



**PLAN**  
INTERNATIONAL



# PLAN INTERNATIONAL WORLDWIDE ANNUAL REVIEW

# 2020



**Cover photo:** With children in East Nusa Tenggara province in Indonesia out of school due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Plan International distributed 1,000 solar radios to deliver lessons in the children's homes. Credit: Plan International

**This page:** As part of the Kick-off for girls' leadership project in Senegal, Plan International is using sport to develop adolescent girls' skills as leaders. Credit: Plan International.

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# OUR PURPOSE

We strive for a just world that advances children's rights and equality for girls, and we motivate our people and partners to:

- empower children, young people and communities to make vital changes that tackle the root causes of discrimination against girls, exclusion and vulnerability
- drive change in practice and policy at local, national and global levels through our reach, experience and knowledge of the realities children face
- work with children and communities to prepare for and respond to crises, and to overcome adversity
- support the safe and successful progression of children from birth to adulthood

# WHERE WE WORK

## AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Kenya
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Liberia
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- South Sudan
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

## AMERICAS

- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Canada
- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- USA

## ASIA

- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- China
- Hong Kong, SAR of China
- India
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Korea
- Laos
- Myanmar

- Nepal
- Philippines
- Sri Lanka\*
- Thailand
- Timor-Leste
- Vietnam

## EUROPE

- Belgium
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- UK

## OCEANIA

- Australia
- Papua New Guinea
- Solomon Islands

## ADVOCACY OFFICES

- Addis Ababa
- Brussels
- Geneva
- New York

## REGIONAL OFFICES

- Bangkok
- Dakar
- Nairobi
- Panama City

## GLOBAL HUB

\*Office closed in December 2019

# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO TRANSFORM CHILDREN'S LIVES FOR OVER 80 YEARS

Active in **75 COUNTRIES**



We partnered with **36,567 ORGANISATIONS**

**€910M** raised



**€910M** spent

**26,881,125 GIRLS** and **24,023,969 BOYS** benefited from our work\*



Supporters sponsored **1.2 MILLION CHILDREN**

\*Total adjusted to compensate for double-counting across different programmes

# FOREWORD

In this third year of our global 100 Million Reasons strategy, we have reached more girls than ever before, strengthened our gender-transformative programming and increased our ability to influence change. There is much to celebrate. But the year also brought unprecedented challenge – the global COVID-19 pandemic with profound implications for girls’ health, rights and freedoms; and a powerful new global anti-racist movement that leads us to ask questions about our sector and how we ourselves operate.

## THIS YEAR ALMOST 27 MILLION GIRLS BENEFITED FROM OUR WORK GLOBALLY.

We increased emphasis on innovative new programmes that harness the power of technology to progress girls’ rights. Our Girls Out Loud programme was scaled up across 16 countries, creating moderated safe spaces on social media for girls to express themselves, share information, organise, and now support each other through the pandemic.

Through close collaboration with valued partners and young activists, we have achieved unprecedented global impact in 2020. International Day of the Girl 2019 saw the launch of our *Rewrite Her Story* report and Girls Get Equal campaign for equal representation of girls in media. Girls called for more positive role models in entertainment and an end to damaging stereotypes, and they took over positions of power, from governments to media and digital companies. New research on adolescent girls in crisis shone a light on the lived experiences of girls who have been stripped of their basic rights and freedoms in the Sahel. As part of the Gender at the Centre Initiative, we won further commitments on girls’ education during France’s presidency of the G7; and at the International Conference on Population and Development in Nairobi, we built bold new alliances and secured commitments from states to act on the sexual and reproductive rights and needs of adolescent girls.

## IN THE FINAL HALF OF THE YEAR, OUR TEAMS ALL OVER THE WORLD STEPPED UP TO RESPOND TO A PANDEMIC THAT THREATENS TO UNRAVEL DECADES OF PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUALITY.

Thanks to the hard work and versatility of our staff and partners in difficult circumstances and the generosity of our donors, we have been able to stand with girls to stop the setback. Millions benefited from our immediate crisis response, which included public health campaigns and vital support for hygiene and handwashing among vulnerable populations. We adapted programmes on child protection and gender-based violence, education and youth economic empowerment to meet spiking demand caused by the crisis and, in particular, improved digital delivery, including virtual tools to maintain children’s education.

## GLOBAL CALLS FOR ACTION AGAINST RACISM HAVE CHALLENGED ALL ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING OUR OWN, TO REFLECT, LEARN AND TAKE ACTION.

In June we launched a comprehensive Anti-Racism Action Plan, covering improvements to our programming and influencing work, our recruitment systems and processes and governance, as well as support and training for staff and managers. This is an important step in a long process of structural and cultural change for Plan International.

To resource our strategic ambitions, we are working to grow income, build a more financially sustainable organisation and become more agile, effective and lean. We will continue our work with communities and partners to ensure that girls, children and vulnerable groups are protected and supported through the COVID-19 crisis. And we enter a new year energised to work with and for girls to create the more resilient, equal and sustainable world they demand and deserve.



Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, CEO



Gunvor Kronman, Chair

# STRATEGY

## PLAN INTERNATIONAL’S GLOBAL STRATEGY TO 2022

Our ambition is to transform the lives of 100 million girls through our five-year strategy.

Our work is inspired by the United Nations’ Global Goals, and in particular, achieving gender equality by 2030. **Without equality, no other goal can be truly met.**

2020 was the strategy’s third year. **Up to 2022 we will:**

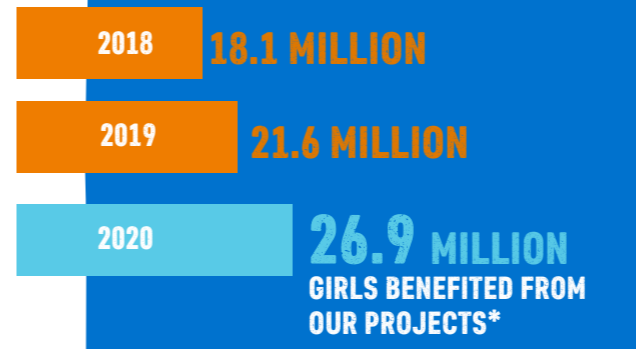
- Deliver greater impact for vulnerable children, especially girls.
- Influence greater change at local and global levels.
- Transform girls’ lives.



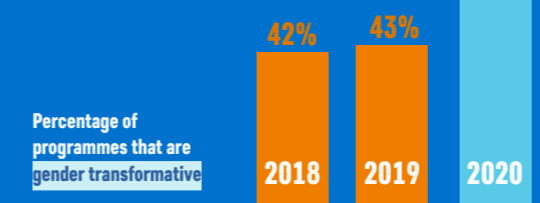
All our programmes will focus on enabling vulnerable and excluded children to learn, lead, decide and thrive, across our six main areas of work:

- EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
- GIRLS, BOYS AND YOUTH AS ACTIVE DRIVERS OF CHANGE
- INCLUSIVE, QUALITY EDUCATION
- PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE
- SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS
- SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

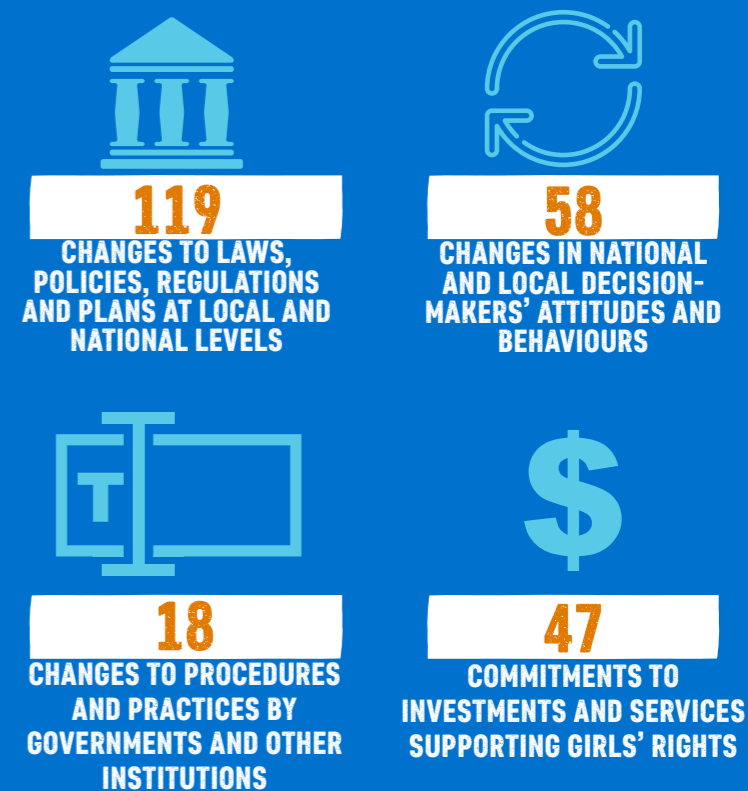
### Progress on transforming the lives of 100 million girls by 2022



### Progress on putting gender equality at the heart of every new programme



### Advances in girls’ rights influenced by Plan International in 2020\*\*



\* Figures may include individual girls reached in more than one year, and they cannot be combined to give a total of unique girls reached.

\*\* Based on reports from 68 Plan International offices



# A YEAR OF GLOBAL ACTION FOR GIRLS' RIGHTS

Credit: Plan International

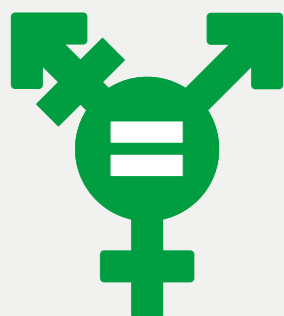
AUGUST 2019

## MOZAMBIQUE BANS CHILD MARRIAGE

Mozambique passed a bill banning child marriage following a two and a half-year campaign by gender equality organisations including Plan International.

## G7 LEADERS COMMIT TO MOVING THE NEEDLE ON GENDER EQUALITY

Leaders at the G7 summit made a declaration on gender equality which recognised the discriminatory laws affecting women and girls around the world, outlined the need to adopt, implement and monitor laws advancing gender equality, and highlighted a need to focus on preventing and responding to sexual violence, including during conflicts.



