



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

### **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the NEH Division of Preservation and Access application guidelines at <https://www.neh.gov/program/cultural-and-community-resilience> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Preservation and Access staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

**Project Title:** Collective Care: Oral Histories of Climate Change in Puerto Rico

**Institution:** University of Puerto Rico, Cayey University College

**Project Director:** Rosa Ficek

**Grant Program:** Cultural and Community Resilience

## Narrative

### Project goals and humanities content

#### *Introduction*

In recent years, Puerto Rico has faced a series of disasters that highlight the connections between climate change and colonialism. Hurricanes Irma and María (2017), the earthquake cluster (2020), the covid-19 pandemic (2020-), hurricane Fiona (2022), as well as the underlying debt crisis (2006-) have revealed how social injustices compound the effects of climate change by reproducing colonial power relations. These disasters also reveal the power of disadvantaged communities, often led by Afro-Puerto Rican women, to respond as agents who shape their own history and material conditions using tools and knowledge developed over generations to survive and resist colonialism. The University of Puerto Rico at Cayey requests a grant of \$149,962 from the National Endowment for the Humanities Cultural and Community Resilience Program to record and preserve oral histories about community-led disaster responses in Puerto Rico in partnership with three community-based organizations.

The project *Collective Care: Oral Histories of Climate Change in Puerto Rico* uses collaborative and participatory methods to document community experiences with climate change. The proposed project builds on work completed from 2018 to 2022 in partnership with eight communities and community-based organizations, the Digital Library of the Caribbean, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Activities have focused on identifying materials for preservation, creating spaces to support collective memory, and sharing these stories with communities and broader audiences. These efforts have led to born-digital collections at the UPR-Cayey and in community spaces, object collections at the NMAH, and a series of events, workshops and storytelling initiatives with communities aimed at deepening engagement with the project's materials and themes.

Research conducted through this project has found that communities respond to disasters through forms of solidarity that are connected to the ways enslaved persons in the Spanish hacienda system helped each other improve their material conditions and obtain their freedom. This solidarity, often organized around Black women's extended family and community networks, has continued to inform the ways disadvantaged communities respond to changing forms of colonial violence. Today, communities update and expand this knowledge to respond to the new challenges presented by climate change. The proposed oral histories will explore the solidarity that informs how communities responded to hurricane María five years ago. For the grant period (January 2024 – December 2025), the project's goals are to 1) record 22 oral histories in partnership with three community organizations, and 2) preserve and build digital access to the oral histories at the UPR-Cayey.

#### *Climate change and community resilience in Puerto Rico*

When Hurricanes Irma and María made landfall in September 2017, Puerto Rico was already in ruins. A staggering \$70 billion in government debt had led to reduced employment, the decay of government services and infrastructure, and increased migration to the United States. With a rate of 44.4% the year of the storms, poverty in Puerto Rico was significantly greater than the U.S. national rate of 13.1% and more than double the poverty rate of Mississippi, one of the poorest states.<sup>1</sup> Politically and socially, the collapse of the populist welfare state provoked a crisis in national narratives that had promised better material conditions in the future, together with a major reassessment of the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. Meanwhile, human-driven climate change has generated new kinds of environmental changes in the Atlantic world. Scientists have found that warming ocean temperatures are likely to cause stronger and more destructive hurricanes.<sup>2</sup> Hurricanes Irma and María, category 4 and 5 storms, demonstrated a pattern of rapid intensification that scientists associate with global warming.<sup>3</sup>

Debt and climate change collided in September 2017, marking a before and after for Puerto Rico. The hurricanes destroyed the entire archipelago, leading to a humanitarian emergency in which people

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Glassman, "A Third of Movers from Puerto Rico to the Mainland United States Relocated to Florida in 2018" (United States Census Bureau, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Tom Knutson, "Global Warming and Hurricanes. An Overview of Current Research Results," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory (2021).

<sup>3</sup> Jeff Berardelli, "Climate Change is Making Hurricanes More Dangerous," *Yale Climate Connections* (2019).

lacked access to food, water, power, and medical care for months. An estimated 4,645 people lost their lives, a disaster deadlier than Hurricane Katrina.<sup>4</sup> The storm devastated the already precarious electrical grid, causing the largest blackout in U.S. history and the second largest in the world.<sup>5</sup> These conditions led thousands to migrate to the United States, remaking the diaspora.

