Beneficiary feedback mechanisms

A literature review

Laura Jump

Ending poverty within a generation

Development Initiatives

devinit.org

Contents

Executive summary

The purpose of this literature review is to inform the work of Development Initiatives (DI) and its Ugandan partner Development Research and Training (DRT), to increase the priority given to the role of information and community feedback in promoting choice, opportunity and security for poor people. These organisations work at both community and policy levels and are funded by a Partnership Programme Arrangement (PPA) with the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). Universal access to information, and subsequent feedback from aid recipients, is central to aid effectiveness. DRT is supporting communities in northern Uganda to access relevant information about aid flows to their region, and to provide feedback to the authorities on whether these funds are arriving and how they are being used. This represents both an accountability function and an empowerment mechanism. This literature review provides a baseline for the continuing work of DI and DRT in this field.

A review of existing literature, both academic and organisational, has found that despite a significant amount of rhetoric about the importance of gathering feedback from beneficiaries during and after aid interventions, terminology in this area remains confused and there is a lack of agreed methodology. From a desk review alone it is difficult to estimate what the real activity in the field is, so the findings of this review are tempered by the possibility that information is being collected, shared and used but that it is not filtering up to research and academic institutions, and rarely to decision- and policy-makers at the global level.

There are a number of initiatives looking at how to improve the capture and utilisation of feedback from beneficiaries, particularly incorporating new information and communication technologies (ICTs). However, this is neither a centralised nor a comprehensive movement.

Lack of evidence on the real impact of beneficiary feedback mechanisms may be holding the sector back from investing more in this field. Plenty of anecdotal evidence exists which demonstrates the importance of collecting this information, and including recipients in the design, implementation and evaluation of aid projects would seem both morally correct and valuable in terms of efficiency. However, the empirical evidence is missing.

Scope of this review: This review will focus its scope on humanitarian interventions but will also refer to the development sector, where it adds a particular point of interest. Different papers, reports and interviewees adopt differently definitions for the term 'beneficiary feedback mechanism', some referring immediately to their agency's complaints response mechanism (CRM) and others talking more broadly about accountability. In addition, the humanitarian side of research and evaluation work provided a clearer agreement on feedback as a method of communicating the opinions of aid recipients on the service(s) they have received.

Key findings

- Despite specific initiatives, such as the Listening Project and the World Bank's Voices of the Poor project, the area of feedback mechanisms is disparate and often ad hoc.
- There is a lack of evidence that beneficiary feedback mechanisms do actually improve the efficiency and/or effectiveness of aid.
- Beneficiary feedback mechanisms may facilitate better downward accountability, but there is no evidence to show that this is the best method.
- Some interesting projects are being developed and implemented, particularly using new ICTs.
- The lack of shared understanding or agreement on terminology discourages joint working or aggregation of data.

Looking forward: next steps

- An evidence base for what works and what does not work, in which contexts, with regards to beneficiary feedback
- An agreed terminology and methodology
- A platform for sharing best practice and lessons learned
- A commitment to always closing the feedback loop

Summary boxes: beneficiary feedback mechanisms

Below are three boxes that summarise key information about drivers for developing feedback mechanisms, examples of mechanisms, and factors affecting how far these mechanisms are used at the agency level.

---

1. Drivers for setting up beneficiary feedback mechanisms

Organisational values	Donor requirement
Demand from beneficiaries	Desire to supply by field staff
Interest of senior staff	Previous experience of personnel

---

2. Examples of methodologies

Dedicated email addresses	Suggestion boxes	Focus groups
Call centres SMS	Community workers	Drop-in surgeries

---

3. What factors affect the degree of implementation of beneficiary feedback mechanisms within agencies?

Resources	Organisational values	Organisational priorities
Donor requirements	Security risks	
Personnel	Activity of other agencies working in the region	

How did the idea of beneficiary feedback mechanisms emerge and develop?

After the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR) in 1996, the humanitarian sector become introspective, and from this self-analysis and scrutiny, accountability emerged as a theme.[1] Since then it has grown in importance and is now a key element of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s Transformative Agenda, along with improved leadership and coordination.[2] Today, accountability is linked with monitoring and evaluation (M&E), professionalisation and the wider humanitarian reform programme as part of a drive for better-quality programming, improved standards, a better-skilled workforce and stronger accountability to disaster-affected communities.

The origin of the term 'beneficiary feedback mechanism' is not readily apparent and this precise wording is rarely used in the literature. As pointed out by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), this is a grey or emerging area and most of the relevant information is unpublished and/or is held at the field level[3]. Such information often fails to percolate up to agency headquarters level, let alone to research or academic institutions. Similar terms, such as 'beneficiary communication' or 'community engagement', have been floating around in the sector for a while. Feedback mechanisms have become a trend or fashion in the humanitarian sector over the past decade, but it is difficult to meaningfully assess the importance of this agenda as there is no analysis of global trends.

The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) found in its 2006 Joint Evaluation that there had been a 'poor quality of beneficiary participation' in the emergency response to the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. The TEC described the response as being based on inaccurate, fragmented and duplicative databases of beneficiary needs. Responding agencies were criticised for failing to involve affected communities in both the collection and validation of data; for overlooking local coping strategies and community-based capacities to respond; and for not sharing crucial information with the affected populations. In conclusion, the TEC found that this was a "persistent problem that has been observed in many natural disasters". Following this report, the sector began to discuss the role of beneficiary feedback mechanisms alongside participatory programme design and better coordination of needs assessments.

There is a notable difference between the approaches of the humanitarian and development sectors to beneficiary feedback. In the humanitarian sector there are concrete initiatives that codify the need to involve beneficiaries in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes. The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) developed its Principles of Accountability in March 2010. Five of the seven principles reference the word 'beneficiary': this demonstrates the focus of this initiative on downward accountability mechanisms over upward accountability mechanisms (i.e. those focused on donors) and demonstrates the emphasis placed on beneficiary involvement in humanitarian action. HAP currently has 87 members, which shows the commitment of the sector to the role of beneficiaries in accountability mechanisms.

---

[1] IRIN (2012), 'Are they listening?', 4 July 2012.
[2] www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-template-default&bd=87
[3] From interviews with key INGO staff in HQ and on the field.

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership: Principles of Accountability

Commitment to humanitarian standards and rights: Members state their commitment to respect and foster humanitarian standards and the rights of beneficiaries.

Setting standards and building capacity: Members set a framework of accountability to their stakeholders. Members set and periodically review their standards and performance indicators, and revise them if necessary. Members provide appropriate training in the use and implementation of standards.

Communication: Members inform, and consult with, stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries and staff, about the standards adopted, programmes to be undertaken and mechanisms available for addressing concerns.

Participation in programmes: Members involve beneficiaries in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and report to them on progress, subject only to serious operational constraints.

