

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	A Nutrition Dialogue for Badghis
DIALOGUE DATE	Sunday, 10 November 2024 14:30 GMT +04:30
CONVENED BY	Murtaza Haidary, Senior MEAL Coordinator, World Vision Afghanistan; Naser Abed, Zonal MEAL Coordinator, World Vision Afghanistan Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: Dr Mark D Calder. Technical support
EVENT LANGUAGE	Dari Persian
HOST LOCATION	Qala-e-Naw, Afghanistan
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Badghis province
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/54326/



The outcomes from Nutrition Dialogues will contribute to developing and identifying the most urgent and powerful ways to improve nutrition for all, with a focus on women and children and young people. Each Dialogue 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

26

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-11	0	12-18	12	19-29
13	30-49	1	50-74	0	75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

8	Female	18	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0	Children, Youth Groups and Students	1	Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)
3	Educators and Teachers	5	Faith Leaders/Faith Communities
0	Financial Institutions and Technical Partners	4	Food Producers (including farmers)
0	Healthcare Professionals	0	Indigenous Peoples
0	Information and Technology Providers	0	Large Business and Food Retailers
0	Marketing and Advertising Experts	0	National/Federal Government Officials and Representatives
0	News and Media (e.g. Journalists)	14	Parents and Caregivers
0	Science and Academia	0	Small/Medium Enterprises
0	Sub-National/Local Government Officials and Representatives	0	United Nations
0	Women's Groups	0	Other (please state)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

Participants were diversified by age, gender, education, marital status, and socioeconomic status. Roughly half were from rural areas and half from urban areas, though the provincial capital Qala-e-Naw city is modestly sized (around 64,125). Participants were selected from those areas where needs are high, with a focus on the most vulnerable households. Participants reported not receiving any type of services from any NGOs including World Vision, so as to avoid any misplaced sense of 'debt'.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

The adults and stakeholders workshops were structured into three main segments: opening, discussion groups, and consolidation. In the opening section, all the adult participants and facilitators introduced themselves to each other. A total of 26 participants, 8 females and 18 males, attended the nutrition dialogues in Badghis province. The event was facilitated by conveners, curators, facilitators, and record keepers who were responsible for taking note of the discussions. Like much of Afghanistan, Badghis has been affected by successive years of droughts as well as flooding and severe weather events. The economy in Afghanistan contracted sharply after the withdrawal of international development aid in 2021, and Afghanistan is considered a 'hunger hotspot'. The nutrition dialogue event was held in World Vision Afghanistan's Badghis zonal office. Participants were divided into four groups, segregating by gender as required by the context, to discuss and share their ideas on three main questions. After 3 hours of discussions on food security and several dialogues on nutrition, the workshop was concluded and different ideas were consolidated and shared by the record keepers.

DISCUSSION

Focusing on three main open-ended questions, conveners, curators, and facilitators ensured that every participant actively engaged and shared their thoughts and opinions, either individually or in group discussions. o How are you affected by food insecurity? o Are you able to get enough of the right kind of nutritious food your family needs? o What can be done to help people in your community secure enough food? The main issues discussed by the adult and stakeholder participants included the impact of food insecurity on their lives, their access to nutritious food, and the reasons behind any difficulties in obtaining it. They also explored potential solutions and recommendations to address their needs and reduce the impact of food insecurity. Through several group discussions and conclusions, they identified key factors and determinants and listed recommendations to be considered in future planning.

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

- The poor economy and a lack of income generation opportunities prevent parents from affording and providing nutritious foods for their families.
- Continuous droughts have significantly impacted agricultural output and household incomes.
- High prices and a lack of access to nutritious food in rural areas discourage people from purchasing various nutritious foods, leading shopkeepers to avoid stocking expensive items.
- Mothers and caregivers lack knowledge of cooking different foods using local vegetables and cereals.
- There is a lack of information and awareness among community members about the importance of nutrition and the types of nutritious food.
- Due to low income and a poor economy, parents are under pressure, and many families face psychological problems which is a catalyst of these challenges, as well as a symptom.
- The rate of malnutrition has increased among children and pregnant mothers due to inadequate nutrition and poor feeding.
- Because of the poor economy, many children are sent to work instead of attending school.

A 31-year-old male rural participant: "The main challenges our community faces include the poor economy of households, lack of agricultural products due to continuous drought, unemployment among breadwinners, limited knowledge among caregivers and parents about the importance of proper feeding, and a lack of nutritious food for families".

A 55-year-old female rural participant: "My husband is disabled and unable to work, so I work outside the home. However, my daily earnings are insufficient to cover our household expenses, leaving my children without enough food."

A 40-year-old female rural participant: "I have a disabled daughter who needs more attention than we can provide. I have to work outside the home every day, and when I take her to the doctor, he says that for her to recover quickly, she needs proper care and nutritious food. However, we don't even have basic food at home."

URGENT ACTIONS

Implement an effective awareness campaign for all community members, with a focus on women of reproductive age and caregivers.