Communities responded to the hurricane María emergency through their own internal structures. Diverse practices of solidarity and autonomous community organizing emerged to keep people alive and embark on the long process of reconstruction.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes this took the form of communities organizing neighborhood kitchens where people could access hot meals, such as the kitchens in Loíza created with support from the local organization **Taller Salud**, which we will document through oral histories as part of this project. In other places, communities formed neighborhood assemblies to improve water, transportation, and electrical infrastructure, rescue underutilized spaces, and build community gardens, such as the processes we will document with our partners the **Legal Psychological Clinic**. Community solidarity also informs the work of first responders, such as the amateur radio operators who volunteered to provide communications support to the Red Cross and government agencies after hurricane María, which we will document with the Puerto Rico section of the **American Relay Radio League**.

While autogestión, as these practices are called locally, gained public visibility in the aftermath of María, the culturally and historically specific form of solidarity that informs autogestión has its origins in the ways people survived plantation slavery and its afterlives in Puerto Rico. Historian Fernando Picó, for instance, has found that enslaved families in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries formed extensive kinship networks that created a platform through which people could obtain access to resources and acquire their freedom.<sup>7</sup> Anthropologist Hilda Llorens, in her recent book, connects community responses to hurricane María to the life-affirming practices of Afro Puerto Rican women who have ensured the survival of their families and communities for generations in conditions of extreme inequality.<sup>8</sup> The theme of solidarity has also emerged in oral histories recorded through the *Collective Care* project. For example, one resident of the Jájome Bajo community in Puerto Rico's central mountains made connections between the way her community came together after hurricane María and the solidarity she remembers among family and neighbors during her childhood:

God allows these things so that we can come together and—look, sometimes, before, when my mother was alive—my mother raised us on her own. Seventeen [brothers and sisters]... And my mother, we were many, but we never went to bed without eating. My mother would cook, my mother would give [food] to Artemia's father, to the sister of, of, to the aunt, whomever would come and eat. Because at home—the first television came to my mother's home—my mother's home, ours, was a temple, a church. And they gave it to my mother. And we all lived there together happy. And people would come and that was—they loved to be at home with us. We would play bingo, games... It was all something very good, you know. And my mother, the first plate of food would be for the neighbors. That was her custom. You know? She was not selfish. No. She was a very good person. Yes, she liked to share. And she taught me and I am like that. I like to share.

While hurricane María revealed how colonialism continues to shape Puerto Rican society, it also revealed the power of people, and especially racialized women, to intervene in a changing world

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<sup>4</sup> Nishant Kishore et al, "Mortality in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria," *New England Journal of Medicine* 379, no. 17 (2018): 162-170.

<sup>5</sup> Trevor Houser and Peter Marsters, "The World's Second Largest Blackout," Rhodium Group (2018).

<sup>6</sup> Adriana Garriga-López, "Debt, Crisis, and Resurgence in Puerto Rico," *Small Axe* 24, no. 62 (2020): 122-132; Beatriz Llenín Figueroa, "Puerto Rico como archipiélago-experimento de emancipación contra el poder: hacia nuestros futuros decoloniales y archipelágicos," *Vistas al Patio* 13, no. 2 (2019): 111-130; Mariolga Reyes Cruz, "Por quiénes esperamos," *80 Grados*, February 2, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Fernando Picó, *Cayeyanos: Familias y Solidaridades en la Historia de Cayey* (San Juan: Huracán, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Hilda Llorens, *Making Liveable Worlds: Afro-Puerto Rican Women Building Environmental Justice* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021).

through community networks and institutions. The extent to which Hurricane María transformed the way communities respond to emergencies can be glimpsed in the events of the summer 2019 uprising, when people voiced their indignation over the government's response to María and the economic crisis, leading to the governor's resignation. After the earthquakes in January 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and after hurricane Fiona in 2022, which produced flooding so extreme it is only expected every 500 years, communities and community-based organizations likewise have responded largely outside of state frameworks.

#### *Documentation strategy*

The proposed oral histories will explore how solidarity informs autogestión and other kinds of community-led responses to hurricane María. Previous research through the *Collective Care* project, including oral histories and the co-curation of digital materials and museum objects, suggests that solidarity is a central feature of disaster responses that originate *in* communities, *for* communities. The proposed oral histories will build on, and complement, *Collective Care* materials already identified for preservation. However, in contrast to the oral histories already collected, which suggest the importance of solidarity but do not explore the topic in depth, the proposed oral histories will explore solidarity in the most robust way possible. The interviews will document how narrators see solidarity manifesting in their responses to hurricane María, describing the tools, strategies, and knowledges they used, their family and community networks, and their community institutions such as women's groups and community boards. Further, the oral histories will explore connections to past experiences with solidarity, and how narrators update those past forms of solidarity to address the challenges of debt and climate change in their communities. The oral histories will be recorded in partnership with three community organizations:

1) With **Taller Salud**, a community-based organization that promotes women's health in Loíza, an area known as a site of Afro-Puerto Rican autonomy and marronage. After hurricane María women in Loíza quickly organized to attend to the needs of their communities. Taller Salud supported their work to establish and operate community kitchens that fed hundreds of people hot meals, create safe spaces for women, men, and children to process the events psychologically, and distribute humanitarian aid. To document these activities, Taller Salud has curated 25 objects for preservation at the Smithsonian NMAH (Attachment 7), including a cooking pot, modified water filter, and worn-out shoes. For the oral histories, a group of about ten women involved in the disaster response in Loíza will respond to the curated objects, which will be displayed on tables. Their responses will be recorded on film. All documentation activities will be coordinated by Yamara Rodríguez, Director of Operations at Taller Salud, and carried out by Taller Salud staff. An NEH CCR grant will support direct costs related to filming the oral history and narrator compensation. All other project activities will be supported through in-kind contributions from Taller Salud.

2) With the **Legal Psychological Clinic**, an organization established in the aftermath of hurricane María to support recovery efforts in disadvantaged communities in the municipality of Canóvanas. The Clinic will record oral histories in two communities, San Isidro and Usabal, located in the swampy land surrounding the old Central Canóvanas sugar mill. Both communities were established in flood areas by people who had been displaced by hurricane Hugo in 1989. In response to hurricane María, which destroyed homes and flooded the communities with polluted water, residents organized to mitigate flood risks by cleaning out canals, reclaiming recreational public space, and conducting an inventory of underutilized spaces. The Clinic has supported these efforts with the goal of strengthening community planning based on their needs, desires and knowledges. The Clinic will record nine individual oral histories and two group oral histories with community leaders who have been active in hurricane recovery efforts and flood mitigation. Co-PI Patricia Noboa, Clinic Director, will coordinate all activities related to documentation together with Clinic researchers. An NEH CCR grant will fund recording equipment, the work of Clinic staff, and narrator compensation.

3) With the Puerto Rico section of the **American Relay Radio League**. After hurricane María a group of amateur radio operators volunteered to provide emergency communications to the Red Cross, municipalities, and government agencies. Among the messages they transmitted were requests for medicines, diesel, power generators for hospitals, and water. They also relayed messages to support the transfer of patients between hospitals, to support the reunification between people in Puerto Rico and their families in the United States, and assisted the Power Authority with

communications to reestablish the electrical infrastructure. PI Rosa Ficek will coordinate individual interviews with ten narrators stationed in different locations across Puerto Rico, in collaboration with Oscar Resto, section manager for the organization during the hurricane María emergency. While as a group they do not represent a single geographical community, the radio volunteers are familiar with local forms of solidarity through ties to the communities where they live and/or where they grew up and will be able to comment on the role of solidarity in their experiences. An NEH CCR grant will fund recording equipment, Ficek's work recording the oral histories, and compensation for ARRL narrators and collaborators.

In sum, the proposed oral history project aims to conduct **one group oral history** with Taller Salud, **nine individual oral histories** and **two group oral histories** with the Legal Psychological Clinic, and **ten individual oral histories** with the American Relay Radio League.

### *Significance*

The proposed oral histories will advance cultural and community resilience by documenting the most effective tools and strategies communities possess to respond to climate change. Hurricane María—the worst disaster in the island's history—laid bare the urgency of addressing inequality and injustice in processes of climate disaster response and reconstruction. The local knowledges documented through the proposed oral history project speak to both the *challenges* communities face as well as the *solutions* that communities devise. As a result, the oral histories will provide valuable insights for disadvantaged communities in the future, who will no doubt face more natural disasters and more economic uncertainty. The preservation of the oral histories at the UPR-Cayey, where they will be accessible to publics online, will ensure that contemporary audiences as well as future generations will have access to this knowledge.

*Collective Care* builds on previous projects to build digital collections around catastrophic events through partnerships between local and national organizations, such as the *September 11 Digital Archive* and the *Hurricane Memory Bank* created at George Mason University. Compared to similar projects to document firsthand accounts of Hurricane María in Puerto Rico, *Collective Care* stands out for its community engagement through participatory and collaborative methods. The oral history project *Listening to Puerto Rico* (University of Michigan, University of Notre Dame) and the *Hurricane Maria Oral History Project* (CUNY) bring firsthand testimonies of Hurricane María to researchers and students. The proposed oral history collections will complement and expand on these collections by centering local, community-based knowledge through the theme of solidarity.

