

**EVALUATION OF THE
PROJECT STRENGTHENING
PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S
SUPPORT FOR LGBTIQ+
ADOLESCENTS**

FINAL EVALUATION



PREFACE

This is an evaluation of the Swedish Postcode Lottery supported Plan International project 'Strengthening Plan International's Support for LGBTIQ+ Adolescents' (June 2016 – December 2019). The evaluation was commissioned by Plan International and carried out by Edge Effect during October – December 2019.

The external evaluation team consisted of:

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This report was finalised after Plan International staff provided comments on a draft report, including members of the Gender and Inclusion Group (GIG) who met to discuss the evaluation in Bangkok in December 2019.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the creation of this report, through voicing their perspectives openly and critically, regarding Plan International's work in support of LGBTIQ+ inclusion and rights. We extend our special thanks to Aidan Leavy and Hannah Johns for their very helpful facilitation of this evaluation, including through providing welcome contextual information, key documents, and feedback at different stages.

About Edge Effect

Edge Effect Collaborations Pty Ltd is a specialist social enterprise which assists humanitarian and development organisations to work in genuine partnership with sexual and gender minorities – aka people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), or LGBTIQ+ people.

For more information please see: www.edgeeffect.org

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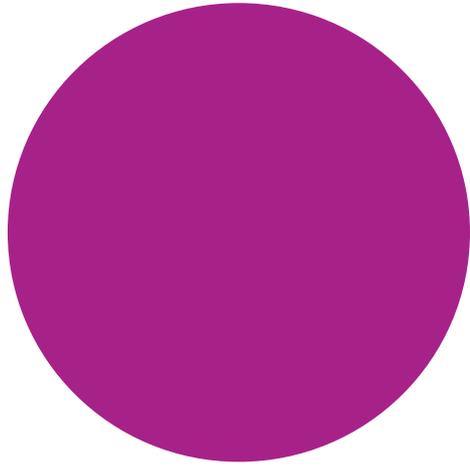
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT

The combination of social prejudice and criminalization has the effect of marginalizing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender non-conforming persons and excluding them from essential services, including health, education, employment, housing... and access to justice... The spiral of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion may start within the family, extend to the community and have a life-long effect on socioeconomic inclusion. Through this process, stigmatization and exclusion intersect with poverty to the extent that, in many countries, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender non-conforming persons are disproportionately affected by poverty, homelessness and food insecurity.

– United Nations Independent Expert for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Victor Madrigal

Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Intersex and Questioning/Queer (LGBTIQ+) people around the world face profound exclusion, marginalisation and violence. In the more than 70 countries across which Plan International works, approximately one third criminalise same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults in private.¹ Discriminatory laws combine with social prejudice to fuel poor social and economic outcomes for many LGBTIQ+ people, making them amongst the communities most left behind. Increasingly, the human rights of people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) have been recognised within core international treaties, institutions, agencies and fora. Change has been driven by LGBTIQ+ communities and CSOs which have pressed States and international institutions, to recognise their rights, especially over the past 30 years.

¹ Of the 70 countries listed on Plan International's webpage *Where We Work*, 22 (31.4%) criminalise same-sex sexual acts. These laws are a very strong driver of violence and exclusion, but there is not typically a direct connection between laws of this kind, and those which restrict the ability of CSOs to operate and register. CSOs defending the rights of LGBTIQ+ people exist in all but two countries that Plan International works in. Chapters 3.3 and 4 contain more detailed discussions on the need for nuance in response to legal and social context when working globally.

Much attention has been focused on these developments in the global North. However, much change has also come from the global South, with movements in Latin America, South and Southeast Asia and Southern Africa, playing strong roles in driving change.

Amidst this rising challenge, international development and humanitarian sector NGOs that espouse rights-based approaches have been slower in realising the role they can, and will need, to play to support people of diverse SOGIESC – if they are to reach the furthest behind first. LGBTIQ+ people experiencing multiple inequalities, such as young people, and people living in the global South and East, are especially vulnerable to marginalisation, invisibility and silencing. As Plan International's 2015 policy report *Strengthening Plan's Support to LGBTIQ Adolescents* has explored, inequalities based on age and SOGIESC often intersect to make young LGBTIQ+ people particularly at risk of exclusion and harm:

Negative experiences of LGBTIQ adolescents are influenced by widespread myths and misinformation, such as that homosexuality is 'a sin', 'against traditional culture', 'un-natural', 'a western agenda'... Such harmful views are sometimes promoted by the very people who are central to the lives of young people, such as their parents, teachers of youth and religious leaders. For adolescents, the challenges related to being LGBTIQ often combine with – and make worse – other general issues experienced by their age group... They also inter-play with factors that make-up each individual's life – such as in the case of an adolescent who is also poor, a migrant and from an ethnic minority.

When LGBTIQ+ young people organise to express their rights, needs and strengths they often face exclusion within the movements and systems that should serve them. Nine in ten (91%) young LGBTI+ people globally report feeling their needs are 'never or almost never' considered in policy-making.² Whilst LGBTIQ+ young people are especially vulnerable to exclusion, young people are also often amongst the most supportive and insistent about LGBTIQ+ rights, demanding more nuance, more complexity and more intersectionality.³

Perhaps surprisingly, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have generally been slower to recognise the need to bring an LGBTIQ+ lens to their work, when compared with global private and public sector organisations.⁴ When they do begin this work, they often face specific challenges. As mission-focused organisations delivering frontline work in some of the most challenging contexts worldwide for all rights-holders, we see both an impulse and a deeply felt need to rush quickly to the 'how' of delivery and impact. Frontline work can be challenging and risky, especially for staff experiencing multiple inequalities. What little emerging research there is shows clearly that LGBTIQ+ development and humanitarian workers are themselves especially vulnerable to violence, exploitation, harassment, abuse, and discrimination. This is especially the case when they are working in challenging legal and social contexts, and especially when they are from those contexts themselves.⁵

2 Richard, G. (2018). *Summary Report of the Global Consultation on Inclusive Education and Access to Health of LGBTI+ youth around the world*. Paris: MAG Jeunes LGBT, with the support of UNESCO.

3 See, for example, IGLYO (2017) *Intersectionality Research*.

4 See, for example, Paine, Clare (2018) *Christian Aid and LGBTI Rights: Breaking the Silence*. Gender & Development, Vol. 26, Issue 1. See also, Save the Children (2019) *Save the Children Position Paper: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*, and Oxfam (2015) *Sexual Diversity and Gender Identity Rights Policy*.

5 See, for example, Feinstein International Center (May 2017) *Stop the Sexual Assault Against Development and Humanitarian Aid Workers*.

As Plan International's 2015 policy report also explored with welcome clarity: it's therefore vital that when we're working on LGBTIQ+ issues globally we do no harm. But in this context, doing nothing can be another way of doing harm. As the report emphasised:

Be aware of the fine line between a "do no harm" and a "do nothing" approach. Recognise that even in the most challenging of contexts, while respecting different opinions, something can be done to uphold the rights of LGBTIQ adolescents – even if the steps are small, indirect and discrete. Failing to learn about or respond to the needs of community members may reinforce their discrimination.⁶

This is not a new commitment for Plan International. LGBTIQ+ issues, alongside other exclusion issues, were addressed at the level of organisational change as part of Plan International's *Strategic Inclusion Review* in 2012. Staff in a range of countries – including Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Thailand and others – were developing and delivering pioneering work on LGBTIQ+ issues prior to the 2015 policy report. A 2013 position paper *Putting Children and Young People's Rights at the Heart of the post-2015 Agenda*, recommended the repeal of discriminatory laws which criminalise same-sex relationships. Indeed, the organisation has demonstrated elements of considerable leadership in its sector on LGBTIQ+ issues over the past few years. The three-year project this evaluation addresses represents a substantial piece of work in the sector. It has clearly helped make LGBTIQ+ issues visible within Plan International and helped ensure they stay on the agenda. There's every reason now to ensure this work is built on.

1.2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

In 2015, Plan International Sweden and Plan International UK commissioned the 2015 policy report cited above. This reviewed Plan International's work to date, mapped the global context for LGBTIQ+ young people, and made recommendations for how the organisation could strengthen its programming, influencing, and institutional support to LGBTIQ+ adolescents. It was based on consultation with Plan International staff and key external stakeholders.

The three-year project under evaluation, *Strengthening Plan International's Support to LGBTIQ Adolescents* was developed in response to this 2015 review. The project was very intentionally focused on internal change; on building the capacity, understanding and awareness of Plan International staff to engage on SOGIESC issues, and enabling the organisation to address root causes of issues facing LGBTIQ+ young people. The project therefore included a strong focus on staff learning. It also entailed an ambition to build organisational capacity to engage on LGBTIQ+ issues, including through improved LGBTIQ+ inclusion in guidance and policies.

The project was funded by the Swedish Postcode Lottery, with a total budget of six miljoner SEK. It was delivered between July 2016 and September 2019. The project proposal was initially developed by staff at Plan International's Swedish National Office (SNO) and Global Hub or International Headquarters (IH), with later support from the United Kingdom National Office (UKNO). Staff at SNO and UKNO played key roles in initially mobilising resources and liaising with country and regional office-based staff who would become involved in delivery.

⁶ Plan International (2015) *Strengthening Plan International's Support for LGBTIQ Adolescents*. Full report, p. 33.

However, the majority of the project was managed by staff at Global Hub, particularly, the Gender Equality and Inclusion team, in close collaboration with key country-based staff and two specialist external consultants.

The overall **purpose** of the project was:

- To enable Plan International to systematically address the discrimination and exclusion of young people based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The **main objectives** of the project were:

1. To build the capacity, understanding and awareness of issues faced by LGBTIQ+ adolescents among Plan International staff.
2. Support Plan International to recognize and address the root causes of issues faced by LGBTIQ+ adolescents.

The **key intended results** were:

1. Plan International's staff has increased understanding and a positive attitude towards LGBTIQ+ adolescents.
2. Plan International recognizes and addresses the root causes of LGBTIQ+ adolescent's vulnerability.

The key **activities and outputs** related to this process included:

- Creation and delivery of a blended learning module *Adolescents in all their Diversity* as part of the organisation's broader *Planting Equality 2.0* curriculum. The module was piloted in six countries (Benin, China, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru and Thailand). A total of 137 staff attended the pilots.

- Delivery of two regional Trainer of Trainer workshops with staff from Regional Office of the Americas (ROA) and Asia Regional Office (ARO), attended by 55 staff from over 20 offices.
- Creation and delivery of a further SOGIESC specific module *We Are Diverse* as part of the organisation's broader *Champions of Change* programme.
- Creation of the new guidance *Diversity Matters*, to equip staff to improve their support to LGBTIQ+ young people in existing programmes and influencing work.
- Input and support for the development of various organisational policy level processes, including the inclusion of SOGIESC issues in key policy areas.

Additionally, the project's contribution also consists in a number of less clearly defined but still substantive outputs. These include liaison between various LGBTIQ+ initiatives across the organisation, supporting broader policy development initiatives, and promoting the visibility of LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International. As such, the project has been a very key component in Plan International's work on LGBTIQ+ inclusion at a general level, over the past three years. However, it is not the only element. Other work on these issues has taken place at the same time. For example, that supported by National Offices outside of the scope of this project; that taking place in alignment with the organisation's work on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR); and significant Country Office-driven work related to LGBTIQ+ issues in, for example, Latin America, West Africa, and Southeast Asia.

1.3. AIMS OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation was commissioned to address three **main questions**:

1. To what extent were the objectives achieved?
2. What were the major factors that influenced the achievement/non-achievement of these objectives?
3. How can Plan International build on the lessons learned from this project to strengthen how LGBTIQ+ adolescents are supported in programming and influencing, and in the workplace?

It answers these questions through reference to three **evaluation criteria**:

EFFECTIVENESS

The extent to which, and the reasons behind, the achievement (or not) of the project objectives, and whether these are leading to unintended (positive or negative) consequences for anybody involved or affected by the interventions.

RELEVANCE

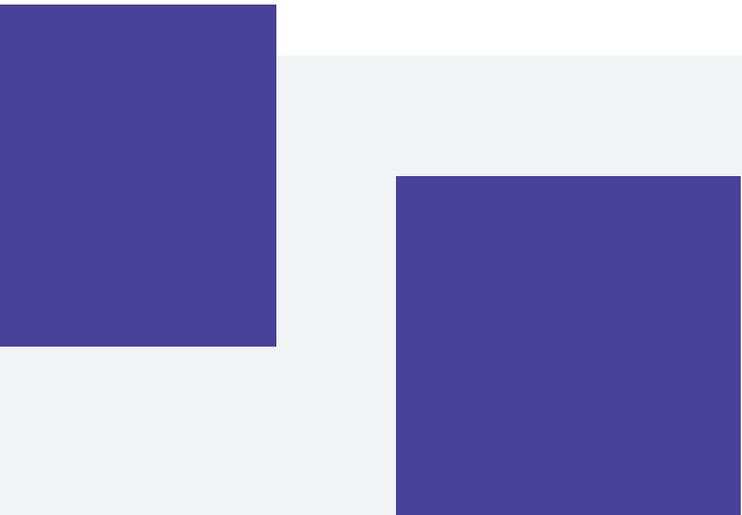
The extent to which the interventions and approaches were contextualised and relevant to the priorities and policies of Plan staff and youth they were intended to benefit.

SUSTAINABILITY

The probability of continued long-term benefits for Plan staff and youth after the project has been completed.



Participants of the Gender and Inclusion Group (GIG) in Bangkok, December 2019. Credit: Plan International



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The project *Strengthening Plan International's Support for LGBTIQ Adolescents* was broadly successful in developing an action learning model to help build the capacity, understanding and awareness of issues faced by LGBTIQ+ adolescents, amongst Plan International staff. The materials developed for *Adolescents in all their Diversity* (*Planting Equality 2.0* module) are high quality, thoughtfully developed, extensively piloted, and expressive of a high level of commitment to doing this work carefully, meaningfully and well. To be more effective, relevant and sustainable, this work needs to be consolidated, scaled, and further developed. Core resources need to be made available for this, as part of the general implementation of *Planting Equality 2.0*.

The project has also supported Plan International staff, and some of the young people they serve, to recognise and address the root causes of issues faced by LGBTIQ+ adolescents. The findings from the pilot of *We Are Diverse* (*Champions of Change* module) in Peru, which worked directly with a group of young people on LGBTIQ+ issues, are overwhelmingly positive. This supports the case for further piloting and a broader application of *We Are Diverse*. The idea behind the new SOGIESC-inclusive guidance *Diversity Matters* is important: to support staff to mainstream SOGIESC issues in their wider work, and to get beyond the idea that LGBTIQ+ issues are an 'add-on'. The execution of the resource is

sound and, to be truly effective, it will need to be meaningfully operationalised, and accompanied by wider tools in this space.

The project was also key in supporting LGBTIQ+ inclusion in key policy areas at the organisational level, to an improved extent than three years ago. Overall, however, the inclusion of people of diverse SOGIESC within Plan International's policy frameworks is still marginal, unclear and inconsistent (examined in Chapter 3.3). As opportunities to mainstream LGBTIQ+ issues within some key internal policy areas appeared, an opportunity was missed to develop a standalone LGBTIQ+ position paper that would have offered much needed clarity on Plan International's support for the rights, needs and strengths of LGBTIQ+ people (also supported by survey findings in Chapter 3.4).

Major factors for the project contribution (see especially Chapter 3.3) included good momentum for LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International, a passionate and committed project team, and strong support from a range of country and regional office staff in the pilot countries (Benin, China, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru and Thailand). Strong efforts to work in partnership with LGBTIQ+ CSOs, and sound efforts to contextualise the curricula also contributed to good outcomes. Drivers for energetic country office engagement include rising interest from young people in learning about LGBTIQ+ issues in different

regions; alignment with strategic and resource mobilisation opportunities; the dedication of key leaders (both senior leaders and committed 'champions' for LGBTIQ+ issues); and positive organisational cultures around LGBTIQ+ issues in participating offices. When positive policy changes did happen, senior leadership and cross-departmental support was decisive in enabling change.

Major factors for project limitations include a tendency for various staff, including those in senior roles, to frame LGBTIQ+ issues as not part of core (basic/thematic/normal) work at Plan International, and as contentious (tricky/uncomfortable/taboo/difficult/complicated/risky). Other key factors included a general low prioritisation of LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International, especially by those with the power to set broader parameters. The prevalence of myths, fears and guesswork in relation to effective cross-cultural working on LGBTIQ+ issues – where transformative and evidence-based approaches could exist – also drove limitations. Ultimately, the most important root causes of limitations to the project are, we believe, related to organisational culture around LGBTIQ+ issues; in part supported by unclear policy frameworks and inconsistent senior leadership commitment. Indeed, one of the main arguments advanced in this report, is that making Plan International's commitment to LGBTIQ+ issues more core, clear and consistent, would be decisive in resolving the other major challenges people discussed in relation to this area of work.

Together, this all points to a need for strengthened attention overall to LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International. The original purpose of this project was 'to enable Plan International to systematically address the discrimination and exclusion of young people based on their sexual orientation and gender identity'. However, to do that, a more

ambitious, holistic approach to meeting the needs of LGBTIQ+ staff, communities and young people is needed. This is also supported by evidence from the staff survey conducted as part of this evaluation (presented in Chapter 3.1). This found:

- Most respondents see the way Plan International addresses LGBTIQ+ inclusion as: unclear and inconsistent; marginal, invisible and silent; and/or limited, basic or absent.
- Less than four in ten (37.5%) of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that Plan International's position on LGBTIQ+ issues is clear to them.
- Despite this, there is very strong support amongst staff for work on LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International. Over three quarters (76.8%) of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that LGBTIQ+ issues are relevant to Plan International's core business and purpose.

Additionally, LGBTIQ+ staff face serious challenges – related to inclusion, safety, wellbeing and performance:

- Most staff don't have faith in their colleagues' ability to create inclusive environments. Almost two-thirds (62.5%) of respondents 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' their colleagues are equipped to create inclusive environments in relation to LGBTIQ+ issues. 15.6% of staff 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with this statement.
- 53.9% of respondents 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that 'the safety needs of LGBTIQ+ staff working in different contexts are understood at Plan International'. 13.9% of staff 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with this statement.

- LGBTIQ+ staff, particularly LGBTIQ+ staff experiencing multiple inequalities, do not feel as able to 'bring the best of myself to work', compared with their non-LGBTIQ+ colleagues. Whilst 75% of heterosexual male staff said they are supported to 'bring the best of myself to work', this figure was just 52.4% for LGBTIQ+ women and gender minorities.

Separately, LGBTIQ+ young people are also being left behind in the programming and influencing work of Plan International to a striking extent:

- Two thirds of offices which responded to the Gender and Inclusion Review survey 2019 (67.2%) said support for LGBTIQ+ groups is 'rarely' or 'never' integrated into their programming and influencing work. This compares very poorly with work on all other areas of exclusion. For the most addressed issues after gender (disability and ethnicity) this figure was 17.2% and 15.7% respectively.
- This also indicates that many of Plan International's offices (perhaps as many as one third) are not including LGBTIQ+ young people, for factors not reasonably explained by external constraints, such as legal and political context in different countries.

