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# PLAN INDIA INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL 2019



## #GIRLSGETEQUAL #PLANGIRLS TAKEOVER

**GIRLS GET  
EQUAL**

**POWER**

**FREEDOM**

**REPRESENTATION**





## MESSAGE FROM ANUJA BANSAL

Every year, on October 11, the International Day of the Girl (IDG) recognises and celebrates girls as the leaders and trailblazers of tomorrow. It all began in 2011, when Plan led the global effort to build a coalition of support behind the Day of the Girl, securing backing from the Canadian government and taking our call all the way to the United Nations. Today, the IDG is a robust platform to rally greater opportunities for girls and awareness of gender discrimination they endure worldwide.

Over the years, Plan India has continued its effort to ensure that girls everywhere can learn, lead, decide and thrive. Partnering with girls, boys, young people, their families, communities and stakeholders across the country, we drive action for girls' rights, at every level.

This IDG, we are joined by more than 300 Girl Changemakers who have 'taken over' 21 Diplomatic Missions, 7 Corporates, a Radio Station, a Statutory Government Body, as well as 270 Gram Panchayats. All in support of girls' rights, power and potential.

For their support and solidarity, we would like to thank the Delegation of the European Union to India, Embassy of Argentina, Australian High Commission, Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium, Embassy of Bulgaria, High Commission of Canada in India, Embassy of the Czech Republic, Royal Danish Embassy, Embassy of Ecuador, Embassy of Estonia, Embassy of Finland, Embassy of Israel, Embassy of Latvia, Embassy of Lithuania, Embassy of Mexico, New Zealand High Commission, Embassy of Norway, Embassy of Slovakia, Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, Embassy of Sweden and the Embassy of Switzerland.

We would also express our gratitude to our Corporate Partners Airbus, AXA-XL, Edelman, Geberit, H&M Hennes & Mauritz Retail Private Limited, KONE India and The Body Shop, who have joined forces with us in the quest for gender equality.

Thank you to Twitter India for their unstinting support to the girls' rights movement, and media pioneers Radio City and RJ Ginnie for championing the cause. We would also convey our heartfelt gratitude to Ambika Singh, celebrated journalist and NDTV anchor, who has partnered with us in our mission.

Many thanks are also due to the Delhi State Legal Services Authority, 270 Gram Panchayats, and Block, District and State-level Government Bodies across the country, who made room for girls to address and resolve real issues they face every day.

Last but not the least, we would thank the heroes themselves: the Girl Changemakers. Hailing from 11 Indian states, they made history as eminent leaders, entrepreneurs, innovators and experts, and showed just how strong we could all be, with girls in the lead. Together, we are that much closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

This booklet features a number of our powerful partners in change across states and sectors. It is an affirmation of our collective commitment for a truly equal world.

This IDG 2019, we invite you to join the girls' rights movement too.

**Anuja Bansal**  
Executive Director  
Plan India



## MESSAGE FROM UGO ASTUTO

The European Union Delegation to India is delighted to partner once again with Plan India for the Girls' Takeover 2019 on the occasion of the International Day of the Girl. This will be the biggest Takeover to date as we managed to mobilise more Diplomatic Missions to participate in this multi-Embassy initiative as well as companies, media and local government as well.

"Takeovers" can be inspiring events – they empower girls and young women who experience the roles and tasks, the responsibilities and the power that come with important positions. Takeovers enable the girl who leads and showcase to others that girls can lead. This will encourage other girls to follow their dreams, to realise their full potential and to contribute to society with their talents and abilities.

The Girls' Takeovers are just one of the projects on which the European Union collaborates with Plan – here in India and worldwide. This partnership is an integral part of our wider portfolio in India geared towards women and girls' empowerment. The EU is active around the world to improve the situation of women and children.

Gender equality is both a matter of justice and a smart investment that will generate more equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. We are a strong supporter of SDG 5 on gender equality and women empowerment and work with countries around the world to implement it and the other SDGs.

We look forward to continued cooperation with India on gender quality. Equality between women and men is one of the core values of the European Union. In her first speech to the European Parliament, the new European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen made gender equality a cornerstone of her policy. Christine Lagarde, the new director of the European Central Bank, has been a promoter of empowering women in the global economy for years. These two powerful and influential women together with the Girl Ambassadors are role models for girls all over the world.

We thank all the participants for their commitment to the Girls' Takeover 2019!

**Ugo Astuto**  
Ambassador  
Delegation of the European Union to India

# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL



11 October has been a key global moment to celebrate the power of girls and highlight the barriers they face since the United Nations adopted it as International Day of the Girl in December 2011.

While there has long been an International Women's Day and an International Day of the Child, neither of these days recognise the unique position of girls who are discriminated against simply for being young and female.

Plan led the global effort to build a coalition of support behind the Day of the Girl, securing backing from the Canadian government which took our call all the way to the United Nations.

Over the years, we have worked with girls and multi-sectoral partners alike to launch global actions on girls' rights. What's more, each October, girls from Plan-supported communities take over leadership roles in political, economic and social spaces, stepping into the shoes of influential leaders and experts, fulfilling their responsibilities, and demonstrating their power and potential to lead the way into the future.

Since 2016, the year that heralded the first-ever Girls' Takeovers, thousands of girls all over the world have taken over positions of power including those of Presidents, Ambassadors, CEOs and Chief Editors as part of a global movement in support of gender equality.

With girls at the helm, we are bringing national and global focus to the need for girls' representation in the global development agenda.

## JOINING FORCES FOR GIRLS' RIGHTS

On International Day of the Girl 2019, Plan India has had the privilege of joining forces with more than 300 Girl Changemakers who have taken over 21 Diplomatic Missions, 7 Corporates, a Radio Station, a National Statutory Government Body, as well as 270 Gram Panchayats and Block, District and State-level Government Bodies across the country.

The Girls' Takeovers are testament to the power and potential of girls, and an emphatic challenge to perceptions around what is possible for girls and young women as decision makers, leaders and change makers.

Hailing from 11 Indian states—Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh—Girl Changemakers brought their keen insight and perspectives to the table.

With their counterparts, they engaged in discussions on gender and power and reflected on the need for greater of representation of girls and young women in the global development agenda. Together, they resolved to ensure this necessary change takes place, and led meetings, decisions and activities to this end.

Girls' Takeovers included the positions of Ambassadors/High Commissioners/Deputy Chiefs of Mission of the Delegation of the European Union to India, Embassy of Argentina, Australian High Commission, Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium, Embassy of Bulgaria, High Commission of Canada in India, Embassy of the Czech Republic, Royal Danish Embassy, Embassy of Ecuador, Embassy of Estonia, Embassy of Finland, Embassy of Israel, Embassy of Latvia, Embassy of Lithuania, Embassy of Mexico, New Zealand High Commission, Embassy of Norway, Embassy of Slovakia, Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, Embassy of Sweden and the Embassy of Switzerland; the Additional Secretary of the Delhi State Legal Services Authority; the Sarpanches/Pradhans of 270 Gram Panchayats, and Block, District and State-level Government Bodies across India; the airwaves at Radio City 91.1 FM; and the CEOs/Managing Directors/Country Managers/Senior Leadership at Airbus, AXA-XL, Edelman, Geberit, H&M Hennes & Mauritz Retail Private Limited, KONE India and The Body Shop.

Twitter India has also joined us to support girls' rights under their Twitter for Good initiative. Through a three-month partnership, Twitter India and Plan India will run impactful campaigns, build conversations and rally support in the movement for gender equality.

## THE GIRL CHANGEMAKERS

Girl Changemakers who led the Girls' Takeovers are well known in their home states for their determination, strength, leadership and passion. As highly effective influencers and mobilisers, they have not only overcome difficult circumstances in their own lives but also brought about development in their communities. A number of them have been recognised by the government and media for their immense contributions.

Starting at an early age in Plan India's programmes, the girls have progressed through Child Clubs, Adolescent Girls' Groups, thematic working groups and technical and governance committees, to be part of State and National Youth Advisory Panels and Children's Assemblies among others. As experienced and long-serving community leaders, they inform our programmatic decision making, implementation, monitoring and advocacy at every level.

This year, Girl Changemakers were selected from across 11 Plan intervention states through a comprehensive screening and selection process characterised by fair and transparent nominations assessed at the State and National levels.

Of the nominees, 33 led National level Takeovers, prior to which their already impressive abilities were honed during a two-day Capacity Building and Leadership Workshop from 9-10 October 2019 in Delhi. The Workshop covered a range of subjects viz. formal presentation, effective communication, negotiation for influencing, leadership skills and more.

In the states, over 270 girls held unprecedented positions of power—at multiple levels—and provided a meaningful, visible and sustainable platform for girls and young women in all their diversity and potential, in their communities and beyond.





**“Leadership is all about handholding the team and walking beside them.”**

**Shakina**  
Andhra Pradesh

Shakina wants to see a world where men and women share household chores, participate equally in financial matters, exhibit joint decision making and treat each other with respect. She believes that gender stereotypes can be broken and the best way to do this is to bring children up in a gender impartial environment.

She strongly feels that social issues like dowry, domestic violence, trafficking, child marriage, sexual harassment and abuse would decrease if social norms and constitutional provisions strongly support equal opportunities for girls' development.

