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Intercultural Art Exchange

My past four months as a Program Coordinator with the Arajuno Road Project have flown by. It has been such a wonderful learning experience for me, and I'm so glad that I still have two months left to enjoy Puyo and continue to grow. My favorite project recently has been my students' participation in a K-12 Global Art Exchange organized by a U.S. based entity, OneWorld Classrooms. (OneWorld Classrooms has also been instrumental in supporting my work here, so I am happy to encourage their programs.)

About two months ago, I charged my students in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades with the task of drawing a picture that would represent their lives or their town or their country to other students around the world. Between the two schools where I teach, Escuela Simon Bolivar and Escuela General Eplicachima, this was a total of 25 students. First, we brainstormed ideas of what they wanted to draw and each student chose a subject for their drawing. The jungle, Paseo Turistico, fruit, and animals were especially popular. Then, they set to work on their art. The art that these schools created was done completely with pencil and marker. My students were so excited to use these resources, their faces lit up and they devoured my bag of colored pencils and markers. I was so thrilled and impressed with their enthusiasm and community pride.



Last week, I received the art that OneWorld Classrooms sent to us. There are photography pieces, watercolor paintings, and pencil drawings from nearly every continent. I was so moved by the thoughtful reflections of identity and community that we received. Much of the work was done by students in the U.S., but we also have art from China, Thailand, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Panama, Poland, and other

countries. I am so excited to bring it in to my students next week so that they can see what life is like for children their age in other places.



Even better, OneWorld Classrooms has helped us arrange two skype exchanges with other schools. On Monday, we will skype with a school in North Carolina that has received some of our art. In preparation for this conversation, we spent some time last week talking about what we'd like to share with another school, and what kinds of questions we're curious to ask them. We decided that we would show some unique South American fruits and that two students would sing in Quechua, an indigenous language spoken in parts of the Pastaza province. Since much of my Master's work was focused on intercultural education, I'm so pleased to incorporate more of this into my English classes.