

THE DREAM **GAP:**

AUSTRALIAN GIRLS' VIEWS ON GENDER EQUALITY

Plan International Australia
national survey of girls
aged 10 to 17-years old.

October 2017



FOREWORD



Susanne Legena, Deputy CEO, Plan International Australia

When I was 10-years-old, it never occurred to me that being a girl was a limiting factor to what I could become. My world changed when I became a young adult.

It was then I realised that this was going to be a struggle. A rift began to appear between what I dreamt of becoming and the opportunities available to me to become it.

Unfortunately this is not an uncommon experience for girls today. That's why Plan International Australia has asked girls aged 10 to 17 their thoughts on gender equality in Australia.

Our survey shows – shockingly - 98 per cent of girls say they do not receive equal treatment to boys.

It's the same story in virtually all of the countries where Plan International works.

Globally the situation is dire: girls and young women are forced out of equal opportunities before their adult lives have even begun, with females making up 70 per cent of out-of-school youth and 82 million girls each year in developing countries married before their 18th birthday.

Like girls everywhere, Australian girls aspire to succeed in their careers and personal lives, but that ambition fades as they get older. This is what we call the dream gap. Girls want to succeed but they face barriers that grow more profound as they enter adulthood.

When we asked girls, unprompted, what change they'd like to see in the world, 50 per cent said simply: gender equality. It's not a big ask.

It's absolutely staggering that at current estimates, the girls who took our survey will be retirement age by the time the gender pay gap is closed in this country alone, let alone developing countries where the gap is even wider. Yes, progress is happening but it's absolutely too slow.

We have to make things right for girls. There's no use telling a girl she is empowered and can change the world if the structures and systems are not there to support her.

We can't accept different treatment as the norm for our girls, nor can we dismiss their views.

This research gives us a rare insight into the experiences of girls, a group we rarely hear from and even more infrequently think to ask. It's time we really listened because girls are telling us very clearly that the number one thing they want is equal treatment.

“THE ‘LIKE A GIRL’ SAYING SHOULD MEAN A GOOD THING. IT SHOULD MEAN TO BE STRONG AND BRAVE AND CONFIDENT.”

GIRL AGED 14, VICTORIA.



My grandmother – one of the first female doctors in her field – was fighting for equality 45 years ago. Although she treated more patients and worked longer hours than any of her male colleagues, they were more likely to compliment her legs than her work. Fast forward to 2017 and sadly, the everyday sexism that entrenches inequality for future generations still exists. I'm 17. I'm at a time in my life when I need to start setting myself up for my career. Yet there's something that puts me at a distinct disadvantage already. I'm a girl. And that's just one barrier I, just like my grandmother decades before me, am facing. Plan's survey illuminates that the forces driving entrenched gender inequality are those that pervade our lives: sports, media, school, and the home. The good news is that there is so much we can all do to close the dream gap and send a clear message to girls that they can achieve their goals.

Jacqueline Rousselot
– Plan International Australia
Ambassador, age 17.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: IT'S TIME WE LISTENED TO GIRLS

The rate of change towards gender parity on all fronts is agonisingly slow and bad news for the next generation of girls growing up in Australia and around the world.

We know that at the heart of this issue is lack of visibility about the experiences of girls. The data simply does not exist and we rarely stop to ask the right questions.

Plan International is working around the world to make girls truly visible: acknowledging their power and potential and not turning away when they are exploited, discriminated against and silenced.

Despite significant progress in recent decades, and despite the commitments to gender equality set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, still globally there is a profound absence of evidence about the situation for girls.

This survey of 1,742 Australian girls aged 10 to 17 years old to gain rare insight into how this group experiences their world.

We found:

- At all ages, in all spaces, girls don't think they are treated equally to boys. Between 96% and 98% of girls surveyed said boys and girls received unequal treatment.
- Girls feel unequal treatment is most profound in sports, followed by in the media (TV and magazines), at school and at home.
- A large number of girls surveyed felt it would be easier to get ahead if they were treated the same way as boys are (91% agreed).
- There is a gap between what girls aspire to and the opportunities available to them that widens as they enter adulthood.
- As girls get older, their confidence decreases – from 56 per cent of girls viewing themselves as confident at 10, to 44 per cent by the time they reach 17.
- By the time girls reach early adulthood (18-25), only 57 per cent agree they have 'every opportunity to become a leader' compared to 75 per cent of the girls aged 10-14.
- 40% of girls think gender is the biggest barrier to their chances of becoming a leader.
- Young men do feel they have a role to play to support young women to lead (59% agree), however they are less likely to say seeing more women in power is important to them (50% agree).
- Rigid views of gender stereotypes associated with careers and hobbies slowly erode over time. However, very few girls and young women view men as being equally good at roles involving the care of children (stay at home parent, childcare worker).
- Above all else, girls just want to be treated as equals. When asked what change they want to see in the world, 50% of girls aged 10 to 14 in this survey said – unprompted – gender equality, including equal pay.

