



Until we are all equal



Girls' Pact for the Future

Youth reimagining a gender-equal future

#FutureGirlsWant



Who we are

We are the younger generations from every corner of the globe. We are young leaders and changemakers, coming from various countries and communities, representing diverse backgrounds and identities. We are the future of society and the architects of our world.

We've come together to speak to global leaders attending the UN Summit of the Future.

If this Summit is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape a system that better responds to the challenges of the 21st century and beyond, then our generation – the first to be born in this new millennium – must have a seat at the table.

We are determined to create a world where gender-based discrimination and inequalities are eradicated, where girls can thrive, paving the way for a society that prospers on inclusivity and mutual respect.

About this document:

This *Girls' Pact for the Future* was developed by 35 young people aged 15-24 supported by both Plan International, and the UNICEF Global Girl Leaders Advisory Group and the UNICEF Youth Foresight Fellows.

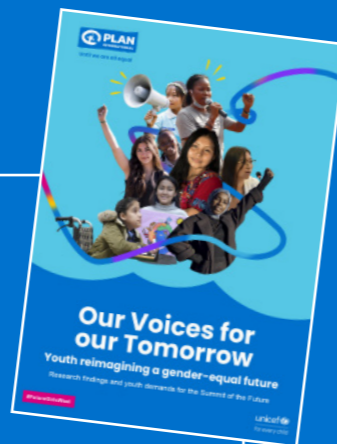
It was the result of a research process that took place in March 2024 using a combination of participatory futures methods mentioned in UNICEF's Youth Foresight Playbook: *Designing a Youth-centred Journey to the Future*. As part of a short survey and the research workshops, young people were asked to identify concrete actions that policy makers should take in the next 30 years for the world to achieve gender equality.

The youth were also invited to submit their own individual drafts of the *Girls' Pact* with specific recommendations, which form the basis for this document.

The research report *Our Voices for our Tomorrow* provides more details on the methodology and on young people's views of the future.

You can download the research report here:

plan-international.org/publications/our-voices-for-our-tomorrow



**We are
the voices
of our
generation.**

**We are
young,
resilient, and
committed
to a better
future.**

**We
demand
that you
listen to us.**



We are concerned about the current state of the world.

⚠️ We live in a world where, too often, simply **being a girl is a problem**. From early childhood to adulthood, and in every space we occupy, girls face persistent challenges, discrimination, inequalities and unequal opportunities. It is even worse for girls living in conflict-affected countries, displaced girls, migrant girls, girls with disabilities, or girls living with HIV.

⚠️ We see girls who **feel unsafe**, whether in the streets, online, in schools, in their workplaces or in their homes. We see girls who are victims of sexual violence without receiving the justice they deserve. We see homeless girls at risk of becoming victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. We see girls with disabilities being particularly at risk of violence, facing barriers to escape or ask for help. We see girls who face backlash and intimidation for daring to raise their voices for change. We see girls who are killed simply because they are girls.

⚠️ Every day we witness **sexual and gender-based violence**, including practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation. We see adolescent girls who become mothers too early because of a lack of comprehensive sexuality education and of sexual and reproductive healthcare services.

⚠️ We see girls whose **needs are not met in our health systems**, because they are robbed of their right to make decisions about their own lives. We witness anti-rights movements turning our bodies into subjects of debate and threatening the state of girls' rights worldwide.

⚠️ We see a **digital divide** that limits girls' ability to participate in the economy and raise their voices in online spaces. Again and again, girls experience harassment, cyberbullying and technology facilitated gender-based violence.

⚠️ We see adolescent girls either **dropping out of school** due to early marriages and pregnancy, or unable to access quality education because schools are too far, too expensive, too dangerous, or are simply not prioritised for girls.

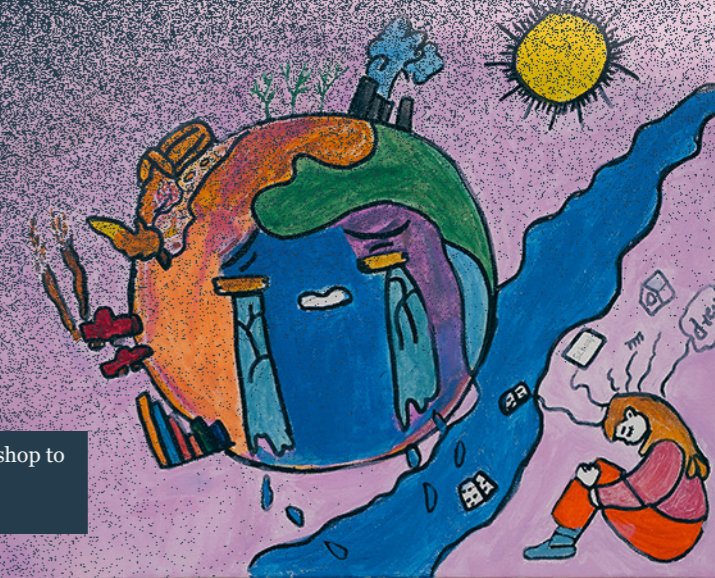
⚠️ We see girls who are expected to carry too much of the burden of domestic and care work at home. When we are **denied equal access to employment** and economic resources, the cycles of poverty continue.

