



sembrando  
**sentido**

**Tech that Fuels Social  
Transformation**

**Issel Masses**

# What Drives Us





# What Drives Us

***Fragile Structures***

Unable to withstand the impact of climate change

***41.7%***

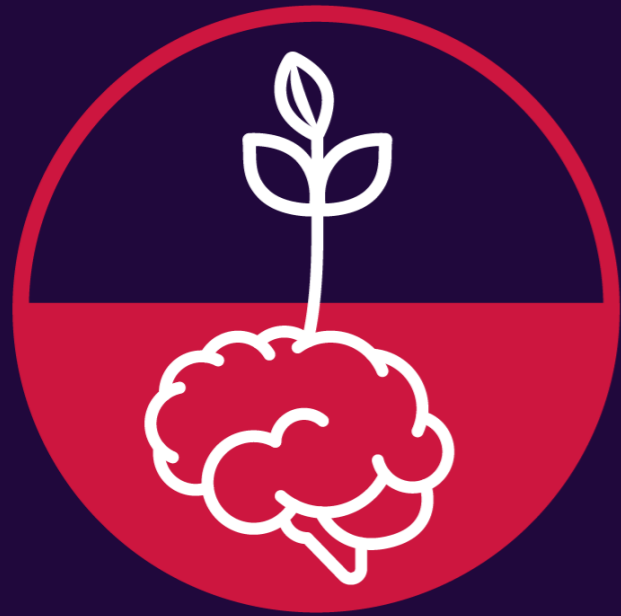
Living in poverty (Gini of .54 in 2021)

***High Risk***

Financial Crime Area

***+ \$127 Billion***

Of Federal Funds assigned after Hurricane Maria



sembrando  
**sentido**

# Mission:

We develop knowledge and tools to collectively transform government structures and achieve a fair and equitable distribution of public resources in Puerto Rico.

