Interagency Study on

Child-Friendly Feedback

and Complaint Mechanisms within NGO programmes

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Agency contacts and contributors

Educo (Member of the ChildFund Alliance) *www.educo.org*	**Yukiko Yamada** – Policy and Strategy Director
	Laura Cantle – Accountability Specialist
Plan International *www.plan-international.org*	**Fiorella Mackliff** – Accountability and Feedback Specialist
	Luca Sinesi - Programme Director of Plan Brazil
Save the Children, UK *www.savethechildren.org.uk*	**Katie Drew** – Humanitarian Evidence, Effectiveness and Accountability Advisor
	Maria Alvarez Perez – Accountability to Children Advisor
	Richard Cobb – Senior Advisor, Partnership and Accountability
War Child, UK *www.warchild.org.uk*	**Hur Hassnain** – Monitoring Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Advisor
World Vision International *www.wvi.org*	**Anna Wood** – Senior Advisor, Accountability to Children and Communities
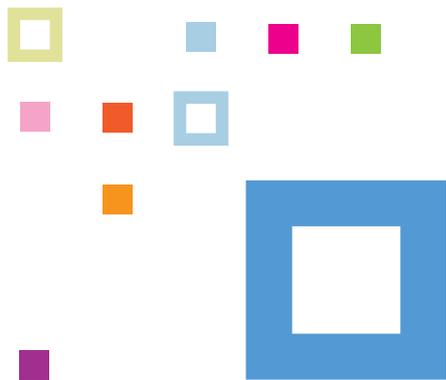
Preface

This report presents findings of a survey designed to document experience and examples of practice in setting up feedback and complaint mechanisms that are accessible to children in the programmes of five international non-governmental organisations: Educo, Plan International, Save the Children UK, War Child UK and World Vision. The survey represents the first phase of a collaborative study between these five child-focussed agencies.

The survey seeks information primarily on the accessibility of the mechanisms to children and youth, but also collects information on general practice and management of the mechanism. The types of mechanisms considered span the feedback and complaint spectrum, from those designed to support children and youth to provide everyday feedback on programming issues to those that allow them to report on more serious issues that concern themselves or their families and for which the agencies have responsibility.

The findings show that the 15 country and regional programmes surveyed have succeeded in establishing feedback and complaint channels that children are able and willing to access. A list of these is included in the report together with information provided by agencies on their experiences of setting up these channels and establishing mechanisms for children. The survey findings also confirm that accessibility is not yet universal and some children remain unable or unwilling to use existing agency feedback and complaint channels. The extent of this inaccessibility is not yet clear.
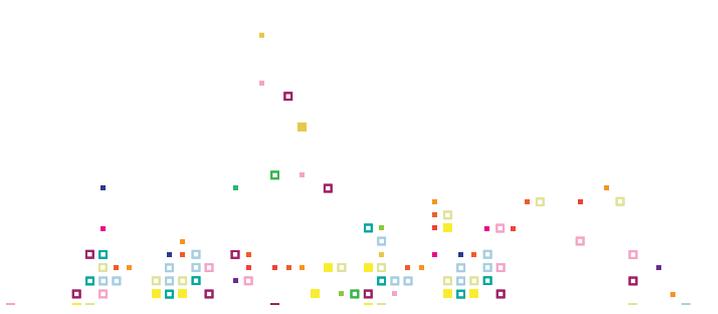
The survey responses highlight some gaps in practice that, if addressed, could help agencies better understand and support accessibility. These include:

☐ Engagement of children in design and establishment of feedback and complaint channels and in monitoring and evaluation of the overall mechanism. The process of engagement will help to increase children's confidence in using the channels and their understanding of the feedback and complaint process. It will help raise children's awareness of their rights and promote trust in the agency. The engagement of children aims to create multiple, contextual appropriate channels that better suit their preferences and needs. This could help address many of the reasons given by agencies for some children being unable or willing to use existing agency channels.

☐ Collection of locally defined, disaggregated data on the use of the feedback and complaint channels. This will help to identify or confirm children's preferences and determine which groups of children are accessing the channels and which are not. This information can be used to design feedback and complaint mechanism that are better targeted to the needs of specific groups of children by age, gender, ability and vulnerability. This can be conducted in parallel to actions in the previous point.

☐ Systematic evaluation of the feedback and complaint mechanism is also required to ensure that it continually reflects and responds to the preferences and needs of children. It can demonstrate that the feedback loop is being closed and that children's views are incorporated into improved programming.

☐ Collection of socio-economic data and application of context mapping can help to more accurately identify the factors that influence children's access in certain contexts. This contextual analysis should specifically cover rural, urban, development and humanitarian programming.

The next phase of this study will further explore some of the findings and recommendations from phase one. During the second phase participating agencies will engage with children within programmes at field level and apply an action learning approach to:

☐ Identify the feedback and complaint preferences and needs of all children.
☐ Determine whether agency channels and mechanisms currently in use match these preferences and needs and identify where the differences lie.
☐ Support establishment of contextually appropriate channels that are accessible to all children.
☐ Document the impact of feedback and complaints from children on programme quality and how it is different from adult-exclusive feedback impact.

Each agency will tailor the second phase to suit its individual programme requirements and contexts.

The findings from the second phase of the study and the final conclusions and recommendations will be developed into a report due in the spring of 2016. This will be accompanied by a guidance document based on the study findings.
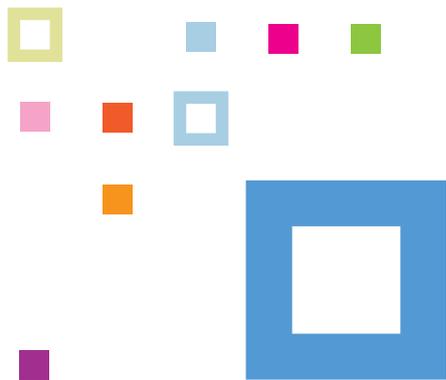
Introduction

This report is the first output of a collaborative study exploring the accessibility of feedback and complaint mechanisms targeted at children within the programmes of five child-focussed international non-governmental organisations (INGOs): Educo (a member of the ChildFund Alliance), Plan International, Save the Children UK, War Child UK and World Vision.

Defining accountability

Accountability takes many forms at many levels. Because of this, there is a great variety of definitions. One definition is that accountability is the means through which power is used responsibly (HAP 2010). Accountability is therefore a process of taking into account the views of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, primarily the people affected by authority or power. Accountability contributes to ensuring that all partners in a programme honour their commitments. It can help to identify what works and what needs to be improved. This in turn helps ensure that programme activities translate into tangible results and better long-term outcomes.

Accountability to children and communities[1] has been an area of strategic focus for many organisations in the INGO sector in the last decade. The recent collaborative development and piloting of the Core Humanitarian Standard[2] confirms ongoing INGO commitment to accountability. The agencies collaborating in this study continue to allocate resources to take accountability work forward in their organisations.[3]

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1   Also termed '*Accountability to Affected Populations*' (The IASC Principals' Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP), 2011); '*Accountability to beneficiaries*' (Our commitments to: accountability to beneficiaries and the communities where we work, International Division, British Red Cross, July 2013*); 'Accountability to people affected by crises'* (The Core Humanitarian Standard) *http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/Core%20Humanitarian%20Standard%20-%20English.pdf*.

2   *http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard* (accessed 8 June 2015); also see *http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/news/first-responses-from-field-testing-the-chs-war-child-uk*.

3   For instance, Save the Children's 2013 Programme Accountability Guidance Pack, available at: *http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/programme-accountability-guidance-pack*;   Christian Aid, Save the Children, Humanitarian Accountability Partnership joint report 2013, *Improving Impact: Do Accountability Mechanisms Deliver Results*, available at: *http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/Improving_Impact.pdf*.
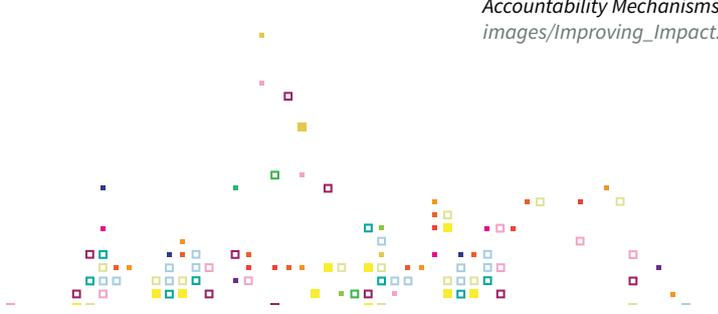
Feedback and complaint mechanisms

As part of the body of work under accountability, seeking, handling and utilising feedback and complaints from community members has received particular attention. Reasons for establishing a feedback and complaint mechanism are numerous, including that it supports accountability, helps increase transparency, builds trust, promotes empowerment of affected communities, collects beneficiary views and opinions to feed into monitoring, evaluation and programme improvement, and provides agencies with an early warning of impending problems (Bonino and Warner 2014). The feedback trend is currently at a peak in the sector with donors demanding that agencies demonstrate they have mechanisms in place to receive and respond to community feedback and complaints, that these mechanisms are effective and that the results have an impact on programme quality and improved community engagement.[4]

The main steps in a generic feedback and complaint mechanism can be described as follows (also shown in Figure 1):

a. A person decides that they wish to provide feedback or make a complaint to the agency.

b. They then choose by which channel to do this. These access points or channels (shaded box, Figure 1) can take various forms depending on a range of factors, such as the needs of the community and agency preference and programme context. Common channels within NGO programmes include suggestions boxes, help desks, face-to-face meetings and collecting feedback through focus group discussions and surveys (Wood 2011). Several different channels can be available and operating simultaneously within one programme.

c. The feedback or complaints received are then processed by the agency and either referred or responded to directly.

d. Best practice in feedback and complaint handling specifies that the feedback loop is closed – response is communicated to the complainant, and that feedback and complaints are applied to improve programming and practice.

