



Until we are all equal



Plan International Latin America and the Caribbean 2024 Annual Report

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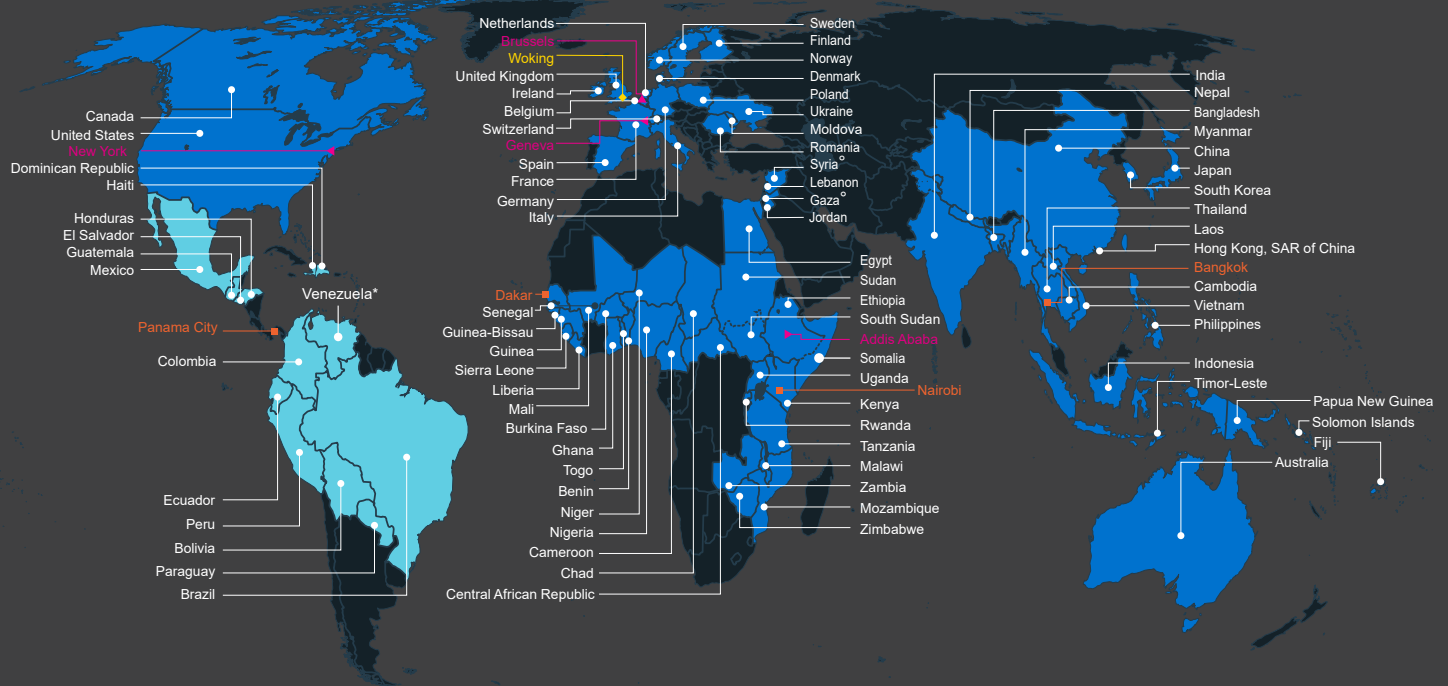
Acknowledgments

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*Results corresponding to the administrative fiscal year of Plan International between july 2023 and june 2024.



Plan International is present in more than 80 countries in the world.



- Countries where we work
- Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean
- ◆ Global hub
- ▶ Liaison office
- Regional Office

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

*Between July 2023 and June 2024

*Working through partners



- Countries where we execute programs
- ◆ Regional office
- Work through partners



In Latin America and the Caribbean we work with children, youth and families in 13 countries.

