



Maria Lorena CARLO UNDA

Home Country
Ecuador

Degree
PhD in Biomedical Informatics

Expertise
Computer Engineering,
Graphics and Visualization

Research Focus
Global Health Informatics,
Visualization

Host University
Columbia University, United
States

Fellowship Awarded
2012

Maria Lorena Carlo Unda was born and raised in Ecuador. Her late father was an accomplished telecommunications engineer and she credits his example as her inspiration to pursue a career in technology.

Lorena was awarded a scholarship by the Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral (ESPOL) in Guayaquil, the largest city in Ecuador, for a BSc in Computer Engineering. Her undergraduate thesis was based on an internet banking system she developed for the Banco de Guayaquil, where she worked during her studies. She subsequently worked as an instructor and software projects coordinator at the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department of ESPOL, where she also gained a Masters in Business Administration (MBA). In 2006 she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for an MSc course in Computing, specializing in graphics and visualization, at the University of Utah, United States. Her Masters' project was related to biomedical informatics, and she later gained an MA in this subject at Columbia University, where she is currently studying for a PhD. Lorena served as a founding Chair of the IEEE Women in Engineering Affinity Group of Ecuador, which aims to motivate young women to pursue careers in science and technology.

Studies in resource-poor settings have demonstrated that timely access to complete and accurate data can improve healthcare delivery. The PhD research focuses on global health informatics, and Lorena is hoping to use information technology to find new solutions to problems in healthcare in low-and middle-income countries. The work uses data from projects related to reducing the incidence of malaria in Ghana.

Following her PhD, Lorena plans to teach and research at ESPOL while continuing her involvement in mentoring and motivating young women to study science and technology.