



IMPACT REPORT

2020-2022

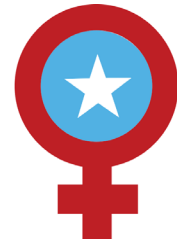


Advancing the movement for gender and racial justice in Puerto Rico

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MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS



Dear Friends,

These are challenging times for gender justice. From recent Supreme Court decisions to the emerging anti-feminist tactics of Puerto Rico's fundamentalist political and religious leaders, we are seeing concerted opposition to the idea of a world of equitable opportunity.

The Puerto Rico Women's Foundation (PRWF) was founded in New York City in the fall of 2019 by a group of women from Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican diaspora as the first philanthropic entity explicitly dedicated to promoting the safety, health, reproductive autonomy, economic security, and leadership of Puerto Rico's women, girls, and gender-fluid individuals.

We opened our doors in Puerto Rico in March of 2020—in the face of a series of earthquakes and a global pandemic—and swiftly sprang into action. We channeled resources to the women-led recovery efforts being launched across our archipelago. We built a board of formidable Puerto Rican women leaders from Puerto Rico and New York. We obtained the support of individual donors and funders, adopted the core practices of feminist philanthropy, and crafted a fundraising strategy designed to both strengthen our operations and educate the broader philanthropic sector about our gender-justice-centered approach.

Our efforts currently support an array of critical programs—from anti-violence efforts to women's entrepreneurial training to comprehensive pregnancy and childbirth care to gender-informed leadership training. We are promoting the sustainability of a solid cadre of grass-roots providers and building a robust coalition of allied funders, advocates, academic and community leaders, and policy makers.

We could never have achieved these impressive results without the vision of our board, the dedication of our staff, and the generous resources and encouragement of our donors and funders. We are deeply grateful to you all.

The backlash against feminist activism does not discourage us. We view it as evidence that we are seen as a force to be reckoned with. We hope you will find inspiration in the impressive progress documented in this report and that you will continue lending us the incomparable benefit of your support.

Sincerely,

Elba Montalvo
Co-Chair

Sara Benitez
Co-Chair



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Colegas,

As I reflect on the Puerto Rico Women's Foundation (PRWF)'s achievements over the past two years, I am simultaneously filled with pride and with a sense of urgency about how much remains to be done.

PRWF's long-term mission to achieve gender justice of necessity requires diverse strategies—from strengthening the programmatic work of community-based, women-led partner organizations to building those organizations' overall capacities to forging connections among the providers, advocates, community leaders, donors, philanthropic leaders, and policy makers who will help us carry that mission forward.

In a similar fashion, gauging the impact of our efforts requires multiple approaches. Some outcomes are easily quantified and conveyed: numbers of women gaining economic security; numbers of organizations reaching financial sustainability. Others require a more descriptive treatment: the benefits to a family of a mother launching a successful business; the growth of philanthropic interest in gender-justice-centered grantmaking. Some can only be expressed as dreams: a Puerto Rican economy moving toward greater independence through the efforts of empowered women farmers.

As you page through this report—reviewing statistics on numbers served, organizations strengthened, dollars raised; reading about nimble women leaders, resilient communities, generous donors—we hope you will gain a better understanding of what we do, and of how and why we do it. We hope you will see inspiring evidence of the progress we are making toward realizing our ambitious mission.

Despite the anti-gender campaigns of recent months, we remain firmly committed to our goals and to an approach that is producing significant multiplier effects. We take heart from reviewing what we have accomplished thus far—and from witnessing the unflagging courage, generosity, and determination of our partners and supporters. We remain passionately committed to working with you.

Abrazo solidario,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Verónica Colón Rosario". The signature is stylized, with a large, flowing "V" and "R".

Verónica Colón Rosario
Executive Director

SUPPORTING THE BEDROCK: THE MULTIPLIER EFFECTS OF A WOMEN-CENTERED APPROACH

The women of Puerto Rico are overwhelmingly the sole caregivers—and generally the main economic providers—for their households. They are consistently the first responders in times of disaster. They provide the backbone for Puerto Rico's retail and service sectors—filling the low-paid essential jobs without which neither society nor the overall economy could function.

