

Three months after Hurricane Fiona and five years after María, what has happened to the fishing villages in Puerto Rico?

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Data

Fiona made landfall on
September 18, 2023.

Since it made landfall between Cabo Rojo
and Lajas, the first fishing villages visited
were those of Cabo Rojo and Lajas.

Our first trip was three weeks after Fiona impacted us.

The trips were divided taking into
consideration the areas that were most
affected by the hurricane.

We visited 17 municipalities where we interviewed fishmonger
employees and some independent fishermen.



Coastal Municipalities Visited

Southwest coast

- Cabo Rojo
- Lajas

West coast

- Mayagüez
- Aguadilla

South

- Guánica
- Peñuelas
- Ponce
- Juana Díaz
- Santa Isabel
- Salinas
- Guayama



Villa pesquera La Mela – Cabo Rojo

Coastal Municipalities Visited

North coast

- Dorado
- Vega Baja
- Camuy
- Loíza
- Río Grande
- San Juan
- Cataño

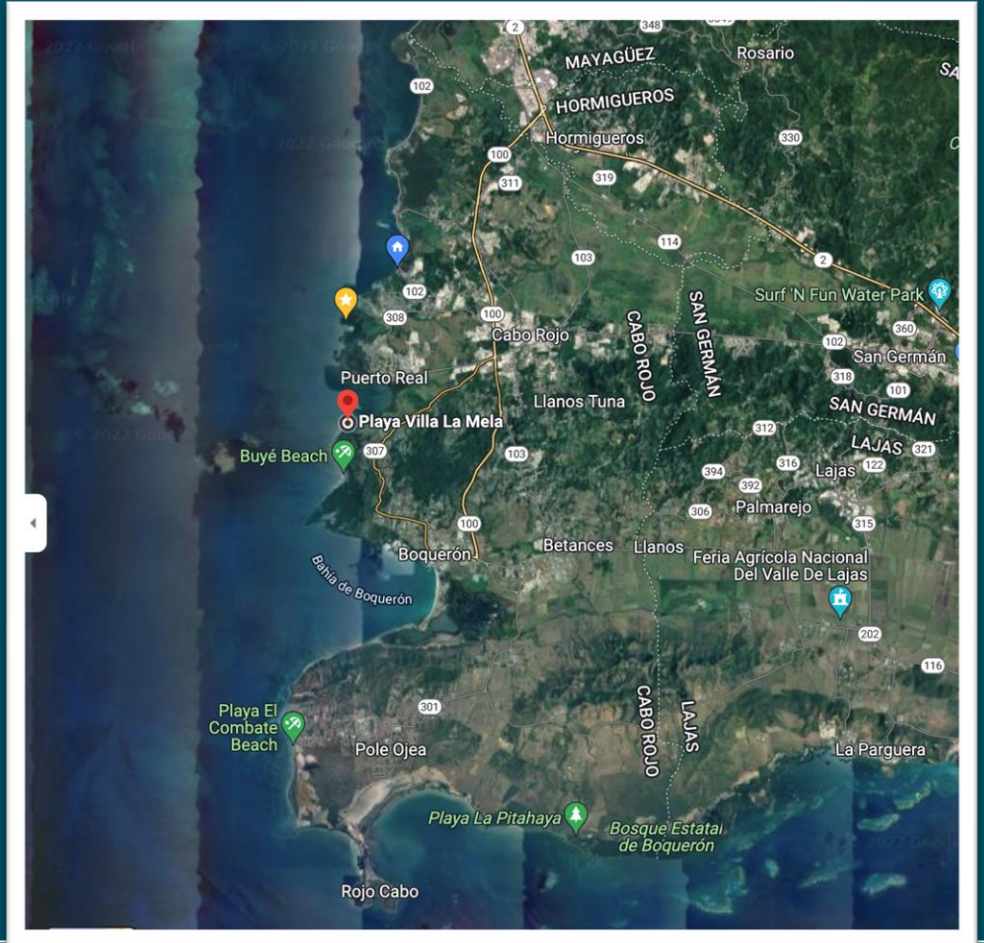
East - Due to the road conditions and the continuous rains, the east coast was not visited, but we are planning to visit it during next week.



