



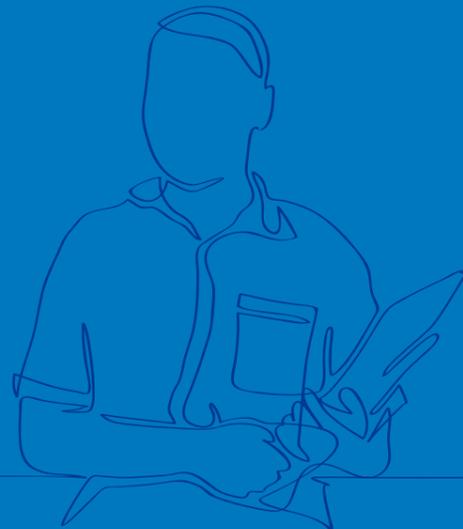
The charity for
girls' equality

**GIRLS EDUCATION
& EMPOWERMENT FUND
IMPACT REPORT 2021**

**YOUR INVESTMENT,
YOUR IMPACT,
YOU'RE BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS
THANK YOU**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The authors of this report acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging of this nation. We recognise sovereignty was never ceded and that this land always was and always will be First Nations land. We recognise their ongoing connection to land, waters and community, and we commit to ongoing learning, deep and active listening, and taking action in solidarity.



CEO'S THANK YOU

Thank you for fighting for girls

The first week I started at Plan International Australia, there was a statistic I heard that still haunts me. If you are a girl in South Sudan, you have more chance of dying in childbirth than finishing secondary school.

That's why Plan is on a mission to change that figure in our lifetime.

It's a big challenge - especially since COVID-19 has made educating girls even more difficult. Yet the United Nations Population Fund says the untapped potential of the 10-year-old girl is the single biggest investment you could make that would alleviate poverty in our world.

That's why the Girls Education & Empowerment Fund is so important. And why your generosity and commitment is so important. Because of you, thousands of girls can finish school. Because of you, girls don't have to remain in poverty. **Because of you, girls can achieve their dreams.**

Thank you for caring and investing into the hearts, minds and talents of girls.

Susanne Legena
CEO,
Plan International Australia



YOUR BOARD'S ENCOURAGEMENT

What your impact looks like

Girls saying no to child marriage. Girls standing up against female genital mutilation in their own communities. Girls finishing school and becoming teachers or professionals – even coming back to work in their own villages.

That's what happens when you contribute to the Girls Education & Empowerment Fund... but at an exponential level. Because your gift is leveraged through grants from major institutional partners to amplify your impact.

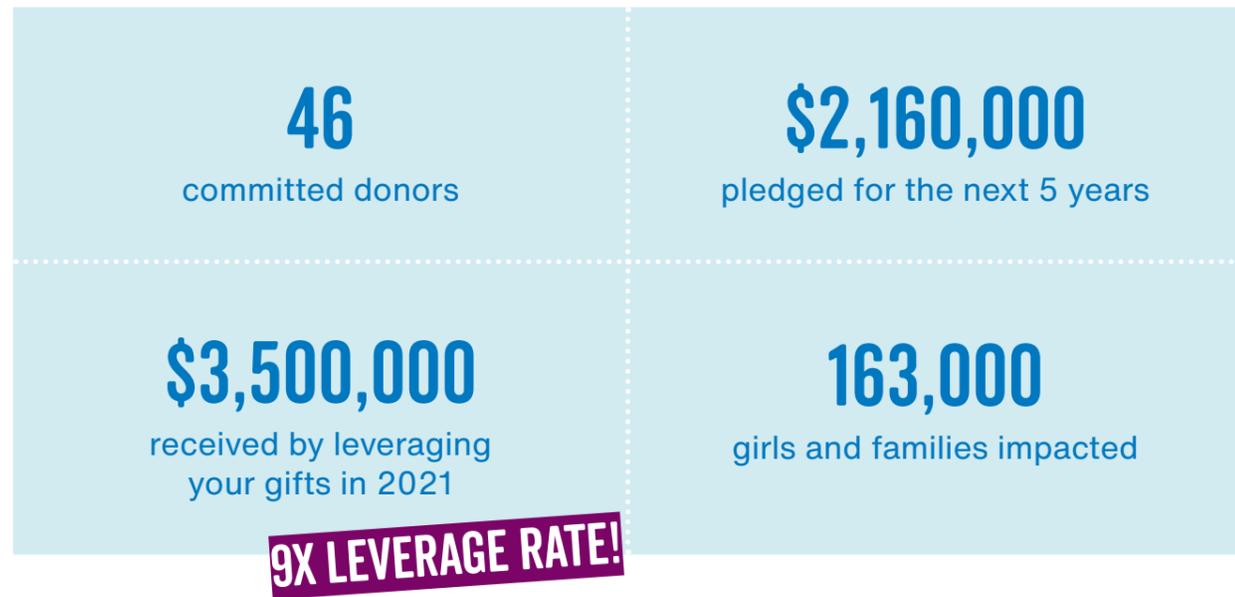
I personally give to this Fund because I believe in Plan's capability and commitment to work with local people to create change so girls can thrive. The Fund also allows me to fill a unique funding gap – and to collaborate with other like-minded donors like you.

