

**Annex 1**

# GLOBAL POLICY

## GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

<b>LEAD</b>	Gender Equality and Inclusion, Global Hub.
<b>VERSION NUMBER</b>	1.2
<b>DATE OF APPROVAL BY MEMBERS' ASSEMBLY</b>	December 2023
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)</b>	s/a
<b>REVIEW DATE (5 YEARS FROM EFFECTIVE DATE)</b>	November 2028
<b>RELATED POLICIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">PII Preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Global Policy on Safeguarding</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Global Policy on Values Conduct and Whistleblowing</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Program and Influence Quality Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Global Data Privacy Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Global Policy on Corporate Partnerships Ethical Engagement</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy</a> (PII Policy)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Grievance Policy</a> (PII Policy)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Disciplinary Policy</a> (PII Policy)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Whistleblowing Policy</a> (PII Policy)</li> <li>• <a href="#">PII Code of Conduct</a> (PII Policy)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Policy</a> (PII Policy)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Learning and Development Policy and Procedures</a> (PII Policy)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Performance Management Policy</a> (PII Policy)</li> </ul>

# APPLICATION

As a Global Policy, this policy applies to:

- a. Plan International, Inc. (“PII”), including its headquarters (Global Hub) in the United Kingdom (operating through its UK subsidiary, Plan Limited), and all its country offices, regional offices, liaison offices, and any other offices, some of which operate as branches and some as subsidiaries;
- b. All National Organisations that have signed a Members’ Agreement and License Agreement with PII; and
- c. All other entities that agree to be bound by the Global Policies.

(Together, “Plan International Entities”, also referred to as “we” or “us” in this document).

All the entities that are bound by Global Policies, including PII, shall enact their own procedures, regulations or other regulatory documents that enable compliance by its employees (and/or, when appropriate, contractors and other partners) with this Global Policy.

# INTRODUCTION

Plan International strives for a just world that advances children’s rights and equality for girls in all their diversity. We envision a world in which children and young people are not disadvantaged by gender inequality, exclusion and unequal power. This is reflected in our new Global Strategy (2022-2027), “**All Girls Standing Strong Creating Global Change**”, and our **Theory of Change** where we commit to deepen our focus on girls’ rights and continue to advance gender equality and inclusion. By 2027, our vision is for all our work across the **Areas of Global Distinctiveness** to be fully gender transformative and inclusive<sup>1</sup> while in humanitarian contexts our minimum standard will be gender aware<sup>2</sup> and more, with gender transformative<sup>3</sup> being the ultimate goal. *This Policy affirms our commitment to gender equality, girls’ rights and inclusion.*

Plan International seeks to contribute to gender justice by addressing the root causes of inequality and exclusion which are rooted in sexism, ageism, racism, ableism and heteronormativity, and all other forms of discrimination. We believe that we can achieve this by examining how intersecting systems of power and oppression, such as patriarchy and colonialism, are interconnected and impact the people we work with, especially girls and women. By partnering with diverse actors, we will challenge discrimination, shift power and end human rights violations based on gender and other intersecting identities.

We will apply our [Gender Transformative Programming and Influencing](#) approach to contribute to social change, shifting gender norms and placing young people at the center of our work. We will showcase sponsorship as an impactful way to promote gender equality and inclusion. We will prioritise increased funding to gender transformative actions, investing in the requisite technical expertise to provide support and inspiration for our work. We will also address shrinking civic space and counter anti-rights movements that are working to challenge and roll back gender equality and girls’ rights around the world. Plan International will aim to ensure that

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<sup>1</sup> That is, tackling the root causes and consequences of gender inequality and exclusion across all contexts

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Annex 2 for Gender Aware definition

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Annex 2 for Gender Transformative Approach definition

our humanitarian work is gender aware, at a minimum, leveraging opportunities for shifting norms and supporting girls' rights across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

We strive to become an anti-racist organisation with intentionally inclusive culture that truly celebrates diversity and is reflective of our strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and feminist leadership principles. We humbly acknowledge that this is a journey, and we will endeavour to learn from and respond to external changes in the sector and from social justice movements.

