





The United Republic of Tanzania

Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children

Post - National Food Systems Dialogue with School-Aged Children and Adolescents





11th to 13th October, 2021 Arusha – Tanzania



A report on the Post - National Food Systems dialogues with School-aged Children and Adolescents, held from 11th - 13th October 2021 held at Sub-Treasury Building in Arusha.

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The Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre with support from different partners, organized Post - National Food Systems dialogues with School-aged Children and Adolescents. The dialogues were held in Arusha - Tanzania from 11th October to 13th October 2021.

The successful copletion of the dialogues is a results of efforts of many. To this effect, the Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre wishes to thank the United Nations Children's Fund for the finacial and technical support provided.

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It is not easy to thank each and everyone individually, however, Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre is aware of the contribution of each one and all are thanked.

Dr. Germana Leyna

Executive Director

Tanzania Food and Nutrition Cente



Post - National Food Systems Dialogues with School-aged Children and Adolescents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In line with Global UN Food Systems Summit, Tanzania convened Pre-National Food Systems Dialogues under the Ministry of Agriculture. After the Pre-National Food System, Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC) in collaboration with Ministries of Agriculture in Tanzania together with other partners engaged youth to facilitate and lead a Post-National Food Systems Dialogue with School-aged Children and Adolescents.

The Post Food Systems Dialogue offered an opportunity to emphasize on the pre dialogues agreed national actions for improving national food systems which will deliver nutritious, safe, affordable, and sustainable diets for all.

The dialogues objective was "To engage school-age children and adolescents through food systems dialogues so that

they can highlight existing food system challenges and suggest actions for addressing them".

Findings from the dialogues may be included in the national food and nutrition guidelines and standards, public sector policies and action plans including the NMNAP II

During the dialogues, school-age children and adolescents shared experience related to food systems and nutrition. They also gave an indication of the level of knowledge on food system, healthy eating and life style.

Dialogues were conducted through physical meeting with school-age children and adolescent (10 – 19 years). Twenty participants were purposely selected, two from each zone. Of the twenty participants only 17 (7 girls and 10 boys) attended.



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The school-age children and adolescents were drawn from 8 zones of Tanzania mainland (DHS Zones). The other four participants were drawn from Unguja (2 participants) and Pemba (2 participants). The zones were: Western, Northern, Central, Southern, South, South west highlands, Lake zone, East and Zanzibar. Ten school-age children and adolescents were from primary and five from secondary schools and two out of school (adolescent mothers). Of the seventeen participants, four (4) were adolescents with disabilities. The types of disabilities were visual and hearing impairment and autism.

The dialogues, findings indicated that, youth food preferences are not met. The most preferred types of food fall under the group of cereals, tubers and green bananas, followed by fruits, vegetables animal products and legumes, fats and sugars were the least preferred.

The children also provided benefits of food security to children, youths and the community in general, but also provided

challenges in accessing nutritious food. Furthermore, the children provided recommendation on how to improve food system, healthy eating and life styles.

Finally, the school-age children and adolescents, promised to be role-model in addressing food system and healthy eating withing their households, school and in the community.

ABBREVIATIONS

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization

NMNAP II National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan II

SGDs Sustainable Development Goals
TFNC Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre

UN United Nations

UNICEF United Nations Children Fund

WFP World Food Program



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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Global UN Food Systems Summit

September 2021, In UN Secretary-General António Food Guterres convened а Systems Summit as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. With only 10 years remaining, many of the 17 SDGs remain far out of reach. In many cases, unsustainable food systems are part of the problem.

Scientists agree that transforming food systems is among the most powerful ways to change course and realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda. Rebuilding the food systems of the world will also help respond to the UN Secretary-General's call to "build back better" from COVID-19. The need is urgent and the ambition from the UN Secretary-General is high. The UN Food Systems Summit was intended to launch bold new actions, solutions and strategies to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable, and equitable food systems. In addition, there is a need to initiate a move on food systems, where each government has to improve their food systems. It is hoped that the UN Food Systems Summit will serve as a turning point in the world's journey to achieve all the SDGs.

