

Fundación  
Aldeas de Paz

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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# WHO WE ARE

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We are a non-profit organization founded in Venezuela in 2001 and we are currently based in the Dominican Republic since 2015, specifically in the Samaná province. Mainly, our focus has been supporting the communities of Las Terrenas and Santa Barbara de Samaná. The organization runs different projects and programs in the subjects of education, human rights, public healthcare, gender equality, community development, marine conservation and animal rescue. We help to create equal environments of rights and opportunities for children and young adults from vulnerable communities and disadvantaged backgrounds.

## MISSION & VISION



Aldeas de Paz is a local and independent NGO based in Santa Barbara de Samaná and Las Terrenas, two towns on the Samaná peninsula in the Dominican Republic. It focuses on improving the lives of the local community and is funded by the monetary contributions from the volunteers. The foundation believes in a Culture of Peace, tolerance, justice, mutual respect and cultural exchange. Aldeas de Paz relies heavily on its volunteers, who come to the Dominican Republic from all over the world to try and make the foundation's vision a reality. The volunteers work, among other things, with children in need of special attention, in hospitals and in the organization of the NGO. They do this while immersing themselves in a respectful manner in the Dominican culture.



# OUR TEAM

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**MANUEL HERNANDEZ**, Executive Director



Manuel Hernandez has held the position of Executive Director since 2019 and has decided to step down at the end of 2021. We would like to thank him for his commitment at Aldeas de Paz over the last three years. With his expertise and ambition, Manuel contributed greatly to the success of the Foundation.

**We wish him all the best and are thankful for his given support!**

From 2022, Edgard McKenzie is accompanying the position of Executive Director. We are happy about his engagement and look forward on working together.



# OUR TEAM

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**CARELIN POLANCO**, NGO Administrator



My name is Carelin Paola Polanco Goris, born in the province María Trinidad Sánchez, currently living in Samaná.

Entrepreneurship and helping people in need is a unique satisfaction. In life we sow to reap. Today, by the grace of God, I have the privilege of being able to exercise my career and contribute part of my knowledge, which, I hope and trusted in God that will be useful, for the Foundation, communities and society of the Province of Samaná.

Therefore, I believe that we must leave positive traces in life and one of the ways to do it is to provide support and help to those people who need it. I am pleased to see how many people have a smile on their face for the support received.

# OUR TEAM

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**LAURA MARTINS**, Coordinator Breaking Barriers



Hi! I am Laura Martins Fernández, I have a degree in Social Work and a Master in International Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.

I was born in Spain, in a beautiful city called Zamora. I am living in the Dominican Republic since 2019, where I started in the beautiful area of El Valle de Elías Piña. Here in Samaná, I work on promoting human rights and community development, especially with people with disabilities. I am a music lover, I love to travel to learn about other cultures and I have special empathy for animals.

This experience gives me the opportunity to contribute directly to social change while learning every day and gives meaning to the phrase: "You may not be able to change the world, but you can change someone's world."

# OUR TEAM

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**LOREINY KELLY**, Volunteer Coordinator Samaná



My name is Loreiny. I am from the Dominican Republic. I was born in Samana. Before I started working at Aldeas de Paz, I worked as a receptionist and after that I created a homework space to help the children of the basic level with the classes that because of Covid were virtual. The benefits I have had working in the Foundation are to support the improvement of the quality of our society, the environment and to be able to coordinate a group of people with different cultures and different expectations. I am happy with what I do and I love working for the Foundation.



# OUR TEAM

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**SANTA JIMENEZ** , Volunteer Coordinator Samaná



My name is Santa. I am from the Dominican Republic. I was born in San Francisco de Macoris. I arrived in Samaná when I was 2 years old, in a few words I have spent my whole life in this beautiful province. Before I started working at Fundación Aldeas de Paz, I worked as an English teacher for children and sometimes as a substitute teacher in a secondary school. Feeling empathy and emotion of belonging to an organization determined to its mission definitely helped me to be happy and enjoy it. I really like being able to coordinate a group of people with different cultures and different expectations. Many times they don't know what to expect, but that's when I like to make their Aldeas de Paz experience everything they wanted it to be. When you like what you do, you keep learning without even trying. Another thing I like about my work is the interaction with the whole team, the people from the community and all the project and program collaborators.

