



Until we are all equal



# Empowering Early Action

Investing in emergency  
preparedness and rapid response



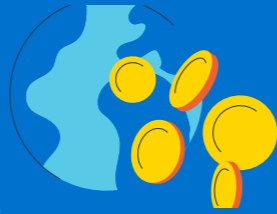
Plan International's

# Early Action Fund to date



Launched in  
**2021**

**27**  
countries have  
accessed funds



**2.3**  
million euro  
disbursed



**1 million**  
people reached



**30**  
disaster preparedness  
programmes  
supported



All funding requests receive a response in

**48 hours**

Source: March 2024, Plan International's Early Action Fund

## Background

The world is witnessing an alarming escalation in emergencies. Protracted crises, conflict, the global climate emergency, and economic factors are the three main drivers contributing to this, exacerbating humanitarian needs and challenging traditional response mechanisms.

- ! **Approximately 300 million people** need humanitarian assistance and one in five children live in, or are fleeing from, conflict zones (UNOCHA 2024).<sup>1</sup>
- ! **45 million children** under the age of five are acutely malnourished as food insecurity poses a significant challenge (WHO 2024).<sup>2</sup>
- ! **According to the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee)** by initiating early action before a disaster the amount of time saved working on a disaster is on average 10 days and the cost savings are over 200%. So, for every \$1 invested in disaster risk reduction this can lead to a saving of \$15 in recovery (UNDRR).<sup>3</sup>

Disasters, whether natural or man-made, can have devastating consequences, but their impact can be mitigated through a combination of preparedness and response efforts including 'early action'. Therefore, to ensure Plan International is maximising cost efficiencies and increasing response speed, we aim to prioritise early action. This supports our efforts to scale up humanitarian response, which is a global priority under our current strategy.

1 [unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2024-enarfres](https://unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2024-enarfres)  
2 [unicef.org/press-releases/un-report-global-hunger-numbers-rose-many-828-million-2021](https://unicef.org/press-releases/un-report-global-hunger-numbers-rose-many-828-million-2021)  
3 [interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2019-01/return\\_on\\_investment\\_in\\_emergency\\_preparedness\\_phase\\_2.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2019-01/return_on_investment_in_emergency_preparedness_phase_2.pdf)



WASH kit to control cholera being handed in Mozambique © Plan International

“ Weeks after the floods, we were still depending on help from people in neighbouring communities. We ate once a day, there were times when we slept on an empty stomach. When my grandmother received the 50 euro as cash from Plan International, it was a celebration for us, she bought corn, millet, and rice. For months now, we have been eating three times a day.

— Rachida, 18, Niger



Women register to collect their cash transfers from Plan International in Guatemala © Plan International / Nelson Pacheco

## What is an ‘early action’?

Traditionally, humanitarian and development work have often focused on responding to crises after they unfold. However, a growing emphasis is being placed on early action as a crucial component of humanitarian work as it aims to prevent disasters from escalating into full-blown crises. Early action bridges the gap between humanitarian and development work through focusing on prevention and preparedness.

The term “early action” is often used interchangeably with “anticipatory action.” Anticipatory action involves pre-arranged financing and programmes whereas early action also includes steps that are taken

before the full impact of an event, based on forecasts, without prior planning or allocated funding. It enables agile risk mitigation and aims to protect against loss, taking the necessary steps so that damage can be minimised.

Through implementing early action, we are better prepared to deal with any disaster. By minimising the risk to life and property during a disaster it can also reduce the cost and the time spent on the response.

**Building resilience is key in early action.**



Materials and psychosocial support in Jordan © Plan International

“ We believe that the more informed our people [are], the better they respond to climatic events such as cyclones and floods, thus minimising the impact. We know Plan International is providing support to Jangamo District by enabling communities and keeping them operational, improving community preparedness and resilience

— Alberto Augusto, Focal Person National Disaster Management Institute (INGD), Jangamao District, Mozambique

# Why Plan International's Early Action Fund?

Early action saves lives, prevents disasters from escalating into major crises and builds community resilience. In the face of increasing humanitarian challenges globally, the Early Action Fund enables Plan International to respond swiftly and effectively to emerging crises. Launched in June 2021, our Early Action Fund empowers country offices to act proactively when risks emerge.

**Funding is released when a crisis is anticipated, so we can collectively minimise impact on children, especially girls, and build the resilience needed to navigate unforeseen shocks.**

The fund as seed funding we receive from National Organisations of Plan International active in various countries.