Ramp at Cibuco – Vega Baja

Southwest Coast

- Puerto Real
- Boquerón
- La Mela
- El Combate
- El Corozo



Findings - Infrastructure

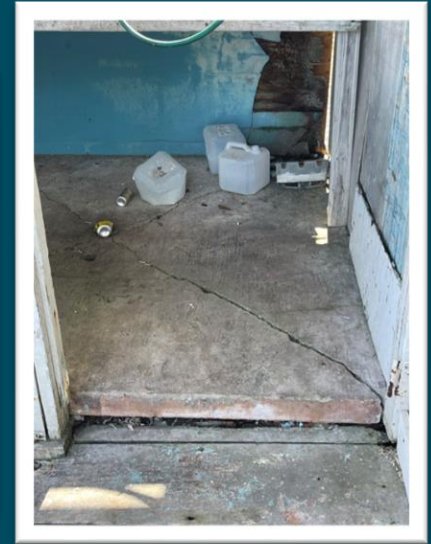
In the southwestern area, (Cabo Rojo) the most affected fishing area was La Mela.



Entrance road to the fishermen association



Fishermen's Association La Mela. You can see the raised roof and the “escamadero” about to collapse.



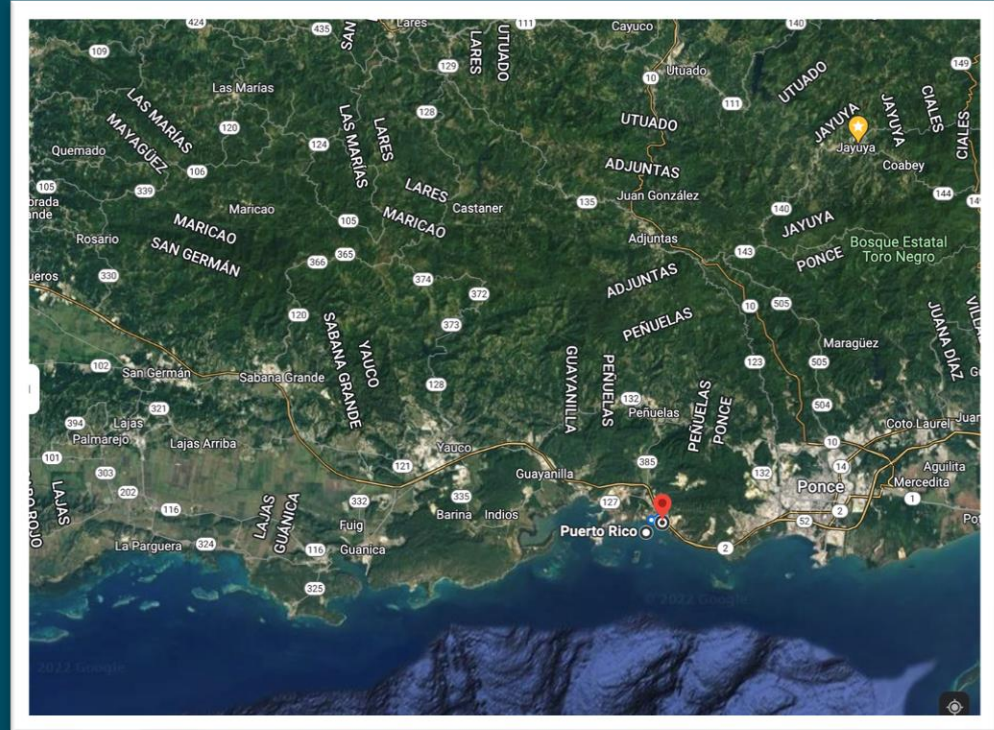
Findings - Infrastructure



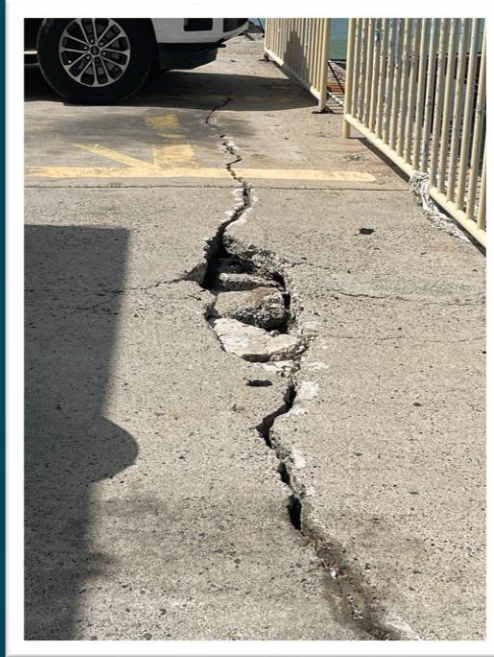
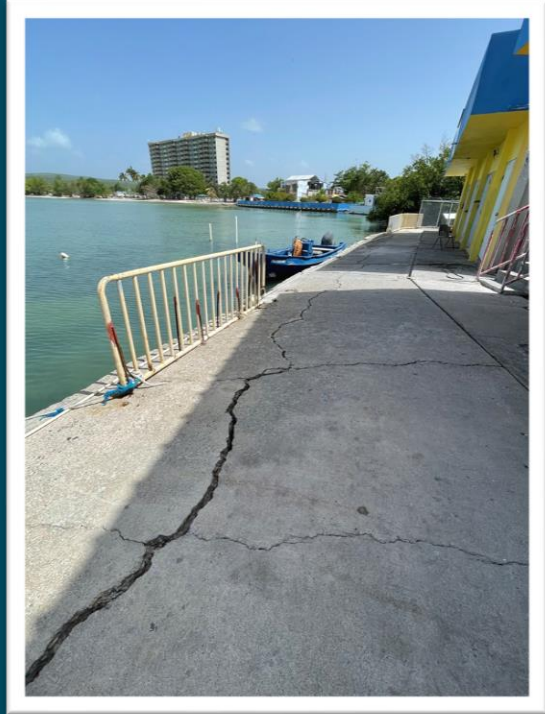
The wet floor in La Mela fishmonger is a testimony of the roof conditions after a rainy day.

Findings – Infrastructure – South Coast

- Guánica
- Peñuelas
- Ponce
- Juana Díaz
- Santa Isabel
- Salinas
- Guayama



Findings – Infrastructure – Guánica



