

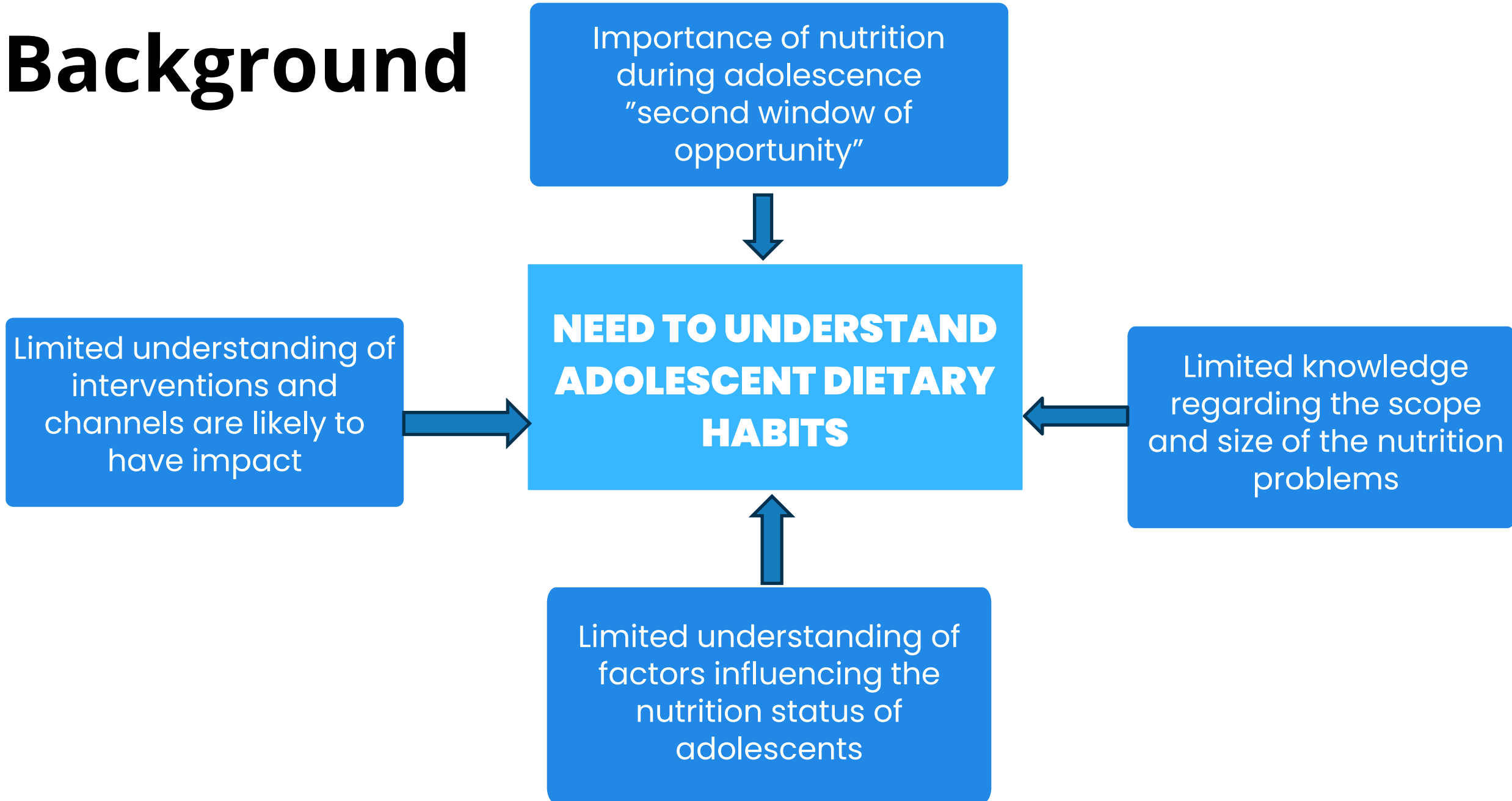
Perceptions and experiences from adolescents about food and nutrition

Preliminary findings on the consultation with adolescents across three regions of Laos

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Background



Methods

Tools developed from Western Sydney University's Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval No. H11101) , used in 18 countries globally

Adaptation to the Lao context and the Lao language

Trained youth facilitators (2pp/provinces, central)

Pilot Workshops and Refinement

Data Collection

Analytical

122 adolescents
(54 male, 68 female)

