

Another example of the activities from "Who is my neighbour?".....

The aim of the project seminar entitled "Helping is a duty" was to motivate students to be independently active in charitable work. The teacher presented various projects and encouraged the students to look at opportunities in institutions as well as in social projects.

This gave rise to a special commitment to asylum seekers who live in communal accommodation in the immediate vicinity of the Maristengymnasium. A social worker enabled the students to contact Nigerian women and their children, who were then invited to the school regularly on the same afternoon. The students showed themselves to be very creative with regards planning activities: painting, handicrafts, playing together, and music making. The children were open and enthusiastic about all the activities and were perfectly at home with us.

Our African friends got the students to sample traditional food from their homeland, while later making pizza together, which was great fun for the children. Both sides were so enthusiastic about the 'foreign' food that recipes were exchanged. Communication with the mothers was somewhat difficult at first because they were initially very reserved, and also because their Nigerian English was not very easy to understand. But that changed quickly, and soon the students felt that the mothers were enjoying the meetings as much as the children.

At the school fête in the summer, the seminar group organised a stand with African dishes. While the mothers were selling the food they had prepared, the students looked after their children.

'Let's keep in touch' was the wish expressed by our Nigerian friends when the summer holidays came. That wish was fulfilled by the students with an invitation to a Christmas celebration. The joy of seeing each other again was very real on both sides when we met for tea and cakes before Christmas. Christmas handicrafts and paintings were prepared with great enthusiasm. The unexpected highlight for our Nigerian guests was the distribution of Christmas presents, which was made possible by financial support given by the Parents' association.

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