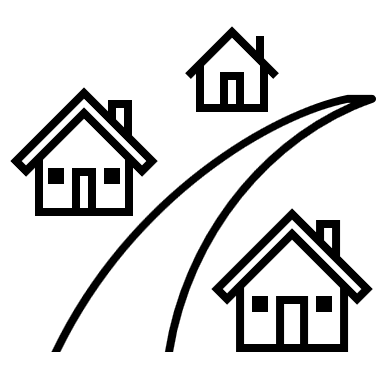
**What is a Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM), and what does it do for humanitarian response?**

A CFM is any system established to support inclusive two-way communication between communities and humanitarian response actors, with the goal of ensuring the information exchanged with communities feeds into how different response operations are designed, implemented, and improved\*.



**What does community feedback look like?**

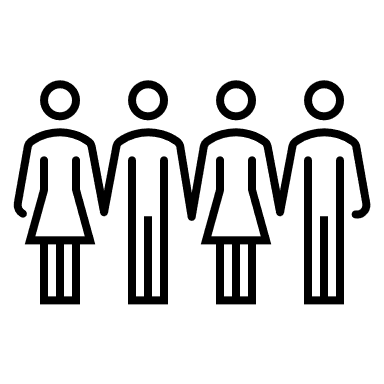
Community feedback is information generated by community members – individuals and groups, adults, and children. Feedback can include questions, suggestions, observations, beliefs, concerns, complaints, and statements of thanks. It can be proactively gathered, received, or encountered directly from community members and groups or through the field teams and community-facing staff and volunteers that interact with them on a day-to-day basis.

**The community feedback cycle**

The community feedback cycle is a simple way to visualise how feedback is gathered, processed, and used to inform decisions, creating a “feedback loop”.

It aims to continuously adapt, meet the changing needs of all the stakeholders (i.e. individuals, groups, and the community at large, actors involved in the response, the staff, and volunteers), and contribute to the collective goals to strengthen programming and systems for feedback at the level of the response.

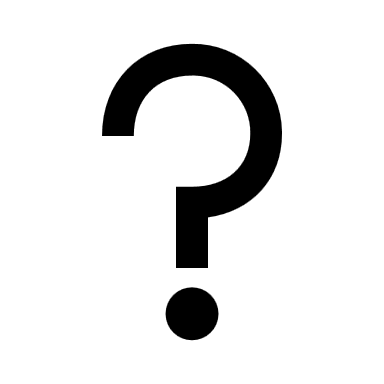
Although the cycle is commonly broken down into discrete and numbered stages, there are often many overlapping and concurrent processes taking place. While individual agencies have worked to standardise approaches across their own country operations, challenges remain in harmonising these approaches at the collective level to support common objectives for the response overall.



**Who implements a CFM?**

A community feedback mechanism can go by many names. It can be set up locally by communities or by individual agencies, in a joint approach by two or more agencies, and can exist at the collective level to support the priorities of clusters, inter-cluster coordination, and response-level decision-making structures. What is important is that a CFM can perform its functions, and for this it needs three basic elements.

**A CFM should have three elements:**



The protocols and tools for feedback management and response determine how community feedback is managed by everyone involved, including how feedback information is gathered, stored, acted on, analysed and used to support the intended objectives of the CFM.

A feedback channel is any modality through which feedback can be shared, captured, and received. They can be face-to-face or remote, formal or informal, and designed for individual and/or group feedback. A combination that meets the preferences and needs of different groups will improve accessibility of the CFM.

The ways in which decisions and adjustments are made depends on the context of the emergency and the response plan in place. Communities and actors involved in the response should be part of the structure and feed into a process for decision-making and adjustment.

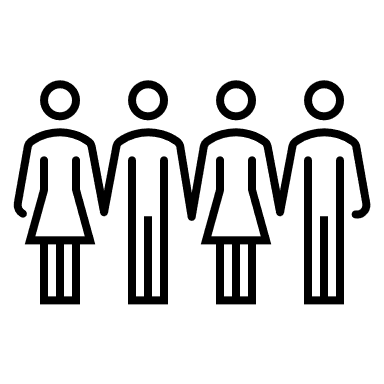
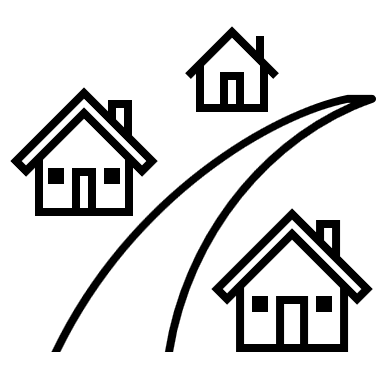
Learn more about the cycle and what sustains it on the next page.

*\* See the glossary for more detailed definitions.*

1. **Communities see all response actors as a single entity.** When we communicate and gather feedback from communities in a consistent way, we show that we are unified in our mandate to listen and respond to their needs. Aligning our approaches will improve how we understand who we are reaching, make sure feedback reaches the right people in positions to act and respond appropriately, and consider broader trends together for adapting our programmes in a holistic way.
2. **We are a diverse response community.** There is an abundance of rich but decentralized information we can harness about the needs, perceptions, and experiences of the communities we serve. If we consider and optimize all the different ways we interface with communities - especially the channels we know they prefer and trust – we can more confidently interpret and triangulate feedback together with other information to meet both strategic and operational decision-making needs.
3. **Being able to adapt together is the best strategy for resource scarcity.**  A CFM that is designed, tracked, and monitored to response plan objectives will be able to adapt quickly to changes, use available resources and capacities efficiently, and deliver on our common commitment to accountability to affected people.

