



THE WORLD IS HUNGRY: Plan Invests \$750 Million to Help Children and Families Facing Global Food Crisis



The global food crisis will have the greatest impact on poor families in the developing world.

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

As food and oil prices reach record highs, people the world over are feeling the strain. In Canada, we've experienced mostly modest increases to our grocery bills and higher prices at the pumps. But in the developing world, food shortages are already a reality and more are looming. If the world does not act swiftly, the food crisis will become a devastating humanitarian disaster of global proportions.

Already, the global food crisis is threatening the survival of the world's chronically poor – the more than 850 million people who normally spend half to two-thirds of their income on food.

While the world is only now waking up to the staggering scale of the crisis, it didn't happen overnight. Many of the root causes have been at work for some time – causes such as agricultural subsidies,

and tariff and non-tariff barriers that keep produce grown in developing countries out of wealthy, lucrative markets.

Trade barriers designed to protect farmers in rich countries have led to a decline in agricultural activity in poor countries, where people have actually found it cheaper to buy staple foods, such as grains, that are imported from overseas. Now that production in the richer countries is falling behind increasing demand, prices are rising and supplies insufficient.

There are a number of factors driving increased demand and higher prices. Some key production areas have been experiencing drought. Climate change and skyrocketing fuel prices have prompted governments – most notably in Brazil and the United States – to promote a shift to biofuels, which are perceived to be less harmful to the environment.

CONTINUED ON PAGE PC6

Wellington West Capital Markets Makes an Investment with Guaranteed Returns

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

A decade of brutal civil war beginning in the early 1990s destroyed Sierra Leone's school system. Rebels targeted schools, health centres, churches and

cause their situation. Armed groups moved in to control the natural resources, especially diamonds," Cohen explains.

"Now that the country has become more stable, even modest investments can pay huge dividends



This new school, built with the support of Wellington West, is helping to improve education for all the children in the community.

mosques throughout the country, destroying thousands of buildings. Classroom tables, desks and benches were used as firewood. The few buildings that survived were looted, the zinc roofs removed and sold.

Six years have passed since the end of the fighting, yet 1.2 million children still do not have access to education. In the few primary schools that survived or have been rebuilt, 60 percent of the teachers have no training.

On the other side of the world, Daniel Cohen, Director of Institutional Equity Sales for Toronto-based Wellington West Capital Markets, was looking for a way to get involved in helping people who are not as fortunate as he is. Knowing the importance of doing his research before investing, he set out to determine where his contribution would have the biggest impact.

As Cohen learned how the children of Sierra Leone must struggle to get an education and what Plan is doing to help them, he decided that this was the perfect place to direct his investment.

"These people did nothing to

for the people of Sierra Leone. It's a place where we can do some good."

During the war, Plan created and implemented an innovative program called RapidEd. Children

CONTINUED ON PAGE PC4

IN THE WAKE OF THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS: Microfinance Project Empowers Farmers in Mali

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

In the village of N'Gouraba, about 75 kms outside Mali's capital city, a group of more than 100 farmers are well on their way to ensuring parents in their community can feed their families, despite the global food crisis – thanks to their partnership with a Vancouver-based investment banker named Kevin Campbell.

Mali is one of the most impoverished nations in the world, ranked by the United Nations as 174th out of 177 countries on quality of life measures. Campbell, who has a keen interest in Africa, first traveled to Mali in 2006 to visit two health clinics he helped establish through Plan.

While visiting the clinics, he also met with farmers in these communities, and learned about their struggles to fund much-needed improvements to their agricultural practices. As a result of this visit the idea of an agricultural finance project took root.

The project started, as all Plan projects do, with a needs assessment. Consultation with community members, communal councils, government, local non-government organizations and Plan staff



Vancouver investment banker Kevin Campbell, centre, visits the agriculture project he helped fund in Mali and finds emerging economic growth.

confirmed that subsidies for fertilizer and equipment were a priority need. Campbell's generous donation, matched by his co-worker Bob Disbrow, made it possible to provide low-interest loans for this purpose.

"The first year was difficult because the farmers faced tough and unusual climatic conditions," says Campbell. "We decided that we wouldn't ask them to start paying back their loans until year two. But remarkably, all the farmers still insisted on keeping to the original schedule. They were completely committed to the business model

and the opportunity the program presented to their livelihood."

When the farmers pay back the loan portion of the financing, the money goes into a community fund. In addition to providing a pool of capital for more agricultural loans, the fund provides assistance to the schools, and the health clinic Campbell helped build, as well as other priority projects. The fund will support the repair of a water retention dam, irrigation systems, and women and youth farming cooperatives.

CONTINUED ON PAGE PC2



Last year, Plan trained more than 24,000 professional health workers and 67,000 community volunteers to raise awareness about preventable diseases. Along with the construction and equipping of health facilities, immunization campaigns, pre-natal care, and programs on HIV and AIDS, Plan's work is improving children's health in more than 45 developing countries.

Creating a Circle of Childhood Learning in Cambodia



Kristy Pagnutti, left, a member of the Plan Leadership Council, visits a school in Cambodia.

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

Just 24 hours earlier, Wayne Che and Kristy Pagnutti were taking in the sights and sounds of a bustling Hong Kong.

Now they're in the middle of rural Cambodia, bouncing along in a four-wheel-drive truck as it navigates gravel roads, bends around steep corners and deep ditches. Pothole after pothole tosses them to and fro. The 30-minute venture through the tropical jungle seems like it's taking forever, but they finally arrive at their destination – a small community outside Siem Reap.

“Many of the parents are survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime who never had the chance to attend school themselves. They see the work Plan is doing as hope for the next generation.”

Wayne and Kristy, friends from Toronto, are members of the Plan Leadership Council (PLC), a group of young professionals who act as ambassadors for Plan and help support development projects in impoverished countries.

When they decided to make the trip to Hong Kong to attend a friend's wedding, they saw a great opportunity to see Plan's work for themselves.

“Plan has done a fantastic job of making presentations to the PLC and introducing us to field experts who give us a sense of Plan's unique approach to community development. However, we felt that the only way to truly appreciate and understand what's being accomplished is to visit a community where Plan is working,” says Wayne.

So they arranged to visit Plan's programs in Cambodia, and set off hoping to learn more about the work they so passionately support.

First stop: Plan's Siem Reap Primary School.

Here, they witness children at play and Plan sponsorship dollars at work. Kristy, who teaches grades five to eight in North York, Ontario, is struck by how similar children are around the world, as the children entice her into a game of Simon Says.

“If I could blur the surroundings and mute the language differences, I could just as easily be in Canada as Cambodia. Children in Siem Reap act, play and respond the same way as children in my classroom. And like Canadian

children, they deserve every right to learn and make better lives for themselves,” says Kristy.

