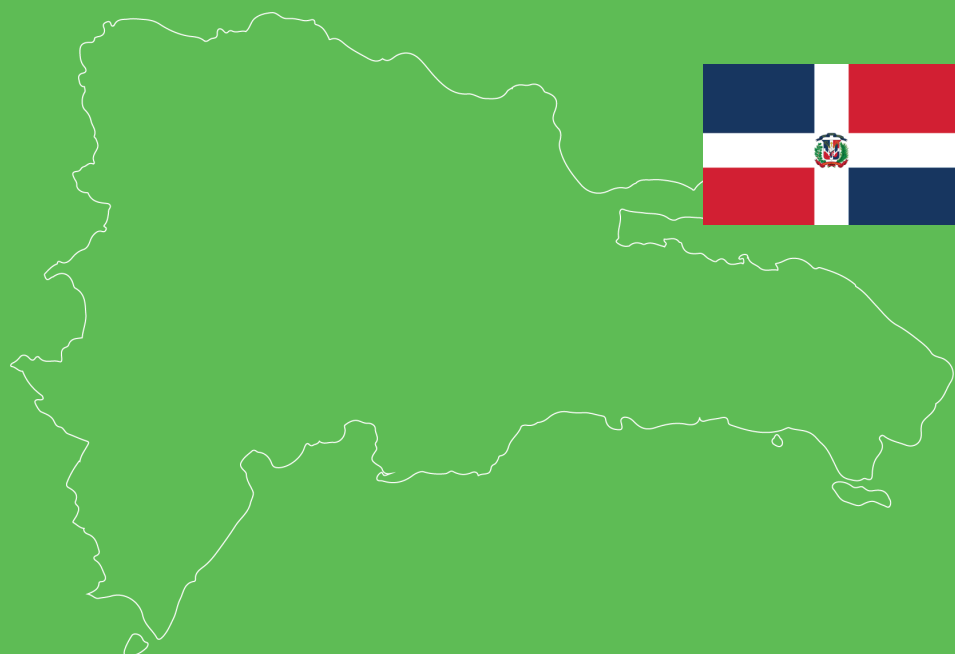




Development of Safety and Security Plans

for CSOs Working on HIV with Key Populations
in the Dominican Republic



Case Study on the Development of Safety and Security Plans for CSOs Working on HIV with Key Populations in the Dominican Republic is a document prepared the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Platform for Support, Coordination and Communication of Civil Society and Communities (LAC Platform).

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Introduction

There is growing concern about violence experienced by people working with key populations (KPs) most affected by HIV. Some of these people are members of the same KPs. Many organizations have documented the impact of violence on the security of individuals, families and communities. In recent years, several extreme situations in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have demonstrated that hostile environments and rights violations affect not only the security of members of key and vulnerable populations but also the people, organizations and programs that support them and their right to health. Thus, security challenges can negatively impact all aspects of the HIV program cycle.

Some organizations and individuals working on HIV programs in Latin America and the Caribbean have identified effective ways to limit or mitigate the harm caused by security risks or to respond effectively to violence. However, more systematic investment is needed to strengthen security and protect implementers and programs working to control the epidemic.

One of the most significant factors of HIV-related vulnerability is stigma and discrimination against the disease and against KPs: people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV), men who have sex with men (MSM), people who inject drugs (PWID), female sex workers (FSWs), transgender people (TPs) and, more recently, migrant populations. As in other regions of the world, community leaders in LAC working on HIV and defending and advocating for the Human Rights of these populations are exposed to risks and threats associated with their activities with these populations. The impact of these risks on the safety of leaders, families and communities has been documented by many organizations and has been the subject of national, regional and global advocacy analyses. These threats are even more significant in countries experiencing political instability.



The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has noted that those who advocate for the Human Rights of LGBTI people and other KPs in Latin America and the Caribbean are more vulnerable to violence due to three factors: :



They identify as LGBT or as members of other KPs who are already vulnerable to greater violence because of their sexuality, behavior, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity;



They experience additional forms of vulnerability to violence because of their role as Human Rights defenders and the specific causes for which they advocate; and



They face alarming levels of vulnerability to violence due to the intersection of their sexual orientation, gender identity, occupation or behavior, and their role as advocates for causes related to these populations.

