FEEDBACK MECHANISM
THE GUIDELINES

Hurricane Dorian Operation

BAHAMAS RED CROSS

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Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Bahamas Red Cross

People have a right to complain or give feedback on the decisions that affect them. An effective mechanism can prevent complaints from escalating while also promoting a culture of transparency and accountability.

The BRCS Community Feedback Mechanism has been established in the Bahamas as part of the IFRC Hurricane Dorian Emergency Appeal. The mechanism aims to ensure accountability to affected populations and the prevention of any form of exploitation and abuse. The mechanism is designed to promote inclusiveness for any and all community members to provide feedback in a manner that is safe, confidential, transparent, and accessible, enabling the BRCS and the IFRC to respond and make any necessary programmatic or safeguarding adaptations and to ensure the safety and security of our communities.

These guidelines serve as standard operating procedures for IFRC and BRCS in order to ensure a consistent approach across locations and sectors. This document serves all ongoing and anticipated programs, and will remain a living document to accommodate the evolving context in The Bahamas, and respond to lessons learned and changes in the country portfolio.

The document will be updated when a new program is added to the portfolio and/or when the operating environment requires adaptation to ensure equal community access to the feedback mechanisms.

What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.
- Aristotle

"The Eye Sees Only What the Mind is Prepared to Comprehend"

- Henri Bergson

1. The Fundamental Principles

All the work carried out by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is based on seven **Fundamental Principles**. These principles can only work if they are understood and respected in practice. Listed below is a shortened version of the Fundamental Principles. For further information, speak to your manager or attend the online course entitled *The World of Red Cross and Red Crescent* (*WORC*), which is available on the [Learning Platform](#) of the **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent.**

Humanity
If you could help, would you walk on by?
We are the world´s largest humanitarian organization. As part of the Movement, you should be prepared to help prevent and alleviate human suffering whenever it may be found.

Impartiality
Shouldn't everyone who needs help receive it?
As part of the Movement, you will be helping those in need without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, social or political status; therefore, you should endeavor to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality
How can we make sure that we are trusted by everyone?
In war zones, the Red Cross is entrusted with a unique role, e.g. visiting prisoners of war and crossing front lines to tend to the wounded, whichever side they are on. To safeguard this vital work, it is essential that the organization, and its staff and volunteers, maintain a neutral stance and don´t engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence
What would happen if we were no longer autonomous?
We are not a governmental agency or controlled by any government or political body. We always maintain our autonomy so that volunteers can act in accordance with the Principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service
What is our motivation for helping those in need?
You are now part of a voluntary relief movement, committed to helping people in need and not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity
Is anyone excluded from joining the Red Cross?
No, the Society is open to all who have accepted the Fundamental Principles, and we all need to ensure that everyone is welcomed. United we stand, divided we fall.

Universality
Is the Red Cross ready to help everywhere?
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all National Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

2. Terminology

What is feedback?

Feedback is information shared by communities to the organization. It may be positive or negative, and it is often more informal and does not require a formal response, although it should be shared with program staff. Feedback provides the BRCS with vital information with regards to how communities perceive the intervention of the organization with regards to impact. As such, feedback uncovers relevant and sensitive details that could prove to be pivotal in the implementation of the organization's programs and help tailor and guide its operation for efficiency and effectiveness. Feedback can come from different sources and can be about any information that is unclear about us, our work, a disease, or myths and misconceptions that are circulating in communities that people are asking/talking about. We can receive different types of feedback from communities, and that´s why we organize feedback into 6 different categories:

1. QUESTIONS
About our programmes, us or other issues, which tell us what the gaps in knowledge are and what people would like to know.

2. SUGGESTIONS
Ideas from the community about how to tackle issues or what we could do better or differently.

3. RUMORS
information and beliefs circulating in the community about us, a specific topic like a disease, or other issues

4. COMPLIMENTS
Praise from communities showing what they are happy with.

5. REQUESTS
Informal or formal inquiries asking for assistance, which tell us what might be needed and the gaps in available services and assistance.

6. COMPLAINTS
Complaints are expressions of dissatisfaction or discontent with something, and/or someone's misconduct, that requires a response. Complaints may be about:

- **Programme Complaints** regarding the quality of programme work. This may include timeliness, safety, and appropriateness of activities. It includes complaints about targeting, quality of items or services, and non-fulfilment of promises.

