



## HanesBrands' Continuing Education Program for Employees is Transforming Lives in Central America and the Caribbean

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*More than 7,500 employees have taken advantage of high school and college programs to improve their skills, support their families and enrich their communities*

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 23, 2017-- When Felipa Benitez joined HanesBrands' Honduras operations seven years ago, she could not read or write. Today, the 34-year-old mother of two is one of the latest HanesBrands employees to hold a new high school diploma after participating in the company-sponsored [continuing education program](#).

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Felipa Benitez could not read or write when she joined HanesBrands in Honduras in 2009. By participating in the company's continuing education program, Felipa recently earned her high school diploma – and has received a scholarship to attend college. (Photo: Business Wire)

who noted that Hanes offers employee discounts on college tuition and scholarships to outstanding students.

For manager-level employees, the company introduced an International Master of Business Administration (MBA) program in El Salvador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic, which focuses on supply-chain management. It was launched in partnership with the prestigious EUNCET Business School, a center for higher education associated with the Polytechnic University of Catalonia in Spain.

"This ambitious program, which includes classes in operational subjects such as supply chain strategy, organizational vision and leadership development, is a key part of the company's competitive strategy," Valerio said. "Hanes is focused on remaining a highly competitive company in the

Felipa, a facilities assistant at Hanes' corporate office in Villanueva, Honduras, joined 150 of her colleagues last month to don robes and celebrate all the pomp and circumstance of the country's seventh and latest graduation ceremony. Felipa is now continuing on to college.

"I am grateful for the support I received through the company's education program," said Benitez, who received a college scholarship during the graduation ceremony. "My life has completely changed."

Since its inception in 2009, more than 2,000 HanesBrands employees in Honduras, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic have earned high school diplomas, more than 10 have earned college degrees, and another 1,500 are currently participating in high school, technical, college and even post-graduate college programs. Many of these employees have secured promotions or moved to higher-level roles within the company.

"Hanes has provided more than 250,000 hours of education to develop the talent of its employees, support families and enrich the communities where we operate in Central America and the Caribbean," said Maria Elena Sikaffy, vice president of human resources, Hanes Central America and the Caribbean. "And the entrepreneurial spirit we recognize in our employees has motivated us to continuing to invest in extending our education programs."

Benitez began her employee educational journey at a first-grade level and studied for seven years to earn her high-school degree.

"From the moment I began the program, I decided to do my best so I could set a good example for my daughter," Benitez said. "I also wanted make everyone who encouraged me – my family and coworkers – feel proud."

The region's employees also have access to technical training designed to enhance their skills in textile manufacturing. Hanes opened the first technical school of its kind in the region within its large El Salvador Textiles fabric plant in 2014. In 2015, similar programs were launched in two of the company's plants in Honduras, and last year, Hanes opened the first bleach-and-dye training center in the Dominican Republic.

Hanes is also supporting employees who have even greater aspirations by developing higher-education programs in partnership with local universities in El Salvador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

"Offering life-changing educational opportunities benefits both our employees and our company," said Eduardo Valerio, manager of organizational development, Hanes Central America and the Caribbean,

future, and that requires developing the next generation of leaders today.”

The first class of MBA students graduated last July in El Salvador, followed the next month by a graduating class in Honduras. About 80 managers have completed the program, and 40 are currently enrolled.

Hanes has been operating in Central America and the Caribbean for more than 40 years, and currently has 30,000 employees in the region. The company's corporate social responsibility programs have been recognized by the Honduran Foundation for Corporate Social Responsibility (FUNDHRSE), the Salvadoran Rotary Club, and the Mexican Center for Philanthropy (CEMEFI). In 2015, The Great Place to Work Institute named Hanes the third best multinational company to work for in Central America and the Caribbean, the first apparel company to garner such an honor.

#### **HanesBrands**

HanesBrands, based in Winston-Salem, N.C., is a socially responsible leading marketer of everyday basic innerwear and activewear apparel in the Americas, Europe, Australia and Asia/Pacific under some of the world's strongest apparel brands, including *Hanes, Champion, Playtex, DIM, Bali, Maidenform, Bonds, JMS/Just My Size, L'eggs, Wonderbra, Nur Die/Nur Der, Lovable, Berlei, and Gear for Sports*. The company sells T-shirts, bras, panties, shapewear, underwear, socks, hosiery, and activewear produced in the company's low-cost global supply chain. A member of the S&P 500 stock index, Hanes has approximately 70,000 employees in more than 40 countries and is ranked No. 448 on the Fortune 500 list of America's largest companies by sales. Hanes takes pride in its strong reputation for ethical business practices. The company is the only apparel producer to ever be honored by the Great Place to Work Institute for its workplace practices in Central America and the Caribbean, and is ranked No. 167 on the Forbes magazine list of America's Best Employers. For seven consecutive years, Hanes has won the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Energy Star sustained excellence/partner of the year award – the only apparel company to earn sustained excellence honors. The company ranks No. 172 on Newsweek magazine's green list of 500 largest U.S. companies for environmental achievement. For more information about the company and its corporate social responsibility initiatives, including environmental, social compliance and community improvement achievements go to [www.Hanes.com/corporate](http://www.Hanes.com/corporate), and connect on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/hanesbrandsinc](https://www.facebook.com/hanesbrandsinc)) and Twitter ([@hanesbrands](https://twitter.com/hanesbrands)).

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