



Meeting Place and Resource Centre

for

B l a c k W o m e n

Manessestrasse 73, CH-8003 Zürich:

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Treffpunkt für Schwarze Frauen – Freitags 10:00 – 15:00 – Meeting Place for Black Women on every
Friday

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Meeting Place and Resource Center for Black Women

REPORT

Mentoring & Empowerment Camp

for

Young Black Women and Girls

August 8th. 2005 – August 16th. 2005

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MIGROS Genossenschaft Bund
Schweizerische Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft
Sozialdepartement der Stadt ZH/Sozio-kultur
EDI- Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern
Successor Generations

Thank you for believing in us and in our vision

This project was planned, supported and conceptualised thanks to the commitment of time and endless hours of voluntary work given by:

Management Committee

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Fatima Rubi
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Mbula Mutile
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Resource Persons

Nellie Mollin
Sabah Sidler

Mission Statement of the Meeting Place and Resource Center for Black Women

The Meeting Place and Resource Center for Black women is a National organisation based in Zurich, Switzerland. The Center serves as a platform for addressing issues concerning Black Women, their families, their integration process, and their interaction with society.

This is achieved by:

- Offering a safe space
- Mobilising and empowering Black Women
- Challenging sexist and racist stereotypes by emphasising positive images of Black women
- Networking and linking up with other institutions locally, nationally and internationally
- Educating, consulting and sensitising society by facilitating dialogue and platforms for information exchange

All the work of the Center is done on a voluntary basis. The running of the Center is coordinated by the Director and a team of 2 committed women. Our organisation is supported by a Management Committee of 6 women from different parts of Africa. Our work and services capacity is extended by the additional support of Resource Persons who offer their time and inputs on request.

WHY A CAMP FOR BLACK GIRLS

METHODOLOGY AND TRAINING SYSTEMS

- ❖ A professional team, with many years of experience teaching youth, was invited to run the camp. The team also consisted of a pedagogian, with 15 years experience in multicultural training for youth, and an expert on youth and conflict.

- ❖ The conscious decision to have a group of girls of different ages was so that we could take advantage of a natural mentoring system.

- ❖ The learning from all sides ensured that no one felt superior, every participant had her role and every participant was able to make valuable contributions to the sessions.

- ❖ As many new words and expressions were used, enough time was spent defining and understanding the definitions. This was to ensure that all the participants understood the same things, and there were no information gaps in the group

- ❖ The sessions always included brainstorming on a flip chart. The sessions were always participative and all the girls were encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas.

To ensure adequate understanding of the transferred information and skills, a daily summary was carried throughout the beginning of each day

Information and guide lines for the camp participants¹

1. In Zurich, all the programs will take place at the Resource Center for Black women. The address is in your documentation. The whole group will be staying at the pension St. Josef, Hirschengraben, Zurich.
2. At the end of the first week, we will host a public event for the participants. This is a dressy affair so do allow your daughter to bring her favourite outfit!
3. We will leave Zurich to go to Lucerne, where we will stay at the Youth hostel (Luzerner Jugendherberge) *Please note: All meals, snacks, local transport and transfers and any miscellaneous costs will be covered by the Resource Center.*
4. Although the programme is quite intensive, as we want to maximise the time we spend together, there are many breaks in between where the process is informal.
5. Your daughter will be in a supervised environment at all times. I.e. An adult member of the team is constantly present to ensure safety and support.
6. If you need to contact us during the camp, call 0041 79 431 50 51. We will not pass social calls to participants, however, we have made provisions for the participants to be able to call home on every third day if they wish. We will pay for the calls.
7. There will be a detailed report at the end of the camp. You will automatically receive a copy as your daughter is a participant.
8. We aim to have a healthy camp so sweet snacks and junk food will be limited / not allowed. Please do not give your daughter any sweet snacks. Enough will be provided.
9. Please have a talk with your daughter regarding all our ground rules, so that she understands that you are also informed about our guidelines.

Please let us know if you have any other enquiries.

Team

Girls Camp

¹ Sent to the participants after being accepted to the Camp

OUTLINE CAMP PLAN

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Sunday 7 th . August	Arrivals Zurich	Introductions, Debriefing and orientation
Monday 8 th . August	Program	Program
Tuesday 9 th . August	Program	Excursion
Wednesday 10 th . August	Program	Group work
Thursday 11 th . August	Evaluation of first week Group presentations	Dinner at Resource Center & Public event
Friday 12 th . August	Departure Lucerne	Arrival Lucerne
Saturday 13 th . August	Program	Program
Sunday 14 th . August	Excursion	evaluation
Monday 15 th . August	Departure Zurich	Farewell event & dinner
Tuesday 16 th . August	Close & departure	Departure participants

SESSION 1

The days exercise regime was led by exercise coordinators Zeedah

Introductions

This session was started with an introduction of the participants. This group work done in pairs, where each pair then introduced her partner to the group.

The participants were asked to share their expectations: Some of the group expectations were:

- to meet girls from other countries
- to learn something about Switzerland
- learn something about my identity
- exchange stories and experiences with other girls
- learn new things
- make new friends
- have fun

It is necessary for everyone to have the same understanding of the groups expectations. The participants therefore proceeded to make and agree on ground rules. As these were group rules, it was agreed that they must always be kept. The rules were as follows:

GROUND RULES

The camp is a space for everyone.

Everyone must feel safe, no excluding anyone

Don't make anyone uncomfortable

No foul language

No fighting and no aggression

Stay with the group unless told otherwise

Respect everybody's space

Learn one new German word a day

Manners must be practiced to each other at all times - be polite

No cell phones during sessions

No unhealthy snacks

Limited candy

Discipline- In and outside the hotel

Speak loudly so everyone hears

Keep rooms tidy

No sulking

If you're upset, talk to someone

Day 1 narrative:

We came to the centre by tram after breakfast at the hotel. Upon arrival at the centre we did stretching exercises. The Camp leader told us about the Black Women's Centre, what it stood for and the importance of such a space being available for Black Women. We learnt that it is a place where Black women can come together to address any issues of importance or relevance to them in their own space. Everything at the Center is planned and run by Black Women. The group was also informed about the values and policies that are important for the Center.

