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Reducing Prejudice in Pluralistic Societies. Trends in Non-Formal and Informal Anti- Prejudice Education in Germany

Frank Greuel*, Frank König** and Stefanie Reiter***

Abstract: Findings of an international mapping study on educational tools to prevent prejudice in 2007 demonstrated a generally high societal awareness about the importance of struggling against prejudice. In spite of a great number of appropriate strategies, measures and approaches, the study also identified deficiencies and a potential for improvement. Most of these deficiencies derive from a lack of consideration of theoretical background knowledge on prejudice, of systematic evaluation, of information exchange and cooperation between institutions and professionals working in the field of anti-prejudice education. In Germany, building upon a variety of practical experience, numerous steps to develop innovative anti-prejudice approaches have already been taken during the past years. Especially in the scope of federal programmes, pilot projects were implemented and evaluated in order to improve pedagogical tools that focus on preventing or reducing prejudice. This article will show respective starting points and approaches, going beyond the “classical” intercultural education, in order to identify strategies which also take the societal causes and conditions of prejudice into consideration, mainly by fostering collaborative activities between schools and non-formal educators as well as child and youth welfare services. In this context, the current transformation processes towards full-time school services (*Ganztagsschule*) in Germany induce new forms of formal, non-formal and informal educational settings. These hybrid forms show a high potential for embedding anti-prejudice and anti-bias measures in comprehensive strategies and for improving the effectiveness of such approaches.

Keywords: anti-prejudice education, diversity, non-formal education, youth work

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Introduction

Facing new challenges due to the increase of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, Western societies must fill the demand for adequate approaches to redress prejudice against people of a different ethnic or religious background or other ascribed group characteristics. In Germany, a country with a high immigration rate, the societal awareness of the importance of combating prejudice as well as its manifestations is fairly well developed, which must also be seen as a consequence of the historical impact of the Holocaust in Germany. Therefore, numerous steps have already been taken by governmental and civil society stakeholders to face these challenges in the past years – especially with regard to pedagogical prevention approaches, methods and tools addressing children and adolescents, who are more likely to be influenced to a greater extent than other age groups. These efforts range from the adoption of formal education policies to a variety of non-formal educational projects especially within youth work, which are mostly of a preventive character. In spite of these numerous efforts, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and right-wing extremist sentiments continue to pose a severe problem: recent research results from representative surveys show, for instance, that about 40% of adolescents at the age of 15 display xenophobic attitudes (Baier et al., 2009, p. 115).

The following section gives a brief outline of the concept of prejudice. Moreover, selected findings of national traditions and prevailing approaches of anti-prejudice education in Western societies are presented, highlighting the importance of developing and applying approaches that entail the multidimensional character of prejudice and take social ideologies into account. The subsequent sections examine the potential of anti-prejudice pedagogical approaches in non-formal and formal educational settings and projects which have been carried out in Germany over the past years.

This description and analysis is based upon results of the evaluation of the German federal programmes against right-wing extremism and for democracy building (*Vielfalt tut gut* 2007-2010 and *Toleranz fördern – Kompetenz stärken* 2011-2014). In the scope of these programmes, numerous small-scale pilot projects in formal and non-formal educational settings have been implemented and evaluated. The evaluation team used a set of quantitative and qualitative methods in order to analyse effects of

selected promising projects on the respective target groups. This included document analyses, monitoring tools on the implementation of processes and standardised questionnaires as well as interviews and group discussions with the participating target groups and educators.

In the subsequent section, some of these evaluation results are reflected in the context of the current transformation processes towards full-time school services in Germany and the respective development of concepts and hybrid forms of formal, non-formal and informal educational settings. The article concludes with tasks and challenges in the scope of non-formal and formal anti-prejudice education.

Prejudice as a multidimensional phenomenon: an educational challenge in pluralistic societies

The concept of prejudice

In the pertinent professional literature, numerous definitions of prejudice can be found. One of the most widespread definitions of social prejudice is the one put forth by Gordon Allport:

Ethnic prejudice is an antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole or an individual because he [or she] is a member of that group (Allport, 1954, p. 9).

This definition is still often used today as a key component for further conceptualisations¹ and it parallels our usage of the term. It frames prejudice as negative and hostile *attitudes* and as acquired and relatively constant behavioural dispositions with regard to consistent reactions toward a specific “object” (Hormuth, 1979). Individuals and groups of other ethnic, cultural or religious background are in the very centre of ethnic prejudice and racism, which can be considered as sub-categories of social prejudice².

¹ See, for instance, Ponterotto, Shawn, & Pedersen, 2006.

