

In the Dominican Republic, the Joint Programme built on recent progress to further strengthen HIV prevention, treatment and support services, including social protection among vulnerable and key populations. For example, 89 primary healthcare centres in three provinces established special contraceptive promotion units, strengthening both their HIV prevention and family planning services thanks to technical and financial assistance from the Joint Programme. Nearly 5500 condoms were also distributed to communities during the International Condom Day (UNFPA). In addition, the national comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) was revised, and an evaluation tool was implemented to strengthen data collection and analyse the strengths and deficiencies of CSE programmes in primary and secondary school levels (UNESCO).

To strengthen services for adolescents who use psychoactive substances, a care model, which includes treatment and care guidelines for adolescents who inject drugs, was developed following advocacy and technical support by the Joint Programme. This model was rolled out in the only centre in the country that provides such services (UNODC).

Integration of prevention of vertical transmission of HIV and antenatal care services in 10 public hospitals. At the same time, 12 adolescent units improved access to HIV testing and treatment services among pregnant women. As a result, 10 361 low-income pregnant women, including over 4500 pregnant adolescents accessed these services. A total of 581 healthcare professionals from these sites also improved their capacity for delivering services (UNICEF). Technical support from the Joint Programme further helped to update the national regulations, protocols and guidelines for mandatory dual HIV and syphilis testing for pregnant women and newborns as well as for the diagnosis, care and follow-up of children with HIV and congenital syphilis. In addition, the national guides for early diagnosis in infants and the clinical care of children and adults living with HIV/AIDS, including pregnant women

living with HIV, were also updated and disseminated across the country (WHO).

Community-led monitoring was integrated into eight additional priority HIV prevention, treatment and care services—reaching a total of 14 services nationwide—to improve coverage and adherence to treatment thanks to the Joint Programme's support. A community network comprising 24 trained members was established to lead the monitoring process. This network assessed the healthcare needs of people living with HIV and other vulnerable and key populations, identified barriers to key services and developed plans to address gaps and improve access to quality services (UNAIDS Secretariat). In addition, for the first time, representatives of people living with HIV, the LGBTQI+ community and sex workers gained three seats at the national civil society council of the social protection cabinet. This milestone is expected to have a significant impact in addressing the social protection needs of vulnerable and key populations, thanks to intense advocacy by civil society, people living with HIV and key populations networks and the Joint Programme (UNDP).

More than 200 people living with HIV received food and nutrition assistance to improve their adherence to treatment. Peer nutrition counselling was expanded to three more comprehensive care services; and over 1300 people living with or affected by HIV improved their knowledge of healthy diet and meal preparation using vegetables produced in gardens and urban gardening skills to create income generating activities. To strengthen the family farming programme led by the Ministry of Agriculture, a seedling bank in shadow house mode with a capacity to produce 30 000 vegetable seedlings was established and more than 100 gardens were installed in households of vulnerable families, including people living with HIV to increase their income and food security (WFP).

## KEY RESULTS

- HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health information and services were expanded particularly among young people and in school settings.
- Social protection programmes for people living with HIV and key populations were strengthened and expanded.
- Stronger and integrated community-led monitoring and empowered communities further address gaps and improve access to and quality of HIV services.

Joint UN Team  
on AIDS

UNICEF  
WFP  
UNDP  
UNFPA

UNODC  
UNESCO  
WHO  
UNAIDS Secretariat

Contributing to  
the UNSDCF  
and SDGs



## The Dominican Republic 2022-2023

Summary of the Joint Programme's support to the national HIV response in 2022-2023

Total Joint Programme  
expenditure in 2022-2023:

US\$ 2 211 463



In addition, 23 peer counsellors and 10 healthcare professionals strengthened their capacity for delivering comprehensive HIV services, including counselling, adolescent health nutrition and home visits thus improving treatment adherence and the overall health outcomes of people living with HIV (UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, WHO, UNAIDS Secretariat).

In 2023, the Dominican Republic joined the Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate all Forms of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination, and the Joint Programme provided technical support to roll out a situation diagnosis and develop a national action plan. Moreover, the newly developed national action plan on gender and HIV 2024-2025 will facilitate effective implementation of policies and programmes aimed at eliminating gender inequalities, including gender-based discrimination and violence associated with HIV (UNAIDS Secretariat).

Strategic evidence for the national HIV response and public policies formulation was strengthened through various studies and assessments. These included a study the profile of Haitian migrants and their descendants, including people living with HIV residing in the Dominican Republic, with the aim of identifying bottlenecks and opportunities to improve strategies to better reach this population. A second study helped identify gaps in the early identification of new HIV cases, linkage and adherence to treatment, and recovery of people living with HIV lost to follow-up (UNAIDS Secretariat).