PLAN INTERNATIONAL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE IN EMERGENCIES

July 2022

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1. WHAT IS 'GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE?'

A gender transformative project is one where there is an explicit *intention* to transform unequal power relations for positive change (e.g., **it is specified as the project's overall objective**). This is measured by Plan International's Gender Transformative Marker as one which has **the *potential* to be transformative.**

Our gender transformative approach focuses on tackling the root causes of gender inequality and exclusion and on reshaping unequal gender and power relations to realise girls' rights and equality between all children, young people and adults regardless of their gender or other identities. Plan International believes that there are six elements which indicate a project has high potential to achieve gender transformative change:

1. GENDER NORMS
Understand and address how gender norms influence children throughout their life course, from birth through to adulthood.

2. AGENCY
Work to strengthen girls' and young women's agency over the decisions that affect them, as well as by building their knowledge, confidence, skills and access to and control over resources.

3. WORKING WITH MEN AND BOYS
Work with and support boys, young men and men to embrace positive masculinities and to promote gender equality, while also achieving meaningful results for them.

4. DIVERSITY
Consider girls, boys, young women and young men in all their diversity when identifying and responding to their needs and interests.

7. CONDITION AND POSITION
Improve the conditions (daily needs) and social position (value or status) of girls and young women.

6. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
Foster an enabling environment where all stakeholders work together to support children and youth on their journey towards gender equality.

The difference between gender aware and gender transformative projects is that gender aware projects do not have the explicit aim to transform relations (although this can be an unintentional effect!), but instead seek to facilitate **equitable access** to aid (or: that all women, men, girls and boys of diverse identities are able to benefit equitably from humanitarian aid). A gender aware project addresses practical gender needs and addresses exclusion issues alongside it.

Such a process is complex, highly context-specific and takes time.

> ### GENDER AWARE ACTION THAT ADDRESSES A PRACTICAL GENDER NEEDS
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> In situations of forced displacement, to achieve better "hygiene", not only are soap and water essential for menstruating girls and women, but it is essential to provide access to sanitary pads or menstrual cloth. This is not transformative, on its own, as it does not transform gender norms. In order to make it transformative, it could be coupled with other activities, such as attitudinal sessions on menstrual taboos in the community, including with men and boys, and policy/institutional change that supports better access and involvement of girls and women to various services.

Gender equality cannot be achieved by one intervention, project or programme alone. Plan has made a commitment to adopt a gender transformative approach so that all our programme and influence work can come together to contribute to gender equality. Individual projects can tackle the specific root causes that negatively affect gender equality. Collectively the sum of these projects can contribute to gender equality over time as we gradually break down the deeply entrenched barriers to gender equality and girls' rights.[i]

2. IS GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE IN EMERGENCIES? IS IT LIFESAVING?

Yes, it is lifesaving! Gender inequality causes harm, including gender-based violence, and high maternal and infant mortality as well as barring access to services[ii]. Whilst we know that there are certain barriers to gender transformative change in emergencies – such as the donor landscape and lack of funding, staff attitudes and misconceptions, the short duration of many humanitarian projects, and other structural and administrative barriers in the humanitarian system – paradoxically there also exist an abundance of opportunities to do this work in humanitarian crises that may not exist in more traditional 'development' contexts.

Research shows that both 'regressive' and 'progressive' norm change is always organically occurring in situations of displacement.[iii] Rapid change to gender roles and responsibilities can occur, and individuals who may have been traditionally excluded are able to occupy roles they couldn't necessarily access pre-crisis. For example, in many countries in Europe, changing societal expectations about gender roles during the First World War occurred while women took up positions previously held by men away at war. This is widely attributed by historians to women gaining voting rights for the first time.[iv] Similarly in today's crisis contexts, communities affected by crises are already experiencing transformative change through rapid norm change with or without humanitarian intervention. It is therefore incumbent upon us to ensure that this change is a positive one and can be sustained. [v]

This means we must **DO NO HARM** by putting the right risk mitigations in place so that inequality is not further entrenched, and discrimination not inadvertently enforced.

This aligns with the **RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH** to projects, since it is unjust that girls and women are not equally able to realize their rights.