⚠️ We see our rivers, which are our only source of water, being polluted with no one taking responsibility. We see climate change affecting the physical and mental health of people from all around the world, and we witness the **disproportionate impact of the climate crisis** on marginalised communities, and specifically on girls and women.

It is these issues, along with an endless etcetera of rights violations we do not have space to list here, that bring us to raise our voices. We are frustrated at the failure we see to implement crucial policies in our countries and communities, including the lack of funding invested to address all the challenges we face. These inequalities are assumed by most as normal and acceptable because of the patriarchal nature of our societies. We have the power to change this and to rewrite the rules that guide society, but we are seldom invited to the table. When we are, we're asked for our experiences but not our solutions. Rarely are our voices listened to or acted on. So now we raise our voices loud and clear: we, the younger generation, refuse to accept a world where girls in all their diversity are denied their fundamental rights.

If you, leaders of the world, do not take immediate, appropriate and significant actions, you will condemn another generation of girls to a future marked by inequality, violence, and exclusion. Progress towards gender equality will regress, widening inequality.

⚠️ **We will fail to reach the Sustainable Development Goals or any other goals – present or future – that you, our global leaders, have set for the world.**





This is the future we want to see.

It is a world where **gender equality** is not just Sustainable Development Goal number five, but **a reality that permeates every aspect of society**.

Where **stereotypes** and biases rooted in racism, colonialism, ableism, patriarchy and other forms of oppression **are dismantled**. Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Asian, LGBTQIA+ and all marginalised communities actively shape their future, and their rights are upheld.

A world where **boys are raised to respect and value girls as equals**, promoting healthy relationships and mutual respect from a young age.

A world where there is **no gender pay gap**, where leadership positions in all fields are equally shared among genders, and where everyone grows up seeing a version of themselves in positions of power. Girls and people of all marginalised groups are given the power to help address global issues, utilising their distinct viewpoints and abilities.

It is a world where technology is used as a tool for inclusion and empowerment, **bridging digital divides** and providing opportunities for all.

It is a future where **accountability for commitments** is taken seriously by governments, creating more inclusive societies.

In the future we want, humanity cares for the planet and nature is seen as a gift, rather than something to exploit. Sustainable practices and efforts to **combat climate change** are prioritised.

In the future we envision, **peace prevails**. Conflict resolution is prioritised, and diplomacy is valued over violence. Girls and women are active participants in peacebuilding efforts, bringing their unique perspectives and solutions to the table.

It is a world without violence. A world without fear.

It is a future where **all persons**, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity **are fully accepted and equal in society**. We are no longer defined by the constraints of our gender.

This is the future the younger generation demands from world leaders.



We believe this vision can be achieved in our lifetime.

To do this, you must start by listening to our voices. Take us seriously. Invite us into powerful spaces and let us influence your agendas. Hold consultations with us. Allow us to shape the policies that you want to implement because we are the ones impacted by them.

Start by fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusivity from a young age.

Listen to marginalised voices, actively seeking out their perspectives and lived experiences to inform policies and initiatives.

Start by promoting and embracing an intersectional approach to feminism

that recognises and addresses the interconnected nature of oppression based on gender, race, class, disability, sexuality, and other identities.

Start by empowering girls as agents of change, investing in education and leadership development for girls from diverse backgrounds.

Create more spaces for their activism and fund initiatives where they can challenge the status quo.

Start by using the term "girls" in international, regional and national policy documents and instruments.

to advance their rights and account for their specific needs, challenges and experiences, which might differ from those of women and of boys. Start also by prioritising the implementation of international standards widely accepted by the international community.



We call on Member States to put into action the following recommendations...

Education & technology



Ensure equal access to quality free education for girls in all their diversity, including during times of conflict and natural disaster, by eliminating all barriers that prevent girls from attending school. For example, policies to address gender-based violence in schools, special measures for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers to continue their schooling, and night school and safe and free transportation must all be put in place.