- After inequality, girls are most concerned with being scrutinised by the way they look rather than appreciated for their abilities and talents. Almost all (93%) of girls aged 15-17 said it would be easier to get ahead in life if they were not judged on their appearance.
- Girls want to see action. Immediate steps must be taken to improve girls' perceptions of equality and the opportunities available to them:
- State and territory governments should remove gendered school uniforms, and instead give girls and boys the opportunity to choose what uniform they wear to ensure they are safe, comfortable and able to learn.
- The federal government should ban sexist advertising, to prevent girls and boys growing up with unhealthy and restrictive stereotypes.
- Government and business should work together to fight the gender pay gap, which continues to demonstrate that women are worth less than men.

Currently there is no way to measure our progress towards eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls. Girls' experiences and unique needs must be counted and considered.

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP BENEFITS EVERYONE

If female university graduates were able to enter the workforce at the same rates as their male counterparts, the Australian economy would gain **\$8 billion¹**.

A survey of 21,980 firms from 91 countries showed that firms with at least 30% female leaders were up to **15% more profitable²**.

In order to reduce violence against women and girls, the gendered drivers of violence such as men's control of decision-making, rigid gender roles and identities and disrespect towards women must be tackled and changed³.

1 Poynton, A & Rolland, L 2013, Untapped opportunity – The role of women in unlocking Australia's productivity potential, EY, p. 6,
2 Marcus Noland (PIIE), Tyler Moran (PIIE) and Barbara Kotschwar (PIIE), Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Study, Working Paper 16-3 (February 2016)
3 Our Watch, Change the Story

THE GLOBAL EVIDENCE ON INEQUALITY FOR GIRLS

Globally, girls aged 5 –14 years spend 550 million hours every day on household chores, which is 160 million more hours than boys of the same age⁴.



Around 1 in 10 (120 million) girls worldwide have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives⁵.



Girls in Colombia report they face threats of sexual violence, rape and sexual harassment every day.

In the Solomon Islands, 45.6% of women aged 15-19 have experienced sexual touching or abuse before the age of 15⁶.

77% of girls in Bangladesh say they 'never' or 'seldom' felt safe in their community.

More than 200 million girls and women alive today have been subject to female genital mutilation (FGM) in 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia⁷.



More than 34 million adolescent girls are out of lower secondary education, unable to gain the skills and knowledge they need to access tertiary education and skilled employment⁸.



Worldwide, more than 700 million women alive today were married before their 18th birthday. Of these women, more 250 million were married before the age of 15⁹.



- 4 Plan International 2017, Unlock the power of girls now: why gender equality is the social and political issue of our time, London, September 2017.
- 5 United Nations Children's Fund, Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects, UNICEF, New York, 2014 https://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child_Marriage_Report_7_17_LR..pdf 8
- 6 Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: A study on violence against women and children, Honiara, 2009
- 7 United Nations Children's Fund, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Global Concern, UNICEF, New York, 2016 https://www.unicef.org/media/files/FGMC_2016_brochure_final_UNICEF_SPREAD.pdf
- 8 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, Education For All Global Monitoring Report, Fact Sheet October 2013 <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/girls-factsheet-en.pdf>
- 9 United Nations Children's Fund, Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects, UNICEF, New York, 2014 https://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child_Marriage_Report_7_17_LR..pdf



Cordelia, 24, Plan International Australia Youth Activist.

ABOUT THE DREAM GAP SURVEY

Essential Research (using the Qualtrics platform) conducted a survey for Plan International Australia from 24 July 2017 to 14 August 2017. This report covers the survey responses of 817 girls aged 10–14 years and 925 girls aged 15–17 years. Essential Research recruited these respondents with thanks to Dr Stephen Biddulph.

The survey results were not weighted. Dr Rebecca Huntley (Essential Research) and Jane Gardner (Plan International Australia) designed the survey. Chris Strods and Rebecca Huntley (Essential Research) analysed the data, with additional analysis conducted by Plan International Australia.

Additional data has been included from a separate cohort – an online panel of 530 young men and women aged 18-25-years-old, conducted by Essential Research's Online Research Unit. These responses were weighted for state and territory and the survey was conducted concurrently with the girls' survey.

Overall, the confidence level was set at 95% (meaning there is a 95% likelihood that the sample accurately reflects the attitudes of young women aged 18–25 across Australia). At this confidence level, for the sample size, the margin of error is 3–4%.

ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA

Plan International is one of the world's oldest and largest child rights development agencies. We work in over 70 countries around the world to tackle the root causes of poverty, inequality and injustice. Our flagship campaign, 'Because I am a Girl', is working to create a world that values girls, promotes their rights, and ends injustice.



AT ALL AGES, IN ALL SPACES, GIRLS DON'T THINK THEY ARE TREATED EQUALLY TO **BOYS**

Larissa from Brazil takes part in meeting at the High Level Political Forum in New York.

It is clear that Australian girls don't believe they are treated equally: whether it's by the media, in sports, at school, in pop culture and even in the home. As they get older, this perception of inequality grows.

Sports and media were the places where girls felt inequality the most profoundly. As girls entered the late teens, only 6% and 7% of girls surveyed (respectively) thought men and women were always treated equally in these settings.