Monitoring and reporting on compliance: Members involve beneficiaries and staff when they monitor and revise standards. Members regularly monitor and evaluate compliance with standards, using robust processes. Members report at least annually to stakeholders, including beneficiaries, on compliance with standards. Reporting may take a variety of forms.

Addressing complaints: Members enable beneficiaries and staff to report complaints and seek redress safely.

Implementing partners: Members are committed to the implementation of these principles if and when working through implementation partners.

The Sphere Project, which was set up in 1997, outlined a set of common standards in the second edition of its handbook, published in 2004; these were updated to Core Standards in the 2011 revised handbook. Within the Sphere Project, the Core Standards are essential process standards shared by all sectors. The six standards are detailed in the box below. This codification of standards across the emergency response sector, and their acceptance and use both in programme design and evaluation, demonstrates that the humanitarian sector is committed to accountability and, in turn, to the incorporation of beneficiary feedback.

The Sphere Project: Core Standards

People-centred humanitarian response: People's capacity and strategies to survive with dignity are integral to the design and approach of humanitarian response.

Coordination and collaboration: Humanitarian response is planned and implemented in coordination with the relevant authorities, humanitarian agencies and civil society organisations engaged in impartial humanitarian action, working together for maximum efficiency, coverage and effectiveness.

Assessment: The priority needs of the disaster-affected population are identified through a systematic assessment of the context, risks to life with dignity and the capacity of the affected people and relevant authorities to respond.

Design and response: The humanitarian response meets the assessed needs of the disaster-affected population in relation to context, the risks faced and the capacity of the affected people and state to cope and recover.

Performance, transparency and learning: The performance of humanitarian agencies is continually examined and communicated to stakeholders; projects are adapted in response to performance.

Aid worker performance: Humanitarian agencies provide appropriate management, supervisory and psychosocial support, enabling aid workers to have the knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes to plan and implement an effective humanitarian response with humanity and respect.

The same commitments are not as apparent in the development sector, though accountability is important and the emphasis on hiring local or national staff over expatriates could be interpreted as recognising that communication with, and the participation of, affected communities are central to effective aid. However, this is all inferred and there is no clear body of literature or set of standards or initiatives that support this inference.

In April 2012, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved the creation of the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA). This new mechanism will scale up and support social accountability to beneficiary groups and civil society organisations (CSOs). The Bank's then president, Robert Zoellick, said: "The Bank understands now more than ever that citizen voice and the engagement of project beneficiaries are crucial for lasting development results."[4] The mechanism has US$20 million as seed money to invest in projects that will boost social accountability and the exchange of best practice in this field. The purpose behind the initiative is the improvement of service delivery, and so beneficiary feedback and participation are central to the approach. In the long term, the GPSA aims to provide a global platform for knowledge exchange, including best practice in measuring the impact of social accountability interventions.

---

[4] World Bank Press Release No: 2012/406/WBI.

The GPSA was created after regional consultations with CSOs in 2011 found large gaps in knowledge and evidence as to what works and what does not work with regards to social accountability mechanisms. This global multi-stakeholder coalition will now work to increase accountability levels at the country level. The main outcome will be an improvement in development results through capacity building for enhanced beneficiary feedback and participation. By 2020, GPSA expenditure is expected to reach between US$75 million and US$125 million.

The GPSA's list of social accountability activities

Budget literacy campaigns	Independent budget analysis
Citizens' charters	Input or output expenditure tracking
Citizen report cards	Participatory budgeting or audits
Community contracting	Procurement monitoring
Community oversight	Public access to information legislation
Grievance redress mechanisms	User management committees
Budget literacy campaigns	Independent budget analysis

Terminology: confusion and overlap

The one clear message from the literature is that the terminology used in this field is not standardised, which leads to confusion of purpose, ideas and hence conclusions. There has been a proliferation of terms and acronyms over the past 5–10 years. Each of these terms describes something slightly different, yet there is no order or framework through which their relations to one another can be traced. The tables below show the different terms used in this sphere and the variety of language describing the goals that work aims to achieve.

Terms used to describe activities[5]

Social accountability	Real-time evaluation (RTE)
Beneficiary feedback	Customer satisfaction surveys
Citizen report cards	Listening
Beneficiary-based consultations (BBCs)	Perception studies
Complaints and response mechanisms (CRMs)	Complaints pathways
Participation	Beneficiary engagement
Transparency	Post-distribution monitoring

---

[5] This is not a definitive list, but rather gives some key examples.

Terms used to describe what these activities aim to achieve

Improved effectiveness	Opportunities to voice demand
Better service delivery	Greater accountability
Feedback	Learning for improved results
Soliciting opinions	Transparency
Responding to aid customers	Greater responsiveness to need

Some of these terms can be grouped, such as 'learning for improved results' and 'better service delivery' in the second table. However, some are circular. For instance, seeking feedback from participants for the purpose of feedback or to solicit opinions does not really explain the purpose of the activity. Without a clear idea of what these activities are intended to achieve, it is impossible to measure their impact or value. However, there are many reasons why an agency should include beneficiary feedback mechanisms within its programmes, including the importance of understanding people's perceptions for security reasons and the moral imperative to give on a needs basis, which requires the continual tracking of needs.

In order to take this review forward, the following oppositions will be made:

- Transparency vs. accountability
- Downward accountability vs. upward accountability
- Participation vs. feedback
- Beneficiary feedback vs. beneficiary feedback mechanisms (BFMs)
- Complaints and response mechanisms as a sub-set of BFMs
- BFMs during emergencies vs. BFMs for longer-term aid.

Transparency is "being honest and open in communications and sharing relevant information, in an appropriate form, with crisis-affected people and other stakeholders".[6]

Accountability "is about using power responsibly … It involves taking account of the needs, concerns, capacities and disposition of affected parties, and explaining the meaning of, and reasons for, actions and decisions. Accountability is therefore also about the right to be heard and the duty to respond."[7]

Downward accountability is being accountable to the people you aim to help.

Upward accountability is being accountable to the funders of your work.

Participation covers the inclusion of beneficiary communities during the planning, implementation and evaluation of aid projects.

Feedback can include complaints, suggestions or comments, appreciation and acknowledgement of receipt.

---

[6] As stated in Principle 9 of the HAP standards.
[7] HAP International.

Beneficiary feedback means comments, suggestions, statements of appreciation and criticisms expressed by the recipients of aid projects.

Beneficiary feedback mechanisms are the systems and processes that give the recipients of aid the opportunity to comment, make suggestions, express gratitude or criticise the products, services or targeting of an aid project of which they may be recipients.

Complaints and response mechanisms allow allegations or concerns to be raised with a service or product provider and then ensure that the person or community who submitted the comment receives an explanation or sees it acted upon. Feedback can be solicited and given throughout the timeframe of an aid project.

What does the literature say about the purpose of seeking feedback?