**Why is a collective approach to managing community feedback important?**





If we are consistent and coordinated in how we communicate with communities, we build trust and send the message we are unified in our goals and intentions. By using **this template logbook** to align how we talk about and document community feedback, we improve our ability to analyse and use feedback coming through all channels to serve the purposes of agencies and the collective.

**START HERE AND FOLLOW THE CYCLE**

If we agree on who is best positioned to address different types of feedback, and the general rules for making sure feedback reaches them, we ensure that anyone providing feedback through any channel – especially those with very specific needs or reporting serious issues – are responded to as quickly, safely, and effectively as possible.

If we bring together community feedback data and findings from our different sources into an **analytical framework**, we can interpret it together with other information that supports planning, implementation, and evaluation of programmes. We can base recommendations and actions on a more transparent and balanced picture of needs.

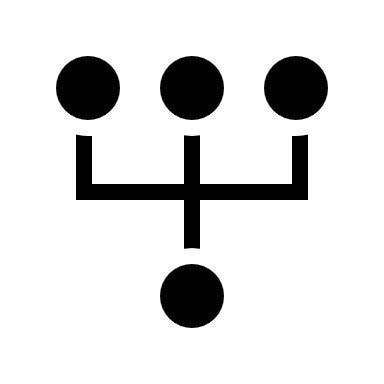
If we collectively define and agree on how linking our systems for feedback can help us achieve goals for the response, we create a foundation for adapting together that builds on the efforts already underway – and the resources we already have – to strengthen our individual systems and programmes.

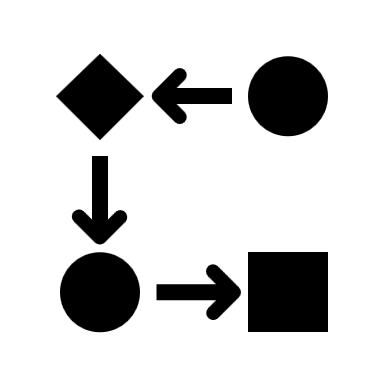
**Linking trend analysis and advocacy for better resource management**

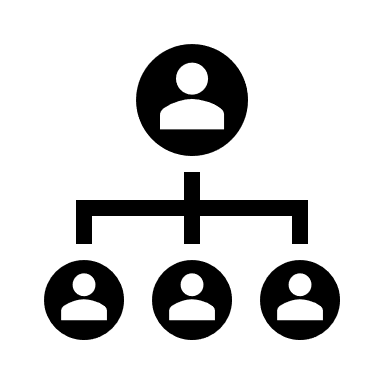
How a CFM is structured and performs depends on the regulatory frameworks, available resources, and technologies chosen to support its functioning.

Talking about these things as a community of response actors can allow us to better leverage our different contributions, engage with donors, prioritise, and advocate for the things we need to achieve our common goals.

**Supporting localisation**If we ensure community-facing teams, feedback personnel and the local partners who implement and encounter feedback are regularly engaged at the collective level to share their findings, feedback on decisions, and reinforce key messages with communities, we can build practical systems that can have real impact where it matters the most.







If we can **keep track** of what we learn, how we adjust and what the persistent challenges are, we can be more confident in our decisions, share this with communities, and better advocate and influence models for resourcing humanitarian interventions.

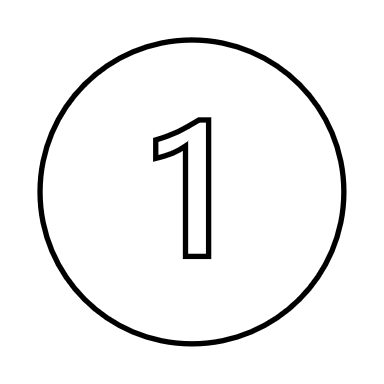


The IASC Standards for Collective Feedback Mechanisms can help local NGO, INGOs, UN, Red cross and civil society organisations and other actors involved in emergency responses to better link their different systems for listening and responding to affected communities. By aligning approaches to collecting, sharing, analysing, and responding to community feedback data, they can make more systematic use of community feedback in programming cycles to serve a set of common objectives for a response.

The standards are primarily intended to guide collective approaches to community feedback and inter-agency initiatives on the response level. However, it should also be applied to support multi-channel feedback mechanisms of a single organization and facilitate sharing feedback data with other organizations for joint implementation and decision-making.

**IASC Standards for Collective Feedback Mechanisms**

**The standards operationalize the five principles that are framed by the stages of the community feedback cycle:**



We define and agree on the objectives, functional roles, and key responsibilities for the CFM at the collective level. We establish common performance indicators to support oversight, monitoring and adaptation of the processes and tools that link the different systems for gathering, sharing, and actioning community feedback together.

We ensure communities are aware of and can access channels available to ask questions and provide feedback and understand their rights in the feedback process. When feedback is provided, we systematically and safely gather it through all channels for centralized management and handle it in accordance with relevant guidelines for data responsibility.

We manage feedback according to its sensitivity and criticality. Where appropriate, we safely refer feedback to those in a position to responsibly handle, escalate and address them in an appropriate and timely manner to support action and individual loop closure.

We collate, thematically explore, and draw findings from feedback data in a way that responsibly and effectively meets the information needs of different stakeholders to feed into the formulation of recommendations and actions for decision-makers at various organizational levels.

We discuss and track the recommendations and actions taken in response to findings from community feedback, and we ensure our programs and strategies for meeting the needs of communities are reviewed and adapted accordingly.







