

Taking visible action – Acting Against Antisemitism in Youth Work and Education

Insights in Germany – Encounter with Israel

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Abstract

Antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes are once again on the rise across Germany. Youth work and education specialists, too, are confronted with antisemitism in various ways. In their day-to-day work they encounter derogatory statements, sometimes even acts of aggression towards Jewish people. Many are unsure about how to adequately respond to negative portrayals of “the Jews”, anti-Israel statements or attempts to deny the persecution of Jews by the Nazis.

In 2020, ConAct – Coordination Center for German-Israeli Youth Exchange launched a model project by the name of *Sichtbar Handeln! Gegen Antisemitismus* (Taking visible action – Acting Against Antisemitism). It is aimed at youth work and education experts without any prior experience of Jewish life and who have never been to Israel. The project provides a longer-term space for learning and discourse in small fixed groups. It offers a mix of education on the past and contemporary history of antisemitism and a trip to Israel during which participants come into contact with members of Israel's young and diverse population. The project encourages participants to develop the confidence to actively stand up to discriminatory and antisemitic attitudes they encounter in their work, tackle them head-on and create an atmosphere of solidarity and cohesion among those they work with.

This article introduces readers to the concept and intended effects of the project, using quotes to demonstrate the learning journey of the around 80 participants so far. Notably, the insights they gained during the project have inspired them to develop German-Israeli youth encounters of their own – a much hoped-for outcome of the project.