



PLAN
INTERNATIONAL

CHILD-FRIENDLY FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

GUIDE AND TOOLKIT

July 2018

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FOREWORD

At Plan International, one of our core commitments in humanitarian action is accountability. We focus on protecting the dignity, survival and recovery of crisis-affected communities. We listen to children, young people and their communities and apply the highest standards to keep them safe at all times while we work with them. Our humanitarian action is guided by the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

Feedback mechanisms are key to our accountability as they provide children, young people and communities with relevant information and the opportunity to provide feedback to us. Not only does this lead to a more effective humanitarian response; it also contributes to the empowerment of communities, including children and young people. Feedback mechanisms also play a critical role in safeguarding children and young people in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes preventative action and handling complaints about any breaches of our organisational safeguarding policy and codes of conduct for our staff, partners and associates.

As a global organisation working to advance children's rights and equality for girls, Plan International is committed to implementing child-friendly feedback mechanisms. This means we adapt our information and feedback channels to suit girls and boys of all ages and gender orientations, we remain inclusive of people with special needs and put in place measures ensure safety in all steps of the feedback loop. We also promote the emerging leadership of children and young people in designing and implementing feedback mechanisms.

We are proud to present this Guide and Toolkit on Child-Friendly Feedback Mechanisms in Humanitarian Settings to our field teams. The development of this resource was supported by generous sharing of experience by colleagues from Ethiopia, Lake Chad region, Nepal, Nigeria, Paraguay, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, and by global teams working on Disaster Risk Management, Child and Young People Safeguarding, Programme Quality and Influence and Accountability.

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KEY TERMINOLOGY

CHILD A person under the age of 18 years.

CODE OF CONDUCT A set of standards for behaviour that all staff members of an organisation are obliged to adhere to.

COMPLAINT Type of feedback which provides a negative reaction or negative information.

COMPLAINANT A person who brings a complaint to the attention of the organisation.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY The ability of an organisation to: understand the context it operates in; understand the interaction between its intervention and that context; and act upon this understanding in order to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on conflict. ⁱⁱ

CORE HUMANITARIAN STANDARD (CHS) The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

DO NO HARM Key humanitarian principle that sets out to avoid exposing children and adults to further harm as a result of (in)action or through the process of providing assistance.

FEEDBACK Information or a reaction to a product, service or performance. This can be positive as well as negative. Feedback can also include a suggestion for change or improvement.

FEEDBACK CHANNEL A specific channel that girls, boys, young people and communities can use to reach the organisation with feedback or a complaint. For example: a toll free phone line, a focus group discussion, or a post-distribution survey.

FEEDBACK MECHANISM A comprehensive system designed to capture and report the viewpoint of girls, boys and young people, communities and partners about an organisation's work in order to improve it.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females (i.e. gender). It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS Entities or organisations that operate to provide services and deliver humanitarian assistance with or on behalf of Plan International. Staff of, and all those employed by, an implementing partner of Plan International are herein referred to as "staff" and "humanitarian aid workers".

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA) is the term used for efforts, including policies, procedures and actions that are put in place by organisations to prevent and mitigate risks of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). PSEA is also referred to as: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. SEA are particular forms of gender-based violence that have been reported in humanitarian contexts, particularly alleged against humanitarian workers. SEA is one of the most serious breaches of humanitarian accountability and a serious protection concern. It erodes the confidence and trust of affected communities and the host country in all those providing assistance. ⁱⁱⁱ

- **Sexual exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another person.
- **Sexual abuse:** The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The responsibilities, preventative, responsive and referral measures that Plan International undertakes to protect children and young people, ensuring that no child or young person is subject to any form of harm as a result of their association with the organisation. Plan International's Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People sets out expected behaviour of all staff, visitors and associates, inside and outside office hours.

SURVIVOR Term used to reflect a person who has experienced sexual exploitation and abuse against him/her. Is often interchangeably used with 'victim'. In this guidance, survivor is the preferred term. However, neither terminology is in any way meant to imply a lack of strength, resilience, or capacity to survive and thrive.

YOUNG PEOPLE In line with United Nations definitions, young people include individuals (young women, young men, and young persons with other gender identities) between 15 years and 24 years old. Plan International regards young people as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults. For the purpose of this guidance, young people is defined as persons between 18 and 24 years old.



INTRODUCTION

Plan International believes that accountability in humanitarian action is crucial to ensure the dignity, survival and recovery of crisis-affected children, young people and communities. Establishing feedback mechanisms is a core component of Plan International's accountability work, in line with the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) and supported by the guiding principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on children's right to participation.

Plan International aims to implement child-friendly feedback mechanisms: feedback mechanisms that promote gender- and age-appropriate, inclusive, safe and confidential ways for children and young people to receive information, provide feedback and meaningfully participate in influencing humanitarian programming.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to support Plan International and its partners in developing or strengthening child-friendly feedback mechanisms in humanitarian settings. The step-by-step guidance and accompanying tools help humanitarian teams to design and implement feedback mechanisms in collaboration with children, young people and communities. The guide is divided in two parts:

Part 1: The first part of this guide introduces the key concepts of accountability and feedback mechanisms in the humanitarian sector and within Plan International.

Part 2: The second part of this guide provides step-by-step guidance on how to design and implement a child-friendly feedback mechanism.

This guide is accompanied by [Child-friendly Feedback Mechanisms training package](#).

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is designed for humanitarian teams in Plan International and partners who are responsible for setting-up a child-friendly feedback mechanisms as core part of humanitarian response programs.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

Humanitarian teams follow the step-by-step guidance and use the accompanying tools during a process of designing, implementing and learning from child-friendly feedback mechanisms in humanitarian action. The key steps provide minimum requirements for feedback mechanisms, while all tools can be adapted to fit the specific country or humanitarian response context.

Throughout Part 2 of the guide, important action points, tools and information are indicated by the following icons:



Key action Indicates a key action that should be taken to complete the step.



Tool Indicates a new tool that is being introduced and that can be used to complete the action or step.



Safeguarding Indicates a specific point of information or an action point related to safeguarding children and young people and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

PART 1: WHY CHILD-FRIENDLY FEEDBACK MECHANISMS?

1.1 WHAT IS A FEEDBACK MECHANISM?

Plan International defines a **feedback mechanism** as: “Capturing and reporting the viewpoint of children, young people, community members and other partners about Plan International’s work in order to improve it”.

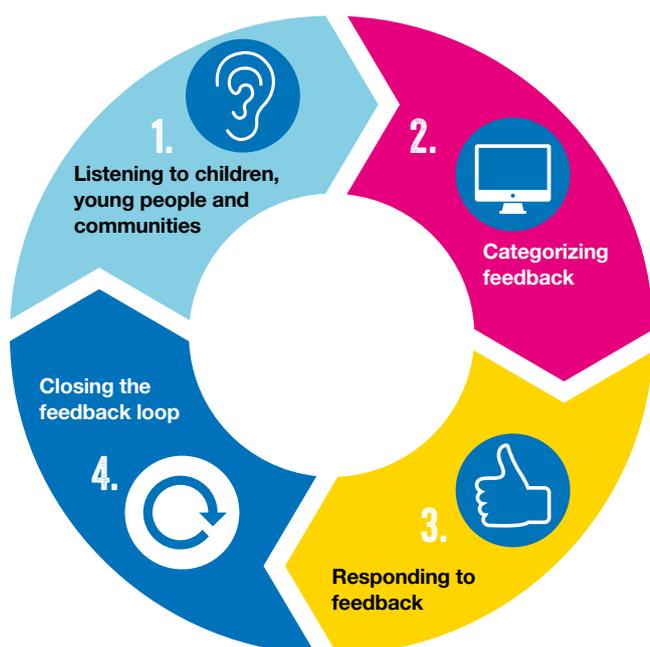
Feedback mechanisms are often also referred to as ‘feedback and complaints mechanisms’ as they aim to capture different types of feedback, including complaints.

FEEDBACK is the general term used for any viewpoint about or reaction to a product, service or performance. This can be positive as well as negative. Feedback can also include a suggestion for change or improvement.

A COMPLAINT is a type of feedback which provides a negative reaction or viewpoint.

Feedback mechanisms are a key component of Plan International’s broader work on **accountability**, which is an active commitment to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people humanitarian organisations seek to assist. Plan International describes accountability as: “**Actively listening to people’s views, providing information about who we are and what we are doing in accessible formats that all stakeholders can understand easily, responding to feedback [and sharing back information] about the decisions and actions taken, including how we are adapting our work in response to feedback and complaints received**”.

Plan International’s child-friendly feedback loop follows four steps:



- 1. Listening to children, young people and communities:** collecting and acknowledging feedback through selected feedback channels and engagement with children, young people and communities.
- 2. Categorizing feedback:** recording and categorizing feedback or complaints, followed by validating feedback where required.
- 3. Responding to feedback:** taking appropriate actions to address feedback and complaints.
- 4. Closing the feedback loop:** informing the feedback provider(s) about the action taken to address their feedback and asking them whether they are satisfied with these actions.

An effective feedback loop is underpinned by the following approaches:

Performance Feedback A feedback mechanism should be able to capture people's thinking about Plan International's work, including: what we do, how we do it and how we behave (our values).

Systematic Approach A feedback mechanism should be designed as an ongoing process, rather than a series of ad hoc interactions with children, young people or communities.

Two-way Dialogue The process of capturing feedback and reporting should be a two-way participatory and inclusive dialogue that is not merely extractive.

Learning and Improvement A feedback mechanism should contribute to organisational learning and continuous improvement of the quality and relevance of Plan International's work.



Feedback mechanisms versus monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Whilst feedback mechanisms often fall under the remit of monitoring and evaluation, their purposes are different.

Purpose of M&E: *measuring program progress and quality against the set objectives, activities and indicators.*

Purpose of feedback mechanisms and accountability work: *measuring program performance against community priorities, and the actions taken to adapt the program based on community feedback.*

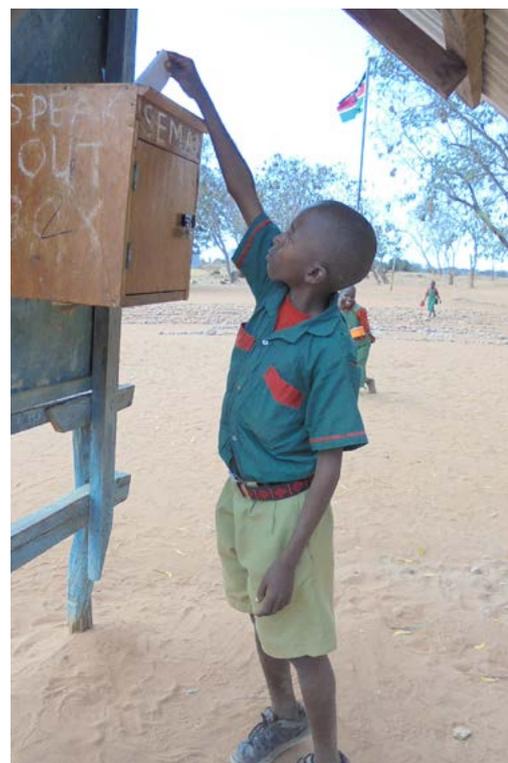
Nevertheless, M&E and feedback mechanisms are closely linked and can contribute to each other. For example, during project monitoring visits feedback can be collected from the community, which can be used to improve or adapt the project along the way. On the opposite hand, feedback from children about activities can help M&E and other project staff understand why a programme is or is not reaching the expected number of children, or why the programme has not reached its intended impact. Suggestions for improvement can also help adjust project activities along the way. Plan International's Child Protection in Emergencies MEAL toolkit ^{vi} provides further guidance on how to link feedback mechanisms to child-friendly monitoring and evaluation activities.

