

# SAFER CITIES MANUAL

LESSONS LEARNED &  
GOOD PRACTICES



Funded by



In collaboration with



### **Responsible editor :**

Catherine Mores  
Plan International Belgique  
Galerie Ravenstein 3B5  
1000 Bruxelles

---

### **Content :**

Team Plan International Belgium  
Team Plan International Spain

---

Graphic design : Bart Behiels

Reviewer: Alisha Parikh

Photo credits: Ismail Ben Hssain, Christophe Hennuy,  
Plan International Belgium, Plan International Spain



## **1 FOREWORD**

## **2 SAFER CITIES WORLDWIDE**

## **4 THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON YOUNG PEOPLE**

## **6 A 360° APPROACH**

## **8 GUIDELINES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

- 8 Local mapping of policies and research
- 8 Analysis
- 13 Youth participatory trajectory
- 20 Youth-led campaigning for social change
- 22 Youth-led advocacy for policy change

## **26 MANAGEMENT**

- 26 Management tips
- 27 Budget posts

## **29 THE POWER OF SAFER CITIES**

# DEAR READER,



Sexual harassment must be addressed. It happens constantly. Anytime and anywhere. We want to be involved in issues that concern us. We want to be a part of the solution. As the new generation of adults, we must fight for structural change, not only for us but also for the children and young people who come after us. We cannot wait any longer. **We want to act now to make the issue of sexual harassment visible and to address it.** Our cities must be safer for all.

During the project, each of us was able to see how taboo this subject remains. There is an urgent need for awareness, openness and visibility. Our society must develop positively. As a group of young people, we have actively taken the step to talk about it not only with each other, but also with our peers through news articles and online campaigns. As young activists of the Safer Cities project, we want to send a signal to all members of our society: Let's end the taboo! This must not happen again!

**However, we also need to be heard.** For things to really change, we need to make room for ourselves on the political agenda. Longer-term initiatives must be launched to end sexual harassment as soon as possible. We can only achieve this structural change with the help of politicians. Without their attention, our voices are hard to hear. We are therefore sincerely happy that several decision-makers in our cities are actively supporting this project. As many people as possible, especially at the political level, must (continue to) support us so that together we can achieve our goal. Let us join forces to make European cities safer and more inclusive. **This way we will have a lasting impact!**

We hope that everyone who reads this manual will echo our signals to young people in their own city.

Signed by Burcu, Elodie, Estelle, Imane, Léa, Lucie, Valentine et Wiam  
on behalf of the Champions of Change in Antwerp, Barcelona, Brussels,  
Charleroi, Madrid and Sevilla

# SAFER CITIES WORLDWIDE

## YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE UP THE FIGHT AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THEIR CITY!

“Gender-based violence is a social problem, but more than that, gender-based violence and sexual harassment is a universal problem.” That is according to a study that Plan International conducted in 5 major cities: Delhi, Kampala, Lima, Madrid and Sydney showing that this is a shared experience across the globe (*Unsafe in The City report, 2019*).

### What is the Safer Cities programme?

The international Safer Cities programme supports young people around the world who are tackling sexual harassment in cities through local youth groups and who share their recommendations to policy makers and their peers. The goal? Building safe, responsible and inclusive cities with and for young people in all their diversity!

Plan International België  
@planbelgie

“The task does not end here with all of us and Plan International working together to end street harassment ...We must do something with all the lessons learned: take them to the streets, take them to the politicians. With our proposals and your public policies, we can build a better society. All the people involved must act for the change to be real and effective. Let us be the drivers of change in our cities”

- Marina, youth activist and member of the Youth Advisory Panel in Spain

9 Juni 2021



BELGIUM



SPAIN

LIMA

ASUNCIÓN

Plan International België  
@planbelgie

“Regardless of the country in which they live, girls and adolescents do not feel safe on the streets of their cities and fear being subjected to different forms of violence and harassment. These types of initiatives allow us to make violence visible and gather the opinions of girls to promote solutions to this problem, a problem that can't be normalized.”

- Concha López, national director Plan International Spain

9 Juni 2021





Since 2019, Plan International Belgium and Plan International Spain have been implementing Safer Cities in collaboration with youth groups, local partners and local decision makers in Antwerp, Barcelona, Brussels, Charleroi, Madrid and Sevilla. Since then, other cities have joined them in their fight against sexual harassment.



# THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

“

*I have to go to the streets  
really covered always if  
I don't want to receive  
commentaries”*

User of the platform,  
18 years, Madrid

“

*I'd rather take the bus for  
fifteen minutes longer every  
morning than the metro. I  
really don't feel safe there.”*

Champions of Change, Charleroi

“

*My mother is always on  
the phone with me when  
I am on my way to the  
subway and home from  
the subway”*

User of the platform,  
20 years, Barcelona

To measure the effect of sexual harassment on young people, we designed and launched a digital platform to collect experiences through pins in interactive maps of all the cities. Moreover, focus groups were organized with young people from the 6 cities in Belgium and Spain. In order to complement this data, we organized interviews with 30 specialists (for each city: a politician, a member of the administration, a journalist, an academic and a person from civil society). These insights, along with the Safer Cities digital platform's data, were analysed by the Open University of Catalonia and showed a strong internalization of the problem.

One in two people who posted a testimony on the platform indicated that sexual harassment had a fundamental impact on their freedom of movement. They avoid certain places or they never go there alone. At the same time, the testimonies show a certain fatalism among young people: 25% of them say that it happens so often that they accept it as a part of their life, as a status quo that cannot be challenged. The reality of sexual harassment affects their daily lives, and especially the lives of girls because they (un)consciously choose to dress in a different way when they go out, take a different route and adjust their interaction with their surroundings. According to the 2021 *Crime, Safety and Victims' rights study* conducted by the FRA Agency, 34% of women say that they experienced a psychological impact after a physical incident of sexual nature (compared to 9% of men). The number goes even higher when we ask them if they avoid going to places or avoid certain situations: 64% of women say they do (compared to 36% of men). If we look at the younger population (ages 16-29), the number goes up to 83% of women and 58% of men.



