



Guidance Note on Designing and Leading a Nutrition Dialogues Process

September 2026

Purpose of guidance note

Many Nutrition Dialogue convenors are organizing several dialogue events – rather than just a single event – to scale impact and transform collective listening into local action and systemic change. The purpose of this guidance note is to **help convenors at country level shape their Nutrition Dialogues 2.0 process – tailored to their specific country context**. The note has been developed by 4SD Foundation building on its own dialogue methodology and tested experience, enriched by learnings and practical insights from World Vision country offices. Convenors are encouraged to adapt the guidance to their local context.

Background and purpose of Nutrition Dialogues

World Vision and 4SD Foundation initiated the Nutrition Dialogues initiative in 2024 as a scalable model for inclusive, community-led nutrition advocacy. Phase 1 engaged more than 12'000 participants, with over 40% of those participating aged under 18, across 54 countries. Ahead of the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in Paris in March 2025, feedback from 346 Dialogue events has been synthesized in a [Global synthesis](#) report. The findings were used for advocacy at the N4G Summit, contributed to shaping N4G commitments and led to a global [Child and Youth Call to Action](#), presented by children and youth representatives to decision-makers at the global summit.

Building on strong momentum of the first phase, the initiative continues in 2026 promoting inclusive, action-oriented Nutrition Dialogues. In Phase 2, the same dialogue methodology is used to strengthen local advocacy and accountability, help communities influence policies, and accelerate actions that improve nutrition at local level. The purpose of using dialogues shifts from global listening to local impact and systemic change.

From a Nutrition Dialogue event to a process

A **Nutrition Dialogue event** is a structured conversation bringing together diverse actors to explore nutrition challenges and identify priorities for action. Dialogues are useful when complex challenges require multiple perspectives. A Nutrition Dialogue can be a Stakeholder Dialogue or a Children's Workshop.

The Nutrition Dialogues initiative is based on a set of '[Principles of Engagement](#)' for all stakeholders, to ensure a meaningful process and Dialogue events to play a valuable role in influencing ways to improve nutrition for all. Core principles of the dialogue methodology include:

- Be inclusive – engage all relevant stakeholder groups
- Listen deeply – do not judge
- Foster shared understanding, including where perspectives diverge – the goal is *not* to reach consensus

To familiarize yourself in more detail with the Nutrition Dialogue methodologies for Children's Workshops and Stakeholder Dialogues, refer to the '[Reference Manual for Convenors](#)'.

A **Nutrition Dialogues process** is a sequence of dialogue events designed by a convenor with a specific intent. The **value** of investing in a series of dialogues is to **increase local impact, influence decisions, and contribute to systemic change**.

A dialogues process is a learning process: Through collective listening of lived experiences across multiple dialogues, patterns become visible, and shared priorities emerge. Dialogues therefore become a process of collective listening, reflecting on diverse perspectives, and fostering collective intelligence and sense-making. The process helps transform conversation into collective learning and action.

A Nutrition dialogues process can be useful for influencing policy decisions, identifying gaps in programme implementation, strengthening advocacy, and ensuring inclusion of marginalized voices.

How to design a dialogues process?

As a convenor of a dialogues process, take the following steps to design your process and influence an outcome:

Step 1 – Clarify your purpose:

- What is the **change** you want to achieve?
- What **decision** do you want to **influence**?
 - *Examples: Influencing a political process on nutrition policies; ensuring funding availability to implement the national school meals strategy.*
- Has your process a **thematic focus**?
 - *Examples: Implementation of school meals program; nutrition education of breastfeeding women; broader general nutrition situation without thematic focus*

Step 2 – Understand your context:

- What is the **context** in which you are operating?
 - *Examples: District government developing a new nutrition policy; upcoming national nutrition event; collecting nutrition data after a natural disaster.*

Step 3 – Build your pathway of influence:

- What **output** are you aiming for?
 - *Examples: Call to action from children to local authorities*
- **Who** needs to be **engaged** in the dialogues?
 - *Examples: Local authorities, health workers, community leaders, teachers, farmers*
- **Who** needs to **hear the insights** from the dialogues?
 - *Examples: District authorities; national parliamentarians.*

Step 4 – Define the scope of the process:

- **How many** dialogues do you plan as part of your process?
 - *Examples: Combine both Children’s Workshops and Stakeholder Dialogues; or stick to one of the methodologies.*
- What **geographic area** do you focus on?
 - *Example: Selected areas with high prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition; ensure coverage across the entire country.*
- What **composition of stakeholder groups** do you aim for?
 - *Example: Children from different schools and community groups, with different social, ethnical and religious backgrounds.*
- What is the **timeline** of the process, including national or local milestones?
 - *Example: Dialogues over the next 4 months, informing the launch of a nutrition campaign at state level.*

Step 5 – Prepare for implementation:

- **Mobilize**, train and coordinate your dialogue convenors.
- **Safeguarding guidance for convenors of Children’s Workshops:** Ensure that facilitators are prepared to respond appropriately if a **child becomes distressed** during a dialogue or **shares concerns** about their safety, wellbeing, or experiences of abuse.

