



Savoury
Dishes
for
Adult Education
and
Counselling



Guidelines and Toolbox



Education and Culture

Socrates
Grundtvig



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Socrates Grundtvig

This project has been funded with support from the SOCRATES-GRUNDTVIG programme of the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.

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Print: Verlag Gesundheit

This publication was developed in the course of the SOCRATES-GRUNDTVIG project
"Food Literacy - A New Horizontal Theme in Adult Education and Counselling
(project number: 116559-CP-1-2004-1-GRUNDTVIG-G1)

Projektpartnerschaft:

aid infodienst Verbraucherschutz, Ernährung, Landwirtschaft e. V., Bonn

BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH, Wien

Consortium Langhe, Monferrato e Roero, Italien

Folkuniversitetet Kristianstad

Initiative Geschmacksbildung in Kooperation mit Slow Food Wien

IRFA Sud, Montpellier

Latvian Adult Education Association, Riga

Papilot Institute for Enhancing and Developing of Life Quality, Ljubljana

Szamalk Co., Budapest

Universität Kassel, Fachgebiet Ökologische Lebensmittelqualität und Ernährungskultur

University Glasgow, Department for Adult Continuing Education

Verlag Gesundheit, Wien

For non-commercial purposes, a download version of this publication will be available until
30 September 2009 at:

www.food-literacy.org

Savoury Dishes for Adult Education and Counselling



Guidelines and Toolbox

Development Team:

Sonja Schnögl, Rosemarie Zehetgruber (Initiative Geschmacksbildung, Österreich)

Silvia Danninger, Monika Setzwein (BEST Training, Österreich)

Regina Wenk, Madlen Freudenberg (Universität Kassel, Deutschland)

Claudia Müller, Maike Groeneveld (aid infodienst, Deutschland)

Contents

Food Literacy! Savoury dishes for adult education and counselling	7
Part 1 - Why Food Literacy?	9
Definition of terms: What is Food Literacy?	10
Why is it necessary to introduce food literacy?	10
Aims and purposes of the project	10
Who can use the Guidelines and Tool Box?	11
What are the advantages of the Guidelines and Tool Box?	11
Food Literacy: A new approach in nutrition education	12
Educational targets and competences	12
Change of perspectives: New contents and methods	13
Part 2 - Good to know and of good use!	15
Everyday nutrition in modern life	16
The cultural dimension	19
The social dimension	21
The individual and biographic dimension	23
The physiological dimension	24
The economic and political dimension	26
The ecological dimension	28
Food quality or: What is good?	30
Part 3 - Toolbox	33
Practical tips for trainers and advisers	34
Suggestions for preparation	34
The inner attitude	34
Check list: Wellness as part of the seminar routine	35
Gender-oriented seminar design	35
Which method for which educational target?	37
Selected Methods:	38
1 "Initial questions"	38

2 “Carrot pantomime”	39
3 “Pictures and sayings concerning nutrition”	40
4 “What food am I?”	41
5 “Culinary Wanted Poster”	42
6 “Tasting: Do you have good taste?”	43
7 “Eating with one’s ears”	44
8 “Smell: Guess, what it is?”	45
9 “Traffic light feedback”	46
10 “Nutritional quiz”	47
11 “Estimating quantities”	48
12 “The influence of commercials”	49
13 “Nutritional diary”	50
14 “Eating biography”	52
15 “Creating a cook book”	53
16 “Preparing a meal”	54
17 “Excursion to a food producer”	55
18 “Bazaar of eating cultures”	56
19 “Pro & Contra Club”	57
20 “Let’s go shopping”	58
21 “The whole world in a shopping basket”	59
22 “Bitter-sweet chocolate”	60
23 “Culinary Good-bye present”	61
24 “Set table”	62
25 “Harvest wagon – dust cart”	63
Case studies	64
Appendix: Literature and Links	69

Food Literacy! Savoury dishes for adult education and counselling

“Where do we come from? Where are we going to? And what are we having for lunch?” According to the Austrian comedian Josef Hader these are the three most crucial questions of mankind. We totally agree, especially on the striking importance of food. Eating and drinking, and everything connected to it, does play a key role in life. Moreover, what we eat and how we eat does have numerous effects on the environment, economy and society as a whole.

Due to current developments in society, we all face challenges in having to cope with our daily nutrition. Everyday work allows less and less time for the provision and preparation of meals, demands on healthy and good food are increasing, there is a wide and altogether confusing range of different food, and people are becoming more and more insecure about various recommendations on nutrition. At the same time, a growing number of people lack the competences relevant and necessary for dealing with the issue of nutrition.

Against this background, everything connected to people’s nutritional habits has become a subject most relevant for education that therefore needs to be considered and treated appropriately in adult education. To do this, it is necessary to change approaches both contents-wise and didactically: “teaching” should more and more be replaced by the motivation of self-determination and empowerment. By integrating food literacy into current adult educational measures (e.g. courses for long-term unemployed people, debt counselling etc.) it will make it more possible to reach the target group of socially and educationally disadvantaged people.

It is not at all necessary to fall into cultural pessimism or paint too gloomy a picture. Still, the changes just mentioned do bring new demands on the educational sector. These should be reacted to in both quickly and in the best way possible.

The Food Literacy project aims at supporting people all over Europe with organizing their everyday nutrition in a self-determined, responsible and enjoyable way. In this way, we consider the project to be a contribution towards the sustainable, democratic development of European citizenship.

Enjoy your meal!

The Project Partnership



Part 1

Why Food Literacy?



Definition of terms: What is Food Literacy?

In international educational discussion, the term “literacy” is increasingly used in a wider sense than its original meaning (the ability to read and write). In the course of this development, it was initially competences belonging to the area of natural science or technique that were focused on (e.g. “computer literacy”). By now, “functional literacy” comprises a whole package of technical and social competences that people need to organize their life in society by having equal rights, being active and responsible. It is in such a context that we would like to place “food literacy” as a term and content of education.

Definition: “Food Literacy is the ability to organize one’s everyday nutrition in a self-determined, responsible and enjoyable way.”

Why is it necessary to introduce food literacy?

New demands – decreasing competences

Developments in society, changing relations between the sexes and different styles of living bring new demands for organizing everyday food provision. It is the continuously increasing choice of new foodstuffs, services and recommendations on nutrition that force us to make many individual decisions. Demands for healthy, varied food are increasing. Developments such as these are a challenge for people having to manage everyday nutrition. The necessary competences, however, are decreasing, especially among groups of socially disadvantaged and young people.

It is one of the new challenges for adult education to fill this gap between, on the one hand, increasing demands and, on the other hand, decreasing competences.

Basic education for the future

According to the guideline of “sustainable development”, a number of big challenges for society are connected with the field of nutrition. Dealing with nutrition in a competent way is, therefore a major element of basic education for the future. Food literacy must be regarded as part of “basic education” in the way it is defined and demanded in the “Memorandum on Lifelong Learning” by the European Commission.

Aims and purposes of the project

The project regards itself as a contribution to a culture of nutrition counting on sustainability and individual self-determination. It:

- introduces Food Literacy as a new horizontal theme in adult education and counselling,
- sensitizes multipliers and trainers in adult education, as well as people working in counselling institutions, to this subject,
- develops materials for integrating food literacy into different educational and counselling opportunities, from computer courses to debt counselling,
- particularly takes into consideration the needs of educationally disadvantaged target groups (e.g. socially disadvantaged and migrants) and
- enables trainers and counsellors to convey Food Literacy to their clients.

Who can use the Guidelines and Tool Box?

- adult education and counselling institutions,
- institutions of health and consumer education,
- institutions offering nutrition education,
- trainers,
- counsellors,
- social workers,
- anyone who wants to broaden his/her knowledge of nutrition and convey this to others

What are the advantages of the Guidelines and Tool Box?

Introducing food literacy as a horizontal theme in adult education and counselling brings advantages on many different levels:

For institutions, providers, trainers and counsellors:

- Eating is a current subject that everybody is affected by and many people are interested in.
- New course measures can be developed around this subject.
- Introducing subjects of nutrition provides additional profit for your client, a clear advantage in competition!
- Food literacy can be made use of as a positive image factor!
- The emotional components of the subject of food create motivation and sustainable learning success.
- Group processes can be arranged positively via eating.
- Food literacy is a positive way of dealing with cultural and social differences.

For participants and clients: (Learning via the stomach!)

- Food literacy offers learning with additional value – e.g. knowledge of nutrition in a computer course!
- Dealing with food means that every course participant can make a contribution.
- Food Literacy offers learning contents contributing to health and wellbeing.
- Eating has an effect – also in a course! Whoever eats and drinks well will be well able to concentrate.
- Good food supports your physical fitness and mental performance.
- Self-esteem, self-responsibility and the ability to experience are increased by food literacy.
- The subject of eating and drinking creates community spirit (it is an Austrian saying that “eating brings people together”) and supports the idea of tolerance.

For society as a whole:

- Food literacy contributes to sustainability and health, that is, to the aims of society.
- It helps with avoiding costs resulting from illnesses caused by wrong nutritional behaviour,
- shows ways of reaching socially and educationally disadvantaged people and
- offers a contribution towards the democratic development of our society.

Food Literacy: A new approach in nutrition education

In many European countries, there are attempts at nutrition education through projects and campaigns. There are different judgements as to the actual effect of such attempts. In any case, traditional education, which is based on natural science, is generally regarded as an attempt that has failed: having increased people's knowledge, it has not managed to produce long-term effects on people's actual eating habits that are determined by many factors.

It is a fact that nutrition education, by now being omnipresent, often leads to irritation and insecurity on the part of consumers. How come?

Some of the reasons: there are more and more experts and so-called "experts", recommendations are frequently changing and often contradictory, or cannot be differentiated from "food fashion" by ordinary people. Seeing through all this requires a lot of consumers' knowledge and competence in making decisions. Moreover, in many cases there is not enough of a critical attitude towards the possible interests behind such campaigns and recommendations, as well as concerning one's own needs and opportunities. This is a challenge for adult education!

Different studies show that it is particularly hard to reach socially and educationally disadvantaged people by nutrition education. By integrating food literacy into already existing educational and counselling offers, these target groups can also be addressed.

Food literacy is certainly not about making people follow current nutrition recommendations! It is much more about

- **empowerment** in terms of strengthening self-determination in the framework of nutritional behaviour,
- supporting **the ability to make decisions**, for example when dealing with excessive ranges of food, campaigns and adventures offered, as well as
- **providing essential and necessary basic competences**, e.g. preparing meals using fresh seasonal products.

The aims of nutrition education in terms of food literacy are part of its definition: enabling the self-determined, responsible and enjoyable organization of everyday nutrition.

From this, we can derive the following:

Educational targets and competences

Target 1: A person organises his/her everyday nutrition in a self-determined way.

This means that he/she

1. is aware of his/her nutritional behaviour and understands it in connection with his/her biography,
2. knows about the social, cultural and historic influences on eating habits and understands their respective effects,
3. shows sufficient knowledge of nutrition and food in order to be able to critically question statements given in the media and made by experts,
4. knows his/her personal needs in nutrition and
5. is able to organize nutrition in a way that has a good effect on him/her.

Target 2: A person organises his/her everyday nutrition in a responsible way.

This means that he/she

1. understands the effect of nutrition on his/her health condition, the environment and society as a whole and understands the respective connections between them,
2. knows about food production, processing, transport and disposal,
3. is informed about the composition of food and can judge its quality,
4. is able to select appropriate products within the framework of his/her personal budget,
5. makes decisions as a consumer that are quality-oriented and effectively develop his/her style of living.

Target 3: A person organises his/her everyday nutrition in an enjoyable way.

This means that he/she

1. can feel for himself/herself what is good and what provides personal pleasure,
2. realizes that conscious perception using all the senses and a varied experience of taste is a condition of enjoyment,
3. appreciates cooking and eating as an aspect enriching everyday life,
4. regards dealing with food as an elementary part of human culture and
5. is open to other culinary cultures.

Change of perspectives: New contents and methods

How do we have to structure and organize nutrition education in order to be able to reach the targets of food literacy that have been described above? The approach has to be new both in terms of content and methods. This new approach is now being compared with the practices used until the present. It can be employed in measures such as public nutrition communication (campaigns), as well as when nutrition education and counselling is offered. For this reason, in the following chapter we use the term “nutrition communication” for all the areas mentioned.

Nutrition between nature and culture!

Until now: Nutrition communication is primarily based on natural science and tells us which ingredients can be recommended and which are harmful, focusing on health as the main target.

Better: Food is a subject of culture and everyday life. It is about identity, community and enjoyment of life and pleasure. When it comes to nutritional behaviour, a lot of cultural, social, emotional, personal and practical factors play an essential role. These have to be made the centre of attention in nutrition communication, since, after all, who eats only to stay healthy?

Something for everybody or the most suitable for each individual?

Until now: Many measures of nutrition communication are directed at the public in a very general way.

Better: Target-group-specific focus, since the population consists of groups differing greatly from each other in terms of interests, needs and possibilities.

Reaching socially disadvantaged groups!

Until now: Socially and educationally disadvantaged people are barely reached by common initiatives in nutrition communication. However, it is especially among these that there are often weight problems or illnesses caused by wrong nutritional behaviour.

