



# Guide on **Child-Friendly Participation**

Joint Initiative UNICEF – Common Thread – IRC ESARO

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**Disclaimer:** This guide was developed prior to the issuance of UNICEF procedure on complaints and feedback management. This guide will be revised once the UNICEF Procedure on Complaints and Feedback Management and related global guidance are published. It is mandatory that this guide be fully aligned with UNICEF regulatory instruments and that nothing within it contradicts UNICEF's regulatory framework. Once issued, the UNICEF Procedure and Handbook will supersede this guide.

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# ACRONYMS

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|              |                                               |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>AAP</b>   | Accountability to Affected Population         |
| <b>CFFFM</b> | Child Friendly Feedback Mechanism             |
| <b>CFM</b>   | Community Feedback Mechanism                  |
| <b>CO</b>    | Country Office                                |
| <b>CP</b>    | Child Protection                              |
| <b>CRC</b>   | Convention on the Rights of the Child         |
| <b>CSO</b>   | Civil Society Organisation                    |
| <b>CTC</b>   | Community Treatment Center/clinic             |
| <b>ESARO</b> | Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office   |
| <b>FBL</b>   | Faith based Leaders                           |
| <b>FBO</b>   | Faith Based Organizations                     |
| <b>FM</b>    | Feedback Mechanism                            |
| <b>FPCC</b>  | Faith and Positive change for children        |
| <b>GBV</b>   | Gender Based Violence                         |
| <b>HCD</b>   | Human Centered Design                         |
| <b>IP</b>    | Implementing Partner                          |
| <b>IRC</b>   | International Rescue Committee                |
| <b>PHE</b>   | Public Health Emergency                       |
| <b>PSEA</b>  | Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| <b>RCCE</b>  | Risk Communication and Community Engagement   |
| <b>RL</b>    | Religious Leaders                             |
| <b>SBC</b>   | Social and Behaviour Change                   |
| <b>SEA</b>   | Sexual Exploitation and Abuse                 |
| <b>SOP</b>   | Standard Operating Procedure                  |

# FOREWORD

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Children, like adults, are experts in their own experiences. Their perspectives are not only valid but essential to improving the quality, safety, and accountability of humanitarian and development programmes. Yet, despite growing recognition of their rights, children's voices are often underrepresented in the design and delivery of services that directly affect them.

This guide developed through a collaboration by UNICEF ESARO, IRC and Common Thread offers a practical and principled approach to establishing and strengthening Child-Friendly Participation and Feedback Mechanisms (CFFMs). These mechanisms are grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which affirms every child's right to be heard and to participate in decisions affecting their lives. They are also aligned with UNICEF's Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) commitments and the Core Humanitarian Standard.

CFFMs are not just about creating channels for children to speak they are about ensuring those channels are safe, accessible, age-appropriate, and responsive. This guide outlines key steps and considerations for implementers, from designing inclusive feedback systems to ensuring that children can report abuse, raise concerns, and share ideas without fear or barriers. It also emphasizes the importance of closing the feedback loop demonstrating to children how their input has influenced decisions and actions.

Ultimately, child-friendly participation is not just about protecting children from harm it is about building trust, promoting accountability, and upholding the right of every child to be heard and taken seriously. It is about shifting from symbolic inclusion to meaningful engagement.

We hope this guide serves as both a practical toolkit and a source of inspiration. By embedding child-friendly feedback mechanisms into our work, we not only strengthen our programmes, but we also empower children and reinforce their role as agents of change in their communities.



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## What are Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFM)?

- A CFM is any system established to support inclusive two-way communication between communities and humanitarian response actors, with the goal of ensuring the information exchanged with communities' feeds into how different response operations are designed, implemented, and improved.

## What does community feedback look like?

- Community feedback is information generated by community members individuals and groups, adults, and children. Feedback can include questions, suggestions, observations, beliefs, concerns, complaints, and statements of thanks. It can be proactively gathered, received, or encountered directly from community members and groups or through field teams and community-facing staff and volunteers that interact with them on a day-to-day basis.

## Who implements a CFM?

- A community feedback mechanism can go by many names. It can be set up locally by communities or by individual agencies, in a joint approach by two or more agencies, and can exist at the collective level to support the priorities of clusters, inter-cluster coordination, and response-level decision-making structures.

## Why develop and implement Child-friendly Feedback Mechanisms (CFFMs)

It is a fundamental right for children to participate in accordance with their evolving capacities, as espoused by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Consequently, it is the responsibility and commitment of implementers to guarantee such participation. Underpinning this right, children need to participate and provide feedback because they:

- Have the cognitive potential to contribute to their development.
- Are important influencers for their peers, households, communities, and institutions, both directly and indirectly. It is therefore imperative to develop their capacity as change agents.
- Possess creativity (untouched by social conformity) that can be harnessed to shift the landscape of SBC and other programs.
- Are at greater risk of abuse and exploitation, particularly in emergencies, underscoring the need for fit-for-purpose reporting mechanisms and referrals.

When feedback mechanisms are designed with children, their unique needs in mind, they are more likely to be:

- Accessible and safe
- Sensitive to confidentiality
- Engaging
- Diverse in channels (offering multiple options to provide feedback)
- Inclusive of literacy, disability, age, gender, and locality.

