

IFRC FEEDBACK KIT – MODULE 1

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK – WHY BOTHER?

WHAT IS COMMUNITY FEEDBACK?

Community feedback is any insights generated by community members and can include any type of information, such as questions, suggestions, observations, beliefs, perceptions, concerns, complaints and statements of thanks. Community feedback can therefore be positive, neutral or negative information.

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.



COLLECTING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK IS NOT A CHOICE

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has committed to listening and acting on community feedback in various documents, including the Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability¹, the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability², and the Principles and Rules of Red Cross Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance³.

HOW COMMUNITY FEEDBACK HELPS US TO DO A BETTER JOB:

- It increases our efficiency and impact by showing what is most important to the community, what the diverse needs of different community groups are, what changes are needed, how the community can contribute and what is already been done by the community.
- It allows us to work in a trusted partnership with communities by engaging in a dialogue on topics that community members are most concerned about, helping us to address rumours and suspicion, and demonstrating that communities' opinions are guiding our work.
- It helps us avoid doing harm and ensures accountability to communities by highlighting issues such as misconduct, security incidents or other issues and negative effects of our work. We can learn from community feedback to avoid making mistakes in the future.
- It allows us to leverage our auxiliary role and coordinate with authorities and other humanitarian stakeholders. Community feedback serves as evidence that gives us the legitimacy and power to demand for transformative processes on behalf of the communities we are serving.
- It supports our fundraising efforts and helps to gain donors' trust by showing we work in a transparent way, have accountability mechanisms in place and funds are spent on what is most needed and relevant to communities.

1. Commitment 4, <https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/movement-wide-commitments-for-cea/>
2. Commitments 4 and 5, <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>
3. Principle 5, <https://www.ifrc.org/document/principles-rules-humanitarian-assistance>

FEEDBACK MECHANISMS HELP ENSURE A SYSTEMATIC AND CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF LISTENING AND TAKING ACTION

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.



PEOPLE COMMUNICATE IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Feedback channels need to be diverse to make sure everyone is heard. They include, but are not limited to:

- **Face to face interactions**, e.g., via a helpdesk, during community meetings or focus group discussions, in-person surveys or interviews.
- **Phone calls**, e.g., via a hotline, phone surveys or interviews, radio show with call-in, or interactive voice response.
- **Voice or video recorder**, where the device is placed in a safe place for community members to use it independently.
- **Written communication**, which can be online, e.g., e-mails, social media, chat bots or other online messaging applications, or offline, e.g., letters, suggestion boxes, SMS messages.

FUNCTIONING FEEDBACK MECHANISMS ARE:

- **Owned by the community**
The mechanism is designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated together with the community to ensure it increases accountability.
- **Effective**
Clear procedures are in place to adequately, in a timely manner, and efficiently, handle the different types of information and ensure feedback is shared and discussed with those who are best placed to act.
- **Accessible and inclusive**
Regardless of who you are and which channels of communication you are using, you can access the mechanism, share information and expect a response.
- **Safe**
Feedback data are collected, stored, analysed, shared and acted upon ensuring the safety of the persons sharing the information at all times.
- **Confidential**
The confidentiality of the person sharing feedback, as well as other relevant parties, is respected at all times.
- **Complementary and collaborative**
Community feedback mechanisms avoid duplication of other systems which are already in place and working. They make sure to build on, tap into and strengthen already existing structures and activities.
- **Transparent**
Information about the mechanism and its processes, and how feedback was addressed (or not) is easily visible, accessible, available in multiple formats and frequently communicated.