20pp/workshop
(ages 13–18)

Hmong, Lao-Tai, Khmu, Taileng, Katou, Halak/Alak, Laven, Jeh

3 districts
(Rural)

3 districts
(Urban)

6 workshops,

3 regions
(Bolikhamxay,
Xiengkhouang, Sekong)

- Thematic Analysis
- Frequency and Pattern Identification
- Qualitative Insights

Methods

- ✓ 11 interactive activities
- ✓ Fun
- ✓ Group discussions
- ✓ Text in worksheets
- ✓ Drawings

Barriers & Actions

Solutions Voiced by
Adolescents for Better
Nutrition and Healthy
Eating.

Home and family

who\where\how the
food at home
preparing & share

Food at School

what does food at
school look like,
learning healthy and
food at school.

Hanging out with friends

Food/drinks preferences, type of place eat
with friends

Everyday food

food choices, mealtimes,
or health perceptions..

Food and your body

What Adolescents Eat and
How They View Nutrition
and Their Bodies

Food in the media

Media exposure form food
choices.



Preliminary Findings

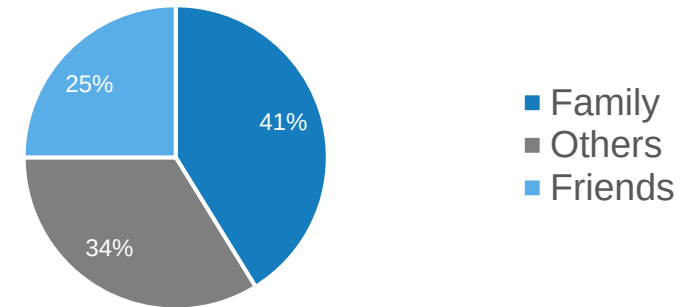


Finding #1: Home is by far the most important place for eating for adolescents

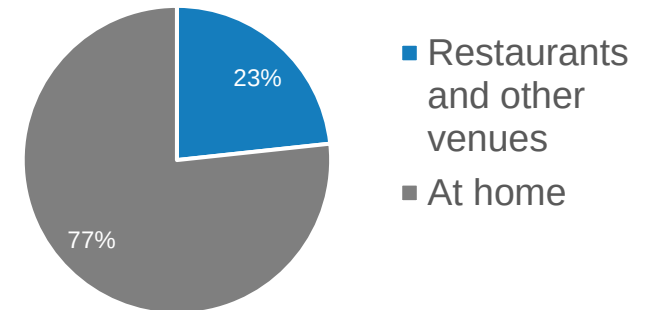
- ❑ Adolescents predominantly prefer eating at home
- ❑ There is a significant emphasis on sharing meals with family or friends