This project's primary audience are the communities and organizations who will contribute oral histories, as well as broader publics interested in climate change, including policymakers, first responders, community leaders, and other people involved in disaster response in Puerto Rico and beyond. Many of the project's local partners present their disaster responses as models that may inform disaster responses in other locations and times. Community partners express interest in sharing their knowledge and learning from the experiences of others. *Collective Care* contributes to this process of knowledge-making and exchange by preserving and disseminating their stories.

For humanities researchers, the proposed oral history collections will be valuable to scholars interested in the cultural impacts of climate change, who consider how disasters change people and communities. The oral histories could potentially support research in disaster studies, environmental history, Caribbean studies, the history of technology, and women's studies. In urban planning, the oral histories could support planning projects based directly on community needs and actions to protect themselves from disasters. In psychology and psychiatry, the oral histories could contribute to avoiding discourses of pathologization such as PTSD, depression and substance abuse after disasters. For policy-makers, the oral histories could inform decisions about climate change and disaster recovery through a gender perspective. For educators, the oral histories could support projects to teach about climate change by humanizing disasters through first-hand stories told by people on the frontlines of climate change in Puerto Rico. Broad publics could also potentially learn from the proposed oral histories, especially in areas of the South and Southeast of the United States that are vulnerable to hurricanes, as well as among Latino, Black, Indigenous, and migrant communities in locations across the United States where extreme weather events, disasters, and other effects of climate change are increasingly experienced in conjunction with the ongoing effects of colonialism.

In sum, the proposed oral histories will contribute to the depth and diversity of the nation’s cultural and historical record by providing insight—especially from the perspectives of Black women—on the ways colonialism shapes the impacts of climate-related disasters, and how disadvantaged communities draw on past intergenerational experiences with colonialism to build solutions. The Taller Salud oral histories will explore women’s leadership and decision-making processes, how the community worked together, and local environmental knowledge that helped them survive. The Clinic oral histories will explore mitigation efforts, and changes in health, eating habits, and the environment due to the effects of hurricanes and climate change. The ARRL oral histories will explore effective strategies to better prepare radio volunteers in the future, and how the actions of first responders are linked to community processes. Considered together, the oral histories will build knowledge about how communities respond to climate change through expressions of solidarity rooted in Puerto Rican history and culture while also acknowledging the diversity of people’s experiences within Puerto Rico, including migrants from the Dominican Republic. A grant from the NEH Cultural and Community Resilience program would provide support to document the experiences of disadvantaged communities in Puerto Rico and share this knowledge with publics who will be able to use these insights to inform their own resilience strategies in culturally-specific ways.

The grant will allow the *Collective Care* project to finalize its documentation efforts, which began in 2018 and represent the **first phase** of the project. The grant would also provide support for the digital preservation of the proposed oral histories and to provide access through the project’s website and digital platform. (The *Collective Care* project has requested an NEH Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant to support the preservation of other digital materials collected between 2018 and 2022 and for building access through the UPR-Cayey library’s digital infrastructure. Attachment 7 includes images from the first version of the project’s digital archive.) After completing the proposed oral histories, the project’s **second phase** will focus on expanding access to the materials through the translation of transcripts from Spanish to English. Completing the proposed oral histories will also lay essential groundwork for the project’s **third phase**, focused on storytelling that would bring the oral histories to national audiences. The Smithsonian Latino Center has provided funding to begin to develop a traveling exhibition based on *Collective Care*, and the proposed oral histories could be incorporated into the exhibition, programming, and related educational resources.

**Program priority**



Figure 1. Map from the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool annotated to show participating communities.

According to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, nearly all of Puerto Rico is highlighted as disadvantaged. Figure 1 shows how the participating communities are located within

the shaded area identified as disadvantaged. According to the study of housing post-hurricane María conducted by our partner Taller Salud, communities in **Loíza** identified unemployment, racism and environmental violence as their biggest problems. Moreover, the study found multiple crises of access to dignified housing and basic services, including clean water and power.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the **Usabal** and **San Isidro** communities where the Legal Psychological Clinic works regularly face increasingly frequent floods with polluted water. The study conducted by sociologist Belinés Ramos of the Clinic found that after hurricane María, residents in these communities faced structural barriers in their recovery process related to discrimination, invisibility, and isolation. In the **Valle Hill** sector of San Isidro, immigrants from the Dominican Republic face added discrimination and racism.<sup>10</sup> With respect to our third partner, the Puerto Rico section of the ARRL, the map does not show the location of volunteer radio operators to protect the privacy of individual narrators. However, they reside in rural areas in the Western and Southern parts of the main island, within the shaded area.