“ Access to the Early Action Fund has enabled us to operate in a precarious humanitarian context by providing actors and communities with relevant and adapted support. The fund has made it possible to support access to food, the integration of internally displaced people into host communities and, also to strengthen their ability to cope with the crisis and its consequences. The fund has enabled Plan International Mali to become one of the Local Administration's key partners in its response to the crisis in the regions where we operate.”

— Ahmadou Mahamane, Deputy Emergency Response Manager, Plan International Mali

As outlined in the G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact<sup>4</sup>: “There is compelling evidence that anticipating shocks and releasing pre-agreed funds in advance for activities to mitigate their impact, such as protecting assets including livestock, rehabilitating water sources or vaccinating children before a drought, is more efficient, more dignified and protects hard-won development gains.”

**The fund facilitates early warning and action initiatives**, enabling Plan International's country offices to enhance global resilience, address the nexus between humanitarian and development needs and anticipate future challenges.

Country offices have the flexibility to pilot innovative programmes with a dedicated emphasis on empowering girls, while also leveraging and securing additional

donor funding. Research by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) shows each dollar invested in supporting farmers to taking anticipatory actions yielded benefits amounting to seven dollars and avoided loss.<sup>5</sup>

**Our Early Action Fund is used to take proactive and strategic action in communities at risk.**

This prevents disasters from becoming full-blown emergencies, safeguards the most vulnerable and promotes stable communities and sustainable development. **The Early Action Fund can be mobilised in response to any potential crisis** – from drought, flooding or cyclones to conflict and forced migration or displacement. Plan International is also a member of the Preparedness and Anticipatory Action Task Team of the Global Education Cluster.

<sup>4</sup> gov.uk/government/publications/g7-foreign-and-development-ministers-meeting-may-2021-communique/g7-famine-prevention-and-humanitarian-crises-compact

<sup>5</sup> fao.org/3/cb7145en/cb7145en.pdf

WASH kit distribution to control cholera in Mozambique © Plan International



“ Community disaster preparedness activities implemented through the Early Action Fund have contributed to reducing loss of life following the landfall of cyclone Freddy in 2023. The funds meant we were the first responder in Massinga, where we distributed hygiene kits with chlorine, resulting in zero cholera. This action also helped us to leverage additional funds from UNICEF and other donors for our response.”

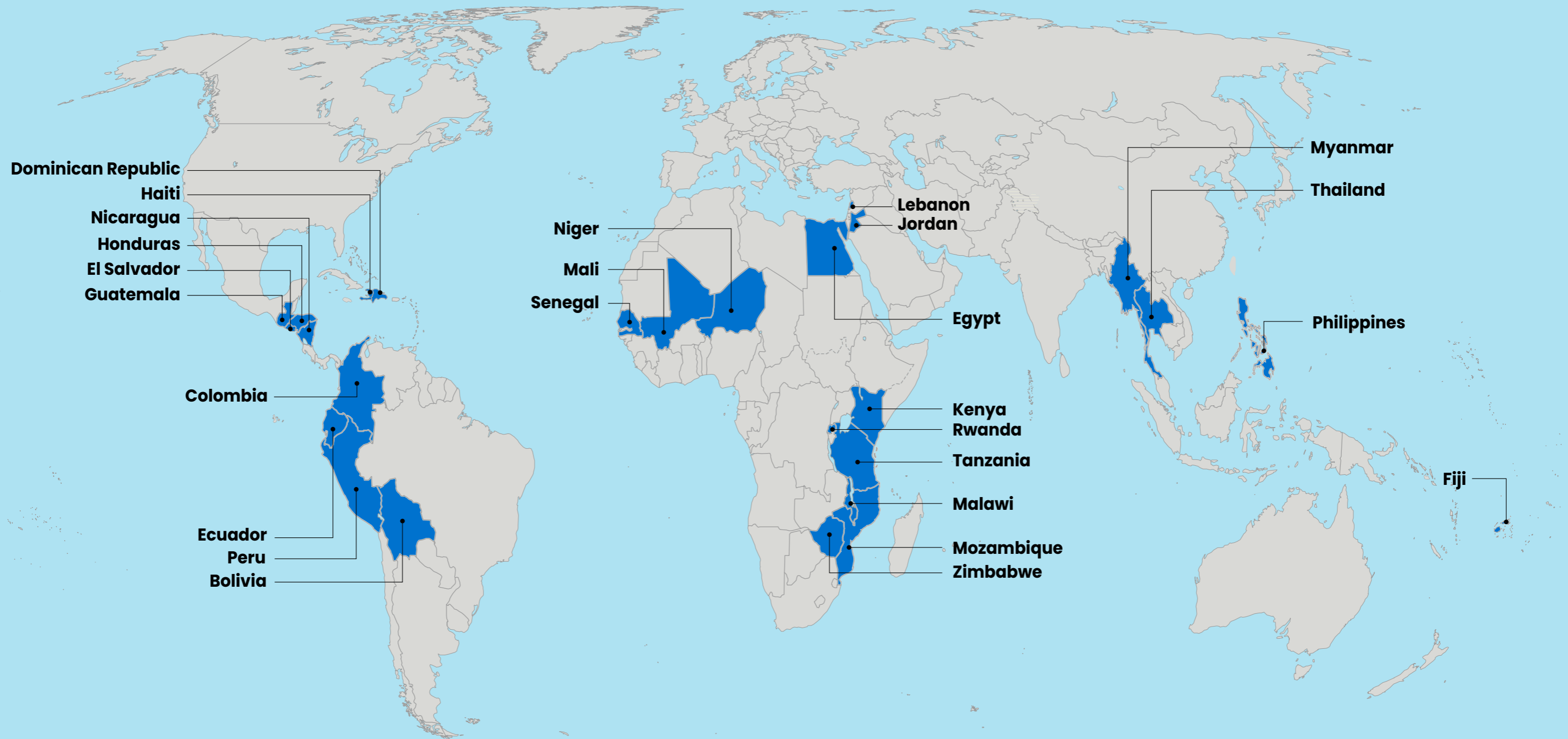
— Gerald Magashi, Country Director, Plan International, Mozambique

