



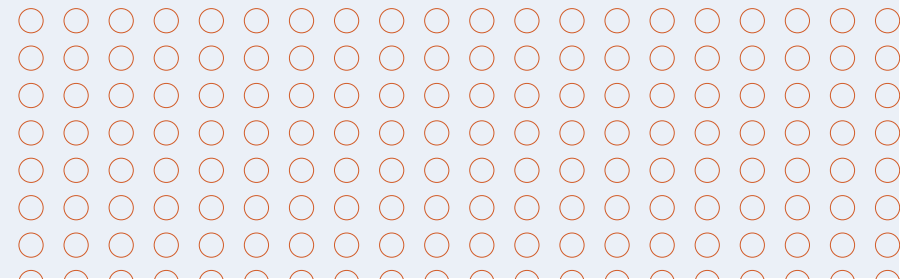
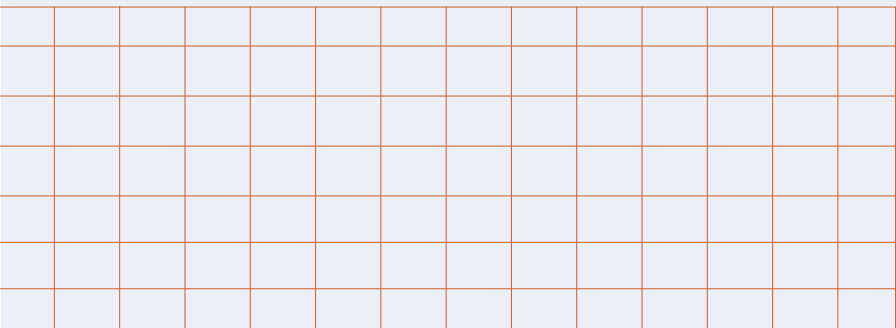
THE Background



In the Winter of 2018, my team and I were given the opportunity to design & submit a grassroots project with the focus of building peace. Since we all had a personal connection to Puerto Rico, we decided to use this project as a way to show our support after Hurricane Maria's impact on the islands economy and independence.

Building off of themes such as 'Women Led', 'Environmental Sustainability', and 'Community Empowerment', we decided to partner up with the women-led NGO; El Departamento de La Comida.

After being awarded the \$10,000 Davis Projects for Peace grant, we were able to work with El Depa and implement our concept to develop a sustainable service that focuses on facilitating agricultural resources among farmers on the island. Ultimately, we were able to achieve our goal of empowering local people with the agency to establish self-sustaining practices, further develop the economy & enable the island to reduce dependency on costly U.S imports.





THE Research



Using our knowledge about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, we began this project by understanding the current agricultural, economical, political & societal environment of Puerto Rico. Hurricane Maria covered every headline, blog post, and interview anecdote about the island since 2017. So as we transitioned from research into ideation, it became increasingly clear to us how we wanted to direct our focus.

To preface our collected data, we learned about decades of government sanctioned policies discouraging Puerto Ricans from farming their land. Since the 1950's, there has been a significant decline in agricultural practices, and more of an emphasis on industrial jobs. Then Hurricane Maria happened.

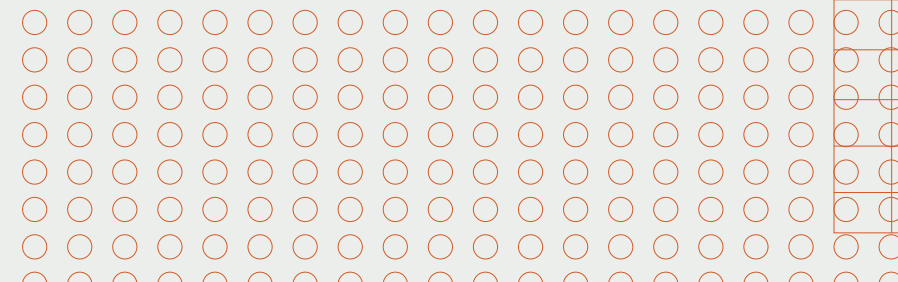
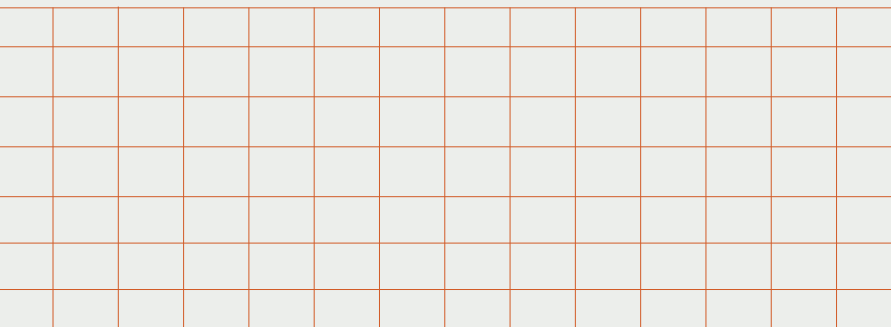
We learned:

Before Hurricane Maria, **85%** of goods were imported from the United States.

During the hurricane, **80%** of the islands crops & farms were devastated by the winds, waves & rains.

After Hurricane Maria, the territories dependence on US imports increased by **18%**, bringing that to whopping **98%** of goods being imported from the mainland.

Ultimately we learned that communities were suffering due to high import costs, and a severe lack of accessible food & water.





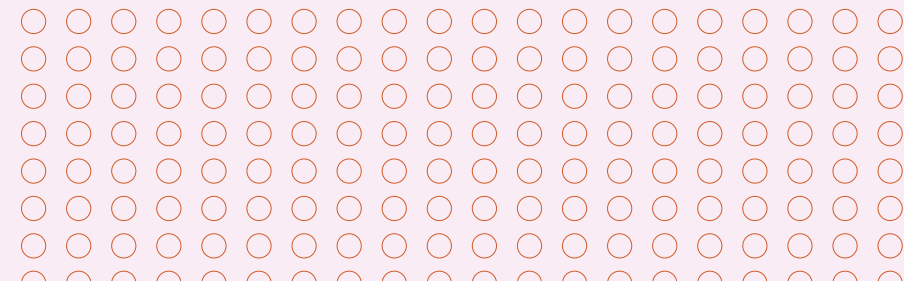
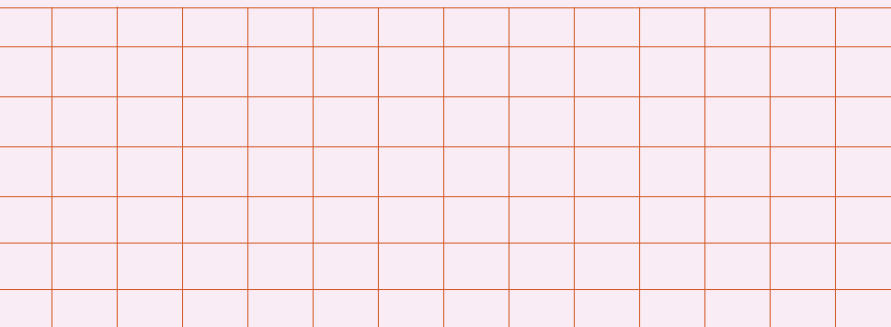
THE Experience



