



Helping children since 1937

Capacity Statement Gender-Based Programming¹

Despite recent progress, gender gaps continue to exist in access to and control of resources and services, in economic opportunities, and in political voice. In the economic sector, young women face high rates of unemployment and underemployment, and when they do get a job, they are often paid less than their male counterparts. Females make up 70% of the 1.5 billion people living on \$1 a day or less². Women and girls are also more vulnerable to violence. An estimated one in five women will be a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime³, and one in three will face sexual or physical abuse⁴. Nearly half of all sexual assaults worldwide are against girls 15 years or younger⁵, and of the 700,000 individuals each year forced into human trafficking, 80% are estimated to be women and girls⁶. Gender-based violence's impact on women's health surpasses the detrimental impact of malaria and traffic accidents combined, and for those aged between 15 and 44, violence leaves more women disabled or dead than cancer⁷.

MDG	how to reach MDG by investing in girls and young women
1 – eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Increase girls' access to land and property, and increase their access to credit
2 – achieve universal education	Increase girls' access to 'safe-spaces' ⁸ and networking opportunities
3 – promote gender equality	Increase young women's access to safe, non-exploitative waged employment
4 and 5 – reduce child mortality and improve maternal health	Increase girls' access to 'life-skills' training, including reproductive health, and increase efforts to prevent child marriage

In developing countries, the mortality rate of children under five is highest among those whose mothers had no education⁸. In Africa, children whose mothers had at least five years of education are 40% more likely to live beyond the age of five and 50% more likely to be immunized⁹. Although the number of girls enrolled in primary school increased by almost 10% in the last 15 years¹⁰, a little more than one-third of countries worldwide are achieving equal gender enrollment rates.¹¹ In

¹ Prepared by Eric Tyler in December 2009, with contributions from Emily Lundell, Pamela Young and Stacy Fehlenberg.

² Plan, *Because I am a Girl: The State of the World's Girls*, 2007

³ UN Millennium Project, *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*. 2005

⁴ Heise, L., M. Ellsberg, and M. Gottemoeller. "Ending Violence against Women." *Population Reports*. 1999.

⁵ UNFPA, *UNFPA and Young People: Imagine*. 2003.

⁶ United States Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. 2005.

⁷ UN Millennium Project, *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*, 2005.

⁸ Plan. *Because I Am A Girl: The State of the World's Girls*. 2007.

⁹ United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI): *Girls' Education: Towards a Better Future for all* (2005)

¹⁰ World Bank, *Equality for Women: Where do we stand on Millennium Development Goal 3?* 2008.

¹¹ UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009*, 2008.

addition, the rise of child marriages has become a limiting factor to girls' education, employment, and fulfillment of human rights. An estimated 82 million girls who are now aged 10 to 17 will be married before their 18th birthday¹², and in some countries, the majority of girls are married before age 18 (for example, 76 % in Niger, 60% in Nepal). These overall trends jeopardize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to gender (see diagram below), and a recent study by the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that in order for these gender specific MDGs to be achieved, a concentrated investment of \$13 billion per year is needed.

Plan's Global Experience

Over the past six years, Plan has completed 45 gender-based projects and is currently executing 81 more. These gender-based programs have predominately focused on improving the livelihood of girls but have also impacted issues of gender equality at large. The programs span 41 countries through dozens of projects including: 50 in Asia, 34 in West Africa, 29 in East and Southern Africa, and 19 in Latin America and the Caribbean. In attempt to translate gender-sensitive policy into program realities on the ground, the following areas have been prioritized by Plan:

1. Develop a system-wide initiative to understand inequality perpetuated by underlying structural and cultural factors relating to patriarchy
2. Involve men and boys as partners in health and education
3. Tailor programs to target age groups of girls and boys to maximize benefits of this programming

In 2006, Plan launched a global initiative called *Because I am a Girl* (BIAG); this campaign was aimed at addressing the global knowledge gap in girls' rights and development issues. At the heart of the campaign is an annual report series that collects secondary data and tracks progress on various themes, like *Girls in the Global Economy* and *Girls in the Shadow of War*; reports began in 2007 and will run through to 2015. Each report provides data and contexts for the social, political, and economic issues within each theme. The campaign garnered global recognition for pioneering the discussion on girls' rights, including a nomination as a top commitment by the Clinton Global Initiative and recognition by UNICEF as an external leader of its gender policy, among other acknowledgments from top government officials worldwide.

