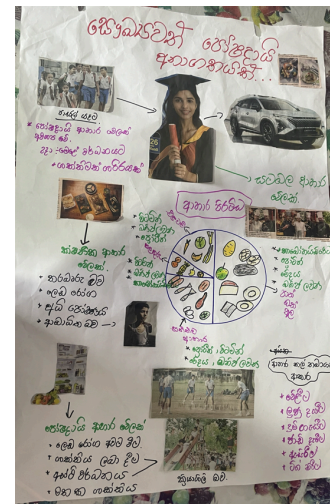


# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>WORKSHOP TITLE</b>	Nutritional Dialogue Phase 2- Children's workshop-Neluwa-Sri Lanka
<b>WORKSHOP DATE</b>	Tuesday, 12 May 2026 15:30 GMT +05:30
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Johanne Rebeira (Campaign coordinator), Lavanya Suriyakumar (National Campaign Manager)
<b>EVENT LANGUAGE</b>	Sinhala
<b>HOST CITY</b>	Neluwa, Sri Lanka
<b>GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE</b>	Community level
<b>AFFILIATIONS</b>	World Vision Lanka-Neluwa Area Programme
<b>WORKSHOP EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/60285/">https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/60285/</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

15

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

11 12-15

4 16-18

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

12 Female

3 Male

0 Other/Prefer not to say

## ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPATION DIVERSITY

Children from the Neluwa area participated in the workshop, representing the local community, which is predominantly Sinhala.

## SECTION TWO: FRAMING

---

The participants were primarily school-aged children from farming families and low-income households, reflecting the socio-economic realities, cultural norms, and dietary patterns of the area. All attendees were from the Sinhala community. The session started with an icebreaker activity to create a comfortable and friendly environment, followed by a discussion where children were invited to explain what nutrition means. This helped assess their existing understanding, and most participants were able to describe the concept of nutrition and its importance in maintaining good health. The discussion then focused on the current nutritional situation within their community, taking into account local eating habits, food availability, and cultural influences. Special emphasis was placed on the impact of the 'Ditwa' cyclone, particularly how it disrupted food security, household access to food, and livelihoods. The children also shared their views on the availability of nutritious food in emergency shelters, the quality of school meals, and the types of food offered in school canteens. The session concluded with the children expressing their ideas and aspirations for improving nutrition in their community in the future. To encourage active participation, child-friendly methods such as storytelling through photos and poster-making activities were incorporated throughout the session.

# SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

## CHALLENGES

- Preference for Unhealthy Foods Among Children

Children are increasingly drawn to junk food due to curiosity, taste preferences, and easy availability. Popular items such as noodles, paratha, bottled sugary drinks, kothu, and fried rice are often chosen over healthier alternatives. This habit, if not addressed early, can negatively influence long-term dietary patterns.

- Lack of School Meal Programs for Older Students

While some primary school students may benefit from meal programs, secondary school children often do not have access to structured or nutritious school meals. This gap leaves many adolescents dependent on unhealthy food options.

- Poor Quality and Limited Options in School Canteens

School canteens frequently lack nutritious food choices. Instead, they mainly provide fried and processed foods with low nutritional value. Additionally, hygiene standards in many canteens are inadequate, raising concerns about food safety and student health.

- Limited Availability of Healthy Traditional Foods

There is a need for school canteens to offer more wholesome, traditional, and nutrient-rich foods such as idiyappam, kadala (chickpeas), rice and curry, green gram, helapa, aappa, cowpea, salads, roti, milk, bread, and other balanced meal options. The absence of these foods limits children's exposure to healthier diets.

- Economic Barriers to Nutritious Eating

Many families face financial difficulties, making it challenging to consistently provide balanced and nutritious meals for their children. This economic constraint contributes to poor dietary intake among students.

- Impact of Global Events on Food Prices

External factors such as international conflicts have indirectly increased local food prices, largely due to rising fuel costs. This has made nutritious food even less affordable and accessible for many households.

