



**GIRLS  
GET  
EQUAL**

# THE 2021 ASIA-PACIFIC **GIRLS** REPORT

Voice, Choice and Power



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# ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEFMU	child, early, forced marriages and unions
CSO	civil society organisation
GLI	Girls' Leadership Index
ISF	Institute for Sustainable Futures
LGBTQIA+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual
MNCH	maternal, new-born and child health
NEET	not in education, employment or training
NGO	nongovernmental organisation
PICTs	Pacific Islands Countries and Territories
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRHR	sexual and reproductive health and rights
UTS	University of Technology Sydney
YAS	Youth Activist Series
YCG	Youth Coalition for Girls

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# FOREWORD



The **2021 Asia-Pacific Girls Report** is Plan International's annual research report concerning girls in the Asia-Pacific region. It is part of our contribution towards the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Across the region, girls and young women continue to face discriminatory perceptions and structural barriers that limit their ability to develop leadership capabilities and exercise their voice, choice and power.

In recent years, activism organisations, government agencies and civic engagement leaders have supported girls and young women activists in changing the societal norms that prevent them from contributing to the region's development.

Through peer-led advocacy these young female activists have demonstrated that their voice can influence not only the progress made towards ensuring gender equality but also a country's overall development.

This report demonstrates girls' ability to break through barriers and contribute significantly to reforms and development. It also highlights the significant civic engagement activities of young female activists and the unique challenges girls and young women face throughout the region.

While many girls and women in the Asia-Pacific region share similar experiences, each group faces unique challenges. Adolescent girls must be included as their own demographic group to establish programmes and services that can aid them in achieving their goals and support their individual and combined choices.

Girls and young women activists have made tremendous strides in promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination, but they cannot continue this work without support. We must create a safe, inclusive and open space for them to use their voice, spread their message of ensuring equal rights for all and develop their collective and individual power.

This research is an important step in determining the specific needs of girls and young women and addressing persisting issues throughout the region and to measure the opportunities of adolescent girls and young women to develop and demonstrate their leadership capabilities and unique voice.

By investing in adolescent girls' development and continued civic engagement, we can actively support their voice, choice and power.

It is every girl's right to be heard, and it is everybody's gain when they are.

*B RDingle*

Bhagyashri Dingle  
Regional Director, Plan International Asia-Pacific Hub



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The research project on girls' civic engagement and activism for gender equality in Asia-Pacific was led by the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF), an interdisciplinary research and consulting organisation at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). The research team comprises Dr. Keren Winterford and Tamara Megaw from UTS-ISF in Australia, Sandra Dewi Arifiani, an independent consultant based in Indonesia and Iris Low and Leaine Robinson from CoLAB Consulting in Fiji.

The Asia Girls' Leadership Index and Pacific Girls' Leadership Index were prepared by Miller Jones Consulting. Special thanks are due to Dr. Alex Riba (Stats4SD), Erica Stillo (independent researcher) and Jennifer Miller (Miller Jones Consulting) for their extensive contribution to this research. Copyediting was provided by Alice Fogliata Cresswell and Gareth Harrison-Poole.

We wish to extend our gratitude to the sector-based experts who contributed time and valuable insights. We would also like to offer warm thanks to the female youth advocates who shared their time, experiences and ideas during the interviews conducted for this research. We hope this study will support their ongoing efforts for gender equality and social inclusion in the Asia-Pacific region.



With the aim to help 'Girls Get Equal', our global strategy for 2017–2022 is an ambitious commitment to transform the lives of 100 million girls so they can:

**LEARN** so vulnerable children have the skills they need to succeed in life and work.

**LEAD** so vulnerable and excluded children have the power to take action on issues that matter to them.

**DECIDE** so children and young people, especially girls, have control over their own lives and bodies.

**THRIVE** so children and young people, especially girls, grow up cared for and free from violence and fear.

Our strategy commits us to producing an annual report that documents progress toward these goals.







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the signing of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, countries around the world have committed to equitable and inclusive development for girls and young women.

Across the Asia-Pacific region, girls and young women are participating in youth activism for gender equality. Such efforts have proven successful in changing long-held discriminatory attitudes and beliefs related to gender and ensuring that girls are better able to use their voice and develop leadership capacities.

The 2021 Asia-Pacific Girls Report details the ongoing work of female youth activism for gender equality, social inclusion and the current state of girls' leadership in the Asia-Pacific region. It also outlines how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted youth-led activism efforts.

This year, our research focused on girls' leadership, particularly the Political Voice and Representation domain outlined in the Asia and Pacific Girls' Leadership Indexes. It also concentrated on the past and present civic engagement efforts of girls and young women activists, enablers for future civic engagement and governments' responses to female youth activism.

Our research found that girl and young women advocates are building their movements with a range of approaches, including working together with boys and men; education strategies; self-conscientisation and connecting with networks or coalitions of organisations.

Plan International collaborated with UTS-ISF to conduct research on girls' activism and leadership throughout the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>i</sup> The research drew on both primary and secondary data to produce a qualitative assessment of youth activism in the region.

**Section 1** presents an overview and the purposes of our research.

**Section 2** presents the key findings collected during this research. It is broken up into two main parts: findings from the Asia and Pacific Girls' Leadership Indexes (GLIs) and findings from our research on girls' civic engagement and activism for gender equality.

**Section 3** presents the conclusions drawn from the findings and how the Asia and Pacific GLIs can be used to support them.

Finally, **Section 4** presents a call to action for national governments, civil society and regional bodies in Asia and the Pacific to invest in adolescent girls.

The Asia and Pacific GLIs are composite indexes that measure adolescent girls' and young women's opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership capabilities.

The **three highest-ranking countries** on the Asia Index are **Singapore** (0.784), **Thailand** (0.733) and the **Philippines** (0.715), all of which are members of ASEAN.

The **three lowest-ranking countries** on the Asia Index are **Pakistan** (0.392), **Afghanistan** (0.405) and **Brunei Darussalam** (0.462), with the former two countries being members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The **three highest-ranking countries** on the Pacific Index are **Australia** (0.854), **New Zealand** (0.820) and **Kiribati** (0.643). Australia and New Zealand's Index values are considerably higher than the 3rd-ranked country and those below it, largely due to their high scores across all domains.

<sup>i</sup> This research included interviews with seven female youth activists from Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Tonga, as well as five sector-based experts from Fiji, Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam.



The **three lowest-ranking countries** on the Pacific Index are **Papua New Guinea** (0.436), **Marshall Islands** (0.482) and **Solomon Islands** (0.529).

In our **analysis of emerging trends** of civic engagement and activism, we found a mobilisation in both invited and claimed spaces including representation in government-invited spaces for policy consultation. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also invite girl and young women activists into friendly spaces to develop their leadership skills and voice. Girls and young women have actively claimed spaces (such as public demonstrations, campaigns and press releases) for voicing their messages. Online spaces are also being claimed for consciousness-raising and empowerment.

Key enablers for successful activism for gender equality included a positive rights-based approach and adults' belief in the value of engaging with girl and young women advocates. Girls and young women need the support of their families and friends, as well as friendly girl- and young women-only spaces to build confidence and solidarity. Young activists were more effective working in partnerships and coalitions with like-minded organisations, and they hope to create a diverse intergenerational movement for gender equality and social inclusion.

We found that successful digital activism by girls and young women was enabled by their fast uptake of new digital technologies and their comfort with interacting on and creating content for social media networking sites. Activists created safer and more inclusive digital spaces to build their movements and activists interacting online, often also connected "in real life" (offline).

Girls are using their unique voice and experience to develop their leadership capacity and advocacy messages that support girls' rights. By changing discriminatory attitudes and beliefs, girls will be better able to make their own choices and participate in decision-making processes, giving them more opportunities to practice leadership and find their own and collective power.

While girls' civic engagement has made great strides in promoting gender equality, governments and civil society must do their part to support girls and young women in developing and using their voice, choice and power.



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# INTRODUCTION

Asia and the Pacific's geographic scope and socio-economic diversity have fostered the region's role in growing the global economy and advancing technology and innovation. Although this has enabled the region to make substantial headway in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, countries in Asia and the Pacific will not be able to fulfil their 2030 commitments without achieving gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women.

Many governments fail to promote, respect and fulfil girls' rights in participation and continue to disregard the critical need to engage and consult them on the very policies and programmes that affect them the most.

To spur real change, it is not enough to simply encourage activism in the public sphere. Governments and decision-makers must work towards ensuring (1) an enabling environment so that girls and young women can demonstrate their leadership potential, (2) open and equal civic spaces so that girls and young women can exercise their freedom of expression along with peaceful assembly and association and (3) equal representation in policies and programmes that affect girls and women. When necessary, governments and decision-makers should also develop and implement relevant mechanisms that specifically address girls' needs and help them develop their leadership capacity.

This report highlights both the civic engagement activities of young female activists in the Asia-Pacific and the unique challenges girls and young women face throughout the region. As part of this research, Plan International conducted interviews with sector-based experts and young female activists to assess the current situation in the region.

Plan International developed and updated the Asia and Pacific Girls' Leadership Indexes to measure the opportunities of adolescent girls and young women to develop and demonstrate their leadership capabilities, their unique voice in the region, the gaining of support for their choices and collective and individual power.

## Voice

These female youth activists have used the support and guidance provided by older generations of female activists and decision-makers, as well as the rapid advancements in technology, to spread advocacy messages and promote the elimination of gender-discriminatory practices.

It is important to recognise that girls and young women are not a homogenous group; an approach that recognises the diversity of their needs and characteristics must be promoted to enable them to use their voice and make their own decisions. While many girls and women in the Asia-Pacific region share similar experiences, each group faces unique challenges.

## Choice

On a wider policy-making level, girls and young women activists are typically combined with the larger activism community. These young advocates have distinct experiences and aspirations, and the lack of demographic recognition prevents programmes and mechanisms from responding to their specific concerns. By recognising each unique group of women and activists, governments can begin to ensure young women's full participation and equal opportunities for leadership.

## Power

The ability to contribute significantly to reforms and development and overcome substantial social impediments can be enhanced through proper investment in education, health, protection, civic engagement and political participation. Despite their ability to evoke positive change, girls and young women are often excluded from decision-making positions. This systemic subversion of power needs to change to allow girls and young women to become key decision makers to influence change.

Through its **regional research on girls' leadership and activism** in the Asia-Pacific region Plan International gained deeper insights into the key trends and issues that either enable or constrain adolescent girls' and young women's empowerment and leadership.



The purpose of this research was to:



This research focused on the key actions girls and young women are taking to practice leadership and promote gender equality within their communities and abroad.

The analysis underlined the type of support young female advocates across the region need from their governments, supporters and key stakeholders to become active change agents and promote gender equality and inclusive societies.

This regional research focused on 19 countries in Asia who are member states of SAARC and ASEAN countries, including Timor-Leste (which is a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum) and 14 Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs).

To ensure inclusive and sustainable development for present and future generations, we must promote the advancement of girls' and young women's leadership and provide them with sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making processes and exercise autonomy.



## Impact of COVID-19 on the Indexes

COVID-19 has significantly affected girls and women in the Asia-Pacific region. While some countries will recover faster than others, the social and economic impacts will remain for many years.<sup>1,2</sup> The effects of the pandemic are not reflected in the 2021 Asia and Pacific GLIs. However, the Indexes provide a baseline for assessing the broad impact the pandemic will have on girls over time. In the coming years, we expect the GLIs to better reflect the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak.



# ASIA GIRLS' LEADERSHIP INDEX

The Asia GLI was first developed in 2019 and updated to include the Pacific in 2021 to provide valuable insight into the circumstances girls and young women have been facing over the past two years. The Asia GLI focuses on six core domains for 19 countries in South and Southeast Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

The six core domains assessed in the Index are



**Education**



**Protection**



**Political voice and representation**



**Economic Opportunities**



**Health**



**Laws and policies**

These domains are further divided into the 23 indicators.

The core domains and indicators represent the essential factors that can enable or constrain well-being and ability to fully exercise their rights and demonstrate leadership. They also determine the opportunities girls and young women have to become leaders within their families, countries and regions over time, as well as the opportunities that impact girls' ability to develop and demonstrate leadership capabilities.

While the Indexes include several domains, this year's focus is **political voice and representation** as girls and young women across the Asia-Pacific region are engaging in increased youth activism. These young female activists are using a wide range of mediums to promote gender-transformative change and encourage female leadership.

Such activism tactics include the use of social media, community campaigns and direct influence over government legislation. While this civic engagement targets specific domains and indicators in each country, the activism efforts have positively impacted all domains and indicators on the Indexes.

The rankings should be considered in the context of the country, as well as the factors that influence each indicator. They should be used as tools to raise awareness and advocate actions to support girls' and young women's empowerment.

Policymakers, donors and stakeholders should use the Indexes to (1) invest in leadership opportunities for adolescent girls and young women at the regional and national levels, (2) inform the design of contextually relevant and strategic programmes and (3) monitor change within those programmes.

Table 1 presents the domains and indicators included in the Index, along with the SDGs they support, and the proportion of the overall Index value contributed by the indicators.




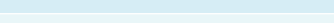







**TABLE 1: Asia GLI domains and indicators**

Domain	Subdomain	Indicator	SDG link	% total
<b>Education</b>	Completion	Completion rate, lower secondary female (%)	4.1.2	4.17%
	Tertiary	Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education, female (%)	4.3.2	4.17%
	Internet	Access to internet, female (%)	17.8.1	4.17%
	Schooling	Mean years of schooling, female (years)	HDI	4.17%
<b>Economic Opportunity</b>	NEET	Share of youth not in employment, education or training (youth NEET rate), female (%)	8.6.1	4.17%
	Employment	Youth labour participation rate, female (%)	ILO	4.17%
	Finance	Account ownership at a financial institution or with a mobile service provider, female (%)	8.10.2	4.17%
	Leadership	Female share of employment in managerial positions (%)	5.5.2	4.17%
<b>Protection</b>	Child Labour	Percentage of girls aged 5–17 engaged in child labour	8.7.1	5.56%
	Child Marriage	Percentage of women aged 20–24 who were married before age 18	5.3.1	5.56%
	Violence	Percentage of the female population aged 15 and older that has ever experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner	5.2.1	5.56%
<b>Health</b>	Maternal Health	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19)	3.7.2	4.17%
	SRHR	Proportion of women aged 15–19 who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods	3.7.1	4.17%
	Nutrition	Prevalence of stunting, height for age, female (% of children under 5)	2.2.1	4.17%
	Mental Health	Suicide mortality rate (15–19), female (per 100,000 female population)	3.4.2	4.17%
<b>Political Voice and Representation</b>	Representation	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments	5.5.1	5.56%
	Justice	Woman's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in court as a man's	5.1.1	5.56%
	Registration	Proportion of girls under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	16.9.1	5.56%
<b>Laws and Policies</b>	Inheritance	Equal rights between sons and daughters to inherit assets from parents	5.1.1	3.33%
	Equal Pay	Equal remuneration for work of equal value	5.1.1	3.33%
	Sexual Harassment	Legislation on sexual harassment in employment	5.1.1	3.33%
	Child Marriage	Laws prohibiting or invalidating child marriage	5.1.1	3.33%
	Domestic Violence	Legislation specifically addressing domestic violence	5.1.1	3.33%



Table 2 presents the overall index values and ranking of each country based on the six domains of Education, Economic Opportunities, Protection, Health, Political Voice and Representation, and Laws and Policies. Table 3 presents the countries' domain rankings.

**TABLE 2: Overall rankings for the Asia GLI 2021**

Rank	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-		
1	Singapore	0.781	0.784	0.004	▲	
2	Thailand	0.694	0.733	0.039	▲	
3	Philippines	0.715	0.715	0.000	≡	
4	Vietnam	0.721	0.712	-0.009	▼	
5	Sri Lanka	0.664	0.665	0.001	▲	
6	Maldives	0.645	0.659	0.014	▲	
7	Malaysia	0.641	0.646	0.004	▲	
8	Bhutan	0.630	0.630	0.000	≡	
9	Cambodia	0.621	0.621	0.000	≡	
10	Indonesia	0.598	0.608	0.010	▲	
11	Lao PDR	0.609	0.596	-0.013	▼	
12	India	0.584	0.591	0.007	▲	
13	Timor-Leste	0.578	0.579	0.002	▲	
14	Myanmar	0.531	0.537	0.006	▲	
15	Nepal	0.476	0.517	0.042	▲	
16	Bangladesh	0.461	0.477	0.016	▲	
17	Brunei Darussalam	0.468	0.462	-0.006	▼	
18	Afghanistan	0.401	0.405	0.004	▲	
19	Pakistan	0.395	0.392	-0.003	▼	

### Reading the Asia GLI 2021

In the 2021 Asia GLI, both the 2019 and 2021 indicators and the normalised values are presented, as well as their relative change (+/-). This change is indicated by one of three symbols:

▲ Indicates a positive change in value from 2019

▼ Indicates a negative change in value from 2019

≡ Indicates no change from 2019

When looking at positive or negative arrows, the symbol refers to a change in the normalised value, not in the country ranking or indicator.



**TABLE 3: Individual domain rankings for the Asia GLI 2021**

Country	Education			Economic Opportunities			Protection		
	Rank 2019	Rank 2021	+/-	Rank 2019	Rank 2021	+/-	Rank 2019	Rank 2021	+/-
Afghanistan	19	19	0.003 ▲	19	19	0.000 ≡	16	16	0.026 ▲
Bangladesh	16	14	0.033 ▲	17	17	0.000 ≡	17	17	-0.004 ▼
Bhutan	10	10	0.007 ▲	15	15	-0.024 ▼	6	6	0.000 ≡
Brunei Darussalam	2	2	0.027 ▲	4	7	-0.056 ▼	-	-	-
Cambodia	15	15	0.027 ▲	5	4	-0.020 ▼	9	8	0.000 ≡
India	12	11	0.007 ▲	13	13	-0.005 ▼	10	9	0.000 ≡
Indonesia	8	8	0.040 ▲	10	8	0.017 ▲	3	5	-0.019 ▼
Lao PDR	17	17	0.002 ▲	12	11	0.000 ≡	12	14	-0.089 ▼
Malaysia	3	3	0.019 ▲	3	3	0.007 ▲	-	-	-
Maldives	4	4	-0.002 ▼	8	6	-0.003 ▼	2	2	0.021 ▲
Myanmar	14	16	0.006 ▲	11	12	-0.002 ▼	7	7	0.000 ≡
Nepal	13	13	0.019 ▲	16	16	0.000 ≡	15	15	0.000 ≡
Pakistan	18	18	0.011 ▲	18	18	0.000 ≡	8	10	-0.028 ▼
Philippines	6	7	-0.009 ▼	6	5	0.003 ▲	4	3	0.009 ▲
Singapore	1	1	0.011 ▲	1	1	0.013 ▲	1	1	0.001 ▲
Sri Lanka	9	9	0.009 ▲	9	9	-0.006 ▼	5	4	0.003 ▲
Thailand	7	5	0.042 ▲	2	2	0.006 ▲	13	12	0.002 ▼
Timor-Leste	11	12	0.001 ▲	14	14	0.000 ≡	14	13	0.000 ▲
Vietnam	5	6	0.003 ▲	7	10	-0.035 ▼	11	11	0.000 ≡

The **three highest-ranking countries** on the Asia Index are **Singapore** (0.784), **Thailand** (0.733) and the **Philippines** (0.715), all of which are members of ASEAN. Singapore's Index value is moderately higher than that of the 2nd- and 3rd-ranked countries, largely due to its 1st-place score in five of the six domains: education, economic opportunities, protection, health, and political voice and representation. However, Singapore ranked 10th in Laws and Policies, as it has only three of five pieces of legislation in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination based on sex.

Between 2019 and 2021, the Philippines' Index value remained unchanged, while Thailand's overall Index value jumped from 0.694 to 0.733. Thailand's domain rankings range from 1st (laws and policies) to 12th (protection), while the Philippines' domain rankings range from 1st (laws and policies) to 13th (health).



**TABLE 3: Individual domain rankings for the Asia GLI 2021** (continued)

Country	Health			Political Voice & Representation			Laws & Policies		
	Rank 2019	Rank 2021	+/-	Rank 2019	Rank 2021	+/-	Rank 2019	Rank 2021	+/-
Afghanistan	19	19	0.015 ▲	16	17	-0.004 ▼	13	14	0.000 ≡
Bangladesh	12	11	0.017 ▲	15	15	0.002 ▲	13	14	0.000 ≡
Bhutan	9	9	0.002 ▲	5	5	0.000 ≡	4	4	0.000 ≡
Brunei Darussalam	2	2	-0.001 ▼	19	19	0.000 ≡	18	18	0.000 ≡
Cambodia	14	14	0.0001 ≡	10	10	0.000 ≡	3	4	0.000 ≡
India	17	15	0.015 ▲	11	11	0.000 ≡	3	4	0.000 ≡
Indonesia	6	6	0.008 ▲	13	12	0.011 ▲	13	14	0.000 ≡
Lao PDR	11	12	0.002 ▲	7	7	0.000 ≡	3	4	0.000 ≡
Malaysia	4	4	-0.001 ▼	17	16	0.003 ▲	10	10	0.000 ≡
Maldives	10	10	0.001 ▲	8	8	0.000 ≡	10	10	0.000 ≡
Myanmar	5	5	0.001 ▲	14	14	-0.001 ▼	18	18	0.000 ≡
Nepal	18	18	0.004 ▲	12	13	0.000 ≡	13	10	0.200 ▲
Pakistan	15	16	0.002 ▲	18	18	0.000 ≡	13	14	0.000 ≡
Philippines	13	13	0.0002 ▲	3	3	-0.007 ▼	1	1	0.000 ≡
Singapore	1	1	-0.006 ▼	2	1	0.029 ▲	10	10	0.000 ≡
Sri Lanka	7	7	0.003 ▲	9	9	0.0004 ▲	3	4	0.000 ≡
Thailand	3	3	-0.008 ▼	4	4	-0.002 ▼	3	1	0.200 ▲
Timor-Leste	17	17	0.002 ▲	6	6	0.000 ≡	3	4	0.000 ≡
Vietnam	8	8	0.001 ▲	1	2	0.000 ≡	1	1	0.000 ≡

The **three lowest-ranking countries** on the Asia Index are **Pakistan** (0.392), **Afghanistan** (0.405) and **Brunei Darussalam** (0.462), with the former two countries being members of SAARC. While Brunei Darussalam's ranking is moderately higher than the two lowest-ranking countries, it ranked last in two domains (political voice and representation, and laws and policies). Despite its low overall ranking, the country ranked 2nd in both education and health.

The difference between the two lowest-ranking countries (Pakistan and Afghanistan) is minimal, with only 0.013 separating them. Pakistan ranked 18th in three domains (education, economic opportunities, and political voice and representation). Its highest ranking is 10th (out of 17) in Protection. Afghanistan ranked last in three domains (education, economic opportunities and health) and ranked as high as 14th in Laws and Policies. The domain and individual indicator rankings for each country in the Asia GLI can be found in [Annex A](#).

# PACIFIC GIRLS' LEADERSHIP INDEX

In 2021, Plan International created the Pacific GLI focusing on seven core domains: Education, Economic Opportunities, Protection, Health, Political Voice and Representation, Laws and Policies, and Climate. These domains are further divided into 29 indicators and applied to 14 PICTs: Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.



**Education**



**Protection**



**Political voice and representation**



**Climate**



**Economic Opportunities**



**Health**



**Laws and policies**

Similar to the Asia GLI, the Index presents the overall rankings for girls' leadership, as well as for each of the core domains. The domains and indicators used in the Pacific GLI represent the essential factors that enable or constrain adolescent girls' and young women's healthy development and ability to demonstrate leadership. These rankings can be compared across countries over time. Table 4 presents the domains and indicators included in the Index, along with the SDGs they support, and the proportion of the overall Index value contributed by the indicators.

## The importance of the climate domain

The Pacific GLI focuses on the same six core domains included in the Asia GLI plus an additional domain of climate. Climate is a key concern within the Pacific region, as PICTs are particularly vulnerable to major climatic events, including rising sea levels and temperatures, coastal erosion and coral reef bleaching. The indicators under this domain focus on carbon dioxide emissions and protected terrestrial and marine areas, as well as the impact climatic events and disasters have on the human population. This domain may be added to future updates of the Asia GLI.





**TABLE 4: Pacific GLI domains and indicators**








Domain	Subdomain	Full form of indicator	SDG link	% total
 <b>Education</b>	Primary	Gross enrolment ratio, primary, female (%)	4.1.3	3.57%
	Secondary	Gross enrolment ratio, lower secondary, female (%)	4.1.3	3.57%
	Out of School	Out-of-school rate for youth of upper secondary school age, female (%)	4.1.4	3.57%
	Expected Years	Expected years of schooling, female	-	3.57%
 <b>Economic Opportunity</b>	NEET	Share of youth (15–24) not in employment, education or training, female (%)	8.6.1	3.57%
	Leadership	Female share of employment in senior and middle management (%)	5.5.2	3.57%
	Equal Pay	Law mandates equal remuneration for work of equal value	-	3.57%
	Unemployment	Female youth unemployment (15–24 years)	8.5.2	3.57%
 <b>Protection</b>	Violence	Percentage of the female population ages 15 and older that has ever experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner	5.2.2	4.76%
	Violence	Percentage of the female population ages 15 and older that has ever experienced sexual violence from a non-intimate partner	5.2.2	4.76%
	Child Marriage	Proportion of women aged 20–24 who were married or in a union before age 18 (%)	5.3.1	4.76%
 <b>Health</b>	SRHR	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19)	3.7.2	3.57%
	Suicide	Suicide mortality rate, female (per 100,000 female population)	3.4.2	3.57%
	MNCH	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	3.1.1	3.57%
	SRHR	Modern contraception prevalence rate (15–19 years)	3.7*	3.57%
 <b>Political Voice and Representation</b>	Representation	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments	5.5.1	4.76%
	Registration	Proportion of girls under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	16.9.1	4.76%
	Mobility	A woman can apply for a passport in the same way as a man	5.1.1	4.76%
 <b>Laws and Policies</b>	Inheritance	Equal rights between sons and daughters to inherit assets from parents	5.1.1	2.86%
	Domestic Violence	Legislation specifically addressing domestic violence	5.1.1	2.86%
	Sexual Harassment	Legislation on sexual harassment in employment	5.1.1	2.86%
	Child Marriage	Laws prohibiting or invalidating child marriage	5.1.1	2.86%
	Credit	Laws prohibiting discrimination in access to credit based on gender	5.1.1	2.86%
 <b>Climate</b>	Vulnerability	Number of deaths and missing persons attributed to disasters (per 100,000 population)	13.1.1	2.86%
	Vulnerability	Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population	13.1.1	2.86%
	Clean Fuels	Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology (%)	7.1.2	2.86%
	Protected Areas	Terrestrial and marine protected areas (% of total territorial area)	14.5*	2.86%
	CO2	Carbon dioxide emissions, production emissions per capita (tonnes)	9.4.1	2.86%

Table 5 presents the overall index values and ranking of each country based on the seven domains of Education, Economic Opportunities, Protection, Health, Political Voice and Representation, Laws and Policies, and Climate. Table 6 presents the countries' domain rankings.

