WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

GLOSSARY OF KEY PROJECT TERMS

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Following is a list of terms and definitions used within the READY project. They are important to understand both the key objectives of the project concept and the scientific theories on which the study visits are based. Definitions are general in nature.

I. DIVERSITY

'Diversity' is a helpful search term but with considerable uncertainties. Therefore, the following glossary shall help to take a closer look at the semantic and factual environment of 'diversity'.

Differences

Every difference is different. Sometimes our differences are biological, sometimes they are chosen, and sometimes they are matter of social construction. The lines between these kinds of difference will always be contested. And since we are social beings, even socially constructed differences are in a sense natural. Seen diversity from the perspective of differences, however, is normally rather critically connoted and has been described in many theories. In these concepts, differences which, due to social power constellations, constitute inequalities between individual people or social groups, are reconstructed. The individual differences can be summarized in larger differential lines (cf. Walgenbach):
Body-oriented difference lines: sex, age, sexual orientation, etc.
(Social) spatially oriented difference lines: nation/state, ethnicity/origin, culture, etc.
Economically oriented differential lines: class, property etc.

Diversity

 (Since this is a key project term, it is discussed in more detail)

Too young, too old, too foreign, wrong sex: we sort out, label, homogenise - to the detriment of all. In the context of the project, however, diversity is seen as a resource, not a handicap. Each individual brings with them a diverse set of perspectives, work and life experiences as well as belief and cultural differences. The term diversity therefore includes individual, social and structural differences and similarities between people and groups that can be found in communities and workplaces and make up a large bandwidth.

We speak about human qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong. These qualities are, of course, present in other individuals and groups, so it's worth reflecting that from their perspective we may seem 'diverse'.

The concept of diversity as it is used in this project encompasses acceptance and respect and is therefore more than simple tolerance. It is about understanding that everyone is unique and contains individual differences; it is also about empowering people by respecting and appreciating what makes them different. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, education, national origin, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious or political beliefs, and other ideologies and worldviews. It asks for their exploration in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment to make sure that people truly value their differences.

Therefore, diversity is understood as a set of conscious practices that involve[1]

- Understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, religions and the natural environment
- Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own
- Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing and understanding (e.g. contradicting religious "truth claims")
- Recognizing that personal, cultural, religious and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others
- Respecting individual rights to self-identification and recognizing that no one culture, religion or view is intrinsically superior to another

It is important to distinguish between the *primary* and *secondary* dimensions of diversity. The primary dimensions cannot be changed: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race and sexual orientation. Secondary dimensions can be changed and include, but are not limited to: educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, parental status, religious beliefs, views and ideologies, or work experiences.

Four Layers of Diversity [2]

The "Layers of Diversity" wheel[3] shows the complexity of the diversity filters through which all of us process stimuli and information. They distinguish between *inner* or *core* dimensions, *outer* dimensions and *organisational* dimensions. That in turn leads to the assumptions that we make (usually about the behaviours of other people), which ultimately drive our own behaviours, which in turn have an impact on others.

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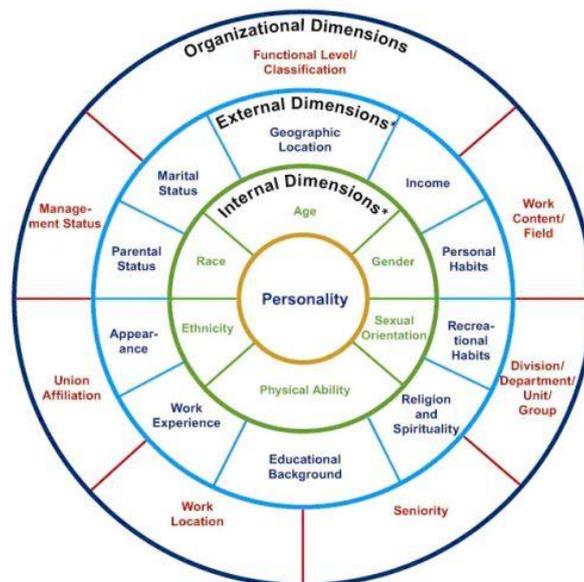
[1] Queensborough Community College: http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/diversity/definition.html (accessed 10 October 2017)
[2] Gardenswartz, L. - Rowe, A. ([2]2003), 32
[3] ibd. 33 (graph taken from http://researchguides.austincc.edu/DimensionsOfDiversity/introduction

Personality (the core) includes an individual's likes and dislikes, values, and beliefs, whereas *internal* dimensions describe aspects over which we have no control. *External* dimensions refer to aspects which we have some control over, which might change over time, and which usually form the basis for decisions on careers and work styles. *Organizational* dimensions concern the aspects of culture found in a work setting.