Finally, I give to this Fund because **I believe in the power of girls to create a better world.**

Thank you for your commitment to girls' rights and education.

Sally Treeby
Board Chair,
Plan International Australia

YOUR GENEROSITY AT A GLANCE



How your impact is amplified

Thank you for your commitment to the Girls Education & Empowerment Fund. Together with Plan International and the communities we work with, you're helping to educate girls and stop poverty.

The Fund is designed to drive change not only for the short-term but for future generations. So girls can choose the lives they want to live. It works like this:



YOU'RE HELPING BREAK DOWN BARRIERS

BARRIER 1
Stunted Early Childhood Development

BARRIER 2
Poor Access to Clean Water & Sanitation

BARRIER 3
Gender-based Violence & Child Marriage

BARRIER 4
Lack of Sexual & Reproductive Health Rights

BARRIER 5
Poverty & Economic Hardship

BARRIER 6
Crises & Emergencies

THE LIFE JOURNEY OF A GIRL

See the difference you make when you remove the roadblocks in a girl's path to power, freedom and equality.

A YOUNG GIRL BEGINS HER LIFE

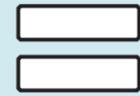
The clear path with education and investment into girls



The girl gets an equal and fair start in life



The girl goes to school and gets a quality education



The girl gets equal opportunities as she grows up



The girl lives free from violence



The girl gets the period products she needs and the stigma is gone



The girl learns how to fight for the right to make decisions about her body



The girl gets family and community support to say no to child marriage



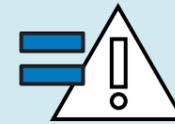
The girl gets to make decisions about sex and family planning



The girl gets equal pay and is financially independent



The girl gets equal power and becomes an active citizen



The girl gets equal rights and treatment during crises and emergencies



The girl is now a powerful woman who can shape her life and the world around her

Roadblocks if no intervention or investment into girls



Parents prioritise boys



Poverty means the girl misses out on school



Burden of chores falls on the girl



The girl faces physical and sexual violence both at home and at school



If the girl does get schooling, she's excluded once she starts her period



The girl is subjected to female genital mutilation



The girl is married off too early



The girl has unwanted early pregnancy



The girl faces lack of job opportunities & discrimination in her career



The girl's voice is excluded or not valued in important decisions



During crises and emergencies the girl is even more vulnerable to these challenges



The girl remains in poverty with few opportunities

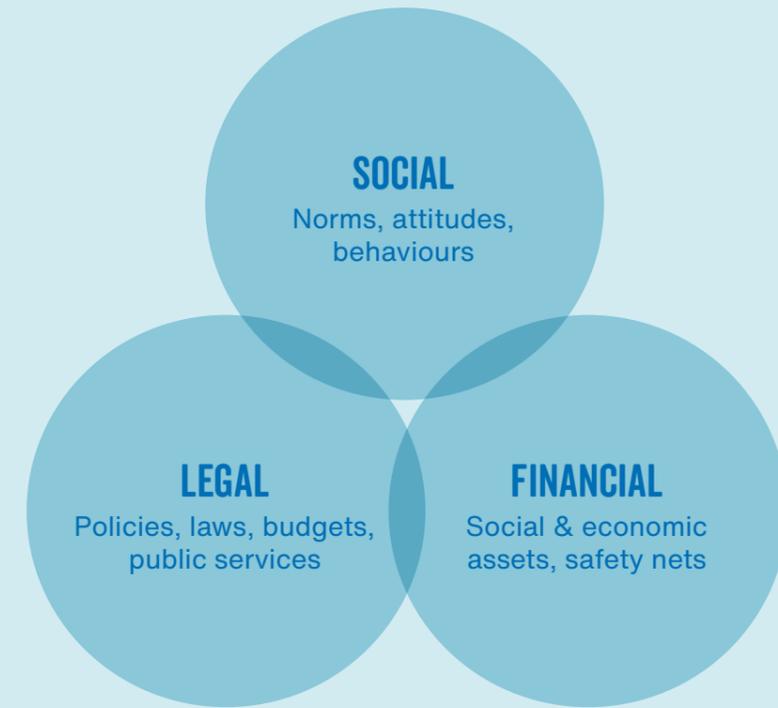
HOW YOU DRIVE LASTING CHANGE FOR GIRLS

Plan’s approach to investing in girls is not a quick fix. It needs many people—including you—to work together to change the attitudes and systems that keep girls in poverty. This has a ripple effect that flows out from individual girls to improve not only their own lives, but also those of their families and communities.