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4   Recent examples from 2015 support this observation, for instance the Nepal Earthquake Interagency Common Feedback Project, *http://reliefweb.int/report/nepal/inter-agency-common-feedback-project-nepal-earthquake-2015* or the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee, *https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-ukaid-transparency-guarantee*.
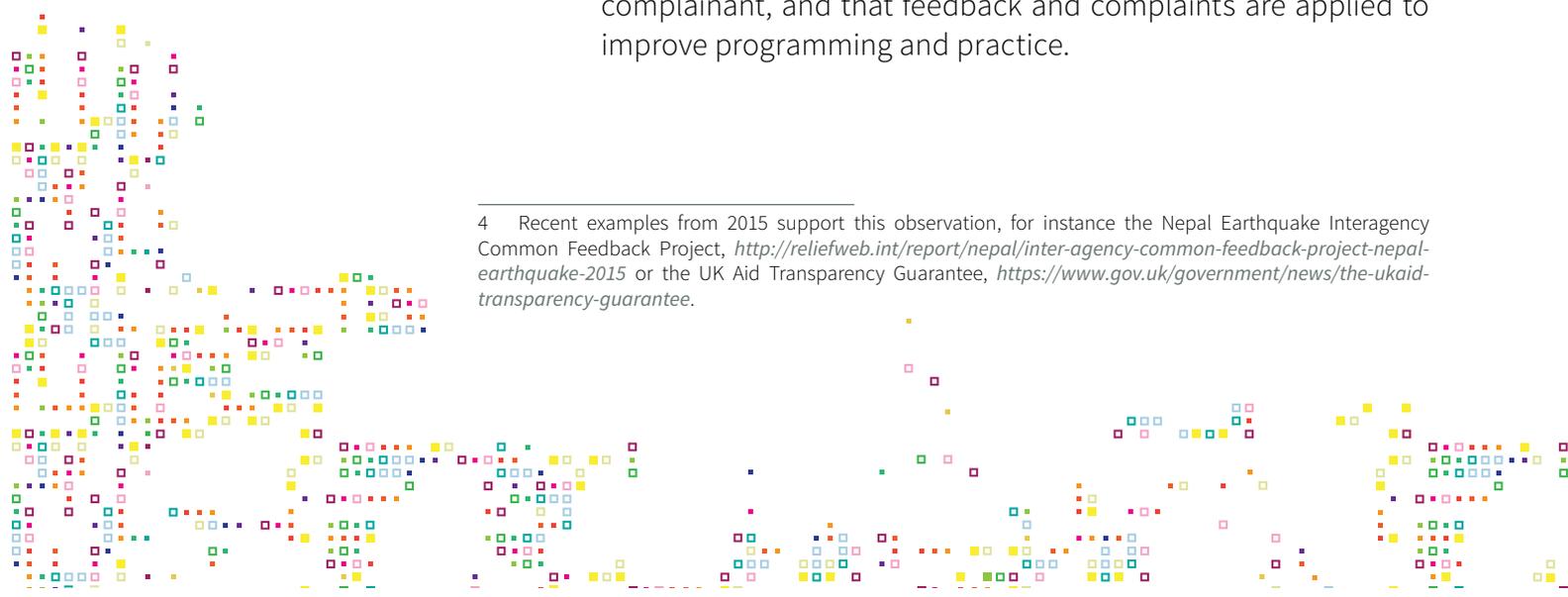
Figure 1. Generic feedback and complaint flow diagram
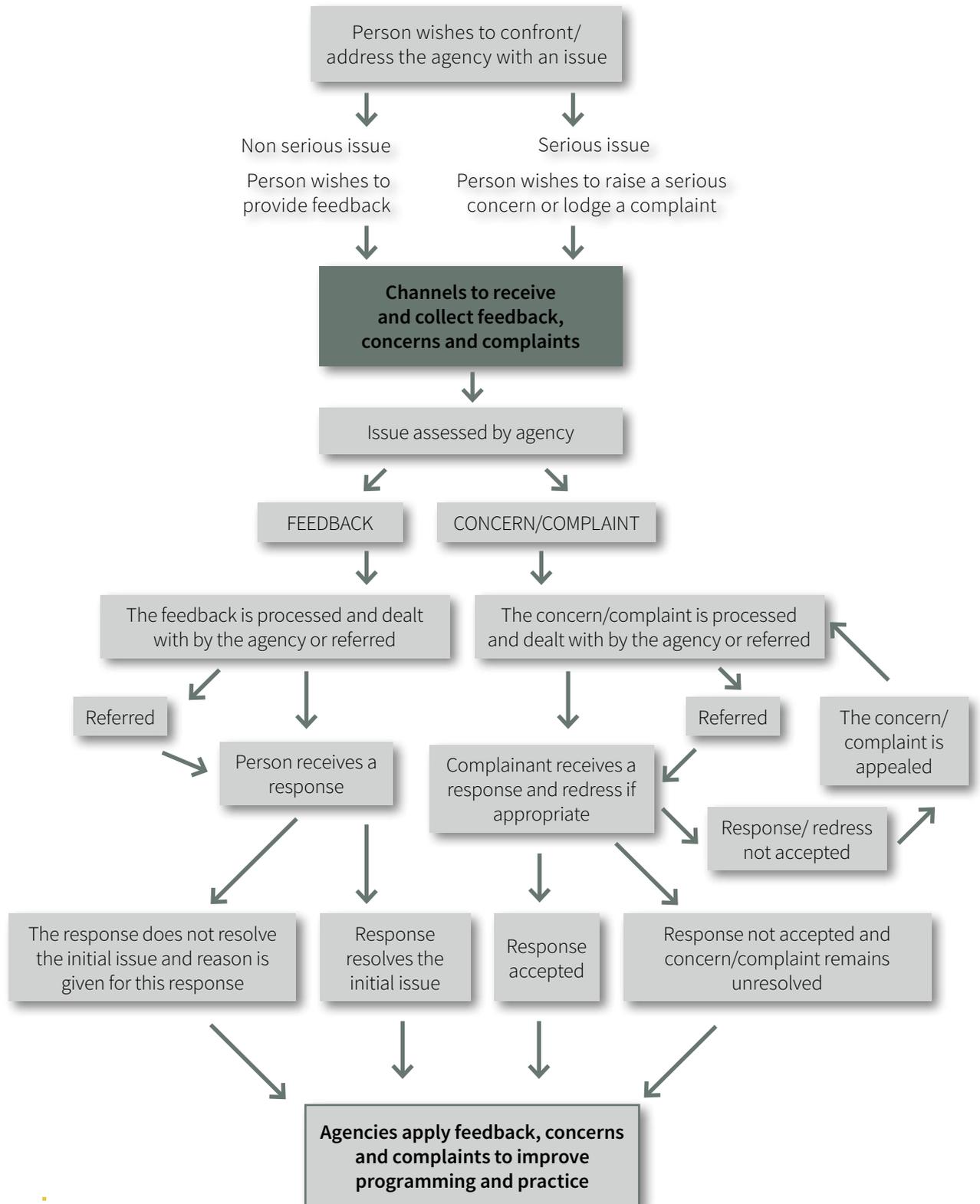
Person wishes to confront/ address the agency with an issue

Non serious issue

Person wishes to provide feedback

Serious issue

Person wishes to raise a serious concern or lodge a complaint

Channels to receive and collect feedback, concerns and complaints

Issue assessed by agency

FEEDBACK

CONCERN/COMPLAINT

The feedback is processed and dealt with by the agency or referred

The concern/complaint is processed and dealt with by the agency or referred

Referred

Person receives a response

Referred

The concern/ complaint is appealed

Complainant receives a response and redress if appropriate

Response/ redress not accepted

The response does not resolve the initial issue and reason is given for this response

Response resolves the initial issue

Response accepted

Response not accepted and concern/complaint remains unresolved

Agencies apply feedback, concerns and complaints to improve programming and practice

Many agencies now have experience of setting up formal and informal mechanisms and have accumulated numerous examples of practice and learning (e.g. Danish Refugee Council 2008, Baňos Smith 2009, Bonino and Warner 2014). Specific studies relating to the quality and effectiveness of feedback mechanisms are also beginning to detail the multiple factors that contribute to effectiveness (e.g. Bonino et al. 2014, CDA 2011). These include: expectation setting and knowledge relating to providing feedback; the accessibility, perceived safety and trustworthiness of the mechanism; verification and analysis of feedback information; acknowledgment, response and use of the feedback provided; and the culture and context in which the mechanism is placed.

Mechanisms for children

In addition to establishing community feedback and complaint mechanisms for community use generally, some agencies have also gained experience of setting up feedback and complaint mechanisms specifically targeted to children (e.g. Save the Children 2001, War Child 2014). However, despite the growth of studies and literature on feedback and complaint mechanisms, there remains little consolidated information and systematic review of good practice relating to mechanisms for children. Information that does exist is fragmented between different programme disciplines within an agency and over different areas of accountability, including child protection, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), child participation, and between relief and development contexts.

When children are given the space to voice their opinion, it increases their self-confidence, thus enabling them to speak up to appropriate and trusted people when facing violence.

Literature Review: Child
Protection Referral &
Response Mechanism for
and with Most Vulnerable
Children (World Vision MEER
2014)

Despite Albania's advanced legal system, out of 162 child protection cases annually, only 1 per cent are reported by children. An assessment conducted by World Vision on children's views of the National Child Protection systems (World Vision UK 2014) reports that, according to children, they feel that they are viewed as passive recipients or beneficiaries.

Recommendations from numerous reports from within the NGO sector (e.g. Willow 2010, World Vision 2014, Horst 2013, O'Kane 2013) as well as from the child protection and health sectors (e.g. Office of the Children's Commissioner UK, 2013) clearly articulate the benefit of having mechanisms in place that allow the voices of children to be heard and for supporting children's involvement in programme decision-making by providing feedback. However, it is also known from reviews of agency child participation and protection literature that some weaknesses in effective child-focussed feedback, complaint and response mechanisms exist (O'Kane 2013, World Vision 2014 (2)). One significant gap is that children often do not feel comfortable accessing the existing agency-established (or national) mechanisms. The existence of this gap is also supported by anecdotal evidence from some agency staff who believe that agencies are receiving only a small fraction of the feedback and complaints they would expect from children, in particular from the harder to reach and more vulnerable children within programme communities.

As accessibility is a fundamental requirement of an effective feedback and complaint mechanism, it is essential that agencies are able to confirm the extent to which their mechanisms are accessible to children and identify and apply features that support this access. Because most agencies do not routinely collect disaggregated feedback and complaint data, it is currently difficult to ascertain the extent to which children are using feedback and complaint mechanisms. Literature and consolidated information on this particular aspect of feedback and complaint mechanisms are also relatively scarce (Bonino and Warner 2014). There is therefore an information gap within the sector. This study aims to seek information to help address this.
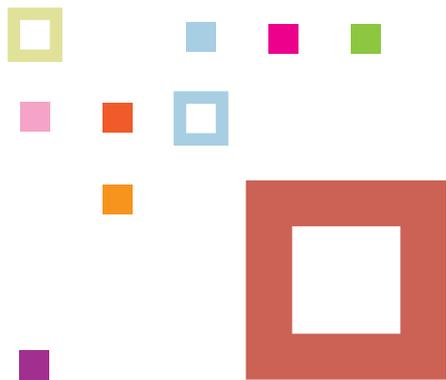
The study

This study is split into two phases.

Phase One: For agencies to move forward in establishing feedback and complaint mechanisms that are accessible to children, it is important that they first take stock of their existing knowledge and experience to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the mechanisms and more specifically the access points or channels they have established to date. This is partly achieved in the first phase of the study through applying an exploratory survey to document experience and examples of practice from five child-focussed agencies. The study sought two types of information during this phase. The first related to the types of channels that are in place, who is using them and for what types of issues. Secondly, in order to put this into context, the study also sought information on factors relating to the agency and the programme context. This covers the capacity and culture of the agency in relation to receiving, handling and utilising feedback and complaints from children, as well as local culture and programme context.

The channels that are of interest to this study span the feedback and complaint spectrum, ranging from those designed to support children and youth to provide general, everyday feedback on programming issues to those specifically set up to allow them to report on more serious issues that concern themselves or their families and for which the agencies have responsibility. These issues might include agency corruption or sexual exploitation and abuse.

Phase Two: The second phase of this study will further consolidate and build on the findings from phase one. It will apply an action learning approach, engaging with children and agency staff within programmes at field level. The aim is to confirm whether agency channels and mechanisms currently in use match the needs of children, then to identify where the differences lie and support establishment of contextually appropriate channels that are more accessible to children. The findings from the second phase of the study and the final conclusions and recommendations will be developed into a report due in the spring of 2016. This will be accompanied by a guidance document based on the study findings.

Survey methodology

The first phase of this study involved conducting a literature review supported by information on current practice relating to feedback and complaint mechanisms for children gathered from surveys and interviews with relevant agency staff.

The survey questions (Annex 1) are summarised in Box 1. Questions were designed to explore agency practice and experience, to highlight strengths and weakness and to try and identify specific areas of interest that could be pursued in more depth during the second phase of the study. The surveys were conducted in a sample of programmes taking place through Educo, Plan International, Save the Children UK, War Child UK and World Vision. Agencies were free to choose which countries and programmes they wanted to include but with the aim of covering a range of contexts between the agencies. This included humanitarian contexts. It is accepted that this selection process could have led to a bias towards agencies choosing a sample of programmes that were more likely to have positive experiences to share. Surveys took place through Skype calls or written submissions. The responses were then transferred into an Excel table for basic analysis and review.

Box 1. Sample of survey questions

☐ What mechanisms are in place?
☐ What features of a feedback mechanism makes it child friendly?
☐ What is the agency's experience of engaging different groups of children, taking into consideration specific vulnerabilities?
☐ What is the agency's experience in establishing and managing mechanisms for children? Have they proved effective in soliciting and handling feedback from children? What are the lessons learned?
☐ How has feedback from children informed programming design, adaptation, correction and improvement?
☐ Have agencies managed to solicit concerns about safeguarding issues?

Fifteen surveys took place between October 2014 and March 2015 covering the country and regional contexts as shown in Table 1. Save the Children UK and World Vision began the survey process in October 2014 with Educo, Plan International and War Child UK joining the collaboration from January 2015. As the same survey was used by each agency, the responses can be used to highlight commonalities between agency experience and practice including common challenges. The survey results are summarised in the findings section of this report, with quotes and examples from the surveys used to highlight points of interest.