1.2 WHY 'CHILD-FRIENDLY' FEEDBACK MECHANISMS?

A child-friendly feedback mechanism promotes gender- and age-appropriate, inclusive, safe and confidential ways for children and young people to receive information, provide feedback, and meaningfully participate in influencing humanitarian programming.

Experience shows that when feedback mechanisms are not intentionally designed with and for children and young people, they are often not utilised by them, because ^{vii} :

- Children and young people are not adequately informed about the existence of feedback channels or how to access them
- Feedback channels are not accessible in locations where children and young people live or access services
- Feedback channels are not inclusive for children and young people with low literacy levels or disabilities
- Children and young people think their feedback is not treated confidentially, or that they will not be believed or assisted by those receiving their complaint.



Child-friendly feedback mechanisms are developed with the following dimensions:



Age-appropriateness The feedback mechanism is adapted to the developmental (physical, psychological, social and emotional) capacities of children and young people and promotes meaningful participation in accordance with their evolving capacities. Information provided and different feedback channels are tailored to and accessible for children and young people of all age groups.

EXAMPLE: Children and young people develop leaflets using simple language and illustrations to communicate key messages about the feedback mechanism to other children in their community.



Gender sensitivity The feedback mechanism promotes equality between girls and boys and between women and men. Where gender inequalities exist, measures are put in place to ensure access and participation for all.

EXAMPLE: In a context where girls and women have limited access to public spaces and community dialogue, specific feedback sessions and consultations are held with groups of girls and groups of women to hear their unique views and priorities. These sessions are led by female facilitators.



Inclusion The feedback mechanism promotes respect for diversity and acceptance of children and young people of different ages, abilities, gender identities, and those from excluded and marginalised groups.

EXAMPLE: Community consultations include people with disabilities and people from marginalized or minority groups and provide them with a safe space to express their views. A group of community members with visual impairments request information materials adapted to Braille and audio.



Safety and confidentiality The feedback mechanism supports children and young people to safely and confidentially provide feedback and report concerns, without risking any harm or retaliation. Efforts must be made to earn their trust in the feedback mechanisms by clearly explaining how the feedback mechanism works, how confidentiality is ensured, and how complainants can expect to hear about actions taken by the organisation.

EXAMPLE: Children and young people are consulted on appropriate feedback channels to report concerns about staff misconduct. They find it important that feedback collection takes place in an environment in which they are comfortable and feel secure, and suggest to nominate one of the female NGO staff members as a Safeguarding focal point to report related concerns to.



Conflict-sensitivity The feedback mechanism should not inflict or exacerbate conflict or divisive power dynamics among the affected population or between humanitarian actors and the community.

EXAMPLE: During inter-agency feedback collection in a refugee setting, the host community is regularly consulted to assess the perceived impact of the presence of humanitarian assistance on the local host population.



Child participation The feedback mechanism promotes genuine and meaningful participation of girls, boys and young people in the process of designing and implementing the feedback mechanism. Participation can be an empowering activity in and of itself, but consulting with children and young people also helps to ensure that feedback mechanisms are better tailored to their needs and capacities. Participation should always be voluntary, respectful, relevant, inclusive, safe, transparent and informative for girls, boys and young people.

EXAMPLES: In Nepal after the 2015 earthquake, youth reporters were trained by Plan International to report on issues affecting children. They collected feedback from children on their information needs and satisfaction with the humanitarian response and reported back to the organisation. In another response, girls and boys were in charge of collecting feedback on the activities in the Child-Friendly Space, including suggested changes or improvements, and they reported back to Plan International. Adolescent girls and boys (11-17 years) led feedback sessions between Plan International and children, where girls and boys could ask organisations and local decision-makers questions about the response and provide feedback on ongoing activities.



Child-friendly feedback mechanisms are an important accountability tool as they contribute to:

Promoting dignity and empowerment of children, young people and communities

Child-friendly feedback mechanisms enable children, young people and the wider community to voice their needs and priorities, to influence humanitarian programme design and to provide direct advice on how humanitarian action can best support their dignity.

Safeguarding Children and Young People and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Robust child-friendly feedback mechanisms can vastly improve the awareness of affected children, young people and the wider community on their rights and expected behaviour of humanitarian aid workers, increase their capacity to identify potential safety risks and enhance their knowledge on where and how to safely report safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations including (sexual) violence, abuse and exploitation.

Prevention of fraud and corruption

Strong feedback mechanisms can help identify and address fraud and corruption, and can act as deterrent for intentional misuse of power.

Increased transparency

A two-way dialogue between Plan International/partner and affected populations can facilitate communication about existing problems, enhance efficiency of solutions, and build mutual trust.

Quality and cost-effective programming

Systematic feedback collection helps to identify successful and unsuccessful actions and suggestions for improvement, which helps humanitarian action to become more effective, inclusive and informed by affected children and communities. Ongoing learning can help improve programming during the action, instead of after the action and is thus also more cost-efficient.

1.3 THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK MECHANISMS IN PREVENTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA) AND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Feedback mechanisms play a key role in strengthening prevention and reporting mechanisms for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and in safeguarding children and young people. Feedback mechanisms can assist known and potential survivors, facilitate reporting and referrals of child safeguarding breaches or SEA incidents and allegations, and fulfil a prevention function through training and awareness-raising of staff members and the community. When designing a feedback mechanism, it is important that all staff members and beneficiaries are briefed or trained on PSEA, the Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People and the Code of Conduct.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

PSEA is the term used for efforts, including policies, procedures and actions that are put in place by organisations to prevent and mitigate risks of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). SEA are particular forms of gender-based violence that have been reported in humanitarian contexts, particularly alleged against humanitarian workers. SEA is defined as ^{viii}:

- **Sexual exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another person.
- **Sexual abuse:** The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature perpetrated by one person to another, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

SEA was brought to the forefront of public attention in 2002 following allegations of widespread sexual exploitation and abuse of refugee and internally displaced women and children by humanitarian workers and peacekeepers in West Africa, as a result of a “**catastrophic failure of protection**” ^{ix}.

SEA perpetrated by humanitarian aid workers is a grave protection concern and one of the most serious breaches of humanitarian accountability. It erodes the confidence and trust of affected communities and the host country in all those who are providing humanitarian assistance ^x.

In humanitarian settings, there are many factors that increase risks of sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable populations: increased poverty and financial desperation of affected people, increased influx of valuable items and goods such as food and non-food items, lack of law enforcement and security, mass recruitment, and fast-tracked recruitment processes.

At the same time under-reporting of SEA issues is still prevalent as a result of vulnerable community members often being too scared to make a complaint for fear that will result in them no longer having access to aid or assistance.

The IASC AAP PSEA Task Team was established in 2014 to work on the following objectives:

- Foster a culture of accountability and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse at all levels of the humanitarian system.
- Encourage institutionalization of AAP and PSEA within humanitarian organizations, including local and national NGOs, INGOs, Red Cross Red Crescent movement and UN Agencies.
- Support operationalization of AAP and PSEA at collective level as well as individual agency level.

Plan International's commitment to **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)** is enshrined in Plan International's global **Code of Conduct** (one for staff and one for non-staff members). Plan International has a zero-tolerance policy for any act of sexual -or other forms of- exploitation and abuse of children, young people and adult recipients of aid. The Code of Conduct set out expected behaviour of all staff and other associates towards affected children, young people and adults, and are applicable inside and outside office hours. Generally, the primary focal point for PSEA is HR.

Safeguarding Children and Young People (0-24)

Safeguarding refers to the specific responsibilities and preventative, responsive and referral measures that Plan International as a child rights organisation undertakes, ensuring that no child (0-17) or young person (18-24) is subject to any form of harm, including violence and abuse, as a result of their association with the organisation.

Plan International upholds a **Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People** as a commitment to maintaining an environment that prevents violence against children and young people, including a zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by staff in humanitarian settings. The global safeguarding policy applies to all staff members, associates and visitors. Associates include paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support the organisation, including representatives of partners and governments, volunteers, interns, sponsors, donors, contractors, researchers, board members and others. The policy is applicable inside and outside office hours. The primary focal point for safeguarding is a designated focal point for Safeguarding Children and Young People of which there is at least one in each Plan International country office.



The difference between the Safeguarding policy and Protection programming

It is important that all humanitarian staff understand the difference between organisational Safeguarding policies including the Code of Conduct that apply to all staff members, and the programmatic Protection response to violence within communities:

- SEA is a form of gender-based violence; however, PSEA is different from GBV programming which aims to address sexual and gender-based violence *within* communities. GBV programming in humanitarian action includes services to prevent and respond to violence within communities. For example, Plan International might implement awareness raising on risks to GBV in schools, or work with children, caregivers and community leaders to prevent and respond to GBV in family- and community settings. GBV work in humanitarian settings is coordinated through the GBV sub-cluster of the Protection cluster.
- Child safeguarding concerns are violations of children's right to protection; however, safeguarding children and young people is different from Child Protection programming which aims to address violence against children *within* communities. Child Protection programming in humanitarian action includes support and services to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children. For example, Plan International might implement safe spaces or provide case management services. Child Protection work in humanitarian settings is coordinated through the CP sub-cluster of the Protection cluster.



Throughout this guide, specific considerations and action points related to Safeguarding Children and Young People and PSEA will be indicated by this Safeguarding icon.