Better: Meet people where they are! – the integration of nutrition communication into educational and counselling opportunities (courses for the unemployed, social office, debts counselling). In carrying these out, we should accept different eating cultures and enable social and cultural diversity.

Women's thing – Men's thing!

Until now: Differences between male and female nutritional behaviour are not sufficiently taken into consideration. Men are hardly ever addressed.

Better: We need specific opportunities for both women and men. Men need to be addressed more directly – they do have a right to acquire nutrition competence and the independence connected to it. It is, however, also about sharing the everyday work of food provision in a fair way.

Who are the experts?

Until now: Nutrition communication usually comes from academics belonging to a social group that is different from the ones addressed. In this way, eating is made an expert subject.

Better: Empowerment! People are experts in their own everyday lives. They must be supported in terms of organizing their everyday nutrition in a self-determined way, corresponding to their actual needs. They must be motivated to ask for supporting frameworks from policy-makers.

Rules or opportunities?

Until now: People are often confronted with advice and rules in large quantities in a warning manner. In many cases, the demands of everyday life are not taken into consideration.

Better: Provide new opportunities, offer support for making decisions and finding orientation! In this way, people can get information, discover new opportunities for themselves, select among different options suitable to their everyday life.

One for all or all for one?

Until now: Nutrition communication strongly appeals to the sense of individual responsibility and creates the idea that each individual can solve his/her respective problems. Whoever does not manage is regarded as a failure. With many people, bad conscience is sitting at the table.

Better: Connections between nutrition, society, economy and the individual have to be shown and taken into consideration. All areas – production, processing, trade, consumers - have to be included. Policy is challenged to provide supporting frameworks and also to incorporate the economy into respective processes.

Solo or as an orchestra?

Until now: There are many single activities that can hardly achieve any sustainable effect.

Better: Long-term, overall concepts including all main areas. Combination of target-group-specific media information and individually adjusted educational and counselling opportunities based on everyday life and the personal surroundings of the respective target groups.

Part 2

Good to know and of good use!

The following chapters have multiple functions: They offer a description of everyday nutrition in modern life, from which the necessity for introducing food literacy into adult education and counselling becomes obvious. They give insight into the many dimensions of nutrition and thus provide an important base for a holistic understanding of nutrition and nutritional behaviour. The contents of the following chapters can be used as a source of information for courses and seminars.



Everyday nutrition in modern life

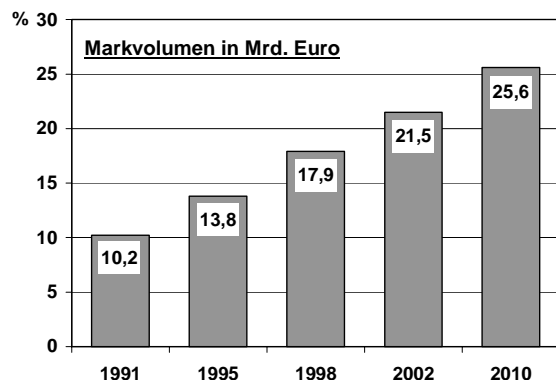
Today's way of producing, processing, preparing and finally consuming food is different from the one some decades ago. There is no longer a common understanding of something like a proper and good meal. On the contrary, in our pluralized and individualized society, various eating cultures determined by regional, national, ideological, social or ethnic factors can exist next to each other or even combine with each other and mix. This provides new opportunities for satisfying one's individual needs. At the same time, however, we are confronted with new social norms: physical attractiveness, ability to perform at work, health, enjoyment, or the simplification of work in the household have become guiding factors, and rising demands bring more need for information and coordination. As a result, there is, especially among women, an overall wish to make everyday nutrition easier.

When, where and who with do we eat?

To most Europeans, the three classic main meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner, are still a fixed component in everyday life. In addition, most people do still have at least one hot meal a day. Nevertheless, the number of both young and older people having meals outside their homes has considerably risen. Due to long distances between place of work and place of living many employees cannot go home during their lunch break, so they depend on the service of more easily reached restaurants, canteens or fast food chains. In many cases food is consumed only in short breaks or while doing something else.

Take-away-food in Germany

Due to time budgets becoming smaller and smaller, the consumption of food outside people's homes and the use of convenience products is expected to increase enormously.



Source: Zeit Graphik ZMP/CMA, BBE (according to: Rützler 2003: 118)

Due to working life, work for the family and various leisure activities, time is short for many people, especially on workdays. Flexible working hours, as well as children's full schedules, result in many cases in families having hardly any time for regular meals on an everyday basis. However, people have not abandoned the wish to have meals together, which is why these are often put off to the weekends. European families do still spend more time together having meals than on any other activity. Even singles (the number of people living alone is continuously rising, especially in big cities) do not usually want to have meals on their own, but prefer to eat in company. This, however, is a demanding situation for them: they have to keep social contacts and dispose of sufficient financial means in order to arrange meals in the company of friends or colleagues.

Who provides the food?

Fast food has not entirely found its way into many families' life yet. Therefore, mothers still spend considerable amounts of time on preparing meals every day. In many social settings it is still mainly the women who are responsible for the provision of food. As a consequence, they not only suffer from having little time, but also face the particular challenge, within a certain budget framework, of having to meet the rising demands of healthy and varied nutrition that are linked to individual preferences. In this duty, even women who have a job are only rarely supported by their husbands. There are some men who like cooking. They often, however, act out this activity for preference as a leisure activity, which means at weekends or when having guests.

The somehow extraordinary dishes prepared by men are more likely to be appreciated than everyday meals being done by women under time pressure.

The fact that children are less and less often asked to help in the household not only leads to a rising amount of work for many mothers. It also results in many young people no longer acquiring the basic knowledge and skills of buying, preparing and storing food. They are, therefore, neither able to deal with the risks of nutrition nor ever experience the joy of providing and preparing food for themselves.

The competence of cooking

Confronting people with the question whether, being equipped with basic ingredients, they would be able to prepare traditional meals without using recipes shows the following results: About 85-90% of forty-year-old women feel able to do so. Among those under forty, the same is true for only 40-50%, numbers tending to decrease with age. (according to Rützler, 2003).

There is no adequate and systematic reaction to this lack of competence in common school curricula. It is particularly young men who remain dependent on others in this important and increasingly complex area of life: they either get provided in the "Hotel Mum" or, later on, by a female partner. Most of them have hardly ever experienced or taken the chance to develop competences for managing their everyday nutrition in a self-determined way. It is, therefore, one of the main aims of the project Food Literacy to motivate men in particular to fill these gaps in experience and competence.

What do we eat?

Although there are considerable national, ethnic, regional, social and gender specific differences, we can still observe a clear general trend in preferences for certain foods. More and more people eat fruit, vegetables, yogurt, poultry and fish. Cheese is also among favourite foods. The consumption of pork and beef, on the other hand, has been decreasing for some years now, similar to the use of animal fats.

Does our food make us ill?

Our affluent society seems to be characterized by a rising number of civilized ailments that are partly caused by inappropriate nutritional behaviour: there are more and more cases of heart disease, circulatory illnesses, cancer and diabetes mellitus. It is also the general lack of physical exercise, going hand in hand with our modern way of living, that has a negative effect. More and more psychological problems (stress) can, for instance, result in eating disorders. In addition, some experts complain about a growing number of overweight children, whereas others, which also needs to be stated, point to an insufficient quantity of studies and the wrong interpretation of statistics in this connection.

Due to the fact that there are resulting costs to be expected for society and the health system, the whole subject has attracted public attention. One positive result is that there has been a certain sensitisation on the close connection of health and nutrition. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that there is no generally accepted definition of the term “overweight”, and even the regularly used “Body Mass Index” is controversial. The concepts of ideal weight and ideas on the body are always culturally determined and can change in the course of time. It is also important to avoid the simplified verdicts of “guilty”, for instance against mothers, caused by such public discussion. Quite on the contrary, our project Food Literacy aims at supporting adult consumers of all age groups with organizing their own culinary culture in a self-determined and responsible way, instead of burdening themselves with a bad conscience.

Who is reached by expert knowledge on nutritional issues?

Not only is nutrition an everyday subject for many members of society, it has also been subject to innumerable scientific studies. In order to combat the rising number of illnesses caused by wrong nutritional behaviour, there has been a European-wide effort to provide all consumers with existing expert knowledge. Increasing consumption of fruit, for example, can be regarded as a sustainable result of such information and counselling efforts.

Only rarely, however, is there direct transformation of this knowledge into nutritional behaviour, since each individual nutritional culture has its place in a person’s general way of living. Food that is considered to be problematic by experts might fulfil important functions within a certain social context: it might provide consolation and comfort, stabilize identity or symbolize someone’s belonging to a certain group. For migrants, for example, it can be important to stick to traditional nutritional habits in order to maintain their own identity within a foreign society. Groups of society that are generally not easily reached by education, including those who have a high risk of suffering from illnesses caused by wrong nutritional behaviour, very often do not get into contact with expert knowledge, since it does not have much to do with their daily life.

The project Food Literacy aims at making a contribution in such a way that consumers can actually confront themselves with expert knowledge and regard it as an impetus for increasing their own opportunities.

Insecure consumers?

In fact, whenever we try to follow the advice of nutrition experts we run the risk of making our daily decisions on food consumption even more complicated. Nutrition experts do not always agree, and again and again they confront us with new, sometimes contradictory recommendations. It is especially findings and statements on the dangerous pollution of food that are continuously changing. Evoked by such kind of information, the insecurity of consumers is becoming stronger and stronger. This is even reinforced by the fact that, due to industrialised and globalised food production, people in many cases do not have the chance to get their own clear ideas about the production, processing or transport of food. In addition to this, many people either do not have sufficient knowledge for evaluating such processes or they simply can’t find enough time to inform themselves or check things out for themselves. Most members of our society are therefore dependent on consumer protection policy (“From stable to table”) to be able to achieve security.

Information making us insecure?

It is also a fact that in many areas there are high quality standards by now, for example on hygiene, that do not have a reassuring effect on many consumers. This is also closely linked to reports in the mass media. In the earlier days of subsistence farming and regional food provision, only a few people were affected by some food that occasionally showed a dangerous lack of quality. In today’s industrialised and globalised nutrition sector it is all, of a sudden, millions of people who are potentially affected, so public interest is very high whenever there is a quality and security problem. The media often report on food scandals in a very emotional way. Daily nutritional practice and the existence of high quality food, on the other hand, cannot be made into such stories of and do not provide high viewing figures. This functional logic behind the world of the media leads to the fact

that they present primarily problems in the nutrition sector. What we miss, however, is purely informative reports or practical advice on dealing with everyday dangers or a multitude of high quality products. In our project Food Literacy we therefore aim at supporting consumers in their way of actively and appropriately dealing with information, instead of just keeping the impression of being exposed to a somehow risky nutritional sector.

Responsible decisions?

Since we are more and more being confronted with an increasing range of food, competence in making decisions is becoming more and more important. Every day, consumers have to decide among innumerable products of different processing levels, prices and qualities. We are encouraged to change our nutritional practice by various innovations in production technique and new marketing strategies. The food industries are eager to open new markets and therefore continuously widen their product range. They often promise additional effects of their products in order to secure market shares. Children, for example, are addressed by colourful packages that sometimes promise different surprises. Adults are often promised to get an extra effect by particularly healthy additives. “Energy Drinks” or “Functional Food” have in this way become top sellers. In many cases, however, such a special additional health value cannot be scientifically proved. On the contrary, promises of that kind tend to make consumers even more insecure, since they create the idea that a state of health can only be achieved by consuming certain products. The project Food Literacy aims at taking a critical distance to such promises. This will be achieved by supporting consumers to become aware of their own experience, needs and preferences and use these as the main criteria for their decisions.

Equal opportunities in eating?

Even in pluralised democratic societies, chances are not equal for everyone. This is, for example, true for access to education, the labour market and income. Social inequality of this kind is also reflected in the culinary cultures of different social groups. We know that socially advantaged people tend to prefer healthy food, which leads to higher life expectancy. In contrast, representatives of the lower social classes often show eating habits that cause illnesses. In the long term, these different styles of living can lead to the gap between privileged and disadvantaged becoming bigger.

The project Food Literacy wants to make a contribution to combat this development by supporting all members of society to organise their everyday nutrition in a self-determined, responsible and enjoyable way.

The cultural dimension

Nutrition between nature and culture

is part of humankind’s basic biological condition. Nevertheless, human nature does not only mean being an organism in need for metabolism. By nature, human beings are also cultural beings. Being human we can only exist within a network of meaning, values, rules and techniques. Correspondingly, human relation to nutrition is also of a cultural kind. Any processes connected to nutrition, from production to disposal of excretions, are determined by culture and society. This is also true for supposedly “natural”, organic processes. Smelling and tasting, for instance, are not only physiological processes, but also cultural techniques that we learn and adjust to our way of living. It is also the way we chew and swallow that is determined by normative rules: not to chew with our mouth open, not to eat noisily, not to bolt one’s food etc. Similarly, appetite itself or the circumstances of digestion are culturally channelled.

