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Multi-professional Round Table on Diversity Education: An International Responsibility

By Kordula Schulze and Dr. Widyastuti Purbani

The German-Indonesian project „Teaching Diversity – Diversity in Teaching“, which the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) supports in its funding line „University Dialogue with the Islamic World“, continued its work with a Multi-Professional Round Table.

The applicants Prof. Dr. Juliane Stude and Kordula Schulze from the Institute of German Studies at WWU Münster and Dr. Widyastuti Purbani, Vice Director of the Graduate School at Yogyakarta State University in Indonesia, brought together different professions and prominent guests at a digital round table to discuss the state of diversity education in both partner countries.

In the future, the event will take place annually as it is an integral part of the project’s „meeting places“. They do not only address the handling of diversity in heterogeneous societies, but also serve personal and professional intercultural exchange and networking between international educational institutions.

Indonesia is known as a country of high linguistic and cultural diversity: about 700 languages and dialects are spoken by the more than 1300 different ethnic groups in the country. In Germany, too, linguistic, origin-related, religious, and social diversity is a reality in everyday society. The Multi-Professional Round Table takes up this international need for discussion on the topic.

Around hundred lecturers, teachers, students, illustrators and children’s book authors from both countries discussed diversity and its implications in education as well as its representation in children’s literature. As the DAAD funding line also emphasises the promotion of women in teaching and research, two renowned keynote speakers were invited who, among other things, focused on female participation in society and in diversity education.

Princess Gusti Kanjeng Ratu Hayu (Kraton Yogyakarta) already represents a role model for female emancipation in Indonesia through her biography: Gusti Hayu studied computer science at the Stevens Institute of Technology in the USA before studying design and IT project management at Bournemouth University in the UK. Since 2012, she has been the director of the IT and documentation agency Tepas Tandha Yekti - Penghageng.



Gusti Hayu also discussed a systematic change in the Sultanate and elaborated on modern family structures and the participation of female members of the

royal family in political offices as a breakthrough. Gender equality, she highlighted, is crucial to be taught to both, girls and boys, in order to achieve a more equal society.

Moreover, Gusti Hayu is also involved in language promotion in the multilingual Indonesian society on a voluntary basis: she presented her freely accessible online project „Tamanan“ which offers families the opportunity to learn the endangered Javanese language. This is a contribution to the promotion of multilingualism in an intergenerational context.

The literary scholar and children’s book author Dr. Murti Bunanta also focuses on promoting multilingualism as well as ethnic and religious plurality. She used examples from her oeuvre of over 50 works to illustrate her concern. She argued that various creative approaches can elementarise complex topics and make them accessible for follow-up



© Dr. Murti Bunanta

communication. Consequently, Murti Bunanta vividly demonstrated numerous action-oriented and semi-staged approaches that promote the joint process of exploring children’s literature in educational processes. Children’s books, the author illustrated convincingly, bear the potential to open the minds of their young readers. Therefore, it is no surprise that Murti Bunanta’s children’s books have been translated into numerous languages and have won prestigious awards. Although the author highlighted that there has been an increase in diversity-orientation in (Indonesian) children’s literature over the last years, a lot of work still lies ahead: Children books which cater all needs of a multicultural society are still rare. Also, teachers have to be trained in how to work with diversity-oriented children’s literature. Only then, they will understand and use them as a valuable resource for learning. Thus, in her foundation KPBA (Society for the Advancement of Children’s Literature), she conveys the concern of promoting diversity in and through children’s literature in seminars and workshops for teachers.

In the third contribution, Prof. Dr. Juliane Stude traced the lines of development in the establishment of the topic of heterogeneity as a subject of teacher education. She highlighted the necessary preparation of prospective teachers for dealing productively with heterogeneity in schools from the beginning of their studies. Also, she pointed out the importance of reflective practical experience: As an example, she presented the results of her study on the feedback behaviour of prospective teachers in language support lessons for newly immigrated pupils. A future goal is to further promote the interactive sensitivity of trainee teachers in the follow-up discussions with children. This supports the young readers in critical thinking. One principle, for example, is to take the child seriously: Teachers have to listen carefully and have to

› Germanistisches Institut – INTERNATIONAL

recognise that also the child holds valid knowledge. Diversity, Juliane Stude closed, is only practised when different perspectives are discussed.

Overall, the multi-professional round table showed how important role models are for an inclusive approach to diversity. Children's literature is a resource for empowering minorities and sensitising them to linguistic, ethnic, religious, social and cultural diversity. Thus, the didactically sound use of children's literature in educational contexts becomes a tool for intercultural understanding and democracy education.



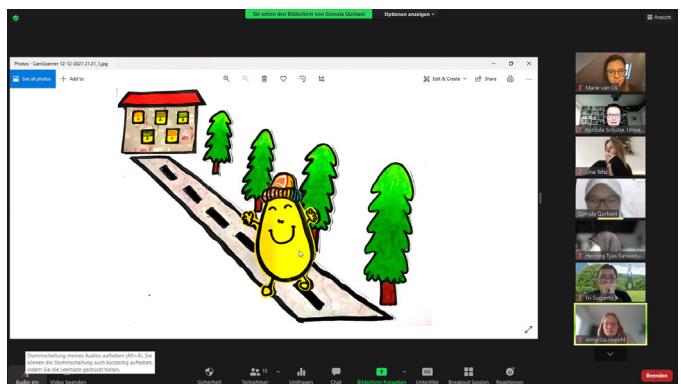
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The fact that all professions involved in the educational process need specific competences to deal constructively with learners in heterogeneous classes became very clear in the round table. What constitutes diversity-sensitive educational actors and how intercultural teaching competence of prospective teachers can be improved will be the subject of further discussions. For this purpose, the bi-national cooperation formed tandems of Indonesian and German students. Since end of November, the bi-national student groups working in tandems are planning and conducting projects on diversity in children's literature. In regular feedback meetings they do not only receive peer feedback but also didactic advice and support by their mentors. The works will be presented to the interested public.

Binational Communication and Creativity as Tools for Promoting Diversity-Oriented Literacy

Anna Gausepohl and binational student tandems report on their work process as part of the DAAD-funded project „Teaching Diversity – Diversity in Teaching“.

A diversity-oriented children's picture book transformed in a theatre play in three different languages and performed with a self-constructed Kamishibai, dialogues of diverse subjects represented by finger puppets and realia, an analysis of the underlying racist narrative of the sleeping beauty, diversity-oriented flash-cards for creative story-telling or development of own diversity-oriented picture-books: seven tandems and seven completely different projects; each of them creative, genuine, true-to-life, critical and heart-warming.



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This is how the first impression of the works by the TDDT tandems can be characterized. Within a few weeks, students from different nationalities and cultures grew into friends who work together, laugh a lot, read, and reflect on stereotypes and systematic racism or illustrate and craft individual storylines. Some of the participants gave first insights into their projects and told us why they put so much heart and soul into their work.

The tandem works are part of the German-Indonesian project “Teaching Diversity – Diversity in Teaching” (TDDT). It is supported by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) in its funding line „University Dialogue with the Islamic World“ and promotes diversity in literacy education. In 2021, several seminars and a multi-professional round table brought together students, lecturers, representatives of various professional groups, and prominent guests to discuss the state of diversity education in both partner countries.

The project initiators, Prof. Dr. Juliane Stude and Kordula Schulze from the Institute of German Studies at WWU Münster and Dr. Widayastuti Purbani, Prorector of the Graduate School at Yogjakarta State University in Indonesia, acknowledged the need to bridge the distance between theory and practice. Therefore, the **tandems of Indonesian and German students** were formed. Since