



## Connecting the World's Children with Nature:

A PROJECT OF THE WORLD FORUM FOUNDATION

Enthusiasm is building as plans are finalized for the Working Forum on Nature Education for Young Children. This Forum project is all about connections. The initial organizing group made connections at the World Forum in Montreal, and enjoyed connecting again recently during a planning meeting in Seattle. During the Forum itself, groups of people from three professions that do not typically work closely together will have the chance to connect knowledge and information to create action plans for helping children connect more deeply with the natural world.

This Forum project is also about hope: a chance to work together to bring about positive change. In a world that seems to dwell so often on differences, a joyful connection with the wonders of the natural world is something that all people can share. All of us working on the project hope that a sense of global community can be nurtured at an early age if children are helped to realize, for example, that the same migratory song birds that they enjoy in their neighborhoods are also loved by children in another place in the world for part of each year. Perhaps children who come to these realizations at an early age will grow up believing that all people of the world would be better off if we worked together to be thoughtful stewards of the good earth we all share. This is the hope that energizes our work together.



The last week of June, 2006, I had the opportunity to represent the World Forum as a World Forum Global Leader at a fascinating meeting in Panama. The Consultative group for early Childhood in Latin America and the Caribbean met there to discuss how to build

public policy for early childhood at the national and local levels. It was very interesting to know the advances in public policy for children in Latin America and the world; nevertheless, the effectiveness at the local level is something that we need to improve. Sometimes national policy can be insensitive to local needs and budgets are spent "blindly" – the effects are shorter than the original intentions. It is important to involve local authorities, NGOs, and citizens to give feedback and fine tune national policies and budgets. It is important that society in each region knows the benefits of investing in early childhood and its important economic return to society, thereby preventing many other problems like drug consumption, urban delinquency, and a population with a lack of basic competencies.

I was particularly impressed with the work of Guatemala involving mayors in the work in early childhood (0-6). They have been able to convince 18 mayors to assign budget and resources to the early childhood program. This means that local authorities are taking responsibility on this issue. And not only national officials; so far, they have been successful in their efforts and they are having a meaningful impact at the community level, enabling the citizens, including children, to work and collaborate closely with local authorities. The interest of other mayors is increasing. I personally want to involve some mayors in Queretaro, México in this program. I will help mayors participate in a meeting with Central American mayors to let them be inspired by excellent work being done south of México.

Saludos,  
Ivan Galindo

Forum  
sold out



Working Forum on Nature  
Education for Young Children  
October 16 – 19, 2006  
Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska, USA

[www.worldforumfoundation.org/wf/natu](http://www.worldforumfoundation.org/wf/natu)

Forum  
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Working Forum for Multi-Site  
Early Childhood Organizations  
October 3 – 6, 2006  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

[www.worldforumfoundation.org/wf/mult](http://www.worldforumfoundation.org/wf/mult)