## POLICY STATEMENT

*We confront and address discrimination and human rights violations based on gender, and other forms of exclusion. We challenge and seek to transform systems of power and oppression to promote gender equality, girls' rights, and inclusion. We foster an organisational culture that embraces Values Based Leadership, feminist leadership principles and anti-racism, while supporting staff to adopt good practice that exemplifies our commitment to gender equality and inclusion.*

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a. articulate a clear vision and direction, common language and consistent message;
- b. set benchmarks, concrete actions to operationalise our commitment to the promotion of gender equality, girls' rights and inclusion; and
- c. outline roles and accountabilities to ensure consistency in application of the Policy across Plan International Entities.

## APPLICABLE REQUIREMENTS

The following commitments have been developed to **guide, support and monitor** the implementation of this Policy. The commitments focus on three areas: Programming and Influencing, People and Culture, and Marketing and Communications. These commitments apply to all Plan International Entities.

To effectively promote gender equality, girls' rights and inclusion, offices will:

### ***PROGRAMMING AND INFLUENCING***

1. Work towards being gender transformative in our **programming and influencing** work. Ensure that humanitarian projects are gender aware and more at a minimum, with the ultimate ambition to be gender transformative. All country & national offices strategies, programmes, influencing plans and projects will be developed based on sound gender, age and inclusion analysis and use the relevant gender marker.

2. Amplify the collective voices of girl/youth activists, feminist movements and representative organisations<sup>4</sup> to **influence decision makers** to eliminate gender discrimination in legislation, service provision and increase accountability to human rights frameworks that promotes gender justice.
3. Strengthen and build **partnerships with women's rights and representative organisations**<sup>5</sup> based on shared commitment and values to gender justice, sharing power and acting in solidarity towards gender transformative change.
4. **Identify, track and measure results** of gender transformative change for all programmes and projects. Use the results to contribute to mutual learning and accountability to the people we work with.
5. **Resource gender transformative and inclusive actions**, in line with our bold ambition and commitments to gender equality, girls' rights and inclusion.

## **PEOPLE AND CULTURE**

6. Ensure that **organisational policies, codes of conduct, business processes and procedures, management functions and leadership** concretely promote gender equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, are anti-racist, family-friendly, and promote staff wellbeing<sup>6</sup>, in line with our overall commitment to gender equality and inclusion.
7. Position the organisation to attract and hire staff with **competencies and values** that strongly align with our gender equality and inclusion ambitions.
8. Ensure that our organisational culture is safe, inclusive, equitable and reflective of our anti-racism and feminist leadership principles.

## **MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

9. All **marketing, fundraising** and sponsorship messages reflect, communicate and promote our commitment to gender equality, girls' rights and inclusion.
10. All **communications** are inclusive and written in an accessible<sup>7</sup> manner and ensure users have equal access to information.

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<sup>4</sup> Refers to women's and girls' rights movements, disabled people's organisations, Indigenous rights movements, and LGBTIQ networks, among others

<sup>5</sup> Refers to women's and girls' rights movements, disabled people's organisations, Indigenous rights movements, and LGBTIQ networks, among others

<sup>6</sup> These policies include: flexible working hours, adequate maternity and paternity leave following international standards, and provisions of space for breast feeding/pumping, as well as physical spaces that are accessible by staff with disabilities, and are non-discriminatory, and are SOGIESC and disability inclusive including equal opportunity hiring, retention, and promotion.

<sup>7</sup> In terms of language, content, and visuals, are available in multiple languages, provide alternative formats including large font size, easy read, and digital audio, and all users have equal and full functionality

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES- ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

All Plan International staff, regardless of job, speciality or location, will implement the commitments outlined in this Policy. *The Gender and Inclusion Group (GIG)*<sup>8</sup> and *the Diversity Advisory Forum*<sup>9</sup> shall provide technical expertise to support operationalisation of the policy across Plan International.

**All Managers and Responsible Unit leads** outlined in the Commitments are **demonstrably responsible** for this policy and shall ensure that staff members and volunteers understand and implement the commitments of this Policy. It is the responsibility of all People and Culture Managers to ensure that these requirements are reflected in recruitment processes, job descriptions and performance management of staff at all levels.

**Country Directors, Regional Directors and Department Heads/Executives** are **ultimately responsible** for the implementation of this policy at country, regional and global level and shall support partners, where necessary, to implement the Global Policy.

