



Photography by Para La Naturaleza

# **An Assessment of The FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund's Emergency Grants**

A Report for the Red de Fundaciones de Puerto Rico

**NOVEMBER 15, 2018**

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## Executive Summary

The FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund (*Fondo ADELANTE Puerto Rico*) was created by the Puerto Rico Funders Network (*La Red de Fundaciones de Puerto Rico*) to strengthen the capacity nonprofit groups to advance social justice and provide innovative solutions to the island's vexing problems. The Fund was created by the *Red de Fundaciones de Puerto Rico* in early 2017 as a vehicle to promote partnerships between local, national and international philanthropic organizations. Investments in the FORWARD Fund grew quickly after Hurricane María devastated the island in September 2017. La Red applied these funds toward emergency grants for local grassroots organizations with proven records that were providing direct assistance to affected communities. The Fund raised \$6.4 M in one year from over 20 local, national and international foundations and over 700 individuals. A total of 24 emergency grants were disbursed, mostly between December 2017 and February 2018.

**This report examines the results of the nearly \$1 M in grants provided through the FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund for those 24 emergency grants.**

### RESULTS

Of the 24 organizations that received emergency grants, 23 participated in this study.<sup>1</sup> All of these organizations reported that the **grant helped enable the continuity of their operations during the emergency**. They agreed that **it provided a respite; enabling executive directors to handle organizational challenges**, especially for those who received it in the first months after the emergency.

Despite not having previous experience in providing emergency aid, **the organizations demonstrated leadership and put in place work teams that involved the community in the design and implementation of activities that met their needs for immediate relief. Proof of this lies in their achievements.**

The groups reported that they collectively served more than **100,000 people** affected by this emergency, and **40,000 families** with more than one adult between ages 21-64. At least **1,148 people with disabilities** received services related to their condition (medical, educational, psychological, etc.).

The grants also contributed to the following organizational achievements:

- Collected and distributed food, and created community kitchens to provide hot meals, delivering more than **5 million pounds of food**.

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<sup>1</sup> This report covers 23 of the 24 grants provided for a total of \$971,000 distributed. One grantee's report was not received in time for this analysis.

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- **3,500 rodenticide stations** were acquired and successfully installed in residences within the communities, vacant lots and public areas where rat lairs could be found. **100 five-gallon rodenticide** containers were purchased from a company specialized in rodent control.
- **8,800 new trees** were been planted, mostly within protected areas.
- **Approximately 15 new artistic projects** were created to encourage the design of spaces for respite, relief and management of emotions related to the emergency, as well as the promotion of social integration and stimulation of cultural tourism and economic development of communities.
- **Over 100 alliances** with local and US entities were established to coordinate efforts and better serve the communities.
- **Over 200 humanitarian brigades** impacted the communities affected by the passage of the hurricanes.

The non-profit leaders underlined how their grants helped them deal with the emergency, their staff and their communities. Importantly, they noted that their experiences following the disaster **made them rethink their operation** in various ways, particularly regarding the need to reinforce the connections to their communities and strengthen their ability to deal with future crisis situations.

### LESSONS LEARNED

1. Maintaining close contact with the community is central to keeping the work relevant.
  - a. The emergency reconnected institutions to their base and made them recall the importance of maintaining that close contact with the community so that their work is always relevant to the participants.
  - b. Good communication was essential to effective decision making during the emergency.
  - c. Relationship were built between individuals, organizations and communities.
2. Puerto Ricans demonstrated a great degree of solidarity and civic engagement.
3. Reserve funds are vital to deal with emergency situations.

Some entities, including government agencies, were unable to disburse funds until months following the emergency.

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4. The extent of poverty is now more visible. Puerto Rico's resources are not distributed equitably. The primary needs of the neediest population are not met.
5. Organizations need to be prepared for emergencies.
6. Organizations need to develop initiatives that increase autonomy with respect to energy, water and food.
7. Collaboration and teamwork are essential to recovery post disasters.
8. Listening to the community helps guide effective action.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To receive grants closer to the event, although most entities confirmed that the emergency donation arrived when they needed it most.
2. To develop an emergency support plan for the sector that includes protocols for:
  - a. Security management, access, communications and transportation.
  - b. Reserve accommodations for volunteers or key people who come to assist organizations in an emergency. FEMA implemented a protocol that limited the availability of hotel rooms during the state of emergency.
3. Develop training related to experience with this emergency.
  - a. Consider the use and promotion of digital platforms as a communication tool among organizations. For example, Connect Relief.
  - b. Offer a training on the responsibilities of Boards of Directors in managing an emergency aimed at the governance of organizations. Learn from those entities that managed to activate their Board as a governing body to implement or develop a plan at the time of the emergency.
  - c. Assist organizations in the development of a financial base to handle an emergency, such as a Reserve fund and credit line.
4. Develop a training cycle to strengthen:
  - a. Organizational capacity to manage the impact of accelerated growth.
  - b. Feasibility assessment of services based on the country's new reality
  - c. Development of trust and creation of strategic alliances
5. Develop a consulting program that uses the most relevant leaders as principal experts in the sector. This action, in addition to recognizing their value and

- trajectory, will contribute to the sector's economy.
- a. Some CEOs are analyzing the need to reevaluate the conventional vision of the donor-grantee relationship; they asked the funders to think of organizations as peers and collaborators with the expertise necessary to strengthen the sector and effectively handle the crisis the country is experiencing.
6. Develop experiences to provide emotional support and respite for leaders of the sector and their work teams. The activities can include a space for dialogue to channel experiences of relief and learning, as well as to promote informal collaborations.
  7. Contribute to the creation and strengthening of reserve funds for community-based organizations.
  8. Generate more agile fund approval protocols for organizations with proven trajectories, without compromising the corresponding scrutiny.
  9. Promote both long-term and multi-year grants, on the part of funders.
  10. Continue to gather statistics on the country's new reality.
  11. Inform the organizations about future plans of the Funders Network, donors of the Network and the evaluation criteria for the granting of new funds.
  12. Design an impact evaluation of the post-María work plan in the philanthropic and non-profit sector.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Providing general operating grants was the best thing to do.
2. Funds were appropriately used to help their community.
3. The grant from the Network built credibility and helped organizations raise other funds.
4. The Puerto Rico Funders Network helped community organizations gain visibility locally and nationally, including with national foundations.
5. Local NGOs could benefit from a "rainy day" or reserve fund to help accelerate their emergency responds.
6. Local NGOs could benefit from assistance to deal with emotional effects of the disasters for their staff and community.

## **Introduction**

The FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund (*Fondo ADELANTE Puerto Rico*) was created by the Puerto Rico Funders Network (*La Red de Fundaciones de Puerto Rico*) to strengthen the capacity nonprofit groups to advance social justice and provide innovative solutions to the island's vexing problems. The Fund was created by the *Red de Fundaciones de Puerto Rico* in early 2017 as a vehicle to promote partnerships between local, national and international philanthropic organizations.

