**January 2019 MEL COP-Feedback and complaints mechanisms**

**HUM MEAL Working Group**- - introduction. ****

* **Action Items:**
	+ **Looking for people to join**:
	+ Humanitarian MEAL reference group-share ideas from CO, resources, review materials
	+ Humanitarian MEAL working group- regional or HQ role-20% LOE needed
	+ **Based on the discussions in this call, major issues raised and emerging interest in the COP for further exchanges the HUM MEAL will organize additional calls and other opportunities for mutual learning and support related to FCMs**

The HUM MEAL Working Group wanted to **focus first on feedback and complaints mechanisms** (FCM) also because of the low score in CARE self-assessment (2017) against CHS commitment 5-lowest score that CARE received (1.4 out of 5) . Major areas for improvement include inclusion of programme participants e.g. what types of mechanism they would prefer to use and which ones they trust in; inconsistent FCMs systems across CARE, design issues (having various channels), inconsistent management and documentation to report and understand type of complaints managed and their status

More on CHS indicators: <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources/chs-guidance-notes-and-indicators>

HUM MEAL working group started work on a practical guidance package for Feedback and Complaints mechanisms that will be part of the CARE MEL minimum package

**What types of feedback and complaints mechanisms are you currently using and for what purpose?**

Examples from colleagues:

Benedict Kitonga from **CARE Kenya**-SMS tool-free line to send

* Call-in toll free number in Dadaab
* Feedback processes in the community where they can drop in their complaints and contact them
* Field staff go around the community and collect complaints
* Make use of anonymous email where community members can send in grievances

From Jay Goulden to Everyone: 09:15 AM

We set up a feedback mechanism in **Peru** after the earthquake of 2007, initially to cover the humanitarian response program, but it was later expanded to be a system that covered all projects (including development) - used suggestions boxes, a freephone number, email address, and face-to-face dialogue - with a system to track complaints and responses, a small team at national level to coordinate, and high level stats being fed into the Country SMT, for accountability. Was later turned into an institutional accountability policy - and documented here ([http://governance.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/CARE+Peru+Guide+to+the+organization+of+systems+for+NGO+accountability.pdf](http://governance.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/CARE%2BPeru%2BGuide%2Bto%2Bthe%2Borganization%2Bof%2Bsystems%2Bfor%2BNGO%2Baccountability.pdf))

From Lamson Ocira to Everyone: 09:16 AM

In the Westnile humanitarian operation (**Uganda**), Care is using suggestion boxes that have been put in the various project sites to enable the beneficiaries can log in their complains. These are later collected by officers incharge and sorted based on their categories.

From MEAL Nigeria Team to Everyone: 09:16 AM

**CARE Nigeria**; WE have Complaint and Feedback desk during activity implementation and Complaint box located at strategic points where participants can access and drop complaints or feedbacks

From Mariana.Pinto to Everyone: 09:19 AM

**CARE Austria**: most projects collect feedback through suggestion boxes (e.g. place at partners' facilities), phone and email. FGDs during periodic evaluations have also sometimes served this purpose

From osama.rahim to Everyone: 09:22 AM

**CARE syria** NW hadn't a visiblity inside syria so we depend on the complaints channels within our partners, now we are working to activate CRM online system to receive complaints directely from stakholders in addtion to the received complaints by the partners

From osama.rahim to Everyone: 09:25 AM

Uwe: we will receive complaints directly through whats number and even through our consultnts on the ground

From osama.rahim to Everyone: 09:28 AM

the system was implemented for all CARE syria Hub by IMMAP and this system was used by CARE Syria South hub, CARE NW hub will used in up coming months

CARE Syria hub-iMap-compliance through a whatsapp number and can analyze all complaints

 Started in the South, but will expand to the North

 CRM online system will be used to receive complaints

From Sadhvi Kalra to Everyone: 09:39 AM

There can be periodic group discussions conducted to share complaints.

From Abdallah Rabah to Everyone: 09:39 AM

**CARE Lebanon** are in the planning phase of developing a piece of work on Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms. Currently, it’s just basic 1-way feedback channels.However, based on similar experiences, worked on developing two different pieces of work;1. A Feedback Mechanisms in Humanitarian Settings Guide and Toolkit, 2. A Feedback and Complaints Mechanisms Training Course This Guide and Toolkit should support us and partners in developing or strengthening friendly feedback mechanisms and ways for communities - beneficiaries to receive information, provide feedback and meaningfully participate in influencing humanitarian programming.We had a guide and Toolkit of feedback mechanisms, which included:• designing è forming a feedback task team + analysing the context + defining the scope of feedback mechanism + selecting friendly feedback channels + designing the feedback loop + planning resources + implementation plan + staff CB + Inform community, • implementation è listening to target group / communities + categorizing feedback + responding to feedback + closing the feedback loop• learning è Monitoring the feedback mechanism + using feedback for organisational learningTools used (such as: Feedback mechanism score card – community feedback activities – FGDs – Feedback boxes – Feedback survey questions – Feedback form – Technology and Feedback Mechanisms – Discussion guide – Community consultation – Feedback loop – Feedback database + guidance – Feedback channels and categories – Safeguarding (Awareness and receiving complaints)