Summary overview: Safeguarding policy vs. programmatic response to violence within the community

PROTECTION CONCERN PERPETRATED BY A HUMANITARIAN AID WORKER		HOW PLAN INTERNATIONAL ADDRESSES THE CONCERN	
PERSON AFFECTED	SPECIFIC PROTECTION CONCERN	ORGANISATIONAL POLICY	APPLIES TO ¹
Girls and boys (0-17 years) and young people (18-24 years)	All forms of violence and abuse, including sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (SEA) against girls and boys (0-18) and young people (18-24) assisted by Plan International	Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People	Plan International staff, visitors and associates.
		Code of Conduct	Plan International staff.
		Non-staff Code of Conduct	Plan International Non-staff
Women and men aged 25 years and above	Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) against women and men aged 25 years old and above who are assisted by Plan International	Code of Conduct	Plan International staff.
		Non-staff Code of Conduct	Plan International Non-staff
Women and men aged 25 years and above	All other forms of violence, abuse, discrimination or harassment against women and men aged 25 years old and above who are assisted by Plan International	Code of Conduct	Plan International staff.
		Non-staff Code of Conduct	Plan International Non-staff

VIOLENCE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY		HOW PLAN INTERNATIONAL ADDRESSES THE CONCERN
PERSON AFFECTED	PROTECTION CONCERN	PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE
Girls and boys (0-17 years)	Any form of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against girls and boys (0-18 years) perpetrated by another member of the community	Child protection in emergencies programme response.
Women and men (18 years and above)	Gender-based forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against adult women and men of 18 years and above, perpetrated by another member of the community	Gender-based violence in emergencies programme response.

¹ Plan International, Inc. staff refers to all staff of Plan International, Inc., Plan Limited and all subsidiaries including International Headquarters, Country, Regional and Liaison Offices. Plan International Federation staff refers to all staff of Plan International Inc. and National Offices (NOs). Plan International Non-staff members include: external consultants, temporary workers from other companies or agencies (including rental drivers, cleaners and security staff), suppliers, sponsors, representatives of donor organisations and visitors.

PART 2: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SETTING UP A CHILD-FRIENDLY FEEDBACK MECHANISM.

Part 2 of this guide provides step-by-step guidance on setting-up child-friendly feedback mechanisms with practical tools.

The guidance is divided into three phases:

- Phase 1: Designing a child-friendly feedback mechanism
- Phase 2: Implementing the feedback loop
- Phase 3: Learning from feedback



Child-Friendly Feedback Mechanism Guidance and Tools – Content List by Step

Phase 1. Designing a child-friendly feedback mechanism

Step 1.1 Forming a Feedback Task Team	Tool 1 – Implementation Plan
Step 1.2 Analysing the context	Tool 2 – Feedback Mechanism Scorecard
Step 1.3 Defining the scope of the feedback mechanism	Tool 3 – Feedback Categories
Step 1.4 Selecting child-friendly feedback channels	Tool 4 – Feedback Channels Tool 5 – Child-Friendly Feedback Activities Tool 6 – Community Feedback Activities Tool 7 – Focus Group Discussion Tool 8 – Feedback and Suggestion Boxes Tool 9 – Feedback survey questions Tool 10 – Feedback Form Tool 11 – Child-Friendly Feedback Form Tool 12 – Technology and Feedback Mechanisms Tool 13 – Child-Friendly Feedback Mechanisms: Discussion Guide Tool 14 – Community Consultations Tool 15 – Safeguarding Risk Assessment
Step 1.5 Designing the feedback loop	Tool 16 – Feedback Loop
Step 1.6 Planning resources	
Step 1.7 Developing a feedback mechanism implementation plan	
Step 1.8 Building staff capacity	
Step 1.9 Informing children, young people and their communities	Tool 17 – Community awareness raising on Safeguarding and SEA

Phase 2. Implementing the feedback loop

Step 2.1 Listening to children, young people and their communities	Tool 18 – Receiving Safeguarding and SEA complaints
Step 2.2 Categorizing feedback	Tool 19 – Feedback Database Tool 20 – Feedback Database guidance
Step 2.3 Responding to feedback	
Step 2.4 Closing the feedback loop	

Phase 3. Learning from feedback

Step 3.1 Monitoring the feedback mechanism	
Step 3.2 Using feedback for organisational learning	

PHASE 1. DESIGNING A CHILD-FRIENDLY FEEDBACK MECHANISM

The purpose of the design phase is to analyse the operational context, select child-friendly feedback channels, and identify the resources that are required to implement the feedback mechanism. Participation of children, young people and the wider community is crucial during this phase: the better they are involved in designing the feedback mechanism, the more likely it will be that the feedback mechanism is child-friendly, meaningful, and accessible to all members of the community. The steps in the design phase will help teams to develop an implementation plan for the feedback mechanism. This plan includes a clear purpose and scope of the feedback mechanism, the feedback channels, a description of the feedback loop and staff functions involved, and the required resources. The implementation plan is an important tool to internally communicate about the feedback mechanism and mobilise the required resources.



Tool 1 – Implementation Plan provides a template to develop an implementation plan for the feedback mechanism.

STEP 1.1 FORMING A FEEDBACK TASK TEAM



Key action: Establish a Feedback Task Team

A feedback mechanism spans across a humanitarian response and is supported by different teams:

- Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)
- Programmes
- Communications
- Human Resources (HR)
- Operations including logistics and IT
- Senior Management

It is recommended to form a Feedback Task Team with representatives of these teams to lead the design the child-friendly feedback mechanism. Since implementing a new system usually requires support from (senior) management, make sure to have management representatives in the Task Team. When working with (an) implementing partner(s), involve them from the start, in order to foster ownership and create shared responsibility of the feedback mechanism.



Ensure the involvement of the person responsible for the Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People (this is the safeguarding focal point in country) and the person responsible for handling breaches of the Code of Conduct including SEA issues (this is usually HR).



Key action: Appoint a Feedback Lead

It is recommended to appoint a Feedback Lead who acts as a focal person to coordinate the Task Team and the overall design process of the child-friendly feedback mechanism. Depending on the size of the humanitarian response team, this person could be a dedicated Feedback manager, or a senior MEAL or Programme specialist.

All steps in this guide are designed to be undertaken by the Feedback Lead and Feedback Task Team.

STEP 1.2 ANALYSING THE CONTEXT

When setting up a new feedback mechanism, it is important to analyse the operational context first. Examine capacities such as existing feedback mechanisms, available human resources, technological and financial resources. Also assess operational risks and constraints, such as the level of access to the affected population, security issues or other risks associated with engaging with communities. Where possible, build on existing capacities and avoid setting up duplicative systems.



Key action: Analyse the operational context

Discuss and analyse the following questions:

- Is there an existing feedback and/or complaint mechanism, operated by Plan International, partner(s) and/or an inter-agency group?
- What are the existing capacities and resources of Plan International/partner? Reflect on human resources, technical staff capacities, and financial, technological and material resources.
- Does Plan International/partner have access to the affected population?
- Does Plan International/partner have capacity to ensure protection of collected data?
- Are there other potential (security) risks, constraints or barriers to setting up a feedback mechanism?



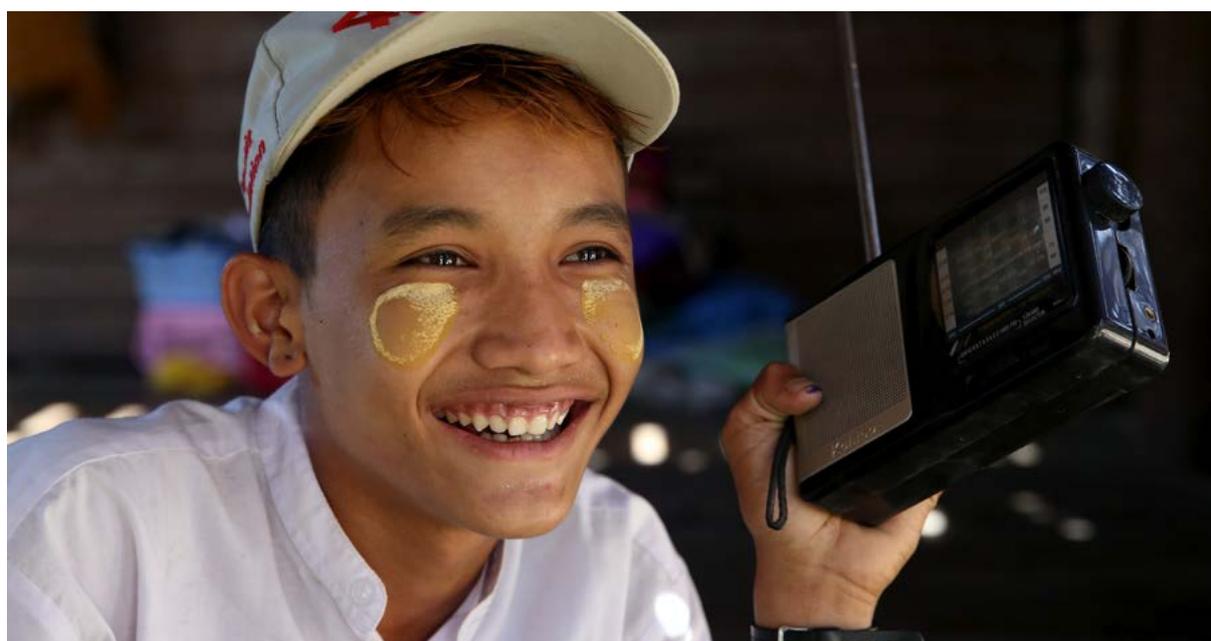
Decision Tree

CAPACITIES, RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS	QUESTION	ANSWER	
Existing feedback mechanism	Does Plan International/ partner have an existing and functioning child-friendly feedback mechanism?	<p>Yes: Good! Use the Tool 2 - Feedback Mechanism Scorecard as a checklist to assess whether all steps have been completed. Where the mechanism needs strengthening, follow the relevant steps in this guide.</p> <p>No: A feedback mechanism does not exist or is not functioning optimally. Use this guide to design and/or improve and implement a child-friendly feedback mechanism.</p>	
	Is there an existing inter-agency feedback mechanism that Plan International/ partner should be part of?	<p>Yes: Good! Ensure that Plan International's feedback mechanism is aligned with the inter-agency system. Use the guidance and tools in this guide to ensure that Plan International's feedback mechanism is safe and inclusive for girls and boys of all ages and abilities.</p> <p>No: Start by establishing a strong and functioning child-friendly feedback mechanism for Plan International (and implementing partners). Where possible and relevant, explore opportunities to initiate or support an inter-agency feedback mechanism.</p>	
	Human resources	Does Plan International/ partner feedback focal points with clear roles and responsibilities for designing and implementing child-friendly feedback mechanisms?	<p>Yes: Good! This will help you implement an effective feedback mechanism. Use section 4 of Tool 2 - Feedback Mechanism Scorecard to assess whether all steps related to staff roles and responsibilities and capacity building have been completed.</p> <p>No: Involve key staff from various teams in the design phase of the feedback mechanism. Assign clear roles and responsibilities among the task team members in different phases of the process.</p>
	Access to affected population	Can Plan International/ partner reach the affected population directly?	<p>Yes: Good! This means that the population can be consulted directly during the design phase of the feedback mechanism. Continue with step 1.3 of this guide.</p> <p>No: Consider developing a feedback mechanism using mobile technology or remote feedback mechanism, possibly through third party assistance. Work with key informants rather than through community consultations to design the feedback mechanism.</p>

CAPACITIES, RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS	QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>Data protection</p>	<p>Does Plan International/ partner have policies and resources in place to adequately protect data of beneficiaries?</p>	<p>Yes: Good! Ensure that global and country-specific data protection guidelines apply to all procedures of (mobile//online) data collection, storage and usage.</p> <p>No: Consult with the country office or regional office IT department to ensure that data protection protocols are put in place and adhered to when designing the feedback mechanism.</p>
<p>Duration of response</p>	<p>Does Plan International/ partner have a long-term presence in the area?</p>	<p>Yes: Good! Ensure that the feedback mechanism that is implemented in the emergency response links to ongoing programmes and systems. Continue with step 1.3 of this guide and involve relevant staff in the design of the mechanism.</p> <p>No: No matter how short the duration of the humanitarian response might be, a child-friendly feedback mechanism should always be in place. Continue with step 1.3 of this guide to set-up a feasible child-friendly feedback mechanism for the duration of the response.</p>



Tool 2 – Feedback Mechanism Scorecard can be used as a checklist to assess the functionality of an existing child-friendly feedback mechanism.