- **Sensitive Complaints** regarding staff or volunteer behaviour. This may include disrespect towards community members; allegations of corruption, nepotism, favouritism or discrimination; or allegations of sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation. Sensitive complaints may also be about the role and actions of any committees working as part of the RC activities.

This poster can be used for training purposes to help frontline workers better understand and memorize the 6 different categories of feedback.

WHAT IS FEEDBACK?

WORD SEARCH

S	U	G	G	E	S	T	I	O	N
B	F	R	Q	P	N	B	Y	D	C
R	V	E	U	S	C	E	A	I	O
U	H	Q	E	L	B	K	C	V	M
M	N	U	S	D	A	L	R	A	P
O	J	E	T	U	B	W	O	R	L
R	M	S	I	H	J	A	S	Z	A
S	D	T	O	P	D	O	C	X	I
U	G	E	N	E	V	A	P	K	N
C	O	M	P	L	I	M	E	N	T

**Find: QUESTION-SUGGESTION-RUMORS
COMPLAINTS-REQUEST-COMPLIMENT**

6 CATEGORIES OF FEEDBACK

QUESTION: About our services, us or other issues, which tell us what the gaps in knowledge are and what people would like to know.

SUGGESTION: Ideas from communities about how to tackle issues or what we could do better or differently.

RUMORS: True or false information and beliefs circulating in the community about us, a specific topic like a disease, or other issues.

COMPLIMENT: A praise from communities showing what they are happy with.

REQUEST: Informal or formal inquiries asking for assistance, which tell us what might be needed and the gaps in available services and assistance.
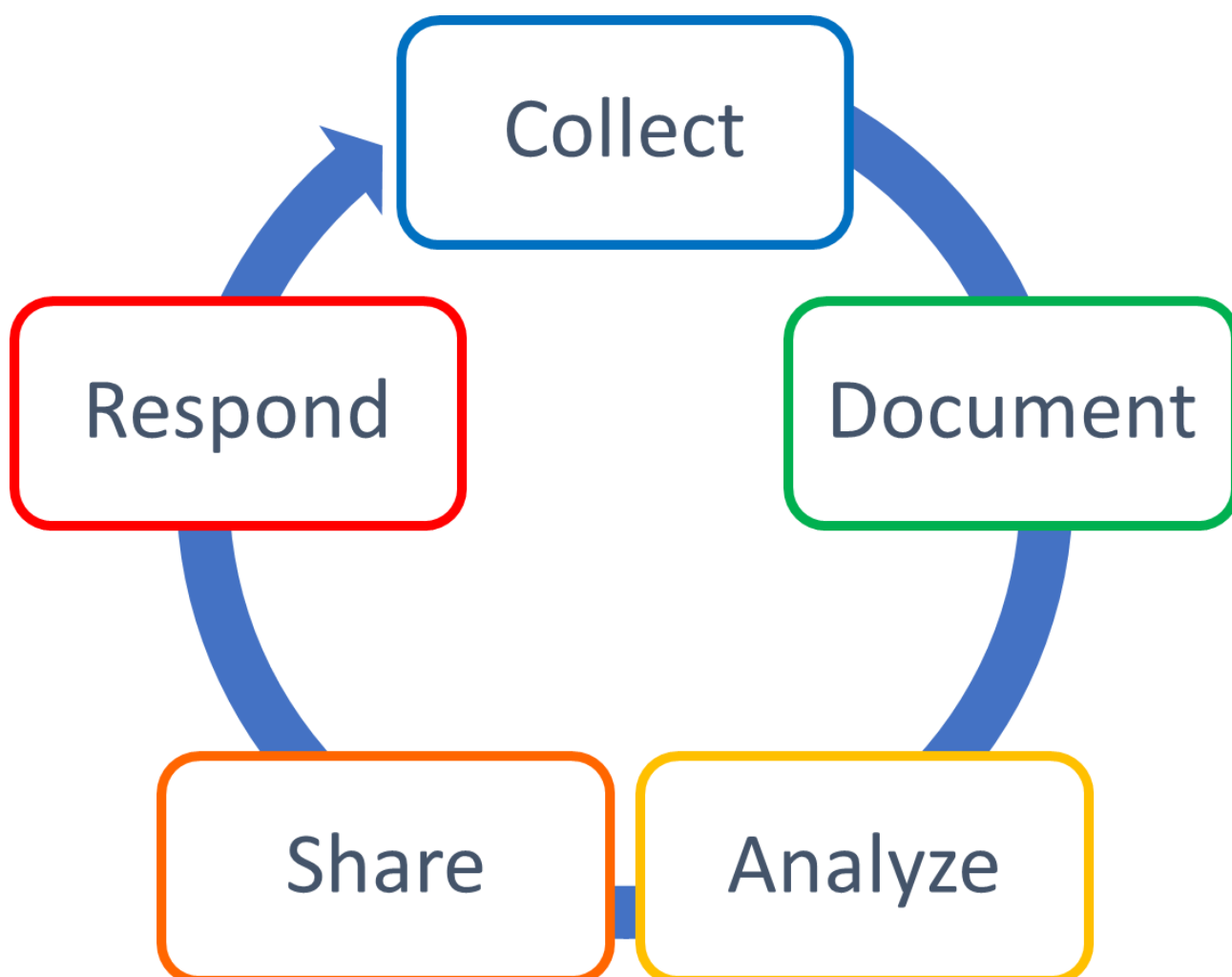
COMPLAINT: Formal expression of dissatisfaction or discontent with something, and/or someone's misconduct, that requires a response. Complaints may be about the quality of the program (**PROGRAM COMPLAINT**), or misbehavior of staff/volunteer (**SENSITIVE COMPLAINT**).

