

GIRLS  
NEED  
ALLIES

BOOKS FIRST  
LATER

WOMEN AND  
CAN PERFORM  
ACTIVITIES MEN

EMPOWER  
GIRLS AND  
WOMEN TO SPEAK  
UP ABOUT ISSUES  
THAT AFFECT THEM

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022  
PLAN INTERNATIONAL

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# **1. Forewords by the Management and Supervisory Boards**

Image: Pélagie (11) from Burkina Faso with one of the radios that Plan International gave to her school  
© Tamani Films / Souleymane Drabo

# Forewords by the Management and Supervisory Boards

## Foreword by Garance Reus-Deelder (Managing Director)

The ink on our new strategy for 2022-2026 had barely dried when the conflict in Ukraine erupted. Suddenly my colleagues were busying themselves with emergency aid for Ukraine, Moldova and Poland. Providing sanctuary for refugees in the region took on a whole new meaning. It shows just how volatile the global geopolitical situation is and how quickly humanitarian crises can devastate the lives of people all around the world.

Now, six months on, the reverberations of the conflict in Ukraine are also being felt in the smallest communities in the Horn of Africa, for example, the Sahel region and in many countries in Central America. Hunger is threatening the lives of millions of people in these and other regions. Food crises are being exacerbated by ongoing droughts caused by climate change. And the people they are hitting the hardest live in countries whose CO2 footprint is way smaller than that of the Netherlands. Girls and women are being disproportionately hard hit. In times of famine, child marriages increase substantially, for example, as research carried out in Zimbabwe by youth advocates of Plan International recently demonstrated.

It's against this sober backdrop that during the past few months we started implementing our new strategy, "Being Bolder for Girls' Rights". Our priorities for the next few years reflect new global realities, such as the aftermath of the Covid crisis, climate change, ongoing conflicts in several countries and the further erosion of civil society all over the world. These realities increase the need to work in line with the Nexus principle, thereby tackling development and humanitarian needs in synergy. During this past year we have also increased the effectiveness of our organisation in the Netherlands. I am also proud to be able to extend a warm welcome to the 12,973 new donors and sponsors who joined us during this period. We were also able to work in a targeted and mainly successful manner with our institutional donors, knowledge partners and programmatic partners on our gender-transformative ambitions. It is partly thanks to all that support and the substantial efforts of all my colleagues that we are now in such good shape, even though the challenges we face are considerable and the resources at our disposal always limited.

During the past year I have again met many strong-willed girls and women who, in collaboration with my colleagues at Plan, are trying to bring about positive changes worldwide, often in the face of significant resistance. At the 50th edition of the United Nations Human Rights Council in July, in Geneva, Switzerland, youth advocates of our She Leads programme took the stage. "It is not easy to speak out as a girl," said Esther from Sierra Leone as she addressed UN representatives in a panel discussion. Girls and young women are still being excluded from decision-making processes all over the world. Policymakers make choices that affect their lives without consulting them. Fortunately, girls and young women, often supported by Plan International, are becoming increasingly vocal. And I applaud the fact that they are doing so on a global stage, such as in the United Nations, as well as in the arteries of society, where the changes really need to be made. Earlier this year I was in the extremely dry Kajiado district of Kenya, where I met Martha, a 20-year-old youth activist from our Break Free! programme, which combats child marriages. She herself escaped a forced child marriage. Now, in addition to being a teacher, she is also a powerful local voice in her community where she fights for the participation of women in local government. You can read her story on page 13. How I laughed with Martha. She taught me so much and made me more confident that we can rise to the enormous challenges in the world. I am dedicating this Annual Report to her.

**Garance Reus-Deelder**





Image: Martha (left) is committed to securing education for girls in Kajiado County, Kenya © Plan International



## Foreword by Anja Montijn (Chairperson of the Supervisory Board)

We live in uncertain times, which are sometimes downright scary. Scary for the people we work to support in Asia, Africa and Latin America, who are the victims of famine and climate change, and scary too for many people in the Netherlands. Drought, high inflation and rising energy prices are having negative repercussions here too, and the resulting social unrest affects us all. That is why I find it so remarkable that we have been able to welcome so many new donors and sponsors again this year. People who, despite tensions and uncertainties closer to home, feel and show solidarity and empathy for girls and young women suffering in countries like Ethiopia, Mali and Nicaragua. It is truly inspirational that so many people continue to support us, enabling us to tackle the many new challenges we face. Major global challenges, such as war and climate change, call for flexibility and creativity in our organisation if we are to have a sustainable, positive impact. We must be dynamic and move in harmony with changes and continue to learn and innovate. To this end, the long-term trust and support of our donors is indispensable.

Anthropologist Margaret Mead once said: “Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; it’s the only thing that ever has.” And despite the complexity and uncertainty we currently face, I am still hopeful. I see a generation of young people emerging who are hugely engaged and determined to make a strong commitment to the future of our world. I see similar commitment in the young activists we work with in many countries and I see it in our office. Our employees have so much passion for our mission! So thank you for your efforts during this extremely challenging year. My thanks also go out to all our major and smaller donors. To the individuals and organisations that have supported us for many years, and to our new donors too. Welcome to the world of Plan International!

**Anja Montijn**





## **2. This is what Plan International stands for**

Image: A girl in Uganda shows a reusable sanitary towel © Plan International / Matthew Kisa

## 2. This is what Plan International stands for

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### Vision

Plan International wants a world in which girls and boys enjoy the same rights and opportunities and in which they can fully develop, a world that respects the rights and dignity of children and young people.

### Mission

Plan International strives for a fair and just world that promotes children's rights and equality for girls and young women. We work in more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

### This is how we make a difference

In the Netherlands, Plan International is part of the Plan International Federation, an international, child-oriented development organisation that is not constrained by political, religious or commercial objectives. Plan International works on the sustainable eradication of poverty and injustice and for the realisation of better living conditions for children and young people in the countries in which we implement our programmes.

Plan International endorses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup> adopted up by the United Nations in 2015 and we strive to contribute wherever possible to the realisation of these goals. We are particularly committed to SDG 5 Gender Equality, as well as SDG 3 Good health and wellbeing, SDG 4 Quality education, SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation, SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth, SDG 10 Reduced inequality and SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions.

To attain maximum impact on the lives of girls and boys worldwide, Plan International combines a unique mix of the following factors:

1. we focus on strengthening the position of girls and young women;
2. we work directly in communities, with employees who live in the region;
3. we make long-term improvements that are based on structural solutions;
4. we work with civil society organisations from the respective regions and support their actions and networks;
5. we are active worldwide in 75 countries, including fundraising offices, and we have four lobbying offices (in New York, Geneva, Brussels and Addis Ababa).

Plan International connects sponsors in the Netherlands with children and their families in the communities in the various countries where we implement our programmes.

### The story behind Plan International

Girls and boys deserve equal opportunities. Unfortunately, in too many of the world's countries girls are just not getting these opportunities. They are forced to leave school sooner or don't receive the education they need to get them a job that offers a future. If girls are given the opportunity to develop, they will make a big difference. If they get a good education they will be more self-confident and have a better chance of getting a worthwhile job that will earn them a decent living. This will reduce inequality and ensure that the next generation also has fairer and better opportunities. It will break the vicious circle and contribute to a stronger economy, benefiting entire communities.

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1 [Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://undp.org)





### 3. Goals and results

Image: A young woman speaks out during a She Leads event in Beirut, Lebanon © Plan International

## 3. Goals and results

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### 3.1 International programmes

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By 2026, thanks to our programmes, some two million girls and young women who face crises, inequality and injustice will be able to learn, lead, make their own decisions and develop themselves. This is the ambition of Plan International in the Netherlands. We want girls and women all around the world to have the same rights and opportunities enjoyed by boys and men.

At Plan International we adopt a gender-transformative<sup>2</sup> approach in our programmes. We are working towards an equal world, a world in which girls are free to learn, allowed to make decisions about their own bodies and in which they can develop to their full potential. We also contribute by changing prevailing views and stereotypes about girls and boys that are rife in communities. This is always done in close cooperation with the girls and boys in question and we ensure that their voices are listened to in decision-making processes. Together with our partners around the world, we also ensure that the applicable legislation and regulations are suitably adapted and complied with, at both national and international levels.

#### Focus on adolescent girls

The number of youngsters in low- and middle-income countries is higher than it has ever been. Adolescent girls in this group are the ones hit hardest by poverty, inequality and conflict. Investing in girls is seen as the key to the sustainable reduction of poverty.

These are the spearheads of Plan International's programmes and projects.

1. Protection against child marriages, sexual exploitation, teenage pregnancies and female circumcision.
2. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), with a focus on the issues that particularly affect girls, such as a lack of menstrual-hygiene products and inadequate sanitary facilities in schools.
3. Education and employment opportunities for young people, with a specific focus on giving girls and young women access to the jobs market and to education in regions deemed to be unstable or in crisis.
4. Amplifying the voice of young people and ensuring that their interests are served in local, national and international decision-making processes.

#### More opportunities and rights for girls

We strive to ensure that 90 per cent of our programmes contribute to the structural improvement of the opportunities and rights of girls and young women. This year, all programmes of the Netherlands' Plan International office were either gender-aware<sup>3</sup> (42 per cent) or gender-transformative (58 per cent).

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- 2 Gender-transformative: focusing on the root causes of gender inequality. Promoting equality, the acknowledgement of the rights of girls and women and aiming for a cultural change that also involves boys and men.
  - 3 Gender-aware: resisting gender stereotyping and gender discrimination and promoting gender equality.



**Number of children/young people reached with the programmes of the Netherlands' office of Plan International in 2021-2022**

	Girls	Boys	Total
Under 18	325,214	318,644	643,858
18-24	146,686	122,120	268,806
<b>Total</b>	<b>471,900</b>	<b>440,764</b>	<b>912,664</b>

During the past year our programmes reached a total of 912,664 youngsters (52 per cent girls and 48 per cent boys), approximately 34 per cent more than in the previous year. Most of the girls and boys were reached through our water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes and a growing number of humanitarian programmes.

In the following sections we discuss a number of international programmes per theme: lobbying for protection and rights; education and employment for young people (Youth Economic Empowerment); water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and emergency aid.

### 3.1.1 Lobbying for protection and rights

Plan International is committed to amplifying the voice of young people. It is important that they are heard loud and clear and that their interests are represented in the decisions that affect their lives. Important lobbying and advocacy themes are protecting girls and young women against female circumcision, child marriages, sexual exploitation and teenage pregnancy.

#### Down to Zero

The Down to Zero alliance consists of Terre des Hommes (lead), Free a Girl, Defence for Children-ECPAT, ICCO (a part of Cordaid) and Plan International. From 2016 to the end of 2020, the alliance members, along with their 26 partners, worked on the Down to Zero 1.0 programme aimed at reducing the sexual exploitation of children. We played our role in a strategic partnership with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The alliance also worked on Voices for Change from March 2020 to the end of June 2021 and on Building Back Better in Times of Covid-19 from May 2021 to May 2022. These two programmes were financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the funds set aside for combatting child prostitution. The alliance was active in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru and Nicaragua. Plan International was active in Nepal, the Philippines, Brazil and the Dominican Republic.

#### Focus on preventing sexual exploitation

During the past year the Building Back Better programme of the Down to Zero alliance combatted a worldwide increase in the sexual exploitation of children. Partly as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, this kind of sexual exploitation increased sharply. During the crisis, the work of care and aid agencies that protect children against exploitation and violence came to a virtual standstill. Home visits to vulnerable families were not possible and it was partially or completely impossible to physically reach emergency services. Consequently, abuses went unreported. The attention of local governments turned to enforcing public health and social measures to curb the spread of the virus.

This had far-reaching consequences for the aid that would otherwise be provided to vulnerable children. Schools were closed, sports activities were suspended and gathering in groups was forbidden. With the removal of their social safety net, this made children even more vulnerable. Families were disrupted by the significant loss of jobs and the resulting widespread economic uncertainty. Parents were sometimes forced into playing an active role in facilitating the sexual exploitation of their own children.

The number of children who fell victim to online sexual exploitation also increased. This was because children were online much more often and for longer, either doing their homework or communicating with friends. Inadequate supervision by parents and their limited knowledge of digital security were contributing factors.

### **This has already been achieved**

The Building Back Better programme worked with children and youngsters between 10 and 24. They were able to improve their skills and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and their right to be protected against violence. Children learned to protect themselves against sexual exploitation by being made aware of the risks and how to be as safe as possible while online. They also learned how to discuss sensitive topics at home, in school and in their communities. Above all, they were informed where they can go to report sexual exploitation and for specific care.

They also joined active youth groups and networks, where they were given useful tools to help them safely and actively behind participate in discussions about sexual exploitation and present their case for better protection systems. In the Dominican Republic, for example, a youth network with 98 participants was set up. After following several training courses, they developed plans that will help them influence local policy making and connect to other youth networks in the region. In some countries youngsters from the programme are now also members of local committees. This enables them to actively participate in discussions and develop activities that will give children better protection.

### **Strengthening local systems**

We also worked on strengthening local systems for the protection of children. In this work we involved parents and carers, schools, local leaders, healthcare providers, civil society organisations, government officials, ministries and other government agencies. Thanks to this programme, these key actors in combatting sexual exploitation now have a better understanding of the role they play in protecting children. We have boosted their knowledge and skills about child protection, as a result of which they are far better positioned to work together.

In Nepal, for example, pupils and teachers in 16 schools have been trained to recognise the signs of sexual exploitation. They have learned what they can do in the event of abuse and how school systems can protect children against violence. A total of 652 students participated and they will now roll it out further. We also supported and strengthened local civil society organisations and helped children and young people to influence policy. Making sure that sexual exploitation is kept firmly on the agenda and monitoring compliance with laws, policies and protocols are hugely important, especially in times of crisis.

### **Break Free!**

Break Free! is a five-year programme (2021-2025) of Plan International, SRHR Africa Trust (SAT) and Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). It is being implemented in strategic partnership with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, We also work closely together with the Zimbabwean Rozaria Memorial Trust and the KIT Royal Tropical Institute. The programme is being implemented in nine African countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Sudan and Zambia.



## Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

In the countries in which Break Free! is being implemented, sexual and reproductive healthcare facilities are often limited. Healthcare workers and teachers find it difficult to even talk about sexuality. Furthermore, young people have insufficient access to affordable contraception, while sex education is practically non-existent. Poverty and the absence of effective legislation and regulations are jeopardising the health and rights of young people. Partly as a result of this, the number of child marriages and teenage pregnancies is high. In collaboration with local civil society organisations and youth groups, we are committed to upholding the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of young people and the prevention of child marriages and teenage pregnancies. In some countries we are also combatting the practice of female circumcision.



### MARTHA ESCAPED A FORCED MARRIAGE

**Now 20, Martha Nadupoi from Kenya was just 10 years old when she was almost married off to a much older man. Thanks to the help of a women's rights activist, she was able to avoid this fate. She is currently a teacher at a local school.**

Growing up in a Maasai family with 12 children, Martha lived in a community where child marriage and female circumcision are commonplace. At the age of 10, her parents wanted to marry her off to a much older man. Fortunately, a women's rights activist arranged for her admittance to sheltered accommodation, where she could safely follow primary education. When it was time to return to her parents, they allowed Martha to continue her education in high school. "After finishing school, my grades were not good enough for the university that I wanted to attend. It felt like failure, but I wasn't ready to give up."

Martha joined a local women's organisation that had been set up with the support of Plan International. With the help of this organisation, in two years Martha managed to save enough money to pay for teacher training. She graduated and has, for the past few years, been working as an Early Childhood Development teacher at a local school. As a youth activist, she now speaks out in support of the education and development of girls and young women. "It is my dream to be an example to girls across the country. I hope one day to start a shelter in my own community," she says. Daniel Momposhi of Plan International in Kenya is proud that the organisation was able to help Martha take those important steps. "Martha is talented, smart and determined," he adds. "She is an independent woman with a dream."

