

ANNUAL UPDATE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

AZUA



Together with your sponsorship, children and families are making positive changes in Azua. Learn more about the valuable ways we work with children and communities.

In the mountainous southern region of Azua, farming continues to play a huge role in the lives of families. With a large population of young people in the region, youth are searching for what their future will hold.

Over the last year, youth employment programs have helped hundreds of young women and men gain technical and entrepreneurial skills so they can reach for their dreams. And with greater understanding of gender equality, girls and boys can work together to overcome discrimination.



604

Youth took part in community volunteer events



300

Children learnt about their rights and gender equality



33

Young people gained advocacy skills and met with politicians

“I LIKE PLAN BECAUSE THEY TALK ABOUT RIGHTS. WE LEARNT HOW FAMILIES CAN RAISE THEIR CHILDREN WITHOUT ABUSE.”

Abigail, 10-year-old Sponsored Child





NAME: NAZARETH

AGE: 17

**DREAMS TO BE: A
COMMUNITY LEADER**

“BELONGING TO A YOUTH GROUP IS THE BEST THING THAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME. LEARNING ABOUT MY RIGHTS AND HAVING MY VOICE BE HEARD IS WONDERFUL.”

Meet Nazareth

Like the child you sponsor, Nazareth is taking steps toward achieving her goals. Naza, as her friends and family call her, lives with her mother and two little brothers. Nazareth helps her mother around the house, but she dreams of becoming a leader in her community.

Overcoming Gender Inequality

In the Dominican Republic, girls are expected to help out at home and often experience early marriage. Street harassment is also prevalent, which often prevented Nazareth and her friends from taking part in community activities. Nazareth loved to play volleyball, but most sports teams were only for boys.

At school, Nazareth joined a youth group where she learnt about gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights. Along with 300 other young people, Nazareth has gained new skills in advocacy and leadership.

Nazareth and her friends have now created a community development agenda that seeks to solve the challenges faced by young people.

Becoming a Leader – On and Off the Court!

To go along with Nazareth’s community advocacy, she has also coordinated a new girls’ volleyball team in her neighbourhood. She encourages other girls to join the team and to feel empowered to take charge of their lives.

Nazareth’s family and teachers beam with pride when sharing how she has grown into a confident young woman who strives for change in her community. Nazareth knows that there are many challenges to overcome, but she firmly believes that small actions will lead to giant steps in ending all inequalities.



Nazareth gaining leadership skills

OUR PROJECTS IN AZUA ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



197 girls and 208 boys are now learning and playing at early childhood centres

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



Physical punishment is a common experience for children growing up in Azua, even for young children. Nurturing and stimulating environments during the early years are critical for giving children the best possible start in life.

At 15 early childhood centres, 405 girls and boys are now building their cognitive, physical, and social skills through art and play. And 54 community volunteers completed training on how to facilitate inspiring learning for young children at these centres. 12 centres also received supplies and equipment, which will help more children thrive for years to come. To help ensure young children feel safe and supported at home as well, 115 mothers and fathers took part in positive parenting sessions. They learnt about children's rights and how to prevent child abuse, and also gained knowledge on childhood nutrition.



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT



For many young people in Azua, a good education and a rewarding job are out of reach. 40% of young people are not in secondary school, and 33% of youth are unemployed. These limited opportunities often result in household poverty for years or even generations.

A youth employment program is now ensuring young people gain the skills they need for a bright future. Through 20 youth groups, 400 young people are gaining entrepreneurial and technical skills that will help them as they enter adulthood. Adolescents and young adults also took part in community volunteer activities, giving back to their neighbourhood. 195 young people created community development plans, highlighting the issues that impact them and proposing solutions to improve their opportunities.

“Plan International has helped me in my personal growth. Thanks to Plan, I have been able to help in the development of my community. My peers and I advocate for the authorities to support our solutions.”

- Kendry (17) from Azua



YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES



The best is yet to come – and together we will continue to work for a brighter future for the children in Azua.

- Around 30% of girls become pregnant before the age of 18. We will continue to promote girls' rights so girls can reach their full potential.
- More than half of girls and boys experience physical violence growing up. We will advocate for children's rights and provide training to parents on positive child-rearing practices.
- The Dominican Republic is one of the top countries impacted by climate catastrophes. We will support communities to develop disaster risk management plans and build resilience for the future.

Thank you for your continued support.



"Thanks to your donations, Plan can support children and youth so that they enjoy their right to a long, safe, and protected life."

Xiomara Garcia
Programme Area Manager, Azua

THE PLAN EFFECT



Your sponsorship commitment is turned into effective long-term change – providing help for self-help. We involve children at the centre of all projects, bringing effective and sustainable solutions to families and communities. With Plan's Effect, your commitment helps empower communities to transform their lives and futures.

THE LAST 12 MONTHS



MAY

50

Young people learnt entrepreneurial skills



APRIL

115

Parents gained positive parenting skills



FEBRUARY

1,920

Students improved their knowledge on sexual and reproductive health



DECEMBER

300

People took part in community recycling activities

