

# Education Uninterrupted

Compendium of  
promising practices  
supporting gender  
transformative,  
inclusive, quality  
education in all  
contexts



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## Acronyms

<b>AE</b>	Accelerated Education	<b>IQE</b>	Inclusive Quality Education
<b>AOGDs</b>	Areas of Global Distinctiveness	<b>LAs</b>	Learning Assistants
<b>APAC</b>	Asia-Pacific region	<b>LEAD</b>	Girls, Boys and Youth as Active Drivers of Change
<b>ASRH</b>	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health	<b>MEESA</b>	Middle East, Eastern and Southern Africa
<b>CAY</b>	Children, Adolescents and Youth	<b>MHM</b>	Menstrual Hygiene Management
<b>CBE</b>	Complementary Basic Education	<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
<b>CC</b>	Climate Change	<b>PfV</b>	Protection from Violence
<b>CCA</b>	Climate Change Adaptation	<b>PSS</b>	Psychosocial Support
<b>CE</b>	Community Educators	<b>PTA</b>	Parents and Teachers Associations
<b>CFS</b>	Child-Friendly Spaces	<b>ROA</b>	Region of the Americas
<b>CSE</b>	Comprehensive Sexuality Education	<b>SDMCs</b>	School Disaster Management Committees
<b>CPC</b>	Child Protection Committees	<b>SIMs</b>	Self-instruction Materials
<b>CPD</b>	Continuous Professional Development	<b>SOYEE</b>	Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
<b>CPiE</b>	Child Protection in Emergencies	<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>CVA</b>	Cash and Voucher Assistance	<b>STIs</b>	Sexually Transmitted Infections
<b>CWD</b>	Children with Disabilities	<b>STs</b>	Student Teachers
<b>DEOs</b>	District Education Officers	<b>TLC</b>	Temporary Learning Centres
<b>DRM</b>	Disaster Risk Management	<b>TSLA</b>	Teachers Learning Circles approach
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction	<b>ToT</b>	Trainer of Trainers
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development	<b>TTC</b>	Teacher Training College
<b>EiE</b>	Education in Emergencies	<b>WACA</b>	West and Central Africa
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based Violence	<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>GLTV</b>	Ghana Learning Television	<b>WOPSEF</b>	Women Peace and Security Forum
<b>GRPTT</b>	Gender Responsive Pedagogy Teacher Training Package	<b>YPEs</b>	Youth Peer Educator
<b>GTE</b>	Gender Transformative Education		



# Plan International’s Approach to Inclusive Quality Education (IQE)

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that works to advance children’s and young people’s rights and equality for girls and young women. Plan International’s new global strategy ‘**All Girls Standing Strong**’ (2022- 2027) prioritises Inclusive Quality Education as one of its six key thematic Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AOGDs). Plan International follows a **Global Approach to Programme and influencing** in all AOGDs and takes a gender-transformative approach to programmes and influencing.


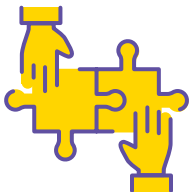
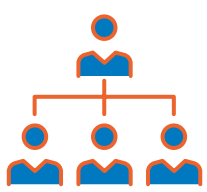

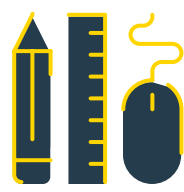
Our organisational efforts focus on providing inclusive quality education at pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels for the most vulnerable and excluded children and youth, prioritising girls from those groups. This encompasses formal, informal, and non-formal provision in both development and humanitarian contexts including conflict zones, and when communities have been displaced. We are dedicated to ensuring that education reaches those who need it, regardless of the circumstances.

**Inclusive quality education** means that all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, or linguistic abilities, including the most vulnerable and marginalised, are supported and able to learn and participate equally and effectively, in safety and free from gender bias in all contexts (development, emergency, and protracted crisis). Inclusive quality education should provide all children and young people with the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours to lead positive and productive lives.



## IQE Core components

The core components are the building blocks of IQE programmes and influencing

 <b>Teaching and Learning</b>	 <b>Out of School Children/Youth</b>	 <b>School Governance</b>	 <b>School Environment</b>	 <b>Curriculum and Learning Materials</b>
Priority interventions				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build capacities and commitment for gender responsive teaching and inclusive learner-centred methodologies,</li> <li>• social &amp; emotional learning / psychosocial support</li> <li>• Address school-related and school-based DRM in different ways tailored to the specific context</li> <li>• Support and promote involvement of students in improving learning environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen school entry / re-entry mechanisms including bridge programmes and accelerated learning</li> <li>• Support development and strengthen quality of alternative education opportunities</li> <li>• Promote and support community led education initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and support effective and inclusive school management incl. engagement of parents and leaders</li> <li>• Influence for gender responsive and inclusive national and local policy, plans and budgets</li> <li>• Facilitate effective alliances, coalitions &amp; partnerships influencing education</li> <li>• Promote and support participatory accountability mechanisms in schools and school authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support accessible, protective and safe school environment incl. safeguarding capacities, DRR</li> <li>• Promote and support gender responsive and inclusive facilities including WASH and MHM</li> <li>• Build commitment and capacity for equal, supportive treatment for CAY in all their diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the curriculum and support teacher capacity to deliver it</li> <li>• Integrate and build capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in the curriculum</li> <li>• Integrate and build capacity for Conflict Sensitive processes and practices</li> </ul>

# The IQE Compendium of Promising Practices

This Compendium presents a collection of promising practices to support continuous, gender-transformative, safe, resilient, and inclusive quality education for children, adolescents, and youth (CAY) in all their diversity. The aim is to provide Plan International staff and practitioners working across the education sector with a toolkit of evidence-based interventions that can be incorporated into future interventions. The broader aim is to provide clarity and inspiration on what works and why in delivering inclusive quality education programmes.

The Compendium showcases practices across Plan International’s education interventions that consistently demonstrated positive outcomes on the key pillars of education continuity (learning continuity during disruptions, access and (re-)entry to education, and transitions to higher levels of education), gender-transformative programming (overcoming and addressing harmful gender norms and practices), safe and resilient learning environments (freedom from violence and resilience to disasters or disruptions), inclusion (access and retention of all children, adolescent and youth in education), and quality education (quality learning and teaching opportunities).






Gender transformative education (GTE) is not just about addressing gender disparities within the education system. It is about leveraging education’s full potential to transform attitudes and practices, within and beyond the education

system. This contributes to a broader environment of gender justice for children, adolescents, and youth in all their diversity<sup>1</sup>. Gender transformation is a gradual and complex journey. Many promising practices included in this Compendium feature gender-responsive practices. These elements, when combined, contribute to gender equality over time, gradually breaking down deeply entrenched barriers through a transformative journey.

It should also be noted that most of the presented practices are most effective when combined in various configurations in a single programme. There is little evidence to suggest that they can produce effective results in isolation. Therefore, the practices should be considered essential components that can be used complementarily to support continuous, gender-transformative, safe, resilient, and inclusive quality education.

Indeed, as seen in the following table, each promising practice supports a variety of key pillars. These key pillars are also visible in the icons presented [in the top corner] on the page, introducing each practice. Embedding gender across programmes in all contexts is fundamental for supporting inclusive, quality education. Reflecting Plan International’s commitment to gender equality, strong examples, and case studies, including gender considerations, have been highlighted across all promising practices.

**Table 1**  
**Summary of promising practices supporting key pillars**

	Education continuity 	Gender-transformative programming 	Safe and resilient learning environments 	Inclusion 	Quality education 
Student clubs and safe spaces	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Training – for educators, community volunteers, and school staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Preparations anticipating potential disruptions	✓		✓	✓	
Physical improvements to learning environments	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Alternative and non-formal education programmes	✓	✓		✓	✓
Community Support Structures	✓	✓		✓	
Distributing materials and provisions	✓		✓	✓	
Family involvement in education	✓				✓
Technology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<sup>1</sup> To know more about gender transformative education you can read the [GTE Brief](#) and take the [GTE E-course](#)

All the findings in this Compendium are based on research conducted for Plan International’s Meta-Evaluation of Education Continuity in all contexts. The Meta-evaluation implied an analysis of 40 programme reports (14 from the Middle East, Eastern, and Southern Africa region; 13 from the Asia-Pacific region; 8 from the West and Central Africa region; and 4 from the Region of Americas) covering Inclusive Quality Education and Education in Emergencies<sup>2</sup>, delivered across Plan International regions between 2017 and 2023.

In producing this Compendium, five additional programme documents (1 from the Middle East, Eastern, and Southern Africa region; 1 from the Asia-Pacific region; and 3 from the West and Central Africa region) were assessed.

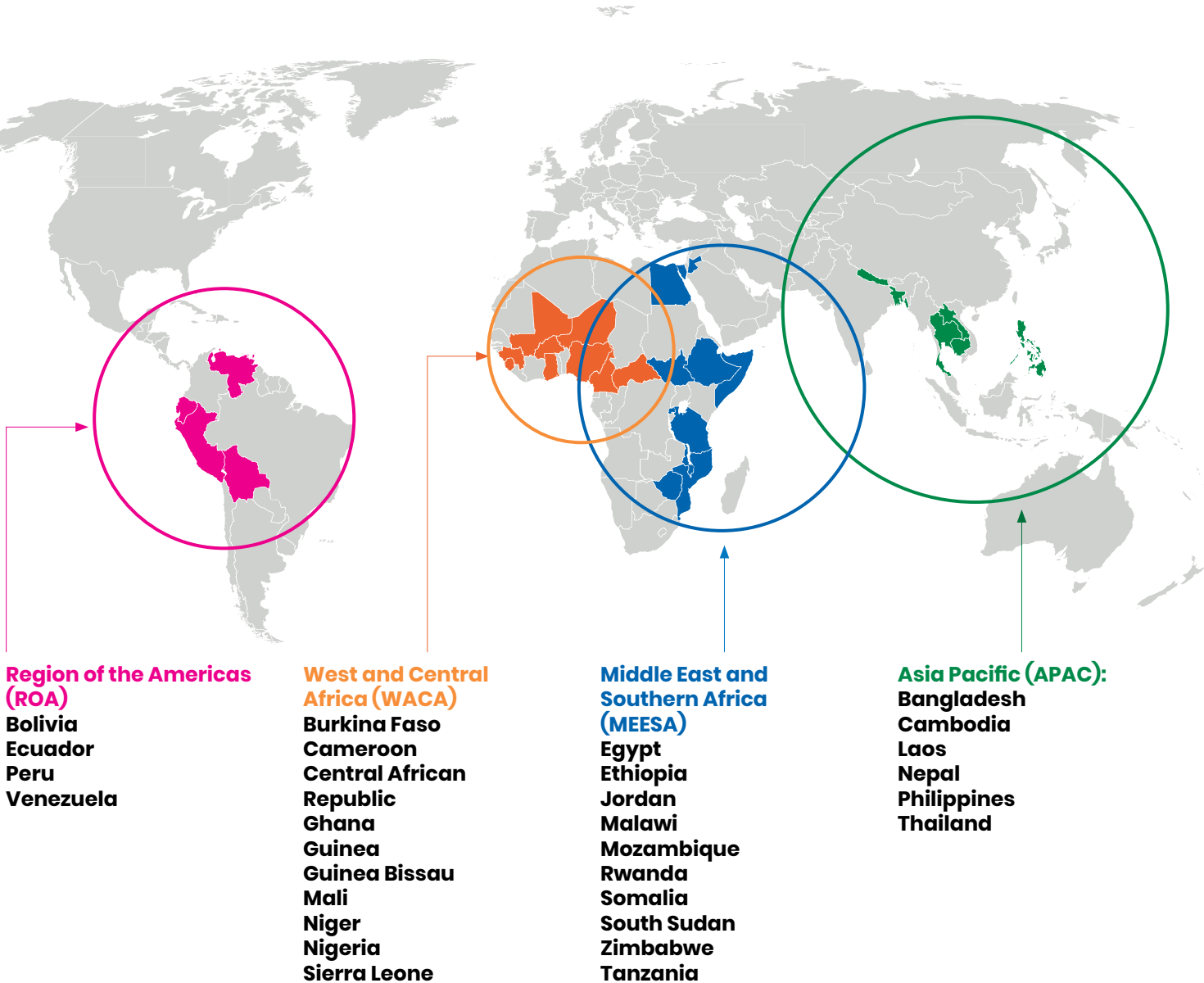
In this Compendium, you will find nine promising practice interventions. Each promising practice intervention includes:

- A description of the practice
- The outcomes that it contributed to<sup>3</sup>
- The key enablers of change that make it a successful practice
- Case studies of the practice in action
- The critical barriers to success and sustainability

The Compendium highlights the importance of adopting a holistic integrated approach to address multiple needs and challenges successfully.