Ultimately, it is vital that we see this work in broader perspective. Individual staff capacity-building is important, but it does need to be seen as just one element of a more holistic approach to LGBTIQ+ inclusion. If Plan International is to get the best out of their LGBTIQ+ staff, keep them safe, and not leave LGBTIQ+ young people behind, a further reaching approach will be needed. Evidence presented in this report suggests change across five additional cross-cutting areas

would be effective, relevant and sustainable: policy and guidance; organisational culture; senior leadership commitment; internal network and representation development; and building the evidence base of the organisation.

For this approach to be meaningful, it needs to be supported by a different kind of conversation around LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International – involving new voices, new perspectives, and a new level of openness. This conversation can support Plan International to move from an ambivalent space (where LGBTIQ+ work is often invisible, marginal, and fragmented) to a more confident space (where LGBTIQ+ work is clearer, well-resourced, and more systemic). It could also bring in new voices and perspectives in conversations on cross-cultural working, risk, and global South and East leadership (explored in Chapter 4). These voices could help deepen this work, to more firmly serve some of the most vulnerable young people, girls and children Plan International works with.

In the section that follows, we briefly outline some of the evidence that supports the key conclusions and recommendations of this report. It responds to the evaluation questions in turn.

DETAILED KEY FINDINGS

1. To what extent did the project build capacity, understanding and awareness of issues faced by LGBTIQ+ adolescents among Plan International staff?

Key findings are:

- While some changes are suggested, overall the curricula *Adolescents in all their Diversity* (AIATD) and *We Are Diverse*, are high quality,

⁷ For readability, we have split evaluation question 1 (to what extent did the project achieve its objectives?) into two parts, in line with the two objectives.

inclusive, comprehensive, and the result of careful and thoughtful development. Involving local LGBTIQ+ partner organisations in development and delivery of AIATD made a substantial contribution to the effectiveness and relevance of workshops.

- As a result of participating in AIATD, staffs' confidence and self-reported knowledge of LGBTIQ+ issues improved substantially. Staff comfort in discussing LGBTIQ+ issues with colleagues, and family and friends, also improved. Participation led to small positive changes in attitudes about LGBTIQ+ people. Survey, KII and FGD data shows some significant practice change post-project. However, more data would be needed to assess whether these outcomes were amplified or constrained by other factors.
- The project was particularly energetically implemented in Latin America, with sound evidence the LGBTIQ+ materials will be of good support to staff in the region. This stands as an important example of the possibility for very strong outcomes where existing energy can be multiplied.
- Good efforts were made to support contextualisation of the curricula, including through involving LGBTIQ+ CSO partners to an extent that was innovative. At the same time, there is an opportunity and an incentive to strengthen these efforts further. By opening new spaces for participation and leadership of country and regional office-based champions, more fully in programme development from an earlier stage. There is an inclusion and a strategic case for this (see Chapters 3.3 and 4).
- Although *We Are Diverse* was only piloted once, the results from Peru are very promising. The content and delivery was clearly useful and engaging. Importantly, there is good evidence of deeper learning. The young people learnt about language and identity, but they also reported being more empowered and enabled to empathise, value differences, self-reflect, and act in support of LGBTIQ+ people.
- The creation of the SOGIESC modules within broader gender equality programming has enabled some dissemination of more inclusive and intersectional approaches to gender and SOGIESC issues. However (notwithstanding rare mentions of LGBTIQ+ terms) *Champions of Change* is centrally structured by strong binary and heteronormative ideas about 'girls' and 'boys' and the (opposing, paired) journeys that they are on. This is not inclusive of people of diverse SOGIESC, and so potentially undermines the effectiveness of *We Are Diverse* within the overall *Champions of Change* approach. *Planting Equality 2.0* was developed with a view to improving various aspects of the first iteration, including SOGIESC inclusivity. It has undergone finalisation during the evaluation period.
- Finally, the cascade training approach of *We Are Diverse* and AIATD places considerable responsibility on facilitators who may have limited experience with diverse SOGIESC topics. Interviews revealed two instances where pilot facilitators did not respond with required technical expertise or were not fully brought into the process; minor issues here, but likely to be magnified when scaling. Therefore, further support for facilitator capacity development to aid delivery of 'echo' programmes, is recommended.

1b. To what extent did the project support Plan International to recognize and address the root causes of issues faced by LGBTIQ+ adolescents?

- The AIATD and We are Diverse curricula support workshop participants to recognise the role that root causes – such as discrimination and stereotyping – play in driving exclusionary outcomes for LGBTIQ+ young people. They also encourage participants to address roots causes, by reflecting on their individual role, and potential for change at various levels. Wider change, including that at the organisational level, has been limited by the relatively small number of participants at pilot stage.
- As noted above, the project initially set out to support Plan International to develop an LGBTIQ+ position paper. This objective was changed part way through the project to focus on efforts to include LGBTIQ+ issues in various policy areas (Global Policies on Gender Equality and Inclusion, Safeguarding Children and Young People, Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination, and the SRHR Position Paper). Plan's new Gender Transformative Marker also explicitly includes SOGI issues as aspects of inequality staff should consider, alongside others, when evaluating effectiveness and inclusivity of work.
- Insofar as the baseline is previous work, these represent a sound – and by all accounts very hard won – set of improvements on the previous policy frameworks. However, this outcome falls short of previous evidence-based recommendations (the 2015 policy report recommended Plan International clarify its supportive position on LGBTIQ+ issues through a formal and clear public statement). In several key ways it also falls short of

best practice policy frameworks amongst comparable global employers, including in Plan International's sector. On their own terms, the policies do not centralise or prioritise LGBTIQ+ issues (evidenced in Chapter 3.3). This pattern of hard-won gains sitting within a broader context of still significant marginality, lack of clarity and lack of consistency is in line with other key findings (see in particular Section 3.4, pp. 46-47).

2. What were the major factors that influenced the achievement/non-achievement of these objectives?

Major supporting factors include:

- A dedicated team at the core of the project, along with allies in country and regional leadership. Within organisations at relatively early stages of LGBTIQ+ inclusion it is common for change to be driven by committed individuals, or 'champions'. This reliance is not however a *sustainable* strategy, as individuals may experience burn-out or may curtail activities if they experience too much resistance – presenting challenges to the organisation in terms of expertise and energy continuity.
- The evidence-based and thoughtful approach taken to the development of the curricula led to the creation of resources that effectively support staff learning. This includes the prioritisation of a do no harm approach (as recommended in the 2015 policy report) and tools to support this.
- The enthusiastic participation of country office staff and young people in the *We Are Diverse* pilot was essential, and a reminder of the importance of avoiding assumptions about content country offices and young people are willing to engage with.

Major limiting factors include:

- As discussed above, the tendency for some staff to frame LGBTIQ+ issues as non-core or contentious, in ways that marginalise inclusion efforts. This framing conflicts with staff survey results that suggest significant appetite for further inclusion, and the success of the Peru *We Are Diverse* pilot which suggests young people may be less worried about LGBTIQ+ inclusion than some staff.
- Insufficient budgeting for project staff time to achieve the project objectives (mitigated by the commitment of project staff to go above and beyond).
- Finally, it is clear that Plan International's increased prioritisation of gender equality has in some ways enabled a focus on SOGIESC issues. However, there is also considerable evidence that the ongoing prevalence of heteronormative, cisnormative, binary and non-intersectional understandings of gender (despite progress made in development of *Planting Equality 2.0* and other documents) also represents, at times, a very challenging context within which to articulate SOGIESC inclusion. Certainly, there is widespread evidence that it was hard for staff to convincingly convey the reality that many lesbians, bi people, and trans people are girls.

3. How might Plan International build on the lessons learned from this project to strengthen how LGBTIQ+ adolescents are supported in programming and influencing, and in the workplace?

- As noted above, 76.8% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that LGBTIQ+ issues are central to Plan International's business and purpose. A similar majority (70.5%) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' LGBTIQ+ issues are relevant to their day-to-day work.

- Survey findings support the case for improved clarity on Plan International's position on LGBTIQ+ issues; increased support for allies to be visible and vocal on LGBTIQ+ issues; and greater country level support for staff to address LGBTIQ+ issues in their contexts.
- Overall, survey findings suggest that – whilst committed actors and initiatives may be disconnected and not very visible – there is significant support out there for a more critical and far reaching approach (see Chapter 3.4).
- In addition to all of the above evidence, in KIIs and FGDs a great many staff also discussed opportunities for the organisation's influencing and communications work (both external and internal) to become clearer and more committed.

Additionally, this evaluation presents three areas around which new conversations might support strengthened work on LGBTIQ+ rights and inclusion, across Plan International's workplace, programming and influencing work. These are:

- Cross-cultural working and the creation of 'Embassy' spaces across the organisation.
- Risk.
- Global South and East leadership.

Detailed findings on these three discussion areas are presented in Chapter 3.3 and, especially, Chapter 4, together with suggestions for future work.



RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that Plan International – including senior leadership, staff across all departments and offices, and committed champions/individuals – commit to:

1. Create space for open and safe conversations within Plan International on LGBTQ+ inclusion

This conversation could address, for instance:

- How can the organisation's position on LGBTQ+ issues become more core, clear and consistent?
- What would need to change to ensure LGBTQ+ people are included across Plan International's programming and influencing work, and beyond gender? For example, in all of the Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AoGDs), and more squarely in flagship campaigns such as Girls Get Equal?
- What would need to change to ensure people of diverse SOGIESC in the global South and East, as well as LGBTQ+ people of colour, are supported to lead this conversation more? How can we create more nuanced discussions, which open space for perspectives of staff in the global South and East, who may already be leading this work, or may be vulnerable to harm based on their SOGIESC?

- How can we come at the conversation on risk in a more evidence based and inclusive way – where LGBTQ+ people are seen as people with rights, needs and strengths, rather than as subjects of risk?

2. Build on existing efforts to generate a more holistic approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion

Create a more holistic approach across five cross-cutting areas, in addition to staff capacity-building. These areas are changes in policy, leadership commitment, organisational culture, internal network and representation development, and building the evidence base of the organisation. This approach should build on existing LGBTQ+ efforts, such as the achievements and momentum of this project, and can align with Plan International's Theory of Change and evolving models for organisational change.

We recommend that senior leaders consider to:

3. Consistently make visible Plan International's support for LGBTQ+ people's rights, needs and strengths across programming and influencing, and in the workplace

When senior leaders demonstrated clear support for LGBTQ+ inclusion and rights it

was of tremendous value to staff and support to projects. However, this is happening inconsistently. Senior leadership would also be valuable in opening space for new conversations. For example, by supporting network and representation efforts for LGBTIQ+ staff and allies, supporting informal leaders, and signalling keenness to hear new perspectives.

4. Ensure all offices and departments function as inclusive and empowering environments for LGBTIQ+ staff and issues

A clear area for next steps is developing consistent 'Embassy' spaces across the organisation in which LGBTIQ+ staff can bring the best of themselves to work and can be safe (see Chapter 4). This is also needed to ensure the full implementation of core organisational policies, including the global policies on Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination, and Safeguarding Children and Young People. In creating this organisation-wide guarantee, it may be helpful to reinforce existing distinctions between the strategic ambition of building programmes and influencing work of support to LGBTIQ+ young people, and the internal requirement to create inclusive internal policies, values, behaviours, and cultures in which LGBTIQ+ people are included and safe. To be truly inclusive and empowering, we encourage Plan International to meet the challenge of raising this standard, creating this culture, and making this commitment clear and non-negotiable.

5. Bring the *Planting Equality 2.0* module, Adolescents in all their Diversity, to scale by allocating core budget for implementation and further development as part of *Planting Equality 2.0*

The curricula and materials developed are of high quality, and this represents an early opportunity to consolidate existing

contributions, in support of a more holistic approach. Appropriate and dedicated funding is needed for these activities and for scaling-up in contexts where pilots have already occurred, as well as in Global Hub and National Offices. Further development is also recommended, including: creating and resourcing a stronger internal monitoring and evaluation framework; revisiting some of the attitudes and practices activities (namely, 4, 5 and 10); and piloting an appropriately amended curricula in new sub-regions, where it is feasible and safe to do so in partnership with country offices and LGBTIQ+ CSOs (e.g. in MEESA, WACA and ARO).

We recommend that key staff in the Global Influencing and Partnership (GIP) Department, with the full support of the Leadership Team, the International Board and colleagues in relevant Departments (e.g. GIRL Department) commit to:

6. Develop an LGBTIQ+ Inclusion position paper which clarifies the organisation's support for LGBTIQ+ rights

This was recommended in Plan International's policy report on LGBTIQ+ issues in 2015, *Strengthening Plan International's Support for LGBTIQ Adolescents*. It is often a key step for organisations in Plan International's sector. It would put beyond doubt the organisation's commitment to LGBTIQ+ issues. A position paper is an opportunity to articulate how LGBTIQ+ rights is clearly linked to organisational priorities such as gender equality and girls rights. It could outline opportunities for external-facing work and review existing evidence. It could address ways of working on LGBTIQ+ issues and offer best practice examples of how to do this safely and well. Working with the human resources team, it could also offer opportunities to more fully address issues of risk and partnership working, and to specify the forms of support staff in different legal and social environments can expect.

We recommend the Human Resources and Operations Department (HROD) consider to:

7. Commit to a workplan for reviewing LGBTIQ+ inclusion in internal policies, in measures supporting talent acquisition and retention, supporting staff safety and mobility, and in organisational capacity to make informed risk management decisions

A workplan is one way of assuring review and revision of relevant internal policies, with a view to meeting legal, policy and best practice standards for LGBTIQ+ inclusion and rights. An important priority is developing a global mobility policy framework which addresses the safety and wellbeing needs of LGBTIQ+ staff. Bringing an LGBTIQ+ lens to policies, guidelines, training and other instruments to support talent acquisition and retention is another key step. Carrying out an organisation-wide risk assessment of the legal, social and internal environments Plan International staff live and work in, to help guide policy and practice development, is also recommended. Staff capacity to do this work, without jeopardising case work and business as usual, would need to be factored in. So, business planning cycle alignment and core funding should be collectively contemplated.

8. Strengthen collection of data on the experiences and needs of LGBTIQ+ staff, utilising tools such as inclusion indexes for benchmarking Plan International's progress on SOGIESC inclusion

As Plan International is on a journey toward diverse SOGIESC inclusion it is vital to understand the needs of LGBTIQ+ staff, keep track of progress, and guide staff on steps toward transformation. A regular, dedicated LGBTIQ+ staff survey would be a sound first step. Questions related to SOGIESC should also be mainstreamed within monitoring systems, alongside information gathering

on other dimensions of inclusion. Consider developing or integrating existing external benchmarking tools and resources, to ensure regular insights.

We recommend that committed individuals (LGBTI+ Staff and Allies) at Plan International consider to:

9. Create a Global LGBTIQ+ Staff Network, a Global Allies Network, and Senior Champions roles to support representation of LGBTIQ+ staff

Create an organisation-wide LGBTIQ+ Staff Network, equipped to articulate issues of relevance to staff and to support policy review, organisational development and learning. Create an accompanying Global Allies Network to facilitate action by non-LGBTIQ+ staff at Plan interested in becoming more supportive. Consider appointing Senior Champions to ensure effective articulation and support for the networks. Look at different models for how other global employers have done this across challenging global contexts for LGBTIQ+ people, including those in relevant sectors.

We recommend that the programmes team, together with key staff in Country, Regional and National Offices:

10. Collaborate to identify opportunities for new signature programme development aligned with Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AoGDs)

Consider examples of early leadership from colleagues in Peru (who piloted the *We Are Diverse* module of Champions of Change) and Thailand (working in Inclusive and Quality Education) to develop and scale effective programme models of support to LGBTIQ+ children and young people in areas of education, violence and gender equality. Identify further opportunities to role model Plan International's support for LGBTIQ

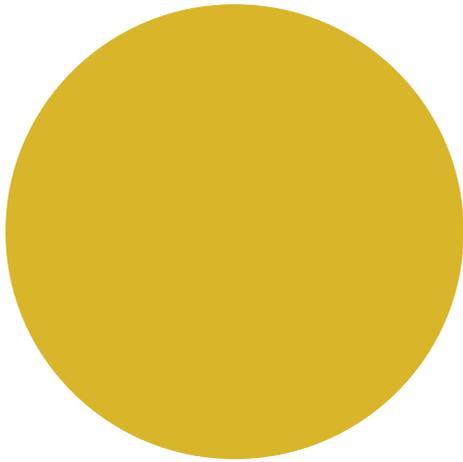
children and young people, aligned with other strategic priorities and AoGDs, for example, on skills and work, and youth activism. As part of this developmental approach, colleagues in the global South and East should be supported to further lead in programme development work, from conceptualisation stage, and new lateral collaborations amongst colleagues working on LGBTIQ+ issues in diverse contexts could be supported and initiated.

11. Strengthen staff capacity and resources for integration of SOGIESC-inclusive approaches in existing and new programmes and influencing work

The tendency to conceptualise LGBTIQ+ people as a separate entity, rather than seeing the relevance of SOGIESC issues across all Plan work, undermines a genuinely inclusive approach. Whilst specific or signature programming is important, we recommend building on the important idea behind *Diversity Matters*, to develop more substantive frameworks and tools for programming and influencing staff to include people of diverse SOGIESC in core aspects of existing and new work. Effective operationalisation will also require staff in business development, programme design, programme management and allied roles to integrate analysis from the new Gender Transformative Marker and agreements from *Diversity Matters* into workflows. Decision-makers need to support integration of SOGIESC components into programme design.

12. Integrate diverse SOGIESC inclusion into existing gender equality, women and girls programming and influencing

The tendency to conceptualise LGBTIQ+ people as a separate entity also overshadows the fact that many LGBTIQ+ people are women and girls. There is significant scope to integrate issues for lesbian, bisexual, trans, intersex and other queer women and girls into Plan International's existing women and girls focused programming and influencing work. Women and girls of diverse SOGIESC are often invisible or marginalised within LGBTIQ+ communities and organisations, partially due to patriarchal norms and low levels of funding. Addressing marginalisation of LGBTIQ+ women is consistent with existing Plan International organisational values and strategy commitments.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The evaluation team reviewed key internal policy and guidelines regarding Plan International's approach to LGBTIQ+ inclusion, and evidence that shaped these documents including *Strengthening Plan International's Support for LGBTIQ+ Adolescents* (2015) and the *Strategic Inclusion Review* (2012). The team also reviewed design documents for the project, along with outputs, including facilitators guides, curricula materials and programme guidance. Appendix I contains a list of key documents consulted. Project-level assessment data was also analysed. This included pre-programme and post-programme assessment data collected as part of AIATD and *We are Diverse*. Key findings are in Chapter 3.1.

2.2. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

A total of five focus group discussions (FGDs) were held as part of this evaluation. They took place in the United Kingdom, Sweden,

Benin, China and Peru. The first two, in the UK (at Global Hub) and Sweden, were facilitated in person by one of the team lead for the evaluation (Emily Dwyer, Managing Director, Edge Effect) in mid-October 2019. Plan International staff also facilitated and provided reports to capture discussions from three FGDs in Benin, China and Peru in early November 2019. These were three of the six locations where pilots were conducted, each representing a particular region.

