

# **CIENCIA PR APPOINTS DR. GREETCHEN DÍAZ MUÑOZ AS ITS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** <sup>[1]</sup>

Submitted by [Ariadna S. Rubio Lebrón](#) <sup>[2]</sup> on 15 October 2024 - 10:34am



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**San Juan, Puerto Rico** – The nonprofit organization Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR) proudly announces the appointment of Dr. Greetchen Díaz Muñoz as its new executive director. With an

outstanding track record in science, education, and advocacy for the inclusion of underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), Dr. Díaz Muñoz will bring her extensive experience and leadership to advance the organization's mission.

Born in Playa de Ponce, Dr. Díaz Muñoz earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Biology at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayagüez. She continued her doctoral studies in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology at The Ohio State University and conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Nebraska.

Her career has been dedicated to science and education, with a special focus on promoting the participation of girls and women in STEM. Since 2017, she served as the Director of the Science Education Program and Community Partnerships at CienciaPR, where she led innovative initiatives that have impacted thousands of students and educators in Puerto Rico. Some of these initiatives include Ciencia al Servicio, a program that fosters collaboration between teachers and scientists to co-create lessons and curriculum content, benefiting more than 150 educators, 25 scientists, and 7,000 students, especially during emergencies like earthquakes and the pandemic.

Dr. Díaz Muñoz founded "Semillas de Triunfo" and "For Girls in Science – Puerto Rico", programs for girls from 7th to 11th grade, providing hands-on STEM experiences, mentorship, and leadership development to more than 710 girls to date. These programs have reached over 90,000 people through outreach projects conducted by the participants. Recently, "Semillas de Triunfo" launched a chapter in New Haven, Connecticut, fulfilling one of her dreams of expanding the program beyond Puerto Rico. Dr. Díaz Muñoz has also established strategic partnerships with the Puerto Rico Department of Education and participated in curriculum review committees and official activities for students and educators.

"It is a privilege to take on this role at CienciaPR, an organization that has been very present throughout all stages of my professional career," said Dr. Díaz Muñoz. "I am committed to continuing the legacy of promoting science as a tool for empowerment and development for individuals and communities in Puerto Rico, especially the most vulnerable," emphasized the scientific leader.

In 2017, Dr. Díaz Muñoz served as the president of the Puerto Rico Society of Microbiologists and became the first Latina to join the Board of Directors of the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), the largest and oldest professional organization in the biological sciences worldwide. She is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, where she chairs the Academic Affairs and Honorary Degrees Committee. Dr. Díaz Muñoz launched, implemented, and directed the first research and development funds program for local scientists and entrepreneurs at the Puerto Rico Science, Technology, and Research Trust, where she also conceived and implemented initiatives such as the Research and Innovation Meetups, the Bajará award for outstanding local scientists, and the Forward Summit, among many others.

Her work has been recognized with multiple awards, including a proclamation by the Senate of Puerto Rico in 2017 for her professional achievements and the Sor Isolina Ferré Award in 2021 for her dedication to science education. In 2019, she was selected as one of the 125 ambassadors of the IF/THEN program by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which promotes leadership among women in STEM.

“Dr. Díaz Muñoz is known for being a dedicated educator, an advocate for the inclusion of marginalized populations and women and girls in science, and a visionary for Puerto Rico,” said Dr. Giovanna Guerrero Medina, who recently announced her retirement as executive director of CienciaPR after 12 years. “She has played a critical role in the development of many of CienciaPR’s most important programs and is someone who lives and breathes to increase access to scientific knowledge every day. I cannot think of a better person to lead the organization than Dr. Díaz Muñoz,” shared Dr. Guerrero Medina, who is also the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Wu Tsai Institute at Yale University.

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