Shakina believes that breaking barriers requires bold steps by both women and men. While girls and women achievers should be celebrated as role models, credit must also be given to their fathers for supporting and encouraging them. She feels that engaging with boys and men is equally important and helps in creating an enabling environment for an equitable society.

Shakina has had a flair for leadership since childhood. She was the elected General Secretary of her college and is currently Student Union President. She profoundly connects with the Women Empowerment Cell of her college that provides guidance and support to girls. Shakina has also participated in elocution, debate and other public speaking opportunities and has always stood out for her oratory skills.

**“We are human beings and, as such, we have rights. The point is that we need to have equal rights, so there is no discrimination about beings in this world. And Girls' Takeover initiative is a great step forward in this regard.”**

**Daniel Chuburu**  
Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to India



Daniel Chuburu is the Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to India since 2018. Previously he has also served as Argentine Ambassador to Mexico (2016-2018) and Kenya (2006-2011).

He is a career diplomat who joined the Foreign Service of Argentina in 1981. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, he holds a Degree in Economics and Business – Universidad Complutense of Madrid (Spain). He has a vast experience in economic and trade affairs.

Early in his career Ambassador Chuburu was assigned to the Undersecretariat of International Economic Relations and, then, posted to the Permanent Mission of the Argentine Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, where he managed economic issues. From 1993 to 1998 he was the Head of Chancery at the Embassy of the Argentine Republic in Washington, United States.

He has been member of Argentine delegations to several multilateral institutions, such as the Financial Fund for the Development of the River Plate Basin (FONPLATA); CIES/OAS, WHO, WIPO, UN-Habitat, ECOSOC, UNCTAD, SELA, G-77, African Union, CELAC, UNASUR, among others

Ambassador Chuburu is married to Ms Carola Machinandiarena and has five children. Like a good Argentinian, he is a big football fan as well as sports in general.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Ambassador to welcome Shakina

Signing of the Pledge

Meeting with  
Deputy Chief of Mission, Minister  
Mr Martín Vía

Embassy tour

Shakina to take over the role of the  
Argentine Consul in visa interviews, then  
assist Head of Commercial Section,  
Secretary of Embassy Ms Agustina Meda  
on pending issues

Shakina to take over the role of  
the Argentine Head of Cultural &  
Educational Section

Speech by Shakina  
followed by lunch



**“Youth can effectively contribute to ending anti-social practices like child marriage and gender discrimination.”**

**Anjali**  
Uttar Pradesh

Anjali has shown good leadership skills since an early age. She was selected as the President of her local Children’s Group and later of the Adolescent Girls’ Group. Presently, she holds the position of Secretary for Plan India’s State Youth Advisory Panel in Uttar Pradesh.

As a leader, she always worked towards ensuring proper education for young girls and organised several meetings and rallies with regard to this. With adolescent school-going girls, menstrual hygiene was a huge concern which often resulted in their absenteeism in the school. To resolve this, Anjali and her group identified such girls and provided incinerators to 50 households.

Anjali feels that education is essential for achieving equal opportunities for girls and women. She feels that if girls have proper education and are financially strong, they will be duly recognised and appreciated in the community.

In order to make sure that no child in her community remains uneducated, Anjali and her friends spend between one hour to three days each week to promote a ‘reading corner’ where children can come and learn reading and writing.

Anjali is an all-round performer in extra-curricular activities and has won several accolades in sports and cultural programmes at the block level.

**“We all have the power to be agents of change, and we can all play a role in achieving gender equality. Australia is committed to working with the international community, and civil society, to advance the rights of women and girls across the world. International Day of the Girl Child is an opportunity for us to collectively celebrate the power and potential of girls, and stand with them as they take their place as leaders of the future.”**

**Harinder Sidhu**  
High Commissioner,  
Australian High Commission to India



Harinder Sidhu has held the post of Australia’s High Commissioner to India since February 2016. She also holds non-resident accreditation to the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Ms Sidhu brings over 30 years’ experience in government. She began her career as a diplomat with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Before her appointment to India, she served as head of the Department’s Multilateral Policy Division with responsibility for Australia’s relationships with the UN and UN agencies, the UN Security Council and the Commonwealth.

Between 2008 and 2013, Ms Sidhu held the post of First Assistant Secretary in the Department of Climate Change. Prior to that, she served in several senior roles in government, particularly on defence and national security matters in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Office of National Assessments.

Ms Sidhu has served overseas at Australian Embassies in Damascus and Moscow, and was also posted to Cairo where she studied the Arabic language. She holds degrees in Economics and Law from the University of Sydney.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Takeover orientation followed by  
High Commission tour

Introduction with the High  
Commissioner and formal  
Takeover

Soft launch of gender campaign  
at the High Commissioner’s  
Residence, film screening

Self-introduction by Anjali at the  
All Staff Quarterly Meeting

Site visit to one of Plan’s NGO  
partners







**“I would like to see my country as a developed nation as development brings opportunities for girls and young women.”**

**Komal**  
Delhi

Komal, a member of the youth group under Young health Program supported by Plan India, lays a strong emphasis on the empowerment of young girls and women. She demands equal opportunities for them in terms of nutrition, education and rights. Associated with Plan project since 2017, Komal is cognizant of the fact that to close the gender gap, the disparity in income and societal belief-systems need to be addressed. She also urges stakeholders like youth, communities, family, government to come together and assume their responsibilities more aggressively and holistically.

For Komal, the development of any country is routed through gender equality and respect for the rights of all. If given a chance to become the Prime Minister of India, she would ensure that each department has an equal number of men and women, including the parliament and state assembly.

Komal has always been a front runner. She has led the team in several competitions like ‘best out of waste’ or ‘A drop of Hope’. Her ability to work for a greater good has put her in a challenging position many times. “When my classmates or colleagues do not hold a similar mindset and instead search for personal gains, I sit with them, discuss the whole issue and try to educate them”.

As part of her association with Plan, Komal has participated in various community awareness activities and capacity building workshops.

**“Belgium promotes women’s rights and gender equality both at home and in its foreign policy. Belgium has made a significant commitment to equality between women and men, the fifth Sustainable Development Goal and Belgium’s international development policy particularly focuses on strengthening women’s rights, including their health and their sexual and reproductive rights.”**

**H.E. François Delhaye**  
Ambassador, Embassy of Belgium



H.E. François Delhaye is Ambassador-designate of Belgium to India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Prior to joining the Embassy in New Delhi, His Excellency was posted as Ambassador of Belgium to Iran.

He was earlier assigned as Deputy Spokesman at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium and as Deputy Permanent Representative to NATO in Brussels. A seasoned diplomat with over twentyfive years of experience, H.E. François Delhaye was also posted in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Kinshasa in Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Austria.

He has studied Political Sciences at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and holds a Diploma in International Relations from the Johns Hopkins University – Bologna center.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival

Greetings and meeting with the  
Ambassador

Round table with Embassy  
colleagues

Komal works on assigned diplomatic tasks

Social media interaction





**Rampi**  
Uttar Pradesh

**“Girls and women in our society are often victims of regressive traditions and superstitions.”**

Rampi is a spirited young girl who has braved many challenges to grow into a strong voice for girls' rights. On joining the adolescent group that she heads today as President, she was given knowledge about menstrual hygiene, personal hygiene, health, nutrition and child and girls' rights. The knowledge helped her to strengthen her capacities as well as work dedicatedly to bring improvements in the lives of her community members, especially adolescent girls.

Rampi feels every girl and woman should work towards developing her capacity. She feels they should be able to take decisions for themselves without any pressure. For this, they should have access to equal opportunities. Rampi feels although there are a number of laws and provisions for the welfare of women but their weak implementation have always stood girls and women at a disadvantage.

When she became a part of the Adolescent Girls' Group, she noticed that girls were not availing health facilities from Anganwadi Centres that were set up for their benefit. On becoming the group President, she ensured that girls received proper nutrition and supplements to improve their health. She also guided pregnant and lactating women to access supplementary nutrition.

One of Rampi's remarkable efforts as the group President was to file an FIR against a local man who was sexually harassing one of the girls in her community. While she made this decision, the perpetrator's family threatened her with dire consequences if she pursued the case. Rampi stood her ground until the perpetrator was punished.

Rampi loves taking part in extra-curricular activities. She attended a scouts and guides camp where she was chosen as leader of her group. Her group was chosen as the best group in the camp for their performance.



**Eleonora Dimitrova**  
Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria

Since March 2019 Mrs Eleonora Dimitrova is serving as Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of India (concurrently to Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives). She is the first woman ambassador of Bulgaria to India.

Mrs Dimitrova has served in various positions in numerous countries, including Brazil, Czech Republic, Germany and Libya.

She has nearly two decades of experience in the Bulgarian diplomatic service. Before her appointment to India, she served as Director of the Presscentre Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ambassador Eleonora Dimitrova holds a Master's Degree in International Economic Relations from the University of Varna, and is decorated with the Honorary insignia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival at the Embassy

Meeting with the Deputy Head of Mission

Meeting with the Ambassador

Rampi to participate in the weekly internal meeting at the Embassy

Informal interaction with Embassy staff followed by participation in Ambassador's meeting

Embassy tour and a mock visit to the MEA





**Sarathi**  
Jharkhand

**“I would like to introduce digital and fun learning in classrooms so that girls are motivated to come to school.”**

Seventeen year old Sarathi is one of seven siblings raised by a single mother, she understood the power of education at an early age, and even worked alongside her mother as an agricultural labourer to gather money for her school fees.