Girls experience the starkest perceptions of inequality in the late teen years (age 15-17). Interestingly, the home is one of the settings where girls experience the sharpest decline at this age, from 61% feeling that they are treated as equals in the home at age 10-14, to only 36% at age 15-17. However, media and sports remain the settings in which the perceptions of equality are lowest.

Do you think girls are always treated as equals ¹⁰ ?	Total YES	10-14 yrs old	15-17 yrs old	18-25 yrs old
	At home	61%	36%	34%
At school	45%	29%	32%	
On TV	22%	8%	24%	
In magazines	16%	7%	22%	
In sports	16%	6%	18%	

Boys and girls are sometimes treated differently	10-14 yrs old	15-17 yrs old
	96%	98%

10 Essential Research 2017, Plan International Day of the girl 2017 research, Melbourne, confidential, pp. 13, 27, 42.



Girls take part in football match as part of the Goal for Peace project, Brazil.

More than any other setting, girls see sport as the place where they receive unequal treatment to boys. Despite this, they remain confident of their abilities, with 86% of girls saying that girls are just as good at sports as boys.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has found that young women engage in significantly less physical activity than young men¹¹. Whilst the reasons for this are multifaceted, it has been suggested that this could be linked to the fear that they will appear unattractive or unfeminine – a strong incentive to change media portrayals of girls – or that forcing girls to wear skirts and dresses at school discourages them from running around and being active.

Globally, female sports professionals are paid significantly less than men. This gender gap weighs heavily on the minds of girls, with many of the responses in this research referring to the disparity in pay:

“I HATE THE FACT THAT MALE SPORTSMEN ARE PAID MORE THAN FEMALES. THERE IS A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN INCOME BETWEEN FOR EXAMPLE A MALE SOCCER PLAYER AND A FEMALE NETBALL PLAYER. I HOPE THAT ONE DAY MEN AND WOMEN CAN BE EQUAL, FOR BOTH SEXES ARE EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT.”

- girl aged 12, West Australia

LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD THROUGH SPORT

Around the world, sport is well regarded as having the potential to bring about positive change. In Papua New Guinea, Plan International Australia is working to change the attitudes and behaviours that contribute to violence against children, in partnership with Equal Playing Field (a not-for-profit organisation).

The program encourages 13 to 15 year-old girls and boys to take part in a mixed-gender sports competition that combines respectful relationship education with skills development and games. Teams compete in recreational matches where they refine their on-field skills and participate in educational sessions on different topics relating to respect and relationships. These include understanding types of violence and abuse, developing support networks and knowing where to seek help, developing empathy for others and managing anger and stress.



AT HOME

Just 36% of 15 to 17-year-old girls and 32% of 18 to 25-year-old young women thought girls and boys are treated equally at home.

When asked if girls do more housework than boys, two-thirds of younger girls (63%) and a similar number of girls aged 15 to 17 (58%) agreed that they do. The feeling of inequality rises as girls enter adulthood. Three-quarters of young women (75%) aged 18-25 said they do more housework than the men in their lives.

These findings reflect Plan International Australia's Everyday Sexism report in 2016 that found one in three surveyed (36%) said their brothers seldom or never did their equal share of housework¹².

The most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) report on gender indicators shows women spend, on average, two hours and 52 minutes of their day on domestic work and 59 minutes on childcare. In contrast, men spend one hour and 37 minutes on domestic work and 22 minutes on childcare.

The impacts of inequality at home are felt even more profoundly in developing nations. Global statistics that show girls spend 40% more time (or collectively, 160 million hours a day more than boys) doing household chores¹³. The disparities grow as girls get older, with 10 to 14 year olds spending 50% more time, or 120 million more hours each day.

Girls and young women in Colombia and Spain reported gender discrimination in their home affects them every day¹⁴:

“AT HOME, I HAVE TO SWEEP, WASH THE DISHES AND WASH MY BROTHER’S CLOTHES. HE WAS BROUGHT TO THE WORLD AS A TROPHY THAT IS CLEANED AND TAKEN CARE OF AND IT MAKES ME FEEL BAD, HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT I HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING AND ALSO HAVE TO WASH HIS CLOTHES? HE CAN LEARN TOO.”

“I SEE THAT MY PARENTS STILL HAVE THE MENTALITY THAT GIRLS HAVE TO LEARN TO DO THIS [THE HOUSEWORK] FOR THEIR FUTURE. AND MY BROTHER BEING A BOY, HARDLY KNOWS HOW TO DO ANYTHING.”

12 Plan International and Our Watch 2016, Everyday sexism: Girls' and young women's views on gender inequality in Australia, Melbourne, October, p. 18.

13 UNICEF, Harnessing the Power of Data for Girls: Taking stock and looking ahead to 2030 https://www.unicef.org/media/media_92884.html

14 Plan International 2017, Unlock the power of girls now: why gender equality is the social and political issue of our time, Melbourne, September, pp. 13, 24.



AT SCHOOL

Manju, 14, is looking forward to the opening of her new school, Nepal.

With less than three in 10 girls aged 15-17 feeling as though they are treated as equals in school, it's clear that more can be done to ensure equality in the classroom and the playground. More than half (52%) told us that since starting high school, their perceptions around girls and boys being treated equally at school had changed.

