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**„Media and interreligious learning –
criteria from a religious education perspective“**

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In the pedagogy of world religions and interreligious learning, the topic of the media has up to now been neglected or narrowed down to the functional use of didactic media. There is empirical evidence, however, that the public media culture plays a significant role in young people's socialization today. It also contributes to shaping the images kids and youngsters develop of religion in general, their own religion and other religions as well as of the religions' ability to communicate with each other. Young people also use the media culture as a field of reference and a means for communicating among each other, often across different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Therefore, from a religious education perspective, it seems necessary as well as promising to take seriously the young people's (religious) self-socialization in and with media culture as a precondition and frame of reference for learning at school, and to accompany this self-socialization by critical education. Especially for the field of interreligious learning, a qualified linking of media education and religious education appears necessary. Along these lines, the following pedagogical guidelines will be unfolded and submitted for discussion.

1. Do not regard the kids and youngsters as “tabulae rasae” who have no idea of religion and religions and can in any case only be seen as questioners and searchers (deficit model). Rather regard them as experts of their life-world – that is to a substantial part a media world (resource model; self-socialization). Support them in further developing their resources (in the sense of educationally accompanying their self-socialization) and thereby discovering religion(s) inside and outside the media culture in their life-enriching, but also life-endangering potentials.

2. Do not regard the kids and youngsters solely as religiously “speechless” persons who must be taught the language of Christian faith or another religion. Rather take into account that even secularized young people may have found elements of a (symbolic) language in the media culture by which they reflect and communicate about existential and religious questions. Support them, with the help of religious traditions, in attaining an even more sophisticated and reflective competence of religious expression, communication and thinking.

3. Do not regard the kids and youngsters as passive consumers of media culture who are helpless in face of its manipulative impacts on them, but rather see them as active and constructive recipients who interpret what they perceive. Regard religious education at school and elsewhere as a chance to promote a cultivation of media reception which enables people to perceive the representations of religions in the media in a more multi-faceted and critical way (competence of perception and interpretation).

4. Do not construct a contradiction between the primary experiences of direct „authentic“ interreligious encounters and the seemingly only secondary experiences of the media world. Reveal to the young people valuable alternatives to the “main stream” inside and outside media culture, and support them in further developing their realistic-critical competence to judge.

5. Do not generally downgrade the media culture but be aware that the media are indispensable for the „functioning“ of religions as well as for the „functioning“ of democratic societies (and of the interreligious dialogue within them). Support the young people in their ability and media competence to actively engage in religious, interreligious and societal communication (competence of participation).