



Participate

Introduction & Aims

You can use this session guide to help you plan a Voicebox Cafe. The aims of this session are to:

- Identify issues that matter to the group, on a local and national level.
- Learn about participation, and how the group can use their voice to make a difference to things that are important to them.
- Create a petition to make change within their local community, or nationally.

Timing

You can adapt this session, depending on how long you have available. There are three **key activities** which run for 1 hour and a half.

There are **extra activities** which you can use to extend the session to be just over 2 hours. There are a few **alternative activities** throughout the session plan too. There are no scheduled breaks within the session plan, so you might want to have a chat to the group and ask when they would like to break. It's usually good to have one at the halfway point of the session.

Running your session

This session is designed to be informal and relaxed. There's a lot of jargon involved in politics, and learners might find this off-putting if it's a new subject for them. As you deliver the session, you may need to explain words that learners might be unfamiliar with. Check learners understanding regularly throughout the session, and ensure that learners know that they can ask questions at any point.

Resources

Resources for this session can be found in this session plan and in the **Participate** section of the Use your voice page on Learn My Way:

www.learnmyway.com/resources/use-your-voice



Top tip

Contact your local MP or a council member to come and give a talk about participation and the difference it can make. Prepare some questions as a group beforehand. Share photos using #VoiceboxCafés



#VoiceboxCafés

Time	Activity	Resource
5 mins	Introduce the session. Read through the aims of the session and explain how long the session will be, when the breaks will be and the kind of activities you'll be doing.	
20 mins	Listen to the podcast in which real people explain the issues that they feel passionate about. Pause the podcast if you are running a longer session, as you will play the rest of it later on in the session.	Podcast: https://goo.gl/AuJW8y Play from 10:53 to 12:09
20 mins	As a group, discuss and write down responses to the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What would you like to change in your local community?• What would you like to change nationally? Collect the groups ideas on a large piece of paper or on post-it notes. Can you agree about some issues that you feel strongly about? Circle these for later on in the session.	Flipchart paper/Post-it notes



Share

Share photos of your learner's ideas on social media using #VoiceboxCafes - why not tag your local MP or local council in the post so that it gets a wider reach?



#VoiceboxCafés

Time	Activity	Resource
Option 1 5 mins (Shorter)	Watch the video	Projector & https://goo.gl/6nKnsP
Option 2 15 mins (Longer)	Listen to podcast	Podcast: https://goo.gl/AuJW8y Play from 12:09 - 23:51
45 mins +	<p>After watching the video or listening to the podcast, ask the group if they'd like to create their own petition about an issue.</p> <p>As a group decide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is it a local or national issue?• Should it be an online or paper petition? <p>Help the group to create their petition, you can get more advice on the website on the right.</p> <p>Paper petition template and guidance on the Learn My Way: Use your voice page.</p>	<p>Paper petition template on Learn My Way: Use your voice page</p> <p>www.learnmyway.com/resources/use-your-voice</p>



Share

The best way to get a petition signed is to share it far and wide! Share e-petitions on social media with #VoiceboxCafes and consider creating your own hashtag too! If your learners have created a paper petition, why not take some photos of signatures being signed?



Time	Activity	Resource
Extra time activity 20 minutes	Use the website to find your MP and send them a message about your group's campaign. Tip: Rather than send duplications with lots of messages, write a group message and sign every member of the groups name.	Projector & Laptop www.writetothem.com

We've suggested creating a petition as a great way for the group to participate and get involved in creating change. For a number of reasons, this might not be something all learners within the group will feel ready for. But there are lots of other ways to participate. Here are some more ideas:

- Set up a local women's council for your centre or community, where the group can make decisions about centre issues.
- Hold a conversation cafe about a local issue. Why not ask other community stakeholders (such as the local church or mosque) along to get involved?
- Host a debate within the classroom to raise confidence and aspirations within the group - ask the group to choose the issues and give them time to plan what they'll say.

What next?

Read:

This booklet encourages women to take an active part in the decisions that impact them

<https://www.parliament.uk/documents/pcfs/Speak-for-Yourself.pdf>

Listen:

There are 6 free podcasts in this series, narrated by comedian Meera Syal. They explain voting, parliament, how government works and petitions.

<https://goo.gl/CC7DvS>