

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	The Nutrition Nexus: Connecting people, Ideas, and solutions
<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Monday, 2 December 2024 12:00 GMT +03:00
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Edgar Onyango, National coordinator, SUN CSA Kenya Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: Charlyne Kirui. Planning, facilitating discussions, managing logistics, engaging stakeholders, and documenting outcomes to ensure an impactful and result-driven event. Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: Charlyne kirui. Planning, facilitating discussions, managing logistics, engaging stakeholders, and documenting outcomes.
<b>EVENT LANGUAGE</b>	English
<b>HOST LOCATION</b>	Kiambu, Kenya
<b>GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE</b>	Community level
<b>AFFILIATIONS</b>	Scaling up Nutrition, civil society Alliance ( SUN CSA )
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/55579/">https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/55579/</a>



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

34

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-11	0	12-18	4	19-29
28	30-49	2	50-74	0	75+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

24	Female	10	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
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## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0	Children, Youth Groups and Students	2	Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)
2	Educators and Teachers	0	Faith Leaders/Faith Communities
0	Financial Institutions and Technical Partners	3	Food Producers (including farmers)
7	Healthcare Professionals	1	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
1	News and Media (e.g. Journalists)	6	Parents and Caregivers
2	Science and Academia	0	Small/Medium Enterprises
3	Sub-National/Local Government Officials and Representatives	0	United Nations
4	Women's Groups	3	Other (please state)

## OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

N/A

## ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

The nutrition dialogue event brought together individuals from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds to discuss nutritional challenges and opportunities. It celebrated cultural food traditions while fostering an inclusive exchange of ideas. Participants included community members who use nutrition services and products, alongside technical officials who provide these services, creating a collaborative platform for solutions.

# SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

## FRAMING

The stakeholder dialogue event was introduced by framing the local context through an exploration of pressing issues such as climate change, conflict, and poverty, which have significantly impacted food security and nutrition in the region. The introduction highlighted how erratic weather patterns, including prolonged droughts and unseasonal foods, have disrupted agricultural productivity, leading to food shortages and higher prices. The ongoing conflict in certain areas was underscored as a major driver of displacement and reduced access to essential resources, exacerbating the challenges of malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable groups like children and pregnant women. Poverty, pervasive across both rural and urban settings, was acknowledged as a key barrier to accessing nutritious food, exacerbating diet-related health problems such as stunting, anemia, and non-communicable diseases. The event also addressed community anxieties surrounding nutrition, including concerns over the affordability of healthy foods, the erosion of traditional diets, and the growing reliance on ultra-processed foods due to convenience and accessibility. Participants shared fears over the long-term health implications of poor diets, especially for younger generations, as well as the strain on healthcare systems already stretched thin by these issues. Emphasis was placed on the interconnected nature of these challenges, fostering a shared sense of urgency to develop context-specific solutions. By setting this comprehensive stage, the dialogue created a safe and inclusive space for stakeholders to collaboratively identify actionable strategies to improve nutrition and resilience within the community.

## DISCUSSION

Our discussion focused on key nutrition challenges, exploring poor meal choices, early pregnancy, and the unique needs of adolescent girls and young mothers. Open-ended questions included: What factors influence poor meal choices in your community? and How can we promote affordable, nutritious alternatives? For early pregnancy and young mothers, we asked, What barriers do young mothers face in accessing adequate nutrition, and how can these be addressed? Regarding adolescent girls, we explored, What specific nutritional and health support do adolescent girls need, and how can we provide it effectively? These questions encouraged diverse perspectives and practical solutions.

# SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

## CHALLENGES

The nutrition dialogue in Kiambu County highlighted numerous challenges that communities face in addressing malnutrition. One key issue is poor meal choices, particularly among caregivers and young mothers, who often rely on low-nutrition diets such as meals providing only empty calories. Practices like overfeeding infants to make them appear “healthy” were identified as harmful misconceptions. Early pregnancies and the stigmatization of young mothers further compound these issues, leading to malnourished babies due to insufficient breastfeeding and inadequate maternal nutrition. Adolescent girls also face unique challenges, including harmful dietary behaviors influenced by societal pressures to maintain certain body images, leaving them vulnerable to iron deficiency, particularly during menstruation.

Daycare centers present significant concerns, with many operating in poor sanitary conditions and providing inadequate nutrition for children. Infants as young as three months are often left in these centers for extended periods with minimal care, raising concerns about their growth and development. Another challenge is the marginalization of boys and people with disabilities in nutrition and health programs. While much attention has been given to maternal health and adolescent girls, boys and families with disabled members often lack targeted support and resources, limiting their access to proper nutrition.

Mental health and substance abuse were also identified as critical challenges, with stress and alcohol consumption negatively impacting food intake and creating household conflicts that disrupt dietary practices. Long working hours for caregivers, especially mothers, exacerbate poor feeding habits, as limited time is available for meal preparation. Socioeconomic challenges, such as widespread poverty, further hinder access to nutritious food, with many families relying on inconsistent handouts.

