



Until we are all equal

Bernadetta, 15, ran away from her village to escape an early marriage. Now she encourages other young girls to choose their own path.



This is Bernadetta's Champions of Change club, a group of youths who work together to create change in their community.



The Doctor Will See Her Now

Times are changing in Tanzania as teens overturn harmful traditions with your support.

The Adolescent Girls' Health and Rights project in Tanzania

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Neema and her mother, Anna, have a special relationship that kept Neema safe from early marriage. Scan or click the code to read more about their story.

This year, **you helped**
33,000+ girls and
young women learn
about sexual health, make
informed choices, and
access the support they
need to stay safe.

THE FACTS

WHO: With funding from Global Affairs Canada and individual Canadian donors, the Adolescent Girls' Health and Rights project (known in Tanzania as VUMA) is investing in the health of 147,614 girls and young women age 10–24, especially teens who've left school and face a higher risk of early pregnancy. By improving equipment, supplies, and health care in facilities and schools, we'll support another 714,374 people in the region. And in partnership with Tanzanian organizations Femina Hip and UMATI, we're training 3,143 health professionals, teachers, and other community leaders to strengthen systems for lasting change.

WHAT: We want girls in Tanzania to choose how they care for their bodies, how far they go in school, if they marry or have children, and what they do for a living. So we're making health services, supplies, and information easier to access. And we're working with youth groups and engaging entire communities – from parents to police to principals – so girls can stay in school longer, earn an income, and enjoy the freedom to lead their lives.

WHERE: Katavi region, western Tanzania

WHEN: March 2022–December 2028

WHY: The project has three goals for long-term change:

1 | Girls learn what matters, from sexual health, menstruation, and family planning to equality and children's rights – plus how to protect themselves against disease and violence so they can stay safe, healthy, and happy.

2 | Girls feel confident walking into a clinic to access care, supplies, and health information from trained, respectful staff in private, safe spaces.

3 | Communities take a stand for girls: Laws are enforced, harmful norms are left behind, and everyone works together so girls can live free from violence and inequality.



Witness, 13, has a long and lush daily trek to get school and to reach the nearest services in the Nsimbo district of Tanzania.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Crocodile Crossing

Many things stop girls in the Katavi region of Tanzania from accessing health care, but some obstacles even have teeth! “From November to May, rains wash out dirt roads and flood rivers, making travel to clinics and schools nearly impossible,” explains Thabiti Ahmed, project coordinator with Plan’s Tanzanian partner organization Femina Hip. “In the rainy season, rivers can fill with crocodiles.”

But crocodiles aren’t the only challenge. For 84% of women in the region, health care is out of reach because of cost, distance, and a lack of permission from their partners or parents. Harsh judgment adds to the fear: “Girls are afraid to go to the clinic and of what the community will think of them,” one teen mother shared in a focus group.

Deep-rooted beliefs make things harder. In many homes, talking about periods, sex, and contraceptives is taboo. Some health workers will even turn away young people who are seeking care, and sex ed isn’t in the national school curriculum.

Without care and information, girls face early pregnancies, and complications during and after childbirth

remain the leading cause of death for girls age 15–19 around the world.

But with your support, the Adolescent Girls’ Health and Rights project has helped implement real measures that are protecting and providing for girls in Katavi:

► **Making time:** Weekend clinics give young people the chance to get care on their schedules, privately and at their discretion.

► **Making space:** Girls’ and boys’ clubs led by trained mentors help teens learn together about health, consent, contraception, nutrition, and where to find help when they need it.

► **Making money:** Savings groups give girls access to funds for essentials like condoms or prenatal checkups, plus training in budgeting and start-up kits so they can launch their own businesses.

Thank you for your support

When a girl has control over her health, she can choose if and when to become pregnant; she can stay in school and work toward a better-paying job in the future. As she grows, she can help her community thrive and break the cycle of poverty. Thank you for believing that investing in girls’ health changes everything.



Sara (centre) is part of a youth savings group that has taught her how to land more customers to support herself and her child.

BY THE NUMBERS

Project Highlights

“

“I always dreamed of helping girls in my community. Now I raise awareness about family planning and violence that targets women and girls.”