FGDs addressed the strengths and areas for improvement of the project, as well as broader perspectives on barriers, opportunities and next steps for Plan International's LGBTIQ+ related work. Most of them involved Plan International staff only, but a group of young people involved in Plan International Peru's delivery of *We Are Diverse* participated in a group discussion in early November. Sessions were around two hours in length. FGDs involved people involved, or not, in this specific project, and people from various departments and levels of seniority.

2.3. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

17 semi-structured interviews and/or meetings were held with people with a role or interest in the project, including two respondents who preferred to contribute in writing. Respondents included members of the project team, consultants, coordinators of pilots, senior managers, representatives from key departments, and representatives of LGBTIQ+ civil society organisations that partnered in delivery. Most of these interviews and/or meetings were conducted remotely by the principal evaluator (Dr. Claire House, Program Specialist, Edge Effect). A limited number were conducted in person in the UK and Sweden by the evaluation team lead (Emily Dwyer, Managing Director, Edge Effect). Whilst many conversations were recorded, some participants felt more comfortable speaking in unrecorded settings. The evaluators therefore facilitated this.

The team responsible for the project and evaluation at Plan International identified the majority of people for interview ahead of the evaluation start. This was practical given the timescales for and scope of the evaluation, and a need to prioritise the involvement of people with direct engagement in and knowledge of the project. Evaluators also added a small number of people to this initial list based on initial discussions and snowballing. However, we should note that this sampling approach may have reduced opportunities to hear from people who were potentially more critical or less knowledgeable of this area of work. The online survey (see below) was identified as a chance to hear some of these wider perspectives. The evaluators also took steps to facilitate conversations in FGDs and KIIs in which people could speak freely and openly.

Types of people invited for interview:

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES
Project team	3
Consultants	2
Country and regional offices	4
Other department representatives	2
Senior managers	3
National offices	2
LGBTIQ+ CSO partners	1
Total	17

2.4. ONLINE SURVEY

A brief online anonymous survey for staff was developed and remained open from October 24 with an advised close date of November 5. This approximately 7-10-minute survey included questions on a range of issues more broadly related to Plan International's organisational context, and current and potential future work on LGBTIQ+ issues. Questions covered, for instance:

- Visibility of the project under evaluation.
- Staff capacity to create inclusive environments in relation to LGBTIQ+ issues.
- LGBTIQ+ staff safety and wellbeing.
- Development of programmes and strategy on LGBTIQ+ issues.
- The organisation's approach to LGBTIQ+ issues overall.

With a view to managing the number of input requests going to staff, the survey was disseminated through a limited number of key internal networks.⁸ This was, intentionally, a very brief tool to test staff views on these issues for the purposes of this evaluation (initially contracted for just two months), and to offer opportunities for more critical, reserved and/or vulnerable views to surface.

147 survey responses were received. This sample size provides room for offering reliable findings on a range of issues. It can also enable findings on the experiences of some groups of staff, such as LGBTQ+ staff (45 respondents), women (95 respondents) and staff working in different regions (58 staff). It can also offer tentative findings on the relationships between these three dimensions. For example, LGBTQ+ staff in the global South and East (15 respondents) and women of diverse SOGIESC

(28 respondents). However, the sample is not large nor diverse enough to reliably explore the experiences of smaller sub-groups of Plan International staff, such as LGBTQ+ staff in some regions, when compared with others.

We also lack evidence on: a) the views of staff in Latin America (regrettably, the survey was only made available in English); the views of trans, non-binary and intersex staff; and c) how dimensions of inequality and identity other than SOGIESC and gender affect people's experiences and views. Profiling views of staff who identify as LGBTQ+ and POC, and/or queer, trans and intersex people of colour (QTIPOC), as well as LGBTQ+ staff in specific regions, could prove particularly important in future review work in this area.⁹ An overview of survey respondents, and key results from the survey are included in Chapter 3.4. Appendix II provides a list of survey questions.

⁸ This included the staff Gender and Inclusion Network, AoGD Networks, and Safeguarding, Sponsorship, HROD, GIRL and GIP departments in Global Hub. Recipients were encouraged to share the survey with wider colleagues.
⁹ The range of profiling questions (SOGIESC identity, gender, etc.) was deliberately limited to avoid compromising respondents' anonymity.



Adolescents in all their Diversity workshop. Credit: Plan International

3. RESULTS

3.1. BUILDING CAPACITY, UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS AMONGST PLAN INTERNATIONAL STAFF

This first section presents results on the extent to which this first project objective was achieved. It introduces the two SOGIESC-focused modules created through this project, *Adolescents in all their Diversity* (hereafter, AIATD) and *We Are Diverse*. It outlines data on the impact of each, gained through pre-programme and post-programme surveys. This provides the basis for a deeper discussion in section 3.4, concerning major influencing factors for the achievement and limitations of the project.

Development and delivery of Adolescents in all their Diversity

Created and piloted through this project, AIATD is a SOGIESC-specific blended learning module within Plan International's wider 12-module staff capacity-building programme, *Planting Equality: Getting it Right for Girls and Boys*. The scope of both *Planting Equality* and AIATD is substantial. AIATD blends pre-programme online elements, a two-day

face-to-face workshop, and follow up elements, including the creation of videos to share learning. AIATD content was developed over six months, ahead of piloting. The development and delivery team included two specialist external consultants. It also included the Gender and Inclusion Officer and Gender and Inclusion Specialist, situated in the Gender Equality and Inclusion team at Global Hub.

Narrow and prescriptive gender norms are deeply damaging for girls, and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and questioning (LGBTIQ+) adolescents who are often discriminated against or targeted with violence because they do not conform to rigid gender roles. We cannot stand by and allow these harmful norms to prevent girls and LGBTIQ+ adolescents from achieving their full potential... To be truly gender transformative, we must challenge these norms and celebrate diversity, moving beyond the binary interpretation of gender. We must embrace, empower and learn from LGBTIQ+ adolescents as part and parcel of our programming and influencing work.

Adolescents in all their Diversity, Facilitator Guide, Foreword

Through this project, the AIATD module was tested through six in-country workshops, in Benin, China, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru and Thailand. 137 staff attended these workshops. Two regional Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops were additionally delivered, to equip staff from various countries to deliver the programme in future. These were held in ROA (involving 24 staff from 13 offices) and ARO (involving 31 staff from 16 offices). Already, 350 staff have attended a workshop delivered by facilitators trained through the TOTs, in four countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Guatemala). The piloting approach mirrors that of *Planting Equality* generally, which was piloted in each region at least twice and contained a TOT element.

Literature review, and interviews with the project team, show the materials developed were thoughtfully and coherently conceptualised and put together. It is clear, for example, that care was devoted to seeking a fair and inclusive balance between workshop participants' needs to start learning about SOGIESC issues, including language, and the needs of diverse SOGIESC communities to be recognised in all their diversity. Consistently, the materials encourage participants to apply an at once intersectional and perspective-taking lens through, for example, inviting participants to reflect on their own SOGIESC (whether LGBTIQ+ or not), and their own role in cultures and societies where stereotypes, myths and discrimination, impact everyone including LGBTIQ+ people. As such they encourage participants to see an LGBTIQ+ lens as not separate and marginal from, but as central to, and enabling of, broader social change efforts. The materials usefully link

back consistently to Plan International's work, enabling participants to see connections between individual, organisational and societal levels of change. The supporting materials are highly comprehensive and aimed at supporting usability. For example, there are substantive sections on safety, security and emergency planning, pre-planning checklists for facilitators, and risk assessment guidance and tools. As one interviewee explained of the curricula overall:

I think some of the strengths [of AIATD] are that it was based on evidence and good practice... It very much took a step-by-step process... so it doesn't chuck people in at the deep end. It very much looks at people's own thoughts and feelings, and takes them... on a journey, to looking at... the impact of things such as stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice on LGBTIQ+ adolescents. And, very importantly, connecting it to Plan's work so really showing that it isn't some area that has no connection to Plan, but is very much part and parcel of Plan's work. And that was a really critical thing throughout this whole process, to try to build Plan's own ownership of these issues.

Measuring the impact of Adolescents in all their Diversity workshops

Pre-programme and post-programme surveys were completed by participants as part of delivery. Questions measured changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices. 160 people completed a pre-programme survey ahead of attending one of the country or regional workshops. The post-programme surveys were completed by participants, and collated by the project team, after all the workshops had been completed, in autumn 2019. 62 respondents completed a post-programme survey.¹⁰

¹⁰ The smaller post-programme sample is still substantial, but it may introduce different effects on the data. For example, respondents with stronger opinions, whether supportive or critical, may have completed post-surveys.

Key results

Overall, the responses indicate that, as a result of attending a workshop, participants’:

- Confidence they know about SOGIESC issues improved substantially.
- Level of comfort in discussing SOGIESC issues with colleagues, and friends and family, improved.
- Knowledge of SOGIESC issues improved to a limited extent.
- View that LGBTIQ+ issues are relevant to their day-to-day work decreased.
- Attitudes towards SOGIESC issues improved to a limited extent.

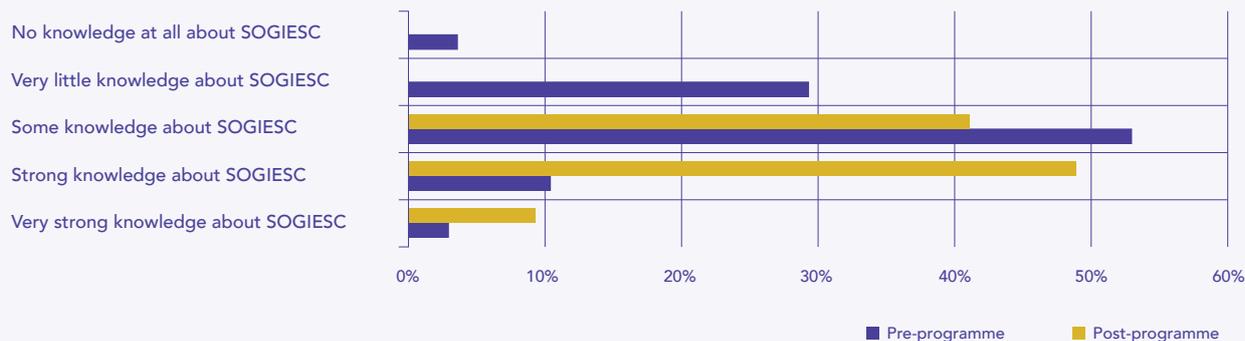
Self-reported knowledge about SOGIESC issues improved substantially amongst participants, after they completed the programme (see chart below). 100% of workshop participants said they had at least ‘some knowledge about SOGIESC’ after completing the programme. Pre-programme, this figure was just two thirds of respondents (66.2%). Those who said they had ‘strong

knowledge about SOGIESC’ improved a remarkable five-fold (from 10.6% to 49%). This shows participants are substantially more confident in their knowledge of SOGIESC issues, and possibly more knowledgeable about them.

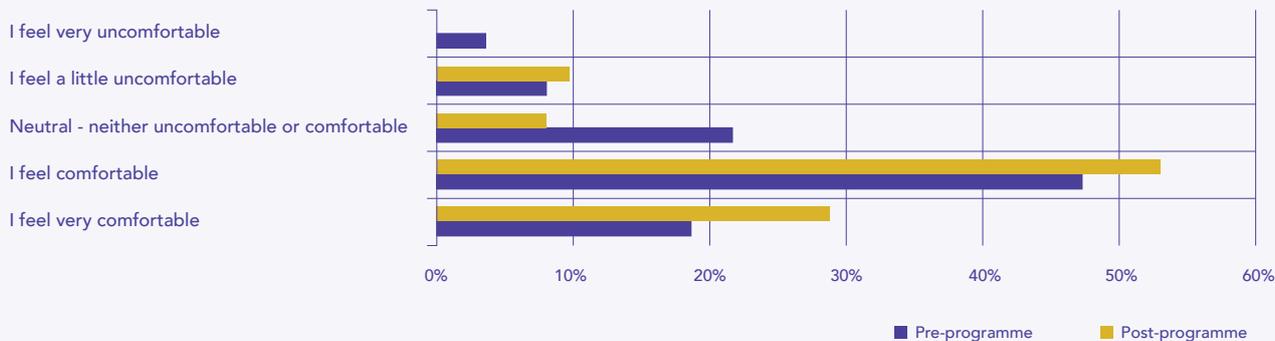
Participants levels of comfort in discussing LGBTIQ+ issues improved, both with family and friends, and colleagues at work. The latter change is shown in the chart below. This shows the programme is supporting participants to feel more comfortable about discussing LGBTIQ+ issues in different areas of their lives.

Regarding participants’ knowledge on SOGIESC related issues, the data shows that knowledge improved across four out of five measures (see chart below). On one question (whether being gay is a lifestyle choice) participants appear to have slightly less insight after the programme. Overall though, it is also important to note that the baseline on some of the questions was already relatively high. On questions one and four, for example, 86.9% and 95% of staff already agreed with these positive statements before the programme. This obviously contains the feasible scope for positive improvements.

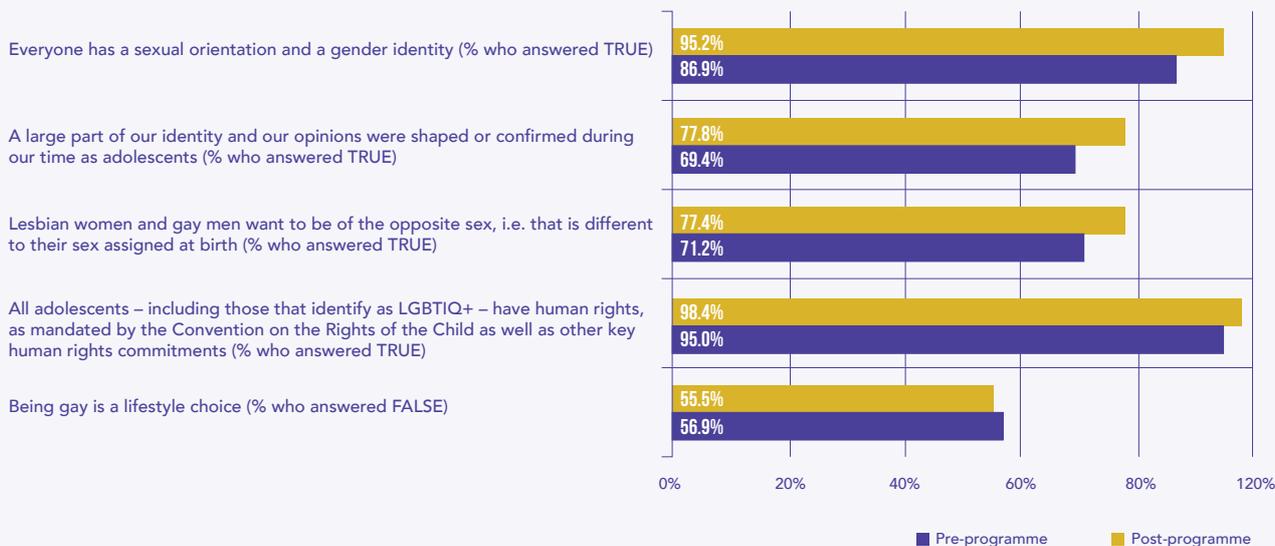
How would you assess your existing knowledge about sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)?



How comfortable do you feel about discussing issues related to SOGIESC and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning (LGBTIQ+) adolescents with your colleagues at work?



Please indicate if the following statements are true or false



Respondents see LGBTIQ+ issues as less relevant to their day-to-day

The assessment results suggest that, after attending the programme, more staff see LGBTIQ+ issues as just 'relevant' as opposed to 'very relevant' to their day-to-day work. Before the programme 69% of respondents said LGBTIQ+ issues were 'very relevant' to their work. After the programme, this was just 51.6% of respondents. This is a substantial decrease. However, the qualitative responses suggest there is positive movement here. Many staff remarked in a specific follow up question that they recognise LGBTIQ+ issues need addressing more. It could therefore be that people now realise that LGBTIQ+ issues have been left behind in their work and are looking for ways to strengthen this focus.

Results suggest attitudinal change improves to a limited extent

The responses related to attitudinal change show a limited amount of positive change across 11 of the 12 measures (see chart below). This suggests that positive change is happening consistently, albeit to a limited extent. Again, it is worth considering that the baseline figures are already relatively positive on some measures, and so only limited positive change is feasible within a 100% threshold.¹¹ Additionally, the workshops were conducted 9-26 months prior to participants completing

a post-programme survey, which suggests relatively long-lasting change.

All of this established, it's important to note that change is more limited on this aspect, than on the above measures. Part of this may be explained by the assessment questions. They could be too broad; arguably representing macro-level societal issues and/or expressions of core values (rather than attitudes, feelings or opinions).¹² Without scaling back ambition, more impact might be revealed by different questions.¹³ The fact that some of the questions are of very varying meaning and value across contexts may also play a role in effective and consistent measurement (e.g. issues such as marriage and adoption, or human rights-based appeals generally, do not represent LGBTIQ+ community priorities in various contexts). Ultimately though, it may also be worthwhile revisiting Activities 4-5 of the module as well (i.e. those which focus most strongly on attitudinal change) to consider changing the approach or specific activities within it.

Practice change

The assessment data unfortunately doesn't provide for comparison of quantitative responses, from before and after the programme. There is comparable qualitative data. This shows some shift towards more active and affirmative individual responses by participants (if not necessarily more substantive,

¹¹ The attitudes data was also analysed in different forms. For example, we ran a set of numbers that excluded China (the pre-programme data from China was partial in one place, and respondents were particularly well-represented in the post-programme data). The results were broadly the same. Indeed, they were slightly less positive. This variance supports overall findings of limited change on this (attitudinal) aspect.