Table 1. Countries and regions covered in the survey responses

Agency	Countries or regions providing survey responses
Educo	Mali, Philippines, El Salvador
Plan International	Brazil[*]
Save the Children, UK	Sierra Leone, Somalia, Egypt, Nepal, Philippines
War Child, UK	Afghanistan, Jordan, DRC
World Vision	South East Asia Region (Philippines included), Middle East and Eastern Europe Region, Lebanon (Syria response)

* Plan is in the process of establishing its Accountability and Feedback System in a more systematic way across the organisation.
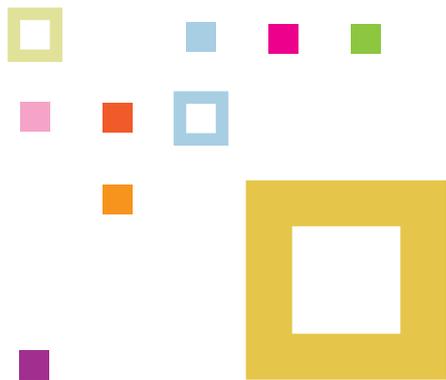
Overview and analysis of survey findings

Children aged 6 to 10 prefer to use participative and funny feedback mechanisms.

Survey response from Plan Brazil

This section provides an overview of agency practice and experience based on the responses to the surveys. Information on the programme or context is provided where possible. Interpretation of the findings and discussion will be covered in the discussion section of the report. Quotes taken directly from the surveys are included within the text to highlight specific points of interest.

The findings are in two parts. The first looks at information provided by agencies on the mechanisms and who uses them, and the second on agency management of the feedback and complaint mechanism.

The types of mechanisms and who uses them

Types of feedback and complaint channels

Survey responses reveal a variety of feedback and complaint channels targeted at children within agency programmes. These are listed in Annex 2.

The agencies involved in this study are also aware of examples which have not been illustrated through the survey responses. This is mainly because the surveys were completed by individual staff or concerned individual programmes and therefore represent a snap shot of current practice across a few programmes.

Age and gender

Limited information is available on the degree to which a child's age and gender determines their preference for using a particular feedback and complaint channel, or whether there might be commonalities between children regardless of context. Questions on age and gender were included in the survey to help explore this aspect.
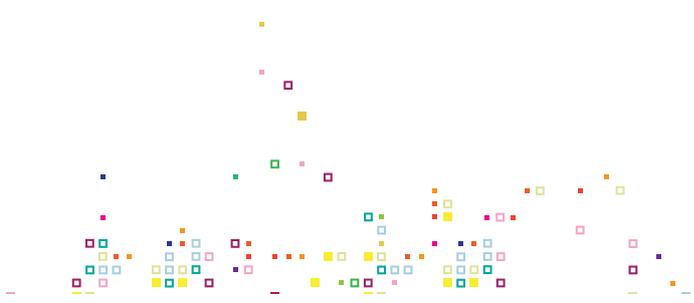
Generally, the surveys reveal that although feedback and complaints are sometimes being logged and tracked according to sector and type of mechanism, they are not yet being routinely disaggregated by gender or the age of the complainant.

Interviews with staff, together with the survey responses, show that children may have preferences for certain types of feedback and complaint channels. However, the extent to which the programme or context influences this preference is not yet clear. One observation is that from a certain age boys and girls become shy about speaking in front of each other during focus group discussions. Responses from Save the Children Philippines indicated that while most younger children (10 years to 12 years) are very open to sharing feedback and being participative and vocal, older children (15 years to 17 years) are more reluctant generally to share their opinions except with their closest friends and peers. Educo Philippines notes that younger children (6–9 years old) are relatively unwilling or unable to give their feedback compared to older children, but it is not clear if this is because of the method used or other cultural factors.

War Child UK's programme in Jordan shows that suggestion boxes are generally preferred by children aged 11 to 16 years, with around 60 per cent of the feedback coming from girls. Older boys (14 to 16) are generally less engaged than other children in the programme and provide less feedback than younger children and girls.
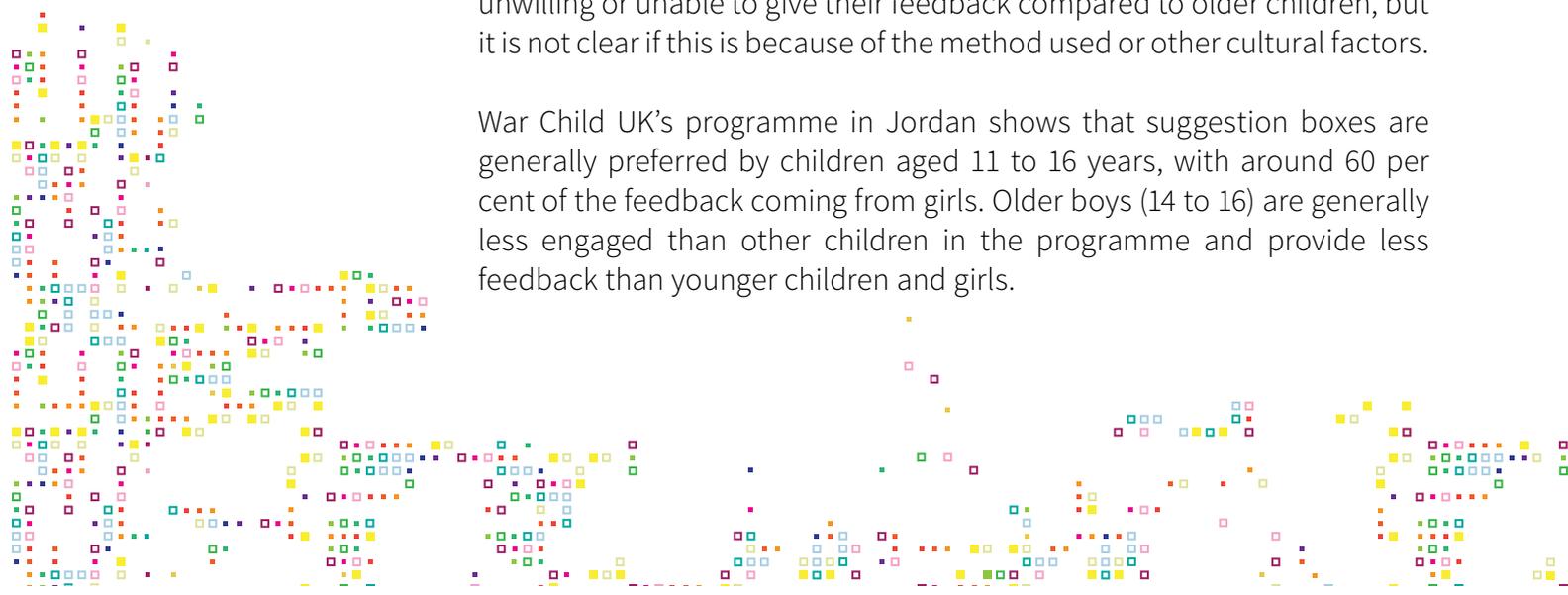
Feedback received from Save the Children Somalia's communities indicates that out of the channels available, older children prefer using the hotline while younger children prefer using suggestion boxes and face-to-face meetings. In Save the Children's Nepal programme, younger children like to draw pictures to express themselves and older children attending school like to give their input in writing. War Child UK in Afghanistan found that structured questionnaires can be used for older children while focus group discussions were more suitable for the younger children.

Responses highlight that the type of feedback received from children depends to some extent on their involvement in the programme, with feedback being related to current or future programme activities. For example requests for play materials, with specific requirements for boys and girls (e.g. skipping ropes for girls, balls for boys in a Save the Children Somalia project). Adolescent children in Nepal shared concerns about their community including health hazards associated with lack of toilets, and safe drinking water. Girls also raised privacy and security concerns around the lack of locks on toilets (Save the Children Nepal).

Older children are also aware that their feedback can have repercussions on those around them, especially parents, and are often reluctant to discuss family issues. However, in some cases, agencies have used information provided by children to address challenges that their parents face, one example being of shop keepers withholding parents' identity cards in a voucher programme (World Vision MEER).

Some survey responses discuss the use of community committees made up of representatives of community groups, including adults and children. This has been supported by awareness-raising for adults to respect and accept children's participation in programme decision making, accompanied by awareness-raising for children on their right to participate. Other survey responses noted that children prefer not to speak in mixed age groups, and are particularly uncomfortable sharing their feelings in front of adults or authority figures.

Literacy and language

Many agencies noted literacy as an important factor determining the way in which children prefer to give feedback. Children with low functional literacy or who are not familiar with the language being used are reluctant to contribute within focus group discussions (Educo Philippines) and are

given alternative options for how they would like to participate, e.g. games, drawing, or translating the language to their own. Separate focus groups for children attending schools and those not attending schools should also be considered. In some communities, staff are adapting the way they collect evaluation data to support children with low levels of literacy (Plan Brazil). In contexts with multiple languages, agencies support children by verbally translating evaluation questions, for example, into vernacular (Save the Children Philippines).

One agency mentioned that children are confused by too many reporting mechanisms and do not understand the agency's policies and standards because they are not normally presented in a way that is accessible to them.

Disability

The survey responses revealed little about how agencies proactively support children with disabilities to provide feedback and complaints. War Child UK in Jordan noted that positioning a suggestion box needs to consider the needs of wheelchair users.

Culture

The cultural aspects of feedback and complaint mechanisms came up in several survey responses. These include the challenges children face when talking in front of adults or wanting to challenge authority. Issues around abuse and child protection are also seen as highly sensitive topics in many countries and this dissuades children or families from reporting.

Other factors

Unwillingness of children to speak their minds due to shyness or feelings that their concerns will not be believed were common agency survey findings. One survey also mentioned that low sociologic status might be a contributing factor (Educo Mali). The survey response from Save the Children Sierra Leone described conducting an assessment on the willingness of children to report their concerns to the agency. They found that out of 109 children included in the assessment, 70 said that they would report something that made them unhappy to Save the Children, but 39 said they would not report. Part of the reason for non-reporting was that children felt there was a gap between themselves and Save the Children because
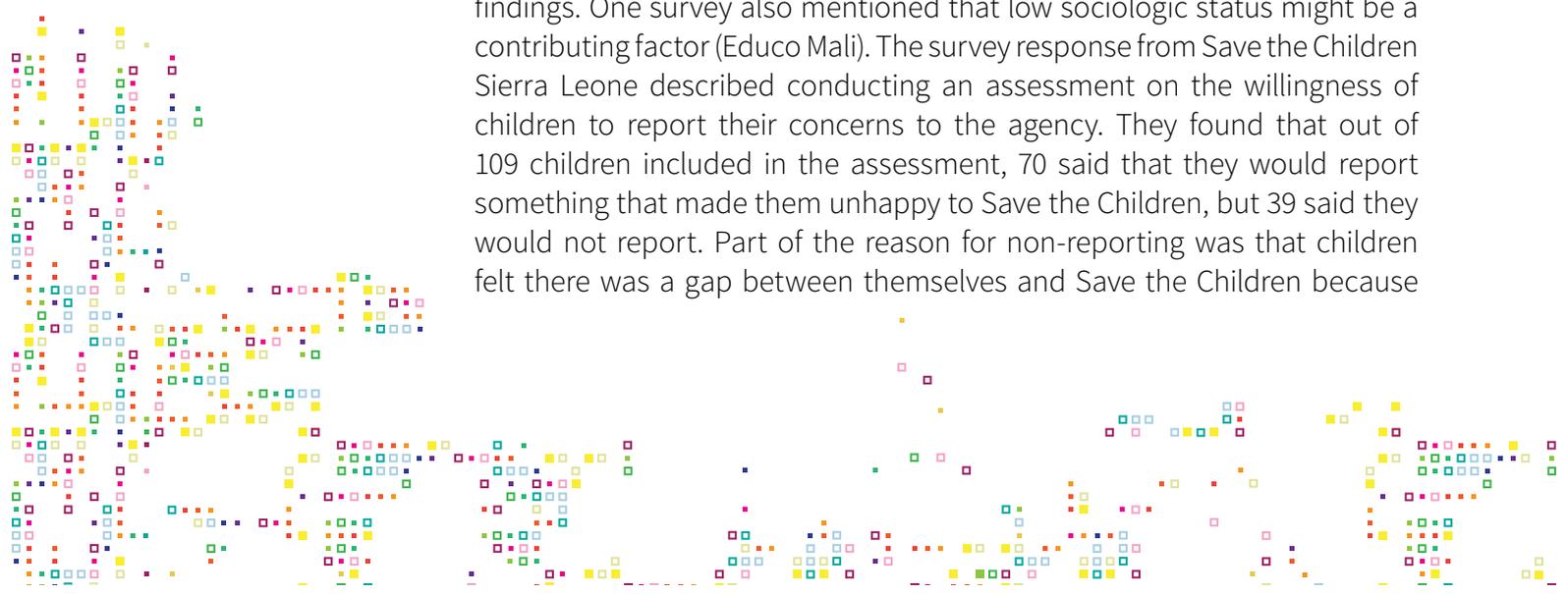
the agency works through local child welfare committee members and not directly with children. Another reason given for non-reporting was due to lack of awareness on how to access the system: in this case not knowing the telephone number or the location of the Save the Children office.