*Since then, I don't walk home alone anymore and when I do that, I always call someone."*

User of the platform, 22 years,  
Antwerp



*When a motorcycle passes me, I turn away automatically because I'm scared"*

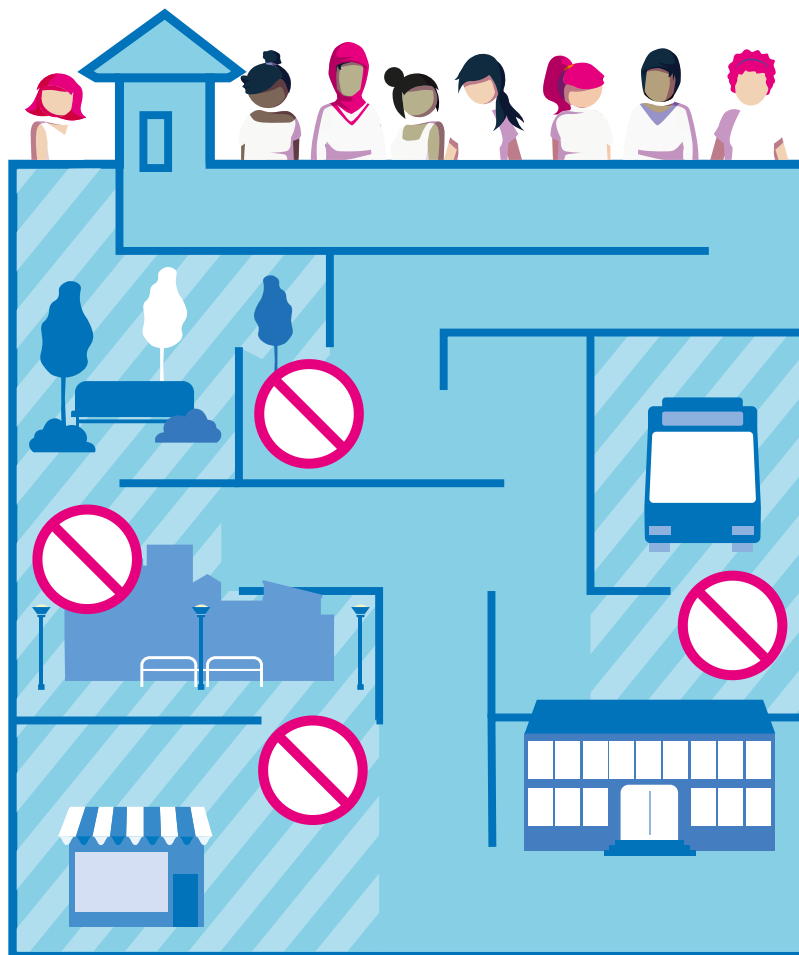
User of the platform,  
17 years, Sevilla.



*It happens to me so often and as a woman I can't enjoy nature or read a good book in the park. (...). I do not want to feel constantly trapped in my room! I also have the right to be at ease"*

User of the platform, 23 years,  
Brussels

## 83% OF GIRLS SAY SEXUAL HARASSMENT LIMITS THEIR FREEDOM IN PUBLIC SPACES



## A 360° approach

Young people are supported in the fight against sexual harassment in their cities. They share their experiences, identify the problem and formulate solutions! Through a four-part series of activities, for and by young people, Plan International Belgium and Plan International Spain offer a 360° approach that works.

### ANALYSIS

Our program is based on research. We set up a digital platform that allowed us collect data, map experiences of (in)security, conduct a survey, organize focus groups and conduct interviews with specialists.

### POLICY CHANGE

The young people conducted awareness-raising campaigns with peers and the public, with a view on breaking the taboos surrounding the problem.

360°

### PARTICIPATORY TRAJECTORY

A diverse group of 15 to 20 young people between the ages of 14 and 20 from Antwerp, Barcelona, Brussels, Charleroi, Madrid and Sevilla followed an educational and participatory trajectory. They were trained to be true Champions of Change in the fight against sexual harassment.

### RAISING AWARENESS

The young people conducted awareness-raising campaigns with peers and the public, with a view on breaking the taboos surrounding the problem.



# GUIDELINES AND LESSONS LEARNED

## LOCAL MAPPING OF POLICIES & RESEARCH

Before starting such a process in which data will be a key element, having a clear overview of the situation is important. This is why a local mapping of all existing policies as well as research, polls, government issued reports etc. will illustrate this information. For instance, in Belgium, we had no data on street harassment for young people, so we did a youth poll to gather the data. On the other hand, in Spain, data was already gathered in the context of the Unsafe in the city report, so the extra step was not necessary. In general, having as solid as possible academic and theoretical knowledge base will reinforce your program.

## ANALYSIS

### Youth poll

#### What is the idea?

Plan International Belgium interviewed 700 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 in Antwerp, Brussels and Charleroi about their experiences with sexual harassment: do people sometimes whistle at you? Do you sometimes suffer from unwanted touches? Where in your city have you experienced this? With whom did you talk to about this afterwards? With this youth poll, we wanted

to hear the voices of the young people and to collect key data on sexual harassment at the start of the Safer Cities program in each city.

#### How did we do it?

To make sure that the poll was scientific and representative, we engaged with a research agency. The agency conducted the survey in each of the cities, based on a representative sample of young people ages 15 to 24. The interviews were conducted on the streets by the research agency.

#### What did we learn?

- In most cities, no concrete data was available on the topic. Having key data from the young people themselves attracted the attention of decision-makers and press. It is very important to have concrete data available at the start of the program: it makes it possible to properly indicate and communicate on the issue of sexual harassment in public spaces. **Remark:** the cost of such a study is high. **Tip!** *Make sure you have data per city. The more contextualised the data, the more interesting they are for communication and advocacy purposes.*
- The results of the survey can be used as the foundation of the Safer Cities programme. **Tip!** *Frame the key data with visuals so that it can be attractive for readers.*



[www.planinternational.be/safercities](http://www.planinternational.be/safercities)

## What is the idea?

We wanted to use a digital mapping tool to create a space where young people can safely voice their concerns and ideas around safety in cities. To achieve this purpose, we created the digital platform 'Safer Cities'. On the digital platform, young people can identify and share the public places where they feel uncomfortable, scared, or just happy and safe. Why? Because it is important to highlight unsafe experiences and identify places where change is needed. Moreover, it is also important that young people can highlight the places where they do feel good and safe. In this way, we obtained very useful information for urban policy makers about which factors are important to achieve a safer public space. Young people are given the opportunity to add a location by placing a pin on the maps of Antwerp, Barcelona, Brussels, Charleroi, Madrid or Sevilla and share their stories where the pin is dropped. The different pins reveal real stories of young people and make them visible to the outside world.

## How did we do it?

We engaged with a company that specialises in developing online tools. On the basis of a questionnaire elaborated by Plan International's staff, together with young people's recommendations, they developed a platform that provided a space for testimonies – positive or negative – to be added on a map. This allowed testimonies to be collected through a multiple-choice study but also left room for additional data through open questions.

