

# Finding

Outdoor adventures for making girls' and women's rights matter

# Balance



Tying in with the celebrations for the International Day of the Girl Child, the Water Adventure Centre in Manchester ran a one day event of water-based workshops and art activities, inviting girls from local youth groups across the area.



The Water Adventure Centre (WAC) uses the water as a way to engage with Young People and to help them develop positive relationships with themselves and others.

As we kneel or make an attempt to stand or sit in the water on a vessel, a range of unfamiliar forces have to be navigated. Some are activated automatically by our bodies' capacities to work out how to balance.

The aim of the day was promoting awareness of self, others and the environment and opening up a space for girls aged 12-19 years to talk about girls' rights, engaging them through activities designed to foster trust and team building.

Finding balance on the water means experiencing your own body in relation to other's bodies and the environment with real time feedback from every movement you make.

Balancing is not a voluntary or cognitive process. While we are consciously able to think 'I need to balance', managing balance is part of the body's automatic work. Balance is under the control of the somatic nervous system.

The Water Adventure Centre regularly run events for young people and a 'Young Women's Evening' once per week. Find out more [here](#).



The canal centre youth workers see rapid transformations in group functioning following just one outing onto the water on a giant Stand Up Paddle board. Girls may not have known each other before hand and may have little in common. Factions are quickly overcome once on the Stand up paddle board in the canal. The need to survive in an unfamiliar milieu forges bonds. Those bonds last once back on solid ground where the groups become so much more than a series of individuals. The experience lingers and becomes a resource that can be called on in the future. This can help young people to work together collectively, a physical activity can mediate the process of creating bonds.

The sensations that we feel through our bodies do not work in the same way as talk and language. Our bodies work in ways that are involuntary (unconscious or automatic) as well as in voluntary (conscious ways). Physical activities such as being on a boat or on a Stand Up Paddle board on the water activate forms of communication through the capacities of our bodies to feel.