# Who has received the funds?

Since its inception, 27 Plan International country offices have utilised the Early Action Fund.

## How can countries access the fund?

Funding is provided on receipt of a successful application to Plan International's Global Hub. We respond to all requests within 48 hours.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by Plan International.









Girls take part in a psychosocial support session in Jordan © Plan International

“Anticipatory action reduces the risk of a crisis disrupting children’s education. It can include, for instance, ensuring alternative arrangements to limit the use of schools as temporary shelters, assessing routes to and from the education facilities are safe, advocating for education continuity plans that include inclusive and gender responsive measures to prevent school dropout, strengthening education infrastructures to protect schools from all hazards and risks causing education disruption.”

— Emilia Sorrentino, Global Lead, Education in Emergencies; Global Humanitarian Team

## Major initiatives funded through the Early Action Fund

Since 2021, Plan International offices have used the Early Action Fund to implement early action ranging from early warning systems to preventing gender-based violence.

<p>✓ <b>Cyclone season</b> anticipatory action in Zimbabwe</p> 	<p>✓ <b>Early action</b> to reduce impact of multiple crisis on girls and build resilience to future shocks in Maroodi-jeeh and Sool regions of Somalia and Somaliland</p>	<p>✓ <b>Anticipating</b> a refugee crisis at the Myanmar-Thailand border</p> 
<p>✓ <b>Assistance</b> to households affected by natural emergencies and conflicts in Niger</p>	<p>✓ <b>Assist</b> flood-affected communities in Mali</p> 	<p>✓ <b>Early action</b> to mitigate risks and respond to cyclones in Mulanje, Malawi</p>
<p>✓ <b>Kenya</b> food insecurity response</p> 	<p>✓ <b>Early action</b> to reduce the impact of anticipated crisis on adolescent girls in Lebanon</p>	<p>✓ <b>Preparing</b> for rapid disaster response in Fiji</p> 
<p>✓ <b>Support</b> girls’ and young women’s resilience to shock and disasters in the southeast region of Haiti</p>	<p>✓ <b>Promoting</b> safe spaces for children in emergency in the Dominican Republic</p> 	<p>✓ <b>Preparedness</b> for internal displacement due to armed conflict and migration from Venezuela in Arauca, Colombia</p>

# Key early action initiatives



## Prepositioning of emergency supplies

such as dignity kits, health and hygiene packs

## Enhancing capacity

of local early responders – including government officials and partner staff

## Developing & dissemination of early warning information to at-risk communities



## Distribution of clean water, health and hygiene kits, hazard specific education in emergencies (EiE) kits to schools ahead of anticipated hazard

## Identifying & training child friendly space and protection facilitators



“ My son is really malnourished. There have been difficult times with my little boy. About a month ago he fainted. He didn't want anything,” Later, we received 665 Quetzals (85 USD). I was able to buy some vegetables such as tomatoes, onions, garlic for the food, because with that we can keep our children healthy.