## What did we learn?

- It is very important to find the right partner to develop the tool. The partner must have technical expertise, as well as the necessary skills, to develop an attractive look & feel and to optimise the user-friendliness and the device responsiveness aspect of the tool. This is of particular importance when targeting a young public. **Remark:** The cost for the development of such a digital tool is high. But once the platform is created, it can be easily scaled to new cities. **Tip!** *If you want to attract young people with your platform, consulting youth should be on your list! It will boost their participation and the effectiveness of the tool.*
- This tool will be used for research purposes, so keep this in mind while designing your questionnaire. The data you want, for which group and on which phenomena must be clear from the beginning. **Tip!** *Brainstorm on the target group and the questionnaire with people who have diverse backgrounds and with academics to get as much input as possible.* **Remark:** Cities show great interest in such a tool because they lack data on the topic. In addition, each of them might also like to focus on a different topic, e.g. LGBTIphobia, racism, ableism, etc.
- Set out a promotion campaign and make sure the campaign corresponds with the target group. **Tip!** *Promote the tool through a targeted social media campaign, in combination with 'live' events (at festivals, in schools and universities...) but if you want to target specific groups, make sure your promotion material is more specific toward those groups.*
- If information is publicly accessible, the platform needs to be moderated on a regular basis to maintain a safe place for everyone and avoid stereotypical comments. This is time-consuming.
- Analyse the data. In our research, we also left room for open questions, meaning that in addition to quantitative data, we also have qualitative data to be analysed. **Tip!** *Try to set up a partnership with a research institution such as a university. Having an official research document will reinforce the future Safer Cities activities. Also if you want a purely scientific research, a survey "behind closed doors" with a company specialised in online surveys should be added to the digital platform.*
- There might be a high risk of stigmatization of specific streets or neighbourhoods. Keep this in mind when developing the tool and presenting the results. **Tip!** *You do not have to make all pins and experiences public.*

### Focus groups

## What is the idea?

The project Safer Cities revolves around young people and how they face sexual harassment and/or feel unsafe in their city; hence why voicing their opinions and experiences was crucial to the research. The focus groups allowed us to deepen the qualitative counterpart to the experiences shared in the platform and to dive deeper into the young people's' reflections. Meanwhile they had the space to share experiences, fears and proposals with their peers. The idea was to have one focus group per city, consisting of six to eight young people, between the ages of 15 and 24. Even though the sample was quite limited, we wanted to take into consideration the diversity of backgrounds, identities and ages in the recruitment.

## How did we do it?

Due to COVID-19, the focus groups were held virtually. They lasted around an hour and a half and were conducted on a weekday evening, by a Plan employee. In order to allow for comparison, an interview guide was created with our academic partner, the UOC, and was used in all six cities.

## What did we learn?

- Recruitment is a time-consuming activity, especially when seeking a group of people from diverse backgrounds. **Tip!** *Going through local (self-)organisations and schools was helpful to recruit participants from different backgrounds.*
- Keep in mind that the interview guide was made by adults, particularly academics. Young people will know the topic, but using long questions with big words can be counterproductive. Simple questions, or themes as prompts, can often suffice as conversation starters. **Tip!** *Let the young people use their own words and vocabulary. If you lay some ground rules at first to maintain the safe place, you can then let them speak freely and you will get the most honest reactions.*
- The script of questions is the frame, allowing you to collect data and to compare between cities and countries. In addition, the role of the moderator is fundamental. While moderators must leave space for participation, they must redirect the debate if it starts to move away from the objective and information we seek to obtain.



## Interviews with specialists

### What is the idea?

While having the voices of the youth through the focus groups, the youth poll and the platform was central to the project, in this part of our research we focused on the specialists. The idea was to interview five specialists per city, in five different domains – media, policy, administration, academics and social education.

How did we do it? Due to COVID-19, the interview was conducted via Zoom or Teams. While some lasted 30 minutes, others lasted around two hours. However, each interview followed the same guide by domain, which was created in collaboration with our academic partner, the UOC. The thematic guide allowed us to have more personalised questions related to interviewees' domain of expertise.

### What did we learn?

- The interviews brought something new to the table and allowed us to get a good view on the topic from different perspectives. **Tip!** *Having a strict interview guide can be restrictive, so keep in mind that all data or opinions can be interesting or useful. In these interviews, we tried to let the interviewee lead the conversation, while maintaining a common framework of questions in order to keep the comparability.*



- Always bear in mind the context in which you are working. You might have to travel to different places to conduct the interviews or conduct the interviews in different languages.
- Interviews were good conversation starters that allowed us to deepen our relationships or collaboration with some experts, policy-makers and even media. They allowed us to have various takes on the subject and enrich the conversation.
- It is essential to make a good selection of experts who are professionals in their field.

### What to highlight?

- **Listen to the voices of young people.**
- **Use different methodologies for data gathering: it is interesting to use several methodologies and triangulate the information in order to obtain a rich and complete analysis and discourse.**
- **Involve academic partners in the data analysis from the start.**
- **Try to combine the scientific rigour of research with attractive proposals for participation, advocacy and communication.**

## YOUTH PARTICIPATORY TRAJECTORY

### Champions of Change journey

#### What is the idea?

A diverse group of 10 to 20 young people follows an educational participatory trajectory and these young people become 'Champions of Change' in the fight against sexual harassment in their cities.

- They follow participatory sessions, together with their peers based on nine modules
- They think critically about the themes of gender, gender equality, public safety and participation in their cities
- They map out the problem of sexual harassment in their cities

- They formulate a plan of action against sexual harassment in their cities
- They advocate with decision-makers to bring up policy changes and campaign amongst their peers and the general public in their cities and countries

#### How did we do it?

We worked together with local partners who are experts in working with young people in their cities. In this regard, Plan International decided to set up a formal partnership with one or more local youth organisation(s). The facilitators of Plan and the partner organisation worked together to recruit participants, to prepare and organise the sessions and to support and train the Champions of Change through the whole journey. In order to ensure impact

and alignment with the global Champions of Change program of Plan International, all facilitators followed a Training of Trainers before the beginning of the sessions with the groups on their city.

## What did we learn?

### The partnerships:

- Finding adequate local partners is crucial. They are first-line organisations and know the target group very well. They reach out to adolescents easier than we do. Allow for enough time to complete this process and identify good allies who can be facilitators.
- A close collaboration with the local partner to prepare, organise and evaluate the sessions ensures project impact, especially at local level. **Tip!** *It is important to organise a Training of Trainers for the partner facilitator at the beginning of the collaboration.*
- Decide with the local partner on the recruitment strategy: they have their own network of young persons and know how to reach them. Also, if you want to ensure diversity, make sure to include many organisations in the recruitment.