# Secret sauce:



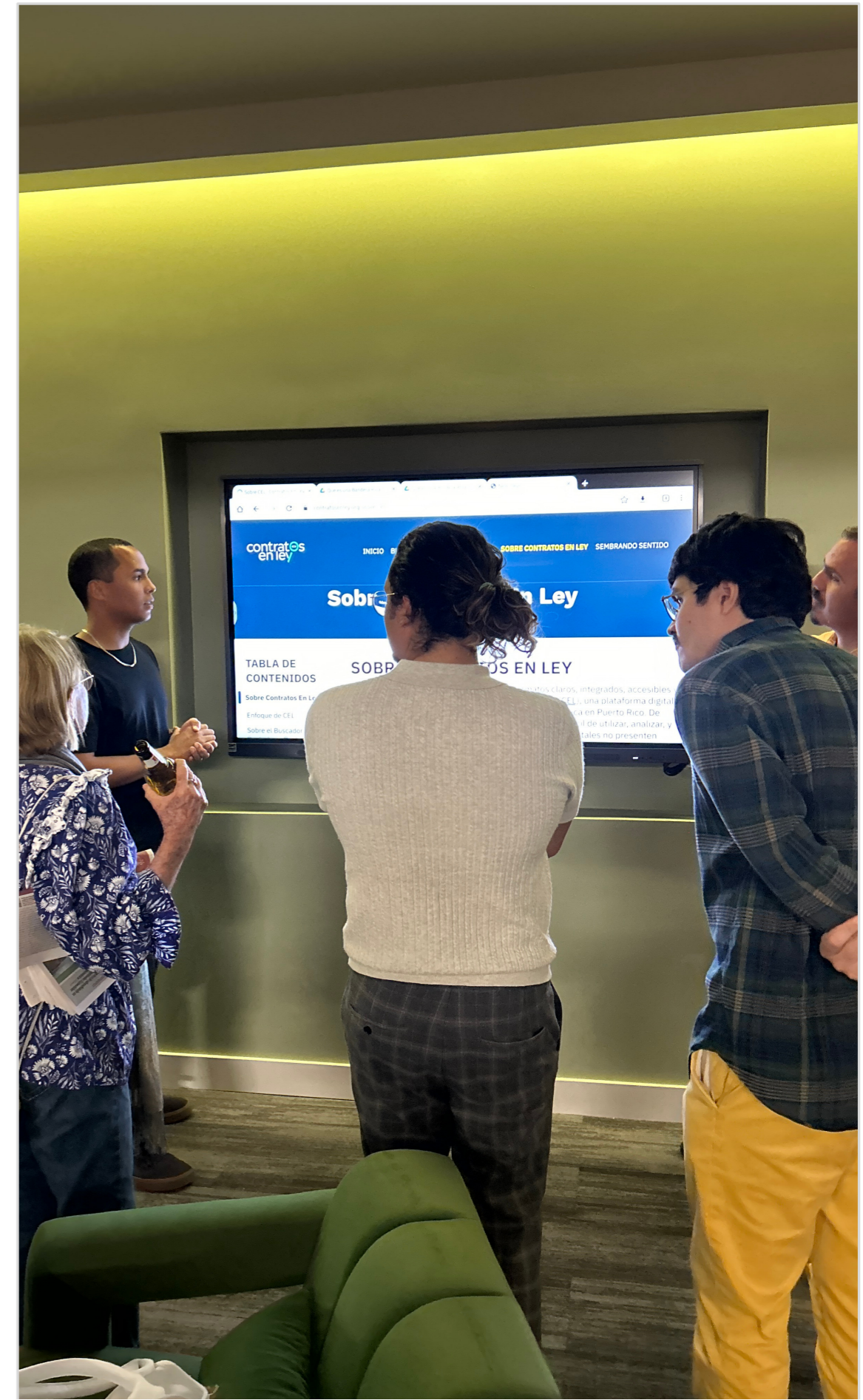
Technology for Social Justice



Policy Research & Advocacy

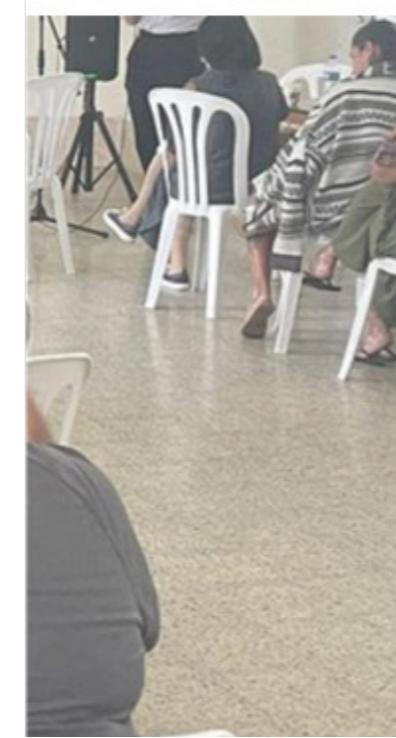


Social Oversight & Audit



# Sembrando Sentido

Our efforts focused around making public spending accessible and actionable started with the largest budget item: **public contracts.**





# Starting where we lose the most

**60%**

of government spending is used to cover the costs of contracts to deliver essential and non-essential services.

**\$4 billion**

or more is lost annually due to weaknesses in government contracting.



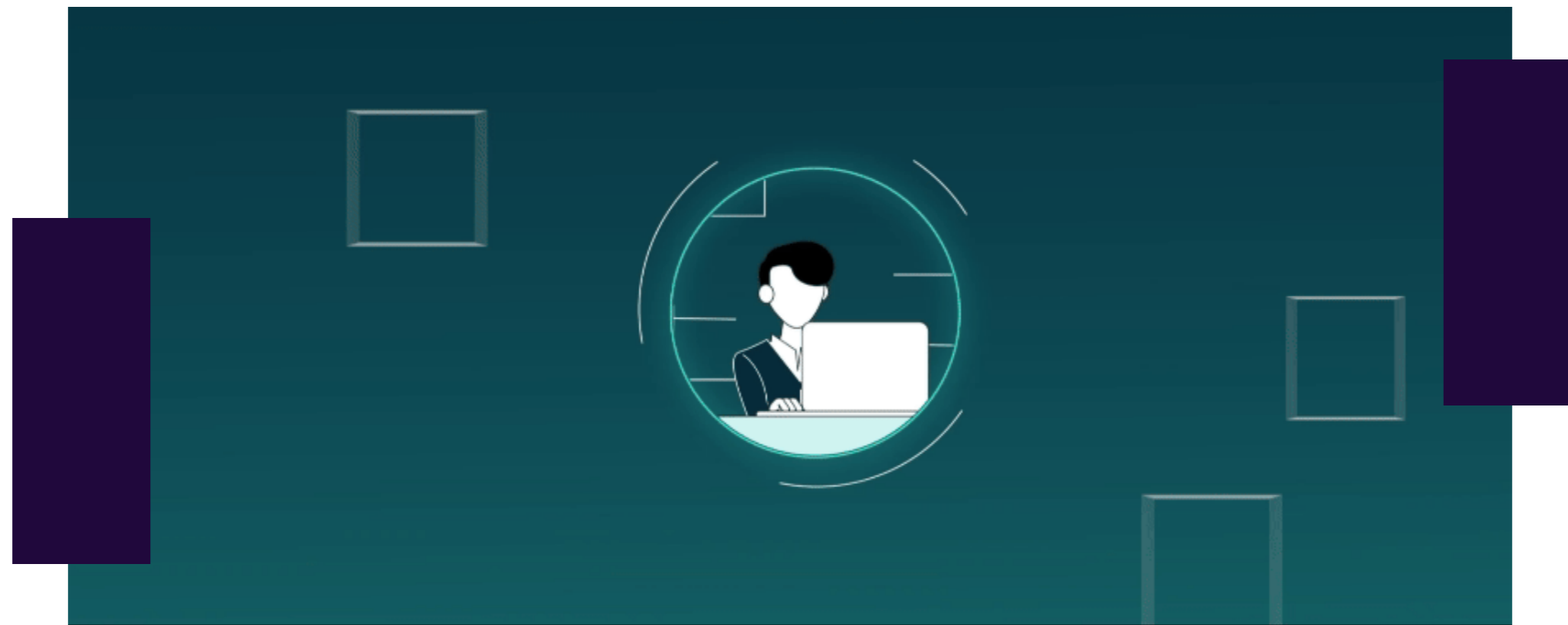
# Why open data technology?

