# PLANNING AND EVALUATING : GROUP INTERVENTION WITH AFRICAN STUDENTS

BY

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A PRACTICUM
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR DEGREE OF

MASTERS IN SOCIAL WORK

FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

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LIAKO SELEBALO-TSEKI

A practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

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## DEDICATION

To my late mother and father. Thank you
for your love and understanding.

# CONTENTS

## ABSTRACT

Every year more and more African students come to study at the universities in Canada. They often come to Canada because the programs they want are not offered at their own universities back home.

Currently there are approximately 200 Africans students at the University of Manitoba. The majority of these students come from communities where the norm is to rely on family in times of hardships. However, when they come to Canada, they are exposed to new and different cultural values. As a result these students usually face immense social adjustment problems because their families who usually provide support are absent.

To respond to a perceived need for a support system for African students, a support and personal growth group intervention was employed by a fellow African student. The aim of this intervention was to provide: (1) alternate forms of support and social ties for missing relationships; (2) assistance to members to overcome difficulties in cultural adjustment and other problems which could interfere with their academic work.

Preventive efforts took the form of supportive and problem solving techniques in which eleven African students at the university of Manitoba participated in self - exploratory group to better understand their personal situation. Such a model seemed to be more in line with African students values related to education and learning.

Members of the group first discovered that there are other African students who are going through similar adjustment problems that all are experiencing the group provided a vehicle for meeting other People with whom they discussed and shared their problems.

Through this group intervention, the participating students in the group came to realize that there is a need for the International Center for Students and the University Counseling Service to change their techniques, so that programs in these units are designed to reach African students. The design of support programs for African students should also involve the African Students Association on Campus.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank those people who contributed to the development and completion of this practicum. Firstly, I wish to express my appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Don Fuchs, for his guidance and support throughout. My gratitude also goes to professor Esther Blum and Dr. Lyle Eide for agreeing to serve on my practicum committee and for their valued suggestions as committee members.

I also wish to gratefully thank my fellow African students who participated in this practicum. Without their valuable time and comments this practicum would not have been possible. My gratitude also goes to the staff of the International Centre for Students at the university of Manitoba, without their help and cooperation, I could never have completed this practicum.

Finally, I wish to thank my family; my husband, who has always been there for me. His unconditional support will always be appreciated, and our daughter and son for being patient with me throughout.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE OF PRACTICUM

There has been an overwhelming flow of students from the so- called "third-world" countries to Canadian universities in recent years, despite the differential fees imposed by many universities in Canada. Unfortunately, there has been a general failure on the part of university administrators and counselors to address the process of adjustment for these individuals (CBIE 1992). This neglect often frustrates their educational efforts and potential. Further, it is not quite known whether the usual helping techniques which may be applied to these individuals in their host universities, based on the hosts' cultural beliefs and practices would be readily effective with these students.

Although it is generally agreed that social and emotional problems exist in all cultures, many "experts" challenge the belief that there exist universal, professional helping methods which can effectively deal with problems among all people irrespective of their social or cultural background, much in the same way Aspirin relieves headaches ( Pederson 1991, Wohl 1981).

Counseling has been said to "represent a technological intervention developed in western societies as a response to western problems" (Pande 1968). Wohl

argues that this technique has a high risk of being rejected by non-western-ers. He is skeptical about this process of being able to effectively address their problems without it undergoing drastic change. He argues that unlike other technologies which have been successfully exchanged between cultures, counseling confronts and arouses the fundamental personal attitudes, values, feelings, beliefs and standards about the conduct of life and interrelationships of people. Lambo (1974) also indicates that western helping techniques cannot be effectively applied in African societies and that if they were applied they would have to undergo such a drastic change that it would render them barely recognizable to the western practitioner observing them. In his study with American Indians, Naki (1975) describes western psychotherapy as being suitable only for those highly westernized American Indians, and this is how this process can be described with Africans. My own experience as an African now studying in Canada, would indeed testify to the truth of these beliefs. It is necessary for counseling technique as it is known in west-ern societies to be modified in order to fit clients from African societies. I agree with Dragun (1975) who views counseling as a means of helping alien-ated persons to return to a better societal participation and functioning. This position clearly highlights the cultural focus of this process.

Although there are significant cultural differences among the African na-tions, one thing that is common is the importance of the family. In fact, one could argue that to really understand Africans one must know and understand their family relationships. It is true that the family in Africa, as in other continents, is undergoing some changes, but these changes are not

towards western norms, but rather towards the creation of new African patterns.

In these new patterns, old patterns and the new ones are blended into more functional forms. What has remained the same, however, despite these changes is that Africans are probably still more family oriented than the majority of societies. As Anthony Barker eloquently stated:

> "The African cultural heritage enshrines a broader,
> more noble concept of family than that of the west.
> The extended family has proved a marvelous security
> for those whom otherwise there was no security at all.
> The extended family is a net [big] enough to gather the
> child who falls from the feeble control of neglectful parents,
> it receives the widow, tolerates the batty, gives status
> to grannies." (Barker 1973)

In modern, industrial, western societies there are government and community agencies to which an individual or a family can turn to for assistance. In African countries, an individual's needs are met by the appropriate relatives (extended family) to whom he/she in turn has duties and obligations. These relatives play an important role in the training and socialization of children. The young children spend many of their early years with their grandparents where they are taught not only skills but also traditional lore and values.

In the communities the elderly have status and are greatly respected, for they are repositories of lore and wisdom. Also, in a society where the dead are presumed to influence the lives and fortunes of the living, the old people are on their way to become ancestral spirits, and as such, they are important link between the living and the dead.

Most Africans, like North American Indians rely on family in times of hardship. Whether an individual should or should not see a healer/helper, for

example- and if so which one- is a decision which is usually made collectively by the family members. An individual is not free to make immediate decisions concerning his/her fate. This usually causes some irritation on the part of practitioners who are not familiar with the African cultures when a client declines help until he/she has discussed the matter with the family members. This is because these people often see their problems, whether emotional, personal or physical, as a threat to the whole broader social network. As a result they insist on the kind of problem solving mechanism which embraces the whole family system. In this way, it is similar to the western family therapy where intervention usually embraces the whole family. Like "African therapies", the family-centered therapy has been defined as a model of therapy which locates the family in the center of the unit of attention. It grows out of the basic premise that human beings can be understood and helped only in the context of the intimate and powerful system of which they are a part. While in western therapy the "family" usually means the nuclear family, for Africans this means the whole extended family.

Typically, African people having problems seek out a helper (healer) and go to him/her much as one goes to the western practitioner. Like in western therapy the goal of the intervention is to modify or remove the problem. The helper may assist in identifying the cause of the problem and also in implementing change based on the expected norms. However the healing rituals

generally include the whole family of the client and sometimes even the larger community. In other words, help in African context has an integrative function not found in western approaches. Thus, African approaches serve to reaffirm the social and cultural bonds among participants, as they unite in seeking harmony with nature, and for them, this is the true meaning of health and happiness. The close link that exists between the everyday world and that of the departed ancestors makes African culture very different from that of the western countries. Recourse to a supernatural in times of hardship ( through the healers ) - whether the advice is good or bad, true or false - usually relieves tension and provides the psychological release which comes from the conviction that a decision is in tune with the wishes of supernatural forces, that it has the blessing of the spirits.

The majority of African students in Canadian Universities come from communities where the norm is to rely on family as we have seen, but when they come to Canada, they are exposed to new and different values. As a result, they usually face immense problems in social and cultural adjustment, and they may face financial hardships, academic problems, discrimination and other problems while they are in Canada away from their families who usually provide support. As Kealey has realized;

> "People with well developed interpersonal skills place
> a high value on the people in their lives. In moving to
> a foreign culture, they are cut off from their friends and
> families [in Africa] and are unknown in their new
> environment. They experience acculturative stress
> from both a sense of loss of the old and familiar and
> a confrontation with the new and unfamiliar."
> (Kealey 1990).

Indeed my discussions with a group of African students confirmed that this group shares special experiences because they are international students from Africa, now living in a foreign land. The discussion also confirmed that the "culture-shock" experienced by these students under these circumstances can cause unbearable stress. Back home they usually look to the family for support and help in times of stress, however, they lack this resource in their new environment.

What this argument points to is that the specific form that intervention for African students takes must harmonize with their broader cultural ethos. It should not violate those implicit values and presuppositions that constitute these people's world views. Based on the above argument one concludes that western methods of intervention cannot be directly applied to Africans. Nevertheless, there is a need amongst African students in Canadian Universities for some kind of intervention which is relevant and which will help them to deal with the stress and problems associated with living in a foreign environment.

It is therefore necessary to create some form of compensatory mechanism to combat this loss of relationships and stability. Even though these students are not familiar with traditional western interventions as indicated, I believe that some western therapy models such as network therapy, supportive and educational group models, if modified to fit their cultural needs, have some applicability to African students in Canadian universities.

The general goals of this practicum therefore are:

1. To identify and examine the issues of concerns among African international students,

2. To develop and implement a group intervention to assist African students at the University of Manitoba in developing an increased awareness of problems faced by their group at the university, and to realize some ways to better cope with life while they are in Canada.

The main goal for the group as a whole was to discuss and talk about the feelings of extreme loneliness and isolation that students have been feeling since they came to Canada, with people who are also experiencing similar problems and feelings, and to try to find some solutions together. The individual goal for each of the group members was generally to find better ways of coping while they were in Canada so that they would be able to concentrate on their academic work.

As was mentioned earlier, there is a loss of significant persons in these people's lives. They are coping with the loss of, among other things, family, friends, homeland and native language. The aim of this group intervention therefore was also to compensate for these missing relationships, and to assist the group members in overcoming difficulties in cultural adjustment and other problems which interferred with their academic work.