Since 9/11 and the "war on terror", the situation for humanitarians on the ground has arguably become more dangerous.[8] This is recognised in the literature as a reason for the flood of projects trying to improve participation, accountability and transparency.[9] Trust is an essential element of the humanitarian sector's acceptance of security strategy. However, this particular motive does not necessarily encourage an open feedback route. This is particularly the case in contexts where there is a blurring of lines between the military and the humanitarian sector, such as in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, following a number of kidnappings and killings of staff from agencies not previously targeted, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the acceptance strategy's dependence on trust no longer appears to be sufficient, particularly as other agencies move to fortified compounds.[10]

Accountability is therefore not just a moral imperative, but also an operational need. BFMs could be a key component of this strategy. The existence of a reporting mechanism for beneficiaries can bring legitimacy to humanitarian action. Nevertheless, by insisting on formal mechanisms as a security precaution, there is potentially a danger of supplanting the softer communication mechanisms that have previously ensured (and in many circumstances still ensure) humanitarian space and protection, while simultaneously providing informal feedback loops.

When considering the literature on BFMs, it is helpful to ask where it comes from and why it was written. Most of the available literature is in the form of field reports, handbooks or guidance, with some key desk-based reviews.[11] There is also a broader realm of literature that focuses on other topics such as accountability, participation or communication with affected communities and in so doing refers to feedback mechanisms. The purpose of the literature is often a pragmatic response to a programme to capture the experience or to try and distil

[8] ALNAP, (2012), 'State of the Humanitarian System' report.
[9] IFRC, 'World Disasters Report 2011'.
[10] Duffield, M, (2001), *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. Zed Books.
[11] See Guidelines and Specific Studies section in the Bibliography in Annex 1.

it into guidance for other staff in the field. The more sceptical reader would also include the drive by some institutional donors to increase downward accountability and the subsequent flux of reports on mechanisms used on the ground. Finally, the purpose can often be derived from the department which undertakes the work. The ambiguous nature of feedback mechanisms is reflected in their institutional positioning by agencies in a range of different departments, including accountability, evaluations, communications, operations and programme management.

In summary, the value of seeking feedback from beneficiaries is accepted by all and reflected, albeit not explicitly, in wider strategies to improve downward accountability, participation and community evaluation of aid projects. Motivations for including feedback opportunities for beneficiaries differ and range from previous positive experiences to donor pressure. The motivation defines the purpose of collecting this information, which in turn determines how and whether the information flows through the organisation and is collated. Finally, it should be noted that there may be much more activity and sharing on the ground, but this review draws only on the available literature and on a small number of interviews with headquarters-based staff.

Existing projects and mechanisms

Despite the dearth of academic articles or research papers on BFMs, there are documents that focus on the issues that this concept aims to address: how to incorporate the needs and opinions of aid recipients into relief or development processes. Many of these documents are produced by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) implementing programmes in the field or at country level. These are presented in a range of formats but mostly consist of case studies or reports on specific field-based experiences, as well as guidance or handbooks.

Nearly all international agencies with significant implementation roles have some kind of guidance, handbook or example methodologies. Often these are not consistently used across the organisation and they may be duplicated for different regions, departments or purposes of the organisation – for example, CARE has separate policies for its Peru and Palestine/OPT programmes. It is not generally clear whether these guidance documents are developed from the ground up, i.e. following particular exercises, or from the policy or headquarters functions. Nonetheless it is clear that few agencies have a clear understanding of the various streams of accountability, participation and feedback that would allow for a comprehensive list of their BFMs.

There is also a considerable difference between theory and practice. For MSF, theory is a necessary part of financial and programmatic planning as a part of medical ethics, whereas in practice it is extremely difficult to ensure that teams on the ground actually do what the guidelines recommend. MSF recently conducted a review of the perceptions of beneficiaries and communities, resulting in a report, 'In the Eyes of Others'. This found that everyone agreed in theory that participatory approaches were essential, but that beneficiaries did not feel that they were being regularly included or given the opportunity to provide feedback. As a result, MSF is redesigning its training package to include more capacity building for staff on how to interact with beneficiaries in a way that encourages

them to feel part of the programme and safe enough that they are able to give feedback without fear.

CDA's Listening Project has developed a listening methodology which has been (and continues to be) employed in different contexts (humanitarian and development) to seek feedback from aid beneficiaries.[12] The wider project aims to "undertake a comprehensive and systematic exploration of the experiences and insights of people who live in aid-recipient societies on the cumulative effects of international assistance efforts".[13] This information is produced through individual exercises at specific sites, such as in Tamil Nadu in southern India in March 2012. Ten listeners, accompanied by staff from local NGOs and community-based organisations, conducted "unscripted conversations" with local beneficiaries. These conversations consist of open-ended questions that allow the interviewee to guide the conversation, producing inductive and evidence-based pictures of how they found the experience. The exercise in Tamil Nadu was undertaken just after a new environmental disaster had struck the region. The feedback from the beneficiaries was both general and specific. Some feedback was very specific: for example, that people had little choice about the size of their kitchens,[14] while others commented that a different response was required to this second disaster as a result of rehabilitation work undertaken following a previous crisis.

Sensemaker is a database that allows the analysis of thousands of stories. Local people can record, input and auto-code their stories and add signifiers or 'tags' for priority issues. This technology makes use of cell phones, oral recording and transcription, and requires literate local volunteers to help collect and record the stories. It is currently being piloted in Uganda by ActionAid and, although not within the remit of this review, it should be considered during any further analysis. Also in Uganda, GlobalGiving's Storytelling Project has established incentives for local communities to record stories of when someone has come to their community and changed something. These are used by donors to better understand the contexts in which projects are being proposed. Although this project does not record real-time feedback, it does demonstrate that self-reporting can be a success.

In a Bangladeshi community affected by a natural disaster, Caritas Bangladesh heard several complaints from local people who had wanted to give feedback but did not know how. The organisation responded by putting in place a complaints and response system and by making staff phone numbers available for follow-up. Feedback is now gathered on a regular basis without any over-reliance on the complaints mechanism. This was a successful project driven by demand from the community itself.

- In 2010 Save the Children launched its Accountability to Children Breakthrough initiative, which aims to improve the accountability of programmes to children and their care-givers. Save the Children's breakthrough projects are central to the implementation of its theory of change. This one includes setting up feedback and complaints mechanisms in all the countries where it operates between 2010 and 2013. The initiative began because of the increased momentum and focus on accountability and

---

[12] The Listening Project has already applied and tested this methodology in 20 countries.

[13] CDA (2011), 'Feedback Mechanisms in International Assistance Organizations', Cambridge, MA.

[14] Ibid., p.10.

an organisational decision to allocate funding for this purpose. It is too early to judge the success of this project, but it demonstrates that programmes are being developed that reflect an organisation's core values and in this case, theory of change.