OCTOBER 2019

## GIRLS GET EQUAL CAMPAIGN TO #REWRITEHERSTORY

On October 1 we launched the *Rewrite Her Story* report in collaboration with the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. The report analysed the 56 top grossing films in 20 countries to find that the world's most popular films are sending the message to girls and young women that leadership is mostly for men. This research was used to demand better role models for girls on screen.

"It's urgent that we no longer create stories that teach children to view women and girls as second-class citizens – not when we've seen the level of sexism in our culture so egregiously put on display." Geena Davis

For International Day of the Girl, the Girls Takeover saw more than 1,300 girls taking over positions of power across 60 countries – including senior executives at YouTube, Universal Music, ABC Network and the presidents of Timor-Leste and Paraguay among others. The girls were calling for radical change in the portrayal of girls and young women in films and entertainment, textbooks, advertising, in video games and all forms of communication.

The campaign was supported by high-profile entertainers and gender equality advocates including Reese Witherspoon, Letitia Wright, Jameela Jamil and Paloma Faith.

## TANZANIAN TOP COURT UPHOLDS CHILD MARRIAGE BAN

Tanzania's Court of Appeal quashed a government request to overturn the landmark 2016 ruling banning marriage for both boys and girls under the age of 18. Plan International has been working closely with human rights advocates in the legal campaign to end child marriage in Tanzania.



Credit: Plan International / Anika Büssemeier

NOVEMBER 2019

## RAISING GIRLS' VOICES AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Despite increasing hostility towards young women's control of their lives and bodies, the Nairobi summit was a significant "pushback against the pushback" on sexual and reproductive rights.

Plan International and allies engaged directly with governments and supported youth participation in conversations before and during the summit. Attending the event, 20-year-old Georgina from Kenya said: "We want to see all girls supported to stay in school. If the government did this... it would fight child marriage, early pregnancy, FGM."

The result? States reaffirmed the original goals of the International Conference on Population and Development 25 years ago, and made new commitments, including efforts to end the millions of child marriages that still happen each year, to end unintended teen pregnancy and child birth which is the leading cause of death for 15- to 19-year-old girls globally, and to end female genital mutilation.

## CHALKING BACK AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In Nairobi, Delhi and Kampala, girls and youth activists gathered to raise awareness and generate dialogue on the issue of street harassment by 'chalking back' – writing the bullying and sexist catcalls they've received in chalk on streets and pavements.

The action was supported by Girls Get Equal and Catcalls of NYC. The founder of the Chalk Back and Catcalls of NYC movements, Sophie Sandberg, said: "Chalk Back encourages young activists to come together and raise their voices. As girls, young women and LGBTIQ+ youth, we have put up with sexual harassment for too long. Partnering with Plan International allows us to reach new young activists around the world, hugely amplifying the efforts of our grassroots activism."

DECEMBER 2019

## HIGHLIGHTING GIRLS' EXPERIENCES OF REPORTING HARASSMENT

In December, we released the *Reporting to Authorities* research detailing girls' and young women's experiences of reporting street harassment to authorities.

It revealed that fewer than 1 in 10 incidents across 5 global cities were reported to police, and less than one third of those cases were acted on. This research reinforces the call for authorities to improve reporting outcomes for girls and young women across the globe.

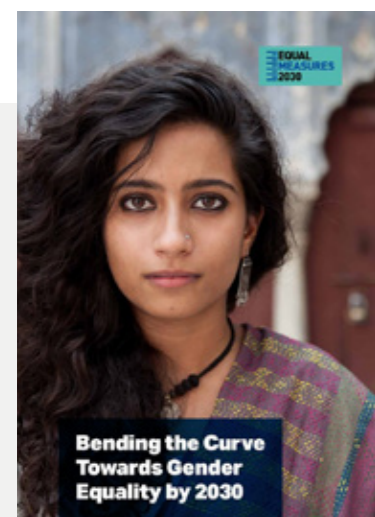
## GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

At the world's first Global Refugee Forum, which brought together governments, international organisations and refugees, Plan International advocated strongly for attention on refugees' specific needs based on age, gender and diversity.

The initiative led to a joint pledge on the rights of women and girls from several UN member states, NGOs and UN agencies, committing to the protection and empowerment of women and girls in forced displacement situations through comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights services and protection from sexual gender-based violence.



Credit: Plan International



JANUARY 2020

## BENDING THE CURVE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

A report from the Equal Measures 2030 partnership – in which we are a founding partner – showed that more than a third of countries have been moving too slowly, or even backwards, on gender equality over the past two decades.

The *Bending the Curve Towards Gender Equality by 2030* report assessed five key gender equality targets: access to contraception, girls' education, political leadership, workplace equality laws, and safety. The data is being used to show world leaders how they can work globally to accelerate progress on equality.

MARCH 2020

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: #REWRITEHERSTORY CONTINUES

Ahead of International Women's Day, the Girls Get Equal campaign consulted with young people in Nepal, Togo, Philippines and Malawi to discover the worst stereotypes in entertainment and media that hold girls back.

The 6 stereotypes were presented to our global digital audience who were invited to share their thoughts on these lazy clichés and suggest their own, showing content creators what their audiences really think.

Women as 'sex objects' was found to be the most prevalent and despised stereotype, and the lack of representation of women in leadership was a significant concern for girls globally.

Following the campaign, 15 of Plan International's partner creative agencies across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America made a commitment to end the use of harmful gender stereotypes in all future content they produce for all their clients.



## GIRLS SHOW RESILIENCE IN THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted girls already disadvantaged in many aspects of their lives. School closures threatened to hit girls hardest, and roll back hard won gains in education and economic progress (see page 12).

However, through the crisis we've seen girls display unparalleled resilience. Using their positions as valued community members, girls involved in Plan International programmes have been helping disseminate invaluable health and hygiene information and kits, as well as providing digital mentorship, skills training and support to their peers.

For example, In Jordan's Azraq refugee camp, 16-year-old Rasha (pictured) not only made masks for her community but also ran digital learning sessions to train others in this potentially life-saving craft. "It gives me great joy, not only because I am educating people but also because I'd like to believe that I am bettering the lives of women and families around me," she said.



MAY 2020

## SUDAN MOVES TO CRIMINALISE FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

After years of advocacy by Plan International, our partners and girls' and women's rights activists, Sudan's Council of Ministers amended the criminal law to include FGM as an offence punishable by imprisonment. This was a giant step forward in eradicating the practice, which affects over 80% of women and girls aged 15-49 in Sudan.

JUNE 2020

## ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN CRISIS: VOICES FROM THE SAHEL

In June, our research from the west Africa Sahel region revealed how the ongoing violence in Mali and Burkina Faso is having a devastating impact on girls' education, survival and safety, in the most in-depth study of girls' experiences in this region.

*Adolescent Girls in Crisis: Voices from the Sahel* included insights from more than 800 adolescent girls. They revealed how their lives have been turned upside down by violence and instability, and how restrictive norms and attitudes of their families and communities have left them feeling trapped and powerless.

"We are going to go out and then we are going to tell them [decision-makers] about our difficulties so that they can help us." said one girl in a focus group in Burkina Faso.

## AMPLIFYING GIRLS' VOICES ON GLOBAL PLATFORMS

Marking the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – an agenda for advancing gender equality – UN Women launched Generation Equality to accelerate equality globally.

It's vital that girls are included in all the decision-making processes that affect their lives. We consulted adolescent girls across 12 countries about girls' rights issues. Girls supported by Plan International and partners then spoke to governments, civil society, UN agencies and other activists to demand leaders of Generation Equality's six Action Forums take girls' voices into account. As a result of this advocacy, UN Women committed to solid steps to advance girls' rights through the Action Coalitions.

Leaders of the action coalitions also committed to ensuring the engagement of girls and young women in the Generation Equality process – supporting the gender equality activists of the future.



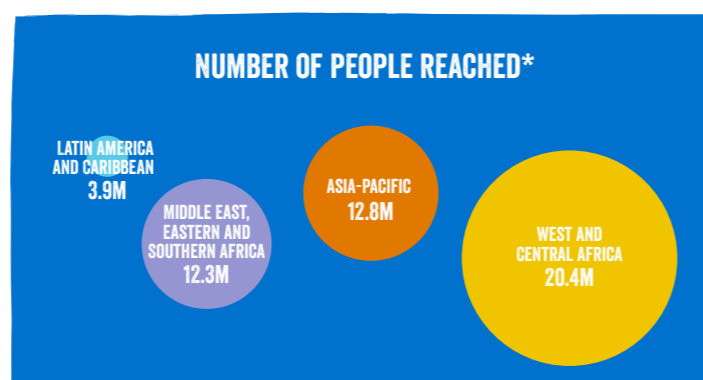
# COVID-19

## SUPPORTING GIRLS' RIGHTS IN A PANDEMIC

On March 11, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. As governments around the world closed schools and large sectors of the economy, and ordered communities to stay at home, it became clear the health crisis would also become a socio-economic crisis. Girls, young women, people with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ persons were most likely to suffer these secondary impacts due to their age, gender and other factors. The risks girls faced included increased risk of violence, exploitation, trafficking, child labour and other harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Drawing on our experience from the 2014-16 West Africa Ebola outbreak, seizing opportunities to strengthen girls' rights has been a central pillar of Plan International's response. Our early focus was on: supporting education; child protection; COVID-19 prevention awareness and community engagement; and support for sanitation and hygiene, including handwashing, among vulnerable populations.

Despite lockdown measures bringing unprecedented operational challenges, including limitations on access and a shift to remote working, as of June 19, 2020, Plan International had reached a total of 49,402,480 people\* through its COVID-19 emergency response programmes worldwide. Through these efforts we aim not only to limit the secondary impacts of the pandemic, but to build back better.



### KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM COVID-19

"I have seen Plan International's volunteers in the village. They teach people how to fight the disease," says Kaligueta, 15, a sponsored child from Burkina Faso. Her region hosts many internally displaced people, who live in circumstances making them vulnerable to infection. Our teams trained families in disease prevention and constructing simple handwashing devices. "Now families know how it is transmitted and how to protect themselves. As my father is a tailor, we asked him to sew masks for the whole family," she says.