At Playa Santa, the platform around the fishing village was severely cracked as a result of the swell caused by Fiona.

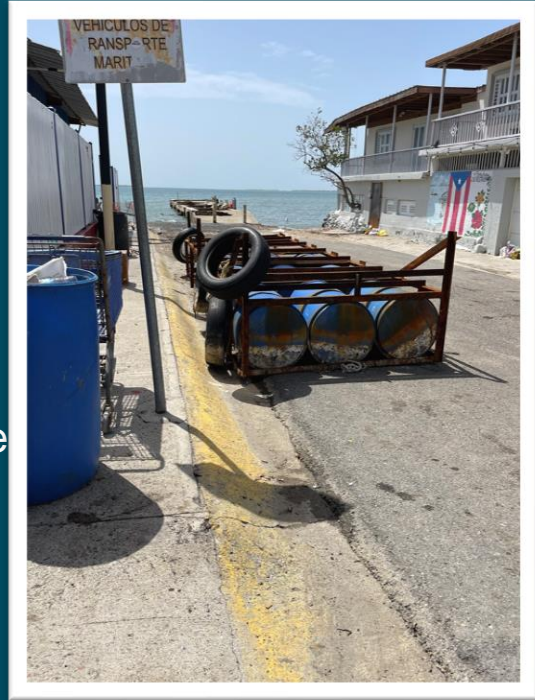
Findings - Infrastructure

South Coast

Peñuelas – Santo Cristo de la Salud

The Peñuelas fishermen's association (Santo Cristo de la Salud) in the El Boquete Sector did not suffer structural damage. However, since the impact of Hurricane María, fishermen have been deprived of a safe dock, as you will see in the following video.

They had managed to have a floating dock built for them on drones, but it was damaged and useless with Fiona's impact.



Findings - Infrastructure



Findings – Infrastructure – Aguirre in Salinas

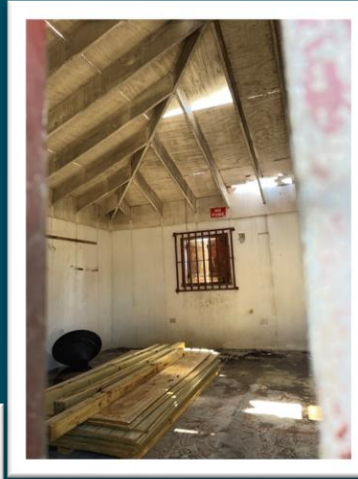


The pier that you can see in the photo no longer exists since Hurricane María.

