UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Guidance notes on Setting and Upgrading Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms

UNHCR Syria

Introduction:

Accountability to affected populations can be understood as an active commitment by the humanitarian actors and organizations to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to and being held accountable by the people they seek to assist.

UNHCR Syria has protection of the Persons of Concern (PoCs) at the heart of its response and its accountability to PoCs is well-established and transpires through its protection interventions conducted through the Rights-Based and Age, Gender and Diversity-based approaches.

A Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) is a key component of accountability to affected populations and finds its endorsement as a commitment in the Accountability to Affected Populations Framework adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2011.

UNHCR Syria's Complaint and Feedback Mechanism includes different ways through which persons of concern, namely refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, stateless and returnees, can submit complaints and feedback in regard to their protection concerns, misconduct of UNHCR and partner staff, the management of their queries by UNHCR staff and UNHCR partners, and the services provided by UNHCR and its partners as well as other relevant stakeholders.[1]

What is Complaint and Feedback Mechanism?

A complaint and feedback mechanism (CFM) is a set of procedures and tools formally established (ideally by UNHCR and partners across different programs and linked to other monitoring processes) which:

a. Solicits and listens to, collates and analyzes complaints and feedback from beneficiaries of community/ satellite centers supported by UNHCR.
b. Triggers action influences decision-making at the appropriate level in the organization and/or prompts a referral to other relevant stakeholders if necessary and appropriate.
c. Provides a response back to the complaint and feedback provider and if appropriate, to the wider community.
d. Supports transparency and accountability to affected populations

This guidance note ensures that joint mechanisms developed by different field/sub offices and/ or partners meet UNHCR's minimum standards which may necessitate that the minimum standards are included in agreements with other organizations.

[1] Guidance note: Feedback and complaint mechanisms, CARE, 2019, page 1

Key definitions:

- **Feedback:** is a positive or negative statement, a concern, response or a suggestion on a non-sensitive issue about an intervention provided by UNHCR or its partners or the behavior/ misconduct of UNHCR or partner staff.
- **Complaint:** is a specific grievance from anyone who claims that has been negatively affected by an organization's action or who believes that an organization has failed to meet a stated commitment. Complaints can be about either non-sensitive issues (such as dissatisfaction with activities) or sensitive issues (such as fraud, corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), sexual harassment (SH)).
- **Accountability:** refers to the responsible use of power (resources, decision making) by humanitarian actors, combined with effective and quality programming that recognizes the community of concern's dignity, capacity, and ability to be independent.
- **Community-based complaints mechanism** is a system blending both formal and informal community structures, built on engagement with the community where individuals are able and encouraged to safely report grievances – including SEA incidents – and those reports are referred to the appropriate entities for follow-up.
- **Complainant:** A person who brings an allegation to the CFM in accordance with established procedures.
- **Protection concern:** is any act that negatively affects the respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with human rights law, international humanitarian law (which applies in situations of armed conflict) and refugee law.
- **Misconduct –** any failure by a staff member to comply with his or her obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules or other administrative issuances, or to observe the standards of conduct expected of an international civil servant.[2]
- **Whistle-blower:** is someone who reports waste, fraud, abuse, corruption, or dangers to safety and protection of people to someone who is in the position to rectify the wrongdoing. A whistleblower typically works inside of the organization where the wrongdoing is taking place; however, being an agency "insider" is not essential to serving as a whistleblower. What matters is that the individual discloses information about wrongdoing that otherwise would not be known.

Purpose:

The complaint and feedback mechanism support UNHCR and its partners to meet their goals, values and commitments by ensuring that:

- Initial steps are taken towards redressing power imbalances, and that we are accountable to those we work with and for – by providing opportunities for persons of concern (of all ages, genders, abilities and diversity) and partners to participate in and influence decision-making.
- Interventions are relevant and appropriate to PoCs' needs – by identifying changing needs and inappropriate activities and taking appropriate action.
- Interventions are implemented in a way which respects PoCs' dignity protects their well-being and safety – by identifying activities or behavior which are causing harm and taking appropriate action.
- The integrity of interventions is upheld -– by identifying situations in which assistance is being diverted for personal or political gain and taking appropriate action.

[2] https://www.unhcr.org/what-is-misconduct.html

- Gender equality and women's voice are supported – by identifying what is working and not working for women, men, boys and girls and providing opportunities for marginalized community members to voice their opinions and feed into decision-making.
- Trust with persons of concern is built and maintained – facilitating implementation and creating a solid relationship with the communities upon which to intervene at a deeper level in the future.
- Actual and potential cases of sexual harassment, exploitation abuse will be identified and addressed – acting as an early warning system and allowing us to respond and prevent further sexual misconduct or other sensitive issues.[3]

Key principles:

In order to ensure that complaint and feedback mechanisms are functioning properly the following principles will be adhered to:

Inclusivity and Non-discrimination

Safe, dignified and meaningful participation of all people of concern must be prioritized. Should ensure inclusion of all segments of the community and promote non-discrimination. Inclusion must take into account age, gender, and diversity, and ensure all persons of concern enjoy their rights on an equal footing including ethnic, sexual and other minorities and persons with disabilities.