We were also informed about the Youth Forum, which is an autonomous program of the Resource Center. The program is run by youth, when they have time after school or during the holidays. This is a program where all participants of the Girls Camp can be involved with.

Roles and responsibilities of Participants

1. Time Keepers:

Every day, the group elected 2 time keepers.

Their job was to ensure that we keep to the times agreed for starting, breaks, ending, group work etc. The first 2 two elected time keepers for the day- were Zena and Sandra.

2. Narrators for each day

responsibility: to briefly summarise (recapitulate) what the group had learnt the previous day's program

3. Exercise coordinator

responsibility: to plan and take the group through an exercise program everyday before the start of the sessions

4. Lunch assistants

responsibility: to assist on planning, shopping and serving the meals.

General Information

- a. Lunch will be at the Center, and will be light. There are fruit snacks on the tables for the whole day, please help yourself. There is also water. Please drink at least 8 glasses a day.
- b. Dinner will be at the hotel or depending on the mood of the group, outside if the weather allows.
- c. There are 2 team members in the class at all times. There are always four adults in the class at all times.
- d. There is a doctor on call for us. We have the medical form filled out by your parents, so we have some information. If anyone feels poorly, please let us know.

SESSION 2

The days exercise regime was led by exercise coordinators

Aims and Objectives of the camp

The group defined what was meant by Aims and objectives by brainstorming. Some answers:

- what is one trying to do
- what do we want to reach
- a goal- reaching what we want to do
- our themes for the camp
- what we want to achieve in the end
- outcome- what is an outcome? Outcomes are results
- what do want to get done

Our Aims are about achieving a goal through learning;

LEARNING

What is learning? How do we learn?

Learning is when we: Do something new; speak a new language; learn about other people; Learn about other things; learn about Black Women.

MOST IMPOTANT AIM OF THE CAMP- Learn more about ourselves, our identity, our values, our choices, our responsibilities, our commitments, our believes- in other words, **OURSELVES**

What happens when one learns?

- gain knowledge
- enlighten your mind
- you know more
- you may change, you allow growth
- new ways of doing things that one already does
- increases what one is able to do

What does one have to do in order to learn?

- listen
- hear
- be quiet
- concentrate
- listen with our eyes- look
- with our ears- be quiet
- give others a chance to say something
- understand
- participate
- everyone must join

Equality is important for learning

- equality is everyone being given the same chances, attention, time, space, materials and resources.

VOICE

When we learn, we have to speak, ask questions when we don't understand.

As young Black women, we must learn to speak, speak up and raise our voices and be heard.

We must speak for ourselves as we know our selves best. We shouldn't let anyone else speak for us, especially not without our permission or consent.

Some important guidelines for learning, not just for the camp, but also for later!!

- ❖ As we learn at the Camp, an EFFORT must be made as some of what will be done is new and may be quite challenging at first. We are allowed to make mistakes, mistakes are learning opportunities.
- ❖ If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain.

Some clever things that Black Women have said:

A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song

It is also important to know when to speak and when to just listen.

A wise African woman once said that Silence can sometimes be louder than spoken words.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

“Everything we do in our lives, everything that we are, everything that we eat, everything that we wear, see, smell, taste, think, say, or touch is interlinked”.

Introduction to C.T.D.

During the camp, we will learn about different issues. Whatever we talk about, or any of the games we play, will be interlinked to the program. The outcome will be to get an image of ourselves and where we are, who we are and what we are.

We will link issues with information. We will connect meanings and facts and even fantasies. When the dots are connected the concept (plan) is easier to understand; we are creating an image.

Why do we need to connect the Dots?

In order to understand what do I want to learn; what do I think; what do I want to learn I need to realise that everything is interlinked. We will get information, and this information will be added to link up to more dots.

We always start with one dot; it doesn't matter which dot we start with; we may not know the image to begin with but we are learning while we are on the journey; sometimes we get stuck while we are connecting the dots, it does not matter as it is a *process*.

What is a process? A process is:

- Journey
- order of going through
- action of something happening
- steps one goes through to achieve something
- thoughts until a decision is made
- plan of doing something
- a cycle of events or thoughts

The second dot can be connected after 3 minutes, after 5 or even after 30 years. There is no fixed timescale for the process of connecting the dots of who I am. I continue to grow in mind, body and spirit. I am allowed to change.

Change

I can not stagnate. Anything stagnant usually carries disease, like malaria. I am dynamic and my environment is dynamic too. It changes all the time. This is a good thing.

Some change can be painful. Sometimes it is good to leave things as they are. Informed choice is important.

² The days exercise regime was led by exercise coordinators Penda and Zeedah

After a lunch time of sandwiches and fruit the group returns to a relay a summary of the events of the morning. It was a group effort; Cocoa reported on this with support from Ifeolu, Sandra and Tenilola

After the summary, there was an exercise and game session.

Me: As a dot- A starting point

Who am I? Who determines who I am?

Parents, family, school, friends play a role in training me, especially in younger years. However, some decisions are completely up to me. For example, my parents can force me to go to school, but I can decide how hard I will work or how hard I apply myself. As I grow older and learn to connect dots faster, I can make decisions about my diet, my friends or my values. Parents and teachers have the responsibility of connecting the dots for me when I am younger and giving me support and training so that I learn how to connect my own dots.

