

Generation Equality Strategic Plan with and for Girl and Youth Engagement

“It’s time to do things differently”

Rationale

The Generation Equality process is an opportunity to build momentum and commitment with adolescent girls and young people to shape the feminist future we want to see as a result of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. Girls, adolescents and young women in all their diversity are leading the way in the fight for racial, gender and climate justice. Their power has grown from local contexts to international spaces, however, they still have to fight to be seated at the table as a legitimate stakeholder in decision making processes.

As a convener of girl- and youth- focused organisations, think tanks and foundations the Adolescent Girls Investment Plan (AGIP)ⁱ organised a set of three strategic planning meetings. The aim was to co-create, with youth-led and girl-led organisations, a strategic plan to support their meaningful engagement in the Generation Equality process. AGIP aims to stimulate the development of investment frameworks and tools to support decision-makers and governments to deliver a comprehensive approach to advance gender equality through girl-centered actions. This feminist, gender transformative and evidence informed approach of AGIP is aligned with Generation Equality’s intentional targeting of adolescent girls. AGIP is calling for transformative actions for adolescent girls and young women within each of the six Action Coalitions and their engagement as key stakeholders in the design and implementation of the Action Coalitions.

In order to support and facilitate the meaningful and safe engagement of adolescent girls in Generation Equality, AGIP:

- Convened a technical workshop with UN Women and participated in discussions with other Generation Equality stakeholders (e.g. Member States, UN agencies and Beijing+25 Youth Task Force members) to develop principles to ensure that Action Coalitions (ACs) prioritise the rights and needs of adolescent girls and youth and their meaningful and respectful participation (finalised at the Paris Design Sprint, February)
- Consulted a group of youth-led and girl-led organisations to co-create a strategic plan for meaningful participation in Generation Equality with the support and facilitation of the Beijing+25 Youth Task Force (first set of calls conducted in May and targeted follow-up with participants planned in July and onwards)
- Developing an intersectional feminist approach to better include girl-led organisations in this process. This is ongoing in partnership with UN Women, Beijing+25 Youth Task Force and girl-focused organisations
- Ongoing engagement with Action Coalition Leaders who are already members of AGIP on their commitment to the centrality of adolescent girls in Generation Equality
- Collating and disseminating toolkits and youth-friendly material on Generation Equality

Co-creating a strategic plan with youth-led and girl-led organisations for meaningful participation in GE

On May 22nd, nearly 100 adolescent girls and young people came together with members from AGIP and Beijing+25 Youth Task Force, to co-create a strategic plan to influence the Generation Equality process to foster the meaningful participation of girl- and youth-led organisations.

What outcomes do adolescent girls and young people want to see in 5 years?

- Girls and youth in all their diversity are not an afterthought when it comes to policies, programmes and investments which affect their lives
- More young people’s voices represented in global advocacy and policy spaces
- More resources for girls and young people to participate in global processes and forums and to implement their projects related to gender equality
- Young people taking up space and leadership - they are at the center of everything!
- The end of harmful gendered norms and practices like CEFMU and FGM with young people part of the process

Who was consulted?

Age / gender breakdown: 89% female, 9% male, 2% non-binary.
Under 18: 12%; 19-24: 46%; 25-29: 21%; 30-35: 18%; 35+: 3%

Overview of countries: Argentina, Ecuador, México, USA, Lesotho, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Guatemala, Paraguay, Nigeria, Tanzania, Colombia, Malawi, Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon, South Africa, Turkey, Uganda, Burundi, Trinidad and Tobago, Philippines, Zimbabwe, Japan, Germany, Uruguay, Yemen, Syria, Tunisia, Sudan, Iraq and Jordan

Main challenges girls and young people face when engaging in global processes

- The spaces are not youth-friendly
- Lack of resources and internet data packages to participate
- Lack of understanding of inaccessible adult-centric processes and structures
- Accessibility and inclusion challenges i.e. connection issues, language barriers

What do girls and young people want?

Support to engage in Generation Equality process

Network building

- Create space to engage and ask questions
- Support participation in online platforms for collaboration, support and network building so that they can link with other girl- and youth- led groups and other stakeholders

Capacity building

- Provide capacity building, leadership and communication training to ensure girls and young people understand the process and the opportunity to participate and influence - participants expressed not feeling sufficiently educated or qualified enough to participate.
- Develop easy to use, accessible tools and information in local languages
- Provide mentorship / coaching from older youth and women's organisations

Make the Generation Equality process girl- and youth-friendly

Awareness raising and information accessibility

- Support youth-led awareness campaigns of the movement through multiple forms of media to reach a diversity of girls (including those with limited internet access)
- Ensure formal entry points, structures and processes are youth friendly and accessible
- Support girls and young people to advocate on issues that matter to them

Dismantling traditional power structures

- Advocate for a cultural shift in stakeholders and gatekeepers to ensure girls and young people are listened to and respected
- Create safe and youth-friendly spaces for girls and young people – who is dominating the room and conversations? Is it a safe space for adolescent girls to speak? Are they treated equally and supported to engage and challenge decision-makers?

Resource mobilization:

- Mobilise financial and other resources to support capacity-building, network building and meaningful engagement in Generation Equality entry points to influence the process and to implement actions related to it
- Think through structures needed to support in-person participation - visas, costs etc
- Provide resources to enable girls to participate virtually, including those in rural areas e.g. internet data packages, access to mobiles / computers

How is AGIP taking this forward?

- Convening working groups with girls and young people to influence the Generation Equality entry points
- Collaborating with the Beijing+25 Youth Task Force and other relevant youth networks
- Holding monthly capacity building calls to co-develop tools and resources, translated into local languages. First capacity building call was on 10th July to support AC leadership applications
- Pushing for a cultural shift within UNW / the Core Group / key stakeholders to champion the value and necessity of meaningful girl and youth engagement
- **Advocating for the meaningful participation of adolescents in the mini workshops July – October 2020**

ⁱ AGIP is co-chaired by Plan International and Girls Not Brides and includes International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE/ODI), Population Council, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Malala Fund, Women Deliver and, Ford Foundation. Save the Children and She Decides are partners of AGIP on Generation Equality Advocacy activities and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is a technical partner of AGIP.

AGIP is committed to support the Action Coalitions (AC) process, including leaders, to fulfill the requirement of having at least one of the priority actions per AC that intentionally and specifically target adolescent girls' unique needs. AGIP stand ready to support AC leaders with the technical expertise and evidence-based solutions to drive gender transformative actions for adolescent girls; accountability through helping track progress and challenges of the adolescent girls' commitments; and ensuring the safe and meaningful participation of adolescent girls and youth across all Action Coalitions