1.2 Tanzanian context

1.2.1 Tanzanian nutrition situation

Tanzania has made significant progress in the reduction of all forms of malnutrition among under 5 years of age children, particularly stunting, which has decreased from 42 per cent in 2010 to 34 per cent in 2015 and further decreased to 32 per cent in 2018 . However, the decline curve has flattened out meaning the progress has slowed down and the country is yet to address malnutrition among school- aged children and adolescents.

According to the national school malaria and nutrition survey report (2020), a third (33.7 per cent) of school- aged children were anaemic, one quarter (25.0

per cent) were stunted, a tenth (11.7 per cent) were underweight, 5.1 per cent were overweight and 1.1 per cent were obese. The situation is compounded by many structural challenges including an inadequate-functioning food systems.

1.3 Food systems

A well-functioning food system comprise of the policies, services and actors needed to ensure that all children have access to a good diet, defined as nutritious, safe, affordable and sustainable diets. Therefore, food systems bear critical responsibility for the nutritional quality, safety, availability, affordability and sustainability of children's diets.

Food systems have proved to have other drivers than wellbeing and the nutritional status of children and therefore often fail to cater for the nutrition rights and needs of children when determining what foods to produce, process, pack, store and market. Furthermore, the cost and extended preparation time of nutritious and safe foods are also driven by other factors than the best interest of the





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child and often puts them out of reach for many households. The result of the mentioned factors is often that ultra-processed and less nutritious foods are widely available, affordable and heavily marketed, directly affecting children's nutrition status in a negative way.

1.3.1 The Pre-National food system dialogues

Tanzania is member the United **Nations** (UN) and committed towards is the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) 2030. Tanzania is also among the UN member countries in which many of the 17 SDGs

remain far out of reach and same reason of global, "unsustainable food systems" is mentioned out as one of the reasons for failure to reach the above-mentioned goals in the country. As scientists has agreed that transforming food systems is among powerful ways to change the cause and realize the vision of the 2030 goals hence the country wished to change its food systems of through use of dialogues. In line with Global UN Food Systems Summit, Tanzania convened Pre-National Food Systems Dialogues under the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture conducted a number of dialogues (12 events) with a

(over 820 physically and 650 virtually) including farmers, youth, business community, CSOs. smallholder farmers, members of the parliament, food vendors to scientists and CFOs.

A mixed approach of physical virtual meetings were and applied during such dialogues in cognizance of public health concerns related with COVID-19 pandemic. The dialogues were effective inclusive platforms 4) Climate change adaptation where visions and voices of a and spectrum of stakeholders were harnessed to inform the futures livelihoods; and

diverse range of stakeholders and pathways to Sustainable Food Systems and SDGs large. The discussions consolidated into six main levers of food systems transformation namelv:

- 1) Production and productivity in crop, livestock and fisheries subsectors:
- 2) Financing Agriculture private sector involvement
- 3) Nutrition/Heath diets and safe food for all and School feeding meals:
- biodiversity protection; 5) Resilient food systems and



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6) Sustainable food systems enablers including ICT, gender, environment, equity, R&D, political economy).

Δfter the Pre-National Food System Dialogues, Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC) in collaboration with Ministries of Agriculture in Tanzania together with other partners and the financial support from UNICEF engaged vouth to facilitate and lead a Post-National Food Systems Dialogue with Schoolaged Children and Adolescents.

1.3.2 The post national food system dialogue with school aged children and adolescents

The post food system dialogue in Tanzania offered an opportunity to emphasize on the pre dialogue agreed national actions for improving national food systems which will deliver nutritious, safe, affordable and sustainable availability of food to children, adolescents and all population groups at large.

The Post national food system dialogues represented a huge opportunity to unpack food

systems: to understand their views and perspectives, to explore their lived experiences, insights and aspirations on how they would like food systems to evolve. Thus, Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre in organized a post Food Systems Dialogue with School-aged Children and Adolescents. The dialogue took place from 11th - 13th October 2021 in Arusha Region.