Plan's Rights-Based Approach. All of Plan's programs address one or more of eight identified rights: (1) right to participate as citizens; (2) right to a healthy start in life; (3) right to quality education; (4) right to water and sanitation; (5) right to an adequate standard of living; (6) right to sexual reproductive health, especially in relation to HIV/AIDS; (7) right to protection from all forms of violence; and (8) right to protection and assistance in emergency situations. Plan has incorporated each of these rights into a multi-dimensional solution to cope with the complex and expansive challenges of gender inequality. A recent survey of Plan's gender initiatives, categorized by strategic priority, is summarized in the table below:

Strategic Program Priority	Types of Activities:	Number of Projects
1. Right to participate as citizens	Training and support to children's clubs, child-to-child activities, organizations, Girls' groups, Children's forums	26

¹² UNICEF, Early Marriage: Child Spouses. 2001.

Strategic Program Priority	Types of Activities:	Number of Projects
2. Right to a good and healthy start in life	Health and hygiene IEC activities, Trainings or information sessions	16
3. Right to quality education	Training of teachers on gender-related issues; Scholarship for girls / Financial support for school supplies, transportation; Infrastructure development for creation of gender-friendly school (e.g. proximity, separate latrines, safe environment)	70
4. Right to water and sanitation	Construction infrastructure: (separate latrines; proximity of water supply)	10
5. Right to an adequate standard of living	Training for girls/adolescents/women: Vocational education and skills training (e.g. Marketing, life skills, workplace communication)	29
6. Right to sexual/ reproductive health, especially in relation to HIV/	Training/Workshops/Peer education on reproductive health	28
7. Right to protection from all forms of violence	Public awareness (IEC through media campaigns; Community education sessions on reduction of violence against children)	63

Often the first step in improving the livelihood of girls is increasing awareness of girls' rights and abilities, both among communities and girls themselves. Gender awareness projects are a central focal point of Plan's programming, and Plan invested over \$800,000 in gender awareness campaigns in the last year alone. For example, Plan Nepal organized 224 *Better Life Option* Program Centers, which provided life skills education focused to 5,599 girls. A further 567 community centers incorporated Behavioral Change Communication (BCC) activities on gender, reaching nearly 30,000 people. On the national level, regional consultations were organized with women members of Nepal's Constituent Assembly to discuss the Women's Charter and to lobby for women's rights in the new constitution. Plan also facilitated the organization of 10,000 women activists from all over Nepal to advocate for ensuring women's participation at all levels.

Plan's gender-based programming targets four main sectors including: education, gender-based violence, economic empowerment and health. Plan's experience in these sectors is outlined below:

Education

Education benefits both girls and boys alike by expanding their future opportunities and choices while also promoting broader development and progress. The education of girls has proven to produce additional socio-economic gains, including: increased economic productivity, higher family incomes, delayed marriages, reduced fertility rates, and improved health for infants and children¹³. However, gender parities still continue to exist; for every 100 out-of-school boys, there are 122 girls¹⁴, and a little more than one-third of countries are achieving equal gender enrollment rates.¹⁵

