

Odisha India

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

Plan International has been a proud partner of communities in Odisha since 2012. This region is located on the eastern coast of India, bordering the Bay of Bengal.

Regionally, around 73% of Odisha residents can read. This number is significantly lower in Sponsored communities, where as little as 45% of women and 63% of men are literate. One contributing factor is the prevalence of child marriage and early pregnancies in the region, which often lead to girls dropping out of school.

This year we celebrated both International Girls' Day and International Women's Day in our partner communities in Odisha. Community members of all ages have created space to learn more about girls' and women's rights, gender-based violence and the importance of female leadership.

"Thanks to Plan's continuing education programme, I am currently attending university."

– Mumak (17)



Girls with educational booklets about their rights.

Impact in Numbers

6,280

Teens know more about child marriage

228

Peer educators trained to discuss menstrual health

46

Girls connected to health centres for treatment

Knowledge Is Power



NAME:

Nakshatra

AGE:

12 years old

DREAMS TO BE:

An engineer

"School is very important to me. I see how it helps children, especially girls, become independent and reach their goals."



Meet Nakshatra

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

Since Nakshatra's father died, the student has been living with her mother, aunt and sister. Their economic challenges and some powerful lessons in leadership are pushing Nakshatra to build a brighter future.

Determination for Education

Nakshatra and her sister are breaking a cycle in their family: unlike their aunt and mother, both girls are getting an education. Today, Nakshatra is in Grade 7, and her sister has completed Grade 10.

Most women in Nakshatra's community earn money as maids or as daily wage workers. Today, Nakshatra's family is in debt. Knowing the heavy weight of poverty, Nakshatra dreams of becoming an engineer so that she can support her family and buy them a new house or things like chairs and a bed for her mother. Nakshatra knows that education is a fundamental tool – not only to achieve her own goals, but also for all children, particularly girls.

Learning and Leading

Since 2023, Nakshatra and her sister have been members of Plan International's Children's Forum, a Youth Leadership Programme with a special focus on empowering young women.

As a member of the Children's Forum, Nakshatra is committed to getting children back to school. Until today, with Plan International's support, she helped four girls get back to school, including her older sister.



Nakshatra, her sister and their friends play carrom, an Indian board game.

We Currently Work With 5,206 Sponsored Children In Odisha

Projects That Support Lasting Change

From Garden to Table

Community nutrition requires a solution from the roots up.

In Odisha, 28,541 children have stunted growth due to malnutrition. More broadly, 86,000 children are underweight due to inadequate diets.

Today, we are working with 70 villages across Odisha to make well-rounded meals more accessible. During National Nutrition Week, games and prizes were paired with educational workshops to reach 2,406 community members of all ages about nutrients and nutrient-dense foods, healthy eating habits, the connection between sickness and vitamin deficiency and infant nutrition. We also partnered with 1,180 families, including 364 families with new mums and 227 families with pregnant women, to distribute seeds for 11 different kinds of delicious, nutritious fruits and vegetables.



Sponsored girls harvest fruits and vegetables from their new home garden.

227

Pregnant women are eating more nutritious meals



Thousands of students in Odisha have received educational booklets on girls' rights.



Sponsored Child Pujarani, 17-year-old, knows more about child marriage.

You Can Count on Me

Three in ten young women in our partner communities were married before their 18th birthday.

Child marriage raises a young woman's risk of experiencing sexual abuse, dropping out of school, having little to no financial independence and contracting health issues related to early pregnancies.

With your help, we're working with parents, young people and local leaders to share vital information about the laws that protect children, and particularly girls, from child labour and other forms of abuse. 120 teenagers are building confident leadership skills as peer educators and experts about children's rights. In total, 3,371 children across 60 villages in Odisha have learned more about the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act. We have also teamed up with 1,622 leaders from local organisations to strengthen existing child protection mechanisms and educate parents in their communities about girls' rights.

"I've learned about child marriage and the laws against it. Now I can help stop these marriages in my community."

— Pujarani, 17-year-old, from Odisha

You're Supporting a More Equal Future



314,778 girls in India have learned more about sexual health and their rights.

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

- On average, 66% of girls and women in this region are anaemic. We will offer workshops about nutrition, including iron deficiency and menstrual health.
- 23% of women in Odisha do not use contraception. We will facilitate important discussions about family planning and sexual health with adolescents, young adults and parents.
- Around 63% of primary school students graduate. We will work with local schools and parents to co-ordinate regular parent-teacher association meetings to discuss the importance of education and children's rights.

Message from Plan Staff

"In the coming year, our work with children and adolescents in Odisha will focus on education, health and nutrition. Your support has helped us become part of significant changes in the lives of people in these communities, especially for young people."



Sukanta Kumar Sahoo,
Programme Area
Manager, Odisha

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

2,955

**Young women
have reusable
sanitary pads**

105

**Community
health volunteers
trained**

2,406

**People learned
more about
nutrition**

1,804

**Students are
practising
reading**