The objective was for this group intervention to serve as an "anchor" against loneliness and confusion, with the worker as a monitor and a facilitator of relationships among members. The content of the group was generally determined by the worker, especially at the beginning, but the direction that

each session took  was directed by the group members, who assisted and supported each other the through sharing of ideas  and ways of constructively dealing with barriers to better, healthier adaptation and adjustment. The intervention  was also  aimed at giving members a chance to share their concerns, feelings,  expectations and coping skills with others like themselves.  Finally, this  group intervention was also aimed at gathering data  and  finding  effective  ways that can be used in future to help and to improve life for incoming African students at the University of Manitoba and to minimize the adjustment problems which this group  goes through  upon arrival and during their stay in this new environment.

A support and personal-growth  intervention was  employed with this group. This approach was intended to offer support  which would help African students function better  on an interpersonal level while they were in Canada. With this approach participants generally shaped the direction of the group process by  identifying the subjects of concern for them as African students at  the  University  of  Manitoba, and  by attempting to collectively find solutions.

This group process was chosen as a means of intervention in this case because it mimics the reality  of students'  experiences. The group was composed of people with different personalities who shared common problems. Therefore,  what was learned in the group sessions  was easily transferred to    real life situations. Papell  and  Rothman  (1980)  view different  personalities  and  experiences  as  sources  of  strength  and resources for  both the individual and the group. They argue that group

intervention provides a testing ground by which the members can experience the realities and consequences of individual differences.

The rationale for choosing African students for this intervention was that this group was very vulnerable because it was comprised of members who were living in a foreign land, with different cultural values and norms. They were also lacking in personal and social support. My familiarity with this group, being an African student myself, was also another reason for choosing this group. Since I have had direct experience with some of the problems they were facing, it was easier for me to identify with them and with their problems.

Following this overview chapter, the practicum report will begin with an examination of the research literature concerning international students in the Canadian and United States Universities, and also the theories which have been applied to help these students in their host countries. The third chapter will discuss and describe individual group members and their feelings about life in Canada. Next, the report will examine how and why group work intervention is an important and appropriate method for working with students from African countries, who are not familiar with western techniques. In chapter five, a brief description of the context is provided. In addition, the description of the intervention model, the evaluation design and measures will be described, and the scores and responses on the pre-test and post-test will be discussed. The sixth chapter will discuss the group process, which indicates the stages of development. Chapter seven will deal with counseling and group work from an African

perspective. It will also indicate the differences between the home cultural beliefs and values and those of the host country and how these differences may make adjustment more difficult. This Chapter will also discuss the common outcomes of the group as a whole. Finally, chapter eight will show general observations based on the outcome of the intervention and how this intervention became a learning experience for the worker. It will also cover the conclusions which were drawn based on this experience, and it will provide some recommendations for future interventions, and suggestions for helping African students at the University of Manitoba.

# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The number of international students in Canadian Universities is now estimated at over 23,000, or 5% of the total full time  University enrollment (CBIE 1989). International students are individuals temporarily in Canada , enrolled in a University for the purpose of pursuing a course of study. They are therefore expected to return to their own countries upon completion of their study  programs  (Ingram 1985).

Studies which have been done on international students' adaptation in Canada  (Mickle 1985  and CBIE 1988) have found that for these  individuals, adapting to Canada  is a painful process. For example, in the 1988 survey of international students in Canada by CBIE,  32% of the respondents reported having encountered " considerable difficulties" in their first year in Canada. According to the authors, these students generally believed that their first few months in Canada were important to their later adjustment to the country. In  addition, the students who had orientation arranged for them on arrival believed that orientation   programs for international students offered by the Universities are very important and that both participation in these programs and their relevance for the international students could be substantially improved.

When asked to rate different factors by the extent to which they had been a problem for them, loneliness came as the factor which presented the most severe problem for these individuals (CBIE 1988). These observations suggest that there is a large and growing population in Canadian Universities with unique social and cultural status which undergoes severe adjustment problems upon arrival and during its stay in Canadian Universities. It also suggests this population requires some attention to assist with these difficulties. Upon entering Canada, international students are exposed to new, and for most part different, societal values. As a result some of them have been found to experience severe adjustment problems.

One of the University administrators' basic assumptions seems to be that international students constitute a homogeneous population and that what applies for one will apply for all (CBIE 1986). They seem to believe that "a student is a student" and refuse to differentiate between those from western cultures and those from non- western societies, because they fear that this might be seen as discrimination. As a result, much effort and literature on the adjustment of foreigners in Canada is directed towards helping immigrants to assimilate and become more like the members of the host country (Wolfgang 1975, Samuda and Wolfgang 1985). However, unlike immigrants, international students see their presence in Canada as only temporary and do not want to be assimilated into it. As a result there is little literature on these international students who need to adjust in Canada temporarily, but who are planning to return to their own countries after a few years. In addition, whatever little literature there is on international students is usually developed from perspectives other than those of the

students themselves. Very few international students have written about their experiences in Canada.

As Spradley and Phillips (1972) realized, even though international students come from widely diverse backgrounds, they are usually expected to adjust to a narrowly defined set of behaviors, requiring them to learn their new and proper roles very rapidly. That is, international students are an example of a population that must learn a wide range of culturally defined and unfamiliar roles in a very short time and under conditions of considerable stress. They must suddenly acquire skills that a person born in the country learns over a life-time (Pedersen 1991).

Pedersen (1981) suggests that the greater the differences in customs, values and life styles between the host country and the country of origin, the greater the adjustment problems, that is, since the African accustomed values differ so significantly from those of the Canadian, they experience a considerable degree of culture shock. This is because their acculturation requires new skills in both formal and informal relationships. As a result one would expect fewer adjustment problems from a "western" foreign student, (i.e. someone from Europe), studying in Canada than from a student from Africa.

Research on international students in the United states indicates: (1) that many of these students from Africa and Asia do not adapt to American life; (2) that many do not engage in any meaningful participation in American society, some even return home without having attained their academic programs (Pedersen 1991 and Sue 1981). In addition, according to Pedersen

(1982), students from Africa and Asia typically seek counseling -if they do at all- only after other resources have been exhausted. They seem to believe that counseling would result in a loss of status, therefore they rely more on fellow nationals for assistance.

In their study of 2,536 University students from eleven countries, Klineberg and Hull (1979) found that there was a striking variation from one country to another in the patterns of difficulties encountered. These findings indicate that the practice of clustering all international students under the same rubric is not very helpful. In fact, the greater the cultural differences between a student and his/her host culture, the greater the likelihood that misunderstandings will occur. Other studies (e.g. Ingram 1985) indicate that international students from other western, industrialized countries tend to socialize more with Canadians than students from non-western or less in-dustrialized countries.

Alexander, Klein, Workneh and Miller (1985) found that a vast majority of non-western students feel vulnerable during much of their stay in western countries. They point out that in addition to suffering culture shock when dealing with external matters such as different food, climate, language and mannerism (communication styles), these students also have to face intense academic pressures, loneliness and prejudice. Not only do they face all these pressures, but they also lose cultural and personal structures while they are separated from their homes and families.

Alexander et al (1981) also claim that they have found group therapies to have little or no therapeutic impact on foreign students and that most of these students find these therapies demeaning and undignified. The authors further argue that because of these students' reluctance to share problems with strangers, group therapies prove to be problematic for them.

There is, however, some controversy over whether international students experience more problems in their host countries than the native-born students. Alexander et al (1981) describe international students as a high risk group with more adjustment problems. However, Klineberg (1982) believes that this may be an exaggeration. Through this intervention with African students, it became evident that most of the problems that these African students encounter in Canada are due to the fact that they are international students from a different culture and these problems were not encountered when the students were at the universities back home. In addition, Klineberg and Hull (1979) argued that international students who are involved with Americans are more likely to be satisfied both socially and academically. In contrast, Alexander et al (1981) conclude that contact with fellow nationals is the most important coping factor contributing to academic success. Also, Pedersen (1975) reviewed research data from 781 University of Minnesota international students indicating that overall, the most sought source of help for solving personal problems was a fellow national. They only sought help from the international office for specific problems which needed their expertise (such as immigration regularities), but not for general or personal problems.

According to Berry (1984), most international students prefer "integration" in to their host's culture, which implies the maintenance of the integrity of their cultural identity while becoming an integral part of a larger societal framework, as opposed to "assimilation". He defines assimilation as relinquishing one's former culture and moving into the new dominant one. As it turns out, in most cases, international students, especially African students, either experience what Berry calls "segregation", where they are involuntarily excluded from the larger Canadian society, or "marginality", in which inability to adapt either to the new culture or to retain one's own culture results in confusion and loss of identity. Marginality often leads to stress and loss of both the home and host culture.

According to Pedersen (1991), a person's self esteem and self-image are validated by significant others, who provide emotional and social support in culturally patterned ways. Moving to a foreign culture suddenly deprives a person of these support system. As we have seen, international students who readily assimilate into the host's culture are usually those who have disassociated themselves from home country values. However, as Pedersen (1991) maintains, many traditional theories for helping international students may not be very effective, and we need to find ways of helping foreign students define their own identity. He also suggests that there is a need for some criteria to help international students define a third culture, which is neither their home culture nor host culture. This would be a culture of people who live in a foreign country for a while and therefore must learn some new practices in order to survive. A culture in which people must keep some of the old values from back home. He finally suggests

that in developing theories to understand the unique and complicated factors influencing international students' success, it may be necessary to either modify current helping theories or to develop new ones.

My own experience as an African and as a group-leader has shown me that western therapies are not directly applicable to Africans. However, through the experience of working with African students in Canada, I realized that if group intervention is conducted in a culturally sensitive manner, and is modified to fit and meet the expectations and beliefs of these African students, group work can be very effective. Two crucial factors are (1) that the group be relatively homogeneous and (2) that the worker (group leader) share basic values and norms with the members. That is, despite all the problems seen by Alexander and his group, group intervention with African students is feasible if traditional methods and techniques are modified to fit this group's needs and value orientations.

In their work with refugees from Southeast Asia, Glassman and Skolnik (1984) realized that it was important for members to have an opportunity to belong to a group of people like themselves, a group which could offer support and friendship. In the present intervention members were encouraged to talk to each other and to share concerns and feelings of isolation. This was done to maximize the chance of strengthening support and ties among the members.

