



MAPPING: KEY FIGURES

NATIONAL REPORT: PUERTO RICO

ICA – EU PARTNERSHIP



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I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This report is part of a Mapping exercise launched by the International Cooperative Alliance and its regional offices, within the framework of a partnership signed with the European Commission for the period 2016-2020. The programme aims to strengthen the cooperative movement and its capacity to promote international development. Other research projects led within this partnership include a worldwide Legal Frameworks Analysis, and several thematic researches on themes of significance for cooperatives.

Responding to challenges and existing knowledge gaps facing the cooperative movement, this research seeks to provide exhaustive information on cooperatives worldwide. This is achieved through a process jointly conducted by the ICA and its four regional offices – Cooperatives of the Americas, Cooperatives Europe, ICA Africa, and ICA Asia-Pacific – using a common methodology. Each office collected the input of ICA members present in the countries within its geographic area, by using the same questionnaire, and completing it with relevant national statistics, in order to obtain an accurate picture of the national situation.

Mapping out cooperatives in each country provides a more precise picture of the cooperative context at national and regional levels, enhances the movement's visibility, networking, partnerships opportunities, as well as advocacy, and empowers cooperators by providing them tools for positive change.

Within this framework, the present report showcases information about the cooperative landscape in Puerto Rico.

i. Historical background

According to the Institute of Cooperativism of the University of Puerto Rico¹, the origins of cooperativism in Puerto Rico go back to the time of the Taino Indians, who worked, cultivated and harvested the land, thus also hunted and collaborated with all the tasks of the yucayeque in set. Later, the jíbaros organized “meetings” or mutual aid groups to cultivate and harvest the land. This product was not paid for but was exchanged among the settlers.

Upon reaching the 19th century, the cooperative doctrine began to spread on the island, being strongly supported and promoted by leaders from all sectors of the country. Among them, Santiago Andrade, Eugenio María de Hostos, Dr. José Celso Barbosa, Román Baldorioty de Castro, Manuel Fernández Juncos, Ramón Emeterio Betances, Salvador Brau, Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón, Luis Muñoz Rivera, Cayetano Coll y Toste, Miguel Casado and Ramón Gandía Cordova. The Catholic Church and the Masonic Lodges made an enormous contribution to the development of cooperativism and its social content in Puerto Rico.

In 1873 Santiago Andrade founded the mutual aid society "Los Amigos del Bien Público", where saving and helping workers were practiced, as well as helping the families of the deceased and offering education to workers. In 1893, Dr. José Celso Barbosa organized the cooperative society “El Ahorro Colectivo”.

After the Spanish-American War, 22 years passed for some sectors of Puerto Rico to return to the idea of the cooperative organization as a form of economic development. The leader Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón lobbied for the development of the first Cooperative Law of Puerto Rico, known as Law number 3 of May 6, 1920. Cooperativism was promoted on the island by the US government and the island government through of funds allocated through the United States New Deal.

¹ Instituto del Cooperativismo. (s.f.). Cooperatives in Puerto Rico. Available at: <http://sociales.uprrp.edu/cooperativismo/cooperativismo-en-puerto-rico/>

ii. Public national statistics

For a more comprehensive picture of the cooperative movement in Puerto Rico, the present section provides key data from the country's public registers as a useful background context to the ICA members' data showcased in Section II of the report.

The data presented here comes from data from the Government of Puerto Rico and represents only the savings and credit sector for 2020².

NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES:

According to the statistics report on the credit union sector, by 2020 there were 113 active cooperatives in the finance market in Puerto Rico.

EMPLOYMENT:

Puerto Rico does not publish public information regarding the generation of employment by cooperatives.

COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP:

According to the statistics report on the savings and credit cooperatives sector, by 2020 the cooperatives have 1 049 482 active members in the Puerto Rican financial sector.

PRODUCTION VALUE:

Puerto Rico does not publish public information regarding the value of the production by cooperatives.

² Government of Puerto Rico. (2020). Industry Statistics: Credit unions. Digital version.

iii. Research methodology

The aim of the mapping research is to collect and make publicly available reliable and up-to-date data to understand what the cooperative movement represents in the targeted country. With this view, the data detailed in the present report has been collected using the methodology detailed below.

The methodological tools include a questionnaire used to collect the data, which was distributed online to the members, as well as a methodological note provided for further guidance. They were built jointly with all ICA regional offices with the support of external experts from the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Euricse) and are applied in a harmonised way in all the target countries.