The Global Fund's Community Engagement Strategic Initiative (CE SI) and [Vía Libre/Plataforma LAC](#), believe it is critical to **Case Studies** that help improve the response to safety and security in LAC, given the risks that leaders, community advocates and mobilizers, program staff, and service providers from CSOs and communities face in their work with KPs. This case study aims to acknowledge the experience in the Dominican Republic and provide information and recommendations for addressing safety and security issues for leaders, community advocates and CSOs working with KPs on Human Rights and HIV issues in LAC countries.

As in other regions of the world, leaders working on HIV and KPs' rights in LAC face risks and threats related to their activities. The impact of violence on the safety of leaders, community health workers and their organizations has been documented by many organizations and has been the subject of global analysis and advocacy ^{1 - 2}.

Against this backdrop, concerns have been raised about the violence experienced by leaders working with KPs and people living with HIV in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF), has proposed to address this issue through the Community Engagement Strategy Initiative (CE SI) and [Vía Libre/Plataforma LAC](#).

General context on the situation of key populaions in the Dominican Republic³

In the Dominican Republic, KPs face various forms of insecurity and human rights violations, as detailed in the report *Being LGBTI in the Caribbean: Dominican Republic 2022*. In the legal context, the lack of legislation prohibiting discrimination and hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as the lack of full recognition of the equality of same-sex couples and the legal identity of transgender people, limits legal security.

Violence against people with diverse sexual orientation occurs in many settings, including work, education, and public and private spaces. State and private actors are responsible for perpetrating this violence, from public officials such as the police and military to individuals and private entities. Workplace inequalities lead to harassment and discrimination, placing these populations in insecure and marginalized employment.

Discrimination also affects access to housing, as LGBTI+ couples face difficulties in renting or buying property due to rejection by their neighbors. Violence begins in childhood, with physical punishment to correct the sexual orientation or gender identity of children and adolescents. Discrimination in education leads to school dropout and poor performance.

In addition, harmful and violent practices to change sexual orientation or gender identity continue, affecting the physical and mental integrity of those subjected to them.

Impunity for deaths and disappearances, particularly of transgender people, reflects structural flaws and biases within the justice system. Transgender sex work is often associated with homicide and violence in highly unsafe public spaces. There are also cases of extortion and violence by repressive state forces.

¹ International HIV/AIDS Alliance & LINKAGES. "Safety and Security Toolkit: Strengthening the Implementation of HIV Programs for and with Key Populations" Durham (North Carolina): FHI 360; 2018.

² Beyrer C, Grady C, Bekker L, McIntyre J, Over M & Jarlais D. "A Framework for Ethical Engagement with Key Populations in PEPFAR programs" PEPFAR

³ Report "Being LGBTI in the Caribbean: Dominican Republic 2022." UNPD-USAID

The National LGBTI Survey confirms these alarming situations, showing a high percentage of violence based on gender identity or expression. However, most victims do not report these acts of violence because they believe that reporting will not lead to justice. Younger people, in particular, are reluctant to report.

On the other hand, the Haitian migrant population in the Dominican Republic, represents a case of extreme vulnerability due to the lack of recognition of their citizenship⁴, and the racism they suffer. They face legal, economic, social, educational and health challenges due to restrictions in obtaining legal documents, which limit their access to social security and health services and create barriers in education, contributing to their precarious and disadvantaged situation.

The lack of legal documentation exposes many to persecution and permanent deportation. The General Migration Law (Law No. 285) of 2004 established categories of residence, distinguishing between permanent and temporary residence, and excluded children of non-resident immigrants from the right to nationality through *ius soli*⁵. Although there were objections and lawsuits against several law articles, the Supreme Court and the 2010 Constitution ratified these restrictions. The National Plan for the Regularization of Foreigners (PNRE, by its Spanish acronym), implemented in 2013, allowed for the regularization of migrants. Still, only 3% of Haitian applicants met the requirements, and most received provisional permits. The Special Law of Naturalization (Law No. 169) was also intended to facilitate the naturalization process, but many did not have the necessary documents.