Prologue

Hello, I'm Odalys, I live in Ecuador. I am a young woman with many dreams, one of them being that girls, boys, teenagers and young people should live in equality. I am currently at university studying Accounting and Auditing. There are four of us in my family, and I am the eldest.

For the last nine years my voice has been joined to that of many other girls and teenagers in the 'Because I Am a Girl' Movement, where sisterhood is our main value. Together, we have worked to create a world where it is possible for us all to have the same opportunities. Currently, I am part of a project coordinated between Plan and the Autonomous Government of my province. I participated in Leadership and Power Gaining Schools where I have been able to realize my potential as a leader. For example, I have been an active part of the community protection mechanisms and also of the risk management committees in my community where my contribution, together with that of other girls and boys, has served to make visible the importance of our rights, to eradicate violence and prevent risks.

In my community, we face many challenges. Insecurity in the streets and public spaces is a constant problem that prevents children, as well as us young people, from enjoying a free life. Insecurity is also the reason why many girls have been forced to abandon their studies. Another recurring problem is early pregnancy. In my province, education is limited; in many schools there is no electricity, basic services or decent facilities. In order to study, we often have to risk our lives by traveling long distances to another city.

Despite these challenges, I continue to dream of a better future for all girls. Together with Plan International with their work in conjunction with the Because I am a Girl Movement we can achieve a transformation in society, where all girls have access to a quality education, to live in safe communities and have the freedom to build their own future.

Odalys, 21, Ecuador



Message from Carmen Elena Alemán

Regional Director for Plan International Latin America and the Caribbean



In a 2024 marked by significant challenges, from the Latin American and Caribbean region we demonstrated the resilience that so characterizes us, achieving important goals. From the communities where we work to the scenes of global governance, the voices of children and adolescents resonated strongly, demanding change and proposing solutions adapted to their realities, thanks to the work of each and every person who makes up the Plan International family.

Our region faced significant challenges in guaranteeing the rights of children, especially girls. At least 45 million children in the region were victims of sexual violence, an alarming reality that profoundly affected their well-being and opportunities for development. Although legislative progress was made, legal exceptions persist in several countries that allow early and forced unions, perpetuating cycles of poverty and violence for thousands of girls. These efforts are also threatened by movements that seek to weaken conquered rights, promoting policies that reinforce gender inequalities and limit the autonomy of girls and adolescents. In addition, 34 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including children, lived in conditions of poverty that limit their access to education, health and other basic services.

The region also faced urgent humanitarian crises such as the increase in violence in different countries of the region, the migration crisis that has put thousands of children and adolescents at risk, as well as the forest fires in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Brazil. In Haiti, food insecurity increased alarmingly, with at least 6,000 people, including children, facing catastrophic levels of hunger and the collapse of their means of subsistence. However, we achieved very important milestones that represented significant progress in terms of children's rights, especially for girls. Among the highlights was the participation of adolescents from the region in the G20 Summit in Brazil.

They presented their demands to address inequality, poverty and climate change to world leaders, setting a precedent for the participation of young people in the global agenda.

Another significant achievement was the approval of the bill prohibiting child marriage in Colombia, setting the minimum age of marriage at 18. This reinforced the commitment to the protection of girls and adolescents, reducing the risk of gender-based violence and forced pregnancies, although there is still work to be done to completely eradicate this practice.

In Brazil, we received a significant donation of 8 million dollars from the American philanthropist Mackenzie Scott, which gave us a significant boost to continue impacting the lives of more children in that country. This donation represented a vote of confidence in the work we have done and in its potential to change lives.

Responding to the needs of girls in terms of protection in emergency situations, we promoted the #NiñasSeguras (Safe Girls) campaign. I was proud to see that more than 750 girls took on leadership roles from local and government authorities, United Nations organizations and companies, among others, in 183 takeovers in 11 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. These actions made their demands and proposals in key spaces to guarantee their protection, asking for actions in favor of their rights to be prioritized.

