**SESSION 7.2:** Using community feedback to take action   
and “close the loop"



**TRAINING PACKAGE FOR USING SOCIAL SCIENCE IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND/OR COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES**

SESSION CONTENT

**Learning approach:** Real-time presentation, individual and group exercises, case examples

**Delivery mode:** Online and offline, 165 minutes approx.

**Essential sessions to have completed before this session:** 1.1, 3.1, 4.9, 4.10, 5.2

**Summary:** This session focuses on using community feedback data by sharing findings and taking action, tracking actions taken, and “closing the loop” by returning to communities with updates.

**Learning outcomes:**

* Become familiar with the uses and applications of complex feedback systems and how they can be used for course correction of response action
* Become familiar with monitoring feedback systems and the concept of “closing the loop”
* Learn how to use a community feedback action tracker and logbook to follow up on actions taken
* Learn how to present feedback findings and make preliminary recommendations

FACILITATING THE SESSION



**TRAINING PACKAGE FOR USING SOCIAL SCIENCE IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND/OR COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES**

Introduction: (5 minutes total)

Talk through session summary and learning outcomes.

Position this session in the question flow. Explain that this module mainly addresses question area 6-8,   
but we will touch on 1, 2 and 3.

1. How to ensure that this information goes back to communities? To inform community-level actions and decision-making of the broader response?
2. What methodology and tools should be used to collect and analyse this information?
3. How to track the information used to ensure that it effectively contributes to operational and strategic priorities?
4. Who can collect this information?
5. Does this information already exist? Is there a related needs assessment or study?
6. What information is needed?

**DATA TO ACTION:**

Key questions in social science research

1. Who needs this information?
2. How to ensure that the information is used to make operational and/or strategic decisions?

Note: Content in this session has adapted from the [IFRC Feedback Kit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PJNUfW8Cr2u8Ew8pK_1fKYJOtqGlxrLZRso9DpyiZ8w/edit?usp=sharing).

Recap from 4.9 & 4.10: Community feedback, feedback mechanisms and the community feedback cycle (25 minutes total)

Community feedback is simply any information shared by members of the community we are working for and interacting with.

* Feedback could be about anything, but we are usually interested in community members’ experiences with the activities we are conducting, the current situation of the community, or other topics relevant to our work, such as health beliefs.
* It is a community’s right to share their feedback with us, and our responsibility to manage and handle it appropriately.
* Community feedback data are owned by the community and, at the end of the day, are used by the community to trigger actions within it.
* Community members may share insights that include questions, suggestions, observations, beliefs, perceptions, concerns and statements of thanks.

A community feedback mechanism is a way to systematically and regularly listen to and act on what community members share with us, especially while they are receiving support.

Community feedback is an essential part of emergency response operations. By recognising, respecting and valuing local knowledge, community feedback mechanisms are an opportunity to build and maintain trust with communities and show accountability to them. Organisations have an obligation to listen to community members and respect their right to give feedback.

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|  | Question to participants (5 minutes):  Why is it important to share community feedback?  Online: Invite the participants to write the answers in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Ask two or three participants to share their answers  The most important step of a community feedback mechanism is sharing the feedback so others can use it!  It’s important for:   * Informing and influencing the response * Ethically, we don’t collect feedback just for the sake of collection. We are collecting it so we can use it to make necessary improvements. * Answering our social science operational research questions * Monitor, evaluate impacts and course-correct * At the end of the day, it’s essential for maintaining trust with the community |

1. Design of a feedback mechanism:

* Determine what kind of information is already received by the community, what additional channels might be required (based on the context and the community preference) and plan the feedback process together with the community
* Clearly identify the processes to collect, manage, and share the community feedback and the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved

1. Feedback collection and initial response:

* Collect feedback through a formal or informal channel
* Record the feedback
* Record information about when and where it was collected, and a bit about who gave the feedback
* Some feedback can be addressed during data collection

1. Consolidation & prioritisation:

* Note which feedback is immediately addressed
* As appropriate, escalate feedback to program teams or leadership.
* Compile all the recorded feedback and clean your data
* Sort and treat the different types of feedback according to the nature of the feedback (level of sensitivity or criticality)

1. Analysis:

* Group the feedback comments to identify the main topics that community members shared with you
* See if there are differences in the feedback shared by specific groups of people or changes over time
* Compare the findings with other information sources to understand the bigger picture

