

Accepting Multicultural Diversity: Building Harmony.

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Introduction:

This is a research project for Reachout foundation which has been conducted in a private school in Sweden. Reachout Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan foundation . Its major objective is to develop awareness about the negative generalisations we tend to make around race and ethnicity and create Stereotypes that leads to Prejudices and Discrimination. The case in point is the issue of alleged racial attacks on people from Northeast India in Indian cities .

Background:

Discrimination, as its official definitions states, is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. (dictionary.com) discrimination can come in all forms and can effect anyone, but it mostly targets racial minorities, black, brown and lgbtq+ communties and disabled people. In this case study, I will present the facts about discrimination and how people of different ethnicities face it.

The Private school where the case study took place, is a very diverse and has students from different ethnicities. Yet sometimes discrimination takes place and becomes problematic. In this school, I have noticed that the students do have a common understanding of what discrimination is, but do not have an understanding of prejudice and bias. Even though the student does not show an understanding of prejudice and bias, the teachers do enforce this in the classroom. The school holds many events such as MUN (Model United Nations) that exposes the students to others nationalities and their perspectives which can lead to a common understanding between the different nationalities prevailing in this school

The students' perspective:

The students that go to this school have a different perspective than the average student. They are surrounded with friends and teachers of multiple nationalities. This can be good or bad, this depends on how students cope-up with their surroundings. Many students that go to this school do not have a clear view of what is going on around them and do not pay attention to diversity and interculturalism. The students do realize that there are some aspects of their everyday lives that are influenced by being around people from many different nationalities. An example of this can be seen in the story below-

Annie, a girl who comes from a small town, that not many people have heard off, looks very different than her classmates and friends. While she is very comfortable with her diverse friend group who accepts her as she is without a second thought, sometimes people make jokes about her skin tone and always seem to apologize

afterwards. This makes her very insecure and conscious of her differences. She thinks that she is made fun behind her back. She does not sure if this is true.

Teachers and peers have noticed this and do confront the people who made fun of her but she feels that while the jokes have de-escalated, they have not stopped. Her peers try to get them to stop and after a really long time and a lot of trying they do, but that still leaves a mark on Annie. Also being a new student in the school, she feels as if she can't reach to teachers. They also do not conduct activities that teach students to be considerate towards one another which could have benefitted Annie. Even if they do, she feels as if she is not benefitting from them and the impact of them is not strong enough. Friends close to her has been a good support and have helped her whenever she feels low. While only a small minority of students tease her, they leave a mark bigger than they could have imagined. Annie still feels like the school should have done more to address her problem and instead of telling people not to discriminate, they should reverse roles and show people what it truly feels like.

My perspective and takeaways:

My experience has been completely different. I collected responses from many of my friends and then compiled them into one document, which took a long time because of end of term assignments. It was challenging to collect them while also working on my own assignments. The responses surprised me and gave me a whole new perspective of the school. I have, personally, never felt discrimination. Jokes about my heritage have been made, but they were never taken to far and while I didn't feel so great about them, I was okay with them. I feel that I have a secure group of friends who are diverse and would never discriminate against anyone. What I could take away from this was that I was not aware of my

surrounding much, I was not able to realize the subtle discrimination that was taking place right before my eyes. After doing this, I have become more aware about how I see other people and how they are being discriminated against, but only slightly so it is hard to report or even confront the people who are doing so. While the school is quite multicultural and everyone has friends from different nationalities, only a few stick to people from the same country. Subtle discrimination is present, while teachers and the school are not doing much about it.

I feel that the school should pay more attention to how the students behave with each other. They must keep eyes on students who are known to discriminate and make jokes about other countries. I feel the school could conduct more activities about creating awareness about discrimination and actively make it a part of the lessons to consciously teach the student about it.

Conclusion:

Most students are very well aware about discrimination and how they and others might be facing it. Yet the students do not know how to combat that discrimination. They do know that they need to do something about it. This is where the teachers can help by conducting more workshops and lessons about discrimination that consciously teach people about it and gives the perspective of both sides so that it is easier for the students to understand and stop. While discrimination can not be completely eliminated, it can be brought to a bare minimum by the correct approach from the teachers, the school and how the information that is all around them is impacting them.

