



SOCIAL WELFARE DIVISION

CASE STUDY:


*How to operate a Suggestion Box in
Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied
Young People (Athens & Kalavryta)*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA)



CONTEXT

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What are the ACs?

The Accommodation Centres for Young People in Athens and Kalavryta have been operating since 2017, providing shelter to unaccompanied minors who are seeking asylum or waiting for their individual asylum case to be finalized by the Greek state (e.g. family reunification, relocation).

The aim of the ACs is to provide a safe environment for the young people living there and to support their educational, personal and emotional development towards adulthood, through a variety of supportive and psychosocial services, such as counselling and legal assistance, Greek lessons, interpretation, psychological support, etc.

The Suggestion Box (SB) as a channel for feedback

SB was established to support continuous evaluation of services provided in the ACs, according to the needs, suggestions and consent of the young people.

The main purpose of the SB was to function as a stable mechanism for receiving feedback and was fully aligned with the internal evaluation regulation of the Ministry of Migration (article 9.2.2. 7143, 20/12/23).

The design and running of the SB is supported by the ACs CEA focal person and the HRC CEA Coordinator.



Before placing the Suggestion Box:

Before the placement of SB, key issues were discussed and clarified in order to ensure its smooth and effective operation to give young people the opportunity to evaluate services anonymously and in their own time.

More specifically:

Where would it be placed?

- SB had to be placed in an accessible, visible and public place in ACs where it would be accessible to all, taking into account the neutrality of the place, e.g. not to be placed outside a specific office where staff could see who was giving feedback and who was not

What did we want to learn?

- The ultimate goal of the SB was to evaluate Red Cross services, not to address specific issues with young people's asylum cases or other issues outside the management of ACs. Clear explanation and clarification had to be given of the purpose of the SBs to manage people's expectations

Who would be responsible for its operation?

- The operation of the SB required time commitment, professionalism and clear allocation of responsibilities, so it was necessary to set up a project team (coordinator of the SB, interpreters e.t.c)

How would feedback be collected and analysed?

- How often would the feedback be collected, translated and which method would be used to record it?

How SB would be promoted?

- Young people needed to get to know and familiarise themselves with what SB was, what it was for, how they would use it and how their feedback would be processed. This information should be given through multiple channels: FGD's and info material (poster)

Placing the Suggestion Box:

- The SB was placed in a shared, neutral and accessible space for all, in the main corridor of the ACs
- The questionnaire was translated and printed in all the languages spoken by the young people
- The questionnaire form included a simplified measurement scale (smiley icons) which measured the level of satisfaction with each of the provided services, as well as an open-ended question regarding general comments and suggestions
- Through focus groups discussions (FGDs), young people were briefed about:
 - What SB was and how they could use it
 - What their obligations were and AC staff's commitments
 - How the feedback would be processed and when and how they would receive feedback regarding the questions, complaints and suggestions they had submitted

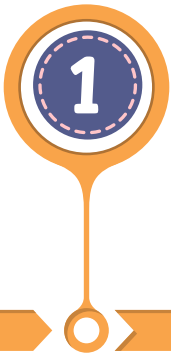


- A poster explaining the SB's purpose was designed and displayed next to the SB, on the notice board and inside the young people's rooms



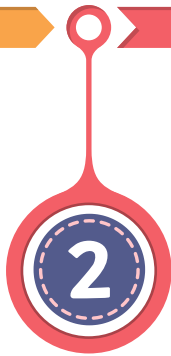
- A project team regarding the SB's management was sustained, composed of CEA focal points and interpreters, together with technical support from the HRC CEA Coordinator

Analyzing the feedback, step by step:



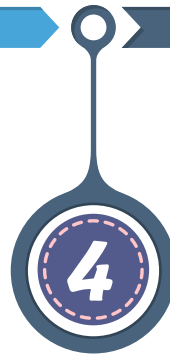
1.Written feedback forms are collected every 15 days.

2.If there are descriptive comments, they are translated and recorded in the excel feedback database, where they are categorized by type of comment, service concerned, actions to be taken, etc.

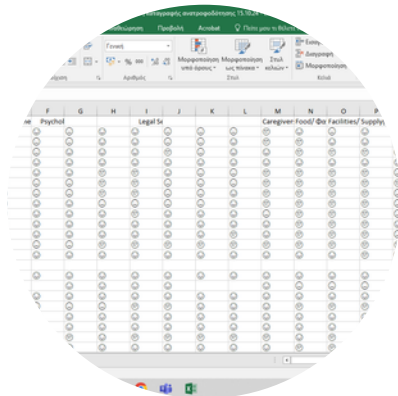


3.The feedback is then captured in a relevant report (statistics) which is shared with all AC services involved.

4.A staff coordination meeting takes place, where feedback is discussed and next steps are planned in order to answer questions and properly manage any complaints and suggestions for improvement.



5.Finally, an FGD is held between staff and young people, to present and discuss the actions taken by the AC management team, in response to the questions, complaints or suggestions.



