Mutual Project

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During the German-African Youth Initiative (2016-2018), a project about appropriate table manners was developed with the aim to educate the young generation about traditional and formal eating manners in different cultures. Eating together plays a major role within everyday life and knowledge about the behaviour code of another culture enhances intercultural competence and enables global citizenship.

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How to be polite

Masubia and German Table Manners
Namibia, Masubia culture: Eating politely

- A set of steps is to be followed
- Respect is given to the elderly people

Step 2
Elders start washing their hands, then pass the water to the younger ones.

Step 3
Before starting to eat, clap your hands to show respect and give thanks for the food.

Step 4
First, elders get the biggest parts of the meat.

Step 5
The food is eaten with hands.

Step 6
After eating, wash your hands again and clap them as a sign of thankfulness.

Germany: Eating politely

- A set of rules is to be followed (cf. “Knigge” = German behaviour codex)
- Only few basic rules were chosen for the project

Rule 1
Before eating, cutlery is placed like this:

Rule 2
Wait until everyone is served, then start eating only after everyone has said “Guten Appetit!”.

Rule 3
Don’t put your elbows on the table.

Rule 4
Try not to make noise. Avoid speaking with food in your mouth.

Rule 5
The way you put your cutlery on the table indicates whether you are still hungry, or full.

Cutlery meaning “I’m still hungry.”

Cutlery meaning “I’m full.”