

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	Nutritional Dialogue Phase 2- Stakeholder dialogue (Government)-Bibila-Sri Lanka
DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 7 May 2026 09:00 GMT +05:30
CONVENED BY	Lavanya Suriyakumar (National Campaign Manager), Jennifer Fernando (Policy advocacy Specialist)
EVENT LANGUAGE	Sinhala
HOST LOCATION	Bibile, Sri Lanka
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Bibila- Divisional Secretariat level
AFFILIATIONS	Bibila Area Programme
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/60246/



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	8
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PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

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

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

3	Female	5	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	0	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
8	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

Local government representatives from various sectors, including education, agriculture, health, nutrition, early childhood development, and public administration, participated in the discussion. All participating government officials have been actively engaged in World Vision Lanka's initiatives and are familiar with the ENOUGH Campaign.
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SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

An introduction to the ENOUGH campaign was provided, including an overview of its objectives, approach, and implementation. The engagement and the participation of the Bibile community was highlighted to the community. The baseline findings were presented, and it was explained how the recommendations were developed as ideas and used to benefit children in the community.

NUTRITION SITUATION PRESENTATION

https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Nutritional-Dialogues-Phase-2-Slide-deck_compressed-1.pdf

DISCUSSION

The session began with a welcome address delivered by the Area Programme World Vision staff. The facilitator then provided a brief overview of the purpose of the discussion and refreshed participants' understanding of nutrition, including an update on the current nutritional situation using recent data. Following this, participants introduced themselves, and the discussion moved into an interactive and engaging session guided by open-ended questions. Participants actively shared their experiences, insights, and perspectives on the prevailing nutrition situation in the area, identifying key challenges and offering practical suggestions. The conversation focused particularly on agriculture services, home gardening, school meal programs, the quality and availability of food in school canteens, and the provision of meals at preschools. Participants also discussed the impact of the 'Ditwa' cyclone, emphasizing how it has disrupted food security and negatively affected nutrition within the community.

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Challenges

Children's food consumption at school is not consistently monitored, leading them to purchase unhealthy food from canteens.

Although healthy food is available in school canteens, children tend to leave school premises to buy food of their preference from outside vendors.

Monitoring children's height and weight is a complex process involving multiple stakeholders.

In some areas, children's nutrition is monitored, but in many others it is not, leading to increased consumption of ice packets and instant foods.

Children bring ice packets and other unhealthy foods from outside, and existing monitoring systems are insufficient to regulate this.

School canteens provide healthy meals, and prefects are assigned to monitor students who leave school premises but those are rules implemented by the school principal.

Cultural such as Muslim and Tamil communities have their own food practices such as eating Rottie in the morning from the shops which may contribute to unhealthy eating patterns.

Farmers often sell locally grown nutritious foods externally due to limited awareness of their health benefits, despite awareness programs.

Some parents show limited interest in preparing healthy meals for preschool children.

Many parents tend to provide only familiar foods for children, while grandparents are more likely to prepare healthier meals.

Children living in line housing face nutritional challenges due to limited space for home gardening, unlike those in village settings.

Many children start their day with minimal nutrition, typically plain tea and roti.

Some parents prefer sending children to preschools that provide meals rather than preparing food at home.

While agricultural programs (e.g., corn cultivation) exist, farmers receive limited welfare support, and production is now clustered.

Some locally available vegetables are used for decorative purposes rather than being consumed for nutritional value.

URGENT ACTIONS

1. Promote behaviour change at the family level to improve children's nutrition.
2. Strengthen regulation and hygiene standards of food vendors and shops.
3. Conduct awareness sessions for vendors on proper meal preparation and the use of healthy ingredients.
4. Position school canteens as a service rather than profit-oriented entities and provide affordable, nutritious meal options.
5. Develop proper regulatory mechanisms to monitor and limit the sale of unhealthy foods such as ice packets.
6. Establish guidelines to restrict students from leaving school premises during school hour and to make the canteens healthy within the area with the involvement of the principles.
7. Promote the cultivation of fruit trees within school premises for children's consumption.
8. Strengthen student-led monitoring by assigning prefects responsibility to check outside food, with recognition or certification for their role.
9. Conduct awareness programmes for vendors selling unhealthy food near schools on malnutrition risks.
10. Leverage guidance from MOH on maintaining hygiene and standards for shops around schools.
11. Introduce innovative food concepts such as dehydrated foods and promote new, healthy recipes among children.
12. Encourage the production and consumption of dehydrated fruits using locally available resources.
13. Promote the use of locally available fruits such as jackfruit in attractive and child-friendly ways.
14. Conduct awareness sessions on family planning and the impact of alcohol consumption on household nutrition.
15. Address supply chain gaps by strengthening direct linkages or introducing collection mechanisms for fruits and vegetables to reduce middlemen exploitation.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There were school principals and Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) who work closely with children and serve as key decision-makers in matters related to children's nutrition. In addition, stakeholders such as agricultural officers indirectly contribute to improving children's nutritional outcomes