## Why children do not provide feedback or report violence and abuse

1. **Awareness:** Often, children are not aware of available reporting mechanisms and survivor support. Additionally, they are not informed about accountability as an integral part of service provision and as a 'right' they can claim.
2. **Fear of repercussions:** Some children feel intimidated and are afraid of backlash (on them or their families) if they report. This fear is particularly grave when the perpetrator is a caregiver (individual or institution).



3. **Sense of helplessness:** Some children feel that nobody takes their concerns seriously, including parents and authorities. They often do not see their views and opinions as important or impactful, meaning they do not believe they can lead to change or course correction.
4. **Stigma:** Often, children feel guilty and fear the stigma associated with abuse.
5. **Negative socialization:** Children may feel that it is normal to be abused, as society normalizes violence.
6. **System failures:** Spaces and channels are not open for children to meaningfully engage, report, and seek redress.
7. **Lack of understanding:** Depending on their age and developmental stage, children might not fully understand what constitutes abuse or violence. They may not recognize their experiences as something that should be reported, or they might not have the vocabulary to describe what happened.

## Overarching principles underpinning child-friendly feedback mechanisms

- **CRC as the reference framework:** Approaches need to be rights-based both in process and outcome.
- **Protection and dignity:** Children deserve the same respect and dignity as any other person.
- **Best interests of the child:**
  - Consider various factors, such as the child's characteristics and environment.
  - Consult actors from various disciplines to analyze the case of the child.
  - Assess the impact of the decision on the child's long-term development.
- **Child participation:**
  - Adapt communication to the child's age and individual situation (e.g. language, gender, and disability).
  - **Minimize power differences:** Avoid formalities in the setup at all levels of the process.
  - **Explain the process:** Inform children about how their views will be used, how confidentiality will be guaranteed, and any possible limits to confidentiality.
- **Non-discrimination:** Mechanisms need to be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable.

## Practical considerations for establishing CFFMs

### Key Steps in the Process:



**Plan** – Secure organizational commitment, consult children on the purpose and the reasons (and how) they can engage, map existing CBMs, and define purpose, scope, and expectations. Standard channels may include helplines, helpdesks, feedback and complaint boxes, and community consultations.



**Design** – Adapt or create a new design, train staff on working with children, and how to handle and refer to sensitive complaints.



**Awareness raising** – Target children on:  
a) The available channels  
b) Why their opinions and feedback matter.



**Analysis** – Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for processing, data access, and storage.

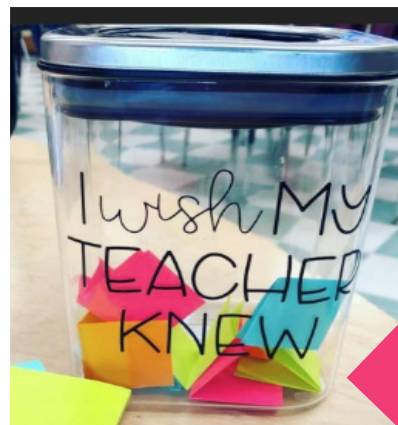


**Close the loop** – Communicate “What did you say?” and “What did we do?” to demonstrate how their feedback led to action.

## Practical elements of a child-friendly feedback mechanism

### Accessibility:

- **Make children aware of existing mechanisms and how to use them** – Ensure that children are informed about the available feedback and complaint mechanisms and understand how to use them effectively.
- **Reduce formalities** – Allow children to express concerns in a variety of ways, including orally, through art, using emojis, or other creative methods that feel comfortable to them.
- **Allow for direct/open submission of complaints** – Children should be able to submit complaints directly, without the need for parental consent. NGOs, agents, or witnesses may also submit complaints on behalf of a child, with the child's consent.
- **Leave no child behind** – Pay special attention to children who may face barriers, including those with disabilities, unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs), children from different gender identities, and children in hard-to-reach areas.



### Responsiveness:

- **Close the feedback loop:**
  - ➔ Respond to complaints submitted and inform children that their complaints are being worked on. If a complaint cannot be addressed, provide clear reasons why.
  - ➔ For actions outside our mandate, offer alternative avenues for redress or guidance on where to seek help.

### Timeliness:

Children are in the process of development and their sense of time differs from that of adults as such ensure:

- **Fast-track procedures:** Put procedures in place to expedite the process, such as resolving complaints within 72 hours.
- **Inform the child:** If the situation requires additional time, inform the child, and provide clear reasons for the delay.

### Fairness/impartiality:

- **Avoid prejudices, political orientations, and conflicts of interest:** Ensure impartiality throughout the process.
- **Investigate thoroughly:** Gather all relevant information, ensuring that all parties involved provide their views separately and equitably.
- **Child's right to disagree:** If the child disagrees with the outcome, inform them about other available remedies or appeal options.

## Privacy and confidentiality:

- **Protect the child:** Safeguard the child from possible threats, retaliation, re-victimization, stigmatization, and harassment.
- **Informing parents or authorities:** Explain if there is a need to inform parents, legal guardians, or the justice system, particularly in criminal cases.
- **Data protection policy:** Make the policy on data storage, access, and erasure available to children.
- **Restrict disclosure:** Limit the disclosure of information that could lead to the identification of the child.

