

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	Faith community Nutrition Dialogues
DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 12 November 2024 11:00 GMT +03:00
CONVENED BY	Daniel Muvengi, Director, Faith and Development World Vision East Africa Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: William Oticha. I offer technical and Administrative support as the Advocacy and External Engagement intern, WV East Africa Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: William Oticha. I give the convenors administrative and technical support.
EVENT LANGUAGE	English
HOST LOCATION	Nairobi, Kenya
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Eastern Africa
AFFILIATIONS	World Vision
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/55468/



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

53

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

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

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

0	Female	1	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

1	Children, Youth Groups and Students	0	Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)
0	Educators and Teachers	20	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	33	Other (please state)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Other stakeholder groups included staff from world vision field offices across the region and other participants They were critical in this discussion since they are actively contributing to hunger and malnutrition response on the ground.

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

The dialogue involved participants from different Faiths who all contributed their unique perspectives. The participants were also from different countries with diverse local contexts. their contributions greatly enriched the discussions.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

The dialogue took place in the backdrop of various nutrition challenges in the region and the urgency of addressing these issues through innovative, community-driven solutions, setting the stage for a discussion on the critical role that faith communities can play in mitigating these challenges. By framing the dialogue within this context, participants were encouraged to approach the discussion with a sense of shared responsibility and a focus on actionable outcomes. Prolonged droughts have led to diminished agricultural yields, leaving many communities reliant on food aid or unable to access diverse and nutritious foods. Conflict in certain areas has disrupted supply chains, displaced populations, and further exacerbated food insecurity. Additionally, natural disasters, such as floods, have destroyed crops and infrastructure, undermining food systems and contributing to widespread malnutrition. The dialogue addressed the nutrition situation, underscoring the prevalence of malnutrition in vulnerable groups, particularly children and women. High rates of stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies were presented as critical challenges.

DISCUSSION

The discussion topic focused on understanding the diverse nutrition challenges faced by different communities and exploring how faith leaders and faith-based approaches can play a pivotal role in addressing these issues. The dialogue aimed to identify the underlying causes of malnutrition, including food insecurity, cultural practices, and access to resources, while recognizing the unique influence of faith leaders in shaping community behaviors and attitudes. By leveraging the trust and reach of faith-based organizations, participants sought to uncover practical and sustainable strategies to promote nutrition awareness, improve dietary practices, and mobilize communities towards healthier outcomes. This comprehensive approach emphasized the critical intersection of faith, community engagement, and collaborative action in combating malnutrition.

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

The participants of the dialogue identified several nutrition challenges rooted in their diverse local contexts:

Food Insecurity: Limited access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food due to poverty, drought, and conflict. Rural areas struggled with seasonal shortages, while urban communities faced high costs and reliance on processed foods.

Malnutrition in Children: High rates of stunting, wasting, and underweight children, exacerbated by inadequate maternal and child nutrition during critical growth periods.

Cultural and Traditional Practices: Harmful cultural beliefs and practices restricted dietary diversity, particularly for women and children, such as food taboos during pregnancy.

Limited Nutrition Awareness: Knowledge gaps on the importance of balanced diets and proper feeding practices led to poor nutrition choices in households.

Health and Sanitation Issues: Poor access to healthcare and clean water contributed to malnutrition, as illnesses like diarrhea reduced nutrient absorption.

Climate Change and Environmental Factors: Droughts, floods, and soil degradation reduced agricultural productivity, limiting food availability and diversity.

Weak Policy Implementation: Insufficient government programs and support for nutrition initiatives, especially in marginalized areas, hindered progress.

URGENT ACTIONS

Participants identified several urgent actions to address malnutrition and proposed practical strategies for implementation:

1. Community Nutrition Education:

Enhance awareness about proper nutrition, dietary diversity, and the impact of malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable groups. Faith leaders committed to integrating nutrition education into sermons, community gatherings, and religious events. NGOs and healthcare providers offered to supply educational materials and facilitate training for faith leaders.

2. Improving Access to Nutritious Food

-Home, school and Community gardens to ensure consistent access to diverse, nutrient-rich foods. Participants proposed partnerships between faith-based organizations, local governments, and NGOs to mobilize resources and provide technical support for these initiatives.

3. Policy Advocacy

Advocate for government policies that address food insecurity, improve healthcare services, and support nutrition-focused programs.

Faith leaders and NGOs committed to engaging policymakers and amplifying community voices to influence policies, leveraging the trust faith leaders hold in their communities.

4. Engaging Schools

Promote healthy eating habits and provide school meals to combat child malnutrition.

