

# Skutečně zdravá škola

## Our Vision

Schools engaged in the program Skutečně zdravá škola (Really Healthy School) offer children meals that are tasty, healthy, and prepared from high-quality and sustainably produced ingredients. Such schools help children to understand where food comes from and how it is grown or produced. They enable pupils to understand the relationship between food they eat and the world they live in. Children also learn the basics of healthy eating habits and acquire important competences that will later in their life help them to choose healthy, quality, and sustainable food products and to prepare tasty and valuable meals.

## Whole School Approach

The program Skutečně zdravá škola is a whole-school-approach educational program that fully integrates into the life of the entire school and aims to create a culture that values food, enjoys food, and teaches where food comes from and how it is produced. The program uses the topic of food as a tool for children to better enjoy the time spent in schools through a joyful school lunch experience and enriching classroom education with practical exercise in the school garden, during farm visits, or cooking lessons.

## How the Program Works

Schools that wish to establish a healthy and sustainable eating culture by joining the program Skutečně zdravá škola must sign up at [www.skutecnezdravaskola.cz](http://www.skutecnezdravaskola.cz) and create a profile. Participation in the program is free of charge. The program is a guide to how to establish the culture of healthy and sustainable eating in the school by meeting the specific criteria of the program.

By joining the program, the school gain access not only to the [resources](#), that will help it to meet the program criteria but also to the personalized school online portal through which it can communicate its progress in the program. The school will receive instructions and procedures on how to meet the individual criteria from the program's organizers. We offer not only methodical tools for teachers but also specific instructions, recipes and tips for school kitchen personnel. We offer the working procedure for the action team in order to prepare a healthy eating plan at the school. We offer school canteens a list of proven “really healthy suppliers” of quality food. Teachers can choose from a selection of educational farms. Using the activity calendar, we give schools inspiration for various activities that meet the program's criteria. Program lecturers provide educational seminars and training for educators, cooks, pupils, and parents. Each region has its own trained regional program coordinator who actively assists schools and canteens in meeting the program criteria.

See how the program works in [this video](#). Besides other things, the schools:

- set up program action teams composed of members of school management, teachers, parents, pupils, and school canteen personnel, which guarantees great engagement in the project,
- purchase fresh seasonal food from local farmers, bakeries, and butchers,
- organize trips to local farms,
- integrate the topic of eating and food into the educational program,
- organize farmers' markets and community activities at school,
- offer cooking courses for pupils and parents,
- grow their own fruit and vegetables in the school garden,
- ensure that lunch in the school canteen is a joyful social experience in a pleasant and peaceful atmosphere,
- give pupils full confidence in their participation in the process - children thus acquire leadership skills and learn to fight for change.

## Program Criteria

Conditions for awarding the program certificate has three levels: bronze, silver, and gold. Each level contains a specific set of criteria that a school must meet. The more criteria a school meets, the closer it gets to individual awards. The criteria revolve around these four pillars or thematic areas:

- Food leadership and food culture
- Food quality
- Food education
- Community and partnerships

Before a school gets a bronze, silver, or gold award, it must prove that it has met all the criteria.

## List of Schools Engaged in the Program

Presently, there are 349 schools from the whole Czech Republic involved in the program. Their list is here:

<http://www.skutecnezdravaskola.cz/registrovane-skoly>

## Novelty Solution

- **Does the project present new solutions in the social area?**

The program addresses the issue of eating by means of a comprehensive whole-school approach. It integrates target groups (children, pupils, and students) into the solution.

It engages the broad school community and the surroundings into the implementation of measures. It addresses several issues at the same time: increasing the nutritional value of food, improvement of the health of children, creation of a healthy eating culture, provision of possibilities to acquire key competencies and practical skills by pupils, and development of local economies.

- **Does the project formulate social issues in a new way?**

The program views the current social problems, such as deteriorating the health of children, loss of the eating culture, loss of contact with nature, rural depopulation, negative externalities of industrial agriculture, and climate change, as opportunities for solutions by means of complex interrelationships.

There is a wide variety of actors involved in the process – from children, pupils, students, teachers, school management, cooks, to parents, school authorities, local authorities, to local businesses. This ensures high engagement and sustainability of the solution.

- **Does the project focus on previously neglected target groups?**

The government offers no education or training for school cooks. Also, their social status is rather low. Over the course of four years, we have trained over 370 school canteen staff members in how to collaborate with local entrepreneurs and to use local food. We have organized several round table talks where school kitchen staff met with local farmers and entrepreneurs. We constantly increase the self-confidence and skills of the target group of school canteen cooks.

## **New Approach to the Target Group and Its Engagement**

- **What are the specific and long-term sustainable benefits of the project for the target groups?**

Target group pupils:

Program:

- leads pupils to think about values and shaping their own attitudes.
- leads pupils to responsibility for the soil condition and teaches them to view soil not only as an ecosystem but also as a value.
- leads pupils to view food as a value.
- leads pupils to think about the ethical aspects of growing, breeding, and production of meat products.
- leads pupils to responsibility in relation to the biosphere, environmental protection, and natural resources.
- leads pupils to understanding of the importance and necessity of sustainable development as a positive future development of the human society.
- encourages activity, creativity, tolerance, friendliness, and environmental protection.
- contributes to the formation of a healthy lifestyle and the perception of the aesthetic values of the environment.
- leads to a perceptive and sensitive approach to nature and the natural and cultural heritage.