It is good practice for facilitators to be familiar with guidance on recognizing signs of distress or abuse in children, listening and responding in a supportive manner, and understanding available referral and support pathways. The following resources provide practical guidance to help create a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for children participating in Nutrition Dialogues:

 - [Preventing and responding to distress in all child participation activities](#)
 - [How to receive a disclosure](#)
- If needed, **adapt** your process to changing context (e.g. virus outbreak, erupting violent conflict).
- **Announce** the series of dialogues on the Nutrition Dialogues [portal](#) (put key words in title).

Step 6 – Turn dialogue into influence:

- After a dialogue, **upload** the completed **feedback form** on the Nutrition Dialogues [Portal](#).
- Review, **analyze** and **synthesize data** from all the dialogue events of your process to identify common patterns and shared priorities.

- Present the **key findings** from the Nutrition Dialogues process in a **report** (e.g. country synthesis report), including nutrition challenges, urgent recommended actions and policy implications.
- Use **key messages** and policy recommendations emerging from the dialogue process for advocacy purposes and to **influence policy processes**.

When is a Nutrition Dialogues process used?

Nutrition Dialogue processes can be used in the following situations:

- **Influencing policy development:** when governments or partners want diverse perspectives to shape and inform nutrition strategies or policies
 - *Output example: **new or improved nutrition policy***
- **Programme design:** when organizations want to understand community realities before designing interventions for nutrition programmes
 - *Output example: **specific programme intervention***
- **Strengthening advocacy and accountability:** when civil society wants to shape advocacy activities, translate community experience into policy influence, and hold the government accountable for commitments
 - *Output example: **Child and Youth Call to Action***
- **Collective learning and accelerating local action:** when convenors want to collect lived experience over time to monitor a nutrition situation, and to understand what is working, what the challenges are and what actions should be taken to improve nutrition outcomes
 - *Output examples: **collection of nutrition data; new community actions***

Convenor's roles in a dialogues process

The role of the **Convenor of a single dialogue event** is to:

- Plan, organize, convene the dialogue in line with the Principles of Engagement;
- Identify, train and brief the Facilitators and Record Keepers;
- Define the discussion topics;
- Select diverse participants;
- Ensure inclusive and meaningful participation by creating a safe and respectful environment where all participants, incl. marginalized groups, can contribute their views;
- Moderate the event;
- Consolidate the outcomes from the discussion groups;
- Submit the Feedback Form on the ND Portal;
- Document and communicate key recommendations and action points emerging from the dialogue to relevant stakeholders and decision-makers;
- Follow up on dialogue outcomes by promoting the use of recommendations in planning, policy development, advocacy, or program implementation processes.

In a **dialogues process**, the role of the Convenor evolves and becomes more strategic. Key **functions of managing the process** include:

- Develop a clear idea what to influence through the process;
- Design the process and define all relevant elements (purpose, focus, output, scope, pathway of influence, timeline), while remaining open and flexible to adapt approaches and decisions based on the insights and recommendations provided by dialogue participants, ensuring that their voices meaningfully influence the process and outcomes;
- Consider the existing power dynamics among participants to ensure that the voices of vulnerable and marginalized groups are not overlooked in the dialogue, and group participants in a balanced way to create a more inclusive and equitable space for meaningful engagement;
- Identify and recruit convenors of dialogue events (and possibly discussion facilitators), and train them on the Nutrition Dialogues programme, methodology and safeguarding;
- Regularly connect with, advice and support the dialogue convenors and discussion facilitators throughout the process;
- Ensure all Nutrition Dialogue events are announced on the ND [Portal](#) and Feedback Forms are submitted;
- Manage the consolidation of feedback from the sequence of dialogues;
- Develop, or accompany the development, of intended output product (e.g. Call to Action);
- Plan and manage the final milestone of the process, such as advocacy activities, presentation of outcomes to national authorities or similar;
- At the end of the process, provide feedback to the convenors, facilitators and participants of all Dialogue events on how the recommendations are being considered and acted upon, to ensure learning, establish accountability and build trust to encourage continued engagement for improved local nutrition outcomes.

