

# Fashion show at Botza training center

“There is no fashion if it doesn't go on the streets” Coco Chanel



Photo: David  
Crittin, Voix  
d'Exils

June 11th 2013 was a special day for the community of Botza, the main training centre for asylum seekers in Valais. The usual noises of tools and machines stopped to let other sounds like music, laughs and stiletto heels fill the air: it was fashion day. The women who attended sewing workshops (Rarogne, Botza, Martigny and Saint-Gingolph) were proud to present their production through a real fashion show. For one day – their day – they all turned into models with bright make up, sophisticated haircuts and incredible dresses.

The different origins of these women, who came from countries such as Somalia, Eritrea, Sri Lanka,



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Nigeria, Sudan, Russia, Kosovo, Turkey and Tibet gave a unique diversity to the works presented. Besides, one little girl and two male models took part in the show and received, especially the little girl, of course, a lot of applause.

The program was joyful for the performers and the audience as well. "It was wonderful to see those costumes and styles of women on the catwalk'", said one Eritrean spectator. Similarly, another observer from Gabon said: "I would like to see such an amazing event happen again and again! It made me happy! And it inspired me to remember my traditional dress". Similarly, two social workers, Marylin Duc and Sarah Kesteloot, said that the show had been a good initiative and a way to integrate people into society.

Victoria, a Nigerian model, said: "Ever since I was a baby, I've had a wish to work on in fashion. Amazingly, my dream started to come true today. It was the first time I've faced the public in a fashion show but I think I performed well. Above all I learned that I still have a life while waiting for the result of my asylum case process. I am really happy for that".



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The Eritrean model Ayesha said proudly: "It was very inspiring. I had a great time. I will never forget the event and the feeling that I felt during the performance." Similarly, Selamawit, another Eritrean model, said: "It was my first time as model. Something has changed in me. I am now more confident and modeling is going to be my hobby. It was a good experience for me".

All models made their dresses during the training session in the sewing workshops. The styles and inspirations were very varied: some dresses were absolutely modern but, at the same time, the audience had the chance to appreciate some traditional African and Tibetan dresses as well.

Such a special day will leave a bright impression behind. You will ask "When is the next?" You must expect to be patient: the response is "2015, only. The time needed for the tailors to renew their inspiration".

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