

Topic: ***Educational recycling platform***

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Date: *January 26, 2023*

Problem Background:

- In Puerto Rico, the problem is exacerbated by the island's lack of effective plastic recycling efforts. Despite the allocation of funds for recycling, the Department of Recycling in Puerto Rico has been unable to effectively utilize these resources to improve the recycling rate.
- The Department of Recycling in Puerto Rico receives an annual budget of \$922,000, but in 2020, only \$278,000 of that budget was used in total, and only 5% of that was used to educate people about recycling.
- As a result, the island's recycling rate remains low, the goal of the government during the past 10 years was to get to 35% of waste recycling, in 2021, only 14% of waste was recycle.

Target

1. Increase public awareness and understanding of the recycling process, with a long-term goal of reducing plastic waste around, and in, the island.
2. Provide plastic recycling education in Puerto Rico and propose potential solutions and best practices.

Causes

FEW PEOPLE IN PUERTO RICO HAVE GOOD KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HOW TO RECYCLE.

Why?

PUERTO RICO GENERATES AROUND 4 MILLION TONS OF SOLID WASTE PER YEAR.

Why?

EACH PERSON IN PUERTO RICO GENERATES AN AVERAGE OF 5 LBS. OF WASTE PER DAY.

Why?

PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WHAT THINGS CAN BE RECYCLED AND WHAT CAN'T.

Why?

PEOPLE LACK INFORMATION THAT'S ACCESSIBLE TO ANYONE AT ANYTIME OF THE DAY.

Why?

PEOPLE NEED A PLATFORM THAT IS ACCESSIBLE AND SIMPLE WHERE THEY CAN GATHER ALL THE INFORMATION THEY COULD NEED, SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECT WITH OTHERS IN ORDER TO CREATE AWARENESS AND GET MOTIVATION TO RECYCLE MORE.

Countermeasures

- Increase the recycling rate, reduce plastic waste on the island, and improve the overall efficiency of waste management in Puerto Rico by providing a web platform for the community to connect and share information, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.
- Reach as many citizens as possible, with available information in Spanish and English to ensure accessibility for all.
- Provide effective and comprehensive information like:
 - Information on the recycling process, including how to properly sort and prepare materials for recycling.
 - Details on the types of materials that can and cannot be recycled.
 - A calendar of local recycling events and opportunities to get involved in community cleanups and other volunteer activities.
 - A simple interactive map about the different places people can take their wastes to be recycled.
- Connect people by: Forums for users to share tips, ask questions, and connect with other recycling enthusiasts in their community. User accounts features that will allow users to track their recycling efforts, set recycling goals, and earn rewards for their participation. Interactive quizzes and games to test user's knowledge and understanding of recycling.

Check/Evaluate

- The growth of the platform can evaluate if the information was accessible to different people.
- A survey with the format of star-rating can evaluate the quality of the information as well as the tips.
- Failure will be denoted by lack of users on the platform, low ratings on the tips and information, and by no users interaction with the web platform.

Act/Standardize

- Users feedback on surveys and star-ratings on the tips and information provided will be taken into consideration in order to make information accessible and simple to everyone.
- The idea of creating an application of the website for better associability.
- Promote the platform on different social medias and contact the government department in charge of this area for a better exposure to the public.