Excel feedback database



FGD's between young people and HRC staff



Feedback report

What happens in cases of sensitive comments;

In case of sensitive comments, e.g. issues of inappropriate and unethical behaviour of staff, references to any kind of harassment, etc., the AC Manager and the HRC Coordinator for Protection, Gender and Inclusion are informed and the internal HRC mechanisms and protocols for the management of sensitive issues are immediately activated.

What happens in cases where feedback cannot be answered;

There are many cases where feedback, requests, questions and complaints cannot be addressed and responded to immediately for various reasons (e.g. change of the catering company or planning a costly activity, etc.).

Even in cases where there is little or nothing Red Cross can do, staff remain accountable to young people and inform them about the reasons why an issue cannot be resolved or a situation cannot be settled. In this way, credibility and trustworthiness are ensured and relationships of trust and respect are built between young people and staff.



Best practice: Online feedback form

After 3 months of operation of the SB, taking into account that all the young people had smartphones and were familiar with the use of new technologies and social media in general, the staff together with the young people, proposed that the feedback form should also be available in electronic form.

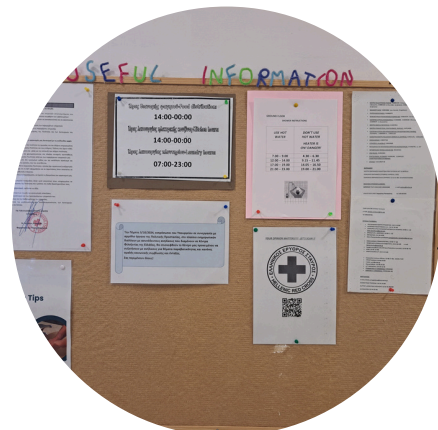
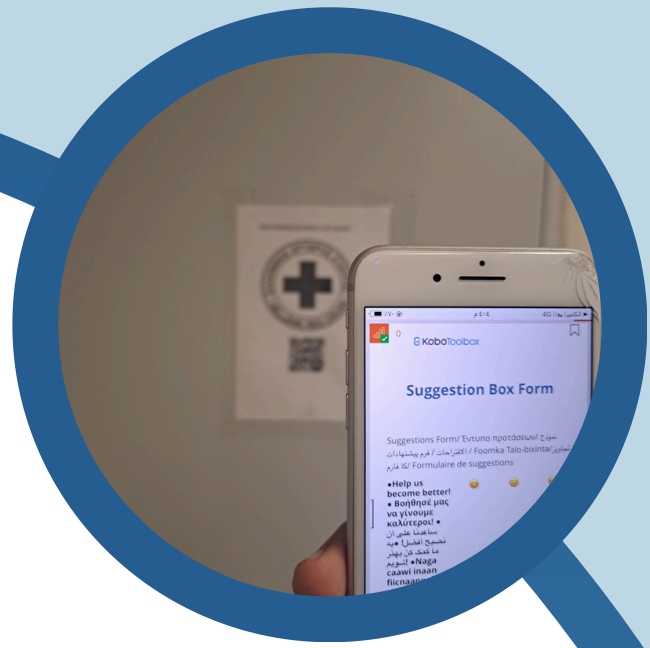
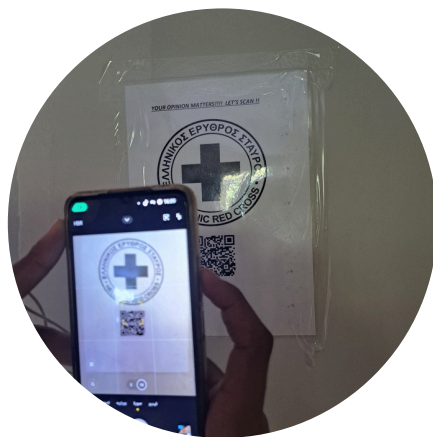
In this way, they could express their opinion and evaluate the services at any time by simply scanning the QR code with their mobile phone and accessing the feedback form, translated into all the spoken languages.

The advantage of using the feedback form online, was that the minors were given the opportunity to express themselves in their own personal space and time, anonymously, avoiding any stigma that might be provoked by the physical use of the SB (e.g. reluctance to use the SB for fear of being seen by a staff member or roommate, or being recognized by their handwriting, and so on).



This practice was designed and supported with the collaboration of the HRC IT Department and the use of KoboToolbox, while the ACs CEA Focal Point is responsible for recording and analysing feedback.

The online feedback is added to the general excel database and is included in the HRC 3-monthly feedback report.



General points:

- SB is regularly evaluated as feedback mechanism by both staff and minors, with the aim of continuous improvement and addressing any issues that risk its proper functioning e.g. in a recent focus group discussion young people were asked whether they find SB useful and what additional suggestions they have regarding its functioning
- SB is only one of several feedback options available in the AC's. It works in combination with all the other available feedback channels like face-to-face communication, FGD's and satisfaction/evaluation surveys. Respecting young people's right to free expression and offering the opportunity to express their opinions in the manner and method in which they feel more comfortable and familiar
- The biggest challenge that has arisen so far is closing the feedback loop, e.g responding to young people with answers and actions in response to their feedback and comments. Daily workload together with bureaucratic difficulties can make it difficult to resolve issues in a timely manner, meaning that responses and actions can be delayed.

MORE INFO



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