

Dear friend,

Several countries across West and Central Africa are gradually lifting movement restrictions and authorising the resumption of classes, yet the COVID-19 pandemic and its detrimental impact on girls and boys is far from over! Plan International continues to be at the forefront of the Covid-19 response alongside governments, young people, girls, women and other stakeholders and is continuing its key role to ensure the well-being and resilience of girls and boys, their families and communities is kept high on everyone's agendas. We know that women and girls play a key lead role in the fight against Covid-19. Nevertheless, the evidence that the burden of unpaid care work continues to fall disproportionately on girls and women is becoming overwhelming.

We also know that when the far-reaching food and nutrition insecurity situation worsens throughout West and Central Africa, it will again be girls and women being the ones that are hit the hardest. Plan International's own Rapid Gender Assessments throughout the region have further highlighted that there are reported increases in domestic violence and in stress levels of children, increased risks of child early and forced marriage, and permanent school drop-outs for girls. Moreover, in a lot of contexts key information channels remain dominantly controlled by men: women have more limited direct access to information and when information is available it is not child and adolescent friendly.

Plan International stands for girls and with girls and other vulnerable groups. We aim to demonstrate and advocate for models that ensure girls and young women have access to support and spaces needed to reach their full potential. We invite you to discover the creative solutions we continue to put in place, together with partners and communities, to reach our ambition.

GIRLS VOICES FROM WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA



Deaf people left behind in the response to Covid-19!

"Things are changing, and we the deaf people are left behind. We are seeing things on the television. Some people cover their nose, others wash their hands, some sneeze in the ankle... there are many things going on, but we do not understand anything. We are just there, following others. We notice that people are wearing facemasks, so we wear them too to be like them."

Fatouma, 18 and Koumba, 16 (two deaf sisters in Togo).



Bearing the brunt of house chores

"Before this pandemic, I could go out, go wherever I wanted and do what I wanted to do. Now we are in semi-confinement. Despite the lifting of the curfew by the authorities, I no longer feel safe outside, I am afraid and I am no longer free. My main occupation is limited to cooking and housework".

Sangare, 23, Mali.



"No Pad Tax" to fight "period" poverty.

"It is really strange that something as normal and regular as menstruation could be a major contributing factor to messing up the future of young girls in Ghana. Schoolgirls, especially in rural Ghana, cannot afford sanitary pads because they are expensive and almost inaccessible to them. It is even worse now with the Covid-19. The goal is to get the government to distribute these pads free at least for Basic and Secondary school girls. However we need to start from somewhere and now we are starting with a petition to the government to scrap the 20% tax on sanitary pads and enable local production."

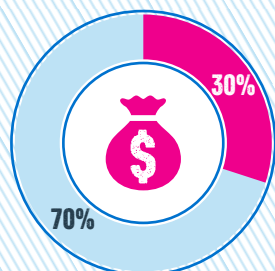
Lilipearl, Ghana.



Stepping up the fight against GBV amidst Covid-19.

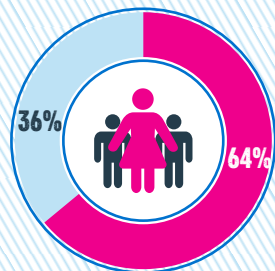
"Because of COVID-19, things are difficult for everyone. We have moved from group meetings to action: door-to-door awareness raising about gender-based violence. Because of our action, child marriage is not happening like before, but we still have many cases of violence and teenage pregnancy to deal with, and trust us, we shall deal with it."

Mawatta, Liberia.



