

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	WHY HYGIENE MATTERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MALNUTRITION
DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 2 September 2026 11:30 GMT +02:00
CONVENED BY	DIOCESE CATHOLIC OF BYUMBA/CARITAS BYUMBA Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: DIOCESE CATHOLIC OF BYUMBA/CARITAS BYUMBA. IMPLEMENTING PARTNER OF WVR Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: DIOCESE CATHOLIC OF BYUMBA/CARITAS BYUMBA . IMPLEMENTING PARTNER OF WVR
EVENT LANGUAGE	Kinyarwanda and English
HOST LOCATION	Rutare, Rwanda
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	GICUMBI DISTRICT
AFFILIATIONS	WVR
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/60097/



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	78
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PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-11	10	12-18	21	19-29
39	30-49	8	50-74	0	75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

42	Female	36	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0	Children, Youth Groups and Students	34	Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)
4	Educators and Teachers	2	Faith Leaders/Faith Communities
0	Financial Institutions and Technical Partners	0	Food Producers (including farmers)
33	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)	4	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 stakeholders included mothers, fathers, caregivers, community members and local leaders. Their involvement was important in promoting household hygiene, safe water use, clean food preparation and healthy environments to help prevent infections

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

The Dialogue included participants from different community and professional backgrounds, including local leaders, health workers, caregivers and community representatives. It brought together perspectives from households and service providers, including those working with rural communities. This diversity helped participants discuss practical hygiene, sanitation and nutrition challenges affecting families and identify solutions that can be applied in different household settings.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

The Dialogue was framed around the understanding that good nutrition depends not only on what children eat, but also on the hygiene and sanitation conditions in which food is prepared and consumed. Participants reflected on how unsafe water, unwashed hands, contaminated food and dirty household surroundings can expose children to infections such as diarrhoea, which may affect their ability to absorb and use nutrients effectively. The introduction emphasized that young children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of poor hygiene and repeated infections. Therefore, preventing child malnutrition requires practical action both before and after food reaches the child's plate. Within the Positive Deviance Hearth (PDH) approach, participants were encouraged to identify positive hygiene and sanitation practices already existing within communities and promote their adoption by other families. Key practices discussed included handwashing with soap at critical times, using safe water, keeping food preparation areas clean, storing food safely and maintaining clean household surroundings. The Dialogue also highlighted that hygiene is a shared responsibility. Mothers, fathers, caregivers, local leaders and community members all have an important role in creating healthier environments for children. The overall framing encouraged participants to see simple, locally available hygiene practices as an essential part of community action to prevent child malnutrition.

NUTRITION SITUATION PRESENTATION

<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/HYGIENE.pdf>

DISCUSSION

The discussion focused on the link between hygiene, sanitation and child nutrition. Participants explored: How can poor hygiene contribute to malnutrition? What simple practices can families adopt to prevent infections? How can caregivers ensure safe water, clean food preparation and proper handwashing? How can communities work together to promote and sustain good hygiene practices?

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Participants identified several challenges affecting child nutrition, particularly poor hygiene and sanitation practices. Some families may use unsafe water, prepare food with unwashed hands or keep food and household surroundings in unhygienic conditions, increasing children's exposure to infections such as diarrhoea.

Participants also highlighted challenges in maintaining consistent handwashing with soap, safe food storage and clean food preparation areas. Limited awareness or inconsistent practice of these behaviours can increase the risk of illness among young children.

Another challenge is that hygiene and nutrition are sometimes considered separately, yet repeated infections can affect a child's ability to eat and absorb nutrients. Participants emphasized the need for families and communities to understand this connection and adopt practical hygiene practices as part of efforts to prevent malnutrition.

URGENT ACTIONS

Participants identified the need to strengthen hygiene and sanitation practices at household and community level to help prevent infections and child malnutrition. They proposed promoting regular handwashing with soap, use of safe water, clean food preparation, proper food storage and clean household surroundings.

They also emphasized the need for continued hygiene education for mothers, fathers, caregivers and community members. These actions should be taken forward through community awareness, health workers and local leaders, with families encouraged to learn from positive practices already existing in their communities through the PDH approach.

Participants further proposed stronger collaboration among Caritas Byumba, World Vision Rwanda, Gicumbi District, health workers and communities to promote, monitor and sustain these practices. The focus should be on practical, affordable actions that families can maintain using locally available resources.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There were no major differences in views among participants. Participants generally agreed that good hygiene and sanitation are essential for preventing infections and supporting good child nutrition. Some differences focused mainly on the practical challenges families face in maintaining these practices, such as access to safe water and consistency in handwashing, food hygiene and household cleanliness. These perspectives were complementary and helped identify practical areas for community action.

