



Until we are all equal

KAGIS's goal?  
To make school  
journeys safer and  
classrooms more  
welcoming for  
girls, ensuring they  
attend and complete  
school at the same  
rates as boys.

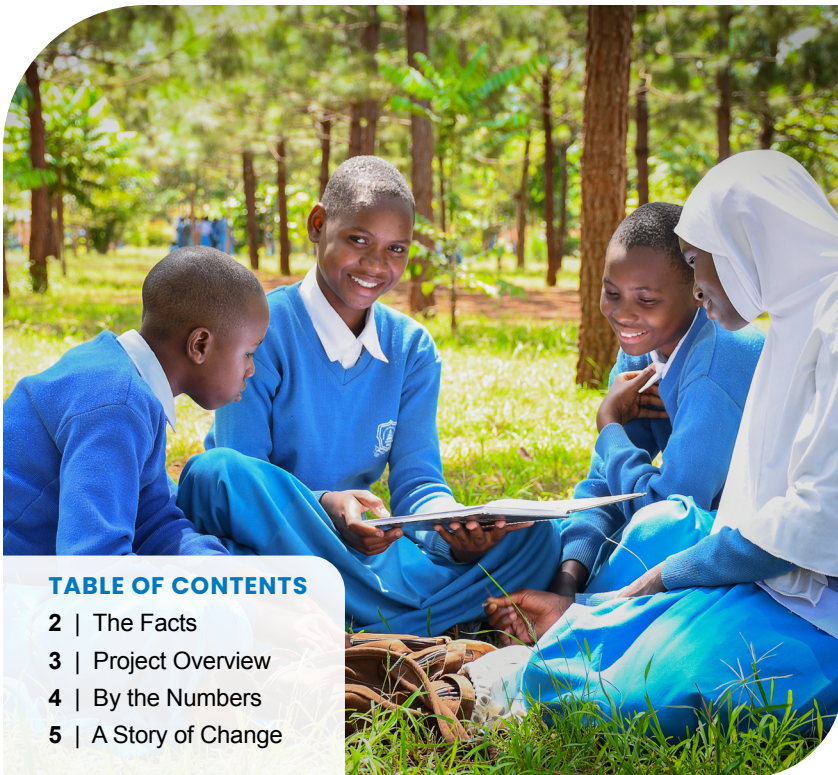


# Her Equality Begins in School

The KAGIS project is helping girls in northern Tanzania stay in class.

The Keeping Adolescent Girls in School  
(KAGIS) project





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Grace (centre) was enrolled in secondary school with the help of a KAGIS savings group that covered her school fees, uniform, and books. Read her story on page 5.

Last year, **23,605 women, men, and children** took part in community meetings, school safety activities, and local support groups to help build a community movement that protects girls from violence.

## THE FACTS

**WHO:** The Keeping Adolescent Girls in School (KAGIS) project works with students, parents, and community members to help remove the barriers that prevent girls from staying – and succeeding – in school. So far, KAGIS has supported 123,489 students, including 60,641 adolescent girls who are in school and 3,024 girls who are out of school. The project is funded by Global Affairs Canada and individual Canadian donors and delivered alongside partners including the Tanzanian government and local organizations such as Rafiki Social Development and the Women's Promotion Centre.

**WHAT:** KAGIS invests in girls' education in northern Tanzania by tackling issues such as child marriage, creating more welcoming classrooms, and ensuring that girls feel safe in their communities, at school, and on the journey between. In many Tanzanian communities, girls are often taken out of school and married at a young age.

**WHERE:** The Kigoma and Geita regions in northwest Tanzania, where secondary-school enrollment for girls is among the lowest in the country.

**WHEN:** April 2021–September 2026

#### HOW:

- ▶ Helping more girls start and finish secondary school by making schools safer and more supportive – training teachers to encourage rather than punish and adding essentials like washrooms, clean water, and menstrual products.
- ▶ Challenging traditions that say a girl's place is at home or in a marriage instead of in the classroom.
- ▶ Building community support through savings groups that help families afford education costs and campaigns that champion girls' rights.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

# Dreams on Wheels

In the Geita and Kigoma regions of Tanzania, girls like Furaha, 17, used to walk five kilometres to school every day. Often by the time Furaha arrived, lessons had already begun. “I struggled to catch up,” she says. “Some days, I was so tired from walking that I’d fall asleep between lessons.”

Long, exhausting walks aren’t only tiring – they’re dangerous. Girls risk animal attacks on rural paths and harassment from men offering rides.

The KAGIS project is bridging the gap between girls and education with practical solutions, like providing girls with bicycles. For Furaha, a bike changed everything: Her trip to school is now faster and safer. She no longer leaves home before dawn, and she arrives ready to learn.

Why does that matter? Because every extra year a girl attends school reduces her risk of early marriage and boosts her future earnings by 20%. That’s good for her, her family, and generations to come.

“I’ve seen how access to education transforms not only the lives of girls but also their families and communities,” says Hildegada Mashauri, technical lead for the KAGIS project.

