

International Day of the Girl 2017



#GirlsTakeover with Diplomatic Missions with Plan India

A Brief Report

Background

To commemorate International Day of the Girl, Plan India, in collaboration with the Delegation of the European Union to India, High Commission of Canada in India and other Diplomatic Missions, provided an excellent opportunity to girls from Plan India's communities to claim powerful positions for a day by stepping into the roles of Ambassadors and High Commissioners in New Delhi on October 11.

Twenty one girls from Plan India's communities, after multiple levels of screening process, took over 10 Embassies and High Commissions in the capital, including the Delegation of the European Union to India, Embassies of Spain, Sweden, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Slovenia, France, USA and High Commissions of South Africa and New Zealand, shadowing global change makers, convening high level meetings and working with mission staff. This initiative is in continuation with Plan India's ongoing efforts to break down barriers of discrimination that continue to hold girls back in society by supporting greater opportunities for girls and celebrating their power and potential. The High Commissions of Canada and Britain were taken over by girls from outside the Plan community.

#GirlsTakeover: Who took over whom?

Names of Embassies/High Commissions and Ambassadors /High Commissioners	Ambassador/High Commissioner for a Day
Delegation of the European Union to India: Tomasz Kozlowski, Ambassador of the European Union to India	Neha Siddiqui
The Embassy of the Czech Republic: Milan Hovorka, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to India	Shikha Mehta
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands: Alphonsus Stoelinga, Ambassador of the Netherlands to India	Sonia Sharma
New Zealand High Commission: Joanna Kempkers, High Commissioner of New Zealand to India	Madhuja Nigam
High Commission of South Africa: France K Morule, High Commissioner of South Africa to India	Reeya Prajapati
Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia: Jožef Drogenik, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Slovenia	Antara Wats
Embassy of Spain: José Ramón Barañano, Ambassador of Spain to India	Neha Manjhi
Embassy of Sweden: Gautam Bhattacharyya, Charge d' Affaires	Vidhi Dawane
Embassy of the United States of America: MaryKay Carlson, Charge d' Affaires	Heena Praveen
Embassy of France: Alexandre Ziegler, Ambassador of France to India	Babita

Canadian High Commission: Nadir Patel, High Commissioner of Canada to India	Deboleena Dutta
British High Commission: Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG, British High Commissioner to India	Rudrali Patil

The Takeovers

Twenty one girls took over the embassies from 8.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The 'Girl Ambassador' and 'Advocate' were assisted by key Plan India staff to their respective takeover. Through the takeovers, the girls met with key members of their missions, held meetings, interacted with mission staff, shared insights on gender discrimination and gained knowledge of embassy functions and key feminist policies.

Excerpt from EU's Twitter handle @EUinIndia



Neha, Divya and Ekta are ready for #GirlsTakeover as they are briefed over duties as Ambassador and Deputy Ambassadors. The girls are ready to #Thrive, #Inspire and #Succeed

Excerpt from Sweden's Twitter handle @SwedeninIndia

Ambassador takeover by Vidhi Dawane leading important discussion on girls empowerment #IDG2017 #GirlsTakeOver #DelhiEmbassies4girls #fempol



Excerpt from NZ'a Twitter handle @NZinIndia

Thanks .@Plan_India and .@CanadainIndia for leading the organisation of today's event for #IDG2017! #GirlsTakeover

Quotes on the Takeovers

“I believe that girls can do everything, but they need the support of everyone around to break down barriers that stop them from achieving. The ‘Girls’ Takeover’ initiative will help build the confidence of girls like me to chase their dreams and aspire to change the world around them,”
Babita, 18 years from New Delhi

“Through the takeovers and by occupying spaces and places where they are rarely seen or heard, girls will seek to highlight the challenges they face and represent their power and determination to build a more equal world that values girls and promotes their rights.”
Bhagyashri Dengle, Executive Director, Plan India

“Gender inequality is not confined to a country, it’s a phenomenon across the world.” Tomasz Kozlowski, Ambassador of the European Union to India



Joanna Kempkers, High Commissioner of New Zealand shared, “I had been tweeting about the takeovers from my handle, because it is very important that all of us further the cause for girls’ rights and movement.”

“As a woman I am capable of doing anything, I come from a conservative background and my relatives will not understand the importance of these celebrations,” shared Neha Siddiqui, European Union, Girl Ambassador

@JKempkersNZ: I've been replaced! Meet Madhuja Nigam NZ High Commissioner for today. #GirlsTakeover @PlanGlobal #WomenEmpowerment

Main Event

After the takeovers were completed, celebrations moved to The Ashok Hotel, New Delhi where International Day of the Girl was marked by all the girls who led the takeovers and their counterparts in the Diplomatic Missions. Out of the 250 participants, there were representatives of diplomatic missions, civil society members, corporate partners, media persons and over 150 youth from Plan India’s communities across New Delhi.



