

YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE FROM DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

We wanted to share some exciting progress made possible in Dominican Republic - thanks to support from you!

Most families in Dominican Republic earn a living through farming and raising livestock. Climate change causes extreme weather, and prolonged periods of drought destroy crops and increase poverty and food shortages. Youth unemployment is high, and many young people lack opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge they need to get a good job or start their own businesses. Young people also do not have access to sexual and reproductive health education and rates of teenage pregnancy are high.

Throughout fiscal year 2020, with the help of your sponsorship, we were able to improve access to sexual and reproductive health education so young people can prevent teenage pregnancies. We were also able to ensure young children grow up safe and healthy by providing positive parenting training to both mothers and fathers.

We are grateful to you for making these changes possible. We know you will enjoy reading on to see how your generosity is changing the lives of children, like your sponsored child, across this region.



OUR IMPACT

328 YOUNG PEOPLE GAINED EMPLOYMENT SKILLS IN SAN JUAN AND ELÍAS PIÑA

1,170 YOUNG PEOPLE LEARNED ABOUT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN BARAHONA AND PEDERNALES

3,110 PARENTS LEARNED POSITIVE PARENTING TECHNIQUES IN AZUA

1,645 CHILDREN ATTENDED EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES IN BARAHONA AND PEDERNALES



PLAN INTERNATIONAL COVID-19 RESPONSE

COVID-19 is having devastating impacts all over the world. It is not only a health emergency, it is an education and protection emergency. Since girls are often worse affected during a crisis, Plan International is putting them at the heart of our response and long-term outlook. We have scaled up healthcare systems, food security, access to clean water, handwashing and awareness campaigns, and keep education in children's lives via radio broadcasts.

DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early childhood development is not well understood in Azua. There is a lack of preschools for young children, and children are not supported with opportunities to learn and

play in a stimulating environment. Many young children suffer from preventable diseases, and physical punishment is commonly accepted in the communities.



To help ensure children grow up healthy and resilient, we have trained 3,110 parents on positive parenting techniques. Parents also learned about children's rights, equality for girls and the importance of hygiene and nutrition.

We have also supported 36 early childhood centres. More than 1,500 children are now able to develop their physical, cognitive and social skills through learning and playing in a safe and supportive environment.

2,439 YOUNG CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO LEARN AND PLAY IN SAFE ENVIRONMENTS BOTH AT HOME AND AT EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES

ENDING EARLY MARRIAGE AND PREGNANCY

Young people in San Juan do not have access to sexual and reproductive health education. This prevents them from making informed choices about their bodies. Early pregnancy is common. Girls from rural areas and households experiencing poverty are particularly vulnerable to forced marriages.

about their bodies, we have trained 1,170 young people on sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, and human rights.

To help young people make informed decisions

We also held community events to raise awareness among parents, teachers, and religious leaders on girls' rights and the dangers of forced marriage. Additionally, local child protection boards have received training on how to prevent, detect, and respond to child marriages in their communities.

"The project 'Girls, Not Wives' has left a great impact on me and other youth by showing the consequences of marriage at an early age. We have a better vision now of the tools to end such practices."

Angelica, 17, project beneficiary



PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

Girls and young women in San Juan face significant barriers to reaching their full potential. Early pregnancies and marriages regularly force girls out of school and

prevent them from gaining the skills and knowledge they need to take on leadership roles in their communities. A culture of machismo and gender inequality also means that sexual harassment and violence against women are regularly accepted.



GIRLS IN SAN JUAN ARE NOW EMPOWERED TO RAISE THEIR VOICES ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING THEM IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

To help girls feel empowered in their communities, we have held workshops with 105 young women on sexual and reproductive health and gender equality. They also learned how to manage their finances and gained leadership skills. This has helped improve their confidence and self-esteem.

Using these new skills, the young women carried out community events that celebrated International Women's Day and the Day of Non-Violence Against Women. They organised talks, marches, and drama performances that all raised awareness of girls' rights and gender equality.

EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR A BETTER FUTURE

The programme area of Barahona, which covers the Enriquillo Region, is one of the poorest parts of the Dominican Republic. The unemployment rate among the economically active population in the border region exceeds 90%, which is much too high and a cause for concern. No investments have been made to create sources of employment to alleviate the poverty levels in this province. It is clear that youth unemployment is an urgent and complex challenge affecting society, the economy and governance globally.

To address these critical issues, we work with governments, international organisations and development organisations to increase and improve young people's access to financial services, entrepreneurship and vocational training. 328 youth are taking part in the capacity-building and life skills training process, so they can enter into the labour market. Youth Advisory Councils are set up to influence the local and national political agenda to address the situation of youth in the country.

"I loved being in this group because I can interact with other girls. I have also learned about equal opportunities and the rights that we have and how to defend them and how to defend myself. Now with what I know, I can help my friends."

Erika, 16, sponsored child in Barahona



YOUR SUPPORT IS CHANGING LIVES

With your support, we will continue to protect children's rights so they are able to thrive.

In the coming year, we will continue to work with the children, families and partners across Dominican Republic:

- Ensuring children grow up with the best start in life by supporting early childhood care and education centres.
- Supporting farming families to adapt and respond to climate change by providing technical advice on drought resilience and sustainable farming practices.
- Working to keep children safe by raising awareness of children's rights and supporting local child protection groups.
- Improving opportunities for young people to gain the skills they need to get a good job or start their own business.
- Increasing access to sexual and reproductive health education, so both girls and boys can make informed choices about their lives, their bodies and their relationships.
- Promoting equality for girls and increase opportunities for them to play leadership roles in their communities.

These are just some of the many ways your kindness will continue to touch the life of your sponsored child and other children. We wouldn't be able to do this without supporters like you!



MESSAGE FROM OLGA FIGUERO
Programme Area Manager, Azua

"We appreciate your contributions to continue the work and create changes in the welfare of children in Azua. We value your help and commitment to children through Plan International. Thank you for your collaboration!"



MESSAGE FROM OSILIA MATEO
Programme Area Manager, San Juan

"Children and youth in this area have expressed the positive impact that the projects, financed with your contributions, have generated in their lives. We thank you once again for your generosity and selflessness."



MESSAGE FROM JEAN BELTRÉ MERCEDES
Programme Area Manager, Barahona

"From the programme unit in Barahona, we want to thank our sponsors like you who make it possible every year to improve the conditions in the areas where these children live. Thank you very much!"