The program leads pupils to acquire the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities in these areas:

- Principles of sustainable agriculture and the basic knowledge related to the understanding of the functioning of farms
- Organic crop growing in the school garden
- Preparing meals from crops grown in the school garden
- Use of seasonal crops

Target group cooks:

The program entrusts them with a crucial role in solving the problem and highlights their role in children's education. We enable them to grow professionally through education and information.

Target group teachers:

The project offers teachers new opportunities to address the interdisciplinary topics of environmental education and health education. It also offers the opportunity to use experience-based and project forms of learning and enrich teaching with a new, rather neglected topic – food and sustainable agriculture. The program also includes methodologies for actively involving pupils in an environment outside the very school building. The project will help them to orient themselves in the current challenges related to climate change and to use new methodologies in teaching.

- **How is the target group involved in the project?**

In the schools engaged in the program Skutečně zdravá škola, school management, teachers, pupils, parents, school canteen staff, food suppliers, farmers, and local community representatives work together to provide children with tasty and healthy meals and develop their healthy eating habits.

Children also learn important information that will later in their life help them to choose healthy and quality food and to prepare tasty and valuable meals. The program Skutečně zdravá škola not only helps to create future conscious consumers but also to form their expectations for good food and develop such skills and habits they will need for a healthy and successful life.

In the participating schools, the program initiates cooperation with the local community, such as parents and grandparents. They are regularly invited to participate in school events, including educational activities held in school gardens or school farmers' markets.

- **Does the project contribute to increasing the social status of the target group?**

Target group cooks: Thanks to their involvement in the program, their social image is greatly improved: cooks become part of the solution, school management and educators work closely with them and emphasize their role.

Target group teachers: By engaging in the program, teachers acquire new competences and skills, in particular in the field of sustainable production and consumption of food. They learn to use outdoor areas, such as school garden or local farm, for educational purposes, thus increasing their “price” on the market.

## **New Method of Implementation – Efficiency**

- **Is the method of implementation of the project innovative, creative, and bold?**

So far, nobody has attempted to tackle the above problems through such a comprehensive solution. The program criteria were chosen with the help of representatives of both professional and non-professional public. We are constantly getting feedback on the criteria and updating them in the light of the current knowledge and practical experience. The implementation of the project is bold in the sense that – as a non-profit parents' initiative – we do not have any funding security and have to raise funds constantly. We are boldly setting out to a new field that has not been explored before.

- **What are the identifiable effects and benefits of social innovation?**
  - The program covers 349 schools in the Czech Republic attended by 57,000 children, pupils, and students.
  - 170 educational events involving thousands of children and pupils.
  - 300 school canteen chefs have undergone practical training.
  - 4 educational conferences attended by more than 800 educators, school canteen managers, and representatives of school authorities.
  - 5,300 tonnes of food worth 320 million CZK used by schools to prepare school meals from local producers yearly.
  - The first price in the Public Sector category of the SDGs 2018 awards.
  - The program is recommended by the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic as an example of inspirational practice, as well as by the Czech Healthy Cities National Network.

- **Does the innovation respond to changing needs and conditions for example of the target group, identified problems, or wider context?**

An integral part of the activities of the program Skutečně zdravá škola is application of outdoor education in school gardens and visits to (organic) farms.

We offer a number of methodological guides to teacher for the use in field education, both in school gardens and farms.

Project training is also an integral part of the program. Schools are actively involved in local affairs and events, e.g., by organizing school farmers' markets or harvest celebrations held in the school garden.

- **Does the innovative solution involve collaboration of various disciplines, competencies, and professional groups?**

The program supports short supply chains by helping to create direct links between school (customers) and producers (farmers) from the local region.

The success of the program is based on linking pupils' and students' experiences from the school canteen to other areas of school life (e.g., classes on healthy nutrition, cooking, gardening, etc.). The aim is to help pupils understand the relationship between food, their own health, and the health of others and of nature.

The second feature of the program is the link between schools and local farmers, which can both contribute to improving the nutritional value and quality of meals in school canteens and to bringing pupils closer to sources of food by visits to local farms or efforts to help local farmers to stay economically efficient.

### **External effect – Innovation as an example or pattern**

- **Is the innovation integrated into the local and regional environment?**

Each participating school addresses the program criteria individually in its local and regional context.

- **Does the project support dialogue and collaboration between organizations or institutions?**

An integral part of the program criteria is the commitment to share good practice with other schools in the region. Sharing of practical experience among schools is in fact the most popular part of annual conferences.

- **Did the project or innovation draw attention of other organizations, media, sponsors, or politicians?**

The Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic and the Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic both provide personal patronage for the program. The program Skutečně zdravá škola is also recommended by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports and the Czech Healthy Cities National Network as an “example of good practice”. The program is further supported by several senators, members of the Parliament, and a number of regional and municipal representatives. Over the four years of the functioning of the program, it has been supported by dozens of sponsors, experts, and public figures. The media have been consistently providing current information on the activities of participating schools and the results of our campaigns.

- **Does the project communicate with external subjects in an innovative way?**

We use all modern tools and services for communication. We report about our activities via our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Youtube channel](#), and [Instagram](#).

Each participating school has its [own school blog](#) on the website of the program Skutečně zdravá škola through which it can communicate with its target group. The blog collects examples of good practice from participating schools and is freely available to other schools and teachers.

An important part of the project is inclusion of parents, grandparents, and the school community into non-formal education, especially in the areas of healthy nutrition, cooking, and gardening.

Cooperation with the local community is an integral component of the program criteria. Schools invite local entrepreneurs (food producers or farmers) to visit the school.

Representatives of local administration authorities are always invited to public events organized by participating schools.