

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	Stakeholder Dialogue- Vakarai Area Programme- Sri Lanka
DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 26 November 2024 14:00 GMT +05:30
CONVENED BY	Lavanya Suriyakumar
EVENT LANGUAGE	Tamil
HOST LOCATION	Vakarai, Sri Lanka
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Vakarai Area Programme
AFFILIATIONS	Event will be conducted as part of the Baseline interactions , we are conducting for ENOUGH campaign.
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/55088/



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

11

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-11	0	12-18	4	19-29
6	30-49	1	50-74	0	75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

9	Female	0	Male	2	Other/Prefer not to say
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

2	Children, Youth Groups and Students	2	Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)
0	Educators and Teachers	0	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)	2	Parents and Caregivers
0	Science and Academia	0	Small/Medium Enterprises
0	Sub-National/Local Government Officials and Representatives	0	United Nations
5	Women's Groups	1	Other (please state)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

NA

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

The participants came from various community groups, including mother support groups, producer groups, civil society organizations, and children club facilitators. Some of them engage in household farming. Most participants work with children, and the discussion also included mothers of children under five and male representatives.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

The participants introduced themselves and shared about their families. The purpose and process of the nutritional dialogue were explained. Vaharaj, a city known for its expansive backwater on Sri Lanka's east coast in the Batticaloa District, is characterized by its large fertile fields, lagoons, and virgin forests. The community primarily engages in fishing, agriculture, and unskilled labor. During the discussion, it was mentioned that most of the legumes, such as black-eyed peas, green gram, and peanuts, and local vegetables such as brinjal, ladies fingers, broad bean are produced in their village. Since fishing is the main occupation, almost every household consumes fish daily.

NUTRITION SITUATION PRESENTATION

<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Stakeholder-dialogues-Eng-6.pdf>

DISCUSSION

The discussion was informal, focusing on questions such as: What are the feelings or concerns about nutrition in our community? How can we ensure good nutrition for everyone? What actions are needed to achieve this? Who needs to be involved to make it happen? Participants also shared their vision for their villages to become nutritionally well communities in the next 10 years. All questions were open-ended, and each participant shared their daily routines, including their responsibilities and meal times. Also the gender roles also discussed when it comes to nutrition of the children and the family.

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

1. Despite engagement in agriculture, accessing a variety of foods is difficult for everyone.
2. Parents who are daily wage earners struggle to provide nutritious meals for their children due to low income.
3. There is a lack of knowledge among parents and caregivers about proper nutrition.
4. Stereotypes about food within the community negatively impact the nutrition of children and families.
5. Most children do not bring food to school; only those whose parents cook in the morning have food to take.
6. Many women work as daily wage earners due to poor economic conditions, making it difficult to cook early in the morning.
7. Most people eat rice three times a day, leading to a diet high in carbohydrates and lacking balance.
8. There is a belief that mothers are solely responsible for their children's nutrition.
9. Mothers migrating for work, both within and outside the country, due to financial burdens, affects children's nutrition.
10. The attraction to microloan schemes for non-essential needs (e.g., house expansion, birthday celebrations, buying electronics) diverts focus from spending on nutrition.

URGENT ACTIONS

1. Provide school meals to all children, including those in preschools.
2. Create job opportunities for youth and women within the village to reduce migration.
3. Clearly communicate awareness about microloan systems.
4. Implement measures to prevent early marriages, which negatively impact the nutrition of both children and mothers.
5. Deliver nutritional awareness in creative, non-traditional ways to help eliminate stereotypes.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

During the discussion on gender roles in family nutrition, several viewpoints emerged. Some men and a few women argued that it is solely the mother's responsibility to care for her children and that she should make time to prepare nutritious meals. Conversely, a few women stated that both parents should share the responsibility of caring for the children. However, they noted that fathers typically focus on providing for the family rather than directly caring for the children. Some participants suggested that mothers do not cook because they are lazy and prefer watching television. In contrast, women explained that they handle all the housework and feel too exhausted to cook three times a day. This highlights the differing perspectives on gender roles and the challenges faced in ensuring proper nutrition for children.

OVERALL SUMMARY

Despite being involved in agriculture, many families struggle to access a variety of foods. Daily wage earners find it hard to provide nutritious meals due to low income, and there is a lack of knowledge about proper nutrition among parents and caregivers. Stereotypes about food and the belief that mothers are solely responsible for children's nutrition further complicate the issue. Many women, who work as daily wage earners, find it difficult to cook early in the morning, leading to children not bringing food to school. Additionally, the focus on non-essential expenses through microloan schemes diverts attention from spending on nutrition. Recommendations include providing school meals, creating local job opportunities, raising awareness about microloan systems, preventing early marriages, and delivering nutritional education in creative ways to eliminate stereotypes. Also there is a huge gap in the gender roles which also affects the nutrition of the children and family.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

All participants had the chance to speak, sharing their daily routines, including meals and meal timings. This encouraged discussions on issues affecting different age groups and genders. The dialogues were healthy, with participants respecting each other's opinions, even when they disagreed, particularly on gender roles.

METHOD AND SETTING

The seating was arranged in a circle to ensure everyone could be seen and heard during the discussion. Special accommodations were made for a lactating mother. Nutritional refreshments were also provided.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Be mindful of the different types of participants, especially lactating and pregnant mothers.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to World Vision Lanka's Area Programmes and the community volunteers for organizing the dialogue despite the adverse weather conditions caused by a cyclone in Sri Lanka. Additionally, the feedback forms were prepared in the local language to ensure accurate and unfiltered responses. At the National office, we translated these documents into English.

ATTACHMENTS

- **Group discussion**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Image-3-3.jpg>
- **Participants sharing their views**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Image-11-1-scaled.jpg>
- **Discussion**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Image-10-1-scaled.jpg>
- **National Nutrition month report 2024**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/National-Nutrition-Month-Summary-Report-2024-7.pdf>