## URGENT ACTIONS

The nutrition dialogue in Kiambu County identified several urgent actions necessary to address the pressing challenges of malnutrition and health inequities. Key actions included enhancing community education, particularly for young mothers, adolescent girls, and marginalized groups, to encourage healthier dietary practices and behaviors. Participants stressed the need for targeted interventions such as strengthening community health promoter (CHP) capacity and training daycare operators on proper nutrition and hygiene practices. Addressing the lack of adequate nutritional supplements, like Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF) and Ready-to-Use Supplementary Foods (RUSF), was also prioritized to ensure immediate support for malnourished children. Furthermore, participants emphasized the importance of promoting food security at the household level by developing kitchen gardens, with a model garden proposed at Makongeni Health Center to inspire other households. To tackle systemic gaps, stakeholders called for policies supporting food fortification and the creation of inclusive programs that address the needs of people with disabilities. Strengthening data collection and harmonization between community-level and health facility data was seen as crucial for accurate decision-making and effective policy implementation. To take these actions forward, participants proposed a collaborative approach involving multi-sectoral partnerships between local government, health, agriculture, and education sectors, alongside community-level engagement. Advocacy for improved resource allocation, policy development, and regulation enforcement for daycare centers was also suggested to ensure sustained progress and equitable access to nutrition and health services across Kiambu County.

## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The nutrition dialogue in Kiambu County reflected both shared goals and significant divergent views, opinions, and positions among participants. Stakeholders aligned on the overarching objective of addressing malnutrition and improving health outcomes, yet differences emerged in priorities and implementation strategies. For instance, while some emphasized the urgent need for immediate interventions such as supplying nutritional supplements (e.g., RUTF and RUSF) to address acute malnutrition, others prioritized long-term, preventive approaches like community education, kitchen gardens, and food fortification.

There were also debates on how to address marginalized groups. While the need for inclusivity was widely recognized, specific focus areas differed. Some participants advocated strongly for gender-sensitive interventions targeting young mothers and adolescent girls, emphasizing their vulnerability to malnutrition and related challenges. Others highlighted the need to focus on boys and people living with disabilities in health and nutrition programs, pushing for more equitable support across demographics. Divergent views also arose on community engagement strategies; while grassroots involvement was considered vital, some questioned the feasibility of achieving widespread participation given limited resources and varying levels of literacy.

Stakeholders differed on regulating daycare centers, with some stressing the importance of training and enforcing standards, while others called for alternative solutions to support working mothers facing time constraints.

Economic constraints and poverty as root causes of poor nutrition were widely acknowledged, but opinions varied on how best to tackle these systemic issues—ranging from promoting self-help groups to increasing government funding for food security programs.

## OVERALL SUMMARY

The nutrition dialogue in Kiambu County provided a comprehensive platform for engaging community representatives, health promoters, and stakeholders from various sectors to address critical nutritional issues. The interactive discussions began with community engagement, where challenges such as poor meal choices, early pregnancies, harmful dietary behaviors among adolescents, and inadequate daycare conditions were highlighted. These issues, compounded by mental health struggles, substance abuse, and marginalization of people with disabilities, underscored the need for targeted interventions. The session emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive education, addressing stigmas, and supporting inclusive health policies.

Stakeholders identified systemic gaps, including poor water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices, lack of regulation for daycare centers, insufficient human resources in health and agriculture, and limited access to essential nutritional supplements like Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF). Socioeconomic challenges, such as widespread poverty and food insecurity, further aggravated malnutrition. Additionally, discrepancies in community and facility-level data posed challenges for effective decision-making.

Proposed solutions focused on capacity building for community health promoters (CHPs), regulation and training for daycare operators, and the promotion of kitchen gardens to enhance household food security. Advocates emphasized the need for food fortification policies and consistent availability of nutritional supplements. The establishment of a demonstration kitchen garden at Makongeni Health Center was proposed as a model for adoption across households. Efforts to harmonize data collection were recommended to improve accuracy and inform policy decisions.

The dialogue culminated in a shared commitment to develop policies and foster multi-sectoral collaboration to address malnutrition holistically. By empowering communities, addressing systemic gaps, and implementing inclusive and sustainable strategies, Kiambu County aims to improve nutritional and overall health outcomes, setting an example for other regions.

# SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

## PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The nutrition dialogue in Kiambu County reflected on several core principles of engagement, emphasizing inclusivity, transparency, and collaborative problem-solving. Key to the event's success was the active involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, including community representatives, health promoters, government officials, and sector experts. This ensured that multiple perspectives were considered in discussions, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of local nutrition challenges and solutions. To manage competing interests, facilitators briefed in advance about the participant list and anticipated areas of disagreement, such as the balance between immediate interventions (like nutritional supplements) and long-term strategies (like food security and education). This helped in guiding discussions and ensuring that all voices were heard without any one viewpoint dominating the conversation.

## METHOD AND SETTING

The nutrition dialogue in Kiambu County utilized a moderated one-on-one discussion methodology with community members, allowing for in-depth, personalized engagement. Held outdoors, the setting created a relaxed environment where participants felt more comfortable sharing their experiences and challenges. This method ensured that voices from all levels of the community were heard and contributed to the co-development of relevant, locally grounded solutions.

## ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

When convening a community nutrition dialogue event, it's crucial to ensure inclusivity and community ownership. Start by engaging local leaders and community health workers to help facilitate discussions and identify relevant topics. Use interactive methods, like moderated one-on-one discussions, to capture diverse viewpoints, ensuring even marginalized groups are heard. Choosing an accessible, open venue—such as an outdoor space—can create a relaxed atmosphere that encourages participation.

# FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our generous funders whose support made this nutrition dialogue event possible. Their commitment to improving community health and nutrition has been instrumental in facilitating meaningful discussions and the development of actionable solutions. We also extend our appreciation to the service providers, facilitators, and community leaders whose expertise and dedication ensured the event's success.