

# Auntieday

Dark skinned eyes look at me. All the children in front of me have white parents. All the children, sitting on the floor in the circle, are dark Nigerian. All are adopted. The sounds of their music run through their blood. Their African rhythms beat in their hearts.

I look at them fascinated. They look at me equally so. We are giving them a Capoeira workshop. This, by invitation of the organizers of Auntieday. The white parents watch lovingly from the side. The stuffed birds on display too. My Capoeira partner plays the Berimbau instrument. The rhythm touches their ears. Does it resonate with their blood? Does it run through their veins? Does it touch a past? A past from Africa. The history of Capoeira. Slaves from Africa to Brazil. Capoeira now from Brazil to Holland. They, themselves, from Africa to Holland. Their history.

I believe that they understand Capoeira more than I do. I am doing it for 12 years, they for 12 minutes. They are from the motherland. A girl gets up. She walks to the round metal lid of the bin in the corner. She starts to tap it exactly in the same rhythm of the Atabaque, the drum in the Capoeira. How does she know? How does she feel that the Atabaque is missing? We did not bring the big drum today, as it was too complicated to take with us. I look at her in awe. She is only 12 years old.

The day is sunny and hot with a lovely breeze. During the lunch break, sitting on a picnic bench eating my chicken bone, I ask a white parent: "How did the link with Nigeria come about? He answers: "By chance". I look surprised.

He continues: "When you decide to adopt you need to fulfill various criteria; age, financial position, education. All countries have specified requirements. Some governments even require letters of reference from a religious entity. Only few third world countries allow adoption. So in a way you are steered quite distinctly into a certain direction. Basically the choice of country is made for you. In our case it was either China or Nigeria. Our adoption agency in Nigeria has a policy of fitting parents to children. With them it is not just a matter of a number on a waiting list, matching nr 1 child with parent nr 1 and nr 2 child with parent nr 2 as some agency do. That is terrible."

I nod understandingly. I understand the explanation, but did not know that there were different types of adoption agencies. A whole new world opens up to me. The white parent continues: "All of the parents here around you, have all been to Nigeria at least once. It bonds us. It also strengthens us to be here together. To be able to talk to others who have undergone the same process of adoption is very supporting. We all have adopted a child with another skin colour, from another culture. But most of all we come here for our children. For them to have a good time and play with children from the same country they were born in".

I look around fascinated. Two hundred and thirty six black kids are having lunch with their white parents. I hear a child's voice: "Mum". The pride of the parent over the picnic table returns. Today I feel privileged to have been invited to participate in this wonderful event. Today I am especially grateful to be a Capoeira teacher.