

THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT

2023 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Reducing the Literacy Gap in Puerto Rico Households

Todos a Leer Coalition

THE CHALLENGE – Help educational organizations, government and the public gain a more robust understanding of Puerto Rican parents' and children's literacy, access to reading materials, and use of literacy skills.

EXECUTIVE CHAMPION –

Carlos Rodriguez, Executive Director, Fundación Flamboyán

THE PROBLEM – Since 2017, students in Puerto Rico have suffered the impact of hurricanes, earthquakes, and a pandemic. The compounding impact of events has aggravated the academic lag that already existed. All the available information that we have analyzed points to a critical aspect of this lag: the percentage of Puerto Rican children who cannot read or do not read at grade level. Only [11% of 1st grade students, 6% of 2nd graders, and only 1% of 3rd grade students can read at their grade level](#). It is imperative to remedy this reality. Reading levels are a way of determining the reading skills a student already has. They measure a child's reading comprehension and fluency, using a variety of factors like phoneme awareness, decoding, vocabulary, and more. Teachers use reading levels to understand what a student knows and what they need to work on. For example, a teacher might share that a student is reading at, above, or below level. The development of language and literacy (especially between kindergarten and third grade) is key to the well-being of children, for their future academic success and to have an informed, critical, and active citizenry, who can insert themselves into the world of work and contribute economically and socially to their communities. Nevertheless, to this day we do not have baseline numbers of what is the real level of literacy in Puerto Rico due to the lack of periodic assessment and data.

THE OPPORTUNITY – To help provide this critical information, we need to develop tech and analog solutions that can better collect and assess data about Puerto Rican students' literacy level and their progress, ensuring they have access to necessary materials and resources and better measure how much they use their literacy skills daily. Capturing the data through assessments, surveys, and other collection means will make it possible to establish a baseline and develop initiatives that help close the existing literacy gap. Also, it can be used to assess and monitor progress of policies' establishment towards national and international literacy-related goals.

VISION FOR SPRINT OUTCOMES – Create a baseline that will help identify needs and develop targeted intervention strategies to track progress that help overcome the literacy gap that exists today in order to monitor progress.

TARGET END USERS – Government agencies, community leaders, non-profit education related organizations, families, caregivers, school directors, teachers and other education stakeholders.

RELATED DATA SETS

- ↳ U.S. Census Bureau [American Community Survey data on the PR literacy gap](#)
- ↳ [National Reporting System for Adult Education](#)
- ↳ [Our World in Data](#) (OWID)
- ↳ Edge Open Data [Public School Characteristics 2020-21](#) | [Public School Characteristics 2020-21](#) | [National Center for Education Statistics](#)
- ↳ [Puerto Rico Department of Education School Report Cards](#)

SPRINT LEADERS

- ↳ Maria 'Baby' Jaunarena, Member, Coalition's Board of Directors (Colibrí Foundation), baby@colibripr.org
- ↳ Hazel Colón, Member, Coalition's Board of Directors (Titín Foundation), hcolon@titinpr.org
- ↳ Carmen Denton, Coalition's Coordinator, coalicion@todosaleer.org
- ↳ Coral Aponte , Coalition's Organization Representative, caponte@flamboyanfoundation.org