

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	Healthy Plates, Bright futures: The school feeding Revolution
DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 11 December 2024 09:00 GMT +03:00
CONVENED BY	Edgar Onyango, National coordinator, SUN CSA Kenya Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: Charlyne Kirui. coordination, ensuring smooth logistics and facilitating collaboration among participants. Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: Charlyne kirui. coordination, ensuring smooth logistics and facilitating collaboration among participants.ts.
EVENT LANGUAGE	English
HOST LOCATION	Nairobi, Kenya
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Community Level
AFFILIATIONS	Scaling up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/56366/



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

30

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

1	0-11	1	12-18	12	19-29
14	30-49	2	50-74	0	75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

18	Female	12	Male	0	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)
4	Educators and Teachers	0	Faith Leaders/Faith Communities
0	Financial Institutions and Technical Partners	1	Food Producers (including farmers)
2	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
1	News and Media (e.g. Journalists)	5	Parents and Caregivers
2	Science and Academia	0	Small/Medium Enterprises
2	Sub-National/Local Government Officials and Representatives	0	United Nations
6	Women's Groups	3	Other (please state)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

N/A

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

Our dialogue in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Nairobi County, embraced diversity by bringing together participants from various socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and rural and urban settings. The event was held in a less affluent area, providing a platform to connect with individuals facing daily challenges, this inclusive approach fostered meaningful discussions, highlighting shared experiences and diverse perspectives to address pressing community needs effectively.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

During the introduction of our stakeholder dialogue, the local context and nutrition situation in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Nairobi County, were highlighted. The area faces significant socio-economic challenges, including limited access to nutritious food, which has led to widespread malnutrition and poor health outcomes. Mr. Emmanuel Atemba provided insights into the concept of sustainability, emphasizing that every child has the right to basic nutrition as enshrined in national and global frameworks. The discussion touched on the community's anxieties, including the impact of poverty, pollution, and food insecurity on nutrition, and the unique challenges of seasonality affecting food availability. Additionally, the prevalence of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and poor meal choices was acknowledged as critical issues requiring urgent attention. This framing set the stage for stakeholders to explore practical solutions to improve nutrition equity and resilience in the community.

DISCUSSION

The discussion focused on several key topics aimed at improving school feeding initiatives. Key questions included: How can we improve the affordability of school meals while ensuring they are nutritionally adequate? What is required to scale the cluster model to other complementary schools in Nairobi's informal settlements? What strategies can enhance the visibility of the school feeding cluster model and attract wider support? Finally, what approaches can ensure strengthened engagement with community-first school feeding programs to promote long-term sustainability and community ownership? These discussions provided valuable insights to enhance the effectiveness and reach of school feeding programs.

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

The participants highlighted several critical nutrition challenges. The primary issue is poverty, which prevents families from affording basic meals. This economic strain extends to school feeding programs, where many children cannot even access the small amount of nutrition provided through school meals. As a result, children are often malnourished, affecting their health and academic performance. These challenges underscore the urgent need for sustainable, affordable solutions to ensure that all children in the community can receive adequate nutrition for their growth and development.

URGENT ACTIONS

Participants identified several urgent actions to address nutrition challenges. Key proposals included engaging various stakeholders to create a collaborative approach, conducting a comprehensive needs assessment to understand specific gaps, and implementing regular monitoring and evaluation to track progress. They also emphasized the importance of digital mapping to identify areas with the highest nutritional needs and ensure targeted interventions. Additionally, a meal-for-meal initiative was suggested, where communities contribute meals, creating a more sustainable and locally driven solution to school feeding. These actions were seen as crucial steps toward improving access to nutrition for children.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Views, opinions, and positions among participants in the dialogue did diverge to some extent. While there was general agreement on the importance of school feeding programs, opinions varied on how best to ensure their sustainability and reach. Some participants emphasized the need for government funding, while others focused on community-driven approaches, such as local partnerships or meal-for-meal initiatives. There were also differing perspectives on the scalability of the cluster model, with some advocating for immediate expansion and others stressing the importance of pilot programs and gradual scaling to assess effectiveness. Despite these differences, all participants agreed on the need for more inclusive and innovative solutions.

OVERALL SUMMARY

The stakeholders' dialogue held in Mukuru Kwa Njenga provided an invaluable opportunity to address the pressing nutritional challenges faced by children in Nairobi's informal settlements. The event was centered around school feeding programs, with a particular focus on understanding the key barriers that hinder the effectiveness and reach of such initiatives. The participants, representing a diverse range of community members, NGOs, local authorities, and school leaders, came together to discuss critical issues such as poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition, which were identified as central to the challenges in the area.