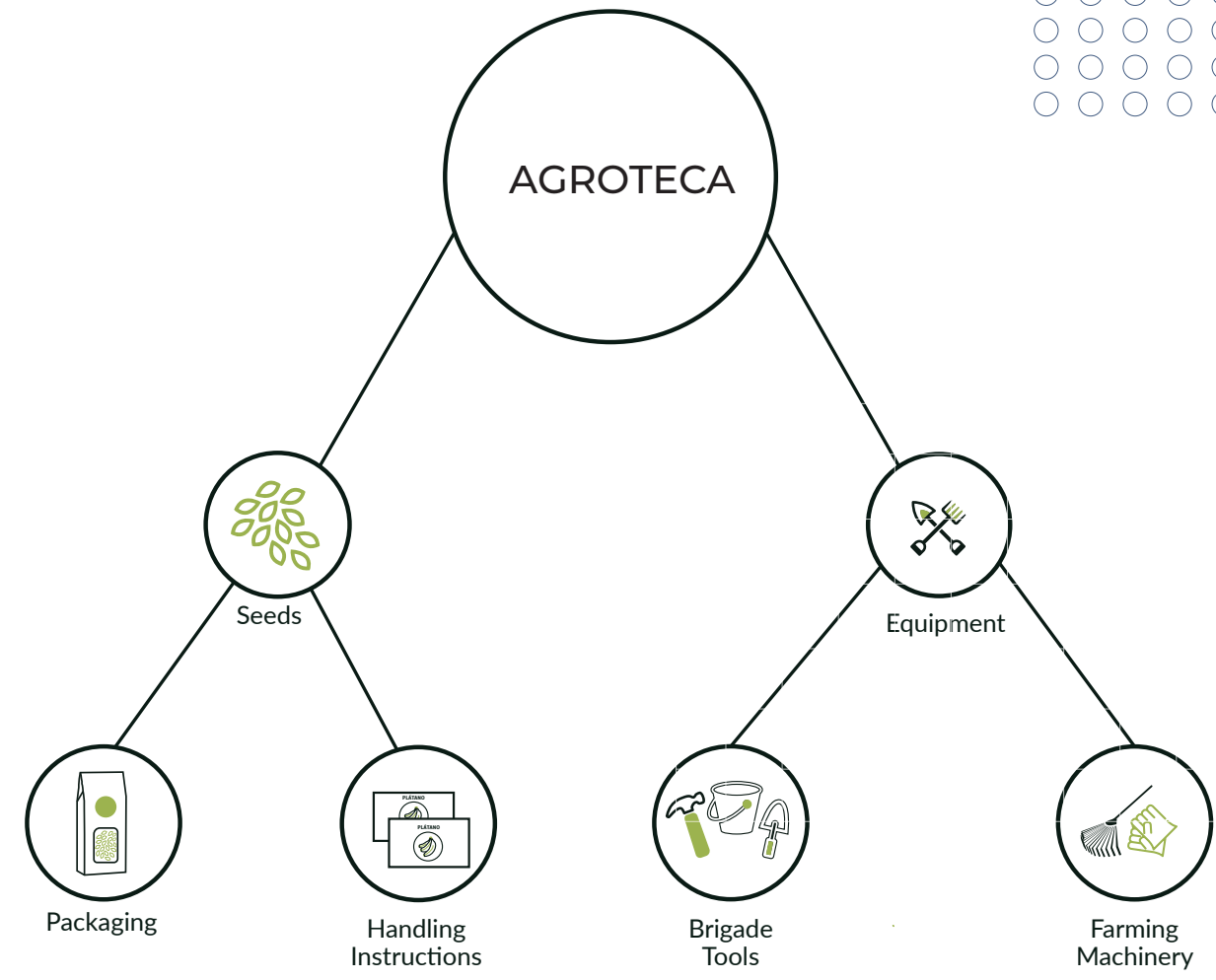
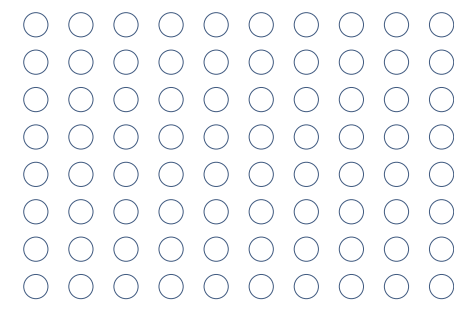
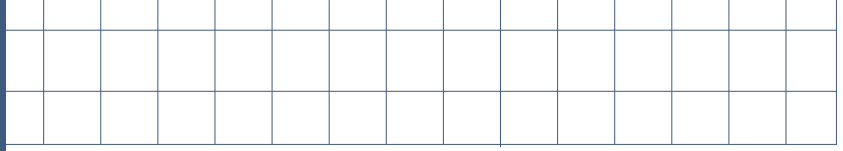
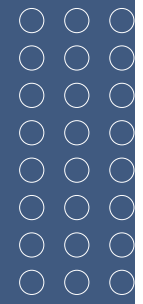
Once we narrowed our concept down, we began planning out the experience. To do that, we focused on the subject of our service- People.