Nonetheless, despite their pivotal roles, Puerto Rico's women all too often live with acute economic insecurity, inadequate health care, the constant threat of violence, and inadequate—or even detrimental—reproductive services. They have higher rates of poverty than women in the poorest areas of the United States and among the highest rates of caesarian sections in the Western hemisphere. The degree of gender-based physical and sexual abuse in Puerto Rico has become so alarming that the government has declared a state of emergency for two years in a row.



Historically, the only solid, reliable providers of assistance and advocacy for Puerto Rico's women, girls, and gender-fluid individuals have been grass-roots, women-led community organizations. The only consistent fuel for those organizations' operations has been volunteer labor. Providers led by and focusing on women's progress and challenges remain almost completely off the radar screen for the philanthropic and public sectors. Globally, they receive less than 2% of all foundation dollars.

THE PUERTO RICO WOMEN'S FOUNDATION WAS ESTABLISHED TO CHANGE ALL THAT.

Since our launch, our efforts have fueled the expansion of women-centered entrepreneurial ventures; helped sustain safe shelter and guidance for hundreds of women and gender-fluid individuals fleeing violence; concretely increased access to care for hundreds of pregnant and parenting women; and made vital medical supplies and food available to communities in which natural disasters destroyed businesses and roads. The PRWF has also supported research, training and organizing efforts that are strengthening the cadre of women leaders working to promote gender-equitable policies, practices, and protections.

Perhaps most impressively, our work reveals the powerful ripple effects of a gender-justice approach. It is showing that supporting women not only benefits those women, but also the families that depend on them, the communities in which they live and work, and Puerto Rico as a whole.



Photo: Marilyn Rosa, Fresas y Uvas Rose Farm
Credit: Fundación Comunitaria de Puerto Rico/Ana María Abruña

HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF THE **WOMEN'S SMALL** **FARMING MOVEMENT**

Over the past half century, a range of policies rooted in Puerto Rico's colonial status have decimated what was once a flourishing and diverse agricultural sector. Currently about 80% of the food products consumed on the archipelago are imported. Over-priced, over-processed, over-packaged and often nutritionally-empty, those products deplete residents' food budgets, diminish health, and pollute the environment.

Women across Puerto Rico's rural areas have always maintained gardens and pocket-sized farms that increase their families' access to healthy food. This practice, however, has not typically expanded those families' earned incomes, created further employment opportunities, produced nutritional gains for the community at large, or boosted Puerto Rico's overall economic independence. Nor has it historically attracted outside support. Whatever limited financial stimulation the government has directed toward agriculture has almost exclusively benefited larger-scale farms run by men.

A few years ago, four small women-led groups began forging a more dynamic model for women's farming efforts. They applied to PRWF for the seed money to parlay their vision into a full-scale and sustainable agricultural movement involving communal purchase of supplies and equipment, seminars on effective agricultural and marketing approaches, increased access to prime locations for selling produce, nutritional education workshops, and forums through which women farmers can continue sharing ideas and resources. The PRWF provided the requested grant, and then increased the impact of that grant with additional funding from the Banco Popular Foundation.

Early results are greatly encouraging. Participating women farmers are creating flourishing bee-keeping and organic meat businesses. They are promoting ecologically-sound agricultural practices. They have installed solar energy systems that are freeing them from dependence on an unpredictable energy grid. They are bringing hundreds of pounds of new fresh, nutritious produce into areas that face food insecurity and creating community centers that support local artisans and smaller gardening efforts. The project has significantly boosted the economic security of its participants and improved the nutritional options available to their community residents. Ultimately, it is laying a viable, homegrown path toward increasing Puerto Rico's agricultural economic independence.

80%

Puerto Rico imports about 80% of all its food, producing just 20% of what's consumed on the island.

40%

A George Washington University survey showed that around 40% of Puerto Ricans reported food insecurity in 2020.

11%

By 2018, 11% of the total people working in agriculture in Puerto Rico were women.

