

A YEAR IN TOGO

SUMMARY REPORT 2011

Plan is working with communities to increase their resilience to disasters



About Togo

Togo remains one of the poorest countries in the world and nearly three quarters of its population rely on subsistence farming to survive.

Plan is working with families, communities, and local and national agencies to improve the welfare and prospects of the country's most vulnerable children.

Problems affecting the children of Togo

- Families have little access to quality healthcare
- Lack of clean water and proper sanitation
- Schools and teaching standards are poor
- 62 percent of people live in poverty
- Little awareness of children's rights



Children raising awareness about health risks caused by open-defecation.

PLAN'S PRIORITIES IN TOGO

1 A healthy start

- Offering families health insurance
- Working with communities to prevent the spread of HIV and care for those affected by it
- Connecting communities to clean water and sanitation facilities

2 Learning for life

- Improving school buildings and training teachers
- Constructing school sanitation facilities and offering healthcare
- Promoting girls' education
- Offering alternative forms of education for those not in school

3 Protection and participation

- Raising awareness of children's rights and protection
- Offering families and young people savings and loans schemes to increase financial security opportunities
- Supporting children orphaned by HIV and AIDS

4 Disaster risk reduction and response

- Working with communities to increase their resilience to disasters



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 Togo.

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

www.plan.org.au/ourwork/westafrika/togo



CHW carrying out a rapid diagnosis for malaria.

CASE STUDY: HEALTH AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITIES

Richala is glad her mother listened to the community health workers in Bodjé, her village in south Togo. Without them, she and her baby might not be as healthy as they are today.

Richala gave birth at home, like her mother and her grandmother before her. But local health workers persuaded her mum that Richala and her baby would be best cared for at the Gbadjahé community health centre, where professionals could monitor the baby's progress and give Richala any medical help she needed.

"They provided me with all possible care that I did not have in the village," explains Richala. "My baby was also registered at birth."

Richala is one of the lucky ones. Her village and others in the district are working with Plan and our partners to make sure families and communities know how to protect the health of mothers and children under five years old. This work is badly needed. In this region, 60 percent of families have no basic education and so have little understanding of how to ensure their children thrive, and what to do when they are ill.

Community involvement in health issues is bringing positive change

Plan is uniting families and communities, the ministry of health, local agencies and health professionals to create a network dedicated to ensuring mothers have information and support to keep themselves healthy and give their babies and young children the best start in life.

We are bringing healthcare closer to communities, literally, by recruiting local people to become community health workers (CHWs). With training, the CHWs can advise families on health matters and make them aware of the health issues facing young children. They also provide basic medical care.

Their role is varied. It might include advising new mothers about birth registration, teaching families about hygiene or showing parents how to prevent malaria. Plan has supplied bicycles to help them travel to each village and first aid kits to those living more than five miles from the nearest health centre.

Positive change

The CHWs are given professional supervision and work closely with health agencies. It's a relationship that benefits everyone, as Raymond Nagbe, a medical worker for East-Mono health district explains:

"People no longer come [late] to the hospital when their condition has become too critical [to treat]. The sick often receive first care from the CHWs and are referred to the health centres on a timely basis if the disease develops. And because of this, the families spend less money treating themselves."

The CHWs' activities at the heart of communities are backed up with health training for professionals and wider health campaigns. Recently, local radio has broadcast on topics like newborn care and involving husbands in ante and post-natal check-ups.

Community involvement in health issues is bringing positive change, judging by Plan's statistics. Over 40 percent more people are now accessing outpatient care, and the use of maternity services has gone up from 57 percent to 69 percent.

It's just a small part of Plan's successful work in Togo this year.

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

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2010

- Established 375 savings and loans groups, enabling more than 9,400 people to increase their incomes
- Trained 185 teachers on better teaching methods to improve children's learning
- Held training for more than 90 community members in Sokodé and Atakpamé to teach them about hygiene and sanitation issues and how to manage water and sanitation projects



Learning in class.