*It is not possible to follow the money.*



# What is Contratos En Ley 3.0 (CEL)?

A digital platform that opens, monitors and evaluates public procurement in Puerto Rico.





# What can CEL do?

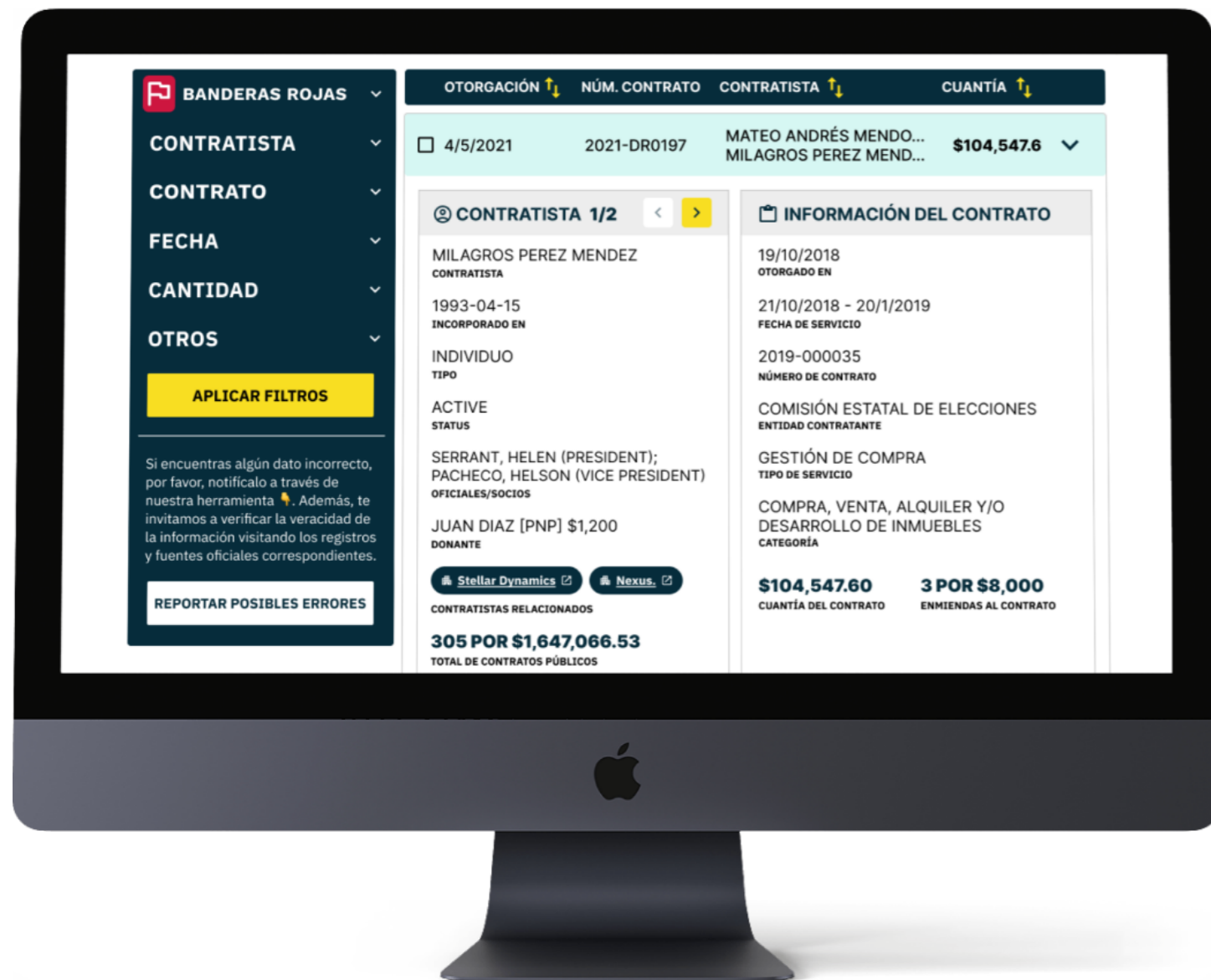
The tool was developed through participatory design and co-creation, ensuring it meets community needs first.