It also means more **EFFECTIVE** programming. Failing to consider gender means our projects will fail to achieve their objectives. Conversely, projects that give greater consideration to gender dynamics are more likely to achieve their objectives.[vi]

Lasting social change takes time to cultivate and become sustainable. This is why *we do not aim for gender transformative change as the overall objective in projects that are under 12 months duration.* The majority of humanitarian crises, however, are protracted, and Plan has multiple multi-year humanitarian projects. In these cases, we can and should be influencing donors and holding ourselves to account on aiming for gender transformative change. Shorter projects should include some transformative elements as long as they are based on a thorough gender and contextual analysis and have good risk mitigations in place.

3. WHERE IS THE MANDATE FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE IN HUMANITARIAN POLICIES, FRAMEWORKS, AND STANDARDS?

Crises are high-catalyst settings for gender and social norm change, which often occurs organically because of power shifts that can be either unintentionally negatively exacerbated or positively facilitated by humanitarian actors. A humanitarian response that does not tailor toward an analysis of these factors risks doing further harm by entrenching these inequalities, being less effective[1], and not upholding rights. This is recognized by the international development community through commitments such as Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which starts by stating that 'Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.' The IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG) 2017 echoes this, explaining that: 'The structural gender inequalities which lead to the differential impact of disaster on women, girls, men, and boys, can also perpetuate crises and insecurity' and that 'gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are human rights imperatives and requirements for **effective humanitarian action.**'

Social inequality, including gender inequality, is widely considered a key driver of conflict[vii] and there are strong correlations between levels of violence and this inequality. It is therefore essential to peacebuilding, and to do no harm principles, that we analyze and address gender inequality in humanitarian responses in order to be effective, lifesaving, and not exacerbate crisis inequality.

UN OCHA, for example, recently published their 2021-2025 Gender Policy which has as its first stipulation 1.1 that the new policy will take a Gender Transformative Approach: ….*This approach moves beyond a gender sensitive approach that only seeks to respond to the different needs and constraints of individuals based on their sex, age, and disability. It also seeks to eliminate gender neutral programming, and actively address gender stereotypes, structural discrimination and exclusion of women and girls, as well as others who do not conform to the gender binary.*

Many other humanitarian standards exist which support this. Find a non-exhaustive list below:

WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

Full and equal participation by women and girls in civil, political, economic and social spheres and in decision making at all levels must become the standard to which all actors, including the United Nations, are held accountable in their development and humanitarian programming and funding. Enact and implement national legislation in line with international norms on women's rights and outlaw all forms of violence against women and girls.

CORE HUMANITARIAN STANDARD (CHS)

3.6 Identify and act upon potential or actual unintended negative effects in a timely and systematic manner, including in the areas of: a. people's safety, security, dignity and rights; b. sexual exploitation and abuse by staff; c. culture, gender, and social and political relationships.

INTERAGENCY NETWORK FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

*Shifts in gender roles and relations observed following crises present the opportunity to harness such dynamics and set **new precedents for gender equality**. Indeed, global research demonstrates that **conflict is less likely in contexts where there is gender parity in terms of mean years of schooling**. Furthermore, emerging promising practices show that when education is available equitably, is of good quality, relevant, conflict and gender–sensitive it can break cycles of conflict and violence, redefine gender norms and promote tolerance and reconciliation.*

Many bilateral donors have made the move toward **feminist foreign policies** which support this work, including Sweden, Mexico, Canada, Norway and others.

Plan International Philippines 2021

4. DOES GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE VIOLATE THE HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLE OF NEUTRALITY AND IMPARTIALITY?

THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITY, NEUTRALITY, IMPARTIALITY AND INDEPENDENCE ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION

HUMANITY means that human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable.

NEUTRALITY means that humanitarian aid must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute.

IMPARTIALITY means that humanitarian aid must be provided solely on the basis of need, without discrimination.

INDEPENDENCE means the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from political, economic, military or other objectives.

No, it doesn't. In fact, it is well aligned with all the humanitarian principles, despite any misconceptions held to the contrary (see above question on mandate). To be 'neutral' about gender inequality is to entrench harmful behaviours and practices since inequality intensifies risk and vulnerabilities.

