



Until we are all equal

# Gender Equality & Inclusion

**Compendium of Best Practices 2024 –  
Summary Version**

December 2024



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## Introduction

Welcome to the **2024 Gender Equality & Inclusion (GE&I) Compendium of Best Practices**, a journey through the stories, challenges, and successes that light the way toward a more gender transformative and inclusive approach.

This Compendium is not just a document; it is a tapestry woven from the diverse experiences of our colleagues and partners around the world, each contributing a unique thread of knowledge and inspiration. From bustling urban centers to remote rural villages, the projects captured here reflect a shared vision: to challenge barriers, raise voices, and ensure that every individual, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to thrive.

This first edition of our Compendium brings together inspiring case studies and practical insights, developed by a dedicated team who believes in the transformative power of equality and inclusion. **A Special thanks** goes to Tinotenda Hondo, Aroub Almasri, Geeta Devi Pradhan, and Ramil Andag, whose passion and hard work have brought this resource to life.

**Additional thanks** to our regional advisors Daniel Molina, Fiona Kaikai, Kusalini Wongnamkob, and Madalitso Chimwenje, and all the people across Plan International's offices who contributed and participated to this compendium. This would not have been possible without their stories echoing through each page, reminding us of the powerful impact we can achieve when we work together.

We hope this Compendium will serve as more than just a reference. May it spark new ideas, inspire bold action, and deepen the connections within our network. Let these stories be a testament to the resilience and innovation that drive the GE&I work forward.

With gratitude and love,

**The GE&I Hub Team**





# CHAPTER 1

## GENDER, AGE, INCLUSION ANALYSIS



# Case Study 1 – APAC

## Anakhot Khong Khoi II–My Future Phase II

*Plan International Laos | Development | LAO100109 | Lead, SOYEE, SRHR | Jan 2022 – Dec 2025*

### **Project Summary:**

Plan Finland is implementing the second phase of the My Body My Future (MBMF2) program, funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Known as Anakhot Khong Koi in Laos, it runs from January 2022 to December 2025 in Pakhta, Bokeo, and Oudomxay districts. The project provides Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) to secondary school students and out-of-school girls, including those with disabilities. It also aims to strengthen adolescent-friendly health services, increase access to contraception, and engage parents and village leaders in creating a supportive environment.

### **Background:**

Laos faces high rates of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage due to limited reproductive health services, social norms, and gender inequality. LGBTIQ+ youth and adolescents with disabilities experience discrimination and exclusion from healthcare and education. Gender norms restrict girls' autonomy in sexual health decision-making, and community engagement is needed to transform these norms. Despite a permissive legal framework, contraceptive access for unmarried adolescents remains limited due to service norms.

### **Project Objective:**

Ensure that children, adolescents, and youth in all their diversity have control over their bodies and futures in a healthy, safe, and supportive environment.

### **Target Groups & Stakeholders**

Children, adolescents, and young people, Adults, including parents and community members, and Girls with disabilities.

### **Gender transformative strategies for Situation Analysis:**

The project conducted a comprehensive norms diagnosis to identify and address gender norms influencing SRHR outcomes. It engaged communities, analyzed social dynamics, and applied findings to develop norm change strategies. Plan Finland provided technical support, tools, and training to project staff and partners. The project involved community consultations and capacity-building for health workers, educators, and CSOs.

### **Achievements:**

- Applied Plan's Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) tool in March 2023, showing high potential for gender transformation.
- Integrated findings from gender norms analysis into CSE programs.
- Strengthened adolescent-friendly health services and addressed misconceptions about contraception.
- Embedded sessions on child marriage and contraception in parenting manuals.
- Conducted capacity-building for CSOs and Plan staff on gender and social norms.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Teachers need additional support in sexual education.
- Video materials and student clubs enhance adolescent engagement.
- Peer-to-peer approaches require trained facilitators for complex learning materials.

### **Challenges:**

- The project expanded to include boys and youth aged 10-24 to increase impact.
- Male engagement strategies focus on partners of married girls and promoting positive masculinities.
- Youth club participation remains low, particularly among boys.
- Gender norms related to SRHR are difficult to translate into Lao.
- Partnership with LGBTIQ+ organization "Proud to Be US" faced challenges due to financial constraints, affecting program integration.



# Case Study 2 – APAC

## Protection of girls and boys from cyber bullying and gender-based cyber violence

*Plan International Vietnam | Development | VNM100495 | PfV | Jul 2021 – Sep 2024*

### Project Summary:

Plan International Vietnam, in collaboration with Plan International Germany, is implementing the "Protection of Girls and Boys from Cyber Bullying and Gender-Based Cyber Violence" project (2021-2024). The project operates in Minh Hoa, Quang Ninh, Le Thuy (Quang Binh), Kon Plong, Kon Ray (Kon Tum), Hoang Su Phi, and Xin Man (Ha Giang). It aims to empower adolescents aged 10-18,

especially girls and vulnerable groups, to safely navigate the internet and social media, while ensuring protective mechanisms are in place at the family, school, and community levels. Government, media agencies, and IT service providers are engaged in preventive and responsive measures to enhance child safety online.



