

In the sixth-formers' hands-on seminar "Discrimination is injustice – worldwide", taught by and dealt with in the combined subjects of English and RE, we have realised that there are several kinds of discrimination – especially against some of our students.

Based on our contact with the local anti-discrimination agency as well as against the background of a brochure from a major German city we have tried to word some hints how pupils and students of our school can help to detect and stop "dissing" at our school and outside our school – even when the seminar will have ended and this year's "Anti-Discrimination Day" will be over.

Law of Equal Treatment

The German *Law of Equal Treatment* has been in force since 2006.

The aim of this law is to prevent people from being disadvantaged or even discriminated against due to their race, their ethnic origin, their religion or ideology, a disability, their age, their gender as well as their sexual identity.

Nevertheless, one must differentiate between different forms of discrimination:

- direct discrimination (if, for example, in a job advertisement it is explicitly pointed out that no foreigners would be employed), or
- indirect discrimination (e.g. if in a job advertisement it is written that knowledge of the German language is a must-have to be employed, even though it is not needed for the job but it is the employer who does not want to or would not want to employ any foreigners).

Nobody may be discriminated or be treated badly, because he/she...

- has a different skin colour (race),
- comes from another country or culture (ethnic origin),
- adheres to a particular religion or represents a certain opinion (ideology),
- has a disability,
- has a certain age,
- is male, female or is transsexual (gender, sex),
- is gay or lesbian (sexual identity).

If that is the case, one can take legal steps and fight for the right of equal treatment.

"Dissing" – not on my watch!

You have a right to be treated fairly!

This means that for example your origin, your faith, your appearance, your skin colour, your gender and your sexual orientation should have no effect on how others treat you. In fact, you should have the same chances as a person with comparable qualifications. Every individual's character traits and features should be accepted and valued.

Unfortunately, this is mostly not the case.

Unequal treatment, exclusion, discrimination and disadvantages are part of our everyday lives. This can happen to anyone at any time and everywhere (e.g. at work, at school, in public).

If you are a victim of bullying or any other kind of unfair treatment due to your variation (your skin colour, your sex, your gender...), go to the info centre of the anti-discrimination agency for consultation. As well, you should talk to your parents or any other trustworthy person who can help you to find a solution and to talk to your bully.

Defend yourself!

If you feel discriminated against and you want to defend yourself, you should....

- talk to the person who has discriminated against you.
- find someone who can help you.
- write down what exactly has happened.
- not put yourself to danger.
- contact us, the anti-discrimination agency, if all this does not work.

This is how we can help you:

- In a first consultation we will see what has happened and we will check the situation.
- After this we can think about how we will go on.
- However, it is only your decision what you are going to do.

But we are always going to support you.

Everything that you entrust us with is safe and will not be communicated to anybody. Our advice is free and suits your situation.

What we offer:

- Giving you advice.
- Looking for solutions with you.
- Establishing contact to others concerned and to other people who can also help you.
- Providing you with contact to other helplines.
- Accompanying you to and in important conversations.
- Explaining legal steps and procedures.
- Supporting your decision-making for your further moves.
- Sharing your experiences with others to finally help *them*.

Do not be afraid and contact at least *someone* who can help you!

Local anti-discrimination agency:

Antidiskriminierungsbüro Siegen

Gül DITSCH
Heidenbergstraße 1c
57072 Siegen

Media Centre Against Racism and Discrimination:

Tiergartenstraße 9
57072 Siegen

e-mail: guel.ditsch@vaks.info

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