

ZWEITZEUGEN e.V.

Anti-discrimination measures & anti-bias concept

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1. Introduction

The consequences of discrimination can be severe and lead to social injustice, psychological and physical suffering, social exclusion and inequality. Furthermore, discrimination can reinforce radicalization tendencies in societies. For this reason, combating discrimination and promoting equality and justice is a key concern in many societies around the world.¹

With this anti-discrimination concept, ZWEITZEUGEN e.V. aims to ensure that the association creates an inclusive and discrimination-sensitive environment for its employees, volunteers, members and partners (hereinafter referred to as “contributors”).

¹ Vgl. Zick, A. (2017).

ZWEITZEUGEN e.V. encourages and empowers (young) people to become second witnesses themselves by passing on the stories of Holocaust survivors and to take a stand against antisemitism and other forms of discrimination today. With this concept, we want to ensure that we also work together internally free from discrimination and exclusion of any kind.

2. Definitions

In the following, we explain definitions that we have compiled from various sources and that explain the main terms that will be used in the following.

2.1. Definition of discrimination

Discrimination is any disadvantageous unequal treatment of persons or groups on the basis of certain characteristics or attributes such as gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, social class or other personal characteristics.²

Discrimination can take various forms, including direct discrimination, where someone is directly disadvantaged because of a particular characteristic, and indirect discrimination, where seemingly neutral rules or practices actually disadvantage certain groups. It can occur in different areas of life, such as the workplace, educational institutions, the housing market, healthcare and social life.³

2.2. Definition of anti-discrimination

Anti-discrimination refers to active measures and practices aimed at recognizing, preventing and eliminating discrimination in all its forms. Anti-discrimination aims to create a discrimination-sensitive environment that takes into account the needs and experiences of all. At an organizational level, the binding and verifiable anchoring of anti-discrimination concepts is demanded, for example through training and qualification measures for employees, the establishment of complaints offices, anonymized applicant selection procedures, forms of monitoring equality measures and the implementation of diversity concepts.⁴

2.3. Definition of anti-bias

'Bias' means 'partiality' or 'one-sidedness'.

Anti-bias is an intersectional approach that focuses on the various forms of discrimination as an expression of unequal social positions and power relations and their complex mutual entanglements.

² cf. Scherr (2016).

³ cf. Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (2024).

⁴ cf. Scherr (2016).

The anti-bias approach aims to make social imbalances visible and to reduce discrimination on an interpersonal, institutional and socio-cultural level.

To this end, it is essential to address the issues of prejudice, privilege, empowerment and power.

Anti-bias is a practical concept that is critical of discrimination and power. It is about dealing with diversity and difference in a prejudice-conscious way on the basis of similarities and actively working towards social change.⁵

3. Goals and principles

Our goals are:

- *The creation of a safe and discrimination-sensitive space for contributors:* We want to create a space where contributors can express themselves freely, knowing that their identity and experiences will be considered sensitively and with understanding.
- *Raising the awareness of participants for different forms of discrimination:* Through training and education, we want to raise the awareness of our participants for the diversity of experiences of discrimination and promote empathy.
- *Promoting diversity and inclusion:* We are committed to ensuring that people of all identities and backgrounds are welcome and feel represented in our association.
- *Raising awareness of unequal power relations and privileges:* Through training courses and seminar contributions, power imbalances and privileges (especially in relation to white privilege) are to be uncovered and made aware of.
- *Promoting language sensitivity:* Through training courses, we want to raise awareness of the power of language and learn how to use language sensitively. This also includes training on easy language and other inclusive tools.

Our principles are:

- *Respect for the dignity and individuality of each participant:* Every performer deserves respect and recognition for their unique identity.
- *Zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind:* We do not tolerate any form of discrimination within our association and react decisively to cases of discrimination.
- *Active participation of all stakeholders:* All participants are responsible for creating an environment that is sensitive to discrimination.
- *Transparency and openness in communication:* We are transparent about our anti-discrimination efforts and anti-bias concepts and promote open communication on this topic within ZWEITZEUGEN e.V..

⁵ Vgl. anti-bias-netz (2021).

4. Structure of ZWEITZEUGEN e.V.

4.1. The carrier

ZWEITZEUGEN e. V. has so far encouraged and empowered more than 30,000 children and young people to become second witnesses of the survivors - second witnesses - and to actively campaign against antisemitism and other forms of discrimination today. In this way, we want to keep the personal memories of eyewitnesses alive and use their important lessons to promote a democratic society.

Our low-threshold, effective and multi-award-winning educational program offers an answer to the question of how remembrance can succeed in the future even without eyewitnesses and establishes references to the here and now. The eyewitness Elie Wiesel said: "Anyone who listens to a witness today will become a witness themselves." Guided by this, we, the ZWEITZEUGEN e. V. association, have interviewed 38 survivors of the Holocaust, documented their (survival) stories and are passing these on to children and young people in a variety of ways. After all, passing on the personal stories of Holocaust survivors can change our society: they help (young) people to understand history and learn from it.

In analog and digital educational projects, events, exhibitions, eyewitness and second witness interviews, we enable children and young people from the age of ten to gain personal access to the abstract topic of the Holocaust. We also offer workshops and training courses for teachers, educators, social workers and other interested parties.