This understanding of neutrality is patriarchal in itself, for it is based on a male-centric understanding of the world.[viii] Attempting to be 'neutral' to this inequality adds further structural disadvantages to the most marginalised. Whilst cultural sensitivity is necessary in all our work, this must be done in a way which does not lend support to the most powerful, or to systemic barriers to equality and the fulfilment of rights.

The humanitarian sector carries patriarchal and colonial baggage which can compromise our projects and vision. **It is important for humanitarian actors to acknowledge that we are always intervening in gender relations whether we are intending to or not. We should not use the humanitarian principles as a convenient excuse not to reach these urgent needs or ignore the social dynamics within which we operate.** [ix x xi]

Cultural sensitivity must not be confused with supporting the status quo of powerholders. In Yemen's Jasmine Revolution (2011-2012), the perception of the international community was that it was a highly conservative country in which women would not take an active role. Yemeni women, however, were central to occupying public spaces and leading the discourse around change. When the international community arrived to support constitutional reform processes, they leant on cultural presumptions about Muslim women and excluded them from these spaces they had built out of respect for cultural norms and the traditional powerbrokers. In this way, the international community did harm to close these spaces down for the active local women who had been leading the charge.[xii]

Whilst the principle of impartiality is sometimes used as an argument by humanitarian actors not to tailor their response to gender-specific needs, this ignores that 'Impartiality' is about: meeting the needs of a diverse population effectively and, given that these needs vary, so too should the assistance offered.

This is therefore not a question of limiting reach by prioritising ever-narrower sets of people, but rather of reaching what a wide and diverse population is already more effectively and appropriately with interventions that serve their self-defined needs and priorities.[xiii] When Plan International commits to 'focusing on girls in crisis' we are using these humanitarian principles as intended to meet the needs of the vulnerable based on our expertise.

Humanitarian action and response has evolved over the last two decades. Complex and protracted crises are acknowledged as the norm, the lines between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding contexts are blurred and the average length of displacement is over a decade. The move to more rights-based, transformative action responds to this changing context.

> **PICTET – THE ACKNOWLEDGED ARCHITECT OF THE HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES** – argued that **neutrality** should never trump the requirement to respond to the most acute forms of suffering without discrimination (see O'Callaghan and Leach, 2013). Furthermore, such conceptions of neutrality are necessarily exclusive and colonial, as only 'the foreign is neutral' while local humanitarian responders are painted as inherently partial (Ali quoted in James, 2022: 486).
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> *Daigle, Megan, 'Gender, Power and Principles in Humanitarian Action,' ODI HPG, March 2022*

5. HOW DO WE EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE MEN AND BOYS FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE IN EMERGENCIES?

It is vital to ensure that when we work with girls and women, we do not leave men and boys behind. Men and boys can play an essential role in shifting gender dynamics and promoting women and girls' safe inclusion in public spaces. This is why 'Work with and support boys, young men and men to embrace positive masculinities and to promote gender equality, while also achieving meaningful results for them' is one of the 6 key elements of Plan's Gender Transformative Approach and part of the Gender Transformative Marker.

While there is supporting evidence as well as progress made to engaging men and boys alongside women and girls for sustainable gender-transformative outcomes, many times interventions in humanitarian contexts often fail to do so.

Men and boys can also be affected by harmful masculinities and rigid gender norms. Thus, the meaningful engagement of men and boys is not only necessary for female empowerment, but also enables programmes to tackle patriarchy, inequality and social exclusion. However, in order to achieve this goal, it is also important that our male engagement interventions in conflict settings treat men and boys as agents of change in the gender-equality process not as the "protectors" of women and girls. Male engagement programmes are advised against using messaging that promote a zero-sum game mentality. Such interventions can focus on addressing power imbalances, social exclusion as well as the various ways in which the intersecting identities of men also contribute to the disempowerment of men and boys by the rigid norms commonly perceived as empowering them.