STEP 1.3 DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE FEEDBACK MECHANISM

A child-friendly feedback mechanism should have a clear purpose and scope that define what types of feedback the mechanism will collect and respond to. Although feedback mechanisms may vary from setting to setting, it is generally recommended that the scope of Plan International's child-friendly feedback mechanisms be broad and all-inclusive of various types of issues, feedback and complaints.

Purpose: To collect and respond to feedback and complaints provided by children, young people and communities, to respond to this feedback, and continuously improve programme activities based on received feedback.

Scope of the feedback mechanism:

1. Feedback related to the humanitarian assistance provided by Plan International/partner.
2. Concerns related to safeguarding children and young people and/or sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of beneficiaries.
3. Other feedback related to staff misconduct, including fraud and corruption.



An all-inclusive feedback mechanism enables Plan International to collect and respond to a great variety of feedback including sensitive issues such as safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations.

From a safeguarding perspective, there are advantages and risks or limitations to an all-inclusive feedback mechanism ^{xi}:

Advantages:

- Risk of stigmatisation and retaliation against survivors of SEA/feedback providers decreases.
- Simplicity in having all programme-related complaints together. The affected population need not be confused by multiple choices on where to lodge complaints.
- Grouping safeguarding and SEA allegations together with other programmatic issues can ease the mainstreaming of safeguarding and PSEA into the response, and promote these as essential components of quality and accountability in humanitarian response programmes.

Risks / Limitations:

- The great variety of issues that can be received through one feedback mechanism might reduce the efficiency of the mechanism; a high amount of community feedback might cause delay in the identification and validation of safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations.
- Risk increases that priority concerns, particularly safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations, may be “overshadowed” by other complaints and missed.
- Reporting of sensitive issues, such as safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations, might require separate feedback channels than common channels.
- Anonymous reporting might complicate adequate response to safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations.

In each step of this guide, due consideration will be given to these different types of feedback and specific requirements for handling more sensitive feedback and complaints.



Key action: Define the feedback categories

Based on the scope of the feedback mechanism, define the feedback categories that the system will capture and respond to. This guide provides nine categories of feedback. Other categories may be added in the local context, for example based on specific donor requirements.

Feedback categories

- 1 Expression of gratitude
- 2 Suggestion for improvement
- 3 Request for information
- 4 Request for assistance
- 5 Minor dissatisfaction with services / aid provided
- 6 Major dissatisfaction with services / aid provided
- 7 **Urgent issue:** Report of Breach of Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People
- 8 **Urgent issue:** Report of Breach of Code of Conduct, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)
- 9 **Urgent issue:** Security issue

Note on category 7 and 8: *alleged* breaches or suspicions also fall in these categories.

All messages that are not related to the defined feedback categories should be addressed outside the feedback mechanism. For example: feedback about assistance that was provided by another agency, should be referred to the respective agency. Reports of incidents *within* the community, for example violence perpetrated between community members, should be not be addressed through a feedback mechanism, but instead through the humanitarian response (e.g. through the child protection response programme).



Tool 3 – Feedback Categories provides a detailed description of each feedback category.



Key action: Identify organisational policies that link to the feedback mechanism

It is important that a feedback mechanism is well-connected to existing organisational policies to prevent and respond to staff misconduct, and that the existing reporting mechanisms are being followed, to avoid creating duplicative reporting protocols.

As a Task Team, review and identify all relevant Plan International/partner policies that cover issues that might fall within the feedback mechanism, including respective reporting mechanisms and focal persons. Include at minimum:

- Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Code of Conduct (staff)
- Code of Conduct (non-staff)
- Global Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy

Involve the focal point(s) for Safeguarding Children and Young People and breaches of the Code of Conduct including SEA allegations.

STEP 1.4 SELECTING CHILD-FRIENDLY FEEDBACK CHANNELS

Selecting child-friendly feedback channels should always take place in consultation with children and young people themselves. It is important to understand what works for children and young people of different ages and abilities, in addition to the preferences of adults. Although this will vary from one context to another, evaluations have shown that children and young people generally prefer to provide feedback in the following ways ^{xii}:

- **Face to face meetings:** Children and young people provide feedback during group meetings such as school class meetings. They may participate in wider community meetings, lead question and answer sessions with humanitarian agencies, or hold meetings with decision-makers.
- **Peers:** Older children and young people often prefer to collect feedback among themselves and report collectively or via a group representative.
- **NGO feedback/safeguarding focal point:** Particularly safeguarding and other sensitive concerns are most commonly reported to a trusted NGO staff member who acts as safeguarding focal point.
- **Writing:** Individually or in groups, children and young people write their feedback or suggestions in the form of a written note, letter or proposal. Suggestion boxes are generally only effective in contexts with high literacy levels where providing direct written feedback is a common practice.
- **Phone helpline, SMS, Email and internet:** Phone hotlines, SMS, email and online platforms are increasingly used by particularly older adolescents and young people with mobile connectivity to receive information, report incidents, and provide feedback or file complaints.





Key action: Identify potential feedback channels

This guide presents a selection of feedback channels that can be used as part a child-friendly feedback mechanism. Review all feedback channels and list those that are feasible in the local context. These can be presented and discussed with children, young people and adults during community consultations. Also identify opportunities for children and young people to lead feedback collection activities.



Feedback channels

Feedback channel	Description
Two Way feedback channels	
Child-friendly feedback activities	Child-friendly feedback activities are specifically designed for children and young people and can easily be integrated in ongoing project activities. Activities include: happy/sad face, diamond ranking, participatory preference ranking, starfish method, storytelling and creative arts. Tool 5 – Child-Friendly Feedback Activities
Community feedback activities	Feedback activities that are specifically designed to collect feedback from young people (18-24) and other adults in the community. They can be integrated in ongoing project activities, or conducted as stand-alone feedback sessions. Activities include: After Action review and the starfish method. Tool 6 – Community Feedback Activities
Focus group discussions	Discussion with small groups of children, young people or adults to collect feedback and suggestions for improvement. Tool 7 – Focus Group Discussions
NGO feedback / safeguarding / PSEA focal point	Dedicated NGO focal point(s) for reporting of general feedback or for specific issues, including reporting on breaches of the Global Policy on Safeguarding Child and Young People and SEA allegations.
Home visit or “door-to-door” feedback collection	Home visits or door-to-door feedback collection by the agency to hear the opinion of children, young people and/or adults in the community.
Community meetings	Community mobilisation and face-to-face meetings with community members to provide information about the humanitarian assistance provided by the organisation and receive feedback.
Feedback from community committees (e.g. child protection committee, youth group, etc.)	Specific groups of community members meet on a regular basis to collect and report feedback on behalf of the community group they represent.
Feedback collection during programme monitoring	Programme monitoring can be a good opportunity to collect feedback from children and adults about humanitarian assistance provided.
Help Desk	Help desks can be located in public areas such as distribution sites, safe spaces, local government offices or at public transport hubs. Help desks can have the following functions in the feedback mechanism: Record feedback and complaints; respond to and report complaints, concerns and suggestions to feedback teams on a regular basis, and; provide direct information or assistance as part of closing the feedback loop.
Organisational telephone number	An organisational phone number that is available for providing direct feedback to the humanitarian agency.
Toll-free hotline	A third party (independent, external) phone number that people can call to provide feedback or file a complaint.
Radio	Radio programmes to provide information and to receive live questions from listeners, address feedback and provide updates on how feedback has been addressed or improvements made.
One Way feedback channels	
Feedback box	A closed box in which written feedback or suggested changes can be submitted. Tool 8 – Feedback Boxes
Survey / interview	A set of questions that is asked to an individual child, young person or adult, using a (semi-) structured set of questions. Sample feedback questions are included in: Tool 9 – Feedback survey questions
Feedback form	Feedback forms can be used by staff members as well as by children, young people and community members themselves to provide written feedback. Sample feedback forms including child-friendly feedback forms are included in: Tool 10 - Feedback Form / Tool 11 – Child-Friendly Feedback form
Email	An email address dedicated for receiving and responding to community feedback.
SMS	Feedback is provided by SMS to a central phone number and response received via the same number.
Online feedback collection	An online platform or website where feedback can be provided and collected.



Tool 4 – Feedback Channels provides a description of each feedback channel and further guidance on the use of each channel including gender, age and disability considerations.

Some feedback channels promote a two-way dialogue, while others are one-way channels that are more extractive. It is recommended to select a variety of feedback channels to ensure different groups of children, young people and adults can access the feedback mechanism. Some feedback channels might only be used for specific groups; for example, home visits might be conducted only to children with disabilities or to children in foster care arrangements. How many different feedback channels should be selected will depend on the size and specificities of the humanitarian context, as well as on existing resources and capacities to collect, manage and respond to feedback. As a general guideline, and to keep data flows manageable, it is not recommended to select more than 10 different feedback channels.



Principles for Using Tech Solutions

Technology can support different steps of the feedback loop and be an extremely useful tool in reaching high numbers of people, promoting two-way dialogue, reaching remote communities, collecting real-time feedback, and simplifying the analysis of vast data sets. At the same time, technology can carry risks and might not be effective everywhere. Consider the following basic principles for tech use when selecting feedback channels:

- Always assess how children, young people and adults share information and identify what technologies they are familiar with and trust. This will help determine when and where technology is appropriate, and what type(s) of technology are most suitable for whom.
- Ensure conflict-sensitivity: consider who will and who won't be reached by the tech solution(s). Avoid exacerbating inequalities associated with gender, age, literacy, access to mobile phones and network connectivity.
- Test, test and test again. Tech solutions that are successful in some areas will fail in others. Build in enough flexibility to allow for iteration and adaptation in response to user feedback.
- Always use multiple feedback channels to ensure back-up when technology fails.
- When using apps, websites or external software, put in place privacy and security measures to ensure privacy data cannot be accessed. When using apps or websites, select those with end-to-end encryption, that collect and retain minimal amounts of data and that have a strong track-record in data protection.
- Put in place strong information management systems and human resources to manage and securely store data. Receiving feedback through tech solutions can introduce large quantities of data from different sources. Weak information management systems can increase risk of failing to respect users' privacy, or frustrate local communities when questions and complaints are not being acknowledged or addressed in a timely manner.
- Invest time and resources in closing the feedback loop, including the verification and validation of feedback, analysis, and responding to feedback.



