

The paper on the views of the Autonomous School Zurich (in simple language)

How the Autonomous School Zurich (ASZ) sees itself.

"Education can never be neutral. Either it is an instrument for the liberation of people or it is an instrument of his domestication, their training for oppression." - Paulo Freire

This means: education can make people free. Or it can make people no longer think for themselves. Then they are not free.

The Autonomous School Zurich is a place, a school and a meeting point. Everyone can join. There are people with ID here. There are documented and undocumented people here. The school is open to all people. Every person has a story and an opinion. For this paper, everyone talked to each other. In the end, we wrote this paper. These are our our common ideas. It is not finished. Sometimes we talk about the paper again and change it.

A decent life for all!

All people belong here. We don't care where someone comes from. We don't care what someone's religion is. We don't care what gender someone is. We don't care who someone loves. For example, whether a man loves a man. Or whether a woman loves a woman. Or whether a woman loves a man. All are equally important and equally valuable. We are against the political and economic system here [1]. Because it is not equal for everyone: some people have more rights. Politics and money decide about people. We are fighting for a world without borders. We want everyone to be free. Everyone can choose for themselves where they want to live.

Emancipation instead of integration!

Everyone at the ASZ has a say. That means: everyone thinks for themselves. Everyone finds their own opinion and talks to others about their own opinion. Together we think about what we want to do at the school.

We do not want discrimination. That means: we are all human beings. We have different genders, skin colours and religions, but we respect each other. We don't want discrimination because of gender (sexism), skin colour or origin (racism) or love (homophobia). We do not want some people to decide for others (oppression).

We do not want integration from one side only. In other words, we don't want people to have to adopt a language or a culture. We all have our own history. We want to talk and discuss together. That way we understand each other and learn from each other. Our opinions change when we talk together.

Just helping is not enough. We want to support each other (solidarity). We want to fight together. We want to change people's situation. Just helping does not change people's situation. We need demonstrations. We also need to talk to people who are not at the ASZ.

We are against the idea of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism means that all people from one culture or one country are the same and do the same things. We say this is wrong: every person is a person. People from one culture or one country are also different. We are interested in people. We are not just interested in the culture, the music and the food.

Living instead of talking!

We don't want violence at the ASZ. We want to be together and learn together. I learn from you and you learn from me. That's how we learn to be brave and strong. We learn to speak our minds. We want to live together as it should be: We want to respect everyone. Everyone should live without fear, without racism, without sexism and without discrimination. We want to be with each other and not against each other.

Education for self-determination!

Education at the ASZ is not just about learning German or math. We want to discuss politics, society and the economy. We want to think critically: that means we want to think for ourselves and not believe everything we are told. We want to be able to change the situation and determine our own lives.

At the ASZ, everyone should be able to take part (participation) and discuss things together. We don't say teachers and pupils. We say moderators and participants. Because we think that everyone has knowledge. Everyone can teach each other something. Moderators and participants all learn.

We try to make no distinction between moderators and participants. Sometimes someone knows more than another person. We try to meet as people and learn from each other.

Self-organised, grassroots-based and participatory

The ASZ is open to all people and groups who agree with this paper. With us, all voices of all people are equally important. Everyone has a say. Everyone helps to organize.

Various groups are fighting for people to be able to stay in Switzerland. They fight for all people to be able to live where they want (movement for the right to stay [Bleiberechtsbewegung]). The ASZ is also a group that is fighting for this. We sometimes work together with other groups to achieve our goals and exchange ideas.

The ASZ does not work for the state. The ASZ does not work for the canton. The ASZ does not work for the city. The ASZ fights against migration policy because migration policy oppresses people (repression).

We do not draw a line between the ASZ and society. But we have clear opinions. We say our opinion.

We want to speak our minds loudly. We want people who have a different opinion to hear us.

We need money for the ASZ. We receive money from people, groups and organizations (donations). Nobody is allowed to tell us what we do with the money. If someone tells us what we have to do, we won't take the money. In other words, we want to remain independent.

Zürich, spring 2019 (translated 2024)

[1] When people make (produce), buy and sell things, this is called the economy. Our economy makes sure that people with a lot of money get even more money. That's why a few people have a lot of money. They are rich. They have houses and factories. They get even more because they already have a lot. But many people have little money. People with little money have to work a lot. But they don't get rich. This economy is called capitalism. In capitalism, money is more important than people.