# OUR TEAM

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**DOMINIKA MALOLEPZKA ,**  
Volunteer Coordinator, Las Terrenas



A traveler through life, literally and metaphorically. I have spent years wandering around the world, both the external and internal, enriching myself with an incredibly wide understanding of diversity and enormous dose of tolerance and acceptance toward anything that life might bring.

I would probably be very surprised if someone told me that the Dominican Republic would be the place where I would stay for a longer period...

I am very happy that through my work for the Fundación Aldeas de Paz I can make a small difference in the lives of the local community and accompany the volunteers on their personal development path.

# OUR TEAM

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**YESICA DE PEÑA**, Teacher



My name is Yesica De Peña Dishmey, I am Dominican, specifically from the province of Samaná. I have a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. I have experience in early childhood education. I am currently working as a teacher of people with disabilities. I had the opportunity to work as a teacher of Spanish as a second language. I like to learn, I consider myself to be responsible. I am a homebody although from time to time I like to go out and meet people. I enjoy listening to music. And I long to learn English.



# OUR TEAM

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**EVELIN SIERRA**, Psychologist



My name is Evelin Sierra Geronimo, I am from the Dominican Republic (Samana). I am a General Psychologist in the foundation Aldeas de Paz. Currently, I am in term of a master's degree in Clinical Psychology.

I work in the foundation because I like to work with different types of people and to be able to contribute to their needs.

# OUR TEAM

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**DARIA BERTONCIN**, Coordinator Marine Conservation



My name is Daria and I am Italian. I have been living in Las Terrenas for more than 10 years and I am the manager of the oldest diving school in town. I started working as a diving instructor 20 years ago and it is the life I have always dreamed of. Having the possibility to explore the bottom of the sea every day is the ultimate for me.

I started working with Aldeas de Paz because I am excited about the idea of getting young people interested in marine conservation. My favorite part of working with the volunteers is that in a short time they become part of a family. To each new person that enters this family I try to give all my knowledge about marine conservation and the problems of our ocean.

To be able to combine my work as a dive instructor and marine conservation with the help of Aldeas de Paz is a success for me.

# OUR TEAM

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**JOSE HERRERO,** Marine Conservation Technician



Hello! I am José A. Herrero Laureano, I am a Marine Conservation Technician, specifically in reef restoration. I have 4 years of experience in diving and 2 years in reef restoration.

I was born in Samaná, Dominican Republic. As I grew up in a coastal town, I always had a certain attraction to work in the sea and then I got the best thing which is to be able to dive to protect what I love so much. Aldeas de Paz gave me the opportunity to get much closer to my passion since I got to know quite a few reefs in Las Terrenas and collaborate with the volunteers to try to help the reefs.



# OUR VOLUNTEERS

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In 2021 we have again received a great support from volunteers from all over the world. A total of 80 people supported us in the operational programs in the hospital, in the work with the community, the work with animals and the environment, as well as in the non-operational programs NGO Management and Multimedia.

Last year, we were finally able to welcome volunteers from the German Red Cross again in September - after we had to suspend the exchange for about 1.5 years due to the Corona pandemic. Normally, the German Red Cross sends volunteers every year to support us with our work for 12 months.

