



Overview of the Common Feedback Platform

Updated: 12 December 2021

The Common Feedback Platform (CFP) refers to a community feedback system developed based on Community Feedback Referral Standards¹ and the Accountability Manifesto.² Following the finalization of referral standards within a technical working group endorsed by the CwC Working Group, IOM, DRC, and UNHCR formed a steering committee to operationalize and incorporate the standards within IOM's previous Community Feedback Mechanism. After adaptation of the CFP system to align with CwC WG standards, IOM, DRC, and UNHCR began to roll out of the system within their respective programs. The system has also been adopted by IOM and UNHCR partner organizations- BRAC, Action Aid Bangladesh, TAI, CARE, DRC. To date, the CFP:

- Is receiving over 15,000 "tickets" of community feedback³ and referring over 6,000 pieces of community feedback through protection and Site Management actors to relevant service providers as of April 2021.
- Is used by seven different agencies within the response and present in 31 camps.⁴
- Is implemented by nearly 400 field staff who have been trained on systems operation and the collection of community feedback across multiple agencies.
- Is overseen by three separate IM teams (IOM, UNHCR, and DRC) who are trained on how to manage, clean, and refer community feedback data with respect to data protection guidance in line with the Accountability Manifesto.
- Is supported by three different programme teams (IOM, UNHCR, and DRC) who retain staff capable of training and supporting the expansion of the system to other agencies and programme teams. These teams routinely provide feedback, training and support to staff working in the system.
- Has dedicated referral pathways for WFP SCOPE-related issues and for UNHCR SMART Card related issues.
- Routinely shares monthly visualizations and IM data outputs to all sectors.

The CFP itself is currently based on a system of Kobo forms and an MS Access database that processes and appends community feedback. Through this approach, the system is scalable, adjustable, and relatively free of charge to expand on a per-user basis. Currently, the consortium is exploring other tech-

¹ The CFM Referral Standards was produced by a Technical Working Group under the CwC WG with consultation and inputs from all related / concerned sectors.

² Available at <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/bangladesh/document/accountability-affected-populations-aap-manifesto>

³ A ticket of community feedback refers a record or entry of feedback in the system that could pertain to different types of issues recording in the system, such as a service related complaint a question about assistance.

⁴ Current implementing actors include BRAC, Action Aid Bangladesh, TAI, CARE, DRC, IOM, UNHCR



based solutions to maintain the current system's flexibility but allow for greater efficiency in feedback processing and referral to improve accountability to affected populations.

There is widespread agreement that the **Common Feedback Platform (CFP)** should function as the central complaint/feedback mechanism for the collection, referral and response of feedback within the Cox's Bazar refugee response. The system should serve as the official tool that agencies can adopt should they seek to improve their own compliance with response standards and need support from a dedicated Steering Committee comprised of UNHCR, IOM, and DRC. IOM Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM) will support the steering committee as a dedicated secretariat, overseeing reporting to ISCG and Sector Coordinators within the response on the system. Agencies' and their respective focal points will oversee the system and continue its expansion and development within the response to improve the harmonized collection, referral, and management of community feedback within the response across all camps.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is an active commitment of humanitarian workers to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the affected populations that humanitarian organizations seek to assist and is a core commitment within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee principles. Community engagement involves a two-way communication process between affected population and humanitarian responders. It should enable people to meet their different needs, address their vulnerabilities and build on their pre-existing capacities. It recognizes the role of affected communities as first responders and thus the role of the humanitarian system is first and foremost to support their efforts. Timely, accurate, reliable information and effective feedback mechanisms are necessary, and lack of information can, at any stage of a conflict or disaster, affect the condition of communities and misinform their decisions. The ability to make informed decisions strengthens societies, fosters economic growth, sustainability and democratic structures, and enhances accountability.

Recent studies have revealed on-going challenges with how feedback mechanisms and referral pathways operate within the Cox's Bazar refugee response.⁵ More than three years after the influx, there is a need to bring systems and procedures in alignment with the "One Camp" principle⁶ and longstanding commitments towards rationalization and improvement of services within the camps. It is a long-standing commitment of the CwC working group to improve community feedback practices within the response and bring them under a greater level of harmonization, transparency, and effectiveness. This commitment is evidenced in the CwC Working Group's Objective 2: "Improve participation of and accountability to affected people following minimum standards for the referral and resolution of community feedback; and through increased use of collective data analysis." There have been several achievements through the CwC working group, including materializing the Accountability Manifesto and creation of referral

⁵ See "Our Thoughts" for more information on perception of CFM systems within the response <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/our-thoughts-rohingya-share-their-experiences-and-recommendations>

⁶ The "One Camp" principle is the idea and commitment towards harmonization standards and systems across the Rohingya response as part of a multi-year reconciliation and rationalization process.



standards for Community Feedback. Despite this progress, the response still lacks an overall response-wide harmonized system for interested agencies to adopt.

Need for Common Feedback Mechanism

Since the onset of the influx in 2017, the response has developed considerably with respect to the provision of harmonized assistance across the camps. However, despite improvements in many conditions and standards across the camps, there remains many issues with respect to the effective collection, referral and management of community engagement with the response. A recent, large-scale study that explored Rohingyas' perception and understanding of feedback mechanisms found that in 73% of focus group discussions with women, participants reported that they did not know where to report a problem.⁷ The 2020 Multi-sector Needs Analysis found similar reports that CFM processes were too complicated, that people did not provide feedback, or did not receive a response to the feedback they provided. The majority of respondents in over 200 interviews reported that feedback mechanisms were unclear and ineffective – the majority of people never received replies or follow-ups after they provided feedback to the organization.⁸ Underlying the affected population's negative perception and ignorance of the community feedback mechanism are a range of operational issues that cause significant difficulties with referrals and responses.