At that time, Puerto Rico's economy was in a ten-year period of contraction and the nonprofit sector was losing funding even as the demands for their services were increasing. Hurricane María exacerbated the precarious state of local organizations that were serving urgent needs of their communities while often finding themselves and their staff likewise needing emergency help. But the Hurricane also spurred philanthropy to contribute to the island's relief and recovery efforts. Investments in the FORWARD Fund grew quickly after the hurricane, and the Fund began making emergency grants to local grassroots organizations with proven records that were providing direct assistance to affected communities. A total of 24 emergency grants were disbursed, mostly between December 2017 and February 2018.

Following the emergency grants, a strategic planning process identified new investment priorities for the recovery, reconstruction, and transformation of Puerto Rico. The Fund raised \$6.4 M in one year from over 20 local, national and international foundations and over 700 individuals. The Fund has achieved substantial coverage in the media for its grantees. La Red has fostered collaboration between more than 30 local and national foundations that have invested through the FORWARD Fund, which visit Puerto Rico to learn about the needs of the island's population and nonprofit sector and see first-hand some of the work supported by the Fund, and strengthen the network.

This report includes the results of an assessment of the activities and the impact of the nearly \$1 Million in emergency donations granted to 24 NPOs.

**Method**

The assessment involved a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected through two instruments: 1) Grant Use Report, and 2) Interview with Executive Directors. Both instruments were administered to 23 of the 24 grantees. The Grant Use Report documented the activities and impact of the grants, what was achieved and the challenges confronted. The interviews explored the organizational changes stimulated by the experience of the devastating hurricane.

**Table 1** includes the assessment areas explored in each instrument.

<b>GRANT USE REPORT</b>	<b>INTERVIEW</b>
1. Summary of the grant (amount and date).	1. Organizational mission changes.
2. Grant use.	2. Strategic plan status.
3. Purpose stated in the grant request.	3. Ongoing activities that were not carried out before the hurricanes.
4. Budget balance.	4. Aspects for which the grant was important for the organization.
5. Other sources of emergency funds received.	5. The most important challenge faced by the CEO after this emergency.
6. Population served.	6. If the grant helped the CEO to face the challenges.
7. 5 significant achievements attributable to the grant.	7. Thoughts about the organizational affairs after the emergency.
8. 5 significant challenges experienced to fulfill the purpose of the proposal.	8. The most significant lessons learned by the CEO after this emergency.
	9. Recommendations.
	10. If the grant achieved some sustainable change.
	11. Need for donations in case of future emergencies.



The following section summarizes the principal results of this assessment.

## **Results**

We analyzed 23 grant use reports and 23 interviews, respectively; that were conducted from July to September of the current year. The most significant results of this evaluation are detailed below.

### **Use of the Donation**

The following information summarizes the results of the Donation Use Report. Grant applications were sent between October 2017 to February 2018.

**Grants were received from early November 2017 until May 2018.** The majority of the grants were received by January 2018. Organizations spent grant funds as early as December 2017. Not all have yet completed their projects.

The total amount requested among all the organizations was **\$ 1,470,132**, with an average request amount per organization of \$ 63,919 approximately; ranging from a minimum amount of \$ 40,000 to a maximum of \$ 388,300. The total amount awarded was \$982,000 in grants that ranged from a minimum amount of \$ 40,000 and a maximum of \$75,000. **This report examines the results of \$ 971,000<sup>1</sup> of the \$ 982,000** provided by FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund.

The total amount spent thus far by the organizations is **\$ 824,529**. There are 6 organizations that have not yet spent their entire grant award: *ESCAPE, Hogar Cuna San Cristóbal, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC), G - 8, Taller Salud* and *Proyecto Matria*. Most of them planned to spend their grants by the end of October.

The organizations requested funds for various purposes. Most of the requests were to support the continuity of their operations (n = 18) following the disaster; all of them experienced urgent demands from their communities who needed relief. The use of the grants is detailed below.

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<sup>1</sup> This amount does not include \$11,000 granted to the *Museo de Arte de Ponce*, whose report was not received in time for this analysis.

The interview explored how the experience with the disaster impacted the mission of the organizations. After the emergency, **all organizations reported that they reflected upon the relevance of their mission**, either to strengthen it (n=12), expand it (n=2) or change it (n = 3) after this experience. Some of the entities (n=5) reported having expanded some objectives and added tactics, or increased the spectrum of the population profile they served. As a result of this experience, **9 grantees reported having reviewed or being in the process of reviewing their institutional strategic plan.**

**Table 2** presents a distribution of organizations according to the proposed use for their emergency fund. 100% of the organizations considered that the grant served the purpose established in their request. The purposes have been grouped as follows:

- Advocacy and public policy
- Collection and distribution of provisions
- Support for cultural management and agency
- Continuity of operations
- Mapping of needs and resources
- Community organization to support the emergency relief respond
- Repair and construction of structures
- Public health

**Table 2** Distribution of non-profit organizations according to the purpose of the grant request

PURPOSE	NPO's
Advocacy and informing public policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Centro para Una Nueva Economía</i></li> <li>2. <i>Espacios Abiertos</i></li> </ol>
Collection and distribution of provisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>La Fondita de Jesús</i></li> <li>2. <i>Nuestra Escuela, Inc.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Centros Sor Isolina Ferré</i></li> <li>4. <i>Espacios Abiertos</i></li> <li>5. <i>Banco de Alimentos de Puerto Rico</i></li> </ol>
Support for cultural management and agency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Beta – Local</i></li> <li>2. <i>Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico</i></li> <li>3. <i>Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico</i></li> </ol>
Continuity of operations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Beta – Local</i></li> <li>2. <i>Boys &amp; Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico</i></li> <li>3. <i>Centro de Periodismo Investigativo</i></li> <li>4. <i>Connect Relief</i></li> <li>5. <i>G-8</i></li> <li>6. <i>Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico</i></li> <li>7. <i>Sociedad de Educación y Rehabilitación de PR</i></li> <li>8. <i>Centro para Una Nueva Economía</i></li> <li>9. <i>ESCAPE</i></li> <li>10. <i>Hogar Cuna San Cristóbal</i></li> <li>11. <i>Instituto Nueva Escuela</i></li> <li>12. <i>La Fondita de Jesús</i></li> <li>13. <i>Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico</i></li> <li>14. <i>Nuestra Escuela, Inc.</i></li> <li>15. <i>Para la Naturaleza, Inc.</i></li> <li>16. <i>PECES</i></li> <li>17. <i>Taller Salud</i></li> </ol>
Mapping of needs and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Connect Relief</i></li> <li>2. <i>Centros Sor Isolina Ferré</i></li> </ol>
Community organization to support the emergency relief respond	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>CREARTE</i></li> <li>2. <i>Proyecto Matria, Inc.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico</i></li> </ol>
Repair and construction of structures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Casa Pueblo de Adjuntas</i></li> <li>2. <i>CREARTE</i></li> <li>3. <i>Espacios Abiertos</i></li> </ol>
Public health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>G-8</i></li> <li>2. <i>CREARTE</i></li> </ol>

### Grant use at the time of the report

91% of the organizations had spent the grants. In most cases, the organizations used part or the grant for general operations, to meet payroll and / or contract obligations to allow continuity of operations or services needed for emergency relief. Around **\$735,629** were used for continuity of operations; including salary (36%), contracted services (13%) and other operational expenses (51%) including: equipment and materials, provisions for distribution, diesel, and security for the electric generators, among others. This represents the **89% of the total outlay**. Due to the fact that in some cases the salary expense could not be separated from contracted services, this amount was estimated. See Table 3, and Table 4.

