



hispanicfederation
C♥N PUERTO RICO



Building a Stronger and More Resilient Puerto Rico

Hurricane Maria: A Five-Year Update

September 2022



Acknowledgments

This report was prepared to acknowledge the work of the Hispanic Federation and the incredible network of Puerto Rican community-based organizations that were instrumental to the emergency response and ongoing recovery of Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria, the earthquakes, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of their energy, commitment, passion, and wisdom, we have been able to act boldly to respond to urgent needs on the island, and work continuously to build a stronger and more resilient Puerto Rico.

We deeply appreciate the thousands of donors and funders who contributed to the efforts in Puerto Rico and genuinely understand the power of creating and harnessing a collective vision towards social good.

We also want to thank the HF team and Board of Directors, present and past, who, since 2017, has been instrumental in leading and managing our program, advocacy and grantmaking work in Puerto Rico. Daily, despite mounting complexities, our staff and Board members have rolled up their sleeves, worked to move mountains, and led with their hearts on HF's efforts in Puerto Rico.

Thanks to Charlotte Navarro Gossett and the Puerto Rico team for their amazing work and absolute and steadfast commitment to the children, families, organizations, and communities of Puerto Rico.

Thanks to Celina Cruz, Mario Colón, Doris Guzman, Craig Goodwin-Ortiz de Leon, and the Finance and Grantmaking staff for contributing to this report. We thank José Calderón, Lillian Rodríguez López, and Emily Gantz McKay for writing and editing sections in the report and Amy Thesing for report design.

Cover: La Corporación Piñones Se Integra (COPI) clears mangrove debris to prevent flooding in Loiza. These efforts helped protect local communities from major flooding during the torrential rains brought on by Hurricane Fiona in September, 2022.

Top: Farmers Ricardo Ruiz Castro and Migdalia Soto Rodríguez of Adjuntas receive the very first seedlings of the coffee initiative. Pictured with HF and Technoserve staff.

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President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Five years ago this month, as the winds and rain that were to become Hurricane Maria lashed the eastern Caribbean, I sat in my office in disbelief that a second storm in less than two weeks was getting set to strike Puerto Rico. I had seen many storms hit the island before but what I did not know then was that Hurricane Maria would mark a before and after moment for all of Puerto Rico and for all Puerto Ricans.

The details of the devastation are well-known. Thousands of Puerto Ricans died in the storm. Millions were left without electrical power, a great many for nearly a year. Tens of thousands were left homeless or with damaged homes. The island's tourism industry buckled; its agriculture was laid to waste. Schools and hospitals were destroyed. And in response to all this devastation, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans — among them my friends and family — left the island for the mainland looking not so much for new avenues of success but for a chance to survive.

Faced with a natural disaster that unleashed unprecedented destruction, the U.S. federal government failed to rise to the challenge. Politics and parsimony carried the day. In the face of government ambivalence and inaction, we had to do what we have always done in our communities: rely on one another.

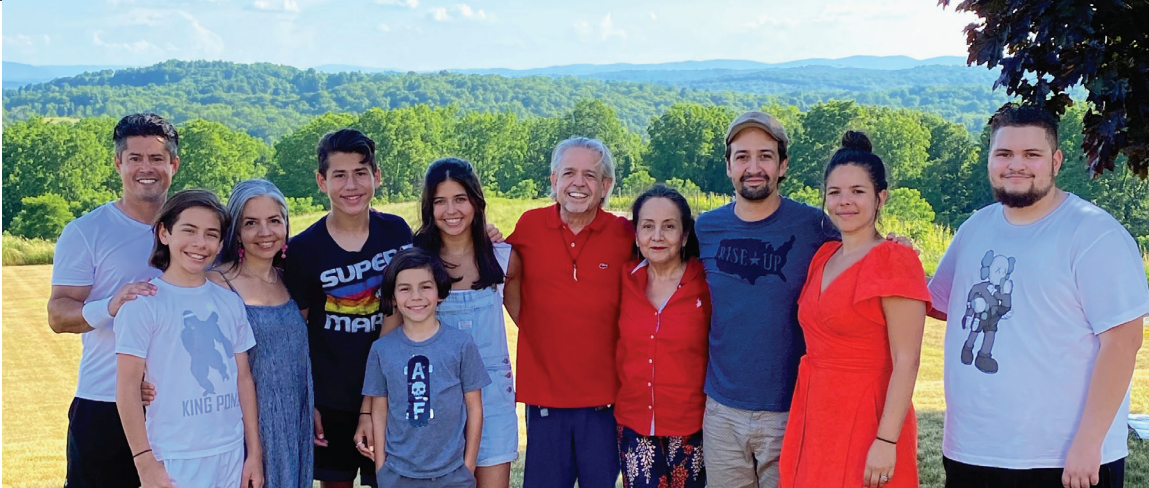
We gathered supplies and delivered them where they were needed most. We provided comfort and care to people who had lost everything. With over 200,000 donations, and the extraordinary support of Lin-Manuel, Luis and the entire Miranda Family, we invested more than \$50 million in the areas of emergency assistance, agriculture and environmental sustainability, housing and community development, renewable energy, healthcare access, and economic development. All of it with one goal in mind: to build a stronger and more resilient Puerto Rico.

The report you are now reading is a record of our vital work and an affirmation of the good that our collective of nonprofits, donors, and HF staff and board can achieve together. It is the commitment, generosity, and trust of this family of stakeholders that continues to make everything we do possible.

As we commemorate the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Maria, I am reminded of the great selflessness and resiliency that Puerto Ricans have shown us over these years. They inspire us every day and remain the focus of the important work we have ahead. Please join us. Puerto Rico and its people urgently need greater charitable investments, and the ongoing support and embrace of philanthropic institutions and leaders across the U.S. Together, we can continue to affirm that ours is a community worth fighting for and that change is possible when we are united in purpose and action.

Sincerely,

Frankie Miranda
President and CEO



Message from Miranda Family

“Yo sería borincano aunque naciera en la luna.” This popular poem and song translates to: “I would be Borincano (Puerto Rican) even if I was born on the moon.”

For our family, that couldn't be truer. Our Puerto Rican heritage is part of every aspect of our lives now as New Yorkers.

So when we watched in horror how Hurricane Maria ravaged the northeastern Caribbean in 2017, our family immediately went to work to help our fellow Puerto Ricans who experienced the worst natural disaster in the region's recorded history. Between calls trying to locate family members in the days after Hurricane Maria made landfall, Luis worked with the Hispanic Federation to bring the first charter flight to Puerto Rico with supplies and first responders. Lin-Manuel wrote “Almost Like Praying” and recorded the single with the help of 21 Latin artists to raise money for recovery efforts.

HF was unquestionably the partner for this work because through its 32-year history, HF values have been continuously rooted in activating around the communities' needs — not bureaucrats and politicians' designs. This is exactly what they did in Puerto Rico. They went town to town, talking with people on the ground, to hear what they needed.

The work didn't stop once the cameras stopped rolling footage of the devastation, and it still hasn't. HF and our family have continued to raise money, advocate in Congress, and raise awareness of Puerto Rico's needs. Earthquakes and the pandemic in Puerto Rico, so often left out of the national conversation, reinforced our involvement. Our work isn't over.

Puerto Ricans continue to face challenges, including such issues as territory status, climate change, migration off the island, energy, anti-abortion fundamentalists, and more. That's why we're committed to continuing our work with Hispanic Federation, which now has a fully staffed permanent office in San Juan.

By following Puerto Ricans' lead and investing in people, we'll use our resources and ability to bring people together to do good. We call on all of our partners in philanthropy, politics, business and the arts to continue their investments in Puerto Rico.

It's the least we can do for an island that has done so much for us.

For it's the same moon that we see in New York that family and friends see in Puerto Rico. Let's make it full.

Siempre,

The Miranda Family



Introduction

An Unprecedented Crisis

The weather forecast told us it was going to be bad. A day before Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico, we were on non-stop calls and meetings, connecting with one another, a growing network of Latino community leaders and nonprofits, discussing how to best respond if the worst materialized. As the day wore on, we decided to organize an emergency convening in our New York headquarters of federal, state and city officials to coordinate and maximize the reach and impact of our plans.

On the radar, Maria looked to take direct aim at Puerto Rico. It was massive. We knew it was going to be deadly. But when Maria finally struck Puerto Rico on September 20th, what emerged was a crisis unlike any other before. Maria was one of the most destructive hurricanes to ever hit our hemisphere, resulting in the deaths of more than 3,000 people¹, an estimated \$90 billion in damages, and the longest blackout in U.S. history.



Mariana Community, Humacao

A Historic Response

Our directive was clear — do whatever we needed to do to help those suffering in Puerto Rico. On September 23, just three days after Maria's passing, the Hispanic Federation (HF) partnered with the Miranda Family to charter the first humanitarian relief flight from New York City, transporting 22 first responders and supplies to the island. This flight would be the first of 25 relief planes HF coordinated that ferried emergency personnel and delivered 7.4 million pounds of food, water, medicine, solar panels, and other critically needed resources to the island. In less than three weeks, the Federation set up and organized 17 unique donation sites across New York, collected hundreds of pallets of supplies, and began coordinating with Puerto Rico's Mayors and community groups to maximize its impact.

As the days and weeks passed after Maria made landfall, it was clear that Puerto Rico's central government and infrastructure was not prepared to deal with the force of this Hurricane, and worse still, that our federal government was unwilling to do everything within its power to meet the growing and widespread needs on the ground. Operational challenges quickly emerged as the shipping ports became congested with supplies from the U.S. and global charities. The government's response plan made it increasingly difficult for supplies to move off the ships and the Federation quickly pivoted.