The *core* dimensions are legally protected from discrimination in many countries. Their common denominator is that these dimensions carry a history of creating inequality. How these terms are to be understood depends on their theoretical location and the corresponding discourses. The recourse to social constructivist considerations from the research fields of the social sciences is particularly helpful in dealing with diversity.

The *internal* dimensions include people
• of all generations (from young to old)
• with or without physical, mental or psychic disabilities
• with different cultural, ethnic and social heritage
• of all gender (women, men, trans-gendered people)
• of all faiths, beliefs, ideologies and worldviews (e.g. humanists, atheists)
• of different sexual orientation & identity (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual)

Which dimensions influence current events depends on context, situation and goal. It is important not only to focus on one dimension, but also to proceed in a multidimensional (diversity of dimensions) and intersectional (connected and interwoven aspects of identity) way. In any case, we must acknowledge that categories of difference are not always fixed but also can be fluid.

Diversity has become a goal for all sorts of institutions—but what it means may depend on who you ask. A study published in *Psychological Science* [4], a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, finds that people's ideologies help to determine what they count as 'diverse'. Groups with members from highly diverse backgrounds simply perform differently (and usually more effectively) than groups with little diversity. Interdisciplinary research teams, e.g. often have the power to solve hard and important problems because each member of the team brings (at least in principle) a perspective and skill set to the problem that some or all other members of the group may lack. This might also apply to religiously or culturally mixed groups. [5]

Learning is impoverished when we are only in homogeneous groups of like-minded individuals who share the same kinds of experiences, beliefs, and aspirations. In the pedagogical context, therefore, in contrast to heterogeneity, the concept of diversity is often positively connoted, expressing that diversity does not primarily produce difficulties, but above all, opportunities. The perspective of diversity directs the viewer to the various differences that pupils bring into a classroom and tries to deal constructively with these differences within teaching plans. The understanding of diversity should lead schoolchildren to deal appreciably and constructively with different cultures and religions and with individual characteristics, attitudes and attitudes (cf. Walgenbach).

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[4] Unzueta, M. et al.
[5] Page, S. (2007)

Heterogeneity

The term simply describes the fact that human beings differ in many respects from one another. Often, this concept is negatively connoted: people connect it with confusion, difficulties and problems to deal with in everyday life. In sociology, 'heterogeneous' may refer to a society or group that includes individuals of differing ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, sexes, or ages (cf. Walgenbach).

Identity or identities

Identity is like culture, there are many aspects to it, some hidden some visible. Essential elements of one's identity are their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage. We follow Stuart Hall's view that identities are constantly changing and therefore for many people their identities are in a constant process of transformation, as they make new allegiances and are subject to pressures, challenges and changes in how they see themselves and their world. Identity is not simply given or fixed, "it is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of being". Hall suggests that identity is something that is never complete, and that it is more helpful to think about 'identification' as a process rather than 'identity' as a fixed state. 'Who we are' is strongly determined by feeling an affinity with 'people like us' or people with whom we share ideas, values, beliefs or experiences.

Intercultural – interreligious learning

The religious dimension of human experience is a constituent part of the culture and identity of a large part of individuals. However, the term 'religious dimension' in intercultural education does not automatically refer to some type of 'religious education' but is aimed at fostering reciprocal awareness, respect and learning how to live together. Taking that religious dimension into account, intercultural education should ensure an understanding of the phenomena of belief and non-belief and nurture the ability to reflect on the different worldviews that can be found in a pluralistic society. Such education needs to develop personal autonomy, a critical spirit, tolerance, openness to diversity and a feeling of belonging to the community as a whole (cf. Council of Europe 2006).