The classifications used in the research are consistent with the internal system used within the ICA movement (e.g. on membership status and types of cooperative organisations) and with standards increasingly adopted in recent studies and by international organisations like the ILO – e.g. using international classifications of economic activities such as the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) rev. 4, which ensures the comparability of statistics both nationally and internationally, as well as with statistics on other forms of enterprises.

Regarding the target organisations, considering that a worldwide survey has very challenging goals, and while the value of directly collecting data from non-member cooperatives must be recognised, the present Mapping exercise targets cooperative organisations members of the ICA.

Furthermore, in order to complete the ICA members' data, the decision was taken to also look at external sources, to provide additional and more exhaustive cooperative statistics for the country. As a result, the data is collected following two strategies contemporaneously: 1) collecting statistics already available in the country; 2) carrying out a survey targeting ICA cooperative members.

In Puerto Rico, the mapping questionnaire was distributed and completed by 2 ICA member organizations. After further follow-up of the surveyed members, the figures provided were compiled to be presented in the next section.

II. KEY FIGURES

This section presents the results of data collection conducted by ICA members.

Puerto Rico has 6 ICA member organizations (all as full members):

- **Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Dr. Manuel Zeno Gandía.** Full member.

It is a non-profit financial institution that was founded in 1955 by eleven people from the Residencial Dr. Manuel Zeno Gandía in Arecibo. Since then, the cooperative has grown and strengthened until it is what it is today, one of the strongest and safest institutions, with more than 23 000 members. Sector: Finance.

- **Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito de Arecibo (COOPACA).** Full member.

Founded in 1946, in this way, it became the first community savings and credit cooperative to be established in Puerto Rico under Law 10 of Puerto Rico Credit Unions, with the purpose of stimulating savings and serving as a source of financing for its associates. Sector: Finance.

- **Cooperativa de Seguros Múltiples de Puerto Rico.** Full member.

It started operations in 1965, in order to offer extraordinary protection services to individuals and organizations; It currently belongs to about 200 credit unions and each one has one vote in the delegate assembly. Sector: Insurance.

- **Liga de Cooperativas de Puerto Rico (LIGACOOOP).** Full member.

It is the central body of the Puerto Rican Cooperative Movement. It is a private, non-profit institution created, directed and sustained by cooperatives. Also known as the Great House of the Cooperative Movement, the League is the federated organization with the highest level of integration of Puerto Rican cooperatives. Sector: Apex.

- **Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Vega Alta (VEGACOOOP).** Full member.

It is a cooperative savings and credit institution that serves about 37 000 members and 35 000 non-members, with two primary purposes: the provision of diversified financial services and the promotion of the community's socioeconomic and cultural development. Sector: Finance.

- **Banco Cooperativo de Puerto Rico (Bancoop).** Full member.

Organization focused on promoting the general well-being of the Savings and Credit Cooperatives, providing them with services aimed at satisfying their needs and those of their partners, through the effective channeling of the Cooperative Movement's resources, to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the people of Puerto Rico. Sector: Finance.

ICA member organizations are directly or indirectly active in the following sectors, in order of the largest number of cooperatives:

- Banking and insurance
- Commerce
- Industry
- Agriculture and food industry
- Education
- Transportation
- Accommodation and food
- Public services
- Administrative services
- ICT's
- Health
- Construction
- Housing
- Professional services
- Others

iv. ICA member data

The data collected was provided for the year 2017 as provided by the member organizations that responded to the survey.

v. General overview

This section provides an overview of the ICA membership data for Puerto Rico. It is displayed in various categories and supported by tables and graphs, for clarity.

Category	Total
Number of cooperatives	6
Number of memberships	-
Number of employees	548

vi. Sector overview

Due to the lack of sectoral or national statistical data for Puerto Rico, this section cannot be constructed.

III. ANNEXES

Sources:

Instituto del Cooperativismo. (s.f.). Cooperatives in Puerto Rico. Available at: <http://sociales.uprrp.edu/cooperativismo/cooperativismo-en-puerto-rico/>

Government of Puerto Rico. (2020). Industry Statistics: Credit unions. Digital version.

Contacts

Further details on the Mapping research and other country reports are available on www.coops4dev.coop

The production of this report was overseen by staff from Cooperatives of the Americas and the International Cooperative Alliance. For any further information or clarification, please contact mappingresearch@ica.coop or with the Research Officer for Cooperatives of the Americas carlos.gonzalez@aciamericas.coop

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