In particular, in every society there are ideas and rules structuring the way we deal with food. Where and when we eat, which food is for whom, how we behave at table etc. – these are all principles based upon social agreements. This is also reflected in the colourful variety of eating habits that can be found on our planet. Despite all the striking differences in culinary customs that exist between peoples of the world, however, there are three things all human eating cultures have in common: Everywhere potential food is excluded from the nutritional system as being “not edible”. Everywhere there are table communities. And everywhere there is a

cultural set of rules, the “cuisine”, the choice, preparation and combination of foods. Satisfying the innate need for sustenance is therefore always preceded by cultural evaluation and expectations of behaviour.

Is everything edible that is edible?

The cultural characteristics of nutrition can best be exemplified by what is not eaten. Biologically, people are omnivores, creatures making use of many different kinds of food, not restricted to a certain kind of nourishment. Nevertheless, we do not make use of all plants and animals nature offers. Only a small amount of substance that is physiologically suited to be food is actually eaten. Differentiating between “edible” and “inedible” is a universal phenomenon – it can be found everywhere in the world. The results are highly variable: What is common food for some – monkey brain, insects, pork schnitzel – utterly disgusts others. Nutritional taboos are omnipresent in our society as well: Although we would not suffer any disadvantages in terms of health, we in Europe do not eat dogs and cats; there are no native predators, reptiles and insects in our pots and on our plates. Obviously it is not because of any material characteristics that certain animals (and plants) are excluded from our nutritional system. Physical utilization processes do not require such a selection, except for cases of poison. Nutritional taboos are in most cases based on magic, mythic, religious or moral thinking. Such taboos can have such a strong effect that people actually die of starvation in the presence of potential sources of nourishment.

Food as a symbol

According to a statement by the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, every food is a symbol. His colleague, Claude Lévi-Strauss, said that the cultural set of rules of a cuisine is something like a language in itself by which societies express their structures. There is actually no need of complicated science to realize that food and forms of eating convey messages. We all know this from everyday experience, even if many things take place in an unconscious way.

Apart from their nutritional value, food and drinks are always of a symbolic value.

Take lobster, caviar, truffles and champagne: they are associated with luxury and cultivated manners. Sweets are said to give comfort and spoiling, grills are regarded as rustic, ethnofood, such as sushi and tortillas, goes hand in hand with a modern cosmopolitan attitude. Stews and other representatives of “good plain food”, on the other hand, are associated with tasteful care for tradition. Nutritional preferences and styles can therefore communicate certain characteristics of people. They can indicate social status, belonging to certain groups and expressing inner beliefs. When we look at the different eating habits of women and men, this becomes particularly obvious.

“Food for men“ – “food for women“: nutrition and gender

Numerous scientific studies show the differences between women and men in nutritional behaviour. It is a known fact that women, on average, eat more fresh fruit, vegetables, milk and wholemeal products than men. In addition to this, women are more often on diets, tend to eat in a more self-controlled manner and sometimes have ambiguous feelings about eating. Men, on the other hand, eat much more meat than women and consume more alcohol. When choosing food, men primarily follow their taste preferences, and generally, more often than women, associate eating with joy and enjoyment. There are no biological reasons for all these differences. It is much more the case that certain ways of nutritional behaviour serve to emphasize the idea of “masculinity” or “femininity” in social surroundings. Eating styles, just like clothes, cosmetics, hobbies etc. can serve as gender emphasizeers. In accordance with cultural models of “masculinity” and “femininity”, dishes, tastes, ways of preparation, but also attitudes and emotional approaches towards eating, are coded in terms of gender. “Masculine” taste favours rich, hot and bitter, whereas “feminine” taste goes for light, mild and sweet. Grilling is a men’s thing, quite in contrast to baking, which is “feminine”. The “stronger sex” helps himself joyfully and plentifully, whereas the “fair” sex acts politely; “hard” men cannot be bothered about health risks, “soft” women are anxious about these etc. By following, either consciously or unconsciously, such stereotypes in terms of acting, feeling and thinking, and by perceiving others through such gender-specific glasses, we continuously reproduce these different ideas of male and female behaviour.

Instruction on Food Literacy should always consider women's and men's different approaches towards nutrition. In order to be able to broaden the scope of action of both sexes, it makes sense to take up different gender typical resources.

"Real men don't eat quiche." Men as target group of Food Literacy

Nutrition is regarded by many men as a "women's subject" that, in addition, has to do with problems. Men's nutritional competence is, on average, lower. They are less often responsible for preparing meals and are generally more resistant to recommendations on healthy food. Nevertheless, there are aspects serving to "hook" men on the subject of nutrition:

- * Physical and mental performance through suitable food
- * Becoming autonomous by competence
- * Achieving status as an "expert" and "gourmet"
- * Social respect by culinary performance (e.g. competing at showcooking)

The social dimension

Joining and separating: social functions of eating

Eating and drinking serve different purposes – providing ourselves with energy and nutrients is only one of them. In many social situations, we do not eat only because we are hungry. We also eat to do somebody a favour, for reasons of politeness, because it is part of a pleasant social community situation, or because we want to become part of a community.

Communication and building up community are among the most important social functions of eating. Eating together links people. No matter if it is family meals, working dinners, requesting the pleasure of somebody's company, or banquets – having meals together is always a peaceful way of linking people. Joining achieved in this way is always of both a symbolic (communal spirit) and concrete (local closeness) nature. There are, however, also somehow forced table communities, for example in homes, or prisons, where they serve to discipline people or reduce their individualism.

In complete contrast to this, there are rules in some cultures saying which groups are not allowed to have meals with representatives from other groups. In some African societies, for instance, there are separated "men's" and "women's houses". Another example is the Indian caste system. Building up a community by some always means excluding others. Integration and segregation necessarily go hand in hand with each other, since social communities (religious communities, family clans, groups of juvenile friends) are always characterized by separation and disassociation from other parts of society.

Everything a matter of taste?! Food and style of living

The way people eat is closely connected to other aspects of how they live their lives. We know from scientific studies that there is a clear connection between nutritional behaviour and social situation. Representatives of the middle and upper social levels tend to eat more fresh fruit, vegetables and milk products. The higher the level of education, the lower the consumption of meat. On the other hand, food like potatoes, sugar or white bread is, on average, preferred more by people from lower social classes.

These differences cannot simply be explained by aspects of income. Even with similar financial resources, there are still differences in nutritional habits, for example between teachers and skilled workers. Except in cases of

poverty, the influence of financial aspects on the daily menu is not a very strong one. People usually like what they eat and drink, they do show their own taste. Nevertheless, taste is a child of social circumstances.

Even if taste gives the impression of being a highly personal issue, it is in fact always acquired under specific circumstances and determined by factors of social level and surroundings. For this reason in particular, it is difficult to influence people's to change their eating habits. Eating habits are generally not like a fashion to be acquired and abandoned easily. They are, on the contrary, part of engrained attitudes, preferences, or routines going hand in hand with the structures of inequality in our society.

Nutrition in socially poor households: lacks, compensation, rebellion

In contrast to earlier days, the nutritional behaviour of people belonging to socially disadvantaged groups is no longer characterised by malnutrition. We often find the contrary: supernutrition caused by excessive consumption of sweet and fatty food. It is particularly in the lower social classes of today's affluent societies that we find overweight and illnesses at least partly caused by wrong nutritional behaviour.

There are many speculations about reasons for this. Some experts think that due to a lack of money people take apparently cheap and quickly filling snacks like potato crisps or sweets as a substitute for proper meals or prefer cheap instant meals to home-made dishes.

Other experts explain this fact mainly by a lack of competence concerning nutrition and how to deal with it, for example, where shopping and preparation of meals are concerned. We can also assume that these people try to satisfy emotional needs resulting from their social situation. Consumption of "stylish" modern instant products and drinks, of fast food and sweets can, for example, be regarded as an attempt not to lose connection to our fun and adventure-oriented society. Eating, in this way, serves a compensatory function. Fun food, as well as high consumption of meat or convenient instant food, compensates for social exclusion and other privations experienced. The actual eating habits of these people can be understood as a strategy to defend their own way of living. Deliberately abstaining from typical middle class nutritional behaviour and common recommendations, at the same time sticking to their own eating habits, is a way of fighting for their own social identity.

Concerning Food Literacy, these connections should be taken into consideration. Eating habits cannot be regarded as an isolated factor. They are always closely related to other aspects of how people live and in which social situation they find themselves. Therefore, concepts have to be developed to meet the different life realities of people.

"Healthy nutrition while living on social welfare"? The socially disadvantaged as a target group of Food Literacy

In socially difficult life situations, nutritional behaviour is often characterised by a lack of financial and cultural resources. "Healthy nutrition" is therefore regarded as a problem of luxury by many of those having existential worries. In addition to this, recommendations for healthy nutrition often correspond to the eating habits of more advantaged middle class people. Representatives of disadvantaged social groups, as a consequence, find it hard to identify with such advice. It is, therefore, necessary to address this target group following, for example, these principles:

- there is not only one "right" form of nutrition (the same is true for ways of living);
- competence in making decisions needs practical experience (getting to know alternatives, trying out by oneself, evaluating usefulness)
- the range of nutritional behaviour can best be widened if alternatives are in agreement with the style of living and available resources

Nutritional poverty in today's affluent society

Whereas today about 826 million people still suffer from the results of insufficient provision of food, lack of food and hunger have become rare in our developed industrial societies. The range of foods has never been wider and provision has never been more guaranteed than today. Cases of material nutritional poverty, i.e. situations in which the need for food cannot be covered, are clearly exceptional. In developed societies, poverty is not an issue of physical survival. This is why we speak of “relative poverty”. Poverty in this case is not characterised and defined by a physical but rather by a socio-cultural existential minimum. We therefore regard people as “poor” who are provided with financial, cultural and social means but are somehow excluded from the common ways of living in their own country. When it comes to nutrition, this means, for example, the lack of opportunity to actually select food and follow the common pattern or schedule of meals.

People dependent on food provision by welfare institutions, people who permanently have to reduce their nutrition to small amounts of cheap food characterised by low social prestige, those being forced to live without full meals or to leave out certain meals, are affected by social poverty in nutrition.

Results of this kind of poverty are of different natures. Affected people particularly complain of having lost their regular eating and shopping habits, and this goes hand in hand with further social exclusion and stigmatization. This subjective impression of loss is likely to cause problems with eating. In addition to this, people finding themselves in such situations of poverty can barely put social functions of eating into action. This is, for example, the case when they can no longer respond to invitations by friends in an appropriate way. The same is true for family meals, that become rare events. As a consequence, people affected by poverty are even more destabilized in psychosocial terms.

The individual and biographic dimension

Behavioural patterns in nutrition are developed throughout the whole of life. At any age, we have certain experiences, react to them and learn something new. In the course of our lives we develop a certain view of the world and create typical patterns of acting. With this, there is a necessary combination of individual and social aspects in every biography.

In early childhood the need for nourishment is also the starting point of the first relationships. In this way infants not only experience the satisfaction of their hunger but also love and being cared for. If a positive experience of these first eating situations is disturbed by them being controlled or refused, this can have a negative effect on the development of a child. Since body-related experience is closely linked to emotional impressions, the atmosphere at family meals plays an important role during the process of growing up. Apart from experiencing a friendly atmosphere, it is positive for the development of children if they get to know a wide range of food step by step, for in this way they can develop their senses for different tastes and smells.

Adults coming across smells and tastes from their childhood often show emotions reminding them of past situations. They are more likely to avoid food and drinks with negative associations. The smell of rose-hip tea, for example, might be disliked by some people, since it reminds them of having been homesick in boarding school days. Food associated with nice memories are more likely to be preferred: for example, freshly made apple pie remains a favourite dish if it reminds us of our dear grandmother.

Experience with eating and drinking as a child remains important and continuously plays a role in our (body-related) memories. However, in the course of life and within the framework of new experiences and aims, there is still some development concerning the role of certain foods, table manners or the importance of certain ways of food preparation. In this process, we might also change our preferences. It is especially during the process of becoming more distant from their parents that young people often look for new experience outside the family. Aiming at being more independent can, for example, be expressed by refusing to follow parental eating habits. In many cases they are instead influenced by their circle of friends.

Changes in nutritional behaviour can also take place when people start their careers: at this point, being accepted by friends is not as important as saving time in providing food. Another change in nutritional behaviour and eating culture can occur when founding a family: caring about children's healthy nutrition becomes of central interest.

In the later stages of life it might become more important to show success. Therefore people often invite others to eat with them and treat them in a way that shows the progress they have made. Moving into retirement also brings changes in some people's nutritional habits: looking ahead to many active years still to come, they more and more focused on remaining healthy.

The new freedom of choice that allows people of all age groups to consume strawberries at any time of the year, to become vegetarian or eat traditional sausages with champagne, is opposed by new norms in our performance-oriented society. What goes hand in hand with this is a new development towards making individuals responsible for the possible consequences of their eating habits: there is the idea that slim and youthful bodies can be created and, likewise, illnesses caused by wrong nutrition can be avoided. This way of thinking is not even shaken by girls and young women having contrary experiences when starting diets at earlier and earlier ages. In contrast, it is regarded as their personal failure if they are not able to sustainably adapt their body shape to current ideals of beauty.

Due to the fact that common patterns of life are dissolving more and more, people are challenged to organize their (eating) biography in an individual way. Deriving from experiences from childhood and youth, our own eating culture can become an expression of joyful living, a way of looking for comfort and consolation, creating biographical continuity, taking over responsibility or mere escapism. Refusing food can, similarly to excessive eating, be an expression of protest.

