ROLE PROFILE

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| Title | Research Manager (Fixed Term Contract until December 2024) | | |
| Functional Area | Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning | | |
| Reports to | Head of Research | | |
| Location | Woking or location where the candidate can be hosted by a Plan International Office | Travel required | Limited |
| Effective Date | January 2023 | Grade | GH4 |

role PURPOSE

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children’s rights and equality for girls. We believe in the power and potential of every child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion, and discrimination. And its girls who are most affected. Working together with children, young people, our supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children.

We support children’s rights from birth until they reach adulthood. And we enable children to prepare for – and respond to – crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national, and global levels using our reach, experience, and knowledge.

We have been building powerful partnerships for children for over 75 years and are now active in more than 70 countries.

Reporting to the Head of Research, this role is situated in the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) Department. **‘Real Choices, Real Lives’ is a unique research project. It follows a cohort of girls living in nine countries**[[1]](#footnote-2) **around the world from their birth, in 2006, until they turn 18, in 2024. The** study provides rich qualitative perspectives and nuanced understanding across a significant period of time and taking account of different social, cultural, economic and institutional contexts. The evidence is important not only for informing *how* Plan supports girls but also to develop wider recommendations for targeting gender inequality at policy and programme level – and it is the ambition of the study to strengthen evidence uptake.

At this pivotal time in the girls’ lives (they turned 16 in 2022), and the study’s lifetime, ‘Real Choices, Real Lives’ is shining a light on what it means to grow up as a girl and the choices, decisions and realities that shape girls’ everyday experiences. Over the remaining years of the study, there will be a greater focus on embedding the evidence in the wider work of Plan International, not only at a global level but across regions and within countries where the study is conducted. At the same time, as the depth of evidence builds year-on-year, it is timely to share insights with the wider sector, including research and evidence networks, as well as programmatic and policy audiences. As such, this is an exciting time to be joining this project and contributing to its future direction with an ultimate view to supporting greater impact through research uptake activities.

Taking forward the study until its intended completion in December 2024 will require a proactive and fresh perspective, sector-wide knowledge of current debates, as well as experience navigating organisational priorities and supporting research uptake. Part of this will involve balancing research rigour and requirements with the ability to make evidence digestible/accessible to different audiences/in different formats, as well as being both opportunistic as well as strategic about outputs. The Research Manager will lead and deliver high quality research outputs on Plan’s focus areas set in terms of the Global Strategy – All Girls Standing Strong.

In addition, the Research Manager is expected to work with the Head of M&E and other MERL team members in implementing the Research Policy and Standards, particular around ethics and will sit on Plan International’s Ethics Review Committee.

**More information about the study can be found** [**here**](https://plan-international.org/blog/2022/08/04/real-choices-real-lives/)**, which also includes links to the latest reports.**

Dimensions of the Role

Reporting to the Head of Research, this post is based at the Global Hub and the incumbent will work in a team of 6 researchers, 5 M&E specialists and 3 M&E system specialists and must work within a shared budget. The Research Manager is also expected to line manage and supervise the Real Choices Real Lives Research and Engagement Officer.

Accountabilities

The job is varied and requires an individual who can:

* Manage and provide overall direction to the study, including inputs from the Research Engagement Officer, as well as overseeing data collection and analysis activities, ensuring research activities and research outputs are of high quality and delivered on schedule/in line with ethical principles.
* Lead and coordinate the production of research products, including ‘flagship’ reports and other research outputs that take different formats (e.g., blogs, briefs, thematic pieces, case studies, presentations etc.), aligning these with global and regional activities/priorities.
* Support the integration of study findings in Plan Federation activities and decisions (across policy, advocacy, campaigns, and programming)
* Build the profile of the study at global, regional, and country-level, maintaining a presence within the wider research and evidence debates (particularly related to adolescence/gender), identifying opportunities to present, collaborate and share knowledge more widely
* Oversee stakeholder and strategy management internally and externally.
* Work with colleagues to profile the study on Plan platforms globally, regionally and in-country, including supporting engagement with Plan Country Offices to embed evidence in Plan country activities, through identifying opportunities and inputting to development of tailored/targeted outputs.
* Ensure that Plan International’s global policies for Child Protection (CPP) and Gender Equality and Inclusion (GEI) are fully embedded in any study outputs and activities. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring staff and associates are aware of and understand their responsibilities under these policies and Plan International’s Code of Conduct (CoC), their relevance to their area of work, and that concerns are reported and managed in accordance with the appropriate procedures.

Key deliverables

**Strategic direction-setting, profile raising and networking of the study with relevant/influential groups and organisations (internal and external).**

* Drive the strategic direction of the cohort study, engaging with internal and external stakeholders.
* Develop/build mechanisms and relationships to ensure ambitious ideas are translated into actions in order to continue to increase visibility of the study whilst maintaining the highest possible quality and standards of research.
* Map opportunities for integration of research evidence across the Plan Federation, to feed into key ‘moments’ and events in terms of communications, policy/advocacy, and programming, at global and regional level, as well as with country teams.
* Identify opportunities for alignment and partnerships with the wider sector to support delivery of research objectives in terms of evidence uptake/integration.
* Identify, engage in, and contribute to relevant networks and events (related to gender, adolescence and research methods etc.).

**Ensure the design, implementation, and dissemination of high quality and rigorous research, including capacity development across the research teams.**

* Plan and manage the schedule for research publications, ensuring integration with Plan International global/regional and country-level events/moments (e.g. inputs to State of the World’s Girls, Girls Get Equal and other activities).
* Guiding Research Officer in their supervision of coding and analysis of transcripts, providing guidance on software as well as technical insights into thematic discussions.
* Assimilate key issues emerging from data to feed into publications (including contributions to other reports, as well as standalone research outputs, aligning this to wider Plan/sector priorities).
* Develop summaries, briefs, papers and presentations to profile research findings, as well as methods, as required.
* Engage with academic advisory panel to ensure ‘rigour’ of approach to the research process and outputs.
* Provide supervision to a PhD student (from autumn 2024) on a monthly basis and alongside academic supervisors (as part of a collaborative PhD).

