

Diary of the International Training

07.07.13 - 13.07.13

Bielefeld/ Germany

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Sunday - day of arrival

During the day, slowly everybody arrived at the youth hostel in Bielefeld.

After a first dinner together we met the mayor of Bielefeld, Mrs. Karin Schrader, who is also the responsible person of equal opportunities for men and women in the company of gas, electricity and water in Bielefeld.

Like this we had the possibility to ask questions and get an impression about gender issues in Germany. In the first exercise of the training we had to come together in small groups and discuss different topics, e.g. about the girls in our countries or our experience in the area of working with girls.

Already in the first evening we could exchange really interesting thoughts and get to know each other.

Monday

The second day of the seminar was all about us. After a short game to remember all the names of the women we started with an exercise, which made us think a bit about ourselves.

The trainer Regina put the 4 cardinal points at different places in the room and we had to choose where our home belongs to. It was up to us, if home meant where we live, where we were born or if we consider the cardinal point of our country in Europe or of our town inside the country. After some confusion everybody stood at some place and we spoke about the different feelings that were caused while searching the right position.

With the same instructions we had to find our place between the 4 elements: fire, water, air and earth and between different motivations to attend the seminar.

After a short coffee break we continued the seminar with interviews to create a profile of another girl. Until lunch break we discussed about girls in our countries and the definition of girl and woman.

In the afternoon we started with a relaxation story to think about ourselves when we were girls. After this each woman got some time for herself to think about the questions, what experiences we had with being

a girl and what limitations we remember. We got some papers and pencils and tried to draw and write everything down that came to our mind. With these posters we formed groups together with the other women of our countries and while talking about our personal experiences, we figured out similarities in our histories. After finishing, every nationality got some time to present their results and we discussed about it all together. Everybody was very motivated and interesting in the topics came up like the meaning of beauty.

Tuesday

The day started with some warming up exercises to wake up. After that the coordinator Ulrike gives a presentation about her organization EigenSinn e.V.. We spoke about sexual violence against children and the differences of laws and ways to help among countries. Ulrike explained the aims and efforts of her organization to prevent sexual violence from girls and boys.

Then the group split up for visiting projects: Half of the women went to the organization „Bell Zett“, which is a center for self-defense and sport activities only for women and girls in Bielefeld.

The other group went to the youth center „Mädchentreff“, which is also only for girls. There the girls can create their own space and have the possibility to try a lot of different activities like cooking, dancing or handcrafts.

The visiting of projects have been very impressing to everyone, especially to see what helpful and encouraging activities these organizations do for girls.

In the second part of the day we came together for the first evaluation. After talking about our impressions of the training, we discussed the meaning of different words like empowerment or freedom in small groups and presented one of these words in mute role playing in front of the group.

wednesday

The morning was all about body exercises. We started with dancing to get energy and were walking around the room. After some time we had to start saying „Me“ or „I“ in our mother-tongue, first just to ourselves and after to every person, that passed by. Later we changed to the sentence „I am important“ what we had to say with different emotions to another woman. It was really empowering to say these words without the need of giving an explanation, why we are important.

During half an hour we did a meditation exercise to completely relax and control our breathing.

Again in groups of two we had to find a safe position and the other one had to try to unbalance us.

Regina was telling us a story, so that we got the feeling of being a strong tree and it became more difficult to get out of balance.

After this we built two groups and stand in lines on the opposite side of the room in front of another woman. Then one group started walking up to the other. The woman in front of you had to show you by saying it or with a sign when you came too close and you had to stop immediately. This exercise was really useful to understand the signs of your body and to set boundaries.

Before lunch we gave each other a massage with our backs and spoke about our feelings of the day.

With new energy after eating we got some time to discover Bielefeld by doing a „field trip“. We got a paper with different stations all related to women. We had to find every place and do some exercises. The most difficult part was to observe girls and young women in the city and try to find out: „How are the girls in Germany?“

In the evening we were having a really nice party with food and music from all the different nationalities. It was funny to have the whole place for ourselves and we were dancing until the bar closed.

Thursday

The morning we spent with talking about the field trip and watching the pictures of every group. After exchanging our different impressions of Bielefeld, Regina gave a presentation to explain us the different steps to do a training to empower girls on our own. Seeing everything together in one presentation, made all the things we had already learned more precisely.

The afternoon got really intense by playing a lot of different games, which made us think a lot about ourselves.

First we started with some exercises to get some energy and be very loud. In one of the games we had to build three groups. One group had to stay on one side of the room and try to shout a word very loud so that the group of the other side could hear them. Between the two groups there was another one, which was doing really loud noises to disturb them, so that it became more difficult to understand which word group 1 was shouting.

In another game always a group of 2 women got a pillow. One had to try to keep it, while the other tried to pull it away and get it for herself. It was really difficult and cost a lot of energy to keep the pillow.

We also stood all together and tried to say the word „Stop“ with different movements to make the other women of the group understand, that we really mean it. It was a good feeling, but also a bit strange to say this word over and over again by also trying to feel it.

Later we built again groups of two and had to learn to leave the control to another person. One woman got a blindfold and the other one had to lead her around the area. In the beginning it was hard to be completely dependent on another person, but after a while it got easier and every group became very creative with the things they did.

The second half of the afternoon was really difficult, but also relieving. Everybody got some time on their own to think about the things in her life she would like to say „No“ to.

In groups we were discussing the most important „No“ for each of us. This one we wrote on a paper and burned it outside in the park. It was a really special and encouraging ceremony, which created a lot of emotions in each of us. We also had to draw a little „angel“, which was a paper with a word on it. This word should help us to ban the „No“ we just burned from our lives.

Friday

In the morning we started with some sportive exercises like dancing and some group games. After that we were practicing the 7 steps to empower girls. First everybody could name her ideas how to transfer

the things we have learned into a workshop. After we split up in groups and discussed different kinds of workshops, e.g. trainings for colleagues, teenagers or women who have been sexually abused.

In the second part of the day every group presented the results, so we got a lot of different suggestions and excitations.

The last hour was all about the evaluation. We got some time to think about our experiences and feelings during the seminar. After we chose a postcard and explained our thoughts and why we took this postcard. Some of the things that were said were really touching and all of us left the seminar with good memories.

We finished this last day with a nice dinner in an Arabic restaurant to spend some last time together.

Saturday - day of departure

After breakfast all participants left the youth hostel for getting home. Adresses were changed, kisses and hugs given – the time for the training has been passed so fast! Perhaps we will meet again – probably for a follow up-training next year.