### Background:

With 70% of Vietnam's population accessing the internet, children and adolescents increasingly use online platforms, exposing them to cyber risks. COVID-19 further heightened internet use for learning and communication. Research shows that online learning has increased exposure to cyber violence. The project's baseline study assessed adolescents', parents', teachers', and local authorities' awareness of cyber risks and protection mechanisms.

### Overall Project Objective:

Empower adolescents (10-18 years), particularly girls and vulnerable groups, to safely use the internet and be protected from online abuse.

### Target Groups & Stakeholders:

Adolescents, parents, teachers, education authorities, Child Protection Committees (local representatives), Journalists, community members, and Ministries of Labor and Information, IT service providers.



### **Gender transformative strategies for Situation Analysis:**

- A pre-survey (2020) with 610 students assessed online safety awareness. Findings showed over 90% had internet access, but only 10% had knowledge of safe use.
- Research analyzed policy gaps, service availability, and gender-based online vulnerabilities.
- The study categorized online risks into active (perpetrator) and passive (victim) risks, evaluating responses at individual, family, and social levels.

### **Achievements/Impact**

- Strengthened adolescent agency, particularly for girls, to prevent cyberbullying and GBV.
- Schools and families established protective mechanisms against online sexual exploitation.
- Government authorities improved prevention and response measures.
- CSE manuals and training materials were developed for teachers and students.
- 936 Child Protection Committee members gained confidence in reporting violations.
- 94 journalists were trained to raise awareness of child online protection.

### **Lessons Learned**

- Quality support services are needed for safe and inclusive protection.
- Peer educators are more effective in school-wide CSE engagement than teacher-led methods.
- Parental guidance enhances children's online safety skills.
- Integrating Champions of Change clubs and seed grants into school/community programs improves sustainability.
- IT service providers play a key role in ensuring child online protection policies.

### **Challenges:**

- COVID-19 delayed project activities.
- Teachers' workload limited participation in project sessions.
- Remote locations and economic constraints restricted project engagement.
- Parental participation was low due to digital illiteracy.

# CHAPTER 2

## GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN'S AGENCY



# Case Study 3 – MEESA

## YouthCan

*Plan International Rwanda | Development | RWA100136 | Lead | July 2023 – June 2025*

### **Project Summary:**

The YouthCan project promotes girls' leadership and meaningful engagement in governance and civil society using Plan International's gender-transformative approach. It builds agency through leadership training, mentorship, public campaigning, and collective action. The project collaborates with duty bearers to advocate for gender-responsive policies and amplify youth and women-led organizations' work.

### **Background:**

Rwanda has achieved gender equality milestones but still faces barriers that hinder girls' participation in leadership. Persistent gender norms, gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, and lack of resources for youth-led initiatives limit their influence. Challenges intensify with intersectional issues such as disability, rural-urban disparities, and global crises like climate change and conflicts.

### **Overall Project Objective:**

- Prepare girls, boys, and youth as change drivers.
- Support collective actions for gender equality and human rights.
- Work with policymakers to enhance youth participation.
- Leverage media to amplify youth voices.

### **Target Groups & Stakeholders:**

- Girls and boys under 18, Children with disabilities, Children from low-income households, Teenage mothers, and Women, men, and duty bearers.

### **Gender transformative strategies for girls and young women's agency:**

- Leadership and advocacy training for girls and young women.
- Girls' Takeover initiative to enhance visibility and mentorship.
- Community-based movements for collective action and policy advocacy.
- Training on social issues, policy, and budgeting for informed decision-making.
- Digital literacy and social media advocacy for gender equality.

### **Achievements/Impact:**

- Youth advocates co-founded YVLEAD and YWEN networks.
- Established strong partnerships with government and media.
- Championed Girls Takeover and the Girls Get Equal campaign.
- Empowered young women with disabilities for inclusion.
- Representation in the Global Youth Innovation Group.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Dedicated teams passionate about feminist principles drive success.
- Youth-centered approaches need resources and commitment.
- Collaboration with youth-led organizations enhances innovation.
- Inclusion of children with disabilities strengthens systemic change.

### **Challenges:**

- Limited funding and shortage of gender technical staff.
- High demand for partnerships exceeds available resources.
- Global emergencies and shrinking civic space hinder progress.