**Manage the cohort study (overall annual budget, project planning and research implementation).**

* Manage the research budget, ensuring regular forecasting is up-to-date and all processes are followed in terms of reporting internally.
* Plan and manage all consultant and research assistant inputs to deliver on the research schedule (in particular overseeing coding and analysis undertaken by consultants, as well as lining-up focused technical inputs for specific outputs).
* Identify any ‘ad hoc’ or ‘in-depth’ data collection needs/opportunities to align with outputs/areas of focus (e.g. case studies with a selection of girls/in a selection of countries to align with specific areas of interest).
* Apply technical gender and research skills to the development of research materials to support delivery of research activities by country teams.
* Provide comprehensive feedback to country teams on the research process to facilitate learning and preparation for subsequent rounds of data collection (through Country Office reports). Ensure any concerns are appropriately reported/flagged and handled.
* Provide support to country research focal points and teams – including undertaking remote and/or in-country training, to enable them to undertake specific research activities/data collection and/or utilise evidence from the study.
* Coordinate regularly with country offices regarding country-level activities/spend and ensure any relevant costs are recharged on time (as applicable).

**Other responsibilities**

* Contribute to wider work of the MERL team as well as the Communications and Advocacy and Programmes teams to identify opportunities for learning from the study to feed into wider processes.

Key relationships

**Internal**

* Head of Research; the Director of MERL and other members of the MERL team to drive forward the direction of the study and deliver on its ambitions at global level, as well as regionally and in country.
* The Real Choices, Real Lives Research Engagement Officer to develop and deliver on the research agenda.
* Liaise with technical staff in Regional, Country, Liaison and National office teams as required.
* Global Communications and Digital teams, Technical Leads, Global Influencing and Global Gender Transformative Policy and Programming colleagues to align evidence emerging from country-specific activities with global priorities and ensure distribution.
* Country focal points in each of the nine research countries, as well as wider members of country teams (as relevant) (coordinating engagement with the Research Engagement Officer).

**External**

* Working with a variety of consultants and academic partners to achieve the research objectives of the Global Strategy as well as individual research initiatives
* Liaise and network with researchers- external consultants and researchers from partner institutions - outside of Plan International
* Attend research forums and conferences to present the Real Choice Real Lives study research results.
* Liaise and network with key research institutes and universities.

Technical expertise, skills and knowledge

**Essential**

* Masters level or equivalent, preferably in research methods, development studies or a related subject.
* Strategic direction-setting for long-term/multi-year projects, ideally research;
* Developing and delivering research uptake plans, including identifying research uptake opportunities (communications, policy/advocacy, and programmatic), to support evidence dissemination/impact;
* Implementing technical expertise (particularly utilising excellent knowledge of girls’ rights, to develop/deliver high quality research outputs);
* Managing and inputting on qualitative research, with a technical focus on gender/gender dynamics, as well as social norms;
* Experienced in the use and application of qualitative data analysis software i.e., NVivo and reporting tools to develop standard and ad hoc reports.
* Delivering research and supporting research uptake across developing country contexts (including undertaking training and overseeing fieldwork);
* Knowledge of research operations, principles, practices and methods
* Strong influencing and stakeholder management skills.
* Must be adaptable and able to work independently on multiple tasks, prioritise workload effectively and meet deadlines in a fast-paced environment.
* Strong analytical skills and robust problem-solving skills.
* Attention to detail; accurate and observant.
* Ability to work within a multi-cultural environment and find creative solutions for successful regional and national knowledge management initiatives to promote learning and information sharing across the organisation
* Good project management and budget management skills ideally in a multi country setting
* Ability to make connections and build relationships within Plan International and externally
* Fluent in English with strong verbal and written communication and interpersonal skills.

**Desirable**

* Spanish and/or French verbal and written communication skills is an advantage
* Experience working with longitudinal data.
* Understanding of social norms theory.

Plan International’s Values in Practice

**We are open and accountable**

* Promotes a culture of openness and transparency, including with sponsors and donors.
* Holds self and others accountable to achieve the highest standards of integrity.
* Consistent and fair in the treatment of people.
* Open about mistakes and keen to learn from them.
* Accountable for ensuring we are a safe organisation for all children, girls & young people

**We strive for lasting impact**

* Articulates a clear purpose for staff and sets high expectations.
* Creates a climate of continuous improvement, open to challenge and new ideas.
* Focuses resources to drive change and maximise long-term impact, responsive to changed priorities or crises.
* Evidence-based and evaluates effectiveness.

**We work well together**

* Seeks constructive outcomes, listens to others, willing to compromise when appropriate.
* Builds constructive relationships across Plan International to support our shared goals.
* Develops trusting and ‘win-win’ relationships with funders, partners and communities.
* Engages and works well with others outside the organization to build a better world for girls and all children.

**We are inclusive and empowering**

* Seeks constructive outcomes, listens to others, willing to compromise when appropriate.
* Builds constructive relationships across Plan International to support our shared goals.
* Develops trusting and ‘win-win’ relationships with funders, partners and communities.
* Engages and works well with others outside the organization to build a better world for girls and all children

Physical Environment

Typical Office environment – some international travel may be required.

Level of contact with children

Low contact: There may be some contact when conducting research

1. Benin, Brazil, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Philippines, Togo, Uganda and Vietnam [↑](#footnote-ref-2)