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INSTITUTO DE ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE

UCL
Centre for
Inclusive Education

Collaboration between UCL Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE) and the Institute of Teaching and Learning (IDEA) of Universidad San Francisco de Quito to co-create an Inclusive Initial Teacher Training (IITT) Framework for Quito, Ecuador.





Project Aims

The aims of this project funded by IOE International Funds were:

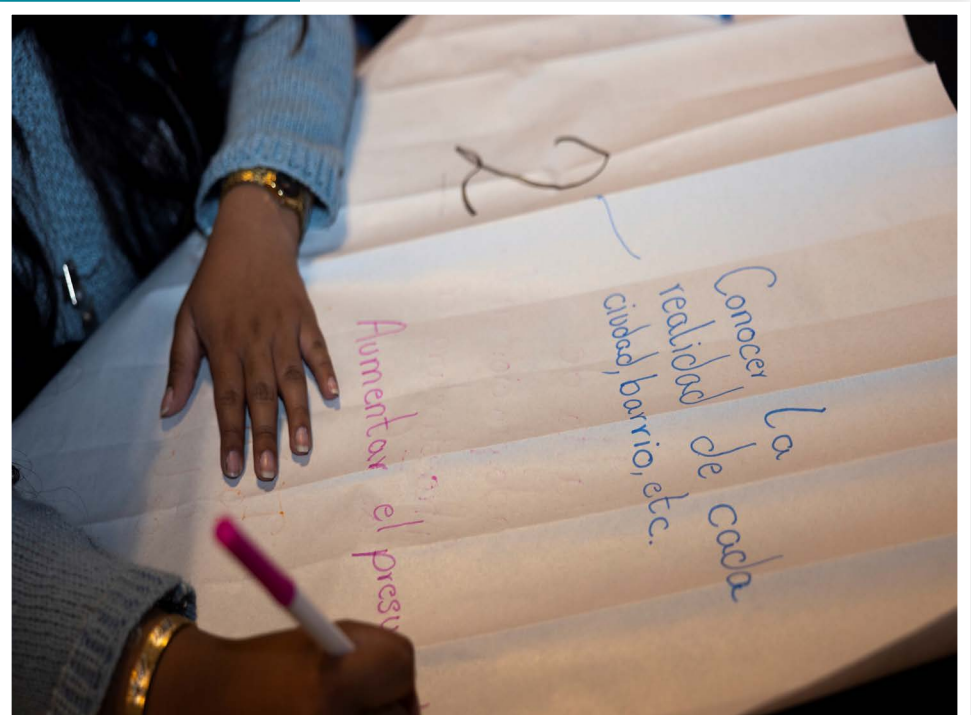
- To establish a partnership between UCL and Ecuador's leading university to facilitate the co-construction of an IITT curriculum framework and continuing professional development in Ecuador that promote evidence-informed inclusive practices.
- To lay the foundations for generating a long-lasting, sustainable impact on the Ecuadorian education sector.
- To strengthen links between UCL and Ecuador by engaging the support of the UK Embassy in Ecuador, building on the relationship established through the Chevening Scholarship that funded the UCL Masters in Special and Inclusive Education of Ecuadorian student, Andrea Villasmil-Lecaro, the project liaison partner in Ecuador.
- To engage the support of the Ministry of Education in Ecuador.

Project Team (From left to right):

Isabel Merino, Director of the Institute of Teaching and Learning, Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ)

Rosanne Esposito, Associate Professor in Special and Inclusive Education, UCL Centre for Inclusive Education

Andrea Villasmil-Lecaro, Clinical Psychologist and Alumna of USFQ and UCL



Project Summary

Research has highlighted the challenges in implementing inclusive education in Ecuador created by the current curriculum and pedagogy (Diez and Sanchez, 2013). The perception of teachers is that neither schools, teachers nor students are sufficiently prepared for students with disabilities, creating a need for in depth training for teachers in special educational needs and disability (Moreno-Rodriguez et al, 2017).

The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008) created the opportunity to drive forward inclusive educational practice and provision. Lenin Moreno, Vice-President of Ecuador 2007-2013 and President of Ecuador 2017-2021 created an impact in making disability visible in Ecuador and inspiring reforms. At the Global Disability Summit in the UK in 2018, Moreno requested greater responsibility from the international community to advance the rights of people with disabilities, praising the social model of disability.