## This has already been achieved

Break Free! has succeeded in mapping out community and district structures and services and organising the first information meetings and training sessions. In so doing we have laid a solid foundation for influencing policy during the coming years. Our aim is to amplify the voice of young people, so that they themselves can claim what is rightfully theirs.

We have established and strengthened partnerships with government agencies and civil servants at local, national and pan-African levels. This is essential in exerting influence and advocating for change and for improving the implementation of policy, which lie at the heart of the programme. Building strong working relationships is very time-consuming. To start the ball rolling we invited stakeholders to attend programme presentations and kick-off meetings. One-on-one introductory meetings then took place and we set up national and local working groups, platforms and networks.

Furthermore, we educated youth groups and religious, traditional and political leaders in partner communities about children's rights and sexual and reproductive health and the rights of adolescents. Thanks to the knowledge and skills they have now acquired, they can advocate for the improvement of facilities in government institutions.

### **These are the challenges**

During the reporting period, persistent or deteriorating conflicts and ecological crises hit six of the nine Break Free! countries, namely Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Kenya and Sudan. This had major repercussions for the groups with and for whom Break Free! collaborates. It was more difficult for them to earn a living and healthcare facilities became less accessible to them. Moreover, the likelihood of having to drop out of school and falling prey to sexual and gender-based violence increased. These are all factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy and child marriages.

Generally speaking, there is scant focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in countries that are affected by crises. It often proved difficult to reach government officials and get them involved in the programme. Break Free! organisations and partners noticed that crises are sometimes used as a convenient excuse for not paying the attention they should to sensitive or controversial topics.

Other challenges are the increasing inflation in some Break Free! countries, including Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, and the school closures and other restrictions caused by Covid-19. Wherever possible, we adapt our programmes so that we can rise to these challenges.

### **Leaders of Peace**

The Leaders of Peace alliance is a five-year collaborative programme (2021-2025) that is being implemented in South Sudan by Plan International, Assistance Mission for Africa (AMA), EVE, HealthNet TPO and the peace organisation PAX. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a strategic partner. The programme is being implemented in the Unity, Lakes, Western Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria and Central Equatoria regions of South Sudan.

The Leaders of Peace alliance is underpinning the participation of women and girls in conflict areas and former conflict areas and supporting them so that they feel safer and more able to stand up for their rights. The aim of the programme is to meaningfully engage women and girls in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, protection, aid and recovery.

Leaders of Peace has two focus areas.

1. The programme aims to improve policies and regulations pertaining to gender-based violence and the protection of women and girls. The objective is to give women and girls better access to mental health and psycho-social support services (MHPSS) and legal protection. The premise is that women and girls, including the victims of gender-based violence, must be made more aware of their rights.
2. The second area of focus is promoting gender equality by changing social norms and beliefs. Leaders of Peace focuses on persuading men and boys to become allies and positive role models. Together



with women's and youth groups, we are getting them to advocate for gender equality and the meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes and making sure that more women and young people who actively participate in peacebuilding are put into leadership positions. We are also strengthening communities and organisations in their communities to lobby on behalf of the agenda for women, peace and security.

### **This has already been achieved**

During the first year of the programme (2021), Leaders of Peace worked with local authorities and the government, which accelerated stakeholders' acceptance of the programme. We relied on existing structures and networks, such as local governments, women's leaders and youth groups. Distributing the thematic expertise and locations across the various partners worked well. Effective collaborations came into being and there was little duplication. Joint programming was necessary to improve and strengthen the work at the national level.

### **Our Voices, Our Choices**

To amplify the voice of young people, Plan International is increasingly committed to young leadership and the participation of young people. An excellent example of this is a new programme called Our Voices, Our Choices, which is funded by the European Union. Launched in March 2022, the programme is a partnership between Plan International and four youth and/or women-led civil society organisations. These are Article 19, Feminist Dalit Organization, Phayao Youth News Agency and Thailand Youth Institute. This regional programme is being implemented in Thailand, Bangladesh, Nepal and the wider Asian region.

### **The participation of women and young people**

In several countries, particularly in Bangladesh and Thailand, there is repression and a restriction of the freedom of expression of journalists, activists and non-governmental organisations. The involvement of youth and women's groups is key in protecting democratic process, at all levels. Unfortunately, the activities of these groups are often obstructed and excluded. The aim of Our Voices, Our Choices is to improve compliance with international human rights policies and legislation. We try to achieve this aim by improving the lobbying skills and capacity of women and young people so they can make the responsible parties more accountable. This is how we seek to create a favourable climate for the participation of young people and women in the Asian region.

### **Focus on inclusiveness**

Our Voices Our Choices targets youth and women in all their diversity, including people who are in what is seen there as lower caste (Dalits), the LGBTIQ+ community, people with disabilities and other groups. All too often these groups are overlooked, repressed and underestimated, which excludes them from participating in decision-making processes.

### **She Leads**

Democracies are under pressure all over the world. Autocratic states, populist leaders and political parties are threatening the independent media, the judiciary and many forms of civil society. People's ability to express opinions, defend their rights and hold politicians and administrators to account is becoming increasingly restricted. This is particularly the case when it comes to girls and young women, a group that is rarely listened to or taken seriously as it is.

The Plan International programme, She Leads, champions the rights of girls and young women to speak out and make an impact. Working together with partners DCI-ECPAT, Terre des Hommes and FEMNET in nine countries – seven in Africa and two in the Middle East – we support girls and young women who are campaigning for more participation and influence. She Leads is also trying to attain more meaningful

participation at regional and international levels. The programme started up in 2021 and will run until the end of 2025. It is being implemented in a strategic partnership with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **This has already been achieved**

In its first year, She Leads has set up networks of the organisations that are involved in the implementation of the programme in all the relevant countries. By joining forces, local non-governmental organisations that champion women's and children's rights can achieve more. All activities are being carried out in close cooperation with the actual girls' and young women's organisations.

We have already reached many people with awareness campaigns that stress the importance of gender equality and the positive value of young female leadership. Furthermore, we have trained local religious and traditional leaders so that they can encourage their people to listen more to what girls have to say. Above all, we have ensured that these girls and young women themselves speak out to their village leaders and to local and national politicians. And because they are suitably trained and supported in setting up their own groups and organisations, they are increasingly able to take the initiative, inside and outside their own communities. Thanks to She Leads, young people have even been given the opportunity to speak at African Union meetings and United Nations institutions.

### **National platform**

Girls and young women can get a lot done. In the Upper West region of Ghana, for example, 25 influential leaders have let it be known that henceforth they will be committed to increasing girls' participation and leadership. And in the Kwale province of Kenya, authorities have set up an advisory board that will advise authorities on how to involve girls and young women in decision-making processes. In Ethiopia, there is now a national platform for girls and young women that supports girls' groups across the country. This platform enables them to exchange experiences and lobby collectively. At local level, schools are often the first place where girls are able to get together. After lobbying the Ministry of Education, last year we were able to start up student networks in four public-school communities.

The biggest breakthrough, however, was at the international level when girls and young women made their voices heard at the United Nations Human Rights Council. They spoke directly to experts of the United Nations and representatives of its member states about their knowledge and experiences as youth lobbyists. Consequently, they made sure that their most important messages were included in a new resolution. This resolution calls on governments to guarantee the rights of young female human rights activists and to protect them against all forms of abuse, violence and harassment.



### 3.1.2 Education and employment of young people

In many countries large groups of unemployed young people find themselves in a hopeless situation. Using programmes that focus on training and employment opportunities, Plan International is bridging the gap between the needs of the labour market and the available knowledge and skills of young people. These programmes are increasing their chances of finding work and attaining a degree of economic independence. The emphasis in all these programmes lies on providing equal opportunities for girls and young women.

#### Promoting Young Women in Employment

In Nepal, girls and young women do not enjoy the same opportunities as boys and young men. They are often unable to complete their education and find decent jobs. Plan International wants young women to derive more benefit from working in the tourism sector. For this reason we launched a project called Promoting Young Women in Employment in 2018. Funded by ASN Bank and Adecco, the project is being implemented in Pokhara, Nepal. We also work closely together with institutional partners, Hotel Association Nepal (HAN) and Trekking Agencies' Association Nepal (TAAN).



#### SHREYA, OUR TOUR GUIDE IN THE HIMALAYAS

**Tour guide exclusively a profession for men? Not according to a young Nepalese lady called Shreya (21). With the help of Plan International, she realised her dream of becoming a tour guide in her hometown of Pokhara.**

Shreya grew up in a family that had very little money. "I was sometimes jealous of friends who could buy sweets and wear nice clothes. But I knew my parents couldn't afford it, so I'd never mention it at home." However, her parents did scrape enough money together to put her through school. "They did everything for us." Shreya dreamed of becoming a tour guide and thanks to Plan

International she was able to follow a free course with a company that organises trekking tours through the Himalayas. Because she excelled as a student tour guide she was soon promoted to full guide. "It was one of the happiest moments of my life!"

In collaboration with our local partners Right4Children, Three Sisters Adventure Trekking and Gate Vocational FAB School, we are training young women to become tour guides or hospitality employees. Moreover, they can also follow training courses that boost their self-confidence and resilience and improve their communication skills. They also learn how to deal with finances and what their rights are, including employment rights. The young women participants complete their training with an internship and are then helped to find a job.

#### This has already been achieved

We have educated and trained over 220 young women in this way, of which 170 are already in employment and able to provide for themselves. And more than 2,000 members of the community and 200 employers from the tourism sector have been trained in gender equality, rights and labour rights, as well as the importance of educating and creating employment for young women. This project has been extended until the end of December 2022.

## Women Lead Change

In Ecuador, social, cultural and economic inequality between urban and rural areas is high. This is why in June 2021, Plan International started the Women Lead Change project in Chimborazo, Ecuador, with funding from ACT Commodities. The aim of the project is to strengthen the position of some 300 girls and women aged between 15 and 24.

We have been doing this by setting up small-scale and sustainable businesses in the agricultural sector. We are training young participants in business skills, digital and financial skills and increasing their knowledge about sustainable production. In addition, we offer them training in various life skills. When they are deemed to be ready, seed capital is made available to them to start up or improve their own business.

### This has already been achieved

The project will run for two years. By June 2022, 60 training sessions had already been given to between 250 and 300 young people. After having drawn up a business plan, with a clear focus on sustainability, gender equality and inclusiveness, 65 youngsters were given seed capital. They started up eight social enterprises. In support of the project, we also signed a collaboration agreement with the University of Chimborazo as a knowledge partner.

## Sustainable Social Protection and Livelihood Solutions Lebanon

There are currently almost a million Syrian UNHCR-registered refugees in Lebanon, meaning it has the highest concentration of refugees per capita in the world. There is a lot of poverty there, both among Lebanese and Syrian people.

In 2020, Plan International started up a three-year project called Sustainable Social Protection and Livelihood Solutions for Severely Vulnerable Households in Lebanon. It is funded by the Madad Regional Trust Fund. Plan International and our partner LOST are implementing the project in a consortium with Save the Children and partner organisation Akkarouna.

### A sustainable route out of poverty

This project is focused on participants of the national poverty reduction programme of the Netherlands Ministry of Social Affairs and beneficiaries of the United Nations food aid programme (World Food Programme). The project offers them a sustainable way out of extreme poverty. The objective is to select more than 10,000 people in the Baalbek-Hermel and Akkar areas, half of them Lebanese and half of them Syrians.

To make these very vulnerable households more self-reliant and less dependent on social assistance, the project has four objectives:

1. increase parents' ability to provide for the basic needs of their children;
2. improve households' economic resilience and earning capacity;
3. enhance households' ability to manage their financial resources and accrue savings;
4. make it possible for young people and women to protect themselves and demand their rights.

### This has already been achieved

The families have been supported by advisers who have been thoroughly trained in coaching, guidance, inclusiveness and safe referral in the event of neglect, gender-based violence and abuse. During the first phase of the project, these advisers established contacts with the selected households.



We gave a sum of money to over 700 households with young children, so that they could provide for basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, healthcare and education. We also carried out minor repairs to the dwellings of 200 households. And we also tried to improve access to the existing social security system.

In all project areas we organised adult training in reading, arithmetic, finance, resilience and gender-transformative life skills. Additionally, we set up seven child-friendly shelters for women and men with young children. In this way we were able to guarantee equal and inclusive participation in the training programme.

During phase two of the project, young adult women and men receive career guidance. Furthermore, they can follow relevant vocational skills training to enable them to support themselves, either as an employee or as an entrepreneur.

### **Green Entrepreneurship Accelerator**

In July 2021, Plan International started up a one-year project called Green Entrepreneurship Accelerator, funded by our partner Accenture. The project focused on supporting sustainable enterprises run by young people, particularly those run by young women. The project was carried out in Colombia in conjunction with the organisation Socialab.

### **Sustainable business**

After running a competition, we selected ten young entrepreneurs, eight of whom were women. These entrepreneurs were active in the areas of plastic-waste recycling, handicrafts, local and natural food products, vertical gardens and bicycle courier services. All selected entrepreneurs were affected by armed conflicts in the Chocó, Valle del Cauca and Nariño regions.

### **This has already been achieved**

With the aid of a market analysis and design challenge, we mapped out the opportunities and needs of the entrepreneurs, after which we transformed challenges into solutions. Participants followed a bespoke four-month acceleration programme, which included coaching, mentoring, skills training, seed funding, technical assistance and networking. Links to potential clients were also given to each entrepreneur.

An important aspect of this project was the improvement of participants' sustainability skills and making their companies more environmentally friendly. When the project concluded, in July 2022, on the basis of the acquired knowledge we defined a roadmap along which we could scale up the results. The objective now is to set up more such programmes, for and with young people, in the next few years.

The most important takeaways of this project are:

1. identifying opportunities and obstacles for budding young, and green, entrepreneurs;
2. strengthening young people's entrepreneurial skills;
3. leveraging strategic partnerships and the power of innovation to enable young people to make the transition to a greener economy.

### 3.1.3 Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

In many low- and middle-income countries, the responsibility for the so-called water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) household tasks, such as cooking and washing, rests mainly on the shoulders of girls and women. The lack of good WASH facilities therefore affects them the most. Girls often have to miss school because they have to walk for several hours to fetch water, or because the schools give them inadequate access to sanitary towels or facilities. Plan International has therefore adopted a gender-transformative WASH approach so that we can offer everyone access to good WASH facilities.

#### The WASH SDG-programme

The WASH SDG programme consortium was set up in 2017 and comprises SNV, WASH Alliance International and Plan International. WASH is an acronym that stands for water, sanitation and hygiene. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has allocated the sum of €59 million, as part of the country's commitment and contribution to realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, particularly SDG 6, clean water and sanitation.

In this context we are working on the sustainable improvement of sanitary facilities for two million inhabitants of Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nepal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, as well as providing safe drinking water for 450,000 people. Through awareness-increasing campaigns, we are striving to improve the hygiene habits of an additional 1.6 million people. Our WASH approach is gender transformative.

The WASH SDG programme has three objectives:

1. increasing the demand for and the use of good WASH facilities;
2. improving access to, and the quality of, WASH services and hygiene products;
3. helping governments to improve their WASH policies.



#### JANUKA PROVIDES SAFE WATER FOR HER VILLAGE

In the remote villages of Nepal, groundwater is the main source of drinking water. And since its sources aren't well protected, this water is often contaminated. To tackle this problem, Januka (41) joined the water committee in her village. Thanks to her efforts, a plan is now in place to install taps with safe water in every household, rather than having a central tap with what might be contaminated water. This will make a big difference for the girls and women in the village. They will have to spend less time fetching water – traditionally still a woman's job – so the women will be free to go work and the girls will be able to go to school.

#### This has already been achieved

In 2021, there was a mid-way evaluation of the programme in all seven countries. The Covid-19 crisis made the importance of good water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities even clearer. Despite setbacks and limitations, the implementation of the programme has continued as well as could be expected.



Despite many Covid-19 restrictions, local teams have supported governments in their hygiene campaigns and found ingenious ways to reach people.