OVERALL SUMMARY

The Nutrition Dialogue focused on the important link between hygiene, sanitation and child nutrition. Held within the Positive Deviance Hearth (PDH) approach promoted by World Vision Rwanda in partnership with the Diocese of Byumba/Caritas Byumba and Gicumbi District, the Dialogue emphasized that preventing child malnutrition is not only about providing nutritious food, but also about ensuring that children live in clean and healthy environments.

Participants reflected on how unsafe water, unwashed hands, contaminated food and unhygienic household surroundings can expose children to infections such as diarrhoea and other illnesses. Such infections can affect children's ability to eat, absorb and use nutrients effectively, increasing the risk of poor growth and malnutrition. This helped participants recognize hygiene as an essential part of nutrition and child well-being.

The discussion highlighted simple practices that families can adopt, including washing hands with soap at critical times, using safe water, keeping food preparation areas clean, storing food properly and maintaining clean household surroundings. Participants emphasized that these practices are particularly important for young children, who can be more vulnerable to infections.

A key message from the Dialogue was that hygiene and nutrition should be addressed together. A nutritious meal can only provide its full benefit when it is prepared, served and consumed in a safe and hygienic environment. Participants therefore discussed the importance of supporting caregivers to understand and maintain these practices consistently.

The Dialogue also emphasized shared responsibility. Mothers, fathers, caregivers, community health workers, local leaders and other community members all have a role in protecting children from preventable infections and creating healthier household environments. Participants recognized that community action can help families encourage one another and sustain positive behaviours.

The PDH approach provided a practical framework for the discussion by encouraging participants to identify positive practices that already exist within communities and learn from them. Rather than focusing only on challenges or requiring expensive solutions, the approach promotes practical behaviours that families can maintain using available resources.

Overall, the Dialogue felt practical, participatory and constructive. Participants were able to connect everyday household practices with the wider challenge of child malnutrition and reflect on actions that can be taken at family and community level. The discussion encouraged participants to look beyond food alone and consider the broader conditions that influence children's health and nutrition.

The Dialogue reinforced the importance of continued collaboration among World Vision Rwanda, Caritas Byumba, Gicumbi District, health workers, local leaders and communities. Participants agreed that sustained awareness, practical education and community engagement are needed to strengthen hygiene practices and contribute to the prevention of child malnutrition.

Overall, the Dialogue provided an opportunity to strengthen understanding that protecting children from malnutrition starts not only with what is on their plate, but also with the water, hands, food preparation practices and environment surrounding them.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Dialogue reflected the Principles of Engagement through inclusive participation, respectful discussion and shared responsibility. Participants from different backgrounds, including caregivers, community members, health workers and local leaders, were given an opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives on hygiene, sanitation and child nutrition. The discussion was open and constructive, with participants focusing on practical solutions and community needs. Different perspectives on hygiene challenges were considered respectfully, and no significant competing interests were identified. The Dialogue promoted collaboration among stakeholders and encouraged participants to translate the discussion into practical actions that families and communities can sustain.

METHOD AND SETTING

The Dialogue used a participatory methodology combining a short presentation, guided discussion, experience sharing and open-ended questions. Participants were encouraged to discuss practical hygiene challenges and identify locally applicable solutions. The session was conducted in a formal but interactive classroom setting, allowing participants to sit together, exchange views openly and reflect on how good hygiene practices can be promoted at household and community level.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Use simple, practical examples that connect hygiene with nutrition and encourage participants to share local experiences. Keep the Dialogue focused on realistic actions that families and communities can adopt and sustain.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We sincerely thank World Vision Rwanda, Caritas Byumba and Gicumbi District for their support and collaboration in promoting good hygiene and child nutrition. We also appreciate the facilitators, health workers, local leaders, caregivers and community participants for their active engagement, shared experiences and commitment to protecting children's health and well being.

RELEVANT LINKS

- **WEBSITE**
<https://caritasbyumba.org/publications/6ab3990d738bdb402d9d15e5>
- **X**
<https://x.com/CByumba/status/2093369537563394474?s=20>
- **X**
<https://x.com/CByumba/status/2093370332337868988?s=20>

ATTACHMENTS

- **PICTURE**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/HQ0iFUZXgAAqUOI-scaled.jpg>
- **PICTURE**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/HQ0iQXyWQAARdrv-scaled.jpg>
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