



# PLAN INTERNATIONAL CANADA'S ARCHITECTURE FOR **GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE** PROGRAMMING AND MEASUREMENT: A PRIMER

## INTRODUCTION

As part of its new strategic framework, Plan International Canada is committed to achieving 100% gender aware or transformative programming in all its initiatives; by 2027, the goal is that 83% of its programming will be gender transformative.

Plan International Canada is a member of the global Plan Federation. We implement projects in child protection, economic development, education, food security, health, humanitarian response and gender equality. Gender equality, social inclusion, child protection and participation crosscut all thematic areas. Our strengths include strong relationships with national and local governments as well as grassroots and national civil society organizations, longstanding experience reaching vulnerable populations, results focused track record in gender transformative development, robust monitoring and evaluation, project management, and strong public engagement nationally. Achieving gender equality, promoting gender justice, realizing girls' rights and fostering an inclusive society are core objectives of our work as an organization dedicated to child rights and equality for girls. This commitment is reflected in our Global Strategy *All Girls Standing Strong Creating Global Change* and our Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion (2017). Plan

International Canada champions gender equality and the rights of girls through its programming, advocacy and public engagement. Examples of activities include co-hosting with the Government of Canada the annual Technical Roundtable on Gender Equality, and the Speakers Bureau, which provides an opportunity for young people across the country (ages 14–22) to be trained in public speaking and create positive change through the Because I am a Girl (BIAAG) movement. We work in countries and communities facing some of the worst forms of gender injustice, discrimination and poverty and are able to effect change despite enormous challenges.

Gender transformative programming aims to explicitly **transform unequal gender power relations**. It addresses the **root causes** of gender inequality and promotes the **value of women and girls**. It goes beyond improving the condition of women and girls – it seeks to improve their **social position**. A gender transformative program works at **several levels at the same time**.

Our program portfolio is regionally broad, thematically diverse, and supported by a variety of donors. As a result, achieving our goals in gender transformative programming (that seeks to change harmful gender power relations) requires the following:

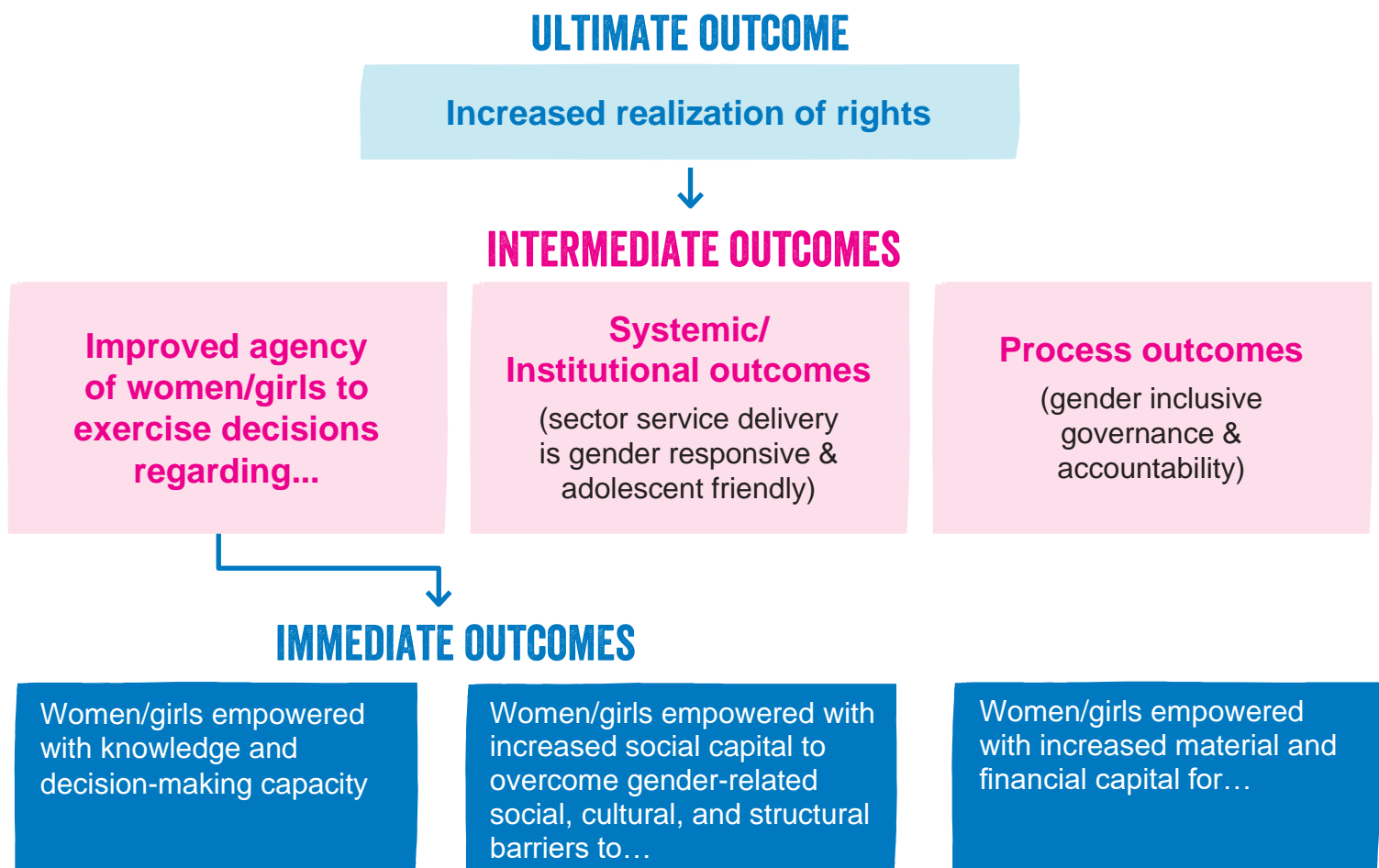
1. **A rights based theory of change:** this presents a detailed and shared understanding of our approach to transformative programming, specifically its core components, what the approach aims to achieve and how;
2. **A women and girls empowerment index:** this tool seeks evidence to effectively and consistently assess our transformative impact within and across projects on the condition and position of women and girls, on thematic outcomes and the causal relationship between women's and girls' empowerment and thematic outcomes;
3. **Gender equality project scoring:** this is a systematic way to hold ourselves accountable across our diverse and growing portfolio.