## Information for the child:

- **The process:** Inform the child about how complaints are handled, including the expected timeframe for reporting progress. Address issues beyond the mandate and provide referral support.
- **The status of the complaint:** Keep the child informed about major steps in the process, such as the reception of the complaint, case opening, and mediation of a solution.
- **The outcome:** Inform the child about how their views have been considered and what actions were taken as a result.
- **Format:** Share information in a way that is understandable to the child, considering their age, capacity, and preferred communication style (e.g., text, drawings, or video).





## Setting up and strengthening a child-friendly feedback mechanism



### Involving children

Involve them in the design of the complaint mechanisms to ensure accessibility and a response to their needs. Include marginalized groups in the participatory development process. Consider the following:

- **How to make the mechanism accessible to children:** (Child-Friendly Language, Multiple Channels for Complaints, Safe Spaces, Supportive Environment)
- **How complaints should be handled:** (Timely Response, Respectful Handling, Non-Retaliation, Confidentiality)
- **How to publicize the mechanism:** (Inclusive Outreach, Multilingual Communication, Engagement of Trusted Community Leaders)
- **How to provide feedback:** (Ensure Two-Way Communication, Use Different Methods, Timeliness, Respect Privacy and Sensitivity, Offer Support)



### Partnerships

- Partnerships strengthen the child-friendly nature of complaint mechanisms.
- Partners often have limited capacity to establish and maintain child-friendly complaint mechanisms.
- Responsibilities should be shared (e.g., receiving complaints, investigating, informing the child, capacity building, etc.).
- Consider partnerships with schools, the media, civil society organizations, and the private sector (e.g., advertising companies, telecom providers, academic institutions for training, etc.)



### Staff/Partner training

- Train staff on child-centered approaches, such as how to interact with, detect, inform, and provide feedback to children.
- Share knowledge on protocols, memoranda of understanding, and referral systems for cases received



### A child-specialized approach

- Child-friendly feedback mechanisms should cover a full range of human rights, including those of adults.
- Train staff and designate focal points to handle children's cases.
- Only trained staff should interview children and/or visit them.



### Advocacy

- Budget for advocacy to address multifaceted issues. Individual complaints reveal important gaps in the system.
- Disaggregate data by subject matter, age, gender, and geographic location to help locate and follow up on the case.
- Ensure an adequate flow of information within the office(s) to guarantee that individual complaints contribute to the advocacy strategy.



### Social mobilization

- Engage with youth organizations/groups and ensure they take the lead.
- Work closely with child protection teams and child protection partners.
- Consider partnering with child helplines or similar organizations.
- Employ a broader child safeguarding approach.
- Engage service providers (linking services and reporting)



## Child-Friendly Reporting Mechanisms and SEA

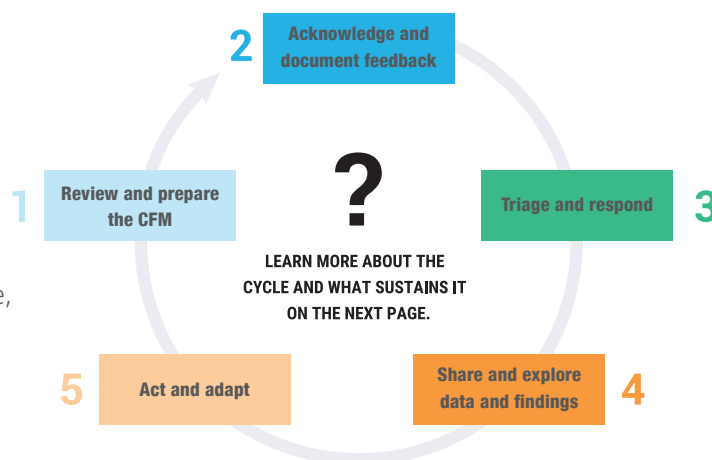
- To improve children's access to SEA reporting mechanisms, it's crucial to involve them in designing and testing child-friendly, age-appropriate communication channels and materials. This includes ethical consultations, engaging youth groups, and partnering with child protection actors and services. Barriers to access should be removed by simplifying processes, providing clear, understandable information, and ensuring confidentiality. Complaint handling must be timely, transparent, and responsive to children's needs, with their privacy respected throughout.

## The community feedback cycle

(adapted from the [IASC Standards for Collective Feedback Mechanisms.pdf](#) )

The community feedback cycle is a simple way to visualize how feedback is gathered, processed, and used to inform decisions, creating a “feedback loop”.

It aims to continuously adapt, meet the changing needs of all the stakeholders (i.e. individuals, groups, and the community at large, actors involved in the response, the staff, and volunteers), and contribute to the collective goals to strengthen programming and systems for feedback at the level of the response.