New York City first responders head to PR on HF chartered plane

1 The exact number of people who died as a result of Hurricane Maria may never be truly known because of the failure of Governor Rosello's administration to adequately count mortalities during the hurricane and its aftermath. A [George Washington University study](#) released in August 2018 estimated that the hurricane caused nearly 3,000 deaths in the six months that followed the storm. An earlier [study conducted by Harvard University](#) estimated that 4,645 lives were lost as a result of the hurricane.



A new strategy was launched to purchase millions of pounds of food and water directly from island-based distributors. By buying locally, the Federation supported Puerto Rico-based manufacturers, distributors, and retailers who were sidelined because stores across the island were closed but who had warehouses full of goods and available transport to reach local communities around the island. This shift allowed aid to reach communities quickly and supported efforts to bring workers back to businesses and to strengthen the local economy. Our new strategy meant that families were receiving supplies in their own communities, from

vendors and distributors familiar to them who were also affected by the hurricane. In a time of widespread devastation and trauma, an unprecedented blackout, and an incompetent government response, this effort was key to our success in getting help to those who needed it the most. Altogether, we reached and provided hundreds of thousands of affected residents with a combination of food, solar lamps, water filtration systems, medical support, mosquito nets, and other essential supplies and services.

A Path Forward

At first glance, the most easily apparent change caused by Hurricane Maria was to the topography of Puerto Rico. The storm's winds had ripped houses to pieces, leaving nothing but debris. Sturdy palm trees were uprooted from the soil. Farms were washed away. Beaches were swallowed by the sea. For months after the storm, it was the patchwork of blue tarps that covered tens of thousands of damaged homes across Puerto Rico that most characterized the island.

But while the changes to Puerto Rico's topography were easy to see, another, more profound change had begun to take place. Faced with an unprecedented crisis, Puerto Ricans turned to one another. In community after community, neighbors helped neighbors and the island's grassroots organizations rose to the challenge of rebuilding the island in a way that was more sustainable, more equitable, and more just.

We were there to help. Hispanic Federation knew from decades of work in responding to human needs and social emergencies that Latino community-based organizations were the trusted safety net providers for our most vulnerable children and families. Supporting them — and actively coordinating our work with them — was key to our ability to achieve large-scale and lasting impact.

In partnership with key local leaders, nonprofits, and communities, we focused initially on meeting Puerto Ricans' most urgent and immediate needs. Over time, the Federation worked with this leadership network to better understand and address the long-term needs of the people of Puerto Rico, from infrastructure to critical health and human service systems. With the future in mind, as early as November 2017, HF launched the Amanece/Road to Recovery Fund to support local nonprofits focused on overcoming the crisis created by Maria and re-envisioning more vibrant communities. With an eventual commitment of \$5.4 million and 57 grants averaging \$100,000, the underpinnings of the selected projects were sustainability, self-sufficiency, and local collaboration and coordination. The overall goal of the Fund was to advance projects that powered systems change in Puerto Rico — spurring innovation, infrastructure development, and greater resiliency across the island.



Frankie Miranda with displaced earthquake survivors

The depth and multi-faceted nature of the crisis on the island required us to hire a permanent team of diverse local experts with a shared and deep commitment to advancing sustainable development and serving the people of Puerto Rico. This local team, which has grown to nine full-time staff today, has been hard at work over the past five years, working with our network to advance a more equitable and sustainable recovery in the areas of agriculture, the environment, renewable energy, community planning, housing, healthcare, education, and economic development, while promoting greater transparency, civic participation, and human rights.

Caring for a Growing Diaspora

A flooded, battered, and energy-devoid Puerto Rico led to the mass exodus of Puerto Rican residents in search of refuge and greater opportunities. As tens of thousands of families on the island departed for the States following Hurricane Maria, the Federation and its nonprofit network in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Florida offered crisis services, including shelter, health care, emergency cash assistance, mental health aid, and other vital social programs. These services were a central lifeline for displaced Puerto Ricans, especially for families with children, during a time of great upheaval and loss.

The HF Florida Office, for example, disbursed \$573,000 in emergency cash assistance to over one thousand families who arrived in Central Florida from 68 different municipalities in Puerto Rico. In New York, HF facilitated the activation of a resource center to support displaced families and individuals. Since 2017, Hispanic Federation has continued to provide support and services to integrate the thousands of Puerto Rican families who chose to remain in the States and assist those who have sought to return.

**HF LAUNCHED AMANECE FUND
WITH A COMMITMENT OF
\$5.4 million
in grants averaging
\$100,000**



PR Advocacy Day at the U.S. Supreme Court

Our Impact

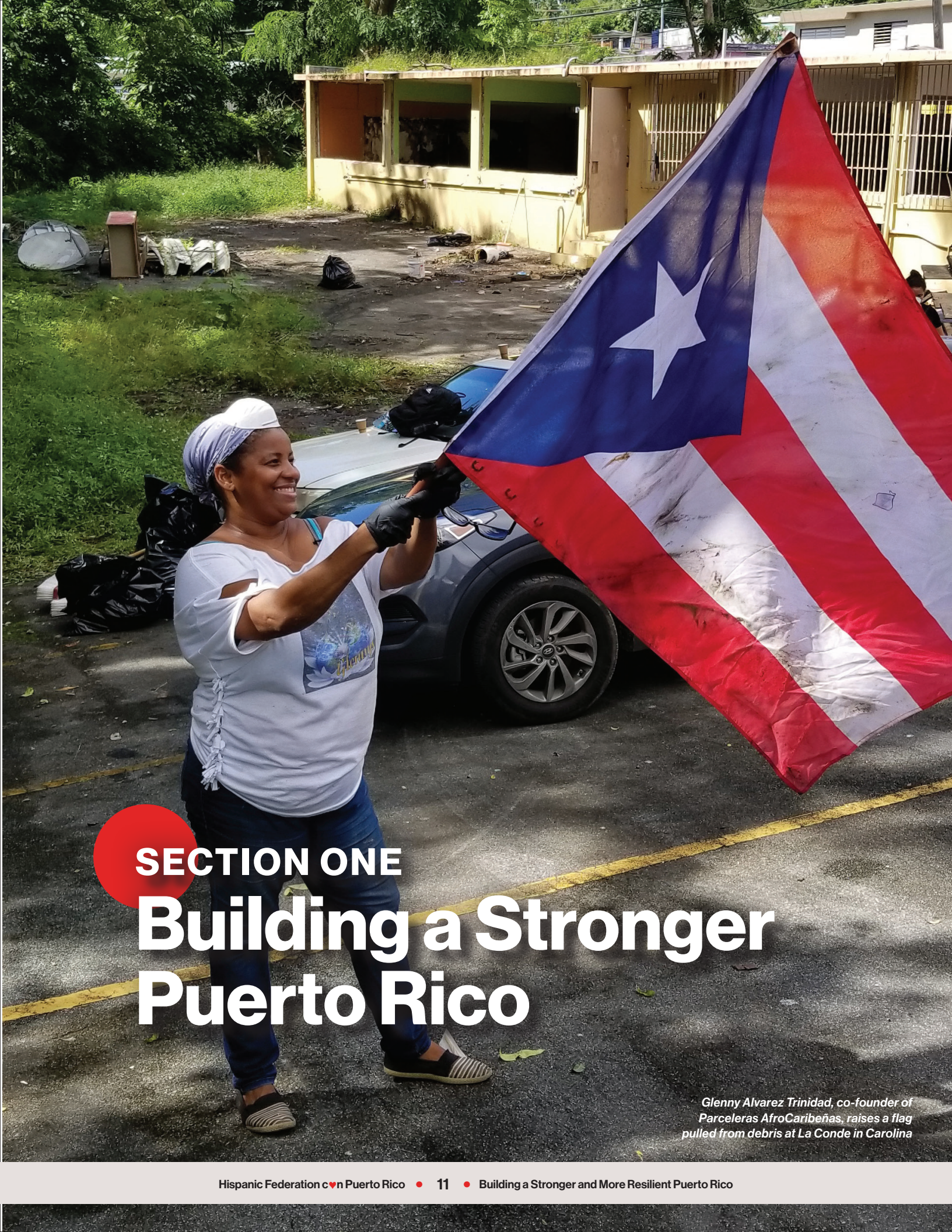
Our response, as unprecedented as it was, would have been impossible without the generous support of more than 200,000 donors from across the world who contributed to our work on the island. From individuals making contributions of just a few dollars to contributions from institutions into the tens of thousands of dollars, people wanted to help Puerto Rico and we served as an important vehicle for doing so. All told, the Federation's commitment to promoting Puerto Rico's social and economic recovery resulted in over \$50 million in private, philanthropic giving, reaching all 78 municipalities on the island. This made Hispanic Federation one of the largest private investors in Puerto Rico's disaster recovery. HF provided 353 grants to 140 nonprofit organizations, collaborated with key institutions and community groups on dozens of large-scale projects, supported the installation of over 250 solar energy systems, bolstered more than 1,600 micro businesses, farmers, and fisheries, offered \$2.4 million direct cash assistance to thousands of individuals, and served over 750,000 Puerto Rican residents through its disaster-relief and sustainability initiatives.

Over the past five years, HF has also persistently spearheaded policy and advocacy work in the areas of energy, housing, community development, land use, agriculture and food security, health, gender equity and reproductive justice, and civil rights. This work has been essential to helping the island achieve major federal and state policy victories, and remains vital to our ongoing efforts to achieve a just recovery for the people of Puerto Rico.

