

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	Nutritional Dialogues with faith leaders- Chillaw
DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 26 August 2025 09:30 GMT +05:30
CONVENED BY	Lavanya Suriyakumar & Dinuka Bandara
EVENT LANGUAGE	English & Sinhala
HOST LOCATION	Chilaw, Sri Lanka
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Chillaw diocese
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/59566/



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	7
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PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-11	0	12-18	0	19-29
4	30-49	3	50-74	0	75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

1	Female	7	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0	Children, Youth Groups and Students	0	Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)
0	Educators and Teachers	7	Faith Leaders/Faith Communities
0	Financial Institutions and Technical Partners	0	Food Producers (including farmers)
0	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
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	1	Other (please state)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

NA

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

Seven Catholic priests from the Chillaw Diocese participated. They have life experience in the context and also serve as directors of various ministries in the diocese

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

All the faith leaders represent the entire Puttalam District, which is a multi-ethnic area comprising Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher communities. The district is also multi-religious, with Buddhism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Islam practiced, though most areas are predominantly Catholic. Puttalam is situated on the north-western coast of Sri Lanka. The main livelihoods in this district are fisheries, agriculture, and tourism. However, the district faces several vulnerabilities, including drought and water scarcity due to its Dry Zone location, degradation of coastal ecosystems such as mangroves and salt marshes, livelihood instability in fisheries and aquaculture from overfishing and disease outbreaks, and environmental issues linked to industrial activities

NUTRITION SITUATION PRESENTATION

<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Faith-leader-dialogue-4.pdf>

DISCUSSION

The discussion began with a welcome speech from the AP Manager, followed by the National Campaign Manager, who explained the purpose of the meeting and introduced World Vision’s ministry and the campaign. The session was conducted informally, using open-ended questions to create space for participants to share their own experiences. Seven Catholic Priests shared their ideas and insights on nutrition-related issues, challenges, and innovative approaches that could be implemented together

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

The discussion covered ensuring nutritious meals, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and addressing food security-related challenges. The following challenges were highlighted.

- Children are busy with their education and do not have enough time or attention to eat proper meals.
- Parents, teachers, and caregivers do not prioritize nutritious meals for children.
- Lack of awareness about nutritious foods, healthy recipes, and their availability.
- Hectic and competitive education system and lifestyle.
- Lack of commitment from parents.
- Insufficient income to allocate for nutritious foods.
- Lack of collaboration and commitment from decision-making parties.
- Parents' drug and alcohol addiction negatively affects household income and reduces their attention to children's well-being.
- In the current lifestyle, both parents work and do not have time to spend with their children or prepare meals. Instead, they give money for school canteens or outside food, leading most children to purchase fast and unhealthy foods.
- Nutritional issues are more commonly identified in urban areas.
- Concerns about food quality and excessive use of chemicals.
- Many people do not focus on maintaining a balanced diet.
- Children are attracted to unhealthy foods because of advertising.
- Most people consume fast food to display social status.
- Excessive use of chemical fertilizers impacts food safety and nutrition.
- Lack of coordination among government institutions and other relevant stakeholder
- Food wastage

URGENT ACTIONS

The following action points were highlighted:

- Raise awareness among children, parents, teachers, and caregivers to encourage positive behavior change.
- Promote home gardening to increase access to fresh and healthy food.
- Introduce home gardening programs for school children.
- Promote food preservation techniques.
- Present healthy foods in an attractive way to encourage children to eat them.
- Promote the consumption of local fruits and vegetables.
- Strengthen collaboration between the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Education (MOE).
- Encourage entrepreneurs to focus on nutritious food production.
- Conduct ToT (Training of Trainers) sessions to promote awareness through Sunday schools.
- The school meal programme needs to be more formalized

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

NA

OVERALL SUMMARY

According to their social experiences, participants shared insights related to nutrition, behavior, and food security in the Trincomalee District. The behavior of children and parents plays a major role, and negligence regarding nutrition is mainly caused by a lack of awareness. In addition, behavioral changes and modern lifestyles make it challenging for parents to provide adequate care. As a recommendation, continuous awareness programs are needed to bring about positive behavior change. They also highlighted simple, nutritious recipes and presenting meals in an attractive manner as practical solutions. Promoting home gardening was identified as another way to improve food security. Furthermore, faith leaders expressed their willingness to collaborate with WVLC to raise awareness and implement interventions, especially targeting Sunday school children and their parents. In this Diocese, APs in Puttalam District have been working collaboratively for more than five years.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

All priests had the opportunity to express their ideas on challenges, issues, and potential solutions. The dialogue was conducted as an open discussion. Before the discussion began, the National Campaign Manager provided an introduction to the campaign. Moreover, the participants were confident and did not hesitate to share their ideas.

METHOD AND SETTING

The discussion was informal and used Sinhala language mostly to encourage participation.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Always prepare for translation options and do the dialogues in local languages to encourage more participation

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We sincerely appreciate the valuable support extended by the Area Programmes, the Bishop of the Diocese, the WVL technical and F&D teams, as well as the regional managers in planning and implementing these dialogues. Their collaboration has been instrumental in driving this initiative forward.

ATTACHMENTS

- **During the discussion**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Image-6.jpg>