A bright young student, she works hard to ensure that, like her, all girls get the chance to study. She counsels children, young people and their families, so that children, especially girls, continue and complete their studies. Her efforts led two families to enroll their daughters in private school. To keep others from dropping out, she offers free tuition as well, and has tutored 45 students from grades 1 to 8 in the last two years.

In the community and village council meetings too, she raises the issue of caste-based discrimination in community and village council meetings, due to which two Scheduled Tribe members are now part of the Panchayat Samiti (rural local government). She also runs awareness drives and campaigns in the community and has stopped two child marriages.

Through an adolescent empowerment programme, she works with the 20 young people in her community and conducts orientation sessions on health, education, vocation, financial literacy, savings, and more. She obtained a Diploma in Computer Applications and due to her aptitude and interest, was invited to become an instructor at the institute. She has since trained 25 students.

Sarathi's commitment to education and equality have made her a household name and role model. No challenge is too big for this powerful young woman.

**“The International Day of the Girl is an opportunity to highlight the rights of girls; showcase their contributions at the local, national and global levels; and advocate for greater action to support them in reaching their full potential”**



**Deirdre Kent**  
Chargé d'affaires,  
High Commission of Canada to India

Deirdre Kent serves as the Canadian Deputy High Commissioner to India, with concurrent accreditation to Nepal and Bhutan.

Prior to her arrival in India in September 2019, she was the Director General for International Assistance Policy within Global Affairs Canada (2015-2019) responsible for advancing strategic and emerging policy issues.

Ms Kent joined Canada's Foreign Service in 1994. Since then, her career has spanned international development policy and programming, peace and security issues and human rights with a focus on multilateral diplomacy.

She served as Human Rights Counsellor at the Canadian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland from 2002 to 2006. She also served abroad in Israel and the West Bank/Gaza.

Deirdre Kent holds a Bachelor of Science and an International Masters of Business Administration (MBA).

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Greetings on arrival at the High Commission

Introduction to the staff

Briefing on the program followed by signing of the pledge at the High Commissioner's Office

Mission's Media & Social Media Strategy Briefing followed by High Commission tour

Interaction with the Feminist Visa Office Committee and the Inclusion Committee

Sarathi to host a working lunch with four Women Deliver Young Leaders



**“Equal participation and opportunities to girls will make the world beautiful, responsible, successful and bolder.”**

**Kavya**  
Andhra Pradesh

Kavya is a proven leader. She captained her throw ball team at the district level and was a part of the under-16 and under-19 State level winning teams. She wants to see a world where girls and women break the barriers of shyness, fear and suppression that stop them from being their best.

She believes that girls and young women go on to become achievers if they are ably supported and given opportunities. However, she notices that the discriminatory attitude towards females starts at the family level and extends into all the other stages of a girl's development.

According to her, poverty, safety issues, low or no value for work, and discrimination from a religious lens are some of the core gaps that hamper the cause of girls to achieve equal opportunities. She feels that communities grow and thrive when there is understanding, trust and mutual respect and this is not possible unless there is equal participation of girls and women.

Kavya is an enthusiast when it comes to supporting people in need. She, with the support of her friends helped a sexual abuse survivor to continue her education by finding a suitable sponsor for her. The sponsored girl did well and was later able to secure a job for herself. She, in turn has now sponsored the education of two underprivileged students. Life changing stories such as this inspire Kavya to continue her efforts for the betterment of others.

**“The Czech Republic is committed to support International Day of the Girl Takeover initiative and work with the international community in order to spread awareness and ensure the equality to all girls and young women across the world.”**



**H.E. Mr. Milan Hovorka**  
Ambassador of the Czech Republic to India

Ambassador Milan Hovorka was born in 1961. In 1984, after graduating at the University of Economics in Prague he worked at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Trade of Czechoslovakia. After the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia in 1989 he was sent to Geneva where he worked as a representative at the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the UN and other international organisations. In 1996 he was appointed the chief director of the Section for bilateral trade policy and for relations with the EU and EFTA at the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic. Between 1998 and 2004 he became the permanent representative of the Czech Republic to the World Trade Organisation in the rank of Ambassador. While being there, he was a permanent representative and afterwards the director of the Mission and a member of various elected WTO bodies, including chair of the Council for Trade in Goods. In 2004, he was appointed the director of the Section of European countries and CIC countries at the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic. Since 1 September 2007, Milan Hovorka has been Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade. In summer 2015 he has been appointed the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. From 1st September 2016 he is in charge of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in New Delhi. He is Ambassador of the Czech Republic for 6 countries, namely India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka with residence in New Delhi.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival and greetings

Assessment of small local project proposals

Participation in interview with a visa applicant and Ambassador's meeting with Indian partners

Participation in preparation of business forum in the field of tourism

Lunch





**“Breaking traditional practices, especially for women is not easy but gradual and persistent convincing often works.”**

**Mayawati**  
Rajasthan

Mayawati has shown an extraordinary sense of independence in her choices so far, whether it be stepping outside the village to participate in sports or pursuing higher education, all this because of the strong conviction in whatever she does.

She has been an outstanding sportsperson from the very beginning. She was the captain of the three times district level champion Kho-Kho team. But this success did not come without challenges. The initial challenge came from her family itself who were against the idea of her traveling to another city for the game. They finally had to give in to Mayawati's persistence. The boys of her village also tried to demoralise her by saying that village girls' team stood no chance of winning the game at the district level. Mayawati took this as a challenge, practiced hard with the team and won the competition, not once but thrice.

She believes that age old restrictions have led women folk to become weak, dependent and prone to all sorts of oppression. This negative attitude of people towards girl child has subsequently led to female foeticide, gender discrimination, incidents of domestic violence and abuse. She knows that breaking traditional practices, especially for women is not easy but gradual and persistent convincing often works. That is how she has successfully convinced many village women to stop the age old practice of 'Ghunghat Pratha' (veiling in public).

For her meritorious performance in grade 12 examinations and for motivating other girls to pursue higher education, Mayawati was honoured by the Sub Divisional Magistrate and Block Development Office with a trophy and cash reward.



**“Denmark believes in gender equality and fighting for women and girls' rights. Gender equality is not only an end in itself but also a means to ensure a sustainable future for the world. Let us realise our dream!”**

**Freddy Svane**  
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to India

Freddy Svane is the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan. He assumed office in September 2019. He brings a lot of experience and knowledge about South Asia as this is not his first tenure in India. He also served as the Ambassador at the Embassy in New Delhi from 2010-2015.

Mr Svane brings over 35 years of experience from the Foreign Service. He has previously served as Ambassador to Japan for two tenures, Under-Secretary of the Trade Council and Ambassador to the Department of Trade Policy and Analysis. In the early years of his career, Mr. Svane has been posted at the Danish Embassy in Paris and at the Danish Permanent Mission to the EU in Brussels.

In addition to his many years serving the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Svane brings experience from his time as General Manager at A.P. Møller and a position as CEO of the Danish Agricultural Council.

Mr Svane holds a degree in history from University of Copenhagen.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival greetings followed by an all-staff meeting hosted by the Ambassador and self-introduction

Embassy tour with the Head of Political Department

The signing of the pledge

Lunch followed by a workshop at the Danish Cultural Institute and Danish University students

Departure



**“Child marriage is one the most devastating examples of gender inequality as it limits women’s opportunities and their ability to reach their full potential.”**

**Anjali**  
Uttar Pradesh

Anjali feels she is fortunate to be born in a family that supports her with progressive opportunities. She is bothered by the fact that she is not allowed to step outside her house during evenings, whereas, her brother is free to go anywhere. She wants to see a society that is free from any kind of fear and discrimination.

Five years back, she became a member of a children’s group as well as an adolescent group and ever since she has been part of diverse activities, some of which she has herself led. She has trained 25 village girls on Menstrual Hygiene Management. On finding out that the school authorities were not providing mid-day meals in the village school, she met the village school authorities and ensured that proper mid-day meals became a regular feature of the school’s functioning. While at the adolescent girls’ group, they made enormous efforts and were able to stop a child marriage.

Anjali sees lack of education, limited technical skill development opportunities, gender discrimination and child marriage as barriers to achieving equal opportunities for girls. She feels child marriage is one the most devastating examples of gender inequality, as it limits a girls’ opportunities and their ability to reach their full potential.

She is striving hard to make girls around her strong and confident. Recently, Anjali participated in a self-defence programme organised by Plan India after which she was able to train 25 girls of her community in self-defence techniques.



**“To change the world, we need everyone but above all girls and women who throughout history of mankind have shown, that their role everywhere is and will always be vital.”**

**Ana María Maldonado Bautista**  
Deputy Chief of the Embassy of Ecuador to India

Ana María Maldonado Bautista (34) is an Afro-Ecuadorian born in the city of Quito. She is a graduate in Mechanical Engineering and holds a Masters in International Relations. Besides being an active member of the Social and Cultural Association for the integration of the black race in Ecuador Ascirne, she is a dancer with the musical group Cimarrón and associated with it since its inception in 1993.

