

Gender — Action Plan

———— 2018-2021

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2018-2021 is UNICEF's roadmap for promoting gender equality throughout its work, in alignment with the organization's Strategic Plan (2018-2021) and in support of its contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The GAP elaborates the gender programmatic results from the Strategic Plan, and specifies how UNICEF will better integrate and strengthen gender across its institutional systems and strategies to achieve those results.

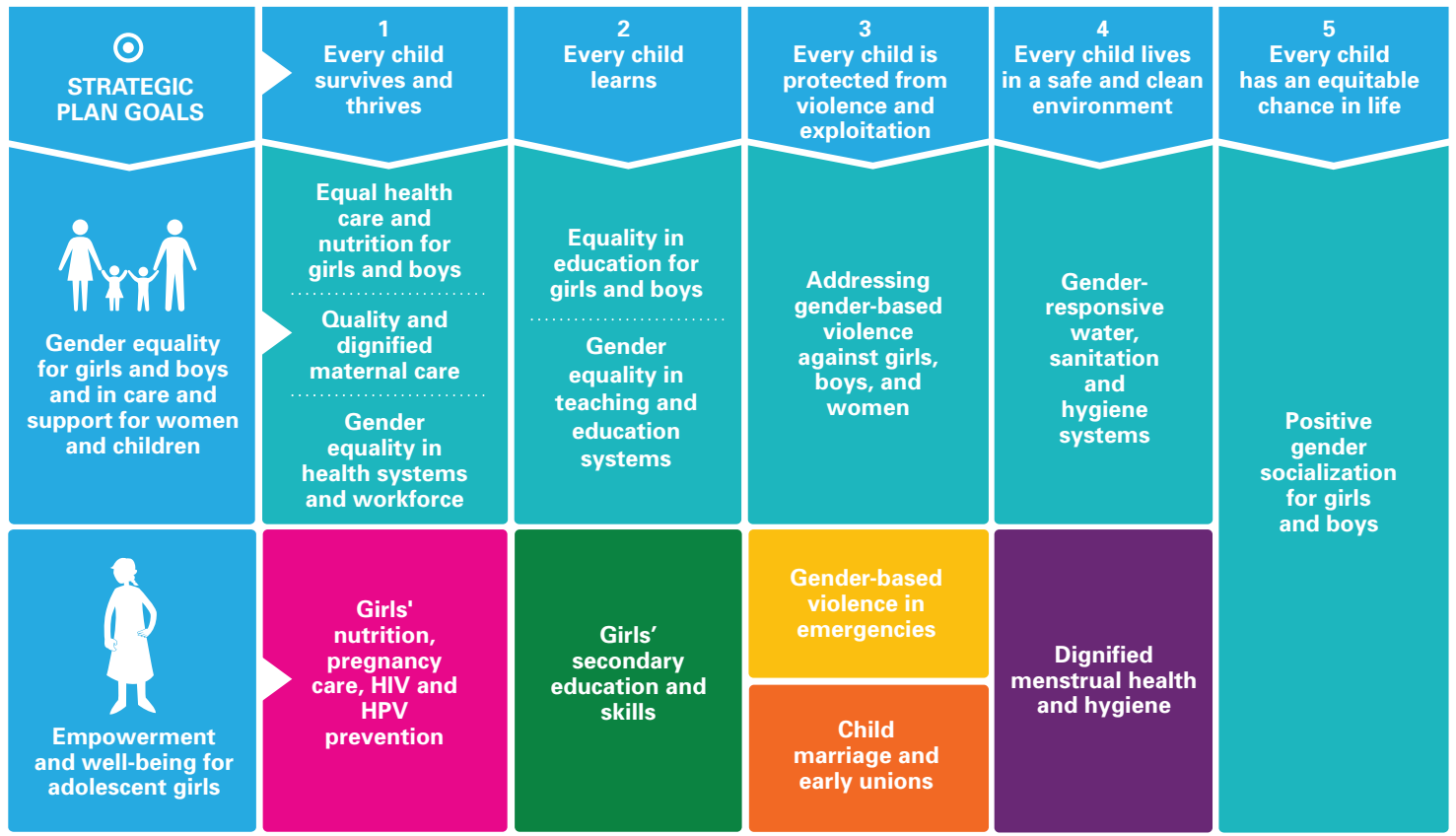
Gender in UNICEF programme results

Gender equality results are integrated into all five goals of UNICEF’s Strategic Plan.

These are further elaborated in the GAP, along two tracks:

- 1) Integrated Gender Results, embedding gender across all programme areas – health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, education, water, hygiene and sanitation, child protection and social policy
- 2) Targeted Priorities for the Empowerment and Well-being of Adolescent Girls

Across development and humanitarian contexts, UNICEF taps the most effective, innovative, evidence-based strategies to support national and local efforts to advance gender equality and children’s and women’s rights and well-being.