### The sessions:

- The Champions of Change journey is composed of about 8 to 12 participatory sessions and is an intense journey. For the young people as well as for the facilitators. **Tip!** *Count on a full year to complete the sessions.*
- The most common formula is to organise sessions on the weekend. However, other formulas are possible, such as a multi-day camp with overnight stay during school holidays or afternoon sessions after classes.

In our experience, the first option can make the journey even more intense and contribute to create closer group. **Tip!** *Decide on the best working formula for your program together with the local partners and the young people themselves.*

- We worked with gender-diverse groups. For some activities, we split the group into two, based on self-identification. Young people could decide for themselves to which group they wanted to participate in, based on self-identification. Afterwards, the split groups joined to debrief. It should be noted that throughout the project, some youth notify that they identify as non-binary and therefore, do not want to join a group or do not know what group to join. It is essential to be aware that splitting the group according to male-identification and female-identification is a binary vision of gender and does not encompass all forms of gender such as trans\* people or non-binary people for instance.
- Creating a safe space for the young people is crucial. Having a strong safeguarding policy with clear responsibilities and a focal person is necessary. Some requirements are basic: ensure a risk assessment for all the sessions involving youth, have a list of first-line organisations or persons whom facilitators can contact if they notice that youth is in danger (even at home), ensure consent for project participation ... The topic of gender and sexual violence is very sensitive and participants might have lived themselves very disturbing situations. We should be very aware of this and create the best possible support for the young people. **Tip!** *Work together with organisations that are specialised in this support.*
- Some groups can be a mix of young people from different neighbourhoods or different social backgrounds.



Other groups can be more homogeneous. This can have an impact on the influencing activities: the more diverse the group is, the more representative the policy recommendations will be. On the other hand, having a homogeneous group might be a necessary first step to hear the voices of young people that often are not heard and to create the safe space that is needed for young people to express themselves. In addition, adding the broad data analysis to the Champions of Change input guarantees the representativity of the final results.

- This most important aspect is the fun part. Of course, young people will learn about advocacy, gender and other topics. The power of the Champions of Change

journey is that they learn in a fun way. In order to ensure that, make sure to facilitate in a spot where youth feel comfortable (maybe not at school), and make sure to find an activity that will help them to express themselves: art, storytelling, sport... What triggers them?

**Tip!** *You can ask the local partner organisations to help you organize this.*

- As discussions might sometimes be heavy, the group's spirit can be lifted away by ordinary sexism (which we all do). It is the role of the facilitators to be aware of those and to identify them. For example, make sure that girls feel safe to speak in the group and that boys do not tend to monopolize the speech and take the lead in the discussions. Also, sexist jokes might come

in the discussion, as they are part of cultural norms. It is the role of the facilitator to identify them and explicitly discuss with the group why they are a problem.

### The methodologies:

- Organising a safety walk is an interesting methodology as part of the Champions of Change journey. It helps young people to map out the problems they face in their daily lives. Furthermore, it is an opportunity for them to learn how to use a camera and make pictures and/or videos. **Tip!** *This can be a great opportunity to invite local decision-makers, media or even the police. However, keep in mind that it has to be focused on the importance of the youngsters' experience and their voices.*
- Plan International Belgium and Plan International Spain organised the Champions of Change methodology outside of the school context, but it could also be used within a school context, like was done in Vietnam or Senegal.
- Exchanges with other young people is crucial in the Champions of Change journey. Organising a youth conference with the participation of a larger number of young people to discuss the problem of sexual harassment and to propose solutions can be an added value. This conference could be organised with young people from one city or from different cities, or even on an international level. These exchange moments can also be organised through workshops via digital tools

## Once upon a time



(Zoom) or in a school context. **Tip!** *Do not think too big. The conversation is the main objective of such an activity. Organizing an international event is time-consuming and asks for a lot of preparation, money and people. Safeguarding is also heavy in that matter. If you are not ready for such event, working at a school level or digitally can also be impactful for the youngsters and local policy people.*

- **Tip!** *We have added storytelling as a common thread throughout the sessions. Adding a 'hook' activity to the journey makes the project more attractive for young people and creates an additional benefit for them. Storytelling also gave young people a handhold to communicate their findings to peers, policy makers and the general public. We worked together with Canon. Other hooks are also possible: sport, art, theatre...*

### The COVID-19 situation

The pandemic had a major impact on the implementation of Champions of Change for Safer Cities. Most of the methodologies had to be adapted to a digital context. Although we are convinced that having physical sessions is fundamental to the Champions of Change journey, we estimate that a mix between digital and physical sessions might be a possible scenario. In some occasions, we also had variations in the number of participants per group due to sanitary restrictions. We found that the sessions worked better with more participants, as dialogue and interaction increase.

## Champions of Change modules

### What is the idea?

Champions of Change for girl's rights and gender equality is one of Plan International's strategies for promoting gender equality and social norms changes through youth engagement and peer-to-peer mobilisation. Its overarching goal is to catalyse a youth-led social movement that challenges social norms and gains society-wide support for gender equality and girls' rights. The Champions of Change curriculum is Plan International's innovative and comprehensive methodology for youth empowerment and engagement. The curriculum includes engaging, adaptable and adolescent-friendly activities that encourages youth to build their knowledge, attitudes and skills based on their own lived experience and contextual realities.

### How did we do it?

Champions of Change was initially developed together with staff, partners and young people across the world. It uses a synchronised approach that engages young people on a journey of change and reflection. Champions of Change intentionally developed separate, yet interrelated curricula for girls and boys. Used in tandem, the original curricula aims to provide a comprehensive and inclusive community-wide child centred approach to gender equality.

In order to ensure a local approach, Plan International Belgium and Plan International Spain reviewed the original curricula with locally anchored organizations in their respective countries. The consulted organizations are based in the programming cities and are specialized in gender, inclusion and youth work. While reviewing the



journey and approach of the original curricula, a clear need for local adaptation quickly appeared as necessary. Therefore, as the first European countries to implement the Champions of Change program, Plan International Belgium and Plan International Spain contextualised the existing international modules to the Belgian and Spanish context, with the support of the local partners. Contextualisation took into account:

- Working with a structure of 10 mixed manuals, for people with diverse gender identities
- Adding a creative hook to ensure youth's participation: storytelling (photography and video)
- Creating an adapted planning to decrease the number of the Champions of Change sessions
- Introducing a self-identification criterion for young participants
- Including a non-binary approach of gender
- Adding new themes in the journey: privileges, racism, LGBTQI+, religion and culture, allyship, by-stander approach
- Working with non-mixed groups (except for certain methodologies)
- Adapting questionnaire for youth at the beginning and the end of the program
- Digitalization of the methodologies: in the context of COVID-19, we adapted some methodologies to the digital setting.

