



GLOBAL ADVOCACY STRATEGY 2022-2027


CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	5
A SHIFTING WORLD	9
GLOBAL ADVOCACY GOALS FOR 2022-2027	14
Criteria for each Goal	15
Updates to the GLAS Framework	15
Our Goals	16
Setting priorities among the overall GLAS Goals	17
OVERARCHING APPROACH TO OUR ADVOCACY	18
Advocacy based on Human Rights	19
Advocacy for a global girls' rights agenda	20
Advocacy for gender transformative change with an intersectionality and inclusion lens	21
Advocacy with a life-course approach	22
Advocacy driven by evidence	22
Advocacy powered by girls' leadership	23
Advocacy in the context of intensifying crises, fragility and threats	24
IMPLEMENTING OUR ADVOCACY GOALS ACROSS PLAN INTERNATIONAL	26
How we will work together	27
Partnerships for our global advocacy	27
APPENDICES	29
Annexe 1: Early Childhood Development (ECD)	30
Annexe 2: Digital influencing and realising girls' rights in the digital age	33
Annexe 3: Anti-racism principles reflected in our advocacy work	36

ACRONYMS

AGIP	Adolescent Girls Investment Plan
AoGD	Areas of Global Distinctiveness
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEFMU	Child, Early and Forced Marriage and Unions
CO	Country Offices
NO	National Organisations
RO	Regional Offices
LO	Liaison Offices
GH	Global Hub
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GLAS	Global Advocacy Strategy
GLOSUP	Global Strategy
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
NAPs	National Adaptation Plans
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PAAS	Pan African Advocacy Strategy
PI	Plan International
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNCRC	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

SUMMARY

A close-up portrait of a young woman with dark hair, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a white sari with intricate blue and gold embroidery. The background is a dark, textured blue.

INDIA: A 16-year-old is passionate about tackling the impact of climate change.

© Plan International

OVERVIEW

The refreshed Global Advocacy Strategy (GLAS) covers 5 years, aligning with our new Global Strategy, 'Girls Standing Strong' (FY23-FY27). Within our mission to strive for a just world that advances children's rights and equality for girls, the GLAS outlines our commitments to use advocacy, based on human rights principles and anti-racist values, that are informed by data and evidence, to promote gender equality through a global girls' and young women's rights agenda.

In particular, the GLAS reaffirms a strategic and inclusive approach that puts girls' and young women's agency, leadership and organisation at the heart of our advocacy. Plan International has committed to adopt a Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) in all its programming and influencing work to be able to sustainably contribute to gender justice and equality and to play a critical role in actively adopting and implementing efforts to shift power, tackle the root causes of systemic exclusion and racism and promote diversity and inclusion between all children, young people and adults, but with a special focus on girls and young women in all of their diversity.

The GLAS closely aligns our global advocacy work with our global flagship campaign for girls and with our programmes across all regions, building on our Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AoGDs).

The ambitious shared Goals of the GLAS are for transformative change in the areas of:

- **Girls' Leadership**
- **Education**
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**
- **Ending Violence Against Girls**
- **Economic Empowerment**
- **Girls in Crisis**
- **Child Early and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU)**
- **Climate Change**



THE GLAS REFRESH

The refreshed GLAS builds on the learnings and experiences of the first two years of its implementation (2020-2022), gathered through an inclusive and consultative process with key stakeholders in Country Offices, Regional Offices, National Organisations, Liaison Offices, thematic experts, the Core Influencing Group, the Gender and Inclusion Group, GH Policy and Advocacy Leads, as well as others. Based on these consultations and insights it was agreed that a light-touch refresh to the narrative and existing Goals and Objectives was necessary. In particular, it looked at how to better anchor and reflect a number of important thematic agendas in the GLAS, particularly Child Early and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU), Climate Change, and Early Childhood Development (ECD).

As a result of the consultation process, it was decided that:

- CEFMU would be introduced as an additional stand-alone Goal
- Climate Change would also be introduced as an additional stand-alone Goal, as well as integrated into the Objectives of other relevant Goals
- Early Childhood Development would be integrated in Objectives under other relevant Goals in recognition of its multi-sectoral nature

The refresh process has also worked to reflect the significant contextual shifts that have occurred since the first GLAS was launched in 2020. In particular, it has focused on the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, shrinking civic space and escalating humanitarian and climate crises, which have significantly rolled back progress on gender equality and girls' rights. The refreshed GLAS also reflects Plan International's growing commitments to addressing humanitarian and climate crises, integrating the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus and mainstreaming principles of human rights, social justice, anti-racism, decolonisation, localisation, inclusion and intersectionality.

APPROACHES

In addition to the Goals and Objectives, the GLAS outlines a number of key approaches that will guide its implementation. These are aligned to the commitments in Plan International's 5-year strategy *Girls Standing Strong* to building a world based on social, gender, economic and climate justice.

ADVOCACY BASED ON HUMAN RIGHTS

We will increasingly hold governments accountable for realising children's rights, gender equality and inclusion with a special focus on monitoring and reporting on girls and young women in all their diversity through regional and international human rights mechanisms including CRC, CEDAW and UPR, security and peace processes, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ADVOCACY FOR A GLOBAL GIRLS' RIGHTS AGENDA

We will continue to adopt a particular focus on the rights of girls in all their diversity, leveraging our advocacy to address, from an intersectional approach, the root causes of the overlapping inequalities and discrimination that girls especially face in realising their rights.

ADVOCACY FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE WITH AN INTERSECTIONALITY AND INCLUSION LENS

We will focus our advocacy on reshaping unequal gender relations and challenging oppressive power structures that reinforce gender injustice, to achieve the full realisation of girls' rights and equality between all children, young people and adults regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). We will always take an intersectional approach to make visible and to challenge how girls and young women are discriminated against on the basis of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability and other identities, seen and unseen, ensuring that the most marginalised and excluded are not overlooked by our advocacy interventions.

ADVOCACY WITH A LIFE-COURSE APPROACH

Our advocacy will recognise that from birth and across the whole life course gender discrimination affects girls disproportionately, impacting on the realisation of their rights with inter-generational impacts. We therefore use a life-course and age-aware approach in our advocacy that recognises key stages in children's lives, starting from infancy and the preschool years, and moving through school-age, adolescence and early adulthood.

ADVOCACY DRIVEN BY EVIDENCE

We will reinforce the strength of advocacy based on the principles of human rights and gender equality by deploying the best available evidence and data – including from our own programming work – recognising that this has the potential to spur significant, sustained action by decision-makers for policies, legislation, budgets and systems reform.

ADVOCACY POWERED BY GIRLS' LEADERSHIP

Our advocacy will recognise girls' and young women's agency and their role as leaders and actors for their own rights. It therefore will seek to support and open space for them to exercise their voice and agency for change in their own communities and societies.

ADVOCACY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTENSIFYING CRISES, FRAGILITY AND THREATS

Our advocacy will reflect the changing global contexts in which we operate and will target mitigating and responding to the intensifying crises, fragility and threats facing the world today. In particular, it will recognise the impact of shrinking civic space on our advocacy, respond to the intensification of humanitarian crises and focus on advancing climate justice.



BANGLADESH:
A 17-year-old and her
sister make cane mats at
their family home.

© Plan International

Implementation

The GLAS provides a shared strategic framework that connects advocacy efforts across Plan International and supports choices and priority-setting at each level of the organisation. It encourages collaboration around a common set of Goals and seeks to achieve these through integrated advocacy plans linking across Goals and across all levels of the organisation.

In countries and regions, focus is achieved through advocacy plans (and/or wider influencing plans) which align to the GLAS Goals and Objectives most relevant in their context, and which are tailored to the specific issues girls and young women face. For instance, regional hubs have their own plans aligned to the specific priorities and opportunities within their region.

At the global level, we focus on a few specific Goals where we can advance our ambitions and deliver measurable and tangible change by capitalising on major external opportunities and leveraging policy processes in international spaces, through plans linking global, regional and local levels. This provides a strategic global-level focus over a shorter, more concerted time period, typically a couple of years. We will continually strengthen these collaborative ways of working in order to harness the combined power of our global organisation to achieve impact that is greater than the sum of our parts.

The thematic agendas within the GLAS are supported by thematic networks made up of CO influencing groups, regional influencing networks, LO, NO and GH Policy and Advocacy Leads. Each network has a Core Group, which provides an overall coordination and strategizing function for the thematic agenda. The networks share evidence and wider knowledge and assess progress, break bottlenecks to our impact, seek new sources of external support and identify partnership opportunities.

An important element of the GLAS governance is the Core Influencing Group, representing colleagues who lead advocacy and broader influencing agendas across the organisation. This group undertakes the coordination and strategising role for the overall GLAS framework and serves as a network to connect local to global by bringing together GH, CO, RO, NO and LO colleagues working on influencing. The thematic networks also feed into the Core Influencing Group.

The GLAS Steering Group has overall oversight and accountability for the GLAS, including setting the strategic vision and critical actions and monitoring progress. It brings together senior GH, CO, RO, LO and NO staff to ensure the priorities identified are relevant to the needs of all offices.

Monitoring progress

Initially, progress under the refreshed GLAS will continue to be tracked through the annual Influentialness Survey whilst a more tailored monitoring framework is developed. Upon review and consultation with relevant stakeholders, a system will be put in place to enable analysis and reporting of progress from FY24 onwards.

INTRODUCTION



GUATEMALA: A 19-year-old, looks out of window
at her home in Quiché department.

© Plan International



BURKINA FASO: Girls learn about menstruation at MHM club at school.

© Plan International

Plan International offices around the world witness gender inequality and exclusion. Girls and women, in all their diversity, face gender-based discrimination, gender stereotyping and an unequal distribution of power between women, men, girls and boys, and people of other genders, as well as exclusion based on multiple and interwoven factors. Achieving gender equality, promoting gender, social, economic and climate justice, realising girls' rights and fostering an inclusive society are therefore core objectives of our work, and this commitment is reflected in our *Global Strategy Girls Standing Strong*, our *Values and Behaviours Framework*, our global Theory of Change, and in the refreshed Global Advocacy Strategy (GLAS) 2022-2027.

