




AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

Summer 2022 Practicum

BRIEFING SLIDES

Puerto Rico Practicum Briefing Report

Prepared by:
AU Practicum Team
For:
Equally American
Summer 2022



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FABRICAS CULTURALES
INSTITUTO DE CULTURA
PUERTO RIQUEÑA



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Puerto Rico: Seeking
UNESCO Recognition
of
la Bomba

Alonso Escobar, Andrew Rahme,
and Paul Simpson

SCHOOL of
INTERNATIONAL
SERVICE

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The background of the slide features two American flags on white poles against a clear, light blue sky. The flag on the left is the modern 50-star American flag, and the flag on the right is the 13-star Betsy Ross flag. The title 'Equally American' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Equally American

Lacey Lattin

Joe Martin

Alexandra Campos

Randi Doan



Terms of Reference

- **In what ways is Puerto Rico discriminated against by the federal government? How and why are Puerto Ricans treated like second-class Citizens?**
- **What is the significance of Puerto Ricans being ineligible for benefits like SSI and SNAP?**
- **How have these policies affected life for Puerto Ricans on the island (those in need of these benefits but are unable to receive them)?**
- **How does this discriminatory treatment affect U.S. citizens on the mainland?**
- **Is it in the U.S. national interest that federal benefits become more inclusive to U.S. territories and how so?**

Policy and Background Info



Insular Cases: the Constitution "did not apply in full"

Territories Clause: Congress has sole jurisdiction over disposing of and making rules and regulations regarding U.S. Territories

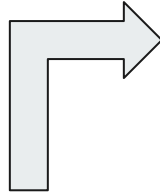
Vaello Madero vs U.S.: the Constitution does not require Congress to extend SSI benefits to residents of Puerto Rico

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): denied to Puerto Rico, rooted in Territories Clause

AABD: Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/NAP): Administrative funding vs fixed block grants

Key Findings



Food insecurity/Poverty

- One-third of the adult residents of Puerto Rico experienced food insecurity (2018).

Inability to Have Basic Needs

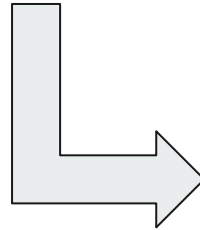
- Medicine
- Medical Equipment
 - 58% more expensive in Puerto Rico
- Other Necessities (Diapers, Bandages, Etc.)

Forced Displacement

- Have no other choice but to leave their homes to survive.
- Out migration increased by more than one third in 2018, continues to increase.

Mental Health Issues

- 253 Puerto Ricans completed suicide, in 2018.
- 29% increase in cases reported to Puerto Rico's Department of Health compared to 2017.



Loss Of Dignity

-Feeling like a second class citizen

Putting A Human Face On The Issue

“The Issue here is about basic human rights and dignity”- Charlotte , Hispanic Federation

“Frustrante, somos ciudadanos americanos, podemos ir a la guerra, somos uno de los más que consumimos productos americanos, todo lo traemos de allá, pero entonces esos beneficios adicionales no nos enteramos, o no los tenemos.”

-Laura Diaz

“I am 46 years old and arrived at California November 17, 2017 and am counting the days and minutes until I return ... (to Puerto Rico).”

-Carlos Rivera

“My friends and I speak about what to do when we get older”... “if we should retire in Florida together for benefits, but we don’t actually want to leave the island” - Laura Delgado

“I am worried she (mother) may become depressed after going back to the States and she leaves family, friends, and other acquaintances behind. Her home has a large front porch with people passing by all day, she will lose that when she returns with me to my house” -Paul Stearns (about his mother)



Carlos Rivera

- Raised in Morovis, Puerto Rico, and relocated to California in order to receive SSI benefits
- Would never have left his home, only option was to relocate

Beatriz Casero

- Mother previously lived in Florida and received benefits, but relocated back to the island and lost them
- “Just an address is not an excuse to not get benefits”

Laura Delgado

- Mom would qualify if she lived on the mainland
- SSI benefits would assist with medical payments and basic necessities



Ivette Chardon

- “Unfair that we pay into SS but receive none of the SSI benefits”
- “I am a very proud U.S. Citizens but I feel like a 2nd class citizen living under colonialism in the 21st century.”

