



Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative Vieques 2020 Report on Sustainable Development

5 YEARS UPDATE

Presented by Josue Cruz

9th. Annual Youth Leadership Summit for
Sustainable Development
Martha's Vineyard
June 22 - 28, 2013

PUERTO RICO:

Imagen en el Arte



Vieques?

- It is a municipality of Puerto Rico, founded in 1844.
- It is an island that measures approximately 21 miles (34 km) long by 4 miles (6 km) wide.
- It has a population of about approx. 10,000.



Vieques, Puerto Rico



Vieques attractions



Overview

Vieques is an island located 7 miles SE of Puerto Rico. Our island is 18 miles long, 3.5 miles wide = 52 square miles.

Without question, this population has increased in 7 years since many people from U.S., foreign countries and the main island of Puerto Rico have immigrated to Vieques. They have come for our tourist attractions and in search of a tranquil place far from the big cities.

This has contributed to our island's inter-related issues of housing and infrastructure. All the increased infrastructure in Vieques of housing, business and government buildings is contributing to increased energy consumption. This problem is not only in Vieques but the entire world. As youth leaders, we worry how our generation is going to live -- how are we going to leave our planet for our children and grand children?

What can we do to face today's challenges?

- Social

- ✓ Vieques needs to:

1. Invest in the diversification of the education curriculum to make the school more attractive to the non traditional students.
2. Strategically provide sexual education at all school levels to avoid the teen pregnancy problem.
3. Help non profit organizations to offer services directly for the well being of the entire community.
4. Organize the communities to stop crime.
5. Create public open spaces for the recreation of local and visitors.
6. Incentivize the creation of sports teams that represent the Island in other parts of the country to create a sense of identity in the community.

Today's Solutions



- Community Organizing Vehicle
 - After more than 15 years, Vieques has its own Radio Station Developed by the community.
 - Funded by NPR
 - It is called Radio Vieques 90.1 FM.
 - It will be broadcasting 24 hrs. a day
 - Live programming/Partnership with different organizations
 - Emergency broadcasting information

Today's Solutions

Maritime Transportation Public-Private Alliance

- 1 year pilot program to determine Viability of a Private Administration.
- Service accuracy have significantly improved.
- Contract will be extended for another year.
- New cargo ferries and high-speed boats are in use at this moment.
- Year cost: 12 millions dollars.

Today's Solutions

Vieques Green Community

- Actually, more than 300 families are in the process of complete their community plan.
- They are looking for financial help from different sources to install the first section of infrastructure.
- The new president of the board is a 24 years old law student and was one of the co-founders of the Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative in 2004.
- She is in the process of reorganizing their board of directors to implement a more viable green vision for their community.

Today's Solutions Sports Programs

- State Government is couching the development of a new generations of kids envolved with outdoor sports.
- Actually there's more than 8 little league teams and about 5 adults teams.
- The investment in infrastructure is more than 2 millions dollars on improving the existing facilities.

TODAY'S SOLUTIONS, FOR *TODAY'S CHALLENGES*

1) Improve air and sea access routes to the Island.

- Vieques' economy is based on tourism.
- The actual access don't allow the development of exportation
- Poor services in the actual services don't allow the growing of the actual tourism economy.

Economy in Vieques

- 54.7% unemployment (2007) – 50% in 2013.
- Government numbers says something different, according to the Department of Labor, the unemployment in Vieques is around 15%.
- Most of the best employs in the hotels and restaurants are foreign seasonal workers. Locals expect to work in the housekeeping, dishwasher and other cleaning areas.
- 64.6% of poverty in all ages (2007) 81.2% 18 years old or less
 - Teen Pregnancy
 - Non education
- 51.5% 65 years old or more

Social Issues

- Vieques has the highest percentage of teen pregnancy in Puerto Rico.
- Drugs and Alcoholism
 - According to a survey realized in the Vieques High School, more than 45% of the students have consumed drugs more than once, being marihuana the most common among the students.
 - Young people (18 and less) are drinking alcohol and accepted into the bars.
- Education and Scholar Desertion
 - 1,176 people do not graduate from high school (U.S. Census 2000)
 - Poor education system
 - Low academic grade percent
 - \$32,000,000,000.00 is the budget for education in 2011

Educating the Community

- Viequenses need to discover their own Island.
- More environmental education in schools and community.
- Offer alternative options to the traditional education system.
- Schools need prepare students to work in the major industry of the island, tourism (hotels, restaurants and eco-tours.)
- Establish undergraduate institutions focused on hospitality careers.
- Improve English language classes in the schools.

Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative (VYLI)

- **VYLI Mission:** train young & emerging leaders to build a new Vieques
- **A Demonstration Project** of the Stone Soup Leadership Institute
- **Community planning process:** business, government, community organizations and youth

- **Spanish curriculum:** *Pan Y Vino Para El Camino*
- **Published report:** *The Challenges Facing Vieques Youth*
- **SSLI Advisory Council & Faculty:** Isabel Valdez, Edward James Olmos, Cesar Chavez
- **Partners:** Barrios Unidos, Cesar Chavez Foundation, Radio Campesina, National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship

- **4 Initiatives:** Cultural Arts, Entrepreneurs, Technology, EcoTourism/Sustainable Development
- **VYLI Photo Exhibit in Vieques Airport:** positive image of Vieques youth
- **Press:** TV, Radio, Print, newsletters and website: www.vyli.com
- **First Federal Grant:** Department of Commerce -- Radio Station planning grant

- **Strategic Allies:** PR Gov' s Office of Education, Puerto Rico Tourism Company
- **Annual budget:** \$60,000 and \$60,000 in-kind
- **Project length:** 4 years, culminating with **VYLI' s 2020 Report for New Vieques**

VYLI's Cultural Arts Initiative

Led by Kutasha Silva



- Invited hundreds of youth to dream about their goals for their lives and for Vieques.
- Created a photo exhibit of our dreams that welcomed visitors in the Vieques Airport.
- Created two theatre performances during our Summer Institutes.
- Painted two murals in strategic places that represent our vision for the future of Vieques.
- Offered workshops of painting, Taino art, jewelry and modeling.
- Wrote & recorded in a professional studio our own song “Pueblo” with singer/songwriter Tito Auger.

VYLI' s Entrepreneurship Initiative

Led by Kutasha Silva & Tania Cruz



- **Created our own little business: selling T-shirts and handicrafts.**
- **Collected indigenous beads/seeds and made beautiful jewelry;**
- **Sold to tourists on the Malecón & created positive image of youth;**
- **Trained three staff National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship in New York;**
- **Young artists/entrepreneurs at the Caribbean Artisan Festival in British Virgin Islands.**

VYLI's Ecotourism Initiative

Led by Tania Cruz



- Cleaned up beaches and collected local seeds.
- Learned about the birds and their habitats and how to protect them.
- Eco-tourism excursions to Monte Pirata, Puerto Ferro and Bioluminescent Bay.
- Inspired by *The Inconvenient Truth* and green architects to use our island's natural resources like wind, solar and earth.

VYLI's Technology Initiative

Led by Josue Cruz



- **Created VYLI web site: www.vyli.com**
- **Trained community leaders and youth at computer workshops;**
- **Educational exchange with Cesar Chavez & Radio Campesina in California.**
- **Developed a plan to create the first Viequense radio station.**
- **Supported youth to improve their radio skills.**

What do we want for the future of Vieques?

Vieques is a cultural and ecological treasure, facing uncertainty and in need of a vision & plan for its future...

**What do you want
for your life and for Vieques
by 2020?**

Art and culture in Everyday Life



Ensure the preservation of the
Art and culture by:

- Creating educational curriculums based on the history of the island to educate students of the great history we have as a community.
- Finally open the art specialized school.
- Incentive non-profit organizations related with the conservation and history.
- Create spaces for art exhibitions in strategic areas.
- Create private/public alliances for the conservation of the Island's Historical Structures and monuments.

Vieques: 2013 Panorama

Municipal Government
Deficit (in Millions)



Cultural Importance



- Archeological investigations of Taino artifacts mark the importance of the island of Vieques.
- Through our history, our soil was fertile and our fishing resources abundant.
- Our island's location has particular significance in the Caribbean geography: it is a cultural bridge between the smaller and greater Antilles.

