

**5** GENDER  
EQUALITY

## Women empowering women

**Vandinika Shukla, 24, India**

Vandinika went to the Lady Shri Ram College in New Delhi and her hard work and excellent results allowed her to enrol and acquire a Masters Degree at the London School of Economics. Still, 85% of Indian girls don't get access to any school education. Vandinika decided to make it her mission to empower other Indian women and girls. She wants to do anything that's in her power to give them the same opportunities that she had. "I believe that education is key to make a real change happen," she says confidently.

Soon, Vandinika started to explore the question of how gender connects to education, and began to be involved in a series of campaigns to promote a gender responsive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in national as well as state policies all over India.

In 2016, she was selected to be one of the Young Leaders for the European Development Days (EDD) thanks to her work as Head of Project Enable, an initiative that she herself started already during her college years, to promote educational programmes for Indian girls. Her final goal is to eliminate inequalities, make schools more accessible and empower high school children. Thanks to her dedication and commitment, the project has already had an impact on more than 100 children in over 15 schools.

Vandinika returned to EDD in 2017 moderating her very own panel, “Transforming Mindsets: 2030 Youth Agenda for Sustainable Development”. She now works with UN Women on gender equality issues across 65 UN bodies. Recently she has been appointed as a SDGs expert to the European Union.

“Empowering young women to be bold and fearless in assuming leadership will transform the fabric of our society; because those young women represent 3.5 billion opportunities for change. The EDD gave me a chance to take this message directly to global leaders and provide interventions on how policy decisions for the SDGs can be more inclusive and innovative. I am determined to influence long-lasting change for young women's participation in leadership and decision-making. I'm excited that my work at UN Women helps me bring together different actors in pushing for UN-system wide and government accountability for gender equality and the SDGs.”



Vandinika Shukla on the ground (Project Enable)



Vandinika Shukla with other participants of the Project Enable



Vandinika Shukla at EDD 2017 - own panel discussion