**Figure 1:**

**Countries with IQE and EiE programmes between 2017 and 2023 included in the meta-evaluation and the compendium**



2 Inclusive Quality Education also includes Education in Emergencies (EiE) which focuses on providing education through crises and disruption, using a humanitarian, peace, and development (HPD) nexus approach. Plan International’s education interventions in emergency contexts aim to provide safe, quality formal and non-formal education opportunities that meet the needs (psychological, developmental, and cognitive) of children affected by humanitarian crises.

3 Related to the key pillars that framed the Meta-evaluation research: education continuity, gender-transformative programming, safe and resilient learning environments, and inclusive quality education.





Nasrin leads a youth group that shares early warning messages about potential floods in Bangladesh.

## PROMISING PRACTICE 1



# Student clubs and safe spaces to promote agency

Student clubs and peer-to-peer learning models not only raise self-confidence and promote gender transformative change, but also serve as a platform for broader community engagement in education. Plan International's student clubs, such as health or girls' clubs -where students learn about Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) or Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH)-; student task forces, like search and rescue task forces which focus on running community awareness interventions on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and resilience; and children's councils, child/youth parliaments, and student school government clubs, all exemplify this. These clubs, along with child-friendly or adolescent safe spaces, which are often non-academic places reserved for well-being, mental health, and psychosocial activities, are integral parts of the educational community, fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility.

## Outcomes

- Participating in student clubs and safe spaces
- Helped students (especially girls) build self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and leadership skills correlated with improved learning outcomes.<sup>1</sup>
- Supported boys to build positive masculinities and see themselves as having joint responsibility at home.<sup>2</sup>
- Contributed to students' increased motivation to attend school.<sup>3</sup>
- Improved well-being of children, adolescents, and youth and increased school retention.<sup>4</sup>
- Contributed to community awareness raising and norms change (e.g., gender-transformative norm change or inclusion for children with disabilities).<sup>5</sup>
- Were effective at building DRR and resilience building in schools and communities.<sup>6</sup>

1 Making Ghanaian Girls Great Project (MGCubed, Ghana 2017-2021), Girls' Access to Education – Girls' Education Challenge (GATE-GEC, Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), and Bolivia Mid-Term Country Strategy (CS) Evaluation (2017-2021).

2 GAC-EIC Nigeria (2019-2023)

3 PGI/EQUIP2 and HPP Final Evaluation (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021) and MGCubed Ghana 2017-2021).

4 ECHO Integrated Child Protection and Education in Emergency Response Action (South Sudan, 2019-2021), GATE-GEC, Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Support for Earthquake Affected Families of Dolakha and Sindhupalchowk Districts in Nepal Project (2015-2017).

5 Gender Equality in Secondary Schools (GESS, Lao PDR 2016-2019) Project, Strengthening Community Resilience to Disaster through School Safety Initiatives (SCRSSI - Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021), and Bolivia CS Evaluation.

6 Safe Schools Project - Promoting Safe School Initiative in Cambodia (2016-2019), [Towards School Safety in Asean Report](#) (8 Asean countries 2007-2017), Child-Centered Recovery and Resilience (C2R2) review ASIA (2017).

**Key enablers of change****Training children, adolescents, and youth in student clubs' leadership.**

Training on how to run and manage student clubs supported adolescents, especially girls, in building their self-confidence and leadership skills. It has also been instrumental in empowering them to initiate changes in their schools and communities. Importantly, evidence has shown that including mixed groups, combining girls with limited school experience and those with prior experience, has consistently been a key element contributing to improvements in learning outcomes and confidence. This underscores the value of inclusivity and diversity in the learning environment.<sup>7</sup>

**CASE STUDY****Girl leaders as role models**

In Bangladesh and Nepal, the *Strengthening Community Resilience to Disaster through School Safety Initiatives* aimed at building students' ability to run taskforces, School Disaster Management Committees (SDMCs), and youth groups. During trainings, meetings, and other activities, girls (including those with disabilities) were purposely chosen to lead proceedings to strengthen their self-confidence and overcome the norms hindering female leadership. In Nepal, girls were selected as "DRR champions" and tasked to lead *climate change awareness* through interactive sessions and reflection meetings for their peers. Their empowerment and leadership inspired other girls felt encouraged to speak up on girls' specific needs and rights in their communities (e.g., on the right to education, the issue of child marriage and early pregnancy, etc.). An increase in students, especially girls, self-confidence and self-esteem led to a positive 'can do' attitude.

**CASE STUDY****Self-confidence: a key contributing factor to improving learning Outcomes**

In Ghana, the *Making Ghanaian Girls Great Project (MGCubed)* Wonder Women Clubs provided female-only spaces to support girls in building their confidence and voice their concerns at home. The project included significant quantitative evidence that resilience and academic results are mutually reinforcing, and that academic improvement supports self-esteem, confidence, and attendance outcomes. Interpersonal skills were shown to support better learning and transition outcomes. Additionally, leadership skills were demonstrated to support better literacy outcomes. The clubs were also effective at supporting girls in taking an active role in their education, enhancing their agency, ability to self-advocate, and challenge gender stereotypes. Girls emphasised that the benefits of accessing remedial time after school contributed to supporting them in improving their literacy and numeracy academic outcomes and feeling more confident.

Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing. Students engaged well with knowledge and information when shared by their peers in an informal and safe environment. The peer-to-peer approach increased awareness among club members on issues such as (but not limited to) gender equality and disaster response/resilience.

**CASE STUDY****Peer-to-peer comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)**

In the Philippines, the *Real Assets through Improved Skills, and Education for Adolescent Girls (RAISE)* Youth Peer Educator (YPEs) clubs were set up to strengthen school and community-based peer-to-peer activities. For each YPE, two or three students and a teacher/guidance counsellor participated in a 5-day training of trainers (TOTs) on how to roll out sessions on reproductive health, gender equality, and bullying, promoting better understanding and action on these topics. At the endline, it was found that the YPEs had a significant impact on both girls and boys. 90% of girls and 76% of boys could identify at least three key sexual and reproductive health messages and their practical application (up from 62.5% and 52.7% at baseline, respectively), demonstrating a clear increase in knowledge and understanding among both genders. A drop in teenage pregnancies in target schools was also noted and attributed to the YPEs.

**CASE STUDY****MHPSS buddies**

In the Philippines, the *Safe Schools in BARMIM, Phase 3* aimed to promote safety and resilience to the risks of natural and climate-induced disasters. Students were trained through online sessions to become peer educators and equipped with basic knowledge of disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change (CC), and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). Once trained, student-facilitators, with the support of a qualified teacher focal point, set up online safe spaces. Here, their peers had the chance to share and discuss openly with each other, reach out to classmates who were having a difficult time, and support those in need of catching up with the lessons and assignments. It was noted that this peer facilitation training and activities provided students (especially girls) with increased confidence and leadership skills in promoting and raising awareness about well-being.



### Safe spaces for boys and girls are crucial platform for self-reflection and fostering awareness about gender inequality.

By working directly and intentionally with boys, we ensure a safe space for them to self-reflect and foster awareness about gender inequality. This approach not only promotes their engagement as active contributors but also highlights their significant role in enabling a safe environment for girls and women to live, thrive, and succeed. The creation of safe spaces to support girls' empowerment has allowed them to explore who they are, learn and try new behaviours in a trusting environment. This process has significantly built their confidence and self-efficacy<sup>8</sup>. The increase in their agency from an intersectional perspective has further strengthened their capacity to act.

#### CASE STUDY

##### Safe to try

In Nigeria, the *Education in crisis – educating vulnerable girls in Northeastern Nigeria* (GAC-EIC) aimed at supporting girls to be seen as valuable and equal rights holders in their communities and to pursue quality education in environments that are responsive to their needs and realities. Through the **Life-skills initiative**, boys had the opportunity to strengthen their awareness and understanding of different topics, including gender equality, sexual reproductive health, and rights, and living free of gender-based violence, living free of child marriage, among others. These reflections helped boys learn positive attitudes and behaviours for living together and how to support women and girls in the family and community. The outcomes of this initiative were significant—at the end of their cohorts, boys were able to identify barriers preventing girls from accessing education, communicating assertively, and becoming aware of the harmful social norms that have been affecting them. They learned how to support girls, see them as equal peers, become champions of change, mitigate gender-based violence (GBV), show solidarity for gender equality while promoting a positive environment for girls and learning positive ways to demonstrate their masculinities.

### Child-friendly safe spaces promoting wellbeing, mental health, and psychosocial support.

There was a direct correlation between attending to CAY's mental health and wellbeing and improvements in school retention.<sup>9</sup> Child-friendly spaces or adolescent safe spaces helped CAY access psychosocial support, which was particularly important during times of crisis. Children's safety and protection, enhanced by the existence of these safe spaces, was also a significant driving force in their return to school post-crisis, which was also a reassuring factor for parents.<sup>10</sup>

#### CASE STUDY

##### Mental health support to out-of-school girls

In Ethiopia, the '*Biruh Tesfa*' *Bright Futures for all* aimed at supporting out-of-school girls living in urban areas through the provision of safe spaces where non-formal education, life skills, and financial literacy were provided. Since most of the participants suffered from anxiety, sadness, or depression due to their situation (e.g., child domestic workers or girls who lack familial support systems and have been on their own since a young age), group and individual counselling and referral to specialized health services were also provided. Many girls reported increased self-confidence, communication skills, and much-needed recreation and social interaction time. The final recommendations state that similar interventions targeting highly marginalized young people should regularly measure and monitor mental health and include mechanisms to address risks and needs.

#### Key barriers to success and sustainability

- **The turnover of student club leaders**, occurring when they graduate or move to a different school, can pose challenges in ensuring the continuity of clubs.<sup>11</sup> In the Philippines, the Real Assets through Improved Skills and Education for Adolescents (RAISE) supported the sustainability of youth clubs by formalising them and linking them to established school structures such as Student Governments, and ensuring ongoing training for students interested in becoming peer educators.
- **The low participation rates in student clubs** can be due to a lack of awareness of what type of activities the club entails or a lack of clear information on how to join the clubs. Better promotion of club activities in the school and clear and transparent selection processes for members have shown a potential to overcome those barriers.<sup>12</sup>

8 Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to complete a task or achieve a goal. It encompasses a person's confidence in their ability to control their behaviours, exert an influence over their environment, and stay motivated to pursue their goal.

9 ECHO Integrated Child Protection and Education in Emergency Response Action (South Sudan, 2019-2021), GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Support for Earthquake Affected Families of Dolakha and Sindhupalchowk Districts in Nepal Project (2015-2017).

10 GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021)

11 Child-Centred Recovery and Resilience (APAC 2017)

12 Gender Equality in Secondary Schools (GESS) APAC (2016-2019)



## PROMISING PRACTICE 2



# Continuous professional development for education practitioners to increase safety, inclusion, gender equality, and learning outcomes

Ensuring that teachers, community educators, school staff, and facilitators/volunteers have the competence and knowledge to support all learners is a core component of Plan International's education interventions. In Plan International programmes, teachers' professional development takes many forms: training-of-trainer sessions, in-person workshops for teachers and staff, online guidance or continuous support provided through mobile phones (WhatsApp) or broadcasting technology, and more.<sup>13</sup> Training also covers a wide range of topics, from equipping educators with gender-transformative pedagogies to create more gender-equal classrooms, guiding how to better support students with disabilities, to sharing practices to help boost academic learning outcomes, and empowering educators to manage tools to support education continuity in case of disasters, to name a few.