The GLAS provides a *high-level strategic framework* to advocate for the realisation of gender equality and promotion of the rights of girls in all their diversity. As with the previous GLAS, girls' leadership is a central approach to driving girls' and children's rights in all contexts. The process to refresh the GLAS has also included a special focus on crisis and humanitarian situations, in response to commitments in the new Global Strategy to becoming a leader in promoting gender equality and protecting children's rights across humanitarian, peace and development contexts. It shapes our advocacy actions at a time of severe threat from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, intensifying climate crisis, mounting humanitarian crises and the rise in shrinking civic space and authoritarian and oppressive systems.

The GLAS provides a *shared* strategic framework that connects advocacy efforts across Plan International and supports choices and priority-setting at each level of the organisation. It encourages collaboration around a common set of Goals and seeks to achieve these through integrated advocacy plans linking across Goals and across local-to-global levels. It informs decisions regarding advocacy focus and resourcing, developing and implementing programmes which include advocacy elements and fundraising for advocacy.

The GLAS anchors our advocacy priorities as part of a wider range of influencing activities systematically planned and coordinated to change the behaviour of decision-makers to advance gender equality and girls' rights. As such, it is relevant to colleagues delivering policy, campaigns, communications, partnerships or research agendas and can be used to inform and better link with other areas of work, such as direct programme delivery.

The refreshed GLAS builds on the learnings and experiences of the first two years of its implementation (2020-2022), gathered through an inclusive and consultative process with key internal stakeholders in Country Offices, Regional Offices, National Organisations, Liaison Offices, thematic experts, the Core Influencing Group, the Gender and Inclusion Group, GH Policy and Advocacy Leads, as well as others.

BASED ON THESE CONSULTATIONS AND INSIGHTS IT HAS BEEN UPDATED TO:

Better anchor and reflect a number of important thematic agendas, particularly Child Early and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU), Climate Change, and Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Reflect the significant contextual shifts that have occurred since the development of the first GLAS, including the COVID-19 pandemic

Recognise the impact of the intensification of humanitarian crises globally and the increased focus on Plan International's role in responding to this in the Global Strategy *Girls Standing Strong*

Recognise the impact of the climate crisis on Plan International's influencing agenda and approaches and better align the GLAS to our existing ambitions and influencing priorities relating to climate justice

Highlight the impact of shrinking civic space, anti-gender actors and the roll-back on rights seen in many of the contexts in which Plan International works

Respond to the increasing support in the sector for integrating the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus in programmatic and advocacy work

Better represent Plan's increasing digital influencing in response to the acceleration of digital transformation and its implications on girls' lives

Better reflect Plan's deepened commitment to gender transformative change, which includes principles of anti-racism, decolonization, localisation, inclusion, diversity and intersectionality

Better articulate our feminist principles and sharpen use of gender transformative language

The refreshed GLAS continues to link closely with many areas of our programme work, based on a Programme and Influence Approach¹ that operates through thematic Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AOGDs).

Over the next 5 years we will build on our advocacy expertise and on our previous successes to maximise our impact. We will seek stronger engagement of diverse girls and young women, sharing and co-creating platforms for their leadership and meaningful participation. We will take opportunities to step back and give space for the voices of others to be heard.



ECUADOR: A 19-year-old does farm work to pay for mobile data to continue her studies.

© Plan International

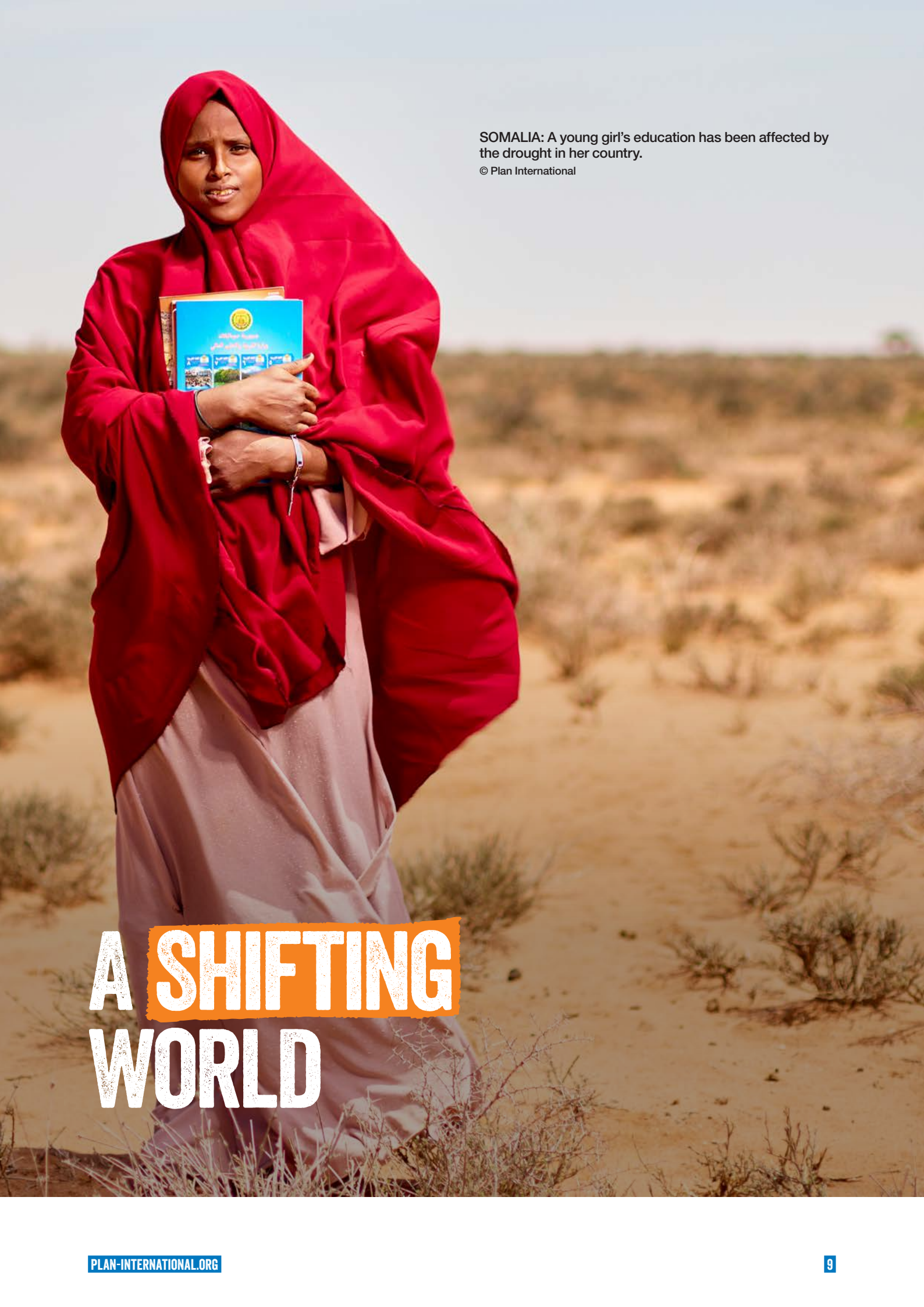
1. Global Approach to Programme and Influence – https://plan-international.org/uploads/2021/11/glo-our_global_approach_to_programme_and_influence_approach-final-to-eng-jun18.pdf

We are mindful of the power and privileges we hold as an INGO, within our global organisation and the global context, as well as due to our access to resources and decision-making spaces. We recognise and acknowledge that structural and systemic racism exists across society and the Official Development Assistance system and that as an organisation we are not separate from, or immune to, this oppression and discrimination. This gives us the opportunity to advocate to drive systemic and structural change, but it also means we have a responsibility to recognise and challenge the privileges that enable us to do so. We will therefore continue our internal reflection process to unlearn and deconstruct behaviours and actions that might be perpetuating colonial and racist dynamics, and we will build more inclusive and equal partnerships including with girls' and young women's movements and organisations. This will result in stronger, more just, collective and shared advocacy efforts to effectively contribute to the achievement of gender equality and promotion of girls' and young women's rights.

Refreshing the GLAS has highlighted significant gaps in resourcing for advocacy and wider influencing work, compared to our ambitions. The full vision of the GLAS framework will only be achievable if it is supported with sufficient capacity, budget and strategic prioritisation within the broader organisation. Implementing the expanded framework, and in particular the areas of growing strategic importance – such as Climate Change, CEFMU and Girls in Crisis – requires Plan International entities to collectively seek and mobilise the necessary resources to deliver the ambition over the 5-year strategy.

THE REFRESHED GLAS IS ALIGNED WITH THE PRIORITIES, APPROACHES AND COMMITMENTS OUTLINED IN PLAN'S GLOBAL STRATEGY 2023-2027: *GIRLS STANDING STRONG*. AS SUCH, IT ADVANCES GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE TO ENSURE THAT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY THOSE EXPERIENCING INTERSECTING FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION WILL LEARN, LEAD, DECIDE AND THRIVE IN THE PROCESS OF REALIZING THEIR RIGHTS.

Girls Standing Strong challenges us to understand why the rights of girls remain unfulfilled, and to act upon and influence the decisions, attitudes and actions of key change-makers, power holders and partners. It helps guide the expansion of networks, platforms and opportunities that enable a conducive environment for girls and young women, in all their diversity, to enjoy their rights. It also calls on us to reflect on how the GLAS can better reflect Plan International's commitments to, by 2027, be more rights-based, evidence-driven, locally-led, globally-connected and youth-centred.

A young girl wearing a vibrant red hijab and a light-colored dress stands in a dry, arid landscape. She is holding several books against her chest, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a vast, open field of dry, yellowish-brown vegetation under a clear sky.

SOMALIA: A young girl's education has been affected by the drought in her country.
© Plan International

A SHIFTING WORLD



The world is a very different place to what it was when the original GLAS (2020-2022) was developed.

COVID-19, conflicts and climate change – among other threats and crises – have had significant repercussions across the globe, particularly affecting those living in fragile contexts and exacerbating existing disparities like gender inequality.