The children welcome Wayne and Kristy into their classroom, describing with pride their active involvement in the design of the school. During the planning process, the children gave their input on the layout and advice on the colour scheme. It's very much their school, and they feel comfortable in it. This sense of ownership on the part of the children and their families is perhaps one reason why attendance figures are high and the school is so well managed.

may have the opportunity – not at all taken for granted in this part of the world – to go on to further study.

The Canadian visitors are surprised and pleased to find out that many of the students here are also teachers. After their school day ends, they take learning materials provided by the school back to their communities and teach English to other children who aren't able to attend daily classes at Siem Reap Primary School. Some of their classes can have as many as 20 children.

This peer-to-peer work multiplies the return on investment made in the school, a benefit not lost on Wayne, an accountant with Ernst & Young.

“Sponsorship money provided a school for one community, but peer-to-peer teaching provides a follow-on benefit for many others. It is truly amazing the impact that child sponsorship can have on an entire region,” says Wayne.

They both reflect on the fact that the PLC has at times found it difficult to raise money to solve problems that seem remote and unfamiliar to most Canadians.

“The field visit exposed us to the unimaginable hardships children face in countries like Cambodia,” they conclude. “Many of the parents

A wheelchair ramp ensures all children have access, an important detail in an area where undetonated land mines remain a horrific legacy of years of war. Wayne and Kristy tour a fully equipped computer room, which students can use even during off hours, and sit in on a class about health and anatomy.



Children and community members played an important part in designing their school.

They learn that the building going up next door is a secondary school being built by the Government of Cambodia, inspired by the example of this successful primary school. The Government was a key partner in the original project, setting the curriculum and providing the teachers. Now these young children

are survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime who never had the chance to attend school themselves. They see the work Plan is doing as hope for the next generation. This experience has inspired us to continue working with the PLC to spread the word and enlist support.”



Plan is helping to rebuild the education system lost during the war in Sierra Leone.

Young Professionals Inspire their Peers

On a warm, late summer afternoon in September, 75 players representing seven energetic soccer teams took to the fields in Toronto to champion a winning cause. Their goal was to raise money for Plan's work to improve the lives of impoverished children and communities in the developing world. They succeeded in raising more than \$5,000 to support an education project in Sierra Leone.

One of the teams was put together by Point Alliance, a premier information technology services and consulting provider and the tournament's lead sponsor. Their energy and commitment propelled them to first place, ultimately outplaying all other teams for the tournament trophy.

The Soccer in the Sand event was organized by the Plan

of supporters through events and peer-to-peer interaction. They are valuable partners in generating tremendous support for the long-term, sustainable solutions Plan brings to all the countries where it works.

PLC Toronto is already preparing for their next event, to be held on Friday, May 8, 2009 at the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto. Called **In Her Shoes**, the event will raise funds to support Plan Canada's **Because I am a Girl** campaign.

Plan Canada is looking for energetic, dedicated young professionals to start PLCs in other Canadian cities. The PLC provides a unique opportunity to network with peers and mentors, and to interact with some of the brightest minds in the international



John Zarei, back row, second from right, Chief Information Officer of Point Alliance, led his team to victory at the PLC's Soccer in the Sand event.

Leadership Council (PLC), a group of young professionals in the Greater Toronto Area who act as ambassadors for Plan. Members of the PLC commit their time and energy to raising funds and helping Plan Canada build a community

development field while supporting a worthy cause.

For more information, visit plancanada.ca/plc or contact Heather McLean at hmclean@plancanada.ca

FROM PAGE PC1

Microfinance Empowers Farmers

In an area with no banking infrastructure, this innovative program is giving community members the start-up funding and organizational training they need to improve their agricultural production, incomes, food security and quality of life in a sustainable way.

“The project started in the central village, but now affects neighbouring communities – benefiting about 13,000 people,” notes Campbell.

When asked why he invests his time and money in Plan projects, Campbell replies: “This is simply what I enjoy doing, and seeing these farmers and their families now in more control of their own destinies is a special thing to witness.”

Interested in investing in Plan projects? Become a Plan partner. Please contact Marni Brinder Byk at mbrinderbyk@plancanada.ca



UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY A Day for Canada to Celebrate Children's Rights

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. Adopted in 1989, it recognizes the human rights of children everywhere. The Convention's 54 articles cover children's rights to be free from exploitation; to have a voice in matters that affect them; to education, health care and special protection.

Nations around the world observe Universal Children's Day as a day to promote children's welfare. In Canada, it is known as National Child Day and is observed on November 20 to commemorate the day on which both the Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) were adopted.

As an organization focused on critical issues affecting millions of children worldwide and a



strong advocate for children's rights, Plan is deeply committed to upholding the fundamental

principles of the CRC. We believe no child should have to endure poverty, and all children should be able to realize their full potential.

Plan Canada invites Canadians to visit plancanada.ca to learn about how we engage children in shaping their future.

A Global Family – One Daughter at a Time

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

As a young couple, they were simply looking for a way to celebrate the birth of their first child. Ten years later, they've established a tradition and found a compelling way to connect their growing family with their roots.

"Spencer was born in 1999, a few days before Mother's Day," says Dr. Brenda Tan, a family physician living in Vancouver with her husband Peter Guo, a Partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers. "We felt quite fortunate and wanted to share our happiness with others. That's when we decided to sponsor a child through Plan."

For many Canadians who are immigrants or children of immigrants to this country, it's important to maintain a link with their origins. Peter and Brenda felt that sponsoring a child from China would be a great way to do this and to teach their children about their country of heritage.

Since they had a boy of their own, they chose to sponsor a girl. They are well aware of the special challenges faced by girls in a country with a one-child policy and in which boys are traditionally more highly valued.

As their family grew, so did their involvement with Plan. The arrival of each new child – Spencer, 9, Charlotte, 7, Samuel, 6, and Casey, 4 – was celebrated with the addition of a new sponsored girl.

"Doing this has been very important," says Peter. "We want our children to appreciate how privileged we are in Canada, and have a connection to the world outside of Vancouver."

When the family receives letters and pictures from their sponsored children in China, the parents take time to go over the material with their kids. "They see how their 'sisters' have gotten bigger," says Peter, "but they also ask important questions like, 'Why is that house



Dr. Brenda Tan and Peter Guo consider child sponsorship an investment.

built with bricks and mud? It doesn't look like the houses we live in."

Brenda notes that Spencer once did a "show and tell" at his pre-school. "He explained who his sponsored sister was. He talked about her family and where and how they lived, including the fact that they don't have electricity. He

Girls face double discrimination because they are both young and female. Compared to their brothers, girls receive less food, have less chance at an education and face more daily violence.

was only four years old, but he had a good grasp of the situation."

The family hopes to visit their sponsored children in China one day and see first-hand the community development work Plan is doing there.