Save the Children Egypt also noted that children are unwilling to give feedback when it is being taken by the same people who are responsible for the activity.

Several agencies have school-based programmes and suggestions boxes are placed in schools – as Save the Children Somalia noted: 'A lot of work is school-based and the entry point is through schools. One effect though is that children who are not in school do not have equal access to existing accountability systems. This was established through their assessment and we are trying to address it through the child protection programming using peer leaders who have been selected by other children.' In one case (World Vision Lebanon), staff are proactively seeking feedback while engaging with children through outreach activities. The surveys also note that children are unlikely to come forward on safeguarding issues (such as breaches of codes of conduct) unless they have first received awareness-raising and sensitisation.

What are we hearing from children?

Currently, information is lacking on what types of issues children raise via existing agency feedback and complaint channels and on whether children might prefer to use a certain type of channel for a certain type of feedback or complaint. A question on the types of issues children raise through current channels was therefore included in the surveys.

The surveys picked up a variety of issues that children share with agencies via existing channels. In some cases these issues are directly related to the programmes that children are involved in, or on which agencies have requested specific feedback. Post-activity surveys (conducted verbally, using smileys or mood boards) have been used to pick up children's feelings and feedback around an activity. For a child-friendly spaces project for example, children gave feedback on the cleanliness of the activity space, about the content of the activity (usually they want more playful dynamics, dance and games), and the timing (if the activity has started late). In general, as suggestions, children request more fun and playful activities and an environment in which they are comfortable and feel secure.

Where data is available, one agency noted that it has identified several categories of feedback from children. These include:

1. Requests for information and for support through programming, e.g. children making requests for specific play materials and seeking support to address the lack of school facilities or feeling unsafe due to lack of streetlights. One agency notes that at least 90 per cent of issues raised by children have been of this type.

2. Minor and major dissatisfactions on issues relating to the agencies' activities in the children's communities, such as how time consuming they are. For instance, during the 'Artwork Collection' activity children were asked to do two or three crafts activities (painting, drawing) and some of the children objected to this due to the workload it represented for them (Educo El Salvador).

3. Behaviour and conduct of staff and partners which breaches the agency's Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy: for example, when partners or teachers did not pass on materials such as school books meant for children. Complaints about verbal abuse and shaming from teachers and parents have also been raised.

Accessibility and agency management of mechanisms

Sharing information about the mechanism

Questions on information sharing were included in the survey to try and understand which channels agencies are using to communicate with children.

The importance of communicating with children is emphasised in some survey responses, for instance:

'We let them understand and see the feedback mechanism as an opportunity to empower them and enhance their participation in our work and the decisions we take.' (Save the Children Sierra Leone)

'The facilitators from day one were talking with children about the complaint box and raising the culture of how important it is for the children to say what they feel or want.' (Save the Children Egypt)

We need to include Most Vulnerable Children (MVC) more in the design, monitoring and evaluation of our projects and use more innovative and participatory tools to assist with this. We should encourage and support MVC's involvement in our programmes – interventions that their creativity, insights and experiences should be guiding. The contribution of MVC will help ensure our programming runs more effectively and responds to their needs.

Every child included and protected (World Vision 2014)

'Need to work with children – they will tell you what they want.' (World Vision Middle East and Eastern Europe)

Survey responses indicate that children are unlikely to come forward on safeguarding issues (such as breaches of codes of conduct) unless they have first received awareness raising and sensitisation, for instance:

'We have not been able to get feedback on safeguarding issues – probably because it was not clearly included in our information sharing. We are now including it.' (Save the Children Somalia)

One challenge noted by agencies is the limited accessibility of relevant agency guidelines and codes of conduct for community members and particularly children. Some agencies have therefore produced child-friendly versions of agency documents.[5] Survey responses did not indicate how agencies then use this material and its effectiveness in raising awareness in children.

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5   World Vision Guidelines for Child Participation **–** Child Friendly Version.

One response also describes that children were involved in the design of communication material: *'Children are oriented and made aware of their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of their participation. After the collection of information to develop the child-friendly program information leaflet, before printing it is shared with the Child's Advisory Committee and get their final feedbacks. Children's advice was sought on the language and design layout of the leaflet.'* (Save the Children Nepal)

Agencies also listed what they considered to be the information sharing methods preferred by children. However, there is no information available on the efficacy of these methods or to what extent they are used to raise awareness of feedback and complaint channels. The following examples were provided:

☐ Community meetings, use of the village and town crier and radio – which is particularly preferred by children, through consultation groups including local authorities, youth leaders and influential people (Sierra Leone);
☐ Face-to-face meetings (Mali);
☐ Workshops, focus groups, audio-visuals and sign boards (El Salvador);
☐ Interactive and child-friendly meetings and focus group discussions, plus colourful leaflets and comics (Philippines);
☐ Illustrations (Somalia);
☐ Providing information to children via parents (Egypt);
☐ Leaflets for school going children, and painting and drawing for illiterate or younger children, plus community meetings generally for those with low literacy (Nepal);
☐ Songs, paintwork and puppets (Lebanon);
☐ Focus groups with child-friendly language (Brazil);
☐ An awareness festival (Jordan);
☐ Billboards, mass media and films (Afghanistan);
☐ One-to-one and group sessions, through visits by social assistants, outreach officers and design, monitoring and evaluation (DM&E) officers (DRC).
☐ Communication staff working on information sharing with children (World Vision, South East Asia).
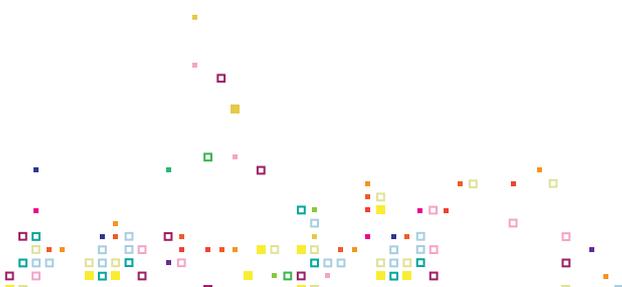
Consultation with and participation of children around the design of mechanisms and channels

The range of child participation in mechanism design and setup *(comments from staff surveys and interviews)*					
'Children were not consulted.'	'No, children were not consulted on how they would like to share feedback.'	'In the design of the approach we include child participation – we talk to youth clubs that already exist.'	'Typically we use facilitated focus group discussions with adults and children for our accountability consultations, exploring what they understand about our work, what their information needs are and how they would prefer to give feedback or make complaints to us.'	'Consultation with the communities including children and adults forms the initial part of the process. This process provides the opportunity to seek the consent of the community people to set up a CFRM (child-friendly feedback and response mechanism) and to discuss and agree on the preferred methods they want to use to provide their feedback.'	'We conducted an assessment and identified these mechanisms as preferred by the community. Earlier this year, children conducted their own assessment (developed questions, interviewed children, analysed their findings and came up with recommendations) and brought back feedback on the mechanism that we should use. Some of these we were already using while others were new ideas.'

LOW CONSULTATION   **HIGH CONSULTATION**

Some survey responses described holding consultations with children to identify the feedback and complaint channels they were most comfortable using. In focus group discussions with children held by War Child UK in Afghanistan, responses revealed that while most children were comfortable sharing their thoughts and suggestions with other children in a group setting, some preferred one-to-one discussions. Responses from Save the Children UK in Sierra Leone and Somalia describe the process of consulting with community members, including children, prior to establishing a feedback and complaint mechanism. In Sierra Leone, this process gave the agency an opportunity to seek the consent of the community to set up the mechanism and to discuss and agree on the preferred methods they wanted to use to provide their feedback. The outcome of the consultations informed the design of the child-friendly mechanism (CFM). In Somalia, Save the Children also supported children to conduct their own assessment (children developed questions, interviewed other children, analysed their findings and came up with
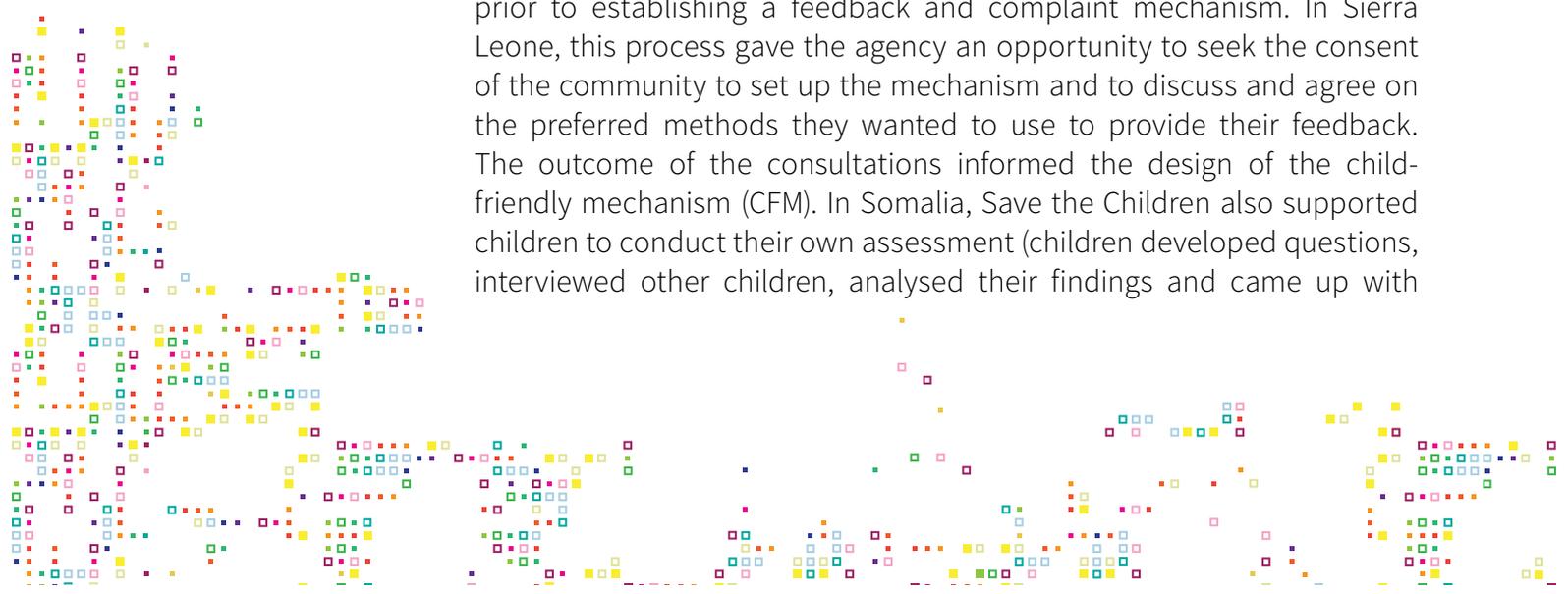
recommendations) to identify the feedback mechanism that should be implemented. Some of these were already in use by the agency while others were new ideas.