\*Figures include TV, radio and social media awareness campaign reach numbers for some countries.

### PROTECTING GIRLS FROM VIOLENCE

Staying at home can be dangerous for the world's most vulnerable people, placing children and women experiencing domestic abuse closer to their aggressors. At the same time, reporting mechanisms and support services have weakened or even disappeared during lockdown.

Worldwide, Plan International has been working to improve awareness of gender-based violence, reporting routes, and support for survivors such as psychological care. In Mali, we worked with ERAD, a local partner, on a gender-transformative approach to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19. Volunteers were assigned households in their villages and trained to carry out COVID-19-safe visits raising awareness of the dangers of gender-based violence and early marriage. Psychosocial support was also offered to survivors, and youth clubs set up to train communities how to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

### ENSURING GIRLS' ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Social distancing measures resulted at one time in 91% of the world's student population, including **743 million girls**, suffering disruption to their education. This has had a profound impact on their learning, health, nutrition and physical safety. Throughout the pandemic, girls have been less likely than boys to participate in remote lessons and return to schools when they reopen.

In Peru, after school closures led to 6.6 million pupils needing to adapt to online lessons, Plan International Peru worked with the Ministry of Education to help children in rural areas take part in our I Learn at Home initiative. Through educational radio sessions and donation of loudspeakers, more than 200,000 students with limited internet access were able to continue their studies.

### STRENGTHENING GIRLS' ECONOMIC SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Economic turbulence has had a marked effect on women and girls' financial security, who typically earn less, hold more insecure jobs and work in unpaid labour more frequently than their male counterparts, putting them at greater risk of violence or exploitation.

Identifying and developing employment skills for women and youth, advocating for the right to decent and equal employment and improving access to information and communication technologies has therefore been a key component of Plan International's COVID-19

response. This has included using social media tools such as WhatsApp in Ecuador to deliver livelihood and financial skills training. One group of women developed a business plan, then produced and sold 31,000 face masks after training via WhatsApp.

### PROTECTING GIRLS SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

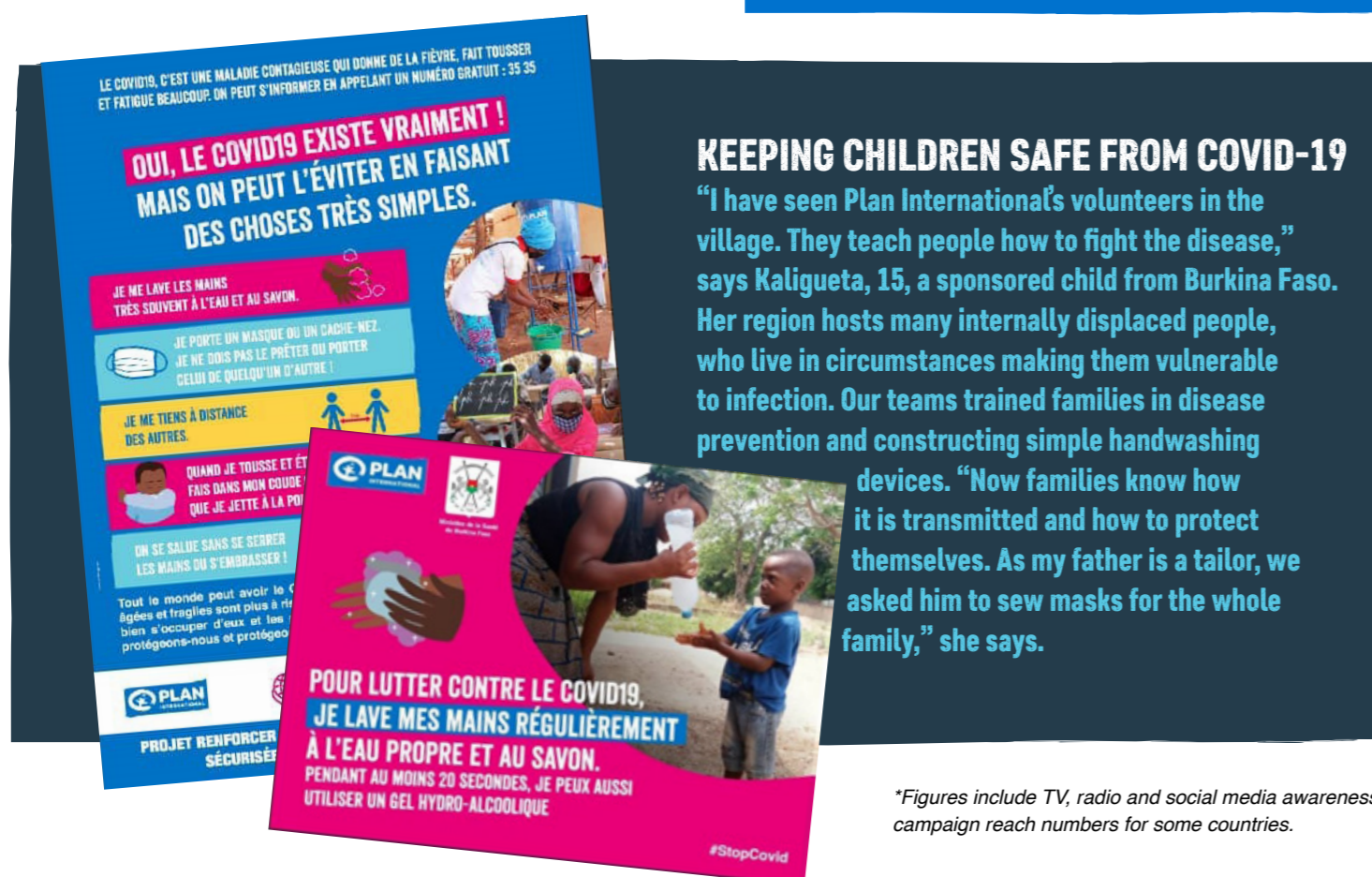
School closures, restrictions on movement and the diversion of healthcare resources to COVID-19 prevention and treatment means girls in 2020 faced even greater barriers to comprehensive sexuality education and essential services. **According to UNFPA projections**, a lack of access to modern contraceptives over six months of lockdown could account for up to 7 million unintended pregnancies worldwide.

During the pandemic, Plan International has been using remote and digital approaches to help adolescents and young people continue to build awareness of their sexual and reproductive health, and where to seek support and services. In the Philippines, we have been using SMS messages to reach nearly 20,000 people with messages about menstrual hygiene management and how to report violence against women and children, alongside COVID-19 prevention; 65% of those who received messages say they helped to guide decisions, and ways of coping with the situation.

### SUPPORTING GIRLS' AGENCY AND VOICE

Young people's ability to organise and make their voices heard has been profoundly affected by social distancing measures. The gender digital divide – girls and women having less access to digital communications – means this has had a disproportionate impact on girls, and their ability to participate in public debate and decision-making.

We have been supporting girls and women to raise their voice, and make their needs clear during the pandemic. In Indonesia, women, children and people with disabilities were involved in the design and delivery of campaigns to prevent COVID-19 transmission and promote social distancing and handwashing with soap. Existing community-led total sanitation teams were trained in gender-balanced COVID-19 interventions, encouraging women to lead the campaigns. Our inclusive approach also led to a project helping people with hearing impairments and those around them to make transparent face masks – enabling them to communicate more easily.



# QUALITY, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

We want vulnerable and excluded children, particularly girls, to have the education they need to succeed in life. This means promoting quality education that is accessible to all.

## THE WORLD TODAY

Ensuring that every child – especially every girl – gets a quality education is now a global focus. Yet as 2020 began, more than 258 million children and youth were not in school. Gender discrimination, poverty, disability, disasters and low government spending all block access to education for children. COVID-19 and resulting school closures created a global education emergency, with girls and the most marginalised children hit worst. **Up to 11 million girls may now never return to school.**

## WORK IN 2020

Plan International's focus on girls' education – access and quality – continued to shape this year's work. As existing inequalities worsened due to COVID-19, programmes swiftly adapted to provide continued access to quality education for the most marginalised, especially adolescent girls. We worked with governments, teachers and parents to support distance learning, with new national strategies and reopening guidelines. Our ongoing work on school water and sanitation facilities took on increasing importance.

**6,108,737  
GIRLS**

WITH BETTER ACCESS  
TO EDUCATION

**€108 MILLION**  
INVESTED IN EDUCATION

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES  
PROGRAMMES IN  
**45 COUNTRIES**





Credit: Plan International

**MEET 11-YEAR-OLD TAEM.** She lives in a remote village in northern Laos where families rely on rainfall to cultivate rice – their main source of food and income. But climate change is leading to poor harvests. Parents cannot afford to pay for education and many children end up dropping out. Since 2014, Plan International and the District Education Bureau have been working with communities to identify the most vulnerable children who would benefit from a school scholarship – one of them was Taem. “This scholarship has increased my confidence with new clothes, new books and pens which allow me to continue my education,” she says.

## TRANSFORMING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

We work at local, regional and national levels to make teaching and learning more inclusive and to improve quality – often at scale.

In Uganda, our capacity-building with primary teachers on psychosocial support and how to encourage gender equality through teaching is benefiting 12,973 local and refugee children. A programme in Ethiopia on safe, inclusive primary education for refugee and local children, reached 99,126 students (44,638 girls) including children with disabilities.

Our work in Ecuador with the Ministry of Education enabled module-based training on psychosocial risks and family communication in more than 3,300 education institutions nationally, reaching almost 1.5 million families.

We also supported outreach activities, such as girls’ participation in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). In India these included dedicated STEM camps, workshops, knowledge festivals and the supply of low-cost science labs. In China, these involved coding and robotics for 800 girls and 400 boys.

## SUPPORT FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Conflict and crisis-affected populations, pregnant girls and young mothers are among those targeted in our work to get children into or back into education.

Our Talents Unlimited programme in Jordan helped to get 2,000 older out-of-school children – many of them refugees – into official education. We also worked to strengthen national policies and reporting mechanisms for out-of-school children.

