



Until we are all equal

At a Plan for Girls mentorship event in Benin, girls like Condoleza met with trained community mentors to discuss the health and equality issues that girls face.



Plan for Girls: Creating Better Opportunities in Benin and Cameroon

Since 2018, Plan International, in partnership with Global Affairs Canada, has been improving health and safety for girls in Benin and Cameroon.



Girls show the menstrual tracking bracelets they made at an annual leadership camp in Cameroon.

THE SCENE

Brave Voices, Breaking Barriers

Girls deserve better opportunities.
Together, we're making it happen.

The challenges are stark in northern Cameroon, where one in four girls is married before the age of 15, and two-thirds by 18. A staggering 16% become mothers before their 15th birthday. In Benin, only 28% of girls finish middle school. Behind these numbers lie thousands of interrupted dreams – young lives constrained by early marriage, abandoned education and limited opportunities.

But change is happening. In community spaces and in chief's chambers, on radio waves and in classrooms, girls are finding their voices. And they're not just speaking up – they're being heard.

"Girls are part of creating the change on many levels," says Roshan Tabari-Cherer, a Plan for Girls program manager at Plan Canada. "Even making and selling menstrual bracelets is improving reproductive health awareness and fostering greater autonomy among girls."

Walk through any community where the Plan for Girls project is operating and you'll see the transformation. Village billboards proudly declare: "Girls and boys should be equally seen, heard and valued."

This transformation comes alive through stories like Nadine's (read more about her on the next page). Today, young advocates like her are changing minds, and their impact is measurable: 13 of 14 local officials now understand girls' top priorities. You'll discover how teachers and parents have become champions for girls' equality, while health providers, once hesitant, now offer compassionate care and support to survivors of violence.

Key challenges in Cameroon and Benin

- ▶ In Cameroon, 21.5% of women ages 15–49 have experienced intimate partner violence.
- ▶ In Benin, 50.4% of girls ages 15–19 are out of school.
- ▶ In rural areas of Cameroon, 42.3% of women ages 20–24 gave birth before they turned 18 years old.
- ▶ Benin ranks 166 out of 189 countries on the UN's Human Development Index, which measures life expectancy, access to education and standard of living.

**Thank you for
your continued
support.**

STORY OF CHANGE

Radio Girls' Group Goes Live

As part of Plan for Girls awareness activities, confident young voices are broadcasting their messages across Collines FM Radio in the heart of Benin, reaching over 124,000 people.

“Good evening! You are now listening to Nadine on the microphone.” Her words, crackling across Benin’s airwaves each week, broadcast hope. Nadine, 17, is one of 75 girls who are transforming their communities through activities like radio broadcasts. They’re not only hosts – they’re change makers.

“We choose topics focused on equal rights for girls and boys,” says Nadine. “We’ve seen how our rights have been sidelined. Now we’re taking charge of the conversation.”



From a small radio studio in Benin, 17-year-old Nadine is not just sharing news – she’s changing minds.

Behind the mic, Nadine leans in and addresses her guest, Quentin Kpokpoya, gender coordinator for the Plan for Girls project in Benin. “What solutions does the project bring for girls’ education? How should parents promote gender equality?” she asks.

“Gender norms must be addressed in order to free girls to pursue their goals,” Kpokpoya replies, and his words aren’t just studio talk. The conversations have inspired community gatherings where girls, boys, men and women come together in unexpected ways. Even cooking classes have become platforms for change, with lessons about nutrition blending seamlessly with discussions about sharing household chores. The impact is clear: 6,104 parents have attended these events, surpassing the project target of 5,400.

“This is my first time hosting a radio show and I am proud of myself,” says Nadine. “I want to become a journalist. And I will do it.”

Project facts

WHAT: The Plan for Girls project helps protect and support young girls in Benin and Cameroon who face poverty, violence and discrimination and who are often denied education.

WHO: Our funding partner in this \$18 million project is Global Affairs Canada. Local partners helping coordinate participation in awareness events and support for girls’ activities include UNOADD and FEPES in Cameroon and RACINES and DEDRAS in Benin.

WHERE: The project covers 60 villages in four communes of Benin (Bante, DassaZoumé, Glazoue and Savalou) and two communes in Cameroon (Ngong and Lagdo).

WHEN: We have completed Year 6 of this eight-year project (2018–2025).

HOW: We’re creating lasting change by working in four key thematic areas:

1. Protection
2. Education
3. Economic empowerment
4. Health

Wide-ranging activities include spaces for girls to safely discuss rights and skills-building like interactive cooking classes.

BY THE NUMBERS

A few highlights of what your support is making possible

In the sixth year of this project, Plan supporters have helped empower **19,595 girls** in Benin and **23,350 girls** in Cameroon to improve their health and safety through training, advocacy, skills development and improved school access.

4

In Cameroon

1,555 youth economic trainings took place on topics like entrepreneurship, financial literacy and life skills, **exceeding the year's goal by 44%**.

27 government actions were taken to meet girls' proposals, including building classrooms and latrines, funding school clubs and extending electricity in rural areas.



132 traditional leaders took part in child-protection and positive-masculinity trainings. Some even led their own sessions after.