Optimized for mobile devices, allowing easy access to track government contracts anytime, anywhere.

Search | Contracts by the Book  
Contratos En Ley



Search | Contracts by the Book  
Contratos En Ley



# Let's roll up our sleeves.

Take a look at the profile of a contractor and see what we can find through *Contratos En Ley*.

1. What data points are important to you?
2. How would you like to manage this new source of data?

# How is it helping?



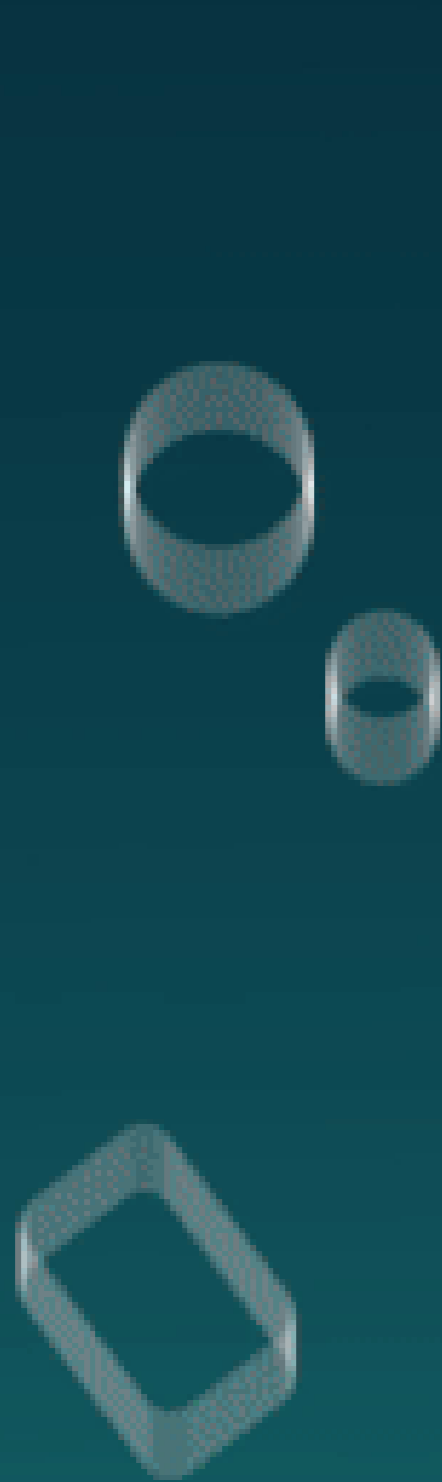
350% Increase in transparency of government contracting



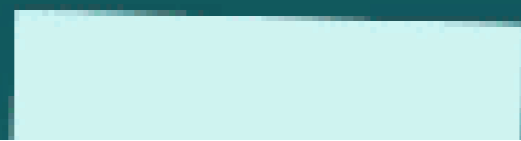
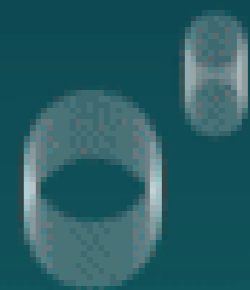
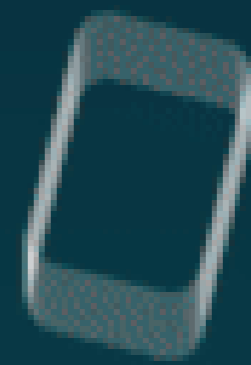
16% Of contracts for which our monitoring system raises a red flag of potential corruption risks promoting timely evaluation, action and prevention.



