



**“Culture brings knowledge. Knowledge leads to consciousness. And when we become conscious we are one short step away from becoming socially responsible. Culture is the key.”**  
(Massimo Bottura)

## **Shine light on invisible potential**

In 2016, Chef Massimo Bottura and Lara Gilmore founded Food for Soul, a non-profit organization that uses culture as a way of strengthening community resilience, opening opportunities for social mobility and advocating for healthy and equitable food systems.

The very first seed was planted during Expo 2015 in Milan, when Massimo Bottura, in partnership with the Italian NGO Caritas Ambrosiana, decided to propose a new project to address the dual issue of food wastage and social vulnerability.

The project sprung from the idea of reinterpreting the iconic church refectory, where monks used to gather around long communal tables to have their meals, and turning it into a beautiful and welcoming dining hall where the city’s most vulnerable population could find a moment of restoration.

Every day, guests were served a three-course menu prepared using the unutilized produce from the Expo’s pavilions that would have otherwise been thrown away. Refettorio Ambrosiano was born.

Since then, Food for Soul has developed several projects around the world in partnership with local organisations. By building community spaces where people are invited to connect around a meal, Food for Soul wants to demonstrate the value and the potential of people, places and food and encourage the community served to advocate for social change. While focusing on improving the Refettorio model, over the years, Food for Soul has also been strengthening its efforts to create a global movement of change-makers thanks to the development of two additional programs: The Learning Network and the Innovation Hub.

The Food for Soul programs are the living expression of the organisation’s Guiding Principles: **The Quality of Ideas, the Power of Beauty, and the Value of Hospitality.**



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES



## QUALITY OF IDEAS

By collaborating with community members, chefs, artists, organizations and professionals from different fields, Food for Soul aims to imagine and create places and experiences that can be platforms for learning and exchange. The Quality of the Ideas brought together through these programs can send the message further, inspiring others to act.

## POWER OF BEAUTY

Beauty is a universal language, whose power can inspire and unveil hidden potential. Moments of beauty - be it art, design, music or an act of kindness - can take people out of their daily experience and help them to connect with each other. By creating spaces and experiences that actively celebrate the equal right of all to beauty, Food for Soul aims to encourage people to embrace empathy, and to form human connections that can be powerful vehicles for change.



## VALUE OF HOSPITALITY

The Power of Hospitality creates experiences that have an emotional impact and that can make people feel seen and cared for. Through the excellence of its services, the integrity of their motivation, and the attention dedicated to each of their stakeholders, Food for Soul aims to ensure a sense of dignity, caring and belonging that motivates individuals and communities to express themselves and their ideas.



# PROGRAMS

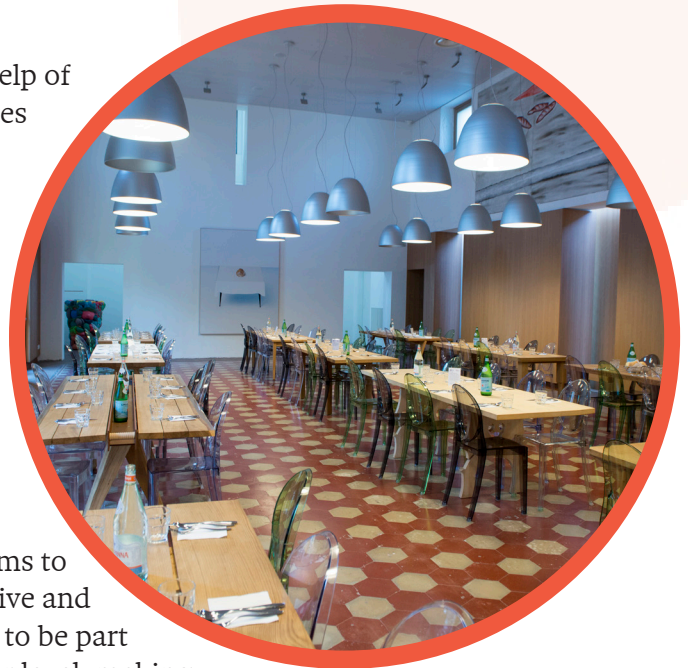
The Guiding Principles are the fertile soil from which innovative ideas sprout up and grow, becoming actionable opportunities to rediscover, restore and reinvent people, places and food.