In 2024, girls and adolescents showed us their leadership and determination to transform their communities. From Plan International, we reaffirm our commitment to continue accompanying them on this path, working tirelessly so that each girl grows up free of violence and with access to opportunities for a better future.

Regional results*

We have reached the lives of

+7.6 million people



Including

+2.9 million girls

+2.6 million boys



We work in

+4,900 communities



We executed

252 projects together with the communities in 13 countries

Annual investment in Latin America and the Caribbean

€79.2 Million euros



*Results corresponding to the administrative fiscal year of Plan International between July 2023 and June 2024.

Reach of our programmes

in our main development areas of work

Early childhood development:

Young children grow up well cared for and equally valued.

Regional reach:

.....
+3.3 million people
of which **+1.5 million** were girls
under 18 years of age.



“As mom and dad, we are quite happy to have our son in the CAIPI because it helps him with psychomotor development and also helps us to grow” .*

Saraí, mother, El Salvador

*Comprehensive Early Childhood Care Center (in spanish)

Inclusive, quality education:

Children, particularly girls, have the education they need to succeed in life.

Regional reach:

.....
+1.9 million people
of which **+1 million** were girls
under 18 years of age.



“The project gave me the support I needed to be able to stay in school and avoid dropping out. This initiative has many benefits for us young people. In addition to offering us the opportunity to learn life skills, we also learned how to prevent sexual exploitation and teenage pregnancy.”

Yoismerlyn, 18 years old, Dominican Republic.

Children and youth driving change:

Girls, boys and young people shape decisions that affect their lives by leading change within their own communities and influencing decisions at higher levels.

Regional reach:

.....

+560 thousand people
of which **+180 thousand were girls**
under 18 years of age.



"I wanted to become the voice of women who are forced to live in silence. Each and every one of these girls and women has the power to change their life and leave an indelible mark on society".

Maria, 23 years old, Ecuador

Protection against violence:

Children and young people, particularly girls, grow up free from violence, fear or discrimination.

Regional reach:

.....

+1.6 million people
of which **+420 thousand were girls**
under 18 years of age.



"Where I live, teenage girls become pregnant mainly as a result of abuse. One of our rights is to continue being girls and not become pregnant at our young age".

Fernanda, 12 years old, Peru

Skills and decent work:

Young people, especially young women, gain knowledge and skills, access opportunities and engage actively in decent work of their choosing.

Regional reach:

.....
+600 thousand people
of which **+123 thousand** were girls
under 18 years of age.



“One of the challenges I had to face was men. They would think that I didn't have the capacity. I urge women to take the initiative, not to see the social prejudice or what people will say”.

Ana, 28, Paraguay

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Girls and young women have control over their lives and bodies.

Regional reach:

.....
+2 millones de personas
of which **+680 thousand** were girls
under 18 years of age.



“I learned a lot about my menstrual health and hygiene. I also learned about my rights and the prevention of violence against women and girls. Now I share this information with my friends.”

Nesly, 15, Guatemala

Humanitarian response

+830 thousand people assisted through humanitarian response in Latin America and the Caribbean

We respond to emergencies and humanitarian crises throughout the region, characterized by the dynamics of migration, displacement, conflict, widespread violence and the impacts of climate change. We guarantee effective and timely humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable communities, protecting the life and integrity of children, especially girls and adolescents.



Haiti crisis

We respond to the complex crisis facing Haiti, which is having a profound impact on food security, health, education and the physical protection and integrity of the civilian population. We are placing particular emphasis on attending to the needs of children, women and adolescents, who are the most vulnerable in this context.



Human mobility crisis

We seek to protect and defend the rights of migrants, refugees, returnees and/or people in transit throughout the region. This implies a coordinated, comprehensive response focused on protection and gender equality, among the countries of South America (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru), Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras) and Mexico. We respond to the particular needs and particular risks faced by children, adolescents and young people, seeking to generate long-term transformations.