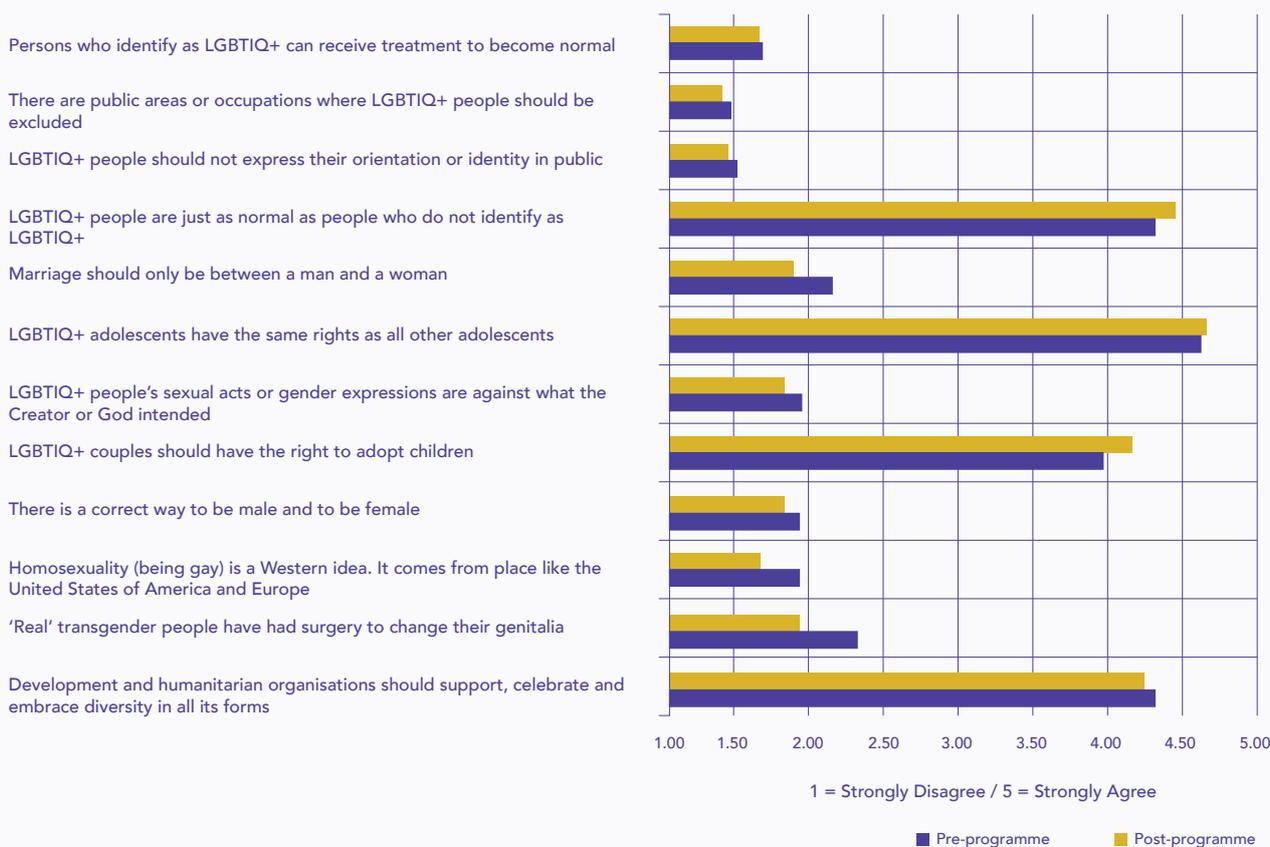
¹² There is also good evidence in emerging literature on LGBTIQ+ strategic communications, which emphasises the importance of developing framing approaches which show people how LGBTIQ+ issues align with their core values, e.g. for dignity, fairness, etc. (rather than pursuing value change per se). See, for example, Singizi Consulting (2018) *SOGIE Messaging Toolkit*, which is based on research and testing of LGBTIQ+ related opinion change approaches in Nigeria, Cameroon, Zambia and Mozambique. In the European context, the recent *Framing Equality* project, involving research by Public Interest Research Centre and ILGA Europe supports a similar approach.

¹³ For example, the capacity/desire/will to empathise with others, appreciate differences, self-reflect, and learn more (which appear to have shifted considerably amongst *We Are Diverse* participants – see below).

proactive or strategic actions being identified).¹⁴ More substantive follow up actions by staff involved in delivery (including further learning and development) were identified in KIIs and FGDs. Illustrative examples were:

- Creation of opportunities for country and regional directors to stand up for LGBTIQ+ issues.
- Development of new programme proposals on LGBTIQ+ issues in Benin and Latin America.
- TOT workshops being organised in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Guatemala.
- New commitments from staff to bring an LGBTIQ+ lens into other areas of work (e.g. education focus in Asia).
- New appetite for learning from and connecting with CSOs, amongst workshop participants, and improved relationships with partners, in some cases at organisational level.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (comparison of pre-programme and post-programme responses):



14 For this reason, as part of future programme learning and development, it may be helpful to revisit Activity 10, with a view to supporting participants to develop more proactive, collective and organisational level actions and/or to create more inclusive environments (as well as supporting reactive individual and inter-personal level actions or behaviours). A strengthened focus on supporting staff to uphold principles and take strategic steps required to create inclusive environments (regardless of the occurrence of specific individual instances of bullying, harassment or discrimination), is also supported by survey findings (see Section 3.1).

- Various examples of people confirming they – or participants they worked with – now feel more knowledgeable, confident and willing to stand up for LGBTIQ+ issues in various settings, including internally, amongst family and friends, and with communities Plan International works with.

Development and delivery of We Are Diverse

We Are Diverse is a SOGIESC-specific module situated in a wider Plan International programme, *Champions of Change*.¹⁵ *Champions of Change* works with girls and boys, separately (except for in the SOGIESC-focused module), to support them to develop respective 'journeys to empowerment'. It has been supported, implemented, or scheduled for implementation, in 54 countries. *We Are Diverse* comprises a face-to-face workshop and takeaway assignments. Like AIATD, it is clear that the curricula has been very thoughtfully and carefully created. Similarly, the learning and supporting materials are highly comprehensive, including sections on risk, emergency planning and creating safe spaces. *We Are Diverse* has so far only been piloted in Peru, with 20 young people, as part of this project. The project team advised that, when they reached out for country and regional office partners to deliver the project, they asked whether staff wished to be involved in AIATD and/or *We Are Diverse*. Only staff in Peru confirmed they would participate in both aspects of the project, and only after the first year of the project.

Measuring the impact of We Are Diverse workshops

19 of the young people completed pre-programme and post-programme questionnaires focused on their skills, confidence, knowledge, and attitudes towards LGBTIQ+ people and issues. Some of the post-programme quantitative data was unfortunately not fully collated. However, there is still a good level of data to analyse. The findings so far are also overwhelmingly positive.

Key results

Overall, the responses indicate that participants:

- Found the workshop content very useful and interesting.
- Key learnings are related to key language and identity issues.
- Key learnings are also related to more substantive, deeper learning, including the ability to empathise, respect differences, and act in support of LGBTIQ+ equality and non-discrimination.

95% of participants found the workshop very useful and very interesting. 18 of the 19 respondents said they found the *We Are Diverse* 'very useful and very interesting'. Just one said they found it 'useful and interesting'. Nobody said that found the workshop 'not useful and not interesting'. Asked why they responded this way, many respondents highlighted the knowledge they gained, and how they intended to use it. For example:

- 'Because they gave me some very interesting information which will help me to talk so much with my parents, siblings and people whom I should advise on the subject of SOGIESC.'

¹⁵ For more information, see Plan International's webpage on [LGBTIQ+ Inclusion](#).

- 'We can understand what's going on with LGBTIQ+ and we can help and inform.'
- 'This information is very useful for us, because with this knowledge we can support someone or some (LGBTIQ+). We can also inform people who have the wrong idea.'

Several participants also expressed the value for them of opportunities to build empathy and explore issues of rights and discrimination. For example:

- 'I could see that there are people who are different and at the same time the same as me.'
- 'It helps us to express ourselves more with others and so we can also know more about our rights.'
- 'Many times, we don't know it and we move away, and we even discriminate and exclude them.'

Learning relates to knowledge, but also respect for difference, greater empathy and support for equality

Additionally, when asked the top three things they learned, this deeper level of learning also comes through. Of the 55 responses given, many were related to knowledge around, for example, what SOGIESC means, who is part of the LGBTIQ+ community, and key issues for and within the community (21 of 55 responses). However, additionally, almost two thirds (62%) of self-reported learning was related to deeper, often more sustainable, changes in personal approach to LGBTIQ+ issues (34 of 55 responses). These included the below examples, in the table and chart.

Indeed, all the data so far suggests the curricula is meeting its objectives: to support young people to recognise and address issues, including root causes, faced by LGBTIQ+ adolescents. Participants gained basic knowledge of key issues, but they also made and felt connections between LGBTIQ+ issues and their individual thoughts, feelings and actions.

Support for equality, non-discrimination, rights and action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We are equal regardless of our sexual orientation ■ Don't discriminate against them for who they are ■ Taking a stand in different situations
Empathy, personal development, seeing things from other people's perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To be more empathic ■ That LGBTIQ+ people suffer a lot along the way ■ How to support others?
Respect for difference; no 'right' or 'normal' way to be; valuing people for who they are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ That it's not necessary to be 'normal' to be the way we are ■ Valuing people as they are ■ That we are diverse

What were the three most important things that you learned from the 'We Are Diverse!' workshop?



In further qualitative comments, many commented on their desire now to learn and act further in support of LGBTIQ+ young people in different spheres of their lives. They also praised the facilitation quality and the ability to hear directly from LGBTIQ+ people in their context about their lived experiences (i.e. one of the LGBTIQ+ CSO partners who co-facilitated).

Conclusion

The curricula developed should support staff to build their understanding, awareness and capacity of issues facing LGBTIQ+ young people. Both AIATD and *We Are Diverse* represent substantial, thoughtful contributions to Plan International's work to support

SOGIESC inclusion, and to meet the needs of young people in all their diversity. The major challenge for this aspect of the project now is to implement, amend and scale the initiative. As one staff member summarised, regarding impact overall:

There is much greater sensitivity, knowledge, interest in the subject matter, there are diverse staff members who have felt much more comfortable celebrating their diversity within Plan without any fear. We have set an example for our partners and our partners have also been very inspired by this work and have asked us to share the methodology. Young people see with great enthusiasm that Plan is opening up to address these issues and LGBTIQ organizations have taken us more into account to participate in learning spaces and advocacy for these populations.

3.2 RECOGNISING AND ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF ISSUES FACED BY LGBTIQ+ ADOLESCENTS

This section assesses the extent to which the second objective was achieved, 'Support Plan International to recognise and address the root causes of issues faced by LGBTIQ+ adolescents'. In contrast to the first objective, the focus here is on: a) root causes that drive outcomes for LGBTIQ+ young people; and b) organisational level change. Key project outcomes are considered in turn. The section first considers the capacity-building elements of the project. It then discusses the creation of new guidance *Diversity Matters*. It concludes by examining the policy development achievements of this project.

Capacity-building contribution

The SOGIESC modules, addressed in the last section, have also clearly contributed to this second objective. Both AIATD and *We Are Diverse* align with social ecological and social norms-based approaches, which emphasise the role individuals can play, in their wider inter-personal, organisational, cultural and societal contexts, in driving or challenging discriminatory outcomes. Therefore, pilot participants have been supported to recognise and address root causes of issues facing LGBTIQ+ adolescents. Overall, the assessment results show further impact would be enabled by wider application.

Outside of workshop settings, the creation of these modules has also fostered opportunities to build organisational-level engagement on SOGIESC diversities. As noted above, pilots provided opportunities for country and regional directors to express their – and Plan International's – support for LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

The project team also led in key activities to raise visibility of the project internally, including: the delivery of a well-attended Learning at Work week session on LGBTIQ+ issues at Global Hub offices; the creation of various well-distributed videos by AIATD pilot participants; the production of project and rainbow-themed accessories, such as lanyards, for staff to show their support; and the creation of external communications about the project.¹⁶ The project team also created a Project Steering Committee to support collaboration cross-organisationally, including around the creation of, a do no harm approach, with representatives from IH, SNO, UKNO, ROA, ARO, WACA and COs. This met periodically and comprised staff more directly involved in the project. A wider Project Advisory Committee, involving more staff in cross-departmental and senior roles, was also created (but did not work as effectively as the Steering Committee).

Development of *Diversity Matters*

Diversity Matters is guidance aimed at supporting staff in Country Offices and National Organisations, to integrate support for LGBTIQ+ young people into their wider programmes and influencing work, from design to delivery stages. It is designed to be relevant for targeted interventions (such as key LGBTIQ+-focused work undertaken in key country offices). Importantly, it is also designed to support staff to mainstream LGBTIQ+ issues in broader programming and projects as well.

As such, *Diversity Matters* represents a different level of work to individual capacity-building; directed more towards programmatic and, to an extent, organisational level change. It also represents a valuable impetus, supported across this evaluation: to try and ensure the needs of LGBTIQ+ young people are more

¹⁶ See, for example, the Plan International webpage [LGBTIQ Inclusion](#).

squarely addressed within Plan International's 'core' work, rather than being seen as an add-on requiring only exceptional, dedicated programming. *Diversity Matters* also responds to a practical demand, articulated in FGDs and KIs, for staff to be supported in moving beyond the 'why' of inclusion, and towards the technical 'how' of delivering support for LGBTIQ+ young people. The vision behind this resource is therefore a highly relevant response to organisational needs.

The guidance provides basic information regarding language and the needs of young people of diverse SOGIESC and outlines the case for inclusion. It summarises the organisational context for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, including how it relates to an effective implementation of Plan International's Global Strategy, Theory of Change, and initiatives across the six Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AoGDs). This should support sustainability; enabling staff to see the relevance of LGBTIQ+ inclusion in their day-to-day work, and to think strategically about opportunities for mainstreaming.

Plan's conceptual approach to inclusion can easily be applied to LGBTIQ+ children and young people – who often experience exclusion from social processes due to harmful social norms. A multi-dimensional approach is required to build understanding and to foster a more inclusive society where all members are respected, have their rights protected and are able to participate.

- *Diversity Matters*, p.12

Additionally, *Diversity Matters* focuses on supporting staff to recognise and address the root causes of issues faced by LGBTIQ+ adolescents, by again adopting a social norms-based approach and affirming connections with Plan International's broader approaches, policies and systems. It includes good practice examples, drawn from different country office contexts, and tools to support programme

effectiveness. This includes an adapted SOGIESC version of Plan International's new Gender Transformative Marker.

One of the obvious limitations of *Diversity Matters* is it has yet to be completed, shared and operationalised. A draft version has been circulated, and it is due to be finalised and disseminated in January 2020. Clearly, the success of this initiative will depend on how widely this guidance is read and used by staff, and the influence it is given, especially by senior staff. Whilst well-executed and striking a fair balance between succinctness and comprehensiveness as it is (it is 20 pages), it would also make sense for this to become one element of a much stronger policy and guidance framework cross-organisationally.

Policy development on LGBTIQ+ issues

The original project proposal included a further significant activity: to support Plan International to develop and endorse a global LGBTIQ+ policy position paper. This aligned with the findings and recommendations of the 2015 policy report, in particular, Recommendation three (see below). Part way through the project, however, a change to the focus of this activity was proposed and agreed by some key actors, including some members of the project team at Global Hub, staff at SNO, senior management, and the funder. Instead, the decision was taken to prioritise the mainstreaming of LGBTIQ+ issues within other key new or revised global policies. Notably, this included: Global Policies on Gender Equality and Inclusion, Safeguarding Children and Young People, and Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination. Staff consciously explained this decision, in part, in terms of a desire for fewer global policies, and a context of significant contention around the organisation's position paper on SRHR (see pp. 39-40). In this context, key staff saw it is unfeasible to press for a standalone position paper on SOGI issues (challenges analysed in Chapter 3.3).

Original project activity

Development and endorsement of a global policy position paper on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), with the support of the Global Influencing and Partnerships department at IH.

Recommendation three from the 2015 report

Develop and issue a clear and concise public statement of Plan's supportive position on LGBTIQ issues. This should refer to both: indisputable international mandates (such as the CRC); and Plan's own experiences of and commitment to supporting adolescents, including those that are marginalised. It should refer to and complement Plan's existing positions on other key areas, such as adolescent SRHR. Subsequently, the statement should be cited in all relevant organisational documents (such as overall and thematic strategies) and should be used to inform all institutional planning processes (such as to develop Country and Regional Plans).

The new Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion (2017) names 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' (but not 'gender expression' or 'sex characteristics') as part of a list of bases for exclusion that Plan International 'encounters'.¹⁷ It also includes a commitment to give 'particular emphasis' to building and strengthening partnerships with 'LGBTIQ' networks (as well as girls' rights movements, disabled people's organisations, and indigenous rights movements). 'LGBTIQ', 'gender identity' and 'sexual orientation' are included in the glossary.

Going further, the policy includes 'other genders' as well as 'women, men, girls and boys' in its opening statement on the organisation's understanding of gender-based discrimination, gender stereotyping and power relations (see below). In a powerful footnote connected to that opening statement, the policy states: 'We recognise that many individuals identify as male or as female. We also recognise that gender is not binary, and includes a continuum of possibilities. To facilitate ease of reading within this policy we refer to women, men, girls, and boys throughout. This does not in any way diminish our commitment to and work with individuals with other gender identities.'

Gender inequality and exclusion vary in their expression from place to place but, in all countries where we work, we encounter different forms of gender-based discrimination, gender stereotyping and an unequal distribution of power between women, men, girls and boys, and other genders,² as well as exclusion based on multiple factors. These factors include identities such as race, class, ethnicity, ability, language, sexual orientation, and gender identity, among others. We recognise that individuals have multiple identities that shape their experiences. We believe that our work on tackling gender inequality can be strengthened by examining how these identities intersect, and by using this learning to inform programmes and influencing.

- Plan International, Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion (2017)

Notwithstanding this strongly worded – *but also footnoted* – commitment, much of the text elsewhere in the policy and accompanying frameworks deploys a markedly binary and heteronormative understanding of gender. This mirrors the approach in the materials towards

¹⁷ Plan's previous Gender Equality Policy (2011) mentions 'sexual identity or orientation' as part of a list of exclusion issues that Plan is 'committed to overcome exclusion and discrimination... based on'. However, there is no inclusion of gender identity nor LGBTIQ+ communities or rights.

intersectionality: strongly-worded, high-level commitments are present. However, this commitment often dissipates when we move to the substantive and the operational (e.g. Areas 1-3 of the Implementation Guidelines) where women and girls are often presented as a unified category, and gender as a sole dimension of inequality. Whilst the footnote is inclusive, it is also ambivalent: it offers permission to not think more inclusively about gender-based discrimination and inequality, and not include people of all genders, in the rest of the text.

The practice of mentioning inclusion issues, but not applying an inclusion lens to the *analysis* of what would need to change to fully integrate an inclusion focus, means staff still lack guidance and standards on how to act in support of LGBTIQ+ issues in specific areas.¹⁸ Additionally, some key terms used are not consistently inclusive, and at times exclusive, of people of diverse SOGIESC, and intersectional insight generally. For example, the definition of 'gender justice' as 'the ending of inequalities between females and males, which result in women's and girls' subordination to men and boys' lacks an intersectional understanding. It does not acknowledge, for example, the specific forms of gender inequality and injustice which also affect LGBTIQ+ communities, especially LGBTIQ+ women; making them also, multiply, subordinated.¹⁹

That two other global policies now also include mention of SOGI issues does also represent a step forward from the previous policy frameworks. Plan International's Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People, and its Global Policy on Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination both include mention of 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity'. This does mean that SOGI issues are now at least mentioned in three of the nine global policies. The inclusion of LGBTIQ+ issues in the Safeguarding Children and Young People policy also meets one of the recommendations from the 2015 policy report (cited above). In both policies, mention of SOGI is almost exclusively within the legal and policy terms of protected characteristics, as would be standard practice for a United Kingdom headquartered INGO and global employer of this scope.²⁰

In addition to the nine global policies, Plan International also has a larger range of position papers. Papers exist on key thematic areas including: Inclusive and Quality Education; Climate Change; Child, Early and Forced Marriage and SRHR. The SRHR position paper also addresses LGBTIQ+ issues. This includes, at times, in substantive discussions concerning the need for more data, and recognition of physical, sexual and verbal abuse against LGBTIQ+ communities. However, given the central importance of rights-based and community-based approaches that

¹⁸ What would an LGBTIQ+ inclusive analysis look like in Areas 1: 1, 2 and 7; Area 2: 5, 7, 9 and 10; Area 3: 2 of the Implementation Guidelines, for example?