² Prejudice can take the form of racism as an ideology and legitimisation that inequalities between groups are given “by nature”, whereas ethnic prejudice “believes” in the inequality and different worth of cultures. Anti-Semitism and xenophobia as related forms of intolerance can be based on either ethnic or racist ideologies, or on a mixture of both.

All types of attitudes encompass *cognitive, affective and conative components* (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010, p. 1085):

Cognitive elements of ethnic prejudice are mainly based on assumed knowledge and distorted perception. A precondition of prejudice are group definitions and mental images of borders between the different groups (perceptions of “us” as the in-group and “them” or “the other”). Negative ascriptions and images with regard to the outward appearance, clothes, habits, typical behaviour, etc. of the other group including moral judgements accompany this assumed knowledge. A typical feature is also the ascription of possible threats for one’s own group (Heckmann, 1992, pp. 121-122).

The cognitive elements of prejudice are tied to certain emotions (*emotive components of attitudes*). Thus, prejudiced attitudes do not only reflect misinformation but go along with positive associations towards one’s own reference groups and, at the same time, negative ascriptions towards certain other “out-groups” (Tajfel, 1982). It is assumed that the mobilisation of emotions, which are often complex and of an ambivalent nature, highly depends on situational impacts (Heckmann, 1992, pp. 123-124).

Besides cognitive and emotive elements, prejudice may also involve behavioural tendencies (*conative elements of attitudes*). These tendencies imply certain intentions to discriminate. An intention to act, however, cannot be equated with the initiation of a certain action, since the acting out of prejudice also depends on other external factors like group pressure and social conformity deriving from norms (Heckmann, 2012, p. 10; Blalock, 1982, p. 23)³. This fact is also described by making a distinction between blatant and subtle forms of prejudice (Petersen, 2008, p. 194)⁴. Subtle forms of prejudice are more difficult to be identified by others as well as by the prejudice holders, who may be unaware of their own prejudiced attitudes. Therefore, approaches in anti-prejudice education dealing with subtle forms should be able to detect hidden prejudiced patterns.

However, negative judgements of ethnic groups do not only exist in the form of attitudes. In fact, the concept of prejudice is also present in the

³ Blalock states that the overwhelming majority of society members will comply with social norms if these explicitly promote non-discriminatory behaviour towards (ethnic) minorities, regardless of their individual attitudes towards these minorities.

⁴ A cross-national study conducted by Pettigrew & Meertens (1995) confirmed the value of the distinction between blatant and subtle as two varieties of intergroup-related prejudice.

form of diverse *social ideologies*. As collective ethnic-cultural constructions, social ideologies exist as coherent systems of statements and images. They are relatively stable, but also subject to change. It is, however, very difficult to influence social ideologies. While in-school pedagogical approaches have the potential to reach all students, for instance, by reflecting upon biased misinformation on certain groups during school lessons, they are subject to clear limitations when it comes to influencing social ideologies on the whole.

Conditions and prerequisites for the development and adoption of prejudice

There are numerous theoretical assumptions and findings with regard to the adoption, enhancement and reduction of prejudice. Firstly, we will look at the conditions and prerequisites of prejudice in order to shed light on how prejudice is adopted⁵.

Prejudice is generally developed and adopted in processes of social learning and 'normal' socialisation. However, it is not based on systematic and learned experiences with the objects of the respective prejudice. Actually, ethnic prejudice is often aimed at persons or groups without existing contact or with only minor contact to these groups. Many studies show a development and an adoption of prejudice during the early stages of socialisation processes: as part of individuation, it already occurs at the age of three to four, but is not restricted to childhood and adolescence (Heckmann, 1992, pp. 129-130). Therefore, in combating prejudice, it is essential to develop preventive approaches and concepts that enable an early reflection of one's own identity and "the other" (Wenzel, Ulrich & Seberich, 2001).

Since socialisation is a life-long process, the adoption of prejudice is not only influenced by specific psychological precognitions that reflect a certain disposition to accept prejudice⁶ (*micro level*), but also by the

⁵ Theoretical literature on the phenomenon of prejudice is extensive (see, for instance, Ponterotto et al., 2006; Heckmann, 2015). However, the treatment of prejudice is underdeveloped in the majority of social science publications. In addition, publications of different disciplines are rarely cross-referenced. The theoretical remarks on the reduction of prejudice in this article present only a selection of the widespread theories. Thus, the list is not exhaustive.