Preferred dining company

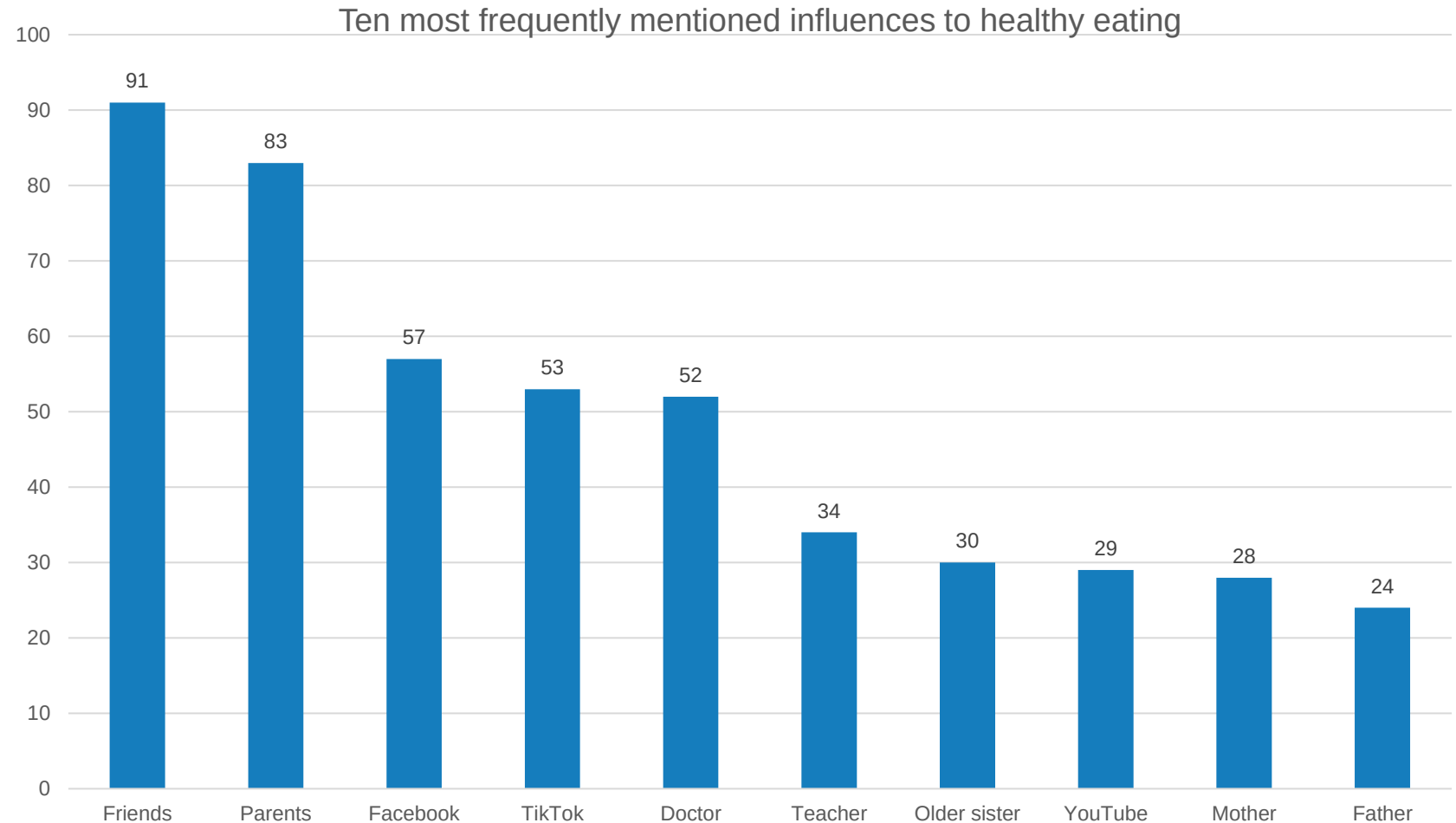


Dining location preference



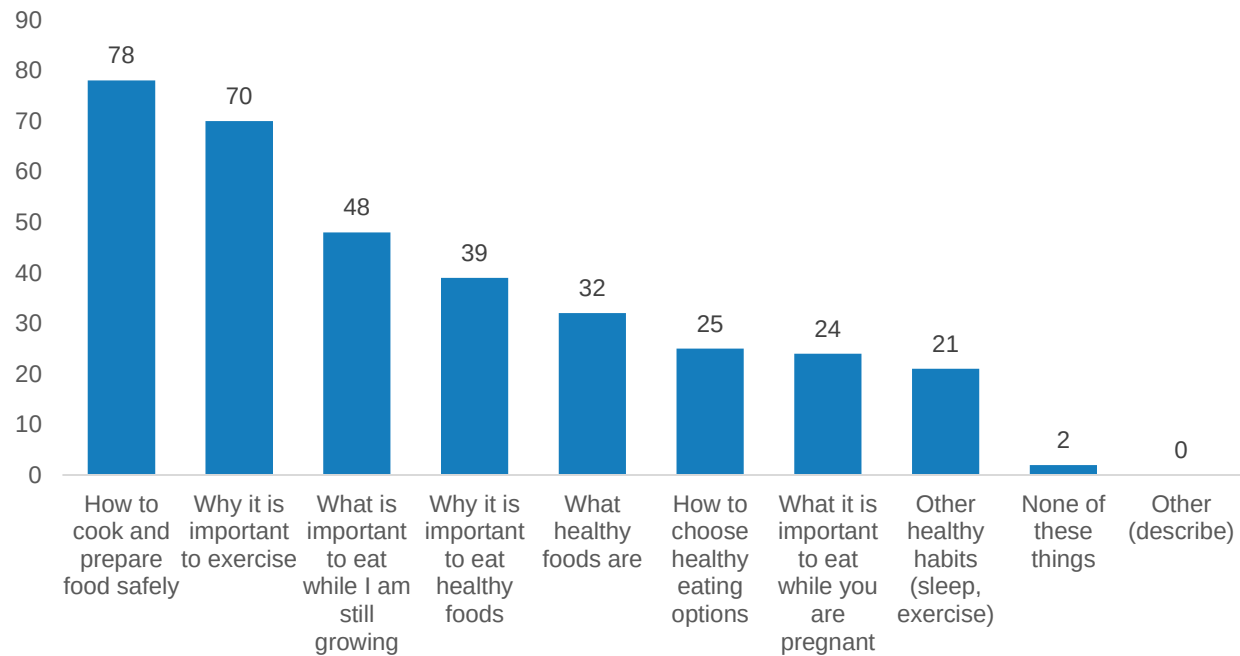
Finding #2: Family and friends are the biggest influences on healthy eating, followed by Facebook, TikTok, Doctors and teachers