1. Sharing & taking action:

* Gather together to discuss what you have been hearing, what it means, and what you can do to address it
* Share and discuss the findings with those who are in the position to act on the feedback through internal discussions, external discussions (with peers and others) and meetings with the community

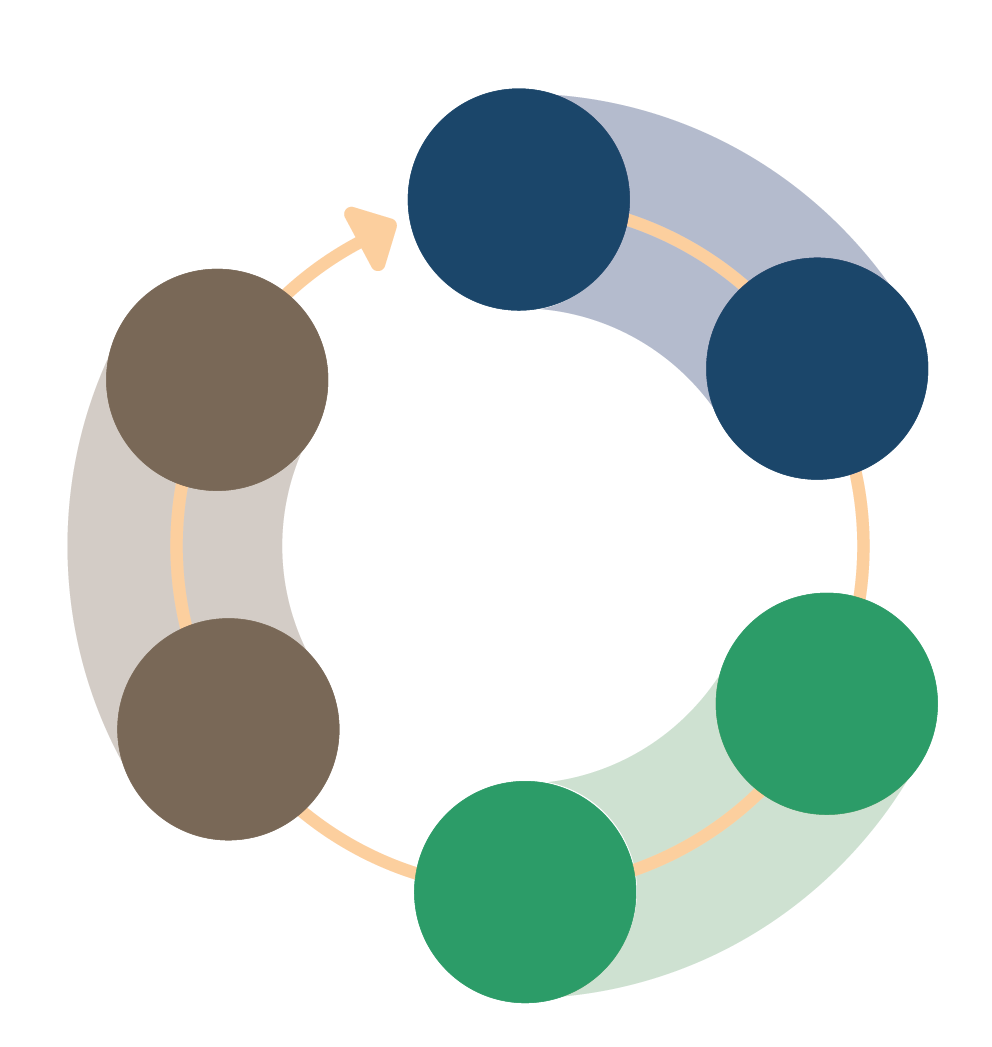
1. “Closing the loop”:

* Document the agreed action points and provide updates to the community on what has been done with the feedback

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|  | Question to participants (5 minutes):  What are the six sages of the community feedback cycle? What does each stage involve?  Online: Invite the participants to write the answers in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Ask two or three participants to share their answers |

Figure 1 below visualizes the 6 stages of the Community Feedback Cycle. In this session, we will cover Stage 5 and 6 - sharing & taking action, and “closing the loop.” For more information on Stage 1-2, see Session 4.9; Stage 3-4, see Session 4.10.

Figure 1: The Community Feedback Cycle



1.

Design

2.

Data collection & initial response

3.

Consolidation &

prioritisation

4.