Her close bond with the Afro-Ecuadorian movement is linked to her participation in this dancing group. This group is sincerely dedicated to the dissemination of Afro-Ecuadorian culture and the fight to eliminate discrimination and racism.

Since June 2015, she has been posted in New Delhi as the Third Secretary at the Embassy of Ecuador to India. She entered the Ecuadorian Foreign Service in 2012, and throughout these 7 years she has served the foreign service of Ecuador wearing various hats such as in charge of the Binational Technical Committee of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Affairs between Ecuador and Colombia, in charge of the Binational Technical Committee of Infrastructure between Ecuador and Colombia and in charge of the Cultural and Consular Affairs at the Embassy of Ecuador in India.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival

Tour of the Embassy

Anjali to participate in the presentation by the Deputy Chief

Interaction with Embassy staff

Lunch







**Ruma**  
Delhi

**“I want to bring about more change through my hard work, smart work and leadership.”**

Ruma is a member of Delhi State Youth Advisory Panel for the past two years. She envisions a society where girls and young women are not burdened, particularly by marriage at an early age. She is confident that girls and young women can prove their potential at all levels if given equal opportunities.

She believes that change in the orthodox mindset of people is needed to promote and protect the rights of girls and young women. She wants girls and women to be accepted and respected for who they are and not judged on the basis of their gender.

She feels that making family, school and public spaces safe and enabling paves the way for the overall development of girls and young women.

Ruma has good communication and leadership skills. She has participated and led awareness campaigns at the field level on a wide range of issues including prevention of child marriage and dowry. She has also been vocal about issues concerning girls' rights in debates and other public speaking opportunities.

Ruma is good at problem solving and believes that an open communication system and appreciation of the efforts of others are instrumental in taking a group forward in a positive manner.

**“I will share my power and stand up for girls' rights. A right to education is an important fundamental right that should be available to all the girls in the world. Equal rights to have access to quality education is a precondition for any successful career in the future. Estonian Embassy in New Delhi is currently setting an encouraging example for many others, considering the fact that all three Estonian diplomats working here are women.”**



**Katrin Kivi**  
Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to India

Ms Katrin Kivi, the Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia in India joined the mission in New Delhi August 2019. Concurrently, she is also Ambassador to Bangladesh, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

Most recently, Ambassador Kivi served as Estonian Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and prior to that, she was Ambassador of Estonia to Denmark.

Ms Katrin Kivi started her work in the Estonian Ministry for Foreign Affairs in December 1993, two years after Estonian independence was restored. During her longstanding diplomatic career, Ambassador Kivi has served among other important functions as Director for Asia, ASEM and ASEAN, Deputy Head of Mission in the Estonian Embassy in France, Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to UNESCO in Paris and Director for EU General Affairs in Tallinn.

Ambassador Kivi is mother of two grown up sons. She speaks French, German, English and Russian.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival greetings

Meeting with the Ambassador

Tour of the Embassy

Meeting with the Embassy  
staff





**“Power is never given to you.  
You have to work your way  
towards it.”**

**Gayathri**  
Telangana

Gayathri, since childhood, has felt that leadership came naturally to her. Throughout her school and college life, Gayathri always took leadership roles. Through her association with Plan India, she continues to be a young leader organising and conducting various programmes on life skills, health and hygiene and nutrition.

For Gayathri, it is very important to inspire and motivate others. She feels discrimination is a key factor that hinders a girls' progress. According to her, it is not just discrimination between boys and girls, but also that among girls which creates an impediment for their development.

She feels that girls and women have the capability to strongly hold families and communities together, which is all the more reason why they should be supported with good education so that they can step up and assume leadership roles.

She wants the government to provide strong girl-friendly provisions, especially for adolescent girls as they are at a critical stage of their development. She wishes that young girls be provided free nutrition and sanitary napkins. She also wants more girls to learn self-defence techniques in order to be more confident in a changing world.

**“The European Union is a strong supporter of gender equality and women empowerment (at home and around the world). I hope that the takeovers will help to break stereotypes and to encourage girls to follow their dreams, to lead and to realise their full potential”**



**Ugo Astuto**  
Ambassador

Delegation of the European Union to India

Ugo Astuto, born in Padova (Italy) on 15th August 1964 Degree in Political Science at the University of Rome (“La Sapienza”). Ugo Astuto entered the Italian Diplomatic Service in 1991. From July 2016 to September 2019 he was the Principal Director for Asia in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome. His career in the Italian Foreign Service spans experience in the Embassies in Nairobi and London (including as alternate Director for Italy in the EBRD-European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), in the Permanent Representation in Brussels and in the Embassy in Delhi, where he served as Deputy Head of Mission. From February 2013 until July 2016 he was seconded to the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels, first as Director for South and South East Asia and then as Deputy Managing Director/Director for Asia and the Pacific.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Formal reception by the  
EU Delegation, briefing by POL

Meeting with the Ambassador,  
formal takeover and signing of  
administrative affairs

All staff meeting followed by the  
signing of the Pledge

POL to discuss the daily press  
review with the Gayathri after  
which she would participate in  
#GoGreen campaign

Gayathri to visit UN Women

Interaction with stakeholders on  
Smart Urbanisation





**Shweta**  
Telangana

**“There is a need to sensitise parents on the need for girls’ education and the positive effect of their economic independence.”**

Shweta is someone who understands girls and women issues and tries to voice their concerns through her poetry. The local newspapers have found her poems compelling and have also published few of them. Through her association with Plan, she has also been trained to work on issues such as child marriage, child trafficking, secondary education and Job Oriented Vocational Training.

She believes that gender discrimination is one of the biggest issues of the developing world. According to her, when people have access to education, they can think, learn, and innovate, thereby contributing to economic development and their own well-being. She feels that girls and women from rural areas in particular must be given equal opportunities so that they can be financially independent and in a position to invest in their health.

Shweta is in a leadership role at her school where she tries to bridge the gap between teachers and students. As a leader, she also addresses cases of eve teasing in and around the school and has brought such cases to the notice of school authorities and village elders in the past.

Shweta has strong oratory skills and on separate occasions has addressed masses, raising awareness about the harmful practices of child marriage and child trafficking.

**“Recognizing girls as active agents, change-makers and leaders is crucial. Advancing the equal rights of girls and women forms an important part of Finland’s foreign and security policy. Sustainable future can only be achieved with the full participation of girls and women at all levels of political, economic and public life.”**



**Erik af Hällström**  
Chargé d’affaires, Embassy of Finland to India and Bangladesh

Mr Erik af Hällström is serving as the Chargé d’ Affaires, Embassy of Finland to India and Bangladesh as of July 2019. He take up his duties as Deputy Head of Mission in New Delhi in August 2018.

He joined the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in 1996, after serving as a Journalist at Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) for six years. He graduated from the Åbo Akademi University in 1989 with a Master’s Degree in Political Sciences. Erik has served in various roles in numerous countries prior to assuming his present.office.

Some of them including Director, Unit for UN and General Global Affairs; (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Counsellor, Defence Policy Department, Ministry of Defence; Team Leader, Pan - African Issues, Department for Africa and the Middle East (MFA);

He has also served as Minister Counsellor at the Embassy of Finland in The Hague; Chair of COARM Working Party during the Finnish EU Presidency in 2006; First Secretary and Human Rights Expert at the Permanent Mission of Finland in Geneva, and Second Secretary at the Finnish Embassy in Brasília.

With more than twenty years spent in foreign affairs, Mr Hällström strongly believes in the strength of tolerance, solidarity and universal human rights. A father of three daughters and strong advocate for the rights of women and girls, he believes that the Finnish strongholds of gender equality, non-discrimination and empowerment of the less advantaged should always stay as the backbone of all that we do.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival

Introductory meeting with  
Charge d’affaires

Embassy tour followed by a  
meeting with the staff

Shweta to draft an action plan on  
the implementation of the Finnish  
gender equality campaign HÄN in  
India

Lunch followed by a meeting with  
UN women at the UN house



**Pushpa**  
Uttar Pradesh

**“Unless people develop a positive mindset about girls and their capabilities, no amount of law enforcement can change the situation.”**

Pushpa is a crusader for girls' rights. Soon after joining an Adolescent Girls' Group in her community, she was handed over the responsibility of being the group leader. This, however, did not come easy. She braved many challenges when she started to orient girls about Menstrual Hygiene Management. Initially there was apprehension among girls and disapproval from their families on the topic of Menstrual Hygiene. Pushpa's influencing skills and conduct was only gradually acknowledged when the community started finding her sensitisation sessions useful.

Pushpa feels that the society is still highly patriarchal and needs to be aware of vital issues including Menstrual Hygiene. She wants to contribute to creating a society where parents focus on girls' education rather than their marriages.

She feels many women are unaware of the laws and provisions for their rights and safety. To her, focus on girls' empowerment has to be the priority. She thinks it is also absolutely essential that women are empowered to be independent so that they can know, access and wield their rights.

Pushpa understood that unless people develop a positive mindset, no amount of law enforcement can change the situation. With her unwavering efforts to address the community issues, she has sensitised more than 50 students from grades 11 and 12. She has also brought 12 school drop-outs back to school and stopped a child marriage with the support of her group.



