Delivering sustainability: the creative procurement of school meals in Italy and the UK

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Our research goal:

To understand the scope for (& the limits to) sustainable public food procurement in Italy & UK

In the context of school meals, a sustainable service is one that:

- delivers fresh and nutritious food
- sees healthy eating as part of a “whole school” approach
- does not forget about production and where its food comes from
Research background

The prospects for sustainable school meals depend on a combination of local and non-local factors. Our background research has highlighted 3 key themes:

- **Regulations.** Tension between competitive and sustainability criteria
- **Resources.** Market-driven regulatory regimes (such as CCT in the UK) spawn a cost-cutting culture extolling *price* over *value* and *quantity* over *quality*
- **Organizational capacity.** Healthy eating skills of school staff; “creative procurement” skills; learning capacity of local governments
Three research contexts:

a) The macro-regulatory context of EU legislation on public procurement

a) The national (cultural and political) context of Italy and the UK – contrasting interpretations of the EU legislation

a) The local authority context of 5 case studies of best practice: Aberdeen, South Gloucestershire, Carmarthenshire, Piombino and Rome
Potential impacts of our research on:

- **Theory** (role of the public sector in fostering sustainability; symmetrical study of the consumer and producer sides of the agri-food chain)

- **Practice** (dissemination of insights about successful examples of school meal systems can stimulate better practice)

- **Policy** (creation of a platform for evidence-based policy-making)