

Launch of the second campaign on the fight against racism: Empowerment of migrants against racism.



CO-HABITER is launching its second prevention campaign on racism. From June to September, 2012, the team of the association will lead workshops on racism in the shelters of the Migrant Welfare Service (EVAM). The team will also hold an information stand during the intercultural events in the Canton of Vaud. The experimental phase of the project started in 2010. It will end in September, 2013.

The initiative is supported by the Service for Combating Racism of the Federal Department of Home Affairs (DFI – SLR) and the Vaud Cantonal Office for the integration of foreigners and the prevention of the racism (BCI).

«[...] in combating Racism, we will rather combat facts and ideas and not people».

(Monique Eckmann and Myriam Eser Davolio, 2002)

We are all concerned with racism. According to the context, situation and/or circumstances, we can be in one or other following position of victim, perpetrator or, spectator/witness.

If it is part of our daily life and becomes integrated into social relations which, moreover, contributes to its normalization, consciously or unconsciously ; racism constitutes a real danger for a harmonious cohabitation of communities.

Indeed and according to some research studies, the experiences of the actors are unsuspected: among the victims, the feeling of self-hatred, hate of one's group, hate of the other, and the identitarian closure can become extreme; among the perpetrators, the feeling of denial or having all rights can sometimes prevail; among the spectators/witnesses, the feeling of sympathy and empathy are mixed with the fear of intervention.

These various experiences, sometimes contrasting to one and another, contribute to freeze the positions. Then the actors tend to diverge, what hinders any individual and collective surge to discover other people and thus to live together.

The prevention and the fight against racism could mean working these positions both separately or together.

As such, what can be integrated in this framework are the followings : freeing the speech of all the actors, recognition of the experiences of the victims, their protection and their support, awareness by the perpetrators of their own contradictions, responsibility to the law and the motivation of the spectators/witnesses to move from passive to active.

CO-HABITER acknowledges the complexity of this work and is aware of the actions which must concern the three positions in a complete process of prevention of racism.

Nonetheless, it concentrates its present initiative on *the empowerment* of the newcomers in the society.

This work involves the sharing of experiences by those concerned, their awareness of the interchangeable positions of racism, the great in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon as well as information on the support structures.

The organization favours this approach while having the strong conviction that the anti-racism education is a constant and long-term commitment for which everyone can work a piece in the process according to his/her motivation, position, membership and the means at his/her disposal.

CO-HABITER is an organization which is committed to the “better living together” of the communities.

Within this framework, anti-racism education is one of its means of action. Its privileged approaches are non-guiltiness, non-victimization, non-indexation, freeing of the speech, mediation, empowerment and the discovery of Others.

The association departs itself from the moralizing method in its prevention of racism, because its opinion is that it only brings a superficial change of mentality and attitudes.

Lausanne, on June 26th, 2012

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