Mobile societies often need new orientations. Situations of change as, for instance, severe illness, new starts in working life or loss of a partner, have to be coped with in a biographical way. This is often accompanied by a change of nutritional behaviour. In such situations of change we are, on the one hand, often in danger of losing balance in terms of what and how we eat and drink. On the other hand, these phases offer chances of finding a new balance. People who have not been able to develop self-reflection, the skill of consciously making use of various active opportunities and information, an openness to self-learning processes and the willingness to take responsibility for themselves, are in danger of losing orientation in an increasingly complex field of nutrition in different phases of life.

The physiological dimension

Eating and drinking is necessary to survive. People can stay alive without substantial food for about 40 days, even less than without drinking (only a few days). As proved by numerous long term studies, nourishment has a crucial influence on health and well-being.

Varied eating – a mix of nutrients on your plate

Materially speaking, our body consists of innumerable cells (a hundred thousand billion) that are constantly formed, re-structured and reduced. In order to maintain these processes, our body needs constant provision of nourishment: fuel for the power stations of the cells, material for new cells and repair work, elements of communication and delivery and other substances that it cannot produce by itself.

Such elements are contained in every food, in different parts and proportions, depending on their structure and composition. All food substances necessary for the maintenance of living functions are regarded as essential. Among these there are amino-acids (protein elements), certain fatty acids, vitamins and minerals. Energy is supplied predominantly by carbohydrates and fats. In addition, nutrients contain substances that are not essential for staying alive but are, in the long run, important for staying healthy. These are, for example, secondary

vegetable substances. Among these, there are structural combinations as contained in plants that can be cancer-preventive, regulate blood pressure, support our immune system and have an anti-microbial effect.

Nutrition providing all these substances that our body needs for optimal functions is always characterised by a variety of food elements. The more varied our food, the more likely it is that all essential nutrients are contained in sufficient amounts and are absorbed by the body. At the same time, varied nutrition reduces the risk of taking too much of certain ingredients and toxic agents.

It is most crucial, however, to choose food in terms of quality. There is a big difference, for example, between having some instant soup containing 2% “dried chicken”, artificial aroma and additional flavouring and, in contrast, soup made of fresh chicken and plenty of vegetables. Logically, freshly-made soup provides for many more nutrients and natural flavours than instant soup.

It's all about the mixture

A varied diet, containing high amounts of vegetables and fruit, is the ideal basis for health and well-being. According to the recommendations of the German and Austrian Nutrition Society, the following groups of food should be consumed on a daily basis:

- **Water:** Our body needs plenty of water in order to compensate for loss by breathing and sweating and in order to be able to secrete final metabolic elements. Adults need about 1.5 to 2 litres of liquid per day.
- **Vegetables and fruit:** Vegetables, salads, pulses and fruit contain high amounts of vitamins, minerals, dietary fibres and secondary plant products. At the same time, they contain little energy. Nearly all institutions relevant in the field of nutrition therefore recommend having at least five portions of fruit and vegetable a day.
- **Cereals and potatoes:** Cereals and potatoes, in the first place, serve to provide energy. Wholemeal cereals supply dietary fibres that are essential for digestion.
- **Milk and milk products, meat, fish and eggs:** These foods of animal origin are valuable sources of protein, vitamins and minerals. Variants containing low amounts of fat are particularly recommended.
- **Fats and oils:** Fats and oils are an important source of fatty acids and vitamins. They also provide a high degree of energy. It is therefore essential to deal with them in a conscious and cautious way.

Nutrition recommendations and their limits

The question as to which foods, in which amounts, are good for our health cannot be answered in the same way for everyone. Food tolerance, as well as the need for certain nutrients, differs from individual to individual. Apart from this, people are able to adapt to different circumstances and surroundings. Inuits, for example, stay healthy despite having a rather monotonous diet that would probably not be suitable for central Europeans.

In reality, nutrition recommendations often lead to consumers feeling insecure. Apart from the fact that there are many charlatans acting in this field, real experts do not always agree. We also have to consider the fact that there are always new findings in medicine and nutritional science. As a consequence, recommendations can change.

In most cases nutrition recommendations are communicated via the media, which means that they are, according to the needs of the media, simplified. In this way question marks contained in this or that study, or certain restrictions or differentiations are neglected. The media need to convey simple truths and simple messages – something science can hardly ever provide.

For all these reasons, general nutrition recommendations can only provide a certain degree of help, according to which everyone can organize his/her nutrition corresponding to his/her individual needs and circumstances of life.

Health – a matter of balance

Health is always something to be achieved. The term “health” is defined as follows in the constitution of the WHO (1946):

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.”

Health, however, is not everything, nutrition being only a part of life, even if an important one.

Trying to answer the question of **how** we can stay healthy, for a long time people employed an approach based on illness, namely the model of risk factors. The question was: what makes us ill? This model was based on factors being measurable. These factors, as we know, can increase the probability of certain illnesses like, for example, the connection of high blood fat values and heart attacks. In this way, considering a principle of cause and effect, we try to reduce or even avoid certain risk factors. Solely bearing in mind all those risks, however, can result in even more insecurity and fear.

It is therefore more important to ask the following question: What keeps us healthy? Doing this, we not only take individual behaviour into consideration, but also individual life circumstances. This approach is employed by Aaron Antonovsky, in his concept of Salutogenesis (see glossary). Vitality, optimism, trust in one’s own capabilities, seeing the meaning behind life, social integration and acceptance all support health and cannot be substituted by healthy food stuffs, vitamin preparations or gymnastics courses.

Stable people with a good physical constitution, part of it being a good nutritional situation, can cope with certain burdens of life more easily than others. There is a certain repertoire of health practices, that is “helping tools” that can be used to consciously reduce momentary burdens or to prevent negative consequences. These include, for example, methods of stress reduction or different forms of exercise that increase our opportunities for action.

Food Literacy supports people to develop competences for dealing with health, illness and nutrition in a self-determined way and encourages them to adjust nutrition to their personal needs.

The economic and political dimension

Food costs money

Nearly everything ending up in European stomachs has been bought. Food, therefore, has a certain economic value, a market value. The chain of value goes from agricultural production via processing in trade and industry, logistics, provision outside people’s homes, wholesale trade, retail trade, specialized trade, to private consumption. The nutrition sector with its concomitant areas (for example, the production of agricultural machines, the chemical industry, the production of packaging, energy supply, refuse disposal) is a considerable part of the European economy.

There is enormous demand for food. Every human being eats and drinks several times a day – altogether nearly three kilos! Nowadays more than two thirds of food stuffs are provided by the food industry. Every year around 10,000 new products are launched. However, the actual producers of food, that is farmers and gardeners, can no longer exist without financial support in the form of subsidies.

Food provides jobs

The food and drink industry is the third biggest employer in the European industrial area. Nevertheless, rates of occupation in agriculture are decreasing. In Austria, for example, the proportion of people working in agriculture declined from 32.3% in the year 1950 to 5.6% in 2000. In Great Britain it is not more than 2%. It is 19% in Greece but the European average is 6.6%.

Cheap food – expensive eating

We spend about 15 – 20% of our household income on food. Some 30 years ago, in many countries, money spent on nutrition was twice as much. We do, however, still spend considerable amounts when it comes to nutrition in general: there has never been more investment in kitchen equipment, for example, but time spent on cooking in these kitchens has never been so little. As citizens who pay taxes, we finance subsidies for agriculture. As discovered by the association for environment and nature protection, every European household pays a further 70% of actual amounts of money spent on food via taxes for subsidies going into agriculture! The ecological and social costs arising from non-sustainable agricultural production, that has to be subsidised by European taxpayers, are still missing from this calculation. Food stuffs are getting cheaper and cheaper, whereas eating is becoming more and more expensive.

Did you know...?

What percent of income do private households spend on food, drinks and tobacco products?

	% of income (1999)
Germany	16,1
France	18,5
Italy	17,9
Austria	16,4
Sweden	17,0
UK	15,8
Slovenia	23,5
Hungary	30,1

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2002), p. 421.

Being economical, or: Is stinginess cool?

Private households are little enterprises. Among other things, they buy food, more and more ready or half-ready-to-serve meals. Household members, having their own personal needs and preferences and disposing of limited budgets, face a vast and continually growing range of food and gastronomic choices. In some European countries the food retail trade encourages consumers to compare prices. The “stinginess is cool”-mania, reinforced by the media, fosters a trend of moving from high quality food to cheap brands. Even for richer households, it has become more attractive to buy from special discount shops. Price, to most Europeans, is more important than quality.

Eating at cheap prices being trendy

It is particularly German, French and Polish consumers to whom the price of food is most important. Italians, on the contrary, show by far the most focus on quality. The question “Is price more important than quality?”, was answered positively in

Germany by	61,7%
France	60,1%
Great Britain	49,4%
Italy	36,9%
Austria	55,8% of population.

Results from the GfK-Study “European Consumer Study 2004“.

Globalised competition with costs arising

Coffee, raisins, cinnamon or pineapple – worldwide trade in food is nothing new. Several centuries ago Europeans were already accessing exotic culinary enjoyments. Ingredients from far away are taken for granted when used for preparing both traditional and modern dishes.

Some other logics of globalised food production include the idea of production in the cheapest locations, without taking into account social and ecological considerations. There are many problems arising from some few trans-national companies playing places and countries of production off against each other, among them being social and ecological dumping and increasing traffic problems by the transport of goods around the globe. Because of this, the ability to provide for oneself and the chances of locally grown small agricultural forms of economy are often constantly undermined.

Hunger and affluence

Globally speaking, supernutrition and malnutrition exist at the same time, in some countries directly next to each other. There is an enormous choice of food in industrial nations. The consequences of this kind of affluence are well-known: between a third and half of the population in industrial nations are overweight. Illnesses caused by wrong nutritional behaviour are continuously increasing. At the same time, about 850 million people face starvation, that is one out of ten in the world. In the long run, world nutrition will, due to growing populations and comparatively decreasing agricultural productivity, be confronted not only with a problem of distribution but also of capacity. This situation will particularly get worse if the western way of nutrition, predominated by meat products, is taken up by threshold countries with increasing purchasing power.

The ecological dimension

Everything we eat has, on its way from the field to the plate, an influence on the environment. It is a mutual relation, of course, since the condition of water, air, ground and climate also has an effect on food quality. Our nutrition system, ranging from burning fossil energy to the exploitation of natural resources, is responsible for a number of burdens on the environment: starting out from production (agriculture, keeping animals), through processing, packaging and transport, up to consumption in large and private households (storing, preparation, disposal).

Ground

About 80% of the area of EU member states is in agricultural use. This means, of course, that agriculture considerably influences the condition of the ground, for example through erosion, condensation, decomposition of humous soil, concentration of toxic agents or oversalting by artificial watering.

Water

Apart from having a negative effect on ground and surface water due to pollutants, negative elements of fertilizing and waste water, food production is also responsible for the loss of water. Worldwide, about 17% of the overall agricultural acreage is watered – this goes hand in hand with a high risk of regional sources of drinking water drying up.

Air

Due to waste gas and drift, food production has a negative effect on air. Depending on the weather, up to 90% of plant-protective agents drift into the atmosphere.

Energy & Climate

About 20% of the overall energy use, as well as 20% of all carbon dioxide emissions in industrial countries, come from the production, transport and consumption of food. Agriculture is responsible for more than 50% of these emissions. The biggest part of this comes from keeping animals, especially from intensive cattle breeding. Ecological burdens caused by agriculture have their origin mainly from buying large amounts of working materials like (nitrogenous) fertilizers, feed, machines etc. About 25% of energy use and carbon dioxide emission comes from consumers themselves. This is caused by private shopping tours and preparation of food at home (cooking, baking, refrigerating). 13% of emissions are caused by trade, including packaging and transport.

Decreasing variety

The variety of living creatures is the natural capital of our planet. This diversity is rapidly decreasing, partly because of agricultural food production. Apart from wild plants and wild living animals, it is increasingly also useful animals and cultivated plants that are affected. Today, most of the world population eats only ten cultivated kinds of plants. The remaining 99.6% of edible cultivated plants are hardly used and more and more are disappearing. There is a similar situation regarding useful animals. In the last century, 1,000 of 6,400 known races of useful animals died out worldwide, and another 2,000 are regarded as critically threatened. The loss of variety of kinds, races and sorts, as well as genetic impoverishment, increase the danger of epidemic diseases and destructive insects and generally lead to even greater use of fertilizers, plant-protective agents, concentrated feed and antibiotics.

Biological agriculture

The main idea about ecological agriculture is working in accordance with nature. The farm itself is regarded as a holistic symbol of ground, plants, animals and man, aiming at creating a closed circle. In this, there are important principles:

- maintaining and supporting the fertility of the ground
- feeding and keeping animals according to their nature
- maintaining diversity
- no genetic modification and no irradiation
- using as little renewable energy and as few raw materials as possible
- caring for and maintaining the cultivated landscape

Energy use in biological agriculture is about a third of that in conventional agriculture. Carbon dioxide emissions are lower by 50-60%. Working without easily soluble mineral fertilizers, chemical-synthetic plant-protective agents, growth regulators and anti-germ substances leads to much less burdening of ground, water and food.