DRAW A LINE BETWEEN THE FEEDBACK AND THE RIGHT CATEGORY

QUESTION	KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!!
SUGGESTION	I AM SO HUNGRY, DO YOU HAVE ANY FOOD TO GIVE ME?
RUMOR	THE DISEASE YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT IS MAINLY KILLING WOMEN
COMPLIMENT	I STILL HAVEN´T RECEIVED THE CASH TRANSFER, BEEN WAITING FOR 3 WEEKS
REQUEST	YOU SHOULD WORK WITH US MORE! (YOUNG PEOPLE)
COMPLAINT	WHERE CAN WE EXCHANGE THE VOUCHER FOR FOOD?

✚C IFRC

THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Collect

Document

Analyze

Share

Respond

3.1 COLLECTING FEEDBACK

The Feedback Channels

CHANNEL	DESCRIPTION
Feedback Hotline 1-(242)-300-2333	The BRCS Hotline is a toll-free, anonymous and confidential feedback hotline, operated from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. The hotline is bi-lingual, staffed by two trained hotline officers; one English-speaking and one Creole-speaking. Its main purpose is to receive, respond to, and refer incoming feedback guided by the **standard operating procedures**. The hotline number is displayed in strategic places within the office premises and also proactively disseminated to communities related to program interventions.
Community Meetings	Community meetings and focus group discussions utilized to address feedback and complaints, as well as to inform and consult target communities about BRCS interventions and target messages. The frequency of meetings depends on the nature of the interventions. During the meetings, the BRCS volunteer in charge will document all feedback and complaints through their reporting template, and it will be addressed accordingly. The meetings are inclusive to ensure equal participation from all community members.
Feedback Boxes	Feedback boxes are located outside the BRCS offices in Nassau, Abaco and Grand Bahama, for community members to relay comments and/or concerns towards the BRCS in a confidential and anonymous way through the **BRCS feedback form** accessible in both English and Creole. Every box has a lock, and only the CEA focal points will have the key. All boxes have **feedback forms** with **instructions** in a pocket placed on the front side of the boxes. The boxes are emptied before the end of each working day. Mobile feedback boxes are also used during relief distributions, and community and household visits.
Household Visits	Household visits will be a key approach for discussing program/branch progress and an integral part of both monitoring and feedback collection, in particular related to the shelter programme, and interventions concerning elderly and disabled persons. During household visits, feedback is collected according to the **BRCS standard operating procedures for collecting and answering feedback.**
Face to Face	Feedback may be received by BRCS staff and volunteers through face-to-face interactions during community visits or when persons visit the BRCS office. Feedback is collected and answered in accordance with the **BRCS standard operating procedures for collecting and answering feedback.** The feedback form should be made accessible in the BRCS office on a daily basis. All BRCS frontline workers should have enough feedback forms in their possession whenever community visits are undertaken.
Bulk SMS	Note: This channel is not used to collect feedback, but only to disseminate key messages at scale and is further demonstrated under the section *Responding to feedback.*

WHY DO WE COLLECT FEEDBACK?

HELPS US TO IMPROVE

Every programme receives complaints and feedback, and they should be viewed as a positive way to help identify areas where we need to improve and to help build trust and confidence with local communities. Community feedback is invaluable to the programme and helps you to judge what is working well and what might need to be adapted. It helps us provide better services and support and use resources more wisely.

