

WFP Styria, Austria activity report

Suzuko Hirschmann
February 3, 2016



1) Cultural Trip to Upper Austria

On the 2nd and 3rd of May we organized a cultural trip to upper Austria. We visited the sister of Mrs. Kathi Pranzl (member of WFP), who welcomed us warmly to her home with cake and coffee. She showed us the so-called 'cloth-print technique' and afterwards we tried to print different kind of patterns on T-shirts, Tablecloths, and cushion covers ourselves. Surprisingly also the male participants were very inspired by this technique and printed beautiful pieces as well.

On the same day our trip went to our next host family named fam. Gutenbrunner. We could deepen our friendships through sharing our experiences at the warmly prepared dinner table. On the next day we visited the 'dye's-market' in a town called Gutau. Our time of being together became an unforgettable memory.

2) Japanese culture-event at the educational center Mariatrost

After the recommendation by Dr. Peter Presinger (Peace ambassador, Chairman of the Austria- Russia Association) we decided to organize a Japanese culture-event on 24th of Oct. 2015 under the theme "A Way to realize my true self" at the educational center Mariatrost. The sponsoring (200 Euro) from the educational center Mariatrost made it a little bit easier for us to organize the event.

Kado (Ikebana), Shodo(calligraphy), Kendo, Sado (Tea ceremony), which we presented, applied to the theme of the event, because their purpose is indeed to help to realize the 'true self'.

The event was opened by Mr. Takatoshi Yano who played on his classical guitar with the accompaniment of a Japanese violist. They played some beautiful Japanese songs together and suddenly the room became another world. All participants were moved a lot by the Japanese songs.

Afterwards Mr. Prof. Anton Grabner-Haider gave a lecture about Japanese history. Even I as a Japanese heard some parts of his lecture for the first time.

After our presentation of Ikebana, Shodo, Tea ceremony, and Kendo the audience asked some quite professional and specific questions like "Why did the Japanese author Yukio Mishima commit 'Harakiri' with his comrades in a public way? ", or "Why did the Japanese government restart the nuclear power plant in Fukushima after all their painful experiences?".

At the end the guests enjoyed the japanese snacks and Greentea which we had prepared. The guests were so happy to experience the Japanese culture through native Japanese and they appreciated our efforts.

At this event we also asked the audience if they wanted to support 19 young refugees who are currently living in a town called Feldbach and we could collect a donation of 160 Euros at this event. We as WFP

Styria added 140 Euros, therefore a donation of altogether 300 Euros could be handed over to Pastor Weingartmann, who is taking care of the 19 young refugees.



3) 3-day congress in Graz (18th – 20th of Nov. 2015)

"Global Citizenship - an alternative to actual form"

From Nov. 18th to 20th, 2015 a congress under the theme "Global citizenship- An alternative to actual form" was held in Graz.

Prof. Grabner had asked me at the Japanese culture-event in Mariatrost if I was interested in contributing for this congress.

This congress was mainly organized by an organization called "New Akropolis" and it was held at the center "Phönix". Some professors, mayors and the Ex-mayor of Graz gave interesting lectures.

On the last day there was an intercultural program, for which I was also invited to give a short lecture of 15 minutes about the Japanese mentality. The Ex-City Mayor opened the program with the words "... 'refugee-crisis' is not the appropriate term, rather it should be called 'the crisis of world politics', because it's not the refugees who are the cause of this crisis - they are the victims."

Representatives from Italy, Russia, Japan, Iran, Indonesia, Africa presented their own countries in various ways like dance, music and lectures.

At the end everyone carried different letters, which created the word "We live in variety as an enrichment."