



## AN UPDATE FROM **UTTARAKHAND**

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### CHILD PROTECTION CAMPAIGN AT LOCAL SCHOOL

A child protection campaign was held at Government Inter College Naitala, a local school in Uttarkashi from 14 November to 30 December 2017, to promote awareness around issues facing children and their families. Chuppi Todo (Break the Silence), a Plan India training film on good and bad touch, and Death Wish, a film on substance abuse were screened as part of campaign activities. After, students participated in discussions about abuse, its prevalence and why it is critical for children to share their opinions and experiences with a parent or responsible adult.

While deterring their parents from abusing tobacco or alcohol is often challenging, the children are increasingly aware and determined to make a change. To reinforce key campaign messages, a child protection manual for parents was shared with the children, teachers and community members. A substance abuse survey was also conducted among children and youth in the programme area.

### WORKING TOGETHER ON WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT

On World Toilet Day, 19 November 2017, Programme Unit (PU) Uttarkashi organised a district level event with active participation from local village water and sanitation committee members, child club members, panchayat (village council) representatives and allied department officials including the District Development Officer, Chief Education Officer and school teachers, to name a few.

At the event, children set up an exhibition under the theme 'Waste Water Management and Treatment'. Through handmade models, skits and posters, they highlighted common malpractices and best practices to live a healthy, hygienic life.

Discussions were held with government officials on collaboratively enabling open defecation free (ODF) communities. Results of a baseline assessment were shared with community members as well, and their inputs and support sought to achieve ODF status and zero waste.

"Only construction of toilets will not fulfil our aim; we have to educate people and also focus on proper [toilet] maintenance, sanitation and management for sustainability and healthy behaviour," affirmed one attendee.





## AN UPDATE FROM UTTAR PRADESH

### A MONTH-LONG CAMPAIGN TO MAKE UTTAR PRADESH OPEN DEFECATION FREE



World Toilet Day celebrations at district level

The Uttar Pradesh state team also commemorated World Toilet Day through a month-long campaign held across Lucknow, Maharajganj, Mirzapur, Bhadoi and Ambedkar Nagar districts. Working to create awareness on hygiene and environmental sanitation, the campaign addressed myths and misconception surrounding toilet use and encouraged local communities and stakeholders to adopt healthy sanitation practices and make their panchayat ODF.

Campaign activities included drawing competitions in schools, community-led total sanitation and triggering exercises, capacity building workshops with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), rallies, magic shows, cleanliness drives, consultations with the Block Development Office and the submission of a memorandum to the District Panchayat Raj Officer on creating an open defecation free society.

### PROMOTING GIRLS' EDUCATION THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Girls undergoing martial arts training

For girls in Mirzapur, staying in school is a challenge due to the sheer distance and risk associated with travel. The state team is working to change this and ensure girls can access higher education through a project supported by Plan International Japan.

In order to build their confidence in their ability to attend school regularly and without fear, the project trained 100 girls on martial arts. Equipping girls with hands-on self-defence skills, techniques and preparedness for any eventuality, a three-day training was carried out in partnership with Varanasi-based NGO and self-defence group Red Brigade.

On Children's Day, 14 November 2017, 50 cycles were distributed to girls in the ninth grade. Hailing from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the girls have overcome their barriers and now attend school regularly and with confidence.





## ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS AND WOMEN

The Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) is a global initiative of the Dutch offices of Plan International, Terre des Hommes (TDH) and Defence for Children-ECPAT. It aims to promote equal rights and opportunities for girls and young women, end violence against them and enable their economic growth in ten countries across Asia and Africa.

In India, the initiative is led by Plan India and implemented in collaboration with TDH and partners in Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Telangana. Primarily, it works to address child marriage and trafficking, promote secondary education among girls and job oriented vocational training for young women.

On 25 November 2017, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, celebrations were held in both states. In AP, GAA held a day-long interface among youth, government officials, elected representatives and civil society titled, 'Moving towards Synergetic Convergence of Society for Equal Rights and Opportunities for Girls and Young Women'. In collaboration with the prominent educational institution Maris Stella College, about 550 students took part along with Mahila Mithra Police Cell Members (a special team constituted with women police officers, welfare and rights activists under every police station to address issues faced by women).