**H.E. Mr Artis BERTULIS**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and  
Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Latvia to  
the Republic of India

**“Latvia adds its voice to help keep girls in school where they can build networks. By building social networks, women have greater opportunities to effect the change in their communities”**

H.E. Mr Artis BERTULIS (born 1966), Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Latvia to the Republic of India since 13 November 2018.

Ambassador BERTULIS has a degree in physics and a postgraduate degree in international affairs from the Latvian University and Royal College of Defence Studies in London.

His diplomatic career started in 1991 by joining the Foreign Affairs Committee of the newly independent Latvia's Parliament. In 1992 he worked as the research assistant in the North Atlantic Assembly in Brussels before joining Latvian Foreign service in 1993.

He was Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime minister of Latvia (1994) and Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs until 1998.

He was Head of State Protocol 1998-2001 and 2005-2007, Ambassador to Sweden (2001-2005), Portugal (2007-2011) and non-resident Ambassador to Brazil (2008-2011).

As Director General EU Affairs (2011-2013) at the MFA he was working with the Prime Minister on the introduction of euro currency in Latvia.

He was Ambassador to Italy (2013-2018) and non-resident Ambassador to Albania, Malta and San Marino; and Permanent Representative in FAO.

Ambassador BERTULIS is married to Esmeralda and they have two adult children.

Ambassador speaks English, Italian, Swedish, Portuguese, Russian, and some French.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Morning meeting with the  
Embassy staff

Presentation on Gender Equality  
in Latvia, Pushpa to present her  
vision

Meeting with the  
Ambassador

Taking over the Embassy's social  
networks followed by tasks  
assigned by the Consul

Lunch





**Gayatri**  
Rajasthan

“I want to strengthen child protection mechanisms so that quick and appropriate action could be taken when any case is reported.”

Gayatri wants her village to stand out when it comes to development. For her strong leadership skills, the 19 year old was chosen to take over the role of Village School Principal during National Girl Child Day celebrations last year. The school did not have an English subject teacher and Gayatri highlighted this and recommended that a teacher be appointed without delay given the requirement for English in a developing world. The authorities heard her plea and shortly after, an English subject teacher was appointed.

Managing her peers is one of her core strengths. When she was elected the leader of the local 250+ member children club federation, some boys from the group showed displeasure at being led by a girl. However, through her management and people skills and progressive mindset, she was able to obtain their support. She believes if girls and young women get equal opportunities they would be able to enhance and showcase their talents, achieve their potential and contribute to society’s development. In her opinion, gender balance will ensure rightful status of women in the society and they would be able to live with dignity.

Gayatri has led several awareness campaigns in her village on issues such as child marriage, child labour and gender discrimination. One of her important roles was to strengthen the village level Adolescent Girls’ Group. As a Deputy Chairperson of the Group, she successfully motivated more than 150 girls to pursue their higher education.

She also likes expressing herself through theatre and has sensitised her community members on several critical issues using the medium.



**Julius Pranevičius**  
Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to  
India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh

“The #GirlsTakeover brings focus on important issues and challenges girls are facing today. I believe it will encourage the much needed social and political change regarding gender equality and empowerment of women and girls”

Julius Pranevičius is the Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (non-resident).

Prior to his posting in New Delhi, he served as the Consular General of Lithuania in New York (2015-2018). Ambassador joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania in 1999 after graduating from the University of Vilnius with a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science, where he later also obtained Master’s degree in European Studies.

Since joining the Ministry, Ambassador Pranevičius has served in various roles focusing on European Union affairs and was posted to Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the European Union. He was also the Director of EU Council Presidency Department during the first Lithuanian presidency of the Council of the EU in 2013.

Ambassador Pranevičius speaks English, French and Russian. He is married and has three children.

ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival followed by a tour of the Embassy

Meeting with staff and a bilateral meeting with the Ambassador

Gayatri to make a short presentation promoting Lithuania as a tourist destination

Gayatri to present her work and discuss challenges faced by girls and women

Taking over the tasks of consulate followed by lunch





**Nikki**  
Bihar

**“If girls get equal opportunities, they can match boys in everything.”**

Nikki comes from a family where she was not allowed to step out for youth meetings, especially if it included discussion with the opposite sex. However, her persuasive nature and deep interest to work for the welfare of her community compelled her parents to gradually acknowledge her efforts and support her in her work.

She feels as girls grow older, the number and nature of restrictions on them increases. Boys on the other hand are free to do whatever they want. As per her, ensuring equal opportunities for girls and boys is very important. She recognises education as a chief catalyst for this as States with a higher literacy rate are more sensitive towards providing equal opportunities to girls. This helps in addressing issues of child marriage and child labour and ensures better health, education and economic opportunities for women.

Nikki has actively led sensitisation drives on education, nutrition, health, sanitation and menstrual hygiene. Her active intervention has resulted in prevention of four child marriages in her community. For her noble support to students, including providing free study material to the underprivileged, Nikki was awarded by the Block Development Officer of her area.



**H.E. Mr. Federico Salas Lotfe**  
Ambassador of the Embassy of Mexico to India

Federico Salas Lotfe, born in Mexico City. Holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Political Science. He is a career diplomat since 1989, and he became Ambassador in 2000. He was Deputy Director for United Nations Affairs from 1983 to 1987. He was Director General of International Organizations in 1988 and adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for 1988 and 1989. He was responsible for Political Affairs at the Mission of Mexico to the United Nations Organization between 1989 and 1993. From 1993 to 1998 he was in charge of Political Affairs and Relations with Congress at the Embassy of Mexico to the United States of America. He then became Director of Policy Planning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until 2000. He has been Ambassador of Mexico to the Czech Republic (2001-2007), to Israel (2007-2015) and to Indonesia (2015-2017). Before being appointed as Ambassador to India, he was Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) (2017-2019).

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Meeting with the Ambassador

Tour of the Embassy

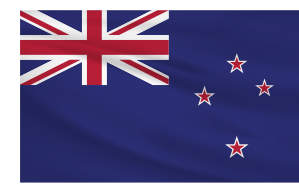
Formal interaction with the staff

Consulate to explain tasks for the girl to takeover

Takeover for visa interview







**“Besides sensitising people on social issues, our thoughts can also positively influence them.”**

**Kumkum**  
Uttarakhand

Fifteen-year old Kumkum is a resolute advocate for girls’ rights. She was elected as a legislator in the ‘Bal Vidhan Sabha’ (Children’s Legislative Assembly) in the capacity of Minister of Home Affairs and has since been actively involved in voicing out concerns related to children and youth.

Recently, the children’s legislation got their 19th resolution passed by the ruling State government. The resolution largely focuses on key issues such as women empowerment and protection. Under Kumkum’s leadership the group also actively engages with the District schools where they sensitise children on child rights and issues such as health, hygiene and importance of sports.

Kumkum is of the opinion that there should be no discrimination on the basis of caste and gender and girls should be given equal opportunities to excel in politics, sports, education and employment. Boys and men are important allies and Kumkum feels that they should have a positive and respectful attitude towards girls.

Kumkum has participated in youth debates and role plays on girls’ and women’s issues. She believes that besides sensitising people on important issues, she has also been able to positively influence them.

“The International Day of the Girl is an opportunity to promote gender equality, and to recognise the potential of girls to make positive changes in their communities and their countries. New Zealand was the first country in the world to recognise women’s right to vote, and three of our senior-most positions in government are filled by women – our Prime Minister, our Governor General, and our Chief Justice. The New Zealand High Commission is taking part in the Girls Takeover event because we support a world in which there is a place for everyone regardless of their gender, age, race, or sexual orientation.”



**Joanna Kempkers**  
New Zealand High Commissioner to India

Joanna Kempkers took up the role of High Commissioner to India in January 2017. Joanna is concurrently High Commissioner to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and Ambassador to Nepal.

Joanna is a career diplomat. She has had postings in France, Fiji and the Cook Islands. Earlier in her career she worked on New Zealand’s Closer Economic Relations with Australia before focusing on New Zealand’s political, trade and development relationships in the Pacific. Her most recent role in New Zealand was as Chief of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Originally from Christchurch, Joanna is a graduate from the University of Canterbury with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Honours in French.

Joanna is married to Dr Tim Markwell. They have three children.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

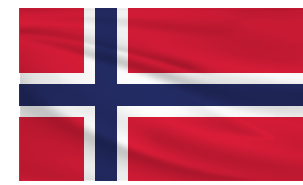
Arrival

Greetings and takeover proceedings at the High Commissioner’s office

Morning tea and introductions to the staff at the residence

Meet with the policy team at the High Commissioner’s office (Agenda - New Zealand in India, and to mainstream gender equality into our work)

Visit Katha Lab School followed by arrival at IDG event



**Manisha**  
Bihar

**“Illiteracy, ignorance and superstitions are some of the issues that increase the gender gap.”**

Being a girl, Manisha felt that her voice was not heard and respected. Initially, when she tried sensitising her community on issues like girls’ education and child marriage, they thought she had vested interest in it. It was only after a sustained engagement with the children, youth and the local school that her community started trusting her and appreciating her efforts.

Manisha believes that illiteracy and ignorance are issues that increase the gender gap. She feels that through constant support and encouragement we can create a world where girls and young women take decisions for their betterment, become financially independent and are appreciated for their contribution at the family and community level.