FUNDING TARGET
€ 53,622,913

CONFIRMED
€ 16,065,425



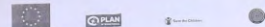
TARGETED BENEFICIARIES
31,834,695

PEOPLE REACHED
20,433,180



#PeriodsInPandemics

Health is a Right
even in Pandemics





CHILD PROTECTION (INCLUDING SGBV)

- ▶ **Benin** organised a series of capacity building sessions on child protection and PSEA for 109 community volunteers and leaders, 23 NGO Facilitators and Executive Directors from local partner NGOs, and 472 community members.
- ▶ **Burkina Faso** supported the renewal and revamp of the Bazega Child Protection Provincial Network (15 women, 18 men) and they are now effective in their mission to protect the rights of the child and the girl child, particularly in the Covid-19 context.
- ▶ **Cameroon** succeeded in drafting a joint action plan on child protection with the Ministry of Social Affairs for improved awareness.
- ▶ **CAR** trained 587 people (309 women) including CFS monitors, community child protection structures, and community leaders on how to use image boxes to work with and sensitise children.
- ▶ **Guinea Bissau** reached 365,409 people with a public awareness video on preventing Covid-19 and child protection produced in partnership with five youth organization and with participation of two (2) sponsored girls from Bafata.
- ▶ **Mali** strengthened accountability of protection committee members and IDP leaders for the monitoring of children at IDP reception sites in Bandiagara and Mopti.

- ▶ **Liberia** facilitated dialogue with Boys' Club on SGBV and Teenage pregnancy prevention in Foya District. The ongoing "Zero Tolerance" dialogue is meant to foster skills, knowledge and confidence of boys to speak out on these issues in vulnerable communities, especially with high rate of SGBV.
- ▶ **Niger** followed up/monitored 7 cases of sexual abuse and provided the victims with counselling and Psychological support in Diffa region. 99 child protection committees were also provided with materials to implement their protection action plans.
- ▶ In Adamawa, Borno & Yobe States in **Nigeria**, 725 caregivers (532 women) participated in sessions on positive parenting during the pandemic ; 733 children (440 girls) participated in recreation and learning activities organised in the CFS while 384 adolescents (244 girls, 140 boys) benefited from the live skills & mentoring sessions.
- ▶ In collaboration with the Departmental Child Protection Committee, **Senegal** has been able to place 50 children victims of trafficking in vocational training and return more than 400 street children amongst which 351, returned to their original places of residence throughout the national territory.
- ▶ In Sokodé, Central Region, 40 volunteers (5 women, 35 men, 01 disabled) from the **Togolese** Red Cross were oriented on the Children and Youth Safeguarding Policy as well as harassment policy: 5,523 people reached through cascading.



COVID19 and gender-based violence: the story of Pauline

Supported by Plan International, Pauline (borrowed name), 15, was attending the 4th grade class in the commune of Andentenga before the school closure. During a door-to-door awareness activity, the Plan International Burkina Faso Centre-East office team learned of her disappearance from her parents who were very worried. The Plan team reported in turn to the social services. A research was launched and after a while Pauline was found in the home of a young man. Unknown to the girl's parents, he had approached her one day in the street and convinced her to go with him, promising her a bright future.

After about two weeks of legal procedure, the man implicated in Pauline's disappearance returned the girl to her family. Plan International will continue to support Pauline's education next financial year.



Excited to be re-united with her daughter, Pauline's mother confesses:

"Without Plan's intervention, I would have had no way to save my daughter from an early and forced marriage. My daughter's schooling is a priority".





WASH (INCLUDING HYGIENE PROMOTION/ SUPPLIES, WASH FACILITIES AND MHM)