Intersectionality

The theory suggests that various biological, social and cultural categories such as gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, religion, caste, age, nationality and other sectarian axes of identity interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels. As a rule, it infers that exclusion and discrimination are not attributable to a single difference, but rather to a whole bundle of different characteristics, which mutually influence each other, overlap and intensify their effect (cf. Walgenbach).

Multicultural - Intercultural / Multireligious – Interreligious / Transreligious

'Multicultural/multireligious' refers to different cultures, national, ethnic, religious groups all living within the same territory *but* not necessarily encountering each other. In such a kind of society difference is often viewed negatively and forms major justification for discrimination. Minorities may be tolerated passively, but not accepted or valued. Even in cases where there are legal rights designed to stop discrimination, the law may not be enforced uniformly.

'Intercultural/interreligious' refers to different cultures, national, religious groups, etc. living together within a territory, maintain open relations of interaction, exchange and mutual recognition of their own and respective values and ways of life. We are talking then about a process of active tolerance and the maintenance of equitable relations where everyone has the same importance, where there are no superiors or inferiors, better or worse people, etc. (cf. for both terms Council of Europe 2016).

Some theologians argue that the term *inter-religious* suggests a relation between two stable entities. This poses a challenge if one views religious entities as being more fluid and interwoven with other structures and fields, such as culture, gender and social class. When 'inter' is replaced with 'trans', we get the term 'transreligious dialogue', or 'transreligious encounter', taking seriously a perspective on religion, religious identities and religious encounters as a more fluid process (cf. Gustafson, Grung).

Othering

Othering is the process of casting a group, an individual or an object into the role of 'not one of us' to establish one's own identity, neglecting that every person is a complex bundle of emotions, ideas, motivations, reflexes, priorities, and many other subtle aspects. Whether the 'Other' is a racial or a religious group, a gender group, a sexual minority or a nation, this process denies the 'Other' the defining characteristics of the 'Same'. According to Michel Foucault, othering is strongly connected with power and knowledge. When we 'other' another group, we point out their perceived weaknesses to make ourselves look stronger or better. It implies a hierarchy, and it serves to keep power where it already lies.

The practice of 'Othering' may lead to the exclusion of persons who do not fit the norm of the social group, which is a version of the Self. In an educational context, we must be aware of the basic consideration: Who is 'We' and who is the 'Other' within a school, classroom or community? In other words: Who represents the 'norm', 'status quo'? (cf. Spivak, Thomas-Olalde).

Plurality - Pluralism

Plurality refers both to the observable religious and cultural plurality and to the plurality of modernity itself. The latter expression describes the range of lifestyles, cultural and political stances and so on which form the social context within which religious plurality is situated. Plurality therefore denotes a diversity of views and stands rather than a single approach or method of interpretation.

Pluralism is a social situation in which people of different ethnicities, philosophies and moralities live together peacefully and interact with each other amicably (cf. Berger). It is a normative idea based on interpretation and judgement, referring to the various values, attitudes, ethical implications and so on which arise in response to plurality. Religious pluralism is an attitude or policy regarding the diversity of religious belief systems co-existing in society. It does not mean the disinterested-benevolent acceptance of the other, but the active confrontation with the other based on respect for the otherness of the other (cf. Skeie).

Safe vs. brave space

In educational institutions, 'safe space' originally indicated that teachers, educational institutions or pupil bodies do not tolerate violence, harassment or hate speech, thereby creating a safe place for all pupils in a group or classroom, as students frequently complained that certain words or ideas would make them feel 'unsafe'.

The term has been extended to refer to a space for individuals to come together to explore differences and to communicate their experiences with being different in biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability (cf. Council of Europe 2006).

Most educationalists agree that education needs 'unobserved' spaces - not being observed if you want to try out something, accepting failure or putting in a few extra loops. Surveys show that young people want opportunities to learn about and from one another's religious perspectives in the safe space of the RE or Ethics classroom, with teachers providing knowledge and understanding so that they can feel safe to reflect on who they are, their hopes and fears.

Critics[6], however, rightly point out that safe spaces have their place only in the enhancement of free speech and the guarantee that people of all identities are entitled to a tolerant environment, not in the exclusion of other opinions and positions since classrooms would otherwise run the risk of becoming echo chambers, in which one is only surrounded by the same people and opinions.