**TABLE 5: Overall rankings for the Pacific GLI 2021**

Rank	Country	Index Value 2021	
1	Australia	0.854	<div></div>
2	New Zealand	0.820	<div></div>
3	Kiribati	0.643	<div></div>
4	Palau	0.633	<div></div>
5	Samoa	0.607	<div></div>
6	Tonga	0.599	<div></div>
7	Fiji	0.595	<div></div>
8	Nauru	0.592	<div></div>
9	Vanuatu	0.584	<div></div>
10	Micronesia, Federated States	0.562	<div></div>
11	Tuvalu	0.537	<div></div>
12	Solomon Islands	0.529	<div></div>
13	Marshall Islands	0.482	<div></div>
14	Papua New Guinea	0.436	<div></div>

**TABLE 6: Individual domain ranking for the Pacific GLI 2021**

Country	Education	Economic Opportunities	Protection	Health	Political Voice & Representation	Laws & Policies	Climate
Australia	2	1	1	1	2	1	4
Fiji	6	8	8	4	13	3	12
Kiribati	7	2	10	10	3	3	14
Marshall Islands	14	12	9	13	5	9	6
Micronesia, Federated States	8	13	4	6	8	9	5
Nauru	9	6	13	14	7	-	1
New Zealand	1	3	2	3	1	1	2
Palau	4	10	3	2	6	9	3
Papua New Guinea	13	14	14	11	14	7	10
Samoa	3	11	6	7	12	3	7
Solomon Islands	11	5	11	12	10	7	8
Tonga	5	7	5	5	4	9	11
Tuvalu	12	4	7	9	11	-	13
Vanuatu	10	9	12	8	9	3	9



The **three highest-ranking countries** on the Pacific Index are **Australia** (0.854), **New Zealand** (0.820) and **Kiribati** (0.643). Australia and New Zealand's Index values are considerably higher than the 3rd-ranked country and those below it, largely due to their high scores across all domains. Australia ranked either 1st or 2nd in all but one domain; its lowest ranking (4th in Climate) is a result of its last place ranking in the carbon dioxide emissions component indicator. Similarly, New Zealand ranked 1st or 2nd in all but two domains, with its lowest ranking being 3rd in both Economic Opportunities and Health. New Zealand's 3rd-place ranking in Economic Opportunities is likely a result of the country's lack of legislation mandating equal remuneration for work of equal value, as well as its mid-table ranking for female youth unemployment.

The difference between the 2nd and 3rd-ranked countries (New Zealand and Kiribati, respectively) is 0.177 – the largest gap between rankings in the overall Index. Kiribati's domain rankings range from 2nd (Economic Opportunities) to 14th (Climate), giving it the widest ranking range of all 14 Pacific countries.

The **three lowest-ranking countries** on the Index are **Papua New Guinea** (0.436), **Marshall Islands** (0.482) and **Solomon Islands** (0.529). Papua New Guinea's ranking is moderately lower than the 2nd- and 3rd-lowest-ranked countries due to ranking 14th in three domains (Economic Opportunities, Protection and Voice and Representation). Despite its overall low ranking, Papua New Guinea is demonstrating progress in the Laws and Policies domain (ranked 7th out of nine) and has reported having three of four pieces of legislation in place to protect and promote the leadership of girls.

The difference between the 2nd- and 3rd-lowest ranking countries (Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands, respectively) is moderate. Marshall Islands' component domain rankings range from 5th (Voice and Representation) to 14th (Education). In comparison, Solomon Islands' component domain rankings range from 5th (Economic Opportunities) to 12th (Health). Despite efforts in both countries to address deeply rooted traditional, social and cultural gender inequalities, these are not yet being translated into meaningful change for girls. The domain and individual indicator rankings for each country in the Pacific GLI can be found in [Annex A](#).

## Reflection of the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 has caused severe socio-economic damage to many parts of the world, with the Asia-Pacific region heavily affected by the pandemic. The outbreak has caused the loss of millions of jobs and livelihoods, reduced economic growth and heavily decreased international trade. The most vulnerable groups, including girls, women, migrant workers, daily age labourers and informal sector workers, have been hit the hardest by the effects of the pandemic.<sup>3,4</sup>

While these effects are not reflected in the 2021 Asia and Pacific GLIs, they have highlighted key vulnerabilities that existed long before the outbreak. For example, many countries in the Asia-Pacific region have inadequate education, healthcare and social protection systems. Moreover, the region often engages in unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.<sup>5,6</sup> These vulnerabilities were exacerbated by the pandemic and highlighted the need to focus on improving the quality of life within these countries.

The pandemic has also revealed an increase in cases of gender-based and domestic violence, including a lack of accessible protection mechanisms and services, particularly for girls. While the COVID-19 outbreak exacerbated these issues, it also illustrated key areas that may inform future civic engagement efforts. For example, many young female activists are currently focusing on child marriage issues. However, considering the potential rise in physical and sexual violence from intimate partners experienced during the pandemic, youth activists may turn their attention to gender-based and domestic violence.







# GIRLS' CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVISM FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN ASIA-PACIFIC



This section presents the findings and results from Plan International's research on girls' civic engagement and activism for gender equality and inclusive societies. Activism is a key component of the Political Voice and Representation domain of the Asia and Pacific GLIs. It ensures that marginalised voices are heard and promotes messages of social inclusion to increase representation in both the public sphere and policy-making spaces.

This section highlights the activities that girls and young women advocates are implementing in their countries, key enablers regarding social inclusion and girls' and women's rights, and local and national governments' responses to these activism efforts. It includes success stories from some countries in the Asia-Pacific region to illustrate the impact these youth activists are having on their countries (see Annex C for full success stories).

As part of this research, Plan International assessed the emerging trends and issues related to gender transformation and social inclusion girls and young women in the Asia-Pacific region are advocating. Research findings under this topic were divided into three areas: (1) gender and social inclusion issues they are advocating, (2) approaches, tactics and tools used by youth activists and (3) types of civic engagement and activism used to support gender equality and social inclusion.

## Identified issues related to gender transformation and social inclusion

During a comparative analysis of the Asia-Pacific region, girls and young women activists outlined several key concerns that they are addressing in their advocacy. These concerns are generally consistent across the region; however, certain issues are more prevalent in some countries than in others.

Overall, girls and young women are concerned about issues that hinder the fulfilment of their human, economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, as well as the rights of others. While some issues occur in the private sphere (self, family and household), others occur in the public sphere (workplace, market and government).

One of the key concerns relates to norms, attitudes and behaviours – particularly the patriarchal norms by which many countries abide. Such norms often lead to sexual harassment and exploitation, including cyberbullying, gender-based violence and human trafficking targeting girls and young women. These issues are aggravated by a lack of child-appropriate services and minimal support for victims.

Under patriarchal norms, girls and young women lack acceptable bodily autonomy. Some of the activists interviewed<sup>ii</sup> cited the need for a culture of body and sex positivity, access to comprehensive sexual education and respect for the sexual and reproductive health rights of girls and young women. Inadequate sexual education and barriers to contraception have contributed to high rates of unplanned pregnancy among adolescents.<sup>7</sup> Child, early, forced marriages and unions (CEFMU) also remains a concern, even among those who have not been directly affected by the issue. One activist from Indonesia states:

*"I felt I was part of it, and I did not want any children to experience child abuse or child marriage. I have not experienced child marriage myself, but I see around me that the consequences are terrifying."<sup>iii</sup>*

<sup>ii</sup> Out of the seven youth activists interviewed (all over the age of 18).

<sup>iii</sup> Interview with Ferny.

In addition to increased bodily autonomy, girls and young women activists also want more access to health services tailored to their needs, including access to menstrual hygiene and sexual health services, as well as mental health support.

Many activists also highlighted issues prevalent in the LGBTQIA+ community, including marginalisation from social spaces and institutions because of exclusionary norms, attitudes and behaviours. LGBTQIA+ community members often have lower confidence and experience a greater threat of persecution when interacting with state authorities than cisgender and heterosexual people.<sup>8</sup>

While patriarchal norms and behaviours are a key concern of youth activists in the Asia-Pacific region, the lack of voice, agency and autonomy among girls and young women contribute to these persisting norms. Girls and young women are excluded from political discourse, debates and decision-making, and there is unequal gender distribution in the political leadership and parliamentary representation of many countries.




Girls and young women activists cited the need for greater mobility and equal opportunities for women. There is persistent gender-based inequality in educational institutions, including in the quality of access to education. There are also barriers to employment opportunities for young women, regardless of their education level. While many girls and young women in the Asia-Pacific region want more opportunities to study and work in male-dominated STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields,<sup>iv</sup> gender norms and stereotypes often discourage them from working at all.

Girls and young women also face issues related to social and economic resources and safety nets. Due to cultural and religious norms, many women do not have the same inheritance rights or ability to borrow money and own land as men. Such inequality can have material consequences for women's economic independence, and access to decent, affordable and safe housing is a concern.

In addition to these norms and behaviours, state conflict, humanitarian crises (including natural disasters and pandemics) and the onset of climate change can have a disproportionate effect on girls and young women and exacerbate their existing vulnerabilities.

The document review identified policy frameworks and budgets as factors that can affect gender equality and social inclusion. **Girls are rarely classified as a particular demographic group with specific needs and interests; they are often concealed under the ageless category of 'women' or the gender-neutral categories of 'children', 'adolescents' or 'youth'.<sup>9</sup> Girls' initiatives also receive very low funding.<sup>10</sup>**

While changing these frameworks can impact activism efforts, several other actions were cited as necessary, such as:

 <p>Greater public investment in child participation in civil society agendas and structures</p>	 <p>Legal reform for the fulfilment of girls' and young women's rights (inheritance, land ownership, borrowing and loans, marriage and the prevention of gender-based violence)</p>	 <p>Comprehensive implementation of national child protection laws and international human rights treaties</p>
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## Approaches, tactics and tools used by girls and young women activists

While girls and young women often lack the voice and resources necessary to make wide-sweeping changes to patriarchal norms and behaviours, in recent years, female activists have been able to progressively mobilise gender-transformative movements and engage in collective actions through a range of approaches.

Encouraged by established organisations,<sup>v</sup> many girls and young women activists are leading their own initiatives, ranging from formally registered organisations to unregistered informal groups. These initiatives

<sup>iv</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

<sup>v</sup> Examples include Plan International, CARE, Fiji Women's Rights Movement and Mama Cash.



tend to be horizontal and democratic, and all members are equally valued and consulted.<sup>11</sup>

These initiatives maintain safe spaces for girls, women and the LGBTQIA+ community to discuss issues and concerns privately.<sup>vi</sup> However, they also recognise the need to include boys and men in the discussion to change gender norms and mitigate gender-based violence. For example, Equal Playing Field runs school programmes in Papua New Guinea that use sport to promote respectful relationships and gender equality among both boys and girls.<sup>12</sup>

Another initiative that includes boys and men in the discussion is Australia's Youth Activist Series (YAS) on street harassment. The initiative developed a crowd-mapping tool that girls and young women can use to highlight areas where they do and do not feel safe. As Alice, a key activist in the movement, states:



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Australia's YAS initiative has developed a crowd-mapping tool to highlight 'safe' and 'unsafe' areas for girls.

*"I think boys and men and people who do not experience street harassment were finally able to realise the scale and the issue by seeing the map. A lot of these people in my life were really blown away by the [...] findings that young women would stop doing very simple things because they were scared of being harassed."<sup>vii</sup>*

Some initiatives have adopted the strategy of educating children, their parents and teachers on gender-transformative change. While children gain a broader education on gender roles, consent and sexual health, parents and teachers learn how to create a safe space in homes and classrooms for children to enact their rights and seek support from the adults in their lives.<sup>viii</sup>

While these initiatives tend to focus on activism for gender transformation and social inclusion within local communities, they also include self-conscientisation and transformation within girls and young women themselves. This process involves reflecting on their own gender identity and reviewing their assumptions and beliefs about gender's role in society. Through self-conscientisation, activists can empower themselves through personal growth, build their confidence and nurture their leadership ambitions.<sup>13</sup>

The majority of these initiatives have similar goals (i.e., promote social inclusion and encourage gender transformation); however, girls and young women activists are using a range of tactics to raise awareness, mobilise youth and influence public opinion on gender-transformative change. They are also sharing educational material in local languages in order to reach a broad audience and spread their messages more widely.

Many initiatives are using in-person advocacy tactics, including presenting a youth manifesto to members of parliament, organising public demonstrations and planning actions around specific days, such as International Women's Day. Activists are also building evidence through research and fundraising for campaigns to maintain momentum and support these movements.

To keep advocacy messages engaging, many activists are using multimedia, including radio talk shows and local drama theatres, to educate and empower girls and young women with age-appropriate messages. For example, the Wan Smolbag Theatre in Vanuatu<sup>14</sup> and the Talitha Project in Tonga use drama and the arts to engage with policymakers and advocate gender-transformative messages.

<sup>vi</sup> Interviews with female youth advocates.

<sup>vii</sup> Interview with Alice.

<sup>viii</sup> Interview with a female youth advocate.

## Types of civic engagement and activism

Girl-led initiatives often connect with networks and coalitions of organisations focusing on similar intersectional feminist issues. These networks are at the ‘glocal’ level and connect activists across geographical hubs and countries. Girls and young women who may have connected across borders and identities are reproducing open networks with a multitude of locally active leaders.<sup>15</sup>

This interconnected activism effort reaches all levels of civic engagement and influences various types of power. Understanding the different factors of these glocal connections is critical for evaluating the success of local movements.

**Invited spaces** may be developed through invitation from governments, supranational agencies or NGOs. In **closed spaces**, however, authorities and elites make decisions with little or no input from the people whose lives might be affected by those very decisions. To counteract the effects of these closed spaces, **claimed and self-created spaces** comprise like-minded individuals who mobilise around similar issues. These spaces typically exist outside of institutionalised policy arenas and range from intentional social movements to organic gatherings for debating issues and discussing strategies.<sup>16</sup>

While this study did not identify a particular closed space, the research highlighted several claimed and invited spaces that support girls and young women in civic engagement. One key example is the Talitha Project.

In Tonga, Anamalia, a youth mentor with the Talitha Project, was invited to participate in national and regional forums and workshops. She has used these platforms to advocate girls’ empowerment and leadership, stating:

*“In these places, I am able to speak and channel discussions about how important it is for women to be in leadership and how important it is to create a society that young girls and women feel safe to live in.”<sup>ix</sup>*

Another example is Australia’s YAS initiative. This 12-month leadership development programme targets activists aged 16–24. Each year, the programme invites up to 10 participants to create long-lasting social change and fight for equality, human rights and the environment. On International Day of the Girl (11 October), YAS invites young people to use their voices and bring their experiences to light by consulting with leaders and decision-makers and spreading advocacy messages across major Australian media outlets. In 2020, the participating youth activists focused on digital technologies by posting to social media accounts and demanding the platforms to commit to creating safe and empowering online spaces for girls and young women.

Alice, a former YAS activist, spoke about her time in the programme, stating:

*“I had read about the YAS in a newsletter and immediately felt this was an amazing opportunity. I did not expect to get into the programme, but I did. [...] I felt really passionate about pushing for real, tangible change.”<sup>x</sup>*



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Alice, a female youth activist in Australia, has been working to promote gender-transformative change in her country.

<sup>ix</sup> Interview with Anamalia.

<sup>x</sup> Interview with Alice.



In addition to the spaces in which youth activists can influence gender-transformative change, the activism initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region span across different levels of civic engagement.

The **local level** includes a personal and household level of action, as well as the arenas of everyday public life in which people can mobilise for change. At this level, female youth advocates connect with individuals on issues specific to their local contexts. Local activism includes sharing stories and information about gender equality and social inclusion issues with friends and family, as well as leading campaigns and educational programmes in local schools.

*“I think a lot of times, young people do not realise the impact they can have on decision-makers. If you think about it, we are literally the juxtaposition – especially young women from diverse backgrounds – of the traditional power holders. [...] I have seen the impact that young women and girls from the YAS have had on decision-making, and I think we are making incredible waves.”<sup>xi</sup>*

Some activism initiatives are working on a wider scale at the **national level**. This level of civic engagement uses the nation state and national political parties and courts to influence power and public authority. At this level, advocates promote campaigns on priority issues for gender equality and social inclusion, and coalitions of feminist organisations often work together to influence public agendas and national policies and budgets. Girls and young women may also engage with the government as citizens, conducting youth consultations convened by governments on policy topics or submitting youth-led petitions to the parliament.

The highest level studied during this research is the **supranational level**, which includes international consultative spaces and regional bodies, as well as formal and informal places for participation beyond the nation state. At this level, networks of children and young women are working with each other and alongside formal institutions to encourage gender-transformative change. These initiatives span multiple countries across the Asia-Pacific region and target issues experienced in each country. Activists involved in these initiatives may draw inspiration or a sense of solidarity from working across regional contexts.

Australia’s YAS programme often works at all three levels of civic engagement to ensure lasting change. At the national level, in 2021, the selected activists developed several powerful recommendations to eliminate sexism and misogyny in Australia’s Parliament. They also plan to present a petition based on the recommendations to politicians and power holders throughout the country.

While girls and young women activists are successfully using different levels of civic engagement to influence gender-transformative change, it is important to understand the different forms of power that can affect the success of these activism efforts.

**Visible forms of power** include public spaces of formal decision-making bodies where various interests are contested, such as legislatures, local assemblies and consultative forums. These spaces tend to be led by global leaders, policymakers and professional campaigners. However, youth activists are using public demonstrations and self-created campaigns to promote their interests and demonstrate their visible form of power to influence decision-makers.

In these decision-making spaces, certain voices are more prevalent than others.<sup>17</sup> By focusing on gaining proper representation in legislature and other government bodies, girls and young women will be able to increase their power, influence and voice and use the opportunity to express their views and influence public policy.

Alternatively, **hidden forms of power** are used by vested interests to maintain their power and privilege by controlling the political agenda. People may also use hidden forms of power to resist domination and control.



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When given sufficient support and the right tools, girls and young women can ensure positive change toward gender equality.

<sup>xi</sup> Interview with Alice.

Similarly, **invisible forms of power** involve hiding the rights and interests of subjugated groups from the groups themselves. This form of power uses the influence of dominating ideologies and values, as well as socialised forms of behaviour.

Addressing hidden and invisible forms of power inherently challenges the dominance of those who want to maintain the status quo. By strengthening the voices of girls and young women through consciousness-raising and skill development, these youth activists can become champions and advocates for gender equality and social inclusion. These activists have already begun challenging hidden and invisible forms of power using media. For example, in Indonesia, the Civil Society Movement for the Elimination of Child Marriage effectively used media coverage to share information about child protection, mobilise public support and achieve legislative change.

## Supporting girls and young women in future civic engagement and activism

As part of this research, Plan International interviewed seven young female activists and five sector-based experts. The activists highlighted the successful efforts and enablers of past and present civic engagement and activism, as well as preferred methods of support for future civic engagement and activism.

### *Past successful civic engagement efforts*

Part of this research involved identifying previous successful efforts by girls and young women to promote gender equality and social inclusion. These findings provide insight into the practices that should be implemented in future activities. Successful efforts highlighted include:

- **Mobilising in groups with collective identities and providing mutual support:** many activists may feel isolated within physically based communities and families.<sup>xii</sup> Social media enabled them to connect with peers who have had similar experiences and hold similar views to resist oppression as a collective.
- **Exercising their voice and speaking publicly on gender equality and social inclusion:** youth activists used their skills and confidence to share their opinions and engage with governments and other stakeholders. For example, Vietnamese youth were invited to speak at the National Assembly and share their perspectives on issues related to girls' rights.<sup>xii</sup>
- **Using educational platforms and materials created for gender transformation:** youth advocates educated children on biology and sexual and reproductive health using special platforms and materials. For example, in the Solomon Islands, youth activists facilitated the educational initiative 'Champions of Change', which uses child-friendly activities to discuss sensitive issues, such as bodily autonomy and consent. School boards and teachers supported these youth leaders in running the programme in schools.
- **Influencing government policy:** activism efforts in several countries were successful in influencing government policy. For example, at the national level, the National Youth Climate Action Summit in Fiji focused on youth's input to the climate change bill.<sup>19</sup> At the local level, children in Indonesia who participated in the Child Forums at the regency level were included in the consultations and conducted research for the Local Development Planning Community Discussion.<sup>xiii</sup>

<sup>xii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

<sup>xiii</sup> Interview with a female youth advocate.



# Enablers of successful civic engagement

The successful civic engagement efforts of these young female activists are essential for promoting gender-transformative change and equality. One of the key enabling factors in supporting civic engagement is the development of local or national policies to provide young female advocates with the protection they need to voice their opinions and share their experiences; a lack of specific policies to protect young female advocates can have detrimental effects on the overall civic engagement movement.

Khadiza, a young female activist from Bangladesh, cited a lack of protection for youth and female civic engagement within the country.<sup>xiv</sup> Girls and young women are motivated to spread awareness and promote gender equality, but many of them do not trust police forces to protect them and address their concerns, making it difficult to safely spread their messages.<sup>20</sup>

Conversely, in Indonesia, despite the lack of a specific policy, the Government is working to support young female activists. Ferny, a local activist and member of the Youth Coalition for Girls (YCG), has stated that the Government supports youth advocacy activities and even invited members of YCG to join activities on gender equality through civil society organisation (CSO) and NGO networks.<sup>xv</sup>

The development of specific policies to support young female civic engagement will provide activists with the protection they need to voice their opinions and spread their messages of gender equality.



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<sup>xiv</sup> Interview with Khadiza.

<sup>xv</sup> Interview with Ferny.

In addition to specific policies, the research identified several other enablers of civic engagement for gender equality and social inclusion:

- **Ensuring a positive approach and a belief in the value of girls and young women:** support from champions within institutions and policy-making spaces can encourage the meaningful participation of girls and young women and enable effective engagement. Adults who can influence child and youth participation need respectful, non-discriminatory attitudes, as well as skills in self-reflection and negotiation.<sup>xvi</sup>
- **Employing a rights-based approach when working with children:** such an approach can help children recognise their right to participate and have a voice. By providing mentorship and support, adults can create a safer space for children to meet and share their ideas.<sup>xvi</sup>
- **Ensuring respect and support from family and friends:** this can help girls and young women to be more effective in their advocacy efforts. Several organisations and initiatives across the Asia-Pacific region have proven the effectiveness of such support. For example, Girls Alliance members educated their family members on how to stop gender discrimination and make a safer space for children to have a voice. They then shared their views on gender transformation and social inclusion issues with peers in their neighbourhoods, which helped to change the attitudes and norms within their local communities.
- **Creating friendly spaces for girls and young women to connect with each other:** these supportive groups help girls to build their confidence and enable further activism. However, to gain confidence as activists in the public sphere, girls and young women need more regular opportunities to voice their views to decision-makers.<sup>xvii</sup>
- **Working together in partnerships and coalitions:** young female advocates have emphasised the importance of support from older generations of feminists. In Indonesia, for example, there are several coalitions between different organisations and initiatives, such as a partnership between the YCG and Jaringan AKSI to develop a campaign to stop child, early, forced marriages and unions (CEFMU). Such partnership gave the activists a broad reach to influence society and decision-makers.
- **Celebrating small wins to sustain social movements:** when children and young advocates are encouraged by small wins in their activism, they are better able to maintain their momentum towards evoking change.

### *Digital technologies and social media in civic engagement*

While girls and young women activists have used a wide range of civic engagement methods, digital technologies and social media have played heavily into the success of this movement. As part of this research, Plan International explored how digital technologies have influenced social change and promoted gender equality, as well as how they can be used in the future to improve civic engagement efforts.

Activists are using online social media content, such as stories, memes and short films, to raise awareness on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube on issues affecting them.<sup>xviii</sup> They are also using WhatsApp and Facebook groups and pages to mobilise youth through 'social influencers', recruit volunteers for campaigns, organise petitions and share instructional templates for organising events. Social networking sites have proven effective in expanding networks, building support systems, creating solidarity and spreading the influence needed to sustain social movements. They also act as an electronic repository for instructional resources that can be used in the future.

A key example of the use of digital technologies is the Free to Be crowd-mapping tool developed through Australia's YAS programme. In 2018, the programme collaborated with CrowdSpot and Monash University's YXX Lab to develop an interactive map where girls can mark areas in the city where they feel unsafe or have experienced street harassment. By the time the online tool launched officially, over 21,000 girls had already used it.<sup>xix</sup>

<sup>xvi</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

<sup>xvii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

<sup>xviii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

<sup>xix</sup> Interview with Alice.



In Indonesia, the YCG is also using digital technology to advocate on CEFMU issues. Many people have posted about the issue on social media platforms to influence public opinion and policies. Ferny, a young activist involved in the campaign, states:

*"I was very happy that many people were willing to make time to share posts on their Instagram. [...] We received a good response as well, and that [...] motivates us to continue our campaign for preventing child marriage."<sup>xx</sup>*

Digital technologies and innovations have also helped the Asia-Pacific region to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Accelerated technologies were used to provide outbreak management and emergency relief, education for children and social protection for vulnerable communities. While these innovations can and should be used to mitigate further outbreaks, the region must remain conscious of green, inclusive and resilient technologies.<sup>22,23</sup>

In some cases, organisations that primarily focus on young female activism have used digital technologies to assist in the COVID-19 response. For example, WeMen View, an organisation that aims to counter sexual harassment in Bangladesh, has moved online and added several relief projects to support children and communities during the pandemic.<sup>xxi</sup>

### **Successful use of digital technologies in activism**

In the Asia-Pacific region, girls and young women activists are using digital technologies to successfully promote gender-transformative change. Such efforts include:

- **Mobilising online campaigns for gender-transformative change:** several activism initiatives have used online campaigns to promote socially inclusive movements. For example, women's rights organisations Lentera Sintas Indonesia and Magdalene organised the 'Let's Talk About It' (#MulaiBicara) campaign, which promoted the prevention of sexual violence. This campaign saw almost 7,000 Instagram posts with the #MulaiBicara hashtag to raise awareness of the issue.<sup>24</sup>
- **Discussing gender equality and social inclusion through digital platforms:** girls and women across the Asia-Pacific region are using digital platforms to share personal stories on gender equality and social inclusion. In Bangladesh, the women-led organisation Swayong created an online storytelling platform for diverse groups of people to share their stories in a safe environment. The platform encourages people to interact meaningfully on sensitive topics by breaking down inhibitions about women's issues in an educational and empowering way.<sup>25</sup>
- **Prioritising accessibility through digital platforms:** youth forums and conferences have been using digital platforms to achieve more diverse participation of young people. For example, the UN75 Youth Forum used a hybrid model of offline and online participation. Semi-remote participation allowed young people in rural areas and socio-economically disadvantaged individuals to join the live stream forum discussions.<sup>xxii</sup>
- **Raising consciousness and expanding awareness through social networking sites and blogs:** many girls and young women are interacting through Facebook and Instagram to build connections and discuss issues surrounding gender equality and social inclusion; this online solidarity promotes activism despite geographical limitations.<sup>26</sup> Social media also provide alternative narratives beyond the scope of immediate social networks and personal perspectives.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>xx</sup> Interview with Ferny.

<sup>xxi</sup> Interview with Khadiza.