This presents an opportunity for schools to tackle gender equality head-on. Seemingly simple policies have the potential to make a big impact, such as removing gendered uniforms to help break down restrictive stereotypes. Some schools in Australia have begun to introduce gender neutral uniform policies, with the Victorian and West Australian governments taking steps to ensure girls can wear shorts or trousers in government schools, but there is still much more action needed for non-gendered uniforms to become the norm.

Introducing respectful relationships education is another key step that schools can take. Teaching girls and boys about respectful relationships in school can set them up for life, instilling positive values in the crucial years when adolescents are beginning to date and explore sexual relationships. Plan International's work around the world continues to demonstrate the impact of respectful relationships education; one 17-year-old boy from Honduras says, 'I have learned to value girls and women and respect them as human beings'.

Globally, girls show a fierce determination to stay in school, although inequality is still a major concern. More than two-thirds of countries have reached gender parity in terms of access to primary education, but when it comes to secondary education less than half of countries have reached parity. Girls in West and Central Africa experience the greatest difference from their male peers, with 79 girls enrolled in secondary school for every 100 boys¹⁵.

"WE USED TO HAVE A TIME AT SCHOOL WHEN THE GIRLS WOULD DO CRAFT AND THEN BOYS WOULD GET TO DO WOODWORK. I PERSONALLY HATE CRAFT AND NEVER FULLY UNDERSTOOD WHY THE TEACHERS ASSUMED WE SHOULD LIKE DOING THINGS LIKE THAT."

– girl aged 13, Tasmania.

"EMPOWER YOUNG GIRLS TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES. TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO BE STRONG BY BEING KIND, HONEST AND HAVING INTEGRITY THAN TO BE POPULAR AND FITTING IN WITH THE 'COOL CROWD'."

– girl aged 12, South Australia.



IN THE MEDIA

Keira, 17, Plan International Australia Youth Activist.

An overwhelming four out of five girls feel that there is more attention on girls' looks than on boys' looks. This echoes the findings from Plan International Australia's Everyday Sexism survey in 2016, which found that half of Australian girls aged 15 to 19 felt they are valued more for their looks than for their brains and opinions¹⁶.

In these older teen years, girls are acutely concerned about how the media portrays gender, with only 8% of girls aged 15-17 believing that men and women are treated equally on TV and 7% in magazines. An overwhelming 85% of this age group felt it would be easier for girls to be leaders if more women were shown doing 'men's jobs' in the media and in advertisements. This should be a wake-up call to Australian media organisations.

When media and advertising reinforces gendered stereotypes, this can have a profoundly negative influence on girls and boys. One 15-year-old boy in Colombia noted the power of the media on teens' perceptions:

Boys see men beating women on the TV and want to do the same thing.

But the positive news is that the media has an opportunity to be an equally strong force for good. By enforcing guidelines around positive language and imagery of women, reducing the use of airbrushed or photoshopped images, and celebrating female role models who break down barriers, media organisations hold the power to open up public spaces for intergenerational dialogue, discussion and information about gender discrimination.

Around the world, actions to reduce gendered portrayals in media and advertising are starting to take hold. The United Kingdom's advertising watchdog has recently announced measures to prohibit sexist content, for example if it depicts women as being solely responsible for cleaning the house. Meanwhile, France has introduced a new law requiring all photoshopped images to display a warning that the photograph has been altered, in order to help promote positive body image, whilst US stock photo company Getty Images has banned the use of image manipulation programs altogether.

“MEDIA SHOULD NOT PORTRAY GIRLS AS MODELS OR SEE US AS ‘THE BEST LOOKING’ BUT AS LEADERS, THE FUTURE AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORLD BECAUSE WE ARE!”

– girl aged 13, New South Wales.



MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, GIRLS JUST WANT EQUAL TREATMENT

Jennie, 17, and Elma, 18, from Sweden at a flashmob in the Place des Nations, Geneva.

A huge number of girls in this survey felt it would be easier to get ahead if they were treated the same way as boys are (91% agreed).

And when asked the simple question of what change they want to see in the world, without prompting, half the girls aged 10 to 14 in this survey gave free text answers that spoke to equality and equal treatment of boys and girls. This included responses around the gender pay gap, which stands at 15.3% in Australia¹⁷ and means that women on average need to work an additional 60 days per year to receive the same pay as men for the same work.

For girls at an age where they are actively considering their careers and futures, this gender pay gap can suggest that their contribution in the workplace will be valued less than their male peers. By taking action to close this gap, employers and government can help to ensure that girls aren't forming negative perceptions of their value and what they can achieve.

I WANT GIRLS TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET BETTER PAYING JOBS (PAY THAT IS EQUAL TO HOW MUCH A MALE WOULD BE PAID DOING MY JOB) AND MORE EQUALITY IN MEDIA AND TRADE JOBS. I BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE IS EQUAL, NO MATTER HOW OLD YOU ARE OR WHAT GENDER YOU ARE OR IF YOU'RE GAY OR IF YOU'RE STRAIGHT, WE ARE STILL ALL HUMAN.