Diversity contains - today more than ever - a great potential for emotionalisation. Thus, thinking differently or taking other positions may turn safe spaces into real *brave spaces*[7] for many people. Therefore, we must discuss whether school subjects such as RE or Ethics can, should or have to be *safe* or *brave* spaces or rather *communities of disagreement*[8]. And if so, what conditions must be met?

Tolerance – respect - acceptance

Tolerance is often described as sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own without sharing in them. In a weak sense, tolerance means putting up with the fact that others may live as they want to live, even as they do not share our values or belong to the same cultural or religious group. In a stronger sense, it implies that we may consider our convictions are true, good and valid for ourselves but that those of others are

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[6] Cf. Amelung, T. R.: Ein Safe Space kann nur eine Utopie sein, in: Der Tagesspiegel, 22.05.2016
http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/queerspiegel/schutz-vor-diskriminierungen-ein-safe-space-kann-nur- eine utopie-sein/19836850.html [accessed May 20, 2017];

Russel, C.: Safe Spaces and Echo Chambers. How Progressive Movements Stagnate Themselves, in: Huffington Post, April 13, 2015 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/candice-russell/safe-spaces-and-echo-cham_b_7043548.html [accessed May 20, 2017]

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http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-furedi-safe-space-20170105-story.html [accessed May 20, 2017]

[7] Palfrey, John (2017): Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces. Diversity and Free Expression in Education, Cambridge MA

[8] Iverson, L. L. (2018): From safe spaces to communities of disagreement, in: British Journal of Religious Education, February 2018 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323479826 (accessed May 1, 2018)

equally good and valid in their eyes and it is not for us to pass judgement on their conception of what constitutes a 'good life'.

However, our approach is based on *active* tolerance, in the sense of "more than peaceful co-existence, crucial as that is. It must be an active understanding fostered through dialogue and positive engagement with others" (UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon 2011).

Respect means thinking and acting in a way that shows others you care about and value their feelings and their well-being.

Acceptance contains the concept of approval. It has to do with positive welcome and belonging, favour and endorsement. However, it does not automatically mean liking, wanting, choosing or supporting.

Which of the three attitudes could apply here?

II. SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS

Critical Incidents & Features

The *critical incident analysis* was founded by J.C. Flanagan in 1954. Working with 'critical incidents' means collecting situations which are either very positive and can serve as good practice or negative in the way that they could produce misunderstandings or even conflicts. Critical means that there could be negative consequences for at least one of the participants. These incidents may arise from cultural/religious differences between interacting parties or where there is a problem of cross-cultural adaptation. People tend to make judgements or attributions about others based on the behaviour they observe.

When their expectations are not met (*disconfirmed expectations*), this may lead to strong emotional reactions:

- People may feel extremely emotional and get upset
- People may make false attributions or assign inaccurate interpretations to the meaning and intentions of someone's behaviour
- People may begin to inquire about how others interpret or find meaning in their world

Intercultural/Interreligious/Transreligious learning

Interreligious education is designed to open up possibilities, spaces and times for the learner to deepen or, if necessary, to correct one's own definitions of life, knowledge and attitudes. However, it is not enough to get to know different rites, practices and teachings, or to look at the relationship between the individual religions. The decisive question is what people can gain for their own life, understanding of the world, the Other, of religion as such (cf. Schambeck).

We call this the balance between learning *about/from/within* religion, whereby interreligious education should focus on learning about and from the Other. People must develop their own well-founded position how to understand something that seems peculiar and strange. Interreligious learning processes are intended to raise awareness of one's patterns of thinking, attitudes and prior knowledge through which the Other is perceived. Ultimately, this means a theologically justified reasoning about difference (*Differenzdenken*; cf. Schambeck). This includes a 'conflictual' view: the question is not who is right, but how do I deal with the question of truth!

As soon as learning begins, it can no longer remain a matter of the juxtaposition of religions but an argument that triggers change.

Intercultural/Interreligious competence

Intercultural competence is above all a basic principle. It can be defined as "the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions" (Deardorff 2006). This comprises the

- Ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Ability to shift frame of reference appropriately and adapt behaviour to cultural context; adaptability, expandability and flexibility of one's frame of reference/filter
- Ability to identify behaviours guided by culture and engage in new behaviours in other cultures even when behaviours are unfamiliar given a person's own socialisation

Likewise, religions are not only to be described as discourse systems, but as interactions of human beings. *Interreligious competence* therefore develops through interactions of people with different religious traditions. It can be best acquired where in the face of religious plurality learning about religion is simultaneously understood as the learning of human beings.

