

The woman who's the lead engineer on Microsoft Teams



With information from Miranda Saucedo

The path to becoming a professional requires dedication and occasional sacrifices such as having to be more than 25 hours away from your loved ones. **Tec graduate Paola Mejía** knows that feeling all too well.

Fourteen years after having graduated from Monterrey campus with a degree in **Computer Systems Engineering**, Paola said that all the effort has been worthwhile, as she is now Principal Engineering Manager on **Microsoft Teams**.

Paola Mejía was on the **Women Innovation Impact** program, an inter-university initiative consisting of the **top six universities** in the **Monterrey Universities for Founders** group, which includes [Tec de Monterrey](#).

Women Innovation Impact is also part of the international **Weekly Women Entrepreneurship 2020** program, the aim of which is to encourage participation by **women in high-impact technology-based startups**.



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When introducing the talk, **Gabriela Ortiz**, coordinator of **Tec de Monterrey's Women in Engineering and Sciences** initiative, said she was grateful to all the women who make events such as this possible, which highlight their presence in science and technology.

*"All of our female teachers, collaborators, students, and researchers are taking part in this initiative to fulfil the commitment made by the Tec at the headquarters of the **United Nations for the 2030 agenda**,"* she said.

To contribute to this project's momentum, Paola Mejía shared part of her trajectory as a student, when she discovered her **passion for engineering**.

Hailing from Veracruz, Paola has worked on different products such as **Microsoft Office 365, Bing.com, Cortana**, and most recently on **Microsoft Teams**.

"At the beginning, I felt a little lonely, because none of my girl friends wanted to study engineering.

"But I knew it was important to break down those gender barriers and the social stigma that engineering, mathematics, or physics are just for men," she shared.

She recalled that the Tec was an essential part of reaching her professional goal. Besides providing her with the necessary tools for being successful, it gave her a new and different panorama to the one she had been accustomed to.

*“At the Tec, I realized that the **engineering area** is full of people whose minds are **open to exploration**, to learning from failures.*

*“What’s more, the way the Tec teaches you to develop a process through **interaction and creativity to generate solutions** was something new for me,” she said.*



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Breaking down barriers

Paola acknowledged that she has had to overcome countless financial and social challenges to get where she is.

“Where there’s a will, there’s a way. As I didn’t have a computer for the first two years, I learned to program with a notebook.”

When circumstances allowed it, she and her dad bought the parts and assembled a computer themselves.

“In the face of adversity, my advice to girls is to recognize what they like, what they’re passionate about, and not to be afraid of trying, not to be afraid of people saying no,” she said.

In the workplace, she added that many obstacles come up just because of her gender: from being the only woman in meetings to battling the biases of her own colleagues.

Presenting Zona Shero

Zona Shero (Shero Zone) was presented during the “**Women in Technology**” webinar. This is an entrepreneurial program for women from **Tec de Monterrey and the Eugenio Garza Lagüera Institute of Entrepreneurship**.

The initiative, which was created by a community of female entrepreneurs from **INCmty**, organizes activities such as workshops, mentoring sessions, and networking opportunities.

“It’s about understanding the entrepreneurial ecosystem from a gender perspective and recognizing where the inequalities are and what we need to work on,” explained **Luz María Velázquez Sánchez**, national leader of the program.

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