

Remembrance projects in cooperation with Austrian Teachers

80.000 white balloons - Letters to the Stars



Vienna, Heldenplatz. More than 15,000 students researched the lives of victims of the Shoah and released 80,000 white balloons with "letters from the present to our past, for our future" as part of a touching commemoration ceremony.

"An impressive celebration which not only allowed people to remember gracefully, but also gave rise to a spirit of optimism."

Example of a research and a letter in German.

<http://www.lettertothestars.at/en/uploads/pdf/Rieger.pdf>

Commemorative Events

In November 2003, Jewish and non-Jewish students assembled on Vienna's Seitenstettengasse to lay pages with names of Austrian victims in front of Vienna's main synagogue.



Night of Silence



During the “Night of Silence” on May 7, 2005, thousands of young people from 17 different nations lit candles in front of the Mauthausen concentration camp, one for each of the 100,000 killed. They did build a touching luminous temporary memorial the day before hundreds of survivors visited the concentration camp.

Flowers of Remembrance



25,000 people, among them 15,000 high school students, gathered at Vienna’s Stephansplatz during the ‘National Day of Remembrance Against Violence and Racism’. In memory of the 80,000 Austrian victims of the Holocaust, 80,000 white roses were placed behind a symbolic barbed wire fence. After a dignified and touching commemoration ceremony that included survivors, students and artists, project participants carried roses with the names of victims of the Nazi regime to the victims’ last Austrian addresses before their deportation and murder. “Flowers of Remembrance” was a unique event worldwide. Not only the 25.000 participants have been involved, but also 10.000ds of inhabitants of the houses, where the murdered jewish population formerly lived. Some reacted with anger and just tried to remove the roses as quick as possible from their doors. Most were welcoming the remembrance project and some started their own research about the former inhabitants of their houses. In several houses memorial plates have been installed, some even could get in touch with survivors and invited them into their houses to unveil together the memorial plates.



Book project: The Survivors:

After we saw how big the impact this project had on the survivors, we began to try to bring them in touch with Austrian students. A wonderful book was written by the students who met the survivors all over the world during the next years. Here an example of a biography in German.

<http://www.lettertothestars.at/en/uploads/pdf/Kern.pdf>

DenkMal



After students met survivors all over the world, more than 200 came to Austria to visit the classes of the students they met or the schools where they have been before 1939. We asked the students to build a DenkMal (a piece for remembrance) but it's also a pun in German, Denk-Mal means start to think, or be ready to think....

I picked this example of the stone involved in copper because it shows how important a creative approach can be. The teacher told me, that while hammering the year dates carefully into the metal the students realized not only rationally but also emotionally the atrocities of the Nazis. A student told her, but that's impossible, this girl had exactly my young age, when she was killed....

In small groups I would like to discuss, what might have been the conditions which made this project so successful, and begin a brainstorming about own projects where most of these conditions could be integrated.