

PROGRAMME ACCOUNTABILITY GUIDANCE PACK

A SAVE THE CHILDREN RESOURCE



Save the Children

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Save the Children works in more than 120 countries.
We save children's lives. We fight for their rights.
We help them fulfil their potential.

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Cover photo: A children's club meeting in Nepal (Photo: Suzanne Lee/Save
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Opinion-ranking exercise, Meiktila Township, Myanmar (Burma)

INTRODUCTION

At Save the Children we think that real accountability to children and communities involves giving them not only a voice, but also the opportunity to influence relevant decisions affecting whether and how we work with them. And it involves giving children and communities the power to hold us to account in ways that influence the organisation's policies, priorities, and actions at local, national and global levels. Such influence balances the power that donors and governments (as regulators) have to influence us.

Accountability is part of our core values. We take responsibility for using our resources efficiently, achieving measurable results and being accountable to our supporters, partners and, most of all, children.

We are committed to improving the understanding and application of accountability approaches across our programmes. Accountability features as a main component of our organisation's Quality Framework, and within the Management Operating Standards.

WHAT DOES ACCOUNTABILITY LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

- **Regular, timely and accessible information sharing** on who we are, our projects (including budgetary information), what behaviour people can expect of our staff and representatives (in line with our Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct), and how people can be involved and provide feedback and complaints. This involves looking at the way we currently share information, making it more systematic and standardised, and producing varied tools for various audiences.
- **Participation – discussing together, deciding together and working together** with children, communities and partners. This involves looking at how we work with our key stakeholders across the programme cycle, moving from consultation to collaboration, and improving quality and inclusiveness of participation where necessary.
- **Proactively seeking feedback from children and communities and handling their complaints.** This involves systematic listening, and setting up formal mechanisms in our projects for people to express views and concerns on our approach, activities and impact, as well as on safety issues and the behaviour of our staff.
- **Monitoring, evaluating and learning:** giving voice to children and communities in our monitoring and evaluation exercises, regularly reviewing monitoring data and data from our complaints and feedback mechanisms to inform changes in implementation, and ensuring evaluation data informs future project design, thus building a culture of learning and continual improvement.
- **Building staff competencies for accountable programming** – this involves ensuring that our staff have the technical and behavioural competencies to deliver our commitments to communities. It also involves working with programme and partner staff to ensure they understand: what accountability looks like in practice; how to implement transparent, participatory programmes; how to set up and manage complaints mechanisms and to abide by our Code of Conduct and our child safeguarding procedures.

These practices are in line with the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) standard for accountability and quality management, which applies to humanitarian, development and advocacy work done by NGOs. Save the Children is a member of HAP, and bases its accountability work on the HAP Standard.

WHAT WILL BE THE BENEFITS TO PROGRAMMES?

An accountable and participatory approach brings important practical advantages, including:

- Improving the quality of our programme design and implementation, making our work more relevant
- Improving our relationship with and acceptance by the communities, helping us move towards working in true partnership with communities
- Reducing the risk of fraud or of funds being used inefficiently
- Reducing the risk of harm to children and other beneficiaries that might be caused by the conduct of our own staff or by the design of the intervention itself
- Demonstrating to our donors that we are able to deliver on quality processes such as accountability in programme design and implementation.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

We know that principles of accountable programming are not new; they are part of the basics of good-quality programming practice, and we are doing them already to varying degrees. What we want to ensure is that they become systematically embedded in our ways of working. This guide has been designed to assist you with that.

This *Programme Accountability Guidance Pack* brings together practical and tested 'how-to' guidance, films and training materials designed to help country programmes put accountability into practice. It is primarily aimed at country-level Save the Children and partner staff responsible for implementing development or humanitarian projects and programmes. At the back of this guide, you will find a DVD containing four films developed to improve understanding and facilitate discussions on programme accountability. You will also find a CD on *Accountability Conversations – A series of eight sessions on accountability* that includes facilitation notes, slides and handouts that can be used to sensitise programme and partner staff.

We hope you find this guide useful. We welcome your feedback – please help us improve our support to you.

If you have any feedback or questions, please write to Dan Collison, Save the Children International Head of Programme Support, at dan.collison@savethechildren.org.

Electronic versions of the resources in this guide and more can be found at: https://onenet.savethechildren.net/sci/ip/program_operations/Pages/Accountability.aspx

I ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING TOOL

I ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING TOOL

The assessment and planning tool¹ (on page 5) has been designed to help projects, programmes, country offices and partners assess how well they are doing in terms of putting accountability to communities into practice. Further, it will assist in the development of plans to support Save the Children and its partners to improve in highlighted areas. This is also a tool for training and sensitisation of all staff, to help them reflect on and understand what accountability looks like in practice. It can be used as a baseline tool, and repeated at the end of the year to measure improvements in areas identified as priority.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

We hope that this tool can be used with staff at different levels. It can be used with Save the Children and partner staff at project or programme level to assess current practice and come up with a plan for improvement for a given project or a programme. It can also be used at organisational level, either for Save the Children country offices or partner organisations, involving senior management and programme managers, to help inform an organisation-level plan/strategy to improve accountability to communities. It is hoped that the plans can then be included in country annual plans, or longer term country strategy documents, to ensure follow up.

USING THE TOOL

In committing to being accountable to those we seek to serve, we must strive to meet certain minimum requirements. The questions below are designed to draw out these minimum requirements. Depending on the nature of the organisation's work and the context, environment and conditions it works in, some of the questions may seem more relevant than others. You may wish to add details to each requirement, to ensure relevance to particular activities and to gain more depth in the process. The assessment and planning tool asks you to think about five different areas of your operation:

- 1. Information-sharing**
- 2. Participation**
- 3. Handling feedback and complaints**
- 4. Staff competencies and attitudes**
- 5. Monitoring, evaluating and learning**

¹ This tool has been adapted from a CAFOD accountability planning tool.

There are six requirements within each area. Read each statement and decide whether each statement is:

RED Not in place/not met/never

AMBER Partially in place/partially met/sometimes

GREEN In place/met/always

As you go through the assessment exercise, we'd like to encourage you to provide honest rankings. It is OK to have red or amber for your initial/baseline assessment in order to identify and be able to act on areas needing improvement. Once you have finished with the questions, follow the instructions at the end of the questions to populate an accountability status dashboard and a planning table.



Dorty is a member of a children's club in Kroo Bay, Sierra Leone.

ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING TOOL

Date: _____

Circle one and state name: Country office/Programme/Project/Partner

Name of staff involved: _____

I. INFORMATION-SHARING

RED **AMBER** **GREEN**

Does the organisation keep children/communities/key stakeholders informed about their organisation and programme activities in ways that are accessible and appropriate to the context?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I.1 The organisation consults and agrees with children/communities/key stakeholders on the best ways of making information available, appropriate to the programme context and situation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I.2 The organisation ensures that children/communities/key stakeholders are informed about the organisation's background, mission and values, and about the conduct they can expect of its staff and representatives (in line with the Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy) and how to contact the organisation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I.3 The organisation informs children/communities/key stakeholders about specific programme goals, activities, cost, beneficiary selection processes and reports on progress. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I.4 Details on how to give feedback or make complaints related to the organisation or specific programme activities are made available to children/communities/key stakeholders. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I.5 The organisation agrees with its partners on standards of information-sharing between partners, and between partner and communities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I.6 The organisation monitors how well information is being disseminated, understood and received through consultation with children/communities/key stakeholders. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. PARTICIPATION

RED AMBER GREEN

How much are children/communities/key stakeholders involved in decision-making processes of the organisation?

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2.1 | The organisation encourages and facilitates on-going participation from children/communities/key stakeholders throughout the programme especially in design and implementation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.2 | The organisation achieves quality in its participation practice in line with Save the Children practice standards or the UN CRC 9 requirements for effective participation (ie, community participation is informative, voluntary, respectful, relevant, child-friendly, inclusive, supported by training for adults, safe and accountable). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.3 | The organisation includes children/communities/key stakeholders in the identification and selection of appropriate representatives for specific programmes. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.4 | The organisation makes particular effort to identify community vulnerabilities and include groups less accessible or those facing additional risk or challenge. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.5 | The organisation encourages the involvement of children/communities/key stakeholders in regularly reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the performance of programme activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.6 | The organisation makes clear to its partners its expectations on community participation (ie, that participation should happen across the project cycle and adhere to participation practice standards), and the organisation supports its partners in meeting these expectations. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. HANDLING FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

RED AMBER GREEN

Does the organisation have safe and accessible ways to ensure that children/communities/key stakeholders can make suggestions, raise concerns or make a complaint about the decisions or actions of the organisation? Does the organisation ensure that concerns/complaints are received, heard, reviewed and acted upon in a timely manner?

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.1 | The organisation or the programme has established an appropriate complaints and feedback mechanism, which has been agreed with children/communities/key stakeholders, which is impartial, timely, safe, confidential, and accessible for various groups. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

3. HANDLING FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS *continued***RED AMBER GREEN**

3.2	Staff know how the complaints and feedback mechanism works and understand their responsibility to it, especially with regards to procedures for handling sensitive complaints (eg, allegations of abuse and corruption are immediately referred/linked into the organisation's internal procedures for dealing with breaches of the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Children/communities/key stakeholders are aware of the complaints and feedback mechanism, how to access it, and what complaints can and can't be handled by the system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4	The organisation keeps a record of the complaints received, the responses given and subsequent project decisions made.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5	The organisation has agreed with partners on how to raise complaints against each other; and has documented this in its partner agreements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6	The organisation supports its partners in setting up and managing the complaints and feedback mechanisms for communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. STAFF COMPETENCIES AND ATTITUDES**RED AMBER GREEN**

Does the organisation provide appropriate induction and training to ensure staff skills, attitudes and conduct are in accordance with the organisation's values and commitments? Does this induction and training support staff to interact with children/communities/key stakeholders in a respectful way?

4.1	Relevant position advertisements and job descriptions encourage competencies in accountability to children and communities and their participation in the programme cycle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Staff have clear job descriptions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Staff know their responsibilities in upholding the commitments made by the organisation to children/communities/key stakeholders with regards to the programme; further, staff know the Code of Conduct, Child Safeguarding Policy, and the principles of accountability and participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4	The organisation has a performance management process that ensures – through regular performance reviews, appraisals, etc. – that staff are performing well technically and behaviourally, including delivering on accountability to communities and in community participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. STAFF COMPETENCIES AND ATTITUDES *continued***RED AMBER GREEN**

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.5 Capacity-building support and training are provided to staff on technical issues related to their roles, as well as on accountability and participation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.6 The organisation supports its partners in implementing and monitoring child safeguarding systems, as well as compliance with their Codes of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policies. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. MONITORING, EVALUATING AND LEARNING**RED AMBER GREEN**

Does the organisation have systems in place that enable lessons to be captured and to be applied within the organisation and throughout the programme cycle?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5.1 The organisation actively seeks and includes the views of children/communities/key stakeholders in its monitoring and evaluation exercises, in relation to programme activities and to staff conduct. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.2 The organisation regularly reviews monitoring and evaluation data, as well as data from feedback and complaints mechanisms, to draw and document learning from the programmes. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.3 As a result of the findings of programme reviews and evaluations and feedback/complaints from communities, the organisation adapts and modifies the way it works accordingly. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.4 The organisation documents and shares findings of monitoring and evaluations with all staff and partners and external forums where necessary/appropriate. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.5 The organisation shares relevant programme learning and plans for improvement with children/communities/key stakeholders in an accessible manner. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.6 The organisation supports its partners in monitoring and evaluating programmes and setting systems for learning and improvement. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

ACCOUNTABILITY STATUS DASHBOARD

In order to collate your accountability status dashboard from the results of your assessment, follow these steps:

1. Collate the rankings (R = red, A = amber, G = green) from the assessment tool into the table below:

	Information-sharing	Participation	Handling feedback and complaints	Staff competencies and attitudes	Monitoring, evaluating and learning
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
Overall ranking					

2. Colour it accordingly: red, amber or green.
3. Based on the number of red, amber or green rankings, allocate an overall ranking for each of the five areas. Use your judgement as you give the overall ranking. For example, three green and three red rankings will mean an amber overall ranking.

