



“A Life-Changing Experience” – Kindergarten Teachers Meeting in Central America

Yolanda Gutierrez

Costa Rica is country where water and fire are never far away. The distance from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic coast is only about 200 km and there are 10 volcanoes, some of which are still active.

In the small town of Coronado a meeting of kindergarten teachers from Central America took place from January 4th to 10th 2015. Forty-four people from seven different countries gathered in a Waldorf kindergarten called Jardín de Niños El Huerto.

Participants came from Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Spain,

Mexico and Costa Rica, representing 18 institutions, some of which are Waldorf initiatives in the region and others that are non-Waldorf kindergartens and schools interested in Waldorf pedagogy.



Meetings like this have been taking since 2010 and year after year the participation has increased, reinforcing the ties within this Central American region.

Together we experienced the joy and the enthusiasm of meeting – no doubt, the fire element was present during this conference!

But there were also experiences of sharing, mutual support, and harmonious relationships among initiatives and countries – the element of water was also there. We have the feeling that we are not alone on this path and that others are thinking about us. It is precisely this feeling of accompaniment that gives us the strength to continue.

The main theme of this meeting was the elements and experiences of festivals in our educational work. A second theme was the observation and study of children and how to bring these to faculty meetings with objectivity and commitment. This theme was presented by a Mexican teacher, Cristina Franco, who is teacher and co-ordinator of secondary school in the Waldorf School of Cuernavaca, and a teacher and director at the Centro de Desarrollo Antroposófico in Mexico.

The artistic activities were watercolour painting with a Dutch teacher based in Costa Rica (Wiet Wildeman), singing with a Mexican teacher (Mayra Mendoza) and felting with Yolanda Gutiérrez from Costa Rica.

Each new participant experienced the kinship aroused by such meetings and a keen interest in Waldorf pedagogy and anthroposophy, and each wants to continue participating. As well as being a training space, the meeting offered a truly life-changing experience; the bonds that have been made will remain throughout the year, with the expectation of meeting again next January.

Yolanda Gutiérrez is a teacher and director of the Jardín de Niños El Huerto and is the first teacher in Costa Rica with a Waldorf Kindergarten certification.