Integrating gender equality across all UNICEF programmes

8 results under two themes

Gender equality in life outcomes for girls and boys from 0-18

The first theme offers a pathway for promoting equality for girls and boys from birth through adolescence by addressing the gender-specific discrimination and disadvantages that typically affect girls the most, but can also affect boys.

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| 1 | Equal health care and nutrition for girls and boys | In societies with son-preference, girls are often denied access to health care and adequate nutrition. In many settings, boys may have higher risk of alcohol use due to ideals associated with “masculinity.” |
| 2 | Equality in education for girls and boys | In many communities, gendered barriers to schooling for girls include domestic chores, sibling care, distance to schools, and lack of safety, transportation, and hygiene facilities. In some settings, boys may also drop out of school due to gendered expectations to earn money or play truant. |
| 3 | Addressing gender-based violence against girls, boys, and women | About one in 10 girls under the age of 18 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other unwanted sexual acts. Violence against women in the home is frequently accompanied by violence against their children. Evidence suggests that boys growing up in such homes are more likely to perpetrate violence, while girls are more likely to experience violence as adults later in life. |
| 4 | Positive gender socialization for girls and boys | Families, schools, and the media often convey “feminine” behaviours and ideals to girls, especially relating to domestic roles, sacrifice, and submission. Boys often receive messages about “masculine” behaviours and ideals around public roles, entitlement, and aggression. |

Gender equality in care and support of women and children

The second theme addresses the care and support that children require to survive and thrive. It highlights the strong linkage between the well-being of women and that of children, as well as the disproportionate share of reproductive and care work that falls on women and girls.

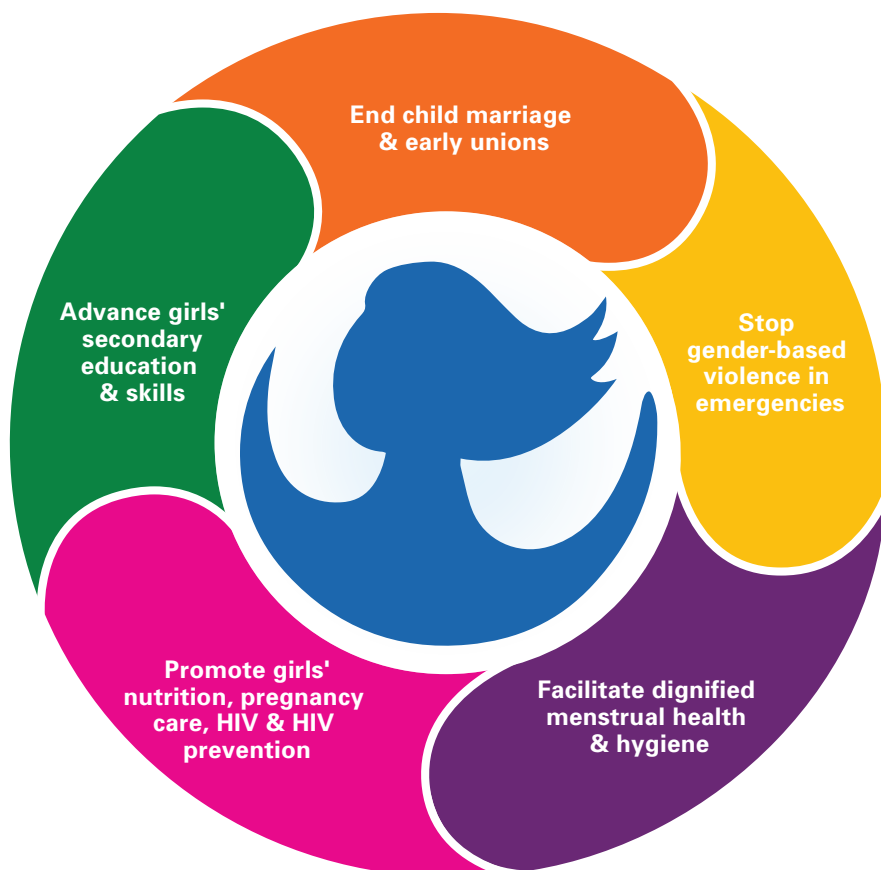
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| 5 | Quality and dignified maternal care | Over 300,000 women and girls per year still die from complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Millions more deliver in appalling conditions, without adequate water, sanitation, medical supplies, or access to skilled, respectful providers or information and support for effective care for themselves and their babies. |
| 6 | Gender equality in health systems and workforce | In many countries, community health workers – who are often women – are low-skilled and voluntary or underpaid – limiting their own professional growth and compromising care for vulnerable children and families. |
| 7 | Gender equality in teaching and education systems | Lack of female teachers can negatively affect girls’ learning, attendance, and retention, while also depriving them of role models. Low pay and poor training for female teachers compared to their male counterparts perpetuates poor quality learning for all children at the lower levels of schooling. |
| 8 | Gender responsive water, sanitation and hygiene systems | Women and girls are disproportionately affected by lack of sanitation and hygiene services at home and in public settings – yet they are often under-presented and under-valued in the design and management of WASH systems. Market-based WASH system approaches provide a particular opportunity to economically engage and empower women. |