From SAMUEL to Everyone: 10:19 AM

**CARE Ghana** have used a digital system (feedback commons) to implement a feedback mechanism on a governance project being implemented through CSOs partners in Ghana. its not easy. but in that case you will require 2 levels: feedback from partner to CARE and feedback from beneficiaries to partners. would be greatful to share insights if time permits

Samuel-CARE Ghana-project implemented through partners (n=27)

Project beneficiaries provided feedback to the partners

 Need to close 2 feedback loops-CARE to partners and partners to beneficiaries

 Feedback Commons-simple survey created

 Community-level feedback-can share more about how to make the process easier

From Moiez Ahmed to Everyone: 10:09 AM

based on my previous experience (non-CARE), we developed an Intractive Voice Response (IVR) which was a digital platform to collect feedback, but also used to share important information with community

**FCM detailed presentations** from :

* CARE Somalia
* CARE Ethiopia
* CARE Chad

**Reflections on the presentations, questions and discussions**

* It’s not just enough to put the feedback mechanisms in place-we need to **ensure people use FCM**, how to build trust in FCM?

Importance of information sharing about program activities, mandates, code of conduct, and how FCM works and why we have them (right-based approach)

Crucial to consult with communities and understand power dynamics to decide which mechanisms to use and build trust in the system

Needs to be continuous work so the community is convinced and uses the mechanisms

Need to improve trust with the community and give feedback to the community and individuals to show how complaints are addressed-to show that it is not a waste of time

Ensure the safety of the mechanisms to avoid fear from retaliation that prevents people from lodging complaints.

Explaining anonymity, explain that the mechanisms that are of no cost to the participant

Creating more awareness

* Importance of awareness raising and **training for staff** and especially frontline staff about FCM and accountability, right based approach
* What **systems / mechanisms** are being used to collect/manage/analyze/communicate feedback. Did you create your own system, pay for a new system, use a system created by a different CO?

Digital system? IMMAP, Feedback commons, Interactive Voice Response

In most other countries I’ve worked, the toll free hotline is not affordable. Have others found Toll free hotlines to be affordable?

What resources are required for preferred methods? Focus groups, outbound calls, etc.

* Working **through partners** and using their FCM?

I’m interested to hear how COs who work through partners manage the FSM? How do they ensure partners are meeting the minimum standards in setting up and managing FSM?

Using consultant to collect FCM in remote management program (third party monitoring)

* Important to look at **gender dynamics** in the communities to ensure access to FCM for women and girls

linked to the CARE Approach: inclusive governance and Gender Equality & Women's voice

feedback mechanisms is part of the gender marker criteria

how can we make the complaint channels Fit the gender sensitive??

goes back to the basic principle of community participation in setting up the feedback system. We need to provide community an opportunity to express what feedback channel best work for them including the most vulnerable, and women.

Recommended to have more than one mechanism for feedback and complaints to increase access to women and girls and other marginalized groups.

to what degree are we considering aspects of GBV and/or sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse in CARE’s feedback mechanisms?

* Want to learn more about **joint mechanisms** so we are not duplicating efforts across agencies
* **Closing the loop?**

Long lead time for the complaints to be addressed. Sometimes the service providers (organizations, government, officers) consider complaints to lack merit hence do not act upon them. How do you shorten the time for feedback to be given to the complainant to be given.

how are programs dealing with anonyms feedback, especially for closing loop?

can we talk about the used categories regarding the complaints, with their timeframes, because the common challenge is there is no standerd complaints categories for the organizations

Yohannes: Do you also categorize the complaints?

do we have any examples where feedback is also systematically used to go back to techical advisors to review the quality of their advice and inform future project design?

Adding to Laura's point--are there more cases like Ethiopia where we use comments to inform advocacy?

* Do any of the speakers who presented also know that we collect statistics of the feedback we get, to review partner performance for example or just to understand or **overall performance**?
* How will you assess the success of those mechanisms to report safeguarding issues? Is there any learning that you could share specifically on encouraging community members/beneficiaries to report **SEA cases** ?
* how can we keep this dialogue and lesson-sharing going and document both the lingering questions as well as the great suggestions and program examples?