

WFP Austria: Strong Families, Safe Communities, Preventing Youth Violence

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How can we prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence and crime? This important question brought together experts from international organizations, education, healthcare, diplomacy, and civil society for a timely discussion on the role of families, schools, and communities in building safer societies.

Speakers agreed that effective crime prevention begins long before young people encounter the justice system. They highlighted the importance of early childhood support, values-based education, strong family relationships, safe spaces, and opportunities for young people to develop confidence, leadership, and a sense of belonging. Practical examples ranged from UN prevention initiatives and neuroscience to school leadership, youth empowerment programmes, and dialogue projects bringing together Arab and Jewish young people.

The event concluded with a shared conviction: lasting peace and crime prevention begin when children feel safe, valued, and supported. As one speaker powerfully remarked, "If hatred can be taught, why not peace as well?"

