

COLEGIO TILATÁ

Nurturing Innovation, Virtues,
Personalized Learning,
and Global Citizenship

Colegio Tilatá is a renowned educational institution located in the outskirts of Bogotá, Colombia. It was founded in 1992 by the esteemed educator María Isabel Casas, who had a clear vision of providing quality education to the students. Her passion for philosophy, critical thinking, ethics, human values, and love for Colombia is the foundation upon which this exceptional institution was built.

María Isabel's dedication to providing education for peace was shaped by her family's experiences during the tumultuous times of violence in Colombia. Their enduring belief that education is a catalyst for transformation became her mission. The school stands upon pillars of love – a force that nurtures both self and others, freedom – forever entwined with responsibility





and wisdom – a product of thoughtful reflection on life’s experiences.

What sets Colegio Tilatá apart is its profound connection to the indigenous roots of the region. In their language, Tilatá translates to “joy in the place of cultivation,” symbolizing the delicate balance between enjoyment and rigorous work that defines this unique educational journey. Juan Sebastian Hoyos-Montes, the Headmaster of Tilatá School, encapsulates this vision when he affirms, “These principles are more relevant than ever today, and they are not just preserved but also brought to life in our mission: transforming education to contribute to a better world.”

The school’s primary purpose is to build a better society, one that is peaceful, ethically grounded, sustainable, just, and democratic. Achieving these calls for a distinct form of education, producing well-rounded individuals who find

their voice, realize their strengths, and contribute to society’s betterment from their areas of expertise.

In 2020, Colegio Tilatá was recognized as a “Great Place to Study.” The school’s philosophy, dedicated teachers, holistic curriculum, nurturing atmosphere of trust and dialogue, outstanding results, picturesque campus, and the opportunity for students to explore their potential and grow through meaningful conversations and reflection all contribute to this well-deserved accolade.

Nurturing Excellence

Colegio Tilatá is renowned for its unwavering commitment to a well-rounded and holistic education. With a vision that transcends the ordinary, the institution focuses on fostering the harmonious development of various dimensions of the human being, including



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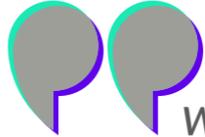


the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects.

“In the heart of our educational philosophy lies the idea that a truly educated individual is one who excels in both academic and human formation,” says Juan Sebastian Hoyos-Montes. Colegio Tilatá is committed to delivering outstanding academic results. The school is affiliated with esteemed networks like IB, Ashoka, and UNCOLI and offers three International Baccalaureate programs – PYP, PAI, and DP.

Hoyos-Montes further elaborates on the school’s unique approach, saying, “We take



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pride in being at the forefront of educational innovation, integrating forward-thinking programs into our curriculum. This includes mindfulness, the development of the spiritual dimension without religious affiliation, arts, dance, theater, music, and Positive Psychology rooted in character strengths.”

Colegio Tilatá is a recognized leader in socio-emotional education, restorative practices, and experiential education. “We don’t just focus on academic excellence; we also cultivate skills that are essential for a well-rounded individual,” Hoyos-Montes explains. “Our curriculum emphasizes the development of five key skills: thinking, research, communication, socio-emotional, and self-management.”

In addition to skills, the school also places a strong emphasis on the development of five attributes in its students: love, consciousness, happiness, democracy, and critical and creative thinking. “Our goal is to produce graduates who not only excel academically but are also sensitive, empathetic, and supportive individuals,” remarks Hoyos-Montes.

What sets Colegio Tilatá apart is not just its curriculum but its holistic ethos. “We foster a dialogic and inclusive way of being in the world, and this ethos is exemplified by our dedicated adults,” Hoyos-Montes notes. “Our teachers undergo continuous professional development and personal transformation, and we actively involve families in the formation and transformation process.”

Trust, dialogue, closeness, affection, and the acceptance of mistakes as valuable learning experiences are at the core of daily life at Colegio Tilatá. “We believe this balance between academic and human formation is essential for the personal and collective growth of our students,” adds Hoyos-Montes.

As a testament to its dedication to excellence, the school has been recognized by numerous entities. “We’re proud of our achievements, such as the ‘Great Place to Study’ recognition and our exceptional results in the evaluation visits for the three IB programs,” states Hoyos-Montes. “These accolades reflect our strong identity and our commitment to leading educational innovation.”

Offering Personalized Attention

At Colegio Tilatá, a small and closely-knit community is the heart of their educational philosophy. With approximately 500 students spanning from preschool to the highest grade, the school maintains an impressive ratio of just eight students per teacher. This creates an environment that thrives on dialogue, connection, attentive listening, and understanding—a culture deeply rooted in love and affection.

