

Voices through Water

The Creative and Activist Methodologies Toolkit



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Election Programmes Workshop

Advocacy, Activist



This activity focuses on analysing and comparing different political parties' election programmes on a chosen topic. Participants critically evaluate party positions, identify gaps, and develop their own proposals, fostering civic engagement and critical thinking.



Target group

Young people aged 16-25 years old (but can be adapted to older groups)
10-30 participants



Environment

A room large enough for group work, with tables and chairs. Ideally, one table per party programme.



Time needed

2-2.5 hours (flexible)



Materials

Printed election programmes (or excerpts) on a specific topic (e.g., climate, migration), pens, flipchart paper, markers, sticky notes.

Objective/aim

The activity aims to strengthen participants' skills in critically analysing political texts, encourage active participation in democratic processes, and empower young people to form their own opinions on party positions regarding a specific topic.

Step by step instructions

Preparation

Print and prepare the parties' or party groups' election programmes on the selected topic. Clearly label each set of documents with the party name and place them on separate tables.

Step 1

Group division

Divide participants into smaller groups (3–5 people per group) and assign each group to one party table. Ensure all groups have pens and paper. (5 minutes)

Step 2

Content analysis

Each group reads and summarises their assigned party's position on the topic. They note the key demands, proposals, and arguments on flipchart paper. Encourage them to focus on the main points rather than details. (20 minutes)

Step 3

Critical discussion

Groups discuss internally what they think about the party's position, whether they agree or disagree with the party's programme. They also reflect on what might be missing or unclear. All comments should be noted on the flipchart. (20 minutes)

Step 4

Developing own proposals

Each group formulates their own policy suggestions or alternative ideas on the topic. These should be presented clearly (as bullet points or a short manifesto) on a new flipchart sheet. (30 minutes)

Step 5

Group presentations

Groups present their analyses and proposals to the whole group. After each presentation, allow for a few questions and short feedback. (30 minutes)

Step 6

Reflection and conclusion

Facilitate a final reflection round to consolidate the learning. Possible guiding questions (15 minutes):

- What did you learn about the different party positions?
- Did anything surprise you?
- How did it feel to create your own demands?
- Why is it important to read party programmes before voting?



Tips for the trainer

Move between groups to answer questions, clarify terms if needed, stimulate discussion, and ensure equal participation. Remind groups to focus on key points rather than getting lost in details. Consider using a timer to keep each step on track.



Alternative

Step 6: Optional World Café

As an alternative to step 4, you can open a general World Café discussion on the same topic. Use the party analyses as starting points to deepen the debate and gather collective insights. (30–45 minutes)

Participants can work with speeches, campaign videos, or social media posts instead of written programmes.



Comment

This method is promoting political literacy and empowering young people to critically engage with election content. It encourages them to move beyond slogans and understand concrete policy proposals and develop their own ideas.



Source

Developed as part of the My Elections-My EU! project by Südwind and inspired by World Café and participatory education methods.