

STUBE Hessen-Seminar
04th-6th September 2020 in Wiesbaden

“Democracy and education”

- Seminar facilitators:** Ms Eileen Paßlack, STUBE Hessen-speaker
Ms Katharina Stein, STUBE Hessen-intern
- Co-facilitator:** Mr Yaman Abobakr (Syria), Civil Engineering, University of Kassel
- Target group:** Students from Africa, Asia and Latin America studying in English in Hessen
- learning goals:** SDG 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions; learning the relation between education and politics, especially the democratic political system; reflecting on access to and quality of education in countries of the global south; discussing the concepts and principles of democratic governance; analyzing political concepts of different countries and reflecting on their accountability; explore reasons and symptoms of rising populism; discuss on the question, whether civic education can prevent this rise of populism; explore the program “School without Racism – School with Courage”; reflecting on success of this program
- Participants:** The number of registrations totalled 60 and a number of 25 students participated in this English speaking seminar (12 women, 13 men). Out of 25 participants, 5 participants attended a STUBE seminar for the first time. All in all, the number of represented countries was 17. Divided by regions, 7 students from 5 African countries, 14 students from 10 Asian countries, 1 student from 1 state in the MENA-region, 3 students from 1 Latin-American country participated in the seminar.

Process of the seminar

The seminar took partially place as indicated by the program. First of all, the seminar-topic was originally planned for the date 8th to 10th May 2020 in Bad Homburg. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the seminar was postponed and rescheduled to 4th to 6th September 2020. Also, the location had to be changed from Bad Homburg to Wiesbaden due to the availability in Wiesbaden on this date. In addition, the speaker Reginald Loggins, from the association “mehr als wählen e.V.” didn’t come. Therefore Ms Eileen Paßlack from STUBE Hessen, filled in for him and conducted a workshop on “*How you can take action*”.

Friday, 04th September 2020

The seminar started with a welcome speech for the participating students by the facilitator Eileen Paßlack and co-facilitator Yaman Abobakr. The program started at 7 pm, after dinner. Ms Paßlack and Mr Abobakr introduced themselves. The facilitator presented the various offers of STUBE to the participants. Together with the students the co-facilitator developed different rules that need to be followed during the seminar, like respect, punctuality, no side-talking. The co-facilitator then assigned duties like taking pictures to some participants who volunteered. Ms Paßlack introduced the participants to the topic. On the participants chairs different comic strips have been placed. In these comic strips different democratic values were shown. The participants presented these values to each other and they discussed the principles of democracy. Afterwards Mr Abobakr introduced the participants to some games to get to know each other.

Saturday, 05th September 2020

For the program on Saturday the group was divided into two smaller groups. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Anne Frank Educational Center for Political Education and Counseling had a limit of 12 participants entering the exhibition and learning lab at the same time. So, group A was starting with the field trip to Frankfurt while group B took part in the workshop **“Concepts and principles of democratic governance and accountability”**. They switched in the afternoon.

The speaker was Mr Komla Mawufemo Digoh who recently graduated from the Department of Political Science at Justus Liebig University Giessen and is an active participant of STUBE Hessen. Mr Digoh started the workshop with a small presentation on his background and then presented the workshop agenda. He asked the participants for a definition of democracy and challenged the group as there are many different points of view. This was the reason why he instructed a little exercise to discuss the question in a brainstorming within smaller groups. The students shared examples and experiences of their countries of origin. Afterwards, he gave a lecture on the history of democracy. The participants learned how democracy evolved over time and they saw there is a gap between people who can partake in democracy and those who can't. Who has the power to make a decision? And how was the situation in the past? During his workshop, he used PowerPoint slides to visualize his arguments. After a small break, his workshop continued with another exercise. He asked the participants to split into three smaller groups and gave them different current articles dealing with democracy in different countries. The students had to read the texts and discuss and analyse together the pros and cons of those case studies. The seminar ended with a presentation and overview about the different situations in Poland, Congo and USA of each group.

