

**Girls Work Network: 1st Annual Gathering
2011**



On 13th April 2011 we gathered together to think about Girls Work in the city and to think big about what we want it to be in the future. Here are our thoughts:

Our International Women's Day Dreams

International World Tour – picking up role models and inspirational speakers, take on board all issues in all countries. Recognise similarities.

Residential Camp or Festival. Bus would get bigger!

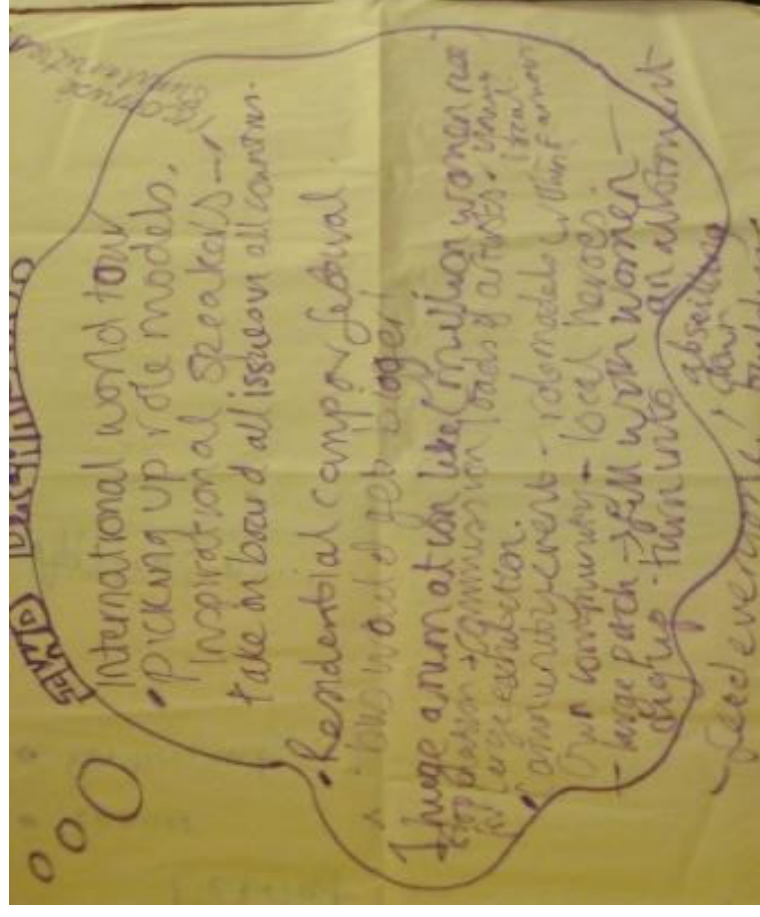
1 huge animation like 'million women rise'. Use stop-motion animation and commission loads of artists, young / local / famous for a large exhibition.

Community Event – role models within own community – local heroes.

Large Patch – fill with women, dig up and turn into an allotment.

Feed everyone!

Abseiling down building



Part 1 | Strengths

- Build on IWD Events that are already run
- Committed women workers to take the work forward
- Enthusiasm and will to do it
- A myriad of skills e.g. Art, Sport, Outdoor Education
- A creative approach →
- Political support
- Not bowing to sexism
- Legislature support
- Occupying public space e.g. North City Library
- Accepting feminism as common space, not an anomaly or oppositional
- Strength to resist any backlash
- We are living resources
- Cooperative approach in women staff (and supportive)

Part 2 | How can we build on / capitalise on these strengths?

- Continuing networks/links –between women not just the posts they have
- Sharing resources –how can we work together effectively
- Supporting people who may lose jobs etc.
- Looking at ways it can be incorporated, cross curricular
- Objectives of meeting up
- Identify free spaces



Part 1 | Weaknesses

- Difficulty in keeping/getting a group together
- Base
- Lack of a Youth Service. Maintain it (?)
- How to maintain networks etc.
- Understanding of the issues
- Young women don't see the value in women only – lack of understanding of the oppression that still exists
- Been sold idea that they are equal, but also believe they are less (submissive)
- Funding

Part 2 | How can we overcome / minimize our weaknesses?

- *Up-to-date contact lists – An onsett(?) register of people
- *Utilise free space – People are the resource
- Influence commissioning
- Consciousness raising, training, staff development, safe space to learn and understand contemporary issues



Part 1 | Opportunities

- Voluntary organisations forming new partnerships
- Government targets re T.P, gender inequalities, i.e. women and smoking etc
- To become more creative (meet their agenda but do our girls work)
- MCC's consultation – generally young women engage in youth forums etc.
- This Network being developed – build upon the enthusiasm

Part 2 | How can we best make use of these opportunities?

Network:

- Use VYM – meeting / half hour dedicated to Girls Work; Use Bulletin and Email list
- Regularity – not letting enthusiasm drop
- Join other Networks e.g. M/cr Chlamydia meeting, Million Women Rise
- Amelia to get us some dosh – build network, focused on annual (or monthly/weekly/daily) event
- Recruitment –existing Network, Facebook, Twitter
- Positive
- Retired women – recycled
- 'Youth Work'? could be off putting e.g. use 'Support Workers', include rather than exclude



Part 1 | Threats

- Disestablishment of Youth Service
- Funding
- Money being directed to the 'deficit-model' of youth work e.g. teenage pregnancy / crime and disorder
- scarcity of resources will force provisions to concentrate on mixed provision and drop 'young women's work'
- loss of women youth workers who believe in women's and girls work – experience and enthusiasm
- more competition for less money – rivalry?

Part 2 | How can we minimize or avoid these threats?

- creation of women, youth and community worker cooperative
- develop fundraising, income generation and how to win commissions strategies (training)
- creative appropriate partnerships to develop the work
- designing dynamic programmes of work that are celebratory and create a 'credit-model' as opposed to 'deficit'
- pooling of resources, think on when else and how else to deliver work, we are the main resource
- partnerships, sharing, volunteers, peer educators, senior members, training, student, retired folk, seconded staff, M-
People.



Feedback tree: Feelings about the event and ways forward

Enjoyed the whole event.

The start of something good.

Great to see women coming together in Manchester.

Networking with other like minded people.

Working together.

More Please.

Great to see so many passionate people doing work with young women.

Meeting great people!

Art work

Really liked the banner – please display it at lots of places!

Thanks, really enjoyed meeting people and banner.

Learnt about what groups had been up to.

Ideas for International Women's Day.

How some of us are already connected in work we do.

New activities to do with young women.

Build the Network, recruit.

Would like us to build a strong network to run a girls work event.

Continuing the Network.

We need to continue the network group to support each other.

Let's keep in touch.

Keep offering opportunities to all our 'members'

Would like to get all the MMU women students on placement to come together to support a big event.

Would like to work closely with others.

Would love to do an awards day – great idea