Tool 12 - Technology and Feedback Mechanisms provides a list of tech solutions commonly used in humanitarian settings, such as SMS, messaging applications and online feedback tools.





Key action: Discuss the dimensions of child-friendly feedback mechanisms

Following the pre-selection of feedback channels, review the main age, gender, inclusion, safety, confidentiality and conflict-sensitivity dimensions of all feedback channels. Tool 13 presents key reflection questions that can be used to guide a team discussion. Discuss how children and young people could participate in and take the lead on feedback activities. This is a useful preparatory action for facilitators of community consultations as it will help prepare them to hold focused discussions with children and young people.



Discuss separately the potential feedback channels for safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations. Consult with safeguarding focal points, HR and other relevant staff on the appropriateness of selected feedback channels, and consider existing reporting channels and procedures. List the potential feedback channels for feedback categories 7 and 8 and other sensitive issues separately.



Tool 13 – Child-Friendly Feedback Mechanisms: Discussion Guide provides key discussion questions and guidance on how to make feedback channels child-friendly.



Child-friendly feedback mechanisms: questions for discussion

Questions for discussion

AGE

- What age groups that are served by the humanitarian response?
- What are the literacy levels of children and young people?
- What are appropriate locations and ways for younger children (6-9 years), adolescent girls and boys (10-17 years) and young people (18-25 years) provide feedback?
- How can they be actively engaged in feedback collection and reporting?
- Can married, engaged or pregnant adolescent girls participate with their peers, or are they considered adult women?

GENDER

- Do girls, women, and people with other gender identities or sexual orientations have equal access to humanitarian aid, public services and/or spaces?
- Are there gender groups who face specific risks when providing feedback?
- Do girls and women have the same literacy levels as boys and men?
- Do gender norms prescribe working separately with females and males?
- When (day/time) and where should consultations and feedback activities be held so as to be sensitive to the routine tasks of target groups, such as school, work and household tasks?

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- Are there any cultural barriers for girls, boys, women or men to provide feedback (in public or privately)?
- Which excluded or at-risk groups should be consulted during the design phase? Should they be consulted separately?
- What barriers exist related to literacy levels, language, remoteness, access to technology?
- Can all members of the community physically access the locations where feedback can be provided?
- Does feedback collection require any specific facilities or aids for children, young people and adults with disabilities, and elderly people/pregnant women?

SAFETY

- What are the main safety risks identified by children, young people and adults when providing feedback?
- Can different groups safely access the feedback channel?
- Can a dedicated in-person channel be put in place for children, women and at-risk groups to report SEA concerns or other sensitive issues?
- What safety risks might children, young people and other community members face when they report a safeguarding breach or SEA allegation?

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Are there existing safeguarding focal points in the community that are trusted by children and young people?
- Have all staff and associates been trained on the Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People reporting procedures, and do they know the Plan International focal point(s)?
- What are the main risks for girls, boys, women and men to confidentially provide feedback?
- Are there groups in the community who face specific barriers to confidentially report concerns?

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

- What are existing power dynamics and issues of exclusion in a community?
- What is the community perception of the role of Plan International/partner in providing humanitarian assistance? And in promoting social cohesion?
- Does the use or provision of access to technology change or exacerbate existing power dynamics between community members?
- Is one group better off because of the resource(s) you bring? (remember that trainings and skills developed through participation in feedback mechanisms are also resources).

Example documentation sheet

CHILD-FRIENDLY FEEDBACK MECHANISMS: KEY DIMENSIONS						
FEEDBACK CHANNELS	AGE	GENDER	DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION	SAFETY	CONFIDENTIALITY	CONFLICT SENSITIVITY
1. E.g. Meetings with children and adolescents in Safe Spaces	8-17 Does not reach youth	8-12 yrs. have mixed clubs while 13-17 yrs. require male/female facilitators	Ensure out-of-school and excluded children have access to this feedback channel	Ensure strong facilitators that know how to create a safe space to provide feedback	Ensure private room for feedback discussions; ask children who they prefer to report feedback to	Ensure other children and out-of-school children have access to feedback mechanisms
2.						
Etc.						

CHILD-FRIENDLY FEEDBACK MECHANISMS: KEY DIMENSIONS						
FEEDBACK CHANNELS FOR SAFEGUARDING BREACHES AND SEA ALLEGATIONS	AGE	GENDER	DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION	SAFETY	CONFIDENTIALITY	CONFLICT SENSITIVITY
1. E.g. NGO safeguarding focal point	6-17	Select both male and female focal points so children can choose who to talk to	Ensure NGO safeguarding focal points reach out to children w/ disabilities and excluded children	Ensure that focal points are trained by Plan International. Ensure children can contact them without risks of stigmatisation or retaliation	Ensure private spaces where NGO focal points can talk to children and receive feedback or concerns	Ensure the NGO focal point is a trusted and respected adult and that selection involves children themselves
Etc.						



Key action: Consult with children, young people and their communities

Hold consultation sessions with children, young people and the wider community to select suitable feedback channels and discuss how to make them child-friendly. Select consultation groups that are representative of the community/ies that the feedback mechanism covers. Ensure that groups are inclusive of people with special needs, people from marginalised groups within a community, and other excluded groups. It is recommended to consult with the following groups separately to identify age-and gender specific needs, considerations and preferences:

- Girls and boys (6-10 years)
- Adolescent girls and boys (11-17):
it is recommended to consult separately with younger (11-13) and older (14-17) adolescents
- Young women and men (18-24)
- Adult women and men (25 years and older)

Where possible, consultations can also be integrated into ongoing programs and activities with existing structures, for example with women's committees, youth groups, or with case management clients. Separate consultations may be held when specific (vulnerable) groups cannot easily participate in community consultations or when the humanitarian assistance is targeting a very specific group. This might be relevant when working, for example, with children in medical facilities or institutional care, children in foster care, working children, or people from marginalised or discriminated groups.





Tool 14 – Community Consultations provides step-by-step guidance on how to conduct consultations with children, young people and adults. Document all selected feedback channels and their intended users, and note key considerations on how to make them child-friendly.

EXAMPLES OF SUGGESTIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY DURING CONSULTATIONS^{xiii}:

- “Community Help desks can be suitable for food distributions, but for feedback on hygiene programs, household visits are better because you need to see the behaviour” – local aid worker in Sudan.
- “For us the best option would be using mobiles with toll free number. Why? Because it is direct... The other best option is for a team to come directly on the spot (...)” – community leader, Pakistan.
- “Due to security (...) we are in contact through our village focal point and the implementing partner. They are conveying our messages to the agency” – community member, Pakistan.



During the community consultations, it is recommended to facilitate separate discussions to select feedback channels for general feedback (feedback categories 1-6) and for reporting of urgent concerns including safeguarding, SEA and security issues (feedback categories 7-9). This is recommended to ensure that the specificities of safely and confidentially reporting safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations are understood and given due consideration.



When consulting with children and young people, always conduct a safeguarding risk assessment to identify potential safeguarding risks associated with children and young people’s participation in the consultation. Mitigate any risks before start of community consultations.

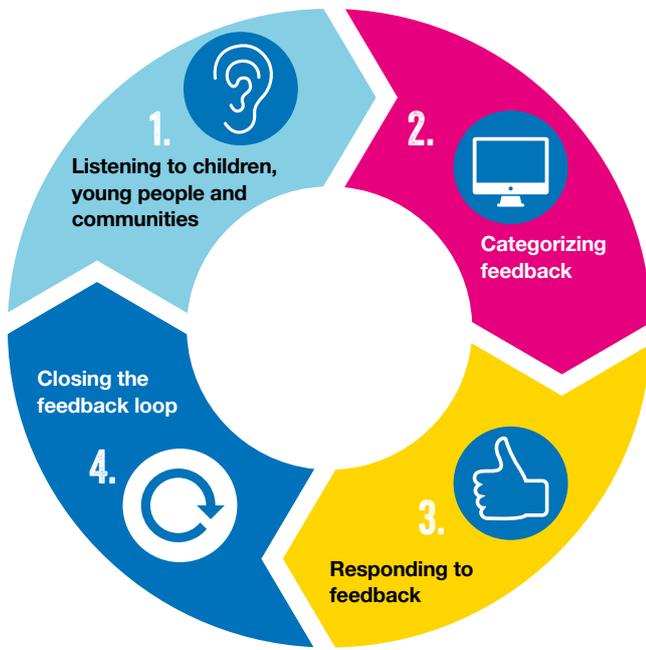


Tool 15 – Safeguarding Risk Assessment provides a risk assessment tool and guidance.

STEP 1.5 DESIGNING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

The feedback loop describes the process from 1) listening to children, young people and communities; 2) categorizing feedback; 3) responding to feedback; to 4) closing the feedback loop.

Feedback loop



Key action: Design the feedback loop

Design the Feedback Loop by discussing what actions are taken by whom in each step in the feedback loop. Answer the following questions:

1) Listening to children, young people and communities

- Who is responsible for collecting feedback through each of the selected channels?
- Who else might receive feedback? (all staff who are in contact with affected communities might receive feedback)
- How, where and by whom will the identified feedback be acknowledged (e.g. letting the feedback provider know that the feedback has been received and what next steps will be)?
- How and by whom will the feedback be documented?



2) Categorizing feedback

- Who is responsible for recording and consolidating all received feedback into the central feedback database?

3) Responding to feedback

- Who will be involved in reviewing feedback and validating feedback when needed?
- Who is responsible for responding to feedback in each category?
- What are minimum actions to undertake when responding to feedback and in what timeframes?
- How will responsible staff report back to the feedback lead/team on actions taken?

- What should be the timeframe for responding to feedback for different types of feedback?
- How will referrals to other agencies be conducted and by whom? How will they be documented?

4) Closing the feedback loop

- Who is responsible for informing children, young people and adult community members about what we have done to address their concerns?
- Who is responsible for asking how satisfied they are with the changes?
- Who is responsible for internally reporting on overall feedback: trends, priorities, and achievements?



Safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations should be addressed immediately and appropriately by the appointed focal point(s) in the humanitarian response and through Plan International's existing country office protocols and policies. Consult with safeguarding focal points in the humanitarian response and other relevant staff members, including management and HR, the specific feedback loop for safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations. Use the following additional discussion questions:

- What are the internal procedures for reporting of concerns related to breaches of the Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People?
- What are the internal procedures for reporting of SEA concerns? Are there external or inter-agency reporting procedures for SEA concerns?
- What are the internal procedures for other security concerns?
- What are the provisions and referral options for survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) or other forms of violence, abuse or exploitation? Consider security, legal, psychosocial, medical, and other (referral) services that have to be identified as contingency.