## Overview of the contextualised modules Champions of Change:



**Module 0:** Facilitator's manual. This manual brings together the informative (theoretical) part for the facilitators to start the journey. It contains a general introduction, the general objectives, a section that explains the path of the young people and an overview of the activities of all the manuals.



**Module 1:** Get to know each other. This manual is the basic introduction to the journey: young people get to know each other, learn to form a supportive group, practice assertive communication, understand and identify different forms of power and encourage each other in teamwork.



**Module 2:** Gender and identity. In this manual, young people define their identity, understand the difference between sex and gender, identify and deconstruct gender stereotypes and norms, understand the link between gender and power and have a basic understanding of 'gender justice'.



**Module 3:** Gender and sexual health. In this manual, young people will learn the basics of their body, they will understand their right to have clear and appropriate information about their sexual and reproductive health, they will co-create an open and safe space to learn about the topic and will be empowered to defend and revendicate their sexual and reproductive rights.



**Module 4:** Gender and gender equality. In this manual, young people reflect on the social construction of gender and gender equality. They analyse how gender constructs life, relationships, individuals and societies. They discuss how they feel regarding their gender identity. Finally, adolescents show their commitment to gender equality.



**Module 5:** Safety Walk. The Safety Walk is a walk carried out by young people in a familiar part of their city in order to identify the factors of safety and insecurity. This activity will provide detailed information on how girls see certain parts of their city.



**Module 6:** Gender-based violence. In this manual, young people first identify and understand the different forms of gender-based violence (GBV). In addition, young people also know and understand the causes and consequences of gender-based violence, address the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" and the diversity of gender identities. Finally, the group develops reflexes and an attitude that rejects gender-based violence.



**Module 7:** Gender and diversity. In this manual, the main goal is understanding that people are diverse. Each individual is shaped by different factors that make up their unique identity. Young people will learn about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics, and will also explore

how misinformation and stigma affect our societies, in order to be able to stand against discrimination.



**Module 8:** Gender in the public space. In this manual, young people analyse gender-based violence in an urban context, develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to live free from gender-based violence.



**Module 9:** Gender-transformative influencing. In this manual, young people practise their communication skills. The group also learns about “influencing” (advocacy) for social and political change.

## What did we learn?

- Local adaptation is key to the success of the program and the journey of the young people. **Tip!** *Work with local organizations in your country.*
- Safe space is key when talking about gender inequalities, both for young people and facilitators. Youth might share personal stories, including trauma related to sexual violence. Facilitators’ trainings should include not only the creation of a safe spaces but also a guide to react calmly to rights violation in group and how to report sexual violence. **Tip!** *Make a list of first-line organizations and centres that help survivors of sexual violence and provide training for facilitators.*
- The Champions of Change journey is intense and takes time. Youth generally have a busy agenda and facilitators might have to adapt the timing of the sessions on a weekly basis. The interest of the young people can also decrease when facilitators enter the

core discussions of Champions of Change on inequalities in the daily lives. **Tip!** *Make sure to plan enough time for a session and introduce fun games, like energizers, to ensure group’s dynamics even during the serious discussions. Also, if young people drop out of the program, make sure to understand why. You can organize an exit conversation with them and reassure that you understand them and that they can always come back if they wish.*

- Make sure that facilitators feel comfortable when training young people. Champion of Change facilitators are persons with strong group facilitation skills and in-depth knowledge of the topics covered by the curriculum. It is imperative that Champions of Change facilitators are not just seen as trainers but as Champions of Change themselves. Therefore, they need to be supported to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours before they support youth in their journey to empowerment and engagement. This requires sufficient time and resources. **Tip!** *Organize a training of trainers for the facilitators.*

## What to highlight?

- Spend time creating a collective safe space for all the participants, it will require time and effort to build it up, but it will be worth it.
- Having a good partnership with local youth organisations will guarantee better success.
- You are working with young people in an intense transformation, so keep in mind: flexibility is a must.
- Local adaptation is key to the success of the program and the journey of the young people.

# YOUTH-LED CAMPAIGNING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

## What is the idea?

The Champions of Change raise awareness amongst their peers and the general public via a creative youth-led campaign, based on youth-led storytelling and youth-led video development. Through youth-led campaigning, young people can make a difference in addressing issues that are taboo in our society.

## How did we do it?

The Champions of Change in Antwerp, Brussels and Charleroi discovered the power of photography during one of the digital Champions of Change sessions. Two well-known photojournalists in Belgium presented their work on themes such as humanitarian aid and minority identity. They highlighted how images can reflect the reality of our world, telling a personal story. During a Safety Walk, the youth activists received a camera to capture the city through their eyes, safe or unsafe. Although during their training, there was a focus on photography as a tool for campaigning and policy change, the Champions of Change also got to work with video.

The Champions of Change in Antwerp, Brussels and Charleroi created their own campaign video to raise awareness of the issue of sexual harassment among young people in their city. Each group chose their own unique perspective and collaborated with a creative videographer.

Furthermore, we carried out a bystander campaign. Plan International Belgium launched the Bystander Dance, to encourage young people to react when they witness

sexual harassment. Renowned choreographer Jeny Bonsenge taught the young people four dance moves that symbolize the four strategies a bystander can use in cases of sexual harassment. The dance emphasizes that young people can indeed contribute to the solution by taking concrete actions when they see something happening. Youth activists in Benin, Bolivia, Niger and Vietnam danced along against sexual harassment in public spaces, because after all, sexual violence is a universal problem.

The Champions of Change in Madrid, Sevilla and Barcelona created their own campaign and organized a street action. This was based on the concept of embodying the testimonies from youth all over the country: reading experiences of other young people, selecting those that were more representative, creating posters and holding them covering their faces in a crowded space, and giving voice to those written experiences. It had a great impact in the people around and it was a great experience for the girls involved. They also designed a collective mural to fight street harassment in their cities. Interviews were also recorded with them as co-creators of the scripts, in order to build up a bigger impact campaign.

