

NUTRITIONAL DIALOGUE ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN IN KWAEKESE

Afram Plains AP - World Vision Ghana

Date: 16th April 2026

Location: Kwaekese,- Kwahu Afram Plains North District

On 16th April 2026, World Vision Ghana, Afram Plains Area Program facilitated a nutritional dialogue engagement with 20 children (10 boys and 10 girls) aged 12–18 in Kwaekese, to explore their understanding of food, its benefits, and how seasonal and contextual factors influence their eating habits. The session created an open and participatory environment where children shared their experiences, reflected on their daily meals, and proposed practical ways to improve nourishment.

The dialogue provided a platform to connect knowledge with lived realities, revealing not only what children understand about nutrition but also the structural challenges that affect their ability to access balanced diets.

Children’s Understanding of Good Nourishment?

The engagement revealed that children have a practical, experience-driven understanding of nourishment, shaped largely by their daily lives and home environments.

They demonstrated the ability to classify foods into energy-giving, body-building, and protective groups. Staples such as yam, cassava, maize, rice, and plantain were identified as sources of energy, while fish, meat, beans, and groundnuts were associated with growth and strength. Fruits and vegetables such as mango, orange, okro, and garden eggs were recognized for their role in preventing illness.

This understanding was expressed in relatable terms. As Philip (15 years) explained, “When I eat yam, I get strength to play football,” while Regina (13 years) shared, “Beans help us to grow well.” Similarly, Bismarck (16 years) noted, “Ginger and garlic protect us from sickness.” These responses show that children associate nourishment with energy, growth, and protection, even if their explanations are not technical.

Children also demonstrated a clear awareness of how seasonality affects food availability. They described the rainy season as a time of abundance, with a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, maize, and beans available. In contrast, the dry season was associated with limited options, with households relying more on cassava, yam, and cocoyam.

As Pearce (14 years) explained, “Dry season, we eat more cassava because food is not many,” while Saviour (13 years) added, “When it rains, we get plenty vegetables and fruits.” This highlights children’s understanding of how environmental factors directly influence nourishment.

However, discussions around daily meals revealed that children often equate nourishment with feeling full rather than achieving a balanced diet. Their meals are largely carbohydrate-based, with limited inclusion of protein and protective foods. Some children openly acknowledged these gaps.

Yayera(15years) noted, "Sometimes we eat banku and pepper only," and Daniel (13 years) added, "We don't always add meat or eggs."

A significant concern raised during the dialogue was related to the school feeding programme. Children reported challenges with both the quality and quantity of meals provided at school. Some indicated that meals are sometimes insufficient, while others noted a lack of diversity and limited inclusion of protein and vegetables. This situation further reinforces the imbalance in their diets, as school meals are often expected to supplement what they receive at home.

Overall, children's understanding of nourishment reflects a blend of knowledge and lived constraints. While they know what constitutes good nutrition, their ability to practice it consistently is limited by availability, access, and systemic challenges.

Children's Ideas for Improving Nourishment

Children provided thoughtful and context-specific suggestions for improving nourishment, demonstrating awareness of both immediate and broader systemic issues.

A key concern raised was the need to improve access to protein-rich foods such as eggs, fish, and meat. Many children expressed that these foods are not consistently available in their meals. As Joyce (13 years) stated, "We need more fish and eggs to be strong," while Dela (17 years) emphasized, "Sometimes we don't get protein food." Children also highlighted the importance of ensuring year-round availability of fruits and vegetables. Francisca (13 years) noted, "We want fruits all the time, not only when it is season." This reflects a clear understanding of the need for dietary diversity beyond seasonal limitations.

One of the most significant solutions proposed was the promotion of irrigation farming. Children recognized that reliance on rainfall limits food production and contributes to shortages during the dry season. Supporting farmers with irrigation systems, they suggested, would ensure continuous production of essential foods. As Mary (12 years) explained, "Government should help farmers get water so food will be plenty in dry season."

Children also proposed school and community-based interventions, including the establishment of school gardens. These would provide a sustainable source of vegetables while also equipping children with practical agricultural skills. Peace (14 years) stated, "If we have a school garden, we can eat vegetables anytime."

In addition, children emphasized the need to improve the school feeding programme, specifically calling for better quality of meals, including balanced food groups

Increased portion sizes to ensure adequacy

Inclusion of more protein and vegetables

Beyond food production and school systems, children also pointed out broader structural challenges affecting nourishment. They highlighted how poor road networks within the district contribute to transportation difficulties, making it harder for food to be brought into and taken out of the community.

Some children further indicated that these poor road conditions expose traders and transporters to risks such as arm robbery, especially when traveling long distances to access markets. This situation discourages the movement of food supplies, leading to reduced availability and, at times, higher food costs within the district.

This perspective shows a deeper level of understanding, as children are able to link infrastructure and security challenges to food access and nutrition outcomes.

Conclusion

The nutritional dialogue highlights that children have a solid foundational understanding of nourishment, including knowledge of food groups, their benefits, and the impact of seasonal changes. However, their ability to maintain a balanced diet is constrained by limited access to diverse foods, seasonal variability, and systemic challenges.

Key issues identified include:

Imbalance in daily meals, with heavy reliance on carbohydrates

Challenges with school feeding quality and quantity

Seasonal food shortages

Structural barriers such as poor road networks and security concerns affecting food transportation

Importantly, children demonstrated the ability to propose practical and actionable solutions, including improving school feeding, promoting irrigation farming, establishing school gardens, and addressing infrastructure challenges.

As Maria (13 years) summarized, "We know the food that is good for us, but we don't always get it."

This reinforces the central finding:

Improving nourishment requires not only knowledge, but also strengthened systems that ensure consistent access to safe food

Participant List

World Vision Ghana
AFRIM PLAINS AREA PROGRAMME
AFRIM PLAINS CARE
ACTIVITY: NUTRITIONAL DIALOGUE WITH CHILDREN

NAME	COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	DATE: 15th APRIL 2023	SEX (M/F)	DISABILITY STATUS	HC STATUS	CONTACT	SIGNATURE
Abasiwa Zachie	Kwaakese		F		7497		[Signature]
Ayemator Beatrice	Kwaakese		F		5795		[Signature]
Ku Ku Stella	Kwaakese		F		6510		[Signature]
Genu Charity	Kwaakese		F				[Signature]
Togboro Yagri	Kwaakese		F		716		[Signature]
Numetu Peace	Kwaakese		F		5541		[Signature]

Aminu Abena Gifty Kwakese	F	5781	[Signature]
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Nguelena Juliet Kwakese	F		[Signature]
Aminu Gifty Kwakese	F		[Signature]
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Photos:



