



PLAN
INTERNATIONAL

www.planindia.org



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

11 OCTOBER 2021

#EQUAL FOR BETTER

BACKGROUND

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 the 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 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 the 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 the 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.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL 2021

On the International Day of the Girl 2021, Plan India joined forces with 45 Girl Changemakers from across India who participated in 35 physical as well as social media takeovers of Diplomatic Missions, Corporates, Government Institutions, district-level authorities and local bodies. The Girls' Takeovers are a 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 changemakers. The Takeovers focussed on the theme of #EqualForBetter calling to ensure that girls have equal access to education, health, financial inclusion, digital literacy and greater representation in the decision making process.

Hailing from 9 Indian states—Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand—Girl Changemakers interacted with Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Deputy Chiefs of Mission, CEOs, Head of Government Institutions and local bodies to raise the issue of equal access to education, health, financial inclusion, digital literacy. They demanded greater representation of girls and young women in the decision making process and engaged in discussions on girls' rights and gender equality bringing their keen insight and perspectives to the table.

At the national level, the Takeovers included platforms of Delegation of the European Union, Australian High Commission, Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium, High Commission of Canada, Embassy of the Czech Republic, Embassy of Finland, Embassy of Israel, Embassy of Ireland, Embassy of Latvia, Embassy of Lithuania, Embassy of Mexico, Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, Embassy of Sweden and the Embassy of Switzerland, German Embassy, Embassy of Estonia; Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights and the corporates H&M (Hennes & Mauritz Retail Private Limited), AstraZeneca and AXA XL.

THE GIRL CHANGEMAKERS

The Girl Changemakers leading the physical and social media 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 Children's 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. Girl Changemakers were selected from across Plan intervention states through a comprehensive screening and selection process characterised by fair and transparent nominations assessed at the state and national levels.

WHY TAKEOVERS?

Takeovers can help raise awareness, begin a meaningful process with the stakeholders and create lasting change. In other words, we hope to:

- Showcase the potential of girls at a national level
- Partner with key decision-makers and influential target groups and stakeholders so that they can support our movement for girls' rights
- Engage young people through a meaningful and empowering process

ENGAGEMENT WITH GIRLS ON CHOTI-BADI BAATEIN

In the run-up to the International Day of the Girl 2021, Plan India organised a series of online sessions called 'Choti-Badi Baatein' (bitesize conversations) between eminent experts and girls from Plan India communities. These sessions were aimed at enabling girls and young women with practical knowledge, and easy-to-use tips to deal with issues faced by them in everyday life.

The topics of the session were selected on the basis of the growing interest of girls from Plan India communities and covered areas like Career Counselling, Health and Nutrition, Stress Management, Leadership Coaching and Sport for Development.

The sessions were led by an exciting panel of experts of national and global repute including Kanchan Rai – Emotional and Mental Well-Being Coach, Swati Bathwal – Nutritionist and Public Health Expert, Disha Tandon – Textile Designer and Social Entrepreneur, Nitish Anand – Researcher and Scholar under Department of Adult Continuing Education and Extension, Delhi University. The initiative was also joined by eminent sports personality; Anju Bobby George – Retired Indian Athlete who is also the Chairperson and Senior Coach at Anju Bobby Sports Foundation, Shaili Singh - Indian Athlete, National Long Jump (under-18), Simran Sharma-India Para Athlete, National Gold Medalist and Sharad Kumar- Indian Para Athlete, Paralympic Bronze Medalist.





AUSTRALIAN HIGH
COMMISSION

NEELAM
Uttarakhand

“
WHEN WE EDUCATE GIRLS, WE ASSIST THEM IN
ACHIEVING THEIR DREAMS”



EMBASSY OF
BELGIUM

ANJALI
Delhi

“
BY PROVIDING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO WOMEN,
WE ASSIST THEM IN ACHIEVING REMARKABLE
SUCCESS”



20-year old Neelam's inclination towards assisting women in completing their education is commendable. She has been working with Plan India for over 6 years. She was a member of Bal Panchayat and participated regularly in the group meetings at the village level. Presently, she is a member of the youth group. She assists in generating awareness amongst people on COVID-19 appropriate behaviour and vaccination. She aspires to join police services in the future.

She motivates young girls to complete their education as she believes education can assist them in achieving better things in life and instill confidence in them. She also believes that we need to generate more awareness amongst girls on their rights and share helpline numbers to register cases of domestic abuse.

