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DIALOGUE TITLE	Gemena GROUP 1 Religious Leaders Lend Their Voice for Child Nutrition
DATE OF DIALOGUE	Wednesday, August 13, 2025 08:30 GMT +01:00
SUMMONED BY	Sylvain KAYUMBA Feedback published on behalf of the organizer by: SYLVAIN KAYUMBA. Facilitator
LANGUAGE OF THE EVENT	French and Lingala
HOST PLACE	Gemena, Democratic Republic of Congo
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	community level
AFFILIATIONS	World Vision Cluster of Gemena Sud Ubangi
EVENT PAGE OF DIALOGUE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/fr/dialogue/59546/



SECTION ONE: PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	19
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PARTICIPATION BY AGE GROUP		
0 0-11	0 12-18	4 19-29
12 30-49	3 50-74	0 75+

PARTICIPATION BY SEX		
4 Female	15 Male	0 Other/Prefer not to say

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP	
0 Children, youth groups and students	0 Civil society organizations (including consumer groups and organizations environmental)
0 Educators and Teachers	19 Religious Leaders/Religious Communities
0 Financial institutions and technical partners	0 Food producers (including farmers)
0 Health professionals	0 Indigenous peoples
0 Information and Technology Providers	0 Large food companies and retailers
0 Marketing and Advertising Experts	0 Government officials and representatives national/federal
0 News and Media (e.g. journalists)	0 Parents and Caregivers
0 Science and Universities	0 Small/Medium Businesses
0 Government officials and representatives local/sous-national	0 United Nations
0 Women's Groups	0 Other (please specify)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS
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ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY
This dialogue on nutrition which brought together the 1st group of 19 Religious Leaders including 4 Women and 15 Men, at Gemenadans in South Ubangi and who have agreed to give their voice for the nutrition of children in their respective community as Pastor, Deacon, Animator, Evangelists...; they are confused men as women from different districts of Gemena city, province of South Ubangi, with the participation of a person living with a disability.

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

MANAGEMENT

It was by invitation 48 hours before that we were able to contact by telephone the Participants drawn from the database of Religious Leaders who were trained in FY24 in Prenatal Consultation (CPN) and Exclusive Breastfeeding (AME) and who became awareness raisers through focus groups within their community mainly targeting Fathers so that they get involved in the nutrition of children and pregnant women; At the same time, this is a support for the recommendation resulting from the dialogue sessions organized in December 2024. Since TPLivelihood was not available to co-organize this session, the TP Santé Nutrition did so at the Hôtel interpellation space in Gemena. The facilitator informed the participants that the current situation is serious, the current situation at all levels on malnutrition, this affected WV and myself to make it the battlefield, he made a brief introduction on the objective and the expected result of this dialogue (collect the points of view of community members for broad advocacy), then a power point presentation was made giving the different contexts of the situation of hunger and malnutrition, we defined some key concepts such as hunger, malnutrition, food insecurity. Then we explained the different types of malnutrition including acute malnutrition, chronic malnutrition, underweight and micronutrient deficiencies with their prevalence and the number of people affected;

DISCUSSION

This is why the facilitator explained and emphasized to the participants that the situation was devastating at all levels. The determinants of this malnutrition, the signs and their impact were demonstrated, as well as the behaviors to adopt to fight against malnutrition and thus improve the situation of the members of the communities of Gemena, most of whom recognized the fact that malnutrition undoubtedly exists. The explanations being clearly given, the participants were formed into 2 heterogeneous groups of discussions, focused on 3 major question groups including: Their perceptions/opinions and considerations/observations, problems/difficulties, related to malnutrition were collected; What are the root causes? What actions/commitments for nutrition should be taken and recommendations? The participants liked the presentation by asking to share the module of the presentation with them; testifies to the interest and good understanding. Participants listed the findings on malnutrition as follows: Lack of respect for the principles of nutrition (preparation, breastfeeding) by those responsible for children, Lack of family planning, Early weaning, Negligence of some parents for the feeding of children, Unemployment made some parents irresponsible for the food needs (quality, quantity, balance) of households, Polygamy practiced by most men, the influence of culture in which most women favor the feeding of their husbands to the detriment of children; no concept of savings for household food;

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE RESULTS

CHALLENGES

The following issues were raised during this dialogue, including: Late meal preparation due to the fact that parents all go out in the morning and return very late, they do not have the culture of food stock in the household, they give birth to many children with less income to take care of food, women do not respect exclusive or continuous breastfeeding, the diet given to children is far from balanced, ignorance of the principles of weaning, lack of notion of rational income management, alongside unemployment and unpaid or undecent remuneration for employees; recourse to foods without much nutritional value, and too cheap; the non-involvement of some Dads in the diet of their children, the non-adherence of some parents to family planning to reduce or limit the number of children who are a burden to feed.