**All National Organisations** are also **ultimately responsible** for ensuring that their offices comply with and report against this Policy as outlined in this Accountability Framework. National Organisations shall support, where necessary, the Country Offices and partners they work with to implement the Global Policy.

**The PII Leadership Team** will ensure the implementation of this Policy, *the International Board* will have **oversight** of this Policy and *the Members' Assembly* is **ultimately accountable** for our commitment to this policy.

To monitor adherence to this Global Policy, Plan International Entities will strengthen the review and monitoring process to include:

- A mandatory **Gender and Inclusion Review (GIR)** to be conducted every two years;
- A **Gender Equality and Inclusion Self-Assessment (GEISA)** to be conducted every five years;
- A **compliance audit** of implementation of the Policy by all Plan International Entities will be undertaken by Global Assurance at least once during the five-year term of the Policy.
- These reports will be shared across Plan International Entities, and every two years the **PII CEO will report to the International Board** on the implementation of the Policy.

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<sup>8</sup> The Gender and Inclusion Group (GIG) Network provides the key mechanism through which the Gender and Inclusion Hub connects to staff across all Plan entities: PUs, COs, NOs, RHs, LOs, and the Global Hub. The network provides a forum for learning, sharing, and peer-to-peer support to strengthen member staff's knowledge and skills concerning gender transformative programming and influencing. The Network is open to all staff, gender, and inclusion technical professionals, and staff interested in the area – including staff working in development or humanitarian settings.

<sup>9</sup> The Diversity Advisory Forum is a mechanism that ensures integrated engagement around emerging EDI issues between relevant networks within the organization and leadership, including the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Leadership Team (LT).

# ANNEX 1

## ASSOCIATED STANDARDS AND POSITION PAPERS

Our commitment is inspired by the Human Rights Framework and the globally agreed principles, such as Equality and non-discrimination. It is based on international and regional standards, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), as well as relevant soft laws<sup>10</sup> and the global ambitions set out in the SDGs. Attention to gender-specific rights violations is clear in the SDGs, as evidenced by a hard-won stand-alone goal which calls on the world to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” (Goal 5) and a goal to reduce inequality within and among countries (Goal 10). Such commitments provide a solid foundation for our priority focus on gender equality, girls’ rights and inclusion.

This Global Policy also considers the Yogyakarta Principles (The Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and the Yogyakarta Principles) plus 10 (Additional Principles and State Obligations on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics to Complement the Yogyakarta Principles.

Furthermore, in addition to all relevant policies and standards applicable to staff and associates, this policy is complementary to, and should be read and applied, in conjunction with the following associated documents, Global Strategies, Thematic Standards & Guidelines, Directives and Papers, as may be amended from time to time:

- [Disability Inclusive Safeguarding in Programming Guidance](#)
- [Anti-Racism and Equity Vision and Principles](#)
- [Building Better Partnerships Guiding Principles](#)
- [Plan International Image Guidelines](#)
- [GLOBAL BRAND MANUAL 2.0](#)
- [Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights \(SRHR\) Position Statement](#)
- [SOGIESC \(Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Characteristics\) Position Statement](#)

Where required by law or local practices, Plan International, Inc, Country Offices, and subsidiaries as well as National Organisations may enhance or modify the standards as set out in this policy.

# ANNEX 2

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

### ***Anti-racism***

Anti-racism is the work of actively opposing racial hatred, bias, systemic racism, and the oppression of marginalized groups [such as black, indigenous, people of colour] by advocating

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<sup>10</sup> Soft laws are non-binding international standards such as resolutions in the Human Rights Council or General Assembly, General Comments by the CRC or CEDAW Committees, etc.

for changes in political, economic, and social life so that power is redistributed and shared equitably. At Plan International, our vision is for us to be an organization where all individuals in all their diversity, including their racial and ethnic identity, feel safe, respected, included and valued.

### ***Disability***

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others<sup>11</sup>.