In school level through debate and speech competitions, Neelam has always raised concerns around education, health and protection of women.

21-year old Anjali firmly believes that in a gender-equal world, people would neither be compared nor discriminated against on the basis of their gender. Equality is for everyone and with this motivation, she has been working with Plan India's youth groups for over five years. She gives credence to this community of youth groups for providing an enabling environment for women to feel safe and receive knowledge to be successful in their adopted career paths.

Anjali aspires to continue serving the community and work on women empowerment. Her love for gaining knowledge has made her set her sights on becoming an IPS Officer (Indian Police Services). She avidly participates in theatre, poem and drawing events as well.

She believes that women, especially the ones living in villages are inspired to make a positive difference within their lives despite their restrictive social environment. Anjali believes that providing equal opportunities to women can give them the required push to achieve great things in life as the strong drive for success is innately present within them.



HIGH COMMISSION
OF CANADA

DEEPIKA
Uttarakhand

“
**A GIRL NEEDS FEARLESS ENVIRONMENT
TO FEEL CONFIDENT**”

Canada

21-year-old Deepika has been participating in various programs and activities organised by Plan India for over 8 years. She is currently the leader of the adolescent girl's group, Kishori Samooch at the village level since 2018 and president of the village-level youth group. She represents the group in village level meetings.

She has motivated numerous girls and boys to actively participate, engage and initiate village development activities with the support of other members from the village. She has also run various campaigns like awareness on health issues, substance abuse and a grand 15-day sanitation campaign at the village level. She has also been an active student at the school level and has participated in many debate competitions and demonstrated an innovative model for the reuse of plastic.

She aspires to build an equal world for all genders. She believes parents can provide an enabling and holistic environment for children and the future of our society by promoting education within the household.



EMBASSY OF THE
CZECH REPUBLIC

DEEPTI
Delhi

“
**STOP SPLITTING HUMANS INTO
PINK AND BLUE**”



Embassy of the Czech Republic
in New Delhi

Deepti is an extremely motivated girl and has time and again displayed her motivation for working on social issues including education for girls. She derives her inspiration from the happiness she receives by helping other young girls and their families.

Deepti has been affiliated with Plan India for over a decade. For her, gender equality is when men and women enjoy equal rights, opportunities, resources and protection. She believes that to build a progressive society, a strong mindset towards gender equality is the key. She aspires to become an IAS Officer (Indian Administrative Services) post her studies.

Women have historically lacked the same opportunities as men. Neelam believes that with the support from government as well as family, women should take initiatives to reform their situation.



EMBASSY OF
ESTONIA

SHIVANI
Uttarakhand

“
**A SOCIETY WHERE WOMEN ARE RESPECTED
IS AN EQUAL SOCIETY**”



EMBASSY OF ESTONIA
NEW DELHI



EUROPEAN UNION

SARASWATI
Delhi

“
**EQUALITY PREVENTS VIOLENCE AGAINST
GIRLS AND WOMEN**”



Shivani is an enthusiastic girl and has proved her leadership skills time and again. She was associated with Plan India's village-level children's group, "Bal Panchayat" from 2010 to 2017. During that period, she would actively participate in and facilitate awareness programs. She was also honoured for her brilliant work at both the school and village levels.

Shivani has always received positive support and encouragement from her parents. They have provided her with a progressive and fearless environment to inspire her to achieve her goal and dreams. She aspires to build such a supportive environment for women all across India.

She believes that equality is a necessary pre-condition to ensure women are at par with men. Only then can we envision a world with no gender discrimination and women will get the respect that they deserve. She aspires to be a self-reliant woman in life.

Saraswati is a self-driven girl and continues to inspire young women in her community. In the short span of five months with Plan India, she has sensitised more than 75 women on myths and misconceptions around menstrual health and hygiene management. As someone whose life was affected by myths around menstruation, she strongly believes in the mission of providing peer group training to foster sensitisation amongst women.

She also volunteers her time in teaching, guiding and supporting children from marginalised communities who are unable to afford basic amenities. 18-year old Saraswati aspires to become a manager in a software organisation to gain financial freedom. She wants to continue working with young women and children as well.

She believes that in a gender-equal world, opportunities are provided to individuals by evaluating them based on similar standards. She also believes that governments should prioritise making school curriculum gender-sensitive and believes that social organisations like Plan India can assist in generating awareness amongst women to live independently and have equal opportunities.



