

Dhaka

Bangladesh

Positive changes are happening in Dhaka. Learn more about how we're supporting children and girls' rights through our collaborative, equality-driven work.

The capital city of Dhaka's rapid urbanization and economic growth have put massive pressure on the limited resources of the country. However, the communities are coming together to create a safe and secure environment for children and young girls.

For example, five safe bathing spaces were built in the city to protect adolescent girls from gender-based violence. Additionally, teen girls are becoming active drivers of change to create awareness of child and forced marriage within the community.

Through the formation of student cabinets, young pupils are being empowered to practice better citizenship and exercise their rights.



Access to educational material reduces barriers.

"We sold our assets for my mother's uterine tumour treatment. She's cured now, but we can't afford school. With Plan's support I can continue my education." - Bithi (17)



Impact in Numbers

20%

school attendance improved during menstruation

800

girls in Youth-led Media Campaign

1,158

mothers improve breastfeeding practices

Girl Power



NAME:

Tahmina

AGE:

14 years old

DREAMS TO BE:

Police Officer

“Learning self-defence boosted my confidence and provided me with a sense of security. We can stand up for ourselves and feel safer now.”



Meet Tahmina

Like many girls in Bangladesh, Tahmina is optimistic about achieving her goals and building a strong future.

Safety for the youth

Tahmina lives in Dhaka with her four sisters and their mother. In many patriarchal South Asian communities, men are viewed as protectors of the family. In the absence of any male figure, families like Tahmina's are exposed to several forms of gender-based violence and societal pressures. The lack of safety affects the ability of young girls to attend school regularly and limits their access to essential resources and opportunities, critically impacting their potential for a better future.

Karate kids

The safety of young girls and children has always been our utmost priority! During our awareness session with parents, community-based organisations and youth groups, we recognised that children were experiencing social bullying and sexual harassment. Taking on the suggestion from the communities, we organised self-defence classes for young girls to equip them with skills to protect themselves in such situations.

Beyond safety

However, the karate training not only helps with safety and safeguarding themselves against harassment, but also instills confidence and self-esteem in young girls and teenagers, and ensures that young girls like Tahmina can feel safe to step out in their neighbourhood.

Additionally, it is a great tool for physical fitness, and mental well-being and creates a sense of community or a peer support group within young girls and teenagers to look out for each other.



Tahmina practicing karate with her peers.

We Work With 2,742 Children in Dhaka

Projects That Support Lasting Change

Safety and Dignity

Inadequate safe bathing spaces expose young girls and women in urban low-income communities to gender-based violence and harassment. Lack of privacy and concern for safety leads to discomfort, shame and even health risks.

Last year, we built five bathing spaces in the community for low-income communities, which has supported young girls from unwarranted harassment and overall wellness. The lack of safe bathing facilities is a continuation of gender inequality where boys' needs are prioritised over girls' in many patriarchal societies around the world. The safe bathing space allows for menstrual hygiene management and the exercising of rights to dignity and better sexual and reproductive health.

The project engaged community members in planning and decision-making and ensured that it was a gender-sensitive and inclusive design. It also provided leadership opportunities for girls to advocate for their needs.



Safe drinking water facility was installed with the bathing space.

5

safe bathing facilities were installed in urban Dhaka



Community activities empower the youth.

Drivers of Change

Child marriage is a common issue in many societies in Bangladesh. To empower young girls to make their own life decisions and enable an environment without gender-based violence and early marriage, this project brings positive changes in the community.

This project addresses various challenges. It addresses the broader issue of social cohesion and community engagement by organising activities like art competitions, community games and cultural events to foster a sense of belonging and mutual support. We promote dialogue and interaction, to empower individuals to make positive choices for their future. Additionally, for a lasting impact, we address adjacent concerns like gender-based violence through community-led initiatives.

Hundreds of families along with local government authorities have now committed to preventing child marriage in Dhaka.



Sinthiya feels empowered after participating in the campaign.

"The impact of the campaign on my life has been immense. I know I am not alone and feel empowered to make my own choices and pursue my dreams without fear." - Sinthiya (14)

You're Supporting a More Equal Future



Early childhood development improves growth.

Together, we're working to create a more just world.

Families of 1,438 sponsored children in Dhaka were evicted from the Citypolli slums. Plan International will ensure they have health and care centre support to ease the relocation and integration back into their community.

The country's capital is the main urban centre, however, it breaks limited resources and has a fragile ecosystem. To accelerate the local economy, we will facilitate training on starting and improving businesses for small and micro-entrepreneurs.

We will develop awareness-raising programs for parents and caregivers on early childhood development and create enabling environment for young girls and children.

Message from Plan Staff

"We hope that our green space enhancement initiatives in Dhaka urban slum areas would increase resilience to climate change. We thank our sponsors for their continuous support in the lives of children, adolescents and youth, especially girls in our working areas."



Nova Shams,
Programme Unit
Manager

The Plan Effect

Sponsored children are at the centre of everything we do, and they help plan our programmes based on what's important to them. Sponsors' donations are a gateway into a community. This helps build trust and credibility to attract even more funds from new sources. This makes more sustainable programmes possible in sponsorship communities. This powerful synergy is something we call The Plan Effect.

Progress in Numbers

800

participants in
youth-led media
campaign

5

safe bathing
spaces catered to
500 women

54

mothers received
training on
nutrition

22

secondary school
teachers trained
in leadership