

RAFAEL CANCEL-VAZQUEZ

Asociacion Nacional de Derechos Ambiental

2008 Global Fellow



BIG BOLD IDEA

Build Puerto Rico's first environmental law center to bridge the environmental justice gap, triggering community participation for a healthy environment and sustainable development.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Environmental justice is a developing concept in Puerto Rico. Most environmental litigation involves communities against powerful interests, such as corporations and the government. Without resources to obtain legal representation or equitable enforcement of current policies, communities struggle to reach justice through governmental proceedings. Existing environmental organizations in Puerto Rico do not provide legal counseling or representation.

Asociación Nacional de Derecho Ambiental (ANDA) is the first environmental law firm on the island. ANDA develops a network of relationships with communities and organizations in order to empower the citizens of Puerto Rico to tackle the root of environmental injustice. ANDA also conducts regularly scheduled workshops on environmental law, trains grassroots leaders in participatory democracy, opens dialogue with those most vulnerable to environmental abuses, and offers free legal representation before the judicial and administrative forums.

PERSONAL BIO

Rafael Cancel-Vázquez, a former Truman Scholar (2003), has actively participated in numerous environmental groups, working directly with communities facing environmental problems. An active student leader, he served as President of his law school's student body, and his work with the Asociación Nacional de Derechos Ambiental helped earn them the Judy Weightman Memorial Public Interest Award from the American Bar Association (2007). In May 2008, he received his JD from the University of Puerto Rico School of Law.

Issue area

Environment

Organization/Fellow Location

San Juan, United States

Impact Location

North America

United States

Organization Structure

Nonprofit

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