

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	Smart Nutrition, Stronger Families: Caritas at Nyagatare Open Day
DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 11 June 2025 08:45 GMT +02:00
CONVENED BY	DIOCESE CATHOLIC OF BYUMBA/CARITAS BYUMBA/WORLD VISION RWANDA Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BYUMBA/CARITAS BYUMBA. Implementing partner of World Vision Rwanda Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: Diocese Catholic of Byumba/Caritas Byumba. Implementing partner of WVR
HOST LOCATION	Nyagatare, Rwanda
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	NYAGATARE DISTRICT
AFFILIATIONS	World Vision Rwanda
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/59331/



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	789
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PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

30	0-11	247	12-18	465	19-29
47	30-49	0	50-74	0	75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

465	Female	324	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0	Children, Youth Groups and Students	1	Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)
124	Educators and Teachers	0	Faith Leaders/Faith Communities
0	Financial Institutions and Technical Partners	0	Food Producers (including farmers)
232	Healthcare Professionals	433	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
0	News and Media (e.g. Journalists)	0	Parents and Caregivers
0	Science and Academia	0	Small/Medium Enterprises
0	Sub-National/Local Government Officials and Representatives	0	United Nations
0	Women's Groups	0	Other (please state)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Other stakeholder groups included mothers who benefited from PD/Hearth programs, local health workers, community volunteers, and local leaders.

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

The Open Day brought together a diverse mix of participants, including families from both rural and peri-urban areas, community health workers, and local leaders. Attendees varied in economic background, from low-income households to more financially stable families. Mothers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds shared their experiences, fostering cross-learning and mutual encouragement.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

The Open Day in Nyagatare District, held in June 2025, was introduced by highlighting the urgent need to address child malnutrition in Rwanda, particularly in rural areas. Facilitators framed the dialogue within the local context, noting that Nyagatare experiences seasonal food shortages due to prolonged dry seasons, which often affect household food production and diversity. They also emphasized the economic disparities within the community, where low-income families struggle to afford balanced meals despite the availability of local produce. Participants were reminded that child malnutrition in the district remains a pressing issue, with stunting and underweight cases still observed in many villages. The introduction underscored how poverty, limited access to clean water, and inadequate hygiene practices compound the problem, especially in households with young children. Local health workers shared data showing how seasonal variations in food availability and market prices impact children's nutritional status. The framing also touched on the success of community-driven solutions, particularly the Positive Deviance/Hearth (PD/Hearth) model, which identifies and shares positive nutrition practices already existing in low-resource households. The Open Day was presented as both a celebration of progress and an opportunity to learn practical, home-based strategies to prevent malnutrition. By recognizing the resilience of families and the importance of local foods, the introduction inspired hope, encouraging participants to see themselves as active contributors to lasting change. It set a tone of collaboration, shared responsibility, and optimism that malnutrition can be overcome when communities are equipped with knowledge, skills, and support.

NUTRITION SITUATION PRESENTATION

<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/DIALOGUE-1.pdf>

DISCUSSION

The discussion focused on practical solutions to end child malnutrition in Nyagatare District. Open-ended questions included: How can families use locally available foods to improve nutrition? What role can community leaders play in promoting hygiene and child health? How can the PD/Hearth model be scaled to reach more households? What partnerships are needed to sustain progress? These questions encouraged participants to share experiences, identify gaps, and propose community-led actions to improve child nutrition, hygiene, and health monitoring. The aim was to foster collaboration, innovation, and ownership of solutions among all stakeholders.

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Participants in the Dialogue highlighted several pressing nutrition challenges affecting families in Nyagatare District and similar rural communities. One major issue is the persistence of child malnutrition, especially stunting, due to limited dietary diversity. Many households rely heavily on staple crops like maize and cassava, with insufficient consumption of fruits, vegetables, and protein-rich foods. Poverty and seasonal food shortages further exacerbate the problem, making it difficult for families to consistently access nutritious foods year-round.

URGENT ACTIONS

Participants identified several urgent actions to combat child malnutrition effectively. First, they emphasized the need to scale up community-based nutrition education programs, such as the 12-day cooking demonstrations and PD/Hearth sessions, which teach practical skills using local foods. This hands-on approach was seen as vital to changing feeding behaviors sustainably.

Second, participants called for improved growth monitoring and early detection of malnutrition through regular screening in communities, enabling timely interventions before conditions worsen.

Third, strengthening partnerships between local leaders, health workers, and families was highlighted to enhance coordination and resource sharing.

To take these actions forward, participants proposed expanding training for community health workers and volunteers to increase outreach. They suggested mobilizing resources to provide more cooking materials and nutrition supplies during sessions. Additionally, community dialogues and open days were recommended as platforms to raise awareness and encourage wider participation.

