Below are the definitions for critical terms used throughout the IFRC Feedback Kit:

‘Big Picture’ Feedback

This is feedback about issues that fall outside of your specific projects or interventions and is often about strategic issues or broader challenges related to the humanitarian response efforts. For example, this might include discontent with the Government or other agencies and their response efforts, questions about the timeframe of the larger humanitarian response, or comments about dynamics within the community that are outside of the response effort. This type of feedback can help you better understand the community, as well as their needs, challenges, and experiences/perspectives. This type of feedback can sometimes be shared with other actors involved in the response who might be in the position to address specific issues.

Closing the feedback loop

The process of communicating to feedback providers what has been done in response to their feedback. It involves explaining and discussing how the feedback was considered, what was feasible to do (or not), the rationale behind these decisions, and what this means for the future. Closing the loop is not the end of the feedback cycle, because feedback is continuous; however, it is often a missing piece that is critical to managing individual feedback.

Coding of open, unstructured feedback data

Coding is a process that occurs in a data management system (e.g., Excel). Specifically, it is the process of attaching a specific keyword or short phrase to feedback comments to track and analyse them more easily. For example, coding all comments related to the belief that COVID-19 is not real, or all comments relating to dissatisfaction with the hygiene kits. This helps you to better understand the main topics communities are talking about, and to identify differences between community groups and locations, and changes over time. Similar codes may be further organised into categories, e.g., different codes relating to WASH, or different codes relating to vaccines.

Community

The term ‘community’ is used throughout this guide and refers to the group of people affected by the organisation’s activities, programmes, or operations – including those who receive support and those who do not. Not everyone in the community is the same and within and across communities there will be a wide range of needs, capacities, and risks. Therefore, when you see the word ‘community’ in this document, it refers to all the diverse groups who make up a community, including women, men, boys, and girls, older persons, people with disabilities, different ethnic groups, sexual and gender minorities and marginalized or at-risk groups. This also includes community representatives, such as local leaders, organisations, and authorities.

Community feedback data collector

The person receiving and documenting the information shared by community members. This includes staff and volunteers documenting insights during their regular activities, as well as staff or volunteers (or representatives of third parties) specifically tasked with collecting and documenting community feedback.

Community feedback mechanism

A feedback mechanism is a system to enable community members to share information, express concerns and needs or suggest changes of importance to them. It includes the channels for receiving feedback, the processes and tools for managing, analysing and sharing the data, as well as the processes for ensuring the feedback is acted upon, and communities are informed of the actions. A feedback mechanism helps organisations be more accountable to communities and ultimately contributes to better quality of programming.

Critical feedback

Any feedback that requires urgent/timely follow-up but is not sensitive in nature. These can include issues like the delivery of spoiled food, potential security risks, signs of an outbreak of disease, or new rumours in the community that might directly threaten upcoming programming. Critical feedback comments need to be shared immediately with the person in the best position to address the issue.

Community feedback

Community feedback are insights generated by community members and can be positive and negative in nature. Feedback offers the agency with an understanding of the community’s needs, perspectives, experiences, challenges, and opportunities both related to the humanitarian response and outside of it. It can be received in all kinds of ways, for example as part of an informal conversation with a staff member, via a phone call to a call centre, or in the form of responses to structured surveys.

Feedback channel

A feedback channel is a modality through which community insights can be shared, captured, and received. For example, this can be a hotline, a face-to-face interview, or a feedback box. By its very nature, each channel has its own characteristics that affect how accessible it is to certain individuals and groups in a community. We can see that a feedback mechanism is the broader system that ensures a whole feedback loop, while the feedback channel is limited to the collection of the feedback. One feedback mechanism can, and should, comprise various feedback channels.

Identity-based violence

is any act of violence by individuals, groups or societies based on actual, perceived or ascribed aspects of an individuals’ identity. Identity-based violence is facilitated and exacerbated by structures, norms, and laws that condone or promote (explicitly or tacitly) discriminatory attitudes and practices.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Informed consent

The permission granted by an individual to collect and process their personal data after understanding and voluntarily agreeing to: 1) the intended purpose of the data collection and processing; 2) with whom their data may be shared; 3) any risks associated with collection, processing or sharing of their personal data; and 4) alternatives in the case that they do not wish to, or cannot, share their personal data.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Information flow

The information flow refers to how people inside of your organisation share and receive different kinds of information (in this case, information from community feedback), this is also sometimes referred to as internal referral pathways. Information can be shared in formal, structured ways (e.g., through weekly reports, monthly meetings, databases, etc.) and through more informal, less structured ways (e.g., because the community engagement team and health team share the same office, the health team is often informed about current events in the community).

