

# The National Composite Index for Family Planning (NCIFP)

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 2017 Scores and 2014-2017 Trends<sup>i</sup>

### What is the NCIFP?

A tool that supports FP2020's<sup>ii</sup> efforts to improve the policy environment for family planning (FP), the NCIFP provides information on FP program activities that are not readily available in national demographic or reproductive health surveys or service statistics systems. The NCIFP measures the existence of FP policies and program implementation based on 35 items that fall under five dimensions: **Strategy, Data, Quality, Equity, and Accountability**.

**Strategy** – whether a national FP strategy/plan exists that includes quantified objectives, targets to reach the poorest and most vulnerable, projected resource requirements, and support for wider stakeholder participation. Also included are two items that affect strategy implementation: high-level leadership and regulations that facilitate contraceptive importation or production.

**Data** – whether the government collects/uses data on special sub-groups (e.g. the poor) and their access, private sector commodities, and the quality of service statistics. It also includes data-based evaluation and research to improve the program.

**Quality** – whether the government uses WHO standards of practice (SOP), task-sharing guidelines, and quality of care indicators in public and private facilities. Quality of care (QOC) also considers the adequacy of structures for training, logistics, supervision, IUD and implant removal, and informed choice, including informing clients about the permanence of sterilization.

**Accountability** – whether mechanisms exist to monitor discrimination and free choice, review violations, report denial of services, enable facility-level feedback, and encourage communication between clients and providers.

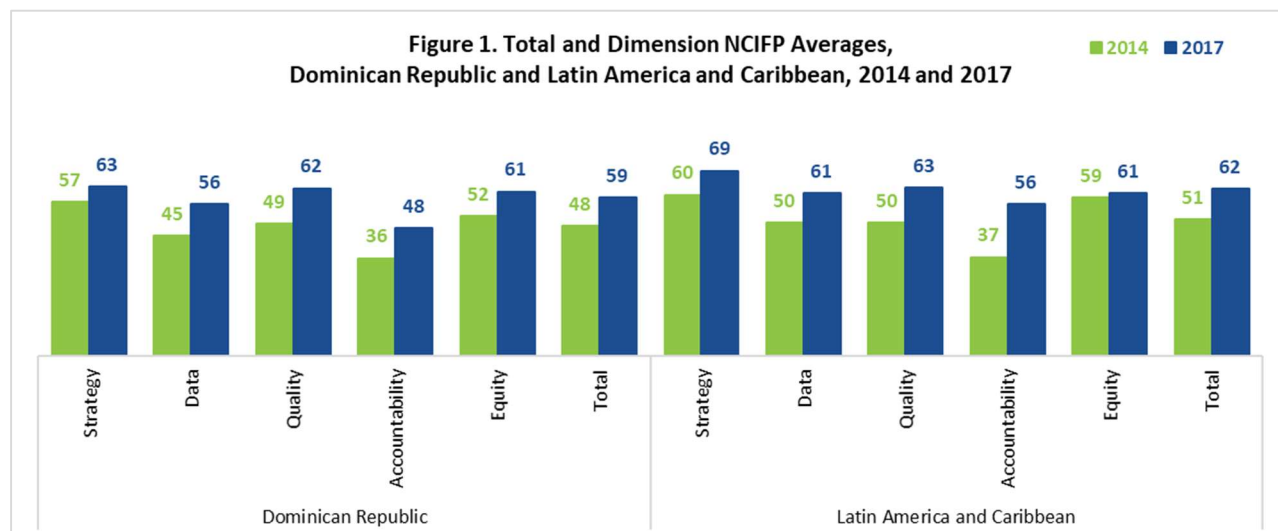
**Equity** - whether anti-discrimination policies exist, providers discriminate against special groups, the population has easy access to modern contraceptive methods (referring to STMs meaning short-term methods, or LAPMs meaning long-acting and permanent methods), and services are provided to underserved areas through community-based distribution (CBD).

First undertaken in 2014, the NCIFP builds on the long-standing National Family Planning Effort Index (FPE). In 2017 Avenir Health's Track20 project (funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to assist countries participating in the FP2020 Global Initiative) administered a new round of NCIFPs to assess current national FP program status and changes since 2014. NCIFP data are intended for policy and planning use by each country's FP stakeholders.

### Dominican Republic vs Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Results

Figure 1 shows that the total NCIFP scores of the Dominican Republic and LAC region increased between 2014 and 2017. The region's ratings were slightly higher than the country's in both years.

