

ReachOut™
YOUTH SOLUTIONS



**Country Leader
Elio Martiz**

2023 UPDATE

CUBA



A world in need of a Savior...

Reach Out's global impact in 2023



Reach Out Global Map

God moved mightily through our Reach Out team in 2023, more than we ever could have imagined! Investing into the training and equipping of youth leaders is crucial in spreading the message of the gospel to the younger generation. Our Country Leaders witnessed God's hand in allowing our team to train and equip more than **5,000 youth leaders** this past year who are now implementing the six essential characteristics taught through Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry into local churches in countries all over the world. Accounts were received about the impact of our JFYM Forums that brought newly certified Eagle Leaders (leaders who are now equipped to train other leaders), churches planted, and onlookers saved. Over **18,000 students were saved** through the ministries of those trained in **Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry**. And thousands more are currently being disciplined into disciple-makers for their generation!

JFYM Forums have sparked the establishment of **85 new churches in just one year**. These churches addressed crucial needs in areas where JFYM Forums were held. Thousands of students also participated in biblical training when our teams were allowed to enter schools in certain countries. Students were given the opportunity to participate in activities that impacted their spiritual, emotional, and relational growth. One of our Country Leaders has even been invited by their government officials to create such a program in their nation!

New opportunities were plentiful in 2023. Youth leader training started in **Pakistan** and **Belize**. Translations were completed in **Hindi** (India) and **Kirundi** (Burundi). And, we were able to add **Ukrainian** as an additional language to our JFYM online training platform! We also trained Links International missionaries from multiple countries in JFYM.

Reach Out hosted its First Annual Golf Tournament early in 2023, which was a great success and was enjoyed by all who participated. We were also able to highlight Reach Out Youth Solutions and Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry at the Southern Baptist Convention, the Texas Baptist General Convention, and Movement Day at Dallas Baptist University.

Thank you for your generosity, support and prayers throughout 2023 to help us extend God's love to the countries we serve. We would not be able to do it without you and your faithfulness in coming alongside us. **Thank you!**



**God kicked
off the year
with fire...**

**burning in their hearts on
a mission tto reach the
youth ...**

**First JFYM Forum of the year in
January with over 70 youth
leaders and 9 Eagle Leaders
ready to serve**



Juan Carlos Ferrer Vargas became a new Eagle Leader for Southeast Cuba for the **Granma Province** [above]. He is a dentist by profession and is married to Eylen Montes de Oca. He is the volunteer Youth Pastor at **Faith on the Rock Church** in **Manzanillo**. This church has been a “Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry” church for 5 years. Juan introduced 8 churches to JFYM, trained 69 youth leaders, and mentored 3 Eagle Leaders. In just a few short months last year, over 50 students were reached with the gospel, 35 of them began being discipled, and 15 were baptized [some students below]!

In February, our team held a JFYM Implementation Workshop in **Baracoa** with 7 churches to help them gain momentum from the previous training they did [top 2 on right].



God enabled our team...

to train many Christian leaders including teens...

March brought our team to meet with a group of **university students to train and equip them** using JFYM principles [bottom 2 on right].



God has allowed us... to equip leaders for over 20 years...



In May our team pressed on, training four sister churches of Ebenezer Church in the east in Bayamo.



Joandris is one of our West Cuba Regional Leaders. Along with his wife **Ismari** and other church youth leader **Yuriel** (both Eagle Leaders), they worked together to plan and lead a JFYM Forum in **Cárdenas, Matanzas**.

This opportunity marks a milestone for ROYS for extended spiritual influence in Cuba. This is because they held a JFYM Forum with four Evangelical Churches in **Matanzas Province**, the *least reached province of Cuba*. Also because this JFYM Forum took place just 18 miles from **Varadero Beach**, the location where Reach Out equipped Eagle Leaders for 20 years, training them to go all across Cuba to bring light to the darkness [near left column].



By the words of our...

testimony God reaches from east to west...



We received Central Cuba Eagle Leader Kike's testimony of how the Lord moved incredibly through his life this year. Through conquering

numerous obstacles, the Lord has been working so powerfully in his life. After a difficult cesarean section procedure, **Kike and his wife Melissa** thought they might lose their newborn, but God healed Aaron, and he is now doing well. Subsequently, in February, Kike resumed weekly JFYM implementation meetings with **Placetas Church** along with his local church leaders. Following that, **Sagua la Grande, Camajuani, and Taguayabon**, three significant cities in the Central Cuba region, hosted a JFYM Forum organized by Kike and his team. From West Cuba, **Manuel David** joined him to assist in directing that JFYM Forum. Kike has been meeting with them every month since then to assist them in

incorporating JFYM values into their ministries and daily lives. Lastly, the lead pastors of these three churches took what they had learned, incorporated it into their ministries and daily lives, and exhorted others to take the JFYM training!