CATCH PROBLEMS EARLY

An effective feedback mechanism can prevent complaints from escalating while also promoting a culture of transparency and accountability. One feedback system was found to help calm community tension, and fewer days were lost to security risks than before the system was set up – people had an outlet for questions which stopped them developing into rumours.

HIGHLIGHTS CASES OF FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

It is important to have a reporting system so that communities can report any instances of abuse or corruption by staff, volunteers – or even people posing as Red Cross staff and volunteers.

IT'S PEOPLE'S RIGHT

People have a right to complain or feedback on the decisions that affect them, and it is our responsibility to listen – it is in the Code of Conduct and the Principles for Humanitarian Response.

PROTECTS VOLUNTEERS

Having a feedback system in place can reduce the pressure on volunteers and make it easier for them to respond to and refer difficult questions or complaints they receive while in the community doing their work.

CAN YOU THINK OF MORE REASONS?

IFRC

3.2 DOCUMENTING FEEDBACK

The first tool to be completed when a feedback is received is the **feedback form** filled in by a volunteer/ staff at the branch or HQ.

All feedback is documented with the feedback form the moment they are received by the staff/volunteer. The CEA Senior Officer will receive the feedback form on paper on a daily basis, after which all feedback is transferred into **the digital feedback form**. The feedback form on paper and the digital feedback form contain the same basic information, which disaggregates the feedback as follows:

Received through	Sex	Age	Type of Feedback
Select the feedback channel through which the feedback was received	If identified, select the sex of the person giving feedback	If identified, enter the age of the person giving feedback	Select the right category that describes the type of feedback being documented

Location before	Current Location	Vulnerabilities	Sector
If identified, select the island on which the person giving feedback was residing on before Dorian	If identified, select the island on which the person giving feedback was residing on after Dorian	If identified, select the vulnerabilities related to the subject of the feedback	Select to which sector the feedback relates

Is the feedback sensitive?	
YES	NO
All feedback indicating any misbehaviour of staff/ volunteers is sensitive feedback. Refer to the standard operating procedures for collecting and answering feedback, and select YES when documenting. All sensitive feedback is handled separately from other feeedback and in accordance with the PSEA protocols.	The sensitivity of the feedback does not depend on the vulnerability of the person giving feedback. If the feedback does not describe misbehiour of staff/volunteers, the feedback is not labelled as sensitive.

Status of the feedback		
The referral pathway for the feedback is controlled by the documented status, and indicates how the feedback was dealt with by the staff/volunteer receiving the feedback		
OPEN	CLOSED	REFERRED
Select OPEN if the feedback requires any kind of follow up action	Select CLOSED if the feedback was resolved and does not require any follow up action	Select REFERRED if the person giving feedback was referred to an external service

TOLL-FREE - ANONYMOUS - CONFIDENTIAL
GRATIS - ANONIM - KONFIDENSYÉL

Your Voice Matters To Us!

1 **Ask** if you can receive support from the Red Cross.

2 **Give feedback** or raise issues regarding the way our support is provided.