1.4 Objective

The objective of the dialogue was "To engage school aged children and adolescents through food systems dialogues so that they can highlight existing food system challenges and suggest actions for addressing them.



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2.0 METHODOLOGY

Methodology at a glance

Adolescent centered participatory methods including group discussion, gallery walk, group work and presentations in a plenary were used to get the school aged children and adolescents views. There was an interlude of ice breakers related to food systems.

2.1 The approach

2.1.1 Selection of the participants

Twenty participants were purposely selected to attend the dialogue but only 17 (7 girls and 10 boys) attended. The selected participants were from the 8

zones (two from each zone) of Tanzania mainland (according to Tanzania Demographic Health Survey Zones); and Unguja (2 participants) and Pemba (2 participants).

The selection of participants zone-wise, offered an opportunity for country-wide selection of the participants. Also, the selection of the fore mentioned participants, was considered as an appropriate number due to consideration of prevention of COVID 19 as the dialogue was done physically. Gender balance was also taken



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into consideration among the criteria, hence 10 girls and 10 boys were proposed to participate in the dialogue. The other criterion for selection of participants was the education level, hence eight (8) were from primary schools, four (4) from secondary school and four (4) were from out school. These participants were accompanied by their parents/ guardians.

The participants were from the following regions: Arusha, Unguja Mjini, Kigoma, Katavi, Kusini Pemba, Kaskazini Pemba, Lindi, Morogoro, Mjini Magharibi, Ruvuma, Singida and Shinyanga. Amongtheattendedparticipants, ten were from primary schools, five from secondary school and two out of school (adolescent mothers). Of the seventeen participants, four (4) were adolescents with disabilities. The types of disabilities were visual impairment, hearing impairment and autism (Appendix II).

2.1.2 Modalities

Day one and two, were used mainly for the orientation of participants to the food systems by their facilitators (Appendix III). Thereafter, the participants were engaged in discussions on various issues specifically healthy eating and life styles. On the third day in the presence of guest of honor (Arusha Regional Medical Officer representing



Regional Administrative the Secretary) and invited guests, school aged children and adolescents highlighted their experiences with regards to food systems, challenges they face in accessing nutrition foods and actions to be taken by different actors to address the situation. Adolescent centered participatory methods including group discussion, gallery walk, group work and presentation in a plenary were used to get the participants views.

Local and national media, social media and other digital platforms from Arusha region were engaged in the dissemination of recommendations from the food

systems dialogues with school age-children and adolescents. Prior the actual dialogue, it was preceded by media seminar presentation to the media houses people. It aimed at orientating them on various issues on nutrition, food systems, healthy eating and life styles so that they can assist in the dissemination of the received knowledge. Their details are in appendix IV.

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3.0 KEY FINDINGS

Key findings at a glance

the From discussions, the school-age children adolescents, explained their views about food, food mapping, types of foods they most prefer, sources of these food, who makes decisions about what they eat, types of foods the don't prefers and associated reasons and source of information about food. They also listed challenges they are facing in accessing nutritious food. In addition they proposed actions to be taken to address the situation.

3.1 Participants views about food

A set of questions were used to get the participants views about food. They participants asked to explain on their own words what food is. There were various answers. The answers were: "Food is what we eat", "Food is something that gives us nutrients", "Something that a living organism eat in order to survive, get energy, prevents diseases and provides heat". Others said that, "food is a complete diet that a human

being eats and is prepared at the home". After these answers, the and facilitator concluded by giving heir the proper meaning of food: ping, "Food is anything that we eat or efer, drink and provides nutrients to who the body".

3.2 Food mapping

With regards to food mapping, the participants were asked to list food they eat regularly, food they eat occasionally (Eid, Maulid, Easter, Christmas) and food they wish to eat when they have their own choice. They were further probed as follows: "Why



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do you eat this food?, "Where do you get this food?" and "How do you know about the food you have mentioned?