One example of our advocacy work and impact is the *Take Action for Puerto Rico* campaign, which was born in 2018 and every year since has brought together dozens of advocates and allies to push the federal government to address Puerto Rico's ongoing recovery needs. Together, collaborating with a cadre of Congressional allies, community leaders, and advocacy coalitions on the island and the U.S. mainland, we have successfully made the case for critical federal policy changes and investments that have resulted in billions of dollars in additional relief and recovery aid for Puerto Rican children, families, and communities.

Looking Ahead

This report, which chronicles the scope and impact of our investments, is a testament not only to Hispanic Federation's staff and partners, but also to the stunning love and generosity of many thousands of people who contributed to our work. As we look ahead, we see important opportunities to build a stronger and more resilient Puerto Rico. However, seizing these opportunities will require philanthropic institutions across the U.S. to see, engage, and embrace Puerto Rico. It will require philanthropic leaders to take risks and look beyond their established portfolios of nonprofit grantees and build new relationships with Puerto Rican nonprofits. If we can achieve that, then we can truly harness the knowledge, leadership, resiliency, and communal spirit that is evident on the island to advance greater equity, justice, and opportunity for the people of Puerto Rico.



SECTION ONE

**Building a Stronger
Puerto Rico**

Glenny Alvarez Trinidad, co-founder of Parceleras AfroCaribeñas, raises a flag pulled from debris at La Conde in Carolina



Energy Resiliency and Justice

Since 2017, Hispanic Federation has been collaborating with community, nonprofit, and philanthropic partners to help lead Puerto Rico towards a more just, sustainable, and human-centered energy future. Puerto Rico's centralized, fossil-fuel-dependent, and long-neglected energy system was no match for Hurricane Maria. It set the stage for a calamity of historic proportions, impacting all of Puerto Rico and resulting in the longest blackout in U.S. history. Some regions on the island endured eleven months without power. Communities living in poverty were the last to have their energy restored and had the highest rates of death in the aftermath of the storm because of the lack of electricity to operate medical equipment, store medications, and ensure adequate nutrition. Hispanic Federation serves as a key voice in energy policy and advocacy in support of Puerto Rico's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2050. Our advocacy efforts have contributed to important policy wins to prioritize decentralized, rooftop solar energy investments and humanize the energy needs of vulnerable, low-income communities.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, the Hispanic Federation worked with environmental organizations to urgently transport donated solar equipment to Puerto Rico to provide a lifeline to local communities and families. The installation of solar systems for health care centers and community centers was prioritized to ensure that critical services to vulnerable, hard-to-reach communities would be available. Since 2017, HF has partnered with dozens of local nonprofit organizations to provide the funding, technical assistance, and capacity support needed to contribute towards more than 250 solar energy installations in community centers, health centers, small businesses, schools, first responder stations, and more critical large- and small-scale community sites. The following are a few examples of this critical work.

Restoring a Critical Community Lifeline

Hurricane Maria caused severe damage to a crucial health resource, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) that provide affordable and high-quality health care services to approximately 377,000 mostly low-income Puerto Rican residents each year, equivalent to 12% of the population. For many families, especially the uninsured, FQHCs are their only healthcare alternative, providing preventative, routine, and emergency care for families and individuals residing on the island. Despite their importance, after the 2017 hurricanes, many FQHCs were rendered inoperable given the destruction to infrastructure and systems, including roofs, air conditioning, and generators, threatening the lives of thousands of families who depend on them. After the FQHC leadership shared their immediate recovery needs, HF jumped into action. The Federation invited UNICEF, Jennifer Lopez, and Alex Rodriguez to help launch a \$2 million fund to support urgent infrastructure improvements in 20 health centers, including rooftop solar energy and battery systems, electrical system repairs, generator installations, roof and air conditioning system repairs, elevation of parking lots in flood zones, and communication system upgrades.

In January 2018, Hispanic Federation also partnered with The Clinton Foundation, Direct Relief, and the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (formerly The Solar Foundation), to launch the *Solar Saves Lives* Initiative. The initiative's primary focus was to maximize the solar energy potential of FQHCs through the installation of rooftop solar energy and battery systems. HF's \$1.8 million contribution and technical support made these installations possible in four FQHCs in Loiza, Orocovi, Patillas, and Las Piedras. Each Center received up to 800 solar panels and Tesla batteries designed to provide back-up energy in cases of electrical grid failure.

In 2022, these four FQHCs benefited from uninterrupted power despite numerous general blackouts and lowered their monthly energy costs, resulting in a combined \$250,000 in potential annual savings. The installation of the systems also reduces oil dependence and greenhouse gas emissions into the environment. With the energy levels required to operate the FQHCs, these systems prevent 2.4 million pounds of CO₂ from entering the environment, the equivalent of planting 3,500 trees.

Today, the Solar Saves Lives collaboration has impacted 16 health centers, guaranteeing not only access to power but also high-quality healthcare to vulnerable communities, even during outages. The centers continue to provide critical health and mental health care as well as COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots without loss of refrigeration for crucial medicines.



Through the *Solar Saves Lives* Initiative, HF's **\$1.8 million contribution** and technical support made these installations possible in four FQHCs.



Fisherman in Peñuelas

Bottom: HF with Conservación ConCiencia in Naguabo

Protecting Economic Livelihoods

Plaza de Mercado Rio Piedras

Plaza de Mercado Rio Piedras is home to 200 small agricultural and food vendors. As Puerto Rico's primary distribution center for agriculture, electric power outages cause thousands of dollars in product spoilage and threaten the livelihood of hundreds of mostly immigrant vendors and their families. As the principal source of financial support for these families, constant outages resulted in operational disruptions and business closures. In 2018, the Hispanic Federation partnered again with the Clinton Foundation and IREC (The Solar Foundation) and with the support of Google.org made an investment of \$790,000 for the installation of a rooftop solar energy and battery system, and energy efficient lighting throughout the Plaza.

The project successfully installed 800 solar panels and LED lights, which will reduce CO₂ emissions by approximately one million pounds annually, equivalent to the annual energy consumption of 60 homes. HF is working with the municipality to identify federal recovery funding to install batteries needed to complete the project and provide energy resiliency to the Plaza vendors for decades to come.

Villas Pesqueras

Puerto Rico's fishing communities in the Puerta Del Sol region faced economic hardship and massive product losses due to the energy crisis in Puerto Rico. With compounded losses created by the disasters, the fishing communities were consistently losing income and discarding spoiled seafood due to interruptions in refrigeration. At one fishing village in Naguabo, the economic losses surpassed \$200,000 in the first two months without power after Hurricane Maria, exacerbating local poverty and food insecurity. To support energy independence and build economic resiliency, Hispanic Federation joined with **Conservación ConCiencia** to install a small-scale solar energy and battery system for the fishing village. After the proven success of this pilot, we joined forces again to install similar systems in fishing villages in Guayama, Guánica, and Peñuelas.



The goal was two-fold: to address energy insecurity and the resulting economic hardship and food waste, and support entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency among these communities. The solar systems save these fishing villages up to \$5,000 annually in energy costs, funds that can be redirected to the long-term businesses of 126 artisanal fisherman. In addition, energy independence provides the surrounding community residents with a local site for cellphone charging, and refrigeration for medications and food in emergency situations.

Sustainable Agriculture and Habitat Restoration



La Corporación Píñones Se Integra (COPI) clears mangrove debris to prevent flooding in Loíza

Prior to Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico's food insecurity had reached dramatic levels. The shrinking agro-food system has led to a perilous dependence on imports, consistently reaching over 85% of the food consumed. According to the 2018 agriculture census, of Puerto Rico's 8,230 farms, 67% qualify as small farms that generate less than \$10,000 in annual sales. In addition, 89% of farmers are over the age of 60 and each year, the percentage of land reported in use for agricultural production decreases. Puerto Rico's central mountain region, where the economy has historically depended on agriculture, especially coffee, is among the poorest regions. The artisanal fishing industry and rural coastal communities face similar challenges. These facts point to both a food and economic security crisis in Puerto Rico stemming from an underinvestment in rural communities, outmoded agricultural practices, and climate change.



Advancing sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation has been a central focus of HF's work in Puerto Rico over the past five years. Working with local environmental organizations, farmers, climate justice advocates, and community leaders, to date, the Federation has invested over \$7.9 million to restore natural habitats, protect critical ecosystems, and strengthen local agriculture and fishing communities on the island.

With support from the Amanece Fund, organizations like **Para la Naturaleza**, **Protectores de Cuencas Caras con Causa**, and the **Vieques Conservation and Historic Trust** have reforested thousands of native and endemic trees and mangroves that were destroyed by the hurricanes; **Sociedad Ambiente Marino** rebuilt their underwater coral nursery to restore the vital reef systems in Culebra; and **Corporación Piñones se Integra (COPI)** led a community effort to clear natural waterways and mitigate local flooding. In addition, HF partnered with **Foundation for a Better Puerto Rico** on a million-dollar investment to support the multisector sustainable reforestation of Flamenco Beach, a dynamic environmental resource and economic driver in Culebra. HF actively supported these projects and others to protect Puerto Rico's natural beauty and ecological systems that are essential to fighting poverty, hunger, and climate change.

Agroecological farms and agricultural nonprofits were also particularly challenged in Puerto Rico after facing consecutive years of natural disasters and COVID-19. With the goal of advancing food sovereignty and rural economic development, HF worked with a network of grassroots organizations to support initiatives to restore farms, provide cash and financial assistance, as well as capacity-building and technical support to a network of more than 1,500 small-scale farmers and artisanal fishing villages, agroecological and community farm groups, agro and food microenterprises, and agricultural nonprofit organizations.