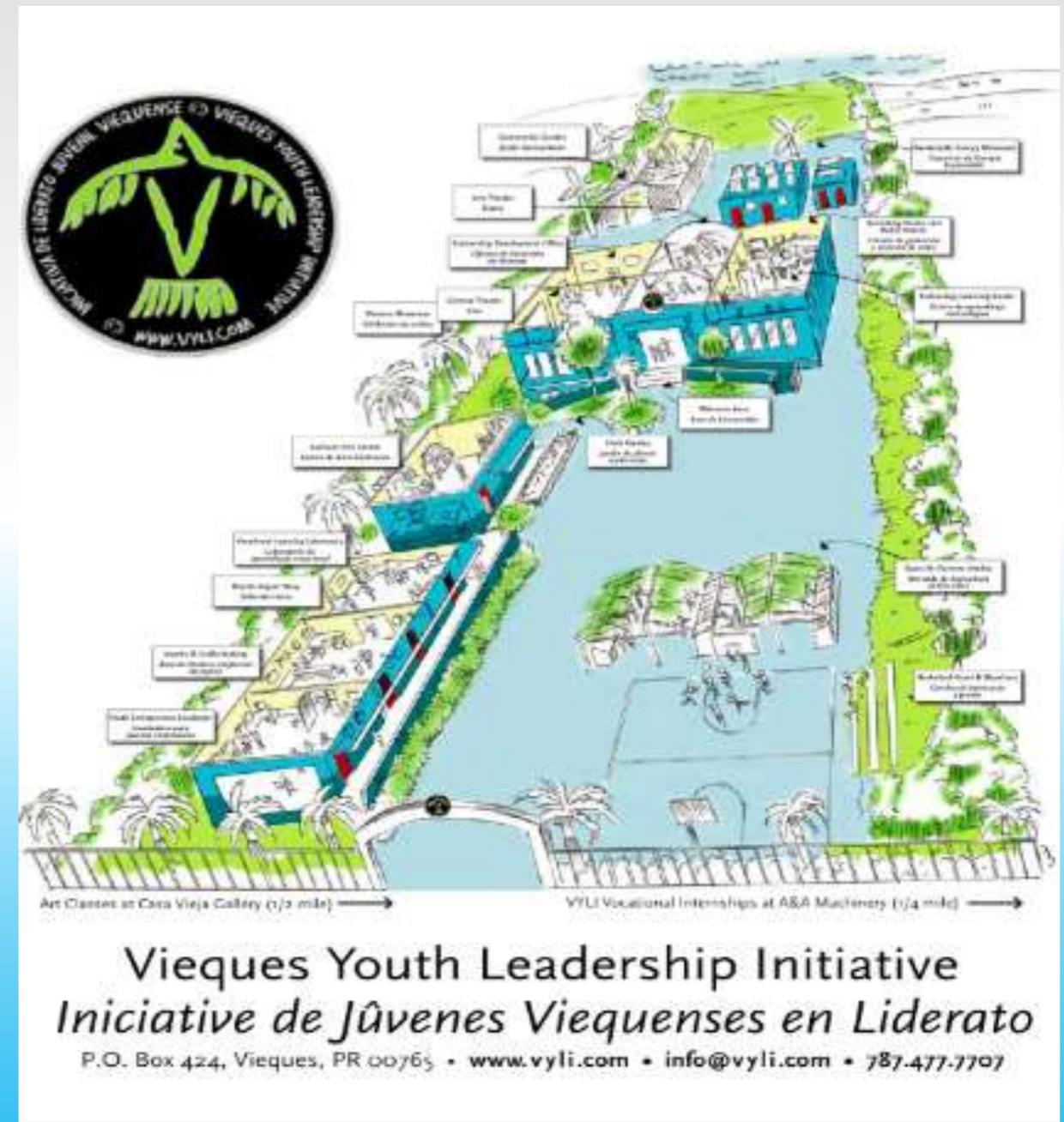


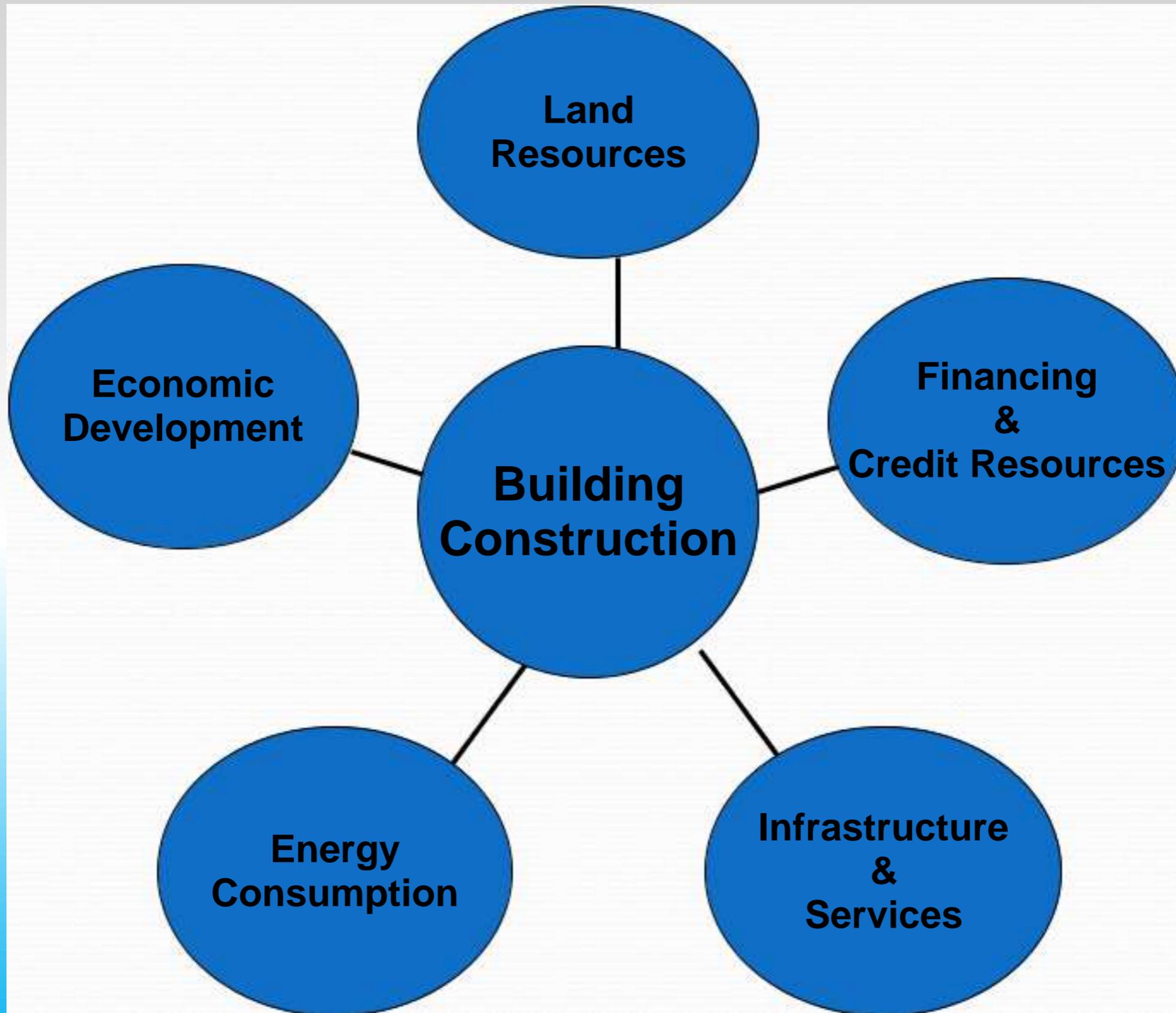
After school education programs in the arts such as: dance, music, theatre and visual arts has innumerable benefits for the youth of the community.