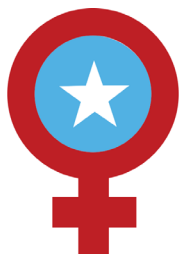


28
ORGANIZATIONS

\$313,850
AWARDED

(Before Hurricane Fiona)

50% OF TOTAL GRANTMAKING WENT
TO ORGANIZATIONS NEEDING SUPPORT
DURING THE FIRST MONTHS OF COVID-19



2020-2022 GRANTEES

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY

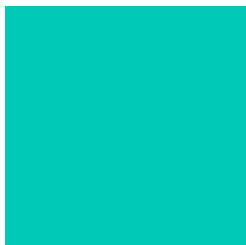
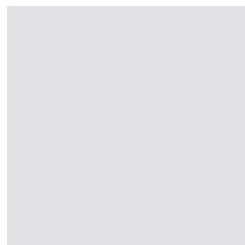
Asociación Agro-Mujer de P.R., Inc's efforts to support women farmers' micro-enterprise projects through equipment sharing, workshops, and training. (2020-2021; 2021-2022)

Asociación de Mujeres Agroempresarias de Puerto Rico's work supporting women farmers' micro-enterprise projects through resource-sharing, networking, workshops and training. (2020-2021; 2021-2022)

Comedores Sociales's work to provide resources and information to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. (2020-2021 | COVID-19 Response)

La Colmena Cimarrona's efforts to promote agro-ecology and beekeeping among women farmers on the island of Vieques through promulgation of agro-ecological principles and encouragement of cooperation among women farmers. (2020-2021; 2021-2022)

Mujeres de Islas, Culebra's work helping women launch entrepreneurial projects promoting individual and community socio-economic development on the island of Culebra. (2020-2021; 2021-2022)



GENDER AND RACIAL JUSTICE

Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses' initiatives to promote the participation and empowerment of youth feminist leadership in the island municipality of Vieques. (2022-2023)

Caderamen's programs supporting reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health supports to women and children during pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period, and in the months of early childhood development. (2020-2021 | Earthquake Response)

Casa Juana Colón's efforts offering guidance and support to help women, girls, and gender-fluid individuals to heal and rebuild their lives and sense of self after experiencing abuse. (2020-2021 | COVID-19 Response; 2022-2023)

Casa Pensamiento de Mujer del Centro, Inc.'s programs offering specialized counseling and services to women, men and LGBTTIQAP+ individuals who have experienced violence, sexual assault, or rape. (2020-2021 | COVID-19 Response)

Centro de la Mujer Dominicana, Inc.'s efforts to provide immigrant women in Puerto Rico (generally domestic violence survivors fleeing the Dominican Republic) with social, legal and educational supports. (2020-2021 | COVID-19 Response; 2021-2022)

Colectivo Educativo por la Perspectiva de Género's programs offering gender-justice-informed tutoring and social supports to women and LGBTTIQ+ individuals. (2020-2021 | COVID-19 Response)

Colectivo Ilé's efforts to organize and educate those who seek to address the economic, psychological, and social effects of racism and colonialism on the women, girls, and gender-fluid individuals of Puerto Rico. (2020-2021 | COVID-19 Response)





Coordinadora Paz Para la Mujer (CPM)'s efforts to organize and sustain a coalition of emergency shelters, service organizations, universities, feminists, and human right activists providing survivors of violence with direct services, advocating for increased protections, and monitoring the government's recent efforts to eradicate gender-based violence. (2020-2021 | COVID-19 Response | Earthquakes)

House of Grace's efforts enabling a collective of primarily black trans, female, or nonbinary Puerto Ricans to build community, promote healing and create healthy family ties through art and cultural projects. (2020-2021 | Earthquakes)

Impacto Juventud's work with the west coast's youth for the development of a program on a gender-centered education curriculum for community-based programs. (2022-2023)

Inter Mujeres Puerto Rico's law-school-based efforts to promote knowledge about the rights of women and girls and increase public awareness about gender discrimination. (2020-2021 | Earthquakes)