Our grantmaking expanded the capacity of nonprofit organizations to promote and serve the sector, strengthen agriculture and business practices, and secure access to local and federal resources as we work collectively to develop a resilient agro-food system. Organizations such as the **Centro de Microempresas y Tecnología Agrícola Sostenible de Yauco (CMTAS)**, **Plenitud**, **Colmena Cimarrona**, **Departamento de la Comida**, **Armonía en la Montaña**, **Acción Valerosa**, **ARECMA**, **PROCAFE** and **Cooperativa Orgánica Madre Tierra**, among others, received grants to advance their transformational work. At the intersection of environment and food justice, **Conservación ConCiencia**, a marine conservation organization, has been pivotal to the collaboration to strengthen local fisheries.

Successful long-term recovery will require sustained economic investment, capacity building, and increased technical assistance to these crucial enterprises. The following are some examples of how our investments and collaborations in sustainable agriculture are making a difference:

Supporting Puerto Rico's Coffee Farmers

Coffee is ubiquitous in Puerto Rico's culture and central to the identity and economy of the central mountain region and its residents. Prior to Hurricane Maria, the coffee industry in PR was worth an estimated \$100 million with an exceptionally strong harvest expected in Fall 2017. However, in less than 24 hours, Hurricane Maria destroyed over 80% of Puerto Rico's coffee harvest and trees, resulting in an estimated total loss of \$85 million in annual revenues for coffee farmers. Compounding the loss, nearly 30% of Puerto Rico's municipalities relied on coffee production for income and employment, which created direct unemployment of almost 10,000 people, including an estimated 2,300 coffee farmers. The future of the coffee industry was at risk and with it, the livelihoods of thousands of families that depended on its production, particularly small-scale producers who are responsible for 70% of Puerto Rico's total coffee production.

Thanks to the vision, leadership and active support of Lin-Manuel Miranda and The Miranda Family Fund, a powerful multisector collaboration was formed to revitalize Puerto Rico's coffee industry. Under the stewardship of the Hispanic Federation, this multimillion dollar, three-and-a-half year effort brought together the philanthropic leadership of the Miranda Family Fund, Rockefeller Foundation, and Colibri Foundation, private industry leaders from Nespresso, Starbucks, and Puerto Rico Coffee Roasters, and



Lin-Manuel Miranda at coffee farm in Jayuya

the technical expertise of international nonprofits Technoserve and World Coffee Research, as well as local coffee sector leadership represented through PROCAFE, and other key individuals, organizations, and donors.

Despite unforeseen hurdles such as earthquakes and a global pandemic, the initiative surpassed expectations. Among many achievements, this collective revitalization effort accomplished the following:

- Distributed over 2 million high quality, locally grown arabica coffee seedlings to 1,139 smallholder coffee farmers impacting 1,380 agriculture acres across 54 municipalities.
- Provided technical training and assistance to more than 1,000 farmers, wet mills and nurseries to elevate the practices, production, and quality of the local sector.
- Graduated 866 smallholder farmers from the Technoserve Coffee College with best-in-field, sustainable agronomic and business practices.
- Established new seed lots to safeguard the purity of future local arabica varieties.

With the 2022 harvest season, Puerto Rico's coffee production is expected to surpass pre-Hurricane Maria levels, and the collective work of the partners and local growers is making historic contributions to the coffee sector. With farmers implementing recommended practices, Puerto Rico average production per acre has the potential to increase from 7 to 15 quintals per acre. The 2 million new trees have a potential economic impact of \$6 million at the farm level, and an average \$10 million at the mill level. This effort was the largest privately led initiative in support of Puerto Rico's coffee industry.



“Before Hurricane María, these were complete coffee farms and in the aftermath we had practically nothing left. That was our livelihood. Now we are getting back up with the help of Hispanic Federation for the new coffee planting... that Hispanic Federation provided us the seedlings was a great help because we could save money and, in that way, invest in other important areas to reestablish the farms.”

**– Héctor Corniel Feliciano,
Yauco coffee farmer**



CMTAS team members in Yauco

Investing in Sustainable Practices

Puerto Rico's rural municipalities are facing complex and growing social, economic, and environmental challenges, including landfills reaching maximum capacity, increasing poverty and underinvestment leading to urban migration, and unsustainable agriculture practices, including the high use and cost of chemical fertilizers and ineffective waste management contaminating water sources. The Yauco Center for Agriculture Microenterprises and Sustainable Technology (CMTAS for the Spanish acronym) conceptualized an innovative project to tackle these issues at the community level with anaerobic biodigesters. Anaerobic biodigesters are a hundred-year-old technology that utilizes a naturally occurring process to break down organic waste matter — such as food scraps, plant waste like coffee pulp, and manure — and transform it into two important outputs: a natural liquid fertilizer and biogas, a renewable energy source.

HF partnered with CMTAS to bring their vision to fruition by providing technical capacity and financial support. With an initial investment of over \$1 million combined from the HF and Fundación Banco Popular *Big Ideas Challenge* Prize and the Cohen Family Foundation, CMTAS is implementing a pilot anaerobic biodigester project in seven rural communities across southwest and central Puerto Rico

Through the installation and operation of community-scale anaerobic biodigesters, the project diverts valuable waste from stressed landfills and watersheds, and produces high quality, low-cost natural fertilizer to mitigate the global shortage and soaring cost of fertilizers and promote transitioning from harmful chemical alternatives. Profits from the sale of the fertilizer will be reinvested to sustain and scale the project. Additionally, the project will capture methane gas before it is released in the atmosphere and reuse the biogases to provide energy for nearby structures and appliances.

By late 2022, eight biodigesters will have been constructed and six will be in early operational testing. Strengthening economic development in the region, 28 community members were trained and 16 employed in anaerobic biodigesters construction and maintenance.

“In the midst of crisis, there are opportunities to reimagine systems and together with the Hispanic Federation we have sought to protect and improve our local environment while being responsive to the economic realities and needs of our local farmers and rural communities.”

**– Wanda Santiago,
CMTAS Executive Director**



Community Planning and Development

HF dedicated a significant amount of time and resources to addressing the most basic of human needs: safe, decent, and affordable housing. Over 92% of homes were damaged during the hurricane, and the multitude of government programs designed to repair them have been slow and ineffective. The Federation's response to the housing crisis in Puerto Rico has been multi-faceted and includes funding to repair and reconstruct hundreds of impacted homes, provide community and individual legal assistance to marginalized communities, and lead local and federal advocacy to ensure recovery funds reach the most affected families and communities.

In 2018, HF provided seed money and convened a coalition of more than 20 diverse, local nonprofit leaders to amplify the housing needs and rights of low-income and historically marginalized communities in Puerto Rico. Today, the coalition, known as *Movimiento Vivienda Digna*, is a leading voice in the recovery processes, most actively engaged in strengthening accountability, civil society participation, and the effective use of the \$20 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery and Mitigation funds for housing and overall community development.

Doña Dora received home repairs from Centros Sor Isolina Ferré in San Juan





La Maraña home
rebuild in Comerío

HF has been a leader in promoting transparent, equitable, and participatory planning processes for the distribution and implementation of federal recovery funding and the design of community planning and land use policies. HF has accompanied local communities and nonprofits in their advocacy to prevent displacement, protect agriculture and ecological lands, safeguard against the privatization of public spaces, transform abandoned spaces, and center the needs of residents in all aspects of planning and development.

As a close ally of **G8** and **Proyecto Enlace**, HF supported the fight to secure the federal funding needed to dredge the Martín Peña Channel and develop the potential of their waterfront. HF leveraged its extensive federal advocacy experience to amplify their voices on Capitol Hill and collaborated in their lobbying efforts through 2022 when they finally achieved a historic \$163 million congressional appropriation for the Channel dredging by the Army Corps of Engineers.

In the Saint Just community of Carolina, HF provided technical, legal, and financial assistance for the grassroots organizing efforts of **Parceleras Afrocaribeñas**. These efforts resulted in the successful transfer of a closed public school building to community control, the development of an ecological corridor, and prevention of further industrialization of their residential zones.

Housing Repairs and Reconstruction

Since 2017, HF has provided more than \$2.5 million in funding to 17 organizations to repair and reconstruct homes of the most vulnerable residents across historically underserved communities. In Humacao, our partner **PECES, Inc**, witnessed homes destroyed by major flooding and restored dozens of homes with HF funding. In Orocovis and Adjuntas, **Proyecto Matria** and **Ponce Neighborhood Housing Services** reconstructed 30 homes torn apart by powerful winds. Through our partnerships with community-based organizations, more than 525 homes were repaired or rebuilt touching an estimated population of 1,400 residents.

HF's funding prioritized local economic development by requiring the hiring of local contractors and construction workers and the purchase of supplies from local hardware stores and businesses. HF recognized that beyond the physical boundaries of the home, many housing-related issues were impacting the community. Through a human-centered approach to housing, HF supported a network of resources and services that allowed community-based organizations (CBOs) to make referrals to mental health services and address situations identified in the field such as domestic violence, individuals living with disabilities, and environmental issues. HF granted an additional \$1 million to 22 nonprofits to provide complementary legal services and advocacy that would address issues of tenancy, access to aid, documentation, and other information needs.



Movimiento Vivienda Digna
Housing Coalition

Making Good on Our Promise

A series of large earthquakes shook the southern region of Puerto Rico beginning in late December 2019 and January 2020, resulting in billions of dollars in damage to thousands of homes and buildings. The quakes further weakened the island's fragile infrastructure and left about 500,000 Puerto Ricans without electricity and more than 250,000 without regular access to water. HF began moving essential supplies to the areas impacted by the earthquakes within 24 hours. With the support of one of its community partners and grantees, **Centros Sor Isolina Ferré**, in less than a week, HF opened a large-scale emergency distribution center in the earthquake zone in Ponce. When HF learned of the delay in full FEMA operations for the area, the Federation extended its operations an additional two weeks.

