



Food for Life Nepal Mid-Day-Meal program

(Nepal's Largest Mid-Day-Meal Provider)

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Photo credit: Food for Life Nepal

When the lunch bell rings, you can hear the blissful cries of children with big smiles on their faces eagerly waiting in line to receive their piping hot meals. Tummies filled with locally palatable food, their personalities shine with beautiful smiles, and their joyous chit chat will soothe your soul.

All of this is made possible by skilled kitchen team members in the kitchen premises behind ISKCON Nepal preparing food tirelessly and free of cost, each and every day for the 26 community schools in Budhanilkantha and Tokha Municipalities. Since its founding 9 years ago, Food for Life

Nepal has worked for the welfare of children. After the construction of a centralised modular kitchen with state-of-art technology in 2019 by the Embassy of Japan, the 'School Lunch Preparation Centre' has operated as a centralised kitchen operated by the organisation. If by chance you happen

to walk by the area at 6am in the morning, you can hear heavy utensils clanking, the sound resonating far and wide, signifying warm meals being cooked for the little students.

Food for Life Nepal understands that proper nutrition is important to children's intellectual and physical growth. The organisation realises that school children perform better academically with a nutritious meal filling their stomachs. This philosophy is why Food for Life Nepal exists in the first place. It serves humanity by providing nutritious meals to the community, especially to needy children free of cost. Food for Life Nepal started by serving meals to a relatively small number of 18 children in 2014. Today, the organisation serves over 10,000+ meals every school day to children attending government schools, all free of cost. The organisation has so far served almost 2 million meals to community school children and communities as of writing.

There are approximately 3.5 million students in public schools all over Nepal. The majority of the students who are enrolled in Government schools are from financially challenged backgrounds. These government schools have been facing challenges in providing meals to students, largely due to budgetary concerns. To address this issue, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology initiated the 'Diva Khaja' program in its 2017 national budget. Within this program, each student is to be allocated Rs.15 for food costs, which was a huge step towards eliminating classroom hunger. Though this was a commendable move, the fund has proved insufficient for providing a properly nutritious meal, largely due to inflation.

Comprehending the situation, Food For Life Nepal has committed itself to consistently serving the children by providing the additional funds required for a wholesome meal.

Food for Life Nepal contacts the school administrators and offers their mid-day meal plan to schools in need of help implementing the Diva Khaja program. This program features six meals for six days (except for government holidays), ensuring that students in the school get to fill their stomachs without having to compromise their health by relying on junk food. Among the main impacts observed in the implementation of the program has been improved academic performance, as proper nutrition led to improved health, which in turn led to regularity in attending school and therefore a more consistent learning environment.

Food for Life is not only limited to deprived school children, they have also expanded their operations by featuring packages like the Meals for Frontliners pack. This provision ensured that frontline health workers got the nutrition they deserved during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to this program, about 20,000 frontline workers received proper meals during this precarious period. Soon after registration of the organisation in 2015, a powerful earthquake hit Nepal. In response, our team sprang into action to set up relief kitchens that served more than 300,000 earthquake victims over the course of a month. These kitchens were situated at different locations, including Nuwakot, Panauti, Bhaktapur, Tudhikhel, Sakhu, Budhanilkantha, and more. In addition, they also set up 44 shelters for earthquake victims. In 2020, Food for Life Nepal also

announced giveaways of Happiness Kits, which helped school children to keep up with stationary requirements and encouraged them to attend classes after more than a year and half of social distancing. Throughout its existence, Food for Life Nepal has hosted other significant activities, such as awareness campaigns, clothes drives, and dental hygiene awareness programs to promote the overall holistic development of children and community schools.

Food for Life Nepal has ambitions to grow, and it believes no child in Nepal should be deprived of education because of hunger. With a relentless drive to serve the hungry and intentions to expand, Food for Life Nepal has garnered the support of several prominent international organisations such as, Dr. Jacob's Medical, alongside other local organisations. We offer our deepest gratitude to Kumari Bank Limited for sponsoring meals to the children of Jana Jagriti Secondary School for the year 2022 which directly impacted the lives of young learners, enabling them to focus on their education without the burden of hunger. This sponsorship program not only fulfilled their nutritional needs but also created a positive learning environment where they can thrive academically and personally.

Food For Life Nepal not only fuels children but also fuels their ambitions. Thanks to the organisation's efforts, small children don't have to worry about their stomachs and can therefore concentrate on their desire to succeed. Food For Life Nepal aims to fuel the dreams of 25,000 children daily within the next ten years.

People wishing to know more about Food for Life Nepal can visit our website at: <http://foodforlife.org.np/>.