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School

Rap against hatred and exclusion: pupils produce their own song

Co-operation project between Arnold-Janssen-Hauptschule, JUBoh and VHS sends a strong signal for respect and tolerance

Last week, a classroom at the Arnold-Janssen-Hauptschule in Bocholt was transformed into a small recording studio: eight seventh-grade pupils produced their own song against hatred, racism and exclusion together with rapper and workshop lecturer Dennis Buss. The project was organised by the Junge Uni in Bocholt (JUBoh) in cooperation with the Volkshochschule Bocholt-Rhede-Isselburg (VHS).

The project aims to send a strong signal in favour of respect, diversity and cohesion. The pupils at Arnold-Janssen-Hauptschule were thus given the opportunity to write their own lyrics, select beats and find expression for their thoughts and feelings in rap.

"Rap is a language that speaks directly to many young people", explains rapper and workshop instructor Dennis Buss. "In the writing sessions, we tackled topics that are of personal concern to them: Friendship, respect, but also experiences of marginalisation. The end result was not only a finished song, but above all the feeling of having created something strong together."

For the director of JUBoh, Jennifer Engels, this aspect in particular is crucial: "We want to show young people that their voices count. In this project, the pupils have creatively processed their experiences and thoughts and put them into a form that also reaches others. This not only boosts their self-confidence, but also shows that they can actively do something against hatred and discrimination."

The school itself also rates the project very positively. School social worker Damian Buss emphasises the educational value: "Many young people experience every day how hurtful language can be - whether at school, online or on the street. For us as a school, it is important to support the children. The result is a song that makes them proud, boosts their self-esteem and sends a clear message at the same time."

At the end of the project week, the youngsters presented their song to a small audience for the first time. A professional recording will follow in the coming days - as an audible sign of respect, diversity and cohesion in Bocholt. "With the workshop, VHS, Junge Uni and the school were once again able to show how important close cooperation is. We are very pleased that we were able to successfully apply for funding, as this is the only way to provide opportunities for special activities in which everyone can participate", adds VHS director Isabel Testroet.

This special project was financed by the Democracy Action Fund of the Borken district and by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia via the project "Shaping (with) Diversity" of the Bocholt-Rhede-Isselburg Adult Education Centre.



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Rapper and workshop lecturer Dennis Buss with the pupils of the Arnold-Janssen-Schule and the director of the Junge Uni Bocholt, Jennifer Engels (left), as well as VHS director Isabel Testroet (right).