

DECs HELPING DECs **William Harazin**

A recent phenomenon in the NADEC realm is the cooperation and coordination among DECs in identifying DEC challenges and jointly meeting those challenges with successful concrete results. A case in point is the cooperation, coordination and participation of a number of DEC members from various DECs across the US helping out the Puerto Rican DEC in bringing the “Building the Trade DNA” Initiative to Puerto Rican University students through a number of export webinars.

In 2017 the Education Committee of the North Carolina District Export Council (“NCDEC”) chaired by Clem Schrader & Bill Harazin created “Building the Trade DNA” Initiative for outreach to local school systems for the purpose of educating today’s youth on the importance of exporting and international trade. The Initiative covers several groups of students ranging from Elementary level all the way to MBA students.

The “Building the Trade DNA” initiative went national when Jonathan Szucs, during his term as NADEC Chair, made it a NADEC pillar of NADECs public outreach. The initiative was pushed out to the 61 DECs, who embraced it and worked it into their own outreach programs in many novel ways.

In 2022 Puerto Rican DEC member Joan Laureano noticed a need to educate Puerto Rican university students on the benefits of exporting. Knowing of the “Building the Trade DNA” initiative, she reached out to Jonathan Szucs, who in turn connected her with Jim Anderson of NADEC’s Education Committee and Bill Harazin, NCDEC Chair. Together they started brainstorming with Professor Alex Rodriguez of the Puerto Rican University System on how best to bring exporting content to the Puerto Rican University students through his class. The result was a plan of 4 webinars on the fundamentals of exporting: “Why Export”; “Are You Ready to Export”, “How to Choose your 1st Market” and “Landed Cost... are Your Products or Services Priced Right?”.

With the plan in place, Jim Anderson requested Bill Harazin, Clem Schrader and the NCDEC to coordinate and organize the webinars with Joan Laureano and Professor Alex Rodriguez. The format of the 4 webinars became a conversation with 4 DEC member-panelists for each webinar topic. The panelists were drawn from DECs across the US. The webinars occurred about 2 weeks apart in the Fall of 2024. They were broadcast to Professor Alex Rodriguez’ class and were joined by students across the Puerto Rican University system with over 280 attendees. The webinars created an awareness and an interest in global trade and career opportunities in global trade. The webinars proved to be a great success. Not only were they a successful program of the “Building the Trade DNA” initiative, but they were also a successful example of coordination and cooperation of DECs helping DECs.

Comments for Puerto Rico:

Alex Rodríguez, Director
InterEmprende Metro Entrepreneurs Center

During the past months of October and November 2024, the InterEmprende Entrepreneurs Center co-organized four webinars with the purpose of introducing the topic exports to students and professors at the Metropolitan Campus and other Inter American University of PR (IAUPR) campuses.

*This series of webinars were possible due to the initial collaboration with the Puerto Rico District Export Council (PRDEC) and the National Association District Export Councils (NADEC). The architectures of these important events were Joan Laureano, President and Mr. José Batista member of PRDEC, William Harazin, esq., Jim Anderson, Clement Schrader members of NADEC. Also, we need to recognize the North Carolina District Export Council (NCDEC) members for the creation of the Trade DNA initiative, that in some way, enables the PRDEC and IAUPR students the opportunity of experiencing their valuable organization, scheduling, excellent international panelists, and execution of these webinars. The majority of the outstanding panelists, that offered their time voluntarily and shared amazing stories and information in the four webinars, were NCDEC members. The extraordinary team of 11 export experts (see Webinars’ Detailed Information) offered the following webinars titled: **Why Export? / Are You***

Ready Export? / How to Choose Your First Market? / Landed Cost... are Your Products or Services Priced Right?
Approximately, a total of 282 IAUPR students participated in these webinars, presented for the first time in a Puerto Rico university through ZOOM. Students and professors from four IAUPR campuses participated at least in one webinar and many of professor's Rodríguez Entrepreneurship Culture course were present in the complete series.

Our gratitude to the PRDEC, NADEC, and especially NCDEC collaborators who made possible this excellent and educational series of events for the IAUPR community.

Joan Laureano, Puerto Rican DEC Member,

.... I have to say that remembering the beginning of this effort and seeing how it has grown warms my heart. A virtual toast for this great achievement and... we need to keep this going! We need to meet again soon for phase 2 because the students are very excited about this. We even saw results we totally did not expect, such as the interest of international trade promotion careers... something that was not expected because we did not talk about that subject. But the interest grew naturally among the students.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!! We needed this in Puerto Rico.