- ▶ **Benin, Burkina Faso and CAR** supported the provision of over 3,500 handwashing devices to schools and communities, health and child care centers, local administration and supported manufacturing of handwashing Tippy taps for 3,591 sponsorship families in Burkina Faso as well as training of 167 hygiene committees on how to use the handwashing equipment in Benin.
- ▶ With the technical support from the Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Water and Energy in the region, **Cameroon** is engaged in the diagnosis and repair of malfunctioning boreholes in 4 regions (North, Center, East and North-West), in order to provide water to vulnerable populations in partner communities.
- ▶ **Guinea** did a cumulative distribution of 2,343 handwashing devices, 263 thermoflashs, 2,623 facial masks, 500 posters, 711 boxes of hydro-alcoholic gels and more than 1000 boxes of soap to reach some 3,286,567 community actors to ensure proper hand washing and preventive measures.
- ▶ **Guinea Bissau** distributed preventive kits in 71 communities across Bafata and Gabu regions (soap, bleach, etc.) benefiting in total 6,517 sponsored children including 3,989 girls.
- ▶ **Liberia** procured and distributed 1041 hand hygiene kits for 70 Sponsorship communities in Lofa and provided several commercial motorcyclists with one-gallon faucet containers and disinfectants to promote handwashing by passengers boarding commercial bikes in Lofa.
- ▶ **Mali** got 12,500 masks made by 40 young seamstresses as a support to their income generating activity and distributed in several partner communities.
- ▶ **Niger** carried out awareness on the prevention measures of the Covid-19 pandemic followed by the setting up of 2638 tippy tap hands washing facilities reaching 1,663 sponsored children including 1,292 girls in Maradi and 13,224 people in Dosso and Tillabéri.
- ▶ In Louga Region **Senegal**, 320 under 18 girls received hygiene kits and were sensitized on barrier measures of Covid-19 (including handwashing demonstration) and preventing GBV.
- ▶ **Togo** delivered handwashing devices, soap and awareness posters to 21 health facilities in Tchamba Prefecture and supported 159 people from 42 households with hand washing equipment.



Mobile washing facilities protect Liberia's motorcycle taxi drivers and passengers

In Liberia, motorcycle taxis are one of the most popular ways of getting around. There are few buses or rail networks in the country, so people have little option but to climb on board one of the many motorbikes that zip around the cities and towns, potentially exposing themselves and their driver to COVID-19.

To protect passengers and drivers from catching and spreading the disease, Plan International has introduced an innovative initiative to encourage people to follow the preventative measures in place and wash their hands before and after riding one of the taxis.

“

When a passenger stops me for a ride, I first make sure they have on a face mask. Next, I ensure they wash their hands. After washing their hands, I allow them to get on the bike and carry them to where they want to go. Also, because of the social distancing imposed by the government, I don't carry more than one person on my bike.”

John (beneficiary motorcycle rider) explains.

Supported by the Motorcyclist Union and the Liberia Transport Union, Plan International is providing one-gallon water containers and disinfectant to riders in Lofa county.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (INCLUDING YOUTH PARTICIPATION)

- ▶ The [Youth Challenge Fund \(YCF\)](#), a competitive and inclusive flexible fund initiative to strengthen girl- and youth-led organisations in West and Central Africa during COVID-19, has been launched. 1350 applications received. A youth led project governance body is being set-up for the selection of projects to be funded and coordination of next steps.
- ▶ In **Benin**, 510 young people, including 193 girls between 14 and 24 years of age, and 155 parents were made aware of the barriers and the pandemic (YEWA Project).
- ▶ In **Benin** and **Burkina Faso**, round tables, radio spots, door to door visits with posters, and town crying in local languages enabled to reach more than 20,000 households as well as about 3,500 members of VSL group in Burkina Faso.
- ▶ In collaboration with the Regional Delegation of Youth and Civic Education, **Cameroon** trained 350 youths on mobilising peers against the Covid-19 pandemic, including tips for improved SRHR for girls and young women. A total of participated in this program (211 women, 139 men).
- ▶ In **CAR**, 1,200 posters, 2,000 pamphlets and 60 banners were distributed and enabled to reach some 48,000 with Covid-19 prevention messages through community child protection structures in Ouham, Haute-Kotto, Mambere Kadei, Nana Grebizi and other prefectures.
- ▶ **Guinea** equipped 1,590 Community Relays and 954 CBO leaders with protection kits to prevent Covid-19 during home visits and educational talks in the community, and distributed 1,572 posters for awareness raising purpose.



Community sensitisation session in Gwoza, Nigeria



Peers training on liquid soap manufacturing in Togo.