By the end of January, the Federation purchased more than \$500,000 in food, water, and emergency supplies from local vendors and obtained donations from local farms and companies to distribute through the Ponce center. More than 130 nonprofit and faith-based organizations, government officials, and a team of NYC emergency responders accessed the distribution center for supplies, which were delivered to an estimated 60,000 people affected by the earthquakes. In addition, HF committed \$1.5 million in grants to nonprofits implementing strategies to address school closures, mental health, energy outages, shelter, and legal assistance. This effort reached 263 communities in 21 municipalities across the impacted South-West-Central regions.



“The relationships, scale of operations, and expertise we developed in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria formed the foundation of our ability to quickly mount a communal response. It allowed us to take immediate action during the time of the earthquakes and make good on our promise to be there for affected families and communities on the archipelago at a moment’s notice.”

– Charlotte Gossett Navarro, HF Puerto Rico Chief Director



Youth leader of Proyecto Enlace in San Juan

Census Education and Mobilization

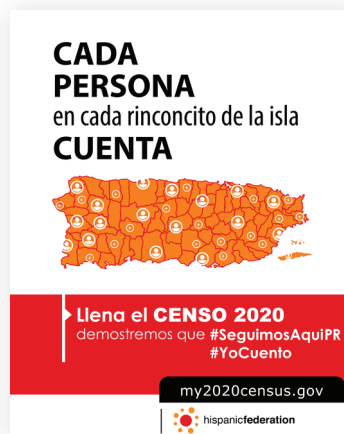
An accurate 2020 Census count offers the opportunity to distribute resources responsibly and fairly when and where available. Public and private entities use Census data to inform their decision-making processes, including designing and implementing systemwide programs and resource allocation for infrastructure, programs, and service investments. HF's Census Education and Mobilization Initiative, *Yo Cuento Puerto Rico*, brought together a group of 20 diverse, local community-based organizations and provided them with the opportunity, tools, information, and resources needed to collectively engage in a coordinated effort to achieve a complete count and educate citizens on how Census data is used.

Launched during the early months of the pandemic, *Yo Cuento Puerto Rico* was Puerto Rico's most extensive non-governmental census

effort. To ensure successful participation, the campaign combined key Census information with food and personal protection equipment (PPE) distribution and included a culturally and linguistically competent public education and outreach strategy, mass media activities, and maximized allyship to reach historically undercounted communities. The campaign also provided government agencies with a credible and effective ally on Census matters.

Our collective efforts directly reached over 133,000 residents, distributed over 55,000 informational pieces, and trained 150 Census campaign coordinators and canvassers. In addition, our multi-media public education campaign and local events reached over 1.5 million individuals.

Since 2020, HF has continued collaborating with the U.S. Census Bureau through participation in the Addresses Subgroup of the Federal Geographic Data Committee and The Opportunity Project. Both efforts are working toward the development of technical, governance and community solutions to better define and tackle issues like the lack of address standardization, lack of general access to data, and obstacles that prevent populations from receiving mail-based services.



Yo Cuento Puerto Rico Media Campaign



Red por los Derechos de la Niñez y la Juventud at the Las Negras education center in Juncos

Strength in Crisis, Responding to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic required the Hispanic Federation and Puerto Rican community-based organizations (CBOs) to respond with great urgency and purpose, recognizing that their actions would be critical to the safety and survival of families and communities across the archipelago. The lessons learned from the coordinated response to Hurricane Maria, and the earthquake crisis that followed, allowed us to plan and act decisively.

Protecting Puerto Rico's Nonprofit Sector

Caring for affected families and communities remained our constant focus throughout the pandemic. To achieve this, the Federation's priority was to protect and preserve the viability of its network of CBO partners. The coronavirus shutdown caused a national emergency which resulted in significant delays in funding contracts for most of our nonprofit organizations. Without economic safety nets and backstops — endowments, large reserves, affluent board leadership, development teams, etc. — which certain nonprofits rely upon, Puerto Rican CBOs found themselves financially compromised as they struggled to meet payroll, pay vendors, and provide social services that function as the primary safety net for Puerto Rico's most vulnerable residents.

In response, on April 1, 2020, HF announced a national Latino Nonprofit Emergency Assistance Fund that included Puerto Rico and provided \$2 million in new grants to 80 community organizations. Thanks to our COVID-19 grants, many of our organizations, including the full network of community health centers, were able to pay their employees, meet basic costs like rent and electricity, address new safety requirements such as disinfection and plexiglass inserts, and pivot to new services and delivery models.



Sol es Vida community kitchen in Toa Baja

HF also launched a series of webinars on how CBOs should prepare and adjust to survive the pandemic. Through virtual technical assistance, capacity building, toolkits, and trainings, HF helped local organizations shift their employee policies, understand mental health needs, access the new federal and local financial assistance programs, such as the Paycheck Protection Program, and understand important policy changes such as employee protections and benefits. More than 650 participants received essential support on transitioning to the new pandemic reality.

Emergency Assistance and VIDA

HF COVID-19 grant-funded programs in Puerto Rico primarily worked to address three critical areas for our communities: food, financial assistance, and health services. One example was the collaboration of 18 CBOs that worked with the Federation to distribute more than \$340,000 in cash cards to support more than 1,300 economically vulnerable individuals and families, undocumented immigrants with no access to federal relief funds, women-led households, victims of gender violence, artisanal fisherman, small-scale farmers and farmworkers, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities. In addition, HF, in alliance with local and national institutions, advocated for Puerto Rico and its nonprofit sector to be equitably included in all COVID-19 federal relief and recovery programs including the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC). CTC expansion allowed families in Puerto Rico with three children or less to equitably access this benefit.

As vaccines gradually became available in early 2021, HF mobilized to ensure that all our communities had access to this life-saving medicine. The community health centers that serve Puerto Rico's most vulnerable residents — uninsured, indigent, rural and undocumented patients — did not initially receive federal funds to cover operational and ramp up costs during the critical vaccination roll-out phase. HF responded

Over \$2 million in new grants to 80 community organizations

by launching the VIDA (Vaccine Immunization Dosage Awareness) initiative in early January, helping four community health centers in Puerto Rico jumpstart their vaccination efforts, including community outreach and education, hiring needed personnel, technology upgrades, user-friendly scheduling systems, and most significantly, getting doses to tens of thousands of people.

A Success Story

One success story was our collaboration with the **Primary Health Services Center** in Patillas. Patillas is a rural municipality in the south of Puerto Rico, with few health services and more than 50 percent of the population living below the federal poverty level. When the vaccine availability was announced, the interest from the community was so great that at one



Salud Integral en la Montaña vaccination drive in Naranjito

moment more than 8,000 calls were registered causing the Center's communication system to collapse, preventing not only vaccine seekers but also those in need of other health services from reaching the Center. The limited capacity of the Center to manage such high-volume demand led their leadership to consider ceasing COVID-19 vaccine operations. Given our partnership, HF learned about their challenge



Lin-Manuel Miranda and Luz Towns-Miranda with Proyecto PATRIA and Caras con Causa in Cataño

and quickly provided a VIDA grant allowing them to build internal capacities and systems needed to manage and sustain their vaccination program, while they waited for the government funding to arrive. In their first six months of vaccine operations, the VIDA grant allowed them to manage more than 18,000 calls for vaccine appointments and administer nearly as many COVID-19 vaccines.

Responding to a Mental Health Crisis

Many community residents carried invisible scars from the loss of life, disruptions, and lingering daily effects of the hurricanes, earthquakes, and COVID pandemic. The uncertainty, fear, and recurring crises created deep emotional stress for thousands of people affecting their social interactions and physical and emotional health. Unfortunately, the limited number of mental health professionals on the island lacked the necessary capacity to meet the demand and magnitude of these stressors. In response, Hispanic Federation, with the support of Dr. Luz Towns-Miranda, collaborated with the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) to develop the University Project for Empowerment, Transformation, and Recovery (PATRIA), a first-of-its-kind evidence-based model of interdisciplinary training and service delivery for a post-disaster mental health response.

With more than \$2.2 million in funding from Hispanic Federation and additional philanthropic support from partners, PATRIA brought together 58 advanced-level graduate and doctoral students from the UPR's departments of psychology, rehabilitation counseling, and social work to receive specialized training. In a new model of field work, teams of trained students from various departments and under the supervision of licensed professionals partnered with 13 community-based organizations from across the archipelago. Collectively, they provided free mental health services on site, in non-traditional community spaces, at four university campuses, via telemedicine, and directly in the homes of individuals with health, mobility, and other access issues.

Through PATRIA, thousands of individuals, from children beginning at age five to the elderly, received direct services, including rehabilitation counseling, psychological evaluations, treatment plans, psychoeducational activities, and rehabilitation evaluation and service requests. Beginning in 2018, nearly 10,000 residents participated in psychoeducational workshops, and 3,000 therapeutic sessions were provided to 850 clients suffering severe emotional trauma. In addition, the 58 students who participated in PATRIA entered the professional sector better prepared to respond effectively to natural disasters. The experience of PATRIA also encouraged multiple community-based partners to permanently integrate or expand mental health services. Out of the PATRIA program, UPR developed two specialized curriculums for mental health professionals and human service providers, which they plan to integrate within academic offerings for future students and continuing education professionals, to build the long-term capacity of the local mental health sector to prepare and respond to natural disasters in the future.



