

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

WORKSHOP TITLE	School Meal Summit
WORKSHOP DATE	Sunday, 16 August 2026 11:34 GMT +05:45
CONVENED BY	Susma Kumari Sarki
EVENT LANGUAGE	Nepali
HOST CITY	Rautahat, Nepal
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	District Level
AFFILIATIONS	World Vision International Nepal
WORKSHOP EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/61257/



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	21
------------------------------	----

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

15	12-15	6	16-18
----	-------	---	-------

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

12	Female	9	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
----	--------	---	------	---	-------------------------

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPATION DIVERSITY

The workshop engaged 21 adolescent and youth participants from the Rautahat district in Madhesh Province, bringing together a diverse group of young leaders. While specific ethnic or socio-economic quotas weren't numerically detailed, the cohort represented local rural and semi-urban school communities facing distinct regional vulnerabilities. It actively engaged both young women and men as change-makers, fostering inclusive dialogue across peer groups to address localized nutritional challenges

SECTION TWO: FRAMING

The workshop was introduced within the context of Madhesh Province, Nepal, highlighting critical regional nutrition indicators from Rautahat district. Facilitators presented baseline data concerning high rates of anemia, stunting, and low exclusive breastfeeding prevalence, which surprised many participants who were previously unaware of the severity of local malnutrition. The introduction contextualized these issues within broader environmental and socio-economic realities, emphasizing seasonal vulnerabilities, prevalent community anxieties regarding pollution, and widespread micronutrient deficiencies. Discussions also focused heavily on the proliferation of ultra-processed foods, sugary drinks, and unnutritious local dietary habits common among adolescents. By anchoring the opening sessions in local realities, the framing established a direct link between community health challenges and systemic issues like poverty and limited dietary diversity, setting a grounded tone for youth-led advocacy and actionable solutions.

SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Participants identified several nutrition challenges affecting children and adolescents in their communities, starting with the heavy consumption of ultra-processed, junk, and street foods such as packaged chips, raw noodles, and sugary sodas. They noted widespread micronutrient deficiencies, notably high rates of anemia among adolescent girls and women, compounded by poor menstrual hygiene management and inadequate WASH practices. At the structural level, participants highlighted operational flaws in the National School Mid-Day Meal Program, including limited school budgets, inconsistent meal quality, lack of dietary diversity, and failure to consistently utilize local, traditional food items. Broader socio-economic barriers such as poverty, traditional gender roles, early marriage, and a lack of multi-sectoral coordination among local governments, schools, and health sectors were also recognized as major drivers sustaining the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.

URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Participants proposed urgent actions through structured policy recommendation frameworks and a multi-stakeholder role-play. They called for stricter local government regulations and monitoring of school vendors to restrict the sale of ultra-processed foods near schools. To improve the National School Mid-Day Meal Program, they urged increased budget allocations, better adherence to diverse local menus (such as Madhesh sets), and enhanced coordination between local authorities, health institutions, and schools. For community-level execution, participants recommended scaling up peer-led educational initiatives—utilizing tools like Nutribeads, Red-Cycle bracelets, and interactive Poshan Melas—to continuously raise awareness about the golden 1,000 days, anemia prevention, and balanced diets. They emphasized that organizations like RDC, WVI Nepal, and SOCHAI must maintain ongoing engagement with youth networks (Rupantaran) to ensure sustainable accountability and local-level action.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Views and positions diverged primarily during the multi-sectoral role-play exercise (Sajha Sawal), which simulated interactions between local government officials (mayors, sector chiefs), school principals, civil society, and the general public. While public representatives voiced community frustrations regarding poor school meal quality, economic constraints, and lack of accessible health resources, stakeholder representatives highlighted administrative hurdles, tight budgetary limits, and systemic policy bottlenecks. Minor divergences also emerged regarding how best to balance traditional dietary practices with modern youth preferences for convenience foods. However, through collaborative activities like the Menu Budget Challenge and policy co-creation sessions, participants successfully bridged these gaps, aligning on shared, practical priorities for local nutritional reform.

OVERALL SUMMARY

School meals in Madhesh can serve as a lifesaving and equity-enhancing intervention, improving school attendance, reducing hunger, and supporting girls' education. Locally sourced meals can also strengthen smallholder farmer livelihoods, particularly for women and youth. WVI Nepal already announced ENOUGH campaign at Madhesh in presence of chief minister and other authorities and, local governments are also launched ENOUGH campaign and nutrition dialogue to promote nutritious food at school meal programming. School meals can function as a bridge between education and local food systems, stabilizing attendance while creating reliable markets for local agricultural produce. Climate-smart and locally adapted menus align with the action circular's emphasis on sustainability and resilience. From an experiential perspective, the event was vibrant, highly engaging, and deeply resonant. Participants moved from initial surprise regarding grim local nutrition statistics to empowerment, enthusiastically showcasing their learnings at the Poshan Mela through 12 distinct interactive stalls. The integration of cultural performances, peer-led games, and stakeholder dialogues created a collaborative atmosphere that energized both the youth and visiting community members, laying a solid foundation for sustainable local advocacy ahead of the March 2025 Nutrition for Growth summit.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The workshop actively reflected the Principles of Engagement by prioritizing youth empowerment, inclusivity, and multi-stakeholder accountability. It directly aligned with youth-led advocacy principles by equipping adolescents with practical tools such as IEC materials, anthropometric tracking, and policy scouting frameworks to lead community conversations. The event fostered multi-sectoral collaboration by bringing together students, teachers, Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), and local executive stakeholders onto a shared platform during the School Meal Summit. Furthermore, the use of localized, culturally resonant methods (such as Nutribeads, local food displays, and indigenous drama) ensured that the engagement was context-specific, transparent, and respectful of local community structures.

METHOD AND SETTING

The 4-day initiative utilized a hybrid methodology combining a formal, indoor capacity-building workshop at Hotel Gautam in Chapur with an interactive, community-facing School Meal Summit (*Poshan Mela*) at Shree Secondary School in Mohammedpur, Garuda. The methodology heavily prioritized participatory, youth-led learning techniques recommended for adolescent engagement, including role-plays (*Sajha Sawal*), peer-led games, and low-tech interactive communication tools.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Incorporate creative, interactive tools like role-plays, bracelet-based visual aids, and myth-busting games to keep adolescent participants deeply engaged.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Huge appreciation to SOCHAI, RDC for their coordination and the amazing participants from Rautahat district.