“When we were in our community there was a river that affected us, we lost our crops, like coffee, cardamom and corn. This money is going to help us buy food, it’s the first time we’ve received a little help.”

Norma, affected mother by floods in Guatemala



Climate change crisis

We worked to mitigate the effects of climate change and the associated adverse meteorological phenomena, such as long periods of drought, floods, rain and the transmission of diseases by vectors. We responded to the forest fires in Bolivia, the floods in Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, as well as the tropical storms that impacted the Central American countries.

Outstanding projects

During the last year*



Cambalhotas

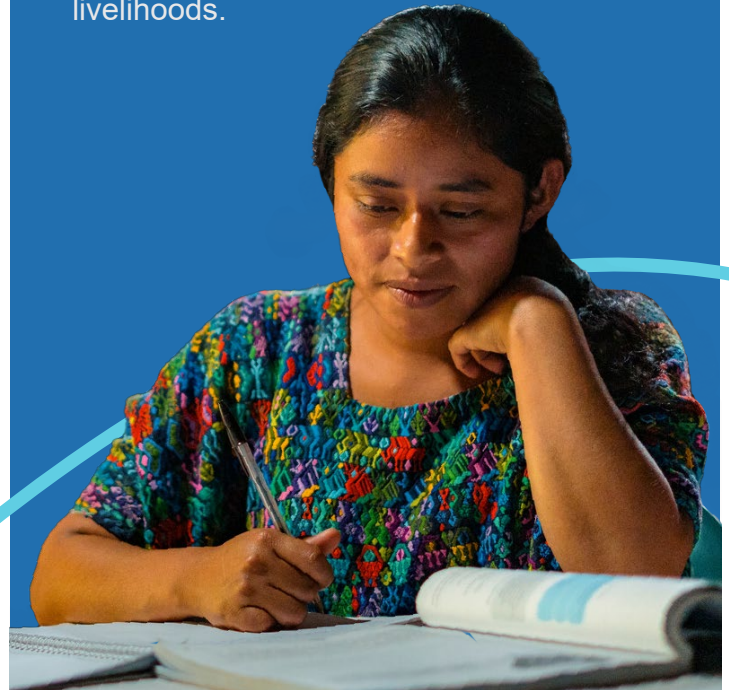
Plan International Brazil's project in the states of Maranhão and Piauí, involved around 16,400 people in 2024. Through play and learning, it teaches children between the ages of 3 and 11 about their bodies, different forms of abuse and how to seek help in risky situations. The project also strengthens the capacity of key actors in the rights protection system, promoting a safe and protective environment for children.

Results:

- Increased knowledge of risks and protective behaviours from 58% to 76% among children and adolescents.
- Increased knowledge of protection agencies from 53% to 77%.

Generation with Opportunities

A programme implemented in Guatemala in the departments of Jalapa, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz and Quiché that aims to empower adolescent girls and young women by strengthening their economic autonomy through training in employment skills, entrepreneurship and financial literacy. The programme aims to enable participants to access employment opportunities and create sustainable livelihoods.



Results:

- 7,684 girls and adolescents have been able to continue and complete their secondary education thanks to scholarships funded by Plan International.
- By 2024, 29% of these 7,684 students had successfully completed their education, with the remainder expected to graduate within the next two years.
- In addition, 3,482 young women and men have achieved economic autonomy and empowerment through their integration into the labour market.



Community savings accounts (EDUCAS)

This is a Plan International Ecuador project that strengthens economic autonomy and access to finance in communities in Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, Guayas, Loja and Manabí. These community savings accounts allow the unbanked to save and access low-interest microcredit, facilitating investment in small businesses and protection against financial emergencies, contributing to the economic empowerment and sustainable development of the communities.

Results:

- 72 EDUCAS in operation with more than 1,600 members, 75% of whom are women.
- 7 savings accounts in Cotopaxi are run by adolescents, fostering financial learning from an early age.

