
4 Country summaries

4.1 Country summary: India

4.1.1 Impact on soft skills

Goal graduates identified key changes as a result of programme participation that underpinned gains in other areas, including:

- increased self-confidence
- enhanced communication skills
- increased decision-making ability
- development of leadership skills.

Together these changes enabled girls to identify their goals, believe in their abilities, confidently express themselves, and take action to realise their aspirations. Goal graduates learnt that they have the *right to make decisions about their own life*; many reported negotiating with and convincing their parents to allow them to go out with friends, complete their education or choose the career they want, though others reported limited influence over key decisions that affect them.

Earlier I was very shy and didn't speak much. But during our sessions with Didi (coach), she taught us about opening up and voicing our thoughts. Slowly I started talking and sharing . . . I developed a certain confidence which I didn't have earlier.
Goal graduate, Thane

Peer leaders and community sports coaches also learnt and practised *leadership skills*, such as understanding, supporting and convincing others. In some schools, coaches and peer leaders designed and implemented projects to improve the school environment – for instance, organising a campaign for garbage problems or poor toilet hygiene.

31% of Goal graduates reported taking up a leadership role in their school or community, compared with 20% of girls just starting with Goal.

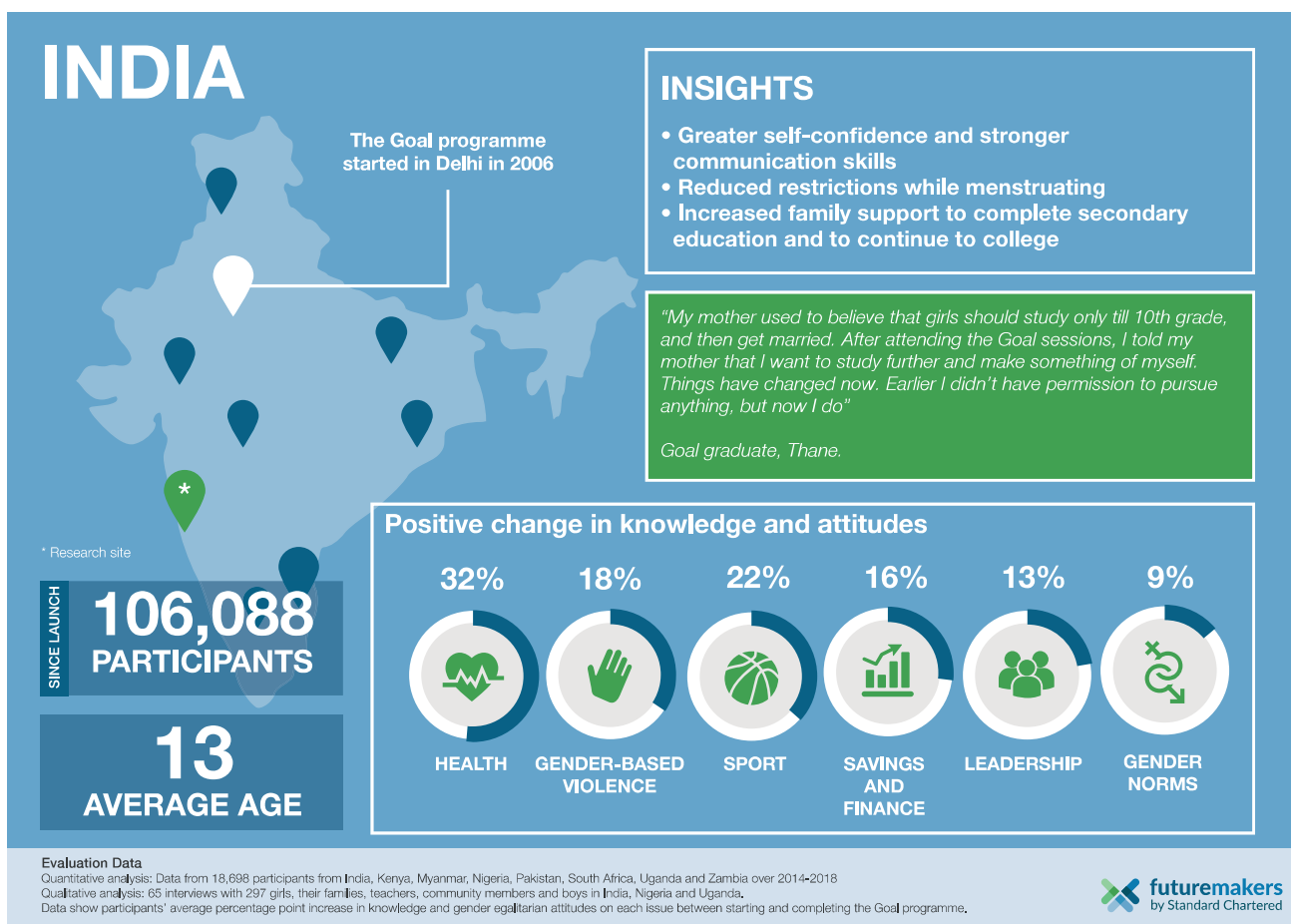
Girls also identified the importance of having role models whom they look up to. They included their parents, especially mothers, and other relatives with successful careers, famous male athletes and their Goal coaches.