The event had a strong collaborative atmosphere, with participants expressing both concerns and hope for the future. There was a sense of urgency among the group, particularly when discussing the prevalence of hunger and poor nutrition among school-aged children, many of whom struggle to access even the smallest portions of nutritious meals. As poverty continues to be a significant factor, there was widespread agreement on the need for affordable solutions that could be scaled up to address the gaps in the current school feeding programs. The dialogue also highlighted the impact of poor meal choices, lack of nutritional education, and insufficient access to fresh, healthy food, all of which further exacerbate malnutrition in the community.

One of the most significant contributions from the dialogue was the emphasis on the need for a more inclusive, community-driven approach to school feeding programs. Participants agreed that engaging local stakeholders, including parents, community leaders, and local businesses, would be key to creating a sustainable and locally appropriate solution. There was also strong support for conducting a needs assessment in each community to ensure that interventions are based on local realities, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. Monitoring and evaluation were seen as critical tools for tracking progress, ensuring accountability, and identifying areas that require additional attention.

The idea of implementing a digital mapping system was well-received by participants as an innovative way to identify areas with the highest nutritional needs and track the progress of feeding programs in real-time. By using technology to map out the most vulnerable areas, the community could better direct resources to those who need it the most. This tool could also help stakeholders identify gaps in service delivery and make timely adjustments to the feeding programs.

A particularly inspiring aspect of the dialogue was the proposal for a meal-for-meal initiative, where communities would contribute to providing meals to children in need. This approach was seen as a way to foster a sense of ownership within the community, where local individuals and businesses could play an active role in improving the nutrition of children in schools. The meal-for-meal concept was viewed as a way to create a reciprocal relationship, where support for the program could come from the very communities it aims to serve, making the initiative more sustainable in the long term.

Despite the strong sense of urgency, the dialogue also allowed for moments of optimism and shared vision. Participants were able to share ideas and experiences, acknowledging the complexity of the challenges but also recognizing that there are concrete, actionable steps that can be taken to improve the situation. There was a collective realization that, while resources may be limited, collaboration, innovation, and community engagement can lead to effective, sustainable solutions.

The event felt like a turning point in how school feeding programs in informal settlements might be approached. While the challenges are undoubtedly significant, the dialogue demonstrated a strong willingness to work together, learn from each other, and create a better future for the children in these communities. The open exchange of ideas and solutions was energizing, leaving participants with a renewed sense of purpose and determination to address the root causes of malnutrition and hunger.

In conclusion, the dialogue served as a crucial platform for not only identifying key challenges and gaps in school feeding programs but also for brainstorming practical, locally relevant solutions. It showcased the power of community engagement, the importance of stakeholder collaboration, and the need for innovative approaches to tackle the complex issue of child nutrition.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

In organizing our dialogue, we took the opportunity to combine it with a school feeding stakeholders' workshop in Mukuru, Viwandani. This approach allowed for a broader conversation that addressed both immediate school feeding issues and long-term nutritional needs. Before the event, we briefed facilitators on the participant list and identified potential areas of competing interests, such as differing priorities around funding and resource allocation. This helped us anticipate challenges and create a balanced, inclusive environment where all views could be shared. Financial disclosure requirements were communicated, ensuring transparency regarding any financial involvement from participants. By creating an open platform for discussions, we encouraged collaboration while managing competing interests through structured facilitation, allowing for collective problem-solving.

METHOD AND SETTING

The dialogue in Mukuru was convened in a formal setting within a classroom. This setup encouraged both structured discussions and open interactions. We employed a participatory methodology, engaging stakeholders through facilitated discussions, group brainstorming, and feedback sessions. The recommended approach of creating a safe, inclusive environment was adhered to, ensuring that all participants could contribute freely.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

My advice for other dialogue convenors is to prioritize inclusivity, ensure diverse stakeholder representation, and establish clear communication on expectations and goals. Also, create a collaborative environment where all voices are heard, and be prepared to manage competing interests through transparent, structured facilitation.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Viwandani Comprehensive Community Organisation (VICCO) and Topfer Muller Gabner (TMG), for their invaluable support and collaboration. Our appreciation also goes to World Vision for leading the Nutrition Dialogue initiative together with the 4SD Foundation, Finally, we sincerely thank our funders, SUN CSN for their generous contributions, which have made this initiative possible.