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# BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2024-MARCH 2025

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# BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## Performance Progress Report

**Grantee:** University of Puerto Rico – Mayaguez Campus

**Project Title:** A US Caribbean Regional Proposal for Innovation & Business Development within Puerto Rico & U.S. Virgin Island

**Project Number:** ED21PHI3030013

**Period covered by the report:** 09/01/2024 - 03/31/2025

**Reporting period end date:** March 31, 2025

**Report Prepared by:** Dr. Moraima De Hoyos - Ruperto (PI)

## Narrative

The Business & Economic Development Center (BEDC), a University Center at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus, as part of the Caribbean Regional UC completed all the tasks in our scope of work: **job creation (9), job retention (6), and its investment (\$492,945)** and the **UVI-CELL at University of Virgin Island (UVI)** with **job created (5), job retention (25) and its investment (\$50,312.50)**. The Caribbean Regional UC proposes to provide specific activities through the BEDC at UPRM, and the UVI-CELL, which includes, providing technical assistance, conducting applied research and dissemination as part of the economic development activities. Three mayor categories of innovation activities proposed are: 1) technical assistance to innovators and existing businesses; 2) applied research through allied centers and courses, and 3) dissemination of all activities that impact economic development in the region. Regarding the direct service to clients the BEDC during this period received **93 new service solicitations**. We provided an approximately **59 hours of one-on-one assistance**. A group of **31 intern students**, with **15 graduate students** among them, offered technical assistance in their different areas of specialization to businesses, under the supervision of our mentor's professors and business specialists. The BEDC continue as the hub of the **UPRM E-Ship Network**. As ecosystem builder we support all the efforts to expand the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region. Our more close partners are the NSF I-Corps Site UPRM, Echar Pa'Lante of Banco Popular, Engine 4, PRIMEX, West Chamber of Commerce, Gravital Agency, Patent and Trademark Resource Center at UPRM, and Colmena 66 of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust (PRTRUST). Additionally, during this period the NPO-SIED Program finished after two (2) years, having assisted over forty (40) Non Profit Organizations. Also, in September 2024, began the new EDA proposal, Post Award Grants Management Technical Assistance Program (PAGM-TAB) for next two (2) years. Finally, the \$200,000, granted by Banco Popular of Puerto Rico in the previous period for our Seed Fund program were received and distributed, impacting twenty-five (25) existing companies.

### Beyond these completed tasks and assignments, we would like to highlight the following:





- Dr. Leila Marcano, a collaborator professor, continued for a third year proposal to Echar Pa'Lante Program at Banco Popular. During August to December 2024, the program provided seeded fund (\$5,000) to 25 of our existing companies with 3.5 years or more in operation.
- The **CNDE Improvement Team**, compose by students led by the Industrial Engineering Professor Lourdes Medina, developed a series of workshops and activities to promote a culture of continuing improvement between all the staff (professors, undergraduate and graduate students). During this period 3 **capacitation's** were provided, 1 **Kaizen Event** and 2 **professional development training** on subjects related to the center's services, for a total of 9 hours of training to the all the personnel.
- The magazine UPRM E-ship Network La Revista, developed by a group of students, is currently in its sixteenth volume. The main subject during this last volume was to offer people the opportunity to see the history the BEDC now that their fortieth anniversary is coming up.

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As part of the US Caribbean Regional Proposal for Innovation & Business Development the University of Virgin Island-CELL reported:



- Successfully recruited 15 businesses throughout the USVI with the intentions of providing entrepreneurship, workforce development. Mostly existing business and few startups and ideas.
- During November to March, we have 7 group coaching sessions and 25 one-on-one coaching and mentoring.
- In January, UC researched a pilot program to have an entrepreneur art program.
- All activities conducted to date have benefited our distressed and underserved community. All participating businesses are low income and minority-owned who have been traditionally underserved.