Below is an example to illustrate what the final product might look like:

	Information-sharing	Participation	Handling feedback and complaints	Staff competencies and attitudes	Monitoring, evaluating and learning
1	R	R	R	G	A
2	A	R	R	G	A
3	A	R	R	G	G
4	A	R	A	G	G
5	A	G	A	G	G
6	A	G	G	G	G
Overall ranking					
	A	A	R	G	G

This table will provide a visual dashboard for how your organisation is doing in accountability to children and communities. It can be used to identify the most appropriate areas in which to prioritise and focus efforts.

Once you have a sense of priority areas, please populate the planning tool on page 10.

ACCOUNTABILITY PLANNING TOOL

	ACTION NEEDED	TIMELINE (month/quarter)	RESPONSIBLE
Information-sharing			
Participation			
Handling feedback and complaints			
Staff competencies and attitudes			
Monitoring, evaluating and learning			

2 PUTTING ACCOUNTABILITY INTO PRACTICE ACROSS THE PROGRAMME CYCLE

2 PUTTING ACCOUNTABILITY INTO PRACTICE ACROSS THE PROGRAMME CYCLE

The table below tries to articulate what needs to be done in each step of the programme cycle in order to mainstream accountability.

Please note – in order for the following to actually happen, it is critical that senior management – especially Directors of Programme Quality and Design and Directors of Programme Implementation – encourages, supports and champions mainstreaming of accountability. Only in this way will we be able to build the funding base in our proposals and the capacity in our teams to implement more accountable programmes.

Programme design

At programme/project design stage, we need to:

1. **Ensure understanding** – the design team and the key people involved in the process need to understand what we mean by accountability, so they have a view of what needs to be happening in all stages of programming.



Watch and show our five minute film that tries to explain what accountability looks like in practice: *Putting Accountability into Practice*. Available in the DVD at the back cover of this Guide or online: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgMfCwwu4nY&feature=plcp>

2. **Ensure a participatory approach** by giving priority to the views of children, communities and partners in the design. See page 44 for how to mainstream participation across the programme cycle.

Undertake a risk assessment in consultation with children/communities/key stakeholders to consider whether any aspects of the project or intervention design might inadvertently cause harm to children/vulnerable community members. Mitigation of such risks is critical but may have design – and therefore budgetary – implications.

Timing: we strongly recommend that children, communities and partners are involved as early as possible as this will positively impact on the outcome. Also, make sure that the design process is informed by/based on documented consultations, evaluations and assessments recently done with the same communities. Cite these in the proposal.

continued on next page

Concept and proposal development

- 1. Integrating into the narrative** – the proposal should mention how we will promote a participatory approach and ensure accountability to children and communities.

You may wish to include “*ensuring accountable programme implementation to children and communities*”, as a separate objective in the proposal.



See page 55 for example excerpt for proposal on mainstreaming accountability. If you have a proposal development checklist at country level, please integrate this tool into it.

- 2. A robust MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning) plan** should be included in the proposal that allows feedback to be regularly solicited from children and communities as well as partners. This will provide sufficient room for response and reflection and enable learning for the programme. Consider including indicators on monitoring our accountability to children and communities, looking at how good we are at information sharing, participation, and complaints handling. Also, consider including indicators that will provide information about the conduct of staff, and whether any harm has been done to children/communities/key stakeholders as a result of the intervention itself.

Children and communities should be actively involved in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) planning from the start. Success indicators can be developed with children and communities, or checked with them, so we are informed about and work with what success looks like for the communities. This will then help us work with them to monitor progress and impact, and help community ownership of the project.

- 3. Budgeting for accountability and participation** – this is critical in ensuring the programme is accountable and participatory.

Appraise your budget with the questions below:

Information-sharing – have you budgeted for resources that will enable you to share information effectively with children and communities and our partner organisations? (Consider allocating resources for production of posters, leaflets, information boards, child-friendly materials, films, etc.)

Participation – have you budgeted adequately to enable participation of children, adults and partners in activity design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation? (Consider resourcing for regular meetings, setting up of community groups, and special needs that may be required for children, such as transport assistance, chaperoning requirements, weekend meetings.)

Complaints-handling – have you budgeted for setting up complaints mechanisms? (Consider allocating resources for training for staff, consultation meetings with communities, and materials for the complaints mechanisms.)

continued on next page

Concept and proposal development

continued

Dedicated staff – consider allocating resources for a full- or part-time dedicated staff member to coordinate the work on accountability. This could be an M&E and accountability officer or an accountability coordinator.



Our 'How to budget for accountability guide' on page 56 will help you calculate how much you need to allocate for accountability and participation in your budget.

4. **Checking the programme design.** Once you have a draft programme design, you should check it with children, young people and different groups of people from the community to confirm its relevance and robustness of approach, and to ensure it will not cause unintentional harm.

Programme set up

1. Ensure Save the Children and partner staff are well informed about:

- Save the Children's vision and mission
- All aspects of the project
- Practice Standards for Children's Participation
- The Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy.

2. Share information with children and communities in accessible formats about:

- Save the Children
- The project (including budget for that community)
- How people can be involved
- The standards of behaviour they can expect of Save the Children staff and representatives, in line with the Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy.



See: How to share information guide on page 17

How to share information about project budgets guide on page 20

Information sharing template on page 22.

3. As you hold project set-up meetings with children and adults, it is critical to ask:

- How they would like to receive information (Verbally? In writing? How often? From whom?)
- How they would like to share feedback and complaints about the project (This will help you set up complaints mechanisms in the implementation stage.)



See guide on how to consult with children on complaints handling on page 32.

continued on next page

Programme set up

4. Planning participation. In what ways will children and communities participate at each stage of the project cycle? What opportunities have you created for children and communities to work with you as you plan for their involvement? Consider mapping how you currently meet our Practice Standards on Child Participation. You can then plan to address gaps and ensure quality and safety.

5. Identify appropriate representatives who adequately represent the interests of different vulnerable groups. Have you considered how inclusive your approach is? What can you do to ensure the most marginalised people can participate?

6. Invite local communities, village committees, and local authorities to take part in **developing criteria for selection** of those to participate in or benefit from the project.

7. Partner agreements need to include expectations on:

- Information-sharing with communities and between partners
- Enabling children's and adults' participation
- How complaints will be handled between partners and with communities (how and when a partner will refer to Save the Children)
- Code of Conduct and child safeguarding
- Project monitoring and evaluation.

8. Discuss with Save the Children and partner staff their **capacity-building needs** around accountability, participation and child safeguarding, and make a plan. You could use the accountability assessment and planning tool on page 5.

9. Staff work-plans need to reflect the amount of staff time required to carry out all the aspects of accountability to children and communities. Setting a **performance objective** on accountability for programme staff will help make it happen.



See guide for suggested roles and responsibilities on accountability on page 65.

10. Set up a MEAL system – consider including in the M&E system indicators to help monitor our accountability to children and communities, looking at how good we are at information-sharing, participation and complaints handling, and upholding our commitment to keep children and other vulnerable community members safe from harm.

continued on next page

Programme set up

continued

11. Exit planning. Considering when and how we will close a programme at the outset helps to ensure true ownership of the programme by its stakeholders, helps to reduce dependency on Save the Children, and helps to avoid uncertainty and misunderstandings.

Exit planning involves meeting with key stakeholders (particularly children, men and women living in poverty, partners and, where appropriate, local government) to agree on:

- expected outcomes and timeframe for Save the Children's withdrawal
- how the capacity of local partners, allies, children and community members will be developed throughout the programme so that they are able to take over responsibility when Save the Children withdraws
- who will take over key elements of the programme when Save the Children withdraws and what assets will be transferred with this responsibility.

Programme implementation

1. Regularly share information – based on the community's preferences, make a plan with partners for regular information-sharing (which tools to use with which audiences, who will update, how often, visibility in the community, etc.).

2. Set up a complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) – you will need to:

- Consult with children and communities on the most appropriate way they would like to share complaints and feedback
- Design a process and a system for recording and responding – ensuring it includes a process for fast-tracking urgent or sensitive complaints, such as abuse or exploitation
- Assign roles and responsibilities
- Train staff and, possibly, community volunteers
- Inform children and adults about the CFM – this should be part of our larger social mobilisation
- Record complaints and responses
- Review your CFM database/records to inform programme improvements – present complaints analysis to programme team on a monthly basis and SMT on a bi-monthly basis and include in programme reports.



See guide on how to set up a CFM in 10 steps on page 20.



See film on setting up CFMs. Available in the DVD at the back of this guide or online: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXvln3rddmA>

continued on next page

Programme implementation

continued

3. Make it easy for children and adults, especially from marginalised groups, to be **involved in the project** by carefully considering activity places, times and formats.

4. Involve people in making decisions about the project, such as deciding on the beneficiary selection criteria, the kinds of activities, and the timing and place of the activities we will be implementing.

5. Regularly listen to people

- Regularly monitor the programme – ask children and adults involved in the programme their impression of progress and the impact of the project; ask them how well are we sharing information, handling complaints, working with them in partnership and upholding the commitments of our Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy
 - Invite children and community members to take part in project monitoring
 - Take time to reflect on programme implementation with partners and staff
 - Based on community feedback, make necessary changes
 - Provide regular reports on performance and project finances to the community
 - Share results of project evaluations with the community in accessible formats.
-

Programme exit

Key things to consider during **closure of your programme** are:

- Communicating with stakeholders about when, why and how you will be closing your programme, and who they should contact once Save the Children has left
 - Handing over to communities, partners or government some aspects of the programme that might continue
 - Handing over assets to Save the Children or key stakeholders
 - Managing programme staff towards the end of their contracts
 - Accounting and reporting
 - Identifying, documenting and sharing lessons learned.
-

3 INFORMATION SHARING

3 INFORMATION-SHARING

OUR PRINCIPLES

We are committed to providing **timely, relevant and clear information** about our organisation and the work we do with children, communities, and partner organisations.

We need to make sure we share this information in **languages, formats and media that can be easily understood** by the children and communities we work with.

When we work with partners, we first need to share this information with them and make clear to them our expectations on information-sharing with communities in our partnership agreements.

SHARING INFORMATION WITH PARTNERS, CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES



On pages 18–19 is a checklist of the information you need to share with partners, children and communities. Go through the checklist and tick to see if you are sharing this information, and any gaps you need to address.

Remember – in order to be able to share this information with partners, children and communities, our staff will need answers to the questions on pages 18–19. Therefore, we need to make sure that they have access to this information and can comfortably communicate about it with partners, children and communities.