Although the cycle is commonly broken down into discrete and numbered stages, there are often many overlapping and concurrent processes taking place.

|                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Review and prepare the CFM</b>          | Define and agree on how linking our systems for feedback can help us achieve goals for the response, we create a foundation for adapting together that builds on the efforts already underway and the resources we already must strengthen our individual systems and programs                                      | Supporting localization                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Acknowledge and document Feedback</b>   | Consistence and coordination in how we communicate with communities build trust by using the Template Logbook to align how we talk about and document community feedback, improve our ability to analyze and use feedback coming through all channels to serve the purpose of agencies and the collective.          | Ensure community-facing teams, feedback personnel and the local partners who implement and encounter feedback are regularly engaged at the collective level to share their findings, feedback on decisions, and reinforce key messages with communities, we can build practical systems that can have real impact where it matters the most. |
| <b>Triage and respond</b>                  | Address different types of feedback, and the general rule for making sure feedback reaches them, we ensure that anyone providing feedback through any channel, especially those with very specific needs or reporting serious issues are responded to as quickly, safely, and effectively as possible.              | Linking trend analysis and advocacy for better resource management                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Share and explore data and findings</b> | Bring together community feedback data and findings from different sources into an analytical framework can be interpreted with other information that supports planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes. We can base recommendations and actions on a more transparent and balanced picture of needs. | How a CFM is structured and performs depends on the regulatory frameworks, available resources, and technologies chosen to support its functioning.                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Act and adapt</b>                       | Systematically track actions and how we address persistent challenges, can be more confident in our decisions, share this with communities, and better advocate and influence models for resourcing humanitarian interventions                                                                                      | Talking about these things as a community of response actors can allow us to better leverage our different contributions, engage with donors, prioritize, and advocate for the things we need to achieve our common goals.                                                                                                                   |

## The Role of NGOs in Operational/Business Level Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (OLGMs)

### What are OLGMs?

OLGMs are processes for receiving, evaluating, and addressing operations-related grievances from affected communities at the company level. For children, OLGMs ensure:



Principles and operational elements commonly recommended include information transparency, confidentiality, etc.

### What can NGOs do in OLGMs?

- Help reach and inform children and their families about OLGMs and other avenues for redress, including child justice procedures.
- Serve as a first point of contact and be retained as facilitators or mediators.
- Provide in-person support to children during grievance processes.
- Incorporate children's views and experiences into design and monitoring processes.
- Build capacity to address child-specific issues.
- Engage in dialogues and raise public awareness on systemic change at improving child protection standards.
- Independent monitoring and evaluation of OLGMs.

## Tips, examples and recommendations to build a feedback channel disaggregated by gender and age group

| AGE GROUP             | GENDER                                                                                       | TIPS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | FEEDBACK CHANNEL EXAMPLES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5–9 (Early Childhood) | Boys<br>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use play-based methods (drawing, puppets)</li> <li>■ Keep questions short</li> <li>■ Include movement breaks</li> <li>■ Immediate positive reinforcement</li> </ul>                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Drawing activity</b> with emojis</li> <li>■ <b>Talking puppet interviews</b> (“What made you smile today?”)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                               |
|                       | Girls<br>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use storytelling and relational framing (“How did it feel when...?”).</li> <li>■ Girls may show higher emotional vocabulary earlier – encourage expressive responses.</li> <li>■ Offer simple choices to empower decision-making.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Feelings board:</b> Girls place stickers or magnets on a board showing how they felt about different activities.</li> <li>■ <b>Story starters:</b> “Once upon a time there was a girl in your school who didn’t like recess. What do you think happened?”</li> </ul> |
| 12 (Pre-Adolescents)  | Boys<br>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Focus on specific scenarios; abstract questions may be too vague.</li> <li>■ Group settings or games can ease shyness or awkwardness.</li> <li>■ Use competitive or tech-driven tools (e.g., quizzes, apps).</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Interactive polls:</b> Short, anonymous in-class polls using tools like Kahoot or Mentimeter.</li> <li>■ <b>Gamified feedback wall:</b> Colored tokens placed in “good,” “meh,” and “bad” boxes after activities.</li> </ul>                                         |
|                       | Girls<br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Allow time and space for journaling or one-on-one conversation.</li> <li>■ Group discussion circles may work well, especially among friends.</li> <li>■ Validate emotions and encourage nuance (e.g., “Tell me more...” prompts).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Reflection journals:</b> Prompted with questions like “What was one thing you wish was different today?”</li> <li>■ <b>Peer-led circles:</b> Trusted peer leaders ask reflective questions in safe spaces.</li> </ul>                                                |
| 13–18 (Adolescents)   | Boys<br>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Anonymity reduces social pressure</li> <li>■ Action-oriented questions work better</li> <li>■ Digital formats preferred. Online platforms may be more comfortable than in-person conversations.</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Anonymous digital form:</b> Two-minute weekly check-ins using forms with sliders and multiple-choice options.</li> <li>■ <b>Suggestion box with incentives:</b> Tangible rewards (e.g., snack coupons) for participating in feedback efforts.</li> </ul>             |
|                       | Girls<br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use emotional and open-ended questions</li> <li>■ Emphasize confidentiality in safe space</li> <li>■ Peer mentorship enhances trust and a powerful feedback loop</li> </ul>                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Confidential focus groups:</b> Led by slightly older female peers or trusted adults, with discussion prompts.</li> <li>■ <b>Digital diaries or vlogs:</b> Anonymous or private submission of video/audio reflections about experiences.</li> </ul>                   |

## General principles

1. **Language matters:** Use age-appropriate and gender-sensitive language.
2. **Format flexibility:** Allow verbal, written, visual, or physical (movement-based) expression.
3. **Build trust:** Children and teens need to know their feedback is safe and valued.
4. **Close the loop:** Always show how their feedback led to change or action

# LESSONS LEARNT

It is important to support children and adolescents in understanding how they can engage in each space and intervention in line with their evolving capacities.