3 **Report issues** regarding your safety or the safety of others in your community.
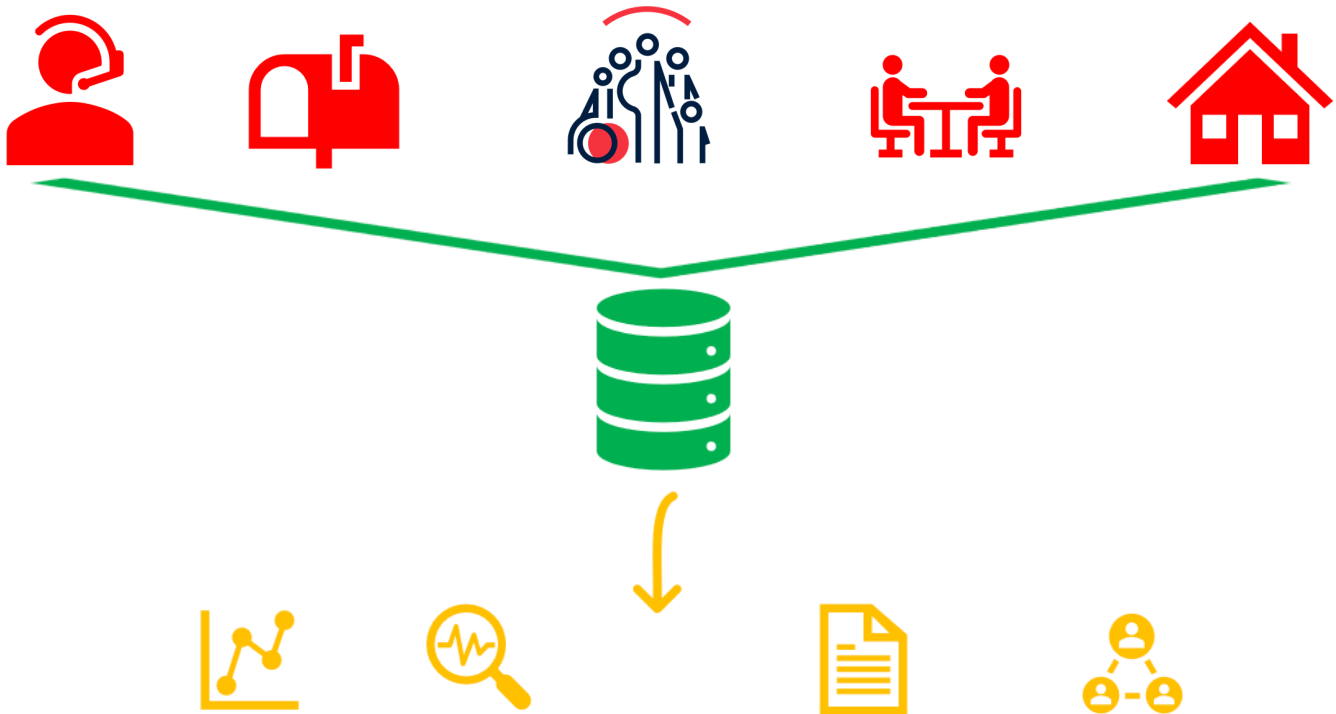
1-242-300-2333

Vwa Ou Enpotan Pou Nou!

1 **Mande** sou ou la resevwa sipo nam men Make A Wouj

2 **Bay fidback** oswa ogmante problem konsenan wout la soti sipo yo bay la.

3 **Repote pwoblem** konsenan sekirite ou oswasekirite lot mon nan lavi ou

BAHAMAS RED CROSS

**OPEN 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM
MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

**LOUVRI DE 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM
LENDI A VANDREDI**

3.3 ANALYZING FEEDBACK

UNDERSTANDING THE FEEDBACK

Feedback is data analyzed according to the type of feedback, geographical areas, sectors, and is sex and age disaggregated. This data will then be analyzed by the BRCS CEA Senior Officer to identify trends or patterns with monthly feedback updates being produced and shared with relevant stakeholders on open and closed feedback cases and any additional relevant analysis.

The collected data can only go so far as to identify the problems and make recommendations about how to change course. The crucial part is to adjust the programme or operation based on the information received and analyzed (see the section on Share and Act on Feedback).

In addition to feedback updates, the feedback analysis is presented through the **CEA Dashboard**, which is publicly accessible and updated twice a week.