In terms of the economy, 73% of the Haitian migrant population works in the informal sector in jobs related to agriculture, fishing and handicrafts. Although those who participated in the PNRE were granted limited access to social security, they still face barriers in the social security system. Regarding healthcare, only a minority of the Haitian migrant population has health and occupational accident insurance. Data from the 2017 National Immigrant Survey (ENI, by its Spanish acronym) show that 32% of Haitian migrants reported illness in the previous 12 months, a higher rate than people from other countries. Education, although universal, is also unequal for Haitian migrant children. Data from the same survey show that children from Haitian households are less likely to attend school than those from Dominican households or other countries.

At the same time, the context of sex workers in the Dominican Republic is characterized by legal, occupational, economic, social, and physical insecurity. Although no legal prohibition exists on autonomous sex work, the lack of regulation and a specific normative framework creates ambiguity and confusion. The Constitution guarantees the principle of legality and the freedom to work within the law.

Authorities, especially the police, often use ambiguous regulations or regulations indirectly related to sex work to exert control, extort bribes, use violence and stigmatize. The health card system, which is supposed to regulate health, becomes an instrument of surveillance and control used by the police.

⁴ "Migration in the Dominican Republic: Context, Challenges and Opportunities" UNDP LAC PDS # 31, 2022.

⁵ From the Latin "right of soil," *ius soli* is the right to acquire nationality or citizenship by being born within the territory of a state, i.e., the national identity is determined by the place where a person is born, regardless of the origin of the parents.



1. Objective

This case study aims to describe and share the processes, challenges and lessons learned from the development of the Safety and Security Plans of CSOs working on HIV with KPs in the Dominican Republic. It also proposes a set of useful recommendations for both Dominican organizations and those in other LAC countries that may be interested in developing their own SSPs.



2. Methodology

For the preparation of this case study, a document review focused on the outcomes of the consultancy: *“Development of a costed operational plan to prevent situations that affect the safety and security of KPs in Dominican Republic, 2022”* and the *Safety and Security Toolkit: Strengthening the Implementation of HIV Programs for and with Key Populations*, developed by the Alliance and FHI 360 for the USAID- and PEPFAR-supported LINKAGES project, and adapted by the LAC Platform⁶

Furthermore, four virtual semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders involved, including one of the consultants who facilitated the process. At the end of the data collection phase, the information was systematized, collated and analyzed based on categories corresponding to the objectives of the case study.

6

Vía Libre, Plataforma LAC (2022). “Safety and Security for Organizations Working with Key and Vulnerable Populations to Strengthen HIV Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. A Toolkit” (Protección y seguridad para organizaciones que trabajan con poblaciones clave y vulnerables para fortalecer programas de VIH en Latinoamérica y el Caribe, Caja de herramientas).

Available at: <https://www.plataformalac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CAJA-DE-HERRAMIENTAS-PROTECCION-Y-SEGURIDAD.pdf>
<https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-linkages-safety-security-toolkit.pdf>

3. Main Results

A. Background. Adaptation of the guide for Latin America

The Safety and Security Toolkit: Strengthening the Implementation of HIV Programs for and with Key Populations, from the USAID LINKAGES, AMAN, MENA, FHI 360° project has been adapted by [Vía Libre/Plataforma LAC](#), to the context of CSOs in Latin America and the Caribbean⁷. This new toolkit was implemented for the first time in Guatemala between March and September 2022 and was used to develop the SSPs in the Dominican Republic.

B. Adaptation of the tools to the context in the Dominican Republic

Based on the lessons learned from the process in Guatemala, adjustments were made to the tools (timelines, matrices, etc.) to adapt them to the context and needs of the Dominican Republic.