Food for Soul's efforts focus on **three programs: Refettorios and Social Tables, the Learning Network, and the Innovation Hub.**

## REFETTORIOS AND SOCIAL TABLES

The word **Refettorio** comes from the Latin *reficere*, meaning 'to re-make', but also 'to restore'. With the help of different partners, Food for Soul restores and renovates neglected or underused spaces transforming them into inspiring community living spaces, open Monday to Friday, where people in situations of social vulnerability can feel welcome, and where the community can rediscover the value of the abandoned and the potential behind food surplus.

Following the Refettorio model, **Social Tables** are services offered once a week in pre-existing community spaces, where families and individuals in need are invited to join the table. By involving chefs, food suppliers, artists and designers, Food for Soul aims to empower a local network of actors to create an inclusive and conscious community. The community is also invited to be part of cultural activities that can involve people at a higher level, making them feel part of something, motivated and stimulated to give their best both for themselves and for their community. The goals of these global projects are: demonstrating social inclusivity, stimulating food recovery, strengthening social progress, enabling food solidarity and strengthening resilience. To date, **Food for Soul has successfully launched four Refettorios** (Refettorio Ambrosiano in Milan, Refettorio Gastromotiva in Rio de Janeiro, Refettorio Felix at St Cuthbert's in London and Refettorio Paris in Paris) **and three Social Tables** (Social Tables Ghirlandina in Modena, Social Tables Antoniano in Bologna and Social Tables Made in Cloister in Naples).



## LEARNING NETWORK

The Learning Network was created with the idea of **developing a community of Food for Soul operational partners** and a creative space for open dialogue, the exchange information, capacity building and to test theories of impact. The long-term vision is to develop this community into empowered actors, demonstrating transformative examples of equitable and inclusive programs designed to promote a healthy and just food ecosystem and to advocate for the value of human potential.



## THE INNOVATION HUB

One of Food for Soul's greatest assets is the ability to connect a **global network of expertise** and diverse disciplines to cultivate and share bold and innovative ideas, and best practices. Born out of this imagination, inspiration and creativity, Food for Soul will launch The Innovation Hub in late 2019. The Hub will live as a virtual forum to showcase research study, measure program efficacy, and engage in educational opportunities. By bringing together thought leaders, change-makers, field experts, academics and students, the aim of The Innovation Hub will be to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and critical thinking through an interdisciplinary approach.



## REFETTORIO and SOCIAL TABLES PROJECTS

**Refettorio Ambrosiano** was the first community kitchen, opened by Massimo Bottura in partnership with Caritas Ambrosiana, and with support from Davide Rampello, on the occasion of the Expo 2015 in Milan. Refettorio Ambrosiano is located in a theatre, once abandoned, in the suburbs of Milan, which was completely renovated and transformed into a brand-new community kitchen. During the six months of Expo, 65 international chefs cooked in the kitchen of Refettorio Ambrosiano recovering 15 tonnes of food surplus from the Expo's pavilions and serving more than 10,000 meals to people in situations of social vulnerability. Today, Refettorio Ambrosiano keeps welcoming people in need and offers them a daily three-course dinner service, prepared with surplus ingredients collected from markets and supermarkets across Milan. Thanks to the non-profit organisation *Per il Refettorio*, the venue is also available to the whole neighborhood for educational projects and cultural events.

The first six months of the Refettorio Ambrosiano were documented in the book **Bread is Gold**, a collection of stories and recipes from the guest chefs who participated in the project. The book is meant to inspire readers to cook with the ordinary ingredients in their pantries and refrigerators, urging them to use their creativity to fight food waste at home.

