

CITY SCHOOL MEALS CASE STUDY: MILAN

**Prepared by the Cities Feeding the
Future and Research Consortium
for School Health and Nutrition,
Initiatives of the School Meals
Coalition**

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Prepared by the Cities Feeding the Future and Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition, initiatives of the School Meals Coalition

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Background

The city of **Milan** is a **spotlight case study** internationally for the implementation and strengthening of school meals programmes. School meals in Milan are one of the historic public services managed by the Municipality. Started on **19th of December 1900** with a City Council Resolution, first as cold meals (sandwiches) then, with the creation of the kitchens, as hot meals (dry and wet soups). It has been managed continuously, except for a small suspension between the two world wars, under **direct management by the Municipality** for a century. In **2000**, the City of Milan created a municipal company for a specific purpose, called [Milano Ristorazione](#), fully controlled by the Municipality, which changed the service from the direct management towards an in-house providing model. In **2015**, the City of Milan adopted one of the most innovative urban food policies in Europe, also called today [Milan Food Policy](#) towards a more sustainable and inclusive local food system. The **school meals programme** of Milan is not only one of the main results of the action-research process of the Milan Food Policy, but it is also considered the **main driver for achieving the goals of the Milan Food Policy**. Additionally, as part of the activities of the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact \(MUFPP\)](#) network chaired by the Mayor of Milan, the city has hosted more than 50 city delegations interested in the school meals model. As part of these **exchanges**, Milan has also supported a number of cities worldwide in better structuring their school meals programmes via the development of feasibility studies and the transfer of best practices. For the abovementioned reasons, the city represents a **key player** of the Cities Feeding the Future Initiative and has the potential to concretely **efforts of other Mayors worldwide**, committed towards more sustainable, healthy and inclusive school meals for their children.

City profile

Population and economics

Milan is a northern Italian city and capital of Lombardy. The city is the second largest one in Italy, after Rome, with a total surface of 181 Km.¹ It is also Italy's financial and economic capital. Milan is home to a large number of immigrants which represent approximately 19% of the population, mainly from Egypt (16%), the Philippines (13%) and China (12%).²

- City Population: 1,366,155 (2025, ISTAT)³
- Population aged 5-19: 174,220 (2025, ISTAT)⁴
- GDP per capita: 66,000 € (2022, Eurostat)⁵
- Urban poverty rate: 7%⁶

¹ISTAT (2024). Report Comune di Milano. Available at: https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Approfondimento_Milano.pdf

² ISTAT (2024). Available at: <https://www.tuttitalia.it/lombardia/18-milano/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri-2023/>

³ ISTAT. 2025. Available at: <https://demo.istat.it/app/?i=POS&l=it>

⁴ ISTAT. 2025. Available at: <https://demo.istat.it/app/?i=POS&l=it>

⁵Eurostat (2022). GDP per inhabitant. Available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10r_3gdp_custom_14713110/default/table?lang=en

⁶ Reuters. (2019). Poverty in Italy stops growing for first time since 2015. Accessed: Sep. 27, 2024. [Online]. Available:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-politics-poverty-idUSKCN1TJ1FN/>.

Education

The Italian education system, also present in Milan, is articulated into three levels: **early childhood education** and care, not mandatory, compulsory education and higher education. A widespread network of around 150 municipal nurseries⁷ and 160 municipal kindergartens⁸ are present in the city, targeting girls and boys aged 3 months to 6 years. More specifically, municipal nurseries contribute to children's care, education and well-being from 3 months to 3 years of age. Kindergartens welcome girls and boys aged from 3 to 6 years and promote their identity, autonomy, psychomotor and cognitive development. Starting from the sixth year of age, **school education is compulsory for at least 10 years**. The first education cycle begins with the **Primary school** from age 6 to 11. From 11 until 14, pupils attend **Lower secondary school** that lasts three years. The first cycle of education, from Primary school to Lower secondary school, ends with a state exam. At the age of 14, students' progress to **Upper Secondary School** where they have the option of choosing between three programmes that last 5 years (lyceum, technological and vocational). The Upper Secondary School programme is also concluded by a **final State exam**.

