



Japanese Volunteer leads workshop over addition and subtraction of fractions and decimals to teachers in the Tomasa de Benedetto Elementary School, in the city of Choluteca, Choluteca.

Teachers receive training during vacation time



Even though teachers are currently enjoying vacations, mathematics teachers living in the south of the country received a training session from the 1st to the 3rd of December in order to strengthen their knowledge in areas such as decimals and fractions. The activity took place in the School Tomasa de Benedetto, in the city of Choluteca, with the participation of volunteers of the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

"It's always good to keep updated", Professor Gloria Judith Hernandez said, "even though these are topics we know, sometimes we forget how to teach them to our students". Professor Hernandez, a teacher with 18 years of experience, explained that the Japanese methodology is simple and effective. "Whenever one considers something made or thought by the Japanese, he or she thinks it is highly detailed, but this is not the case of the pedagogical techniques I have learned from them".

She added that these techniques seek to organize and structure class room activities in a step by step fashion, so that the student can learn easily. "My students are more and more interested in mathematics – whenever they apply this step-by-step process, they learn more and feel more motivated."

Students like Máynor Zúniga, a 10 year old, agree. "I used to get angry when I didn't understand math before," the 5th grader admitted. In his frustration, Zúniga said he procrastinated his studies and instead, focused on other things in which he was interested in. "When my uncle started tutoring me, at first I wasn't so happy about it because I thought I wasn't likely to understand it again, but that wasn't the case." His uncle, a teacher trained under the Japanese methodology, got Zúniga to understand. "Now I like mathematics because I get it; I just hope I will keep this up until I graduate."

One of the volunteers involved in the training session, Ms. Hiroko Yamada, said the sessions came about due to certain weaknesses found in teachers. "I have seen that teachers have problems teaching fractions and decimals, and if they struggle with them, students will struggle more". The volunteer agreed teachers have the knowledge, but sometimes it is necessary to update them. "We (JICA's volunteers) are not teaching anything they don't know, we are only practicing each process step by step." Ms. Yamada applauded participating teachers for their dedication in spite of being on vacation time; they still chose to participate in the training sessions.