

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	Prayer and Nutrition Dialogue Together with Church and Faith Institutions: "Faith Action for Every Child, Life in All Its Fullness"
DIALOGUE DATE	Monday, 29 September 2025 09:30 GMT +07:00
CONVENED BY	Wahana Visi Indonesia Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: Priskila Estauli. F&D Specialist Church Engagement Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: Priskila Estauli. Faith and Development Specialist - Church Engagement
EVENT LANGUAGE	Indonesia
HOST LOCATION	Central Jakarta, Indonesia
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	National Level
AFFILIATIONS	World Vision
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/54940/



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

15

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-11	0	12-18	4	19-29
4	30-49	8	50-74	0	75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

12	Female	3	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0	Children, Youth Groups and Students	0	Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)
0	Educators and Teachers	15	Faith Leaders/Faith Communities
0	Financial Institutions and Technical Partners	0	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)	0	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 included Catholics and Christians from various denominations, alongside representatives of faith-based groups, educational institutions, and community organizations from both urban and rural areas. Their diverse ages, backgrounds, and regions provided wide social and economic perspectives, enriching the dialogue and supporting inclusive, context-aware recommendations locally.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

In the introductory session, participants reflected that nutrition challenges cannot be separated from the wider local context. Climate change has altered weather patterns, causing longer droughts, unpredictable rainfall, pests, and crop diseases that repeatedly reduce harvests and limit access to diverse, nutritious foods. Rising fertilizer, fuel, and transport costs have further strained smallholder farmers, making food production more difficult and increasing the burden on poor households already struggling to provide healthy meals. Parents expressed fears of stunting, anemia, and micronutrient deficiencies as animal-source foods become increasingly expensive. Failed harvests and extreme weather have made vegetables and side dishes occasional luxuries, while soil degradation is believed to reduce nutrient content in staple crops. These concerns reflect daily realities in which healthy food is harder to find and afford. At the policy level, discussions highlighted varied implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals/Makanan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) program. While promising, the program often distributes processed foods that lack fresh, local, nutrient-rich ingredients. Limited communication, weak coordination with schools, and oversight gaps have reduced its effectiveness. Reports of food safety concerns, including mass food poisoning, have also undermined parental trust. Against this backdrop, the dialogue offered a space for community voices to be heard and for diverse stakeholders—government, religious leaders, farmers, health workers, and civil society—to search for solutions together. Grounding the conversation in local experiences helped participants identify pathways toward more resilient, community-based nutrition efforts. Ultimately, the dialogue aimed to build a shared vision in which every family can access food that is healthy, safe, and culturally appropriate.

DISCUSSION

The discussion focused on the nutritional challenges faced by children within Christian and Catholic communities, and the critical role of religious leaders in shaping feeding practices, child-care behaviors, and community awareness. Participants explored how climate change, declining harvests, and food processing that prioritizes convenience over nutrition have contributed to worsening diets for children. The dialogue also examined how faith-based spaces can serve as trusted platforms for promoting healthier habits. Key open-ended questions included: What spiritual, cultural, and economic factors contribute to poor feeding practices? In what ways can religious leaders and faith-based organizations guide families toward better nutrition and caregiving? What barriers do they encounter in acting as agents of change? And what opportunities exist within churches and community networks to strengthen children's health and well-being?

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Poor feeding and child-care practices in the community stem from practical, economic, cultural, and spiritual factors. Many families choose foods that are cheap, quick, and easy to prepare—an understandable response to rising prices and economic pressure. At the same time, fast food and ultra-processed snacks have become daily staples, especially among younger generations who value convenience in a digital-age culture that prioritizes speed over nutrition.

Vegetables, which could be seen as God's provision, are often viewed merely as ordinary, affordable items without appreciation of their nutritional value. Eating patterns focus on satisfying hunger rather than intentionally nourishing the body as a form of gratitude and stewardship. The belief that "as long as we eat, it is enough" overshadows the understanding that the body is the temple of God.

Low levels of health and nutrition knowledge reinforce these habits. Many parents are unaware of balanced diets, child growth needs, or the long-term consequences of poor nutrition. A culture of instant gratification shapes food choices, pushing families toward instant noodles, packaged snacks, and other processed items.