Urban food policy

The **Milan Food Policy was approved in 2015** by a Resolution of City Council and implemented in strong alliance with Cariplo Foundation⁹, the most relevant philanthropic regional institution. After a local food system assessment¹⁰, multiple rounds of public consultations engaging different departments and municipal companies, universities, civil society organizations, start-ups, and the private sector, the process led to the definition of **5 context-based priorities**, to guide the city's decision-making on its food system. Namely:

- To ensure healthy food and water for all citizens
- To promote the sustainability of the food system
- To promote food education
- To fight against food waste
- To support scientific food research.

The commitment of the Municipality is to guide the choices that directly or indirectly concern food and water to improve the quality of life of people and to play an innovative role on a national and international level. On top of this, in 2015, on the occasion of the Universal Exhibition Expo Milan 2015 "*Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life*", the **Milan Urban Food Policy Pact** (MUFPP) was created, thanks to an initial group of 40 cities and international organizations that discussed the contents of the Milan Pact. The MUFPP was signed in Milan at Palazzo Reale on the 15th of October 2015 and delivered to the Secretary General of the

⁷ City of Milan (2025). Brochure servizi all'infanzia a. e. 2024/2025. Available at: https://www.comune.milano.it/documents/20126/463523142/Brochure_2024_2025.pdf/a4bab674-2b0f-b405-af80-afdeaa143e13?t=1705928693768

⁸ City of Milan (2025). Brochure servizi all'infanzia a. e. 2024/2025. Available at: https://www.comune.milano.it/documents/20126/463523142/Brochure_2024_2025.pdf/a4bab674-2b0f-b405-af80-afdeaa143e13?t=1705928693768

⁹ City of Milan (2015). Deliberazione del Consiglio Comunale n. 25 of 05/10/2015. Available at: <https://www.comune.milano.it/documents/20126/481928510/DGC-25-2015.pdf/f6c065f0-19af-f27f-28b3-781d36e86c44?t=1711707227792>

¹⁰ City of Milan, Food System Report, 2018
<https://www.comune.milano.it/documents/20126/481928402/The+Food+System+in+Milan.pdf/36978120-4ff7-cd81-6e4c-c1e246391673?t=1711709850933>

United Nations Ban Ki-moon during the celebrations for World Food Day. Chaired by the City of Milan, the Milan Pact is a global commitment of mayors from around the world who consider food as an entry point for the sustainable development of growing cities. It represents the **main framework for cities and international stakeholders** active in the definition of innovative urban food policies. Today, **the Milan Pact brings together around 300+ cities** (100 of which are in Europe), representing a total of 490 million inhabitants worldwide. Since 2017, the political addresses for the Food Policy of the city of Milan has been entrusted from the Mayor of Milan to the Vice Mayor Anna Scavuzzo. In 2022, the Food Policy Department was formally established within the Educational Directorate of the Municipality and in charge of overseeing all the food related policies, from **school meal programme to food waste, food poverty and urban agriculture**.

With the launch of the Food Policy, the school meals programme has gained a new centrality in Milan's public policies, contributing to the implementation of the objectives as main public driver of change.

National framework of school meals programme

In Italy, **school meals programmes are managed by the municipality** where the schools are located, as public services on individual demand, which formulates its own rules for managing the service, through public tenders for outsourced management or service contracts for in-house providing. The municipality can directly manage the service with its own staff or contract it out to public or private catering.¹¹