⁶ In this context the discussion turns to whether a disposition to adopting prejudice results from certain processes such as frustration, projection, fear, insecurity of identity which can influence almost everyone under certain circumstances. The alternative approach would be the assumption of a higher likelihood of accepting prejudice among people with a certain

immediate social environment, which also encompasses formal, informal and non-formal educational settings (*meso level*). Attitudes can also vary due to changes of group affiliations (e.g. peer groups). Moreover, the social climate and corresponding value systems (*macro level*) do not only influence the development of individual attitudes but also embrace the aforementioned collective dimension of prejudice in the form of social ideologies. These levels interact: changes of attitudes in the context of group affiliations, for instance, can be explained in the following way:

In terms of subjective expected utilities, most persons are motivated to value high status within whatever groups they select as positive reference groups. Most persons also wish to avoid negative sanctions (punishments) in groups of which they are actual members. In the case of norms, regulations, or laws of any importance in these groups, conformity will generally be rewarded and deviance punished. Therefore, if these norms stress that minorities should be treated in a certain fashion, the overwhelming majority of group members will conform regardless of their personality needs or deep-seated feelings about minorities. (Blalock, 1982, p. 23)

After this brief glance at the development and adoption of prejudice, we will now explore the aims that are linked with attempts to prevent or reduce emerging and already existing prejudice. In doing so, we will focus on educational anti-prejudice approaches for young children and adolescents in formal and non-formal group settings which tend to consist primarily of group-related activities and concentrate on the impact of group dynamics. It has to be mentioned, however, that in addition to these educational anti-prejudice approaches, prejudice can also be reduced and exacerbated by public discourses. Therefore, the fight against propaganda and other manifestations of social ideologies, for instance, by the means of awareness-raising campaigns aimed at the general public are also important means in the fight against prejudice.

Starting points and key components in anti-prejudice education

In the struggle against prejudice, numerous measures with varying aims can be found. In order to categorise these objectives we find the previously

type of character (for the latter theory, cf. "authoritarian personality" by Adorno et al., 1950 and Petersen, 2008).

established description of prejudice as attitudes with cognitive, affective and conative components useful.

Traditionally, attempts to combat prejudice in formal educational settings predominately aim at the cognitive components of prejudice. By informing people about distorted and biased knowledge, e.g. on other groups, prejudices are supposed to be reduced. Numerous empirical studies confirm that the acquisition of differentiated and comprehensive knowledge about the “other” can reduce fear-based attitudes towards “out-groups”.

In addition, the significant correlation between the general degree of education including the ability of subtle thinking and prejudice, xenophobia or related concepts (e.g. Wenzel et al., 2001) seems to be an important influencing factor. However, the impact of information greatly varies and depends on the following conditions.

On the one hand, the source of information plays an important role. A lack of credibility, attractiveness, prestige and/or power can ruin its impact. The impact of information and “persuasive communication” also depends on the degree of cognitive stress that comes with admitting incorrect images. Chances for success of such communication, for instance in the scope of school lessons, seem to be high, when students actively participate in discussions and when the production of new insights and the stress level among students is rather low (Heckmann, 2012, p. 9). Some results, however, also show that a high stress level might limit mental processes of activating prejudice (Schmid Mast & Krings, 2008). This might improve the chance that “incongruous” information not will be ignored or refused.

On the part of the multipliers, *offering* new frameworks and images, instead of trying to force participants to adopt these images, is a useful concept. Time should be given to the participants, so that they can become familiar with the new insights (Arnold & Siebert, 1999, p. 118). Social-psychological theories, such as that of psychological reactance by Brehm (1966), confirm the usability of this approach⁷. Brehm states that people tend to change their attitude, however not in the intended way, when confronted and forced to adopt the opinion of a multiplier (boomerang effect). The assimilation-contrast-theory also reasons that people do not adopt the attitudes of multipliers or contents of interactions that they perceive in an emotionally negative way (Sherif & Hovland, 1966).

⁷ See also Miron & Brehm, 2006.

According to the cognitive dissonance theory first developed by Festinger (1966), the following social-psychological factors also influence the impact of information and persuasive communication on prejudice: people tend to seek and give their attention to information that is in accordance with their already existing attitudes. They also tend to remember those aspects of consistent information more easily. In addition, people tend to avoid information that increases a state of “dissonance” as the perception of incompatibility between two cognitions. An involuntary exposure to information that increases dissonance leads people to discounting that conflicting information. They ignore it, misinterpret it, or deny it. As a result, people with strong prejudice can rarely be influenced only by using persuasive communication. Moreover, those who have access to the most accurate information are those who show little prejudice (Heckmann, 1992, p. 156).