- **Partnership:** Working with collectives and individuals in an emergency context requires an agile and adaptive approach that builds on the lived experiences, knowledge, and skills of the affected children/youth. Proactive collaboration is key to identifying and formalizing their contributions.
- **A co-design approach:** To develop guidance and tools strengthens their quality and relevance while cultivating joint ownership and a shared stake in the outcomes
- **Localization:** It is important to work with local institutions for children and adolescents, as it enhances commitment and empowerment. Meet people where they are. This involves building a localized system from scratch and/or encouraging the adoption of a system that is not yet valued but has been revamped.
- **Accountability and inclusion:** The responsibility of all organizations and should not be confined to specialist agencies
  - It is important to take the time to understand the system and align with government and implementing partners, as well as UNICEF program sections, to ensure clarity on all phases and roles within a common feedback system.
  - SBC is ideally suited to facilitate and advise on program-focused work but is often put in a difficult position managing program demands and expectations.
  - HCD and other research teams are frequently exposed to unexpected, unplanned observations. It helps to find ways to capture observations that may support team
- **Researching feedback mechanisms:** Effort must be made to practice AAP principles by ensuring there is a feedback loop within the research process



# ANNOTATED RESOURCES

[Plan International \(2019\) Child Friendly Feedback Mechanisms: Guide and Toolkit](#)

[NHRI\\_ComplaintMechanisms.pdf \(unicef.org\)](#) National human rights institutions (NHRIs) Series: Tools to support child-friendly practices. CHILD-FRIENDLY COMPLAINT MECHANISMS

[Desk Review Child Accountability in Humanitarian settings](#)

[Save the Children Feedback and Reporting Mechanism Guidance](#) | Save the Children's Resource Centre

[Interagency Study on Child-Friendly Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms Within NGO Programmes](#) | Save the Children's Resource Centre

[VOICEMORE: THE HANDBOOK-War Child's Participatory Youth Advocacy Methodology](#): Handbook provide approaches and steps for participatory methodologies, including participatory research and advocacy driven by the youth.

[Tool 8.3 Basic requirements child and adolescent participation \(unicef.org\)](#): Provides requirements that can be used by staff as a tool to plan, monitor and evaluate child and adolescent participation in the programme cycle. To be effective and meaningful, participation is process, not an individual one-off event.

[Report Launch Event | Linktree](#): Children in Poland share their voices on mental health, education and integration in the face of the war in Ukraine; initiative by UNICEF, Plan International and Save the Children. This is the first time that the three organizations in Poland consulted children and heard their voices to understand education, social cohesion, mental health and psychosocial support and their right to participation.

link to the GTS paper: <https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/library/accountability-in-practice-a-new-child-friendly-consultative-methodology-in-burkina-faso> Consultative tool to include children's feedback

<https://www.tdh.org/fr/burkina-faso-ameliorer-notre-redevabilite-envers-les-enfants-que-lon-soutient> a child-friendly consultative tool to include children's feedback

Link to the game: <https://link.tdh.org/jeu-aventure> a board game

[Accountability to Affected Populations - AAP - Prompting discussions on AAP and PSEA with adults and children, Colombia guidelines - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#): This is a set of 4 guidelines developed for implementing partners to promote discussions on AAP and PSEA (including participation, inequality, raising complaints) with adults and children in communities;

[AAP Tool Hub - Training modules on inclusion of children with disabilities in programmes \(and AAP and PSEA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#): Module 3 covers inclusion in PSEA and AAP, including adapting communication modalities and feedback channels for children living with disabilities.

[DISCUSSION PAPER: Operational-level grievance mechanisms fit for children](#): Provides guiding principles for grievance mechanisms in business environment and the role of NGOs in establishing and maintain such mechanisms.

# ANNEX

## Examples of approaches in implementing Child-friendly Feedback Mechanisms

### Using Human Centered Design (HCD) for Child-Friendly Feedback Mechanisms

#### The Interface between AAP and HCD:

Processes of HCD perfectly patch into the demand of AAP. Some examples are as follows:

| Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)                                                                                                                                 | Human Centered Design (HCD)                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>LEARNING &amp; IMPROVEMENT</b> - Organizations should actively seek feedback and use it to learn and adapt their programs and approaches                                  | <b>PROTOTYPING</b> - Creating early versions or mock-ups of solutions, practitioners can gather feedback, test ideas, and adjust before committing to a final design.                                                   |
| <b>FEEDBACK &amp; COMPLAINTS</b> - Establishing a safe, accessible, and responsive FCM allows affected populations to share their views.                                     | <b>ITERATIVE DESIGN</b> - A process of continuous testing, learning and refinement, allowing for feedback and improvement at each stage to best meet user needs.                                                        |
| <b>PARTICIPATION</b> - Affected populations have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives                                                               | <b>COLLABORATION AND CO-CREATION- HCD</b> encourages collaboration and co-creation with multidisciplinary teams. This fosters creativity but also ensures a broader range of knowledge and perspectives are considered. |
| <b>TRANSPARENCY</b> - Organizations should provide clear and accessible information to affected populations, including how decisions are made to allow for informed choices. | <b>INCLUSIVE and DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES</b> - Incorporating a range of perspectives, including marginalized or underrepresented groups ensures design is inclusive AND addresses the needs of the broader user base.      |
| <b>HUMAN RIGHTS &amp; DIGNITY</b> - Organizations should respect and promote the human rights & dignity of affected populations on decisions that affect their lives         | <b>SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL DESIGN</b> - HCD considers and promotes responsible design choices that align with social, environmental, and cultural values.                                                               |
| <b>COORDINATION &amp; COOPERATION</b> - Organizations should work together to coordinate efforts, avoid duplication and maximize impact.                                     | <b>USER EMPATHY</b> - Developing a deep understanding of user needs, desires and challenges through active listening, observation and engaging with people.                                                             |

## HCD process in AAP with children some suggested steps

### Understanding:

- This is the first stage where you can involve children in exploring the problem. Children can draw, write, or display how they know, feel, or think about an issue or problem. Make this process as open as possible, allowing children to express their aspirations, hopes, fears, or frustrations. It is about expressing “what comes to their mind when they hear about the issue or words associated with the issue (e.g. floods, camps).” These could be either positive or negative experiences.
- Ask the children to draw the people involved in the issues, starting with themselves at the center. They should then identify who else is involved, either in a positive or negative way. Children should be encouraged to describe their drawings without being forced to speak.

### Observation/Inquiry:

- Children can be asked to go and talk to their friends about the challenges they are trying to explore. This helps gather other points of view on how others feel and think about the problem. Simple questions they could ask include: “What comes to your mind when you hear about [the issue]?”, “What do you think about it?”, “How do you feel about it?”, and “What would you like to see changed regarding [the issue]?”

### Synthesis:

- Ask the children to draw illustrations representing the ideas they heard from others. These could be emojis or complete illustrations.
- Ask the children to group similar drawings that represent similar ideas.
- Ask the children to vote on the idea(s) they want to solve first.

### Ideation:

Come up with creative ways to help the children generate ideas to solve the prioritized problem. Emphasize to the children that all ideas are valid and that sometimes the best ideas may sound unusual at first. There's no need to overthink. They could try:

- Throw/Catch the Ball, Say Something: Children throw the ball to each other, and the person who catches it suggests an idea.
- Round Robin: In a cycle, one person suggests an idea. The facilitator then asks the next person why it might not work and asks the following person what can be done to make it work. This is repeated until the cycle is complete.
- Draw the Main Ideas on a Wall: Children can draw the main ideas on a wall and vote on which ideas should be implemented based on:
  - i) Easy to do (short-term results)
  - ii) Difficult to do (long-term results)

### Prototyping:

- As the children develop prototypes of the solutions, these could include drawings, Lego models, drama, songs, or stories

## Testing/Presentation:

Pretesting is about getting early feedback on the suggestions made by the children/youth.

- You can invite different stakeholders to view or listen to the prototypes developed by the youth/children. The stakeholders could include parents, local authorities, CSOs, and district/regional authorities. Discussions should include:
- How different stakeholders will respond to the issues raised (with alterations as suggested)
- What the children/youth will do to follow up on the recommendations made during the pretesting.

## Using U-report Chatbot for Adolescent Feedback

### Guiding principles

These are concepts that help us create solutions that prioritize user needs and preferences at every step. These principles serve as a guide to ensure that design solutions are user-centric, intuitive, and aligned with the findings.



**Take adolescents seriously, and show them they have been taken seriously.**

Adolescents will participate once, but if they don't see the results/benefits then they won't participate again.



**Adolescents are ready to participate in reciprocal relationships.**

If we ask something of them, we should give them something. If we give them something, we should let them give us something.