Whoever is to deal appropriately with the existing - also internal - religious plurality needs to possess the capability to

- Diversification – to distinguish between the self and the other

- Relationing - to interrelate the self with the other

This basic consensus shows that simple language skills are not yet sufficient for intercultural/interreligious competence; it is more important to communicate and act effectively on the basis of personal attitudes and appropriate action and reflexion skills.

Learning objects

People from different cultures might not only communicate in different ways but also experience a situation differently. Therefore, the purpose of the lesson observations, which constitute an essential element of the study visits, is to explore and describe behaviour, communication patterns and interactions in the context of diversity. However, this task does not primarily aim to analyse the lessons from a didactic or methodological perspective but to identify and document certain previously defined learning objects in the context of the project theme. This approach draws on ethnographic research as learning about a context and the people living or working in it by understanding their values, needs, motivation or vocabulary in order to draw conclusions and create innovative solutions.

Each learning object has a lot of features. Observers need to filter out those which are important for them in the observed lesson. A learning object can be divided into an *indirect* and a *direct* one, where the indirect one refers to a certain skill or ability and the direct object of learning to the learning content (Marton & Tsui, 2004). Both aspects can be in the focus of the observers.

Overlapping situations

We speak of a social overlapping situation when people with different cultural socialisation become interdependent for each other and enter into an interactional relationship. The term is a specification of the social overlapping situation in the *Field Theory* of Kurt Lewin. He asserted that behaviour exists in a totality of interacting facts which comprise a dynamic field. The circumstances or conditions in any part of the field are influenced by and depend on every other part of the field. In a social contact situation, people not only deal with their own goals for action, their motives and attitudes, but also have to understand those of the interaction partners in order to be able to act and react appropriately (external comprehension). Thus, you are at the same time in several situations.

The interpretation of the actions and reactions of the interaction partners succeeds better in a similar socialisation through the recourse to shared conceptual and conceptual worlds than in socialisation processes in strongly different cultural orientation systems. The question which orientation systems activate the interaction partners in the particular situation is decisive for the

course of the interaction relationship. In a subject-specific situation, the possibly very different occupational socialisation processes can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (cf. Dorsch).

We speak of intercultural and interreligious overlapping situations or *critical interaction situation* (see respective term) when culturally or religiously caused codes and interpretations of a situation overlap and misunderstandings or uncertainties arise – what might also cause an 'exotic charm' of a situation (cf. Willems).

In order to systematise it is important to grasp the perspective from which we experience the incidents. Three perspectives can be considered:

- the affected person
- the causer
- an observer, co-causer, rescuer

Within a school context, one might distinguish different constellations: Pupils or teachers among themselves, pupils versus teachers, teachers versus principal, teachers versus parents, parents among themselves or pupils versus their environment. We also have to consider the respective power constellations between the perpetrator and the victim, since the form of this relationship might have a direct influence on the communication situation (cf. Apedaile).

As we know, language reflects culture and to understand the impact of a language we must understand its culture. Similarly, languages converge when cultures converge. Linguistic interferences occur also on the level of conceptions and ways of thinking. People do not only activate their everyday understanding of specific terms but their prior conceptions of them on all levels. That is why classrooms sometimes operate in a tension between everyday culture and the pupils' and teachers' background culture of thinking and acting.

The concept of the 'overlapping situation' has not yet been expressively used in religious education, but could be very fruitful there as well.

Theory of Variation

Marton and Booth's *Theory of Variation* (1997) developed the critical incident analyses further by drawing on the ***phenomenographical research*** tradition. It encourages teachers and pupils to identify the critical features of a new object of learning through comparison with existing frameworks of knowledge and understanding. Learning is defined as a new way to experience — an ability to see something from another perspective. To obtain this ***shift in perspectives***, aspects that need to be varied and discerned are called critical. Variation Theory offers a framework to

analyse the lesson subject content and focuses teachers' attention on what is called the object of learning.

By exploring these dimensions, teacher trainees and student educators receive support to raise awareness of religious and cultural diversity and plurality and improve their competences (cf. Byram).

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