VYLI's Building

Transforming old school into 2020 Vision

- Entrepreneur Training Center
 - Technology Center
 - Radio & Recording Studio
 - Community Center & Dance
 - Community Gardens
 - Conference Center
 - Sustainable Tourism Showcase
 - 2020 Vision for New Vieques
-
- Thanks to Puerto Rico Governor Anibel Acevado & First Lady, Vieques Mayor Damaso Serrano, PRTC, Governor's Office of Education





Recommendations for Sustainable Housing



Promote:

- Incentives to construct second floors and increase property taxes to vacation homes with a mostly horizontal construction.
- Establish a green code for constructions, where the new constructions will have to include energy efficient elements such as a correct orientation to implement solar energy panels.
- Rehabilitate uninhabited structures
- Study/resolve property titles

Windmills

- With strong prevailing winds and large area of inhabitable lands, Vieques is a perfect location for windmills.
- With just a few windmills, Vieques can generate enough energy for entire island and sell it back to the grid!

This represents another Income source for the Economy of Vieques.



Innovative Solutions: Low Consumption Bulbs



- **Just one of these bulbs saves 137 litres of petroleum!**
- **Power plants use petroleum to create fossil fuels.**

Innovative Solution: Rooftop Gardens = SAVE ENERGY

- **COOL your home**
- **Create thermal insulation, especially concrete**
- **Improve air quality and reduce CO2 levels**
- **Slow the velocity of rainwater runoff**
- **Grow your own food and flowers**
- **Enjoy a green space in urban areas**
- **Increase the property value of your home**

Innovative Solutions

Net Metering = Saves Energy + \$\$

- Solar and wind generation systems generate more electricity than is consumed at various times of the day.
- Solar systems convert sunlight into electricity into large quantities during the day and none at night. The cycle of wind systems is linked to wind patterns.
- A house equipped with a solar or wind generation system, the excess power not being use can be returned through the meter to the grid, and the meter runs “backwards” – and gives us a credit.
- At the end of the month you pay less \$\$ for the net (from the grid - from the home generation)

REDUCE, RECYCLE, RENEW



Our dump place only have 5 more years of service!
We have to promote that at least 30% of our trash will be recycled.

The town administration will have to start charging the citizens for the pick up of regular domestic trash and offer a free service for all the trash properly placed in recycling containers.

Consumerism in PR



- Puerto Rico is rapidly growing segment of U.S. economy
- Puerto Rico is top 10 highest consumers of U.S. products

50% of our income
is tied up in credit cards and debt.

Green Economy = A Positive Vision

What if we used the power of our money and consumption to help ourselves?

- What if we used our love of consuming to develop a strong Viequense economy?
- We need money to stay in Vieques and circulate to develop the community and other aspects of Vieques.

Ways We Can Reduce Consumerism

- *Reduce*: Buy in quantity to eliminate excessive packaging.
- *Reuse*: bags and bottles.
- *Recycle*: Separate paper, plastic, glass, cans; take to recycling center.