– girl aged 14, Western Australia

The one change I want for girls like me¹⁸

Responses

Equality (including equal pay)	50%
Less focus on body image	14%
More respect for girls	11%
More/better career opportunities	8%
Increased awareness of women's health issues	5%
Better living conditions for women globally	3%
More female leaders	2%
Something else	5%
Don't know	2%

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Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Sydney, 2017
Essential Research 2017, Plan International Day of the girl 2017 research, Free responses to survey, Melbourne, confidential.



AUSTRALIAN GIRLS WANT TO ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS, BUT THEY FACE SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES

Plan International Australia Youth Activists, Sydney.

Girls in Australia see leadership potential in themselves, but they see fewer opportunities as they grow into young adults.

Almost all (95%) of 10 to 14 year old girls and those aged 15 to 17 (96%) believe they are just as good at being leaders as boys.

But the overwhelming majority of younger girls agree (91%) it would be easier to be a leader if things were more equal between boys and girls. A further 86% think it would be easier if girls had more opportunities to lead.

Girls' desire to lead diminishes as they get older. Two-thirds (69%) of 15-17 year olds aspire to be leaders, but this decreases to just 49% of young women.

"I WISH FOR THERE TO BE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS TO BE LEADERS."

– girl aged 12, South Australia.

Do you want to one day become a leader in your community or profession?	15-17 yrs old	18-25 yrs old
	Yes	69%

It's extremely worrying that girls are so rapidly losing their aspirations to leadership, and this correlates with their perceptions of a loss of opportunities for them to lead. By the time girls reach early adulthood, only 57% feel empowered to lead, compared to 75% of the younger group.

Boys have an important role to play, considering 78% of girls aged 15 to 17 think it would be easier for girls to be leaders if they had more support from boys to get ahead.

Girls' and young women's views on leadership	10-14 yrs old	15-17 yrs old	18-25 yrs old
	Girls are just as good at being leaders as boys	95%	96%
It's important to me that more women become leaders	75%	82%	69%
When I grow up, I have every opportunity to become a leader	75%	60%	57%

The biggest roadblock to leadership for young women was by far, their gender – with this feeling of being held back only increasing with age. Almost half of young women surveyed listed this as the top barrier to leadership. Lack of opportunity was also high on the list, as was the desire to start a family. Young women were more likely to agree lack of confidence (28%) and lack of encouragement (41%) for them to lead was a big problem for them.

“GIRLS CAN HAVE BABIES AND STILL BE THE PRIME MINISTER.”

– girl aged 12, Western Australia.

What might get in the way of becoming a leader?*

Barrier	15-17	18-25
My gender	40%	45%
Not enough opportunities	30%	27%
Wanting to start a family	29%	29%
Lack of encouragement	27%	41%
Lack of qualifications	23%	24%
I don't feel confident to be a leader	18%	28%
Too much responsibility	12%	35%
My religion	6%	12%
The colour of my skin**	5%	8%
I would rather follow than lead	5%	8%

* This question was only asked for the older age groups

** 10% of girls aged 15-17 and 18% of respondents 18-25 whose parents were born overseas answered yes to this question.

It would be easier for girls to lead if...

	10-14	15-17
Things were more equal between boys and girls	91%	93%
Girls weren't judged on their looks over their abilities	89%	93%
Girls were treated fairly in the media	88%	93%
Girls had more opportunities to try out being a leader	86%	87%
More women were shown doing men's jobs in the media	77%	85%
We made sure that there were as many woman bosses	76%	78%
Girls had more support from boys to get ahead	72%	72%

As well as equality, girls expressed a desire to be recognised for their abilities, over their appearance. It is clear that the media has a role to play.

Girls of all ages felt they were judged on their appearance and that feeling became more profound as they hit puberty. The majority of girls (81%) agree there is more focus on the way they look than on boys' looks. When asked what one change they want for girls, 14% of girls surveyed said (unprompted) that they wanted to be valued for their abilities, rather than their appearance.

There is more attention on girls' looks than boys' looks ¹⁹	Total Agree	10-12	13-14	15-17	18-25
		yrs old	yrs old	yrs old	yrs old
		72%	87%	81%	82%

“IT WOULD BE NICE TO SEE WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF POWER WHO DIDN'T HAVE TO LOOK GOOD AT THE SAME TIME.”
 – girl aged 10, Victoria.

“I WOULD LIKE IT IF, IN THE MEDIA (TV, MAGAZINES, ETC.), GIRLS WERE JUDGED EQUALLY IN INTELLIGENCE, KINDNESS AND APPEARANCE. AT THE MOMENT GIRLS ARE MOSTLY JUDGED ON THEIR APPEARANCE.”
 – girl aged 14, Queensland.

“WELL, WE HAVE TO BE PERFECT. ... WE HAVE TO BE EDUCATED, YES THAT'S TRUE, BUT WE CANNOT TALK TOO MUCH. WE HAVE TO BE THIN, WE HAVE TO BE PRETTY, WE HAVE TO BE SMART, WE HAVE TO BE GOOD WITH OUR HUSBANDS, BOYFRIENDS²⁰.”
 – girl in Colombia

A NOTE ON INTERSECTIONALITY

Plan International Australia recognises that gender inequality does not impact on all people in the same way and for many marginalised groups, the effects are compounded.