Consultation with children on the design of the mechanisms is, however, not yet common practice:

'Children were not consulted on how they would like to share feedback. At best they were oriented prior to the activity by their teachers, community worker, or any adult working on the activity.' (Educo Philippines)

In many cases, opinions of children are sought once the mechanisms are piloted:

'We set up the first version of the feedback mechanisms and we started a pilot stage, which involved a consultation with groups of project participants about the mechanisms.' (Plan, Brazil)

'After the testing stage, some mechanisms were set up and others were rejected by children.' (War Child UK in the DRC)

Once a mechanism is in place, agencies have many examples of how they have adapted it to appeal more to children: for example, allowing children to decorate the suggestion box and the use of smileys for evaluation of activities. Whether such adaptations actually resulted in increased access or encouraged more children to provide feedback was not noted in the survey responses.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Survey responses show that all agencies receiving feedback and complaints from children have systems in place to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. This is part of agency child safeguarding and child protection protocols, primarily achieved by limiting the people who have access to sensitive information and training staff on the protocols for handling this information. In some cases, feedback is collected by one team (monitoring team, for example) and passed on without sharing the identity of the child or their location to programme staff who will then respond. Where feedback is collected using suggestion boxes, in order to maintain a level of independence, responsibility for opening the boxes is given to staff who do not engage directly in programme activities or directly with children.
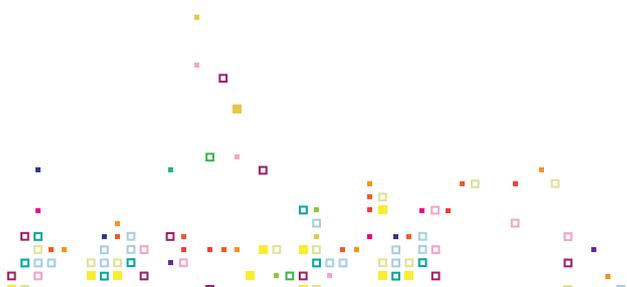
One channel mentioned by several agencies as being accessible for children is focus group discussions. However, agencies also note that not all children are comfortable disclosing their concerns and opinions openly in a group. In these cases, children are followed up on an individual basis.

One way for children to secure confidentiality themselves is to provide anonymous feedback, but supporting an individual to resolve their complaints while maintaining their anonymity presents some challenges, as noted by Save the Children Somalia: 'We are not always able to feed back to children who reach us by using the suggestion box because often, as is expected, they don't indicate their names. We are encouraging them to write their names so that we are able to feed back but the feedback is handled with strict confidentiality such that only the MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning) team knows the source of information. We have just started doing this – we don't know yet whether it will be effective.'
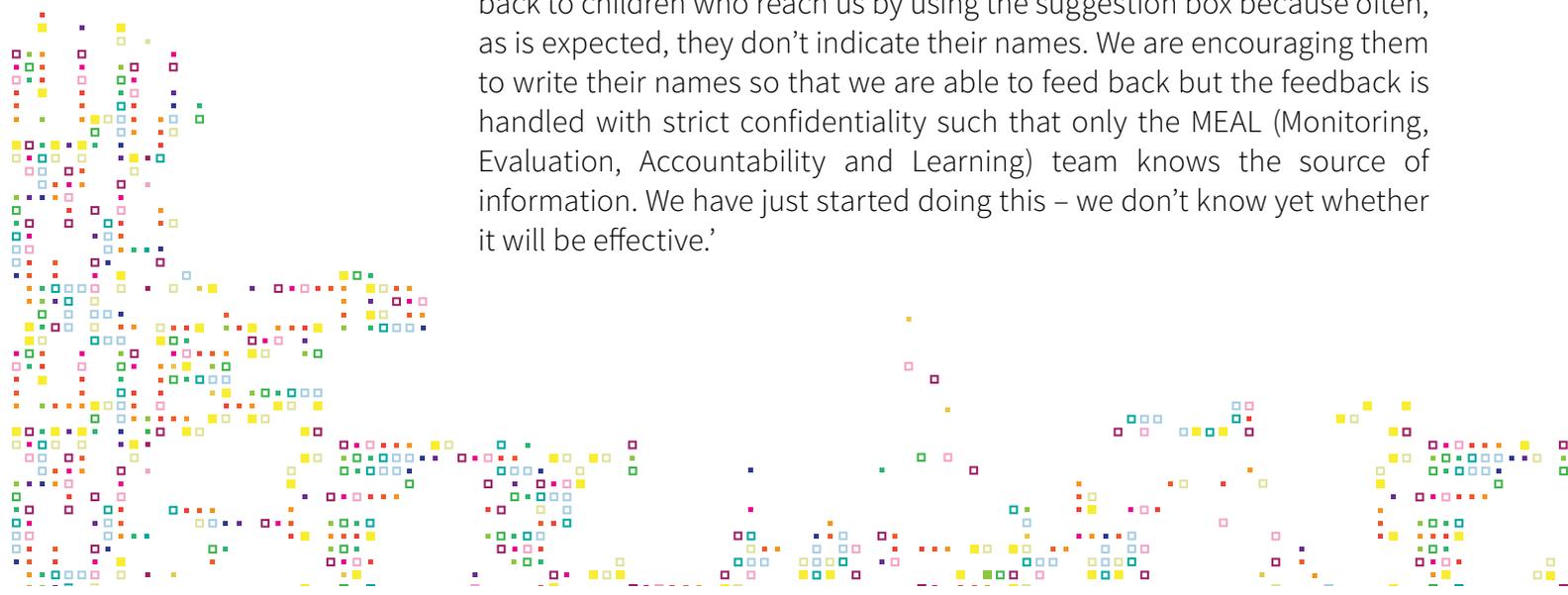
Other agencies collect feedback on an activity by activity basis by requesting that children write their feedback anonymously (just their age and location) on a piece of paper after every session.

Recording feedback

Most survey responses described ways in which agencies collect and store feedback and complaints. This usually involves using a logbook, spreadsheet or database to record the type of feedback, the date received, response and status. Information from this is then used for reporting purposes. Child safeguarding or child protection incidents are recorded in a similar manner via a case log. It was noted that such information can then be centralised to aid follow up and reporting.

Acknowledging feedback from children

The survey responses highlighted the importance of acknowledging feedback from children. This can be via follow up meetings with individuals or reporting back to a group, or the community generally. Examples of how this has been done include:

- ☐ Through production of an activity report in the form of a magazine which includes how feedback has influenced projects (Educo Philippines).
- ☐ Holding group feedback sessions to share the feedback they received and explain how it was used. Where complaints were sensitive, then the response was shared with a limited number of people such as parents or other caregivers.

Plan Brazil makes it a compulsory requirement that all quarterly project reports must describe which actions responding to participant feedback or complaints have been carried out or are planned. Agencies also noted that they sometimes have limited capacity to respond in a timely manner to the range of feedback or complaints they receive.

Assigning responsibility

The surveys did not ask specific questions on the positioning of staff who have responsibility to deal with feedback and complaints. MEAL/DM&E
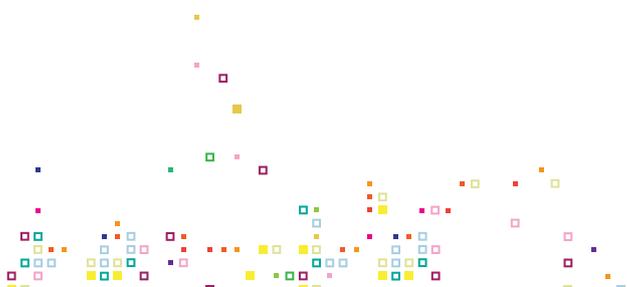
staff were most often mentioned in responses as being involved in or responsible for agency feedback and complaints at field level. Other staff roles included social assistants, councillors and outreach officers involved in face-to-face contact with children. In one agency, DM&E staff were commonly assigned responsibility for collecting feedback and monitoring the mechanism, but then referred cases to programme staff to address. On the other hand, in some cases: 'The child feedback mechanism has not yet been set up officially and described in the roles and responsibilities of staff.'

Staff capacity

Survey responses listed the type of staff capacity required to support feedback and complaints from children. These included knowledge of:

- ☐ Accountability;
- ☐ Feedback and complaint mechanism design and function;
- ☐ Agencies' policies in dealing with feedback and complaints, especially sensitive complaints;
- ☐ Agency Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and Staff Codes of Conduct;
- ☐ PSEA and Child Rights and Child rights-based approaches.

Specific skills and experience required were also mentioned, including:

- ☐ Implementation of a feedback mechanism;
- ☐ Communication skills;
- ☐ Facilitation and consultation skills with children across different age groups;
- ☐ Encouraging effective and ethical children's participation, facilitating children's focus group discussions;
- ☐ How to involve children in monitoring and evaluating the activities;
- ☐ Listening and recording skills, decision making skills, community mobilisation;
- ☐ Ability to create a child-friendly, respectful and safe environment to work with children;
- ☐ Patience to hear children and sensitivity while working with children with different backgrounds.
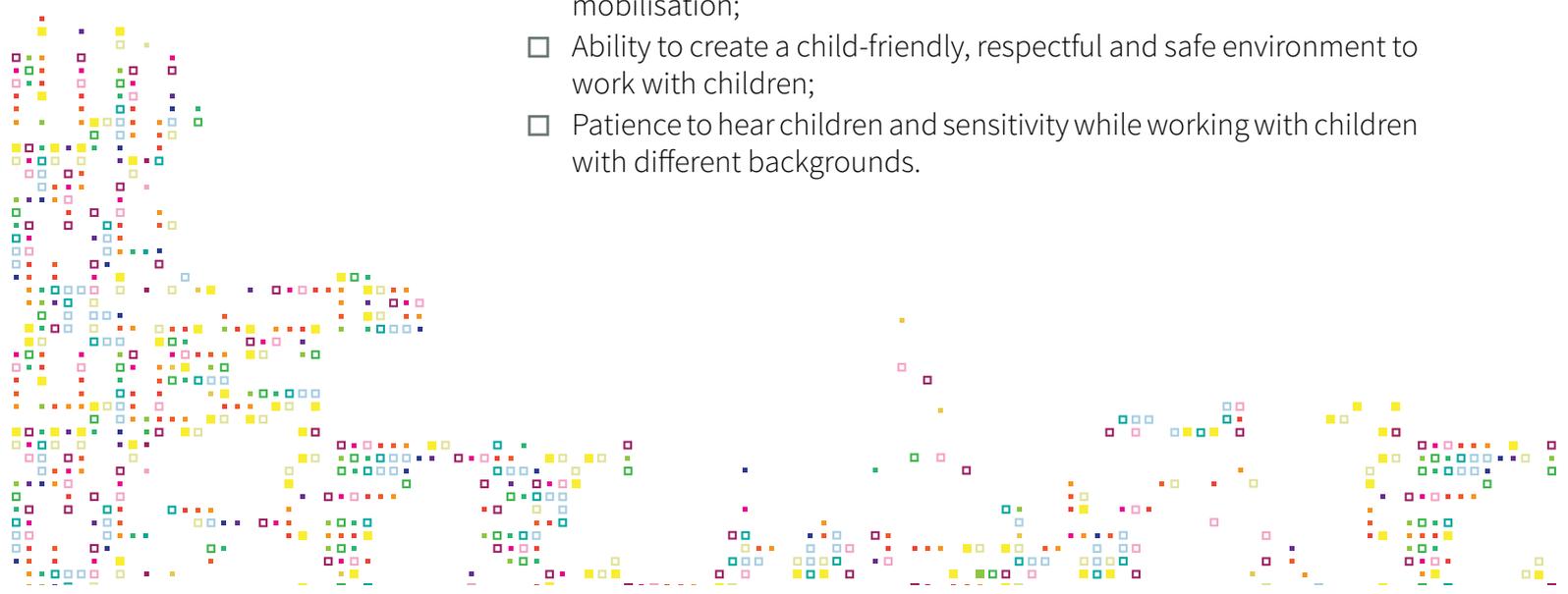
Agencies also noted that in a humanitarian response context staff training can be ad hoc, or that staff initially learn on the job, with more structured capacity building becoming available later in a response.

As well as staff having the right capacity, the case load of individual staff and resource constraints were also thought to be significant factors in the effectiveness of the feedback and response mechanism. The regular face-to-face interaction between staff and children that most agencies seek is sometimes not possible due to resource constraints, as noted by Save the Children Somalia: 'The face-to-face interactions with the MEAL team takes place on a monthly basis although we are sometimes not able to achieve that level of frequency because of the size of the MEAL team.'

Agencies noted also that they work though partners and that capacity building for partners needs to be considered.

Use of technology

Some responses noted that in many cases children are more digitally literate than assumed and that agencies should explore more options to communicate with children using technology. In World Vision's Georgia programme, for example, children developed a peer support group via Facebook. Children in some of World Vision's Africa programmes have access to smart phones giving them potential to use this technology to provide feedback. Learning from Save the Children's Sierra Leone programme highlights: 'A greater variety of means of submitting complaints/feedback, including the use of mobile phones and toll-free numbers, needs to be explored,' while others note the need to further diversify and employ innovative mechanisms when engaging children (Save the Children Philippines).