THINGS YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT

- How can you make sure that information is available and accessible to all members of the community?
- How will you give information? Verbally, in meetings and/or in written form?
- How will you display information? Using maps, pictures, pie charts (for project finances) and photos is a good way of presenting information to people who may not be able to read.
- How will you update the information, and how regularly?
- How will you make information child friendly? There are lots of examples of fun, innovative ways to involve children in preparing and presenting information to others in their communities. They can also learn valuable skills through being involved.
- How can you help children to understand why it's important that we share information with them? How can you make the term 'accountability' relevant and engaging for children and their communities?
- How can you encourage children to ask questions about the information we give, or to give us feedback?

Remember – the children and communities we work with have a right to this information.

CHECKLIST FOR SHARING INFORMATION

I. INFORMATION ABOUT SAVE THE CHILDREN AND/OR PARTNER ORGANISATION

- What is our vision and mission?
- Why are we here?
- Where do we get our money?
- Staff Code of Conduct – behaviours you can expect from our staff
- Our commitment to keep children safe, both in terms of how our staff conduct themselves, and how we implement our programmes
- How to complain or raise concerns about our activities:
 - Why we set up a complaints mechanism
 - What can people complain about?
 - Who can complain?
 - How and where?
 - Timeframe of response
 - Policy of non-retaliation and confidentiality

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

- Project name
- Target locations and how they were selected
- Timeframe (start and end dates)

- Names of partner organisations
- Project goals and activities
- Finances:
 - Who funds this project?
 - How much will the project contribute to your community?
 - What will the community agree to contribute (in cash or in kind)?
- Who will benefit from this project and how we propose to select them
- How many people can the project help?
- What will people receive and when (the deliverables)?
- Information on significant changes to the original project
- Progress reports – what is the progress this month and what is the plan for next?
- Summaries of evaluations

3. INFORMATION ON HOW PEOPLE CAN BE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

- Dates and locations of key activities, including meetings
- Current agreement with the community on its involvement
- How we propose to monitor and evaluate what we achieve together
- Contact details for general queries

HOW TO SHARE INFORMATION ON PROJECT BUDGETS

HOW MUCH FINANCIAL INFORMATION SHOULD YOU PROVIDE?

We want to help people understand what we have spent on their behalf. So the information you share should be relevant to local people about the activities you are carrying out in their village or area. It is good practice to provide information about:

- what the materials cost us
- what the community is contributing
- what Save the Children is contributing
- where we get our money.

HOW SHOULD YOU PRESENT THE INFORMATION?

You can summarise expenditure by activity, geographical area or budget line – or a combination of these. Present figures using local currency. Set out the amount that was budgeted for each activity, area or budget line, as well as what was actually spent. Good practice suggests that full project costs should be made available. But use your judgement. It may not be practical to publish sensitive salary information, for instance.

You can present expenditure in a spreadsheet, or as a narrative report. Keep the information clear and concise. It is important that you present it in ways that children and other members of the community can easily understand. We have lots of good examples of child-friendly budgets, so contact the Accountability to Children team to find out more.

Remember – sharing direct project costs is a good first step to financial transparency.

WHY SHOULD WE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON BUDGETS?

1. **It increases ownership of the project:** if communities know how much things cost, they are more likely to get involved with activities and even help us protect project assets. We should welcome questions and suggestions about project finances, as they are a form of participation.
2. **It challenges notions of dependency,** as it allows us to say: “This is how much we bring. What will you, the community, contribute?”
3. **It increases the quality of our work:** by being transparent, we involve communities and partners more.
4. **It increases our credibility** and trust with the community.
5. **It promotes citizens’ rights and a culture of transparency:** if we can share information regularly about our budgets and expenditure, it will encourage citizens to exercise their right to ask other public institutions to do the same, including national and local government, churches and schools.

6. **It promotes value for money:** publishing or sharing information on project finances should help us try to be more cost-effective.
7. **It helps to prevent fraud:** if we know we are sharing budget information, we will be more careful about our financial processes.
8. **It is a learning opportunity:** discussing project finances will help us learn from communities.
9. **It increases our competitiveness:** donors increasingly encourage financial transparency.
10. **It helps us meet international quality standards** as set out by SPHERE, HAP (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership) International, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Code of Conduct.

BUT, WHAT IF...?

You might come up against some barriers or challenges to being transparent about project finances. Below, we set out some 'what if' questions, and provide answers to help you overcome these challenges.

WHAT IF...

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT THIS?

The community

challenges what we are spending or doing?

"If we provide budget information to communities, they will scrutinise our budgets and will ask more questions. They may even say 'Give us all the money instead of spending it on overhead costs.'"

- Programme staff and staff from partner organisations might be asked difficult questions about our budgets and expenditure. Finance managers and other relevant staff (eg, procurement officers) need to work with programme staff and partners so that they are able to answer difficult or challenging questions.
- Explain that our procurement procedures are designed to make the best use of available resources. Point out all the behind-the-scenes work that needs to be done to carry out the project.
- Ask finance staff to come to community meetings at the planning stage to explain what's involved in budgeting for project activities. This will give them the chance to get out of the office and be more engaged with project activities and beneficiaries.

The community does not like or accept the donor(s) involved?

In these cases, we should share this concern with the donor, who may agree not to advertise their name in branding. This way, we could still share information on the project budget, but without disclosing the donor's name. We must always try to use our reputation and track record to help build rapport with communities.

continued on next page

WHAT IF...**WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT THIS?** *continued***There are low literacy levels within the community?**

Spend some time with the community to see which methods of sharing information might work best for them. You could try presenting information about budgets and expenditure visually – using pie charts and other graphics – or verbally.

Security issues mean it is not advisable to share budget information?

In some cases, it may be inadvisable to share any budget information. Discuss the situation in your programme within the team and consult relevant security staff. Then you can make an informed decision as to what information is appropriate to share (if any).

Our internal culture and procedures make it difficult to share budget information?

- Finance departments need to work more closely with programme staff, sharing brief financial information updates regularly. If programme officers do not have access to this information, they will not be able to share it with communities.
- Within the programme team, talk about why we want to share financial information with communities right from the start (see ‘Why should we provide information on budgets?’ section), when we meet with partners and communities to discuss the planned project.
- Financial transparency should be assessed as part of the internal audit. Auditors should ask communities how much they know about how project funds are spent.
- Agree with donors that financial information will be shared with communities as appropriate.

Remember – the communities we work with have a right to this information. We should have nothing to hide.

EXAMPLE INFORMATION SHARING TEMPLATE

Complete the information sheet template on pages 23–24. You can use it to guide your information sharing in community meetings, you can leave copies of it with community members, and you can put it up on an information board. Remember to keep it precise and clear. Translate the headings into the local language and present the information in the local languages.

For largely illiterate communities, you will need to consult with the community and also observe to see which methods of sharing information would work best for them. In such contexts, you could still leave copies of this sheet with literate members of the community.

INFORMATION SHEET TEMPLATE

I. INFORMATION ABOUT SAVE THE CHILDREN

What are our vision, mission and values?

Why are we here?

Where do we get our money?

What conduct can you expect of our staff, towards children and other community members?

How to complain or raise concerns about our activities:

Why we set up a complaints mechanism: _____

What can people complain about? _____

Who can complain? _____

How and where: _____

Timeframe of response: _____

Policy of non-retaliation – people who provide feedback and complain will not lose access to our services.

Confidentiality – we will do our best to keep the names of the complainants confidential, especially in cases of sensitive complaints.

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project name:

Target locations:

Timeframe (start and end dates):

Names of partner organisations:

Project goals and activities:

Finances:

A. How much will the project contribute to your community?

B. What will the community agree to contribute (in cash or in kind)?

How we propose to choose target groups:

What will people receive and when (the deliverables)?

Information on significant changes to the original project:

Progress report – what is the progress this month and what is the plan for next month?

Summaries of evaluations:

3. INFORMATION ON HOW PEOPLE CAN BE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

Dates and locations of key activities, including meetings:

Current agreement with the community on their involvement:

How we propose to monitor and evaluate what we achieve together:

Contact details for general queries:

4 HANDLING FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

4 HANDLING FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

DEFINITIONS AND KEY ISSUES

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction. It is a specific grievance of anyone who believes that the organisation has failed to meet a stated commitment, or of anyone who has been negatively affected by Save the Children programmes or its staff. A complaint primarily includes concerns about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by Save the Children or its staff and representatives, which include partner staff, volunteers, contractors/consultants, community committee members or anybody directly involved in the delivery of our work.

A complaint to which we can respond has to be about an action for which Save the Children is responsible, or one which is within our sphere of influence.

Remember – a complaint requires a response.

Feedback is a positive or negative statement of opinion about our programmes and the behaviour of our staff and representatives shared for information or action but not with the intention of lodging a formal complaint. Depending on the nature or seriousness of the feedback, however, the organisation itself may need to take the same action as if the feedback were a complaint.

Non-sensitive and sensitive complaints: A **non-sensitive complaint** concerns implementation of activities or programme decisions taken by Save the Children or partners that can be handled with knowledge of the programme and common sense.

A **sensitive complaint** includes issues related to:

- Corruption, misuse of project funds or materials
- Any violation of the Child Safeguarding Policy or serious violation of the Code of Conduct, such as any form of exploitation, abuse or harassment (including sexual, physical and verbal) of beneficiaries by staff
- Discrimination of beneficiaries on the basis of race, gender, creed, religion, sexual orientation, age, etc.
- Other complaints judged as serious by Save the Children programme/complaint-handling staff, such as violation of local laws, concerns around safety or harm of children or other beneficiaries arising from the way the organisation is carrying out its work.

Most of the sensitive complaints will need to be handled according to relevant existing policies and their reporting mechanisms, such as the Fraud and Dishonesty policy and Child Safeguarding policy, so that confidentiality and fast-tracking can be undertaken.

CATEGORIES OF COMPLAINTS

Below are categories of complaints to help country offices record complaints in a unified manner:

Please note that requests for information and assistance have been identified as categories, in order to make it easy for country offices to record such issues coming through our complaints and feedback mechanisms.

CATEGORY

Category 1	Request for information
Category 2	Request for assistance
Category 3	Minor dissatisfaction with activities (eg, missing items from kits, lack of follow-up)
Category 4	Major dissatisfaction with activities (eg, issues about our programme approach, poor-quality items, beneficiary selection issues, safety of children/adults being put at risk)
Category 5 (require fast-tracking approach) – country office child safeguarding reporting procedures OR fraud protocols should be implemented	Breaches of Save the Children's Code of Conduct and/or Child Safeguarding Policy (eg, allegations of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct by Save the Children or partner staff or representatives, including fraud; theft; corruption – such as misappropriation of goods or requests for payment; verbal, physical or sexual abuse; sexual exploitation of beneficiaries; or behaviour that could be perceived to be abusive, such as spending too much time alone with a child with whom we are working)
Category 6 (require fast-tracking approach) – country office local procedures for reporting child safeguarding concerns should be implemented	Allegations of child abuse or sexual exploitation by non-Save the Children staff or representatives – ie, a member of the community, staff of other NGOs or the UN.