In Nepal, for example, vans equipped with speakers disseminated information on good hygiene as they drove through neighbourhoods in which people didn't have radios. In villages where the Covid-19 crisis had led to a shortage of sanitary towels, girls and women were given hygiene packages with reusable sanitary towels. Extra hand-washing points were also set up.

1. A total of 194,969 people were given access to water (the final goal is 450,000 people).
2. The quality of sanitary facilities has been improved for 863,231 people (the final goal is two million).
3. A total of 2,672,109 people now have good hand-washing facilities.

### **These are the challenges**

Some WASH activities were delayed or postponed because of the Covid-19 crisis. It was not possible, for example, to hold large gatherings in the villages to make people aware of the importance of good sanitation. In many countries, schools were also closed for protracted periods, and this brought many activities to a standstill. But while the Covid-19 crisis made many governments more acutely aware of the importance of good hygiene, there was little enthusiasm to embed it more firmly in their WASH policy. This was because people were primarily concerned with the many practical challenges they faced as a result of the crisis.

The project increased women's and girls' participation in decision-making processes and activities related to WASH. What's more, there was a rise in the number of female WASH entrepreneurs. But the main challenges still remain, namely, reaching the poorest population groups and maintaining good hygiene habits in the longer term.

### **Healthy Village**

In Ethiopia, Plan International and Max Foundation are collaborating on the Healthy Village programme. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has allocated €12.9 million to this programme, which started at the end of 2020 and will run to 2025.

The programme has been developed to combat chronic growth retardation, diarrhoea and dysentery. Despite the fact that diseases like these are highly preventable, they account for high mortality among children up to five years old. We are improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and nutrition for the most vulnerable people in four selected districts in the Seqota region.

### **Attention to climate and gender equality**

The programme also focuses on climate and gender equality. The availability of clean water is negatively affected by seasonal changes and climate change. Combined with poverty, food insecurity and the low social status of girls and women, the end result is that it is having a detrimental effect on children's growth and health. Taking a gender-transformative approach, we aim to combat inequality and discrimination and increase the influence that girls and young women have.

### **Good health and healthy food**

The Healthy Village programme focuses on the health of mothers and children. Through this programme, we stress the importance of healthy nutrition for pregnant women, for example, and encourage breastfeeding during the first six months of a baby's life. We are also ensuring that influential members of communities, such as traditional leaders, are involved in the programme. Furthermore, fathers are being persuaded to become actively involved in the care of their children. This is how we are combatting gender inequality.

## Collaboration with local and national governments

To realise sustainable progress, we are collaborating with local government authorities in the Healthy Village programme. In Ethiopia, for example, we are working with the government to develop national guidelines to combat stunted growth in children and to meet WASH and nutrition targets. We are collectively working towards establishing a healthy living environment there for girls and boys. One in which they can grow up safely and enjoy equal opportunities. An important component of this is research being carried out on the programme's impact on chronic growth retardation.

### 3.1.4 Emergency aid

When natural disasters, famines, epidemics or armed conflicts threaten the lives and the future of large groups of people, Plan International provides emergency aid. Our specific focus in this is on girls and young women, because during crises they are usually the ones who are confronted with gender-based violence and insecurity. Thanks to our knowledge of communities and local and national structures, we can act quickly. Not only in dealing with acute situations, but also when it concerns the longer term. We are therefore better placed to help with reconstruction, for example, and to make people more prepared for possible future disasters. Wherever we can, we provide early action and a state of preparedness (anticipatory action). When providing emergency aid, we always take the gender-specific consequences of disasters into account and act accordingly.

#### Dutch Relief Alliance: Cabo Delgado Joint Response

Northern Mozambique has been plagued by violent conflict for many years. In March 2021, armed groups were responsible for large-scale attacks, killing dozens of people and displacing thousands more. The country is also increasingly being affected by severe cyclones, further exacerbating food insecurity there. More than 900,000 people in the Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Nampula provinces of the country are affected. The resulting insecurity is disrupting local markets and driving up food costs. What's more, gender-based violence is increasing significantly.

The Cabo Delgado Joint Response initiative ran from May to December 2021. It was led by Plan International, in collaboration with CARE, SOS, Tearfund, Cordaid and Oxfam, as well as local partners Caritas AMA and ADEL CD. A total of 135,461 people were reached in the districts of Mecufi, Chiure, Metuge, Montepuez and Ancuabe. The project was funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Dutch Relief Alliance.

#### Gender-based violence

The project focused on improving the services available to the victims of gender-based violence and making these services more accessible. The prevention of gender-based violence also played a major role. In this way we strengthened the referral processes and psycho-social support available to displaced persons. The project was rolled out in areas where women's and child-friendly places had already been established, thanks to previous funding. This enabled us to build on existing partnerships and community relationships and thus increase our impact.

#### This has already been achieved

We have distributed hygiene kits, shelter kits and kitchen facilities to vulnerable individuals and households. Furthermore, in inaccessible areas we also distributed survival kits.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) was a major concern in the region because the conflict cut off poor people's access to their primary water source, thereby increasing the risk of disease. In Cabo Delgado,



45 per cent of health facilities do not have clean water and 85 per cent of schools do not have adequate hygiene facilities. In the context of WASH, we distributed soap among people in the communities and we provided clean and functional toilet facilities, as well as clean water for household use. We also educated people on the importance of good hygiene.

### European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

Plan International is a certified partner of the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) of the European Union. Thanks to its financial support, during the year under review Plan International was able to realise four emergency aid projects in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Peru and the Dominican Republic. A fifth project was started up in Ethiopia in June 2022.

### Disaster preparedness in Peru

Since June 2021, Plan International, in collaboration with Humanity & Inclusion (formerly Handicap International) and Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), has been strengthening indigenous and Mestizo communities in how they respond to emergency situations. The activities are being carried out in the regions of Cantagallo (the metropolitan area of Lima), San Juan Bautista and Belén (Iquitos, Loreto). These are the areas in which the likelihood of disasters and extreme weather conditions is very high. Moreover, in Peru they were also the areas that were hit hardest by the Covid-19 pandemic.

### This has already been achieved

Eight committees have now been set up at community level to improve disaster preparedness. These committees are responsible for making risk analyses, designing and implementing emergency plans and setting up task forces that can be quickly deployed should a new disaster occur. Several task forces, specialising in a variety of disciplines that include first aid, firefighting, evacuation, prevention and search & rescue, are now operational. These task forces have been trained in disaster preparedness, taking a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach. In Iquitos, 180 task force members have attained diploma status in disaster preparedness.

At administrative level, we have strengthened the preparedness capacity of local, regional and national authorities by linking together the coordination of protection and disaster risk management. In Iquitos and Lima, 148 government officials have been trained. By sharing our knowledge, we have been able to revise and improve existing emergency plans and instruments. Community leaders and representatives of vulnerable groups have been actively involved in the process. So far, we have reached 8,130 people in eight communities with the development of emergency plans, the distribution of emergency aid packages and the installation of warning signs.

### Disaster preparedness in the Dominican Republic

Between June 2020 and March 2022, together with Oxfam, Habitat for Humanity and Ciudad Alternativa, Plan International implemented a project in the Dominican Republic called Be Alert: Prepare to Respond. Santo Domingo Este is an urban area of the country that is susceptible to several hydro-meteorological hazards, such as floods, landslides and tsunamis. This area is home to unofficial settlements populated by Haitian and Venezuelan immigrants, whose legal and economic status makes them vulnerable to extreme events. It is for this reason that, in the context of disaster relief, the project was focused on these vulnerable groups.

### This has already been achieved

The project has developed response and emergency plans for 110,000 people and upgraded and renovated 23 small-scale unsafe structures and buildings so that they can withstand possible hazards. The project also included schools and orphanages in the plans, training both staff and students and carrying

out practical exercises. The communities that we helped were also hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. We therefore offered 500 families no-strings financial support and hygiene packages to enable them to better protect themselves against the virus.

### **Emergency aid for children in South Sudan**

South Sudan has been plagued by civil war and food shortages for many years. Consequently, many children in Yei, a city to the south of the country, have been separated from their parents. Orphans, as well as separated children, often cannot attend school because they simply cannot afford to do so. On top of this they are also more vulnerable to violence. Furthermore, countless children are also affected by trauma caused by humanitarian crises and are therefore in urgent need of psychological help.

### **This has already been achieved**

Since 2019, Plan International, in collaboration with Terre des Hommes, has been implementing an emergency-aid project in Yei for vulnerable children and young people, with a special focus on girls. In addition to setting up a system of social workers to support vulnerable children, three child-friendly areas to help children process trauma have also been established. Trained community volunteers help out in these trauma-processing areas. In this way Plan International has made it possible for 1,900 children to go back to school and we are working on the restoration and reopening of 25 schools. Since 2021, Plan International has also been working together with Tearfund to provide clean drinking water for the local population and toilet facilities for the schools.

### **Refugee camps in Ethiopia**

Plan International is spearheading a humanitarian initiative in four refugee camps in the Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz regions of Ethiopia. Funding is being provided by ECHO. Plan International has been supporting these camps since 2018; the current project will run until July 2023. It represents the continuation of Plan International's efforts to support South Sudanese refugee communities in Ethiopia with protection and education. The initiative is focused on vulnerable South Sudanese girls and boys in refugee camps and vulnerable members of the host community in the Metekel zone. During the past two years this zone has been heavily impacted by conflict, resulting in the mass displacement of inhabitants and the destruction of essential infrastructure and property.

### **This has already been achieved**

We have provided aid to 75,937 people in the refugee camps in question. By the end of the project, it is expected that 133,336 people will have been reached.

### **Emergency aid in Ethiopia**

Following the outbreak of the Tigray conflict, in November 2020, Plan International provided life-saving emergency aid in northern Ethiopia. The conflict, which overflowed onto the neighbouring regions of Amhara and Afar, has had a devastating effect on the lives of at least seven million people. Plan International, together with Actionaid, is currently implementing an emergency aid project there, which will run from June 2022 to May 2024. With this emergency aid we are reaching over 35,000 vulnerable and displaced people in the Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions of Ethiopia.

### **Child Protection**

A key element of Plan International's activities in Ethiopia is the investments made in local communities. These investments underpin the sustainability of the results of what we are doing there and increase the resilience of the affected communities and their members. These community members, both refugees and displaced persons, are being trained as social workers who will serve their own communities. As social workers, they can help to identify needy families and offer them practical emergency aid, in the form of

clothing, hygiene items, mattresses and cooking utensils, for example. They are also supporting Plan International employees during information meetings and information campaigns on child protection, family planning and sexual and reproductive health. Thanks to this model, it is possible to reach a large number of children and families that are in need of help.

### **Giro555 — Cooperating Aid Organisations**

Plan International has been a member of Giro555 - Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties (Cooperating Aid Organisations) since 2015. It is an initiative in which, in the event of an exceptional disaster, 11 aid organisations join forces under the collective name of Giro555. During the past financial year, this initiative enabled us to provide emergency aid in Nepal and Ukraine.

### **Giro555: Emergency aid programme during the Covid-19 crisis in Nepal**

During the past year, the quickly spreading Covid-19 pandemic placed unprecedented pressure on Nepal's already fragile healthcare system. Funded by Giro555, Plan International provided medical supplies in the Sindhuli, Bardiya, Sunsari and Kalikot districts of the country. In the context of this project, we worked with local governments, care institutions, Female Community Health Volunteers and village communities.

We both improved vaccination-giving facilities and provided information about why vaccination was so important. We also supported vaccination campaigns by debunking myths about vaccines and by mobilising and training volunteers. Furthermore, we also provided essential supplies, such as sanitary facilities, buckets, facemasks, disinfectant, oxygen cylinders, monitors, beds and refrigeration boxes. We also strengthened the capacity of healthcare workers and trained both them and volunteers. This support was highly instrumental in the vaccine rollout and Covid-19 response of the Nepalese healthcare services.

### **Giro555: Emergency aid programme in Ukraine**

Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, over 6.2 million people have been displaced. The UNHCR has estimated that sanctuary is currently being provided to over 5.4 million refugees in Europe. In Ukraine itself, there is a significant shortage of basic needs, such as food, water and medicines. The delivery of life-saving aid remains a challenge in areas where there is fierce fighting, while the humanitarian situation all across the country is rapidly deteriorating, particularly in the east. In early March 2022, funded by Giro555, Plan International launched an emergency aid programme involving life-saving aid, protection for refugees and support for their host communities in Ukraine and Poland.

Together with our international colleagues, this is what we are doing in Poland:

1. providing material and financial support to 1,000 vulnerable refugee families from Ukraine;
2. setting up community centres and mobile units for Ukrainian refugees in the Polish city of Opole, where they are being given medical and psycho-social support;
3. providing legal support and advice to at least 1,000 refugees from Ukraine.

Together with Defence for Children/AUFCR, this is what we are doing in Ukraine:

1. providing child protection and protection against gender-based violence to at least 10,000 internally displaced persons and members of the host communities;
2. providing food aid to 500 children in residential care institutions;
3. providing non-food aid to 500 evacuated children in orphanages.



Together with International Medical Corps, this is what we are doing in Ukraine:

1. providing financial assistance to 4,000 internally displaced people and the hardest-hit host communities;
2. providing protection, also for children, to at least 2,000 internally displaced persons and members of the host community;
3. providing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, such as access to safe and sufficient water supplies, hygiene kits and medical aids.

## 3.2 Community programmes, courtesy of child sponsors

Child sponsorship has played a key role in Plan International's work from the very beginning. Thanks to the support of our child sponsors, Plan International has been able to implement programmes and projects in marginalised communities all over the world. The contributions we receive are channelled into programmes implemented in the communities of the sponsored children. This not only improves the living conditions and future prospects of the sponsored child, it also provides a better life for all the children and their families in the community.

We work together in programmes with all those involved, including the children themselves, their families, teachers, governments and partner organisations. This enables us to jointly determine the kind of support that will benefit them the most. Our programmes enable children to grow up safely to be independent adults who have the freedom to shape and give direction to their own lives. We contribute to their protection and provide them with safe drinking water, good hygiene, good healthcare and education.

### **This has already been achieved**

During the past financial year, the sponsorship money was spent on projects in the immediate vicinity of the sponsored children. These projects contributed towards:

- providing a safe learning environment and sufficient teaching materials;
- the medical support of pregnant women, babies and young children;
- the psycho-social counselling of young girls who have escaped child marriages and who are being given the opportunity to receive an education or learn a trade;
- creating awareness campaigns about equal rights for girls and boys;
- better birth registration systems, so that more children are officially registered and given birth certificates;
- providing protection against gender-based violence, teenage pregnancies and female circumcision;
- providing information about menstrual hygiene;
- showing schoolchildren how best to wash their hands.

Through child sponsoring and the annual update, complete with photo, child sponsors are kept up to speed on what their contributions are spent on and the impact that they are having on the lives of the sponsored children. Some sponsors even correspond with their sponsor child. During the past year, 39,997 child sponsors from the Netherlands supported Plan International's work to the total tune of €13,751,000. Their contributions were used to implement projects in the communities of 45,408 sponsored children in

Africa, Asia and Latin America. Worldwide, Plan International was supported by 1,044,995 child sponsors, sponsoring a total of 1,158,157 children.

### **The impact of Covid-19**

The Covid-19 virus had far-reaching consequences for the countries in which Plan International is active. The healthcare systems in many of these countries were unable to cope with the effects of the virus. It is more difficult to combat the spread of the virus if soap and clean water are not freely available. We continued our current programmes as best we could and provided additional help where possible. For example, we distributed water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) packages in the communities of the sponsored children. We also supplied soap and even taught mothers how to make their own soap and children how to make reusable facemasks. Furthermore, through education about hand washing and hygiene, we instructed children and their families on the best ways of avoiding infection. We also provided mobile water points.

By distributing radios, we enabled people in communities to stay up to date on the latest official Covid-19 measures and news. We also sought out cooperation with other humanitarian organisations and local governments. Additionally, we made it possible for children to do home schooling, thus enabling them to continue learning remotely. Finally, we offered psycho-social counselling for families.