Protection and education for children, adolescents and young women affected by migration and armed conflict

In Colombia, we worked in partnership with several key donors to respond to one of the largest migration crises in the Americas, giving priority to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children in transit to help them through the Darien jungle.



Results:

- 10,681 people received water and sanitation supplies, blankets, nutritional supplements and repellents.



Protection mechanisms

This is a project in El Salvador that has provided humanitarian assistance in the areas of child protection and education to people in emergency situations, facilitating their access to essential services.

Results:

- Protection provided to 377 people in a situation of human mobility.
- Humanitarian assistance provided to 517 people, including 266 children and adolescents.

Achievements in advocacy and participation in international forums

Ban on child marriage in Colombia

In November 2024, the Colombian Senate passed a bill that eliminates child marriage in the country by raising the minimum age of marriage from 14 to 18 years old. This law is the result of years of joint work between civil society organisations, such as Plan International, and congressmen.



Adolescent participation at the G20

Adolescents from nine Latin American and Caribbean countries, with support from Plan International, called on G20 leaders in Brazil to address inequality, poverty and climate change, issues that disproportionately affect girls. Through a consultation with nearly 1,100 young people aged 12 to 17, they gathered testimonies and recommendations, such as promoting inclusive education policies and support for menstrual health. This report, presented to policymakers at the G20, seeks to give visibility to their voices and urge concrete action.



Participation of a youth in the Quito Process meeting

A Venezuelan adolescent supported by Plan Colombia Foundation represented migrant children at the Second Thematic Meeting of the Ninth Round of the Quito Process, held in Bogotá in September 2024. There she shared her testimony on the importance of investing in migration regularisation and family reunification. In November 2024, the San José Chapter of the Quito Process included a cross-cutting focus on migrant children, reflecting the impact of these voices on regional policies.



Participation in the 23rd Pan-American Child Congress

The 23rd Pan-American Child Congress, organised by the Inter-American Children's Institute, took place in El Salvador in October 2024, in conjunction with the 4th Civil Society Forum. The Forum was attended by children and young people from several countries, including Bolivia and El Salvador, who took part in discussions on key issues such as mental health, early childhood and human mobility. On this occasion, the organising committee of the congress was also led by Plan International, which took over the technical secretariat of the Global Movement for Children in Latin America and the Caribbean (GMC LAC).



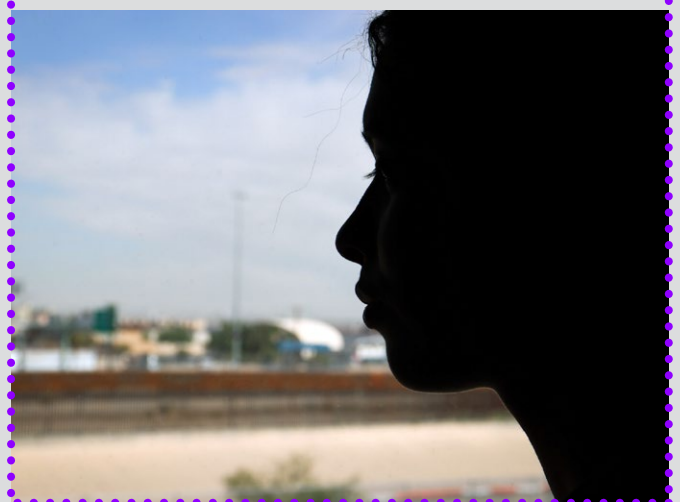
Young Bolivian women raise their voices at the 2024 Summit of the Future

Juanita (19) and Fabiana (20), two young Bolivian girls, participated in the 2024 Summit of the Future at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in September 2024, where they represented the voices of girls and adolescents from Bolivia and the region. This global event aims to address urgent challenges and strengthen multilateral cooperation on issues such as climate change, social justice, digital governance and sustainable development. This edition, organised in partnership with Plan International, focused on issues such as violence against women, sexual and reproductive rights, climate change and youth participation, linked to Plan International's **#SafeGirls** campaign for the Day of the Girl in 2024.



