

## **“New School Nutrition” Project Launched in Ukraine**



*On February 6, 2019, the Educational Complex № 141 "ORT" (5, I. Shamo Boulevard, Kyiv) hosted a press conference showcasing the interim results of the "New School Nutrition" project. The project team, accompanied by representatives of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF), presented a new "Cookbook with recipes for school-age children nutrition in organized educational and recreational facilities," developed by a food expert Evgeniy Klopotenko.*

A pilot project, supported by the Auchan Foundation for Youth in 2017 and joined by over 1537 students from three schools in the Dnipro district of Kyiv, marked the turning point of reforming school nutrition. It showed that on average, 29% of kids eat in the canteens (grades 1-11). And while testing a new menu, this rate has hit 47-60%.

The "New School Nutrition" team managed to draft a special menu for students, which inspired them to eat in school canteens, influenced the development of healthy eating habits, and even changed their attitude to food in general. Not only students and school staff, but also food experts and nutritionists took part in testing the recipes, which allowed to balance fats, proteins and carbohydrates in the students' meals so that they could get all the necessary nutrients and enjoy tasty, hearty and "modern" food. All 110 recipes tested in school canteens were added to the Cookbook.



*"It is worth noting that the meals were tested in special labs, which confirmed their safety and benefit for school-age children. As a result, in December 2018, the Cookbook was approved by the State Service of Ukraine for Food Safety and Consumer Protection. I'd like to point out that we managed to save the cost of food and cook new high-quality meals using the same ingredients",* emphasized **Professor Maria Hulich**.

*"Benefit of the meal is the key, supported by the quality of ingredients and compliance with the kitchen sanitary conditions. The meal must be of high quality; its taste, smell and look must be attractive. 73% of children want to increase the amount of fruit in their canteen meals. 61% of kids are ready to give up buns and snacks if the food is tastier and more modern,"* assures **Evgeniy Klopotenko, author of the Cookbook**.

**Pavlo Khobzei, First Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine**, noted that the *"New School Nutrition" project is in line with one of the "New School" concept directions introduced and implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, namely the health maintenance. "The Ministry is committed to implement the project "New School Nutrition" in schools throughout Ukraine. For our part, we will do our best to reform the school nutrition,"* added Pavlo Khobzei.

Vladyslav Zbanatskyi, Deputy Director of the Public Health Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, justly noted that the school nutrition reform will have a positive impact on the students' health in general and will promote the improvement of the educational process in schools, since food itself is a source of energy and immunity for schoolchildren.

The further implementation of the *"New School Nutrition"* project and the distribution of the Cookbook are supported by the **Western NIS Enterprise Fund**. The representatives of WNISEF, namely, Jaroslawa Johnson, President and CEO, and Iryna Ozymok, Local Economic Development Program Manager, stressed the importance of the *"New School Nutrition"* project, particularly in line with the reform of the secondary school, aimed not only to improve learning, but also to make the school environment attractive and inspiring. To ensure integral implementation of the Cookbook at the Ukrainian school canteens, all school principals need to be aware of the need for a healthy nutrition, while the cook's training will be provided as part of the regional project activities and through online cooking classes. With the Fund's support, the project is planned to be scaled up to cover all Ukraine.

To wrap up the conference Evgeniy Klopotenko shared some plans for the Cookbook implementation in schools: *"Changing food habits in Ukraine is a global and long-term process, so we decided to start with the younger generation of Ukrainians. It is at school that students acquire the skills and abilities they use throughout their lives, so changing the attitude to food must parallel the stage of personality formation. Through children we can influence their parents and their surroundings, thus covering the whole country. The Cookbook is a kind of a healthy cooking guide that focuses on technical and financial capabilities of schools and parents. The introduction of the Cookbook to school canteens will commence at 3 schools in Kyiv, where our team will be cooking meals for 2 weeks, being accompanied by students. The next step will be field presentations for*



*teachers, students and their parents in 6 regional centers of Ukraine. The aforementioned recipes and the cooking process in particular, will be available for free on the official project's Youtube channel. Thus, the "New School Nutrition" project aims to serve as a basis of the food habits change not only in school canteens, but throughout Ukraine!"*

After the official part, the speakers and participants of the event, as well as the media, were invited to enjoy the meals of the new Evgeniy Klopotenko's menu, namely: avgolemono - vegetable soup with lemon, beet and pot barley tabule, chicken nuggets (not fried in oil but baked) and linden-blossom tea.

#### Info

**Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF)** is a \$150 million regional fund, a pioneer in Ukraine and Moldova, funded by the U.S. government via the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). With more than two decades of successful experience in investing in small and medium-sized companies, the fund invested \$185 million in 129 companies, employing over 27,000 people and unlocking \$1.8 billion of total capital over its tenure for Ukrainian and Moldovan companies.

In 2015, WNISEF launched a \$35 million legacy program focused on export promotion, local economic development, impact investing and economic leadership. WNISEF is funding innovative, high-impact, reform focused programs aimed to transform lives of the ordinary people in Ukraine and Moldova. Visit [www.wnisef.org](http://www.wnisef.org)