Involving men and boys in emergency settings should not only be through isolated activities targeted solely on them, but also incorporated as important elements of the process to achieve gender equality. They should be taken into consideration when designing activities tackling gender norm transformation. They can be involved as direct beneficiaries of an action or through Behavioral Communication for Change sessions in order to support the better achievement of a particular girls and women centred objective.

6. HOW DOES GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMMING CONTRIBUTE TO INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY?

Plan International's work towards gender equality seeks to tackle the root causes of inequalities and unequal power relations at all levels. To achieve our organisational ambitions for gender transformative programming in both development and humanitarian contexts, social inclusion is integral to every aspect of our project design, implementation and evaluation.

DOES FOCUSING ON GIRLS MEAN WE ARE BEING TRANSFORMATIVE?

No, it doesn't. Just adding 'and particularly girls!' to project proposals does not work unless it is based on a solid gender, age and inclusion analysis and tailored toward that. A project may work with majority girls but still perpetuate stereotypes and discrimination and not tackle root causes of discrimination.

We know that not all girls or all boys are the same and that "one size fits all" solutions simply do not work when responding to their expressed needs and interests. The discrimination and barriers to rights that children face depend on many factors. These include age, sex, location and other factors of social exclusion such as disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and ethnicity.

Inclusive programming ensures that girls, women, boys and men are engaged and benefit from our work in a meaningful manner. This starts with the consciousness they are not homogeneous groups but are stratified by various intersecting identities.

Depending on how the dynamics manifest within each context, these identities may present various levels of capacities, barriers, vulnerabilities and risk for girls, women, boys and men. In many cases it might result in the loss of opportunities, dignity, human rights protection and security, especially in time of crises or conflict.

In order to effectively achieve equitable outcomes for women, girls, boys and men, it is vital to recognise and respond to the vulnerabilities, needs and risks faced by the most marginalised and often excluded (including girls, women, persons with disabilities, children, religious and ethnic groups, refugees, internally displaced persons, unemployed youth, sexual and gender minorities, the elderly, indigenous peoples, and racial minorities) in all programming contexts- including during crises.

When our programming fails to take this into consideration, it affects our ability to achieve sustainable gender transformative outcomes. It also presents unintentional risks and negatives impacts at individual, communal and institutional levels. It is important to note that it is further exacerbated in humanitarian contexts.

Thus, it is vital that throughout our programme cycle, we integrate gender and inclusion analysis, design, implement and budget for effective gender and inclusion activities, assess the possible risks posed by our programming and also measure the impact of our work on diverse groups. Plan International's work towards gender equality seeks to tackle the root causes of inequalities and unequal power relations at all levels. To achieve our organisational ambitions for gender transformative programming in both development and humanitarian contexts, social inclusion is integral to every aspect of our project design, implementation and evaluation.

7. HOW SHOULD PLAN SUPPORT LOCAL MOVEMENTS TO DO GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMMING IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS?

(1) Partnering with girls and women's rights organisations (G/WROs). Plan International should support local groups and organisations in their priorities for influencing and programming for girls' and women's rights. Local actors are the ones best positioned to understand and drive priorities for change as defined by the affected populations themselves. Local women's rights actors or youth groups must be seen as humanitarian and frontline partners. This engagement also means that we have a foundation to work from for better gender transformative programming in the later stages of a response. *See Box 1 for an example of initiatives to scope for and support.*

BOX 1. SELF-ORGANISED WOMEN'S GROUP ADVOCATING FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN HUMANITARIAN AID

Gender transformative change can be a necessary means to address the gendered needs and interests of affected populations. For instance, in Cox's Bazar Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees among girls and women self-organized into groups in response to being excluded in what and how humanitarian aid was provided.[1] The group, called RWEAN (Rohingya Women Empowerment and Advocacy Network) are working to facilitate literacy and empowerment of girls and women so they may voice their concerns to humanitarian actors. Moreover, they also do this so they may build self-reliance and be part of larger decisions on durable solutions to their displacement.

