

## **iPOPY—innovative Public Organic food Procurement for Youth: Project background, activities, and first results**

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### **Abstract**

*The main iPOPY objective is to identify and describe efficient ways of implementing organic food in public-serving outlets for young people. By analyzing systems of public organic food procurement in four European countries, we will propose strategies and instruments to foster sustainable nutrition and increase young people's consumption of organic food. Young people are the future daily food shoppers. Public and private initiatives to increase consciousness about healthy food produced without negative environmental impacts may be especially effective when targeted at young people. As the youth gradually reside longer in public institutions and eating habits are often unsatisfactory, school meals become a matter of great public interest. Many projects are developing and improving new and existing food-serving systems.*

*iPOPY (2007–10) is 1 of 8 pilot projects in the European CORE Organic program, funded by a network of cooperating funding bodies in 11 countries. Our working methods combine the qualitative and the quantitative, collecting data by structured and open-ended questionnaires and interviews, and searching for information and statistics from public Web sites and reports. We have defined a number of relevant cases in each country (Denmark, Finland, Italy, and Norway) where drivers, hindrances, and factors promoting organic food serving are being studied (e.g., municipalities, congregations, music festivals). The work packages are studying policies, supply chains and certification, the young consumers' perception and participation, and health effects of organic menus.*

*Our first results are preliminary reports about the school meal situation in each participating country, emphasizing the target areas for organic food (available at the project Web site, [www.ipopy.coreportal.org](http://www.ipopy.coreportal.org)). The school lunch systems vary a lot between the countries. A warm lunch is offered free to all children in Finland, from kindergarten to comprehensive school, but organic food is not yet much in use. Italian authorities support daily warm meals for pupils spending full days in school, and many regions have ambitious goals about the food being produced organically and locally. In Denmark, school meals are the focus of the public discussion. Various preparation and sales arrangements are being tested in many municipalities; many include a significant proportion of organic produce. However, the traditionally short lunch break (20 minutes) makes it difficult to buy and enjoy a warm meal. Norwegian pupils generally bring their lunch boxes from home and may subscribe for milk and/or fruit. In some regions, organic fruit and/or milk may be purchased. As teenagers eat less fruit and those pupils that mostly demand a fruit serving commonly don't subscribe, pupils in schools with a lower secondary level have gotten the fruit without payment since August 2007.*

*The preliminary iPOPY conclusion is that many challenges are facing efforts to implement organic food in serving outlets for youth, but various successful cases demonstrate that the difficulties may be overcome. We have achieved an overview within a highly dynamic field, and are now ready to proceed with our analyses and in-depth studies.*

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