

Cooking with the candidates running for mayor in Passau 2020

Description: In the course of the communal elections 2020 we invited the candidates running for mayor in the city of Passau to a cooking event with young voters between 15 and 27 years old.

Idea/vision: During cooking and/or eating people get closer to each other by getting a task finished as a group. We wanted to engage an open dialog between candidates and participants and minimize the distance between their roles. The main goal was to make young people actively participate in politics (and go vote!). Therefore most of the hard-to-reach youth was our main target audience: Thus they are empowered to participate in every day's political life. Our moderators and organisers reached this goal by supporting the youngsters with the required environment in which this could take place.

What is it? Activity

Why do we do it? The BREXIT showed us that youngsters were not responsible for the decision to leave the European Union. The biggest part of them voted to stay in it. Moreover, young people were the lowest counted group to go to the voting. Most of the people voting to leave were older. That is why the young generation will have to live with the decision of the UK to leave the EU. Because of that we want to motivate young people to vote and to make their voices heard and to be more interested in politics, political activities and decisions. The cooking event with the possibility to meet politicians and to ask them questions was a fitting decision to encourage that.

IOs: IO1 – IO5. The biggest IO is IO3.

Target group: People under 27. Mixed groups. For every kind of educational background, but most of all: for people who are not interested in politics. Language level should be B1 and above because participants engage in political thoughts and discussions. It is not necessary to be able to read and/or write. Special skills are likewise not necessary. The cooking abilities do not need to be high as the cooking is distributed within the group and support from peers and politicians is guaranteed. Facility specifications are mostly indoor but it is also thinkable to move it to an outside place (for example grilling outside). 16 people are the ideal number of participants (4 participants per table) but it is also possible to do the activity with between 12-24 participants. Do not forget to also count the number of moderators (four at least, one per table) and the supervising organisator.

Material/equipment: Everything needed for the cooking. Oven (more than one), groceries, tableware and dishes, depending on the recipes for the cooking. Moreover flipcharts to write down the rules and "idea bubbles" (sheets of paper on the walls, needed for giving inspiration what to talk or ask the politicians). Don't forget to print out every recipes and lists for groceries shopping.

Additional requirements: Briefing into hygiene regulations, and into dangers of hurting oneself while cooking/chopping/washing. First aid kit and fire extinguisher. The room or rooms should be prepared depending on what is to be done within the event. During our cooking event it was necessary to prepare salad and fruits for it. Wash fruits and vegetables BEFORE the event. The cooking takes about 90 minutes. The covering of tables and preparing the long table takes about 30 minutes on top. So be sure to have all recipes and plan accordingly to it.

Requirements for the trainer: Moderation of the discussions is very important. Talking shouldn't be interrupted, dialogues instead of monologues are key to the success. Make sure that every participant gets enough space and room for questions and to remark their thoughts.

Program:

1. Greeting the participants and the candidates:
2. Introducing the trainers and the idea of the activity
3. Introducing the candidates
4. Explanation of the program points
5. Group photo
6. Drawing a lottery of the participants to the four cooking tables
7. Cooking with the candidates – Participants move to the next table after 20 minutes
8. Eating together at the big table
9. Video statements of participants and candidates, about why they want to vote or make their voices heard and about the cooking event itself
10. Feedback of the participants

Content description:

- 1) Introduction: First of all we welcomed every participant and told them to write their names in the list of participants. Then we did small talks with them and went on to the overview.
- 2) Short overview: With the help of a flipchart we explained the program points 1-10.
- 3) Agenda item & Activity: The activity itself started with point 6 on the program, the participants were divided after a quick lottery to their different groups and tables where they started the cooking.
- 4) Wrap up activity: Eating together at the big table.
- 5) Evaluation methodology: See points 9 and 10, feedback.
- 6) Follow up: The desired follow up was the communal election 2020 on March 15, where it took place. We are sure our activity could motivate the youngsters to go voting and raise their political and social awareness after our event. We think their competences grew as it was desired beforehand.

Framing activities: No extra framing activities needed; the dynamic of the event already employs framing activities by itself and by the moderators and organization. By rotating the participants, framing happens.

Presentation styles used: Lecture, group discussion, visual media, digital media, report

Pedagogical approach: Self-directed learning, interactive learning, cooperative learning, self-reflection, experimental learning

Instructions and recommendations on implementation: For this we need to go back to the first planning. The idea arose in the middle of December 2019, whereas the first cooking event took place on the second of March, 2020. We recommend a time of preparation about two months. Advertising

was done in social media, directly on the streets by talking to people, in stores and mall, and also in classic media like newspaper and a radio station, especially for young people. Moreover we gave interviews in classic media. It was complicated to acquire people participating in our communal voting workshops or in our cooking activity. First of all because Passau is a city where many people from outside come to go shopping or work. So, it was not always easy to talk to under 27 year olds, from Passau, wanting to participate in our activities. Some thought we wanted to advertise for political parties, so we had to change our strategy. What really worked well, was to acquire people by telephone calls. We thought of youth organisations, youth centres and of sport clubs. After having talked to the people working there, we got people to participate, representing these organisations. The other half of participants was gathered by above mentioned ways.

Secondly our cooking activities started Mondays at 6 pm. Maybe this fact scared off some participants who wanted to think about participating.

Considering these two points, it might be useful not to print out many flyers but to leave them in digital kind and send them around in e-mails and to post them in social media.

Background information: Over the course of two months, we took a look at local newspapers and cut out articles regarding our topic. Thus we prepared questions and information about the candidates, their parties and their view on certain political, economic and social topics. Nevertheless, it has to be said that the participants prepared their own questions and just got some inspiration by our “thinking bubbles” we put on the walls of our community room. For the next time, it is not necessary to put in so much work in preparation about the topic as it was not used in a relevant way. This saves time for next time we do a workshop/activity like this.

Potential risks and boundaries: See - requirements for the trainers

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