

Your Plan



Until we are all equal

Our Plan, Your Impact, Her Future

Autumn Newsletter 2024



See inside:

- How you're helping to make child marriage a thing of the past
- Your role in ending period poverty
- Helping girls say no to gender-based violence

Thanks to you, Lena, 12, spends her days at our child-friendly space forging friendships and recovering from the traumas of war

Hello, it's Paul here, CEO with Plan International Ireland

I couldn't let this newsletter go out without expressing my deepest thanks for the compassion and generosity you continue to show to so many. It's difficult to put into words the profound impact your support has in enabling us to carry out our work.

Sadly, in all my years, I've never seen a greater need for that support than I do now. Now more than ever, we need people to come together in a show of kindness in the face of the worst humanitarian emergencies.

Situations where girls, far more than boys, are confronted with real threats, danger, and suffering – just because they are girls.

In some conflict zones, teenage girls are 90% more likely to be out of school, compared to girls in conflict-free areas. Globally, around 1 in 3 women have experienced at least one form of gender-based violence and again, the numbers are higher in countries ravaged by conflict or crisis.

Thank you to each of you, here in Ireland, for the compassion and commitment you continue to show girls everywhere. They need you now more than ever.

In this newsletter, you'll read just a fraction of what your support is achieving. There's so much more than what we can fit in here, but I hope it gives you some idea of the incredible impact of your generosity.

**You have a truly significant role
in making our work possible and
I'm so grateful to you**

Thank you.

Paul O'Brien
CEO, Plan International Ireland



Empowering Guatemala's girls to talk openly about periods

**With your support, girls like
Nesly can manage their
periods with confidence**

Your support means that
Nesly, 15, now has a better
understanding of her rights

**"I learnt a lot from
Plan about my
menstrual health
and hygiene. I've
also learnt about
my sexual rights
and violence
against women
and girls."**

– Nesly, 15

Nesly was 12 when she had her first period. She felt scared and unsure what to do, but fortunately, Nesly's mother, Ingrid, was on hand to offer advice.

For girls in Guatemala, the challenges are numerous and driven by issues such as gender inequality, poverty, discrimination, and child marriage. In many cultures, a negative stigma around periods is common, but Nesly and girls like her refuse to let this stop them from achieving their full potential.

With your support, we're working with girls like Nesly to help them manage their periods with confidence. This includes addressing their needs for supplies and

facilities, as well as equipping them with the knowledge and skills to understand and manage menstruation.

Today, girls like Nesly are no longer afraid. They are removing the taboo and misconceptions around periods. The changes made possible by your support have led to improved attendance and performance at school and given these girls the confidence to fully participate in society.

Thanks to you, Nesly can dare to dream. Determined to finish her education, she plans to become a social worker to help tackle the gender inequality faced by women and girls in Guatemala.



In South Sudan, child friendly spaces are helping children to heal

Lena playing in one of the child friendly spaces

Thank you for helping to keep girls like Lena safe

The war in Sudan has affected children in the most devastating and traumatic ways, with **3 million children like Lena currently displaced**. To date, over 560,000 people have crossed into South Sudan, with more arriving each day.

Lena and her family fled their home in Khartoum and now live in a dedicated centre established in Renk, South Sudan.

Before fleeing, children like Lena lived with the sound of bullets and explosions and the sight of dead bodies in the streets. This trauma can have a profound and

long-lasting impact. It's vital that girls like Lena have access to safe spaces, to foster a sense of normality that allows them to heal.

Thanks to your support, and by working with our partners in Renk, we've created a child-friendly space, where girls like Lena can forge vital bonds of friendship. With access to recreational activities and life-skills training for adolescents, Lena and girls like her now have the safe environment needed to recover from the trauma of war.

Thank you for making this possible.

Your donations in action: feeding starving families in Gaza

Your support is the difference between life and death

In Gaza, famine has taken over and **1.7 million families face starvation**. That's more than half the population.

As the conflict rages on, restrictions on food delivery are putting young children at risk of severe malnutrition. UNICEF has warned that in the Northern Gaza Strip, one in three children under the age of two is suffering from acute malnutrition.

