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Leading EU project on sustainable school meals releases policy recommendations for innovation in nutrition education

SchoolFood4Change (SF4C), a Europe wide initiative spotlighting the power of schools in transitioning to sustainable food systems, has published a set of policy recommendations emphasising the potential for innovation in school meals and nutrition education. The recommendations, which outline the need for at least one healthy and sustainable school meal daily and better integration of EU policies that affect school meals and food education, have been released in light of the upcoming review of the [European Union School Scheme](#) scheduled for the end of March 2024.

“Access to healthy and sustainable school food is not evident in many countries, despite the EU Child Guarantee, which is why we ask policy makers of the European Union to support the Member States in providing at least one healthy and sustainable school meal daily in all schools across Europe. Our SchoolFood4Change [policy brief](#), which was presented at the [Open Food Conference](#) organised by the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council in Leuven (Belgium), explains how we can recognise every child's right to healthy, sustainable food and food education,” shares Katharina Beelen, Policy Expert, Rikolto.

These policy recommendations are, in part, based on the SF4C Whole School Food Approach (WSFA), which acts as a framework to encourage innovation and improvement in school nutrition, while fostering a healthy, sustainable food culture in



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schools. [SchoolFood4Change partner schools in the Czech Republic](#) have now reached the bronze level of the WSFA framework, denoting the inclusion of healthy eating and sustainable food production and consumption in the curriculum as well as the establishment of an internal school working group on nutrition, amongst other activities.

Alongside the policy recommendations, an environmental impact calculator to help inform food procurement decisions is also under development. Furthermore, project partners have also published [hands-on guidance for purchasers](#) (from schools and cities), outlining innovative criteria and cases for procurement, to get healthier and more planet friendly food on children's plates. As part of the project, students' health is being scientifically monitored at a selection of SF4C partner schools.

"We want to assess children's diet-related health issues and current sustainability challenges by asking ourselves how dietary changes in school menus translate into improved nutritional behaviours among students. In the end, we expect to find higher quality diets in children taking part in the SchoolFood4Change activities. These results will help us to replicate the SF4C approach on a larger scale," says Irene Sánchez Vidal, Registered Nutritionist and Research Technician, University of Alcalá, Spain.

SchoolFood4Change aims to encourage both sustainable and healthy diets on a broad societal scale by directly impacting over 3,000 schools in total and 600,000 school children in 12 European countries. Today - International School Meals Day - underscores the importance of "innovation in school meals" and schools' role as catalysts for systemic, multi-actor change.

Read the SchoolFood4Change policy brief [here](#).

Learn more about the SchoolFood4Change project on the [SF4C website](#).



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Press contact:

Anastasia Lundqvist

Communications and Visibility Focal Point

WWF Sweden

Email: anastasia.lundqvist@wwf.se

For general enquiries about the project, please contact info@schoolfood4change.eu

#schoolmeals #schoolfood #SchoolFood4Change #ISMD2024



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