EMBASSY OF
FINLAND

USHA
Rajasthan



“
**EQUALITY MEANS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
OF SUCCESS FOR WOMEN**”

Coming from a humble upbringing, Usha travels about 42 km every day to attend school as her local school does not offer science. Her determination of becoming a doctor after school has inspired many girls to pursue their dreams and complete their education.

18-year old Usha had joined the village adolescent girls' group facilitated by Plan India in 2018. She has regularly visited the Youth Resource Centre being run in her village since then. She is also a part of the girl's football team and regularly attends coaching.

She regularly participates in several debates and speaks eloquently on issues such as education for girls, stopping child marriage, sexual violence against girls and caste-based discrimination. She has won several accolades for her contributions. Usha strongly believes that equality when translates into providing equal opportunities for girls to educate themselves, builds their future.



EMBASSY OF
THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY

SAKSHI
Bihar



“
**AN EDUCATED GIRL CAN FIGHT FOR
HER RIGHTS**”

16-year-old Sakshi helped her community members with food and clothes during the COVID-19 pandemic. She also encouraged people to donate to the cause during that time. She has been associated with Plan India for the past nine months and is a member of Plan India's Adolescent Girls's Group. Sakshi has conducted sensitisation training for girls in her community on issues including trafficking, child marriage, child labour and school dropout rates.

She is motivated to make a difference in the dialogue around gender equality at the family, neighbourhood and community level. She believes that it is imperative to educate both genders, treat and support them the same way along with providing them with the opportunities that foster their growth.

She believes that change begins at home and girls should be treated equally in whichever role they play as a daughter, sister or mother at the home. She aspires to become a nutritional expert. She wants to ensure lactating mothers, adolescent girls and pregnant women have a healthy diet with appropriate nutritional values.



EMBASSY OF
IRELAND

ASHITA
Bihar

**“PEOPLE NEED TO TREAT ALL GENDERS EQUALLY,
IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR SOCIAL STATUS,
EDUCATION OR ECONOMIC SITUATION”**



A trained Kathak dancer, Ashita uses the art form and the platform it provides to spread the message of child rights and gender equality in the community. She is currently training young girls in the dance form as well so that they can achieve financial independence.

A champion of girl child rights in her community, Ashita has been associated with Plan India for over 10 years. She had joined Plan India as a member of the Children's Club, then became a member of the Adolescent Group and now she is a member of the Youth group.

She thinks child marriage forces young girls and women to drop out of the education system, surrender a life of dignity and face sexual, physical and mental violence. She envisions a world that is safe for women to roam freely, attain higher education and make decisions for themselves. She believes women need to be financially independent and should be treated equally at workplaces.



EMBASSY OF
ISRAEL

SAMTA
Delhi

**“A MAN OF QUALITY RESPECTS GENDER
EQUALITY”**



Samta is a passionate girl, driven by reforming the lack of opportunities and online abuse meted out to women. With an aspiration to become a teacher, she wants to inspire students and teach them how to achieve gender equality at the primary stakeholder level.

She believes that to truly transform the current situation of women, one must make women aware of their unmatched capacity of dealing with both housework and job. Most women either believe they are incapable of dealing with both or have to do only household chores and end up restricting their dreams themselves. Moreover, it is also important to conduct awareness programs for mothers to support the dreams of their daughters to make a living.

The 19-year-old believes gender equality is providing equal opportunities for economic participation and decision making to all genders including transgenders. All genders should also be given the same salary for the same work.



EMBASSY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

MUSKAN
Delhi

**“GIRLS DON'T WANT ANYONE'S SYMPATHY.
WE JUST WANT EQUAL AND FAIR
OPPORTUNITIES”**



EMBASSY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

YASHWASHI
Bihar

**“IT'S TIME FOR GIRLS TO WAKE UP AND
STAND FOR THEIR RIGHTS”**



17-year old Muskan feels strongly about bringing incremental changes in the mindsets by working at the grassroots level for a gender-equal world. She believes that the force to achieve gender equality lies within the hands of younger generations. With the right tools - education and gender-sensitive attitude, at their disposal, the youth would be empowered to make gender equality a reality and not just a part of the Indian Constitution.

In over four months of being affiliated with Plan India as a peer group member, Muskan has sensitised over 85 adolescent girls and young women on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management. Even though she was berated initially by her friends, family and neighbours on talking about this taboo topic, she kept making efforts to bust the myths and misconceptions around menstruation. To her, gender equality means providing women with equal opportunity, equal treatment, equal rights, equal priority and equal status.