Other factors that influence who I am

Size

Education

Whether parents are married or divorced

The weather

Where I live

How the government runs the country

How rich/poor I am

How big my family is

The group agreed that there are some adults who still don't know how to connect dots properly and they still make mistakes with their lives or with their children. Some examples were given, such as drug takers, abusive parents, parents who can't keep a job because they are not disciplined or don't add to their skills, parents who don't take children seriously but beat them instead, parents who continue with harmful traditional practices, etc.

Energiser

To reenergise ourselves, we played a fun game called fruit salad. This was so enjoyable, the group agreed to play it again the next day.

Me, Myself and I.

Group work:

We broke up into groups of two to interview one another and return to give presentations on one another. This was a way of getting to know each other, but also an exercise in **active listening**. Each person introduced their partner, withholding one detail about them until the next day.

What makes me who I am? What influences that which makes me?

My personality- How I act; how I speak; what I do

I am different to other people

The things I like- my personal style

Appearance

My granny, my aunts, my mum and her friends

TV

Media influences

Attitude

Values- learnt from home

Values learnt from church

Experiences

Religion

Education

Diet

Where I live

Which school I attend

What I eat is also important

Why what I eat? Because of health, which is important for living longer and achieving one's aims; being fit- staying in shape. Our health is one of the most valuable things we have.

What I say? How one speaks: volume-loud, brash, quiet, timid; manners-tone; language-polite, foul; respect; outlook- are you always negative or positive

How I behave?

How we say something is very important. As is our behaviour, our language, the tone of our voice etc. Sometimes, these things are more important than what we actually say.

To illustrate this, we did some **Role plays**:

There were 3 plays - two illustrating what bad behaviour and one of good behaviour look like. Everyone then participated in a discussion to see what we felt needed changing. (bad behaviour: there was pushing and shoving, foul language, physical abuse, violence).

For the third role-play there were manners, politeness, apologies, and a voice tone which was not aggressive and loud. Messages we send out say a lot about who we are.

What I learn and what I practise?

When one learns something they can teach and Mentor; one can find a job; I can only practise what I have been able to learn. If we don't learn useful new ways, we continue with harmful ones, and we don't break cycles of bad habits or practice.

We looked at the different roles we play in our lives and how there are some we are not conscious of. The trainer repeated that this was also a mentoring camp. The group defined what a mentor is and that we as Black girls are mentors to others.

I AM A MENTOR

Me, a mentor? What is a Mentor?

A mentor is someone who

- Teaches others
- Looks after your interests
- Person who shares experience, knowledge and wisdom
- person who sponsors or supports
- Gives you good ideas about jobs, hobbies
- Can help you negotiate with parents, bosses, teachers
- Makes sure you do the right thing
- Is a friend

A mentor can be younger than you or older. Mentors are sometimes people we admire. They are people we like. We can mentor our younger sisters or our older brothers.

All the participants have an obligation to learn to be mentors when they leave the camp, and tell other Sisters about the camp.

I am responsible for others, especially my family and friends, I also have an obligation to other Black sisters. I have an obligation to be my sisters keeper, because we are all interlinked and she is part of the dots that I am connecting in my process.

SESSION 4

The days exercise regime was led by exercise coordinators Emem and Sandra

IDENTITY

As the issue of identity is such a central part of the camp, the group spent a lot of time defining what identity is and what influences or has impact on each identity. The main question asked was: What is it and makes up identity?

- training
- believes, religion, spirituality
- culture
- finger prints
- where one comes from
- appearance
- genes
- style or fashion
- ID cards and passports
- Smell / perfume / scent
- Clothes and jewellery - In some African cultures, each newborns face was scarred in a unique way, to make it possible to trace her origins. This proved handy when a person lost their memory, got lost or was taken as a slave. These marking were what identified you to yourself and to your environment. The jewellery we wear can also be part of our identity, eg, the Maasai people of East Africa have clearly defined jewellery for married women, widows or new brides. Most married couples in then world wear a ring on their middle finger. This has significance in the rituals done during the wedding ceremony. In the western culture the bride usually wears a white dress. Very few brides have been seen in brown and yellow striped dresses. Her identity is symbolised by the dress. Another example given from the group: priests and nuns and school children have a dress code which helps identify them.

The places I come from or where I feel is I belong is crucial for my identity, even if its just a feeling of belonging.

Also important for identity:

- Language, skin colour, religion
- Being female or male
- Age

Identity is one thing that can give a group commonalities and bind them. This means they live by similar values and respect similar laws of behaviour.

Identity is a person's self-affiliation (or categorisation by others) as a member of a (cultural) group.

The language that we speak plays an important role for our identity. It is very important to understand and to be understood.

Environment is also another influencing factor. How does the environment do this?

Some examples from the group:

- Penda's sense of security in her environment enables her study.
- If one has friends in school, the day is easier to manage and school become fun. Friends play an important role in our environment. It always nice to see faces we know and recognise in places we spend a lot of time in.
- Living in a dessert means that my identity will be influenced by water! Getting it, keeping it, buying it, selling it. Etc. many women in some African countries spend up to 5 hours a day getting water. This is for cattle, cooking, bathing etc. it makes a total of 1825 hours a year on just getting water, compared to most of us who just open a tap! Zeedah said that the most valuable thing where she comes from is water as she is from a very arid part of Kenya.
- Emem said that her all her family support Arsenal so it makes watching telly easier. There is peace as everyone will want to watch the same game.

Identity is dynamic. It can change and grow. As we learn more about our selves and our environments, our identity adapts or is formed or influenced. It is important to always be aware of who we are and what is important for our identity.

Group work

The group brainstormed about their own identities, and what each participant thought was important for hers.

Some important Learning Points

- Identity can be developed and nurtured in positive or negative ways.
- Identity is a sense of belonging, where you are understood, supported and recognised.
- The group agreed that it is possible to feel at home in several places at the same time.