Scale of response, complexity of aid system, volume of feedback & changing assistance guidelines:

Feedback systems in the response are generally tasked with the complex task of having to make sense of many different systems and practices of aid provision that can be quite complicated in terms of how these systems are administered. They are also subject to changes that require corresponding changes to community feedback management systems. In general, the volume of feedback provided to systems is large and difficult to sort, refer, and manage effectively. For example, the CFP receives over 15,000 pieces of community feedback within a given month alone – all of which from the perspective of accountability principles require sorting, referral, and reply from the relevant agency. As a result, multiple systems that are not well integrated, not well informed about the various aid systems or not developed to manage large quantities of feedback are generally ineffective.

Lack of monitoring of feedback systems: While many agencies operationally put their community feedback mechanisms under Monitoring and Evaluations departments, community feedback mechanisms and their operational effectiveness generally lack independent monitoring to ensure the accuracy of information recorded and associated actions taken across all stages of the community feedback process.

Non-standardized collection and referral of feedback between agencies and sectors: Another critical challenge lies in the different practices of feedback collection and referral at camp level. Despite the creation and endorsement of Community Feedback Referral standards in early 2020, many agencies, sector focal points and camps have yet to align with them. While CFP has been actively advocating and

⁷ ["Our Thoughts"](#), (IOM & ACAPS 2021)

⁸ ["Our Thoughts"](#), (IOM & ACAPS 2021)



encouraging adoption at field level, there remains need to adjust standards as needs develop on the ground.

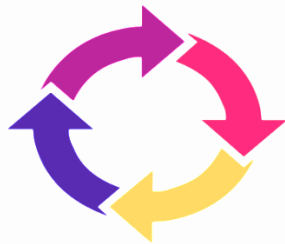
Needs for dedicated referral pathways on specific issues: Beyond camp-based referral and feedback management, there is an increasing need for improving centralized referral practices with centrally managed programs such as SMART Registration and SCOPE assistance. While there are camp-based referral pathways established, resolving technical issues with SMART and SCOPE assistance is done within or above Cox's Bazar level and would benefit from centralized, supplementary referral pathways and feedback loops.

Need for greater analysis and visualization of community feedback: Assessing the coverage and effectiveness of community feedback mechanisms is greatly hampered by the lack of standardized feedback systems in the response. This inhibits data analysis and visualization, which limits overall understanding of service effectiveness, coverage and hinders associated advocacy.

Lack representation of operational CFM challenges at sector level: Currently, only some Site Management and Protection agencies are managing the referral of community feedback at camp level and there is no dedicated person within the Cox's Bazar coordination structure to advocate for CFM accountability and flag referral blockages to specific sectors. This greatly hampers the ability of any system to improve referral pathways and feedback coordination within the wider response. Through this central system, there will be greater opportunities for improving referral pathways, standards, and coordination of community feedback within the Cox's Bazar response.



Common Feedback Platform Workflow



COMMON FEEDBACK PLATFORM

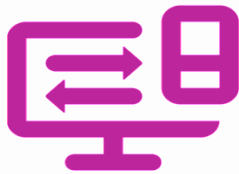
Overview & Workflow

The Common Feedback Platform (CFP) is an open source, ODK based application used to collect and manage data. Data is collected through ODK forms on Android phones and sent to a live cloud server. These workflows can be set up by information management to refer cases to specific users within the system. These users can then add information to the tickets through the web portal. As information is updated, camp based staff receive updates about the case and are prompted to follow up with further actions. Data can be exported from the system anytime for analytics and has a range of user controls to restrict access according to a person's specific user role. The CFP application essentially allows for ODK forms to be turned into a case management system that track, automate and refer cases within and between teams. The following workflow was implemented for the Community Feedback Mechanism being implemented within the response:



Collecting feedback

- Feedback is received through the mobile application in the field using normal ODK/KOBO forms. Forms can be updated as frequently as necessary just like a normal ODK form.
- Current feedback forms are based on CwC WG Referral Standards and consulted with sectors.
- Field teams can review gathered data and have a copy of pending feedback on their devices.
- User information and a unique ticket number is assigned to each piece of feedback collected for tracking and referral.



Referring information

- The server will check information in the ticket and refer to the responsible person, usually the sector focal point, through the web-platform.
- Referrals & Workflows are set up by IM but can be changed anytime.
- Referral agencies can receive email updates and notifications when they receive referrals.
- Each ticket is assigned a status to keep track of who needs to take action in order to resolve the feedback. Tickets that need to be referred are marked as open and require an agency to respond.



Responding to tickets

- Agencies can review the information in a ticket and add comments or update the status accordingly.
- When an agency has responded to the ticket, they can mark the ticket as "Responded" in order to alert the camp staff responsible that the ticket is ready for "follow-up."
- Agencies are also required to state whether the ticket has been "Resolved" or whether the ticket "Can't be Resolved". They also have the chance to add a comment or additional explanation to the ticket.



Closing the feedback loop

- Camp staff have a "to-do list" in their application that show when a case has been updated and needs to be "followed up" with the person who provided the feedback.
- Camp staff can relay the comment provided by the referral agency to the person on the ground and cross-check whether the case has been resolved with the person.
- At the end of the process data from all stages can be exported and analyzed to understand whether cases were actually resolved as stated by referral agencies.