# Case Study 4 – WACA

## Child, not bride

*Plan International Mali | Nexus | MLI100354 | PfV | Jan 2022 – Dec 2025*

### **Project Summary:**

The project combats child, early, and forced marriage in central Mali through comprehensive sex education, vocational training, and inclusive education. Implemented by Plan International and local NGOs ODI SAHEL and LA CITOYENNE, it has humanitarian and development components. It supports accelerated learning centers for out-of-school children and promotes women's empowerment through 50 Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs), enabling small businesses and self-sufficiency.

### **Background:**

Mali has a high prevalence of early marriage, with 59% of women aged 20-24 married before 18, contributing to low education levels and restricted autonomy. Rural areas have higher rates of child marriage than urban areas. Plan International launched a four-year project (2022-2025) to reduce child marriage, child pregnancy, and promote sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in the regions of Kayes and Sikasso, with national advocacy efforts.

### **Overall Project Objective:**

Reduce early marriages in the Segou and Mopti regions.

### **Target Group:**

Girls and boys (3-11 years), Teenagers (12-18 years), Young people (19-24 years), Adult women and men, Teachers, healthcare workers, and community leaders.

### **Gender transformative strategies for Girls and Young Women's Agency:**

- VSL approach to economic empowerment
- Vocational training for young women
- Market gardening for 25 girls
- Business development support in various trades (hairdressing, catering, sewing, etc.)

### **Achievements:**

- Women's empowerment through VSL groups changed community perceptions.
- Girls and women gained more influence in decision-making.

- Beneficiaries of the youth empowerment program became financially independent.
- Six cases of child marriage were prevented through local committees.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Partnering with local authorities enhances community engagement.
- Respecting girls' vocational choices leads to better outcomes.
- Establishing local follow-up committees improves project sustainability.

### **Challenges:**

- Cultural reluctance to discuss SRHR initially hindered progress.
- Some trained girls relocated, demanding their share of project benefits.
- Procurement delays affected the timely establishment of girls in their businesses.



# 3

CHAPTER

## GENDER NORMS



# Case Study 5 – ROA

## Strengthening Organization, Agency & Rights of Women ECD Workers (SOAR)

*Plan International Canada, Ecuador and Paraguay | Global Affairs Canada (GAC) | Development | PRY100231 | ECD,SOYEE,SRHR,PfV | Jan 2024 – Mar 2028*

### Project Summary:

The SOAR project strengthens economic, social, and cultural rights, focusing on labor rights for women in early childhood development (ECD) in Ecuador and Paraguay. Led by Plan International Canada and funded by Global Affairs Canada, it enhances women's agency through advocacy, capacity-building, and gender-responsive policies. The project engages women ECD workers, their families, community organizations, and government officials to promote equitable working conditions.



### Background:

Women globally dominate paid and unpaid care work, facing low wages and substandard conditions. Latin America, including Ecuador and Paraguay, experiences deep-rooted gender inequalities in the care sector. Despite legal frameworks supporting workers' rights, social norms limit women's opportunities. SOAR aligns with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and key international human rights instruments to address these issues.

### Overall Project Objective:

Increase the realization of social and labor rights for women in paid ECD work in Ecuador and Paraguay by enhancing their agency and promoting gender-responsive policies.

### Target Groups:

Women ECD workers (formal/informal), Community organizations and women's rights groups, Male family members and colleagues, Public servants and policymakers.

### **Gender transformative strategies for Gender Norms**

- Recognition, reduction, and redistribution of unpaid care work
- Representation of ECD workers in decision-making
- Gender-sensitive policy advocacy
- Promotion of transformative masculinities and self-reflection on social norms
- Strengthening local women's rights organizations

### **Achievements:**

- Strengthened women's agency and advocacy skills
- Enhanced coordination among organizations for collective action
- Developed a gender-transformative glossary and monitoring indicators
- Established dialogues with policymakers to integrate gender equity in ECD labor rights

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Collaboration with feminist and grassroots organizations improves project impact
- Technical expertise in gender-transformative programming is essential
- Shared decision-making strengthens partnerships but requires time and effort

### **Challenges:**

- Resistance from conservative movements against gender equality
- Economic hardships and precarious working conditions for women carers
- Limited formal organization among childcare workers
- Security concerns and migration issues affecting project implementation

# Case Study 6 – APAC

## MS-Balika Shivar: Accelerated learning centres for Girls

*Plan International India | Development | IND105224 | IQE | Jan 2022 – Jun 2025*

### Project Summary:

Balika Shivar supports adolescent girls (13-18) who dropped out of school and young women (19-24) who are not in education, employment, or training. The project provides second-chance education through Open Schooling, vocational training, and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to enhance retention and enrollment. Alumni groups, Sakhi Sangams, act as community change agents advocating for girls' education and empowerment.



### Background:

Targeting girls and young women facing gender-based barriers, Balika Shivar establishes Accelerated Learning Centers with trained educators and tailored curricula to bridge educational gaps. Vocational training is provided in high-demand fields, enabling financial independence. Over 3600 women have received training, with many starting businesses. Community engagement through Sakhi Sangams has prevented child marriages and increased awareness of girls' rights.