Approximately 11% was used for construction and repairs, the development of field evaluation tools, and as a reserve fund for emergencies.

**Table 3. Percentage detail of reported expenses.**

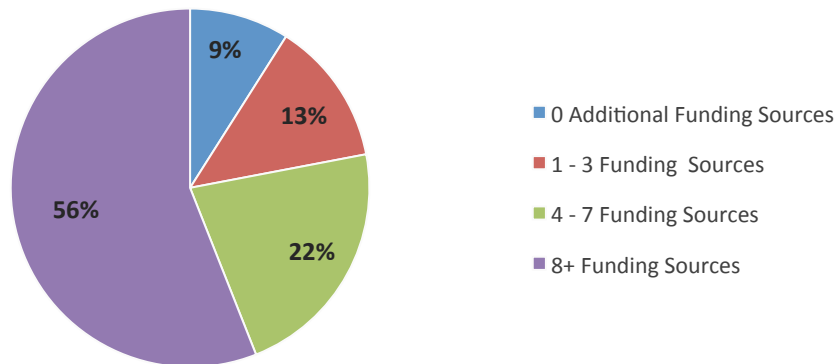
<i>Budget Expenses</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Continuity of operation</i>	\$735,629.25	89%
<i>Other expenses</i>	\$88,900	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$824,529.25</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4. Percentage of the expenses details for continuity of operations**

<i>Type of operation</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Payroll</i>	\$268,392.47	36%
<i>Equipment &amp; materials</i>	\$254,465.31	35%
<i>Others operational expenses</i>	\$114,418.97	16%
<i>Contracted services</i>	\$98,352.50	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$735,629.25</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Most of the institutions obtained additional funds to achieve the purposes established in their original request.** Grantees reported obtaining up to 11 additional sources of funds to achieve those purposes. Only 3 organizations did not raise additional funds for their work. Figure 1 details this distribution.

**Figure 1: Additional Funding Sources**



**56% of the organizations secured 1 to 3 additional funding sources besides from the PR Funders Network** (violet – Figure 1). About 22% received funds from 4 to 7 different sources (green – Figure 1). Three organizations (13%) received them from more than 8 different institutions (red – Figure 1).

Overall, **they reported 51 additional funding sources.** Three organizations did not raise additional funds to fulfill the purpose they stated: four reported using their own funds to complement the donation.

The following table summarizes additional funding sources identified by each organization.

Table 5: Additional Funding Sources identified by the Organizations.

NPO's	OTHER FUNDERS
<i>Banco de Alimentos de Puerto Rico</i>	<i>Unidos por Puerto Rico</i>
<i>Beta-Local</i>	Andy Warhol Foundation, Robert Rauschember Foundation, Hispanic Federation, Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Richard W Rupp Foundation, Friends of PR, Voices for Puerto Rico, New Art Dealer Association, Ford Foundation, (Southern Methodist University, Texas) & Individual donations.
<i>Centro de Periodismo Investigativo (CPI)</i>	Rockefeller Brothers Foundation & Open Society Foundations
<i>Centro para una Nueva Economía (CNE)</i>	Open Society Foundations
<i>Centros Sor Isolina Ferré, Inc.</i>	Unidos por PR, Weinberg Foundation, Dow Chemical, <i>Fundación Plaza Las Américas</i> , Casey Family Fund, Monsanto Fund, Austin Community Foundation, The Boston Foundation & The 20/22 Act Foundation.
<i>Connect Relief</i>	<i>ConPRmetidos</i>
<i>Corporación La Fondita de Jesús</i>	<i>Fundación Ángel Ramos</i> , Global Giving Foundation, AIDS United, PR Community Foundation, Boston Foundation (Massachusetts United for Puerto Rico fund), MCS Foundation & Reliable Auto ( <i>donated vehicle</i> ).
<i>CREARTE INC. - Centro Yabucoa</i>	<i>Unidos por PR &amp; Fondos Unidos - Inkind (Sistema Energía Alterno Comunal)</i>
<i>Espacios Abiertos</i>	Puerto Rico Recovery Fund (PRRF)(crowdfunding)

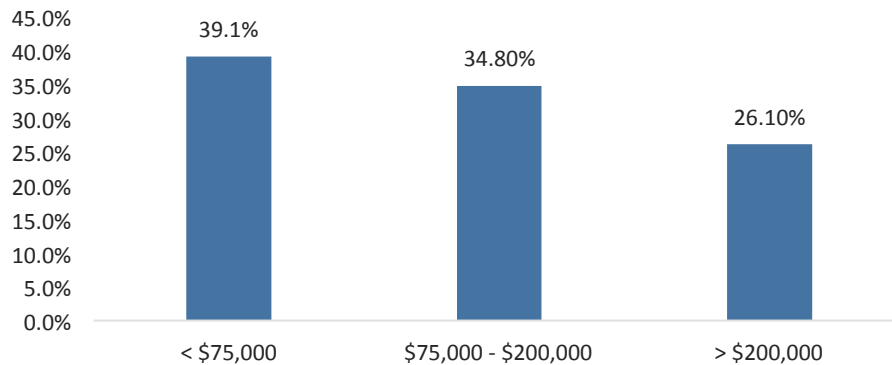
NPO's	OTHER FUNDERS
<p><b><i>G-8, Grupo de las Ocho Comunidades Aledañas al Caño Martín Peña, Inc.</i></b></p>	<p>Global Giving</p>
<p><b><i>Instituto Nueva Escuela</i></b></p>	<p>MCS, <i>Fundación Flamboyán</i> &amp; Firstbank</p>
<p><b><i>Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico</i></b></p>	<p><i>Donativo Legislativo, Abrazando a Puerto Rico, Fundación Banco Popular de PR, Northwestern University &amp; Mellon Foundation &amp; Fundación Ángel Ramos.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico</i></b></p>	<p>National Endowment for the Arts, <i>Capítulo de Puerto Rico (Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña)</i>, National Endowment for Humanities.</p>
<p><b><i>Nuestra Escuela, Inc.</i></b></p>	<p><i>Sierra Club, Fundación Comunitaria de Puerto Rico</i>, Global Giving, Save the Children</p>
<p><b><i>Para la Naturaleza</i></b></p>	<p><i>Fundación Ángel Ramos</i>, New York Community Trust, Ironman Foundation and Hispanic Federation.</p>
<p><b><i>Programa de Educación Comunal de Entrega y Servicio, Inc. (P.E.C.E.S., Inc.)</i></b></p>	<p><i>Fundación Segarra Boerman, Sierra Club, Fundación Ángel Ramos, S5 Foundation, Evertec, Colegio CPA, Encantos Restaurants, Mrs. María San Miguel, Oriental Bank &amp; Unidos por Puerto Rico.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Proyecto Matria, Inc.</i></b></p>	<p>Hispanic Federation, Fort Washington Church, NY &amp; personal and small donations.</p>
<p><b><i>Taller Salud, Inc.</i></b></p>	<p><i>Donativos Legislativos, Hurricane Maria Fund, Boston Foundation, Global Giving &amp; National Philanthropic Trust</i></p>
<p><b><i>Boys &amp; Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico (B &amp; GC)</i></b></p>	<p>“Impact Fund” (Crowdfunding campaign established by Boys &amp; Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico in respond to the hurricanes)</p>