¹⁹ In short, there are ways of retaining (and arguably strengthening) a primary focus on gender equality and/or justice, whilst still recognising that LGBTIQ+ people, especially LGBTIQ+ women and girls, are also vulnerable to specific forms of gender-based violence and exclusion. Such an approach could incorporate a strengthened focus on, for example: intra-familial power relations and norms which oppress girls, and all children, who do not conform to established gender norms; particularly high rates of sexual violence against lesbians, bi and trans girls and young women, including through so-called 'corrective' rape; child, early and forced marriage affecting young lesbians, and bi and trans women; and coercive, non-consensual and unnecessary medical procedures on intersex children. All issues recognised by recommendations by CEDAW, the earliest going back to 1999. See, for example, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (2009) *Equal and Indivisible: Crafting Inclusive Shadow Reports for CEDAW*.

²⁰ 85% of large global employers have a non-discrimination policy which includes 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity'. See Human Rights Campaign Foundation (2019:6) *Corporate Equality Index 2019*. See also tools and guidance from *Bond* (regarding safeguarding) and *UN OHCHR* (regarding non-discrimination).

recognise and address the rights of LGBTIQ+ communities in effective development initiatives in this area, their treatment is – on balance – still a considerably marginal one.

Taking the contributions together, this of course represents a set of sound improvements on the previous frameworks. However, there is also a great deal more progress needed. Overall, desk review of all relevant policy documents provided shows that mentions of 'LGBTIQ+', 'SOGIESC', 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' in these documents is almost exclusively: a) as part of a list of other dimensions of inequality; b) in a footnote; or c) in the glossary. This way of mentioning LGBTIQ+ issues, whilst an improvement, does also underscore the marginality, invisibility and 'complicated' and 'difficult' treatment of LGBTIQ+ people and issues. This analysis is consistent with staff views from the survey, which also depict an organisation with, overall, an inconsistent, unclear and non-core approach to LGBTIQ+ inclusion (see Chapter 3.4). It is also consistent with many staffs' framing of LGBTIQ+ inclusion as non-core and contentious (see Chapter 3.3).

Above all, this picture leaves a substantial gap for the articulation of: the meaning and relevance of LGBTIQ+ inclusion for Plan International; the organisation's clear position on these issues; an expression of Plan International's way of working; a review of the evidence on LGBTIQ+ issues; core messages; and clear and comprehensive standards for LGBTIQ+ inclusive work across the organisation. A range of organisations in Plan International's orbit have standalone public position papers and/or policy statements on SOGIESC issues, including UNICEF, Save

the Children and Oxfam, which could provide models for thinking further about this area for development.²¹ There are also several areas of internal-facing policy development that need to be developed in accordance with good practice, some of which are recommend as a priority (especially global mobility). These themes feature prominently in the key findings and recommendations.

3.3. MAJOR INFLUENCING FACTORS

This section identifies and explores major influencing factors for the contribution and limitations of this project. The first half considers the drivers for the project contribution. The second half focuses on drivers for project limitations. Throughout, strategic and critical thinking supports analysis. This starts from a recognition that the strengths and barriers people identified in this evaluation are valid and important to listen carefully to. At the same time, they may also be usefully grouped together, reflected on through reference to other evidence, and simplified into a set of likely higher-level factors/changes; that if *they* existed, other changes would likely also be addressed (or would be easier to address). This kind of analysis also enables a focus on finding linkages between strengths and challenges. This can hopefully help expose hidden resources and actors to support change. Most practically, analysis asks first was it a factor (was it *causal*)? And second was it a major factor? By major factors, we ask was it: a) *necessary* (did this factor need be present in order to ensure key contributions or limitations, of this project?); and b) *primary* (is this factor a root cause, or is it better explained by other factors?).

²¹ Save the Children (2019) *Save the Children Position Paper: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*; Oxfam (2015) *Sexual Diversity and Gender Identity Rights Policy*; UNICEF (2014) *Eliminating Discrimination Against Children and Parents Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*.

MAJOR FACTORS FOR THE PROJECT CONTRIBUTION

Overall, six major factors for the project contribution were identified:

- Institutional momentum and opportunity.
- Committed and passionate project team, including key 'champions' for LGBTIQ+ inclusion.
- Strong interest in the global South and East, amongst staff and young people.
- Backing of senior leadership.
- Evidence-based, thoughtful and careful approach of the project team and external consultants.
- Mobilisation of resources.

Institutional momentum and opportunity

A strong factor for the project contribution was strong institutional momentum, driven by rising interest from staff in National and Country Offices, and Global Hub. Importantly, new institutional space and staffing existed for a greater focus on inclusion, including SOGIESC, within the wider Gender Equality and Inclusion team; a change supported by the 2012 *Strategic Inclusion Review*. The 2015 policy report (cited throughout) provided a strong evidence base for Plan International's new focus on LGBTIQ+ inclusion work. The report was high quality and represents a significant good practice example of LGBTIQ+ inclusion work in the sector. This fed directly into the case for and design of this project.

Various interviewees commented on how Plan International's new gender equality and inclusion approach, whilst challenging in many respects (see also pp. 40-41), did help foster new spaces for LGBTIQ+ work as well. Accompanying this, various key actors shared a view that – in order for the gender equality and broader inclusion approach of the organisation to be meaningful, effective and inclusive – it would need to be intersectional. In this context, key thought leaders and a passionate and committed project team (see below), with go ahead from key senior leaders, pressed to create a space together in which to articulate a more inclusive approach to SOGIESC inclusion and gender equality work. In creating this space, some actors drew on inspiration from Plan International's gender equality work. As one interviewee explained:

I come from a place where I am fully aware that [gender] could be either [an enabler or a barrier, to SOGIESC work] – and so it really takes a concerted effort... to make it an enabler instead. And that is certainly the perspective that I took on when I was asked to work on this project... I saw my task to be beyond the pedagogical approach piece – to really figure out how we can make use of the wins that we've already had... in embedding attention to gender equality issues within the broader framework of child rights. And how we could really leverage some of those wins to then expand them to also take into account a more nuanced understanding of gender identity, and the inter-relation with the other issues of SOGIESC... And for me specifically that meant two things. It meant how is the organisation really showing up for LGBTIQ youth? But, also how is it showing up for youth that identifies, or either consciously or not, as cis hetero, and how they can be questioned and their own prejudices – brought about to recognize them, and also accompanied in unpacking them? So, I really saw the potential for doing it in a concerted way.

Committed and passionate project team / champions

As touched on above, another major factor was the commitment and passion of the project team. This included key champions for LGBTIQ+ issues in key country and regional offices, who were also able to drive delivery and buy-in for the project in their contexts, bring in local LGBTIQ+ CSO partners, support contextualisation of the curricula, and contribute learning required to test and develop the curricula. It also included staff at Global Hub and from the consulting team. All key actors involved shared, or increasingly came to share, the insight that recognising and addressing the needs of young people and girls in all their diversity requires a proactive approach to ensuring SOGIESC, and all key aspects of, inclusion. Many key staff saw this approach as a very obvious one. As one interviewee commented, when asked about the drivers for the involvement of their Country Office:

We had this *Champions of Change* methodology in the Safer Cities [programme]... The main objective of the project is to have inclusive, responsible cities, for girls in all their diversity. And in all their diversity means, ethnic diversity, sexual orientation, gender identity, it means class-related issues – for me diversity means all kinds of characteristics... For me that was clear.

Strong interest from the global South and East

As the above quote also suggests, a further necessary and primary driver for the project achievement was the willing and enthusiastic participation of key staff in Country and Regional Offices. Many key staff were not only very motivated to participate in this area of work, but had a strong experience in leading

SOGIESC-related initiatives in different contexts. Many had been calling for staff at Global Hub to step up support for some time. Some of this energy and experience is summarised in the quote below:

Plan's interest in addressing these issues arises from the need to find strategies, activities and methodologies to address LGBTIQ youth in a correct and differentiated way. Plan Guatemala has been supporting for five years a group of 600 adolescents and young people that integrate networks at a local and national level that seek to promote sexual and reproductive rights. In these groups, more and more adolescents and young people from diverse backgrounds participated, who were fighting for common causes, but more and more need to take actions aimed at promoting LGBTIQ rights. These people approached Plan staff to ask for attention and differentiated processes for their population. We started doing some affirmative actions and we considered that Plan staff and partners should know how to do with much knowledge of the cause of these interventions, we saw a window of opportunity with this initiative that the Gender and Inclusion Group of Plan was designing.

Like this interviewee, many staff in the Country and Regional Offices involved in the pilots stressed that one of the main driving factors for their engagement was interest from staff, and from young people and wider communities Plan serves. Data from KIIs and FGDs reveals various other factors for country and regional office engagement as well. Offices involved in pilots generally had a history of work on LGBTIQ+ issues and/or projects relevant to these issues (e.g. work involving key populations in Guatemala). Many were also able to draw on existing partnerships with colleagues within LGBTIQ+ CSOs. Various staff also commented on development and resource mobilisation opportunities as a key incentive for engagement.

Leadership

Country and regional directors played a key role in decision-making concerning project participation. In China, for example, this was advised to have played a decisive role, in both participation and in support for follow up. The importance of senior staff support, as well as the 'initial awareness' the project helped to open up is supported by testimony elsewhere. As one interviewee from Latin America explained:

This process in Plan is historic, courageous, and definitely challenges the organisation to address gender equality issues from a fairly broad spectrum that accommodates many different LGBTIQ people. The process is very rich and generates the initial awareness that Plan staff needed. In addition, I believe that Plan indirectly builds a position on this issue and makes technical, methodological and political contributions... I heard how our regional director in a discussion on the issue was very emphatic and said, this issue is not [an individual champions] agenda... "this issue is very important and is an organizational commitment, people who are not comfortable with this issue, maybe they are in the wrong organization, Plan is evolving and LGBTIQ people have the same rights as everyone else". I was very surprised and from there the message was very much engraved on the staff. (Interviewee)

In addition to the role of individual leadership – both from key 'champions' (i.e. mostly working-level staff with experience leading LGBTIQ+ work) and senior staff (e.g. country and regional directors) – inclusive organisational cultures appear to have also played a role in strong engagement in some contexts. In various offices, the decision by staff to engage in the project appears to have been entirely uncontentious and normalised, consistent with the views of many colleagues, and connected to staff views of their overall business, purpose and day-to-day work. In one interview, laughter greeted my question as to why they would wish

to be part of this SOGIESC inclusive initiative, suggesting it was an absurd question to ask – with an obvious answer:

I think that as a children's and youth organisation we have a commitment to some of the most discriminated populations of children and youth, so I think that we should be more involved.

Evidence-based, careful, and thoughtful approach

A further major driver is the evidence-based and careful approach taken by the project team in developing the curricula. This drew on the experience of specialist external consultants in having led in development of the *Planting Equality* curricula.

For example, the project represents Plan International's first initiative to create a curricula on LGBTIQ+ related issues that works across country contexts. Within that ambition, it is clear that sound efforts were made by the project and consulting team to contextualise the content, including through involving in-country partners in the delivery and testing of materials, to an extent that was innovative and new. Consistent and coherent opportunities for contextualisation of learning by participants also exist within the curricula developed. For example, the LILO (look in and look out) approach features prominently, which creates opportunities for people to reflect on their internal thoughts, feelings and actions, in relation to their specific external contexts. The curricula includes various peer-to-peer elements and encourages a strongly facilitative, rather than instructive approach generally. These techniques can be particularly useful when working in cross-cultural context, where norms around sexuality, gender, and identity differ greatly. A similar level of expertise and care was brought to bear beyond issues of partnership and contextualisation, to issues around language, and do no harm.

One of the challenges in bringing this work to scale will be extent to which lead facilitators, co-facilitators, and LGBTIQ+ CSOs with relevant expertise and shared approach/values, are available to deliver workshops. This is a challenge common to *Planting Equality* and TOT models generally, but it is particularly salient in relation to this area of work in this context (given the much smaller number of staff with required knowledge on these issues). The partnership approach with LGBTIQ+ CSOs is one smart way of assuring the likelihood of having people actually from the LGBTIQ+ community on the facilitation team. In addition, though, it would make sense to consider establishing and resourcing: a) an aligned capacity development programme for facilitators of *AIATD* and *We Are Diverse*; b) a core set of lead facilitators (possibly including relevant external specialists) that is qualified to lead delivery of workshops with new observers and facilitators, whilst simultaneously coaching them; and c) a community of practice through which facilitators can contribute to one another's personal and professional development as peers. Were an LGBTIQ+ staff network to exist there would be potential to align these efforts with their mission and membership as well.

Resources

A final obvious, but still important, major factor was the existence of financial resources for this project, without which it may not have existed (or could have been very different). Such 'projectisation' of inclusion work at early stages can offer opportunities to develop resources and impetus for a new focus. Like the reliance

on individual 'champions', however, this can also entail sustainability issues. This approach usually involves risk that future funding is not secured or that funder priorities unduly shape work. A further risk here being the work simply falls off the cliff, with outputs not used, or impact or relationships not supported further. It also involves risk that staff roles funded through project funding are not renewed, entailing loss of staff know-how and networks. This again speaks to an organisational challenge (and interest) to make LGBTIQ+ inclusion work a more core and consistent commitment.

MAJOR FACTORS FOR THE PROJECT LIMITATIONS

In relation to project limitations, a wide range of factors were consciously identified by staff.²² Applying the same analysis as above however (listening carefully to factors people described, and then reflecting on whether they are *causal, necessary and primary*), this section argues that most of these factors point to deeper issues. Our analysis identified three major factors that, we believe, are root causes:

- Framing of LGBTIQ+ issues as not core/basic/normal/thematic work, and as 'contentious'.
- Low and/or inconsistent prioritization of LGBTIQ+ issues within the hierarchy of the organisation.
- Myths, fears and guess work; a need for strengthened evidence and global South and East leadership.

²² These included: contention around LGBTIQ+ and other issues related to gender, sexuality and the body at Plan International (e.g. SRHR position paper); lack of appetite for further policy initiatives, especially compulsory ones from Global Hub; limits on staff time to engage on various issues, especially many different inclusion issues (sometimes combined with the 'complicated' nature of SOGIESC issues); limited focus of Plan International's work on gender equality (e.g. binary, not intersectional); limiting legal and social environments and the positions of the country offices; inconsistent senior leadership engagement; lack of capacity and resources to focus on more change, for example beyond capacity-building; lack of space for stronger work on LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International.

Ultimately, we believe, this all points to the organisational culture around LGBTIQ+ issues, in part supported by unclear policy frameworks and inconsistent senior leadership commitment. The next section addresses the three major factors in turn.

Framing of LGBTIQ+ issues as not part of core/basic/normal/thematic work, and as contentious

A range of staff, including those in senior roles, regularly discussed the difficulties around engaging on LGBTIQ+ issues in reference to 'even' more mainstream work – that itself was very challenging to address. Such more core, basic, normal or thematic work included gender inequality, girl's rights, SRHR, bodily autonomy, consent, access to safe abortion, intersectionality, and sexual diversity. This logic was present alongside justifications for slower or less-far reaching approaches on LGBTIQ+ issues. This can be seen, for example, in the following quotes:

But even bringing the organisation to recognise that gender inequality exists between girls and boys... has even been, *quite a challenge*. So, there's history and there's a journey that the whole organisation is going on and a big shift that's happened, or is happening, to talk about LGBTIQ [issues] very openly in offices... And you see in different places... [a] different willingness to embrace those issues, so where issues around LGBTIQ are illegal, in some contexts you will find offices just simply not able to just – even the sense of SRHR... and that women have the right to control their own bodies, they have the right to say no, they have the right to access safe abortion etcetera, that still remains, quite challenging in some of our offices. But then you'll find other offices where... certain aspects are also illegal, however the office is starting to be much more willing to start to look at how can we change this. (FGD participant)

I will just give you an example just in the last week we have had a... discussion with the – it's not even

the modules or anything – just discussing issues of intersectionality and sexual diversity in Eastern Africa, with the resistance to even discuss these issues because of the legal framework and of course because of their own assumptions and biases... We're having the same issues over when you think about the hot topic, the taboo issues, on SRHR... as I was saying it should be like more of a long-term perspective of how do we get into a more complex understanding of gender... If we cannot even talk SRHR or girls at the lens of diversity, then it potentially closes more doors and dialogue with some of our colleagues. So, it has to be really thoughtful and as I said I believe like a gradual approach. (Interviewee)

These kinds of positions came up as highly relevant in staff's explanations of why further policy development on LGBTIQ+ issues was, therefore, very difficult to press forward on. If the organisation couldn't press forward on girl's rights, how could it address LGBTIQ+? Whilst expressive of Plan International's organisational context and culture, these formulations do also position LGBTIQ+ issue as somehow separate from or marginal to the core work of the organisation, including because these issues are, apparently, so 'contentious'.

This framing seems to be the root cause behind a number of other barriers that staff discussed. For example, almost everyone we spoke with emphasised the SRHR policy position paper, and the 'contention' and 'uproar' around it, when speaking about the limitations to the policy contribution of this project. As two interviewees advised, for example:

[Whilst explaining the decision not to have an LGBTIQ+ position paper] And then lots of other things started to happen. Particularly the SRHR position paper... [which] was extremely contentious in Plan... because of their opinions – very deeply entrenched opinions around reproductive rights essentially.

Certainly, the type of pushback that that [SRHR position paper] got was felt across the teams. I think it provided insights into what was possible across different teams.

Interestingly, as these quotes show, some staff did tend to frame the 'paper', the 'pushback' and the 'contention' (as well as 'other things' and 'deeply entrenched opinions') as expressions of project limitations. However, these are not strictly *causal*. Rather, it is more plausible that it wasn't the contention, the paper or the pushback itself that caused the limitations, but rather, staffs' lack of will and/or hopes for success to act on an issue that was also widely framed as contentious in this broader context. This analysis is also supported by the fact that, where LGBTIQ+ issues are seen as core and uncontentious, the limitations around policy development also appear markedly less overwhelming:

It's absolutely not to take away from *Planting Equality* work with staff, or *Champions of Change* work with young people. But I guess in terms of that real institutional impact, that real kind of culture change, a formal, strong, clearly-worded position paper by Plan, I think would be absolutely stunning. For Plan as an organization, because it would really put beyond any doubt Plan's commitment to these issues. But, also within the wider development NGO sector and children's rights sector, because I think Plan is a lead organization. And as we said in the introduction, there's a lot of other organizations either starting to do this type of work or keen to do it. So, I think you know it's an opportunity for Plan to be a real leader in that field. You know I think there's that shared understanding of how amazing it would be, a shared understanding of how challenging it might be, to get it through the Plan apparatus... But I've always thought... we should just go for it! You know even if it's going to be difficult, even if it's going to take a long time, we should go for it. And I'm still not entirely sure why we haven't gone for it. (Interviewee)

Low and/or inconsistent prioritisation of LGBTIQ+ issues

One of the project limitations was also that, although LGBTIQ+ issues were included in the Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion and other policies, this inclusion was still marginal, unclear and inconsistent overall (see pp. 31–34). Some staff acknowledged some of the shortcomings:

Now of course it wasn't nearly as in-depth as we wanted, nor were similar issues related to disability or ethnicity as detailed as we wanted in the global policy, because we were told you have four pages for your policy. That's what we were given, and we stretched it a bit more than that. And then we also added the implementation guidelines to be able to have a little bit more detail. (Interviewee)

Like the above examples, this is also very reasonable-sounding limitation. However, space also isn't a *causal* reason; LGBTIQ+, disability and ethnicity could have been included more substantively within the four-page document, and the implementing guidelines and other accompanying materials. This would not have necessarily meant gender was dealt with less substantively. A more plausible limiting factor here seems, rather, that an LGBTIQ+ (nor broader inclusion) focus was not a particularly high priority for staff with the power to set policy parameters (i.e. senior staff). This analysis is supported by other testimony:

100 per cent a lot of people wouldn't understand why Plan would even do this. Our focus is on girl's rights, it's on gender equality. Why are we talking about LGBTIQ+ inclusion at all? ... If you go to looking at our old policies and guidelines, they never mentioned gender in a non-binary way, so gender was seen as men and women... And I think that's a lot of the pushback that at least I would've felt. I can't speak on anyone else's behalf, but that's the pushback I felt – like there's no place for this work, we're a girl's right organisation, the focus is gender equality. (Interviewee)

As this quote touches on, another barrier frequently voiced by staff concerned the organisation's approach to gender equality and girls rights. This was also a prominent feature of online survey responses. However, as noted above, there are also examples of the gender equality and inclusion approach of staff at Plan International generating institutional opportunities and momentum for LGBTIQ+ inclusion. So, a balanced assessment needs to recognize that staffs' approach to gender equality and girls rights work at Plan is at times appearing both as an enabler and a barrier to change.

