

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	Enhancing learner nutrition by promoting awareness of school nutrition guidelines and Statutory Instrument 13 of 2025 through structured dialogues with school authorities, food preparers and community members.
DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 14 May 2026 10:00 GMT +02:00
CONVENED BY	Kudakwashe Zombe Event announced on behalf of the Convenor by: World Vision Zimbabwe . Technical Support Feedback published on behalf of Convenor by: Kudakwashe Zombe. Technical Support
EVENT LANGUAGE	Shona and English
HOST LOCATION	Buhera, Zimbabwe
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Buhera
AFFILIATIONS	World Vision
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/60233/



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

40

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-11

0 12-18

0 19-29

40 30-49

0 50-74

0 75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

29 Female

1 Male

11 Other/Prefer not to say

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0 Children, Youth Groups and Students

0 Educators and Teachers

0 Financial Institutions and Technical Partners

0 Healthcare Professionals

0 Information and Technology Providers

0 Marketing and Advertising Experts

0 News and Media (e.g. Journalists)

0 Science and Academia

40 Sub-National/Local Government Officials and Representatives

0 Women's Groups

1 Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)

0 Faith Leaders/Faith Communities

0 Food Producers (including farmers)

0 Indigenous Peoples

0 Large Business and Food Retailers

0 National/Federal Government Officials and Representatives

0 Parents and Caregivers

0 Small/Medium Enterprises

0 United Nations

0 Other (please state)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

N/A

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

The discussion involved a mixed group of parents, guardians, and caregivers from the Buhera West community, including both women and men of varying ages. The group included individuals responsible for children's welfare and these individuals are Teachers, Child Care Workers, Community Leaders and Health Care Workers.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

The session began with a brief introduction to the ENOUGH Campaign, focusing on promoting healthy, affordable diets for children and strengthening school food environments. Participants were oriented on the purpose of the meeting, which included raising awareness on nutrition, understanding parental roles in shaping children's eating habits, and identifying practical, community-led solutions to improve children's diets. The discussion was interactive, allowing participants to share experiences and reflect on changes in food consumption patterns over time.

DISCUSSION

Parents and caregivers highlighted multiple barriers to providing nutritious food for children. The most prominent challenge was the difficulty in monitoring children's food choices, especially at school, where peer influence and easy access to unhealthy foods undermine parental guidance. While parents reported some awareness of healthy diets, they acknowledged challenges in consistently providing balanced meals due to economic limitations. In addition, high cost of nutritious foods, particularly protein sources such as meat and legumes was noted. Participants noted that limited household income often forces families to rely on less diverse diets, mainly sadza and vegetables. Seasonality was also a major constraint, as many nutritious foods, including fruits and certain vegetables, are only available at specific times of the year. In addition, participants raised concerns about the increasing availability and consumption of cheap, nutrient-poor foods such as sweets, freezits, and processed snacks sold at schools and some parents giving their own children those cheap nutrient-poor foods to consume during school hours. Parents and caregivers acknowledged that school meals play a critical role in supporting children's education, noting a visible improvement in school attendance since the introduction of the feeding programme. Many participants highlighted that children are more motivated to attend school because they are assured of at least one meal during the day. However, concerns were raised regarding the quality and consistency of the meals provided. Participants reported that children often complain that the food is not properly cooked, which discourages them from eating. In addition, there was strong dissatisfaction with the lack of variety in relishes, with soya mince reportedly being served repeatedly. This monotony has led to some children choosing not to eat the meals at all, undermining the intended benefits of the programme.

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Teachers will consistently supervise meal preparation and serving to ensure food safety, proper hygiene, and fair distribution of meals to all children. This supervision is intended to maintain quality standards and protect the health of learners.

Parents also agreed on the importance of establishing nutritious gardens. They committed to acquiring land that will be used to grow vegetables, beans, and other nutritious crops to support the feeding programme. This initiative is expected to start when schools open.

In support of the feeding programme, parents agreed to contribute food items or money at household level. Each household will provide an agreed contribution, such as a cup of beans or a monetary amount, and all families are expected to uphold this agreement.

To strengthen coordination and accountability, these contributions will be organized at village level, with villages taking responsibility for sourcing relishes used in meal preparation for children.

To ensure effective implementation, a functional school feeding committee will be established. This committee will be responsible for supervising food sourcing, meal preparation, and serving, as well as monitoring compliance with agreed standards. Parents further agreed that contributions will be made on a termly basis.

The dialogues also emphasized the need for strong parental involvement in all matters affecting children's welfare.