Aboriginal women are almost 10 times more likely to die from assault than other women. Girls and women from culturally diverse communities face additional barriers to education and employment. In particular, migrant and refugee women are overrepresented in insecure and low paid work.

With limited telecommunications and lack of connection to public services, rural and regional girls are at risk of poorer health and have greater vulnerability to family violence.

Girls with disabilities are more likely to experience family violence and sexual assault, are less likely to be in paid employment and are paid comparatively less than men with a disability or women without disabilities.

Trans and gender diverse people may feel forced to hide their gender identity when accessing services, when in the workplace and in social settings. They are more likely to experience mental illness, verbal abuse and physical abuse, as well as cyberbullying and social exclusion.

[Sourced from the Victorian Government's Gender Equality Strategy]

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Essential Research 2017, Plan International Day of the girl 2017 research, Melbourne, confidential, pp. 14, 29, 44.
 Plan International 2017, Unlock the power of girls now: why gender equality is the social and political issue of our time, London, September, p. 25.

GIRLS OFTEN DON'T FEEL THEY HAVE THE QUALITIES THEY BELIEVE ARE IMPORTANT IN LEADERS

There are discrepancies between the traits girls recognise in themselves and the qualities they feel are necessary to lead.

Between 25% and 34% of girls consider themselves to be shy and 25 to 33% consider themselves quiet, while only 1 to 3% of girls consider these to be valuable qualities in a leader.

Kindness and friendliness were values considered both a quality of leaders and a quality girls themselves possess.

As girls get older, their confidence decreases – from 56% of girls viewing themselves as confident at 10-12, to 44% agreeing at 17-years-old. Similarly, they tend to start viewing themselves as less powerful.

“I’D LIKE FOR ALL WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD TO BE BRAVE AND STAND UP TO SOMEONE THAT TELLS YOU THAT YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO DO SOMETHING THAT YOU KNOW YOU ARE ABLE TO DO.”

– girl, aged 13, Victoria.

I am:	10-14 yrs old	13-14 yrs old	15 yrs old	16 yrs old	17 yrs old
Confident	56%	54%	48%	41%	44%
Powerful	21%	27%	24%	18%	16%

What qualities do you have versus what qualities you think a leader should have

Age Group	Qualities a leader should have		How I describe myself	
	10-14 yrs old	15-17 yrs old	10-14 yrs old	15-17 yrs old
Confident	80%	80%	55%	44%
Hard-working	80%	83%	64%	64%
Friendly	76%	74%	75%	71%
Kind	76%	75%	70%	68%
Brave	70%	66%	50%	32%
Ambitious	60%	73%	46%	54%
Strong	57%	62%	46%	42%
Fun	50%	42%	71%	56%
Powerful	42%	38%	23%	19%
Popular	12%	11%	20%	10%
Good looking	5%	2%	27%	13%
Bossy	4%	3%	15%	19%
Quiet	2%	3%	24%	34%
Aggressive	2%	1%	9%	12%
Shy	1%	1%	25%	33%

VIEWS ON RIGID GENDER STEREOTYPES AT WORK AND AT PLAY IMPROVE AS GIRLS GET OLDER

When asked what professions are better suited to men or women, the results were somewhat mixed.

The vast majority of girls at all ages believe that both genders are equally as good at leadership roles, such as Prime Minister, doctor or a CEO.

However, the results were not as encouraging for industries that are either very heavily male-dominated (particularly blue collar professions, like plumbing and construction) and roles that involve caring for children.

Being a childcare worker was seen as the profession least suited to men, with less than 1% agreeing men were better. Equality scored low, too, with just only 29% of girls aged 10-14 believing men and women were equally as good at caring for children.

Perceptions of men and women being equally as proficient improved across the board as girls moved into the late teens, in some cases, a remarkable improvement was seen – for example,

Do you think men or women are better at these jobs²¹?

* Note: the presence of a dash (-) indicate fewer than 1% responded to this answer.

Occupation	Girls 10–14 years			Girls 15–17 years		
	Women	Men	Equal	Women	Men	Equal
Actor	9%	1%	88%	4%	2%	94%
Doctor	6%	5%	86%	4%	4%	91%
Lawyer	10%	6%	81%	6%	3%	89%
Chief executive officer	7%	6%	77%	4%	6%	87%
Journalist	17%	2%	77%	13%	1%	85%
Prime Minister	9%	11%	76%	5%	8%	82%
Astronaut	3%	19%	66%	1%	13%	82%
Chef	7%	6%	84%	2%	6%	82%
Police chief	4%	21%	70%	1%	17%	79%
Stay at home parent	38%	1%	58%	21%	-	77%
Nurse	38%	-	59%	23%	-	75%
Jockey	6%	19%	66%	3%	18%	71%
Secretary	29%	3%	61%	27%	1%	70%
Firefighter	1%	30%	65%	-	30%	68%
Plumber	1%	48%	44%	-	38%	58%
Construction worker	1%	47%	48%	-	42%	55%
Childcare worker	58%	-	29%	45%	-	52%

When it comes to hobbies and activities, older girls were also more likely to say that boys and girls are equally good at activities stereotypically associated with boys - such as fixing computers, playing computer games and building. They were also more likely to say boys and girls are equally good at activities stereotypically associated with girls, such as sewing, housework and cooking.