### Project Objectives:

- Establish 20 Balika Shivar centers in Rajasthan and Jharkhand.
- Enable 3600 dropout girls to reach secondary and senior secondary levels.
- Provide vocational training to 3600 young women for livelihood support.
- Increase school enrollment and retention of 21,600 girls through Sakhi Sangams.

### Target Groups:

3600 adolescent dropout girls (13-18), 3600 NEET young women (19-24), 21,600 girls engaged through Sakhi Sangams.

### Gender transformative strategies for Gender Norms:

- Re-enrollment of girls in formal education.

- Challenging gender norms through awareness campaigns.
- Strengthening leadership skills among girls.
- Building partnerships with government and civil society organizations.

### **Achievements/Impact:**

- 3600 girls re-entered education, preventing 32 child marriages.
- 3600 young women gained vocational training and entrepreneurship skills.
- Community-based change agents raised awareness through Sakhi Sangams.
- Innovative education models improved learning outcomes.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Parental involvement enhances project ownership and success.
- SEL training improved focus and emotional resilience among girls.
- Traditional skills development boosts income generation.

### **Challenges:**

- Gender norms limit girls' autonomy and mobility.
- Child marriage traditions hinder education efforts.
- Safety concerns and distance from schools prevent attendance.
- Restrictive family attitudes limit career choices for women.



# CHAPTER 4

## TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES





# Case Study 7 – WACA

## Educating vulnerable and hard-to-reach girls and adolescent girls

*Plan International Nigeria | Nexus | NGA1000085 | IQE | Dec 2019 – Dec 2023*

### Project Summary:

The Education in Crisis (EiC) project addresses gender inequalities preventing girls from accessing education in conflict-affected Borno and Yobe states, northeastern Nigeria. Aligned with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, the project removes demand and supply-side barriers to education for vulnerable girls, including pregnant girls, young mothers, and survivors of conflict-related violence.

### Background:

Northeastern Nigeria faces a humanitarian crisis with poverty, insecurity, and gender-based violence disproportionately affecting women and girls. Education is severely disrupted, and harmful gender norms further restrict girls' school attendance. Addressing these challenges requires prioritizing gender equality, empowering girls, and promoting inclusive education and economic opportunities.

### Project Objectives:

Improve realization of girls' rights to inclusive, protective, and gender-responsive education in conflict-affected areas.

### Target Groups:

Adolescent girls and boys in formal and non-formal schools, Girls with disabilities, Parents and caregivers, and Community mobilizers (60% women, 40% men)

### Gender transformative strategies for Transforming Masculinities

- Engaging men and boys in gender awareness activities
- Life skills training for adolescents on gender roles and reproductive health
- Mentorship for marginalized girls, including survivors of gender-based violence
- Community advocacy involving religious and male leaders
- Training teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy
- Economic empowerment initiatives for adolescent girls

### Achievements/Impact:

- Increased confidence among girls to assert their right to education
- Greater family support for girls' education
- Positive shift in attitudes towards girls' education and protection

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Gender-transformative curricula tailored to target groups enhance learning
- Capacity-building for community mobilizers strengthens program impact
- Parental involvement reinforces education initiatives
- Safe spaces for girls foster participation and agency
- Establishing feedback channels promotes inclusivity

### **Challenges:**

- Complex project design requiring better integration
- Cultural resistance to gender equality
- Limited female representation in governance hinders advocacy
- Child marriage remains a challenge due to cultural norms
- Disability inclusion requires greater investment and planning
- Strengthening partnerships with local organizations improves effectiveness

# Case Study 8 – ROA

## Connections for Success Phase II

*Plan International Guatemala | Development | GTM100264 | SOYEE | Sept 2023 – Aug 2026*

### Project Summary:

The Conexiones para el Exito Fase II project empowers rural youth in Jalapa, Quiché, and Alta Verapaz by addressing gender norms and expanding economic opportunities. It seeks to equip young people with skills through entrepreneurship, employability training, and business acceleration while fostering sustainable job opportunities and gender inclusion. By challenging traditional norms and strengthening local value chains, the project aims to reduce unemployment and improve socio-economic prospects.

### Background:

Targeting youth aged 16 to 29, the project focuses on economic empowerment, particularly for women and individuals with disabilities. By challenging gender stereotypes, 70% of beneficiaries are women, 30% men, and 5% individuals with disabilities. The project facilitates training, mentorship, and strategic partnerships between youth networks, public institutions, and private sector actors to enhance economic opportunities and social inclusion.

### Project Objectives:

To economically empower marginalized youth, especially girls and young women, through entrepreneurship, employability, and business acceleration.