Each school meals programme is developed in accordance with two main national guidelines, namely the (1) **Guidelines for healthy eating**¹² and (2) **National Guidelines for school meals programmes**¹³ that aim at promoting the adoption of correct eating habits for preventing non-communicable diseases associated with poor diets and obesity. Nationally, the overall objective of the school meals programme is to provide an **appropriate meal**, ensuring **nutritional quality** and **food safety**. Guidelines for healthy eating state that the menu must be prepared according to the principles of a **balanced diet**, with a rotation of at least 4/5 weeks and be different for the autumn-winter and spring-summer period. The variety of food is also fundamental, as it guarantees the intake of adequate nutrients. In accordance with the national guidelines, **the main actors** of the school meals programmes are the (1) **municipality**, (2) the **catering service**, (3) **users** (children and their families), (4) **schools** and (5) the **local health authority**. The municipality is responsible for choosing the type of service to offer, planning investments and allocating resources, drawing up specifications for direct management or external assignment of the service, supervising the service and monitoring its performance. The catering service is responsible for carrying out the service in compliance with current legislation and contractual commitments. The tasks of the local health authority refer to the monitoring of hygienic-nutritional characteristics of meals, and the compliance with current regulations, via inspections, and audits.

¹¹ Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research. Available at:

<https://www.mim.gov.it/web/guest/mensa-e-trasporti>

¹² Italian Ministry of Health (2018). Linee guida per una sana alimentazione. Available at:

https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pubblicazioni_2915_allegato.pdf

¹³ Italian Ministry of Health (2010) Linee di indirizzo nazionale per la ristorazione scolastica. Available at:

https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pubblicazioni_1248_allegato.pdf

At the national level, although there is no specific legislation dedicated to school meals, several sectorial ministerial decrees contribute to shaping the regulatory framework, these include:

- Decree of the Ministry of the Environment on **Minimum Environmental Criteria for school meals** (DM 10 March 2020, No. 65), which establishes guidelines on sustainability, short supply chains, food waste reduction, minimum percentages of organic products, and the use of compostable materials;
- Interministerial Decree issued by the Ministry of Agriculture on **Organic School Canteens** (DIM 18 December 2017, No. 14771), which defines the criteria and requirements for classifying school canteens as “organic,” and establishes a dedicated national fund;
- Minister of Education **Guidelines for Food Education** (2015) developed on the occasion of Expo Milano 2015, to promote healthy eating habits, environmental awareness, and food culture among students.
- Law No. 61/2022 on **Short Supply Chains**, which sets out provisions for the promotion and valorisation of zero-mile agricultural and food products, as well as those from short supply chains.

Description of the school meals programme

Objectives

The school meals programme in Milan aims to provide each school day an **educational meal** (good, healthy and sustainable) to all children in the public schools in order to develop good food habits and sustainable lifestyles for their lifespan. Via the design of sustainable and healthy meals, the city strives to ensure concrete transformative changes towards a more **sustainable urban food system**. As a consequence, Milano Ristorazione, the municipal agency for school canteens, stands to provide all children in Milan with "**healthy, good, educational and fair**" meals. The goal of the service is to satisfy the needs of all its users, as well as to promote the food policy guidelines related to healthy and sustainable diets, among other stakeholders such as families, teachers, suppliers, and the broader Milanese community. Integral to this vision are food and nutritional security, food quality, the environment, health and safety in the workplace, transparency, and sustainability.

Model of school meals programmes

- ☒ Centralized management - Service provided by an in-house company

Types of infrastructure for school meals service

- ☒ Number of Central kitchens (+10.000 meals): 2
- ☒ Number of Neighbourhood kitchens (2-10.000 meals): 22
- ☒ Number of Small Kitchens (<500 meals): 79
- ☒ Number of Central warehouse: 1

Coverage

- Type of school included in the programme: Public and private
- Children age range: 4 months - 14 years old
- Number of meals served per day: 77.000 in 2024

Table 1: Number of schools at different educational level.