Study on the impact of violence on migrant women and adolescent girls

In April, Plan International Mexico launched a study on violence against women and adolescents in the context of human mobility. The report, titled **Adolescent Women in Crisis: Impact of Migration Policies in Ciudad Juarez**, found that 53% of women and their families surveyed in Mexico had been victims of a crime or security incident, and 28% reported incidents of kidnapping or forced disappearance. This report was accompanied by a call for governments to prioritise international protection needs.



International Day of the Girl 2024



+750 girls participated in 183 takeovers, taking on positions of authority in 11 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

For the twelfth year running, October 11th marks the International Day of the Girl, an important day to highlight the importance of girls' rights and gender equality. In 2024, the organisation launched its **#SafeGirls** campaign to highlight the protection and safety needs of girls, who are often vulnerable to gender-based violence, especially in emergency and crisis situations.

The day also serves as a platform for girls from different countries to take part in takeovers, with the support of Plan International.

These spaces allow them to take on roles of authority, as governors, leaders, decision-makers and entrepreneurs for a day, and to demand concrete action in favour of solutions to the problems that limit girls' equality in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2024, Plan International launched the Global Report on the State of the World's Girls entitled **'Still We Dream: Girls and young people living through conflict'**, which presents the findings of more than 10,000 girls and young women surveyed to understand how the experience of violence, disruption to education, loss of livelihoods and emotional distress caused by conflict varies for girls and young women.



Girls' and young women's leadership testimonies

Youth Leadership for Environmental Rights



'Before we had access to clean water, our ancestors relied on paúros for their needs,' explains 18-year-old Lizeth from Bolivia as she points to one of them. A paúro is a stream of water that gushes from an underground source or seeps through rocks, emerging to the surface.

These natural springs served as a source of fresh water for generations in Santa Cruz, but human intervention in the ecosystem has left most of the paúros dry and forgotten, buried under brush.

'Two years ago we ran out of water, who better than us to look after our needs and find solutions? We are two young people committed to working for our village. We have faced many challenges, starting with gaining recognition, being acknowledged by the authorities and, at the same time, presenting proposals and ensuring their implementation,' Lizeth added. She believes that strengthening youth leadership is essential to restore the Guarayo heritage.



A context marked by early pregnancies

Izamar is a 15-year-old teenager from the department of Choluteca, Honduras.

From a very young age, she has seen some of her schoolmates get pregnant at a young age, unprepared for motherhood. *'I have a friend who already had a boyfriend and was having sex. Her father was very angry when he found out she was pregnant, and her boyfriend decided to go to the United States because there wasn't enough work here to support a household,'* says Izamar.

Lack of sex education, sexual violence and, in some cases, lack of family support have all contributed significantly to this problem, leaving these young women vulnerable.

Recognising the importance of tackling this issue, Izamar became actively involved in Plan International's teenage pregnancy prevention workshops, where she learned about female empowerment, leadership, life planning and responsible decision-making.

'We learned about women's rights, girls' rights, women's rights and domestic violence. We talked about all these issues and how to protect women,' she says.



The impact of our work would not be possible without the cooperation of our partners. In every country, joint efforts with the state, local governments, non-governmental organisations, community, children's, women's and youth organisations, civil society, businesses, academia, research institutions, international organisations, aid agencies, foundations and many others have been key to advancing the promotion and protection of children's and young people's rights.

Working hand-in-hand with diverse actors allows us to respond effectively to challenges and build sustainable solutions that transform lives.

Together, we have made great strides over the past year, thanks to their commitment and dedication.

We will continue to strengthen these partnerships so that together we can build a more equitable future full of opportunities for children, especially girls, in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thank you for being part of this journey!





Until we are all equal

About Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organization 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

Regional Office for the Americas

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