<sup>xxii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

## Enablers of successful digital activism

The research also identified several enablers that support the successful use of digital technologies and social media, including:

- **Adaptability in learning digital technologies:** the girls and young women interviewed during this research are savvy with social media and have the awareness and skills needed to protect themselves online. Many of these female youth advocates grew up with advanced technologies and are comfortable engaging with older generations through online conversations.<sup>xxiii</sup>
- **Use of interesting content and applications for digital engagement:** social media accounts promoting gender transformation and social inclusion use posters, infographics, narratives, competitions, videos and short films to spread civic engagement messages. Live discussions on Facebook or Instagram are interesting ways to encourage communication about social inclusion.
- **Creation of safe and inclusive spaces to build solidarity:** building solidarity in safe spaces such as social media promotes collective action and strategic gains in the public arena.<sup>28</sup> Social media channels allow individuals to edit their ideas and maintain control of the conversation. Marginalised groups, such as LGBTIQIA+ youth, often feel more comfortable discussing their stories and views online where they can protect their identity and avoid the pressures that come with in-person discussions.<sup>29</sup>
- **Connections between offline and online activities:** in many cases of successful digital activism, key actors facilitate these connections and promote in-person relationship-building between youth advocates. New media scholars remain cautious about the potential for sustained social movements existing solely online.<sup>30</sup> Dynamic social media sites require specific knowledge and energy to drive them forward, and digital labour is essential for establishing and maintaining an online presence.<sup>31</sup> For example, the Jakarta Feminist Discussion Group conducts public events, such as community gatherings, book clubs and film screenings, and their Facebook page has built a network across the region. Some of the members are also administrators on feminist Instagram accounts and can coordinate strategy and tactics for campaigning on intersectional gender issues.<sup>32</sup>
- **Appropriate technologies and improved digital literacy skills:** organisations and individuals promoting inclusive child and youth engagement should invest in inclusive and accessible digital technologies. Building the digital literacy of people of all ages, including providing training and guidance on how to use social media effectively for advocacy, enables the involvement of a broader segment of the population in citizen engagement and activism.



<sup>xxiii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.



## Future of civic engagement

In addition to the enablers of successful activism, this research also identified a range of visions for the future of girls' civic engagement. These visions offer insights into the current barriers and constraints of youth activism in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as how best to enable and support future civic engagement and activism efforts.

As part of this research, girls and young women activists identified several factors that are needed for future civic engagement. One of the main enablers for future civic engagement of girls and young women is support from older generations. Khadiza, a young female activist leading the organisation WeMen View in Bangladesh, states:

*"We expect that the adults, our previous generations do not hinder us voicing our opinions. We imagine that they won't be bullying or harassing us. Instead, we expect them to support these (gender equality) causes and support us to move forward"*<sup>xxiv</sup>

Other necessary factors to support future civic engagement include:

- **Diverse intergenerational social movement:** the Pacific Feminist Charter Action Plan specifically outlines the need to support solidarity among diverse groups of girls. Cooperation and experience-sharing between younger and older activists can strengthen the leadership capacity of girls and young women and bring new approaches and ideas to civic engagement movements.
- **Intersectional approach:** girls and young women are not a homogenous group, and diversity must be promoted. The public sphere should incorporate the inclusion and visibility of diverse groups of girls and young women, including transgender, disabled and indigenous women.<sup>xxv</sup> Similarly, invited spaces should allow children and young women to elect their own representatives.
- **Increased support from adults:** adults should support children in developing their capacity as activists. Girls and young women activists cited a lack of support from families and fear of community backlash as barriers to becoming active advocates for change. Adults must protect youth activists and provide the mentorship necessary to equip them with the skills, knowledge and consciousness needed to participate in civic engagement.<sup>xxvi</sup>
- **Improved networking with other advocates:** activists have expressed the desire to strengthen their networks and collaborate on campaigns for similar causes, both within their countries and across the region, to gain insights and new ideas from different contexts.<sup>xxvii</sup> The Pacific Feminist Forum is one such existing regional platform that connects diverse female activists.<sup>34</sup>
- **Opportunities to occupy leadership and decision-making positions:** girls and young women should be included in both the design and implementation of programmes that benefit girls, as well as the research, monitoring and evaluation of youth engagement programmes. Girls and young women should also have a voice in policymaking at the national and supranational levels, as well as in regional-level consultations.<sup>35</sup>
- **More mechanisms to hold national governments accountable to girls and young women:** governments will be more responsive if they are held accountable for taking specific measure to support female and youth activism. Such accountability can include feedback mechanisms and allowing community members, particularly girls and young women, to report any concerns regarding human rights violations.<sup>36</sup>
- **Supportive legal and financial framework for activism efforts:** girl-led groups have recognised that financial support is important to identify sources of funding and network with potential donors. To ensure movement sustainability, they also need knowledge strengthening and training to improve technical and management skills.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>xxiv</sup> Interview with Khadiza.

<sup>xxv</sup> Interview with a female youth advocate.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Interview with a female youth advocate.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

The interviewed girls and young women activists also identified the role digital technologies will play in future activism efforts, including:

- **Acting as a safe place for girls and young women to engage in activism:** social networking sites should be free from the threat of cyberbullying, and digital platform providers must be held accountable for online safety; the harassment of girls and young women will not be tolerated.<sup>37</sup>
- **Educating the public on gender equality and social inclusion:** multiple digital platforms can be used to strengthen social networks, mobilise social movements and promote campaigns. Social media users, including young female activists, will be equipped to deal with misinformation and fake news. Digital databases may also be used to hold governments accountable for policy commitments.
- **Enabling more inclusive use:** people living with disabilities will be more involved in the design of digital technologies, and their input will ensure that these technologies suit their needs. Diverse groups of both men and women will be able to engage in online activism, and girls' voices will be amplified using stories, art, images and videos to reach a broader audience.<sup>xxviii</sup>

### National governments' responses to a rise in youth activism

Girls and young women activists in the Asia-Pacific region have implemented a wide range of tactics and mechanisms to ensure gender equality and inclusive societies. However, ensuring change requires not only civic engagement but also a positive and receptive government response.

As part of this research, Plan International assessed governments' response to the rise in youth activism, as well as the factors that can enable a positive response for future civic engagement. It is important to note that there is a lack of reliable and formal sources citing governments' response to the rise in youth activism. Much of these findings come from government comments and emerging actions reported in media articles, as well as interviews with government representatives. Additionally, governments are made up of various agencies and individuals with differing viewpoints; the findings outlined below are not meant to represent a single perspective from the 'overall government' but rather the various responses different governments have demonstrated.

The involvement of young female activists in the decision-making process and policy-making spheres is important for not only the development of relevant and necessary programmes and policies but also continued youth civic engagement. As Ferny, a young female activist from Indonesia, states:

*"Hopefully, in 10 years, things will get better. [...] As youth, we can work with the Government and are allowed to be involved before the Government makes a decision regarding policy; [...] our thoughts are listened to and taken into consideration. I hope that in the future youth will be invited to be involved more in advocacy."*<sup>xxix</sup>

National governments in the Asia-Pacific region have had mixed responses to the rise in youth activism. Both the Asia and Pacific regions, as well as the individual countries within those regions, have taken various actions to either support or hinder young female civic engagement.

In the Asia region, governments have begun expanding spaces of youth consultation and influence. While this expansion has not been widespread, some governments have supported girls by sharing their messages. For example, in Timor-Leste, government agencies shared the advocacy messages of the Girls Alliance on both social media and in traditional news outlets.<sup>xxx</sup> This enabled girls to directly influence official discourses on the education and health rights of children.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

<sup>xxix</sup> Interview with Ferny.

<sup>xxx</sup> Interview with a female youth advocate.



Expanding spaces for youth consultation and influence is critical for promoting advocacy messages of gender-transformative change and equality. In Bangladesh, WeMen View is working to address sexual harassment through the education of children and young people. Addressing gender issues can be challenging and controversial in a conservative society, and WeMen View has struggled to access schools. However, the organisation has made great progress; However, the organisation has made great progress in teaching both boys and girls in some targeted schools the difference between 'good touch and bad touch', as well as who to approach and how to ask for help in case of abuse.<sup>xxxix</sup>

While some Asian governments have supported civic engagement efforts, others have begun limiting youth activism by penalising protestors and dissenters. Authoritarian tactics have emerged that restrict human rights advocacy efforts, including security force repression, censorship, arrests and surveillance.<sup>38</sup> There has also been legislation passed on anti-terrorism policies that restricts activists' freedom and strengthens the power of the state. Such legislation includes 'fake news' laws and Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 in the Philippines, which allows the state to detain suspects without charge for up to 24 days.<sup>39</sup> In response, female youth advocates have called for more dialogues between gender activists and the Government, as well as increased support from law enforcement agencies to protect young female activists.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Despite the prevalence of these restrictions, some Asian countries are working to expand the opportunities for youth advocates to participate in international youth consultation forums. For example, the Ministry of Home Affairs in Viet Nam and the UN Youth Union developed a Youth Advisory Group to give young people the opportunity to shape a revised youth law.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Since 2015, there have also been some successful reforms to policies on gender and social inclusion issues as a result of youth activism. Notably, in 2019, the Constitutional Court of Indonesia ruled that the marriage age of girls should be increased to 19 (the same as boys), and the Parliament has committed to implementing this change in existing laws within three years.<sup>40</sup> While this issue continues to be discussed in the public domain, particularly considering the increase in CEFMU during the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a victory for gender activists who have been campaigning for many years for CEFMU prevention.<sup>41</sup>



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<sup>xxxix</sup> Interview with Khadiza.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Interview with a female youth advocate.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.



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While girls and young women have made great strides in influencing public policy, it remains difficult for governments to address socially controversial and religious issues. For example, the elimination of female genital mutilation in Indonesia will require stronger political will and the cooperation of religious authorities. In Bangladesh, enforcing penalties on men for violence against women remains a challenge because social norms and practices which support violence are insitutionalised in custom and law at all levels of the society. Also, there is complete gender bias present in the current legal and judicial system.<sup>xxxiv</sup> In many countries in the region, the prevalence of CEFMU is also driven by social norms and religious beliefs.

While governments' responses in the Asia region have been mixed, the response in the Pacific region has been relatively positive, with several governments inviting girls and young women to participate in civic engagement programmes and public consultations. However, the research did not highlight specific examples of policy changes related to gender equality and social inclusion because of youth activism.

In Australia, efforts by YAS activists have influenced policy around women and girls' safety and street harassment. The Greater Sydney Commission, the Transport for NSW and the Committee for Sydney have begun developing the Women's Safety Charter as a direct result of the advocacy messages YAS has put forward.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Despite the lack of specific policy changes, most PICTs have recognised the importance of youth participation in national development. Some governments have developed structures and mechanisms, such as the Pacific Youth Development Framework, for young activists to participate in development at the national and subnational levels.

Partnerships between NGOs and national and subnational governments in the Pacific region have also facilitated opportunities for girls' leadership. For example, Plan International and the Honiara City Council in the Solomon Islands<sup>xxxvi</sup> have been working together to promote gender equality and provide safe spaces for girls to participate in training on various topics, including gender equality, the prevention of sexual harassment, and sexual and reproductive health.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

While governments' responses in the Pacific region have been largely positive, certain governments are censoring media and public debate, limiting girls' and young women's opportunities to influence the political agenda for gender equality. Sector-based experts warn that governments should not try to control girls and young women; rather, they should provide support, ensure justice and allow young activists to express different values and political views.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Interview with a female youth advocate.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Interview with Alice.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Plan International in the Solomon Islands provides funding and mentoring for youth advocates.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Interview with a female youth advocate

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.



## Enablers of positive government response

There are certain enabling factors that can promote positive government responses to future civic engagement. Primarily, governments must leverage existing practices and strengthen national agendas and commitments to gender equality and social inclusion.

The research identified several areas where governments should focus to ensure an open space for girls' meaningful participation:

- **Strengthening the value of girls' and young women's participation and voice:** inclusive and peaceful societies depend on the active participation and meaningful engagement of young people. Governments must promote broader and inclusive youth participation in local and national decision-making and facilitate interactions between senior political leaders and children and youth leaders. Such interactions will allow governments to gather useful information and become champions for youth interests in decision-making forums.<sup>xxxix</sup>
- **Promoting young people as agents of positive social change:** there are many policies and programmes on youth issues that associate adolescents with undesirable behaviour. Governments need to address this harmful association and reframe young people as agents of positive change.<sup>xi</sup> As part of this effort, governments may create programmes that build young people's critical thinking skills and creativity, fostering an environment for youth-led solutions.
- **Playing an active role in broader leadership for societal change:** the research found that young female activists must be recognised and supported in their local communities before they can build the confidence, skills and networks to engage in activism at the national level. Governments have a unique role to play in fostering inclusive dialogue between diverse groups of people to address the needs of girls and young women who face intersecting forms of discrimination. By working together with progressive CSOs, government agencies can change harmful norms, attitudes and structures and strengthen the bureaucracy to protect adolescent girls.<sup>xli</sup>
- **Demonstrating gender equality within leadership roles:** when governments demonstrate gender equality in leadership positions, girls will be more confident and better equipped to develop the skills they need to become political leaders. Greater representation of women in politics can provide positive role models for girls and influence gender-transformative decisions.
- **Funding initiatives that promote youth activism:** to ensure that national policies and funding are informed by the needs and priorities of girls and young women, governments must create consultation spaces where young female advocates feel comfortable in addressing their needs. This effort can involve strengthening support to CSOs by adopting or funding campaigns and programmes that promote a gender-transformative approach and build the capacities of girls and young women in citizen engagement.
- **Providing an enabling and inclusive digital environment:** access to the internet and social media is a strong factor in forming social networks and increasing education and political participation.<sup>42</sup> Governments must invest in improving accessibility to the internet, including affordability and availability, to ensure inclusion in digital activism. Governments should also create safe digital spaces that are free from harassment and threats without restricting youth and gender activists from expressing their views. Such efforts can include ensuring law enforcement response to threats, publicly supporting gender-transformative change and mobilising public education around online expectations and responsibilities.<sup>43</sup>
- **Upholding and implementing existing international agreements:** governments in the Asia-Pacific region have committed to several international and regional agreements to achieve gender equality, including SDGs and the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women and Youth.<sup>44</sup> Governments must take decisive steps to progress in these commitments, such as extending gender equality frameworks and developing a clear process for engaging with children and young people. National governments must also protect politically active girls and young women and respect young people's freedom of expression and right to demonstrate publicly.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

<sup>xi</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.

<sup>xli</sup> Interview with a female youth advocate.







# CONCLUSION

The research findings presented in this report highlight the activism efforts of girls and young women advocates, as well as what they need to continue such civic engagement.

Throughout the Asia-Pacific region, girls and young women are working to ensure gender-transformative change and social inclusion. However, some countries have developed a more enabling environment for girls' leadership and activism than others. The Asia and Pacific GLIs outline the various domains that contribute to a country's political and social context: education, economic opportunities, protection, health, voice and representation, and laws and policies, as well as climate in the Pacific region. The combined index values for these domains in each country can be used to identify the enabling and constraining factors that influence girls' and young women's opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership capabilities. While many of these factors must be addressed at the policy-making level, youth activists are doing their part to promote gender-transformative change and practice leadership.

Girls and young women across the Asia-Pacific region are advocating similar issues related to gender transformation and social inclusion. These efforts touch on key concerns related to the norms, attitudes and behaviours that affect girls' autonomy and voice, including gender-based violence and discrimination, as well as the opportunities girls have to develop and display leadership skills.

The analysis found that girls and young women are mobilising in both invited and claimed spaces at local, national and supranational levels to address different forms of power, promote their messages and facilitate connections. Within these different spaces, girls and young women are using a range of approaches to develop their civic engagement movements, lead their own initiatives, raise awareness, mobilise youth and influence public opinion. The research highlighted digital technologies and social media as key components in successful civic engagement. Girls and young women use digital technologies to (1) mobilise online campaigns for gender-transformative change, (2) discuss gender equality and social inclusion through accessible digital platforms and (3) raise consciousness and expand awareness through social networking sites.





Several enabling factors were identified that can further empower girls and young women activists in future civic engagement, including support from champions, family and friends and the use of a rights-based approach among organisations working with children. Governments and stakeholders must also invest in adolescent girls' initiatives and programmes that can both promote advocacy messages and improve the domains outlined in the Asia and Pacific GLIs.

As highlighted in key informant interviews, digital technologies have played a critical role in past activism activities. However, the continued use of digital technologies in future civic engagement will depend on several factors, including (1) adaptability and digital literacy skills, (2) safe and inclusive spaces, (3) connections between offline and online activities and (4) the use of appropriate technologies. To support future civic engagement efforts, social networking sites should promote safety and inclusion for girls and young women, and digital platforms should be used to educate the public on gender equality and social inclusion.

Governments' response to young female activism has been mixed. Some governments have implemented security force repression, censorship, arrests and surveillance, while many local and national governments have supported young female civic engagement and invited activists into decision-making spaces. Several policies and initiatives have also been developed to respond to the demand for greater gender equality. While this response may be viewed as a victory for civic engagement, it can also be further improved. Governments must keep civic spaces open to girls' participation. Policies, programmes and mechanisms must be constantly reviewed to ensure that they do not contribute to gender discrimination and restrictive civic spaces.

While the Asia and Pacific GLIs highlight the circumstances surrounding girls' situation in the region, the findings on young female activism stress on the importance of girls and young women as active agents of social change. The combined findings of this research show that social and cultural norms continue to contribute to gender inequality and the lack of opportunities for girls and young women across the region. By investing in the continued use of the Indexes, policymakers, donors, key stakeholders will be better able to monitor change in those key domains over time and address the key constraints that prevent young female leadership and representation and greater gender equality.



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Based on the research findings and the results of the Asia and Pacific GLIs, Plan International has identified the following considerations that CSOs and stakeholders working to promote girls' activism should consider supporting and catalyse girl and youth-led movements:



Continue to invite girls and young women into enabling spaces to build their confidence, share their experiences, and influence and learn from others. Allow them to expand their network and benefit from intergenerational conversations



Advocate to governments to invest in adolescent girls' frameworks and provide other supportive frameworks for youth leadership and activism, as well as mechanisms for girls and young women to hold them accountable for gender transformation and social inclusion



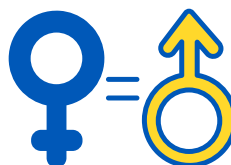
Support girls and young women in joining invited spaces and engaging with governments to influence policies and decisions



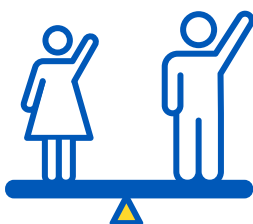
Advocate to governments and digital platforms to provide safe and inclusive digital technologies and prevent cyberbullying without restricting spaces for political dissent



Foster multiple types of networks that can provide support and mentorship to youth advocates at different levels (local, national, regional and global)



Ensure that girls and young women hold leadership and decision-making roles and can inform programme designs and implementation – particularly those that are intended to have gender-transformative outcomes



Develop online and in-person programming that is responsive and flexible to accommodate the diversity of youth activist initiatives for gender equality and social inclusion



Leverage international and regional commitments and lobby national governments to fulfil their gender equality and social inclusion commitments



Mitigate risks to girls and young women by creating an enabling environment for activism and gender-transformative change, such as educating parents, teachers, NGOs and government representatives who interface with young people







# CALL TO ACTION

From suggestions put forward by girls themselves and evidence from this report we call on national governments, regional bodies and civil society to:

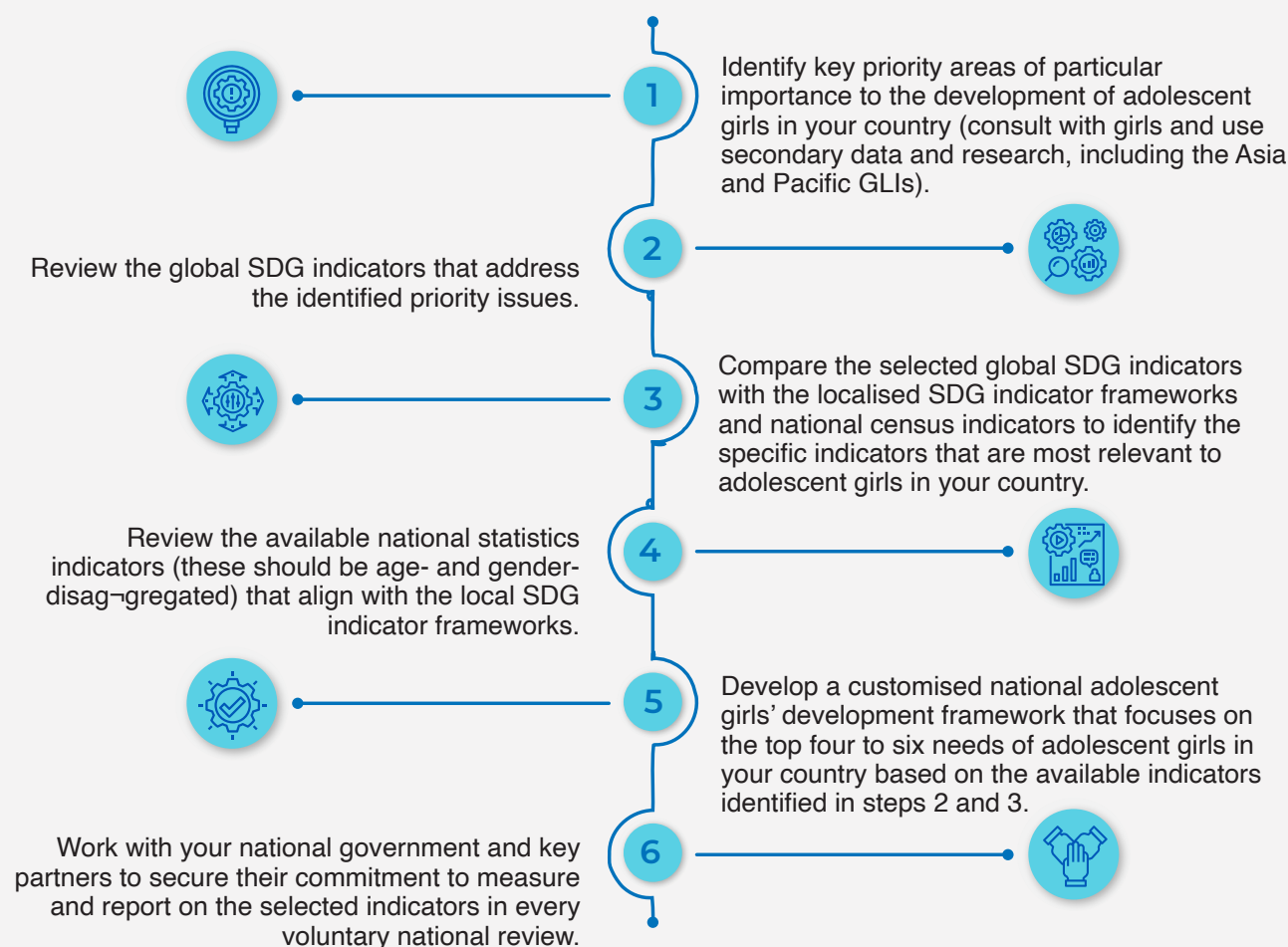
## ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF GENDER INEQUALITY BY CREATING ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS FOR GIRLS' LEADERSHIP

Pervasive gender inequality and oppression affect the allocation of resources, including education, healthcare, nutrition and political voice. We must address the patriarchal norms and structural barriers at the root of these injustices to ensure that all children and young people, particularly girls and young women can realise their full potential and rights.<sup>45</sup> **Governments and regional bodies should make the appropriate investments and budget allocations in programmes that create an enabling environment for girls' leadership, including gender-transformative education, sexual and reproductive health and protection from gender-based and domestic violence.**

Governments are urged to invest in an adolescent girls' framework with a multi-sectoral approach for development and leadership.

### Process for developing an adolescent girls' development framework

Countries that want to develop their own framework to support adolescent girls' development can use these steps as a guide.



## Investing in Adolescent Girls' Frameworks

With the deadline of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda fast approaching, it is critical that countries in the Asia-Pacific region invest in adolescent girls' development frameworks. These frameworks are key to achieving the SDGs and providing girls and young women with the support they need to develop their leadership skills and obtain gender equality. The decision about where to invest resources and how to assess the progress of those investments will impact on current and future generations of girls and young women. Countries must work together to identify key priority areas, share best practice and review national statistics indicators to develop a framework that is specific and relevant to each country. Plan International is committed to supporting this development and urges all countries in the Asia-Pacific region to respond to this call to action.

## SUPPORT GIRLS' LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION THROUGH POLICY, DIALOGUE AND FLEXIBLE FUNDING

Many Asia-Pacific countries have committed to the United Nations SDGs, which focus on achieving equitable, inclusive development that leaves no one behind. This year, Plan International's focus on political voice and representation relates to SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

SDG 5 aims to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere (SDG 5.1) and ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life (SDG 5.5).

SDG 16 involves ensuring public access to information and protecting and recognising young female activists' rights and fundamental freedoms at all times. **Governments must develop and strengthen gender-responsive, age-appropriate human rights mechanisms and repeal discriminatory national and local policies and actions that are inconsistent with international human rights agreements and commitments.** Duty bearers and decision-makers at all levels need to provide technical support and flexible funding, as well as a safe and inclusive space, for girls and young women to realise their potential as active, positive agents of change.

## ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE HOME, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITIES

**Governments, regional bodies and civil society must support the realisation of young women's right to participation in household and public decision-making processes through comprehensive efforts to address gender inequalities and barriers to this participation.** Addressing the relevant issues within the education sector can help to ensure that girls obtain quality and inclusive education to develop the skills needed to use their voice, find employment opportunities and harness their leadership skills.

**Promoting gender equality and introduce mechanisms to ensure that young women have safe and equal opportunities to participate in community, subnational and national decision-making forums.**

Stakeholders should also sustain information awareness and capacity building on gender equality and girls' rights issues, including CEFMU, girls' participation and girls' access to education. Media outlets can be used to help promote relevant campaigns under this effort.

Young female activists also need access to intergenerational dialogues and mentoring, capacity-building programmes, positive representation in all media platforms and network-building opportunities on and offline.



## DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS SPECIFICALLY FOR GIRL ACTIVISTS

Female human rights defenders are often violated and discriminated against both in the civic and digital space, including through discriminatory laws and policies and harassment on social media platforms. **Regional and national human rights bodies should address this discrimination through easily accessible, widely disseminated and sufficiently funded referrals, responses and legal mechanisms.**

## PROVIDE SAFE AND OPEN CIVIC AND DIGITAL SPACES FOR GIRLS' MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

**Civic and digital spaces must remain open, inclusive and safe for everyone. Government bodies must amend or repeal laws and policies that seek to restrict or violate the rights of citizens to expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly.** Young female activists should be able to express themselves freely in both online and offline spaces without fear of retaliation, bullying or harassment, complemented by protection policies and mechanisms offline. Stakeholders must bridge the digital gender divide by investing in equal access to online platforms to allow building of networks, partnerships and coalitions with their peers. Governments should explore potential collaborations with private companies to support this initiative.

## UPHOLD THE RIGHTS OF GIRLS IN ALL THEIR DIVERSITY TO MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE CREATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

**At all times, governments should take a rights-based approach when engaging with citizens, including girls. They should support the participation of girls and young women in policy-making spaces by engaging and consulting them.** Girls and young women should be co-creators or co-designers of the programmes, services, policies and monitoring mechanisms that affect them. There should be recognition of the value and capacity of girls to contribute to the development of their families and communities. To ensure diverse representation, governments should engage girls and young women of various ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations and disabilities. Representatives should be given a seat in development councils, youth parliaments and other similar bodies as one of the many ways that they can demonstrate their leadership.