Develop and integrate gender-transformative curriculum and learning materials that promote gender equality and challenge stereotypes and biases. Include topics such as women's and girls' achievements in all areas of society, how to recognise and challenge stereotypes, engaging men and boys as allies, comprehensive sexuality education, and the importance of diversity and inclusion. This could include incorporating Gender Transformative Education Principles outlined and endorsed in the Transforming Education Summit's Call to Action "Advancing Gender Equality and Girls' and Women's Empowerment in and Through Education". Encourage girls' participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields by providing mentorship, role models, and hands-on learning opportunities.



Expand national education financing by increasing allocation of resources to education ministries to reach the widely endorsed benchmark of at least 15 to 20 per cent of public expenditure. This expansion would mean sufficient funds to invest in quality education that reaches the most vulnerable, especially and marginalised girls and youth. This should also include increased funding for teachers' continuous training and development to help more effective learning.



Address gaps in digital access and connectivity and build digital skills and knowledge: tackle disparities in access to technology, artificial intelligence and internet connectivity that disproportionately affect children with disabilities, and girls and women, particularly in low-income and rural communities. Expand initiatives to provide affordable and accessible technology resources, such as computers, tablets, and internet access, to girls and their families. Equip girls and boys with digital literacy skills to navigate technology and information effectively, safely, and ethically, supporting them to understand both the positive impacts and potential risks of being online.



free quality education

digital literacy skills

equal access to technology

financing for education

Violence against girls and women



Enact, strengthen and enforce laws

that criminalise all forms of violence against girls and women, including domestic violence, sexual violence, harassment, trafficking, harmful practices and online and technology-facilitated gender-based violence. End impunity, make sure that perpetrators are held accountable, and that victims have access to justice, including in conflict and post-conflict settings. Provide training for police officers, judges, and prosecutors on gender-sensitive approaches and victim-centred responses. Establish monitoring bodies to oversee law enforcement and judicial proceedings, regularly collecting data to monitor levels of reporting.



Provide support services and strong referral mechanisms:

establish and fund accessible, holistic, gender-sensitive, confidential, survivor-centred support services in a long-term sustainable way, including safe spaces, shelters, hotlines, counselling, legal assistance, healthcare (including mental health), and professional catch-up programmes. Opportunities for job training, skills development and mentorship should be made available to all survivors, regardless of their background or circumstances.



Strengthen education and awareness-raising efforts

to empower individuals to recognise and report violence. Launch campaigns to challenge harmful gender norms and attitudes that encourage violence against girls and women and foster a culture of victim-blaming. Promote messages of respect and zero tolerance for violence as well as support to survivors in all community, media and educational settings. Provide training for teachers, parents, and community leaders on identifying and addressing signs of violence. Prioritise the protection of children and young people online: ensure robust protection and reporting measures are in place through government legislation, internet regulation and private sector action to prevent social media being used to perpetuate sexual violence and abuse and gender stereotyping. Promote a variety of ways for young people to socialise and connect, through social media but also with the creation of safe and inclusive youth-friendly spaces outside of the online world.



support services

challenge harmful norms

enact, strengthen and enforce laws

zero tolerance for violence



online protection

reporting measures



Ensure protection against gender-based violence in conflict zones, including in post-conflict settings:

provide safe spaces and services, humanitarian assistance, legal protections, and training to peacekeeping forces, humanitarian workers, and local communities on gender-sensitive approaches and the protection of girls and women in conflict settings.



Strengthen mechanisms for reporting and participatory data collection:

establish standardised and comprehensive systems that address gender-based violence, obtaining accurate, confidential and detailed information to better understand and monitor the magnitude of the problem and design effective policies and programmes to combat it.



Adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights



Implement comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education within school curricula:

allocate resources to develop and implement curricula that comply with international standards but are contextualised to our countries, addressing topics such as reproductive health, consent, gender equality, and LGBTQIA+ rights, healthy relationships, and bystander intervention, in an age-responsive and non-judgmental manner that breaks down taboos. Such education should aim to combat misinformation for girls and young people as well as for families and communities.



Eliminate barriers related to menstrual health and hygiene:

this includes providing widely accessible information on menstrual hygiene and reducing or removing sales tax on products with the aim of providing free products from 2030 onwards. Prioritise the development and promotion of eco-friendly menstrual products, such as reusable pads or menstrual cups, to reduce environmental impact and promote sustainability.



Ensure access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services:

promote awareness of, and guarantee access to, affordable and inclusive sexual and reproductive health services for adolescent girls, including those in rural and underserved areas. Remove barriers such as cost, stigma, and lack of information, and instead, implement strict confidentiality and the creation of safe spaces. Promote access to testing, treatment, and support services for girls at risk of, or living with, HIV and other STIs.



Promote access to family planning services:

ensure access to information on safe sex and to affordable or free contraception to protect adolescent girls from unintended pregnancies. Legalise or decriminalise abortion in all cases but most urgently for victims of rape. Provide safe and legal abortion services for girls in accordance with international human rights standards and comprehensive post-abortion care and support services.