During the field trip to Anne Frank Educational Center, the participants explored its various offers of political education and counselling. The goal is to empower young people and adults to actively participate in an open and democratic society. Using innovative concepts and methods, the participants are sensitized to deal with and stand strong against antisemitism, racism and various forms of discrimination. In the learning lab *Anne Frank. Morgen Mehr* (Anne Frank. More Tomorrow), at the educational center, the group digitally dived into the world of Anne Frank. The learning lab started with a historical part. The students came across Anne Frank, her family and her diary. Anne Frank is the leading character but also other young people were represented in the exhibition. For example, Malala is shown as the awardee of the Nobel Peace Prize or Jamie Raines who made a transformation from a girl to a man. Awa Yavari guided the group through the learning lab and revealed technical tricks — for example, how a button allows them to visit Anne Frank in her Secret Annex, where the Frank family hid from July 6, 1942 until they were discovered and arrested on August 6, 1944. The students also made use of the "Racist Glasses" device: With the special glasses, drawings of "completely normal" people can be observed through the distorted lenses of prejudice, turning a girl into a stereotypical Roma or "prostitute", while another student appears to be a "gangster".

After exploring the learning lab, Ms Yavari conducted a workshop on “discrimination” with the participants of the STUBE Hessen seminar. At the beginning, they talked about their experiences and what impressed them the most during the learning lab. Then, she asked the students to evaluate different statements whether or not they view them as situations of discrimination or not. The participants shared their own experiences and discussed them together. Afterwards, Ms Yavari concluded by elaborating the three-step-process of discrimination: People are valued of some undefined attributes like name or skin colour and these attributes are followed by specific characteristics. The ascriptions are made by strangers. So, it is possible that these ascriptions aren't true and the described person therefore might feel hurt and has to face negative consequences. At the same time, if you make negatives descriptions, you grade up yourself. After this workshop, the students returned to the youth hostel.

Sunday, 06th September 2020

After breakfast and a short energizer by the co-facilitator, the workshop “*How you can take action*” started. Ms Paßlack presented the structure of the workshop. Then she asked the students to reflect on their own on two questions “What means democracy for you” and “What do you think is the biggest challenge for democracy?”. After that, a short video for explaining the Problem-Solving-Tree-method was shown and the speaker divided the group into five smaller ones. The second part of the workshop was an interactive simulation game in which the participants were assigned to develop their own projects to make the society more democratic by keeping the presented method in mind. Therefore the participants did a “Problem tree analysis” to tackle a main challenge of democracy with a “Planning Triangle” based on the findings from the problem tree. This kind of analysis is central to many forms of project planning and is well known among development agencies. A Problem tree analysis (also called Situational analysis or just Problem analysis) helps to find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect around an issue in a similar way to a Mind map, but with more structure. The main problem, which every group defined, was written in the center of a poster and became the 'trunk' of the tree. The different groups identified the causes of the focal problem - these became the roots - and then identified the consequences, which became the branches. Based on the identified problem, the groups developed solutions through a concrete project idea. One group had the assignment to be the evaluation group. They developed criteria for their evaluation of the projects. After hearing all project groups, they had the responsibility to decide according to their evaluation grid which project they would choose to fund. For example one group pitched a project idea called “(K)now your leader!” and wanted to tackle corruption by making potential political leaders more transparent.

At the end of the discussion, Ms Paßlack thanked all the participants for their creative project ideas and their presentations. She closed the seminar and asked the participants to fill in a short evaluation form. The participants had the chance to share their impressions of the seminar.

Used methods and evaluation of the seminar

During the learning lab digital tools were used and according to a peer education approach the group was guided by a student in a similar age; problem-tree-analysis; discussion and question rounds; teamwork in groups; presenting in front of the other participants; power point-presentation; problem solving methods; film sequences.

Impressions from the seminar:

- This is an interesting topic, but the thing I love most is to hear perspectives from different people from all over the world. It's a mind opening occasion.
- Really liked the content of the seminar and I studied how democracy plays an important role. I will take back home the knowledge I gained and this wonderful memories that I created with the group.
- The visit at “Anne Frank Bildungsstätte” was awesome, I would have never done it otherwise I understand the time and travelling issue but it would be nice to include meal time like coffee and snacks.
- Should have been deeper about education
- More knowledge and understanding about democracy
- I will miss this kind of discussion and all the students and the leaders. It was really amazing

17.09.2020

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