Tool 16 – Feedback Loop

provides a handy tool to plan and document who does what in different steps of the Feedback Loop. Adapted this tool to the local context and include the finalised Feedback Loop in the feedback mechanism implementation plan.



STEP 1.6 PLANNING RESOURCES

An optimally functioning child-friendly feedback mechanism is supported by adequate staffing, materials, technology and financial resources. The financial costs of a child-friendly feedback mechanism should be shared across all humanitarian projects. Consider the following:

Human resources

- **Staffing:** Develop a team structure and organogram to support the child-friendly feedback mechanism including the following roles:
 - Feedback lead/coordinator: coordinates the design and overall implementation of the feedback mechanism.
 - Database manager: responsible for data entry in the Feedback Database, keeping feedback files up to date, providing analysis and regular reports on feedback data.
 - Feedback officers: responsible for collecting and reporting feedback and closing the feedback loop.
- **Time and management support:** Allocate adequate human resources to the feedback mechanism. When no dedicated feedback staff are in place and these roles are fulfilled by other staff members, it is key that all staff involved have sufficient time and (management) support to fulfil their tasks effectively.
- **Staff briefing and training:** Allocate time and funds for all-staff briefings and in-depth training of selected staff, as well as for specialised trainings that all focal points for the global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People and for SEA allegations should undergo.
- **Team composition:** Ensure feedback teams have an appropriate gender balance for effective engagement with girls, boys, women and men. Depending on the context, staff may need to reflect representation of the local community in which they will work, so as not to worsen conflict risks. Staff should be respected and trusted by the community, especially by children and young people.
- **Partners:** Support local partners to plan their resources for the feedback mechanism.

If no dedicated Feedback staff are in place, these roles may be fulfilled by MEAL staff, project staff and/or community engagement staff.



Materials

- **Materials:** Plan for materials required to operate the feedback mechanism, such as feedback boxes, help desk equipment, feedback forms, lockable file cabinets and folders, design and printing costs for infographics and other communication materials, materials for people with disabilities (using visual materials, braille, audio, etc.), and venue rent for feedback activities.
- **Space:** Identify (community) spaces where children and adults can confidentially report feedback or incidents, or have a meeting with a staff member.
- **Logistical support:** Identify any procurement and transportation requirements, including vehicle rent or fuel, bicycles, motor bikes or staff transportation costs. To avoid delays in implementation, it is recommended to procure materials and use technology that is locally and readily available and to avoid resources that are hard to find or take a long time to procure or transport.

Technological resources

- **Technological resources:** Consider hardware such as laptops, tablets and phones, as well as software, including anti-virus software, software to develop radio or video messages, running costs for an online feedback platform or hotline, technical support and maintenance.
- **Information management and data security:** Set up a safe and confidential information management system for collecting, storing and sharing feedback and other information. Use password protection for the database and all files, use codes for each individual feedback case (rather than names) and always file paper records in a lockable file cabinet.

Financial resources

It is recommended to develop a master budget with an overview of all costs related to the feedback mechanism. The total costs of a feedback mechanism will depend on the context and size of the humanitarian response programme, but generally it is recommended to budget for 0.5% to 2% of the total response programme budget. Include a portion of these costs in each individual project budget.

Consider the following budget groups:

- **Staffing:** staff costs e.g. feedback coordinator/manager, feedback officers and/or MEAL staff time.
- **Staff training:** e.g. costs for all-staff briefings, regular in-depth trainings and workshops, including those with partners and other stakeholders (venue, materials, refreshments, transportation costs).
- **Costs related to the design phase:** e.g. meetings and workshops with staff, partners and/or inter-agency groups, and consultation sessions with children, young people and communities.
- **Costs related to information provision to communities:** e.g. materials including communication and technological resources, workshops with children e.g. to develop radio or video messages, and other costs related to ongoing awareness raising and information provision.
- **Costs related to the implementation:** e.g. materials, technological and logistical resources required for implementation of the feedback system. Also include costs associated with the changing or adapting programming as a result of feedback.
- **Costs related to closing the feedback loop:** e.g. community consultation, town hall meetings, transportation, radio or video announcements, transportation costs associated with providing feedback to individuals.
- **Costs related to monitoring and evaluation of the feedback mechanism:** e.g. team meetings, reflection workshops, community consultations, setting up or adapting feedback channels and communication materials.



Emergency fund: include a budget with emergency funding to enable immediate response to urgent protection concerns, including concerns of survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse.

STEP 1.7 DEVELOPING A FEEDBACK MECHANISM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Use the information gathered step 1.1 to 1.6 to develop an implementation plan for the child-friendly feedback mechanism. This plan can be used to provide necessary internal information and guidance to staff involved and to mobilise resources. In this step, it is recommended to establish clear linkages between the feedback mechanism and existing monitoring and evaluation work. Identifying opportunities to combine M&E and feedback collection efforts can help optimise data collection efforts and prevent duplicative practices.



Tool 1 – Implementation Plan provides a template implementation plan.

The feedback mechanism implementation plan should cover:

- The overall purpose and scope of the feedback mechanism.
- All selected feedback channels.
- All steps of the feedback loop, including staff functions involved.
- Resource requirements.
- Optionally, include a master budget with a cost breakdown for the feedback mechanism to support effective cost-recovery.
- List of tools and forms to support the feedback mechanism.



STEP 1.8 BUILDING STAFF CAPACITY

Competent staff is an essential element of an effective feedback mechanism. Training sessions should be provided to all staff on a regular basis. Staff skills should meet the requirements of the child-friendly feedback channels, and staff behaviours should reflect the values and commitments of the organisation.

Collaborative approach

Build on the collaborative process of designing the feedback mechanism by involving different teams in the roll-out of at field level. This mitigates the risk that feedback collection is seen as a MEAL function only, in which field teams are not involved, or that each individual project team sets up their own feedback mechanism.

Therefore, it is generally advised that MEAL or Feedback teams provide an initial, central training for all key staff and subsequently support field teams to lead the roll-out to (partner) staff members at the field level, in order to create greater ownership of the mechanism. It is recommended that MEAL teams take a role of providing coaching and on-the-job support, rather than enforcement and oversight in the implementation of the mechanism.

Staff might feel reluctant to engage in feedback collection if their perception is that that negative feedback will reflect on their job security. Engage senior management in promoting feedback mechanisms as an organisational approach to learning and improvement, rather than a measure of individual staff performance.

Training for all humanitarian staff

All humanitarian staff who are in contact with beneficiaries, including partners, should at minimum be trained on:

- The feedback mechanism: purpose, scope and the feedback loop.
- Plan International's Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People.
- PSEA: the international commitment.
- Plan International's Code of Conduct for staff and non-staff members.
- Community awareness raising and key message on the feedback mechanism.
- Acknowledging feedback.
- What to do after receiving feedback, including Safeguarding or SEA incidents.

Staff training should take place on a regular basis to ensure that all staff are updated and aware of any changes in the feedback mechanism. When teams are new to humanitarian work, it is recommended to include an introduction to humanitarian action, including the humanitarian principles and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) for Quality and Accountability.

STAFF CAPACITY: WHAT WORKS

Evaluations show that staff members see availability of on-the-job training and coaching opportunities as a key elements of functioning feedback systems. Other enablers include:

- Support from a highly functioning M&E system
- Clear internal communication
- Opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and rotation in the different roles and tasks involved in a feedback mechanism and learning by doing approaches
- Availability of funding for dedicated staff who operate the feedback mechanism
- Senior staff acting as role models to infuse a culture of sharing and openness in the organisation.

From: Bonino, F. with Jean, I. and Knox Clarke, P. (2014) Humanitarian feedback mechanisms: research, evidence and guidance. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI.

Specialised training for humanitarian staff with a specific role in the feedback loop

For staff members with dedicated roles in the feedback loop, such as facilitating feedback sessions with children or administering surveys or analysing data, additional training and coaching support should be provided and tailored to their specific role and required competencies. Consider:

- Communicating with children: active listening, using child-friendly language, participatory facilitation skills with children and adolescents of different age groups.
- Receiving in-person complaints related to safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations (only for designated focal points)
- Child and youth participation during feedback collection.
- Gender and Inclusion: understanding of gender, inclusion, inclusive facilitation skills, analysis of gender- and diversity-related needs in feedback provisions
- Conflict-sensitivity: engaging with communities in a conflict-sensitive manner that does not inflict (further) conflict with(in) communities.
- Implementing the feedback channels (quantitative, qualitative and participatory data collection);
- Feedback Database: data entry, information management and analysis.
- Reporting on the feedback system.

The **Child-Friendly Feedback Mechanisms Training Package** is the accompanying training package to support the steps in this Guide.

PROMOTE INTERNAL DIALOGUE ABOUT APPROPRIATE STAFF BEHAVIOUR AND REPORTING CONCERNS

During training sessions on feedback mechanisms, staff often have many questions about safeguarding children and young people and PSEA. It is not uncommon that confusion exists over terms and definitions, such as: the difference between PSEA and sexual- and gender based violence (SGBV), appropriate and inappropriate staff behaviour, and how to confidentially report concerns including allegations and suspicions. It is important to create a safe space during trainings for these discussions to take place and to allocate sufficient time to explain terminology, present the relevant organisational policies and explain what steps staff should take if information is received that indicates that the global policy or code of conduct is breached.

Take a participatory training approach to approach these topics. Training sessions that merely introduce the Secretary-General's Bulletin on SEA (2003) or present the Safeguarding policy are insufficient and ineffective. Instead, organise interactive work meetings and training sessions with staff to brainstorm on creative internal and external

awareness raising activities that will effectively engage staff and promote behaviours in line with organisational commitments and values.

The video **To Serve with Pride** ([video](#)) can be used to introduce the topic of PSEA. Designed for UN staff and related humanitarian personnel, this 20-minute film discusses the impact of SEA on individuals and communities, and introduces the obligations under the Secretary-General's Bulletin on SEA (2003).

The Plan Academy [course](#) on Safeguarding Children and Young People provides a good introduction to the organisational staff policy and is also accessible to partner staff and external associates.

Focal points for Plan International's Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People are trained by International Headquarters (IH) on the implementation of the policy in country, including how to receive in-person complaints and how to respond to (suspected) breaches.

STEP 1.9 INFORMING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

Once the feedback mechanism is designed and staff have been trained, the next step is to inform communities about the system and how it works. It is important to prepare this well, as it is a key step in the process: the better children, young people and community members are informed about a feedback mechanism, the more likely it is that they will make use of it. Defining key terms related to the Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and clearing up misconceptions about what each means, are an important starting point for community awareness-raising.



