

Organic and healthy food strategies in schools

-Separate strategies or two sides of the same coin?

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Introduction

A food and nutrition revival has hit European schools in recent years and as a result school meal provision is undergoing significant changes. Unhealthy eating and growing prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents are significant threats that seem to foster a remaking and rethinking of the food and nutrition "technology" at school. Also call for climate friendly and sustainable food consumption strategies seem to impact the way food, nutrition and health is being shaped at school including the way the food service is carried out.

Statement of the objectives

This research studies the relationship between healthy eating patterns among the pupils and sustainable organic food procurement policies in the Danish school food service. The other goal of this project is to compare Danish school cases with school food systems in Germany, Italy and Finland. The purpose of the whole study is to test the hypothesis that if organic food intervention in school food service can act directly or indirectly as a driver for healthier eating among pupils (See figure 1).

Table 1. The research objects in each working package

	A (DK)	B (DE, IT and FI)	C (DK)
"Top" level (school food coordinators)	X (done)	X	
"Bottom" level (pupils)			X



Figure 1. The illustration of relationships in 3 working packages to prove the hypothesis

The whole study will divide into 3 parts and the intention is to prove the hypothesis from two levels of research objects (See table 1). One is named as "top" level, refers to the group of people in schools which implement, arrange or operate school food systems, such as school food coordinator. The other is "bottom" level, refers to the pupils that having lunches provided by schools during schools days.

The project is a part of the iPOPY research project funded through the European Research Arena project Core Organic.

<http://ipopy.careportal.org/>



Methods

Design: A quantitative survey using a Web based questionnaire (WBQ) will be carried out in which the schools having organic food provision and the schools having no organic food provision. The surveys will be performed in selected public primary or/and secondary schools in Germany, Italy and Finland among school food coordinators.

Research object: The school food coordinators in the public primary or/and secondary schools in Germany, Italy and Finland.

Amount of individuals: Min. 100 school food coordinators from the schools where has organic food provision. And min. 100 school food coordinators from the schools where has no organic food provision.

Outcome measures to be tested

- Attitudes toward organic foods
- Attitudes towards healthy eating
- School healthy policies
- School food serving practice

Design: a comparative analysis will be carried out in which school having an organic policy will be compare with school having no organic policy. Inclusion criteria will in both cases be the existence of a food & nutrition policy. A stratified sampling will be applied and 5 clusters will be sampled.

Research object: The pupils are at 5th - 6th grade in the public primary schools in Denmark.

Amount of individuals: 100 pupils from 5 schools where has adopted an organic policy. And 100 pupils from 5 schools where don't have an organic policy.

Outcome measures to be tested

- Dietary intake: FFQ, recorded by mobile technology.
- Attitudes toward organic foods
- Attitudes towards healthy eating
- Knowledge about healthy eating
- Knowledge about organic foods
- Knowledge about physical activities
- Intake of food items in each school day

Conclusions

The project is to expect to prove the following hypothesis: organic food service praxis/policy (POP) is associated with praxis/policies for healthier eating in Danish school food service. In other words the organic procurement policies and the resulting praxis in schools can help build a healthier eating habits among pupils in such school as compared to schools without organic policies/praxis. A former study in the Danish primary schools has shown that there is an association between organic school food policies and indicators (proxies) for healthy eating among children when (school food coordinators) statements on indicators (proxies) for healthy eating are used as variable.