Ultimately, though, how can gender or even people's understandings of gender be, in itself, a barrier? Surely what drives this is not people's understandings of gender per se, but again a lack of consistent, core and clear integration of SOGIESC issues within people's thinking and within the hierarchy of the organisation, including in policies, strategies and systems. If this were resolved, gender (nor for that matter education, or water and sanitation, or any other issue) wouldn't appear as a barrier. This point is supported in a different way by the following interviewee, who suggests the real problem is not gender as such, but a lack of institutional clarity and consistency around the organisation's approach to SOGIESC inclusion:

Because of the nature of Plan... things almost have to fit within a gender lens or fit in a gender box to get traction within the organisation... it sort of makes sense within Plan's context even if it might not – I'm not sure that I would think it would make sense necessarily outside of that. The thing that I've struggled with the most though within that whole positioning of LGBTIQ+ under gender, is that throughout the whole time of the project there were conversations going on about what gender *means* to Plan... the extent to which its definition of gender goes beyond boy/girl, male/female, and extends to the full spectrum, holistic understanding of gender that you and I might have. And that was something that I found difficult. Because... within

this project, we were very much pushing against binary understandings of gender identity. And yet within Plan more widely, I just wasn't clear where they were going... I think the positioning, the hierarchy, the umbrella, all of that, maybe isn't perfect but made sense within Plan. But my bigger issue was around what Plan as an organisation actually meant by gender, because that is the starting point for a whole conversation then about SOGIESC.

Again, this also points to a root cause of lack of clarity and consistency, as well as SOGIESC issues just not being a core commitment (insofar as key aspects of SOGIESC inclusion are contained 'within this project'). When they're at the start of their SOGIESC inclusion journey it is relatively common for development and humanitarian organisations to do so as a subset of their gender equality work. However, not everything about LGBTIQ+ people can be explained inside of a 'gender box'. Lifting the prioritisation of LGBTIQ+ inclusion at Plan International, including through seeing the relevance of this area of work right across the organisation's work, should help create further enablers for change.

Myths, fears and guesswork, and a need to strengthen global South and East leadership

As several quotes touch on already, many staff frequently rationalized inaction or blocks on LGBTIQ+ issues through reference to the views of the countries, regions and/or offices. Indeed, this was a very prominent feature of justifications that SOGIESC diversities were difficult to integrate further. However, discussions like this did tend to proceed alongside an absence of voices from the global South and East, or evidence about what the (therefore, largely assumed) positions of staff in the country and regional offices are. Certainly, a remarkable number of oppositional views towards LGBTIQ+ issues on the online survey, and in FGDs, came from Global Hub and National Offices (even discounting for over-representation in the survey).

The existence of this project alone shows that there is very strong support amongst many country and regional office staff (although by no means all) for further work on LGBTIQ+ issues. There are many staff in some regions (e.g. in Southeast Asia, Latin America and West Africa) that have been leading work in this area for some time, sometimes significantly more so than staff at Global Hub and National Offices. And, in all the contexts in which Plan International works, there will be people of diverse SOGIESC with immense and urgent needs; caused by the huge societal discrimination, exclusion and violence they encounter. Some of these will be young people. Some of them will be staff.

Still though, simplistic, binary thinking was very frequently expressed by a great many staff; positioning the global North/West as 'good' and the global South/East as 'bad' in relation to LGBTIQ+ rights. Plan International is not alone in this. The idea that LGBTIQ+ rights are a threat to local sovereignty is not a new aspect of the very challenging context for LGBTIQ+ rights movements worldwide. This makes the importance of critical and strategic approaches which support global South and East leadership, ever more vital and valuable to include. The barrier here, therefore, is not 'the positions of the country offices', it is a lack of evidence, and a need to further strengthen the conversation around LGBTIQ+ rights at Plan International to involve new voices and perspectives. This discussion is picked up in the following chapter (especially p. 58), together with encouragement for new conversations on cross-cultural working and risk.

Conclusion

Whilst the many barriers discussed may seem overwhelming, ultimately, we believe, they all boil down to one thing. If the commitment to addressing LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International were more *core, clear and consistent* – a commitment backed at the

highest levels – the other factors would, we argue, either become non-issues, or would be considerably easier to address. This is also a win-win solution, as it will also create an organisation more at ease with itself on LGBTIQ+ issues, and more equipped to address the manifold challenges facing LGBTIQ+ staff and young people.

There are also considerable strengths outlined above that can support resolution of challenges identified. Building on the partnership and contextualisation approach of this project, and strengthening support for staff in the global South and East where there is existing and rising interest, will help challenge 'West vs. the Rest' thinking and bring in new voices required to lead new conversations. Similarly, taking the energy behind the evidence-based, thoughtful and careful approach of key members of the project and consulting team will help develop tools to challenge some of the myths, assumptions, and stereotypes that are still surrounding this area of work. Perhaps most importantly, senior leaders should feel emboldened to act in support of LGBTIQ+ issues. Where their leadership was present, it was decisive in enabling positive change.

3.4. ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

This section provides a focus on key results from the online staff survey for this evaluation. It also covers select data from Plan International's recent Gender and Inclusion Review 2019. Overall, the results suggest there is great scope for LGBTIQ+ inclusion in Plan International's work, across programming, influencing and the workplace. 147 survey responses were received for the online staff survey. The survey was open for around two weeks. It was disseminated through a limited range of internal networks at Plan (see pp. 19–20 for survey methodology). It was designed as an opportunity for anonymous input.

Profile of respondents

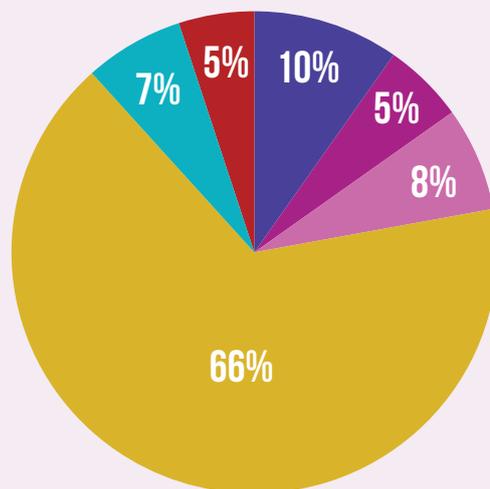
A substantial number of staff who identify as LGBTQ+ responded. One third (33.8%) of respondents identified as something other than heterosexual. This provides a good base to draw inferences about the views of LGBTQ+ (and, more tentatively, LGBTIQ+) identifying staff. It is larger than we would expect the percentage of LGBTQ+ identifying staff within Plan International to be. This may introduce different effects on the data. For example, we can expect (hopefully) LGBTQ+ staff to be more positive towards the rights and issues of LGBTIQ+ communities, and more knowledgeable of Plan International's work in this area.

Women are also well-represented. 71% of respondents identified as female, 24% as male, and 5% preferred 'not to say', or 'to self-describe'. This could reflect the dissemination approach (e.g. via the Gender and Inclusion Network). It could also have interesting effects on results. We do know, for example, that women tend to be well-represented in employee LGBTIQ+ ally networks.

We also asked about gender identity, asking – separately – 'do you identify as trans?' 97.8% of staff responded 'no'. Three staff answered either 'prefer not to say' or 'prefer to self-describe'. Clearly, further research would be needed to understand more about the views of trans staff, including those who identify beyond the male/female gender binary.

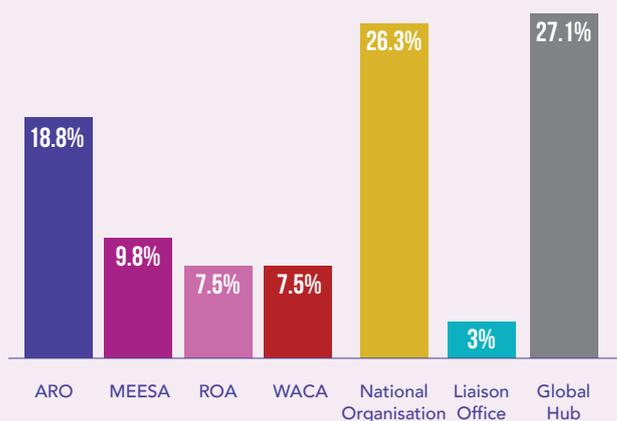
Respondents from Global Hub and National Organisations together make up more than half (53.4%) of respondents, again possibly reflecting dissemination approach and language. A good proportion of respondents are still from country and regional offices (43.6%). However, they are very much under-represented here when compared with the organisation in general. This will shape the results considerably.

What best describe your sexual orientation?



- Bi
- Lesbian / gay woman
- Gay man
- Heterosexual /straight
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe

What region is your office located in?



However, interestingly, what the survey results tell us so far that is that, as a whole, country office respondents had a more critical view of Plan International's progress in this area. For example, staff in country offices disagreed more with the idea that staff at Plan International were equipped to create inclusive environments in relation to LGBTIQ+ issues.

KEY FINDINGS

Strong support for LGBTIQ+ issues as central to day-to-day work and Plan's purpose

There is strong support from respondents for the idea that LGBTIQ+ issues are relevant to Plan International's core business and purpose, as well as their own day-to-day work.

- 76.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I see LGBTIQ+ issues as relevant to Plan International's core business and purpose'. 12.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 70.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I see LGBTIQ+ issues as relevant to my day-to-day work'. 11.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Need for further support for staff to create inclusive environments

When asked about organisational context for LGBTIQ+ issues (see chart below), the statement most respondents disagreed with was 'staff at Plan International are equipped to create inclusive environments in relation to LGBTIQ+ issues'. This supports the case for action in this area.

- 62.5% of people disagreed or strongly disagreed that 'Staff at Plan International are equipped to create inclusive environments in relation to LGBTIQ+ issues'.

- 15.39% of staff agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Need to act on the safety needs of LGBTIQ+ staff working in different contexts

Another significant area highlighted by respondents was safety issues for LGBTIQ+ staff working in different contexts – this scored as the second highest potential area for action (see chart below).

- 53.9% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that 'the safety needs of LGBTIQ+ staff working in different contexts are understood at Plan International'.
- Just 13.9% of staff agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Improved country level support

Almost half (44.8%) of respondents 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that 'I get the support I need from Plan International to address LGBTIQ+ issues in my country context'. This suggests a need for the organisation to offer more contextualised support to staff across varying legal and social environments.

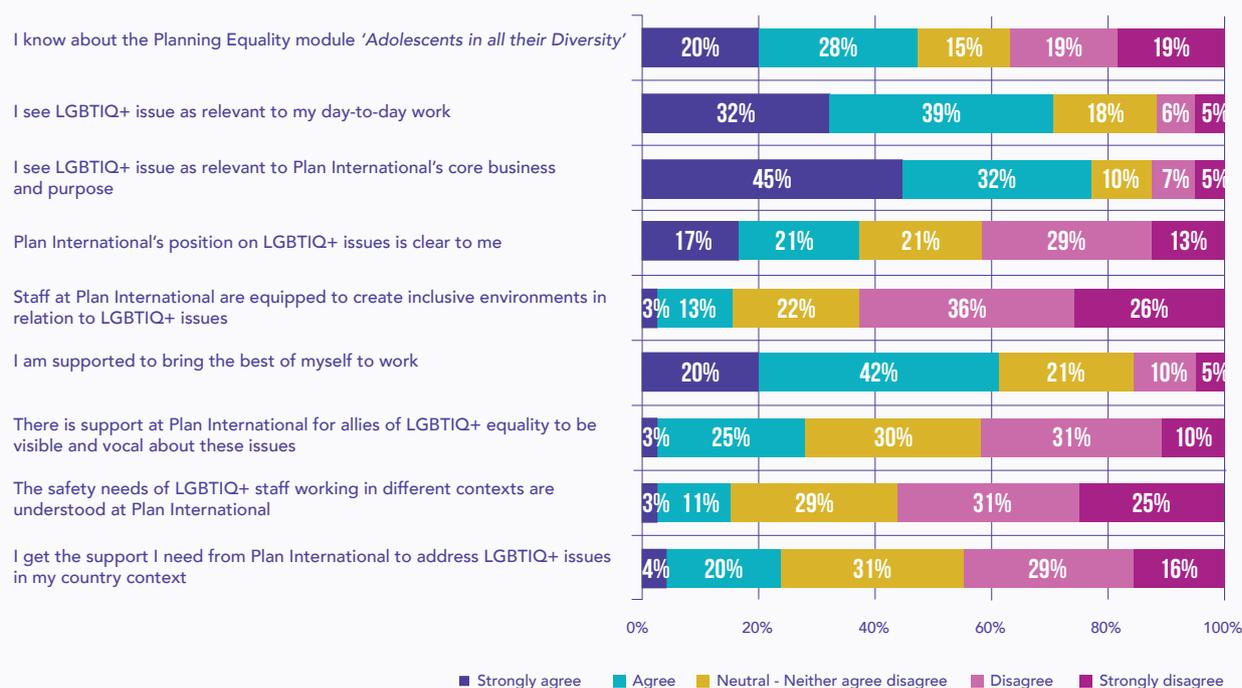
Greater support for allies

Support for allies of LGBTIQ+ people to be more visible and vocal was also highlighted by staff. It is common as organisations progress in their journey towards LGBTIQ+ inclusion that they consider more systematic support for allies. For example, through the creation of an allies network and senior champions roles.

- Less than one third (28.1%) of staff 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that there is 'support at Plan International for allies of LGBTIQ+ equality to be visible and vocal about these issues'.

Staff survey responses on organisational context for LGBTIQ+ inclusion

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Clearer organisational position

Many staff do not clearly understand what Plan International's position on LGBTIQ+ issues is. This stands alongside the fact that three quarters (76.8%) of staff see LGBTIQ+ issues as relevant to Plan International's business and purpose. This suggests that there is broad support for work on LGBTIQ+ issues, as well as an opportunity for the organisation's position to become clearer and more committed.

- A slightly higher proportion of staff 'disagreed' or 'strongly agreed' (41.7%) than 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' (37.5%) with the statement 'Plan International's position on LGBTIQ+ issues is clear to me'.

Regional differences

Staff from West, Central, Southern, and East Africa (20 total) felt the least supported by Plan International to address LGBTIQ+ issues in their country contexts. 65% of respondents from WACA and MEESA regions 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with the statement 'I get the support I need from Plan International to address LGBTIQ+ issues in my country context'. This compares with 44.8% of respondents in general.

It is worth noting that respondents from WACA and MEESA appear to be generally more critical towards the progress Plan International has made on LGBTIQ+ rights. For example, 75% of staff in these regions 'disagreed' or 'strongly

disagreed' with the statement 'the safety needs of LGBTIQ+ staff working in different contexts are understood at Plan International', compared with 56.3% of respondents in general. This suggests there is greater concern for the safety of LGBTIQ+ staff, and more demand for improved, safer approaches, from staff in these regions in the global South. 80% of WACA and MEESA respondents – substantially higher than survey respondents in general (62.5%) – also 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that 'staff at Plan International are equipped to create inclusive environments in relation to LGBTIQ+ issues'. This could imply that staff in this part of the global South want to see staffs' approach to LGBTIQ+ inclusivity improve further. Equally, it could imply that these groups of staff see LGBTIQ+ issues being *promoted* by staff in a non-inclusive (e.g. top down and/or uncontextualised) way. Evidence exists elsewhere (in the survey, FGDs and KIIs) to support both interpretations.

In contrast, the opposite applies for the ARO region. Just 31.6% of respondents from ARO (19 total) 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that 'I get the support I need from Plan International to address LGBTIQ+ issues in my country context'. This suggests *higher* satisfaction than respondents in general (44.8%). The same pattern applies on other questions. 26.3% of respondents from ARO 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that 'the safety needs of LGBTIQ+ staff working in different contexts are understood at Plan International'. This compares with 56.3% of respondents in general. Again, this suggests respondents in the Asia region are more satisfied with the organisation's approach to safety and country level support.

It is of course important to not over-interpret the data, especially given the small sample size. However, these results do support the view that the positions of 'the country offices' are multiple, complex, and potentially surprising. There also isn't substantial evidence about what people's positions really are.

Staff broadly critical, and supportive of more far reaching approaches to LGBTIQ+ inclusion

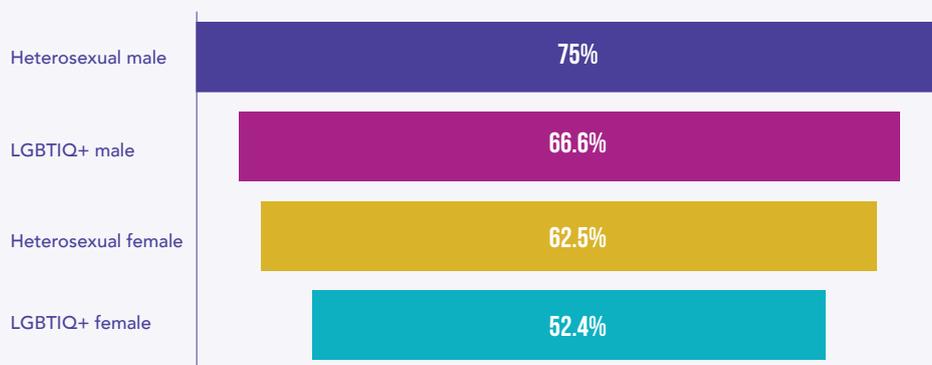
Survey respondents were asked: 'In no more than three words, how would you describe the way in which LGBTIQ+ issues are addressed in Plan International?'. The intention behind this was to get a sense of how staff feel about the organisation's progress on LGBTIQ+ issues, and the culture around this area of work. The raw elements of the (80) responses are presented in the table below, so the reader can draw their own conclusions. They are also organised into ten themes, to support analysis (see chart on page 47).

