

Barguna Bangladesh

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

Remal, classified as a "severe" cyclonic storm, hit the coastal city of Barguna during the 2024 pre-monsoon season. The region continues to experience multiple cyclones annually, with their frequency and intensity worsening due to climate change. Amidst such adversities that render thousands of families homeless, at various health risks, and food crises disproportionately affecting children and young girls, the local communities are displaying great resilience.

For example, fathers are participating in gender transformative care, and routinely sharing household responsibilities in child care. Through policy change, awareness and education, community-led initiatives are empowering young girls into jobs so they are not forced into child marriage.

"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)



Activities empower youth with improved confidence.

Impact in Numbers

1,350

adolescents were oriented on future career aspirations

1,087

children joined Early Child Care programmes

1,175

fathers learned more about gender equality

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 6,861 Sponsored Children in Barguna

Projects That Support Lasting Change

Bridging the Gap

It truly takes a village to raise a child, but most often it falls on mothers as gender equality is a distant dream in many countries across the world. In Bangladesh, women are expected to be the primary and most often sole caregivers for the family. Due to the exposure to this gender stereotype, children adapt to these behaviours at a young age themselves.

Some of the ways in which this project aims to promote gender equality are by engaging fathers in caregiving responsibilities, positive masculinity and male engagement in early childhood development. Members of over 1000 families are in 65 Father's Cafes and 58 Grandparents' Groups where they learn about creating equal opportunities in their families and for children.

Additionally, other community members from different walks of life like community leaders, religious leaders and primary school teachers, participate in various activities that enhance their skills in gender transformative training.



Education in gender-friendly environments helps create equality.

1,078

children were admitted in early learning centres



Student cabinet formation for leadership and agency development.



Shaili in the learning institute.

Girls Get Equal

There is a high prevalence of child, early, and forced marriage in Barguna. Due to cultural norms, poverty, and limited access to education and financial opportunities, young girls are often forced into marriage at a young age. There are various psychological consequences of early marriage, but physically it also increases the risk of maternal mortality and morbidity.

Our Girls Get Equal project aims to reduce child marriage cases by working with the local communities in five key areas: keeping girls in school, providing knowledge on sexual health and reproductive rights, economically empowering youth, changing social norms, and improving policies to address child marriage.

Through meetings, workshops, learning support for children with special needs, and creating safe spaces through student cabinet formation, we empower youth-led advocacy, agency building and leadership.

"I have hearing problems, but Plan's project improved my learning and trained teachers for inclusivity. I dream of becoming an entrepreneur to support women and children with special needs." - Shaili (14)

You're Supporting a More Equal Future



Holistic change can only come from tackling issues at various levels of society.

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

Safety of children will remain our utmost priority in Bangladesh, where over 44% of young girls get married before the age of 15. As per government data, Barguna has some of the highest rates of such early and forced marriage in the country. Through awareness and education, we will combat this issue.

With training on integrated life skills, we aim to empower young women with confidence, self-esteem, and agency building.

The climate crisis makes the local economy vulnerable, we will encourage the youth to implement agribusiness projects and support technology-based learning and skill development.

Message from Plan Staff

"We emphasize designing need-based programmes, which will have positive impacts on the lives of the children in the long run. We appreciate your continuous support in achieving our goal."



Neelima Yasmeen,
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

40

Champions of Change groups were formed

4,800

parents are now more aware of gender equality

500

children received water safety practice

40

parenting facilitators were trained