

# From kicking a ball around to working on the World Cup in Qatar



*"It all started with a **plastic ball** that I used to play with when I was five years old."*

That's how [Marelly Flores](#) recalls the beginning of her journey to where she is today. Along with her team at [FIFA](#) (International Federation of Association Football), she's about to coordinate **the most important soccer tournament: World Cup Qatar 2022.**

*"It's a **unique challenge**, adapting and improving what already exists to the demands of a World Cup and maintaining the standard," she said.*

The **Tec graduate**, who speaks **eight languages** and has participated in **11 World Cups in different categories** -including **Russia 2018**- is a member of the team that **monitors** the stadiums to resolve any unforeseen situations.

Marelly Flores toma un balón de futbol de la FIFA en medio de un torneo de la FIFA width="900" loading="lazy">

**Chasing her dream and fulfilling it by being prepared**

One day, while working in her office at [Tecnológico de Monterrey](#), Marelly realized she could coordinate **soccer world championships** just as well as she could organize events at the university.

From that moment, when she thought about the possibility of organizing a World Cup in her office at Tec de Monterrey, Marley **began to prepare.**

*“I remember thinking about it. The next moment, I was **googling** the master’s degree that could help me fulfill my dream.”*

The next year (2008), she was studying for a Master of Advanced Studies in [Sport Management and Technology](#) in Switzerland.

Later, she worked at the **IBA** (International Boxing Association) and then the FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup in Costa Rica.

After that, she organized matches in the [UEFA Women’s Champions League](#).

Finally, **she started working at FIFA in 2016**, where she is responsible for organizational planning and operation of the **men’s and women’s World Cups.**

Previously, Marely studied for a degree in **Marketing** and a diploma in International Business at Tec de Monterrey.

She recognizes that this gave her the management and leadership tools that she uses today to manage **huge multicultural teams.**

Marely Flores, una mexicana posa en medio de un estadio de futbol de la UEFA Women’s Champions League.   
width="900" loading="lazy"> **“It all started with a plastic ball”**

Marely is always clear about where she comes from: playing with a plastic ball at the age of five.

Her passion for soccer led her to playing the sport. She even played on the **Borregos Zacatecas campus team** until she graduated.

The Tec graduate no longer plays due to some **injuries**, but she is paving the way for all soccer players to do so without any problems.

*“**In real-time**, I solve the problems of the officials and those in charge of each stadium, such as problems with the weather or game operation, any last-minute eventuality,”* she said.

But the **Tec graduate’s** work starts long before the tournaments.

She is responsible for **coordinating teams** from all areas so that everything goes well; overseeing that the **facilities are adequate**; looking for **stadiums** to play in; identifying **possible risks**; and planning modifications to all areas of the stadium; among other things.

*“**It’s wonderful to know that although we’re so diverse, we’re united by our love of soccer.**”*

### **Everything that makes a World Cup possible**

Marely says that each tournament is different and it’s not just about who plays or what the prize is.

“They’re **different cultures, customs, people, and facilities**,” she said. This is one of the aspects of her job that she’s most passionate about.

For Marely, **communication** between the areas she coordinates is very important. That’s why she speaks eight languages.

*“I like to interact with people of different nationalities and languages because that **enriches me**. “It’s wonderful to know that although we’re so diverse, **we’re united by our love of soccer**.”*

Marely has worked on **11 World Cups so far**, but Qatar is a challenge because it will be the first time that the Tec graduate has been to that country.

*“**The biggest challenge is adapting as quickly as possible** to the culture so that I can perform and work in the best possible way with my colleagues to offer the best experience.”*

## The Qatar World Cup challenge

**Her assignment to Qatar** was part of an internal selection process.

*“**Eight people applied** for that position. **I was selected** thanks to all my experience in managing competitions, stadiums, and the list of high-level work teams that I have led,” she said.*

Marely says that she is **one of the first Mexicans** to be part of organizing **Qatar World Cup 2022**, which will start on **November 20** and end on **December 18**.

*“Although the World Cup is in mid-November, my work in Qatar starts from November 1 until December, when it ends,” she tells CONECTA.*

Marely also shares that she acquired many of her skills after running the [FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup 2022](#). *“It made me stand out,” she says.*

The U-20 World Cup was held from August 10 to 28, in Costa Rica.

*“**I was selected (for Qatar) thanks to all my experience in managing competitions, stadiums, and the list of high-level work teams that I have led.**”*

## A Mexican ally in FIFA

Marely lives in Switzerland, at the FIFA headquarters, but always tries to return to Mexico to see her family and recharge her batteries.

*“**Coming to my country gives me perspective and recharges me,**” she says.*

Although Marely is in another country, she always makes sure that other Mexicans and Latinos see her as an ally in FIFA.

*“I’ve had the opportunity to invite Mexican women (with the necessary experience) to be match officials in **women’s World Cups**,” she said.*

In fact, she is always keen to **give advice** to Mexicans taking the same master's degree as she did.

*"The master's degree makes it possible to connect new students with those of us who are already working in the field, and I always sign up to **guide others.**"*

*"Perhaps they don't have the same dream as me but knowing my journey can **make it easier for them,**" she said.*

The Mexican is especially pleased to meet Tec graduates who are about to study for the same master's degree as her.

*"**My goal is to serve as an example to future generations,** to tell them that they can do whatever job they like."*

### **Marely Flores' advice on how to fulfill your dreams**

Finally, Marely shared her advice on how to fulfill your dreams with CONECTA:

1. Have a clear dream and work toward it. Get ready to make it possible.
2. Languages are very important. Start with English and learn more. This is a plus anywhere.
3. Participate in international events. This will give you the experience and visibility that you need.
4. Do what you can with what you have, wherever you are. Every step is important.
5. Be creative.

### **LEE MÁS:**

<https://conecta.tec.mx/en/news/zacatecas/sports/meet-woman-zacatecas-who-organizes-fifa-world-championships>