

Offenbach's cooperation project between Edith-Stein-School and Albert-Schweitzer-School

Edith-Stein-School (ESS) and Albert-Schweitzer-School (ASS) have launched a joint project and participated in the German President's school competition "everyone for one world for all".

We (Ms. Cloos and Ms. Tsatsa) have already been looking for a long time for a project that might help to break down the barriers and prejudices that seem to prevail between the pupils of both types of schools. The topic "Refugees in Offenbach" has engaged both the students and the teachers at this time in both schools and was experienced differently.

Once refugees were accommodated in September 2015 in the gym of the ESS overnight, a discussion among the students and among colleagues arose. This situation was the starting point for the idea of an educational video. There was a need to educate other students about the fact that refugees are human beings and that we needn't be afraid of them. Furthermore, the students felt it was necessary to demonstrate how people who have fled from their homeland came to Germany and what they experienced and felt on their arrival in Germany.

Since the summer of 2015 the school community of ASS has organized in collaboration with the "Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Offenbach" (Workers' Samaritan Federation Offenbach) (ASB) projects to integrate unaccompanied minors who have fled from their homes. Thus the ESS has offered its cooperation without hesitation, because the joint project has motivated both schools to overcome existing differences. For the project, eleven students of ASS and nine students of ESS could be recruited to commit themselves to the end of the project.

Moreover, two young Syrian refugees agreed to participate in the project. The volunteers accompanied the students in many ways throughout the project and supported them. The two young men aged 21 and 23 years had been working in Syria and Lebanon as photographers and filmmakers and supported the students as film experts.

As students from two different schools cooperated, it has not been possible to embed the project in the mainstream classroom. This means that the project group worked exclusively outside school. All students showed a very high level of commitment and perseverance. Altogether everyone was working from mid-November to the end of February on this project so that on 1 March 2016 the video „Gemeinsam Vielfalt leben – Wir sind alle Menschen“ ("life in diversity – we are all human") could be submitted and presented.

The result:

An independent jury of the school competition met in mid-April in Bonn and named the winners. 146 out of 627 articles were selected for the first stage of the evaluation process by the jury - also our contribution came in the close range!

Although we didn't come out first, the cooperation was a good idea, because our students gained some valuable experiences.

The students were able to report in a live broadcast on the Open Channel on 27th April 2016 about these experiences and friendships.

(Transl. by Dorcas Malela July 2016)