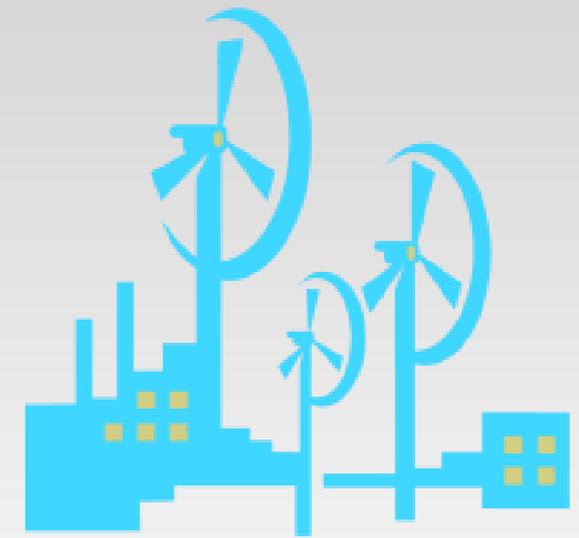
Innovative Solution: Eco-Tourism Businesses

Eco-tourism trips such as:

- The Bio-Luminescent Bay
- Excursions in other bodies of water
- Guided paths in USFWS Refuge
- Trolley
- Historical sites



Innovative Solution: Energy Businesses



- Electronic commerce = new jobs
- Communication: radio, press, television
- Windmills and solar panels = new jobs
- Transportation System = new jobs
- 2nd hand stores = recycle clothes

Innovative Solution: Start a Green Business



- Visit office C.O.D.E.V.I. In Isabel II
- Get info on economic development in Vieques
- Check out business classes.
- Take advantage of all the federal and local incentives for small businesses.

Innovative Solution: Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle

- Grow your own food with organic techniques.
- Buy veggies from hydroponic plant.
- Exercise your body and your mind.
- Bike and walk more.
- Buy energy efficient appliances.
- Use less energy and gas by implementing one or more of this technologies.

Vieques Map Today



Innovative Solution

Green Community Land Ownership & Development

Historical Perspective

- U.S. Navy expropriated Vieques land: 1942-43 & 1947
- 26,000 acres (out of 33,000)
- 10 days (1-2 days) to abandon their homes

- 2003: Vieques land redistributed

1/3 Municipality, 1/3 US Fish & Wildlife, 1/3 PR Conservation Trust

- Real estate boom = foreign-owned homes and land
- Many Viequense families don't have homes or land
- Vieques youth had no hope of creating a home on their island

Innovative Solution

Green Community Land Ownership & Development

The Process

- Community leader: 1
- Youth leaders: 4
- Community engagement: 15 people
- August, 2007

Peoples' occupation of land (civil disobedience)

- Meetings: daily, then every Sunday
- Designed map for community ownership & development
- Large community meeting: 300 people
- Timeframe: 4 months

Innovative Solution

Green Community Land Ownership & Development



Innovative Solution

Green Community Land Ownership & Development

Outcomes

1. Town Meeting with the Vieques Mayor with the lawyer, engineer + 500 people
2. Mayor gave 300 acres to 500 families
3. People presented map for developing their land
4. Next steps: conduct land survey
5. Build homes, park, church, Viequense monuments
6. **Our dream: A Green Community: Verde Vieques**

"Green Ideas" project



- Environmental protection education to fourth graders
- 103 schools
- 5,500 students
- 180 teachers
- 107 food gardens
- More than 50 species of plants
- Two mangroves plantations
- Hundreds of trees planted

VYLI' s 2020 Report

College Team

1. Cultural Arts with Entrepreneurship: Kutasha Silva
2. Market as Eco-Tourism Destination: Tania Cruz
3. Create New Energy & Sustainable Housing:
Nelyrs Sanchez & Eliasib Utreras
4. Build Green Economy - New World Jobs: Kim Diaz Allen
5. Green Community Land Ownership & Development: Tania Cruz
(project with Carmiann Cespedes and Josue Cruz)

**The future of Vieques is in
you and is in me...**



Facing New Challenges

- Five years after we created this report, the social and economical situations in Vieques hasn't improved.
- With a structural deficit of more than two thousand millions of dollars in the State of PR Government and with a deficit of near 9 million dollars in the local government.
- With more than a 50% in unemployment and near 43% living in poverty.
- With the lack of a vision for the future development of the Island
- With highest crime rates in the history
- Vieques needs to change the paradigm.

Envisioning the 2020

- With the actual situation, Vieques needs a master plan for its future development, otherwise, inaction will cause the total collapse of the fragile local economy.