From the biggest to...

the smallest hearts...



150+ children and 50 volunteers helped at the Almendares Church summer VBS in CUBA [top].

And just a couple of weeks later, our team hosted the annual **RESET summer camp** for teens. They were creative having access to minimal supplies, like bucks, tarps, rope, and glow-in-the-dark paint. None of this stopped them from having a blast. A pivotal moment at the retreat was when the students **washed each other's feet just as Jesus did with His disciples.** Most of them were extremely emotional, recognizing the significance and intimacy that comes from doing this with one another.

Many of them got on their knees, crying out to God in reaffirming their lives for Him. Our leaders shared that it was a breaking point of God's presence entering the room and meeting them where they were, overwhelming them with the possibility of His walking with them on a daily basis. The team said it was a beautiful moment.





Demonstrating JFYM...

“I do it...”

Pastors and youth leaders from four churches in the **Las Tunas Province** who finished the JFYM Implementation Program under the guidance of our regional leaders gathered in September. Since they are now on their own, it demonstrates the power of JFYM's "I do it...I show them how to do it...They do it and I help guide them...They do it on their own" concept in action. They discussed their JFYM Implementation's accomplishments, upcoming obstacles to the ministry's continued operation, and the expansion of God's work, pausing to pray together for each other before departing.





God gathered many...

to strive to reach more for Jesus...

On the final day of their national **Regional Leaders Meeting** [above] in **Havana** in October, Elio Martiz and the team joined our international headquarters at our Monthly Ministry Update via Zoom!

Our Cuba team then held this JFYM Forum in **Bayamo City** in November. They also facilitated a JFYM Workshop in the **Campechuela Municipality** [bottom left and right]. God kept them moving throughout the nation.

These youth leaders from **Santiago de Cuba Christian Pentecostal Church** held an implementation workshop [bottom center] with **Geinier**, one of our Regional Leaders. Our team is helping them resolve some of their leadership issues using JFYM principles, which has been working in rejuvenating their team.



May brought many blessings when Country Leader Elio Martiz's son **Miguel** and his fiancée **Ashley Griffin** married and began their new life together as one [left]. Later in the year, Elio's son **Noel** got engaged, so another wedding is on the way!