The group discussed coming from a number of places and the consensus was that it is acceptable to be from a variety of places. The discussion then went on to list the things we like about where were from.

What I like about where I call home

- I don't have to be a colour
- they all speak the same language that I do
- I understand their problems and their fights and differences
- I know their history
- I have local knowledge

IDENTITY is the constant balance to be unique

I am unique and today its ALL ABOUT ME

Each person's identity has many sides and each of us fulfil many roles. These roles change as we get older or as we change our environment. Some of the roles of our identity that we identified are:

The group wrote down all the roles and parts of their identity. Here is a list of some of them

I AM

A girl, female, niece, special, 14 year old, , weird, black, African, Nigerian, Ekiti, American, German, Aunt, Sister, Mother, friend, second born, mentor, cousin, camp leader, lover of chocolate, daughter, Gemini, funny, god-daughter, braid wearing, right handed, left handed, non smoker, patient, meat eater, vegetable eater, spaghetti lover, ear ring wearing, supporter of Arsenal, good dancer, inpatient, fair, kind, sometimes sulky, sometimes mean, Christian, lazy, smart, careful, naughty, nice, mother, neighbour, helper, wife, fan of Beyonce, photographer, resident of London, parent, daughter etc.

This list is endless. It is wonderful to be able to have all these roles.

I AM NOT JUST A FEMALE, I AM NOT JUST A CHILD, I AM NOT JUST A COLOUR

I AM MANY THINGS

Below is an essay by a young girl who couldn't make it to this years Camp. Her words really reflect what was learnt at this session. Her name is Mwelwa Mukwashi. Was is from Malawi, and is 11 years old (28.10.1994).

Mwelwa was invited to send in her essay for the report. An avis reader, Mwelwa also plays the flute and is keen on sports. Here are her thoughts.

The World and what I think of it

The world for young black women can be very difficult sometimes. It can depend on where you live. Sometimes life can be hard. In the place you are staying, you might find it hard to settle, even if it is in a developed country, you might be getting bullied, being left out and being told racist comments. The world, in a way, you could say it was a little bit strange and corrupted. It is difficult to survive in some places and you might find somewhere you finally settle in and other people are always judging you by the way you look or because you are black. You could say that life on earth is like going on a loop to loop, upside down roller-coaster.

Furthermore, some places might just be racist because their government or someone there just doesn't like black people. Therefore making other people not like black people and treating them less respect than they would show to themselves, their family or just any white person. It is not just the occasional group here and there, sometimes it can be nearly everyone around you and mostly can be the girls. Why?

However, there are places in the world that are beautiful and everybody gets along with each other. Those places have to grow. It is no good having to live in someplace where you are either uncomfortable or being bullied. It is human rights. Every person should be treated equally with the same amount of respect no matter what. These good places need to grow and the bad places need to shrink – small and tiny. Those are the good places in life. The places where human rights are shown not said.

A place where people believe everybody is special. Everyone is equal; where everyone is okay with their life. As a result of these good places, more people are realising that everybody is equal. So that is my view of the world.

Mwelwa Mukwashi

SISTERHOOD

We talked about identity, and explored different issues around race. What do Black women have in common, what is a black woman and why is that relevant for us? Some of the responses from the group were:

- Sometimes other kids in my school ask me stupid questions about my skin colour
- Am I Black? I thought I was American
- Some teachers have tried to fail me because I am Black
- Its good to have many other Black girls in my school, I have friends who look like me
- All my mums Black friends are my aunts, even the ones not related to me
- All Black aunts can scold me, but they also give me pocket money and sweets
- Its cool being Black
- We all dance better

Conclusion

There is a connection among people of the Black race. Our identity, mainly defined by our appearance is something we have in common. Yet, we are very, very different. It is important to accept these differences and yet still be *Sisters*.

Black women relate to each other as *Sisters*. What is sisterhood, why are we all sisters? What is a sister?

Sisters:

- can be nice
- challenging
- friends
- relatives
- accepts you
- supports and helps
- cheers one up
- cares about each other
- allows one to be herself
- offers advice and talks through things
- shares things in common
- some one to depend on and can depend on you
- can be mean and pick on you
- take your things without asking
- know all your secrets and don't tell mum
- lends you things
- lend you money

We agreed that no matter what, its good to have sister, and that some of our friend are like sisters.

So, I am a Black girl, I am a sister, a daughter, a friend, a niece, an aunt, a cousin. I am many things. I have a personality and I have likes and dislikes.

Participants presentations

As part of the program, some participants were asked to make a presentation about a subject of their choice. The first presentation was done by Zena Mall.

Zena's presentation

Zena introduced herself again and the country she is calls home. She spoke about Switzerland, and said that it is a small country that is landlocked but with many lakes. The capital city is Bern but Zurich is the biggest commercial city. Four languages are spoken in Switzerland. French, Italian, Retoromansch, and German. French and German or Italian are obligatory in all the schools, so, most Swiss children grow up having learn at least 2 languages.

Zena speaks English, German, Swiss German and some French.

There is a system of Cantons and the representatives from these cantons make up the government. These representatives then rotate the presidency on an annual basis. Switzerland is a neutral country and only joined the UN two years ago. They are not yet members of the European Union. There is no standing army in the Switzerland and the healthy men under the age of 35 years go as soldiers every year as part of the army.

Zena taught the group one new German word everyday. Some of the words we have learnt: Danke (thank you) Bitte (Please) Grüezi (hello in Swiss Germany) Salü (greeting in Swiss German and French), Bahnhof (train station) Nein (no) Geld (money) laufen (walk) mädchen (girl)

Some facts about Switzerland

- There are only about 7 million people in Switzerland (7.164 million as of Dec 1999).
- A new president of Switzerland is elected every year.
- The president of Switzerland for 1999 was a woman and Jewish. Her name is Ruth Dreifuss.