- Familial and social influences significantly affect dietary patterns
- Personal relationships and some social media platforms are among the most predominant influences

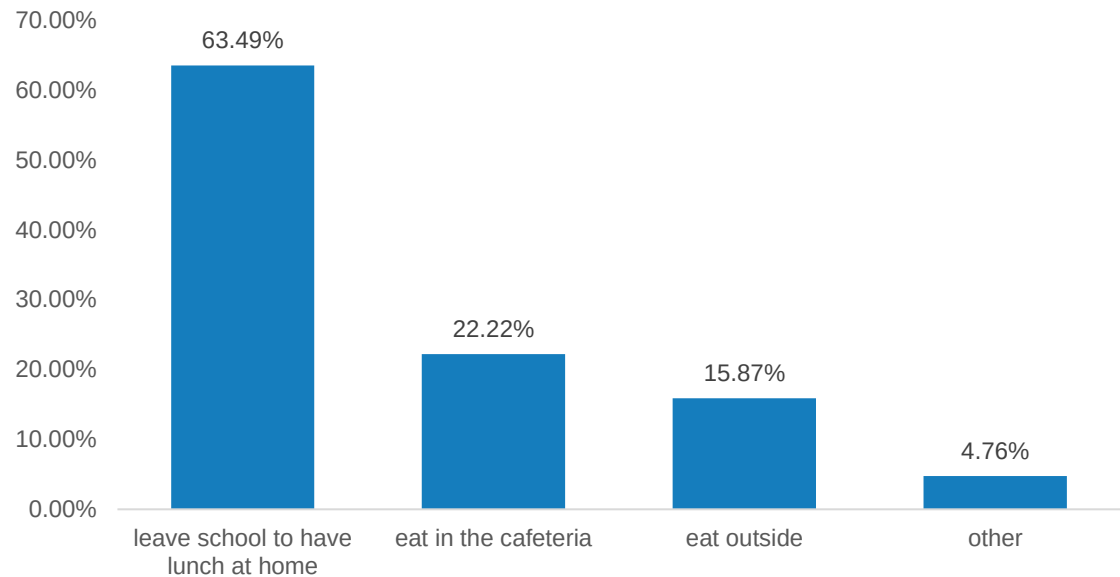


Finding #3: Adolescents are taught about nutrition at school, and they are eating most meals at home

What health topics do you learn at school?



Where do you eat your lunch at school?



