



The economics of the school meal service in Sweden

Where does the funding come from, how much and how is it allocated? How to use and manage the funding?

The funding comes from the local government, from tax. The local government is responsible for providing funding for school food in their jurisdiction. The amount varies from local government to local government, some are generous and some not.

There are often debates in the media about which municipality gives the lowest amount and which gives the highest. I myself for example have worked with 7 - 10 Swedish Krona /portion (63p – 89p / portion) in two different municipalities. Some give less and some give more than I have had. The restaurant and kitchen staff are also paid with tax money, but that is extra and not included in the cost of the food.

How I manage it all at just 1 pound a portion and how to you use and manage the funding?

This is a long answer and I could talk about that non-stop but a quick summary.....

Every year I am given a budget for school food and it is the responsibility of the person who is in charge of the kitchen to oversee the budget. From my annual budget, I divide it into a weekly budget which is not to be crossed. To have more control of what is going out everything is saved in a budget program.

I have a budget of 1 pound/portion which is very sufficient for this kitchen. With wise spending, cooking from scratch, using leftovers effectively and good planning the kitchen is about 20-25% under the budget for the half year in June.

40% of all food coming in is also organic.

Important ingredients for an effective school food budget.

1. Trained and competent kitchen staff.
2. Cook all food from scratch, cheaper and more nutritious than processed foods.
3. Use leftovers.
4. Plan menus so that leftovers can be used later. Always save and calculate how much has gone out on each day.
5. Start using less meat products in the cooking, use 40% less meat in a Bolognese and fill it out with grated carrots and lentils (Protein), use less meat and mixed white beans (protein) in patties instead.
6. Start thinking SMART FOOD, think about the environment.

An example of a daily lunch served at Gisle School Restaurant:

- Baked salmon with herbs, organic potatoes and a shrimp, lemon and sour cream sauce.
- Cajun rubbed drumsticks with a sundried tomato sauce
- Quinoa patties with feta cheese dressing
- Minestrone soup
- Freshly baked bread
- Salad buffet