Analysis

5.

Sharing   
&  
taking action

6.

Closing   
the loop

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|  | Brainstorm (15 minutes):  In the past, how have you used community feedback to adapt your community engagement and/or communications activities or services you were offering?  Think about feedback that was formally collected (solicited, where the community is intentionally asked for their feedback), or informally collected (unsolicited, where community members share their reactions and feedback without planned, systematic collection). Reminder that feedback can be positive, negative or neutral.  Online: Invite the participants to write the answers in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Ask two or three participants to share their answers |

Possible answers may include:

* Realise that there are issues with your services
* React to issues in real-time
* Tailor programs to better meet the needs of community members
* Create new programs
* Involve community members more

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|  | Case example (10 minutes):   * Ebola response in eastern DRC, 2018-2020   In response to rumours about rocks or banana trunks being buried instead of actual people who had died from Ebola, new types of body bags were purchased. These bags have a transparent window, which reassured families and friends of the deceased during the burial process.   * COVID-19 response in Cameroon, 2019   The Cameroon Red Cross staff and volunteers repeatedly heard requests for water in order to practice proper hygiene. These suggestions were shared and discussed with the Cameroon national coordination structure for the COVID-19 response. As a result, access to water in vulnerable communities was improved through the construction of 2 boreholes and the installation of water tanks in at-risk communities with a regular supply of water by the national water company.   * Ebola response in Equateur province in DRC, 2020   The humanitarian response to the Ebola outbreak was met with a lot of suspicion and resistance from community groups. The feedback shared by the community allowed responders to address key issues in dialogue sessions with members of the community who formed key pressure groups. This led to issues being resolved and members of these groups to be integrated into the response as volunteers. |

The bottom line **–** We use community feedback to adapt our response approach. Instead of “helicoptering in”[[1]](#footnote-1) with solutions and answers, we shift towards respectfully listening to community members more and collaborating to find solutions. This approach is more ethical, sustainable and effective. Refer to Modules 2 and 3 for more in-depth discussions.

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|  | Question to participants (5 minutes):  Which of these are the main steps for analysing feedback data?   1. Compile – gather all the feedback data you want to analyse 2. Identify themes – See which topics stand out 3. Disaggregate – See if there are differences between locations, demographic groups, and feedback channels 4. Identify changes – See if the data have changed 5. Triangulate – See if other information sources confirm your findings and provide more insights   Answer: All of these are important steps!  Reminder: For more detailed analysis steps for open feedback data, see Sessions 4.4, 4.6 and 4.10. For structured feedback (e.g. perception surveys), see Sessions 4.3, 4.5, 4.7 and 4.10. |

After analysis, we are ready to share and take action on the community feedback.

Stage 5. Sharing and taking action (90 minutes total)

Refer to Session 4.9 for Stage 1-2

Refer to Session 4.10 for Stage 3-4

After collecting and analysing community feedback, the next stage is to share the findings with different stakeholders and make necessary changes identified in the feedback

Sharing and taking action: The most essential stage feedback cycle is gathering together to discuss what you have been hearing, what it means, and what you can do to address it. To facilitate this process, you need to share and discuss the findings with those who are in the position to act on the feedback. This includes internal discussions, external discussions (with peers and others) and, importantly, meetings with the community.

Sharing and taking action can be broken down into several steps:

1) Prepare to share your initial findings:

* Revisit the tools you used during set-up
* Choose an appropriate communication/information product or format to use when sharing your findings
* Answer the “so what?” question about your findings and identify some recommendations

2) Share your findings

3) Engage in dialogue about your findings

4) Decide on and take action

5) Monitor the feedback mechanism and adapt as needed

Who needs what information when, and how?   
This question can guide you when sharing your community feedback findings.