URGENT ACTIONS

The ACTIONS/Recommendations to be taken are listed as follows:

Raise awareness among customers and provide support on:

- Good practices in food preparation and their importance;
- Encourage how to look for an occupation or work to be responsible for the household
- Family planning to combat unwanted births,
- Create agricultural credits;
- Vigilance and monitoring of the quantity and quality of food consumed by children;
- The initiative to have a plot of land and the breeding of small livestock or poultry
- Create many savings groups
- Do professional training
- Create associations for breeders and farmers and train them in product management and production
- Keep food stocks;
- Consume organic foods
- Change the cultural tendency of some women and men by favoring children's meals, by eating with children together to avoid food discrimination.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

For some parents, responsible polygamy has nothing to do with malnutrition if we know how to plan things; while other parents declare that since our income is so low, to embark on polygamy we risk not being able to control anything and we end up with many children that we will not know how to feed according to nutritional principles, causing malnutrition; on the one hand and on the other hand the refusal to adhere to family planning methods on the part of many Pastors, even influencing their Church deeds are at the origin of malnutrition because there are many mouths to feed, that being said other Pastors have adhered to family planning methods and they have avoided unwanted births and there are fewer and fewer mouths to feed hence the measure fighting against malnutrition in children. Another bridge of divergence is that some Dads monitor if the children have eaten well and are satisfied, and the tendency of some is to invite the children to the table to eat with them or leave them part of the meals that they

always consider special prepared by the Wives sign of a special attention to the husbands that they are supposed to protect and cherish; some women/wives reacted by saying that they do not appreciate such attitudes from men when we want to take good care of them, they involve the children, in their understanding they see as if we accuse them of not taking good care of them creating misunderstandings and conflicts source of divorce contributing to the installation of malnutrition. Finally, the choice of less responsible spouse, the observation made after marriage, shows that there is the poor management of household resources against that carried out before marriage but responsible (spouse in the dynamics of matrimonial regime "community of property or separation of property cemented by egocentrism).

GENERAL SUMMARY

The AP Ledia of the Gemena Cluster organized this nutritional dialogue, in line with the logic of the "Enough" campaign which intentionally targeted the Religious Leaders whose capacity we already had in Prenatal Consultation and Breastfeeding which they use until today as themes to raise awareness among Fathers and Mothers responsible for children in focus group format, hence this dialogue is the result of the databases of these Religious Leaders from different Churches of Gemena; we managed to bring together 19 participants including 4 women and 15 men in this workshop, we shared the nutritional situation and the very critical hunger at all levels and in turn, listen to their points of view; it took place in the meeting room of the Hotel Interpellation Gemena, and we explained to them that they are associated to collect their points of view with a view to broad advocacy at all levels and to obtain solutions to the problems of hunger and malnutrition which affect several households. We listened to the participants to know their perceptions or the root causes of malnutrition, the actions to be taken, what strategy to achieve it, thus creating a space for debates and exchanges by constituting the discussion groups so that everyone could have the opportunity to express themselves freely and openly. This is how the facilitator proceeded with the presentation on Powerpoint to explain the subjects; such as the definition of key concepts (hunger, malnutrition, food insecurity), the different types of malnutrition (acute malnutrition, chronic malnutrition, overweight, underweight, and also explained obesity and micronutrient deficiencies) but also we made the participants understand the triggers of malnutrition, the number, the categories of people most affected by this malnutrition. After these explanations, comes the time for open debate; 2 heterogeneous groups were formed (10 versus 9 people), followed by group work with discussion questions shared to each of these groups: What are your perceptions regarding the nutritional situation in your respective communities? What are the nutritional deficiencies identified by each group in light of the realities in their respective contexts - What are the urgently needed actions and how should they be taken? The participants listed the triggers of malnutrition as follows: Unbalanced diet among pregnant women who end up giving birth to low-weight children, neglect and irresponsibility of parents for the feeding of children, non-compliance with Exclusive Breastfeeding of Children and continued breastfeeding by breastfeeding women to the detriment of children; lack of employment (unemployment), lack of good quality food, insufficient quantity of food, poor preparation of food, no credit for agricultural products, ignorance about nutrition, early weaning, poverty, unpaid wages and unfair (not decent) for workers, poor management of finances (poorly distributed income within households).

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT AND METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF COMMITMENT

The principles of engagement were observed and noted by the participants throughout this dialogue, including: 1. <monitoring the children's diet, if necessary, eating together with them to reassure themselves that what the adults eat is what they also eat and they eat to their satiety. This would avoid certain cultural practices among some women who think that the husband should be given first priority in food and the children come second; 2. Persuade husbands who always impose themselves and demand to be well served to the detriment of the children, for their change of mentalities; the Churches now have the responsibility to make their battlefield all the conditions that disadvantage the food and nutrition of children.

METHOD AND FRAMEWORK

The methodology used was andragogical and participatory and the principles are those related to their interest and real need for their community in the light of sharing made on certain practices found normal while it is abnormal, upsetting, touching statistics at the global, national and provincial/Health Zone level that were presented to them in record time (less time with a precise/concise, and key message; without granting a question-answer game at the end.

TIPS FOR OTHER CONVENERS

Emphasize the points of divergence that need to be mentioned so that participants who can only have that as an idea are not stifled from expressing their thoughts. But also take care to involve all religions for greater diversity.

RETURN FORM: INFORMATION ADDITIONAL

THANKS

We would like to thank the Religious Leaders of different faiths for facilitating contact to reach others because they are already connected by doing focus groups on the importance of CPN and Exclusive Breastfeeding in their respective Health Areas (involvement, mobilization for this dialogue, to whom we express our feeling of gratitude, but also thanks to the cluster manager for his encouragement and support, in a context of overlapping act

RELEVANT LINKS

- Gemena GROUP 1 Religious Leaders speak out for children's nutrition https://nutritiondialogues.org/fr/portail/edit-dialogue/?id=59546#tab_feedback

ATTACHMENTS

- Attendance list and consent form DN Group 1 <https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/liste-de-presence-DN-G-UN-1.pdf>