



BCFN 9th International Forum on Food and Nutrition

Last week, we took four students attending our Fall Semester program at Gustolab International Food Systems and Sustainability on a field excursion to Milan to participate in the 9th edition of the International Forum on Food and Nutrition, organized every year by the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition (BCFN) Fondazione BCFN. The goal of this event is to provide a place for innovators to explore the intersection between sustainability, food, nutrition, agriculture, development and migration. The forum took place at the artistically constructed Pirelli HangarBicocca in Milan. Our students had the occasion to meet experts, international policy-makers and young research fellows presenting their best innovations and scientific research on food, nutrition and sustainability. They discovered many new ideas from the keynote speakers and winners of the Media Awards, including the means and modes to reach the UN's Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs) for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and were inspired by the presentation of the 2018 BCFN YES! Research Grant Competition. This brought forth young researchers from across the globe to share their projects for promoting sustainable food and agricultural systems. It was inspiring to hear ten young PhD and postdoc researchers from different backgrounds and nationalities present their research projects. One of our students from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Anna Seweryniak, was happy to share her thoughts about the forum. Her overall impression follows: "The International Forum on Food and Nutrition was an eye-opening experience. I enjoyed getting to learn about the impressive projects both in action and in the works. Felix Finkbeiner's speech on his 'Plant for the Planet' initiative was particularly inspiring. It was awesome to see how much he and his supporters across the world have managed to accomplish towards the mitigation of climate change in just the last ten years. Likewise, Rita Kimani made a powerful statement with her presentation on Farmdrive, a data-driven model that assesses risk and develops loans that fit the needs of smallholder farmers in Kenya. I also really enjoyed listening to the BCFN YES! award nominees present their new and innovative research projects that aim to create a more sustainable and environmentally friendly approach towards solving world hunger. While the future may seem daunting, these bright, hard-working individuals and their dedication to change makes me hopeful and excited!". Another student from Lebanon, Rita Chahine stated "Participating in the international forum on food and nutrition has given me a new perspective on the fight against climate change. Although the future may seem grim, I now see the difference people are making and the actions they are taking to protect our planet and secure a safe, sufficient food system for all. The experience has given me hope and inspired me to



live a more sustainable lifestyle. Each individual can make a difference. The change starts within you.”

Additionally, our director Sonia Massari moderated a working session on Food and Education at the BCFN event. Her focus was on ‘Teaching the SDGs’. The SDGs involve the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals created by the UN, in which united as a global community, we will strive to reach worldwide by 2030. Some of these goals include eradicating poverty, hunger and inequalities, while improving our systems of sustainability, in terms of food, water, energy, health, education, peace and so forth. The SDGs are of global concern, and hopefully with increased awareness of the issues at stake, we will realize that we all have a key role to play in finding solutions.

The students trip in Milan included a visit around the old city, paying homage to the Duomo, Gallery of Vittorio Emanuele and La Pinacoteca di Brera. They also had a chance to visit un posto a Milano which is both a restaurant and a small farm. Their dishes are made with all local kilometer zero products, and they also host a small daily market.

We work hard to give our students unique educational opportunities and are grateful for occasions like the Forum which can show how we can improve the sustainability of the food system in innovative and multidisciplinary ways.