In addition, Papell and Rothman's mainstream model seemed to have a very high potential for helping this group of African students. In this model, each member of the group is assumed to have "the potential power to make a difference in the group and that the exercise of this power could generate growth and change within the individual" (Papell and Rothman 1980).

This model, according to these authors is characterized by common goals and mutual aid among group members. It is more concerned with the need for each member to belong, and to establish bonds and capacities for identification. As Papell and Rothman note:

- Members are seen as social learners, who expand their skills in social functioning through the group situation.

- The group creates a supportive atmosphere, one characterized by reciprocity and mutual aid.

- The group creates a substitute community which reduces isolation.

- The group creates an atmosphere of empowerment for the members to develop new communication skills and norms for social interaction.

Sue (1981) points out that many "minorities" may bring to therapy the expectations of immediate benefits and concrete results. They may expect the worker/leader to lead and take an active role during the group sessions.

The following have been documented as some of the typical characteristics and fears of international students, particularly those from the developing countries, in relation to University counseling services .

-Underutilization of University counseling services by international students (Pederson 1991).

-Unfamiliarity with counseling and formal helping processes and expectations thereof (Lee 1981).

-Belief that counseling is for people with serious mental problems (Sue and Sue 1972).

-Embarrassment at showing emotional problems or talking about personal problems to strangers in group sessions (Sue and Sue 1972).

-The fact that there are few professional helpers from minority groups and therefore differences in communication styles exist.

-White, western, middle class values are usually reflected in most counseling encounters (Sue and Sue 1972).

Most international students, especially Africans, come to study abroad because of limited educational opportunities in their home countries. Many come to obtain graduate or professional training not available at home. From the foregoing literature review it is clear that a lot of these students experience difficulties when they come to study in Canada. It is also evident that the more different their cultural background is from that of the Canadians, the more difficult the students' adjustments become. From this literature review it is possible to realize that fellow nationals can go a long way in giving support to the students facing some adjustment problems.

# CHAPTER 3

## INDIVIDUAL GROUP MEMBERS

The group was composed of eleven African students at the University of Manitoba , who come from six African countries. The present chapter will be devoted to brief description of the group members, their gender, the part of Africa they come from, their study programs, their length of time in Canada and how they feel about their lives in Manitoba. Their names have been altered to maintain confidentiality.

JOHN is a male Ph.D. student from a country in North-East Africa. He came to Winnipeg in 1988 and has never been home since he left. He reported that he misses home very much and is worried that the woman he was dating and was planning to marry has become tired of waiting since she hasn't been responding to his letters lately. He is also worried about the political situation back home where many people have been killed. He is worried to the extent that he sometimes wonders whether he should just claim refugee status and remain in Canada. However, he says he knows from his four- year experience that he could never really be happy in Canada. He says he joined the group because he felt lonely and after all these years in Canada he feels he has never really been accepted.

MARK is also a male Ph.D. student. He came to Winnipeg in September 1992, and works for a university back home and is now on a study leave.

His wife is living with him here in Winnipeg and she has been looking for a job so that she can earn some money to help with the household needs, since the stipend from Mark's scholarship is hardly enough to take care of the two of them. Mark says he joined the group because he and his wife have been having some problems and he needed to talk to someone who would understand him and his situation. He was also hoping that some members of the group who have been in Canada for a longer time could help him.

ALICE is Mark's fellow country woman and is also working for a Ph.D. at the University of Manitoba. Alice works for the same university as Mark does back home, and is also on study-leave. She came to the University of Manitoba in September 1992, but, unlike Mark, Alice left her family, a husband and two children, at home. She reports that she is trying her best to complete her studies as soon as possible so that she can join her family back home. Alice did her masters program in a university in another province here in Canada a few years ago. However, after completing her masters, she went back home and worked for a while before she returning to University of Manitoba for her Ph.D. She reports that she had a choice to go anywhere in the world to do her program, but she chose Canada because she felt that her experience in Canada before was relatively positive, and that the University of Manitoba had the programs she was interested in. She says she joined the group because she misses her family back home and wished to share this with fellow Africans who would understand what she was going through.

<u>PETER,</u>   the youngest  member of the group,  is from a country in East Africa.   He came  to  Winnipeg  in  September 1992   and   is  doing undergraduate studies. He says he is interested in  psychology and that this was one of the reasons that he joined the group. He  reports that he has not really  seen Winnipeg and its people because  he has not  been going out since he came  six months  ago.  All he has been doing is to come to school  in the morning and then go back home after classes. He says he just could  not  get used to the snow and the cold of Winnipeg. He  reports that he misses home more than he had  thought he would. Before he came  he believed that he would  very soon  make Canadian friends who would   tell and show him all he needs  to know about this place.  As it turned out he does  not know even a single Canadian by name. He says  that  the other reason that he joined the group was because he felt that maybe if he  talked with fellow Africans about Africa  he probably would not miss home as much.

<u>GABRIEL</u>   is from the same country as Peter. He also  came to the University  of Manitoba at the same  time, and is doing a masters  program. He  left his wife and  two children  in  Africa when he came to Canada, and he says he misses his family so much that sometimes  wonders whether he will be able to complete his  study program. He says  the worst times are  during holidays  like Christmas  and   birthdays. He says he  spends almost all his stipend on telephone calls  to his family back home.  Every  time he sees children who are the same age as his  children   his heart always goes out  to them  and he  spends the whole day thinking about his  own children.

<u>LUCY</u>   is a single young woman from  an  East African country.   She came to the University of Manitoba at the same as the above country men and is doing  a  pre-masters  program. She  is  sharing an apartment with  a  fellow African woman whom she met during the  orientation  program. She reports that  she  can  not  imagine  how  she could  have  survived  her first days  in Canada  without  the  mutual   support  that  they  gave  each   other,  Like Gabriel, she says she spends almost all her stipend on phone calls to her family and friends back home. Lucy  reports that  she joined the group  to get to know  and maybe make friends  with some other African students.

<u>RACHEL</u>   first  came to the University of Manitoba in 1985 to do a  masters degree. She went back home, and worked at the University back there for a while, and came back to Manitoba in September 1992 to do a Ph.D. She is also from the same country as  the three people above. When she was in Manitoba   the first time , she had left her family, (a husband, a son and a daughter) at home  She claims that life was so difficult without them, that she just knew that she could never do it again. When she came to Manitoba again  she made sure  that this  time  at least her children accompanied her. She says it is still hard to be so far from her husband because they all miss him very much, but it would  have  been  too  difficult for  him to leave his job and come with them. She joined  the  group  because  she  wanted  to  meet other African students who might be going through a similar experience of separation.

ROGER comes from Southern Africa, and like most members, he came to the University of Manitoba in the fall of 1992. He is presently under the category of "special student," but he came to Canada to do masters work. He is also married, but he left his family (a wife and a daughter ) back home. He admits that he misses his family a great deal, but unlike the others, he feels that even if he had more money than what his sponsors are presently giving him he would have still left them at home. He believes that bringing his daughter to Canada would have only confused her, particularly knowing what he knows now about misperceptions and discriminations towards Africans by Canadians. He says he has decided to study , get his degree and go back to his country. Since he has realized that Canadians are not particularly friendly people, he is not going to worry about them anymore.

MARIAM is a single woman who comes from the same country as Roger, and like Roger she is also a "special student". She came to the University of Manitoba in 1991. She feels that the Canadian students in her department are probably the most unfriendly and cold. She says she has never exchanged even a mere greeting with any of them since she has been in Canada. She thinks that Canadians in general are very cold, and she has been counting days until she moves out of this country. She says she joined the group because she is very lonely and thought she could make friends with her "own people".

MARY, also a single woman, is from another country in East Africa. She came to the University of Manitoba in September 1991. She is also doing a masters program. Like Mariam , Mary thinks that Canadians in general are

very unfriendly, and racists, particularly when it comes to Africans. She believes that there is really nothing that Africans here can do to make the Canadians respect them and regard them as equals. Therefore, she believes the best thing for African students to do is to just try to make the most of it, without the Canadians, so she joined the group to meet other Africans and form relationships with them.

ANDREW is a masters student from a country in Southern Africa. He came to the University of Manitoba about three years ago (1990). Andrew reports that although he misses home a lot, he feels lucky that the students from his country at the University of Manitoba have a kind of association where they usually come together for birthdays and other celebrations. As a result, from the day he arrived in Winnipeg he has always felt like he belongs. He admits, though, that Canada and its people turned out to be less hospitable than he was made to believe by the Canadians at the embassy in his country. He also believes that after all these years of interaction with Canadians, if they still have not changed their attitude towards Africans then there is not much that the Africans can do to change the Canadian perception of them. Like Mary, he feels that Africans should just stick together and try to help each other and forget about the Canadians.

From what we have seen, none of the group members had any kind of personal or emotional relationships with Canadians, even though most of these students admit to having originally hoped to establish some kind of relationship with them. As one member commented;

> "It is just so difficult to make friends with
> Canadians, sometimes I wonder if it is
> because of my color, that they don't
> want to be seen with a black person".

Another member remarked about the type of friendship typically extended by Canadians.

> "Sometimes even if you manage to make some
> kind of friendship with a Canadian you share
> an office with , the friendship is usually so super-
> ficial, that you wonder why they even try".

In summary then, it was clear that all the members felt that their experiences in Canada had been mainly negative and that they had not adjusted to the Canadian culture at all. Also most felt that they could only get the help they need from fellow Africans, who had gone through similar experiences.

All members agreed that they, as Africans, faced more academic difficulties than their Canadian counterparts, in part because of the energy required to adapt to a different cultural situation, which took time and mental concentration away from academic pursuits. In the groups, members discussed specific problems they had encountered since they arrived in Canada . The following examples will indicate some of the problems which African students encounter in Canada. These particular situations were selected because they seem to illustrate some crucial points for African students living in a different culture.