With the support of the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) and the Principal Recipient (PR) responsible for community activities, the Institute of Dermatology and Skin Surgery (IDCP), the following SR CSOs working with communities were selected to participate in the current GF grant process:

- ✓ Grupo de Autoayuda Amigos Siempre Amigos (ASA)
- ✓ Instituto Nacional de la Salud (INSALUD)
- ✓ Aid for Aids Dominicana (AFA)
- ✓ Centro de Promoción y Solidaridad Humana (CEPROSH)
- ✓ Trans Siempre Amigas (TRANSSA)
- ✓ Comunidad de Trans, Trasvestis y Trabajadoras Sexuales de Dominicana (COTRAVETD)
- ✓ Centro de Orientación e investigación integral (COIN)
- ✓ Asociación Dominicana de Planificación Familiar (ADOPLAFAM)
- ✓ Movimiento de Mujeres Unidas (MODEMU)
- ✓ Movimiento Socio-Cultural para los Trabajadores Haitianos (MOSCTHA)
- ✓ Fundación Humanismo y Democracia (H+D)
- ✓ Instituto Dominicano de Desarrollo Integral Inc (IDDI)

⁷ Vía Libre, Plataforma LAC (2022). "Safety and Security for Organizations Working with Key and Vulnerable Populations to Strengthen HIV Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. A Toolkit" (Protección y seguridad para organizaciones que trabajan con poblaciones clave y vulnerables para fortalecer programas de VIH en Latinoamérica y el Caribe, Caja de herramientas). Available at: <https://www.plataformalac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CAJA-DE-HERRAMIENTAS-PROTECCION-Y-SEGURIDAD.pdf>

C. Conducting a situational diagnosis of CSOs

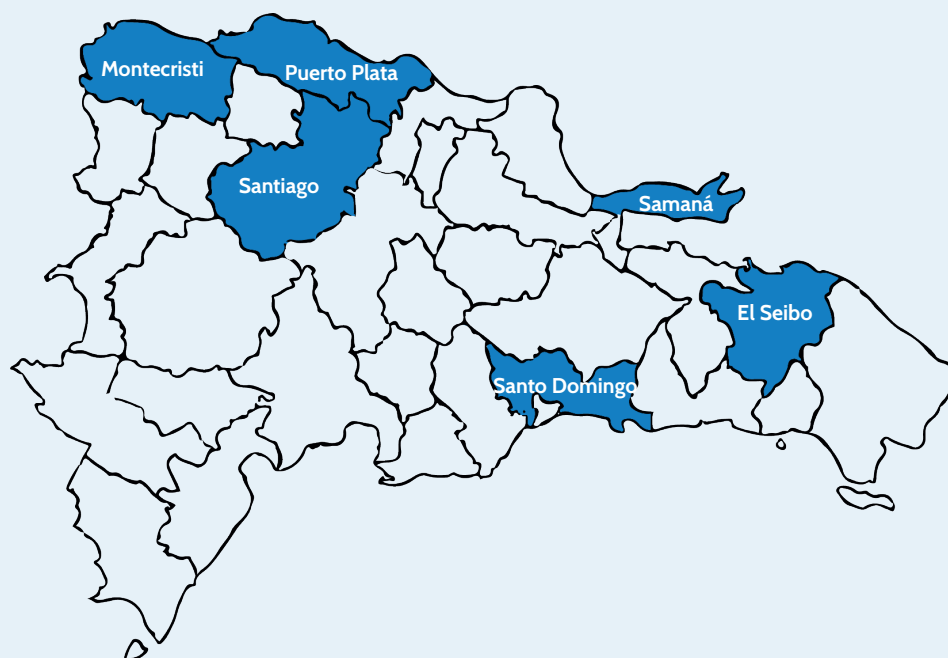
Self-diagnosis phase: CSOs

In this phase, CSOs were provided with the tool “Virtual Safety and Security Checklist”⁸ adapted to the Dominican Republic context, to self-assess the safety and security conditions in the development of their work. This list includes different indicators that CSOs should comply with to prevent risks and attacks and includes: risks in the physical facilities of the organizations; risks faced by the people who carry out community work (promoters, liaisons, counselors, educators, etc.); and risks in the digital and virtual environment.

