

Successful implementation of a Whole School Food Approach through city support

This fact sheet serves as inspiration for implementing the Whole School Food Approach at a city level

If the food served in school canteens is **sustainable and healthy** and a school simultaneously invests in nutritional education as part of everyday school life, this can be a very effective way of establishing healthy eating habits and a healthy society in the long term. However, it is not easy for a school to implement the Whole School Food Approach on its own. Different actors in and around the school need to participate in the implementation, from the school's management and school councils to teachers and pupils, as well as school food services and canteen cooks, pupils' families and the community the school is based in.

Local and regional authorities such as **cities and regions can act as catalysts for change** and make a real difference to public health, society and the environment. They often play a significant role in improving education and in promoting sustainable public food procurement policies.

As local and regional authorities operate in close proximity to different stakeholders, they can help implement the WSFA in schools through tailored guidance and the provision of coaching and networking opportunities to facilitate partnerships with local actors.

In SchoolFood4Change, eighteen cities and regions are supporting more than 350 schools and preschools across Europe in implementing the WSFA. Through strategic planning, evaluation, mutual learning and support from the city the WSFA implementation can continuously be improved and advanced.

What is the Whole School Food Approach?

Whole School Food Approach (WSFA) is a method for developing a healthy and sustainable food culture in and around schools. It is an evidence-based concept that contributes to community-wide systemic change and positively affects education, sustainability, inequalities, communities and health.

The WSFA sees schools - from day-care centres and preschools through to secondary schools - as catalysts for sustainable food system change. The holistic concept integrates food and education and addresses the composition of school meals and the functioning of school canteens, includes practical teaching, learning activities and the active participation of pupils and teachers, and involves the wider school community (including caregivers, farmers, businesses and civil society).



Successful implementation of a Whole School Food Approach through city support



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036763.



Example Valencia

The Valencian Regional Government has incorporated the SchoolFood4Change project into its "Health promotion and prevention service portfolio in the educational environment" to promote the WSFA. Schools in the Valencian Community are guided and supported by Public Health Centres to implement this community approach, advancing progressively through levels (bronze, silver, gold) to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable and healthy food practices.

The Public Health Centres organise regular training courses and provide materials so that school staff become experts in effective measures to improve the food culture in schools.

Curious to know more about how the city can support the implementation of the WSFA? Take a look at this further reading:

- [WSFA Framework gives an overview of the concept](#)
- [Want to implement the WSFA? Find out how in this practical guide](#)
- [Explore the WSFA criteria checklist and learn how to apply it](#)

What does a school have to fulfil to reach bronze level?



Example Umeå

The Municipality of Umeå in northern Sweden has built a very strong support group to facilitate the implementation of the WSFA. The steering group includes representatives from the environment, procurement, school meals and education departments, who are meeting regularly. All of them play a pivotal role in the schools' WSFA implementation. Together they can showcase how the WSFA is part of the school curriculum.

The group supports the schools with in-service training, education materials, strategic planning and documentation. All schools' action plans have been bundled so that schools can learn from each other and get inspiration.

This systematic facilitation has led to 20 schools and preschools reaching bronze level during the SchoolFood4Change project period.