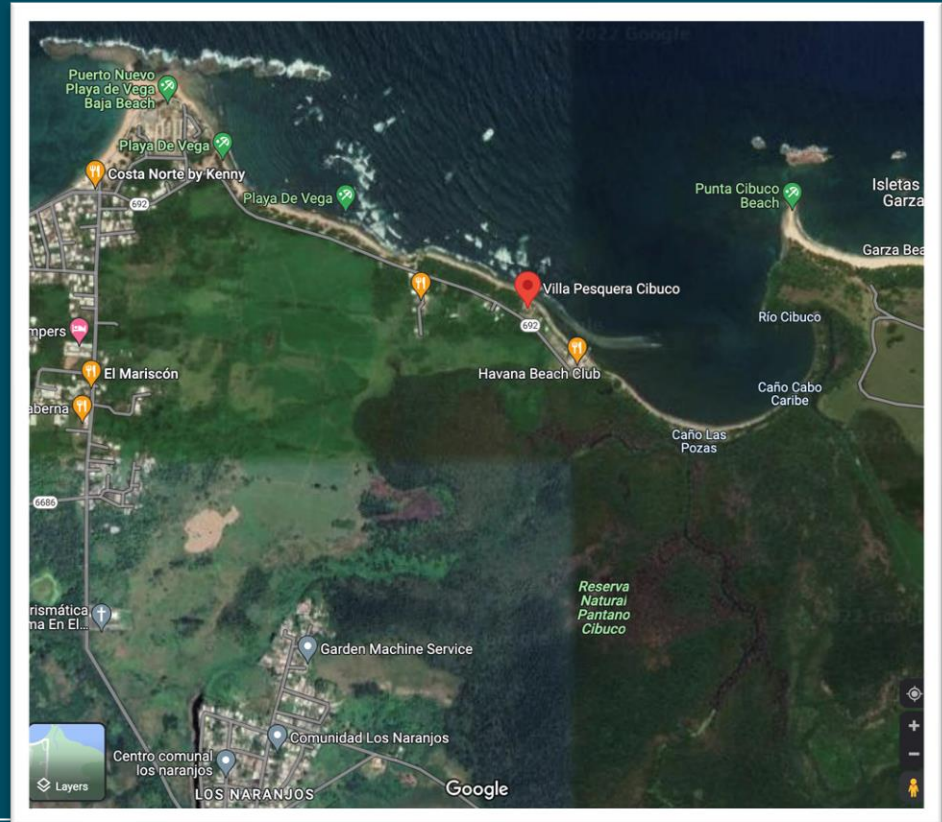
Findings – Infracstructure – Aguirre in Salinas

Fiona raised the roof of the buildings, which had already been affected since Maria. In the same way, the “escamadero” was left in the open without a roof.

There is a ramp that is uneven in relation to the beach, making the process of putting the boats at sea a hard and difficult one.

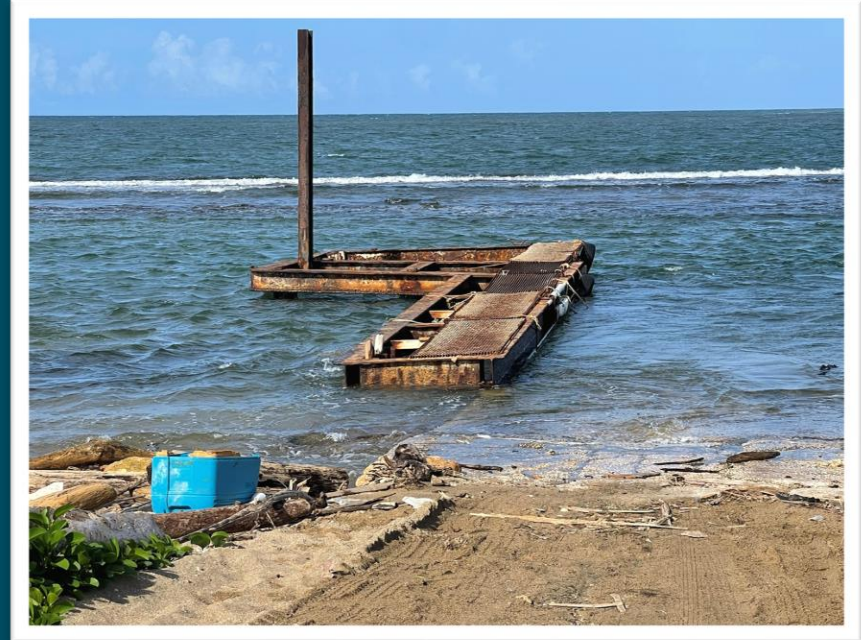


North Coast – Cibuco – Vega Baja



Findings – Infrastructure – Cibuco – Vega Baja

This fishing village shares its ramp with recreational fishermen and with FURA. It was covered with sand, and the pier was in terrible condition.



