



2024 IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

PARTICIPANTS: 10,083

PURPOSE GROUPS: 434

TREES PLANTED: 21,368,035

Data as of June 30, 2024

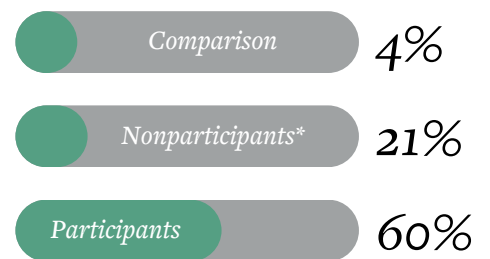


The 2024 Impact Evaluation confirmed that many significant and positive changes are happening through our work in the Dominican Republic. Land is being restored, families are escaping poverty, and hope is renewed. This report provides a more in-depth look at the specific outcomes in the Dominican Republic.

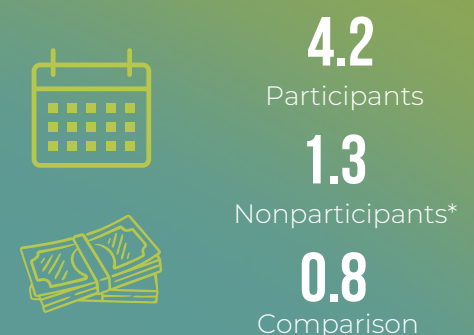
Whole Watersheds Transformed

When Plant With Purpose works in a watershed, entire communities benefit! Plant With Purpose sees improvement among both participant and nonparticipant households in treatment watersheds. Participants in the Dominican Republic are four times more likely to be saving for the future, are planting seven times more trees, and have 49% healthier soil than the comparison. Because participants share what they learn from Plant With Purpose, nonparticipant households are also empowered to make positive changes in their community. Nonparticipant households are saving more and planting more native trees than the comparison watershed. Further evidence of flourishing throughout the watershed is that 88% of participants say their community works together to solve problems. These improvements among both participants and nonparticipants demonstrate how the whole watershed benefits.

Percentage of households planting native trees



Months of Savings Reserves



**Nonparticipants are households in an area where Plant With Purpose is working and Comparison households live outside of the treatment area.*

POVERTY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Poverty reduced by 91%

Poverty is inherently complex and difficult to measure. Plant With Purpose uses a multidimensional poverty index (MPI) to take a holistic approach to measuring poverty. This approach is adapted from the UNDP's MPI formula and customized for a rural farming context. Twelve indicators across six dimensions help us understand the material and environmental factors of rural poverty.

Plant With Purpose participants are reversing cycles of poverty even in the midst of environmental degradation and severe climate disasters. In the Dominican Republic, Plant With Purpose participants experience a 91% reduction in poverty. This reduction is driven primarily by households improving the health of their soil, and accumulating savings for emergencies and the future. Participants report 49% healthier soil than farmers in the comparison watershed - a result of applying twice as many regenerative agriculture techniques.

Building Resilience to Climate Change

One of the most prevalent effects of climate change is the increased frequency of severe storms. The US Geological Survey reports how as temperatures rise and "as more water vapor is evaporated into the atmosphere it becomes fuel for more powerful storms to develop." The Caribbean is particularly vulnerable to such storms. Plant With Purpose has been working in the Dominican Republic for 40 years amidst hurricanes and severe storms. Despite volatile weather, Plant With Purpose participants are building resilience by improving their housing materials, increasing their sources of income, and protecting their farming system by transitioning to agroforestry.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Participants are

5.3X

more likely to be saving cash



Income Sources



Damage from Hurricane Beryl in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in July 2024²



HEARING FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS



Three participatory workshops are conducted in each watershed during the impact evaluation – a watershed mapping workshop, a change matrix, and a spiritual renewal workshop. Workshops usually involve 15-20 participants who represent people with whom Plant With Purpose works – farmers, micro-enterprise owners, men, women, youth, elders, and leaders. When the workshop analysis comes directly from communities, it better helps Plant With Purpose understand the driving factors behind changes in these watersheds.

Watershed Mapping

Participants in the mapping workshop in Caña identified increasing water sources as a positive change in their watershed and attributed the change to reforestation, establishing agroforestry systems, and eliminating the use of agricultural chemicals. Conversely, workshop participants attributed decreasing water sources to deforestation and the use of agricultural chemicals. Workshop participants identified several of the benefits of increasing tree planting: “Trees contribute to precipitation, the climate is cooler, and there is less pollution.”

Why Are These Changes Happening?

Participants in Caña said Plant With Purpose’s economic empowerment training was one of the most significant causes of change in their watershed in the previous three years. As Purpose Groups save, make loans, and start businesses together, social cohesion within the community increases as relationships deepen. The change matrix results demonstrate that their community experiences growth in unity, honesty, and trust in addition to tangible funds saved. Participants in Caña shared that one of the lessons they learned was that the social fund in their Purpose Group helps them to be more supportive of one another.