Community Based Approach

AAP methodologies are in line with UNHCR's community-based approach to protection and take into account pre-existing community structures and effective coping mechanisms, rather than working in parallel to them (where these are not harmful).

Safety and Dignity avoid causing harm:

An important part of staff accountability in the implementation of complaint/feedback mechanism is the confidential treatment of personal and sensitive information in the follow up, investigation, and response. Sensitive complaints are typically related to staff conduct or any issue that the complainant may fear recrimination or victimization for.

Transparency

In general, transparency is defined as the characteristic of governments, companies, organizations and individuals of being open in the disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions. A complaint mechanism is transparent when members of the affected community know what entity in the organization oversees the mechanism and possess sufficient information on how to access it. Communication between the parties should be open and timely, unless information must be limited for confidentiality, privacy or other reasons. The data from the operational complaints received will be used by the office concerned to identify trends and areas for improvement and inform planning within the operation.

Transparency in the context of this Guidance Note means that a complainant is provided feedback on the stage of the complaint and is regularly updated on the actions taken by the overseeing body.

[3] Guidance note: Feedback and complaint mechanisms, CARE, 2019, page 2

Integrity

Integrity is defined as behaviors and actions consistent with a set of ethical principles and standards, embraced by individuals and institutions that create a barrier to corruption. A complaint mechanism should inhere this principle in design and implementation.

Accountability

Accountability is the concept that individuals, agencies and organizations are held responsible for executing their powers properly. For a complaint mechanism this requires 1) compliance with all relevant legislation, regulatory requirements, professional standards and guidelines; 2) the possibility for all parties to a complaint to have decisions reviewed; 3) zero tolerance approach against conflict of interest and misuse of the complaint mechanism by people involved in the process of handling it.

Right to raise concern / complaint and receive response

Persons of concern will be actively informed about their right to complain, the areas covered by the complaint's mechanism and the applicable procedures, through on-going information dissemination, counseling and specifically designed activities.

Non – retaliation

No direct or indirect detrimental action will be threatened or taken against a person of concern who has lodged a complaint.[4] consistent with the principle of non-retaliation set out in UNHCR's Policy on Protection of Individuals against Retaliation (Whistle-blower Policy, IOM/043/-FOM/045/2008). All processes set in place to receive and handle complaints will be designed to incorporate ways to prevent harassment, injury or harm to those wishing to lodge a complaint..

Safety of person of concern & staff

Potential dangers and risks for persons of concern, staff, complainants, witnesses and other parties involved in operational as well as misconduct complaints will be anticipated, examined and provisions to mitigate these will be put into place. If necessary, physical protection to address needs of victims of sexual abuse or exploitation and complainants of other egregious misconduct, or witnesses involved in the investigation process will be arranged.[5]

UNHCR staff who are involved in handling and resolving the complaints will be protected from any kind of influence or pressure that can compromise established procedures and principles.

Accuracy and confidentiality – accurately and systematically recorded- data protection

Complaints will be accurately and systematically recorded and safely maintained, upholding the 'right to privacy' and to data protection. In all procedural steps of receiving, handling, addressing and resolving complaints, UNHCR's Confidentiality Guidelines (IOM 71/- FOM/68/2011) will be strictly followed.

All complaints will be treated with appropriate levels of confidentiality including the necessary data protection mechanisms (password protection, no sharing of databases, and no sharing of non-anonymized

[4] See UNHCR Emergency Policies and Procedures, (IOM/34- FOM 035/2012)

[5] See United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel

data) in accordance with UNHCR's confidentiality guidelines and UNHCR Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern.

In general, complaints are only for UNHCR internal use and only authorized staff (complaint& feedback assigned focal points) will have access to the database. If requested, UNHCR will share the anonymized data with relevant actors.

The submission of a complaint under the criteria of this procedure does not pre-empt the complainant from pursuing legal recourse. Refugees, asylum seekers IDPs and returnees will have the option of remaining anonymous during the complaints process should they wish to do so.

Anonymous complaint – is possible.

Complainants will be encouraged to give their names and contact details, so that complaints can be properly dealt with and followed up. In some cases, persons of concern may be unwilling or unable to reveal their identity because of fears regarding safety or reprisal. Anonymous complaints will therefore be received, as they may bring to light serious issues and breaches of the Code of Conduct, it is acknowledged that however full resolution of such complaints might be difficult.

Mutual respect

All persons of concern who raise a complaint with respect and courtesy and will be assured that their complaints will be dealt with according to established procedures and that action on the complaint will be reported to the complainant with a reasonable time period. UNHCR expects complainants to raise their concerns fairly and appropriately. As a part of UNHCR's duty of care towards its staff, abusive, threatening or violent behavior[6] will not be accepted by the complainant at any stage of the complaint process. Should such behavior persist, the office may consider that there are grounds for treating it as a spurious or malicious complaint.

Fairness, proportionality and consistency

All complaints will be examined and resolved in a fair and transparent manner. Remedial actions will be in proportion to the grievance, and there will be consistency in the resolution of similar complaints. Resolution of an operational complaint will never involve payment of a sum of money as compensation or restitution.

