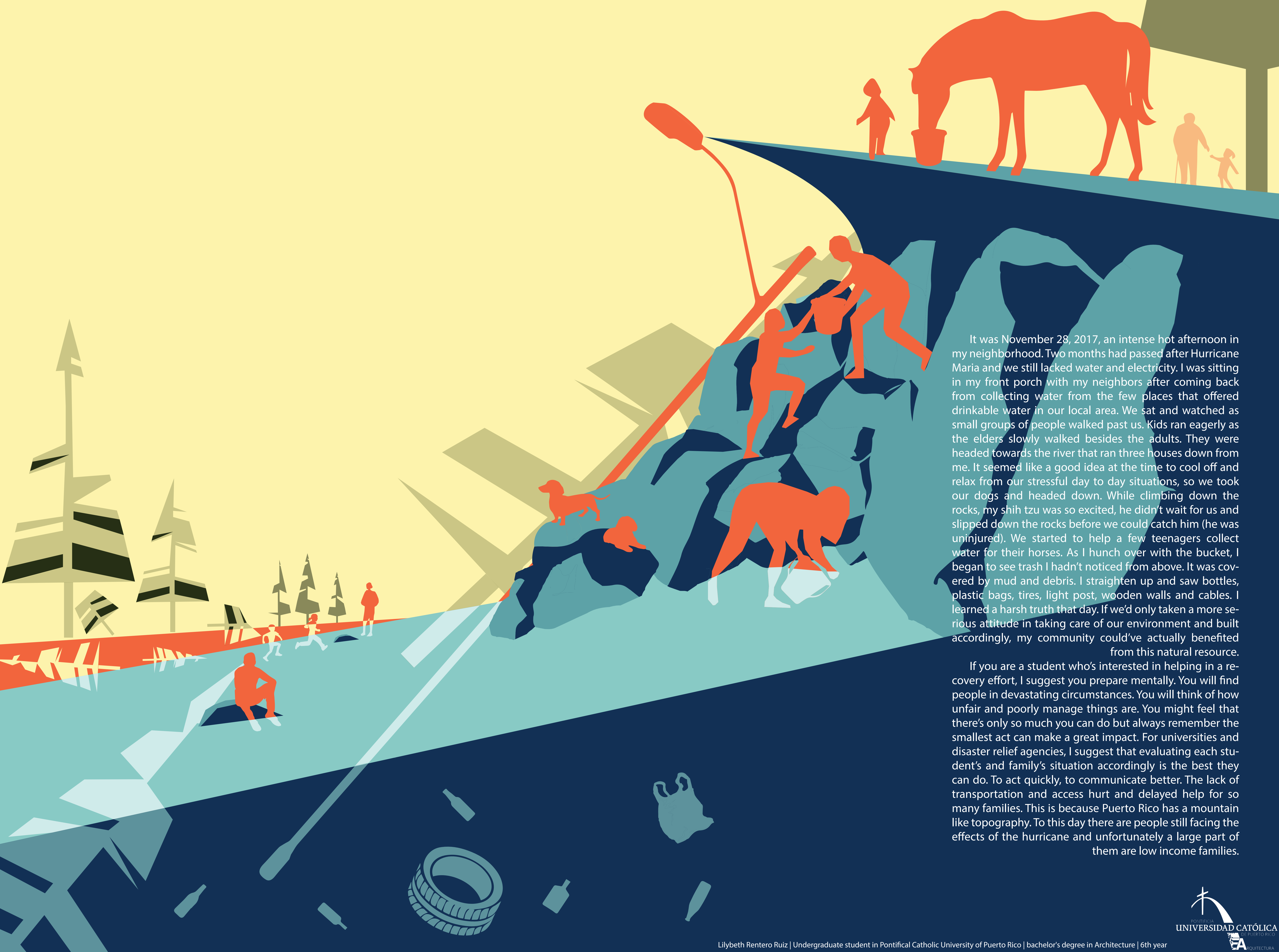


WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND



It was November 28, 2017, an intense hot afternoon in my neighborhood. Two months had passed after Hurricane Maria and we still lacked water and electricity. I was sitting in my front porch with my neighbors after coming back from collecting water from the few places that offered drinkable water in our local area. We sat and watched as small groups of people walked past us. Kids ran eagerly as the elders slowly walked besides the adults. They were headed towards the river that ran three houses down from me. It seemed like a good idea at the time to cool off and relax from our stressful day to day situations, so we took our dogs and headed down. While climbing down the rocks, my shih tzu was so excited, he didn't wait for us and slipped down the rocks before we could catch him (he was uninjured). We started to help a few teenagers collect water for their horses. As I hunch over with the bucket, I began to see trash I hadn't noticed from above. It was covered by mud and debris. I straighten up and saw bottles, plastic bags, tires, light post, wooden walls and cables. I learned a harsh truth that day. If we'd only taken a more serious attitude in taking care of our environment and built accordingly, my community could've actually benefited from this natural resource.

If you are a student who's interested in helping in a recovery effort, I suggest you prepare mentally. You will find people in devastating circumstances. You will think of how unfair and poorly manage things are. You might feel that there's only so much you can do but always remember the smallest act can make a great impact. For universities and disaster relief agencies, I suggest that evaluating each student's and family's situation accordingly is the best they can do. To act quickly, to communicate better. The lack of transportation and access hurt and delayed help for so many families. This is because Puerto Rico has a mountain like topography. To this day there are people still facing the effects of the hurricane and unfortunately a large part of them are low income families.