(2) Risk Mitigation. It is important to note that many people will particularly not like the idea of transformational change if they feel that it has been imposed from outside, and certainly not when colonial dynamics are brought into play, many of which manifest in the humanitarian sector. This is why it is important to support existing local capacities, women's groups and other grassroots movements or marginalised groups working for inclusion. *Risk mitigation* is one of the gender minimum standards in emergencies and also key to gender transformative work. Whilst we know that gender mainstreaming is a key part of any do-no-harm strategy, we also know that backlash occurs wherever progress is made, and the status quo is challenged. An important part of any good programming is to ensure that risks have been properly identified by women, men, girls and boys with prevention and mitigation measures in place. Plan International has various guidelines and toolkits for safe programming. *See Box 2 for an example of gender transformative program that identified a key risk and a mitigation measure in its approach.*

> **BOX 2.** GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMMING IN A HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE BY PARTNERING WITH WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS
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> A local women's rights organisation provided immediate psychosocial support and SRH services to women and young women of reproductive age at the outset of typhoon Haiyan. Organising adolescent girls and young women into groups as a means to respond to a humanitarian crisis was not a common approach yet proved to be transformative even at the beginning. Mindful of the risk of harm if the intervention was short-lived, this was commenced by the local organisation but with a commitment to retain presence, commit resources in the areas of operation for at least 5 years. A decade after, the organized groups have been a strong collective of women leaders in their communities, advocating for SRHR and providing services with the support of the local WRO.

(3) Internal Structural Changes. Apart from programming, structural change in the humanitarian system and organizations like Plan International must occur for a gender-transformative agenda to truly move forward. A Women's Refugee Commission study found that the following overhaul of the system is necessary which includes key actions such as:

1) **Hiring leaders and staff with the capacity for and commitment to gender transformative change**

2) **Creation of a culture and systems for accountability to transformative processes and outcomes**

3) **Shift power and resources to actors in affected contexts and communities especially to women-led CSOs and movements as with the gender commitments under the Grand Bargain**

Source: WRC (2021 January), Gender Transformative Change in Humanitarianism: A View from the Inside

8. HOW CAN WE MEASURE GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMMING IN EMERGENCIES? DO WE HAVE ANY RESOURCES TO HELP WITH THIS?

PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S GiE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR GENDER PROGRAMMING CAN BE USED AS A GENERAL PROCESS, WHICH HAS THE FOLLOWING KEY STEPS:

1. Roll-out a clear gender and power analysis and add to it progressively throughout the response. *[GiE Standard 1] This is accomplished through sufficient funding, deploying the right people at the right time who have GiE and sectoral competencies to guide the rapid gender analysis.*

2. Based on gender and power analysis, tailor *and resource* the response design to address the diverse needs of women, men, girls and boys. *[GiE Standard 2] This is in line with the humanitarian principle of impartiality and to ensure that people equitably benefit from humanitarian interventions.*

3. Together with girls, women, men and boys, identify risks and put risk mitigation measures into the tailored response, adjust and implement where benefits outweigh the risks and where risks can be mitigated and managed. [*GiE Standard 3*] *This is in line with the humanitarian do no harm principle of mitigating and preventing potential risks of a humanitarian intervention.*

4. Install accountability mechanisms at the onset, tailored to facilitate equitable and meaningful participation of affected women, men, girls and boys. [*GiE Standard 4*]

See more on the GiE minimum Standards in the upcoming Emergency Response Manual.

Humanitarian organisations are increasingly exploring ways to measure the impact of gender equality and inclusion efforts. A typical example of such system-wide tools is the Inter Agency Standing Committee's Gender with Age Marker (IASC GAM) and the IASC Gender Handbook which was designed to support teams in the design, implementation and monitoring of humanitarian programmes to ensure that they contribute to equitable outcomes for all.

Various humanitarian organisations and donor institutions have also created their own tools to measure and track interventions for gender equality. For example, see the European Commission's Gender-Age Marker (ECHO GAM).

In line with its global ambitions on gender transformative programming, Plan International maintains that the achievement of gender transformative work is the responsibility of all staff. In addition to this, it is important that our indicators capture key aspects of the 3 dimensions of change of our global Theory of Change[xiv] and actors.