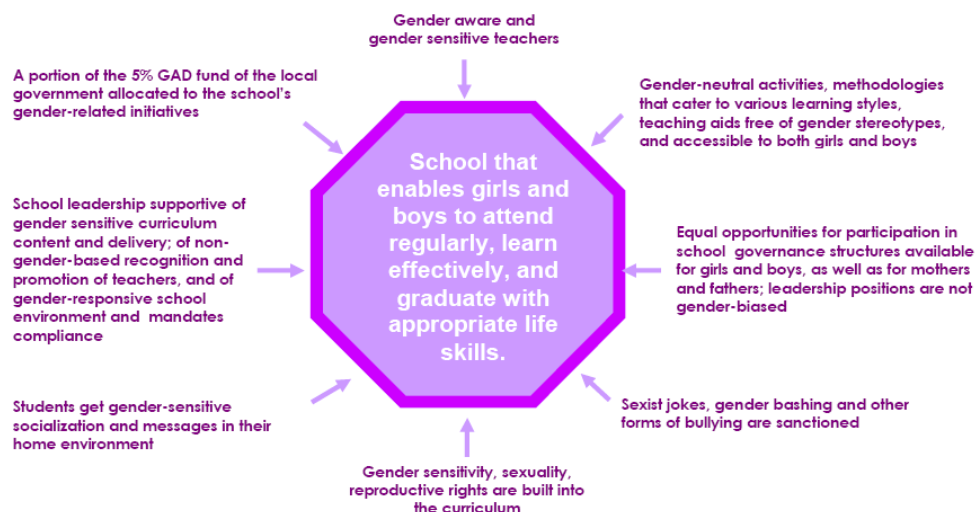
Plan International has implemented a continuum of programs that focus not only on girls' access to education, but also prioritize girls' retention rates and the quality of education they receive. The priority of girls' right to quality education is realized in over 70 Plan projects; and in the 2009 Fiscal Year, Plan invested over \$2.2 million in primary and secondary school scholarships for girls. In

¹³ USAID. Education from a Gender Equality Perspective 2008

¹⁴ FAWE Annual Report 2007

¹⁵ EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008

addition, Plan promotes the School Improvement Program (SIP) as a comprehensive strategy for improving education, which has eight key areas: (1) teacher qualification and attitudes; (2) learning methods and teaching aids; (3) participation of children and parents in school governance; (4) learning environment; (5) curriculum; (6) student preparedness; (7) school governance; and (8) government support. The SIP program specifically identifies gender equity via gender inclusiveness and discrimination-free activities and training. The figure below shows how gender capacities are being integrated into Plan's SIP framework.



Case Study- Burkina Faso: Burkinabe Response to Improve Girl's Chances to Succeed Program (BRIGHT I 2005-2008)

Primary school enrollment rates in Burkina Faso are some of the lowest in the world. In 2005, the gross enrollment in Burkina Faso was only 56%, with primary school completion at 30% overall—25% overall for girls. The opportunity cost of girls' school attendance for households, which includes lost farming, lost labor or delayed bride price, prevents many families from sending girls to school.

In 2005 Plan spearheaded a collaborative effort called the *Burkinabe Response to Improve Girl's Chances to Succeed program* (BRIGHT) in 132 villages in Burkina Faso's 10 provinces with the lowest girls' enrollment rates. The program constructed 132 primary schools with separate girls' latrines, daily school meals, textbooks, and as an added incentive, the program offered take-home rations for girls with a 90% attendance rate. The project also worked to improve the quality of education through:

- (1) Mobilization campaigns – training and informational meetings with ministry officials, teachers, and community members on gender sensitivity, also Girls' Education Days with radio broadcasts and awards for outstanding female teachers;
- (2) Literacy programs – training for adult literacy, particularly female community leaders;
- (3) Girls' mentoring – female teachers and community leaders mentored girls to overcome barriers to attendance;
- (4) Local partner capacity building – the engagement and training of local officials in the Ministry of Education, Child Care Centers, and the community on girls' right to education.

During the first year of the BRIGHT program, over 11,000 children enrolled at 132 schools, far exceeding the target of 3,300, with enrollment reaching over 17,000 children in Year Two. BRIGHT schools also reached a girls' school attendance rate of 95%—4.6% higher than boys. By the end of the program, children who entered with test scores in the 50th percentile improved, on average, to the 80th percentile. As a result of these achievements, the USG is currently supporting a follow up phase (BRIGHT II), expanding the schools to accommodate all six grades, and thereby allowing girls in Burkina Faso to complete their entire primary education.