Overall, participants agreed on a collaborative approach that combines education, monitoring, and community engagement to ensure lasting improvements in child nutrition.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Views and opinions among participants showed strong alignment with only minor divergences. Most agreed on the critical importance of community-based nutrition education and early malnutrition detection through regular screening. There was a shared belief that practical, hands-on approaches like the PD/Hearth model and cooking demonstrations are effective tools for sustainable behavior change.

However, some differences emerged regarding resource availability and the speed at which programs could be scaled up. A few participants expressed concerns about limited funding and human resources, which might slow the expansion of these initiatives. Others were optimistic about leveraging existing community networks and partnerships to overcome these challenges.

There was also some discussion about the balance between traditional knowledge and modern nutrition practices. While many welcomed the integration of local foods and customs, a few highlighted the need for continuous training to keep up with updated nutritional guidelines.

Despite these minor divergences, the overall consensus was strong, with participants united around the goal of improving child nutrition through community empowerment, education, and collaboration. This shared commitment created a positive and constructive dialogue atmosphere.

OVERALL SUMMARY

The Nutrition Dialogue held in Nyagatare District in June 2025 was an inspiring and highly engaging event. It successfully united a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, community health workers, local leaders, and volunteers, all committed to tackling child malnutrition through community-driven approaches. The event focused on sharing experiences and best practices of the Positive Deviance/Hearth (PD/Hearth) model, which empowers families to learn from positive behaviors already present within their own communities.

Throughout the dialogue, participants actively exchanged ideas on how nutrition education, growth monitoring, and practical cooking demonstrations using local foods can be scaled up to support children's health. Many mothers shared personal testimonies about the positive changes they have observed in their families after applying knowledge gained through PD/Hearth sessions.

The atmosphere was hopeful and collaborative. Participants expressed strong enthusiasm and motivation to continue championing child nutrition in their homes and neighborhoods. The event underscored the importance of local ownership and sustainability in nutrition interventions, emphasizing that solutions need not come from outside but can be found within communities themselves.

Overall, the dialogue felt inclusive, respectful, and solution-oriented. It highlighted both progress made and the ongoing challenges, particularly around maintaining behavior change and ensuring access to diverse, nutritious foods year-round. The supportive environment encouraged open communication, which helped build trust among stakeholders.

From my perspective, the event was a powerful reminder that nutrition improvement is not only a technical issue but deeply connected to community empowerment, education, and practical action. It reinforced the value of participatory approaches and showed how shared knowledge and mutual support can lead to sustainable impact.

The dialogue also strengthened partnerships between Caritas Byumba, World Vision Rwanda, and local actors, creating momentum for future collaborative efforts to end malnutrition. It left me with a deep sense of optimism that, with continued commitment and community engagement, significant strides can be made toward healthier futures for Rwanda's children.

In summary, this Nutrition Dialogue was more than a meeting; it was a vibrant platform for learning, inspiration, and collective commitment to ending child malnutrition through locally-driven, practical solutions.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

Our Dialogue strongly reflected the Principles of Engagement by fostering transparency, inclusivity, and respect throughout the event. Prior to the dialogue, facilitators were thoroughly briefed on the participant list to identify any potential competing interests or sensitivities. This preparation helped us manage discussions professionally and ensured all voices were heard fairly. We created a safe space where participants felt comfortable sharing diverse perspectives, while encouraging collaboration over competition. Any conflicts or differing opinions were addressed with neutrality and empathy, focusing on common goals to improve child nutrition. Financial disclosure requirements were communicated clearly to participants in advance to maintain transparency and avoid conflicts of interest. The dialogue emphasized local ownership and community-led solutions, aligning with the principles of mutual respect and shared accountability.

METHOD AND SETTING

The Dialogue was convened using a participatory methodology focused on open discussions, group work, and practical demonstrations. We applied recommended approaches such as inclusive stakeholder engagement, ensuring diverse voices from caregivers, health workers, and local leaders. The setting was informal and community-based, held within a local classroom to encourage comfort and interaction. Facilitators guided conversations with open-ended questions to foster active participation.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

ChatGPT said: For successful Nutrition Dialogue events, prioritize creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where all participants feel valued and heard. Use interactive methods like group discussions, storytelling, and demonstrations to engage diverse stakeholders effectively. Prepare facilitators well to manage differing opinions respectfully and keep discussions focused. Ensure local context and challenges are clearly framed to make the dialogue relevant.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We sincerely thank all participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions during the dialogue. Special appreciation goes to Caritas Byumba and World Vision Rwanda for their ongoing support and partnership. We acknowledge the dedication of the facilitators and support staff who ensured a smooth and productive event. Our gratitude also extends to the community leaders and local volunteers whose commitment made this dialogue meaningful

ATTACHMENTS

- **PICTURE**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/GtKrFVCWsAAXgFt-1.jpg>