DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (Country Case Study)

[Dominican Republic]
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A. Background

1. Which UNCT members have collaborated on this case study?
   - UNDP
   - UNICEF

2. Which national partners (governmental and non-governmental) were involved in developing this case study and how?
   - The main national partners involved in developing this case study are governmental actors.
   - The Citizen Security Observatory (henceforth CSO) has actively and directly provided inputs to draft this case study. Contact details: Alberto Morillo Castillo, CSO Coordinator, amorillo@mip.gob.do

3. Does the case study illustrate one or several phases or levels?

   - [ ] Adapting SDG 16
   - [ ] National level
   - [ ] Implementing SDG 16
   - [ ] Regional level
   - [ ] Monitoring & Reporting on SDG 16
   - [X] Local level

B. Case Study

OPTION 2 (self-structured, covering elements under 4.-7. above)

In the Dominican Republic, citizen perceptions of insecurity and obstacles to the effective Rule of Law undermine confidence in governmental institutions. The intentional homicide rate is still considered high by most international standards, although its tendency points towards a gradual improvement. Most homicides in the Dominican Republic are committed using firearms, ratio which has also diminished over time. Reporting efforts on SDG target 16.1 are led by the OSC, the main governmental actor of the integrated national information system on citizen security and violence. It consists of eleven institutions which supply it with official data on crime and violence, and has the authority to collect, compile, cross-reference, validate and analyze such data in order to update the national citizen security panorama, as well as to monitor and evaluate institutional action aiming at violence prevention.

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1. Around 49% of the population report feeling insecure and 29.8% report having been the victim of a crime (Country Programme Document for the Dominican Republic; 2018-2022).
2. In 2015, 1,256 homicides were reported, and therefore, the intentional homicide rate was 12.6 cases per 100,000 inhabitants (OSC-IT 016, Thematic Report on Citizen Security, June 2018). By September 2018, 801 intentional homicides were reported, so the projected rate for 2018 was 10.4 cases per 100,000 inhabitants (OSC-IE-029 Statistical Report on Citizen Security, January - September 2018).
3. In 2015, 67% of homicides were perpetrated with firearms (OSC-IT 016, Thematic Report on Citizen Security, June 2018), while the last data collected shows that these weapons had caused 48% of the total number of homicide victims (OSC-IE-029 Statistical Report on Citizen Security, January - September 2018). Similarly, in 2015, 4,448 people were reported as being injured by firearms throughout the country (OSC-IT 016, Thematic Report on Citizen Security, June 2018), while in September 2018, the number went down to 1,997 (OSC-IE-029 Statistical Report on Citizen Security, January - September 2018).
In 2018, the collaboration between the OSC and the Dominican Republic National Statistics Office resulted in a progress of indicator 16.1.1\(^4\) from feasibility level 2 to feasibility level 1, due to the incorporation of intentional homicides to the measurement. In 2019, the official homicide figures in the Dominican Republic are compliant with the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS).

The Observatory’s website pioneers in the compliance with General Law 200-04 for the Free Access to Public Information. It displays and allows the download of disaggregated data in a wide variety of formats: maps, charts, graphs, tables and computer graphics, many of which are customizable.

Regarding the role of the Dominican academy, the CSO is about to sign a research collaboration agreement with the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) in Santo Domingo, since the Vice Rectorate for Research and Evaluation are opening a new line of research on “Crime, Security and Prevention Economics”.

As per successful results on SDG target 16.1 reporting, we can identify:

- the publication of 29 quarterly Statistical Reports on Citizen Security, 39 thematic and recommendatory reports and several provincial, municipal and even neighborhood-scoped data maps by the CSO, since its creation in 2012. These reports and maps are key factors in improving the process of formulating public policy recommendations to the National Council on Citizen Security, presided by the President of the Dominican Republic himself.
- outreach efforts focused on publishing more transparent, accessible and informative crime and violence data, targeting a wider general-interest audience. The Website offers the possibility for any user to 1) easily download official citizen security-related databases in different formats; 2) manually search and visualize Power BI and thematic cartography platforms and 3) consult and download key reports from a public repository.

Future opportunities include the articulation of the 9-1-1 National Emergency and Security Attention System as one of the institutions providing data to the OSC’s Operative Technical Unit, since they cover similar areas. This would sharpen data cross-referencing outcomes, improve their quality and accelerate the speed of the reporting process.

