

# Suzana's Story:

## *From Searching to Purpose*

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**For Suzana Fir, teaching at Hope Academy is more than a career**—it's the culmination of a journey that began with longing, led to transformation, and now serves a greater purpose.

Born and raised in a small village in Slovenia, **Suzana's early life was marked by challenges and a deep, unfulfilled yearning for meaning.** She explored various spiritual paths, searching for God in meditation, hare krishna, and other practices, **but found herself drawn to Him in ways she couldn't fully understand.**

When friends suggested she visit the Dominican Republic to research positive energy, Suzana's curiosity took over. After a quick internet search revealed stunning images of beaches and palm trees, she packed her bags and left for what she thought would be a temporary trip. But sitting on a beach in Las Terrenas, overcome with emotion, Suzana knew she had found her new home.

Returning briefly to Slovenia to prepare for a move back to the DR, Suzana faced the weight of her decision. Fearful of her family's reaction, she left without telling them, which caused such concern they contacted the police. While the situation was resolved, **Suzana knew she had to approach her plans with courage and faith. Over the next two years, she worked tirelessly to save enough money to return to the DR permanently.**

When the pandemic forced Suzana, a florist at the time, to consider a new career, someone suggested teaching. Initially resistant, **she eventually saw how God was orchestrating her path.** Around that time, Suzana met Ronald, a fellow teacher, who introduced her to a video about 2nd Mile Missions and the new school they were opening, Hope Academy. She applied for a position, and during the interview, everything clicked.

**"I felt an instant connection," Suzana shares.** "Through everything I had experienced up until that point, **God was giving me a purpose.**"

God confirmed Suzana's calling by reminding her of a vision she had as a teenager—sitting in a chair, reading to children. Now, as a teacher at Hope Academy, that vision is a reality.

**Suzana describes her experience at Hope Academy with four powerful words: transformation, wisdom, understanding people, and knowledge.** "Teaching is a noble calling," she says, "but it also comes with its challenges." For Suzana, the biggest challenge is finding the right balance between pushing students to learn and allowing things to unfold naturally. Yet, **it's the creative side of teaching that keeps her energized.**

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As a former florist, creativity is in Suzana's DNA. **She thrives on opportunities to make lessons engaging and meaningful, and she finds joy in seeing her students succeed.** "When they've accomplished something hard, their happiness makes me forget the challenges we faced along the way," she shares.

**Being part of Hope Academy has not only transformed the lives of Suzana's students but her own as well.** It's taught her flexibility and softened her heart. More importantly, it's shown her that God has been shaping her for this role all along. **"I've always believed there was a diamond inside of me, and God is making it shine."**

Suzana credits God for every step of her journey—giving her the courage to follow His call, helping her overcome language barriers, and providing the confidence she needs to fulfill her purpose.

## Transformation Beyond the Classroom

Suzana's story is a testament to the ripple effect of 2nd Mile Missions' work in the Dominican Republic. While the focus is often on the students, **Suzana's journey reminds us that the impact extends far beyond the classroom, changing the lives of teachers and staff as well.**

This kind of transformation is only possible through the generosity of our donors. Your support doesn't just provide Christ-centered education for students; it also empowers teachers like Suzana to step into their God-given purpose.

**Be part of the transformation.** Sponsor a student, become a Mile Marker, or give a gift to our "In Their Shoes" end of year giving campaign. **Together, we're not just changing lives—we're shaping futures for God's glory.**

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