Economic Development

Puerto Rico was already facing a decade-long economic recession and unpayable national debt. The last five years of successive disasters exacerbated the economic crisis and resulted in an estimated \$49.7 billion² in combined economic losses, pushed unemployment into the double digits, and increased economic inequality. The unresolved damage to fundamental infrastructure, such as water and electric systems, has made the economic recovery drag on as well. As a result, small businesses, the economic engine of much of Puerto Rico's economy, have experienced a challenging rollercoaster recovery that has left many struggling to survive.

Hispanic Federation understands that no recovery is complete without a strong economy to sustain it. For this reason, community-focused, multisector economic development and support for local small businesses are integrated into every aspect of our work. Examples can be found throughout this report and are a feature of the section below.

² \$43 billion (Hurricane Maria) [Hurricane Maria's economic impact on Puerto Rico in tens of billions \(usatoday.com\)](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2018/09/12/hurricane-maria-economic-impact-puerto-rico/1141117001/)
\$100 million (Earthquakes) [Estimado inicial establece \\$100 millones en pérdidas económicas tras terremoto \(metro.pr\)](https://www.metro.pr/estimado-inicial-establece-100-millones-en-perdidas-economicas-tras-terremoto/)
\$6.6 billion (COVID) [El impacto económico de COVID-19 en Puerto Rico ronda los \\$6,600 millones – AAFAP \(pr.gov\)](https://www.aafaf.org/impacto-economico-de-covid-19-en-puerto-rico-ronda-los-6600-millones/)

A Vehicle to Support Small Businesses

Following Hurricane Maria, HF became acutely aware of the losses and vulnerability of small businesses. They were defenseless against the catastrophic damage created by the hurricane and had little to no access to the disaster aid federal loan programs for businesses. Evaluating how to best support these entrepreneurs and next-generation models for climate resilient businesses, HF was excited about the opportunity to innovate by offering

a new concept that would bridge the need for resiliency and flexibility simultaneously. The PopTiendas Initiative emerged as a vehicle to help these small businesses and nonprofit organizations restart their work and revitalize economic recovery efforts for a crucial business sector. With the goal of boosting the entrepreneurial spirit in Puerto Rico, HF granted 30 PopTiendas to micro-entrepreneurs who lost businesses or wished to start a new business on the island.

With additional support from The Coca-Cola Company, Prudential Financial, the Ford Foundation, and other donors, HF PopTiendas provided these micro-entrepreneurs with self-sufficient, custom-built “pop-up” stores made from locally sourced steel containers with the capacity to operate “off the grid” and equipped with solar panels, a generator, a rainwater catchment system, water storage tank, ventilation systems, and customized decoration. Applicants selected for the project received additional business and entrepreneurial capacity building, technical assistance and support on permitting processes, siting, design, and operations of the PopTiendas systems. To date, this ongoing project has created over 65 jobs with more than \$1 million in additional leveraged investments in the local economy through local distributors, vendors, materials, and labor for production. With businesses ranging from coffee shops to eateries to outdoor recreation, the PopTiendas are thriving businesses stretching across all four corners of the island.

Fighting for Economic Equity and Justice

Our approach to economic development also aims to address the growing economic inequality within Puerto Rico and between the 50 states and the territory. Currently, Puerto Rico’s poverty rate is more than twice the poorest US state, and six in ten children live below the poverty level. With a median income hovering around \$20,000, the capital city of San Juan recently ranked as the city with the highest income inequality in the U.S. and its territories. Our work seeks to both address the immediate financial needs of vulnerable households but also to change the systems and conditions that have led to such disastrous outcomes.

Hispanic Federation has been a leader in Washington, DC advocating for equitable inclusion of Puerto Rico in the multitude of federal economic development programs. In addition, HF has fought for access to the full array of social safety net programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which have successfully lifted U.S. families out of poverty and yet are not equally available to residents of Puerto Rico.

In 2021, our advocacy contributed to a major win of Puerto Rico’s full inclusion in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) program. Through ARPA, Congress also permanently changed a policy that had unfairly excluded families in Puerto Rico with less than three children from benefiting from the Child Tax Credit and provided a one-time \$600 million match to the local Earned Income Tax Credit and a permanent \$200 million annual match.



*PopTiendas recipient,
Shaquille Sánchez,
in Río Grande*



Reclama Tu Dinero PR

The 2022 tax season in Puerto Rico was unprecedented. The full inclusion in the federal expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the local expanded Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) together represented an estimated \$2.6 billion transferred directly into the pockets of mostly low- and moderate-income residents. According to analysis by the nonprofit **Espacios Abiertos**, in 2022 over 466,000 people qualified for the local EITC, and 125,000 rose above the federal poverty level as a result. Similar analysis by the nonprofit **Instituto del Desarrollo de la Juventud (IDJ)** shows that through the expanded CTC, 97% of families (304,000) would now qualify compared to just 11 percent previously.

To ensure that this historic opportunity was not missed, Hispanic Federation partnered with IDJ and Espacios Abiertos, to form the Economic Security Alliance and launch the Reclama Tu Dinero PR campaign. With \$600,000 in funding from the Hispanic Federation and an additional \$1 million raised from national foundations, this ongoing campaign has two primary goals, 1) a massive awareness and education campaign to reach newly eligible individuals and orient them on how to receive these credits, and 2) build the capacity of a local network of nonprofit organizations to provide free tax assistance and filing services in under-resourced and rural communities to complement limited federal and local government services.

In a two-month campaign, which incorporated an additional seven funded nonprofit collaborators, we reached over 1 million individuals through mass media and thousands of private sector employees through a targeted education campaign. We also responded to more than 5,000 hotline calls, held more than 30 events impacting 23 municipalities, and directly supported more than 1,000 free tax filings for low-income residents. At one free filing event in Hormigueros, a participant who received filing assistance learned she would receive just over \$16,000 in her refund. We continue to work closely with the Federal and local government as we head into the second phase of the campaign in Fall 2022.

Big Ideas Challenge

In 2018, Hispanic Federation and Fundación Banco Popular launched the Big Ideas Challenge to spur multisector collaboration on innovative and visionary social impact projects to address long-term recovery. With \$1.4 million in prize money at stake, more than 70 multisector teams collaborated to design and propose big ideas. Nine semifinalists were selected to present to a panel of judges in October 2018 and three finalists chosen. Four semifinalists each received \$25,000 and one honorable mention received a \$100,000 prize to seed their ideas. The three finalists each received \$150,000 to pilot their ideas over six months, at which point they were re-evaluated by the judges panel. The first-place team, led by **Caras con Causa**, won \$600,000 to develop a Community Laboratory (LabComm) dedicated to environmental sciences as part of a wider strategy of sustainable community development that tackles pollution as well as frequent flooding in areas of Cataño and Guaynabo. The second-place team, led by **CMTAS Yauco**, won \$450,000 to pilot anaerobic biodigestors in three rural communities. The third-place team, led by the **Interamerican University of Barranquitas**, won \$350,000 to develop the Center for Agriculture Security and Sustainability focused on micropropagation. These finalists are also receiving customized mentoring and support from local and global experts as they implement their ideas.



Caras con Causa receives award at Fundación Banco Popular



SECTION TWO

A Powerful Network of Community-Based Nonprofits



Red por los Derechos de la Niñez y la Juventud ribbon cutting of Casa Ramón in Juncos

Hispanic Federation conducted a survey during August 2022 of a subset of its nonprofit grantees in Puerto Rico to provide a snapshot of their work, challenges, progress, and ongoing collaboration with HF following Hurricane Maria. Seventy-two organizations responded to the in-depth 36-question survey. The information shows how essential community-based nonprofits are to Puerto Rico’s recovery and development, and documents the impact of their work, the continuing importance of HF’s grantmaking, capacity-building, and other assistance, and the critical need for philanthropy to sustain and grow this sector through greater investments.

Overview of Puerto Rico’s Nonprofit Sector

The 72 organizations that responded to our survey reflect the diversity of the island’s nonprofit sector. They are in all parts of Puerto Rico and together serve all 78 municipalities. They range from all-volunteer groups to multi-site entities with more than 200 employees. Almost all are registered in Puerto Rico as nonprofits, and many have obtained a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in the U.S. The majority are small nonprofits and their focus ranges from social services, education, healthcare, and legal assistance to agricultural, fishing, renewable energy, and business assistance, as well as community organizing and advocacy.

Puerto Rican nonprofits are at a disadvantage compared to most U.S.-based nonprofits because of a much more limited philanthropic sector. While the number of philanthropic entities has increased in the past several years, Puerto Rico has 191 foundations and grantmaking organizations that, combined, employ 87 people, and have assets of \$210 million. In comparison, North Dakota, the state with the smallest philanthropic sector, and one with a quarter of the population of Puerto Rico, has 340 foundations and grantmaking organizations that together employ 157 people, and have assets of \$922 million.³

“The support of HF to organizations like ours has promoted the development of more capable and resilient nonprofits organizations.”

– Elizabeth Colón, Executive Director, Ponce Neighborhood Housing Services

³ <https://www.causeiq.com/directory/foundations-list/north-dakota-state/>.