These three tools, presented in detail below, provide an interconnected and mutually reinforcing architecture that will guide our interventions at the project design stage, throughout implementation, and in the demonstration of impact during the evaluation stage.

## 1. A RIGHTS BASED THEORY OF CHANGE

Transformative change requires a rights-based approach which recognizes that the realization of rights is the ultimate goal of development programming that leads to the achievement of other development outcomes such as education, health, economic empowerment etc. In order to entrench this approach across our programming, Plan International Canada will use a framework for project design that places the rights of women and girls, and the agency and empowerment required to realize those rights as a central objective in and of itself as well as a pathway for attaining thematic outcomes.

In order to support this approach, Plan International Canada has developed a standardized logic model (LM) stream to be applied to all projects regardless of thematic/sector focus. This LM stream is represented in the graphic below:







### Ultimate outcome

As a rights based organization, Plan expresses this as the realization of the right to a thematic/sector outcome such as health, education, protection or economic participation enshrined in the international human rights framework including international and regional standards/treaties as well as globally agreed principles; If we look at the realization of these rights closely as an ultimate outcome, it requires both the exercise of rights by the rights holder, and quality provision by the duty-bearer. Combined, this represents an increased *demand* for the thematic/sector resource or service, improved *supply* of the resource or service and improved ability to hold duty-bearers *accountable* by rights-holders.

### Intermediate outcomes

The agency of girls and women, defined as the capacity to make choices and the power to act on those choices, is one of the intermediate outcomes which contributes to the ultimate outcome. This is a standalone agency result. In order to contribute to the ultimate outcome, we see that **three conditions** need to be fulfilled. First, the woman and/or girl's agency has to improve so she can participate in, make, and act on decisions relating to the desired thematic/ sector outcome such as health, education or economic participation, essentially to *demand* her rights. But increased agency alone, while an objective in and of itself towards substantive empowerment of women and girls, is insufficient to fulfil her rights unless the *supply* of thematic/sector resources and services meet her needs in a gender-responsive way. This is the second condition, which builds the institutional enabling environment around women and girls for the realization of their rights. Finally, the third condition is that all processes of governance and *accountability* include her voice and support the realization of her rights.

### Immediate outcomes

The agency result is supported by three immediate empowerment results; these include increased knowledge and decision-making capacity and social and financial capital (assets) for women and girls. The thematic/sector **immediate outcomes** will vary according to the scope of the program/project. To achieve the intermediate level women's/girls' agency outcome three core elements, **duly contextualized** will be addressed to eliminate the individual, social and financial barriers and underlying factors that impede women's and girls' individual and/or collective path to power. These include empowering her by increasing her knowledge of her rights and entitlements including thematic/sector services and opportunities available to her through a range of interventions as well as increasing her decision-making capacities in her home and in communities both joint and autonomous; empowering her by increasing her social capital being her networks, engaged men and other influencers in her home and communities to change gender norms and practices with her; and empowering her by increasing her access to material and/or financial assets through a range of activities.