Also in attendance were key leaders across the state: Chairperson of the AP State Women Commission, Chairperson of AP Scheduled Cast and Scheduled Tribe Commission, Police Commissioner of Vijayawada, members of the AP State Commission for Protection of Child Rights and Chairperson of Indian Women Network AP (Confederation of Indian Industries).

In Telangana, 85 gram panchayat sarpanches (presidents of village administration) from across priority districts were invited to an event sensitising them on the role they could play in making their villages violence free, particularly against women and girls. A panel discussion was held with the Secretary of the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare, Inspector General - Crime Investigation Department and eminent social workers. A poster was also released, demonstrating the role of gram panchayat sarpanches in addressing child marriage and promoting education for all children in their villages. Copies of the posters were distributed to the sarpanches for display in their office premises.

The GAA continues to strongly advocate for violence against women and serves as a platform for government officials, civil society, PRIs and youth to come together to build a gender-just society where girls and women can learn, lead, decide and thrive.



AP: MLA Upuleti Kalpana reflected on ending violence against women



TL: Dignitaries release poster on role of village leaders in ending child marriage





# AN UPDATE FROM **ODISHA**

## **STUDENTS PLEDGE TO WASH THEIR HANDS WITH SOAP FOR BETTER HEALTH**

Keeping one's hands clean is a critical step to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Diseases and conditions are often spread by neglecting to wash hands with soap and clean, running water.

In the state of Odisha, water, sanitation and hygiene are a burgeoning programme priority. Therefore, to increase awareness and adoption of correct hand washing practices among students, an unprecedented pledge was undertaken along with a flag hoisting ceremony on Republic Day, 26 January 2018 by Plan India and Center for Youth and Social Development supported by Unilever.

As part of the ceremony, 3,393 students, 83 teachers and non-teaching staff across 15 schools took an oath to wash their hands with soap and promote hand washing among their communities as well. The pledge continues to be remembered and upheld – after all, clean hands save lives!

## **PROMOTING TECHNICAL EDUCATION THROUGH SKILL DEVELOPMENT**



Girls at the ITI Barbil campus

Empowering girls with education and market oriented skills can transform their lives and the economy. To promote technical education through skill development among unemployed youth (aged 18 to 25), Plan India and partner Women's Association for Social Cultural Awareness organised an exposure visit for girls at the government Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Barbil.

31 girls from tribal backgrounds who completed the tenth grade underwent orientation led by the Principal of ITI who briefed them on the importance of technical education and related job opportunities in addition to government provisions. Teachers took the girls to different departments, familiarising them with various trades. After the visit, 80% of the girls expressed an interest in enrolling at ITI in the coming year.



# AN UPDATE FROM BIHAR

## CELEBRATING NEWBORN CARE WEEK IN 140 VILLAGES

Every year, Newborn Care Week is celebrated from 15 to 21 November under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India to raise awareness about the importance of newborn care for child survival and development. 2017 saw celebrations under the theme, 'Gender gap in neonatal survival - Time to Act'. Reflecting on India's declining trend of child sex ratio at birth, strategy and action is required to ensure that girl children survive all the odds.

In Bihar, intensive efforts were made to orient and sensitise service providers and communities to improve newborn health with a special focus on girls, as the first four weeks of life are crucial in reducing preventable deaths. Through Information education and communication (IEC) and Behaviour change communication (BCC) approaches including a mobile van, village and block level community meetings, events and awareness drives, discussions were held on various aspects of neonatal care, government schemes for women and children and complementary feeding for infants. Frontline health workers were also trained on the week's theme as well as important aspects of essential newborn care.

Celebrations extended across 140 villages in the districts of Vaishali, Saran, Samastipur, Muzaffarpur and Jamui, reaching 8,126 pregnant and lactating women and caregivers and 9,009 adolescent girls.