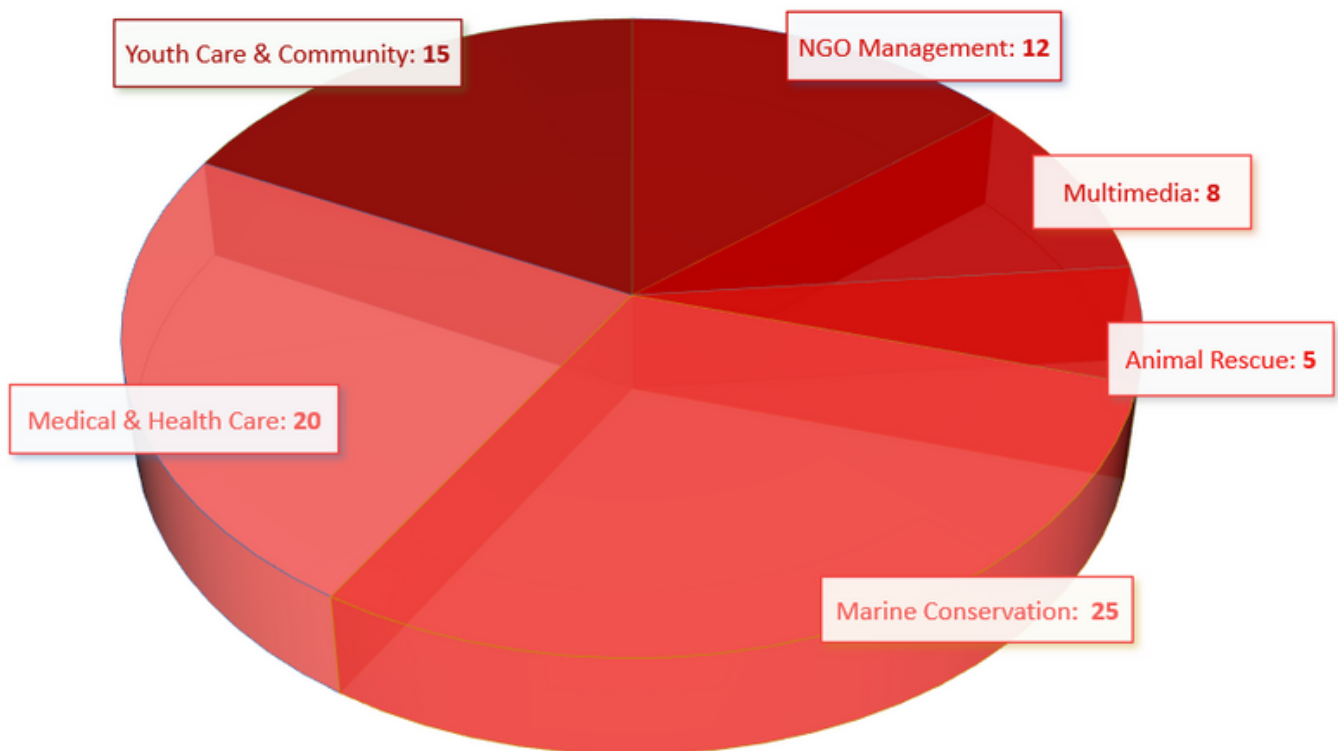


We would like to thank all the volunteers for their active support - they are the heart of our Foundation. Without them we would not be here where we are now!

