

Canada and equality between women and men – the results

To have a voice. To have a choice.

Safety net catches vulnerable girls in Kenya

The outlook for girls in Kenya has become much brighter, thanks to a nationwide database called the Girl Child Network.

Created by CARE Canada as part of its Girl Child Program, and funded in part by a \$322,000 grant from the Government of Canada, the network coordinates information from hundreds of non-governmental organizations, community groups, and government ministries working to save vulnerable girls.

In Kenya, life can be difficult and dangerous for girls, who are often forced to stay at home to care for their younger siblings and the household while their brothers go to school. Rape and physical abuse are common as are traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and early forced marriage.

“If a girl comes to a shelter because she was being beaten but then disappears again, the database allows us to follow up,” says Samuel Adol, project manager for the Girl Child Program. “Once we have a record of them, these girls will not simply be forgotten or get lost in the system if they leave a shelter.”

The Girl Child Program has already had a dramatic impact. For instance, the network was instrumental in the enactment of the Government of Kenya’s Children’s Act, a bill designed to protect the rights of children, particularly girls. In addition, 6 members of the Girl Child Network accompanied 12 Kenyan children to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in New York, ensuring Kenyan voices are heard in the worldwide fight for children’s rights.



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The Girl Child Program has also incorporated many hard-won gains and helped implement a comprehensive, nationwide policy that ensures that the protection of girls and young women is a priority for Kenya.



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