As part of this representation, it is important to understand that each group of girls and young women should be represented. However, adolescent girls face unique challenges that neither children nor women experience. Regional and national human rights policies and mechanisms should be designed to ensure a positive and appropriate response to their unique concerns.

While girls and young women are working at all levels of civic engagement, governments and NGOs must do their part to support them, particularly in eliminating gender inequality and discrimination.







# ANNEX A: THE ASIA AND PACIFIC GIRLS' LEADERSHIP INDEXES

Asia-Pacific is a complex region with a vibrant culture and fast-growing economy. Despite its economic successes, it is also home to patriarchal norms, attitudes and beliefs that prevent girls and young women from experiencing equal rights as men. While many countries in the region have been working to narrow the gender gap over the last decade, discriminatory practices persist.

The Girls' Leadership Index (GLI) acts as a composite index that measures girls' and young women's opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership capabilities. Policymakers, donors and stakeholders can use the Index to compare the overall situation across countries and design programmes to develop leadership opportunities for girls and young women across the region. While the GLI does not fully examine the complexities of current regional situations, it provides valuable insight into the circumstances that girls and young women face. The results should be used to raise awareness and advocate actions to support girls' and young women's empowerment.

The Asia GLI was first developed in 2019 and later updated in 2021 to reflect the changes that have occurred in the region. It assesses 19 countries from South Asia and Southeast Asia across six domains: Education, Economic Opportunities, Protection, Health, Political Voice and Representation, and Laws and Policies. These domains are further divided into 23 indicators reflecting the essential factors that support or constrain adolescent girls' and young women's opportunities to become leaders within their families, workplace and wider community and fully exercise their rights.

The Pacific GLI was developed in 2021. It assesses 14 countries from the Pacific region across the six domains, as well as the additional domain of Climate. These domains are further divided into 29 indicators.

It is important to note that a positive or negative arrow refers to a change in the normalised value, not in the country ranking or indicator. For certain indicators, a decrease will result in a positive normalised value. For the domain of Laws and Policies, the country ranking is only available for the overall domain, not by the individual indicator, as indicators under this domain represent either the existence of (Yes=1) or the absence of (No=0) a specific legislation.



# THE ASIA GIRLS' LEADERSHIP INDEX

Below are the domain and individual indicator rankings for each country in the Asia region.

EDU EDUCATION					
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-
1	SGP	Singapore	0.717	0.728	0.011
2	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	0.613	0.640	0.027
3	MYS	Malaysia	0.582	0.601	0.019
4	MDV	Maldives	0.541	0.540	-0.002
5	THA	Thailand	0.485	0.526	0.042
6	VNM	Vietnam	0.520	0.523	0.003
7	PHL	Philippines	0.486	0.477	-0.009
8	IDN	Indonesia	0.418	0.458	0.040
9	LKA	Sri Lanka	0.394	0.403	0.009
10	BTN	Bhutan	0.333	0.340	0.007
11	IND	India	0.309	0.316	0.007
12	TLS	Timor-Leste	0.312	0.313	0.001
13	NPL	Nepal	0.285	0.304	0.019
14	BGD	Bangladesh	0.269	0.302	0.033
15	KHM	Cambodia	0.269	0.296	0.027
16	MMR	Myanmar	0.271	0.277	0.006
17	LAO	Lao, PDR	0.266	0.268	0.002
18	PAK	Pakistan	0.170	0.181	0.011
19	AFG	Afghanistan	0.110	0.113	0.003



## INDICATORS:

Completion Rate, Lower Secondary Female (%)  
 Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education, female (%)  
 Access to Internet, Female (%)  
 Mean years of schooling, female (years)

EDU1 Completion Rate, Lower Secondary Female (%)									
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-	
1	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	105.8	105.9	0.1	0.695	0.696	0.001	▲
2	NPL	Nepal	98.1	101.6	3.5	0.642	0.666	0.024	▲
3	MDV	Maldives	104.9	101.1	-3.8	0.689	0.663	-0.026	▼
4	VNM	Vietnam	100.2	100.7	0.5	0.657	0.660	0.003	▲
5	SGP	Singapore	104.1	99.2	-4.9	0.683	0.650	-0.034	▼
6	LKA	Sri Lanka	96.1	96.1	0.0	0.628	0.628	0.000	▬
7	TLS	Timor-Leste	97.0	95.8	-1.2	0.634	0.626	-0.008	▼
8	BTN	Bhutan	90.7	93.3	2.6	0.591	0.609	0.018	▲
9	IDN	Indonesia	92.7	92.7	0.0	0.605	0.605	0.000	▬
10	MYS	Malaysia	84.2	87.6	3.4	0.546	0.570	0.023	▲
11	PHL	Philippines	85.1	87.2	2.1	0.552	0.567	0.014	▲
12	BGD	Bangladesh	87.1	87.1	0.0	0.566	0.566	0.000	▬
13	IND	India	87.9	85.3	-2.6	0.572	0.554	-0.018	▼
14	THA	Thailand	82.1	84.8	2.7	0.532	0.550	0.019	▲
15	MMR	Myanmar	64.4	67.9	3.5	0.410	0.434	0.024	▲
16	LAO	Lao, PDR	65.5	63.9	-1.6	0.417	0.406	-0.011	▼
17	KHM	Cambodia	62	63.8	1.8	0.393	0.406	0.012	▲
18	PAK	Pakistan	44.7	46.3	1.6	0.274	0.285	0.011	▲
19	AFG	Afghanistan	38.6	40.1	1.5	0.232	0.242	0.010	▲

SDG Indicator 4.1.2 Secondary completion rates are important to measure since the dropout rates are highest in lower secondary grades. These are the ages when both the actual cost and the opportunity cost of education become higher, and when education systems struggle to provide high-quality instruction. There may be gender differences, as willingness to school girls is far more strongly determined by income and the broader costs of education than is the case for boys, and families are often unwilling to invest in the education of girls if this investment will not bring equivalent and direct economic gains to them and if girls continue to be valued only as wives and mothers. Lower secondary education completion rate is measured as the gross intake ratio to the last grade of lower secondary education (general and pre-vocational). It is calculated as the number of new entrants in the last grade of lower secondary education, regardless of age, divided by the population at the entrance age for the last grade of lower secondary education. It covers ages 3-5 years above national lower secondary age.

EDU3 Access to Internet, Female (%)									
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-	
1	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	90.0	99.8	9.8	0.900	0.998	0.098	▲
2	SGP	Singapore	83.6	87.8	4.2	0.836	0.878	0.042	▲
3	MYS	Malaysia	78.2	82.4	4.2	0.782	0.824	0.042	▲
4	VNM	Vietnam	68.7	68.7	0.0	0.687	0.687	0.000	▬
5	THA	Thailand	52.1	65.6	13.5	0.521	0.656	0.135	▲
6	MDV	Maldives	63.1	63.1	0.0	0.631	0.631	0.000	▬
7	IDN	Indonesia	30.1	44.9	14.8	0.301	0.449	0.148	▲
8	PHL	Philippines	48.1	43.0	-5.1	0.481	0.430	-0.051	▼
9	BTN	Bhutan	41.8	41.8	0.0	0.418	0.418	0.000	▬
10	KHM	Cambodia	32.5	40.5	8.0	0.325	0.405	0.080	▲
11	TLS	Timor-Leste	27.5	27.5	0.0	0.275	0.275	0.000	▬
12	LAO	Lao, PDR	23.7	23.7	0.0	0.237	0.237	0.000	▬
13	MMR	Myanmar	19.4	19.4	0.0	0.194	0.194	0.000	▬
14	NPL	Nepal	17.3	17.3	0.0	0.173	0.173	0.000	▬
15	IND	India	14.9	14.9	0.0	0.149	0.149	0.000	▬
16	BGD	Bangladesh	5.1	12.9	7.8	0.051	0.129	0.078	▲
17	PAK	Pakistan	9.5	12.9	3.4	0.095	0.129	0.034	▲
18	LKA	Sri Lanka	10.5	10.5	0.0	0.105	0.105	0.000	▬
19	AFG	Afghanistan	4.9	4.9	0.0	0.049	0.049	0.000	▬

SDG Indicator 17.8.1 Denotes the percentage of female respondents, age 15+, who report having access to the internet in the home. This indicator demonstrates the risk of isolation from the digital revolution, but also as an indication of accessibility to information, economic opportunities, and connectivity. See <http://www.oecd.org/internet/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>

EDU2 Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education, female (%)									
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-	
1	SGP	Singapore	91.2	95.4	4.2	0.608	0.636	0.028	▲
2	MDV	Maldives	59.8	59.8	0.0	0.399	0.399	0.000	▬
3	THA	Thailand	57.8	57.8	0.0	0.385	0.385	0.000	▬
4	MYS	Malaysia	49.9	48.7	-1.2	0.333	0.325	-0.008	▼
5	PHL	Philippines	40.4	40.4	0.0	0.269	0.269	0.000	▬
6	IDN	Indonesia	39.0	39.0	0.0	0.260	0.260	0.000	▬
7	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	38.4	38.8	0.4	0.256	0.259	0.003	▲
8	VNM	Vietnam	31.7	31.7	0.0	0.211	0.211	0.000	▬
9	IND	India	29.1	30.2	1.1	0.194	0.201	0.007	▲
10	LKA	Sri Lanka	23.4	26.0	2.6	0.156	0.173	0.017	▲
11	MMR	Myanmar	22.0	22.0	0.0	0.147	0.147	0.000	▬
12	BGD	Bangladesh	17.0	20.0	3.0	0.113	0.133	0.020	▲
13	BTN	Bhutan	15.5	17.0	1.5	0.103	0.113	0.010	▲
14	LAO	Lao, PDR	15.5	15.3	-0.2	0.103	0.102	-0.001	▼
15	TLS	Timor-Leste	14.8	14.8	0.0	0.099	0.099	0.000	▬
16	KHM	Cambodia	12.9	14.3	1.4	0.086	0.095	0.009	▲
17	NPL	Nepal	12.8	13.7	0.9	0.085	0.091	0.006	▲
18	PAK	Pakistan	8.7	8.3	-0.4	0.058	0.055	-0.003	▼
19	AFG	Afghanistan	4.9	4.9	0.0	0.033	0.033	0.000	▬

SDG Indicator 4.1.2 Tertiary education builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. Tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education but also includes advanced vocational or professional education. It comprises ISCED levels 5 (short-cycle tertiary education), 6 (bachelor's degree or equivalent), 7 (master's degree or equivalent) and 8 (doctorate or equivalent). The indicator, based on national education administrative data, is the total number of students enrolled in tertiary level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education. A high GER generally indicates a high degree of participation, whether the pupils belong to the official age group or not. A GER value approaching or exceeding 100% indicates that a country is, in principle, able to accommodate all of its school-age population, but it does not indicate the proportion already enrolled.

EDU4 Mean years of schooling, female (years)									
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-	
1	SGP	Singapore	11.1	11.2	0.1	0.740	0.747	0.007	▲
2	LKA	Sri Lanka	10.3	10.6	0.3	0.687	0.707	0.020	▲
3	MYS	Malaysia	10.0	10.3	0.3	0.667	0.687	0.020	▲
4	PHL	Philippines	9.6	9.6	0.0	0.640	0.640	0.000	▬
5	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	9.0	9.1	0.1	0.600	0.607	0.007	▲
6	VNM	Vietnam	7.9	8.0	0.1	0.527	0.533	0.007	▲
7	IDN	Indonesia	7.6	7.8	0.2	0.507	0.520	0.013	▲
8	THA	Thailand	7.5	7.7	0.2	0.500	0.513	0.013	▲
9	MDV	Maldives	6.7	7.0	0.3	0.447	0.467	0.020	▲
10	BGD	Bangladesh	5.2	5.7	0.5	0.347	0.380	0.033	▲
11	IND	India	4.8	5.4	0.6	0.320	0.360	0.040	▲
12	MMR	Myanmar	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.333	0.333	0.000	▬
13	LAO	Lao, PDR	4.6	4.9	0.3	0.307	0.327	0.020	▲
14	NPL	Nepal	3.6	4.3	0.7	0.240	0.287	0.047	▲
15	KHM	Cambodia	4.1	4.2	0.1	0.273	0.280	0.007	▲
16	PAK	Pakistan	3.8	3.8	0.0	0.253	0.253	0.000	▬
17	TLS	Timor-Leste	3.6	3.8	0.2	0.240	0.253	0.013	▲
18	BTN	Bhutan	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.220	0.220	0.000	▬
19	AFG	Afghanistan	1.9	1.9	0.0	0.127	0.127	0.000	▬

Average number of years of education received by people ages 25 and older, converted from education attainment levels using official durations of each level. This indicator is also used as an education and knowledge domain indicator in the HDI, the GDI and indicates the overall schooling years for a girl over her lifetime, by country



## EC ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	
1	SGP	Singapore	0.681	0.694	0.013	▲
2	THA	Thailand	0.597	0.604	0.006	▲
3	MYS	Malaysia	0.581	0.588	0.007	▲
4	KHM	Cambodia	0.553	0.533	-0.020	▼
5	PHL	Philippines	0.520	0.523	0.003	▲
6	MDV	Maldives	0.518	0.515	-0.003	▼
7	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	0.569	0.513	-0.056	▼
8	IDN	Indonesia	0.495	0.512	0.017	▲
9	LKA	Sri Lanka	0.500	0.494	-0.006	▼
10	VNM	Vietnam	0.519	0.484	-0.035	▼
11	LAO	Lao, PDR	0.482	0.482	0.000	≡
12	MMR	Myanmar	0.484	0.482	-0.002	▼
13	IND	India	0.403	0.398	-0.005	▼
14	TLS	Timor-Leste	0.387	0.387	0.000	≡
15	BTN	Bhutan	0.382	0.359	-0.024	▼
16	NPL	Nepal	0.332	0.332	0.000	≡
17	BGD	Bangladesh	0.330	0.330	0.000	≡
18	PAK	Pakistan	0.192	0.192	0.000	≡
19	AFG	Afghanistan	0.166	0.166	0.000	≡

EC1 Youth NEET Rate, Female (%)								
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-
1	SGP	Singapore	5.5	5.2	-0.3	0.945	0.948	0.003
2	KHM	Cambodia	15.2	9.3	-5.9	0.848	0.907	0.059
3	MYS	Malaysia	15.3	16.1	0.8	0.847	0.839	-0.008
4	VNM	Vietnam	12.0	17.1	5.1	0.880	0.829	-0.051
5	THA	Thailand	19.7	18.6	-1.1	0.803	0.814	0.011
6	MMR	Myanmar	23.6	20.4	-3.2	0.764	0.796	0.032
7	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	20.0	22.0	2.0	0.800	0.780	-0.020
8	PHL	Philippines	28.5	24.1	-4.4	0.715	0.759	0.044
9	MDV	Maldives	25.3	25.3	0.0	0.747	0.747	0.000
10	TLS	Timor-Leste	25.7	25.7	0.0	0.743	0.743	0.000
11	IDN	Indonesia	28.0	26.2	-1.8	0.720	0.738	0.018
12	LKA	Sri Lanka	33.2	31.1	-2.1	0.668	0.689	0.021
13	BTN	Bhutan	30.5	39.9	9.5	0.695	0.601	-0.095
14	BGD	Bangladesh	44.6	44.6	0.0	0.554	0.554	0.000
15	LAO	Lao, PDR	44.9	44.9	0.0	0.551	0.551	0.000
16	NPL	Nepal	46.6	46.6	0.0	0.534	0.534	0.000
17	IND	India	48.3	47.0	-1.3	0.517	0.530	0.013
18	PAK	Pakistan	54.9	54.9	0.0	0.451	0.451	0.000
19	AFG	Afghanistan	65.9	65.9	0.0	0.341	0.341	0.000

SDG Indicator 8.6.1. Conveys the number of young persons not in education, employment or training as a percentage of the total youth population, and thus serves as a broader measure of potential youth labour market entrants than youth unemployment, since it also includes young persons outside the labour force not in education or training. This indicator is also a better measure of the current universe of potential youth labour market entrants compared to the youth inactivity rate, as the latter includes those youth who are not in the labour force and are in education, and thus cannot be considered currently available for work.

EC3 Account ownership, Female (%)								
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-
1	SGP	Singapore	96.3	96.3	0.0	0.963	0.963	0.000
2	MYS	Malaysia	82.5	82.5	0.0	0.825	0.825	0.000
3	THA	Thailand	79.8	79.8	0.0	0.798	0.798	0.000
4	IND	India	76.6	76.6	0.0	0.766	0.766	0.000
5	LKA	Sri Lanka	73.4	73.4	0.0	0.734	0.734	0.000
6	MDV	Maldives	63.4	63.4	0.0	0.634	0.634	0.000
7	IDN	Indonesia	51.4	51.4	0.0	0.514	0.514	0.000
8	NPL	Nepal	41.6	41.6	0.0	0.416	0.416	0.000
9	PHL	Philippines	38.9	38.9	0.0	0.389	0.389	0.000
10	BGD	Bangladesh	35.8	35.8	0.0	0.358	0.358	0.000
11	LAO	Lao, PDR	31.9	31.9	0.0	0.319	0.319	0.000
12	VNM	Vietnam	30.4	30.4	0.0	0.304	0.304	0.000
13	BTN	Bhutan	27.7	27.7	0.0	0.277	0.277	0.000
14	MMR	Myanmar	26.0	26.0	0.0	0.260	0.260	0.000
15	KHM	Cambodia	21.5	21.5	0.0	0.215	0.215	0.000
16	TLS	Timor-Leste	11.1	11.1	0.0	0.111	0.111	0.000
17	AFG	Afghanistan	7.2	7.2	0.0	0.072	0.072	0.000
18	PAK	Pakistan	7.0	7.0	0.0	0.070	0.070	0.000
-	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-	-	-	-

SDG Indicator 8.10.2. This indicator is a proxy for access to finance. In developing economies, the share rose from 54 percent to 63 percent. Yet, women in developing economies remain 9 percentage points less likely than men to have a bank account. The data points to the advances in digital technology that are key to achieving the World Bank goal of Universal Financial Access by 2020. The indicator is defined as the percentage of respondents who report having an account (by themselves or together with someone else) at a bank or another type of financial institution or report personally using a mobile money service in the past 12 months (female, % age 15+). Each economy is classified based on the classification of World Bank Group's fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018). Demirci-Kunt et al., 2018, Global Financial Inclusion Database, World Bank.



### INDICATORS:

Share of youth not in employment, education or training (youth NEET rate), Female (%)  
Youth Labour Participation Rate, Female (%)  
Account ownership at a financial institution or with a mobile-service provider, Female (%)  
Female share of employment in managerial positions (%)

EC2 Youth Labour Participation Rate, Female (%)								
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-
1	KHM	Cambodia	69.5	68.8	-0.7	0.695	0.688	-0.007
2	VNM	Vietnam	52.9	45.4	-7.5	0.529	0.454	-0.075
3	MDV	Maldives	42.9	41.6	-1.3	0.429	0.416	-0.013
4	IDN	Indonesia	38.1	39.9	1.8	0.381	0.399	0.018
5	MMR	Myanmar	43.9	39.7	-4.2	0.439	0.397	-0.042
6	SGP	Singapore	35.7	37.9	2.2	0.357	0.379	0.022
7	MYS	Malaysia	35.7	37.7	2.0	0.357	0.377	0.020
8	TLS	Timor-Leste	36.6	36.6	0.0	0.366	0.366	0.000
9	THA	Thailand	34.0	33.4	-0.6	0.340	0.334	-0.006
10	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	35.5	31.9	-3.6	0.355	0.319	-0.036
11	BTN	Bhutan	31.0	31.0	0.0	0.310	0.310	0.000
12	LAO	Lao, PDR	27.3	27.3	0.0	0.273	0.273	0.000
13	PHL	Philippines	27.2	27.0	-0.2	0.272	0.270	-0.002
14	BGD	Bangladesh	26.4	26.4	0.0	0.264	0.264	0.000
15	LKA	Sri Lanka	23.1	20.6	-2.6	0.231	0.206	-0.026
16	NPL	Nepal	20.3	20.3	0.0	0.203	0.203	0.000
17	AFG	Afghanistan	19.9	19.9	0.0	0.199	0.199	0.000
18	PAK	Pakistan	18.3	18.3	0.0	0.183	0.183	0.000
19	IND	India	14.7	10.1	-4.6	0.147	0.101	-0.046

ILO Indicator. The labour force participation rate expresses the labour force as a percent of the working-age population. Data only refers to the population of female youth, which should be females between the ages of 15 and 24 years. In practice however, some countries apply different definitions of youth.

EC4 Female share of employment in managerial positions (%)								
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-
1	LAO	Lao, PDR	59.0	59.0	0.0	0.787	0.787	0.000
2	PHL	Philippines	52.7	50.5	-2.2	0.703	0.673	-0.029
3	SGP	Singapore	34.5	36.4	1.9	0.460	0.485	0.025
4	MMR	Myanmar	35.6	35.7	0.1	0.475	0.476	0.001
5	THA	Thailand	33.6	35.1	1.5	0.448	0.468	0.020
6	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	41.3	33.0	-8.3	0.551	0.440	-0.111
7	IDN	Indonesia	27.5	29.8	2.3	0.367	0.397	0.031
8	VNM	Vietnam	27.2	26.3	-0.9	0.363	0.351	-0.012
9	LKA	Sri Lanka	27.6	26.0	-1.6	0.368	0.347	-0.021
10	TLS	Timor-Leste	24.5	24.5	0.0	0.327	0.327	0.000
11	KHM	Cambodia	34.1	24.1	-10.0	0.455	0.321	-0.133
12	MYS	Malaysia	22.1	23.3	1.2	0.295	0.311	0.016
13	MDV	Maldives	19.6	19.6	0.0	0.261	0.261	0.000
14	BTN	Bhutan	18.5	18.5	0.0	0.247	0.247	0.000
15	IND	India	13.7	14.6	0.9	0.183	0.195	0.012
16	NPL	Nepal	13.2	13.2	0.0	0.176	0.176	0.000
17	BGD	Bangladesh	10.7	10.7	0.0	0.143	0.143	0.000
18	PAK	Pakistan	4.9	4.9	0.0	0.065	0.065	0.000
19	AFG	Afghanistan	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.053	0.053	0.000

SDG Indicator 5.5.2. The female share of employment in managerial positions conveys the number of women in management as a percentage of employment in management. Employment in management is defined based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations. Two different measures are presented: one referring to total management (category 1 of ISCO-08 or ISCO-88), and another one referring to senior and middle management only, thus excluding junior management (category 1 in both ISCO-08 and ISCO-88 minus category 14 in ISCO-08 and minus category 13 in ISCO-88). This indicator is calculated based on data on employment by sex and occupation.





## PROT PROTECTION

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	
1	SGP	Singapore	0.969	0.970	0.001	▲
2	MDV	Maldives	0.889	0.909	0.021	▲
3	PHL	Philippines	0.843	0.852	0.009	▲
4	LKA	Sri Lanka	0.842	0.845	0.003	▲
5	IDN	Indonesia	0.852	0.834	-0.019	▼
6	BTN	Bhutan	0.829	0.829	0.000	≡
7	MMR	Myanmar	0.818	0.818	0.000	≡
8	KHM	Cambodia	0.761	0.761	0.000	≡
9	IND	India	0.760	0.759	0.000	≡
10	PAK	Pakistan	0.776	0.749	-0.028	▼
11	VNM	Vietnam	0.733	0.733	0.000	≡
12	THA	Thailand	0.689	0.691	0.002	▲
13	TLS	Timor-Leste	0.671	0.671	0.000	≡
14	LAO	Lao, PDR	0.728	0.639	-0.089	▼
15	NPL	Nepal	0.619	0.619	0.000	≡
16	AFG	Afghanistan	0.575	0.601	0.026	▲
17	BGD	Bangladesh	0.525	0.521	-0.004	▼
-	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-	
-	MYS	Malaysia	-	-	-	



### INDICATORS:

Percentage of girls aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour  
 Percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married before age 18  
 Percentage of the female population ages 15 and older that has ever experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner

### PROT1 Percentage of girls aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-
1	SGP	Singapore	0.5	0.4	-0.1 ▼	0.990	0.992	0.002 ▲
2	BTN	Bhutan	1.7	1.7	0.0 ≡	0.966	0.966	0.000 ≡
3	MDV	Maldives	2.3	2.3	0.0 ≡	0.954	0.954	0.000 ≡
4	IND	India	3.1	3.1	0.0 ≡	0.938	0.938	0.000 ≡
5	PHL	Philippines	3.5	3.5	0.0 ≡	0.930	0.930	0.000 ≡
6	TLS	Timor-Leste	4.2	4.2	0.0 ≡	0.916	0.916	0.000 ≡
7	IDN	Indonesia	4.6	4.6	0.0 ≡	0.908	0.908	0.000 ≡
8	BGD	Bangladesh	5.2	5.2	0.0 ≡	0.896	0.896	0.000 ≡
9	LKA	Sri Lanka	7.5	7.1	-0.4 ▼	0.850	0.858	0.008 ▲
10	MMR	Myanmar	7.6	7.6	0.0 ≡	0.848	0.848	0.000 ≡
11	THA	Thailand	8.2	7.9	-0.3 ▼	0.836	0.842	0.006 ▲
12	KHM	Cambodia	12.2	12.2	0.0 ≡	0.756	0.756	0.000 ≡
13	PAK	Pakistan	7.1	12.4	5.3 ▲	0.858	0.752	-0.106 ▼
14	VNM	Vietnam	12.5	12.5	0.0 ≡	0.750	0.750	0.000 ≡
15	AFG	Afghanistan	12.6	12.6	0.0 ≡	0.748	0.748	0.000 ≡
16	NPL	Nepal	19.3	19.3	0.0 ≡	0.614	0.614	0.000 ≡
17	LAO	Lao, PDR	12.9	26.2	13.3 ▲	0.742	0.476	-0.266 ▼
-	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-			
-	MYS	Malaysia	-	-	-			

SDG Indicator 8.7.1. According to the latest ILO global estimates, about 168 million children worldwide are child labourers, accounting for almost 11 percent of the child population. The term child labour refers to the subset of children's activities that is injurious, negative or undesirable to children and that should be targeted for elimination. Child labour is a legal concept rather than a statistical one, and the international legal standards that define it are therefore the necessary frame of reference for child labour statistics. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-08-07-01.pdf>. Statistical information on child labour, and more broadly on all working children, also provide a basis for increasing public awareness of the situation of working children and for the development of appropriate regulatory frameworks and policies. The indicator is defined as the number of children engaged in child labour corresponds to the number of children reported to be in child labour during the reference period (usually the week prior to the survey). The proportion of children in child labour is calculated as the number of children in child labour divided by the total number of children in the population. For the purposes of this indicator, children include all persons aged 5 to 17 (some countries use the range of 5 to 14).