Bio – organized on a European wide level

Since the EU decree 2092/91 in 1991, there has been a European wide regulation for ecological production. In this, the minimum standards for ecological farming, as well as demands on control for agriculture and processing, are defined for the European Union and imported goods from third countries.

Ecological products are labelled as follows:

- “from (controlled) biological agriculture”
- instead of “biological”, the term “ecological” can also be used and “agriculture” can be replaced by “farming” or “growing”
- additional identification and labelling referring to ecological quality comprises an eco-control number, the protected eco-brand of the EU, of individual states, biological associations or of trade.

Conscious selection of foods can be a considerable contribution to the protection of nature. A way of nutrition and living that is compatible with the environment is an issue of personal preferences and also knowledge.

7 steps towards nutrition that is compatible with the environment

reduce consumption of meat

prefer ecological food

choose seasonal products from your region

select ecological food or dishes when eating outside your home (canteen, restaurants etc.)

save energy when cooking at home (use lids, make use of remaining warmth, regularly defrost refrigerators and freezers)

use food or meals that are not highly processed

go shopping on foot or by bicycle

Food quality or: What is good?

One of the main aspects of food literacy is being able to judge the quality and environmental compatibility of food products. Considering the huge choice of industrially produced food, the main ingredients and forms of production of which are hardly analysable and understandable, it is particularly in this field that a lot of knowledge and competence for making decisions is required.

For consumers it is often difficult to judge the quality of food. It is most important to decide which criteria to take into consideration. The aquality of food is determined by the entirety of its characteristics. Depending on your point of view, different characteristics and criteria are the most important:

- For the food industry, quality in the first place means meeting all standards, the products being accepted by consumers and, of course, profitability.
- Farmers consider the quality of products primarily in terms of suitability for growing and market value. They are dependent on the quality demands of food processors and trade.
- For consumers, the quality of food mainly has to do with taste, appearance, freshness and price. To many it is also the natural state, origin, content of toxic agents and the use of methods of genetic modification that plays an important role.

Quality aspects illustrated by strawberry yogurt

In supermarkets we are offered innumerable different sorts of strawberry yogurt. It is sometimes difficult to make a choice. The quality of food can be judged by considering eight aspects:

Enjoyment value (sensory quality)

This quality aspect is of crucial importance to consumers. It comprises all characteristics to be judged by using our senses, like appearance, smell, taste, consistency and temperature.

Example: Do colour and taste meet expectations? Is the smell pleasant and appetizing? Does it taste natural or artificial?

Health value (nutritional physiological quality)

This quality aspect is determined by the entirety of ingredients increasing its value (nutrients, content of energy, healthy elements). However, ingredients that reduce value (foreign substances, toxic agents) also play a considerable role in this respect. Other criteria are being easily digestible and tolerance.

Example: Which nutrients are contained in yogurt? Are milk acid bacteria contained good for bowels and immune system? Is yogurt poor in cholesterol?

Suitability value (usefulness for consumers)

This comprises criteria as suitability for certain applications, durability, price, time spent on buying, preparation and consumption.

Example: is the cup stable enough, so that it is not squashed by other products in the shopping basket? How long can it be kept in the fridge? How much is it?

Psychological value

This aspect is based on individual criteria and needs, such as joy in eating the product, imagination, opinions and expectations, the sense of being rewarded.

Example: Is this the sort that is said to be especially good in the advert? Is the strawberry taste the same as the one I got at grandmother's, the one that gives me this special feeling of cosiness?

Ecological value

Products of different forms of growing and production also differ in their level of compatibility with nature.

Example: To what extent were environmental aspects taken into consideration during the production of the yogurt? What about the distance the ingredients and the product itself were transported? Are the ingredients biologically grown? What about the packaging's compatibility with the environment?

Sociocultural value

This kind of value of a certain food is determined by individual consumption habits and aspects of society, such as the prestige of a certain product, its entertainment and community value.

Example: Is a light strawberry yogurt said to be the ideal snack for a successful man in today's world? Can I be an idol for my child when buying and using this product? Is it good fun to eat strawberry yogurt?

Economic value

This is the product value assigned by the producer, processor, trader and consumer.

Example: Can I afford this yogurt? Is the price fair enough considering the cost of production? Do I have to pay an extra contribution for advertising?

Political value

Buying a product also brings political consequences, such as effects on (regional) agriculture, poverty or richness of certain countries or producers.

Example: By buying this product, do I support regional agriculture or the destruction of surplus food stuffs? Do I contribute to the impoverishment of the third world?

Part 3

Toolbox

This part contains 25 methods/approaches, which may be applied in seminar planning. It also gives practical advice on how to impart Food Literacy. The selected methods cover simple ideas for the start-up and introduction phase as well as comprehensive suggestions for longer seminar units. They may be applied in a variety of ways. Most of them are suitable for training seminars as well as personal development sessions with only slight adaptations. Many of them are suited to both individual and group counselling.

The Toolbox also contains three case studies containing the description of the courses where materials from this Tool Box have been applied, as well as feedback from trainers and participants.



Practical tips for trainers and advisers

Suggestions for preparation

- What does food mean to you personally? What are your attitudes in terms of values concerning food? It makes sense to think about this before the training session in order to make oneself aware of one's own impacts and views. By doing this you may have less difficulty in perceiving and taking up the various attitudes of the participants.
- It might be worth thinking about the constellation of the group with regard to gender, social background, education, the significance of nutrition implied, finances etc. (Refer to chapters on the cultural and social dimensions of nutrition in part 2.)
- For background information concerning nutrition, educational objectives and the specific approach of Food Literacy refer to parts 1 and 2 of this manual.
- Keep in mind that the educational objectives of Food Literacy as defined in part 1 are meant to be a model! Almost nobody will be able to completely come up to the expectations mentioned. That would be absolutely unrealistic and is not at all required. But everybody can make at least small steps in this direction – and that is the point!
- Nutrition is a multilayered topic which may be best 'grasped' with all senses involved. The use of different material such as images or food is as important as experiences and action such as tasting, preparation of food, cookbooks, or excursions.
- Try to adapt the basic conditions to the topic. For detailed descriptions refer to the checklist "wellness as part of the seminar routine" below.

The inner attitude

- Consider yourself as a companion and moderator.
- Critical reflection on different topics concerning nutrition makes sense. Cultural pessimism is not reasonable.
- Please keep in mind that the point is to support people in their efforts to structure their daily food routine themselves and boost their self-confidence.
- Work in a resource-orientated way, that is, try to establish a link to the participants' knowledge, experiences, and abilities. Bring these resources to light together with your participants!
- Dealing with different eating habits curiosity, mutual tolerance and respect are useful and reasonable.
- Differences, in accordance with the requirements of Diversity Management, are meant to be perceived as resources. Each person can make his or her contribution and people can learn from each other, because with a great variety you can open up new horizons. Support your participants in realizing different ways of access to nutrition, appreciating their value and broadening their scope of action.
- Attention! Gender trap! Especially with eating you will often come across - frequently hidden – gender-specific stereo types and clichés. For advice in connection with this topic refer to the paragraph on "gender-orientated course design" below.
- Eating is a very personal subject. That is why a cautious introduction is essential. Point out that it will be all right if a participant wants to withdraw from one or another exercise in order to guarantee that people participate voluntarily.

Check list: Wellness as part of the seminar routine

Whenever Food Literacy is imparted, the surroundings have to be adapted to it. Based on holistic approaches the following aspects have to be considered for the seminar:

- Finance permitting, a little breakfast or snack at the beginning of the course would be a relaxing and social start into the day.
- There should be water at the participants' disposal all the time, because drinking sufficient amounts of water makes you fit and merry and boosts your productivity.
- Make breaks at regular intervals that are long enough to have a light snack (fruit, nuts etc.). This will increase your ability to relax and take things in.
- If possible prepare a list of appealing recommendations of local restaurants. Palatable, light, fresh-prepared meals during the lunch break make it easier to continue the seminar in the afternoon.
- Light and simple gymnastic exercises in between times keep motivation and concentration high.
- If you provide information and books, you will complete the choice by books, magazines and brochures dealing with food and nutrition and create an additional space for learning and gaining experience.

Gender-oriented seminar design

“Gender” refers to the roles of the sexes played within a society, implying the expectations and views on how women and men are supposed to be. These roles may change in the course of time and differ from culture to culture as well as within one and the same culture.

“Gender Mainstreaming” means to consider and consciously become aware of the social dissimilarities between men and women in all fields of life and when making plans and decisions. All actions taken are examined in terms of possible gender-specific effects and structured in such a way that they contribute to the equal treatment of men and women. This approach is considerably important for all courses, because it is increasingly required by funding institutions such as the labour market administration.

Especially when talking about nutrition one will come across gender-specific attributions (e.g. women like eating chocolate, men prefer meat) and a distinctive gender-specific role allocation (e.g. it is still mainly women who prepare the meals at home). Both things have to be considered in seminars and counselling. In practice we have to bring to light the differences between men and women and seek their causes. The goal must be to overcome gender-specific role allocations.

- Pay attention to gender-sensitive formulations in your lecture notes and seminar papers. Texts for and about men and women are supposed to contain and explicitly address both genders. It would not be sufficient to make remarks that women are “included” when using male forms. There are different ways of fairly expressing gender. It is important to apparently include both sexes or use neutral formulations. Moreover, it is essential to equally consider female and male perspectives in the examples.
- Pay attention to the way men and women are described in cases dealing with comparisons, tasks etc. Question or better avoid stereotypes and clichés.

What can you do if you are confronted with patterns, clichés or stereotypes in your seminar? Consider the following suggestions:

- Make a “Meta topic” out of it by asking the whole group e.g. “How can you deal with this matter in your professional life, your neighbourhood, with regard to your friends, your health ...”
- Establish an observer role. This may be most suitable when working in small groups, to illustrate the behaviour of males and females, and then reflect on the observations on a higher level in plenary.

- Mention your observations as group instructor and obtain the perceptions of the participants not affected by patterns, clichés or stereotypes.

For further details with regard to nutrition and gender refer to chapters “Everyday nutrition in modern life” and “The cultural dimension of nutrition”.

Which method for which educational target?

Target 1: A person organises his/her everyday nutrition in a self-determined way.

This means that he/she

- is aware of his/her nutritional behaviour and understands it in connection with his/her biography,
- knows about social, cultural and historic influences on eating habits and understands their respective effects,
- shows sufficient knowledge of nutrition and food in order to be able to critically question statements given in the media and made by experts,
- knows his/her personal needs in nutrition and
- is able to organize nutrition in a way that has a good effect on him/her.

In order to achieve this target, the following methods/exercises should be used:

1	5	9	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	25
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Target 2: A person organises his/her everyday nutrition in a responsible way.

This means that he/she

- understands the effect of nutrition on his/her health condition, the environment and society as a whole and understands their respective connections,
- knows about food production, processing, transport and disposal,
- is informed about the composition of food and can judge on its quality,
- is able to select appropriate products within the framework of his/her personal budget,
- makes decisions as a consumer that are quality-oriented and effectively develops his/her style of living.

In order to achieve this target, the following methods/exercises should be used:

4	6	9	10	11	12	13	15	16	17	18	20	21	22
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Target 3: A person organises his/her everyday nutrition in an enjoyable way.

This means that he/she

- can feel for himself/herself what is good and what provides personal pleasure,
- realizes that conscious perception using all the senses and a varied experience of taste is a condition of enjoyment,
- appreciates cooking and eating as an aspect enriching everyday life,
- regards dealing with food as an elemental part of human culture and
- is open to other culinary cultures.

In order to achieve this target, the following methods/exercises should be used:

1	2	3	5	6	7	8	9	10	13	15	16	18	19	20	23	24
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Selected Methods:

1 „Initial questions”

Learning objectives:

- Raising awareness and expressing attitudes towards dishes, food and nutrition.
- Creating a relaxed atmosphere and activating emotions.
- Realizing and appreciating the diversity of accesses and preferences.

Description:

The group instructor selects one or two questions for the participants of the course out of those mentioned below. The questions may be asked in the plenary or in small groups and answered individually. They may also be dealt with in smaller groups before being discussed in the plenary.

If the group is meeting for the first time, aspects such as persons' names, professional background, and motivation for the course etc. may be properly integrated into the questions mentioned below.

- What kind of food particularly agrees with you? What positive effect do these substances have on you?
- What kind of food provokes a feeling of well-being in your?
- What is your favourite food?
- Have you ever tasted organic food? If so, what effects did it show then?
- What did you eat yesterday? How did you feel after the meal?
- The “How are you today?” activity in the morning is apt to be based upon these questions.
- Did you like your food on a mainly successful working day?
- What about the food during a business trip?
- Asking for the participants' condition – the emotional barometer:
- If I were a beverage, what would I choose to express my current condition? (e.g. Most probably, I feel like a sparkling mineral water, or stale water, or fresh-squeezed orange juice etc.)
- If I were a dish, what would I choose to most likely express my current feelings? e.g. I feel like a thawed-out spinach, or a rouxed potatoe, or pasta al dente etc.
- If I were food, what would I choose to most likely express my current feelings? e. g. I feel like a maggoty apple, or a pickled gherkin, or whipped egg white

Training phase: Introduction / getting to know each other

Material: Not required

Number of group members: maximum of 15 participants, larger groups preferably working in smaller sub-groups

Duration: approx. 30 minutes (according to group size)

Arrangement: plenary, small groups

For background information see part 2, especially chapters on the cultural, social and biographical dimensions of nutrition.

