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🛠 **PRACTICAL SHEET**

10 STEPS TO SETTING UP AN EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK MECHANISM

MOVING BEYOND THEORY TO PRACTICE - TO ACTUALLY CLOSE THE FEEDBACK LOOP - IS A CHALLENGE, ESPECIALLY IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION. HOW DO YOU REALLY LISTEN TO COMMUNITIES? WHAT ARE THEIR VIEWS? PROVIDE ANSWERS AND, IF NECESSARY, CORRECT OR ADAPT OUR ACTIVITIES? HERE ARE TEN KEY STEPS TO PUTTING AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM IN PLACE.
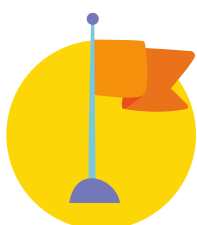
1. DEFINE THE CHALLENGE

Consult with communities and humanitarian responders to work out what barriers are preventing feedback being listened to and acted on. This homework stage is essential.

TIPS
Work out where the problems really lie – these can include lack of staffing, poor or non-existent communication channels, non-working technology, bad data management and confused information flows.

2. DON'T DUPLICATE EFFORTS

Build on existing staff capacities and work with established services to ensure sustainability.

TIPS
Work out what activities are already underway and build on these, identify which community members, partners, and staff you can work with.

3. USE PREFERRED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Engage with them through channels they like and trust.

TIPS
Conduct an Information and Communication Needs Assessment – different groups and individuals prefer different channels.

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4. COORDINATE

Have clear commitment and agreement on roles and responsibilities, both internally and inter-agency.

TIPS

Draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which clearly indicate the agreed commitments, timeframe for follow-up, as well as different agency/individual roles.

5. MAKE IMPROVEMENTS

Design your mechanism to collect structured data that enables you to make decisions and take action at the right time.

TIPS

Mobile data collection enables quick collation, is time-efficient and reduces errors – it also enables the capture of standardized data based through structured questionnaires. Design your questionnaire with decision makers so that they define what is information is collected.

6. PREPARE FOR SENSITIVE ISSUES

Ensure you have the resources and appropriate channels to create a safe and confidential space for reporting.

TIPS

Provide private areas and/or channels for discussion and reiterate the confidentiality of the information being shared. Always consider gender and age dynamics of staffing and ensure they know how to escalate/refer the sensitive issues they receive.
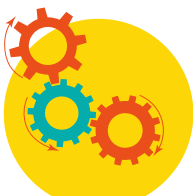
7. TEST AND REFINE

Speak to those using the mechanism and iterate your design to ensure effectiveness.

TIPS

Consult with communities to understand why/why not they are using the mechanism.

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8. ENABLE EVOLUTION

Adapt your mechanism to the changing dynamics of the response – go back to the drawing board if necessary.

TIPS
The more channels you establish the less risk there is of complete loss of engagement with a community if access to one fails.

9. MAKE DATA DIGESTIBLE

Visualise your data, show trends and find the right forum(s) for sharing to make it accessible.

TIPS
Mobile data collection tools help you to easily pull your data into charts – show trends for different groups and clearly highlight priority concerns for follow-up.

10. DEMONSTRATE YOU'VE LISTENED

Proactively explain the changes you've made and why certain actions sometimes cannot be taken.

TIPS
Don't wait until the community is frustrated by the lack of feedback make sure a key responsibility of the mechanism is to 'close the loop'. The loop needs to be closed through preferred and trusted channels.

USEFUL REFERENCES

Full details of the fYR Macedonia case study, practical tips and a 'how to' can be found here. The mechanism there used Kobo Toolbox – an online data collection tool – to support data collection, visualization, and analysis.

Good luck implementing your own feedback mechanisms. Please do share any experience you have putting these steps into practice – within your own operation, organization or at the interagency level. Feedback is always welcomed!

PROCESS C4C TOOLBOX | 10 STEPS TO SETTING UP AN EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK MECHANISM

More tools and tips
on communicating with communities are available on the website:
cwc.westafrica.exposed

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