60+ Oversight and analytical support services provided to communities, journalists, and NGOs regarding public spending.



PARA  
CADA,  
CONEXIÓN  
INDIVIDUAL  
PARA  
EMPRESAS, COLECTIVOS  
Y ORGANIZACIONES





# What else have we learned?



Erosion of Government Capacity



Accountability Gaps



Compromised Service Quality

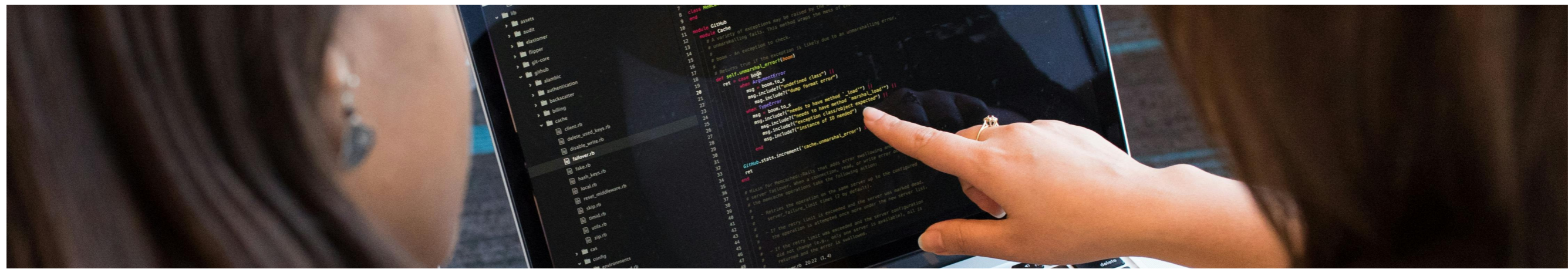


Weakened Labor Advocacy

# What's next on our agenda?

Several users have raised ideas about how to create experiences that are even easier for all who want to know how public funds are spent.

*For example, enabling searches using simple terms like **'energy+contract'** when the contractor or department is unknown. Our goal is to search through the project to find the contractor or contract. These tags are part of an infrastructure that can be enabled or unleashed through AI.*








**Our work beyond  
contracting and  
beyond Puerto Rico**



# The Role of Federal \$\$\$ in States

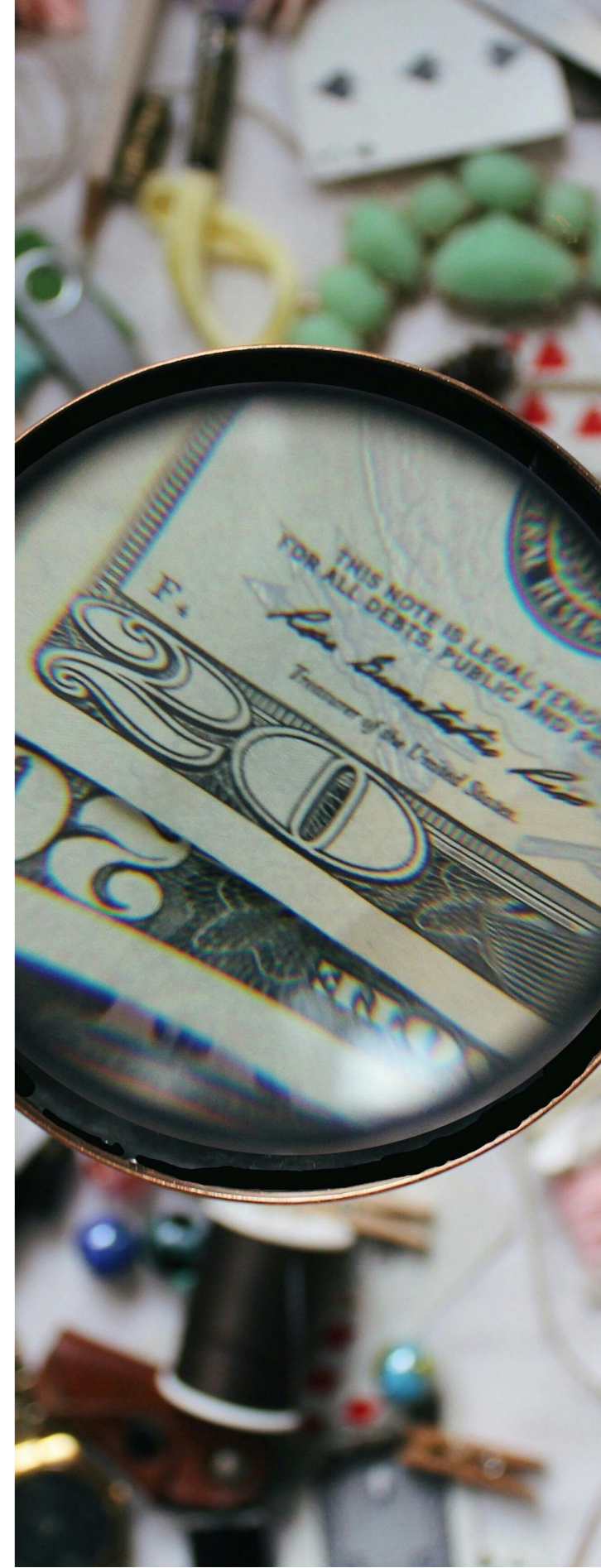
Federal funding for state and local governments, which on average used to represent **20%** of their revenue, is now on the rise as a result of increasing climate-related disasters.



