



Not religions, but people meet each other

Conference of interreligious learning at the University of Education Heidelberg

What are concepts of intercultural and interreligious learning and when are they important in everyday life at school? These were the main questions of the conference at the University of Education Heidelberg on 17th November. This was the first event organized by the *Netzwerk Bildung und Religion e. V.* (Network for Education and Religion) in cooperation with the *Heidelberg Centre for Migration Research and Transcultural Education* and the *Institute of Philosophy and Theology* of the university

To design religious instruction at school in a way that every child has the opportunity to get to know their religion is of great significance for interreligious learning. Havva Engin, head of the Centre for Migration Research and Transcultural Education (Hei-MaT) explains in her opening speech: "Education always has to be aware of the plurality." From her point of view it is too narrow-minded that the focus of the integration debate is almost only on language. Society is characterized by hybrid identities and religion plays an important part.

At the conference there were various workshops for students and teachers to get into conversation about the role of religion at school. They were talking about a Global Ethic, interreligious learning at the Internationale Friedensschule (International Peace School) and the contribution of theology to interreligious learning.

In the panel discussion that followed André Ritter from the European Institute for Intercultural and Interreligious Research made clear, that nowadays there are a lot of hybrid forms of religiousness throughout Europe and that in many families a coloured bouquet of ways of religious life can be found. In this context it is important to have a public debate about what image of human being and what values we share in society.

Sylvia Selke from the Heidelberg Centre for Migration Research and Transcultural Education pointed out that - regarding religious affiliation - the largest group in Germany is the one of those who state to have no religion. Also for these people, or the children and young people from these families, the school should provide a (scientific) space to discuss questions of religious plurality, secularity and shared values in a more distinct way than it is possible so far. What is required is a culture of dialogue which does not exclude anyone and which is not limited to a conversation of religions. Cancan Kalac, head of the *Netzwerk für Bildung und Religion e. V.* summarized the results of the conference as follows: "Not religions, but people meet each other."