NPO's	OTHER FUNDERS
<i>Casa Pueblo de Adjuntas</i>	Casa Pueblo/ Oxfam (installation technicians).
<i>ESCAPE, Centro de Fortalecimiento Familiar</i>	Own funds
<i>Hogar Cuna San Cristóbal Inc.</i>	Operational account
<i>Sociedad de Educación y Rehabilitación (SER) de Puerto Rico, Inc.</i>	--

Organizations reported receiving a total of \$3,774,738 in additional funds (from \$493 (B & GC) to \$567,500 (*Centros Sor Isolina Ferré, Inc.*). Thus, the FORWARD Fund contribution appears to have been matched about 4:1; even though the grant did not require a match.

As the following figure shows, 39% of the organizations obtained funds that do not exceeded \$75,000, 35% received between \$75,000 and \$200,000, and 26% received amounts greater than \$200,000.

Figure 2: Total of other Sources of Funds for the same Purpose



The organizations that **reported funds over \$200,000** for the same purpose were: *Centros Sor Isolina Ferré, CREATETE, Para la Naturaleza, Beta - Local, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico and Proyecto Matria.*



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Those that reported **less than \$200,000 up to no less than \$75,000** for the same purpose were: *CPI, Taller Salud, Corporación la Fondita de Jesús, Espacios Abiertos, Instituto Nuestra Escuela, Banco de Alimentos, CNE and Nuestra Escuela*. However, we know that organizations such as *CNE, Taller Salud, Espacios Abiertos, Banco de Alimentos*, among others, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to address the emergency.

Finally, the institutions that reported raising **less than \$75,000** were: *G - 8, Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Connect Relief, Casa Pueblo of Adjuntas, ESCAPE, B & GC, SER and Hogar Cuna San Cristóbal*.

In general, **the grants were used for the following types of activities:**

1. Mapping of needs and resources in the most affected regions.
2. Collection and distribution of provisions and equipment necessary for the recovery and basic needs such as food, water, cleaning supplies, personal and family hygiene products, school and educational materials.
3. Continuation of the organization's operations.
4. Reforestation and habitat restoration.
5. Repair and reconstruction of organizational structures and housing.
6. Promotion of energy autonomy and related solar equipment installations.
7. Preservation, conservation and restoration of cultural heritage collections.
8. Support of country's cultural resources.
9. Promotion of safety and public health.
10. Advocacy both in and outside of P.R., visibility of P.R.'s state of affairs, and informing public policy for the country's recovery and rebuilding.

Many organizations had no prior experience with some of the activities they undertook, such as solar panel installations, or distribution of essential goods. These were implemented because of needs identified in the assessments carried out during the emergency. Despite not having previous experience with many of these services, **they demonstrated leadership and put in place a work team that designed and implemented activities that met the needs of their community.**

*Total number of direct beneficiaries*

The 23 organizations exceeded **the total number of direct beneficiaries that they had expected to serve:**

The groups report that they collectively served:

- More than **100,000 people** affected by this emergency
- More than **40,000 families** with more than one adult between ages 21-64
- A single organization reached nearly **39,000 families**
- **1,148 people with disabilities** received services related to their condition (medical, educational, psychological, etc.).

Table 6 presents a comparison of the differences between the number of beneficiaries proposed vs. those been served. One organization grouped the total of families served (38,778), hence this total was not included in the analysis.

**Table 6.** Quantity of population proposed vs. served<sup>2</sup>

Population	Proposed	Served
<i>Children 0 – 4 years</i>	25	1,442
<i>Children 5 – 10 years</i>	54	1,846
<i>Youth 11 – 15 years</i>	114	651
<i>Youth 16 – 20 years</i>	185	15,497
<i>Adults 21 – 64 years</i>	40,256	41,430
<i>Adults &gt; 65 years</i>	206	650
<i>Personnel</i>	56	190
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40,896</b>	<b>61,706</b>

Also, the organizations reported the following **relief efforts**:

- Due to the support of this grant, more than **5 million pounds of food** were delivered. Grants allowed organizations in the collection and distribution of food, and the creation of community kitchens to provide hot meals.
- **3,500 rodenticide stations** were acquired and successfully installed in residences within the communities, vacant lots and public areas where rat lairs could be found.
- **100 five-gallon rodenticide** containers were purchased from a company specialized in rodent control, which installed the 3,500 stations and re-supplied the rodenticide seven times.
- **8,800 new trees** were been planted, mostly within protected areas.
- **Approximately 15 new artistic projects** were created to encourage the design of spaces for respite, relief and coping of emotions related to the emergency, as well as the promotion of social integration and stimulation of cultural tourism and economic development of communities.
- **Over 100 alliances** with local and US entities were established to coordinate efforts and better serve the communities.
- **Over 200 humanitarian brigades** impacted the communities affected by the passage of the hurricanes.

<sup>2</sup> The data has been grouped by age as reported.