Parents committed themselves to actively participate in initiatives related to nutrition, health, and general well-being of their children. In addition, the Headmaster and Deputy Head will work out clear ration guidelines indicating what can be contributed per child at household level to promote fairness and transparency.

Parents further agreed to provide plates for their children to use during school meals. These plates will be kept at school to ensure proper hygiene, easy management, and consistency during feeding times.

URGENT ACTIONS

While there was general agreement on the importance of healthy diets by parents, caregivers and the community leadership, some differences emerged regarding parental influence. Some participants believed that parents still play a strong role in shaping children's eating habits, while others felt that children are increasingly influenced by peers and external factors, reducing parental control.

There were also mixed views on school meals, with some participants appreciating their role in supporting vulnerable children, while others expressed concerns about lack of variety and adequacy. These differing perspectives reflect variations in experiences across households and schools.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The dialogue revealed a clear awareness among parents and caregivers of what constitutes a healthy diet and its importance for children's growth, concentration, and school performance. However, this knowledge is constrained by economic challenges, seasonal food availability, and the growing presence of unhealthy food options in school environments.

The discussion emphasized the need for a collective approach, combining parental responsibility, school-level regulation, and community action to improve children's diets. Participants demonstrated willingness to take action, particularly in promoting local foods, strengthening guidance to children, and supporting school-based initiatives.

OVERALL SUMMARY

The Buhera West Community Nutrition Dialogue brought together 40 participants, including parents, caregivers, teachers, community leaders, child care workers, and health care workers, with women making up the majority of participants. The engagement was conducted under the ENOUGH Campaign, which seeks to promote healthy and affordable diets for children while strengthening school food environments. The dialogue created a platform for community members to openly discuss challenges affecting children's nutrition, reflect on changing food consumption patterns, and identify practical solutions that can be implemented at household, school, and community levels.

The discussions revealed that parents and caregivers have a good understanding of the importance of healthy diets for children's growth, concentration, and academic performance. However, despite this awareness, many families continue to face significant barriers in providing balanced and nutritious meals. Economic hardships were identified as one of the major challenges, as many households struggle to afford protein-rich foods such as meat and legumes. As a result, most families rely heavily on staple foods such as sadza and vegetables, with limited dietary diversity. Participants also highlighted the effects of seasonality, which limits access to fruits and certain vegetables at different times of the year.

Another major concern raised during the engagement was the increasing availability and consumption of unhealthy foods within school environments. Participants noted that children are often influenced by peers and are attracted to cheap, nutrient-poor foods such as sweets, freezits, and processed snacks sold at schools. Some parents were also reported to be providing such foods for children during school hours, further contributing to poor dietary practices.

The dialogue further emphasized the important role of school feeding programmes in supporting children's education and well-being. Participants acknowledged that the provision of meals at school has improved attendance and motivated children to come to school regularly. However, concerns were raised regarding the quality, preparation, and variety of the meals provided. Some children reportedly avoid eating school meals because food is not properly cooked or because the same relishes, particularly soya mince, are served repeatedly. Participants stressed the need for more nutritious, appealing, and diverse meals to ensure that children benefit fully from the feeding programme.

The engagement concluded with a strong commitment from parents, schools, and community stakeholders to take collective action. Agreed actions included establishing nutritious gardens to support the feeding programme, contributing food items or money at household level, strengthening teacher supervision of meal preparation, and forming a functional school feeding committee to oversee implementation and accountability. Parents also committed to providing plates for their children and actively participating in nutrition and child welfare initiatives. Overall, the dialogue demonstrated strong community willingness to work together in improving children's nutrition, health, and educational outcomes through coordinated and sustainable community-led efforts.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The dialogue reflected key Principles of Engagement by promoting inclusivity, participation, transparency, and shared responsibility among stakeholders. Participants included parents, caregivers, teachers, community leaders, child care workers, and health care workers, ensuring diverse community representation and allowing different perspectives to be heard. The session was conducted in an interactive and respectful manner, encouraging open discussion on challenges affecting children's nutrition and school feeding programmes. Prior to the engagement, facilitators were briefed on the objectives of the dialogue, expected discussion areas, and the importance of managing differing opinions constructively. Competing interests and differing views, particularly around parental influence on children's eating habits and perceptions of school meals, were managed through open dialogue and consensus-building approaches.

METHOD AND SETTING

The discussion was conducted at a formal indoor functions room.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Joint planning is key when planning for a similar event at sub national level.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NA

ATTACHMENTS

- **Buhera West Community Dialogue Report**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Buhera-West-Community-dialogue-report.docx>