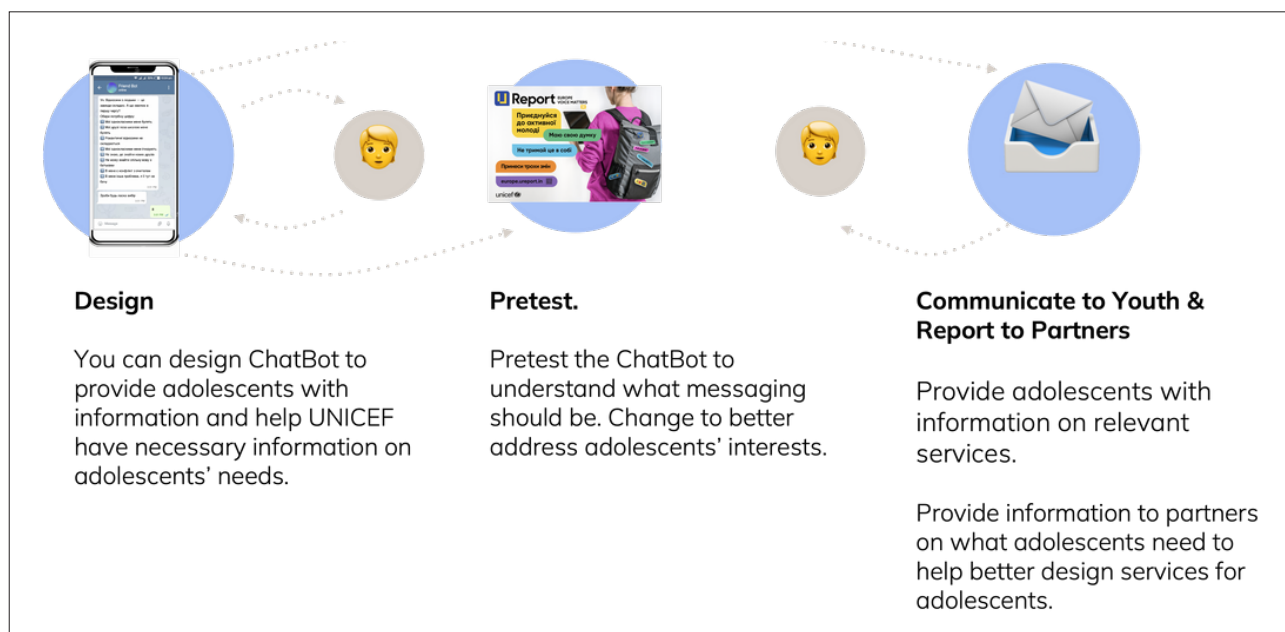
**Adolescents need to feel valuable.**

The systems we design for adolescents to interact with need to recognize their value, and they need to understand the purpose of what they are being asked to give.

### Design principles

- **Adolescents need to feel that they are not alone:** It is hard to be the first to voice a problem. It is easier to tell the truth when you are not the only one.
- **Adolescents don't want to be in the spotlight as a refugee:** This is an important experience that needs to be acknowledged. It makes them feel different from their peers in host communities, but it is not their whole identity.
- **Adolescents seek familiarity:** The online world has not changed for adolescents. Their phones are a tie to home and something familiar. Create welcoming, familiar experiences for them to access on their phones.

## Intervention map



## General recommendations for chatbot and polls

### DO:



- Give the bot a name. FriendBot is a good choice.
- Use emojis in the text.
- Limit the choice of messenger to Telegram. Ensure the link works.
- Send the message "You are not the only one" when a child reports a problem.
- Provide an opportunity for an open-text answer when a user cannot find a suitable option.
- Entertain users with funny polls between serious ones.
- Share the results of the polls in the chat after they are closed.

### DON'T:



- Use a "human" name for the bot.
- Provide only pre-defined options to questions asked by the bot. Also, offer an option to enter an open-ended answer.
- Limit the options to pre-defined ones for which we have answers.
- Children engage with the surveys when they see their problems reflected.

Example of bot files: [Link to the deliverable files](#)

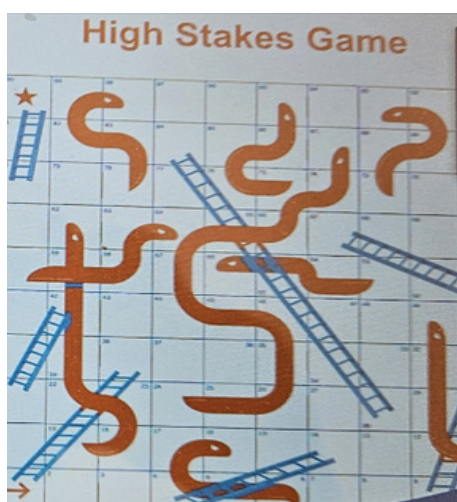
**PLEASE NOTE:** U-Report is not designed/certified to handle personal and sensitive data; hence it should not be used to handle individual/sensitive complaints.

Here are some examples of child engagement and feedback mechanisms that can inspire implementers for adaptation or similar programming.

# INNOVATIONS IN FEEDBACK COLLECTION

## Snakes and ladders

- Developed by UNIDIR and UNICEF for children exiting armed groups to identify the risks (snakes) and support (ladders).



## Photovoice documentation

- It provides technology and documentation training to selected young people through a series of workshops (Comms + PME).
- Cameras are assigned to young people for a specific duration and focused on specific themes, with the final workshop displaying and reviewing the results.
- Kenya – “Hope through the Camera Lens” (Dadaab Refugee Camp)- Within the PROSPECTS programme (funded via UNICEF), youth including refugees were trained in photography, video editing, and storytelling. Through this, they documented their daily lives in Dadaab, becoming community storytellers and advocates.
- More information can be found: [Hope through the camera lens | UNICEF Kenya](#)
- Uganda – Digital Storytelling by Young People. In Arua, Adjumani, and Terego districts, UNICEF Uganda trained youth in video storytelling during COVID 19. These youth filmed and shared stories on child protection, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and community resilience voicing their own experiences and pushing for positive change. More information can be found here: [In Uganda, young people share stories through films | UNICEF Uganda](#).