### Target Group:

Young people, Women, Men, and Gender-diverse individuals.

### Gender transformative strategies for Transforming Masculinities

- Workshops challenging traditional masculinity and promoting empathy and respect.
- Fatherhood programs fostering positive relationships.
- Bystander intervention training to combat gender-based violence.
- Activities promoting emotional literacy through storytelling and art.
- Collaboration with women's organizations for advocacy.

### Achievements/Impact:

- Inclusive workshops encouraging discussions on gender roles and power dynamics.

- Training in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and job readiness.
- Mentorship relationships fostering healthier attitudes toward gender equality.
- Strong partnerships with local organizations to promote youth engagement.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Youth, particularly women, are becoming active agents of economic empowerment.
- Supporting job creation fosters business growth and poverty reduction.
- Expanding formal sector job opportunities enhances employability and education prospects.

### **Challenges:**

- High dropout rates due to migration.
- Disengaged youth lacking entrepreneurial motivation.
- Need for safe spaces to build confidence and self-expression.

# CHAPTER 5

## CONDITION AND POSITION



# Case Study 9 – APAC

## Girls Lead Project

*Plan International Cambodia | Development | KHM100257 | LEAD | Sept 2017 – Feb 2023*

### Project Summary:

Plan International Cambodia is implementing the five-year "Girls Lead Project" to empower youth aged 12-24 in Siem Reap, Stung Treng, and Ratanak Kiri. Funded by Plan Germany, the project fosters gender equality through leadership training, advocacy, and small grants. By equipping girls and boys with knowledge and leadership skills, it promotes social development with the support of families, communities, and government officials.

### Background:

With Cambodia's youth comprising a significant portion of the population, gender inequalities persist, particularly in rural areas. Barriers such as early marriage, economic challenges, and restrictive social norms limit girls' access to education and leadership. Despite policy improvements, gender disparities remain in decision-making, economic empowerment, and personal safety. The project leverages youth engagement, social media, and advocacy to drive systemic change.

### Project Objectives:

Empower adolescents and youth, particularly girls and young women, to contribute to gender equality and public decision-making.

### Target Groups:

Girls and boys aged 10-18, Parents and caregivers, Local government and community leaders, Youth networks and advocacy groups

### Gender transformative strategies for Condition and Position

- Providing leadership training through the Champions for Cambodia curriculum
- Advocacy and role modeling to challenge gender norms
- Community initiatives and campaigns to raise awareness
- Mentorship programs to connect experienced and younger leaders

### Achievements/Impact:

- Decreased tolerance of violence against women and girls
- Increased participation of girls in community problem-solving
- Greater self-confidence among girls in decision-making



- Strengthened youth participation in governance and advocacy
- Recognition of girls' rights to education and leadership

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Youth-led initiatives drive gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors
- Online engagement and virtual activities can maintain impact despite disruptions
- Community structures play a crucial role in youth participation
- Engaging boys as allies is essential to achieving gender equality

### **Challenges:**

- COVID-19 disruptions delayed activities and engagement
- High attrition rates among youth due to migration and education changes
- Limited parental and community support for youth-led initiatives
- Uneven participation in youth clubs impacting long-term sustainability

# Case Study 10 – MEESA

## Protection for empowerment/Stronger together

*Plan International Jordan | Nexus | JOR100067 | PfV, SOYEE | Aug 2021 – Jan 2024*

### Project Summary:

Plan International implemented a multi-faceted approach in Azraq Camp to mitigate protection concerns for children, parents, and the community. The project provided psychosocial support, self-protection education, and quality protection services. It emphasized empowering individuals to safeguard against violence, exploitation, and abuse while training community volunteers on child protection and gender-based violence.

### Background:

Protection concerns in Villages 2 and 5 were exacerbated by COVID-19, increasing anxiety among adolescents. School closures led to learning disruptions, forcing children into the workforce and isolating children with disabilities. Parents faced additional stress due to online learning responsibilities and economic hardship, leading to increased mental health issues. The pandemic heightened gender-based violence and reduced livelihood opportunities, worsening the protective environment for vulnerable children and youth.

### Project Objectives:

Enhance the protective environment for at-risk boys and girls in Village 2 and 5 in Azraq Camp.

### Target Group:

Children (0-17 years), Young people (18-49 years), and Older persons (50+ years).