## **3.3 Lobbying in the Netherlands**

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Despite the Covid-19 virus, face-to-face contact with policymakers and politicians in the Netherlands was once again possible last year. We were able to meet the Netherlands' new Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Ms Schreinemacher, in person, for example, and we participated in several consultation forums on drafting the Ministry's new policy memorandum. Covid-19 continued to be a hindrance in international circles, however, which meant that conferences still had to be followed online.

### **She Leads**

In the run-up to the EU-Africa Summit on 17 and 18 February, Plan International worked closely with our European Union office and with Plan International in France. The objective was to draw attention to including youth participation and employment in the final statement. In collaboration with Nala Feminist Foundation and the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign network (GIMAC), a partner of She Leads, we organised an online event. During this event, several youngsters gave presentations and entered into dialogue with the Dutch Ambassador for Youth, Education and Work, Tijmen Rooseboom. The final statement now acknowledges the inclusion of women, young people and marginalised groups as an overall priority. Moreover, the Netherlands will stick to its ambition to play a leading role internationally in offering young people a real perspective.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) campaign kicked off in September 2021. To this end, Plan International spoke to Kati Piri (from the Dutch PvdA political party) and Jan Klink (VVD political party). Together with Aidsfonds, we spoke to Anne Kuik (CDA political party). In January, we spoke with Dutch Member of Parliament, Marieke Koekkoek (Volt political party) about the European Union's Africa Summit.

### **Menstrual health and hygiene**

This past year, an ambition of Plan International was for the Dutch coalition government to pay more attention to menstrual health and hygiene. And we succeeded! During the budget debate for Foreign

Trade and Development Cooperation on 25 November 2021, the Stoffer/Koekkoek motion on promoting menstrual health was adopted by the Dutch House of Representatives.

In her response, Minister Schreinemacher wrote that given the importance of menstrual health for the rights, health and the mental and social well-being of girls and women, the government will continue its efforts to champion menstrual health. At the end of May 2022, on the initiative of Plan International, Simavi and Population Services International, there was a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And while menstrual health and hygiene are not the highest priority for its government, in a multilateral context the Netherlands will certainly follow up on efforts so far on this important theme.

## **The Truth Gap**

Led by our director, a Plan International delegation presented the Plan International report entitled “The Truth Gap” to policymakers and politicians. The report was about misinformation and disinformation online, and their effects on girls and young women. It was well received by the Task Force on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and five members of the general commission on Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. As a follow-up to the report, we were invited to a roundtable discussion on digitisation, as part of the consultation process for the policy memorandum for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.

## **The sexual exploitation of children**

During the past three years, Terre des Hommes, Free a Girl, Defence for Children-ECPAT, ICCO (part of Cordaid) and Plan International have jointly lobbied for long-term funding to combat the sexual exploitation of children. This lobbying has finally borne fruit: on 18 May 2022, the government decided to allocate €5 million every year until 2026 towards combatting the sexual exploitation of children.

## **Platforms**

Like we do every year, Plan International proactively participated in a variety of lobbying platforms, including sector organisation Partos, SRHR+, WO=MEN and the Platform for Humanitarian Action. During the course of the year, all four platforms wrote several letters to decision-makers and provided input for the Internet consultation of the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. For the SRHR+ platform, we coordinated their input. For Partos, 10 input sessions were organised in the run-up to the publication of the Dutch government’s Africa strategy. In collaboration with Cordaid and WO=MEN, Plan International coordinated the session on gender equality with the participation of Plan International in Zimbabwe and South Sudan.

In February 2022, a meeting took place between several members of Partos and the new Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. Plan International participated in this meeting, during which a “10-point roadmap for a fair and sustainable world” was presented by Partos.

In May and June 2022, introductory talks were held between Dutch members of parliament and the Dutch Relief Alliance. Plan International participated in talks with representatives from the D66, PvdA and CDA political parties.

## **“Doing what the Netherlands is good at”**

In June 2022, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation published its policy memorandum, of which many of the priorities were recognised by Plan International. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) remains one of the main priorities, gender equality is now an integral part of Dutch policy, the Youth at Heart strategy is to be continued and an additional €150 million is to be made available for emergency aid by 2023.



## 3.4 Measuring results

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Measuring results is an indispensable part of Plan International's work. By carefully planning, monitoring and evaluating our projects and programmes, make timely adjustments. It also shows us which strategies and interventions work best in a particular context. To this end, we use a combination of quantitative and qualitative measurement methods. The figures obtained give us insights into the volume, while the qualitative information adds depth to the results.

Key highlights of the past year were the evaluations we carried out for our strategic partnerships, our water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes and our humanitarian projects. A total of 55 programme evaluations were carried out, including baseline measurements, final evaluations and needs assessments. These evaluations enable us to compare the results of a variety of programmes and share lessons learned. They also help us to embed what we learn into within our organisation.

### Transparency

At Plan International, transparency is very important. Every three months we publish our results in IATI (International Aid Transparency Initiative), which is the benchmark for transparency in finance and results in the development sector. We work closely with donors and alliance partners to optimise this publication. Our global programme activities, expenditures and results are also available on our website. They can be seen on a map of the world, please refer to: [www.planinternational.nl/hier-werken-we](http://www.planinternational.nl/hier-werken-we).

## 3.5 Innovation

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Innovation is a priority of the new long-term strategy that we developed this past year. By focusing more intensively on innovation, we expect to keep differentiating ourselves and be more competitive and effective in the realisation of our mission.

### A team dedicated to innovation, knowledge building and learning

Plan International aspires to be an innovative learning organisation, which is why we decided last year to form a team that will focus entirely on learning, innovation and knowledge building. By bringing together learning and innovation in one and the same team, programmatic innovations can be linked to the lessons that are learned during the implementation of our programmes. Moreover, it can then be made the responsibility of the team to innovate in the areas of applications, working methods and fundraising. The recruitment of team members was completed at the start of the new financial year.

### Innovations in private fundraising

To reach larger and new groups of potential private donors, this year we tested various communication channels with different types of content. We concluded that paid advertising via search engines and continuous online campaigns on social media are the most fruitful. During the year ahead we will therefore continue to recruit new sponsors this way.

## 3.6 Results of private fundraising: the acquisition and retention of sponsors

During the past year, the number of private project sponsors of Plan International increased by 8.4 per cent. We were able to recruit many project sponsors by going door to door, despite being forced by the Covid-19 measures to temporarily shut down this recruitment method. Furthermore, one of our recruitment agencies went bankrupt, bringing door-to-door activities to an almost complete standstill for three months. Another of our offices had capacity problems. These were caused by staff shortages due to Covid-19 infections and many recruiters finding work of a different nature.

Throughout the year we also recruited sponsors online, but to a lesser degree than the previous year. This was probably because the post Covid-19 reopening of society returned things to normal and people spent less time online. Changes in legislation governing recruiting through social media channels also had an impact.

As has been the case in previous years, this financial year saw a fall in the number of structural child sponsors. However, this fall was less than anticipated, partly as a result of new online registrations.

	Actual FY22	Actual FY21	Difference with FY21 in %
Total number of sponsored children	45.408	48.568	-6,5
Number of child sponsors	39.997	41.925	-4,6
Number of project sponsors	49.436	45.592	8,4
Total structural sponsors	89.433	87.517	2,2
Total one-time sponsors	14.670	19.649	-25,3
Total number of sponsors	104.103	107.166	-2,9

### Personal contact

At Plan International we consider it very important to maintain personal contact with our sponsors. It is the only way to remain attuned to their wishes, ideas and expectations. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, face-to-face meetings were again impossible this past year. However, we were able to partly compensate this with telephone calls and cards.

### 3.6.1 Public fundraising activities

The Giro555 campaign to combat Covid-19 in vulnerable countries was rounded off at the end of September 2021, with a final result of almost €9.4 million. The proceeds are being channelled into supporting vaccination campaigns and providing medical assistance to Covid-19 patients by the participating aid organisations, including Plan International. On 8 February 2022, the Giro555 campaign in support of victims of the conflict in Ukraine started up. Thanks to an impressive effort in the Netherlands, €168.9 million has already been collected in this financial year. The campaign will continue into the new financial year.

In addition to regular campaigns, Plan International carries out two public campaigns every year. Carried out towards the end of 2021, one of these was a campaign themed on child marriages and teenage pregnancy, in combination with education: “Change the world of girls and girls will change the world”. This campaign was conducted mainly online, supported by social media and a direct mailing. At the beginning of 2022, we ran an online campaign combatting child marriages, linked to the international campaign “Girls in crisis”. Unfortunately, due to disappointing results this campaign was discontinued.

#### La League: Champions of Change

Girls’ football is helping to reduce the inequality between girls and boys. Playing football helps girls to exercise and have fun. It also boosts their self-esteem and makes them stronger and more self-confident. That was the thinking behind La League, which put girls’ football in the spotlight. It was an initiative of Plan International, in collaboration with various partners, such as the Johan Cruyff Foundation and Women Win. In Brazil and Nicaragua, we used football to address gender inequality and prevent teenage pregnancies and child marriages, as well as give these girls some training in life skills. The programme’s pilot, which was financed by the National Postcode Lottery, the Pierre Bellon Foundation and the Chanel Foundation, ended last year in both these programme countries. During the coming years the programme in Brazil and Nicaragua will be continued with the aid of fundraising done in the participating countries. Fundraising events in the Netherlands, done in conjunction with the Dutch Football Association (KNVB), have, after due consultation, been terminated because of disappointing results.

#### Nicaragua

After the lockdown, the ball has been fully back in play in Nicaragua. However, due to political instability in the country, there were no major football tournaments. Following the termination of the programme there, the girls’ teams remained active and joined local competitions. The programme participants continued their efforts in combatting teenage pregnancy and attaining equal rights for boys and girls.

#### Brazil

In Brazil, the teams were given online training on gender equality and preventing teenage pregnancies and child marriages. This was done in collaboration with sexual health experts. Furthermore, fathers, mothers and caregivers were trained to support the adolescent girls who were participating in La League. Youngsters successfully lobbied to get concrete commitments from municipalities to organise activities that will contribute to the prevention of this problem. In the area covered by the project, we also carried out several activities to prevent Covid-19 infection, such as disseminating information, for example, and issuing prevention packages to the poorest households.

#### Positive evaluation

The pilot was positively evaluated in both Brazil and in Nicaragua. Playing football has made the girls more aware, empowered them and helped them to break gender stereotypes in their communities. The programme was also effective in preventing teenage pregnancies and combatting child marriages among the participants. During the past year, several learning moments were exploited to further develop the La League methodology, which means that the programme can now be widely applied in more countries in future.



### **Event Team La League**

During the year under review, we also planned the Team La League fundraising event. Unfortunately, despite starting the recruitment process in good time, this year we weren't able to recruit enough clubs. A key part of the recruitment campaign was that our partners, SportsGen and the KNVB, were able to get the Eredivisie (Dutch Premier League) ladies players and clubs on board. However, when only three of the nine clubs actually wanted to participate, we decided to cancel the event. Due to a lack of enthusiasm, this event will not be repeated.

### **Cycle for Plan**

Since 2015, Plan International has organised fundraising cycling tours through several of the countries in which we are active. On 1 March 2020, a global travel ban was imposed on all Plan International offices, effective until 1 January 2022, at the earliest. The six Cycle for Plan tours that were planned for 2020 in Guatemala, Malawi and Thailand were put on hold. In the past year we evaluated whether it would still be possible to organise these trips – and if so, how.

While the pandemic seems to be increasingly under control in Europe, unfortunately this cannot yet be said about the Cycle for Plan countries. Fragile healthcare systems and low vaccination rates in vulnerable communities in these countries would make it irresponsible to travel there in large groups. We have a responsibility to safeguard the security of the cyclists, staff and residents of the countries we intend to visit. In November, we therefore decided to definitively cancel the six editions of Cycle for Plan and not to organise any new trips. We informed all applicable participants, partners and country offices.

### **Run for Plan**

At the beginning of the financial year, Covid-19 measures forced us to also cancel running events such as the Dam tot Damloop (Amsterdam to Zandaam Run) and the City-Pier-City Run. Consequently, the Run for Plan teams that we had managed to recruit were not able to run. However, we were able to recruit Run for Plan teams for the Dam tot Damloop in September 2022. We recruited 49 participants.

## 3.7 Communication results

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By means of external communication, Plan International keeps our target group informed about and involved in what we do. We also try to increase Plan International's brand awareness through our own channels and by making the most of free publicity. To this end we use a mix of online and offline resources. We also glean information by monitoring online clicking behaviour, through responses to polls in online newsletters and through written questionnaires. This is how we find out what resonates with our target group.

### Language policy

Language, of course, is a crucial aspect of communication. This is why, last year, we developed and implemented a policy for the use of language in our external communication. The objective is to use less jargon, pay more attention to inclusiveness and to avoid prejudices and assumptions. In doing so, we have looked at the social discussion and that within the non-profit sector. What's more, in collaboration with students from Hogeschool Utrecht (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences), we also researched language perception among Plan International's target groups.

### 3.7.1 Communication campaigns and activities

In 2021, our communication activities focused heavily on the effects that crises have on girls and young women. Crises like the Covid-19 pandemic, conflicts and climate change affect adolescent girls proportionately more because they are more vulnerable to violence, discrimination and exploitation. They are also at greater risk of succumbing to child marriages and teenage pregnancy and of being forced to drop out of school. We have tried to draw attention to this through our own communication channels, including our website, social media, newsletters and the donor magazine Girls first. We also used the Stop the Clock and Rewrite Her Story campaigns, as well as publishing articles in national media.

### World Girls' Day 2021

Every year, in the run-up to World Girls' Day on 11 October, Plan International draws attention to the predicament of girls and young women worldwide. During the past year, one of the ways we did this was by publishing the annual State of the World's Girls report. This report focused on the disastrous effect that online disinformation, misinformation and intimidation can have on girls and young women. In many countries, the Internet is one of the few places that girls can go to for information on topics such as menstruation, pregnancy, contraception and abortion. False or misleading information online can therefore have major repercussions for girls' well-being.

This report was presented to the members of the standing committee for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. We were also successful in bringing the research to the attention of the national media, which resulted in excellent publicity for Plan International. In addition to garnering editorial attention in various media platforms, we also ran advertisements in national newspapers and on social media. These put into the spotlight all the courageous girls and young women who, often in very trying circumstances, are fighting to attain equal rights and opportunities for themselves.

### 3.7.2 In the media

Plan International continuously draws attention to its work by exploiting editorial exposure in the media. In this way, we ensure that topics such as gender inequality, child marriages, female circumcision, menstrual taboos and emergency aid activities find their way onto the agenda.

A few highlights of the past year are listed below.

1. Research known as Bloody Honest, that Plan International carried out in May 2022 in the context of Menstrual Health Day, generated a great deal of publicity across several media platforms. These included Trouw, NOS Radio 1 News, LINDA, Metro and various local newspapers, such as Noordhollands Dagblad, Haarlems Dagblad and De Gooi en Eemlander.
2. A lot of media attention was generated by the Giro555 campaign for Ukraine. Several publications carried information about the psycho-social help and protection that Plan International provides.
3. One year after the explosion in Beirut, the Giro555 support campaign is still firmly on the agenda. Plan International chairs this campaign.
4. Research, carried out in the framework of World Girls' Day, into female leadership and how disinformation and misinformation affects girls, received a lot of attention in the press. Among other platforms, it was featured by NOS Radio 1 News, Nederlands Dagblad, Het Financieel Dagblad, Metro and Grazia.
5. In the area of paid publicity, we ran the first editions of a series of monthly advertorials in the NRC daily newspaper. These first editions focused on menstrual health and child marriages.

#### Own media channels

Social media (particularly Facebook and Instagram) and our website [www.planinternational.nl](http://www.planinternational.nl) remain Plan International's most important media channels.