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|  | Group exercise (15 minutes):  Divide into pairs.  Offline: Assign pairs  Online: Assign break-out rooms in pairs  Explain the exercise. After a few minutes of reflection, each participant takes 5 minutes to share their experience and answer the following questions:  Think of a time when you had to communicate your community feedback or operational social science research findings. Your example may be in the past, or you might think of a project you’re currently involved with. If no example comes to mind, it’s ok to imagine one!   * Who were you trying to communicate with? (your audiences) * What was the main finding or message you wanted to share? * What communication products did you use? * Why did you decide to use these products? * What went well? What would you do differently?   Online: Invite the participants to share the findings in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Collect answers from the group and discuss   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Examples of audiences include: | Examples of communication/information products include: | | * Community members | * Dataset | | * Response leaders | * Posters | | * Response staff | * Radio spots | | * Your team/organisation | * Infographics | | * Academic conference audience | * Short videos | | * A specific person | * Policy briefs | | * Government officials | * Reports | | * Funders | * Academic journal articles |   Note that some individuals may belong to multiple audiences. For example, response staff may also be community members.  It’s best to choose our communication/information products based on what our audience expects and needs, within the resources we have and the time available. |

1) Prepare to share your initial findings

Several tools that you used to set up your community feedback mechanism (Session 4.9) will now be helpful for sharing community feedback. Draw upon the planning you did in Stage 1, using these tools:

1. Communication channels
2. Information flows mapping
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Analytical frame

Tool 1: Communication channels

Recall that when you set up your community feedback mechanism, you identified communications channels. Information provision and response channels can be used to share updates and information with community members, and “close the loop” (Stage 6).

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| Information Provision Channels | Feedback Channels | Response Channels |
| Are channels through which we can share information about our organisation, partners, programs, and response plans with the communityin the areas where we work. These channels can be used to advertise the feedback mechanism, as well as share requested information. | Are channels through which we collect insights from communities about our work and services, and anything else of importance to the community. This can include broad information about cultural and contextual conditions for the target population. | Are the channels through which we respond to community feedback, usually during our process of “closing the loop.” It is important to remember that channels for collecting feedback are not always the appropriate channels to respond to the feedback. |

Tools 2 & 3: Information flows mapping; Roles and responsibilities

When setting up your feedback mechanism, you also mapped your key information flows, roles, responsibilities and timeframes. In your data collection plan, you also may have made commitments to return to the community members with updates.

Tool 4: Analytical frame

An analytical framework is a way to organise information about key areas of an issue or emergency. It supports planning and strategising, collaboration, triangulation of various data sources, and gives an overview of the information available. An analytical framework categorises all the available information and helps foster collaboration across different teams and break down silos to increase effectiveness.

Our analytical framework allows us to ensure that all data sources are feeding into one common analysis process. We have a responsibility to ensure community feedback is also included in this process, and that the analytical framework is updated according to emerging feedback topics.

Session 5.1 on evidence synthesis for additional insights on how to access relevant data and information required to undertake a synthesis to inform decision-making, and approaches to synthesizing qualitative evidence from those different sources.

Choose a format to present community feedback findings

Use different formats to share your community feedback findings. These can be called communication products or information products.

Key questions that can help you decide about the most effective way to present your initial feedback findings are:

* Who needs to see what kind of feedback?
* What level of detail do they need?
* How often do they need to see the feedback?
* In what form do they need to see the feedback?
* What do your audiences prefer as a format? Do they have any feedback/suggestions?

For more guidance on how to make a communications plan, please revisit Session 5.3 (i.e. communicating and presenting research outputs).

“So what?” Identify some preliminary recommendations

Sometimes community feedback contains suggestions that can directly be turned into actionable recommendations. But for other types of feedback, it can be helpful to offer some preliminary options or recommendations about how to act on the community’s feedback, as a starting point for the dialogue and discussion.

Tip: Sometimes preliminary options or recommendations can be phrased as questions. See the group exercise below for what these questions could look like.

When identifying recommendations, strike a balance between being responsive to the feedback while remaining open so that realistic, context-appropriate solutions can be proposed by your stakeholders and community members, when you engage in dialogue.