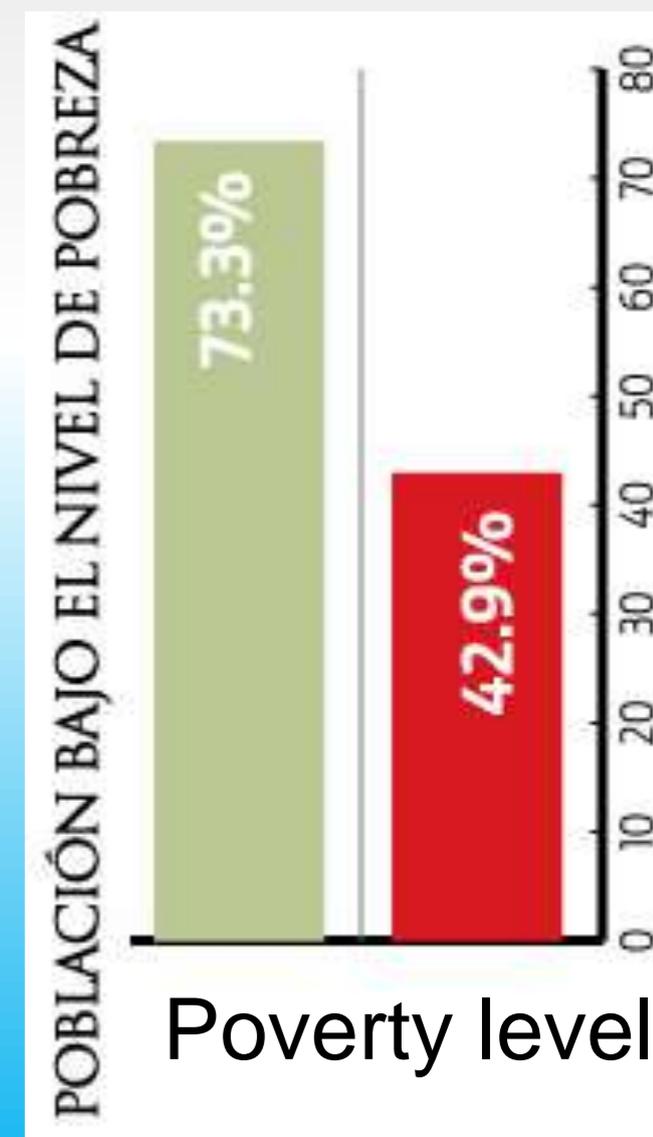
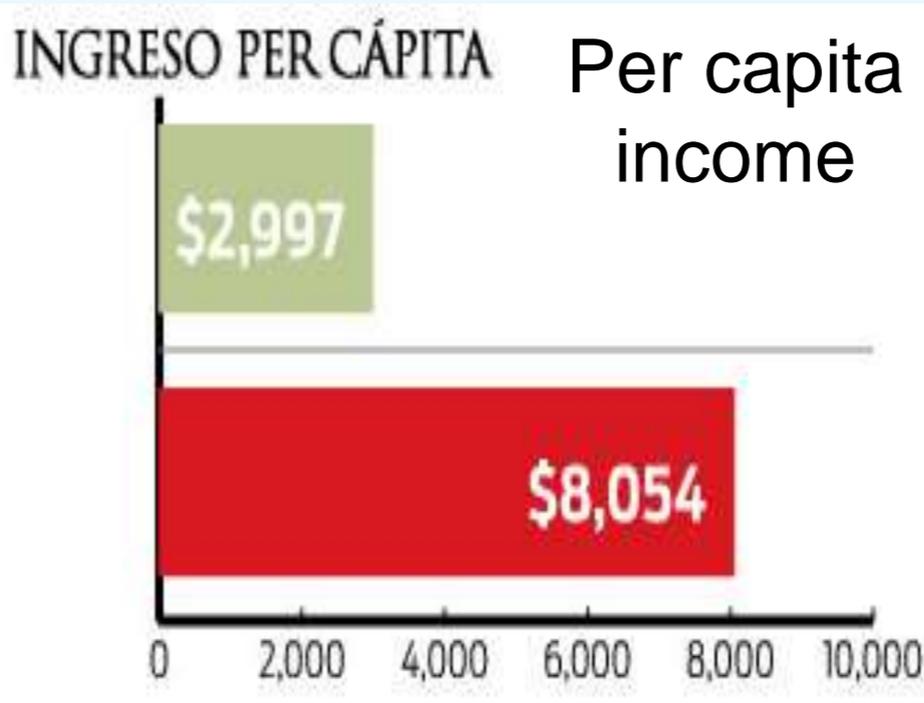
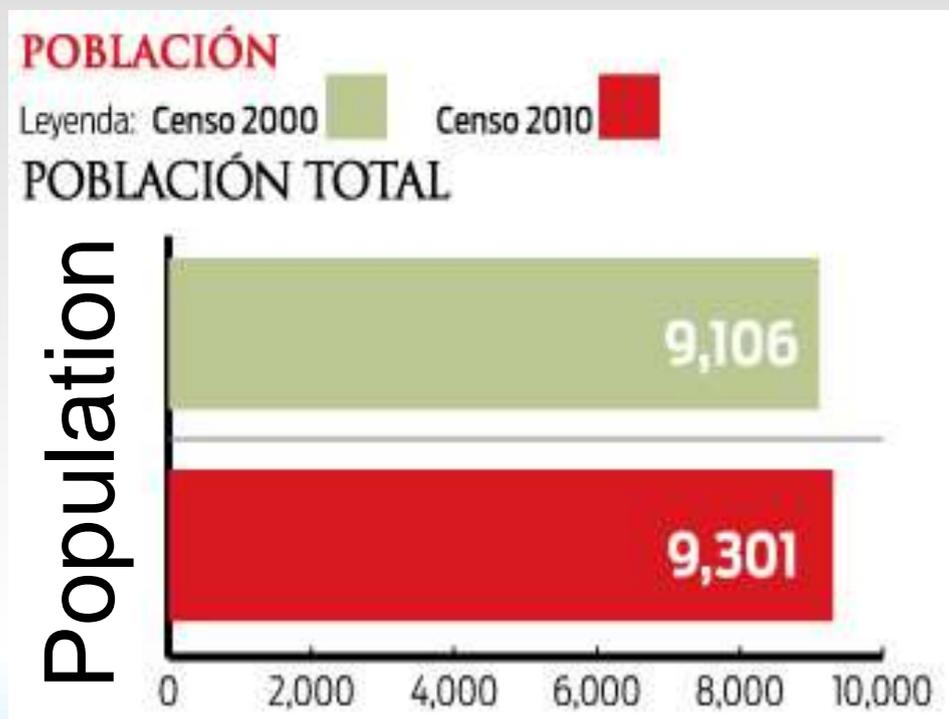
Today's Solutions