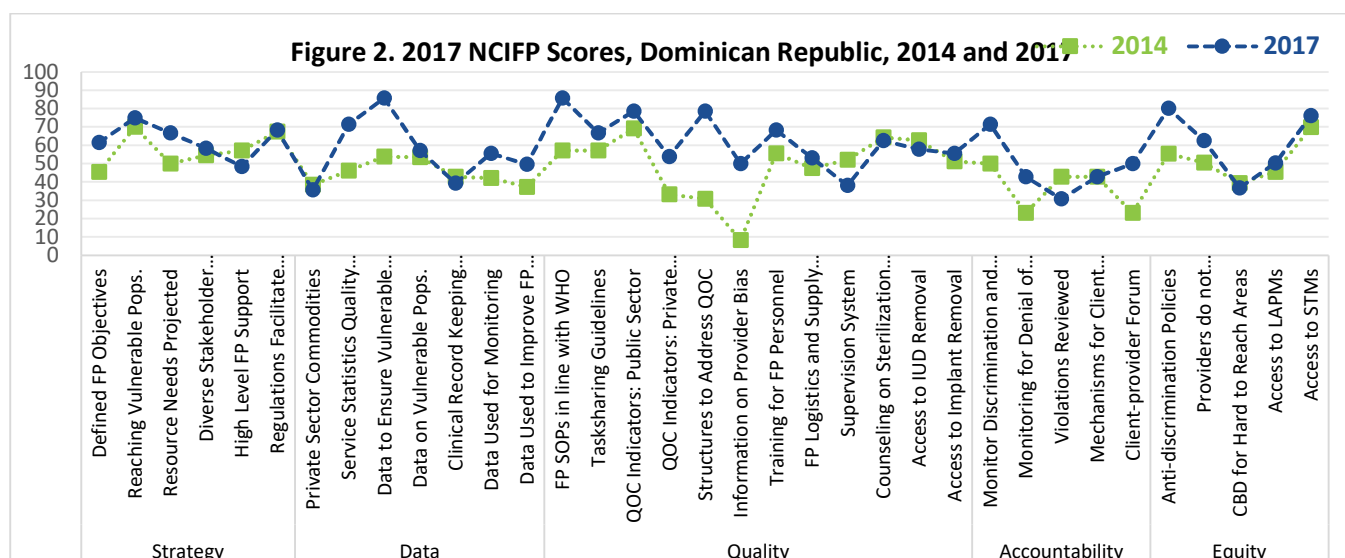
- Accountability was the Dominican Republic's lowest rated dimension in both years while Strategy persisted as its highest ranked (followed closely by Quality and Equity in 2017).
- The region's highest rated dimensions were Strategy and Equity in 2014 while Strategy alone occupied the first place in 2017. Accountability persisted as the LAC's lowest ranked in both years.



### Individual NCIFP Trends, 2014 and 2017

Ratings of individual NCIFP items over time indicate which FP program activities are progressing, stagnant, or deteriorating. Figure 2 shows the Dominican Republic's NCIFP scores for 2014 and 2017. Over 20 items received higher scores in 2017 but the remaining items minimally changed.

- **Strategy** – While the score for FP program support fell from 57 to 48 in 2017, ratings were higher for the strategy’s prioritization of vulnerable groups (75), estimated resource needs (67), and clarity of objectives (62). Ratings were practically constant for regulations that facilitate contraceptive importation (68) and the strategy’s support for diverse participation (58).
- **Data** – Scores were higher by at least 25 points in 2017 for the use of data to ensure the most vulnerable have access (86) and service statistics quality control (71). Marks improved to the 50s for data-based monitoring and program improvement, and data collection on vulnerable groups. Ratings fell to the 30s for data on private sector commodities and clinic recordkeeping.
- **Quality** – Most items scored higher in 2017: 86 for the use of WHO SOPs; 79 each for QOC indicators in public facilities and community/clinic monitoring structures; 60s for the use of tasksharing guidelines, the training system, and sterilization counseling; and 50s for access to implant removal, logistics, QOC indicators in private facilities, and provider bias information (from scoring only 8 in 2014). However, scores fell from 63 to 58 for access to IUD removal and from 52 to 38 for supervision.
- **Accountability** – Scores improved for discrimination and free choice monitoring (71), client-provider dialogue (50), and mechanisms to report denial of services (43), stayed at 43 for client feedback and declined for violations review (31).
- **Equity** – 2017 scores were higher for anti-discrimination policies (80), STM access (76), lack of provider discrimination against certain population groups (62), and LAPM access (50). The score for CBD coverage remained in the 30s.



## Implications

The Dominican Republic has a total population of about 10.7 million at present, of which 36% are less than 19 years of age. The total fertility rate is close to the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman.<sup>iii</sup> The economy is expanding at about 7% annually since 2010 but the poverty headcount based on the national poverty line was 31% in 2018.<sup>iv</sup> Aside from high poverty and inequality, the UNFPA Country Programme Document 2018-2022 cited other challenges that the country faces: high rates of adolescent pregnancy and early marriage, gender-based violence, the lack of comprehensive youth policies that in turn affect the youth’s access and rights to sexual and reproductive health information and services, and limited youth participation in decision-making processes. Moreover, the national statistical system relies on an outdated legal framework, resulting in low data quality, lack of data periodicity, and limited ability to produce disaggregated data. Data utilization in policymaking is also a major challenge.<sup>v</sup>

The country’s NCIFP scores in 2014 and 2017 indicate that the country has undertaken various efforts to strengthen the national FP program. These initiatives include prioritizing the most vulnerable especially the youth; using quality of care standards and indicators as well as monitoring structures; ensuring accountability by monitoring discrimination and free choice; and having anti-discrimination policies in place. Nevertheless, several challenges still exist, including the need for high-level program support; government collection of data on private sector contraceptive commodities; clinic recordkeeping and feedback of results to clients; supervision to ensure quality of care; mechanisms to review violations, report denial of services, and solicit client feedback; and CBD coverage of underserved populations. These FP program challenges are for Dominican Republic’s stakeholders to consider in their efforts to ensure accessible, high-quality FP services and reach the most vulnerable sectors of the population, especially the youth.

<sup>i</sup> Suggested citation: Avenir Health Track20. “The National Composite Index for Family Planning (NCIFP): DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 2017 Scores and 2014-2017 Trends”. 2017 NCIFP Policy Brief Series (2019).

<sup>ii</sup> FP2020 is a global initiative through which governments, civil society, multilateral organizations, donors, the private sector, and the research and development community work together to enable more women and girls to use contraceptives by 2020. (See: <https://www.familyplanning2020.org/>)

<sup>iii</sup> UN World Population Prospects, 2019 Revision. <https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery/>

<sup>iv</sup> Dominican Republic country profile from [https://data.worldbank.org/country/Dominican Republic?view=chart](https://data.worldbank.org/country/Dominican%20Republic?view=chart)

<sup>v</sup> UNFPA Country Programme Document from <https://www.unfpa.org/data/transparency-portal/unfpa-dominican-republic>