

Your **IMPACT**

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You didn't give up on her

Cover: Girls learning in a primary school.
Photography by Amina Isa Oumarou.

Right: Fasila, 13, is now in primary school
after taking accelerated learning classes.
Photography by Plan Staff, Ghana.

The odds were stacked against 13-year-old Fasila from the beginning. Born in rural Ghana, Fasila lived in an area where it was common for girls to drop out of school early to marry or help at home, while their brothers continued with their educations. But, unlike most girls in her village, she wasn't even given the opportunity to start school.

You see, Fasila was born with a genetic condition that made it difficult for her to walk. In her parents' minds, this was a second strike against her. They decided not to send her to school — no matter how badly she wanted to be there. "I was always sad when I was left alone at home," Fasila said. "All I wanted was to be able to live a normal life just like the other children in my village."

Still, Fasila refused to give up on herself, and she finally got the chance she



was waiting for, through Plan's Reach program. A groundbreaking accelerated learning approach for children ages 8 to 14, this basic education program helps excluded children learn reading, writing and math over a nine-month period, so they're ready to transition to primary school. With the support of donors like you, Reach aims to return 90,000 children in Ghana to the classroom.

Fasila pleaded with her parents to let her participate, and eventually they relented. Thrilled to be in the classroom, her confidence blossomed - she made friends and thrived academically, which didn't go unnoticed by her teacher, Mr. Jalil.

"She is intelligent, committed and hardworking," Mr. Jalil said. "I know she will excel when she transitions to the formal school."

Seeing their daughter graduate at the top of her class, her parents realized what Fasila had always known — that she could achieve anything she set her mind to. Fasila passed the assessment exam and is now in primary school, with her parents' full support.

"I am determined to complete my education and become a nurse so that in the future, I will be able to encourage others who might also find themselves in my situation," she says proudly.

Thank you for helping to remove roadblocks that determined girls like Fasila are free to continue down the road to making their dreams a reality.

You can find more stories about children you've helped at planusa.org/blog.



INSPIRING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

with The Body Shop

In the summer of 2019, Bailey, a senior in high school, attended Plan International USA's Youth Leadership Academy. This weeklong program allows girls like Bailey to expand their knowledge of youth leadership at a local and global level. Bailey's passion for social and economic justice, gender equity and environmental sustainability were celebrated during this program.

"I had always wanted to do [more] in my own community, but I never had the support or courage to do so," Bailey explains.

This year, our Youth Leadership Academy will convene more students than ever to address social issues, build a network and create projects to help communities. To make this possible, The Body Shop donated \$50,000, raised through their holiday campaign in 2019, to inspire girls like Bailey to dream big. Thanks to their support, we will engage and train 50-60 students, mostly girls ages 14-18, in leadership, advocacy and communication skills.

These young leaders will apply their newly acquired skills to their own communities, reaching more than 1,200 youth.

To learn more about our Youth Leadership Academy, please visit planusa.org/yla.

Above: Bailey at the Youth Leadership Academy.
Photography by Plan Staff, U.S.





Image: Anthony is committed to making his community a safer place for girls. Photography by Quinn Neely.

Amy Bickford, Senior Director of Sponsorship at Plan, answers your questions about sponsorships, Gifts of Hope and anything else you want to know.

How do boys fit in to your work, as a girls' rights organization?

Hi Kerri,

Thank you for your question. Experience and research have shown clear links between fulfilling children's rights, ending child poverty and achieving gender equality. Investing in a girl's future will not only improve her life, but also the economic condition of her family, community and country.

The active participation of all community members — boys, girls, men and women — is an essential component of our work.

Every child has the right to grow up healthy, educated, protected and valued. Yet girls are often denied access to these basic human rights, simply because of their gender. They are more likely to be forced into early marriage, subjected to violence or sold into the sex trade.

With the support of donors like you, we're working to end harmful practices like child marriage and trafficking, and to remove the barriers preventing girls and boys from reaching their full potential. Gender equality is a fight we must take on together. In the end, we'll all be stronger because of it.

Sincerely,

Have a question for Amy?

Simply return the enclosed slip or send an email to donorrelations@planusa.org with "Ask Amy" in the subject line, and your question may be featured in a future newsletter!

Worth a thousand words

Jane Button has been a Plan sponsor for more than half a century — 60 years, to be exact.

That's quite the remarkable achievement, but don't expect Jane to make a fuss over this milestone. That's just not her style. She has always let her actions speak louder than her words. It's a trait that seems to run in the family.

Jane's mother Ethel Louise was a nurse in World War II. After her husband tragically passed away in a car accident, Ethel went back to work full-time to support her family. Jane later followed in her mother's footsteps, also becoming a nurse.

When Ethel Louise passed away, at age 77, Jane discovered that Ethel had been sponsoring a child with Plan, something

her mother had never mentioned to her. "I had never even heard of it!" she admits.

Still, Jane didn't hesitate to take over her mother's sponsorship. "It seemed like the proper thing to do," she said simply.

And Jane didn't stop there. After her mother's sponsored child graduated from the program, she sponsored another child, and another. By now she's lost count of all the children she's sponsored over the decades, saying "Time has gone by!"

Today, Jane sponsors an 8-year-old girl named Feliciana from Nicaragua. She enjoys sending cards and small gifts for special occasions, but her greatest wish is for Feliciana to stay in school. Jane knows education will be the key to

creating a better future for herself and her family.

A lot has changed since Jane started sponsoring in 1960, but the dedication of Jane, and donors like you, has never wavered. Your support is giving a voice to the voiceless, and that makes all the difference in the world.



Plan International USA
155 Plan Way • Warwick, RI 02886
800.556.7918 | planusa.org

