

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| WORKSHOP TITLE | Learners Voices in Transforming School Food Environments |
| WORKSHOP DATE | Friday, 20 December 2024 07:50 GMT +02:00 |
| CONVENED BY | Kudakwashe Zombe Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: Zimbabwe Civil Society Organisations Scaling Up Nutrition Alliance (ZCSOSUNA). Advisor Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: Kudakwashe Zombe. Independent Consultant |
| EVENT LANGUAGE | Shona and English |
| HOST CITY | Harare, Zimbabwe |
| GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE | National |
| AFFILIATIONS | Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society |
| WORKSHOP EVENT PAGE | https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/57023/ |

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

25

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

6 12-15

19 16-18

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

13 Female

12 Male

0 Other/Prefer not to say

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPATION DIVERSITY

Our meeting was attended by 25 learners and 5 chaperons from 3 urban and 2 rural districts. There was a fair representation of learners from wealthy, middle class and poor communities as the dialogue wanted to hear voices from all classes. The differences in wealthy status between rural and urban communities in Zimbabwe result an equal access to opportunities between the two. However, the dialogue considered all those factors and ensured a fair representation of all classes.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING

To shape the dialogue, a representative from the conveners explained to participants that adolescence is a critical period for establishing and maintaining healthy diet and eating practices, and healthy levels of physical activity. It is also a time for learning to balance food choices and increasing self-rule but due to marketing of less nutritious foods and poor food environments adolescents' end up making unhealthy food choices. They shared adolescent malnutrition statistics in the country and the need to ensure this is addressed. They highlighted that for the country to succeed in fighting malnutrition among learners there is a need to engage them in the design, implementation and monitoring of nutrition interventions targeting schools. It was also highlighted that the dialogues are taking a deliberate effort to hear voices of learners in addressing the challenge at hand. Learners were encouraged to be honest and effectively participate in the dialogue for it to be meaningful. They were guaranteed that their chaperons were present only for their safe guarding purposes. In addition to all these they were encouraged to make the dialogue a fun moment. It was explained that the dialogue was seeking to understand how school food environments including tuckshops and vendors near schools, as well as fast-food restaurants and supermarkets in the direct vicinity of schools are contributing towards foods consumed by learners during their time at school.

SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

There was consensus that the Zimbabwe School Health Policy of 2018 and School Nutrition Guidelines were an important and timely endeavor considering that latest surveys are indicating that children of school going age are being affected by the triple burden of malnutrition in the country. Sentiments were also shared that schools provide strategic and targeted pathways for delivering nutrition interventions to children and indirectly to their families and communities. However all of the learners confessed they had neither heard of the policy nor the guidelines.

Most of the learners from both rural and urban settings highlighted that they do not consume a proper meal during the time that they will be at schools. Only a few learners indicated that they rarely consume fast food in the form of deep fried chips and chicken. Instead, the majority of learners eat non nutritious snacks such as corn snacks and sweetened beverages. A few learners carry home prepared meals and they have to share their meals with colleagues. Most learners prefer lunch money to carrying homemade meals. Tuck-shops and vendors within the school vicinity sell sweetened beverages, corn snacks, sweets, chocolates, biscuits and at times seasonal fruits. They sell attractive and trendy food stuffs so they can make profits. The students underscored that though they rarely consume fruits and vegetables when at school. In relation to the school feeding programme, it was indicated that most government schools were providing a decent meal to learners however the facility cannot be accessed by those from the private schools. Learners also highlighted that some of the schools provided are less palatable and attractive. Some of the food the government is providing in some schools include porridge, sadza (thick porridge) served with relishes such as beans, cabbages and meat.

URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Participants to the dialogue urged the government to fully disseminate the School Health Policy and School Nutrition Guidelines so that learners and school authorities are aware of them. This is key in holding the government and schools to account and also in ensuring that there nutrition interventions in both rural and urban set ups since malnutrition is not only affecting a particular group but all learners. The government was also called to expand the school feeding programme to all schools across the country. Learners also expressed the need to ensure that meals being offered to learners is varied and balanced. Furthermore, learners from the urban areas requested the drill boreholes in all schools for learners to easily access clean water. Other learners felt the school agriculture projects can be incorporated into the school feeding programme. Some participants felt the urgent need to engage school authorities, tuck-shop owners and super markets in highlighting the need to sell nutritious foods. Going forward, learners committed to establishing nutrition clubs at their schools and rolling out campaigns aimed at educating other learners on healthy eating and the need to maintain healthy lifestyles. They also proposed to engage junior parliament and council in lobbying for debates centered on the expansion of the school feeding programme to both private and public schools in rural and urban areas.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Learners from private schools expressed dissatisfaction over the failure by their schools to provide them with decent meals. Others felt the government need to support private schools in this regard as they may not have the capacity to access and prepare the food for learners

OVERALL SUMMARY

As the health and nutrition of adolescents are becoming global priorities, their participation in the design and implementation of school nutrition interventions is important in Zimbabwe. They have the best understanding of young people's needs, how to address them, and how to get them involved. The methodology is flexible and allows for adaptation to specific school contexts with the aim of achieving main broad objectives as highlighted - Ensuring the full implementation of the School Health Policy by building healthy school environments to promote healthy lifestyles among school aged adolescents and warranting food suppliers to avail affordable, safe, nutritious and convenient food for school going children in a sustainable way.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The workshop adhered to principles of engagement inter alia diversity and inclusion, it ensured that participants were invited from different backgrounds, ages between 12 to 18 years and of different sexes. During the introduction section of the workshop, the moderator encouraged participants to speak freely and openly and guaranteed participants that the workshop was a safe space for participants to share their views on child hunger and malnutrition.

METHOD AND SETTING

The workshop employed presentations, group work and plenary as part of its methodology of gaining insights and views of learners experiences in transforming school food environments. Child Safeguarding standards were maintained during learners travel to and from the destination, stay and participation during the workshop. Learners traveled with their chaperons and the meeting was convened at a safe hotel in the capital city.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Conveners need to ensure inclusivity when convening a similar dialogue, they need to adhere to short presentations in the form of pictorials or graphs and avoid technical jargon for learners easily understand. They need to find fun methods of engaging if they really to harvest more information on the topic.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would want to the Save the Children Uk for providing us with financial support to engage in this dialogue