- ▶ **Guinea Bissau** reached 455,964 people on Covid-19 prevention through radio programmes, educative talks with community leaders, digital media and some 2000 posters displayed in strategic places in 382 communities of Bafata and Gabu regions.
- ▶ In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, **Liberia** launched a joint Covid-19 prevention awareness outreach in 8 Sponsorship communities in Nimba and provided 15 megaphones and batteries to National Risk Communication Pillar to harness community mobilization in hot Covid-19 communities.
- ▶ Thanks to interactive radio programs, synchronized radio broadcasts, radio spots, round tables and door-to-door sensitization on Covid-19, SSR and GBV, **Mali** reached more than 61,597 people including 10,000 children in Yanfolila and Bougouni communities.
- ▶ **Niger** reached 3,309 people with awareness raising sessions on the consequences of lockdowns, the risks of unwanted pregnancy due to the Covid-19, preventive measures, and the importance of girl education.
- ▶ **Nigeria** reached out to about 1000 people including 643 women in Adamawa, Borno & Yobe state on child stress, community transmission and prevention of Covid-19.
- ▶ **Senegal** reached out to 200,000 people including some 45,300 under 18 girls, with radio programs and has been able to support the creation of youth WhatsApp groups in several communities to disseminate Covid-19 prevention and child protection messages.
- ▶ **Togo** reached out to about 191,000 people in several communities across the country with community awareness-raising sessions on Covid-19, radio shows, debates, and audiovisual spots.



Community Engagement and Accountability (including youth participation)

People living with disabilities face unique challenges which have been heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic, including equal access to health care, support and information, as well as coping with social isolation, loss of employment and income support and the effect of the situation on their mental health.

To safeguard the rights of people with disabilities during this period, Plan International is working with the disability relief organisation OSH-Guinea to prevent the spread of the virus and protect the most vulnerable communities in Conakry. The association, made up of girls with disabilities between the ages of 19 and 35, is ensuring that people with disabilities have the hygiene materials and the information needed to shield themselves against the disease.



Oumou H., the founding member of the association, explains more about the initiative.

“People with disabilities are very exposed to this disease. For us, this is a struggle for the right to life as this disease will hit the most vulnerable people hardest. To this end, we are teaching people with disabilities and their families to follow the simple but important barrier measures while preventing the emergence of any form of stigmatisation towards them.”





HEALTH (INCLUDING COVID INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL, SRHR)

- ▶ **Benin** trained 192 people (45 women, 147 men) living with HIV, mediators, LGBTQ, Therapeutic Educators, Legal Assistants, Injecting drug users on SRHR, MNCH, Food and Nutrition, and Covid-19.
- ▶ **Burkina Faso** supported awareness raising and provision of SRH services, including family planning to 64 women associations in 3 health centers in the South-West region and donation of hand washing kits to 44 health centers in Bazega province.
- ▶ **Cameroon** and **Mali** organized training sessions respectively for 93 health personnel on Covid-19 cases management in the North and North West regions, and for 43 health workers in Dioila (Mali).



- ▶ **Guinea** ensures continuum of services at the community level with the 184 peer educators (HIV prevention component) and 955 community tuberculosis workers in cooperation with all NGOs/SR partners who coordinate activities with community workers.
- ▶ **Liberia** conducted orientation with 64 (50 women, 14 men) Healthcare workers in 4 districts in Nimba on Covid-19 preparedness/response flowchart and is working with the Ministry of Health and other partners to train Covid-19 case management team members and contact tracers in Lofa.
- ▶ In **Nigeria**, some 24,069 people (15,146 women, 8923 men) received SBCC on Covid-19 prevention in Pulka community of Gwoza.
- ▶ **Senegal** ensures Covid-19 prevention by organising training sessions on the Covid-19 pandemic and gender-based violence for some 1,280 community actors in Thiès, Kaolack and Louga. They in turn have been able to reach out to more than 10,000 households via home visits and door to door sensitisation.
- ▶ **Togo** continued the provision of hygiene kits to 12 health facilities in Kara and Atakpamè Regions, and engaged youth clubs, pregnant women and other community groups on the risk of pregnancy, the importance of prenatal consultation and vaccination for the new-born, sexual & menstrual hygiene, early pregnancy prevention, etc.



Better menstrual hygiene management for girls in Nigeria.