Schools were identified as key platforms, with support suggested from local governments and NGOs to integrate nutrition programs into curricula and provide logistical assistance for meal programs.

5. Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

Foster partnerships among faith communities, government agencies, healthcare providers, and NGOs.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The divergence in views, opinions, and positions during the dialogue largely stemmed from the differing local contexts of the participants' countries, including variations in socio-economic conditions, cultural practices, and governance structures. For instance, participants from conflict-affected regions emphasized insecurity's impact on food access, while those from arid areas focused on drought's effect on agriculture. Urban participants highlighted challenges like pollution, whereas rural counterparts pointed to subsistence farming issues and seasonal shortages. Cultural norms and faith practices also varied, influencing dietary habits and the role of faith leaders in addressing malnutrition. Despite these differences, the dialogue fostered consensus by focusing on shared goals, leveraging the unifying role of faith leaders, and promoting context-specific solutions tailored to diverse challenges.

OVERALL SUMMARY

The Dialogue focused on leveraging the role of faith communities in addressing malnutrition and improving nutrition outcomes. Held virtually via Zoom, the dialogue brought together diverse stakeholders in the faith community ensuring an inclusive and representative platform for discussion.

Purpose and Objectives

The dialogue aimed to:

1. Explore the underlying causes of malnutrition in the local context.
2. Identify faith-based and community-driven solutions to improve nutrition practices.
3. Foster collaboration between stakeholders to implement actionable strategies.

Key Themes Discussed

1. Nutrition Challenges and definitions:

- Climate change, poverty, and conflict were identified as key drivers of malnutrition.
- Urban pollution, food insecurity, and seasonal shortages were highlighted as additional barriers to proper nutrition.

2. Role of Faith Communities:

- Faith leaders were recognized for their influence in shaping community behavior and attitudes toward nutrition.
- Religious institutions were seen as effective platforms for promoting awareness and addressing cultural barriers.

3. Collaborative Opportunities:

- Participants emphasized the need for partnerships between faith-based groups, NGOs, government agencies, and healthcare providers.
- Schools and parental engagement were identified as critical components in addressing child nutrition.

4. Barriers to Progress:

- Limited access to diverse and nutritious foods.
- Knowledge gaps in proper dietary practices.
- Structural issues, such as inadequate healthcare and sanitation infrastructure.

Methodology

The dialogue followed a structured format:

1. Introduction: Context-setting presentations on local nutrition challenges.
2. Facilitated Discussions: Open-ended questions guided group discussions, with Zoom breakout rooms for deeper engagement.
3. Recommendations: Collaborative brainstorming of solutions and commitments from participants.

The dialogue adhered to the Principles of Engagement, ensuring inclusivity, respect, and transparency.

Outcomes and Recommendations

The dialogue resulted in actionable outcomes and commitments:

1. Community Education:

- Faith leaders committed to integrating nutrition messages into sermons and community events.

2. Practical Initiatives:

- Support for community gardens, feeding programs, and food banks.
- Collaboration with schools to promote healthy eating habits.

3. Advocacy and Policy Influence

- Faith leaders pledged to advocate for policies addressing food insecurity and sanitation issues.

4. Partnerships:

- Participants agreed to strengthen collaboration across sectors to implement nutrition-focused programs.

The dialogue successfully created a platform for diverse Faith stakeholders to discuss and develop solutions for malnutrition. It highlighted the unique role of faith communities in addressing nutrition challenges and underscored the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The event concluded with clear commitments to actionable strategies and plans for follow-up, ensuring the dialogue's impact extended beyond the meeting itself.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The dialogue intentionally included participants from various countries and contexts. The dialogue was grounded in evidence, with presentations on the local nutrition challenges and drivers of malnutrition. This ensured that discussions were informed, and solutions were relevant. Further, the dialogue acknowledged and respected cultural and religious differences that influence dietary practices and nutrition challenges. Above all, the dialogue emphasized the shared mission of addressing malnutrition and improving community well-being, helping to align diverse interests. Participants were encouraged to identify synergies between faith-based initiatives, government policies, and NGO programs, leading to actionable recommendations.

METHOD AND SETTING

Participants were carefully selected to represent a wide range of stakeholders, including faith leaders and Invitations sent well in advance, with clear objectives and expectations shared to ensure participants came prepared. The dialogue was held virtually on Zoom, a platform chosen for its accessibility and familiarity among stakeholders.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Be sure to have clear objectives and outcomes. Let these be communicated well and ahead of time to the panellists, stakeholders and other participants in general.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

World Vision East Africa Regional Office would like to thank all the participants in the dialogue, esteemed faith leaders who made time to attend and offer their perspectives and the entire support team that made the engagement seamless.