Her source of inspiration is her teacher who also volunteers her time teaching children like Muskan for free. Her perseverance and giving attitude has motivated Muskan to continue working for the community and Muskan aspires to become an IAS Officer (Indian Administrative Services) someday.

17-year-old Yashwashi belongs to a rural village in Bihar. She has been associated with Plan India since 2012 and works as a member of the youth group. She assists the organisation in spreading the message of gender equality in her community. As a champion of girl child rights, she has sensitised girls and women on the perils of child marriage and even prevented a child marriage in her village.

She strongly believes that inability to access education is one of the major impediments to the growth of women in society. She feels that once girls are afforded with proper education, they will get due recognition and appreciation from the community.

Yashashawi aspires for women and girls to be empowered to claim their rights and lead dignified life in society. She is motivated towards enhancing gender equality within India and wants to work on it along with a career in engineering when she grows up. She also wants women to be given equal opportunity in administrative services. She believes there should be equality in rights, responsibilities and opportunities between men and women.



EMBASSY OF
MEXICO

MANISHA
Delhi



“
**GIRLS RIGHTS ARE HUMAN
RIGHT**”

20-year old Manisha is a personification of grit and passion. She has received many academic accolades and represents her area of residence as Delhi Youth Leader. She aspires to join the National Youth Leaders soon. She works on various social issues like bird saving and generates awareness by writing on them and sharing podcasts on social media platforms. She is inclined towards making a career out of podcasting on social issues.

She sources her inspiration for working with the community from the sessions she has taken at Plan India. They have assisted her in coming up with new ideas and building confidence within herself.

She believes that even when women across age groups are aware of the plights of gender inequality, they have subconsciously internalised them. To make a change in society, one has to encourage women to stand out and speak their minds. We should also design opportunities like helpline numbers and a teaching centre for women to share their plights, seek help and understand the value of their rights.



EMBASSY OF
SLOVENIA

KRITI
Delhi



“
EDUCATE HER TO EDUCATE ALL”

Kriti draws a major source of her inspiration from her mother. Growing in a conservative family, her parents were chided and berated for spending their resources on the education of their three girls, but her parents continued to support their daughters. She aspires to be a Judicial Officer one day to make her parent's hearts swell with pride.

Kriti has been associated with Plan India for over 15 years and used to attend several workshops on children's rights. Currently, she is assisting the organisation in spreading awareness on the importance of education and equality in society based on caste, class and gender.

She believes gender equality is when men and women have equal opportunities for financial independence, education, political power and personal development. This is possible by increasing a woman's sense of self-worth, her decision-making power, her access to opportunities, her power and control over her own life inside and outside the home. Education is the weapon that can assist women and men to ward off the evil of gender inequality and customs that promote it. It is also important to educate children from an early age about the importance of gender equality.



EMBASSY OF
SWEDEN

RABIYA
Delhi

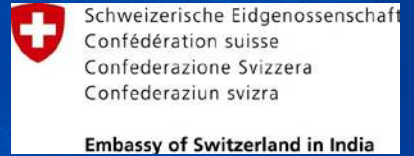
“
**WOMEN SHOULD HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
TO LEARN AND GROW**”



EMBASSY OF
SWITZERLAND

MAHIMA
Jharkhand

“
**A WOMAN HAS ALL THE POWER
WITHIN HER**”



19-year old Rabiya believes that the mindset shift towards gender equality is facilitated by our environment and families. Internet as a medium could be used to facilitate this change among other tools by generating awareness on gender equality.

Rabiya has been affiliated with Plan India for over five years. She is extremely grateful to the organisation for improving her self-confidence. With this new-found motivation, she encouraged about fifty people who were earlier hesitant on getting their vaccinations due to fear, to get their COVID-19 shots.

She is inspired now to build a strong support system for women all over India and wants them to walk the path of developing equal opportunities and improving gender equality with her. She believes once women know their rights, it will be easier for them to claim them and seize opportunities.

A 19-year-old, Mahima Kumari has a passion for teaching and playing football. She has been associated with Plan India since 2019 as a peer educator. She volunteers her time to provide academic support to vulnerable and marginalised children. With the active support of Plan India and teachers of the community, Mahima assisted in reducing the dropout cases in her village. She also provided educational support to weak students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She trusts that gender equality is essential for any community to prosper and equality in opportunity precedes it. She believes gender discrimination acts as a hindrance to the success and growth of women, thereby snatching the equal right to the growth of a child. Education is the key to change the mindset of society on gender equality. She aspires to be a bank manager.