3.3 Type of food eaten regularly

The types of food eaten regularly as mentioned by participants under were the group tubers cereals. and green namely ugali, bananas, rice and green banana. Other food groups mentioned were: Fruits, vegetables, legumes and animal source food respectively. Foods under the group of fats, sugar and honey were the least consumed. Their responses quoted verbatim are as follows:

3.3.1 Why do they eat these food regularly?

When asked why they eat these types of food regular, they mentioned:

Lack of choice

"I have no choice is the only type of food available"

Availability

"I eat what I eat because it is easily available"

Peer pressure

"This is the type of food my friends eat"

3.3.2 Where do you get these food?

Majority of participants reported that they get/buy food from the



market. Others mentioned that they got their food from: shops, food vendors, home garden and 3.4.1 Why do they eat these from school

3.3.3 How do you get to know about the foods you eaten regularly?

Most of the participants said that, they get information about the type of food they eat regularly from parents, schools (teachers), media (television), school food committee, tales and stories.

3.4 List food/ they eat occasionally (Eid, Maulid, Easter, Christmas)

Most of participants reported that they eaten occasionally: Pilau, cake, biriani, chips chicken, soft drinks (soda), salads, rice

and roast meat.

food occasionally?

During holidays, they eat the mentioned types of food because:

"It is a special day and hence a special meal is eaten"

When they were asked to mention hindering them factor from eating those foods on regular basis, they said that "These types of food are expensive"

3.4.2 Where do they get these food?

The participants mentioned that they get these types of food from the neighbors, home, church, hotels and canteen.



3.4.3 How do they get to know about the foods you mentioned that are eaten occasionally?

In response to this question they said that, the source of information is home, neighbors, parents, church and hotels.

3.5 Food they wish to eat when they have their own choice

3.5.1 What food do they eat when they have their own choice?

When they were asked about In choice to decide on what to eat, they mentioned: Soup, milk, fruits, chapati, chicken chips,

chips mixed with eggs, cooked hananas and tea with milk

3.5.2 Where will they get these foods?

The places where they would get these types of food are: Home, shop, market, from street vendors, hotels, kiosks and supermarket.

3.5.3 How do they get to know about the food they eat when they have their own choice?

answering this question, the type of food, they could majority mentioned that they got have eaten when they have the information from their peers.



3.6 Benefits of food security to children, youths and the community in general

The benefit reported were:

It strengthens body immunity hence reduced the chances of diseases hence costs of medical care. Italso provides energy which enables the body to perform different functions hence helps individuals to participate in different activities at school and home. Furthermore, it improves thinking capacity for better academic performance as well as supporting physical growth and development.





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4.0 Discussions: Challenges school aged children and adolescents face in accessing nutritious diet

4.1 Challenges adolescents face in accessing nutritious diet in school

participants The mentioned following the challenges accessing nutritious food school: Shortage of money to buy food; Large number of students compared to the available food school; Poor Corporation between parents and the school contributing authorities on to buying food stuffs. Other challenges mentioned Poor access to balanced meals especially setting; in rural Students are not involved in choosing meals to eat; Shortage of cooking utensils and kitchen equipment in school settings and Lack of food varieties provided by food vendors around the school premises (they only provide fried foods).

4.1.1 Who has influence over what you eat at school?

With regards to who has influence over what adolescents eat while at school, they mentioned the following: Head of the school teacher, headmaster. headmistress), fellow students and teachers. Other mentioned influencers School were: committee, assistant head teacher/master and personal decision.

4.2 Challenges in accessing nutritious diet at home

Challenges facing adolescents in accessing nutritious foods at their homes were: Poverty, lack of knowledge about balanced/ healthy diet, environment is not conducive enough for the preparation of meals especially nutritious diet and decision of the parents and sometimes they provide only one type of meal. challenges Other mentioned constraints Time in were: preparation of nutritious meals, poor infrastructure when



comes to transporting produce to communities and taboos and customs that hinder some members of the family from eating certain types of food.

4.2.1 Who has influence over what you eat at home?

With regards to who has influence over what adolescents eat while at home, they mentioned the following: Parents/guardians, neighbor, friends and personal decision.