To mark the commemoration of the World Menstrual Hygiene Day 2020, Plan International **Nigeria** had as target to educate 10 million girls to take charge of their menstrual hygiene, even in the period of covid-19 pandemic.

Amongst other activities carried out were round table discussions with adolescent school girls in Maiduguri, interactive online engagement and campaign on myths and concerns about menstruation, community sensitisation, and dignity kits distribution.

In a safe space, adolescent girls living in GDSSS IDP Camp, Bama Local Government Area of Borno State were also thought how to make reusable sanitary pads, as most of them are dependent on their parents and caregivers, who cannot afford to buy them sanitary pads during their monthly cycles.



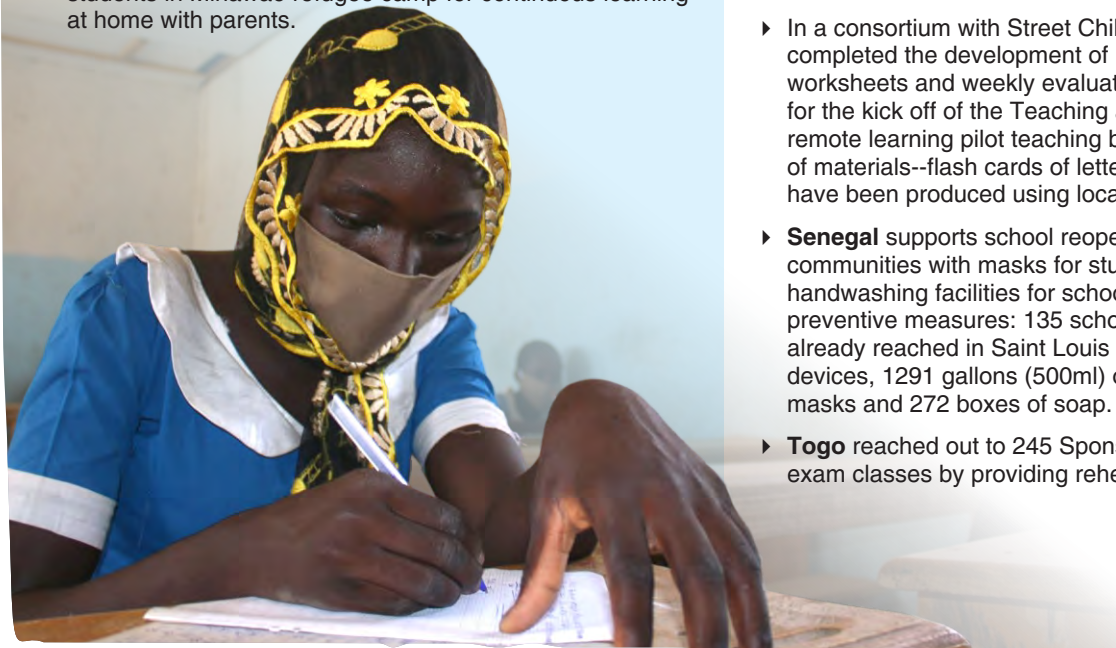
“With the training we just received, we are ready to produce reusable sanitary pads in larger quantities, and sell it at a more affordable price to other girls and women in the community. This will serve as a way of sustaining the dignity kits support we receive from donors,” says one of the beneficiaries of the training.





EDUCATION (INCLUDING EARLY LEARNING AND PARENTING)

- ▶ In **Benin**, 1078 additional handwashing equipment were distributed in Primary and Secondary Schools in six (06) municipalities and the Departmental Directors of Health and Primary Education of Zou and Couffo carried out a joint mission to ensure the proper use of those hand washing kits and respect of barrier gestures by teachers and schoolchildren in schools.
- ▶ **Burkina Faso** organized a series of training for 274 primary school teachers and 20 pedagogical supervisors on Covid-19 prevention, supported the manufacturing of hand washing Tippy taps for 244 primary schools, did donations of trash cans and hand washing kits to 11 primary schools and organized Radio broadcast of educational programs for 5th grade pupils in the Kourintenga Province.
- ▶ **Cameroon** procured 1,643 radio sets and flash keys to enable refugee children to continue to have access to learning, and distributed integrative exercises to 1,058 pupils (530 girls) and 448 (180 girls) secondary school students in Minawao refugee camp for continuous learning at home with parents.