Cause	Change	Consequences
Purpose Groups & trainings	Increased economic stability	Solidarity, unity, responsibility, discipline, honesty, trust



SPIRITUAL RENEWAL



In a spiritual renewal workshop, a group of community leaders and pastors are invited to share stories of reconciliation or healed relationships in their watersheds. They vote on the story that best represents reconciliation in their watershed and analyze it for causes and effects.

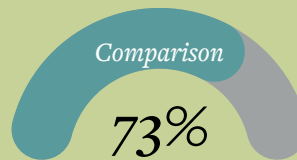
The testimony on the right received the most votes in Caña. The community describes how diversifying crops to restore the soil represents reconciliation with their physical environment. The community further recognizes God's creativity in being the author of creation and their role as its stewards.

While workshops help Plant With Purpose understand examples of reconciliation, quantitative measurements of spiritual growth are admittedly challenging. However, analysis of the spiritual impact on program participants, manifested in shifting attitudes and behaviors, reveals increased personal agency, improved reconciliation, and higher levels of education for girls as a result of holistic flourishing. Participants also switch from perspectives of receiving help to giving help in service to their community.

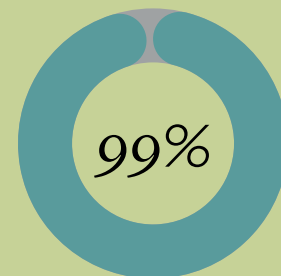
In the Dominican Republic, 99% of participants believe they have the ability to improve their lives and are 20% more likely to work with their neighbors to change things that are wrong in their community. Empowered by savings and agriculture training, participants actively improve their communities – serving their neighbors and investing in the health of their environment.

Reconciliation Testimony

“In the community of Vallecito, the planting of short-cycle crops was not profitable, more was spent than was achieved, we decided to change to an agroforestry production system, which is more sustainable for the environment and for the family economy. Before, the community of Vallecito burned, felled and used oxen to prepare the soil; This caused the soil to deteriorate more each year. For 8 years now, the community of Vallecito has been working with the production of avocado, sour oranges and coffee. Thank God the community of Vallecito is contributing to taking care of God's creation.”



% of households who see their community working together



99% of participants who believe they have the ability to improve their life





HOLISTIC FLOURISHING



Participants are building resiliency in their watershed

By restoring soil participants protect their land from erosion, preventing flooding after increased disasters from climate change. By saving for the future, participants have financial capacity to invest in their family's future and withstand shocks.

Poverty is decreasing

Poverty is multidimensional, and participants are improving their lives across 12 indicators of poverty. They are improving their housing, eating more meals, and saving for the future. The graph (right) shows that participants are above the poverty threshold in more indicators than the comparison group -- resulting in a 91% reduction in poverty over the study period.

All households in the watershed benefit

Plant With Purpose participants share what they learn with their neighbors who aren't participating in the program. As a result, non-participants are growing out of poverty more than the comparison watershed where Plant With Purpose isn't operating at all. Similarly, as farmers plant trees and practice regenerative agriculture, downstream households benefit from a revitalized environment upstream.

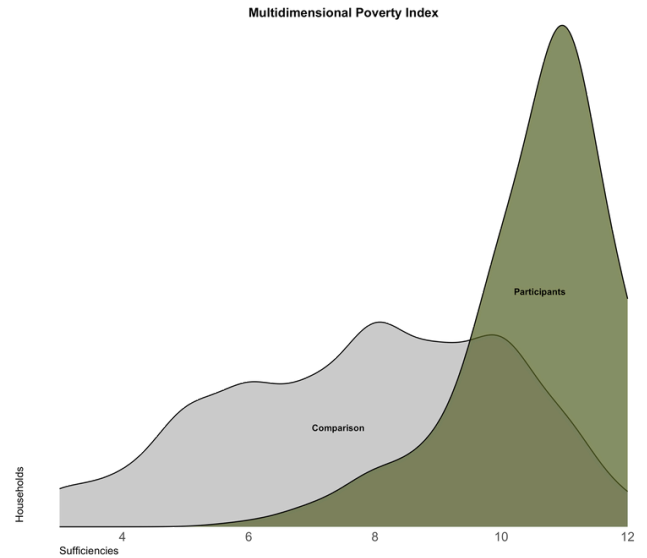
Bibliography

1 "How Can Climate Change Affect Natural Disasters?" How can climate change affect natural disasters? | U.S. Geological Survey. Accessed October 18, 2024.
<https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/how-can-climate-change-affect-natural-disasters>.

2 Dominantoday. "Damage Caused by Hurricane Beryl in the Dominican Republic." DominicanToday, July 3, 2024.
<https://dominantoday.com/dr/local/2024/07/03/damage-caused-by-hurricane-beryl-in-the-dominican-republic/>.



Participants plant **6.5**
times more trees



This map shows the three watersheds studied in the impact evaluation. Our team uses digital data collection methods to monitor incoming survey data, including their location in the watershed.