Rural and urban contexts

Responses to the survey question about which mechanisms work better for children living in rural or in urban locations were not conclusive. One response noted that the same types of activities will work, but the mechanisms need to be contextualised. Suggestions also included that urban contexts are more appropriate to the use of mobile phones and structured questionnaires for collecting feedback, while rural contexts require a more face-to-face approach which supports children with low literacy. Suggestion boxes were considered suitable for both contexts. Agencies also noted that different translation requirements may be associated with each context.
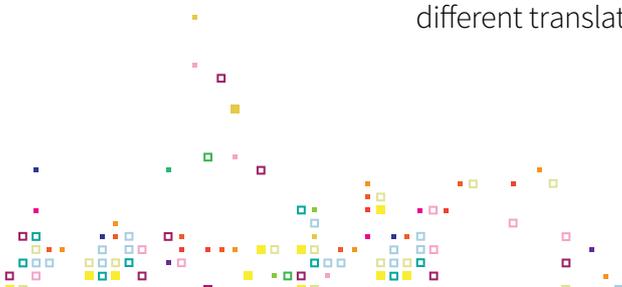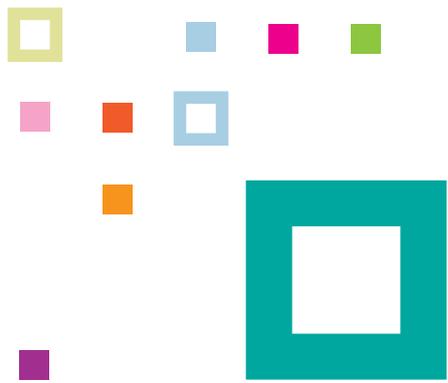
Discussion on the findings

Information from a literature review and from discussions with staff prior to conducting the survey highlighted that children's access to agency feedback and complaint mechanisms was an area that would benefit from further study. It was for this reason that accessibility was chosen as the primary area of interest for the study.

All the agencies participating in this study want to ensure that children's voices are heard. The findings from the surveys provide a preliminary and useful glimpse into agency policy and practice and show the types of feedback and complaint channels that are being employed across a range of programmes and contexts. The surveys also provide examples of channels that are being accessed by children to provide feedback and raise concerns about general programme activities through to issues around safeguarding. More detailed information on these channels will be collected in the second phase of this study to support learning and further development of good practice.

Gaps in knowledge and further exploration

The survey responses confirm the original premise for this study – that children's access to accountability mechanisms is not yet universal. Some children are using agency channels to voice their concerns, but others remain unable or unwilling to do so. The survey responses from agencies highlight some of the possible reasons for this, including:

☐ Channels that are not in accessible locations;
☐ Children's lack of awareness of the existence of channels or how to access them;
☐ Channels that do not accommodate children with low literacy levels or those who lack confidence;
☐ Children's assumption that they will not be believed by those receiving their complaint and concerns around confidentiality.

This under-reporting by children is also reflected in project reports and anecdotal evidence from agency staff who believe that, in some cases, they are receiving a small fraction of the feedback and complaints they would expect from children, and more specifically from vulnerable children.

Agencies have succeeded in setting up channels that are accessible for some children in a range of contexts – the survey responses describe many of these channels. One gap in our knowledge, however, is around the extent of this accessibility or inaccessibility – how many children are affected, who are these children, and what can be done to ensure they are able to access, or have improved access, to agency feedback and complaint channels?

Surveys show that some agencies engage communities and children in discussion on the design of the feedback and complaint channels. However, survey responses did not reveal information on the extent of this engagement – who was involved and how, and the perceived effectiveness in terms of this engagement leading to the design of channels that children
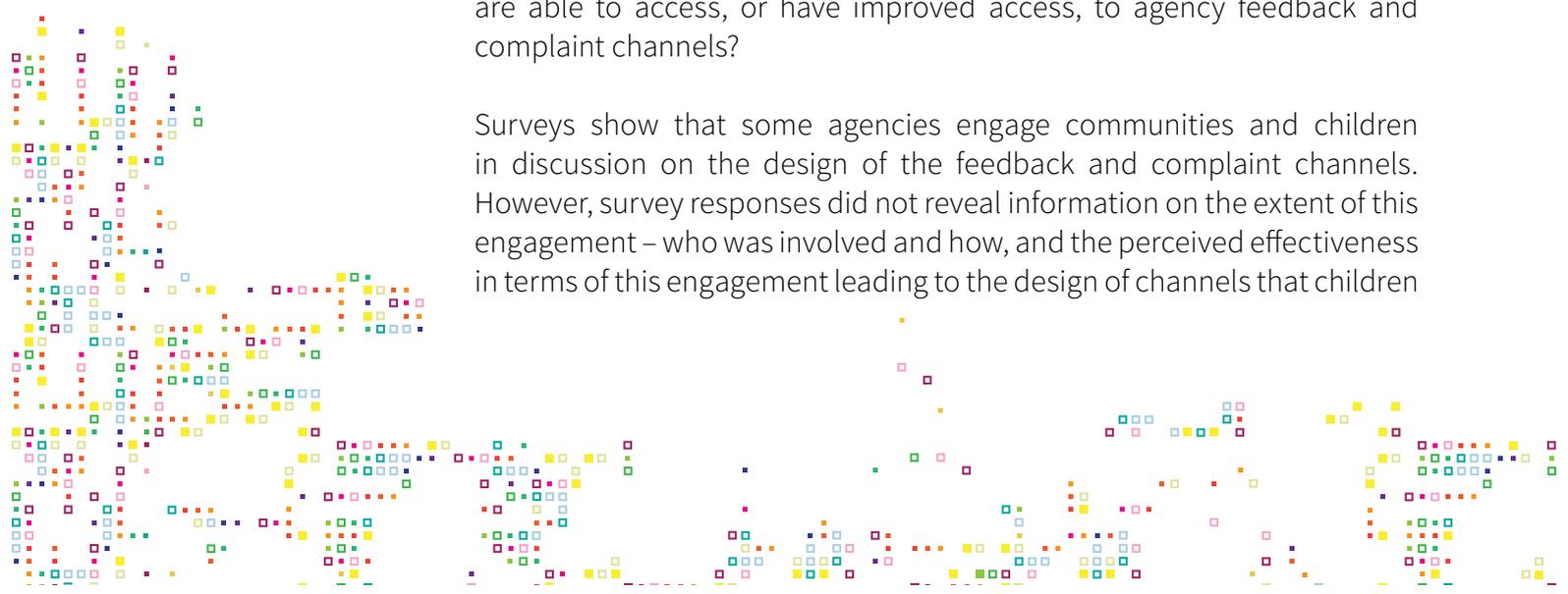
then went on to use. Further information is needed on the type and extent of this engagement and whether it results in better access for children.

The survey responses reveal interesting information on children's possible preferences for particular feedback and complaint channels. The information provided does not, however, allow a conclusion to be made on whether these preferences are genuinely what children would have preferred, or are instead a reflection on what the agency offered. Information from the survey responses also show some possible preferences based on age or gender, but no conclusions are able to be drawn. It is not clear to what extent the various contextual or cultural differences might be masking the age or gender differences. Further investigation to identify children's preferences and understand why these preferences exist could help agencies design channels that are better suited to children's needs.

Designing or identifying feedback and complaint channels that children are comfortable using is an essential part of agency accountability to children. Agencies are already aware of the principles for establishing feedback and complaint mechanisms for children (Annex 3), but as the surveys reveal, some gaps in information, practice and contextualisation of these principles exist. The following recommendations are proposed as ways to begin to address these gaps.
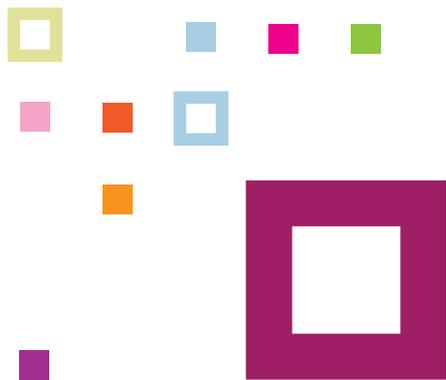
Recommendations

Based on the information provided in the surveys, several factors stand out as having potential to help agencies establish mechanisms that will be more accessible for, and better suited to the needs of, children. These are:

☐ Engagement of children in design and establishment of feedback and complaint channels and in monitoring and evaluation of the overall mechanism. The process of engagement will help to increase children's confidence in using the channels and their understanding of the feedback and complaint process. It will raise children's awareness of their rights and promote trust in the agency. The engagement of children through the design and establishment process aims to create multiple contextually appropriate channels that suit the preferences and needs of children. This could help address many of the reasons given by agencies for some children being unable or unwilling to use existing agency channels.

☐ Collection of locally defined, disaggregated data on the use of the feedback and complaint channels. This will help to identify or confirm children's preferences and determine which groups of children are accessing the channels and which are not. This information can be used to design feedback and complaint mechanisms that are better targeted to the needs of specific groups of children by age, gender, ability and vulnerability. This can be conducted in parallel to actions in the previous point.

☐ Systematic evaluation of the feedback and complaint mechanism is also required to ensure that it continually reflects and responds to the preferences and needs of children. This will help to confirm if the feedback loop is functioning and the extent to which children's opinions are influencing programme decision making.

☐ Collection of socio-economic data and application of context mapping can help to more accurately identify the factors that influence children's access in certain contexts. This contextual analysis should specifically cover rural, urban, development and humanitarian programming.

Other considerations

Survey responses highlighted a number of other gaps and challenges relating to feedback and complaints that would also benefit from further exploration.

Organisational clarity on the accountability role – The location of responsibility for feedback and complaint mechanisms within the agencies surveyed varied between programme management and practitioners, and monitoring and evaluation staff. It would be useful to know in what way the various organisational models impact the effectiveness of accountability to communities. There is also a high degree of overlap with Child Protection, which needs to be explored.

Accountability leading to improved programming – Although documentation is available on the process of setting up and implementing feedback and complaint mechanisms generally, relatively little has been documented about the outcomes of these efforts and how they are contributing to the continual programme improvement and accountability to communities. Ways need to be found to incorporate and incentivise such documentation and learning in regular reporting.

Informing children about how their feedback is used – Survey responses provide examples of the ways in which children are informed of how their feedback has been used by agencies. It is known from experience that providing a response to feedback and complaints is critical to determining whether a person continues to provide feedback and to their level of confidence in the process. Further work is needed to ensure that feedback to children is systematic while being conducted in a child-friendly manner.

Resourcing feedback and response mechanisms – Ensuring the resourcing, mainstreaming and sustainability of mechanisms beyond the piloting phase is currently a challenge for some agencies and might be addressed through better integration of accountability efforts into programme DM&E, proposals and budgets.

