WHAT IS LUCEROS?

High levels of poverty and a lack of knowledge about documentation and birth registration processes are closely linked to the fact that many community members in the Dominican Republic lack a birth certificate. Without official documents, these community members are deprived of access to fundamental services including education, health or income-generating opportunities. In response to this need, DREAM created the LUCEROS Human Rights and Documentation program.

LUCEROS has the dual objectives of (1) decreasing the number of undocumented community members in the Dominican Republic and (2) advocating for the universal human right to a name and identity to be respected.

HOW DOES LUCEROS WORK?

The LUCEROS program employs a network of community advocates who are trained to identify and resolve documentation cases while also building community awareness around issues of human rights and documentation, particularly as it relates to education. All advocates graduated from a 20-hour training course implemented in collaboration with the Peace Corps Dominican Republic’s Declaro Mis Derechos initiative.

Community advocates accompany families through the documentation process and work directly with local government and health officials to resolve cases. DREAM provides documentation services to students enrolled in its early childhood and primary education programs, while also serving as a resource to community members who are not affiliated with DREAM schools. The network of community advocates works in more distant communities and is often affiliated with other human service institutions to ensure sustainability of the documentation program. Advocates facilitate local committees to engage community members in the process of identifying and resolving cases.

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE PROGRAM?

LUCEROS targets children and youth lacking official documentation (birth certificate or identity card) as well as those who possess documents that are incorrect and/or have been invalidated by the government. DREAM’s program focuses in the province of Puerto Plata on the north coast of the country, but is part of a national network of community advocates based on its affiliation with Peace Corps.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM?

In 2013, 33 community advocates were trained on the North Coast. Since then, more than 280 cases have been submitted (nearly 60% have been resolved and 40% are being processed by the government). In addition, more than 500 community members have benefited from a series of workshops on human rights and documentation in the province of Puerto Plata.