The 23 organizations interviewed reported that the **grant** was crucial in some cases to **guarantee or support the continuity of their operations during the emergency**. They agreed that **it was a relief; a support to handle organizational challenges** and those related to their role as executive directors. Regardless of the amount of the donation received, all acknowledged that the donation **opened a space of respite to continue with their mission**, especially for those who received it in the first months after the emergency. Among the aspects that stood out as important for the organizations were:

**Table 7.** Relevant aspects reported by NPOs

ASPECT	NPO'S
1. Continuity of operations	<p><i>Banco de Alimentos de Puerto Rico</i>  <i>Beta-Local</i>  <i>BGCPR</i>  <i>Caras con Causa – Connect Relief</i>  <i>CNE</i>  <i>Centros Sor Isolina Ferré</i>  <i>ESCAPE</i>  <i>Hogar Cuna San Cristóbal</i>  <i>Instituto Nueva Escuela</i>  <i>Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de PR</i>  <i>Museo de Arte de PR</i>  <i>PECES</i>  <i>SER de PR</i>  <i>Taller Salud</i></p>
2. Extension of services	<p><i>Beta-Local</i>  <i>Casa Pueblo de Adjuntas</i>  <i>Centro de Periodismo Investigativo</i>  <i>Corporación La Fondita de Jesús</i>  <i>Create</i>  <i>ESCAPE</i>  <i>Espacios Abiertos</i>  <i>MAC</i>  <i>Nuestra Escuela</i>  <i>Proyecto Matria</i>  <i>Taller Salud</i></p>

ASPECT	NPO'S
3. Relationships with the community	<p><i>Casa Pueblo de Adjuntas</i>  <i>Create</i>  <i>Espacios Abiertos</i>  <i>G-8</i>  <i>Instituto Nueva Escuela</i>  <i>Museo de Arte Contemporáneo</i>  <i>Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico</i>  <i>Para la Naturaleza</i>  <i>Taller Salud</i></p>
4. Projection within and outside of Puerto Rico, including competitive grants.	<p><i>CNE</i>  <i>Centros Sor Isolina Ferré</i>  <i>Create</i>  <i>ESCAPE</i>  <i>Espacios Abiertos</i>  <i>Museo de Arte Contemporáneo</i>  <i>Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico</i>  <i>PECES</i></p>
5. Increase in funds raised	<p><i>Centro de Periodismo Investigativo</i>  <i>Centros Sor Isolina Ferré</i>  <i>Espacios Abiertos</i>  <i>Museo de Arte Contemporáneo</i>  <i>Para la Naturaleza</i>  <i>PECES</i></p>
6. Support for staff	<p><i>Proyecto Matria</i>  <i>Instituto Nueva Escuela</i>  <i>Para la Naturaleza</i></p>
7. Relationships with volunteers	<p><i>Museo de Arte Contemporáneo</i></p>

Moreover, the organizations indicated that their experiences following the disaster **made them rethink their operation** in various ways, particularly in those areas related to the need to reconnect with their communities and to strengthen their ability to manage effectively future crisis.

Table 8 includes some examples.

Table 8. New NPO Directions

ASPECT RETHOUGHT	NPO's
<p>1. Strengthen relationships with the community:</p> <p>a. Design and implement services according to the real needs of the community, that implies community-based planning and decision-making</p> <p><i>Espacios abiertos</i> initiated “a program area and projects for the development of civic / community infrastructure at the island level based in their experience with the community.”</p> <p><i>CREARTE</i> initiated “a process to foster the establishment of collaborative networks and the promotion of effective community organization. Among the most significant achievements is the First Meeting of Leaders with the participation of 17 communities and 12 organizations in the region. In this meeting the agenda and identification of needs was established. Followed by a second encounter.”</p> <p><i>Fondita de Jesús</i> create a new position of "Community Educator", with the purpose of educating the communities and their leaders to be more self-sufficient in times of crisis, to seek and access necessary resources and promote partnerships between communities.</p> <p><i>PECES</i>: “This emergency made us realize that we need to keep close to the base, plan our operation and services according to the needs of our community.”</p>	<p><i>Casa Pueblo de Adjuntas</i></p> <p><i>Centros Sor Isolina Ferré</i></p> <p><i>Espacios Abiertos</i></p> <p><i>PECES</i></p> <p><i>G-8</i></p>
<p>2. Enhance Staff support:</p> <p>a. Increase the compensation for local staff.</p> <p>After the emergency, Beta Local decided to pay the local artists they hired, previously they had a trade policy.</p>	<p><i>Beta-Local</i></p> <p><i>Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico</i></p> <p><i>Taller Salud</i></p> <p><i>CREARTE</i></p> <p><i>Proyecto Matria</i></p>

**ASPECT RETHOUGHT**

- b. Staff Recognition

*Corporación La Fondita de Jesús carried out an event for their employees to recognize outstanding performance during the emergency.*

- c. Strengthen work team

- 3. Revise mission and/or guiding principles.

- a. Confirmed the importance of and reasserted their way of working

*Instituto Nueva Escuela staff came to help the communities where their schools were located and found that people had already organized recovery efforts following the guidelines of the Montessori philosophy that they had been practicing for years.*

- b. Expanded organizational mission to include new target population, other kind of services, new tactics or objectives.

*Instituto Nueva Escuela added a psychosocial component.*

*Proyecto Matria added men and families as part of their target population.*

*Nuestra Escuela developed an approach to promote the engagement of their students in the country's economy through entrepreneurship.*

*Corporación Fondita de Jesús expanded its definition of homeless people and created new tactics to care for homeless families.*

- c. Extended services to include new populations

*Corporación Fondita de Jesús: "After Hurricane María, thousands of people in the country lost everything. In a matter of hours, they had lost their homes and other necessary resources. However, they did not perceive themselves as homeless, because they had a "home". It was necessary to refer*

**NPO's**

*Corporación La Fondita de Jesús*

*Corporación La Fondita de Jesús*

*Hogar Cuna San Cristóbal*

*Instituto Nueva Escuela*

*Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de PR*

*Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico*

*Nuestra Escuela*

*Proyecto Matria*

*Taller Salud*

**ASPECT RETHOUGHT**

to them as ‘people with roofless homes’ so that they could perceive the need for our services and be more receptive to them.”

- d. Expanded model to other communities

*Proyecto Matria*

They applied their model to promote a recovery process in the community of Miraflores.

- 4. Improve Facilities:

- a. Redesign of facilities to continue operating during an emergency. Regular operations or as relief centers.

*Centros Sor Isolina Ferré* is building a Relief center that will be use as vocational school for their participants.

*PECES* used the fund to build secure spaces to operate the electric generators that were donated to the institution to continue their services.

- 5. Design and strengthen emergency protocols

During and after the emergency, the organizations reported that they created, strengthened or radically changed their emergency protocols to deal with disaster.

- 6. Provide services in vulnerable areas and outside the institution’s walls.

*SER* was able to identify and serve people who had never received services for their conditions.

- 7. Diversify sources of funds

*Taller Salud* made the decision to stop requesting support from institutions that only provided reimbursement for services provided.