"I don't think of it as a donation," says Peter. "Rather it is an investment and a necessity. I'm

always pleased to see how we can make a small difference, to see each child grow up healthy, educated and aware of what's around them. And it is equally as important in Canada, as in parts of the world where opportunities are few and far between."

Plan has been active in China since 1995. Its programs focus on education, water, hygiene, income generation and emergency relief. Plan was there when the devastating earthquake struck Sichuan Province in May this year. Plan also raises awareness of the rights of girls and advocates for them through campaigns like **Because I am a Girl**, a multi-year study on the status of girls around the world.

Girls face double discrimination because they are both young and female. Compared to their brothers, girls receive less food, have less chance at an education and face more daily violence. Educating girls and giving them full opportunity to participate in society has a strongly positive effect on a community's ability to achieve financial security, improve its health status, and live in peace.

For more information on the **Because I am a Girl** campaign, visit becauseiamagirl.ca

GIRLS OF LATITUDE Plan Canada and MTV Profile Three Girls with the Courage to Change the World

STEVEN THEOBALD
MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
MANAGER, PLAN CANADA

Patricia cannot escape the constant reminder of the dangers of living on the streets of Haiti: a police officer's bullet lodged inside her 14-year-old body, one of four separate gunshot wounds.

Since her mother died four years ago, the only family she has known are other girls and women trying to survive in Port-au-Prince's most dangerous slum, Cité Soleil. They are regularly harassed and arrested.

In Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, arrested children are thrown into the same prisons as adults, creating a vicious circle of helplessness and petty crime in order to survive. Even the most sympathetic judges are constrained by the reality that the justice system has no resources to give children special care and education.

"If you die in here they just throw you away," Patricia says. "The government cannot be the ones mistreating us. They must respect children's rights."

Girls Mobilizing for Change

To make their voices heard, Patricia and her friends formed an advocacy group, which boasts more than 80 members, to lobby government for change. They are supported by Plan Haiti through a partner organization.

"What I am asking for is a future – that is all," says Patricia, who dreams about starting up a

hair salon with some friends.

Her story is one of three being profiled in a Plan Canada and MTV Canada film about girls' rights.

An MTV crew traveled with Plan to Haiti, Southern Sudan and Colombia to meet girls who are fighting for their rights in environments steeped in conflict and violence.

The film, **Girls of Latitude**, is part of Plan's global **Because I am a Girl** campaign, a nine-year project that advocates for girls in developing countries. It will air on MTV Live this fall.

"What I am asking for is a future – that is all," says Patricia, who dreams about starting up a hair salon with some friends.

In Southern Sudan, the crew met Suku, a 16-year-old girl living in Juba, who wants the same access to an education that boys in her community enjoy. Like Patricia, Suku leads an advocacy group that fights for an end to forced early marriages of young girls. Marriage means the end of school, even for girls hungry for education.

Suku has fought for her own rights and won. Three years ago, when her father went away to fight in the civil war, she was placed with an uncle. In her father's absence, the uncle arranged for Suku to get married. She refused.

"He said go to the boy's

house. I said no. I don't know the boy," Suku recalls. "So he started beating me with a cane."

Suku returned to her mother's house to live with her four other siblings. Things were difficult, since her mother was out of work, but Suku managed to stay in school.

Recently, she graduated from secondary school, once an almost-unheard-of accomplishment for girls in Southern Sudan. She plans to pursue a law degree to equip her to fight for girls' and women's rights.

Education vs. Marriage

Some estimates say that in 2005 in Southern Sudan, only 700 girls out of an overall population of seven million people attended primary school. Even fewer moved on to secondary school. A young girl married off can bring a significant dowry to the family. The alternative, school, costs money and is perceived to be a bad investment.

Things are improving, however. Since the civil war with the north ended, members of the international community – including Plan – have been working with the government to get girls into schools.

But an end to forced marriages at young ages must come from within Sudanese society. With advocates such as Suku leading the fight, that change will come.

"I want all the girls to be educated so they can build our nation," she asserts.

Conflict and Violence

When the crew arrived in Colombia, they found more conflict and violence.



MTV host Nicole Holness listens as Patricia describes the challenges facing girls in Haiti.

In Tumaco, a Colombian fishing town on the Pacific Ocean, military helicopters and airplanes regularly spray herbicides to eradicate coca crops – the raw material for cocaine. They are as common in the sky as clouds. In addition to the drug lords and the gang violence they cause, Colombia is struggling with guerrilla forces fighting for control of sections of the country.

Liseth is one 17-year-old girl caught in the middle of all this.

She told the crew about the day that gunshots rang out very close to her house. Standard procedure is to close all the windows and doors, but her seven-year-old brother couldn't resist peeking outside.

He witnessed someone being shot to death.

"He turned pale and couldn't breathe," Liseth says. "These kinds of situations occur on a regular basis." The violence – intimidation, abuse, sexual assault – is often targeted at girls and women.

Like her sisters in Haiti and Southern Sudan, Liseth has decided to advocate for change. She is part of a Plan peace building and conflict resolution project supported by the Canadian International Development Agency. The program equips youth with skills in communication, leadership, civic responsibility and negotiation to help reshape their lives and their communities.

Together with schools, local governments and media outlets, Liseth and her colleagues (including many boys) work to counsel their peers that the violence must end. Like girls around the world, Liseth is raising her voice to lead change and create the type of world she wants to live in.

Plan Canada and MTV's film about girls' rights, **Girls of Latitude**, will air on MTV Live – visit plancanada.ca for a broadcast schedule. To learn more about Plan's **Because I am a Girl** campaign, visit becauseiamagirl.ca

PLAN EXPERTS QUICK TO MOBILIZE WHEN CRISIS STRIKES

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

China, Myanmar, India, Pakistan, Vietnam and Haiti – just some of the countries hit by crises in 2008.

Cyclones, floods and famines bring chaos and devastation, along with a chilling sense of helplessness for many of us watching the drama unfold from halfway around the world.

But within hours of a humanitarian disaster, a team of experts at Plan is already mobilizing resources to provide relief for those most desperately in need – especially children, who are always the most vulnerable in times of crisis.

“Plan’s early warning system monitors key developments around the globe: unstable weather conditions that threaten to grow into something more severe, droughts that could result in famine, or political and social conflicts that have the potential to erupt into a refugee crisis,” explains Safo Visha, Program Manager, Children in Emergencies at Plan Canada.

This early detection system



When Haiti was hammered by four major storms, Plan responded with food, water, medical assistance, shelter and emotional support for traumatized children. You can help by donating at plancanada.ca/haiti

With expert technical staff and strategists in 66 countries around the world, Plan can quickly spring into action.

“When Haiti was struck by Hurricane Gustav earlier this fall,

for 1000 people for a week,” says Rezene Tesfamariam, Plan Haiti’s Country Director.