Shortly after the launch of the original GLAS in January 2020, the **COVID-19 pandemic** erupted globally, radically shifting the landscape for advancing children's rights and gender equality. Many hoped the crisis would present the opportunity to 'build back better': a moment to accelerate progress on equality and human rights issues, tackle the climate crisis and reimagine an alternative future. However, data suggests that the pandemic has curbed or even reversed progress made on many gender equality and children's rights issues.² Plan International's research in the first year of the pandemic revealed that 19% of girls worldwide believed that COVID-19 would force them to temporarily put their education on hold, while 7% feared they would have to drop out of school entirely.³ It is estimated that the pandemic may cause an additional 13 million child marriages by 2030, with reports of other forms of gender-based violence also surging during this period.⁴ The impacts of COVID-19 have not been felt equally, with the pandemic amplifying inequalities within many populations and communities. COVID-19 has also led to lack of access to livelihoods, increased poverty and humanitarian needs in the most fragile countries, and its impacts will likely stay with us throughout the period of the GLAS.

The year 2022 has also been characterised as the period in recent decades with the highest number of people in **need of humanitarian assistance**: 274 million.⁵ Today we see more protracted conflicts and complex emergencies, as well as an increasing number of climate-induced disasters. With no end in sight, we frequently work in the context of long-term conflicts with long-term negative consequences for girls and women, such as in Ethiopia or Central Sahel. Although children are protected by International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and customary law, they are very often the victims and targets in war. Among the unique challenges facing girls and boys are the six grave violations against children in conflict: killing and maiming of children; recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups; sexual violence against children; attacks against schools or hospitals; abduction of children; and denial of humanitarian access for children.

Conflict and insecurity are the main drivers of unprecedented and **growing hunger**, alongside economic and climate crises. This year 811 million people are going hungry in the world⁶ – a higher number than the entire population of Europe – and the Horn of Africa is on the brink of a famine. When there is hunger, girls and women tend to eat less and last. Food insecurity also exacerbates negative coping mechanisms, such as child marriage and early pregnancy, the worst forms of child labour, sexual and labour exploitation, and permanent school dropout.

2. Equal Measures 2030, 2022, 'Back to Normal' is Not Enough: the 2022 SDG Gender Index', https://www.equalmeasures2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/SDG-index-report_FINAL_EN.pdf.
3. Plan International, 2020, 'Halting Lives: The Impact of COVID-19 on Girls', <https://plan-international.org/publications/halting-lives-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-girls/>.
4. IRC, 2020, 'What Happened? How the Humanitarian Response to COVID-19 Failed to Protect Women and Girls', <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/5281/ircwpecovidreportv7.pdf>.
5. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Introduction' (OCHA) <https://gho.unocha.org/intro/glance> accessed 6 June 2022.
6. World Food Programme, 'A Hunger Catastrophe' (WFP) [https://www.wfp.org/hunger-catastrophe#:~:text=The%20World%20Food%20Programme%20\(WFP,is%20bigger%20than%20ever%20before](https://www.wfp.org/hunger-catastrophe#:~:text=The%20World%20Food%20Programme%20(WFP,is%20bigger%20than%20ever%20before) accessed 6 June 2022.

Alongside this, a number of the existing crises facing the world have intensified. Despite significant evidence highlighting the catastrophic impacts of climate change and a range of international processes and efforts to address it, global action on climate change remains insufficient in the face of the scale of the ecological, social and economic crisis. The 2022 AR6 IPCC report highlighted the unavoidable multiple climate hazards the world faces over the next two decades with global warming of 1.5°C and above.⁷ This also has significant ramifications for the pursuit of children's rights: UNICEF estimates that 1 billion children – nearly half the world's 2.2 billion children – live in one of the 33 countries classified as “extremely high-risk” for climate and environmental shocks.⁸ The climate crisis is also intensifying gender inequalities, particularly for the most marginalised girls and young women who have contributed least to global warming but are most impacted. Research by the Malala Fund, for instance, estimated that climate-related events in 2021 would have prevented at least four million girls from completing their education in low- and middle-income countries.⁹ Climate impacts also routinely place girls, especially during adolescence, at increased risk of human trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence and disruption in access to sexual and reproductive health services and maternal and postnatal care.¹⁰ It can also contribute to increases in harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage due to the growing impoverishment of communities.¹¹

In other types of emergencies, such as complex emergencies, extreme natural events or displacement, girls and young women face challenges in accessing basic and life-saving services. Currently, over 1 per cent of the world's population is displaced, and more than 40 per cent are children.¹² This figure does not take into account the fastest and largest displacement of people in Europe since World War II following the onset of the conflict in Ukraine. While girls in any context have difficulty accessing decision-making, when they are in a situation of displacement – whether internally as in Mozambique or in refugee contexts such as Lebanon – supporting their participation in decision-making is tremendously complex.

While the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has never been greater, we also see significant **challenges in the humanitarian sector** – of coordination, accountability, short-termist funding or inadequate funding – particularly when it comes to addressing the problems faced by girls, adolescent girls and young women, especially those with intersecting identities. As a result, the sector is failing to adequately meet people's humanitarian needs, promote peaceful societies and support sustainable and inclusive development.

This has led to the emergence in recent years of the **humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus** as a new concept and global policy agenda. However, the reality is that the countries in which we work have for decades been dealing with contexts that intertwine humanitarian, development and peace crises. Understood as the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions, HDP nexus approaches focus on strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity between these three areas so that programming in fragile and conflict affected contexts better realises rights, reduces needs, vulnerabilities and risks and strengthens resilience, promotes gender equality, and addresses drivers and underlying causes of conflict and fragility over the long-term. While this is a new global agenda, the reality is that in most fragile contexts where we work, communities have been integrating the three components of humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding for decades. However, much work remains to be done to convince donors and decision makers of its potential and operationalise the approach, and unpack its significance for organisations like Plan International working across a range of contexts.

Another key shift in the last few years has been the acceleration of the **digital transformation of our societies and economies**. COVID-19 responses have expedited the adoption of digital technologies at an unprecedented pace in all sectors. Even after the resumption of in-person education in schools, digital communications and tools continue to be one of the primary means of learning, creating, thinking, and interacting with others, organising and activism, as well as enjoying entertainment for girls and young people.¹³

7. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2022, 'Sixth Assessment Report: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability' (28 February 2022) <<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/?>>.

8. UNICEF, 'Climate Crisis: Childs Rights Crisis' <<https://www.unicef.org.uk/climatecrisis/>> accessed 6 June 2022.

9. Malala Fund, 2021, 'A greener, fairer future: Why Leaders need to invest in climate and girls' education' (March 2021) <<https://malala.org/newsroom/malala-fund-publishes-report-on-climate-change-and-girls-education>>.

10. Plan International, 2021, 'Policy and Advocacy Brief: COP26' <https://plan-international.org/uploads/2021/12/cop26_policy_and_advocacy_brief_final.pdf?>.

11. Ibid.

12. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Introduction' (OCHA) <<https://gho.unocha.org/intro/glance>> accessed 6 June 2022.

13. UNICEF Office of Research- Innocenti, 2020, 'Digital Connectivity During COVID-19: Access to Vital Information for Every Child' (UNICEF-IRC: December 2020) <<https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/1099-digital-connectivity-during-covid-19-access-to-vital-information-for-every-child.html>>; 'Remote Learning and Digital Connectivity'; UNICEF, 'Remote Learning and Digital Connectivity' (UNICEF DATA: 2021) <<https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/remote-learning-and-digital-connectivity/>>; Plan International, 2021, 'Girls Say Education Is Area of Life Most Affected by COVID-19' (10 May 2021) <<https://plan-international.org/news/2021/05/10/girls-say-education-is-area-of-life-most-affected-by-covid-19/#:~:text=Girls%20and%20young%20women%20have,profoundly%20affected%20by%20COVID%2D19>>.

Evidence suggests that screen time has increased globally for children and adolescents in the past two years.¹⁴ This growth is much faster than it had been over the four years before the COVID-19 outbreak, meaning that the evolution of laws, policies, strategies and investments to support young people to engage in the digital world also needs to accelerate. For instance, the design, moderation, and regulation of online spaces – all of which have serious implications for girls' safety, wellbeing, and participation – are more important than ever. Likewise, ensuring digital access, literacy, and meaningful connectivity is essential not just to ensure continuity and quality of education but also to enable girls' civic and political participation and access to information as well as economic and employment opportunities.¹⁵ Alongside this, the exponential growth in the use of artificial intelligence in content curation and moderation by social media platforms¹⁶ and of algorithmic decision-making in the public sector have caused adverse impacts on girls and young people due to algorithmic bias and lack of sufficient safeguards to prevent potential harms. This fast digitalization of all facets of life requires new laws, governance mechanisms, investments, public and corporate policies, enforcement mechanisms, and measures to mitigate risks of harms against girls and young women and protect their rights.¹⁷

The period since the inception of the GLAS has also seen further intensification of a trend towards **shrinking civic space and increasingly restrictive political contexts**. Young people have been at the forefront of justice movements tackling such changes. COVID-19 and other pandemics, such as Ebola, alongside humanitarian crises have allowed states to activate states of emergency. During these, restrictions on personal freedoms have been introduced which, for many contexts, have upturned human rights norms previously considered inalienable. In conflict-affected communities, armed groups have also restricted movement during the pandemic and heightened the risk for any dissent. In both conflict and non-conflict settings, this limits the possibility of assembly, accountability and participation. These restrictions were often accompanied by additional constraints on civic space, making it harder for



BENIN: Youth campaigners call for an end to violence against children.

© Plan International

civil society to scrutinise decision-makers and decision-making processes. However, this move towards shrinking civic space was not new: CIVICUS Monitor – which tracks civic space in 196 countries – revealed that in 2019 only three per cent of the world's population lived in countries where the core civic freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression were widely respected.¹⁸ Young people, particularly girls and young women, are disproportionately affected by this, frequently having their activism undermined by under-funding, push-back, threats and violence. Research undertaken for Restless Development's most recent State of Youth Civil Society Report found that nearly three-quarters of the youth civil society activists indicated that their organisations' funding has decreased since the start of the pandemic, significantly hampering their ability to engender change.¹⁹

14. Jason M. Nagata, Hoda S. Abdel Magid, Kelley Pettee Gabriel, 2020, 'Screen Time for Children and Adolescents During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic', *Obesity: A Research Journal* (28) 9 <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/doi/epdf/10.1111/josh.13170>.

15. Plan International, 2018, 'Digital Empowerment of Girls' <https://plan-international.org/publications/digital-empowerment-of-girls/>.