Aurelis Aponte

- “Nunca en mi vida me imaginé que tendría que abandonar mi querido Puerto Rico” (El Nuevo Dia).
- “Pero mi vida y la de mi bebé dependían de eso” (El Nuevo Dia).
- Had to relocate in order to pay for daughter’s treatment



Data Support Anecdotes

Disparities of Federal versus PR Benefits:

Monthly: \$841 (SSI) vs \$75 (AABD)

Puerto Ricans with Disabilities: 22%

United States: 26%

Table 4.1: SSI/AABD Comparison of SSI/AABD Benefits of Puerto Ricans Living in the States Versus Puerto Rico

	Puerto Ricans living in the states	Puerto Rican residents living on the island
Total Households	1,873,440	1,192,654
SSI/AABD Households	215,445	37,000
Mean Yearly Income	\$9040	\$900

Data Support Anecdotes

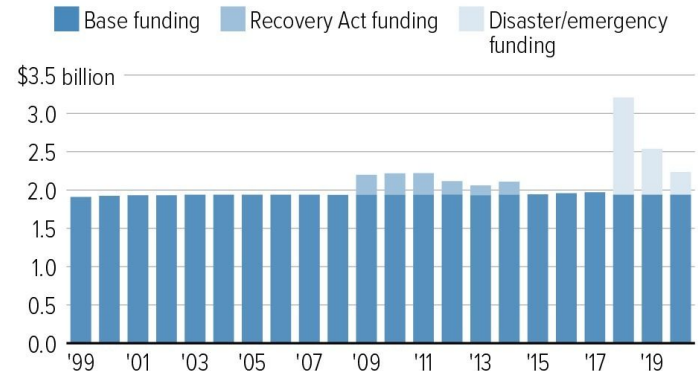
Qualify for NAP:

Households of 2 and under: Resources cannot exceed \$2,000 (savings accounts, bank accounts, etc.)

Households of over 2: Resources cannot exceed \$3,000 (savings accounts, bank accounts, etc.) while being a part of a household with a person aged 60 or older or totally disabled

Base NAP Funding Flat in Recent Decades

Puerto Rico's Nutrition Assistance Program funding by fiscal year



Notes: Adjusted for food inflation using the Agriculture Department's Thrifty Food Plans from June 1998 to June 2019. In fiscal years 2009-2014, NAP received supplemental funding through the 2009 Recovery Act. Congress authorized additional funding following hurricanes Irma and Maria in fall of 2017 totaling \$1.27 billion, spent over fiscal years 2018 and 2019, and an additional \$600 million in disaster funding for NAP in 2019, spent over fiscal years 2019 and 2020. Congress also authorized roughly \$297 million in funding to address the COVID-19 crisis. Source: Food and Nutrition Service/Nutrition Assistance Program reported data



FÁBRICAS CULTURALES

INSTITUTO de CULTURA
PUERTORRIQUEÑA

By: Sumi Lee, Jessica
Marques, Peter Riess



Scope of Project

Conduct research, analysis, and recommendations on the successes of the Fábricas Culturales program and what can be improved in future programs

Summary

The response from the participants of the Fábricas Culturales program alumni was overwhelmingly positive, albeit with some calls for improvements

Despite significant challenges (budget cuts, pandemic restrictions, and natural disasters) the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (ICP) successfully implemented a program that provides useful entrepreneurial information to artists; can be replicated and expanded to other districts & municipalities

Interviews were conducted with (3) (ICP) staff members, a Universidad del Sagrado Corazón Program Director, (1) Guayacán staff member, and (4) alumni of the Fábricas Culturales programs

Successes - Structure

- Well-structured workshops
 - Participants: learned new skills, concepts, and terms (business fundamentals)
 - Instructors: well-prepared and knowledgeable in their field
 - Diversity of topics offered: performing art, visual art, digital design, craftwork, and music

Successes - Participation

- High participation
 - Course material, curriculum and professors were excellent
 - Classes and homework were very helpful
 - Penalties encourage students to stay for the whole course

Successes - Value Added

- Provided new opportunities
 - Entrepreneurial skills / businesses expansion
 - Ripple effect to the community
 - - to share best practices with the community
 - Opportunity to bridge into Guayacán for high performers

Successes - Visibility

- Attractive Reputation
 - Strong social media following / presence
 - Constant email distribution / newsletters

Areas of Improvement - Logistics

- Logistical viability of attending workshops
 - Travel time to San Juan - displacement and significant inconvenience for some
 - 2+ hours to travel
 - High gasoline prices, subpar infrastructure, safety concerns
 - Limited transportation options for some
 - Online access - lack of technological comfort/infrastructure for elderly and those from lower socioeconomic status

Areas of Improvement - Opportunity Costs

- Attendance in Program
 - Lost time selling/producing/promoting
 - Expensive district - even locals can't afford lodging
 - Extensive time commitment for some - (2 hours nightly, twice a week for 7 weeks) plus travel time

Areas of Improvement - External Resources

- Lack of sufficient resources for follow-up assistance
 - Pitch day but no funding/further engagement
 - Opportunity cost to participate - pre-certification and affiliation process required
 - Goals not clear to some participants (i.e. next steps and future support)
 - Not enough private sector partners to maximize funding opportunities which could augment resource challenges