The people fighting for change



What are we addressing to ensure lasting change



Philomena, 13, Solomon Islands, wants to be a doctor when she grows up. Photo: John von Ahlen

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS:

Stunted Early Childhood Development

Thank you for helping us work with communities to provide:

- **Breastfeeding support and food supplements** to combat malnutrition
- **Better nutrition and a wider range of foods** so girls can grow up healthy and strong
- **Play groups and early education** so girls don't start school behind

"(In first grade,) I cried when the teacher asked me to go to the front of the class and count from 1 to 10 and I didn't want to go back to school."

-Tai, 20, now an early learning volunteer in her village in Laos

When you live in poverty like Tai, girls don't learn their ABCs or 123s before they go to school - if they get to go to school at all.

In fact, their parents often never went to school themselves and don't see the point of education, especially for girls. There is no counting toys or reading before bedtime. It's a big enough struggle to provide enough food each day.

That's why, with your help, Plan works in villages like Tai's to overcome malnutrition and hunger. Encouraging healthy diets and help with food means girls are stronger and better able to concentrate on learning at school.

YOUR GIFT IN ACTION

Integrated Programs in Laos - Nutrition and Early Childhood work

Your contribution is an investment into the early years of girls' lives. Your impact includes:

- Fighting malnutrition at its earliest stages
- Promotion of breastfeeding for early nourishment
- Food and nutrition for pregnant women and lactating mums
- Playgroups and early learning
- Training local people in early education and working with children to give them the best start in life

Plan also worked in Tai's village to create better early learning opportunities and help parents understand the value of school for girls. This included setting up informal playgroups. Here children improve their language skills, play games, sing counting songs and develop social skills so they're better prepared for school.

With your help, girls like Tai won't have to start school without knowing the basics. Thank you!



Thank you
When you help girls get the right nutrition and early learning start, they can thrive along with the boys.

15,117 GIRLS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS:

Poor Access to Clean Water & Sanitation

Thank you for helping us work with communities to provide:

- **Local clean water sources** so girls don't have to walk hours to collect water and end up missing school
- **Safe water sources** so girls aren't at risk of violence while collecting water in isolated areas
- **Safe toilets and menstrual products** so girls can go to school when they have their periods

"Collecting water ruins my day. When I collect water it keeps me from doing my homework and playing with my friends."

-Juam, 13, lives with her grandparents in Laos

With your support, Plan is now working with the people in Juam's community to fix this problem. They're doing surveys to set up a close, convenient water source right in the village. This will ease the pressure on girls like Juam.

During the dry season, her village's tap system provides water for only 10-20% of the people. Among other chores, this means Juam must collect water for her family... up to 10 times a day.

Each time, she has to take her double-bucket shoulder pole, make the trek to the creek, fill up both buckets and return home. Then repeat over and over. It's not a chore she can skip because the whole family needs water for cleaning, washing and cooking. Unlike boys, Juam is expected to do domestic work like this.

Obviously, this has an impact on Juam's education. The time it takes to collect water is time taken away from her studies.

And so, the new water system will help keep Juam in school because she can collect water much faster. Thank you for giving a girl like Juam a clean, safe water source.



Thank you
Juam won't have to miss out on school when the new water system cuts down the time spent collecting water.

15,116 GIRLS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED

YOUR GIFT IN ACTION

Integrated Programs in Laos - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project

Your contribution is an investment into the water and hygiene needs of girls. This project covers:

- Basic sanitation including hand washing and other personal hygiene
- How to safely carry, store, treat and use drinking water
- Working with locals to set up clean water taps and systems
- Providing and using latrines, which is safer than open defecation
- Practising menstrual hygiene and help with period products

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS:

Lack of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

Thank you for helping us work with communities towards:

- **Changing attitudes** towards domestic violence and promoting healthy relationships instead
- **Accurate sex and pregnancy education** for girls to prevent unplanned early pregnancy
- **Escape from family and sexual violence** with girls seeking help from hotlines, safe houses and family support centres

“Here, people are not allowed to talk about sexual reproductive health issues... Parents of teenagers won’t accept their children have condoms...They don’t want their children to touch this subject.”