“In the early stages of a crisis, the first objective is getting the right information on what happened, how many people have been affected and what resources are needed,” says Visha. “Having expert Plan staff and local partners on the ground is crucial to ensuring accurate assessments and responding swiftly and effectively. It’s also invaluable when disasters create a longer-term need to rebuild communities and infrastructure, which goes to the core of Plan’s work.”

Within a few hours of disaster striking, while field staff are already

beginning to deliver aid, staff at Plan Canada begin raising money to finance immediate relief efforts and long-term reconstruction. An appeal is often launched within hours of a crisis hitting.

Thanks to a strong base of loyal donors, Plan has been able to quickly raise significant funds with a minimum of expense. Donors are confident that contributions ear-marked for a specific humanitarian crisis will in fact ease the suffering of the people affected. With a reputation for accountability and careful spending on the right things to deliver results, Plan is also regularly entrusted by the Canadian government with public funds

for emergency relief.

Relief can take various forms, depending on the type of disaster. “It usually involves meeting physical needs for food or medical aid, tents or plastic sheeting, clean drinking water. It can include child protection or dealing with physical trauma such as broken bones and wounds,” says Visha.

“It’s important to understand that children have special needs in a crisis. They need to be kept safe. They may need trauma counseling. They need something to keep them occupied and give them a sense of normalcy, such as attending school, while their parents deal with the crisis.”

Plan’s professionals are thoroughly versed in the international standards for humanitarian disaster response established by Sphere (an internationally recognized and comprehensive set of standards to ensure the quality of relief efforts), and are committed to meeting or exceeding these standards. Plan also abides by the Red Cross Code of Conduct.

Its history of collaboration with local governments and international partners such as the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) makes Plan an effective partner in both short-term response and longer-term rebuilding of devastated communities.

To find out about Plan’s current emergency appeals, visit plancanada.ca/emergencies

“...within 24 hours of the storm Plan had organized eight shelters and provided enough food and water for 1000 people for a week.”

gives Plan’s humanitarian aid experts a head start should the worst-case scenario become reality.

within 24 hours of the storm Plan had organized eight shelters and provided enough food and water

Trip to Peru a Revelation for Canadian Philanthropist

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

The Koerner name in Toronto is synonymous with philanthropy and the arts. Over the past 40 years, Michael and Sonja Koerner have supported a wide array of high-profile cultural institutions and projects, the most recent being the expansions of the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Perhaps less known is Sonja’s interest in international development and her support of Plan, a partnership that was further strengthened when she recently travelled to Peru to see Plan’s work first-hand.

Though born and raised in Lima, Peru, Sonja had never before ventured into the neighbourhood called Ventanilla, an area considered by many people living in the capital as “too dangerous.” In the late 1980s and early 1990s, unprecedented waves of terrorist violence rocked Peru. Thousands of indigenous people were driven from their mountain homes and into Lima seeking safety. This migration created, in effect, a cluster of satellite cities. Though some prospered, today many

communities, Ventanilla among them, still lack access to basic services such as water, sanitation and education.

“Plan’s approach to helping these people greatly impressed me,” said Sonja, after her visit to the area. “They don’t impose their way – it all has to be in partnership with the communities.”

While Plan funds projects such as early childhood education and the construction of wells and sanitation systems, its staff and volunteers also teach the communities how to gain access to Peruvian government programs that might benefit them. “There is some government funding,” said Sonja. “The problem is that people often have no idea how to

approach the bureaucracy.”

Sonja was delighted to see that things are improving for some:

“They have homes, schools, teachers, and tiny vegetable gardens – water is such a luxury – but many people still need our help.”

Though she’s often travelled to Lima to visit family, her visit to Ventanilla proved a revelation. “I found the whole visit an uplifting experience,” added Sonja. “I’m full of admiration for Plan. I’m really impressed with the organization.”

Sonja came back even more convinced of the importance of helping others. “My father always said that you can’t take it with you, so you might as well do something good with it. If you have more money than you need, you should look around and see how you can help.”

In addition to sponsoring a child in Colombia since 2003, Sonja Koerner has funded Plan projects in Malawi, Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

Plan has been active in Peru since 1995. Its programs focus on education, health, water and sanitation, and livelihood opportunities – all with a view to creating an environment in which children can thrive. In all projects, Plan works in collaboration with children and other community members to identify the difficulties they face and mobilize local talent to improve living conditions.

FROM PAGE PC1

Wellington West Capital



The new school is a hub of activity that also serves as a community centre.

on the run from rebel forces were losing years of education. RapidEd, also known as “school in a box,” provided safe learning spaces that moved with the millions of displaced children as they moved to escape the fighting.

Now that the conflict is over, Plan’s focus in Sierra Leone is on rebuilding what was lost.

Education Renewal is the project that jumped out at Cohen – the opportunity to help improve the quality of education for more than 30,000 children.

The project focuses on the construction and repair of schools to create well-equipped learning facilities for children in the devastated Kailahun District in the eastern extreme of Sierra Leone, the last area to achieve peace.

The project also:

- Supplies educational materials and textbooks
- Trains teachers to teach effectively and to build a culture of peace among children
- Raises health and hygiene awareness
- Establishes community groups that promote education, especially for girls.

Through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Canadian government matches donor contributions dollar for dollar – doubling each donation to Plan’s Education Renewal project. Cohen

decided to go one step further and expand the donor pot by engaging some colleagues.

“I put a pitch together. In an email to my colleagues, I outlined how Plan works, details about the CIDA match, and why I chose Sierra Leone,” says Cohen. He followed up in person and found 25 people who were just as passionate about the plight of children in Sierra Leone as he is.

Cohen and his small group of dedicated colleagues at Wellington West Capital Markets succeeded in raising \$53,100 to support Plan’s Education Renewal in Sierra Leone. This became more than \$100,000 with the CIDA match – enough to build a three-classroom school complete with water and sanitation systems, furniture, textbooks and school supplies.

Because the school doubles as a kind of community centre, it not only ensures children have access to quality education but also strengthens the entire community.

Says Cohen, “Sierra Leone really is a nation that is ready to help itself. All they need is a little help from us.”

Visit plancanada.ca/partnerships to find out how your organization can work with Plan on a project that matters to you, or contact Janet Hay at jhay@plancanada.ca



Plan works with children, families and communities in Peru to make a lasting difference for children.



CCT Global mobilized support from suppliers, customers and friends to improve education in Vietnam.

CCT Global Sourcing Rallies Suppliers to Bring Education Opportunities to Vietnam

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

For Yoram Weinreich, building a school in Vietnam was just something he felt his company should do, and it feels great.

A Partner at CCT Global Sourcing, a furniture wholesaler and distributor to some of North America's biggest retailers, Weinreich has traveled the world with his partners Steve Hall and Erez Weinreich to grow their business into a successful, multi-national corporation. Since much of the product they source comes from Asia, the partners wanted to give back to the supplier countries that have contributed to their good fortune.