### PROT3 Experienced physical and/or sexual violence

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-	
1	SGP	Singapore	6.1	6.1	0.0	≡	0.924	0.924	0.000
2	PHL	Philippines	16.9	14.8	-2.1	▼	0.789	0.815	0.026
3	BTN	Bhutan	15.1	15.1	0.0	≡	0.811	0.811	0.000
4	LAO	Lao, PDR	15.3	15.3	0.0	≡	0.809	0.809	0.000
5	MDV	Maldives	19.5	16.3	-3.2	▼	0.756	0.796	0.040
6	LKA	Sri Lanka	17.0	17.0	0.0	≡	0.788	0.788	0.000
7	MMR	Myanmar	17.3	17.3	0.0	≡	0.784	0.784	0.000
8	IDN	Indonesia	18.3	18.3	0.0	≡	0.771	0.771	0.000
9	KHM	Cambodia	20.9	20.9	0.0	≡	0.739	0.739	0.000
10	PAK	Pakistan	23.7	24.5	0.8	▲	0.704	0.694	-0.010
11	NPL	Nepal	25.0	25.0	0.0	≡	0.688	0.688	0.000
12	IND	India	28.7	28.8	0.1	▲	0.641	0.640	-0.001
13	VNM	Vietnam	34.4	34.4	0.0	≡	0.570	0.570	0.000
14	THA	Thailand	41.0	41.0	0.0	≡	0.488	0.488	0.000
15	AFG	Afghanistan	50.8	50.8	0.0	≡	0.365	0.365	0.000
16	BGD	Bangladesh	53.3	54.2	0.9	▲	0.334	0.323	-0.011
17	TLS	Timor-Leste	58.8	58.8	0.0	≡	0.265	0.265	0.000
-	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-				
-	MYS	Malaysia	-	-	-				

SDG Indicator 5.2.1. Number of ever married females 15-49 (depending on country) that has ever experienced physical and/or social violence from an intimate partner. Physical violence refers to pushing, shaking, slapping, twisted arm, kicking, dragging, choking, burning, threatened with weapons, whereas sexual violence refers to physically forced her to have sexual intercourse, physically forced her to perform any other sexual acts she did not want to, and forced her with threats or in any other way to perform sexual acts she did not want to.

### PROT2 Percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married before age 18

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-
1	SGP	Singapore	0.5	0.4	-0.1 ▼	0.994	0.996	0.001 ▲
2	MDV	Maldives	4.0	2.0	-2.0 ▼	0.956	0.978	0.022 ▲
3	LKA	Sri Lanka	10.0	10.0	0.0 ≡	0.889	0.889	0.000 ≡
4	VNM	Vietnam	11.0	11.0	0.0 ≡	0.878	0.878	0.000 ≡
5	TLS	Timor-Leste	15.0	15.0	0.0 ≡	0.833	0.833	0.000 ≡
6	IDN	Indonesia	11.0	16.0	5.0 ▲	0.878	0.822	-0.056 ▼
7	MMR	Myanmar	16.0	16.0	0.0 ≡	0.822	0.822	0.000 ≡
8	PHL	Philippines	17.0	17.0	0.0 ≡	0.811	0.811	0.000 ≡
9	PAK	Pakistan	21.0	18.0	-3.0 ▼	0.767	0.800	0.033 ▲
10	KHM	Cambodia	19.0	19.0	0.0 ≡	0.789	0.789	0.000 ≡
11	THA	Thailand	23.0	23.0	0.0 ≡	0.744	0.744	0.000 ≡
12	BTN	Bhutan	26.0	26.0	0.0 ≡	0.711	0.711	0.000 ≡
13	IND	India	27.0	27.0	0.0 ≡	0.700	0.700	0.000 ≡
14	AFG	Afghanistan	35.0	28.0	-7.0 ▼	0.611	0.689	0.078 ▲
15	LAO	Lao, PDR	33.0	33.0	0.0 ≡	0.633	0.633	0.000 ≡
16	NPL	Nepal	40.0	40.0	0.0 ≡	0.556	0.556	0.000 ≡
17	BGD	Bangladesh	59.0	59.0	0.0 ≡	0.344	0.344	0.000 ≡
	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-	-	-	-
	MYS	Malaysia	-	-	-	-	-	-

SDG Indicator 5.3.1. Marriage before the age of 18 is a fundamental violation of human rights. Many factors interact to place a girl at risk of marriage, including poverty, the perception that marriage will provide "protection", family honour, social norms, customary or religious laws that condone the practice, an inadequate legislative framework and the state of a country's civil registration system. Child marriage often compromises a girl's development by resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupting her schooling, limiting her opportunities for career and vocational advancement and placing her at increased risk of domestic violence. Child marriage also affects boys, but to a lesser degree than girls. Child marriage is defined as, "Any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically, physiologically, and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage" (Inter-African Committee - IAC 1993) whereas the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) defines it as "a formal marriage or informal union before 18" (UNICEF 2011). Girls Not Brides2 defines child marriage as "any formal marriage or informal union where one or both of the parties are under 18 years of age." The coalition estimates that there is an average of 15 million girls being married before the age of 18 (Girls Not Brides n.d.).

## VOICE POLITICAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	
1	SGP	Singapore	0.769	0.798	0.029	▲
2	VNM	Vietnam	0.773	0.773	0.000	≡
3	PHL	Philippines	0.768	0.762	-0.007	▼
4	THA	Thailand	0.737	0.735	-0.002	▼
5	BTN	Bhutan	0.732	0.732	0.000	≡
6	TLS	Timor-Leste	0.708	0.708	0.000	≡
7	LAO	Lao, PDR	0.699	0.699	0.000	≡
8	MDV	Maldives	0.684	0.684	0.000	≡
9	LKA	Sri Lanka	0.6802	0.6807	0.0004	▲
10	KHM	Cambodia	0.665	0.665	0.000	≡
11	IND	India	0.664	0.664	0.000	≡
12	IDN	Indonesia	0.652	0.6632	0.011	▲
13	NPL	Nepal	0.663	0.6627	0.000	▲
14	MMR	Myanmar	0.652	0.651	-0.001	▼
15	BGD	Bangladesh	0.612	0.614	0.002	▲
16	MYS	Malaysia	0.596	0.599	0.003	▲
17	AFG	Afghanistan	0.597	0.593	-0.004	▼
18	PAK	Pakistan	0.229	0.229	0.000	≡
19	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	0.061	0.061	0.000	≡



### INDICATORS:

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments

Woman's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in court as a man's

Proportion of girls under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority

VOICE1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments								
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-
1	TLS	Timor-Leste	38.5	38.5	0.0	0.513	0.513	0.000
2	NPL	Nepal	32.7	32.7	0.0	0.436	0.436	0.000
3	SGP	Singapore	23.0	29.5	6.5	0.307	0.393	0.087
4	PHL	Philippines	29.5	28.0	-1.5	0.393	0.373	-0.020
5	LAO	Lao, PDR	27.5	27.5	0.0	0.367	0.367	0.000
6	AFG	Afghanistan	27.9	27.0	-0.9	0.372	0.360	-0.012
7	VNM	Vietnam	26.7	26.7	0.0	0.356	0.356	0.000
8	BGD	Bangladesh	20.6	20.9	0.3	0.275	0.279	0.004
9	IDN	Indonesia	17.4	20.3	2.9	0.232	0.271	0.039
10	PAK	Pakistan	20.2	20.2	0.0	0.269	0.269	0.000
11	KHM	Cambodia	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.267	0.267	0.000
12	THA	Thailand	16.2	15.7	-0.5	0.216	0.209	-0.007
13	BTN	Bhutan	14.9	14.9	0.0	0.199	0.199	0.000
13	MYS	Malaysia	14.4	14.9	0.5	0.192	0.199	0.007
15	IND	India	14.4	14.4	0.0	0.192	0.192	0.000
16	MMR	Myanmar	11.3	11.1	-0.2	0.151	0.148	-0.003
17	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	9.1	9.1	0.0	0.121	0.121	0.000
18	LKA	Sri Lanka	5.3	5.4	0.1	0.071	0.072	0.001
19	MDV	Maldives	4.6	4.6	0.0	0.061	0.061	0.000

SDG Indicator 5.5.1. The proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments is the number of seats held by women members in single or lower chambers of national parliaments, expressed as a percentage of all occupied seats. It is derived by dividing the total number of seats occupied by women by the total number of seats in parliament. National parliaments can be bicameral or unicameral. This indicator covers the single chamber in unicameral parliaments and the lower chamber in bicameral parliaments. It does not cover the upper chamber of bicameral parliaments. Seats are usually won by members in general parliamentary elections. Seats may also be filled by nomination, appointment, indirect election, rotation of members and by-election. Seats refer to the number of parliamentary mandates, or the number of members of parliament. General cut off date is end-December. Relevance to gender indicator: Women are vastly underrepresented in decision making positions in government, although there is some evidence of recent improvement. Gender parity in parliamentary representation is still far from being realized. Without representation at this level, it is difficult for women to influence policy.

VOICE2 Woman's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in court as a man's								
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-
1	AFG	Afghanistan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	BGD	Bangladesh	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	BTN	Bhutan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	KHM	Cambodia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	IND	India	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	IDN	Indonesia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	LAO	Lao, PDR	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	MYS	Malaysia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	MDV	Maldives	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	MMR	Myanmar	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	NPL	Nepal	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	PHL	Philippines	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	SGP	Singapore	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	LKA	Sri Lanka	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	THA	Thailand	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	TLS	Timor-Leste	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
1	VNM	Vietnam	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
18	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	0.000
18	PAK	Pakistan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	0.000

SDG Indicator 5.1.1. Woman's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in court as a man's is whether the law differentiates between the evidentiary value of a woman's testimony in a court and that of a man. It covers all types of court cases. Inclusion of this indicator is reflective of the environment whereby women and men's voice is equally considered within the justice system.

VOICE3 Proportion of girls under 5 years of age whose births have been registered								
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021	+/-
1	SGP	Singapore	100.0	100.0	0.0	1.000	1.000	0.000
2	BTN	Bhutan	99.8	99.8	0.0	0.998	0.998	0.000
3	THA	Thailand	99.5	99.5	0.0	0.995	0.995	0.000
4	MDV	Maldives	99.1	99.1	0.0	0.991	0.991	0.000
5	LKA	Sri Lanka	97.0	97.0	0.0	0.970	0.970	0.000
6	VNM	Vietnam	96.3	96.3	0.0	0.963	0.963	0.000
7	PHL	Philippines	91.2	91.2	0.0	0.912	0.912	0.000
8	MMR	Myanmar	80.6	80.6	0.0	0.806	0.806	0.000
9	IND	India	80.1	80.1	0.0	0.801	0.801	0.000
10	LAO	Lao, PDR	73.1	73.1	0.0	0.731	0.731	0.000
11	KHM	Cambodia	72.9	72.9	0.0	0.729	0.729	0.000
12	IDN	Indonesia	72.5	71.9	-0.6	0.725	0.719	-0.006
13	TLS	Timor-Leste	61.0	61.0	0.0	0.610	0.610	0.000
14	BGD	Bangladesh	56.1	56.3	0.2	0.561	0.563	0.002
15	NPL	Nepal	55.2	55.2	0.0	0.552	0.552	0.000
16	AFG	Afghanistan	41.9	41.9	0.0	0.419	0.419	0.000
16	PAK	Pakistan	41.9	41.9	0.0	0.419	0.419	0.000
-	BRN	Brunei Darussalam						
-	MYS	Malaysia						

SDG Indicator 16.9.1. Registering children at birth is the first step in securing their recognition before the law, safeguarding their rights, and ensuring that any violation of these rights does not go unnoticed. Children without official identification documents may be denied health care or education. Later in life, the lack of such documentation can mean that a child may enter into marriage or the labour market, or be conscripted into the armed forces, before the legal age. In adulthood, birth certificates may be required to obtain social assistance or a job in the formal sector, to buy or prove the right to inherit property, to vote and to obtain a passport. Children's right to a name and nationality is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) under Article 7. The numerator of this indicator includes children reported to have a birth certificate, regardless of whether or not it was seen by the interviewer, and those without a birth certificate whose mother or caregiver says the birth has been registered. The most recent data source from either UNICEF or DHS/NCHS has been used. It should be noted that birth registration prevalence rates are highly sensitive to the way in which questions are formulated. This is especially true of questions regarding the civil authorities in charge of recording births. Similarly, questions regarding the possession of a birth certificate may also be the source of erroneous data, since respondents may confuse a birth certificate with a health card or other document.



## LAW LAWS AND POLICIES

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	
1	PHL	Philippines	1.000	1.000	0.000	==
1	THA	Thailand	0.800	1.000	0.200	▲
1	VNM	Vietnam	1.000	1.000	0.000	==
4	BTN	Bhutan	0.800	0.800	0.000	==
4	KHM	Cambodia	0.800	0.800	0.000	==
4	IND	India	0.800	0.800	0.000	==
4	LAO	Lao, PDR	0.800	0.800	0.000	==
4	LKA	Sri Lanka	0.800	0.800	0.000	==
4	TLS	Timor-Leste	0.800	0.800	0.000	==
10	MYS	Malaysia	0.600	0.600	0.000	==
10	MDV	Maldives	0.600	0.600	0.000	==
10	NPL	Nepal	0.400	0.600	0.200	▲
10	SGP	Singapore	0.600	0.600	0.000	==
14	AFG	Afghanistan	0.400	0.400	0.000	==
14	BGD	Bangladesh	0.400	0.400	0.000	==
14	IDN	Indonesia	0.400	0.400	0.000	==
14	PAK	Pakistan	0.400	0.400	0.000	==
18	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	0.200	0.200	0.000	==
18	MMR	Myanmar	0.200	0.200	0.000	==



### INDICATORS:

Equal rights between sons and daughters to inherit assets from parents  
 Equal remuneration for work of equal value  
 Legislation on sexual harassment in employment  
 Laws prohibiting or invalidating child marriage  
 Legislation specifically addressing domestic violence

▲ No updated values for LAWS since previous index in 2019

LAW1 Equal rights between sons and daughters to inherit assets from parents							
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021
1	BTN	Bhutan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	KHM	Cambodia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	IND	India	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	LAO	Lao, PDR	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	MMR	Myanmar	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	PHL	Philippines	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	SGP	Singapore	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	LKA	Sri Lanka	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	THA	Thailand	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	TLS	Timor-Leste	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	VNM	Vietnam	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
12	AFG	Afghanistan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
12	BGD	Bangladesh	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
12	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
12	IDN	Indonesia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
12	MYS	Malaysia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
12	MDV	Maldives	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
12	NPL	Nepal	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
12	PAK	Pakistan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000

This indicator is related to the domain of managing assets. It explores whether there are gender-based differences in the rules of intestate succession for transfer of property from parents to children. The answer is "Yes" when the law recognizes children as heirs to property without any restrictions based on gender. The answer is also "Yes" when aspects related to inheritance fall under a mix of custom, law and judicial precedent and all sources, including CEDAW reports which do not reveal the existence of inequality. Other information is available at: <https://law.bepress.com/worldbank/cgi-bin/submit.cgi?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>. The indicator only refers to whether the country has legislation, not the effectiveness of its implementation.

LAW3 Legislation on sexual harassment in employment							
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021
1	AFG	Afghanistan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	BGD	Bangladesh	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	BTN	Bhutan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	KHM	Cambodia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	IND	India	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	LAO	Lao, PDR	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	MYS	Malaysia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	MDV	Maldives	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	NPL	Nepal	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	PAK	Pakistan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	PHL	Philippines	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	SGP	Singapore	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	LKA	Sri Lanka	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	THA	Thailand	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	TLS	Timor-Leste	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	VNM	Vietnam	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
17	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
17	IDN	Indonesia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
17	MMR	Myanmar	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000

Building on the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law 2018 report, on June 21, 2019, the ILO adopted a ground-breaking global treaty that will improve protections for workers facing violence and harassment. The ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment sets standards for ending violence and harassment in the world of work so that ratifying governments will be required to develop national laws prohibiting workplace violence and take preventive measures, such as information campaigns and require companies to have workplace policies on violence. Further government will be required to monitor the issue and provide access to remedies through complaint mechanisms, witness protection measures, survivor services and provide measures to protect survivors and whistleblowers from retaliation. The existence of legislation on sexual harassment in employment reflects a government's commitment to creation of an environment that supports' women's employment and economic opportunity.

LAW5 Legislation specifically addressing domestic violence							
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021
1	BGD	Bangladesh	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	BTN	Bhutan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	KHM	Cambodia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	IND	India	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	IDN	Indonesia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	LAO	Lao, PDR	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	MYS	Malaysia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	MDV	Maldives	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	NPL	Nepal	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	PAK	Pakistan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	PHL	Philippines	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	LKA	Sri Lanka	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	THA	Thailand	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	TLS	Timor-Leste	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	VNM	Vietnam	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
16	AFG	Afghanistan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
16	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
16	MMR	Myanmar	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
16	SGP	Singapore	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000

Scoring is Yes=1 and No=0. If yes, there is legislation addressing domestic violence that includes criminal sanctions or provides for protection orders for domestic violence. Legislation also addresses "harassment" that includes physical or mental harm arising from domestic relationships. If No, there is no legislation addressing domestic violence, if the domestic violence legislation does not provide for sanctions or protection orders or if only a specific category of women or family member is protected; or there is only a provision that increases penalties for general crimes covered in the criminal code if committed between spouses or within the family. Domestic violence refers to gender-specific violence commonly directed against women, occurring in the private sphere, within the family or members of the same household, and within interpersonal relationships, including intimate partner violence (IPV). Domestic violence may take on different forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence.

LAW2 Equal remuneration for work of equal value							
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021
1	BTN	Bhutan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	NPL	Nepal	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.000	1.000
1	PHL	Philippines	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	THA	Thailand	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.000	1.000
1	VNM	Vietnam	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
6	AFG	Afghanistan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	BGD	Bangladesh	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	KHM	Cambodia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	IND	India	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	IDN	Indonesia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	LAO	Lao, PDR	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	MYS	Malaysia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	MDV	Maldives	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	MMR	Myanmar	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	PAK	Pakistan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	SGP	Singapore	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	LKA	Sri Lanka	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
6	TLS	Timor-Leste	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000

"Remuneration" refers to the ordinary, basic or minimum wage or salary and any additional emoluments payable directly or indirectly, whether in cash or in kind, by the employer to the worker and arising from the worker's employment. "Work of equal value" refers not only to the same or similar jobs, but also to different jobs of the same value. Equal remuneration for work of equal value reflects social, cultural, civil and legal environments that recognise and support women's opportunity for economic gain and participation in the labour force.

LAW4 Laws prohibiting or invalidating child marriage							
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value 2019	Index Value 2021	+/-	Normalized Value 2019	Normalized Value 2021
1	AFG	Afghanistan	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	BRN	Brunei Darussalam	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	KHM	Cambodia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	IND	India	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	IDN	Indonesia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	LAO	Lao, PDR	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	MYS	Malaysia	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	MDV	Maldives	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	PHL	Philippines	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	SGP	Singapore	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	LKA	Sri Lanka	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	THA	Thailand	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	TLS	Timor-Leste	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
1	VNM	Vietnam	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.000	1.000
15	BGD	Bangladesh	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
15	BTN	Bhutan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
15	MMR	Myanmar	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
15	NPL	Nepal	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000
15	PAK	Pakistan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000

Law prohibits or invalidates child or early marriage is whether there are provisions that prevent the marriage of girls, boys, or both before they reach the legal age of marriage or the age of marriage with consent, including, for example, a prohibition on registering the marriage or provisions stating that such a marriage is null and void. Child marriage endangers the life trajectories of girls in multiple ways. Child brides are at greater risk of experiencing a range of poor health outcomes, having children at younger ages when they are not yet ready to do so, dropping out of school, earning less over their lifetimes and living in poverty compared to their peers who marry at later ages. Child brides may also be more likely to experience intimate partner violence, have restricted physical mobility, and limited decisionmaking ability. Most fundamentally, child brides may be disempowered in ways that deprive them of their basic rights to health, education and safety. These dynamics affect not only the girls themselves, but also their children and households, as well as communities and entire societies (<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/134161519943385981/WBL2017-Child-Marriage-Laws.pdf>)

# THE PACIFIC GIRLS' LEADERSHIP INDEX

Below are the domain and individual indicator rankings for each country in the Pacific region.

EDU	EDUCATION			
Rank	Code	Country	Index Value	
1	NZL	New Zealand	0.9313	
2	AUS	Australia	0.9142	
3	WSM	Samoa	0.8963	
4	PLW	Palau	0.8556	
5	TON	Tonga	0.8284	
6	FJI	Fiji	0.8278	
7	KIR	Kiribati	0.8037	
8	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	0.7833	
9	NRU	Nauru	0.7355	
10	VUT	Vanuatu	0.7037	
11	SLB	Solomon Islands	0.6876	
12	TUV	Tuvalu	0.6775	
13	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.6578	
14	MHL	Marshall Islands	0.5008	



## INDICATORS:

- Gross enrolment ratio, primary, female (%)
- Gross enrolment ratio, lower secondary, female (%)
- Out-of-school rate for youth of upper secondary school age, female (%)
- Expected years of schooling, female

EDU1	Gross enrolment ratio, primary, female (%)			
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value
1	AUS	Australia	100.1	1.000
1	FJI	Fiji	114.2	1.000
1	KIR	Kiribati	104.9	1.000
1	NRU	Nauru	121.0	1.000
1	NZL	New Zealand	101.4	1.000
1	PLW	Palau	105.2	1.000
1	PNG	Papua New Guinea	103.6	1.000
1	WSM	Samoa	115.7	1.000
1	SLB	Solomon Islands	106.0	1.000
1	TON	Tonga	116.0	1.000
1	TUV	Tuvalu	104.1	1.000
1	VUT	Vanuatu	107.8	1.000
13	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	94.7	0.894
14	MHL	Marshall Islands	78.1	0.562

SDG 4.1.3. Total number of new entrants into the last grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the intended entrance age to the last grade of primary education or lower secondary general education. This indicator is a proxy measure of primary completion and reflects how policies on access to and progression through the early grades of primary or lower secondary education impact the final grade of the given level. It also indicates the capacity of the education system to cater for the completion of the population of the intended entrance age to the last grade of the given level of education. It assumes that pupils entering the last grade for the first time will eventually complete the grade and hence the given level of education. A GER rate above 100% indicates that pupils who entered school either early or late and/or who have repeated earlier grades.

EDU3	Out-of-school rate for youth of upper secondary school age, female			
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value
1	NZL	New Zealand	0.8	0.992
2	WSM	Samoa	4.8	0.952
3	AUS	Australia	6.0	0.940
4	FJI	Fiji	22.2	0.778
5	TON	Tonga	25.3	0.747
6	KIR	Kiribati	30.2	0.698
7	TUV	Tuvalu	38.5	0.615
8	MHL	Marshall Islands	40.9	0.591
9	PNG	Papua New Guinea	42.7	0.573
10	NRU	Nauru	60.1	0.399
-	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	-	-
-	PLW	Palau	-	-
-	SLB	Solomon Islands	-	-
-	VUT	Vanuatu	-	-

SDG 4.1.4. Proportion of children and young people in the official age range for the given level of education who are not enrolled in upper secondary levels of education. The higher the rate and number of out-of-school children and adolescents, the greater the need to focus on improving access to education. Some children have never been in school or may not eventually enroll as late entrants. Other children may have initially enrolled but dropped out before reaching the intended age of completion of the given level. When disaggregated by sex, location and other characteristics, this indicator can identify excluded population groups.

EDU2	Gross enrolment ratio, lower secondary, female (%)			
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value
1	AUS	Australia	105.8	1.000
1	FJI	Fiji	110.0	1.000
1	NZL	New Zealand	102.5	1.000
1	PLW	Palau	109.3	1.000
1	WSM	Samoa	107.6	1.000
1	TON	Tonga	111.6	1.000
7	NRU	Nauru	99.3	0.993
8	KIR	Kiribati	95.0	0.950
9	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	88.1	0.881
10	SLB	Solomon Islands	77.1	0.771
11	VUT	Vanuatu	68.6	0.686
12	PNG	Papua New Guinea	65.8	0.658
13	TUV	Tuvalu	59.5	0.595
14	MHL	Marshall Islands	45.0	0.450

SDG 4.1.3. Total number of new entrants into the last grade of secondary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the intended entrance age to the last grade of secondary education or lower secondary general education. This indicator is a proxy measure of secondary school completion and reflects how policies on access to and progression through the early grades of primary or lower secondary education impact the final grade of the given level. It also indicates the capacity of the education system to cater for the completion of the population of the intended entrance age to the last grade of the given level of education. It assumes that pupils entering the last grade for the first time will eventually complete the grade and hence the given level of education. A GER rate above 100% indicates that pupils who entered school either early or late and/or who have repeated earlier grades.

EDU4	Expected years of schooling, female			
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value
1	NZL	New Zealand	13.8	0.733
2	AUS	Australia	13.6	0.717
3	WSM	Samoa	12.6	0.633
4	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	11.9	0.575
5	KIR	Kiribati	11.8	0.567
6	PLW	Palau	11.8	0.567
7	TON	Tonga	11.8	0.567
8	NRU	Nauru	11.6	0.550
9	FJI	Fiji	11.4	0.533
10	TUV	Tuvalu	11.0	0.500
11	VUT	Vanuatu	10.1	0.425
12	MHL	Marshall Islands	9.8	0.400
13	PNG	Papua New Guinea	9.8	0.400
14	SLB	Solomon Islands	8.5	0.292

SDG 4.3. Refers to the number of years of schooling that a child of school entrance age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates persist throughout the child's life. The indicator shows the overall level of development of an educational system in terms of the average number of years of schooling that the education system offers to the eligible population, including those who never enter school. A relatively high value indicates greater probability for children to spend more years in education and higher overall retention within the education system. Caution is required when making cross-country comparisons; neither the length of the school year nor the quality of education is necessarily the same in each country. It should also be noted that, depending on countries, the enrolment data do not account for many types of continuing



## EC ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value	
1	AUS	Australia	0.844	
2	KIR	Kiribati	0.765	
3	NZL	New Zealand	0.587	
4	TUV	Tuvalu	0.581	
5	SLB	Solomon Islands	0.565	
6	NRU	Nauru	0.559	
7	TON	Tonga	0.549	
8	FJI	Fiji	0.523	
9	VUT	Vanuatu	0.507	
10	PLW	Palau	0.470	
11	WSM	Samoa	0.460	
12	MHL	Marhsall Islands	0.442	
13	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	0.413	
14	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.323	



### INDICATORS:

Share of youth (15-24) not in employment, education or training, Female (%)

Female share of employment in senior and middle management (%)

Law mandates equal remuneration for work of equal value

Female youth unemployment (15-24 years)

EC1 Share of youth (15-24) not in employment, education or training, Female (%)					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	SLB	Solomon Islands	8.9	0.911	
2	AUS	Australia	9.0	0.910	
3	NZL	New Zealand	12.5	0.875	
4	PLW	Palau	14.4	0.856	
5	PNG	Papua New Guinea	29.0	0.710	
6	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	29.1	0.709	
7	FJI	Fiji	29.6	0.704	
8	TON	Tonga	31.5	0.685	
9	VUT	Vanuatu	35.3	0.647	
10	TUV	Tuvalu	37.4	0.626	
11	WSM	Samoa	41.5	0.585	
12	MHL	Marhsall Islands	45.2	0.548	
13	KIR	Kiribati	47.6	0.524	
14	NRU	Nauru	51.3	0.487	

SDG 8.6.1. The share of youth not in education, employment or training (also known as "the NEET rate") conveys the number of young persons not in education, employment or training as a percentage of the total youth population. It provides a measure of youth who are outside the educational system, not in training and not in employment, and thus serves as a broader measure of potential youth labour market entrants than youth unemployment, since it also includes young persons outside the labour force not in education or training. For more information, refer to: <https://ilostat ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/description-youth-neet/>

EC3 Law mandates equal remuneration for work of equal value					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	Yes	1.000	
1	KIR	Kiribati	Yes	1.000	
3	FJI	Fiji	No	0.000	
3	MHL	Marhsall Islands	No	0.000	
3	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	No	0.000	
3	NZL	New Zealand	No	0.000	
3	PLW	Palau	No	0.000	
3	PNG	Papua New Guinea	No	0.000	
3	WSM	Samoa	No	0.000	
3	SLB	Solomon Islands	No	0.000	
3	TON	Tonga	No	0.000	
3	VUT	Vanuatu	No	0.000	
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-	
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-	

SDG 5.1.1. This indicator is related to the domain of 'pay' within the Women, Business and Law database. It captures whether employers are legally obliged to pay equal remuneration to male and female employees who perform work of equal value. Work of equal value refers not only to the same or similar jobs, but also to different jobs of the same value. If the answer is yes, employers are legally obliged to pay equal remuneration to male and female employees who perform work of equal value in accordance with the definitions above. If no, the law limits the principle of equal remuneration to equal work, the same work or work of a similar nature; or the law limits the broad concept of "remuneration" to only basic wages or salary; or the law limits the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value to the same place of business or same employer.

