

Science Protagonists: Greetchen Díaz Muñoz takes over as director of Ciencia Puerto Rico ^[1]

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Gretchen Díaz Muñoz has a B.S. and M.S. in Biology, and a Ph.D. in Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology (Carlos Rivera Giusti).

Her interest in science was first sparked at her grandmother's house in the Playa barrio of Ponce, where she read encyclopedias while taking care of her grandmother. That interest became a passion when, at age 15, she left her hometown to study at the Centro Residencial de Oportunidades Educativas de Mayagüez (CROEM), where she emerged as a scientific leader. After an extensive career - which includes promoting education and the inclusion of more women in the field - Gretchen Díaz Muñoz became the new executive director of the Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR) collective.

“Since I was a little girl, I was rebellious in the sense that I said, 'No, it can't be that I have to settle for this.' I saw many negative things in my neighborhood in the years I was growing up. It was a period where there was a lot of gang violence. Sometimes they would take us out of school at noon because there was going to be a shooting,” she told *El Nuevo Día*, in an interview in which she explained that, for some people who are part of the public school system and come from marginalized or underserved communities -like her-, the process of achieving their goals can be bittersweet.



In 2019, Díaz Muñoz was selected as one of 125 ambassadors for the American Association for the Advancement of Science's IF/THEN program, which promotes women's leadership in STEM. (Carlos Rivera Giusti)

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