



Atik holding up his birth certificate in Bangladesh.

CHILD PROTECTION

CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE, ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION

OUR CHALLENGE

All children have the right to be protected. Yet, more than one billion children experience violence every year. Globally, nearly one in three adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 have been the victims of **combined emotional, physical and/or sexual violence** perpetrated by their husbands or partners.

Evidence shows that violence, abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation can cause irreversible damage to a child's health and development both in the short and longer term, impairing their ability to develop, learn and socialise, and impacting their ability to thrive into adulthood. Children living without family care, on the streets, lacking official birth registration or in situations of conflict or natural disasters are especially vulnerable.

Ending all forms of violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation against children is now a global priority under the new **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Within the SDGs specific targets have been established to: create safe, non-violent, inclusive learning environments; eliminate harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage; eradicate the worst forms of child labour; achieve universal birth registration so children are legally recognised; end the abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children. It is a global imperative that these targets are met, to ensure all children grow up in a healthy and safe environment.

OUR RESPONSE

Recognising that children require specialised protection due to their age and evolving capacities, Plan International Australia's (PIA's) rights-based approach supports governments, civil society organisations, communities and children to ensure that children grow up in protective families, schools, and communities.

Guided by Plan International's global Child Protection strategy, our work focuses on four key gender transformative child protection impact areas, including:

1. Preventing and reducing violence in the family.
2. Ensuring Child Protection in Emergencies.
3. Strengthening and promoting gender responsive child protection services.
4. Promoting children's access to legal identity through rights-based civil registration.

We are helping to identify, prevent, and respond to violence against women, girls, and boys in **Cambodia** by strengthening community-based child protection services and ensuring access to age and gender sensitive case management.

PIA also works to reduce protection risks for children affected by sudden and slow onset disasters and emergencies. In support of the recovery efforts for children

Globally, almost 230 million girls and boys under the age of five are effectively invisible because they haven't had their births registered.

UNICEF

affected by flooding in **Nepal** and **Laos**, earthquake in **Indonesia**, and conflicts in **South Sudan**, **Myanmar**, **Syria**, and the **Philippines**, we collaborate with other Plan International offices to ensure children remain safe from harm. We have established child-friendly and adolescent-friendly spaces enabling vulnerable children (aged 0-18 years) and their caregivers to participate in safe space activities, structured psychosocial support, tracing and reunification services, and multi-sector activities including

child protection; disaster risk reduction; water, sanitation and hygiene and education. PIA is providing gender-based violence prevention and response services for refugee and host communities in **Lebanon**.

Building on our commitment to child protection Plan International recognises that ensuring children's right to a name and an identity is fundamental. **An estimated 1.1 billion people around the world cannot officially prove their identity, and 40% of these are children.** When children are officially registered, they are recognised, protected, and provided for through access to lifelong services, including education and healthcare. Plan International's global initiative – **Count Every Child** – has been **promoting universal birth registration for over 15 years.**

In support of this initiative, PIA works in **Uganda** and **Bangladesh**, in partnership with Plan International Country Offices, the mandated government authorities and parents and family members wanting to register births, deaths, marriages and divorces to design user friendly registration services that are accessible in low resource community settings. We are **developing Open CRVS**, a global first open source, rights-based, free CRVS software product that will be freely available and configurable to every country, in any location.

A key feature of PIA's child protection work is also **strengthening child protection capacity** for Australian civil society organizations and partners in countries where programs are based. We co-facilitates the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Child Protection training and regularly advises on child safeguarding. PIA provides in-country partners with training on child protection and support Pacific partners in **Papua New Guinea** and **Solomon Islands** to establish their own to child protection policies and processes, encouraging shared accountability and helping to ensure they operate as child safe organisations.

OUR KEY PARTNERS

PIA's primary partners are Plan International Country Offices in developing countries, working together in close partnership with relevant national and local government authorities. PIA is also the only INGO core member on the civil registration and vital statistics regional steering communities in Africa and the Asia Pacific.

PIA is also an active member of the global Child Protection cluster collaborating with UN agencies and other International Non-Government Organisations in emergency settings to coordinate and strengthen child protection systems and programs.

OUR FUTURE PRIORITIES

Over the coming year PIA will work together with its partners in-country to see the following key developments within the Child Protection programs:

- Support the creation, testing and expansion of Open CRVS beginning with an implementation pilot with the Government of Bangladesh.
- Strengthen the capacity of local and international partners through child protection training, policy development, and peer-to-peer support.

- Support children in emergency settings, preparing to respond and advise on child protection issues in future emergencies.

Institutional Donors

As an accredited NGO with the Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) many of PIA's projects are supported by Australian Aid through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program' (ANCP).



