



Book & Cook

UK project evaluation of local workshops



Summary and overview

- A local steering group was formed and had its first meeting in December 2018.
- 8 beneficiaries and 1 member of Chequers team comprised the membership
- During this and subsequent meetings, this local steering group put together a list of recipes that could be included in the recipe book and planned the activities and visits for the Kent Training Visit to take place in April/May 2019

- The local steering group also participated in three local cookery workshops, the first following on from the steering group's first meeting. (A fourth was planned for March 2020 but was cancelled due to the pandemic. A separate group of participants took part in 6 online cookery demonstrations during October to December 2020.)
- These 3 workshops comprised group cookery activities, testing recipes for the international cookery book and the second two workshops also included participants who were not members of the steering group.

Some of the local workshop participants



Putting together recipes

- The recipe book aimed to include mostly typical British recipes that could easily be reproduced in the partners' own locations. The process of choosing recipes caused participants to reflect on why they enjoy certain dishes and the meanings they have for them. The conversations emerged of memories of childhood and emotions attached to different dishes.
- Our participants also decided that dishes with international influences should also be included as British cooking is now very multi-cultural, with an Indian dish, chicken tikka marsala, being considered the most popular dish in the UK

- After the pandemic put a stop to the final workshop, and we were not able to cook together in person, we organised online cookery demonstrations via Zoom, working with South Kent Mind. 6 participants attended 6 online demonstrations of healthy, budget-conscious cooking. They were delivered by our team member, Chris, who is a stroke survivor, and who demonstrated how simple the dishes are and how delicious.

- The South Kent MIND co-ordinator reported back to us after the 6 online workshops:
“Chequers Cookery School Book & Cook demonstrations brought the joy of learning to cook to people who as a result of their mental health find it difficult to take care of themselves. Through their love of food and cooking Chequers Cookery School gave people struggling with self belief ,the confidence to explore cooking and at the same time reduced loneliness by bringing people together.”



Training Visit to Pro-Vita

- 5 travelled to Romania in November 2019
- They comprised one staff member, one sessional worker, and three volunteers
- The visit was enlightening and inspiring
- “I had no idea Romania was so beautiful and culturally rich. We learned so much from Pro Vita and how they adapt their activities to meet the needs of their local population.”

The study visit to Romania led us to reflect on the nature of community and the central role eating together plays in building relationships. The communal meals at Pro-Vita were an inspiration, not just as they brought together so many people in a shared daily gathering. The food prepared and served was wholesome and delicious. We were struck by the sight of so many children enjoying freshly prepared meals with no element of junk food or refusals to eat vegetables, both of which are common occurrences in our experience of school dining halls.

We were disappointed not to have the opportunity to visit our partners in Belgium and France, although the virtual contact during the pandemic has built a strong relationship between us.

Our participants in the Book & Cook workshops and local steering committee selected recipes for our local Book & Cook recipe book which is available to download here

<https://keen2cook.org.uk/the-erasmus-book-cook-project-produced-a-recipe-book-available-to-download/>

This collection of recipes was chosen by the volunteers and participants in the Book & Cook project with our partners from France, Belgium and Romania. We would like to thank the Erasmus+ programme for the opportunity to participate in a fascinating and enlightening transnational project. Our partners are inspiring and have become friends, for which we are very grateful.



Stephanie Hayman

Cinque Ports Community Kitchen CIC

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