

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT

April 2021

This report outlines Plan International's activities across all offices engaging with the United Nations Global Compact between the periods of October 2018 and April 2021.

PART 1: Statement of Support by Chief Executive Officer, Plan International, Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen

Dear Ms Kingo,

I would like to take this opportunity to renew Plan International's commitment to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-Corruption. It is my pleasure to submit our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact for the time period of October 2018 to April 2021. We appreciate any feedback.

This Communication on Engagement is a joint submission outlining all actions that different offices of our organisation have taken to support the Global Compact and its Principles. We will be sharing this information with all our stakeholders.

Plan International's global strategy calls on partnerships to support in delivering our purpose to advance children's rights and equality for girls. We work with partners across sectors and recognise the importance the private sector plays to revitalise the global partnership for the Sustainable Development Goals. Our collaboration with the Global Compact has supported both those missions, and we are dedicated to expanding on the work that is currently being done.

Warm Regards,



Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen

CEO, Plan International

PART 2: Description of Actions

Engagement in local Global Compact networks, workstreams, and events

All Plan International offices are encouraged to become active members of their local Global Compact Networks, and currently offices in Ecuador, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, The Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom are engaging locally with the Global Compact. Plan International Honduras joined the UN Global Compact in 2019 and Plan International Brazil joined in 2020 and thus will not be able to report on activities yet, however, this shows that the Global Compact continues to be an area of interest and opportunity for Plan International that is continuously explored and broadened. All offices listed have collaborated with the Global Compact in different activities and capacities as is outlined below.

Ecuador

In 2020, Plan International Ecuador received two major social awards in appreciation of its work for girl's equality and social impact, the Award for Business Excellence, in the category "Social Projects Performance", awarded by the SEK International University; and, the recognition by the Ecuador Global Compact as a "recognized practice" of Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 on Gender Equality.

Since March 2020, Plan International Ecuador focused all its efforts to help mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country coupled with working in favor of children's rights and equality for girls. A Response Plan was implemented and executed successfully, its objective was to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 crisis through prevention and humanitarian assistance in the most vulnerable communities including migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people.

The main activities of this plan prioritize women and girls and aimed to provide access to:

- Financial assistance, food, education, information, hygiene supplies, and contraceptive methods.
- Prevention and response to violence, mainly: Gender, sexual and online violence.
- Development of entrepreneurship with the leadership of women, for the economic and social recovery of families.

Germany

In Germany, Plan International has actively promoted the UN Global Compact's Principles with its corporate partners, and furthermore suggested the Global Compact to new and existing corporate partners. Plan International Germany continues to deliver education and information on topics related to the Global Compact and its Principles.

Guatemala

The work in Plan International Guatemala is aligned with the 10 principles of the Global Compact and based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular 'gender equality'. Plan International Guatemala recognises the importance of being a part of the Global Compact initiative, which is communicated widely to new and current corporate partners that they work closely with.

Working together with adherents such as TIGO in October 2020, Plan International Guatemala were able to achieve a national reach with the Global #FreedomOnline

Campaign. The goal of this was to increase awareness about the limited access that girls and young women have to the internet, as well as the online violence that they face when they have internet access.

Japan

Plan International Japan joined the UN Global Compact in April 2019. Since then the office has been:

- Connecting with and building productive private sector partnerships to pursue the Global Compact Principles
- Contributing to the achievement of the SDGs
- Promoting the SDGs among their partners

Plan International Japan also submitted a separate Communication on Engagement in April 2021.

The Netherlands

At Plan International Netherlands there are a variety of projects and work that are contributing to the principles of the UN Global Compact. These are:

- [Girls Advocacy Alliance](#) Programme – this works for the protection of girls and young women against violence and for their economic empowerment. The GAA is an initiative by Plan International Netherlands, Terre des Hommes Netherlands and Defence for Children – ECPAT Netherlands, in cooperation with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme ran from 2016 – 2020 in the following countries: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda.
- Wired 4 Work Project – this started in January 2018 and is an innovative Youth Economic Empowerment (YEE) programme that leverages scalable digital solutions to increase the capacity of YEE practitioners in reaching youth in high quality employment. W4W is focused on vulnerable youth (16-29 years old), particularly women, in Indonesia and the Philippines, who acquire vocational, soft and work readiness skills to successfully enter the labour market. By the end of 2021, 14,000 disadvantaged youth will be trained and/or obtained work experience and 4,200 will have access to decent employment.
- General Lobby & Advocacy Work – Plan International Netherlands has worked to influence political parties and their election manifestos to include due diligence legislation based on the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights. In addition to this they have advocated for the freedom of civil society actors.
- General Youth Economic Empowerment – Plan International Netherlands in 2019 and 2020 worked with corporates and educational institutions around the world to support over 21,000 young people to obtain better employment.
- Partnership with Accenture and Plan International – Plan International and Accenture have been working in partnership since 2010. To help close the digital gender gap, the two organisations collaborate to mark Girls in ICT Day (the aim of which is to unlock the digital power of girls). In 2019 Plan International Netherlands organized Girls in ICT Day events in 4 locations across the country, as well as events in Colombia and Norway. In 2020 the office was ready to scale up these events, but they had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Together Plan International and Accenture conducted research on green jobs in March 2020 to identify best