Juan Sebastian Hoyos-Montes says, “In our small but vibrant school, we prioritize personalized attention. This involves not only maintaining a low student-to-teacher ratio but also creating an environment that fosters



genuine connections and support.” The school’s authorization to teach and certify the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, including the Primary Years Program (PYP), Middle Years Program (MYP), and the Diploma Program (DP), has made a substantial impact on the institution.

These internationally recognized programs have fundamentally enhanced the school’s educational approach. Hoyos-Montes elaborates, “The International Baccalaureate programs have left an indelible mark on our school, enriching our educational approach on multiple fronts. However, the most significant impact lies in the rigor and structure they provide, which have, in turn, cultivated a community of lifelong learners.” Students at Colegio Tilatá are encouraged to pose thought-provoking questions, nurturing their curiosity and sharpening their critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, these programs instill an international mindset, enabling students to better navigate a globally connected world. They also emphasize the development of robust study skills and organizational structures. The combination of personalized attention and the IB programs



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equips students not only for academic success but also for success in various facets of life.

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Impact on Education and Beyond

Colegio Tilatá's commitment to innovative education has earned it a remarkable reputation. Recognized by ASHOKA as one

of the six transformative schools in Colombia, the institution's approaches have redefined the very essence of education. Their countercultural philosophy centered on "being," mindfulness practices, and the development of the spiritual dimension through self-awareness, values, and the search for meaning exemplify their dedication to innovation.

Juan Sebastian Hoyos-Montes says, "At Colegio Tilatá, our philosophy is a rebellion against the conventional. We believe that education should not just focus on 'doing' but on 'being,' and this perspective sets us apart in the world of education." The school's commitment

to restorative practices, Positive Psychology, and socio-emotional education further underscores its innovative spirit. "We are proud to declare that our primary goal is to mold loving, conscious, happy, thoughtful, and democratic individuals," notes Hoyos-Montes.

In addition to these philosophies, Colegio Tilatá houses a Center for Social and Environmental Justice, which actively engages with public schools in the region. Their approach is one of cooperation rather than charity, aiming to learn from these schools and address their academic and environmental needs. This unique initiative underscores

their dedication to creating a better society through education. Furthermore, the school has undertaken an ambitious environmental project centered around the river that runs through its picturesque campus, nestled amidst the beauty of nature with mountains, trees, and a flowing river.

Beyond their innovative educational approaches, Colegio Tilatá has garnered recognition from the EFQM model, underscoring their commitment to excellence in their management model. This commitment is not just theoretical; it's backed by tangible evidence. The school consistently delivers good



academic results, and its graduates actively contribute to building a better society.

University professors who interact with Tilatá's graduates provide positive feedback, highlighting their exceptional qualities. "We are thrilled to hear commendations from university professors who encounter our graduates. It reaffirms our belief that we are nurturing, caring, empathetic, and kind individuals," says Hoyos-Montes. Moreover, students from other schools also recognize the exceptional character of Tilatá's students, considering them good citizens who are compassionate and considerate.

A Global Network and a Reflective Approach

Colegio Tilatá's commitment to excellence extends far beyond its own boundaries. As a proud member of UNCOLI, the network of international schools in Colombia, the institution actively participates in a dynamic exchange of ideas and practices. Through this network, Tilatá not only shares best practices but also collaboratively organizes arts, music, and sports events. Additionally, the school engages in social responsibility projects in vulnerable areas of Colombia, sharing elements of its unique pedagogical model.

Juan Sebastian Hoyos-Montes states, "Being part of UNCOLI is a testament to our commitment to continuous improvement. It's a

platform that allows us to share our innovations and gain valuable insights from other like-minded institutions." Tilatá remains at the forefront of innovation through a dedicated commitment to reflection. Their leadership team is intricately aligned with the school's purpose and vision. They regularly attend conferences and engage with an advisory board that consistently reviews their practices.

"Our commitment to innovation is deeply ingrained in our culture. We believe in learning not only from textbooks but also from our students, teachers, and families," Hoyos-Montes notes. "This reflective approach helps us adapt to the evolving educational landscape and stay on the cutting edge of pedagogical best practices." Tilatá is like a garden. Its teachers are gardeners who carefully nurture so that the individual seed of each student can flourish. This reflects a commitment to a different style of education and a different way of relating to students. At the same time, its education is not focused on preparing for exams, but centered on helping students build their life projects, full of meaning and contribution to society. In summary, it's a countercultural school. This translates into a critical stance towards trends, social customs and practices, such as consumerism, where human virtues take precedence over knowledge or economic success. ●