The proper use of cognitive dissonance, however, can be a valuable educational tool in combating prejudice as it can induce attitude changes. According to the cognitive dissonance theory, cognitions will be eliminated or changed once dissonance reaches a high (emotional stress) level. There are different ways of producing cognitive dissonance. Classically, cognitive dissonance is created by means of dialogue. Another method to produce cognitive dissonance is disarming behaviour: by learning what others expect you to do and then behaving very differently, disarming behaviour is generated and cognitive dissonance is accordingly created. This process has to be repeated several times to obtain noticeable results. Otherwise, behaviour displayed in the short term is not obvious or visible enough to induce attitude changes. A further way to use cognitive dissonance is to enhance interpersonal communication and contact by joint projects. This method does not only refer to the cognitive dimensions of attitudes, but also to its emotive and conative part.

As already mentioned, due to time constraints most of the approaches in formal educational settings are usually directed toward the cognitive dimension of prejudice, e.g. by counteracting against biased information. This is often based upon the assumption that more appropriate information about other groups automatically leads to a (more) positive attitude towards the respective groups. The emotive component is rather neglected. Also in fighting negative (in the sense of biased) social ideologies, it is important to take emotive aspects into account, as these ideologies are embedded in culturally and emotionally affected contexts. Therefore, methods that aim at

influencing the emotive aspects of prejudice should not be underestimated. The awakening or strengthening of positive feelings towards a (thus far) rejected social group can be achieved by initiating contact and encounter programmes. For instance, Farley (2005, p. 42) states, “There is considerable evidence that reduction in prejudice [...] results from contact in educational, employment, recreational, and other settings.” However, it has to be stressed that this impact on the target groups in the setting of intercultural projects depends on certain preconditions: “Contact between racial or ethnic groups does not always lead to reduced prejudice or improved relations between the groups” (Farley, 2005, p. 42).

According to the contact hypothesis, first formulated by Allport (1954) and its implications and empirical examination (for example, Amir, 1969; Dollase, 2001), the following contact conditions lead to improved inter-group relations: interaction, active participation and involvement of the participants, contacts between individuals of equal status (at least within the context of the contact situation), and cooperative activities with an aspiration of common goals. Therefore, activities are supposed to be non-competitive and non-threatening for both groups (Farley, 2005, p. 43)⁸. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) showed that the positive effects of intercultural contacts on the reduction of prejudice even occur if these conditions are not fully met⁹. In sum, according to these theories, comprehensive strategies that take cognitive as well as emotive components of information into consideration seem to be generally promising¹⁰.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to keep in mind that there is not only *one* fruitful approach. Instead, differentiated approaches are highly necessary. In particular, the social embedding of prejudice at a macro and meso level poses a major challenge for educational methods to reduce prejudice. Considering that prejudice is not solely an individual misperception of “the other” but part of collective ideologies, it is essential to deal with collective ethnic-cultural constructions and, in particular, with the ethnisation of

⁸ According to Farley (2005, p. 157), these ideal conditions can hardly be established in societies with strong economic inequalities and ethnical stratification.

⁹ A representative survey for Germany, conducted by Wagner et al. (2006), also confirmed that prejudice was reduced in districts with an increasing share of foreign population.

¹⁰ Besides efforts to influence the cognitive and/or emotive components of prejudice, there are also attempts to change the conative side. This is mainly done by measures of “social control” such as laws (Heckmann, 1992, p. 124). In this context, one must also keep in mind that some people cannot be influenced by educational tools against prejudice.

societal conflicts. As a consequence, educational measures do not only need to be able to adjust to different target groups – this can also refer to variables such as age or the ethnic background of the participants – but also need to be accompanied by appropriate political and societal measures on the meso and macro level in order to redress collective ideologies (cf. Peucker, 2011, p. 4).

Different patterns of national traditions in anti-prejudice education

An international mapping study on educational tools against prejudice compiled in 2007 on behalf of the London-based Rothschild Foundation (Peucker & Reiter, 2008) provided an overview on formal and informal educational anti-prejudice approaches in European countries with a particular emphasis on activities in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland and the UK. The study led to the conclusion that the societal awareness of the importance of combating prejudice and its manifestations is generally quite high. The overview confirmed the existence of a broad variety of formal, non-formal and informal educational tools. In the analysed countries, numerous steps have already been taken to face these challenges – especially with regard to tools addressing young people. Different kinds of *interplay between formal and non-formal approaches* were found – which also reflect national traditions of anti-prejudice education.