Other Findings – Infrastructure

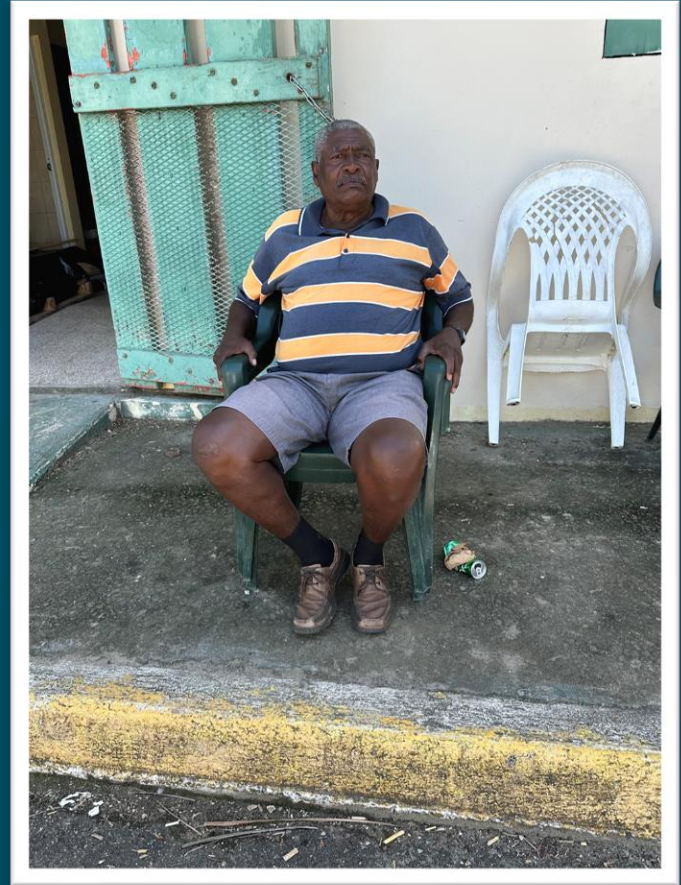
North coast - Loíza



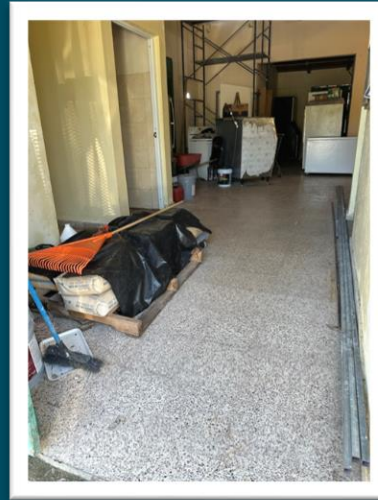
Other Findings - Loíza

“They came to remodel the villa, they started and left everything lying around and they haven't been back for months.”

Rafael – President of the fishermen association talking about the Agricultural Department.

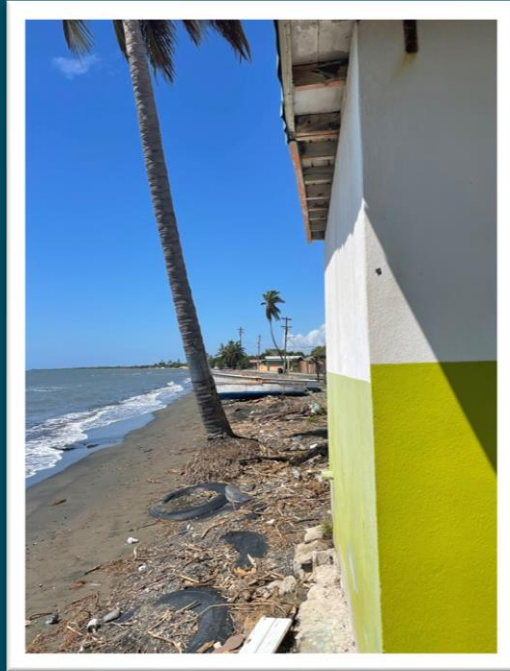


Findings – Infrastructure



Other Findings

Coastal erosion in Juana Díaz



In both places, the sea entered the facilities during the passage of Hurricane Fiona. You can see the loss of beach and the space occupied by buildings near the coast.