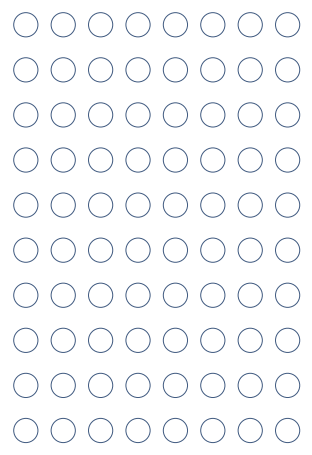
We partnered with a women-led NGO, El Departamento de la Comida. El Depa is an organization that has previous experience as a non-profit organization, a women-owned farm-to-table service, and had hopes of building a resource library. With this partnership, we implemented a resource library that provides farmers with agricultural equipment, seeds native to the island, and educational resources. We strived to empower Puerto Rican farmers to increase their yield, propogate a diversity of goods, and perpetuate sustainable agricultural practices for generations to come.

From a farmers perspective, we built 'Agroteca' a service that enables them to sign-up for a membership with the Resource Library, and collaboratively participate with other local farmers to rent out heavy machinery, hand-held machinery, check out books, & trade seeds with other farmers. We wanted to make sure that this service wasn't dependent on us, so looking back now, we see this service thriving.

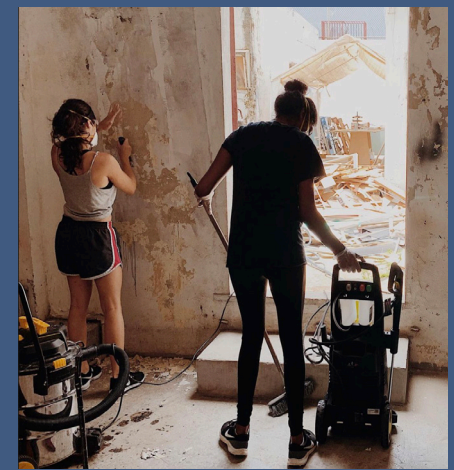
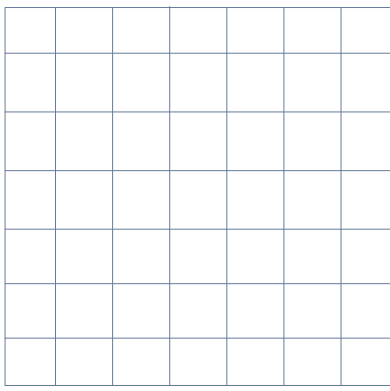


THE
Ecosystem





THE Process

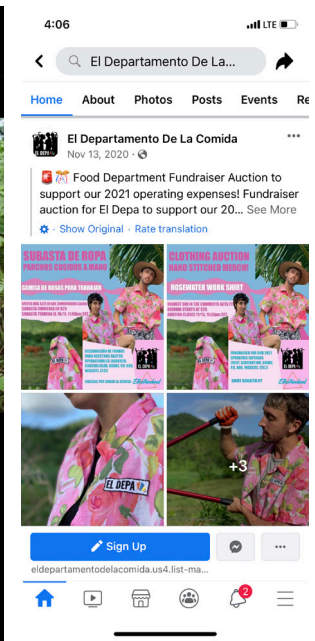


Social Media

Along with renovating a physical space to house the tools, seeds and agricultural library, we played a role in rebranding El Departamento De La Comida. This consisted of visual re-branding, a social media takeover & creating patches, flyers, stickers, signs & banners that represented the organization.

Below you will find a few social media posts on Instagram & Facebook that reflect the re-branding aspect of this project.

The organization continues to utilize our designs, as they move forward in raising awareness and facilitating resources among farmers.



THE *After Party*

As the renovations came to a close, we wanted to kick start this program by raising awareness within the farming community in Santurce, Puerto Rico.

We held a 'housewarming' party with local agricultural enthusiasts, a local DJ, and a farm-to-table feast.

At the end of the day, we were able to generate 25 new members participating in our newly established service. And that was just the beginning!

After recently reaching out to El Depa, we learned that the organization moved the library to a larger (more accessible) space, with more resources and are doing well- motivating local farmers to have the agency to take control of their agricultural independence.