Continual improvement

The Head of Office will regularly monitor the complaint mechanism and evaluate its use and effectiveness in consultation with persons of concern, with a view to improving its operation and ensuring that it complies with relevant UNHCR policies.

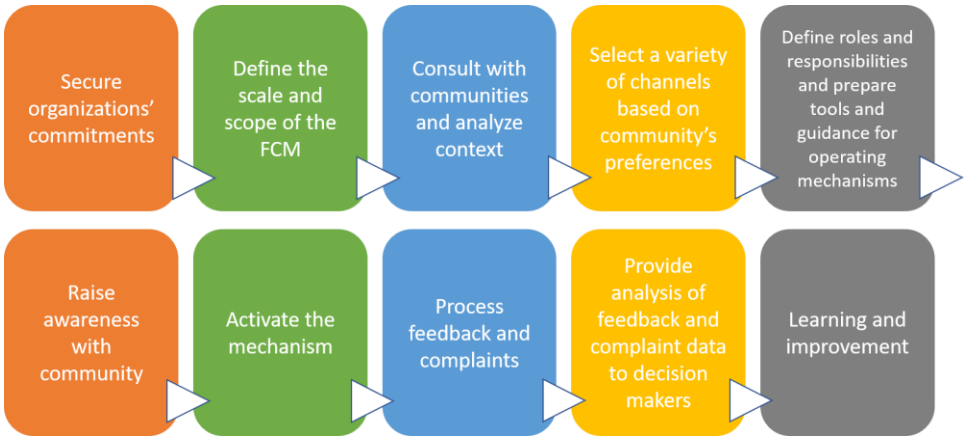
[6] See document: Safety Guidelines for Handling Threats, Verbal Abuse and Intimidation from Refugees

Complaints & Gender

Any complainant has the right to request that any contact or interview be with a staff member of the same sex. UNHCR and its partners will attempt to be pro-active in this policy and provide same-gender contact where appropriate.

Requests that demand actions/follow up are regarded as complaints and as such will initiate the handling mechanism, otherwise, in case the requests do not demand a follow up they will be accounted as feedback and will therefore, receive a standardized response.

Steps to establish complaints and feedback mechanism (minimum operating standards):[1]



Step 1: Secure organizations' commitments:

1. UNHCR has the responsibility to build an organizational culture that supports accountability to communities and ensures that both UNHCR and partners' staff understand and are committed to the CFM minimum operating standards through training and guidance.
2. Secure budget and resources (including staff time) to set-up, run, and continually improve the CFM.
3. Include a concrete CFM plan/mechanism that should be fit in the country operational plan (COP)

Step 2: Define the scale and scope of the CFM:

1. Decide the geographic scope of the CFM.
2. Create referral pathways for complaints and feedback of what UNHCR and its partners can address.

Step 3: Consult with communities and analyze context:

1. consult with community members to understand their preferences for channels to provide complaint and feedback and receive responses, including preferences around how to provide sensitive complaints, particularly for women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

2. Take into account contextual information arising from other projects or programs implementation processes such as monitoring visits, databases, reporting tools.

Step 4: Select a variety of channels based on community's preferences:

1. Select multiple channels to ensure that all community members will have safe and easy access to provide all types of complaints and feedback and receive a response within the timeframe indicated in this guideline.
2. Take into account physical, social, and cultural access barriers identified in the consultations with community. At a minimum select at least 1 collective (public) channel and 1 individual (private/ confidential) channel.

3. At a minimum select at least 1 static channel (which require PoC to initiate a dialogue) and 1 active channel (in which UNHCR or partners solicit feedback). Static feedback channels are in place over a long period of time and generally allow PoCs to report whenever they choose while active channels are rarely anonymous and do not typically receive sensitive claims.

Static channels	**Active channels**
Individual: - Face to face with FOs/SOs/partners staff/ ORVs/ community-based committees - Suggestions, complaints and feedback boxes - Hotlines managed in-house or externally. - SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter - Letters, emails, other online or digital systems Collective: - Community committees - Billboards - Radio or TV shows	Individual: - Micro-feedback surveys - Questionnaires Collective: - Dedicated FGDs - Public community meetings - Meetings with community leaders/ representatives

Step 5: Define roles and responsibilities and prepare tools and guidance for operating mechanisms:

1. Edit, adapt, translate available resources to create the CFM standard operating procedures (SOP), the SOP should include complaint and feedback categories, steps, and timelines for processing each category (including referrals, and response pathways), Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for common complaints and feedback, and a standard script for introducing CFM to community member, and links to all relevant tools and the CFM data management system.
2. Design hardcopy and digital forms of logging complaints and feedback.
3. Design data management system for managing complaints and feedback.
4. Ensure that CFM is designed and managed in a way that does not cause harm.
5. Establish roles and responsibilities for UNHCR and partners' staff and provide training for staff on the CFM SOP.

Step 6: Raise awareness with community:

1. Share information with all community members including the most marginalized groups about CFM system, behaviors to be expected from staff and volunteers, available channels for providing

complaints and feedback (how and when to use them), what UNHCR and partners will be able to response to and how the complaints and feedback will be processed and responded to, and principles of anonymity and confidentiality.

2. Ensure awareness raising reaches PoCs of all genders, ages, and abilities in all community centers' locations, consider literacy levels, local context, vulnerability, cultural when designing information sharing materials.