## **Community participation**

### *History of partnerships*

The *Collective Care* project uses participatory and collaborative methods to engage with communities and their organizations. The project began working with Taller Salud in June 2020, when we began a series of virtual and in-person meetings that led Taller Salud to curate objects for preservation at the National Museum of American History and born-digital photographs for preservation at the UPR-Cayey, and to plan the proposed oral histories. *Collective Care* has worked with the Legal Psychological Clinic to co-curate materials for collections and collaborate on storytelling projects since August 2021. For 2022-2023, *Collective Care* and the Clinic are collaborating to produce a podcast about the San Isidro community's recovery efforts, with the support of an ACLS Sustaining Public Engagement Grant. *Collective Care* has worked with the Puerto Rico section of the ARRL since January 2021 through a series of meetings that have resulted in two oral histories and the co-curation of videos, photographs, and objects for preservation.

### *Community input on the proposed oral histories*

In line with the Participatory-Action Research methods used by both Taller Salud and the Legal Psychological Clinic, the Project Director will work closely with project leads from each organization to obtain community input on the oral histories. Through group meetings and targeted outreach, we will seek input on the interview guides from narrators and other community members. Once the oral histories are transcribed, narrators will participate in assessing whether it is appropriate to share the oral histories on a public website or if they require editing. The Project Director will work with partner organization project leads to identify the themes and subjects each organization would like to highlight through descriptive metadata. Decisions will be made by consensus.

Communities will be involved in the ongoing management of the oral histories through the project's post-custodial model of preservation. Through this model, narrators and organizations retain all original rights to the oral histories, granting the *Collective Care* project permission to preserve digital copies of materials and their metadata, and to make them available to the public. We will continue to use the Authorization and Release Form (Attachment 7) developed with input from the Puerto Rico Foundation for the Humanities.

### *Addressing potential harm*

Because the oral histories could potentially retraumatize narrators and interviewers, Co-PI Patricia Noboa will facilitate a workshop on trauma-informed interviewing for the project team at the beginning of the grant period. As a psychologist with five years of experience working closely with communities impacted by hurricane María, Dr. Noboa is one of the most qualified persons in Puerto Rico to train oral historians on trauma-informed interviewing and specifically on hurricane María.

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<sup>9</sup> Taller Salud, Estudio Comunitario de Vivienda en Loíza 2022.  
[https://issuu.com/tallersalud/docs/web\\_estudio\\_vivienda\\_02\\_final](https://issuu.com/tallersalud/docs/web_estudio_vivienda_02_final)

<sup>10</sup> Belinés Ramos, Encuentro con el abandono, autogestión como respuesta: Trayectoria de lucha de la comunidad San Isidro. Master's thesis, UPR-Río Piedras, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, 2020.

### *Contributions to partner missions and goals*

In addition to facilitating health-related workshops in Loíza, Taller Salud also creates storytelling projects that further their mission to promote women's health through place-based knowledge. For example, they have recorded oral histories with community elders, used to create artwork celebrating the community's history. They have also recorded a series of group conversations about sexual and reproductive health, available as a podcast, which serve as a model for the proposed group oral histories. The oral histories will document one of the most important moments in the organization's and in Loíza's history—the aftermath of hurricane María. They could potentially be used in a documentary produced by Taller Salud or other initiatives to share these stories.

The Legal Psychological Clinic has supported recovery efforts through legal accompaniment, psychological services, and art activities, among other initiatives. The Clinic has also worked to explore the cultural and historical dimensions of climate change in the communities through a podcast featuring community leaders, and two short films submitted in 2021 and 2022 to a local film festival on climate change. The proposed oral histories will continue to build on the Clinic's storytelling projects, providing a deeper look into how communities have faced flooding and other climate-related disasters, and providing spaces for collective reflection, analysis, and healing that advance the communities' efforts to build resilience. Moreover, building knowledge about the collective actions of Usabal and San Isidro will help avoid the stigmatization of these and other communities.

The Puerto Rico section of the ARRL regularly assesses their activities in response to emergencies in the form of After-Action Reports that discuss the effective strategies and what could be improved. The oral histories will document knowledge that the organization can use to help amateur radio operators better prepare for future climate emergencies. The oral histories will build on the technical knowledge documented in the After-Action Reports, expanding the organization's knowledge and memory to explore the collective and cultural dimensions of their work.

