

Research program „Facing Global Challenges - From Islamic Religious Education towards Global Environmental Responsibility and Inter-religious Peace-Building

Imran Schröter / Amina Boumaaiz, Pädagogische Hochschule Karlsruhe

The intention of Islamic religious education in State schools (in Germany) is to support young Muslims in the pluralistic society to find their way to religious maturity and identity and at the same time to encourage them to participate and actively contribute to the society. Adolescents should be given the opportunity to critically explore their own religion from the internal perspective of the Islamic faith, taking into account their living environment. Thereby the current establishment of Islamic religious education in public schools and also for institutes for Islamic theological studies at universities (in Germany) is based on the assumption of a potential for peace and a will for peace in the religion of Islam. It is necessary to continue researching and promoting this basis scientifically.

The great fear – whether erroneous or not – of Islamic religious education in state schools unnoticedly paving the way for fundamentalists to exert influence in a government institution could be dismissed from the start by incorporating inter-religious learning. Directing content towards mutual understanding and tolerance for others would not only be demanded by means of the concept but would also be tried out in practice by pupils and also by the teachers involved in direct inter-religious encounters.

In times of increasing globalization and plurality, but also growing nationalistic, populist or radical ideas, inter-religious encounters and peace projects are particularly important. It is obvious that Islamic religious education at a state school cannot isolate itself in religious terms but must be designed for dialogue. Moreover, Islamic religious education should also serve peace in the class community and at school and even far beyond that, it should promote peace in the society and the world.

The impending ecological crisis is also a global challenge and the question arises as to what contribution Islamic religious education can make to environmental education and how Islamic theology positions itself in this regard. Hereby it is also not just about developing concepts and laying theoretical foundations, but above all about the question of specific fields of action and possibilities of environmental activities in the name of Islam. In this regard the aim of the project "Facing Global Challenges" is the exploration of contributions to Islamic religious education in the context of peace and in making theological environmental and peace needs tangible on the basis of new perceptions of other socio- denominational constellations.