**MENU OF FEEDBACK CHANNELS & TOOLS**

A combination of face-to-face, ICT-based, informal and formal feedback channels helps to capture complaints, feedback, and perspectives from different segments of beneficiary population. Feedback channels generate useful performance data for managers, who seek to assess the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of programs using beneficiary views along with monitoring data and other available information. There is no one-size-fits all feedback channel.

**Operational context considerations** take into account local realities i.e. social context; power dynamics; key decision-makers and the incentives shaping their behavior; local norms governing feedback and representation; barriers faced by community members (i.e. women, marginalized, vulnerable, disabled) such as literacy levels, socio-economic status, gender roles, cost and perceived risk from engagement, security and access restrictions. See Standard 2 (pages 8-9).

**Institutional context considerations** take into account commitment of country leadership, internal decision-making process, levels of decentralization, ability for real-time problem-solving, staff technical capacity, available resources, cost and appropriateness of ICT channels. See Standards 1 thru 3 (pages 7-10).

| Feedback Channels, Tools, and Methods | Type / User Engagement | Pros / Strengths / Context Appropriateness | Cons / Weaknesses / Context Limitations | Institutional Resource / Institutional Context Considerations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Suggestion / Feedback Boxes | FormalWrittenLow techUnsolicited | Fairly easy to implement in small-scale responses. In large-scale responses, complements other channels. Requires community sensitization and collection and response protocols. Allows for anonymous complaints that can reveal otherwise undetected issues and concerns.  | Not ideal for urban, dispersed, or large camp settings unless multiple boxes can be managed well. Low literacy and low mobility e.g. for women or disabled can be an obstacle. Responding to anonymous sensitive complaints is challenging. People may perceive a risk of retaliation if complaints are not handled confidentially. | Requires predictable and transparent handling procedures for anonymous, sensitive, non-sensitive feedback. Response timeframes & methods need to be clear to staff and community members (e.g. posting FAQs, and “issues resolved” on a notice board near the suggestion box). |
| Designated Drop-In Hours at Sub- or Main Office | FormalFace-to-FaceVerbalLow techUnsolicited | Satisfies preference for face-to-face communication and for immediate response to urgent questions and complaints. Demonstrates openness, responsiveness, and accessibility of staff vs. reliance on ICT channels. | Low mobility/cultural restrictions on women may pose obstacles. The cost of travel and time spent away from household and income-generating activities can be a limiting factor.  | Requires a dedicated staff person with appropriate language, inter-personal, listening, and dialogue skills to communicate with visitors. Response given immediately or via follow-up calls or visits by staff. |
| Open Door Policy at Sub- or Main Office | In/formalFace-to-FaceVerbalLow techUnsolicited | Satisfies preference for a face-to-face communication and for immediate response to urgent questions and complaints. Demonstrates openness, responsiveness and accessibility of staff vs. reliance on ICT channels. | Same as above, except does not require a designated time, which improves ease of access for the “end users.” If incoming queries and complaints are not tracked or documented, it is not a formal feedback mechanism. | Requires several dedicated staff available during office hours with appropriate language, inter-personal, listening, dialogue skills to communicate with visitors. Response given immediately or via follow-up calls or visits by staff. |
| Hotline/Call-In Line Managed In-House | FormalICTVerbalUnsolicited | Good option for remote & restricted contexts, large-scale responses and where mobile coverage is high/mobile use is not restricted. Can handle large volume of data. Easier to document and track incoming calls with feedback registries. Phone conversations reduce the need to travel to the office. Allows for a rapid response to urgent questions and referral. Can include “call-out” function to reach people (becomes ‘solicited’ if this approach is used) | Should be complemented by face-to-face channels. Requires a decision on locating the function and reporting lines: is the data managed by M&E team, program staff or separate Feedback / Hotline Manager? Impartiality of the person who answers the line needs to be considered along with types of issues that might come up and how to ensure fair and transparent process. | Requires sufficient number of staff responsible for picking-up incoming calls during designated times. Staff need to be able to respond to questions, document issues/suggestions and make internal referrals. May require negotiations with the local mobile network provider(s) for a toll-free number to ensure access and sustained user engagement. |
