**Cooking workshops with food surpluses**

Panier de la Mer (PdlM) in Boulogne-sur-Mer processes and distributes surpluses from the fish auction through food aid ( a form of state support). They also train people who have been unemployed in fish processing, from cleaning fish to meal processing.

Often fish goes to waste because people do not always know how to prepare it. To tackle this PdlM organises cooking workshops for different target groups, four days a week, twice a day. These take place in different locations across the city and sometimes outside of Boulogne-sur-Mer. During the workshops that help people to understand about the short shelf life of fish, seasonal products and the prevention of food waste, to stimulate healthy cooking. It also brings people from across the community together. An example of this is a cooking workshop in a social housing area of le Chemin Vert in Boulogne, which is described below.

Because of the corona measures and the limited space in the kitchen, the capacity is limited. In a domestic setting, there are four participants, a mix of ages, gender and origin. Besides the participants, two supervisors are also present. The first is David, the regular cook of the cooking workshops of PdlM, who guides the participants during cooking and teaches them about healthy food. An example of this is replacing wheat polenta with maize polenta, which improves blood sugar levels. Other food-related issues are also discussed, such as how to deal with the use-by date in order to avoid food waste. This information is repeated regularly during the workshop.

The second facilitator is a street worker who organises the cooking workshop. She makes sure that the participants are present and that the venue is set up. She also starts conversations with the participants during the cooking workshop, during which people often share other challenges they may be facing, around finances or support and the facilitator then helps to follow up on these.

During each workshop, a main course and dessert is prepared with whatever fresh produce is available at that time. Because the participants are themselves dependent on the food bank, they always cook with the vegetables available that day. In this way the participants are supported in 'cooking with what arrives'. After the workshop, the recipes are shared on the Facebook page of PdlM.

At the end of the workshop the participants can take the prepared meal home, one portion for each family member. Since corona, a larger quantity is cooked. The remaining meals are distributed in the neighbourhood by the street worker immediately after the workshop. In this way, they also work on food distribution. This is also a way of encouraging the residents of the social housing estate to take part in the workshop themselves in a way to reach the largest possible audience.

Besides the health aspect, the social aspect is also an important added value. For the participants of the workshop the atmosphere and the social contacts are important reasons to participate. Both the process and the product are aimed at increasing the participants' self-esteem. Cooking for others and contributing to the health of people in the neighbourhood can further strengthen this feeling. In this way, the cooking workshops are not a goal in themselves. Rather, a context is created in which both health promotion and the strengthening of the participants' self-esteem are addressed. The great added value lies in the friendly atmosphere and the experience of being together.

Photos of the cooking workshop

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