### Gender transformative strategies for Condition and Position

- Promoting quality education for girls, including STEM and leadership skills
- Establishing craft clubs for skills development and safe socialization
- Engaging communities to challenge harmful gender norms
- Encouraging male allies to advocate against gender-based violence
- Supporting girls' leadership initiatives and decision-making participation

### Achievements/Impact:

- Increased awareness through the ECHO Walk to School campaign and GBV sessions
- Higher participation of girls in education and community projects

- Strengthened agency for girls through knowledge-building and skill development
- Breaking gender stereotypes by hiring women in non-traditional roles
- Improved community awareness and response to gender-based violence

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Online programs are effective but require device accessibility
- Digital literacy support is necessary for parents assisting children
- Community engagement ensures culturally relevant programming

### **Challenges:**

- Economic instability increasing child labor and early marriage risks
- Gender norms limiting protection measures' effectiveness
- High risk of gender-based violence for girls at home
- Additional barriers for children with disabilities in education and employment
- Disruptions in education worsening gender disparities

# CHAPTER 6

## ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



# Case Study 11 – MEESA

## Promoting Access to Inclusive SRHR and SGBV services and Information in Mzimba District – YFHS II

*Plan International Malawi | Development | MW0101286 | SRHR | Jul 2022 – Jun 2025*

### Project Summary:

Plan International Malawi (PIM) is implementing a three-year Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHRs)/Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) project (2022-2025) with funding from Plan Germany National Office. The project provides SRHR information and services to improve the well-being of adolescents and youth (10-24), particularly girls and young women. Interventions focus on addressing negative social norms, enhancing access to SRHR services, and equipping communities with advocacy skills.



### Background:

Despite Malawi's legislative strides in gender equality, challenges persist, including high child marriage rates, sexual violence, and limited SRHR access. Many young people lack comprehensive SRHR services, with stigma and misinformation further limiting access. Gender norms and patriarchal structures continue to restrict women's rights, making targeted interventions essential.

### Project Objectives:

Enhance SRH and well-being for adolescents and youth, especially girls and young women, including those with disabilities and at risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), in Mzimba District.

### Target Groups:

Adolescents (girls and boys) aged 10-24, Young men and women aged 19-24, and Community leaders, religious leaders, and parents.

### Gender transformative strategies for Enabling Environment

- Translating key policies into local languages for wider dissemination
- Training health workers in disability inclusion and sign language
- Equipping youth with leadership and advocacy skills

- Promoting accountability using community scorecards
- Advocating for policies supporting gender equality and youth empowerment

### **Achievements/Impact:**

- Increase in youth discussing SRHR with families (32% to 98%)
- Greater informed decision-making on SRHR
- Enhanced community participation in holding duty bearers accountable
- Improved confidence, leadership, and decision-making skills among girls
- Challenging gender norms and fostering open SRHR conversations

### **Lessons Learned:**

- More investment in training health workers for youth-friendly services
- Mentorship and peer support networks boost confidence among young women
- Research needed to address gender gaps in confidence levels
- Comprehensive, culturally sensitive sexuality education is vital
- Community dialogues help challenge harmful cultural norms

### **Challenges:**

- Lack of disability-friendly infrastructure and data tracking systems
- Underutilization of community support structures due to stigma
- Persistent gender disparities in SRHR access
- Declining confidence among youth in challenging societal attitudes



# Case Study 12 – WACA

## Strengthening civil society to combat gender-based violence

Plan International Togo | Development | TGO100259 | LEAD, SRHR, PfV | Jan 2019 – Dec 2024

### Project Summary:

Plan International Togo is implementing the "Strengthening Civil Society to Combat Gender-Based Violence" project (2019-2024) with funding from Plan Sweden. The project aims to eradicate violence against children and young people, particularly girls, in the Central and Plateau regions. It collaborates with communities, NGOs, and state actors to create an enabling environment to end gender-based violence.

### Background:

Despite international agreements and national reforms, children, especially girls in rural Togo, face challenges related to violence, early marriage, and lack of education. While legal frameworks exist, enforcement remains weak. This project works closely with state actors to implement laws protecting children from gender-based violence and harmful practices.

### Project Objectives:

Create a community and institutional environment free of harmful beliefs and norms, improving quality education and protection for all children.

### Target Groups:

Adolescents and young people, Community members, Teachers and religious leaders, Educational inspectors and advisors, Civil Society Organizations, and Directors of decentralized state services.

### Gender transformative strategies for Enabling Environment

- Training educators on Positive Discipline and protection measures
- Strengthening monitoring systems in schools and training centers
- Advocating for child- and gender-responsive budgeting
- Public campaigning to end child marriage and promote non-violent education
- Capacity building for CSOs on gender and child protection

### Achievements/Impact:

- Increased youth awareness of their rights, improving healthcare access
- Community engagement in accountability using the Young Citizen Score Card
- Positive Discipline Codes reduced violence in schools

- Strengthened government collaboration on child protection policies
- Improved capacity of teachers and community leaders in addressing GBV

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Village chiefs play a crucial role in deconstructing harmful norms
- Youth participation through Champions of Change strengthens ownership
- A multisectoral approach enhances stakeholder engagement and sustainability
- Partnering with government agencies increases credibility and effectiveness
- Capacity building for all actors ensures the sustainability of violence-free education