Finding #4: At home, mothers play the strongest role in food and nutrition

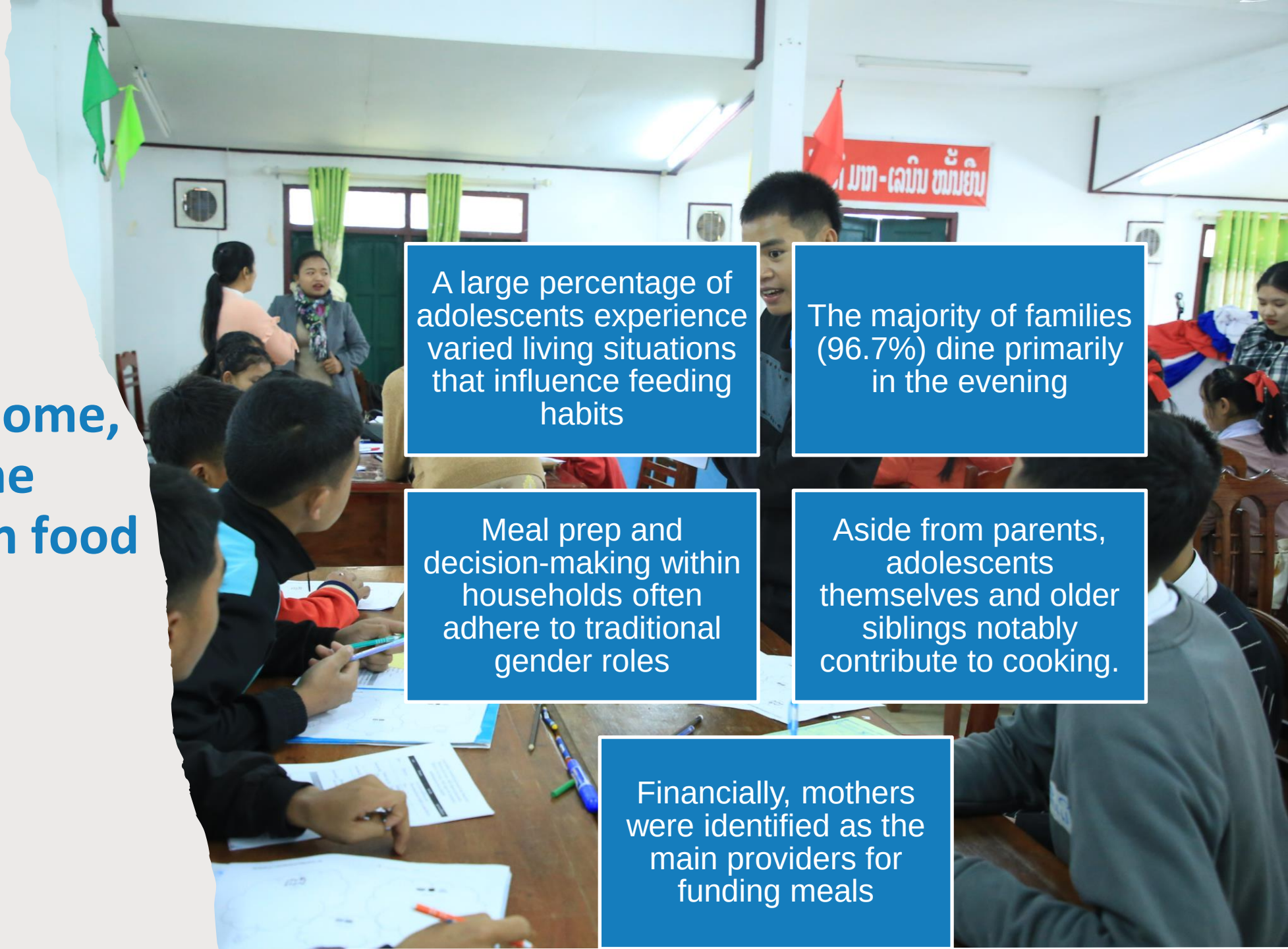
A large percentage of adolescents experience varied living situations that influence feeding habits

The majority of families (96.7%) dine primarily in the evening

Meal prep and decision-making within households often adhere to traditional gender roles

Aside from parents, adolescents themselves and older siblings notably contribute to cooking.