30 safe spaces were created so girls can confidentially discuss issues, gain support and find solutions.

500 birth certificates were registered and granted after girls advocated for action. Birth certificates help girls access government services and provide proof of age to prevent early marriages.

Men and women participate in cooking classes, where they learn about nutrition and also explore gender roles.



Girls and boys level the playing field in Benin during a soccer game to raise awareness about equal rights for girls.

In Benin

9 of 10

surveyed health providers could identify likely signs that an adolescent is facing or has experienced abuse (compared with four out of 10 last year).

22 new youth savings and loans associations were established to help 653 adolescent girls and young women gain financial literacy and independence.

450 girls, including young mothers and those with disabilities, took part in small-business training such as soap making, cooking and jewelry creation.

“

Young women were speaking, and that gave me courage. I thought, if they can pursue an activity and earn respect, then so can I. Even as a mother, I can do it.”

– Carole, 20, a Plan for Girls participant

STORIES OF CHANGE

Dreams to Dollars

Carole's remarkable returns! This courageous young woman is taking charge of her business.

Walk into Carole's shop and you'll find an unlikely combination of vibrant clothing racks, fresh soy cheese and handcrafted soaps. But this thriving business represents more than merchandise – it's one woman's triumph over expectations.

When she became pregnant at 20, Carole thought it marked the end of her dream of having her own business. In her community in Benin, young mothers traditionally turn to homemaking, not entrepreneurship.

But when the Plan for Girls project started, she was inspired to join. "Young women were speaking, and that gave me courage," she explained. "I thought, if they can pursue an activity and earn respect, then so can I. Even as a mother, I can do it."

Carole joined one of the 58 youth savings and loans associations, where she made small, scheduled contributions and eventually saved enough to take out a loan. First, she used the funds to expand her existing soy cheese business.



You're helping women like Carole (at her shop) invest in themselves – and in their families and communities.

Then she branched into selling shoes and clothes, and then into homemade soaps and body balms, using skills gained through Plan for Girls training.

"I used to take out loans of 5,000 CFA francs (C\$11). I now borrow up to 70,000 CFA francs (C\$156) to reinvest [in product offerings and outreach]. It has helped me a lot – and my family." Now a mother of two, she adds, "I am very proud."

Today, Carole is paying it forward as a Plan for Girls mentor, teaching girls in her neighbourhood how to create and market their own soap products. With women supporting one another, female-led businesses are bringing growth – and breaking gender norms. Her shop is more than just a business; it's a symbol of possibility for the young women in her community.

"Thanks to my wife's work, we bought a motorbike. If I had to cover all the family expenses, it would have been difficult."

–Carole's husband, Pierre

Through Assabe's Lens

Once she was too shy to speak. Today, Assabe is too bold to stay silent!

It's hard to believe that Assabe, 19, was once too shy to speak in public. Today, she's ready to take a stand, thanks to her Champions of Change group in Cameroon. The project-backed collective helps girls like her discover and embrace their power as well as find further opportunities to explore it. "This journey has helped me gain confidence, and now I am ready to make a difference for women in my community," she says. Here are some of the transformations Assabe has seen.

TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

When a local girl was pulled from school due to an early marriage, Assabe's group didn't stay silent. They engaged her parents in crucial conversations, successfully advocating for the marriage's annulment and the girl's return to education. One life changed, one future restored.

CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS

"Boys are becoming more involved in household chores," says Assabe. "This is a great step forward." She and her



Assabe, 19, advocates against injustices like gender-based violence while pursuing her dream of becoming a lawyer.

group continue to encourage parents to see beyond traditional gender roles and recognize their children's equal potential. As a top student herself, Assabe embodies what's possible when girls are given the chance to shine.

LOOKING FORWARD

While six years of the Plan for Girls project have brought significant progress, Assabe and her fellow Champions know their work continues. Her dream? To see the project spread to other areas so that more young women can benefit from these opportunities and realize their full potential.

“

This journey [with Plan for Girls] has helped me gain confidence, and now I am ready to make a difference for women in my community.”

—Assabe, 19,
a Plan for Girls
participant

**Thank you again
for your continued
support.**



Click or scan the code to learn how you can support girls, until we are all equal.

WHAT'S NEW AT PLAN

Our Shared Dream

We see the world as it is and the world as it could be. No matter how complex the challenges, a better future is possible.

It takes **determination**.

It takes **optimism**.

It takes **vision**.

Our “moon shot” vision is equality for girls everywhere. Improving the lives of girls improves the lives of everyone in the family and the community. That understanding, which we know you share, is at the heart of our fundraising campaign, Until We Are All Equal. When you support this campaign, you’re trusting us to identify the greatest threats to

equality, especially for girls, and respond to them as they arise.

Just going to school every day is impossible for many girls, with one in six living in a conflict zone. That’s why, right now, about 120 million girls are missing out on an education. What’s more, many girls – 12 million every year – are forced into early marriage, placing them at a heightened risk of dying from complications of early pregnancy or childbirth.

There are 1 billion girls alive on our planet today, each filled with promise and potential and with their whole futures ahead of them. How do you transform the world? Start by investing in girls.



Until we are all equal

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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