



Until we are all equal



Among the 1.9 million people in Gaza who have fled their homes, this family has sought shelter in Rafah.

Children in Crisis
Response Fund (CICRF)

Make an Impact When Every Second Counts

Children aren't to blame for war, conflicts and climate crises, and yet, inevitably, they suffer most. With the support of **inaugural donors like you**, Plan's first-ever emergency fund is making an immediate, life-saving difference in children's lives.

Close your eyes for a moment.

Imagine being in the middle of a war or crisis. Now, imagine being a child in the middle of that war or crisis. Every minute, every hour, every day could be the difference between life and death.

Although children aren't responsible for the problems of the world, they are the first to pay the price when crisis or conflict strikes. The odds that a child will face violence, sexual exploitation or hunger skyrocket in the immediate aftermath of an emergency event.

As one of the first donors to support Plan International Canada's Children in Crisis Response Fund (CICRF), you're a first responder for children whose communities have been shattered by war, conflict or extreme weather like droughts and cyclones.

In this report, you'll see the difference you're making and gain a fuller understanding of how CICRF funds are deployed during the early hours of an emergency and in the weeks and months that follow.

At this moment in history, nearly a quarter of the world's children live in a conflict zone, and 1 billion children live in parts of

the world that feel the brunt of climate emergencies. Your generous contribution puts Plan in a position to deliver urgent support – and a path forward – to children, whose futures are worth fighting for.



Children at one of Plan's child-friendly spaces in northern Haiti, in an area that is a flashpoint for gang violence.

Fund facts

WHAT: When a conflict or crisis strikes, Plan International dispatches an emergency response team to provide life-saving support within 72 hours.

WHO: Plan's emergency response teams partner with local organizations to assess and address the immediate and longer-term needs of children, especially girls, and their families. Between our specialized expertise in how crises affect children and our local and global networks, we are uniquely positioned to work at the intersection of disaster and development.

WHERE: So far, in Gaza, Chad and Haiti

WHY: A typical fundraising campaign – from planning and launch to when funds are deployed – takes about six weeks. It's a timeline that works well for supporting ongoing humanitarian initiatives in areas like education. When calamity strikes, however, the first few days are everything. The CICRF enables Plan to respond to emergencies as quickly and effectively as possible.

HOW MUCH: Since launching in the spring of 2023, the CICRF has raised more than **\$500,000**, all through private donations like yours.

Through Their Eyes

Is it even possible to imagine what it's like to be a child lost in the chaos and destruction of an airstrike or a weather catastrophe? Based on our program directors' experiences and their conversations with children in conflict and crisis zones, we have tried our best to put the unthinkable into words.



➤ THE FIRST 60 SECONDS:

The earth feels alive.

There's a soft thump, then a whoosh of wind. Dense white smoke wafts up.

There's screaming, wailing and confusion.

➤ MOMENTS LATER:

A parent grabs their child's hand as they run, leaving their old life behind. Sharp stones stab the undersides of their rubber slippers or bare feet.

Dust settles inside their noses. Their vision blurs.

Entire buildings fall like leaves.

A siren shrills out and the sound of children crying punctures the chaos.

TOP: Blast damage reduced this street in Gaza to rubble. LEFT: This girl lives with her family in an internally displaced persons' camp in Rafah, in southern Gaza.



Sudanese refugees who fled conflict in their country arrive at a transit centre in eastern Chad.

➤ THE FIRST 72 HOURS:

A child doesn't understand. They ask their mother when they can go home. She can't answer because she doesn't know.

Joints ache and hunger takes hold. Acid sloshes around, burning inside their stomachs. They look for water, food and – if they're lucky – a place to sleep.

Nowhere feels safe. There is no settling into a warm bed.

This is the new reality for a child in crisis.

► DAYS LATER:

A child is sandwiched among people being registered at a refugee camp. Some children are separated from their parents – some have permanently lost one or both.

They are still wearing the clothes from the first day they fled, now crusted in mud and sticky with sweat. They're assigned to a small tent, which they might share with dozens of people.

When there's enough water, they wash themselves as best they can. More than a hundred people share one bathroom. Girls run out of sanitary pads and use scraps of cloth, paper or leaves instead.

There is no privacy and no rest. Everyone is exhausted. Everyone is on edge.



► WEEKS IN:

A child and their mother have been surviving on dried and canned food. But now, even that is scarce.

Children have little to do all day, with no books, toys or games on hand. As families look to alleviate food and financial burdens, girls

become more at risk of early marriage. For many parents, this option is a desperate bid to give their daughter and remaining children a better chance at survival. In times like these, children can be abused, forced to work and exploited – sometimes in exchange for the basics to stay alive, like food.

► MONTHS AND YEARS LATER:

After moving to a new host community, a child still hears explosions that aren't there.

They jump up at loud noises, remember what they saw in those first moments and feel afraid. They finally start going to school regularly. It has been months, so writing and reading is hard, and it is difficult to focus.

LEFT: A child in Gaza receives food from one of Plan's partner NGOs, Taawon. BELOW: Children in Haiti get a break from gang violence in a safe child-friendly space.



Your Contribution in Action

THE EYE OF THE STORM: How your donation impacts children in the first few days

Plan International helps children get what they urgently need, including food, water and other essential supplies like dignity kits containing menstrual pads, soap and underwear.