Most responses are broadly critical of Plan International's progress to date in this area. Together, they suggest that LGBTIQ+ issues are addressed at Plan International in a way that is: invisible and marginalised; slow, basic and absent; and inconsistent and unclear. There are some supportive and affirming voices, including staff who seem to wish to express their generalised support for this area of work. However, they are the minority. This supports a call for strengthened attention overall on LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International, and for greater clarity, consistency and inclusivity in approach. It also suggests that, although networks and action may currently be fragmented and isolated, there is broader support out there amongst staff for a more critical and far-reaching approach.

In no more than three words, how would you describe the way in which LGBTIQ+ issues are addressed in Plan International?

1. INCLUSIVELY, WELL	2. OK, STARTING, IMPROVING	3. SLOW, POOR, CAUTIOUSLY	4. LACK OF ACTION	5. INVISIBILITY, SILENCE, MARGINALITY
<p>Inclusive, empowering and non-discriminatory</p> <p>Well</p> <p>Phenomenal.</p> <p>Interesting. Inclusive.</p> <p>Individual rights, respect.</p> <p>Respect, responsibility and communication</p> <p>Carefully, broadly, safely</p> <p>Inclusive, equal</p> <p>Open, inclusive, in evolution</p> <p>Consciously, well, in need of more attention</p> <p>Aligning the local context</p>	<p>Partly OK</p> <p>Adequate</p> <p>Better than others</p> <p>Some staff have the correct understanding of this issue.</p> <p>In the beginning</p> <p>We're starting the journey</p> <p>Starting but quietly</p> <p>Let's do more!</p> <p>Improving, mis-understood (by some staff), optimistic</p> <p>Challenge, opportunity</p>	<p>Slow, unconscious, little-energy</p> <p>Very, very poorly</p> <p>Very limited</p> <p>Insufficient because sensitive</p> <p>Poorly</p> <p>Keeping It Safe</p> <p>No clarity, timid</p>	<p>They are not</p> <p>They aren't</p> <p>NON</p> <p>LGBTIQ+ Aren't Addressed.</p> <p>Hardly ever</p> <p>Not necessary for attention</p> <p>Do we care enough about the issue</p> <p>Not an issue</p>	<p>Lack of prominence</p> <p>Invisible; quiet; unknown</p> <p>1. Under 2. The 3. Carpet</p> <p>On the side</p> <p>Covert, minimal, basic</p> <p>Silence avoiding</p> <p>Under the carpet</p> <p>Invisible, unsupported.</p> <p>Not so explicit</p> <p>NOT DISCUSSED OPENLY</p> <p>Side-lined, confused, open</p> <p>Ignored, avoided</p> <p>Fear, Phobia, Discrimination</p>
6. INCONSISTENT	7. UNCLEAR, UNCONTEXTUALISED, TOP-DOWN	8. SUPERFICIAL, SHALLOW	9. BINARY, HETERO	10. DON'T KNOW, NOT KNOWN ABOUT
<p>Quietly, conservatively, inconsistently</p> <p>Mixed</p> <p>When it suits</p> <p>Inconsistently</p> <p>Unclear and inconsistent</p> <p>Inconsistently and weakly</p> <p>Wherever highly relevant</p> <p>Patchy, positive intent</p> <p>Inadequate, inconsistent, cautious</p>	<p>Not clear enough</p> <p>Confused, Northern/Western dominated, and yet un-questioning</p> <p>Not very clear – no in-depth capacity building to staff – not contextualised</p> <p>Not very clear (to all)</p> <p>It is still weak and not clear</p> <p>Unclear; uncontextualised risks</p> <p>Finally, fragmented, top-down</p>	<p>Superficial</p> <p>Shallow, Unattended, inconsistent</p> <p>LIGHT, superficial, comfortable</p>	<p>Ignorance Ignored Binary</p> <p>Binary, limited, heterocentric</p> <p>Unskilled, unknowledgeable, comes from a hetero viewpoint</p>	<p>Don't know</p> <p>No idea</p> <p>No idea</p> <p>I have no idea</p> <p>No idea.</p> <p>I know too little about what Plan has been doing on this front to answer this question.</p> <p>None</p> <p>Not really aware</p> <p>Unknown</p> <p>Not very known</p>

Percentage of staff who 'agree or 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I am supported to bring the best of myself to work'



Inequality related to staff well-being and performance

LGBTIQ+ staff feel less supported to 'bring the best of myself to work' than their heterosexual colleagues, and this disparity is compounded when gender is considered as well. 75% of heterosexual men agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I am supported to bring the best of myself to work'. Just 52.4% of non-heterosexual women (and people who preferred not to say, or to self-describe their gender) agreed or strongly agreed.²³ The level of support for this statement amongst staff generally is reassuring compared to other questions (61.3% 'agree' or 'strongly agree') but disparity based on staff group is also remarkable.²⁴

LGBTIQ+ adolescents are being left behind in programming and influencing work to a striking extent

In addition to the survey for this evaluation, two questions were asked in Plan International's wider Gender and Inclusion Review (GIR) 2019, which also inform analysis.²⁵ One question was, 'To what extent does your programming and influencing integrate support for the following vulnerable and excluded groups?'

- Two thirds of respondents (67.1%) said support for LGBTIQ+ groups is either 'rarely' or 'never' integrated into their programming and influencing work.
- One in eighteen (5.7%) of respondents said their programming and influencing work 'always' integrates support for LGBTIQ+ adolescents. 8.7% said this happens 'very often'.

²³ Those who answered, 'prefer not to say' and 'prefer to self-describe' are included in LGBTIQ+ female in the chart.

²⁴ Region and office also featured strongly as a factor. 45% of staff in WACA and MEESA said they 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with this statement, which is lower than all these groups. But 73.7% of staff in ARO 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' as well. Staff in Global Hub also lag behind, with 54.6% of respondents saying they 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'. Of course, we would expect LGBTIQ+ women and gender minorities in key regions in the global South, to feel the least able to bring the best of themselves to work.

²⁵ Results were made available in October 2019. Representatives of 69 offices responded to the GIR 2019.

- This means just 14.4% of offices are 'always' or 'very often' integrating support for LGBTIQ+ adolescents in their programming and influencing work.

The results do suggest that more work does need to be done to improve Plan International's integration of support for children and youth with disabilities and children and youth from ethnic communities (see chart below). But the absence of work to support LGBTIQ+ groups is also very low in comparison to work on these two areas as well. Indeed, LGBTIQ+ adolescents seem to be more left behind than all the 'other groups' (beyond gender, disability and ethnicity) *put together*. For example, 40% of 'other groups' are 'rarely' or 'never' included, compared with 67.1% for LGBTIQ+ adolescents. These results also mean that we can expect LGBTIQ+ adolescents with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ POC, to face profound exclusion.

Importantly, these results also support the conclusion that external legal and political environment is not a convincing explanation for why offices are failing to integrate support for LGBTIQ+ young people in their work. Two thirds of Plan International offices are 'never' or 'rarely' integrating support for LGBTIQ+ young people in their programming and influencing work. This is far higher than the number of states in which Plan International operates where legal instruments, political actors, and social, cultural and religious movements, create such a hostile environment as to make safe and effective actions in support of LGBTIQ+ rights untenable. Less than one third of the States in which Plan International operates criminalise same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults in private. Moreover, there is typically

not a direct connection between laws of this kind, and laws which restrict the ability of civil society organisations to operate, register and advocate for positive reforms for LGBTIQ+ communities. In at least 40 of the 70 States which criminalise private sexual acts, CSOs exist which support and defend the rights of LGBTIQ+ communities. Indeed, CSOs working on LGBTIQ+ issues exist in all but two States in which Plan International operates (Central African Republic and South Sudan).²⁶

Just eight States worldwide have an explicit legal prohibition against the formation or registration of an openly LGBTIQ CSO, that has been documented (Bahrain, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen), none of which Plan International works in. Indeed, sexual orientation discrimination in employment is outlawed in 36% of the States Plan International works in (25 of the 70 listed on Plan's website), and broader laws banning discrimination based on sexual orientation, for example in the provision of goods and services, exist in 27% of the States Plan operates in (19 of the 70 listed).²⁷ This suggests there may be cases where staff and offices are not integrating support for LGBTIQ+ rights in their work, where there is legal incentive or even demand to do so.

Opportunity to develop staff networks, including for LGBTIQ+ staff

Additionally, results from the GIR 2019 suggest that staff networks are not in place, in a way that is potentially unusual for a global employer of this scope. Asked 'To what extent are the following mechanisms in place to support and celebrate diversity and inclusion among staff?':

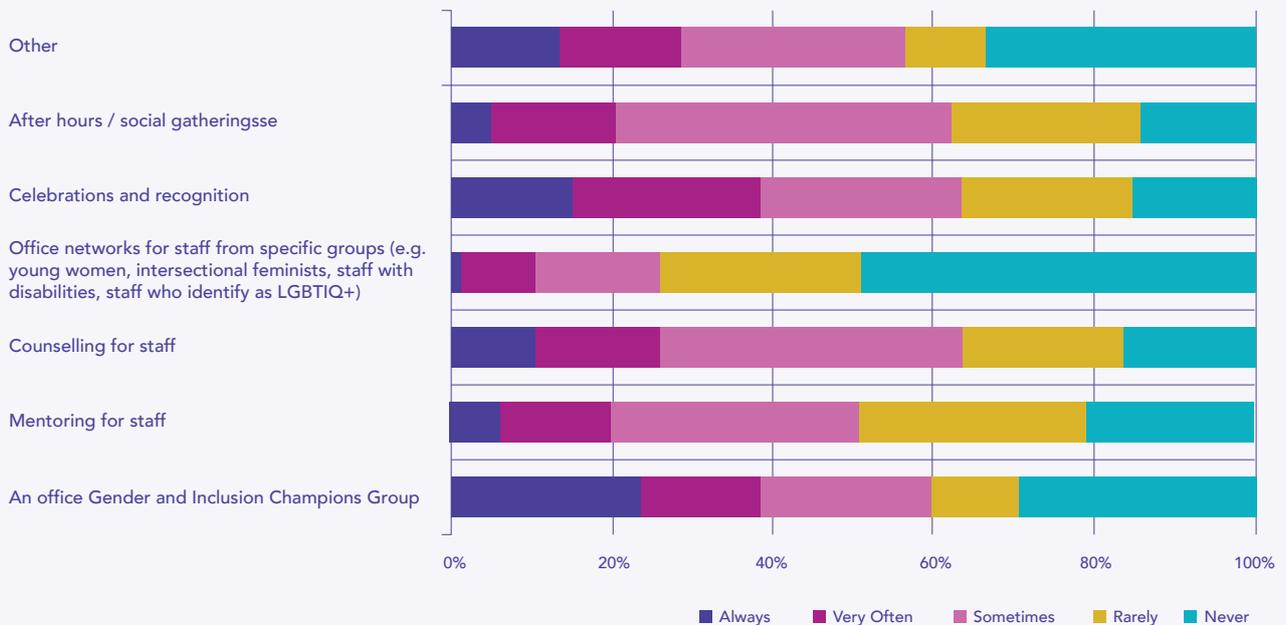
²⁶ OutRight Action International (2018) *The Right to Register*.

²⁷ All figures based on ILGA World (December 2019:89-114) *State-Sponsored Homophobia Report*.

To what extent does your programming and influence integrate support for the following vulnerable and excluded groups?



To what extent are the following mechanisms in place to support and celebrate diversity and inclusion among staff?



Half of respondents (48.6%) said they 'never' have office networks for staff from specific groups in place, to support and celebrate diversity and inclusion among staff.

- Just one in ten respondents (11.1%) said they 'always' or 'very often' have these networks in place.
- Of all the mechanisms surveyed, staff networks are the least common (see chart below).

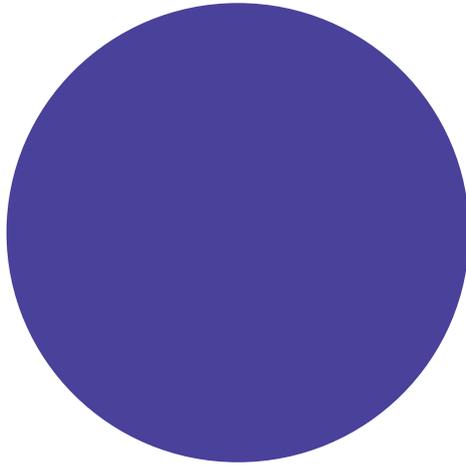
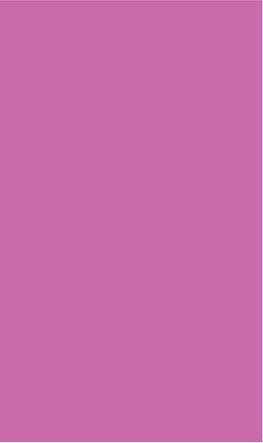
Conclusion

Overall, this section shows there is substantial scope for LGBTIQ+ issues to be more firmly integrated into Plan International's workplace, programming and influencing work. LGBTIQ+ young people are being left behind in

programming and influencing work to a striking extent. Although external constraints play a role in the context for this, they are not a reliable explanation for inaction. LGBTIQ+ staff do not feel as able to bring the best of themselves to work as their non-LGBTIQ+ colleagues, and staff lack faith in their colleagues' ability to create inclusive and safe environments for LGBTIQ+ people and issues. The data supports the case for creating a more core, clear and consistent commitment to LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International. It also points to a need for specific actions, including: the creation an LGBTIQ+ inclusive global mobility policy framework; staff support to create inclusive environments; the creation of LGBTIQ+ and allies networks; and improved policy clarity on Plan International's support for LGBTIQ+ communities.



Credit: Plan International



4. DISCUSSION: CREATING NEW CONVERSATIONS

This chapter opens a discussion on what key results might mean for Plan International, across several different thematic areas: cross-cultural working, risk, and global South and East leadership. It addresses these three issues in turn.

4.1. CROSS-CULTURAL WORKING: CREATING EMBASSY SPACES

When thinking about how to address LGBTIQ+ issues across country contexts, one of the tools staff might look at is the When in Rome, Embassy, and Advocate model. It was originally created through research and analysis by the Center for Talent Innovation in 2016.²⁸ The model is also referenced in the United Nations Standards for Business to tackle LGBTI discrimination, developed by the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights

(OHCHR) in 2017. Researchers at the New York University School of Law's Center for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (in collaboration with EY, Microsoft and Dow) also developed the model further in 2019, including through providing evidence-based guidance on how to choose and move between the three models.²⁹

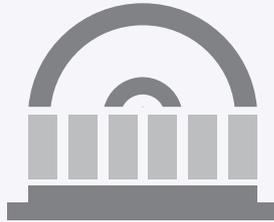
When in Rome, Embassy and Advocate model

The model acknowledges that it is impossible for global employers to be consistent advocates for LGBTIQ+ rights around the world. This is because they are operating across varying legal, social and internal environments facing LGBTIQ+ people across country contexts, and they will need to adjust their policies and initiatives to varying extents, in order to adhere to local laws, and societal and cultural norms. Given this scenario, many

²⁸ Center for Talent Innovation (2016) *Out in the World: Securing LGBT Rights in the Global Marketplace*.

²⁹ Center for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, at the NYU School of Law (2019) *Opening Up The World How Multinational Organizations Can Ascend The Maturity Curve On LGBT+ Rights*.

When in Rome, Embassy and Advocate model



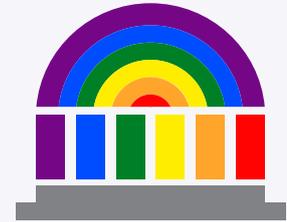
WHEN IN ROME

Global employers adhere to the norms of the jurisdiction by creating exceptions to their pro-LGBT+ policies.



EMBASSY

Apply pro-LGBT+ policies and practices to their own employees without seeking to influence the society outside the organisation.



ADVOCATE

Strive to make change externally, such as by lobbying the government or supporting local activists.

Graphic adapted from an original, created by Centre for Talent and Innovation.

global employers tend to operate across these three ways of working. They can, and often do, operate in all three ways at the same time. The study by NYU School of Law (2019) also provides one way of thinking about how to move from When in Rome, to Embassy and then Advocate. It stresses, for example, the importance of building an organisational evidence base and thinking critically about what the real legal, social and internal risks actually are in each kind of jurisdiction. This can inform policy and practice development.

Key findings

Firstly, this review finds Plan International is also operating across all three ways of working. Whilst there is a Global Policy on Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination, for example, which protects staff on the basis of their SOGI, it does not apply to National Offices, and its implementation depends, in part, on staff feeling comfortable reporting SOGI-based discrimination. This will vary, in part according to the legal, social and internal contexts of offices (as well as leadership approach, and

the practices of staff, etc.). In this instance, Plan International aspires to Embassy ways of working, but falls back to When in Rome in practice (and with exemptions for National Offices). Advocate ways of working are also in evidence. Good examples include SOGIESC inclusive programmes work, such as that related to Safer Cities in Peru, Education in Thailand, and SRHR in Benin. They also include work situated in the global North and West. For example, work by Plan International UK and Sweden, to support strengthening of Plan International's LGBTIQ+ work.

Our review also finds there is considerable confusion amongst staff about having to jump straight from When in Rome to Advocate, and not yet a significant organisational-level focus on consolidating Embassy spaces. Skipping logic was found to be at work in various people's formulations, whether broadly 'for' and 'against' a focus on LGBTIQ+ issues. In contrast, where staff did describe Embassy ways of working, there is considerable reason and nuance in what they say. For example:

As the laws and context varies from country to country, it is important that there is a global guiding document which is customized to country context. Also, in personal capacity some people are sensitive and respectful, but at organizational level it will be good to have it as one of the clear agenda. There are dedicated organizations who are working for LGBTIQ+ and have many as their staff as well, so common understanding programs can be developed. (Survey respondent, ARO)

Thirdly, we also found evidence that staff are already working creatively across the three ways of working. For example, partnership approaches exist in some contexts which enable a focus on LGBTIQ+ work by Plan International, but through specialised intermediaries and/or NGOs led by LGBTIQ+ communities. There are other models to help organisations think through these challenges, for example, those stressing quiet diplomacy. In all but two of the country contexts Plan International operates in, there are LGBTIQ+ CSOs in existence. This makes consultation and partnership-working feasible, even though direct public-facing work may be, at times (and, importantly, depending on the views of LGBTIQ+ CSOs) risky, ineffective or counterproductive. In short, as Plan International staff are already showing, there are a range of models that can allow organisations to safely and effectively work within the terms of laws and norms whilst ensuring that LGBTIQ+ people are at least partially included.

Fourthly, we found a tendency for LGBTIQ+ issues and communities to be addressed by various staff as a moral, political, religious and/or cultural issue (When in Rome vs. Advocate), that is up for debate. Rather than, as a professional duty and set of policy frameworks and conversations that need to be created and upheld (Embassy). The different positions can be seen at work in the following quotes.

