

# The school improvement program



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# The school improvement towards accountable and quality

Plan is an independent child centred organisation working with and for children, their families and communities in 45 countries across the world. Ensuring children realise their right to an education is a key aspect of this work and the school improvement program is an important means of supporting primary schools.

## What is the school improvement program?

‘School improvement’ means making schools better places for learning. This relies on changes at both school level and within classrooms, which in turn depend on schools being committed to fulfilling the expectations of children and their parents. In other words, school improvement refers to a systematic approach that improves the quality of schools.

The school improvement program is a Plan-initiated education program based on our long experience of supporting basic education in the developing world. Its aims are:

- to ensure support to every aspect of a school essential in creating the best learning environment for children
- to promote the active participation of children and communities in school governance
- to hold the individual school management accountable for children’s enrolment, attendance, learning and successful completion

## What is the background to the school improvement program?

In 2001, Plan began drafting basic guidelines for the school improvement program, by taking in to consideration the lessons learned from supporting basic education programs in different regions of the world. These were then adapted and developed and each interested country where Plan has a presence selected 10 primary schools to pilot the program. Today, 20 countries are already implementing the school improvement program in hundreds of primary schools across Africa, Asia and the Americas.

# ment program

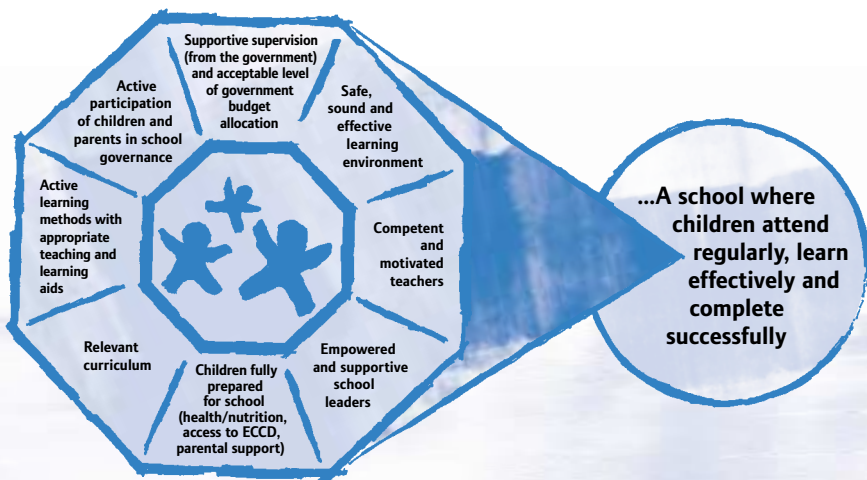
## schools


### What are the core elements of the school improvement program?

The school improvement program aims to support schools in addressing the following key areas:

- ensuring teachers are competent and motivated
- promoting active learning methods supported by appropriate teaching and learning aids
- promoting the active participation of children and parents in school governance
- ensuring a safe, sound and effective learning environment
- establishing a relevant curriculum
- ensuring that children are properly prepared for school (which includes ensuring good health and nutrition, access to early childhood care and development [ECCD] and the support of parents)
- ensuring empowered and supportive school leaders
- advocating for supportive supervision (from the government) and an acceptable level of government budget allocation

Each of these areas is equally important; if any are weak, the strength and therefore the success of the whole will be affected.