Step 7: Activate the mechanism:

1. Establish a systematic tracking of complaints and feedbacks from all channels in data management system and start using the standardized formats.

Step 8: Process complaints and feedback:

1. Following steps and timelines outlined in the SOP, ensure complaints and feedback are processed or referred from receipt to response within **two weeks from the date the complaint/feedback opened.**

Provide response to the individuals who provided complaint or feedback (if not anonymous), explaining what have been done, what will be done, and what could not be done, ensure receiving and processing of sensitive complaints links closely to safety and support options in place of survivors and for such complaints. Update the data management system by entering the complaint or feedback was referred or closed (if response provided).

Investigations related to PSEA should be processed in accordance with the PSEA internal SOPs for UNHCR Syria.

Step 9: Provide analysis of complaint and feedback data to decision makers:

1. The data should be analyzed by sex, location, sector, category, channel, etc., share the analysis with FOs/SOs and partners and support decision makers to make course corrections to improve programming as required, track and follow up on action points.

Step 10: Learning and improvement:

This should include reviews on:

1. The effectiveness of the operating CFM in terms of number and complaints received and average processing times
2. The effectiveness of different channels and review accessibility of PoCs of different ages, gender, diversity and abilities
3. The effectivities of referral pathways with partners and different agencies at least once a year to ensure they continue to serve the needs of communities
4. The types of complaints and feedback received, successes and challenges related to CFM, identifying solutions, and sharing learning with UNHCR and other UN agencies

5. Review community consultations regularly and establish additional channels if required[7]

Key consideration when setting up complaint tools:

- **Age, gender, diversity (AGD) is respected**
- **Inclusiveness and Accessibility:** All PoCs and in particular to women, older persons and Persons with specific needs including illiterate persons should be aware of and have access to the established tools: Consider putting complaint boxes in areas that are widely accessible for all population such as public toilets for women, distribution sites, child friendly spaces.
- **Safety and confidentiality**, All PoCs can have safe access to the existing complaint/ feedback tools. Complaint boxes should NOT have a specific designation written on them. People will not use them if they can be easily associated with SEA out of fear of stigma, shame, retribution and/or retaliation.
- **Design complaints and feedback tools that are child friendly, to ensure participation of children and young people.** E.g., to place a child friendly complaint tool inside the child friendly spaces. The tools should be gender appropriate with safe and confidential ways for children to complain.

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK TOOLS

Complaint/Feedback Boxes:

The lockable complaints/feedback boxes should be placed inside community centers and UNHCR premises, distribution sites, shelters supported by UNHCR. The complaint/feedback boxes should be located in places that are visible and easily accessed/found by all visitors. Safe and confidential manner should be guaranteed. They should be accessible to older persons, women, persons with disabilities and children, those boxes should be covered by a note in Arabic and English which state the following:
"Feedback box: this box is available to anyone who wishes to write to (NGO' Name)/ (UNHCR) about a feedback or suggestion in relation to its services, an update about a person's situation, or a complaint. Letters can be anonymous, confidential, and safe. However, should you wish (NGO name)/ (UNHCR) to be in contact with you, please ensure that you indicate your name and phone number."
Submitted letters are collected, documented, and followed up on, by designated UNHCR/partner staff members on bi-weekly basis. The complaint/feedback messages will be reviewed on bi-weekly basis, on the second and fourth week of every month.

1. <u>Filing a letter in complaints/feedback boxes:</u>

The beneficiaries may write their concerns, complaints and feedback in a simple, standard form *(Annex 1- CFM Complaint Form)* available alongside each of the boxes. Beneficiaries should be aware of the existence of these forms through their community representatives (eg. Women committees, Outreach

7 [1] See document: Guidance Note: Feedback and Complaints Mechanisms, CARE,2019, P3

volunteers…) as a part of an awareness-raising campaign on the CFM. The CFM complaint form advises beneficiaries to include the following information:

- Contact Information (optional)
- Date of the complaint/feedback submitted.
- Tick a box relevant to the issue at hand (assistance, documentation, shelter, livelihood, protection, other etc.)
- Description of the issue related to the assistance/services provided at defined location. Information provided has to be sufficient for the complaint to be processed. The beneficiary can also suggest a solution to the stated feedback.

2. Complaints/ feedback box committee:

The quorum to open the complaints/ feedback box is constituted of at least two committee members. The key custodian and backup may attend the opening of the boxes and is therefore considered as part of the committee forming the team of two. The key custodian should be the most senior staff, in the case of UNHCR premises, the custodian should be either the head of office or the most senior protection staff. In case of partner premises, the custodian should be the most senior staff (the centre coordinator).

The committee is constituted by the following staff members:

	Staff	Backups/ alternatives
Key custodian	a) In the community centre : Community centre coordinator b) In UNHCR permises : Head of office	a) Second senior staff in the centre b) the most senior protection staff
Letter opening focal point 1	a) Partner PSEA focal point in case of Partner/CC permises. b) UNHCR PSEA focal point in UNHCR permises	a) PSEA backup at the partner level b) PSEA backups at UNHCR level

There should be one committee per location.