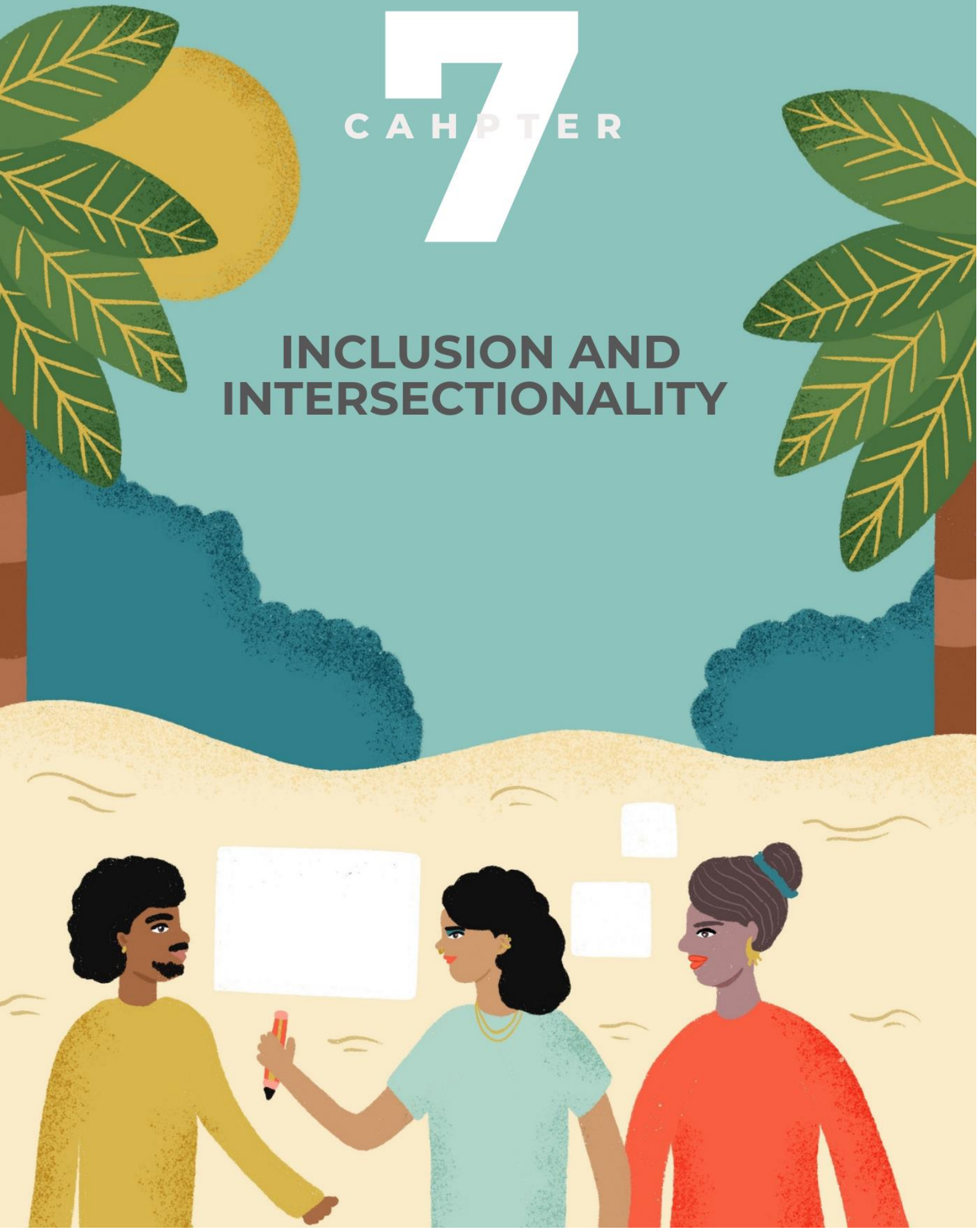
### **Challenges:**

- Limited access to services and opportunities for girls and women
- Persistence of harmful traditional practices
- Weak enforcement of gender-sensitive policies
- Lack of psychologists to support abuse victims
- Budget constraints limiting capacity-building efforts

# 7

CHAPTER

## INCLUSION AND INTERSECTIONALITY



# Case Study 13 – APAC

## Urban Nexus Phase 2

*Plan International Indonesia | Nexus | YPI100077 | LEAD | Jul 2023 – Jun 2025*

### **Project Summary:**

Plan Indonesia's Urban Nexus Phase 2 empowers 7,000 young people annually in Depok by promoting leadership and environmental sustainability. The project, in partnership with MDMC, TGGI, Plan International Australia, and DFAT ANCP, ensures youth participation in shaping a resilient urban future.

