PROJECT INFORMATION

FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND LEGAL GUARDIANS

Dear students, parents, and legal guardians,

welcome and thank you for your interest in our project "Together for Tolerance, with each other, for each other"!

We will now provide you with some information about our project so that you can decide whether you would like to participate. Participation is voluntary.

THE PROJECT IN A FEW WORDS:

1. General Information – Who we are and how we work

The project "Together for Tolerance - with each other, for each other" was developed by the Institute of Psychology at the University of Osnabrück and the Association of Lower Saxony Educational Initiatives e.V. (VNB e.V. for its German abbreviation) and is now being carried out at your school with their support. Prof. Dr. Maarten van Zalk from the Institute of Psychology at the University of Osnabrück is leading the project. This information material is currently available in German and English. Other languages will also be available at a later date. The questionnaires are in German. The responsible teacher at your school and the staff at the University of Osnabrück will be happy to help you with any questions.

Important Information:
This project complies with the regulations of the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Society for Psychology (DGPs). The project has been reviewed by the ETHICS COMMISSION of the University of Osnabrück and has been declared ethically harmless.

Organisations we work with:
Radicalization Awareness Network of the European Commission (RAN)
Lower Saxony State Prevention Council (LPR)
Association of Lower Saxony Educational Initiatives e. V. (VNB e.V.)
Theoretical Computer Science working group at the University of Osnabrück

If you don't understand something while reading (for example: Who are the legal guardians? What is an intervention or what is data?), have a look at the Info Box at the end or in the FAQs on our website, maybe it is explained there.

The light bulb and the words spelled in capital letters show you what we explain further.

2. Project procedure

The following procedure will be explained to you again by a teacher in the classroom before you fill out the survey. You will then also have time to ask your questions! The project consists of two parts: (a) the surveys and (b) the intervention.

(**a) The surveys**
If you take part in the project, we will ask you to complete three short surveys at different times (around 10 minutes each). It is important that you take part in all of them. The surveys will take place during class time. We start the project with a short introduction and the completion of the first survey directly afterwards. If you do not have the opportunity to fill out the survey with your own cell phone, you will be given a device from your school to use while you fill out the survey.

The survey sometimes also includes questions on personal topics. For example, what you think about other people and how you behave towards them. We are interested in how the relationships at your school are. That way, we want to find out more about your school's social network. This means, for example, that we ask you who you spend time with. If you participate, you can select the names of other students who are also participating in the project and who have given their consent from lists. Other students can then also select your name. But don't worry! Your answers and the answers of your classmates are secret. This means that you do not know whether other participants select your name or vice versa. Only the staff at the University of Osnabrück will be able to see what the social network at the school looks like. After the survey, only the names of the selected people will be displayed, so that the contact person at your school can only see their names and possibly some of their friendships. We explain more about this in the "Data protection" section. In the questionnaire, you also have the opportunity to tell us what you would like to change at your school - so your opinion counts here! In this way, you can help to improve interactions at your school.

Following the survey, some students will be invited to take part in an intervention. This is a program designed to help prevent conflicts between groups and promote a positive school climate. The exact procedure of the intervention is explained in the section "The intervention". The participants for the intervention are selected by the responsible contact person at the school using a special webtool, which is the subject of the following section. The contact person at your school will only see who these selected participants are and what their social network looks like (without seeing the names of the students who selected them).

After identifying and inviting the School Influencers, there are two other surveys: one that comes immediately after the project group meeting (with the School Influencers) and a last one after the School-Wide Actions. These surveys have the specific aim of assessing the impact of the different stages of the intervention. As mentioned, the goal of the project is to promote a positive school climate through positive and tolerant coexistence and strengthening cooperation between pupils from different cultural groups and backgrounds by promoting inclusivity norms, meaning norms grounded in equality, belonging, and dialogue. These surveys allow us to observe how inclusivity norms are reflected in students' responses and how school influencers and the school wide actions are influencing and promoting them.

Imagine you regularly do sports, for example running. After a while, you may start to feel improvements: running feels easier, you can go longer and you feel stronger. These feelings can give you a general sense of progress. However, if you have a specific goal in mind – for example, training for a marathon – you need measurements that allow you to evaluate whether you are actually getting closer to that goal. By measuring things such as distance, speed, or endurance, you can see how far you are and how you might adjust your training. Measuring at different points in time also allows you to compare your progress and see whether improvements are stable or only short-term. (The same principle applies here: only clear and repeated measures make it possible to evaluate whether an intervention is truly effective.) Sounds exciting? We think so too!