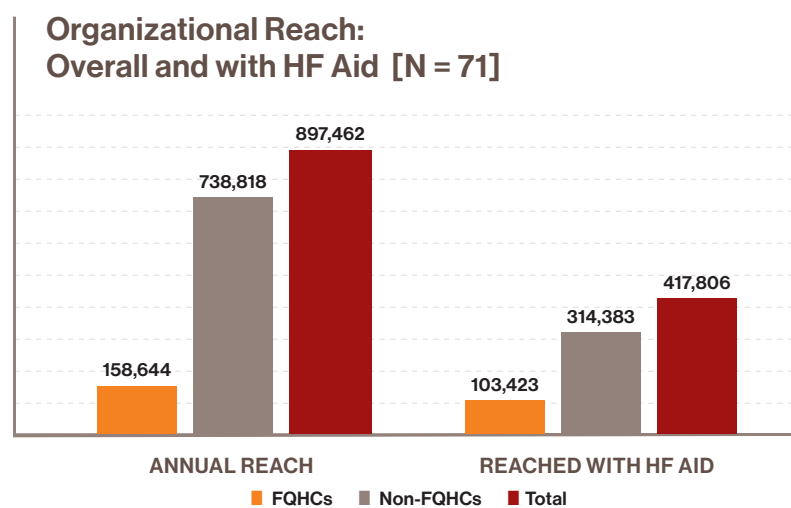


Despite being significantly undercapitalized and under-resourced, these organizations remain the heart and soul of communities across Puerto Rico. They are deeply embedded in low-income neighborhoods, providing the most vulnerable residents with food, shelter, and clothing, helping at-risk youth succeed academically, rural, and marginalized families obtain medical care and workers gain the skills they need to be more socially mobile. They also help communities that would otherwise be voiceless organize to advance equity and opportunities that improve everyone's quality of life. Equally important, they serve as economic engines and leadership incubators for our communities, employing thousands of local professionals and support staff: from social workers and community organizers to environmental program directors and health outreach workers. Understanding their importance — and protecting their sustainability — is more important today than ever.

Response, Reach and Impact

Despite the historical under-capitalization of Puerto Rico's third sector, it was Puerto Rican nonprofits that led the way in responding to the unrelenting disasters on the island over the past five years. From Hurricane Maria to the COVID-19 pandemic, nonprofits across the island stepped up to serve as the frontline service providers for affected communities. They provided indispensable social services for the elderly, at-risk children, people with chronic diseases, immigrants, low-income workers, survivors of crime and violence, and vulnerable families.

Organizations were asked how many people they reach annually and how many they reached with HF funds and other aid. This subset of HF grantees indicated that they had an overall reach of more than 400,000⁴ across all 78 Puerto Rican municipalities. Since some people may be assisted by more than one organization, these figures do not represent unduplicated individuals, but are nonetheless substantial. Most of our nonprofits expanded or initiated services to help meet growing and emerging needs. For example, over 60% of the organizations added or expanded emergency preparedness and response, social services, and educational services. Other services added by at least 30% of responding organizations included food security and nutrition, renewable energy, and social services.



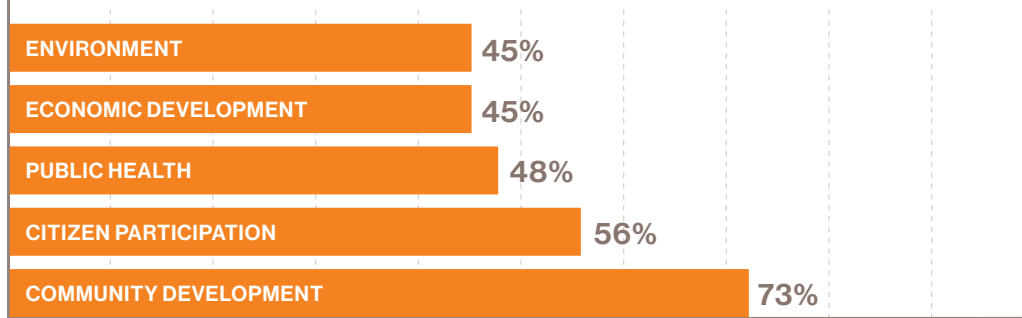
⁴ These figures exclude the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico, Inc., which alone reported an annual reach of 254,000. FQHC data are shown separately and indicate unduplicated clients for each healthcare provider. Reach is determined by adding the number of people each organization reported impacting annually or with HF funds.



Public Policy and Advocacy

Over 60% of the organizations indicated involvement in public policy and advocacy activities, and 30% began such activities in the past five years. They work on a very wide range of issues, most often community development, citizen participation, public health, economic development, and the environment, as shown in the figure. In addition, more than one-third advocate on civil rights, gender equity and the LGBTQ+ community, rights of children and young people, food safety, housing, and government transparency. The most frequent target for public policy work is the Puerto Rican legislature and public agencies (88%); a majority (59%) advocate at the municipal level, and 43% indicated federal policy work.

Most Frequently Reported Public Policy and Advocacy Topics [N = 44]



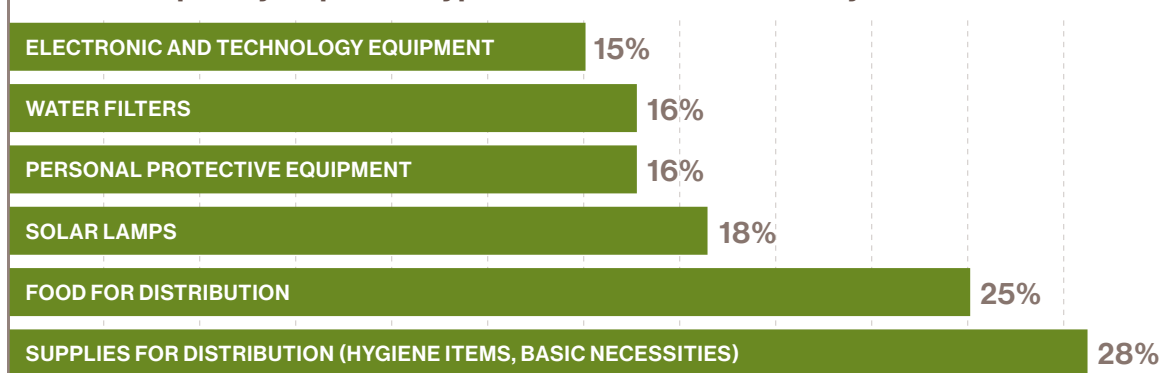
HF Grantmaking

All the 72 responding organizations received direct grant funding from the Hispanic Federation. Grants were provided to support emergency needs and long-term recovery and reconstruction projects, with an emphasis on sustainability, community development, renewal and self-sufficiency, and local collaboration and coordination. Nearly half of the organizations (34 of 72) reported receiving 3 or more grants from the Federation over the past five years, with 11% (8) receiving 5 grants or more.

HF Community Assistance

HF assistance was not limited to grants. Three-fourths of the organizations also reported receiving other direct community assistance. This aid ranged from hygiene supplies and food for distribution to solar lamps, water filters, cash cards for direct assistance, and generators. Most frequently received assistance is shown below.

Most Frequently Reported Types of HF Direct Community Aid [N = 72]

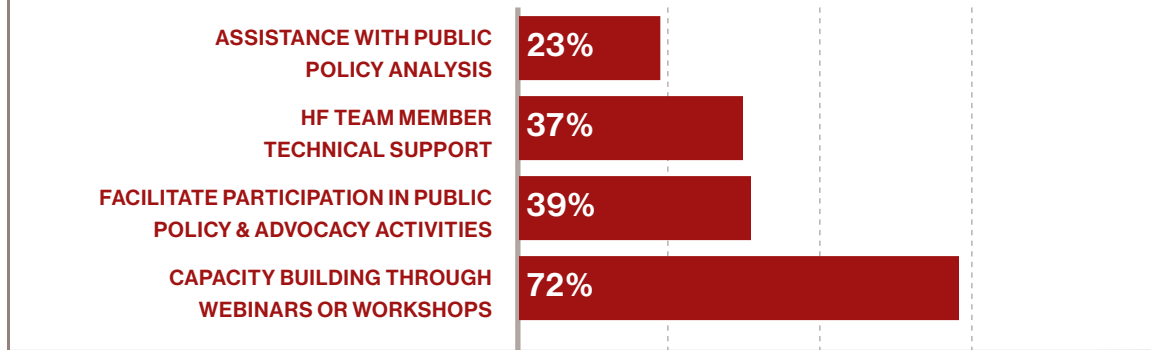




Capacity-Building Assistance

Sixty of the 72 organizations (85%) reported assistance from HF beyond funding, equipment, and materials. Most often this support involved capacity-building webinars or individualized assistance or help with public policy analysis and advocacy, including facilitating their involvement in public policy and advocacy activities through coalition-building, research, power mapping, legislative contacts and visits, and advocacy trainings. Some also reported help in accessing the media and in fundraising and proposal submission.

Most Frequently Reported Non-Grant Assistance from HF [N = 72]



Most Often Reported Impact of HF Grants [N = 72]



Importance of HF grants

Organizations were asked to identify the most important aspects of their HF grants. HF funding was seen as helping groups to extend or expand services and/or operations at a critical time, providing support before government aid arrived, coming before other grants, and offering greater flexibility than other funding. In addition, HF has continued to fund relief and recovery longer than other funding sources. Thirty-four or nearly half of the organizations strongly agreed or agreed that without HF support, they would have had to lay off staff and reduce services. Twenty-five percent (18 of 72) indicated that without HF support, the organization might not have survived.

Fifty percent of the organizations (36 of 72) indicated that HF grants helped them obtain grants from other funders that would not otherwise have supported them, and 43% (15 groups) indicated that they obtained more than \$50,000 in additional funding from such sources. Based on amounts, the 36 groups say they obtained well over \$1 million in additional funds collectively thanks to HF support.



