

# Providing a quality education for Girls

**Senegal**



**PLAN**  
INTERNATIONAL

# Reducing the barriers to girls education in Senegal

## Final project report for Kaplan International Colleges

### The problem

Although education is compulsory and free up to the age of 16 in Senegal, 60% of children aged 5 to 14 years do not attend school. **The country's limited resources mean that the education system lacks the appropriate infrastructure and is unable to cope with the number of children that must enrol each year.** As a result, many school-age children miss out on a quality education.

**Girls find staying in school the hardest.** They face multiple pressures: they are required to stay at home to do housework, they are often forced to marry early, and, generally, people do not see girls' education as important compared to that of boys. Teaching practices sometimes reflect these attitudes and discriminate against girls, making it harder for them to achieve highly if they do manage to stay in school.



**Plan International UK and the Kaplan International Colleges have helped 1,000 girls get the education they need – improving their lives and the lives of future generations in their communities.**

### The project

This project aimed to benefit **1,000 girls across 16 schools** in St Louis. The project placed a special focus on improving education for girls, and has also benefited **12,000 community members** with the growth of an educated younger generation with increased skills and knowledge. The participating schools are a mix of primary and middle schools, involving children aged 9-16 from **St Louis**, in West Senegal.

Beneficiaries	
Girls attending extra classes	1,000
Teachers	98
Mothers	600
Boys as members of Gender Clubs	160
The wider student population	Over 9,000

*"I had trouble speaking in class, but since the reinforcement classes have begun, I feel more comfortable along with my girl friends. Today I feel really confident: the additional support we receive is very important"* - Angela, Student, Ross Bethio



# Girls Education

## Girls in School

Access to and completing a quality education remains a significant challenge for the majority of children in St Louis, Senegal. However, the situation is even worse for girls, who are more likely to be excluded from education. Drop outs and non-attendance are exacerbated by early pregnancies, domestic violence and cultural attitudes. While enrolment rates, particularly in primary school, are promising, completion rates are poor. Girls are disproportionately affected by this and are much more likely to drop out for economic and cultural reasons, such as early marriage. At the same time, children often have little or no say in their families' or school's decisions. Despite progress in establishing Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs), student associations that provide valuable learning experiences are rare at the primary or secondary level.

## What we have achieved

### End of grade exams

School inspectors and trainers from the Regional Centre for Professional Training of Teachers conducted a study tour of a number of schools participating in the project. The inspectorate measured the academic results of the girls from the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade from a sample of 3 middle schools and 1 elementary school from grade 1 and 2.

The end of grade exam results show a vast improvement in the pass rate from 2014 to 2015. Particularly impressive is the improvement in the number of 5<sup>th</sup> Grade girls passing their French exams – this jumped from just **19% in 2014 to 57% in 2015**. Overall, the percentage of girls that passed French and Maths across the schools measured increased from **29% to 47%**. **This is a huge achievement in just one year**. As these results are so encouraging, we are continuing to monitor the success of the project and will collect more data across the schools. These findings can then be used to influence future programming in the area.

The results are shown in the following table.

School	Percentage of students attaining the French pass mark				Percentage of students attaining the Maths pass mark			
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
	5th Grade		4th Grade		5th Grade		4th Grade	
Fass Ngom	23%	46%	67%	94%	0%	8%	2%	25%
Gandon	13%	28%	13%	46%	0%	9%	10%	0%
Tassinere	20%	96%	86%	93%	13%	17%	9%	16%
Khatete Elementary	2nd Grade		1st Grade		2nd Grade		1st Grade	
	50%	60%	33%	100%	40%	80%	80%	40%

### Ross Bethio school

The project also analysed more closely the attendance and retention at one of the participating schools - Ross Bethio School. Since the project began the following results have been noted:

- **The Drop-out rate for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade classes has decreased from 4.4% to 2.5% between 2012 and 2015.** This is the equivalent of three students at this school alone staying in education for another year and increasing their chances of having a successful future.
- **The Repetition rate (those repeating a grade) has decreased from 24% in 2012 to 17% in 2015.** This means that around 36 less students repeated a grade in 2015 compared to 2012, at this one school. These 36 students instead progressed into the next grade, increasing their likelihood of successfully completing school.

### Across St. Louis

The elementary examination pass rate increased from **40% in 2015** to **60% in 2016** (where girls comprised 60% of the entrants).

