



N we Lwin and Than Htike Zaw listen to the radio for weather updates on their father's farm in Myanmar.

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

WHEN CHILDREN CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING SAFE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES, THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE CAN BE MANAGED AND REDUCED

### OUR CHALLENGE

Climate change represents a real and urgent threat to vulnerable children, particularly girls, people with disability and their communities. The Earth's atmosphere is warming, largely as a result of human activities— increased greenhouse gas emissions, particularly burning of fossil fuels, creating uncertainty in weather patterns and increasing the likelihood of climate-related disasters and crises. The impacts of climate change continue to exceed previous scientific forecasts, worsening and multiplying at dramatic rates that will only be amplified in the years to come. It is affecting communities across the world, especially in Asia and the Pacific. According to the United Nations University, seven of the world's ten countries most vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters are in Asia and the Pacific.

Climate impacts and climate-related disasters often have disproportionate impacts on children, with serious implications for securing their human rights, including their health, survival and education. Impacts include malnutrition as seasonal changes affect food security, higher mortality rates from extreme weather events, susceptibility to climate-induced diseases and disruption of their education. Children are also affected when climate change hits their parents and caregivers, such as through loss of livelihoods and food shortages from loss of productivity. When climate change sparks conflict over dwindling resources, displacing entire populations, children are affected by threats to stability of states and societies. Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts is recognised in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global priority, Goal 13.

### OUR RESPONSE

Recognising that children are at the forefront of both current and future climate change impacts, Plan

International works across Asia and the Pacific using the child rights-based approach to support communities to adapt to climate change, ensuring children are involved and participate in the design of their own adaptation initiatives.

**In 2018 Plan International Australia helped around 62,000 boys, girls, women and men to benefit from climate change activities across Asia and the Pacific.**

We use the **Child Centred Climate Change Adaptation (4CA)** approach that focuses on building awareness of climate change among children and their communities and empowers them to be active participants in adaptation efforts. As part of the approach, each community and school designs and implements adaptation programs using small grants. The process strengthens the community members' ability to prepare for climatic impacts and engage with local and national governments to advocate action on climate change, including consideration of children's opinions.

With a strong focus on gender equality throughout our work, we promote equal access for girls and boys to training and capacity building, ensuring gender equity messages are present in awareness raising and training materials. We also recognise the importance of reaching the poorest and most vulnerable groups, including the disabled, to truly build a community's resilience.

### OUR PROGRAMS – ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

We are working to incorporate resilience elements throughout our wider development programming, aiming to achieve safe and resilient communities in which children and young people contribute to

managing and reducing the risks associated with climate change.

We collaborate with in-country partners to implement climate change adaptation programs in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Solomon Islands and Vietnam, with a total portfolio value of over A\$6 million for 2014–2019. Grant support is received from institutional donors, including the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

**75% of all disasters in the past two decades have been climate related; disasters now affect 250 million people every year.**

Climate Institute

Our programs aim to build community awareness of climate change science and impacts, enabling children to have a voice in their communities on adaptation planning and action. In partnership with communities, we support the development of child-friendly education materials and gamification of learning on climate change appropriate to the local context, including teacher manuals and student books, cartoons and animation films and fun games. Peer-to-peer learning is also applied to build children's knowledge about climate change integrating traditional local knowledge with science, empowering children to build awareness of their peers and their community. A key focus is to ensure disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are included in education systems where we work. Local governments and authorities at all levels are also supported to embed 4CA as a sustainable and recognised approach.

### OUR KEY PARTNERS

Partnerships with local governments and civil society are central to ensuring coherence in our climate change work. The programs collaborate with our country offices to build capacity and provide technical support when required. In the Pacific, we have developed strong partnerships with the Foundation of the Peoples of South Pacific International (FSPI), Solomon Islands Development Trust, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to coordinate and implement climate change programs with communities and collaborators from the focal ministries, provincial administrators, and House of Chiefs.

