

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>WORKSHOP TITLE</b>	"Nutrition" children workshop
<b>WORKSHOP DATE</b>	Wednesday, 18 December 2024 14:00 GMT +08:00
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Ulziimaa Nyamaa, Program quality lead, World Vision International Mongolia Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: Sanchirmaa Surenkhorloo. Workshop facilitation Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: Sanchirmaa Surenkhorloo. Facilitation support
<b>EVENT LANGUAGE</b>	Mongolian
<b>HOST CITY</b>	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
<b>GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE</b>	Community level
<b>AFFILIATIONS</b>	World Vision
<b>WORKSHOP EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/57728/">https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/57728/</a>



The outcomes from Children's workshops will contribute to developing and identifying the most urgent and powerful ways to improve nutrition for all, with a focus on children and young people. Each Workshop contributes in four distinct ways:

- Published as publicly available PDFs on the Nutrition Dialogues Portal
- Available as public data on the Nutrition Dialogues Portal "Explore Feedback" page
- Available publicly within a .xls file alongside all Feedback Form data for advanced analysis
- Synthesised into reports that cover which nutrition challenges are faced, what actions are urgently needed and how should these be taken forward - particular, in advance of the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris, March 2025.

# SECTION ONE: PARTICIPATION

## TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

19

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

16 12-15

3 16-18

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

16 Female

3 Male

0 Other/Prefer not to say

## ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPATION DIVERSITY

The workshop participants represented a RC and Non-RC from the Songinokhairkhan district. While most children were from urban areas, there were also participants from isolated parts of the district, reflecting a mix of backgrounds. Socio-economically, the children came from various family situations, including those from lower-income households and RC. All of participants were of Mongolian ethnicity.

# SECTION TWO: FRAMING

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The Child Nutrition Workshop in Songinokhairkhan district, Mongolia, was framed to address the pressing local challenges surrounding child nutrition. Songinokhairkhan, being one of the most densely populated districts in Ulaanbaatar, faces unique socio-economic and environmental issues that directly impact child health and nutrition. The introduction highlighted the critical context of climate extremes in Mongolia, where harsh winters (dzud) and dry summers significantly affect food security and dietary diversity. Local anxieties about nutrition were acknowledged, including the prevalence of malnutrition risk factors such as seasonal food shortages, reliance on processed foods, and limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Pollution, particularly during winter, exacerbates respiratory illnesses, further impacting children's nutritional status. The workshop also addressed cultural dietary practices and how they contribute to gaps in balanced nutrition.

# SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

## CHALLENGES

### 1. Lack of Nutritious Food Options in Schools

Schools do not provide meals but instead sell fast foods such as steamed dumplings, huushuur, and piroshki. These foods are high in calories but lack the essential nutrients needed for a balanced diet, contributing to poor nutrition among children.

### 2. Limited Time to Eat

With only a 10-minute break during school hours, children have insufficient time to eat properly. This often leads to hurried consumption of unhealthy foods or skipping meals altogether, which can negatively affect their health and focus.

### 3. Prevalence of Unhealthy Food Options Near Schools

Mini-markets around schools sell a wide variety of unhealthy snacks and fast foods. Many of these products, such as chips, sugary drinks, and processed items, are either expired or stored improperly, posing significant health risks.

### 4. Food Insecurity and Inflation

Economic challenges and rising food prices make it difficult for families to access nutritious and affordable food. This is further exacerbated by seasonal shortages of fresh produce, particularly during Mongolia's harsh winters.

### 5. Lack of Awareness About Nutrition and Food Safety

Children and their families have limited knowledge about balanced diets, food safety, and the health risks associated with consuming expired or improperly stored foods. This lack of awareness contributes to unhealthy dietary habits.

## URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

### 1. Government Actions:

**Strengthen Regulations on Imported Low-Quality Food:** Participants recommended that the government implement stricter regulations to control the importation of low-quality or unsafe food, protecting children from substandard nutrition.

**Remove Mini-Markets from Schools:** The removal of mini-markets selling unhealthy snacks and expired food from school areas was suggested to prevent children from accessing poor-quality food.

**Introduce Comprehensive Nutrition Education:** It was proposed that nutrition education be introduced from primary school through high school to raise awareness about balanced diets and food safety.

### 2. School Management Actions:

**Collaborate with Canteen Staff to Improve Food Quality:** Schools were encouraged to work with canteen staff to improve food quality, offering healthier options such as fruits or vegetables alongside current fast food offerings.

**Extend Break Times:** Participants recommended extending break times to at least 20 minutes, allowing children enough time to eat their meals properly without feeling rushed.

**Provide Healthier Food Options:** Schools should provide healthier food options, including fruits like bananas or apples, as part of their school menus to promote better nutrition.