Since May 2016, Food for Soul has been collaborating with the Antoniano Onlus in Bologna to expand the activities of the community kitchen Mensa Padre Ernesto. Besides the regular service offered at lunch, the **Social Tables Antoniano** open every Monday night, serving welcoming meals cooked with surplus ingredients to families with children living in situations of social vulnerability. Since its launch, the Social Tables Antoniano have also been focusing on implementing new ways to facilitate social inclusion and community participation. As a result of their efforts, more families have been joining the Monday evening service as well as the other activities organized by the Antoniano.

On the occasion of the Olympics in 2016, Food for Soul opened its first international project: **Refettorio Gastromotiva** in Rio de Janeiro, developed in partnership with Gastromotiva, a Brazilian non-profit organization dedicated to social gastronomy projects, such as creating educational opportunities for the underprivileged. The project involved internationally renowned artists and designers including Vik Muniz, the Campana brothers, Maneco Quinderé and architect Gustavo Cedroni from Metro Architecture. More than 80 national and international chefs joined the project using surplus food from the Olympic Games to prepare healthy meals for people in situation of social vulnerability. Since then, Refettorio Gastromotiva has become an important hub for the local community while continuing to offer delicious meals to those in need as well as vocational training for young adults from the favelas.



The **Social Tables Ghirlandina** in Modena were launched in December 2016 in partnership with Fondazione Auxilium. The dinner service opens its doors every Monday evening to 60 guests in need from the local community who can now count on a weekly evening of good food and welcoming conviviality. Dishes are made with surplus ingredients and unsold produce donated by vendors from Modena's historic market. The Social Tables Ghirlandina are located in an old chapel in the center of Modena; the space was renovated to host the dining area, while the walls have been painted with wonderful black and white frescos realized by two young local artists, Luca Zamoc and Luca Lattuga.

In June 2017, Food for Soul launched **Refettorio Felix at St Cuthbert's** in London in collaboration with St Cuthbert's Centre, an open-door drop-in community centre for all marginalised, vulnerable people in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The renovation of the space was managed by interior design studio Studiollse and Charles Wainwright, while chefs from all over the world were invited to cook for the guests of the Refettorio using surplus ingredients recovered and delivered by London-based NGO The Felix Project. Today Refettorio Felix is still operational, serving lunch Monday to Friday to people in socially and economically vulnerable conditions and offering them a variety of services and social activities such as art classes, culinary training courses, and nutritional workshops.



**Refettorio Paris** opened its doors in March 2018 at Le Foyer de la Madeleine. Located in the crypt of the church of La Madeleine, in the heart of Paris, Refettorio Paris offers a welcoming dinner time food service prepared with surplus ingredients to vulnerable members of the community, including homeless, rough sleepers and refugees. The Refettorio was designed by Nicola Delon, architect and co-founder of Encore Heureux and designer Ramy Fischler, founder of RF Studio. Works by renowned

artist JR, known for his urban photography installations, and Prune Nourry, a multi-disciplinary artist based in Brooklyn, decorate the space.

The **Social Tables Made in Cloister** opened in Naples in December 2018 thanks to the collaboration with the Fondazione Made in Cloister. Every Monday night, the space offers a nourishing dinner service prepared with surplus ingredients to individuals and families experiencing social vulnerability and isolation. Located in the heart of Naples, the project was designed to celebrate the artistic, cultural and gastronomic value of the neighborhood through the development of community projects and events. Italian artist Mimmo Paladino designed three long wooden tables and the ceramic plates, realized by local artisans to inspire togetherness and community spirit.

**“Refettorio Gastromotiva taught me that food can be a powerful tool for social transformation. Everyone has the right to have a meal served with dignity and respect. Every human being has the right to a moment of pleasure, gathering and bonding. That’s what we give our guests when they dine at the Refettorio.”**  
(Eloisa - Volunteer, Refettorio Gastromotiva)

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