

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE TITLE	Nutritional Dialogue Phase 2- Stakeholder dialogue-Bibila-Sri Lanka
DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 7 May 2026 15:30 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	Community level
AFFILIATIONS	World Vision Lanka
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/dialogue/60263/



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
6	30-49	1	50-74	0	75+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

5	Female	2	Male	0	Other/Prefer not to say
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0	Children, Youth Groups and Students	2	Civil Society Organisations (including consumer groups and environmental organisations)
0	Educators and Teachers	0	Faith Leaders/Faith Communities
0	Financial Institutions and Technical Partners	3	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)	2	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

The participants comprised farmers and representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from the rural communities of the Bibila area.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

FRAMING

Participants were first invited to introduce themselves and share where they were from. It was explained that the session was a dialogue, encouraging everyone to share even small ideas that could make a meaningful difference. The community was also asked to reflect on and share their daily food consumption patterns and they were asked what they ate in the morning for breakfast to get an opening for the dialogue.

NUTRITION SITUATION PRESENTATION

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

DISCUSSION

The session commenced with a welcome address delivered by World Vision Area Programme staff. This was followed by an introduction to the objectives of the discussion, during which the facilitator refreshed participants' understanding of nutrition and presented an overview of the current nutritional situation using recent data and evidence. Participants then introduced themselves before engaging in an interactive discussion facilitated through open-ended questions. The session provided an opportunity for participants to share their experiences, observations, and perspectives on the nutrition situation in the Bibila area. They identified key challenges affecting nutrition and food security and proposed practical solutions to address them. The discussion focused on several thematic areas, including agricultural services, home gardening, school meal programmes, the quality and availability of food in school canteens, and meal provision in preschools. Participants also reflected on the impact of the 'Ditwa' cyclone, highlighting its adverse effects on livelihoods, food security, and the overall nutritional well-being of households within the community.

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

Diets are repetitive and lack diversity, resulting in limited nutritional value.
Children frequently consume instant foods due to convenience and a lack of parental engagement.
Many children are reluctant to eat traditional meals such as rice in the morning.
Children often pool money and purchase food such as fried rice from shops to share during lunchtime.
It is difficult for parents to monitor and control children's eating habits outside the home.
Time constraints prevent children from going home after school to eat nutritious meals before attending tuition classes.
School canteens are not always actively managed or effectively regulated.
Parents provide money to children to avoid social exclusion among peer groups.
Encouraging adolescents to adopt healthy eating habits is challenging due to peer influence.
Transportation challenges limit access to food and other services.
Poor water quality has led to health issues, including kidney-related diseases.
Water scarcity and climate-related challenges affect agricultural production.
Government welfare support is limited primarily to certain agricultural groups.
Existing agricultural committees mainly support rice farmers, excluding vegetable and fruit growers.
Prices are often determined by intermediaries rather than farmers.
Low market prices for vegetables result in significant financial losses for farmers.
There is limited knowledge of food preservation methods such as dehydration.
Even when knowledge exists, farmers face challenges in accessing formal market requirements such as barcodes.
Limited access to digital platforms and low digital literacy among older farmers restrict the use of online tools and knowledge-sharing (e.g., Zoom).
School principals play a key role in decisions related to school-based nutrition programmes.
Government welfare distribution is often inequitable and does not always reach the most vulnerable groups.
Awareness of climate-resilient agricultural practices remains low.

URGENT ACTIONS

1. Conduct consistent and structured awareness programmes for parents on nutrition and healthy feeding practices.
2. Increase government engagement in addressing adolescent nutrition, particularly as children spend less time at home.
3. Review and regulate tuition class schedules (e.g., starting after 3:00 pm) to allow children time to eat proper meals and rest.
4. Strengthen accountability and active engagement of Agricultural Instructors (AI Officers) within communities.
5. Establish and regulate farmer organisations for those involved in fruit and vegetable cultivation.
6. Improve awareness on export standards and value-added products, reducing reliance on private sources for knowledge.
7. Ensure agricultural extension programmes are conducted at times convenient for farmers (morning/evening).
8. Provide parents with practical knowledge and skills on preparing nutritious meals at home.
9. Strengthen government ownership and coordination of programmes across all GN divisions, including better follow-up on NGO-led initiatives.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

NA

OVERALL SUMMARY

The discussion highlighted a range of challenges affecting nutrition, food security, agricultural livelihoods, and healthy eating behaviours among children, adolescents, and families in the Bibila area. Participants noted that diets within many households are repetitive and lack diversity, limiting access to essential nutrients. Poor dietary practices are further compounded by the fact that individuals with health conditions often do not consistently follow appropriate dietary recommendations. Children and adolescents are increasingly consuming instant and processed foods due to convenience, peer influence, and limited parental supervision. Many children are reluctant to consume traditional meals such as rice for breakfast and instead opt for less nutritious alternatives. It was also observed that children frequently pool money with friends to purchase foods such as fried rice and other fast foods during school hours, making it difficult for parents to monitor and influence their eating habits.

The discussion emphasized that changing adolescent food behaviours is particularly challenging due to peer pressure and social norms. Parents often provide money to children to avoid feelings of exclusion among their peers, unintentionally encouraging the purchase of unhealthy foods. Time constraints associated with tuition classes further affect nutrition, as many students do not have sufficient time to return home and consume a proper meal before attending after-school lessons.

Participants identified several school-related concerns. School canteens are not always effectively managed or regulated, and decisions related to school-based nutrition programmes often depend heavily on the commitment and leadership of school principals. Greater coordination and oversight were considered necessary to ensure that schools actively promote healthy eating habits and provide nutritious food environments for students.

Agricultural and environmental challenges were also highlighted as significant contributors to food insecurity. Water scarcity, poor water quality, and changing climate conditions have adversely affected agricultural production and community health, including the occurrence of kidney-related illnesses. Transportation difficulties further limit access to food, markets, and essential services. Participants noted that government support mechanisms largely focus on specific agricultural sectors, particularly rice cultivation, while vegetable and fruit growers often receive limited assistance.

Existing agricultural committees and welfare programmes do not adequately represent the needs of all farming groups. Market-related challenges create additional barriers for farmers. Prices are frequently determined by intermediaries rather than producers, leading to low returns and significant financial losses, particularly for vegetable farmers. While some farmers possess knowledge of value addition and food preservation techniques such as dehydration, many face difficulties in accessing formal markets due to requirements such as packaging standards and barcoding. Limited digital literacy and restricted access to online platforms among older farmers further constrain access to market information, training opportunities, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms.

Participants also expressed concerns regarding the effectiveness and equity of government welfare and disaster relief programmes. Support provided to farmers affected by disasters, including the Ditwah cyclone, was perceived as inadequate, while welfare assistance was not always reaching the most vulnerable households. Awareness and adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices also remain limited.

To address these challenges, participants recommended strengthening nutrition awareness programmes for parents and caregivers, increasing government attention to adolescent nutrition, and providing practical guidance on preparing healthy meals at home. Additional actions included regulating tuition schedules to support healthy eating, improving agricultural extension services, establishing farmer organizations for fruit and vegetable growers, promoting knowledge on value-added products and export standards, and ensuring stronger government ownership, coordination, and follow-up of nutrition and livelihood programmes across all communities. These measures were viewed as essential for improving nutrition outcomes, strengthening agricultural livelihoods, and enhancing household food security.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

All participants were provided with an opportunity to share their perspectives on challenges, issues, and potential solutions within an open and inclusive discussion. The session also utilized a problem tree as a participatory tool to facilitate deeper analysis and understanding

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

- **One of the farmer sharing his views**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/1.png>
- **Group discussion**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/3.png>