CCT Global looked to Plan to make that happen.

The school project started with Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope catalogue, which Yoram received in the mail.

"Until I looked at the catalogue, I hadn't realized Plan was involved in so many long-term initiatives – all that program work focused on sustainable solutions to critical issues like access to education," says Yoram. Reading the catalogue and then talking with Plan staff in Canada convinced CCT that Plan was well equipped to make their vision a reality. Sights set high, CCT committed to supporting a project in Vietnam.

Vietnam has suffered through decades of conflict and isolation, but today is one of Asia's fastest-growing economies. Parts of the country have achieved great improvement in health, education and gender equality. In spite of this, many Vietnamese children still suffer from poverty, particularly in rural areas, where malnutrition remains a pressing problem and the quality of education is poor. Eighty percent of the people of

Vietnam live in small villages.

Plan has been working with communities in Vietnam since 1999, implementing programs to improve healthcare and financial security, teach early childhood care and development, and provide basic education and protection for children.

...many Vietnamese children still suffer from poverty, particularly in rural areas, where malnutrition remains a pressing problem and the quality of education is poor. Eighty percent of the people of Vietnam live in small villages.

Recognizing the critical role of education in ending poverty, CCT set out to raise funds to build an eight-classroom school in the village of Huynh Thuong. Children in this community currently must attend school in shifts, as there are simply not enough classrooms to accommodate 370 children and 22 teachers.

More than half of the classrooms that do exist in the area are in serious disrepair. Sanitation facilities are inadequate, there are no ventilation systems, and lighting is poor. Many of the classrooms don't have a stick of furniture. Going to school is uncomfortable and unpleasant.

The CCT-funded project will change that. With an inspired letter, the Weinreichs and Hall contacted suppliers, customers and friends and promised that for every dollar they donated to the school project, CCT would match the funds, doubling the impact. They even expanded their fundraising efforts out to the

public. All contributions made to the Vietnam project through plancanada.ca/cct will also be matched by CCT. Donors can choose a specific component to finance, such as a school playground for \$315, a washroom for \$567, or a classroom lighting and ventilation system for \$2,000.

"Building this school gives our company a tangible project to get excited and motivated about, and a clear goal to work toward," says Yoram.

Since the CCT partners travel to Vietnam regularly, they plan to visit the construction site to follow the progress of the project and see their dollars at work. They will also see how Plan's conviction that long-term sustainability depends on community participation plays out on the ground.

The entire community of Huynh Thuong has a vested interest in the success of the project. Planning, implementation, monitoring and maintenance are all driven at the community level. Parents and community members provide volunteer labour during the construction. School management and upkeep are done by volunteers. Teachers contribute to building management, and community members to a maintenance fund so that resources will be readily available in the future when repairs are needed.

"Life isn't about making money," says Yoram. "Life is about living in a world where if we succeed, we give back. It may sound cliché, but it is heartfelt, and it is the right thing to do."

Find out how you can give back through Plan at plancanada.ca/partnerships, or contact Janet Hay at jhay@plancanada.ca

FROM THE FIELD: Q & A with Journalist Lisa LaFlamme

Lisa LaFlamme is the National Affairs Correspondent for CTV National News. Regarded as one of Canada's top journalists, LaFlamme reports on a wide spectrum of national and international news stories that affect Canadians. She is a supporter of Plan Canada and a passionate ambassador for its work to help children.

Q. You recently traveled to Benin with Plan Canada. What precipitated that trip?

A. It was an opportunity for me to see first-hand the work that the organization does "in the field" and also to better understand the impact Plan has on communities.

Q. What was your impression of Benin?

A. As a journalist who has covered wars, floods and famines, I've seen a lot of upsetting things, but nothing prepared me for our journey through Benin. We traveled through village after village, so remote that most residents had never seen a paved road, few people had ever seen a doctor. Many children in these villages will never see the age of 15.

Because the West African nation is small, relatively calm with no civil war or recent natural disasters, the country has never hit the international spotlight – its level of perpetual poverty and premature death has never become front-page news. That made the experience all the more important to me. It felt like we were uncovering a disaster that had, so far, remained secret. And yet we were met by uninhibited enthusiasm and warmth.

Q. What can you tell us about the children you met?

A. Children, dozens of children, would crowd around us, eager to greet these new and foreign visitors. Tragically, most bore the signs of severe malnutrition: distended stomachs; and discoloured hair, teeth and fingernails. Children as young as five carrying baby brothers and sisters on their backs while their mothers spent the day working the fields – if they had mothers. A growing number of these children, we found out, are now orphaned by the AIDS pandemic that has found its way to Benin.

Watching these children sweep their huts, start the small fire that would cook their food, collect and carry wood and water, I couldn't help but realize how the concept of childhood was as foreign to these kids as we were. We are so protective of our own children, warning against the dangers of playing with matches. But in these villages, if a five-year-old doesn't start the fire, there will be no dinner.

Q. What did you see as the impact of Plan's work on the communities you visited?

A. I saw the contrast between the villages already under the protective wing of Plan Benin and those with no outside help. In "Plan villages," we found communal water pumps, saving villagers half a day's journey back and forth from the filthy



Lisa LaFlamme visits a Plan community in Benin.

river that had been their source of water. We found schools packed with children and undeniable evidence that Plan is making a difference.

Q. Life for girls in Benin is particularly difficult. Did you see any evidence of Plan's programs having an impact on their lives?

A. One classroom had more girls than boys – an anomaly to be sure! Traditionally the girls head to the fields while the boys head to school, but here the campaign message, "toutes les filles à l'école" ("all girls at school"), visible on billboards throughout the countryside, is obviously sinking in. Educating girls may not yet be the norm, but it's beginning.

Q. After seeing Plan's work in action, what's the one thing you would tell people who don't have the opportunity to see it themselves first-hand?

A. If knowledge is power, then in Benin it would be the power to save lives. It's the undisputed goal of Plan Benin staff, many of whom grew up in the villages they now serve. They work long hours in cramped quarters to implement as many programs as the money will allow. I also watched them as they visited the rural communities, where they were greeted like close relatives. As they would pick up a small child, laugh with a local woman or get an update from the village elder, I realized this is not a job, it's a passion.

Media-Savvy Kids Turn a Community on its Ears – And Find a Voice

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

When a taxi driver in the Dominican Republic asked Canadian Heather Borquez to keep quiet so he could hear the latest installment from this new teenage investigative reporter on his radio – she knew she had a hit on her hands.

What had started as a pilot project to let kids express themselves through the media had turned into a highly successful and very popular radio feature. More important, it had given dozens of children who had few other opportunities a powerful voice and an opportunity to lead change in their communities.

"These kids were talking about issues that people rarely spoke about publicly," recalls Borquez, who at the time was Country Director of Plan Dominican Republic. "The topics included child abuse and incest, rape, alcoholism and pollution."