La Sombrilla Cuir's work to create safe spaces and provide support for the LGBTTIQAP+ community in Puerto Rico. (2022-2023)

Mujer Eres Especial's work to provide health and emotional support and legal services to women experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault. (2020-2021 | COVID-19)

Mujeres Ayudando a Madres's projects providing education and support around reproductive functions, pregnancy, childbirth, the post-partum period, nursing, and child rearing. (2020-2021 | COVID-19)

Observatorio de Equidad de Género's work evaluating, analyzing, and promoting policy recommendations related to gender equity—and overseeing the government response to Puerto Rico's crisis of gender violence. (2020-2021)

Proyecto Matria's programs providing housing alternatives, education, psychosocial supports, guidance and micro-credit services to women and gender-fluid individuals fleeing violence. (2020-2021 | COVID-19)

Red Nacional de Albergues de Violencia de Género's projects providing shelters for survivors of gender-based violence and strengthening the long-term viability of shelters. (2021; 2022)

SIEMPREVIVAS RUM's work to provide support and services to women victims of gender-based violence in the west coast. (2022-2023)

Taller Salud's work promoting women's access to a holistic range of health, educational, economic development, racial justice and anti-violence services. (2020-2021 | Earthquakes)

TEAM 821's work helping the town of Guánica continue recovering from the massive damage imposed by the earthquakes of January 2020. (2020-2021 | Earthquakes)

Todas PR's investigative journalism work to represent the activism of the feminist movement and the LGBTTQIA+ communities in Puerto Rico. (2022-2023)

Vai Ventura's projects promoting mental health and healing practices among LGBTQPIA+ people and allies in the western area of Puerto Rico. (2020-2021 | Earthquakes)



Our grants offer a combination of emergency, programmatic and capacity-building assistance—including general operating support grants in acknowledgement of the struggles that these organizations face when they try to cover basic operational functions on invariably shoestring budgets.



LA MAREA VERDE POR EL DERECHO A DECIDIR

On May 28th, 2022, the International Day of Action for Women's Health, several activist organizations joined efforts for a march to protect reproductive rights as an essential healthcare service in Puerto Rico.

We joined them and supported their efforts with a grant for the event.

Building a Coalition:

The Multiplier Effects of a

Feminist Philanthropic Approach

A core tenet of feminist philanthropy is that the relationship between funders and grantees needs to be one of partnership and mutual respect: that grantees should be viewed as the key experts on how best to carry out projects in their communities and that funder support should be holistic and accessible. The Puerto Rico Women's Foundation was specifically crafted to promote those practices. In particular, we:

- Make our application processes simple and brief. Grass-roots organizations do not have the resources to jump through hoops.
- Provide general operating as well as programmatic grants. The organizations with which we work often operate entirely on volunteer labor. In some cases, even the Executive Director is a volunteer. They need the resources to hire the necessary core staff, to pay that staff living wages, and to cover other basic costs such as rent and supplies.
- Open doors to other funding sources. Grass-roots organizations rarely have connections to the broader philanthropic world.
- Offer capacity-building assistance in organizational areas (fundraising, fiscal management, applying for a 501-c-3) going beyond immediate project operations.
- Make grant renewal possible. We know that achieving results takes time.
- Encourage networking among grantees, for mutual support and potential collaborations.
- Keep lines of communication open for questions, guidance, or additional support. Unforeseen challenges are normal and are best resolved early and cooperatively.

In Spanish, we call practices like ours: “acompañamiento.” The English cognate (accompaniment) doesn't convey quite the same thing, but the underlying implication of helping someone arrive successfully at a destination is clear.

Since our launch, we have seen strong and growing evidence of the vitality and effectiveness of our “acompañamiento” approach. For—just as holistically supporting women's strengths produces significant ripple effects for the families and communities that depend on them—so building a network of powerful, sustainable, women-led organizations ensures that the mission of gender justice will gather the collective strength required for long-term impact and success.

Harnessing the Power of Partner Sustainability

Casa Juana Colón—an anti-violence organization operating in the low-income municipality of Comerío, Puerto Rico—was launched eighteen years ago to support women experiencing gender violence. Its core work involves training local volunteers to provide survivors with emotional support and to help them navigate the legal and employment barriers that can complicate the pursuit of safety and independence.

