

Summary of Plan's Policy on Gender Equality

Building an Equal World for all Children



Plan

Why Plan has a policy on gender equality

Plan's vision is a world in which all children, both girls and boys, realise their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity. This commitment to gender equality is based on international standards established by the United Nations' Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

By signing the CRC more than 20 years ago, all Governments agreed to the principle that girls and boys have the same rights. There has been some progress towards gender equality, but in all parts of the world we still find many injustices. Girls and boys have the same rights, but they are not able to realise them to the same degree. Girls and women have lower social status than boys and men, they are more severely affected by poverty, they have less power to make decisions for themselves and

for their family, and they are less likely to be sent to school. When they are sick, they are less likely to receive good medical care.

The origin of these rights violations are gender-based discrimination, gender stereotyping and an unequal distribution of power between women and men, girls and boys. These injustices affect the lives of girls, boys, women and men from infancy to adulthood. They contribute to high death rates and to low educational achievement among children. They are one of the reasons why children are not sufficiently protected from injury and harm. They affect the abilities of families to earn a decent living. And they are one of the barriers that prevent children and young people from participating in family and community decisions.

The context: Gender Justice

Many violations of children's rights have their roots in gender-based inequality, exclusion and injustice. This contributes to cycles of poverty that may affect communities over many generations. Girls who are not allowed to go to school or who are married when they are still children will not be able to effectively defend the rights of their own daughters and sons. Boys who are raised to be aggressive and to feel superior to women are at risk of growing up to be violent or abusive.

In response, Plan works with girls and with boys, with women and with men, in order to achieve equal rights and equal opportunities for all children. Plan aims to tackle gender injustice head on at many different levels—with individuals, institutions and policies. Achieving gender equality is one of the core objectives of everything Plan does.

Girls and women have been disadvantaged throughout history. This is why Plan also pursues projects for the empowerment of girls, and why Plan has launched its global Because I am a Girl campaign. In its country programmes, Plan supports projects for girls that address the gender gaps identified in consultation with children and communities, be they in health, education, protection or access to professional development and to capital for small business.

Plan believes that gender equality is central to achieving our vision for change.

Plan's twelve commitments to gender equality

Based on the principles of Plan's Child-Centred Community Development¹, Plan makes the following twelve commitments to gender equality.

1. Plan will confront and challenge gender discrimination, stereotyping and unequal power relations between men and women, and boys and girls.

Plan is committed to act against all forms of gender-based injustice wherever it exists.

2. Plan will advocate and promote gender equality as a human and child right.

Plan's commitment to gender equality is an inseparable part of our commitment to child rights.

3. Plan will oppose all forms of gender-based violence and all practices that undermine the dignity of children and their right to protection from harm.

The most severe forms of gender injustice is violence against women and girls. It happens in families, in schools, at work and in the community. Plan will work to end violence and protect children from harm in all situations, including in emergencies and disasters.

4. Plan will not tolerate practices that result in gender-based discrimination, prejudice or inequality.

Plan is committed to overcome exclusion and discrimination, whether it is based on sex, age, religion, ethnicity, economic status, caste, citizenship, sexual identity or orientation, marital status, physical or mental disability, HIV status, or urban/rural residence.

5. Plan will implement long-term strategies of social change to address the causes of gender-based exclusion and discrimination.

Girls who have disabilities, who grow up in very poor families, or who are disadvantaged or excluded for any other reason are especially likely to experience discrimination, violence, exploitation or neglect. Plan will pay special attention to working with these girls.²

6. Plan will ensure that a gender analysis and actions to promote gender equality are included in all programmes.

Wherever Plan works, we will try to understand how inequality and discrimination affect the lives of girls and boys, and we will develop programmes to overcome gender gaps. Plan's marketing, communications and fundraising strategies will convey this commitment to our sponsors, donors and partners.

7. Plan will promote the empowerment of girls and women to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to realise their rights.

Girls are less likely to be enrolled in school, have less access to medical care, and are more likely to be deprived of food. They experience more gender-based

violence and have fewer opportunities to develop their professional skills and their potential to succeed in business. Programmes for the empowerment of girls and women are meant to overcome this disadvantage and lead to more gender justice.

8. Plan will work with men and boys in tackling gender discrimination and promoting gender equality.

Plan's policies and programmes aim to make gender relationships more equal by engaging boys and men in the work for gender justice.

9. Plan will promote the equitable and meaningful participation of girls and boys in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

All children, girls and boys, have a right to be listened to in decisions that affect their lives. Plan will assure that they have equal opportunities to speak out, be heard and influence decisions.

10. Plan will create an enabling environment for gender equality to thrive in our internal organisational culture.

Plan's work environment will be inclusive; free of discrimination and prejudice. Women and men working for Plan will share power and responsibility equally based on their skills and capacity. Plan will take active steps to recruit, train and promote more women into leadership positions. All leaders in Plan will be gender-sensitive and will know how to address overt and subtle forms of inequality in our offices. Plan work policies will be family-friendly, enabling women and men to participate fully in work and family life.

11. Plan will analyse the risks that may arise in the pursuit of gender justice and will take steps to prevent any potential harm to girls and boys.

In our activities to promote gender equality, we will make sure that we do not cause any unintentional harm to children.

12. Plan will mobilise the human and financial resources to meet its commitments to gender equality.

Plan will make sure that we have skilled staff, the right tools and sufficient money to be able to work for gender equality.

¹ These principles are outlined in the Plan Programme Guide: Promoting Child Rights to End Poverty (<http://plan-international.org/about-plan/resources/publications/about-plans-work/promoting-child-rights-to-end-child-poverty-1>)

² This commitment is further elaborated in Plan's global strategy: One Plan, One Goal: Rights and Opportunities for every child (<https://intranet.planapps.org/TeamResources/PlanWide/Policies/Strategy-2015.pdf>)

How Plan will live up to its commitments

Plan will give account on how we live up to our commitments on gender equality to the children, communities and partners with whom we work, to our sponsors and donors, and to our staff. All staff members across Plan, regardless of function or office location, are accountable. This will be reflected in their job descriptions and performance reviews. Activities for the promotion of gender equality will be monitored and will be reported each year to the Plan International Board of Governors.

The standards against which our effort will be measured include:

For Plan Offices and Staff

Plan offices will have workplace policies that assure equal opportunities for male and female staff and a family-friendly work environment. Staff will receive training on how to promote gender equality. Gender equality will be included in staff work plans, accountabilities and performance appraisals. Plan offices will allocate enough funding to implement the gender equality policy in their annual budgets. Sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the workplace will not be tolerated.

For Plan Programmes

Programme development will include an analysis of the child rights situation regarding gender equality. The programmes will include objectives, indicators, targets and results that are specific to the promotion of gender equality. All programme data will be disaggregated by sex and age. Plan will discuss gender inequality with the community and with children and will negotiate ways to overcome injustices. This will be done in a way that is respectful of local culture, does not lead to open conflicts and does not expose anybody to harm.

For Plan Partnerships

Plan will work in partnership with organisations that are committed to gender equality and child rights, and will provide partner organisations with assistance and training on promoting gender equality.

For Plan Advocacy and Campaigns

Plan will support girls and boys, women and men to advocate for gender equality and will ensure that the issue of gender equality is included in the monitoring reports for the Convention on the Right of the Child.

For Plan Communications and Marketing

All Plan's media and marketing messages and publications will reflect Plan's commitment to gender equality. We will assure that our messages are gender-sensitive: that they do not paint girls or boys, men or women in a negative light or use language or images that might offend them.



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