Spiritually and institutionally, challenges arise from the strong separation between "physical" and "spiritual" matters in some churches. Nutrition is often seen as outside the church's mission, limiting the role faith leaders could play. Some parents also assume that God's blessing alone will meet a child's needs, leading to low participation in church-supported education or programs.

Economic hardship remains a major barrier. Even when parents know what healthy feeding looks like, unstable prices and limited income make it difficult to consistently provide nutritious meals. These intersecting factors create a complex environment that restricts families' ability to support good nutrition and optimal child growth.

URGENT ACTIONS

Participants highlighted urgent actions for faith-based organizations (FBOs), churches, and religious leaders to strengthen child well-being, family resilience, and community transformation. These actions include education, integrating faith with daily practices, collaboration, capacity building, and using technology.

1. Education & Habituation

Continuous education for parents and children is essential, with religious leaders playing a key role through sermons, counseling, and community programs. Knowledge must be paired with daily healthy habits in nutrition, hygiene, and emotional well-being to shape long-term behavior aligned with care and stewardship.

2. Integration of Spirituality & Nutrition

Churches are encouraged to emphasize that children's physical health is part of faith practice. Understanding the body as God's temple connects spiritual teachings with concrete actions that support growth and health. Pastoral messages on gratitude, simplicity, and sharing can inspire healthier lifestyles and mutual support.

3. Collaboration & Synergy

Collaboration is crucial. FBOs must work with government, community leaders, theological schools, and interfaith partners to strengthen outreach and provide holistic support. Existing church ministries, such as those in GPIB and GKI, offer strong models. This synergy is especially important in 3T areas (Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged regions) where resources are limited.

4. Strengthening human resources and the congregation's economy is also key. Investing in training for local leaders and volunteers improves program quality and sustainability. Building economic resilience enables congregations to better support vulnerable families and ensure access to nutritious food.

5. Technology provides an opportunity to expand impact. FBOs are encouraged to use social media, digital learning, and online campaigns to share faith-based, culturally relevant messages on nutrition and parenting with children, youth, and parents.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Participants shared varied perspectives on child nutrition, reflecting the many factors influencing children's well-being. Some focused on practical and economic issues, such as high food costs, limited access to nutritious foods, and the convenience of instant meals. Others emphasized spiritual and value-based views, linking nutrition to honoring the body as God's temple, gratitude, and concerns about weakening parental responsibility due to limited spiritual formation.

Structural issues were also raised, including the influence of digital culture, changing food habits among children, and climate change affecting food availability. These views ranged from seeing nutrition as a practical matter to understanding it as deeply connected to faith and moral responsibility.

Participants also differed on the expected role of religious leaders. Some called for direct involvement through preaching, teaching, counseling, and modeling healthy practices. Others stressed collaboration with government, community leaders, sectoral agencies, and theological institutions. Synods with integrated ministries were seen as models.

Obstacles were interpreted in multiple ways: internal challenges such as low sensitivity to emerging issues and rigid systems, and external barriers including policy limitations, restricted participation due to religious norms, and climate-related crop failures.

Opportunities were also viewed differently. Some prioritized partnerships, others highlighted congregational empowerment and daily habit formation, while some emphasized digital technology as a key channel for education.

Despite these differences, participants agreed that child nutrition is a serious issue and that religious leaders and faith-based organizations hold a strategic role in driving positive change. The diversity of views enriches the dialogue and underscores the need for a multidimensional, collaborative approach combining spiritual, practical, economic, and community-based strategies.

OVERALL SUMMARY

The dialogue highlighted the multidimensional nature of child nutrition, showing how practical, economic, cultural, and spiritual factors shape family choices and children's well-being. Participants brought diverse experiences that enriched the discussion and expressed strong commitment to improving child nutrition through the leadership of faith communities. The atmosphere was reflective and solution-oriented, grounded in field realities and theological insights. Overall, the event was collaborative and hopeful, with a shared desire to bridge sectors and identify concrete pathways for churches and FBOs ahead of the Nutrition for Growth Summit in March 2025.

Practical & Economic Factors

Many families, especially in low-income and rural contexts, prioritize cheap and quick food. Instant meals—though low in nutrients—are increasingly chosen due to affordability, convenience, and limited access to fresh foods. Economic pressure, time scarcity among working parents, and logistical barriers were consistently cited as major drivers influencing children's diets.