EC2 Female share of employment in senior and middle management (%)					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	WSM	Samoa	43.0	0.691	
2	TON	Tonga	40.3	0.642	
3	FJI	Fiji	38.6	0.611	
4	KIR	Kiribati	38.5	0.609	
5	AUS	Australia	37.8	0.596	
6	TUV	Tuvalu	36.7	0.576	
7	NRU	Nauru	36.1	0.565	
8	PLW	Palau	35.5	0.555	
9	VUT	Vanuatu	28.5	0.427	
10	SLB	Solomon Islands	25.1	0.365	
11	MHL	Marhsall Islands	25.0	0.364	
12	PNG	Papua New Guinea	19.3	0.260	
13	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	18.2	0.240	
-	NZL	New Zealand	-	-	

SDG 5.5.2. The female share of employment in managerial positions conveys the number of women in management as a percentage of employment in management. Employment in management is defined based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations. Two different measures are presented: one referring to total management, and another one referring to senior and middle management only, thus excluding junior management. This indicator is calculated based on data on employment by sex and occupation.

EC4 Female youth unemployment (15-24 years)					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	SLB	Solomon Islands	1.6	0.984	
2	VUT	Vanuatu	4.8	0.952	
3	KIR	Kiribati	7.5	0.925	
4	NZL	New Zealand	11.5	0.885	
5	TON	Tonga	13.1	0.869	
6	AUS	Australia	13.2	0.868	
7	MHL	Marhsall Islands	14.2	0.858	
8	FJI	Fiji	22.4	0.776	
9	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	29.9	0.701	
10	NRU	Nauru	37.5	0.625	
11	WSM	Samoa	43.4	0.566	
12	TUV	Tuvalu	45.9	0.541	
-	PLW	Palau	-	-	
-	PNG	Papua New Guinea	-	-	

The unemployment rate conveys the number of persons who are unemployed as a percent of the labour force (i.e., the employed plus the unemployed). The unemployed comprise all persons of working age who were: a) without work during the reference period, i.e. were not in paid employment or self-employment; b) currently available for work, i.e. were available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and c) seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment.

## HLTH HEALTH

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value	
1	AUS	Australia	0.8939	
2	PLW	Palau	0.7901	
3	NZL	New Zealand	0.7900	
4	FJI	Fiji	0.7167	
5	TON	Tonga	0.6614	
6	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	0.5980	
7	WSM	Samoa	0.5823	
8	VUT	Vanuatu	0.5352	
9	TUV	Tuvalu	0.4972	
10	KIR	Kiribati	0.4791	
11	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.4385	
12	SLB	Solomon Islands	0.4239	
13	MHL	Marhsall Islands	0.3559	
14	NRU	Nauru	0.3530	

### HLTH1 Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)

Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	11.7	0.906	
2	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	13.9	0.889	
3	TON	Tonga	14.7	0.882	
4	KIR	Kiribati	16.2	0.870	
5	NZL	New Zealand	19.3	0.846	
6	WSM	Samoa	23.9	0.809	
7	TUV	Tuvalu	26.6	0.787	
8	PLW	Palau	33.8	0.730	
9	FJI	Fiji	49.4	0.605	
10	VUT	Vanuatu	49.4	0.605	
11	PNG	Papua New Guinea	52.7	0.578	
12	SLB	Solomon Islands	78.0	0.376	
13	NRU	Nauru	94.0	0.248	
-	MHL	Marhsall Islands	-	-	

SDG 3.7.2: The adolescent birth rate measures the annual number of births to women 15 to 19 years of age per 1,000 women in that age group. It is also referred to as the age-specific fertility rate for women aged 15-19. Reproductive health is a state of physical and mental well-being in relation to the reproductive system and its functions and processes. Means of achieving reproductive health include education and services during pregnancy and childbirth, safe and effective contraception, and prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death and disability among women of reproductive age in developing countries. Adolescent fertility rates are based on data on registered live births from vital registration systems or, in the absence of such systems, from censuses or sample surveys.

### HLTH3 Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)

Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	6.0	0.960	
2	NZL	New Zealand	9.0	0.940	
3	PLW	Palau	22.4	0.851	
4	FJI	Fiji	34.0	0.773	
5	NRU	Nauru	35.5	0.764	
6	WSM	Samoa	43.0	0.713	
7	TON	Tonga	52.0	0.653	
8	VUT	Vanuatu	72.0	0.520	
9	TUV	Tuvalu	81.8	0.454	
10	MHL	Marhsall Islands	87.7	0.416	
11	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	88.0	0.413	
12	KIR	Kiribati	92.0	0.387	
13	SLB	Solomon Islands	104.0	0.307	
14	PNG	Papua New Guinea	145.0	0.033	

SDG 3.1: Defined as the death of a woman from pregnancy-related causes during pregnancy or within 42 days of pregnancy, expressed as a ratio to 100,000 live births in the population being studied. The high number of maternal deaths in some areas of the world reflects inequalities in access to quality health services and highlights the gap between rich and poor. The risk of maternal mortality is highest for adolescent girls under 15 years old and complications in pregnancy and childbirth are higher among adolescent girls age 10-19 (compared to women aged 20-24)



### INDICATORS:

- Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)
- Suicide Mortality Rate, female (per 100,000 female population)
- Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)
- Modern contraception prevalence rate (15-19 years)

### HLTH2 Suicide Mortality Rate, female (per 100,000 female population)

Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	PNG	Papua New Guinea	1.6	0.936	
2	SLB	Solomon Islands	1.9	0.924	
3	TON	Tonga	2.6	0.896	
4	FJI	Fiji	5.7	0.772	
5	NZL	New Zealand	5.8	0.768	
6	AUS	Australia	6.4	0.744	
7	WSM	Samoa	6.7	0.732	
8	VUT	Vanuatu	7.6	0.696	
9	KIR	Kiribati	8.7	0.652	
10	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	12.7	0.492	
-	MHL	Marhsall Islands	-	-	
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-	
-	PLW	Palau	-	-	
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-	

SDG 3.4.2: Mental disorders occur in all regions and cultures of the world. The most prevalent of these disorders are depression and anxiety, which are estimated to affect nearly 1 in 10 people. Suicide was the second leading cause of deaths among young adults aged 15-29 years, after road traffic injuries. Around 70 countries currently provide WHO with regular high-quality data on mortality by age, sex and causes of death, and another 40 countries submit data of lower quality. This indicator is also an indication for how diseases and injuries are affecting people – for assessing the effectiveness of a country's health system. The indicator is not available by age disaggregation, only by gender. Further methodological details are available at: [https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/crude-suicide-rates-\(per-100-000-population\)](https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/crude-suicide-rates-(per-100-000-population))

### HLTH4 Modern contraception prevalence rate (15-19 years)

Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	77.2	0.965	
2	NZL	New Zealand	48.5	0.606	
3	VUT	Vanuatu	25.6	0.320	
4	MHL	Marhsall Islands	23.7	0.296	
5	TUV	Tuvalu	20.0	0.250	
6	TON	Tonga	17.1	0.214	
7	PNG	Papua New Guinea	16.5	0.206	
8	SLB	Solomon Islands	7.1	0.089	
9	WSM	Samoa	6.0	0.075	
10	NRU	Nauru	3.8	0.048	
11	KIR	Kiribati	0.6	0.008	
-	FJI	Fiji	-	-	
-	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	-	-	
-	PLW	Palau	-	-	

SDG 3.7: Refers to the percentage of women aged 15-49 years, married or in-union, who are currently using, or whose sexual partner is using, at least one modern method of contraception. Modern methods of contraception include: oral contraceptive pills, implants, injectables, contraceptive patch and vaginal ring, intrauterine device (IUD), female and male condoms, female and male sterilization, vaginal barrier methods (including the diaphragm, cervical cap and spermicidal agents), lactational amenorrhea method (LAM), emergency contraception pills, standard days method (SDM), basal body temperature (BBT) method, TwoDay method and sympto-thermal method.



## PROT PROTECTION

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value	
1	AUS	Australia	0.884	
2	NZL	New Zealand	0.875	
3	PLW	Palau	0.799	
4	FSM	Micronesia, Federated State:	0.796	
5	TON	Tonga	0.780	
6	WSM	Samoa	0.762	
7	TUV	Tuvalu	0.716	
8	FJI	Fiji	0.698	
9	MHL	Marhsall Islands	0.614	
10	KIR	Kiribati	0.609	
11	SLB	Solomon Islands	0.588	
12	VUT	Vanuatu	0.550	
13	NRU	Nauru	0.502	
14	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.472	

PROT1 Percentage of the female population ages 15 and older that has ever experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	22.8	0.772	
2	NZL	New Zealand	23.0	0.770	
3	PLW	Palau	25.2	0.748	
4	FSM	Micronesia, Federated State:	32.8	0.672	
5	TUV	Tuvalu	36.8	0.632	
6	TON	Tonga	39.6	0.604	
7	WSM	Samoa	46.1	0.539	
8	NRU	Nauru	48.1	0.519	
9	MHL	Marhsall Islands	50.9	0.491	
10	PNG	Papua New Guinea	51.0	0.490	
11	VUT	Vanuatu	60.0	0.400	
12	SLB	Solomon Islands	63.5	0.365	
13	FJI	Fiji	64.1	0.359	
14	KIR	Kiribati	67.6	0.324	

SDG 5.2.2: Number of ever married females 15-49 (depending on country) that has ever experienced physical and/or social violence from an intimate partner. Physical violence refers to pushing, shaking, slapping, twisted arm, kicking, dragging, choking, burning, threatened with weapons, whereas sexual violence refers to physically forced her to have sexual intercourse, physically forced her to perform any other sexual acts she did not want to, and forced her with threats or in any other way to perform sexual acts she did not want to.

PROT3 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 (%)					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	1.0	0.9800	
1	NZL	New Zealand	1.0	0.9800	
3	WSM	Samoa	7.4	0.8520	
4	FJI	Fiji	9.0	0.8200	
5	TUV	Tuvalu	10.0	0.8000	
6	TON	Tonga	10.1	0.7980	
7	KIR	Kiribati	20.0	0.6000	
8	SLB	Solomon Islands	21.0	0.5800	
8	VUT	Vanuatu	21.0	0.5800	
9	MHL	Marhsall Islands	26.0	0.4800	
10	NRU	Nauru	27.0	0.4600	
11	PNG	Papua New Guinea	27.3	0.4540	
-	FSM	Micronesia, Federated State:	-	-	
-	PLW	Palau	-	-	

SDG 5.3.1: Marriage before the age of 18 is a fundamental violation of human rights. Many factors interact to place a girl at risk of marriage, including poverty, the perception that marriage will provide 'protection', family honour, social norms, customary or religious laws that condone the practice, an inadequate legislative framework and the state of a country's civil registration system. Child marriage often compromises a girl's development by resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupting her schooling, limiting her opportunities for career and vocational advancement and placing her at increased risk of domestic violence. Child marriage also affects boys, but to a lesser degree than girls. Child marriage is defined as, "Any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically, physiologically, and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage" (Inter-African Committee - IAC 1993) whereas the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) defines it as "a formal marriage or informal union before 18" (UNICEF 2011). Girls Not Brides2 defines child marriage as "any formal marriage or informal union where one or both of the parties are under 18 years of age."



### INDICATORS:

Percentage of the female population ages 15 and older that has ever experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner

Percentage of the female population ages 15 and older that has ever experienced sexual violence from a non-intimate partner

Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 (%)

PROT2 Percentage of the female population ages 15 and older that has ever experienced sexual violence from a non-intimate partner					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	TON	Tonga	6.3	0.937	
2	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	8.0	0.920	
3	FJI	Fiji	8.5	0.915	
4	KIR	Kiribati	9.8	0.902	
5	AUS	Australia	10.0	0.900	
6	WSM	Samoa	10.6	0.894	
7	MHL	Marhsall Islands	13.0	0.870	
8	PLW	Palau	15.1	0.849	
9	SLB	Solomon Islands	18.0	0.820	
10	VUT	Vanuatu	33.0	0.670	
11	NRU	Nauru	47.3	0.527	
-	NZL	New Zealand	-	-	
-	PNG	Papua New Guinea	-	-	
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-	

SDG 5.2.2: Number of ever married females 15-49 (depending on country) that has ever experienced physical and/or social violence from a person other than their partner/spouse. Physical violence refers to pushing, shaking, slapping, twisted arm, kicking, dragging, choking, burning, threatened with weapons, whereas sexual violence refers to physically forced her to have sexual intercourse, physically forced her to perform any other sexual acts she did not want to, and forced her with threats or in any other way to perform sexual acts she did not want to.

## VOICE POLITICAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value	
1	NZL	New Zealand	0.803	
2	AUS	Australia	0.768	
3	KIR	Kiribati	0.671	
4	TON	Tonga	0.668	
5	MHL	Marshall Islands	0.628	
6	PLW	Palau	0.563	
7	NRU	Nauru	0.533	
8	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	0.500	
9	VUT	Vanuatu	0.476	
10	SLB	Solomon Islands	0.318	
11	TUV	Tuvalu	0.285	
12	WSM	Samoa	0.227	
13	FJI	Fiji	0.098	
14	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.045	



### INDICATORS:

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments

Proportion of girls under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority

A woman can apply for a passport in the same way as a man

### VOICE1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments

Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	NZL	New Zealand	40.8	0.408	
2	AUS	Australia	30.5	0.305	
3	FJI	Fiji	19.6	0.196	
4	PLW	Palau	12.5	0.125	
5	NRU	Nauru	10.5	0.105	
6	WSM	Samoa	10.0	0.100	
7	KIR	Kiribati	8.9	0.089	
8	TON	Tonga	7.4	0.074	
9	SLB	Solomon Islands	6.4	0.064	
10	TUV	Tuvalu	6.3	0.063	
11	MHL	Marshall Islands	6.1	0.061	
12	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	0.0	0.000	
12	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.0	0.000	
12	VUT	Vanuatu	0.0	0.000	

SDG Indicator 5.1.1: Women are vastly underrepresented in decision making positions in government, although there is some evidence of recent improvement. Gender parity in parliamentary representation is still far from being realized. Without representation at this level, it is difficult for women to influence policy. The proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments is the number of seats held by women members in single or lower chambers of national parliaments, expressed as a percentage of all occupied seats; it is derived by dividing the total number of seats occupied by women by the total number of seats in parliament. It does not cover the upper chamber of bicameral parliaments. Seats are usually won by members in general parliamentary elections. Seats may also be filled by nomination, appointment, indirect election, rotation of members and by-election. Seats refer to the number of parliamentary mandates, or the number of members of parliament.

### VOICE3 A woman can apply for a passport in the same way as a man

Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	Yes	1.000	
1	KIR	Kiribati	Yes	1.000	
1	MHL	Marshall Islands	Yes	1.000	
1	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	Yes	1.000	
1	NZL	New Zealand	Yes	1.000	
1	PLW	Palau	Yes	1.000	
1	TON	Tonga	Yes	1.000	
1	VUT	Vanuatu	Yes	1.000	
9	FJI	Fiji	No	0.000	
9	PNG	Papua New Guinea	No	0.000	
9	WSM	Samoa	No	0.000	
9	SLB	Solomon Islands	No	0.000	
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-	
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-	

SDG 5.1.1: This indicator, drawn from the Women, Business and Law Database for the domain of 'mobility' looks at whether there are differences in passport application procedures. The answer is "Yes" if there are no gender differences in passport application procedures, while if "No", it indicates that an adult woman needs the permission or signature of her husband, father or other relative or guardian to apply for a passport, or passport application procedures or forms require a woman to provide details about her husband, father, or other relative or guardian; or passport application procedures or forms require a woman to provide additional documents, such as a marriage certificate, whereas the same is not required for a man.

### VOICE2 Proportion of girls under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority

Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	100.0	1.000	
1	NZL	New Zealand	100.0	1.000	
3	NRU	Nauru	96.0	0.960	
4	TON	Tonga	93.1	0.931	
5	KIR	Kiribati	92.5	0.925	
6	SLB	Solomon Islands	89.0	0.890	
7	MHL	Marshall Islands	82.3	0.823	
8	WSM	Samoa	58.0	0.580	
9	TUV	Tuvalu	50.6	0.506	
10	VUT	Vanuatu	42.9	0.429	
11	PNG	Papua New Guinea	13.6	0.136	
-	FJI	Fiji	-	-	
-	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	-	-	
-	PLW	Palau	-	-	

SDG 16.9.1: Registering children at birth is the first step in securing their recognition before the law, safeguarding their rights, and ensuring that any violation of these rights does not go unnoticed. Children without official identification documents may be denied health care or education. Later in life, the lack of such documentation can mean that a child may enter into marriage or the labour market, or be conscripted into the armed forces, before the legal age. In adulthood, birth certificates may be required to obtain social assistance or a job in the formal sector, to buy or prove the right to inherit property, to vote and to obtain a passport. Children's right to a name and nationality is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) under Article 7. The most recent data source from either UNICEF or DHS/MICS has been used. It should be noted that birth registration prevalence rates are highly sensitive to the way in which questions are formulated. This is especially true of questions regarding the civil authorities in charge of recording births. Similarly, questions regarding the possession of a birth certificate may also be the source of erroneous data, since respondents may confuse a birth certificate with a health card or other document.



## LAW LAWS AND POLICIES

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value	
1	AUS	Australia	1.000	
1	NZL	New Zealand	1.000	
3	FJI	Fiji	0.800	
3	KIR	Kiribati	0.800	
3	WSM	Samoa	0.800	
3	VUT	Vanuatu	0.800	
7	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.600	
7	SLB	Solomon Islands	0.600	
9	MHL	Marhsall Islands	0.200	
9	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	0.200	
9	PLW	Palau	0.200	
9	TON	Tonga	0.200	
-	NRU	Nauru	-	
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	

LAW1 Equal rights between sons and daughters to inherit assets from parents					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	Yes	1.000	
1	FJI	Fiji	Yes	1.000	
1	KIR	Kiribati	Yes	1.000	
1	FSM	Micronesia, Federated State:	Yes	1.000	
1	NZL	New Zealand	Yes	1.000	
1	PNG	Papua New Guinea	Yes	1.000	
1	WSM	Samoa	Yes	1.000	
1	SLB	Solomon Islands	Yes	1.000	
1	VUT	Vanuatu	Yes	1.000	
10	MHL	Marhsall Islands	No	0.000	
10	PLW	Palau	No	0.000	
10	TON	Tonga	No	0.000	
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-	
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-	

SDG 5.1.1: This indicator is related to the domain of managing assets within the Women, Business and Law database. It explores whether there are gender-based differences in the rules of intestate succession for transfer of property from parents to children. The answer is "Yes" when the law recognizes children as heirs to property without any restrictions based on gender. The answer is also "Yes" when aspects related to inheritance fall under a mix of custom, law and judicial precedent and all sources, including CEDAW reports which do not reveal the existence of inequality. The indicator only refers to whether the country has legislation, not the effectiveness of its implementation.

LAW3 Legislation on sexual harrasment in employment					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	Yes	1.000	
1	FJI	Fiji	Yes	1.000	
1	KIR	Kiribati	Yes	1.000	
1	NZL	New Zealand	Yes	1.000	
1	WSM	Samoa	Yes	1.000	
6	MHL	Marhsall Islands	No	0.000	
6	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States:	No	0.000	
6	PLW	Palau	No	0.000	
6	PNG	Papua New Guinea	No	0.000	
6	SLB	Solomon Islands	No	0.000	
6	TON	Tonga	No	0.000	
6	VUT	Vanuatu	No	0.000	
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-	
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-	

SDG 5.1.1: This indicator is related to legislation in employment and covers provisions on sexual harassment in the workplace or in employment, regardless of whether sanctions apply. The answer is "Yes" if legal provisions specifically protect against sexual harassment in employment, including unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. The answer is "No" if there is no legislation specifically addressing sexual harassment in employment; or the law addresses harassment in general but makes no reference to acts of a sexual nature or contact; or states only that the employer has a duty to prevent sexual harassment but no provisions prohibit it or provide sanctions or other forms of redress.



### INDICATORS:

Equal rights between sons and daughters to inherit assets from parents

Legislation specifically addressing domestic violence

Legislation on sexual harrasment in employment

Laws prohibiting or invalidating child marriage

Laws prohibiting discrimination in access to credit based on gender

LAW2 Legislation specifically addressing domestic violence					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	1.0	1.000	
1	FJI	Fiji	1.0	1.000	
1	KIR	Kiribati	1.0	1.000	
1	MHL	Marhsall Islands	1.0	1.000	
1	NZL	New Zealand	1.0	1.000	
1	PLW	Palau	1.0	1.000	
1	PNG	Papua New Guinea	1.0	1.000	
1	WSM	Samoa	1.0	1.000	
1	SLB	Solomon Islands	1.0	1.000	
1	TON	Tonga	1.0	1.000	
1	VUT	Vanuatu	1.0	1.000	
12	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	0.0	0.000	
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-	
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-	

SDG 5.1.1: This indicator is related to the domain of marriage within the Women, Business and Law database. The answer is "Yes" if there is legislation addressing domestic violence that includes criminal sanctions or provides for protection orders for domestic violence. Legislation addresses "harassment" that includes physical or mental harm arising from domestic relationships. The answer is "No" if there is no legislation addressing domestic violence, if the domestic violence legislation does not provide for sanctions or protection orders or if only a specific category of women or family member is protected; or there is only a provision that increases penalties for general crimes covered in the criminal code if committed between spouses or within the family.

LAW4 Laws prohibiting or invalidating child marriage					
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value	
1	AUS	Australia	Yes	1.000	
1	FJI	Fiji	Yes	1.000	
1	KIR	Kiribati	Yes	1.000	
1	NZL	New Zealand	Yes	1.000	
1	PNG	Papua New Guinea	Yes	1.000	
1	WSM	Samoa	Yes	1.000	
1	SLB	Solomon Islands	Yes	1.000	
1	VUT	Vanuatu	Yes	1.000	
9	MHL	Marhsall Islands	No	0.000	
9	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	No	0.000	
9	PLW	Palau	No	0.000	
9	TON	Tonga	No	0.000	
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-	
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-	

Law prohibits or invalidates child or early marriage is whether there are provisions that prevent the marriage of girls, boys, or both before they reach the legal age of marriage or the age of marriage with consent, including, for example, a prohibition on registering the marriage or provisions stating that such a marriage is null and void. Child marriage endangers the life trajectories of girls in multiple ways. Child brides are at greater risk of experiencing a range of poor health outcomes, having children at younger ages when they are not yet ready to do so, dropping out of school, earning less over their lifetimes and living in poverty compared to their peers who marry at later ages. Child brides may also be more likely to experience intimate partner violence, have restricted physical mobility, and limited decisionmaking ability. Most fundamentally, child brides may be disempowered in ways that deprive them of their basic rights to health, education and safety. These dynamics affect not only the girls themselves, but also their children and households, as well as communities and entire societies.

## CC CLIMATE

Rank	Code	Country	Index Value	
1	NRU	Nauru	0.872	
2	NZL	New Zealand	0.756	
3	PLW	Palau	0.754	
4	AUS	Australia	0.677	
5	FSM	Micronesia, Federated State:	0.645	
6	MHL	Marshall Islands	0.637	
7	WSM	Samoa	0.525	
8	SLB	Solomon Islands	0.518	
9	VUT	Vanuatu	0.515	
10	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.514	
11	TON	Tonga	0.508	
12	FJI	Fiji	0.505	
13	TUV	Tuvalu	0.466	
14	KIR	Kiribati	0.374	



### INDICATORS:

Number of deaths and missing persons attributed to disasters (per 100,000 population)

Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology (%)

Terrestrial and marine protected areas (% of total territorial area)

Carbon dioxide emissions, production emissions per capita (tonnes)

CC1 Number of deaths and missing persons attributed to disasters (per 100,000 population)				
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value
1	NZL	New Zealand	0.02	1.0000
2	AUS	Australia	0.18	0.9996
3	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.37	0.9993
4	TON	Tonga	0.97	0.9981
5	FJI	Fiji	1.90	0.9962
6	SLB	Solomon Islands	3.75	0.9925
7	VUT	Vanuatu	4.06	0.9919
8	FSM	Micronesia, Federated State:	9.18	0.9816
9	WSM	Samoa	105.10	0.7898
-	KIR	Kiribati	-	-
-	MHL	Marshall Islands	-	-
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-
-	PLW	Palau	-	-
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-

SDG 13.1.1: This indicator refers to the number of people who died during the disaster, or directly after, as a direct result of the hazardous event, or the number of people whose whereabouts is unknown since the hazardous event. It includes people who are presumed dead, for whom there is no physical evidence such as a body, and for which an official/legal report has been filed with competent authorities. Disaster loss data is greatly influenced by large-scale catastrophic events, which represent important outliers and the indicator is an average of data from the past 10 years.

CC2 Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population				
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value
1	PNG	Papua New Guinea	3.8	0.9998
2	AUS	Australia	36.6	0.9985
3	VUT	Vanuatu	57.0	0.9977
4	SLB	Solomon Islands	295.2	0.9882
5	MHL	Marshall Islands	489.7	0.9804
6	NZL	New Zealand	668.0	0.9733
7	PLW	Palau	8664.6	0.6534
8	FJI	Fiji	9493.2	0.6203
9	TON	Tonga	21986.1	0.1206
-	KIR	Kiribati	-	-
-	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	-	-
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-
-	WSM	Samoa	-	-
-	TUV	Tuvalu	-	-

SDG 13.1.1: This indicator includes three elements of i) people who died during the disaster, or directly after, as a direct result of the hazardous event; ii) The number of people whose whereabouts is unknown since the hazardous event. It includes people who are presumed dead, for whom there is no physical evidence such as a body, and for which an official/legal report has been filed with competent authorities; and iii) The number of people who have suffered injury, illness or other health effects; who were evacuated, displaced, relocated or have suffered direct damage to their livelihoods, economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets. Indirectly affected are people who have suffered consequences, other than or in addition to direct effects, over time, due to disruption or changes in economy, critical infrastructure, basic services, commerce or work, or social, health and psychological consequences. Disaster loss data is greatly influenced by large-scale catastrophic events, which represent important outliers and the indicator is an average of data from the past 10 years.