## Activity Summary









| Activity  | Task  | Benefits/Outcome/Impact  | During this Period |
|---|---|--|--------------------|
| <p>Technical Assistance and Innovator Existing Businesses</p>  | <p>Assistance includes workshops, seminars, one-on-one and group meetings, as well as other activities to support entrepreneurs with professionals and help them expand their networks.</p> | <p><b>BEDC-UPRM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>17 startups</b> and <b>32 potential entrepreneurs</b> (in the developing idea stage) received technical assistance in marketing, funding requests, programs applications, business plan, government regulations, Intellectual Property, Copyrights, pitch mentoring, among others.</li> <li>• In this period, five (5) startups received investments of <b>\$5,475 (in-kind)</b>. In this period, one of the potential entrepreneurs, Fund &amp; Brand Solutions (a business consulting and management agency), became a startup with our assistance. Handlez, startup assisted, <b>won a prize of 10,000</b> on Entreprize Competition to Grupo Guayacán.</li> <li>• <b>14 existing businesses</b> received technical assistance in the development of a compensation plan, business plan, marketing, funding requests, programs referrals, intellectual property, copyrights, among others. Assisted companies received investments of <b>\$200,000 (cash)</b>, and <b>\$232,800 (in-kind)</b>, for a <b>total of \$432,800</b>. Those businesses <b>retained 6 employees</b> and <b>created 9 new jobs</b>. Two of those existing business, El Sión and Next Cycle Foods <b>won a prizes of \$35,000 (\$25,000 and \$10,000, respectively)</b> on Entreprize Competition to Grupo Guayacán.</li> </ul> <div>    </div> |                    |
|   |   | <p><b>UVI-CELL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs received services with a UVI CELL consultants and the GCSEN Entrepreneur coaches to include aspects of marketing, funding request, program applications as well as technical assistance.</li> <li>• 45 coaching sessions were made, from which the participants learned how to make pitch decks, business plans, marketing plan and the were given the opportunity to either built or update said documents.</li> </ul>   |                    |












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| Activity   | Task  | Benefits/Outcome/Impact   | During this Period |
|--|---|---|--------------------|
| <p>Applied research through allied centers and courses</p>  | <p>Identifying a specific challenge or problem to be addressed by the entrepreneur; determine courses, centers, programs that may assist the client and are available in the entrepreneurial network; facilitate the process to connect the entrepreneur with a resource.</p> | <p><b>BEDC-UPRM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Seventeen (17) undergraduate students</b> from the course of Business Plan (ADMI 3150) worked with eight of our entrepreneur clients: Fenedas Boutique, Partfinder, Vio's Creations, Crafterboards, Jannette Batista, Crecimiento NPO, Cooperativa de Camioneros and June6 by Kathiely. The BEDC's personnel provided support to students in the research and analytical processes. Therefore, we estimate a contribution of <b>\$16,000 in-kind</b> through their services provided to our clients.</li> <li>• <b>Thirty one (31) undergraduate students</b> from the course of Project Management, Industrial Engineering Faculty (ININ 4090) worked with three clients: Los Teques (two separate projects at once), Vio's Creations, and "Parques Imaginarios". We estimate an <b>in-kind contribution of \$228,800</b>, the reation of <b>six (6) new jobs</b> through the services provided to our clients, and the <b>retention of six (6) employees</b>.</li> <li>• Professor Glennys Rivera and Doctor David Santiago both served as a resources on the professional development program called CRECEN of the College of Business Administration, impacting twenty four (24) potential entrepreneur and twenty (23) between volunteers and officers to a Non Profit Organization and potential Non Profit Organizations.</li> <li>• <b>Thirty one (31) innovation interns, at undergraduate (16) and graduate level (15)</b>, participated directly in their service to clients and the development of entrepreneurship ecosystem activities, as part of the different BEDC programs. Students worked on the idea generation process, business consulting, marketing, information systems, accounting, and other business areas such as web developing, project management, while strengthening the ecosystem. These innovation interns brought their own set of expertise from their university studies and incorporated themselves into services offered by BEDC.</li> <li>• Currently, <b>thirteen (13) professors, twenty-two (22) students</b> (graduates and sub graduates), and administrative staff compose the BEDC team to supervise and manage all the programs.</li> <li>• Currently, <b>two hundred and fifty (250) entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs</b> are registered in the <b>I&amp;E Virtual Education Program</b>.</li> </ul> <div>   </div> |                    |

