

The outcomes from Children's workshops will contribute to developing and identifying the most urgent and powerful ways to improve nutrition for all, with a focus on children and young people. Each Workshop 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

1

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 12-15

0 16-18

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

10 Female

10 Male

0 Other/Prefer not to say

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON PARTICIPATION DIVERSITY

The Kwaekese Nutrition Dialogue reflected diversity across socio-economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Children came from farming, trading, and low-income households, representing Akan, Ewe, and minority groups, as well as Christian and Muslim faiths. Equal gender participation and rural perspectives enriched the dialogue, ensuring inclusivity and broad representation of nutrition challenges and solutions.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING

The Kwaekese Nutrition Dialogue was framed by situating children's experiences within the broader local context of poverty, seasonality, and systemic challenges that shape food access. Facilitators began by acknowledging how climate variability—particularly reliance on rainfall—creates cycles of abundance and scarcity, with rainy seasons bringing diverse foods and dry seasons marked by shortages. This framing resonated with children's anxieties about hunger during lean periods and their reliance on carbohydrate-heavy meals when protein and protective foods are scarce. The introduction also highlighted structural barriers such as poor road networks and insecurity, which limit food transportation and raise costs, further restricting household access to diverse diets. These realities were connected to the community's nutrition situation, where deficiencies in protein and micronutrients are widespread, and school feeding programmes often fail to provide adequate or varied meals. By grounding the dialogue in these local challenges—climate change, poverty, infrastructure gaps, and systemic inequalities—the workshop created a participatory space where children could link their knowledge of food groups to lived realities. This framing not only validated their experiences but also encouraged them to propose practical solutions, such as irrigation farming, school gardens, and improved school feeding. The introduction thus set the tone for a conversation that was both context-aware and solution-focused, empowering children to see themselves as active contributors to addressing malnutrition in their community.

SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

CHALLENGES

The children in the Kwaekese Nutrition Dialogue identified several pressing nutrition challenges shaped by both household realities and systemic gaps. A major issue was the imbalance in daily meals, which are heavily carbohydrate-based with limited inclusion of protein and protective foods. Many reported eating staples such as cassava, yam, or banku with pepper alone, often without meat, eggs, or fish.

Seasonal food shortages were another challenge. During the rainy season, vegetables and fruits are abundant, but the dry season brings scarcity, forcing households to rely on fewer food options. This seasonal variability contributes to inconsistent access to diverse diets.

Children also raised concerns about the school feeding programme, noting inadequate portion sizes, lack of dietary diversity, and limited inclusion of protein and vegetables. Since school meals are expected to supplement household diets, these shortcomings reinforce nutritional gaps.

Beyond food availability, children highlighted structural barriers such as poor road networks and insecurity, which hinder food transportation and trade. These challenges reduce access to affordable, diverse foods and sometimes increase local food prices.

Overall, the dialogue revealed that children's nutrition challenges stem from a combination of seasonality, poverty, systemic gaps in school feeding, and infrastructure limitations. While they understand what constitutes good nourishment, their ability to consistently access balanced diets remains constrained by these factors.

URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

During the Kwaekese Nutrition Dialogue, children identified several urgent actions to address the nutrition challenges they face. A top priority was the improvement of the school feeding programme, with calls for larger portions, more balanced meals, and greater inclusion of protein and vegetables. They emphasized that school meals should not only fill stomachs but also contribute to healthy growth.

Another urgent recommendation was the promotion of irrigation farming. Children recognized that reliance on rainfall leads to food shortages in the dry season, and proposed that government and NGOs support farmers with irrigation systems to ensure year-round food production.

They also suggested the establishment of school gardens, which would provide a sustainable source of vegetables and equip children with agricultural skills. This was seen as a practical way to supplement diets and reduce seasonal gaps.

Beyond food production, participants highlighted the need to improve road networks and address security concerns. Poor infrastructure and risks such as robbery discourage food transportation, limiting availability and raising costs. Children proposed that authorities prioritize road improvements and community safety to strengthen food access.

Finally, they stressed the importance of increasing access to protein-rich foods like eggs, fish, and meat, and ensuring fruits are available beyond seasonal limits. These actions, they argued, should be taken forward through collaboration between government, schools, communities, and farmers, with children's voices included in planning.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

In the Kwaekese Nutrition Dialogue, children's views were largely aligned on the core challenges of nourishment, but some divergences did emerge. Most participants agreed that meals are heavily carbohydrate-based, with limited protein and protective foods, and that school feeding is inadequate in both quality and quantity. However, differences appeared in how they perceived certain practices. For example, while many strongly criticized the lack of protein in daily meals, a few felt that having staple foods consistently was still valuable, even if not fully balanced.

On seasonality, most children emphasized the scarcity of fruits and vegetables during the dry season, yet some saw cassava and yam as reliable substitutes that at least ensured fullness. Similarly, while many called for urgent improvements in school feeding, others prioritized broader systemic solutions such as irrigation farming or road infrastructure, reflecting varied perspectives on what should be addressed first.