Humanitarian versus development contexts and rural versus urban contexts– Survey responses provide only a very brief list of possible differences between feedback and complaint mechanisms in humanitarian and development contexts and urban and rural contexts. These areas require further exploration, particularly if agencies wish to develop context-specific contextual guidelines.
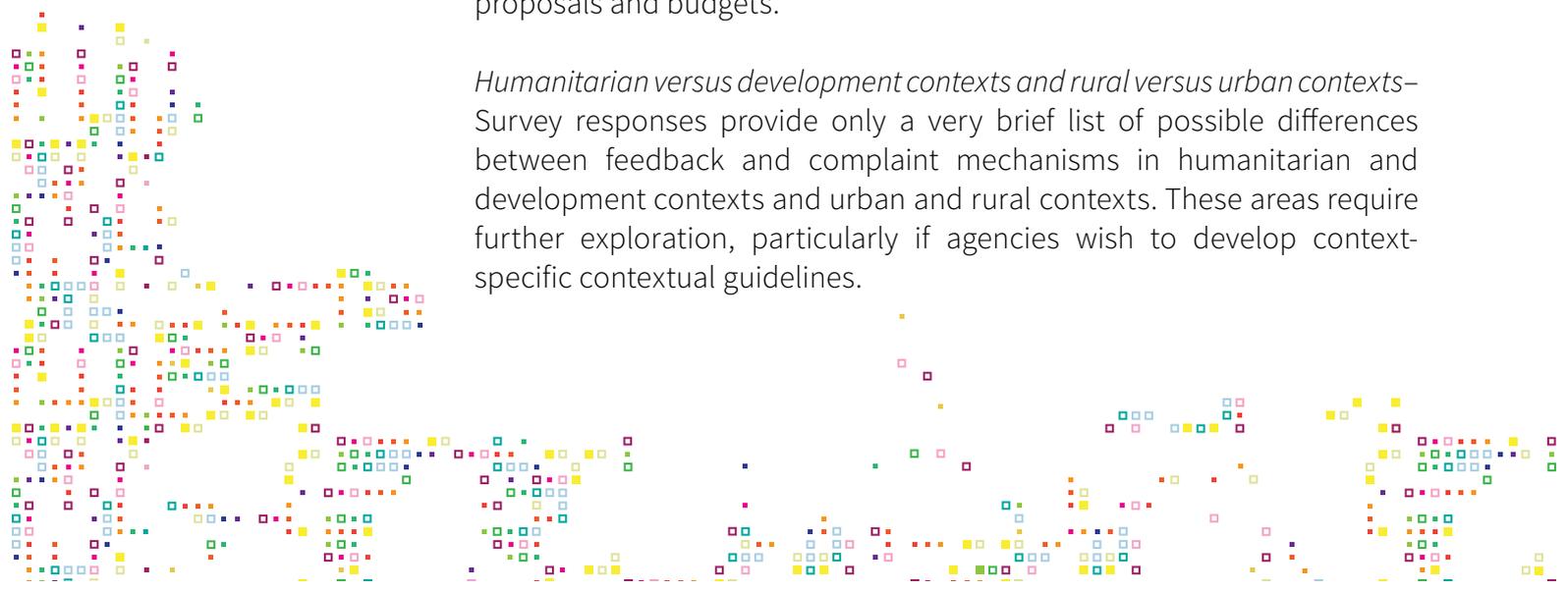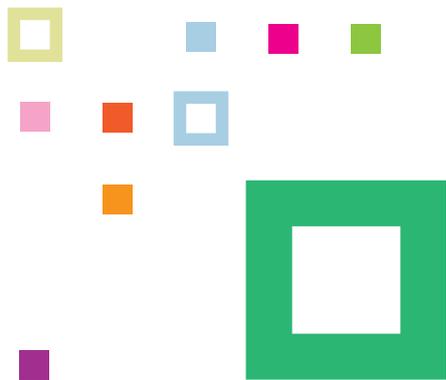
Next steps
Phase two of the study

The next phase of this study will further explore some of the findings and recommendations from phase one. Participating agencies will engage with children within programmes at field level and apply an action learning approach to:

☐ Identify the feedback and complaint preferences and needs of all children;

☐ Determine whether agency channels and mechanisms currently in use match these preferences and needs and identify where the differences lie;

☐ Support establishment of contextually appropriate channels that are accessible to all children;

☐ Document the impact of feedback and complaints from children on programme quality and how it is different from adult-exclusive feedback impact.

Each agency will tailor the second phase to suit their individual programme requirements and contexts.

The findings from the second phase of the study and the final conclusions and recommendations will be developed into a report due in the spring of 2016. This will be accompanied by a guidance document based on the study findings.
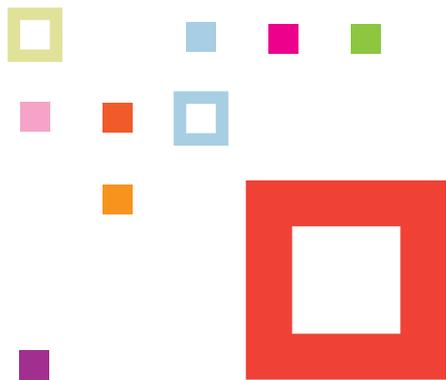
Annexes

Annex 1. Survey questions

What mechanisms are in place for children?

☐ What mechanisms or activities currently exist within your organisation that allow you to gather feedback or complaints from children?

☐ Please give examples of all options, activities or mechanisms available to children and youth (complaint boxes, meetings, court yard sessions, one-to-one contact, mobile phones, all others?)

☐ For each mechanism identified, how often are they used?

☐ What efforts are made to ensure anonymity?

How were the mechanisms set up?

☐ Have you consulted with groups of children on how they would like to share feedback to inform the setting up of these mechanisms?

☐ If yes, which methodology have you used for consultation, and what was the outcome?

☐ If no, if we were to consult with children on their preferred feedback mechanism/activity, then what do you think children will tell us?

Information sharing

☐ How do children know about (how are they made aware of) the feedback mechanisms/activities in your organisation?

☐ Generally, what information sharing methods do children find most useful and accessible? (leaflets, billboard, flex print, community level meetings, one-to-one contact, etc.)

☐ How do you ensure that children are aware of their valuable role in providing feedback, particularly where safeguarding issues are concerned? (How do we ensure that children know their opinion matters?)

Who do we hear from?

- ☐ Which groups of children are providing feedback? (disaggregate by age, gender, vulnerability, frequency of providing feedback)
- ☐ For each group of children identified above, which types of feedback mechanisms/activities do they most prefer to use, and which do they least prefer to use? Why do they have this preference? How do you know about this preference?
- ☐ Are there any groups of children who are reluctant, unable or unwilling to give their feedback? Which groups?
- ☐ Why are they reluctant, unable or unwilling? How do you know this? How do you support these children?

What are we hearing?

- ☐ In general, what kinds of issues have you heard feedback from children on?
- ☐ Are we recording what we hear? How do we do this?
- ☐ Specifically, do the mechanisms in place manage to solicit concerns about safeguarding issues, including safety of programmes, breaches of our code of conduct, and sexual exploitation and abuse? If yes, which mechanisms or which features of mechanisms proved helpful? If not, what were the reasons?
- ☐ Have we managed to protect confidentiality when sensitive issues were reported?
- ☐ What has been key, in your experience, to keeping feedback from children confidential?
- ☐ Were there any cases where we did not manage to respond to a sensitive issue raised by a child as per our procedures or any harm was done? If yes, how did we deal with that?

Appropriateness and effectiveness of the mechanisms

- ☐ Do children face any challenges to providing feedback with the existing mechanisms/activities? If yes, what types of challenges do they face?
- ☐ In your opinion, are the existing mechanisms effective in soliciting and handling feedback from children?
- ☐ How do we deliver the responses to children? (i.e. How do children know that adults have heard/read their concerns and are responding to them?)
- ☐ Are we or partners able to handle the amount of feedback data that is received and deliver the responses in a timely manner?
- ☐ What have been the challenges in managing feedback mechanisms for children?
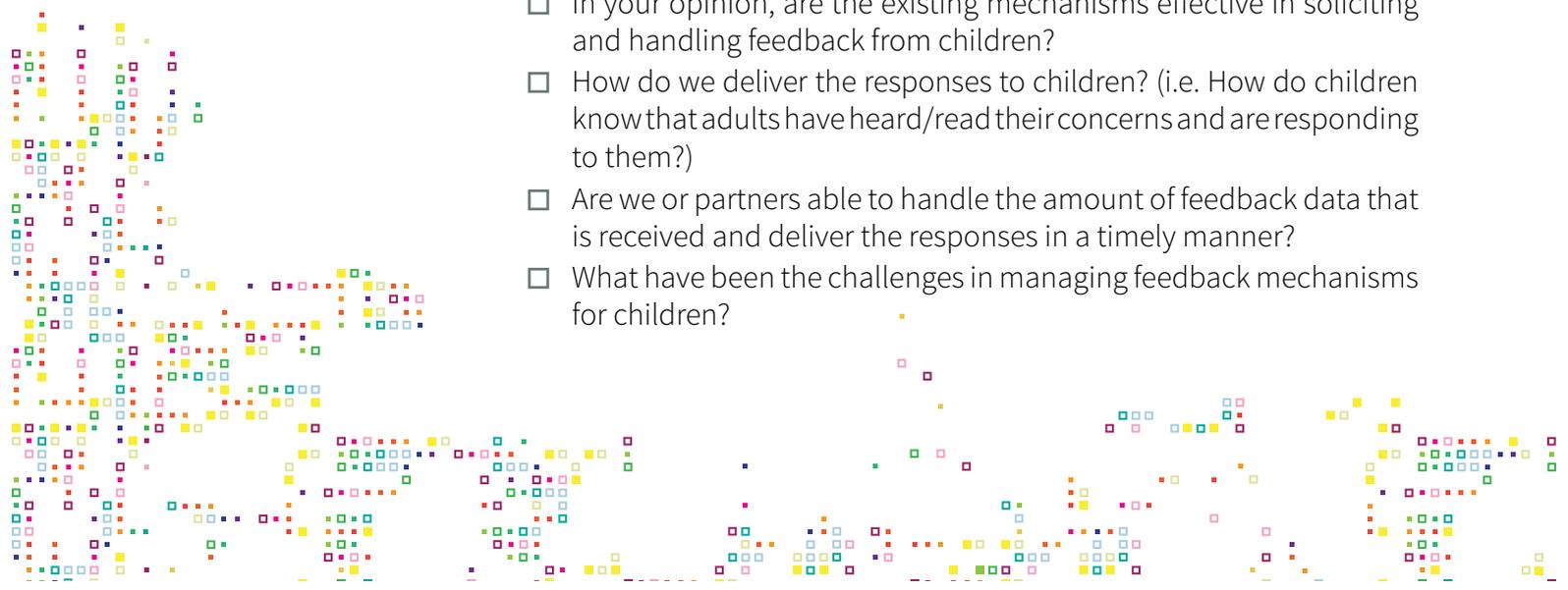
What are our lessons learnt?

- ☐ Do you have any suggestions on what suitable feedback/complaint mechanisms/activities for children should look like?
- ☐ Which of the mechanisms/activities will work better for children living in rural and urban locations? Girls, boys? Humanitarian or development contexts?
- ☐ What features of a feedback mechanism/activity make them specifically child-friendly?
- ☐ Have the mechanisms proved a value added for the programme? That is, have they helped us hear more from children? Have they helped us hear about issues we were not hearing about before? Have we, as a result of the feedback, made changes to our programmes? What kinds of changes were made?

Staff capacity

- ☐ What skills are necessary for our staff to be able to set up and manage feedback mechanisms for children?
- ☐ Are staff clear about their roles and responsibilities for seeking and handling feedback from children and how the relevant policies such as safeguarding and code of conduct are linked to the process?
- ☐ Has any support been provided to staff (agency as well as partner) to set up and manage these mechanisms? If yes, what was done?
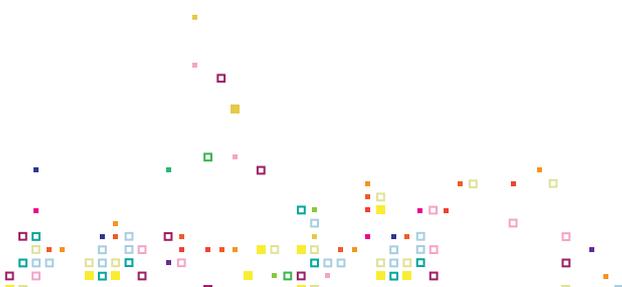
Annex 2. Agency feedback and complaint channels used for children. Information collected from survey responses

Key to agencies:
SC – Save the Children, UK
WCUK – War Child, UK
WV – World Vision
PI – Plan International

Mechanism	Country	Context	Target group	Agency
Technology				
Phone calls direct to staff	Bangladesh	Community project	Parents of school children. Preferred for sensitive feedback	SC
	Sierra Leone	Districts covered by Ebola response and other project areas/districts	No information	SC
Helpline or hotline

Agency managed or established helpline | Lebanon | Refugee context | Aimed at adults, but children are informed about it and youth say they prefer it | WV |
	Bangladesh	Community project	Community in general. Toll-free number was requested by community	SC
	DRC	Child helpline: To collect specific information from children. Anonymous	Children	WCUK
	Somalia	IDP camp	General target, but children hardly use this mechanism	SC
	Mongolia	The Child Helpline (for child protection) was originally established by WV and is now managed by the Government of Mongolia	Children in the community generally	WV

