



Desperate to be Recognized: Youth in South Africa Ikamva Labantu-Lifeskills Program--Cape Town, South Africa

Project Goals

- ◆ To learn about Black life in post-apartheid South Africa
- ◆ To assess the role of youth in South Africa's transformation into a democratic, multiracial society

Personal Goals

- ◆ To live, work, and make friends in a different culture successfully
- ◆ To learn more about the lives of young South Africans, especially young women
- ◆ To learn more about the operations of an international nonprofit, nongovernmental organization

Activities

- ◆ Coordinated a Winter Arts program for Black and Coloured youth in Nyanga Township featuring fine arts, drama, music, and dance
- ◆ Helped to implement a school readiness program in a daycare (or creche) in Guguletu Township
- ◆ Organized a child abuse workshop with RAPCAN (Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse Network)
- ◆ Planned and researched a workshop on sexually transmitted diseases for the Lifeskills Program for Nyanga schools

Key Dilemmas

- ◆ What is my connection to Black South Africans as a Black American outsider? Is our skin color enough of a foundation to create a bond?
- ◆ Which is more important to me: being seen by white South Africans as an American or as a Black American?
- ◆ Is it fair to apply my cultural and sociopolitical beliefs to South African society?
- ◆ Can true interracial coexistence be achieved when society still has distinct physical and social boundaries that continue to separate the races?



Lessons Learned

- ◆ In order to live in a different society, sometimes one must make allowances for cultural differences and learn to adjust to others. However, there are some values and ideals that are fundamental to me as a person and an activist and I have the right to demand that they are respected.
- ◆ Apartheid bred such a culture of violence in South Africa, that coexistence issues are not limited to race but include gender equality, value for human life, and children's rights.
- ◆ Concern for and inclusion of the voices of young South African in the the building of a "new South Africa" is imperative if the gains toward coexistence are to be maintained.



Page 4, top: Nikki joins other facilitators to plan the theater portion of the Winter Program; Bottom: earrings made by local artisans; Page 5, left: Coloured facilitators of the Winter Arts Program tour Nyanga with the Black counterparts; Left: Day care children get ready to learn at a creche in Guguletu; Below: a newsletter from the Child Abuse Network and a bracelet made with beads and safety pins.