### ***Diversity***

Diversity acknowledges that each individual is unique. It means recognising, accepting, celebrating and finding strength in individual differences such as gender, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identities, expressions, sex characteristics, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

### ***Exclusion***

Exclusion is the process that prevents certain individuals or groups from fulfilling their rights. It is a consequence of oppressive social and gender norms that support unequal distributions of power and resources and reinforces differences between groups of people by placing different values on distinct groups and individuals. For example, girls, boys and youth with disabilities, and those of diverse SOGIESC, are often stigmatised and not valued.

### ***Feminist leadership***

Feminist Leadership is about transforming the ways we do things at Plan International in order to promote gender equality and become an inclusive organization. It requires us to be good leaders and change makers by challenging gender norms, privilege and rejecting all forms of discrimination and exclusion; promoting shared power and collective decision-making; focusing on cooperation and a common agenda of change; and empowering staff and valuing everyone's contribution. Embracing feminist leadership principles is part of Plan's commitment to gender transformative change. It has been embedded in our value-based leadership approach to ensure that this agenda reaches all our operations and delivery framework.

### ***Gender Aware:***

Efforts that explicitly address practical gender issues, but do not try to transform gender relations, change unequal power dynamics and address the root causes of gender inequality and exclusion. Gender awareness seeks to improve the daily condition of diverse groups of women and girls by addressing practical gender and exclusion issues.

### ***Gender Equality***

Gender equality means that all persons, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, gender expressions, gender identity and sex characteristics enjoy the same status in society; have the same entitlement to all human rights; enjoy the same level of respect in the community; can take advantage of the same opportunities to make choices about their lives; and have the same amount of power to shape the outcomes of these choices. Gender equality does not mean that women and men, or girls and boys are the same. Women and men, girls and boys, and people of diverse SOGIESC have different but related needs and priorities, face different constraints, and enjoy different opportunities. Their relative positions in society are based on standards that, while not fixed, tend to advantage men and boys and disadvantage women and girls, and people of diverse SOGIESC. Consequently, those who are not advantaged, are affected in different ways by policies and programmes. A gender equality approach is about understanding these

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<sup>11</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities [Article 1 - Purpose | Division for Inclusive Social Development \(DISD\) \(un.org\)](#)

relative differences and intersecting identities, appreciating that they are not rigid and can be changed. It is important to keep these differences and intersecting identities in mind when designing strategies, policies, programmes and services. Ultimately, promoting gender equality means transforming the power relations between women and men, girls and boys and people of diverse SOGIESC to create a more just society for all. One part of a strategy to achieve gender equality is gender equity. A gender equity approach is the deliberate process of being fair to produce equal and measurable outcomes.

### ***Gender Equity***

Gender equality means equal outcomes for women, men and gender-diverse people. 'Gender equity' is the process to achieve gender equality. Gender equity recognises that women and gender-diverse people are not in the same 'starting position' as men.

### ***Gender Expression***

Each person's presentation of the person's gender through physical appearance – including dress, hairstyles, accessories, cosmetics – and mannerisms, speech, behavioural patterns, names and personal references, and noting further that gender expression may or may not conform to a person's gender identity.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Gender Identity***

Refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Gender Justice***

Gender justice is the ending of inequalities and all forms of exclusion, which result in unequal power relations between diverse groups of women, girls, men and boys and people of diverse SOGIESC. It implies that all people have equal access to and control over resources, the ability to make choices in their lives, as well as access to provisions to redress inequalities and exclusion, as needed. A commitment to gender justice implies that we must strengthen our gender transformative approach to accelerate change and tackle the root causes of gender inequality. It focuses on the responsibility to hold duty bearers accountable to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

### ***Gender Transformative Approach***

Our gender transformative approach explicitly tackles the root causes of gender inequality and exclusion, unequal gender power relations, discriminatory social & gender norms and legislation, in all our work. The focus goes beyond improving the condition of diverse groups of women and girls and seeks to improve their social position (how they are valued in society) as well as the full realisation of their rights. This will involve promoting and applying, affirmative action for girls and women so that long standing gender gaps are closed, and inequalities overcome.

### ***Gender Norms***

Gender norms are the shared expectations or rules about how each gender should behave. Gender norms tell us what it means to be a girl or a boy, a man or a woman in a given society. The concept of gender norms has at its core the notion of unequal power relations and prestige between men, women, girls and boys, and gender-diverse people.