**NPO’s**

*Boys & Girls Club*

*Caras con Causa*

*Centro de Periodismo Investigativo*

*Corporación La Fondita de Jesús*

*ESCAPE*

*Boys & Girls Club*

*Centro para la Nueva Economía*

*CREARTE*

*Espacios Abiertos*

*G-8*

*Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico*

*SER de PR*

*Taller Salud*



**ASPECT RETHOUGHT**

8. Map needs and resources.

Three organizations mapped needs by region to channel the aid.

*Centros Sor Isolina* conducted a survey for the distribution of provisions, even when the aid had not arrived. The initiative helped them to return with the aid that the people needed the most.

*Taller Salud* was trained in a mapping system by region that records and matches the resource with the need through the evaluation of a case manager. They began creating the Map of *Loíza* and its neighborhoods; including information about flooded sectors, gathering places, and other data that may benefit future emergency planning and response efforts.

**NPO's**

*Centros Sor Isolina Ferré*

*PECES*

*Taller Salud*

Grantees also reported achievements that led to **sustainable changes** in the operation, the population or the community they served:

- Changes in **institutional policies and practices regarding emergency management**. One example is the *Beta Local* scholarship fund, which provided financial support to artists and cultural workers. Another is *Nuestra Escuela*, which created a community kitchen that impacted their future plans, and imparted important experiences to the students and their families. They decided to build a permanent kitchen to support students, their families and their community in future emergencies.
- **Protection and conservation of the national artistic heritage**. For example, MAPR created an unprecedented service by becoming a provisional repository for more than 200 art objects from 6 institutions.
- *Beta Local*, MAC and MAPR underlined the impact of the disaster on the artistic class, cultural workers and the national heritage; **they created and strengthened**

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**permanent protocols** that not only supported artists in the emergency, but also **strengthened relationships** among their staff, the administration, the board of directors, the artists and the community in general.

- *Casa Pueblo* provided resources and education activities on renewable energy in the municipality of *Adjuntas*. They purchased and installed solar panels in key locations and refrigerators to provide access to safe **food, and storage for medicines**. At the same time, these energy resources helped to strengthen social relationships and sense of community in the midst of the emergency, especially to those in need.
- *CREARTE* benefited 65 families and their communities in the municipality of *Las Piedras*, by facilitating the installation of an alternative energy system. This included solar panels to each of the 65 housing units, and solar powered systems of community lighting.
- *Proyecto Matria* created **new community sustainability project in the Miraflores Barrio of Arecibo**. *Matria* came to *Miraflores* to distribute supplies such as food and water. They found that the community needed a sustainable support project due to their poverty context. In an alliance with people and groups from the community, such as the *San Martín de Porres* parish, local merchants and other support groups for *Matria*, they began an agroecological project in which young people from the community have been trained, and jobs were created. This project includes educational, psychosocial, prevention and interventions in intrafamily violence services in *Casa Solidaria Matria*, temporary hosted in *San Martín de Porres* parish.
- The facilities of P.E.C.E.S., Inc. in the town of *Humacao*, were badly damaged. Practically all the equipment and furniture were lost. P.E.C.E.S. decided to return to their original location in Punta Santiago to better integrate their services within the community.
- *Corporación Fondita de Jesús* expanded the range of services available to people who did not meet the strict definition of "homeless" established by HUD, but were

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living in inadequate housing after the hurricane. In addition, it created a new permanent position of "Community Educator", to help communities and their leaders become more self-sufficient in emergency situations and to help them have access to essential resources.

- *Hogar Cuna San Cristóbal* noted that the grant allowed them to continue operating and to **reinvent their fundraising strategies**. The emergency was a blow to their major fundraising strategy: charity galas.
- *Caras con Causa* saw the final development and implementation of version 1 of **Connect Relief**, which is **now a virtual platform that connects victims of natural disasters with relief efforts in the short, medium and long term**. They guide and match aid resources based on information gathered with a mobile application about community needs.
- *Centro para una Nueva Economía* was able to **strengthen their work in Washington, DC. where they continue to educate the Congress on Puerto Rico's challenges and opportunities. This office now has a permanent executive director.**
- The **turnover of trained and specialized personnel in organizations such as the INE was prevented**, thanks to the fact that staff received their salary on time so they did not see their stability at risk.
- *ESCAPE* **created a reserve fund with \$ 20,000 of the \$ 40,000 received**, thanks to the fact that the fund could be used for general operating expenses. The emergency coincided with the closing of the fiscal year for some of the recurring donations of *Corporación Fondita de Jesús*. The grant helped them to weather the delay in receiving their funds.
- *Espacios Abiertos* 1) **developed and strengthened its relationship with community leaders**, and 2) offered its **staff an invaluable experience of working directly with the community.**

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- B & GC reopened *Aguas Buenas* center. They were the **first service facility that was opened in this municipality.**
- The organizations achieved more than proposed. Below are some of the most prominent achievements.



**Banco de Alimentos de Puerto Rico**

“The presence and contribution of the Foundations Network, significantly increased the number of plates of food served at the table of our families, in some of the municipalities with the highest poverty index.”

“The food was distributed through non-profit organizations with access to the following municipalities: San Germán, Guánica, Guayanilla, Hormigueros, Peñuelas, and Juncos. This collaboration agreement with the network of organizations in the island allowed us to reach out a greater segment of the population and to bring food to Puerto Rican tables more frequently for a 5 month period.”

“We empower communities and non-profit organizations ascribed, as well as government agencies and private companies, to act in a collaborative network by municipality. The agencies mobilized over 7,000 volunteers with skills and knowledge to address the challenges during the emergency and recovery period.”



**Beta Local**

Encouraged an expanded relationship that has become a network of mutual support between individuals and organizations. In this way, contributed to a steady and healthy cultural scene.

Moreover, the granting of scholarships, contributed to ensuring that artists and cultural workers remained working in Puerto Rico.

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**Boys & Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico (BGCPR)**

“The most important achievement during the donation period was keeping the doors open and continue offering educational services despite the fact that the facilities in *Aguas Buenas* suffered severe damage due to the



hurricane and the services had to be offered from alternate spaces, first in a church and then in a school in *Aguas Buenas*.”

**Caras con Causa**

“Over 200 humanitarian brigades were achieved and/or promoted.”



“We were the only platform that presented in real time the needs of the communities, focusing the attention and services to the most vulnerable.”

**Casa Pueblo de Adjuntas**

“Installation of 27 solar refrigerators for rural families.”



“The nutrition and health of these families improved dramatically. Families changed their

high in sodium diet from canned foods to a food regimen closer to the one they enjoyed prior to Hurricane María.”

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**Center for a New Economy, Inc. (CNE)**

“Support the CNE research team to analyze federal contracting for the recovery of P.R. Contracts awarded to local companies vs. those granted to US companies are being compared. The results will be presented promptly.”



extraordinary visibility for our investigations.”