First, the ideal profile of individuals in the CSOs to complete the tool was provided based on their knowledge and representativeness. This profile included managers, field staff and supervisors. A total of 20 people from 12 organizations completed the tool.

On-site diagnostic phase: consulting team

With the support of the PR (IDCP) and in coordination with the SR CSOs, an agenda was established for visits by the consulting team to the areas where the interventions of the GF grant were being implemented. The visits included the localities of Puerto Plata, Santiago, Santo Domingo, Samaná, Montecristi and El Seibo, and resulted in extensive field observations.



The visits were conducted during the implementation of combined prevention strategies for several key populations prioritized in the national response: men who have sex with men (MSM), female sex workers (FSW), transgender women (TW), and migrants from Haiti. In addition, interviews were conducted with community health workers in the field and supervisors, both from the CSOs and the PR (IDCP). The interviews followed a set of questions prepared by the consulting team to gain more in-depth knowledge about:

Situations that have jeopardized and/or compromised the integrity of the workers.

Individual perceptions of insecurity and risk generated by work strategies, schedules, locations of outreach activities, transportation, etc.

Ways in which people and organizations respond to situations of risk and vulnerability.



The result was a relatively broad panorama of the conditions in which work is carried out and the situations that can be potentially unsafe for CSO workers.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the consulting team and the CSO members were confronted with several risk situations. One occurred when, during a nighttime outreach to a sex worker population in a closed space, a fight broke out among the clients, resulting in the premature termination of the outreach strategy and the withdrawal of the people present.

The people interviewed for this study particularly emphasized the importance of this phase of field diagnosis because:

“There is no one-size-fits-all approach to solving problems. Sometimes consultancies or technical assistance bring solutions packages, but not all countries are the same, nor are all organizations. The consulting team took the time to see and listen to us, and they witnessed how the work is done on the ground and what our organization faces.”

CSO leader for sex workers.



D. Conditions and risk situations identified

- Among the situations observed and discussed during the fieldwork, it was noted that CSOs often carry out their interventions in environments with high drug and alcohol consumption
- In some places, drug trafficking poses a threat and risk to community health workers, who could be accused of involvement in illicit activities.
- In some streets (hot spots), there are people armed with knives, guns, machetes, and broken bottles.
- The scenario is further aggravated by social protests and strikes, trapping promoters in volatile and chaotic situations where violence can erupt at any moment.
- Some community health workers have been victims of express kidnappings, and their cell phones are often stolen while they are at work.
- In sex work venues, fights between clients under the influence of alcohol and drugs have even forced the suspension of interventions. Promoters work in high-risk areas and witness verbal and physical aggression.
- Some promoters have been sexually harassed during interventions, and some transgender women have been extorted by the police.
- During testing, threats have been made when positive results are reported, creating a palpable tension that puts promoters at risk.
- After the interventions, some users harass promoters in search of services and goods, sometimes in the early hours.
- Community health workers who provide services to the Haitian population have been targeted by immigration police raids, making them victims of arbitrary detention.
- The roads to many bateyes⁹, are muddy, and reaching certain locations during the rainy season is an additional challenge.

Sometimes, the populations are located in situations and areas inherently conducive to increased risks for community workers (nighttime, remote areas, drug use, etc.). It is essential to reach these populations and conduct outreach activities because the state does not reach them, leaving them unprotected and vulnerable to HIV infection and disease progression. Achieving the goals set under these conditions is therefore crucial; however, if the risks are not managed, the vulnerability of community workers may increase.

⁹ A batey (Taíno voice) or bato is a housing unit in the Spanish Antilles that originated from a sugar mill, that is, the factories or industrial facilities dedicated to the milling and processing of sugar cane. Originally, in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, the batey referred to the complex of the sugar house, the master's house and the slaves' barracks. Sierra Torres, G. (2017). "The role of the bateyes in cultural processes in Cuba. Some historical-anthropological reflections." ("El papel de los bateyes en los procesos culturales en Cuba. Algunas consideraciones histórico-antropológicas", in Spanish). Revista Cubana de Antropología Sociocultural.