## **Methodology**

### *Oral history methods*

The methods used to record the oral histories in each community are tailored to each of our partner organization's needs and capacities. The oral histories with Taller Salud will be coordinated by Yamara Rodríguez, filmmaker and Director of Operations for Taller Salud. The museum objects curated by Taller Salud (Attachment 7 includes object images and descriptions) will guide the oral histories. Narrators will travel as a group to the UPR-Cayey, a location selected by Taller Salud because of its green and peaceful atmosphere. Here, a Taller Salud psychologist will facilitate a collective discussion among the women as they react to the objects, which will be displayed on tables. Objects include a cooking pot, buckets, and water filters used in the community kitchen, among other items. Taller Salud will develop the interview guide in dialogue with PI Rosa Ficek and the women who participated in the hurricane María disaster response. As an organization that has worked with Loíza communities for over thirty years, Taller Salud is in an excellent position to record their stories in a way that centers the women's agency and dignity, and to explore connections between contemporary responses to climate change and forms of solidarity and autonomy rooted in Loíza's past. We expect to produce one three-hour video recording.

Activities with the Legal Psychological Clinic will be coordinated by Patricia Noboa, Director of the Clinic and Professor at the UPR-Cayey. Clinic researchers Michelle Alvarado and Belinés Ramos, who have worked directly with residents for five years, will create the interview guide based on their knowledge of the communities' histories. The interview guide will be developed through the analysis of four interviews about hurricane María the Clinic has already conducted with community leaders. These previous interviews provide partial information on the history of each community and how they experience climate change. In particular, the oral histories will explore what the community has done to prepare for more prolonged and intense disasters, the impacts of climate change on residents' health, the changes they have observed in their environment, changes in food consumption and agricultural activities, the narrators' past experiences with solidarity, and the intergenerational memories they have of solidarity. After conducting the individual interviews, the Clinic will conduct two group interviews with the goal of fostering the exchange of knowledge and identifying points of overlap that will produce a collective oral history. These group interviews will allow narrators to reflect on their actions, on how they work, their leadership styles, and the successful strategies they



have implemented for mitigation, which condense and draw on ancestral knowledges from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Michelle Alvarado, Patricia Noboa and Yalitz Serrano will conduct the interviews, resulting in nine one-hour recordings and two three-hour recordings.

While Taller Salud and the Clinic have staff that is highly qualified to conduct oral histories, in the case of the Puerto Rico section of the ARRL, PI Rosa Ficek and a student assistant will conduct the oral histories with the radio volunteers. Rosa Ficek has recorded over 100 oral histories for *Collective Care* and other projects over fifteen years. She will work with ARRL section manager Oscar Resto to develop an interview guide, based on the analysis of the two oral histories already conducted for the *Collective Care* project. This analysis will allow them to identify the best way to inquire about the topic of solidarity as the radio operators experienced it during their time volunteering, and to explore connections between solidarity in first responder settings to the narrators' experiences with solidarity in community settings. Ten radio volunteers active in the aftermath of hurricane María will be interviewed at the UPR-Cayey, resulting in ten one-hour recordings.

Supporting documentation (Attachment 7) includes a list of narrators and a draft of interview questions that will be further developed during the grant period for each community organization. The group interview with Taller Salud will be recorded with a DSLR camera and lapel mics. The individual interviews with the Clinic will be recorded with a digital recorder and two lapel mics, while the group interviews will be recorded with the digital recorder and two boundary microphones. The individual interviews with the ARRL will be recorded with the voice recorder and two lapel mics. Recording formats are consistent with the Library of Congress Recommended Formats Statement. Initial metadata to be recorded when recording each oral history include narrator, interviewer, date, and interview location.

*Post-interview preservation and access methods*

The proposed project aims to record **22 oral histories** (19 individual oral histories and 3 group oral histories), totaling **25 hours of audio recordings** and **3 hours of video recording**:

Partner	Individual oral histories			Group oral histories		
	Quantity	Duration	Format	Quantity	Duration	Format
Taller Salud	-	-	-	1	3 hrs	.mov
Clinic	9	9 hrs	.wav	2	6 hrs	.wav
ARRL	10	10 hrs	.wav	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19 hrs</b>	<b>.wav</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3 hrs</b> <b>6 hrs</b>	<b>.mov</b> <b>.wav</b>

After a student assistant transcribes the interviews, PI Rosa Ficek and UPR-Cayey librarian Ángel Ríos will work with community partners to evaluate the oral histories for accession at the Víctor M. Pons Gil Library, taking into consideration sensitive content and lightly editing the recordings and transcripts if necessary. (Transcripts will be translated into English in the next project phase, together with other *Collective Care* materials collected). Ficek and Ríos, with advice from Laurie Taylor and the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC), will work with a student assistant to create metadata aligned with the Oral History Association's Principles and Best Practices. Co-PI Patricia Noboa and a student assistant will also create descriptive metadata. All descriptive metadata will include a summary and keywords developed in collaboration with community partners. Materials will be described at the item level and collection level.