## What did we learn?

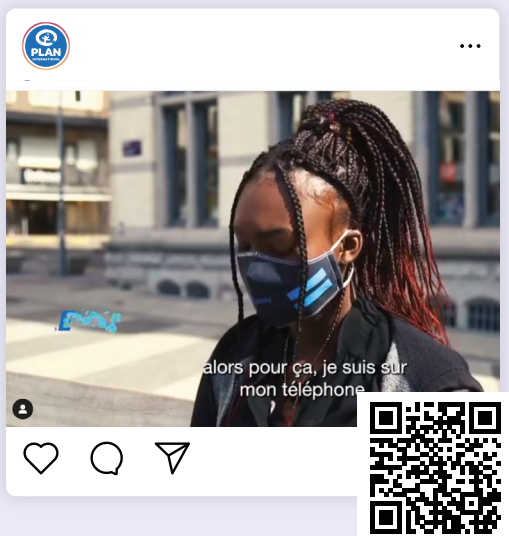
- It is very important that the young people create the idea and develop the campaign themselves. **Tip!** *Look for creative videographers or photographers (inside or outside your organisation) that can guide (not direct) the young people in the development of their ideas.*

- Social media are an excellent way to promote the campaign. It is very easy to target the right people in the different cities.
- Working together with partners that support the campaign of the young people can lift the campaign to a higher level. **Tip!** *Plan International and the Brussels transport company launched a campaign to inform victims and bystanders on sexual harassment. This campaign called on witnesses and victims to act and report on unwanted and inappropriate behaviour. The young people developed a brochure and posters that were distributed in the metro stations.*
- It is also good to target specific locations. **Tip!** *Music festivals can be a good setting to campaign against sexual harassment.*
- Letting the group decide on what campaign they want to do, from start to finish, within a set framework can really help you to have an attractive, out-of-the box campaign. **Tip!** *It can be easier, in a managing perspective, to set a defined framework. It still allows young people to create their own campaign while keeping realistic expectations qua timing and workload.*

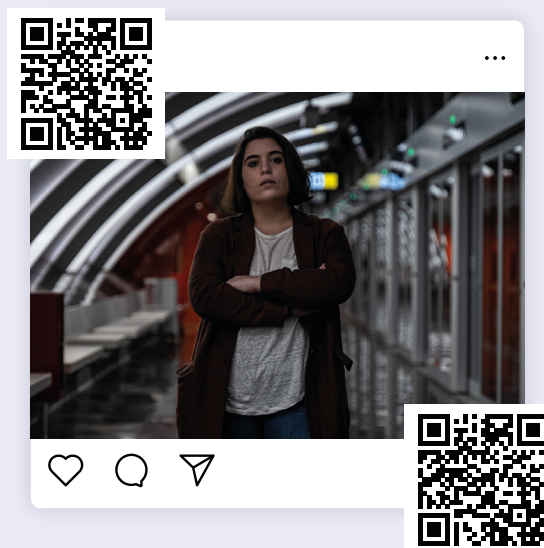
### What to highlight?

- Create an attractive and concrete call to action for example on bystander approach
- Be creative! By using a youth-led process based on storytelling, you can create an attractive and out-of-the box campaign.

#### Link to videos made in Belgium



#### Link to videos made in Spain



# YOUTH-LED ADVOCACY FOR POLICY CHANGE

## What is the idea?

Our experience as an international organisation has taught us that we can get things moving by pooling our efforts and strengths. The core of the Safer Cities program is the Champions of Change, a diverse group of young people who are ambassadors of the project in their cities. To make their voices heard and increase their impact, we work closely with local authorities to put the recommendations of the young people into practice.

As a 360 project that includes advocacy and policy aspects, it was clear that involving local authorities was essential to work together on creating safer and more inclusive cities. That is why we designed an influencing plan from the beginning, identifying key actors and following a roadmap to involve decision-makers.

“Organisations such as Plan International Belgium create a safe environment for young people to speak openly about sexual harassment. We will extend this safe environment to our squares and other places in the city where young people come together.” Jinnih Beels, Alderwoman for Education and Youth, Antwerp

“For the city government, the eradication of harassment and any type of gender violence is a priority. And in this fight, collaboration and unity of action with the associative movement is fundamental. This Plan International project and its conclusions show us that there is a long way to go and it is important that we move forward together. We have to make the problem visible and put a strategy in place”, Juan Espadas, Mayor of Seville.

## How did we do it?

We set up and implemented a Safer Cities advocacy plan consisting of the following 10 steps:

- **Step 1:** contact the relevant decision-makers (alderperson of Equal Chances and/or Youth) to present the Safer Cities program and ask for their collaboration.  
**Tip!** *Define a single point of contact per city to keep the contacts going smoothly.*
- **Step 2:** meet to establish official commitment by the city to support the Safer Cities program and define next steps.
- **Step 3:** engage the city to promote the digital platform Safer Cities through the official channels of the city and through personnel communication channels of the alderperson.
- **Step 4:** map the different departments involved (equal chances, youth, education, urban planning, public transport...)
- **Step 5 (optional):** organise a safety walk with different options for the involvement of the cities:
  - Participation of the focal point or the alderperson,
  - Participation of the alderperson to the Champions of Change session,
  - Presentation of the results of the safety walk to the local decision-makers by the young people
- **Step 6 (optional):** organise a Townhall Meeting where young people from the city of from different



cities discuss the topic of sexual harassment. High-level decision-makers from the cities can be invited to participate to small-group discussions. **Remark:** we organised a Townhall Meeting bringing together (online) 500 young people from Antwerp, Brussels, Charleroi, Barcelona, Madrid and Sevilla to seek solutions against sexual harassment. Young people discussed with each other around five themes in small groups, some of which were accompanied by politicians. The participating young people discussed 25 recommendations and ultimately voted for their top five. **Tip!** Organising such a large event means a lot of work from many people and is expensive. You could think of organising such an event on a smaller

scale. Bringing together young people to exchange between peers and with local decision-makers was very valuable.