E. Planning. Development of plans by each CSO

The importance of the on-site workshop

Based on the information gathered during **the situational diagnosis phase** an on-site workshop was designed to develop the Safety and Security Plans.

The methodology of the two and a half day workshop had a pedagogical and a broad participatory approach. It was organized in three stages to:

1

Promote understanding and reflection on the scenarios of insecurity and risks that affect CSOs, based on the systematization of the results obtained in the previous diagnostic phase;

2

Incorporate new tools through the exchange of good practices in security among all CSOs;

3

Develop the plans by working in groups composed of CSOs working with the same key population sectors.



The consulting team that facilitated the workshop was supported in the KP sector working groups by members of PR who supervise the fieldwork of CSOs and have in-depth knowledge of it, which contributed significantly to the expected results of the workshop. .

One of the difficulties expressed by the interviewees for this study was that the workshop was too short and that at least two or even three full days were needed.

“The workshops need to be longer so the plans can be completed on the there and then. Afterward, a meeting should be arranged with directors and decision-makers so that they can take up the results of the workshop as a commitment within the CSOs and with funders.”

CSO leader for sex workers.

There were 54 participants: three members from each SR CSO, the PR fieldwork team, and PR management profiles linked to the GF project and the consultancy team. Participants were generally positive about the profile selected for the workshop.

“For the development of the plan, we need technical profiles, people who have a lot of information, but also activists who understand the pain of the people.”

PR representative.



Development of the plan

Two tools were used to develop the plan:

- ✓ A matrix that allowed the analysis of the following elements: threats/risks; vulnerabilities/causes; existing capacity/current strategies; capacity to be acquired/needs (human, economic, political resources). Each CSO responded based on its situation.
- ✓ Pre-formatted costed plan including: specific objectives, activities, activity indicators, specific tasks and estimated costs of activities..

The group work methodology among the CSOs made it possible to identify common risks and, in some cases, share the same solutions and, in others, different solutions to similar problems, depending on the characteristics of each CSO. In the case of the Dominican Republic, the physical presence of the CSOs' staff was fundamental for the work to be carried out, as it allowed for open dialogue, cooperation among CSOs and mutual recognition of their work. It also created synergies that contributed to the joint design of their respective plans.

At the end of the workshop, the CSOs presented their plans (some of which were still in the process of costing).

The main security elements requested were:

- ✿ Development of security protocols/plans
- ✿ Security training for the organizations' staff
- ✿ Design and systematization of incident logs
- ✿ Mapping of risk assessment zones and risk prevention/mitigation measures
- ✿ Psychological support and team self-care activities
- ✿ Education and sensitization on sex work for business owners and authorities (police, military)
- ✿ Support for agreements and alliances with local partners and authorities
- ✿ Uniforms and other identification materials for field workers

The consulting team supported the subsequent work virtually, analyzing the plans and making recommendations on objectives, indicators and costing for the review of each CSO. The CSOs verified and validated their plans, including adjustments to the costing of their activities.

Budget

The PR had approximately US\$1,500 to support each of the 12 CSO plans. At the time of this study, the funds had not been transferred, and the SSPs had yet to be implemented.

Communication

Communication is fundamental to working with communities. The gap between the language used by the Global Fund's consulting teams and the communities has been questioned on many occasions. In this sense, respondents perceived the communication between the consulting team and CSOs as close, accessible and non-hierarchical.





4. Challenges

Methodological planning by the consulting team

The PR interviewee stated that the biggest challenge in the planning process was coordinating the work of the consultant team in the field with the work schedule of the CSOs and the PR, who accompanied all the visits.