	Total FY22 Actual	Total FY21 Actual
<b>Website</b>		
Number of unique visitors	495,125	572,028
<b>Social media</b>		
Facebook (Likes)	96,159	97,610
Twitter (Followers)	19,529	19,667
LinkedIn (Followers)	13,802	11,800
Instagram (Followers)	6,195	5,930
<b>Girls First magazine</b>		
Annual circulation, print	81,725 (2 editions)	123,992 (3 editions)
Total sent online	64,943 (2 editions)	99,313 (3 editions)
<b>Online newsletter (annual circulation)</b>		
Child and project sponsors	825,025 (14 editions)	293,911 (7 editions)
Interested parties/leads	512,639 (16 editions)	514,349 (14 editions)
One-time sponsors (total 9 editions)	55,317	307,087
Former donors (total 4 editions)	136,948	142,478



### **Boys and men being bloody honest about menstruation**

Under the appropriate name of “Bloody Honest”, Plan International carried out research into taboos about menstruation, surveying 4,127 boys (aged 15-24) in Brazil, Indonesia, Uganda and the Netherlands.

From the results of the survey, it transpired that boys in all four countries think almost the same way about menstruation. They consider it dirty, shameful and sometimes downright disgusting. More than one in three boys also feel that a girl should keep it to herself when she is menstruating. The research was carried out in the run-up to Menstrual Health Day, which was on 28 May 2022. The results have important implications for future programmes in the field of Menstrual Health and the role to be played in them by boys and men.

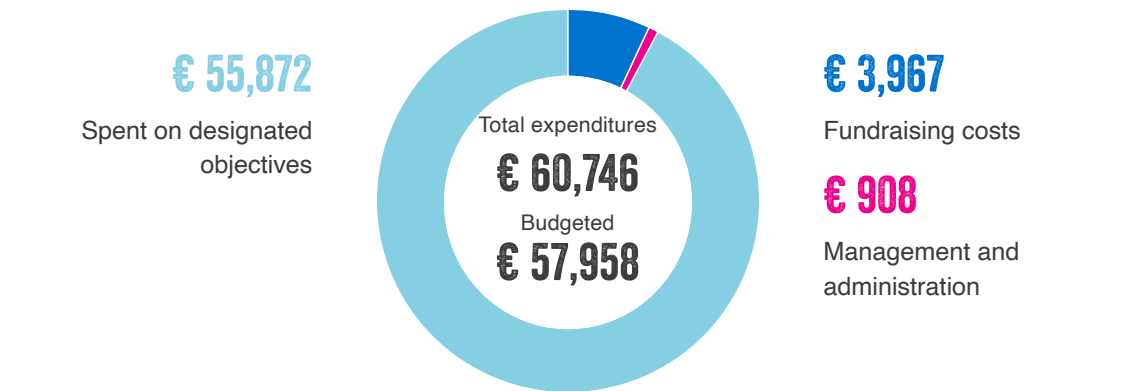
A nice-to-know titbit is that it emerged that 92 per cent of boys want menstruation to be normalised, through the dissemination of better information, through discussions and via the media.

## 3.8 Financial results

### 3.8.1 Expenditures

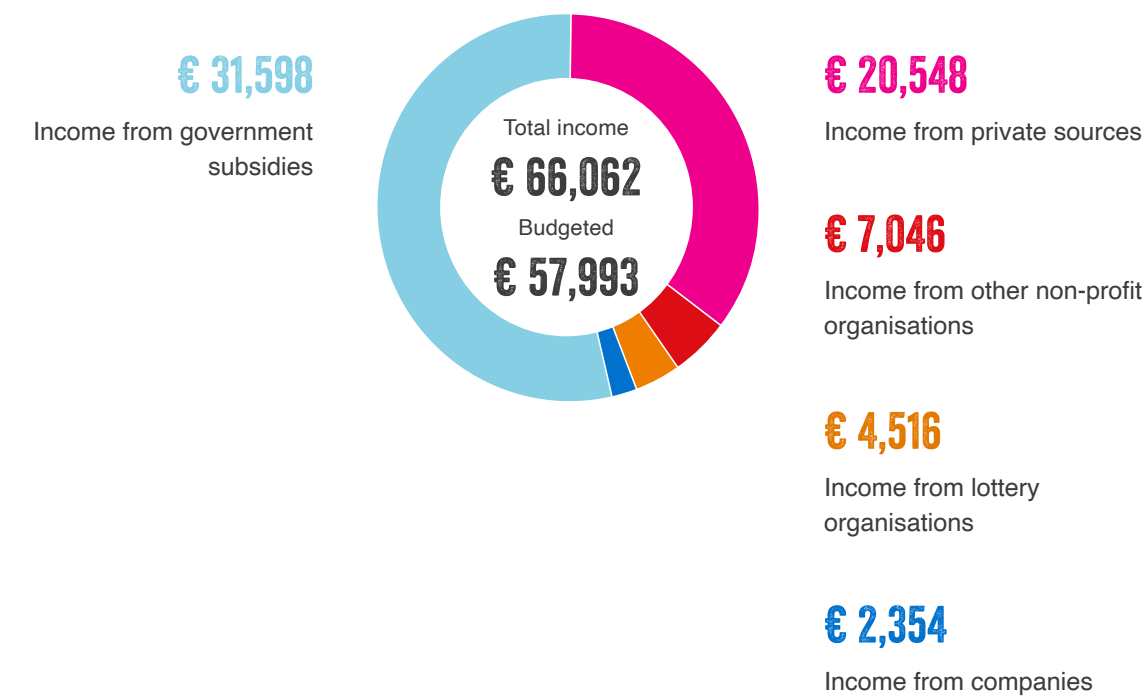
Plan International makes the received funds available for the designated objective as soon as possible. In the year under review, 92 per cent of total expenditures was spent on the designated objectives, 6.5 per cent was spent on recruitment costs and 1.5 per cent on administrative costs.

Amounts \* €1000



### 3.8.2 Incomes

Amounts \* €1000



### **Total income from government subsidies**

The total income from government subsidies in the 2021-2022 year was marginally higher than expected (by 0.1 per cent). This was mainly explained by the slight increase of approvals for emergency aid applications, particularly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Income from private individuals**

This pertains to one-off and structural gifts and donations to our programmes from sponsors or third parties through child sponsorship, or to our projects through project sponsorship. The objective of all our projects is to attain equal opportunities and rights for girls and young women, such as in the areas of protection, education and employment, for example.

In the year under review, we actively recruited child sponsors and project sponsors through online channels and via direct mailings. Compared with the previous year, income from sponsorship (child sponsorship and project sponsorship combined) fell by 1.4 per cent. This fall was mainly due to the cancellation of planned events, including cancellations due to Covid-19 measures. As we expected, income from legacies was also slightly lower than during the previous financial year.

Worldwide, Plan International supported 1,158,157 sponsored children in 2022, with almost 50,000 children (and their communities) supported from the Netherlands. Last year, a total of €13.75 million was raised by child sponsors.

### **Income from non-profit organisations**

This mainly pertains to funds made available by Giro555 (the Cooperating Aid Organisations), of which Plan International has been a member since 2015. This income was €6 million higher than budgeted, thanks to the campaign for Ukraine in February/March 2022. It was not budgeted because income of this nature (emergency aid in the event of disasters) is difficult to predict.

### **Income from lottery organisations**

Since 1998, Plan International has been a beneficiary in the Netherlands of the National Postcode Lottery and has received an annual contribution of €3.2 million since 2014/2015. In 2019/2020, as part of an additional lottery draw, the National Postcode Lottery approved our project application for Talents Unlimited – a future for Syrian youth in Jordan, which was valued at €2.2 million. In the year under review, €1.36 million was spent on the programme.

### **Income from companies (business partners)**

Business Partners contributed €2.35 million to our programmes, €0.6 million more than we budgeted. This was despite the effects of the Covid crisis, which was particularly noticeable in this sector.

In addition to project contributions and regular donations, Plan International also received donations in kind from DLA Piper in the form of free legal support and from Accenture in the form of non-billable consultancy hours.





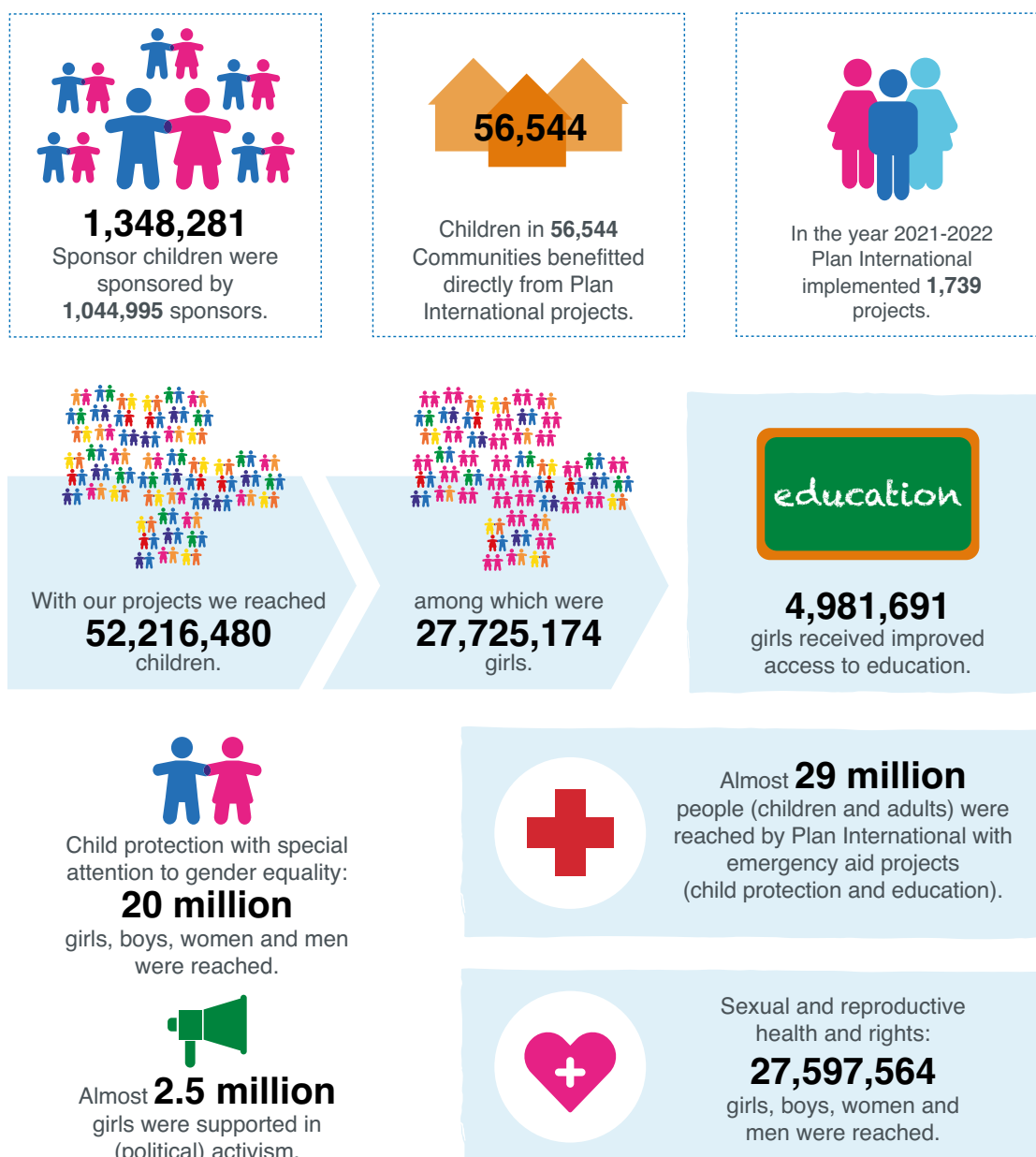
## 4. An impression of the results of the Plan International Federation

Image: Children cycling home from school in Siem Reap, Cambodia © Hartmut Schwarzbach / Argus



## 4. An impression of the results of the Plan International Federation

Plan International in the Netherlands is part of the Plan International Federation. With projects in more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, Plan International champions the rights of children and young people all over the world. We are also committed to improving compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with a special focus on the opportunities and rights of girls. A graphical summary of the 2021-2022 results of the Plan International Federation is given below.







## 5. Support and cooperation

Image: Young women at a She Leads event in Accra, Ghana © Femnet



## 5. Support and cooperation

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The relationship we enjoy with our supporters, whether they are private sponsors or institutional or business partners, serves as an important societal basis for our work. We are grateful for their support, be it of a financial nature or in the form of time, expertise, networking or even just a signature on a petition. Without our supporters, we at Plan International would never be able to realise our designated objectives.

For this reason, we find it important to thank these supporters for their respective contributions and involve them in our work. The way we do this is by telling them and showing them what we are doing in our projects and the differences that their contributions are making. This also implies that we feel obliged to inform them if results are disappointing or if a particular method fails to deliver the hoped-for result. We try to inspire these supporters, both online and offline, with stories about the resilient girls and young women whose lives, with aid of Plan International, they have helped to change for the better.

### 5.1 Private sponsors

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Sponsors are Plan International's most loyal supporters. We attach great value to their opinion, which is why we regularly invite them to think along with us. And we do so in all kinds of ways: via social media, for example, or by telephone. This has led to some very enlightening interactions. In a two-yearly loyalty survey, we gauge how satisfied our sponsors are and try to find out what their expectations are. The last survey was carried out in December 2021, and it gave us some excellent insights that we will incorporate into our communication activities.

#### Reachability

Plan International can be reached during office hours by telephone, e-mail and through contact forms. We answer questions within two working days. We also answer questions and comments on our social media channels, with a response time of four hours. Our social media channels are also checked several times a day during the weekend and any urgent questions posted on them are then processed immediately. Furthermore, we also stay in touch with sponsors by telephone on a variety of matters related to their sponsorship, or just to make sure that everything is still as they think it should be.

#### Sponsors' complaints

If it implies that we are not living up to a sponsor's expectations, Plan International will register a sponsor's comment as a complaint. It might even be the case that the sponsor in question doesn't necessarily see it as a complaint, but we still register it as such. Based on this premise, this year we registered a total of 1,360 complaints. Most of the complaints concerned the recruitment of new donors. During the year under review, recruitment was at a partial standstill, after which we focused on door-to-door recruitment. Complaints about the cancellation process were also received. During the past year, staff shortages meant that the call centre we used was not easy to reach. This was a challenge faced by the whole sector.

## 5.2 The government, the EU and other institutional donors

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### Long-term partnerships with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In 2021, we embarked on three strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: She Leads, Break Free! and Leaders of Peace. After closing contracts with partners and carrying out baseline measurements, the partners in these alliances got on with the implementation process, together with women's and youth organisations in the relevant programme countries.

Plan International has also partnered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the theme of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). In the context of the WASH SDG consortium, which runs between 2017 and 2022 and has a budget of €60 million, Simavi is the contracting party of the Ministry. In the final phase of the partnership, Plan International and its partners are focusing on consolidating the results and making arrangements with local authorities about follow-up activities.

When it comes to humanitarian aid, our most important partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the Dutch Relief Alliance, with which we finance approximately 50 per cent of our humanitarian projects. The total expenditure on humanitarian projects amounted to around €18 million last year, when Plan International and its partners implemented humanitarian projects in Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso.

More information about these programmes can be found in chapter 3.

### European Commission

As a member of the worldwide Plan International Federation, the Netherlands office of Plan International works closely with Plan International offices in other countries to ensure that income received from the European Commission is optimally used. To maximise success and efficiency, this year we set up a partnership, or compact, comprising several Plan International offices for every programme country. These compacts immediately had a positive effect on fundraising and we submitted more than six funding applications. Relatively speaking, these have been quite successful; three have already been approved and we are still awaiting the outcome of a final application.

In the Philippines, we started a project funded by the European Commission combatting the online sexual abuse of children. A regional programme was also started in Thailand, Bangladesh and Nepal to strengthen the position of youth and women's organisations in achieving their rights.

