

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

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| DIALOGUE TITLE | Nutrition at the heart of international development |
| DIALOGUE DATE | Tuesday, 17 December 2024 10:00 GMT +00:00 |
| CONVENED BY | Joanna Casson, Policy Manager, World Vision UK |
| EVENT LANGUAGE | English |
| HOST LOCATION | London, United Kingdom |
| GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE | Multi-country: Ireland, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Netherlands, Somalia, UK, Zambia |
| AFFILIATIONS | ICAN UK |
| DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE | https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/55866/ |

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

18

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-11

0 12-18

2 19-29

16 30-49

0 50-74

0 75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

12 Female

6 Male

0 Other/Prefer not to say

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0 Children, Youth Groups and Students

0 Educators and Teachers

0 Financial Institutions and Technical Partners

0 Healthcare Professionals

0 Information and Technology Providers

0 Marketing and Advertising Experts

0 News and Media (e.g. Journalists)

0 Science and Academia

0 Sub-National/Local Government Officials and Representatives

0 Women's Groups

18 Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)

0 Faith Leaders/Faith Communities

0 Food Producers (including farmers)

0 Indigenous Peoples

0 Large Business and Food Retailers

0 National/Federal Government Officials and Representatives

0 Parents and Caregivers

0 Small/Medium Enterprises

0 United Nations

0 Other (please state)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

We invited colleagues from across ICAN's member organisations, meaning that participants brought perspectives from national country offices, global and support offices. Participants approached the subject of nutrition differently, some offering examples from direct programme delivery, others from research experiences, others commented on financing and national government policy for nutrition. Participants joined from 8 different countries.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

ICAN UK (International Coalition for Advocacy on Nutrition) is a network of civil society organisations working to save and improve lives through better nutrition. The coalition works with allies to encourage governments, multilateral organisations, and donors to step up to the challenge of combating malnutrition in all its forms by 2030. ICAN wanted to contribute to the global nutrition dialogues programme by bringing together colleagues from our various member organisations to discuss integrating nutrition into all areas of sustainable development. This dialogue complements ICAN UK's recently developed policy briefing entitled 'Nutrition at the heart of international development', and we hope that learning from this dialogue will help bring to life the reality of the briefing's financial and policy asks around nutrition. The breakout rooms were structured around three core themes: Nutrition and Conflict, Nutrition and Universal Health Coverage, and Nutrition-sensitive and Climate Resilient Food Systems.

DISCUSSION

1. How would you describe the nutrition situation in your context or area of work? What are the challenges? 2. What urgent actions (at local, national, global level) are needed to ensure good nutrition integration in UHC/ conflict settings/ climate-smart food systems? 3. What actions are needed to address hunger and ensure good nutrition for children and women specifically? 4. Who needs to be involved in the delivery of these actions? How can we ensure better accountability?

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Participants shared that in their contexts, hunger and malnutrition is driven by a combination of conflict, displacement, climate shocks, and weak markets. Conflict and insecurity displace communities, disrupting food production and access. In the Horn of Africa region, conflict seems to particularly affect the progress made in tackling malnutrition, with a huge relapse in child wasting. Climate events such as prolonged droughts, floods, and environmental changes devastate agriculture and livelihoods, leading to food shortages and increased malnutrition. Poor sanitary conditions and water supply compounds increasing malnutrition with disease outbreaks. For example, in Zambia, malaria, worm infestations, and poor diets hinder effective malnutrition treatment. There is a need to diversify diets, improve knowledge of nutritious diets, and address systemic barriers to food security and health.

Healthcare systems struggle to address these issues sustainably. Reliance on donor-driven nutrition programmes, combined with donor fatigue, can leave health ministries without a sense of ownership. Limited access to healthcare facilities, especially in arid regions, complicates child rehabilitation efforts, as families either cannot access clinics or treated children often return to homes without adequate food.

Displacement exacerbates these challenges, as displaced individuals lack the resources to cultivate food or maintain home gardens. Weak markets controlled by external actors further limit access to affordable food, inflating prices and restricting families' ability to feed their children. The drivers of malnutrition seem to be similar across contexts, despite differences in how climate change or conflict is manifested in each country/region.