Case Study – India: Kick-Start for Girls’ Education (1998)

Plan India has been working with a local NGO, Uttari Rajasthan Milk Union Limited Trust (URMUL), since 1998 to educate and empower adolescent girls and young women in Rajasthan, a particularly conservative part of India. Met with huge opposition at first, URMUL gradually persuaded reluctant parents to release their girls for a residential camp (called Balika Shivir) to kick-start their basic education.

After five months, the girls leaped several years in their primary education level, along with a greater awareness of their rights, their health and other social issues. Since the camps started, nearly 2,000 12 to 24 year olds have benefited from basic education, with half continuing to study in mainstream schools, and many more becoming champions for girls’ rights in their local communities and mentoring other girls. Inspired by the success of Balika Shivir, URMUL and Plan initiated an extension called Kishori Prerna Manch (KPM) in 2001.

The KPM program continues the education of girls returning from the camps with life-skills training and helping them create peer support groups. The cornerstone of KPM is the Girls’ Forum, where they can meet and learn about governance, health, agriculture, the importance of education, and—through all of these sessions—their rights. The key to these forums is also the safe space it creates for girls to have candid discussions with their peers and with village leaders to find solutions to their challenges in a supportive space. As of 2008, 58 such village forums are in operation.

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence against women and girls takes on many different forms, including incest, rape, genital cutting, sexual harassment, domestic violence, honor killings and trafficking. Plan understands that gender-based violence is one of the most atrocious symptoms of gender inequality, and has developed a wide range of projects to address the broad span of gender-based violence. One of Plan’s more innovative programs involves raising awareness of domestic violence in Latin America (see Case Study below).

Case Study – Brazil, El Salvador, Colombia, & Honduras: Raising Awareness for Gender Equality

Working in Brazil, El Salvador, and Honduras, Plan implemented a two-year pilot project to raise awareness on domestic violence through the engagement of teachers, parents, community leaders and children. Teachers, health workers and local police were trained on how to recognize gender violence and worked to strengthen community protection networks and shared best practices on supporting child rights networks across the Region. Equitable participation of girls in project activities was evident as they assumed leadership roles as youth facilitators.

Results achieved include:

- ✓ 4,749 children and youth trained in child rights and domestic violence issues to break the inter-generational cycles of violence and silence
- ✓ 1,223 teachers trained in non-violent approaches to resolving domestic violence
- ✓ 2,744 parents trained on child rights, non-violent approaches to child rearing, and gender equality
- ✓ 530 community leaders trained on child rights, domestic violence, and gender equality
- ✓ 710 health professionals trained on case recognition and referral skills for domestic violence and child abuse
- ✓ 1,326 police officers trained on case recognition and management on domestic violence and child abuse
- ✓ Increased local NGO awareness of domestic violence and abuse, including gender violence, and the constructive ways to address it

Case Study – Mali: Fighting Against Female Genital Cutting (2006)

In 2006, an estimated 94% of females in Mali had undergone female genital cutting (FGC), of which nearly 22% suffered severe haemorrhaging or death. Plan has worked to raise awareness about the dangers and consequences of female genital cutting, lobbying at all levels from local communities to government officials. In the short-term, Plan is working with 140 target villages and is aiming for a 25% reduction in the practice, with complete elimination as the long-term goal. In connection with capacity building for actors in the fight against the practice of FGC, the main activities of the project include:

- ✓ Advocacy training on FGC and the Rights of the Child for 140 traditional communicators, 350 members of 70 children's organizations, and 700 community organization members on communications techniques, human rights and developing action plans to advocate for FGC abandonment.
- ✓ Training seven local NGO partners who conduct seven community education (IEC) campaigns on FGC.
- ✓ Organization of an Information and Views Exchange Day on FGC with 13 members of RMCAEX (Malian network of communicators), resulting in RMCAEX publically calling for the abandonment of FGC.
- ✓ In partnership with the National Program to Fight FGC and Plan Mali's technical and financial partners, advocating to 45 members of the High Council for commitment and support to publically abandon FGC.
- ✓ Organization of seven Children's Forums and a National Forum with Muslim religious leaders to clarify the position of Islam on FGC and the validity of prayers offered by a woman who has not undergone FGC.