- Concerns About Food Quality and Safety

The widespread use of food preservatives in processed and packaged foods is an additional concern.

## URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

### Extending Nutritious School Meal Programs to Secondary Students

Primary school meal programs are generally well-structured and provide balanced, nutritious meals that support children's growth and learning. Students have expressed a strong need to extend similar meal programs to secondary school children.

- Availability of Healthy and Traditional Food Options

There is a clear demand for a wider range of healthy, culturally appropriate, and nutritious food options within school environments. Foods such as idiyappam, kadala (chickpeas), rice and curry, green gram, helapa, aappa, cowpea, salads, roti, milk, bread, and even occasional treats like ice cream should be made available. These foods must be prepared in a balanced and hygienic manner to ensure they contribute positively to children's nutritional needs rather than simply filling hunger.

- Improving Nutrition Awareness Through Engaging Education

It is important to implement awareness and education programs that are interactive, engaging, and age-appropriate. Simply providing information is not sufficient; programs should be designed in creative ways, such as games, competitions, demonstrations, and peer-led activities.

- Raising Awareness on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

Special attention should be given to educating children about non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Students need to understand the root causes of these conditions and how their daily eating habits and lifestyle choices can influence their long-term health.

### Supporting Economic Stability of Vulnerable Families

Many families face financial challenges that limit their ability to provide nutritious meals consistently. Therefore, programs and initiatives aimed at improving household income, such as livelihood development, skills training, or community-based support, should be strengthened.

## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

NA

## OVERALL SUMMARY

The information highlights both the challenges and recommended actions related to improving children's nutrition, particularly within the school environment.

Children are currently facing significant barriers to healthy eating. Many are drawn to unhealthy, processed foods due to taste preferences, availability, and lack of appealing alternatives. Secondary school students are especially disadvantaged, as they do not benefit from structured, nutritious meal programs like those provided in primary schools. School canteens often offer limited healthy options, focusing mainly on fried and low-nutrient foods, with poor hygiene conditions further compounding the issue. At the same time, economic hardships and rising food prices make it difficult for families to afford balanced meals, while the increased use of food preservatives raises additional health concerns. These factors together contribute to unhealthy eating habits and increase the risk of obesity and other non-communicable diseases later in life. To address these challenges, several key actions are recommended. Expanding nutritious meal programs to include secondary school students is essential to ensure all children have access to balanced diets. Schools should also provide a variety of healthy, traditional, and culturally appropriate foods such as idiyappam, rice and curry, green gram, salads, and milk, prepared in hygienic conditions. In addition, engaging and interactive nutrition education programs are needed to help children understand the importance of healthy eating and encourage better food choices. Raising awareness about non-communicable diseases and the long-term impact of dietary habits is also crucial. Finally, efforts to improve the economic conditions of low-income families will play a vital role in ensuring children have consistent access to nutritious food both at school and at home.

Overall, a combined approach involving improved food availability, education, and socio-economic support is necessary to promote healthier lifestyles and better long-term health outcomes for children.

# SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

---

## PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

All children actively participated in the discussion and enjoyed the activities they were engaged in, while openly sharing their honest experiences and ideas. The active ones took leadership in facilitating others too. They supported each other while sharing information and ideas.

## METHOD AND SETTING

It was an indoor setting with table and chairs where children sat in a circle and were able to write and draw together.

## ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Give the leadership to the children, they are very good at facilitating each other.

# FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the World Vision Lanka Neluwa Area Programme, its staff members, and community volunteers for successfully organizing this workshop. We also extend our appreciation to Dinuka Bandara (Technical Advisor - Integrated Nutrition) and Chandrika Kularathna (Technical Specialist - Disaster Risk Reduction) for their valuable support and guidance in designing the guiding questions used to facilitate the dialogue.

## ATTACHMENTS

- **Children enjoying the collage making**  
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/2-scaled.jpg>
- **Group photo of the participant children**  
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/3-scaled.jpg>
- **During the discussion**  
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/1-scaled.jpg>