### **Background:**

Depok faces urban challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change hazards, including flooding, heat waves, and pollution. These issues disproportionately affect young people, especially those with disabilities, limiting education and employment opportunities. The project enhances climate resilience, education, and youth leadership while addressing socio-economic and environmental barriers.

### **Project Objectives:**

Create a healthy, safe, and resilient environment by empowering young people in Depok City.

### **Target Groups:**

Adolescents (girls and boys), Young and adult women and men, People with disabilities, and Gender-diverse individuals.

### **Gender transformative strategies for Inclusion**

- Empowering young women with disabilities as climate leaders
- Inclusive educational platforms with sign language and visual aids
- Collaboration with special schools and disability organizations
- Green Influencer Festival promoting paper recycling
- Affordable, inclusive flood warning device development
- Engaging marginalized youth in climate action projects

### **Achievements/Impact:**

- Increased participation of young women and girls in climate and disaster risk education

- Improved inclusivity in program design and implementation
- Development of GenTa, an online learning platform for climate resilience
- Strengthened collaboration between youth, government, and NGOs

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Gender and inclusion should be integrated into disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation
- Prioritizing meaningful youth participation challenges gender norms
- Inclusive facilities and tailored assistance ensure equitable engagement
- Engaging men and boys fosters gender equality
- Leveraging technology enhances youth involvement
- Collaboration with stakeholders maximizes impact

### **Challenges:**

- Limited awareness of the link between gender-based violence and disasters
- Social and cultural biases affecting youth confidence and participation
- Stigma against individuals with disabilities limiting leadership roles
- Expectation of material incentives for participation
- Climate unpredictability and external commitments disrupting engagement

# Case Study 14 – WACA

## Safer Schools for Girls

*Plan International Sierra Leone | Development | 4593382 | LEAD | May 2020 – Feb 2024*

### Project Summary:

The Safer Schools for Girls project aimed to empower girls by increasing their knowledge and agency, creating a safe and gender-responsive learning environment. Using Plan International's "Champions of Change" model, secondary school students mentored younger girls on gender equality, GBV, child marriage, and SRHR. School clubs, safe spaces, and reporting mechanisms were established, while teachers were trained in gender-responsive pedagogy. Community engagement and advocacy targeted harmful norms, strengthening child protection and law enforcement responses.

### Background:

In Sierra Leone, high dropout rates, early marriage, and SRGBV hinder girls' education. In Koinadugu, 42% of girls marry before 18, and 38% experience teenage pregnancy. Entrenched gender norms, lack of safeguarding protocols, and economic barriers worsen their vulnerability. The project engaged girls, boys, teachers, and community leaders to promote gender equality and prevent GBV, improving access to education.

### Project Objectives:

Create a safe, inclusive, and gender-responsive learning environment where girls can complete their education free from violence and discrimination.

### Target Groups:

Girls and boys (under 18) and Women and men (18 and over).

### Gender transformative strategies for Inclusion:

- Targeted outreach to marginalized communities
- Accessible infrastructure for students with disabilities
- Culturally sensitive awareness campaigns
- Collaboration with CSOs and local leaders
- Teacher training on gender-responsive pedagogy

### Achievements/Impact:

- Increased awareness of gender equality and GBV prevention
- Empowered girls with knowledge, leadership, and advocacy skills

- Engaged boys and men in promoting gender equality
- Improved safeguarding practices and reporting mechanisms
- Strengthened school and community support networks

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Community involvement is key to changing gender norms
- Empowering girls boosts confidence and self-advocacy
- Inclusive policies enhance school safety and accountability
- Engaging boys and men fosters a culture of equality
- Support networks provide essential psychosocial resources

### **Challenges:**

- Delays in implementation due to partner transition
- Cultural barriers and gender norms limiting girls' participation
- Lack of female mentors and role models
- Resistance to change in patriarchal communities



## ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY & INCLUSION HUB AT PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Gender Equality and Inclusion is a cross cutting theme in our global programs and influencing and is part of the work of the Gender Equality and Inclusion is anchored on Plan International's:

- **Goal** where we strive for just world that advances children's rights and equality for girls in all their diversity
- **Organizational values** of being rights based and gender transformative
- And **purpose** where we engage 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.'
- **Gender Transformative Approach** where we addressing the root causes of inequality and exclusion which are rooted in sexism, ageism, racism, ableism and heteronormativity, and all other forms of discrimination.

## Soaring to New Heights: Feminist Dreams and Perspectives

### CONNECT WITH US



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**Until we are all equal**

## **ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL**

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organization that advances children's rights and equality for girls. We believe in the power and potential of every child but know this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion, and discrimination. And it is girls who are most affected. Working together with children, young people, supporters, and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges girls and vulnerable children face. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and we 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 85 years, we have rallied other determined optimists to transform the lives of all children in more than 80 countries.

**We won't stop until  
we are all equal.**

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