practices and opportunities of youth employment in the green sectors, consolidate experience to promote youth employment with a positive contribution for climate change and the environment and identify prospective collaboration partners.

Spain

Plan International Spain has promoted the UN Global Compact principles in multiple companies and through participation in global events, such as COP25. Also Plan International Spain collaborates with different companies through social mentoring to ensure the elimination of discrimination in the workplace.

United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, Plan International UK actively promotes the Global Compact principles, as well as sharing news, events and consultations on which the UNGC UK Network are leading.

Denmark

PlanBørnefonden (Plan International Denmark) has actively promoted the UN Global Compact's Principles with its corporate partners, and furthermore suggested the Global Compact to new and existing corporate partners. PlanBørnefonden continues to deliver education and information on topics related to the Global Compact and its Principles.

PART 3: Measurement of Outcomes

Human Rights, Principles 1-2

At Plan International, all partnerships must abide by our strict child protection policies. We undergo a formal and thorough due diligence process that ensure that we do not engage with businesses and organisations who are complicit with human rights abuses. In 2021 we have updated our global due diligence template to reflect the ongoing anti-racism work happening within the organisation, to ensure that the partners that we are working with are not perpetuating racist discrimination.

Plan International's Girls' Advocacy Alliance has led to the development of a gender responsive human rights due diligence tool for companies. The alliance also advocates for the inclusion of gender equality in the Dutch responsible business conduct covenants and the corresponding action plans of companies (signatories of covenants in the metallurgic, food and garment/textile sector).

Plan International Netherlands Lobby & Advocacy Work has worked to influence political parties and their election manifestos to include due diligence legislation based on the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. In addition to this they have advocated for the freedom of civil society actors, most notably Women's Rights Organizations, their freedom of expression and association; countering shrinking civic space, advocating in collaboration with the Dutch interagency organization for development cooperation for policy coherence (sustainable growth, tax justice, sustainable and fair trade).

Labour, Principles 3-6

Plan International engages in different partnerships that strive to advance labour rights, and secure and strengthen employment opportunities especially within the area of youth employment.

Plan International continues to implement the outcomes from the project and research into **eliminating modern slavery** in our own supply chains which was launched in 2018, and the following outcomes have been achieved and are being continuously utilised:

- 1) A review of relevant policies to assess whether there is a gap in coverage as regards to protecting against the risk of modern slavery. This led to the following:
 - a) Creation of a Plan International Non-Staff Code of Conduct, which is aimed at suppliers and explicitly refers to unfair labour practices.
 - b) Update of the Plan International Code of Conduct with the aim of further preventing sexual exploitation.
 - c) Creation of a new Global Policy on Whistleblowing, Values and Behaviour – this is broad brush but does address risks related to modern slavery re lack of transparency in supply chains.
 - d) Update of Plan International Whistleblowing Policy in line with international best practice.
- 2) Plan International has put in place enhanced due diligence procedures within our procurement processes. For example, we've updated our standard supplier questionnaire with specific questions regarding supply chain transparency, and we're doing additional due diligence on high-risk tenders (which are identified based on location, source, nature of contract etc).
- 3) Our Logistics and Procurement Team undertake training on risks posed by modern slavery and the need to ensure transparency in supply chains.

In respect of child labour, Plan International's Global Safeguarding Code of Conduct states that all Plan staff will:

- Comply with all relevant international standards and legislation in relation to child labour, and refrain from using children and young people below 18 years for domestic or other labour, if such work is inappropriate, exploitative or harmful given their age or development capacity, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury, exploitation or violence.

Plan International Germany and Schwarzkopf/Henkel Partnership aimed to strengthen the confidence of girls and women in China and offer them new perspectives around female empowerment through the Schwarzkopf Million Chances Initiative.