Our collaboration with the European Union's Emergency Relief Fund, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) was also successful. In the 2022 financial year, we implemented five ECHO projects: in South Sudan, Peru, the Dominican Republic and two in Ethiopia.

More information about projects carried out in collaboration with the European Commission can also be found in chapter 3.

## 5.3 Cooperation with the National Postcode Lottery

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Plan International has been a proud partner of the National Postcode Lottery in the Netherlands since 1998. Thanks to this collaboration we can invest more in programmes that focus on securing a better future for children and equal rights and opportunities. During the past financial year, the National Postcode Lottery supported us to the tune of €3,150,000 for basic expenses and for the development of innovative projects.

And partly as a result of this contribution, we were able to quickly respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and the new circumstances and challenges that it posed. We were, for example, able to invest in the necessary digital resources for distance learning in our programme countries. Additionally, the National Postcode Lottery helped to facilitate network activities, such as (online) galas and the Green Challenge Awards. And now, talks are underway with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) about a possible collaboration themed on Climate and Youth.

### Innovative projects

The flexibility of the National Postcode Lottery makes it possible to start many innovative projects that would otherwise not have gotten off the ground. Together with Oxfam Novib, for example, we were able to start up the innovative emergency aid project B-Ready. This enables us to be quicker in helping needy people with digital solutions and cash transfers.

A project that was made possible with funding from an extra lottery draw is Talents Unlimited. This project is helping youngsters in Syria and Jordan to obtain recognised vocational diplomas, thus offering them a more promising future. The project was scheduled to be completed this year, but was delayed by the Covid lockdowns. To avoid a situation in which vulnerable children would not have been able to continue learning, Talents Unlimited furnished them with tablets and internet access so that they could keep learning at home.

### Communication channels

The communication channels of the National Postcode Lottery have provided extensive exposure for our mission and the projects that we implement. During World Girl's Day on 11 October 2021, for example, we guested on a television programme called Koffietijd (Coffee Break) and we also featured in a programme called 1 tegen 100 (1 against 100). These opportunities enabled us to inform a huge audience about what we do.

## 5.4 Cooperation with companies

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During the past year, we cooperated closely with Dutch companies and their institutions in promoting equal rights for girls and young women. This cooperation varied from financing projects to setting up activities and campaigns linked to a payment-per-product, service, turnover or profit. In-kind donations were also provided, such as the support of personnel/volunteers and the provision of free goods and services to Plan International.

### Accenture

In collaboration with Accenture, in Colombia we started up the Green Acceleration Pilot in support of young eco-entrepreneurs. Together with Socialab and sustainability experts, we gave entrepreneurs the knowledge and skills they need to grow their sustainable businesses. Accenture consultants again volunteered to help Plan International this year, supporting us in the area of online marketing and data analysis. During Girls in ICT Day, Plan International and Accenture organised workshops for more than 80 secondary school students at three Accenture offices. Furthermore, Accenture also provided free Design Thinking and Agile training for Plan International colleagues all over the world.

### AkzoNobel

AkzoNobel has supported Plan International for 28 years: a collaboration that we are very proud of! For the next three years, AkzoNobel is to support one of Plan International's youth economic empowerment projects in India. Part of this project will be implemented in collaboration with AkzoNobel's painter academy in Delhi, in which vulnerable young people – particularly young women – are being trained to become painters. These women are demonstrating that they both can, and want to, work in this sector.

### ASN Bank and Adecco

Pokhara is a major tourist destination in Nepal and most of its population come from a migrant background. Of the ethnic minorities that comprise this population, women are the most disadvantaged because they are often less well educated and thus have fewer job opportunities. Our youth economic empowerment project in Pokhara is giving young women skills training in the tourism sector, which is in line with the prevailing market demand in the city. It also makes sure that at least 80 per cent of these women get decent jobs. The project is being financed by Plan International with support from ASN Bank and Adecco.

### ASML Foundation

With the assistance of ASML Foundation, we have set up a project in marginalised rural communities in China. In this project youngsters - particularly girls – are being taught about Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM) and how to develop a growth mindset. Following a successful first phase, we have now started a second project in a new region.

### TUI Care Foundation

Since 2016, Plan International has been collaborating with the TUI Care Foundation. Together, we have set up the TUI Academy in the Dominican Republic, where vulnerable young people – particularly young women – are being trained for jobs in the tourism sector. In 2022 we also started up a TUI Academy in Thailand. Although the tourism sector worldwide was hit particularly hard by the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism in the Dominican Republic and Thailand is now taking off again, with hotels and resorts reopening. This is a sector in which young people are still highly motivated to work.



### **Plan International is also well supported by smaller companies**

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) support Plan International in a variety of ways. For example, we receive monthly donations for projects in the areas of employment, protection, emergency aid and education. Plan International also receives income from targeted marketing campaigns, whereby a fixed amount or a percentage of a product or service rendered is donated.

These are just a few of the companies that support us, and how they do so.

- Jeh Jewels sells Equality Earrings, with a percentage of the proceeds going to support our projects combatting child marriages.
- Pavone Lingerie and the Arthur&Willemijn clothing retailer donate a fixed amount every month.
- Legista Advocatuur supports us with a fixed donation every month and provides expertise in the areas of ICT and law.

### **Donations in kind**

Our partner DLA Piper is one of the largest law firms in the world and donates non-billable hours to Plan International every year. Between July 2021 and June 2022, DLA Piper gave us 174 hours of free legal advice.

## 5.5 Ambassadors

Last year, the Covid-19 pandemic once again limited our activities and collaboration with Plan International ambassadors in the Netherlands: Sarina Wiegman, Simone Kleinsma, Moïse Trustfull and Giovanca. Nevertheless, this didn't at all dampen their enthusiasm in drawing attention to the need for equality for girls, particularly during our campaigns. In late 2021, for example, Giovanca literally gave a voice to the campaign "Change the world of girls and girls will change the world", by recording the voice-over for their videos. Furthermore, all our ambassadors participated in the campaign video "Every strong woman was once a girl" for International Women's Day on 8 March, 2022. To highlight a survey on menstrual shame and boys' attitudes towards menstruation, Moïse and her partner Kaj featured in the video "Bloody Honest" in which she asked him questions about the subject. This video generated attention on social media around Menstrual Health Day on 28 May.

### AMBASSADORS SHATTER TABOOS

Around Menstrual Health Day, we used a variety of social media posts to draw attention to our Bloody Honest survey. For example, a video was shared on our social media channels in which our ambassador Moïse Trustfull discusses menstruation and the taboos that surround it with her boyfriend Kaj van der Voort. This video reached 800,000 people on Instagram and Facebook and generated 2,200 clicks to the survey.



40% OF DUTCH  
GIRLS HAVE  
SKIPPED SCHOOL/  
WORK AT SOME  
POINT DUE TO  
MENSTRUATION.

Image: A screenshot of the video Bloody Honest in which Moïse Trustfull and Kaj van der Voort discuss menstruation

## 5.6 Other partnerships

### **Giro555 - Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties (SHO)**

Plan International has been a member of Giro 555 (Cooperating Aid Organisations) since 2015. It is an initiative in which, in the event of an exceptional disaster, 11 aid organisations join forces under the collective name of Giro555. During the past financial year, two campaigns were carried out.

On 6 May, 2021, Giro555 organisations reacted to Covid-19. Plan International provided aid in three districts of Nepal until July 2022. You can read more about this in paragraph 3.1.4.

On 28 February, 2022, Giro555 came into action on behalf of Ukraine. Plan International used part of the raised funds to provide medical and psycho-social support to girls, women and their families in Ukraine and its neighbouring countries. You can read more about this in paragraph 3.1.4.

### **Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA)**

In the year under review, Plan International implemented emergency aid programmes that were financed by the Dutch Relief Alliance, a coalition of 14 Dutch aid organisations acting in collaboration with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Dutch Relief Alliance enables participating organisations to respond in a timely and effective manner to major international crises. Within the framework of this coalition, Plan International focuses primarily on the protection of children, education, combatting sexual and gender-based violence and providing direct financial support (Cash Voucher Assistance).

In the year under review, we implemented emergency aid programmes financed by the Dutch Relief Alliance in South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Sudan (lead organisation). With the support of the Dutch Relief Alliance, we also provided acute emergency aid in Burkina Faso (lead organisation) and Mozambique (lead organisation). We were also actively involved in the Dutch Relief Alliance through our participation in several working groups. You can read more about these projects in paragraph 3.1.4.

### **Knowledge exchange on emergency aid**

Plan International is an active member of KUNO, the Platform for Humanitarian Knowledge Exchange in the Netherlands (see <https://www.kuno-platform.nl/>). KUNO unites people in the humanitarian sector, helping academics, policymakers, organisations and institutions to learn from one another and to jointly reflect on and debate about emergency aid. During the past financial year, Plan International employees have followed courses, workshops and events that will further develop their knowledge of humanitarian themes such as migration, food security, the conflict in Ukraine and diversity and inclusion.



A group of young children, likely of Southeast Asian descent, are gathered together, holding up white paper airplanes they have made. The child in the foreground, a young boy, is smiling broadly and wearing a red shirt with a Superman graphic. Other children are visible behind him, also holding up their paper airplanes. The background is slightly blurred, showing more children and a blue wall.

## 6. The organisation

Image: Seuk (7) and his friends show off the paper aeroplanes they made in their reading club, Laos  
© Plan International



## 6. The organisation

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### 6.1 Organisational structure

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At Plan International, a statutory distinction is made between management and supervision, in accordance with the Supervisory Board model (two tier). The Managing Director steers the organisation, in close cooperation with the management team. The relationship between the Management Board and the Supervisory Board has been laid down in the statutes, in internal regulations of the Supervisory Board and in a separate Management Charter. The internal regulations comply with the guidelines of the Good Governance Code. The Management Board and all members of the Supervisory Board are signatories of the declaration, as it pertains to independence and the prevention of conflicts of interest. For more information about the responsibilities of the Management Board and the Supervisory Board go to [www.planinternational.nl/over-plan](http://www.planinternational.nl/over-plan).

### 6.2 The employees

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During the year under review, Plan International had an average of 103.73 FTEs, which corresponds with an average of 110 employees (an average of 65 per cent full-time and 35 per cent part-time). Of these employees, 75 per cent identified as women and 25 per cent as men. The average age of the employees was 44.

In keeping with government measures, during the first part of the year under review employees frequently worked from home. As soon as the government scrapped recommendations to work from home, we officially started hybrid working in April 2022. Together with the Works Council, we formulated an appropriate hybrid working policy. In its formulation, a balance was sought between a flexible way of working from home or the office and maintaining the necessary connection. The latter by realised by providing a pleasant working environment and organising various activities. Line managers attended workshops to learn how best to manage hybrid teams.

During the year ahead a lot of attention will again be paid to leadership and team development. In January 2022, the results of the employee satisfaction survey were presented. The general consensus was that, as an employer, employees rated Plan International with a score of 7.2. Areas of improvement mentioned by the employees will be tackled in the coming year.

Plan International is not party to a collective labour agreement. We have our own salary policy, which is periodically reviewed against the sector benchmark. Every year, provided this is financially feasible, Plan International indexes salaries on the basis of the consumer price index of Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Salaries have been indexed for the financial year under review, 2021-2022, and the coming financial year, 2022-2023. The salary policy for members of the Management Board and the Supervisory Board is explained on page 113.

## 6.3 Diversity

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Diversity and respect in the workplace are very important at Plan International. There is no place for inequality, either in the workplace or in our programmes. For more information about this, see chapter 7.2. During the employee recruitment process Plan International goes to great pains to invite all candidates who want to apply their talents to benefit the organisation, regardless of their cultural background, gender, age, or religious or sexual preferences. Thanks to these efforts, along with the changing labour market, our workforce is becoming increasingly diverse. In terms of the management, 62 per cent identify as women and 38 per cent as men. The Supervisory Board is chaired by a woman and in the year under review 57 per cent of the members were women and 43 per cent men.

## 6.4 Volunteers

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In the Team Sponsorship Services department, 40 volunteers translated extensive documents that we send to our child sponsors during important updates. Furthermore, 10 translators helped us translate correspondence between sponsored children and sponsors.

## 6.5 The Plan International Works Council

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The Plan International Works Council (WC) comprises seven members; five of them identify as women and two as men. The WC members represent a cross section of long-serving and recently recruited Plan employees, from different clusters and teams. During the year under review, elections were organised and the composition of the WC changed from five members to seven. New members followed a WC starter course and the whole WC followed joint training in the field of team building and capacity building.

The WC is a consultative and representative advisory body that plays a dual role: standing up for the interests of the Plan International employees, while also representing the interests of the organisation as a whole. The WC convened its own meetings every three weeks (more often if it was deemed necessary) and met with the Managing Director and a representative of the HR department every six weeks. Depending on what was on the agenda, a member of the management team also joined when necessary, or there would be a separate consultation with members of the management team.

In March 2022, consultation took place between the WC and members of the Supervisory Board about Plan International's new strategy. In the year under review, the WC rounded off a request for a recommendation on the move to new premises. Its recommendation was positive. Furthermore, a request for a recommendation on merging the Institutional Donors team and the Business Partnerships team into a single Institutional & Business Partnerships team was also rounded off. This was subject to a number of preconditions, which have largely been adopted by the Management Board. Because the initial proposal was not clearly substantiated and would therefore enjoy insufficient support within the organisation, the WC gave a negative recommendation on the new, yet-to-be-formed Impact Evidence & Applied Learning team. After a revised request for the establishment of this team was submitted, the WC gave a positive recommendation, but subject to preconditions. The WC was also actively involved with aspects relating to the organisation's working conditions policy, the impact of Covid-19, the employee satisfaction survey and hybrid working.



A young girl with dark skin and hair, wearing a blue hijab and a purple dress with a white lace trim, is standing in front of a chalkboard. She is holding a piece of chalk in her right hand and is in the process of writing on the board. The chalkboard has some faint, previously written numbers and symbols, including a large '3' and some less legible markings. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

## 7. Managing risks and uncertainties

Image: A young girl writes on the blackboard in a childcare centre in Kibaha district, Tanzania  
© Plan International / Hendri Lombard

## 7. Managing risks and uncertainties

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Plan International's risk policy and risk management system complies with the risk policy of the international headquarters (according to the ISO 31000:2018 standard). This policy minimises the likelihood of mistakes and enables the organisation to be alert to and proactive about potential risks, and to identify, monitor and mitigate possible weaknesses. In this way, the likelihood of damage and detrimental effects is kept to a minimum. If you go to [www.planinternational.nl/over-plan/keurmerken](https://www.planinternational.nl/over-plan/keurmerken) you can read how Plan International deals with financial risks and avoids potential calamities. You can also read more there about contractual obligations.

### 7.1 The repercussions of Covid-19 for our organisation

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Once again, the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on our organisation – and particularly on the people we work with, and for.

#### **Programme implementation**

In many countries in which Plan International works, the pandemic is still ongoing. This is sometimes obvious, other times less obvious. Most of our programme countries still have little prospect of an adequate vaccination programme. This is having a major impact on populations with vulnerabilities and in some regions is impeding the implementation of our programmes. Wherever possible and necessary during the year under review, we adapted our programmes to the prevailing situation.

For example, more attention was diverted to WASH projects and to girls who face increased risks of child marriages because of the economic crisis and school closures. New digital tools were developed to reach groups with vulnerabilities. We also placed more emphasis on access to education and youth economic empowerment programmes, mainly to give girls and young women the opportunity to get an education and earn a decent living.

#### **Income and reserves**

Despite what was a very uncertain year, income from private fundraising was more or less in line with expectations, despite the cancellation of all fundraising events. Face-to-face and door-to-door fundraising activities could largely continue, albeit with occasional interruptions due to government measures. Despite Covid-19, the realised programmatic incomes were more or less in line with budgeted expectations. There were, however, several programmes in which progress faltered somewhat. We are now getting back up to speed across the board.

