

FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

February 2017



Happy Independence Day!

Today, the Dominican Republic celebrates its 169 years of Independence! The 27th of February 1844 is the date when Dominican's obtained their Independence and were finally called the Dominican Republic. After many years of being a Spanish colony and then being occupied by Haitians, it was in 1844 when the Founding Father, Juan Pablo Duarte, created a secret society named "La Trinitaria" in which along with other leaders Francisco del Rosario Sánchez and Matías Ramón Mella fought against the Haitian repression to gain Independence.

The history of the Dominican independence was also the main topic of the last school week. The children learned a lot of this important date and had also fun by painting the flag of the country.

Workshop de-escalation:

On the 15th of February we had a Workshop with the topic de-escalation in School. Thanks to Sarah, who is always preparing the workshops. It helped the volunteers who are working in the school a lot to deal with difficult situations and improves the lessons for the children too. This time we collected behavior of children in the school and created a plan for the teachers to react to those. For example the refusal to work or disturbing of the work processes other children. Furthermore, we evaluated consequences that will help to show the children not to act in this way again. Due to the workshop the reaction of all teachers to inappropriate behavior will be the same, which confronts the children with continuous rules, so they can accept them more easily.



Laurenz about the trip to La Vega



For one weekend six of our volunteers went to La Vega to visit the most famous carnival of the famous carnivals of the Dominican Republic. Most cities only celebrate carnival on the last Sunday before lent but La Vega is so keen on partying that they disguise themselves and let their speakers blast extremely loud Dominican music every Sunday in February. The costumes are handmade with such extreme effort and intent on the details that they are so time-consuming in their production that the carnival groups already start their preparations in September. Different cities in the Dominican Republic have different carnival traditions and La Vega is the home of the most decadent demon and devil costumes. As devils and demons are no friendly spirits they walk around hitting the spectators with their "vejigas (bladders)". Nowadays most of them are made from rubber and not animal organs but it still hurts a lot to get whipped with them. Some people actually ask the disguised to be hit but we were not particularly keen on it as we came for dancing and seeing the spectacular costumes. Although we were really unlucky with the weather we had a wonderful time and an unforgettable experience.

Max experience at the Quelonios festival

By Guawuaw the other volunteers and I are reaching "El Valle". Normally it's a silent place. The turtles hide their eggs in the sand until the sun finally hatches them. Then the baby turtles try to get into the water. A new generation. Now there are tents next to the beach, a restaurant, a bar a lot of people and there are more coming. It's twelve a.m the stage isn't built up, but nevertheless the people are in a very good mood. Suddenly it starts. A truck arrives with all the material on it. After some minutes there is a stage, food and later loud music. In the evening everybody is dancing, talking or just enjoying the atmosphere. Candles all over the beach. That's how this festival worked out! Nothing happened exactly as planned, but it succeeded, thanks to the great mixture of people who have joined the festival. They were respectful with each other, respectful with the local nature. The next morning everything was cleaned up without need to say a single word. Now the beach lays silent again until the turtles come.

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