In the middle school entrance exams, the pass rate increased from **44% in 2015** to **54% in 2016** (girls represented 49% of entrants).

On the sample analysed the elementary pass rate of solely female entrants has increased by **10% across the region – to 79%.<sup>1</sup>**

When looking at the entire school population, there are of course a number of contributing factors to consider that fall outside of the scope of this project. **However, the Education Inspectorate were confident in remarking on the positive impact the project has had on examination results and retention rates in school.**

<sup>1</sup> This is based on the results of 3 elementary schools and 9 middle schools

## Voices from the project: Khady – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Ross-Bethio Middle School

Khady lives with her parents and four sisters – her two older sisters and her brother have moved out of the family home. Both of Khady’s parents are illiterate and work as farmers 6km away from their home. Khady’s family is very poor and farming is very important to the family’s livelihood. Khady will often accompany her father to assist in the maintenance of the fields or travel with him to market. She also often helps her mother with her work in the home.

Unfortunately, due to the family’s circumstances Khady has struggled to find time to study – and usually tries to find time to do this at school or after dinner at home. Before the project started Khady received very little help – **“I was alone in my studies, I had nobody to help me and I didn’t have good grades - I even failed a grade.”** Khady enrolled with the project in 2015 and has benefitted from the Maths and French reinforcement classes. Since then, she has seen an immediate improvement in her grades, with her French improving from Grade ‘C’ in the first half the semester to Grade ‘B+’ in the second half.

One of the main issues facing girls like Khady at school in Senegal is the negative attitude from many people in their communities towards their education – which this project is addressing through awareness raising and advocacy campaigns. This has been particularly welcome to Khady, whose parents have attended many of the events in the community and at the school and reflected on the positive impact this has had on her studies: **“my mother understood the importance of my education and has given me more time to study.”** This has allowed Khady to keep up her studies and she has subsequently passed her BFEM (middle school exam) and graduated to High School.

Khady is feeling very positive about her future, and has attributed a large part of her success to the project. She is also quick to thank her teachers and parents as well – as she realises girls’ education takes more than being present in a classroom.

**“I wish that other girls are given the same opportunity as me”**

## Activities delivered

**Goal One: Improve the quality of the schooling experience by improving infrastructure and community participation in school management**

### Construction of classrooms

Three schools were selected to benefit from **new classroom blocks** (one at Fass Ngom and one each at Ross Bethio Primary and Middle Schools). The classrooms provide a much needed secure space for classes to take place and the improved infrastructure is a major factor in enabling the schools to attract both teachers and students.



The classroom block at Fass Ngom

The construction included the **installation of two reading corners** with additional materials including books, textbooks, stationary and furniture to create an additional learning space for students. These are also being used by the students taking part in the reinforcement classes to study in a safe environment that is conducive to learning.

*“Each year the local education authorities have to spend money on shelters, but even then students were released from school as soon as the rains came. The project has greatly improved the school environment .” – Ms Aissata Sy, President, Santhiaba Ross Bethio School*

### Construction of latrines

**Three sex-separated latrines** have been constructed at Gnith, Kassack Nord and Ndiawdoune middle schools to ensure girls don't miss out on school during menstruation – which can cause girls without access to latrines to miss up to a week of school every month.

Sex-separated latrines mean that boys and girls can use appropriate, clean latrines without embarrassment. In Plan Senegal's experience schools that lack basic facilities also struggle to recruit or retain teachers, affecting the quality of teaching and learning.



**The sanitation block in Ndiawdoune School**

### School Management Committees

**16 School Management Committees** consisting of head teachers, teachers, parents and pupils **have been established** to ensure that project activities were properly implemented and that good practice is sustained now the project has finished. 112 members, including 36 women, were trained on relevant subjects including child protection, school management and monitoring of school goods and services to ensure the schools are well run in the future.

### Awareness campaigns

**16 awareness campaigns have been run with members of management bodies** in schools and communities to promote discussion on discrimination, violence against girls, domestic chores and children's rights. These focused on the fact that girls should be allowed - and encouraged - to stay in school and not to drop out due to lack of money to pay fees, domestic obligations or child marriage.

### Gender clubs

**Gender clubs** have been established in each school and have been trained on; leadership, advocacy and planning, life skills and good environmental practice. The training programmes reached 480 students who will now act as **peer-to-peer educators** and will cascade the training to their peer groups and classes.