Nursery Schools	Kindergartens	Primary Schools	Lower Secondary Schools	Private Kindergartens
184	202	154	55	61

- Number of school meal days on average in one academic year: 175

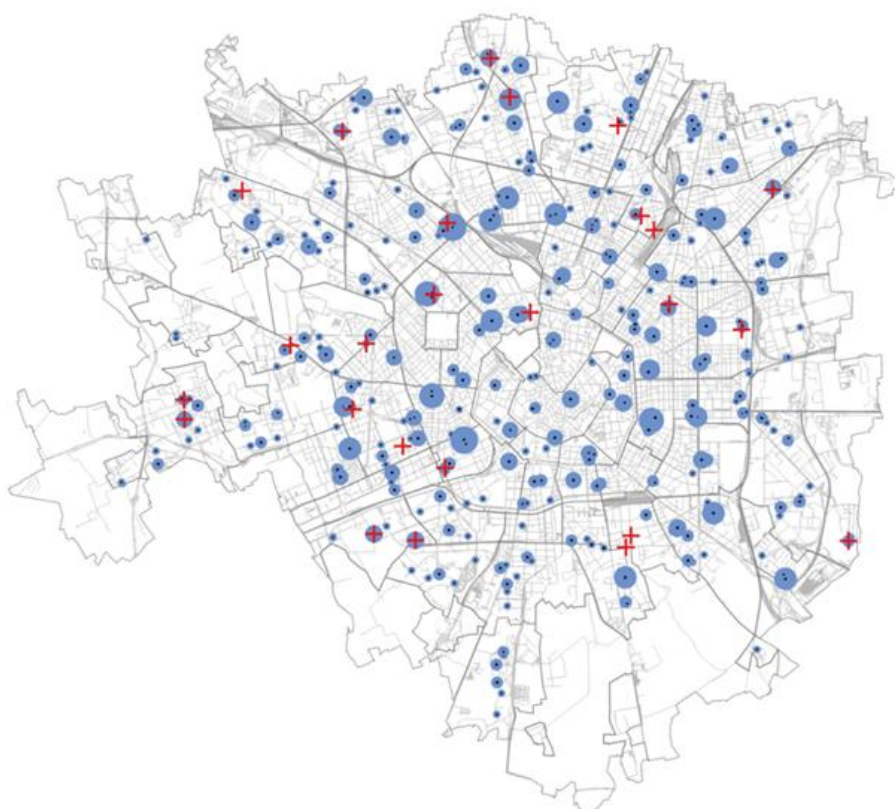


Figure 1: Map of the schools and kitchen centers of the Milan school meals programme.

Sources: City of Milan, 2018.

Guidelines

School meals are prepared according to the **guidelines** of the national Ministry of Health, the regional Authority of Public Health and the Milan Municipality, in compliance with the Recommended Daily Allowance for each age range (for additional information please refer to Section “National framework of school meals programme”).

More specifically, the offered **menus** are elaborated according to the following guidelines:

- The guidelines of the Italian Ministry of Health for the school meal service.¹⁴
- The guidelines for the school meal service of the Lombardy region.¹⁵
- The guidelines for the school meal service of Milano Ristorazione

¹⁴ Italian Ministry of Health. (2010). Linee di indirizzo nazionale per la ristorazione scolastica

¹⁵ Lombardy region (2021). Linee di Indirizzo per i menù della refezione scolastica. Italy.

As for the **procurement practices**, the procedures for conducting tenders for the supply of raw materials and services follow the provisions of the Legislative Decree No. 36 of March 31, 2023. Relatively to the **food safety** procedure, Milano Ristorazione operates in compliance with the legally binding national and international food safety regulations, based on the principles of the HACCP System, and in alignment with the company's **Integrated Management System** certified (ISO 9001/2015, ISO 22000: 2018, ISO 22005:2008). Raw materials are subjected to checks based on the technical requirements specified in the technical data sheet and other requirements established by the tender contract. The verification of compliance on food and non-food products is carried out both by the technical staff of the Quality and Food Safety Office directly employed by Milano Ristorazione S.p.A., and by the staff managing the logistic platform. In line with the procedures of Milano Ristorazione Integrated Management System, the control of raw materials can also be carried out through audit within the producer's site, and checks are extended throughout the entire supply chain based on the level of risk associated with the specific food.

