



## Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA): Empowering Girls to Learn and Lead

### About Power to Lead Alliance

PTLA, a three-year public-private partnership built on a broad base of collaboration between CARE, USAID, civil society organizations (CSOs) and private sector partners, aimed to create, strengthen, and scale-up diverse leadership opportunities for girls in vulnerable communities across six different countries, particularly through extra-curricular activities, social networks, and civic action.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Cultivate opportunities for girls to practice their leadership skills;
2. Create partnerships to promote girls' leadership;
3. Enhance knowledge to implement and promote girls' leadership programs.

### STRATEGIES

PTLA's work for girls' empowerment is based on CARE's Women's Empowerment Framework, which asserts that three interactive dimensions of empowerment – agency, supportive relations, and structures – must be addressed to sustain transformative outcomes for the well-being of girls, boys, and women. According to this framework, PTLA developed the following strategies to accomplish its mission:

#### Establishing Community Acceptance and Support

Across the six PTLA countries, girls were limited in their access to school and activities outside their homes. Working with communities to create safe and participatory environments for girls and boys to learn and develop leadership skills was central to the initiative. CARE built community awareness and acceptance of girls' participation through extracurricular and leadership-building activities, which laid a foundation for girls to develop their own voices.

#### Implement and Promote Leadership Programs

PTLA's leadership programs focused on developing five leadership competencies:

1. **Confidence:** Believing in herself, overcoming shyness to speak in public.
2. **Voice and Assertion:** Articulate thoughts and make decisions, has her own voice, knows she has the right to an opinion, able to ask questions, and be critical and assertive.
3. **Decision Making and Action:** A sense that her decisions matter in her own life, can solve problems, can create opportunities for herself; believes that in acting on her decisions she can influence both her destiny and that of others.
4. **Organization:** Able to organize herself to achieve her goals; able to take something from an idea to a final product. Observed through civic action, planning public events, and organizing community activities.
5. **Vision and Ability to Motivate Others:** Able to bring people together to accomplish something, to direct how to translate an idea into a practical result, to play an active social role in the community.

#### Program Name:

The Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA):  
Empowering Girls to Learn and Lead

#### Program Countries:

Egypt, India, Malawi, Tanzania,  
Yemen and Honduras

**Timeframe:** Sept. 2008-Sept. 2011

**Budget:** US\$ 3,699,709

**Donor:** USAID

#### Beneficiaries:

#### Egypt

**6,754 girls, 5,500 boys**

Girls' participation in the civic arena appears to have improved. Some girls even competed for student union president and vice president.

#### Tanzania

**5,957 girls, 357 boys**

Girls became highly involved with organizing activities and public events, such as lobbying at community meetings.



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## India

14,624 girls, 9,332 boys

Girls initiated public discussions about illegal practice of early marriage and there was an increase in freedom of movement for girls in villages.

## Honduras

2391 girls, 2239 boys

## Yemen

3,867 girls, 3,519 boys

Boys have become more accepting of their sisters attending school, and have even reported doing homework together.

Community attitudes are changing, as more girls are participating in extracurricular activities than ever before.

## Malawi

19,269 girls, 19,225 boys



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## Cultivate Opportunities for Girls to Practice Leadership Skills

PTLA provided many diverse opportunities for girls to build and practice leadership skills. These generally fell into the following categories: sports, health, arts and drama, debate, music, youth council and boards, life skills groups, academic clubs, scouts, awareness campaigns, environment work, and classroom support.

Through participation, girls were able to hone their leadership competencies. Peer networks provided mutual support and safe spaces to express ideas while teaching girls how to resolve conflicts, deal with setbacks, and become more accepting of others. Girls' groups were also encouraged to exercise their leadership skills through voluntary civic action in their communities. Girls exercised their new found confidence and voice to advocate for their rights and the rights of others in public community forums, in meetings with government leaders and over the radio.

## Supportive Relations

Community members', parents', and youth's perceptions of gender roles tended to restrict girls' involvement. Supportive relationships where girls had teachers, coaches, mentors, peer leaders, family members, community leaders, and peers encourage them to participate in school or CARE activities proved to be one of the biggest support factor for girls' leadership development.

## Create Partnerships to Promote Girls' Leadership

By convening PTLA partners on a regular basis, the project sought to strengthen learning, sharing and replication of project successes. In each of the six countries, PTLA engaged partners at multiple levels - national, regional, and local. National government agencies, women's rights groups, and universities supported the projects and advocated for the girls. On the local level, PTLA worked with local government structures, community organizations, and community members to gain acceptance, remove barriers, and advocate for girls' rights to participate and express themselves.

## Enhance Knowledge to Implement and Promote Girls' Leadership Programs

Throughout the project, CARE developed strategic partnerships with peer organizations to share emerging knowledge and research concerning girls' leadership development. By creating a common framework of analysis, and encouraging innovative approaches across the six countries, PTLA added to current literature and learning about girls' leadership. In 2010-2011, CARE expanded use of PTLA's girl leadership model to 16 additional CARE country offices implementing girls' education programs, each of which is exploring ways to incorporate the model into existing and future programming with young adolescent girls.

## RESULTS

Building leadership on a foundation of education was the right choice. Schools provided a physical structure in which to launch activities, and a staffing and resource framework that both accelerated and supported leadership projects. Participation in leadership projects within the school environment enhanced girls' educational performance, attendance and retention. Additionally, a variety of partners—including community-based organizations—added breadth and variety, and more firmly connected activities to the girls' local communities.

PTLA demonstrated that girls, boys, parents and leaders can participate in and progressively work toward girls' empowerment. To learn more, check out [Girls' Leadership Development in Action: CARE's Experience from the Field](#) report.

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