- ▶ **CAR** reached out to some 249 teachers, school directors and school authorities through briefing sessions on Covid-19 pandemic and preventive measures.
- ▶ In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and **Ghana** Education Service, Ghana continues to offer e-learning using Plan International Ghana's T4T and MG-Cubed project studios to Basic school children, with a reach out which is far higher than the original target beneficiaries.
- ▶ **Guinea** ensures education continuity at home with distribution of radios, books, pens, mathematic boxes, and other materials provided to 36,306 students, including 16,802 girls from Guéckédou prefecture, and provides special education support to 735 children living with a disability (284 girls).
- ▶ **Liberia** is working with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and key players to develop age and gender appropriate guided Health Kits contents on Covid-19 for schools across the country, and responded to MoE's request for EiE related documentation and resources, by sharing education resources from GH, NOs, and WACA.
- ▶ To ensure implementation of continuous learning for children at home, **Mali** is supporting recording of courses with the participation of 10 students (4 girls, 6 boys) and in partnership with the Mahamane Fondogoumo PC school.
- ▶ In a consortium with Street Child and UNICEF, **Nigeria** has completed the development of learning materials, worksheets and weekly evaluation templates, for learners for the kick off of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) remote learning pilot teaching by radio. In total, 22,321 sets of materials--flash cards of letters, syllables and numbers have been produced using locally available materials.
- ▶ **Senegal** supports school reopening in sponsorship communities with masks for students, hygiene kits, handwashing facilities for schools and radio awareness on preventive measures: 135 schools and 6,895 children already reached in Saint Louis Region with hand-washing devices, 1291 gallons (500ml) of hand sanitizer, 8000 masks and 272 boxes of soap.
- ▶ **Togo** reached out to 245 Sponsored Children (139 girls) in exam classes by providing rehearsal classes.



Back to School in the Minawao Refugee Camp.

In March 2020, closure of schools and lockdown was ordered by the **Cameroon** Government due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This caused millions of pupils and students, including refugee and IDP children to abruptly stop learning, with a lot of anxiety going on about end of year exams. It is with a lot of excitement that more than 500 Class 6 pupils from the Minawao refugee camp who will be writing the First School Leaving Certificate examination went back to school on 1st of June, in respect of the Government's decision to reopen school for examination classes. Plan International Cameroon put in place hand washing devices and distributed hand sanitisers, school kits, radios & USB keys to facilitate learning during this period of COVID-19.



"I thought I will never go back to school again after this long stay at home, some of my classmates have gone for marriage and my parents were also planning to give me out for marriage since there was no school but thanks to the timely resumption of schools I am now free from the marriage arrangement" **says Jaja, a class 6 pupil from Minawao refugee camp.**





FOOD AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (INCLUDING CVA, SOYEE, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND NUTRITION)

- ▶ In **Benin**, Adjohoun precisely, the YEWA project supported peer to peer and apprenticeship training for 20 associations - 714 youths (276 girls) in mask fabrication and liquid soap manufacturing, and 136 people (57 girls, 79 men) on handwashing equipment manufacturing.
- ▶ **Burkina Faso** supported training on entrepreneurship for 120 youths (89 girls) in the Sanmatenga, Bam and Namentenga provinces, for 12 sponsorship children in the commune of Garango, and did Cash transfers (25,000 FCFA) and Food kits donations to 150 households in the Bam province.
- ▶ **CAR** distributed food coupons to 500 people (372 women and girls) in various streets of Bangui, in order to support people living with HIV/AIDS and others affected by Covid-19 and raise awareness on Covid-19's barrier measures.



Manufacturing of crimps as income generating activity for a youth group supported by YEWA Project in Togo.