In Belgium, for instance, the great majority of anti-prejudice projects or activities are developed as extra-curricular and out-of-school activities, mostly implemented by NGOs and associations, which are frequently financed by official bodies.¹¹ Compared to this, activities in formal education seem to be fewer, but also existing, in the federalised Belgian educational system. By contrast, in the United Kingdom, which has a long tradition of dealing with immigration and multicultural environments, educational tools against prejudice are mainly curriculum-oriented and take place in school for the most part. There is a top-down approach with

¹¹ One has to keep in mind that the competence for educational policies in some Western countries like Germany and Belgium is generally federalized. In Belgium this means that the Flemish, French and German-speaking communities have full legislative and executive power over curricular educational approaches aimed at reducing prejudice.

implementation on the local or school level. In France, the vast majority of educational projects or activities are also developed and implemented in school. Anti-racist education and tools against anti-Semitism are part of the official policy; but these topics are rather broached during periodic, but frequent in-school activities, which are implemented by association with the admission of the authorities rather than being anchored in detail in the curriculum. These projects are mainly initiated or implemented by civic associations and have the authorisation of the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, the Ministry itself and the Rectorates as regional offices of the Ministry initiate many projects or activities. Anti-prejudice education in France generally seems to be a joint project of authorities at all levels and civic associations, including migrant organisations.

In addition, there are programmes operating at EU level, for instance, “Youth in Action” of the European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA), which is funded by support of the European Commission since 2007¹². The YiA Programme allows young people to gain international experience and to acquire knowledge and competencies outside formal education through intercultural encounter projects. It aims at promoting the adolescents’ personal development and their active participation in society.

In spite of a great number of strategies, measures and approaches by governmental and civil society stakeholders ranging from the adoption of formal education policies to a variety of non-formal educational projects mostly of a preventive character – deficiencies and a *potential for improvement* were identified by the international mapping study. Most deficiencies derive from a lack of reflection on theoretical background knowledge on prejudice, a lack of systematic evaluation, information exchange and cooperation between institutions and professionals working in the thematic area under consideration.

Looking for *success factors*, the study concluded that prejudices are more easily confronted at an early stage of development, e.g. by addressing children and young people; therefore, preventive measures are most promising. Approaches that purely address the cognitive side of prejudice are more likely to be ineffective as the emotive component of prejudice is insufficiently reflected. In addition, as mentioned above, it became obvious that anti-prejudice education is most effective when embedded in a comprehensive strategy which encompasses the micro and meso levels of

¹² The programme was originally launched in 2001, initially as the YOUTH Programme.

socialisation processes; such a strategy can, for instance, be conjointly developed by formal and non-formal educators and practitioners and be implemented in varying in-school and out-of-school settings. This requires a systematic long-term commitment by stakeholders and institutions of formal and non-formal education (Peucker & Reiter, 2008; Peucker, 2011). In this context, both formal and non-formal education show specific potentials and challenges in the field of pedagogical prevention. This will be further elaborated and exemplified by the situation in Germany which is – like France and the United Kingdom – a country with a long tradition of anti-prejudice education and a federalised educational system (like Belgium).

Potentials and challenges of formal and non-formal educational approaches in fighting prejudice in Germany

Building upon the variety of practical experiences, numerous steps for the development of innovative approaches have been taken in Germany during the past years. In the scope of the German federal programmes against right-wing extremism and for democracy building (*Vielfalt tut gut* 2007-2010 and *Toleranz fördern – Kompetenz stärken* 2011-2014), pilot projects were implemented and evaluated in order to, among other things, improve preventive intercultural pedagogical tools and approaches. At the same time, an intense academic discussion on the impact of non-formal and informal education on socialisation processes of adolescence emerged during the compilation of the Twelfth National Report on Children and Youth (BMFSFJ, 2005). This brought the attention of researchers and educators to the specific potential of non-formal education as well as on youth organisation work and peer groups as informal educational settings.

The *pedagogical power of non-formal approaches*, which makes them attractive for preventive work, derives from two specific characteristics, which simultaneously constitute important preconditions for the effectiveness of pedagogical work. Firstly, participation in corresponding measures is *voluntary* and can be seen as an expression of the intrinsic motivation of the participants. Secondly, the learning processes are widely *guided by the participants' needs and interests*, which increase their willingness to gain appropriate new knowledge. In this respect, the term “non-formal learning”, as it is used here, shows a certain proximity to the

term “informal learning” that describes more unintended learning processes (Overwien, 2006; Jeffs & Smith, 2011). The mentioned characteristics simultaneously stand for the main working principles of non-formal education and youth work in Germany (BMJFFG, 1990).

Unfortunately, these attributes are not as convenient in prevention-stimulating settings as they seem to be at first glance. It is well known that especially the voluntary nature of “traditional” non-formal education induces *challenges in reaching the primary target groups of youth with strong negative and ethnic-based prejudice*. Underprivileged young people, who are more likely to have a particular predisposition to prejudice, tend to elude the corresponding projects. In this context it is unclear, however, whether this described phenomenon mainly derives from (accidental) exclusion processes initiated by pedagogic professionals, or processes of self-exclusion by the young people (in the sense of a self-fulfilling prophecy), or from a lack of interest on behalf of the target groups who sense a gap between the offered measures and their own actual needs (see Sturzenhecker, 2008). In the case of the latter, the preventive objectives of a measure set clear limits to their adaptability towards the interest of the potential participants.

