

# Q&A with Plan International Uganda Country Director - Ms Phoebe Kasoga

## Q: What is Plan International Uganda?

**Country Director:** Plan International Uganda is part of an independent development and humanitarian organization that advances children's rights and gender equality for girls and women. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We strongly believe in the power and potential of every child, girl or woman. However, this potential is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion, and discrimination. It is particularly concerning that children and girls are the most affected.

## Q: Where does Plan International work globally, and how long has it been active in Uganda?

**Country Director:** Plan International currently works with children and girls in over 80 countries to help create a world where everyone is equal. For over 85 years, we have rallied determined optimists to transform the lives of all children. Plan International started working in Uganda in 1992 to respond to the needs of children affected by a guerrilla war in Luwero district. Since then we have worked alongside communities on many different issues to improve millions of children's lives in over 16 districts. Our work is aligned with the Global Goals, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and Uganda's National Development Plan III. Gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women are at the centre of our work. Our work drive changes in practice and policy at local, National, and Global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

## Q: What is the mission and focus of Plan International's work in Uganda?

**Country Director:** We work together with children, young people, communities, and partners to strive for a just world where we are all equal. To achieve this, we tackle the root causes of the gender inequalities that children and young girls face in Uganda and globally. We employ Gender Transformative Approaches through community engagements, support girl child education, and have supported the skilling and entrepreneurship nurturing of teenage mothers across various districts in Uganda.

The organization supports girl-child education and has established over 400 Girls' Education Movement (GEM) Clubs with over 9,300 members to drive re-enrolment and thriving for out-of-school children. Through our RISING project community rooted approaches, Plan International Uganda was able to return 110,086 (female 54,562, male 55,524) children in class in 401 primary Schools from 09 districts. In Kamuli, Baba Clubs helped return 136 children to classrooms within 12 months of their establishment.

In the West Nile, the organization partnered with the Alur Kingdom to develop customary marriage guidelines that prohibit marriage under the age of 18 and penalize forced child marriages in its community with fines and legal action.

As Plan International Uganda, we are there for children from birth until adulthood. We particularly stand with girls to dismantle the harmful norms that force them into child marriages that rob them their childhood.

## Q: What is the scope of Plan International Uganda's humanitarian work in Uganda?

**Country Director:** Plan International's humanitarian efforts are anchored around government designated refugee camps in Kyangwali, Bidi-Bidi and Pagirinya where we integrate girl child education, protection, health, and infrastructure support for both refugees and host communities. In education, Plan International Uganda implements accelerated learning programs and fosters safe, inclusive, gender-responsive environments to boost girls' enrolment and retention in primary and secondary schools. While Protection initiatives, are rooted in strengthening community and public sector systems to combat SGBV, child marriage, and unplanned pregnancies. Our work in Health strongly seek improve adolescents' and young people's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services to protect them from teenage pregnancies, HIV, STIs that often are key drivers of school dropouts among girls in Uganda. The WASH programs build community capacity for total sanitation and menstrual hygiene management.

## Q: What development work is Plan International Uganda doing in Uganda?

**Country Director:** Plan International Uganda's development work is in over 16 districts, focuses on improving education infrastructure and promoting girls' learning and retention across 16 districts in Uganda. In partnership with organizations like the Strømme Foundation, Plan International Uganda has constructed new classrooms, and associated water and sanitation facilities; for example, over 83 classrooms built/renovated, 12 teachers' houses constructed, 06 schools fenced across 9 districts. This is in line with our national strategy of creating safer, more gender-responsive schools to ensure a conducive learning environment for girls. Furthermore, through our community engagement models, plan international Uganda collaborates with government, civil society, parents, and community leaders to promote children's rights; build local capacity, and challenge cultural norms that impede girls' education and well-being.

## Q: Which specific districts does plan International Uganda operate in?

Plan International Uganda operates through Programme Area coordination offices in East Central Region, Northern Region, Kampala Urban programme, West Nile Region reaching over 16 districts in Uganda i.e., Kamuli, Buyende, Luuka, Kampala City, Lira City, Lira District, Kwanja, Alebtong, Adjumani, Madi-Okollo, Yumbe, Maracha, Nebbi, Obongi, Koboko, Kole.

We particularly want to thank the Ministry of Education and Sports and the district Local Governments for their support; as partners, we are contributing to the national education goal of providing "Inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" in Uganda

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