

The dialogue brought together community health workers, local leaders, and nutrition stakeholders from the Akagera cluster to discuss strategies for combating child malnutrition through early detection and the Positive Deviance Hearth (PDH) approach. The event was marked by a strong sense of collaboration and shared commitment to improving child nutrition outcomes.

Participants shared experiences about the challenges they face, such as limited food resources and seasonal food insecurity, which hinder the consistent implementation of nutrition programs. Despite these difficulties, there was widespread recognition of the effectiveness of regular growth monitoring and home-based nutrition education. The PDH model, with its focus on practical cooking demonstrations using affordable local foods, was praised for empowering caregivers and fostering sustainable behavior change.

The dialogue fostered open communication, allowing participants to voice their concerns and contribute ideas. This openness created a positive and supportive atmosphere, reinforcing trust among stakeholders. There was unanimous agreement on the need for continued community engagement, strengthening local capacities, and increasing support from government and partners to scale up interventions.

From a personal perspective, the event was inspiring and hopeful. It showcased how grassroots efforts, when well-coordinated and supported, can make a tangible difference in child health. The energy and dedication of community health workers were particularly impressive, as they are the frontline actors driving these changes. Their passion and perseverance underscored the importance of investing in their training and motivation.

Overall, the dialogue was not just a meeting but a collective reaffirmation of commitment to fighting malnutrition. It highlighted the power of local solutions combined with external support, and the critical role of community participation in sustaining health improvements. This event set a strong foundation for future collaboration and will inform ongoing efforts ahead of the Nutrition for Growth summit in March 2025, emphasizing practical, community-centered approaches to ending malnutrition in Rwanda.