YMCA of the **Dominican Republic**

The Dominican Republic shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with Haiti. It is 18,000 sq miles—almost two-thirds of the Island—and has an estimated population of 10 million 95 percent of whom are Christian.

The official language spoken in the Dominican Republic is Spanish, in addition to some English and French. The landscape is forested and mountainous, with valleys, plains and plateau.

The YMCA of the Dominican Republic

The YMCA of the Dominican Republic was founded in 1967 and has focused its programs since then on children in poorer districts of the country.

The YMCA was among the first organizations in the country to start programs for street children and also pioneered the first private technical school to allow people with very limited income to learn a profession in just a few months.

Currently, the YMCA has four branches with membership of almost 1,500 children in school programs from kindergarten to the eighth grade. In addition, more than 800 young people and adults, especially women and single mothers, are learning a trade in the Y's technical schools.

One important YMCA program is Nutrition for Life, an initiative that provides hundreds of thousands of prenatal multivitamins to maternity hospitals and other organizations specializing in nutrition, which benefits more than 10,000 mothers. Another impactful program is *Cuerpo de Lideres George Williams* (The George Williams Leaders Body), a leadership program involved in social welfare activities that include HIV/AIDS and drug prevention programs, recreational activities and work in the community with homeless people. ▼

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