“At the same time, we managed to do collaborative research with US and international media such as The Associated Press, In These Times, CNN, Quartz.com, Miami Herald and Latino USA. The work involved new expenses for us that we were able to cover, including gasoline and transportation, chargers, batteries, food, lodging, and travel outside of Puerto Rico. We also managed to cover new expenses for photography and video, translations, website programming, among others.”

**Centros Sor Isolina Ferré, Inc.**

“The needs of affected families were met, as reflected in the house-to-house needs assessment conducted by CSIF.”



**Centro de Periodismo Investigativo**

“We established fixed editorial alliances with new media in the United States, such as Latino USA and Latino Rebels, Telemundo and the Miami Herald. This allowed to achieve an



**Corporación La Fondita de Jesús**

“We were able to prevent people and families from becoming homeless after the hurricane.”



**CREATE, Inc.**

“Young people were able to continue their educational process, three weeks after the hurricane, 100% of the families were screened and the physical and psychosocial needs of the participants were met.”



**ESCAPE**

**Centro de Fortalecimiento Familiar**

“The grant gave job security to the employees who worked in the facilities that were total loss in the metropolitan area, and continuity of services for the participants of the same region.”



**Espacios Abiertos**

“The grant strengthened and reinforced our network of distribution centers. 4.1 million pounds of supplies of water, food, medicine and basic needs were distributed through our centers on the island. More than 120 volunteers participated.”



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**G-8 Grupo de las Ocho  
Comunidades Aledañas al Caño  
Martín Peña**

“3,500 rodenticide stations were acquired and successfully installed in residences within the communities, vacant lots and near public areas where rat lairs can be found.”

“100 pans of rodenticide were acquired and a company specialized in

rodent control was hired who installed the 3,500 stations and re-supplied with the rodenticide seven times.”



**Hogar Cuna San Cristobal Inc.**

“The grant enabled us to make our building more secure and protect it from future storms.”



**Instituto Nueva Escuela (INE)**

“We opened our schools to offer services to students and communities. The Montessori Guides were an essential part of the rapid response to the communities. They were the social agents who identified the needs of the people in their

communities.”

“INE’s mission is to achieve the social transformation of our school communities by having communities assume their own reconstruction as families and as individuals.”



**Museo de Arte Contemporáneo**

“We experienced a high demand for the MAC services after the hurricane. This demonstrates the confidence of the communities in our institution and our ability to adapt. We offered programs to a diverse and intergenerational public, which includes homeless

people whose profile has changed significantly at this juncture.”



**Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico**

“Cover operational costs including the specialized personnel of the Museum that worked to preserve Puerto Rico’s artistic heritage.”



**Nuestra Escuela, Inc.**

“We expanded our services to reach communities of *Aguas Buenas, Caguas, Canovanas, Carolina, Cayey, Cidra, Fajardo, Gurabo, Juncos, Loíza, Luquillo, Río Grande* and *San Lorenzo*. We provided 2,285 meals in the month of November, after the passage of Hurricane María.

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**Para la Naturaleza**

“Thanks to this grant, from January to June of 2018, we produced 7,202 new trees in the nurseries of Para la Naturaleza. And we managed approximately 3,310 volunteers in nursery and planting maintenance activities, for a total of 14,585 volunteer hours.”

**Programa de Educación Comunal de Entrega y Servicio, Inc. PECES**

“We were able to continue the operations of P.E.C.E.S., Inc. in a rented temporary space with an electric generator and Internet access.”



**Proyecto Matria, Inc.**

“We began an agroecological project in which young people from the community have been trained and jobs are being created. A neighbor donated the use of land for the planting.”





### Sociedad de Educación y Rehabilitación de Puerto Rico, Inc.-SER

“A total of 1,148 participants were served during October and November 2017;

“Children and adults who had never received services for their conditions were identified and served during the emergency.”

### Taller Salud

“We hired an expert Consultant in creating maps with GIS. We were able to start creating the Map of Loíza with its sectors by neighborhoods. We want to include information about flooded sectors, places available to gather people and other data that may benefit emergency planning and response.”

### Challenges

Despite the multiple challenges that Hurricane María generated in organizational operations and the access and communication between the personnel and the communities served, most of the entities reported having completed the projects and invested their grant funds as detailed previously.

Regarding the challenges experienced by the CEOs after the emergency, one of the salient effects of the grants was the **ability of organizations to maintain effective leadership to guide their staff**. Despite their own situation or emotions, leaders reported that they had to remain calm, and promote solidarity, firmness of convictions and open dialogue. This allowed the construction of work practices that met the needs



of housing, security, food, physical and mental health of their staff, their families; and that of participants and surrounding communities.

The vast majority of directors interviewed **broke down emotionally in describing what they experienced and affirmed that even today physical and emotional fatigue is tenacious**. Some mentioned that they became ill, that they had an important medical examination or that they have yet to find the time to rest. Even when they are in the midst of post-emergency changes and increased demand for services, nonprofit leaders face the reality that many in their communities still face harsh conditions; and many of leaders still do not recover.

**The most significant challenge that nonprofit leaders continue to face is the need for** support to tend to their personal emotional and physical health.

Another important challenge is **the dizzying pace at which the roles of organizations are evolving**. There may be a gap between the organizational capacity and the volume of services that they provide or plan to add to their operation. Many have not even had the time to sit down with Board members to develop strategic plans accordingly, nor have they evaluated their institutional capacity to add new services or hire new personnel to implement the new programmatic components, some of which are totally new to them (for example, mental health or housing reconstruction services).

Few provided information on whether they have done a **capacity or duplication of services assessment in their community**. **Funds that have begun to flow for Puerto Rico's recovery have created many** new opportunities, but nonprofits may not yet be equipped to take advantage of them in a sustainable way.

Some organizations are **still handling challenges related to the emergency** such as the **loss of their facilities**; leaders' **sense of loneliness, impotence or lack of support from the State**, which is primarily responsible for meeting the housing, health, social and food security needs of its people.

As mentioned above, **21 beneficiaries recognized that their grant from the FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund helped them meet their challenges as CEOs**. The other 2

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mentioned the importance of receiving the donation at the time it arrived, and **how they used it to strengthen their long-term recovery plan.**

Most of the CEOs **recognized how important it was that this grant was not restricted.** They thanked the Network for the initiative; this **gave them a sense of optimism and respite** in the middle of the emergency.

CEOs also valued the **access to external resources (U.S.- based donors) facilitated by the Puerto Rico Funders Network (La Red de Fundaciones de Puerto Rico).** The Network supported diverse efforts to showcase their work. Likewise, the emergency grant **was useful in leveraging new resources** because it implied that local foundations trusted them.

Other challenges were related to **communications.** For the Center for Investigative Journalism, telephone interviews were difficult and Internet was barely available. Interviews had to be conducted door to door. Obtaining information from government officials was complicated. “When we went outside of San Juan, it meant a long day of travel without communications, without being able to make calls, send information or edit until we returned. We worked long hours, every day, for several months.”