2 “Carrot pantomime”

Learning objectives:

- Making aware and expressing one’s attitudes towards certain dishes and food, and nutrition in general.
- Realizing the diversity of accesses and images existing within a group.
- Creating a relaxed atmosphere and activating emotions.

Description:

Different terms referring to the preparation of food such as peeling carrots, slicing cheese, whipping egg whites and kneading dough are each written on small cards. Afterwards, each participant has to draw a single card without showing it and try to mime the activity mentioned on the card in front of the whole group. The other members of the group are expected to find out which activity is being mimed. The game is continued until all participants have acted out their performances.

Training phase: Introduction / getting to know each other

Material: Cards on which the participants write the various preparation activities

Group size: maximum of 15 persons, larger groups can be divided in small groups

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

3 “Pictures and sayings concerning nutrition”

Learning objectives:

- Recognizing and expressing one’s own attitudes towards dishes, food and nutrition in general.
- Realizing the diversity of access and preferences of group members.

Description:

Pictures of dishes and food, or people eating and/or cards with proverbs, quotations and statements concerning nutrition are spread at random in the centre of a circle of chairs. In turns, the participants start introducing themselves to the group by selecting one picture or card and subsequently explaining why he or she has been repelled or attracted by a certain picture or card.

Variation:

Pictures and cards may be replaced by a big basket filled with various genuine foodstuffs.

Training phase: Introduction / getting to know each other

Material: Pictures (e.g. cuttings from magazines), sayings and statements on cards (e.g. ‘Hunger is the best sauce’, ‘Wholemeal is healthy food’ etc.)

Group size: maximum of 15 people, with bigger groups introduction activities are carried out in small groups

Duration: approx. 30 minutes (depending on the group size)

Arrangement: plenary

For background information see part 2, especially the chapters on cultural, social and biographical dimensions of nutrition.

4 “What food am I?”

Learning objectives:

- Getting to know one another
- Activating the group
- Introduction of the subject matter/topic

Description:

The participant has a sheet fixed on his or her back with the name of a certain foodstuff. He/she has to guess the food mentioned on it by asking the other participants questions, e.g. “Can you drink me?”, “Do I taste sweet?”, “Is it necessary to import me?” etc.

Variation 1:

Instead of foodstuff, the cards may contain names of dishes, famous restaurants or well-known cooks.

Variation 2:

All participants bearing cards with similar food or drinks form sub-groups (e.g. different kinds of vegetables, dairy products, or drinks, examples of Asian or fast food, or regional food etc.).

Training phase: Introduction / getting to know each other

Material: Cards to write on, adhesive tape

Group size: minimum of 10 people

Duration: approx. 30 minutes (depending on the group size)

Arrangement: plenary

For background information see part 2, especially the chapters covering the cultural and social dimensions of nutrition.

5 “Culinary Wanted Poster”

Learning objectives:

- Getting to know and expressing one’s attitudes towards dishes, food and nutrition in general.
- Realizing the diversity of approaches and pictures created within one particular group.

Description:

The participants fill in a “culinary wanted poster” individually or in groups consisting of two or three people. The questions have been prepared previously for each group on posters. The participants may be asked for their names, age, shoe size, favourite food, or other culinary likes and dislikes. The results are either reported back or presented as a culinary exhibition to the whole group.

Training phase: Introduction / getting to know each other

Material: Flip chart paper, flip chart markers

Group size: maximum of 9 people for individual activities, minimum of 10 for small group activities

Duration: approx. 30 minutes (depending on group size)

Interaction variation: individually and small groups

For background information see part 2, especially the chapters covering the cultural, social as well as biographical dimensions of nutrition.

6 “Tasting: Do you have good taste?”

Learning objectives:

- Evaluating food in a sensory way.
- Discovering the joys of taste.
- Tasting the diversity of flavour nuances.
- Becoming aware of the fact that we constantly eat using our eyes, but risk being deceived by the visual effect of a meal.

Description:

The participants taste and evaluate food according to written instructions (the tasting protocol). During the tasting breaks they are supposed to rinse out their mouths with water to neutralise the previous taste. Afterwards the participants report back to the group members and discuss the outcomes of their tasting round. Possible questions for the tasting protocol to be based on: “Have you enjoyed the food tasting?”, “Which tastes were the most remarkable ones?”, “What did you like best, and why?”

Variations:

Conventional tasting: tasting of different unlabelled samples such as three different types of strawberry yoghurt, or three sorts of apples, milk or bread etc.

Material: samples on plates or small bowls, spoons, knives, evaluation sheets, pens, water and glasses for cleansing the palate.

Blind tasting: the participants are divided into pairs. Taking turns, the person wearing a blindfold has to guess what he or she is fed by the other person.

Material: Two sample sets with five samples each. E.g., sample set 1 contains small pieces of apples, fried potatoes, crisps, onions, carrots etc., sample set 2 small pieces of boiled pumpkin, tomato or cucumber, savoury biscuits, cubes of pork sausage, an olive. Plates, spoons, blindfolds, if possible nose clamps, evaluation sheets, pens, water and glasses for cleansing the palate.

Important: Before blind tasting make sure that participants do not suffer from food allergies or food intolerances of any kind.

Triangle tasting – for gourmets: Three samples are prepared, two of which have the same source. Firstly, the participants have to identify these two samples, secondly they have to evaluate the different samples, sensorily filling in a tasting record and answering questions such as “Which sample tastes better?”, “Which one shows whole-food features”.

Material: samples – e.g. two Granny Smith apples organically grown and one conventional, or two conventional sweet carrots and one sweet biological carrot etc. Plates, small bowls, spoons, knives, evaluation sheets, pens, water and glasses for cleansing the palate.

Training phase: Introduction

Group size: maximum of 30 people.

Duration: minimum of 30 minutes (depending on the tasting variante)

Arrangement: individual or small group

For background information see part 2, especially the chapters covering the physiological, social and individual dimensions of nutrition.

7 “Eating with one’s ears”

Learning objectives:

- Enhancing the ability to use one’s senses effectively, perceiving food in different ways

Description:

Small non-transparent containers such as empty film tins contain small amounts of food, e.g. flour, beans, lentils, corn, nuts, salt etc. Each participant has to try to guess the secret content. After one round of guessing the riddle will be solved by opening the tin. What will follow is a short discussion within the group guided by questions, e.g. How did you feel while listening? Was it easy to guess the content of the tins? Have you ever tried to listen to food as carefully like this? What did the noises remind you of?

Variation:

One participant is blindfolded and is asked to guess what food makes the sounds that are produced by the other participants by e.g. breaking crispbread, pouring water into a glass, biting into an apple, cracking nuts, breaking a piece off a carrot, spooning soup, stirring up liquid/eggs using a whisk, etc.

Training phase: Introduction

Material: At least six non-transparent tins with covers such as film tins are filled with small amounts of food.

Group size: maximum of 15 people

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

Arrangement: group work

8 “Smell: Guess, what it is?”

Learning objectives:

- Enhancing the ability to use one’s senses effectively, perceiving food in different ways.

Description:

The participants sniff at non-transparent containers and try to guess what food or spices they have been filled with. What will follow is a short group discussion which will be based on questions such as “How did you feel while sniffing?”, “Was it easy for you to find out about the content of the containers?”, “What did the aromas remind you of?”

Training phase: Introduction

Material: About 10 to 15 non-transparent containers filled with fragrant food and spices, e.g. coffee, coco florets, cinnamon, vanilla, peppermint, cloves, caraway, curry, cocoa, lemon peels, walnut, etc.

Group size: maximum of 20 persons

Duration: about 30 minutes (depending on group size)

Arrangement: individuals or small groups

Tip: Compare method (7) “Eating with one’s ears”

9 “Traffic light feedback”

Learning objectives:

- Activation and warming up by asking questions referring to theoretical and practical knowledge with food as the subject matter, for simply entertainment purposes or starting out other activities related to the topic.

Description:

Each participant holds three cards coloured red, yellow and green in their hands. The course instructor reads out questions and suggests answers. The participant has to show the green card in case of agreement, the red card in case of disagreement, and the yellow card if he or she remains indecisive. To give a more entertaining impetus to the game the participants are asked to make their decisions as quickly as possible. After the activity has been finished, the course instructor indicates the right answers which may result in lively discussions on the topic, in which different opinions are all valued.

Possible questions: Gender warming up

Is the following food more appropriate to men or women?

A cutlet?	Chocolate?	Pasta with tomato sauce?
Sushi?	Cereal?	A steak?
Red wine?	White wine?	Fish fingers? Broccoli pudding?

Solution: All the food mentioned above is equally appropriate for both genders. Assignments are culturally and/or socially determined.

Possible questions: kitchen expert warming up

Which of the following freshly prepared dishes may be prepared and served within less than 30 minutes?

Pasta with cheese sauce?	Fried chicken?	Greek salad?
Boiled potatoes with herbs?	Apricot cake?	Cereals?
Wok-dishes?	Pancake?	Potato dumplings?
Roast beef?	Milk shake?	Courgette cream soup?

Variation:

The participants reply by changing their positions inside the room instead of lifting coloured cards. In case of agreement, they move to one particular corner of the room, in case of disagreement they move to the opposite corner. If they can't make up their minds they move to the room centre.

Variation to the questioning for gender warming up:

Which of the following food would you consider to be more popular with women than with men? (Attention! Gender-related topics frequently cause lively and controversial discussions. See also chapter for gender oriented course design).

Training phase: Main part / Warming up

Material: One red, one yellow, and one green card for each participant.

Group size: no limits

Duration: about 15 minutes

Arrangement: groups

For background information see part 2, especially the chapter on the cultural dimension of food

10 “Nutritional quiz”

Learning objectives:

- Gaining knowledge about nutrition and food
- Activation through competition
- Quick response
- Team formation

Description:

The course group is divided into two groups (e.g. women, men). Each group has to select one person as the speaker before the competition starts. The first group that knows the answer indicates this firstly by e.g. pointing to an object with outstanding features and secondly by giving the answer. The group gets a nut if the answer has been right, otherwise the other group has the chance to get a nut by replying correctly.

Possible questions:

- Nutritional associations and cancer relief organisations call upon people to have “5 a day”. Do they want us to have five meals, five nuts or five servings fruit and vegetables a day (the last being the right answer).
- How much cream do you need to produce 1 kilogram of butter, 5, 10, or 20 litres? (again the last is the right answer)
- Imagine, 100 grams of milk chocolate contains as many calories as five apples! Do you have to ride a bicycle for 20 minutes, 2 hours or 20 hours to digest these 100 grams? Answer number two is correct.
- Pulses (peas, beans, lentils) are sometimes called ‘meat on the fields’. What do you think is the reason for this neologism? Is it because of their high content of vitamins, proteins or fibres? It is the high protein content. With a percentage of approximately 20 per cent peas and beans contain about the same amount of protein as meat and fish do.
- Orange plantations have to be watered. How much water is needed to produce 1 litre of orange juice? 10 litres, 100 litres, or 1000 litres? (1000 litres of water is correct)
- The transportation of food consumes high amounts of energy. The transfer of 1 kilogram of kiwi fruit from New Zealand (about 20,000 kilometres from here) by plane requires as much energy as the transport of 68 / 680 / 6,800 kilograms carriage per lorry along a distance of 100 kilometres of locally planted fruit. 6,800 kilogrammes is the correct answer.
- How much sugar is hidden in one litre of limonade? 17 / 37 / 70 sugar cubes?
(37 cubes are contained)

Training phase: Main part/Warming up

Material: Bag full of nuts, nut cracker

Group size: maximum of 20 people

Duration: approx. 45 minutes

Arrangement: group activity

11 “Estimating quantities”

Learning objectives:

- Realizing that size influences people’s ability to estimate the amount of packing as opposed to content and their consumption behaviour.

Description:

Four cups or glasses of various diameters are each filled with 150 millilitres of fruit yoghurt. The participants have to consider which of the portions might be served as a dessert or snack. After their selection they are faced with the solution, i.e. the fact that all contain the same amount. This might result into a lively discussion amongst the participants.

In this connection it is worth mentioning that people are influenced by the packet sizes of goods when eating. The bigger the packing the more consumers are tempted to eat bigger amounts. For demonstration purposes displaying various sizes of yoghurt cups may help to get the discussion moving.

Training phase: Main part/Warming up

Material: Four cups or glasses of various diameters, fruit yoghurt of different sizes.

Group size: a maximum of 20 people

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

Arrangement: individual, plenary

For background information see part 2, especially the chapter on the economic and political dimensions of nutrition.

12 “The influence of commercials”

Learning objectives:

- Realizing and analysing the effectiveness and symbolic values of advertising, and people’s susceptibility to it.
- Raising awareness of one’s own consumption powers, elaborating individual criteria applied to food quality.

Description:

The participants receive magazine advertisements without any indication of the actual product. The group is asked to draw conclusions from the subjects, colours etc what target group the ad is meant to appeal to, the emotions and wishes evoked by looking at it, and the kind of food e.g. cheese, sweets, a beverage, sausage etc. that is advertised. This activity is apt to provoke a lively discussion on susceptibility to commercials and on the power of consumption of the individual.