— Irma, Guatemala



## Cash transfers to vulnerable families and communities

## Setting up gender-based violence referral groups

## Refresher trainings

on psychological first aid, lifesaving messages, and referral pathways for teachers

## Strengthening child protection mechanism and structures



## Targeted WASH provision

in schools ahead of drought-induced crisis or cholera alert

## Case study

# How early action training helped to save lives in Malawi

In March 2023, Mulanje district in Malawi was **hit by flooding and landslides** caused by Tropical Cyclone Freddy, leaving more than 600 people dead and thousands in need of shelter, clean water, and food.

**The death toll was much lower in areas with early warning systems.**

For example, in Nkanda, Jennifer Kalumba, a community member who is also representative of the District Civil Protection Committee played a significant role in **warning people to run to safer ground before the disaster.**

“We heard the sound of river, and it sounded different,” recalled Jennifer. “I saw that the river was now [at level] red. I ran to the low-lying areas to warn people that there was danger.”

As the rain gauges installed in Thuchila River indicated that the levels were at a critical level, Jennifer and her team **blew their whistles and notified families to evacuate quickly.**

### As a result

There was no loss of life in the area.



Jennifer Kalumba, a community member played a crucial role in warning the people in her community to run to safer ground before Cyclone Freddy in Malawi © Plan International

## Case study

# Early action helped to reduce anticipated crisis on adolescent girls in Lebanon

With support from the Early Action Fund, Plan International Lebanon helped to **reduce the impact of anticipated crisis** on adolescent girls during multiple crises.

The response targeted adolescent girls and their families - those identified as the most vulnerable. This includes those affected by the Beirut explosion, the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic downturn in Lebanon, which has faced multiple crises in recent years, and has also been heavily impacted by the war in Syria since 2011. For example, economic shocks mean that the Lebanese pound was massively devaluated, leading to a staggering 423% increase in commodity prices due to inflation and leaving many families unable to afford basic essentials. The 2020 explosion in Beirut caused widespread damage; over 200 people were killed and 7,000 people were injured and 300,000 people were displaced as homes, schools and livelihoods were destroyed.

**In March 2022, working with a local partner, Plan International supported 275 adolescent girls (256 from Syria and 19 from Lebanon).**

Girls aged between 10-17 years received psychosocial support and cash transfers to support their mental health and well-being.

**Lina, a 14-year-old girl, was one of the recipients, she was isolating herself in her room, has lost her appetite and was refusing to speak to anyone.**

After participating in the programme, her behavior changed dramatically. **Lina actively attended the discussions and contributed,** sharing her thoughts and feelings.

The support also assisted her mother as the cash provided for protection and transportation fees enabled her to pay their house rent and buy food for the family. **The EAF enabled many girls like Nina to receive self-care kits and cash to cover their essential expenses.** The psychosocial intervention enhanced wellbeing and increased knowledge to communicate with their caregivers.

### As a result

Caregivers became more responsive and enhanced communication within the family and with peers reducing the long term impact of the crisis.



# How you can support our work

By investing in the Early Action Fund, you can be part of building a more resilient future for the children and communities we work with, and in turn...



## Save lives

When we act swiftly, we save lives by providing vital assistance to those in need



Scan here for more!



## Maximise impact

By mitigating the impact of disasters, we ensure humanitarian assistance reaches those who need it most, when they need it most



## Build resilience

When we invest in preparedness, we support communities to withstand and recover from shocks




## Protect children


through safeguarding measures, early and post response, we protect the interests and rights of the children in any crisis





# Price Points


## what can we do with your donation?


 **€5**  
could provide menstrual hygiene management (MHM) kits (sanitary pad, soap, inner clothes, towel, etc) for one girl in Zimbabwe.

 **€10**  
could provide water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) kits for one child/family in Mozambique.

 **€20**  
could develop capacity of a community member to deal with protection and safety in Niger.

 **€25**  
could purchase a set of dignity kits in Colombia.

 **€30**  
could purchase an education pack for a child.

 **€100**  
one family of five can have two meals for a month in Kenya.

 **€500**  
could broadcast one minute alert radio message 100 times in South Sudan.

 **€1,000**  
could preposition emergency rescue supplies in the Philippines.



Distribution of essential supplies in Mali © Plan International



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Contact details for more information:  
[FOA@plan-international.org](mailto:FOA@plan-international.org)

## About Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. We believe in the power and potential of every child but know this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it is girls who are most affected.

Working together with children, young people, supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges girls and vulnerable children face. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and we enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

For over 85 years, we have rallied other determined optimists to transform the lives of all children in more than 80 countries.

We won't stop until we are all equal!

### Plan International

Global Hub

Dukes Court, Duke Street, Woking,  
Surrey GU21 5BH, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1483 755155

Fax: +44 (0) 1483 756505

E-mail: [info@plan-international.org](mailto:info@plan-international.org)



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