One of Plan's major strategies for addressing gender-based violence involves combating child marriage. Child marriage causes a wide range of challenges for girls. Aside from the life-threatening probability of early motherhood, it holds girls back from school and therefore economic independence, and often isolates them from public life, preventing the building of social support networks. Recent statistics estimate 100 million girls around the globe will marry before they are 18¹⁶, and girls who are married this young report being physically abused as much as twice as often than girls who marry later¹⁷. Many families may marry off their young daughters for tradition or for the bride price, and dowries can place a significant financial burden on families and parents, who will often prioritize investing in their daughter's eligibility for marriage over her health and educational needs. Girls are caught between a birth family that neglects her nutrition, schooling and health care, and a marital family that seeks to maximize the profit of taking a young wife into a family. As a result, girls are left with few rights but a multitude of responsibilities.

Case Study – Niger: Understanding Childhood Marriage in Niger¹⁸

Niger has one of the highest rates of child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa, in which 60% of girls are married before age 19. An in-depth survey of 36 villages in the rural Dosso area of Niger found that 68% of girls were married before their first menstruation; 52% had a child before the age of 16; and 49% experienced complications during their first pregnancy. While some of those interviewed believe the influence of tradition is waning, men in the region considered early marriage as a way of ensuring the family honor, a way of ensuring control over girls, and was mentioned as a means to punish rebellious daughters. Some of the women also adhered to the traditional belief that a child born to a very young woman would be stronger, fiercer and more resilient.

Plan formed a working group with government officials, religious leaders and a local partner, PECDI (Protection de l'Enfance en Circonstance Difficile) to work with religious leaders to sensitize communities on the dangers of early pregnancy. At the same time, Plan is working with government and civil society groups to establishing a legal code to rights of children, including the right of girls to remain in school and resist early marriages—it's legal to marry at the age of 15 in Niger.

¹⁶ Haberland, N. 'Supporting married girls: Calling attention to a neglected group', *Population Council: Promoting Healthy, Safe and Productive Transitions to Adulthood*, 2007.

¹⁷ Plan, BIAG: The State of the World's Girls 2009

¹⁸ As seen in Plan International, Gender Equality and Plan, 2005.

Economic Empowerment

Many developing countries have laws and traditions that limit women's access to land, financial services and employment in the formal sector. To target these differences, Plan's gender-based programs often include economic empowerment projects such as: vocational training, financial education, village savings and loan programs, and market analysis and entrepreneurship. Given the

	Total		Males		Females	
	1995	2005	1995	2005	1995	2005
World	58.9	54.7	67.2	63.0	50.1	45.9
Developed Economies and European Union	53.6	51.8	56.9	54.0	50.1	49.6
Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS	47.2	41.8	52.8	48.4	41.5	35.0
East Asia	75.2	67.3	74.6	66.3	75.7	68.4
South East Asia and the Pacific	56.1	56.5	64.5	64.2	51.6	48.5
South Asia	50.6	47.2	68.0	64.2	31.7	29.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	56.4	54.2	70.4	63.8	42.3	44.5
Middle East and North Africa	40.0	40.0	56.2	54.3	23.2	25.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	68.2	65.5	76.1	73.7	60.2	57.3

Source: ILO (2006)²³

opportunity, girls become women who ensure the health and education of their children, create sustainable livelihoods, and are able to break the cycle of poverty. Plan realizes that women need a wide range of support to achieve lifelong economic empowerment including:

- Building the foundation for girls' economic future in the early years;
- Equipping girls with economic tools and skills in the middle years;
- Ensuring that markets and business opportunities work for young women so that they can achieve full economic empowerment

Plan's microfinance programs are often targeted towards existing women's groups or provide support for establishing new women's groups, and the average proportion of women participants in Plan's microfinance programs is 83%. In the Tillaberi zone of Niger, 131 new women's groups have received training on microfinance activities. In the Dosso region, Plan established women's groups in five villages and facilitated the formation of a microfinance network to give them greater negotiating power when seeking credit. Overall, Niger's microfinance program has trained 106 new community volunteers to advise group members on microfinance issues, and this has resulted in 98% of group members making regular contributions to a village savings scheme.