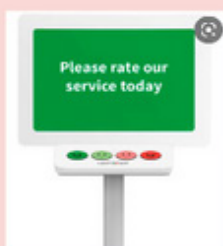
## Storytelling

I am Mariam



- Developed by Plan International and Hurras Network, it sets out a story about a refugee child and can be adapted for children to craft their own story.
- It provides insights into their well-being, living situations, protection concerns, feedback on goods and services, etc.
- Link with more info: <https://medium.com/@RachelG/how-unicef-harnesses-the-power-of-visual-storytelling-fae27a2e42d7>

## Feedback register

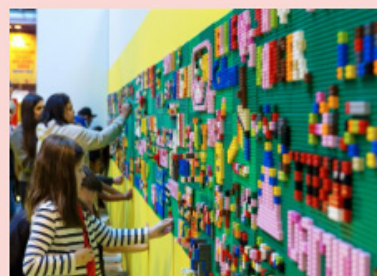


Have these branded with logo + QR code so if kids want to take them, it lives on as a contact vehicle.

distribute stickers with QR code - link to info - fun for kids

can be combined with tracking service from entry moment --> exit moment

## Community-builder



What if it's like **reverse-jenga**?  
Take a block from a box that corresponds with your answer to a question, and add it to a sculpture?

If each box starts the day with X number of pieces you can count votes by how many are left

Collab. **Lego wall!** - reset each day

take a lego from yesterday's structure (don't need to say it's yesterday's structure)

Timelapse video of yesterdays wall!

next to photos of previous days' walls



Blow up a balloon, write a single word on it with a sharpie how you felt coming into the blue dot. Blow up a different colour balloon and write how you felt as you're about to leave the blue dot

or write feedback word on a tag attached to the balloon string (so the sharpie doesn't pop the balloon)



Building a poem out of verbal feedback

## Speak APP digital platform

Speak App is implemented by IRC to allow young refugees to share experiences and provide feedback on the services received from humanitarian organizations. The app uses interactive exercises to engage young people and collect their feedback in a fun and engaging way. The app is available on both Android and iOS platforms, ensuring wide accessibility among youth in refugee communities.



More information about the app can be accessed on this link: <https://www.rescue.org/article/speak-app>

## Monitoring variables and indicators

| Variable                                                                         | Some indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Access to complaint mechanisms by children                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ # of complaints related to children's rights submitted (% increase/decrease)</li> <li>■ (%) of complaints directly submitted by children</li> <li>■ (% increase/decrease)</li> <li>■ Trends in complainants by age, gender, and geographic origin (% increase/decrease)</li> <li>■ Trends in terms of complainants by age, gender, geographic origin</li> <li>■ % complaints involving cases of marginalized children, submitted by them or by someone on their behalf</li> <li>■ (%) children aware of the existence of the mechanism</li> <li>■ Availability of tools for communicating with children about the mechanism</li> <li>■ Existence of partnerships and how they promote accessibility</li> </ul> |
| Effectiveness of the mechanism at handling complaints in a child-friendly manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ # of cases fully investigated during the year</li> <li>■ # of cases dealt with by referral to another body</li> <li>■ # of times the child is informed of progress</li> <li>■ Average and median time required to resolve a complaint</li> <li>■ Existence of protocols for handling complaints involving children</li> <li>■ Existence of a referral system</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Outcomes of the complaint mechanism                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Were child complainants satisfied with the support provided and the process</li> <li>■ Has any policy change occurred following the handling of an individual complaint and subsequent advocacy</li> <li>■ % Of children complainants satisfied with the support provided and the process</li> <li>■ # of changes made due to received feedback and subsequent advocacy</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## Common challenges and proposed solutions

| Challenge                                                                                                             | Proposed Solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Handling many complaints: As mechanisms get better known &amp; trusted.</p> <p>Creating a backlog and stress.</p>  | <p>Communicate the scope of work, limitations, and other remedies available as this helps sustain trust.</p> <p>Develop a referral system with other institutions (standby agreement and MoUs).</p>                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>Accessing children, especially the most marginalized ones, is challenging as they usually have no access.</p>      | <p>Children will often directly submit complaints when they are physically visited, such as in schools, youth centers, institutions, or detention centers.</p> <p>Implement specific initiatives to reach out to the most marginalized children.</p> <p>Publicize the complaint mechanism widely to enable others to support a child in making a complaint.</p> |
| <p>Acting swiftly: Some cases require state administrative and legal procedures.</p>                                  | <p>Interpret existing rules with maximum flexibility and openness.</p> <p>Maintain the child's best interests as the guiding principle for all actions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>Non-compliance with Obligations: Unlike tribunals, recommendations are usually not mandatory for duty bearers.</p> | <p>Enhance mediation, negotiation, and advocacy skills to promote the implementation of recommendations.</p> <p>Develop social accountability communication strategy to enhance shared commitment (e.g. press conferences on urgent cases, press releases, interventions in the media) and advocacy with public bodies (the parliament).</p>                    |



