

Guatemalan Students Complete First Space Hackathon to Win Scholarships in Astronautics

The International Institute for Astronautical Sciences provides first space scholarships in emerging space nations as part of its Space for all Nations program.

GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA, June 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [International Institute for Astronautical Sciences](#) (IIAS) announced today that it had completed the first phase of its '[Space for all Nations](#)' (SFAN) initiative in Guatemala, a program designed to drive innovation and provide education in space-related fields in emerging space nations.

Guatemala was chosen as the first country to be represented under the SFAN program because of its recent involvement in space, including the launch of the country's first satellite, Quetzal-1. It was also the host of last year's Central American Space Congress, which IIAS sponsored.

The first phase of SFAN's 'Space for Guatemala' project involved a regional space hackathon where IIAS awarded six IIAS scholarships to Guatemalan students. Among them was Valeria Fernanda Sierra Cano, who proposed the use of sugar cane ash as a simulant of the lunar regolith. She won a full scholarship to attend IIAS's Fundamentals of Astronautics course in Melbourne, Florida last April.

"You don't have to be born in the right country to aim for space.", said Sierra Cano, "You just have to believe you belong there."

SFAN is a global initiative designed to elevate the next generation of space professionals from emerging space nations by connecting students to real-world research, industry experts, and



The International Institute for Astronautical Science's Space for all Nations program selects Valeria Sierra Cano as the winner of its first national STEM contest in Guatemala.

academic scholarships that open doors to the space sector—doors that have historically been closed to entire regions.

“In every corner of the world, there’s a brilliant mind dreaming of space,” says SFAN Chairperson David F. Guajardo. “Our mission is to clear the path by identifying talent and nurturing it, ultimately building a more diverse, inclusive, and representative future for space exploration.”

The next phase of SFAN’s commitment to Guatemala will involve working with the [Guatemalan Association of Space Science and Engineering](#) to support a network of Guatemalan research and education organizations with space

aspirations and provide them with access to IIAS’s subject matter experts and research facilities, including microgravity environments, space suits, and research aircraft and balloons. SFAN’s long-term goal within Guatemala is to foster international collaboration, enable research

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Valeria Sierra Cano

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The International Institute for Astronautical Science's Space for all Nations program introduced in Guatemala

through flight opportunities, and to develop curriculum that will incubate a space-focused science and engineering program.



Valeria Sierra Cano, winner of IIAS's Space for all Nations contest in Guatemala, prepares for high-altitude training

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