OVERALL SUMMARY

The discussion identified multiple factors affecting child nutrition, food security, and healthy eating practices within schools, households, and communities. One of the main concerns was the limited monitoring of children's food consumption during school hours. Although some schools provide healthy meals and attempt to regulate food choices, many students leave school premises to purchase unhealthy foods such as ice packets, instant foods, and processed snacks from external vendors. Existing monitoring systems and regulations are inconsistent, and successful initiatives such as school food banks and prefect-led monitoring depend largely on individual school leadership. Concerns were also raised about children's nutritional status and growth monitoring. Participants noted that early childhood malnutrition can contribute to long-term health issues, including overweight and obesity. Monitoring children's height and weight involves multiple stakeholders and is not consistently implemented across all communities, limiting the early identification and management of nutrition-related problems. Household and community factors further contribute to poor nutrition outcomes. Many children begin the day with nutritionally inadequate meals, often consisting of tea and roti. Parents frequently rely on familiar food choices and may be reluctant to introduce healthier alternatives, while grandparents were perceived as more likely to prepare nutritious traditional meals. Some parents also depend on preschools to provide meals rather than preparing healthy food at home. Limited awareness and interest among parents regarding child nutrition remain key barriers to improving dietary practices. Cultural food habits also influence nutrition. In some Muslim and Tamil communities, purchasing prepared foods such as roti from local shops is a common practice. While culturally accepted, these habits may contribute to unhealthy diets when nutritious alternatives are not included. Participants emphasized the need for culturally appropriate approaches to nutrition promotion. Agricultural and livelihood challenges were also highlighted. Despite the availability of nutritious local foods, farmers often sell their produce externally rather than consuming it within their households. Limited awareness of nutritional benefits, climate-related changes affecting agriculture, inadequate welfare support for farmers, and weak market systems contribute to reduced access to nutritious foods. Families living in line housing areas face additional challenges due to limited space for home gardening compared to those in village settings. To address these challenges, participants recommended strengthening family-level behaviour change initiatives, improving nutrition awareness, regulating food vendors around schools, and enhancing hygiene standards. They also emphasized the importance of establishing healthy school canteens, preventing students from leaving school premises during school hours, promoting school gardens and fruit trees, and empowering prefects to support monitoring efforts. Additional recommendations included promoting innovative and nutritious food products, encouraging the use of local fruits and vegetables, addressing social issues such as alcohol consumption, and strengthening market linkages to improve access to affordable and nutritious foods. Together, these actions were identified as essential for improving child nutrition, strengthening food security, and promoting healthier communities.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

All participants were given the opportunity to openly share their views on key challenges, underlying issues, and possible solutions in an inclusive and participatory discussion. A problem tree analysis was also used as a facilitation tool to support deeper reflection and understanding of the root causes and effects of the identified issues.

METHOD AND SETTING

Seating was arranged in an indoor room to encourage interaction, and the National Campaign Coordinator facilitated the discussion by guiding participants through questions on challenges, issues, and suggested solutions. The session was conducted in a semi-informal manner, with participation from individuals representing diverse ethnic backgrounds

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

NA

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the World Vision Lanka Neluwa Area Programme, its staff members, and community volunteers for successfully organizing this workshop. We also extend our appreciation to Dinuka Bandara(Technical Advisor - Integrated Nutrition) and Chandrika Kularathna (Technical Specialist - Disaster Risk Reduction) for their valuable support and guidance in designing the guiding questions used to facilitate the dialogue.

ATTACHMENTS

- **Participants engaging in the dialogue**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/4.png>
- **One of the participants from education sector sharing his views**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/7.png>
- **Group discussion**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/5.png>