Advertising tends to influence our attitudes and behaviour, including our decisions when we buy food. It makes use of thoughts, pictures, metaphors, allegories and symbols that generally appeal to the majority of people.

Tip: Mark the food advertisements with numbers on the back and make a list of them in order to avoid a mess while doing the activity.

Variation:

Summarizing individual food quality criteria on a poster as a team.

Training phase: Main part/Warming up

Material: About 20 food advertisements e.g. from magazines without any indication of the actual product as such; poster; markers

Group size: maximum of 20 people

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

Arrangement: group work

For background information see part 2, especially the chapter on the political and economic dimensions of nutrition.

13 “Nutritional diary”

Learning objectives:

- Considering one’s own eating habits with regard to health and well-being, self-determined and heteronomous decisions for food consumption.

Description:

The participants are invited to note down what they have eaten to raise their awareness of their eating behaviour and give them the opportunity to change or improve it. The diaries are analysed either individually or in the group and subsequently discussed. Suggestions for questions:

- Was it easy to fill in the table?
- Are you content with your eating habits? Why? Why not?
- Who or what do you think has the main influence on your stomach and what are the factors that determine your meals? Do the choices in your canteen and supermarket or the members of your family, who are fixed on certain dishes, have effects on your food choice? Or do you determine exclusively by yourself to eat only the food that you prefer?

Variations:

What I ate yesterday: The participants are asked to fill in a table (see draft next page) what they have eaten and drunk the day before.

Nutritional diary: The participants are asked to fill in a table (see draft next page) what they will eat and drink during the following three days.

Time analysis: Add a column called “duration” to the table where you are supposed to note down the time needed for shopping, consuming food, clearing the table and washing-up. This makes it possible to attach a real-time outcome of the total time that is covered by nutrition.

Budget planning: Add a column called “expense” to the table to indicate the real or estimated cost requirements for single meals giving an overview of the real costs covered by nutrition. What is intended to follow is a discussion on suggestions what a weekly eating plan compiled of tasty and economical items may be based upon.

How to make notes:

- Note down all meals and drinks including food supplements that have been ingested.
- Make records of the time of consumption.
- The meals are as significant as the little snacks in between.
- Also make notes for all instances when you have cancelled a meal.
- Moving: Make detailed notes on the frequency and what kind of exercise you have made during the day e.g. one hour of walking, half an hour of jogging, half an hour of riding a bike etc.

How to describe the food:

- Try to make your descriptions as precise as possible.
- How the food has been prepared (grilled, boiled, steamed, fried etc.)

- Possibly mention brand names of convenience food.
- Specify your description of sweets e.g. Rich Tea® biscuits, sponge cake with fruit, doughnut, nut waffles etc.
- Specify the type of cheese (e.g. Tilsit cheese), fish e.g. (fish fingers, salmon), sausage (e.g. salami, frankfurter), and meat (e.g. lean pork cutlet, fried chicken, turkey breast)
- Make exact notes on quantities (grams, millilitres, half a litre, a level/heaped dessert or teaspoonful, chicken-egg-sized potatoes, tennis-ball-sized dumplings, level ladle of rice etc.)

Example: Monday, January 10, 2006

Meal	Time	Food/ Quantity	Drinks	Situation	Reason for selection
breakfast	7:00	2 slices of whole-meal bread (palm size, approx. 1 cm thick) with 1 teaspoonful of butter, 1 teaspoonful of jam, 2 slices of Edam cheese (30%FiT)	1 cup of herbs tea (aprox. 200 ml) 1 teaspoonful of honey 1 glass (200ml) of orange juice 1	All alone sitting at the kitchen table, radio on (morning programme))	Doesn't take long, I am always hungry in the morning
2nd breakfast	8:30	3 Rich Tea® biscuits 3	1 cup of coffee, 1 tsp of sugar, 3 dessertspoonfuls of milk , ¼ litre of water	coffee during discussion of the day with the colleague	just a favourite habit
snack	10:00	fruit yoghurt (180 g, 3,6%F.i.T.), 1 apple	¼ l fizzy apple juice	in the office	in a rush, on the side
Mittagessen	12:30	1 pancake soup, 1 serving of lasagne, cabbage salad	¼ l mineral water	in the canteen	meal of the day ...
Jause	15:00	1 apple pie (baker's)	¼ l of water	in the office	fetches by a colleague
another snack	16.00	3 pralines	¼ l fizzy apple juice	while writing on the computer	Pure frustration
etc.					

Training phase: Main part

Material: questionnaire, possibly a PC equipped with a spreadsheet programme

Group size: no limits

Duration: analysis of approx. 30 to 40 minutes

Interaction: individual, plenary

14 “Eating biography”

Learning objectives:

- Reflecting on one’s own eating habits and the events, circumstances etc. by which they have been marked.
- Promoting esteem towards others by tracing the particularities and similarities of different groups of people.

Description:

The participants draw a line on a poster that symbolises their life time lines from the childhood up to the present. They have to think of answers to the following questions:

- Which meals had an influence on me when I was a child?
- Which nutritional rules are still effective, which habits have been changed, what food was I keen on?
- To what extent are my eating habits determined by myself, and how far am I influenced by external factors?
- How many times did I have meals in a day?

The results are reported back to the whole group. This approach requires a firm base of confidence amongst group members.

Variation:

Based on the drawing covering their whole life the participants deal with determining phases of life in order to reconsider how and what they have eaten in certain situations e.g. kindergarten parties, starting school, wedding, house warming party, birth of the first child, baptism etc. Furthermore, the aspect of differences and similarities between cultures comes in here.

Training phase: Main part

Material: Flip chart paper und markers

Group size: maximum of 15 people

Duration: 90 minutes (depending on group size)

interaction: individual, presentation in plenary

For background information see part 2, especially the chapters on food quality as well as physiological, social and individual dimensions of nutrition.

15 “Creating a cook book”

Learning objectives:

- Considering one’s own nutritional needs, taking steps towards their integration into daily routine, dealing with the eating habits of other people and cultures, promoting the ability to work as a team, to boost the ability to plan and organize, broadening one’s technical knowledge such as languages, EDP etc.

Description:

The participants compile appropriate (different options are possible here: tasty, convenient, quick meals, economical, family-friendly etc.) recipes to create a personal cookbook. According to their respective basic conditions different variations are possible here. Before starting out, the participants are advised to discuss individual eating habits and needs. (See activity “nutritional diary”, “eating biography”). At the end the recipes or cookbooks may be presented, discussed or even marketed by the participants.

Corresponding to the basic conditions this activity can be carried out as a large scale project or on a small scale (one favourite recipe).

Variations:

For computer courses: The participants search the Internet for appropriate recipes and then, using text and picture edition programmes, design a personal cookbook on their PC, that may be printed and filed in a folder.

For language courses: Recipes in the respective language are searched for and selected. Where no computers are available, cookbooks and magazines in the respective language can serve as a model to copy from. Consequently, the focus will be shifted towards making oneself familiar with the cooking and food of other cultures.

For personality training: A group is asked to create a common cookbook with a specified objective in mind. E.g. Diversity Training – to be open to other eating cultures, community formation between participants of different cultures. E.g. gender training – reflecting on male and female eating habits, preferences, different roles etc.

Training phase: Main part

Material: Computer, printer, Internet access, cookbooks and magazines, maybe folders

Group size: maximum of 20 people

Duration: one or more course days

Arrangement: individual, small groups, plenary

16 “Preparing a meal”

Learning objectives:

- Analysing one’s own nutritional needs, setting steps towards their realization, trying out different cooking techniques,
- Sharpening of senses and perception,
- Experiencing and reflecting on one’s role within a team,
- Experiencing cooking and eating as valuable additions and a possibility of creative expression.

Description:

The participants prepare (simple) food as a team. During the phase preceding the cooking activity the dish is decided on and the tasks (shopping, preparation of food, setting the table, clearing the table, tidying up) are shared amongst the team members. The next step is the preparation of the food (e.g. spread, fruit salad, pieces of vegetable + dip, soup, salad). The participants are asked to attentively follow their work (cutting, mixing of ingredients ...) and perceive their sensory impressions (smelling, feeling ...). Afterwards they eat together. The meal is meant to be nicely decorated and enjoyable. After the meal the team reflects on the newly gained experiences.

This activity may, depending on the number of possibilities and given resources, be carried out on a smaller or larger scale. It is also possible to cook virtually. The roles are allocated, the tasks are discussed etc. similar to a business game.

Variation 1:

The ingredients are prescribed (e.g. vegetable of the season), all things have to be used for the meal.

Variation 2:

The food must not exceed a certain amount of money such as 1 Euro per person. A great number of other variations and instructions are possible.

Training phase: Main part

Material: Kitchen or other water supply facility, food, dishes, table cloth, napkins, candles, flowers, ...

Group size: 12 to 15 people

Duration: depending on the dish at least 2 hours

Arrangement: group work

17 “Excursion to a food producer”

Learning objectives:

- Transfer of knowledge about food production as well as promotion of organisational abilities.

Description:

The participants choose a particular food producer (baker, farm, commercial or industrial company) and make an appointment for an excursion. Afterwards they start making a list of questions to be asked on the spot. After the excursion the participants will discuss and incorporate the impressions and information they obtained.

Variation:

This approach also highlights the demands and working conditions in companies as well as locates possibilities for practical training. In such a case, these aspects have to be considered in the compilations of questions.

Training phase: Main part

Material: List of questions put on a flip chart or cards

Group size: maximum of 15 people

Duration: preparation time of 60 minutes (depending on group size)

Arrangement: group work and plenary

For background information please refer to part 2, especially the chapters on food quality as well as the political, economic and ecological dimensions of nutrition.

18 “Bazaar of eating cultures”

Learning objectives:

- To learn how to perceive and esteem the diversity of different approaches and flavour preferences, as well as culture-specific correlations.
- Promoting creativity by delight in the performance of food. Sensitizing of the senses. Project management, planning and organisational skills.
- Handling the Internet as a means for investigation, handling of spreadsheet programme for calculations .

Description:

One section of the participants constructs a number of stands displaying various foods from different cultures, while the other section moves from one stand to the other and asks about the eating habits of different cultures. E.g. What do they usually have for breakfast, lunch, dinner? What courses do they have on special occasions? How does the food smell, taste, feel and what sounds do they produce?

In particular recommendable to heterogenous groups of various cultural backgrounds.

Variation “Arranging events”:

The participants will create an event considering the thematic content of the course, where food plays a significant part. This approach makes it possible to consider different cultures and eating habits in particular, when each culture is represented by their authentic food. Depending on the budget and time given there is also the option of having a picnic.

Training phase: Main part

Material: room, food, dishes, decoration, etc., possibly a PC and Internet access

Group size: maximum of 15 people

Duration: 30 to 60 minutes or at least two hours for bigger events

Arrangement: group work

For background information please refer to part 2, especially the chapters on the cultural, social and biographical dimensions of nutrition.

19 “Pro & Contra Club”

Learning objectives:

- To learn how to perceive and esteem the diversity of different approaches and flavour preferences.
- Practising convincing argumentation and finding ways to dissociate oneself.
- Promoting the ability to empathize with other people’s approaches and thus broaden one’s horizon.

Description:

It is based on role play. Unusual eating preferences or dislikes are written on separate cards. (Example: “Roasted grasshoppers taste extraordinarily delicious”, “fresh bread tastes ugly”). Then small groups are formed and each draws a card. Their task is now to collect arguments in their group that are strong enough to convince others and to stand firm against views diametrically opposed to their own. Finally, the “Pro & Contra Club” is opened up in plenary in which the members of the whole group participate by giving their views. After a lively discussion the experiences based on various questions will be worked out in plenary. E.g. “What have I learnt from all this?”, “How do I feel about views opposed to mine?”, “How did I succeed in taking responsibility for my convictions?”, “Which arguments were helpful, which ones were counter-productive?”...

This exercise requires language competence and/or the people involved should have a command of the respective national language.

Training phase: Main part

Material: Cards or paper

Group size: maximum of 15 people

Duration: 30 to 45 minutes (depending on group size)

Arrangement: group work/small groups /plenary

For background information please refer to part 2, especially the chapters on cultural, social and biographical dimensions on nutrition.

20 “Let’s go shopping”

Learning objectives:

- Learning how to adapt food purchases to the household budget.
- Establishing personal criteria for buying food.

Description:

The participants form two groups, each receiving the same shopping list for a meal with several courses. One group has to select food which is particularly economical and calculate the overall costs covered. The second group is challenged to select high-quality items and calculate the overall costs. The calculations should be based on advertising material and online-shopping of supermarkets and food trading companies or in proper shops (e.g. as a task for the next course day).

As a next step, the two purchases are compared with regard to the overall costs, quality of food, waste produced ... At the end, the groups are asked to cooperate in elaborating shopping criteria for the selection of food, and subsequently individually analyse them (things that I personally consider to be important such as economical, ecological products, flavour, brand ...).

Training phase: Main part

Material: Advertising material from different chains of food retail shops, PCs with Internet access

Group size: 30 people

Duration: at least 60 minutes

Arrangement: small group work, plenary

For background information please refer to part 2, especially the chapters on the economic and political dimensions of nutrition.

21 “The whole world in a shopping basket”

Learning objectives:

- The participants should learn how to evaluate the available information on food (supermarket info, labels etc.) and consider them when making decisions on purchases.
- Realizing that the selection and purchase of food has ecological, social and physical aspects.
- Becoming aware of the fact of consumers having power when they buy food.