We began to support vulnerable local children and Venezuelan migrant children to access Peru’s public education system. To support children during COVID-19 quarantines in Latin America, we developed *The Adventures of Zuri*, a self-learning package with cartoon characters, that offers a gender equality perspective and emotional support for children and caregivers.

In Zimbabwe, we helped to enrol 5,341 out-of-school adolescent girls in 88 community-based learning hubs under the Supporting Adolescent Girls programme. In partnership with Cambodia’s government and a local NGO, we ran activities at 63 primary schools, reaching 2,444 children (1,136 girls), including 642 out-of-school children (231 girls), ethnic minority children, and those at risk of dropping out. Activities included accelerated learning, bilingual education, transport support, scholarships, and community events for caregivers and school management.

## IMPROVING SAFETY, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

Our interventions promote effective and inclusive school governance to improve the quality of education, address barriers to access and bring about good learning outcomes.

We trained parents, teachers and local leaders on improved school governance in Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan. To encourage children’s participation and leadership skills, we worked to set up children’s parliaments in India and Bolivia, and held motivational talks by women role models in Malawi.

In Togo, we trained 50 people (25 women) to help set up children’s governments – resulting in 48 governments

being established to help manage school water and sanitation facilities. In Guinea Bissau, student-run school governments developed awareness campaigns on gender-based violence, marriage and early pregnancy.

A safe schools programme in Liberia to build resilience to disasters covered 30 schools and more than 12,000 students. The programme also trained parent-teacher associations and management committees on improving access to education for girls and children with disabilities.

## EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our work has adapted to ensure that children's education can continue, often in contexts where another form of emergency was already unfolding.

To address COVID-19 school closures, the Make Ghanaian Girls Great! project in Ghana supported distance learning by designing, recording and broadcasting lessons on the Ghana Learning TV channel. Where children lack access to the internet, lessons via radio ensured education continued during the pandemic in many countries. In Peru, 750 teachers received USBs with two batches of 80 lesson scripts to support distance learning via radio broadcasts. In Rwanda, 2,000 families received solar powered radios, that also provide lessons from memory sticks. We supported television lessons and live Facebook classes in Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education and UNICEF.

We distributed learning kits to 5,199 ethnic minority children in Vietnam to maintain learning at home and school, and gave funding support to 151 schools to sanitise classrooms prior to reopening.

Our project in Rakhine State, Myanmar, funded by UNICEF, helped 3,163 Rohingya children affected by the crisis there to get a formal primary education and gave life skills training to more than 600 out-of-school adolescents.

## INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND POLICIES

The Gender at the Centre Initiative, supported by Plan International and partners, assists ministries of education to advance gender equality in education through sector planning and monitoring. It was adopted by the G7 Ministers of Education and Development in July 2019 after we jointly lobbied the France G7 presidency. Eight sub-Saharan African countries engaged in the initiative initially.

Other influencing activities on policy contributed to the enactment of Zimbabwe's Education Amendment Bill, addressing the safe return of girls to school after pregnancy and the abolition of corporal punishment. Guinea Bissau's Ministry of Education, influenced by our evidence, adopted our Accelerated Education Strategy for out-of-school students. Our advocacy activities prompted Sierra Leone's Teaching Service Commission to include professional development modules on inclusive methodologies and gender responsive teaching.

We helped to influence curriculum change at a national level in Nigeria, to develop a certified accelerated basic education curriculum, with EU funding. With El Salvador's Ministry of Education, we developed 28 modules with a focus on gender that are now part of the official curriculum. We worked with governments in Indonesia, Benin, Burkina Faso and Cameroon on COVID-19 response plans for education. Our inputs ensured inclusion and gender were integrated into the plans and helped develop distance learning and school reopening strategies.

# SKILLS AND DECENT WORK

We want vulnerable and excluded young people, especially young women, to be resilient, gain knowledge and skills, access opportunities and engage actively in decent work of their choosing.

## THE WORLD TODAY

Young people and women are more likely to be in informal or insecure work, particularly in low-income countries. They been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 as the pandemic has ravaged economies, with the equivalent of 495 million full-time jobs lost in the second quarter of 2020. Worldwide, **female unemployment has risen faster than for males, and one in six young people are no longer working since the outbreak. Many countries are so far failing to consider young women's and girls' specific vulnerabilities to economic insecurity.**

## WORK IN 2020

It is vital for young people, especially women, to have the skills and opportunities to work, earn and have control over money. The COVID-19 crisis has confirmed the relevance of many of our approaches to economic empowerment – the need for partnerships with businesses, increased digital delivery of training, and influence in sectors like tourism and textiles to improve prospects for young women. Spearheading change at scale, we signed up to the International Labour Organization's Decent Jobs for Youth global drive to skill up 1.5 million young people. Our teams also continued vital humanitarian work on the economic impacts of forced displacement and other ongoing crises.

**€41 MILLION**  
INVESTED IN SKILLS AND WORK

**1,190,504**  
**GIRLS**  
WITH IMPROVED SKILLS AND  
WORK OPPORTUNITIES



Credit: Plan International

**MEET 19-YEAR-OLD ANN FROM KENYA.** She is the second child of a family of seven. Her parents could not afford for her to go to college and she was expected to take care of her younger siblings once she completed secondary school. But she found a scholarship opportunity through Plan International in an education and training project funded by the German government. Its aim is to provide technical training for vulnerable youth, especially young women.

Ann chose a six-month training course in welding, not a typical career option for women. “I wanted to learn a skill that is mostly associated with men, to show the world that women can do it too,” she says.

## BUILDING SKILLS FOR LIFE AND WORK

Our activities develop life, vocational and entrepreneurial skills by supporting young people, and involving communities, government and businesses. In China, Nepal, Guatemala and Nicaragua, gender training is now part of basic life skills and employability skills activities. We support communities to challenge gender norms – as in Peru, where our project with women mentors left the majority of young women participants “feeling more valued at home”.

Many programmes develop young people’s digital skills – a need starkly underlined by COVID-19. The SMART UP Factory programme in Ethiopia and Uganda offered computer-programming skills, while entrepreneurship activities in Zimbabwe covered digital marketing. In Vietnam, an IT training programme with a focus on hiring requirements partnered with IT businesses to provide vocational training including on web coding and graphic design to almost 200 disadvantaged youth.

Entrepreneurial training included honey production in Bolivia and Ecuador, and agricultural projects in Guatemala and Zambia. The Dominican Republic’s Sowing My Dreams programme led to young people being certified in organic agriculture and the country’s first social entrepreneurship fair.

Our support for savings groups helped to underpin self-employment, as in programmes for women’s economic

development via renewable energies in Mali, Niger and Senegal. The regional programme, A Working Future, has scaled up to meet the employment needs of 24,000 youth (60 per cent female) in Uganda through business opportunities in agriculture, and will train gender equality champions.

In Paraguay our partnership with the Fundación Saraki enabled youth with disabilities to undertake technical and life skills training.

## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

We partner with private sector businesses to enhance skills training, create local and large-scale opportunities, and contribute to making workplaces more gender responsive.

Our Wired4Work partnership with Accenture in Indonesia and the Philippines uses digital solutions to provide skills and job opportunities for youth, especially girls. Tools provided include online courses, a job-matching platform and a social media chatbot that helps build CVs and prepare for interviews. This collaboration also provides us with innovative digital solutions which support customisation of training and replicating successful approaches.

The Saksham project in India partnered with AkzoNobel, National Postcode Lottery, Deutsche Bank, AXA, Bank of America and other major donors to

support young people's opportunities. More than 2,500 girls gained job placements with employers and were encouraged to be role models for others.

In Myanmar, a three-year partnership with mobile telecom giant Telenor entered its second year. Mobile communications and digital technology are used in joint projects to reduce inequalities and provide digital access and skills, with a focus on equality for girls.

We're working regionally with private sector and government partners across the world on gender sensitive regulations for workplaces. For example, in Nepal, our gender equality and labour law training with employers is contributing to improved, gender sensitive workplaces, especially in tourism. In Indonesia and the Philippines, we backed research with the private sector on gender equality and tackling stereotypes at work.

### ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN EMERGENCIES

In disasters and crises, our support to vulnerable families is multi-pronged: responding to immediate financial needs and boosting prospects for longer-term economic security. We gave cash assistance to more than 30,000 vulnerable internally displaced people affected by COVID-19 restrictions in Somalia to help them buy food and basic supplies. In Kenya, we gave similar support to the families of more than 5,000 vulnerable children badly affected by lockdowns.

With the UN World Food Programme, we supported 100,000 people affected by extreme poverty in Malawi with a five-month cash transfer to meet basic needs. Longer-term support in Malawi included the EU-funded KULIMA project to build young people's business skills.

In the Central African Republic, we helped 420 young people (including 209 girls) who were removed from armed forces and groups over the past year with vocational training and support to create income-generating activities. Working across development and humanitarian fields, we helped Syrian refugees in Egypt, Venezuelan migrants, and Somali and Eritrean refugees to access enterprise opportunities.

### INFLUENCING SPENDING AND POLICY ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

We aim to influence decision makers to prioritise skills-building and decent work opportunities for young people that are gender transformative.

In Vietnam, we worked with the Ministry of Training and Education to design new careers packages for senior schools that are gender sensitive and market-oriented. Thirty schools in areas where we work will pilot the packages.

We are working with Jordan's Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship to create more social enterprises. Often women-led, these enterprises help to integrate marginalised people, especially youth and women, into the formal economy. In Egypt we engaged with government bodies to influence gender sensitive regulations including tackling violence against women in the workplace.

In China, we work with the Ministry of Education through local education bureaux to create more gender friendly education opportunities in science and technology for girls and boys from marginalised rural areas. We are also collaborating with employers, vocational training institutions and government bodies to influence youth employment policies and create more decent work opportunities for marginalised young women and men in China.

# YOUNG PEOPLE DRIVING CHANGE

We want girls, boys and young people to have the power to take action on issues that matter to them. We want them to shape the decisions that affect their lives by leading change within their own communities and influencing decisions at higher levels.

## THE WORLD TODAY

Young people raised their voices and united in several defining causes this year – climate change, widening democracy, fairer economies, and the Black Lives Matter movement. Numbering 1.2 billion, today's 15- to 24-year-olds are the best-educated generation ever. Yet attacks on civic space and core freedoms are curbing their potential to bring positive change. The lockdowns to counter COVID-19 and subsequent economic hardships have also left young people with less time, money and opportunity to engage more widely for gender equality and human rights. Many have turned to participating through online spaces – but there they face challenges around safety and access.