| Hotline/Call-line Outsourced to External Service Provider | FormalICTVerbalUnsolicited | Context appropriateness, same as above. Less risk from staff turnover because external service provider bears responsibility for training call center operators. Decreases the pressure on staff. Staff respond to urgent, sensitive and complicated queries that cannot be answered by operators. | Cost effectiveness depends on negotiated fees. Can be perceived as detached from NRC, an insufficiently direct channel. Call center operators need to be trained and provided with regularly updated FAQs and information about eligibility and program details.  | May require negotiations with the local mobile network provider(s) for a toll-free number to ensure access and sustained user engagement. |
| SMS / Crowdsourced Input Only | FormalICTWrittenUnsolicited | Most appropriate in early relief phase for information gathering about acute needs. Requires an SMS platform (e.g. Ushahidi) linked to a database for incoming questions, requests, and feedback to be sorted and analyzed.  | Can generate large volumes of data. Not a two-way communication tool but may be perceived as such. Higher likelihood of use if SMS is free and short code (e.g. 3-digit number vs. 9+ digit number).  | May require negotiations with the local mobile network provider(s) for a toll-free number to ensure cost effectiveness for NRC and to ensure access and sustained user engagement. |
| SMS / Two-Way Text Messaging | In/FormalICTWrittenUn/solicited | Two-way feedback system through SMS and voice. Free and paid platforms exist and are used by NGOs to gather feedback e.g. Frontline SMS. Linked with registries/databases allowing for easier tracking, sorting.  | Higher likelihood of use if SMS is free and short code (e.g. 3-digit number vs. 9+ digit number). Formal if a designated SMS number is provided and feedback compiled into a registry. It becomes an informal channel if users are sending SMS to staff directly and are not compiled. | May require negotiations with the local mobile network provider(s) for a toll-free number to ensure cost effectiveness for NRC and to ensure access for users and increase engagement. Requires available and capable staff to manage feedback registry and SMS responses. |
| Radio Show with Call-In Service | FormalPublic ICTVerbalUnsolicited | Ideal for combining information provision, public service announcements (e.g. hygiene, cholera prevention, DRR, etc.), and periodic questions and issues from local population.  | Too costly to establish a separate radio station. Best to negotiate a hosted hour on local radio station. Reputational risk when criticism or allegations are raised publicly. Risk of perceived bias, depending on the reputation of the station.  | Cost implications: high fees for hosting the radio show especially if the station is very popular and has large coverage/subscription. Staff need to be made available to develop content for the hosted hour. |
| Letters / E-mails | FormalICT (e-mail)WrittenLow tech (letters)Unsolicited | Typically, low volume. In some contexts, people associate written letters with a formal and respectable form of feedback provision.  | Low literacy levels are an obstacle, although in some contexts it is acceptable to ask someone else to write letters on your behalf. Limited access to computers and low internet coverage is an obstacle for web-based feedback.  | Requires protocols for handling incoming letters, sorting and referring complaints internally. Requires staff with appropriate language skills to respond either in writing or by calling/follow-up visits. |
| Community Help Desk with Logbooks | FormalFace-to-FacePublicVerbal/WrittenLow techUnsolicited | Most appropriate for periodic, predictable aid distribution programs. Staffed by trained local volunteers, CBO partners or staff. Complements post-distribution monitoring and alerts program staff to targeting and other issues. | For large scale responses, multiple simultaneous help desks needed. Requires a literate help desk volunteer / monitor to record feedback. Logbooks may need to be translated and require data entry into feedback registry / database.  | Low resource on data collection if using beneficiary volunteers, higher resource investments on data entry and analysis in-house. Response provided by calling back, asking M&E/program team to follow-up in person, and notice boards. |
