



¡BIENVENIDOS!

Colegio Gregorio Hernández

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

In 1985, with just 100 students and 5 teachers, Colegio Gregorio Hernández opened its doors in Barahona with a clear mission: to provide quality education while instilling strong values and a sense of environmental responsibility. Today, the school teaches 300 learners, employs 22 educators, and has become a beacon of educational excellence and community involvement. At the center of this remarkable transformation is Ms. Quisquella Peña, the school's founder and principal, whose unwavering passion for teaching has impacted countless lives.

Ms. Quisquella's love for education was kindled during her own schooling in Barahona. Even as a student, she was asked to teach her peers, an experience that profoundly shaped her future. "Teaching gave me a sense of purpose—I realized that education could transform lives," she recalls. After graduating, she worked in public and private schools and offered tutoring to children in need, but she always dreamed of creating something greater.

That dream became a reality when Ms. Quisquella and her husband established Colegio Gregorio Hernández in their home. Their vision was to create a space where children could thrive academically while learning the values needed to shape a better world. Over the years, with the help of a loan from Banco Popular, the couple expanded the school, adding classrooms and enhancing its facilities to meet growing demand.

As the school grew, so did its reputation as a hub for quality education and community engagement. To strengthen parent involvement, the school introduced innovative initiatives like "Open Classrooms" and educational fairs, where parents participate in activities and observe the learning environment firsthand.

“

WHEN PARENTS STEP INTO THE CLASSROOM AND SEE THEIR CHILD LEARNING, IT STRENGTHENS THE BOND BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL, AND THAT'S WHERE REAL CHANGE HAPPENS.

- MS. QUISQUELLA PEÑA

”

A woman with glasses and a white floral shirt is smiling and standing in front of a blue background. Above her is a red banner with yellow spiral patterns and the text "¡BIENVENIDOS!" in white, bold, capital letters.

¡BIENVENIDOS!

Colegio Gregorio Hernández

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The school also prioritized hiring high-quality teachers through a rigorous selection process that includes demonstration classes and reference checks. These efforts have ensured a team of educators who share Ms. Quisquella's vision for excellence. "Our teachers are not just employees—they are the backbone of our mission to deliver quality education," she emphasizes.

Joining EduQuality, a program offered by Opportunity EduFinance, in 2023 marked a transformative chapter for Colegio Gregorio Hernández. The program's emphasis on School Leadership Professional Development (SLPD) and Teacher Mentor Professional Development (TMPD) has empowered Ms. Quisquella and her staff to refine their practices, creating a ripple effect throughout the school community.

Through the SLPD workshops, Ms. Quisquella gained invaluable insights into leadership strategies tailored for affordable non-state schools like hers. These sessions provided her with tools to address challenges such as teacher retention, financial sustainability, and fostering a collaborative school culture. One particularly impactful area has been managing teacher retention and hiring. Armed with strategies from the workshops, Ms. Quisquella implemented a robust hiring process that includes demonstration lessons and thorough evaluations of candidates' subject knowledge and teaching ability.

On the financial front, SLPD sessions on budget management have equipped Ms. Quisquella with techniques to allocate resources more efficiently while maintaining quality. "Learning to stretch limited resources has been a game-changer—it allows us to do more for our students without compromising the sustainability of our school," she adds.

The Teacher Mentor Professional Development (TMPD) component has had an equally transformative impact on classroom teaching. With the introduction of teacher mentors, the school has created a system for continuous professional growth. Mentors not only conduct regular classroom observations but also provide actionable feedback tailored to each teacher's needs.



¡BIENVENIDOS!

Colegio Gregorio Hernández

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Through TMPD, teachers have adopted new, student-centered methodologies that emphasize active learning and inclusivity. This shift has significantly enhanced the learning experience for students, leading to noticeable improvements in engagement and outcomes. "The TMPD program is not just about improving teachers' skills—it's about creating a culture where teachers are collaborators in each other's success," says Ms. Quisquella.

In recent years, the school has embraced inclusive education as one of its top priorities. As the number of students with emotional and physical challenges increases, Colegio Gregorio Hernández is committed to ensuring every child receives the support they need. "Every child deserves the chance to learn and succeed. We're building an environment where barriers are replaced with opportunities," Ms. Quisquella explains. This dedication has fostered a culture of acceptance and support, allowing all students to thrive.

With its unwavering focus on parent engagement, teacher excellence, and inclusive education, Colegio Gregorio Hernández stands as a model of what a community-centered school can achieve.

“ EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO A BETTER TOMORROW, AND WE ARE PROUD TO PLAY OUR PART IN SHAPING THAT FUTURE.

- MS. QUISQUELLA PEÑA ”