While categories 3 and 4 are likely to cover non-sensitive issues, categories 5 and 6 are sensitive complaints and will likely require confidentiality and fast-tracking. Some issues falling under category 4 (major dissatisfaction with activities) may also be sensitive, especially if they are about discrimination, safety issues, or issues that put staff or a representative in a difficult position.

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK MECHANISM

A complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM)² is a set of clear, transparent procedures that provide children and communities with access to a safe, confidential means of voicing complaints on issues within the control of the agency. A complaints and feedback mechanism may incorporate multiple entry points – ie, ways in which the complaints can be submitted.

The country office will likely have multiple entry points (mechanisms to submit complaints) in place to enable soliciting of feedback and complaints from various community groups. The feedback and complaints mechanism should complement regular programme monitoring and evaluation activities, and be appropriate to the local context, building on respected local ways of giving feedback. For example, in communities where oral communication is prioritised, Save the Children staff may take oral feedback and later document it within the Save the Children system.

WHO CAN COMPLAIN?

Children and communities involved or not involved in our programmes. Everyone affected by our programmes or programme decisions can submit complaints and feedback.

HOW TO RECORD COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK?

Country offices are encouraged to use the *Complaints and Feedback Database format* (see page 41) and the **Complaints and Feedback Recording Form** (see page 39) to help with proper recording and analysis of complaints.

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS AND REPORTING ON CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Country programmes are obliged to develop internal procedures for rapidly reporting and responding to concerns of child abuse, sexual exploitation or other serious harm. These procedures generally involve referring the concern immediately to a child safeguarding focal point, or even to the country director. This system will not change with the establishment of CFMs; rather, the CFMs will simply become another (very important) entry point for such concerns to be raised. It is important that child safeguarding concerns do not get stuck in the CFM system, as this could have serious consequences for the child involved. CFM staff, therefore, need to be well-informed about the Child Safeguarding Policy and the child safeguarding reporting structure in their country, including who their child safeguarding focal point is so they can immediately refer any concerns to this person. Likewise, such concerns need to be handled with the utmost confidentiality and on a strict 'need-to-know' basis, for the protection of the child and everyone else involved. It is recommended that the mechanisms for referring child safeguarding concerns from the CFM to the child safeguarding focal point be discussed and agreed at the time the CFM is being established.

² Please note that the term complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) in this guide is used interchangeably with complaints and response mechanism (CRM), widely used in our organisation and in the sector.

CAN PARTNER STAFF USE THE COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK MECHANISM?

It is critical that our partner staff also have a means to communicate their feedback and complaints about our partnership and programme management-related issues to us. The programme and its partners should agree on a mechanism for sharing feedback and complaints with each other, and should stipulate this in their partnership agreement. This should be separate from the mechanism set up for use by children and communities.

In communities where we implement programmes through partners, we will need to support our partners to set up and manage complaints and feedback mechanisms, and ensure feedback data is shared on a regular basis with relevant Save the Children staff. This will enable us to take action where appropriate, make changes and communicate learnings.

HOW TO SET UP A COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK MECHANISM IN TEN STEPS

We are committed to giving children and their communities the chance to raise concerns or complaints, and to respond to them appropriately. Here are ten steps to help you set up a complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM).



Don't forget to watch our film, included in this pack, which explains the ten steps below using an example CFM in Dadaab, Kenya.

1 SECURE ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND RESOURCES

Senior management and field staff must support the idea of a CFM. Staff responsible for handling complaints must dedicate time for the task, and may need training. In addition, some financial resources will need to be made available to set up the CFM.

2 CONSULT CHILDREN, CARERS AND PARTNERS

Ask children, their carers and our partner organisations for their views about how we should get feedback and handle complaints. Find out about the traditional mechanisms for handling complaints that already exist and explore the possibility of using them in the project.

Make sure children and the community know what they can complain about. We can deal with complaints about:

- the project (what we do and how we do it)
- the behaviour of our staff and representatives (including partner staff, contractors/consultants, and community committee members).

Here are some mechanisms (entry points) children and adults may prefer:

- a suggestions box
- a complaints desk
- a telephone hotline

- regular 'open house' meetings to receive feedback and complaints
- setting up a community engagement committee – comprised of respected community members who receive concerns or complaints on our behalf and share them with us.

Remember – the process you design must protect children and others who may complain.

3 DESIGN THE PROCESS FOR COMPLAINTS HANDLING AND AGREE WHO WILL DO WHAT, WHEN AND HOW

Process: the project team need to agree how the CFM will work in practice. This will mean thinking about the scope of the mechanism (see Step 2), how to ensure the safety of the complainant, how to handle allegations of abuse, and the referral (cases outside of our mandate that we will need to refer to local authorities or other agencies) and appeals processes (what happens if the person making the complaint is not happy with the outcome). For the referral process, consult your local procedures for child safeguarding.

Would children or adults face any repercussions if they were to voice concerns of a sensitive nature, for instance? Your CFM must include *principles of confidentiality and non-retaliation*. Confidentiality means the name of the complainant and the person they complain about will be kept confidential by those involved in handling the complaint. The *principle of non-retaliation* means that the person will not lose access to our services as a result of complaining about our programme or staff.

Roles: the team also needs to decide on roles – who will receive and register complaints, who will investigate and how, who will respond, and by when.

4 SET UP THE COMPLAINTS-HANDLING INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE COMMUNITY AND TRAIN STAFF

Make access to the complaints processes as easy and safe as possible:

- Make it possible for children and their carers in remote locations to be able to complain.
- Receive complaints both verbally and in writing.
- Make it possible to file a complaint on behalf of somebody else (whether owing to illiteracy, fears for personal safety, inability to travel, etc).

Ensure that all staff know about and are trained to implement the CFM.

Ensure that staff are aware of Save the Children's staff Code of Conduct, Child Safeguarding Policy, and local procedures for reporting child safeguarding concerns.

Remember – if you're using a complaints box, put our logo on it (security permitting), the project name, and the scope of the mechanism (what people can complain about).

5 MAKE SURE PEOPLE KNOW HOW THE CFM WORKS

Children, their parents and carers need to know how to use the CFM. You could put up posters on community noticeboards, or hold a meeting to let people know how to complain. Clearly state what people can complain about.

Tell people how long each stage of the process should take. How often will the complaints box be checked? How many days before we will give an initial response to a complaint? And describe the appeals process.

6 RECORD THE COMPLAINT

Complaints should be recorded on a complaints form, in a logbook, or on a database. After recording the complaint, a member of staff should complete the relevant forms (eg, child safeguarding or fraud incident), as appropriate.

As you record the complaints, it is good practice to categorise them in order to make it easy to analyse trends afterwards. Consider using the categories outlined on page 26.

Keep complaint files confidential. Only those responsible for dealing with complaints should have access to these files. It is vital that complainants have complete trust in the process, and that their right to confidentiality is respected at all times.

Remember – confidentiality does not only protect the complainant, but also our staff, who may have a complaint lodged against them.

7 ACKNOWLEDGE THE COMPLAINT, VERBALLY OR IN WRITING

Let the person who made the complaint know that you have received it. Your verbal or written acknowledgement should include the date the complaint was made, the person to whom the complaint was made, a brief outline of the nature of the complaint, the date by which the person can expect a response, and how to appeal against the outcome of the complaint.

8 RESOLVE THE COMPLAINT

Resolve informally: most complaints can be resolved quickly and informally with common sense and knowledge of the programme. Staff must be encouraged and supported to do this wherever possible. Even if a complaint is resolved immediately, it is still good practice to record the complaint in the complaint database or logbook, and to note the outcome.

Resolve formally: some complaints, especially where they allege staff misconduct, cannot be resolved quickly or easily. Misconduct includes behaviour that is not in line with our staff code of conduct and child safeguarding policy. It is good practice to involve staff (or partners or community members) not directly linked to the project to carry out a formal investigation. Some complaints may need to be 'escalated', so that they are investigated at a more senior level or by those with specialist expertise.

If a complaint concerns possible abuse or exploitation of a child or other beneficiary **by a staff member or representative** of Save the Children or another organisation,

immediately report as per your local internal reporting procedures – eg, inform the Country Director or designate. Do not try to investigate the concern yourself, do not try to find evidence, and do not discuss it with others. Simply report it.

If a complaint concerns serious child abuse **by a member of the community**, or professional abuse such as sexual exploitation by staff from another NGO or the UN, report this to your local child safeguarding focal point, who should then proceed as per your internal local procedures, such as referring the case to relevant local or agency authorities (again, as soon as possible).

Remember – Save the Children staff and representatives have a mandatory requirement to report any case where they suspect, are told, or receive information that a child may be experiencing abuse or exploitation of any type. Failing to report concerns or allegations is considered to be a violation of the Code of Conduct/Child Safeguarding Policy.

9 RESPOND TO THE PERSON WHO COMPLAINED

Try to respond to the person or people who made the complaint within ten working days of it being received (or within your agreed timeframe, if this is different). If you are unable to do so, you must let them know why. You should update them on the status of the complaint, and let them know when they can expect to receive a response.

Maintain oversight of how the complaints process is working. Always inform children, their carers, and partner organisations of their **right to appeal** to the Country Director or other appointed person. Remember:

- **Appeals** will be considered when the complainant is highly dissatisfied with the complaint-handling process, or the response, or when the complainant has produced new evidence which s/he previously could not access or was not available.
- A review committee (ideally different from the investigation committee) will decide to accept or reject the appeal. If accepted, it might ask for a reinvestigation by the existing investigation committee, or it may re-constitute one.
- The response will be communicated to the complainant; more than three appeals from the same complainant/s would not be entertained.

10 RECORD THE RESPONSE INTO YOUR DATABASE, MONITOR YOUR CFM AND SHARE LEARNING

The programme officer should monitor the number and type of complaints that are being received. If you are not getting complaints, you should evaluate whether children and the community found the CFM easy to use, and whether your efforts to inform them about it worked well (and if not, why not).

Tracking the number and types of complaints you get will help you make changes in your current and future programmes, so that you do not keep getting similar complaints from the community. You should also share learning as appropriate with colleagues in-country, within your region or more broadly across the organisation.

HOW TO CONSULT WITH CHILDREN AND ADULTS ON COMPLAINTS-HANDLING

In order to set up an effective complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) we need to consult with children and adults to find out how they would like to share with us any concerns or complaints about our work.

Ideally, this needs to be done at the outset of the programme, while we are setting up the project in communities. The consultation on how people would like to share feedback and complaints with us can be easily made an agenda item in one of the initial meetings with communities. Alternatively, separate meetings can be organised for a more detailed discussion on what the mechanism might look like, especially in communities where complaints handling might be a new or a sensitive issue. We have designed the story-telling tool below for use with children or adults to have that more detailed discussion and to help you set up your CFM.

PREPARING FOR YOUR CONSULTATION

The session should only take between 60 and 90 minutes with a group of 10–12 children or adults. It's a good idea to use this tool early on, when you're setting up a project. You can adapt the story to your own context, but don't use real names (of people or organisations). You could also use puppets or find other child-friendly ways of telling the story.

When you're planning this session, use the *Practice Standards in Children's Participation* to help you achieve best practice. Children's participation should be relevant and voluntary. Depending on the context, you may wish to obtain participation consent forms from children and their parents/carers to attend this consultation. Involve children from a broad range of backgrounds wherever possible. Use methods appropriate to the evolving capacities of the children taking part.