Communication

As part of the process, several interviews with CSO management staff and some key actors were scheduled before the consulting team visited the country so that the consulting team would have prior knowledge of the “security” conditions under which the CSOs operate. However, due to the meager response to this virtual work, the consulting team had to redefine the work and the methodology to be carried out in the country so that the interviews could occur in person.

In this regard, the PR interviewee pointed out that it would have been necessary for the consulting team to provide more specific information on the methodology and some of the working approaches to the PR, as an intermediary in the communication with the CSOs, from the beginning:

“The specific context of the Dominican Republic requires more upfront work with the PR as a liaison with the CSOs. If we know more about the working methodology, we can think beforehand how to convey and communicate the information to the SR CSOs. That way, we can anticipate how they will react to the methodology and whether they will adapt to it. Also, when discussing security, it was unclear whether we were talking about key population beneficiaries or just CSO workers. It was not well understood.”

PR representative

Developing plans and budgets

Interviewees mentioned that they found it quite challenging to reach a consensus and prioritize needs, given their diversity.

“The most difficult thing was to reach a consensus on the priorities, also taking into account that there are also different risks depending on the area where we work. Things look the same on the ground, but we have differences by community.”

CSO leader for the Haitian migrant population

“It is difficult to prioritize what to protect. One thing is what you would like to do, and another thing is what is possible, because not everything can be financed or is expensive. It was important that the consulting team was supportive. In many cases, CSOs did not know what to do to prioritize in their plans”.

PR representative.

Participants noted that the difficulty during the workshop was mainly in the costing part, as no administrator among the profiles attended the workshop on behalf of the CSOs. The availability of resources from the budget was also a challenge. Contrary to previous experiences, the PR of the Dominican Republic was able to obtain only scarce resources from its budget to implement the plans.

On average, these funds covered only 10% of the total implementation budget of each plan, which posed a double challenge:

- ✓ Encouraging CSOs to seek resources from funders other than the GF to implement their plans.
- ✓ Making recommendations to CSOs and the PR for cost-effective use of the scarce resources available.



5. Lessons Learned

- **SSPs should be living documents.**

Plans should be living documents and should not be closed during of budget preparation. Situations are diverse and dynamic; as the needs of CSOs evolve, this plan should become a working guide and evolve over time.

- **Virtuality works differently in each country.**

In the case of Guatemala, communication was smooth, and all interviews with stakeholders could be conducted online, but this was not possible in the Dominican Republic. In this case, a prior interview with the PR and other stakeholders who are familiar with working with the CSO can help in design the methodology and adapt it to the particular reality.

- **Time can affect the methodology.**

Due to the short duration of the workshop, the SSPs had to be completed later. This situation led to the consultancy team providing online support and follow-up to the CSOs (which increased the workload and was highlighted as a difficulty by stakeholders).

- **Develop mentoring to prioritize and find resources.**

There may not always be funds available to implement all of the plans, so other sources must be sought. CSOs should have sufficient tools to prioritize the most urgent actions/inputs for their safety and security within their plans and carry out advocacy activities if the plans do not have funding. They should also build alliances with PR to support them in this search..

- **Conduct a friendly follow-up between the consulting team and the PR/SR after completing the TA.**

Typically, consulting teams disengage entirely from the processes once the products have been delivered; however, re-establishing contact with key stakeholders can contribute to the continuity of the process. This follow-up should also be considered in the planning and costing of the consulting team's fees.

- **Listening to “others” helps build visible and invisible connections.**

These processes are an opportunity to create sensitivity and cohesion among CSOs. There are differences between populations. Some groups are more vulnerable because of intersectional discrimination. Sometimes, there is even a lack of awareness among some CSOs and populations of the needs and characteristics of others, and this view is not always easy to reconcile, mainly because they do not have the time to meet and acknowledge each other.

“The fact that we listened to each other helped a lot. CSOs were able to learn about other major problems in the country, such as the situation of stateless people and deportations. This is the reality that the country is facing, and it is something fundamental. It helped to sensitize all of us, and we have the capacity to organize and to share”

CSO leader for Haitian migrants

- **De-normalizing risk work.**

Normalization means that something that did not happen before becomes common. Raising awareness of the dangers and risks that CSO people face to reach populations is fundamental to begin to change and build safer practices.