# How Better Data can Help

When data challenges are addressed, it can help:

- Inform more accurate estimates of local damages and needs.
- Pinpoints opportunities to adjust, simplify or clarify processes and requirements.
- Allows real-time tech to monitor spending and promote effective and equitable use of public funds.







# Tracking the Use & Impact of Federal Funds

Designed to overcome data gaps and create a digital tool for better transparency and understanding of federal spending, from appropriation to community impact.





**Community-based tech that  
helps track federal funding and  
impact in the U.S.**





# Tracker Implementation

Sembrando will develop the Tracker in phases to build its foundation and scalability.

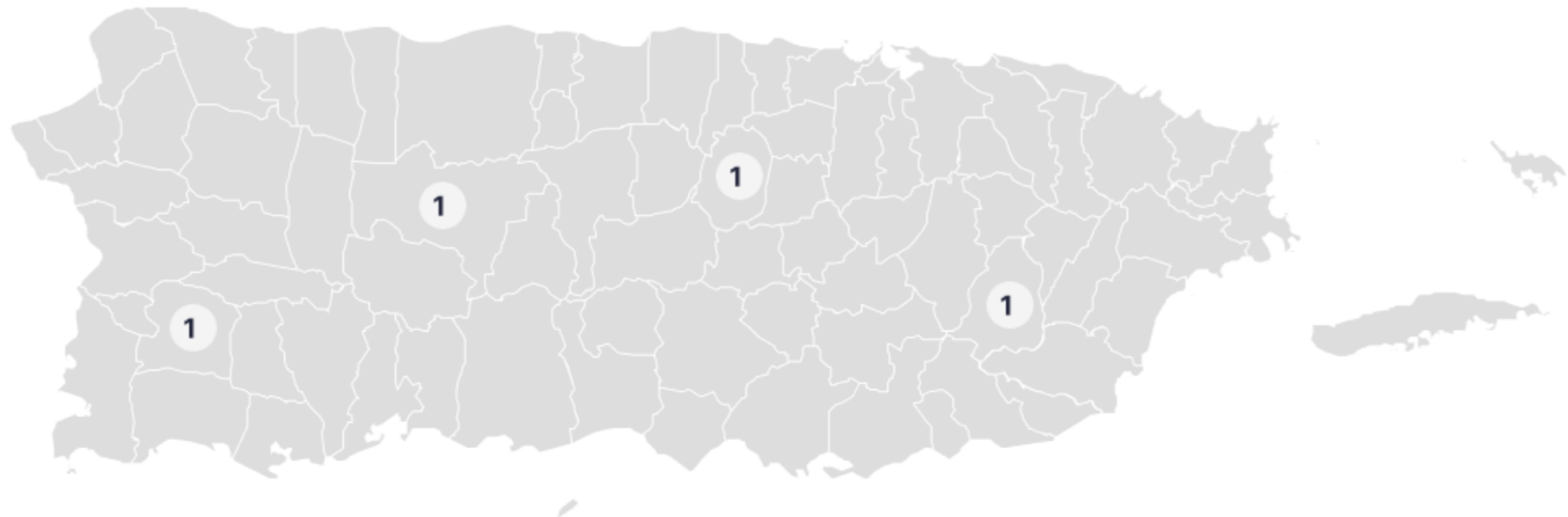
- Getting a 'Lay of the Land':  
[Mapping data sources](#)
- *Piloting the integration of data sources*
- Using AI to increase data visibility
- Supporting improvements in data systems, standards and processes
- Designing a Roadmap and Tools for Scale

# AI to Close Information Gaps and Increase Usability

Q Insert your Zipcode

X Reconstruction |

Reconstruction	3
Repair	1



# What we need to scale <> How you can help

-  Funding
-  Communications Support
-  Hardware
-  Partnership & Expert Advise
-  Cross-sector Collaborations

Let me support with...



