

YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE

Thanks to your sponsorship, children and families are making positive changes in Azua. Learn more about the valuable ways your support has benefitted.

Hot, dry, rural Azua has partnered with Plan International since 1991. This predominantly agricultural region has a significant youth population, in which 47% of its residents are under the age of 18.

This year, 106 community members received vocational training. 80 young women learnt more about gender equity and leadership, while another 8 young people honed their skills as community mentors. We have founded 13 early childhood development centres for children aged 3-5.

Your sponsorship will ensure even more success for children in Azua.



180

Young people learnt about gender-based violence & safety



288

Young children received support in early childcare centres



231

Caregivers participated in positive parenting workshops



COVID-19'S IMPACT IN DOMINICAN

Hear from Jireh about how COVID-19 has impacted her community.

“During the pandemic, Plan delivered a kit with materials for the prevention of Covid. That was good for the whole community, because not everyone had the means to buy a mask, and they still use the masks that Plan delivered. I felt happy because I knew they were taking care of me.”

CASE STORY: FROM LEARNERS TO LEADERS



NAME: MANUELA

AGE: 13 YEARS OLD

HOBBY: DRAWING

"Plan International taught me about my rights, and also the rights of other people. My GONNA teachers teach us many nice things. Not only have I learnt a lot, I also have fun, and I feel protected and part of a family."

Meet Manuela

Like your sponsored child, Manuela has been empowered by Plan International to change her life. Manuela is a hardworking student living in San Juan. Learning is not accessible to everyone in San Juan due to limited school resources and school closures. Plan International has got many ideas to find the best solutions.

I Will Stay in School

Manuela is currently in Grade 8. She lives with her grandmother, her two sisters and her father. Since Manuela's mother was diagnosed with cancer, she has had to move to another village for treatment.

Manuela's teachers describe her as a smart, dedicated learner. However, schools in San Juan faced with an uphill battle. With limited space to address topics outside of the school curriculum - and limited space literally - young students in low-income areas like Manuela's do not have room to talk about their rights or struggles, or to participate in sports. Students across the country have fallen behind during the pandemic-related school closure. Without access to remote learning, many learners are losing step with their grade levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

Strong Schools for Strong Students

Plan International's Children's Club creates nurturing spaces for young minds. Through her Children's Club, Manuela participates in GONNA, a guidance group for children and adolescents.

This year, Manuela and her classmates learnt about human rights and gender through GONNA. Plan International donated supplies for volleyball and chess, as well as more than 200 books.

Since participating in GONNA, Manuela's grades have improved. She has gone from being a shy student to a confident leader.



A Children's Club group in San Juan participates in an activity.

WE CURRENTLY WORK WITH 6,705 CHILDREN IN AZUA

OUR PROJECTS IN AZUA ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



Hundreds of community members learnt about safety, empowerment and non-violence, while hundreds more received care and early childhood guidance.

CONSENT COUNTS



29% of teenagers in Azua have been or are currently pregnant. Many young people in Azua do not have extensive knowledge about sexual health, including menstruation - a topic considered taboo - and gender roles.

Plan International's "I Decide Over My Body and My Sexuality" programme focuses on dismantling harmful practices like child marriage, teen pregnancy and gender-based violence.

66 adolescent girls and young women at risk of marriage or unwanted pregnancy learnt more about their rights, reproductive health and STI prevention. An additional 30 students participated in workshops on positive masculinity and harm reduction.

INVESTING IN EARLY EDUCATION



Hundreds of parents and young children received skills to build safer, stronger lives. In the Dominican Republic, many parents practice violent discipline with their children. Young children are often victims of physical abuse, and early childhood development is not considered significant.

This year, Plan International focused our efforts on establishing 13 direct care centres for children aged 3 to 5. 288 young children have strengthened their abilities from cognition to curiosity, guided by 54 community volunteers. In addition to learning about pedagogy, these volunteers have received training in child protection and abuse prevention.



Simultaneously, 231 caregivers participated in family guidance workshops. There, they discussed critical topics ranging from play and exclusive breastfeeding to gender and abuse prevention.

"The project is very good and very educational for the children. It contributes a lot to their development. The children have learnt a lot. They know more colours, share more with other children. They are no longer shy."
- Francis, 31, from Azua

YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES



FUTURE CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



23%

of young women in the Dominican Republic are unemployed



38%

of women in the Dominican Republic are married before age 18



13%

of girls in the Dominican Republic are married before age 15



Your support helps girls and boys to stand up for their futures.

- Violence against children is socially normalised in the Dominican Republic. We will provide young people with services for their protection, physically and legally.
- Young people in the Dominican Republic often do not have access to sexual health education or services. We will promote programmes in both sectors.
- Many young people do not have jobs. We will provide community members in Azua with vocational training.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated issues of youth poverty and gender-based inequality. We will continue to advocate for and educate about womens' entrepreneurship and financial independence.

We know the best is yet to come, and together we will continue to work for a brighter, happier future for the children in Azua.



"A considerable part of our achievement is due to the commitment made by you as a sponsor. Through your sponsorship, the programmes we carry out are transforming the future and realities of children and adolescents in Azua. Thank you."

Jean Beltre
Programme Area Manager, Azua

YOUR GENEROSITY WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN IN STANDING UP FOR THEIR FUTURE AND RIGHTS