A close cooperation between school (formal education) and youth work (non-formal education) is often proposed to deal with the problem that young people – who, from a certain point of view “need” a non-formal “treatment” – hardly participate in respective voluntary measures (see for example Glaser & Johansson, 2012, p. 94, Sturzenhecker & Karolczak, 2014). This is instigated by the idea that the intended target groups will be reached more easily in the scope of such cooperation forms.

However, this line of reasoning usually fails to take into consideration all aspects of achievement or “reaching” a target group: firstly, to come in contact with young people in the scope of a measure, secondly, to motivate them to actively participate in it and, thirdly, to affect them. Due to the obligation of enrolment in compulsory education, the presence of young people in school is guaranteed. Mere presence does, however, not automatically entail a willingness to get involved in an offered measure. Inattention during classes or curriculum-guided activities is a well-documented phenomenon, especially, if students are not truly interested in the measure they are urged to participate in. Taking into account that preventive measures try to induce learning processes and that such

processes are only conceivable as co-productive, the question of how to activate them for “real” participation is crucial.

This means that it is essential to develop tools which meet the interest of young people (e.g. spending time together, having fun, doing something sense-/useful, earning respect), and combining them with pedagogic and/or preventive objectives which keep the characteristics and obligations of formal educational settings in mind while establishing such tools in school.

To create an effective environment within school for non-formal work means that both formal and non-formal professionals are required to co-ordinate their activities and to develop innovative, idealistically common coherent or interacting approaches. However, this is a time-consuming and labor-intensive process which requires that additional resources, especially sufficient trained personnel are allocated to this aim.

Unfortunately, in particular German public schools in their traditional form – that is, institutions that provide lessons only in the morning and are strictly regulated by school authorities and syllabi – have only little (additional) time, place and work capacities to adequately incorporate non-formal educational measures offered by non-school educators. As there are hardly any time contingents available outside of school, prevention work against prejudice commonly involves short-term educational formats that are often carried out in the form of project days being implemented, for instance, within intercultural projects. The shortness of the educational intervention does usually not derive from technical or conceptual considerations, but is rather due to capacity constraints. This often leads, more or less necessarily, to subsequent problems for the implementation of projects and – eventually to insufficient project results.

Our research about project-work within the evaluation of the current German federal programme against right-wing extremism and for democracy building (*Toleranz fördern – Kompetenz stärken*) shows that a respective mismatched cooperation between formal and non-formal educators not only denies desired outcomes but also can produce negative side effects.

Evaluating anti-prejudice projects – experiences from a cooperation project between formal and non-formal educators

The following case-description, which results from a qualitative study, illustrates the *challenges of successfully integrating non-formal educational approaches in formal school settings*. It refers to a project carried out in the scope of the aforementioned German federal programme against right-wing extremism (*Toleranz fördern – Kompetenz stärken*). Several extra-curricular, but in-school projects have been funded in this programme.

In order to evaluate this project and, by doing so, to gain insights into its effectiveness, outcomes and influencing factors, interviews were conducted with participants of the target group as well as with non-formal and formal educators, who were involved in the project organisation and implementation. Moreover, an accompanying document analysis took place.

The project was conducted by a non-governmental organisation that offered short-term educational activities in schools. The project team, consisting of several professionals, worked with school classes in different schools and focused on the presence of ethnic or racial prejudice among students. The intention of the project was to bring any prejudice existing among the students to the fore and to morally delegitimise it. The most essential aim of the project was, hence, to raise awareness of ethnic prejudice among all students.

The time in which the project team could work with the target group within school classes was, however, very limited (altogether six hours) and there was no extra time allocated to the project outside the lessons. This tight schedule apparently only allowed for unveiling the students' subtle prejudice by initiating discussions. In the scope of the project implementation, it became obvious that the awareness raising processes led to disputes between students and to the eruption of conflicts. Due to the tight project timeframe, these conflicts could not be sufficiently dealt with by the project staff. Therefore, the project staff attempted to at least initiate further (non-moderated) discussion processes about prejudice and discrimination between the students by encouraging students without racist prejudice to argue critically against their classmates with prejudiced mindsets. The encouragement of the students was limited to giving them self-confidence. There was no special preparation for them such as argumentation techniques. Nevertheless, after the official end of the project

measure members of this particular group were supposed to become so-called “defenders of tolerance”.