*"The great thing about the J500 is that we can work with young people from Spain and learn a lot from each other. We are suddenly helping the next generation of young people with this." Karim, 19 years old, Champion of Change, Antwerp*

*"The J500 is an important event to make our voices heard and find solutions to a problem that shouldn't even exist." Audrey, 16 years old, Champion of Change, Brussels*

*“For me, the moment in which we put this social problem on the table and we gather with so many different people to try to change it collectively, we are already doing something big” Ana, 23 years old, Champions of Change, Sevilla.*

*“It was a really good opportunity to share experiences and work together certain aspects to help change our cities!” Sara, 17 years old, Champions of Change, Madrid.*

- **Step 7:** ask and define the support of the city to the promotion of the Safer Cities campaign of the Champions of Change.
- **Step 8:** the Champions of Change carry out advocacy activities in their cities. These activities can take different forms, but must be developed by the Champions of Change themselves (youth-led activities). Examples: organise a safety walk in presence of local decision-makers, the Champions of Change present their policy recommendations to the council or commission of equal rights, the Champions of Change develop a photo or video activity. **Tip!** *For these activities, it is highly recommended that you have an official ‘policy recommendations report’. You can launch this report on an official press moment. Tip! Plan enough time to prepare the youth and decision-makers for the handover of the recommendations.*
- **Step 9:** follow up on the policy recommendations together with decision-makers to make sure that real change is achieved. **Tip!** *Keep in mind you will have to do the follow up even after the program ended.*
- **Step 10:** define scaling-up of the Safer Cities program (future program, summit on regional or national level, international link of Safer Cities, ...)

## What did we learn?

- Thanks to the input of thousands of young people, specialists, local authorities and partner organisations, we came up with concrete policy recommendations that the cities can use. These recommendations should be formulated as concretely as possible and with a local link. **Tip!** *Apply the holistic 4P approach to cluster the policy recommendations according to the specific “P” they are tackling (Prevention, Protection, Participation, or Prosecution).*
- As Plan staff, we created the framework for the young people to carry out the influencing activities. For youth-advocacy to be successful, the influencing activities should be youth-led, and keep in mind that youth-advocacy can quickly be used as a token. **Tip!** *Prepare and send a list of recommendations beforehand to the cabinet so the Alderman or spokesperson can have an answer for the youth and they don’t feel the meeting is useless.*
- Having a local approach of the influencing activities triggers the interest of local-decision-makers. However, they may be interested in receiving the map/pins list from the Safer Cities Platform in order to know exactly the places marked as unsafe. Make clear that it is not public information, but that it can always be shared for internal work and information.
- Organise exchange between politicians and Plan staff/young people on different levels (personal contacts, Townhall Meeting, safety walk, handing over of the policy recommendations report, support campaigning activities, ...)

## PREVENTION



## PROTECTION



4P



## PARTICIPATION



## PROSECUTION

- The Safety Walk as a methodology was highly appreciated by the local decision-makers and young people. The Safety Walk gives young people a new perspective on their perception of public space by mapping the safety factor. To do this, young people are encouraged to take a city walk and analyse the environment according to seven core principles. During this activity, the young people were also accompanied by local policy actors such as their alderperson and their cabinet staff, local journalists, a public transport representative or the spokesperson of the local police. In this way, the young people were able to share their feelings, recommendations and questions, while learning to better understand the reality on the ground.

### What to highlight?

- Make sure that the whole process is tailored to the local context; this will increase your chances of having a greater impact.
- In this process, the moments of exchanges cannot be missed! But make sure to diversify the activities, such as a safety walk, the J500 or official handing-over moments.
- To have a fruitful process, regular meetings with decision-makers and/or administration throughout the program are key. Make them part of the project from the beginning and assure their participation by a formal commitment.
- Having recommendations written by the young people themselves is crucial to youth-led advocacy.

# MANAGEMENT

## MANAGEMENT TIPS

### Different experts

For a good implementation of the program, you need different experts, with skills in the areas of:

- Youth engagement
- Research
- Advocacy
- Campaigning, communications and press
- Project management
- We also recommend to ask every city that you work with to appoint a dedicated Safer Cities focal point within their administration.

### Importance of partnerships

Safer Cities is a program that is built on partnerships with:

- Local youth organisations
- Local authorities
- Local administration
- Academic institutions
- Partners for hook activities such as photography and video.

- In Belgium we set up a partnership with Canon, who provided us with cameras and organised training for the young people on storytelling through photography and video
- Press agencies to report on the activities of the Champions of Change
- Partner organisations for the implementation of the program. The current Safer Cities programme was a collaboration between Plan International Belgium and Plan International Spain

### Importance of general coordination

The Safer Cities programme is a complex programme in the sense that it is composed of different interrelated domains in which different experts are involved. For example, during the Champions of Change trajectory, we need the involvement of:

- the youth coordinators (to prepare the educational materials, to organise a Training of Trainers, to guide the Champions of change sessions, ...)
- the local youth organisations (to recruit the young people and co-organise the Champions of Change sessions)
- the advocacy coordinator (to prepare the young people for the policy activities)
- a communication specialist (to prepare the young people for the campaigning activities, press, interviews...).

Also, in the case of an international program, you need to coordinate the activities between the two countries. A Safer Cities project takes at least one full year to complete.

The best way to deal with this complexity is to appoint a responsible for the general coordination of the program. We also recommend every city that you work with, to appoint a dedicated Safer Cities focal point within their administration.

### What to highlight?

- Your programme will be adapted depending on your situation. If you work in a country with multiple languages or a big country with large distances, you will have to take that into consideration.

## BUDGET POSTS

The current Safer Cities programme was funded by the European Union. Other opportunities might be the national or regional government, the city authorities, foundations or corporates.

It would be hard to put a general budget on the programme, as prices for goods and wages might be very different throughout the EU.

The main cost items for the implementation of the program are listed below.

- Staff costs: guiding young people in the set-up and implementation of the campaigning activities

### Analysis

- External cost: development of platform/survey
- Staff costs: set up partnership with academic institution for the research, development of a research document, possibly moderation costs for the digital platform
- Logistic costs: logistic costs linked to the organisation of focus groups and expert interviews, promotion costs

### Youth participatory trajectory

- External cost: possibly costs related to engaging with a local youth partner
- Staff costs: preparation and organisation of Training of Trainers for local youth partner, youth recruitment, preparation of the sessions, guiding the sessions, preparation and follow-up of the advocacy and campaigning activities
- Logistic costs: food & drinks for the young people during the sessions, venue for the sessions, accommodation in case of multi-day sessions, transport to the sessions

### Youth-led campaigning for social change

- External cost: photographer, video-maker
- Logistic costs: development of campaign materials, promotion of the campaign, costs related to a 'live' activity

## Youth-led advocacy for policy change

- External cost: possible for photographer or video-maker to film the hand-over moment
- Staff costs: guiding young people in the set-up and implementation of the advocacy activities
- Logistic costs: potential costs for the organisation of a 'official' hand-over moment of the policy recommendations by the Champions of Change to the local policy makers (venue, food and drinks...)