“It was an awakening of consciousness. We don’t see anymore and we don’t realize that we put ourselves at risk because we want to achieve the goals in the whole chain (from PR to CSOs), and the risk is not taken into account to achieve the goals. And finally, we all put ourselves at risk, the SRs, the PR supervisors. These are risks that affect us all.”

PR representative

- **Different safety and security priorities, depending on the scope of work within CSOs.**

The focus on the (costed) priorities that the CSO should have for the people working in the field usually does not consider digital security. However, self-diagnosing the security conditions of the CSO in the Dominican Republic has identified significant gaps. These gaps should be taken into account in the selection of participants for the workshop, and in the reflection methodology to be used during the workshop so that stakeholders are fully aware of them and can make the most appropriate prioritization.



6. Conclusions

Using the Toolbox in the Dominican Republic, as the second experience in Latin America and the Caribbean, has confirmed its flexible and dynamic functioning as a guide that can be easily adapted to the context of each country.

Despite limited resources, all participating organizations were able to develop their SSPs. We hope that once implemented, individuals and organizations will have reduced their vulnerability in carrying out their activities.

The most important aspect of the process was to raise awareness among all stakeholders of the normalization of insecurity as they work to achieve the GF objectives. They now recognize how they have incorporated best practices for managing risks that they were previously unaware of. This awareness is an added value in the development processes of the SSPs so that the exchange of local best practices should be repeated in countries that want to develop plans and improve the conditions in which the work is carried out.

In this sense, it is essential to highlight that, beyond the objectives, the commitment of the CSOs in the Dominican Republic to the people in the KPs was a value underscored by both the PR and the consulting team that conducted the field observation.

Although the lack of resources available in the current HIV grant (GC6) in the Dominican Republic did not significantly affect the commitment of CSOs to the development process, it is crucial to strengthen the mentoring work so that CSOs seek resources and diversify sources..





7. Recommendations

For participating CSOs

- Develop an internal security incident reporting system to record incidents so that immediate protective action can be taken by CSO leadership.
- Establish a cooperation agreement with the Human Rights Observatory (cost-effectiveness) to create a joint reporting system for cases of insecurity and harm recorded during fieldwork to inform the country's authorities, advocate and make the need more visible to funders.
- Design a guide to improve digital security for the storage and security of information, including security software and the management of social networks in CSOs that do not have it.
- Design a collaborative working strategy among SR CSOs working with the same key populations to continuously share common experiences and strategies based on best security practices.
- Prioritize mental health care for workers by creating spaces for group and individual psychological support for workers in the field.
- Seek funding from sources other than the GF to cover all the needs outlined in the SSPs. It may be included as an institutional policy to allocate a percentage of grant requests submitted to funders to improve the safety and security of individuals and organizations.

For the PR

- Provide one or more consultations and training to develop, update, and implement security protocols for CSOs. .
- Design safety and security indicators to be integrated into the monitoring and supervision of activities during fieldwork, including identifying risks, types of violence and their frequency, to systematize the information and develop lines of work and resources to apply for new GF grants. It could also be included in a Community-Led Monitoring plan of the grant within the CCM. .
- Improve coordination between CSOs and owners and/or managers of facilities and meeting places to improve the safety of community workers..

For the Global Fund

- Increase flexibility in using funds in current grants to cover expenses that could improve the security conditions in which CSOs carry out their work: secure transportation, telephones, distinctive uniforms, etc.
- Promote guidelines that include the safety and security of CSOs working in GF activities as a priority in new grants. .

For the consulting team

- Meet with the PR and representatives of the participating CSOs beforehand to familiarize them with the working methodology and share their perceptions of the process to improve communication with CSOs.
- Plan face-to-face workshops that last at least two or three full days.
- The issue of safety and security is very sensitive for the populations. Working spaces should allow for empathetic listening, pauses, and dynamics for playfulness, laughter and ease.