The webtool for selecting students - What is it and how is it used?
The webtool is a program that makes it possible to make your school's social network visible. The social network is the "web" of relationships that exists between students. For this, we will use both the information you provide in the questionnaire and the webtool. An example: Momo and Kim are in the same class and have become friends. In the question "Who did you choose to spend time with?", they both state the name of the other person. However, this connection can not be seen in this way. The webtool is now used to make the network visible. This is quite special, because previously this was only possible with a lot of work from many people. In the end, the goal is to find very well-connected students (the *School Influencers*). This is important because these students are then invited to the intervention. Studies show that intervention projects with these students can be particularly effective.

Step-by-step: How does the selection process work and what does it mean for you?

1. First, your teachers collect the consent forms from you and your classmates to find out who wants to and is allowed to take part in the project. In the case of students under the age of 16, the LEGAL GUARDIANS must also give their consent. A list of all participating persons will then be created and included in the survey.
2. In the second step, the surveys take place. The participating students fill out a survey on their cell phone or tablet at school. They answer questions about interactions at school.
3. The webtool then uses the answers about relationships with classmates to carry out an analysis of the social network in your school – it can therefore show how the relationships or connections between the students are. IMPORTANT: Only the contact persons responsible for the project at your school and the staff at the University of Osnabrück have access to this data. Only the name of the School Influencers are displayed in the network – all other names are not visible.
4. The contact persons at your school take a close look at the network. The webtool helps them to find the students who are connected with their classmates in a special way – the School Influencers.
5. From the list of School Influencers, up to 18 students are invited to take part in the intervention. An equal number of girls and boys from grade 7 to 9 are invited. These students will then receive more detailed information about the intervention process. If you are not invited to the intervention, this does not mean that you do not have good contacts at school – you are also a valuable part of your school network! Moreover, your answers in the survey will help to identify the problems that the intervention aims to address.

(b) The Intervention:
The core of the project is the INTERVENTION, a program designed to prevent conflicts between groups and promote a positive school climate. For this some students who are taking part in the project are invited to take part in up to 10 meetings. The meetings are prepared and accompanied by the school social workers. They are based on a program developed by the University of Osnabrück and VNB e.V. In these meetings, the invited students discuss the problems at the school and what they would like to change in the school. School-wide actions are then planned and implemented together. The whole school can take part in these actions!

3. Voluntary participation and consent - How you can participate

If you would like to take part in the project but are not yet 16 years old, you can only take part if your legal guardians have agreed to your participation (this is called a DECLARATION OF CONSENT). You will receive the form for the declaration of consent from the contact person at your school. In addition to your legal guardians, you must of course also confirm that you yourself wish to participate. As soon as you hand in the declaration of consent signed by you and your legal guardians to the responsible teacher, you will be added to the list of participating students and can take part in the project.

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Your participation in the project is voluntary (both in the surveys and in the intervention if you are invited). You do not have to take part in the project if you do not want to.

4. Data protection - What happens with your data

How will the data be used?
The data is intended solely for this project. All information in the survey, including personal data, is used exclusively for the purposes of this project. The contact persons at the school and the staff involved at the University of Osnabrück assure that the data will only be used as described in this project information. The data and the lists of names from the surveys are only accessible to the contact persons and researchers involved in the project. They will not be passed on to third parties. All contact persons involved in the project at the school and employees of the University of Osnabrück are subject to LEGAL CONFIDENTIALITY OBLIGATIONS.

How is the data made confidential?
After the end of the project, all names in the data will be completely deleted and replaced by REPLACEMENT NAMES. These are randomly generated letter-number codes. This step is called ANONYMIZATION. This means that no answers (including social network data) can be linked to the participants' real names. We therefore ensure that no one can link the data to the real names: the data is therefore secret.

Where is the DATA stored?
All digital DATA is stored in secure locations (encrypted servers) at the University of Osnabrück using the "MyShare" software and stored for at least 10 years after the end of the project in accordance with the recommendations of the German Research Foundation (DFG). Our project follows the requirements of the German General Data Protection Regulation (DSGVO).