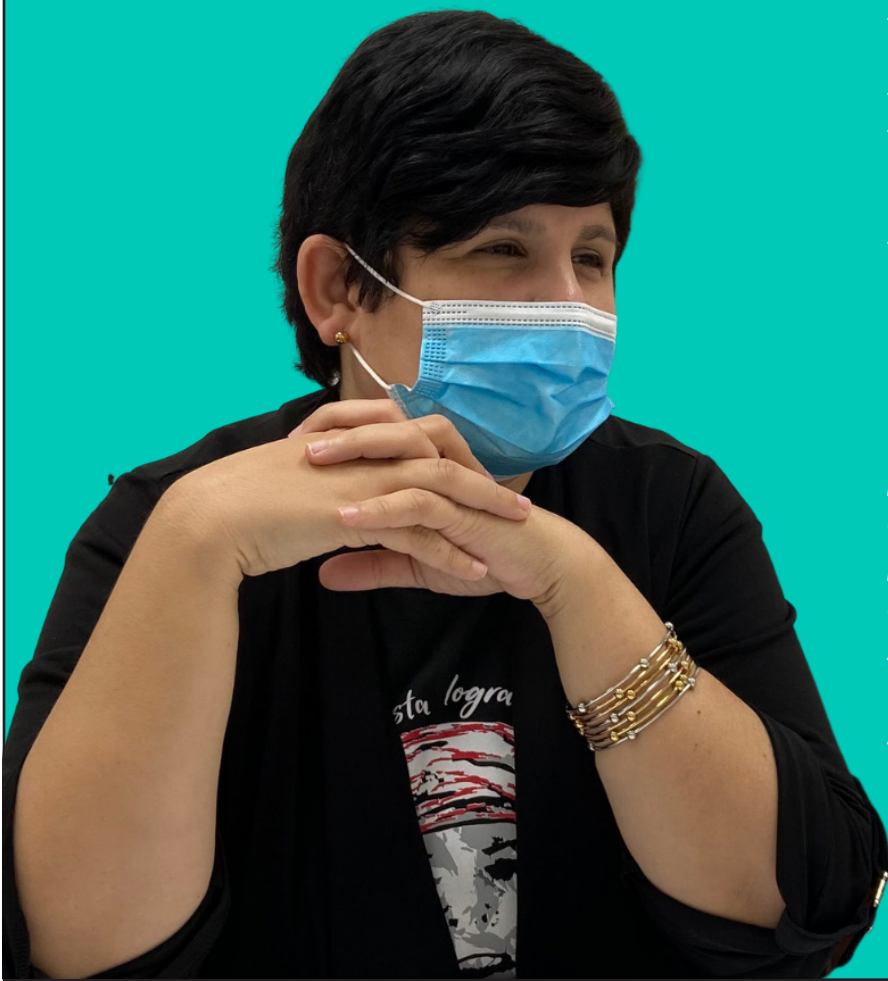
Like most of Puerto Rico's women-led, women-centered organizations, Casa Juana has historically operated almost entirely on volunteer labor. When it first applied to us, it had not yet attained the 501-c-3 status that would enable it to access other funding sources.

We provided Casa Juana a \$35,000 general operating grant that allowed it to hire staff, gain 501-c-3 status, apply for significant additional funding, and expand services to include helping domestic violence survivors develop their own businesses and navigate a health care system gravely strained by the COVID epidemic. Casa Juana is now a \$300,000 organization looking forward to a future of stability and growth and of reaching out to other like-minded organizations to brainstorm and share strategies.

Helping a small, gender-justice-focused grantee organization to build its overall operations has potentially exponential beneficial effects. It allows the organization to expand the number of constituents it serves, to enrich the services it provides, to explore new strategies, and to attract additional funders. Perhaps most importantly, by freeing the organization from the day-to-day struggle just to survive, it opens the door to long-term planning, advocacy, and collaboration—to joining the local and global network of feminist organizations determinedly working to shape a fairer, safer, and more equitable world.