URGENT ACTIONS

1. Invest in community-led, context-sensitive solutions: Provide targeted support to address specific challenges, such as climate impacts and conflict, and integrate nutrition with livelihoods and other sectors to address household food insecurity.
2. Ensure accountability across all levels: Strengthen leadership accountability at local, national, and international levels, ensuring healthcare systems, governments, civil society, and partners fulfil commitments and effectively distribute resources. Political will and high-level accountability are crucial.
3. Promote multi-sectoral collaboration: Break down silos by fostering partnerships between health, nutrition, and other sectors to deliver sustainable, integrated programmes that address food security and malnutrition comprehensively. This includes those involved in direct delivery, as well as government and civil society.
4. Advocate for international action against conflict-induced hunger: Enforce compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL), hold states accountable for using hunger as a weapon, and keep conflict-related hunger on the global agenda.
5. Invest in nutrition education and implementation research: Invest in nutrition education and training for caregivers, community health workers, and traditional leaders to enhance understanding of balanced diets and strengthen community resilience to malnutrition. Changing health systems and services requires rigorous testing and adaptation to user needs. Modelling alone is insufficient, and implementation research is a critical, often missing step.
6. Leverage climate finance for local, nutrition-sensitive interventions: Increase access to climate finance to support nutrition-sensitive programmes, ensuring funds are provided as grants, not loans. Prioritise channeling these resources to local levels, focusing on initiatives that benefit women, children, and other local groups while enhancing climate-resilient food systems.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Despite differences in contexts, participants raised many similar drivers of malnutrition. Recommendations and solutions differed by participant based on their area of work, the context they work in and the stakeholders they regularly engage with. For some, the focus was on financing for nutrition, ensuring that funding was diversified and channeled to local actors. For others, the focus was on holding governments to account for their nutrition commitments (both as donors and as implementers). Some participants focused on the role of traditional leaders and community groups as a vital component of improving nutrition and food security. The range of solutions shared, in the face of much convergence when speaking of challenges and drivers of malnutrition, demonstrated the range of levers surrounding nutrition. It also further emphasised a point raised multiple times throughout the dialogue about the risks of siloed working in nutrition and how important integration is to improving nutrition outcomes.

OVERALL SUMMARY

The dialogue offered participants the opportunity to deep dive into three thematic areas: nutrition and conflict, nutrition and universal health coverage, and nutrition-sensitive and climate-resilient food systems. When discussing the drivers of malnutrition, there was lots of overlap between each of the thematic groups.

Nutrition and universal health coverage:

This group discussed the challenges of integrating nutrition into healthcare systems when there are few nutritionists trained or recruited. They discussed the importance of ensuring that community health workers are well-trained in nutrition so that nutrition becomes an essential feature of healthcare. They discussed challenges in treating malnourished children when healthcare facilities are far away with poor infrastructure. The effects of climate change were raised as a key driver of malnutrition linked to sickness caused by poor sanitation and water supplies affected by floods and droughts. The importance of a holistic approach to nutrition was emphasised by everyone in the group. "Nutrition needs to be everyone's concern" was central to the discussion and participants highlighted the need for nutrition and health sectors to work better together, including at government level. Participants also raised the importance of nutrition education, to ensure that caregivers have a better understanding of food preparation, food storage and nutrient-rich foods.

Nutrition and conflict:

This group discussed the role of conflict in driving food insecurity and malnutrition. Conflict disrupts food systems, damaging agricultural production and infrastructure making responses difficult. Displacement and economic instability lead to loss of livelihoods and displacement also places pressure on neighbouring countries, pushing them to the brink of famine. Health outbreaks, financial burdens, food insecurity, and disrupted health systems exacerbate crises. Access to and purchasing of nutritional commodities remains a serious issue. The group discussed groups most affected including pastoralists who have lost livestock, agricultural workers and communities dependent on farming, and rural populations, particularly those targeted in agricultural conflicts.

Nutrition-sensitive and climate resilient food systems:

This group discussed the links between climate change and food insecurity and malnutrition. While climate impacts manifested differently in different contexts, there was consensus that it was a key driver in malnutrition and that food systems needed to be both climate-resilient and prioritise nutrition. There was a range of recommendations made by participants in this group, including better financing (more access to climate funds for nutrition programmes; more for nutrition-sensitive interventions, grants not loans) and enhanced coordination of actions among implementing partners. They discussed the need to increase political will to make food systems more resilient to climate change and nutritious, and greater accountability of what governments, NGOs and UN agencies promised to deliver. They also raised the importance of nutrition education as a key aspect for empowering families to boost their nutrition, through cooking demonstrations, food education and addressing cultural beliefs about certain food.

In plenary, the group discussed areas of convergence including the need to strengthen national and local bodies to monitor nutrition and clinics by enhancing coordination across sectors and building capacity at all levels. Participants recommended that governments develop and enforce policies to ensure nutritious food production, assign nutrition focal points at health facilities, and empower national advisors to guide policies and programmes. A multisectoral approach is essential to integrating nutrition into broader initiatives, supported by robust training and capacity building to sustain effective, dynamic interventions.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The dialogue was structured to reflect the principles of engagement, which were shared in advance as a key expectation of everyone participating in the dialogue. The structure of the dialogue particularly reflected the first two principles. Recognising the multifaceted nature of nutrition, we structured the three breakout groups into three different thematic areas so that participants could choose a topic to 'deep-dive' into. Our questions emphasised solutions, urgent actions, and identifying key actors/ stakeholders with power over nutrition outcomes, recognising a commitment for the outcomes of the dialogue to help improve nutrition for all.

METHOD AND SETTING

We followed the guidance to have an introductory presentation to frame the discussion. We then split out into breakout groups. Each breakout group focused on nutrition in relation to a different sub-topic, namely climate-resilient food systems, conflict and universal health coverage. We then came back together to discuss in plenary. The dialogue took place online.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

My main advice would be to make sure participants have clear expectations of the dialogue, how the session will run, the intended outcomes and how information will be shared. This should be shared in advance at the point of invitation so that participants have a clear idea of the whole session before they agree to participate. One thing I would have changed from our session would be to spend more time in plenary as there were some rich reflections to come from that part of the discussion.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to ICAN UK members who supported the dialogue and to everyone who attended.