#### **Supply chain**

Despite what was a complex economic climate, the collaboration with strategic suppliers was never at risk. During the past financial year, Covid-19 measures made it necessary to pause door-to-door recruitment activities a few times. However, recruitment is now back on track. Moreover, the call centre that we use for customer service had to contend with absenteeism and staff shortages. This was a



problem that affected the whole sector. We continuously monitor these services and we have noticed that the situation is now improving.

### **Internal control measures**

Plan International employees now make fewer trips to our programme countries. This is because of Covid-19, the impact that travel has on the climate and our intention to delegate more responsibilities and activities to the programme countries themselves. This means that we will now do a lot more digitally, which brings with it additional requirements in the area of ICT security. Working from home frequently and the use of new digital applications last year necessitated investments in digital security and the internal awareness of the importance of data security and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

### **Continuity**

While Covid-19 is still driving uncertainty, at the moment we do not expect its impact to have a materially detrimental effect on our financial condition or liquidity.

## **7.2 Combatting unacceptable behaviour**

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At Plan International, we differentiate between child protection and safeguarding. In our programmes, we focus on child protection and address societal issues such as child marriages and violence against children. We strengthen the systems that protect children. Parents and guardians, schools, care providers, the police, governments, societal organisations and the children themselves all play key roles in this.

Safeguarding pertains to the protection of children and young people against abuses committed by Plan International. At Plan International we take preventive and responsive measures to ensure that no child or young person is harmed as a result of his or her involvement with the organisation. Plan International does everything in its power to prevent, identify and punish any unacceptable behaviour.

The comprehensive policy for the protection of children and young people is laid out in the Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People. Our teams must follow guidelines, such as for safeguarding in sponsorship, in their communication and in the programmes themselves. Plan International also adheres to the guidelines of the Sphere Project (Minimum Standards in Disaster Response) and the Do No Harm principles (preventing the negative consequences that conflict situations have for children).

### **Reporting unacceptable sexual behaviour**

In the year under review, there were no reports of unacceptable sexual behaviour at Plan International in the Netherlands. Between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022, 20 incidents of unacceptable sexual behaviour involving children or young people were reported worldwide via Plan International's international headquarters.

All victims and their families were offered support and they were put in touch with organisations that provide specialist care in areas that include medical and psycho-social support. All the victims were female; 14 of them were younger than 18 and six were older than 18. Eleven of these victims were project participants.

In three cases a Plan International employee was involved, while in 17 cases it involved external parties (employees of partner organisations, volunteers and persons who collaborate with Plan International in

some capacity). In all cases, the perpetrators were fired or the involvement of the offending employee was terminated. The offenses were investigated by the local authorities, with the exception of one case in which the victim decided not to press charges.

### **Other forms of unacceptable behaviour**

Worldwide, there were 35 incidents involving unacceptable behaviour with children or young people. In 12 incidents physical, verbal or emotional abuse played a role. Six of these involved a Plan International employee, while six involved external parties (employees of partner organisations, volunteers or local partners who collaborate with Plan International in some capacity).

Twenty-three incidents involved violations of the safeguarding policy, such as unaccompanied/inappropriate contact, visits or communication with children or young people or the improper implementation of procedures that might put children and young people at risk. No children or young people suffered negative consequences as a result.

In all these incidents, the well-being of the children and young people that were involved was investigated and documented. Furthermore, Plan International focused emphatically on additional training for employees, warnings, stricter control of professional behaviour and dismissal where appropriate.

### **Reports of intimidation, bullying and discrimination**

Plan International has a zero-tolerance policy regarding intimidation, bullying and discrimination in the workplace. Last year, Plan International received three reports from an external confidential adviser in the Netherlands. This year, we paid additional attention to unacceptable behaviour. We invited the external confidential adviser to explain his activities, for example. What's more, if someone feels that he or she has been the victim of unacceptable behaviour, the procedure for getting in touch with an internal contact person has been simplified. We also organised a psychological safety workshop for managers. This will be rolled out further among the teams during the coming year.

Plan International's Anti-Racism Task Force works towards institutionalising anti-racism within the organisation, its work, the Plan International Federation and within the sector generally. We do so by creating opportunities for colleagues to think and to learn about power, privilege and prejudice. The Task Force also helps the organisation to create a working environment in which racism and racist behaviour can be freely and safely discussed and addressed. The Task Force also contributes to Plan International's objective of incorporating anti-racism and racial equality into its programming, lobbying, campaigning and communications.

Here is an overview of what the Task Force has already achieved:

1. contributed to the development of the new strategy, with a special focus on anti-racism, decolonisation and localisation;
2. provided feedback on various public statements, including those on Plan International's website;
3. translated and facilitated the adoption of Plan International's anti-racism principles;
4. lobbied internally for the roll-out of Power, Privilege and Biases training;
5. organised the first Power, Privilege and Biases training for employees, in collaboration with the Plan International Global Hub;
6. supported the Human Resources department in the revision of anti-racism policy documents;
7. participated in the Plan International Federation anti-racism council;
8. provided monthly anti-racism updates.

## Reports of fraud

Plan International takes fraud prevention very seriously, which is why we follow a zero-tolerance fraud policy, as is described in our Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery Policy. Furthermore, in our international headquarters we have a separate Counter Fraud Unit that investigates cases and suspected cases of fraud. During the year under review, there were no cases of fraud in the Netherlands. However, there were eight cases of suspected fraud in projects financed through Plan International in the Netherlands. Some of these cases are currently being investigated and in two of them it has already been established that no irregularities took place. Should it subsequently be proven that irregularities have taken place in any of the other reports of fraud, it will automatically lead to the recovery of the amount that is involved and it might well lead to the dismissal of the person or persons involved. Furthermore, if it is deemed necessary, the relevant internal rules and enforcement procedures will be tightened.

## 7.3 Operational and security risks

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Plan International's worldwide Safety & Security policy limits the unavoidable safety risks of employees and visitors whose work obliges them to travel to the countries in which Plan International's programmes are implemented. Due to Covid-19, very few such trips were made by Plan International employees in the year under review. Everyone who travels on behalf of Plan International is obliged to follow safety training, to limit the risks as much as possible.

Concerning business travel, Plan International made more sustainable choices. This was driven by our awareness of the impact on the climate and the need to be economical in our use of financial resources and time. With these measures, in the coming year we aim to reduce our CO2 travel footprint by 25 per cent compared with 2019.





## 8. Sustainability

Image: Petronila (22) with her 12-month-old daughter, Alta Verapaz District, Guatemala © Plan International/Nelson Cadenas



## 8. Sustainability

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### Girls and climate change

At least 85 per cent of the world's population is affected by climate change, with approximately 218 million people being impacted by natural disasters every year. Climate change is making extreme weather phenomena like prolonged droughts even more commonplace. This, in turn, is causing crops to fail and exacerbating the global hunger crisis.

Climate change hits girls and young women proportionately harder because they often start from a disadvantaged position in society. Gender inequality means they have less access to natural resources, such as land and water, credit, the decision-making structures, technology and education. All these factors make them even more vulnerable and less able to adapt to the negative effects of climate change. For example, girls and young women are having to walk further and further to fetch water (because of drought) or firewood (because of deforestation). Not only can this be dangerous for them, it can also mean them having to miss more schooling, as well as exposing them to more exploitation and forced marriages.

Within Plan International, our offices all over the world are working increasingly closer together in the areas of sustainability and combatting climate change. The agreement is to produce 55 per cent less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030. This target represents a first joint step towards climate neutral operations.

## 8.1 The sustainability of our business operations in the Netherlands

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Plan International has researched the carbon footprint that our offices have in the various countries, including in the Netherlands. Based on this research, we have developed a manual which will help us to reduce our ecological footprint. It prescribes, among other things, the types of environmentally friendly measures that can be taken by our offices. These range from coffee, electricity and paper selection, vegetarian catering and waste separation to encouraging the use of public transport by fully reimbursing travelling expenses. The objective is to further operationalise the climate policy for the Netherlands office by 2022.

At the end of 2022, Plan International will move to another office building in Amsterdam that has a better energy label. Mostly second-hand furniture has been chosen for the office configuration. Plan International employees have been working in a hybrid manner since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The ecological benefits that this has brought is that less office space is needed and the need to commute has decreased.

Plan International uses green electricity and green gas. Furthermore, last year we used as little paper as possible – and only the FSC-certified variety. To attend local business appointments, we put bicycles at the disposal of our employees and we also made it possible for them to take advantage of special tax breaks if they want to purchase a bike. Our operations in the Netherlands also include the choice of a sustainable

pension scheme. And to cover the activities of the external parties that we collaborate with, we have set up guidelines for sustainability and respecting human rights.

To avoid air travel as much as possible, we have stimulated the use of online meetings. We have also set up a new travel policy, with stringent conditions relating to air travel. One of these conditions is that you are not permitted to travel by air to a destination that can be reached by train in less than 10 hours.

### **Global Compact of the United Nations**

Plan International is committed to the Global Compact, which is a strategic sustainability initiative of the United Nations. The objective of all affiliated companies and organisations is to bring their activities and strategies in line with, among other things, the Sustainable Development Goals. In March 2022, Plan International gave a presentation to the Dutch network of the Global Compact. The presentation was about our gender-transformative approach and our cooperation with the business community to promote sustainable employment for young people.

## **8.2 Sustainability in our programmes**

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Plan International's new strategy in the Netherlands focuses on integrating sustainability in all areas of our results. What this means is that educational projects will contain climate and environmental modules and will also have an emphasis on green skills for sustainable, future-proof jobs.

Promoting green entrepreneurship with facilities for start-ups and supporting young female climate activists also form part of our new strategy. To ensure that projects pertaining to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are climate proof, we have strengthened relationships with environmental organisations. This will optimally facilitate collaboration on integrated water management. In the implementation of our projects we are trying to make them climate proof and limit their negative climate impact. At the same time, we are ensuring that communities have the knowledge and resources to adapt to the repercussions of climate change.

Last year, we expanded our expertise and programmes in relation to climate change and we intend to continue this expansion during the coming years. We are focusing on programmes that underpin climate adaptation and limit climate change and the impairment of the environment, either with or without the collaboration of specialised environmental and climate organisations.

### **Green skills and jobs for young people**

In April 2022, Plan International carried out a global survey to gain an insight into the extent that young people feel prepared to contribute to the transition to a greener, more sustainable economy. A total of 2,229 young people from 52 countries were surveyed. The objective of the survey was to establish the types of skills young people need to tackle climate change and find work that protects the environment. The insights that were obtained will help Plan International to shape future programmes.

### **Eco-entrepreneurs in Ecuador**

In Chimborazo, Ecuador, Plan International is helping young people, particularly young women (between 15 and 24), to strengthen their economic position and the role they play in the community. In the rural communities of Ecuador, young women have limited access to resources like land, timber and water. To encourage sustainable entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurs, Plan International is helping these young women by strengthening their soft skills, digital expertise and their green and financial skills.

In several start-ups, young people are now able to earn a sustainable income and improve their living conditions. You can read more about eco-entrepreneurs in Ecuador in paragraph 3.1.2.

### **Green Acceleration Pilot in Colombia**

In July 2021, Accenture and Plan International started a pilot in the Chocó, Valle del Cauca and Nariño regions of Colombia. The objective of the pilot is to create employment opportunities for young entrepreneurs from vulnerable communities. In a three-month period, 10 young entrepreneurs (including eight women) were intensively coached and trained in entrepreneurship. During this time they learned green skills, networking and how to build relationships with potential investors, suppliers and customers. It taught them how to further develop their companies in a sustainable manner. These entrepreneurs then shared what they had learned about the opportunities and the sustainable impact of their businesses with secondary school students. You can read more about the Green Acceleration Pilot in paragraph 3.1.2 and section 5.3.

### **Work and green citizenship in rural China**

Young people from rural areas in China who migrate to the cities in search of work are often insufficiently prepared for the rapidly changing labour market. As a result of this, opportunities can pass them by, particularly in the digital sector and the green economy. The resulting skills gap mostly affects young women, who then end up working in the informal sectors, where the jobs are poorly paid, insecure and risky.

Since this project started, in July 2021, Plan International has already supported over 270 young women in the Shaanxi region by training them and helping them to find jobs. To increase their chances of finding worthwhile employment, young people are given relevant vocational training and coached in the necessary social skills. By ensuring that the training pays extra attention to sustainability and green global citizenship, we want to mobilise these young people to become active ambassadors for a greener and more sustainable lifestyle.

### **Green life skills curriculum**

With our Skills & Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (YEE) programmes, Plan International wants to contribute to sustainable development. We thus aim to ensure that young people can become climate-conscious, resilient citizens of the world. To achieve this aim we are using a robust curriculum for green life skills, which we have been developing since May 2022 with the CINOP expertise centre. The content of the curriculum is based on the needs of young people, particularly young women, in the six countries in which the YEE projects are being implemented (Colombia, China, Ecuador, India, Indonesia and the Philippines). It is a modular course that can be used in different contexts and countries and supports our life skills courses.

### **The Healthy Village programme, Ethiopia**

A Climate Vulnerability and Resilience (CVR) assessment has been carried out in the context of the Healthy Village programme. The programme is being implemented, in collaboration with the Max Foundation, in Ethiopia and it focuses on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in combination with food security. The aim of the assessment was to identify the climate risks and vulnerability of the programme area and then take the appropriate actions. You can read more about Healthy Village in paragraph 3.1.3.

### **Learning sessions on climate change and sanitation**

In the context of the WASH SDG consortium, and in collaboration with IRC WASH, learning sessions have been held about water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and climate. The aim was to exchange knowledge about the various activities in the area of climate adaptation in the seven countries where the consortium is active in the sustainable improvement of sanitation and providing access to safe drinking water. 9.

Supervisory Board Report





## 9. Supervisory Board Report

Image: Shreya (21) has trained as a professional guide in the Himalayas, Nepal © Plan International



## 9. Supervisory Board Report

The Supervisory Board of Plan International normally comprises seven members. As of September 2022, there are two vacancies. This is because Mr Samson reached the end of his second and final term in September and, due to other activities, Ms Kok has indicated that she will not seek re-election for a second term. The criteria pertaining to the composition and respective expertise of the Supervisory Board members are documented in profile sketches. The profile was updated during the past financial year to align it with the new strategy. Supervisory Board members are appointed for a period of four years and are eligible for re-election once. The Supervisory Board has two committees. The first of these, the Audit Committee, advises the Board, among other things, on the annual financial statements and (long-term) budgets. The second, the Remuneration Committee, advises on decisions regarding the remuneration of the Management Board and generic labour law and salary aspects pertaining to the foundation.

During the year under review, the Supervisory Board convened four times. Unfortunately, due to circumstances, the meeting scheduled for June 2022 could not take place. The Audit Committee convened twice and the Remuneration Committee convened once. In addition to regular meetings of the Supervisory Board, informal meetings and consultations took place between the Supervisory Board, the Board of Directors and the management team.

Furthermore, on behalf of the Netherlands' office, two members of the Supervisory Board occupy places in the most senior body of the international federation of Plan International, the Members' Assembly. In that capacity they represented the Netherlands' office in meetings and consultations organised by the Plan International Federation. One of these delegates to the Members' Assembly also sits on the programme committee of the international organisation. This committee advises the Members' Assembly on international programmes and international lobbying and advocacy activities, as well as their systematic monitoring.

During the past financial year, among other things, the meetings of the Supervisory Board focused on:

- the approval of the Annual Report and the annual financial statements;
- the discussion and approval of the new strategy for 2021-2025;
- private fundraising, including the results of pilots in the areas of recruiting child sponsors, target group analysis and brand positioning;
- a presentation on our humanitarian strategy and programmes;
- the organisation's planned new accommodation;
- a statute amendment, driven by new legislation in the Netherlands (WBTR, the Act on Management and Supervision of Legal Entities) and changes to Plan International's global governance regulations;
- the approval of the power of attorney for the new CFO, who was appointed in January 2022;
- discussing the profile and areas of expertise of the Supervisory Board.

