

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

WORKSHOP TITLE	Child to Child Dialogues on Hunger and Malnutrition
WORKSHOP DATE	Tuesday, 3 December 2024 09:15 GMT +02:00
CONVENED BY	Despite Kupara, Graduate Intern Education, WASH and Community Engagement & Sponsorship Plan Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: Despite Tatenda Kupara. Coordination Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: Despite Tatenda Kupara. Coordination
EVENT LANGUAGE	English and Shona
HOST CITY	Wedza, Zimbabwe
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Community Level
WORKSHOP EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/55871/



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

30 12-15

2 16-18

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

17 Female

15 Male

0 Other/Prefer not to say

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPATION DIVERSITY

The workshop included 28 children from St. Anderson Primary selected to represent a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, ensuring diverse perspectives and experiences were captured. This selection aimed for fairness and inclusivity, reflecting the varied realities they face. The group consisted of an almost equal gender balance with 14 girls and 14 boys participating with 4 facilitators. This balance was crucial for ensuring that both genders had an equal opportunity to voice their concerns

SECTION TWO: FRAMING

The Junior MP started the dialogue by giving a brief background on the El Nino effect to the communities. She went on to introduce the ENOUGH Campaign being run by World Vision Zimbabwe with other partners in the country. She also introduced the link between hunger and malnutrition highlighting key contributing concerns such as poverty, climate change and food insecurity. She among other child leaders stressed how unreliable rainfall patterns, persistent droughts and poor agricultural harvests have worsened food shortages mainly in the rural communities. The participants of the discussions acknowledged that poverty remains a major driver of hunger, limiting access to diverse and nutritious foods for many households and schools. Participants explored seasonal food scarcity, particularly during the lean months, and how this impacts children's growth and school performance. Facilitators also touched on the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies, vitamin A deficiency, which are common in the community. These conditions were linked to poor dietary diversity and lack of access to fortified foods. Participants shared concerns about how hunger often forces children to skip meals, leading to reduced energy levels, poor concentration, and increased school dropouts. Local concerns were highlighted, including the impact of malnutrition on education outcomes, as well as its ties to child marriages and teenage pregnancies, particularly for girls from food-insecure households. The workshop framed the dialogue as an opportunity for children to act as change agents, using their unique perspectives to contribute to solutions. Facilitators encouraged participants to reflect on their lived experiences and to identify practical initiatives such as advocating for school feeding programs, promoting community gardens, and educating peers on the importance of a balanced diet.

SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Participants in the Children's Workshop highlighted several nutrition challenges affecting their community. Chief among these was food insecurity, driven by poverty and worsened by the rising cost of living. Many households struggle to provide diverse and nutritious meals. Periodic food scarcities are also a common challenge, particularly during lean seasons when agricultural produce is scarce. This is worsened by the effects of climate change including unpredictable rainfall and prolonged droughts which has disrupted farming activities and reduced crop harvests. Boarders cried over poor quality and quantity of meals provided at schools often being unsatisfactorily balanced to meet their nutritional needs. Day scholars similarly highlighted challenges in accessing nutritious lunches over feeding schemes at the schools and inability to have packed lunches due to economic constraints at home. The children also highlighted the link between poor nutrition and educational outcomes, including low energy levels, reduced concentration, and increased school absenteeism. Hunger has often forced children to skip meals further worsening these issues. Children also hinted on social factors like child marriages and teenage pregnancies affecting their livelihood and wellbeing, which are more prevalent in food-insecure households. Malnutrition was being regarded as both a cause and consequence of these issues creating a cycle of poverty and vulnerability. The workshop brought about a variety of nutrition challenges highlighting the need for systemic interventions and solutions that address food access, education, and sustainable agricultural practices.

URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Children identified several urgent actions to address hunger and malnutrition in their community and at their schools. They recommended implementing and intensifying school feeding programs to ensure that all children, including day scholars and boarders, receive balanced and nutritious meals. They recommended mobilizing resources from communities, local stakeholders, non-governmental organizations and government support to sustain these programs. They also recommended the establishment of community gardens to promote local food production and dietary diversity. The children highlighted the need for training in sustainable farming practices particularly on effects and strategies to combat climate change and increase agricultural harvests. These initiatives could also serve as learning hubs for children to understand nutrition and food security as they also conduct agricultural lessons at their schools. The children also highlighted the importance of increasing awareness about balanced diets and the impact of malnutrition. They wished for more peer-led campaigns, utilizing school educational facilities and community events to educate people about the ENOUGH campaign on ending Hunger and Malnutrition. The children were also worried and cried for availability of clean water and sanitation facilities to reduce the risk of waterborne diseases that worsen malnutrition. They also advocated for the integration of nutrition and health education into school curriculums to tackle social problems such as child marriages and teenage pregnancies. They said this would empower children with knowledge to make informed decisions and advocate for their rights.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Some children advocated for total reliance on food aid emphasizing the importance of immediate relief, especially in times of food scarcity due to climate change and economic hardship. However, others argued that long-term, sustainable solutions, such as community gardens and local agricultural initiatives, should be prioritized