| Micro FeedbackSurveys | FormalFace-to-FaceVerbalLow tech (paper surveysHigh tech (tablets)Solicited | A small set of pre-determined questions with periodic, light-touch surveys. Repetition of same questions allows for easier trend analysis. Requires careful consideration of selected questions. Some methods and sample surveys have been tested in recent emergencies e.g. GroundTruth Solutions | Should be complemented by face-to-face channels. Survey-only method does not allow for probing and follow-up conversations to understand the reasons behind why people provide low-scores or high-scores on certain questions.  | Data analysis and compilation skills required. Strong communication skills needed for internal dissemination and debriefing decision-makers about the significance and implications of data trends. |
| Conversations and FGDs during Routine Monitoring Visits | InformalFace-to-FaceVerbalLow techSolicited | Complements quant- and indicator-based monitoring. Open-ended, not pre-determined/no scripted questions, and not extractive. Can reveal unintended effects of programs that fall outside monitoring rubrics.  | Can be time consuming. Requires additional data collection at the point of service / distribution sites. The volume of qualitative data can present a challenge for sorting and analysis.  | Requires good listening and facilitation skills. Requires competency in both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. M&E team needs to work closely with program team to ensure rapid response to complaints, problem solving, and needed adjustments. |
| Score Cards | FormalFace-to-FaceVerbal/WrittenLow techSolicited | Typically used in long-term programming and stable contexts. Periodicity of data gathering supports trends analysis. | Not appropriate for contexts where access is restricted and periodic data collection is hampered.  | Data is largely quantitative and analysis is less complicated than FGD data. |
| Participatory Monitoring | FormalFace-to-FaceVerbal/WrittenLow techSolicited | Community members define indicators and use scorecards and pre-selected monitoring tools to gather information. Allows participation by non- or partly-literate people.  | Highly participatory but can be time-consuming for staff and community members.  | Requires good listening skills and the ability to analyze feedback quickly for programmatic considerations.  |
| Public Community Meetings  | FormalFace-to-FacePublicVerbalLow techSolicited | Allows for periodic feedback and input on issues selected by NRC and by community members. Can be a standing agenda item for community meetings.  | Power dynamics and gender roles need to be understood. Risk of hearing only the dominant voices. Public setting precludes feedback on /response to sensitive issues. | Requires good facilitation skills. People prefer to have decision-makers / managers in the room when significant issues are raised. Otherwise perceived as merely information sharing by junior staff. |
| Meetings with Community Leaders / Select Representatives | FormalFace-to-FaceVerbalLow techSolicited | Consultation of local community leaders may be part of an expected relationship-building protocol. Bypassing local leaders can damage NRC’s perception. | Traditional structures for community representation may systematically exclude most vulnerable. Leaders may misrepresent community views.  | Requires good facilitation skills. People prefer to have decision-makers / managers in the room when significant issues are raised (see above). |
| Listening Conversations with Beneficiaries and Partners | InformalFace-to-FaceVerbalLow techSolicited | Complements formal monitoring data collection methods. Allows for an open-ended exploration of issues and suggestions.  | Can be time consuming. Requires additional time in targeted areas.Volume of qualitative data can present a challenge for sorting and analysis. | Requires good listening and facilitation skills. Requires ability to analyze large amounts of qualitative data.  |
| Ombudsman | FormalFace-to-FaceVerbal/WrittenLow techSolicited | Has been used in large-scale shelter construction programs when issues about quality of local contractors required regular dialogue and a dispute resolution mechanism. | Requires a competent staff person or third party to serve this role. | May be costly for the organization. Can be time consuming, and requires dedicated in-house focal point for communication with partners etc. |
| Third party Monitoring / Outsourced Feedback Collection | FormalFace-to-FaceVerbalLow techSolicited | Most appropriate in settings of high-insecurity and remote management. Offers an independently verified analysis of beneficiary experiences and views. | Requires a competent and trustworthy third party monitoring agency with access to program areas.  | Requires clear lines of communication btw/ NRC and 3rd party. Requires a mechanism to incorporate externally gathered data into program review & decision-making. |