The key custodian and his/her back-up should not be involved with PoCs. Letter opening focal points should receive training on how to open and store letters in safe, locked storages.

3. Processing a complaint in complaint boxes:

In terms of the management and sorting of complaints placed in the boxes, the following procedures have been put in place:

- ***Opening the Boxes***

Within the second and fourth week of each month the key custodian opens the boxes in the presence of the two committee members or their backups to take out all the letters from the boxes and put them inside a zipped pouch. The letter opening focal points can then proceed with the opening of the envelops.

The letters will be opened in the presence of the two staff, including the PSEA focal point (UNHCR PSEA focal person in case complaints reached through UNHCR premises or other UNHCR channels. Partner PSEA focal point in case complaints reached through partner/CC channels) who will be the first person who reads the content of the letters to ensure that the SEA complaints are handled with the required level of confidentiality. For transparency reasons, a letter which includes SEA allegations will be shown to the other committee members while **hiding the identifiable information of the survivor and perpetrator. And then the SEA related allegation is directly referred to PSEA channels.**

The committee reads the letters in order to allocate them to the heads of relevant units or to the designated persons to whom they should be addressed. The role of the openers is strictly restricted to sorting the letters. They should not take any actions to respond to complaints received in their capacity as the openers are bound by the principle of confidentiality. The committee staples each individual envelop to the letter that it contained

Should the letter be written in a language that is not Arabic or English, the openers contact an assigned interpreters who will provide support on the spot by reading the letter in presence of the openers.

The letters should be put in envelops addressed to the relevant staff member and sealed. On the surface of each envelop, the openers put the addressees (e.g., Attention: Head of XXXX unit / Subject: Compiled letters from the feedback box for the period between dd/mm/yyyy and dd/mm/yyyy).

- ***Recording the Complaints***

After the opening of the complaint boxes, UNHCR and partner staff, will date the letters and record the complaints in a standard reporting system *(Annex 2- CFM Database)*. The database will be updated on a monthly basis. UNHCR is responsible for producing reports on the number and type of complaints received every three months. This allows for the production of statistics on the CFM's efficacy and complaints typology, provide information on the basis of which the provided services can be adjusted to the beneficiaries' needs and advocacy made for relevant concerns.

- **Follow-up Action**

Functional units and sections are responsible to ensure that the letters are properly filed in each PoC's file and that the necessary follow up action takes place, including case management and counselling.

Depending on the nature of the complaint UNHCR and partners shall take action accordingly:

1. Operational complaints will be separated from Misconduct Complaints.
2. Addressing of operational complaints will be the mutual responsibility of UNHCR and partners, who will follow up with the complaints accordingly as follows:
    - If the beneficiary has provided his/her contact information in the feedback, he/she shall be informed within two weeks of the steps taken to address his/her complaint.
    - If the complaint is general, about the quality of the services provided and does not necessitate follow-up on an individual basis, the complaint will be raised during relevant working group meetings, coordination meetings, and bi- or multilateral meetings with the relevant partners.

3. Addressing of Misconduct Complaints will be the primary responsibility of the Senior Protection Officer and/or the community-based protection Officer (UNHCR Focal Point) who will pursue relevant internal and external channels, including the authorities, as applicable, to provide potential redress.
    - In the case of a complaint sensitive in nature or necessitating redress on an individual basis, the UNHCR Focal Point shall specifically follow up on the case until redress is provided.
    - Sensitive cases should be dealt with the utmost discretion and confidentiality. These complaints are to be channeled through the UNHCR Focal Point for screening and potential onward referrals. In each and every case the beneficiary should be contacted to verify the story and check if they are in agreement with the pursuance of relevant processes.
4. Addressing misconduct complaints related to SEA: SEA allegations should be immediately referred to PSEA Focal point who shall process the case in accordance with UNHCR PSEA internal SOPs.

Hotlines:

The phone used in community centers are a call service through which PoCs can pose any question related to their situation as well as set for complaints. While a dedicated hotline should be allocated by each partner/ governorate in case of central partners to receive complaints.

The phone numbers of the complaints' hotlines and working hours should be spread out into community, through printed materials (brochures, flyers, and posters…), and information dissemination by outreach volunteers, and community structure committees. The hotline operating hours should be expanded to allow receiving complaints after regular working hours, this should also be communicated to the community.

When the hotline's focal point receives a complaint from a PoC, he/she should record all details of the incident in their hotline recording spreadsheet (Annex 2) and then will provide the specifics in an email with relevant units or to the designated persons to whom they should be addressed. The spreadsheet is shared on weekly basis among all staff managing the hotline copying the community center coordinator who will regularly review the complaints especially the sensitive one, monitor the quality of the response and provide guidance to elaborate counselling lines if needed.

For operational complaints, the PoC will be informed of the official channels for making the complaint. The focal point then determines the type of services that each case requires, provide PoC with relevant information, refers him/her to the appropriate service provider and provides follow-up to ensure that credible and appropriate action has been taken, or refers to UNHCR relevant unit focal point.

For Misconduct Complaints, the case should always be referred to the Protection Officer or the Associate Community Services Officer who will then decide the best way to address the complaints.