# VOLUNTEERS STATISTICS

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## VOLUNTEERS PER PROGRAM

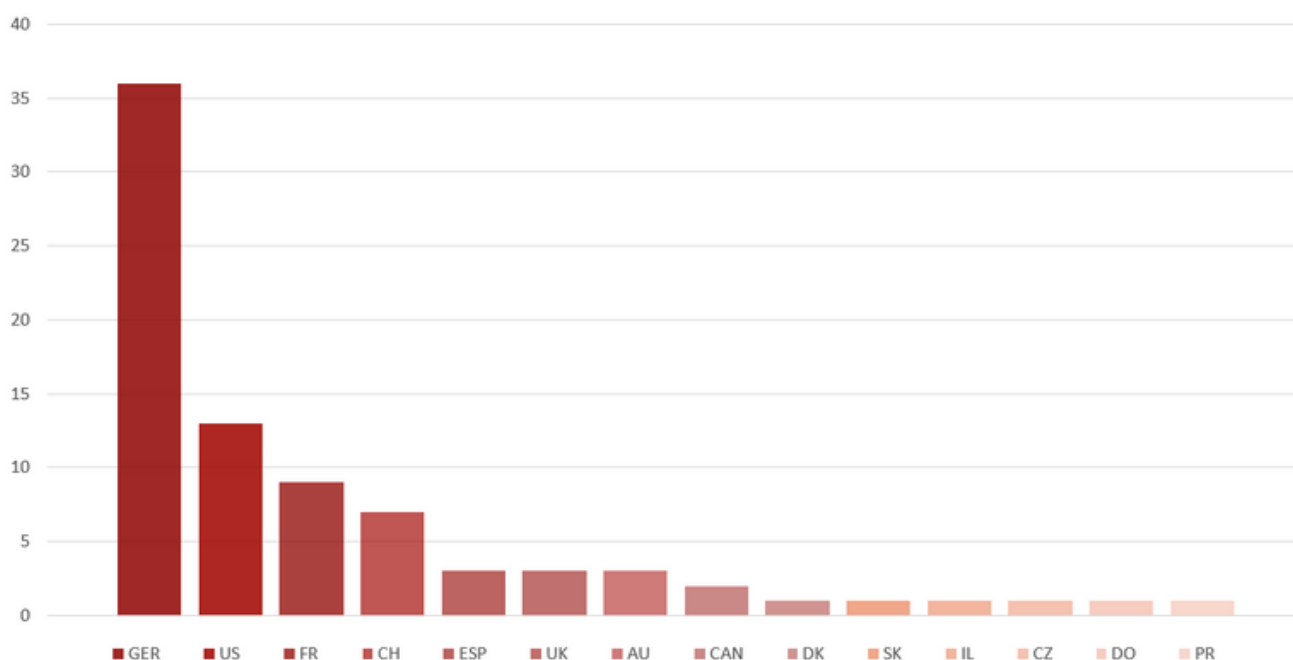


In 2021, we were pleased to welcome 80 new volunteers, distributed between our Samaná and Las Terrenas sites. The majority of the volunteers worked for the Marine Conservation Program, with a total of 25 volunteers.

The Animal Rescue program was initially at a standstill during the Corona pandemic, however we were able to get it back up and running in 2021 and were happy to have 5 volunteers assisting us in this program.

# VOLUNTEERS STATISTICS

## COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF THE VOLUNTEERS



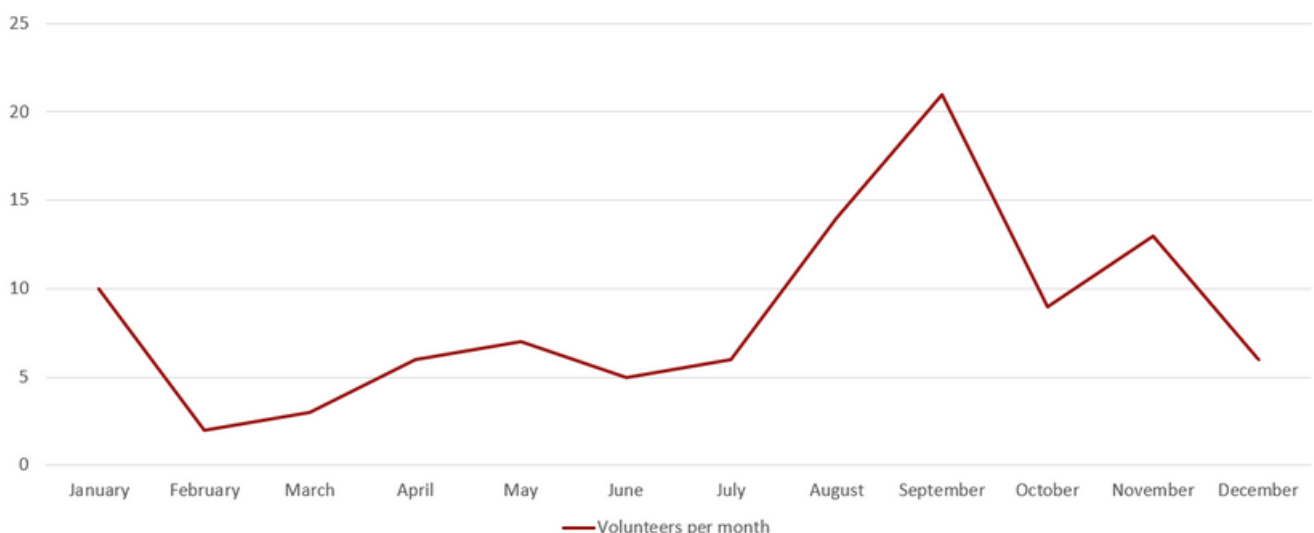
Our volunteers come from all over the world. In 2021, we welcomed people from 14 different countries. What clearly stands out, once again, is that the majority of volunteers comes from Germany. This is partly due to our cooperation with the German Red Cross, which sends volunteers to us every year - in 2021 the number of volunteers was 5. However, countries such as the United States, France, Switzerland and Spain are also well represented in the statistics. This allows for an international atmosphere, cultural exchange and learning from each other. To follow on from this: Most of the volunteers already speak Spanish at a level where you can converse. Those who have not yet mastered the language, can learn it relatively quickly through the weekly Spanish classes we offer and by being confronted with it at work and in their free time.



