

The Ideas Office, Switzerland



The Ideas Office was set up by a teacher in a bilingual school. As well as the usual difficulties between groups of children, such as fighting and bullying, the language groups faced each other with icy silence.

In 2002, in order to contribute towards a dialogue between the cultures and to reduce tensions the first Ideas Office started: Troubled children can deposit their worries in a letter-box. Voluntary counsellors invite them to come and discuss their problems. The children look for a way out of their distress together. A check ensures that the measures have been carried out and that the solution is lasting. Through this solution-oriented approach the confidence of the children is improved and their social competence strengthened. This reconciliation experience prepares them for a responsible life in a free society in the spirit of peace and tolerance.

The Ideas Office is a place of Education through Reconciliation. It can act as a valve in a school or district. In 2004 The Ideas Office won the Orange Award, which was set up by UNICEF Switzerland and Orange Switzerland. www.ideenbuero.ch