## PROBLEM TYPE 1- HUSBAND-WIFE PROBLEMS

One member of the group talked about his situation in particular, where he and his wife came to Canada six months ago . The couple did not have any friends in Canada at that time. The husband, being a new student, still had to acquaint himself with the university and all its different departments and other issues pertaining to his program. He usually left their apartment in the morning, sometimes even before the wife got up, and he came back late in the evening. The wife would be left alone in the apartment. She had very little money and few friends. Also, the fact that it was winter and very cold in Winnipeg, especially for someone who had just come from very hot weather in Africa, and did not have a car, going out had been a real problem for her, so she usually stayed home alone. The couple hardly saw each other. As a result the wife complained that her husband was neglecting her, and the husband complained that the wife was inconsiderate, that she ought to be aware that he needed to do all he could in order to cope with his school work in the new and foreign environment. This couple argued constantly, almost all the time blaming one another for being inconsiderate and not caring.

## PROBLEM TYPE 2 -HOST FAMILY

Another member talked of her experience with a host family. She reported that when she first came to Winnipeg from Africa, the International Center for Students arranged a host family for her. The family members were supposed to take care of her for a few days and to help her get settled. The

student reported that since there did not seem to be much to do with her host family, one day she decided to use her time to get to know the University, the bus system and down town Winnipeg. She reported that she apparently came back from these adventures too late in the afternoon. She was very tired and hungry only to find that the family had had supper already . As it turned out nobody said anything to her about supper so she went to bed that night very hungry, not knowing whether she could have just gone into the kitchen and prepared something to eat. She reported that back home it is not absolutely necessary for all family members to have meals at the same time. For a while she wasn't sure why all of a sudden the hosts had turned unfriendly towards her.

## PROBLEM TYPE-3 HOME SICKNESS

The third case was that of a male student who had come to Winnipeg a few months before the beginning of the intervention, leaving his "family" (two children and a wife) at home. He reported that the Canadian agency which was sponsoring him to study in Canada would not sponsor his wife and children to come and join him in Canada. He also reported that since he came to Canada, he would not really concentrate on anything, not even his academic work. He was constantly thinking about his family back home, particularly on his children's birthdays. Every time he saw a child who was close to his children's age he felt even more homesick. He reported that the pain and loneliness he felt because of this separation made him wonder if it was all worth it. He spent almost half of his stipend - which was

not much as was shown - on telephone calls back home, to his wife and children.

As Pedersen (1991) observed, many western counselor may not be sure how to deal with international students, mainly because "this is seldom included as part of counselor-training programs."

It is clear that the above problems were faced by these students because they were living in a foreign culture away from home and family, where the means of communication are different. Helping them, therefore, required a deviation from conventional helping practices.

# CHAPTER 4

## GROUP INTERVENTION

### AFRICAN STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

In this chapter we will discuss briefly the problems which the African students in general face in Canada because of the cultural differences. These are some of the problems which, in a way, initiated this practicum.

Despite the numerous problems experienced by international students in Canada, very few studies have been done on African students (compared to Asians). If African students' problems are examined at all, it is usually under the global term "international students". Their social and cultural life, as a group, in their host country is virtually unknown and consequently, very little has been done to help these students to adapt in a meaningful way to their new and unfamiliar environment. Their experiences are usually looked at and analyzed from the host's perspective rather than from that of the people who are experiencing the feelings themselves, who are able to attach meaning to the experiences. In addition the studies which have included African students in their population have predominantly used questionnaires or 1-2 hour interviews, to collect information. Their aim is usually just to acquire knowledge of the problems that international students face when they come to live in Canada, so that the information can be documented, with no specific intention of helping the respondents in the process.

As we have shown, some western practitioners and writers have realized that many western helping approaches fail to meet the needs of various ethnic and "minority clients." Corey and Corey (1992) for example, assert that many clients from these groups terminate therapy earlier than Anglo clients and that this early termination is caused by barriers such as language and other culture bound values. This observation serves to indicate the problems faced by both helpers and African students, whose culture is even more unknown to the Canadian helpers.

This practicum, therefore, is an attempt to have this bias rectified through a group intervention with African students by someone who has some "first hand" experience in some of the difficulties they are going through. I believe that it is important for those who are dealing with or responsible for assisting these students to understand their special academic, psychological and social needs in order for them to adapt to their new surroundings.

As previously mentioned, there are complex issues around African international students' adjustment to life in Canada. Leaving their supportive social network behind and living among strangers can create intense feelings of loneliness, homesickness and uprootedness. Therefore an attempt to understand some of their problems should begin by focusing on the subjective experiences of these students themselves. In this intervention, culturally sensitive communication and understanding were provided in order to promote the adjustment and healthy integration of these students into the university setting and the Canadian society as a whole. Since facilitative exercises and educational discussion are reported in the

literature as the methods which usually achieve tangible gains and demonstrable change with immigrants and other minorities (Sue and Sue 1972), they were employed in this intervention, and turned out to be very effective. The group was helped through a supportive and personal- growth group intervention aimed at assisting personal growth and better adjustment in their host country.

As we have seen, traditional treatment group models could be very difficult to implement with these students. For example, the members in this group believe that their problems are so different that the University counseling service personnel would not be able to understand them because of cultural differences. Since kinship or collective unity is an important consideration for African students, it was necessary to find some way of incorporating cultural dimensions into the intervention process. Group approaches constitute important culturally responsive strategies for them as opposed to individual approaches. That is to say method that provides a network of social support by people who share similar experiences, such as fellow Africans, needed to be incorporated into the intervention. As it has been shown, this group does not utilize the counseling service on campus because they believe this to be for people with serious mental problems. It was evident then that special intervention techniques were needed in order to meet the special needs of this growing population of African students.

## CHAPTER 5

__METHODOLOGY__

__(i)  FORMING  A GROUP__

This chapter  on methodology will  start  by providing a brief description of the context (The   International   Center   For  Students)   in   which  the practicum  was  carried  out.  Then  it  will  give  the  description  of  the intervention design, and, finally,  the description of the evaluation design and measures.

__THE CONTEXT__

The activities related to this intervention were conducted in conjunction with the  International Center  for  Students (ICS). This center sees  the educa- tional and cultural experiences of international students as important  to this university as they  enrich its academic and social environment. According to their Information Handbook for New International Students, the role of this center  is:

> - To  help international students adjust to the Canadian  university
>   environment.
>
> - To assist them  with problems  they  may  encounter while they
>   are  here.
>
> - To provide  opportunities  for  all students, staff and public  to
>   learn more  about  the world  from  each  other, and  through  the
>   resources  and  activities  which  the  center  provides.
>
> - Its  mandate  is also  to  promote  cultural  interaction  and inter-
>   national  awareness.

Their programs include the following:

(a)    Assistance for international students through:

(i)    Host family program- The objective of this program is to provide
       newly arrived students with a home for a few days until they get
       settled. It also provides the Canadian hosts an opportunity  to meet
       and get to know people from  different cultures.

(ii)   Newspapers and  magazines from other  countries- This  is  meant
       to  keep international  students  informed about  what  is
       happening  in  their  own  countries  and  the  rest  of  the  world.

(iii)  Assistance with immigration office- ICS assists international
       students by providing them with immigration forms  for student-
       visa renewal or work permits. The  office also helps the
       international students  by confirming   that they are actual
       students  at the  university.

(b)    In addition, the ICS sponsors a variety of events which are aimed
       at  promoting global awareness such as workshops, film series,
       guests speakers and symposiums to discuss development issues.

The  objectives and goals of this intervention fit into the ICS 's main mission,

which is to support and assist international students at the University of

Manitoba, and to provide them with general and specific programs aimed at

improving  cross-cultural  understanding  and  personal  adjustment

(Information handbook for International Students 1991). To begin with, the

ICS  helped me to  get  in touch  with   all African students presently enrolled

at the University of Manitoba.  The ICS was also responsible for finding and

arranging for  the room in which  the group sessions were held every week.

They were also instrumental  in arranging for  a larger room when the first

one proved  to be too small  to adequately accommodate twelve people. The

room was secluded enough to allow privacy so that the members were not

disturbed during the group sessions, and also that they could feel free to talk about their intimate problems without a fear of being overheard, which was very important. The ICS also arranged an office for use by the worker during this time, and this was very convenient.

## RECRUITMENT OF GROUP MEMBERS

Multiple approaches were used to contact the students directly and indirectly to sign up for the group. Posters were displayed at the International Center for Students (ICS) and the health clinic ( the two places most frequented by African students). Before the intervention started, the worker met with some staff members at these agencies to let them know about the group intervention that was going to be offered for African students with the hope that they may be able to identify appropriate candidates for the group. The pamphlet and the posters showed the goals and the purpose of the group intervention, issues to be discussed in the group sessions, who could join the group, the meeting time, frequency of meetings and duration of the group sessions.

With the help of International Center for Students, all African students were sent an introductory letter, with a "return portion" (Appendix 1), describing the purpose and major objectives of the intervention and requesting their participation. A supporting letter from the vice- president of the African students Association (Appendix 2) was also included. On the whole the response to all these efforts was very low; the students generally

did not indicate much interest in participating in the program. As a result, alternative methods and strategies for recruitment had to be taken, whereby students were personally approached and asked to participate. All students approached in this manner agreed to participate in the project.

It is assumed that the students did not show interest the first time because they probably saw the first method of recruitment as impersonal, especially when they realized that the letter was a "mass- letter" sent to every African student. Whereas, by personally approaching them and talking to them, giving them chance to ask questions for more clarification, they could commit themselves because this method implied respect.

## GROUP COMPOSITION

This was a group of people with common experiences and grievances as African students living in a foreign country. Because they had specific problems and needs, they were able to focus exclusively on those common problems. This similarity of group members' needs and interests led to a great degree of cohesion. Members were able to understand each other in a special way.

The members were informed in the very first session that their participation was voluntary, that they could stop anytime they wanted to. This session was also used to explore the students' problems ( Appendix 3 ), and to prepare them and explain once again what the group intervention was all

about. Confidentiality and other ground rules such as coming to group sessions regularly and on time were also discussed.