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|  | Group exercise (20 minutes):  Online: Assign participants into three break-out rooms, one group for each finding below  Explain the exercise. Each group will think of 1 or more recommendations for one of the findings. Then allow 10 minutes for group discussion and 5 minutes to summarize.  Offline: Assign participants into three groups, one group for each finding below  Consider the following findings, which were based on open, unstructured community feedback collected by Red Cross volunteers in Beni, North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo in April 2019 during an Ebola response.  Questions that can help you identify recommendations are:   * What do we not yet understand? * How could this feedback be relevant to our operations? * What does this mean for right now in the operation? * What does this mean for the future of the operation?   What recommendations could you make that give a starting point for further discussion?  Finding 1:  Frustration about unanswered demands for hand washing stations and soap​   * People are asking, “How can you be educating us about handwashing when we don't have clean water?”​   Finding 2:  There seems to be confusion and discontent with the current ring vaccination strategy. In the feedback, we heard demands for a broad Ebola virus disease vaccination campaign with a proven vaccine and questions demonstrating lack of understanding about ‘ring vaccination’ strategy. Community members are saying:   * “Why does the vaccination team come to vaccinate in a neighbourhood only after a confirmed case?” * “Why are they bringing a test vaccine instead of bringing one that is tested and reliable?”   Finding 3:  There are many questions about response strategies and tactics and their effectiveness, including why the response hasn’t changed or been adapted.   * “How do you explain this reappearance of Ebola in our city?” * “When will the Ebola outbreak end? We have lost our family members and loved ones;  is there no way to take other measures to eliminate the Ebola virus disease?” * “Why hasn’t the response changed strategies, given that the current measures haven’t ended the outbreak?”   Online: Invite the participants to share verbally or write the answers in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Ask participants to share their answers, take 2-3 per example  Potential recommendations:  Finding 1:   * How might the response help to ensure that hand washing stations are distributed everywhere they are needed to ensure compliance with hygiene?   Finding 2:  To address community members’ questions about the ring vaccination strategy, consider updating the Frequently Asked Questions document with an explanation about why this is the current strategy. Question you can ask may include:   * Does information on the vaccine trial need to be updated? * Does social science research and vaccine operations data describe how these beliefs and questions may be impacting the vaccination campaign?   Finding 3:   * How can we be more transparent with the community about the response strategy and decision-making process? * Do we need to have a response leader address these questions when communicating with affected communities? * How frequently should we give updates so that these types of questions don’t lead to doubt? |

Please refer back to Session 5.2 for how to effectively design research and transform social science data and evidence into findings that can be used to influence policy and relevant practice. Refer also to Session 6.1 on translating social science research into action.

In the next steps, you will discuss these recommendations with the stakeholders who have decision-making power.

2) Share your findings

Share your findings within the community and with your intended audiences, as well as any other stakeholders who might be interested. This way, others can adopt a more community-centered response, especially if they don’t already have a direct link to a community.

Consider uploading your findings on platforms which are accessible by key decision makers.

For example: your website, [ReliefWeb](https://reliefweb.int/), the [Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) Platform](https://data.humdata.org/), or share with social science researchers which work on synthesis analyses like the [Social Science in Humanitarian Action Platform (SSHAP)](https://www.socialscienceinaction.org/).

REMINDER: Ethics in operational research (Module 3)

Ensure that the identity of the person who provided the feedback is protected and anonymised before sharing. Think about ways to prevent indirect identification (i.e. through identifying factors other than a person’s name or contact information).

Community feedback reporting/presentation checklist

* When you share your findings, try to include these critical elements:
* How the feedback was collected
* Your analysis methodology
* Main trends and differences in the community feedback data
* Your interpretation of what these trends/differences mean
* Any insights from triangulating with other social science or operational sources
* Any context or details to help clarify your findings or interpretation
* Narrative quotes to illustrate your findings and bring community voices forward
* Preliminary recommendations to spark discussion

Transparency and feedback collection and analysis methods

As with other social science research methodologies, when sharing community feedback findings, it’s important to be transparent about the methods you used to collect and analyse the feedback. This will help guide the audience on how to interpret your data and findings for themselves, and to critically appraise your analysis.

* For perception surveys, if purposive or convenience sampling approaches were used, it is important to stress that the findings cannot be extrapolated to the whole community to avoid misunderstandings and false expectations.
* For open unstructured community feedback, it’s important to specify whether feedback was conducted using a solicited/formal active strategy (e.g. going door to door on in a neighbourhood on certain days of the week to listen to community members), or in an unsolicited/informal reactive manner (feedback box or hotline).

3) Engage in dialogue about your findings

The next step after sharing your findings is to engage in dialogue. One-way sharing of feedback results is often not enough to ensure action is taken and the community is aware of those actions.

Take advantage of “windows of opportunity” when the time and place is right for a discussion of feedback.

Look beyond your team and organisation and make links with groups that could learn from the community feedback.

