

When a mother is away attending to work, farming, or other family responsibilities, who makes sure the child eats a nutritious meal?

In Gicumbi District, the answer is increasingly becoming clear: **fathers have an important role to play.**

As part of the Positive Deviance Hearth (PDH) approach promoted by World Vision Rwanda in partnership with the Diocese of Byumba/Caritas Byumba and Gicumbi District, men are being encouraged to take a more active role in preventing and addressing child malnutrition. The approach goes beyond teaching families what children should eat; it also encourages fathers to become part of the everyday actions that protect their children's health and development.

During the training held in Gicumbi on 28 August 2026 under the Professional Umuganda initiative, participants explored how men can contribute to better nutrition within their households and communities. One of the practical lessons was that fathers can learn how to prepare nutritious meals for their young children, particularly when mothers are away attending to other responsibilities.

This simple shift can make an important difference.

“Caring for a child's nutrition is not only a mother's responsibility.”

By learning how to prepare appropriate meals, fathers can support their children directly while also sharing these practices with other men. The aim is to create a culture in which men see child nutrition as a shared family responsibility and actively contribute to their children's well-being.

The training also created an opportunity for men to encourage one another. Rather than keeping nutrition knowledge within individual households, trained participants can become role models for fellow fathers, showing that preparing food, feeding young children and monitoring their well-being are responsibilities that men can confidently take on.

This community-to-community learning is at the heart of the PDH approach, which builds on positive practices that already exist within families and communities and encourages people to use locally available resources to improve children's nutrition.

For Gicumbi District, strengthening men's engagement also supports the broader objectives of **Professional Umuganda** by turning knowledge gained during training into practical action within communities. When local professionals, leaders, families and community members work together, nutrition messages can move beyond training rooms and become part of everyday family life.

The involvement of fathers is particularly important because preventing child malnutrition requires action at household level. A father who knows how to prepare a nutritious meal, participates in feeding his child and encourages other men to do the same becomes part of the solution.

Through the continued collaboration between **World Vision Rwanda, Caritas Byumba and Gicumbi District**, the PDH approach is therefore not only strengthening knowledge about child nutrition. It is also helping to promote shared responsibility within families and encouraging men to take a more visible role in creating an environment where young children can grow well and thrive.