As such all of our gender transformative programs work either on all three streams concurrently or a combination of two or one stream depending on the scope i.e.: mobilize demand; improve quality service provision; and support participatory and inclusive accountability processes. It should be noted that other thematic/sector intermediate and immediate outcomes of the project also integrate gender equality. For example, systems and services outcomes are gender-responsive and process related outcomes such as governance or accountability are gender inclusive. All projects integrate gender equality results and these results are measured systematically. These outcomes collectively address the issues, barriers and **root causes** of gender inequality across the five domains of gender equality described on the following page.

## 2. WOMEN & GIRLS EMPOWERMENT INDEX(WGEI)

In order to support standardized rights and empowerment-based program model, a more comprehensive and consistent approach to measuring the *impact* of transformative programming is required across Plan International Canada interventions.

Gender transformative programming needs to be multifaceted and integrated if it is to achieve its ultimate objective of realizing women's and girls' rights by shifting entrenched and unequal social norms, attitudes and behaviours in order to increase the agency of women and girls. Because these changes, especially in attitudes and perceptions, can be very difficult to measure, a more thoughtful approach to measurement is required which avoids traditional standalone or proxy indicators that only partially capture the breadth and scope of gender transformative change. The WGEI will measure changes *directly associated* with the root causes of gender inequality across five gender equality domains which are built into the Ranking Tool as described below. These are: roles and responsibilities, resource access and control, participation and decision making, social norms, institutional change.

There is also a need to standardize measurement, processes and protocols to systematically and consistently capture transformative change. A standardized systematic approach allows for consistent measurement across projects and sectors and the possibility to aggregate results in order to understand and present a bigger picture of Plan International Canada's impact on transformative change. The design of the WGEI is intended to provide a standardized level of measurement at the indicator level, while ensuring that data collection tools are flexible enough to respond and adapt to the needs of projects in different themes and locations.

### How does it work?

The WGEI is designed as a composite measure that aggregates, ranks and summarizes multiple indicators or data points.

The WGEI specifically measures and aggregates changes across the five GE domains:

1. Gender roles and responsibilities
2. Access to and control over resources
3. Participation and decision-making
4. Social norms
5. Primary duty-bearers and institutions

These domains are further divided into subdomains and their associated data elements or variables to be captured. Each subdomain and domain have associated indicators. These indicators are constructed through a scoring and weighting system that considers their related variables.

The WGEI domain and subdomain indicators are designed to be generic to ensure they can be used across all thematic sectors and contexts. Some indicators however, such as access to resources, institutional responsiveness and public decision-making, can be customized to better respond to specific thematic sectors. This means contextualizing them to the specific thematic sector, but with the core intention of the indicator remaining unchanged. For example, in a project with a strong sexual and reproductive health focus, the 'Percentage of women/girls with adequate access to resources' indicator can be customized by defining the type of resources relevant to the project, in this case, sexual and reproductive health resources such as SRHR information, contraception, gender responsive services, etc.

Depending on the type of project and intensity of programming, domain and subdomain indicators can be used as standalone or in clusters to assess progress in specific intervention areas of a project. During project design these standard indicators can be included in the project's Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) at the immediate and intermediate levels and used to assess progress in specific gender transformative domains. For example, a project with a strong governance and institutional strengthening component can include, besides the WGEI at the ultimate outcome level, the Duty-bearers and institutions domain indicator (Level of gender responsiveness of primary duty-bearers and institutions) to assess progress in that specific stream of the project.



Plan International Canada recognizes that empowerment is a function of changes across all five GE domains.

Therefore, in addition to assessing progress and change in specific areas through domain and subdomain indicators, the overall WGEI will capture changes within a project across all domains.

Through a scoring and weighting system, the WGEI will aggregate results across domains, ultimately arriving at a standardized score from 1–100 with low scores reflecting low agency/empowerment and high scores reflecting high agency/empowerment.

Therefore, because of its modular design, the WGEI has the flexibility to be applied and analyzed in a variety of ways. For projects that are not comprehensive in nature and address only specific domains and sub domains the WGEI can be calculated as a weighted composite that includes all domains but is weighted to reflect project design and/or that exclusively aggregates the results from only the domains addressed by the project. Additionally, for comprehensive projects addressing all domains or to allow aggregation of results across projects regardless of their design, the WGEI

can be calculated as a standard weighted composite that includes analysis of all domains and is not adjusted to the nature or intensity of programming.

