

## WFP Austria event on Africa Linz

Therese Heitzinger  
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Mrs. Maria Ackwonu-Hirnschall gave a pictorial feature about her work at the day centre for Koran – students ("Jardin d'Espoir") of the Austrian association "AMINA". Maria also gave a very good presentation of her work at a health promotion centre at the outskirts of St. Louis in Sénégal, Africa.

Maria worked for 6 months as a voluntary aide. During her stay she mainly took care of "Talibés" – boys, whose parents had given them to a "Marabout" (a sort of Koran-teacher). Together with some other associates she cooked for all Talibés in St. Louis. To some of the children she taught some French and – most of all – she tried to teach them the basic elements of hygiene – e.g. washing hands before eating their meal, which is even more important, since all children eat from the same large bowl with their fingers.

One excerpt from her memories: "I have learned to know Sénégal as a very peace-loving nation. The people there are searching for democratic ways for their living together. At the moment there are still many stones (obstacles) in their way, but eventually these may one day become flagging for the streets, where people can walk safely...into a future, where the "Jardin d'Espoir" no longer will be a project for volunteers, because there will be no more begging children, all have a place in school and all have enough to eat.

Maria's blog: <http://mariasenegal.tumblr.com/>

The guests at our event were very attentive and interested. The many colorful pictures gave an impression of the unbelievable poverty and filth, yet on the other hand also the delightful vibrancy.

For her versatile work for peace and her commitment for the city of Linz (teaching German language to homeless people, migrants etc.) Maria was honored with a peace-ambassador-certificate.

We are looking forward to work with her more often in the future!

Reported by:

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