You'll need an experienced facilitator, and someone to take notes (see the separate 'Form for recording details of consultation on handling complaints'). Make sure the note-taker writes down what participants say, rather than his or her interpretation of what has been said.

RUNNING THE CONSULTATION



Step 1: Introduce participants

(10 mins)

Here, you can use any fun introduction game or song that you know for children to introduce themselves. Here's a suggestion:

Name and action – ask the children to stand in a circle. One child says their name and makes a movement or a sound. Then everyone else in the circle shouts that child's name and repeats the movement and/or sound. Then move on to the next child in the circle.



Step 2: Explain why you are here

(5 mins)

Explain that the aim of the session is to consult children about how we handle feedback and complaints about our project or how our staff work with them.

Explain that you will tell a story, then discuss it together. This will help us to set up a mechanism for handling any complaints about the project we are planning to carry out. We are doing this because we want children to know how they can tell us if they are unhappy about the project and how it might be affecting their lives.

Explain to the children that:

- This is not an evaluation of the project or the organisation.
- We need their consent to participate in this session (even if their parents and guardians have given consent for them to attend the meeting). Their participation is important to us, but they are free to leave whenever they want.
- We would like to take notes from our discussion – is this OK? We won't write who said what, just what is said.
- There is no right or wrong answer. What is important is that the children say what they think, not what they think we want to hear.
- If any child wants to tell us something that they don't want other people to know, please tell us this is the case.
- We will try to speak clearly. If there is anything you don't understand, please ask us to explain it again.



Step 3: Tell the story

(5 mins)

You can use this story or adapt it to your local context:

"Once upon a time, there was a village close to a big town. One organisation was working on a project with children in the village who were out of school, helping them get back to school. Part of the project involved giving school kits to children.

"When the project began, staff from the organisation did not explain the project very well to the community, or ask them who the poorest families were, so some of the children who needed the kits were not included. Also, some people on the community committee set up to support the project asked for money to put people's names on the list to receive things. One of the staff of the organisation seemed to be touching and looking at the boys and girls in a bad way.

"When the day came for the school kits to be given out, nobody seemed to know where or what time the kits would be distributed. When people saw that the distribution had started, word quickly spread and they came along. But there was a lot of confusion. The staff doing the distribution became unhappy and were shouting at the children and pushing some of them. No one seemed to be happy about how the distribution was organised. In the end, many of the children from the poorest families did not get a school kit."

Step 4: Discuss the issues raised by the story and by current complaints handling practices



(20 mins)

Ask probing questions to bring out the main issues:

- Why were children unhappy with this project?
- What could have been done differently?

Let the children themselves identify what went wrong, in terms of staff not sharing information with the community on a regular basis, not involving the community in assessing who needed help the most, corruption by the community committee, and staff misbehaviour. Be aware that children may not find it easy to talk openly about issues like corruption, and physical and sexual abuse.

Referring back to the story, ask the children these questions:

- If this happened in your community, would you say something about it?
- Who would you talk to about the things in the project that were making you unhappy?
- Would you say something to us, as an organisation?
- How would you tell us what you were unhappy about?
- What might stop you from telling us you were unhappy?
- If you think there is something wrong with the project we are carrying out now, what do you do? Who do you tell? (Here, you may be able to explore some of the traditional ways of handling complaints in the community and whether they would work for the project.)

Remember – if any child or adult would like to share any complaint about our project or disclose any form of abuse or concern at any point during the activity, do not ask further questions or discuss it, but ask them to share it with you at the end of the session. Brief your fellow facilitators to do the same. Any concerns that a child has been, or is being, abused must be reported according to your local internal child safeguarding procedures. Ensure that *before* you go into this type of a meeting with children, you have consulted with your child safeguarding focal point about how to deal with disclosures of this nature.

As the children will have been sitting down for about 40 minutes by now, and as the next step is really important, you may want to play a five-minute game here. Here's a suggestion:

Animal noise – all children are given a piece of paper with an animal on it (eg, cow, dog, cat or duck). They have to close their eyes and move around the room making their animal noise until they form a group of children who are the same animal.



Step 5: Setting up your complaints response mechanism

(30 mins)

Explain that you are here today talking to the children about these issues because Save the Children wants them to be able to tell us if they are not happy about the project we are carrying out in their village. And we want to make sure that children know *how* to tell us – that is, what mechanism we will use to handle any complaints or to respond to concerns.

- So, how would you feel most comfortable telling us about the things you are unhappy with? (Let the participants come up with different ideas and continue with the questions below.)

Discuss these points with the children:

- The scope of the mechanism – what can children complain about? (Here, take their ideas but reiterate that we can only respond to complaints about things we have control over – our project and the behaviour of our staff).
- How will it work in practice?
 - How will complaints be recorded? If there's a logbook, who will keep it?
 - Who will be involved in responding to complaints?
 - What will the complaints mechanism be called?
 - Timeframes (if someone makes a complaint, when can they expect a response?)
 - Access: how can we make the mechanism easy to use for everyone in the community? (Here, you can ask them to think about people who are illiterate or old.)
- Of all the ideas the children have suggested so far (recap all of them), if they were to pick the best two, which ones would they choose? (In doing this, they should consider what would work best for them, but also for other children and for people in the community who are not here today.)
- Finally, ask the children if they feel they could use these two chosen methods to tell us about any sensitive issues, like corruption or abuse. If not, how could we help them feel able to report such issues to Save the Children?



Step 6: Close the consultation, and thank the participants

(10 mins)

Thank the participants for taking part and giving their views and suggestions. Remind them that there were no right or wrong answers. Explain that we will use their ideas and comments to set up a complaints mechanism for the project. And we will be back in touch soon to tell them how the complaints mechanism will work.

You could end the session with a short game. Here's a suggestion:

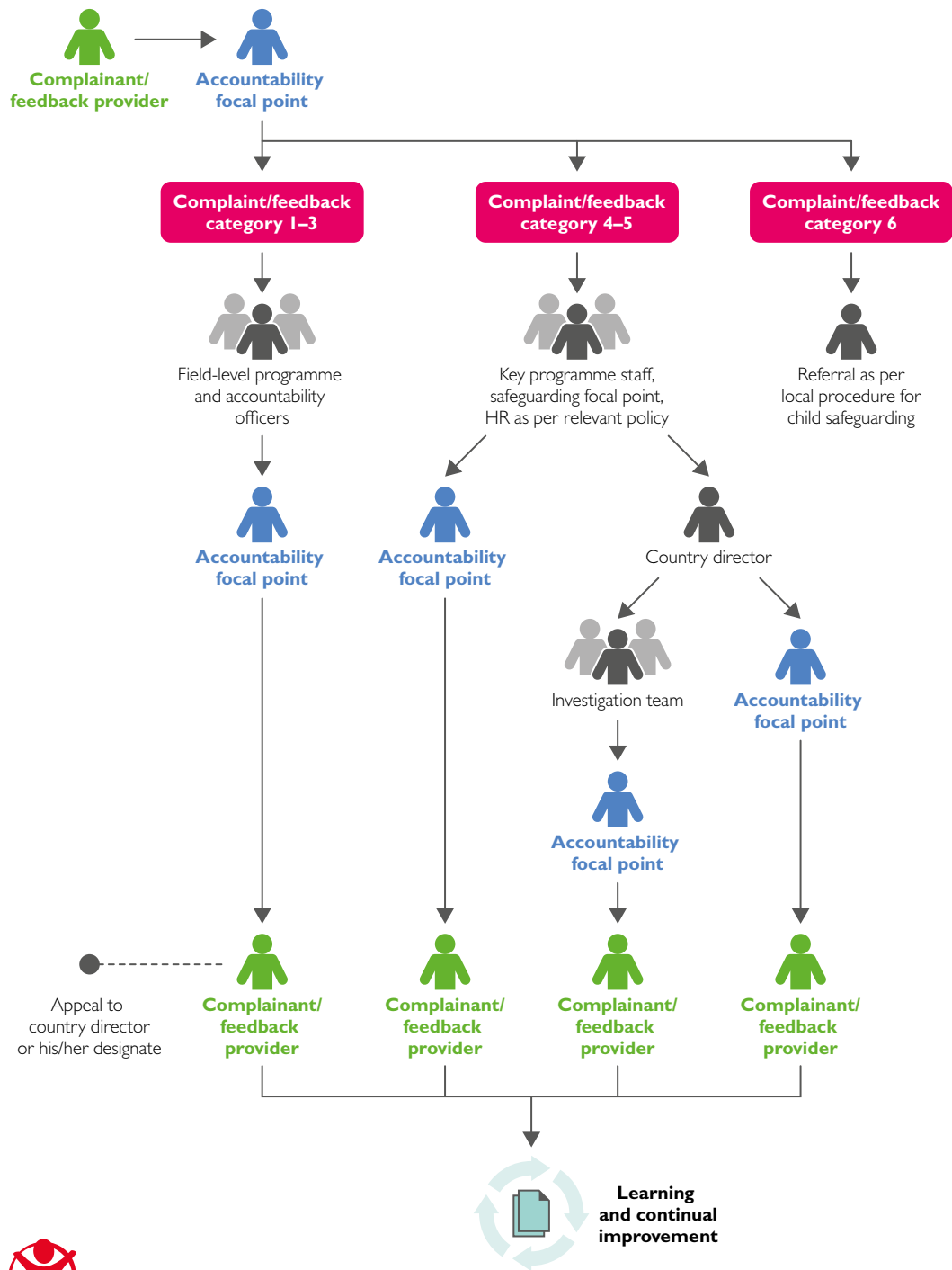
Paper, scissors, stone – form two teams. Each team decides if they are paper, scissors or stone. The teams face each other and show their symbol on the count of three, using their hands (paper: hold your hand flat; scissors: point your first two fingers forward like a pair of scissors; stone: clench your fist).

Paper beats rock, rock beats scissors, and scissors beat paper.

COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK HANDLING FLOWCHART

On pages 37–8 is an example flow chart that tries to explain who should be involved in handling different categories of complaints. In each of your programmes where you might be piloting CFMs, the flow chart might look slightly different. If, for example, our partners are managing the CFM, we should support them in identifying roles and responsibilities and drawing a specific flow chart. Minor and non-sensitive issues can be handled by a committee of field-level programme staff who know about the programme and the community context. For more major and sensitive issues, higher level programme managers may need to be involved. In highly sensitive and serious cases such as allegations of abuse or fraud (categories 5 and 6), the person who receives the complaint should get in touch with either the child safeguarding focal point or HR focal point, as relevant, or the Country Director, whichever is quicker. The person should not try to investigate the case, but just report it.

COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK HANDLING FLOW CHART



Complaints categories

Category 1

Request for information

Category 2

Request for assistance

Category 3

Minor dissatisfaction with activities,
eg missing items from kits, lack of follow-up etc

Category 4

Major dissatisfaction with activities,
eg poor quality items, beneficiary selection issues, safety of children/adults being put at risk (eg unsafe construction site etc)

Category 5

Breaches of Save the Children's Code of Conduct and/or Child Safeguarding Policy,
eg allegations of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct by Save the Children or partner staff or representatives, including fraud, theft, corruption (eg misappropriation of goods, requests for payment) or verbal, physical or sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of beneficiaries etc

Category 6

Allegations of child abuse or sexual exploitation of beneficiaries by non-Save the Children staff or representatives, ie a member of the community, staff of other NGOs or the UN

Notes

Categories 1-2 (Request for information or assistance) In most cases, the accountability focal point should be able to respond to those immediately as they are being shared. In some cases, s/he may need to share it or consult with other programme colleagues. It is not mandatory to record these categories in the complaints database.