Layshi

I want to help with Design!!



**Alfredo Cruz - Louisiana use of this tool-  
we have so many disasters- CDBG-DR  
funds in rural areas...letsfixitt@gmail.com**

Add name, role, team...

Add a description

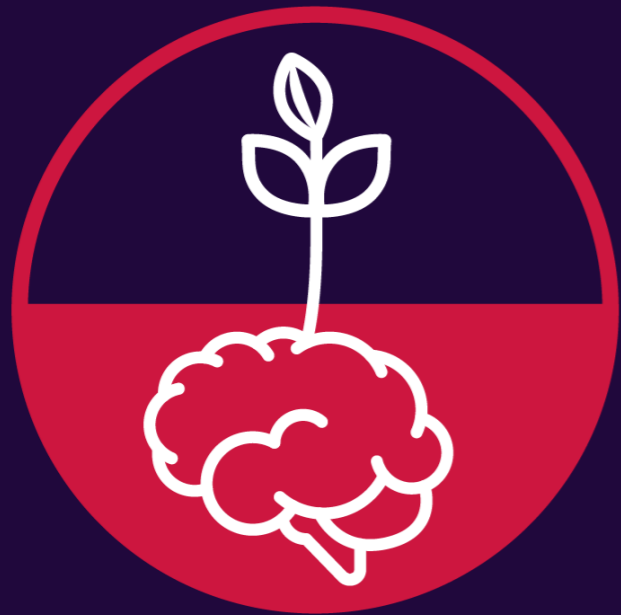
Add name, role, team...

Add a description

Add name, role, team...

Add a description





sembrando  
**sentido**

# Thank you



**Issel Masses**

+1 787-552-8811

[www.sembrandosentido.com](http://www.sembrandosentido.com)

[imasses@sembrandosentido.org](mailto:imasses@sembrandosentido.org)

## Share your thoughts

Let's take a look at the profile of TETRA TECH, INC. and see what we can find through *Contratos En Ley*.

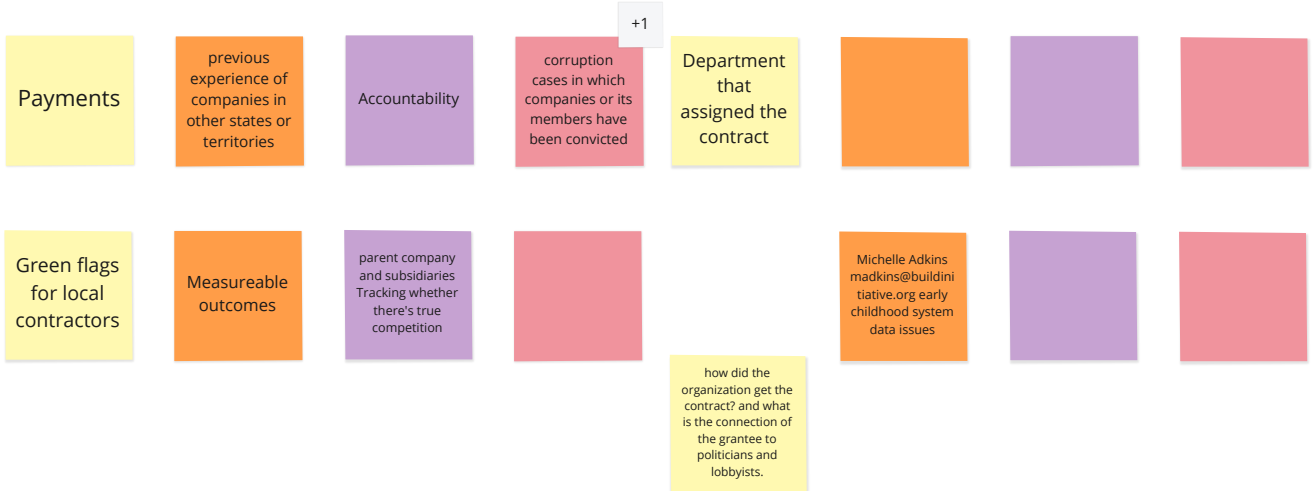
1. What data points are important to you?
2. How would you like to manage this new source of data?