Key Action: Develop a community awareness plan

Develop a plan for raising awareness on the feedback mechanism in the community, including: what information should be provided, to which target groups, where and how to effectively inform this information to children, young people and adults in the community.

Discuss the following components:

What: Identify key messages and information to disseminate to different target groups in the community. Generally, information is provided about the following:

- Information about the organisation (i.e. Plan International/partner).
- What services are being provided in the response and how to access them.
- Purpose and scope of the feedback mechanism: what types of feedback can be provided.
- Feedback channels and how they can be accessed by children, young people and adults.
- How people can contact the organisation directly: key contact information.

- What to expect after providing feedback or making a complaint, how long will it take for the organisation to respond and how will the feedback loop be closed.
- What steps the organisation will take to ensure safety and confidentiality of reported feedback.

Specifically related to safeguarding and PSEA, communities have the right to know:

- The purpose and scope of Plan International's Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People and what the organisation does to safeguard children and young people.
- The definition of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and what the organisation does to prevent it.
- The standards of conduct for all humanitarian workers (PSEA commitment and organisational Code of Conduct).
- That they have a right to humanitarian assistance without being subjected to SEA or other safeguarding concerns.
- Where and to whom to report safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations (also mention if a specific PSEA inter-agency reporting system is in place).
- What to expect after making a complaint, potential referral timeframes, roles, responsibilities and any limitations of staff/teams involved.
- What steps the organisation will take to ensure safety and confidentiality of reported complaints.



Tool 17 – Community awareness raising on Safeguarding and SEA provides additional guidance on how to inform communities on Safeguarding and SEA issues and related reporting mechanisms.

Who to reach: Identify who should know about the feedback mechanism. Consider different groups that should be informed and reached with awareness raising activities, including:

- Girls and boys, adolescent girls and boys, young women and men and families.
- Specific groups: children in foster care or in medical facilities, homebound girls, people from marginalized groups, children with disabilities, etc.
- Other individual members or groups within the community, including but not limited to: representatives of community structures, such as community leaders, members of child clubs or youth groups, women's associations, local committees, etc.



- Representatives of local organisations, government bodies and other key stakeholders.
- Representatives of organisations that work at local level, such as UN agencies, INGOs, and donors.

Where: Identify locations to raise awareness and inform people about the feedback mechanism, including locations where the affected population live or visit, for example:

- At project sites.
- In residential areas.
- In community centres.
- In schools.
- At Help Desks.

When: Identify opportunities for awareness raising such as:

- During community meetings.
- During social and recreational activities.
- During distributions.
- During registration e.g. for distributions, of case management services, etc.

Also consider strategic moments in the overall response and in project cycles that provide opportunity to inform communities about the feedback mechanism; e.g. when launching the response in a new local area, opening a new office, during project start-up, or during ongoing humanitarian response activities.

How: Identify the means of communication to reach the target groups, such as:

- Written materials, such as leaflets or pocket guidebooks
- Billboards
- Online via email, social media
- Through songs (music), drama or other creative outlets
- Verbal communication
- Radio or video messages
- Visual aids

Identify staffing and other resources required to design and disseminate the information. Consider how children and young people could be involved in designing child-friendly information materials or raising awareness among peers.

GOOD PRACTICE IN AWARENESS RAISING:

Music to transfer key messages: In the IASC's Pilot community-based feedback mechanism in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, radio and music have been a very successful means to transfer messages using local radio stations that are popular in IDP camps, making messages accessible for the population. The messages are also frequently repeated, which increases impact.

Child-led Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Campaign –

The Philippines: Children video-recorded areas in their communities that they considered at-risk for SEA incidents and interviewed community members and duty-bearers responsible for keeping children safe. This proved to be a powerful tool that identified the gaps in protection/safety and lack of awareness among parents and duty-bearers on their responsibilities.

From: PSEA Best Practice Guide: Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms (2016)

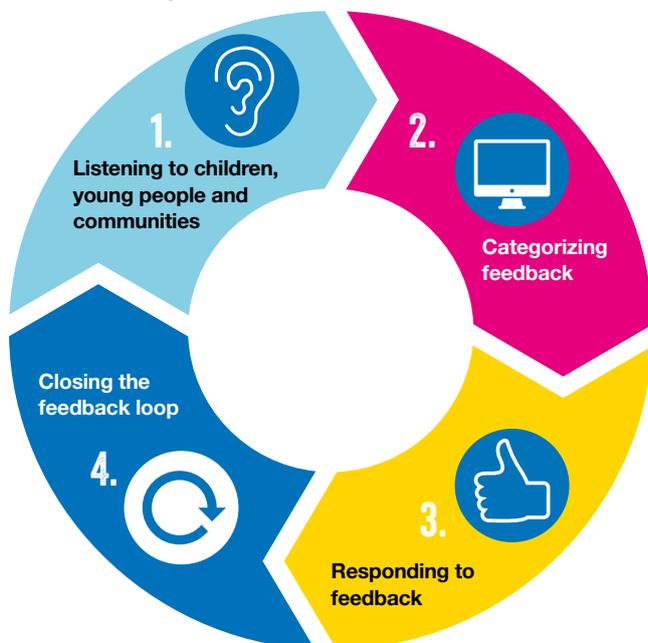


Risk assessment: Identify any risks associated with widely advertising the feedback mechanism, or informing children, young people and adults. If there are any security risks, make sure not to involve children and young people in raising awareness.

PHASE 2. IMPLEMENTING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

The feedback loop follows the following phase: 1) listening to children, young people and communities; 2) categorizing feedback; 3) responding to feedback; and 4) closing the feedback loop.

Feedback Loop



1. LISTENING TO GIRLS, BOYS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Plan International ensures that the voices of children, young people and communities are heard, through activating various child-friendly feedback channels.

Acknowledging feedback: Plan International lets the feedback provider know that their feedback is received.

2. CATEGORISING FEEDBACK

The feedback team consolidates all messages and classifies all feedback according to sex, age, location, sector and feedback category.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | Expression of gratitude | 7 | Urgent issue: Report of Breach of Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People |
| 2 | Suggestion for improvement | 8 | Urgent issue: Report of Breach of Code of Conduct, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) |
| 3 | Request for information | 9 | Urgent issue: Security issue |
| 4 | Request for assistance | | |
| 5 | Minor dissatisfaction with services / aid provided | | |
| 6 | Major dissatisfaction with services / aid provided | | |

3. RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

Feedback and complaints that fall in category 7, 8 and 9 are addressed **urgently** following Plan International's organisational policies and procedures. They are immediately shared with safeguarding focal points, HR and management.

All category 1-6 feedback are shared with the concerned teams who review and address all feedback and concerns, and report back on what they did.

4. CLOSING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Once action has been taken and concerns have been addressed, the feedback loop can be closed. Plan International closes the feedback loop by:

- 1) Informing feedback providers what we did: informing girls, boys, young people and communities what the organisation did to address the feedback or complaint.
- 2) Asking them feedback providers how satisfied they are with the actions taken.



STEP 2.1 LISTENING TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

Listening to children, young people and their communities is the first step of the feedback loop. The selected feedback channels are activated to ensure that the voices of affected communities are heard and that all feedback is acknowledged and recorded.



Key Action: Acknowledge feedback

Acknowledging feedback is a key component of feedback collection and should take place for each individual feedback that is received through the child-friendly feedback mechanism. It entails:

- Listening, communicating respectfully and paying attention to the person(s) providing feedback;
- Providing responses or clarification on the spot when feedback is provided, and/or;
- Ensuring feedback is recorded appropriately, and;
- Letting the feedback provider know which steps will be taken in responding to the feedback.

Acknowledging feedback is a key staff competency, demonstrated by excellent communication skills and a respectful attitude towards the feedback provider. When communication towards feedback providers is unclear, untruthful or disrespectful, children and adults will lose trust in the feedback mechanism and be reluctant to receive assistance or report future concerns. This is also a key consideration when involving partners, external parties, or adolescents and young people as feedback collectors; they should be well-trained and informed to collect feedback and complaints on behalf of the organisation.

While acknowledging feedback does not necessarily mean that the requests that have been submitted are all going to be satisfied, it is important to inform the feedback provider on how their feedback will be used and show that their concern is taken seriously and respectfully. Acknowledging feedback can take place in-person, in written form, by SMS or through radio or video messages, depending on the type of feedback and the preferred means of communication of the feedback provider(s).



While any staff member could potentially receive a complaint about a safeguarding breach or SEA allegation, the formal acknowledgement should always be handled by the dedicated and trained focal points.



Tool 18 – Receiving Safeguarding and SEA complaints provides further guidance on the role of Feedback staff and safeguarding focal points in receiving these complaints.





Key Action: Record all feedback

Recording feedback is often a weak link in the feedback mechanism. Especially unsolicited feedback or complaints that are solved on the spot are often not recorded or reported. This leads to gaps in feedback data which can have negative impact on both beneficiaries and the organisation; feedback providers might not get the after-care provided by an organisation to close the feedback loop, and at macro-level incomplete feedback data can lead to biases in trend analysis and reporting.

Support field teams to routinely document the messages they receive, whether this is solicited or unsolicited feedback. Put in place dedicated documentation tools for each feedback channel and introduce a standard feedback form (paper or online). A feedback form captures concise information on the feedback which can easily be entered into the database and includes space to add more discursive information. Further develop and/or adapt this form to the local context. Sample feedback forms are provided in Tool 10 and 11.



Tool 10 – Feedback Form provides a standard feedback form.



Tool 11 – Child-friendly Feedback Form provides a feedback form in child-friendly format.



STEP 2.2 CATEGORISING FEEDBACK

Consolidate all collected feedback into a central feedback database. Maintaining a central database helps to track all feedback and actions taken to address complaints or suggestions, and it provides tools to analyse and report on feedback trends. Possible database tools include: Excel, Microsoft Access or an SPSS database. This guide provides an Excel Feedback Database tool.



Tool 19 – Feedback Database provides a pre-designed Feedback Database that can be contextualised to a local context.



Tool 20 – Feedback Database Guidance provides guidance on the coding definitions of the Feedback Database labels.

Coding feedback Assign each individual feedback report with a unique ID number and a code for the specific feedback category. When in doubt about the nature of a message related to categories 7, 8 and 9, reach out to the safeguarding focal point and other relevant (HR, management) focal points for support. Classify each feedback according to sex, age and disability, and other relevant demographic variables.

Feedback categories

- 1 Expression of gratitude
- 2 Suggestion for improvement
- 3 Request for information
- 4 Request for assistance
- 5 Minor dissatisfaction with services / aid provided
- 6 Major dissatisfaction with services / aid provided
- 7 **Urgent issue:** Report of Breach of Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People
- 8 **Urgent issue:** Report of Breach of Code of Conduct, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)
- 9 **Urgent issue:** Security issue



All feedback that falls into categories 7, 8 and 9 must be recorded in a confidential way without entering any personal details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint into the database. Hence, section 4 and 5 and 11 to 18 of the database must be left empty. This information should be kept confidential by the safeguarding focal point and other respective focal points for urgent issues.