## SHOWCASING CHILDREN'S DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS DURING CHILD RIGHTS WEEK

Every year, India celebrates Children's Day on 14 November and International Child Rights Day on 20 November. The period between the two events is commemorated as Child Rights Week by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

During the week, the Bihar programme sought active participation from children and youth, showcasing their talents and knowledge on children's rights through various child media tools. Events like quizzes, painting and essay competitions were used as a medium for children to express their thoughts and raise awareness of stakeholders on child protection issues. A mobile van packed with IEC materials was used to sensitise communities in 107 villages, successfully reaching 7,232 children and more specifically, 4,302 girls aged 6 to 18 years. Participatory discussions were organised on preventing child marriage, gender based violence, various forms of abuse and promoting girls' education.

## SAVING LIVES WITH A PILOT SWIM TRAINING PROGRAMME

Bihar is India's most flood-prone state with as much as 76% of its population at risk of floods as per the International Water Management Institute. Drowning has taken a large toll in recent years, especially among children. Last year alone, 54 children lost their lives, spurring the Bihar State Disaster Management Authority (BDSMA) to take urgent action.

They initiated the Safe Swim programme for children residing by river banks, partnering with Plan India to organise a ten-day day swim training for 12 to 18 year olds. The pilot programme was organised at the popular Sonapur Fair (Asia's largest cattle fair) from 10 to 19 November 2018, with sessions led by the Bihar Jal Krida Manch, as well as the National and State Disaster Response Forces.

As part of their training, children learned various aspects of swimming along with life-saving techniques. A total of 20 children benefitted from the programme, mastered different swimming strokes and were awarded certificates by the BDSMA.





# LAUNCHING THE SUPPORT MY SCHOOL MISSION RECYCLING PROJECT

Support My School (SMS) is a long standing campaign implemented in partnership with Coca-Cola India Private Limited and NDTV (an Indian television media company) to build happy, healthy and active schools for students across India. Over the last seven years, the campaign has revitalised 1,000 schools, coming to be known as 'Mission 1000' and benefitting more than 372,000 students.

Aligned with the government's Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan (Clean India Mission), Plan India and its partners have revitalised 272 government schools across nine Indian states. Through renovated school infrastructure, access to clean water and sanitation, fully equipped learning and play facilities and an enabling environment, over 70,000 children have been impacted as part of the project.

On 14 December 2017, Mission 1000 culminated in an enthusiastic celebration at Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi. The event was attended by six lead implementing partners and their grass root level partners, whose efforts were recognised and appreciated through mementos presented to them by the leadership of Coca Cola India. Their senior representatives expressed great joy and pride at the impact the campaign has had on the ground.

Plan India Executive Director Bhagyashri Dingle also took the stage to share how girls have been impacted through Mission 1000 to take decisions to shape their own future bolstered by supportive communities, teachers, principals and fellow students.

The event concluded with the launch of a new chapter: the Coca Cola SMS Mission Recycling project. Aiming to sensitise children from over 5,000 schools on waste management, the project will further contribute to the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan and focus on proper collection and segregation of waste including Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET).





# IMPROVING URBAN WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE FOR 12,000 GIRLS AND BOYS

Plan India has partnered with USAID and Coca Cola India Private Limited on a three-year project titled, 'Urban WASH – Swachh Bharat Swachh Vidyalaya' (Urban WASH – Clean India Clean School) from July 2016 to July 2019.

Promoting sanitation, effective use and ownership of school Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure in 60 schools in three cities – Vishakhapatnam, Pune and Dehradun (20 schools per city) – the project will benefit 12,000 girls and boys. With increased access to access to potable water and safe sanitation, it will enable duty bearers and children to realise their right to equitable and sustainable access to improved sanitation facilities and safe drinking water, and to practice good hygiene behaviours.

On 8 December 2017, a project workshop was organized in Dehradun with 103 attendees including teachers, school management committee members, children's club members from 20 schools, officials from the Directorate of School Education and Municipal Corporation Dehradun, USAID, civil society organisations as well as Plan India and partner Shri Bhuvneshwari Mahila Ashram.