### What else holds girls back?

In Kigoma and Geita, girls face more than just distance:

- Without private washrooms or clean water at school, girls stay home and miss class when they have their periods.
- Cultural norms prioritize boys’ education, while girls are expected to help at home.
- Early marriage and adolescent pregnancy are common, often ending a

girl’s education and trapping her and her children in a cycle of poverty.

Along with our community partners, the KAGIS project is tackling these challenges head on. Together we have:

- Built **18 school washroom blocks** with access to clean water
- Provided more than **1,000 bicycles** to girls
- Trained **13,000 youth** – both boys and girls – to make reusable menstrual pads
- Distributed condoms to **18,401 young people** to prevent early pregnancy

Because when nothing stands between girls and education, everything changes.

**The KAGIS project has distributed more than 1,000 bicycles, helping girls travel long distances safely and quickly.**

## Thank you for your support

Thank you for helping thousands of girls in Kigoma and Geita put their education first. Together with families, teachers, and community leaders, we’re ensuring that all girls have access to the same education opportunities as boys and that they can access health care systems designed and equipped to provide the support they need.





BY THE NUMBERS

## Project Highlights

“

The most rewarding part of this project is seeing real change: parents urging daughters to stay in school, loan groups backing girls' education, and boys stepping up as advocates for gender equality.”

—Hildegada Mashauri, KAGIS technical lead, Plan International Tanzania

Girls' primary-school attendance has risen by

**15+** percentage points (from 83% in 2020 to 98.8% in 2024) while attendance in secondary school has grown by 8+ percentage points (from 88.0% in 2021 to 96.2% in 2024).

**5,634** girls have participated in youth groups – exceeding the project target of 5,200 – to build confidence, understand their rights, and raise their voices on topics such as education, early marriage, and violence.

**280** community savings groups have been formed since the project's start. With 7,717 members, these groups help families grow their incomes and cover children's school costs.

**18** school washroom blocks and 3 water supply systems have been built at schools so girls can manage their periods without missing class.

**3,000** teenage girls have received reusable menstrual pads so the cost doesn't prevent them from coming to school during their periods.

**18,401** teenage girls and boys have obtained condoms from trusted community distributors, helping reduce unplanned pregnancies and lower the risk of sexually transmitted infections.

Benadeta, 16, shares her knowledge of menstrual health in a school workshop so that periods don't take girls out of class.





## A STORY OF CHANGE

# A Knock That Changed Everything

Grace had given up on studying beyond primary school – until Mama Ashura opened the door.

**G**race, now 14, became the head of her household at just 12 years old. After her father's sudden death and her mother's diagnosis of amnesia, she took responsibility for herself and her sister Onesta, now 10. "One morning, Mama looked at us like strangers. She never remembered us again," Grace recalls. "I cried so much."

To survive, the sisters went door to door looking for small jobs, earning the equivalent of C\$1.05 – just enough to buy one meal. Sometimes, they were paid with food instead of money. Even during these struggles, Grace managed to complete primary school. But secondary school? That felt impossible. "Going to secondary school was no longer even on my list," she says.

### The turning point

One day, while searching for work, Grace knocked on the door of Mama Ashura, head of a savings group formed through the KAGIS project. "I was shocked," says Mama Ashura. "A young girl looking for work instead of being in school?"

Plan International helps community members form savings and loan associations where they save and pool small amounts of money. These funds provide a safety net as well as opportunities: Members can invest in small businesses for sustainable household income, access loans for

education costs, or cover essentials during challenging times.

Mama Ashura took both sisters in and rallied the savings group members to arrange medical help for their mother. She worked with local authorities to secure a spot for Grace in secondary school and for Onesta in primary school. The savings group paid for the girls' uniforms, notebooks, pens, and other necessities. "It felt like a dream," says Grace. "They told me I wouldn't have to work again."

### Opening doors for more girls

Grace is one of 133 children from low-income families who were provided with school supplies and other support with the 2,589,000 Tanzanian shillings (about C\$1,500) that Mama Ashura's group pooled in 2024.

"We've introduced interest-free education loans," explains Mama Ashura. "Members list their children's requirements for school and we buy the items directly. Later, parents repay the amount slowly and without pressure."

Inspired by this success, six new savings groups were formed in their community this year, each with 30 members, aiming to keep children in school and help parents sustain their households.



Grace (middle) stands with Mama Ashura (left) and other members of the savings group that helped her return to school.

“We want a future where no child, especially girls, are being left behind just because of poverty.”

—Mama Ashura, community savings group head





Jackline, Belinda, and Benadeta smile outside of a mobile unit that distributes information about menstrual and sexual health for adolescents.

## Thank you!

**Your support of the KAGIS project is creating lasting change by ensuring that nothing stands in the way of girls' education in Tanzania. Every girl in school brings us closer to a world rooted in equality. Thank you for standing with girls, for believing in their potential, and for helping build a future where their dreams become a reality.**



### 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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