

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

WORKSHOP TITLE	Nutritional Dialogue Phase 2- Children's workshop-Watawala-Sri Lanka
WORKSHOP DATE	Friday, 8 May 2026 14:00 GMT +05:30
CONVENED BY	Lavanya Suriyakumar (National Campaign Manager), Duminth Deshanth (Advocacy Coordinator)
EVENT LANGUAGE	Tamil
HOST CITY	Watawala, Sri Lanka
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Community level- children society
AFFILIATIONS	Watawala Area Development Programme- World Vision Lanka
WORKSHOP EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/60278/



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	24
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PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

21	12-15	3	16-18
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

10	Female	14	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
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ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPATION DIVERSITY

All the children represented tea plantation communities in the central region of Sri Lanka. All come from families of tea estate workers who rely on daily wages for their livelihoods. They are predominantly from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and belong to some of the most marginalized and underserved communities in the country. The children are from the district that record the highest levels of malnutrition in Sri Lanka.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING

The discussion began with an icebreaker activity during which participants introduced themselves and shared their favorite foods. Popular choices included Maggi noodles, fried rice, kothu (a fast food dish made from wheat flour, vegetables & meat), and various fast foods. The facilitators then explained the purpose and process of the nutrition dialogue, emphasizing the importance of listening to and valuing children's perspectives. To encourage meaningful engagement, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions aimed at exploring their understanding, perceptions, and experiences related to nutrition. A photo-based reflection activity further stimulated discussion, enabling children to share diverse viewpoints and interpretations. Through these conversations, it became evident that taste, appearance, and aroma strongly influenced their food preferences.

SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Many children expressed a growing preference for fast food because it is convenient, tasty, visually appealing, and heavily promoted. This trend is contributing to unhealthy eating habits and increasing the risk of nutrition-related health issues.

Participants observed that traditional foods are becoming less popular among children and young people. Modern and processed foods are often perceived as more attractive and desirable than local food options.

Many children continue to experience undernutrition due to inadequate access to nutritious meals and limited school feeding opportunities. This remains a significant challenge, particularly in vulnerable communities.

Children often choose foods based on their taste, color, aroma, and appearance rather than their nutritional value. As a result, they may consume unhealthy foods more frequently, leading to poor dietary practices.

Financial difficulties faced by families often affect their ability to provide balanced and nutritious meals for their children. Limited household income can result in reduced access to healthy food options.

Despite having land or suitable space, many households are not actively engaged in home gardening. This limits opportunities to produce fresh and nutritious foods for family consumption.

Children also highlighted the frequent consumption of wheat flour-based foods as a regular part of their daily diet. They emphasized the need to promote greater dietary diversity and encourage the consumption of healthier, locally available alternatives.

URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Schools should provide more nutritious and affordable food options through school canteens and meal programmes. Healthy foods should be made easily accessible and attractive to students.

Awareness programmes should be conducted to help children understand the benefits of healthy eating and the risks associated with excessive fast-food consumption. These programmes should use engaging and child-friendly approaches.

Parents should be supported with practical information on preparing nutritious meals using affordable and locally available foods. This would help families make healthier food choices despite financial constraints.

Schools should organize regular fruit promotion campaigns and encourage students to include fruits in their daily diets. Partnerships with local farmers could help improve access to affordable fruits.

Home gardening initiatives should be strengthened in schools and communities to increase the availability of fresh vegetables and fruits. Children should be encouraged to actively participate in growing food at home and at school.

Stronger measures should be introduced to limit the availability and promotion of unhealthy foods around schools. Healthy alternatives should be promoted through school canteens and nearby food vendors.

More practical nutrition education should be incorporated into school activities so that children can learn about healthy eating through hands-on experiences. Activities such as cooking demonstrations, food exhibitions, and nutrition clubs can make learning more enjoyable.

Greater efforts should be made to promote traditional and local foods by highlighting their nutritional value and cultural significance. Schools and communities can organize events that showcase healthy traditional recipes.

Government, schools, parents, and community organizations should work together to address child malnutrition and ensure that every child has access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food. Joint action is needed to create a h

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

NA

OVERALL SUMMARY

The discussion highlighted that children's food choices are heavily influenced by taste, appearance, convenience, and marketing, leading to a growing preference for fast food and processed products over traditional and nutritious foods. Participants also recognized the increasing burden of malnutrition and non-communicable diseases, linking these challenges to unhealthy dietary habits and limited awareness of nutritious food choices.

Children also emphasized that economic hardship affects many families' ability to provide balanced meals, while access to fresh fruits and other nutritious foods remains a challenge. They noted that many households do not actively engage in home gardening despite having the potential to grow their own food, and that diets often rely heavily on wheat flour-based foods with limited variety.

To address these concerns, children called for stronger nutrition education, healthier school canteens, improved access to affordable nutritious foods, greater promotion of traditional foods, and increased support for home gardening initiatives. They stressed the importance of collective action by schools, parents, communities, and government institutions to create healthier food environments and ensure that all children have access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

All the children actively contributed to the collage activity and engaged in meaningful discussions before reaching their conclusions. The activities encouraged thoughtful reflection and enabled participants to share their perspectives on the issues discussed. Recognizing that children have different communication preferences, a combination of speaking and writing activities was used throughout the session. While some children were more comfortable expressing their ideas through discussion, others preferred to write their thoughts. This approach ensured that every child had an opportunity to participate and share their views in a manner that suited them best, resulting in richer and more inclusive engagement.

METHOD AND SETTING

The workshop was held at a preschool, a familiar place for the children as they usually gather there for child club meetings. This familiarity helped them feel comfortable and engaged. Nutritional refreshments were provided at the beginning of the workshop, as the children were likely hungry after their tuition classes. This gave them time to settle down while enjoying their snacks. The seating was arranged in a circle to ensure everyone could see each other when sharing their opinions.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

When conducting consultations with children, it is important to consider external factors such as weather conditions, as these can significantly affect attendance, punctuality, and participation. In this session, heavy rainfall resulted in delays in children's arrival, requiring additional time for all participants to settle in before the activities could begin. It is also advisable to schedule refreshments at the start of the session.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to World Vision Lanka's Area Programmes and the community volunteers for organizing the workshop despite the adverse weather conditions. Also to the Nutrition technical advisor and the DRR technical advisor for their inputs for the preparations.

ATTACHMENTS

- Group photo
- Children doing the collage
- Group work
- Child explaining the collage
- Presenting to other children