

Confronting Concerns: April 28, 2007 - Session #1



The Confronting Concerns Part II first session took place on April 28, 2007. At 11:45, the youth leaders along with Tene and Sr. Kathleen arrived and asked the participants to put away all electronic devices to prevent distraction. Throughout this session, there were three parts: introduction, concerns, and goals.

There were also two questions being looked at. There were 2 icebreakers played in order to get the youth familiar with each other's names, and warmed up so that they could begin to discuss their concerns. The next activity was the Human Barometer in which youth had move to different parts of the room depending on if they agreed, disagreed, or were not sure about a statement.

After they made their decision and moved they were called on to discuss how they felt about the statement. During this part, the bars were raised, for the reason that the youth were eager to get their point across and were excited that their voices were being heard. In the next activity, youth were placed in 3 different groups and had to pick either a rap, poem, role play, or poster out of a hat. Then they had to read a document on the life style of youth their age in Sudan. With that, they had to compare and contrast the youth lifestyles of America and Sudan in a rap, a role play, and a poster. This activity really opened everyone's to see that we have it easy in America and that we need to appreciate our education because not everyone is getting one. The final part of the session consisted of a warm meal, a group picture, and a message of encouragement in order to invite the youth back for the second session on May 12, 2007. They were also given flyers.

Roshelle Wickham,
Member of Teen Leadership Group

SUMMARY



Building on the success of last year, NPD assembled a group of young leaders to plan and coordinate the 2007 Confronting Concerns program. In preparation for the first forum, held on April 28th, 2007, the team analyzed the results of their 100+ interviews of Harlem youth. The youth leaders analyzed the data and created four pie charts based on the four questions asked on the interview sheets. In preparation for the first workshop, youth leaders also created several workshop objectives to help to guide the discussions. Among the objectives that the leaders identified were that participants would make connections between the local and the global and that they would identify what they would like to learn in order to address their concerns.

Youth Leaders Erica and Jahmala opened the workshop by summarizing the results of the interviews and presenting the pie charts that gave a visual representation of the interview results. The youth then participated in the icebreaker, which was an all group activity that enabled everyone got to know each other a bit more and identify the concerns most important to them. They also connected their concerns to others' concerns in order to see the ways that many of the issues in their communities were interrelated. The other activities during the day ranged from large group dialogues, to small group activities and the participants had the opportunity to explore the connections between local issues and global issues.

The participants engaged in lively dialogue during the workshop that highlighted the uniqueness of their experiences as Harlem youth. At the same time, the participants were able to draw connections to the experiences of youth in other parts of the world, and recognized the ways in which youth experiences are connected. In discussing the differences between themselves and youth in Africa, the participants realized that the images they see of Africa are one sided and only depict children living in poverty. While many children do live in that situation, the participants noted that youth in America live in poverty as well, and it is important to have images of real peoples' lives in other parts of the world to be more informed and realize that we all have a lot in common. The participants also had the opportunity to read about real childrens stories from different parts of the world and create posters, rap songs and poems based on what they had learned. At the end of the workshop youth were able to present what they had learned in small groups and get feedback from the other students.

Outcome:

Ten Harlem youth named similarities and differences between youth in Harlem and in youth in the Sudan. In two groups they created a rap song and a poster regarding these insights and presented and discussed their insights from one group to another.