4.2. The structure

The bodies of the association are the General Assembly, the Advisory Board and the Board of Directors. The association is managed operationally by two full-time managing directors, who are each responsible for content-related and organizational/commercial issues.

The educational work and all content-related topics are combined in a core area. In addition to the content-related strand, all administrative topics and tasks are also combined and act as service units for the content-related work. At the middle management level, three divisional heads are responsible for individual target groups and areas and design the offers and projects for children and young people in the school and extracurricular educational context as well as those for multipliers and adults. Individual teams and topics are supervised by full-time and volunteer team leaders.

The association's employees are full-time and voluntary staff who work and contribute to the teams and projects.

Honorary staff are brought in for individual tasks and projects.

5. Anti-discrimination measures

5.1 Raising awareness through training and literature

The association has set itself the goal of implementing the following measures:

Training for all full-time employees, board members and volunteers on discrimination and its effects: This training helps to recognize discrimination and respond appropriately.

Workshops to promote empathy and understanding of different identities and life experiences: We aim to promote empathy and understanding of diverse experiences and ensure that training is sensitive to different backgrounds.

Training and literature to raise awareness and recognize one's own (white) privileges and racisms: We would like to encourage and urge all participants to deal with their own privileges and racisms and to become aware of them. Seminars are offered and literature is made available for this purpose.

Training courses and seminars on language: We want to look at which language usage can be discriminatory and agree on a common and non-discriminatory language that we use in the association. This also includes training on easy language, which opens up the opportunity to include other groups of people in our work and reach them with our work. We also have our own guidelines and contacts to translators.

5.2 Complaints mechanism and support

- *A defined complaints mechanism for cases of discrimination:* We ensure that those affected can report discrimination without fear or action and respond seriously, decisively and respectfully to all complaints. The focus here is on the needs of the person who has experienced discrimination.
- *Confidential reporting channels:* We ensure that the privacy of those affected is protected and that all reports are treated confidentially.

5.3 Communication and public relations

- *Clearly communicating our values and principles to the public:* We publicly demonstrate our commitment to an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment.
- *Active collaboration with other organizations and institutions committed to anti-discrimination:* We work cooperatively with other actors to increase our impact and ensure that our activities and concepts are subject to continuous quality assurance and remain open to dialog and evaluation.

5.4 Promoting diversity

- *Recruitment and inclusion of contributors of different identities:* We actively strive for broad representation in our association and address the needs and concerns of all. It is particularly important to us that all calls for participation reflect this and make it clear.
- *Recognizing and celebrating diversity within the association:* We value the differences and similarities of our members, employees and volunteers.
- *Promoting diversity in full-time positions:* We strive for diversity and take different backgrounds into account in our application process.

5.5 Anti-discrimination at events

- *Designing events with the needs and concerns of all participants in mind:* We pay close attention to ensuring that events are inclusive and that we respond to the needs of the participants.
- *Creating spaces at events where participants can feel safer:* We create spaces that are designed to be safe and where participants can express themselves freely and without fear.
- *Training full-time and volunteer event leaders in anti-discrimination and awareness-raising:* Our events are supervised by trained staff who pay attention to the needs of the participants.

5.6. Anti-discrimination in educational work

- *Training educational advisors in anti-discrimination and sensitive communication:* Our educational advisors are prepared to provide empathetic help in difficult situations and to react sensitively to cases of discrimination.
- *The promotion of empowerment and solidarity among participants:* We encourage them to support and strengthen each other, promoting a sensitive, encouraging understanding of the challenges they may face.
- *Create safe spaces:* We offer (young) people protected spaces (so-called 'safer spaces') to exchange ideas and network with each other about antisemitism and other forms of discrimination.

6. Proposal of persons consulted for advice

Person from whom the discrimination originates	Vorschlag von zur Beratung herangezogenen Personen
Board member	- The management - the rest of the Management Board - All full-time employees
Management	- The Advisory Board - the remaining management - All board members
Full-time employees	- All board members - The management - Division managers - Personnel department
Volunteers	- All full-time employees - The management - All board members - Voluntary or full-time team leaders
Visitors Members Participants	- (Voluntary) team leaders, divisional managers - All full-time employees - Educational advisors

If external advice is required, the following offices, among others, can be contacted:
(open and never complete list)

- Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency → www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de
- The German Anti-Discrimination Association → www.antidiskriminierung.org
- Competence center for education and research critical of antisemitism → www.zwst-kompetenzzentrum.de
- Anti-bias network → www.anti-bias-netz.org
- RIAS → www.report-antisemitism.de
- Overview of service centers for anti-discrimination work of the Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband NRW → <https://www.der-paritaetische.de/themen/bereichsuebergreifende-themen/vielfalt-ohne-alternative/beratung-qualifizierung/>

7. Monitoring and evaluation

We will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of our anti-discrimination measures by collecting anonymized data on cases of discrimination and how they are handled. This information will be used to continuously improve our strategies and training programs to better meet the needs of our staff, volunteers, members and participants. The evaluation will be made available to those involved in ZWEITZEUGEN e.V..

8. Conclusion

ZWEITZEUGEN e.V. is committed to creating an inclusive and discrimination-sensitive environment for all. This anti-discrimination concept forms the basis for our efforts to recognize, prevent and eliminate discrimination, raise awareness and responsibly promote diversity and inclusion. We are convinced that only through collective action and commitment can a fairer and more equal world be created for children, young people and all people.

Literature & Sources

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