Preservation activities will be carried out by a student assistant under the guidance of librarian Ángel Ríos. This includes the creation of checksums, working copies of the materials, and backups of the oral histories, their metadata, and documentation. Copies of the materials will be stored on external hard drives at the UPR-Cayey library, at the UPR-Cayey Institute of Interdisciplinary Research, at the dLOC, and with community partners. The UPR-Cayey library will make the oral histories accessible online through its Internet Archive account and linked to the *Collective Care* project website, the dLOC, and the UPR-Cayey library catalog. Attachment 7 includes a screenshot of the Internet Archive platform where the oral histories will be accessible to the public.

**Deliverables**

Project deliverables and the strategy for sharing them are summarized as follows:

Deliverable	Dissemination strategy
1 workshop document on trauma-informed oral histories	Patricia Noboa will share with the project team during the workshop.
4 interview guides (for Loíza, Usabal, San Isidro, and ARRL oral histories)	Rosa Ficek and partner organization will share with the project team and participants via email and print.
4 oral history collections (19 individual oral histories and 3 group oral histories)	Ángel Ríos will share through the library's Internet Archive account.
22 interview transcriptions	Ángel Ríos will share through the library's Internet Archive account.

The *Collective Care* project obtains written authorization to preserve and disseminate copies of digital materials from each contributor through an Authorization and Release form (Attachment 7). This document authorizes the deposit of materials in a public archive and their dissemination in communications media, including the Internet. It also states that the materials will only be used for purposes that align with *Collective Care* goals, including exhibitions, curriculum, research, publications, programming, and related publicity. Creators retain all original rights to the materials.

The UPR-C Víctor Pons Gil Library will be responsible for the preservation of the digital collection as part of its mission to acquire, preserve, and make accessible resources in diverse fields of knowledge and culture. The proposed project supports the library's strategic plan for expanding digital access. The collections will be integrated into the library's digital maintenance activities.

### Work plan

*January to August 2024:* Patricia Noboa will facilitate a workshop for the project team on trauma-informed interviewing. Rosa Ficek will obtain advisor feedback on interview guides. Project leads for each organization will work simultaneously: Yamara Rodríguez will record one group oral history for Taller Salud. Patricia Noboa, Michelle Alvarado, and Yalitza Serrano, with input from Belinés Ramos, will record nine individual and two group oral histories for the Legal Psychological Clinic. Rosa Ficek, in collaboration with Oscar Resto, will record ten oral histories for the ARRL.

*June to December 2024:* A student assistant will transcribe the interviews.

*September to December 2024:* PI Rosa Ficek, librarian Ángel Ríos, and project leads for each organization, with two student assistants, will appraise the oral histories, edit the recordings and transcripts if necessary, and create descriptive metadata.

*January to August 2025:* PI Rosa Ficek, librarian Ángel Ríos, and a student assistant will create metadata at the item and collection levels, organize the supporting documentation, and create copies with advice and feedback from Laurie Taylor and the dLOC.

*September to December 2025:* A student assistant under the supervision of Ángel Ríos will upload the collections to the Internet Archive. Rosa Ficek will transfer copies of the materials to the dLOC and community partners.

### Project personnel and advisors

*Director and Principal Investigator.* **Rosa Ficek** will supervise all aspects of the project and ensure its timely completion. She will coordinate with community partners to conduct oral histories, work with the UPR-Cayey library on preservation and access, train and supervise student assistants, and obtain community and advisor feedback. She will also conduct 10 oral histories. Rosa Ficek is adjunct assistant professor at the UPR-Cayey Institute of Interdisciplinary Research. As director of *Collective Care*, she has collaborated with over 15 institutions and local organizations, developed participatory research methods, and supervised 12 research assistants. She has 15 years of experience conducting over 100 oral histories as an environmental anthropologist. She holds a B.A. in Anthropology and Spanish from Cornell University and a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California-Santa Cruz. She will dedicate 80 hours a month to the project for two years.