The combined consistency and flexibility of the WGEI will enable Plan International Canada to:

- Understand the effectiveness of its gender transformative programming **over time**.
- Quantify our transformative **impact across different thematic sector programming** at both the overall index level and within domains and subdomains.
- **Assign attribution to our gender transformative programming** though contrasting scores with a control or comparison group through a difference in analysis.
- Better **understand the determinants and drivers for changes** in empowerment through deconstructing the WGEI and analyzing scores by domain and subdomain.
- **Inform the design** of more effective, transformative programming by providing a broad evidence base

DOMAIN	INDICATOR	SUBDOMAIN	INDICATOR	VARIABLES ASSESSED
Gender roles and responsibilities	Percentage of women/girls experiencing equitable assignment and distribution of roles and responsibilities	Time poverty and burden of work	Average time women/ girls spend in unpaid work (productive, reproductive and community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time spent on household care activities/ domestic chores each day</li> <li>• Time spent each day on paid and unpaid productive work</li> <li>• Time spent in discretionary activities each day</li> </ul>
		Attitudes and Perception regarding gender roles and responsibilities	Percentage of women/ girls with equitable attitude and perceptions regarding gender roles and responsibilities  Percentage of men/ boys with equitable attitude and perceptions regarding gender roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes and perceptions of roles and responsibilities of men and boys</li> <li>• Attitudes and perceptions of domestic roles and responsibilities of men and boys</li> <li>• Attitudes and perceptions of paid and unpaid productive work of women and girls</li> <li>• Attitudes and perceptions of domestic roles and responsibilities of women and girls</li> <li>• Attitudes and perceptions of community level roles and responsibilities of women and girl</li> </ul>
Access and control	Percentage of women/girls with adequate access and control over resources (to be customized by sector)	Access	Percentage of women/girls with adequate access to resources (to be customized by sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to cash/income/credit/social protection revenues</li> <li>• Access to technology and productive assets</li> <li>• Access and utilization of public services (health, education, business, protection, other)</li> <li>• Access to skills training/decent employment</li> <li>• Access to transportation/mobility options</li> <li>• Access to information</li> <li>• Access to basic needs (nutrition, sleep, clothing)</li> </ul>
		Control	Percentage of women/girls with adequate control over resources (to be customized by sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control of cash/income/credit/social protection revenues</li> <li>• Control of technology and productive assets</li> <li>• Control of basic needs (nutrition, sleep, clothing)</li> </ul>



DOMAIN	INDICATOR	SUBDOMAIN	INDICATOR	VARIABLES ASSESSED
<b>Participation and decision-making</b>	Percentage of women/girls who participate in and make decisions relevant to their lives (to be customized by sector)	Household Decision Making	Percentage of women/girls with adequate involvement in HH decision making (to be customized by sector)  OR Level of involvement in HH decision making (to be customized by sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of involvement in decisions regarding allocation of resources</li> <li>• Level of involvement in decisions regarding marriage, sex negotiation, family planning</li> <li>• Level of involvement in decisions regarding participation in community activities</li> <li>• Level of involvement in decisions regarding utilization of services</li> <li>• Perceptions and attitudes of family members about women's/girls' HH level decision making</li> <li>• Women's/girls' own perceptions about their HH level decision making capacities</li> </ul>
		Public/Community level participation and decision making	Percentage of women/girls with meaningful community/public engagement  OR Level of community/public engagement of women/girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomy of women and girls to form and freely meet with social networks, friends, relatives, etc.</li> <li>• Women and/or girls in the ability to attend public/community events and forums</li> <li>• Women and/or girls in the ability to raise voice and be heard</li> <li>• Women and/or girls in the ability to influence decisions in community forums</li> <li>• Presence of women in leadership/decision-making positions in community forums</li> <li>• Perceptions and attitudes of community members about women's/girls' public participation</li> <li>• Women's/girls' own perceptions about their participation in public and community forums</li> </ul>
<b>Social norms</b>	Degree/extent to which women/girls are perceived as equal to men/boys			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and recognition of women's and girls' rights (GBV, SRHR, CEFM, other)</li> <li>• Perceptions of men and boys regarding the value of women/girls relative to men/boys</li> <li>• Perceptions of men and boys around abilities and capacities of women/girls relative to men/boys</li> <li>• Perceptions of women and girls regarding the value of women/girls relative to men/boys</li> <li>• Perceptions of women and girls around abilities and capacities of women/girls relative to men/boys</li> </ul>
<b>Duty-bearers and institutions</b>	Level of gender responsiveness of primary duty-bearers and institutions (by thematic area)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the way decisions are made (i.e. use of sex-disaggregated data, gender analysis, participation of women and girls)</li> <li>• Change in the way services are organized and delivered (i.e. e.g. removal of barriers for access such as consent, timing etc.)</li> <li>• Change in the way services are monitored and evaluated</li> <li>• Change in the way institutions are governed/managed.</li> <li>• Changes in policy and guidelines</li> </ul>