- In an example from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Pakistan, staff recognised the need for formal feedback mechanisms to help them manage the scale of humanitarian response. They provided suggestion boxes, a dedicated phone number and an email address to receive feedback, and a 'help desk' was staffed during distributions of food and other items so that people could give feedback and get answers to questions about the project. Recipients provided feedback and if they left their contact information, they received a response within two weeks. When staff received repeated or surprising feedback related to problems with the project, they investigated whether programming changes were necessary and, if so, what they should be. For example, CRS's office in the Swat Valley received many complaints through complaint boxes about transitional shelters not being connected to a water source. Based on this feedback, the agency investigated and altered programming to connect shelters through drinking water supply schemes. In Besham, CRS adjusted its coverage area as it learned from community feedback that other NGOs that had agreed to cover that area were not in fact doing so. In the south, the contents of non-food item kits were adjusted and additional hygiene promotion sessions were held, based on feedback indicating that beneficiaries did not correctly understand how to use the items included in the kits. The establishment of this BFM was driven by the agency's staff on the ground and by a practical need.

Also in Pakistan, Save the Children UK used SMS messaging to obtain feedback from community members. In response to feedback received, a member of staff was released from their duties following serious allegations of wrongdoing and an investigation.

The international response to the Haiti earthquake saw a considerable number of feedback mechanisms used, during both the emergency and recovery stages. Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) members in Haiti reported using different approaches to handling feedback and complaints, including a free telephone number for recipients to call and providing beneficiaries with tape recorders to lodge complaints. They also held community meetings with recipients to hear their complaints, opinions and suggestions and to discuss the steps they would take to resolve issues. It is not yet known what impact these efforts have had and there are serious concerns about the coordination of aid organisations in Haiti, which would suggest that the sharing of information feedback by beneficiaries may also have been neglected.

In Senegal, humanitarian agency OFADEC (L'office Africaine pour le développement et la coopération), a HAP member, has instituted a complaints mechanism known as SINFOR – which stands for "Suggestions, Information, Reclamation" – which places emphasis on gathering and responding to aid recipients' suggestions. OFADEC asked primary stakeholders how the feedback system should be structured before establishing its various procedures. In addition to this formal solicitation of feedback and complaints, field staffs periodically use random questionnaires during site visits. These questionnaires do not target a specific group of recipients, but are given to whoever is at the

community site or at the meeting that day. During the next visit, different people are surveyed, which provides the organisation with a diversity of feedback. In addition, focus groups are used to gather feedback and explain decisions, particularly to people who are illiterate.

CARE USA has established an effective practice for consultative processes with community members and partners, but the commitment to regularly solicit and utilise feedback varies greatly between country programmes. Many country programmes carry out customer satisfaction surveys on a regular basis, asking for feedback on specific projects and programmes, such as health and education. The level and scope of feedback solicited differ based on the length of the project. CARE staff have reported different experiences as to how much of the feedback is analysed by country programme teams and used to influence programme decisions, noting that this often depends on leadership and principled commitments to integrate feedback.

Action Against Hunger (ACF) in Zimbabwe uses a beneficiary accountability system (BAS). This has an ombudsman for each project to ensure "fluid and comprehensive communication between the beneficiaries, programme staff and programme managers". Representatives are selected by the communities themselves and rotate on an annual basis; training is provided to both the representative and the wider community and there is an annual review of the system.[15] ACF in Zimbabwe has found that this system has improved cooperation and trust, created a feeling of ownership for programmes, improved the efficiency of the implementation process and encouraged the sustainability of results. Difficulties have included the need for continual coaching or mentoring.

The role of technology

In 2008, the BBC World Service Trust published a report called 'Left in The Dark: The unmet need for information in humanitarian responses', which highlighted the lack of resources being put towards providing information for beneficiaries during humanitarian emergencies. Though it was not the first report to reflect on these issues, it succeeded in corralling a group of communications organisations into a movement to advocate for improvements which resulted in a push for more two-way communication.[16] As demonstrated above, the provision and communication of information to beneficiaries are vital to the later collection of feedback. Post-distribution monitoring surveys have long asked beneficiaries if they received the correct information about the date, location and purpose of distributions sufficiently in advance.

Following publication of the report, the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network was formed. Subsequently, the Infoasaid project was set up "to improve the quality of humanitarian responses by maximising the amount of accurate and timely information available to responders and affected people through enhanced information exchanged between them". Infoasaid (which has now ended) took a multi-level approach, working with systems, agencies and organisations and with affected populations. The ubiquity of communications technology across the globe and the rapid decrease in costs of

---

[15] ACF Learning Review 2011.
[16] This community became the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network.

installation have also been major drivers in the current interest in BFMs. This is led both by communications technology entrepreneurs and companies and by beneficiaries' access to technology acting as a driver of demand for feedback mechanisms through these increasingly available channels.

In 2012, BBC Media Action published a follow-up report, 'Still Left in the Dark? How people in emergencies use communication to survive – and how humanitarian agencies can help'. The earlier report had focused on two-way communications and moving from rhetoric to operationalisation. The follow-up recognised and highlighted the importance of beneficiaries being able to communicate as well as receive information.

Nevertheless, even where BFMs are in place, there are still obstacles to overcome. The 'Still Left in the Dark?' policy briefing recognised three concerns for agencies:

- People's inability to answer the questions asked. This could be because the questions refer to another project, or to a regional or national policy, or because they are raised with subcontractors and not with the main actor.
- Lack of skill or capacity to manage the volume of feedback. If feedback is not integrated into the programme itself and its facilitation is not included in the job description of each member of staff then, depending on the size of the project, extra staff members are required to manage the system.[17]
- Staff are often not equipped to deal with the potential anger of beneficiaries (fear often results in the delay or lack of implementation of BFMs).

To these we can add:

- fear of negative publicity
- fear of personal criticism of staff
- potential to create confusion if mechanisms are not well coordinated
- beneficiaries' fears that aid will be withheld if they complain
- lack of capacity (time, energy or capability) of beneficiaries to provide feedback.

After the earthquake in Haiti there were a number of examples of beneficiaries being able to communicate and receive information. These included:

- texting locations of victims trapped in the rubble to emergency search and rescue services
- using Facebook pages to reunite families split up during the earthquake
- using real-time feedback through radio shows – for example, local radio host DJ Carel Pedre read out relevant tweets to his audience on a daily basis as a means of sharing information and then collated them for NGOs
- texting and emailing to the Haitian diaspora, particularly in the United States, who then fed it in to Ushahidi and other mapping platforms
- outsourcing BFMs. IFRC did this with a locally staffed call centre run by Voila, which has since developed into a global partnership.
- using technology to verify, validate and triangulate data and feedback from beneficiaries, e.g. through the use of automatic tracking or GPS or the increasing use of video footage, as witnessed recently in Syria. However, it

---

[17] Jonathan Potter of People in Aid has identified that existing staff are usually not trained for this work and that, in order to roll out BFMs, capacity building is required.

should be noted that although advances in ICT provide opportunities to widen the reach of BFMs, as noted by the GSDRC report: "the advantages of these tools are largely unproven"[18].