The workshop aimed to provide key insights on project progress against baseline findings on WASH infrastructure and knowledge, attitude and practices among programme beneficiaries. Another aim was to advocate with the Municipal Corporation to obtain requisite support for effective and sustainable operation and maintenance of school WASH facilities.

The initiative was well received by the government and donor agencies who have pledged their continued support. Lessons learned from 20 project schools will be scaled and replicated in 200 municipal schools in the city, and a compendium on the project, its tools, techniques and IEC material will be incorporated into and showcased during an upcoming Swachh Sarvekshan 2018 (Cleanliness Survey) led by the Municipal Corporation Dehradun.



## FINANCE MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE TRAINING FOR PARTNERS IN UTTAR PRADESH AND UTTARAKHAND

The Programme and Finance departments are critical to any organisation and as such, should always be united and speak one language. This was the rousing message shared at the start of a three-day training on financial management and compliance at Hotel Dayal Paradise, Lucknow from 13-15 December 2017.

The workshop was organised to orient programme and finance staff of NGO partners in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand on financial management, the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, internal controls, income tax and budget management and reporting requirements, which would enable greater understanding of financial systems and procedures and increased efficiency in implementation.

Facilitators led in-depth sessions on how to plan and utilise income tax provisions to benefit staff and link with social security; tools and methods for internal control; principles of financial management based on field experience; and best practices for joint review and reporting with case studies. Partner-wise interactions were also undertaken to identify challenges often faced when implementing programmes, and solutions to ensure financial management and good governance.

At the end of the training, certificates were distributed with thanks to the attendees and trainers. Feedback was taken from participants on eight parameters viz. duration, content, trainers, methodology, overall experience, venue and accommodation quality as well as services. The overall score given by participants was a whopping 96%.



## CELEBRATING GIRL POWER THROUGH THE MERI BETI MERI SHAKTI (MY DAUGHTER MY STRENGTH) CAMPAIGN

Plan India's [Meri Beti Meri Shakti](#) campaign seeks to celebrate girls and highlight the importance of daughters in society, subverting age-old narratives around male-child preference in India.

In 2014, Plan India partnered with luminaries from various walks of life (celebrities, sports persons, entrepreneurs, artists, etc.) documenting deeply personal stories of their relationships with their daughters, their strength. This culminated in a [coffee table book](#) that received widespread acclaim.

2018 saw Meri Beti Meri Shakti evolve into a national campaign forging strategic partnerships with key influencers, decision makers, media and the public, while also empowering girls and their families so that by 2020, 10 million girls in India can learn, lead, decide and thrive.

It was launched through a week-long digital campaign on National Girl Child Day (Jan 24), and featured creative posts and videos of Board Members, Country Management Team and country staff. Positive, celebratory messages were at the heart of the campaign which spanned social media ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)) and website pages. In fact, the campaign was entrenched into onsite activities such as stakeholder meetings, football matches, planting saplings, painting competitions and road shows. The campaign also received immense support through tweets and posts by leading Bollywood celebrities such as Mr Amitabh Bachchan (33mn twitter followers) and Mr Anil Kapoor (3.02 mn twitter followers) to name a few.

Additionally, an hour-long tweetathon was hosted with digital media partner Women's Web wherein Plan India Executive Director Ms Bhagyashri Dingle answered questions on the launch of the campaign; how to make cities safer for girls; and the necessity of safe spaces, among others.

Meri Beti Meri Shakti strives to ensure girls, supported by their families and communities, can take independent decisions about their lives, careers and growth.



# SUCCESS STORIES

## COMMUNITY-OWNED SOLID WASTE SEGREGATION AND COLLECTION



A community meeting on waste management

Taking off from the success of the Support My School campaign which revitalised schools across the country, Plan India, Coca-Cola India Private Limited and NDTV have partnered once again for Project Mission Recycling: a pilot focused on plastic waste management and recycling in 20 schools and communities.