Being a programme managed through the current **service contract** between the Municipality of Milan and Milano Ristorazione signed on 29 December 2022, the service is regulated by the provisions of that contract, which aims to:

- Achieve the objectives of the Food Policy of the Municipality of Milan, promoting a healthy, educational, fair, inclusive, and sustainable food system, in line with SDG 12, the Minimum Environmental Criteria, and the Organic School Canteens Decree;
- Provide cooked and raw meals, snacks, cold meal boxes, and fruit for nurseries, public schools, municipal holiday homes, and summer camps;
- Ensure ordinary and extraordinary maintenance of kitchen facilities and implement the redevelopment of all dining areas based on behavioral nudging principles to improve the overall food environment;
- Offer two seasonal menus (rotating every four weeks), differentiated by age group, with each meal including a first course, second course, side dish or single course, bread, fruit or dessert, and water and also provide special diets (medical, ethical-religious, light, and weaning diets);
- Conduct ongoing monitoring of food appreciation and food waste levels;
- Maintain an active system of municipal controls and performance indicators;
- Recognize the role of the School Meals Committees, composed of parents and teachers, who carry out service evaluation and participatory activities.

Responsibilities and political commitment

The **City of Milan** has stipulated a contract with **Milano Ristorazione**, which oversees the school meals programme in the city, throughout all food supply chain stages.¹⁶ To this scope, Milano Ristorazione closely collaborates with the Food Policy Department (within the Education Directorate) of the Municipality of Milan in charge of supervising the school meals programme.

¹⁶ Contract Service between the Municipality of Milan and Milano Ristorazione: https://www.milanoristorazione.it/files/Documenti%20Societari/contratto_di_servizio/CdS_2023-2042/01_Contratto_di_Servizio_CDM-MiRi.pdf

Milano Ristorazione S.p.A. manages the entire school meals chain for the Municipality of Milan, it designs seasonal menus in collaboration with nutrition experts and oversees the sourcing of raw materials, prioritizing quality, sustainability, and supply chain traceability. The company runs centralized cooking centers, organizes meals transport and distribution, and ensures daily quality control through an integrated management system. It also plans and maintains kitchen facilities, renovates dining areas, engages directly with users, and promotes food education activities in schools. In accordance with the Municipality, Milano Ristorazione published the so-called “Service Charter”, a document to provide families, school meals users and the wider school community with transparent information about the management of the service.

The **Food Policy Department** is responsible for monitoring Milano Ristorazione and the school meals service through dedicated Control Unit. This activity is carried out within a **certified quality management system (ISO 9001:2015)**, ensuring transparency, continuous improvement, and compliance with service standards. Inspections focus on food quality, hygiene, and user satisfaction.

The **School Meals Committee** is a participatory body composed of parents, teachers, and school representatives. It monitors the quality of the school meals service, collects feedback, and promotes collaboration between families, schools, and the service provider. Its role is formally recognized by the Municipal Council Regulation. The School Meal Committees are also central node for guaranteeing adequate **involvement of different stakeholders** in the service. The terms of involvement are established by the Regulations of the School Meal Committees and the Citizens’ Representation of the Meal Committees, approved by Municipal Council Resolution No. 6 of March 12, 2014.

Type of meal

Each age group has a dedicated menu structure based on the Nutritional Recommended Intake Level for the Italian population (for additional information please refer to Section “National framework of school meals programme”). A typical meal is generally composed of a first dish, a second dish, a side dish, bread and fruit. Two different types of **4-week seasonal menus** are prepared: a summer version (March-September) and a winter version (October-February). The quantities of individual **nutrients** for each meal component guarantee achieving the accuracy and consistency of the menus for each age group. **Cooking methods** are also selected to ensure the achievement of sensory and functional adequacy as a whole, for each type of user. Food is prepared using steam cooking, boiling, and baking methods; no frying is carried out.

Since the launch of the Food Policy, the menu has undergone a significant **protein transition**, progressively replacing animal-based proteins with **plant-based alternatives**. Today, the weekly protein intake is ensured through a structured rotation, with daily main courses featuring **legumes, cheese, fish, white meat, and eggs**. The adoption of local and seasonal ingredients, the introduction of recipes linked to the Milanese gastronomic culture, and the rotation of multiple ingredients’ varieties are particularly encouraged. Additionally, to meet the needs of children with food-related specific health conditions or ethical-religious reasons, the city of Milan foresees special menus. The **special menus** are divided into medical diets and ethical-religious diets.

