

The dialogue event in Burera District, organized by Caritas Byumba in partnership with World Vision Rwanda, was a powerful and inspiring platform that brought together diverse community members including parents, health workers, local leaders, and caregivers. The focus was on the Positive Deviance Hearth (PD/Hearth) model, a community-based approach that encourages families to identify and adopt successful nutrition and hygiene practices already present within their own environment.

From the outset, the atmosphere was one of shared purpose and openness. Participants expressed a strong commitment to improving child nutrition, highlighting both the challenges and successes in their communities. The event was framed within the local context of poverty, seasonal food shortages, and the prevalence of malnutrition, which added urgency to the discussions. Participants appreciated that the PD/Hearth model does not rely on external solutions but builds on the community's existing strengths.

The dialogue featured storytelling and cooking demonstrations, which made the learning interactive and practical. Caregivers gained confidence in preparing nutritious meals with locally available foods and understood the importance of hygiene and responsive feeding. The session also emphasized the critical role of community volunteers in sustaining these efforts.

One of the most impactful aspects of the dialogue was the collective realization that change is possible through simple, positive behaviors. Participants left motivated and empowered to apply the lessons learned in their homes and to spread awareness in their neighborhoods. The supportive environment fostered mutual respect and collaboration, making the event feel inclusive and energizing.

While there was broad consensus on the value of the PD/Hearth approach, some concerns were raised regarding resource availability and long-term sustainability. Participants discussed the need for continued support to ensure access to nutritious foods and training materials. There were also reflections on how to engage local leaders more deeply to strengthen community ownership and address wider socioeconomic factors that influence nutrition.

Overall, the dialogue felt like a step forward in uniting the community around a shared goal. It reinforced the idea that nutrition improvement is not only a health issue but a community effort requiring cooperation, education, and practical action. The event successfully blended knowledge sharing with motivation, leaving participants hopeful and determined to contribute to healthier futures for their children.

In summary, the dialogue was more than just a meeting—it was a community-driven movement towards sustainable nutrition improvement, highlighting the power of local solutions and collective commitment. The event underscored the importance of ongoing support, capacity building, and inclusive engagement to achieve lasting impact on child malnutrition in Burera and beyond.