

Plan International Deutschland e. V.
Communications
Bramfelder Straße 70
D-22305 Hamburg / Germany

Phone +49 (0)40 61140-251
Fax +49 (0)40 61140-141
www.plan-deutschland.de
presse@plan-deutschland.de



Plan

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Toni Garrn new ambassador for Plan-campaign Because I am a Girl Top model visits educational projects for girls in Burkina Faso

Hamburg, July 4th, 2014 – internationally acclaimed model Toni Garrn is the new ambassador of Plan's "Because I am a Girl" campaign. Kicking off her engagement for the children's charity Plan International, the 22 year old visited educational projects in aid of needy girls in Burkina Faso by June this year. The West African country counts one of the five poorest in the world. Girls are especially stricken by poverty and the sparse educational opportunities. Only every second girl attends a primary school and very few have the chance to attend a secondary school.

Toni Garrn aims at changing this. The top model supports a project set up by Plan International, enabling young women to earn a degree as an elementary school teacher in Burkina Faso. Certified teachers not only improve the overall quality of class instruction but are seen as important role models. As such, they also help spreading awareness of the significance to finish an education. "In Burkina Faso parents often cannot afford schooling for their children. Education for girls is deemed unnecessary. Therefore girls rarely attend school. Many of them become pregnant early on, are married off, or have to do hard labor. Only if they go to school there is a chance of changing the system", Toni Garrn said. "I was deeply moved by the stories that the girls of Burkina Faso were willing to share with me. It will remain an unforgettable experience."

Toni Garrn was once discovered in the streets of Hamburg, when she was a teenager. Within a short time, she appeared on the most prominent catwalks around the world including bookings for Calvin Klein, Prada, Boss, Lagerfeld, L'Oreal, and Victoria's Secret. In October this year she will be the new face for Jil Sander Perfumes. From the beginning on, she travelled globally – however, she never drop out of school and managed to complete her High School-degree. Education had always been important to her: "I know from my own experience, that graduating from school is the most important thing. Now I have the freedom to choose if I want to go to university and I also speak many languages. I believe, that irrespective of where we are born, girls should have the right to decide what they want to do. It is this perception that I would like to share."

Toni Garrn has supported Plan International since 2008. By the age of 16, she became sponsor for a girl in Vietnam. Later on she became a member of the students-initiative "Weitblick – Farsightedness", which supported building schools in Africa. Today, she is ready to expand her commitment – and became the ambassador for the global campaign "Because I am a Girl" of Plan International. "I will gladly take the responsibility as it is truly an affair of the heart. That's why I am getting involved and being committed sound, so that girls in developing countries can finish their education". The "Because I am a Girl" campaign of Plan international comes in aid of girls in adverse living conditions. The lives of four million girls should be changed for the better by offering them continuous education or some kind of equivalent vocational training. Education is key in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Images, movies and information are available. Kindly contact Plan International Germany:

- Sabine Marxen, Press Officer, Phone +49 (0)40 61140-278, Sabine.Marxen@plan-deutschland.de
- Claudia Ulferts, Press Officer, Phone +49 (0)40 61140-267, Claudia.Ulferts@plan-deutschland.de

Plan International, one of the oldest child-focused organisations in the world, supports development programs in 50 countries. Plan is an organisation without religious and political affiliation and finances sustainable and child-focused self-help projects mainly by means of sponsorship, but also through grants and public funds. Plan International Germany – awarded two transparency prizes in 2012 – supports more than 300,000 sponsored children in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The German Central Institute for Social Affairs (DZI) has conferred Plan International Germany its donation seal.