—Gertruda, 20, who has trained as a community health worker



Gertruda, a new community health worker, visits a family in her district to alleviate pressure on the one clinic that serves 20,000 people.

Learning together 40,503

girls have learned from trained youth club leaders about sex ed, periods, contraception, nutrition, how to make safe choices, and where to get help. This includes:

- 2,211 out-of-school girls age 15–24 [TARGET*: 12,500]
- 38,292 in-school girls age 10–19 [TARGET: 68,842]

Earning together 486

young people have taken part in 25 savings groups to help grow their income. [TARGETS: 450 MEMBERS, 45 GROUPS]

- These groups have raised 32 million Tanzanian shillings (about C\$18,500) for start-up businesses and health care needs.

*Target numbers represent cumulative goals for the seven-year project.

Better care

115 clinic workers have been trained to offer respectful sexual and mental health care and to provide referrals to specialists or hospital services so more girls feel comfortable seeking help. [TARGET: 115]

240,422

people in Katavi have used sexual health services such as STI and HIV testing, family planning consultations, and contraceptives through weekend clinics and community outreach. [TARGET: 711,048]

Better protection

1,133 teachers have adopted interactive lessons (like role playing) to engage their students on topics such as equality, preventing and responding to violence, and building assertiveness so they can face future situations with confidence and knowledge [TARGET: 1,818]

947 community members, including police and safety volunteers, have worked together to improve the medical, legal, and mental care services available to survivors and people at risk of violence, child marriage, and sexual abuse. [TARGET: 870]

A STORY OF CHANGE

Somebody to Loan On

A savings group and girls' club gave Subira a second chance – not just to survive, but to thrive.

Subira didn't want to marry at age 15. But she had no choice – the marriage went ahead without her consent.

"No one was on my side, and everyone benefited from it except me," says Subira, now 19. Her family received money for new land, while she landed in an abusive relationship with a man twice her age. After two children and one miscarriage, she tried to escape and return home, but her parents refused. "A married woman belongs to her husband," they told her.

Not long ago, Subira saw girls her age gathering in clubs supported by the Adolescent Girls' Health and Rights project. "A facilitator told me I could gain skills, that I could still become independent," she says. She joined a club where she was finally seen as more than her husband's property.

"When we met her, she was scared and unsure," says Neema, a member of Subira's new Champions of Change club. "We saw strength in her. We just needed to help her see it too."

The club's 30 members meet weekly in safe spaces like schoolyards. Led by a trained female facilitator from the community, they share their struggles and dreams, how to seek help if they are being pulled out of school or pushed into marriage, and how to fight for what they deserve. With their support, Subira had the courage to leave her husband, take her children, and move in with her sister.

Next, she joined a youth savings group, where she and her peers learned about budgeting, starting businesses, and financially supporting one another. Through the group, she borrowed the equivalent of C\$27 to open a business selling fish. Today, she's earning C\$82 a month – enough to support her children.

Now Subira pays it forward, advising other girls on their rights and helping them avoid child marriage and early pregnancy.

“

If I had this knowledge five years ago, my life would have been different. But I want girls to know that it's never too late to take back control of your life.”

–Subira, 19, project participant



Scared after suffering abuse, a miscarriage, and two births in two years, Subira joined the groups that have helped her take ownership of her life.



In our mini-documentary *Choosing Freedom*, watch Neema's personal battle against *chagulaga*, a child-marriage ritual practiced in Sukuma communities in Tanzania.





At only 12 years old, Esther (left) has already seen friends forced into child marriage. She wants stricter laws to stop the practice.

Thank you!

With your generosity, girls like Subira across the Katavi region are creating safer, stronger futures. Together, we've already supported more than twice as many girls as planned by hosting weekend clinics, expanding programs to more schools and students, and partnering with hundreds of teachers, health workers, and government safety personnel. And we're not stopping there: In future updates, you'll see how your support is helping renovate and equip 20 health facilities, open five new youth centres, and so much more.



About Plan International Canada

Plan International Canada is a member of a global organization dedicated to advancing children's rights and equality for girls. Plan International has been building powerful partnerships with and for children for over 85 years and is now active in more than 80 countries. We stand with children, especially girls, wherever they are oppressed, exploited, left behind, or not equally valued. We're determined optimists, and we will continue to persevere until we are all equal.

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