



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ADOLESCENTS AND CHILDREN HIV INCIDENCE REDUCTION, EMPOWERMENT, AND VIRUS ELIMINATION (ACHIEVE)

OBJECTIVE

In the Dominican Republic (DR), ACHIEVE is designed to contribute to PEPFAR and USAID epidemic control goals through the provision of a package of wraparound services that are family-centered, community-based, delivered to the Priority Population (PP) - migrants from Haiti and their descendants. HIV prevalence among PP is much higher than in the general population, and there are significant gaps in the clinical cascade for PP. ACHIEVE has 12,748 target beneficiaries designated PEPFAR-supported facilities.

COUNTRY SITUATION

The DR faces a concentrated HIV epidemic, with a general population prevalence of approximately 0.9%. HIV prevalence among PP is significantly higher, estimated at 2.5 to 5.0%, per the 2019 Biological and Behavioral Surveillance Survey (IBBSS, unpublished). There are approximately 25,000 HIV-positive PP in the DR (Ministerio de Salud Pública, Informe de Estimaciones y Proyecciones de Prevalencia de VIH y Carga de Enfermedad 2018, unpublished). In the general population, 64% of those who know their HIV-positive status are undergoing treatment. These gaps present significant challenges to achieving the DR's epidemic control goals. Key barriers PP face in accessing HIV and related support services largely reflect socio-demographic factors, including poverty levels and access to employment opportunities. High poverty and general economic disenfranchisement are barriers to accessing treatment, while lack of food and adequate nutrients are impediments to adhering to treatment. The lack of food and lack of resources for transport are key barriers to accessing and adhering to treatment. Other common barriers include language challenges; domestic violence or fear of violence arising from HIV status disclosure; belief systems which limit access to medical care; internal and external migration; and a lack of documentation and fear of visibility given irregular immigration status. The lack of documentation limits access to government social programs, retention in school, and access to employment and other relevant services.

OUR WORK

USAID, in collaboration with the international NGO Pact, is implementing the ACHIEVE Project, with the goal of improving HIV test uptake and case finding, and treatment adherence through community care and community-clinic networks. ACHIEVE strengthens support networks by increasing access to testing for household members and connecting them to healthcare providers in their communities to improve retention in HIV care and treatment. Moreover, the project works with community clinics to address barriers to adherence and reduce viral load. USAID is focused on improving the access of HIV-positive PP and their families to comprehensive care services through the direct delivery and strengthening referral network of social services to PP households, designed to address the priority needs of PP and their families. USAID provides a set of services for the benefit of FCs and their families, based on four themes: In **HEALTH**, USAID helps provide HIV testing and counseling, referral and support to HIV services, reproductive health, nutrition, HIV prevention, tuberculosis, and other health services; in **SCHOOLING**, USAID supports with educational materials, school fees, uniforms and shoes, homework help at the community level, transportation assistance for education, and referral for literacy support; In **STABILITY**, USAID gives food and nutritional support, and links with social protection programs; and in **SAFETY**, USAID helps in the prevention of child abuse and gender-based violence, and support in the management of birth certificates and national identification.

RESULTS ACHIEVED TO DATE

- Defined strategic approach and case management model that target the specific needs of PPs in the Dominican Republic context (adult entry point to the program, irregular migratory status, employability, access to government funded social programs).
- Designed service packages based on the needs of the families and the barriers associated with adherence to HIV treatment, testing, status disclosure.
- Collaboration with PEPFAR care and treatment projects to develop referral and counter referral systems to detect treatment abandonment cases, viral load suppression, and linkage to care.
- Offer vocational training and financial literacy education to PPs, focusing on increasing household income and increasing financial independence for women in the home.
- Leveraged local government educational programs to link beneficiaries to primary school and literacy programs.
- Created and operationalized social service networks in five provinces: Santiago, La Altagracia, Puerto Plata, Valverde, and Santo Domingo for child safeguarding, detection of gender based violence and domestic violence.

Duration: October 2019 - October 2024

Budget: US\$3.2 million

Implementing partner: PACT

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