On the days that we spend in the classes, we often notice that they start to talk, to discuss, so that something is really starting to happen. And of course that's what we want. Because we are there [in the schoolroom] for only six hours. I mean, the class spends months or years together. And of course we want to set something in motion, that the ones with a humanistic attitude, with strengthened self-confidence from the project day take action and go out and have an effect on the others in the long run. (Project team educator: qualified youth worker, male).

However, the intended effect did not seem to occur or was connected with adverse side effects within the everyday school life. One important side effect was that the open conflict, which had manifested during the project, was still perceptible in one class and even influenced the lessons given to the respective class, which was then considered as “problematic” among teachers, because it was difficult to teach the students.

I mean, to be honest, this has given us negative feedback from teachers. They say, 'Suddenly our class argues about right-wing extremism or about racism and so on.' So it [the measure] has often been negatively assessed, because the previously balanced class is suddenly divided. (Project team educator: qualified youth worker, male).

The quoted example shows some structural problems that are characteristic for the work of extra-curricular projects in “traditional” public schools in Germany. These projects work in a setting that focuses on formal educational processes. There are fixed curricula, the main goal is to pass on knowledge and it is a risk to disturb the routines that a school needs.

There is a negative reaction of the school. They are really interested in well-behaved, and not in unruly students. (Project team educator: qualified youth worker, male).

Given such circumstances, processes of non-formal education are currently subordinated, which may complicate the cooperation activities of schools with extracurricular projects. In our example, the project-staff

experiences this structural problem in the cooperation as a lack of interest on behalf of the teachers.

We conducted an evaluation discussion with the teachers directly after the measure. In our experience, many teachers do not want this discussion. But this is also a structural problem. (Project team educator: qualified youth worker, male).

Here, we see a relatively one-sided blame placed on teachers. This contains a hidden notion that the project concept does not match the frame conditions of the school.

The aforementioned problems could also be found in other evaluated projects and are characteristic for cooperation activities between schools and providers of extra-curricular activities who offer projects (such as of intercultural learning) in formal educational contexts. Many problems can be attributed to different objectives of teachers and non-formal educators. Nevertheless the cooperation is important, because intended target groups will be reached more easily in schools. It can be concluded that greater integration and a more equitable position of formal and non-formal education in cooperation activities would be promising. In the final section, we will turn to the questions of how these could be achieved and what the consequences could be for making anti-prejudice work more efficient.

Concluding remarks

German schools as formal curriculum-run, part-time educational institutions offer only little opportunity and space to deal with the described challenges. There is, however, a trend towards the so-called “*Ganztagschule*” (full-time school) in Germany, a kind of school that provides additional learning time in the afternoon, which opens up chances to overcome these restrictions. In our opinion, fruitful collaborations between youth work and other social organisations on the one hand and schools on the other could arise particularly well within the context of “full-time schools”. Such collaborations promise to meet the requirements

of preventive work as well as the needs of young people¹³. In this context, the collaborations are able to serve as starting points for an “overall ecology of learning opportunities” (Sefton-Green, 2013, p. 5), where educators play the role of facilitators. According to the aforementioned reasons, the proposed approach is to focus not exclusively on work in school classes, but to have room for interest-led activities beyond school and curriculum which combine informal and non-formal learning processes within “semi-natural” learning environments.

The mainstays of such approaches are primarily that the (youth work) organisations offering the respective learning environments (or opportunities) modify their working principle of voluntary participation in favour of the compulsory school attendance of the pupils. Secondly, the other maxims of non-school educational (youth) work have to be maintained, that is participation, responsiveness, accessibility and self-possession (Sturzenhecker & Karolczak, 2014, p. 301). Most notably, complying with these maxims contributes to avoiding negative side-effects caused by the not entirely voluntary attendance by young people (Bischoff, König & Zimmermann, 2014). Though the needs and interests of the cooperation partners, especially in schools, should be respected simultaneously, as the example noted above has shown. In this respect, we do not suggest an entirely new approach, but would like to remind to put the well-known tools into action by adapting them. This also counts for measures that aim to prevent or fight prejudice.

Such projects could be group-focused activities fitting the characteristics described by the contact hypothesis (Stürmer, 2008). Yet, we must keep in mind that the preconditions to meet the requirements for an effective work in compliance with that hypothesis are ambitious and manifold.

