

A YEAR IN PARAGUAY

SUMMARY REPORT 2011

Plan is providing technical farming assistance and training



About Paraguay

Paraguay is a landlocked country in South America. Forty percent of its population live in poverty.

Plan has been working in Paraguay since 1994, and has a presence in five areas. One of these – Cordillera – has made important progress in recent years. Plan is now moving out of this area to set up programmes in regions with higher rates of poverty.

Problems affecting the children of Paraguay

- Poor quality schooling and high drop-out rates
- Lack of good healthcare services
- Violence against children (especially girls) occurs within the family, at school and in the community
- Poor farming methods mean families often lack sufficient food



School members of a group that's encouraging students to respect the school environment

PLAN'S PRIORITIES IN PARAGUAY

1 Health and education

- Negotiating with local, regional and national authorities to improve health and education
- Helping parents learn about disease prevention

2 Encouraging children's participation

- Supporting children to get involved in decision-making, so their needs are better addressed
- Teaching children how to claim their basic rights

3 Creating healthy environments

- Extending safe water supplies and sanitation coverage
- Promoting sanitation and hygiene at home, in schools and in the community
- Raising awareness about the environment and methods to protect it

4 Improving incomes

- Supporting families, women and young people access credit in times of emergency
- Ensuring essential costs can be met
- Providing technical farming assistance and training
- Helping families increase food production and boost incomes

By being a child sponsor, you have directly supported projects like the ones below. Your ongoing support sustains our long-term development work which impacts the lives of children, their families and communities for generations to come.

Together we are making an invaluable difference to the lives of people in Paraguay.

To learn more about Plan's work in Paraguay visit:

www.plan.org.au/ourwork/southernamerica/paraguay



Lorena drawing picture encouraging pupils to respect their school environment.

CASE STUDY: DEMOCRACY, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Children's rights are at the centre of Plan's work. And the rights set down by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to education, healthcare, safety, self-expression and more are nowhere more important than in Paraguay, a country that has suffered dictatorship, corruption, and the suppression of human rights in its recent history.

Educating Paraguayan children about their rights, and giving them the skills to claim them, is one of the ways Plan aims to improve their lives in the future. It ensures that when they grow up they will have the knowledge and capability to hold governments and others in authority to account for fulfilling their obligations.

Children in Guairá, southern Paraguay, know that creating a culture of respect of children's rights will ultimately contribute to a better standard of living for them and their families. And with Plan's help, they have been passing on their knowledge to their communities.

A social and financial education

Esther Correa School in the community of Caroveni, Guairá, is filled with children eager to talk about what they've been learning. Nelson, 9, excitedly explains: "We've learned that saving is important, and there are several ways to save – not just money, but also water and time. Some children also learned how to recycle," he adds.

"I tell my mum, we can save water and electricity. If a tap is broken, we should buy a

new one to avoid leaks, and we must turn off the lights when we're not using them. And she listens to me!"

Lina is one of the teachers participating in the project. "This is the first time that teachers have been trained to teach children financial skills, as well as how to make better use of available resources," she says. "In our country, financial management is still seen as something exclusive to adults. But these children are already aware of the importance of saving. During classes, with our help, they made their own piggy banks. Some children say their parents have also started to save money."

A miniature democracy

The project also concentrates on teaching children about their rights, and about living democratically. "We've been working on social skills for the past few years," says one Year 3 teacher. "Now we have a School Government – and this year, a girl was elected as President."

That girl is 10-year-old Celina. She, along with the members of her government, promotes a number of activities including respecting others, keeping the school clean and lobbying for children's rights. She says: "The children involved in this programme easily learn about activities, work faster, know their rights, and participate in sessions and events. They are no longer shy."

Children's rights

Wilma, who has been teaching for 15 years, sums up the importance of people knowing their rights: "Children are cleverer now. They protect themselves and protect their rights. They participate and do not have the shyness often characteristic in rural children. We, the adults, cannot demand our rights because we don't know what rights we have. If we don't know them, we can't claim them."

With rights, however, also come responsibilities. As 11-year-old Lorena comments: "Now I know my rights well. I know I have the right to education and to recreation, but I have to organise myself to have time to do everything!"

Lorena is one of thousands of children in Paraguay that Plan is helping to turn into engaged, informed citizens, with the skills to be able to transform the country for the better.

Some names have been changed for child protection and privacy reasons.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2010

- Trained 1,385 farmers on ways to improve their crop yields
- Helped enable over 2,000 people access to financial services such as savings and credit, promoting a culture of saving
- Trained 1,850 teachers to ensure they work in ways which are supportive towards children, and encourage children to take an active part in the learning experience



Taking part in a Plan economic and food security project to improve quality of farming practices.

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