PROCEDURE 6.3

Selecting Feedback Mechanisms

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Selecting feedback mechanisms[1]

MEAL Procedure 6.3: CRS staff establish feedback and response channel(s) that reflect the preferences of members of targeted communities within 180 days of the project (or emergency response) start date.

The purpose of this document is to support teams to select appropriate feedback mechanisms for the project or response context by providing a description and pros and cons for each approach. While feedback mechanisms should be selected according to preference of community members (see MEAL procedure 6.3), the pros and cons associated with each also present important considerations for the team in narrowing down options appropriate for the context.

Feedback approach and description	PROS	CONS
Hotline This is a telephone hotline to collect feedback. When community members call to give feedback, they speak directly to a staff person.	• Can collect anonymous and confidential feedback. • Easy to use for those with access to a phone. • Accessible to non-beneficiaries. • Accessible to people with mobility concerns, such as those in remote locations or the elderly. • Useful in communities with low literacy.	• Requires more set-up time which may be too long for short projects. • Depends on a working phone system in the community. • Requires staff to be available to answer the phone. • Could be costly for community members to make calls if a toll-free number is not set up. • Not all community members will have access to a phone, especially the elderly and the poor.
Help desks A staff member or community volunteer is available to answer questions and listen to concerns. Help desks are often established in conjunction with other program activities and may be set up at a distribution site, for example.	• Convenient for beneficiaries as they are often located with other program activities. • Can be set up very quickly. • Follow-up or more detailed information can be requested during the interaction. • Good visibility depending on where and when they are established. • Can collect confidential feedback although the person giving the feedback may be reluctant to share in such a visible way. • Useful in communities with low literacy.	• Cannot collect anonymous feedback. • Requires staff or community volunteer time. • Less accessible to non-beneficiaries if established as part of project activities.
Face-to-face Interviews Individual face-to-face interviews involve staff actively asking members of the community to provide feedback on key aspects of the response.	• Follow-up or more detailed information can be requested during interaction. • Can be done as part of monitoring methods. • Staff are able to respond immediately to feedback. • Can be adapted for the audience, e.g., adopting child-friendly approaches for children, or culturally appropriate greetings for the elderly. • Can collect confidential feedback although the person giving the feedback may be reluctant to share directly with staff. • May engage non-beneficiaries. • Useful in communities with low literacy.	• Cannot collect anonymous feedback. • May require additional staffing to ensure both men and women are represented. • Requires good facilitation skills of staff to generate in-depth information. • Some cultures are not willing to express criticism openly to staff. • Only some people can be selected, so some people with important feedback may be missed.
Consultative meetings These are similar to face-to-face interviews, but involve a group discussion instead of discussions with individual community members.	• Able to get feedback from more people in less time. • May engage non-beneficiaries. • Can be adapted for the audience, e.g., adopting child-friendly approaches for children, or culturally appropriate greetings for the elderly. • Useful in communities with low literacy.	• Cannot collect anonymous nor confidential feedback. • Value of feedback may be diluted if certain people dominate the group. • May not be appropriate in some cultures where public criticism is not acceptable. • Only some people can be selected for this, so some people with important feedback may be missed.
Suggestion boxes A suggestion box offers the community an opportunity to submit written feedback.	• Anonymous and confidential feedback can be collected. • Accessible to non-beneficiaries. • Useful in highly literate populations.	• Not accessible to community members who don't read and write. • Difficult for people with mobility concerns, such as those in remote locations or the elderly.
Monitoring methods Questions soliciting feedback and general satisfaction with the response can be added into monitoring methods, including household or post-distribution surveys, focus group discussions or telephone surveys.	• Can efficiently add a few questions into planned monitoring activities. • Can be adapted for the audience, e.g., adopting child-friendly approaches for children, or culturally appropriate greetings for the elderly. • Good for people with mobility concerns, such as those in remote locations or the elderly. • Provides an opportunity to actively seek feedback and may generate more feedback than other approaches. • Useful in communities with low literacy.	• Cannot collect anonymous feedback. • Not appropriate for capturing serious complaints due to timing and selection of respondents, i.e. not all are reached.

1. The content of this document is taken from the CRS MEAL in Emergencies e-learning course (2015)