For instance, social driven ethnic segregation in schools in Western German cities (Baur & Häussermann, 2009) or ethnic homogeneity in certain rural areas, especially in Eastern Germany, can lead to a lack of

¹³ This is also in accordance with our research findings: the projects conducted within the federal programme “*Toleranz fördern – Kompetenz stärken*” (Promoting tolerance – strengthening competencies) also discovered that full-time school offer an appropriate space for prevention measures. It is not an accident, according to our results of research, that over 80 percent of all projects within the programme have realised their measures within full-time school environments. However, whether this can be seen as a paradigmatic shift toward a new quality of cooperation or whether it is simply a case of pouring new wine into old wineskins still remains an open question.

fitting counterparts that thwart necessary group-formation processes. Though the participation in youth exchanges or the European Voluntary Service Program, as promoted and supported by the European Union, may theoretically offer a solution of these problems and facilitate encountering people of a different ethnic or cultural background, this is very costly and therefore, especially for underprivileged students often not a realistic option. In addition, a possible lack of social as well as cultural capital on behalf of underprivileged adolescents (Bourdieu, 1983) makes even programmes of the European Union and of the several foundations, which fund respective activities, rarely convenient for these young people, due to their application requirements. Furthermore, exchange measures generally focus solely on the level of the individual and are not directly devoted to influence the societal (pre)conditions of prejudice as mentioned above.

Nevertheless, some approaches and tools exist that can be adapted to the field of anti-prejudice education which do not only remedy economic and other restrictions within everyday preventive efforts, but are targeted to the micro or meso level, meaning, for instance, the local community.

Regarding prejudice, community based long time approaches like service learning which foster social cohesion and tolerance may have the potential to be notably effective (for a brief international overview see Murphy & Tan, 2012; for Germany, see Sliwka & Frank, 2004).

Although service learning does not rely on the explication of specific anti-prejudice pedagogic aims, it is based on the assumption that meaningful service activities, in which young people take some responsibility (Furco, 2002, p. 43), have an impact on adolescents by developing personal competencies like self-confidence, empathy, sagacity or emotional (self) control (Koopmanns, 2007). This process can also induce preventive effects. In this respect, this approach can be regarded as “hidden persuasion”.

Under a preventive focus, the service learning projects can concentrate on specific, anti-prejudice/bias-centred working fields. That is, for instance, care for disabled or elderly people and support for refugees or homeless persons.

According to the contact hypothesis, such measures do not only have an impact on the target groups (Krahé & Altwasser, 2006), but can also induce comprehensive processes of de-categorisation or re-categorisation (Otten & Matschke, 2008).

Nevertheless, taking into account that prejudice may vary from blatant to subtle forms (Petersen, 2008, p. 194 ff.), the aforementioned measures should be accompanied by pedagogic professionals giving particular attention especially to subtle prejudice that will only be shown if it is considered socially accepted or desired.

Besides immediate anti-bias effects, service learning evolves the capability for moral adjustments, which is regarded as a protective factor against discrimination (Wagner & Farhan, 2008, p. 275).

Furthermore, findings of research on voluntary social commitment suggest that such commitment en passant contributes to the formation of democratic values and encourages humanistic attitudes and behaviour (Krettenauer, 2006, p. 110). It is inevitable and essential for experience-based learning that offers of in-group-reflection for young committed people support the service learning process (Battistoni, 2000; Krettenauer, 2006, p. 114).

Whereas service learning is part of the curricular activities at school in some countries outside Europe, in Germany service learning and other community oriented pedagogical approaches are still rather unknown.

Due to the aforementioned limitations in traditional “part-time” school, it is hardly possible to implement the relevant tools there. In contrast, full-time schools offer a more convenient environment to realise them. While school can lend credence to planned projects and is able to bring young people in contact with players of non-formal activities, youth work has the access to related fields of social work that may offer opportunities for service learning. Moreover, youth work as a pedagogically formed space at the “semi-formal” interface between formal and non-formal approaches with links to informal learning, allows young people to interact according to the hypothesis presented.

Based upon the fact that learners consciously or unconsciously connect the (intended and unintended) outcomes of learning in formal and non-formal settings (Sefton-Green, 2013, p. 9), as in our example, it is essential for both, the cooperating school teachers and the youth workers, to know what the relevant subjects and topics within the respective learning environments comprise. Only knowing this can help to avoid negative side-effects which may result from mismatching pedagogic content or means as shown.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that informal learning environments (e.g. peer-groups and family) have a very high impact on

students and can contradict the activities of the professionals. The more these learning spheres are interlinked with the non-formal pedagogic spheres provided by professionals, the higher the chance to achieve a coherent learning environment. This points to further developing the strategy presented here: incorporating parents or other relevant persons into the design of the learning processes seems to be an additional promising approach. The development of such approaches, however, is still in its infancy in Germany.

Last, but not least, non-formal or semi-formal educational projects that derive from the contact hypothesis certainly show many positive effects to prevent prejudice (and other undesirable social attitudes). Yet, one should keep in mind that these approaches, like every pedagogical work, primarily follow an individualistic rationale (Stürmer, 2008). Therefore, where community-based learning is difficult to set up, attention should also be given to additional measures that aim to strengthen school as a democratic entity.

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