

Case Study: Vieques, Puerto Rico: 2003-2007

Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative

SustainWDN™ Pathway: Leadership Development



Our Partners

- Municipality of Vieques
- Barrios Unidos
- Caribbean Artisan Network
- Cesar Chavez Foundation & Radio Campesino
- National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship
- Puerto Rico Governors Acevedo & Calderón
- Puerto Rico Tourism Authority
- Rock star, Tito Auger, the Bob Dylan of Puerto Rico

IMPACT

- Organized Economic Development Trip to Tortola, BVI
- Youth received 100 acres to develop green community.
- Developed **Train-the-Trainer Program** with VYLI youth to empower youth: Martha's Vineyard, Hawaii, Virgin Gorda

[Website](#) | [Press](#) • [Video](#):

The Institute developed four-year bi-lingual initiative using the *Pan Y Vino Para El Camino Curriculum* for a comprehensive youth leadership program to empower youth to develop skills, training and leadership to build a socially healthy and prosperous island.

The Challenges

- The island of Vieques is the poorest in all of Puerto Rico with highest school dropouts, teen pregnancy and alcohol-drug use.
- For 68 years, Vieques was occupied; its economy shut down; 10,000 adults left; elders and children on government assistance.
- Three generations of people didn't have jobs or work ethic
- Teachers protested by not teaching children English.
- Social-economic crisis: new tourism and real estate development
- Local people, esp. youth were unprepared for new jobs, economy
- "Brain-drain" –those with promise left for higher education.
- Young people had no hope or training for their future.

Strategic Implementation

- Developed [Report](#): *The Challenges Facing Vieques Youth*
- The Institute's Spanish speaking role models traveled to Vieques

Program

- Year-round weekly sessions after school program: Cultural Arts, Entrepreneurship, Sustainability and Technology
- Entrepreneurship Initiative sold handicrafts made by youth
- Raised funds; traveled to BVI to Caribbean Artisan Festival
- Job Shadow Days with local business leaders
- Sustainability Summits: 2004-2007
- Blue Economy Sustainability Tours
- Developed & presented VYLI's 2020 [Report](#) to Governor

Community Engagement Process

- Actor Edward James Olmos, Institute's Advisory Council
- Built public-private partnerships with local, national business