She loves to play football which is considered a male-dominated sport in conservative societies. She wants to inspire other girls to join sports as well.



AXA XL

PUSHPA

Uttar Pradesh



“
**CHILD MARRIAGE IS AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIETY AND NATION**”

Pushpa believes violence against women and child marriage is an impediment to the development of girls and in turn, our society.

She saw a street play (nukkad natak) two years back which played a pivotal role in shaping her work on gender rights today. In this street play, she saw a 14-year girl who lost herself and her life to early marriage. In her school, Pushpa has organized many such programs including discussions and street plays with young girls to generate awareness on gender rights.

She is associated with Plan India for 6 years and is a member of the youth and adolescents group. She has trained many girls in school on self-defence and also encouraged them to train other girls. Pushpa has generated awareness amongst 3000 girls on menstrual hygiene management, child marriage and child labour in her village and school.

She believes investment in education, nutrition and health will guide the efforts on gender equality. For a gender-equal world, government and community both are responsible and have to work together. Pushpa aspires to be a teacher in the future. Through that support, girls have to be self-reliant and make decisions on their education, health, sex and development.



HENNES & MAURITZ
RETAIL PVT. LTD.



ARCHITA

Uttar Pradesh

“
**WOMEN SHOULD HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS TO
EDUCATION AND DECISION MAKING**”

Archita is a driven individual who appreciates sharing her knowledge and learnings with the children of her community. She has been associated with Plan India for over 6 years. She has conducted several pieces of training on menstrual hygiene management, disposal of used pads, abolishing child marriage, and increasing enrolment of children in schools. She has also informed children about safe/unsafe zones, good/bad touch, stick and stone and so on. Plan India has motivated her to organise many such awareness workshops with women and girls. She aspires to transform conservative ideologies and believes they hamper progress made by women.

Archita has received many honours and accolades for her contribution to the community. She strongly believes that women and girls should get equal opportunities in all sectors. Moreover, they should also have equal rights to education and freedom of opinion. Earlier in her community, women were given less opportunity and there were no support mechanisms but gradually situation is changing for the better and girls are going for higher education.

She aspires to be a software engineer and inspire girls in her community. She wants to continue working on gender equality.

REGIONAL TAKEOVERS

BIHAR



Vibha

Additional Director Child Protection Unit, District Muzaffarpur, Bihar

BIHAR



Sangita

Child Development Project Officer, Maker Saran Block, District Saran, Bihar

DELHI



Bhavna

HR Head AstraZeneca, Delhi

DELHI



Rani

Director Commercial Excellence and Market Access AstraZeneca, Delhi

BIHAR



Chandani

Principal, High School, Madanpur, District Vaishali, Bihar

DELHI



Khushi

Chairperson, Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights

JHARKHAND



Anisha

Principal, High School, Churchu, District Hazaribagh, Jharkhand

JHARKHAND



Sugandh

Principal, Dumarbaga Middle School, Sadar Block, District Khunti, Jharkhand

ODISHA



Niyatee

Medical Officer Incharge of Community Health Centre,
Kaptipada Block, Mayurbhanj District, Odisha

ODISHA



Sushree

Child Development Project Officer, Ghatgaon Block,
Keonjhar District, Odisha

TELANGANA



Sujatha

Additional Director General of Police, Women
Safety Wing, Telangana

UTTAR PRADESH (UP)



Anushka

Deputy Director, Department of Women Welfare,
Lucknow Division, UP

TAMIL NADU



Gopika

Commercial Head, AstraZeneca, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

TAMIL NADU



Priyadharshini

Facilities Head, AstraZeneca, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

UTTAR PRADESH (UP)



Roopa

Chairman, District Child Welfare Committee,
Maharajganj, UP

UTTAR PRADESH (UP)



Pushpa

Principle, Higher Secondary School, Mirzapur, UP

MEDIA COVERAGE

[illegible]

The IDG #EqualForBetter campaign reached **14.2 million** users on social media generating **15.1k** engagement on all platforms.

ABOUT PLAN

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

PLAN INDIA

1, Community Centre, Zamrudpur, Kailash Colony Extension
New Delhi - 110048, India
Tel: +91-11-46558484, Fax: +91-11-46558443
Email: planindia@planindia.org