Where do the holes in the cheese come from? When Swiss cheese ferments, a bacterial action generates gas. As the gas is liberated, it bubbles through the cheese leaving holes. Cheese-makers call them "eyes."

Sandra's presentation

Sandra lives in Germany. Her presentation was about cloth which is part of what women in Kenya and the rest of East Africa use for everyday purposes. Sandra spoke about a fabric called a Lesso from East Africa. The fabric is very colourful and has a variety of uses:

- used by girls for dressing after their shower
- carrying a baby on the back
- table cloths
- for carrying things
- lie on it
- as a pretty wall hanging

It is also part of the standard gifts given to the bride at her wedding, or a mother after she gives birth. The Lesso is also used at funerals, and some Muslim women are buried wrapped in lessos. Every lesso traditionally has a message in Kiswahili which is a language widely spoken in East Africa. These sayings are usually sayings, riddles or cryptic sayings. Sandra's Godmother has about 60 lessos. When her friends visit, she gives them one. She has also given Sandra a couple.

Lessos for each Sister

Sandra gave each participant the gift of a lesso. Lessos are usually bought in pairs. Each person got half of one lesso. The patterns were in twos so each pair of sisters had the same patterned Lesso and we all promised to keep in touch with the sister who we shared the pattern.

Some facts about Kenya

- The Great Rift Valley is a major archaeological site in Kenya; remains of the earliest known humans were found there.
- The second highest mountain in Africa is Mount Kenya; it is about 5199 meters high and has snow on its peaks the whole year round
- Kenya has 41 languages

SESSION 5

The days exercise regime was led by exercise coordinators Ifeolu and Teniola

As usual we started the day with a summary of yesterday's activities and programs, and discussed the relevance to how it relates to the theme of the camp. Everyone really enjoyed trying different ways of using the lessso. Everyone wore their lessso to the session today. We all really looked nice and had lots of pictures taken.

Summary of what we have learnt since the first session

- a. Connecting the Dots starts with one single step by me
- b. We have to learn and make an effort in everything that we do
- c. We aim to make a good impression in our personal and public lives
- d. As a community, everyone must have a space to voice their beliefs and convictions
- e. Respect where everyone is and accept that different things give different people balance
- f. People are not all on the same page at the same time
- g. Different things can be understood differently, perspective and experience make a difference. (That is why our parents sometimes know more or better, but it does not mean our view is invalid)
- h. Universal truth is truth that ensures justice for all
- i. Even if we don't agree, everyone deserves a voice
- j. We should not judge
- k. Even those we think are less informed than we are have a right to a voice and a space.
- l. We must be understanding and try to help people understand.
- m. The increase of a knowledge base is crucial as it gives us the possibility of making new or different choices that are available
- n. Increasing our knowledge base is a process of give and take and; the process of learning is a continuous cycle
- o. It is to every societies advantage to nurture and enjoy diversity

Not to forget:

- A. Our environment influences us whether we like it or not. What we can do is decide how that influence adds or takes from us.

- B. Our direct influences like our parents may not know everything they too are adding and learning, and keep adding to their knowledge base. Some was not expanded beyond a certain level. They don't know everything, but they know a lot that we have yet to learn.

- C. When one Black girl is doing well and looking good, this will reflect on the rest. We have an obligation to our sisters to achieve and keep a good name and image

What different participants have learnt from different people and their environment

Environment	Mum/Dad	Grandmother	Aunt
School Neighbours Shopkeeper Media Church School Sports Management	Reading; praying Forgiveness Behaviour How to cook Spelling Accepting difference Passion for music Manners Feed myself Hygiene Integrity	Love Sawing Feminism Respect for parents and elders Traditional values	God Relatives Eat Chocolates Drawing Fashion tips About growing up About adulthood

Things I know that my parents can learn from me:

What did my parents not teach me that I have now learnt and think they should learn from me:

- ❖ Playing guitar
- ❖ Drawing well
- ❖ Having fun
- ❖ Being patient
- ❖ Skipping rope
- ❖ Enjoying Music
- ❖ Being a mentor to my sister
- ❖ Style
- ❖ To be a young girl in these days
- ❖ IT Factor
- ❖ Cooking
- ❖ Feminism

After lunch, there was the regular exercises session. Thereafter, the favourite game of fruit salad!! Our exercise coach today was Penda assisted by Zena

We have been learning about difference and self. Our differences are an opportunity. This variety or difference enhances the richness of our societies. We call it:

DIVERSITY

What is Diversity?

Group work

The group looked at similarities and difference in the group. This was done with a group exercise where we noticed that:

- Although all the participants were Black, the skin colours were different
- Although all the participants were female, they all looked different, had different identities
- Its like a box of dolly mixtures, they all look different but are all sweet
- Difference
- a space for all
- we are all similar and all have differences

Diversity is a chance for societies. Variation adds to culture and society benefits from a multicultural society. Acceptance for diversity promotes tolerance and openness to others.

This is all part of diversity.

How do we promote and maintain healthy diverse spaces?

- tolerance
- not judging those who are different
- respecting other religious beliefs
- not feeling superior or inferior to anyone
- racial tolerance
- being proud of who I am
- being proud of my race
- supporting my black sisters
- having solidarity for those less fortunate
- adding to my knowledge base and connecting my dots

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Many times, we do things because it is a habit, or because we have never taken time out to think about it. We have habits. Sometimes, the habits are good, important or necessary. At other times, they can be harmful to ourselves or others.

It is important to think about what we do and the reasons for it. We need to ask ourselves some questions. It is healthy to question our motives.

The group brainstormed on some of the questions that we need to ask ourselves regularly:

1. Do I do it because e.g. the president says I must (eg. Vote) or do I do so because I understand the importance of being allowed to chose who runs our government?
2. Do I study hard because my parents say I should or because I understand how important it is for me to increase my knowledge base and plan for a good future for myself?
3. Do I go to church because my parents insist or do I do so because I see signs of God all around?
4. Do I just eat that because its what is on the table or because I understand that it is healthy and good for me?
5. Do I keep these friends because they are family friends or because they are nice or good to me?