Today, as Director, Program Management for Plan Canada,

Heather Borquez continues to speak enthusiastically about the Child Media project – one of many projects she oversaw while working in the Dominican Republic.

When the project was launched in the village of Barahona, near the border with Haiti, the goals were pretty straightforward: Teach the children how to interview people, record the story and edit it. The segments were to be broadcast once a week on a local radio station. Children between the ages of 10 and 16 from half a dozen villages were invited to participate.

"What impressed me most was that they broke all the barriers," says Borquez. "They introduced a host of very serious issues."

They wanted to know if the government knew that cars were speeding through their villages, hurting and even killing people. Parents were coming home drunk, beating the children, not feeding them. Frustrated by the rampant alcoholism in their community, the kids began to publicly chastise



Plan's media projects provide a forum for children and youth to raise their voices for change in their communities.

the bar owners for allowing their parents to drink. They would ask the bar owners why they didn't care this was going on.

"It was interesting because everybody knew about these problems, but no one was talking about them, especially not on the

radio," says Borquez. "And the kids would just blast through social norms and even name names!"

One boy became interested in the lake his family lived on. He interviewed relatives, friends and neighbours and discovered that the fish were dying, threatening a key

food source for the village. He followed the story for five or six weeks, uncovering the fact that pollution from the nearby factory was killing the fish. He interviewed the factory's manager and its owner.

"When my cab driver became

CONTINUED ON PAGE PC7

A PROMISE MADE, A PROMISE KEPT



Top row, left to right – Michael Waring addresses the crowd at pre-reception sponsored by Galileo Global Equity Advisors Inc.; Lisa LaFlamme, Stacey Mowbray (Second Cup) and Rod Black; Rosemary McCarney, Jennifer Heil and Dominick Gauthier. Middle row, left to right – Josh Liswood (Miller Thomson), Heather Howes and Peggi Liswood; Joan Paliwoda, Anne MacPhail Meilleur and Cheryl Sproul (Danier Leather); Ron and Susan Chapman, Tom Epplert (Ticketmaster) and Mark Banbury. Bottom row, left to right – Members of the Plan Leadership Council; Heather Howes and Alex Tilley; Steve Stewart, Tina Rodgers, Sylvio Stroescu (ING DIRECT), Janet Hay and Marni Brinder Byk.

All photos by Jason Thompson

A PROMISE KEPT, A PARTY HAD

Drumming, dancing and superb company – Plan knows how to make keeping a promise fun!

On June 23, 2008, at Toronto's exquisite Casa Loma, Plan celebrated the success of its ambitious \$25 million "Promise a Future" campaign – a campaign to bring a better, brighter future to more than three million children, their families and communities.

The "A Promise Made, A Promise Kept" gala recognized the many people who made generous contributions to the campaign, in support of Plan's health, water and education projects.

"Plan is committed to sustainable solutions. This means that communities eventually become self sufficient, with the resources to grow their own communities independent of foreign assistance," commented Plan Canada President & CEO, Rosemary McCarney.

Hosts Rod Black and Lisa LaFlamme, long-time Plan supporters, kept more than 170 enthusiastic gala attendees entertained. The evening kicked into high-gear with a great performance by the world-famous African Children's Choir.

Corporate sponsors such as IAMGOLD, Danier Leather, FUSE, and Galileo Global Equity Advisors were in attendance. Olympian Jennifer Heil inspired the crowd with colourful tales of her visit to Plan projects in Burkina Faso.

The King of Kalimba and African drums, Njacko Backo, the Samba Squad and Kidz groups had attendees of all ages jumping up to the dance floor! The evening was a celebration from start to finish – because when Plan makes a promise, Plan keeps its promise.

Thank you to our Promise a Future Gala Sponsors

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FROM PAGE PC1

THE WORLD IS HUNGRY

This has caused a massive increase in the prices of corn and wheat, the preferred feedstock for biofuel production.

Rising standards of living and changing tastes in emerging economies like China and India are also affecting the food supply, as these huge populations add more meat to their diet, and more grain is required for raising animals. A general rise in global commodity prices, depletion of natural resources, political instability, high taxes, poor infrastructure, depletion of national food reserves and under-investment in rural development and agriculture in many parts of the

world are all contributing factors.

The food crisis will have the greatest impact on poor families in the developing world. Women and children – especially girls – will be the most vulnerable. In many countries, women and girls have historically been discriminated against when it comes to distribution of available food, and shortages only make the situation worse.

With an ever-rising proportion of their income required for food, families will not be able to afford other essentials, such as medical care and education. Lack of adequate care means greater risk of death in childbirth. Children

born to under-nourished mothers are at greater risk of infant mortality, and have more health problems if they do survive.

The crisis is huge, and there is no easy solution.

The Canadian government has allocated \$230 million to food aid programming this fiscal year – a \$50 million increase over last year – making Canada the second-largest donor to the World Food Programme. Governments around the world are monitoring the situation, providing short-term emergency food aid, experimenting with price controls, and beginning long-term sustainable food

security planning.

Plan is tackling the crisis on several fronts. Food aid, school feeding programs and community-based grain banks are providing immediate relief in communities in which Plan has an established presence. Working with local and national governments, Plan is also taking a longer-term view, supporting the development of national food security policies, and strengthening microfinance and other schemes that encourage agricultural production.

Plan intends to invest \$750 million over the next five years in food and income security programs

that are expected to reach over five million people. It's a significant commitment that will have a substantial impact on the lives of the children and families with whom we work. But that alone will not solve the crisis.

For the crisis to be solved, the global community must recognize and address the root causes that created it. That's why Plan is also investing in raising awareness and advocating for change.

To learn more, go to plancanada.ca/globalfoodcrisis

Squashing Gender Discrimination

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

Mike Way is using a little rubber ball to make the world a better place for girls.

The highly accomplished squash coach, former North American top-10 player, and father of two girls has worked hard to help Canadian girls do great things.

As Director of Coaching at Canada's National Squash Training Centre, based at the Oakville Club, Way has inspired – and been inspired by – the likes of Laura Gemmell, who has become one of Canada's top female squash players.

So when Way read about Plan Canada's **Because I am a Girl** campaign, which tackles the discrimination faced by girls around the world, he knew he had to get involved.

"I'm so fortunate to live in a society where my daughters will enjoy every opportunity to succeed and live a healthy and fulfilling life," says Way. "I'm just trying to give a helping hand to girls who are entitled to the same shot at happiness."

Girls in many countries start experiencing discrimination very early in life. While their brothers may get a chance to attend school,

they take on household chores and care of younger siblings, or get sent to work to supplement the family income. They get less food than

Education is key to breaking the cycle of hardship and poverty in which these girls are trapped.

the males in the family and their health suffers, making them less likely to have healthy babies in their adulthood. Forced early marriage and motherhood give them little opportunity to fulfill their dreams and make the social contribution that an education and better health would make possible.