## WORK IN 2020

Our work to support youth collective action and build young people's leadership and influencing skills encompassed agenda-setting and innovative approaches this year. From being recognised for our best practice partnering with youth organisations in Latin America to running the Africa Youth Festival; from involving young people in peacebuilding efforts to enabling youth-led responses to COVID-19 – we have put young people's initiatives for gender equality and human rights at the centre of our work.

**€93 MILLION**  
INVESTED IN SUPPORTING  
YOUNG PEOPLE TO DRIVE CHANGE

**2,986,609**  
**GIRLS**  
SUPPORTED TO BE ACTIVE CITIZENS

**MEET 14-YEAR-OLD VISHNUPRIYA** from a rural area in south India. She is a member of an Eco Club that is part of Plan International's climate action programme. The project places girls at the heart of the response to climate change in the region, encouraging them to discuss ways to take action and engage their communities in saving their local environment. "We have done rallies in our community, installed garbage bins and spoken to elders about the harmful effects of climate change and environmental pollution," she says. About 1,200 children have been trained as change agents across 40 communities.



Credit: Plan International / Vivek Singh

## NURTURING COLLECTIVE ACTION BY YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY GIRLS

The bedrock of our work is empowering young people – especially girls – to drive change. We support youth organisations' leadership and networks, both at scale and locally.

Our readiness to act boldly, directly supporting a broad range of youth organisations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Bolivia and Honduras, prompted the International Civil Society Centre to praise our work as a "best practice" partner. We are also funding youth collective action in an increasing number of countries, including Togo, Burkina Faso and Guinea Bissau.

In India, we enabled more than 900,000 young people – almost two-thirds of them girls and young women – to engage with media and authorities to champion child rights and gender equality, while inspiring 1.4 million of their peers to act.

In a new initiative, our regional teams in the Middle East, Eastern and Southern Africa brought together 50 youth activists at the Africa Youth Festival in Kenya, to collectively problem-solve and build networks, in order to have greater impact when advocating on gender equality issues.

Our Indigenous Leadership School project continued to empower indigenous girls and young women in Guatemala to influence decisions that affect them. Adolescents there also helped to develop agendas and action plans in nine municipalities. In Laos, the Girls Leadership and Development project set up safe,

collaborative clubs in 19 senior schools for training on soft skills, gender and leadership. Several girls have become club leaders and class captains, confounding previous expectations.

International-level partnerships included our strategic role in With and For Girls, and its 2019 Awards Week which recognised a new cohort of girl-led groups. We also co-founded the Global Resilience Fund to provide flexible grants to girl and young feminist groups during COVID-19, with 129 groups already benefiting.

## SUPPORTING YOUTH VOICES IN MEDIA

With our backing, young people's organisations campaign both to be heard on different media and to change the way that girls and young women are portrayed.

In Egypt, with the National Council for Women, we ran a workshop on enhancing girls' and women's representation for 35 media workers from different platforms. Young Leaders camps for girls included work on improving their social media advocacy skills. We also held a community dialogue on the role of women in the arts with leading film director Hani Khalifa.

As part of our Girls Get Equal campaign, we launched #RewriteHerStory, a global call for equal representation of girls and young women in the media and entertainment. The October 2019 launch showcased the Rewrite Her Story research report and saw more than 1,300 girls step into the shoes of leaders around the world during #GirlsTakeover action (see page 8 for more).

Among them were 119 girls and young women, aged 12 to 25, in the Philippines, who took up key roles in radio, social media, schools and local government to call for expanded, meaningful spaces for girls' voices. Plan International Philippines also hosted a panel discussion on equal representation with 25 media professionals, advertisers, filmmakers, writers and artists.

In response to the COVID-19 emergency, Nepal and the Philippines supported young people in their youth reporter projects to produce stories about the impact of the pandemic on them. The youth reporters also communicated health messages and safety issues, such as the rise of gender-based violence during quarantine, via the internet and radio.

### **STRENGTHENING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ROLES IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

We involve young people in acting for their communities in response to crises, not least to ensure that their own needs – especially girls' needs – are met.

We supported young people to raise awareness about COVID-19 in their communities and to raise their voices about how they are affected by the pandemic. We facilitated girls' inclusion in decision-making spaces in Uganda's response, provided training on digital participation in Paraguay, and equipped young people in Peru and Guinea with devices and credit for data to help them participate this way.

With UNICEF in Togo, we co-organised a Facebook webinar on the impacts of COVID-19 on children, reaching 23,974 people. We also financed the activities of 22 child and youth organisations to fight the virus. Three digital campaigns produced by children and young people reached 100,000 people.

Young people led and joined peacebuilding efforts in Colombia, including identifying risks of conflict and

influencing local planning to address its causes. The University Youth Peace Ambassador Project in Myanmar trained students as peace ambassadors and is now supporting the integration of peacebuilding into the university curriculum.

### **INFLUENCING GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE'S CIVIL RIGHTS AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT**

We influence governments to ensure that they involve young people, especially girls, in decision-making and to embed youth participation in official processes.

Children and young people in rural parts of Bolivia now take part more actively in municipal, departmental and national committees and youth councils, thanks to local laws that guarantee the existence of these channels of participation.

We help to review and implement national youth policies as a basis for youth participation. In Lima, Peru, our influencing and the contributions of 1,400 young people helped to create a youth strategy with young people's participation at its heart. We support our youth partner Mojomayas to contribute to Guatemala's National Youth Policy.

In Cameroon, a youth-led intergenerational dialogue united traditional authorities, civil society, government officials and 69 young people to reflect on causes of gender discrimination and harmful practices affecting girls, and established an official platform for ongoing debate.

In highly marginalised areas of Bangladesh, we supported National Children Task Force committees, where young people have urged the government to increase social protection for vulnerable children, resulting in substantial budget increases.



# SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

We want vulnerable and excluded children, particularly girls, to have control over their lives and bodies. We want them to be able to make informed choices about sexuality and relationships, and if and when to have children.

## THE WORLD TODAY

Governments have made strong commitments in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights and eliminating harmful practices, most notably at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25) in Nairobi. The summit was convened by UNFPA and the governments of Denmark and Kenya.

Yet populist and conservative governments are still seeking to overturn hard-won rights and undermine further progress on health and rights. **COVID-19 is worsening this, as millions more unintended pregnancies, child marriages, cases of FGM and gender-based violence are forecast to occur than were previously expected.**

## WORK IN 2020

We met the challenges facing sexual and reproductive health and rights with more funding and a sharper focus. Our work helped to end harmful practices for many girls, to change minds and laws, and to promote positive sexuality education in and out of schools. Our COVID-19 Health Task Force helped programmes to mitigate the devastating impacts on access to vital sexual and reproductive health services – as highlighted in our needs assessment in Jordan with UNFPA. We expanded activities in humanitarian settings, winning wider recognition of the sexual and reproductive health needs of millions of girls, women and young people during crises.

IMPROVING SEXUAL AND  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH FOR

**5,501,362  
GIRLS**

**€68 MILLION**

INVESTED IN SEXUAL AND  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

**MEET 18-YEAR-OLD ILLUMINÉE** from Rwanda. When she joined one of our youth clubs, aged 15, she lacked vital knowledge about her own body and rights. “I couldn’t express my feelings and needs and didn’t have the courage to ask people I knew about all the things I wondered about,” she says. In the youth clubs, young people learn life skills and pass on their knowledge to others. Developing awareness of reproductive health and rights plays an important role in reducing unintended teen pregnancy, a growing problem where Illuminée lives. “I have no fears any longer when it comes to asking questions or expressing myself.” she says. “My wish is that all children, especially girls, know about their rights and know how to protect themselves.”



Credit: Plan International

## SEXUALITY EDUCATION FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES

We support comprehensive sexuality education and dialogue, and engage caregivers and communities – often in innovative ways.

Youth drama groups used theatre to explore health and rights issues in Zambia, and in India more than 50,000 adolescent girls and young women became peer educators on safe menstrual health and hygiene. Almost 14,000 parents and caregivers in Zimbabwe joined parent-child communication and positive parenting sessions about positive sexuality and harmful practices.

Nicaragua is using our youth-led Champions of Change approach to build a peer support network among the indigenous Miskito community, which has very high unintended adolescent pregnancy rates. We also continued a football-based project, La League, to reach out-of-school adolescents. The same project engaged fathers in Brazil to challenge gender stereotypes, and to help stop unintended early pregnancy.

Adapting to COVID-19 restrictions, we developed and increased the use of digital tools to inform young people on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Laos created the popular “Merlin Pha Hoo” learning tool, which may be included in national education curricula. Bangladesh, Peru, Indonesia and Zimbabwe were also among places to adapt projects to deliver health and rights messages and education digitally.

We continued to push for comprehensive sexuality education to be integrated into national curricula, by engaging governments, as in Burkina Faso and Timor-Leste, and partners like UNFPA.

## STRENGTHENING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES FOR ADOLESCENTS

We strengthen the capacity of staff and systems to provide quality, inclusive services. In Paraguay, we trained over 400 health professionals and worked with government on standards for adolescent healthcare. In Zimbabwe, we trained more than 300 care workers in sign language and disability, leading to marked improvements in services for adolescents with disabilities.

We partnered with AstraZeneca and government in Brazil on the Young Health Programme to pilot scorecard assessments of services by young people. These assessments are used to improve the provision of youth-friendly health services.

We also make services affordable and accessible. In Malawi we trained 98 youth agents to ensure young people get health services and contraceptives, even in remote areas, and are able to make decisions about if and when they have children. Demand for contraceptives among young people there more than doubled in 12 months.

We supported 27 sexual and reproductive health camp services in distant parts of Uganda, reaching more than 6,000 young people with HIV testing and treatment, post-abortion care and cervical cancer screening.

As part of building family and community support, programmes backed by the Honduras government enabled 30,951 young women and 35,086 young men to access youth-friendly clinics and learn about adolescent pregnancy prevention.