Provide extensive support to high-need communities through long-term development programmes, including vocational courses and job creation – not least in traditional skilled crafts such as tailoring and weaving, as well as emergency humanitarian assistance.

Facilitate market linkages for local food production.

School feeding programmes could help ensure parents do not prevent their children from attending school.

Conduct wider screening and treatment for malnourished mothers and children through nutrition programs.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There was a high degree of consensus regarding the challenges and immediate needs of communities affected by hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. There were variations in the level of education and awareness about nutrition and cooking among the participants. Some had better knowledge and experience regarding nutrition, apparently regardless of economic hardships. Almost 60% of the attendees mentioned a lack of awareness about nutrition, while the remainder professed to understand something about nutrition and nutritious foods.

OVERALL SUMMARY

Participation in the Badghis Nutrition Dialogue was energetic and engaged. It is clear that many of the participants in this event were living daily with the challenge of food security, and both positive and negative coping mechanisms were discussed.

The diverse backgrounds of participants was an essential attribute of these dialogues, and participants included people from urban and rural areas, both male and female, members of educated and uneducated families, parents, faith and community leaders, and other community members. However, we were consistently mindful of the potential for more literate or higher status individuals to dominate and facilitators were briefed to ensure participation of all. The result was a candid discussion of some of the challenges faced by those with inadequate knowledge of nutrition.

The event was organised rather quickly and sampling was purposive, targeting highly vulnerable communities, so we are cautious about representativity. However, around half of Afghanistan's population is thought to be in need of humanitarian assistance, and the range of challenges discussed, and the most urgent solutions, seem reflective of concerns we have heard elsewhere from communities in which World Vision implements humanitarian projects.

It is clear that humanitarian assistance is still leaving whole communities unreached by vital support. Participants urged that a most urgent need is an increased in the breadth of screening and treatment for malnourished mothers and children through public or internationally-funded nutrition programmes.

Recommendations from participants, such as this, reflected much of what we already know about food insecurity in Afghanistan, and the required response, however the emphasis upon nutrition education was striking. Several participants emphasised the need to implement an effective awareness campaign for all community members, with a focus on women of reproductive age and caregivers.

At present, most international donors only permit 'humanitarian' assistance in Afghanistan, which limits what can be done to build longer-term resilience and economic security. However, participants were clear that there is a need to provide extensive support to at-risk communities through long-term development programmes, including vocational courses and job creation initiatives. Traditional skilled crafts such as tailoring and weaving carpets are a major part of the province's economic identity.

None of this needs to displace humanitarian assistance, but it should articulate with lifesaving work.

Participants' focus on facilitating market linkages for local food production was rather salutary, as food assistance provided by the UN and INGOs is in large part sourced from outside of Afghanistan. This is a missed opportunity to create positive development impacts through emergency lifesaving assistance.

Finally, participants flagged that school feeding programmes could help ensure parents do not prevent their children from attending school. At present, there is reluctance from donors to invest in the education infrastructure around primary education, but warm facilities linked to the provision of school meals – and perhaps also kitchen gardening by schools – could be a catalyst of positive change.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

It was essential in Afghanistan to consider the potential for kinship affiliations, power relations, and the restricted environment for expression, to impinge upon the event. Focusing on people who were not already benefiting directly from NGO support was one mitigation, but discussion groups were facilitated with this potential in mind. All participants and facilitators were briefed on the following points, and assented to them in advance of the dialogue event commencing.

- Give time for everyone to share their ideas. If one of the participants does not participate, ask them for their ideas.
- Avoid closed questions, complicated concepts, and slang words.
- Do not ignore the views of any participants.
- Reflect back participants inputs and seek their approval or amend in response to any objections.

Facilitators monitored the discussion, encouraging all participants, especially those who considered themselves illiterate, to express their views and actively take part.

METHOD AND SETTING

The setting of the Badghis Nutrition Dialogue was the World Vision zonal office in Qala-e-Naw. This complex comprises two buildings in which World Vision staff work, segregated as per the authorities' regulations by gender. Inviting participants who had no prior engagement with World Vision ensured that this location felt relatively neutral. The key method was focus group discussion with carefully observed and transcribed notetaking.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Participation was so enthusiastic, bearing in mind that many of these participants had never been asked for their views on matters that impinge greatly upon their families' wellbeing, so managing time during discussions was difficult, with sessions extending beyond the planned schedule. Therefore, it is recommended to allocate more time for the workshop than the two hours we set aside. Moreover, longer to plan the workshops could have included a greater range of stakeholders, but we were keen to

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These dialogues were organised and implemented by the World Vision Afghanistan MEAL team, and we acknowledge Naser Abed in particular for his leadership in implementing the Badghis dialogue. We also extend our gratitude to colleagues from World Vision Afghanistan operations and security teams, to our conveners, curators, facilitators, and record keepers for their dedication and hard work in leading the sessions, and to participants for their active engagement.