–Jennifer, community health worker, Papua New Guinea

With your generosity, Plan is able to train people like Jennifer to overcome the taboos surrounding sex education and violence against women.

Because what happens when you’re not allowed to talk about sex? Girls don’t know basic information like how babies are made - and they end up with unplanned pregnancies.

The result? Health complications. Social isolation. An abrupt end to schooling and any ambitions a girl has. And a life where she’s at risk of domestic abuse. The problem is even worse in the most remote areas of Papua New Guinea.

YOUR GIFT IN ACTION

Empowering Girls in Papua New Guinea

Your contribution is an investment into helping girls to make wise choices about their own bodies and futures. This project involves:

- Training youth champions and health workers to challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes
- Providing accurate information about sex and contraception to prevent unplanned pregnancies
- Highlighting domestic violence issues and teaching families about healthy relationships
- Encouraging youth to seek advice or referrals for pregnancy, contraception, STDs and HIV
- Working with churches and community leaders to ensure girls get support when reporting violence

When girls have control over their bodies, they’re more likely to finish school.

“There’s a lot of risky behaviour...The use of condoms just isn’t bothered with... When adolescent girls [in rural villages] get pregnant, there’s not much help for them. They don’t have access to health services,”

“I teach girls that family planning is not just about conception and contraceptives - it’s about planning your life. What kind of life do you want to live? How many children do you want to have? If you want to complete school, when do you want to do that by? It’s about choices.”

5,500 GIRLS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED

Thank you

After attending workshops run by community health workers like Jennifer, Laila (age 20, pictured) is now training to become a nurse. She wants to help other girls make informed choices about sex, education and life.



Thank you

Birth registration means no child marriage for Bandana's beautiful twin girls, Kakoli and Taani. They have their whole lives ahead of them.



অভিনন্দনা।
আপনার নবজাতক সন্তানের জন্য অভিনন্দনা হইল। আপনার সন্তানের জন্ম নিবন্ধন সনদটি নরসিদৌ পৌরসভা থেকে সংগ্রহ করা হয়েছে। আগামী ১০ দিনের মধ্যে নিম্নলিখিত কাগজ পত্র নিয়ে নরসিদৌ পৌরসভাতে যোগাযোগ করুন।
- হাসপাতালের ছাড়পত্র
- নবজাতক শিশুর পিতা-মাতার এনআইডি (NID) অথবা জন্ম সনদপত্র
নবজাতক শিশু ও শিশুর মায়ের সার্বিক সুস্থতা এবং মঙ্গল কামনা করছি।
OpenCRVS প্রজেক্ট টিম
প্লান ইন্টারন্যাশনাল বাংলাদেশ।

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS: Gender-Based Violence & Child Marriage

Thank you for helping us work with communities to:

- **Encourage birth registrations** to help protect girls from early marriage, abuse and exploitation
- **Fight child marriage** to stop early motherhood and prevent girls dropping out of school
- **Improve safety for girls to stop violence** and harassment of girls whether it takes place at home, in the classroom or while collecting water

Bandana is a new mum from Bangladesh. She's taken a big step towards protecting her twin girls from becoming child brides in the future.

From her hospital bed after labour, Bandana completed the birth registration of her two new daughters. This gives them both a legal identity and helps protect their rights.

This was made possible with your support and Plan's work with the Bangladesh government to set up the Open Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (Open CRVS) population data system. Without this system, a child can't be issued a birth certificate. Without this basic document, a girl doesn't exist in the eyes of the law.

This means children can't prove their age. For girls like Bandana's, this leads to a much higher risk of being forced into child marriage. Although the legal age of marriage is 18, in reality the practice is still widespread. Over half the women in the country now aged 20-24 married when they were still children... some as young as 10.

But with an official birth record, you make it much harder to force girls into early marriage. For Bandana's baby girls, this means they'll avoid health issues or even death from early pregnancy. They are less likely to suffer from violence. And they'll get to finish school, giving them better work and career prospects in future.

YOUR GIFT IN ACTION

Pilot Project - Birth Registrations in Bangladesh

Your contribution is an investment into promoting and enforcing the legal rights of girls. This project covers:

- Open source registration system set up to record births, deaths, marriages and other population data
- Enforcing the legal age of 18 for marriages
- Stopping birth certificate forgeries showing the age of girls as over 18

Ultimately, this helps to keep girls in school and free from the risks and abuses of child marriage.

