



animals,
climate and
civic education

Podcast 3: Civic Education

Abstract

Imprint

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Abstract of the civic education podcast:

Animal ethics in political education

Podcasts 1 and 2 focused on *Animals* and *Climate*: animal ethics and our relationship with animals, using the example of farmed animals, and the impact of animal agriculture on the climate.

Podcast 3 is primarily aimed at teachers in schools and other educational contexts. It focuses on how information from the previous two episodes can be integrated into lessons in accordance with the principles of emancipatory education. The facts and figures from podcasts 1 and 2 can be used in lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. In podcast 3, however, we focus primarily on teaching politics in higher year groups.

In this podcast we look at the principles of critical emancipatory political education and the *Beutelsbacher Konsens*, a guideline for political education developed in Germany in the 1970s. We also suggest questions and topics that can be looked at in lessons and provide didactic tips, such as how to respond appropriately to emotional reactions and problematic statements from students (for example comparing the situation of farmed animals to the Holocaust). This is followed by an interview with Robert Pilgrim, a teacher, in which he shares his practical experiences on teaching this subject matter. He discusses, among other things, how to motivate students to engage with the topic and become active themselves.

Brief summary of the interview:

- Robert Pilgrim is 35 years old, runs an animal sanctuary and for the past eight years has been working as a teacher in a community school in rural Schleswig-Holstein. The school is attended by over 800 children and young people. He mainly teaches students with special educational needs. He also works as a liaison teacher and teaches the optional course “Animal protection and animal rights” for students aged 15 - 16. This course aims to cover the whole range of human-animal relationships, including species protection, animal testing, zoos and dairy production - with a particular focus on the ethical dimensions and the impacts on health and climate change. When designing lessons Robert aims to make them relevant to the students’ lives. Course activities include visiting animal sanctuaries and other animal welfare projects as well as cooking lessons. He is also campaigning for more plant-based options in the new school canteen, which is currently being designed.
- Overall, Robert has had mixed experiences. He has faced some opposition: due to the rural nature of the area many of the parents work in the animal industry. As a result students and parents often react defensively to a critical examination of the human-animal relationship and analogies to other forms of discrimination. However, there is also very positive feedback from students and parents. Robert receives a lot of encouragement to tackle these important issues, which are still under-represented in society in general and in schools in particular. Robert hopes that his school will continue to make further progress. He has the support of the school’s management, especially with regard to the new canteen.