- Economy:

- ✓ Vieques need to :

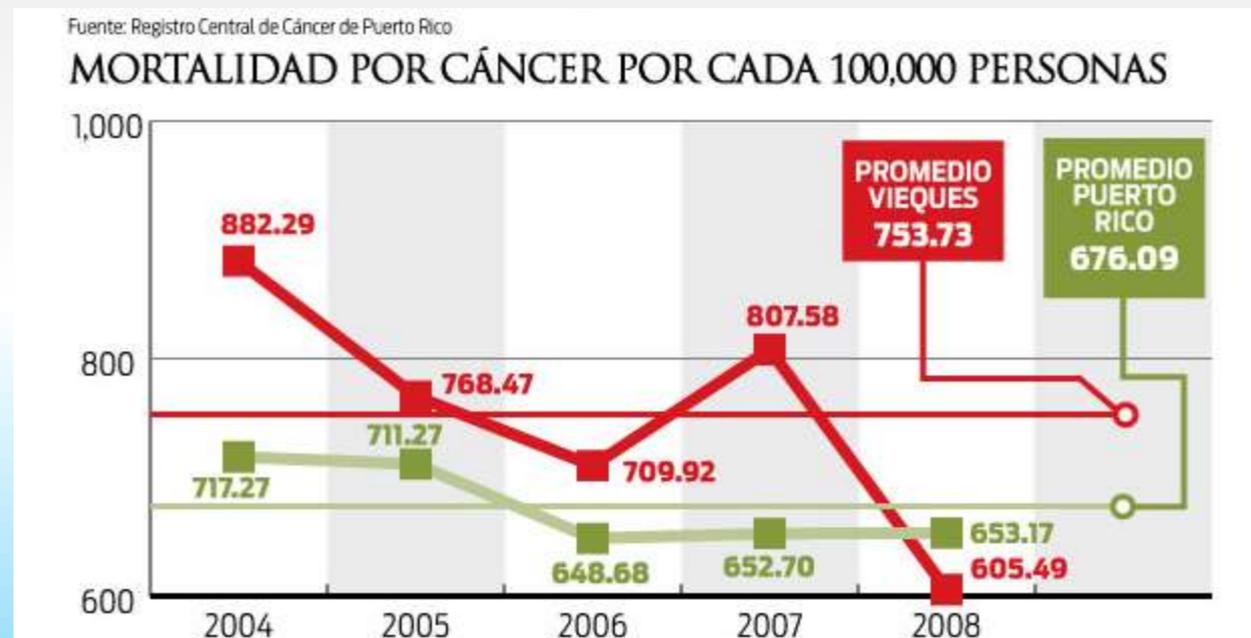
1. Stabilize the maritime transportation services that under collapse.
2. Eventually establish a private-public alliance to manage this system. An actual pilot program with a private operator have shown the potential efficiency of this system under private hands, supervised by the government.
3. Create for its first time ever, a Vieques “Branding” to identify Vieques as a unique travel destination.
4. Create a land management and protection plan for the whole Island.
5. Promote the investment of foreign capital in hotels and tourism related industries that are respectful of the Island natural environment.
6. Help local Viequenses to understand the importance of tourism for the local economy and promote an entrepreneurial atmosphere by providing incentives to the creation of local owned and operated businesses
7. Expand and invest in the training of young people to work in the industry, but with a strong entrepreneurial vision.
8. Establish new aerial access routes to Vieques to facilitate the arrival to the Island of all the people impacted for a tourism campaign strategically designed.