\*Indicators will be disaggregated by sex and age as appropriate

### 3. GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT SCORING

In order to systematically evaluate and track what proportion of its programs are gender transformative, Plan International Canada has developed an automated **Gender Equality Scoring Tool** to rank all of the projects it supports. In addition to providing a systematic approach to ranking projects, this tool is also intended to provide additional levels of analysis that can inform Plan International Canada staff and management about the relative ranking of projects in different thematic sectors, in different regions, according to project size and donor, and at various key points in project implementation to assess sustained commitment through the life of the project. These analytics will help Plan International Canada management to understand factors that contribute to weaker GE integration and prioritize GE resources accordingly.

The Scoring Tool builds on Plan International’s *Gender Equality Programme Criteria, from Plan’s Strategy on Gender Equality (2012–2016)* and the Federation’s 2017 *Global Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy Guidelines*. This criteria has been and continues to be a general guideline to determine the level to which a project has integrated gender equality considerations and approaches, based on a range from gender unaware at the lowest end, through gender neutral, gender aware, and finally, gender transformative as the highest and optimal level of gender integration.

ASSESSMENT AREAS	ASSESSMENT VARIABLE
<b>Project Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion and level of gender transformative outcomes</li> <li>• Inclusion of gender transformative indicators and disaggregation by sex</li> <li>• Disaggregation of targets</li> <li>• Gender analysis during design</li> <li>• Domains of influence of the gender transformative strategy (individual, HH/Community, Institutional)</li> <li>• Beneficiaries reached through gender transformative outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Domain Analysis</b>	<p>Type and intensity of changes expected in each of 5 gender equality analysis domains:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Gender Roles and Responsibilities</li> <li>ii. Resource Access and Control</li> <li>iii. Participation and Decision Making</li> <li>iv. Social Norms</li> <li>v. Duty-bearers and Institutions</li> </ol>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of effort allocated for Gender Equality experts</li> <li>• Inclusion of budget for gender assessment, Gender Equality capacity building and gender equality monitoring</li> </ul>

#### The Scoring Tool assesses and ranks projects based on three specific areas:

- 1. Project Design.** This area examines the architecture of the project, based on the documents submitted at the design phase of development, as well the same design components at subsequent stages of implementation.
- 2. Gender Equality Analysis Domains.** This area assesses in detail the *breadth* and *intensity* of the change expected in the five domains used for gender analysis (see table to the right).
- 3. Resources for gender equality programming.** This area looks at how gender equality technical inputs and oversight have been included in the budget and staffing of the project.





In order to reduce respondent subjectivity, each area is assessed through a set of standard questions with predefined response categories and options. Weighted scores are assigned to each question and are aggregated into a composite score ranging from 1 to 100. Specific thresholds within this range were set to indicate the intensity of gender equality programming within the project. Projects with scores above 75 points are considered gender transformative, those between 50 and 74 are considered gender aware and those below 50 points are rated as gender neutral.

The tool is fully automated, meaning that questions are automatically scored, weighted and aggregated. An immediate rating for the project is available upon completion of the assessment form, as well as detailed reports by assessment area. Results across projects are also automatically aggregated into a central database with programmed reporting functions. The central reporting interface allows us to present overall and detailed results and filter results by a range of criteria, such as region, donor, size, themes and duration.

The tool is applied to all Plan International Canada projects at least three times in a project cycle, including when it is approved, at the inception stage and at mid-term by Plan International Canada's Gender Equality team. The scoring tool is also intended as a project design and diagnostic tool to identify areas that we can strengthen as part of our gender equality work.

## INTEGRATION INTO PLAN INTERNATIONAL CANADA: PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS

Currently, several of our projects have begun to integrate components of these tools, and some testing and analysis has already been completed. This toolkit will be socialized systematically through department and team trainings, and will be integrated into our internal program management tools and processes to ensure shared ownership and understanding across programming staff.

### Additional next steps include:

- Annual Portfolio analysis
- GEI analysis and presentation of results
- Development of relevant presentations (PowerPoints) for Business Development and PIP workshops for example
- External dissemination and peer review.

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