



**Accountable
Now**

GLOBAL STANDARDS LOCAL TRUST



Plan International Independent Review Panel Feedback

Interim Accountability Report 2018-19

Review Round August 2020



Plan International Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round August 2020

16th September 2020

Dear Anne-Birgitte,

Thank you for submitting your interim accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the individual assessment below.

The interim report addresses the questions raised by the panel in the previous feedback letter. The panel notes very positively the level of detail provided in the answers, and the substantial improvement from the previous reporting cycle. The additional information provided in the annexes on building partnerships with youth-led groups and organisations and the progress made on Responsible stewardship of the environment (C4) are highlighted as strengths by the panel.

The panel also notes positively the update of the [website](#) where policies supporting accountability can be accessed. The panel would like to see in the next report how it is ensured that stakeholders are aware of these policies and examples on how they might work in practice.

We look forward to your response letter, which will be made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report and this feedback letter.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel





Plan International's Accountability Report 2018-19

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Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

The opening statement by Plan International CEO, Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen emphasises the role of Accountability as the organisation enters a new decade. The statement refers to recent events that the body of the report does not address as they started after the reporting period. Those are the COVID-19 pandemic and the BlackLivesMatter movement, which have prompted reflection and action within the organisation.

Environmental impact is highlighted as one of the areas where Plan is increasingly working on, and how the pandemic has demonstrated that many meetings can be held virtually. Openness and transparency is also highlighted as a priority, particularly on expanding child-centred and child-participatory feedback mechanisms.

The statement also explains how an Anti-Racism Action Plan for the whole organisation is being developed through dialogue in all offices.

C. We lead by example

C4	<p>Responsible stewardship for the environment</p> <p>The panel notes positively the creation of an environmental working group, which has worked on providing leadership and strengthening efforts on environmental protection.</p> <p>Four initiatives have started with key milestones planned for FY20 such as developing a carbon footprint measurement system, and research to explore the climate crisis impact on girls. Several publications making reference to climate change and impact on girls are shared.</p>	3
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	<p>The new travel policy has an environmental focus and aims to reduce carbon emissions from travel.</p> <p>The panel recognises the efforts on this area and suggests that in the next report progress on the initiatives started, particularly those actions focused on internal shifts being led by environmental working group, is reported.</p>	
<p>E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders</p>		
E1	<p>Stakeholder feedback</p> <p>The panel notes positively the response addressing points raised in the previous panel feedback letter.</p> <p>The Building Better Partnership (BBP) Guidance document (annexed to the report) highlights the importance of providing accessible avenues for feedback to staff and how this might lead to mutual accountability.</p> <p>The Annual Partnerships Survey Report (also annexed to the report) provides evidence and examples on how the partner feedback is used across Country offices leading to concrete actions.</p> <p>Feedback from children and communities is addressed in E3.</p>	3
E2	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <p>The Building Better Partnerships Guidance document, annexed to the report, provides several examples of how the partnership approach works in practice. The response depicts four examples, which illustrate a strong commitment to enhance partnership.</p> <p>The response also provides examples of Country Offices engaging with communities and programme participants at different stages of programme development. The panel looks forward to more details on the several initiatives scheduled for 2021 to address stakeholder engagement in the next report.</p>	3
E3	<p>Main likes/dislikes from stakeholders and organisation's response</p>	3



	<p>The response addresses likes/dislikes feedback from three stakeholders groups: partners, children and communities, and employees.</p> <p>On partners, the Annual Partnership Survey Report is annexed to this report (E3). The panel commends the acknowledgement that some partners might not feel comfortable providing honest feedback, and that other methods of gathering feedback will be explored to capture missing voices. An explanation on what and how the feedback is used by Plan International would be welcome in the next report.</p> <p>The mechanisms to gather feedback from children and communities are being diversified. Although data on feedback received is not being aggregated, a standard template that Country Offices are asked to use, is hoped to help to spot trends. The 'Pathways to Partnering with Youth-led groups and Organisations', annexed to this report, provides advice on how to engage young people for feedback.</p> <p>An overview of the Global Employee Engagement Survey results is shared. The results have been very positive. The panel would like to know whether the result is representative ie. What proportion of the staff has taken the survey? Key actions in reaction to areas for improvement are listed in the report.</p>	
<p>G. We are transparent, invite dialogue and protect stakeholders' safety</p>		
G1	<p>Availability of key policies and information on your website</p> <p>The panel commends Plan International for the website on accountability update, which includes links to relevant global policies.</p> <p>The response states that "children and young people policy awareness and understanding is embedded throughout the safeguarding policy" and relevant elements of the policy are outlined. In the next report, the panel suggests to provide examples</p>	3



	that show that children and young people are aware of the policy and of the impact the awareness might have.	
J. Governance processes maximise accountability		
J3	<p><i>Complaints handling mechanisms and overview of complaints (internal and external)</i></p> <p>The Anti-Fraud, Anti-bribery and Corruption policy, Grievance Policy and Whistleblowing Policy are published in the accountability website mentioned above. It also gives details of how to use the external online malpractice reporting mechanism.</p> <p>Country Offices are required to implement local complaints mechanisms, which are audited by the internal Global Assurance department. Data on complaints is not standardised, nor aggregated globally. In the next report, the panel suggests to explore how Plan International might spot trends in complaints locally and globally.</p>	2