

SchoolFood4Change together with European Leaders in Rome to Shape the Future of Sustainable and Healthy School Meals

At a time of rising food insecurity, childhood obesity and climate pressures, cities are increasingly recognising school meals as a strategic investment in long-term societal resilience.

The EU-funded SchoolFood4Change (SF4C) project arranges the Flagship Session “It’s Time for a New Menu! How Healthy School Meals Can Transform Food Systems.”, held in the framework of [the Forum Compraverde - BuyGreen Conference 2026](#) in Rome (Italy) - one of Europe’s leading arenas for sustainable public procurement and policy dialogue.

The event marks the culmination of more than four years of international collaboration to transform school meals into a powerful lever for public health, education, climate action and sustainable food systems. High-level representatives from cities, national authorities, EU institutions and international organisations will come together to translate local action into lasting policy impact.

From School Canteens to Policy Change

Across Europe, the SchoolFood4Change network has collaborated with nearly 4,000 schools, and thereby reached over one million children, as well as students and educators in 35 cities and regions.



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SchoolFood4Change has demonstrated that **school meals are not only a service, but a strategic public policy tool** to:

- improve children's health and wellbeing, by shifting towards more nutritious and sustainable diets;
- strengthen food literacy and lifelong habits, by teaching children about food;
- support sustainable agriculture, through public food procurement;
- reduce environmental impacts, through shorter supply chains, less waste and more plant-based menus;
- and reinforce social inclusion, as all children go to school.

At the SchoolFood4Change Flagship Conference 2026, these results will be debated alongside broader discussions on **sustainable public procurement, climate targets and food system resilience**, firmly positioning school meals on the European policy agenda and reinforcing the SchoolFood4Change consortium's call to strengthen the European Child Guarantee.

By sharing these experiences at the Conference in Rome, SchoolFood4Change helps ensure that **local solutions inform future European and national policies** on sustainable and healthy school meals.

High-Level Political Engagement

The Forum Compraverde Buygreen Conference brings together **decision-makers at municipal, national and European level**, reinforcing the role of cities as **drivers of food system transformation**. Building on this momentum, SchoolFood4Change partners will call for action to scale up successful school food policies, embed sustainability criteria in public food procurement, and strengthen cooperation among cities, policymakers and food system stakeholders across Europe.



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From European Union Funding to Long-Term Impact

The SchoolFood4Change journey concludes in **June 2026**, but its legacy, scientific insights, and results will continue to support local and regional governments across Europe and beyond. SchoolFood4Change's [guidance, policy briefs, tools and good practices developed for cities and schools, cooks and canteens](#) remain **freely available and transferable** beyond the project's lifetime.

About SchoolFood4Change

SchoolFood4Change is a 4.5-year long EU-funded project (Horizon 2020), which began in January 2022 and is coordinated by **ICLEI Europe**, involving **43 partners from 12 European countries**. SchoolFood4Change has endeavoured to inspire, assist, and empower cities, regions and schools in Europe and beyond in providing meals that are not only innovative, climate-friendly, and zero-waste but also uphold the principles of health, deliciousness, and a strong reflection of local identity. The project supports cities and schools in transforming school food systems through:

- sustainable public procurement,
- healthier and more sustainable diets,
- training of kitchen staff,
- and the Whole School Food Approach.

More information and resources: schoolfood4change.eu



PRESS RELEASE



Further information

Website: <https://schoolfood4change.eu/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/sf4c_project/

Contact: info@schoolfood4change.eu



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