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DIALOGUE TITLE	Nutrition Forum in Luwuwoshi: Religious Leaders
DATE OF DIALOGUE	Monday, August 18, 2025 09:30 GMT +02:00
SUMMONED BY	Edouard MUSASA, Effectiveness Program Coordinator, Cluster Lubumbashi and Augustin Kazadi, Luwuwoshi Child Well-Being Facilitator Luwuwoshi AP Event announced on behalf of the organizer by: {advertiser_name}. {explanation} Feedback published on behalf of the organizer by: Francine Nyemba Lukusa. Technical support
LANGUAGE OF THE EVENT	Swahili and French
HOST PLACE	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Community level
EVENT PAGE OF DIALOGUE	https://nutritiondialogues.org/fr/dialogue/59628/



SECTION ONE: PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	15
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PARTICIPATION BY AGE GROUP		
0 0-11	0 12-18	0 19-29
4 30-49	11 50-74	0 75+

PARTICIPATION BY SEX		
2 Female	13 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	15 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	1 Other (please specify)

OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY
The nutrition dialogue session brought together a diversity of religious leaders representing several faiths local, including Vent de Miracle, Jehova Nissi and the Orthodox Church, thus illustrating a broad representation geographical and

SECTION TWO: FRAMING AND DISCUSSION

MANAGEMENT

Religious leaders took part in discussions on nutrition, focusing on hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition, and local risk factors. The participatory approach adopted fostered an open and inclusive dialogue, allowing for the identification of challenges, possible solutions, stakeholders to mobilize, and cultural barriers to overcome. The results were shared in plenary to enrich the discussions. The axes exploited around the theme focused on the basis of the dialogue on nutrition through several main axes. The facilitator denounced the concepts of hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition, placing them in a global context marked by multiple crises. He emphasized human nutrition as a fundamental right linked to several areas (health, education, gender, climate). He explored the determinants of good nutrition, the benefits of nutritional improvement, the different forms of malnutrition and their impacts, at-risk groups, particularly women and children, and presented the global nutrition situation through key data. Finally, it provides reliable sources for nutritional monitoring and analysis at global, national and local levels.

PRESENTATION OF THE NUTRITIONAL SITUATION

https://nutritiondialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FR_Introduction_Nutrition_Slideset_Dr_Ph_2024-5.pptx

DISCUSSION

During the community session in Luwowoshi, local leaders engaged in focused discussions on the causes and solutions to malnutrition in their immediate environment. They identified low dietary diversity, dependence on a few food crops (particularly corn and cassava), and lack of access to protein sources as aggravating factors. To address these factors, they proposed promoting family vegetable gardens, encouraging the cultivation of local vegetables rich in micronutrients (amaranth, sweet potato leaves, moringa), and the raising of small animals (chickens, goats) to improve protein intake. The leaders also emphasized the importance of strengthening nutritional knowledge through community education sessions, led by trained local representatives. They proposed integrating schools and health centers into this dynamic, using these spaces as support points for awareness-raising and the distribution of fortified meals. Cultural barriers, such as dietary taboos related to the consumption of eggs or meat by children and pregnant women, were openly discussed, with proposals for intergenerational dialogue actions to deconstruct them. In terms of follow-up, the leaders recommended the establishment of village nutrition monitoring committees, responsible for collecting simple data on children's growth and eating habits, in collaboration with health workers. Finally, they emphasized the need to mobilize local authorities to support these initiatives with resources and a favorable political framework. These concrete proposals reflect a strong desire to build sustainable solutions, rooted in the realities of the territory and driven by the communities themselves.

SECTION THREE: DIALOGUE RESULTS

CHALLENGES

Participants in the nutrition dialogue workshop identified several challenges that hinder good nutrition for children in their community. These include:

- Lack of parental employment, polygamy, early pregnancy, large household size and marital breakdown;
- Poor management (excessive spending) and lack of initiative in households;
- Lack of supervision or subsidies from the government;
- Low incomes and socioeconomic instability in households;
- Food scarcity on the local market, not to mention monetary fluctuation;
- Climate disruption or climate change, leading to low food production;
- Poor access to arable land, which is already occupied by mining companies (Malta Forest, Chemaf and Ruashi Mining);
- Poor knowledge of parents about dietary diversification;
- Lack of information on infant and young child feeding in a particular way and good nutritional practices in general;
- Chronic illnesses leading to the inability of the head of household to work or have sufficient income to cover the needs of the entire family.

URGENT ACTIONS

To ensure good nutrition, the participants wished to:

- Reduce unemployment among community members: through job creation and entrepreneurial initiative;
- Strengthen agricultural production: the community would like to improve pig breeding conditions already in operation and promote the agricultural sector with food crops for the community;
- Mobilization through churches on the spirit of entrepreneurship and courage in job search; with a view to enabling empowerment of households; Isaiah 55: 1-3, Deuteronomy 28: 1-5
- Awareness on the importance of agriculture, team spirit, creativity and diversification of sources of income.

Genesis 1:26-28.

- Awareness raising through churches on desirable birth and good nutritional habits.
- The creation of IGAs: the community would like there to be several income-generating activities in households and would like capacity building on the management of income-generating activities (IGAs)
- Community awareness on the importance of food security and good nutrition in households
- Community awareness on the importance of promoting agricultural production in the community and households. This is the case of local markets and local farmers

Participants revealed some cultural barriers that hinder good nutrition of community members, such as: Prohibitions: some religions prohibit members from consuming pork, catfish, rabbits and eggs. (Seventh-day Adventists, apostolates).

