



# DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION

Every child matters.  
Every person matters.

## Foreword from Laura Brown, PEAS CEO

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are central to the PEAS vision and mission. We believe every young person, no matter their circumstance or background, deserves a quality education.

Evidence shows that PEAS helps the most marginalised – girls, students with special education needs, and those with lower primary results – overcome barriers to accessing secondary school. Beyond our results demonstrating a commitment to DEI, our model and ethos promote long-term, locally-led development. Our school networks are designed to run independently of foreign aid. And, when our school networks reach full scale and sustainability, we will be entirely accountable to our customers and local government.

Sustainability is about finances *and* people. From the start, PEAS has prioritised local leadership. Our schools and country offices are staffed and led by African personnel. This is a principled *and* pragmatic approach – it's the right thing to do *and* it helps us achieve better results.

We're proud of our inclusive culture and equitable outcomes, but we're ready to take a more deliberate approach to DEI. The debate around racism, power, and privilege in our sector has intensified. We've reflected on our ways of working, considered our blind spots, and put DEI at the centre of our new Global Strategy 2022-26, which has three main goals:

- **Expanding our school network** – PEAS networks will continue to serve the most marginalised students, with a specific focus on removing additional barriers faced by adolescent girls.
- **Improving wider education systems** – Our system-strengthening work will prioritise supporting governments to make secondary education more equitable and inclusive for everyone.
- **Strengthening our own organisation** – We will shift the balance of leadership and governance from the UK to Africa, and elevate women across leadership and management positions.

Addressing DEI as an international organisation working in different geographies, cultures, and legal systems will not always be straightforward. We will embed PEAS global values while respecting local perspectives. We won't shy away from difficult conversations. We will balance our ambition for fast progress with a pace of change that brings people along with us.

This document sets out our deliberate approach to DEI. It details our foundations and the actions we will take across four key areas: governance and leadership, programme design, people and culture, and partnerships and communications. As we implement our wider strategy, this document will influence all our priorities and decisions – keeping DEI at the heart.

## Our Commitment

PEAS knows education is a powerful tool for building an accepting, inclusive, and just society. We will work thoughtfully to remove barriers for those who would not otherwise have the chance to succeed. We will empower individuals throughout the organisation who can best represent the young people we serve, enabling every person in the PEAS community to thrive.

We will make sure DEI remains central to the success of delivering our strategy by:

- **Integrating DEI throughout PEAS** – embedding it into the organisational culture as the right thing to do *and* a means to achieving sustainability and organisational success.
- **Being accountable to our people** – building a DEI working group of representatives to focus on reviewing progress and evaluating DEI initiatives.
- **Tracking progress at the board level** – reporting both qualitative and quantitative impact data on DEI, with a member of the board dedicated to DEI.
- **Acting with transparency and integrity** – publishing our DEI progress externally and internally via easily accessible, regularly updated learnings.

## Our 2026 Goal

*PEAS is the leader in our sector for diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

We will know we have achieved this if we are:

- Ensuring our people experience PEAS as an organisation where differences are positively recognised and cultivated, diverse voices are heard, and everyone is valued.
- Approaching our work with a growth mindset, continually learning and pushing ourselves to improve.
- Able to share strong DEI data to monitor and evaluate our work, outcomes, and effectiveness.
- Being called upon as a role model and clearly demonstrating initiatives that have made meaningful and tangible changes in removing barriers.
- Using our voice in the sector, supporting others to push the DEI agenda and champion for wider change.

We don't yet have all the answers. However, we have identified two critical changes we want to drive – greater African and female leadership across PEAS – with:

- A majority African global senior management team and board.
- Greater gender parity in leadership and management roles.

# Bringing it to Life

## GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS

**We have better gender parity and representation on the global leadership team and board.** Our recruitment and development systems have effectively increased PEAS leadership diversity.

**School and team leads in Uganda and Zambia are Ugandan and Zambian nationals.** We are locally led. It is built into who we are and helps us achieve better results.

**Our structure is collaborative and recognises the diverse expertise of individuals.** Colleagues in management positions feel heard and empowered to make decisions.

### ACTIONS

1. Build more diverse candidate pools, review our systems and processes, and invest in the recruitment, retention, and development of women.
2. Be leaders that enable and inspire change, with clear accountability for creating an inclusive, equitable, and representative environment.

## PROGRAMME DESIGN FOUNDATIONS

**We strive to give our network independence from the influence of international aid.** Full sustainability in Uganda, school sustainability in Zambia, full sustainability in a third country.

**We listen to our communities and deliver high-quality services.** We respond to DEI feedback loops at all levels – parents, community members, students, teachers, staff, schools, and offices.

**We challenge damaging stereotypes, particularly attitudes towards women and girls.** We use our staff, students, and their caregivers to engage the community to support girls.

**We embed DEI in how we operate our schools.** We support individuals using our four pillars of strong safeguarding practices: awareness, prevention, reporting, and response.

### ACTIONS

1. Identify key initiatives to complement the PEAS Girls Approach to support female teachers and leaders. Increase female representation in Uganda and Zambia, reducing the lack of female role models and counsellors in students' lives.
2. Leverage our system-strengthening work and use our influence in the sector to achieve progress at a wider scale. Build collaborative relationships with governments. Place greater emphasis on girls. Conduct and share evidence on achieving better outcomes for underrepresented groups.

## PEOPLE AND CULTURE FOUNDATIONS

**Our school and support teams are recruited locally and represent our student population.** We achieve even greater diversity, with a particular focus on increasing gender parity.

**We cultivate great school leaders and teachers.** External evaluations show that our strong continuing professional development and on-the-job training are key to driving better quality and increased learning gains in our schools.

**Our staff is happy and engaged.** Termly survey results highlight that across our school networks and offices, people are engaged and feel PEAS is values driven.

**We have a strong track record of internal recruitment within our schools and office.** We give our people opportunities to develop, and we prioritise internal recruitment to progress.

### ACTIONS

1. Conduct a full review of our recruitment, performance management, advancement, remuneration, and safeguarding policies and practices – identifying gaps and strengthening.
2. Prioritise learning and development for all our people. Pilot initiatives in career pathways that create a more consistent and inclusive approach.
3. Integrate DEI into learning and development to build knowledge, competence, and confidence in all staff to foster an inclusive and equitable PEAS.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS FOUNDATIONS

**We actively avoid partnerships that risk unintended negative consequences.** We responsibly support the economies of the countries in which we work.

**We ensure our proposal designs reflect the needs of our communities.** We involve implementers to lead proposal design and decision making for new or expanded partnerships.

**We work with partners and funders that share our commitment to empowering communities.** We build on our ethical partnerships policy to use a DEI lens for making partnership decisions.

### ACTIONS

1. Invest in raising the profile of our Uganda and Zambia leaders. Seek opportunities to recognise them for their expertise and thought leadership in the wider sector.
2. Review our comms to make sure we challenge negative stereotypes and don't perpetuate inequity or white saviourism. Focus on the opportunities and positive impact of secondary education.
3. Consult on, create, speak, and regularly review a common language about our work, communities, and DEI approach. Identify and use deliberate words, with a shared understanding of meanings.