



# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC YOUTH, EDUCATION, & SECURITY

## COUNTRY CONTEXT

Crime statistics show that the Caribbean and Latin American regions are among the most violent regions in the world, and youth are at the center of the challenge to reverse this situation. Given the significant flow of people between the United States and the Dominican Republic, Dominican security challenges are intertwined with those of the U.S. government, including transnational criminal networks, illicit trafficking in contraband, or the historical challenge of corruption. Crime, violence and instability are top concerns among Dominicans, and over 50 percent of women report experiencing some form of gender-based violence (UN Women). Compounding these security concerns, the Dominican Republic continues to face significant development challenges. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 850,000 youth are neither in school nor at work. The World Economic Forum ranks the country 132 out of 140 countries on the quality of police services and the Dominican Republic ranks 78 of 79 countries assessed in educational performance by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).<sup>1</sup> The poor, people with disabilities, people of Haitian descent, women, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and intersexual (LGBTI) community often suffer from stigma and discrimination and limited access to justice, health, and social services, making the rates of human rights abuses and violence disproportionately higher for the most marginalized members of the population.

## OUR WORK

USAID partners with the Government of the Dominican Republic to prevent crime and violence, improve citizen security in the country, reduce corruption, bolster democratic institutions, and mitigate the factors that drive youth to engage in crime and violence. USAID is supporting the Dominican Government to counteract security threats that impact both countries by improving institutional effectiveness, accountability, and transparency in the justice

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/pisa/Combined\\_Executive\\_Summaries\\_PISA\\_2018.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/pisa/Combined_Executive_Summaries_PISA_2018.pdf)

sector and working at the community level to promote protective factors that reduce involvement in crime and violence.

## CARIBBEAN BASIN SECURITY INITIATIVE

USAID has been instrumental in the development and roll out of the Dominican government's National Citizen Security Strategy, which is aimed at addressing crime and violence across the country. To combat internal corruption and excessive and unwarranted use of force by law enforcement, USAID focuses on building the talent retention and capacitation of the police workforce. By enhancing administrative practices and talent management of the Dominican National Police, USAID has contributed to increasing police responsiveness and building a culture of peace in high-crime and vulnerable communities.

Complementing this effort, USAID is bolstering Dominican Government accountability for citizen security and crime prevention efforts by engaging Dominican civil society organizations in addressing local and national citizen security needs.

USAID is working to increase access to justice systems for the most vulnerable populations, such as youth and people of Haitian descent, through Community Justice Houses. USAID also partners with the private sector to create opportunities for at-risk youth between the ages of 11 and 24 by providing integrated support for school insertion/retention, vocational training, entrepreneurship, job placement, teen pregnancy prevention, health services, life skills and identity documentation to improve chances for a brighter future.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

USAID's work to reduce corruption and increase transparency in public procurements has culminated in a draft Public Procurement Law which the Dominican government submitted to the Congress in 2022 and is expected to be approved in early 2023.

USAID supported the General Directorate of Public-Private Partnerships to launch the first-ever infrastructure public-private partnership (PPP) tender, for the construction of a cruise port in Samana. USAID's support has resulted in the institutionalization of international best practices, policies and guidelines that will be applied to all future PPP projects to ensure transparency and efficiency.

## EDUCATION

At the basic education level, USAID helps improve students' reading skills and strengthens teacher instruction through enhanced curriculum and innovative education approaches to ensure schools and higher education institutions are safe and inclusive for all students. This includes work with the Ministry of Education and other donors to strengthen school governance and safety, as well as to increase learning opportunities for children with disabilities and other vulnerability factors. USAID also supports Higher Education partnerships to strengthen the effectiveness of institutional programs and services to attract and retain youth from high risk environments into universities. These higher education institutions contextualize and apply best practices from US universities to support youth in developing resilience and the skills necessary to positively contribute to the economy.

## RESULTS ACHIEVED

- Improved reading skills of 364,004 students in 387 schools in targeted communities.
- 155,479 youth from over 400 vulnerable neighborhoods benefited from at-risk youth development programs, including job training, mentorship, and life skills workshops.
- 229 Parent-Teacher Associations engaged in their children's education.
- 5,338 justice officials trained in specialized criminal justice and human rights protection skills.
- 237,442 members of low-income, marginalized communities benefited from free legal or counseling services from Community Justice Houses.
- Wraparound support provided to 58,870 victims of gender-based violence including health and legal services, psycho-social counseling, and sheltering
- National Police reform legislation passed and regulations designed and implemented.
- 1,453 government officials trained in anti-corruption principles, contributing to a 4-point decrease in the country's corruption perception score
- Conducted the first ever national LGBTQI+ survey in the Dominican Republic and Barbados to measure the impact of societal stigma on the LGBTQI+ community
- 3,664 human rights defenders across the Caribbean region supported in advocacy work to advance the rights of members of the LGBTQI+ community

## CONTACT

USAID/Dominican Republic

Email: [drinfo@usaid.gov](mailto:drinfo@usaid.gov)