OVERALL SUMMARY

The children's workshop on hunger and malnutrition was a vibrant and engaging event that provided a valuable platform for children to actively participate in discussions about nutrition and food security. The workshop was framed in the context of the local challenges faced by the participants, including the prevalent issues of poverty, climate change, and seasonal food scarcity. The facilitators effectively created a safe space for the children to express their experiences and concerns while also highlighting the urgency of addressing the multidimensional problem of malnutrition.

The introduction set the stage by addressing the critical challenges affecting nutrition, including the impact of erratic rainfall patterns, droughts and poor agricultural harvests. The local context was discussed in a way that made the challenges relatable to the children, connecting the issues they encounter in their daily lives to broader environmental and social factors. This created a sense of urgency and relevance, motivating the children to think critically about their own circumstances and the changes they wanted to see in their community.

The workshop itself was a collaborative and inclusive process, with children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and rural/urban settings participating. The diverse group created a rich exchange of ideas, as each child brought their unique perspective and lived experience to the conversation. Gender representation was also balanced, with 14 girls and 14 boys contributing equally to the discussions. This diversity allowed the workshop to address a wide range of issues, from access to food and clean water to social factors such as child marriages and teenage pregnancies.

The proposed solutions from the participants were both practical and innovative. The idea of implementing school feeding programs was seen as essential to ensuring that all children had access to nutritious meals, especially during lean seasons. The creation of community gardens emerged as a highly favored solution, with children proposing that such initiatives could empower families to grow their own food, enhance dietary diversity, and teach children about sustainable agriculture.

The workshop also addressed the link between malnutrition and broader social issues. Participants made the connection between poor nutrition, child marriages, and teenage pregnancies, particularly for girls from food-insecure households. Many children suggested that integrating nutrition education into school curriculums could help empower children to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. Additionally, some participants proposed that efforts to reduce child marriages and teenage pregnancies should include a stronger focus on education, access to resources, and gender equality.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the workshop was the level of engagement and empowerment shown by the children. It was evident that they felt a sense of ownership and responsibility toward addressing hunger and malnutrition in their communities. The children displayed an eagerness to take action, whether through promoting better nutrition in their homes, advocating for school feeding programs, or participating in community initiatives. There was a strong sense of solidarity and shared purpose, as the children recognized that the fight against malnutrition requires collective effort. From my perspective, the event felt overwhelmingly positive and hopeful. The children's enthusiasm, creativity, and willingness to engage in difficult conversations about nutrition were remarkable. It was heartening to see how motivated they were to not only identify the challenges they face but also propose realistic, actionable solutions. The diverse group of participants, their openness to discussion, and their passion for change made the workshop a truly collaborative and empowering experience.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The workshop revealed several key aspects of the principles of engagement, particularly in its focus on child-centered approaches, inclusivity, and empowerment. Firstly, the workshop upheld the principle of meaningful participation by providing children with a platform to voice their concerns, share their experiences, and propose solutions to nutrition challenges. The workshop also utilized the principle of collaboration which was evident in the teamwork encouraged among participants, who worked together to identify solutions and understand diverse perspectives.

METHOD AND SETTING

The dialogues used a participatory approach where children were actively engaged in discussions, sharing their experiences and proposing solutions. The workshop facilitators used group activities, brainstorming sessions and peer-led dialogues to encourage collaboration and ensure that all voices were heard. The workshop was held in a classroom at St Anderson Primary School providing a structured environment conducive to focused discussions and activities.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

For other convenors, I recommend letting the children choose their preferred a safe and inclusive environment where all children feel relaxed and motivated. Encourage active participation through interactive activities and group discussions to ensure diverse perspectives are shared. It's important to simplify complex topics like nutrition and make them relatable to children's daily lives. Additionally, involving children in the planning and implementation processes to foster a sense of ownership

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the dialogue facilitators - the child leaders. Special thanks to the support team, our WVZ Advocacy Team, our Area Program management and team for their efforts in ensuring this workshop a success. I would like to acknowledge the MoPSE, the administration and staff at St Anderson Primary School for their valuable support, contributions, participation and the children themselves, for their enthusiasm and insightful input.