Do I need to always understand the things I do? This question was the basis for a lengthy discussion.

Some participants said no, others felt that it made sense to understand and not just follow blindly. Some said they didn't need to understand; they did so because their parents insisted, or because they were afraid of being punished.

What are Cycles?

- A cycle is a process that can take any period of time
- The repeating of habits, rituals, actions from one generation to another or from one family member to another.
- Cycles can form through generations
- Some of these cycles are very good and are not to be broken
- There are some that are quite bad cycles and may need to be broken

How are cycles sustained?

- through what is learnt and what then makes up the knowledge base
- cycles can be sustained by force, e.g. through beatings, threats, punishments
- if one resists some cycles, one can be punished, excluded, sometimes even killed
- habit, repeating over and over again
- Cycles are maintained by lies or fears or superstition
- Most negative cycles are kept going by ignorance
- Lack of choices or alternatives

Just like everything else, Cycles start with a single Dot that needs a next dot in order to exist. A dot alone is not a cycle

There are negative cycles and positive cycles

Examples of negative cycles:

- ❖ Alcoholism
- ❖ Hatred- family feuds
- ❖ Unhealthy eating patterns and habits
- ❖ Harmful rituals such as punishing or starving widows
- ❖ Bearing grudges and passing this on to children
- ❖ Violence, (to wives or children)
- ❖ Constant cussing and bad language (eg. songs, rap, movies)
- ❖ Always putting women down as inferior
- ❖ Female Genital Mutilation
- ❖ TV as the only form of family bonding
- ❖ Drugs
- ❖ Selfishness
- ❖ Pettiness
- ❖ Revengeful attitudes

Examples of positive Cycles

- ❖ Supporting education of daughters
- ❖ Teaching and training about spirituality
- ❖ Generosity of spirit
- ❖ Compassion for others and kindness to others
- ❖ Putting family first
- ❖ Living ecologically balanced, not always wasting
- ❖ Loving books and reading
- ❖ Balancing work and play
- ❖ Healthy lifestyles, good diet
- ❖ Respect for women
- ❖ Respect and kindness for all of Gods creatures
- ❖ Sports

Group exercise

The participants divided into groups of 2. They talked and discussed personal experiences and identified both positive and negative cycles in their own lives. Each participant committed to going home and changing one cycle. Some of the cycles to be broken /changed are listed as:

- Encourage healthier eating in my family, more salads and vegetables
- Encourage my parents to sit with us at meal times
- Encourage my family to stop FGM of my siblings and relatives
- Encourage my family to be more sportive and go outdoors
- Encourage talking about problems instead of silence, beatings or sulking
- Discourage humiliation because I have not fulfilled cultural expectations (marriage, children, being “a good woman”)
- Bullying my siblings
- Lying out of fear

SESSION 7

The days exercise regime was led by exercise coordinators Zena and Teniola

COLLAGE

(A collage is a random or organised image made of words, pictures, cut-outs, etc.)

the morning was increasing listening skills. The group worked in pairs, interviewing and asking questions about the themes we had learnt about this week. It was a fun day, and there was lots of space for creativity.

Exercise

Working in groups of 2, each one made is a collage of her partner, including details such as likes and dislikes, dreams, fears, happiest moments etc. A photograph taken by the sister accompanied each portrait.

These were hung up on the walls and the group could ask questions or make comments. The gallery of portraits was left hanging for the public day event.

PUBLIC EVENT AND GALLERY WALK

The day ended with a public event, where the members of the Resource Center came to meet the participants.

This was a dress up affair, with everyone expected to wear their pretty clothes. The chair of the Center greeted everyone and welcomed all the guests. The participants introduced themselves and Funmi facilitated the summary.

There was a gallery walk to view the portraits and the guests were welcome to ask questions about the program, the portraits or the participants.

The next part of the program was the presentation of certificates of participation. These were presented by Dinah Obay-Siering, the Chair of the organisation, who said that she was very proud of all the participants. Dinah also promised that this camp was to be the first of many and that the Resource Center is committed to promoting and mentoring young Black women, She invited all the Alumni to be active in the Youth Forum, which the Center launched in 2001.

Dinner was a splendid Buffet of favourites. After the dinner which was shared by participants and guests, the group made their way back to the hotel in preparation for an early start heading to Lucerne, and for the second segment of the Camps programme. The feedbacks all confirmed that it was a very pleasant informal evening.

WEEKEND IN LUCERN

Short summary of the last camp weekend:

The train ride to Lucerne was very special and picturesque. On arrival in the group travelled by bus to the youth Hostel and checked in.

The following day, there was a visit to Mount Pilatus on the programme. The weather on departure was beautiful and warm. The journey was made via cable-car, a very unique experience. It was cold and foggy, so everyone had to bundle up.

There was lunch a short tour, and then the group returned to the hostel.

Due to a family tragedy, the camp leaders had to leave the camp 2 days earlier than planned.

Eka and Sophia (the coordinator of the Youth Forum of the Resource Center), supported the group and made sure that there was a supervised environment. The group had a full days evaluation, and an excursion in Lucerne to visit the city.

The participants then went back to Zurich and spent 1 more day there relaxing before heading back to their respective homes. As there had been a shopping afternoon in Zurich, no one really wanted to go into the shops. The participants packed and wrapped their gifts for the home journey.

Sefa Dänzer kindly stayed with Emem until her departure for the Airport. Alexandra and Harry Meierhofer, with support from Sophia and Eka managed the last days of the camp wonderfully.

Everyone is so proud of the programme. Many thanks to all of us for making it a success!