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|  | Brainstorm (10 minutes):  What could be some “windows of opportunity” to discuss community feedback findings and engage in dialogue about actions to take in response to the feedback?  \*Windows of opportunity are circumstances when the time, place, mood and mindset are set up to meet your particular goals (in this case, successful communication).  Online: Invite the participants to write the answers in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Ask two or three participants to share their answers |

Opportunities to share community feedback and have discussions include:

* At internal meetings:
* Standing agenda point for short and concise updates and a discussion of who can do what to respond.
* Bilateral meetings for in-depth discussions of taking action on specific issues with relevant colleagues.
* At external meetings:
* Inter-agency coordination meetings are opportunities to share insights with organisations that aren’t regularly listening to community members. This could be due to structural barriers or lack of opportunities or awareness, like a lack of access to community members’ feedback. These may be working groups on social sciences, community feedback, community engagement, or other themes. Here you can triangulate your feedback, prioritise and coordinate joint action.
* Bilateral meetings with external stakeholders can be organised to discuss specific issues. External stakeholders can include community representatives, community groups, local authorities, organisations, media, or anyone who can act on the feedback.
* At community meetings:
* Meetings with community members allow you to understand issues and discuss what actions need to be taken. Communities usually already have suggestions or solutions to challenges or for improvements. You may even already have some suggestions in your feedback findings. Decisions about how to respond to feedback should not be taken independently, so instead, ask community members how you can support implementing their ideas.

Session 5.4 complements this session and covers different examples of sharing findings with communities to support community decision-making power.

Tip: Become a champion! Share community feedback findings on a routine basis so that it becomes normalised   
and until it becomes a routine request from colleagues and the community.

4) Decide on and take action

The biggest challenge of the community feedback cycle is moving from the results of your analysis to action. In the roles and responsibilities (Session 4.9), we discussed how the feedback team’s responsibility is to share insights with those who can take action and communicate information to the decision-makers, and ensure a participatory planning process.

In this step, you’ll draw on your preliminary recommendations and the outcomes of your dialogue, and in collaboration with your community and stakeholders, decide on or recommend changes.

When you are having dialogue with the community and your team, ask yourselves the following questions to help you decide how take action:

* Which topic do we need to address?
* What kind of action needs to be taken?
* Who needs to take responsibility for the action(s)?
* Have those who should act agreed to take action?
* Is there something that can be done to learn from the feedback for the future?

Keep in mind that not all feedback requires a change; sometimes positive feedback can motivate us to continue and validate that we’re on track. When changes are needed, the response might immediate, or it might require a programmatic or strategic change.

Recommendations should be clear, concise and realistic. Focus on the most important and urgent ones. It’s not all on you and your team to tackle! Remember to delegate follow-up where possible.

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|  | Question to participants (5 minutes):  True or false? It is the responsibility of the teams managing a feedback mechanism to ensure the feedback leads to concrete action.  Online: Invite the participants to write the answers in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Ask two or three participants to share their answers |

Answer: False!

* The responsibility of the feedback team is to *share* the insights with those who can take the action, as well as to *learn from the feedback* and *adapt the feedback mechanism*.
* Those who are most likely best placed to take action are the leadership of the programme or operation, the technical leads, local authorities, partner organisations and most importantly, the community itself.
* It is essential to have leadership drive the action planning process, so make sure to regularly involve coordinators, operations managers, committee chairs/presidents, and/or senior leadership.
* For the humanitarian response cluster context, refer to Session 6.2.

Document your decisions and recommendations

It’s important to document the recommendations and decisions you make, and the actions you and your stakeholders take based on what you learn from the community feedback mechanism. Make this document accessible to everyone concerned, to monitor progress and stay accountable. Include this document in your broader operational reviews, organisational action plans and evaluations.

5) Monitor the feedback mechanism and adapt as needed

Regularly check on your feedback mechanism, to see if it’s working and whether people still feel comfortable sharing their feedback. Some questions to guide you:

* Are the feedback channels used? Have we received sensitive feedback? If the amount of feedback received is low, is it because people do not trust the mechanism?
* Who is sharing feedback – and who isn’t? Are there certain groups of people (e.g. women, elderly, certain ethnicities or locations) that we are not hearing from?
* What are communities’ views on the process? Are they satisfied? Do they feel heard?
* Has the feedback led to action? If not, why?
* Are people hearing back about the feedback they shared? If not, why?

You can answer these questions by asking colleagues and communities, holding focus group discussion or by implementing a survey data (see Session 4.2).