16. Meta Transparency Centre, 2022, 'How Enforcement Technology Works' (19 January 20) <https://transparency.fb.com/en-gb/enforcement/detecting-violations/how-enforcement-technology-works/>.

17. A policy brief outlining Plan International's position on digital transformation with a focus on its implications on the lives of girls and young women will be developed in 2022.

18. CIVICUS, 2021, 'Civil Society Report 2020' <https://www.civikus.org/index.php/state-of-civil-society-report-2020>.

19. Restless Development, 2022, 'State of Youth Civil Society Report: 2022', <https://restlessdevelopment.org/youth-power-in-a-pandemic/>.

Alongside this, a complex and evolving network of ‘anti-rights’ and ‘anti-gender’ actors is exerting increasing influence in international spaces as well as domestic politics.²⁰ Often backed by obscure funding, these actors build tactical alliances across issues, regions and faiths to increase their impact. Core girls’ rights issues – particularly SRHR – have been the target of these movements, further contributing to the hardening of restrictive contexts around the world and curbing progress on issues including the promotion of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), access to contraception, access to safe abortion, and the rights of girls, young women and gender non-conforming people more broadly. This means that organisations like Plan International that are doing in-depth work on these issues are doing it with increasing personal and organisational risk, significant personal and organisational consequences, and little – or no – recognition and funding.²¹

The Black Lives Matter protests, following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and many others in the USA and around the world, brought urgent global attention to the concerning **global state of racial injustice**, and how Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC), especially girls and women, are disproportionately affected by discrimination and exclusion. These events intensified criticism of the existing structures perpetuating racial, gender, economic and broader social inequalities, with young people at the forefront of many of the justice movements tackling such issues. Within this, the ways in which **aid systems replicate colonial hierarchies**, racism and white saviorism have been called out,²² requiring organisations like Plan International to be bolder in their stances on issues related to racism, inequality, intersectionality, patriarchy and colonial practices. For Plan International, this has meant reflecting on how to become a truly anti-racist organisation – one which robustly challenges systemic oppression of all kinds. Plan International is now working towards being an intersectional feminist organisation, which includes rooting out structural racism, inequities, and all other forms of discrimination within our interventions, approaches and practices, including in our advocacy, and defining what we actively do to meaningfully advance racial justice.

All of these trends have significant ramifications for the ways in which organisations like Plan International are able to advocate and influence. Shrinking civic space, further intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, has limited or closed many of the spaces and avenues previously used to advocate for change at the local, national, regional and global level. The growth in humanitarian needs, the pandemic and climate crisis have also intensified many of the existing humanitarian and development challenges to which Plan International’s influencing agenda seeks to respond, deepening need whilst also stretching the resources of an already underfunded sector. And growing criticism of the neo-colonial nature of the aid sector requires Plan International to better reflect its commitments to anti-racism, intersectionality, localisation and inclusion in its advocacy plans.

With this in mind, Plan International has sought to refresh the GLAS, recognising the significant shifts in context that have taken place since its inception and recommitting to challenge the unequal power relations, systemic oppressions and root causes of discrimination that disproportionately affects girls and young women in all their diversity.



BRAZIL: Bruna holds a sign reading: “leadership, equality, voice, respect, emancipation”.
© Plan International

20. Observatory on the Universality of Rights, 2021, ‘Chapter 4: Anti-Rights Actors’ in *Rights at Risk: Time for Action – Observatory on the Universality of Rights Trends Report 2021*, <https://www.owid.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Ch4_RightsAtRisk_TimeForAction_2021.pdf>.

21. (Forthcoming and Internal) Plan International, 2022, ‘SRHR Influencing in Restrictive Contexts – Guide’.

22. The New York Times, 2021, ‘Opinion: Foreign Aid is Having a Reckoning’, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/13/opinion/africa-foreign-aid-philanthropy.html>.

UGANDA: A 17-year-old reads one of the books
in her school library.

© Plan International

GLOBAL ADVOCACY GOALS FOR 2022-2027

CRITERIA FOR EACH GOAL

The Goals have been selected based on the extent to which they:

Contribute to our overarching aim of advancing children's rights and gender equality with an intersectional, inclusive and anti-racist lens, and one which is based on international human rights and humanitarian law and principles

Address urgent and emerging challenges to the rights of girls and young women in all their diversity, as experienced and told by girls themselves and as shown by data and evidence

Leverage our expertise, knowledge and insights at all levels, and areas of globally distinctive programming and influencing, where we have already established experience, momentum, profile and credibility

Provide options for combining advocacy work with other approaches, such as programme interventions and social mobilisation, recognizing that the changes we seek can happen in different ways and at different levels

Capitalise on opportunities for Plan International to influence new policy agendas and bring distinct added value to advocacy efforts by partners, by promoting girls' rights and gender transformative approaches that put girls' leadership at the centre

Align with Plan International's Global Strategy *Girls Standing Strong* and build on the previous Global Advocacy Strategy and country and regional priorities

Progress in each of these thematic areas will help to break down barriers that prevent girls and young women, including the most vulnerable and marginalised, from making autonomous decisions and realising their rights. Many of these challenges may require holistic approaches in which we combine our advocacy efforts across several Goals.

UPDATES TO THE GLAS FRAMEWORK

As a result of the in-depth consultation process the following decisions were made to amend the GLAS Framework of Goals and Objectives:

- **CEFMU has been introduced as an additional stand-alone Goal:** The GLAS formerly recognised CEFMU as a 'special focus area.' The consultations revealed that CEFMU is viewed as one of the organisation's long-standing areas of expertise and one on which country and regional offices are already undertaking significant influencing and programmatic work, providing the opportunity to link programmatic interventions and advocacy at other levels
- **Climate change has been introduced as an additional stand-alone Goal, as well as integrated into the Objectives of other relevant Goals:** The consultations revealed that climate change was perceived as one of the biggest issues impacting the rights of the girls and young women, including in relation to key areas such as access to education, SRHR and livelihoods. It was recognised as an area in which there is an urgent need for advocacy and action and considerable appetite to expand focus, commitments and capacity. This is also reflected in *Girls Standing Strong*, which commits to strengthening our programming and influencing work on climate change
- **Early Childhood Development (ECD) would be integrated in Objectives under other relevant Goals:** The consultations revealed a desire to better represent ECD in the GLAS framework as both a key thematic area of the AOGDs, an opportunity to better address the needs of girls across their life-course and a way to reinforce Plan International's commitments to transforming gender norms and roles from the earliest stages in a girls' life. It was decided that, given the already broad remit of the GLAS and the multi-sectoral nature of ECD, this was best done through introducing Objectives under relevant Goals. The GLAS Goals relating to Education, Violence Against Girls, Economic Empowerment, Climate Change, CEFMU and Girls in Crisis all include components relevant to influencing ambitions for ECD.

OUR GOALS



Girls and young women in all their diversity enjoy civic and political freedoms, with access to open and safe civic spaces, increased and sustained influence in decision-making processes and strengthened movements and networks for collective action, across development and humanitarian settings.



Girls and young women in all their diversity are able to have control over their own bodies, enjoy positive sexual experiences and realise the full extent of their sexual and reproductive health and rights free from discrimination, coercion or violence, both in development and humanitarian settings.



The right of girls and young women in all their diversity to live free from all forms of violence is fulfilled throughout the life course through investment in and implementation of strategies and approaches, across development and humanitarian settings, which are gender- and age-responsive, prevention-focused and evidence-based.



The right to gender transformative education from early childhood through to secondary levels is upheld in all development and humanitarian settings through strengthening and resilience building of education systems, digital empowerment, equity-focused innovations and investments in youth-led activism.



Young women living in both development and humanitarian settings, particularly those most climate-affected, can access decent work across their life course in formal and informal contexts through skills building, education to work transition support, employment and financial services, protection from violence and the redistribution of unpaid care burdens, and they gain personal, social and economic agency.



Girls and young women have their needs met and rights upheld before, during and after a crisis and can actively shape decisions affecting them. This is based on securing humanitarian responses, budgets, policies and legal frameworks at different levels which are accountable, and responsive to gender, age and diversity.



Significant progress is made towards preventing and reducing child, early and forced marriages and unions (CEFMU) and realising the right of all girls and young women to freely decide if, when and to whom they should marry across both development and humanitarian contexts. Married girls and young women as well as those at risk of CEFMU will have access to the services and opportunities needed to make decisions about their lives and to thrive.



Girls and young women in all their diversity are able to anticipate, adapt and transform in the face of climate impacts and have opportunities to engage in the development, implementation and monitoring of key climate strategies and action in all development and humanitarian settings.

SETTING PRIORITIES AMONG THE OVERALL GLAS GOALS

At the global level, while pursuing change in all areas, we will emphasise a limited number of Goals for focused effort over one to two years. Through a sharp focus we will leverage opportunities, processes and milestones in the international, regional and country environments to develop advocacy plans that link local to global levels. In 2018, for example, we put special emphasis on girls' education in view of opportunities in the G7. In 2019, we emphasised advocacy on SRHR in the context of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) review and stepped up our efforts to promote the centrality of girls in global conversations on the climate crisis. In 2020 and 2021 we focused on advancing

girls' rights, leadership and gender transformative education through collaborative strategies across Plan International offices and with external partners to influence Generation Equality and the G7, Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and COP. In 2022 onwards we will continue to build on this momentum.

Our Regional, Country and Liaison Offices, as well as National Organisations, will identify and set their own priorities for advocacy using the GLAS "menu" of global Goals and Objectives as a frame of reference. Their prioritisation will be based on analysis of the specific context and situation of girls in each setting.²³

23. We often design interventions with Objectives drawn from across several Goals. This helps us address the drivers of a particular challenge to girl's rights using a holistic approach to influencing.

OVERARCHING APPROACH TO OUR ADVOCACY



Dominican Republic: Girl takes part in consultation ahead of the elections.
(© Plan International)

In addition to the Goals and Objectives, the GLAS outlines a number of key approaches that will guide its implementation. These are aligned to the commitments in *Girls Standing Strong* to building a world based on social, gender, economic and climate justice.

ADVOCACY BASED ON HUMAN RIGHTS

All our work is grounded in human rights principles – particularly those of participation, universality and non-discrimination. When it comes to advocacy, this means that the starting point for any discussions and decisions about positioning, priorities and approaches is always a commitment to the defence and guarantee of human rights.