Vieques: 2013 Panorama

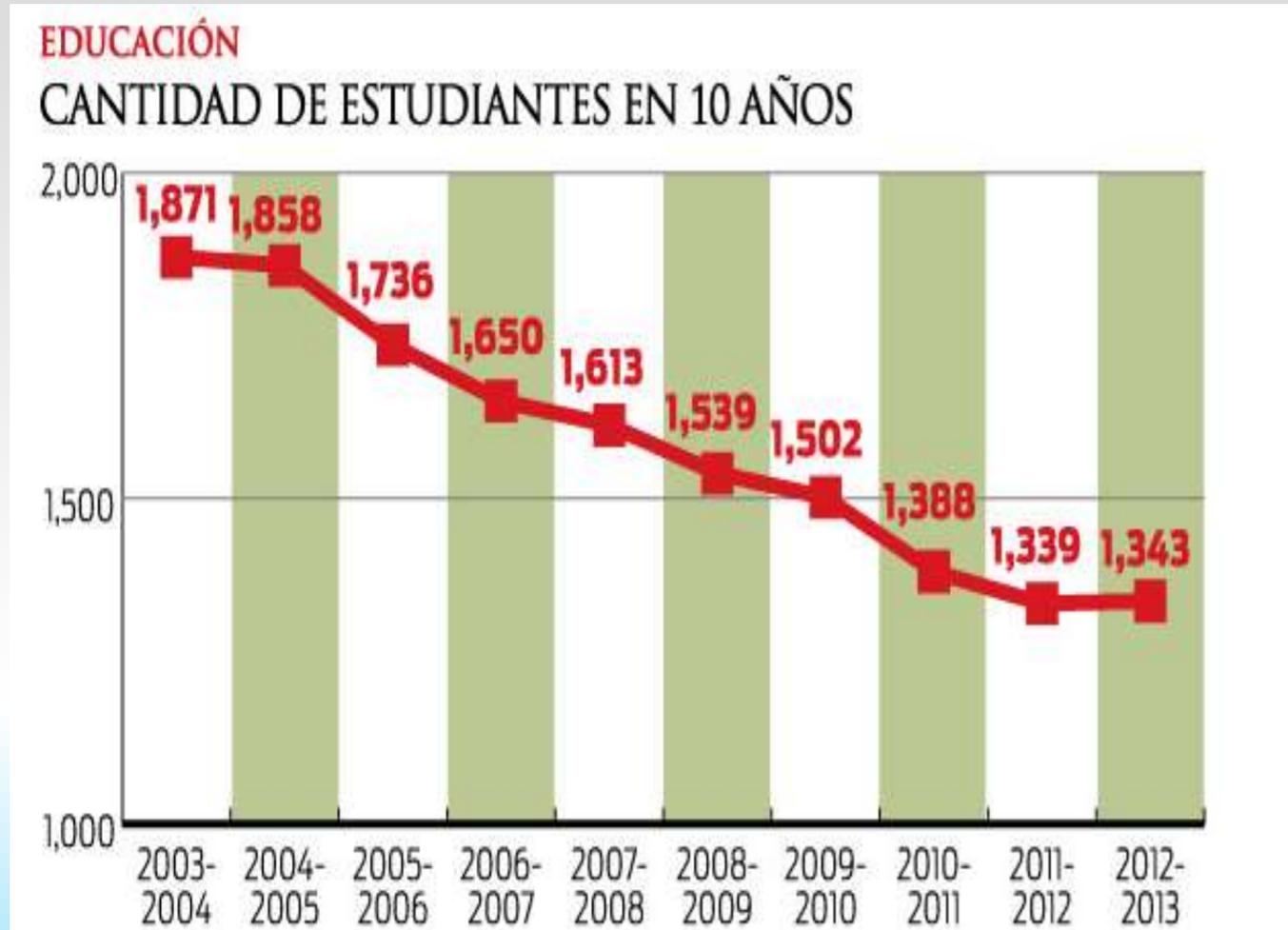


Vieques: 2013 Panorama

Vieques cancer rate



Vieques: 2013 Panorama



Amount of Students in 10 years

Students graduating from High School

Fuente: Departamento de Educación

GRADUADOS DE ESCUELA SUPERIOR