"Thanks to the general operating support provided by PRWF... Casa Juana Colón... can now carry out a [larger] range of projects and be a strong, independent organization, dedicated to advocating for social justice."

Janice Sullivan Roig
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Building Momentum: The Multiplier Effects of a Gender- Justice-Focused Fundraising Approach

When the PRWF first began seeking resources for its work, it faced three major challenges:

- The overall newness of our organization.
- The historical lack of general philanthropic support for feminist goals.
- The historical lack of focus on Puerto Rico by both U.S. and international funders.



We knew that our first order of business had to be identifying and approaching the small group of donors and funders known to have a natural predisposition to supporting us because of their own focus on feminist goals—or their strong connections or interest in Puerto Rico. We quickly decided, however, that we needed to embrace a more ambitious fundraising agenda. That we needed to spread the word about our mission and our work in ways that would not just strengthen our sustainability but would help transform the way the larger funding community perceives our constituents, our locale, and our grantmaking practices.



So, while we began with that precious inner circle of feminist and Puerto Rico-focused donors and foundations, we quickly began reaching out to other funding sources. And we began supplementing those individual funder meetings with broader-scale educational efforts—webinars, seminars, conferences, newsletters—highlighting and communicating the achievements of the PRWF, of our grantee organizations, and of feminist philanthropy to a wide range of potential supporters and allies.

Initial responses have been deeply encouraging. We have found common ground with a growing group of funders around the goals of promoting community economic progress, launching anti-violence efforts, advocating for racial equality, and promoting environmental protection. Within our first short two and a half years, we have successfully raised the funds to meet our own basic operational needs, to carry out several rounds of grantmaking, and to help meet additional partner organization needs.

We continue to see ourselves as ambassadors not just for ourselves but for our mission—for the idea of broad-based philanthropic and public sector commitment to the cause of racial and gender justice.

OUR SUPPORTERS



Spotlight on our First Donor:

LISETTE NIEVES

Lisette Nieves, the President of the Fund for the City of New York, was the Puerto Rico Women's Foundation's first individual donor—lighting the way for the other diaspora donors whose participation is so vital to our success. Born and raised in New York City, Lisette is deeply committed to advancing the progress of all Puerto Rican women, regardless of where we currently make our home—and to promoting our ongoing connections and mutual support.

Thank you, Lisette, for your faith, your vision, and your generosity.

Spotlight on our First Funder:

NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Among the core principles of the feminist philanthropic movement is boldness and expansiveness of action. It is no surprise therefore, that **The New York Women's Foundation**—one of the largest and most audacious of all women's funds—was the first in line to encourage PRWF's founders' dreams and to provide us with our critical first foundation grant. A leader in uniting girls, women, and gender-fluid individuals across all communities—and in the overall movement to achieve racial and gender justice—**The New York Women's Foundation** remains our invaluable champion and a model for our own philanthropic efforts.

**THE
NEW YORK
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION**
Radical generosity.

We are grateful for the **205 individual donors** who actively participated in improving the lives of women, girls, and the non-binary community in Puerto Rico by supporting the Foundation since 2020 with a total of individual donations of **\$71,878.15**. **Thank you for being part of this community of transformative change and great social impact.**

\$776,000 FROM FOUNDATIONS

We are grateful for all the Foundations that have supported our work...



...and the current funders advancing our work on gender and racial equity in Puerto Rico



The Chicago Community Foundation
Starry Night Fund

[**DOWNLOAD OUR AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**](#)

ABOUT US

OUR TEAM



**Verónica
Colón Rosario**
Executive Director



**Zulnette
García Ramos**
Program Officer



**Danelys
Estévez Dávila**
Communications
Manager



**Paula
Díaz Castro**
Program Associate

OUR BOARD



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**Janice
Petrovich**



**The Puerto Rico Women's Foundation is
the **first and only** organization with the
exclusive mission to advance **gender and
racial equity** in Puerto Rico.**

To learn more visit
www.prwf.org

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Fundación de Mujeres en Puerto Rico

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