Plan has also developed participatory tools and have included gender inclusion indicators within our AoGD frameworks to enable us track and measure our projects potential to contribute to gender transformative outcomes in both humanitarian and development contexts. These include:

- **Plan International Technical and Summary Guidance Note on Gender Transformative Programming and Influencing**: This establishes a common language on what we mean by gender transformative change, outlines the six elements of gender transformative programming and influencing and identifies what steps must be taken by our staff and partners to effectively put our commitment to gender equality, girls' rights and inclusion into practice.
- **The *Gender Transformative Marker (GTM)*:** This is a tool for measuring potential of a project to contribute to gender transformative change.
- **Plan International Gender Age Inclusion Analytical Framework**: This is an analysis tool that enables context examination of the diverse manifestations of inequalities that exist which can affect the potential for our programming work to contribute to gender transformative outcomes.
- **Plan International Situation Analysis Tool**: This is a tool for conducting *Root Cause and Drivers Analysis*
- Plan International **rapid gender assessment tools and annexes:** This is a tool designed to equip staff and partners engaged in DRM work, with the foundations for a rapid gender analysis in order to inform our response. The methodologies used should be taken from the list on **page 49** of **The Adolescent programming toolkit with lots of adolescent friendly tools** (see this link for the Planting Equality tools including Plan's 'Girls Agency Star.'
- Plan International **Result Frameworks on the six Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AoGDs)**: The AOGD package helps teams across the organisation to design strategies, programmes and projects in an easy and consistent way and in line with our global strategy All Girls Standing Strong Creating Global Change, our Theory of Change and Programme & Influencing approach.

WHEN DO I USE THE GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE MARKER VS THE IASC GENDER WITH AGE MARKER?

You only need to use ONE marker per project. The GT Marker can be used for all development projects and humanitarian projects implemented for 12+ months. The IASC Gender with Age marker is used for the design, implementation and evaluation of emergency response programs. In some instances, donors would require their specific marker, which may be utilized in programming processes. In such cases, the donor-specific marker can be used instead of the IASC GAM. Further information on when to use the GT marker, IASC GAM and/or ECHO marker throughout the project cycle can be found in the User Guidance on the Gender Transformative Marker (ENG – FRA – SPA).

For Plan International, every short-term humanitarian project must be at least gender aware or ranked as 4T or 4M in the IASC Gender with Age Marker. For development projects and also humanitarian projects implemented for 12 months or more, it is expected that such projects should be gender transformative in accordance with Plan International's Gender transformative Marker. Please see the relevant document for further information on project eligibility for assessment a well as how to use each tool.

9. WHAT'S NEXT?

A new humanitarian version of the Gender Transformative Marker will be developed through the joint efforts of the Gender and Inclusion Hub and the Humanitarian team. This marker will reflect the realities of humanitarian work – short proposal turnaround time, often shorter project duration and limited funds – but also be more aspirational than the existing humanitarian gender markers, ensuring that all Plan offices use the same vision across humanitarian and development work.

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[i] Plan International (2019) 'Getting it Right: A Guidance Note for Gender Transformative Programming and Influencing.'

[ii] See for example, the Interagency GBV Minimum Standards: https://gbvaor.net/gbviems

[iii] Daigle, Megan, 'Gender, Power and Principles in Humanitarian Action,' ODI HPG, March 2022

[iv] https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/changing-lives-gender-expectations

[v] HPG, ODI outlines the international standards mandating humanitarian action to be gender-responsive to gender transformative (i.e., GEEWG commitments). See reference 1 of HPG and ODI paper by Megan Daigle (2022 March) "Gender, power and principles in humanitarian action" , along with other operational reviews of gender approach in humanitarian response (I.e. Cox's Bazar Gender Operational review, among others). Moreover, HPG policy brief (based on a e-year study on inclusion and exclusion in humanitarian action), reported that the ignoring gender power dynamics have worsened exclusion; and that "inclusion is at the core of impartiality" thus being gender blind in humanitarian action automatically excludes those who have unique gendered needs for equitable access with others. See "Veronique Barbelet, Oliver Lough and Sarah Njeri (May 2022): Towards more inclusive, effective and impartial humanitarian action. HPG Policy Brief.

