

Confronting Concerns: September 9, 2007 - Session #4



Post-dialogue between youth and adults

Planning began for the final session of the CCII project after the final youth workshop in June. After the Saturday youth sessions, the young women who had been planning the CCII project as well as the adult facilitators felt that it was necessary to share the outcomes of the work with other important adults in the community. The youth leaders acknowledged that a community is made up not only of young people, but parents, grandparents, teachers, church members and other important adults in the lives of youth are important stakeholders in a community. The young people decided to focus their attention on bringing these people together in order to share with them their vision for community empowerment, and also hear their own ideas about how to engage youth. The group decided not to take the step of inviting local political officials, or other youth organizations because they wanted to first engage the adults in their lives and the lives of the young people who came to the workshop. They felt that it was important to first get the support from these adults so that they could build on their work as the project progressed.

Planning for the adult presentation spanned over the summer and the young leaders developed an agenda for the September program with adults and created a PowerPoint presentation that illustrated the work they had done in the three youth sessions. In addition to creating the Power Point, the youth planning team developed an agenda for the forum that would enable them to both share the successes and challenges of the youth forums as well as engage the adults in activities that would get them talking and give them an idea of the structure of the youth workshops. Quite a bit of work also went into planning the logistics for the day, including deciding who would get the food, who would facilitate which activities, how the room would be set up and many other small jobs.

Through planning this event the young women learned a lot about organizing and planning and were able to use some of the facilitation and public speaking skills that they had developed during the youth workshops. Adults as well as youth who had participated in the CCII program were present at the inter-generational presentation. The young people started off with introducing guidelines such as respect and that one person should speak at a time so that the dialogue would be able to move forward and people present could learn from one another. After sharing names and concerns, the participants learned about the CCII youth workshops through a PowerPoint slide presentation given by the CCII youth leaders. The

participants then got to experience the Human Barometer, an activity where you are asked to say whether you agree or disagree with a statement read, and then both give your own opinions and listen to others'.

It was a very engaging afternoon and the adult participants were able to have a genuine dialogue with youth from their community. Many adults confessed that they had not had this type of earnest dialogue with youth in a while and that there should be more opportunities to take part in this type of dialogue. There were many places where the youth and adults agreed on the kinds of issues that affect the community. The discussion ended with everyone sharing that this was a positive experience and some of the adults expressed interest in helping out in future forums. The positive energy of the day gave us all a good feeling and made all the organizers realize that these are the types of conversations that are necessary in order to bring the community together and create positive change.

" Be the Change you want to see in the world "
- Mahatma Ghandi