- ▶ **Cameroon** submitted a report for rapid survey on successful economic activities for refugees during the COVID crisis in Douala and Yaoundé and now proceeding with the registration of refugee households in preparation of the CBI payment within the framework of Covid-19 in Douala, Yaoundé, Langui and Banyo.
- ▶ **Niger** supported the production of 2,621 masks by young apprentice girls from the tailoring learning centres (members of the youth savings and loans association): 1,115 were sold and contributes to boost the economic power of the girls.
- ▶ In **Nigeria**, some 10,200 internally displaced people (5,814 women, 4,386 men) received food assistance.
- ▶ **Nigeria** is also supporting 2,700 youths (1,620 girls) with skills through the Vocational training Centres and apprenticeship scheme in Borno and Adamawa states in Nigeria.
- ▶ In **Senegal**, Cash transfer activities in the Region of Thiès reached 36,474 persons (18,340 women).
- ▶ **Togo** supported the training of about 190 young girls and boys on sewing of masks according to WHO norms and liquid soap manufacturing in Maritime Region.



Livestock to improve livelihood for children and families in Sierra Leone.

Plan International **Sierra Leone** begins the distribution of livestock to 200 beneficiaries in 10 communities in Port Loko and 12 communities in Moyamba districts to improve food security and boost household income for parents of sponsored children in the districts.

Making a statement while handing over the livestock to the beneficiaries in the Tinkatopa, Makama Saprokoh Chiefdom, the Country Director of Plan International Sierra Leone, Evariste Sindayigaya, advised beneficiaries to look after the livestock so that they multiply and generate income for their families and the community.

Prior to the distribution, Plan International Sierra Leone trained members of the 200 targeted beneficiary households in domestic livestock rearing, and so far, beneficiaries from 7 communities have received livestock.

The distribution to the remaining 15 communities is expected to be completed by June 30th.

Plan International Sierra Leone will continue to engage with the beneficiary communities to monitor and evaluate the impact of the livestock in their households.



“Nutrition remains a serious concern in Sierra Leone, with high incidence of chronic, and particularly seasonal hunger in the rural areas. Therefore, improving food security and access to financial services for parents and caregivers of children and young people remain key to advancing the rights of children”. **Evariste Sindayigaya (CD - Sierra Leone).**



HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION, INFLUENCING, PARTNERSHIP AND GENDER EQUALITY

- ▶ At **West and Central Africa** Regional level, a joint Member States briefing was organized with OCHA, FAO, WFP, UNICEF, ACF, and NRC. The [Sahel Humanitarian Needs and Requirements Overview](#) was published and shared, as well as a joint [press release](#) with the voices of eight directors from UN and NGO partners. A press briefing was also held with both UN directors and NGO representatives including Plan International.
- ▶ Plan International **Benin** as member of the social and child protection thematic group participated in the first meeting of the cash transfer sub-group to support the government in cash transfers for the affected population.
- ▶ Plan International **Cameroon** chaired the 4th coordination meeting of partners of the task force of Covid-19 response working in the Minawao refugee camp. Discussions were centred on activity coordination, community engagement, communication improvement, case management, and wash item distribution in the camp.
- ▶ **CAR** joins UNICEF and other child protection stakeholders to advocate to the government for the authorisation of Child Friendly Spaces activities, to be carried out in due respect of restrictions and Covid-19 prevention measures including social distancing and hygiene measures.
- ▶ Plan International **Ghana** is continuing its participation and contributions to the Inter-Agency Working Group on Emergency Response, pushing for more structured approach to emergency response in Ghana. This group consist of 35 UN, INGOs and some LINGOs.
- ▶ Advocacy carried out by non-state actors, including Plan International **Guinea**, led to the release of 42 children in conflict with the law in order to decongest prisons in the context of Covid-19 pandemic. They are being cared for by foster families or their respective centers.
- ▶ Within the framework of **Guinea Bissau's** Ministry of Education contingency plan to ensure that children continue to have an education in times of crisis, Guinea Bissau is working with other GPE members, including UNICEF, to introduce learning from distance through radio.