In addition to providing materials for temporary shelters (e.g., tarps and rope), our teams work to reunite children who have been separated from their families and help protect those who are isolated or orphaned.

We also distribute purification tablets that ensure water is safe to drink. This, along with sanitation support like hand-washing stations and latrines, helps stop diseases such as cholera and typhoid, which can cause a second wave of deadly risk for those clustered in camps.

Thank you for your continued support.

Children play at a child-friendly space set up by Plan in eastern Chad, near the Sudanese border.



THE AFTERMATH: How your contribution helps displaced families pick up the pieces

As time passes and international attention fades, food becomes scarcer than ever. Our teams help ensure that provisions like oil and flour and cooking pots are available for families.

With every passing day, girls are at increased risk of early marriage. This is why we prioritize introducing important safety measures. We help share information about girls' rights and preventing, identifying and reporting violations like trafficking.

Protecting childhoods is pivotal – and part of that means encouraging play. In times of crisis, it's crucial to help children feel a renewed sense of their normal routine. We form child-friendly spaces as places of respite, where children can giggle together, be read to by staff, or play with colourful blocks.

These are the things donors like you help us do.

“

Right away, we establish child-friendly spaces, because that provides a safe environment where children can play and learn, and it helps support their resilience and well-being. That needs to happen very early in the aftermath of a crisis.”

—Jessica Capasso,
director of humanitarian
assistance, Plan
International Canada



I see suffering which is unprecedented, and I see it almost every day. It is important to recognize that every little bit of help actually helps people. ... So it's not an option to not do anything."

—Dr. Unni Krishnan, global humanitarian director, Plan International

The Difference Our Donors Make in a World in Crisis

• **In Gaza**, where all 335,000 children under the age of five are at risk of severe malnutrition, Plan International Egypt has developed a working partnership with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society (ERCS), one of the few organizations with permission to take supplies into Gaza. With \$75,000 in CICRF funding, Plan has been able to procure and load first-aid kits, cartons of water and food baskets into large trucks for ERCS to deliver across the Rafah border crossing – an extremely challenging operation.

• **In Sudan**, where civil war has launched the country into a state of crisis largely ignored by the international community, more than 50% of the 10 million civilians forced to flee their homes are under the age of 18. An allocation of \$75,000 from the CICRF is being used to respond to the growing humanitarian needs of children and families fleeing to eastern Chad.

• **In Haiti**, CICRF donors are helping support children and their families after a spike in gang violence led to the displacement of more than 54,000 people. In two weeks alone, more than 15,000 people, including upwards of 3,000 children, were forced to flee their homes. Through a \$75,000 grant, our teams will be able to reach many of those in need with emergency cash assistance, supplies and safe shelter spaces.

How the Children in Crisis Response Fund works

Together we can act faster to support children in crisis.



Invest > Crisis hits > Drawdown > Response > Support

Donors like you create a "ready to deploy" fund for crisis response.

Our in-country team makes a quick decision to respond.

Decision is made to allocate funds within 24 hours.

Community-led response takes place, leveraging the fund to gather further support.

We work with the community beyond the initial response phase.



Marwa and her children live in a temporary shelter in Kassala State in Sudan. "It's hard to be uprooted from your home and move to another area," she says. "It affects our health, our mental health and morale."

Facing the Emergencies of Today and Tomorrow

Around the world, even in countries previously considered stable, crises are erupting. In remote areas, there are more coups, protests and violence than ever. Even schools are being burnt down. For perspective: We have seen more conflict and war in the last two years than we had seen since the end of the Cold War. And so much of it goes unreported by the media.

At the same time, the world is experiencing a record number of climate-induced crises, with affected regions often flipping back and forth between flooding and droughts. "Every year seems to surpass the previous year, and yet the funding is not there," says Jessica Capasso, director of humanitarian assistance at Plan Canada. "Having a reliable source of funding like the CICRF enables us to say to a country office, 'We have some money for you. Start responding.'"

In the age of permacrisis, your generous support of the CICRF is helping us tackle not just the humanitarian disasters currently unfolding in Gaza, Sudan and Haiti but the emergencies of tomorrow – the ones that haven't happened yet, but are right around the corner. Thank you for being among our very first champions.



Until we are all equal



Plan International Canada
245 Eglinton Ave East, Suite 300
Toronto, Ontario
M4P 0B3
416-920-1654 | 1-800-387-1418



© 2024 Plan International Canada Inc. The Plan International Canada name, associated trademarks and logos are trademarks of Plan International Canada Inc. The Standards Program Trustmark is a mark of Imagine Canada used under the license by Plan International Canada.



Angham, 14, and her four brothers were displaced from their home when the fighting in Sudan spread from Khartoum to El Gezira State. Today they live with their parents in Kassala State in a small office space with no beds.

For more information,
please contact:
philanthropy@plancanada.ca

About Plan International Canada

Plan International Canada is a member of a global organization dedicated to advancing children's rights and equality for girls. Plan International has been building powerful partnerships with and for children for over 85 years and is now active in more than 80 countries. We stand with children, especially girls, wherever they are oppressed, exploited, left behind or not equally valued. We're determined optimists, and we will continue to persevere until we are all equal.