4.1.2 Impact on girls' education

Girls highlighted the following key impacts of Goal participation on their education:

- **increased class participation** and confidence to ask and answer questions
- **improved time management and study skills**, which enabled most coaches to manage work and study responsibilities
- **development of aspirations for higher education** and increased ability to negotiate to achieve their goals
- **greater ability to pay their own and siblings' educational costs** from their stipends and salaries (coaches)
- **access to careers advice.**

In the past 2 years I have observed many changes in Goal participants. Earlier, many girls in this school were getting married by 10th grade. Now, our girls are developing aspirations for further studies, 12th and beyond. . . . Girls have started expressing their desire to continue studying and to work in private companies.
Teacher, Thane



4.1.3 Impact on girls' economic empowerment

The key impacts on economic empowerment mentioned by Goal graduates in India were:

- **Improved financial knowledge and increased savings:** specifically, spending pocket money more wisely on daily personal needs such as travel to school, food, books or sanitary pads and saving the rest; saving for specific goals such as bicycle repairs or new clothes; and, in the case of community sports coaches, funding college fees and contributing to household needs.
- **Development of aspirations for a career and economic independence:** community sports coaches and other coaches highlighted the work opportunities and the valuable career guidance that Goal had offered them; other participants spoke of how Goal had helped them think about the careers they wanted to pursue, and had increased their determination to be financially independent.

After I participated in Goal, I decided that I want to become independent, earn my own money and only then think of marriage. It will be difficult for my mother to spend money for my marriage and I don't want to burden her. . . . I also want to support my younger sister financially.
Goal graduate, Mumbai

4.1.4 Impact on girls' health

Girls identified positive changes in:

- **hygiene and body care,** including treating sports injuries
- **menstruation,** such as understanding that menstruation is a natural process that should not embarrass them or restrict their activities, including playing sports; the need to stay clean during menstruation and regularly change their pad or menstrual cloth; and challenging traditional restrictions, such as confinement

at home or exclusion from cooking, visiting the temple, or touching certain foods. Goal participants had shared this knowledge with female family members, in some cases changing their mothers' behaviour too

- **fitness**, from understanding the importance of physical exercise to eating more healthily
- **mental health**, related to greater understanding and acceptance of bodily changes, and less embarrassment about body image, including among overweight girls who gained the confidence to play sports through Goal. Participants also mentioned that playing netball helps reduce stress.

4.1.5 Impact on gender-based violence

Goal graduates reported:

- **increased understanding of gender-based violence**, such as recognising good and bad touches, and understanding their right to say 'no'
- **increased knowledge of sources of support**, including the police
- **increased ability to take action when facing violence**, at home, in public spaces, and on public transport. Interviewees mentioned four instances where coaches had taken action to help girls facing physical violence or sexual harassment
- boy graduates stressed that they had learnt through Goal that violence against girls is wrong and unacceptable behaviour.

4.1.6 Impact on gender norms

The girls we interviewed and their families identified the following changes in their own beliefs and behaviour:

- **increased mobility**: to netball practice, tournaments, to shopping malls with friends. Community sports coaches also mentioned visiting public institutions such as banks and shops, and using public transport alone
- **less control over girls' dress codes**: more acceptance of jeans and sports clothing
- **greater acceptance of girls' right to complete education and choose marriage partner**
- **greater acceptance of male–female friendships** and rejection of the view that they are a risk to girls' honour and to family honour.

Earlier, girls were often forced into marrying early. But now I have the freedom to pursue my dreams and until then I won't get married. Now I have the willpower to convince my parents, and I did.

Goal graduate, Thane

4.1.7 What hasn't changed?

- **Girls still face more restrictions than their brothers**, particularly in terms of their mobility. This affects their leisure time, their ability to participate in sports for which they need to travel, and for some of the community sports coaches, the distance they can travel to work.
- **Girls are still expected to do more household chores than their brothers**, despite some girls negotiating for equal distribution of chores.
- **Girls still face perceptions that they are less capable and can achieve less than boys**, though there are signs that empowered Goal participants are also seen as role models in their communities, to boys as well as girls.