She has been vocal from an early age and has participated in debates and street plays to address relatable issues like child labour, child marriage, female foeticide, health and personal hygiene. She successfully motivated her community members and peer group to support government’s campaign against child marriage and dowry by creating a massive human chain.

Her work in WASH and child marriage was recognised by Plan India on separate occasions. Manisha is also an active member of Plan India National Youth Advisory Panel.

**“Gender equality is important because we cannot have a just society without it. Gender equality helps create a better social, political and economic environment and provides the opportunity to use talent, resources and abilities of us all, women and men. I congratulate this campaign for helping us visualise the effect of empowerment. The Norwegian Embassy proudly supports the Girls Takeover campaign! #GirlsGetEqual.”**

**Hans Jacob Frydenlund**  
Norwegian Ambassador to India



Hans Jacob Frydenlund is presently Norwegian Ambassador to India. Before coming to India he was Director for UN Policy in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Frydenlund (Born in 1959) has served in Chile, at the Norwegian Mission to the European Union in Brussels, at the Norwegian Mission to the United Nations in New York and has been Norwegian Representative to the Palestinian Authority. He has worked for thirteen years in different capacities with conflict resolution in Africa. He has been Press Spokesman for International Development in the Ministry. Frydenlund was born in 1959, is an economist by education, is married and has three grown-up children.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival and greetings

Embassy tour and meeting with  
Counsellors

Discussion about NIPi  
(Health project)

Message to all staff

Visit to UN Women office

Lunch





**Salma**  
Odisha

**“Girls and young women should learn self-defence techniques and update themselves with the government mechanisms for protection of girls and women.”**

Nineteen-year old Salma understands that without good education nobody can have a bright future, let alone girls. She believes good education for girls and women is their best chance at getting equal opportunities. Salma herself is pursuing a Diploma in Civil Engineering and has been an active advocate for girls' rights, therefore, her peers and community members do take her words seriously.

As part of the child club, Salma and her friends ensured that there was no school dropout or child labour in their Gram Panchayat. She counselled parents and children alike and successfully brought five children back to school, who are now happily continuing their education. With the support of the group members, she was also able to prevent two cases of potential child marriage in her community. She and her friends have been intensely sensitising parents on the issue which has led to a positive outcome. Parents are now aware about the legal marriageable age for boys and girls and they now also understand the physical and legal consequences of child marriage.

Salma has conducted Child Protection Committee meetings and sensitised children of her community on their rights. She has also engaged with elders and sought their support to address child protection issues in her area. She is an active member of the adolescent group that has facilitated Menstrual Hygiene Management sessions for adolescent girls as well as sessions on sanitation, personal hygiene, hand washing and immunization. Her persistent efforts have encouraged pregnant women of the community to opt for safe institutional delivery.

Salma's transformative efforts have been recognised several times at the community level.

**“I am delighted for the opportunity to participate in IDG. Every year, all over the world, we see progress in promoting rights of women and young girls, leading gradually to improvement of their confidence and self-image in general. Yet we can never be fully satisfied with the results and must proceed further in our work to overcome the obstacles that hold us back from providing equal opportunities to all.”**



**Ivan Lančarič**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of the Slovak Republic to India

Mr Ivan Lančarič is a graduate of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. After completing his university studies by obtaining a law degree at the Comenius University in Bratislava, he joined the Foreign Service of the then Czechoslovakia in 1990. In 1993 he joined the newly established Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the same year was posted to the Slovak Embassy in Zagreb, Croatia. In 1995-1996 he acted as the Slovak Representative to the OSCE Mission in Georgia. Between years 1997-2000 he was posted to the Slovak Embassy in London as the Deputy Head of the Mission. During 2001-2006 he worked at the Slovak Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications as Advisor to the State Secretary, and later as a Political Assistant to the Member of Parliament.

In 2006 he became Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, in charge of the coordination of the Slovak non-permanent membership to the UN Security Council, as well as Slovak initiative for building the capacity of the United Nations in the Security Sector Reform (SSR).

In 2010 he was appointed Slovak Ambassador to Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar. Following his term in Kuwait, in 2015 he was seconded to the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, and named the Director General for Foreign Trade Policy and European Affairs, responsible for the preparation of the Slovak EU Presidency Programme for the Foreign Affairs Council (Trade).

Since July 2017, Mr Lančarič worked at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, at the Directorate General for International Organisations, Development, Assistance and Humanitarian Aid.

Since 11th July 2018, he is Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic to India in New Delhi. The Embassy of the Slovak Republic in New Delhi has jurisdiction also in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival followed by an introductory meeting with the Ambassador

Interaction with the staff (Salma to talk about her life and activities)

Meeting with the Women Diplomatic Staff of the Embassy

Salma to be the Guest of Honour at lunch hosted by H.E. Mr Ivan Lančarič at his residence





**Micky**  
Bihar

**“Mothers need to be educated and empowered in order to make the right choices for their daughters right from the time of their birth.”**

Micky has been associated with Plan India for the past six years. During this association, her leadership qualities have flourished in different contexts. She was able to stop three child marriages in her community and as a peer educator led the drive on menstrual hygiene management. She also counselled 235 adolescent girls and ensured behaviour change in them during menstruation, thereby preventing their absenteeism in schools.

She believes that lack of participation from women and high rate of illiteracy in them are the basic concerns in a highly patriarchal society. She feels education is the key to empowerment. She considers child marriage and sexual harassment to be the fundamental barriers that hold girls back from completing their education.

Given an opportunity, she wants to implement stringent laws that protect girls from gender based violence. She also wants to revise the prescribed marriageable age for girls in the Indian constitution to 21 years. It is her firm belief that this will allow girls to complete their higher education and become self-dependent.

Micky stands as an example for her peers with her all round skills. She has taken active part in street plays, speech competitions and painting and has always stood out in whatever she has pursued.

**“The Embassy of Slovenia will help to create an equal world where girls and young women will be able to follow their dreams with no regard to their gender.”**

**Mateja Vodeb Ghosh**  
Charge d'affairs a.i. of Slovenia to India



I was fortunate enough to grow up in a country and raised in a family where girls and boys were treated equally. I never had to think that some doors would be closed for me just because I was a girl. However few times along my diplomatic career, when moving around the world, I was reminded that not all had had this privilege.

Ever since I was 17 years old I wanted to be a diplomat. Living in different countries, experiencing different cultures, and still working for the progress of my home country was a drive behind my desire. My diplomatic career has so far taken me to Tokyo, Japan as a junior diplomat, to United Nations in New York as an international development expert, and twice to New Delhi, India: first time as a political counselor, and second time as an economic diplomacy diplomat. Each country left a different mark on me, but all of them thought me that while working for the progress of Slovenia, I can also in a tiny way contribute to the progress of the world.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival

Greetings and introduction with the staff

Micky takes over on challenges encircling gender equality in India, calls for proposals to ameliorate the same and provides feedback

Embassy tour followed by lunch (Micky leads the lunch on a theme of her choice)

Departure





**Aliya**  
Delhi

**“Equal opportunities for girls and women are a sure way to a powerful world.”**

Aliya likes sensitising people on issues concerning girls’ rights. She is an active member of Plan India’s Youth Advisory Panel and as part of her role, she makes sure that she speaks about child protection at different forums.

Aliya was a noted speaker at the report launch of ‘Child Rights Situation Analysis’ to celebrate the 30th year of UNCRC. In her special address, she reflected on the status of child protection in India. She also expresses herself through participation in theatre. Street plays as per her are very effective in communicating the message to the community members and in initiating action.

She is critical of how the patriarchal attitude in society restricts girls from making vital decisions for themselves. Their non-participation subsequently makes them highly dependent and makes their lives challenging.

She feels that people need to be sensitised on gender equality and how it will lead to the making of a powerful nation. She feels mass media channels should be used extensively to propagate and endorse the message of gender equality so that girls feel hopeful and motivated to do better in life.



**Klas Molin**  
Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden

**“As a group in society, girls are often doubly discriminated – both on the basis of their gender and their age. We must break the pattern and focus on girls’ agency and leadership to ensure their rights and create democratic and sustainable societies.”**

Klas Molin has held the position as Sweden’s Ambassador to India since currently the Ambassador at the Embassy of Sweden in New Delhi. He also holds non-resident accreditation to the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Republic of Maldives, the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Mr Molin has more than 30 years of experience from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Before his appointment to India he was Chief of Protocol at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm. Before that, he served as the Ambassador of Sweden to the Kingdom of Thailand and as head of the Department for Asia and the Pacific region. Mr. Molin has also previously been posted at the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN in New York and served at the Embassy of Sweden in Washington.

Mr Molin graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Uppsala University in 1983, and later went on to pursue a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

## ACTIVITY PLAN





**Jyothi**  
Telangana

**“Lack of awareness among parents and community on child related issues is one of the major gaps in achieving equal opportunities.”**

Jyothi believes that equal opportunities are essential to reduce gender disparity. She is one of the strong youth advocates for Girls Advocacy Alliance, a Plan India Initiative, where she has raised issues concerning girls in multiple forums. She represented India in a global youth meet in the Netherlands where she spoke about the situation of girls in India.