## Outcomes

- An increase in **female teachers** due to better access to teachers' training further raised the number of girls attending and completing primary and secondary education.
- Training for teachers and facilitators, including in pedagogy promoting gender equality and inclusion, contributed to advancing **gender-transformative outcomes** (e.g., treating CAY in all their diversity equally, addressing gender-based violence, overcoming gendered barriers to education, and empowering female teachers).<sup>14</sup>
- Teacher training and capacity building on DRR and resilience also supported **education continuity**, including children's mental health and psychosocial support.<sup>15</sup>

## Key enablers of change

### Supporting young women into entering the teaching profession

and overcoming challenges such as lack of nearby training facilities (out of reach), safety and security, high tuition fees, and families and communities not permitting them to move away from home. More female teachers are linked to more female students entering and completing their education.<sup>16</sup> Girls are more responsive and motivated when taught by female teachers, especially those with similar backgrounds. Additionally, more female teachers contribute to enhancing perceptions of gender equality.

### Supporting teachers in adopting a gender transformative approach, integrating gender considerations into pedagogy, and becoming aware of gender biases.

Training that strengthens teachers' capacities in effectively adopting learner-centred, active, inclusive, and gender-transformative teaching methods and approaches improves learning environments, teachers' engagement and motivation, and education outcomes for all.<sup>17</sup>

## CASE STUDY

### Pedagogical approaches free from gender bias increase education outcomes for all

In **Zimbabwe**, the *Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE)* aimed at providing access to education to married girls, young mothers, girls who have never been to school, girls from the Apostolic community, girls with disabilities, girls from ethnic minorities, and girls engaged in labour. The key to this initiative's success was the role of the trained Community Educators (CE). These educators, through their regular interactions with learners, challenged the gender status quo, which regards boys as better performers than girls regarding education achievement. They reinforced messages from Learner Workbooks showing girls in successful economic and livelihood activities and venturing into male-dominated jobs to encourage girls to break the gender employment ceiling. Girls noted the CEs helped them to improve their learning and self-confidence and increase their motivation.

<sup>13</sup> See Promising Practice # 9. Technology.

<sup>14</sup> MGCubed (Ghana, 2017-2021), SAGE (Zimbabwe, 2019-2023), PASS+ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, 2016-2021), EQuIP2 (Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Burkina Faso, 2017-2021)

<sup>15</sup> See Promising Practice #3. Preparedness is key to anticipating potential disruptions.

<sup>16</sup> GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021)

<sup>17</sup> **Gender Responsive Pedagogy Teachers' Training (GRPTT) Package**



Kumba, Eunice, and their classmates at the teacher training centre, Sierra Leone

#### CASE STUDY

### A new pathway into the teaching profession for young women

In **Sierra Leone**, the *Girls' Access to Education – Girls' Education Challenge (GATE-GEC)* project aimed at providing young women from rural communities with a structured pathway into the teacher profession. Selected young women were provided with work placements as learning assistants (LAs) in local primary schools, along with study materials, tutorial sessions and support, and revision camps to study English and Maths modules ahead of taking their Teacher Training College (TTC) entrance exam (after approximately one year of study). Once LAs pass their TTC entrance exam, they become Student Teachers (STs) and continue to work in primary schools while taking distance learning and residential TTC courses. After completing the three-year TTC training course, STs can sit exams to become qualified teachers. The **LA/ST model** had a demonstrable impact on the lives of those who became qualified teachers, including improving their self-perception, their standing in communities, and their potential to be role models and influencers for marginalised children, especially girls. Also, the barriers preventing women from entering TTCs, such as not having finished school or speaking English, can be overcome.

### Empowering female teachers and appointing them as gender focal points.

Training that empowered female staff supported gender-transformative outcomes.<sup>18</sup> For example, the self-confidence that female teachers gained through programme interventions enabled them to feel more comfortable speaking up, making decisions, and voicing their opinions in school meetings despite existing gender norms prevalent in the societies they worked in, thus creating a more gender equal environment at schools and providing positive role models for female students. There was also evidence of female students feeling reassured by female presence among school staff, as it was easier for them to consult female teachers for menstrual hygiene or wellbeing issues, increasing their retention in education.

<sup>18</sup> As evidenced in the SCRSSI (Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021), HPP (CAR, Niger, Cameroon, Jordan), GESS (Lao PDR 2016-2019), and Stopping exploitation through accessible services project (Seas of Change) (Cambodia, Thailand, 2015-2018), GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021).

## CASE STUDY

**Female teachers play an essential role in disaster risk reduction (DRR)**

In **Nepal** and **Bangladesh**, the *Strengthening Community Resilience to Disaster through School Safety Initiatives (SCRSSI)* trained teachers and students on DRR and DRM. In Bangladesh, female teachers felt more confident, started speaking up more in meetings, and actively helping young girls. They could translate the knowledge and skills gained in DRM and climate change adaptation (CCA) into actions. Knowledge and skills gained through training helped increase access to decision-making forums and help them be able (and more confident) to identify risk reduction approaches despite the existing gender norms and roles prevalent in their society. Girls stated they felt more comfortable contacting female teachers for school safety-related matter.

## CASE STUDY

**All-inclusive gender-responsive education systems**

In **Nigeria**, the Educating vulnerable and hard to reach girls and adolescent girls in Northeastern Nigeria (GAC – EIC) aimed at increasing access to quality education for girls living in crisis-affected areas through the promotion of an all-inclusive-gender-responsive-education system. Target teachers benefit from Gender responsive pedagogy training. The Gender Responsive Pedagogy Teacher Training Package (GRPTT) developed by Plan International includes an introduction to key gender-related issues and concepts in education and mainstreams gender considerations into teaching skills, including child-centered instructional methods, classroom management, lesson planning, positive discipline, evaluation, and assessment and reflection practice.

**Teacher peer reflection groups.**

These groups serve as a platform for educators to enhance the quality of their teaching through self-learning and peer reflection. This process encourages educators to critically review and reflect on how their lessons, and even video-record their classes for self-evaluation. The regular meetings among school staff, where they share insights from their training, discuss challenges, and collectively find solution, foster a strong sense of community and collaboration, which is a key strength of these programmes.

## CASE STUDY

**Teachers' peer-to-peer learning**

In **Zimbabwe**, communities of practices were set up through the *SAGE programme*. These included sessions on '**Plan, Do, Feedback, Reflect**' with staff from learning hubs across districts, creating sustainable communities of educational practice. Educators were also matched with **Non-Formal Education Buddies** who were trained to provide mentorship support. These buddies conducted monitoring visits during which they observed the educator's teaching, provided feedback, and offered guidance on areas of improvement. Educators credited the training they received and the peer learning opportunities for their increased ability to deliver inclusive education that makes learning easy, fun, and engaging for their students.

## CASE STUDY

**Teachers' mentorship**

In **Nigeria**, the teachers' mentorship approach implemented in the *GAC – EIC project* has proven to be one of the most effective ways of influencing teachers' pedagogy and practice. The approach, characterised by self-reflection, specific, positive, and constructive feedback, has been a beacon of support, recognising strength, reinforcing good practices, and fostering open communication. This mentoring has guided teachers in improving their methodology and approaches when interacting with pupils and delivering their lectures. It has provided a continuous support system, creating an environment where questions and discussions for potential enhancements are encouraged.

**Training for head teachers and school management.**

In addition to training teachers, programmes that focused on building the capacity and improving the skills of head teachers and school management provided teachers with better leadership, mentoring, and support, thereby improving their educational practice, and, therefore, the learning experience of students.<sup>19</sup> Working with school management also helps ensure buy-in on promoting gender equality and inclusion in teaching and learning.

19 Trabajamos por un mundo justo que promueva los derechos de la niñez y la igualdad de las niñas (Bolivia, 2017 – 2021), PASS+ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Níger, 2016-2021), ORME (Guinea, 2016-2017), Biruh Tesfa Bright Futures (Ethiopia, 2019-2021)



## CASE STUDY

**School management as champions of gender equality and inclusion**

In **Ghana**, the *Making Ghanaian Girls Great!* (MGCubed) trained district education officers (DEOs) to build their capacity to monitor teachers' lessons and report on student-centred learning and gender approaches. The training also provided DEOs with an understanding of advocating for girls' educational needs and monitoring how girls experience teaching and learning. DEOs attributed to the training they received an increased capacity in supporting schools to meet their targets and not "lag behind".

**Well-paced, practically oriented, and repeat/refresher training.**

In several Plan International programmes, teachers preferred multiple-day training focusing on one topic or approach. It also emerged that teachers found it helpful to receive practical examples of how to implement a methodology instead of heavily theoretical.<sup>20</sup> Teacher training was more effective when repeat or refresher training were provided or when booklets, learning guides, or follow-up discussions were offered.<sup>21</sup>

## CASE STUDY

**Promoting gender equality through practical examples**

In the **Philippines**, the *Real Assets through Improved Skills and Education for Adolescent Girls (RAISE)* teacher training activities included practical strategies for breaking down gender stereotypes in the classroom. It provided reading materials that respond to gender bias. According to the project findings, several factors contributed to the effectiveness of the gender training approach: the topics focused on gender stereotyping; the topics were delivered in a practical manner, including actions that teachers can readily apply in the classroom; the messaging on avoiding gender stereotyping was very clearly explained, with examples; the gender sessions were complemented with follow up discussions led by a Community Development Facilitator, fostering a collaborative environment that helped to reinforce key messages.

**Gender-responsive psychosocial support (PSS).**

Supporting education continuity through equipping teachers with gender-responsive psychosocial support (PSS) skills and material creates a better and more resilient education environment, especially in contexts prone to crisis.

## CASE STUDY

**PSS to support education continuity**

In **Nigeria**, the *Education in crisis – educating vulnerable girls in Northeastern Nigeria project* (GAC-EIC) aimed at addressing gender inequalities and tackling the root causes and barriers that prevent girls from attending and staying in school in conflict-affected areas. Students and teachers were provided with gender-responsive psychosocial support (PSS), including counselling, referrals, and other services to address the impact of conflict, which disrupts the foundation of learning. Training included understanding resilience, children's reaction to the crisis, the principles of psychosocial first aid, gender equality, and inclusion, identifying students needing psychosocial support, and working with parents and communities to promote children's psychosocial well-being. The training also provided opportunities for teachers to learn how to support their colleagues with psychosocial first aid and supportive communications. Trained teachers observed an improvement in the general well-being, and school heads integrated PSS sessions into school timetables.

**Key barriers to success and sustainability:**

- **Trainings that do not include children, adolescents, and youth in all their diversity.** Training interventions that do not consider the diverse needs of students can foster inequality as teachers support some but not others. For example, in the *Primary Access through Speed Schools (PASS+)*, teachers could not support all students, including those with disabilities, which increased drop-out rates for that group. To address the problem, it is recommended to take a genuinely **intersectional approach to inclusion** in training teachers so that all CAYs in all their diversity, can experience the benefits of quality education.
- **Teachers miss school time due to training.** Sometimes, teachers and school heads/directors participate in training schools or classes are cancelled due to a lack of staff availability.<sup>22</sup> A possible solution is providing additional school time when teachers are back or providing printed-out booklets to work through (possibly accompanied by radio programmes) under the supervision of trained community educators or families, who can provide guidance and support in the absence of regular teachers.

20 Build Back Safer Schools for All (Nepal, 2015-2017)

21 TAWASOL (Egypt, 2018-2021) and the Biruh Tesfa Bright Futures (Ethiopia, 2019-2021)

22 Safe School Initiative in Cambodia (2016-2019)

## PROMISING PRACTICE 3



# Preparedness is key to anticipating potential disruptions

Preparing in anticipation of potential disruptions means having a plan in place in case an emergency arises that disrupts education. This involves variations of disaster risk management and, more generally, an education context analysis to identify continuity risks. Crucially, this also means having feasible and actionable gender-responsive and inclusive plans. These plans should seek to ensure the minimum disruption possible to students' education and should be known and ready to be implemented by the education community.

## Outcomes

- Having a plan in place, designed with an inclusive and gender approach, anticipating potential disruptions to education was **effective in creating resilient education continuity in unexpected situations.**<sup>23</sup>
- Anticipating and preparing for disruptions to education from an inclusive angle that considers the needs of CAY in all their diversity-supported **inclusive education continuity.**<sup>24</sup>
- An increase in **women and girls' participation** in DRR and peacebuilding processes and decision-making improved resilience, stability, and gender equality.

## Key enablers of change

### Capacity building or training using participatory approaches for school staff and students to identify risks and take action to mitigate them.

