

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

WORKSHOP TITLE	A Children's Nutrition Dialogue for Badghis
WORKSHOP DATE	Monday, 11 November 2024 14:30 GMT +04:30
CONVENED BY	Murtaza Haidary, Senior MEAL Coordinator, World Vision Afghanistan; Parwana Rahmani, Child Health Lead, World Vision Afghanistan Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: Dr Mark D Calder. Technical support and advocacy
EVENT LANGUAGE	Dari Persian
HOST CITY	Qala-e-Naw, Afghanistan
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Badghis Province
WORKSHOP EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/55058/



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

32

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

12 12-15

20 16-18

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

15 Female

17 Male

0 Other/Prefer not to say

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPATION DIVERSITY

There was a balanced mix of boys and girls from the same community. We invited participants 50% from rural and 50% from urban areas, mostly from vulnerable households. Nearly all the children belonged to the Qala-e-Naw communities. The children who attended the event were asked if they received any assistance from NGOs specifically from WVA, and nobody reported receiving any type of assistance. The nutrition dialogue event was held in Wold Vision Afghanistan's Badghis zonal office.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING

The children's workshop was structured into four main segments: opening, exploration of good nourishment, ideas to improve nourishment, and closing. In the opening section, all the children introduced themselves and mentioned their favourite foods to create a positive atmosphere. Each child wrote their name on a sticky note and listed their favourite foods. They were then asked to share a story or describe a time when there wasn't enough food at home or school, and they felt very hungry but had no money to buy snacks or food during breaks.

SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Key challenges identified included parents' lack of awareness about the importance of nutrition, poverty in terms of low family incomes and a lack of income-generating opportunities, and insufficient humanitarian assistance in many areas.

The children expressed the feelings they recalled during times of hunger. We further asked them to describe their experiences of going to school hungry and how it affected their bodies. One 12-year-old girl shared: "One day I came home from school at lunchtime, and I was very hungry. I asked my mother if she had cooked something, and she told me we didn't have anything at home to cook, not even wheat flour to make bread."

Similarly, when the boys were asked if they had any stories, a 14-year-old boy mentioned: "One day I got ready to leave for school, but my father asked me to help him with his construction work because he couldn't manage alone. He said I shouldn't go to school for a while."

According to the children, good nourishment means having access to a variety of nutritious foods and eating at least three times a day. Most of the children listed common foods such as rice, meat, beans, potatoes, lentils, and peas. Dairy and fruits were rarely mentioned.

URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Children made the following recommendations:

1. Humanitarian aid should be increased and broadened to target all communities in need.
2. Creation of job opportunities for the younger generation is a priority, especially for heads of households.
3. Establishing and implementing long-term development projects by the authorities or organisations is essential to give people more opportunities.
4. Children should be taught the importance of nutrition through the distribution of appropriate learning materials to school-aged children (both inside and out of schools).
5. Awareness-raising seminars or training programmes for parents and caregivers would help communities become educated about the importance of nutrition.
6. Families who are cold should receive more support with winterisation and clothing.
7. Malnourished children should be treated as an urgent priority.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Children's nutrition varied in terms of the types and amounts of food they consumed, though there was no significant disagreement in the recommendations for action. Some children had better nourishment due to coming from relatively wealthy families, but more than half of the participants reported poor nourishment regarding food variety and quantity.

OVERALL SUMMARY

The nutrition dialogue workshop provided a valuable opportunity to understand children's feelings and perceptions about nutrition from various points of view, particularly contrasting the experiences of those who had come from rural and urban settings respectively. Children expressed diverse opinions and perceptions of good nutrition, the impact of food insecurity on their lives, the challenges they face, and potential solutions to improve their nutrition.

The workshop was highly participatory. Curators provided a simple briefing about the nutrition dialogues and asked the children for their feedback on the consent form, assuring them that their participation was entirely voluntary. The facilitators emphasised the importance of the children's ideas and perspectives, encouraging them to share freely, whether through writing or speaking. To make the process easier, the facilitators simplified the questions, allowing the children to express their thoughts and ideas through drawings or writing. Three open-ended questions were posed, and the children were encouraged to share their minds, with the assurance that their identities would remain anonymous.

Due to cultural norms and the challenging context, the sessions for boys and girls were conducted separately. In the morning, the session was for girls, and in the afternoon, it was for boys. The girls' session was led and facilitated by female conveners, curators, facilitators, and record keepers, while the boys' session was led and facilitated by their male counterparts. At the end of the day, all records and results from both sessions were compiled, reviewed, concluded, and summarised by the conveners for reporting.

The dialogues demonstrated the value and importance of child consultation in developing nutrition policy that properly meets the needs of children to survive crises, adapt to changing contexts, and thrive in the long-term. It was notable that there was little reference to the droughts and environmental crises that have been definitive of children's experiences in Badghis.

Key challenges identified included parents' lack of awareness about the importance of nutrition, poverty in terms of low family incomes and a lack of income-generating opportunities, and insufficient humanitarian assistance in many areas. The children proposed several solutions and recommendations, such as: conducting awareness-raising sessions for parents on the importance of nutrition, increasing humanitarian assistance, providing job opportunities for young people and heads of households, establishing vocational training and learning courses for youths and parents, distributing winter clothing for children, and implementing long-term development programmes.

Some children focused more on urgent humanitarian needs, others on longer-term development needs. Interestingly, children from both perspectives flagged the importance of education and learning. One of the children who was a boy aged 17 stated "We need humanitarian aid organisation support in terms of food [assistance] and education services". A girl aged between 12-14 from Jari Boz Kashi appealed to aid organisations, saying, "We need your support in terms of vocational and learning courses."

The children believe that these actions will address their main nutritional challenges and enable them to consume a variety of foods.

Another child participant who was a girl aged between 12-14, from Jari Boz Kashi village was asking from the aid organisations, "we need your support in terms of vocational and learning courses".

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

World Vision's staff applied the following principles to maximise inclusion and avoid risks of harm. • Ensure all children feel welcome and valued, regardless of their background or abilities. • Create a safe and comfortable environment where children feel secure to express themselves. • Encourage children to actively participate through interactive and hands-on activities. • Foster mutual respect and trust between facilitators and children, ensuring their voices are heard and valued. • Provide opportunities for children to express themselves creatively through various mediums like art, writing, and play. • Use simple, clear language and instructions to ensure children understand and can follow along. The workshop was highly participatory. In the beginning, the curators and facilitators introduced themselves and conducted ice-breaking activities with the children. • Encourage children to give feedback and reflect on their experiences, helping them feel involved in the process.

METHOD AND SETTING

The workshop was set up in the training hall of World Vision Afghanistan's Badghis zonal office. Curators provided a simple briefing about the nutrition dialogues and obtained written informed consent. The facilitators emphasised the importance of the children's ideas and perspectives, encouraging them to share freely. To make the process easier, the facilitators simplified the questions, allowing the children to express their thoughts and ideas through drawings or writing.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Longer planning allowing for more coordination with the community would help to ensure breadth of perspectives, and also create more time for children to reflect on their experiences and views of nutrition and food insecurity.

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 above all to the children and their caregivers for their active engagement

ATTACHMENTS

- https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/20241111_152758-scaled.jpg
- https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/photo_2024-11-13_13-53-17.jpg
- https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/photo_2024-11-13_13-53-15.jpg