CC3 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology (%)				
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value
1	AUS	Australia	97.5	0.9750
1	NZL	New Zealand	97.5	0.9750
1	PLW	Palau	97.5	0.9750
4	NRU	Nauru	90.0	0.9000
5	MHL	Marshall Islands	65.0	0.6500
6	FSM	Micronesia, Federated State:	64.0	0.6400
7	TON	Tonga	50.0	0.5000
8	TUV	Tuvalu	43.0	0.4300
9	WSM	Samoa	35.0	0.3500
10	FJI	Fiji	28.0	0.2800
11	SLB	Solomon Islands	9.0	0.0900
12	PNG	Papua New Guinea	8.0	0.0800
12	VUT	Vanuatu	8.0	0.0800
14	KIR	Kiribati	2.5	0.0250

SDG 7.1.2: Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology is calculated as the number of people using clean fuels and technologies for cooking, heating and lighting divided by total population reporting that any cooking, heating or lighting, expressed as percentage. "Clean" is defined by the emission rate targets and specific fuel recommendations (i.e. against unprocessed coal and kerosene) included in the normative guidance WHO guidelines for indoor air quality: household fuel combustion. Cooking, lighting and heating represent a large share of household energy use across the low- and middle-income countries. For cooking and heating, households typically rely on solid fuels (such as wood, charcoal, biomass) or kerosene paired with inefficient technologies (e.g. open fires, stoves, space heaters or lamps). It is well known that reliance on such inefficient energy for cooking, heating and lighting is associated with high levels of household (indoor) air pollution. See: <https://sdg-tracking-progress.org/indicator/7-1-2-population-with-primary-reliance-on-clean-fuels-and-technology/>

CC4 Terrestrial and marine protected areas (% of total territorial area)				
Rank	Code	Country	Indicator	Normalized Value
1	PLW	Palau	82.9	0.8290
2	NZL	New Zealand	30.5	0.3050
3	AUS	Australia	29.7	0.2970
4	KIR	Kiribati	11.8	0.1180
5	TON	Tonga	1.5	0.0150
6	FJI	Fiji	1.0	0.0100
7	PNG	Papua New Guinea	0.7	0.0070
8	MHL	Marshall Islands	0.3	0.0030
9	WSM	Samoa	0.2	0.0020
9	SLB	Solomon Islands	0.2	0.0020
11	VUT	Vanuatu	0.1	0.0010
12	FSM	Micronesia, Federated States	0.0	0.0000
12	TUV	Tuvalu	0.0	0.0000
-	NRU	Nauru	-	-

SDG 14.5: This indicator measures the proportion of terrestrial and marine protected areas as a share of the total territorial area, including territorial waters, in a country. Terrestrial protected areas are totally or partially protected areas of at least 1,000 hectares that are designated by national authorities as scientific reserves with limited public access, national parks, natural monuments, nature reserves or wildlife sanctuaries, protected landscapes, and areas managed mainly for sustainable use. Marine protected areas are areas of intertidal or subtidal terrain—and overlying water and associated flora and fauna and historical and cultural features—that have been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment. Sites protected under local or provincial law are excluded. Protected areas remain the fundamental building blocks of virtually all national and international conservation strategies, supported by governments and international institutions. They provide the core of efforts to protect the world's threatened species and are increasingly recognized as essential providers of ecosystem services and biological resources. See more at: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&type=metadataseries=ER.PTD.TOTL.ZS>



# ANNEX B: SUCCESS STORIES

## PROMOTING THE PREVENTION OF CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE IN INDONESIA THROUGH DIGITAL ACTIVISM

### Ferny, Youth Coalition for Girls, Indonesia

Ferny, 21 years of age, is playing her part to prevent child, early and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU) through Youth Coalition for Girls (YCG), an organisation that works for the fulfilment of child rights and equality for Indonesian girls. Ending CEFMU in Indonesia is a priority issue in the National Mid-Term Development Plan 2020–2024. The national social and economic survey (Susenas) 2018 showed that one in every nine girls (under the age of 18) was married, and the number of women aged 20–24 who were married before the age of 18 was estimated to be 1,220,900. The prevalence of CEFMU is spread unevenly between provinces of Indonesia, and in 11 out of 34 provinces the rate of CEFMU increased between 2018 and 2019. Although the national rate of CEFMU has been steadily decreasing every year, change is still very slow,<sup>xliii</sup> and Indonesia still ranks eighth in the world for absolute number of CEFMUs.<sup>46</sup>

Ferny has been focused on the campaign to prevent CEFMU and violence against women for the last four years. She has coordinated and joined several initiatives, and this has kept her engaged in efforts to stop CEFMU. Among them are public discussions and knowledge sharing on gender equality; a fundraising campaign selling T-shirts with the hashtag *#IndonesiaTanpaPerkawinanAnak*; online discussions on CEFMU issues; and an online survey of the CEFMU situation in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Mobilisation as a child and youth advocate

Ferny's serious concern with the CEFMU issue began when she joined a child forum. She first learned about children's issues such as child abuse, CEFMU and human trafficking in the child forum from the facilitator, who happened to be a member of the Plan International's youth advisory panel. When she became a young woman, she felt more concerned about these issues and wanted to contribute more. She looked for a youth organisation that shared her focus and values of gender equality and found YCG. That's where her activism on CEFMU issues started, according to Ferny:

*"I felt my concern raised there, I felt I was part of it, and I did not want any children to experience child abuse or CEFMU. I have not experienced CEFMU myself, but I see around me that the consequences are terrifying. I think the poverty chain will not break while CEFMU still exists and the rate of maternal mortality and [school] drop out will increase."<sup>xliii</sup>*

### Awareness-raising approach to youth advocacy

Ferny believes in the importance of awareness-raising among youth to stop CEFMU. She acknowledged that persuading youth to be aware of CEFMU issues is not easy, especially because CEFMU issues might not seem as relevant as mental health issues to many young people. Most youths are aware of or exposed to mental health issues, but not all of them experience CEFMU, and some may not even be aware that CEFMU is a problem. In response to that situation, Ferny and her friends in YCG initiated an intense online campaign called '16 days of activism for HAKTP (The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women)' in November 2020 to build awareness of the CEFMU issue.

<sup>xliii</sup> The rate of child marriage was 11.2% in 2018, 10.8% in 2019 and 10.2% in 2020.

<sup>xliii</sup> Interview with Ferny.

## Online campaign on the prevention of CEFMU for 16HAKTP 2020

YCG conducted this campaign for 16 days, from 18 November to 13 December 2020, on Instagram National YCG (@ycg.id) and the subnational YCG groups (@ycgkotakupang, @ycg.riau), supported by the feminist coalition *Jaringan AKSI* and nongovernmental organisation (NGO) Plan International Indonesia on ‘Hari Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan/ HAKTP’ (The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women). The CEFMU issue was selected for this online campaign because, in 2020, a YCG online survey found that the rate of CEFMU had been increasing during the pandemic. The campaign was launched by inviting youth to download pictures and fact sheets about CEFMU from YCG and share in their own Instagram accounts with the hashtag *#IndonesiaTanpaPerkawinanAnak* (Indonesia without Child Marriage).

More than 300 youth joined the WhatsApp group and uploaded information about the prevention and consequences of CEFMU online via Instagram for 16 days consecutively. In total, almost 2,000 Instagram posts were published with the hashtag *#IndonesiaTanpaPerkawinanAnak*, and all content was related to YCG’s Campaign on 16HAKTP.<sup>47</sup> The YCG also invited youth to join the live discussion on YCG’s Instagram in collaboration with subnational YCG groups, such as YCG Kupang and YCG Riau organisations.

### Social media successfully used to reach and mobilise youth

Ferny has intertwined her interest in social media with the gender equality issues she is concerned about. She uses Instagram as her main social media platform for digital activism. For her, Instagram has many useful features for sharing information, such as feed posts, interactive story features, polling, asking opinions and live discussion. She creates content related to gender equality and child protection issues, including CEFMU and mental health; recently, she also advocated as part of the campaign to influence the Government to pass the sexual violence eradication bill (RUU PKS). Although at first, she could not see the impact of her digital activities, after five years of work, Ferny found that social media activism had been appreciated by other youth who noted her posts are informative and insightful.

In the online campaign on the prevention of CEFMU for 16HAKTP 2020, Ferny was very proud to see how YCG could make many people aware of the issue. As of April 2021, there were 13,209 posts with the *#16HAKTP* hashtag on Instagram, linking to various campaigns from different organisations and individuals.<sup>48</sup> Volunteers were mobilised to publicise the issue on social media, which was zero-cost, as all participants were voluntarily involved. For her, advocating on CEFMU issues is not easy, and having many people give their time to share and post about CEFMU on their social media accounts will open doors to reach more people. The experience of being heard and influencing people is essential for her because it has made her more enthusiastic about continuing to advocate to prevent CEFMU.

*“I was very happy because [...] persuading many people to be aware of the child marriage issue is not an easy thing. I was very happy that many people were willing to make time to share posts on their Instagram! [...] Although it was exhausting, and we were nervous and worried if we made a mistake, the result made me very happy. I was also happy because we did it together. We received a good response as well, and that makes us happier. It motivates us to continue our campaign for preventing child marriage,” says Ferny.<sup>xliv</sup>*

The use of digital technologies and social media for advocacy and to build support for youth activism is even more relevant because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, despite social media making activism activities easier, Ferny has realised that online interactions are different to offline activities. They require digital literacy and good internet connection. Therefore, the online campaign will be limited in scope as it is only targeted to youth who have mobile phones and good internet connectivity in their areas.

Ferny also acknowledges that there are risks that may arise from creating online content for campaigns to end CEFMU. One of the risks is hoax content on social media platforms, which creates the potential for YCG’s sensitive content to be mislabelled to represent the wrong message. The other risk is people’s reactions, such as questions and protests, especially from specific communities that believe CEFMU is acceptable.

<sup>xliv</sup> Interview with Ferny.



## Personal motivations and attributes of youth advocates

Ferny felt that she could be involved as a youth advocate because she has both strong willpower and privileges. Growing up in a village, Ferny was exposed to situations where there was low awareness of gender equality issues. However, she had better opportunities than other girls to receive a good education and engage in youth activism. Meanwhile, many girls face obstacles to accessing information, and some of them cannot afford the transportation costs associated with joining in such activities. Ferny explains:

*“Youth like me have opportunities because I have willpower and privilege as well as connections. [...] I see that young people around me are not aware of such issues, but I’m different because I’m educated, and my school has enough connection and also opportunity. In the Child Forum, they reimbursed my travel cost so I could go to their headquarters. Some girls do not have access to information. Maybe some other girls do, but they do not have money to travel. It’s difficult for them.”<sup>xlv</sup>*

Ferny also recognises that there are educational and class gaps among youth themselves. When she moved to Jakarta to pursue her degree, she found out that most youth came from prestigious backgrounds and had excellent English skills, which was not the case with her. She thinks that she would not be a youth advocate if she did not have a strong will to learn.

Ferny emphasises that people need to know that youth activism exists and can help prevent CEFMU. While many young people have made efforts to promote gender equality, many youths in rural areas do not have the opportunity to be aware of gender issues because there are no spaces where they can discuss them. By promoting CEFMU prevention on social media, she hopes that more youth can be exposed and interested to join YCG or even follow their activities. She believes that the CEFMU issue needs young people to engage and take action to prevent it.

## Youth networks and collaboration as important factors to enable civic engagement and activism

YCG has extensive networks at the national and subnational levels, and Ferny believes that good collaboration between youth through national and subnational networks was a key strategy in the 16 days of action for the campaign. She also took advantage of her network in various forums and communities, such as *Jaringan AKSI*, a participatory, collaborative network containing many activists, civil society organisations and NGOs that work on intersectional feminist issues, including Plan International Indonesia and the United Nations Children’s Fund. The networks are not only for mobilising youth activism, but also for sharing information about opportunities for youth to join activities on various related topics and issues. Ferny describes the importance of working in youth activist networks:

*“Actually, our friends have helped to popularise [the CEFMU issue] since the beginning. And what makes us succeed is how we utilise our network. We involve youth from other areas as much as we can. [...] Some activists are also involved with other organisations besides YCG. [...] In my opinion, this campaign is booming because we have all collaborated very well, national YCG, YCG Riau and YCG Kupang – and the youth indeed, since we share a common concern, we really have done this together. How we work together, that’s what makes this campaign successful.”<sup>xlvi</sup>*

Collaboration with other stakeholders, such as NGOs and the government, is no less important for advocacy on gender equality. Plan International Indonesia has been involved in capacity building for YCG’s members and contributed funds for an online survey on CEFMU. Ferny said that the Government is rarely directly involved in the YCG campaign activities, but they appreciated it when young people carried out advocacy activities. The YCG members were also invited to join various government activities on gender equality through their civil society and NGO networks. For example, in 2018, Ferny was invited to join the regional-level Asian Youth Forum in South Korea where she talked publicly about the inclusivity of women in the workforce.

<sup>xlv</sup> Interview with Ferny.

<sup>xlvi</sup> Interview with Ferny.

Ferny realises that more and more youth communities are being established with an awareness of gender equality. She hopes that, in the next five years, all of these communities will continue working together and collaborating in a large network. She feels they cannot work alone and need to continue working together to improve gender equality in Indonesia. In her vision, she wants the Government to support youth and involve more of them in the decision-making process so that their interests will be heard. She hopes that the Government can be more responsive in handling cases and strengthening its role in implementing the amendment of the marriage law for a minimum age of marriage.

*“Hopefully, in 10 years, things will get better. [...] As youth, we can work with the Government and are allowed to be involved before the Government makes a decision regarding policy; [...] our thoughts are listened to and taken into consideration. I hope that in the future youth will be invited to be involved more in advocacy,” concludes Ferny.<sup>xlvii</sup>*

## COUNTERING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS

### *Khadiza, WeMen View, Bangladesh*

Twenty-four-year-old Khadiza immerses herself in promoting gender equality in Bangladesh by leading WeMen View, a registered voluntary social welfare organisation that aims to counter sexual harassment. The organisation focuses on children and young people and seeks to change pre-existing gender perceptions and develop a vivid understanding of consent. By promoting the importance of understanding gender-based violence, she engages youth in looking at these issues in their own environments and nurtures ideas on how to reduce the incidence of this form of abuse in Bangladesh.

Sexual harassment, intimate partner violence and dowry-related violence are grave concerns in Bangladesh. A 2015 survey found that over 70% of married women and girls in Bangladesh had faced some form of intimate partner abuse. Over 70% of these survivors had never told anyone about what they had been subjected to, and only 3% took legal action.<sup>49</sup> According to the legal aid and human rights organisation *Ain o Salish Kendra*, 201 women reported being harassed, 1,627 women were raped, and 53 were murdered after being raped in 2020.<sup>50</sup> The number of actual cases of abuse is much higher than the number reported. A 2020 Human Rights Watch report found that government response to gender-based violence is inadequate, there is a shortage of shelters and other support services for survivors, and there are barriers to reporting assault or seeking legal recourse.<sup>51</sup> As in many other parts of the world, violence against girls and women in Bangladesh increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>52</sup>

Khadiza started WeMen View in 2018 with eight youth volunteers who shared the goal of reducing gender-based violence. She started working with the team and then recruited more people in 2019. The primary work of WeMen View is teaching young people about gender roles, personal space, consent, good touch and bad touch, and intervention techniques when witnessing someone getting harassed. In the education of boys and girls, they hope to combat the sexism, rape culture and toxic masculinity that contribute to gender-based violence. WeMen View provides teaching to underprivileged children who mainly study in public primary schools. In 2020, WeMen View had reached more than 1,000 students and teachers all over the greater Dhaka area and had collaborated with more than 10 NGOs.<sup>53</sup>

*“There is a lot of rape and sexual harassment in Bangladesh that girls face every day. You could go ask around anyone, and at least 70–80% would say that yes, they have been at least harassed once in their life. So, what came into my mind was that I want to work with the cause, I want to work with children [...] so that we can protect the future generation,” says Khadiza.<sup>xlviii</sup>*

<sup>xlvii</sup> Interview with Ferny.

<sup>xlviii</sup> Interview with Khadiza.



## Addressing taboo issues in a conservative society

Working on gender-based violence issues in Bangladesh is not an easy road for Khadiza and her team in WeMen View. They put forward some ideas on gender issues that are controversial in conservative parts of society. At first, it was difficult for the organisation to get access to schools because gender-based violence is classified as sensitive. When she told schools that WeMen View wanted to teach the students about good touch and bad touch, consent and personal space, some teachers were scared to raise these topics because they knew parents might have issues with it.

*“There are religious issues and conservativeness in our society. When some people get to know that we are working with issues around body autonomy, [...] they might even take their children out of school. So, it’s very risky. It was very hard for us to get access with proper consent and permission,” says Khadiza.<sup>xlix</sup>*

Khadiza understands that there are risks associated with activism on gender issues. Potential risks include threats, both to female activists and their family members, and this might make people too scared to join the movement.

*“Whenever we start working in the field of gender, we know that we could get killed, but it’s fine. What we actually fear is the danger to our family members and friends. [...] With some volunteers that I work with, I try not to engage them in too controversial projects because a lot of them are under 18, and I cannot really put them at risk,” says Khadiza.<sup>i</sup>*

## Stories on education activities

In WeMen View teaching activities, Khadiza acknowledges the importance of building rapport with the students and the roles of school teachers in supporting gender-focused education. She believes that the key to successfully teaching gender-related material is to make the students comfortable through different activities before the workshops. In her experience, teachers also contribute a lot because students feel safer around them.

Khadiza is motivated when she sees the impact of her work on children’s lives. In her journey, she has been influenced by stories from girls and boys who have benefitted from the WeMen View’s teaching projects.

*“There were moments where [WeMen View] taught good and bad touch, and a girl stood up and said, ‘Does that mean that what was happening to me all these days was actually wrong, but I did not know anything?’ The child was being harassed almost every day, and she did not understand that. So, she cried and thanked us and said that ‘Now I know what I had been going through, and I did not realise that before’.”<sup>li</sup>*

Speaking of another case, Khadiza recalled:

*“A boy started asking very specific questions, like, ‘What if someone tries to pin me down inside my room, what do I do then?’ So, after that we answered his questions, he told us that he had been facing a lot of issues, but he did not know that these were wrong, and now he knows who to talk to and how to talk and who to go to when he faces this kind of abuse.”<sup>lii</sup>*

<sup>xlix</sup> Interview with Khadiza.

<sup>i</sup> Interview with Khadiza

<sup>li</sup> Interview with Khadiza

<sup>lii</sup> Interview with Khadiza

Based on experiences like these, Khadiza has become convinced that they are on the right track in the education project. Many children and youth need their support and working in the issue of gender-based violence is extremely necessary.

*“So, this is when I particularly felt very satisfied that yes, what we are doing is correct. And these were moments where. [...] I felt really satisfied that [...] what we are doing is very much needed because these children do not even know that they’re being harassed; they need to know this, and they need to be aware of what they can do about it.”<sup>liii</sup>*

## Digital campaign as an approach in mobilising youth to join the movement

Social media is being used by many youth movements, and Khadiza explained that WeMen View also uses digital campaigns to attract people by sharing information on social media about their organisation’s activities and actions. For her, social media plays a huge role in connecting people who think the same way as WeMen View, and in creating platforms for girls, women and activists who believe they can contribute to the movement for gender equality.

As the use of social media has increased in Bangladesh, Khadiza has begun to see her personal activities on social media as being about more than her personal interests. Social media is also a valuable tool to influence people and attract volunteers to join the movement against gender-based violence. Khadiza uses Facebook to share her work because she knows that many people will be inspired or interested in eliminating gender-based violence. With around 1,500 followers on Facebook, she frequently posts articles about gender equality, prevention of sexual violence and digital security, shares referral services contacts details and promotes opportunities for youth to join activism. She believes that social media will play a crucial role in bringing everyone together in this journey.

*“Because it’s a voluntary organisation, it’s really hard to get volunteers who will dedicatedly work for the cause without any remuneration. So it was really crucial for me to prove to them that this could be a good thing and the causes that we work on could actually impact a lot of people. So that’s one of the biggest ways I use social media. I usually showcase a lot of my work to encourage others to also do this work.”<sup>liv</sup>*

WeMen View recently conducted an awareness-raising event called ‘Digital Utopia: An Ideal Online World for Girls’ co-hosted by Plan International Bangladesh. This project shared stories about gender-based violence through a mobile short movie competition to put forward a female-centric vision of an ideal, safe and secure online world for women. According to a recent report in the *Daily Star*, 80% of the victims of cyberbullying in Bangladesh are adolescent girls and women in their early twenties.<sup>54</sup>

## Shifting the focus from children to youth due to COVID-19 pandemic impact

In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, WeMen View had to change its entire advocacy plan. Before the pandemic, the primary focus of WeMen View was on face-to-face educational activities with children. As the pandemic hit Bangladesh, Khadiza and her team moved to online platforms, worked more closely with youth and added relief projects to support children and communities in dealing with the pandemic.

To date, WeMen View has educated around 50 youth volunteers on gender issues, including different tiers of gender-based violence, how these take place and how they can be changed. In conjunction with their advocacy using social media, they have partnered with many organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic for different projects, including providing humanitarian assistance and other advocacy activities. As individuals, families and communities were suffering after the lockdown, WeMen View contributed by providing food, including for transgender communities and vulnerable girls and their families.

<sup>liii</sup> Interview with Khadiza

<sup>liv</sup> Interview with Khadiza.



## Digital Utopia: An Ideal Online World for Girls

- Taking a cue from Plan International Bangladesh's theme of 'Online Freedom – Digital Safety and Security for Girls' for the 2020 Equality Awards, WeMen View arranged the 'Digital Utopia' event.
- It was an all-girl project – the judges were girls; the event was organised by girls, and it was for girls.
- On the interactive platform of 'Digital Utopia', short films on themes about women's freedom, safety and security in the digital realm were showcased and discussed.
- The focus was on what an ideal, safe and secure online world would look like for Bangladeshi girls and women.
- The event raised awareness about digital security for girls and young women.
- Through this competition, the organisers promoted the work that women filmmakers and cinematographers are doing in Bangladesh so that more girls are encouraged to become cinematographers and filmmakers.
- Anonymous real stories of girls and women facing sexual harassment in public places were also shared on the platform.

## Creating a safer environment and support services for future activism

For future activism, Khadiza emphasised the importance of a safe environment and support services for youth activists. She felt that girls and young people are highly motivated to create gender equality, and they need protection.

To support the youth gender activists, the Government needs to provide a safer environment to enable them to voice their opinions and address the threats they receive from their opponents. In Bangladesh, women and girls frequently do not trust the police to respond appropriately to their complaints and provide protection, and they fear that contacting the police will place them at further risk of abuse.<sup>55</sup> The Government needs to give practical support to youth activists through law enforcement agencies, and these agencies need to let the public know that they are aware of gender issues and are working on creating change.

There is also a controversial digital security act in Bangladesh that some activists believe restricts their freedom and their ability to express their opinions. The Government should consider changes to the digital security act to ensure the safety of youth activists working on gender issues.

*"If these are not taken care of, if these policies are not changed, and if they cannot provide a safer environment for us, eventually, many great movements will die down because of the safety issues," says Khadiza.<sup>iv</sup>*

The provision of mental health support services for youth activists is no less crucial. Many youth activists experience mental health issues, especially those working to support victims of gender-based violence. They could be referred to legal aid organisations and other relevant organisations or counsellors – even government services. However, WeMen View does not have dedicated funding for mental health support services. Gender activists need professional mental health support to stay healthy and keep working.

## Expand the network to engage stakeholders

A key enabler for future activism is continuous support from key stakeholders. So far, dialogue sessions between gender activists and the Government have rarely happened. Khadiza thinks that having more dialogue sessions where they can work together is very important because they would enable the Government to gain more understanding of what is needed to support gender equality and reduce gender-based violence. Currently, she is also working on expanding the network with the Government and other stakeholders in the hope they can work together with WeMen View in the future.

<sup>iv</sup> Interview with Khadiza.

*“I expect the adults, or the older generation, to not stop us in voicing our opinion, not bully us and not harass us. Instead, in the future, they will come with us to support these [gender equality] causes.”<sup>lv</sup>*

Five to 10 years from now, Khadiza expects youth and the next generation of children to be sensitised about gender issues. She wants to see youth activists bring about change, and she wants them to keep talking about consent, harassment and policies that should be changed. She also hopes to see comprehensive sexual education and more measures to ensure gender equality.

## EMPOWERING GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN TONGA TO STAND UP AND TAKE ACTION FOR CHANGE

### *Anamalia, Talitha Project, Tonga*

For 18-year-old Anamalia, the absence of girls and women in decision-making processes at home, in the community and in her country motivates her to support and empower girls and young women in Tonga.

Anamalia is a youth mentor with the Talitha Project, an NGO committed to empowering girls and young women aged 10–24 years to make informed decisions through informal education, life skills and development programmes. In 2017, Anamalia started as a participant in Talitha programmes, and now she is helping to inform and shape the programme for girls, particularly in the areas of empowerment and leadership – issues she is very passionate about.

In the Pacific, traditional leadership and education systems tend to prescribe more traditional roles to women as homemakers and/or participants in more feminised sectors such as teaching and nursing. Generally, limited attention is given to educating young women regarding their potential as leaders and the opportunities for them to participate in decision-making. High rates of gender-based violence in the Pacific region, although they do not impact all women equally, affect young women’s potential to engage in leadership and decision-making.<sup>56</sup>

### **The Talitha Project provides a platform to build girls’ activism and agency**

Through her affiliation with the Talitha Project, Anamalia has been able to participate in forums and workshops in Tonga and other Pacific Island countries, establishing herself in the Pacific feminist movement as a genuine and passionate advocate.

*“[Anamalia] is a great advocate, very articulate but very genuine. She is not a performer. It’s just what she has to say,” shared a sector specialist.<sup>lvii</sup>*

Anamalia has also been invited to youth engagement activities by international NGOs such as Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and CARE Australia. She has also had the opportunity to engage with regional programmes such as the Pacific Girl programme (an initiative under the Australian Aid Program’s Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development programme), in which she was able to work alongside girls from Papua New Guinea Equal Playing Field, the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement, CARE Vanuatu and other organisations.

Being invited to participate in national and regional forums and workshops has enabled Anamalia to use these platforms to advocate girl’s empowerment and leadership.

<sup>lv</sup> Interview with Khadiza.

<sup>lvii</sup> Interview with a sector-based expert.



*“In these places, I am able to speak and channel discussions about how important it is for women to be in leadership, and how important it is to create a society that young girls and women feel safe to live in,”<sup>lviii</sup> says Anamalia.*

The Talitha Project provides a platform for girls and young women in Tonga to discuss and advocate about issues affecting girls and women nationally and internationally such as domestic violence, cyberbullying and sexual and reproductive health. In 2018, the Talitha Project started an initiative in partnership with telecommunications company Digicel Tonga to address cyberbullying. They held a competition for high schools to compile one-minute videos shared on Talitha’s Facebook page as a means to raise awareness about cyberbullying. Anamalia featured in Tonga High School’s submission to the competition as the lead singer for the advocacy song called ‘Think Again’, which she composed with friends.