The school community (students, teachers, and school personnel) must be equipped with the skills to contribute to risk identification and mitigation so that this task is not left to a few external experts. Instead, the school community becomes empowered and resilient to protect itself through capacity building. This requires training on a wide range of topics, each of which brings its own benefits. Early warning systems can save lives, first aid can prevent further harm, search and rescue can ensure everyone's safety, psychosocial support can help cope with emergencies, and collaborative planning can lead to effective risk management. Additionally, training in distance learning ensures that education continues even in challenging times when students or teachers cannot physically reach schools.<sup>25</sup>

## CASE STUDY

### Inclusive and gender-responsive DRR plans to ensure education continuity

In Bangladesh, the *Disaster Resilient Equitable School Settings (DRESS)* had a profound impact on student participation. By establishing DRM committees, which included teachers, students, and student representatives, the project encouraged student involvement in disaster management. These committees through the Hazard, Vulnerability, and Capacity Assessment process, identified disaster risks and developed risk reduction plans. Regular DRM committee meetings were also conducted. This approach resulted in a significant increase in student return rates-50% of students (48% boys and 52% girls) in target schools returned to schools immediately after the crisis, compared to only 31% of students before the project.

### Ensuring students are aware of risks and actively involved in DRR planning is crucial.

It equips them with the knowledge and skills to understand, mitigate, and respond to disasters and crises. The understanding of DRR also enables children, adolescents, and youth to develop lifelong knowledge about handling emergencies and mitigation skills, fostering resilience towards various hazards. DRR education, with its focus on child participation, not only enhances their teamwork skills but also emphasizes the significance of their involvement, making the audience feel the importance of their role.<sup>26</sup>



Danica, 16 years old, teaches her fellow students basic first aid skills, Philippines

23 PASS+ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, 2016-2021), DRESS (Bangladesh, 2020), SCRSSI (Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021), the Safe School Initiative in Cambodia (2016-2019)

24 Real Time Review Report - Response to Cyclone Idai in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (2019), Safe School Initiative in Cambodia (2016-2019), MEESA Report on Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021), C2R2 (Asia, 2017).

25 DRESS (Bangladesh, 2020), Safe Schools in BARMIM, Phase 3 (Philippines, 2019-2022)

26 Plan International strives to ensure our work contributes to strengthening children's resilience to disasters and climate change. This is guided by our [Pathways to Resilience framework](#)

## CASE STUDY

**Girls and boys as active agents of DRR**

In the Philippines, the Safe Schools in BARMIM, Phase 3 built on lessons learned from Safe Schools 1 and 2. Project phases 1 and 2 promoted the active participation of girls and boys in school disaster management, including in their education disaster preparedness and school safety.

This approach, based on previous experiences, has led to a significant reduction in students' risks during disasters, providing a reassuring outcome by increasing their ability to participate and decide on DRR activities and planning.

## CASE STUDY

**Promoting environmental conservation to strengthen resilience**

In Malawi, the 18+ Ending Child Marriages/Promoting Safe Schools project aimed at increasing DRR and school safety through training on risk reduction activities, including planting 25,000 trees to strengthen resilience for school clubs' members. Participants noted that these initiatives increased their awareness of the importance of environmental conservation.

**Having supplies ready.**

Anticipating or preparing for disruptions includes having post-disaster essential equipment and supplies ready to be used/distributed.<sup>27</sup> This equipment can help ensure the safety of teachers and children at school in the event of a disaster. Anticipating potential disruptions and distributing school supplies (such as learning materials, textbooks, exercise books) to students at the start of the school year proved to be an effective strategy in case of school closures to ensure education continuity.<sup>28</sup>

**Establishing clear communication channels with official authorities.**

Ministries and governments play a crucial role in responses by facilitating transport or improving infrastructure to enhance access to programme areas. Through these clear communication channels, officials can swiftly authorise field officers to travel even when movement is restricted during emergencies. The availability of updated information from local government institutions and sectoral government agencies is also paramount in determining the extent of damage and in identifying the most affected communities and responses required in emergencies.

**Involving girls and women in DRR processes and peacebuilding.**

Peace processes that include women and girls are more resilient and promote gender-equal societies that are less likely to experience conflict. In turn, including girls and women in these processes and strengthening their contribution to decision-making increases their self-esteem and fosters gender equality. This can be done by leveraging girls' clubs and mothers' and women's clubs linked to schools.<sup>29</sup>

## CASE STUDY

**Women and peacebuilding**

In Nigeria, the Education in Emergency in complex context project aimed at improving inclusion and peaceful cohabitation through community engagement, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Women Peace and Security Forum (WOPSEF) was set up to engage women in peacebuilding processes, enhance their participation and social cohesion, and bolster their advocacy skills. WOPSEF met twice a month to discuss pressing issues related to GBV and peace and security and to identify possible solutions. These initiatives also aim to advance gender equality and strengthen women's voices and community positions. WOPSEF has been instrumental in resolving disputes within their communities, promoting inclusivity, peaceful cohabitation through social engagement, and sustainable peace and safety.

**Key barriers to success and sustainability**

- **Lack of gender-transformative considerations during humanitarian or emergency contexts.** In humanitarian and emergency contexts when education is likely to be disrupted, there can be less of a focus on gender-transformative education<sup>30</sup>, even though research shows that girls and women are often among the most vulnerable in post-disaster settings, have special needs, and face specific protection concerns. Several reports, including Plan International's **MEESA Report on Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19**, emphasize that it is essential to prioritise gender-transformative programming in times of crises due to the multi-layered vulnerabilities faced by adolescent girls and women.
- **Lack of inclusive considerations for children with disabilities during disaster planning.** Children with disabilities are frequently excluded from DRR initiatives yet overlooking them significantly deepens their vulnerabilities.<sup>31</sup> It is essential that participatory disaster planning takes an inclusive and intersectional lens, that people with disabilities are equally involved and trained in risk identification, and that the school community is equipped to support CAY with disabilities and their education continuity needs in the event of disasters.

27 DRESS (Bangladesh, 2020)

28 E.g., the PASS+ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, 2016-2021), GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), SAGE (Zimbabwe, 2019-2023), and Real Assets through Improved Skills and Education for Adolescents (RAISE) (Philippines, 2013-2018)

29 Education in Emergency in complex context project (Nigeria, 2022 – 2023)

30 Based on the projects reviewed. Although many projects acknowledged in their recommendations that this should be rectified in future programming.

31 C2R2 (Asia, 2017)



## PROMISING PRACTICE 4



# Quality learning environments

Quality learning environments include constructing schools and learning spaces and retrofitting them to ensure they are safer in disasters. They also involve building facilities such as gender-sensitive toilets, kitchens, or dormitories to ensure that the basic needs of children, adolescents, and youth are met. All infrastructures should be accessible so that no children, adolescents, and youth are excluded from participating in education.

## Outcomes

- Physical improvements to learning environments, such as the construction of physical infrastructure<sup>32</sup> contributed to making education spaces safer and more resilient, helping to ensure that **education continued in disruptive situations**.
- Making the infrastructures accessible contributed to **inclusive education** and better learning outcomes for learners with disabilities.<sup>33</sup>
- Improvements in the physical infrastructure of learning spaces (e.g., schools and classrooms) contribute to **better student and teacher wellbeing at school**.<sup>34</sup>
- Physical improvements can also make learning spaces **gender-responsive** by enabling girls to feel more welcome and comfortable at school, which correlates to increased motivation and better learning outcomes.<sup>35</sup>

## Key enablers of change

### Making education buildings and spaces physically safe.

For example, the improvement in structural features such as roof repairs, building compound walls, the provision of playgrounds, landslide treatment, installing thunderbolt protection facilities, or raising school grounds from existing land levels (above the flood level) has attracted more students to school than before, as they felt safer.<sup>36</sup> In terms of education safety in periods of conflict, the construction of fences to make schools more secure has been particularly successful, ensuring schools remain incident-free in the face of adversity.<sup>37</sup> These physically safer learning environments have significantly contributed to the mental wellbeing of both teachers and students.

## CASE STUDY

### Safer schools help to reduce anxiety and improve concentration

In **Bangladesh** and **Nepal**, the *Strengthening Community Resilience to Disaster through School Safety Initiatives (SCRSSI)* noted that teaching is not as effective if a school has poor physical facilities. For example, the continuous fear that disasters could damage the building makes teachers less confident in delivering their lessons and disrupts students' concentration. The girls consulted during the evaluation process confirmed that their level of stress, anxiety, and fear lowered when their knowledge of risk prevention increased in tandem with improved school buildings. Many respondents mentioned that one of the key reasons more girls were going to school was because girls' needs were addressed with the construction of new gender-friendly toilet facilities and the set-up of a Sanimart (a sanitary pad shop in each target secondary school), which reduced girls' absence rate during their period. This not only improved the learning environment but also enhanced academic performance.

### Making schools girl-friendly.

Many programme interventions included the construction of MHM facilities (safe spaces to change and attend to menstruation needs), producing positive outcomes such as increased comfort at schools and, in turn, increased academic performance and improved accessibility of education for girls.<sup>38</sup> Making education spaces girl-friendly also involved renovating or constructing gender-sensitive water-sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, creating a safe learning environment and reducing school travel distances.

### Improving hygiene facilities.

Hygienic toilets and learning facilities complemented and supported learning continuity (especially in post-crisis contexts). For example, in the *ORME project*<sup>39</sup>, implemented in Guinea after the Ebola epidemic, the evaluation noted a correlation between improvements in the school environment through latrines, refectories, water points, and improved hygiene practices, and improvements in students' academic outcomes.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, in post-earthquake contexts, providing a holistic package of temporary learning centres, health education, temporary toilet construction, water tanks, and teacher training helped to support education continuity.<sup>41</sup>

32 E.g., Gender friendly WASH systems, clean and hygienic spaces, fences around schools, zebra crossing near schools, dorms near schools, ramps, disability access systems, dormitories near schools, etc.).

33 Build Back Safer Schools for All (Nepal, 2015-2017), C2R2 (Asia, 2017)

34 Build Back Safer Schools for All (Nepal, 2015-2017), SCRSSI (Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021)

35 Enhancing access and retention of girls in the secondary schools (Tanzania, 2021-2022), SCRSSI (Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021), EQuIP2 and HPP (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021), GESS, Lao PDR 2016-2019

36 SCRSSI (Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021) and Disaster Resilient Equitable School Settings (DRESS) Project (Bangladesh, 2020)

37 EQuIP2 (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, 2017-2021)

38 Enhancing access and retention of girls in the secondary schools (Tanzania, 2021-2022), SCRSSI (Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021), EQuIP2 and HPP (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021), GESS, Lao PDR 2016-2019

39 ORME project (Guinea, 2016-2017)

40 No further details were provided in the evaluation report regarding the statistics of types of academic results and possible causations or explanations for this correlation. However, it should be noted that this project provided numerous interventions, including teacher training and learning support through revision classes for children.

41 Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Support for Earthquake Affected Families of Dolakha and Sindhupalchowk Districts in Nepal (2015-2017) and Build Back Safer Schools for All (Nepal, 2015-2017)



School MHM restroom and adolescent friendly information corner, Nepal

**Making schools accessible.**

Facilities such as lighting, railings, ramps, sloping stairs, and special floor tiles for children with disabilities (CwD) promoted inclusive learning for all. Such improvements can increase the access of CwD to education and thereby increase their enrolment rate.<sup>42</sup>

**CASE STUDY**

**Accessible buildings to ensure quality learning for all**

In **Nepal**, the *Build Back Safer Schools for All* included the construction of accessible schools that could welcome students who were visually impaired and deaf. The work included the provision of light bulbs to indicate the incidence of a disaster to deaf and hard of hearing students, larger-than-usual classrooms to accommodate railings along classroom walls to facilitate mobility of those in need, and verandas with special tiles to support the visually impaired. Ramps were also constructed to ensure wheelchair access. Improving both structural facilities (safe school buildings, school grounds, compound walls, and retaining walls to reduce the risk of landslide damage) and non-structural facilities (WASH, easy access for CwD, playgrounds, laboratories, computer facilities, education kits, learning materials, furniture, sport, and musical equipment) helped to improve the education experience for all. One of the students with a disability said that since the earthquake, he had been afraid that his school would collapse. The improvements in the school buildings made him feel safer and motivated him to encourage his friends to return to school. He noted that he and his friend with a disability can save themselves if the warning light switches on.