The group consisted of eleven African students, all studying at the University of Manitoba. This sample consisted of five women and six men, from six different countries. Eight of the members were in graduate studies, two were "special students" and one was studying in an undergraduate program in social sciences. The members had been in Canada for periods ranging from six months to four years. This number of participants was small enough to allow a constructive discussion to be carried on and for the worker to focus on the skills and resources of individual members. It was also large enough to allow for possible drop-outs. There were no drop-outs.

## FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF MEETINGS

The group had originally contracted for six weeks, but after the first four weeks we all realized that a little bit more time was needed in order to achieve the goals which were set at the beginning. As a result, we contracted for three more weeks, for a total of nine weeks. This period was long enough for trust to develop (this happened almost immediately) and for the constructive group work to take place.

At the beginning of the intervention, the group met once a week, for one hour at 2.30 P.M. , but after a few meetings we realized that one hour was not

enough time to hold a constructive discussion. Therefore, the time was increased to one and a half hours per session. Because of conflicting academic schedules, it was very difficult to find time longer than 1.5 hours. In any case, one and a half hours turned out to be long enough to allow for constructive discussion. Snacks and drinks were provided in each session to create a free and relaxed atmosphere.

## CLOSED GROUP INTERVENTION

This was a closed group intervention from the beginning. That is, no new members were allowed after the group had started. This was in fact an advantage since as time went on, and the members got to know and trust each other. It was then that they started to really open up and feel free and comfortable to disagree, criticize and support each other and also to talk about some personal experiences.

Also at the first session the group members were asked to complete a questionnaire (Refer Appendix 4) on how they were generally coping and what they expected to gain from the group intervention. This gave the worker an idea of what the members wanted and expected from the intervention, based on the goals and objectives ( P6-7) as they were explained to them before they signed up for the group.

## (ii) EVALUATION DESIGN

When the group is dealing with issues that affect the worker as much as they do the group members, as was the case in this intervention, it is very difficult to keep one's distance, and to act as an observer rather than as a participant. Being part of the group , in this particular case, proved to be very effective since the group leader was perceived to be-and indeed was -"one of us". The leader was therefore in a position to understand the members' meaning and where "they were coming from" in a way that someone from a different culture would not have been able to understand. It was evident from the beginning that the sharing of experiences and cultural understanding were necessary and vital ingredients in this intervention in order to create trust and openness.

As a result some techniques which Hanmer and Statham (1988) have advocated as important when women workers are working with fellow women clients were adapted  The following guidelines  were followed:

> -Relating to members as fellow Africans and equals.
>
> -Assuming members' problems and lack of choices.
>
> -Together finding ways to communicate.
>
> -Exploring some choices and different ways of coping.

As we have shown, this group of African students presents their own unique requirements for effective helping,  therefore a model  which is based on the

primary prevention scheme for work with South East Asian refugees, proposed by Owan (1985), was used for intervention with these students from Africa. Preventive efforts took the form of group intervention in which members were culturally similar as indicated. This model was both self-exploratory and educative. It emphasized non-evaluative exploration and understanding of students' situations and concerns as international students in an unfamiliar environment. Further, this model identifies the differences between these students' cultural norms and values and those of the Canadians. The topics in the group sessions were presented in an informal format, in the form of video tapes and discussions.

This model seemed to be more consistent and in line with African belief systems and values. It was important in general to encourage these students not to reject their African values. It was also equally important for them to realize the advantages of combining both Canadian values and their own traditional values to make survival easier for them while in Canada.

The model also has an advantage because of its supportive problem - solving nature, therefore it was more acceptable to Africans than the individual or insight oriented interventions. This model is more synchronistic with African students' values of education and learning and lacks the threatening and stigmatizing connotations that are usually associated with "western insight- oriented counseling."

Effective primary prevention, according to Owan (1985), has the following requisites:

(a)    It must be group oriented and not targeted at individuals.

(b)    It must be directed to "well" people who are at risk.

(c)    It must be intentional, that is, directed towards strengthening psychological health or towards reduction of psychological maladjustment.

(d)    It must be proactive and focused on the development of adjustive skills.

In the beginning of the group intervention (the first two sessions), pre-departure expectations were discussed to find out what each of these members had expected in relation to Canadian people and life in Canada in general, before they actually came to Canada. From these discussions it was evident that before leaving their countries almost all the members had high and positive expectations about their lives in Canada. Most were looking forward to coming to Canada and had hoped to have friendly and trusting relationships with Canadians.

By the beginning of this intervention, all members had been in Canada for at least six months. In the pre-test they all expressed dissatisfaction with their life in Canada. Their impression of Canadians was also generally negative. These observations challenge the traditional "U" curve model in that almost all the members, irrespective of the length of time in Canada, were still at their lowest level of adaptation.

It was evident from the pre-test and the discussions in the group sessions that there was a huge discrepancy between pre-departure expectations and the reality of actually being in Canada. The comparison between pre-departure expectations and the real outcome helped to indicate the extent to which the members have had to make adjustment upon arrival in Canada.

The effectiveness of this intervention was evaluated in both individual and group terms . In order to find out if the group had benefited from this intervention, single case design (AB) where the baseline measurement (pre-test) was followed by the measurement after the intervention (post test) was employed. For baseline data a self-report questionnaire was administered in which members reported their personal support system in Canada (Appendix 4).

The chart below indicates individual student responses to some of the questions which were intended to measure how the members perceive their personal support in Winnipeg.

## TABLE 1

### PERSONAL SUPPORT

|  | Very Much | Sometimes | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How often in the last week have you felt lonesome? | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 2. Have there been times before the last week when you felt lonesome? | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. How satisfied are you with your life situation in general | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| 4. How satisfied are you with the personal support you receive? | 0 | 7 | 4 |
| 5. If you are dissatisfied with your support system, do you believe that you can make it better? | 3 | 2 | 6 |

N=11

For those who reported that they are sometimes satisfied or not at all satisfied with their personal support system, when asked to give the reason, 8 members responded that they did not have enough people to relate to. All eleven members gave the reason that their supporters (fellow African Students) are too similar, as a result there are some types of support they could not provide. Three members reported that they did not meet with their supporters often enough. When asked what they thought they could do to improve the situation, seven members said they did not know, while four said they probably needed to increase their interpersonal

relationships. All members reported that they are always left out of activities by Canadians. Five members believed that they are left out in a lot of activities by Canadians because they are Africans, three believed they are left out because they are too busy and involved with their academic work, and one member said he was not interested in interacting with the Canadians, and two people were not sure why they get left out (See Fig 1).

.

Fig 1



GROUP PERCEPTION THAT LIMIT AFRICAN/CANADIAN INTERACTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

9%

18%

46%

27%

- BEING AFRICAN
- TOO BUSY
- NOT SURE
- NOT INTERESTED

45
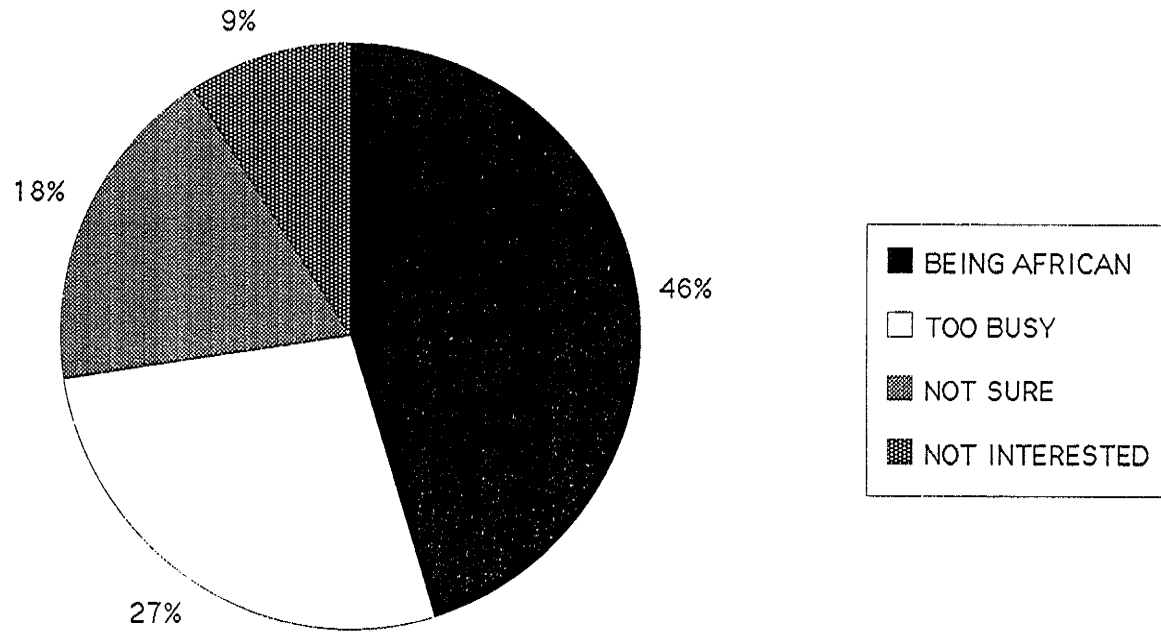
In the group sessions the members mainly focused on identifying problems which they face in Canada as Africans. Because the members seemed to have common problems, the group was used as a support system. The worker helped the members define the problems and issues that were of concern for them, and they were told that they would be helping each other deal with the problems of adjustment they identified.

Unlike the pre-test, the post-test (Appendix 5) was composed of individual written test, with questions which were more exploratory in that they needed long and elaborate responses in which members expressed their feelings about the intervention and its outcome. These involved free and unstructured discussions of the things they liked and did not like about the group and of the personal changes in which members are likely to engage after the intervention. In general the intervention provided a venue, an appropriate place where the members were "allowed" to experience their feelings and to talk about them. The intervention, in general made them think seriously about their position as African students in Canada, and made them realize that it is really up to them to make life tolerable while they are here.

Some members felt that it is up to them as Africans to try to make life good for themselves while they are in Canada, despite the Canadians' attitudes towards them. They felt that if they joined together as Africans, now that they know that their problems are common, they could come up with ways to cope by themselves.