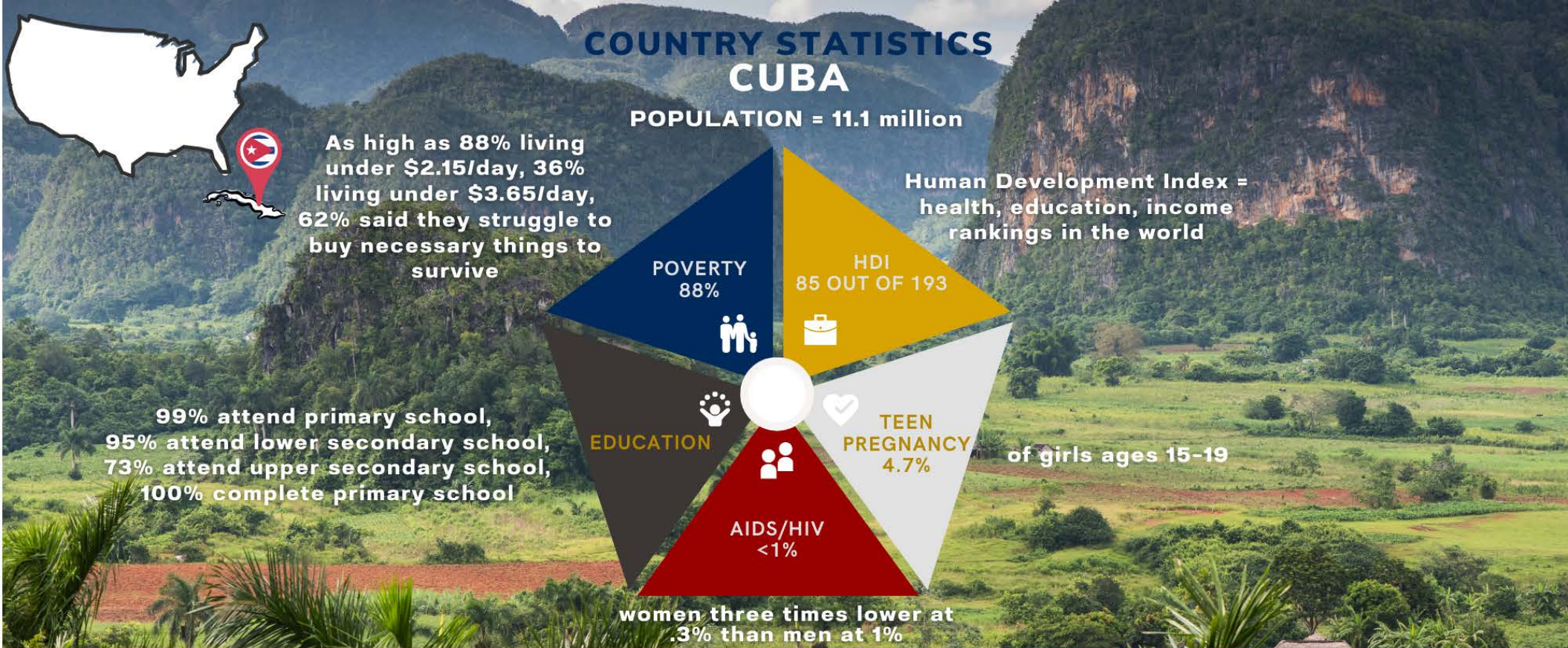


Our team traveled to Cuba **two times** this year -- in February, then again in August, taking along much needed supplies. Many of the team members visited for the first time. It was a tremendous eye-opener for many of them, as they did not realize the struggles Cubans go through every day to provide for their families and obtain supplies and care they need. However, regular power outages, flooding, thievery, and lack did not stop our team. They **pressed on** to what God wanted to do. They face their ministries gracefully, supporting each other, praying with each other, and encouraging one another through the hard times when there have been moments when many of them have wanted to give up.



And despite all of this, look at the glorious work of the Lord in just one year in extending His hand from east to west. Our team feels very blessed and continues allowing God to help them reach the younger generation for Christ. The favor they have had with the high schools during this year was **nothing short of a miracle**. They've experienced a **mass exodus and they believe that approximately 10% of the population has left the country**. Praise God for our leaders for weathering the storm and answering God's promptings!

We appreciate your kindness, support, prayers and gifts in helping the impossible happen in a nation that is facing great trials for Christ. Thank you for being a part of this journey with us and for all that God is going to do through our team in Cuba as we follow His lead!



COUNTRY STATISTICS CUBA

POPULATION = 11.1 million

As high as 88% living under \$2.15/day, 36% living under \$3.65/day, 62% said they struggle to buy necessary things to survive

Human Development Index = health, education, income rankings in the world

POVERTY
88%



HDI
85 OUT OF 193



EDUCATION



TEEN PREGNANCY
4.7%



of girls ages 15-19



AIDS/HIV
<1%

women three times lower at .3% than men at 1%

99% attend primary school, 95% attend lower secondary school, 73% attend upper secondary school, 100% complete primary school

Challenges

- Only 15% of people are able to eat 3 meals per day
- Consistent blackouts, with 29 blackouts out of 31 days in 1 month
- Fuel shortages prevent travelers from even using owned vehicles
- 38% of elderly unable to obtain medicines due to high cost/shortages
- Mass exodus of approx. 10% of the population left the country, with up to half a million crossing the U.S. borders for refuge
- Hundreds of pastors and youth leaders left their ministries, leaving leadership spots unable to be filled timely
- 17k teachers fled the country in 2023, leaving major gaps in education
- Many people prevented from traveling in/out of the country, and even from reentering once they have left though they are Cuban citizens
- 10,000 homes affected and 6 people died in 8 provinces, including Granma, Camagüey, Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo from severe rainfall/flooding in June which directly affected several of our ROYS team
- 44,000 homes and 102 schools affected by Hurricane Ian in the Pinar de Río Province in September which are still not restored
- 62% decrease of imports in 10 prior years, causing high food insecurity when relying on 75% of their food products being imported

Reach Out

- A gift of \$1,000 helps indigenous leaders train 50 youth pastors through an “in-person” forum in their country.
- A gift of \$500 helps provide scholarships to train and mentor 20 youth pastors online.
- A gift of \$200 (\$3.85 per week) helps us equip 1 leader for 1 year, with the goal of that leader moving from being introduced to JFYM to implementing and multiplying JFYM. As a result, that new leader will begin training 3 additional leaders, so that from those 4 new leaders, there are a total of 12 young people discipled and praying for opportunities to influence 36 of their friends to follow Jesus.
- A monthly gift of \$100 helps us continue current ministry to leaders around the world who are trained and resourced through Reach Out.

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