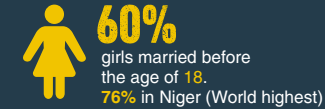


Handing over of "No Pad Tax" advocacy document to the Minister of Gender by Plan Alumni in Ghana

- ▶ **Liberia** successfully advocated for the Ministry of Education to adopt young people's voices in the Covid-19 Education Emergency Response Plan that originally did not consider that. It was revised to include media-based activities on young peoples' contribution to national response in line with child protection guidance and continuity of learning.
- ▶ In **Mali**, Advocacy towards the Ministry of Women, Children and Family Promotion to support the development and implementation of a COVID-19 contingency plan specific to the protection of the child, extended to the establishment of a hotline for information, counselling and referral of children to specialized services.
- ▶ **Niger** engages with UNFPA and the Covid-19 task team to take part in the revision of the HRP at both national and sub-regional level (Diffa) by providing required data and technical support.
- ▶ **Nigeria** actively participated in the seminar on "The future of Almajiri children in a post-COVID world" with the Governor of Kaduna State and other government officials from Northern States, INGOs, National NGOs, CBOs, other stakeholders (teachers' unions, national PTAs, etc.).
- ▶ **Senegal** engaged with State actors to ensure that they consider specific needs of girls and young women with disabilities and school girls regarding Menstrual Hygiene Management.
- ▶ **Sierra Leone** continues to coordinate with the Government the Emergency Operation Centre for the national Covid-19 response, including resource mobilization and planning for a potential second national lockdown.
- ▶ In collaboration with its partner CREUSET-Togo, **Togo** has initiated an advocacy to get a "presidential pardon" to release children and young people in conflict with the law, in order to enable them to be better protected and regain socio-professional reintegration.

HEAR IT FROM THE SAHEL: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON GIRLS

The Central Sahel countries face another existential threat in COVID-19 that adds a layer to the multi-crises that the region is plagued in. The region is affected by a complex crisis involving growing competition over dwindling resources, climatic variability, demographic pressure, high levels of poverty, disaffection and a lack of livelihood opportunities, etc.



The social and economic impact of the preventive measures taken by the governments to prevent the expansion of COVID-19, have heightened the risks for the most vulnerable population. As mothers and children, in general are the hardest hit.

Plan International's support to Girls in the Sahel

Plan International's response to address the challenges girls are facing during the pandemic crisis include:

- ▶ The consequences of COVID-19 will exacerbate the gender-based violence caused by conflicts and the existing gender inequalities.
- ▶ In March 2020, UNFPA recorded an increase in the risks of GBV.
- ▶ Confinement in Camp shelters and hosts families where promiscuity is already a huge challenge exacerbate women and girls' exposure to the risks of rape, sexual assault and domestic violence, difficulty maintaining dignity, etc.
- ▶ Cases of unwanted and early pregnancies, early and forced marriage, physical assaults, are increasingly being reported.
- ▶ The limited access to WASH facilities, information, and poor health and sanitation infrastructure in humanitarian setting, affect girls' health and menstrual hygiene management, as the scarce health facilities and resources will be diverted to the health crisis.

- ▶ Psychosocial support to girls who are confined or infected and cured from COVID 19
- ▶ Provision to girls in confined situation with menstrual management kits and dignity kits;
- ▶ Awareness raising on girls' education, girls' rights, and sexual and reproductive health,
- ▶ Strengthening economic protection and leadership capacity of girls and young women
- ▶ Engagement of girls, youth and community leaders on addressing the root causes of persisting gender inequalities and discrimination
- ▶ Gender sensitive information on COVID-19 that meets the needs of young women and girls, paying attention to language and literacy barriers.
- ▶ Inclusive education for girls through radio, TV, and Internet where possible.

"There is an immediate need to scale up the humanitarian response while providing timely, appropriate, and inclusive response to the pandemic through the increase and rapid disclosure of funding in order to protect the displaced and refugee girls of Sahel from the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities they are facing. In addition, interventions, policies and procedures need to consider the specific vulnerabilities, risks and needs of girls through gender sensitive measures and services to insure they have equal access to information, screening, health facilities and all the humanitarian response".



Our financial supporters so far include, but not limited to:



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