Talitha Project also focuses on the empowerment of girls and young women to take up leadership opportunities by building their knowledge, confidence and skills. In an interview featured in a news article on the Tonga Broadcasting Commission website, Anamalia talks about her experience at a Regional Housing Forum she attended in 2019:

*“I did not have formal information or statistics, but I spoke from the heart by emphasising that we youth should be included in all decision-making regarding housing because it is our future that we are talking about, and we do not want to be left out because our voices and our opinions do matter in this situation. [...] I also want to emphasise to youth that if they want to see a change in their country, if they want to see a change in their communities, they have to shape that change – they cannot just sit around and always expect and rely on the older generations to do the work to make the change that they want to see. [...] You have to start now because this is the time to make the change, and you have to be the change because you are the solution to all the issues in our community and in our society.”<sup>lv</sup>*

Engaging with men and boys is an important component of programming which aims to end violence against women. Through the Talitha Project’s *Front Row Against Violence* programme, rugby tournaments are held for girls and boys. Participation of both girls and boys is controversial since rugby and touch rugby are often considered men’s sports. Anamalia is supporting the implementation of activities in this programme to encourage a positive shift in attitudes and behaviours.

In 2019, with the support of Habitat for Humanity New Zealand, Anamalia travelled to Thailand to be on a panel in a Housing Forum. Anamalia has used platforms such as this to represent, advocate and raise awareness on the problems girls and young women face. Anamalia considers these experiences a high point in her activism:

*“Although being so nervous, I spoke on the topic, how I think governments, stakeholders and everyone should come together and work together. After my speech, I got a standing ovation. I think that point was probably the highest point for me because it really showed me that I am doing something, [...] that I’m being acknowledged, and the message that I’m trying to get across is being acknowledged by all these people in government and people who are way older than me, who have all these leadership positions. But also – every time I’m at forums, I am able to represent all the young people like me in addressing issues such as climate change or domestic violence. And I think every time that I’m up on that stage, I always take it to heart, [...] the thousand other people that I’m representing. And that, for me, is always the highest point.”<sup>lix</sup>*

In 2020, Anamalia attended the global gathering of the National Child Rights Committee on the Rights of the Child held in Samoa, representing the Pacific Girl programme. It was a historic occasion, given it was the first time any of the United Nations treaty body had held a regional session outside of Geneva or New York.

<sup>lviii</sup> Interview with Anamalia.

<sup>lix</sup> Interview with Anamalia.

Anamalia shared her perspective on the lived realities of children in the Pacific region and the issue of violence against children. She called for actions to prevent bullying, domestic violence, economic violence and sexual violence towards children. Anamalia concluded her speech by encouraging Pacific children to take action:

*“We cannot always rely on our leaders, elders and parents to do everything for us; we Pasifika children can be leaders in our own homes, schools and society. Our leaders and elders have done so much for us; now it’s time for us to do ours.”<sup>58</sup>*

## Supporting and mentoring young activists

Leaders in NGOs can provide mentoring for youth activists to hone their decision-making and leadership skills. This foundation in leadership skills is further enhanced by the opportunities young leaders have to participate in various networks. When girls and young women engage in activities that they define and control, this helps them take on responsibilities, gain vital skills and acquire the confidence necessary to become empowered and successful activists. Anamalia draws inspiration and empowerment from her family and from the Director of the Talitha Project, Vanessa Heleta.

*“She really encourages me when I’m given opportunities such as [representing youth at an international forum], to really use the opportunity to do the best I can in expressing my opinions as well as representing the voices of others behind me,”<sup>59</sup> says Anamalia.*

CARE Australia supported Anamalia’s growth as an activist and creates opportunities to ensure the voices of young Pacific women are heard. In 2020, Anamalia was given the opportunity by CARE Australia to use its social media accounts to advocate on the issue of the climate crisis and its impact on young people in Tonga. To support Anamalia with this online activism, CARE Australia provided her with internet connectivity. Internet access problems are a barrier to online activism that Anamalia highlighted, as connectivity is not reliable in Tonga. She was also provided access to CARE Australia’s social media accounts to post stories. She was offered technical support to identify the type of language that should be used online and understand how to use social media effectively in her advocacy work. Anamalia believes this type of support was crucial for her as social media is an important platform in advocacy because most people communicate and engage on social media networking sites. Especially for young people, social media enables wider reach.

## Continuing activism for gender equality despite the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the challenges faced by adolescent girls in Tonga and other Pacific Island countries. Key issues identified in the ‘Pacific Girl Speak Out: COVID-19 Survey’ included disrupted education, increased anxiety and loneliness, feeling isolated and unsafe at home and online, increased care burdens at home and disrupted access to menstrual hygiene and sexual health services.<sup>59</sup>

For Anamalia, COVID-19 brought a lot of challenges to the Talitha Project and the activities she is involved in. Due to the government-sanctioned lockdown at 8 pm each night to prevent the spread of COVID-19, she was not able to conduct many activities after school. She was also restricted from travelling, and due to challenges in accessing the internet, she could not always attend workshops and forums that shifted from being face-to-face to online. These challenges with internet connectivity are commonly experienced in Tonga, especially in rural areas, and may be a barrier to activist networking.

Despite these challenges, Anamalia and other youth activists have continued their work during 2020 and 2021, and their voices promoting gender equality and girls’ rights have not been stifled.

## Working together for gender equality

There has been positive progress in recent decades in advancing gender equality, but there are still barriers faced by girls, women and gender and sexual minorities. For Anamalia, culture is still a barrier to advancing gender equality in Tonga, and her vision for the future is that everyone will work together to advance gender equality:

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Anamalia.



*"I feel like there's very small opportunities out there for girls to really speak. I hope that our culture, in the next five to 10 years' time, would not be one of the biggest barriers, as it is now, because one of the biggest barriers to advocating in gender equality is culture. We have a rich culture here in Tonga that identifies males as decision-makers in everything. So, that is a dream for the future, that Government and everyone, our communities, would work together to help break that barrier down. But just to get everyone to work together – that is my dream for the future."<sup>xi</sup>*

## TAKING IT TO THE STREETS: FIGHTING STREET AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT THROUGH A GROUND-BREAKING, INTERACTIVE CITY SAFETY MAP

### ***Alice, Plan International Australia's Youth Activist Series alumni, Australia***

As a child, 24-year-old Alice says she was always inspired and empowered by the women in her life and the trailblazers throughout history who had bravely and publicly shared their stories in the fight for gender equality. But from a young age, she had also been acutely aware of the barriers she faced because she was a girl. While fighting for social change and justice had always been important to her, it was while studying at university in 2018 – when she joined Plan International Australia's Youth Activist Series (YAS) – that she says her activism was truly ignited.

*"I had read about the YAS in a newsletter and immediately felt this was an amazing opportunity. I did not expect to get into the programme, but I did. At our introduction and training session, we were told the first advocacy campaign we would work on would be around street harassment. This was incredibly exciting for me and something I felt very strongly about... street harassment is a particular issue in regard to gender inequality that is really visceral. I had never actually felt safe walking home, ever – both as a child and now as an adult. It was always something in the back of my mind. So, the campaign was something I really jumped on, and I felt really passionate about pushing for real, tangible change," she says.*

Involving activists aged between 16 and 24, Plan International Australia's YAS is a 12-month leadership development programme committed to creating long-lasting social change and fighting for equality, human rights and the environment. Throughout the year, the youth activists learn essential activism and leadership skills and get involved in advocacy and campaigning, media and public speaking, and collective action. The YAS are fearless, powerful and feminist, with up to 10 activists taking part each year since the programme began more than five years ago. Since 2020, the programme has been funded by The Body Shop, an organisation with deep activist roots and strong values around empowering young women.

Over the years, the YAS have achieved incredible things. In 2020, alongside Plan International's youth leaders in Viet Nam, the youth activists led research into the challenges faced by girls, young women and non-binary people because of COVID-19. Not only did they delve into the issues that COVID-19 exposed in our systems, but they also highlighted young people's dreams and solutions for a 'better normal' – a just, equitable and sustainable future for all. They then presented their report 'A Better Normal: Girls Call for a Revolutionary Reset' and their recommendations to the United Nations General Assembly – calling on global leaders to centre youth in the recovery process.

Every International Day of The Girl, YAS also partake in 'share the mic' opportunities, where young people consult with leaders and decision-makers and stage 'takeovers' of major Australian media outlets to bring youth experiences and voices to the forefront. In 2020, the youth activists spoke to Instagram, Facebook,

<sup>xi</sup> Interview with Anamalia.

TikTok and Twitter to demand commitments from social media platforms to create safe and empowering spaces for girls and young women online.

When Alice took part in the programme in 2018, she and her fellow YAS were instrumental in co-designing Plan International Australia's ground-breaking Free to Be crowd-mapping tool, rallying participation in the research and adding girls' voices to the national conversation about their right to live safely in their cities. Advocating girls and young women's safety, the YAS engaged with numerous power holders and stakeholders to push for change and implement the recommendations they wanted to see from the accompanying Unsafe in the City report.

Free to Be formed part of Plan International Australia's global Safer Cities programme, which is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program. For the first time in history, there are more people living in cities than in rural areas. Every month, five million people move to cities – and by 2030, around 700 million girls will be living in these urban environments. Yet, the world's cities are not safe for girls. All over the globe, women and girls face street harassment every day and are made to feel uncomfortable in public spaces. Ongoing Plan International Australia research since 2016 has revealed that 96% of adolescent girls do not feel safe in Delhi; 45% of girls have reported sexual harassment when using public transport in Kampala; and just 2.2% of girls say they feel safe in public spaces in Lima. In Sydney, 90% of young women felt unsafe at night time.

Safer Cities helps to ensure that girls can access and feel safe in public spaces, that they can move around their cities independently and participate meaningfully in the decisions being made about their cities. To make this happen, Plan International works with young people around the world to (1) help them influence governments and policymakers to make city services safer and laws more inclusive, (2) work with their families and communities to create an environment that promotes girls' safety and inclusion, (3) support them in creating the change they want to see in their cities and (4) give them the opportunity to participate in meaningful decision-making. From girl-led safety walks, to assessing city services and creating tools such as Free to Be, Safer Cities activities and resources have been created to be easily adapted to suit cities and countries around the world.

Free to Be is an interactive digital online map that allows girls to share areas where they do and do not feel safe in their cities. The project was implemented in five cities around the world – Sydney, Lima, Kampala, Delhi and Madrid – and captured clear and powerful data on the safety and inclusion of girls and young women for the first time ever, providing valuable evidence of the harassment in public spaces. Using this data, the YAS were able to lobby and influence community leaders, governments and transport bodies, campaign for policy and practice change and, more widely, challenge attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls, to make cities safer for everyone.

### **Alice's YAS journey: "Talk to every decision-maker, regardless of who they are, as a human"**

Girls and young women have been speaking out about street harassment for years, but the evidence base needed to help decision-makers understand and respond to the issue has been lacking. Following a pilot of Free to Be in Melbourne in 2016, in 2018, Plan International Australia and the YAS rolled out an improved version of the crowd-mapping tool in five cities across five continents.

As one of their major campaigns for the year, the 2018 YAS helped co-design the map with Monash University's XYX lab and were critical to its user experience. They were also heavily involved in advocacy for the Free to Be campaign, inviting young women and girls in all their diversities to tag where they felt happy, sad, safe and unsafe in the cities. By the time the tool officially launched, over 21,000 girls had already reported the areas in their cities where they felt safe and unsafe. In total, 2,083 pins were dropped on spots of the Sydney map, of which 25% denoted good experiences (516) and 75% bad (1,567).

*"We went to around 20 stakeholder sessions, where we shared our experiences as girls and young women in Sydney, communicating the need for a tool like Free to Be to make lasting change. Once the Free to Be map was closed for submissions, we made speeches to decision-makers outlining the results. One of the most poignant tools we used were 'girls' walks', in which decision-makers were able to walk in our shoes around Sydney, so we could show them how and why so many girls feel unsafe on a daily basis."*

Following the release of the research findings on International Day of the Girl (11 October) in 2018, Alice and her YAS peers advocated with the Greater Sydney Commission, NSW transport authorities and other key organisations to implement the recommendations. They met with senior decision-makers such as Lucy Turnbull, the Chief Commissioner for the Greater Sydney Commission. In response to this, on International Women's Day 2020, the Greater Sydney Commission, in collaboration with Transport for NSW and the Committee for Sydney, launched the Greater Sydney Women's Safety Charter, built on Free to Be's ground-breaking research on girls' experiences as they move around cities. Alice was the keynote speaker at the launch of the Charter.

*"One key thing I learned was to talk to every decision-maker, regardless of who they are, as a human. They are people, and if you connect with them on a human level and appeal to their inherent desire to make the world a better place, I found it to be very effective. I also think there is a lot of power in being young and, in a way, naïve: I did not always know who a lot of the decision-makers were at the time! That helped me speak to them as normal people and in quite a casual way, but now that I am working in Government and understand their gravity and power much more deeply, I find it much more intimidating."*

Alice also believes the impact Free to Be had on the wider Australian public was significant. When launched, Free to Be and the Unsafe in the City report received 125 reports across print and broadcast, reaching an audience of over three million, covered across high-profile media outlets such as the ABC, Al Jazeera, Buzzfeed, Guardian, Mamamia, Marie Claire, News.com, SMH, SBS and The Project Fairfax newspapers.

*"To the public, I think that Free to Be showed the problem [of street harassment] at the scale that it needed to be discussed at. We often think of street harassment as a one-off thing, especially for people who do not experience it the same way that women and particularly young women do. So, they might not have realised the scale of the issue before we brought it to light. Critically, the map simply showed that young women just do not feel safe. And it does not matter where it is, it's just the experience of being a young woman, and it is pervasive."*

Alice says that Free to Be made a powerful statement to decision-makers because it conveyed the issue collectively, and in a very strong, visual and unique way. For young women, she thinks it was invaluable because it validated their experiences.

*"Importantly, I think boys and men and people who do not experience street harassment were finally able to realise the scale and the issue by seeing the map. A lot of these people in my life were really blown away by the findings and the data, and especially the findings that young women would stop doing very simple things because they were scared of being harassed. The fact the girls, women and gender-diverse people do not have the same opportunity to move around space and the city the way boys and men do was finally brought to light in a way that one conversation cannot really achieve. While I still think we have a lot of work to do, to talk about the issue of women's safety, Free to Be was definitely a step in the right direction."*

## Highs and lows: navigating the public side of youth activism

When the Free to Be map and Unsafe in the City report was released, the YAS had the opportunity to communicate the issue and their stories of harassment to encourage other girls and women to use the map. Alice says this was a 'double-edged sword': while it was empowering to tell her story to the media and the world, she felt her story was sometimes taken away from her. Alice appeared in numerous primetime television and broadcast interviews and penned several opinion pieces for mainstream newspapers and magazines.



*"We were one of the first movements in recent years to talk about street harassment. And it was quite divisive in the media: we were getting a lot of negative attention, particularly from a lot of undesirable parts of the internet, and trolling. I always felt happy to tell my story, but it was very challenging to know that the public then had their own opinions on whether your story was legitimate. My name went from being associate with 'a young women who is helping create change' to 'Alice Rummery: she says she has been assaulted, do you believe her?' I wrote opinion pieces and had far-right commentators saying awful things about me. But this became a big learning moment for me too."*

Alice says that one of the hardest parts of being an activist is the abuse you can encounter when advocating on a public level. She is still emotionally exhausted from her experience and says it can be hard to continuously talk about women's safety because it can take her back to a time she felt vulnerable. At the same time, she says that knowing her advocacy made such an impact and that decision-makers did and continue to do something about the issue makes it all worth it.

*"I hope that, in any little way, us YAS talking about street harassment have made it easier for other girls and women to talk about their experiences and made the world more aware that it is legitimate. I see wonderful people like Chanel Contos, Brittany Higgins and everyone who has come out around the allegations of harassment and assaults in Parliament, and I look up to them and think they are so brave; I am really glad we can all do that."*

Alice's advice to fellow youth activists is to "not let the media paint you as a victim." She says it is important to stand your ground and ensure you are framed as "a girl making a difference" rather than someone who had certain experiences. She advises to steer clear of any journalists who are making you a subject of their story.

The opportunity Alice had to present with her YAS peers to decision-makers and be positioned as an expert was particularly empowering, she says:

*"Young women are the experts at being young women, and if you want the advice or perspective of a young women, you need to put them in the seat as that expert. Being asked questions by senior power holders and people I had looked up to for a long time in Government or politics was such an emboldening situation. Then to have them actually do something about it... that was really wonderful. When the Women's Safety Charter was launched, the YAS and Plan International Australia were so often mentioned, and that was incredible."*

## Coming full circle

Three years after her involvement in the YAS, Free to Be still plays an important part in Alice's life. As an alumni of the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) – a signatory of the Women's Safety Charter – she was involved in implementing the charter at the education institution. Upon graduating, Alice now works at the NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment, where on top of her day-to-day climate change and sustainability work, she also plays a key role in implementing the Women's Safety Charter with the Secretary of the Department. Her activism and career have now come 'full circle'.

*"I think a lot of times, young people do not realise the impact they can have on decision-makers. If you think about it, we are literally the juxtaposition – especially young women from diverse backgrounds – of the traditional power holders. So, when you hear a young woman speak up to an audience and explain something confidently, it really stands out to everyone in the room. I have seen the impact that young women and girls from the YAS have had on decision-making, and I think we are making incredible waves."*

*“The YAS has led me to where I am today. These were experiences and opportunities I never would have had otherwise; the fact that I can say hands-down that myself and the other YAS have helped make a change in society is probably one of the things I am most proud of in my whole life, and it definitely has instilled a sense of purpose in me. I have also created a name for myself in this space and people seem to listen to the things I have to say now which is incredible. My youth activism certainly helped me to get to where I am now*

## Free to Be

- Free to Be is a crowd-mapping tool that was developed in collaboration with CrowdSpot, Monash University’s XYXY Lab and, crucially, young women.
- Free To Be is a platform where the real stories of women can be unearthed and taken to people in positions of power to advocate change. The interactive map invited girls and women to drop pins – happy or sad – on places they love, avoid, feel safe in and those that can be improved.
- Launched on IDG in 2018, Free to Be enabled young women in Sydney, Delhi, Kampala, Lima and Madrid to identify and share public spaces that make them feel uneasy and scared, or happy and safe. It has empowered young women in these cities to call out unsafe experiences and geographically identify spaces where change needs to occur.
- As a result of advocacy by Plan International’s youth activists, the Greater Sydney Commission, Transport for NSW and the Committee for Sydney announced the development of the Women’s Safety Charter, to be built on Free to Be’s ground-breaking research on girls’ experiences as they move around cities.
- To address the research recommendations, Sydney’s charter goes beyond international initiatives like London’s Night Safety Charter by acknowledging that harassment and abuse do not just happen at night, focusing on improved reporting processes and establishing mechanisms for ongoing data collection to build understanding of the issue.
- Directly after the Charter launch, Transport for NSW threw its weight behind it by announcing the ‘Safety After Dark’ Innovation Challenge to find new and effective ways to combat the problem of harassment on public transport.

# ANNEX C: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

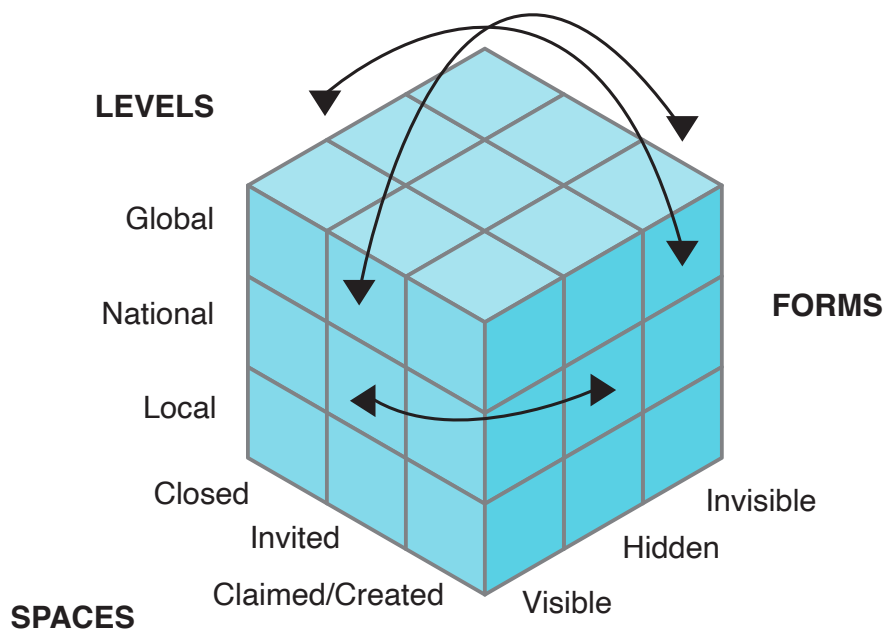
## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following key questions helped to guide the research:

1. What are the enabling and constraining factors that affect how adolescent girls and young women across Asia and the Pacific develop and demonstrate leadership capabilities?
2. What are the emerging trends and issues for advocacy on gender transformation and social inclusion by girls and young women in the Asia-Pacific region?
3. What forms of support can better enable future civic engagement and activism by girls and young women in Asia and the Pacific?
4. How have girls and young women in the region used digital technologies and social media in civic engagement and activism and how might they use these tools in the future?
5. How have national governments responded to the rise in youth activism for gender equality and inclusive societies in the Asia-Pacific region and how might positive government responses be enabled in the future?

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

### *Research on girls' civic engagement and activism for gender equality*



**FIGURE 1:** The 'power cube': the levels, spaces and forms of power (Gaventa, 2006).



The research on girls' civic engagement and activism for gender equality in the Asia-Pacific region was qualitative and drew on both primary and secondary data. It employed four different methods: a desk review of publications from sector-based and academic literature; interviews with selected female youth activists and sector-based experts; and four stories of success (see Annex B) and social media listening, with a focus on female youth advocates.

The following key conceptual frameworks guided the research.

**Appreciative inquiry**<sup>60</sup> provided an overarching framework to guide research, data collection and analysis tools. Appreciative inquiry aimed to reveal what is working well and identify enablers of these 'highpoints' as a means of creating constructive change.

**Power cubes** provided an analytical framework to analyse the research participants' responses and guide the document review. Plan International used the power cube framework<sup>61</sup> to assess the different types of activism girls and young women are employing. The framework also determined how such activism represents different forms of civic engagement and connects with decision-making processes.

The cube employs multiple dimensions and acts as a framework for analysing the spaces, places and forms of power, as well as their interrelationships, as illustrated in Figure 1. Findings related to the power cube are provided in Section 3.

## DEVELOPMENTS OF THE ASIA AND PACIFIC GIRLS' LEADERSHIP INDEXES

In addition to desk reviews and interviews, the research included the update of the Asia Girls Leadership Index (GLI) and the development of the Pacific GLI. Below is a summary of the methodological approach used to develop both Indexes. For further details on the methodological notes of both Indexes, please visit the [Asia Girls' Leadership Index Technical Notes](#) and the [Pacific Girls' Leadership Index Technical Notes](#).

- 1. Selection of indicators and data population:** Indicator selection was based on the Plan International Girls' Leadership Research Framework, which outlined domains and potential indicators. The framework informed a scan of global databases to compile complete data sets on each proposed indicator. Indicators were drawn from internationally recognised online databases, with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators, in order to support regular updates of the Indexes.
- 2. Normalisation:** The research team conducted a normalisation process to account for the different measurement units of each indicator. This process resulted in unitless indicators with values between 0 and 1. The team undertook a second process to transform all indicators into 'positive' values.
- 3. Generation of the domain indexes:** The team obtained the domain indexes by averaging the normalised positive indicators in each domain. Equal weights were assigned for each indicator within all domains.
- 4. Aggregation of the domain indexes to produce the overall index:** The team obtained the overall index by averaging the seven individual domain indexes in the Pacific GLI and six individual domain indexes in the Asia GLI.
- 5. Computation of regional indexes (only for the Asia GLI):** The research team computed the regional indexes (ASEAN and SAARC) by obtaining the weighted mean of the normalised indexes and aggregating the indexes by the unweighted mean. The populations of girls aged 10–19 in each country were used as weights.

## ADJUSTMENTS OF THE ASIA GIRLS' LEADERSHIP INDEX FROM 2019 TO 2021

In 2019, the first Asia Index was constructed using the available data at the time. In 2021, after the development of the follow-up Pacific Index, it was discovered that several of the original indicator values had been adjusted or re-estimated by the source (e.g., the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development reports, the World Health Organization etc.). To complete the 2021 Index, each indicator was either re-mined to confirm its validity or adjusted to reflect the update made in the same year. Moving forward, the 2019 values will remain static, even if future re-estimations are conducted, and represent the baseline and starting point for any future updates and comparable trends.

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

It is important to note that there were some limitations in the information gathered through this research.

- Due to time and budget constraints, the research team used a limited sample of data sources across the Asia-Pacific countries included in the research. Key informant interviews were conducted in only nine countries. While the interviews provided a rich learning experience, Plan International does not claim that these findings are applicable to the entire geographic region.
- Due to the youth activists' connections to Plan International programmes and networks, particularly in Asia, these participants may not be representative of a broader demographic of youth advocates in the region.
- The research team was unable to interview girl activists aged 15–17 due to time constraints. Girls' perspectives were therefore included in the document review only, not in the primary data collection.
- The research did not collect as much information about governments' responses to civic engagement and activism as originally intended. The document review revealed this lack of information as a gap, and government perspectives were shared primarily in media articles rather than in academic or grey literature.
- The main limitation encountered when developing and updating the Asia and Pacific GLIs was the availability and consistency of data. Globally, the collection, disaggregation and reporting of data on adolescent girls and young women are not consistent. There is limited available literature specifically on these age groups, and both the terms and age ranges used vary among indicators and the organisations collecting the data. Many indicators straddle multiple stages of adolescence and youth, making it difficult to generalise between indicators.

## Ethical practice

The research gained ethics approval through the UTS-ISF review committee. The research team employed the ISF Code of Ethical Research Conduct and followed all Australian Council for International Development Principles for Ethical Research and Evaluation: respect for human beings, beneficence, research merit and integrity, and justice. The research team complied with Plan International's Child Protection Policy and advice on child safeguarding related to the project.

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**PLAN INTERNATIONAL** IS AN INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATION THAT ADVANCES CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND EQUALITY FOR GIRLS. WE STRIVE FOR A JUST WORLD, WORKING TOGETHER WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS. USING OUR REACH, EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE, WE DRIVE CHANGE IN PRACTICE AND POLICY AT LOCAL, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS. WE ARE INDEPENDENT OF GOVERNMENTS, RELIGIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES. FOR MORE THAN 80 YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN BUILDING POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN AND ARE ACTIVE IN MORE THAN 75 COUNTRIES.



#### Girls Get Equal

Plan International has been campaigning for girls' rights for more than a decade. Our current Girls Get Equal campaign aims to ensure girls and young women have power over their own lives and can help shape the world around them. Promoting young female leadership is central to the campaign. While this includes access to formal positions of power and authority, such as increasing the numbers of young women and girls in decision-making roles in public life, it also looks beyond these formal positions. Girls Get Equal, with its iconic warpaint-style equal sign, seeks to redefine leadership to better reflect how girls, young women, and young advocates and activists are choosing to lead by working with them to ensure leadership is feminist, gender-transformative and inclusive. It means not reinforcing a narrow male-defined set of leadership skills and behaviours or replicating the male-dominated power and leadership structures that currently exist. Throughout the campaign there will be ongoing research, partnering with girls and young women to fully understand what it means to them to be a leader.



#### Partner with us!

Plan International intends to partner with a range of leading and contributing actors to promote and support investment in adolescent girls in the region. We welcome new partners who are willing to join our effort and combine resources and technical expertise to invest in adolescent girls' development and their successful transition from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

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