Neha, Ekta and Divya at the EU office in New Delhi as part of the #GirlsTakeover

The event began with Ms. Aafreen Khatoon who took over the position of Ms. Bhagyashri Dengle, Executive Director, Plan India, formally handing over her duties to Bhagyashri. This



Delegates at the event with messages on girls' rights

was followed by the release of the research report, **Unlock the Power of Girls Now**, by Surina Narula, Plan India Patron, Minty Pande, Plan India Treasurer and Madhukar Kamath, Plan India Board Member. The report undertaken by Plan International in Spain, Uganda and Colombia, clearly demonstrates that gender inequality is still very much part of the fabric of our society and that the key to equality is to challenge the widespread perception that girls are worth less than boys.

Following the release of the report, an interactive chat session was held, moderated by Madhukar Kamath, wherein the Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Girl Ambassadors from the 12 Diplomatic Missions and the 12 Girl Ambassador/High Commissioner counterparts shared their experiences, insights and thoughts on the gender equality and other issues that plague the lives of girls.

Summing up the intensive interactive chat session, “The articulation of the panel and the emphasis on gender discrimination shows that we still have miles to go,” said Madhukar Kamath, who was the moderator of the session.

For the girls, the takeovers and the interactive session were an enriching experience. “We spoke about gender neutrality, divorce and the stigma around it, reservations for women...the Ambassador discussed triple talaq with us. I found that wage gap is very low in Slovenia,” shared Deeksha Sharma, Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, Girl Ambassador.

Link to image gallery:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/PlanIndiaNGO/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1455942074491965

The Interactive Art Installation



A part of the art installation at the event

Plan India engaged with renowned artists Ela and Prashanta Mukherjee to create an interactive art installation displayed at the event, through which the youth, delegates and champions were invited to express their notions on gender discrimination, vulnerability and inequality. The installation featured a 42 foot long running canvas covered in the artwork of youth from Plan India’s communities, depicting gender and their aspirations for an equal world. The installation was an avenue created by Plan India for gender advocacy and expression. It was designed such that it could be split into 12 panels, one

for each Diplomatic Mission, to commemorate International Day of the Girl and their support for girls’ rights.

Media Coverage

A joint press statement was released by the embassies and Plan India on the eve of International Day of the Girl.

A joint press release was drafted and released post the event.

Link: <https://www.planindia.org/press-release-girls-takeover-ambassadors-mark-international-day-girl>

In all, 20 articles including print and online media were published on the event and takeovers.

Online Coverage

- **The Times of India:** <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/on-a-mission-23-girls-become-ambassadors-for-a-day/articleshow/61043732.cms>
- **The Indian Express:** <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/when-23-girls-took-over-12-embassies-on-international-day-of-girl-child-4886008/>
- **DNA:** <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-teens-take-over-embassies-on-international-girl-child-day-2552194>
- **The Statesman:** <http://www.thestatesman.com/india/international-day-girl-child-girls-take-diplomatic-missions-capital-1502509606.html>
- **The India Saga:** <http://theindiasaga.com/social-sector/diplomatic-missions-in-india-champion-the-cause-of-girls-on-girl-child-day>
- **The Quint:** <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/international-day-of-girl-child-embassies-give-up-seats-to-girls>
- **The Indian Express:** (Pre-event)- <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/international-day-of-the-girl-child-today-underprivileged-girls-to-step-in-for-11-diplomats-4884431/>
- **The Tribune (Pre-event):** <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/21-underprivileged-girls-on-diplomatic-mission/480363.html>
- **PTI (Pre-event):** http://www.ptinews.com/news/9143272_Delhi-women-to-don-role-of-diplomats-for-a-day.html
- **India Today (Pre-event):** <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/delhi-women-to-don-role-of-diplomats-for-a-day/1/1065940.html>
- **Business Standard (Pre-event):** http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/delhi-women-to-don-role-of-diplomats-for-a-day-117101001328_1.html
- **Outlook India (Pre-event):** <https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/delhi-women-to-don-role-of-diplomats-for-a-day/1164983>

Social Media



A social media creative designed for #GirlsTakeover

Hashtags used: #GirlsTakeover #IDG2017 #DayoftheGirl #DayoftheGirl #Girls4Embassies

Campaign period: Oct 3-12

A robust social media campaign was designed for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It was coupled with GIFs, videos, graphics and albums. Plan India also partnered with Women's Web, an online news portal to further scale-up the campaign.

Social Media	No. of Posts	New Followers	Reach/Impressions
Facebook	39	564	183,677/237,617
Twitter	68	40	25,400
Instagram	15	20	-

All the 12 mission delegations tagged @Plan_India in all posts and tweets, which we leveraged by retweeting and re-posting.

Way Forward

Plan India will leverage the momentum and continue building fruitful relationships with the missions in India and the Government. The work on gender advocacy will continue through various smaller events, meetings and workshops. This is expected to bolster Plan India's efforts towards policy influence as well as potential funding opportunities, so also contributing to the organisational mission to positively impact the lives of 10 million girls.