3.4 SHARING AND ACTING ON FEEDBACK
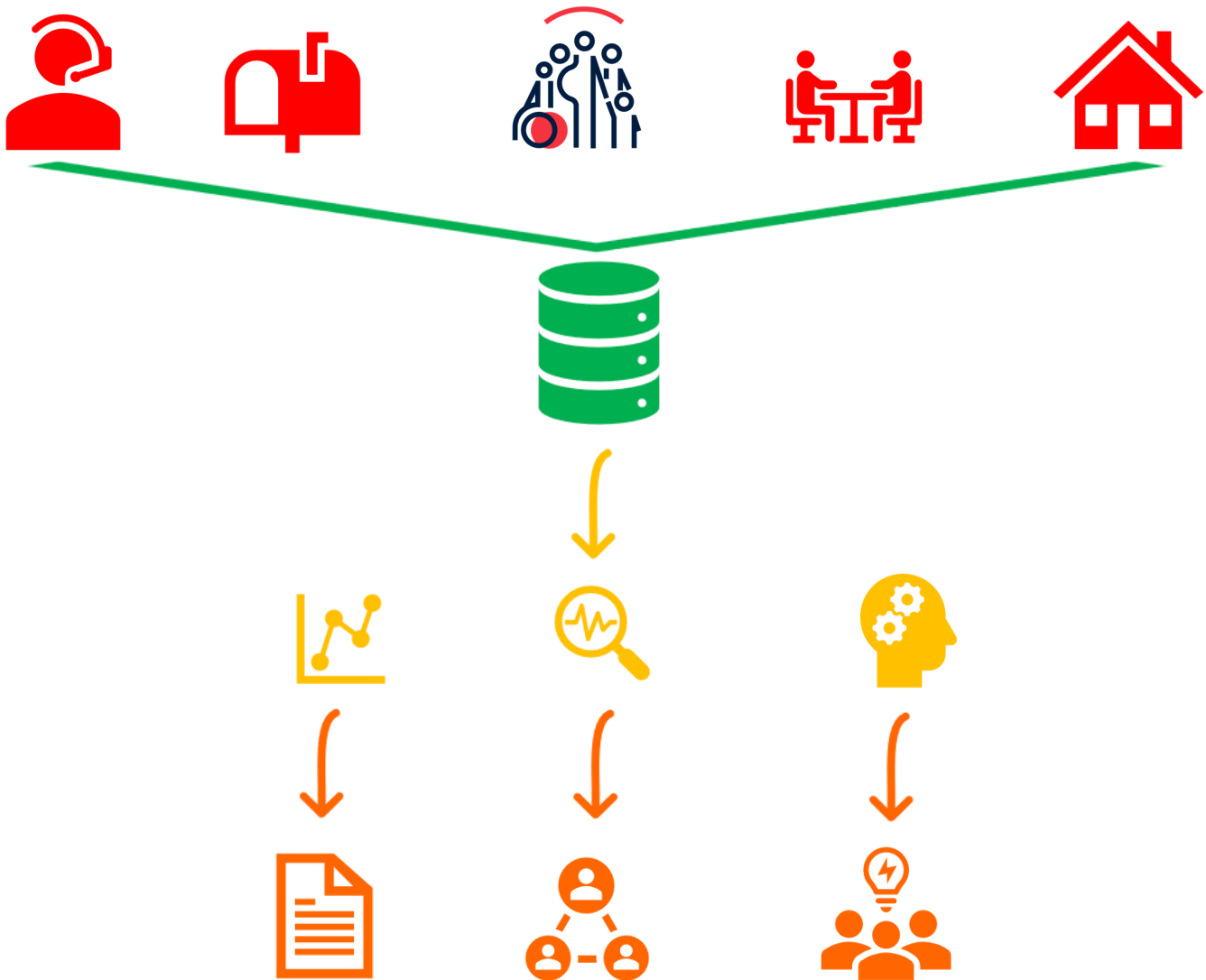
ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITIES

Sharing and acting on feedback means that the feedback analysis is used to inform programmes about identified problems and make recommendations for improvements so that necessary adjustments are made according to feedback received in a systematic manner.

Community Feedback Update Reports
The BRCS CEA Senior Officer is responsible for producing and sharing community feedback update reports bi-weekly with relevant stakeholders, including all sectors, the operation manager, as well as programme staff and volunteers. Feedback leading to significant changes should be shared with the relevant wider communities for accountability purposes.

Reports and feedback sharing only contains general quantitative information about trends and patterns to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of persons giving feedback.

Finding solutions for programmatic improvements
With the support of the BRCS CEA Senior Officer, the relevant sector is responsible for ensuring consultation with the respective community in finding solutions and necessary improvements based on identified trends and patterns from the feedback mechanism through focus group discussions and community meetings.