Will the data be published?
The anonymized data of the project (i.e. the secret data) will be made accessible as open data in a secure data archive on the Internet (planned data archive at https://leibniz-psychology.org) for the long- term archiving of research data. Such a procedure means that other researchers can also access the anonymized data in order to re-evaluate it if necessary and investigate further questions of their own. For the publication of the data on the Internet, in addition to the deletion of the replacement names, all other personal information (e.g. school, class, group affiliation, parents' countries of birth, migration background) is also deleted. This project thus follows the recommendations of the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Society for Psychology (DGPs) for quality assurance in research. The data collected may be used for publications in scientific journals (e.g. articles) and for presentations at scientific events. This is also done in anonymized form, i.e. without the data being able to be assigned to a specific participant.).

5. Summary

Please consider the following points before deciding to participate in the project:
- Your participation is voluntary. Even if you agree to participate, you can decide at any time not to complete the survey. However, your name can no longer be removed from the list of participants. After the project ends, your name will be anonymized, meaning it will be kept secret (see 4. Data Protection).
- Before you can participate, you must fill out the consent form. If you are under 16 years old, your legal guardians must also give their consent.

- One question addresses a personal topic, namely your relationships with other participants. A list with the names of the other participants will be presented to you as possible answers. You can select names from this list to respond to the question. Likewise, your name will appear in the lists of the other participants and can also be selected.
- The security of your personal data is guaranteed. All researchers and teachers involved assure that the data will only be used as described here.
- Your anonymized data may be published in scientific journals. It is no longer possible to link the data to people or names.

6. Further questions and contact - How you can reach us

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the responsible contact persons at your school or to us via email at tolerance@uos.de. For that please indicate the name of the project "Together for tolerance". Or you can visit our Website where you will find plenty of useful information: www.togetherfortolerance.de

We would be happy if you would like to participate in this exciting project!
We greatly appreciate your support!
Prof. Dr. Maarten van Zalk and the research team
Developmental Psychology – University of Osnabrück

INFO-BOX

What is an ethics committee, and what regulations does this project follow?

The regulations of the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Society for Psychology (DGPs) are intended to ensure that researchers adhere to rules and treat all participants fairly. In order to verify compliance with these regulations, there is a group of experts at the University of Osnabrück: the so-called ethics committee. They take a close look at projects and determine whether these regulations are being followed. The ethics committee of the University of Osnabrück has also reviewed this project: we comply with all regulations and the project is therefore ethically sound. When storing, anonymizing, and using your data, we strictly follow the German General Data Protection Regulation (DSGVO).

Who are legal guardians?

Legal guardians are adults who care for children and are responsible for them. In most cases, these are your parents. If you do not live with your parents, these can also be other adults, such as foster parents or someone appointed by the youth welfare office. They are allowed to make important decisions for you, such as whether you can participate in a project at school.

What is an intervention?

An intervention is an action taken to change or improve something. The goal is to find solutions that make things better in the future. Our project is also an intervention: Together with some students, we develop strategies to help everyone at the school get along better with each other in the future than they have in the past.

What is a consent form?

A consent form is a document where someone confirms in writing that they agree to something. For our project, this means that: Your parents or legal guardians must sign a form stating they approve of your participation. If you are under 16 years old, you cannot participate without this approval. You must also fill out a consent form yourself.

What exactly is meant when referring to my data?

In this project, we will ask you different questions. The answers become your data. You can think of it like a class list where information about all students is collected (e.g., age, height, favorite colour). We can then use the data for calculations. Mathematics then helps us to understand the data from all students and answer various questions (e.g., how tall are most students at school? How many students like the colour yellow?).

What are replacement names, and what does "anonymization" mean?

Imagine you answer a question but do not want anyone to know what you said. For example, you feel embarrassed that your favorite color is yellow. To calculate how many students' favourite colour is yellow, we only need your honest answer, not your name. To help you feel comfortable answering honestly, we replace your real name with a replacement name (e.g., Momo Muster = DK8N). This happens automatically and ensures that your answers remain secret. Later, even this replacement name will be deleted and replaced with a new code, so that no one will be able to find out what you replied. This process is called anonymization.

What is the legal obligation of confidentiality?

Even if we wanted to or could, we are not allowed to share your data or tell anyone what you answered. There is a law that prohibits us from doing so. So we are obliged to remain silent.

INFO-BOX

Will my answers be graded?

No. The questionnaires are not tests. We are interested in your honest answer. There are no right or wrong answers. No one except the people responsible for the project can see your answers. By anonymising your data at the end of the project, we also ensure that your data remains secret.