Social media:

Communicating through social media such as (UNHCR's/NGO's Facebook page- Websites- Emails…) could be an effective complaints and feedback channel for PoCs

Social media's pages should be available in Arabic, and English, they aim to serve as UNHCR/NGO's online "bulletin board" to provide PoCs with information and news related to them, made available in an

accessible, attractive, and shareable format to draw the attention to relevant information about services provided by UNHCR or NGOs.

Social media's pages should also highlight the complaints and feedback mechanisms through different methods including providing complaints through it.

To preserve privacy and confidentiality of PoCs, complaints received on social media's pages should be referred to the hotlines encouraging PoCs to use hotlines or any other appropriate channel to proceed with their complaints.

Social media's pages will be administered by a partner's staff from Head Quarter. He/she will be led by the Associate Officer, will be responsible for all tasks relating to the management of the page. The Associate Officer will seek the guidance of, and report to, the Senior Management, in particular on potentially sensitive posts and responses to questions.

The tasks of the designated staff will be as following:

1. Producing content, in collaboration with colleagues at NGO
2. Publishing content on the page
3. Monitoring and evaluation of the page's content, including the reactions ('like', 'love', 'haha', 'wow', 'sad' and 'angry'), shares and comments received.
4. Monitoring related groups and pages on Facebook and other social media
5. Liaising with the administrators of partners' Facebook pages for cross-promotion of content.
6. Responding to messages and complaints received on Facebook Messengers and recording all details of the incident in their call log and then will provide the specifics in an email with relevant units or to the designated persons to whom they should be addressed.

For operational complaints, the PoC will be informed of the official channels for making the complaint. The focal point then determines the type of services that each case requires, provide PoC with relevant information, refers him/her to the appropriate service provider and provides follow-up to ensure that credible and appropriate action has been taken, or refers to UNHCR relevant unit focal point.

For Misconduct Complaints, the case should always be referred to the Protection Officer or the Associate Community Services Officer who will then decide the best way to address the complaints.

Email addresses:

Beneficiaries who want to communicate with UNHCR or NGOs can send a message to specific email addresses that are specially established by partners/ UNHCR to receive complaints, One email address for each partner/each UNHCR premises. Checking the email boxes on a weekly basis is the responsibility of a designated staff with each partner. PoCs can send queries or issues via email and a reply is sent to them through the same email address.

UNHCR and NGOs also received several complaints from POCs; and all complaints are documented, followed up and compiled to the monthly CFM report.

Queries sent by PoCs related to issues about services provided by UNHCR or in community centers can be referred to relevant units for further information. Should the query be examined to a specific unit, the message is forwarded to the relevant unit and staff to check the background of the case and draft a response for the PoC.

For Misconduct Complaints, depending on the nature of the misconduct, if it is a fraud case it should be referred to head of organization, if it is a SEA, it should be referred to the PSEA focal point.

Should the complaint/feedback not warrant a follow up, it will be accounted as feedback and will therefore, receive a standardized response.

Surveys:

UNHCR launched multiple feedback surveys inside all supported community centers on CP, GBV, MHPSS case management and adult diapers distribution, in addition to a survey designed to analyze and assess the existing community centers in terms of their coverage/outreach to population in need. The aim of these surveys is to collect PoCs' feedback on provision of services and if it responded effectively to their concerns and needs. Complaints also can be raised through these surveys. Non-sensitive complaints can be addressed and responded immediately by the partners' staff if regarding information on services delivery or protection activities. However, if some further information and follow-up is required, the queries and complaints will be referred to the relevant units.

Any fraud allegation must be reported to the designated UNHCR's fraud focal point in writing without delay. UNHCR's fraud focal point decides whether an investigation is warranted, according to the procedure set out in the SOPs for Fraud Prevention and Response or refer to the relevant units for further information or to solve any inconsistencies.

Should the complaint be of a sensitive nature and related to SEA, it will be directly referred to the PSEA focal point who will proceed with the case in accordance with PSEA SOPs.

Should the request not warrant a follow up, it will be accounted as feedback and will therefore, receive a standardized response.

ORVs- committees:

It is more likely that the ORVs and community-based committee members have gained the trust of their community members and established good links with all parts of the community, including community leaders, key members and other stakeholders. Therefore, some community members would find it easier and feasible to share/express their feedback, complaints or suggestions through the outreach volunteers and/members of the community-based committees.

The ORVs/CB-committee members should communicate the complaint to the right channels (e.g. PSEA reporting channels for SEA related complaint (refer to UNHCR PSEA internal SOPs), CFM focal point in case of other type of complaints.) keeping into consideration the following points:

- ✓ **Confidentiality**: The identity of both the ORV and complaint/feedback holder should not be exposed unless a consent is obtained from all concerned sides (the PoC, the ORV, the CB-committee member).
- ✓ **Accountability:** To ensure safety of all ends, the role of the ORV/committee member should end at the point of delivering the information to their direct supervisor, shouldn't be involved in the verification process or in digging for details on the information collected.
- ✓ The information should be corresponded to the official channels assigned by the partner.
- ✓ The ORVs/Committee members must be fully trained on the CFM.
- ✓ The ORVs/Committee members should be always updated and familiarized with the CFM official channels and mechanism.

- ✓ A response should be drafted to the PoC and the ORV/committee member should be updated that the case has been responded to.