These principles are embedded in the human rights laws and treaties which provide the normative basis for our work, including:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Other relevant treaties, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- International Humanitarian Law, Refugee Law, and humanitarian principles and standards.

From the UNCRC, which has been ratified by all UN Member States except the USA, we take the principles of the right of every child to express their views freely, that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all decision-making that affects them, that all children should enjoy their rights free of discrimination and that all children have the right to survive and develop.

We reaffirm these principles and assert the rights of girls and young women in all their diversity, especially in contexts of authoritarian governance, patriarchal and racial oppression and gender-based violence, conflict and climate crisis, where girls and young women are often those most vulnerable to the violation of their human rights due to the different intersecting and overlapping forms of discrimination and exclusion they face.

We aim to use key mechanisms at national, regional and international levels to hold governments to account for their human rights obligations and sustainable development commitments to girls and young women.²⁴ These accountability mechanisms, together with the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and its SDGs, give Plan International and our partners the opportunity to promote change across all areas of rights.

Engaging at these various levels, we also encourage key allies and champions among duty-bearers to pro-actively enable safe and meaningful environments and spaces for girls and women to support their journey of becoming powerful agents themselves in holding their governments and other power holders accountable. Girls' and young women's meaningful participation in society including in advocacy processes and scenarios is fundamental for their rights to participation, to freely express their views and opinions, and to be heard. It also fosters their agency and strengthens their own capacity to Lead, Learn, Decide and Thrive.

IN OUR ADVOCACY, AS IN ALL AREAS OF OUR WORK, WE UPHOLD THE ABSOLUTE NEED TO SAFEGUARD THE WELL-BEING AND RIGHTS OF EVERY CHILD WITH A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE LENS, TO ENSURE THAT ALL RISKS ARE ASSESSED AND MITIGATED, AND TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO CAUSE NO HARM TO ANY CHILD THROUGH OUR INTERVENTIONS. IN ADDITION, OUR ADVOCACY AIMS TO CHALLENGE, AND TO AVOID REINFORCING COLONIAL, PATRIARCHAL AND RACIST SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES WHICH UNDERMINE THE RIGHTS OF ALL GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AND KEEP THEM LOCKED IN DISADVANTAGE AND POVERTY THAT PERPETUATE GENDER INEQUALITIES AND EXCLUSION.

24. These mechanisms include, among others: periodic reporting on UNCRC, CEDAW and the African Charter, the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council, Nationally Determined Contributions under the Conference of the parties (COP) 21 Paris Climate Agreement and the Voluntary National Reviews of progress on the SDGs.

ADVOCACY FOR A GLOBAL GIRLS' RIGHTS AGENDA

GIRLS CONTINUE TO BE THE LARGEST EXCLUDED GROUP IN THE WORLD.

They face discrimination and abuse simply for being young and female, and additional characteristics, identities, circumstances and contexts can increase their marginalisation. For instance, girls whose rights are most at risk include those who are gender non-conforming, have a disability, live in rural areas, with limited or no digital access, those who are married or mothers, and those who are Black, Indigenous and/or girls of colour. Despite this, as a group they have the potential to achieve collective agency and work together as a movement for change and achieve common strategic interests. Girls are rights holders in their own right and not only a sub-group of 'women' or 'children', as they are often treated within global development and humanitarian work.

Within our overall work for the rights of all children, Plan International adopts a particular focus on the rights of girls – due to their invisibility and the multiple disadvantages they live through, underpinned by entrenched power relationships and systemic oppression. Our advocacy aims to address the root causes of the inequalities and discrimination that girls especially face in realizing their rights, from the earliest stages of their lives. In line with *Girls Standing Strong*, we are committed in the coming period to deepening this focus on promoting the rights of girls, adolescent girls and young women in all their diversity; strengthening our niche around girls' rights and equality for girls; and working with boys and men as key allies to advance both.

We address girls' rights in each context through advocacy with duty bearers and decision-makers, especially those who make significant decisions on national, sub-national, municipal, regional and international priorities, legal provisions and the allocation of public funds. We promote reform of the design and working practices and culture of the systems and institutions that are meant to serve and protect girls, in ways that transform existing imbalances of power and control over resources – including information, political access, finance and natural resources.



MOZAMBIQUE: A 15-year-old rides her bicycle for two hours to get to school.

© Plan International

Our advocacy focus on policy, legal, public spending and funding, budgetary and systems change is complemented by our work to challenge and change the entrenched social norms and practices that undermine the rights of girls, expose them to harm, limit investments in their lives and confine them to restrictive and passive roles. We strongly recognize that boys and men are crucial as allies and agents for achieving gender equality and work with them to achieve the changes we seek for girls.

In order to set the agenda and advance international standards on girls' rights at the UN, Plan International at all levels advocates towards Member States, UN agencies and international experts. Plan International's positions and recommendations, as well as evidence generated from our research in the countries we work in, are used to convince and support decision-makers to strengthen children's rights and gender equality in policy and practice. We engage with international human rights mechanisms to ensure that the governments of the countries in which Plan International works continue to implement their commitments. We also engage in intergovernmental spaces such as the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to drive policy changes, as well as with the UN Security Council and other influential Member States to raise the needs and rights of girls in conflict. Plan International also utilises and influences important internationally agreed commitments, standards, and goals including human rights frameworks and resolutions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to advocate for the rights of children, girls and young women in all their diversity and hold governments accountable to their commitments.

ADVOCACY FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE WITH AN INTERSECTIONALITY AND INCLUSION LENS

Plan International has made a commitment to adopt a gender transformative approach in all our work. This means that all of our advocacy actions will aim to make the best possible contribution to gender equality. Through gender transformative advocacy we aim to change structures and power imbalances that are unequal and unfair based on a vision for a gender just and equal world. This approach is essential to our ambition of achieving children's rights and equality for girls and young women, taking into account their diverse realities, specific needs and intersecting identities.

Our shared commitment to gender equality and promoting gender justice approach aims to improve the condition of girls and young women while advancing their position and value in society. It supports them in all their diversity, to be able to make informed choices and decisions, to act upon these free from fear or threat of punishment and to be leaders and active agents of change in society.

Our approach encourages critical reflection, questioning and challenging of gender norms, and unequal power relationships that are limiting for all children, particularly for girls, and fuel inequalities of all types. It also challenges the distribution of resources and roles based on a person's gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation

and aims to transform gendered power imbalances that are at the heart of gender inequality and social exclusion on the basis of age, sex, location and other factors of social exclusion such as disability, immigration status and ethnicity, to name a few. We will always take an intersectional approach to make visible and to challenge how girls and young women are discriminated against on the basis of these intersecting identities, ensuring that the most marginalised and excluded are not overlooked by our advocacy interventions. We apply this lens through all our advocacy because 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.

Our advocacy seeks to foster an enabling policy, budgetary and institutional framework for gender equality, that adequately protects girls' and women's rights, tackles the barriers they face and meets their particular needs. It entails working towards comprehensive and integrated human rights-based legislative and policy frameworks that eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls and women across sectors and leveraging policy, legal and systems reform to help trigger transformation of gender norms and practices. We emphasise both the results of Governments' policies – for example towards girls' rights to education – and the process they are following – by including all girls through participatory, gender-responsive and inclusive policies.

CAMEROON: Girls and boys form circle to depict the spirit of 'Ubuntu' or togetherness.

© Plan International



AS RECOGNISED IN THE NEW GLOBAL STRATEGY *GIRLS STANDING STRONG*, THE STRUGGLE FOR A GENDER-EQUAL AND JUST WORLD MUST ALSO INCLUDE BOYS AND MEN, WORKING POSITIVELY, RESPECTFULLY, SAFELY AND EQUITABLY TOGETHER WITH GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN. WE PROMOTE THESE WAYS OF WORKING THROUGH OUR ADVOCACY AND WIDER INFLUENCING, GOING BEYOND ENGAGING BOYS AND MEN AS CHANGE-AGENTS IN GENDER EQUALITY WORK, TO ALSO SUPPORTING THEM IN ADOPTING NEW MASCULINITIES AND CHALLENGING PREVAILING GENDER NORMS.

ADVOCACY WITH A LIFE-COURSE APPROACH

From birth and across the whole life course, gender discrimination affects girls disproportionately, impacting on the realisation of their rights, with inter-generational impacts. As girls grow older, the impact of these disadvantages accumulate, meaning that gender inequalities widen. Conversely, when girls do well in early childhood, they are more likely to do well in middle childhood, into adolescence and so on.

ENSURING THAT GIRLS GET A FAIR START IN LIFE IS THE FOUNDATION FOR ENSURING THAT GIRLS HAVE THE POWER, FREEDOM, VOICE, AND CHOICE TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE DURING ADOLESCENCE.



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC:
A 17-year-old has learnt sewing skills which enable her to look after herself and her family.
© Plan International

We therefore use a life-course and age-aware approach in our advocacy for children, particularly girls, in all their diversity. This recognises key stages in children's lives, starting from infancy and the preschool years, and moving through school-age, adolescence and early adulthood. It recognizes that all these stages are intricately intertwined – and that the moments of transition from one stage to another can be times of particular vulnerability. Using a life-course approach supports a more holistic approach to influencing, promotes integration across AOGDs/ sectors and GLAS goals, and will help ensure maximum impact.

Within our overall mission for the rights of children and girls, we place a priority focus in our advocacy on girls in different stages of adolescence, with

different backgrounds and identities. At the same time, we also seek ways to strengthen advocacy for the fulfilment of rights of younger girls, starting in early childhood, given the importance of taking a life-course approach and the fact that gender attitudes and norms are learned and internalised from the early years. This includes expanding our influencing on ECD in conjunction with our programme delivery and with the expansion of major global partnerships for young children. It involves highlighting the challenges facing girls who themselves are mothers, their infant children, and the support and services they require. It also recognises that gender inequality and discrimination set up boys and men for a life of harmful notions of masculinity.

ADVOCACY DRIVEN BY EVIDENCE

We reinforce the strength of advocacy based on the principles of human rights and gender equality by deploying the best available evidence and data. This shows how investing in the rights of girls, and acting for their advancement, yields both social and economic progress. An effective combination of values-based and evidence-driven elements has the potential to spur significant, sustained action by decision-makers for policies, legislation, budgets and systems reform.