It's a huge global challenge that will require much local action to address, along with major cultural and policy shifts. Way asked Plan what he could do as an individual to make things change and where the need was greatest.

He decided to take on the complete renovation of a girls' school in Burkina Faso, a West African nation that ranks as one of the poorest on earth. In Burkina Faso, 48 percent of girls between five and 14 are forced to work. Many are subjected to the brutality of female genital cutting. Roughly 120,000 children in the country have been orphaned by AIDS.

Education is key to breaking the cycle of hardship and poverty in which these girls are trapped. Girls who receive education are better equipped to demand their rights, have a greater voice in their country's democratic process, are more likely to have fewer children (resulting in lower infant mortality rates), and stand a better chance at getting a good job and increasing their family income.

Faced with the challenge of raising funds for this project and to boost awareness of girls' rights, Way and his partner, certified personal trainer Beth Zeitlin, decided to combine their interest in helping girls with their knack for bringing out the best in people. Way turned to what he knows

best: squash.

He organized an exhibition tournament at the Adelaide Club in downtown Toronto. The first

Mike Way Challenge featured a series of squash matches headlined by Natalie Grainger, former world #1 in singles and the top-ranked female doubles player in the world, Laura Gemmell, a Branksome Hall student who is Canada's top female player under 17, and Tara Mullins, a member of Canada's national team.

In the feature match, Grainger took on Adrian Griffin, the Adelaide Club's resident squash pro. Grainger won the hard-fought "Battle of The Sexes," showcasing her skills as a female squash champion.

While the on-court action was fast and furious, it was an evening of good-spirited competition that celebrated the vibrant spirit of female achievement, the galvanizing effect of Plan's campaign to squash discrimination against girls around the world, and Mike Way's commitment to giving girls in Burkina Faso a chance at an education.

"I hope that one day I can take my daughters Lisa and Michelle to visit this school and meet some of the girls – as well as some graduates – to see how an education is changing their lives," Way says. "In the meantime, I will do whatever it takes to make this school a reality."

If Mike Way's example inspires you to organize your own event to raise funds for a project you care about, visit plancanada.ca/fundraise



Natalie Grainger used her champion squash skills to help raise funds for girls' education in Burkina Faso.

A Numbers Game Children Always Win

When you know the numbers, you know you're making a difference. Here are some of the numbers that count. In the last year alone, Plan:

- Trained **26,000** community health workers in Bangladesh
- Immunized **90,000** children in Tanzania
- Registered the birth of **1.1 million** children in Cambodia
- Planted **700,000** trees in Ethiopia
- Granted **17,000** primary school scholarships to girls in Haiti
- Provided deworming treatment for **36,000** children in India
- Trained **11,000** health workers in Cameroon
- Distributed seeds to **5,000** farmers in Kenya
- Upgraded or extended **5,000** community water systems in Senegal
- Provided **117,000** sets of primary school supplies in Sierra Leone
- Published **1.3 million** children's newspapers and magazines in Sri Lanka
- Fed **50,000** malnourished children under age five through a supplementary feeding program in Zimbabwe.

And we did it all in a cost-effective way. On average, 80% of the money contributed by donors to Plan goes directly to programs benefiting children, their families and communities (percentages fluctuate slightly from year to year).

To learn more about how you can be part of making something extraordinary happen, visit plancanada.ca

FROM PAGE PC5

Media-Savvy Kids

riveted to the story," recalls Borquez, "I was delighted to see that it had garnered that level of interest in the community."

The children succeeded in bringing about changes in their villages, such as the installation of speed bumps to reduce accidents.

But having their voices heard also transformed the children.

They came from the poorest part of the country and had little reason to hope for a better future. When they first joined the project, they were often dirty, in rags and very subdued. Many came from troubled family backgrounds, and some had suffered abuse and rape. But within a few years, they blossomed into self-confident, articulate young people.

"We had trained them, given them the tools," explains Borquez. "They had truly become a voice in their community, which is a key goal for Plan. We believe that

children have unique insights into what it will take to create a better life and a better future, and that too often their voices go unheard."

With a new-found sense of purpose and confidence, these children were equipped to have a say in decisions that affected them, providing valuable input to Plan project staff working in the community and to local politicians.

Today, Plan's Child Media program has expanded into 76 villages throughout the Dominican Republic and involves thousands of children. Other Plan offices around the world are replicating this successful model.

As for the young man who broke the story about the pollution killing all the fish in the village, he is on record as saying he wants to be President of the Dominican Republic some day.

Given his track record, he may well succeed.

You Can be Part of Something Extraordinary!

At Plan we believe that no child should have to endure poverty. No child should be without food, clean water, shelter, education, basic health care or the opportunity to contribute to society.

But the reality today is that millions of children around the world are in need and are denied the power to shape their future – especially in the poorer communities of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America.

Plan works collaboratively with children, their families, grassroots organizations, local and national governments, and all members of a community to create and implement a long-term plan that improves living conditions. We make it possible for people living in poverty to use their ideas, talents and energy to make better lives for themselves. We engage children in shaping their own future.

We understand what it takes to make a lasting difference in people's lives, and we're committed for the long haul. We have no religious or political affiliations. We advocate for children's rights and educate on development issues. We honour the culture, rights, faiths and dignity of the people we work with to create a brighter future for all.

Now it's your turn.

Plan invites individuals, families, businesses, schools, associations, community groups, faith-based organizations, professional or social networks to join with us in creating and experiencing the extraordinary. We offer multiple options for investing in the lives of children:

- Form a special relationship by sponsoring and corresponding with a child in need – even taking a trip to meet your sponsored child
- Donate to one of Plan's long-term projects or make a general contribution to Plan's work
- Make a monthly contribution to solving a specific critical problem – HIV and AIDS; access to education or clean water; the special challenges faced by girls, children with disabilities, children living through a crisis – through solution sponsorship
- Engage your company, sports team, book club or social network in raising funds for a project of your choice
- Respond to a crisis by donating to emergency appeals when disasters like floods or earthquakes put urgent humanitarian relief demands on our on-the-ground staff

- Give a Gift of Hope in your name or on behalf of someone else so someone you care about can share your commitment to making a lasting difference
- Take advantage of capital gains tax savings by donating shares
- Leave a legacy to Plan in your will or create an endowment fund that provides investment income to Plan through your lifetime and beyond
- Honour someone special with a tribute gift
- Volunteer your time and talent to support the operation of Plan in Canada
- Participate in advocating for children's rights
- Get engaged in our Plan Leadership Council or Youth Action Council.

Visit plancanada.ca and get involved.



Plan works with children and communities to ensure children have access to clean water, food, shelter, education, health care and the opportunity to contribute to society.