Many of the families living in the most affected communities **have not received the anticipated assistance.** The inhabitants often do not have formal land titles, which makes it difficult to access FEMA assistance, and that was the case of an organization such as *Proyecto Matria* that is trying to acquire land to build *Casa Solidaridad Matria.*

### Lessons learned

Each experience brings lessons learned, harsh memories are still alive, and the sense of unease has been woven with the **clearest sense of solidarity and belonging.** The reaffirmation of the **value of community-based methodologies, equity, freedom, citizen participation and collective self-care** are the most valuable lessons learned expressed by them. These are some of the **growth experiences** described by the CEOs.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- Maintaining close contact with the community is central to keeping the work relevant.
  - The emergency reconnected institutions to their base and made them recall the importance of maintaining that close contact with the community so their work is always relevant to the participants.
    - “Deepening the participants’ sense of belonging to the organization, it helped them participate actively in the reconstruction process”
    - “[Participants] are part of the organization, in fact, many were more concerned with the security of the staff ... [participants] know how to deal with the housing crisis.”
    - “As new institutions grow and formalize processes, they need maintain contact with the community work, and avoid bureaucratization, or they are going to stop being effective.”
  - Good communication is essential to effective decision making during the emergency.
    - Relationships were built between individuals, organizations and communities. For example, CNE developed a network of 11 emergency centers throughout Puerto Rico, which became activated by the threat of Hurricane Kirk in September.
    - “Organization and communication: without these 2 factors we would not have been able to react in time.”
- Puerto Ricans demonstrated a great degree of solidarity and civic engagement.
  - “I was amazed by the reaction of Puerto Ricans. We have demonstrated a great degree of solidarity, even when we have been personally affected. People did the unthinkable to help others.”

### LESSONS LEARNED

- “We were able to resume the semester but the students requested and decided that they wanted to help the community. This sense of citizenship and solidarity of young people showed me what they are capable of doing for the country.”
- Reserve funds are vital to deal with emergency situations. Some entities, including government agencies, were unable to disburse funds until months following the emergency.
  - “Entities and funders must have a reserve fund for emergencies. Thanks to the grant, we met our payroll.”
- The extent of poverty is now more visible.
  - Puerto Rico’s resources are not distributed equitably. The primary needs of the neediest population are not met.
- Organizations need to be prepared for emergencies:
  - “The importance of being prepared, not to trust that hurricanes will be diverted.”
  - “Institutions must have security plans, we cannot expect that an event of this kind will not happen. Today was Hurricane María, tomorrow any other disaster can happen and we have to learn to be prepared.”
- Organizations need to develop initiatives that increase autonomy with respect to energy, water and food.
  - “We need to continue developing independence and self-management tools. Our greatest strength is in community networks; there lies the possibility of a new economy and social system.”
  - “Maintain the country's energy self-sufficiency for the conservation of our resources and the prevention, reduction and management of emergencies such as the one experienced.”
- Collaboration and teamwork are essential to recovery post disasters.
  - “The non-profit sector demonstrated the capacity to organize itself to address many pressing needs of the people.”



### LESSONS LEARNED

- “With the support of our network of collaborators, we demonstrate that we have the ability to work as a team, to overcome the event.”
- “The relevance of alliances is no longer a theoretical issue. Action is demonstrated by walking, and action is in our hands.”
- “Allocating resources for the protection, preservation and conservation of our national heritage is so important, we need to work together”
- “The biggest asset of organizations is their work team. It is important to protect it and not think it is replaceable.”
- Establishing networks, personal and organizational relationships in PR and other places in the world to anticipate and address an emergency.
- Listening to the community helps guide effective action.
  - “Listening to the community, establishing a political practice of listening first, guaranteed a response to the emergency that was none violent, that was agile and prevented us from making many mistakes.”

## Recommendations

In general, the CEOs described the emergency fund as relevant, thoughtful and sensible towards the entities' urgent needs. The application and report processes were described as agile and flexible. Some noted that their grant could have been received closer to the date of request.

Some of the recommendations made by the NGOs are not within the purview of the Puerto Rico Funders Network nor its FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund. It is recommended that the Network effectively re-direct those that do not apply, and consider those that can reinforce their work.

Below are the general recommendations for this report.

1. To receive the disbursement closer to the event, although most entities confirmed that the emergency donation arrived when they needed it most.
2. To develop an emergency support plan for the sector that includes protocols for:
  - a. Security management, access, communications and transportation.
  - b. Reserve accommodations for volunteers or key people who come to assist organizations in an emergency. FEMA implemented a protocol that blocked hotel rooms during the state of emergency.
3. Develop training sessions related to experience with this emergency.
  - a. Consider the use and promotion of digital platforms as a communication tool among organizations. For example, Connect Relief.
  - b. Offer trainings on the responsibilities of Boards of Directors in managing an emergency aimed at the governance of organizations. Learn from those entities that managed to activate their Board as a governing body to implement or develop a plan at the time of the emergency.
  - c. Assist organizations in the development of a financial base to handle an emergency, such as a Reserve fund and credit line.
4. Develop a training cycle to strengthen:
  - a. The impact of accelerated growth on organizational capacity

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- b. Feasibility assessment of services based on the country's new reality
  - c. Development of trust and creation of strategic alliances
5. Develop a consulting program that uses the most relevant leaders as principal experts in the sector. This action, in addition to recognizing their value and trajectory, will contribute to the sector's economy.
  - a. Some CEOs are analyzing the need to reevaluate the conventional vision of the donor-grantee relationship; they asked the funders to think of organizations as peers and collaborators with the expertise necessary to strengthen the sector and effectively handle the crisis the country is experiencing.
6. Develop experiences to provide emotional support and respite for leaders of the sector and their work teams. The activities can include a space for dialogue to channel experiences of relief and learning, as well as to promote informal collaborations.
7. Contribute to the creation and strengthening of reserve funds for community-based organizations.
8. Generate more agile fund approval protocols for organizations with proven records, without compromising the corresponding scrutiny.
9. Promote both long-term and multi-year grants, on the part of funders.
10. Continue to gather statistics on the country's new reality.
11. Briefing organizations about future plans of the Funders Network, donors of the Network and the evaluation criteria for the granting of new funds.
12. Design an impact evaluation of the post-María work plan in the philanthropic and non-profit sector.

## **Conclusions**

1. Providing general operating grants was the best thing to do.
2. Funds were appropriately use to help their community.
3. The grant from the Network built credibility and helped organizations raise other funds.
4. The Puerto Rico Funders Network helped community organizations gain visibility locally and nationally, including with national foundations.
5. Local NGOs could benefit from a “rainy day” or reserve fund to help accelerate their emergency responds.
6. Local NGOs could benefit from assistance to deal with emotional effects of the disasters among staff members and the community.