



## Civic Education with the Smartphone: Discovering places of diversity and exclusion with the app *map the gap*

Katherine Arp

<b>Name of Activity</b> Map the gap	<b>Total time</b> Time for preparation, playing and follow-up: about 90 minutes each
<b>Overview</b> The project <i>map the gap</i> uses an app, to create an activity similar to an interactive paper chase to discover places of diversity and of marginalization.	<b>Materials/room</b> Smartphone, free app <i>map the gap</i> which can be found in the Google Play Store or the App Store
<b>Number of people</b> (Various) small groups of 3 to 4 players	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> Young people between 14 and 18 years. Adults
<b>Learning outcomes</b> <i>Map the gap</i> helps participants confront, understand and address many forms of discrimination. The app also shows places that are positive examples of how people with different living realities can come together in equality. The project enables young people to deal with exclusion and diversity in their reality and encourages discussion.	

## **PART I: The background to the Method**

### *Educational philosophy:*

The basics for living together in democracy shall be transmitted by civic education and citizens' judgement abilities and their democratic behaviour will be strengthened. Equivalence — the assumption that every person has the same values—is the basis of a democratic society. Anyway, it is challenged by prejudices, exclusion or discrimination over and over again. Racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, devaluation of Muslims, refugees, homosexuals, homeless and of people with queer identities or special needs are a widespread phenomena in Germany. This is also known as 'group-focused enmity'. At the same time, society is becoming more diverse in its ways of life, family constellations and migration stories. Therefore, civic education should discuss the chances of a diverse society and the dangers of exclusion, reaching and including especially young people.

Digital media is part of everyday life of young people. In Germany, 97% of the 12 to 19 year-olds possess a smartphone of their own (JIM-study 2017 [Youth, Information, (Multi-) Media])<sup>1</sup>. Age appropriate designs of civic education should therefore also come up with digital offers. The project *map the gap* provides an app, which is similar to an interactive paper chase to discover places of diversity and of marginalization. It can be used independently in small or big groups. The app leads players by their smartphones via GPS (Global Positioning System) along a route where tasks have to be fulfilled. In a peer-to-peer-approach, young people choose places in their neighbourhood, where they wanted to show the app during a workshop. These can be places where exclusion becomes obvious such as the swimming pool where girls experienced sexual harassment, the club where black people are turned away or the town hall where adolescents have few possibilities to participate. On the other hand, the route leads to places where living together in diversity works out well as in a youth centre that counts on inclusion, the intercultural sports club or a store for everyone<sup>2</sup>. In this way, the players of *map the gap* confront many forms of discrimination. The app also shows places that are positive examples of how people with different living realities can come together in equivalence. The project enables young people to deal with exclusion and diversity in their reality and encourages discussion.



Information, videos and pictures related to the places that the players find, appear on the smartphone so that new perspectives or past events can be experienced. The questions and tasks of the tours reach into the players' real world and request them to work collectively. To achieve points, the group has to exchange opinions and find answers together. Acknowledging different perspectives and feeling empathy for others are aims of the game. It sensitizes young people to discrimination and asks them to question prejudices. In this way, *map the gap* encourages building of one's opinion via the app. Participating in the tours is a playful approach to fundamental questions of living together in democracy at a low threshold.

## **PART II: The Method**

### **An interactive paper chase about prejudices and diversity:**

#### **Playing *map the gap***

*Map the gap* can be played in a town where a tour already exists or new tours can be created e.g. with the software *Actionbound*. (There is more information in the part 'Developing an own tour').

#### *Preparation*

- *Map the gap* creates a space to talk about prejudices and exclusion. This can be painful for some people; facilitators should pay attention to the topic beforehand to avoid offensive language and behaviour.

- In our experience, sometimes teenagers do understand words like discrimination or sexism differently or incorrectly. Words

that come up should be defined in the group so that everyone understands what is talked about.

- For preparation, common methods to deal with prejudices or discrimination are recommended.

### *On the tour — playing the game*

- The app *map the gap* is downloaded free of charge from the Google Play Store or App Store.

- In the app, all tours that are created up to now are available. Choose a nearby one.

- The small groups go to the starting point of the tour from where the app leads them by GPS to the next stops.

### *Follow-up*

- Enough time should be slotted to talk about questions and topics that came up during the game in the groups. Therefore, all the places the groups found during the game can be gone through again and the backgrounds of the tasks should be discussed.

- The results, the photos and videos taken by the small group during the tour are a good basis for a discussion. They can be accessed, watched together and visualised as the experiences of the small groups by the whole group.

### *Developing an own tour*

- The *map the gap* app is based on the software *Actionbound*. It is available worldwide in German and English. If one wants to create a GPS tour at his or her place, there is more information at [www.actionbound.com](http://www.actionbound.com) (there are free and charged options available).

- The places for a tour can be chosen and the tasks can be designed individually. It is recommended that the tour is not too long. It should include diverse types of tasks and self-made photos and media are used.

- The technical design of the tour is just one aspect: it is more important to know what should be transmitted by the tour. If one wants to deal with group-focused enmity, prejudices or diversity, it should be made sure, that one organizes a workshop for his or her group regarding these topics first. One's own topics can also be emphasized.

- There is the option to design a tour that needs GPS-access in the area where it is played, but it is also possible to invent questions,

quizzes and tasks that do not use GPS.

*map the gap* is a cooperation project between the Federal Youth Association of Lower Saxony and Centre of Democratic Education. It was financed by the Ministry for Science and Culture of Lower Saxony.

More information in German at [www.mapthegap.de](http://www.mapthegap.de)



MAP THE GAP

### Notes

1. The research network of media education Südwest conducts annual studies regarding the use of media in children and teenagers. The JIM study focuses on youth, information and (multi) media.
2. In these stores you can find donated but good products at an affordable prize. Often people who work in the stores are those who've been jobless for a long time and who haven't been able to find jobs in the labour market.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Katherine Arp* dealt with societies, gender and the global distribution of power during her studies of history, politics and MA Atlantic Studies. She got to know perspectives of the global south in Bolivia, Colombia and Chile and is now working in Hanover in civic education for a diverse and open society.