Girls were far more likely to see themselves as better at academic pursuits than boys. Interestingly, science and maths and playing musical instruments were viewed as the most equal hobbies.

“[GIRLS SHOULD] NOT BE ASHAMED FOR BEING SMART IN MATHS AND SCIENCE, TO WANT TO BE A LEADER AND TO BE ABLE TO TAKE CREDIT FOR THE HARD WORK THEY DO.”

– GIRL AGED 12, AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY.

Do you think boys or girls are better at these things²²?

* Note: the presence of a dash (-) indicate fewer than 1% responded to this answer.

*Answers marked 'not sure' have been omitted.

Occupation	Girls 10–14 years			Girls 15–17 years		
	Girls	Boys	Equal	Girls	Boys	Equal
Playing musical instruments	12%	2%	83%	5%	1%	93%
Science and maths	11%	6%	80%	4%	4%	90%
Sports	4%	9%	85%	1%	13%	85%
Cooking	34%	1%	63%	21%	-	78%
Studying	45%	1%	52%	28%	-	70%
Fixing computers	3%	33%	59%	1%	29%	67%
Playing computer games	2%	40%	54%	1%	31%	67%
Building	2%	32%	61%	1%	32%	66%
Housework	48%	1%	46%	36%	-	61%
Sewing	57%	-	39%	45%	1%	52%



HOW DO **YOUNG MEN** FEEL ABOUT EQUALITY?

Girls understand that lasting change requires commitment from those in power in families, communities, schools, sports, businesses, and politics and at a Federal level. And those people in power are predominantly men.

In the online survey of young adults aged 18 to 25-years-old, Plan International Australia also asked young men their opinions on gender equality and women's leadership. The results, while mixed, were encouraging in many areas.

More than half of the young men surveyed expressed a desire for positive changes to help women get ahead. In particular, 59% agreed that society should be more equal and 58% agreed that women should be judged on merit, not appearance. Similarly, 69% of young men acknowledge that there is more attention on women's looks than men's.

Three-quarters of young men agree that women are just as good at being leaders. However, only half of those surveyed felt it was important to increase women's representation in leadership.

It would be easier for women to be leaders if...

	Young men	Young women
Women weren't judged on their looks over their abilities	58%	77%
Women were treated fairly in the media	55%	73%
More women were shown doing men's jobs in the media and in advertisements	50%	64%
Women had more mentoring opportunities	50%	64%
Women had more support from men to get ahead	54%	65%
We lived in a more equal society	59%	75%

Do you agree with these statements?

	Young men	Young women
Women are just as good at being leaders as men	72%	89%
There is more attention on women's looks than men's looks	69%	82%
Women do more housework than men	62%	75%
It's important to me that more women become leaders	50%	69%

Emmanuel has been working hard to change the attitudes of his peers when it comes to girls' rights. As part of Plan International's Champions for Change program in Uganda he's shifting attitudes and challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes using social media.

"There is a stigma attached to being a male advocating for girls' rights. Most people see us as people who are giving women more authority and they don't like it.

"I post positive messages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram about gender inequality and share videos of songs I've written on YouTube about ending child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

"When people criticise me, I challenge them. I ask them to think about their lives and the people who were there for them during the times they felt most alone. Most of the time it was the women – our mothers and sisters."



FIVE WAYS FATHERS AND BROTHERS CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

1. It is not enough for fathers in heterosexual relationships to do more housework; they should lead, and manage housework. Fathers being supportive and taking part in housework is a first step that has already been taken, but so long as women are seen as the responsible party for this labour, the issue is still gendered. Parents should allocate housework to young men regardless of whether they have sisters or not.
2. Fathers should lead in ensuring that 'caring' is not seen as a purely feminine virtue. Men should be encouraged to hug, kiss, play, and be affectionate with their sons well into their teens and adulthood.
3. Young men should challenge inequality where they see it. If they note that their sister is doing more housework, they should offer to take half. If they note that their sister is judged more on her looks, they should challenge
4. Brothers should listen to what their sisters like about being a girl, and ask why they can't have the same. If brothers note that girls are allowed to do things that they are not, such as crying, talking about how they feel or being affectionate with their other friends, they should discuss these things with other boys.
5. All men have a responsibility to hold other men accountable for their sexism, and to call it out when they see it. Schools have an opportunity to teach young men empathetic ways to challenge their male peers, and to introduce respectful relationships education for all children that encourages them to consider the nature of their everyday interactions with others.



AN ACTION PLAN FOR CHANGE: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE AND WHAT MUST THEY DO?

Hannie Grace, 17, speaks before ambassadors and govt officials in Philippines.

Gender equality desperately needs a political and social revolution.

