

University Inclusion Project Culminates in a National Conference in Ecuador

Education and inclusion experts reach 500 teachers, leaders, and university students in the inaugural event

LOS ANGELES, CA, USA, August 15, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On July 20th, 2023, Inclusion Matters by Shane's Inspiration partnered with [FADSE](#) and Universidad UTE to co-host a national conference spotlighting best practices in social/emotional inclusion for children and young adults with disabilities in Ecuador.



This powerful day was the culmination of a 12-month University Inclusion Training Project, which was made possible through a generous grant from the US Embassy and Consulate in Ecuador.

The project launched in September 2022 and has trained over 1,000 university students and professors from 4 national universities and practicing teachers from Fe Y Alegria, a South American non-profit organization that provides education to underserved children throughout Ecuador and beyond.

During the conference, 500 attendees gained critical perspectives and tools from esteemed presenters, such as:

- Universidad UTE Rector, Ricardo Hidalgo Ottolenghi,
- US Embassy & Consulate in Ecuador's Public Diplomacy Officer, Chigozie Okocha,
- Inclusion Matters by Shane's Inspiration's Co-Founder & CEO, Tiffany Harris & Sr. Vice President of Programs, Marnie Norris
- Celebrated Ecuadorian Television Presenter, Estefani Espin, and
- Subsecretary for Education Innovation for the Ministry of Education, Andrea Lorena Penaherrera Vaca.

Presentations highlighting best practices in inclusion from early childhood through university education were offered by Universidad UTE, FADSE, Inclusion Matters by Shane's Inspiration,

Universidad Estatal de Milagro, Fe Y Alegria, and Communa.

Project History:

In 2012, Inclusion Matters by Shane's Inspiration and the Country of Ecuador partnered to design and build the country's first fully inclusive playground in the City of Cuenca. The project went far beyond building a play space. They facilitated a community design process involving more than 200 families of children with disabilities, therapists, education specialists, and local organizations who provided input into the design. In partnership with the City of Cuenca's Acción Social Municipal, they hosted trainings at a local university and for local non-profits and facilitated Inclusion Matters by Shane's Inspiration, Together, We Are Able (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX5RuM3L1lc&t=3s>) education program in local elementary schools.

Over the next decade, this initial effort to support inclusion priorities for people with disabilities in Ecuador led to several trainings with cross-sectors in government ministries on inclusive practices in design, community building, urban development, and education. The University Inclusion Training Project has been the culmination of over a decade of cross-collaboration with inclusion leaders throughout Ecuador.

FADSE (<https://fadse.org/>)

FADSE seeks to build an Ecuador where all are part of processes that contribute to the strengthening of a more just society, capable of responding to current contexts and requirements. Their mission is to improve living conditions, reduce inequalities, direct attention to others and, in unity of actions, seek sustainable development. With more than 18 years of experience, they have developed actions linked to social sustainability through Inclusive Education, as well as integral agro-productive processes, self-sufficient renewable energies, environmental management and education, and strategic planning.

INCLUSION MATTERS BY SHANE'S INSPIRATION (<https://inclusionmatters.org/>)

For more than 25 years, this global non-profit organization has fostered a bias-free world for children with disabilities. Their mission is to create inclusive playgrounds and educational programs that unite children of all abilities. They have a network of 78 inclusive playgrounds worldwide, reaching millions of children each year, and have delivered school and community inclusion programs that have reached over 55,000 children. Their innovative social inclusion curriculum and training have reached 67 countries, and they have advocated worldwide, including the United Nations Conference on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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