Hence the importance of mass education on good social rules, health education of couples on good nutritional practices, desirable births and non-stigmatisation of people.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

During this discussion, a divergence was noted among the root causes of malnutrition in children. Some participants emphasized socio-economic factors, pointing out that unemployment, lack of electricity and lack of entertainment lead many couples in the community to have close births, because for a man, the greatest entertainment remains his wife and for the woman, to prevent the man's indelicacy, she agrees to sleep with her husband at any time, even during the critical period of ovulation. The consequences include closely spaced pregnancies, large household size, poor access to adequate food, leading to malnutrition in children under 5, pregnant and breastfeeding women. This divergence highlighted a gap in interpretation of the roots of the problem, highlighting different perspectives on the solutions to be favored. Some participants emphasized the poor knowledge of parents on contraceptive methods, good nutritional practices and the lack of notions of educating couples at the church level on responsible sexuality. On the other hand, some participants stressed the importance of community involvement, emphasizing the role of households in improving children's nutrition and food security conditions, i.e., households must take ownership of actions implemented by the government and NGOs and enable their sustainability in the community (agriculture and livestock).

GENERAL SUMMARY

During the community workshop held in Luwuwoshi, religious and community leaders took part in in-depth discussions on nutrition, focusing on hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition, and local risk factors. The participatory approach adopted allowed for an open and inclusive dialogue, promoting the identification of major challenges, appropriate solutions, stakeholders to mobilize, and cultural barriers to overcome. The facilitator introduced key nutrition concepts in a global context marked by multiple crises, while emphasizing that nutrition is a fundamental right linked to health, education, gender, and climate.

The discussions then turned to local realities. The leaders identified several structural causes of malnutrition in their community: low dietary diversity, dependence on a few food crops (corn, cassava), lack of access to protein, poor nutritional knowledge, and limited access to arable land, often occupied by mining companies such as Malta Forest, Chemaf, and Ruashi Mining. To address these issues, they proposed concrete solutions: promoting family vegetable gardens with local vegetables rich in micronutrients (amaranth, moringa, sweet potato leaves), raising small animals (chickens, goats), and strengthening nutrition education through community outreach and sessions in schools and health centers.

Religious leaders played a key role in identifying cultural barriers, including food taboos and sexual practices within couples. A significant divergence emerged around the root causes of child malnutrition. Some participants emphasized socioeconomic factors: unemployment, income instability, lack of electricity and entertainment, which they believed favor closely spaced births. They explained that, in this context, men find their main entertainment in marital relations, while women, for fear of indelicacy, accept frequent intercourse, even during periods of ovulation. This leads to early and closely spaced pregnancies, large household sizes, and increased pressure on food resources, exacerbating malnutrition among children under five and pregnant or breastfeeding women.

Other participants highlighted the lack of awareness about contraceptive methods, good nutritional practices, and educating couples on responsible sexuality, particularly within churches. They recommended that religious leaders integrate these themes into their teachings to encourage lasting behavior change. At the same time, the importance of community involvement was emphasized: households must take ownership of initiatives implemented by the government and NGOs, such as agricultural and livestock projects, to ensure their sustainability.

Participants also identified several structural challenges: polygamy, teenage pregnancies, poor household resource management, lack of government subsidies, food scarcity on the local market, monetary fluctuations, climate change affecting agricultural production, and chronic diseases limiting the working capacity of household heads. For monitoring, the establishment of village nutrition monitoring committees was proposed, with the mission of collecting simple data on children's growth and eating habits, in collaboration with health workers.

In short, the discussions allowed for a common vision to emerge: the fight against malnutrition requires solutions rooted in local realities, carried by the communities themselves, with support from the authorities and the mobilization of religious leaders to deconstruct cultural barriers and promote adequate nutrition.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT AND METHOD

PRINCIPLES OF COMMITMENT

The Nutrition Dialogue Workshop was concluded with a commitment from all participants; namely: equity and social inclusion: all participants, regardless of origin or religious affiliation, expressed themselves in a participatory manner during the discussion on hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity. The principle of equity was implemented by ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to participate equally and meaningfully in the discussions, regardless of their religion, socio-economic background or status. In addition, the principle of inclusion was respected throughout the event (men and women).

METHOD AND FRAMEWORK

We used a participatory approach that encouraged open discussions. Group discussions were structured around four main themes: nutrition challenges, urgent actions to be recommended, points of divergence/convergence, and recommendations. Interactive activities and brainstorming sessions were also used to encourage the active participation of all stakeholders.

TIPS FOR OTHER CONVENERS

Organizing this workshop with religious leaders as part of the Nutrition Dialogues is taking place in the fourth quarter of FY25 with many implications on budgetary restrictions; hence, it is crucial to organize these meetings during the second or third quarter. Ensure you create a safe environment, encouraging mutual respect and tolerance. Incorporate interactive, participatory and fun methods to foster stakeholder engagement

RETURN FORM: INFORMATION ADDITIONAL

THANKS

We would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Edouard MUSASA, program effectiveness coordinator of the Lubumbashi cluster, for his availability in the planning and implementation of this workshop. Our thanks go directly to the religious leaders of Luwuwoshi for their essential commitment and active participation for the success of this dialogue. A big thank you to the leaders of the Orthodox Church for their valuable contribution to the logistics (the framework, chairs and tables) and