of child migrants and refugees and their families, both within, at and outside Europe’s borders.
#EDD17 GLOBAL CAFÉ

During the 2017 European Development Days, we connected young people in Brazil, Uganda, Pakistan and India to discuss the challenges and opportunities they face in the world of work. During a global café broadcast from our stand in the Global Village, youth exchanged their ideas and experiences on issues ranging from gender discrimination to the role of mentors and access to finance.

#ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

We are helping to empower children and young people economically and politically, providing them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to speak out and succeed in life.

#YOUTHTAKEOVER: LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND

In April 2017, we organised the first ever global youth takeover of EU Delegation social media channels, in partnership with the European External Action Service. Young people in 19 countries shared their messages on the challenges and opportunities they face, providing context to the revised EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child. “The #YouthTakeover was not only an experience for the girls who participated, but also for the EU Delegation. We learned a lot from them about the problems they face and their experiences,” said Rensje Teerink, EU Ambassador to Nepal.

#DIGITAL EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS FOR YOUTH

Offering children and young people inclusive and quality education and the opportunity to gain appropriate skills are essential to enable them to fulfil their potential. Yet globally, more than 600 million 15 to 24 year olds are not in education, employment or training. Harnessing the power of digital technology to reach even the most marginalised and hardest to reach young people, Plan International’s Youth Employment Solutions Digital Ecosystem is helping young people gain the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to succeed in the world of work. It provides online courses which have been developed by experts who understand the country, the market, the opportunities, what works and what doesn’t, allowing young people to learn what, when, and where they want before being placed with a local company. We showcased our innovative approach at the European Development Days Global Village and Pitches, demonstrating the investment potential to EU and private sector partners alike.

#EDD17 GLOBAL CAFÉ

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We are contributing to the global movement for girls’ rights, strengthening girls’ voice and leadership.

#GIRLSTAKEOVER: POSITIONS OF POWER AND INFLUENCE

A better world tomorrow begins by empowering girls to lead today. That’s why we supported young women from European and developing countries to take over the roles of EU leaders, as part of the European Week of Action for Girls 2016. Through a series of digital and physical takeovers, girls showed why they deserve to be heard far and loud, and called on the EU to invest in their rights and empowerment.

During our #GirlsVoices social media takeover of the European Commission’s International Cooperation and Development Directorate-General, girls from Brazil, Bangladesh, Tanzania and the Netherlands talked about issues including gender-based violence, child marriage, and the need to educate and empower girls. Commissioner Neven Mimica congratulated the girls personally, saying, “I salute the courage of all girls in their fight for gender equality around the globe.”

Following the #GirlsVoices takeover, Radha, a 21-year-old activist from Bangladesh who escaped her own child marriage, physically took over the position of European Commission Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva. “I want to thank Plan International for coming up with this great idea to help change perceptions about what is possible for girls and the value of investing in them,” said Commissioner Georgieva.
UNLOCKING POTENTIAL, PROGRESSING TOGETHER

Influencing EU policies, practices and funding has the potential to positively affect the lives of hundreds of millions of children and youth in developing countries. With a renewed strategic focus, we aim to advance children’s rights and equality for girls in the EU’s external action. Our 2017-2022 strategy, Unlocking potential, progressing together, sets out our ambition to help transform the lives of 100 million girls so that they can learn, lead, decide and thrive. We will use evidence-based advocacy and bold communications to push for the changes at EU level needed to address the barriers preventing children, especially girls, reaching their full potential. In particular, we aim to help strengthen girls’ leadership and voice, and ensure all children have the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to succeed, and will continue to call for more, better, pro-poor aid, with a focus on girls.

#BEBOULDFORCHANGE: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY 2017 TWEET CHAT

We co-hosted the 2017 International Women’s Day Tweet Chat, discussing how the EU could #BeBoldForChange and achieve gender equality. With discussions ranging from ending violence to promoting skills and training, the Tweet Chat engaged 155 contributors, including policymakers and peers, and reached over 625,000 accounts. @PlanEU was one of the top contributors to the chat, with the highest number of retweets and mentions.

“I DARE TO IMAGINE A WORLD IN WHICH ALL GIRLS ARE ENCOURAGED TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL.”

Neven Mimica, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Girls’ Rights Gazette October 2016
We are pushing for more, better, pro-poor EU external aid, with a focus on girls.

**ROBUST AND PRINCIPLED ANNUAL EU BUDGETS**

With the EU facing a growing number of challenges, particularly in the fields of migration and security, there is an increasing threat that money which should be used to reduce poverty and inequality and to respond to crises is being used to serve the EU’s own interests. Together with our partners, we continued to call for robust and principled external annual aid budgets dedicated to achieving the core objectives of EU development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

“AT A TIME WHERE MULTIPLE CRISSES ARE CAUSING COMPASSION FATIGUE, THE EU HAS THE POTENTIAL TO SET THE STANDARD BY WHICH OTHERS MUST FOLLOW — TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE, PREDICTABLE AND IMPARTIAL ASSISTANCE TO THOSE MOST IN NEED. LOW, LATE AND UNPREDICTABLE FUNDING WILL COST LIVES.”

Devex Opinion,
*Humanitarian aid – needs-based no more?*

**A PRO-POOR EUROPEAN EXTERNAL INVESTMENT PLAN**

In September 2017, the EU agreed to the European External Investment Plan (EIP), a tool expected to encourage private sector investment in Africa and the EU Neighbourhood. Together with our partners, we worked on analysing it and expressed a number of concerns over its underlying objective and rationale. In our recommendations, we pushed for a focus on reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development rather than curbing migration flows, and called for the respect of accountability and transparency principles. While the final document incorporates several of our demands, many questions remain: Can such a tool be pro-poor and pro-women? What evidence is there that the EIP will deliver any sustainable development impact? Will supporting private sector development contribute to reducing inequality? Scrutinizing the implementation of the EIP will be crucial in getting answers and ensuring that the EU’s development aid reaches those most in need and leaves no one behind.

**IDEAS + INVESTMENT = IMPACT**

As part of the European Week of Action for Girls 2016, we co-drafted an advocacy paper calling for an EU policy framework backed up by gender-sensitive budgeting to deliver on commitments for girls. The paper called for the EU to incorporate a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructure revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality, setting out a number of key recommendations to be implemented in order to establish a strong foundation for gender-sensitive budgeting.
GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Plan International EU Office represents Plan International towards the European institutions and services and acts as a coordination and liaison hub on EU issues for Plan International.

The work of our office is overseen by a board composed of the National Directors or Chief Executive Officers of Plan International’s European National Organisations, plus our International Headquarters. The board meets twice a year, and is responsible for approving the budget and workplan of our office.

Plan International EU Office receives funding from Plan International’s European Offices and our International Headquarters, in proportion to their annual income. In 2016-17, this amounted to €647,093.00.
ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL EU OFFICE

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