The school seasonal menus are regularly published on the dedicated website¹⁷ and delivered to children's families at the start of the season. The **menus leaflets** are accompanied by a set of information on the cooking methods used, the seasonality of ingredients and the overall environmental impact of each daily meal. On top of this, on the menu leaflets a **dinner menu proposal complementary to the school lunch menus** is regularly offered to families.

Food procurement

Through its **public procurement system** Milano Ristorazione carries out an important **persuasion activity towards suppliers**. **Procurement criteria** are fundamental and constitute an important lever for **informing and orienting the market** toward more sustainable and inclusive objectives. Milano Ristorazione has adopted a **supplier selection system**, assigning 70% of the score to technical and qualitative aspects and only 30% to price, in order to prioritize the quality of services and products over mere cost savings.

In particular, the **awarding criteria** of the procurement process include, but are not limited to:

- additional food safety criteria (e.g., analytical plans, physical contaminant control procedures, pest control plans of production facilities, certified traceability systems)
- environmental criteria (e.g., certification or ISO 14001:2015)
- local and short food supply chains
- educational activities
- gender aspects (e.g., gender parity certification Law 162/2021)
- animal welfare requirements (e.g., CRenBA and antibiotic free statements)
- social accountability (i.e., SA8000 Standard)
- sustainable fishing (e.g., MSC Certification, Friend of the Sea Certification, Dolphin Safe Certification)

By adopting these criteria, the procurement process is able to generate benefits for the environment, the economy and society.

Every year, the Procurement Department of Milano Ristorazione publishes online the Procurement Planning for the next two years. Such a statement represents for the city of Milan a significant tool to inform the market.

¹⁷ Milano Ristorazione (2025). Available at: <https://www.milanoristorazione.it/infomenu>.

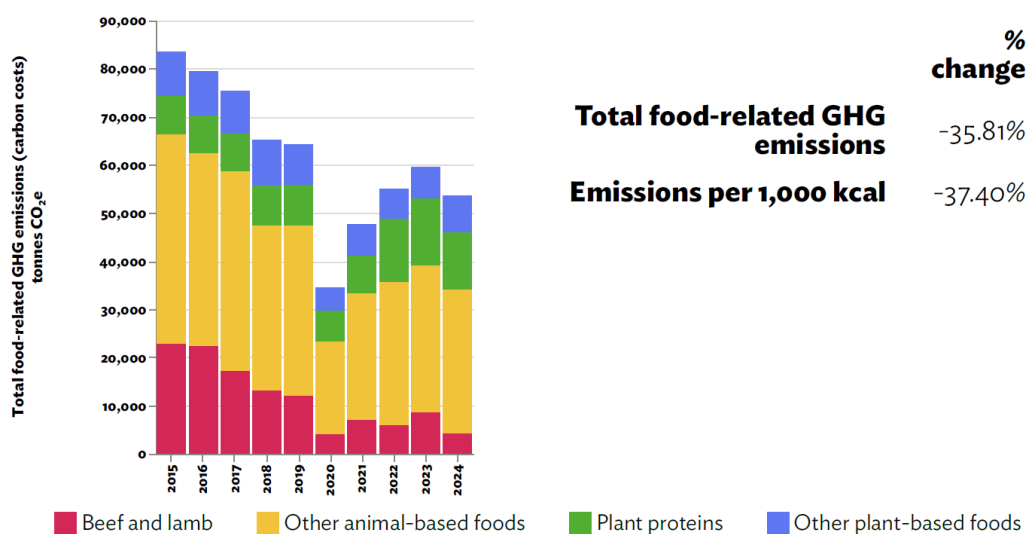


Figure 2: Total Milan school meals procurement food-related emissions (2015-2024)¹⁸
 Sources: Purchase data provided by Milano Ristorazione - Procurement department, data processing by World Resources Institute - Cool Food team. Emission factors from Poore and Nemecek (2018) (agricultural supply chain) and Searchinger et al. (2018) (carbon opportunity costs).