Working with 6,000 children and 20,000 community members in Barabanki, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai, the project has facilitated 'environment clubs' that generate awareness on waste management, ensure adoption of best practices and plan and monitor key activities. Children are at the heart of this effort, leading child-to-child, child-to-parent and child-to-community engagement as dedicated campaigners and change makers.

Most notable is the environment club run by students from grades three to five of a primary school in Narendi Gram Panchayat in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh. Having conducted an initial assessment, they found that 60% of the waste generated in their school is degradable. Rallying the School Management Committee, school administration and PRI, they built a compost pit to convert degradable waste into manure to be used in the school's kitchen garden and field. Waste is no longer thrown into the street and ponds.

Working with the authorities, the club is successfully creating a demand for community-owned solid waste management mechanisms. As a result, every household is segregating waste and contributing INR 50 per month to a waste collector appointed by the club. Testament to the importance of engaging children as change agents, the project has enabled a clean and hygienic environment and adequate segregation, utilisation and disposal of waste.

## CHANGING MINDS AND LIVES IN JHARKHAND



Block Education Officer and Child Development Project Officer visiting Rita at school

Seventeen-year old Rita lives with her parents and brother in Goborshusi village in Jharkhand. Despite excelling in the tenth grade at the local high school and wishing to study further, she has been confined to her home for the past year.

This is because her father was opposed to the idea of bearing the responsibility for girls, especially when under the influence of alcohol, which was often. He spent all of his money to fuel his drinking habit and a few years ago, married off two of Rita's sisters at the ages of 14 and 15 so they would settle into family lives and be less of a liability to him. Her mother did not wish the same fate for Rita, instead hoping to educate her and encourage her academic bent of mind. Her best intentions were in vain however, as her husband decided it was time to get their youngest daughter married and began looking for a groom. By January, two proposals arrived leaving Rita very afraid with nowhere to turn.

Fortunately, she was then invited along with various other youth to attend a child rights' week celebration organised by Plan India and partner Sambhav in her village. There, she interacted with her peers, learned about her rights and soon felt able to confess her fears to the programme team.

The team immediately swung into action and tied up with the government Child Development Project Officer, Village Child Protection Committee and local Anganwadi (rural mother and child care centre), jointly approaching Rita's parents and offering solutions. Citing her ability and determination to study and make a life for herself, they were able to convince her father to stop the marriage. They met and counselled the family regularly, discussing the value that girls bring to their homes, society and country, and how education is the key to the future.

It had the intended effect. Rita's father became a changed man, and with assistance from the team, submitted an application to enrol her in a residential school supported by the government Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya scheme. Now, Rita is enrolled in school where she is happy and often visited by her family and new found friends in the programme team. "I will give a 100% to my studies and become a teacher so I can make a positive social change. I have no words to thank all those who stopped my marriage and will make the best of this opportunity to continue my education," she says.





Using MUAC band to screen the nutritional status of a child

## FEEDING THE CHILD OF TOMORROW

India has the second largest population in the world. Being a country with such high numbers, there are inevitably going to be issues and problems which some part of the populace will face. Unfortunately in India, it is the children that are suffering. As per a study conducted by Assocham and... [Read more](#)

## MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

[Al Jazeera - How young women in Delhi are fighting street harassment](#)

[India Today - Campaign dedicated to marginalised women](#)

[Indian Express - Goa ranks top, Bihar at bottom of Gender Vulnerability Index](#)

[Indiaspend - Women In India's Small States Least Vulnerable](#)

[Firstpost - Gender Gap Index: Women's requirements never given priority when resources are limited, says Plan India's Bhagyashri Dengle](#)

## ABOUT PLAN INDIA

Plan India is a nationally registered not for profit organisation striving to advance children's rights and equality for girls, thus creating a lasting impact in the lives of vulnerable and excluded children and their communities.

Since 1979, Plan India and its partners have improved the lives of millions of children and young people by enabling them access to protection, quality education and healthcare services, a healthy environment, livelihood opportunities and participation in decisions which affect their lives.

Plan India is a member of the Plan International Federation, an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. Plan International is active in more than 70 countries.

## Plan India

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