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UBUNTU



Agenda
Ciudadana

PUERTO RICO HAS ANSWERS Fundación Agenda Ciudadana

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MISSION

To facilitate the processes of dialogue, agreements, collaboration and alliances among all sectors, based on citizen empowerment, participatory democracy, transparency and accountability in order to build a nation based on sustainability, solidarity and equality.

VISION

We aspire to be a country with education, solidarity, prosperity and democracy with citizens that are competent, active, conscientious and collaborative.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

Fundación Agenda Ciudadana is a non-profit organization incorporated in 2011. It began as a project created by the newspaper El Nuevo Día and in collaboration with the *Corporación de Apoyo a Programas Educativos y Comunitarios, Inc.* [Corporation for the Support of Education and Community Programs] and the support of Telemundo, Channel 2. It is a non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and a 501 (c) 3 federally certified organization.

I. Necessary reforms in Puerto Rico to achieve sustainable growth and development and prosperity:

- **Puerto Rico's Healthcare System Reform:** As it is currently designed, we know that the healthcare system will face financing challenges by 2018. The system must be reformed to ensure its sustainability and to enable that services are provided to more than 50% of the indigent population, including the population that does not have a healthcare plan or access to services. Having matching funds from Medicaid and Medicare helps but does not solve the problem.
- **Public School System Reform:** Almost one third of the national budget is invested in the public school system and we know that this investment has not guaranteed a high quality education, reduced the drop-out rates nor ensured that teachers and students are prepared to face the challenges of the 21st century. The public school system must be reformed to ensure that future generations of citizens will be educated from their early childhood years to their



post high school years. Without this guarantee, Puerto Rico will not be able to overcome its permanent crisis.

- **Macro and Micro Economic Reforms to reduce dependency, inequality and achieve prosperity at all levels from a participatory and inclusive process:** “According to the latest World Economic Forum report, Puerto Rico is number 36 out of 144 countries. This lag is largely due to its weak microeconomic stability, its labor laws, its tax system, its high energy costs, its obsolete education system and its high dependency on social welfare” (Gustavo Vélez; August 8). Citizen initiatives and proposals in all of these areas should be considered so as not to depend solely on government and/or political party decisions to guarantee their implementation.

II. Obstacles that must be eliminated to enable the desired growth:

- **Political party favoritism** and/or the influence of political parties and campaign contributors to obtain economic benefits or public policies that delay or devalue the development of the country at all levels.
- **Centralization** of the decision-making process on public issues that require multiple sectors and society in general.
- **Bureaucracy** that delays the implementation of projects and leads to conditions prone to corruption and the proper use of public resources.

III. Implementation of short-, medium- and long-term proposals to reduce poverty among families, create employment, achieve savings and promote the necessary stability in order to attract local and international investment:

- **Include the Multisectorial Healthcare Council of Puerto Rico** and be designated as the Advisory Council as required by Federal Law 431.12 to guarantee the design of a sustainable healthcare system for Puerto Rico. The Multisectorial Healthcare Council was created under Law 235 and was approved by multiple sectors and political parties in 2015 and complies with the parameters established by said federal law. Its focus is to guarantee an integrated and affordable healthcare system of the highest quality for all citizens.
- **Approve a medium- and long-term Education Plan** for Puerto Rico that guarantees that the public school system will be decentralized and not be adversely affected by political party favoritism or bureaucracy (from pre-school to high school education). It is recommended that a participatory design be



implemented, in which the community participates and shares responsibility for the success of education in each school. (There is a current bill in both the House and Senate.)

- **Implement the Early Childhood National Plan**, which was passed in August of 2015 and is part of Law 93 (2008) and which seeks to guarantee the education and development of children and their families, guaranteeing the health, education, and socio-economic needs that could reduce the poverty and violence that affects over 60% of the families in Puerto Rico. This Plan is a product of consensus among multiple sectors and political parties and proposes short-, medium- and long-term measurement tools that comply with the federal laws.
- **Approve and implement public policies as proposed by the organization *Juntos por PR* [Together for Puerto Rico] which focuses on five strategies to enable socio-economic growth and development.** This Project is short-, medium- and long-term; is supported by multiple sectors and political parties; addresses economic development with a strategy to attract investment, promote local services globally, develop businesses from its micro to its multinational status, all based on assets the Island has and which have not either been fully or yet developed. Some examples are the visitor economy, green companies, and intellectual capital export. This organization presented a citizen-backed bill that aims at creating and implementing a strategic national plan that will be led by multi-sectorial agreements that have been endorsed by all political parties.
- **Promote and support the implementation of proposals and projects for the youth (ages 18-34) *Somos el Ahora* [We Are The Now].** In order to reduce emigration, the informal and illegal economy and guarantee the stability and prosperity of future generations, there must be well-thought out and specific efforts addressing the 18-34 age population, which represents more than 60% of the annual emigration in Puerto Rico. This can be guaranteed with a public policy that includes said population in the design of business activities, labor and education conditions that can compete with the offers they receive in other countries or in the informal and illegal economy. *Somos el Ahora* has diagnosed the problem and is proposing strategies and policies that could specifically help this population, which represents more than 20% of the entire population and has the highest indicators of poverty and social marginalization and insecurity of Puerto Rico.



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