**Key barriers to success and sustainability**

- **Physical improvements are a significant enabler to inclusive education and education continuity but are not enough on their own.** It should be noted that to increase CwD access and school attendance, accessible infrastructures alone are insufficient. For example, in **Nepal**, the *Build Back Safer Schools for All project* noted that teachers need specific training to change their attitudes and provide better support to students with disabilities and to provide psycho-social support to those in need in post-disaster times. This can also be applied to constructing gender-sensitive WASH facilities. On their own, physical facilities cannot overcome the social norms that prevent girls and women from participating in education during their period. However, their contribution to improving girls' safety and comfort is significant.

42 C2R2 (Asia, 2017) and Build Back Safer Schools for All (Nepal, 2015-2017)

## PROMISING PRACTICE 5



# Alternative and non-formal education programmes

Alternative and non-formal education programmes provide students with a path alongside, or instead of, formal education, allowing them to access or ease back into formal education, catch up with their education, or transition to the labour market. Examples of alternative education programmes included in Plan International's initiatives are accelerated learning classes (to catch up with learning), temporary learning centres (e.g., during emergencies), community-based learning hubs (for children, adolescents, and youth who cannot attend formal education during standard school hours, such as CAY who are seasonal or domestic workers), child protection spaces (where children can continue their learning and receive psychosocial counselling as needed), and more.

## Outcomes

- Alternative or non-formal education programmes support **education continuity** and readiness as they help ease entry/re-entry into formal education or replace formal education when it is inaccessible to CAY.<sup>43</sup>
- Alternative or non-formal education programmes support **inclusive education** as they are effective at catering to the needs of CAY left behind by formal education or those not reached by formal education pathways (especially marginalized girls).<sup>44</sup>
- Alternative education programmes such as after-school learning or small study groups **improved learning outcomes and the quality of education** experienced by CAY.<sup>45</sup>
- Most interventions that aligned with local, national, and/or regional priorities, with **collaboration and cooperation with relevant authorities and ministries** (e.g., of Education) were found to have positive impacts on effectiveness, scalability, and sustainability.<sup>46</sup>



Anna, 5 years old, plays doctor and patient with her friend at pre-school, Laos PDR

## Key enablers of change

### Accelerated education and “catch-up” education strategies.

Across Plan International's programme interventions, re-organising and condensing several grades' worth of learning content into a shorter but intensified timeframe helped learners catch up to national education levels and made the transition to formal education more accessible. Plan International has unique models of accelerated education for different ages (pre-primary<sup>47</sup>, primary education to transition to formal school, and older learners to transition to work), with varying numbers of condensed grades.<sup>48</sup> Accelerated education proved effective in both development and humanitarian contexts, as well as post-crisis and protracted crisis contexts<sup>49</sup>, suggesting that it can be successful across the nexus.<sup>50</sup> **Collaboration and endorsement of accelerated education by official authorities or governments** supported transitions to formal education or the approval of final certification by the authorities. Collaboration with relevant authorities improved the sustainability and impact of alternative education programmes.<sup>51</sup>

## CASE STUDY

### School Readiness

The multicountry (Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Tanzania) *LEARN-Summer Pre-primary (SPP)* program aims at improving the school readiness of disadvantaged children without access to pre-primary education to better prepare for school entry and success. Results from evaluations indicated that the intervention improved school readiness, on-time enrolment, and retention in Grade 1, and the resilience of children exposed to early life adversity.

43 EQUiP2 and HPP (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021)

44 GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), Bright Futures (Ethiopia, 2019-2021), SAGE (Zimbabwe, 2019-2023), Seas of Change (SEAS - Cambodia and Thailand, 2015-2018), RAISE (Philippines, 2013-2018)

45 GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), BRICE (Ethiopia, Somalia 2018-2022)

46 Support to Response, recovery, and resilience in Borno State, Nigeria (2019 – 2022)

47 Plan International's Global Programme and Influencing Model I am Ready! Accelerated pre-primary education programme

48 E.g., In the EQUiP2 and HPP (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021) was condensing two grades of learning content within one year, which had positive results.

49 Burundian and Congolese refugees have access to quality and holistic protection services in refugee camps in Tanzania project (2018-2019) took place in refugee camps; and the HPP and EQUiP (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021) took place in the development and humanitarian contexts.

50 The humanitarian-development-peace nexus focuses on the work needed to coherently address people's vulnerability before, during, and after crises. The nexus is a continuation of long-running efforts in the humanitarian and development fields, such as 'disaster risk reduction' (DRR), 'linking relief rehabilitation and development' (LRRD), the 'resilience agenda', and embedding conflict sensitivity across responses.

51 LEARN-Summer Pre-primary (SPP - Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Tanzania, 2014-2024)



## CASE STUDY

**Sustainability, Scalability, and Impact**

In **Nigeria**, the *Support to Response, recovery, and resilience in Borno State project* (2019-2022) aimed at creating opportunities for out-of-school children to learn basic numeracy and literacy and to transition back into the formal education system or to enrol on vocational training. The project supported the Ministry of Education to develop and pilot an **accelerated education (AE) curriculum**, including a policy and a teacher training pack. At the end of the intervention, the new curriculum was certified and will help to harmonize all AE interventions in the country.

## CASE STUDY

**Education Continuity**

In **West Africa**, the multicountry (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger) *Pass+ project* (2016-2021) aimed at increasing access to education for out-of-school children. The close collaboration with the Ministries of Education made it possible to promote students' transition from accelerated learning centres to formal schools, particularly by strengthening teachers' knowledge of how to support the newly transferred students. The project also worked with regional authorities to ensure all children had a birth certificate to enrol in national exams.

## CASE STUDY

**Remedial classes to support girls' learning**

In **Ethiopia** and **Somalia**, the *Safe and quality education for girls and boys in displacement situations (BRICE) project* (2018 – 2022) targeted children living in crisis settings who are frequently denied access to safe and quality education. Responding to the need for subsidiary education for female students, remedial education in the format of after-school classes was set-up. The small-sized groups were provided with continuous support for up to 8 weeks. Data collected showed that 100% of female students who participated in remedial education had improved their grade scores. Feedback from participants highlighted girls appreciated attending the classes after school because it gave them a much-needed physical space and time to catch up on homework, time, and space they lack at home due to the expectations placed upon them to do household chores and take on caring responsibilities.

**Small group or community learning hubs<sup>52</sup> that include harder-to-reach students and provide them with personalised support and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.<sup>53</sup>**

These types of education programmes can involve small study groups that are supervised or accompanied by facilitators, and breaking down lessons that students find challenging. Students, especially marginalised CAY and girls, found it beneficial to learn in small groups in familiar environments where they can interact with community educators/facilitators and their peers.<sup>54</sup>



Najma, 11, and her best friend study together

## CASE STUDY

**Study groups to enhance learning outcomes**

In **Sierra Leone**, the *Girls' Access to Education: Girls' Education Challenge (GATE-GEC) project* (2017-2021) aimed at supporting marginalised girls and children with disabilities to attend school, reach their full learning potential, learn in a safe and inclusive environment, and successfully transition to further education and beyond. Small study groups focusing on literacy and numeracy provided students with academic support, which contributed to learning outcomes improvement as well as an increased sense of self-confidence and agency. Participants noted that in smaller groups, they had better opportunities to ask questions and practice what they had learned in school. Students felt the groups were an inclusive space where all participants were provided equal opportunities to participate, owing to the inclusive approach adopted by the facilitators.

**Listening to student needs.**

Engaging with students and listening to their needs can highlight the barriers preventing them from continuing or fulfilling their educational potential. When programme interventions prioritised listening to students, it emerged that issues such as far distances, childcare, or conflicting activity schedules were the main obstacles to their education.<sup>55</sup> When interventions provided targeted responses to those challenges, positive outcomes were observed such, as increased attendance, and commitment to education, as well as smoother transitions from non-formal to formal education.<sup>56</sup>

**Flexibility.**

Flexibility was recognised as an essential element of accessible education programmes.<sup>57</sup> This included flexible time schedules and delivery modalities (such as increasing or decreasing the number of lessons per week, providing self-study textbooks, etc.) based on students' needs.

52 E.g., where groups of approximately 15 students gather in their community at the village level, convened by locally recruited and trained facilitators and teachers, as in the GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), and Bright Futures (Ethiopia, 2019-2021).

53 MEESA Report - An Evaluation of Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021)

54 SAGE (Zimbabwe, 2019-2023) and GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021),

55 SAGE (Zimbabwe, 2019-2023), RAISE (Philippines, 2013-2018), Bright Futures (Ethiopia, 2019-2021)

56 Ibid.

57 SAGE (Zimbabwe, 2019-2023), PASS+ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, 2016-2021), Bright Futures (Ethiopia, 2019-2021), RAISE (Philippines, 2013-2018)

## CASE STUDY

**Modified In-School, Off-School Approach (MISOSA) and the Open High School Program (OHSP)**

In the **Philippines**, the *Real Assets through Improved Skills and Education for Adolescent Girls (RAISE)* adopted the innovative approaches called the **Modified In-School, Off-School Approach (MISOSA)** and the **Open High School Program (OHSP)**. In MISOSA, the class is grouped into two: an *in-school* group with the classroom teacher, which follows formal lessons, and an *off-school* group with a teacher facilitator at a venue other than the classroom, providing students with self-instruction materials (SIMs). In OHSP, self-study distance learning addresses the learning needs of those who cannot attend regular classes. The OHSP allows flexibility in completion, permitting enrollees a maximum of six years to complete the programme — meaning that students may fast-track or slow down, depending on their circumstances. School heads interviewed attributed the zero-dropout rate achieved implementing MISOSA and OHSP. Although these approaches are best suited for independent learners (as they require self-study), teachers and school heads highlighted that teachers supported learners in MISOSA/OHSP to become independent over time. They did this through home visits, one-on-one tutorials during break times, and providing reading support. Learners interviewed indicated that MISOSA and OHSP had helped them complete schooling and advance to the next grade despite being unable to attend school regularly. They also noted increased motivation to return to school after a long absence (e.g., pregnancy) because they could keep up with schoolwork through self-study using SIMs.

**Dedicated and personalised outreach approach to support hard-to-reach students.**

When community educators or mentors used personalised door-to-door modalities to reach students who are not accessing education, the hardest-to-reach CAY were able to participate in education.<sup>58</sup> The outreach approach was successful in retaining CAY when mentors or educators themselves were from the hard-to-reach communities, being then able to establish closer relationships with these CAY and had received training on how to engage marginalised CAY.

## CASE STUDY

**Personalised outreach approach to reach girls hardest to reach**

In **Ethiopia**, the *'Biruh Tesfa' For All project*, meaning 'Bright Future' for All in Amharic (2019-2021), aimed at mobilising out-of-school girls (aged 10 to 19) into safe spaces convened by locally recruited and trained female mentors and teachers. The recruitment was done by mentors going house to house, which allows them to identify eligible girls and, if needed, negotiate for girls' involvement in the programme, which is especially critical for domestic workers. Mentors were recruited from the project communities and were, most often, local women leaders; many mentors had the same experiences as participants, having migrated to the area or being in domestic work. Previously, the standard approach to reach these marginalised groups was community-based association memberships, but this strategy tends to reach only those with access to such groups. In community learning groups, girls were given non-formal education for four days a week and life skills/financial literacy on the fifth day. Participants significantly improved their literacy and numeracy skills, recording an increase in self-confidence, with girls describing it as the ability to 'do things like other people do.' The project showed the possibility of engaging child domestic workers in education, provided they are offered flexible solutions. The interventions addressed the prolonged absenteeism by providing catch-up opportunities through additional sessions, weekend tutorials, and the support of dedicated mentors. Multiple recruitment rounds were necessary to ensure that newly arrived girls had the chance to join and those who dropped out could re-engage.