Jyothi considers discriminatory social and cultural practices, superstitions and taboos as barriers to girls' development. She feels that girls are capable of successfully leading the development agenda of the nation. Her conviction stems from the belief that an educated girl can contribute to the growth of the nation economically, socially and politically.

She aspires to create awareness on social issues from grassroots to higher levels through a strengthened response mechanism.

As one of the school leaders, she looks at maintaining the classroom discipline in the absence of her class teacher. She has also organised cultural programmes for her school. Her other notable participation has been in essay writing competitions, elocution and dramatics.

**“Women play a crucial role in a country's economic and social development. The “Girls Takeover” empowers young women, gives them strength to address challenges they face in their day to day lives. Platforms like these help to show their determination and potential and contribute to build an equal world. We at the Embassy of Switzerland are proud to participate again in this meaningful initiative. The road to transform the lives of girls and women might be long, but together we can support them to walk this road successfully.”**



**Tamara Mona**  
Deputy Head of Mission,  
Embassy of Switzerland, New Delhi

Ms. Mona holds a Master's degree in International Relations from the Graduate Institute in Geneva and in History and Political Science from the University of Bern. After her diplomatic training at the Swiss Embassy in Singapore, she started her diplomatic career in 2004 in the Political Division of the Foreign Ministry of Switzerland in Bern, working on human security issues. She assumed the post of Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Switzerland in Abuja, Nigeria, also responsible for Niger and Chad in 2009. From 2013 to 2015 Ms. Mona was Commissioner for the OSCE Ministerial Conference in Basel during the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship in 2014. Before being posted to the Swiss Embassy to India and Bhutan in New Delhi as the Deputy Head of Mission in 2017, she was the Chief of Staff of the Directorate of Resources of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Arrival followed by a tour of the embassy

Jyothi to lead Press Brief in the presence of the Ambassador

Meeting with an NGO

Lunch at the residence with discussion on Embassy Outreach Idea for 2020

Social media interaction







**Parvallika**  
Telangana

**“Families need to support girls as they are the first opportunity for girls to get equal.”**

Pravallika believes when a girl gets good education, it has a decisive effect on the family. Children turn out to be gender sensitive, there is equal distribution of responsibilities among everyone in the family and there is always an environment of mutual support and respect in the family. She considers herself an adept mathematics problem solver and believes that the existing problems of gender inequality and discrimination can also be addressed if equal opportunities are ensured to girls.

Being the Head Girl of her school, Pravallika has taken some key initiatives such as organising youth leadership programmes to ensure capacity building for youth, especially girls. She often helps them with their public speaking skills. She believes that the unequal access to opportunities has a direct impact on the development of the country.

Pravallika feels girls and women have tremendous entrepreneurial qualities and if given proper opportunities, they can set up and run businesses successfully. She wants easy access to finance for women who are not educated and not in a position to avail bank loans.

She sees family having a very strong role in inculcating positive behaviour in children. She thinks, at present, not many families, especially in the rural set-up are support equal opportunities for girls. She aspires to change all that so that more girls like her grow up to be confident citizens.



**Namrita Aggarwal**  
Additional Secretary,  
Delhi State Legal Services Authority

Additional Secretary, Namrita's penchant for law and justice started early. After finishing her schooling from Carmel Convent School, she did BA LLB (Hons.) from National Law College. A double gold-medallist at the University, she got selected for Delhi Judicial Services in 2008, and in the following two years, she completed her LLM.

Namrita has held various positions of responsibility. She has served as Civil Judge, Metropolitan Magistrate, Rent Controller, Senior Civil Judge, to name a few.

At present, she serves the Delhi State Legal Services Authority, which holds a mandate to carry out legal services such as organizing Lok Adalats, granting free legal aid and services to the poor, underprivileged and deprived classes and most importantly spreading legal literacy.

# #GIRLSGETEQUAL

# #PLANGIRLSTAKEOVER



**Arti**  
Bihar

**“Community support and encouragement helps in the holistic development of girls.”**

Arti believes that empowerment of girls and women is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. She feels conservative mind-set and rigid cultural and traditional practices have since long discriminated girls and women in her community.

She feels that giving equal opportunities to girls has to start at the family level for confidence building of girls. Having taken over the position of a District Magistrate last year, Arti raised relevant questions about the state of development in her district.

Through her active participation as a youth club member and peer educator, Arti has spread awareness on girl's education, girl's empowerment, gender equality and other child protection issues. She stopped 5 potential cases of child marriages in her community and persuaded 7 school drop-outs to join school again, whom she continues to monitor.

Arti believes that young people should lead important sensitisation campaigns as they are the country's future. She has exhibited effective leadership skills to inspire children and youth club members in her community by organising more than twenty workshops on issues relevant to them.



**Aditi Shukla**  
Head of Insurance Operations,  
Function Enterprise Shared Services, AXA XL

She joined XL India in 2004 to establish and helm the CAT Modelling group. In 2013 she took over a new role as Head of Operations India, responsible from a local perspective for a wide variety of functions like policy management, underwriting support, credit control, claims, ceded reinsurance, enterprise risk management and investment operations, dealing with a broad spectrum of stakeholders both in and outside India.

This role not only helped her learn stakeholder management, but most importantly, how to navigate a large global organisation with matrix management.

One of her biggest achievement in that role was playing a key contributor role in setting up XL India's second centre in Bengaluru.

In 2016, she took over her current role as Head of Insurance Operations and is currently in charge of running a team of more than 1,000 colleagues spread across three centres in Gurugram and Bengaluru in India and Wroclaw in Poland.

In this capacity, she has overseen two integrations as the operations has grown many-fold through acquisitions and being acquired.

The thrill of learning new things along with meeting new people keeps the job exciting for her even after 15 years.

Prior to XL India, she worked for Churchill (of the nodding dog fame) now part of RBS group, and prior to that, EXL services.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Briefing on the role

Staff introduction followed by a floor walk

Arti to present D&I initiatives & AXA policies with Band B colleagues

Round Table discussion with India leadership team over lunch

Arti to share her experiences and journey followed by signing of the Pledge





**Snehal**  
Maharashtra

**“Girls and women can do everything, provided they get opportunities for their development.”**

Snehal has always felt that girls need education and freedom to take their own decisions. To be self-dependent and to look after their health is the need of the day according to her.

Snehal owes her confidence to the opportunities she was lucky to have in school. She participated in cultural programmes and captained Kho-Kho and Kabaddi teams which went on to become champions at the school level.

She feels there is an urgent need to take action on the proper implementation of rights to safeguard girls and women. She thinks girls should be aware about their rights, if they don't know what their rights are, they cannot have access to equal opportunities.

Snehal feels there is need for more comprehensive schemes promoting girls' education, health and empowerment. She wants her community girls to benefit from such schemes so that their lives change for the better.

She feels that the best way to bring change is to speak about the issues faced. She enjoys public speaking and has won several awards at the school level in debate and elocution competitions.



**Reema Singhal**  
Vice President,  
Reinsurance Head of Shared Services, AXA XL

Reema Singhal - Designated as Vice President, Reinsurance Head of Shared Services. Total work experience of 18+ years in the Reinsurance industry of which 12 have been with Axa XL. I started at Axa XL as single FTE supporting Reinsurance business from India shared services in 2007 and the team has grown to 80 FTE. I also manage Poland Reinsurance operation since 2017. I love the world of reinsurance and have handled multiple roles spanning across finance, technical accounting, underwriting support, claims, internal audit and retro functions. I am part of India Management Committee, Reinsurance Operations Leadership team and sit on various functional groups within Axa XL Re segment that support continuous improvement. I am India co-lead of WoMen, a colleague resource group, launched in Nov 2016 as part of Axa XL Diversity and Inclusion initiative.

The reinsurance world fascinates me and keeps me challenged and excited to learn and achieve more. I am passionate about developing talent and love the opportunity my role provides to work with colleagues globally, get an exposure to various cultures and appreciate diversity of ideas and experiences.

On the personal side I love to spend time with my husband traveling and exploring places. I love to read – mostly fiction, get my hands dirty in my little garden and draw pencil sketches.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Briefing on the role by the leader

Staff introduction followed by a floor walk

Snehal to present D&I initiatives & AXA policies with Band B colleagues

Round Table discussion with India leadership team over lunch

Snehal to share her experiences and journey followed by signing of the Pledge





**Soni**  
Andhra Pradesh

**“Increasing investment in adolescent girls and young women’s leadership is an important step to break age old patriarchy”**

Soni aspires for an equal society. She is not in favour of the reservation policy. According to her, only people who are meritorious for a particular role or job should get it. However, she feels this field would remain uneven as long as girls and women do not get equal opportunities.

She believes an equal world is possible when girls and young women feel confident, even when they are outside their comfort zone; when they can live their lives freely, without fear or guilt of being judged as girls or women.

Soni has herself championed the cause of standing up for the rights of girls. She, along with other like-minded girls supported a rape survivor from their locality and fought for her justice. It had a positive impact in terms of garnering support from her family and neighbourhood. Their efforts yielded positive results as the perpetrator was subsequently punished.

Soni is also a natural leader with effective problem solving skills. She successfully mainstreamed school drop-outs who had stopped coming to school due to inadequate sanitation facilities and improper quality of food being served as mid-day meals.