Category 3 (Issues of minor dissatisfaction) will need to be taken to a small committee of programme officers who are familiar with the project and the community context to be able to come up with a response.

Category 4 (Issues of major dissatisfaction) may need to be brought to a higher level of programme staff to discuss and decide on a response to be delivered. This group might want to consult with the Country Director if and when necessary.

Category 5 (Breaches of our Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding policy) will need to be immediately brought to a higher level programme staff, child safeguarding focal point, and HR focal point as per relevant policy. Breaches of child safeguarding will be resolved as per our Global

Child Safeguarding Policy. Fraud or corruption issues will be dealt with as per Fraud and Corruption Policies. The Country Director will likely be involved in the resolution of such cases.

Category 6 (Allegations of abuse by other agency staff or community members) will be resolved as per local child safeguarding policy.

COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK RECORDING

This form has been designed to help our programme staff to start recording feedback and complaints that might be raised when in contact with community members. We know that this happens all the time, but in most cases, even some of the serious issues that we follow up on are not recorded. This form helps us start recording these issues.

Recording has two advantages: firstly, it helps ensure that there is a follow up, that things do not slip; and secondly, it helps us look back over time at the series of issues that have been raised by the community, and at our responses and learnings.

Therefore, we want to encourage the use of this form by programme and partner staff who are in contact with communities. Issues that require a response – ie, complaints – have to be recorded. Please note that all staff using the form need to be properly oriented to our complaints categories and how the complaints-handling system works – ie, the roles and responsibilities identified for receiving, recording and resolving the complaints, and feedback in the country programme or a given project/programme.

They should especially know that in cases of categories 5 and 6, staff need to keep the issue confidential; they must not discuss it with anyone, nor investigate, but they must immediately inform the child safeguarding focal point or HR focal point. In the case of a child safeguarding concern, the child safeguarding focal point will complete a child safeguarding incident report form from the information provided by the person who has received and recorded the complaint, and they must immediately submit this form for action, as per the local reporting procedure. It is advisable for staff involved in managing complaints and feedback to talk to their child safeguarding focal point about the type of information that is requested on the child safeguarding incident report form, as this may help you to ask a few important questions of the complainant. Remember though, that when receiving a child safeguarding concern, you only need to get very basic information (who, what, where, when). Never ask “why”. Discretion should also be exercised when writing down sensitive information. Doing so publicly, for example, can cause distress/harm for the person who is disclosing, and can compromise the confidentiality of the disclosure.

If there are issues with recording the complaints into a complaints database, the recording form should be filed and kept as documentation. In such cases it would be good to record the resolution and closing of the case at the back of the form, to keep a paper trail and keep the files confidential, in a safe place where a limited number of people can have access.

COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK RECORDING FORM

Date: _____

No: _____

Name of complainant/feedback provider: _____

Sex: Male Female

Age: Child (under 18) Adult (18 and above)

Phone number: (if permitted and available; note – if the complaint involves the conduct of a staff member or is a child safeguarding concern, it is critical to be able to get in touch with the complainant.)

Location/address: _____

Name of project the complaint/feedback is related to: _____

Description of complaint/feedback: _____

Does the complainant want a response? Yes No

Complaint category: (Tick as appropriate)

- Category 1 Request for information
- Category 2 Request for assistance
- Category 3 Minor dissatisfaction with activities (eg, missing items from kits, lack of follow-up)
- Category 4 Major dissatisfaction with activities (eg, poor-quality items, beneficiary selection issues, safety of children/adults being put at risk – such as an unsafe construction site)
- Category 5 Breaches of Save the Children's Code of Conduct and/or Child Safeguarding Policy (eg, allegations of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct by Save the Children or partner staff or representatives including fraud; theft; corruption – such as misappropriation of goods, requests for payment; verbal, physical or sexual abuse; sexual exploitation of beneficiaries)
- Category 6 Allegations of child abuse or sexual exploitation of beneficiaries by non-Save the Children staff or representatives – ie, a member of the community, staff of other NGOs or the UN

I have explained the procedure of complaints handling and appeal procedures to the complainant and thanked them for sharing their concerns with us.

Name of recorder: _____ Signature: _____

Remember – *Categories 5 and 6 need to be referred immediately to the appropriate child safeguarding focal point or HR focal point as relevant, or to the Country Director, whichever is quicker. You should not try to investigate the case, but just report it.*

Complaint/feedback referred to:

Name: _____ Position: _____

Date of referral: _____



The suggestion box at Save the Children's centre in Helewyn refugee camp, Ethiopia.

PHOTO: OLIVIA ZINZAN/SAVE THE CHILDREN

COMPLAINTS DATABASE FORMAT

We have designed a database to help you record the complaints and feedback you receive from children and communities and other key stakeholders. This has been disseminated to country offices along with other key complaints handling tools and is available on the Accountability Conversations Resource CD at the back of this guide. It has an analysis sheet that will be automatically populated as you enter information into it, which will help you look back on a quarterly basis and reflect on the numbers of complaints we are receiving by category, age, sex and sector. However, we understand that in several of our partners and field operations it may not be possible to use this database due to lack of computers. In such cases, log books with similar fields can be used. The analysis will then have to be done manually.

Below are suggested fields which you can use to create your own complaints database in Excel or in a log book:

- Date complaint/feedback received
- Complaint/feedback channel (entry point)
- Name of complainant/feedback provider
- Sex
- Age
- Phone number (if permitted and available)
- Location/address
- Sector/programme
- Name of project/intervention
- Description of complaint
- Does the complainant want a response?
- Complaint/feedback category (1–6)
- Complaint/feedback referred to
- Description of resolution/action
- Staff member who communicated resolution to complainant
- Date closed

5 PARTICIPATION

5 PARTICIPATION

Participation is a fundamental principle of accountability. The HAP standard benchmark on participation says that it is our responsibility to enable children and communities and other key stakeholders to participate meaningfully at all stages of the programme cycle, right from the start, when we plan and design activities, as well as during implementation, and in monitoring and evaluation.

Participation takes different forms: child/community-led, collaborative, consultative and non-participation. Programmes may not consist of just one type of participation but may naturally involve a combination of the above.

Non-participation is negative and may be tokenistic or manipulative. However, the other three types are all equally as valid and are suited to different projects and stages of the programme cycle.

Consultative participation involves seeking the views of children and adults in order to increase their knowledge and understanding of their lives and the issues affecting them. It recognises their beliefs as well as their expertise, but is led and managed by us or our partners. Consultations may be used in project design and in monitoring and evaluation.

Collaboration involves children and adults partnering with our staff in some capacity, through which adults and children work in partnership to make decisions and implement projects. Children and adults may collaborate in the research phase of a project or during project implementation in initiatives such as school-based clubs.

Child/community-led participation is when children and adults are empowered to lead their own projects or initiatives, either individually or as part of their own organisations, clubs or parliaments. In this case, our role is about facilitation, offering advice and support.

In terms of our work on participation, we are looking at two issues: firstly, improving the scope of participation across the programme cycle; and secondly, improving the quality of participation. The following sections are designed to help you with tackling these issues.



Navy (centre, wearing a blue T-shirt) is a children's representative in Banteay Sleuk slum, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

HOW TO FACILITATE CHILDREN'S AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ACROSS THE PROGRAMME CYCLE

PROGRAMME DESIGN

Steps

When designing programmes we need to:

1. **Ensure understanding** – those involved in the programme design process need to understand what we mean by participation. Filling in the table below will help you to map your current practice to find any gaps, as well as strengths, to build upon.

	Not involved	Consulted	Collaborative	Led/managed by community
Situation analysis				
Design				
Implementation				
MEAL				

2. **Ensure a participatory approach:** give priority to the views of children, communities and partners in the design. Ask children what they consider to be their key issues/concerns and find out whether they agree with your priorities.

Children and young people

- **Evolving capacities:** when preparing for children's participation, consider the ages and background of children involved. Will activities need to be adapted to suit a younger age group? Can children read and write? Creative drawing and mapping can be a great alternative to any written tasks.
- **Balance of power:** consider how much power children and young people can/will have throughout the programme cycle – will the approach be **consultative, collaborative, child-led or a combination of these?** All approaches are equally valid but may suit different contexts or stages of the programme cycle. Non-participation or tokenistic participation must be avoided. You will need to **manage the expectations** of children and young people.
- Where possible, work with **existing groups of children** eg, children's clubs, committees for good representation and to consolidate existing work.

continued on next page

PROGRAMME DESIGN *continued*

- You could consult with children and young people, using participatory methods. Alternatively, consider ways young people can influence the work of the project team, eg, as a member of the team or as part of a **Children's Advisory Panel**.
- Ensure that you adhere to our Child Safeguarding Policy, procedures, Code of Conduct, Safe Child Participation and Ethical Guidelines.
- Consider what you can build into the project plan to support children's empowerment, self-esteem, capacity to lead change and in building new skills.
- Involve children in the MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning) plan.

Parents, carers and communities

- Consult with parents, carers and communities where possible, through focus group discussions or with existing community groups.
- Think about how you can ensure that child participation is recognised and adopted by other duty-bearers in the children's community.

Partners

- Involve partners in the project design as much as possible from the start. Ensure that partners are willing and have the skills necessary to work with children and have had any necessary training.

Timing: we strongly recommend that children, communities and partners are involved as early as possible, as this will positively impact on the outcome.

Suggested activities with children

Child-led fact finding (can also be used for MEAL)

- youth group discussions facilitated by youth facilitators
- child-led community surveys
- child reporting

Participatory learning and action (PLA)

- social mapping
 - community risk mapping
 - model building
 - role playing
 - ranking and scoring exercises
-

CONCEPT AND PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Steps

1. **Integrating into the narrative** – the proposal should state how we will promote a participatory approach, and how children and communities have been consulted or involved in the design of the project.
2. **Include children and communities in MEAL planning** – success indicators can be developed with children and communities or checked with them so that we know what success looks like for children. This will help us work with them to monitor progress and impact, and increase children's ownership and the sustainability of the project.
3. **Budgeting for participation** – this is critical to ensure the programme is participatory. Have you budgeted adequately to enable participation of children, adults and partners in activity design, implementation, and in monitoring and evaluation? (Consider resourcing for regular meetings, setting up community groups, special needs that may be required for children such as transport assistance, chaperoning requirements, weekend meetings, etc.)
4. **Checking the programme design** – once you have a draft programme design you should check it with children, young people and different groups of people from the community, in order to confirm its relevance and the robustness of the approach.