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| Activity  | Task   | Benefits/Outcome/Impact   | During this Period  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Dissemination of all activities that impact economic development in the region</p>  | <p>Outreach efforts to make the BEDC programs publicly known and share the diverse opportunities available in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.</p> | <p><b>BEDC-UPRM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the collaboration of PRIMEX, Banco Popular, USPTO, Mayaguez Patent and Trademark Resource Center, Department of Economic Development and Commerce - Government of PR, Women in Business Inc, Pre18, PRTRUST, Evolving Space, among others they offered more than <b>eighteen (18)</b> events. Some of the events are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taller de la Evolución de la Mente del Consumidor</li> <li>Women Economic Forum</li> <li>Neuromarketing</li> <li>Buzzly Webinar</li> <li>BioLeap</li> <li>AgroHack MeetUp</li> <li>Taller Diseño Industrial</li> <li>AI for Entrepreneur</li> <li>3D Printing 101</li> <li>Valentines 3D Workshop</li> <li>Networking Area E Market</li> <li>FuckUP Day</li> </ul> </li> <li>Prof. Glennys Rivera, Dr. Moraima De Hoyos and others BEDC staff participated in various radios interviews and speakers in different activities, talking about the entrepreneurship and motivating a futures entrepreneur.</li> </ul> |        |

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| Activity  | Task   | Benefits/Outcome/Impact  | During this Period  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Dissemination of all activities that impact economic development in the region</p>  | <p>Outreach efforts to make the UVI CELL programs publicly known and share the diverse opportunities available in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.</p> | <p><b>UVI-CELL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated in Afternoon on the Green, a networking event that assist an average 2,000 people. In the activity we promoted UVI-CELL and encouraged people to sign up for the next programs.</li> <li>UVI CELL EDA University Center continued an outreach effort campaign to support and promote program participants.</li> <li>The Center Director and Manager attended several community engagement events promoting the program, the resources and the courses.</li> <li>They also continued reaching out to UVI auxiliary groups and related community groups on potential collaborations for the participants and supporters for the program.</li> </ul> |    |
|   |  |      |    |



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## Timeline

The Business & Economic Development Center (BEDC), a University Center (UC) at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus (UPRM) for **39 years**, and the Center of Excellence in Leadership (UVI CELL) compose the Caribbean Regional University Center (CRUC). During this period, we **created 14 jobs, have retained 31 jobs, and investments \$543,257.50.**

| BEDC<br>UPRM                 | September 1, 2024<br>to March 31, 2025 | UVI<br>CELL                              | September 1,<br>2024 to March<br>31, 2025 | Total 2024-2025<br>September to<br>March |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Jobs Created<br>Goal: 25     | 9                                      | Jobs Created<br>Goal: 2                  | 5   | 14                                       |
| Jobs Retained<br>Goal: 50    | 6                                      | Jobs Retained<br>Goal: 25                | 25  | 31                                       |
| Investment:<br>Goal: 500K-1M | \$492,945                              | Investment<br>Goal:<br>\$25,000-\$50,000 | \$50,312.50                               | \$543,257.50                             |



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## Milestone

### Anticipated Impact by Program Milestones -UPRM & UVI

| Program Milestones   | UPRM<br>Benchmark<br>Metrics<br>per Year<br>PI:<br>Pre-incubation<br>Businesses | UPRM<br>Benchmark<br>Metrics<br>per Year<br>GB:<br>Growing<br>Businesses | UVI<br>Benchmark<br>Metrics<br>per Year<br>PI:<br>Pre-incubation<br>Businesses | UVI<br>Benchmark<br>Metrics<br>per Year<br>GB:<br>Growing<br>Businesses | UPRM + UVI<br>Metrics<br>September<br>2024 through<br>March 31, 2025<br>PI:<br>Pre-incubation | UPRM + UVI<br>Metrics<br>September<br>2024 through<br>March 31,<br>2025<br>GB:<br>Growing<br>Business |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| <b>1. Technical Assistance<br/>(TA)</b>  |   |  |  |   |   |   |
| 1.1 Educational Program<br>(S&A)- I&E VMP  | 10  | 5  | 5  | 2   | 52  | 52  |
| 1.2 One - on-One TA  | 50  | 5  | 10   | 3   | 51  | 17  |
| 1.3 Mentorship program   | 13  | 3  | 5  | 2   | 17  | 3   |
| <b>2. Applied Research<br/>Efforts</b>   |   |  |  |   |   |   |
| 2.1 Challenge Identification<br>And plan Development                             | 15  | 5  | 5  | 2   | 15  | 8   |
| 2.2 Resource Identification-<br>Matching Process                                 | 15  | 5  | 3  | 2   | 7   | 1   |
| 2.3 Successful Completion<br>of AR Program                                       | 7   | 3  | 2  | 2   | 6   | 8   |
| <b>3. Dissemination<br/>Efforts</b>  |   |  |  |   |   |   |
| 3.1 Outreach Activities  | 4   | 4  | 2  | 2   | 17  | 17  |
| 3.2 Engagement Businesses<br>and Potential Entrepreneurs<br>(Solicitation of TA) | 75  | 10   | 10   | 5   | 241   | 241   |
| 3.3 Successful Completion<br>of PI or GB Program                                 | 25  | 5  | 5  | 2   | 20  | 16  |