160 GIRLS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS: Poverty & Economic Hardship



YOUR GIFT IN ACTION

Rebuilding livelihoods in Zimbabwe

Your contribution is an investment into family livelihoods so poverty doesn't push girls out of education and into harmful situations. This project involves:

- Food e-vouchers to ensure families could maintain proper meals and nutrition for children
- Business and livelihood training so families are better able to support girls and withstand future economic shocks
- Gender equality education for families so girls are treated equally and boys aren't prioritised over girls

Girls stay in school when families have a secure income.

25,000 GIRLS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED

Because without help, these two girls would be at great risk.

When their mum struggled to put one meal a day on the table, there was no money for school. Child marriage was a real threat. When parents can't provide, marrying off a daughter is seen as a way to provide for her.

But with an education, Shona and Danai won't end up abused in a child marriage or exploited as a sex worker like their mother. When they finish school, these girls will be able to choose the career path they want.

Thank you for helping us work with communities towards:

- **Food and income support** so girls aren't pulled from school to care for younger siblings or older relatives
- **Microbusiness training** so parents can support and educate their girls
- **Giving families a livelihood** so they don't resort to marrying off girls or selling them into exploitation

"The lockdown meant I could not sell my wares at the market...Life became so difficult in such a short period of time that I had no choice but to become a sex worker."

-Tendai, 31, single mum of 2 daughters and a son, left an abusive husband, Zimbabwe

With your support, Plan worked with parents like Tendai left destitute when COVID-19 shut down businesses. The food voucher program means Tendai can buy more and better food for her children. Now they can eat three healthy meals a day instead of their single paltry serve of maize porridge.

Savings and business training is also giving Tendai a way to build a new livelihood so she can send all her children to school. That includes daughters Shona, 14, and Danai, 11.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS: Crises & Emergencies

Thank you for helping us provide this support during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Emergency relief** so parents can continue supporting their families during the pandemic
- **Income support** to keep girls in school and get materials to support remote learning
- **Livelihood training** for families who lost jobs or income during COVID-19

"Because of the lockdown, my husband was unemployed for four months. Since he was the sole income earner, it was really hard for us to make ends meet... then we ran out of medicine for Lizel."

- Lilibeth, 36, mother of six children including one with a seizure disorder, Indonesia

It's hard enough when you struggle in poverty. Add an emergency like COVID-19. Then a



7,770 GIRLS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED

daughter who has a disability which requires life-saving medication.

So when Lilibeth's husband lost what income he had, it was disastrous. Not only did they lack money to feed six children, they could no longer afford the medicine Lizel needed to stay alive. Lining up for hours to ask for government aid yielded nothing.

With your support, Plan worked with local partners in the Philippines to distribute cash vouchers to the families hardest hit by COVID-19. For Lilibeth, her highest priority was that vital medicine for her daughter.

The reality is the pandemic is exacerbating the inequalities girls already face. Girls and women are last in line for food. With income losses, they're more likely to drop out of school permanently. During such times, a rise in financial stress also leads to a rise in violence against women, both inside and out of the home.

Cash aid for families like Lilibeth's helps them get through the crisis so they can focus on rebuilding for the future - thank you!

YOUR GIFT IN ACTION

COVID-19 Response in Indonesia

Your contribution is an intervention during disasters and crises to ensure girls aren't left behind. This project involves:

- Cash voucher aid so families can buy necessities such as food and life-saving medications
- Portable handwashing stations so families can practice COVID-safe hygiene
- Livelihood training for youth and families to build sustainable incomes
- Youth projects for longer-term flood disaster risk management such as early warning systems

When communities are resilient during emergencies, girls are more likely to stay in school and maintain their rights.

FUTURE GOALS – WILL YOU JOIN US?

Target: \$3 million in cumulative pledges by the end of 2022.

When you invest in the Girls Education & Empowerment Fund, together we break down the barriers that stop girls from reaching their full potential.

In 2022, we are aiming to double the impact of this life-changing fund, by supporting over a quarter of a million girls to become powerful women that change the world.

With your help, we want to:

1. Expand our reach and invite more Australians to join us in this movement,
2. Continue leveraging your contributions for greater impact each year, and
3. Deepen our impact in communities to create lasting change.

Halima, 15, and her friends stand in the doorway of their school in Kenya.



**THANK YOU FOR TRANSFORMING THE LIVES
OF GIRLS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.
BECAUSE A BETTER NOW FOR HER,
MEANS A BETTER FUTURE FOR EVERYONE.**

To make a further contribution to the Girls Education & Empowerment Fund, go to planau.me/geefund



The charity for
girls' equality

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