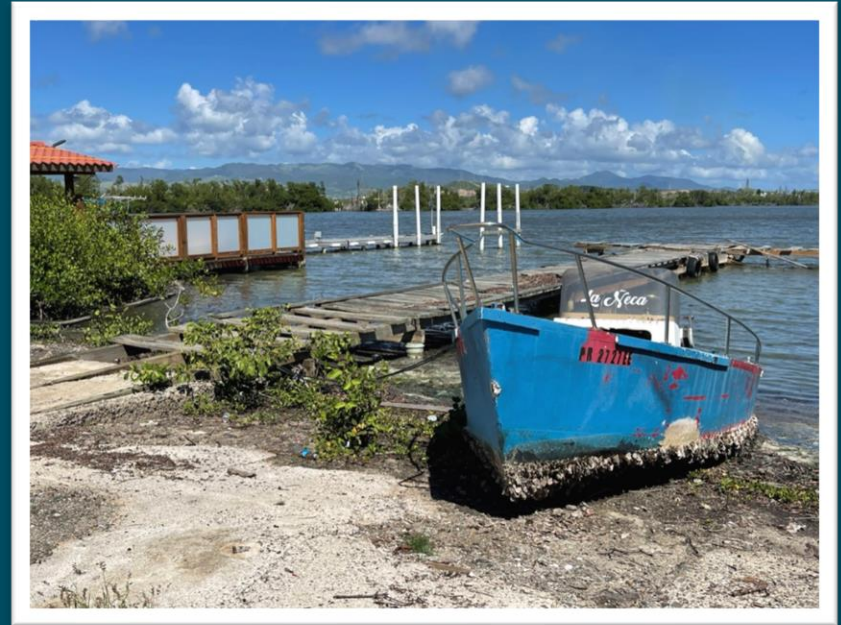
Other Findings

Abandoned fishmongers



Las Mareas – Salinas

Closed since 2014



Other Findings

Papayo – Lajas

Even though it is an area of fishermen who report their catches and who have the facilities of a dock built by them, the building that would house the fishermen's association has remained closed and in disuse for years. It does not have water or electricity facilities, nor permission for them to use it.



What They Have to Say...

More important than reviewing and collecting the physical damage suffered by the structures that house fishmongers, is what the fishermen had to tell us.

“I lost 60 fishing boxes and 30 traps.” – fisherman in Santa Isabel

“The motors of my yola drowned.” – fisherman in Aguadilla

“We lost all the fishing.” all of the fishermen interviewed.

“We couldn't go fishing for several weeks.” all of the fishermen interviewed.

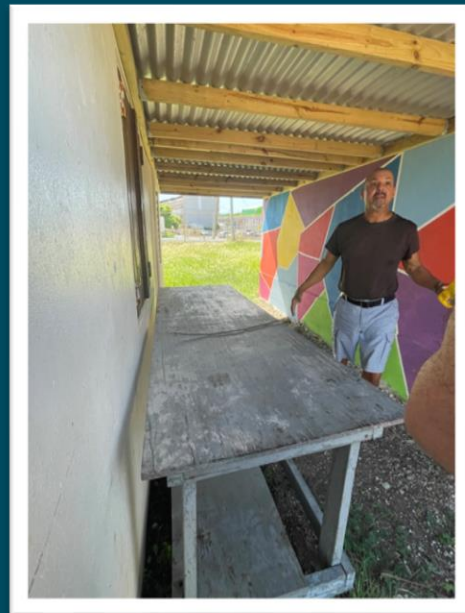
“The government has forgotten us.” all of the fishermen interviewed.

“We have been like this since Maria.” – fisherman in Peñuelas.

“You are the first people who come to visit us and ask us how we are doing and what we need.”

Their Faces





Us



Thank you