**Key barriers to success and sustainability**

- **Transitions from alternative education programmes into formal education.** The formal school system's lack of facilities to absorb students ready to transition away from alternative programmes can create overcrowded classrooms. This can make it challenging for teachers to manage classrooms and provide quality learning eventually discourage learners from attending school. Interventions of accelerated learning that aim for a transition to formal education should simultaneously address capacity in formal education systems, possibly through cooperation with national or regional education authorities. It is also essential that those in formal education (e.g., directors and teachers) who will be welcoming the new learners transitioning from accelerated programmes have the required skills and knowledge to support the newly arrived.
- For after-school clubs or programmes that extend the school days of students, it's essential to consider their basic needs. For instance, over half of the participants in the *GATE-GEC project (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021)* felt that the lack of food in study groups was the aspect that they enjoyed least. This highlights the importance of ensuring students are not hungry or thirsty during these extended hours, as it can significantly impact their wellbeing and learning outcomes. Non-formal education programmes must therefore prioritise addressing these basic needs, just like formal education (e.g., safe facilities, WASH facilities, and more).

## PROMISING PRACTICE 6



# The whole school approach – Community support

Community support structures include school or education management committees, parent associations, parenting circles or parent clubs, community disability networks, or community-based child protection mechanisms involved with local education affairs. These structures can strengthen programme interventions by promoting community buy-in, mobilising key stakeholders, and supporting the mission of schools or education programmes (e.g., helping source workers for school construction projects, organising community events, helping teachers establish relationships with the families of CAY, etc.).

## Outcomes

- Community structures supported **awareness-raising and norms change** (e.g., around entering and staying in education).<sup>59</sup>
- Community structures supported **gender-transformative change and inclusion** (e.g., including children with disabilities or disadvantaged children in education activities).<sup>60</sup>
- Community structures supported school staff to directly **identify cases of out-of-school children and facilitate their (re-) enrolment**.<sup>61</sup>

## Key enablers of change

### Providing mediation between the school (or education programme) and the families of CAY.

Community structures, such as education management committees or parents' associations, occupy a unique space between the school and the home and can serve as an intermediary between the two. As intermediaries, they can help solve problems that schools may find challenging to do on their own. For example, if there is information to pass on to the students' families, or if students are absent from school, committee members can go to family homes to understand the situation and find a solution.<sup>62</sup>



Yollanda, 12 years old, uses a mobile phone to connect with a community educator, Zimbabwe

## CASE STUDY

### Parent-to-parent support to deal with their children with disabilities

In Zimbabwe, the *Creating a Safe and Friendly Environment for Adolescent Girls and Boys project* (2016-2019) established parent-to-parent support groups. These groups provided psychosocial support to parents dealing with the challenges of caring for their children with disabilities (CwDs). Additionally, **Community-Based Rehabilitation committees** were responsible for ensuring that every CwDs of school-going age received assistance to attend school. This led to a remarkable improvement in the enrolment rate. In the Kwekwe region, for example, before the project, only about 10% of CwDs attended school. However, after the intervention, the numbers increased to around 60%, a clear indication of the positive impact on the children's education.

59 BRICE (Ethiopia, Somalia 2018-2022), GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021),

60 PASS+ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, 2016-2021)

61 PASS+ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, 2016-2021), REACH (Ghana, 2016-2021)

62 Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) committees are usually made up of people with disabilities, their family members, interested members of the community and representatives of government authorities.



**Strong knowledge of the locality or community.**

When community structures are well-connected and experts about the local environment, they can identify the most effective interventions to support education continuity, create norms changes, or reach hard-to-reach CAY (e.g., via door-to-door check-ins on students, community hubs, or non-contact strategies such as radio and TV). The participation of community leaders, volunteers, health workers, youth leaders, and more in identifying participants is a significant ingredient in reaching the most vulnerable families in target communities, and the effectiveness of these community-based strategies is a testament of their value.

**CASE STUDY****Community engagement model to support marginalized girls**

In **Sierra Leone**, the *GATE-GEC project (2017-2021)* developed a community engagement model to support marginalised girls and children with disabilities to attend school. The positive work undertaken pre-COVID-19 to engage communities and build their trust was reflected in the successful post-COVID-19 'back-to-school and safe re-opening of schools' campaign. 99% of girls and children with disabilities returned to school after the extended six-month school closures. Strong community networks and initiatives were implemented to keep in touch with children during school closures and successfully engaged families in the return to school phase.

**CASE STUDY****School safety as a direct reflection of the more comprehensive community safety**

In **Ethiopia and Somalia**, the *Safe and quality education for girls and boys in displacement situations in Ethiopia and Somalia (BRiCE) project (2018-2022)* aimed at creating a safer learning environment setting up **Child Protection Committees (CPC)**. CPC members, such as parents, received training on child protection and creating safe learning environments. Trained CPC members led community dialogue sessions, in person and through radio programmes, to improve social cohesion, recognising that safety in schools was a direct reflection of the safety of the wider community. The sessions included mixed-gender dialogue, social cohesion, and support for vulnerable groups. The monitoring of the dialogues highlighted some best practices to magnify their effect on the community better:

- Securing community buy-in for tangible activities that address protection risks (e.g., school improvement plans) through awareness-raising events.
- Working with community stakeholders to include topical issues from community dialogues in religious services and broadcasting them to local radio stations to ensure messages have a wider reach.
- Ensuring CPCs discussions address key issues and allow them to define future priorities for training and programming.

**Training and capacity-building.**

Community structures, such as community-based child protection committee (CPCs), can become more effective when they receive training to enhance their capacities. Through training, often informal community structures can become functional and successful at identifying, monitoring, reporting, and responding to incidents in their communities (e.g., violence against children).

**Building on what exists and ensuring participation.**

The effectiveness and strength of these community approaches, especially during crises or instability, depend on the existing community structures and leadership.<sup>63</sup> Using existing structures, skills, and knowledge contributes to the effective implementation of rapid response mechanisms. Working in a participatory manner with target groups and their communities helps support sustainability.<sup>64</sup>

**Key barriers to success and sustainability**

- **Sustainability.** Community organisations may need training and support if they have limited managerial, technical, and financial capacities, especially concerning managing scale budgets. However, there is a risk that local community structures become dependent on external support. A possible solution is to thoroughly build the capacity of the individuals participating in these structures and provide ways of retaining the practices and knowledge learned through booklets, pamphlets, posters, or videos.

63 MEESA Evaluation of Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021), Zimbabwe Disaster Rapid Response Mechanism (ZDRRM) (2020-2021), BRiCE (Ethiopia, Somalia 2018-2022).

64 SAGE (Zimbabwe, 2019-2023), Safe School Initiative in Cambodia (2016-2019), ECHO Integrated Child Protection and Education in Emergency Response Action (South Sudan, 2019-2021), Enhancing access and retention of girls in the secondary schools (Tanzania, 2021-2022)

## PROMISING PRACTICE 7



# Distributing materials and provisions and Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)

This intervention refers to distributing materials such as school supplies and equipment to continue studying at home at the same time, (and at night while it is dark), or provisions that address the basic needs of children, adolescents, and youth (such as food, water, and hygiene equipment) and the specific basic needs of girls (such as menstrual hygiene materials) or children with disabilities (such as assistive equipment or care).

## Outcomes

- Distributing school materials supported **education continuity** by helping to keep students in education and avoid potential dropouts.<sup>65</sup>
- Providing school materials proved to be essential to education continuity in **emergency contexts**.<sup>66</sup>
- Distributing materials and provisions based on the specific needs of CAY **supported inclusivity** as it ensured that girls could attend school during menstruation and that children with disabilities could participate in education.
- **Cash and voucher assistance for education (CVA)** interventions primarily addressed barriers to education access and retention. By raising household income, CVA supported their ability to address the financial costs of education and potentially mitigate harmful coping mechanisms, such as child labour and early marriage<sup>67</sup>.

## Key enablers of change

**School supplies include bags, pens, pencils, notebooks, uniforms, and stationery (“back to school kits”).**

This provision increases access to education, especially for girls, CwDs, and children from marginalised and financially disadvantaged communities.<sup>68</sup> In particular, the distribution of school bags was identified as applicable during the rainy season as they helped keep learning materials dry.

## CASE STUDY

### Back to school kits

In Egypt, the Supporting Basic Education for Syrian Refugees and Egyptian Host Communities (TAWASOL) project (2018-2021) aimed at increasing access to education for vulnerable children. Back-to-school kits alleviated a financial burden on refugee parents and enabled them to direct their financial resources to pay for other basic needs like food and rent. This helped families to keep their children at school and avoid potential dropouts.

### Solar lamps.

These help students (especially those financially disadvantaged) to continue learning at home, especially when there is no electricity. Solar lamps also help children, adolescents, and youth to travel home safely when it gets dark outside.<sup>69</sup>

### Self-study manuals, textbooks, and booklets for students to study at home.

This enables students to catch up and learn in their own time, allowing them to keep up with and continue their education.



Shuborna, 10 years old, can study at night thanks to her solar lamp, Bangladesh

65 PIE and Safer School in Sindhuli (Nepal, 2018), EQUIP2 and HPP projects (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021), GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021).

66 Build Back Safer Schools for All (Nepal, 2015-2017), Strengthening resilience through Cash for Education in North-East of Nigeria (2017-2019), PASS + (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, 2016-2021)

67 **The Role of Cash and Voucher Assistance in Increasing Equity and Inclusion for Girls and Children with Disabilities in EIE (2022)**

68 PIE and Safer School in Sindhuli (Nepal, 2018), EQUIP2 and HPP (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021) and GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), REACH (Ghana, 2016-2021)

69 SCRSSI (Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021) and ORME (Guinea, 2016-2017)

## CASE STUDY

**MyBook tool for remote learning**

In Sierra Leone, following school closures, the GATE-GEC project (2017-2021) designed the distance learning MyBook tool (a paper-based learning resource and workbook) to be used by students during study group and catch-up session, and for remote learning during school closures. MyBook was designed as a dynamic tool designed to 'future-proof' against any further periods of school closures. Guidance and training enabled educators to support students remotely via telephone or in-person during study group sessions. This enabled children to continue learning during school closures, and allowed those who were already falling behind before the pandemic to catch up.

**Food and water.**

Not all students are fed before attending school, so their hunger can become unbearable during the school day.<sup>70</sup> An essential enabler for CAY's well-being and education continuity is, therefore, to ensure that they have food at school or locations near the school (so that they do not lose significant time travelling to the food source and back). In the *Report on the Response to Cyclone Idai in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe* (2019), it is noted that it was not possible to deliver Gender Based Violence (GBV) messages to communities who did not have food as they were unable to engage.

**Cross-sectoral collaboration**

In Sierra Leone, the GATE-GEC project (2017-2021) also noted that more efforts were needed to target hunger as a barrier to learning, including through cross-sectoral collaboration. The project evaluation remarked that gender transformation is a tangible list of intersectional interventions. Models to enact the most systemic change need co-creation with key stakeholders in education, social welfare, and finance.

**Menstrual hygiene materials.**

Menstrual pads, tampons, and other materials are essential for girls and women to attend to their menstruation. Across several programme interventions, the provision of menstrual hygiene materials or dignity kits helped girls and women attend and remain in education.<sup>71</sup>

**Materials and medical care for CwDs.**

Incorporating assistive aids such as hearing aids and spectacles makes education more accessible for children with disabilities.<sup>72</sup>

**Cash and voucher assistance for education (CVA).**

Cash transfers have consistently been found to benefit school participation (enrolment and drop-out rates). Humanitarian intervention should seek to bridge the humanitarian-development-nexus to ensure the sustained inclusion of marginalised children in education by considering how CVA recipients can be supported to overcome demand-side economic barriers long-term (e.g., through linkages between EiE-specific CVA and livelihood programming) and linking humanitarian CVA to larger social protection and safety net mechanisms.<sup>73</sup>

**Key barriers to success and sustainability**

- **Distribution or delivery delays.** If back-to-school kits are delivered too late they are less valuable for the CAY who may need them. Therefore, timely planning, procurement, and distribution should be a priority consideration.
- **Children with disabilities might not know how to use the materials provided.** It is necessary to consider guiding children with disabilities and their families to use the assistive equipment or medical support provided to them.
- **The materials provided may not be in line with the infrastructure available.** For example, wheelchairs may be useful provisions for certain children with mobility issues, but if there are no ramps, they cannot be sufficiently beneficial. Therefore, often, materials for children with disabilities need to come as a package, accompanied by other interventions (e.g., construction of physical spaces, or teachers and students training on how to maximise the use of the materials/provisions).