Suggested activities with children

Establish or work with a Children's Board

- prioritising
- ranking
- diamond matrix

Children's Charter

- children identify issues in their lives, networks already existing and their priorities in going forward
 - children select key points for action based on priorities identified and then grouped according to theme
 - the charter is used to develop an action plan
-

PROGRAMME SET UP

Steps

1. Ensure that our staff and partners are well informed about the following organisational information, so that they are able to share it with children and communities using appropriate formats/methods:

- Save the Children vision and mission
- All aspects of the project
- Basic Requirements for Children's Participation
- Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy

2. Planning participation

- a) How will children and communities participate at each stage of the project? What opportunities have you created for children and communities to work with you as you plan for their involvement?
- b) Gain informed consent from children.
- c) Identify appropriate representatives that adequately represent the interests of different vulnerable groups. Consider how inclusive your approach is. What can you do to ensure that the most marginalised can participate?
- d) Invite the local community, village committee, and local authorities to take part in developing criteria to select those participating in or benefiting from the project.
- e) Prepare parents, teachers and other adults who regularly interact with children by recognising and addressing any negative attitudes towards child participation, and respond to concerns. Gain parental consent.
- f) Partner agreements need to include expectations on:
 - Enabling children's and adults' participation
 - Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding
 - Project monitoring and evaluation
- g) Map how you currently meet the Basic Requirements on Child Participation (see page 52), then plan to address gaps. The action plan template below will help you to ensure that recommendations are followed up on:

Gap identified in meeting basic requirement	Action(s) required to ensure basic requirement can be met	Person/people responsible to take these actions	Deadline for completion of these actions

continued on next page

PROGRAMME SET UP *continued*

- h) Discuss with staff and partners their capacity building needs around participation and child safeguarding and make a plan.
- i) Staff work plans need to reflect the amount of staff time required to carry out all participation-related activities. Setting a performance objective on participation for programme staff will make this happen.
- j) Plan with children **what you will do when they reach the age of 18**. Think about and discuss how they can remain involved in the project, possibly as mentors or in a supportive role. Agree on this with children.

Exit planning involves meeting with key stakeholders (particularly children, communities, partners, and, where appropriate, local government) to agree together on:

- Expected outcomes of the programme and the timeframe for Save the Children's withdrawal.
- How the capacity of local partners, children and community members will be developed throughout the programme so that they are able to take over responsibility when Save the Children withdraws.
- Who will take over key elements of the programme when Save the Children withdraws and what assets will be transferred with this responsibility.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Steps

1. Make it easy for children, especially those from marginalised groups, to be involved in the project – consider activity places, times and formats.
2. Involve children in making decisions by working in consultation and/or collaboration with children's groups/clubs.
3. Regularly listen to children:
 - Monitor the programme – ask children and adults their impression of progress and impact of the project.
 - Facilitate children's involvement in monitoring.
 - Take time to reflect on programme implementation with partners and staff.
 - Based on your consultations, make necessary changes.

continued on next page

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION *continued*

4. Set up a Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) based on the children's preferences. You will need to:
- Design a process and a system for recording and responding, ensuring it includes a process for fast-tracking urgent or sensitive complaints such as abuse or exploitation.
 - Assign roles and responsibilities.
 - Train staff and possibly community volunteers.
 - Inform children about the CFM.
 - Record complaints and responses.
 - Monitor trends and make changes to programme, as necessary.



See film on setting up CFMs – available in the DVD at the back of this guide or online: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXvln3rddmA>

Suggested activities with children

Working with or setting up child-to-child clubs

- Activities such as promoting good hygiene and sanitation, and disaster risk reduction
- Mobilising peers about child rights
- Children set up sports and other clubs
- Children advocate for changes in schools
- To increase children's representation in existing community structures
- Using new technologies to increase awareness in society around children's issues. Technologies may include radio, SMS text messaging and social media (eg, Facebook, Twitter)

Confidential letter-writing

- Children write confidential letters regarding an issue or topic (eg, sexual health) to a fictional character or agony aunt.
 - The letters are presented to the children as a group and they decide on the best solution and response to problems and concerns.
 - Replies are then shared with the group.
-

MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

Steps

Ensure that the project M&E system has indicators on monitoring child participation.

- Regularly monitor the programme – ask children and adults involved in the programme their impression of progress and impact of the project. Be sure to ask questions about how safe the children feel in the programme – eg, whether there is anything about the programme interventions that might be putting them at risk of abuse or harm; and whether the conduct of staff, other adults or even other children is causing them any concern.
- Invite children and community members to take part in project monitoring.
- Take time to reflect on programme implementation with partners and staff.
- Based on community feedback, make necessary changes.
- Provide regular reports on performance and project finances to the community.
- Share results of project evaluations with the community in accessible formats.

See existing guidance on participatory approaches to M&E with children and communities at the Save the Children Resource Centre (<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/>)

For our framework and toolkit, developed to create a step change in the monitoring and evaluation of child participation, search on the Resource Centre for 'child participation framework' and 'child participation toolkit' respectively, and click the first result for each.

Suggested activities with children

Set up a Complaints and Feedback Mechanism

- suggestion boxes
- complaints desks
- telephone hotlines
- 'open house' meetings
- community engagement committees
- SMS text messaging

Stories of most significant change

- Children think about stories that demonstrate the most significant change (positive or negative).
- Stories can be told through pictures, poems, stories or letters.
- Interpret and discuss the stories in groups.
- Child-led documentation and dissemination of children's stories of most significant change to evaluate projects.

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MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

continued

Create, share, reflect, learn

Creative activities enabling children to participate in a process of sharing, reflection and learning.

- body mapping
- pots and beans
- circle analysis
- subjective scoring on self confidence
- H-assessment

PROGRAMME EXIT

Steps

Key things to consider when closing your programme:

- Communicating to children about when, why, and how you will be closing your programme, and who they should contact once you've left.
- Work with children to decide on how they want to approach the end of the programme – for example, do they want to form a children's club which can continue or are there child-led initiatives they can take forward?
- Handing over to communities, partners, or government some aspects of the programme that might continue.
- Share programme evaluations with children and communities.



PHOTO: JONATHAN HYANIS/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PARTICIPATION

In 2005 Save the Children developed seven practice standards for our child participation activities. However, in 2011 we were part of a broad consensus that child participation should in fact meet nine basic requirements. These were adopted into a General Comment on Article 12 of the UNCRC. Below are some questions to help you to assess whether you are meeting the nine Basic Requirements, and to help you identify necessary action to improve.

REQUIREMENT	QUESTIONS ON KEY INDICATORS	✓	ACTION NEEDED
1. Participation is transparent and informative	Do children have enough information about the programme to make an informed decision about whether and how they may participate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is information shared with children in child-friendly formats and languages that they understand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Are the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved clearly explained and understood?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Participation is voluntary	Is children's participation voluntary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Have children been given enough information and time to make a decision about whether they want to participate or not?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Do children know that they can withdraw (stop participating) at any time they wish, and that there will be no repercussions to them or their families?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Participation is respectful	Are children's own time commitments (to study, work, play) respected and taken into consideration?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Do the ways of working with children consider and build upon local cultural practices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Has support from key adults in children's lives (eg, parents, carers, teachers) been gained to ensure respect for children's participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

continued on next page

REQUIREMENT	QUESTIONS ON KEY INDICATORS	✓	ACTION NEEDED
<i>continued</i>			
4. Participation is relevant	Are the issues being addressed of real relevance to children's lives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Do children feel any pressure from adults to participate in activities that are not relevant to them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Participation is child-friendly	Are child-friendly approaches and methods used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Do the ways of working build children's self-confidence among girls and boys of different ages and abilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Are child-friendly meeting places used? Are such places accessible to children with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Participation is inclusive	Are girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds – including younger children, children with disabilities, children from different ethnic groups, adolescent mothers – given opportunities to participate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the process inclusive and non-discriminatory? And does it proactively develop strategies to ensure that marginalised children will be able to participate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Are children encouraged to address discrimination through their participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Participation is supported by training for adults	Are the staff from Save the Children and the NGO partners child friendly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Do staff have confidence to facilitate children's participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Are staff able to effectively support children's participation in the community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

continued on next page

REQUIREMENT	QUESTIONS ON KEY INDICATORS	✓	ACTION NEEDED
<i>continued</i>			
8. Safe and sensitive to risk	Do children feel safe when they participate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Have risks, and ways to keep children safe, been identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Do children know where to go for help if they feel unsafe while participating in the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Participation is accountable	Are children supported to participate in follow-up and evaluation processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Do adults take children’s views and suggestions seriously and act upon their suggestions or give explanations as to why suggestions were not acted upon?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Are children given feedback from Save the Children about any requested support needs and follow up?	<input type="checkbox"/>	



A sign created by children in Za’atari camp, Jordan, describing their rights and responsibilities.

6 ACCOUNTABILITY IN FUNDRAISING PROPOSALS

6 ACCOUNTABILITY IN FUNDRAISING PROPOSALS

INTEGRATING ACCOUNTABILITY EXCERPT INTO PROPOSALS: SAMPLE TEXT

Below is an example excerpt you may wish to use when writing proposals.

Mainstreaming accountability to communities: Save the Children and its partners are committed to mainstreaming principles of accountability throughout our programme in accordance with the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership Standard on accountability and quality management. Save the Children's Accountability to Children Breakthrough, which has been supporting X country office efforts to mainstream accountability and participation, will provide support to this programme.

We will promote accountability by ensuring that the target communities have access to information about Save the Children and partners, and to the planned activities, and by creating opportunities for those communities (including children) to participate in programming decisions and to provide us with feedback on the project interventions. In the programme set-up stage, we will hold consultations with groups of children and adults in target communities to identify most appropriate ways of sharing information and seeking feedback. This will help us develop our information sharing tools with various audiences as well as set up feedback mechanisms.

We will ensure that Save the Children and partner staff can comfortably communicate about our organisations and our programme details, as well as our Code of Conduct and child safeguarding rules for staff. We will also plan together with children and adults their participation in the various elements of the programme. We will seek their input as to what success would look like for the programme to set our M&E indicators and explore the possibility of working with community members to monitor the programme. Also during set-up stage, we will discuss programme exit with partners and communities to clarify objectives, timeframe and who might take over what elements of the programme after we leave.

During programme implementation, we commit to regularly listen to children and communities in our day-to-day programming activities, via regular programme monitoring and via our complaints and feedback mechanisms. During community visits, our staff will use feedback forms to record any issues that require a response. We will set up complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) that will enable us to solicit feedback and complaints, especially on more serious grievances. We will regularly review feedback data coming in from our monitoring as well as CFMs, to make necessary changes to our programme. Our monitoring plan will include accountability indicators to monitor the effectiveness of our information sharing, participation and feedback mechanisms. We will share information on programme progress, as well as results of evaluations, with the communities.

APPRAISE YOUR BUDGET FOR ACCOUNTABLE PROGRAMMING

To ensure that adequate resources have been set aside for accountable programming, appraise your budget with the questions below:

Information sharing – have you budgeted for resources that will enable you to share information effectively with children and communities and our partner organisations? (Consider allocating resources for production of posters, leaflets, information boards, child-friendly materials, films, etc.)

Participation – have you budgeted adequately to enable participation of children, adults and partners in activity design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation? (Consider resourcing for regular meetings, setting up of community groups, special needs that may be required for children such as transport assistance, chaperoning requirements, weekend meetings, etc.)

Complaints-handling – have you budgeted for setting up complaints mechanisms? (Consider allocating resources for trainings for staff, consultation meetings with communities and materials for the complaints mechanisms.)

Dedicated staff – consider allocating resources for a full- or part-time dedicated staff member to coordinate the work on accountability. This could be an M&E and accountability officer or an accountability coordinator.