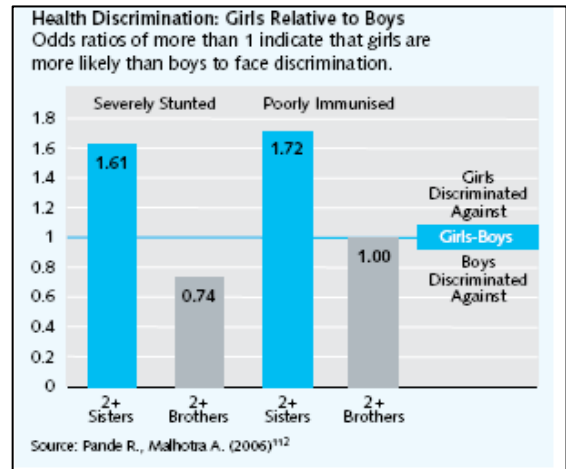
Case Study – Nepal: Women Empowerment Project (1999)

Plan Nepal is implementing a Women Empowerment Project (WEP) since July 1999 in the Makwanpur district with an objective of empowering women in social and economic spheres. Although the 1990 constitution of Nepal guarantees equal opportunities in all spheres for men and women, the gender inequality is prevalent in many aspects including control over resources, property rights, decision making process and acquirement of citizenships. Women also heavily suffer from domestic violence, illiteracy, malnutrition and deep rooted patriarchal practice.

The formation of saving and credit group is considered an entry point for empowering women and addressing child rights. Based on the wellbeing ranking, poor women are encouraged to join in the groups, which comprise 10 to 25 group members. These women's groups are ultimately linked up with women's saving and credit cooperatives (WOSCCs). Since the inception of the project, over 18,500 women have been enrolled in financial services through 1,185 self-help groups and 25 women's cooperatives. As of March 2008, women's cooperatives have accumulated resources amounting to over \$1 million. Furthermore, over 12,000 women have been graduated through 608 functional literacy classes, and more than 2,000 women have acquired citizenship certificates.

Health

Inadequate nutrition and pediatric care for girls are often the result of pervasive cultural attitudes that value boys more than girls. Often the health status of women in a community is clearly reflected in the health and nutritional status of their children. Plan's health programs have excelled at ensuring two fundamental rights for girls: the right to a healthy start in life and the right to sexual and reproductive health. Plan's programs aim to provide health resources for those girls and women who are particularly vulnerable in their communities while also educating women and men to prevent and mitigate health risks.



Case Study – Uganda: Introducing Sexual and Reproductive Health (2004-2007)

From 2004 to 2007, Plan provided sexual and reproductive health care (SRH) to young people and adults in four districts of Uganda via community-based programs that partnered with the Ministry of Health and the Uganda Family Planning Association. The programs covered HIV/AIDS information and prevention, safe motherhood, family planning and immunization. Central to this initiative was the way it addressed gender concerns holistically, avoiding the practice of isolating women's concerns and recognizing that gender dynamics influences women's reproductive health issues. While the majority of clients continue to be women and adolescent girls, the role and responsibilities of men and boys have also been emphasized.

Through workshops geared exclusively towards men, the project emphasized changing inequitable cultural practices that leave women vulnerable to SRH concerns. As a result, increasing numbers of men are accompanying their wives to outreach clinics for SRH services and information, and an increase number of men accessed clinics to receive treatment for sexually transmitted diseases and to gain knowledge about family planning.