### 3. Vendor and Production Supervision:

**Enforce Stricter Supervision of Food Vendors:** Participants called for stricter oversight of food vendors near schools, ensuring that food is fresh, safe, and of good quality.

**Prohibit the Sale of Poorly Stored or Substandard Products:** Authorities were urged to enforce regulations against the sale of food items that are expired or stored improperly.

**Improve Oversight of Local Food Production:** Stronger monitoring of local food production should be implemented to ensure food safety and quality across the community.

## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Throughout the workshop, while there was general consensus on the importance of improving food quality and nutrition education, several areas sparked differing opinions. One key point of divergence was the availability of healthy food options in schools. Some participants emphasized the need for healthier food offerings, citing the prevalence of fast food and unhealthy snacks, while others argued that the issue stemmed from time constraints during breaks, making it difficult for children to consume healthy meals even if they were available. When discussing food vendors and mini-markets near schools, most participants agreed that regulation was necessary, but a few expressed concerns about the impact on local businesses and suggested that monitoring, rather than elimination, might be a more balanced approach.

## OVERALL SUMMARY

The Nutrition Children workshop offered an invaluable opportunity to engage local children in a meaningful dialogue about nutrition and food safety. The event was structured into three main sessions: an introduction to global and national nutrition trends, an interactive discussion to identify local challenges, and the formulation of actionable solutions. The workshop created a space for children to voice their concerns, expand their knowledge, and collaborate on ideas to address pressing nutrition challenges in their community.

The first session, led by World Vision staff, provided an overview of the current global and national malnutrition situation. This session helped set the stage for a deeper discussion about local food environments, highlighting the links between poor nutrition, food insecurity, poverty, and lack of access to education. This context allowed the children and community members to understand the broader implications of nutrition, including the impact on health, development, and long-term well-being.

In the interactive discussion session, children actively participated by sharing their experiences and opinions about the food environments in their schools and neighborhoods. The children were eager to clarify their opinions about nutrition, and as the discussions unfolded, it was clear that their understanding of nutrition expanded significantly. They voiced concerns about the limited time available for eating during school breaks, with only 10 minutes to consume food. Many also raised issues regarding the availability of unhealthy food options, such as fast food and expired items sold in mini-markets near the school. These food choices were often the result of the limited access to healthier, affordable alternatives.

Throughout the session, children demonstrated respect for one another's opinions, even when their views differed. It was evident that they recognized the importance of learning from each other, and this collaborative environment allowed them to better understand the diverse factors contributing to the poor nutrition situation in their community. The children also highlighted the lack of education on nutrition, food safety, and the importance of balanced diets, which they believed contributed to unhealthy eating habits among their peers.

By the end of the session, the children had developed a deeper understanding of the challenges they face, and they proposed several solutions. These included recommendations for government actions, such as regulating imported food quality, removing mini-markets from schools, and introducing nutrition education from primary through high school. They also suggested actions for school management, like improving the quality of food served in school canteens, extending break times to allow for proper meals, and offering healthier food options like fruits. Additionally, they called for better oversight of food vendors to ensure that products were stored properly and that food safety standards were met. This workshop not only raised awareness about the critical issues surrounding child nutrition but also empowered children to take action for a healthier, more equitable future.

# SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

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## PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Nutrition Child Workshop reflected several key aspects of the Principles of Engagement, ensuring a participatory and inclusive approach. The workshop provided a platform for all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, to express their views and concerns, fostering equal participation. Children were encouraged to respect one another's opinions, creating an environment of mutual learning and collaboration. Their voices were treated as valuable, giving them a sense of ownership and empowerment in the process. Furthermore, the workshop was action-oriented, as the children not only identified the challenges they faced but also proposed concrete solutions to improve their nutrition environment. Through these principles, the workshop successfully centered the children's perspectives in addressing local nutrition challenges.

## METHOD AND SETTING

The Child Nutrition Workshop utilized a participatory methodology, engaging children in interactive discussions, group activities, and brainstorming sessions. This approach encouraged active participation and allowed children to identify local nutrition challenges and propose solutions.

## ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

For other convenors planning a Nutrition Dialogues Children's Workshop, my advice is to ensure that the workshop is interactive and child-centered, allowing children to express their opinions and ideas freely. Make the environment safe and inclusive, where every child feels respected and valued. Be flexible with the agenda to allow space for discussions and creativity. Ensure the facilitation team is well-trained in child safeguarding standards and can manage sensitive topics.

# FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Songinokhairkhan staff and volunteers for their dedication and expertise in facilitating the workshop, ensuring that all aspects were thoughtfully organized. A special thank you to the children for their active participation, insightful contributions, and willingness to learn.