3.5 RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK
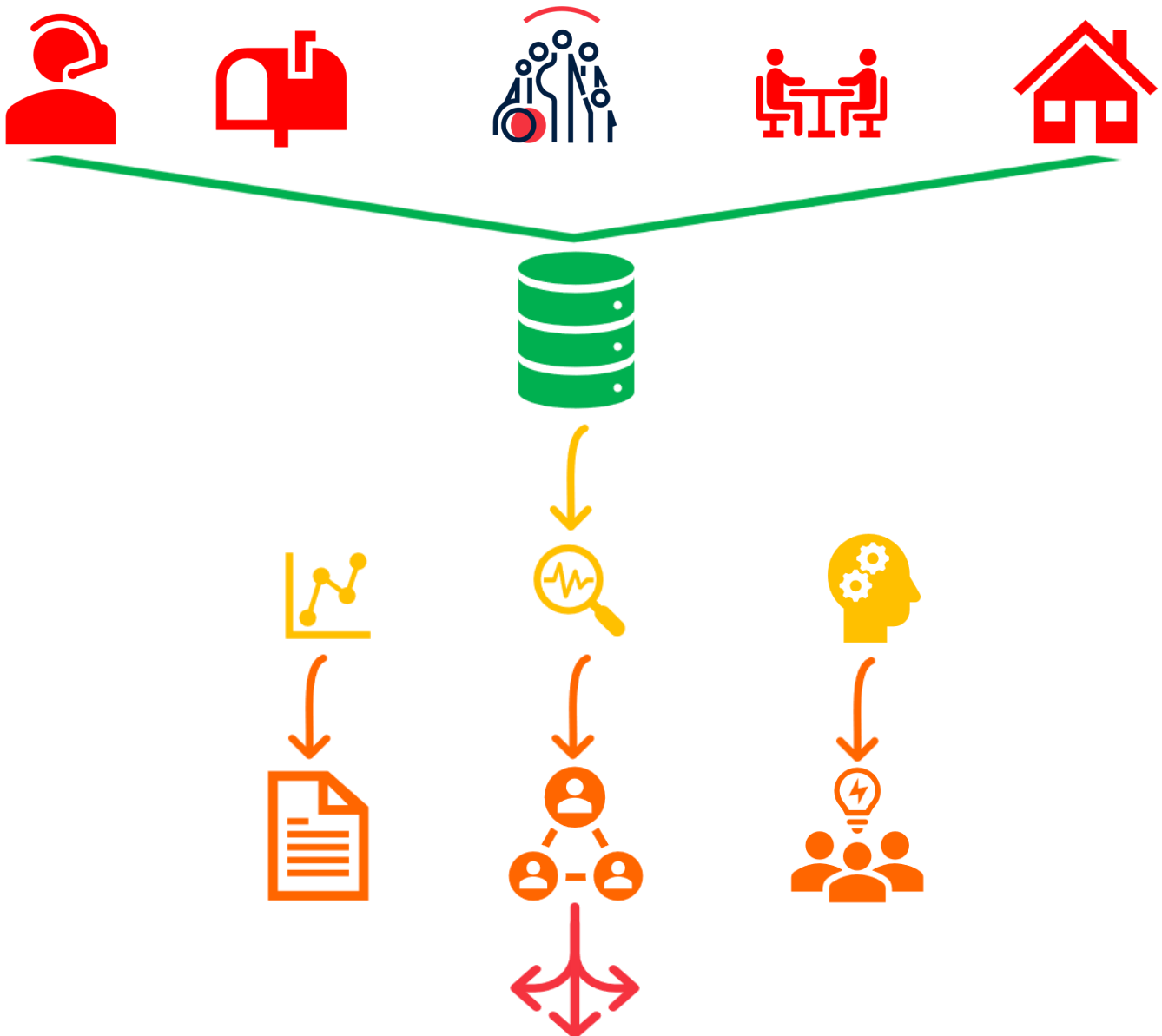
CLOSING THE LOOP

The goal is always to answer feedback immediately with knowledge of the programme and according to the FAQ document. It is important that the answer is actionable, and the person understands the solution provided.

Once feedback is documented as OPEN with the digital feedback form, an email notification is automatically generated to the relevant referral focal point, who is responsible for resolving the feedback case within 3 working days from the time when the feedback was received, and updating the database accordingly using the **Guide for BRCS staff on how to access and manage feedback through the CEA database.**

The BRCS CEA Senior Officer is responsible for monitoring the response rate as well as the quality of the responses.

When feedback is submitted anonymously, general information on the case and any resulting changes to program activities will be shared with the larger community if relevant and appropriate.

The FAQ document is regularly updated based on feedback analysis with the support of the BRCS Communication Officer. **The Bulk SMS guidelines** are activated when necessary to disseminate key messages and to inform about programme delays and changes.