Just like every other year, Plan International's financial statements and Annual Plan were discussed and approved by both the Audit Committee and the full Supervisory Board. With thanks to her and the entire organisation, the Director was granted final discharge for the policy pursued during the past year.

On behalf of the members of the Supervisory Board (June 2022): Anja Montijn, chairperson, S.T. (Susan) Blankhart, J.J. (Hanco) Gerritse, K. (Katja) Kok, A. (Alfred) Levi, G. (Geneviève) Lieuw, H.J. (Herberth) Samsom.

**A. H. (Anja) Montijn**

Chairperson since 12-6-2018

Commissioner Fugro

Non-Executive Director OCI

Member since 12-6-2018, eligible for re-election

**Other positions at the end of the financial year:**

Board member VEVO

Chairperson Supervisory Board of Jinc

**S.T. (Susan) Blankhart**

Mrs Blankhart worked for the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs for over 34 years, the last 15 years of which as ambassador in Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, Egypt and Sudan.

Member since 6-11-2017, not eligible for re-election

**Other positions at the end of the financial year:**

Member of the Supervisory Board of RNW Media

Treasurer of the Achmea Foundation

Director of FemDiplo

Chairperson RvA Stichting Berendina

Academic Board Georg Arnhold Program

**J.J. (Hanco) Gerritse**

Chairperson Audit Committee

Director of Finance at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU). Within the framework of this position, he is also director of the VU Holding B.V., under which participations of Vrije Universiteit are incorporated, as well as a member of the Supervisory Board of parking company VU-VUmc B.V.

Member since 13-4-2017, not eligible for re-election

**Other positions at the end of the financial year:**

Secretary Stichting Continuïteit AVNM (Algemene Vereniging Nederlandse Militairen)

**K. (Katja) Kok**

CEO of Van Lanschot Switzerland

Member since 6-11-2017, outgoing

**Other positions at the end of the financial year:**

Member of the Supervisory Board of the

Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra

Commissioner of Neways Electronics N.V.

**A.E. (Alfred) Levi**

CEO Heelal BV (Board &amp; Management Advice)

Member since 19-4-2021, eligible for re-election

**Other positions at the end of the financial year:**

Member of the Supervisory Board of RvC Griffon Holding

Member of the Supervisory Board of Stichting Ether Reclame (STER)

Member of the board of the Dutch Golf Federation (NGF)

Member of the Supervisory Board of Quooker

Member of the Supervisory Board of IJsvogelgroep

Member of the Supervisory Board of Hoogvliet

Supermarkets

Member of the Advisory Board of Scoupy



### G.M. (Geneviève) Liew

Member of the Institute for Human Rights

Member since 15-2-2021, eligible for re-election

#### Other positions at the end of the financial year:

Member of the Supervisory Board of the Foundation for the Reclassification of Caribbean Netherlands  
Member of the Appeals and Advisory Committee CAF 11 and comparable matters, the Netherlands' Tax Office  
Board member of the Amsterdam Gay Pride Foundation  
Chairperson of the Supervisory Board of the Mondriaan Fund  
Member of the Supervisory Board of the Rosa Manus Women's Shelter Foundation  
Member of the Netherlands' Judiciaries Committee for Human Rights (NJCM)

### H.J. (Herberth) Samsom

Vice chairperson  
CEO of TB Auctions

Member since 8-9-2014, not eligible for re-election

#### Other positions at the end of the financial year:

Supervisor The Data Company  
Supervisor Equipe Zorgbedrijven  
Supervisor Medsen-Ceban





## 10. Looking ahead to 2023, and beyond

Image: Wale Mekuria (32) with his son Atinkut (6 months) at home in Tej Bahir kebele, Ethiopia  
© Plan International / Genaye Eshetu



## 10. Looking ahead to 2023, and beyond

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### 10.1 Ambitions for the coming years

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Entitled “Being Bolder for Girls’ Rights”, our new strategy for Plan International in the Netherlands falls within the framework of the global strategy of the Plan International Federation. In this strategy we have outlined our specific focus areas, as well as where we want to add value within the Plan International Federation. From within the Netherlands, we are keen to play a leading role in Plan International’s ambitions to shift control and responsibility to our partners and local offices in the countries where our programmes are being implemented, and to work together with young activists on gender equality.

These strategic shifts are more about how we do what we do, than what it is that we do. We are still committed to our mission: a just world that champions children’s rights and equality for girls and young women. Gender equality is more than just a matter of justice; it is crucially important in bringing about lasting, positive change.

Plan International’s ambition in the Netherlands for the next four years is to ensure that two million girls and young women around the world who are facing crises, inequality and injustice will be able to learn, lead, make decisions about their own bodies and lives and enjoy the freedom to develop. To realise this ambition, we will follow a gender-transformative approach in our work with our partners around the world in support of young activists. Our areas of focus will include access to quality education, skills and opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship (SOYEE), empowering young activists, underscoring sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and protection against violence.

In many respects, Plan International in the Netherlands is currently in good shape. We have an extensive programme portfolio for the coming years and we have gradually started to reverse the decades-long trend of declining public donations. This in itself points to the fact that our target groups consider our work to be both relevant and urgent. We intend to use the next four years to ensure that in 2025 (when we celebrate our 50th anniversary in the Netherlands) our organisation will still be a strong player in a world where the role of international NGOs is changing. From programme developers who are heavily involved in implementation to innovative global partners who build strategic relationships, share knowledge and experience and provide platforms that enable young people to stand up for their rights.

Our first strategic objective is to increase our impact. To this end, we will make allowances in our work for new realities such as the climate crisis, and act according to the Nexus principle, whereby we will exploit synergies in our development and humanitarian approach. Above all, we intend to learn and innovate more systematically and improve our systems and processes so that we can work even more efficiently and effectively.

Key to our second objective is shifting power closer to the place of implementation. This will call on Plan International’s local partners and country offices to play a leading role in projects and programmes. Projects will be implemented as locally as possible and, where this adds value, in an international context. We also want to provide a platform for young leaders and activists.



Our third objective is to improve the sustainability of our organisation in the broadest sense of the word. This will involve diversifying our financing streams, building a strong (global) brand and reducing our own carbon footprint.

## 10.2 FY23 Annual Plan spearheads

Spearhead FY23	Long-term objective
<b>1. Increase impact</b>	
a) We will focus on learning & innovation.	We will grow into a learning and innovative organisation.
b) We will develop our Nexus portfolio.	We want to specialise in Nexus programming: connecting emergency aid and development aid.
c) We will incorporate climate change into our programmes.	Our programmes will have positively impacted climate change.
d) We will increase our impact in the theme of Skills & Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship.	We want to increase the share of the Skills & Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship portfolio in our programmes and projects.
e) We will increase our impact in our protection and climate change themes.	The integration of climate change and the Nexus method (the connection between emergency aid and development aid) in the protection portfolio.
f) The realisation of new long-term financing portfolio water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).	Keep a strong WASH portfolio.
<b>2. Shifting the power</b>	
a) We will commit to locally led and globally connected programmes.	Strategic decision-making and project monitoring and management will be done more in the programme countries themselves, as opposed to in the Netherlands.
b) The development of a new generation of child sponsoring.	Offer a future-proof child sponsoring product.
c) We will promote youth advocacy and feminist leadership.	National: the continuation of policies for gender equality, position and leadership of women and girls, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and youth policy.  International: raising awareness among governments and international organisations of the importance of youth and women's participation and action in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).
<b>3. Better future-proofing</b>	
a) Better systems and work processes.	
Optimum support of processes by reducing manual work, labour intensity and complexity (wherever possible).	Optimum support of work processes in project and programme management, the use of data-driven private fundraising and sponsorship services.
b) Fundraising	
The retention of €20 million in non-earmarked private income.	The realisation of the budgeted income (€20,150,000).
Increase the total number of sponsors to 99,535.	Increase the total number of sponsors to 105,301.

Grow institutional revenue from the EU by 20 per cent.	Grow institutional revenue from the EU by 40 per cent.
The realisation of budgeted income of €17,800,000.	Grow institutional Humanitarian income to around 50 per cent of institutional income.
Grow income from embassy funds by 25 per cent.	Grow income from embassy funds by 50 per cent.
Maintain good relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and convince them of the importance of our programmes.	The continuation of excellent partnerships.
Building relationships with equity funds.	Grow income from equity funds to €1 million per year.
Growth plan finalised.	Grow income from corporate partners and foundations to €2.7 million per year by FY25.
c) Branding & positioning	
Given the gradual incremental steps, these targets will be measured every other year.	Brand power: from 85th to 82nd position in the benchmark.
	Spontaneous brand awareness: an increase from 0.6 per cent to 0.8 per cent.
	Aided brand awareness: an increase from 26 per cent to 29 per cent.
	Brand awareness in target group: an increase from 39 per cent to 43 per cent.
d) Financial sustainability	
Set up instruments and preconditions.	Projects and programmes fully cost-effective: organisational costs are fully covered and 70 per cent of child sponsorship income paid.
e) Organisation development & Human Resources	
The employee satisfaction survey shows improvement in the cooperation and bonding with the organisation spearheads.	A more effective and efficient organisation, with satisfied employees.
f) The reduction of CO2 emissions	
Policy, instruments and preconditions set up in the area of travel and corporate accommodation.	Carbon footprint reduced by 25 per cent.

## 10.3 Risks associated with FY23 Annual Plan

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Plan International leads in three alliances financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And while this positively impacts our work, it also calls for a considerable additional effort on our part. While working with several new African partners, we have noticed that reporting obligations weigh heavily on these small organisations. Furthermore, all partners are still dealing with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are therefore supporting these new partners in the areas of project administration, reporting and accountability.

In many of the programme countries in which Plan International is active, the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing. In some regions this is impeding the implementation of our programmes. Moreover, countries such as Mozambique and Ethiopia are also having to contend with internal conflicts and violence. For this reason, it is even more important to carefully apply our monitoring and safeguarding protocols in unstable regions. Using situation reports, Plan International monitors the current situation in the various regions every week and, where possible, makes the necessary adjustments to the programmes. More attention is also being paid to WASH projects and to the girls who are at increased risk of child marriages due to the economic crisis and school closures. We are also developing digital tools to reach vulnerable groups.

Private fundraising is crucial to the future of Plan International and it calls for great effort and creativity. For our recruitment activities, we always draw up a test plan, complete with indicators, in which we include risks related to Covid-19. Budgets are used in phases, on the basis of evaluations. We also concentrate on maintaining a strong bond with our donors and try to keep organisational costs as flexible as possible. Furthermore, we keep a close eye on the national willingness to donate. And we closely monitor the repercussions that current economic uncertainties, such as inflation and rising energy costs, have for our donors, employees and other stakeholders.



## 10.4 Long-term budget FY23-FY27

Combined statement of income and expenditure	Actual 2021/2022	Budgeted 2021/2022	Budgeted 2022/2023	Budgeted 2023/2024	Budgeted 2024/2025	Budgeted 2025/2026	Budgeted 2026/2027
	€ *	€ *	€ *	€ *	€ *	€ *	€ *
<b>Income</b>	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Income from private sources	20,548	19,667	20,007	20,171	20,195	20,167	20,137
Income from companies	2,354	1,741	1,370	1,670	1,770	1,870	2,070
Income from lottery organisations	4,516	3,915	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150
Income from government grants	31,598	31,570	41,556	39,646	38,877	39,738	39,294
Income from connected non-profit organisations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Income from other non-profit organisations	7,046	1,100	3,644	2,475	2,069	750	800
<b>Sum of raised income</b>	66,062	57,993	69,727	67,112	66,061	65,675	65,451
<b>Total income</b>	66,062	57,993	69,727	67,112	66,061	65,675	65,451
<b>Expenditures</b>							
<b>Mission objectives</b>							
Objective A Dutch Programmes, Partners and Alliances	18,395	16,916	18,251	18,880	18,191	18,763	18,572
Objective B Information and Awareness	2,503	3,131	3,370	3,407	3,404	3,422	3,438
Objective C Made available to Plan International	34,974	32,140	41,820	38,624	37,931	36,887	36,594
	55,872	52,187	63,441	60,910	59,526	59,072	58,604
Fundraising costs	3,967	4,819	4,902	4,858	4,823	4,865	4,885
Management and control costs	908	952	989	972	957	965	970
<b>Sum of expenditures</b>	60,746	57,958	69,333	66,740	65,306	64,901	64,459
Result before financial income & expenditure	5,316	35	394	372	755	774	993
Financial income & expenditure	-104	-35	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Surplus/deficit of income and expenditure</b>	5,212	0	394	372	755	774	993
<b>Key ratios</b>							
Mission objectives (as % of the total income)	84,6%	90,0%	91,0%	90,8%	90,1%	89,9%	89,5%
Mission objectives (as % of the total expenditures)	92,0%	90,0%	91,5%	91,3%	91,1%	91,0%	90,9%
Fundraising costs as % of total expenditures	6,5%	8,3%	7,1%	7,3%	7,4%	7,5%	7,6%
Management and control costs as % of total expenditures	1,5%	1,6%	1,4%	1,5%	1,5%	1,5%	1,5%
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Average number of employees, in FTEs	103,7	107,8	113,7	113,7	110,7	109,6	107,6
Average number of employees excl. charged FTEs	101,7	110,4	102,2	101,2	100,5	100,4	100,4

## 10.5 Explanation of expected income and expenditure

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### **Income from private sources**

At the end of June 2020, Plan International launched pilots aimed at reversing the declining trend in child sponsorship income. One of these was a targeted version of a successful international online campaign to recruit child sponsors. Going forward, efforts will be made to develop new forms of fundraising from private sources, so that we can reduce our dependence on door-to-door fundraising. For the time being, there is still a downward trend in the number of child sponsors, while the number of donors who support us through project sponsorship is increasing. In the long-term budget, this has resulted in the stabilisation of income from private individuals.

### **Income from companies**

For the short term, we have downwardly adjusted our ambition with regard to income from companies. At the moment, we are not actively focusing on fundraising from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In the longer term, it is still our ambition to realise growth in this segment (as can be seen in the long-term budget).

### **Income from lottery organisations**

For the next few years Plan International expects to receive an annual income of €3.2 million from the Netherlands National Postcode Lottery. Furthermore, we will submit additional project applications to the National Postcode Lottery every year.

### **Income from government grants**

Three new strategic partnerships have been included in our long-term budget: Break Free!, She Leads and Leaders of Peace. Additionally, more applications for humanitarian (emergency aid) grants have been approved, by both the Dutch government and the European Union. This has led to a substantial increase in this type of income in the long-term budget. Furthermore, as a result of the campaign for Ukraine by the Cooperating Aid Organisations/Giro555, an increase in income can be expected during the next few years (FY23, FY24 and part of FY25).

## 10.6 Explanation of the key ratios

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### Targeted expenditures

Targeted expenditures, expressed as total costs in the long-term budget, are stable in an expected range of 89 to 90 per cent. Plan International maintains a policy of spending received income as quickly as possible in accordance with the objective. This, to keep (temporary) allocated funds and reserves as low as possible and thus limit the level of free reserves.

The expenditure percentage (as a percentage of income) over this financial year differs from the norm because of funds raised through the Giro555 campaign for Ukraine. These funds have been received but for the most part not yet spent.

### Fundraising costs and management and control costs

For the coming years, a controlled cost development is expected with regard to fundraising costs (maximum eight per cent) and management and control costs (maximum two per cent).

### FTE developments

In the long-term budget, it can be seen that there will be a short-term increase in the number of FTEs. This is explained by the investments we want to make in our strategic goals, particularly in FY23 and FY24. Afterwards, this increase will once again diminish. In the longer term, we are looking to decrease the number of FTEs. This is mainly because the shift of responsibilities to the project countries is expected to lead to a more limited range of responsibilities at our office in the Netherlands.

Temporary employment contracts currently underscore the flexibility of Plan International's workforce. This flexibility will remain necessary if we are to be able to quickly react to (unexpected) fluctuations.





Image: Girl with new school supplies provided by Plan International, South Sudan.  
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