4.3 Challenges in accessing nutritious diet in the community

Challenges facing the adolescents from accessing nutritious foods at the community were: Food stuffs are expensive,

the environments where food stuffs are sold are not conducive (unhygienic), lack of funds to buy varieties of food stuffs to prepare a balanced meal and parents do not educate their children healthy eating. about Other challenges were: Lack of land to cultivate fruits, vegetables and other types of crops, poor infrastructure for transporting agricultural products and taboos customs practices hinder some members of the community from eating certain types of food.

4.3.1 Who has an influence of what you eat in the community?

A leader of the respective area (Hamlet/village), food vendor,



personal decision and religious leaders were mentioned as influencers when to comes to eating healthy foods in the community.

4.4 Suggested ways to addressing challenges in accessing healthy diet at different levels

The suggested ways by school aged children and adolescents in addressing challenges in accessing healthy diet at different levels were as follows:

4.4.1 To the Community

They suggested to educate the community on the importance of engaging in income generating activities so that they can get enough money to buy variety of food, to educate community

members on the importance of cultivating variety of foods and food vendors to be educated to provide variety of food in the proper hygiene premises.

Other suggested interventions were: The whole community should he educated and participate in promoting healthy habits eating and lifestyle, to form platforms where community members will discuss about

healthy eating, to involve health care providers in educating community members on nutrition and healthy eating during outreach services and the community to come up with strategies on how to access nutritious diet.

4.4.2 To School Authorities The adolescents proposed the following to be done by the school authorities: To improve the school hygienic conditions within and around environment. to involve students in decision making regarding school meals through school committees which will provide diversified food, to provide advice parents on healthy eating habits and lifestyle and to form healthy eating and lifestyle committee in schools to address food and nutrition related issues.

Other suggestions were: To to organize organize fund raising activities on healthy effor supporting sustainability lifestyle to to school meals, to initiate and students.

platforms where students can air their views on issues related to healthy eating habits and lifestyle (lishe clubs), To motivate parents to contribute towards school feeding programs, to develop sustainable school gardens and small animal keeping.

Other suggestions were: To make sure that the collected funds for school meals are not allocated for other purposes, to make sure that teachers who are responsible for school feeding are educated about healthy eating habits and lifestyle and to organize regular seminars on healthy eating habits and lifestyle to teachers, parents and students.



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4.4.3 To parents and guardians The participants suggested that, the parents and guardians should be educated about healthy eating habits and lifestyle, involve children in the choice of foods, be educated on the importance of home gardening and small animal keeping and be provide a nutritious diet on a regular basis.

Other suggestions were: Parents and guardians should engage in income generating activates for them to afford food items and educate their children on healthy eating habits and lifestyle.





4.4.4 To the Government

The government was advised to allocate land for food cultivation and livestock keeping, allocate sufficient funds for school meals proportionate to the number of pupils/students, form various projects for income generation, agricultural make sure that like fertilizer and inputs insecticides are available and at an affordable price and to reduce tax rates in food production.

4.4.5 To Individuals

The adolescents promised 4.5 to improve environmental sanitation, educate the community about healthy eating and lifestyle, advice fellow peers trusto engage in home gardening and to a

small animal keeping and reduce the consumption of unhealthy foods. They also promised to use the available groups in schools like school clubs and scouts in promoting healthy eating habits and lifestyle, participate in food production system, conduct outreach session within and out of school environment and to raise their voice while exercising their rights to seek for healthy meals from people who have authority like parents.

4.5 Who do you trust when it comes to nutrition and healthy eating?

The following were listed as the trusted persons when it comes to nutrition and healthy eating:



The president (government 4.7 officials), parents/guardians, artists, religious leaders, doctors, nutrition experts and teachers.

4.6 Means through which messages about healthy eating can be communicated to school children

Means through which messages about healthy eating can be communicated to school children were: Media (television), tales and stories, school food committee, parents and teachers.

4.7 Means through which messages about healthy eating can be communicated children who are out of school

Means through which messages about healthy eating can be communicated children who are out of school were: Media, magazines and newspapers and radio. They also mentioned to form community group on healthy eating, to compose songs and to organize bonanza that involve artists.