Cultural & Value Shifts

Participants observed significant changes in food culture. Fast food and instant meals have become normalized, especially among younger generations shaped by digital culture that prioritizes speed and convenience. This shift has weakened traditional practices and reduced appreciation for slow, communal, nutritious meals.

Spiritual Dimension

Some participants linked poor nutrition practices to weakened spiritual grounding. The absence of values such as gratitude, discipline, and stewardship over the body—the body as God's temple—contributes to unhealthy choices. They emphasized the role of faith in encouraging responsible behaviors that reflect spiritual integrity and parental care.

Role of Religious Leaders

Religious leaders are seen as influential educators, advocates, and connectors. Through sermons, counseling, role modeling, and community programs, they can shape family habits and reinforce value-based approaches to nutrition. They also hold the potential to build collaboration with government, schools, and civil society.

However, several barriers persist. Internal barriers include limited awareness of nutrition among church leaders, reduced sensitivity to emerging issues, and lack of institutional focus. External constraints include restricted access to services, socio-cultural norms, remote geographies, and climate-driven crop failures.

Opportunities

Key opportunities identified include:

- Strengthening external collaboration with government, schools, health institutions, and civil society.
- Empowering congregations through stronger family economic capacity and habituation of healthy practices.
- Using digital technology to reach youth and parents with accessible nutrition education.

Practical Recommendations for Churches and Theological Schools

Integration in Theological Education

- Incorporate topics on food security, nutrition, and public health into theological curricula.
- Train emerging church leaders to respond to health and nutrition issues in their communities.

Congregational Assistance

- Enrich Sunday School, youth classes, premarital counseling, and Bible studies with health and nutrition content.
- Use worship and fellowship spaces to model healthy, sustainable lifestyles.

Church Policies & Protocols

- Develop SOPs for children's meals at church events to ensure nutrition, safety, and cultural appropriateness.
- Form Congregational Health and Nutrition Teams for education, monitoring, and guidance.

Strengthening Spirituality & Congregational Culture

- Revitalize the practice of *ugahari* (living sufficiently) to counter consumerism.
- Promote "Sharing Tables" where members bring and share nutritious foods as fellowship.
- Encourage intergenerational activities such as communal meals, food sharing initiatives, or congregational gardens.

Conclusion

Despite varied emphases—practical, economic, cultural, or spiritual—participants agreed that child nutrition is a critical issue. Religious leaders hold a strategic role in integrating faith values, education, and cross-sector collaboration. With these recommendations, churches and FBOs can function not only as centers of worship but also as hubs of learning and transformation, supporting food security, health, and holistic well-being for children and families.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Dialogue was designed to uphold the Principles of Engagement by ensuring inclusivity, transparency, and a safe space for open discussion. Participants came from various Christian and Catholic denominations, church leaders, FBOs, and educational institutions, allowing diverse perspectives to be heard and respected. Equal speaking opportunities were emphasized so all voices could contribute freely. To manage competing interests, facilitators received preparatory briefings on participant backgrounds and organizational mandates, helping them anticipate sensitivities and guide discussions neutrally. Clear expectations and rules of engagement were shared at the start to ensure a fair, transparent process and prevent dominance by any group. By consistently applying these principles, the Dialogue stayed focused on strengthening understanding and practices related to child nutrition within church and FBO settings, while fostering trust, collaboration, and meaningful outcomes.

METHOD AND SETTING

Participants were warmly welcomed and introduced to one another. Buffet-style meals promoted equality and reduced waste. As most attendees were faith leaders, the session opened with brief worship, affirming that child nutrition is a faith-driven calling. The dialogue was participatory and inclusive, involving diverse denominations, faith leaders, FBOs, and educational institutions. Small-group and plenary discussions built shared understanding. The room was arranged in a U-shape with soft music.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

When organizing a Nutrition Dialogue, create a warm, inclusive, and respectful environment so all participants feel heard. Prepare guiding questions and space for reflection and storytelling. Involve faith leaders, local influencers, and community representatives for diverse perspectives. Ensure accessible, comfortable venues and healthy, eco-friendly food. Document insights, agreements, and follow-up actions to achieve practical, lasting impact.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We sincerely thank everyone who made the Nutrition Dialogue a success. Special appreciation to the Faith and Development and Procurement teams for ensuring nutritious, eco-friendly food, and to the Security team for welcoming participants safely. We are grateful to community leaders, churches, partners, and friends for their commitment, and to the sponsors whose support made this event possible.