Description:

The course leader brings along a shopping basket filled with fruit and vegetables (e.g. lemons, apples, pears, bananas, mandarins, tomatoes, garlic, peppers, prunes, kiwis ...) The participants are asked to guess the country of origin of the different sorts of fruit, and the approximate distance they have been transported. Afterwards the riddle is solved by means of a poster that has been prepared by the trainer. The whole group tries to evaluate the transport distance together.

Food is transferred these days over thousands of kilometres. This is possible because the transport costs cover only one percent of the shelf price. The increasing volume of traffic represents an additional environmental problem. Fruit which is transported long distances has often been harvested unripe, stored for longer and thus contain less valuable substances.

Subsequent discussion on the following issues:

- How does our current life style affect the volume of food transport?
- What food is transported long distances, what items are supplied regionally?
- What food is available from the region, but competes with similar products which have to be transported long distances?
- How can we raise our environmental awareness in terms of buying food and eating?

Variation:

Analyse the usual weekly purchase in terms of food transport. Try to compile an alternative list based on regional food containing all the things requested.

Training phase: Main part

Material: Basket full of fresh fruit and vegetable; worksheets, poster with the solution (food is marked in terms of the respective country of origin in the supermarkets or there are signs or labels with packed food. The distances of transport may be roughly estimated by means of a map).

Group size: no limits

Duration: about 40 minutes

Arrangement: individual work, plenary

For background information please refer to part 2, especially the chapter covering the ecological dimension of nutrition.

22 “Bitter-sweet chocolate”

Learning objectives:

- Thinking about fair and unfair trade, working and manufacturing conditions.
- Realizing that the selection and purchase of food has social consequences.
- Becoming aware of the fact of consumers having power when they buy food.

Description:

Five groups are formed. Each group receives one card telling them their role play identity

(1. cocoa farmer, 2. cocoa trader, 3. suppliers of milk, sugar, paper, 4. representatives of the chocolate manufacturers, 5. dealers). Additionally, each group receives an empty plate. On another plate 40 pieces of chocolate are displayed on tooth sticks representing the total value of the manufactured chocolate.

During the discussion phase the group decides on the number of pieces they consider adequate to receive for their cooperation in the chocolate production. Then each group has to select a speaker who shows his or her function by putting on either a straw hat (farmer), or a jute sack (cocoa trader), or a paper hat (supplier of further ingredients), or a tie (chocolate manufacturer), or an apron (dealer).

In the subsequent discussion of group speakers the cocoa farmer starts explaining why he or she deserves a certain number of chocolate pieces. He is then allowed to put the pieces on the plate of his or her group. The farmer is followed by the cocoa trader, who also puts forward and argues for his claims, then puts the corresponding number on the group plate. The session will continue until all the chocolate is shared out between the groups. If there is no chocolate left before all the speakers have said something, the chocolate may be taken from other plates, but the speaker has to justify his or her decision. The game will be finished if the group comes to an agreement or the participants run out of arguments.

Afterwards the course leader shows the solution on a poster indicating the actual constellation as it exists on the world market: Trade 12 pieces, chocolate manufacturer 16 pieces, suppliers of other ingredients four pieces, cocoa trader six pieces, cocoa farmers two pieces.

Discussing the subject, introducing fair-traded chocolate.

Training phase: Main part

Material: Big bar of chocolate (40 pieces), 40 tooth sticks, 6 plates, cards with role play identities, straw hat, jute bag, paper hat, tie, apron, poster showing the solution, chocolate with „Transfair” stamp, information on Transfair

Group size: 30 people

Duration: approx. 60 min

Interaction: small groups, plenary

For background information see part 2, especially the chapter on the economic and political dimension of nutrition.

Source: This exercise was developed by Südwind/Wien, www.oneworld.at/swagentur/start.asp

23 “Culinary Good-bye present”

Learning objectives:

- Giving appreciative feedback

Description:

Each participant is presented a culinary Good-bye present by the trainer or another participant, such as a fruit (apple, plum, nuts ... according to the course motto “may the course have been fruitful for you”), a recipe, ...

Training phase: final phase

Material: fruit or sheets with recipes

Group size: no limits

Duration: about 5 minutes

Arrangement: plenary

For background information refer to part 2, especially the chapters on the cultural and social dimensions of nutrition.

24 “Set table”**Learning objectives:**

- Giving appreciative feedback.
- Summing up individually the experiences gained during the last few days by finding appropriate culinary metaphors.

Description:

The tables are put together to form one festive table which is covered by a long sheet of paper fixed like a table cloth, and surrounded by the participants. Each person is asked to draw a cover where he or she is seated, including meals as metaphors of the things learnt in the course (e.g. rice with vegetables, meat and salad in separate positions indicating “I have learnt about different things, but haven’t yet succeeded in linking them up”, or colourful mixed salad implying that “the course was full of relish and colours, and I have received a lot of essential vitamins”...). Finally, all participants in turn are invited to present and comment on their culinary metaphors.

Training phase: Final phase

Material: Continuous paper reel, different coloured pencils or wax crayons

Group size: maximum of 20 people

Duration: about 45 minutes (depending on group size)

Arrangement: individual work, plenary

25 “Harvest wagon – dust cart”

Learning goal:

- Making visible personal feedback of the group.
- The effects of a bountiful harvest at the end of the seminar is meant to be a challenge to its participants.

Description:

Two posters are pinned to the wall, one showing a harvest wagon, the other one showing a dust-cart. The participants are asked to note down all the things they have reaped from the course and will take home. The dust-cart is meant to be filled up with things from the seminar they don't want to take on in the future.

At the end the group looks at the filled up wagons on the posters, and the seminar leader summarizes the findings of the group.

Training phase: Final phase

Material: Two posters: one showing a harvest wagon, the other one a dust-cart, poster markers

Group size: maximum of 20 people

Duration: about 15 minutes (depending on group size)

Arrangement: plenary

Case studies

In the course of the project several pilot tests have been carried out with three target groups in three different countries, namely Austria, Sweden, and France, which have definitely shown positive results. The respective trainers appreciated the practical approach and the useful instructions of the manual. They successfully adapted the methods to the specific course objectives and necessities.

Case study 1: Jobexpress – adults’ applicational training (Austria)

Content: job search, writing and compiling of application papers, how to behave during a job interview, social competence

Duration: 6 weeks training in groups/4 days a week /4 hours a day, one or two 50 minutes units of individual coaching a week for each participant

Participants’ shares: 5 women and 5 men between 38 and 55

Social background: from unskilled worker to academically educated, multi-cultural groups of various origin: 2 Turkish, 3 Serbocroatian, 2 Austrian, 1 Albanian, 2 Slovakian

Qualifications: high degree of diversity: ranging from study drop-outs, college graduates, skilled workers, primary school graduates, and secondary illiterates, people with a low level of computer proficiency up to computer specialists; different levels of German proficiency.

Trainer: female, aged 43; andragogical freelance trainer and psychological counsellor for 10 years, personal interest in nutritional matters.

Applied methodology:

- Food quiz (10): to create the right mood for the topic
- Nutritional biography (14): to raise awareness of individual eating habits in good as well as bad times, emphasizing the effectiveness of joyful eating in times of crisis.
- Cookery book (15): to be trained in computer handling (Internet researches, copying and inserting pictures in word files as well as writing in Word application and compiling several files into one unit), to counteract cultural exclusion by using networking and complementary approaches (“eating makes friends”), and to consolidate the feeling of self-esteem.

Group procedure:

An initial sceptical feeling especially with regard to lack of computer knowledge was gradually transformed into curiosity in the course of the introductory stage due to existing resources of computer skills. During a process of gathering and finding recipes from their respective cultures the participants developed a group spirit and realized similarities in taste. The joint product of a cookery book was highly esteemed. At the end of the project the participants had a common meal and celebration.

Participants’ feedback:

“The cookery book is meant to be a special present for all of us reminding us of the experiences we have gained throughout the course.” – “We have increased our knowledge and mutual understanding of cultures.” – “We are proud to have lost our inhibitions about PCs.” – “We have realized how significant it is to enjoy eating particularly during times of crises.”

Trainer’s feedback:

The high amount of differences within the group initially caused problems. A common link was established with the topic of food, which the project “cookery book” was based upon. It served as a starting point to motivate the participants, to effectively overcome inhibitions, and to reach a common aim. Most remarkable of all was the impetus everybody developed, which decreased the impact of resistance and negative thoughts and strengthened everybody’s feeling of self-esteem. On the whole a successful project which was really enjoyable.

Case study 2: „Konsensus“ – cookery course for adults with physically and mentally handicapped people (Sweden)

Content: to learn about different nutritional substances, to be trained in cooking, nutritional studies, basic social competences

Duration: 18 weeks, once a week 2.5 hours

Participants’ shares: 8 women and 7 men between 25 and 62

Social background: all participants suffer from physical and/or psychological disabilities

Trainers: aged 41 and 43, have been working with target groups of this kind for 6 years, are personally interested in nourishment.

Applied methodology:

- Pantomime with carrots (2): to create the right mood for the topic
- What food am I? (4): to experience the taste of food, to make one’s own choice independently, to train social behaviour in
- Feedback by showing traffic lights colours (9): to explore one’s own relationship with food, to determine the level of nutritional proficiency, to serve as a basis for the course
- Estimating quantities (11): to develop a feeling for proportions and quantities
- Nutritional diary (13): to become aware of the nature of eating habits and to initiate positive changes, to enhance the degree of adaptation of participants’ needs
- Preparing a meal (16): to learn how to carry out a complex task covering the selection of the recipe, the making of a shopping list, the sharing of tasks amongst the participants, the joint cooking, the covering of the table as well as the combination of the meal. To accomplish a high degree of team working ability.
- Set table (14): to receive the corresponding feedback and to reveal all course results

Participants feedback:

This approach was very well received. They especially appreciated the practical exercises and opportunities to celebrate a meal together. The more theoretically based exercises such as the nutritional diary did not meet with a lively response.

Trainers' feedback:

To work with this specific target group presupposes a combination of an appropriate pedagogical approach and highly-skilled trainers. These preconditions are given in the present case. The manual and the compilation of approaches are both very useful and all the exercises stated may be well integrated into the procedures. They aim at supporting the participants in their daily choice of food and boosting their self-esteem. It is advisable to have small groups (not exceeding 8 in number) and repeat the instructions in order to guarantee a better understanding of the exercises.

Case study 3: „Competence“ - Coaching of people receiving income support (France)

Content: to develop readiness for employment, to strengthen social competence, to look for individual resources, and to conceive individual plans

Duration: three months, half a day each week

Social background: all participants are to be unemployed, with some of them never having had a regular job; they are faced with health, financial and psychological problems; they are socially handicapped and have either not been educated at all or are primary school graduates.

Trainer: aged 44; has been working with socially handicapped people for many years, has gained professional experience in Africa, personal interest in nutritional matters.

Applied methodology:

- Initial questions (1): to create the right mood for the topic
- Sniffing: Guess what it is? (8): to school sensory perception
- Feedback by showing traffic lights colours based on gender-oriented questions (9): to explore one's own relationship with food, to detect the participants' level of nutritional proficiency, to serve as a basis for the course.
- Influence of commercials (12): to analyze one's own shopping habits and to make people consider these habits more critically
- Nutritional diary (13): to become aware of the nature of eating habits and to initiate positive changes
- Nutritional biography (14): to trace back the origin of individual eating habits
- Preparing a meal (16): to learn how to carry out a complex task covering the selection of the recipe, the making of a shopping list, the sharing of tasks amongst the participants, the joint cooking, the setting of the table as well as the combination of the meal. To accomplish a high degree of team work ability.

Group procedure:

The first meeting day of the group started with a joint breakfast. Enough time was left for arrival and first talks. The whole process ran entirely smoothly. The participants were absolutely committed to the topic. They got on with each other and quickly formed one group. They were in the position to get rid of their complexes concerning their low social status, and to regard themselves as highly esteemed human beings.

Participants' feedback:

This approach was very well received. They were extraordinarily interested in exploring new flavours and other ways of nourishment. “Many of the exercises have been fun.” – “I felt very comfortable to escape the limited scope of income support” – “We have learned how to select delicious food at reasonable prices”. – “I have discovered the food market for me.” – “We have been able to talk about other things but problems.”

Trainers' feedback:

A big success: a newly created room has been filled up by the participants' recently boosted self-esteem. They have been a good team, totally committed to the subject matter. Many skills and strengths have become apparent, which we will be able to build on when searching for work. Participants who had suffered from a high degree of depression succeeded in creating a new image of themselves and their possibilities.

Part 4: Literature and Links

The following literature and links have been used while compiling the Guidelines and the Toolbox. For further references, please visit the project's homepage www.food-literacy.org where you can find background information and relevant links in each partner's language.



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Education à la carte!

Who can use the Guidelines and Tool Box?

Adult education and counselling institutions

Institutions of health and consumer education

Institutions offering nutrition education

Trainers

Counsellors

Social workers

Anyone who wants to broaden his/her knowledge of nutrition and convey this to others.



Socrates
Grundtvig

This project has been funded with support from the SOCRATES-GRUNDTVIG programme of the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.