

With joy, thank you.

Lourdes Tormes



There are many words I could use to sum up my impression of the Steiner/Waldorf World Conference for Early Childhood Educators in a single word: gratitude, strength, love, community, belonging, enthusiasm, hope, ... But of all of them, I'll choose just one: joy.

Behind the scenes, the gathering is a very stressful experience, and all the mistakes, big and small, are glaringly obvious: what was missing, what was left over, what couldn't be done, what didn't work out. But looking back with a calmer mind, the image that comes to me is that of a great celebration, not only because it was the centenary, but above all because of the gathering of colleagues, the renewal of our commitment to children, and the universality that unites us across borders as we follow our guiding star. A celebration of the genuine joy we feel at being able to meet, acknowledge and thank each and every one of those who support us so that we can carry out our work and fulfil our ideals.

I would like to begin by thanking all the participants for their presence and dedication and applauding the effort they have made to be at the Goetheanum, which was at times unimaginable. And also, to their families and colleagues who have made it possible in so many ways, and at times through great sacrifice, for them to take part.





Also, to all the speakers and workshop leaders, for their selfless effort in giving the best of themselves and their knowledge and experience to enrich our innermost being a little more. Among them, a very special thank you to those in charge of the Goetheanum Sections; it was an immense joy to feel their closeness and their love for the children.

A huge thank you also to all the individuals and organisations that, by helping with the participants' travel costs, made it possible for so many to attend from every corner of the world. And a very special apology to the Helmut von Kùgelgen Foundation, which was omitted from the list of donors in the programme!

We also thank Nana Göbel for the many hours of research she devoted to publishing this book, which tells the fascinating story of early childhood education through the lives of 100 courageous pioneers from around the world.



Thanks to all the artists who accompanied us with humour, joy and sensitivity. And to the hard-working colleagues who arrived laden with wonderful puppetry plays, telling us stories from all over the world, opening up new horizons and perhaps prompting us to reflect on the new perspectives that interculturality opens up for education.

Of course, a special thank you to all the unseen coworkers at the Goetheanum for their dedication, collaboration and professionalism, and to the translators, whose discreet work was essential in making so many participants feel welcome.

And of course, we must thank Mother Nature, who allowed us to enjoy an explosive spring throughout the gathering, full of sunshine and warmth, and bid us farewell with a blessed blanket of rain that had us running back to our homes amid laughter!

Nor can we forget all those who are no longer with us, but who remain by our side, inspiring us, protecting us and helping us to improve in the work we have set ourselves for the sake of children and a better future.

And finally, to each and every one of our IASWECE colleagues, who, with their flowers in their lapels, guided, helped, accompanied and welcomed us, always with joy and good humour.



May joy continue to fill your daily work with the children, families and colleagues!

Lourdes Tormes is a member of the IASWECE coordinating group and part of the conference organising team, alongside Philipp Reubke, Jacqueline Walter-Baumgartner, Birgit Krohmer and Michal Reshef.