The case of Haiti and the recent examples listed below show that the central driver for this movement is increasingly beneficiaries themselves, who are setting up their own mechanisms to share information and to communicate in disaster situations. Aid agencies should engage more effectively with these organic communications platforms in order to respond to the growing expectations of affected communities regarding their right to be included and informed, and to take advantage of rapidly improving access to communications technology for all. If they do not, the humanitarian sector is in danger of becoming less relevant and, consequently, less effective.

Trilogy Emergency Relief Application (TERA) manages two-way SMS text messages between aid teams and disaster-affected communities.[19] This initiative emerged through the work of IFRC and Trilogy (a wireless telecoms company) after the Haiti earthquake. TERA identifies the location from which an SMS text message is sent and notes the feedback from that location. Following the success of this pilot feedback mechanism, the two organisations are now looking to widen its scope so that eventually it can be rolled out globally.

Ushahidi is an open-source platform that can be used and adapted by all. It is continually being updated by users to respond to needs at both the community and global levels. It began as a website developed to map reports of violence following the 2008 elections in Kenya; its name is the Swahili word for 'testimony'. The platform has been used to facilitate a number of initiatives, including election monitoring and conflict prevention activities. The exciting thing about it was that it collected data submitted by mobile phone. Ushahidi is now a non-profit tech company with a platform of the same name that facilitates the crowdsourcing of information using different technologies such as SMS, Twitter, email etc. It has been used in a large number of different contexts.

One of the most potentially significant applications of this technology has been in the humanitarian field. The software has been used to enable beneficiary feedback by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) (see box on p19) in Somalia and by AidData in Uganda. AidData is creating an "Enhanced Project View" that will act as a public platform for feedback via text message, photographs, trip reports and other information that will provide greater insight into the true impact of development assistance as seen from the ground level.

In Kenya, the Frontline SMS system has revolutionised communications with communities by creating a software package that allows individuals or organisations to send text messages to large groups of people at once. The technology is already being used in the following initiatives:

- Stop Stock Outs has used it to ensure access for all to essential medicines in Uganda and Kenya.

---

[18] www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=619&source=bulletin
[19] http://healthmarketinnovations.org/program/trilogy-emergency-response-application-tera-technology-provider

- Rural farmers and environmental advocates in Indonesia use mobile phones to report, connect and raise awareness of their issues, in partnership with a local TV station.

- Minmini News is a local SMS news service for women in the Batticaloa District of Eastern Sri Lanka. The concerns and experiences of women in towns and villages here are rarely reflected in the mainstream media. A small informal collective associated with women's groups in Batticaloa trialled a model for sourcing, producing and sharing news relevant to local women. The data from the pilot phase showed that not only were recipients overwhelmingly positive about the service, but that it exposed them to novel and useful information, and had some influence on their perspectives.

- The Popular Engagement Policy Lab (PEPL) used SMS to communicate with affected communities during the humanitarian response to the floods in Pakistan in 2011. Using Frontline SMS to set up a complaints and response mechanism, it enabled people to share their experiences of accessing food and shelter.

- Daraja, in Tanzania, uses SMS messaging to provide feedback, initially about the functioning of local water services, but its focus is now widening. Information is forwarded to relevant government authorities, enabling them to respond quickly. Daraja works with local governments to ensure that they are more accountable to local communities; with local communities to boost awareness of their rights and the responsibilities of local governments; and with national government, presenting research based on the knowledge gained at local and district levels. Its three current programmes are:

  - Raising the Water Pressure, or Maji Matone, a nationwide programme focusing on local governance in the water sector. The programme aims to create simple opportunities for rural citizens to put pressure on local government to deliver water supplies more fairly and more sustainably.

  - Twende Pamoja ("Let Us Walk Together"), a local media programme, starting with a trial local newspaper (Kwanza Jamil) in Njombe. The paper aims to promote inclusive public debate on local issues, to scrutinise local government's plans and performance and to strengthen communications between local government and the community.

  - The National Policy Advocacy Programme, which conducts research on the practice of local governance and uses the findings to influence national policy in ways that support responsive local governance.

The use of technology to communicate with beneficiary communities in inaccessible areas has become increasingly vital. For instance, in south Somalia most international NGOs were evicted in 2011 and 2012 during the famine. This resulted in some agencies using remote management systems to continue their assistance programmes, which in turn relied upon the willingness and capacity of local staff. To ensure that programmes continued to be relevant and to match needs, NGO heads based in Nairobi used mobiles and SMS messaging to hear from their local staff.

A focus on social media

Social media now allow agencies to work on a real-time, many-to-many information model and also to track trends. According to the October 2011 issue of *Forced Migration Review*, mobile access is about 40% in Africa and 77% globally.[20] However, this does mean that focusing all feedback mechanisms through the Internet and mobile networks could have a divisive result. It has to be asked whether technology is empowering poor people or deepening the divide.[21] As a demographic group, young males have much greater access to mobiles and in developing countries are more likely to own them than women. This can result in an already vulnerable or marginalised section of society[22] becoming even more marginalised through their lack of access to these new information channels.

It cannot be denied that multilingual social media (Facebook) is now available in 70 languages) increase the opportunities for disaster-affected communities to communicate. However, people do not tend to start using new media or technologies in the aftermath of a disaster but instead are inclined to use tools that they and their family and friends are accustomed to using. For this reason we have seen significant use of social media and mobile technology in places such as the Philippines and Indonesia, but not in Pakistan.[23]

To avoid potentially missing out a large sector of society, for those who do not have access to the Internet some agencies are using an 'oral Internet' which allows people to phone in and listen to information posted online being read out over the phone. Similarly, Twitmobil sends Twitter feeds via SMS messages to personal mobile phones. Nevertheless, as the ICRC emphasises, these are all 'cold lines' of communication and not the favoured 'hot lines' (human interaction). Once again, however, there is little evidence to show whether hot lines are more effective than cold ones.

---

[20] *Forced Migration Review*, October 2011. 'The technology issue'. www.fmreview.org/technology
[21] Price, G. and Richardson, L. All in Diary.
[22] This is particularly relevant to disabled people, who suffer from access issues, and the illiterate.
[23] *Forced Migration Review*, October 2011.

SMS beneficiary feedback systems – a successful example?

What is it? Funded by the [Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) and implemented by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)](#) in partnership with UNICEF's Community Driven Recovery and Development (CDRD), [this project in Somalia](#) "enables beneficiaries to have direct access to DRC and a voice in the decision-making process to allocate funds to local projects. It also helps DRC better monitor the effects of the projects on the ground."