Walk-in office hours:

At the community centre, UNHCR/Partner premises: The frontline staff in the community centre/ at office premises provide counselling.
Mobile missions are conducted by ORVs who should be trained on the CFM and who conduct house to house visits and protection monitoring.

Management of complaints/feedbacks received in- person

Persons of concern will be informed of the official channels for making the complaint. In consultation with the PoC, the staff then determines the type of services that each case requires, provide refugees and IDPS with information, refers them to the appropriate service provider and provides follow-up to ensure that credible and appropriate action has been taken, or refers to UNHCR relevant unit's Focal point.

Focus group discussions (FGDs):

Focus group discussions and structured community discussions are usually used the community is consulted and engaged in all steps of the program cycle. Such discussions can also be used for purposes of feedback collection and information verification.

Planning the FGDs/structured discussions:

- ✓ Highlight the purpose of the FGD (information verification, feedback, information collection…)
- ✓ The FGD questionnaire should be drafted based on the specified purpose
- ✓ The target group should be selected in line with the AGD policy, paying extra attention to including older person, boys, girls, women, persons with disabilities and people from minority groups.
- ✓ The staff assigned to the FGD task should be properly trained on the FGD and familiarized with the CFM purpose.
- ✓ Ensure that all information is properly recorded in the FGD tool.
- ✓ Cross check the information collected during the FGD with other relevant information collected through other reliable channels.
- ✓ Immediately report to the official channels any complaint, concern or information related to harm, risk of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) or gender, based violence (GBV) or any breach of code of conduct.
- ✓ Ensure that the PoCs receive a response on the raised concerns, complaints or feedback.

Ensure that the community receives update on the action taken and results of the conduct FGD.

Useful tips

- ➢ Each partner/FO should dedicate one hotline for complaint and feedback. Central partners can allocate one hotline per governorate.
- ➢ One email address for each partner/ office

- A committee at the partner HQ to review on regular basis the received complaints/feedback and take action
- The hotlines and emails dedicated for normal complaint and feedback should be different from the hotlines and emails dedicated for PSEA.
- In case of surveys, the partners are encouraged to launch their own surveys and not wait for the central decisions. The partners can tailor their own surveys and share outcome with UNHCR offices.

Annex with templates

Excel / KOBO: # cases – type of complaint/feedback- status (progress) - time it took to act and respond- action taken

Annex #:

Annex 1: CFM Complaint Form:

Complaint and feedback Form for Suggestions Boxes.docx

Annex 2: CFM database:

CFM database.xlsx

Annex 3:

UNHCR_AAPTool_FR_Consultations_on_Feedback_and_Complaints_Mechanisms (1).docx

CFM tools, best practices, Pros. and cons.	Strengths	Weaknesses	Best Practice
Complaint/Feedback Boxes	✓ Easy to set up ✓ Safe reporting/complaint can be filed anonymously. ✓ Visible and reachable to all the visitors of the centres/office premises. ✓ Cost effective ✓ Doesn't require electricity and/mobile network coverage. ✓ No cost required from the PoC to use	-Might exclude people who can't write. - Not accessible to all (PoCs living far from the Centres /Office premises have challenges accessing the boxes)	1) Share with the community information on using the complaint/feedback boxes (e.g. for asking questions/ making recommendations/ making a complaint / provide positive feedback, etc.) 2) Explain / discuss with the community the process for opening the boxes (frequency, the panel in charge) and allow community participation in this process 3) Explain / discuss how and by whom the complaints/feedback will be reviewed and how and when responses will be provided. (timeline should be set). 4) Pay a specific attention and engage community to identify the best locations for the boxes (to avoid access or confidentiality challenges) 5) Ensure that complaints/feedbacks are treated confidentially and in a manner that ensure the protection of all PoCs.
Hotlines	✓ Allow PoCs who can't write to provide feedback	-Risks excluding PoCs without access to a phone or network	1) Share with the community information on using the hotline (e.g. to ask questions/ make

	✓ Allow a two-way communication between UNHCR/Partner from one hand and the community members from the other hand. ✓ Allow the opportunity for the staff member understands better the nature of the complaint/feedback with opportunity to ask for details. ✓ Confidential and accessible (as long as PoCs have phones and network coverage) ✓ No cost required from the PoC to use.	- Risks of receiving "spam" calls - Risks of having limited access to reach in specific hours/days (In cases the hotlines are operating only during the centre/office working hours/days). - Challenge of having to deal with multiple languages/ operators - Generally considered expensive to set up and to operate (communication and operator costs)	recommendations/ make a complaint / provide positive feedback etc.) 2) Share information on time and days the hotline operating (if not a 24/7 service) 3) Explain / discuss how and by whom the suggestions will be reviewed and how and when responses to the feedback will be provided to the PoCs
Social media	✓ Accessible (as long as PoCs have access to a smartphone/internet)	- Risks excluding a potentially large number of PoCs those who lack access to smartphone, internet, not familiar with social media, etc.)	1) Share information with the community on the use of social media (for asking questions/ making recommendations/ making a complaint / providing positive feedback etc.) 2) Explain / discuss with the community how and by whom the suggestions will be reviewed and

