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Sustainable Development Goal #4:

Quality Education

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The acronym SDG belongs to the term of Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 agenda on the SDGs was adopted in 2015 by the states belonging to the United Nations. *This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan.* [Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations]. The agenda is made up of 17 objectives. [Puerto Rico is within the countries of the United Nations; therefore, it is part of the countries that promote compliance with the objectives of the SDGs.](#) It is important that these objectives are fulfilled to have a more just and harmonious world. A world with equal rights and opportunities for all.

This is a call to action that we will respond by getting to know in a deeper way one of the SDGs created and aimed to address one of the social problems that we are facing these days, education. The SDGs 4 which is named as “Quality Education” has as its definition *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.* [Definition by the United Nations]

So, what it means to have quality education? Having quality education should provide the necessary resources such as safe and comfortable environment where child's feel emotionally supported and have access to personalized learning provided by qualified teachers. This type of education prepares the child to be productive for the society and to participate by having a voice and knowledge about the global matters. An education that doesn't necessarily categorize children by their academic percentage but rather measures knowledge through the implementation of tasks that help develop children's skills and critical thinking. All of this, with the support of the integration of other services provided by the community. To prove this, the two leading education organizations, that represent over 30 millions of educators, (ASCD: "Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development" and EL: "Education International") made this statement: *"A quality education is the one that focuses on the whole child, social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or geographic location. It prepares the child for life, not just for testing."* [ASCD and EL]. To accomplish this the SDGs 4 "Quality Education" established 10 targets:

- Quality primary/ secondary education for all
- Early childhood and Pre-primary education
- Equal access to Higher Education
- Skills for a decent work
- Gender equality and equal access for all
- Youth and adult literacy
- Sustainable development and global citizenship

- Safe and inclusive learning environments
- Scholarships for higher education
- Professional development of teachers

While researching about the SDG's goal #4 "Quality education" in Puerto Rico, we couldn't find information about Puerto Rico's progression towards making this Goal a reality. The goal of our researching was to find the statistics of improvement in every subdivision of the goal #4 "Quality Education" to make an accurate conclusion on the advancement of this goal. As mentioned before there is no statistics available on this goal. While researching we found that after hurricane Irma and Maria, the infrastructure of many schools was affected, this makes it difficult to provide a quality education. Despite not finding statistics that confirm that this goal is being achieved, we were able to find a project that promotes the SDGs 4, created by a passionate educator.

Reading Faces, an exemplary project of quality education. Reading Faces is an initiative carried out by especial education teacher Bryan M. Rivera Medina at the Mercedes Rosado school in Naranjito, Puerto Rico, with his autism students. The project is driven by the desire to provide students with emotional education through the use of artificial technology. Through the course of a series of phases where the student learns the recognition, regulation, and form of action in the face of emotions, they will be able to gain access to academic and functional skills. *"Positioning emotional education as the backbone of lasting learning for students with autism turns out to be the opening to a quality education that guarantees a hopeful future under a concept of*

accessibility and inclusion” [Bryan M. Rivera Medina]. Reading Faces not only has the goal of benefiting the student, but also seeks to impact, through the children, their families, and the community. Thus, being a promoter of quality education and the SDGs.

To promote and be a part of the action, you don't necessarily need to create an exemplary project, you can contribute with small details that are going to leave a mark and make a considerable difference, even though it could not be appreciable in the moment. Some ideas on how to act can be promoting or implementing Quality education by educating yourself and others. This can be done through the digital platform, where the opportunities of education in different subjects it's very accessible. Find a goal 4 charity that you can support by donating used books, school supplies or quality time helping. Stay informed about the Global Goals in the platforms and always have in mind that there's never a small action, every one of them contributes to the change when is related to the sustainable Development Goals.

As mentioned above, different factors such as Hurricane Maria have weakened our country's educational system, directly affecting the quality education that our children receive. We know that the purpose of SGDs is to foster a world with equal opportunities for all. Therefore, it is important that we care about the welfare of future generations. A simple gesture such as volunteering in schools and helping to improve infrastructure is extremely important as it not only guarantees a place to study for our children but also

provides them with greater security. We must remember that there are no small actions but big gestures.

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