When? June 2011–November 2012

What are its successes? Though there has been no official evaluation yet, some successes can be easily identified:

- The project reaches people in an area that is difficult to access for most humanitarian actors: over 268 SMS messages had been received by DRC as of September 2012.

It closes the feedback loop by responding directly to the beneficiaries on their particular point.

What can we learn from this example? According to Anahi Ayala Lacucci, a consultant who in June 2012 met with Fatuma, the communications officer for DRC running this project, there are already five lessons to be learned from it:

Do not use technology to replace 'in person' dialogue. Use it to support it.

Manage expectations with dialogue and timely accurate information, not with silence.

Make sure that a response mechanism is in place, so that even if people do not get what they want, they feel that they are being heard and they are having a dialogue.

Integrate all available systems: face-to-face, SMS, voice calls, social media. A combination of tools is also a combination of resources and people, and as such has a great potential.

Transparency in humanitarian aid is, and will continue to be, a fundamental factor that will not only make the difference between successful and unsuccessful projects, but also between sustainable and unsustainable relationships with beneficiaries on the ground.

It was noted by HIF that the number of the visitors to the [Ushahidi platform](#) was much lower than was expected or was hoped for. This suggests that there is a need to evaluate the additional impact of converting text messages onto Ushahidi.

Movements and projects working to aggregate data

A number of movements already exist that are attempting to aggregate data from feedback or complaints mechanisms. However, there is no one standard that is used across the world. The Listening Project, during a review in 2011, found that global analysis or collation was non-existent and that even within agencies there was rarely a single standard or agreed system for garnering feedback from beneficiaries. There has been a recent (in the past two years) proliferation of guidelines, but these tend to be country-specific and are often influenced by the interests of specific personnel. This is particularly apparent in multi-mandate agencies where learning from development projects does not appear to be shared with humanitarian projects, or vice versa. The conclusion arises that data (and best practice) is only shared informally by word of mouth both within agencies and between them.

This lack of coordination and aggregation is particularly stark when compared with the data produced and reported to donors, in what is known as 'upward accountability'. All institutional donors require regular reporting (normally at least every six months) to include beneficiary numbers and delivery data. In addition, most ask for external evaluations, which should include an element of discussion with the beneficiary community. For the humanitarian sector, these evaluations are now shared publicly through the ALNAP resources library.

About a decade ago, the World Bank instigated a project called Voices of the Poor. Its purpose was to inform and contribute to the concepts and content of the World Development Report in 2000. The Bank used the QSR*NUDIST software to analysis 130 historical studies, and as a result three books have been published representing the views of over 60,000 women and men from around the world. The 2000/2001 World Development Report, 'Attacking Poverty', featured many of the experiences, priorities and recommendations that were voiced by people during the study. Based on the Voices of the Poor findings, the World Bank committed to scale up its portfolios of community-driven development (CDD) programmes that would more directly benefit the poor. In addition, the initiative led to the creation of Global Coalitions for Voices of the Poor to address the disconnect between global priorities, macro policies and the priorities of local people, though clearly there is a long way to go to ensure that the voices of poor people are heard in policy debates.

One interesting example is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC has used a type of BFM for decades, which it sees as integral to its four key pillars of work.[24] It distinguishes between many different types of beneficiary and between the diverse methods and types of feedback. The ICRC continually tracks feedback from those it wants to assist and/or protect. There are strict systems in place which are globally applicable while being flexible enough to adapt to context-specific issues. There are templates and formats for capturing the information collected, which feed into datasets that track changing needs or comments. This methodology allows the organisation to distil and capture trends, both locally and regionally. The ICRC uses this information to determine what kind of response is necessary and then to adapt the response if it later emerges that it was not appropriate or if the situation changes. Since the late 1990s each

---

[24] Protection, assistance, collaboration with national societies, prevention.

project has captured this information in a results-based management logframe system. As a result, this data now constitutes the backbone information management system for the institution and feeds into 30–40 different databases. Each of these databases is searchable and reports can be generated. The example of the ICRC demonstrates that, at least institutionally, such information can be captured centrally and can be used to inform decision-making.

Recently, the ICRC has started to look at the potential of developing visual maps for the feedback it collects. There are concerns, however, that much of the intelligence contained within the information is lost during this process. The ICRC already uses a geographic information system (GIS) portal, which works as an internal map that can have an infinite number of layers of information added on top. Crowdsourcing can be used to provide this information, which can be particularly useful in inaccessible areas, for instance, to plot water services or to track the progress of an infrastructure project. Finally, this software also allows for satellite imagery to be overlaid in order to understand what is happening on the ground and to verify feedback.

It is also worth considering other aggregation movements working in this area. For example, the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) is a Geneva-based organisation that is working to improve the accuracy and timeliness of need assessments during humanitarian crises by developing a coordinated assessment culture. In order to achieve system change, it uses a dual strategy combining methodology/policy development and operational support and capacity development. Recently it has produced a geo-coded tracking system of needs in current crises, such as the violence in Rakhine State in Myanmar. Although ACAPS is focused on needs rather than feedback, the systems necessary to collect, aggregate and utilise the data are similar. The success of ACAPS could open up space for a new project working towards a coordinated feedback culture.
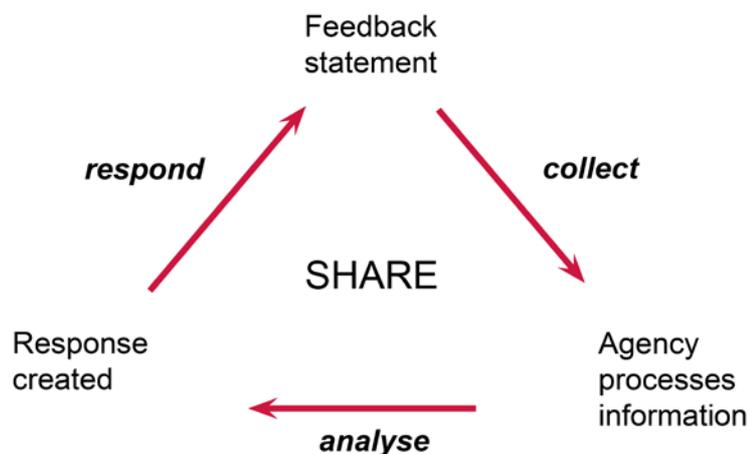
What is missing?

This review has found that there are three main missing elements relating to BFMs:

- an agreement on terminology
- a shared methodology
- a forum for sharing best practice, lessons learned and case studies.

Closing the feedback loop

Communication with beneficiaries alone, even if two-way, does not imply an operational action or response. Until this happens, the feedback loop is left unclosed. One challenge is how the humanitarian/development community can get this to feed into operational planning or programming to ensure that targeting and product inputs are adjusted for that programme, and for future programmes and policy.