*Co-PI and Legal Psychological Clinic Lead.* **Patricia Noboa** is Professor in the Department of Social Science at the UPR-Cayey and co-founder and director of the Legal Psychological Clinic. She will coordinate and conduct oral histories, describe them for preservation, and supervise the work of a student assistant. She brings to the project five years of experience documenting the impacts of hurricane María through Participatory-Action Research. She has presented her work in over forty national and international conferences and published in peer-reviewed journals with national and

international audiences. She holds a Ph.D. in Psychology with a specialization in Academic-Research Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras. Two course releases will allow her to dedicate the equivalent time to the project for one year.

*Taller Salud Lead.* **Yamara Rodríguez** is Director of Operations at Taller Salud. She brings expertise in video documentation as an award-winning filmmaker in addition to 5 years of experience working with Loíza communities in their recovery from hurricane María. She will coordinate all aspects of one group oral history and provide descriptive metadata. She will dedicate the time necessary to complete this work. The project will compensate Taller Salud through a subaward.

*American Relay Radio League Lead.* **Oscar Resto** is a member of the Puerto Rico section of the American Relay Radio League and has nearly 40 years of experience in amateur radio. He will draw on his experiences as section manager during hurricane María to advise and help coordinate the oral histories with the radio volunteers who worked under his leadership during the emergency, including the design of the interview guide. He will dedicate the time necessary to complete this work. The project will recognize his contributions through an honorarium.

*Preservation and Access Lead.* **Ángel Ríos** directs the Victor M. Pons Gil Library at the UPR-Cayey. He will supervise and lead project activities related to preservation and access. Ríos obtained his B.A. in Foreign Languages and an M.A. in Information Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras. He is studying at the doctoral level in the History of Puerto Rico program at the Center for Advanced Studies of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. He has over 20 years of experience in librarianship, providing references to specialized collections such as the Puerto Rican Collection, the Business Administration Library, the Arts Collection, and the Planning Library of the System Libraries at the UPR. He will dedicate the time needed to complete the preservation of the proposed oral histories and their access, as part of his collection development activities at the library.

*Researcher.* **Michelle Alvarado** is an anthropologist and lawyer with the Legal Psychological Clinic. She holds an M.A. in Latin American Studies and Anthropology from Georgetown University and a B.A. in History from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez. She will develop the Clinic's interview guide, coordinate and conduct oral histories, and create descriptive metadata. She brings to the project five years of work with communities impacted by hurricane María, as well as expertise in climate mitigation and adaptation, agroecology, and ethnography. She will dedicate 60 hours to the project through a subaward to the Legal Psychological Clinic.

*Researcher.* **Belinés Ramos** is a sociologist, lawyer, and co-founder of the Legal Psychological Clinic. She will draw on expertise acquired through five years of Participatory-Action Research in the Usabal and San Isidro communities to collaborate on the interview guide and descriptive metadata. She holds a B.A. in the Research and Social Action program of the Social Science Department at the UPR-Humacao and is a doctoral student in Sociology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. She will dedicate 30 hours to the project through a subaward to the Legal Psychological Clinic.

*Co-facilitator.* **Yalitz Serrano**, social worker at the Clinic, will co-facilitate the recording of two group oral histories. She brings to the project familiarity with the communities and narrators that will contribute to narrator comfort during the interviews. She will dedicate ten hours to preparation and facilitation through a subaward to the Legal Psychological Clinic.

*Research Assistants.* **Two undergraduate students** will participate through two sections of the course *Interdisciplinary Research Experiences for Students*. One will work for two semesters with Nobao to coordinate and describe eleven oral histories. The second student will work for four semesters with Ficek and the library to conduct ten oral histories and prepare materials for preservation and access. Students in this course receive research experience and mentorship but are not usually paid. An NEH CCR grant will support a stipend of \$250 per credit for each student.

*Transcription Assistant.* A UPR-Cayey **undergraduate student** will transcribe the oral histories. The student will receive training and supervision from PI Rosa Ficek. While the usual pay rate for students at the UPR-Cayey is \$8.50 per hour, an NEH CCR grant would allow us to pay \$15 an hour.

*Advisors.* **Hilda Llorens**, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Rhode Island will advise the oral histories by providing feedback on the interview guides. She brings expertise in the culture and history of environmental racism and environmental justice in Puerto Rico. **Laurie Taylor**, operational lead for the Digital Library of the Caribbean and Senior Director for Library Technology and Digital Strategies at the University of Florida, will advise digital preservation and access activities. Advisor contributions will be acknowledged through honorariums.