



M A L C S

*mujeres activas en letras y cambio social*

MALCS offers their support of Puerto Rico during the recent economic downfall due to hurricane Irma and now, hurricane Maria. We stand in solidarity with our gente of Puerto Rico.

We voice our concern about the political crisis and the natural disasters that have brought much distress to the American citizens of Puerto Rico. We express our grave concern with the slow federal aid and relief that Puerto Rico has received from the U.S. and the unequal levels of aid and empathy that Puerto Rico has received when compared to states on the mainland that have suffered from similar natural disasters. The rhetoric coming from President Trump and the current administration suggests that Puerto Rico is not doing enough to help themselves and we are heartbroken that such a reply does little to facilitate productive dialogue and swift solutions to the crisis that Puerto Rico is facing. As a territory that has a long colonial history, we recognize the daunting effects of this legacy in light of this crisis.

Last week, Cici Aragón, chair of MALCS, spoke to Mami Yaya, her mother-in-law, who lives in a suburb of San Juan. She reports that her family have been without electricity for almost two months. They have limited access to running water and no access to electricity, meaning they must work by candlelight or kerosene lamps in the evenings. There is sparse cellular service throughout Puerto Rico and food supplies are coming in slowly due to accessibility at food ports on the island. Though the daily tasks of laundry, cooking and bathing are difficult under these conditions, Mami Yaya reports that they are doing better than many in Puerto Rico, who have not had similar access to basic services.

Cici's Tío Gilbert, who lives in Cabo Rojo—a more rural area of Puerto Rico—reports that that there is no electricity, running water, postal mail services, or cellular services. He also suffers from a shortage of food supplies. In many ways, Hurricanes Irma and Maria have made it especially challenging for rural communities to survive in the aftermath of the storms. On social media and through news outlets, we are realizing that this is not a singular experience, but one that has affected the majority of citizens in Puerto Rico and takes an emotional toll on families who live on the mainland who cannot even communicate with their loved ones on the island.

Despite these adversities, the people of Puerto Rico are overcoming challenges and struggles. At universities across the U.S., we are joining together to offer support and learn more about the ongoing struggles facing Puerto Rico. At Arizona State University, Puerto Rican scholars organized a one-day symposium titled, “De Tripas Corazones: Puerto Rico’s Resilience, Creativity and Solidarity after Hurricane María.” Attendees learned about the history of colonialism on the island, the power crisis, the economic and agricultural effects of the hurricanes and how we can help by donating to organizations like the Puerto Rican Center of Arizona. We urge everyone to reach out to your colegas, friends, and community members whose families reside in Puerto Rico and help in any way that you can.

Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social is committed to issues of social justice and to the healing of our communities. We offer our heartfelt support to all those affected in Puerto Rico and throughout the United States by the recent hurricanes that have left families and communities vulnerable and in need of a helping hand. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all and we join together to ask the U.S. Government to offer the needed support and aid to all communities struggling to rebuild their lives.