	✓ Attractive mean of communication, particularly for youth. ✓ No cost required from the PoC to use (as long as internet access is available)	Considered less confidential than other offline channels, unless the social media channel is administrated and managed by the same complaint/feedback focal point. -Not necessarily in line with AGD policy. (doesn't guarantee full access to all age and gender groups)	how and when responses to the feedback will be provided to the PoCs.
Surveys	✓ Information can be collected rapidly ✓ Ensures access to all population groups without any marginalization, ✓ Can reach a broad sample ✓ Provide quantitative data ✓ Results are easy to disaggregate ✓ Results easy to interpret	- Limited access to specific areas, causing risks of excluding PoCs of these areas (unless conducted by a third party or by phone/ sms, etc.) - Limited in the amount of qualitative data it provides. - Require certain resources (staff, time, equipment)	1) The survey should be planned to target all PoC groups, ensuring participation of the boys, girls, women, older persons, persons with disabilities and persons from minority groups. 2) The survey not to exceed 10-12 questions 3) Focus on using closed questions, as this will aid quick analysis 4) The survey should be piloted with a small number of respondents before use 5) Before proceeding with the survey, a comprehensive introduction should be provided

	✓ Can be done frequently ✓ Cost effective		to the PoCs on the following: the organization, the purpose of the survey, outcome and expectations, confidentiality measures adopted and how the collected information will be used. 6) During the survey, the staff should avoid prompting the PoCs' answers, however, should be available to clarify questions if needed 7) All surveys should include an option for the respondents to say that they do not want to answer, or do not know 8) Provide an option for respondents to share feedback on another issue which has not been covered in the survey 9) Immediately flag any issues of concern to a supervisor to deal with them, e.g. feedback relating to possible harm or a code of conduct violation 10) Report back to the PoCs regarding survey results, what you will do to respond and why.
Focus group discussions (FGDs)	✓ Information can be collected rapidly ✓ Very good to collect qualitative information (for	- Limited access to specific areas, causing risks of excluding PoCs of these areas (unless conducted by a third party or by phone/ sms, etc.)	1) The FGDs should be planned to target all PoC groups, ensuring participation of the boys, girls, women, older persons, persons with disabilities and persons from minority groups.

	example to complement information collected through a survey) ✓ Good to collect views from specific groups on specific subjects (e.g. issues or challenges emerging from survey results for example). ✓ AGD oriented, planned in a manner that ensures participation of all population groups.	- Some people may not feel comfortable expressing themselves in a group - People may not share sensitive information - Require facilitation skills - Require certain resources (staff, time, equipment)	2) A comprehensive introduction should be provided to the FGD participants on the following: the organization, the purpose of the FGD, outcome and expectations, confidentiality measures adopted and how the collected information will be used. 3) Ensure that the staff administering the FGD is briefed about the project, so they know how to interpret the feedback which is being shared and can effectively prompt deeper discussion 4) Allow the participants to share feedback which isn't directly on the "agenda", but make sure that the discussion is broadly kept on topic 5) In line with Age, gender and diversity (AGD) policy, split FGDs into appropriate sub-groups in a way that PoCs will feel most comfortable sharing their views (e.g. boys, girls, men, women, adolescents, women with disabilities, men with disabilities, older men/women). Pay specific attention to ensuring that vulnerable groups feel comfortable in the group that they are in 6) Immediately flag any issues of concern to a supervisor to deal with them, e.g. feedback relating to possible harm or a code of conduct violation

			7) Report back to PoCs what the FGD results showed, and what you will do to respond and why
Individual Interviews	✓ Good to collect feedback from people in position of power. ✓ Allow discussions about sensitive subjects. ✓ Allow to collect very specific qualitative feedback.	- Time consuming, (cannot be covering large number of interviews) - Require good facilitation skills to administer well.	1) Be clear about why you are conducting an individual interviews (as opposed to an FGD, for instance) 2) Tailor the questions to that objectives/ information you want to collect 3) Ask a max of 10-12 questions 4) A comprehensive introduction should be provided to the interviewee on the following: The organization, the purpose of the outcome and interview, expectations, confidentiality measures adopted and how the collected information will be used. 5) Ensure that the staff conducting the interview is familiar with the programmes, knows how to interpret the feedback which is being shared and can effectively prompt deeper discussion 6) Allow the interviewee to share feedback which isn't directly on the "agenda", but ensure the discussion is broadly kept on topic

			7) Immediately flag any issues of concern to a supervisor trained to deal with them (e.g. feedback relating to possible harm to a POC or another person or a code of conduct violation) 8) Report back to interviewee on how the interview was used to inform programming
Walk-in office hours	✓ Allows clients who can't write to make suggestions. ✓ Allows a two-way communication between UNHCR/Partner and the PoCs (and therefore the opportunity for staff to clarify / better understand the feedback being provided by the PoCs).	- Unlikely be used by PoCs who want to make a confidential suggestion / complaint. - Not accessible to all (e.g. PoCs living far from the Centres/Office premises) - Restricts access to certain working hours	1) Explain to the community the possibility of walking-in to provide complaint/ feedback 2) Identify and communicate the name(s) of the staff clients can come to meet with 3) Explain how this may influence the way of working