

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

WORKSHOP TITLE	Nutritional Dialogue Phase 2- Children's workshop-Wattala-Sri Lanka
WORKSHOP DATE	Tuesday, 12 May 2026 15:00 GMT +05:30
CONVENED BY	Dinushi Tennekoon (MEAL coordinator), Jennifer Fernando (Policy advocacy Specialist)
EVENT LANGUAGE	Sinhala
HOST CITY	Wattala, Sri Lanka
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Community level- Urban
AFFILIATIONS	Wattala Area Development Programme- World Vision Lanka
WORKSHOP EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/60292/



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	22
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PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

19	12-15	3	16-18
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

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

All the children represented urban communities and came from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Most of their families relied on daily wage employment as their primary source of income, with many belonging to economically vulnerable households.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING

The facilitator began by explaining the objectives and process of the nutrition dialogue. An icebreaker session was conducted, where participants introduced themselves and shared the animal they would like to be, creating a relaxed and engaging environment. Participants were then guided through a discussion on their understanding of nutrition, including what constitutes nutritious food. Their responses were acknowledged and clarified as needed. Further discussion explored concepts such as malnutrition, its effects on the body, and the relationship between broader economic factors (such as GDP) and nutritional outcomes.

SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

1. Genetic factors influencing nutrition outcomes.
2. Limited household income affecting access to nutritious food.
3. Misuse of household income (e.g., substance abuse), impacting children's well-being and mental health.
4. Preference for purchasing food from canteens instead of consuming home-prepared meals.
5. Availability of food with high chemical content driven by profit-oriented markets.
6. Misunderstanding that school canteens are responsible for providing school feeding programmes.
7. Poor quality and limited nutritional value of school meals (e.g., lack of adequate seasoning or balance).
8. Limited parental knowledge on nutrition.
9. Gaps between government initiatives and actual practice at community level.
10. Insufficient or underutilized resources for nutrition development.
11. Inconsistent service delivery among government officials.
12. Short school intervals limiting children's ability to eat meals brought from home.
13. Availability of unhealthy beverage options (e.g., sugary cordials) in school settings.
14. Poor hygiene standards in school canteens.
15. Skipping breakfast due to time constraints or household routines.
16. Reliance on minimal food such as tea during school hours.
17. Economic and agricultural impacts of the Ditwah cyclone affecting food availability.
18. Increased prices of fruits and vegetables following the disaster.
19. Climate variability affecting food production and availability.
20. Lack of structured pre-awareness or training mechanisms within communities.

URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Promote home gardening to grow fruits and vegetables.
2. Support mothers' entrepreneurship opportunities through government initiatives.
3. Strengthen awareness programmes using digital platforms and social media.
4. Use community-based approaches such as street drama and public events for awareness.
5. Encourage behavioural change among parents and children regarding nutrition.
6. Promote community self-initiative rather than complete reliance on government support.
7. Introduce healthier food innovations (e.g., incorporating vegetables into common snacks).
8. Organize food demonstration and tasting sessions for children.
9. Improve availability of nutritious food and beverages in school canteens.
10. Extend school intervals to allow sufficient time for meals.
11. Ensure proper handwashing facilities in schools.
12. Strengthen disaster preparedness and awareness at community level.
13. Introduce regulations to reduce harmful chemical usage in food production.
14. Promote environmentally sustainable agricultural practices.
15. Advocate for stronger national and international attention to nutrition issues.
16. Integrate nutrition awareness into school activities (arts, culture, etc.).
17. Expand growth monitoring programmes beyond early childhood (e.g., up to age 9).
18. Address substance abuse issues within communities.
19. Provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for low-income families.
20. Strengthen home and school garden initiatives.
21. Raise awareness among urban children on food production and gardening.
22. Establish child-led or school-based nutrition programmes.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There were clear differences in children's experiences, including levels of physical activity, involvement in food preparation, and access to school meal programmes. While some children regularly participated in sports and received school meals, others had limited engagement in both.

Disparities were also evident between urban and rural contexts. Children in urban schools had access to larger canteens with a wider variety of food options, whereas those in village schools relied on smaller canteens with limited choices. Additionally, children who had left school for vocational training often lacked access to structured meal programmes.

OVERALL SUMMARY

Children identified a range of challenges affecting nutrition and well-being in their communities, with poverty and limited household income emerging as key concerns. They highlighted how financial difficulties, limited parental knowledge on nutrition, unhealthy food preferences, and the increasing consumption of processed foods and sugary drinks negatively influence children's dietary habits. Participants also noted issues such as skipping breakfast, relying on minimal food during school hours, poor hygiene standards in some school canteens, and limited time to consume meals due to short school intervals.

The discussion also highlighted broader systemic and environmental factors affecting access to nutritious food. Children expressed concerns about the gap between government programmes and their implementation at community level, inconsistent service delivery, underutilized nutrition resources, and limited awareness mechanisms. They further noted that climate-related challenges, including the impacts of cyclones and changing weather patterns, have affected agriculture, reduced food availability, and increased the prices of fruits and vegetables, making healthy foods less affordable for many families.

To address these issues, children proposed practical solutions focused on awareness, behaviour change, and community action. Key recommendations included promoting home and school gardens, supporting livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunities for families, improving nutrition awareness through schools, social media, and community programmes, and increasing access to healthier food options in school canteens. They also emphasized the importance of child-led nutrition initiatives, stronger disaster preparedness, sustainable agricultural practices, and collaborative efforts among communities, schools, and government institutions to create healthier and more nutrition-sensitive environments for children.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

All children actively participated in the discussion and enthusiastically engaged in the various activities conducted throughout the session. They openly shared their thoughts, experiences, and ideas, creating a lively and interactive environment. The participatory activities encouraged even the quieter children to contribute, whether through speaking, writing, or group discussions. Children demonstrated a strong understanding of the challenges affecting their communities and confidently proposed practical solutions. Overall, the session highlighted the value of providing child-friendly and participatory spaces that empower children to express their views and take ownership of issues that affect their lives.

METHOD AND SETTING

The consultation was conducted in a comfortable and inclusive environment, with participants seated in a semi-circle arrangement that allowed everyone to clearly see one another and engage equally in the discussion. This seating setup encouraged participation, ensured that all voices could be heard, and created a sense of openness among the children. The conversation was audible to everyone, enabling active listening and meaningful interaction throughout the session.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

NA

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the World Vision Lanka Area Development Programme, its staff members, and community volunteers for successfully organizing this workshop. We also extend our appreciation to Technical Advisor – Integrated Nutrition and Technical Specialist – Disaster Risk Reduction for their valuable support and guidance.

ATTACHMENTS

- During the discussion
- Children engagement

CORRECTIONS, ADJUSTMENTS, OR CHANGES

Title	Photos
Date	27/08/2026

The photos were not got attached

ATTACHMENTS

- Group photo
- During the discussion