



2017 Dominican Republic Impact Report



¡Gracias! - We're so grateful for your partnership in 2017!

As you know, thousands of children and women face violent oppression every day in the Dominican Republic. They are being lied to, kidnapped, locked down, silenced, sold and raped; they are scared, their voices are not heard, and as they face this darkness, they can come to feel powerless and alone. With your support, and in the midst of this darkness, our Dominican team has relentlessly walked alongside survivors to represent them and their families in court and prove justice is possible.

Daily, our team actively responds to God's call to defend his children, **joining forces with extraordinary partners like you to bring rescue and freedom to children survivors of sex trafficking in the Dominican Republic.** We know that change takes time, but positive change in the Dominican Republic gives us hope. Local and international voices are arising to advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable in this country. Because you stand with us and thousands of survivors in the work of transforming justice systems and protecting thousands more from violence, we believe this dream is possible!

Our impact together in the Dominican Republic:



RESCUE

We partnered with authorities to rescue **25** children and teens from sex trafficking.



RESTORE

Our programs helped restore **12** survivors to health and wholeness.



RESTRAIN

We made sure **20** traffickers and pimps were held accountable.



REPAIR

We trained **670+** police, judges, church members and other leaders to combat trafficking.

Highlights from Our Year



First Dominican Survivor Reaches Restoration, July 2017

In the third quarter, IJM celebrated its first aftercare participant in the Dominican Republic reaching restoration. Fourteen additional survivors subsequently reached this goal, meaning they have significantly healed from their trauma and returned to mental, emotional and physical health.

The aftercare team has been working with many of these boys and girls since 2014, because we know that children need at least one constant and loving person walking by their side as they grow in their resilience and move forward on their own.



Dominican Churches take Ownership of the Fight, September 2017

In September 2017, leaders from more than 70 local churches joined the global movement by holding “Domingo de Libertad” (Freedom Sunday) at their congregations. IJM recruited these churches to commit their entire Sunday service to speaking up and acting against trafficking; we estimate that 7,000 attendees participated.

After Freedom Sunday, churches can join IJM’s prayer network, form a “Justice Group” to disciple congregants in God’s heart for justice, or develop a church action plan to address trafficking. Globally, more than 2,700 churches held Freedom Sunday services in September.



Strongest Sentence in the Dominican Republic, October 2017

This year, IJM secured a 10-year conviction against the man who sexually abused 9-year-old Enrique* and five other boys. All six brave boys testified in court against the perpetrator, and their mothers persistently pursued justice for their children alongside our legal team. (*A pseudonym)

This strong conviction reflects the changes that have happened in the Dominican Republic over the years. Justice system officials are protecting children by sending a strong message to other abusers: sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children will not be tolerated.

Looking Ahead to 2018

In 2018, IJM will continue to protect children from sex trafficking and will also expand our impact by training police, government officials, social workers, partner organizations and community members to recognize and effectively respond to sex crimes against children. We believe that by improving the quality of aftercare services and enhancing the practices of correct investigation, we will empower Dominican social services and law enforcement officials to effectively care for survivors and their families, transforming their lives and their communities. **Thank you for your prayers and for helping our team seek justice in the Dominican Republic!**