DEPARTURE FOR HOME

Unfortunately the ending was rather abrupt, as everyone still had so much to say. Many friendships were made and the sisters agreed to stay in touch until the next camp. Everyone had a sister connection through a same patterned Leeso. This will be a connection and a reminder of a very special time together.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Meeting Place and Resource Center for Black Women in Zurich has committed to carrying this programme forward. As this was a pilot project, it was an opportunity to gather information, revise and actualise our understanding about the current needs of black girls.

This meant that the Camp could better cater future programs, equipped with current inputs, which would be added to the existing module that had been created after extensive research. After intense evaluation, the planning Team and have outlined the next camp. Taking the feedbacks and requests of the Alumni into considerations, and also the observations of the trainers, there are a few additional factors to the camp.

New additions will include:

- more participants, perhaps increasing the number to 15
- 2-3 participants recruited from Africa
- preliminary 2 day seminar in London. (This Seminar will be partnered with Akina Mama wa Afrika and co-funded by The Future generations Youth Foundation and the Scarmanns Trust)

The tentative dates for the next camp will be advertised at a later date. The invitation to participate will also be sent as soon as the dates are finalised.

EVALUATION

The group evaluated the Camp. The facilitator gave each assessed item a score between 1-10. (10 being excellent)

Content	Comments & recommendations
Arrivals	Went smoothly. We were met at airport, no hiccups Score: 10
Accommodation	Really nice and posh!!! Zurich was posher than Lucerne Score: 10
Infrastructures	The Center was private and our own space, nice. No big play ground, but a fun area. Score: 9
Themes and subjects	Many new and interesting stuff. important things we should all know. All the participants want to come back for the next camp. Great! Score: 10
Constellation of group	All very nice girls. Next time, there should be more people from more countries. Score: 10
Participation	We were all expected to talk, everyone's voice and opinion was important, Its good to be heard and to be taken seriously. Score: 10
Trainers	Very nice aunties. They were a lot of fun, but also very serious. They explained everything until we understood. Score: 10
Food	No junk food allowed, but the pizzas and pasta were great and as much fruit as we wanted. We learnt that "Healthy food is non-negotiable at camp" Score: 9
Activities	More next time, e.g. Swimming or roller-blading. Best was fruit salad game. The daily exercises were surprisingly fun. Can we also visit a museum? Score: 9
Any other	As we were not allowed TV, maybe we can watch some videos next time. Also, can the camp last longer so we can see more of Switzerland

ANNEX 1

Information and guide lines for the camp participants

1. In Zurich, all the programs will take place at the Resource Center for Black women. The address is in your documentation. The whole group will be staying at the pension St. Josef, Hirschengraben, Zurich.
2. At the end of the first week, we will host a public event for the participants. This is a dressy affair so do allow your daughter to bring her favourite outfit!
3. We will leave Zurich to go to Lucerne, where we will stay at the Youth hostel (Luzerner Jugendherberge) *Please note: All meals, snacks, local transport and transfers and any miscellaneous costs will be covered by the Resource Center.*
4. Although the programme is quite intensive, as we want to maximise the time we spend together, there are many breaks in between where the process is informal.
5. Your daughter will be in a supervised environment at all times. I.e. An adult member of the team is constantly present to ensure safety and support.
6. If you need to contact us during the camp, call 0041 79 431 50 51. We will not pass social calls to participants, however, we have made provisions for the participants will be able to call home on every third day if they wish. We will pay for the calls.
7. There will be a detailed report at the end of the camp. You will automatically receive a copy as your daughter is a participant.
8. We aim to have a healthy camp so sweet snacks and junk food will be limited / not allowed. Please do not give your daughter any sweet snacks. Enough will be provided.
9. Please have a talk with your daughter regarding all our ground rules, so that she understands that you are also informed about our guidelines.

Please let us know if you have any other enquiries.

Girls Camp Team

ANNEX 2

THINGS NEEDED FOR GIRLS CAMP

PERSONAL ITEMS INCLUDING:

- ❖ *Jeans, / trousers for rough wear*
- ❖ *T-shirt blouse for rough wear*
- ❖ *I warm sweater / cardigan*
- ❖ *I pair closed shoes*
- ❖ *I smart outfit for celebratory evening*
- ❖ *Any medicines that need to be taken regularly**
- ❖ *Sun block*
- ❖ *Favourite note book*

The organisers will provide the following:

- ❖ *First aid kit*
- ❖ *Cameras / videos*

- *Please ensure that your daughter has very little luggage. Not more than one piece per person!*

**The organisers must be informed about this in detail*

ANNEX 3

PROJEKTBESCHRIEB: TREFFPUNKT UND RESSOURCEN ZENTRUM FÜR SCHWARZE FRAUEN

Der Treffpunkt für Schwarze Frauen wurde 1993 gegründet. Vorausgegangen war eine elfjährige Vor- und Abklärungsphase. Der Treffpunkt ein zusätzliche Ressourcen Zentrum, welches Materialien wie Videos, eine Bibliothek und Info-Pakete für Interessierte anbietet.

Wir sind das einzige solche Stelle für Schwarze Frauen in der Schweiz.

Team

Der Treffpunkt wird von ein Team von 2 Frauen geleitet, die ehrenamtlich arbeiten. Neben professioneller Beratung, bietet das Team und Ressourcenpersonen gemeinsam etwa 27 Sprachen an und kann die meisten Schwarze Frauen in Ihrer Muttersprache beraten. Die Teamfrauen werden weiter durch Ressourcen-Frauen unterstützt.

