

## What can I do about discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment?

We tend to play down incidents of discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment; we either give the aggressor the benefit of the doubt or sometimes even doubt our own perceptions. When suffering from discrimination, bullying and/or sexual harassment, we may additionally feel embarrassed, ashamed and afraid of victimization or of being judged by others. Of course, all these emotions and worries are valid and should be respected.

However, they do not need to prevent us from taking action. Being victimized is not your fault, it is your fundamental right to be treated with respect. If you are being discriminated against, bullied or sexually harassed, there are a number of things that you **can** do.

### **Seek advice. Confidentiality is ensured.**

When you are in a country with a culture and social norms that are unfamiliar to you, it can be

hard to assess how to deal with difficult situations. You may feel nervous about naming the injustice done to you, thinking you may not have interpreted the situation correctly. Trust your instincts! If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe something probably is wrong.

You do not need to deal with this on your own; confide in family and friends – get as much support and confidence you can. Do not hesitate to be in touch with the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Officer or the Counselling Service at the Barenboim-Said Akademie to discuss any matter in strict confidence, and to be fully informed about your options and their consequences. Please see names, addresses and telephone numbers on the back.

### **Set boundaries if you feel able to. Take notes.**

If you feel confident enough you might want to tell the aggressor that their behavior is unwelcome and ask them to stop. Sometimes an early word can prevent the matter an escalation. You may also do it in writing if you do not wish to face the aggressor or have a person you trust accompany you. This prevents the aggressor claiming that they did not know you objected to their behavior. Keep notes of what happens; note incidents, witnesses, if any, dates and times, and keep a copy of any letter you send to the aggressor. This can be important evidence, especially if you consider filing an official complaint.

### **File a complaint.**

At the Barenboim-Said Akademie, action against the aggressor will be taken irrespective of who



they are or the position they hold. The concrete complaint procedure is regulated in the Akademie's *Statutory Guidelines on the Protection against Discrimination, Bullying and Sexual Harassment*. If you are unsure whether you have grounds for a complaint, do not hesitate to be in touch with the Equal Opportunities Officer at the Barenboim-Said Akademie. It is your right to have the complaint treated impartially, promptly and confidentially. It is also your right to be taken seriously, and to be protected from victimization.

### **Apply for special consideration.**

If your experience of discrimination, bullying and/or sexual harassment has had a negative impact on your performance in class you have the right to apply for special consideration. The application is to be submitted to the Rectorate's Office in written form. You are not obliged to reveal anything that makes you feel uncomfortable; you can attach a generally worded letter from the Counselling Service to your application that states that something serious has occurred and that this has had a

significant impact on your ability to study. If you are unsure whether you have grounds to apply for special consideration, do not hesitate to be in touch with the Counselling Service or the Equal Opportunities Officer at the Barenboim-Said Akademie.

### **Relevant Policies and Advice.**

Statutory Guidelines on the Protection against Discrimination, Bullying and Sexual Harassment.

General Act on Equal Treatment (2006).

[https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/publikationen/general\\_act\\_on\\_equal\\_treatment\\_2018.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=2](https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/publikationen/general_act_on_equal_treatment_2018.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2)

### **Useful contacts**

#### **Equal Opportunities and Diversity Officer-**

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