We draw upon the most relevant and powerful evidence, using formal research, girls' and women's own testimonies of impact from policies, and well-documented monitoring and evaluations of programme interventions. These types of evidence are drawn both from external sources, including partners working for children's and women's rights, and from Plan International's own data collection, research and evaluation, together with girls, at the local, country or global level.

We also develop our advocacy based on robust analysis of the barriers children, and especially girls, face in realising their rights in each situation, including the policy, social, economic, political, and digital contexts. This draws on the most recent data and research of local and national settings as a basis for strategy. Current examples of Plan International's work to mobilise evidence to convince decision-makers, power brokers, donors and investors of the centrality and benefits of deploying resources to ensure the rights of girls include establishing evidence through the ROAH's regional observatory on girls' rights, field-based centres of excellence on CEFMU (18+), our work with partners in the Adolescent Girls Investment Plan (AGIP) coalition, as well as Plan International's work on Girls and Young Women in Crisis, which provides testimony on the needs for interventions in humanitarian contexts.

ADVOCACY POWERED BY GIRLS' LEADERSHIP

We recognize girls as leaders and actors for their own rights and we aim to support them to exercise their voice and agency for change across all levels. Girls' leadership is central to our advocacy and wider influencing. This includes supporting girls and young women to be leaders in their lives, including young advocates and human rights defenders, many of whom are already at the forefront of tackling gender inequality in their communities and societies.

As part of our strategic approach to supporting youth-led movements, Powering the Movement, and our global flagship campaigns for girls (the Girls Get Equal campaign runs until 2023), we aim to see our advocacy progressively led by girls and young women and in partnership with the groups, organisations and collectives that they lead.

WE WORK WITH YOUNG FEMINIST MOVEMENTS, AND GIRLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO OFTEN REPRESENT DIVERSE INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES AND THOSE MOST TYPICALLY EXCLUDED FROM DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, WORKING TO STRENGTHEN THEIR COLLECTIVE ACTION WITH TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

This includes working with and to influence donors to adapt their funding practices to be more flexible, long-term, youth-friendly and focused on building the capacity of the activists, movements and organisations they support.

We partner with girl- and young feminist-led groups, organisations and collectives across all of our advocacy work: co-creating campaigns, identifying advocacy priorities and messaging and engaging duty bearers. We advocate with girls and young women to secure meaningful platforms and funds, and we use our influence to shape an enabling environment for meaningful participation, where they can use their voices to demand change with key decision makers, at all levels of power, across both online and offline spaces.

Leadership by girls and young women is a strong and distinct contribution in our advocacy and we will continue to strengthen this approach, based on what girls and young women are telling us about constraints that they face in exercising voice and agency or becoming leaders in each context. We will critically reflect on and act upon the power dynamics that exist, and in line with the ambition of *Girls Standing Strong* we will work to address and dismantle those barriers towards equal and respectful partnership.

This is in line with our commitments to becoming an actively anti-racist organisation. Through this work, we will identify ways to shift power and resources to girls and young women in all their diversity, particularly the most marginalised and excluded, helping to address the power imbalances that exist in our sector and enabling them to take up their rightful roles as leaders and advocates in decision-making spaces.

This also involves us learning continuously and applying inclusive, cost-conscious and climate-conscious approaches to supporting advocacy led by girls and young women. The wellbeing and safety of girls and young people we work with is our priority, including their mental health, and we recognize and respond to gender and other intersecting dimensions of risk. We prepare and support them for possible reprisal when they confront entrenched beliefs and practices.

Our advocacy for girls depends on an environment that safely and sustainably enables their leadership and rights, and, fundamentally, on decisive progress towards a more gender equal world.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: A young woman says she is a nurse by vocation and a leader by conviction.

© Plan International



MALAWI:
19-year-old Clementine
lives in Dzaleka Refugee Camp
which is about 25 miles
north of the capital Lilongwe.
© Plan International

ADVOCACY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTENSIFYING CRISES, FRAGILITY AND THREATS

Plan International is committed to protecting children's rights and equality for girls in intensifying and protracted crises, complex emergencies, armed conflict and contexts of increased fragility and threat.

The longstanding barriers faced by girls and women are exacerbated in humanitarian contexts and their access to basic rights is diminished and sometimes nullified. They are often even targeted in situations of armed conflict. In addition, other risks unique to humanitarian crises emerge, including the six grave violations against children in conflict, forced displacement, sexual exploitation and abuse in the emergency responses, famine, among other risks of long-lasting, often fatal, negative consequences. During states of emergency or active hostilities, humanitarian access to ensure life-saving and basic services may be severely restricted.

Our advocacy therefore seeks to secure favourable positions, decisions, and actions by a range of other decision-makers in crisis situations, particularly in the humanitarian architecture, including the cluster system, other humanitarian NGOs, UN agencies, local governments, regional organisations, donors and external governments.²⁵

Effectively influencing these actors requires a strong presence from community level through to the global level to ensure each level is mutually reinforcing a change for children's rights and gender equality in humanitarian settings.

In responding to these crises, our advocacy is underpinned by the legal, policy, budgetary and normative frameworks which apply in humanitarian settings, in addition to IHL and International Human Rights Law (IHRL). We promote changes that recognize the rights and priority needs of girls and young women in these frameworks, as well as in the individual response to specific crises of disaster, conflict and displacement.

WE HELP ENSURE THAT THESE RIGHTS AND NEEDS ARE ADDRESSED BY ADVOCATING IN ALL PHASES OF A CRISIS – FROM STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE AND REDUCING RISK, TO RECOVERY AND POST-CONFLICT TRANSITIONS.

Crisis can also present opportunities for transformative change in power relationships and for resetting social norms. We use our analysis to identify such openings and promote changes and new investments that work in favour of children, girls and young women.

Plan International's advocacy-based response to the global climate crisis and its impacts on girls and young women will be also progressively strengthened at the macro level through a standalone goal and in specific Goals. Based on the global climate change position paper of September 2019, our approach is framed around climate justice.

25. Other actors, including parents and caregivers, schools, and community organisations also play important roles in fulfilling children's rights. While efforts to influence these actors are an important aspect of affecting change, these efforts will be advanced through our programmes and fall outside the scope of this framework.

Our initial advocacy focus highlighted in the paper is on advancing girls' leadership, education for climate action and just economic transitions, linked to the relevant Goals. Our approach has advanced since this position paper and we will also advocate with urgency for all Governments to recognize and integrate girls' and young women's rights and gender equality in climate policies and action. We will increase our efforts to hold governments to account for their pledges to achieve the Paris Agreement's 1.5 degree target, especially those with greatest historic and current responsibility, and for increased finance for adaptation and loss and damage. We will deepen our advocacy alliances with and support to movements of girls and young women for climate action, and advocate for their meaningful engagement in climate processes.

THESE CRISES EXIST AGAINST A BACKDROP OF SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE, INCREASINGLY RESTRICTIVE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENTS AND THE BROADER ROLLBACK ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THESE CHALLENGES ARE INTENSIFIED BY THE GROWING MOMENTUM OF GLOBAL ANTI-GENDER MOVEMENTS THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO DERAIL AND REVERSE THE GAINS MADE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY AND GIRLS' RIGHTS IF NOT ADDRESSED SYSTEMATICALLY USING A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH.

Not only do these trends pose barriers to addressing the core objectives of the GLAS, but they further undermine our ability to advocate and influence, and that of the organisations, movements and activists that we work with. Where possible, we therefore commit to taking action to push-back against these trends, recognising the importance of the defence of civil and political rights to the ability of young people, including girls and young women, to enjoy their broader rights.

Given the intersections of many of these crises and challenges, we commit to reflecting in the coming period on the significance of the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding nexus to our work. In doing so, we will seek to understand how

best to operationalise the concept, with a view to overcoming the silos that exist between Plan International's advocacy on humanitarian and development issues and recognising the intersections between fragile and conflict-affected contexts and development challenges.



CAMBODIA: Karry, 19 speaks at symposium in her role as Indian Ambassador to Cambodia.

© Plan International

During crises, fragile contexts and in increasingly challenging environments we observe the imperative to do no harm and to be relevant to contextual sensitivities. There may be tensions between a conflict- and politically sensitive approach to advocacy and our desire to take a bold, visible stance on the upholding of human rights. Our decisions on whether to speak out are informed by our risk and political analysis, while in some settings, risks can be reduced by working in partnerships or by utilising our private advocacy approaches.



NEPAL: A young woman with her mother and sister at their home.
© Plan International

IMPLEMENTING OUR ADVOCACY GOALS ACROSS PLAN INTERNATIONAL

HOW WE WILL WORK TOGETHER

All Plan Offices will assess or refresh their advocacy focus and wider influencing strategies over time, taking the GLAS and the relevant contextual priorities into account. Updated areas of focus for advocacy will be built into programmes, projects and grant proposals wherever possible. This will help to strengthen the resource base for advocacy and generate more powerful synergies between our advocacy and programme work.

In countries and regions, focus is achieved through advocacy plans (and/or wider influencing plans) which align to the GLAS Goals and Objectives most relevant in their context, and which are tailored to the specific issues girls and young women face. For instance, regional hubs have their own plans aligned to the specific priorities and opportunities within their region.

At the global level, we focus on a few specific Goals where we can advance our ambitions and deliver measurable and tangible change by capitalising on major external opportunities and leveraging policy processes in international spaces, through plans linking global, regional and local levels. This provides a strategic global-level focus over a shorter, more concerted time period, typically a couple of years. We will continually strengthen these collaborative ways of working in order to harness the combined power of our global organisation to achieve impact that is greater than the sum of our parts.

As the external context changes, and new challenges and opportunities arise, we will use situation and political analysis to identify the best use of our resources, considering new issues where essential. At the same time, in rapidly changing political environments, we use our analysis to identify major power-holders in contexts and spaces which may be new for us, reflecting sources of power that can be leveraged for girls' rights. These may include advocacy targets in the national, regional and international corporate sector, new media, philanthropic organisations and networks of local government leaders. We also aim to understand how shifting power systems and power holders reinforce gender inequalities and exclusion in new ways, ensuring our advocacy strategies continue to challenge these systemic power imbalances and address the root causes of discrimination experienced by girls and young women in all their diversity.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR OUR GLOBAL ADVOCACY

Plan International has a critical role to play in actively adopting and implementing efforts to shift power, tackle systemic oppression and racism and promote diversity and inclusion for girls, young women, and gender non-conforming people, and this includes the way we build and co-create partnerships across the globe.