### OUR HIGHLIGHTS

Key outcomes of our climate change adaptation programs during the past year include the following:

- With Plan International Finland, we supported the implementation of the ADB-Climate Investment Funds project on **Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning** to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Cambodia to

carry out community-based climate change adaptation activities and mainstream climate change adaptation into their operations. The project supported 18 CSOs, benefitted 56,600 people in 17,176 households, 45 communes in 17 provinces, and 26 schools; women's participation in leadership and key activity groups was 55 percent overall. The thematic interventions included child centred climate change adaptation, climate smart agriculture, coastal resilience, water supply and urban resilience.

- Working with the in-country project team, we produced the document **Gender Mainstreaming into Community-Based Climate Change Adaptation in Cambodia, Experiences and Lessons from Civil Society**, which highlighted that all the Cambodian projects adopted gender-sensitive processes and demonstrated success in guiding CSOs in shifting from, in some cases, gender unaware toward gender transformative.
- The **Community Resilience to Climate Change and Disaster** project in Nagekeo, Indonesia, financed through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program of DFAT, implemented over 100 local adaptation measures by children, schools and their communities through small grants. The project over-achieved its target to empower children, youth and women as agents of change in community-based climate adaptation by nearly 50 percent. The increased confidence and empowerment of women, children and youth was attributed to knowledge and skills training in climate adaptation; growing food in areas prone to frequent droughts; training in business management and financial recording of seed grant implementation; and provision of water supply in households and schools. These resulted in increased income and economic welfare from livelihoods generated through adaptation of climate smart agriculture practices. Measures to adapt to climatic conditions—such as efficient use of irrigation systems for dry areas, provision of water storage, use of organic fertilizers, crop rotation to maximise crop quality and selection of crops that are more resilient to drought—were adopted by the communities and endorsed by the local and provincial government.

### OUR IMPACT

The various climate change projects are ensuring the meaningful participation of children. Children have been involved in documenting and monitoring community activities through video documentaries, working together with adults in the implementation of small grants projects and in climate change adaptation advocacy at national and regional levels. Education materials developed are being adopted and taken up by

other organisations, government agencies and countries, multiplying the reach and impact of the projects.

### OUR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Our Climate Change Adaptation program prioritises investments in research and innovation. We are partnering with the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) in developing and scaling-up effective gender-transformative interventions in climate change action in Southeast Asia. The Human Development Report for the Asia-Pacific region indicates that women continue to face serious economic, political and legal discrimination, resulting in unequal gender power relations, discriminatory social norms and lack of enabling policy environment to provide opportunities for women and girls to access productive resources and knowledge. The desired impact of this research is to guide policy recommendations, development programming and investments toward gender-transformative climate action.

Plan International Australia commissioned the Institute of Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney to undertake research on **Gender Transformative Climate Change Action in the Pacific** to support our global commitment to strengthen policy and programming objectives to be more gender transformative. Such an approach is critical in climate change programming, since gender inequalities can be amplified by the impacts of climate change. The end product of the research is a framework for Plan International gender-transformative climate change programming with user-friendly tools to inform the programming, two case studies and a published article of the findings in a development journal.

### OUR FUTURE PRIORITIES

Over the coming years, we will work with our partners in-country and regionally to better coordinate activities; provide awareness raising and disseminate evidence-based findings, and assist in building capacities to reduce vulnerabilities to climate change and disasters. Plan International has set an ambitious target of 100% gender transformative programme outcomes by 2022.

Our climate change adaptation programs will:

- prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable in climate change adaptation efforts, particularly children, who will bear the brunt of climate change far longer than adults;
- improve community adaptation pathways in partnership with the CSIRO and WWF, helping affected communities design and implement their own adaptation actions through small grants and knowledge exchange;
- help reduce gender inequities and promote gender-transformative approaches to climate change action;

- provide children, youth, people with disability, and all women and men with climate change education, awareness raising and training;
- align and coordinate our work on climate change adaptation, preparedness and disaster risk reduction at national and subnational levels; and
- protect children and their families who are forced to move as a result of climate change.

### 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).



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