Other members reported having realized through sharing their experiences with fellow Africans and with the Canadian guests who came to the group sessions, that they may have been biased against the Canadians. They came to Canada with some expectations based on their own cultural practices and when these were not met, they blamed the Canadians, while the Canadians on the other hand, might be behaving in a way that their culture has taught them to relate to Africans. Therefore, it seemed necessary that a way be found where both groups can be more accommodating so that they learn from each other as it was indicated earlier.

As mentioned, in an effort to try to understand Canadians and their attitude towards Africans, two Canadian graduate students, who are also counselors were invited to talk about the way Canadian students see, understand and relate to African students. During this session the group discussion focused on Canadian and African life styles, belief systems and culture. In other sessions, the members discussed the differences in communication styles between the Africans and the Canadians and what this means to them now living in Canada.

In general, the members' responses summarize their group experience as "discovery". The group was about discovering themselves, about finding themselves, their relationship with Canadians and their needs as Africans in a new and different world.

## CHAPTER 6

## THE GROUP PROCESS

## (i) THE FIVE STAGES

This chapter is about the group process, which indicates the stages of development which the group had to go through. According to Balgopal and Vassil (1983), this process refers to all the happenings within the group, and to the interactional and communication patterns among all members and between members and the group leader. Group process typically goes through five stages and these will be described here for the intervention with African students:

## STAGE 1 - FORMING THE GROUP

This stage which has been described in the previous chapters typically involves drafting a detailed proposal, indicating objectives, goals and methods. This was followed by attracting and recruiting group members, and then actually forming the group.

## STAGE 2- THE INITIAL STAGE

The main goal during the initial stage of the group was to provide encouragement to members to talk about any fear and confusion they might have had, especially since this was the members' first experience participating in a "formal" group intervention. Therefore they did not

know what was expected of them. The following were the general goals for the initial phase:

-Explore the members' expectations.

-Clarify the goals and the objectives of the group intervention.

-Discuss procedural details, which included what confidentiality is and why it was important, as well as time, place and the format of the group and the importance of regular attendance.

-Answer any questions the members might have had about the group.

The pre-test (page 66) was also given at this stage to inquire and assess the members' personal support systems and their coping techniques. Also at this stage, the worker explored some of the expectations the members had about living in Canada before they left their countries. Further, the worker discussed which of these expectations were met and which were not, and some of the things the members had done to compensate. All members reported that they had been looking forward to coming to Canada and had had high hopes of interacting with the Canadians. However, as it turned out there were some discrepancies between their expectations before they actually came to Canada and what became the reality. Most of them blamed the Canadians for this. They believed that the Canadians were not as friendly or as accommodating to foreigners, especially Africans, as the members thought they would be. They reported that they had expected the Canadians, as the hosts to welcome them and try to make them feel at

home, as it is the norm to welcome guests in Africa, where they come from.

Most members reported that joining this group intervention was their first attempt to compensate. Most of them reported that before the beginning of the group intervention, they had been confused, not knowing what to do and wondering if the problem, in fact, lay with them.

## STAGE 3 - TRANSITION

According to the literature ( Corey and Corey and Papell and Rothman), the transition stage is characterized by high anxiety for the individual members, and for the group as a whole, leadership is challenged and goals and activities are questioned. From the beginning, however, members of this group interacted very well with each other; they did not seem to be inhibited in any way. They seemed motivated to become active group participants from the beginning. Once they realized that the problems they had were shared by other members, they were able to open up and disclose enough for the purpose and goals of the group. They started to talk freely about their experiences and beliefs about Canada and the Canadians. They immediately showed caring and concern towards each other.

At this stage all members seemed to be in agreement, all blaming Canadians for their problems in Canada. I maintain that this common

belief helped to develop and sustain the high level of cohesion in the group. Since the main problem for this group was feelings of loneliness and isolation, this "togetherness" enhanced the feelings of belonging.

They started to express the perceptions about their lives in Canada that they had kept to themselves.

In order to illustrate and make the members aware of the difficulties of perceiving life in another culture once they have become accustomed to it in a different way, each member was asked to describe an event that happened to them in Canada which they believed illustrated a misunderstanding that took place because of differing cultural attitudes, beliefs or values. The purpose of this exercise was to heighten awareness of the differences between Canadian and home culture, and to recognize the implications of transferring attitudes and beliefs to a new culture ( See an example on page 41 on host family ).

## STAGE 4 - WORKING STAGE

Since this group had grown used to things in "an African-way" ( i.e. the way things are done back home ), it became very difficult for them to accept them in another way. During this period the group leader provided challenge necessary for the members by assisting them to recognize their own patterns of defensiveness, and also for them to realize that they were in charge of their own lives; that it was up to

them to make necessary changes and adaptations they had contracted for.

As mentioned, the members had focused their frustration and blame for their unhappiness on the Canadians. Based on the literature (e.g. Corey and Corey) the group leader was aware that when members stop blaming others, and started accepting responsibility, they would start to be in control and more able to make changes in their lives. For the change to occur participants were made aware that they would need to formulate plans and strategies which they could employ in their lives after the intervention.

One group session, for example, began with members discussing whether they should try to find out what they can do in order to be "accepted" by Canadians. Several members indicated that they wished, instead to discuss and try to find ways of working together as Africans to try to make things better for themselves without necessarily involving the Canadians. The majority was in favor of finding ways to survive without help and cooperation from their hosts.

The discussion then began with exchanging ideas about what they could do to make life better for themselves. Several suggestions were made for ways to form different types of support groups. These were evaluated and members discussed this in order to determine which suggestions to follow and later implement.

I felt it was desirable for me, being an African student myself, to get involved in these activities by revealing my feelings and experiences, and acting as a participant at times. That is, as an African student I have gone through similar experiences as the members of the group, therefore the manner in which I interacted with them held a different and special meaning. The communication was at a level that would have been impossible for someone who had not experienced what the members were going through to understand.

## STAGE 5 - ENDING THE GROUP

On the last day of the intervention members had an opportunity to evaluate and clarify the meaning of the whole group experience, and to consolidate the gains they had made.

The group created an environment in which the members became aware that there were other African students who were experiencing similar pain. They also realized that talking about it, sharing with others and looking for solutions together was a great help. All members had hopes and beliefs that change was possible, even though most still believed that they were victims of racism and discrimination. They believed that these were forces over which they had no control. They believed that through this intervention and sharing their problems with others like themselves, they had gained courage and strength to direct and turn their lives around while they were in Canada.

Members were asked to explain what this whole experience meant to them and their lives in Canada (Appendix 5) and to think about what they were going to do next. In general, the members reported that the

group intervention had made them realize that they are not alone in their problems. They also realized that it is really up to them to do something in order to make the situation better, and also to pass on their experience with the group to others, particularly the new incoming African students.

They talked of plans to form their own groups with the help of the African Students Association to continue where this group intervention had left off. This, they believed, would help to create the feeling of belonging, and also to provide a forum where they could discuss and find solutions to problems which they might face in future while they were in Canada (See Appendix 3 ).

## (ii) THE HELPER'S BACKGROUND

This intervention provided very important insight regarding the preference of African students for a helper. As it was indicated earlier African students are usually reluctant to seek help from the present professional sources on campus. In fact, the members of this group expressed a preference for working with a fellow African if possible, especially for problems which are personal, as opposed to academic in nature.

From their experiences with their hosts so far, the members reported that they have learned that the Canadians view them only as "Black-Africans" with whom they cannot interact. This, in a way, has promoted

the lack of trust which this group has for university counselors who are predominately white as was indicated earlier. Through this intervention it became evident, therefore, that support groups with fellow Africans can offer an excellent context in which African students feel validated and learn to validate each other in a powerful way.

African students can be helped by creation of an intervention which has a meaning for them, and by someone they can trust and believe has their best interest at heart, and by someone who has heightened awareness and appreciation of African cultural beliefs and values - such as a fellow African. Helpers for this group need to find ways to incorporate indigenous sources of support and African cultural dimensions into the helping process. It is very important, however, for an African who undertakes the role of a helper to know and understand the basic skills and guidelines for formal counseling and working with groups. Therefore, it would be very important for counseling service and the ICS on campus to recruit African volunteers for peer- group interventions. These volunteers could be trained and taught the basic skills and ethics in helping techniques, and encouraged to incorporate these with their cultural methods of helping.

CHAPTER 7

## COUNSELING AND GROUP WORK
## FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

### (I) GROUP EXPERIENCE

The purpose of this chapter is to put together and discuss the findings of this intervention. Specific problems and cultural changes which confront the African students at the University of Manitoba will be addressed. Issues such as gender roles, cultural differences in the way visitors are perceived and also the Canadian racial prejudices and stereotypes about Africans will be discussed.

From this intervention, it was clear that African students bring with them their own reality of the world and cultural values and they get confused when these are not followed. One major problem for this group was communication with Canadians. For example, in Africa it is well known that a visitor ought to be welcomed. That is, the host has to go out of his way to welcome and show acceptance for a visitor. As a result they expect this same behavior from Canadians when they come to Canada. However, when they arrive, they find themselves uncomfortable, having to reach out, and not knowing how that will be interpreted. In some cases, they report that Canadian students become "friendly" and talk to

them inside the classroom, but once they leave the classroom, they would act as if they have never seen them before, which make these Africans question their own personality and ability to make friends.

Sometimes when the Canadians "try to be nice", they usually say something like "I'll call you", while they don't really mean that. The Africans usually take this literally, and as a result go home and sit by the phone. Again they question themselves when the phone does not ring, thinking that they must have done something which made the Canadian change his/her mind, while in fact what the Canadian meant in the first place was just "See you later".

The members believe that there is a great need for the University through the International Center for students to set up some kind of emergency fund for international students. According to the members, financial problems constitute the most serious problem they have to face. As one member commented:

> "Money is a big problem for us, the stipends
> never increase despite the fluctuations in the
> cost of living".

Since most of the African students' bursaries and scholarships do not cover families, the members defined their position as a "catch-22". That is, they either come to Canada alone, and leave their families (wives and children) at home, which makes life even more unbearable because of loneliness and worry over these family members, or they bring them along and share the stipend which is meant for one person with three,

and sometimes even four other people. Whichever the case, the students report that they are not able to fully concentrate on their studies because of missing and worrying about the family who remained at home in the first case, or for not being able to feed, provide for or take care of the family members because there is not enough money to go around.