Indicators you can use to monitor your feedback mechanism can be:

Based on your community feedback set-up:

* # and type of methods established to collect feedback and complaints from the community

Based on your community feedback action tracker:

* # of operational decisions made based on community feedback

Based on your perception surveys:

* % of community members who feel their opinion is taken into account during operation planning and decision-making
* % of community members, including marginalized and at-risk groups, who know how to provide feedback or make a complaint about the operation
* % of people who received a response to their feedback or complaint about the operation

**REMINDER:**

As you monitor your feedback mechanism, you may identify actions you need to take to improve it. Some of these actions were identified above and in Session 4.10, and serve to improve your feedback system.

Some action for improvement might include:

1. Planning refresher trainings as the emergency (and your feedback mechanism) evolves
2. Bringing specific feedback to focal points, subject matter experts, leaders of different departments or parts of the response
3. Bringing back any patterns in data quality issues to the feedback collectors so they can improve
4. Identifying ways that critical or sensitive feedback can be referred in a more timely manner and responded to more appropriately

Stage 6. Closing the feedback loop (40 minutes total)

“Closing the loop”: Closing the feedback cycle means that you document the agreed-upon action points and provide updates on what has been done with the feedback directly to the community.

Closing the feedback loop is the process of communicating to feedback providers what has been done in response to their feedback. It involves explaining and discussing how the feedback was considered, what was feasible to do (or not), the rationale behind these decisions, and what this means for the future.

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|  | Question to participants (5 minutes):  Why is it important to close the loop in your community feedback mechanism?  Online: Invite the participants to write the answers in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Ask two or three participants to share their answers |

Community members have a right to share their feedback, and to know what came of their feedback. Otherwise, they may assume that nothing was done, which undermines trust. Session 5.4 covers describes additional approaches used to share research findings back with communities through a range of case examples.

Where, how and with whom do we need to close the loop?

Closing the loop has two layers: internally with your organisation, and externally with the community. When closing the loop, link the community feedback findings to the decisions or actions responding to them.

Actions taken to address specific pieces of feedback can be tracked in a simple table or logbook. Sensitive feedback may be followed up on and documented separately by Human Resources, Security, Legal and other teams, depending on what’s appropriate and according to the roles and responsibilities in your feedback mechanism (e.g. whether an investigation occurred, and what the results were).

Where broad themes or trends are found, a community feedback action tracker can be a helpful tool to document recommendations and actions taken.

In your organisation, make sure that staff and volunteers are regularly updated on and know how community feedback is shaping decisions and improving or validating their work. This is important because staff and volunteers interact with community members and can pass along this information.

With the community, we want to share actions with the community as a whole and with the individuals who provided specific feedback. It’s important to always close the loop, even if no action was taken. Either way, it’s important to explain the decisions made and rationale for them, so community members and stakeholders understand and may gain insight into the constraints and context.

When closing the loop, consider the following:

* Choose communication channels that are diverse and preferred by the community and stakeholders
* Clearly delegate who is closing the loop with whom
* Use your Information Flows and Roles and Responsibilities documents. Update them when needed.
* Close the loop, even if no action was taken
* Keep track of how, to whom and when you closed the loop in the logbook, database, or community feedback action tracker. This will help make sure no feedback is forgotten and will support accountability.

Tip: Make a plan for how to share community feedback findings, discuss and take action, and close the loop with staff, volunteers and community members (including those who provided feedback).

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|  | Question to participants (10 minutes):  How can we close the loop with community members?  Online: Invite the participants to write the answers in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Ask two or three participants to share their answers |

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| OPTIONS FOR “CLOSING THE LOOP” WITH COMMUNITIES | | |
| WHO  to share with? | Directly with the person who provided feedback | With the broader community where the feedback was received |
| WHEN  is this important? | * When the feedback shared was sensitive * When the person urgently needs to hear back about a specific issue * If there is a need for the person to provide consent to share their contact details | * When the feedback topic is of interest to the whole community * If the feedback was provided anonymously and the response can be shared without potentially identifying the anonymous feedback giver |
| HOW  can this be done? | Directly contacting the person the way they prefer and is feasible (e.g., in person, via phone, or email) | Options include:   * Updates and discussions during regular activities * Community meetings on the topic * Discussing the issue on community radio programming * Posting signs or posters with the relevant information in public spaces |

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|  | Individual exercise (15 minutes):  Open **Worksheet 1**. Explore the examples and try entering your recommendations from the group exercise on developing preliminary recommendations we did earlier in this session.  Open **Worksheet 2**. Explore the example and fill in the last several columns about “closing the loop.” Try filling in the logbook using the group exercise we completed earlier in this session.  Online: Invite the participants to share the findings in the chat function and summarize  Offline: Collect answers from the group and discuss |

