

Report

The 35th Jewish Christian Muslim standing student conference took place in Wuppertal, as it did for the last 3 years.

Before that time it took place in Bendorf near Koblenz.



The topic of this year was "interreligious learning from each other and with each other"
The conference started on the 10th of March until the 16th of March.



I arrived on Monday the 10th in the evening after having a journey though strong rain and very stormy wind. I found out that 20 person from London and Iran even had to arrive a day later because there flights were cancelled because of the very strong storm.

That was the start of the wonderful and inspiring conference with 80 people from different countries and cultural backgrounds.



As there were students and teachers from the Leo-Back-College in London, the Heythrop College in London, from the university in Birmingham, from Iran, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Iraq, Tunisia, Morocco and of course Germany. The participants were from all ages and colour and the religions were mainly Jewish, Christian and Muslim.

During the conference we heard lectures, we build discussion groups, we had speakers corners, we shared the services with each other and we had 4 sessions of project groups. There were some project groups to choose from, Torah and Quran studies, singing, dream telling, peace book studies e.g. and the Non violent communication. The NVC training was realized as a follow up project to the Youth Exchange in Cyprus where NVC and conflict transformation were the topics. Edith Sauerbier, a German Non violent communication trainer did a very good job training us on NVC. We were 10 people in the group and we had time to learn about the structure of NVC, the feelings and needs and the ways of using NVC to learn about us and about others.



We found out that it is important to concentrate on what we actually feel without valuing the feeling. We were doing some training on this in the beginning and the end of the sessions. Actually we realized that if we really concentrate on the feeling we have it may change. For example a staff member who did hard work and then hurried to the project group, was tired. After he had taken the time to concentrate on that and his need to learn more about the NVC and his being curious about it, he received new energy and was ready to concentrate again.

The first day we did some training of observation without valuing. We had to tell each other what we see if we look at that person. But it was not

allowed to interpret anything. It was good to realize that it is important to observe situations or people very good and that it needs some time.

During the second session we concentrated on the feelings, the positive and negative feelings and the needs which would be fulfilled or missing to let us feel in that way.



By the time all the participants got closer together and the atmosphere was very good. Our project group also helped us to analyse situations which could be personal or during work or interfaith meetings. The needs were in the focus of the third session and it was interesting how many spiritual needs we actually have and how religion can influence the needs or satisfy them. For example the fasting in Ramadan for Muslims.

During the last meeting we trained some situations and analyzed them with our NVC method of feelings and needs. We also started to look at the other person with whom we want to communicate. How he or she feels and which needs he or she has. And we tried to find out which request we have to let our needs be satisfied.

During our last conference meeting where everybody could thank or tell his experiences we found out that it is sometimes not so easy to tell friends or Colleagues back home about our experiences. The wonderful and peaceful time where different religions meet in peace and with joy to share with others what he or she loves for him or herself. This is a gift which not everybody can imagine.

NVC would be a possibility to talk and maybe get in communication with some people to let the spirit we were thankful to share can spread to others.

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