Spezifikum

Der Treffpunkt antwortet auf Bedürfnisse Schwarzer und anderer Frauen, die durch die vorhandenen Angebote nicht oder nur ungenügend befriedigt werden. Die spezielle Stärke des Treffpunktes liegt:

- in der Vertrautheit mit den Problemen, die Schwarze Frauen als Migrantinnen erleben.
- in der Auseinandersetzung mit den spezifischen Bedürfnissen dieser Frauen.
- in einer von Schwarzen Frauen erstellten Analyse, die die notwendige Wahrnehmung von Unterschieden wie Macht, Möglichkeiten, Privilegien und Status beinhaltet. Die Selbstdefinition und Kompetenz der Migrantinnen hat darin Platz.

Die Benutzerinnen

Schwarze Frauen sind keine homogene Gruppe, sie sind Frauen aus fünf Kontinenten; jedoch haben sie Gemeinsamkeiten, die sie verbinden:

- Die Auseinandersetzungen mit ihrem Umfeld wegen ihres Aussehens und die damit verbundenen Vorurteile
- Schwierigkeiten, eine soziale und ökonomische Nische in ihrer neuen Heimat zu finden
- politische und gesellschaftliche Systeme, die Migrantinnen diskriminieren
- es fehlt an einer gerechten Erziehung und Ausbildung für ihre Kinder
- sie werden von ihrer Umgebung fremdbestimmt
- sie werden durch die geschilderten Schwierigkeiten im fremden Land, ebenso aufgrund ihres Geschlechts benachteiligt. Die öffentliche Aufmerksamkeit für diese weitere Belastung ist erst im Entstehen begriffen, wie sich in der nur zögernden Revision von speziell Migrantinnen diskriminierenden Passagen im Ehe- und Ausländerrecht zeigt.

Schwarze Frauen werden in der hiesigen Gesellschaft durch ihr Aussehen definiert, eingestuft und als ein defizitäres Element marginalisiert. Ständige Missachtung ihres Umfeldes und die dadurch entstehende Isolation erschweren:

- den Integrationsprozess
- die Aktivierung von Ressourcen wie Bildung und Erfahrung in Multikulturalität
- Networking und Austausch mit anderen Migrantinnen und dem Rest der Gesellschaft
- eine klar etablierte politische Position.

ANNEX 4

Camp Information in German

Hintergrundsinformation:

Unser Zentrum ist 13 Jahre alt. Während den letzten dreizehn Jahren haben wir im Treffpunkt wertvolle Arbeit im Kampf gegen Rassismus geleistet. Von Anfang an war das Ressourcen Zentrum Begegnungsstätte für Benutzerinnen aus 6 Kontinenten, aus verschiedenen Altersgruppen. Viele Frauen haben von immer ihre Kinder mitgebracht, vor allem an Seminarien und Konferenzen über Rassismus und Vielfaltigkeit. In 2001 hat der Treffpunkt ein Jugendforum gegründet, welches jetzt integraler Bestandteil des Vereins ist. Seit 2001 haben wir unsere Jugendarbeit erweitert. Wir sind der festen Überzeugung dass junge Menschen eine Chance sind, unsere gesellschaftlichen Werte zu ändern, wenn sie früh lernen mit Unterschiedlichkeiten richtig umzugehen.

Als Teil unseres Youth-Forum, planen wir ein Sommercamp, welches als Pilotprojekt für weitere solche Begegnungs-Events fungieren soll.

Projektidee

Die Projektidee basiert auf der 4-jährigen Erfahrung des Jugendforums vom Treffpunkt Schwarze Frauen. In dieser Zeit hat das TPSF verschieden Seminarien organisiert und dabei festgestellt, dass diejenigen die den Prozess des Exchange-Learnings unter Gruppen unterschiedlichen Alters boten, am beliebtesten waren.

Thema

Auseinandersetzung mit den eigenen Werten, Kultur und Verhaltensmustern. Prävention rassistischer Gewalt durch Informationsaustausch, Aufbau einer eigenen Identität und Fördern des Verständnisses und des Vorteils der Vielfaltigkeit.

ANNEX 5

Ziele vom Lager

Der Lager wird ein Ort sein wo die Teilnehmerinnen:

- Ein Plattform für Austausch
- Ein Ort wo das Diaspora Kulturgut gepflegt werden kann
- Lernplattform für Sensibilisierung auf Menschenrechte
- Ein Plattform wo das Image vom Schwarze Frauen positiv gefördert wird

Zielgruppe

Die Frauen die wir ansprechen wollen, scheinen in einem Teufelskreis der Marginalisierung gefangen zu sein. Sie sind isoliert und leiden unter dem ständigen Druck Versäumtes nachholen zu müssen. Trotz der Öffnung der Schweiz und Europas im Allgemeinen, scheinen diese jungen Frauen in einer Randgruppe zu verbleiben, entweder gewollt, oder als Folge des rassistischen Systems in welchem sie leben. Es ist notwendig die Machtstrukturen herauszufordern und die Umgebung in Bezug auf Rassismus zu sensibilisieren.

Dadurch wollen wir dieser Gruppe potentieller Opfer die Dynamik von Rassismus und ihre eigene Rolle darin aufzeigen. Wir wollen mit dem Aufbrechen dieses Teufelskreises beginnen, indem wir einen Lernprozess „über sich selbst“ in Gang setzen und damit die Betroffenen in die Lage versetzen, sich gegen Rassismus als Individuen und als Teil der Gesellschaft zu wehren. Auch möchten wir einen Prozess in Gang setzen, der das Verständnis der Umgebung und der Machtstrukturen in denen die Betroffenen leben fördert, um dadurch die Rassismus-Systeme aufbrechen zu können.

Zielpublikum Reichweite und Sprache

Junge Schwarze Frauen, 9- bis 20 jährig, wohnhaft in CH. Das Camp wird in Deutsch und Englisch geführt.

Begin und Dauer des Projektes Geplant ist eine 14 Tage, vollzeitiges Wohncamp - 6. bis 20. August 2005. Danach organisieren wir eine Evaluation am 5. – 7. September 2005.