70 EQUIP2 (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, 2017-2021), Response to Cyclone Idai in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (2019), Bright Futures (Ethiopia, 2019-2021), GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021)

71 Bright Futures (Ethiopia, 2019-2021), GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021)

72 E.g., Project on Creating a Safe and Friendly Environment for Adolescent Girls and Boys in Zimbabwe (2016-2019)

73 [The Role of Cash and Voucher Assistance in Increasing Equity and Inclusion for Girls and Children with Disabilities in EiE \(2022\)](#)



## PROMISING PRACTICE 8



# Family and caregivers' involvement in education

Family involvement in education implies that parents and caregivers support their children in participating in education, encouraging, and reminding them of the benefits of education and facilitating their educational success. It also means noticing signs of distress, absenteeism, and disengagement from education so these can be addressed promptly with teachers and other relevant professionals.

## Outcomes

- Family involvement is correlated with improvements in **education continuity**, such as school retention and continued learning during educational disruptions.<sup>74</sup>
- Family involvement is also associated with **improvements in academic results and learning outcomes**.<sup>75</sup>
- Family involvement through intergenerational dialogues, parents and teachers' associations (PTA) and groups, and men's and women's clubs increased community support for gender equality.

## Key enablers of change

### Awareness-raising and coordinated work with families and caregivers emphasising the importance of education.

When families promote the importance of education and commit to their children's education, particularly girls, are more likely to remain in school and succeed.<sup>76</sup> Interventions implementing awareness-raising initiatives for parents and caregivers saw success in adults passing on these values and messages to their children.<sup>77</sup> Coordinated work with families can involve parenting circles or parental education where parents or caregivers can learn how to support their children's learning and development better.

### Home support – parents and caregivers helping students to study at home.

Across programme interventions, home study and support from home on the need to put time aside for learning was correlated with better learning outcomes, especially during school closures and education disruptions. It is essential that following their understanding of the importance of education, families agree to let their children spend time on homework or find arrangements for CAY to study and tend to their chores .

## CASE STUDY

### Home support

In Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, the **Primary Access through Speed Schools (PASS+) project (2016-2021)**, the drop-out rate decreased, and the quality of student self-learning and homework was enhanced when parents and caregivers were supported to motivate or help their children in continuing their learning at home. Teachers ensured continuous support to parents and caregivers via phone calls or text messages, especially during the COVID-19 school closure, and through parent education initiatives when face-to-face meetings were possible. Continuous support to parents to help and motivate their children increases education continuity and improves learning outcomes.

## CASE STUDY

### Intergenerational dialogues and Men's clubs as powerful tools to tackle harmful gender norms

In Zimbabwe, the *Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE) programme (2019-2023)* established men's clubs and organised intergenerational dialogues to increase families' and communities' support to gender equality. This initiative not only brought young men and young women together with other members of their families and communities, but also empowered young girls by increasing the common understanding of their specific issues. Dialogues with decision-makers in their communities allowed girls and boys to exercise their agency and identify positive actions to address harmful practices. The role of men in this process was crucial. Men's clubs, targeting fathers and husbands of girls participating in the programme, provided the unique opportunity to work with adult men on how to challenge harmful gender attitudes and practices, to reflect on positive masculinity, and the role played by positive role models. At the end of the implementation, it was noted that men reported being more aware of gender roles and barriers women face and appreciated the value of equality.

74 Ecuador's Country Strategy (2019-2023), the Educando en familia /Educating in the family (Ecuador 2019), TAWASOL (Egypt, 2018-2021), EQUIP2 and HPP (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021)

75 The MGCubed project [29] demonstrated the need for home support for better learning outcomes: girls who had access to someone who helped them study at home were better supported to maintain or improve their English literacy outcomes during school closures.

76 Plan International Ecuador's country strategy, EQUIP2 and HPP (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, CAR, Niger, Jordan 2017-2021)

77 E.g., PASS+ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, 2016-2021)



Fabián helps his eldest daughter with her homework, Ecuador

#### CASE STUDY

##### Parents as first educators

In Ecuador, the Educating in the family / Educando en Familia project (2019) aimed at working with families and communities to emphasise their active role as educators for their children. The project recorded increased parents' attention to their children's grades and learning processes, increased responsibility, and punctuality in completing homework, and improved intra-family relationships. Parents benefitted from workshops where they could learn more about specific parenting topics, discuss with their peers, and look for advice. During the workshops, participants developed concrete tools to strengthen their capacities as "first educators" for their children.

#### Key barriers to success and sustainability

- **Illiteracy among parents and caregivers can prevent families from supporting children with home-based learning.**<sup>78</sup> Tackling this would require interventions often beyond the scope of education programme interventions targeting children, adolescents, and youth as this concerns adult education. However, learnings from Plan International's work on adult education and partnerships with organisations specialising in adult education and lifelong learning can complement education interventions targeting children, adolescents, and youth.
- **The busy schedules of parents, who often juggle household and paid work, leave them with limited time and energy to support their children's learning.**<sup>79</sup> This is a deeply rooted and systemic issue that requires comprehensive solutions. One potential approach is to provide financial support, such as cash grants, to families, enabling them to reduce their work duties. However, it's crucial to acknowledge the sustainability challenges associated with this strategy. although the sustainability challenges of this approach need to be acknowledged.

78 MEESA Report on Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021)

79 Play Matters (Rwanda, 2020-2021)



## PROMISING PRACTICE 9



# Technology

Technology has been used across several of Plan International's programme interventions to support education interventions, especially concerning remote teaching and learning approaches. There is good evidence of the positive impact of using radios, satellite broadcast technology, mobile phone apps such as WhatsApp, and home learning packs (while perhaps not a "digital" technology, this tool often complements other technologies).

The primary considerations taken by Plan International's initiatives, including technology, were that it should reduce, not exacerbate, inequalities; that teachers are still essential; that learning must be as engaging and interactive as possible; and that parents and caregivers, who play a crucial role in this process, need to be equipped in their role as teachers and facilitators of learning.

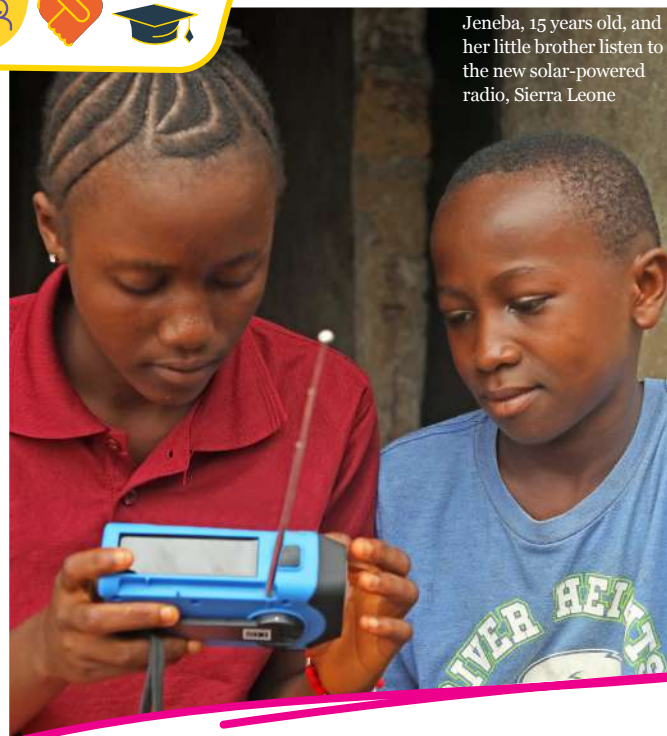
## Outcomes

- Technology, such as the use of radios, mobile phones, and satellite broadcasting, are examples of innovative interventions that have effectively supported distance learning and **education continuity** during disruptions, emergencies, and crises.<sup>80</sup>
- Technology has also supported **awareness-raising efforts** towards norms change (thus contributing to **gender transformative change and greater inclusivity**) and resilience.<sup>81</sup>
- Technology was successfully used to provide support and training to educators, and thereby **improve education quality**.<sup>82 83</sup>

## Key enablers of change

### Distributing radio to students and broadcasting lessons.

The most successfully used technology was national and community-based radio<sup>84</sup>, primarily to support learning continuity during school closures (e.g., COVID-19).<sup>85</sup> When CAY experience several weeks without education, it becomes more difficult for them to re-enter and continue education afterwards, therefore innovations such as radios or other ways of supporting continuous education for temporary durations between school closures can be very effective.



Jeneba, 15 years old, and her little brother listen to the new solar-powered radio, Sierra Leone

Indeed, radios can be used in contexts of limited internet coverage and low access to any other distance learning solutions, including printed materials, providing a reliable and effective means of education continuity.

### Complementing radio learning broadcasts with paper learning materials.

Learning materials accompanying radio broadcasts helped students revisit and consolidate their learning. Without these, students found it challenging to follow radio or remote learning broadcasts.<sup>86</sup> For example, in the *Play Matters at Home project in Rwanda* (2020-2021), 59% of respondents indicated that both the package and the radio episodes were beneficial to their children's learning.

## CASE STUDY

### Radio and workbook to support home learning

In **Sierra Leone**, the GATE-GEC *project* (2017-2021), radios and workbooks were distributed to support home learning. The project participant survey showed that those who could access radio lessons without the workbook found it hard to follow the contents. Children with disabilities, orphans, and girls who were mothers found it particularly difficult to study on their own without any support. To address these challenges, a workbook was developed and distributed. Almost all participants found the distributed radios and workbooks sufficient, appropriate, and valuable.

80 GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), and MEESA report (2020-2021)

81 SCRSSI (Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021), Play Matters (Rwanda, 2020-2021)

82 Mobile smartphone devices were used in Nepal for teachers to watch teacher training videos that they downloaded (accessible also offline), watching back recordings of how they teach, which was especially effective when followed by reflection and learning circles (TSLA) to improve teaching and learning ("Promoting Inclusive Education (PIE)" and Safer School in Sindhuli (Nepal, 2018).

83 **Blend On!** A guide on how to blend in-person & remote learning for professional development of educators.

84 The report on the role of education technology during and after the COVID-19 pandemic [21] states that "across Plan's programs, the most used tool was national and community-based radio", which was confirmed in the project reviews conducted for this meta-evaluation.

85 GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), MEESA Evaluation of Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021)

86 Play Matters (Rwanda, 2020-2021), GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), MEESA Evaluation of Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021)



### Distributing radios to communities and running radio shows, debates, and awareness-raising campaigns.

Several programme interventions successfully used radio shows to raise awareness on topics such as risk reduction and resilient education<sup>87</sup>, parental education (such as teaching parents about positive pedagogies)<sup>88</sup> and the importance of education.<sup>89</sup> The messages disseminated included information on the root causes of lack of access to education or high drop-out (such as early marriage or child labour being correlated with non-enrolment in education).

### Complementing distance learning with teacher support or parental involvement.

Successful distance learning programmes (e.g., via radio sessions) included teacher support (explanation of the broadcast and interactive sessions with the children) as well as parental involvement.<sup>90</sup> *Plan International's report on the role of education technology during and post the COVID-19 pandemic* confirms that when combined with facilitators and a hotline for children to ask questions, radio broadcasts are more effective. This can also include having community-based learning hubs or small learning groups where students can avail of similar support.

### Using mobile and smartphone devices to provide and support teacher training.

Teachers effectively used smartphones and other mobile devices to watch teacher training videos that they downloaded (accessible also offline) and re-watch recordings of how they or their peers teach. This was especially effective when followed by reflection and learning circles to improve teaching and learning.<sup>91</sup> Teachers appreciated the ability to learn 'anytime, anywhere', giving them control of their own learning process.

#### CASE STUDY

##### Blended approach for successful Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

In **Zimbabwe**, the *SAGE project* (2019-2023) moved CPD sessions for Community Educators (CE) on WhatsApp when COVID-19 restrictions banned face-to-face meetings. This approach allowed the integration of offline tasks, which CE would practice before the remote training on WhatsApp. The use of WhatsApp also helped to establish peer-support groups. As COVID-19 restrictions eased, the remote CPD became a blended CPD model integrating face-to-face sessions with continuous online support.