[v] Inclusion is at the core of impartiality because individuals that have been marginalised over time – and w" " hose voices and opportunities for meaningful participation historically stymied – are at a higher risk and more vulnerable to crises (Carter, 2021).1 As such, they often make up the most urgent cases that must be prioritised according to the principle of impartiality...Such failures may be seen as an unintended consequence of good intentions, such as efforts to reach as many people in need as possible. In reality, it is often the result of a lack of political will from operational agencies to engage and take into account harmful norms and power dynamics before and during crises.2

[v] Women's Refugee Commission (2019). Gender-Transformative Change in Humanitarianism: A View from Inside. Quote below references other studies "However, lasting and inclusive change, referred to here as *inclusive gender-transformative change (IGTC),* can only be realized if policymakers and practitioners move beyond the individual and start addressing the structural and root causes that perpetuate inequality.3 In addition, efforts to achieve and maintain justice, equality, and peace must be centred around the well-being, capacities, and perspectives of the most marginalized.4 It is in this context of global priorities and unprecedented humanitarian need that the international humanitarian system, which was set up to deliver emergency relief, assistance, and protection in times of crises, has been deemed unfit for purpose.5 While crises have grown in frequency, scope, scale, and complexity, the global aid architecture has not been able to adapt to shifting demands.6 Emergency response persists over several years, reaches too few people, and remains top down rather than demand driven. Similarly, assistance is heavily underfunded and resources are inefficiently allocated.7 Reforms are urgently needed to overhaul the (post-)colonial power structures of the Western humanitarian construct, and to create institutional incentives to make responses more effective and people-centered.8 Humanitarian actors have attended to needs, particularly fundamental material needs such as food and shelter, while being reluctant to engage in the processes and interventions needed to create equitable, inclusive, and sustained change. "

[v] *GiHA WG in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh (March 2022). Four years on: Shifting gendered perceptions and experiences: comprehensive gender analysis within Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar Bangladesh. Can be accessed from:*
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[v] WRC (2019 September). "We need to write our own names: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Rohingya Humanitarian Response in Cox's Bazar – Gender Operational Review Report; Chekufa ra, a woman Rohingya leader featured in https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2019/3/6/rohingya-women-seek-to-raise-our-voices-ourselves and https://www.wfp.org/stories/our-own-words-three-stories-escape-longing-and-hope-future; also: "Support us in responding to crises, female activists in Bangladesh say" https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/support-us-responding-humanitarian-crises-female-activists-bangladesh-say

[vi] Re: effectiveness - in the UN WOMEN, 'The Effect of Gender Equality Programming on Humanitarian Outcomes,' https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/7/the-effect-of-gender-equality-programming-on-humanitarian-outcomes

Improved gender equality programming in humanitarian settings led not only to improved quality of life for all community members and greater access to services
- e.g., In the Philippines, the prevalence of hunger was 37 per cent lower in households where women were more satisfied with the availability of gender equality programming.

- In Turkana, it was demonstrated that by increasing the Gender Intensity Measure from low to high, the proportion of literate children per household rose by 4.8 per cent, which is the equivalent of 59 children per 1,000 households.

vii https://www.c-r.org/resource/gender-violence-and-peace-post-2015-development-agenda
viii https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2019/07/18/gender-equality-humanitarian-principles/

xii Source: Stephanie Brigden, Independent Peacebuilding Expert, drawing from her experience supporting civil society actors after the Jasmine Revolution in Yemen, in different advisory capacities including as Oxfam GB's 'Within and Without the State Programme' Adviser (shared during consultancy with Plan /October 2021)
xiii Daigle, Megan, 'Gender, Power and Principles in Humanitarian Action,' ODI HPG, March 2022, page 19
xiv Our global Theory of Change guides us on this journey by ensuring that we focus on three dimensions of change: 1) how harmful social norms, attitudes and behaviours need to change to promote gender equality and to enable children and youth to grow up healthy, safe and happy; 2) how social and economic resources can equally support girls, boys, young women and young men to develop their full potential; 3) how the application of international and national laws, policies, budgets, investments and services can tackle gender inequality and exclusion in very tangible ways.

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About Plan International

Plan International strives to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected.

As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children.

We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 75 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 70 countries.