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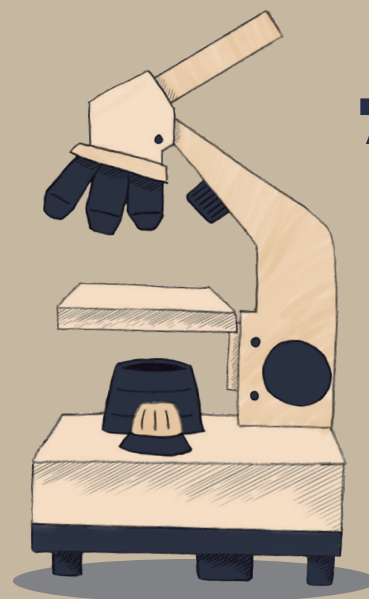
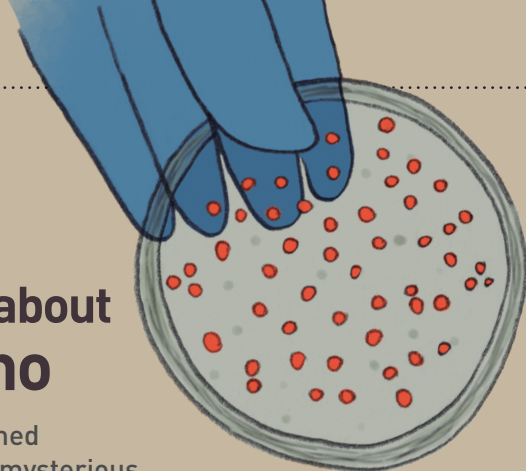
Twelve ideas you should know about Ángela Restrepo Moreno

“Two hundred and fifty years ago a humble man named Leeuwenhoek looked for the first time to a new and mysterious world populated by thousands of different species of tiny beings, some very fierce and deadly, others very useful and beneficial, and even many whose finding has been more important to humanity than the discovery of any continent or archipelago.”

The Hunter of Microbes [De Kruif, 1964, p. 2].

Microscope, microbe, cure ... are words that the most recognized mushroom scientist in the country knows very well since she was five years old: Dr. Ángela Restrepo Moreno. She, the only woman who was part of the Mission of Wise men in 1994, was responsible for tracing the route of *Colombia to the edge of opportunity* along with Nobel Prize for Literature, Gabriel García Márquez, and Dr. Rodolfo Llinás, among others. She talked with **Ingenio** and told us this:

- 1 | As an only child, her parents were very affectionate and loving. Her greatest inheritance from them is the love with which they brought her up. Rita, her nanny, always spoiled her a lot, as good nannies do.
- 2 | She never liked meat and learned to disguise it by hiding it under the lettuce. Nor did she play dolls despite having the famous blond Shirley Temple, with porcelain skin, which opened and closed her blue eyes coquettishly.
- 3 | Her grandfather, “Papa Julio”, was a doctor with tangled mustaches who had his own pharmacy in the city of Medellín: it was a magical place full of mortars and jars with preparations of rare names and a golden and black microscope that was his focus of attention.



- 4 | “Gordi”, as her friends called her, was not much of a social kind. She preferred to study or read rather than going out to a dance. However, she enjoyed being invited to walks or to share some time with Dandy, Pico y Placa, Benitin or Dingo, some of her dogs.
- 5 | As a small girl, she attended Mixed Kindergarten The Garden of Honor. She preferred subjects about life or sciences instead of numbers and mathematics. That’s how she discovered that studying microbes was her thing. She continued with her primary and secondary studies at La Presentación School, right in the center of Medellín, and alternated her education with her taste for languages at the Centro Colombo Americano.
- 6 | She attended the School of Medical Technology of the Colegio Mayor de Antioquia, where she became the first woman technologist in clinical laboratory. Later, she traveled to the United States and completed a Master of Science (M.Sc., 1960) and a Ph.D. in Microbiology, with an emphasis in Mycology (Ph.D., 1965), at Tulane University, in New Orleans, United States.
- 7 | Her great literary discovery was *Microbe hunters* by Paul de Kruif. That’s why she recommends it to all those young kids who want to become scientists. The book includes stories about the origin of diseases, their epidemiological characteristics and posible remedies. She also read all the work of the visionary Jules Verne, but she currently prefers to read Shakespeare and listen to Mozart and Wagner, pure love or tragedy.
- 8 | As for research, she was always interested in mushrooms. She is fascinated by their ability to resemble humans: they have the same enzymes and, despite their size –a cell of 4 or 5 microns–, their potential is enormous: they have a lot of genetic information and they can be transformed of mycelium (mold) existing in the environment to yeast in a short time, be resistant to antibiotics or reproduce very fast.
- 9 | She has worked all her life with *Paracoccidioides brasiliensis*, a microorganism that produces paracoccidioidomycosis and of which only cases are known in Latin America, mainly in Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador.
- 10 | She participated as founder of the Corporation for Biological Research (CIB) of Medellín in 1970, a private non-profit organization, where she worked as a researcher, head of the mycology laboratory and scientific director until 2015.
- 11 | Her favorite place is the lab. She just loves seeing it full of equipment and people learning in them. She really enjoys being a teacher and as she says: “You can not teach anyone if you do not love what you do”.
- 12 | What is the hardest thing of being a scientist? “Well, you have to give up many things you wanted to do. But, without a doubt, the greatest thing that has been granted to me is having belonged to the mission of science, education and development that was published in the book *Colombia on the edge of opportunity*”.

These twelve ideas about the life of Ángela Restrepo Moreno are gathered from an interview conducted on November 21, 2018 by the journalistic team of Ingenio and their exhaustive search in different public sources. The text was prepared, reviewed and approved by the Editorial Committee of **Ingenio** magazine.

Illustration: Ana María Jiménez Vélez