#### CASE STUDY

##### Teacher Self-Learning Academy (TSLA) approach

In **Nepal**, the *Promoting Inclusive Education (PIE) and Safer School in Sindhuli projects* (2018) used smartphones to improve teaching and learning through reflection and teachers learning circles (TSLA). The TSLA approach includes: 1) Hardware: using hand-held iPod devices as mobile learning devices and audio-visual materials that do not require internet access. Teachers were encouraged to access the self-study materials at their own pace and re-watch as necessary; 2) Software – the materials loaded onto the devices, e.g., content such as video demonstration of learner-centred and participatory approaches; 3) Teacher-reflection circles facilitated by a lead teacher to share lessons learned and promote peer-to-peer learning.

### WhatsApp or communication apps for teachers to connect with parents/caregivers.

In some programme interventions, WhatsApp was used between teachers and parents to communicate how to support children's learning better. Teachers would take photos of the lessons organised at school and worksheets and send these to parents with video instructions on how to help their children. Parents then sent back completed worksheets and pictures of children doing the work, which enabled teachers to monitor children's progress in learning and parents to become more active in supporting their children.<sup>92</sup>

### Satellite broadcasting technology.

Satellite technology can deliver educational content to hard-to-reach communities. It has also been successfully used to provide high-quality teacher training at scale and on an ongoing basis to reach teachers living in rural communities.

#### CASE STUDY

##### Remote teacher training for hard-to-reach communities

In **Ghana**, the *Train for Tomorrow (T4T) project* (2019-2021) used satellite technology to provide quality training from a studio in Accra to 20 technology-enabled Colleges of Education across all regions. This approach allows a single trainer to broadcast lessons and synchronously and interactively train hundreds of teachers in multiple locations. Teachers receiving training can ask questions and interact with the trainer. With one highly qualified teacher, the project reached 400 future teachers, responding to multiple needs, such as increasing the number of available new teachers and reaching those living in remote areas.

87 SCRSSI (Bangladesh, Nepal, 2018-2021)

88 Play Matters (Rwanda, 2020-2021)

89 PASS+ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, 2016-2021)

90 GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), *Plan International's report on the role of education technology during and post the COVID-19 pandemic*, MEESA Evaluation of Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021), SAGE (Zimbabwe, 2019-2023)

91 "Promoting Inclusive Education (PIE)" and "Safer School in Sindhuli (Nepal, 2018)

92 TAWASOL project [16] and "Rawdai" project, as mentioned in the report [21]



Francisca, a studio engineer, manages the tech equipment at a studio in Accra which broadcasts catch-up lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ghana

### Partnerships with governments and relevant authorities.

Government support can help ensure digital infrastructure and access to signal and connectivity, facilitating the use of technologies, especially for rural and hard-to-reach communities. Governments are also able to provide free access to education websites and apps and facilitate broadcasting airtime space.<sup>93</sup>

#### CASE STUDY

### Learning TV and after-school study groups with broadcasted lessons

In Ghana, the *Making Ghanaian Girls Great (MGCubed) project* (2017-2021) partnered with the government to set up Ghana Learning Television (GLTV) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project relied on broadcasting infrastructure to deliver a high-quality distance learning programme via pre-recorded national TV broadcasts on GLTV, which students could access distributed decoders. Girls who had followed GLTV had higher mathematics grades and higher levels of attendance when schools reopened. Parents with positive attitudes towards girls' education were more likely to support their children watching GLTV, and data indicates that watching GLTV and having someone in the household to help with learning benefit girls to progress with their English and Mathematics during school closures. After-school study groups, including broadcasted lessons from a studio in Accra, accompanied by in-person facilitation, were also set up. This provided students with personalised support and built their confidence in their academic abilities.

### Partnerships with the private sector.

It is important to recognize that there is substantial evidence to suggest that brokering partnerships with Internet Service Providers and other relevant stakeholders can be a **game-changer in overcoming the challenges of Internet access and technology-based gadget availability. This strategy can accelerate access to free or low-cost education content or tools (tablets, phones, etc.), making it a vital step in our educational landscape.**<sup>94</sup>

#### Key barriers to success and sustainability

- **Access to technology.** When using technology to support education interventions, it is essential to consider how participants can have continued and equitable access.<sup>95</sup> For example, the mobile phone learning initiative included in the *SAGE Programme in Zimbabwe (2019-2023)* had limited uptake as girls reported challenges in accessing phones (e.g., not independently owning a mobile phone to use at will). Further, access encompasses physical access to the device, and having the time to participate in distance learning sessions, which household chores can hinder. In this case, personalised outreach and support by mentors or small group in-person learning groups may be more effective.
- **The effectiveness of technology or distance learning is contingent upon the context.** A case in point is the MEESA Report on Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19, which revealed that in Uganda, radio lessons, initially thought to be a cost-effective solution, were not as successful as anticipated. The limited access to radios among children and poor signal in some areas posed a significant challenge. Consequently, the project pivoted to a more localised approach, setting up small groups in each village where children could gather and receive support from caregivers.<sup>96</sup>
- **Being unable to charge devices or devices running out of battery.** There have been challenges with radios distributed to students running out of battery.<sup>97</sup> One possible solution is to distribute **solar chargeable devices.**
- **Distance learning sessions must be held at a convenient time for participants.** There was evidence that while participants were satisfied with radio interventions, there was room for improvement in scheduling sessions.<sup>98</sup> Better assessment of learners' and caregivers' availability can address the challenge.

<sup>93</sup> The role of education technology during and post the COVID-19 pandemic: recommendations for Plan International

<sup>94</sup> The MEESA Evaluation of Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021), SAGE (Zimbabwe, 2019-2023)

<sup>95</sup> GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), The MEESA Evaluation of Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021), and Play Matters (Rwanda, 2020-2021)

<sup>96</sup> The MEESA Evaluation of Adolescent Girls and Young Women's Continued Access to Education During COVID-19 (2020-2021)

<sup>97</sup> GATE-GEC (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021)

<sup>98</sup> For example, in the Play Matters (Rwanda, 2020-2021), only 43% (n=51) of respondents to the endline survey were very satisfied with the time the episodes were played, suggesting that there is room and potential for improvement, as respondents (caregivers and families) generally indicated that the radio episodes were very useful in learning about playful pedagogies to apply with children. In the GATE-GEC project (Sierra Leone, 2017-2021), covering the curriculum effectively was also challenging due to limited broadcast airtime availability.



Karelys migrated with his family from Venezuela to Peru

# Stronger together – Holistic and integrated approaches

## Nexus<sup>99</sup>

The Nexus approach refers to a strategy where interventions extend beyond immediate responses, such as providing cash grants or improving the learning environment, to ensure long-term education continuity. It also involves being prepared and responsive to changing circumstances, particularly in emergencies. **Adapting to changing contexts.** Often, this was achieved by training teachers in quality pedagogy and empowering communities to sustain the education outcomes beyond the immediate intervention of the programme. For example, in **Egypt**, the *TAWASOL project* (2018-2021) considered long-term development through sustainable actions by establishing **parenting circles, peace clubs, and education training** and providing temporary cash grants. The project's endline evaluation report notes, *'Teachers constitute the nexus of any sustainable education system transformation. Building upon existing teacher capacity is critical to successful teaching and learning, but it should also be the starting point for reconstituting the education system and supporting long-term changes.'*

**Provide immediate responses as well as elements of education continuity.** Some programme interventions in areas that had been affected by an emergency (natural disaster or conflict) went beyond the scope of the immediate



responses, combining immediate relief with initiatives to increase readiness for future disruptions, such as improving response measures and preparing teachers and the learning environment in case of a new disaster. In **Zimbabwe**, the *ZDRRM project* (2020-2021) aimed at ensuring timely response to rapid onset disasters, including the establishment of community and school-based child protection mechanisms, provision of temporary shelters, rebuilding of damaged infrastructure; long-term education responses such as training of teachers on psychosocial support, hazard mapping and school's vulnerability assessment, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse; and reporting protocols for all protection cases identified.

## Disaster risk management (DRM)

**Disaster risk management (DRM)** has a vital role in education continuity. Examples of DRM interventions included improving safe learning facilities to make schools safer - such as setting up Temporary Learning Centres (TLCs) that provide a safe and conducive learning environment in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, and Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) that cater to the emotional and psychological needs of children, adolescents, and youth -, food distribution, school, and dignity kits, community awareness raising, strengthening school disaster management systems, increasing knowledge/ changing attitudes among students, teachers, and school


99 Nexus refers to contexts where both humanitarian, development and peace-building work are relevant (Plan International ).



directors on risk reduction. Most programme interventions incorporated DRM interventions, which were largely effective in making schools more resilient and prepared for disasters. In **South Sudan**, the *Integrated Child Protection and Education Emergency Response Action (2019-2021)* aimed to improve children’s well-being while living in a conflict environment. Children’s resilience was supported through psychosocial intervention in child-friendly spaces. In **Venezuela** and **Peru**, the *Pasos Sostenibles project (2019-2021)* aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 as well as violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women by distributing food vouchers and implementing child protection in emergency (CPIE) activities.

**Interventions that integrated several aspects/dimensions of children’s, adolescents’, and youth’s lives**


**Interventions that integrated several aspects/dimensions** of children’s, adolescents’, and youth’s lives (e.g., education, hygiene, human rights, and financial skills) were not only crucial in ensuring that CAY continued to access education but also addressed other needs.


 The integration of **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)** in education programmes included the set-up of adolescent girls’ safe spaces to provide needs-based support on menstrual health management (MHM), gender-based violence (GBV), SRHR, CSE, child marriage, HIV, etc. For example, in **Zimbabwe**, the *18+ Ending Child Marriage project (2016-2019)* provided knowledge of SRHR. By the end of the project, most girls were aware of their sexual and reproductive rights and how HIV and other STIs are transmitted. The *MEESA Report on Adolescent Girls and Young Women’s continued access to education (2020-2021)* found that the integration of key supporting interventions, such as WASH and SRHR, is crucial to ensure that girls and young women continue to access learning.


 The integration of **Protection from Violence (PFV)** in education programmes included education staff and community groups being trained on the prevention of and response to child protection issues and GBV, establishing monitoring mechanisms to prevent trafficking, and creating safe spaces to promote child protection and awareness on school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). For example, in **Sierra Leone**, the *GATE-GEC project (2017-2021)* raised awareness about protection through radio programmes, community sensitisation activities, phone calls, posters, and during the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) meetings. In **Nepal**, the *Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Support project (2015-2017)* set up ‘check booths’ and provided training to monitor and prevent child trafficking in post-earthquake emergencies. These were said to be effective in preventing and reducing child trafficking. In **Ecuador**, the *Educando en Familia project (2019)* organised workshops to reduce intra-household violence and improve communication between parents and children.



Fethia, 13 years old, leads a discussion at her school on the dangers of child marriage, Ethiopia

 The integration of **Early Childhood Development (ECD)** in education programmes supported parents in adopting positive and active parenting approaches. In **Rwanda**, the *Play Matters at Home project (2020-2021)* aimed at empowering parents and ECD/ Early Childhood educators and caregivers to build solid foundations and ensured that children aged 3-6 development and learning continued during COVID-19. This was done by providing a ‘learning through play’ package and radio sessions. Interviewed parents noted they had been inspired by the package to come up with new ideas to develop new games for their children, alternating new games with those included in the package. The project’s findings show an increase in parents’ awareness of the critical role that play has in their children’s development. This also helped to change the common belief that adults should not play with children.<sup>100</sup>

 The integration of **Girls, Boys, and Youth as Active Drivers of Change - LEAD** in education outcomes has been consistently observed in young students developing skills to gain leadership positions, and independently self-organising to influence authorities’ decisions regarding education.

 The integration of **Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE)** in education programmes is explicit in **Ecuador’s** *Evaluación Intermedia de la Estrategia de País FY19-FY23: Las Niñas Lideran el Cambio*. The report shows that young people who received scholarships benefitted from training, and in many cases, became the first professionals in their families.

100 Additional resource showing the importance of play in children’s development Learning through Play (2012)



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More information on Plan International's IQE work is available at [Inclusive, quality education | Plan International \(plan-international.org\)](https://www.plan-international.org)

## About Plan International

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls worldwide. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion, and discrimination. And it is girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, adolescents, and youth, our supporters, and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until adulthood and enable them to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national, and global levels using our reach, experience, and knowledge. For 85 years, we have been building powerful partnerships for children and are active in over 80 countries.

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