# Share your thoughts

Let's take a look at the profile of TETRA TECH, INC. and see what we can find through *Contratos En Ley*.

1. What data points are important to you?
2. How would you like to manage this new source of data?



# R3 Process & Data Flow of Federal Funds



## 1 | White House: Declares a major Disaster

FEMA.gov

- **\*Disaster Number**
- State
- Declaration Type
- Declaration Date
- Incident Type
- Declaration Title
- Designated Area
- 18 more variables



## 2 | US Congress: Appropriates Community Dev. funds

CONGRESS.gov

- **Public Law Number**
- CPF Appropriation Amount
- Restrictions and conditions



## 3 | HUD: Allocate CDBG-DR funds

FEDERAL REGISTER/ HUD/ USAspending

- **Public Law Number**
- **Disaster Number**
- Grantee
- CDBG-DR Allocation Amounts
- **CDBG-DR Grant Numbers**
- CDBG-DR Grant Amounts
- % Spent
- 100+ more variables from 5+ data sources



## 4 | PR Housing Department: Plans and budgets CDBG-DR programs

PR CDBG-DR TRANSPARENCY PORTAL

- **CDBG-DR grant number**
- R3 programs budgets
- R3 programs expenditures
- R3 programs households served
- 25+ more variables



## 5 | Contractors & subcon: Manage & execute R3

PR CDBG-DR / OCPR/ CEL

- Bid name
- Bid due date
- Contract number
- **Contractor name**
- Contract amount
- Contract documents
- Subcontractor name
- **100+ more variables from 10+ data sources**



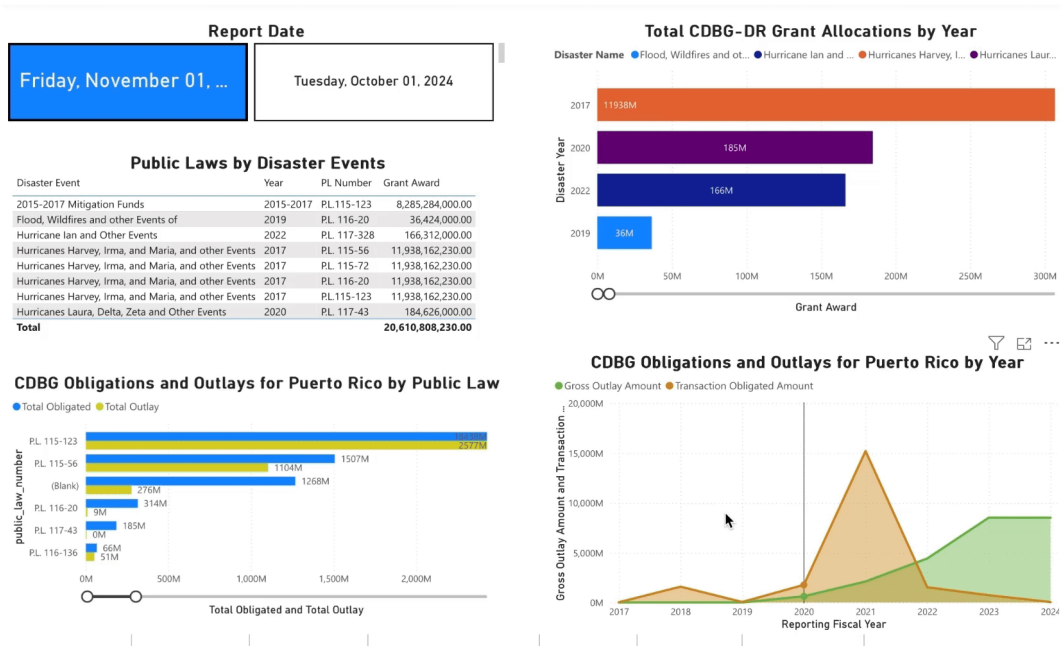
## 6 | R3 Beneficiaries

PR CDBG-DR / US CENSUS/ NGO's

- Municipality
- Eligibility status
- Award status
- Type of award
- Construction status
- **Construction manager name**
- Original project cost
- **100+ more variables from 10+ data sources**

# Where we are now

Starting with HUD funds, particularly "**Repair, Reconstruction and Reallocation**" (R3) programs, where over 23 billions have been allocated to other jurisdictions in the U.S. (including Louisiana, California, Florida, and others) to help rebuild homes after disasters.



Let us know what you think...

What would you like to know?

Sticky stack