Data protection Store all written feedback in locked file cabinets and use password-protected files and databases to data-protect online feedback. Use the case ID numbers when communicating about cases instead of names of individual feedback providers.

Qualitative data The risk of using a database is that qualitative data (e.g. documented conversations or group discussions) is overlooked or overshadowed by feedback that is presented in more concise or numeric forms (e.g. survey data or monitoring logs), which are easier to enter into a database. Ensure that database managers can effectively distil and code feedback from discursive formats. Document important qualitative information in separate password protected narrative data files (e.g. Word files).



STEP 2.3 RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

Responding to feedback starts with sharing feedback with respective focal points, followed by verification of feedback, addressing concerns, and internal reporting on the actions taken to address the feedback. Separate actions should be taken in responding to safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations. These are described at the end of this step.



Key Action: Report feedback to respective focal points

Follow the internal feedback flow with agreed upon roles and actions. All feedback that falls within category 1-6 is shared with the concerned teams and managers, in particular MEAL or Feedback teams, Programme, Communication or Operations departments or senior management, depending on the issue. It is recommended that a general overview of received feedback across the response is reported and discussed by management on a regular basis, for example in weekly or monthly management meetings.

Verification of feedback. Verifying feedback is the process of comparing the information provided with other available information to evaluate its accuracy (triangulation), and possibly the extent and severity of the situation, in order to plan an appropriate response. For example, when families complain that items are missing in their WASH kits, it can be verified whether this is indeed the case, and whether this happened to all families or just to one family. Additional information can be collected to verify feedback, for example: information or feedback from other community members, from partners, from staff or from internal databases, logs and reports. Collecting this information may require staff to visit the project site and conduct meetings, interviews or observations.

The process of verification should be organised in a way that does not allow for easy dismissal of unwelcome feedback by a staff member. To mitigate this risk, let two staff members review and verify feedback together; where needed, with support from MEAL or Feedback staff.





Key Action: Responding to feedback

A feedback response will depend on the nature of the feedback that is provided. Responding to feedback does not necessarily mean that all requests or suggestions will always be satisfied; sometimes they cannot be satisfied. Generally feedback responses range from ^{xiv} :

- Responding to feedback by **providing information**

FOR EXAMPLE: clarifying in-person or through other means of communication why or why not a program or an organisation can or cannot help in satisfying certain requests or suggestions to change some elements of the response, and being transparent as to what can be achieved.

- Responding to feedback by **making some changes** in the assistance provided

FOR EXAMPLE: adapting the targeting criteria for selection of eligible program participants or recipients of assistance; adding requested activities to a recreational play scheme for children and adolescents; or creating a shaded area at a distribution point upon request of a group of women.

- Responding to feedback by **making significant changes** in the type, quality or way in which humanitarian assistance is provided.

FOR EXAMPLE: changing the type of food that is being distributed to communities, changing the design and materials used to construct child-friendly spaces to make them more sturdy, or opening additional playgrounds to accommodate psychosocial and sports activities in girls-only spaces.

- Responding to safeguarding breaches or SEA incidents by providing **immediate assistance and protection** (e.g. safety, medical, legal and psychosocial support) and follow-up.



Reporting back after the response After the feedback response, the responsible team or manager reports back to the Feedback (Database) manager about the actions taken so that this information can be entered into the feedback database. This will allow for efficient follow-up, as well as analysis of the organisational responses to feedback, including the timeliness and appropriateness of actions taken. In some cases, particularly when feedback is reported anonymously, it can be hard to verify information or gather additional information. Ensure that awareness raising about the feedback mechanism includes key messages on the limitations of an organisational response to anonymous complaints or feedback.

Feedback response analysis It is recommended to regularly analyse the feedback responses and report trends, successes and challenges to management, and to enable decision-making about major changes in the program response. Infographics can be a useful tool to develop summary overviews of the feedback provided by different groups -girls, boys, women and men-, by sector or geographical location (see Step 3.2 for more guidance on using feedback for organisational learning).



Responding to safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations

Report all category 7, 8 and 9 feedback immediately to the dedicated focal points. Complaints such as sexual abuse and exploitation allegations, reports of fraud and corruption, or staff misconduct, should be treated as urgent and sensitive concerns that require immediate attention. These concerns should be shared immediately with Plan International's focal point for Safeguarding Children and Young People, HR, Emergency Response Manager (ERM) and/or other relevant focal points and be addressed urgently and appropriately following Plan International's policies and reporting protocols.

Verification of safeguarding breaches and SEA allegations is only undertaken by the respective focal points, who are responsible for basic investigation and evidence-gathering and, where needed, initiate a police investigation. For other urgent concerns, such as fraud or other breaches of the Code of Conduct, the respective focal points are responsible for verification and investigation.

Responding to situations of SEA and breaches of the safeguarding policy is only undertaken by the safeguarding focal point, together with management and HR. The global IASC PSEA Task Team recommends to conduct a service mapping to ensure (information about) the following services are in place for survivors of SEA:

- Security and immediate safety of the survivor and their family
- Health/medical assistance
- Mental health and psychosocial support
- Material care (clothes, shelter, food or emergency funds)
- Legal/justice response

STEP 2.4 CLOSING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Closing the feedback loop involves informing children, young people and communities about the actions taken by Plan International/partner as a result of their feedback and asking them how satisfied they are with these actions. Closing the feedback loop is crucial for maintaining a healthy child-friendly feedback mechanism. It helps facilitate community empowerment as people are treated as active participants of the programming, rather than passive recipients of aid.

If children, young people and communities do not hear back on if and how their feedback has been addressed, they will lose trust in the mechanism as they do not know how their feedback has been addressed or their issue resolved. They might not see the benefits of providing feedback again in the future.



Key Action: Identify appropriate ways to close the feedback loop

Informing the feedback provider about the action that Plan International/partner has taken can be done in different ways, depending on the type of feedback. Depending on the type and nature of feedback, different methods can be used such as:



Immediate action by field staff

If a concern is raised towards field staff and they are able to address the concern directly, the feedback loop may be closed immediately: the staff member acknowledges the feedback, addresses the feedback on the spot (immediate response), the feedback provider is aware of the action(s) taken, and staff can assess the satisfaction of the feedback provider on the spot.



In-person communication with feedback provider

Individual feedback or complaints can be responded to directly in person, by phone or in writing. In case the feedback provider has shared their contact details, a direct, in-person follow up is recommended to ensure the feedback loop is closed effectively. For more sensitive feedback or major dissatisfactions, direct communication with the feedback provider is particularly important and also the most appropriate way, for example through direct communication or a small-group meeting between the organisation and the complainant(s).



Mass communication: information boards, radio, video, online platform, flyers

Closing the feedback loop of concerns shared by many people or issues that affect the community at large, mass communication might be appropriate. This could include information boards, websites, radio messaging or flyers attached to relief goods. Consider the literacy levels and language when developing messages. If there are actions taken by the organisation that affect children and young people, make sure that the messages are disseminated in public areas that they have access to. Prevent any sensitive information from being communicated through mass communication methods.



Community consultation

Community consultation sessions are useful to directly respond to feedback from a specific group or to inform targeted groups about actions taken by the organisation. Community consultations can also be very useful when further dialogue is required. Avoid discussing individual feedback or concerns during a community meeting without consent of the feedback provider.



For any issues related to breaches of the Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People or SEA issues, closing the feedback loop should take place in line with the agreed procedures. Safety and confidentiality should be central to this action, and Plan International's interaction with the feedback provider should not put him/her at risk of (further) harm or retaliation.

PHASE 3. LEARNING FROM FEEDBACK

The final phase of implementing a child-friendly feedback mechanism is learning from the feedback received in order to continuously improve programmes. Regular monitoring of the functioning of the feedback mechanism is key to identifying any challenges, risks and gaps and addressing those in a timely and appropriate manner. When a feedback mechanism is functioning optimally, the collected feedback can be used strategically to inform improved programming.

STEP 3.1 MONITORING THE FEEDBACK MECHANISM

A feedback mechanism should be flexible and adaptable to the context in which it is implemented. Monitor all aspects of the child-friendly feedback mechanism on a regular basis, at least every six months, but more frequently if the humanitarian context or response programming is rapidly changing.

Use the following tools to monitor specific aspects of the child-friendly feedback mechanism:

- **Regular internal team reflection** on the functionality of different aspects of the feedback mechanism.
Use [Tool 2 - Feedback Mechanism Scorecard](#)
- **Analysis of the feedback Database:** the database can help monitor the type of feedback received, timeliness and appropriateness of responses by the organisation, utilisation of feedback channels and any unexpected changes.
Use [Tool 20 - Feedback Database Guidance](#) for guidance about the analysis that can be conducted with feedback data.
- **Involve children and young people in monitoring:** Engage with children and young people to monitor functioning of feedback channels and appropriateness of actions taken by the organisation to address feedback.
Use [Tool 13 – Child-Friendly Feedback Mechanism: Discussion Guide](#) to review the different dimensions of child-friendly feedback mechanisms.



STEP 3.2 USING FEEDBACK FOR ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

The information generated by a child-friendly feedback mechanism provides important data for an organisation that can be used to learn from past risks and mistakes and to improve program efficacy and quality. It is recommended to include a section on organisational learning in the implementation plan of the child-friendly feedback mechanism. Consider all resources that are required to promote organisational learning from feedback.

Below are three examples listed of ways to improve organisational learning from feedback mechanisms:



Include feedback in regular reports

Include feedback analysis in internal reporting processes, such as weekly or monthly reports or quarterly donor reports. Regular summary reports can be useful tools to inform teams and managers about the feedback trends, such as how many feedback and complaints have been received over a period, how many of them have been addressed, what is the time lapse between feedback received and the concern being addressed, how often is the feedback provider informed about how their concern is being addressed, any recurring concerns, etc. Use infographics to make feedback reports accessible for staff. Reduce additional reporting requirements by developing easy-to-use templates for sharing feedback data in reports.



Regular internal meetings to discuss and reflect on feedback

Regularly present feedback in internal team meetings, such as programme staff meetings or senior management meetings. Present the overall trends in the feedback received and concerns raised, as well as actions taken by the organisation. Discussion and reflection can help address key concerns, take decisions on changes in the humanitarian response programme or in the feedback mechanism itself. It is also a good way to inform senior management about the community perception of the organisation.



Top 3 concerns shared with management

Sharing the top 3 concerns with senior management can be a good and easy way to make sure management is aware of the key complaints or challenges in the response. This is especially important when feedback may lead to significant changes in the response programme, which requires a senior management decision.





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Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organization that advances children's rights and equality for girls.

We believe in the power and potential of every child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. Working together with children, young people, our supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children.

We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood. And we enable children to prepare for – and respond to – crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

We have been building powerful partnerships for children for over 80 years, and are now active in more than 71 countries.



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