



# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

## YOUTH-LED ACTIVITY

### OBJECTIVE

To reduce youth crime and violence in the Dominican Republic through engagement with youth-led and youth-serving organizations in order to generate cross-sectoral, positive youth development outcomes.

### COUNTRY SITUATION

The Dominican Republic continues to face challenges in social equality, educational quality, opportunities for economic capacity and growth, and citizen security. Close to 40 percent of students enrolled in public school drop out before the eighth grade, and the drop-out rate has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, 24 percent of youth (30 percent of young women and 18.8 percent of young men) in the Dominican Republic were neither in the education or training system, nor employed, and the unemployment rate for youth (15-24 years old) is only 16 percent.

Crime also disproportionately affects youth; in 2018, youth ages 15-29 accounted for 41.4 percent of all homicide victims. Citizen security is a major concern among the Dominican population, and the country has a lower level of trust in the police than the regional average for Latin America and the Caribbean. In efforts to promote a more prosperous and inclusive society, improving citizen security is a joint priority between the Government of the Dominican Republic and the U.S. government. Current data, referenced above, demonstrates the important role that youth can play in sustainably improving citizen security.

## OUR WORK

The Youth-Led Activity focuses on strengthening institutions and improving youth-friendly services to contribute to community resilience and reduce risk factors for youth. The Activity is based on USAID's Positive Youth Development Strategy and benefits marginalized youth, including LGBTQI+ youth, orphans, youth that are trafficked or smuggled, young people with disabilities, Dominicans of Haitian descent, Venezuelan youth migrants, and youth living with HIV/AIDS. The geographic focus is high-crime "hot spot" communities. A key component of the Activity is a pilot reintegration program designed to reintegrate youth offenders into their communities through a combination of job skills training, employment, and wraparound services including, but not limited to, cognitive-behavioral training, social support networks, case management, accelerated learning courses, and civic engagement. The Activity includes an intentional and robust private sector engagement component with a matching funds scheme which will create opportunities for youth job insertion, technical training, mentorship, and education.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- Increased youth leadership.
- Expanded youth civic engagement and participation in decision making.
- Improved access to multidisciplinary social, emotional, educational and economic development opportunities.
- Expanded social and labor inclusion, tolerance, and acceptance of marginalized groups.
- Reintegration of youth offenders into their home communities through participation in productive activities.
- Increased interpersonal, cognitive, and self control skills for youth offenders.
- Integration of gender and inclusive analysis to inform decisions towards programming actions.
- Strengthened research and analysis capacities of youth, youth-led organizations, youth-serving organizations, community members, and local authorities to inform their crime and violence prevention programming.

**Duration:** 5 years (October 2022 - October 2027)

**Budget:** US \$15 million

**Implementing Partner:** Entrena SRL

## CONTACT

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