The most important lesson learned is that it is indispensable to import the 2030 Agenda combo dynamics and find a balance between each institution’s strategic programmatic priorities so as to square them and fuel the efforts conducing to common goals. Close attention must be paid to a double outreach: the traditional approach, using official channels, and a combined approach using closer more personal involvement practices which usually prove really useful to efficiently manage bureaucratic hurdles.

As a conclusion, satisfying citizen security needs triggers development in other areas, such as economic growth and poverty reduction, education, and gender equality. The 2030 Agenda declares that “there can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without development.” A context of peace and security sets the foundation for the rest of the Agenda to be successfully carried out.

We shall now focus on describing the efforts made by the Dominican Republic\(^5\) towards implementing SDG target 16.9 on universal access to documentation, especially on birth registration\(^6\).

According to 2014 data\(^7\), 116,880 or 12% of Dominican children under the age of 5 were not officially registered by a civil authority. 27.5% of the children under five living in impoverished homes had not been registered timely. Despite meeting

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\(^4\) “Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age”.

\(^5\) Initiatives were possible thanks to four governmental actors which have worked with UNICEF: Presidency’s General Direction of Special Programmes, the Central Electoral Board, the Ministry of Health and the National Health Service.

\(^6\) Regarding SDG target 16.9, “by 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration”, and indicator 16.9.1 “Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age”, the Dominican Government is committed to achieving universal rates of birth registration in the country.

\(^7\) National Household Survey (ENHOGAR)
all the necessary pre-conditions to achieve universal rates on birth registration, the country still faces low rates of registration at birth as only 39% of newborns were registered before leaving the hospital. Currently, the country ranks 18th out of the 23 in the region.

In 2014, a pilot program was implemented in four hospitals, aiming at achieving universal birth registration rates. Upon adapting the program, in 2017, the Inter-Institutional Agreement for the Timely and Late Birth Registration was signed by high-level institutions, including the Presidency of the Republic, the Central Electoral Board (CEB), the Health Ministry and the National Health Service to support the implementation of birth registration policies. This priority was translated into Presidential Goals, a high-level political commitment towards the achievement of the SDGs.

To support the implementation and reporting, a workplan was agreed between partners, targeting 21 hospitals located in 19 provinces and implementing 36 prioritized initiatives, including, amongst others:

a) Placing “birth registration promoters” in hospitals to help families navigate administrative registration procedures
b) Strengthening continued data monitoring by the Central Electoral Board in hospitals, ensuring that no baby leaves the hospital unregistered.
c) Equipping the Civil Registry Delegations located at big hospital with human resources and equipment necessary for a permanent operation.
d) Improving existing regulations, such as the one requiring proof of birth registration before hospital discharge.
e) Developing a sense of ownership and shared responsibility towards birth registration among healthcare professionals and hospital employees.
f) Tackling communication issues and facing diversity challenges by disseminating relevant information, describing steps to issue a timely birth registration certificate.

As part of the efforts to monitoring progress, the Central Electoral Board developed a baseline on timely birth registration to review the procedures based on the 2016-2017 evidence. The continued data monitoring allowed to implement a data-let approach to increase registration rates.

Results achieved during implementation showed that timely birth registration rates in grew significantly from 39% in 2012 to 61% in 2017 and subsequently to 70% in 2018. Also, in 2018, 50,755 newborns were timely registered in hospitals. The timely birth registration rate of children born to adolescent mothers grew from 20% in 2017 to 28% in 2018, and that of children born to foreign mothers grew from 37% to 55%.

The collaboration resulted into the production and dissemination of informative material, both in Spanish and Creole, that has been placed in the 21 identified hospitals. 607 employees from the healthcare sector, civil registry offices and promoters were trained to carry-on activities autonomously.

Moreover, the planned next steps include strengthening the capacity of hospitals where birth registration rates are still below national average; expanding the number of participating hospitals and focusing on the groups of children under greater risks of not being registered (children mothered by foreign women and of adolescent mothers).

Finally, the lessons learned concerning the implementation of SDG target 16.9 are:
- **Quality over quantity**: provision of better-quality services over implementation in more hospitals.
- **Ownership of the initiative by hospital staff**: it ensures commitment and training replication.
- **Empowering women**: Engaging expectant mothers as a key success factor.
- **Improving coordination between hospital teams and Civil Registry Delegations**: as a means to reduce the number of families leaving the hospital without finalizing their child’s registration process.