



HO 2.6: Feedback Channel Pros and Cons

This table gives a summary of the pros and cons of different feedback channels. The choice of feedback mechanisms should be based on community members’ preferences, but there are other factors to consider.

FEEDBACK CHANNEL	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>Suggestion box A secure box for written feedback and complaints using free text or forms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can have a wide reach if placed in high-traffic areas Easy to set up in small-scale projects Accessible to people who are not program participants Suitable for anonymous or confidential complaints (but the location of the box could limit privacy) Can be placed in the community for a long time, so members can access it at any time Can be mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not suitable for community members who cannot read or write Can exclude people with limited mobility—such as those in remote locations or older people Not ideal for communities spread over large areas or for urban or large camp settings Processing and responding to written feedback can be slow It may be difficult to respond to individuals or communities if they do not give enough contact information Can be destroyed in a disaster—such as a cyclone, flood or earthquake Responders may not be able to manage written communication in local languages
<p>Hotline and short message service (SMS): single prepaid account (managed in-house) A number for community members to call or text to give feedback directly to a staff member</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very accessible if the location has good network coverage and if diverse program participants use mobile phones Suitable for remote areas and large-scale responses Suitable for anonymous or confidential complaints; however, if calls can be traced, this could be a barrier Easy to use for people with low digital literacy Accessible to people who are not program participants It is possible to quickly acknowledge, respond to and refer complaints. Can be used to tell disaster actors about a disaster event and ask for prompt support Can be multilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires set-up time, which may be unsuitable for short projects Excludes community members without access to a cellphone, electricity to charge one or phone credit Can be expensive for callers if there is no toll-free number Personal data may not stay confidential There may be long delays in responding if the hotline has high traffic Some disaster events can interrupt phone coverage

FEEDBACK CHANNEL	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>Hotline: Interactive voice response (IVR) A dedicated number for community members to access information and record a message</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High accessibility (24/7) if there is good network coverage ■ Program participants can call at any time ■ Can help decrease the amount of feedback and complaints received because questions can be answered with key information ■ Can be free for communities ■ Suitable for anonymous or confidential complaints (the caller can decide if they want to leave contact information) ■ Easy to use for people with low digital literacy ■ Can be multilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More effective for sharing information than managing feedback and complaints ■ Excludes community members without access to a cellphone, electricity to charge one or phone credit ■ Can be expensive for users if there is no toll-free number ■ High staffing and resource costs: there must be an agreement with a service provider and staff time to listen to and log messages ■ Feedback may not include details needed for follow-up (e.g., name of agency the feedback is about, contact information), especially if feedback does not fit into set categories ■ Audio must be transcribed and translated to manage multiple languages
<p>Face-to-face with staff Staff (such as community liaison officers with specific feedback mechanism tasks) approached by individuals in the field to receive and record feedback and complaints directly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Often one of the most popular channels with communities ■ Can reveal if programs are having unintended effects that are not being monitored ■ Makes it possible to respond to urgent questions and refer people quickly; can resolve many issues immediately ■ Can be multilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff may find recording feedback time-consuming and tiring ■ Staff may think complaints reflect poorly on them and be reluctant to process them ■ If there is a disaster event, it can be difficult to reach people in remote areas because roads may be damaged ■ During recruitment, it is necessary to make sure staff have the appropriate language skills
<p>Community focal point (or feedback and complaints committee) Locally managed focal point/committee appointed by community members trained to collect and document feedback and complaints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Often a popular channel because community members may feel more comfortable talking to a community member than to a staff member ■ Increased ownership by community ■ Can build on existing social and cultural channels to resolve issues rather than imposing an unfamiliar approach ■ Many issues and urgent questions can be resolved immediately; referrals can also be made immediately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requires training, time and effort from community members ■ Complaints go through too many channels ■ Risk of high turnover or low effort if community members are not paid for this work ■ Marginalized languages may be overlooked

FEEDBACK CHANNEL	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>Help desk near project sites or designated drop-in at the office</p> <p>Desk or hub set up at the office or in the field, with designated operating hours and trained staff or community volunteers to answer questions and listen to concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy to set up ■ Highly accessible when set up with other program activities—such as at a distribution site ■ Good visibility if set up in high-traffic areas ■ Useful in communities with low literacy ■ Suitable for confidential feedback and complaints; however, complainants may not want to share information if the help desk is in a public place ■ Offers face-to-face contact, which community members often prefer ■ Fast and immediate response; possible to resolve many issues immediately ■ Staff/volunteers can follow up or ask for more detailed information ■ Can offer quick support and orientation if there is a disaster event ■ Can be multilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low accessibility for those who are far from the project or office location ■ Can be difficult to set up after a natural disaster event if infrastructure was damaged or destroyed ■ Less accessible to people who are not program participants if it is set up as part of project activities ■ It is not possible to stay anonymous ■ Staff must be selected based on language skills
<p>Open community meetings</p> <p>Meetings organized at project locations bringing together large groups of people to share information and collect feedback and complaints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy to set up ■ Can ask for feedback and complaints from many people in a limited time ■ Can involve people who are not program participants ■ Can be adapted to the audience (e.g., using child-friendly approaches) ■ Suitable for communities with low literacy ■ Low staffing and resource costs ■ Allows immediate responses ■ Can respond to common questions and concerns immediately and for many people simultaneously ■ Can be multilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Discussions may be limited if some people dominate group ■ May not be suitable in cultures where public criticism is not acceptable ■ Can exclude most marginalized groups (such as women and children) who may not feel comfortable attending or sharing their concerns ■ Not suitable for anonymous or confidential complaints ■ May need interpreters for speakers of marginalized languages
<p>Social media and instant messaging platforms (e.g., Twitter, WhatsApp)</p> <p>A dedicated account available for individuals to share written or voice messages and pictures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can have a wide reach if the location has good network coverage ■ Good way to quickly collect information about immediate needs in the first phase of an emergency response across a large area ■ Can manage anonymous or confidential complaints if user accounts do not contain identifiable information ■ Can be multilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requires good network coverage and access to smartphones or computers ■ Requires digital literacy to set up and use ■ Can create a lot of feedback and questions, which can overwhelm staff ■ Risk of online safeguarding issues ■ In remote areas, it may be difficult to share phone numbers or accounts with the community ■ Requires staff to manage platforms ■ Some natural disasters can affect internet coverage ■ Requires fast translation to send and receive messages in several languages

FEEDBACK CHANNEL	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>Dedicated email address A dedicated email address set up for individuals to send messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Very accessible if the location has good network coverage and if communities have access to smartphones or computers ■ Suitable for anonymous complaints if user email accounts do not contain identifiable information ■ People may see emails as a formal and respectable way to give feedback ■ Easy to set up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requires good network coverage and access to smartphone or computer ■ Requires digital literacy ■ Risk of online safeguarding issues ■ There may be delays in response and flexibility ■ Follow-up depends on the user supplying contact information ■ Some natural disasters can affect internet coverage