Mechanism	Country	Context	Target group	Agency
Facebook peer support group	Georgia	Facebook peer support group. Set up by children within a WV supported development programme	Set up by children for children	WV
Written				
Suggestion and feedback boxes	Lebanon	Syria response	Set up in response to request by youth for use in schools	WV
	Bangladesh	Bangladesh, community project and schools, learning and recreation centres	Parents of school children. Children also found them useful. Literacy mentioned as an issue. Children in the learning centres	SC
	Somalia and Egypt	Box was set up and children asked to personalise it to better suit them. Children also consulted on their opinion of the box's efficiency. In Somalia box opened on a weekly basis	Children	SC
	Nepal	Boxes set up in Government schools	Info about boxes is shared with children's committees	SC
	Sierra Leone	Ebola response and other project areas/districts	No information	SC
	Jordan	Constant presence within projects so open for use continuously and emptied once per week	Children	WCUK
	Afghanistan	Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre	Children	WV
	Somalia	IDP camp. In communities the boxes are placed at local partner offices or offices of the community welfare committees	General including children - In schools and communities	SC
One to one/face-to-face				
Household visits by staff	Lebanon	As part of follow up or referral from other mechanism	No information	WV
Community talk to representative, volunteers and non-agency staff	Lebanon	Syria response	No information	WV
	Bangladesh	Bangladesh, community project	The volunteers are parents of school children. Children happy sharing feedback with volunteers	SC
One-to-one meetings children and staff	Lebanon	Syria response	FGD responses suggest that this is preferred by youth	WV
	DRC	Sometimes, the M&E organise individual meetings with specific children that do not feel safe talking in group meetings	Children	WCUK
One-to-one meetings	Egypt	With agency focal point or psychosocial team	Children	SC
	DRC	Following a group meeting, some children can go on to have individual meetings. Feedback given to War Child from children is confidential	Children	WCUK
One-on-one interviews	Philippines	During and/or after an activity	Children	Educo
	Afghanistan	Annual interviews to ask their feedback on the projects implemented by War Child, on the capacity of staff and on what they think should be improved, continued or change	Children (randomly selected) beneficiaries	WCUK

Mechanism	Country	Context	Target group	Agency
Help desks	Lebanon	Distribution sites. Syria response	Adults. Preferred by youth. Used for some sensitive complaints	WV
Visits to agency office	Lebanon	Syria response	General	WV
Interactive				
Children's clubs and Youth clubs	Philippines (SE Asia)	Works via existing clubs to promote child protection and seek information on current community feedback mechanisms	Children and youth	WV
Theatre (includes puppets and plays)	Lebanon	Child-friendly spaces (CFS) in humanitarian context. Child consultation activity	Children	WV
	Mali	In schools	Theatre used to give children opportunity to present their message to parents	Educo
Writing own stories	Nepal	Brick kiln project – targeting child brick kiln workers. School-going older children like to write to give inputs, but some have limited literacy skills. Children who do not go to school are less active when expressing themselves in writing	Children	SC
Drawings by children	Lebanon	CFS Syria response. As part of consultation activity with children – use of drawing allows children to express themselves	Children	WV
	Nepal	Brick kiln project – targeting child brick kiln workers. Generally children love to talk and draw pictures to share their thoughts, inputs. Younger children like to draw pictures to express themselves	Younger children	SC
Mood boards	Philippines	Not specified	Children	Educo
Programmatic				
Activity evaluation form with smileys	Brazil	Community projects. Application of the form varies depending on the audience. In case of children who are not able to write and/ or read, the form is applied by using stickers with smileys, so that children (and any other illiterate persons) can evaluate an activity without the need of reading and/ or writing	Adults, youth and children	PI
Evaluation with child-friendly (unspecified) activities	Egypt	Evaluation per activity: After each activity the facilitator usually gets the feedback from the children through child-friendly activities	Children	SC
Surveys	Philippines	Creative surveys (child friendly)	Children	Educo
	DRC	Child feedback survey. To collect specific information from children. Anonymous	Children	WCUK
Via a vulnerability analysis	Lebanon and others	Humanitarian, based on UNHCR WPF format	Aimed at adults during household survey. Can pick up on issues affecting children in the household	WV

Mechanism	Country	Context	Target group	Agency
Referral system form	DRC	Forms are used to obtain direct feedback from children about the referral services children receive from partners	Children	WCUK
Via project information sharing sessions	Bangladesh	Development community projects	Designed for information sharing with community generally but also an opportunity for staff to pick up feedback and complaints from community	SC
Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	Lebanon	Humanitarian. Syrian refugees. One staff member engages with children while other staff observes and takes notes of responses	Discussions aimed at children in small groups. Part of CFS activities with children 7–12 years old	WV
	Philippines	Children prefer being in a group (meetings and FGDs) rather than speaking alone	Children	Educo
	Mali	During this process children can discuss preferences for their activities	With children 12–14 yrs old. Most often with girls	Educo
	Lebanon	Refugee camp school (Syrian refugees)	Youth. Girls and boys	WV
	Brazil	Held on a quarterly basis. The Focus Group is carried out with homogenous groups of children in certain age groups, including youth. Group balanced by gender. Form of (semi-structured?) questions used	Aimed at children and youth. Divided by age and gender	PI
	Philippines	Post response Haiyan. Sometimes boys are shy to share information when girls are present, or vice versa. There is a tendency for older children to dominate younger children. FGDs are very helpful in soliciting all types of concerns	Children. Same gender and age groups were encouraged	SC
	Jordan	The FGDs are carried out around once every 3 months	Children	WCUK
	DRC	Focus group discussion/outreach and community visits: Weekly basis. Children and social workers/ outreach officers organise discussions with all children since their roles are following up on children's cases	Children	WCUK
Community hearing sessions	Bangladesh	Community development projects	Community	SC
Children's committees	Nepal	'Protection of Children Working in Brick Kilns' project. 14-member Child Advisory Committee (CAC) made up of children representing the views of other children in the community formed through the project. Meets quarterly. These meetings are also used to inform children about other CFMs, e.g. the toll-free numbers. Interactive activities are included such as body mapping	Children	SC

Mechanism	Country	Context	Target group	Agency
Participation in adult councils	SE Asia region	Children were involved in WV's Triennial Council. Through this forum, children have been able to make recommendations and influence debate about their future involvement	Children invited to attend a General Council	WV
Deals	DRC	These are weekly life skills sessions held with girls at the drop in centres. These sessions allow children to talk about their experiences compared to the support they are receiving from the project; they also give ideas on how the services should be improved. The ideas are collected as ideas from the group and not related to specific girls	Girls	WCUK
Camp committees/ relief committees	Lebanon	Informal tented settlements	Meetings with feedback committees are held during outreach visits	WV
Community reference groups	Sierra Leone	Ebola response and other project areas/districts	General	SC
Meetings	Afghanistan	Meetings to allow communities to share their views about the services provided, which part of our interventions are helpful and ask for suggestions on what we should do better and what they think of our staff providing services to them	Children	WCUK
Meetings	Somalia	IDP camp. Face-to-face interactions with children. MEAL team joins feedback sessions for children which have been set/ started up by partners	Children	SC
M&E discussion/ evaluation visits	DRC	As part of project evaluations. M&E usually organise evaluation meetings with children in order to exchange ideas and learn about what children think of projects. The fact that children get the chance to talk to someone who is not used to their environment, beneficiaries open up to the M&E, these discussion findings are reported in M&E reports in a quarterly basis	Children	WCUK
From a third party				
Referrals	Lebanon	Syria response	No information	WV
Feedback and complaint mechanisms not mentioned in surveys, but which have been identified in literature reviews. Letters, SMS, video diary, beneficiary user groups, ombudsman, community feedback logs, beneficiary perception surveys, report cards, community score cards, complaint sheets, feedback via public radio and newspaper, online complaints.				
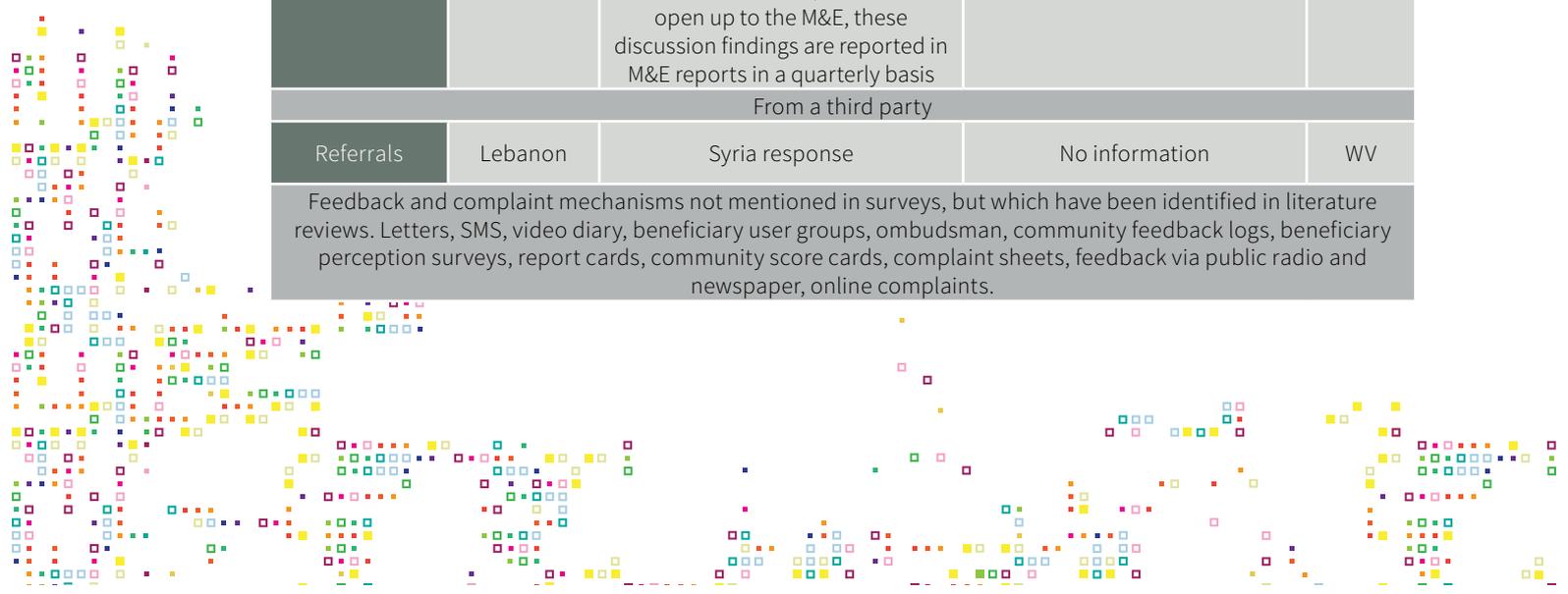
Annex 3. Principles for a child-friendly feedback and complaint mechanism[6]

☐ Provides face-to-face reporting when possible, recognises the heterogeneity of the group and engages multiple tailored channels.

☐ Is situated in child-friendly locations as identified by children – accessible, safe, where they are treated with respect, understanding and calmness and where they feel comfortable asking questions or giving feedback.

☐ Uses child-friendly contextual, age- and gender-appropriate messaging – simple, clear and understandable language and pictures.

☐ Promotes engagement and inclusivity – is flexible and includes younger, non-school going children and children with disabilities.

☐ Is led by people having skills to work with children: active listening, tolerance, patience and a positive attitude; skills in understanding and management of child protection issues.

Lessons from practice have also shown that:

☐ Children prefer an immediate response to their concerns.

☐ Agencies need to combine passive with proactive approaches to soliciting feedback.

☐ Provision needs to be made to receive anonymous complaints and indirect complaints (as children will sometimes complain on behalf of another child).

Agency consultations with children have identified areas in which children themselves need support in raising their concerns – mostly in awareness raising and provision of an enabling environment. These include:

☐ Understanding what is and what is not good practice and behaviour towards them.

☐ Knowing that they have a right to give feedback and to complain.

☐ Knowing who to go to and how to give feedback and to complain.

☐ Having the capacity and ability to report.

☐ Knowing that their feedback and complaints will be welcomed and acted upon.

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6   Based on Save the Children (2011). Guide for setting-up Child Friendly Complaints and Response Mechanisms (CRMs) Lessons Learnt from Save the Children's CRM in Dadaab Refugee Camp.
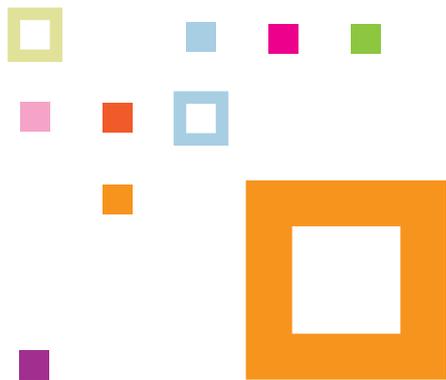
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