



Winner of Fritz-Steppat-Prize 2022

My name is Leigh-Ann McSweeney. I am 27 years old and I am from Cork, Ireland. I was always interested in languages and culture studies in school, which is why I decided to study BA International, majoring in the subjects German and Spanish, at University College Cork from 2013-2017. I spent the third year of my degree on Erasmus at the Leibniz University in Hannover. On finishing my Bachelor degree in Cork, I decided to return to Hannover to study the Master of Atlantic Studies in History, Culture and Society in October 2017.

The Master of Atlantic studies was a great programme because I was able to deepen my knowledge in the cultural studies area. I was also able to build on my Spanish language skills, when completing a compulsory internship. I did my internship in Barcelona with a small cultural organisation, Centre Euro Africa, whose aim is to bridge the gap between African and European cultures.

I decided to write my thesis on the topic of youth participation in political and social movements in post dependence Senegal, in particular looking at the influence that hip-hop culture had on the election campaign of 2012, because political decisions often impact youth the most. It was interesting to investigate how hip hop culture, a culture often more associated with drugs, sexism and violence than politics, was the chosen instrument for the youth to have their voices heard. I am currently working as a Junior Communications Officer at Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung in Hannover.