

Science Spotlight: Puerto Rican studies ocean acidification in Hawaii ^[1]

Submitted by [Ariadna S. Rubio Lebrón](#) ^[2] on 21 February 2024 - 3:15pm



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Raised in Comerío, Melissa Meléndez felt, from an early age, an interest in the sciences.
(Provided)

On the occasion of Women and Girls in Science Day, oceanographer Melissa Meléndez highlights the importance of increasing the representation of women in STEM careers.

For oceanographer Melissa Meléndez, forging her career as a research scientist has been a "difficult, but enjoyable" process. Difficult because she was the first person in her family to earn a college degree, and enjoyable because she met mentors and friends who helped her overcome barriers along the way.

By Amanda Pérez Pintado

"It was a little bit difficult because it was not only educating myself, but also my parents and my family about what I was going through and what I wanted to do," recalled Meléndez, who is currently studying ocean acidification in Hawaii.

"And it was nice because I met a lot of good mentors, good friends who helped me overcome economic barriers, barriers, when I went to the United States, language barriers," she said.

During her career, however, Meléndez noticed the absence of women in spaces such as laboratories and university department faculties. All of the scientist's main mentors, for example, have been men.

"In the sciences-especially engineering and oceanography-there are very few of us," said Meléndez, a researcher attached to the Department of Oceanography at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. "When you have to go on oceanographic expeditions for 30, 42 days at sea and there aren't that many women, that can represent some kind of barrier."

Against this backdrop, Meléndez stressed the importance of girls and women having role models to follow, so she felt that spaces should be created so that women scientists can make themselves known.

This is a summary, to view the full article please visit our website in Spanish or [click here](#) [3].

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