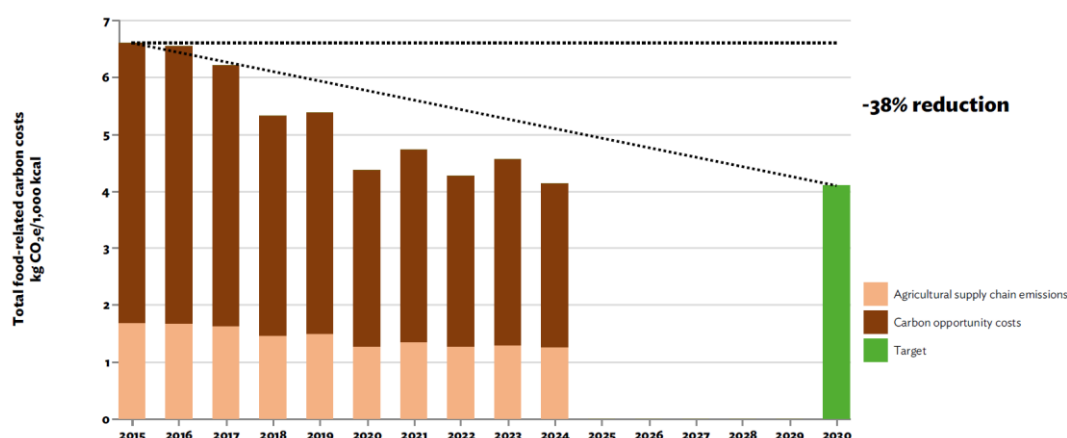


Figure 3: Progress against relative 38% target (per each 1,000 kcal cooked)
 Sources: World Resources Institute - Cool Food team. Emission factors from Poore and Nemecek (2018) (agricultural supply chain) and Searchinger et al. (2018) (carbon opportunity costs).

To monitor the impact of its **protein transition strategy**, the City of Milan and Milano Ristorazione joined the **Cool Food Pledge** initiative and, in 2024, has achieved a **35.8% reduction** in food-related greenhouse gas emissions compared to the 2015 baseline, exceeding the 2030 target of -25%. This result was driven by an **81% cut in red meat purchases** and an about **ninefold increase in plant-based proteins**. In 2024, total food-related emissions were **53,545 tonnes CO₂e**, down from 83,422 tonnes in 2015.

As part of its commitment to **support local agriculture**, Milano Ristorazione procures several key ingredients, such as rice, potatoes, onions, celery, and carrots from local farms within the Municipality boundary. These "zero-kilometer" products help reduce environmental impact and support the local economy, with 26 food products provided by local actors in a range of 70km from the City of Milan.

¹⁸ 2020 and 2021 saw a total drop in emissions due to school closures during the pandemic lockdowns.

Meal cost

Table 2: Cost analysis of Milan school meal

Number of children in schools	77.000
Number of children eating at canteen	77.000
Average cost of a meal	6.27 USD (VAT excluded)
Family participation	38%
Subsidization from the city per child and meal	62%
Subsidization from the national government per child and meal	0%
Number of teaching days per year on average	175
Number of school meal days per year on average	175

1 dollar USD = 0.86 local currency (EUR) in September 2025.

Financing

- Public financing (the data can be disaggregated by educational level):
 - Level of financing from national government: partially present only for covering part of the teacher's meals, the budget for children is exclusively provided by the City of Milano own budget and families contribution.
 - Level of financing from local government: the City, through its Municipal budget, covers the large majority of the cost of the service, while families contribute to the budget based on their income level
 - Revenue sources: general municipal budget
- Role of private sector and households:
 - Households' contribution: The annual contribution fee of families for school meals service is set by the City of Milan. Families participate to the financing with a lump-sum contribution, partially covering the total cost of the service provided. It follows that the family is committed in full to the payment of the annual contribution fee and the variation in the pupil's actual attendance does not influence the fee. The Families contribution is based on **five income brackets** and depends on the school grade. Families below a critical income threshold have **free access to the school meals service**, while those with **multiple children enrolled** benefit from a **50% discount**.
 - Private actors do not participate to the funding of the programme.