## Client and Ecosystem Building Success Stories

### El Sión



El Sión is a family owned peruvian cuisine food truck in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. It has been open for almost twenty (20) years and it is run by/with the parents of UPRM graduate student Vicente León Saavedra. Vicente won \$10,000 in the Enterprize Competition with the exclusive and unique “Huancaína” sauce and his “pique” sauce. The prize also included an exclusive distribution contract for the sauce with B. Fernandez y Hnos., Inc., a renowned food distributor in Puerto Rico.

### Parques Imaginarios



Parques Imaginarios is a series of stories where others create fun stories inspired by real places that capture children's imaginations to help them reach their full learning potential. It was founded by Luz Bonilla in 2016 and was recently awarded \$2,000 in the Intensive Gen.3 Demo Day Competition of Fase 1.

**In February 2025, the UVI Center for Excellence in Leadership and Learning (UVI-CELL) opened a new CELL on the island of Saint John.**



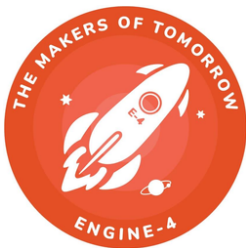
## Challenges and Mitigation

The BEDC with 39 years of relationship with EDA, still working with the administration to overcome the challenges at the accounting office to stay the invoicing and other financing things updated. Dr. De Hoyos agreed assist them through our administrative officer who help them in the reconciliation process and other reports. For UVI-CELL the biggest challenge are the additional funds need to paid the personnel for the continuity of the program.



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The BEDC continue as a hub of the *UPRM E-ship Network* serving as a role models to the other campuses and organizations in the process of strengthening and developing their I&E Ecosystem. During this period we continue supporting several allied programs such as the Engine 4, CFP of the "Resarch Grants Program", SBIR Comitte and "Phase I" of the PRSTRUST, I-Corps RUM, Guayacán, Pre18, Venturewell, Puerto Rico Manufacturing Extension, Patent and Trademark Resource Center at UPRM, among others. We still collaborate with projects related to CDBG-DR grants, such as CRECEN. We continue leveraging our impact on Puerto Rico's west side, through collaboration with programs such as West Chamber of Commerce, Mercado Colegial, among others. In the case of UVI-CELL they work closely with the GCSEN, Office of Veteran Affairs, Digital Lending Innovation .



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## Press Engagements / Opportunities:

(please see press release for details)

Examples of media coverage of the BEDC's accomplishments, its clients and partnership initiatives.



**Figure 1:**  
<https://www.elnuevodia.com/negocios/empresas-comercios/notas/de-estudiante-y-empleado-a-fundador-de-la-fresqueria-y-otros-negocios-en-el-oeste/>

educador y te interesa llevar esta maravillosa actividad a tus estudiantes, contáctanos por todos los detalles o haz clic aquí para más información: [www.parquesimaginarios.com/lectura](http://www.parquesimaginarios.com/lectura)  
 #Lectura #ParquesImaginarios #Escuela #CuentoInfantil #Maestros #Niños



**Figure 2:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/100063557264841/posts/1017599123701987/?rdid=uIjeW8VkkK7A7Fmf8>



**Figure 3:**  
<https://recuperacion.pr.gov/por-onza-venta-de-alimentos-por-peso-y-sin-empaques-para-la-conservacion/>



**Figure 4:**  
[https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=1130324632435292&id=100063732962520&mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=14AxlAe6z0dq51kb](https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1130324632435292&id=100063732962520&mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=14AxlAe6z0dq51kb)

## Press Engagements / Opportunities:

Examples of media coverage of the Center's accomplishments, its clients and partnership initiatives.



**Figure 5:**

<https://www.facebook.com/100072406809686/posts/667848275638727/?rdid=Pittr7hdQINE4DTX#>



**Figure 6:**

[https://www.uvi.edu/news/2025/25\\_027\\_empoweru\\_youth\\_summit\\_2025.html](https://www.uvi.edu/news/2025/25_027_empoweru_youth_summit_2025.html)