# VOLUNTEERS STATISTICS

## VOLUNTEERS PER MONTH

The below graph shows the monthly number of volunteers we hosted during the year of 2021. Especially during the summer we had a high frequency of volunteers. In the month of September we reached a peak of a total of 16 volunteers. At the end of the year, especially during the Christmas period, we experienced the usual drop in the number of volunteers as most of them want to spend the holidays with their families. In return, usually at the beginning of the year we are able to welcome again several volunteers. Compared to 2020, we were happy to welcome so many volunteers despite of the worldwide Corona pandemic.



# PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

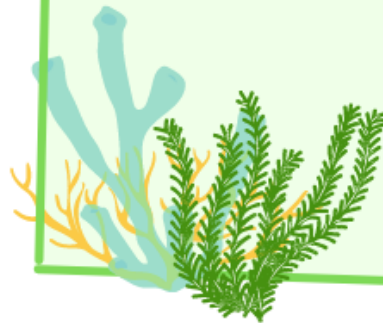
## YOUTH CARE & COMMUNITY

- Breaking Barriers: Inclusion & Disability
  - Malecón Inclusivo
  - Inclusive Camp
- Fútbol por La Paz
- Language Courses



## ENVIRONMENT

- Marine Conservation
- Beach Clean Up & Reforestation



## HEALTH

- Hospital Program
- Dentistry and Physiotherapy Treatments



## ANIMALS

- Coco Dog
- Project Samaná



# YOUTH CARE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## BREAKING BARRIERS Inclusión y Discapacidad



Contribute and encourage social inclusion and improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families, by promoting a more inclusive and equitable society, promoting the guarantee and protection of the human rights of people with disabilities and active participation in society in the province of Samaná, through the strengthening of individual potentialities necessary to achieve personal autonomy and development.

By addressing the challenges of the environment and individual characteristics based on the information generated by our program, we propose strategies that respond individually to collective issues, achieving the opportunity for inclusion. The work starts from the person with functional diversity and their family environment, providing the program users with the necessary tools to receive the appropriate treatment and care in the community.

# YOUTH CARE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## BREAKING BARRIERS Inclusión y Discapacidad



Aldeas de Paz operates a Community Attention Center (CAC) in Samaná where our local team consists of teachers, therapists, social workers, volunteers and a pedagogue who help our beneficiaries from underprivileged communities both individually and as families. At our CAC and also through outreach programs in the neighborhoods we build community support for youth care. We provide a recreational, therapeutic and educational space in which each participant can develop their own skills through games and the arts, active participation in the community and social interaction. By this means, we were able to support around 5.000 people in 2021.

**Direct beneficiaries: 937**      **Indirect beneficiaries: 3.958**





# YOUTH CARE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## BREAKING BARRIERS Inclusión y Discapacidad



### Project Malecón Inclusivo

In April, we began our work on the project "Malecón Inclusivo", which aims to enable wheelchair users unhindered access to Samaná's promenade Malecón, by installing necessary pedestrian ramps and signage, making Samaná a benchmark for inclusive tourism and leisure and promoting participation and awareness.

In May, as a public activity, a presentation of the project "Malecón Inclusivo" was held including a tour along the Malecón of Samaná together with wheelchair users. Latter were the protagonists in this activity, who participated in the tour, in an animation program along with inclusive games together with other users of the program, guests, collaborators and local staff. In June, we produced a documentary called "Breaking Down Barriers: Inclusion and Disability", in which we are raising awareness about the capabilities of people with functional diversity, their rights and participation through the work done.