The Gift of a Goat



NDUNGU KAHIHU
DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL POLICY
AND ADVOCACY, PLAN CANADA

I met with a local community leader one sunny afternoon in Banfora, Burkina Faso. He was full of praise for the work Plan does but he wanted to remind me that we have a mutually rewarding relationship, one extending beyond the mere client/benefactor arrangement assumed by many charities.

As is common in African oral tradition, he used a goat metaphor to explain things.

"The goat does not say thank you to the bush from which it feeds," he said. "After all, it will need to come back tomorrow. Ours is a long-term relationship. So when we don't always take time to tell you how grateful we are for your assistance, it is because we know we shall have many such opportunities in the coming days."

Through its Gifts of Hope program, Plan Canada offers Canadians the opportunity to purchase a goat for a family in a developing country in their own name or on behalf of someone else. This, too, is a mutually rewarding relationship. For the donor, a simple \$40 to buy a goat for a family in an impoverished country can turn into a unique and memorable gift to mark a friend's birthday or say thank-you to a colleague. But for the family who receives the animal, it means much more. It provides a source of milk for children, increased income for the family and a tie to ancient traditions for the entire community. Goats have been a part of



Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope program provides opportunities for children and families in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Central and South America to lift themselves out of poverty.

African communities for thousands of years. They wander into the philosophies, beliefs and artistic expressions of different peoples across the continent like no other animal.

Then again, they do like to wander.

When I was growing up in Kenya, before I started going to school, I used to help my grandfather take care of the goats.

Tending to goats was very frustrating as I could not play the many games my friends and I invented to while away the hours. If you are distracted for even a minute you will find the goats have taken off and are feeding on a neighbour's crops. Believe me, I know.

Like many of his peers, my grandfather valued cows and looked down on goats as "not worth bragging about at a beer drinking party." But even he would warn us not to laugh at the man so poor that all he owned was a goat.

"If the gods will it," he would

But goats are also hardy survivors, and unlike cows, who require a lot of care, they are low maintenance. They also differ from cows in one other very important way: the potential for legal ownership.

Most ethnic communities in Africa are traditionally patriarchal, with assets such as cattle and land owned and controlled by the male head of the household. But many of these communities have long allowed women and children to own goats.

In Plan's work with communities

It provides a source of milk for children, increased income for the family and a tie to ancient traditions for the entire community.

tell us, "the poor man's goat will one day become a cow."

The Masai people of Kenya and Tanzania believe that their god Engai bequeathed all cows to them and to them only. They deem this gives them the right to retrieve what is divinely theirs by raiding other tribes to relieve them of any cows they may have.

But this divine direction apparently does not apply to goats. No self-respecting Masai Moran raiding party will bother to "steal" goats unless it's to use them as food for the return journey. Of course, this could also be an acknowledgement of practical raiding challenges. Goats are strong-willed creatures, not easily herded like cattle or sheep, and the last thing you need on your hands when you are trying to make a quick getaway.

today, we encourage women to leverage the opportunity in this tradition by helping them to convert the gift of a single goat into a small herd or a milk-selling business, thus boosting their income. Experience shows that if the woman manages the business, most of the new wealth will be controlled by the woman and will be used for the benefit of the whole family. Where a man will often use his livestock to marry an additional wife, the woman will use her money to provide for her children's health and education.

Which is a pretty good result from a \$40 birthday gift for your cousin.

For more about Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope program – goats and all – visit plancanada.ca/gifts

Going Once, Going Twice, Sold: Goats Take Over Fundraiser

STAFF WRITER PLAN CANADA

They may know more about home equity and interest rates than about livestock, but when a group of mortgage brokers from across Canada were offered the chance to get a good deal on a goat, they ended up raising thousands of dollars for one of Plan Canada's favourite programs.

When VERICO – a national mortgage brokers' network –

hosted its annual member appreciation night, it was the typical corporate event: cocktails, dinner, entertainment and awards. As an added attraction for its 200-plus attendees, it included a fundraiser for VERICO's charity of choice.

"We had a live auction to raise money for Plan," explains Associate Vice President Karla Dreyer, who organized the evening.

"We had a spa package, a golf trip with the president, a wine package. But for some reason, when people were given a chance to simply buy a goat to help a poor family in another country, the crowd got very excited."

According to Dreyer, more than half the audience wanted in on the

can visualize."

In addition to raising funds through events such as these, VERICO has made a long-term commitment to Plan by sponsoring a girl in Vietnam. "Plan sends us regular updates about her and her family," says Dreyer. "We've also been encouraging our members to sponsor a child on their own or as a family."

VERICO wants to build on its partnership with Plan. According to Dreyer, "If you're passionate about children and passionate about helping communities around the world, Plan is the charity to work with." She adds that she appreciates the on-going communication she receives from Plan and the support provided for fundraising events.

VERICO's next member appreciation night and fundraiser

action, and most of the money was raised through this one item.

"So many people want to give back," says Dreyer. "For \$40 – what they might spend on a lunch or dinner – they can buy something that will help a family and a whole community. People want to know what is happening with their money and how it will be used. A goat is something concrete that people

"If you're passionate about children and passionate about helping communities around the world, Plan is the charity to work with."



VERICO's Sean Widdess, Karla Dreyer, Colin Dreyer, Marina Ellis, John Kelly.

is scheduled for the end of November and will take place in Vancouver.

The \$40 goat for a family is only one of the many unique gift

ideas available through Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope catalogue.

For more information, please visit plancanada.ca/gifts

No, Really... It IS the Thought That Counts

As the holiday season approaches, the task of gift-selecting – not only for family and friends, but also for clients, suppliers and colleagues – jingles its way onto your to-do list. This year, get creative and make your gifts count. Consider these options:

- Save a tree while helping out a family with a Gift of Water. Skip the holiday cards and send an e-mail to your contacts wishing them "well" (get it?) – and encourage them to add to your donation in lieu of getting you a gift.
- Together with your department, purchase a cow for a family in Bangladesh. Secretly name it after the boss.
- Swap one kitchen gadget for another by bringing that espresso maker into the office and asking the staff to donate a dollar for a caffeine connection. Before you know it, you'll have enough to buy a fuel-efficient stove for a family in Darfur.
- Transform the office gift exchange into one for the books – school books, that is. Instead of a mutually meaningless exchange of trinkets and trash, pool your resources to provide school supplies for kids in Sierra Leone.

Think outside the (gift) box and make your gift choices meaningful. Visit plancanada.ca/gifts for more gift ideas to get your creative juices flowing.



MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE WITH A GIFT OF YOUR CHOICE

Have a specific world issue that you would like to help with? Perhaps there's a country that you have a passion for?

Plan Canada is happy to work with you to find a Plan project that suits your needs and interests at any gift level from \$1 to \$1 million plus. Just call us at 1-800-387-1418 ext. 215 or 416-920-1654 ext. 215 to spread the joy and make a lasting difference.