Continued support is needed now more than ever to help those affected.

Thanks to our generous community of supporters, we have been able to have an impact. By working with local partners, we have been able to address the dire humanitarian situation that has brought suffering on an unprecedented scale.



Young child in Gaza receives a warm meal

Plan International recently supported the Egyptian Red Crescent in delivering **600 food baskets, 1,000 first-aid kits and 1,600 cartons of water** into Gaza via the Rafah crossing.

We've also recently partnered with Palestine's largest NGO, Taawon (Welfare Association), to deliver nearly 6,000 hot meals to displaced families across three shelters in the Gaza Strip.

As innocent children starve, hundreds of food trucks continue to be routinely blocked from entering Gaza by the Israeli army. By granting them access, countless lives could be saved.

In the areas where safe passage into Gaza is guaranteed for aid workers, we can assure you that your donations are hard at work. Thanks to you, hungry families are being given food. With your support we'll continue working with our local partners to deliver vital, life-saving meals. Thank you for supporting desperate families in Gaza. Your compassion is their lifeline.



Plan International staff preparing a box of dignity kits for women in Gaza



With your support, more girls are escaping the threat of child marriage

Sharjina, 18, Bangladesh

By complementing her education with a practical skill, Sharjina has gained financial independence

At 18 years old, Sharjina understands all too well the hardships her parents endured to care for their children and put them through school.

Growing up in a remote part of Kurigram district in Bangladesh as the eldest of three children, Sharjina worked hard at school and dreamt of going to university, but needed a way to fund it.

Remembering how she learnt to sew as a child, she bought a sewing machine.

Thanks to the support of people like you, Plan International offers dedicated courses that teach girls like Sharjina how to set up

their own business. Sharjina was determined and soon put her new-found entrepreneurial skills to the test, taking orders from neighbours and relatives. Her journey to financial independence had begun.

As well as putting her siblings through school, saving for her own university education, and putting money back into her business, Sharjina is also focused on teaching other girls in her community to sew, so that they too can enjoy financial independence and escape the threat of child marriage.

Your support is helping to build a future in which child marriage no longer exists.

The women saving children from hunger in Mali

Your generosity is helping women set up cereal banks

In Mali, recurring food shortages mean around **8.8 million** people are expected to need humanitarian assistance this year. That's over **40%** of the population and over half of them are children.

Ongoing insecurity and climate change have led to an increase in hunger and poverty, with households headed by single women disproportionately affected.

But your generosity is changing things. Thanks to you, we've been able to work with six women's groups, helping them create cereal banks in their communities. Your support is empowering women to run community warehouses where grain is made available to group members when food stocks are low between harvests.



Members of a womens group in Mali with their cereal bank

Women are looking out for their families and their community, by providing the grain themselves, contributing 250kg of maize after each harvest. This provides a reserve which can be made available to families who run out of food during the lean season.

Plan International has also been able to offer the women training in how to check the grain they receive, ensuring it is clean and stored correctly, to avoid it rotting. They are also trained in bookkeeping and stock management, as well as crop production. This provides the community with a sustainable way in which to tackle food shortages during the lean season between June and September.

Thank you for your support, which is helping to feed hungry children in Mali.



February 2023:
Cereal banks are set up



6 associations, with 726 women members, open 6 cereal banks in 6 communities



The banks have been helped more than 300 households during the lean season

Child sponsors are changing the future for girls like Sokha and Rosaria



Sokha, 10, attending a school built by Plan International

Thank you for giving Sokha hope for the future

Sokha was just 8 years old when her father passed away two years ago. She lives in a rural part of Cambodia's Stung Treng province, with her mother, Sokhun, her twin big brothers and her 2-year-old little brother, Thom.

Sokha says her mother, a farm labourer, has to work hard to support the family, but she doesn't earn a lot and sometimes, the family does not have enough to eat. With her mother out working, Sokha has to take care of her little brother, as well as doing the housework and cooking. Sometimes, she helps her mother to collect cashew nuts.