# YOUTH CARE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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## BREAKING BARRIERS Inclusión y Discapacidad



### Inclusive Camp

The Inclusive Camp covers training and learning sessions for people with Specific Educational Support Needs: 24 educational and psychosocial development group interventions have been performed. These activities are carried out developing the following areas: socioemotional, cognitive, sensory, psychomotor, phonoarticulatory and practical life. The first inclusive camp was held in July after the end of the school year of 2020/2021. In total 15 students participated, nine of them with disabilities and another four guests with disabilities during the recreational days. In August and September, an inclusive space was maintained to reinforce knowledge before the start of the course 2021/2022 in October. In this period, the camp has been carried out by the innovation of inclusive modality, where mainly people with disabilities and their families have attended, creating an inclusive space where students with and without disabilities learn and develop together.

# YOUTH CARE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## Fútbol por La Paz



In 2020, the Aldeas de Paz Foundation and the Aspiras Foundation created the project "Fútbol por la Paz" to make a real and lasting impact with the introduction of soccer in the province of Samaná.

In 2021, it was that time again: With a duration of four weeks, the camp included not only soccer training, but also four awareness workshops on Marine Conservation, Special Olympics, Injury Prevention and Dental Care. Despite the limit on the number of participants, we saw more than 50 children present on training days at the baseball field.

Through "Fútbol por la Paz", football has begun to become a method of recreation and sport for the daily life of children and people in the province, intervening in schools, streets, clubs and the community in general, serving as providers of utensils and equipment necessary for the effective implementation of the program.

We look forward to continuing to organize "Fútbol por la Paz" in 2022 and making an impact on the community!



# YOUTH CARE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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## Language Courses



After a lot of planning and organizing, we were happy to finally offer our language courses from November 2021! We provide the following courses:

**English Basic, English Advanced & German Basic.**

All people of age 15 years and older are welcome to join us. We teach not only young locals, but also people who are already of retirement age. The courses are held by volunteers of the German Red Cross, as they will support us for a whole year and therefore can best accompany the process of learning. The volunteers prepare and deliver the lessons on their own. To our delight, the language courses are well received and we have the pleasure of teaching a bunch of inquisitive students. There are between 8 to 20 students in the language classes. The greatest joy for our volunteers is to see the progress of their students and to receive regular feedback.



# YOUTH CARE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## AWARDS



One more year our work reaps recognition!

As you can see, our practices have been awarded the recognition "RD Incluye: Sello de Buenas Prácticas Inclusivas" (DR Includes: Seal of Good Inclusive Practices), granted by CONADIS and PNUD República Dominicana. The recognized practices are:

- 1) Educational Attention for People with Disabilities**
- 2) Access to Justice and guarantee of Rights for People with Disabilities in Samaná.**

It is always to be celebrated when our efforts and the merits that we make every day are recognized. Now is also the time to motivate ourselves and overcome the good practices already achieved. We achieved successes, let's show perseverance. Congratulations to the entire Aldeas de Paz Foundation team, users, volunteers, partners, and collaborators! These awards are also yours!

We will continue to break down barriers to inclusion.

# ENVIRONMENT

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## MARINE CONSERVATION



Since its launch in 2019, our marine conservation programme in Las Terrenas has grown tremendously and has evolved to one of the most popular programmes along our volunteers in 2021. The conservation work we do consists of training of international volunteers, exploratory dives, monitoring dives, management of the Las Terrenas coral nursery, beach clean-ups and much more.

Aldeas de Paz, together with the diving center Profundo Blue, have engaged international volunteers to provide them dive training and scientific knowledge about the reefs and the marine flora and fauna. These volunteers are taught general diving techniques with internationally recognised courses and are also taught more specific techniques by actively participating in marine conservation activities. In 2021, 45 diving licences were accomplished by our volunteers (23 coral reef conservation - 14 open water - 3 advanced - 5 deep diver). Our volunteers are an integral part of the programme as they help in the centre promoting marine conservation in all its forms.

# ENVIRONMENT

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## MARINE CONSERVATION



In 2021, our marine conservation team carried out several activities, together with the diving center Profundo Blue and the foundation CEBSE. An excerpt of our activities:

**Exploratory Dives:** Diving on different reefs in Las Terrenas in which various parameters are evaluated to identify suitable sites for coral monitoring and/or transplantation.

