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MedDietMenus4Campus: Integrating Views from Nutrition, Marketing and Psychology to Improve Diets

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Food service is an important setting for public health interventions, educating consumers and modulating behaviours through the meals provided. Social Marketing is one of the strategies designed to promote behaviour change, which contributions to health and well-being of consumers are widely recognised. This project aims to identify the compliance of food service menus with the Mediterranean Diet (MD) in public high education institutes

(HEI) canteens, pinpointing opportunities to intervene, namely: 1) promoting changes in the food offer addressing proximity to the MD, creating, and offering plant-based meals, with seasonable and local food products and 2) developing tailored social marketing strategies to engage stakeholders to encourage healthier and sustainable food habits. It gathers a team comprised of nutrition experts on public health and food service, food technologists, gastronomy experts, psychologists, and marketers. To achieve the objectives researchers will: 1) develop an index to evaluate compliance of menus with the MD; 2) define priority stakeholders and define a methodology for engagement; 3) evaluate perceptions, barriers and facilitators; 4) develop a meal plan framework; 5) develop a new food concept “student bag” (meal on the go) and test it for industry scale-up; 6) use previous diagnosis to develop social marketing strategies directed to stakeholders and consumers to achieve food behaviour change and 7) measure the impacts of the implemented strategies. This research intends to create and implement a new healthy and sustainable food service concept, expecting to define the standpoint to inspire other food service settings to achieve an effective and sustainable food offer change and positively influence food service consumers’ food pattern towards Mediterranean recommendations, while addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (3 - good health and 12 - responsible consumption and production; 17 - partnerships for the goals).