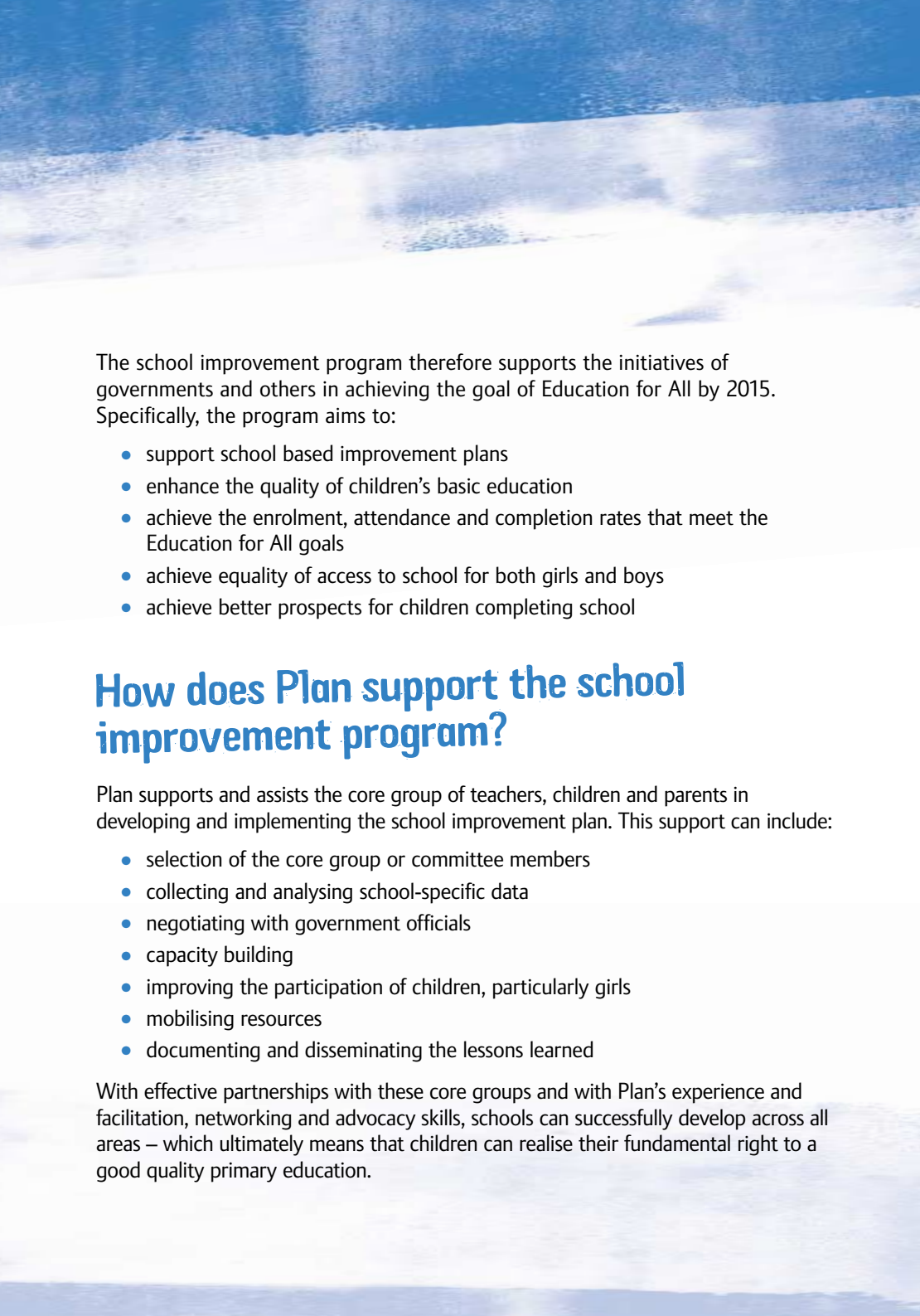
A core group of teachers, children and parents in each school develops and implements its own plan to address all these areas. These plans are based on the current situation of the school in terms of levels of enrolment, attendance, achievement in basic skills and completion. Each plan includes measurable targets and a timetable for monitoring and reporting.

## Why the school improvement program?

Plan's support to basic education is significant and consistent. In areas where Plan works, the infrastructures of schools have improved considerably. However, in many countries, the number of girl students, rates of attendance, reading, writing and numeracy levels of children and the active participation of children and communities in school governance are far from the expectations of communities and Plan.

Plan's long experience has shown that school quality cannot be achieved through more conventional support where schools simply request inputs without being required to demonstrate specific improvements in organisation, functioning and governance. Equally, real improvement in a school requires the genuine cooperation and meaningful participation of children, communities, teachers and head teachers.

This is why an approach whereby schools identify all their basic needs, and work to secure the human and financial resources from a range of sources to meet those needs, is so important. The school improvement program offers this approach and therefore increases the probability of all key stakeholders achieving the objectives they have set between them.



The school improvement program therefore supports the initiatives of governments and others in achieving the goal of Education for All by 2015. Specifically, the program aims to:

- support school based improvement plans
- enhance the quality of children's basic education
- achieve the enrolment, attendance and completion rates that meet the Education for All goals
- achieve equality of access to school for both girls and boys
- achieve better prospects for children completing school

## How does Plan support the school improvement program?

Plan supports and assists the core group of teachers, children and parents in developing and implementing the school improvement plan. This support can include:

- selection of the core group or committee members
- collecting and analysing school-specific data
- negotiating with government officials
- capacity building
- improving the participation of children, particularly girls
- mobilising resources
- documenting and disseminating the lessons learned

With effective partnerships with these core groups and with Plan's experience and facilitation, networking and advocacy skills, schools can successfully develop across all areas – which ultimately means that children can realise their fundamental right to a good quality primary education.

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