We have committed that at least 25% of our own humanitarian funding will be passed to national and local NGOs by the end of our next Global Strategy period (2022-2027), and that we will budget for and fairly fund our partners' organisational support costs and capacity strengthening. In addition, we have made a number of other commitments to support, and enhance the visibility of, local and national organisations including youth-led organisations and those focused on girls and young women in all their diversity. This is in order to take a more transformative approach to change, including in all our advocacy efforts.

We build partnerships and form part of civil society alliances at country, regional and international level that share our mission, to advocate more effectively with decision-makers and hold governments to account for their obligations to children, especially girls in all their diversity. Our advocacy partnerships aim to amplify our positive impact by sharing and co-creating resources, knowledge and access to power while reinforcing common messages. We also work with UN agencies and entities to advance our agendas.

Central to our advocacy efforts is collaboration among child rights-focused international, national and local NGOs and alliances and networks promoting gender equality and the rights of girls and women. We also work closely with many humanitarian actors and networks to drive our Girls in Crisis agenda forward.

In addition, we have a range of partnerships within each specific Goal, spanning humanitarian and all other contexts. We consider joining or co-creating new advocacy coalitions and networks that have the potential to be highly cost-efficient and impactful for our Goals.



INDONESIA:
A young girl
is the chairperson
of her local village
children forum.
© Plan International

Through our partnerships, we explore different ways of working together that make us collectively more accountable to girls and young people themselves and support them directly as leaders and by fostering their meaningful participation in all phases of advocacy design and implementation. We give increasing emphasis to working with girls and young people as full partners, including by supporting grassroots feminist, women's and girls' rights organizations and movements for change.

A number of existing partnerships that manifest these principles and approaches will be continued through the period of the GLAS. For instance, through Plan International's participation in the Adolescent Girls Investment Plan (AGIP) – a global intergenerational coalition focused on closing the gap in funding, evidence and commitments for adolescent girls. In the Asia-Pacific Region, partnerships like the ASEAN Youth Forum are enabling Plan International to leverage its platform to promote youth voices in key regional human rights mechanisms, whilst engagement with the ASEAN Civil Society Conference is supporting offices to connect with and learn from grassroots and local-led civil society groups and movements.

A young woman with dark skin and hair pulled back, wearing a white short-sleeved school shirt with blue trim and a blue skirt, stands against a bright blue wooden plank wall. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: A 17-year-old
is lobbying for girls' education.
© Plan International

APPENDICES

ANNEXE 1

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

The consultations revealed a desire to better represent ECD in the GLAS framework as both a key thematic area of the AOGDs, an opportunity to better address the needs of girls across their life-course and a way to reinforce PI's commitments to transforming gender norms and roles from the earliest stages in a girls' life. It was decided that, given the already broad remit of the GLAS and the multi-sectoral nature of ECD, this could be done through integrating ECD into relevant Objectives under existing GLAS Goals. How effective this approach is will be assessed during the life of the GLAS.

However, it is noted that an important influencing opportunity for Plan in ECD therefore not captured in the GLAS is focused on gender-transformative ECD policy supporting parents/ caregivers of all genders and ages (including, and in particular, adolescent mothers). This recognizes

that the enactment and implementation of comprehensive, gender-transformative ECD policies and budgets that promote gender transformative parenting education are lacking globally. These are needed to help ensure that parents and caregivers of all genders and abilities, across all contexts, have access to the education, services and support that are essential for them to provide the nurturing care their young children need to thrive. Influencing work on this agenda will be undertaken through partnerships and other global initiatives, including around men's engagement.

For integration in the GLAS, Goals relating to Education, Violence Against Girls, Economic Empowerment, CEFMU and Girls in Crisis all include components relevant to ECD influencing ambitions. The new goal on Climate Change is also relevant.

GLAS GOAL	RELEVANT OBJECTIVES	RATIONALE
 <p>EDUCATION</p> <p>This Goal explicitly mentions the right to gender transformative education from early childhood, and through to secondary levels</p>	<p>Objective 1: Development and delivery of gender responsive and resilient education sector and emergency response plans and budgets starting with early childhood education</p> <p>Objective 2: Meeting globally agreed financing benchmarks for education, including 10% of national budgets for ECE</p> <p>Objective 3: All girls are able to realise their rights to education in crisis, from pre-primary to secondary</p>	<p>Global policy gap: Policy gaps for Early Childhood Education (ECE) are more significant than for any other level of education, across all contexts.</p> <p>Lack of financing: Pre-primary education remains deeply underfunded in LMICs compared to other education levels across all contexts, by both governments and international donors.</p> <p>Impact for girls in all their diversity: Girls who receive pre-primary education stay enrolled in primary school, attend for longer and have an equal or better chance than boys of continuing to the upper grades and of making the transition to secondary school. Gender responsive ECE also addresses gender socialisation processes that see young girls (and boys) socialised into limiting and discriminatory gendered attitudes, norms and expectations.</p>

GLAS GOAL

ENDING
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
GIRLS

This Goal explicitly mentions the life-course

ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT

This Goal explicitly mentions the life-course. It also addresses the need to redistribute care burdens.

RELEVANT OBJECTIVES

Objective 2: Eliminate, prevent and respond to violence against children and GBV, including using a gender transformative and age-responsive approach

Objective 3: National Action Plans to end violence against children and GBV target root causes, shift harmful gender norms, and take a life-course approach

Objective 3: Addressing redistribution of unpaid work and care burdens that disproportionately affect young women

RATIONALE

Addressing root causes: Harmful gender attitudes and norms that perpetuate violence begin in early childhood. Addressing root causes must begin with parents/caregivers and the gendered socialization of young girls (and boys) through support for positive parenting programs that address intra-couple and intra-family relationships, couple communication, shared decision making and non-violence.

Impact for women and girls in all their diversity: Work to prevent violence, including gender norm change and access to positive parenting programs from early childhood is essential, recognizing that the gender norms that underpin violence towards women and girls begin and are perpetuated from birth (and even from before birth). This includes engaging male parents/caregivers in nurturing care and advancing gender equality.

Redistribution of care burden: Unpaid domestic/care work is disproportionately done by women, limiting their potential to pursue decent work and engage in formal employment. Economic empowerment initiatives must transform discriminatory gender norms that place an unequal care burden on girls and women.

Childcare and parental leave are not widely available or financed: Government provision/subsidisation of childcare is limited, and there is insufficient public financing for it, as well as low coverage in LMICs for paid parental leave.

Impact for women and girls in all their diversity: Access to quality, affordable childcare and paid parental (maternity and paternity) leave are vital to ensuring women's opportunities to work and for economic advancement as well as child outcome benefits. Older siblings, especially girls, will not be forced to take on childcare responsibilities.

GLAS GOAL

GIRLS IN
CRISIS

This Goal upholds the rights and needs of girls and young women in crisis through gender, age and diversity responsive policies, budgets and frameworks



CEFMU

This Goal seeks to make progress on elimination of CEFMU

RELEVANT OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Humanitarian responses are age, gender and diversity responsive

Objective 2: Policies, funding and budgets address the rights and needs of girls and young women

Objective 3: Humanitarian, peace and security and human rights legal and policy frameworks and processes are age, gender and diversity responsive

Objective 1: Promotes recognition of the link between CEFMU, adolescent pregnancy and maternal mortality

Objective 2: CEFMU is addressed in humanitarian settings, including drivers of CEFMU, with access to needed services for married girls and survivors of CEFMU

Objective 5: Multi-sectoral and coordinated approaches to prevent and respond to CEFMU

Objective 6: Implementation and resourcing of gender transformative policies and programmes challenging harmful gender norms, including through parenting and working with boys and men

RATIONALE

Vulnerability to crisis: Youngest children and girls are particularly vulnerable to the immediate and long-term impacts of crises. This includes malnutrition, injury and death from preventable diseases, as well as prolonged exposure to violence and stress that can affect wellbeing, resilience and development through to adulthood. Adolescent mothers and pregnant and lactating women also face particular challenges, including relating to malnutrition and poor maternal mental health, with inter-generational effects.

Global policy and financing gap: There is insufficient funding and attention to Early Childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDiE) on the part of governments, humanitarian actors and donors, especially in recognition of the life-saving and life sustaining nature of such programs.

Impact for women and girls in all their diversity: Access to ECDiE programs in humanitarian settings (including parenting and early learning programs) is lifesaving. It supports the development and learning of the youngest girls, and health and wellbeing of parents/caregivers, particularly female parents/caregivers.

Mother and child survival: Pregnancy is both a cause and a consequence of CEFMU, and carries increased risk for adolescent mothers and their babies, including infant mortality, malnutrition and other poor health outcomes. Complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for 15–19 year old girls globally. Adolescent pregnancy is overall associated with dramatically worse child survival. Young children's survival and health is influenced by the health and survival of their mothers.

Addressing root causes: Gender inequality is a root cause of adolescent pregnancy and CEFMU. Harmful gender attitudes and norms that perpetuate CEFMU begin in early childhood. Addressing root causes must begin with the parents/caregivers of young children. Services and supports must also be available for adolescent mothers and their children.

Impact for women and girls in all their diversity: Access to ECD programmes, including parenting programmes, is important for adolescent mothers who often have particularly limited autonomy and decision-making power, and few opportunities for education and work, with intergenerational impacts. ECD programmes are also vital to support the rights and needs of children of adolescent mothers, particularly girls. ECD programmes are an entry point for needed gender norm change work, including engagement of male parents/caregivers in nurturing care.

ANNEXE 2

DIGITAL INFLUENCING AND REALISING GIRLS' RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Digital transformation of our societies and economies has been expedited in all sectors in the last few years. While the digital technologies have a strong potential to empower girls and women economically, politically, and socially, their increasing adoption without sufficient safeguards presents novel risks and challenges that might reinforce already existing inequalities and cause adverse impacts on girls' lives and

rights. To better support and guide Plan's ongoing influencing efforts for realising girls' rights in the digital age, a digital lens has been incorporated into the relevant refreshed GLAS Goals and Objectives. Education, Girls' Leadership, Ending Violence against Girls, and Economic Empowerment all include components and objectives relevant to empowering girls in the digital age.