Thanks to generous supporters like you, Plan International can provide the seeds to grow their own vegetables and equipment to make food products they can sell at local

markets. We are also providing parenting classes, teaching the importance of good child nutrition.

Thanks to supporters like you, Sokha and children like her are enjoying the new school built by Plan International – in fact, Sokha proudly tells us she has never missed a day! She has been diagnosed with learning difficulties but is making good progress with the support of her teacher and her best friend, Sok Na.

The gift of sponsorship has given Sokha big hopes and a plan for the future.

"I want to be an NGO employee so I can earn money to support my younger brother with his studies."

How the Student Emergency Savings Project is helping girls like Rosario prepare for the future

In 2021 and 2022, the island of Lembata in Indonesia was devastated by deadly cyclones and flash floods. Buildings and homes were severely damaged, with countless people displaced - including Rosario, now 14, and her family.

Rosaria and her family moved to a temporary shelter, but with no savings, they had to rely on the government for financial help. It simply wasn't enough. Rosaria's parents were left with no choice but to borrow money, which put them in debt.

In places like Lembata, the concept of saving is not commonplace and families like Rosaria's often lack the support to do so. As a result, putting money aside for emergencies or a child's education doesn't usually happen. When disaster struck, Rosaria's family was simply not prepared.

Rosaria is one of the fortunate ones. Through Plan International's Sponsorship programme, she took part in the Student Emergency Savings project, which teaches important financial management skills.



Rosaria, 14, with her account book

Families are taught to save money for emergencies, such as a serious illness or natural disaster.

Rosaria now puts money away for the future, with plans to continue her education. And to date, thanks to people like you, over 10,000 sponsored children like her have taken part in this training.

Here's how child sponsors are changing lives: every Sponsored Child taking part in the project is given a savings account. Parents contribute regularly to the account and, in the event of an emergency, will be given a recommendation letter from Plan International and the local authority that enables them to make a withdrawal.

Families like Rosaria's can sleep soundly at night, knowing they have savings to fall back on in times of crisis. None of this would be possible without people like you.

Our Child Sponsors truly change the future for girls like Rosaria - we're so immensely grateful for the huge difference they make!



Rosaria with her family



Génesis, 12, Honduras



How your support is helping women and girls tackle gender-based violence in Honduras

“She was traumatised by what happened to her. She doesn’t want to go out anymore, she thinks it’s going to happen again.”

— Génesis, 12

Growing up in Honduras, 12-year-old Génesis knows all about gender-based violence in her community. In one instance a girl from her school narrowly escaped a violent assault by a man.

“She was traumatised by what happened to her. She doesn’t want to go out anymore, she thinks it’s going to happen again,” she says, adding softly: “It may happen to me too.”

By attending Plan International workshops, run as part of our Violence-Free Generation programme, Génesis has learnt to pick up on potential threats. Now she’s passing those skills on to other girls in her community.

Empowered by this programme, Génesis has become a young leader in her community and is now an advocate for improved education to prevent sexual abuse. Your incredible support is continuing to equip girls with important techniques to protect themselves against gender based violence.

Research shows it will take over 131 years to achieve gender equality. With the compassion you show victims of gender-based violence, we know you’ll agree that 131 years is too long. With your support, we’re determined to get there sooner.

Thank you for your generosity and the compassion you show girls like Génesis as they fight to achieve gender equality.

Action Saves Lives

Investing in Emergency Preparedness and Rapid Response

Baby Sham has his arm circumference measured by one of our mobile nutrition teams

The world is witnessing an alarming escalation in emergencies driven by:

• **Protracted Crises** • **Conflict** • **The global climate emergency**

Disasters, whether natural or man-made, can have devastating consequences as we have seen in Sudan and Gaza. Your support is saving lives and your kindness is needed now more than ever.

You are already doing so much for children around the world but if you can, please donate today to our emergency crisis response in Sudan and Gaza.

€20



could provide ration kits to two families to provide sustenance for one week.

€40



could purchase dignity kits so that women and girls can manage their periods and general hygiene with dignity.

€100



could provide a shelter kit to two families fleeing war in Sudan.

Donate now at plan.ie

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