The members from the 10 middle schools have been provided with additional training around **Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and family planning** and will now act as peer-to-peer educators. **Awareness campaigns** focusing on the reproductive health of teenagers were delivered in each middle

school and have focused on communication around sexually transmitted infections, AIDs, teenage pregnancies and menstrual cycles.

## **Goal Two: Improve the quality of teaching through improving teacher's skills and providing extra classes for girls**

### **Reinforcement courses**

**Reinforcement courses took place in all 16 schools for 1,000 girls.** The girls attended 3 hours of classes each week for 10 months and the attendance rate was excellent – over 90%. The project targeted the most vulnerable girls from the most vulnerable families and provided students with additional classes to ensure their base learning ability is comparable to their peer group. Part of the reinforcement class package was the provision of lunches to the students. This helped both the individual's ability to study and student retention as students and families don't have to worry about finding money for food. These classes contributed to the improvement in end of year exam results.

*"At the start of the project I could not read and it was the same with Maths – now it is the opposite – our situation has positively changed and I am no longer thinking about dropping out of school."* – **Monica, Student, Ross Bethio School**

### **Shared experiences**

**A 'twinning' activity has been held for the top performing 10 girls across the 6 middle schools with Guembuel College in Gandon.** The gender club guides – produced by Plan Senegal staff in collaboration with the schools during the project inception stage - were shared with the college and the girls had the chance to share common experiences and good practices around girls' education and child rights

### **Training head teachers**

**98 Teachers and School Heads have been trained on participatory teaching and gender sensitive teaching.** Participants were trained for three days on how to teach in a more participatory way that involves girls and boys in their own education, and how to avoid gender stereotyping in their teaching. They also learnt techniques to support girls and boys who need to catch up in French and Maths, which have been found to be the subjects that students most often fall behind in.

Teacher Training complements the messages communicated to the students and includes how to **approach gender and gender equality whilst managing their classrooms.**

## **Goal Three: Improve attendance and retention of girls in school by providing a more supportive educational environment – both in and out of school**

### **Shared learning**

We organised 5 days of **shared learning experiences** with teachers (98 in total) in 8 communities. Participants discussed the importance of girls' education, how girls are taught in the classroom and the best practices to ensure their full participation.

### **Community Watch Committees**

In conjunction with the Child Protection National Strategy, the project has established 109 Community Watch Committees designed to monitor girls' attendance and performance in school.

## Advocacy campaigns

Girls' Clubs in 16 schools have completed **5 joint advocacy campaigns in their local communities** of Ross Bethio, Bango, Guinaw Rail Fass Ngom, Maka-Diama and Ndiagambal.

These campaigns were based on guidelines developed by project partners to tackle deep-rooted negative cultural practices that result in discriminatory practices and impact on girls' education. The awareness and advocacy campaigns focused on discrimination, gender based violence, abuse of girls, child rights and exploitation; and targeted:

- Traditional Leaders
- Religious Chiefs
- Local Authorities
- Heads of Families
- Students
- Girls' Clubs

Alongside the core beneficiaries (1,000 girls and 160 boys) the project messaging has reached **7,854 children (3,516 girls and 4,338 boys) and 4,334 members of the community (2,000 females and 2,334 males).**

## Radio broadcasts

We organised **20 community radio broadcasts** on girls' education and child rights. The project worked with *Sud FM Radio* over a period of six months and broadcasted positive messaging around girls' education and child rights.

As part of the wider awareness raising and advocacy campaigns, **8 radio programs were hosted by representatives from the Girls' Clubs.** The girls' broadcasts on the radio provided an opportunity to directly connect an authentic voice to the rest of the community and further reinforced the positive messaging of the project around discrimination, gender based violence, abuse of girls, child rights and exploitation.

## Days of Excellence

Celebratory **Days of Excellence** were held to honour the best performing girls on the project (based on grades and school attendance). These were held in 3 locations and 78 girls were provided with school bags, school supplies and a certificate. The days of excellence were public events and provided an important opportunity to allow the local community to understand the project's objectives and successes.



**A student receiving her prize during a Day of Excellence in Gandon**

## Improved community participation:

- 16 community meetings on the importance of girls' education were conducted through the local education authority and reached approximately 1,500 people (60% female)
- 8 planning meetings for the advocacy and awareness raising campaigns were held at the community level between community leaders, parents and children reaching 168 people (120 males, 48 females)
- 200 school pupils took part in the Ndiawdoun School Conference - addressing themes of prevention of violence against young girls and female school drop outs

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The project was monitored and evaluated in partnership with children, community members and our local partners. Children, parents, teachers and the School Management Committees conducted routine monitoring with support from Plan staff and the District Education Inspectorate Department. The Inspectorate of Education and Training organised four training sessions for gender clubs, teachers, facilitators and implementation groups – reinforcing their monitoring visits and oversight of project delivery.