IOE International Funds facilitated a UCL visit by Rosanne Esposito to the IDEA Institute to meet with the Director, Isabel Merino and Andrea Villasmil Lecaro to build a shared vision of the inclusive principles that should underpin the co-created curriculum framework and ongoing professional development.

A presentation and workshop at the IDEA Institute, USFQ on 15th June 2023 was attended by teaching professionals, school psychologists and representatives from the UK Embassy in Ecuador and the Ministry of Education of Ecuador.

Purpose of Workshop

- To hear the voices of professionals working in educational contexts in Quito about their experiences and perspectives on the barriers and facilitators to inclusive education in Ecuador.
- To better understand the Ecuadorian educational context and to identify the key elements and structure that should inform inclusive teacher professional development programmes in Ecuador.
- To develop an ongoing partnership with school professionals, the UK Embassy and the Ministry of Education.

Findings

- Commitment of all workshop participants demonstrated a strong collective will to develop the collaboration established by this project to drive improvements in inclusive educational practices in schools in Quito and to better prepare school professionals through training and ongoing professional development.
- Participants united by a commitment to meeting the individual needs of each child and young person in schools in Ecuador.



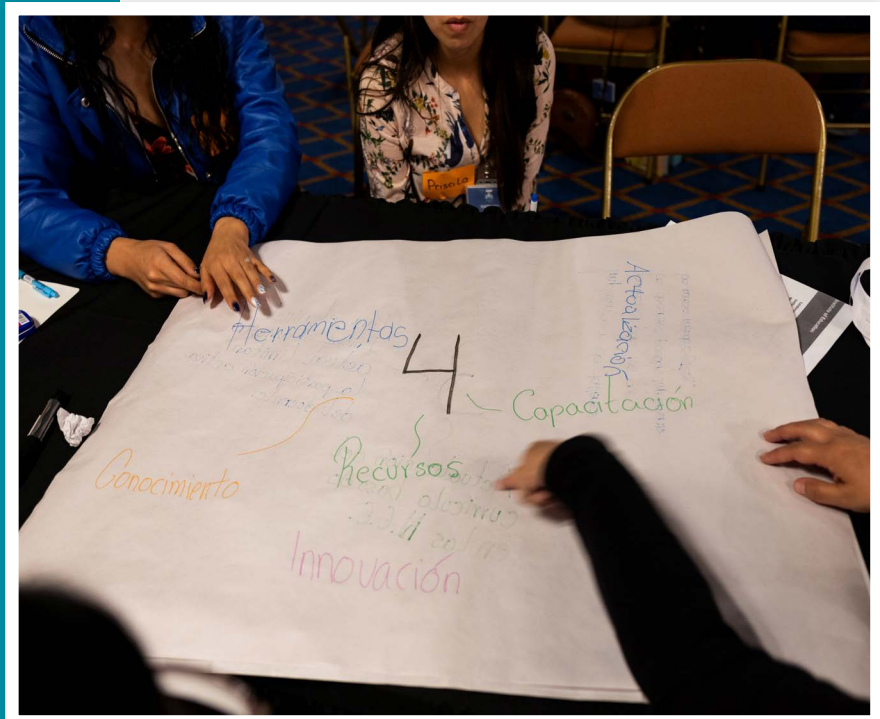
Barriers and facilitators to inclusive educational practices in schools in Ecuador seen as:

Barriers:

- Insufficient training and support for teachers to effectively address the diverse needs of pupils.
- The curriculum not tailored to be adapted to include special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Societal prejudice around SEND.

Facilitators:

- Embedding existing Ecuadorian laws in practice through ongoing teacher training.
- Transdisciplinary teams to support students with SEND through implementing Universal Design for Learning.
- Educational community awareness workshops on SEND for teachers, parents, leaders and students.



Next steps

- Continue to develop the partnership between UCL CIE and the IDEA Institute, USFQ to draw on findings from the workshop to develop the inclusive teaching framework.
- Work in partnership with the UK Embassy in Ecuador and the Ministry of Education of Ecuador.
- Establish a Community of Practice with workshop participants and school professionals in Quito.
- Undertake surveys, focus groups and observations in schools in Quito to gain deeper insight into professional development content required to drive improvements in inclusive educational practice and provision.
- Seek further funding to build on foundations established through this partnership project to develop and scale up the inclusive teaching framework and professional development needed to reach additional teacher training departments in universities across Ecuador and Latin America.



Logo from workshop

Thanks to UCL Research Culture and IOE Early Career Impact Fellowship for supporting the production of this briefing.