When asked what they most value about their relationship with HF, organizations often mentioned the HF work team, the support provided “before, during, and after” an emergency, enhanced visibility with other organizations and federal agencies, the communication, and the access to learning and training opportunities. They also emphasized the sense of mutual respect. One described “the trust HF has in community groups to manage and execute large-scale projects” and HF’s “respect for the work and deference to the capabilities” of Puerto Rican nonprofits.

Looking Ahead

The survey asked about priority needs over the next three years for the organizations and their community regarding collaboration and fundraising. They identified a wide range of programmatic needs, from installation of solar systems and access to drinking water to food distribution and access to health and mental health services. They expressed concern about ensuring the continuity of programs and services. In addition, the nonprofit executives identified several organizational needs related to employee recruitment and retention, strengthening of the administrative area, and fundraising — diversifying their sources of funds, obtaining training in proposal writing and other aspects of fundraising, and obtaining flexible operating funds.

Many look to the Hispanic Federation for help in meeting these needs. When asked what they would like HF to do differently or better in the future, the most frequent responses included requests for ongoing and additional financial and non-financial support:

- Tools and templates for compliance
- Expanded workshops and training
- Networking opportunities between grantees and funder briefings
- More help in the search for other funds to support projects subsidized by HF

Puerto Rico’s nonprofit sector continues to strengthen itself through visionary leadership, expanded services and support from a growing number of philanthropic institutions in the U.S. However, the nonprofit sector in the island will require stronger and more sustainable engagement from grant-makers to continue to invest in new approaches and systems. With Puerto Rico at a critical tipping point for rebuilding and reenergizing itself, the time is now for our philanthropic institutions and leaders to act and help the island’s nonprofit sector accelerate its vital work to build more just and inclusive communities — and a brighter future for all Puerto Ricans.

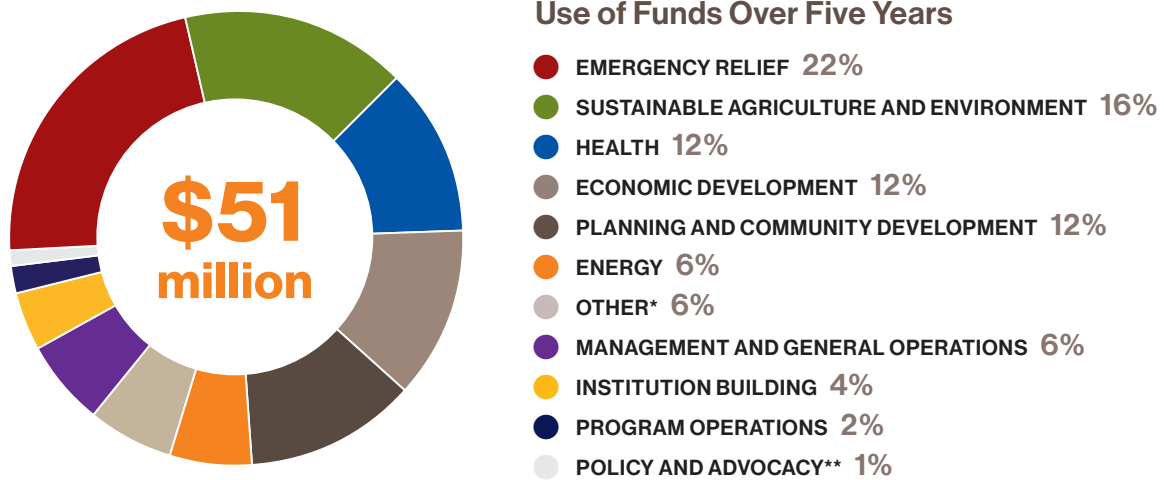
“Hispanic Federation has been instrumental in strengthening the third sector in Puerto Rico after Hurricanes Irma and Maria. At the island level it is an organization that amplifies the voices of the causes that concern us at the grassroots level... and their economic support is essential so that we can continue working for the Puerto Rico we dream of.”

– La Maraña

Use of Funds

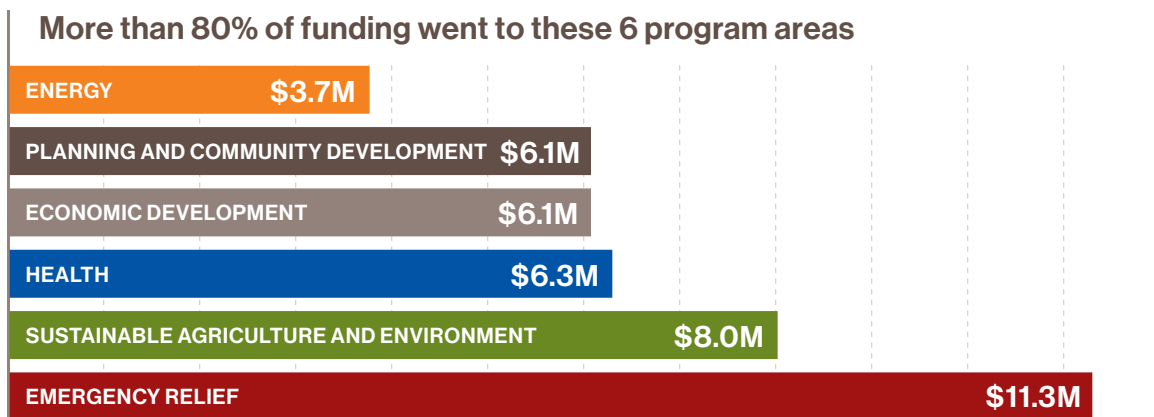
Hispanic Federation (HF) invested \$51 million to support Puerto Rican families and communities over the past five years, with 94 cents of every dollar going to support emergency relief and long-term recovery programs in the areas of environmental and agricultural sustainability, community planning and development, health, economic development, energy, nonprofit institution building and other services such as education, immigration, LGBTQ+ and gender equity, and arts and culture. As we highlight throughout this report, and as is reflected in the chart below, HF has focused its work on the archipelago on six key strategic areas essential to building a stronger and more resilient Puerto Rico. In fact, \$4 out of every \$5 dollars (81%) supported activities directly related to these critical program areas. The percentages represented in each category below are estimates based on the primary purpose of the funding, however most initiatives and grants impact multiple strategic areas.

94 cents of every dollar went to emergency relief and long-term recovery programs



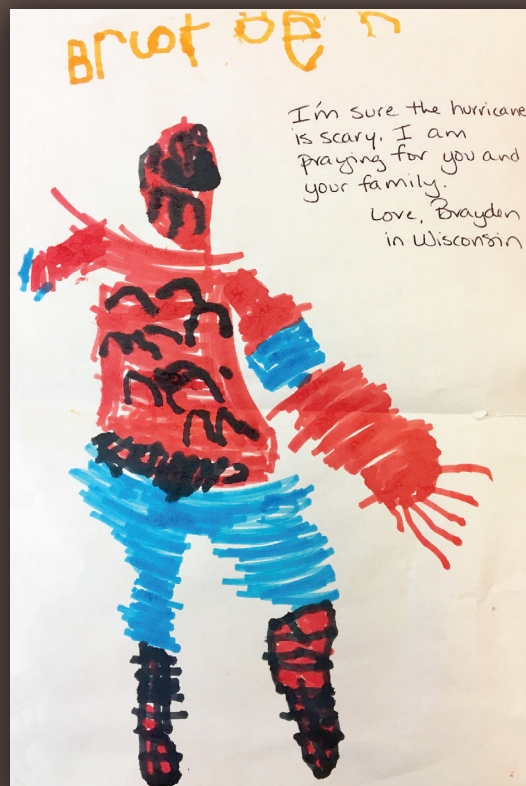
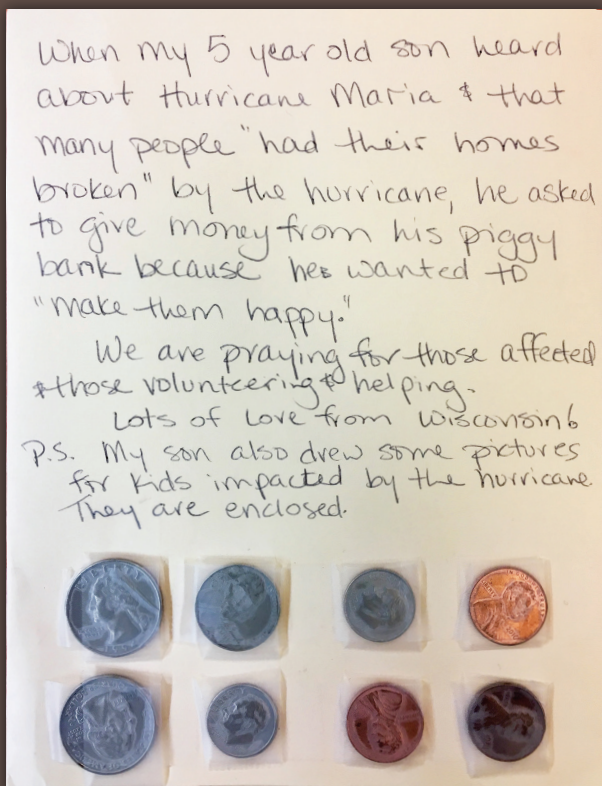
* Other includes Education, Arts and Culture, Immigration, Gender and LGBTQ+.

** These investments mainly reflect our work on Federal Policy and Advocacy. The majority of Local Policy and Advocacy is represented in the program sections to which they correspond.



Thank You to Our Supporters

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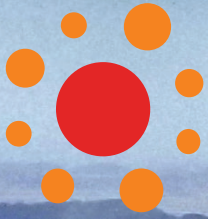
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