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5.0 Recomendations

Generally, school aged children and adolescent recommended the following:

5.1 Infrastructure

They recommended to continue to improve road and water infrastructure to accelerate the production of nutritious food.

"Improved road and railway networks and water supply systems will help to accelerate the production of nutritious food"

5.2 Taxes and tariffs

They recommended to reduce taxes and tariffs on agricultural products and food stuffs.

"We recommend the reduction of taxes and tariffs on agricultural products and food stuffs; this will lower the cost of food hence we will manage to buy and eat nutritious food"

5.3 Farm implements

They recommended to continue to support farmers with farming implements including seeds, fertilizer and insecticides.

"Farm implements are expensive and some of the farmers cannot afford to buy them, we recommend to continue to support farmers with seed, fertilizer and insecticides"

5.4 Behaviour change communication

Other recommendations were to use strategies and materials (print materials, bonanza, fora and meetings) to educate the community about nutrition and healthy eating.

"Most of the people are not aware of what eating healthy is, we recommend to continue to use different fora to disseminate information about nutritious food and eating healthy"

5.5 Employment opportunities

They recommended continue to provide employment opportunities to bridge the income gap.



"If employment opportunities are availed, families and individuals will get enough income where part of their income will be used buy nutritious food"

5.6 School meetings with parents

They recommended in the organization of school meetings with parents and students to be involved and discuss on nutrition and healthy eating

"We recommend the organization of school meetings with parents and students, the meetings should discuss school feeding and provision of nutritious food to students"





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5.7 Allocation of space for gardening and keeping livestock

"We recommend space to be allocated for vegetable and fruits growing as well livestock keeping at school and in the community"

5.8 Participation of parents in school feeding

"Our parents have to be sensitized on the importance of contributing on school meal"





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6.0 Channels to be used to provide information to school aged children and adolescents

6.1 Infrastructure

6.1 Proposed channels by school aged children and adolescents to be used for provision of nutrition information.

"Our parents, youths and the community can be informed **6.1.5** about nutritious diet and health "Medieating through different ways as and not listed below."

6.1.1 School food committees

"Form school food committees with and parents that will also involve pupils/students"

6.1.2 School clubs

They recommended the formation of school clubs that will provide education on nutrition and healthy eating.

"We recommend the formation of school clubs that will provide information on nutrition, healthy eating and life styles"

6.1.3 Organize seminars on regular basis

"We recommend seminars on nutrition and healthy eating, on regular basis"

6.1.4 Use of village and hamlet meetings

"Village and hamlet meetings to be used to educate the community on nutrition and healthy eating"

6.1.5 Media

"Media including television, radio and newspapers/magazines to be used to educate the community about nutrition and healthy eating"

6.1.6 Sports bonanza

"Organize sports bonanza that will involve artists and youths with knowledge on nutrition to disseminate information on nutrition and healthy eating"

6.1.7 Youth involvement

"Involve youth with knowledge on nutrition to educate their fellows and the community about nutrition"



6.2 What we can do

"We promise to be role models "We by eating healthy and avoiding envi unhealthy foods" sani

"We promise to educate other youth on nutrition through youth groups"

"We promise to conduct community outreach activities to out of school youth and distribute IEC/BCC materials"

"We promise to participate in keeping vegetable and fruit gardens at home and at school" "We promise to improve environment cleanliness and sanitation in order to increase food production and prevention of diseases"

"We will raise our voices to people with authority to demand for our right to be provided with healthy and nutritious food for better nutritional status."







APPENDICES







Appendix 1: Secretariat

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Appendix II: School aged children, Adolescents and their Parents/Guardian

S/N	NAME OF ADOLESCENT	NAME OF PARENT/ GUARDIAN	NAME OF SCHOOL	DISTRICT	REGION	PHONE NUMBER
1	Grace Donald Adam	Wanumbilya Mujungu	lkungi p/s	Ikungi	Singida	0754422601
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12	Zacharia Ramadhani Kipala	Mussa M. Chama	Igwamanoni Sec School	Kahama	Shinyanga	0762983031
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