Open, unstructured feedback

Feedback that community members share when they want about topics they want to address (as opposed to structured feedback, when an organisation actively solicits feedback from communities about certain topics). It can come through routine conversations, community meetings, telephone hotlines, interactive radio shows, etc. and generates qualitative data for the organisation to analyse and act upon.

Operational feedback

This is feedback that directly relates to ongoing projects, programs, activities, or operations that are being undertaken by the organisation. For example, this can be suggestions on changes of the schedules for distributions, questions about opening hours, or reports of dissatisfaction with the type of assistance provided.

Perception survey

Perception surveys are data collection efforts to measure what respondents believe, think or feel and can produce information about: (a) Knowledge (e.g. levels of awareness and understanding of particular issues); (b) Experiences (e.g. in regards to service provision) (c) Beliefs and values (e.g. norms, beliefs and levels of tolerance of certain behaviours) (d) Attitudes and opinions (e.g. views of performance of actors, satisfaction with services); and (e) Expectations (e.g. fears and hopes).[[3]](#footnote-3) The primary distinction of a perception survey is that it is intended to discover opinions rather than factual data.

Personal data (or personal information, personal identifiable information)

Any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, or the cultural or social identity of that natural person.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA):

policy, rules and actions intended to prevent IFRC Personnel from engaging in any form of sexual exploitation and abuse and to respond where it has occurred.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Protection

refers to keeping people safe from harm. It aims to ensure that the rights of individuals are upheld by preserving the physical, psychological, and emotional safety, integrity, and dignity of those at risk of, or affected, by violence, discrimination, and exclusion.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Safeguarding

for the IFRC network refers to our responsibility in acting to keep people safe from any form of harm caused by the misuse of power by making sure that our staff, volunteers, programmes, and communications do no harm to children and adults, nor expose them to abuse or exploitation. Safeguarding also includes protecting staff from harm and inappropriate behaviour such as sexual harassment.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting units (e.g. people, organizations, etc.) from a population of interest which may be surveyed and/or studied and the results generalized back to the population from which they were chosen. This is different from a census, where every person or entity in the population is included in the survey or study, a practice which is often not feasible nor adds to the credibility of the data collected.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Sensitive feedback

Any information that can put the person sharing it or other people linked to it at risk and needs to be handled with care.[[9]](#footnote-9) This involves any allegation related to serious violations of national or international law pertaining to the rights of the individual; any breach of the [code of conduct](https://www.ifrc.org/our-promise/do-good/code-conduct-international-red-cross-and-red-crescent-movement-and-ngos) or safeguarding policies; and/or safety and security threats targeting the humanitarian community.[[10]](#footnote-10) Sensitive feedback can be received as any type of feedback, such as a complaint, a question, or a suggestion as it depends on the specific situation if it puts a person at risk if shared with others.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)

categories that include, but are not limited to, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage, sexual harassment, forced prostitution, femicide, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation and abuse, and denial of resources, opportunities and services.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Social science

Is the scientific study of individuals and communities, how individuals interact with each other, how people behave and the dynamics between different (population) groups.​ ​ This information is used to adapt the design and delivery of services and the way response actors engage with communities throughout the response.​

Violence

the use of force or power, either as an action or omission in any setting, threatened, perceived or actual against oneself, another person, a group, a community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in death, physical injury, psychological or emotional harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.[[12]](#footnote-12)

1. IFRC (2022): *Protection, Gender and Inclusion Policy*. <https://www.ifrc.org/document/protection-gender-and-inclusion-policy> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For more see: <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/closing-the-loop-effective-feedback-in-humanitarian-contexts-practitioner-guidance/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sian Herbert (2013): Perception surveys in fragile and conflict affected states, <https://www.academia.edu/3365331/Perception_surveys_in_fragile_and_conflict_affected_states> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. OCHA (2019): Data Responsibility Guidelines, p.49. <https://centre.humdata.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/OCHA-DR-Guidelines-working-draft-032019.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. IFRC (2022): *Protection, Gender and Inclusion Policy*. <https://www.ifrc.org/document/protection-gender-and-inclusion-policy> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ICRC (2020): Acquiring and Analysing Data in Support of Evidence-based Decisions: A Guide for Humanitarian Work, p. 105. <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/acquiring-and-analysing-data-support-evidence-based-decisions-guide-humanitarian-work> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2021). Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Contexts. Operational Guidance, p.30. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/operational-response/iasc-operational-guidance-data-responsibility-humanitarian-action> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Danish Refugee Council (2022): Community Feedback Mechanism. Guidance and Toolkit., p.8. https://www.drc.ngo/media/vzlhxkea/drc\_global-cfm-guidance\_web\_low-res.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. IFRC (2022): *Protection, Gender and Inclusion Policy*. <https://www.ifrc.org/document/protection-gender-and-inclusion-policy> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-12)