In 2009, development economist Owen Barder wrote a working paper for the Center for Global Development (CGD) that identified the broken 'feedback loop' as one of the critical challenges to the aid system. What the term 'beneficiary feedback mechanism' fails to capture is the importance of responding to comments, suggestions or complaints from beneficiaries. In Europe, we would expect at least an acknowledgement of any feedback we take the time to provide, and if it was a criticism or complaint we would expect to be told the reason for the failure or what the organisation would do to rectify the situation. Beneficiary communities equally have a right to expect no less than this. But often, the feedback loop is not closed, and a direct result or change may not be visible to the provider of the feedback.

Barder argued that there was too much focus on inputs and not enough on results and impacts. Participatory processes do not always provide the right link to close the feedback loop. In order to achieve all the goals of transparency, accountability and participation, the loop needs to be closed on every occasion possible. Depending on the emphasis of the feedback loop, there are different methods of achieving this. Barder identifies two: short-chain accountability and long-chain accountability. The former gives beneficiaries greater control over service delivery organisations, while the latter focuses on transparency, community engagement and the measurement of results. The next step for an organisation such as Development Initiatives would be to decide if it can best add value to the short- or long-chain accountability mechanisms. It is clear that the long-chain accountability mechanisms are where the scope for aggregating information lies.

Key findings

- Despite individual initiatives such as the Listening Project and the World Bank's Voices of the Poor, the field is disparate and often ad hoc.
- There is a lack of evidence that beneficiary feedback mechanisms do actually improve the efficiency and/or effectiveness of aid.
- Beneficiary feedback mechanisms may facilitate better downward accountability, but there is no evidence to show that this is the best method.
- Some interesting projects are being developed and implemented, particularly using new information and communication technology.
- The lack of shared understanding or agreement on the terminology in this area discourages joint working or aggregation of data.

Conclusion

There is now a 'critical mass' behind this issue but progress is less positive due to a lack of clarity around purpose, commitment and investment. Currently, the sharing of best practice or successful culturally sensitive approaches is ad hoc and mostly anecdotal. An evidence base and lessons learned log should be established. There is little transfer of information because the data is not collected in an accessible or comparable fashion.

From the perspective of implementing agencies: This review has found that many agencies would be willing to share and be transparent with one another in order to learn how to establish and improve BFMs. The competitive nature of the aid community, due to the need to bid for funds, is likely to continue to determine the extent to which this is realisable in practice. There is also the challenge of sharing and aggregating data from a range of agencies with diverse objectives and working practices, though this could be achieved by international data standards providing a foundation for sharing. However, there are many examples in the wider world of different entities coming together to share data for a public good, such as the Open Data Movement. Therefore we should not overlook the possibility of making data comparable. Nuances and flexibility will always be required due to the vast range of contexts and projects.

From the perspective of donors: As ALNAP has found: "Feedback will only work if the organisation is ready to respond to it, if it is culturally appropriate, and does not ignore or duplicate existing local feedback mechanisms." A lot of the difficulties can be overcome by correctly presenting the mechanism to the community, so that they are able to separate out issues and only give feedback on the work of the aid sector. For donors, this means providing additional or re-allocated resources. To initiate and implement these mechanisms effectively will take considerable time and training, and hence both human and financial resources.

There is particular resistance during rapid-onset emergencies, as well as particular difficulties in conflict-affected emergencies, because time and resources are not available or feedback is not viewed as a priority issue compared with basic services such as shelter, water, food and medical care. Currently BFMs are completely lacking in authoritarian states and are rarely found in conflict-ridden contexts.[25] Donors such as the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danida), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) are encouraging their development, but due to a decline in influence of the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative, coordination between donors has been flagging. For the use of BFMs to become an integral part of programming and for the development of aggregation methods, donors would need to increase the funding available for this work.

From the perspective of national staff: Staff in the field often have to deal with frustration or desperation from beneficiaries, even when the problem is not associated with the action of their agency. The pertinent question for staff is whether more formal feedback systems would relieve them from having to assist individuals with problems or whether this would add an extra layer of work and

---

[25] Presentation by Sean Healy, MSF, at Berlin Humanitarian Congress 2012.

expectations. Many local staff live within, or are from, the same communities as beneficiaries: it is vital that their safety and well-being are factored in when designing new elements of programmes. In some cases (the obvious example being the detention work of the ICRC), beneficiary feedback is integrated into programmes and therefore, whether formally or informally, is already part of the daily tasks of staff on the ground.

From the perspective of beneficiaries: During the recent 'Arab Spring', which saw relief responses in urban settings, the use of social media and new communication technologies enabled disaster-affected communities to have their voices heard more quickly and at a lower cost. Beneficiaries will increasingly expect or know that they have a right to be included within the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of aid programmes. Some beneficiary communities will require training and capacity building, as the notion of feedback or accountability will be a foreign concept to them. Ultimately, the real challenge will be to ensure that feedback loops are closed and beneficiaries who have participated see changes as the result of their efforts.

For all: Access to information changes power relations and gives more agency to beneficiary communities. If this paradigm shift was to occur – and some suggest it already is occurring – then the system will need to adapt accordingly to reflect new power relations.

Looking forward: next steps

It would appear that parts of the aid system are moving quickly with these ideas, though others are holding it back. Ideally, before more work is undertaken to build complex technological or organisational systems, the following need to be established:

- an evidence base for the impact of BFMs on service delivery and perceptions and acceptance of the aid industry by the beneficiary community
- a commitment to always closing the feedback loop.

However, the existing pockets of innovation and best practice could be held back by a major coordinated effort, and instead a simultaneous and continuous development of both of the above, together with new practical solutions, would be best.

Once these elements are agreed upon and in place, it will be clear whether or not there is value in working towards an industry standard for data so that it can be shared and compared, and the following should then be developed:

- an agreed terminology and methodology
- a platform for sharing best practice and lessons learned.

Annex 1: Bibliography

Accountability

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (2009), 'NGO Accountability and Aid Delivery'. ACCA Research Report 110.

Feinstein Institute (2012), '12 Perceptions Case Studies'.

HAP International (2011), 'The 2011 Humanitarian Accountability Report'.

IRIN News, 4 July 2012. 'Are they listening? Aid and humanitarian accountability'.

MSF (2012), 'In the Eyes of Others: How people in crises perceive humanitarian aid'.

Role of technology and communication

BBC Media Action (2012), 'Still Left in the Dark? How people in emergencies use communication to survive – and how humanitarian agencies can help'.

BBC World Service Trust (2008), 'Left in the Dark: The unmet need for information in humanitarian responses'.

CrisisMapper Blog, 18 June 2012. 'The Very First Humanitarian "Customer Calling Center"'.

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (2011), 'Disaster Relief 2.0: The future of information sharing in humanitarian emergencies'. UN Foundation and Vodafone Foundation Technology Partnership.