Ways to Increase Impact - Internal Resources

- Value-added varied according to the participant
 - Limited staff to assist older demographics with administrative tasks (paperwork, IT, etc.)
 - Limited opportunities for further development upon completion of the program
 - Inadequate time for meaningful networking - tight schedule
 - Program participant's difficulty in conveying knowledge learned to others who did not participate in the workshop
 - Mixed results due to varying levels of follow-up

Summary of Findings

Success was varied depending on whether the participant was selected to advance to the next round (Guayacán enterprise) for further project development

Once “fast tracked,” participants selected received additional resources to include funding, training, and mentoring to enable project success (1-2k grant and 7 month mentoring process)

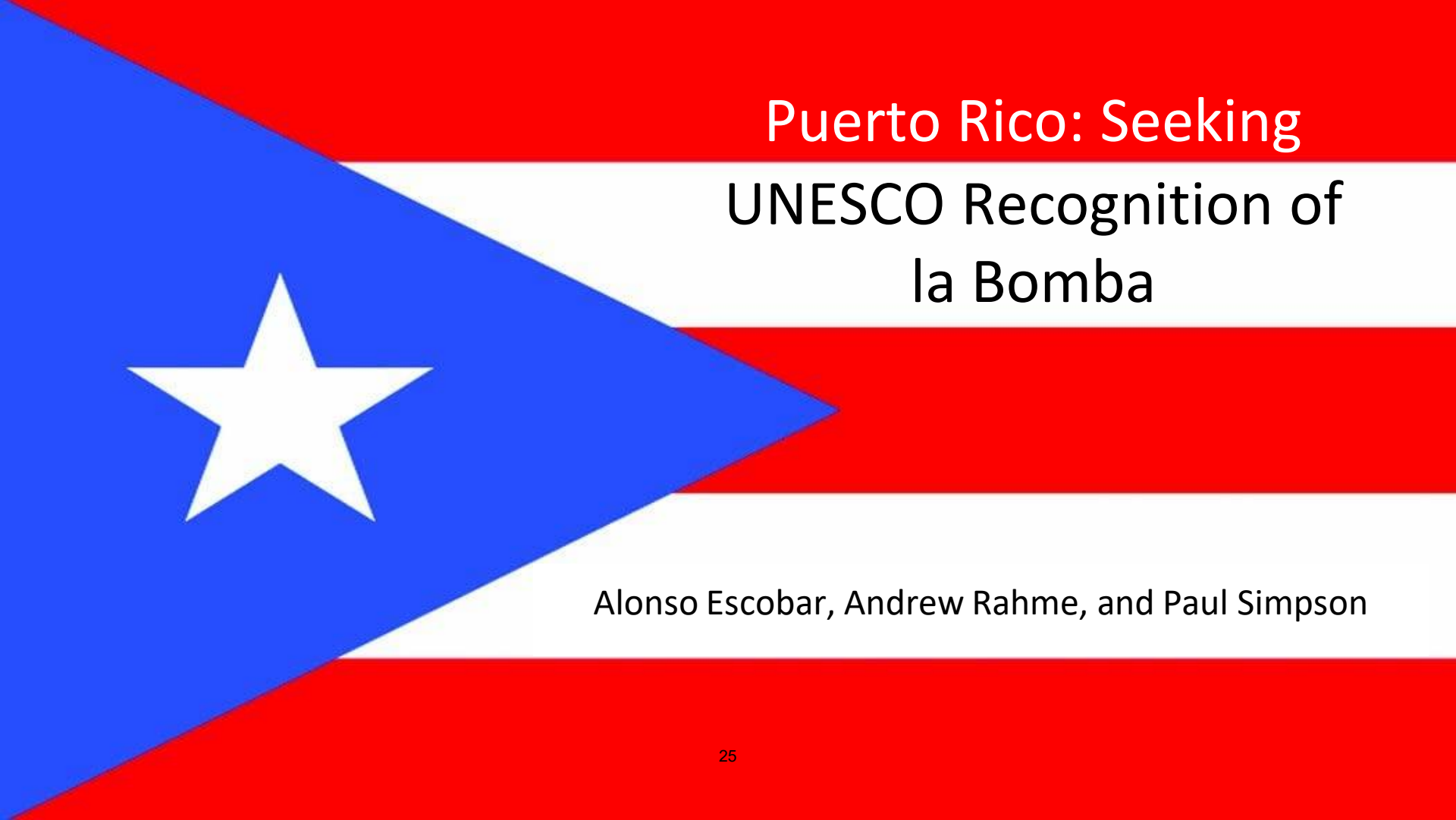
Alternatively, participants who were not selected found the program useful but desired additional resources similar to those provided by the Guayacán. Moreover, the value of their return on investment (opportunity cost) varied according to participation in the next stage.