It's time we all played a role in smashing gendered attitudes and stereotypes that pigeon-hole girls and women, boys and men. Girls are already doing their part to change attitudes towards them. It's time for all of us – boys, parents, teachers, employers, the media – to join them if we are truly going to create the social change required for true gender equality. We also need Governments to step up and intervene – from schools to boardrooms, to political institutions and in the media – to end gender inequality. This needs strong political will. And it will mean effective policing of laws and policies, to bring about the wholesale change in attitudes that will finally see girls and women valued equally with boys and men.

Australian girls needn't grow up believing their dreams are unrealistic.

It's outrageous that in 2017, Australian girls are still experiencing a 'dream gap' between what they aspire to, and what they believe is possible for them. What's even more alarming is that they perceive their gender as the thing most often holding them back from achieving their dreams.

It doesn't have to be this way. Around the world, Plan International is working with girls to achieve their leadership ambitions and to address gender discrimination. In Australia, our work with girls has highlighted the following specific recommendations that, if implemented immediately, would have an instant effect on reducing gender inequality. These three recommendations have been developed by girls themselves as a starting point to making Australia a more equal place.

- 1. In schools:** State and territory governments should remove **gendered school uniforms**, and instead give girls and boys the opportunity to choose what uniform they wear to ensure they are safe, comfortable and able to learn.
- 2. In the media:** The federal government should **ban sexist advertising**, to prevent girls and boys growing up with unhealthy and restrictive stereotypes.
- 3. In the workplace:** Government and business should work together to **fight the gender pay gap**, which continues to demonstrate that women are worth less than men.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of Plan International's Generation project in Brazil.

1 Remove gendered school uniforms

As this report illustrates, gendered attitudes start from a young age, with stereotypes becoming entrenched and shaping behaviours and choices. Working with boys and girls at school is a key point of intervention that can produce more gender equal, respectful relationships.

- **State and territory governments** should introduce legislation removing gendered uniforms, with students instead having the opportunity to choose what uniform they wear. The focus should be on ensuring girls and boys are safe, comfortable and able to learn.
- In the meantime, **individual schools** should take immediate steps to remove gendered school uniforms; schools need not wait for government action before introducing their own inclusive uniform policies.
- Additionally, **state and territory governments** should provide targets and incentives for schools to promote gender equality focussing, in particular, on introducing respectful relationships education, gender training for staff, integrating gender equality into school curriculums, developing school based programs to empower girls to lead, and supporting youth led initiatives such as feminist clubs.

STATES MOVE TOWARDS GENDER-NEUTRAL SCHOOL UNIFORMS

In a recent analysis of the uniform policies of 100 state schools in Victoria, campaigning group Girls Uniform Agenda found that 1 in 4 still require girls to wear dresses or skirts²³. The Victorian government has recently announced that it intends to make it compulsory for state schools to allow girls to wear trousers or shorts, following a similar policy recently introduced in West Australia. This is a huge step forward, although as yet these policies don't apply to private schools or exist in other states.

2

Ban sexist advertising and media

This research finds that girls are significantly influenced by the gendered portrayals and sexist stereotypes they see in the media. Addressing this is crucial if we are to interrupt the pattern of girls giving up on their aspirations when they reach the late teen years.

- The **federal government** must introduce a ban on sexist advertising, prohibiting public advertisements in all mediums that undermine the equal status of women and girls. Such a ban could follow recent measures announced by the United Kingdom's advertising watchdog, designed to prohibit sexist content that, for example, depicts women as solely responsible for cleaning or reinforces stereotypes that men are inept at parenting.
- Alongside this, **media organisations** should set internal guidelines for the use of more positive images and affirmative language when portraying women and girls in dramatic content, factual content and advertising. This should include avoiding the use of photoshopped images, which can make girls feel valued for what they look like over what they can achieve.
- **Governments** at all levels should introduce Gender Portrayal Guidelines that promote the portrayal of positive images of women as well as cultural, religious and sexual diversity.

3

Fight the workplace gender gap

Equality, including equal pay, arises in this research as the number one change that girls want to see. For school-aged girls considering their future, the gender pay gap – which stands at 15.3% in Australia²⁴ – continues to suggest that women are worth less than men. Closing this gap must be prioritised by government and business alike, to ensure this doesn't impact on girls' perceptions of their value and what they can achieve.

- **Federal and state governments** should address low pay in sectors that continue to be dominated by women, such as childcare and cleaning and in sectors where young women are most likely to be employed, such as hospitality and retail. This could include raising public sector pay rates for relevant roles, and providing incentives to private employers. Meanwhile, government should invest in campaigns that promote such work as being not just a female responsibility.
- **Companies and businesses** must take action to address the gender pay gap by undertaking gender pay audits, creating transparency and accountability in wage setting processes, incorporating pay equity in organisational goals, and correcting gaps that exist within the workforce. They should also introduce ambitious targets to build a gender equal workforce across all levels of management and governance, with specific performance goals for management to meet each year in lifting female representation in the workplace and on company boards.
- Within the workplace, **employers and managers** must take active steps to support parents to share childcare equally. This not only includes encouraging women to return to work if they wish to, but also actively encouraging men to take parental leave or share childcare duties. Flexible working should be made available to all parents, especially in low paid sectors.

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