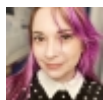


Fostering knowledge: Why science is key to moving PR forward ^[1]

Submitted by [Jennifer Lynne Bocanegra](#) ^[2] on 16 September 2016 - 12:00am



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Currently, Puerto Rico is confronting great moments of uncertainty. With a mass exodus of great minds, it might seem as though the weight of finding effective solutions to the deepening economical, educational and overall social problems that continue to rise in Puerto Rico is set on a select few group of people. There is increasing doubt about what will happen to this beautiful land we are so proud of. Where many would say that we have hit rock bottom, I would say that there is an opportunity. It is time we step up and assume the challenge of creating a society capable of overcoming this deep depression that consumes us.

But first, we must unlearn what we were taught about how only a select few have the ability to make an impact. That is far from true. Every person has the capacity to move masses, to produce the change that we desperately need to thrive. It's time we lose our fear, and this can best be done by educating ourselves and others. Let's learn. Let's teach. Let's connect and join forces.

While there are many organizations, government and non-government, that are tirelessly working to provide Puerto Rico with the resources necessary to move forward, there is still much to be done. We all have a different idea about what can move the country forward, and they are all valid as long as we are working for them. In my case, I believe that education is the most essential asset for growth. The more we know, the better prepared we are to find effective strategies that can positively impact the economy, society, and our culture in general. To me it is of upmost important to be able to share knowledge and effectively communicate to absolutely everyone where our areas of opportunity lay. An educated culture is one that continues to exist for aeons to come.

If you asked me where I would be most likely to invest my money, I would have to say science education- off the bat. Why? To me it's simple. Science fosters curiosity and that is the driving force behind the pursuit of knowledge, in general. Also, science is around us, from the chemical reactions taking place behind our morning coffee, to the physics that moves our car so we may

get to work, and even to the vaccines we are given to prevent life-threatening diseases such as Polio or Smallpox. When we walk through el Yunque, staring in wonder at the view from 3,496 feet above sea level, we are appreciating not only the beauty behind the physical structures that compose our land, but also the history behind it, for a brief moment, we become geologists. There is also science in art. Early artists would use elements to extract the colors they wanted to use to paint, and today conservation of historically significant pieces, such as the Greek statues and paintings of the renaissance, is possible thanks to biology and chemistry. Science does not belong to a select few, science belongs to everyone, and we must foster a scientifically literate culture, this is an investment that will surely give us back more than what we put in.

Fortunately for me, there are many people that share this idea, they are the over 7,500 members of the CienciaPR community. Each and everyone have shown their commitment to bringing science to all, regardless of their expertise, age, social standing, profession or professional stage, experience or geographic location. For 10 years, CienciaPR has proven that there are no boundaries that can deter the effective communication of knowledge, and now, as they look towards the next 10 years, I am glad to say that I am #ConCienciaPR. Along with many other organizations, CienciaPR is here to give us not only hope- but the resources and moral strength we need to overcome this great uncertainty that we face regarding our country's future. Through science, we can forge a new path for Puerto Rico, one that leads to the growth and stability of a country that has the human capital to confront the challenges to come. I join CienciaPR during its 10-year anniversary celebration, and feel great pride when I say I am a part of a team that is working hard to push Puerto Rico forward. Through science education, we can acquire the knowledge that will help us better make sense of where our areas of opportunity for growth are, and to lose the fear of the unknown that overwhelms such a great and proud country.

To sum up my idea, in the words of the great Marie Curie: **“Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.”**

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