GLAS GOAL



EDUCATION

Digital empowerment and equity-focused innovations are highlighted in the refreshed Goal as important means for upholding the right to gender-transformative education.

RELEVANT OBJECTIVES

Objective 5: Refers to 'digital literacy' and 'ICT education' as essential means for equipping girls with the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to tackle the climate crisis, be leaders for gender justice, climate justice, and social justice more broadly and become empowered to take up jobs in the green economy.

RATIONALE

Limited access to digital devices and connectivity and limited digital literacy are important barriers to learning. Promoting digital empowerment and literacy for teachers and students as well as equity-focused innovations in the education sector will contribute to ensuring the quality and continuity of education.

GLAS GOAL



GIRLS' LEADERSHIP

Digital environment should be understood as one of the settings implied by the phrase 'all settings' in the refreshed Goal.



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS

'All forms of violence' mentioned in this goal include online forms of violence such as online harassment, cyber bullying, online child sexual exploitation and abuse, grooming, non-consensual distribution of intimate images, doxing, hate speech, and others.

RELEVANT OBJECTIVES

RATIONALE

Objective 3: Refreshed to call for the reform of the legislative frameworks and meaningful engagement of girls and young women in the co-creation of policies and practices that ensure accessible, enabling, empowering, and safe digital spaces, where girls and young women's rights to convene, organise and mobilise digitally are protected.

Objective 4: 'The right to privacy' is now added to the objective, calling for governments to uphold freedoms of peaceful assembly, access to information, the right to privacy and to be heard.

Governments and tech companies do not meaningfully engage girls and young women in reforming or creating public and corporate policies that shape girls' online experiences and their interactions with technology. Girls and young women must be provided seats, and their needs and problems must be addressed in policy- and decision-making as well as technology-creation processes that affect their digital experiences and interactions.

Girls are increasingly worried about their privacy and the collection, retention, and processing of their personal data. User data is frequently being requested and used by governments in investigations and prosecutions against activists, especially in authoritarian contexts. Digital and biometric surveillance by tech companies and governments might have a chilling effect on their freedom of expression and activism. Privacy must be protected not just because it is a right on its own but also because several other rights are related to and dependent on it.

Objective 1: Refers to 'online violence'. It highlights that governments must enact, resource, implement and monitor strong legislative frameworks to address both online and offline forms of violence. This reflects Plan's ongoing influencing efforts at local, regional, and global levels for the reform and effective enforcement of laws and policies to prevent online violence.

Objective 4: Addresses the need for protecting girls and young women activists from violence including in online spaces.

Internet use has increased globally for children and young people in the past two years. While this provides new opportunities for learning, interaction, creation, and activism, digital space is at the same time where various forms of online violence take place. Laws, policies, and measures have not evolved at the same pace to respond to increasing online violence.

Evidence suggests that online abuse and violence result in girls' and young women's voices being silenced and reduce women's and girls' ambition to be politically active and visible. Prevention of online violence is essential to protect girls' freedom of expression and their right to participate in public affairs.

GLAS GOAL



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Digital agenda is not referenced in the Goal but in the Objectives.

RELEVANT OBJECTIVES

RATIONALE

Objective 1: Highlights that policies, legislation, and investments must ensure that young people “have digital access and the skills to use and create technology as an enabler of economic empowerment so that they can navigate their careers in (...) digitising economies (...)”.

Objective 3: ‘Digital assets’ is listed as one of the enablers for young women’s participation in fair and decent work. Objective 3 states that policies, budgets, informal systems and legislation should fulfil the needs and rights of young women to digital assets along with personal, social, economic and assets.

As we clear the path for women and girls to have access to technology and digital content on par with boys and men, it is essential that we also enable and promote their participation as the makers and creators of tech. Much of the technology and digital products we use today have been designed and developed by men. It is important to recognise the role of women and girls not just as users and consumers of technology, but as developers and creators of it as well.

Upskilling of girls in ICT and digital literacy will play a key role in their employment and economic empowerment in our increasingly digitising economies.

ANNEXE 3 ANTI-RACISM PRINCIPLES REFLECTED IN OUR ADVOCACY WORK

The growing attention to the concerning global state of racial injustice in recent years has intensified criticism of the existing structures perpetuating racial, gender, economic and broader social inequalities within our sector. As a result, Plan International has undertaken a process of internal reflection to understand how it can be a more actively anti-racist organisation and challenge issues related to inequality, intersectionality, patriarchy and colonial practices through our work.

Plan International recognises that racism is a human rights violation and has no place in our organisation nor in the work we do. We are committed to adopting an intersectional approach to rooting out structural racism, inequities, systemic oppression

and all other forms of discrimination, within our internal operations, programmatic interventions, advocacy, approaches and practices. Our aim is to ensure that our organisation is a place where all individuals in all their diversity, including their racial and ethnic identity, feels safe, respected, included and valued.²⁶

We are aware we have a long journey ahead of us to achieve this, but we are dedicated to meaningfully advancing racial justice within Plan International and throughout our sector. This has significant ramifications for our advocacy work and, as such, we are working to ensure that this refreshed GLAS, reflects and lives the principles identified by Plan International:²⁷

01 We are committed to creating an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory culture. We have a zero-tolerance approach to racism and discriminatory behaviour.

02 Each and every one of us – especially our leaders – must be committed, visible and active in our will for self and organisational change. We recognize that this requires deliberate self-reflection on our thoughts, behaviours and attitudes, together with an intentional championing of diversity and inclusion through the lens of understanding of power, privilege and bias.

03 We must mainstream Anti-Racism and Racial Justice in the organisation's relationships, workstreams, interventions, transformation and operational processes and procedures.

04 We must adopt an intersectional feminist approach to addressing racism and discrimination. We will work on driving positive change within the organisation to ensure that people in all their diversity feel safe, respected, included and valued in their engagement with us.

05 We must work collaboratively across the Plan International network, committing to an action plan and standards that ensure that our relationships, interventions, approaches and practices are built upon the foundation of our vision of intersectional feminism and Anti-Racism.

06 We must redistribute power by boldly reforming our governance, leadership, partnership, human resources, communications, and resource mobilisation structures, processes and strategies.

07 We must create space, time and systems to encourage open discussions on racism, discrimination and injustices. We will listen to each other, share our experiences, and learn from one another. We will seek to unlearn and address what does not serve our mission interpersonally, institutionally and within the sector.

08 We must be accountable to our staff by transparently, honestly and periodically sharing the progress we have made on upholding our Anti-Racism commitments and the lessons we have learned working towards sustainable organisational and culture change.

09 We must be transparent and honest in our communications on our positions, efforts, progress and learnings on Anti-Racism, discrimination and justice. We will be vocal and intentional in driving positive change within the sector.

26. Anti Racism Initiatives at Plan International April 2021

27. Anti-racism Vision Principles Final 23 Feb 2021. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iBd-BHlqR8pxCjFGJZaJuPLmtmO_WjCk/edit.

Plan International has taken a range of actions over the last years including adopting our Vision & Principles, and starting to implement a global Anti-Racism Action Plan, embedding anti-racism and equity principles in discussions across all the areas of our work as part of the development of aligning with our new Global Strategy, *'Girls Standing Strong'* (FY23-FY27), and taking steps to start to shift power and increase diversity in our internal leadership and governance. However, our actions to date are just the start of a journey and we are committed to concerted, ongoing action to create the change that is needed so we walk the talk.²⁸

By undertaking this process of reflection, learning and action, which must be continuous and ongoing, we want to shift work that we do and ways that we work that are part of that racist and colonial system. We acknowledge and are aware of our own privilege and that this means that we need to be on a journey of continuous learning and reflection. We approach this work with an intersectionality lens, recognising the impact of overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination experienced by individuals and groups, especially girls, young women and gender nonconforming people.

We recognise the need to specifically examine the ramifications for our advocacy work and identify concrete actions, through a **series of next steps**, which may for example include:

- Reviewing the Principles and considering how we apply these through the GLAS and our advocacy work: this could include a discussion/workshop to jointly draft specific anti-racist advocacy principles, such as the ones that certain Plan International offices have developed on communications
- Reviewing external resources and guidance, and/or develop our own tools and resources for policy and advocacy, and wider influencing work
- Developing a set of core advocacy actions and/or messages that underpin and support the GLAS Goals and Objectives and implementation of the GLAS.

Note: This annexe was developed based on documents shared by different parts of the organization, including the Anti-racism Council and Plan UK.²⁹ As this is an ongoing process within Plan International, and different parts of the organisation are at different stages of learning and change, this annexe will be revised and updated as we continue our reflection internally.

28. Plan International, 2021, 'IDC Inquiry: Racism in the Aid Sector - Plan UK Response' <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FNfsJgVnpLDtzMWu1L90fZVEc0d9cpx6/edit>

29. Other Plan documents consulted:

- The Equality Glossary
- Plan UK, March 2020, PAR Anti Racism Workplan (External)
- Plan UK, March 2022, Anti-racist communications principles (Internal)
- Plan UK, July 2021, Anti-Racism and decolonisation in policy and advocacy. Audit report.
- Anti racism presentation_ EU Influencing Forum April 2022. <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LLe5gfxAoZ9h8LGYN89zoL99B43bXsef/edit#slide=id.p1>



Cover photograph: A 14-year-old has had her education disrupted by COVID-19. © Plan International

Design: Out of the Blue Creative Communication Solutions – www.outoftheblue.co.za

About Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. We strive for a just world for children and young people, working with them and our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of discrimination against girls, exclusion and vulnerability.

We support children's rights from when they are born to when they reach adulthood. Using our reach, experience and knowledge, we drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels and enable children and young people to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We have been building powerful partnerships for children for over 85 years, and are active in more than 75 countries. We are independent of governments, religions and political parties.

Plan International

International Headquarters
Dukes Court, Duke Street, Woking,
Surrey GU21 5BH, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1483 755155

Fax: +44 (0) 1483 756505

E-mail: info@plan-international.org

plan-international.org

Published in 2022. Text © Plan International



facebook.com/planinternational



twitter.com/planglobal



instagram.com/planinternational



linkedin.com/company/plan-international



youtube.com/user/planinternationaltv