Monitoring and evaluation

Milano Ristorazione implements a **continuous monitoring** of the school meals programme quality levels by assessing the satisfaction of its stakeholders through specific **menu customer satisfaction** surveys per each seasonal menu. The city's Food Policy Department, in collaboration with the Customer Service Department, conducted a general **school meals customer satisfaction** each two years. The design and results of these surveys are shared with consumer associations through dedicated working groups.

In addition, the **School Meals Committees** during the visits within schools fill a digital evaluation checklist that is aggregated in order to understand the service quality.

The **analysis of feedback** contributes to measuring the qualitative levels of the service and aims at the improvement of services. In response to any identified issues, Milano Ristorazione is committed to implementing targeted corrective actions to address the areas of weakness highlighted.

Best practices

The Milan school meals system is characterised by a **large set of innovative good practices** that have been advanced and implemented over the years with the aim of shifting towards more sustainable diets, promoting adequate nutrition and improving children's food habits and education.

- **massive reduction of red meat and animal-based foods** and increased offer of **legumes, vegetable croquettes** and other plant-based protein recipes such as **soy and tomato sauce** instead of tomato sauce with beef (ragù) in the first dishes;
- focus on **organic food** through the replacement of conventional products with organic and whole foods options. In 2024, 64% of the served food is organic;¹⁹
- change in meal preparation techniques, encouraging **oven steam cooking**, and excluding fried dishes. Additionally, **added salts are removed** in the kindergarten's menu and salts and sugar are progressively reduced in all recipes. The combination of **different colours** in recipes is also encouraged in order to increase meals acceptability;
- support to **local producers**, with 26 food products provided by local actors in a range of 70km from the City of Milan. By applying this approach, Milano Ristorazione has managed to develop a rice short supply chain that involves farmers in the City of Milan for the supply of 240,000kg of rice/year;
- participation in the **Cool Food Pledge initiative** of the World Resources Institute (WRI) to monitor the CO₂ impact of food purchases with a GHG emission calculator. Based on such a monitoring, Milano Ristorazione achieved in 2024 a -35% GHG reduction on the procurement;
- testing of the program "**Middle Morning with Fruits**", introduced in 2016 in 50% of primary schools to anticipate fruits meant for lunch during the mid-morning break;
- development of **educational materials** for children and families to improve awareness on food consumption and reconnect them with the production of food;
- promotion of **parents' and teachers' engagements** with the establishment of permanent committees to pursue effective improvements and better students' eating environment;
- constant **data analysis to monitor** the pleasantness of the menu, evaluate its impact and share insights to stimulate evidence-based continuous improvements. Examples include the **annual survey** of the menu introduced in 2017 and the sharing of the WRI Cool Food Pledge results.
- **renovation of school canteens** through the redesign of dining spaces, applying behavioral nudging strategies to improve the food environment, reduce distractions, and promote more mindful eating habits among children;
- **prevention of food waste** through portion adjustments, real-time monitoring of food losses, and educational initiatives involving children and families to foster awareness and responsible consumption.

¹⁹ Milano Ristorazione, Sustainability Budget 2023.

https://www.milanoristorazione.it/files/Amm_Trasparente/Bilanci/MiRi_BilancioSostenibilita_2023.pdf

Challenges and learning needs

The Milan school meal system has identified a set of learning needs which are meant to be addressed for further improvements. Namely:

- Increasing children's **appreciation of innovative school meal legumes recipes** which are introduced to improve sustainability of the menu. This can be reached via the further consolidation of awareness raising activities the school community.
- Strengthening the **relationships** between teachers, the school principals and families so as to reinforce a positive alliance able to support a sustainable and systemic transformation of school meals programmes.
- Improving **school food environments** around children in order to facilitate healthy and sustainable consumption practices and shift toward better food habits.

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