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Puerto Rico, Natural Disasters

### **Puerto Rico: The Harm of Natural Disasters**

Puerto Rico faces many issues with natural disasters. They terribly affect the community and the population. In this essay I'm going to give background information on the country, families, how they affect the country, and solutions to this problem. My solutions are meant to be able to help the victims of natural disasters and the environment. The solutions I chose will be very beneficial to the economy.

As of 2024, the population of Puerto Rico is 3,268,193, 16% of that is urban and 36% is densely populated rural and sparsely populated rural. Puerto Rico is a republic type of government. In 2021 19.04% of land is in PR according to the World Bank Collection of Development Indicators. The major crops and exports are rice, sugar cane, coffee, and corn. There are 59.3 cuerdas compared to the average size which is 463 acres. PR is a tropical marine which is normally sunny, hot, and humid. The temperature can be between 76 F and 88 F in the coastal plains and 73 F and 78 F in the mountains. Geographically it is in North America between the Caribbean and North Atlantic ocean.

Normally a family consists of two parents and three kids which live in Spanish colonial type homes. A family's typical diet consists of bean soups, chilis, rice and beans, and eggs. The kids will normally eat Puerto Rican foods such as tostones or fried plantains and sorullos or corn sticks. Most Puerto Rican families eat from their homes, restaurants, and food trucks. A lot of people there work as food truck or restaurant owners and make \$12.58 an hour and a yearly rate of about \$21,543. Puerto Rico's economic crisis has reduced access to sexual and reproductive health care services and education for the people. More than 250,000 residents don't have access to clean water and sanitation. A major barrier that the people face is the damage from natural disasters, this makes it difficult for families to have access to food and other things, more in rural areas. Many families have also lost their homes and livelihoods making it very difficult to provide for their children.

This next paragraph is going to be about how this topic has impacted my chosen country. Right now FEMA is trying to help but it's not enough. The trends of this topic are currently staying the same, but improving just a little bit. The things that contribute to this trend are natural disasters continuing to wreck the country and the economy. This affects rural populations because they are more vulnerable to landslides. This affects women because it increases exposure to sexual and domestic violence, but it doesn't affect men at all. Unfortunately for elderly and children they have less access to healthcare and care giving. Natural disasters can affect marginalized populations because now it's even harder for them to live in the country. This is a very big inconvenience for them because they are already living in a new home but now they are in a new home that has problems, but that's what they were trying to escape. Lastly, this topic affects the environment the most in so many different ways such as power outages, landslides, flooding, tornadoes, and much more.

One solution that could help Puerto Rico is investment in infrastructure resilience. This basically means that we should fund more money to make the buildings stronger, so that they could withstand the natural disasters and not cause as much damage. The first strength to this solution would be to make resilient

infrastructure construction which can lessen the effects of natural disasters like hurricanes and flooding by making reinforced structures, flood barriers, and better drainage systems. The second one would be that investments in infrastructure can create jobs and stimulate economic growth. The last one would be that communities can become safer and more sustainable by improving the quality of life for residents through improved infrastructure. The first weakness to this solution would be that this procedure can have high upfront costs and may need large financial contributions from the government or other outside parties. The second one would be that over time maintenance expenses might build up, and getting money for continuous care might be difficult. The last one would be that infrastructure projects may take longer to complete than expected because of environmental issues or paperwork.

The next solution to this problem could be community preparedness and education programs. This means that the country could prepare for when a natural disaster is coming and be educated on it so they know what to do. The first strength to this could be that educating communities on this such as evacuation plans, and emergency response protocols can help residents to be proactive and protect their families during natural disasters. The second strength to this could be community-based initiatives which can bring everybody together so they all know what to do during these times. The last strength to this could be investing in education and training programs that can have a lot of benefits by getting residents with good skills and knowledge to respond effectively to future situations. The first weakness to this solution would be that education and preparedness programs require a lot of effort and resources over time. The second weakness would be that language and cultural barriers may affect efforts especially in communities with a diverse population. The last weakness to the solution would be that some residents may be hesitant to participate in preparedness activities because of their lack of awareness.

The last solution to my country's problem could be expansion of renewable energy sources. This means that the leaders of the country could expand the renewable resources that they need the most. The first strength to this would be investing in renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power that can reduce reliance on fossil fuels and increase energy independence. This makes Puerto Rico less vulnerable to problems in fuel supply chains during natural disasters. The second strength to this would be that renewable energy systems can be more resilient to hard weather and can help stabilize the power grid reducing how often power outages happen. The last strength to this is that transitioning to clean energy can reduce the long-term impacts of climate change, lessening the likelihood of more common and severe natural disasters in the future. The first weakness to this solution would be the first cost of transitioning to renewable energy can be significant, although declining costs and government motivation may help offset these expenses over time. The second weakness would be that Puerto Rico's energy infrastructure may need many upgrades to accommodate renewable energy systems. The last weakness would be political and regulatory challenges as well as resistance from vested interests in the fossil fuel industry may affect the efforts to the adoption of renewable energy.

To wrap everything up in conclusion, the solution that I think would be best for my country is investment in infrastructure resilience or in other words funding more money to make stronger buildings. I think that this solution would work best because it has the most effect, and probably helps Puerto Rico the most out of all the solutions. I think this because building stronger buildings would help save the environment and the population. Although this has its weaknesses they are mostly just about the funding for the new infrastructure, but since Puerto Rico is a US territory the US could definitely help out a lot.

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