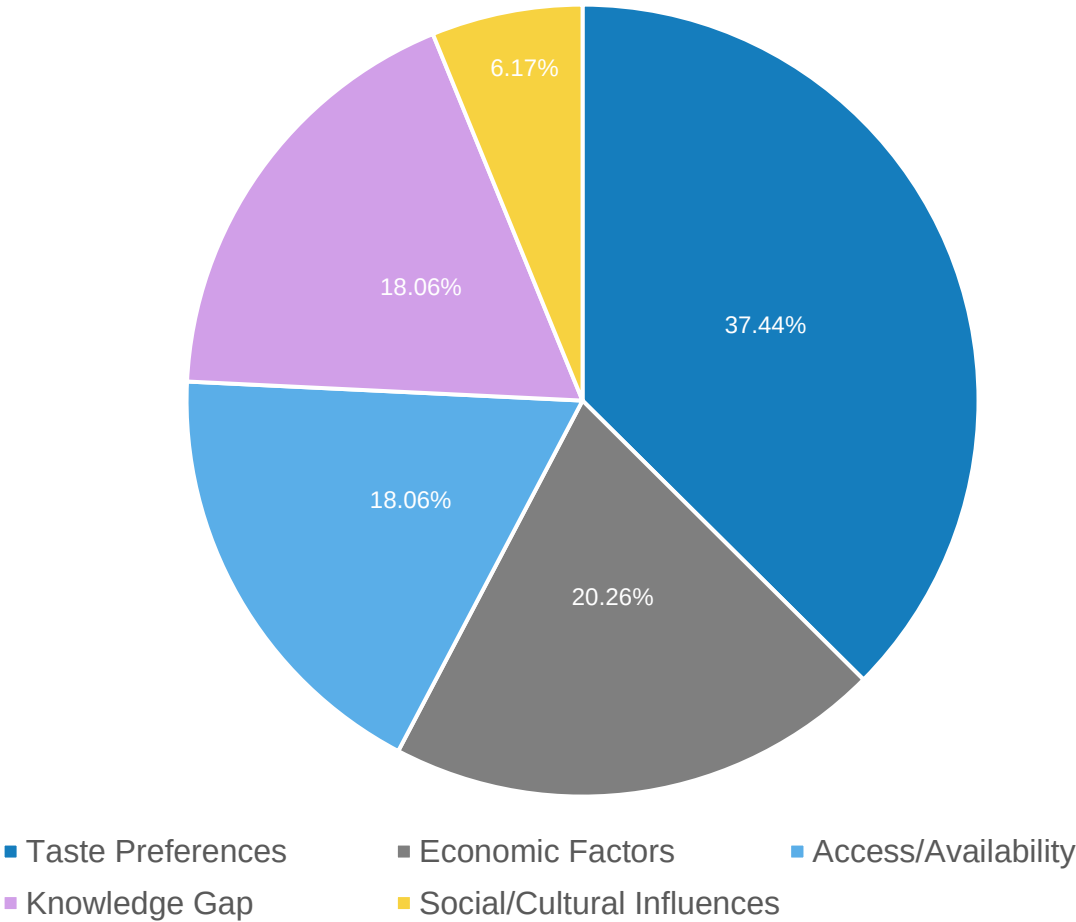
Financially, mothers were identified as the main providers for funding meals



Finding #5:

Barriers to healthy eating include taste preferences as the most prominent barrier, followed by economic factors, access to healthy foods, knowledge gaps, and social/cultural influences.

Most common barriers to healthy eating



Finding #6 Environmental concerns is the most mentioned societal barrier to healthy eating

Society barriers discussed by adolescents includes:

- **Environmental Concerns (most often mentioned concern):** concerned about the impact of these on health and food safety
- **Food Safety and Hygiene:** concerns about unclean foods
- **Nutritional Awareness and Diversity:** highlighted need for more knowledge on eating diverse and balanced diets to prevent malnutrition.
- **Chemical Contamination in Food:** concern of contamination agricultural practices, and desire to reduce use of chemicals
- **Community and Infrastructure Issues:** need for cleaner public spaces and better infrastructure to support a healthier living environment.
- **Health and Lifestyle:** Issues related to children's health, livelihood, and impact of lifestyle choices e.g. alcohol



Financial solutions

- Invest in education, healthy eating, clean water, and avoiding food contaminants
- Invest in the environment
- Support for community-based environmental preservation

Education solutions

- Advocate for professional advice on food safety
- Use projectors and flipcharts in educational sessions to display visuals that reinforce messages on nutrition and health,
- Educational books that provide information on balanced diets and dietary management

Community solutions

- Engage community leaders and villagers on safer agriculture
- Advocate for community development projects with villagers' support, focusing on nutrition education, hygiene, and sustainable farming practices
- Behavioral change campaigns include social media, flyers, and community meetings

Finding #7: Adolescents voiced change solutions related to finance, education, and community involvement

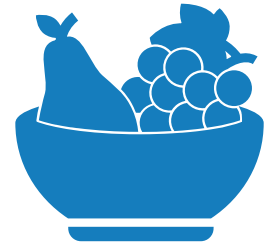


Finding #8: Adolescents see themselves in three roles

- **community mobilizers,**
- **advocates for external support, and**
- **persuaders for behavioral change**

Keys recommendations

1. Strengthen nutritional education that aligns with the cultural context of home and school environments;
2. Promote healthy eating choices through targeted engagement of influential family members, particularly mothers;
3. Facilitate innovative interventions that address identified barriers, such as taste preferences and access to healthy foods;
4. Leverage adolescents' self-identified roles to foster community-driven initiatives and support sustainable behavioral changes.





Thank you