Recommendations

- To assist with the varying levels of previous knowledge base and preparation of participants, separate the courses into varying levels of expertise: beginner, intermediate, and advanced according to their needs to ensure maximization of learning.
- To ease transportation difficulties, expand the fábricas to the other municipalities outside of Old San Juan
- To establish clear expectations regarding follow-up, provide participants a factsheet with clearly set expectations- prior to enrollment - outlining the scope and resources offered

Recommendations

- To ensure additional administrative and technical assistance resources for fábricas participants, and later graduates, enlist university interns who could provide these services to artists (ex. Sagrado Corazón project)
- To enable artists to communicate among themselves after the fábricas, create a platform for them to connect/collaborate after participation
 - Alumni program
- To maximize long-term and potentially larger funding opportunities, develop a comprehensive sponsorship package when soliciting new or existing partners

The background of the slide is the flag of Puerto Rico, which consists of three horizontal stripes of red, white, and red, with a blue triangle on the left side containing a white five-pointed star.

Puerto Rico: Seeking UNESCO Recognition of la Bomba

Alonso Escobar, Andrew Rahme, and Paul Simpson

KEY QUESTIONS

- Why hasn't UNESCO recognized Puerto Rico's intangible cultural property, and what can be done to overcome the obstacles to recognition?
- What precedents exist that could allow for Puerto Rico to gain recognition for its own cultural property?
- In what ways can community engagement change UNESCO's position? Is there a potential role for Washington to become an advocate for Puerto Rican recognition?
- How can the international narrative, including rallying Latin America's and other countries' support, be shifted to recognize Puerto Rico's cultural sovereignty?



Obstacles

- Popular acceptance not yet universal, despite great progress
- US membership problems
- Technical work in need
- Lack of diplomatic strategy

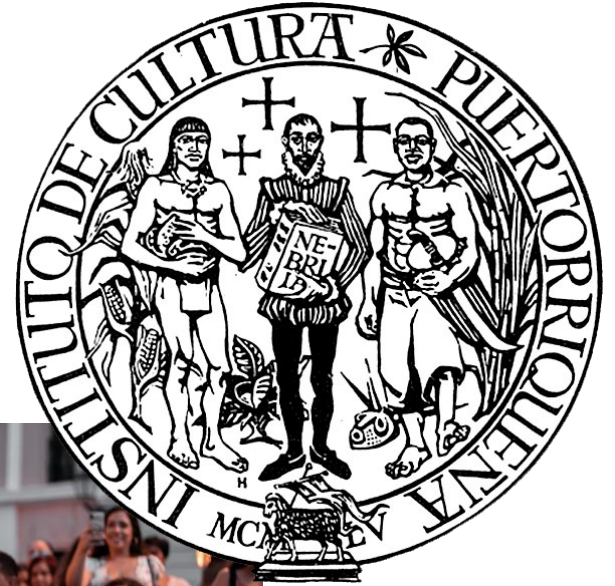


ACTION PLAN

- Puerto Rico
- Mainland
- International

PUERTO RICO

- Creating partnerships with academia and experts to provide technical support
- Continue efforts to expose population to la Bomba and establish a common identity of la Bomba
- Further organizing to put pressure on Governor to apply for associate membership of UNESCO



MAINLAND

- S.3075 - Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2022
 - Reach out to cultural foundations and diaspora to encourage the passage of the amendment of the appropriations bill
- Work with NEA for recognition
- Mobilize diaspora and other allies to put pressure on US government to support UNESCO associate membership
- Encourage Resident Commissioner to introduce a congressional resolution that states la Bomba as Puerto Rican tradition



**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT**
for the **ARTS**



**Mellon
Foundation**

INTERNATIONAL

- Work with organizations to further promote Puerto Rican cultural sovereignty and UNESCO recognition
- Support ICOMOS in negotiating for National Committee
- Encourage IFACCA to help push for international recognition
 - Rally the Americas regional group for support in cause
 - 2023 - 9th World Summit in Stockholm



CONCLUSION

- Puerto Rico: Activities to promote continued awareness, and unifying la Bomba to influence governor and diaspora
- Mainland: Coordinate with resources in the mainland to motivate passage of appropriations bill to enable membership to UNESCO via US or as associate member
- International: Collaboration (ICOMOS and UNITWIN) to provide technical support, Use IFACCA as the mechanism for international diplomacy including a joint statement to ask for recognition of Puerto Rican cultural sovereignty