Some members complained of being perceived as some kind of criminal by Canadians, because of their of race ( Black) . One member reported that Canadians are in fact sometimes reluctant even to be alone with them in a bus - shelter or to sit next to them in a bus. This, they assumed, results from the way blacks are generally portrayed in the media, and also the fact that most Canadians seem to lack knowledge and have misconceptions of Africa and Africans.

They also reported that they object to being called "blacks", which seems to be a common practice with most Canadians, especially when other groups are not usually referred to by their skin color but rather by their ethnic designation, such as Chinese or German. They complained that they feel degraded and that it looks as if they are not perceived as anything more than just color.

The analysis and discussion of culture clashes in Canada, gave rise to a discussion about the members' changing gender roles, particularly for members when they return back to their own countries, where there is a large differentiation in gender roles. Women in the group argued that,

when they return home it will be difficult to return to their old traditional gender roles. Typically, back home, women are expected to take over household chores when they return from their daily paid jobs. They report that since they came to Canada the African men have been very cooperative in sharing the household chores, and they believe this is because this behavior is acceptable, or even expected in Canada. The men in the group explained that even though they are aware that the sharing of the household work " is only fair", when they get home, they will have their friends and relatives to contend with - people who might interpret such a change as turning "Sissy", which would be just as difficult to cope with, especially since the majority of African men would not do such jobs.

The members shared other problems and experiences. For example, all members felt they had to repeat themselves over and over in class, because fellow students claim that they do not understand their African accent. This occured so often that some reported that they have decided not to participate in class in order to avoid the embarrassment. Most of them actually complained that when they have to speak in class, they always have to worry about talking "proper" English. That is , English not being their first language, they worry about making grammatical mistakes, they also worry about the "correct" pronunciation and most importantly, they still worry about the content of what is being presented, like everybody else does. For these

African students talking in class does not just mean saying the "right thing", it really means a test on three different items: grammar, the "right accent" and finally, the content.

Also in the classroom they have to adjust even to what might seem very insignificant to Canadians, that is, the lack of formality between professors and students. They argue that they spend all their school days in Africa being told that a student cannot call her/his teacher by the first name, only to come to Canada and be told that they should do what they have known all their lives to be inappropriate. Surprisingly, they admit that once they get used to this system they tend to prefer it to the African system where professors tend to have a superior attitude, which makes them less approachable and therefore less helpful to students as compared to Canadian professors. Nevertheless, they argue that the Canadian system takes some adjustment on the part of these students.

In summary then, it is clear that there are various problems which confront African students at the University of Manitoba. In order for these students to be able to concentrate on their studies, they first must deal with these problems which they are facing. However, some of these problems such as gender roles would not just end in Canada. The misunderstandings will continue even after they have left Canada. This implies that the solutions that they come up with have to be long term.

## (ii) THE GROUP'S WORLD VIEW

This chapter will view and discuss some reasons why African students go through serious adjustment problems, to what we have described as an unfamiliar Canadian socio-cultural context and why it might be necessary to implement special programs in order to help them cope while they are in Canada.

To begin with, it is important to mention that most of these African students come from communities where therapy is such that clients place faith in the authority of a professional helpers. Thus, these students generally would be uncomfortable with approaches where they are expected to challenge the helper, or to take a major responsibility in the therapeutic program while the helper plays a less active role. These latter expectations may indeed work against the "African expectation of therapy". Because these African students in general lack familiarity with the western therapeutic process it is not clear for them what is expected of them in the therapeutic process. Also, in most African societies there is no clear distinction between physical and social or emotional problems. When a person goes to a healer/helper he/she usually expects the helper to provide a "remedy" after hearing about the problem, much as a physician would do. Consequently, western therapies which are built upon western values of insight may be difficult to implement with these people who do not share these values.

Group therapies, as they are traditionally conceptualized, can be generally difficult to implement with these international students from Africa. As indicated, Africans typically rely on family in times of hardship, and turn to outsiders only as a last resort. They usually do not act as isolated individuals in relation to the outside world ( healers, government officials, schools etc. ) . They view themselves as members of a group, and are responsible to their group for their behavior, and depend on them for support and social sanction.

African students at the University of Manitoba report that they rarely seek help from the University counseling service, and they say this is because they associate this service with serious mental problems. They believe that it is better to be physically ill than to have "mental" problems, and having to face the threat of instant deportation. Therefore most African students at this University have never been to the campus counseling service. Some even admit that they do not even know where it is located. However, they do admit to having had some adjustment problems at one time or another. As was mentioned, this group also believes that their problems are unique to them as Africans and therefore Canadian counselors would not be able to understand their problems.

Africans, like Asians, as seen by Lee (1981), generally find it difficult to disclose or discuss personal problems with anyone other than close family members, therefore personal matters that are embarrassing or which cause hurt are not usually discussed with anyone but the family

members. Openness as a basis for understanding and "talking out" problems in therapy sessions may not be possible to the same extent as with someone from the western culture. A major reason for this, as noted, is that verbal confrontation is usually interpreted as aggression. These students are thus unwilling to receive and give negative feedback, and are reluctant to participate in self-disclosure. They are wary of making personal revelations to others because of a strong connotation of shame attached to the exposure of personal weakness or of being a failure. In their study with Asian clients, Sue and Sue (1972) found that if a few members of a group decide to share personal information, this was viewed as indiscreet and frowned upon by other group members. Thus, great efforts are often made to keep the group discussion and process on an impersonal or social level, making insight a difficult goal. Judging by other similarities between the Africans and Asians as far as counseling is concerned, it is safe to assume that African students may react this way in traditional group sessions. In addition, these Sue and Sue have identified three ways in which Asian students typically react to cultural conflict in their host countries, which can also be generalized to include African students as well:

1. By resisting assimilation and adhering to the values and practices from their native countries.

2. By trying to become assimilated as soon as possible and rejecting identification with their own ethnic group.

3. By remaining proud of their cultural and social identification but suspicious of the values and intention of the people in the host country.

Wolfgang (1975), identifies the fourth way, which is:

> 4. Having pride in one's own culture but also trying to be part of the host's culture by learning as much as possible from it.

I believe that international students should be encouraged towards this fourth option, which is to appreciate their own cultural heritage and to try to understand the Canadian social structure and values. International students can be seen as "ambassadors" of their countries in their host countries, who bring with them their own cultural heritage. Their presence in their host countries provides the opportunity for sharing the cultural wealth of the world's people as they come together in a classroom or community. Thus, their role is not only to learn about their host countries, but they can also be helpful by teaching and exposing Canadians to their own cultures which they have brought with them, and as a result making the campuses richer in knowledge. They can do this only if they appreciate their own cultural heritage and are also eager to learn that of their host country. In my view, this is what cross cultural experience and learning is all about.

## CHAPTER 8

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is first, to discuss recommendations for helping African students at the University of Manitoba, based on the findings of this intervention and suggestions made by the members. Secondly, the conclusions which have been made regarding the adjustment and other problems faced by this group will be discussed. Finally, the observations and personal learning which were provided by the intervention experience for the worker will be presented.

### (i) RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this intervention, was to help African students to adjust in their host country by (1) identifying the problems which they encounter in Canada which interfere with their academic and learning process; and then by (2) finding the ways and means of dealing and overcoming these problems.

The University officials have a tendency to cluster all international students under one homogeneous group. However, as we have seen from this intervention, African students need special and different help from what is presently being offered by the University counseling

service and the ICS, in order to adjust in Canada. The question then is, do African students experience special problems in Canada, to warrant special programs created just for them? The answer is emphatically "yes". As we have seen, this group experiences different kinds of problems because, compared with other international students, their cultural beliefs, values and way of life are further removed from those of Canadians.

From the group sessions, it was evident that:

    (a)   The experience of being able to sit down and discuss common problems with, and provide personal and social support to fellow Africans who have had or still experiencing similar problems, turned out to be of greatest help, and should be continued.

    (b)   The members who attended the orientation program provided by ICS, felt that it was helpful in introducing them to some University programs, but they also felt that the program was too short.

In order to help this group, therefore, some group programs organized by the International Center for Students (ICS), and African Students Association aimed specifically for them and run by a fellow African can be a big help, especially for newly arrived students who are usually more confused. Some services usually provided to international students during orientation programs can be extended beyond this period. ICS can also plan programs that are aimed at increasing tolerance and attitudinal acceptance of African students. For example, educational programs might be established which will target the stereotypical image

held by Canadian students about Africans, or ICS might also have a multicultural awareness week, in which students can be exposed to the cultural traditions of various racial and ethnic groups on campus where the goal would be to understand and appreciate racial and cultural differences.

In addition, the African Students Association can be very instrumental by providing "cultural therapy", based on their experiences, to new fellow African students during this period. Also we have seen from CBIE studies that international students perceive orientation programs to be invaluable to them, and that they believe that there is room to make them even better by making them more relevant (CBIE 1989). At the University of Manitoba this can be achieved by involving the leaders of different international students' associations on campus. In this manner, international students will be somewhat involved in the planning and development of the programs. This I believe would raise the chances of the effectiveness of these programs. It will ensure that the people for whom these programs are intended are involved in their development, and hence know about their existence.

As we have shown, some of the group members claimed that they had never been to or even heard of the University counseling service on campus, a service which is meant to assist all students. This indicates that there is a need to advertise this service and also to make it more relevant to international students, particularly those who come from the "developing countries", whose life - styles and cultures are

very different from the Canadians', and therefore these students are expected to experience more culture shock when they come to Canada. Very few counselors, if any, have some experience living in a foreign country. From this intervention, we realize that there is a need for special training in helping international students. Also, from this intervention it was evident that this group preferred someone with whom they could identify. Therefore it may be necessary to have a fellow African student (or at least an international student ), who knows first - hand what these students are going through, to be the one who helps them.