THE FEEDBACK LOOP

COLLECT

DOCUMENT

ANALYZE
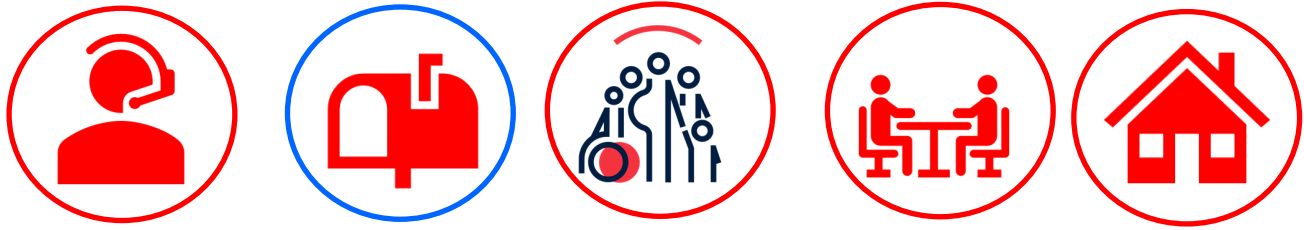
SHARE/ACT

RESPOND

Bulk SMS

FAQs

FGDs
Community Meetings

14

4. Improving the Mechanism

MONITORING

In order to adapt to the evolving operating environment and community needs, the mechanism will be monitored and evaluated at the country and program levels. The BRCS CEA Senior Officer will produce a monthly report on open and closed feedback cases and any additional relevant analysis, disaggregated by geographical areas, sex, age, sector, and type of feedback. The report will not contain any personal identification information and will be shared with the relevant stakeholder at BRCS and IFRC. Documentation of adaptations made to implementation or operations will be the responsibility of the BRCS CEA Senior Officer/PMER Officer.

Questions related to knowledge of, perception and satisfaction with the mechanism will be incorporated into focus group discussions (FGDs) and post-distribution monitoring (PDM) surveys. If more specific feedback is captured through these methods, the PMER officer responsible for analyzing the data will forward all feedback to the BRCS CEA Senior Officer to log in the CEA database and process appropriately.

Discussion participants and survey respondents will never be asked if they have ever submitted feedback to the BRCS in order to protect their anonymity and confidentiality.

EVALUATION

The EPoA indicators will be measured by the IFRC to identify patterns in feedback and potential areas for improvement. These indicators will be measured across all programs in the country portfolio. Satisfaction and knowledge questions will also be incorporated into endline and/or PDM surveys, and results will be used to modify the mechanism for future interventions and programs.

5. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Emblems

The Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems are the linchpins of our humanitarian activities in peacetime and in times of conflict. They have two purposes:

- **To protect the victims of armed conflicts and those who assist them.**
- **To indicate that a person or an object is linked to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**

In both cases, they are symbols of neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance. They have no religious significance, and they are protected by international and national law. The protective value of the emblems must be built up in peacetime, because it may well be too late once hostilities have begun. We can all play a role in protecting the use of the emblems by reporting their misuse. For more detail, please refer to the 1991 Emblem regulations:

https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/57jmbg.htm
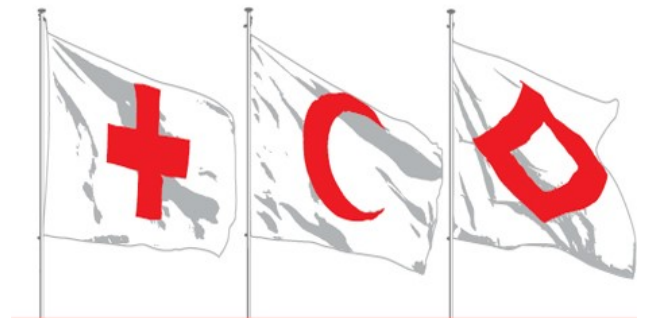
The main rules governing the use of the emblem are contained in the Geneva Conventions and many countries have made them part of their national legislation, chiefly to be able to repress any misuse of the emblem. The Regulations specify the various conditions governing the use of the emblem by National Societies and their members in greater detail.

- 1991 Emblem regulation

6. IFRC vs. ICRC

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network that reaches 150 million people in 191 National Societies through the work of over 17 million volunteers.

Together, we act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions.

Guided by Strategy 2020 – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed, in this fast-changing world, to 'saving lives and changing minds'.

Our strength is in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our ability to give a global voice to vulnerable people. By improving humanitarian standards, working as partners in development, responding to disasters, supporting healthier and safer communities, we help reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

The work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is based on the Geneva Conventions of 1949, their Additional Protocols, its Statutes – and those of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – and the resolutions of the International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The ICRC is an independent, neutral organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. It takes action in response to emergencies and at the same time promotes respect for international humanitarian law and its implementation in national law.

I think the clearest distinction between the ICRC and the IFRC lies in the fact that the ICRC responds to armed conflicts, whereas the IFRC responds to natural disasters.
- BRCS volunteer.