In college, Soni was recognised for being an active personality in women awareness activities. She also served as a senior volunteer in the National Services Scheme.



**Sumit M Chadha**  
Head of Enterprise Shared Services at AXA XL

Sumit comes with a rich and diverse experience of 28 years in the Financial Services Industry. Besides heading Enterprise Shared Services at AXA, she serves on the Board of Directors in XL India Business Services Pvt. Ltd., an Independent Trustee on the Board of Trustees of Canara Robeco Mutual Fund and a Non-executive Independent Director at Affle (India) Limited.

She is passionate about building new businesses profitably. Her focus ranges from technological innovation to execution excellence. She is zealous about stakeholders, customers and devoted to education and women empowerment. She holds expertise in many disciplines such as strategy development, business transformation, client experience, outsourcing, diversity and inclusion practices. She is deeply committed to the development of the community.

Sumit is B.A. Economics (Hons) from St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi and M.A. Economics from Delhi School of Economics and University of California, Los Angeles, US. She is a recipient of many awards and recognitions during her academic and professional career.

## ACTIVITY PLAN

Briefing on the role by the leader

Staff introduction followed by a floor walk

Soni to present D&I initiatives & AXA policies with Band B colleagues

Round Table discussion with India leadership team over lunch

Soni to share her experiences and journey followed by signing of the Pledge







**Ritika**  
Delhi

**“Community support and encouragement helps in the holistic development of girls.”**

At 15 years, Ritika is a young advocate for child rights. She, along with her group members actively worked to sensitise parents of adolescent boys and girls on child labour and child marriage issues. She also organised awareness campaigns in her community and ensured good participation.

Ritika was a leader of the children's club and now leads the adolescent girls' group. Quite early in her leadership career, Ritika has learnt that taking everyone forward together requires patience and a calm temperament. She tries to resolve issues in her group amicably. One of her key contributions was to mobilise children and organise them for the Literary Festival reading week celebration in her State.

She believes holistic development of girls is the need of the hour. She feels girls need to be backed at various levels by different stakeholders starting from the family who are primarily responsible for inculcating the value system in children, to the government, who have the capacity and bandwidth to implement progressive systems and policies for girls and women.

She enjoys participating in cultural activities and expressing herself through theatre. Her views on gender discrimination and public speaking skills helped her win an award in a recently concluded debate competition at her school.



**Rakesh Thukral**  
Managing Director – Edelman India

With over 25 years of experience in public relations, public affairs and strategic communications, Rakesh Thukral has successfully led the growth journey of Edelman India over the last five years, first as chief operating officer and then as managing director. Under him, the operations of Edelman India have grown manifold, adding scale and breadth.

Rakesh was instrumental in setting up Edelman India's award-winning Public Affairs practice that brings together understanding of policy making, regulatory affairs and communications to develop and execute campaigns with impactful strategies.

Rakesh has closely worked with the Government of India as well as the governments of Delhi, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.

His experience in the energy, environment and the development sectors includes his work as Communications & Outreach Advisor for the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Union Ministry of Power. He led a team of experts from Edelman India to successfully undertake the mandate for COP21 in Paris in 2015.

Rakesh has also advised a host of blue-chip business organisations, including the Tata Group, Walmart, Unilever, Pepsi, SoftBank, Microsoft and Airbus, and civil society organisations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Tata Trusts and TERI.

Rakesh is a member of the Governing Board at Action for Ability Development and Inclusion (AADI), an NGO devoted to facilitating enabling environments for children and adults.

## #GIRLSGETEQUAL

## #PLANGIRLSTAKEOVER



**“When parents put pressure on girls to marry early, girls must convince their parents to let them focus on their education.”**

**Barsharani**  
Odisha

Barsharani believes that every girl has a right to education. However, the state of education in her area concerns her. She has witnessed many girls dropping out after primary schooling and getting engaged in sibling care, domestic chores or labour work. She also points out early marriage as a major issue that often leads to increased dropout rates and maternal and infant mortality rates.

As a girl who has not always been in an enabling environment, Barsharani has made the best use of the opportunities given to her. Her association with Plan India helped her find her creative side and has since participated actively in various creative writing forums. She was also a key participant during the Children’s Literary Festival organised in 2018.

Barsharani and her friends successfully lobbied with the State government to add children’s manifesto in the general elections manifesto in January this year.

Barsharani is one of the proud leaders of her school. She is the troop commander at school. At the Independence Day parade held last year, she and her team put up a serious show and were awarded for their performance. She also wears other leadership hats and is currently the Chief Minister of the School Cabinet. Their considerable efforts towards school campus sanitation as well as in the hostel maintenance were honoured with the “Prakruti Mitra” (Nature’s Friend) and “Swachha Vidyalaya” (Clean School) Awards.

“At H&M we believe that diversity and inclusion contribute towards innovation and creativity, that contribute to our success. We actively strive for an inclusive workplace where respect for human rights is the utmost priority and there is zero tolerance for discrimination. As part of our CSR in India, we support education for girls and focus on empowering women through financial literacy and livelihood trainings. Inclusivity and equality are core to the H&M values.”

**Janne Einola**  
Country Manager,  
H&M Hennes & Mauritz Retail Private Limited



Janne Einola is currently the Country Manager at H&M Retail India.

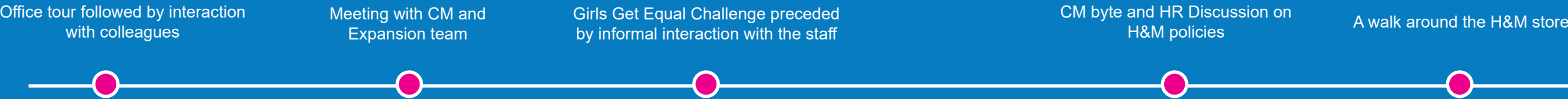
Result and vision driven professional with 22+ years of experience in H&M (spread over 7 roles, 4 markets, 9 countries), Janne has been involved in opening 200+ H&M stores, [www.hm.com](http://www.hm.com) and marketplace openings, with strong leadership skills and H&M values.

Janne believes people are the most valuable asset of a company and trusting them is the secret to the success of H&M. Under his leadership and guidance the brand has opened 43 stores across 20 cities in India in just 4 years.

He holds a Diploma and Vocational Qualification in Business Administration.

In his free time, he loves cooking, spending time with friends and playing with his 3 boys.

# ACTIVITY PLAN







**Sheema**  
Telangana

**“Empowered girls are an inspiration to the community.”**

Sheema is currently enrolled in Plan India’s Saksham Job Oriented Vocational Training programme. She feels confident that the training programme is an important step towards her financial independence. Sheema believes that such vocational programmes not only ensure financial security for grown up girls but also give them confidence to take decisions independently.

She desires that the right to education be practiced by every girl and feels that the government has an integral part to play in ensuring this. She feels that girls should not only be provided educational/work opportunities but should also be supported with an enabling environment that ensures their safety and progression.

Sheema is a good communicator and has a nice rapport with all her classmates at the vocational training centre. As a leader of her group, she has motivated students and provided assistance to students who are weak in studies. This has helped them to score well in their examinations and has lifted their confidence levels.

She feels that ensuring equal opportunities for girls will help them become bolder and confident. Experience has taught her that when a girl is empowered, she can be an inspiration to the entire community.

**“The Body Shop strives for equality for women and girls globally. Our purpose as a brand is to fight for a fairer and more beautiful world and that means not just creating ethical, sustainable sourced products, but also to stand up, speak out and be counted.”**



**Shriti Malhotra**  
CEO, The Body Shop

With 25 years in the Indian Retail sector, she has been instrumental in creating, launching and establishing inspiring brands and retail experiences for Indian consumers.

She started her career with Benetton India in the early 90’s, and later worked with Nike, Puma and multiple International Sports brands in Apparel. Footwear, sport licensing, branding, retail, wholesale development and General Management.

She moved to the Beauty and Cosmetics industry, launching The Body Shop in India, 13 years ago. In the last decade, The Body Shop’s growth has been exceptionally fast paced and dynamic. Under Shriti, the brand has expanded and penetrated a vast market across Metro cities, tier 1, 2, 3 and even tier 4 cities along with very successful digital footprint, E Com expansion and a multi-channel presence. Market penetration, customer contact strategy along with a vast loyalty and social base has been at the heart of the business success.

The Body Shop is today the largest International Beauty retailer in India, with a defining voice and presence across channels, a physical retail dominance in 70 cities, a rapidly developing Brand own e-commerce business that extends Brand reach to 2000 cities and towns and to millions of beauty consumers and aspirants.

If you do things well, do them better. Be daring, be first, be different, and be just.

Shriti believes that team spirit along with passionate and empowered teams with an insatiable appetite to learn, grow and succeed are the key to the success of businesses.

## #GIRLSGETEQUAL

## #PLANGIRLSTAKEOVER

# OTHER GIRLS' TAKEOVERS

## Embassy of Israel



Taken over by Vijaylaxmi from Uttarakhand

## Airbus

# AIR BUS

Taken over by Ranjitha from Odisha

## Geberit



Taken over by Yashoda from Karnataka

## Radio City



Taken over by Rubi and Misa from Delhi

## KONE India



Elevators Escalators

## 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.





[www.planindia.org](http://www.planindia.org)

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