Due to the success of this project, we are carrying out an additional external evaluation to provide us with more data on the improvements across the schools. This will enable us to evaluate the ongoing impact this type of work can have, and will help to inform our future projects in Senegal and across additional countries where Plan International operates. This will come to a total cost of £5,005 and will take place over two months. We would be delighted to share the results of this with Kaplan International Colleges once it is complete.

## Sustainability

Partnership agreements have been signed between the School Management Teams and teachers in order to promote sustainability of extra tutoring courses. In particular, the agreements focus on strengthening stakeholder's knowledge of child rights and protection, and school management.

A project partner – the Federations of Village Associations for Saving and Credit (FAVEC) – a network of female teachers in St. Louis - and the community committees have signed a protocol that ensures the sustainability of activities. This includes: continued material support for girls in school – including a mentorship program, monitoring of performance of girls in school and use of the reading corners, and to provide support to community-level advocacy efforts.

## Learning

The results detailed above demonstrate a marked improvement in the target schools amongst the beneficiaries of the project. However – Maths, although showing noticeable improvements, remains a weakness amongst the students in all 16 schools. The local education authorities, who have been heavily involved in project implementation, are well aware of the student's performance and will continue to monitor the girls' progress in Maths and lend support to additional reinforcement classes where necessary.

Challenges remain in getting the poorest children to school and children falling behind during holidays, as they are involved in livelihood generating activities with their parents and can fall behind in their study. This is an ongoing and persistent issue the project has begun addressing and, in conjunction with the project partners (most notably the local education authorities and the school management structures), will continue to monitor after project implementation. A strength of Plan International's approach is that we continue to work in the same communities and so will be able to continue tackling these problems. It is projects like this one that contribute to this approach to create a lasting change.

## Budget

The kind donation of £75,823.48 from Kaplan International Colleges will be spent in full on project activities following the completion of the additional evaluation, and the project's original activities have now been completed to schedule and budget. Please note, not all payments have been internally processed yet, therefore some items are currently showing lower amounts than have actually been spent.

Project budget	Budget	Spent
<b>Improved attendance and retention of girls in school by providing a more supportive educational environment – both in and out of school</b>		
• Materials and resources for gender clubs and girls' education campaign	£17,946	£15,430
• Setting up Community Watch Committees	£1,681	£1,257
• Awareness-raising campaigns on tackling discrimination against girls	£11,675	£8,526
	<b>£31,302</b>	<b>£25,213</b>
<b>Improved the quality of teaching through improving teacher's skills and providing extra classes for girls</b>		
• Tutors' allowance and teacher training on effective methodologies and learning exchange visits	£18,348	£14,252
• Exchange visits between schools for girls and school events promoting female role models	£3,871	£3,074
• Extra classes and academic support for girls falling behind	£3,252	£2,661
• Allowances for Community Development Facilitators	£3,226	£463
	<b>£28,697</b>	<b>£20,450</b>
<b>Improving the quality of the schooling experience by improving infrastructure and community participation in school management</b>		
• Construction of classrooms and provision of equipment	£24,194	£16,115

• Construction of gender separated latrines	£11,613	£9,149
• Establishing school reading corners	£2,689	£2,228
• Teaching and learning materials, including text books, pens and hygiene handbooks	£6,606	£5,635
• Training of School Management Committees, Parent and Teacher Associations and developing school action plans	£9,605	£9,219
• Training on hygiene and environmental education, reproductive health and literacy	£5,161	£1,012
	<b>£59,868</b>	<b>£43,358</b>

## Monitoring and Evaluation

• Situational analysis, project monitoring and mid-term and final evaluation	£8,745	£8,365
• Additional Evaluation	£5,005	£0
	<b>£13,750</b>	<b>£8,365</b>

## Operation Costs

• Plan Senegal Project Coordinator staff costs	£24,640	£15,657
• Programme management and coordinating costs in Senegal	£11,421	£10,013
• Plan UK partnership support costs	£18,297	£18,297
	<b>£54,358</b>	<b>£43,967</b>

<b>Total project costs</b>	<b>£187,975</b>	<b>£141,352</b>
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