The roles of the discussion facilitators and the record keepers remain the same (see [Reference Manual for Convenors](#)).

Success factors and risks of a dialogues process

To make the dialogues process a **success**, several factors can help influence a political process:

- **Timing:** Tailor the timeline of your dialogues process deliberately to influence relevant political opportunities;
- **Credibility:** Ensure commitment of the Convenor's organization to the process;
- **Clarity of output:** Present your final product in clearly structured, concise and easy-to-understand language, tailored to the target audience;
- **Communication:** Communicate your dialogues process plans early on with relevant actors, such as local authorities or community leaders, and keep them informed;
- **Relationships:** Engage your network and foster positive relations with relevant actors.

Possible **risks and limitations** of a dialogues process include:

- **Overclaiming impact:** A dialogues process can influence an outcome and have an impact. However, often this is one factor amongst several and should be recognized as such.
- **Limitations of qualitative data:** Qualitative data is gathered in smaller samples, providing valuable insights for a specific context without necessarily being scalable. For more generic evidence, qualitative findings should be combined with quantitative data. In data analysis, be aware of and limit the risk of bias. Personal assumptions or subconscious biases of facilitators, record keepers and data analysts can inadvertently skew data interpretation.
- **Fatigue and expectation:** Frequent consultations can result in participants' fatigue or excessive expectations. Provide feedback to participants on the dialogue outcomes to express appreciation of their invested time and efforts and to build trust for possible future engagements, and manage their expectations.

Country examples

Examples of Nutrition Dialogues processes conducted by World Vision country teams:

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The outcomes of over 100 Nutrition Dialogues convened by World Vision DRC in 2024/2025 were used for various successful advocacy activities during the School Meals Awareness week in March 2026. This included a Children's Call to Action submitted to the President of the National Assembly, children's participation in a radio broadcast reaching 1 million people to popularize the school meals programme, and a Faith Leaders Call to Action. The objective of these engagements was to raise awareness and ensure full implementation of the national school meals strategy. The ND 2.0 process is composed of a dialogues programme with Children's Workshops, Stakeholder Dialogues and Faith **Leaders'** Dialogues in World Vision Area Programmes across the country. The outcomes of ND 2.0 will inform advocacy and programmatic decisions of the ENOUGH campaign.

Ghana

The aim of Ghana's team is to gather lived experiences from students across the entire country to get a comprehensive picture on nutrition. Therefore, the ND 2.0 process convenes student consultations in World Vision Area Programmes that had not been engaged in ND 1.0. Additionally, the outcomes of Stakeholder Dialogues convened in three districts will inform the local launch of the ENOUGH campaign. The focus of these Nutrition Dialogues is to find out why malnutrition exists. The findings will guide World Vision where to put advocacy efforts to influence better nutrition outcomes through the ENOUGH campaign. The aim is to influence local authorities at district level, and to work with traditional and faith leaders to ensure changes at community level.

Sri Lanka

The purpose of the 2.0 Nutrition Dialogues process designed by the Sri Lanka team is to strengthen community-generated evidence by conducting dialogues in the same locations and with the almost same participants as in the first ND phase. Also, 2 locations have been added to capture the voices of the people who experienced natural disaster in 2025 in the country. The aim is to deepen

engagement with participants and build evidence across phase 1 and 2 to use the emerging insights for: local, national and global advocacy; the mid-term assessment and reshaping of the ENOUGH campaign; understanding the issues and gaps to influence policy implementation; and fundraising purposes. The process also helps understand the impact of the new government supporting nutrition facilities and activities. In this second phase, discussions include a focus on the impact of recent natural disasters on the nutrition situation of communities.

Zambia

In Zambia, the ND 2.0 process has a thematic focus on school meals with the objective to ensure availability of adequate funding to implement the new school feeding programme of the Government in a sustainable way. In a mix of Children's Workshops and Stakeholder Dialogues across all Provinces, questions around funding availability, quality and frequency of school meals are addressed. Geographic areas with high hunger and malnutrition are particularly prioritized. Children will present the outcomes of their dialogues in a Call to Action at the Global Child Nutrition Forum in Lusaka in November 2026.

These examples show how different countries design the Nutrition Dialogues process around a specific purpose and a decision they want to influence, adapt the process to their local context and tailor timelines around relevant political opportunities. **There is no single ideal model to follow. More important is to have clear objectives and targets for a dialogues process. Quality of intent and process matter more than format.**

For any questions on this guidance note, reach out to the Nutrition Dialogues support team at info@nutritiondialogues.org.