## Management

- External cost: potential external evaluation and audit
- Staff costs: partnership coordination (with the local partners), general coordination, reporting to donors, businesses
- Logistic costs: travel and accommodation costs in case of joint program with other countries/cities



# THE POWER OF SAFER CITIES

*“As a young person I didn’t feel very comfortable, because I had a lot of ideas to give, I wanted to speak, but I didn’t know how to do it and it’s true that with the Safer Cities project, I was able to open up a lot more and give my ideas and I felt listened to, which is the most important thing, I think.”*

— Champion of Change, Charleroi

*“For me, being part of Safer Cities for Girls was a really cool experience. We created a group that worked really well. I was always coming out of the sessions with a strong feeling of empowerment. In general, being part of something like this is being wonderful”.*

— Sara, 17 years old, Champions of Change Madrid:

*“Having the opinion of young people is such a valuable field experience that it allows us to orientate the policies to be followed. So, it’s really important!”*

— Françoise Daspremont, Alderwoman for Equal Opportunities (at the time of the project):

*“It has been an honour to be able to collaborate in the preparation of this report and to continue expanding our knowledge about the different forms of violence suffered by women in public spaces.”*

— Jose Anierte Rueda (Madrid), Aldermen for Family, Equality and Social Welfare

*“The project empowered the young people in their personal lives and provided them with additional skills that will help them in their lives.”*

— Cailean Dangreau, La Maison Arc-en-Ciel (Charleroi):

*“It’s a journey that sensitize the youngsters, makes them aware and helps them to understand situations that they live. It makes them experience the situation as a global, realizing that in other countries the problematics are existing as well, but also makes them realize there are other young people aware and walking towards of social change.”*

— Fundación Aldeas Infantiles SOS Cataluña,

*“The space generated for the youngsters to share and reflect collectively is a great opportunity for the youth to grow, think critically, gain resources and tools and empower themselves. Opening dialogue in certain difficult topics is needed to reach meaningful and sustainable changes in our societies.”*

— Ángela Rodríguez, Youth Coordinator at Plan International Spain:

ERAMOS UN GRUPO DE CHICAS  
DE 15 AÑOS. HABÍAMOS IDO A HACER  
PICNIC AL RETIRO. SE ACERCÓ  
UN EXHIBICIONISTA. OTRAS VECES  
HE VISTO GENTE TOCÁNDOSE ESCONDIDOS  
ENTRE LOS SETOS... **EVITO  
IR SOLA...**

We would like to thank all persons who participated in the Safer Cities project, with special thanks to the youth activists who made real change happen in their cities. We also thank our partners and the cities without whom this program would not have been possible.

**Champions of Change in Antwerpen:** Amgar, Amine, Aya, Burcu, Hanae, Imane, Imrane, Kamal, Karim, Khadija, Mohamed, Rania, Suleyman, Wiam

**Champions of Change in Barcelona:** Sharon, Tiffany Cahomi, Francisco Javier, Pol, Thais, Pili, Laura, Nerea, Roberto Carlos, Joan, Sara, David, Adam, Alain, Alejandro, Erika, Rubén, Aitor, Sumayya, Adiba, Daniel, Lorena, Saad, Abderahman, Eulalia, Erica, José, Irene, Jacqueline, Mohamed, Soledad, Nuria, Paula, Silvana, Fabià, Santiago, Eduardo, Adel, Denis, Marta.

**Champions of Change in Brussel:** Adam, Adrienne, Alice, Audrey, Cécilia, Fatou, Fauve Lamya, Mehdy, Rania, Rania, Salma, Valentine

**Champions of Change in Charleroi:** Aaliyah, Anthony, Elodie, Estelle, Fatma, Flore, Guillaume, Léa, Léna, Lucie, Maena, Maximilien, Nisrine, Rama, Safia, Saïd, Simon and Tom

**Champions of Change in Madrid:** Laura, Vanesa Alejandra, Andrea, Laura, Alba María, Sara, Alba, Eva, Sarah, Fátima, Estefanía, Emma, Celia, Patricia, Mia Sar, Raquel, Carlos Javier, Aingeru, Fania Yolanda, Mohamed, Nor El Houda, Gonzalo Andrés, Erick Joel, Lucia, Yanire, Martha Yohely, Almudena Arancha, Sekandar (Alejandro) Shah, José Manuel, Juan Alberto, Arlet, Naghely, Shaimaa, Brenda Lucía, Daraluana de Jesús, William Andreu, Angerick, Oma, Pedro, Iker, Raúl, María Engracia, Javier Daniel, Ever Matías, Iyariel Josué, Anabel, Rosibel, Liobardo.

**Champions of Change in Sevilla:** Alba, Dolores,

Rocio, Ana, María, Paula, Susana, Nuria, Isaac, Rocío, María, Natalia, Mariangeles, Paola, Sara, Lorena, Belén, Milva, Beata, Ana, Julio, María, Marta, Antonio Javier, Cristina, Irene, Alba, Blanca, Cristina, Adrián, Emilia, Juan Carlos, Nathalia.

**Our local partners in Antwerp:** Imad Ouriagli Adel, Naima Bouali, Abderahim Lamsayah, Fatima Nassiri, Mustapha Siyahya (Kras vzw)

**Our local partners in Barcelona:** Aldeas Infantiles SOS Cataluña.

**Our local partners in Charleroi:** Christelle Baudoux, Christophe Bedin, Déborah Doucet (Centre Ener'J), Cailean Dangreau (Maison Arc-en-ciel de Charleroi), Laurane De Graux (Tels quels)

**Our local partners in Madrid:** Fundación Balía por la Infancia, Federación Injucam.

**Our local partners in Sevilla:** IES Sotero Hernández, IES Heliópolis.

**The cities** of Antwerp, Barcelona, Brussels, Charleroi, Madrid and Sevilla; and the Brussel-Capital region.

**Canon** for the collaboration and the photographers involved

**The research team** from the Open University of Catalonia

**The European Union**

## CONTACT DETAILS

### Plan International Belgium

Website: [www.planinternational.be](http://www.planinternational.be)

Facebook: @planfans

Instagram: @planbelgique

Twitter: @planbelgique

Sofie.picavet@plaininternational.be

### Plan International Spain

Website: [www.plan-international.es](http://www.plan-international.es)

Facebook: @Planinternational.es

Instagram: @planint\_ES

Twitter: @PlanInt\_ES

Begona.solorzano@plan-international.org

# JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT

[www.planinternational.be/safercities](http://www.planinternational.be/safercities)