FURTHER RESOURCES

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| **Step 1-5** | **Resource** |
| 1 | [Mapping the information flow](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Hi34vhZYczoT0HCxMcFvOsudXRv18vGS/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109473232721131860036&rtpof=true&sd=true) |
| 1 | [Mapping and agreeing on necessary roles, responsibilities](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A9EgUbMkG7ZnNhXIKURw0PaAR-uUoyYu/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109473232721131860036&rtpof=true&sd=true%5C) and resources for a feedback mechanism |
| 1 | [Analytical framework for community feedback](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10mp4MFCizRsG3M3IuzPI_0SEYStCD25Y?rtpof=true&authuser=evaelisabeth.erlach%40gmail.com&usp=drive_fs) (example) |
| 1 | [Different formats for sharing community feedback](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GIH40_GJ1BXUSO2FRwrKt6d_DRyvJypb/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109473232721131860036&rtpof=true&sd=true) |
| 1 | [Tool How to identify the best format for sharing feedback data with your audience](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ev51BqKyaWlptX8S5bfsQ43nfwvHQSh1/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109473232721131860036&rtpof=true&sd=true) |
| 1 | [Defining communication channels for feedback mechanism](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Hp2nQTRcTAXDyhVeKvyxqlCmjVxY3xq4/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109473232721131860036&rtpof=true&sd=true)s |
| 1 | [COVID-19: Community feedback report. Ukraine, December 2020](https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/04/UPD-Com-Feedback-report-URCS-Dec-2020.pdf) |
| 1 | [Survey on community perception on vaccination against COVID-19: Condensed summary](https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/11/URCS_COVID-19_Survey_-Highlights_Final_EN-2.pdf) |
| 1 | [IFRC Africa region: COVID-19 community data dashboard](https://go.ifrc.org/emergencies/4583#community-data) |
| 4 | [Tool: Developing an action plan](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EfdIVk0Yi_a2TzIJArKH9XjLg60wuj6E/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109473232721131860036&rtpof=true&sd=true) for addressing community feedback |
| 4 | [Community feedback action tracker (template)](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EgAszUouzrrNL_SDO17faVvshaKMcGg0/edit#gid=1704245436) |

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY FEEDBACK –

* [Using Community Feedback to Guide the COVID-19 Response in Sub-Saharan Africa: Red Cross and Red Crescent Approach and Lessons Learned from Ebola](https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/hs.2020.0195?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%20%200pubmed)
* [New Mixed Methods Approach for Monitoring Community Perceptions of Ebola and Response Efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](https://www.ghspjournal.org/content/9/2/332)
* [A Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability](https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/06/20211020_CEAGuidelines_NEW1.pdf)
* IFRC’s [COVID-19 Community Feedback Kit](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/covid-19-community-feedback-kit/), which provides a list of tools and guidance actors need to set up mechanisms for systematically listening and responding to communities

Wrap-up/summary (5 minutes total)

* Stage 5 and 6 of the community feedback cycle focus on *sharing and taking action* and “*closing the loop”.*
* Sharing community feedback findings is the most important step of the feedback cycle, while moving to take action is the most challenging.
* A response approach that acts on community feedback is more collaborative and respectful of communities, and is therefore more ethical, sustainable and effective.
* To share and take action on community feedback you need to:
* 1. Prepare to share your initial findings
* 2. Share your findings
* 3. Engage in dialogue about your findings
* 4. Decide on and take action
* 5. Monitor the feedback mechanism and adapt as needed
* Closing the loop means communicating to those who gave feedback about what has been done in response to their feedback.
* It’s important to close the loop within our organisations and with the community to ensure our accountability.
* Use tools like an action tracker and a logbook to document how you and stakeholders have responded to community feedback and closed the loop.

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1. We can think about how the pitfalls of “helicopter research”, where people from outside the community come in, do impose a flurry of activities, and at some point leave, also apply to operational social science research and public health emergency responses or humanitarian aid. For more see: Session 5.4: Feeding back to communities, “extractive research” part; <https://irb.cherokee.org/media/rkknqeww/helicopter-research.pdf>; Smith, L. T. (2021). Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples. Bloomsbury Publishing. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)