Canadians also need to be educated about Africa and Africans . The African students who presently live in Canada have the opportunity, and as a result are obligated to "set the record straight" and remove the misconceptions which Canadians seem to harbor about Africans. For example, they can write about their culture and experiences in the students' paper ( Manitoban), in order to share these with the University community.

And finally, long term projects can involve programs that aim at greater involvement of African students with the wider society through cross cultural contact. This must be encouraged as a way of addressing some of the problems of racial intolerance and any misunderstandings on the part of Canadians.

## ( ii) CONCLUSION

As Pedersen (1991) has noted, professional literature on international students is confused and divided. There is even disagreement on why international students come overseas to study in the first place. For example, Pedersen (1975) believes that they are the "cream of the crop", the best students who only come because the programs they have come for are not offered at home. Other writers, for example Klineberg (1982), contend that the students who come to study abroad are the ones who could not get placement in their home Universities, because they are not very bright. These latter writers therefore deny the claim that lower academic performance which is sometimes shown by these students when they come to Canada could be due to the adjustment problems which they face when they come to live in their host country.

Most researchers do not make a distinction between the different groups of international students. However, as we have shown, there are differences between African students and those from Europe, for example, in the way they interact and evidently adjust to Canadian society. Although Klineberg's claim may be valid for international students from other continents, I feel that his generalization is not fair. For example, it is a fact that most African students who come to study abroad fit Pedersen's description above.

This confusion, as we have noted, is partly due to the fact that international students' ( especially African students ) problems in their

host countries are usually analyzed from perspectives other than those of international students themselves. This is one reason why the present intervention provided very important insight regarding social and cultural adjustment for African students. That is, since the intervention was conducted by an African for fellow Africans, there were no communication problems or other problems which are typically characteristic of cross - cultural counseling where the client and the therapist are of different nationalities.

It was evident from this intervention that African students represent a significant challenge to the ICS and counseling service at the University of Manitoba. The following were the conclusions which were drawn from this intervention:

- African students are confronted by adjustment and social problems at the University of Manitoba and these problems last for their entire study period.

- This group does not feel that they can be helped by the professional sources from the University counseling service because they view their problems as different.

- There is therefore a need for new strategies and techniques for helping African students overcome their problems while they are in Canada.

- Peer counseling is therefore recommended for this group.

- With the help of the ICS and the counseling service, African student volunteers should be trained with specific intervention strategies which are consistent with their cultural and life experiences.

- The African Students Association will be a valuable resource for volunteers.

## (iii) OBSERVATION AND LEARNING
## EXPERIENCE FOR THE WORKER

This intervention provided me a chance to get to know and share personal concerns with fellow African students. It also provided a challenge for me as a social work student to make sure that they get the special and relevant help which they so much need even after this intervention has terminated. I realize that even though as a worker, I could do little to replace the loss of homes and families, there was still a lot to do in order to change the situation in which they are presently living and studying, therefore the worker and the members worked together to search for meaning in their present difficulties, and to clarify personal values and goals. This intervention offered a safe environment in which members were, for the first time, honest with themselves and were able to get in touch with their deep pain and feelings of loneliness.

Through this intervention the individual group members were able to realize that they were not alone any more, and to deal with their loneliness and isolation. The group created an environment in which they became aware that there are other Africans who are experiencing similar pain. They also realized that talking about it, sharing with others, and looking for solutions together may be a great help. This discovery has been the main positive outcome of this intervention. The group, therefore, decided to continue similar group discussions under the "hospice" of the African Students Association.

The intervention made it possible for me to realize that African students at the University of Manitoba are a group of people with special needs, and that there have to be some changes or additions to the usual services provided by ICS and the counseling service.

The experience has also given me an opportunity to examine or test culturally appropriate methods of intervention for African students. It helped me to broaden my understanding of intervention beyond narrowly defined methods and content.

I learned through this intervention that different populations need and respond to diverse styles of intervention, and that Africans, because of their cultural values and the way they perceive formal help, may respond better to less formal means of intervention. In fact, the informal interaction that took place between the group leader and the members contributed greatly to the success of this intervention.

Being an African myself, I had gone through similar experiences to those of this group. The manner in which I interacted with the members held a unique and special meaning. The lack of conflict typically associated with the transition stage (Stage 3) of the group process, which was observed with this group, for example, can be explained in cultural terms. As I indicated earlier, "help" in an African context, has an integrative function not found in western approaches, that is, there is less focus on "I" with Africans. There is more of an ethic of sharing and co-operation, as opposed to competitive practices,

that is, the problems are usually solved communally. Because of these values the group and individual goals and objectives became so intertwined that it was difficult to separate them.

These observations indicate that in the absence of their "real families", the members in a group context, to some extent, substitute for these families. I believe, therefore that African students can be helped more effectively by a fellow African; someone who has similar experiences and knows the culturally sanctioned and accepted beliefs and values, who will therefore better understand and appreciate the problems this group is facing in Canada.

Literature on the subject of African students and their lives in their host country was very limited. Therefore this intervention was a challenge for the worker. Through this intervention I learned that members of the group, who are Africans by origin, feel that they are being discriminated against by their Canadian hosts, mainly because these Africans are black and different, and this is the reason why they feel they could not fully trust the University counselors who are predominantly white. Finally, this was the first opportunity for me and for the group members to express and talk freely about our feelings, experiences and our lives in Manitoba. I found that it would be very important to design a program that is culturally appropriate for this group. This I believed could be done by involving the Africans, and by making them help each other through peer- group intervention.

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APPENDIX 1

Nov. 24, 1992,

Dear Student,

I am an African graduate student at the University of Manitoba, presently working towards my master's degree in social work. For my practicum (thesis), I am examining and helping African students at the University of Manitoba towards healthy social and cultural adjustment.

My objective is to create a group intervention which will serve as an "anchor" against loneliness, communication problems, prejudice, and other problems faced by African students. The overall goal is to develop and implement a group intervention to assist these students in developing an increased awareness of some problems faced by African students at this University, and

to provide them with the opportunity to realize tools to better cope with life while they are here.

The group sessions will be held twice a week and will take about two (2) hours each. They will begin in mid- December, after the exam- period, and will continue into 1993 for a total of six (6) weeks.

If you are interested in this group process and are willing to participate, please return the portion below to me at the ICS as soon as possible. I will then contact you to inform you more about the group.

Thank you very much,

Sincerely,

Liako Tseki

P/S  Please respond before Dec. 07,'92

Please return this portion:

Name:_____

Phone Number:_____

Length of time in Manitoba:_____

Year and Field of Study:_____

<u>**APPENDIX 2**</u>

African Students Association
Room 537 University Centre
University of Manitoba

November 22 1992

Dear Student

The African Students Association would like to take this
opportunity to encourage students to participate in the proposed
research project of Liako Tseki.  Liako's research will be used
by the association to create orientation programming for incoming
African students in 1993.  For our programming to address
pertinent issues of adjustment, we need to have an exchange
of ideas and experiences from as many of us as possible.  We are
hopeful that your active participation in the present research
will help facilitate that process.


Sincerely,


Blessing Rugara
Vice-President A.S.A

# APPENDIX 3

## IDENTIFIED   PROBLEMS

1. Climate

2. Cultural  differences

3. Financial

4. Academic

5. Social

6. Racial  Intolerance

7. Government

8. Communication

## APPENDIX 4

## PERSONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

1.Sex:_____ Female_____Male

2.Graduate:_____Undergraduate_____

3.Home Country_____

No. of years in Canada_____

5.Married_____Single_____

6.Spouse in Canada?_____Yes_____No

7.How often in the last week have you felt lonesome?

   Quite often_____1_____2_____3_____4_____5 Not at all

8. Have there been times before the last week when you felt lonesome?

   Quite often_____1_____2_____3_____4_____5 Not at all

9. How satisfied are you with your life situation in general?

   Very dissatisfied_____1_____2_____3_____4_____5 Very satisfied

10. How satisfied are you with the personal support you receive?

   Very dissatisfied_____1_____2_____3_____4_____5 Very satisfied

   Comments (optional)_____

   _____

   _____

11. If, to some extent, you are dissatisfied with your support system, Why?
    You may check as many of the following as apply to you.

   _____Not enough people to relate to

_____My supporters are too similar, and there are some type of support they can't provide.

_____I don't meet with my supporters often enough.

_____Though my supporters are sometimes helpful, they sometimes cause difficulties as well. (explain)_____

_____Others (please specify)_____

_____

_____

12. If you are dissatisfied with your support system, do you believe that you can make it better?

Not possible_____1_____2_____3_____4_____5 Possible

13. If you believe item 12 above is possible, what do you think you could do to improve situation?_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Do you think you feel left out in a lot of things because you are an African?

(Please comment)_____

_____

_____

## APPENDIX 5

## EVALUATION OF THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

Please answer the following questions on the group intervention you have just participated in. *please try to answer all questions honestly.* Your comments and suggestions will also be greatly appreciated.

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1. What general effect, if any, has your group experience had on your life?

2. What were the highlights of the group experience for you? What were some of its most meaningful aspects?

3. What were some specific things that you became aware of about your beliefs, values, attitudes, and relationships with Canadians?

4. What are some changes you've made (or plan to make) in your life while you're in Canada that you can attribute at least partially to your group experience?

5. What are some of the problems do you anticipate to encounter on leaving the group and following upon your decision to make some change?

6. What questions have you asked yourself since the group? Were these questions left unanswered by the group?

7. Did the group experience have any negative effects on you? If yes, please explain.

8. Have you become more aware since the end of the group of the part you played in the group process?

9. If a close friend were to ask you to tell in a sentence or two what the group meant to you, how would you respond?

10. What are some other questions you think we should ask in order to get a complete picture of the meaning the group had for you? Do you have anything else to say about your experience during the group?

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## APPENDIX 6

March 10th, 1993

## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

The purpose of this program is to develop awareness of problems faced by African students at the University of Manitoba, through sharing of the members' experiences with other Africans.

This program is  strictly confidential. This means that the information and the video tapes should, and will not be shared or released to anyone other than my supervisor, and should not be used for purposes other than this practicum.

Liako Tseki ----------------