### ***Girls' Rights***

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<sup>12</sup> Yogyakarta Principles +10 [Preamble \(YP+10\) – Yogyakartaprinciples.org](https://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/)

<sup>13</sup> Yogyakarta Principles [Preamble – Yogyakartaprinciples.org](https://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/)



Girls everywhere face significant barriers to their rights simply because they are young and female. To effectively support girls and achieve equality, it is essential to recognise that girls as a cohort represent one of the largest excluded social groups. Yet, as a group they have the potential to achieve collective agency and work together as a movement for change and achieve common strategic interests.<sup>6</sup> Girls are right holders in their own right and not only a sub-group of 'women' or 'children'. Girls' rights are covered by both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, even though girls face particular risks and barriers to the realisation of their rights and have specific needs that require special protection under law, the binding international human rights framework rarely explicitly spells out their specific rights. Different sources of international soft law may specify, though, girls' rights or contain references to girls' specific needs and vulnerabilities. Therefore, if we are to leave no girl behind, an important first step is to ensure that girl-specific rights are recognised and realised as human rights. Therefore, Plan International firmly believes that securing the rights of girls is the critical social justice issue of our time, and that girls' rights are human rights.

### ***Heteronormativity***

The assumption or expectation that all people are or should be *heterosexual* in their *sexual orientation*, which is often inscribed in law, institutions, and social practices.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Inclusion***

Inclusion is bringing diverse people into a process in a meaningful manner. Creating an environment or society, where diverse groups of individuals are valued and can fully enjoy their rights regardless of their intersecting identities (age, gender, ability, SOGIESC, language, race, ethnicity, etc.) and compounding vulnerabilities. Recognising and considering the diverse needs of various groups, it seeks to dismantle barriers while addressing the root causes of exclusion. It promotes respect for diversity and just society where every individual is treated with dignity, fairness, and equality.

### ***Inclusive Communications***

Inclusive communications refer to the use of language and communication practices that are accessible, context-sensitive and appropriate. It takes into consideration existing dynamics in respect to language, race, ethnicity, ability, SOGIESC, age and use neutral and sensitive language that is respectful and reflective of diverse backgrounds. It aims to create a safe, and respectful environment where everyone feels valued, heard, and included.

### ***Intersectionality***

Intersectionality is a way of thinking about power, privilege, and gender that recognises a person's combination of social identities. Social identity is the part of each of us which identifies as a member of a social group. These social groups which impact on our identity may include age, sex, gender, gender identity, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, class, any history of conflict with the law, and more. Intersectionality means we think about multiple forms of inequality (based on our social identities) at the same time rather than considering each of them separately and we understand how they overlap (or intersect) and compound to create a person's experience of prejudice and inequality, or power and privilege.<sup>15</sup>

### ***LGBTIQ+***

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, and Queer/Questioning (the "+" is used to signify an inclusive approach to all people with diverse SOGIESC). Please note that while the term LGBTIQ is increasingly understood and used in different regions on the world, in many countries other terms may be preferred by LGBTIQ+ persons to self-identify.

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<sup>14</sup> From SOGIESC Position Paper

<sup>15</sup> From Global Policy on Safeguarding

***Patriarchy***

Social system in which men hold the greatest power, leadership roles, privilege, moral authority and access to resources and land, including in the family. Most modern societies are patriarchies.

***Sex Characteristics***

Each person's physical features relating to sex, including genitalia and other sexual and reproductive anatomy, chromosomes, hormones, and secondary physical features emerging from puberty.<sup>16</sup>

***Sexual Orientation***

Refers to each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional, and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender.<sup>17</sup>

***Social Norms***

Social norms are shared beliefs about what is typical and appropriate behaviour in a group of people. These are like informal rules, which influence and are influenced by formal rules such as laws and regulations. Norms shape expectations and attitudes and can sustain and prescribe gender inequality. Around the world, social norms on gender shape the unequal status of women and girls in all their diversity and the expectations of their role in society.

**SOGIESC** - Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics. SOGIESC is language drawn from human rights discourse and a protected characteristic. All people have SOGIESC, diverse SOGIESC refers to non-normative forms which includes LGBTIQ+ people. Different combinations of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics can be associated with the LGBTIQ+ categories and ways of expressing those identities. (From SOGIESC Position Paper)