There were also differences in how children viewed nourishment itself. Some equated it with feeling full, while others stressed the importance of dietary diversity and balance. These divergences highlight the richness of children's lived experiences: while consensus existed on the main nutrition gaps, their opinions diverged on priorities, interpretations, and solutions. This diversity of thought added depth to the dialogue, ensuring recommendations captured both shared realities and nuanced viewpoints.

OVERALL SUMMARY

The Kwaekese Nutrition Dialogue, facilitated by World Vision Ghana's Afram Plains Area Program on 16th April 2026, was a vibrant and insightful engagement that brought together 20 children aged 12–18 to reflect on nourishment, food access, and the systemic challenges shaping their diets. The workshop was framed around lived realities—seasonal food availability, poverty, infrastructure gaps, and the limitations of school feeding—and created a safe, participatory space where children spoke candidly about their experiences and aspirations.

From the outset, the atmosphere was warm and inclusive. Equal gender representation and ethnic diversity ensured that the dialogue captured a broad spectrum of perspectives. Children demonstrated impressive knowledge of food groups—energy-giving, body-building, and protective—and linked them to everyday examples. Their voices carried authenticity and urgency, as they described how meals often equate to “feeling full” rather than balanced nutrition, with protein and protective foods frequently missing. The honesty of their reflections, such as eating “banku and pepper only” or lacking eggs and meat, underscored the nutritional gaps they face.

The dialogue also revealed how deeply children understand the impact of seasonality. They spoke of rainy seasons as times of abundance and dry seasons as periods of scarcity, when households rely heavily on cassava and yam. Their recognition of these cycles highlighted both resilience and vulnerability. Concerns about the school feeding programme were particularly strong, with children noting insufficient portions, lack of diversity, and limited inclusion of protein and vegetables—issues that compound household-level deficiencies.

What made the workshop especially powerful was the children's ability to propose practical, context-specific solutions. They called for improvements in school feeding, including balanced meals and larger portions; the promotion of irrigation farming to reduce reliance on rainfall; and the establishment of school gardens to ensure year-round access to vegetables while building agricultural skills. They also connected nutrition challenges to broader systemic issues, such as poor road networks and insecurity, which hinder food transportation and raise costs. This ability to link nourishment to infrastructure and governance demonstrated remarkable depth of understanding.

Beyond the content, the event felt inspiring and empowering. Children were not passive recipients of information but active contributors, confidently articulating both challenges and solutions. Their voices carried hope, determination, and a sense of agency. The participatory methodology, combined with strong safeguarding measures, created an environment where children felt respected and valued.

In summary, the Kwaekese Nutrition Dialogue highlighted that children possess both knowledge and insight into nutrition, but their ability to practice balanced diets is constrained by systemic barriers. Their recommendations—improved school feeding, irrigation farming, school gardens, and better infrastructure—reflect urgent priorities for action. The workshop reinforced the importance of listening directly to children, as their perspectives enrich strategies for tackling malnutrition and ensure interventions are grounded in lived realities. It was not only a learning exercise but also a testament to the power of child-led dialogue in shaping sustainable nutrition solutions.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT & METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Kwaekese Nutrition Dialogue reflected the Principles of Engagement by prioritizing child participation and inclusivity. Each child was given space to share experiences, ensuring equal gender representation and involvement of diverse ethnic and religious groups. Safeguarding standards were upheld through the two-adult rule and the presence of a trusted adult chosen by the children, creating a safe environment. Children's ideas were treated with respect and dignity, reinforcing their role as active contributors rather than passive recipients. Transparency and accountability were demonstrated by documenting their recommendations and linking them to actionable steps for schools, caregivers, and communities. Finally, the workshop fostered empowerment, enabling children to recognize their agency in shaping nutrition practices. These elements embodied the Principles of Engagement and created a participatory space where children's voices could meaningfully influence nutrition programming.

METHOD AND SETTING

The workshop followed a participatory dialogue approach, using guided discussions, experience sharing, and reflections to ensure children's voices shaped outcomes. Safeguarding standards were applied, including the two-adult rule and the presence of a trusted adult chosen by the children, creating a safe and supportive environment. Held in an informal outdoor setting after school in Kwaekese, the relaxed atmosphere encouraged openness.

ADVICE FOR OTHER CONVENORS

Use dialogue-based methods rather than lectures, encouraging children to connect nutrition concepts with their daily lives. Ensure equal gender representation and include children from diverse socio-economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Apply strict child safeguarding standards, such as the two-adult rule and the presence of a trusted adult chosen by the children.

FEEDBACK FORM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the support that made the Kwaekese Nutrition Dialogue possible. Special thanks go to the World Vision Ghana Afram Plains Area Program team, whose dedication ensured a safe and participatory environment for children. We appreciate the community leaders, parents, and caregivers for encouraging children's involvement and creating space for their voices. Our gratitude also extends to the volunteers and facilitators who managed logistics and documentation with care.

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Pictures**
https://wvi365-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/joshua_okomongye_wvi_org/lgCytSbO1floTLWTK2GOIDnlAWO6xLVP7vIPHzSrDs7VF2w?e=xitwv7

ATTACHMENTS

- **Report**
<https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/NUTRITIONAL-DIALOGUE-ENGAGEMENT-WITH-CHILDREN-IN-KWAEKESE-REPORT.pdf>