23. November 2026

Integration Council

Cooking brings people together: generations and cultures come together around the hob

The 'Cooking Across Generations' initiative continues // Older people and young people cooked together

Following the conclusion of the IHELP project last year, the organisers of the intergenerational cookery sessions decided to continue the initiative and to meet twice a year for these sessions. The second session took place on 19 November 2026 at the family education centre.

The event was organised by jusina e.V. in collaboration with the Family Education Centre (FABI), the association Leben im Alter e.V. (L-i-A), the City of Bocholt's Integration Office and the Committee for Equal Opportunities and Integration (ACI). The Berufskolleg am Wasserturm is also supporting the project. The aim is to bring together people of all ages and backgrounds and to inspire volunteers to get involved.

Cooking Together

The cooking took place under the guidance of four women from the Lebanese Aid and Development Association, which is currently being set up. Farah Salman, Asma Salman, Safa Salman and Zeinab Salameh had selected recipes for Lebanese specialities.

After a brief round of introductions, participants split into four diverse groups to cook together using recipes from Lebanese cuisine. People from different generations, with roots in Lebanon, Poland, Croatia, Afghanistan, Egypt, Turkey and Germany, worked hand in hand. The menu included Lebanese-style chicken shawarma, toum (Lebanese garlic paste), kafta, fattoush and - a must - flatbread.

Cross-generational, collaborative teamwork and diversity

""Age doesn't matter in the kitchen - it's all about doing things together,"" said Susanne Rademacher from the Family Education Centre. ""Even though we already know some of the participants, it's always lovely to meet new people, whatever their age,"" she added.

It's clear: the event was not just a culinary evening, but a valuable contribution to greater understanding, openness and togetherness in a diverse urban community. Or as participant and cook Safa Salman put it: "I'm delighted that everyone had so much fun; I really enjoyed it too, and I hope we'll cook together again soon". Beate Ehlting, taking part for the first time, was delighted: "The culinary theme was brilliant; the way we interacted with one another - even though we come from such different cultures - was very positive and communal; everyone helped everyone else. I'll definitely be back next time."" For the two youngest participants, Apanoub from Egypt and Shahid from Afghanistan, much of it was still new territory. Neither had ever cooked with so many people before and "it was great fun, especially getting to know such lovely new people."" ""It was wonderful,"" says Uschi Ledwon, ""everything worked out through teamwork - brilliant. And it was delicious too.""

Bruno Wansing, Integration Officer for the City of Bocholt, would like to continue offering this format: "Precisely because the exchange between young and old, and also between people with and without an international family background - which we've experienced here today - is so important to us, we'll continue to hold the intergenerational cooking sessions twice a year. We're planning the next session for April 2027". Agnes Wellkamp from jusina was

also delighted: "My thanks go to everyone who brings this collaborative spirit to life through this initiative."