



Because
I am a **GiRL**

Because I am a Girl...

I watch my brothers go to school while I stay home.

I eat if there's food left over when everyone is done.

I am the poorest of the poor.

And Yet...

I will share what I know and what I earn.

I am the heart of my community.

I will pull my family out of poverty if you give me the chance.

I will take what you invest in me and uplift everyone around me.

Because I am a girl, investing in me is key to eliminating global poverty.



Girls in rural communities spend up to eight hours a day walking to and from a local water source.

The plight of girls

Girls in the poorest regions of the world are among the most disadvantaged people on the planet. They face unique barriers to survival and development — simply because they're girls. We will never eliminate global poverty unless we invest equally in all our children and address inequalities for girls.

- In the poorest countries of the world, 50% of girls do not attend secondary school.
- Girls are three times more likely to suffer from malnutrition than boys.
- Pregnancy is the leading cause of death for girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide.
- Globally, girls represent two thirds of new HIV infections among youth.
- Each year, roughly two million girls aged 5 to 15 are trafficked, sold or coerced into the sex trade.
- An estimated 100 million girls are “missing” because of gender-based abortion or infanticide.
- For every development dollar spent, girls receive less than two cents.



Of the one billion people who live on less than
a dollar a day,
70% are girls or women.



The power of girls

There is no question that investing in girls in developing countries is key to reducing global poverty and instability. Girls have a unique power to positively influence the lives of those around them, as future women, mothers, workers and leaders.

- For every year a girl stays in school, her income rises by 15% and her children are 5-10% more likely to survive.
- Women invest more of their income in their families than men do.
- A woman who is educated will marry later and have fewer, healthier children.

If girls are healthy, educated, and empowered, they will grow up to pull themselves out of poverty — and bring their children, communities and nations along with them.



No nation has yet emerged from poverty without ensuring **education for all** its young people.



The Plan for girls

Plan has a wide range of programs to improve the lives of girls and give them equal access to health care, education, protection, independence, and an opportunity to participate in society.

Our programs include scholarships, safe schools and dormitories, reproductive and maternal health programs, life skills, vocational training, financial literacy programs, microfinance, and more.

Simple solutions deliver powerful results:

- Giving a girl rice when she goes to school keeps her enrolled and makes her education a priority within her own family.
- Giving a mother a small loan to start a business raises her status as an income earner and means she'll reinvest her earnings in her children's education, transforming a cycle of poverty into a cycle of opportunity.
- Giving girls training in media and a chance to broadcast their views raises their voice within the community and plants the seeds of change.

Plan does not work only with girls! We address gender discrimination in all of our program work to ensure that as many girls as boys get access to education, healthcare, and the skills and opportunities needed to become independent adults who can break the cycle of poverty for themselves and their children.



If we **invest in girls**
equally, all children will benefit.

Geeta's story

From servitude to success with one small investment

When Geeta was 12 years old, her father made a traditional “kamalari” contract, sending her to work as a domestic servant. Geeta worked from sunrise until late evening, and earned only 700 Nepali rupees (about \$10) a year.

Geeta recalls, “It was impossible to escape. Even with all the verbal abuse and threats, there was nothing I could do. My master was highly regarded in his community. I was afraid of the consequences for my family if I left.”

But Geeta did escape. Thanks to a microloan and business training from Plan, she opened a roadside café, which she now operates as a thriving business.

Today, Geeta makes 46 times the annual wage she earned as a kamalari. She employs her entire family, and even several friends when business is brisk.

Geeta's future is now as bright as her potential. Because she is a girl.



Because she is a girl, no one believed she had any other skills or value.



Empower girls today

Investing in girls delivers a higher return than any other investment made in a country's development.

Join

- Join the movement at becauseiamagirl.ca
- Sign our petition to urge the Canadian government to declare September 22 as the National Day of the Girl, and take us one step closer to lobbying the United Nations to declare September 22 as the International Day of the Girl

Give

- Sponsor a girl
- Contribute to Plan Canada's girl fund
- Invest in girls through the **Because I am a Girl** endowment fund

Engage

- Mobilize your friends
- Hold a fundraiser
- Spread the word through Facebook and Twitter



Investing in girls is the right thing to do.
It's also the **smart thing** to do.
—Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala,
Managing Director, World Bank

About Plan

Plan International is a global movement for change, mobilizing millions of people around the world to support social justice for children in developing countries.

Founded in 1937, we are one of the world's oldest and largest international development agencies, working in partnership with millions of people around the world to end global poverty. Not for profit, independent and inclusive of all faiths and cultures, we have only one agenda: to improve the lives of children.

Through programs in more than 65 countries, we give children, families and communities the tools they need to break the cycle of poverty and build sustainable solutions for improving their own lives. While we work to improve the lives of all children, we understand that girls face unique barriers, so we address gender discrimination in all of our program work.



We put **children at the heart of our work,** and make sure girls and boys of all ages can participate in a meaningful way.



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