A special focus on adolescent girls

Five interlinked results

For millions of adolescent girls, particularly the nine in 10 who live in low- and middle-income countries, gender inequality combines with poverty and other forms of disadvantage to curb freedom of choice and access to resources. In too many societies and communities, a girl reaching puberty is a signal for constraining her movements, schooling, friendships, sexuality, and life exposure – while the opposite is often true for boys. Expectations to marry, the risk of pregnancy, violence, lack of access to dignified menstrual hygiene, and barriers to a quality education are just some of the obstacles that limit girls' lives and prevent them from reaching their full potential. Promoting their empowerment and well-being reflects a recognition that, within UNICEF's mandate to advance children's rights, adolescent girls are both a special responsibility and an opportunity to counter intensifying inequalities and deprivations, paving the way for girls to flourish.

The five results that UNICEF has prioritized for adolescent girls – depicted to the right – tackle some of the most pressing interconnected challenges girls face. Targeted, interlinked investments in these areas can transform vulnerability into opportunities, with multiplier effects for girls, their families, and the next generation.



Making UNICEF a more gender-responsive organization



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UNICEF is investing in bringing quality gender programming to scale and enhancing capacity and accountability on gender equality across the organization.

Gender data and evidence

- Custodianship for a number of gender-related SDG indicators; participation in the UN Inter-agency Expert Group on Gender Statistics
- Support to national statistical and administrative systems on gender data
- Data disaggregation by sex; development of indicators that measure gender equality beyond gender-parity – including for integration of gender measures in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and other data collection mechanisms
- Innovation in gender data through technology and the power of big data

Gender analysis

- Routine mapping of the nature and scale of gender inequalities as they affect UNICEF priority results
- Systematic deployment of UNICEF's Gender Programmatic Review tool to assess gendered barriers as well as opportunities for effective programmes at scale

Gender partnerships and UN coherence

- Collaboration with governments, civil society, research organizations, the private sector, and sister UN agencies to foster innovative solutions and expanded financing for gender-equitable results
- Essential role in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework to set system-wide country-level gender priorities

Gender resources

- 15% UNICEF benchmark on programming expenditures allocated to advancing gender equality results; investment of institutional resources in gender programming, capacity, and systems-building
- Gender thematic pool for donor contributions that serve as catalytic resources for advancing innovation, data, and incentivizing sectoral and cross-sectoral spending on gender equality

Capable and learning organization on gender

- UNICEF's GenderPro Initiative is building a cadre of gender experts – especially at country level – with robust credentials in gender programming and measurement
- Strong gender network and communities of practice and learning within UNICEF and among partners
- Gender parity in positions at all levels; a gender equitable workplace, free of sexual harassment or intimidation

Accountability for gender results

- Executive-level GAP Steering Committee supporting monitoring and implementation of the GAP
- Management at all levels bearing responsibility for performance on key institutional indicators on gender equality embedded in the Strategic Plan

Seizing the moment to accelerate progress

Examples of UNICEF's ambition for progress by 2021

30+
COUNTRIES

implementing quality **maternal health** care plans

70M
ADOLESCENT
GIRLS

reached with **anaemia and malnutrition** prevention

21+
COUNTRIES

with **gender-responsive teaching** and learning systems

39+
COUNTRIES

with education systems facilitating **equal access** for boys and girls

6.5M
GIRLS

reached with employability, learning, citizenship and **empowerment** programmes

1.2M
GIRLS AND
WOMEN

provided **FGM/C** prevention and protection services

670K
ADOLESCENT
GIRLS

provided with **child marriage** prevention and care interventions

25
COUNTRIES

with female **community health workers** part of the formal health system

60K
SCHOOLS

with **separate bathrooms** for girls and boys

11K
SCHOOLS

providing dignified **menstrual hygiene** services

Please see [UNICEF.org/gender](https://www.unicef.org/gender) for the complete Gender Action Plan and full range of indicators. Contact Gender@UNICEF.org for more information.