The Youth Employment Solutions for Youth Project in Shaanxi was launched in August 2018 by Plan International Germany in participation with Shaanxi Women's Federation with funding of €355,500. This project was implemented in multiple municipalities and provinces across China and aimed to assist 600 marginalised young people aged 16-30 (80% of whom were girls and women) to realise their social and economic potential by providing them with technical skills, life skills and job preparation training. This project gave the participants the tools to navigate the challenges of living in cities and securing a job.

Plan International Spain's collaborative work with companies through social mentoring is working to promote principle 6 to uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Girls Advocacy Alliance contributed to Principle 6 of the UN Global Compact through advocacy towards stakeholders within the garment sector in Bangladesh and the T&H sector in Nepal regarding the economic and social benefits of equal inclusion of young women in employment and entrepreneurship. The project is also supporting and training Dutch textile brands on how to integrate women's economic empowerment into their supply chain management and awareness raising about the importance of investing in gender equality in Ready Made Garment supply chains. In addition to this, the project also advocates about the business case for women economic empowerment and the elimination of gender-based violence in the transport sector (Uganda), the hotel sector (Kenya and Ethiopia) and the agricultural sector (Liberia, Sierra Leone). The full impact of these activities is still currently being evaluated.

Wired4Work! led to the development of the e-learning digital platform [Yes!Academy](#) to provide disadvantaged youth in particular young women, free access to courses for skills development and facilitate their transition to job opportunities and/or businesses. This project also created an e-platform called [Yes!Hub](#) to build capacity on designing, implementing and sustaining gender transformative Youth employment and entrepreneurship and to host communities to promote gender equality and youth employment. In November 2020 the platform hosted the Asia Pacific Youth Symposium organized by the Asian Development Bank, Plan Int and other partners with the participation of more than 300 young people. Through this project partnerships with the private sector were established with more than 60 companies in the Philippines and Indonesia to promote the inclusion of gender equality in the workplace and to align the quality of soft and vocational skills curricula with the needs of the labour market. In particular strategic alliances with the Indonesia Association of Employers and entrepreneurs APINDO and the Philippines and Cebu Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines were established.

The COVID-19 Response in Ecuador was implemented in coordination with humanitarian actors as well as with public and private sectors. More than 23 private companies came together to support its mission during 2020 to protect the most vulnerable communities through funds and in-kind donations. On the International Day of the Girl, seven organizations donated: 3,000 USD, 74 technological devices (tablets, mobile phones, computers, printers, and scanners), Internet service for 13 communities in southern Ecuador, scholarships, space for advertisement, and placing for fundraising. Since May 2020, for the first time, individual donations have been managed exclusively through telemarketing and social media due to COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, Plan International Ecuador has collected more than 5,580 USD through 211 one-time donors and 253 recurrent donors.

Plan International Guatemala's Response Plan for COVID-19 was aligned and coordinated with the National Government and United Nations agencies and clusters. In this context, their work has been reorganized to support the most vulnerable communities that have been affected by COVID-19. As of July 2020, they had received an investment amount of €978,200, benefiting the population of 24 municipalities in 5 departments and this implementation is continuing. Throughout this period, Plan International has been part of and has supported the consolidation process of Global Compact with the objective to work more closely with all those involved to generate a sustained and greater impact in the country.

Environment, Principles 7-9

Although Plan International does not primarily focus its programming on environmental issues, Plan International's programmatic approach recognises that climate change and environmental sustainability are key factors in achieving gender equality.

The Partnership with John Hopkins University with Plan International Spain and Plan Rwanda has conducted a research project taking place in Kigeme refugee camp in Rwanda. In this intervention, one technological solution, Inyenyeri biomass pellet system, and one behavioural, I-ACT empowerment training, were combined to see if both together could further the multiple goals of reduced gender-based violence, reduced health impacts, improved food security and intrahousehold decision-making. It is recognised that clean and efficient cookstoves/fuel reduce environmental damage and harmful emissions. Furthermore, this study pointed out that access to cookstoves/fuel in this context also improved women's overall well-being reducing the risks and drudgery associated with time spent collecting firewood, as well as reduce women's risk of intimate partner GBV, as a consequence of less food insecurity and household stress. Further to this, the gain of time provided by these cooking solutions, increased the time available for more productive activities such as income generating enterprises, increasing women empowerment, and allows more time to be spent on childcare. This project was financed by the Clean Cooking Alliance and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative.

Anti-Corruption, Principle 10

Whilst neither partnerships nor programmes have an explicit focus on anti-corruption, Plan International's internal policies, and thorough due diligence and ethical checks of potential partners, are in place to prevent working with individuals and companies who do not align with the Global Compact's principle on anti-corruption and bribery.