



## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ADVANCING PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES



In the Dominican Republic (DR), HIV prevalence among the general population has remained stable at 0.8 percent.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, HIV prevalence among key populations is significantly higher—ranging from 1.7 percent to 6.3 percent among sex workers, 3.9 percent to 6.5 percent among men who have sex with men (MSM), and 1.3 percent to 4.8 percent among drug users.<sup>2</sup> This is considered a concentrated epidemic since HIV is largely confined to high-risk subpopulations. The disproportion in prevalence shows that key populations—MSM, transgender persons, drug users, and sex workers—in the DR remain severely underserved due to large gaps in coverage and access to HIV prevention and treatment services, along with stigma and discrimination barriers.

### USAID'S SUPPORT

Advancing Partners & Communities (APC) is a five-year centrally-funded USAID project implemented by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. In the DR, APC's goal is to contribute to a sustainable reduction in HIV transmission among key populations and to promote an improved quality of life for people living with HIV (PLHIV). APC has been operating in 15 provinces in the DR since late 2013 to improve access to integrated, high-quality, comprehensive HIV prevention and care services for vulnerable populations such as sex workers and their clients, transgender persons, MSM, residents of *bateyes*, and PLHIV. As APC enters its third year of implementation, it will focus on scaling-up services in five priority provinces.

### WHAT HAVE USAID AND ITS PARTNERS ACHIEVED?

Through grant awards and technical assistance, APC has strengthened the technical and organizational capacity of local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that promote the implementation of high-impact practices to improve the reach and quality of HIV services. Additionally, APC has been working closely with national and regional health system managers and community-based organizations (CBOs) supporting HIV service delivery implementation and the adoption of anti-discrimination policies. APC and its grantees have achieved impressive results during the two years of implementation. These results include: reaching over 61,000 people from key populations with HIV prevention packages, improving adherence to antiretroviral treatment (ART) rates as compared to baseline measurements in six APC-funded clinics, and supporting the Ministry of Public Health to identify and implement measures that allow the Dominican health system to address the HIV and AIDS needs of its key populations in a sustainable manner.

### NEXT STEPS

In FY16, APC will continue to integrate technical, organizational, and human rights elements to improve and scale the quality of HIV services based on the care cascade for PLHIV and key populations, with a particular focus on the five priority provinces. APC will support a network of private and public clinics, and CBOs to increase the uptake and quality of community-friendly HIV testing and counseling (HTC) and sexually transmitted infection (STI) services.

<sup>1</sup> Encuesta Demografía de Salud (ENDESA) and Centro de Estudios Sociales y Demográficos (CESDEM) Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance Survey (IBBSS) 2012.



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