### ELIMINATING HARMFUL PRACTICES

We work to change the attitudes, behaviours and laws that enable harmful practices like child marriage and FGM.

Our multi-level approach in Burkina Faso showed how harmful practices are linked to issues like early and unintended pregnancy. We worked with government and national coalitions; with traditional and religious leaders to underline their roles as local change makers; with schools; with men and boys; and through peer education.

Our engagement with religious and traditional leaders in Uganda enabled girls to escape child marriages and be integrated back into their families. More than 50 Ghanaian communities we worked with took action to stop child marriage and adolescent pregnancy, and recorded no child marriages for the year. In Bangladesh, we trained 90,000 informal officials, and 7,200 registrars to use an app to stop child marriage.

With local partners, we influenced by-laws to end child marriage in Tanzania. Nepal's Girls' Advocacy Alliance project advocated for better implementation of existing laws on gender-based violence and child marriage.

### BUILDING SUPPORT FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN MOST AT RISK

Girls and young women who are mothers, pregnant or in crisis situations are among those considered most at risk. They are often excluded from education and need specific support.

As part of the Girls' Advocacy Alliance in Kenya, we championed a unified tracking system to count how many girls return to school after leaving due to pregnancy. We helped the most vulnerable adolescents in poor parts of the Philippines to make informed choices, in collaboration with the government and Family Planning Organization.

We stepped up work for adolescents in humanitarian settings. In Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi, we worked in partnership with the Ministry of Health to train youth educators, who helped to inform more than 4,500 young people about sexual and reproductive health services. Thanks to menstrual health kits and sessions held in Sudan and Tanzania, some of the most vulnerable girls in host and refugee communities reported improved personal hygiene.

### INFLUENCING LAWS, POLICIES AND BUDGETS

Our advocacy helped to strengthen global commitments from governments at the International Conference on Population and Development in Nairobi. As a result, the official "Nairobi Statement" was considerably stronger and clearer on the rights and needs of adolescent girls, including younger girls, and on the agency of young people.

Our sustained influencing work also led to notable successes towards strengthening laws on harmful practices and to more youth-responsive policy approaches. Such work included a huge campaign in Egypt against FGM – reaching almost 14 million people on TV and online. This prompted commitments to address critical loopholes in the law criminalising FGM, and a national study to gauge the status of the practice.

A two-year campaign in Mozambique against child marriage resulted in a new law setting the minimum age to marry at 18.

In Indonesia, we formed a coalition of NGOs that successfully influenced policy makers and mobilised public pressure to tighten the law to prevent child marriage. Evidence-gathering among communities fed directly into shaping national policy.

# EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

We want vulnerable and excluded young children, particularly girls, to grow up well cared for and equally valued.

## THE WORLD TODAY

Early childhood is the most important development phase in life. In low-income countries, more than two-thirds of young children face poor development due to poverty, lack of nurturing care, ill health and poor nutrition. This jeopardises their chances of entering and completing school, learning essential skills and becoming healthy, capable adults. COVID-19 has magnified the situation and disproportionately hits the youngest, most vulnerable children. Global actors have intensified action on early childhood development, particularly on nurturing care, parenting and early education.

## WORK IN 2020

We support early childhood development by promoting all aspects of nurturing care with parents, caregivers, communities, service providers and partners. Our programmes covered early learning, maternal and young children's health and nutrition, sanitation, and positive parenting – including in emergencies. We forged new strategic partnerships, as with the Sesame Foundation and the LEGO Foundation, and worked with longstanding partners such as Promundo. In response to COVID-19, we delivered multi-language parenting support materials alongside food assistance and support for play-based learning at home.

**€90 MILLION**  
SPENT ON EARLY  
CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMES

A BETTER START IN LIFE FOR  
**4,002,243**  
GIRLS



Credit: Plan International

**MEET SEVEN-YEAR-OLD FADI.** In 2016, her family took refuge in a camp in Cameroon to escape Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria. Educating girls is not traditionally seen as important in her community, but her parents were encouraged to send Fadi to our early childhood care and development centre. Fadi was withdrawn and unhappy. “But one morning, during a colouring lesson, I heard a voice happily singing,” recalls her mother. “When I raised my head, I discovered it was Fadi.” Fadi now attends primary school. Her teacher says, “She is a smart and very sociable child; this shows that she had a good foundation at the centre before coming to us.”

## SUPPORTING NURTURING CARE FREE FROM GENDER BIAS

All our early childhood development work is guided by the Nurturing Care Framework, launched by the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other partners in 2018.

In Cambodia, we ran comprehensive parenting programmes – covering play and early learning, protection, nutrition and health – that reached 9,000 parents and caregivers (7,743 women) and set up 27 village fathers’ groups.

We actively promoted getting men involved in nurturing care in more than two-thirds of countries where we work, including Guatemala, Jordan, Nepal, Paraguay and Rwanda. In Ecuador, we used radio, video and social media to campaign nationally for behaviour change among men regarding care work, decision-making and non-violence.

When COVID-19 struck in China, we switched to an online parenting course to spread prevention messages and indoor play ideas, reaching 50,000 people. In Bangladesh, we developed videos with Sesame Workshop for children and families – these were viewed digitally 2.7 million times. We supported more than 4,000 families in Vietnam with cash assistance, hygiene kits, parenting support meetings, cooking demos and toy-making sessions.

Globally, we produced the Coping with COVID package of support sessions in Spanish, French and English for at-risk adolescents and their parents/caregivers, and helped multiple countries to use this resource.

## PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

We work to ensure that young children survive and thrive, even in adversity, by protecting maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition.

Our flagship SHOW project continued in Bangladesh, Haiti, Senegal, Nigeria and Ghana. This project aims to strengthen health systems to provide gender responsive care; promote women’s empowerment and demand for services; and mobilise men’s positive involvement. Trained health staff in several countries now use gender responsive, adolescent-friendly checklists and referral mechanisms.

In Bolivia, we conducted needs assessments in 50 health centres to plan adolescent-friendly, gender responsive services. Our technical support to health authorities helped them to keep vital mother and child health services going during the pandemic.

Our work on maternal, infant and young child nutrition for populations in acute need included a food-for-assets programme in South Sudan and on farming high-nutrient crops in Benin. We also trained young mothers in Peru in “agri-preneurship”.

The Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance, which we host in Laos, reached more than 1 million people via online platforms with guidance on breastfeeding and nutrition related to COVID-19 prevention. We also provided food assistance in the pandemic in 11 countries.

### IMPROVING EARLY LEARNING AND STIMULATION

Our play-based early learning programmes aim to provide safe, stimulating environments for all young children, laying the foundations for their future education and wellbeing.

We trained 1,200 educators in Colombia from public and private pre-schools, reaching more than 36,000 children. We ran 161 full-day pre-schools with a local partner in India, and 288 community pre-schools in Cambodia. Through our support, children with disabilities attended 27 community-based early childhood centres in Mozambique and parents of children with disabilities in Nicaragua received local training.

We provided early learning for refugee and internally displaced children in Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Jordan and Nigeria. In Uganda, we supported quality, low-cost services in 92 centres, helping more than 25,500 Ugandan and South Sudanese refugee children.

As pre-schools closed due to COVID-19, we created home-based, play-based materials in several countries including Egypt, Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia. We adapted a digital learning platform, run in partnership with Viamo and World Vision, to support young children's learning at home in Zimbabwe.

We led work with Jordan's government on its remote-delivery programme for school readiness – an area where we have expertise through our Accelerated Learning Programmes.

### COMMUNITY HYGIENE AND SANITATION

We work in communities to promote access to basic hygiene and sanitation facilities, recognising how these are fundamental for children's health and nutrition.

Over 50 country teams ran programmes on water, sanitation and hygiene. Most targeted the pandemic – through distribution of emergency hygiene and

protective equipment, including hygiene kits for families, behaviour change campaigns, installing hand-washing devices, and sharing supplies for schools, health facilities and community spaces, among other actions.

In many countries, we integrated awareness campaigns on hygiene and infection prevention into early learning activities. In Sudan, where cholera occurs, we helped 130 community hygiene promoters to visit 157,628 refugee and internally displaced children and their families to raise awareness on hygiene.

We began a rural project in Ghana with our German office to reduce morbidity and mortality in children under five, through equitable access to safe water and better sanitation and hygiene.

In Venezuela, we rehabilitated water supply and storage systems for early learning and elementary schools. We helped to build play spaces in early childhood centres in Uganda with gender responsive, inclusive latrines and hand-washing facilities.

### INFLUENCING EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICIES AND PRACTICE

We build on our strong reputation for early childhood development programming in many countries to influence relevant laws and policies, locally and nationally.

We contributed to ensuring that Ecuador's government included nurturing care and positive parenting in their national bill for early childhood development. As a member of the Philippine Coalition of Advocates for Nutrition Security, we contributed to the passing of the First One Thousand Days law in the Philippines – and later influenced municipal decision makers to implement that law.

Our influencing led to improved government standards and use of tools on child protection in health and education in Bolivia; state-level action on the right to play without sexism in Brazil; and early learning standards that will underpin a national early childhood programme in El Salvador.

In Rwanda, where we have long worked to influence the national early childhood development programme, our parenting manual (adapted from Kenya and Uganda) is to be used as a national reference guide.

# PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE

We want vulnerable and excluded children, particularly girls, to grow up free from violence, fear or discrimination and we work with families, communities and governments to end all forms of violence against children.

## THE WORLD TODAY

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – which marked 30 years in 2019 – enshrines children’s right to be free from violence. Yet every year at least 1 billion children still endure violence of some kind – whether in homes, schools, communities or crises. Girls, children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged groups are disproportionately affected.

Weakly enforced laws and policies, lack of resources, patchy services and gaps in data are all barriers to ending violence against children. COVID-19 has both exacerbated and revealed the extent of children’s vulnerability to abuse, especially at home and online.

