

# A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL FIELD STUDY IN SLOVENIA: WHICH INTERVENTIONS WORK TO IMPROVE SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENTS?

## SUMMARY

Schools can be a key setting to implement measures to address childhood obesity. Most European children spend a significant amount of time at school and consume many of their daily calories there. Currently, however, the meals and snacks that school cafeterias offer to kids are unhealthy and contain few fruits and vegetables.

A field study (quasi-experimental) is currently underway at two Slovenian schools (one control: one test) to identify optimal ways to encourage and make it easier for children to eat healthier snacks and more vegetables. The design takes a four-pronged approach targeting children, their parents, cafeteria staff, and teachers.

Children in the test school will participate in a MasterChef-style competition for snack-making and bring home recipe cards to their parents. Parents will also receive weekly electronic newsletters with additional recipes and other tips for healthy eating. Cafeteria staff will start serving more salads and attractive vegetables, and as the MasterChef competition progresses, start including winning snack recipes on trays. Teachers have been encouraged to ask children to eat their lunches during a COVID-shortened lunch break rather than playing and socialising. None of these interventions will occur at the control school.

Pre-and post-measurements will take place at both schools, and it is hoped that the results from the test school will show attitudinal improvements over the control school. That is, we hope that children in the test school will have more positive attitudes to healthy snacks and eating more vegetables. Findings from this study will inform public health policies related to school-based interventions to improve children's dietary intake.



For more information, visit [www.stopchildobesity.eu](http://www.stopchildobesity.eu)