Combat child, early and forced marriage and unions

by strengthening and enforcing laws that prohibit underage marriage and unions, providing support services for girls at risk of, or affected by, child marriage, and addressing its root causes, including poverty and insecurity. Work closely with community and religious leaders, and other influencers, urging them to denounce and eliminate this practice. Establish initiatives that allow pregnant adolescents to continue with their education without stigma.



Climate change



Actively involve girls and women

in the decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring of environmental policy, climate mitigation and adaptation measures and conservation projects. This makes sure that their needs, knowledge, and experiences are taken into account, leading to more effective and equitable solutions. Ensure girls and women are represented in relevant decision-making bodies on environmental policy, including in gender-balanced delegations to intergovernmental spaces.



Increase international financing

and ensure equitable investment in climate and environmental programmes between high-, middle- and low-income countries. Individual Member States must acknowledge their role and contribution as the largest producers of gas emissions and finance mitigation measures accordingly.



Strengthen and implement gender-responsive climate policies

that protect girls' rights recognise and address girls' and women's unique needs and challenges and support efforts to address environmental injustices, including those due to the impacts of war and conflict, that affect them disproportionately. Implement policies and interventions in line with international climate-related commitments and obligations such as the Paris Agreement. Make sure there is fair access to resources such as land, water, and clean energy technologies, and support initiatives that empower girls and women as stewards of natural resources and agents of sustainable development.



Promote environmental awareness and empower communities,

by integrating this into school curricula, and strengthening the skills and knowledge of girls and women in vulnerable communities to cope with climate impacts. Provide safe spaces, uphold the right to peaceful protest, fund girl-led groups, and give visibility to the varied girl-led environmental activism and awareness raising, including through content creation and via online platforms.



Strengthen green skills, economic and educational empowerment:

provide girls and women, indigenous people and those living with disabilities with access to green jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities, and financial resources to invest in climate-resilient, future-proof livelihoods and businesses. Support women-led initiatives that promote sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and eco-tourism, contributing to both protecting the environment and alleviating poverty. Promote adaptation and resilience strategies, including training programmes in survival skills, diversifying sources of income, and strengthening community support networks.



Foster green technologies and solutions:

encourage the adoption and development of green technologies and solutions, such as clean cookstoves, solar energy systems, and water-saving devices. These largely benefit girls and women who carry the unequal burden of domestic work, particularly in lower-income countries. Promote access to eco-friendly products and services that reduce carbon emissions, protect natural resources, and improve livelihoods for girls and women, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Participation in political processes



Consult and co-create solutions with girls from diverse backgrounds across all areas of public policy and decision-making:

Member States must conduct regular and meaningful consultations with diverse groups of girls and women in accessible and inclusive ways, across all the above interventions, in order to gather their input. This could include townhall meetings, focus groups, and surveys. It could also include creating advisory boards or councils for girls, youth, and women to advise policy makers on issues affecting their demographic, as well as girl-friendly accountability systems that allow girls and youth to monitor government progress.



Increase funding and support for girl- and youth-led, and community-based organisations working to promote gender equality. Funding opportunities must be made accessible to girl and youth groups with donors increasing the amount of funding available and removing barriers, so more can access flexible, diverse, multi-year grants to support girl and youth-led action.



Support girls to become political leaders:

invest in programmes and initiatives that empower girls and women to develop leadership skills and the capacity to meaningfully engage in political activism and civic life. This could include mentorship programmes, leadership training workshops, and opportunities for civic engagement and advocacy, at all levels from local to international.



Implement quotas and other forms of positive affirmative action: remove institutional barriers that prevent women from attaining and staying in political and public leadership positions. Where representation is lacking, introduce quotas or other enabling policies, including around childcare, to increase the representation of girls and women in all decision-making bodies and political institutions such as legislatures, parliaments, youth parliaments, and councils. Women's participation in peace negotiations must also be prioritised.



gender equality

support girls to become political leaders

positive affirmative action



mentorship programmes



regular and meaningful consultations

increase funding and support

By taking all these actions now, we can lay the foundation for a more equitable and prosperous future for all.

We want our voices to be heard, and we want to engage with you in building a gender equal future that fulfils girls' rights.

We refuse to settle for anything less than full equality and justice for girls everywhere.

Together, let us create a world where every girl can thrive, where their rights are upheld, and where their potential knows no bounds.

Let every word of the Pact for the Future, Declaration on Future Generations and Global Digital Compact be a firm commitment to the future laid out here.



**Your job is to listen to your people.
We are your people, we are your future.
Will you listen to us?
This is our voice for our tomorrow.**

You can download the research report here:

plan-international.org/publications/our-voices-for-our-tomorrow