

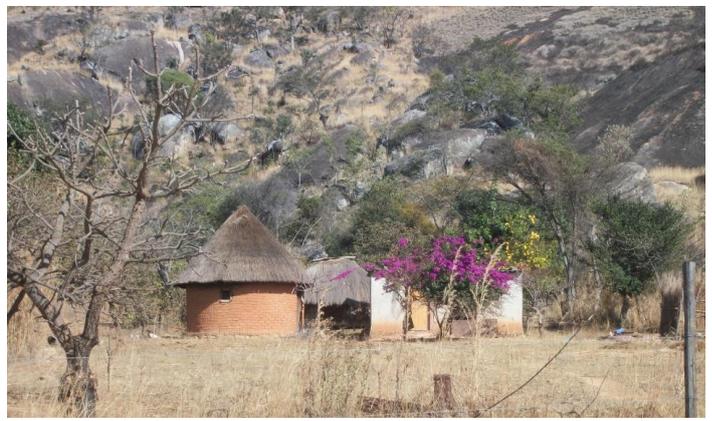
## A Waldorf Early Childhood Workshop in Zimbabwe -

Su Rubinoff

The interest in Waldorf education has been growing for the last few years in Zimbabwe. A German anthroposophical doctor Florence Hibbeler, has been fundraising and is one of the inspirations behind Waldorf education developing in this country. My one week course this past August was held at the Kufunda Learning Village. Kufunda was created about a decade ago and is trying to make a difference in Zimbabwe by offering different workshops such as Leadership for sustainable communities, permaculture, renewable energy, health, and more.



A group of 24 women from different regions in Zimbabwe attended the program; two of the participants had gone to Kenya or South Africa for some Waldorf training while the others had at the most, an introductory course. Most of the women were working in a preschool and wanted to integrate Waldorf pedagogy into their curriculum. Counting all of the children that were in our programs, there were approximately 500.



The topics I chose for the program included: The Essentials of Waldorf Early Childhood (I used Susan Howard's incredible article as a guide, [[http://www.iaswece.org/waldorf\\_education/what\\_is.aspx](http://www.iaswece.org/waldorf_education/what_is.aspx)]) observation of the child, the lower senses and bringing this into Circle, the inner development of the teacher through some of Steiner's verses, making stars, and sewing puppets and puppet shows.

Many of the schools in my region, the Northeast of the United States, donated materials so I traveled with 2 huge suitcases filled with items such as yarn, felt, books, and musical instruments.





While many of the women spoke and understood some English, they mostly spoke the language Shona. I was fortunate that two of the participants were fluent in both and they helped tremendously in translating. At the end of the week, I asked everyone to write what they would be taking home with them and some of the responses were, “I learned finger games and hand games and the importance of them”, “How to teach a child from the head, heart, and limbs”, “how to observe a child in and out”, and “that even if you are a teacher or parent your actions affect a child somehow so we should be aware of what we say or do”.

My Peace Corps experience helped me with the pit toilets, no running water and unpredictable electricity and the passion and belief that I have in Waldorf education gave me guidance and security in my leading this program. I am so grateful to my colleagues for their support as well as for the financial and organizational support from IASWECE which made this experience possible.



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