



## An Afternoon of Lebanese Culture

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*By Gregor Sattler*

**N**atascha Schellen, who is currently completing her Masters study at the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University, grew up in Lebanon where her parents still live and involve themselves in several peace projects.

On 19th November she shared her enthusiasm for her homeland with an international audience at a Lebanese cultural event, jointly held by the Women's Federation and the Universal Peace Federation. Natascha gave a vivid report about the country and its history, centering on its people - their attitudes and traditions.

She dealt with various conflicts in Lebanon, but stressed above all the exceptionally good and pleasant interactions that she had experienced in her school time with children and families of various faiths.

The country's Constitution aims at peaceful coexistence by recognizing 18 religions and specifies that the State President should always be a Maronite Christian, and the Minister President a Sunni Muslim. In the current crisis (the resignation of the State President), the citizens of Lebanon are striving to find a solution without their country becoming a pawn to be abused by foreign powers.

The speaker showed impressive photographs demonstrating the diversity of the countryside- the sea and beaches, mountains and valleys, towns and villages - and she related many personal experiences giving a vivid impression of her country.

Her remarks about architecture and music were most informative, and many of the audience practiced the 'dabke' dance under her guidance!

And especially appreciated at the end, were the Lebanese delicacies that she had prepared, such as hummus, falafel, mutabbal and taboule.!