Infoasaid website: www.infoasaid.org

IFRC (2005), 'World Disasters Report: Information in disasters'.

Internews (2012), 'When Information Saves Lives: 2011 Annual Report, Internews' Humanitarian Information Projects'.

Walmsley, L. (2012), 'Note on CDAC Network Media and Technology Fair'.

Somalia CDRD project website: http://somcdrd.org/hif/main

Ushahidi Project website: http://ushahidi.com

Other reviews

Abu-Sada, C. (ed) (2012), *Dilemmas, Challenges, and Ethics of Humanitarian Aid: Reflections on Médecins Sans Frontières' Perception Project*. McGill-Queens University Press.

Anderson, M., Brown, D. and Jean, I. (2012), 'Time to Listen: Hearing people on the receiving end of international aid'. CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Cambridge MA.

Barder, O. (2009), 'Beyond Planning: Markets and Networks for Better Aid'. Center for Global Development, Working Paper 185, October 2009.

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2011), 'Feedback Mechanisms in International Assistance Organizations'. Cambridge MA.

Guerrero, S. (2012), 'ACF Learning Review 2011'.

IRIN (2008), 'Beneficiary feedback: thanks but no thanks'. www.irinnews.org/Report/78640/GLOBAL-Beneficiary-feedback-thanks-but-no-thanks

Lattu, K. (2008), 'To Complain or Not To Complain – Still the Question: Consultations with humanitarian aid beneficiaries on their perceptions of efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse'. HAP International.

Stirk, C. (2012), 'Background Research for OCHA Report'. Development Initiatives (unpublished).

Twersky, F., Buchanan, P. and Threlfall, V. (2013), 'Listening to those who matter most, the beneficiaries'. Stanford Social Innovation 10th Anniversary Review, Spring 2013.

Walton, O. (2010), 'Helpdesk Research Report: Participatory M&E and Beneficiary Feedback'. GSDRC

Specific studies of regions or emergencies

Catholic Relief Services (2012), 'CRS Haiti Accountability Framework'.

Development Research and Training (DRT) (2012), 'Tracking Resources for Poverty Eradication: Community feedback in Northern Uganda'.

DRT (2012), 'Documentation of Existing Feedback Methodologies and Processes Used by Government and Non-Governmental Agencies in Northern and North Eastern Uganda'.

IASC Accountability Taskforce, 'Accountability to Affected Populations Framework in Côte D'Ivoire, Bolivia and Madagascar'.

Kaiser, T. (2004) 'Participation or Consultation? Reflections on a "Beneficiary Based" Evaluation of UNHCR's Programme for Sierra Leonean and Liberian Refugees in Guinea, June–July 2000'. *Journal of Refugee Studies.*

Oxfam (2012), 'Listening Exercise Report from Tamil Nadu Southern India' (longer-term evaluation of Oxfam's response to the Asian tsunami).

Save the Children (2010), 'Accountability Matters in Emergencies: Listening to children and responding to their feedback during Save the Children's humanitarian response in Myanmar'.

Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (2006), 'Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis report'.

Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (2006), 'Needs Assessment Report'.

Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (2006), 'Capacities Study'.

Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (2006), 'Coordination Study'.

Guidelines

ACF-Spain (2012) 'Beneficiary Feedback Mechanism Guide for Staff'.

CARE Peru (2010) 'Guide to the Organisation of Systems for NGO Accountability to the Community: The experience of CARE Peru'.

CARE West Bank and Gaza (2011) 'Complaint Mechanism Guidelines'.

HAP International (2003), 'HAP Principles of Accountability'.

HAP International (2007), 'Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management'.

IASC (2011), 'Accountability to Affected Populations: A framework'.

Save the Children (2012), 'How to Consult with Children and Adults on Handling Complaints'.

Other organisations working in this field

Organisation	Website
Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) – Effective Humanitarian Feedback Mechanisms	www.alnap.org/ourwork/feedback-loop.aspx
The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS)	www.acaps.org/
betterplace Lab	www.betterplace-lab.org/projects/stakeholder-feedback (in English and German)
Berlin Civil Society Center – INGO Accountability Charter	www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org/
CDA Collaborative Learning Projects – Listening Project	www.cdainc.com/cdawww/project_profile.php?pid=LISTEN&pname=Listening%20Project
Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC)	www.cdacnetwork.org/
DFID's Access and Beneficiary Feedback Pilots Programme (ABFPP)	www.itad.com/projects/research-and-impact-evaluation-of-dfid-access-and-beneficiary-feedback-pilots-programme/
Fritz Institute	www.fritzinstitute.org/prgHumanitarianImpact.htm
GroundTruth Initiative	http://groundtruth.in/
Listen First	www.listenfirst.org
World Bank – Voices of the Poor	http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/0,,contentMDK:20622514~menuPK:336998~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:336992,00.html

Annex 2: Interviews and presentations

Presentations and meetings of relevance

- Angela Kellet, Evidence and Accountability Manager for WorldVision on 'Citizens Voice Accountability', funded by DFID PPA (presentation on 17 September 2012).
- Communication for Development (C4D), 'Innovations in Humanitarian Communications' event (26 September 2012).
- Charlotte Lindsey-Curtet, Director of Communications at ICRC (presentation on Social Media at Berlin Humanitarian Congress, 13 October 2012).
- Sean Healy, Humanitarian Affairs Adviser at MSF Berlin (presentation on 'Working in Authoritarian States' at Berlin Humanitarian Congress, 13 October 2012).

Interviews

- Lukas van Trier, Accountability Adviser for CARE International UK (26 September 2012).
- Hugh Earp, Shelter Accountability Adviser for ECB (26 September 2012).
- Isabella Jean and Dayna Brown, the Listening Project at CDA (27 September 2012).
- Francesca Bonini, Research Officer: Evaluation, Learning and Accountability, ALNAP (15 October 2012).
- Caroline Abu-Sada, Author of 'In the Eyes of Others', MSF (19 October 2012).
- Robert Whelan, Communications Officer at ICRC (1 November 2012).

About us

[Development Initiatives](#) (DI) has been working with governments, multilateral organisations and NGOs since 1992. Its core programmes – [Global Humanitarian Assistance](#), [aidinfo](#), Investments to End Poverty – focus on analysing, interpreting and improving information about resources for poverty elimination by making it more transparent and accessible.

We have offices in Bristol in the south west of England and in Nairobi, Kenya. The African Hub, in Nairobi, provides a regional perspective to our work on eradicating poverty. The Hub sees better information in East Africa as being a fundamental tool to improve policies and influence the allocation of resources to address chronic and extreme poverty in the region.

This paper was written by Laura Jump, Senior Engagement and Advocacy Advisor, with support from Chloe Stirk, Programme Researcher, Development Initiatives. If you would like to discuss this paper in more detail or any additional information, please contact laura.jump@devinit.org