Many Plan COs are in strongly conservative countries and staff follow religious and social norms which are discriminatory to LGBTIQ communities... [We need to] address the issue of religion in Plan... we are not a Christian organisation, but in some COs in Africa you wouldn't know this as religion is so deeply entrenched in society and staff see us as no different to World Vision or other more conservative Christian organisations. (Survey respondent, MEESA)

I do think we need a tailored approach for the different regions. I think having a standardised approach for this is probably not the way to go. I do agree that some of the basics of non-discrimination, bullying and these type of things, are non-negotiable and those are a bit different. How much we can go ahead? I would love that at least at the office level we could have more open discussions. (Interviewee)

Interestingly, the 2015 policy report proposed a similar discussion around the creation of 'de-politicised spaces' within Plan International, in which to inclusively address LGBTIQ+ issues. This could provide another, or an alternative, model for addressing these issues as well. New conversations could benefit from asserting terms within which LGBTIQ+ issues just aren't up for debate as a moral, cultural, religious and/or political issue. This could align with other efforts to re-frame LGBTIQ+ issues as uncontentious and core to the organisation's business and purpose.

Finally, it is notable that many significant calls for action that staff identified were related to expanding and consolidating Embassy spaces. A range of examples are provided below (all survey respondents).

In conclusion, a strong focus for Plan International now could be creating Embassy spaces. As the examples illustrate, this requires a holistic approach involving changes in policy, leadership commitment, organisational culture, network development, and building evidence.

Specific policy review areas also include global mobility, and talent acquisition and management. This analysis doesn't contradict a view that further material support is also needed for Country and Regional Offices with the will and incentive to continue leading, as Advocates for the rights of LGBTIQ+ young people. Indeed, as recommended throughout, these leaders should be more firmly brought into development work by Global Hub and

supported by National Offices. But meanwhile, it could be fruitful for the organisation, including senior leaders, to develop and communicate further clarity between this work (which is a strategic choice we, and many others, strongly believe ought be supported), and the creation of Embassy spaces in its workplace work (which is a professional, ethical, and sometimes legal, obligation).

<p>CLEAR AND IMPROVED POLICIES AND GUIDANCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HR support for concerns for those who are LGBTIQ+ travelling abroad. Also support for those who have fears transitioning in the workplace and believe that this is an unfriendly place to do so. ■ Position paper on Plan's stance. Tools or guidelines on integrating best practices into programme sectors. ■ Clear HR policies, that are known. More open dialogue.
<p>MORE CONSISTENT AND VISIBLE LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HAVE LEADERSHIP TALK ABOUT IT. ■ LGBTIQ+ visible champions and go-to people, who bridge the gap between staff and leadership (i.e. raising concerns in leadership meetings/work priorities, LGBTIQ+ leadership staff representation (employing more LGBTIQ+ people in leadership positions to also act as mentors if willing). ■ We will not be able to achieve our purpose if we do not deliberately incorporate and include LGBTIQ+ issues in our DNA.
<p>ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE CHANGE AROUND LGBTIQ+ ISSUES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More conversations, my team speak openly, and it is not at all an elephant in the room. However, once I leave the room, I am less comfortable speaking about my sexuality or LGBTIQ+. I feel this is quite reflective of a right-wing Woking. ■ By talking more about it and creating a space for people to feel comfortable to express themselves. ■ Showing compassion and understanding – staff need a lot of capacity-building.
<p>NETWORKS AND REPRESENTATION WITH A KEY ROLE FOR LGBTIQ+ STAFF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Form a network (if one doesn't already exist) for LGBTIQ+ staff and allies, with an LT Champion. Make everyone aware that there is a network (e.g. in recruitment and induction material). Ask staff to signify their sexual identity (anonymously) so that pulse survey and promotion data can be analysed. ■ Creating more visible LGBTIQ+ champions/focal points in the office (who are well trained and comfortable) to possibly act as mentors/well-being counsellors/communication points for LGBTIQ+ staff to speak with confidentially about issues they are personally concerned about. ■ In the National Office there have been LGBTIQ+ staff organising guest speakers, educating their peers and forming groups to improve our awareness of LBGTIQ+ issues in the workplace... Plan (HR) should pro-actively organise such trainings, signage etc.
<p>BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE OF THE ORGANISATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Technical advice (contextualised) information. ■ Global hub understanding of the risks involved if/when Plan International Country offices is seen to be bold on this in a context that is hostile and considered not reflective of host country value systems. ■ Understanding how context, rights and local law, culture are nuanced and where can be clear and objective but sensitive whilst not contradicting what Plan stands for.



4.2. RISK

Risk is a second major area for potential new conversations at Plan International. This review found evidence that: a) LGBTIQ+ people are quite often seen as themselves risky and/or as, effectively, bearers or groups of risk; and b) LGBTIQ+ issues are seen as exceptionally risky in a way that has not actually been explored or evidenced. At the same time, risks facing LGBTIQ+ staff are largely absent from this conversation. Repeatedly, views about (largely uncontextualised) risk were used by various people to shut down support for LGBTIQ+ initiatives, or advocate for less far-reaching reforms.

Staff need to understand the complexities of being defined as LGBTQ+ and the risks these staff face if it were to be open and transparent. Even people who are in this group do not necessarily understand the risks faced by being/visiting some countries we work in. (Survey respondent, Global Hub)

I do not think that Plan as an organisation should take up issues it or its staff are not equipped to dealing with nor should it be forcing staff in countries where it is illegal to take up these issues. Plan cannot provide protection for staff/children/young people and others. Plan is not an expert on this, and it wants to be everything to everyone. Stick to what it is good at and leave other organisations to do what it can't. (Survey respondent, Global Hub)

At the same time, there is a notable absence of discussion and organisational-level action around the fact that LGBTIQ+ communities, including Plan International staff, are themselves already being placed at risk, including through inaction. Different staff advised of different cases in which LGBTIQ+ staff have not been able to safely travel to different countries, for example, and/or have done so whilst feeling unsupported by the organisation to provide effective and relevant guidance and support. There is actually very little research on the safety and wellbeing needs of LGBTIQ+ development and humanitarian staff; a gap in evidence which itself reflects a broader sector failure to address the rights, needs and strengths of LGBTIQ+ people. What evidence there is indicates this is an area requiring much further research and action.³⁰ As the online survey results show, a majority of Plan International staff (62.5%) agree, and this call to action to keep LGBTIQ+ staff safe was especially prominent from staff in the global South and East.

Overall, this suggests a need for a more evidence-based and inclusive conversation around risk and LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International: LGBTIQ+ issues are being positioned widely as risky to engage further on, at the same time as some of the key risks currently facing LGBTIQ+ staff are not being addressed. The 2015 research recommended that a comprehensive risk assessment be carried out in relation to the organisation's work on LGBTIQ+ issues. Our key findings also support this, and we outline this as part of Recommendation seven. Finally, we believe it important to note here that the transference of risk to individuals is not a new aspect of discrimination and stigma against LGBTIQ+ people globally. The treatment of LGBTIQ+ communities as groups, populations and/

or carriers or bearers of risk, has been a very strong feature of deeply homophobic and transphobic responses to, for example, the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. This raises the stakes in ensuring this challenge is fully addressed.

4.3. GLOBAL SOUTH AND EAST LEADERSHIP

As discussed in Chapter 3.3, the (often largely imagined) positions of the country offices are frequently being pointed to by staff as a reason/barrier to explain why actions on LGBTIQ+ initiatives (such as policy level objectives from this project) were difficult to press forward on. This reduction of massive, human and cultural complexity to simple binary was, at times, challenged by various staff. However, the labour for challenging this view fell, from what research observed, overwhelmingly to Plan International staff that possibly identify as people of colour, and/or staff living and working in the global South and East.

To put it another way, there is a SOGIESC inclusive perspective that is – most broadly – critical of racism and neo-imperialism, that isn't being captured in current discussions and action around LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International. The following critical perspectives are provided, by way of illustration. Together they indicate a way forward for addressing LGBTIQ+ issues at Plan International in a way that is more inclusive, and undercuts simplistic binaries. One of our key cross-cutting recommendations (present in both Recommendation one and ten) is that these voices be heard more fully in new conversations, concerning organisational culture around LGBTIQ+ issues, and future policy, programme and network development.

³⁰ See, for example, Feinstein International Center (May 2017) *Stop the Sexual Assault Against Development and Humanitarian Aid Workers*.

VIEWS ON CULTURE, POWER, RACE AND ETHNICITY THAT COULD BE HEARD IN NEW CONVERSATIONS:

Can we also start including more about the intersectionality of race and the LGBTQ+ community? It is often/very much ignored and overlooked.

This might be a very slight derailment, but I think that it's a particular thing with Anglo Saxon cultures and this is, like it's a function of white supremacy, that those discussions [around SOGIESC and inclusion issues at Global Hub] aren't had, because it's impolite... and that's the really tricky thing, like that's one of those intersections when you come in – that's white supremacy, in action.

Involve the different Plan experts more in transcendental processes for their recognition and empowerment and make the relations with partner organizations more effective in this area.

At least at the Global Hub and the National Organisation level, I challenge the assumption there's programmes happening in these spaces and not so much at the country level. I really believe that even within here [Global Hub], there are some very conservative viewpoints on these particular issues.

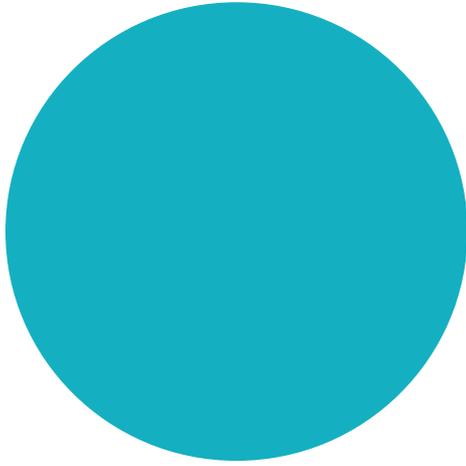
LGBTIQ issues are considered taboo in conservative Arab societies. The Plan offices there will not be supported in addressing these issues.

Most of the narrative in Plan on LGBTQ seems to come from NOs... That is very worrying to me, because I understand Plan as primarily a development and humanitarian INGO, and so I would expect the dominant narrative on an issue to be coming out of the developing countries. We are then in danger of falling into funder-development clichés... For example, for most of the "LGBT" activists I know in Africa, deconstructing the binary is not a priority for them... Plan's focus should be on the issues facing same sex attracted people in developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America.

I will like the Influencing team to slow down on irrelevant issues and focus on influencing the Nigerian legislation to be more inclusive and be more respective of people's sexual orientations. This is where the influencing will be life-saving. I have seen young people take their own lives because they felt they were odd or abnormal.

Bring the developing country LGBTQI adolescents to the fore front. Recognise the difference in languages, priorities, starting points for different contexts. Don't allow the narrative to be dominated by which office has some funding to nurture some youth voice on LGBTQI adolescent concerns and challenges.

I welcome that Plan is making efforts in this area. But too much of the narrative and prioritising is being led and dominated by OECD LGBT concerns. This is a classic trap of global North efforts to "support" LGBT activism in the global South. I welcome this effort to reflect on that. We need to turn the work around, for it to be led by the global South/ developing countries concerns. On staffing – forcing COs to be better on LGBT staffing overnight is counterproductive and dangerous for existing LGBT staff. A more nuanced approach is required.



5. CONCLUSION

The project evaluated represents a really important piece of work for Plan International, in a sector that requires urgent change. LGBTIQ+ people, especially young people, and especially young people in the global South and East, continue to be catastrophically left behind in the work of development and humanitarian actors. These actors are well-placed to support real change in the lives of LGBTIQ+ people globally. This project responded to this context, in a way that was relevant and should be effective. The challenge now is ensuring this work is operationalised, scaled and sustainable.

There is room for this response to be both brave and safe. Even where LGBTIQ+ people's rights, needs and strengths are under sustained assault, something can be done to ensure LGBTIQ+ staff and young people are supported. In finding the right approach, one thing that will help is developing a more explicit, owned, open, and senior supported, conversation around these issues at Plan International. Whilst it is understandable and important that, when beginning this work, organisations choose a safe approach, a safe

approach also doesn't mean drawing back from change where it's desperately needed, or where risk exists in failing to act. We have offered some key recommendations, new conversational angles, and models, for approaching these issues that we believe respond to Plan International's context. However, new, longer-term conversations will need to be led by key groups within Plan International; taking their cue from the children and young people the organisation serves. This includes a key role for LGBTIQ+ staff, especially those experiencing multiple inequalities, and especially those living and working in the most challenging of contexts for LGBTIQ+ people globally.

An important part of the challenge is moving beyond a view that LGBTIQ+ inclusion and rights are an 'add on', rather than part and parcel of what Plan International does. People of diverse SOGIESC are everywhere, in all the contexts Plan International works in, and they will be encountering challenges created by the organisation's failure to act. Even if they're not able to be visible, organised or represented, as individuals or communities, there is strong

incentive for Plan International staff to create inclusive environments, in which people of diverse SOGIESC – and everyone – can bring out the best of themselves.

Ultimately, as we state throughout this report, many of the barriers in relation to this area of work will be lessened or resolved, if the organisation makes its commitment to LGBTIQ+ rights more core, clear and consistent. This needs to be supported by a commitment to a more holistic approach to SOGIESC inclusion which stretches across learning, as well as policy change, senior leadership approach, culture change, network development and building the evidence base of the organisation. These central themes thread through each of the twelve Recommendations we make. There is also tremendous opportunity

for SOGIESC inclusion to help enrich the organisation's approach to its core work, including across its strategic priorities, and its approach to learning and organisational culture. As one interviewee expressed the contribution of the project, in a different way:

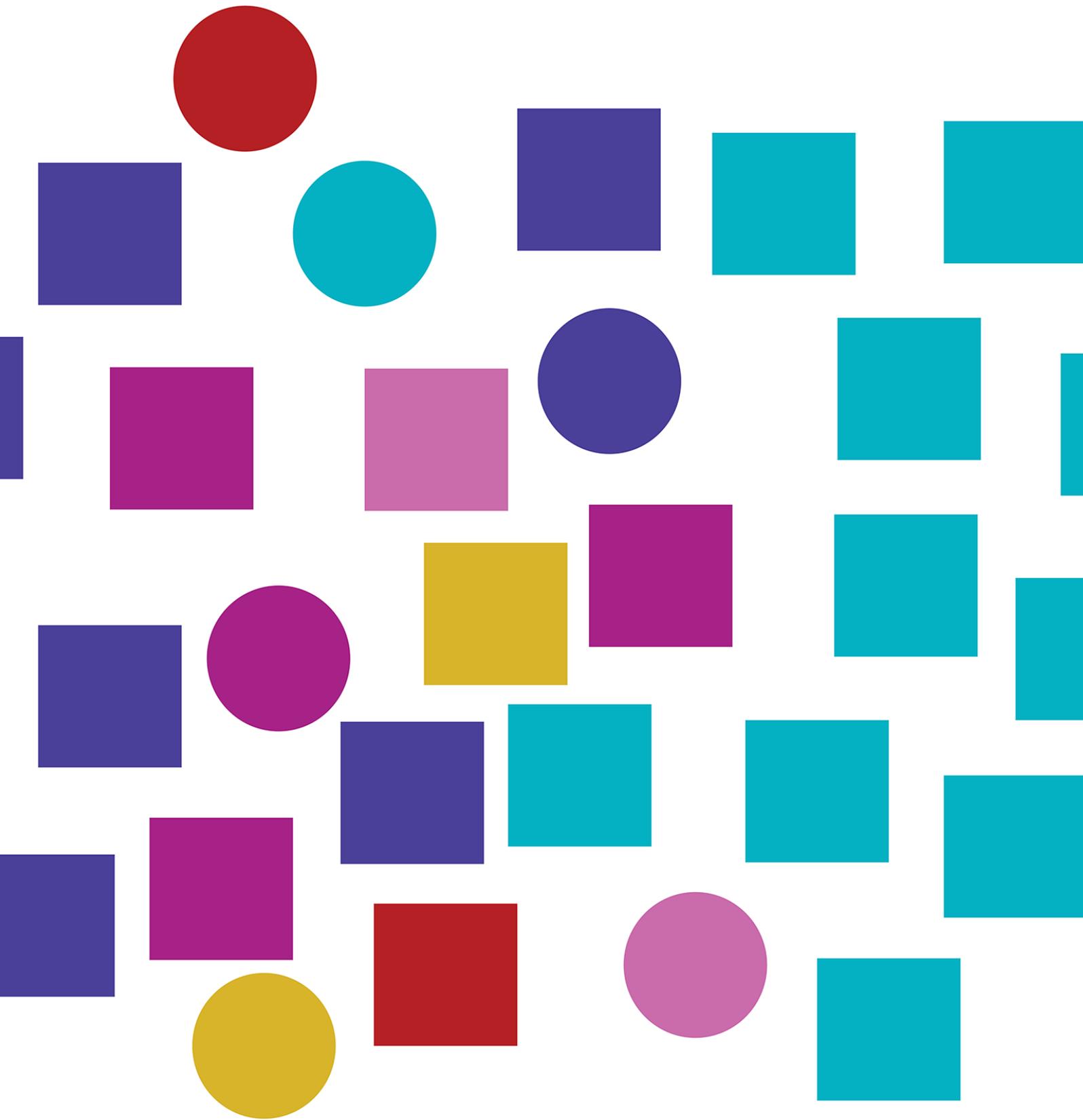
I think on a personal level, I will be forever grateful for having been given this opportunity... and you know to truly, I think I knew at an intellectual level, why some of the choices like the binary choices were made, and I don't think I truly understood the nature of the trade-offs until I personally embarked on this project. And so, my whole vision of my gender equality work was transformed through this project. And that's why I wish – that's why I'm like everybody needs to do this! I'm saying this from a position of, this changed my life! Well, why wouldn't everybody else want to do that?



Adolescents in all their Diversity workshop. Credit: Plan International

GLOSSARY AND TERMS

AIATD	Adolescents in all their Diversity
AOGD	Area of Global Distinctiveness
ARO	Asia Regional Office
BINARY	Splitting into a pair (e.g. male and female, 0 and 1, black and white)
CISGENDER / CIS	A person or community of people who are not trans. From 'cis' meaning 'the same as'.
CISNORMATIVITY	A way of seeing and organising societies which entails assumptions that all people are cisgender, and this is 'the norm'; a system of social norms that sometimes drives discrimination against people of diverse SOGIESC.
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil society organisation
FGD	Focus group discussion
GIP	Global Influencing and Partnerships
HETERONORMATIVITY	A way of seeing and organising societies which entails judgement on normal and appropriate behaviour for men and women; a system of social norms that sometimes drives discrimination against people of diverse SOGIESC.
HROD	Human Resources and Organisational Development
IAS	International Advocacy Strategy
IH	International Headquarters
INTERSECTIONALITY	A way of expressing that people experience compound inequalities. For example, people of diverse SOGIESC living in the global South and East, are more likely to experience various exclusions and injustices which combine together. An expression of people's humanity as not reducible to just one thing (e.g. their gender, or SOGIESC).
KAP	Knowledge, attitudes and practices
KII	Key informant interviews
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Intersex and Queer/Questioning people or communities
MEESA	Middle East, Eastern and Southern Africa
NON-BINARY	People or communities who identify within a spectrum of genders that are not exclusively masculine or feminine
OHCHR	Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights
POC	People of Colour
QTIPOC	Queer, Trans and/or Intersex People of Colour
ROA	Regional Office of the Americas
SNO	Swedish National Office
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TRANS	An umbrella term for people, or communities of people, whose gender doesn't match the sex they were assigned at birth
UKNO	United Kingdom National Office
WACA	West and Central Africa



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