## WORK IN 2020

We have increased investment and widened programmes to end violence against children, especially girls and children with disabilities. We strengthen family and community environments that protect children, and change views that see violence against children as acceptable. We help to improve services for those who have experienced violence, working in effective partnerships and in humanitarian settings, and we involve children in protecting themselves. This is especially relevant given the exponential rise in cases of abuse reported by young people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**€101 MILLION**  
SPENT ON CHILD PROTECTION

GENDER-SENSITIVE  
CHILD PROTECTION FOR  
**5,716,214 GIRLS**

CHILD PROTECTION IN  
EMERGENCIES PROGRAMMES IN  
**54 COUNTRIES**



**MEET KENDRY, ANDRIS AND ROBERTO** from the Dominican Republic. They are involved in the Down to Zero project, which aims to eradicate child sexual exploitation by educating at-risk children to demand change in their communities. These three boys are among 6,000 girls and boys who have been trained to advocate for girls' rights, raising the subject among their peers and reporting cases to the authorities. "We are a fundamental part of the fight against child sexual exploitation," says Roberto. "We should get involved and work together with girls to make this a thing of the past."

Credit: Plan International / Fran Afonso

## WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AT HOME AND IN COMMUNITIES

We involve children and young people directly so they know their rights and how to protect themselves while also helping families to build positive, protective environments.

The Impact-Elle project in Benin trained girls to participate in their own protection. The issues covered include child marriage, sexual abuse and economic exploitation. In Egypt, children, including those with disabilities, learned through games and art about the values of care and respect, which had positive ripple effects in their communities.

The Cambalhotas project in Brazil used workshops to teach 877 children about preventing different forms of violence, especially gender-based. It also targeted more than 600 parents and caregivers to promote protective environments within families.

In China, we began piloting the Digital School Bullying Prevention project among 4,432 girls and 4,572 boys in 20 project schools in Yunnan province. With school-based violence affecting many children, the project aims to improve peer relations and make schools safer.

We oversaw positive discipline training for parents and caregivers in Guatemala to increase acceptance of violence-free child discipline. Participants also learned about active parenting, to help distribute household tasks equitably and involve men in child-raising.

## STRENGTHENING PROTECTION SERVICES

We worked throughout the year to strengthen the capacities and quality of protection services for children and to improve mechanisms for reporting violence – a need underlined by the impacts of COVID-19.

For the second year running, we organised the Cyber Talino Summit in the Philippines on training and awareness-raising about online threats, uniting young people, teachers and technology giants like Facebook, Google and Microsoft, reinforced by a webinar series.

We supported official piloting of Myanmar's first digital platform to allow children to directly report cases of abuse. We invested in developing more child-friendly reporting mechanisms in India, following programme work with street children and those in conflict with the law.

Increased reporting of abuse during COVID-19 meant that we intensified existing work with partners – as in Cambodia and Uganda – to set up or strengthen online counselling and toll-free helplines for children to report abuse or to ask for information about the virus. In Cambodia, Facebook was used for online counselling and sharing of psychosocial support messages, as well as sharing a video cartoon to raise awareness of the helpline among children.

To strengthen child protection structures, we ran training on skills and global standards in Niger to ensure providers offer quality psychosocial support



services for children, and we collaborated with UNICEF and government partners in Sierra Leone on refresher training for social workers, at national and district levels.

### WORKING WITH OTHERS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Collaboration at all levels – from grassroots leaders to government and law enforcement officials – helps us to strengthen child protection mechanisms and services.

A foundation of this is strengthening community-based protection – as in Ghana where a group of progressive traditional and religious leaders advocated to end practices like child marriage, after working with us. They then convinced senior local leaders to publicly condemn child marriage, with the effect of influencing others.

Dedicated efforts in Indonesia have led to a partnership with the House of Grace Foundation for the social rehabilitation and reintegration of young people affected by commercial sexual exploitation. Some small and medium enterprises also campaigned with us to prevent and outlaw child sexual exploitation.

We worked widely to build police capacity on child protection risks. In India, police and counsellors were trained on child- and gender-friendly reporting, protection from sexual offences, and improving understanding of sexual abuse.

Advocacy work included winning the backing of Cambodia's prime minister for a national policy on child protection systems, helping Vietnam's government to integrate modules on sexual and gender-based violence into its education system, and municipal-level activities to draft and enforce laws on violence against women and children in Bolivia.

### ADVANCING GENDER SENSITIVE CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES

We're investing funds and resources to tailor and improve gender-sensitive child protection services in emergencies through multi-sector and partnership working.

In Myanmar's conflict-affected Kachin state, we expanded life-saving support services to 34 camps for internally displaced people. Through our activities, children can access psychosocial support, age-appropriate case management and referral services, and learn positive coping mechanisms, while caregivers and communities gain vital protection skills.

Some 1,340 young people aged 6 to 17 in Jordan's Azraq camp have had increased access to protection and psychosocial services, including on gender-based violence, thanks to our partnership with the EU's ECHO to create a safer environment for vulnerable children.

Our intervention in the Central African Republic provided psychosocial support through child-friendly spaces, and case management for unaccompanied and separated children, children in armed groups, and those affected by gender-based violence.

To overcome challenges created by COVID-19, our teams worked with ingenuity and energy to provide remote case management, keep children protected via online sessions, conference calls and child-friendly materials, build capacity of staff and partners through online platforms, and reach key audiences in distant regions with radio broadcasts.

# THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS



We work with partners across the world to advance children's rights and equality for girls.

## WE PARTNERED WITH

over  
**27,600**  
community organisations

over  
**3,400**  
non-governmental organisations

**934**  
corporate and private sector institutions



Credit: Griff Tapper

### The power of learning through play

Gender inequalities are compounded by crisis – refugee girls have less time to play and enrol less frequently in primary education. Along with a consortium of partners led by the International Rescue Committee, we joined PlayMatters, a \$100 million dollar project funded by the LEGO Foundation bringing learning through play to refugee children in Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania. “Investing in play-based learning interventions is key to addressing toxic stress and trauma for young children in refugee settings, as learning through play helps to develop social and emotional skills, builds resilience, and strengthens brain connections,” said John Goodwin, CEO of the LEGO Foundation. Some 800,000 refugee children will benefit from inclusive education opportunities.



Credit: Plan International

### The power of joined-up campaigning

An innovative partnership with mineral water supplier Agua Buena is helping Plan International Dominican Republic challenge child marriage and unintended teen pregnancy. A joint campaign using branded trucks and billboards with the message ‘No girl pregnant or married before 18’, is generating public debate about solutions. “The communication campaign helped to create awareness about the issue and recognition for Plan International as the go-to organisation for girls’ rights among the population and the leader against child marriage and teen pregnancy in the country,” said Virginia Saiz, Plan International Country Director.

### The power of a coalition

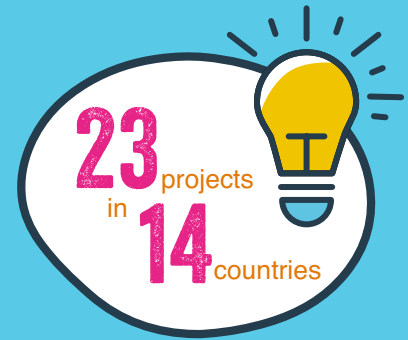
The Adolescent Girls Investment Plan (AGIP) is a partnership of civil society organisations, research institutions and foundations, co-chaired by Plan International and Girls Not Brides. It is working with governments to strengthen social, political and financial investment in adolescent girls’ lives. Within the UN’s Generation Equality process, for example, AGIP has convened meetings between leaders and adolescent girls, helping secure a commitment to actions focused on adolescent girls. One young participant in the meetings, said: “Girl and youth-led organisations should support grassroots girls’ and women’s activism because it’s where the true community mobilisation and social change happens and they know the local and national needs of the specific communities.”



Interested in partnering with Plan International?  
Visit [plan-international.org/working-partnership](http://plan-international.org/working-partnership)

# INNOVATION: BOLD PROJECTS, BIG IMPACTS FOR GIRLS

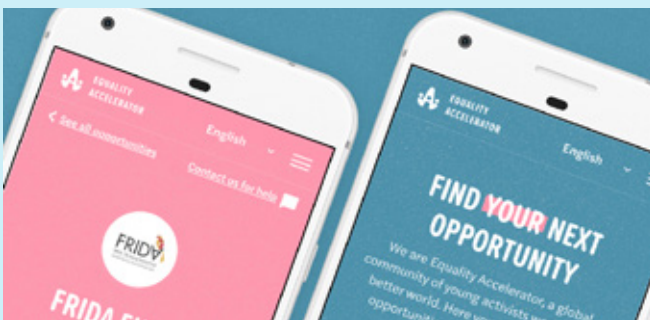
Using experimentation and risk to develop new approaches, products and services.



## Social media groups supporting girl leaders go global

Girls Out Loud supports girls to safely use social media, discuss issues they face and become leaders. From an initial pilot in Colombia, the project, which is easily adapted to local contexts, has been scaled up and is now running in 16 countries, supporting over 5,000 girls. It has been particularly successful during the COVID-19 pandemic. Local lockdowns have restricted girls' ability to meet in person, but the groups have allowed them to share their experiences and access reliable information.

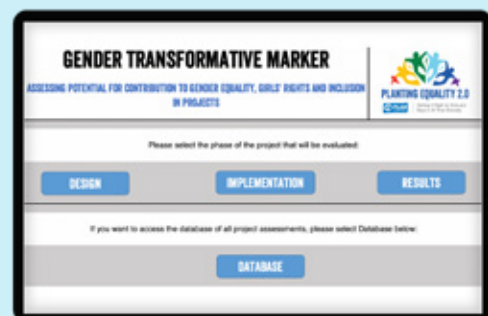
"I learned more about myself, my rights and the things I can do for our community," said a girl from the Philippines.



## Digital platform boosts young activists

Young women are driving change globally yet under 1% of international development funding to support gender equality goes to women's organisations. That's why we worked alongside young women to create Equality Accelerator, a digital platform that connects young activists with flexible funding opportunities, technical knowledge and support from their peers.

We consulted with young activists to discover where they need the most support. Through this research we identified the areas of greatest need, such as for those campaigning on issues like racial equality, LGBTIQ+ rights and violence against girls and women. An online tool was designed to target these critical needs and after first piloting in Brazil and Guatemala it will be rolled out to a wider range of countries.