**Monitoring Dives:** Data are collected to establish the status of the coral reefs. The data is then analysed and used locally and nationally to help monitor and care for the coral reefs.

**Yucahu Nursery:** Taking care of the cleaning and maintenance of the nursery at a depth of 11 metres. By this means, the corals were able to grow around 10-20 cm in 2021. In total, the nursery exists of 11 structures like the one in the picture above.

**Coral Transplants:** We are cooperating with CEBSE on coral transplants and on monitoring them. Moreover, we are working together on a research on coral diseases to protect our reefs.



# ENVIRONMENT

## BEACH CLEAN UP



Plastic waste pollution - a well-known and still acute problem. The amount of plastic waste in the Dominican Republic is around three times higher than the world average. In Samaná, which is famous for its bay, which is a breeding sanctuary for humpback whales, we see every day plastic waste from the street and river piled up and dumped in the bay.

Our Marine Conservation team in Las Terrenas and our volunteers in Samaná performed several Beach Clean Up activities throughout the year, also always seeing these activities as a teaching assignment to the population. Like in August, we cleaned Playa Punta Popi together with kids from the community school Jardin el Principio. In cooperation with partners, we performed cleaning activities with locals at the beaches of Las Garitas as well as mangroves' reforestation in the surrounding area.



# HEALTH CARE

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## HOSPITAL PROGRAM



In 2021, we were once again able to support local hospitals in Samaná and Las Terrenas with the help of our volunteers. The Hospital program enables our volunteers to get an insight into the running and daily routine of a hospital or a neighborhood health clinic. Areas in which our volunteers were deployed: emergency, maternity, pediatric, diabetes, integral attention & prevention for HIV, tuberculosis and uterine cancer as well as nursing and hospital administration.

We are happy and thankful about our cooperations with the hospital Lic. Pablo A. Paulino in Las Terrenas, Centro Diagnóstico and the hospital Los Cubanos in Samaná.

# HEALTH CARE

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## DENTISTRY AND PHYSIOTHERAPY TREATMENTS



We started a new project in las Galeras and in Samaná together with the NGO "SOS Odontología Social" from Spain in 2021. We helped local people to get dental treatments as well as physiotherapy for free. Within two weeks, we were able to treat 505 people in total, of which 56 had a disability. The medical treatment towards the dental care included among others the elimination of caries, occlusion, cleaning the teeth. The physiotherapy included especially therapeutic massage and rehabilitation.



## COCO DOG



We have been offering our volunteers to work in the project "Coco Dog" since 2020. There, mainly street animals are treated and released back into the wild after successful treatment. However, locals, who cannot afford treatments in a regular veterinary practice, can also bring their animals to the project site. The animals are treated by two veterinarians and a handful of veterinary assistants. In the best case, a home is then found for the lovable animals. Due to the pandemic, the project had to be paused in the meantime. Nevertheless, 5 volunteers from Aldeas de Paz have supported the Coco Dog team in their veterinary mission. Currently, the project is back in full swing and is looking forward to further support.





## PROJECT SAMANÁ



After a long Corona break, we were finally able to support Project Samaná again in 2021. Around 30 volunteers from the USA, including veterinarians and veterinary assistants, came to Samaná for a week in October to treat primarily street dogs and cats. Treatments included sterilizing and neutering the animals to control their reproduction. However, surgeries such as amputations also took place.

The volunteers of Aldeas de Paz took care of locating the street animals and bringing them to the venue. Likewise, we agreed to take in the animals that had recently been operated on, but could not yet be released, to our Foundation for a weekend. Our volunteers passionately cared for them and released them after their wounds successfully healed.

We look forward to supporting the Project Samaná team again next year!



# ¡MUCHAS GRACIAS!

## TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS, DONATORS AND PARTNERS

### *We will continue working...*

*The year 2021 began with a lot of uncertainty and doubt about our ability to continue collaborating with communities and vulnerable groups, but we have come out stronger. With the help of our donors and collaborators we will continue contributing to Samaná.*



**Jimmi Núñez**  
President



[www.aldeasdepaz.org](http://www.aldeasdepaz.org)

# IMPRINT

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