## Setting standards in our push for equality

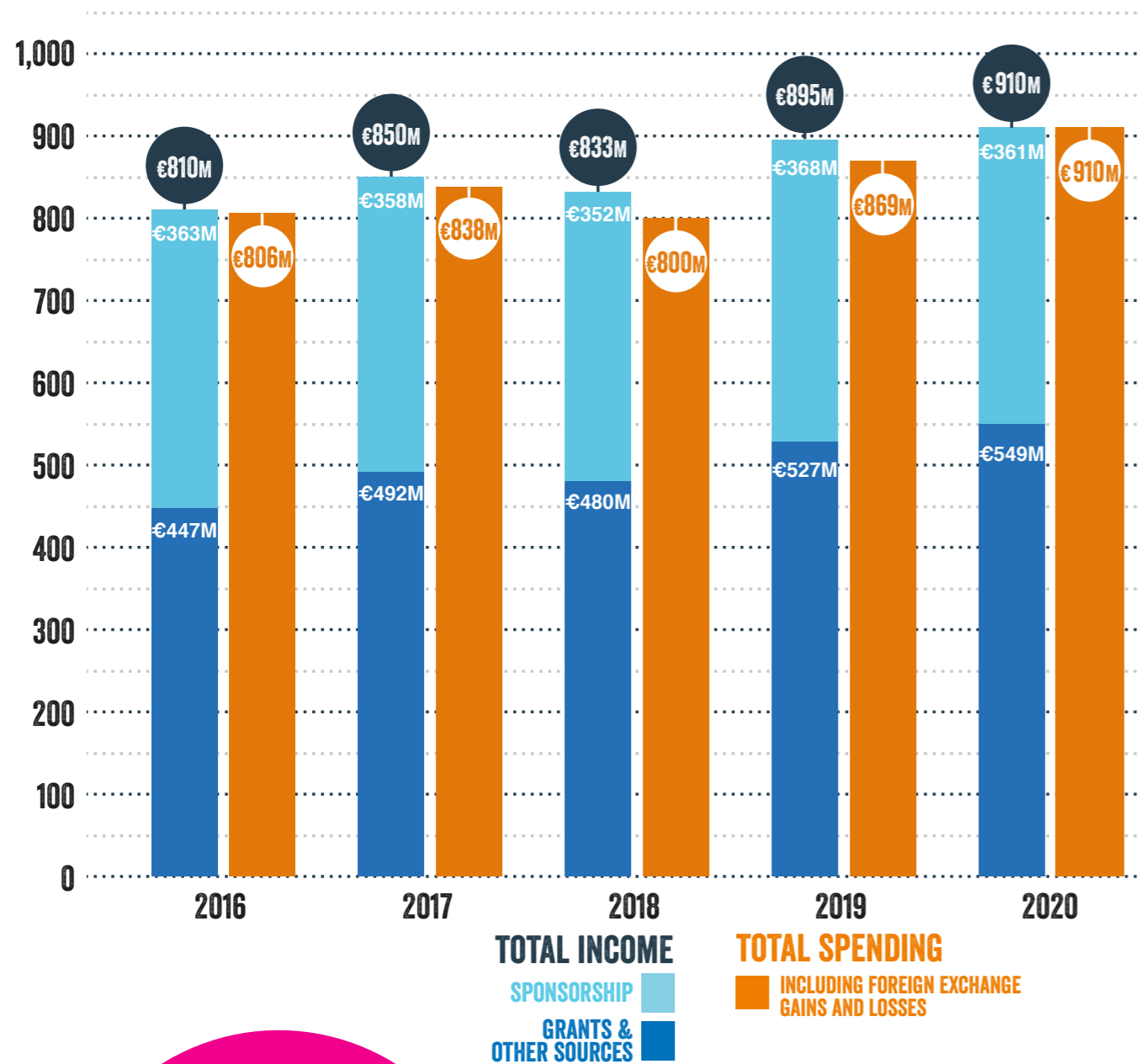
To ensure we achieve our mission to advance equality for girls we need to develop the ways we monitor our impact. To measure the gender equality outcomes of our programmes and influencing, we've launched the Gender Marker. It helps us design programmes and identify where improvements can be made to existing projects.

Plan International Germany's Kirstin Bostelmann used the Gender Marker to improve a project on urban safety for girls. She says, "Although the project was rated highly, the Gender Marker enabled us to identify that it was not focused enough on diversity, so we did specific research and learned from a local organisation experienced in working with LGBTIQ+ youth."

Want to learn more about innovation at Plan International?  
Visit [plan-international.org/innovation](https://plan-international.org/innovation)

# 2020 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## ANNUAL INCOME & ANNUAL SPEND

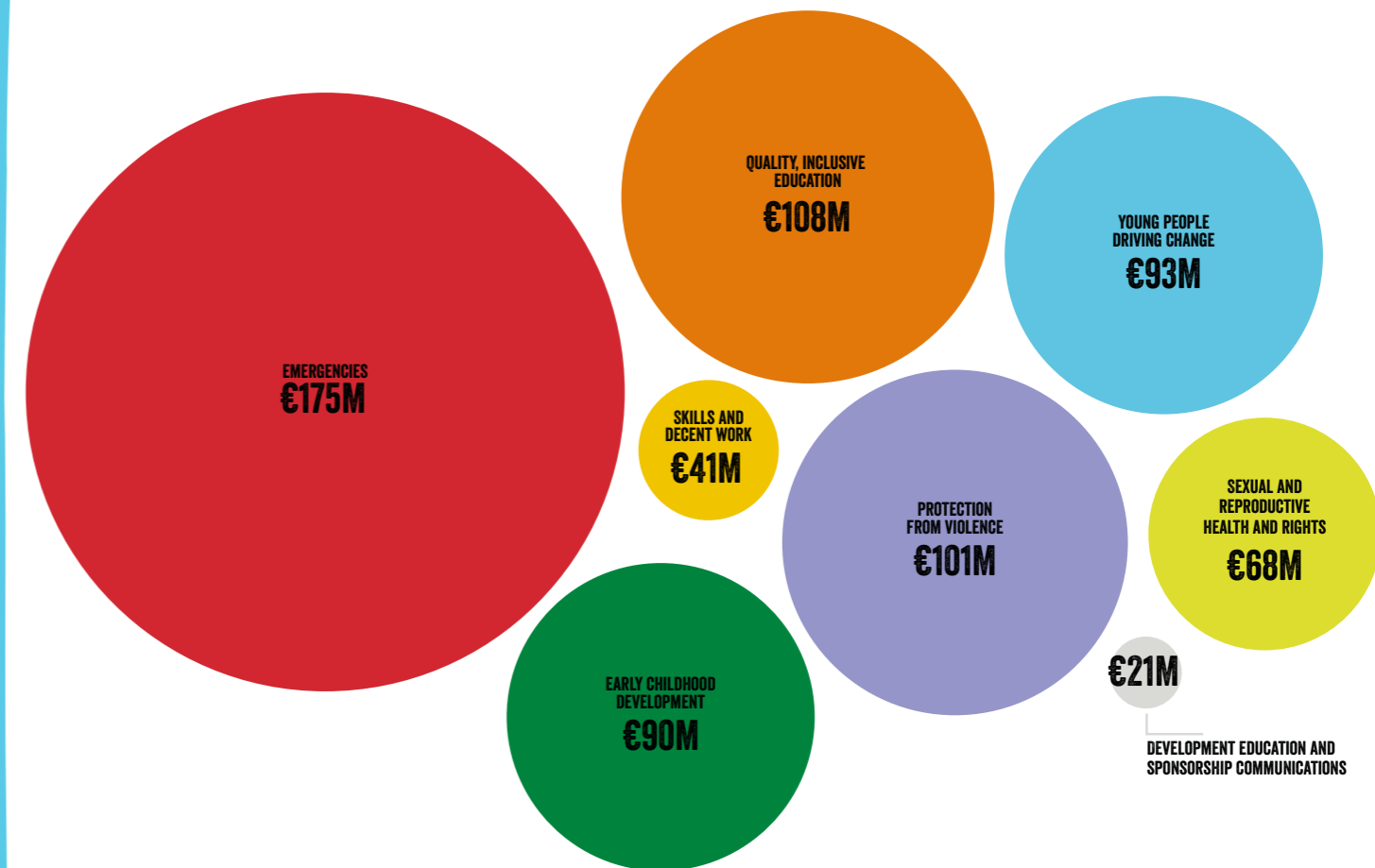


- 77 CENTS**  
Life-changing programmes for children, their families and communities
- 13 CENTS**  
on raising funds and attracting new supporters
- 10 CENTS**  
on activities such as HR, finance and IT systems to make our programme work as efficient and effective as possible.

\* excluding foreign exchange gains and losses

To see the full financial statements go to: [plan-international.org/annualreview](http://plan-international.org/annualreview)

## 2020 PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY AREA



**FOR EVERY €1 INVESTED FROM SPONSORSHIP INCOME...**

**...WE INVEST AN ADDITIONAL €2.08 FROM GRANTS AND OTHER SOURCES**

**OUR GLOBAL INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES**

To see the full financial statements go to: [plan-international.org/annualreview](http://plan-international.org/annualreview)



## OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS IN 2020 INCLUDED...

- Accenture
- Adecco Group Foundation
- Adolescent Girls Investment Plan
- AkzoNobel
- Asia Development Bank
- AstraZeneca
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Chelsea FC
- Citi
- Coca-Cola
- Credit Suisse
- Daiichi Sankyo Company Limited
- ECMIA Continental Network of Indigenous women of the Americas
- Education Cannot Wait
- EQUALS
- Equal Measures 2030
- Fondation Botnar
- Fondation Chanel
- Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media
- Generation Unlimited
- Girls not Brides
- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- Global Partnership for Education
- International Civil Society Centre
- JPMorgan Chase Foundation
- Kimberly Clark
- Latter Day Saints charities
- Lego Foundation
- Microsoft
- Mira que Te Miro
- Monki
- Procter & Gamble
- Scotiabank
- Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls
- Tui Care Foundation
- UN Women
- UNESCO
- UNFPA
- UNHCR
- UNICEF
- Viacom
- Women Deliver
- World Food Programme

### About Plan International

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 80 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in 75 countries.

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