HOW TO BUDGET FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Budgeting for accountability means setting aside the resources (funds and staff) you will need to meet the six benchmarks in the HAP (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership) standard for accountability.³

WHAT BUDGET LINES CAN ACCOUNTABILITY ACTIVITIES COME UNDER?

This tool is designed to help you insert accountability-related costs into any project budget, without calling it 'accountability'. It is organised according to the six HAP benchmarks to help you think through the cost of various aspects of accountability. You can look at the example budget lines under each benchmark, and select and calculate costs for your own project.

³To find out more about *The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management*, go to: www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/2010-hap-standard-in-accountability.pdf

HOW TO BUDGET FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

SHARING INFORMATION (HAP BENCHMARK 3)

Budget line	Example cost	Your budget (work out what it will cost for your project)
<p>Communications or publications or branding</p> <p>List all activities. These might include:</p> <p>Designing, translating, publishing and distributing child-friendly reports and plans, leaflets and posters, staff code of conduct, and other key information</p>	<p><i>Designing community-friendly posters: \$24 for each picture drawn by a local artist (Save the Children Ethiopia)</i></p> <p><i>Printing/laminating costs: \$100 a month (World Vision)</i></p>	Cost of activity 1
Setting up community noticeboards	<p><i>Community noticeboards: \$710 for 10 noticeboards (Tearfund, Kenya, 2007)</i></p> <p><i>\$245 for each information board (includes materials and construction) (Save the Children Ethiopia, 2011)</i></p>	Cost of activity 2
Holding meetings with children to discuss plans and activities and get feedback		Cost of activity 3
Other (add your own ideas):		
		Subtotal:

Remember to work out the subtotal for each benchmark.

PARTICIPATION (HAP BENCHMARK 4)

Budget line	Example cost	Your budget
<p>Activities or travel or materials or venue hire</p> <p>List all activities. These might include:</p> <p>Regular meetings with partners, children and community members and leaders (meeting costs are likely to include travel, materials, venue hire, and lunch)</p>	<p><i>Community meetings: \$15 for each meeting (World Vision). Multiply this cost by the number of villages or clubs there are, and the number of times they meet each year (eg, \$15 × 22 × 3)</i></p>	Cost of activity 1
Set-up and ongoing costs for children's clubs and committees		Cost of activity 2
Involving children in monitoring and evaluation activities		Cost of activity 3
Other:		
		Subtotal:



PHOTO: PIERS BENATAR/SAVE THE CHILDREN

A children's council meeting in Kinlingala Village, Lindi District, Tanzania

HANDLING COMPLAINTS (HAP BENCHMARK 5)

Budget line	Example cost	Your budget
<p>Staffing/staff training or activities and materials or communications</p> <p>List all activities. These might include:</p> <p>Training, travel and per diems for staff who will be dealing with complaints</p>		Cost of activity 1
Meetings (travel and logistics, and materials) with children and community leaders and members to consult about the complaints mechanism and tell them how it works	<i>Refreshments for focus group discussion with children and adults: \$20 per visit (World Vision)</i>	Cost of activity 2
Materials for the complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) (eg, child-friendly posters, feedback forms, complaints boxes with logo)	<p><i>Materials for complaints response mechanism: \$80 for 5 complaints boxes (Tearfund, Kenya, 2007)</i></p> <p>\$24 per picture drawn by local artist to make CFM materials child friendly (Save the Children Ethiopia, 2011)</p>	Cost of activity 3
Cost of meetings of the complaints committee, which might include representatives from the community and partner agencies	<i>Complaints committee meetings: \$10 a month, multiplied by 11 sub-villages, multiplied by 12 months = \$1,320 (World Vision)</i>	Cost of activity 4
Other:		
		Subtotal:

Now do the same for the other three benchmarks, listing what you think each activity will cost per month or year.

STAFF COMPETENCY (HAP BENCHMARK 2)

Budget line	Example cost	Your budget
<p>Staffing, training, activities or communications</p> <p>List all activities. These might include:</p> <p>Appointing a dedicated staff member to lead work on accountability and participation</p>	<p><i>Staff posts: \$1,313 a month (Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Coordinator), \$880 a month (Accountability Assistant) (Save the Children Ethiopia, 2011)</i></p>	Cost of activity 1
<p>Training staff, programme staff and staff from partner agencies on ways to promote participation and accountability</p>	<p>Costs for providing accountability training for staff, partners, and government representatives: \$200/session × 7 sessions = \$1,400 (World Vision)</p>	Cost of activity 2
<p>Production of induction materials on accountability and participation</p>		Cost of activity 3
<p>Other:</p>		
Subtotal:		



PHOTO: ANDY HALL/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Dr Bang (centre) holds a meeting with tribal elders over health concerns in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, India.

LEARNING AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT (HAP BENCHMARK 6)

Budget line	Example cost	Your budget
<p>Activities, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), meetings, or communications</p> <p>List all activities. These might include:</p> <p>Ongoing M&E activities</p>		Cost of activity 1
<p>Mid-year or end-of-year workshops with staff, partners, children and community representatives, to receive feedback and suggestions for ways to improve future activities</p>	<p><i>Workshops:</i> \$815 (Save the Children Ethiopia, 2011)</p>	Cost of activity 2
<p>Meetings with children and communities to share results of our evaluations</p>		Cost of activity 3
<p>Publishing success stories and case studies to share your experiences</p>		Cost of activity 4
<p>Other:</p>		
		Subtotal:

ESTABLISHING AND DELIVERING ON COMMITMENTS (HAP BENCHMARK 1)

Budget line	Example cost	Your budget
Activities, M&E		Cost of activity 1
List all activities. These might include:		
Assessing accountability activities with staff and communities (field trips, materials for focus group discussions or face-to-face interviews)		
Workshops to review existing accountability framework and revise it, drawing up an appropriate action plan	Workshops: \$815 (Save the Children Ethiopia, 2011)	Cost of activity 2
Other:		
		Subtotal:



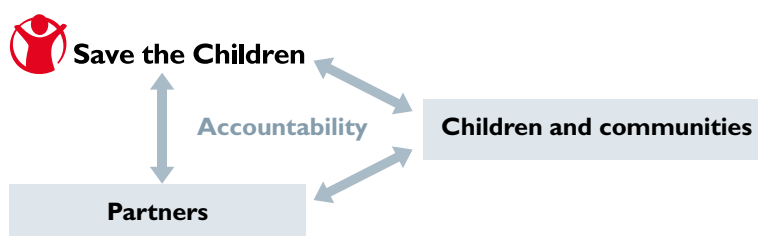
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7 ACCOUNTABILITY TO AND WITH PARTNERS

7 ACCOUNTABILITY TO AND WITH PARTNERS

Across the globe, we implement a vast number of our programmes together with partner organisations. We work with a wide range of partner organisations, reflecting the varied country contexts in which we operate. Transparency and accountability are part of our partnership principles, which imply that openness and honesty in working relationships are pre-conditions of trust. Only with transparent working and information sharing will a partnership be accountable to its stakeholders.

Modelling accountability in our relationship with partners is a prerequisite to ensuring that our programmes are accountable to children and communities.



Ensuring accountability in the partnership means:

- sharing information with each other on a regular basis
- taking programme management decisions together
- agreeing on a procedure on how we will raise and handle complaints against each other in a safe and accessible way
- regularly monitoring and evaluating the quality of the partnership, and each other's agreed performance.

Ensuring our joint accountability to children and communities means that we support our partners in:

- sharing information effectively with children and communities
- facilitating meaningful children's and adults' participation across the programme cycle
- setting up and managing complaints and feedback mechanisms based on community preference
- monitoring and evaluating the progress and impact of the programme, reflecting on mistakes and making changes to improve practice.

Please note that as we support our partners, especially in complaints-handling, we should reassure them that soliciting complaints and feedback from communities is indeed part of our success – the more complaints we are able to receive and respond to, the more relevant and impactful our programmes will be.

In order to ensure accountability in the partnership and accountability to communities, it is a good idea to embed the above-mentioned principles in our partnership agreements. The new **Save the Children International MOU Template** has the above sections embedded in it. Therefore, we highly encourage country offices to use this template. This template can be found in the Accountability Conversations Resource CD at the back of this guide.

8 STAFF COMPETENCIES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

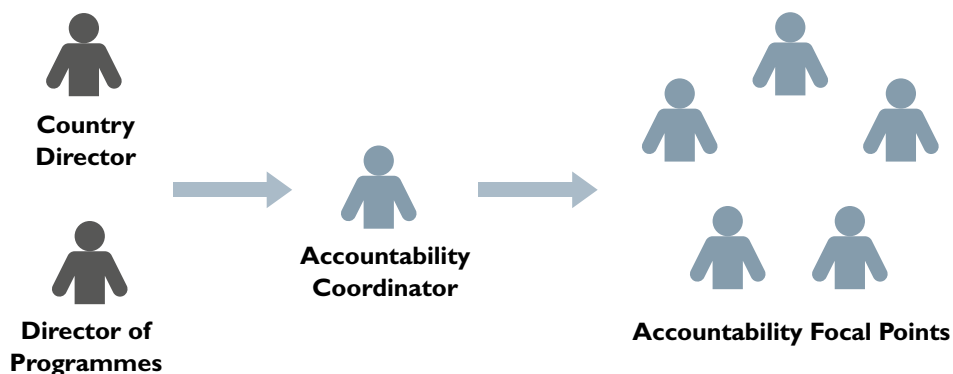
8 STAFF COMPETENCIES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

What does an accountable staff member look like? Here is how we might describe one:

- Culturally aware, respectful and humble
- Transparent and not afraid of criticism
- Listens to the community
- Self-aware/emotionally intelligent
- Can be flexible and adapt to beneficiary feedback
- Abides by our Code of Conduct
- Helps the organisation uphold its commitment to provide a safe environment for children by planning and implementing their work through a child safeguarding lens.

RECOMMENDED COUNTRY ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE

To help mainstream accountability in our programmes and expand outreach of our work on accountability beyond a certain project or field office, we suggest selecting an accountability coordinator to be supported by an SMT member. We also suggest selecting additional focal points to lead on implementation. In many countries, accountability roles are given to already existing M&E staff.



POSTHOLDER	FUNCTION
SLT Member – either Programme Director or Country Director	Sponsor/champion – has overall responsibility for ensuring accountability within the country programme. Support the creation and sign off, and monitor the implementation of, a country Accountability Framework/workplan. Make improved accountability to children and communities an objective for the country programme, embedded in the country annual plan.

continued on next page

POSTHOLDER	FUNCTION
SLT Member <i>continued</i>	<p>Ensure new programme proposals have adequate resources on accountability.</p> <p>Encourage setting performance objectives on accountability for staff to make this everyone's job.</p> <p>Model accountability internally, setting up mechanisms for staff and partners to voice concerns and receive responses.</p>
Accountability Coordinator <p>If the programme does not have a dedicated accountability post, this role should be allocated to a person with cross-cutting programme responsibilities – ie, Effective Programme Coordinator, M&E Coordinator.</p>	<p>Coordination and support – responsible for ensuring fully embedded practical and effective mechanisms for accountability to children within the country programme, via capacity building, championing and supporting implementation.</p> <p>Working with others, facilitate an accountability assessment and planning exercise to put together a plan of action for improvement, agreed by SMT, along with a timeframe and responsibilities.</p> <p>Build capacity of field staff to set up and manage accountability mechanisms.</p> <p>Maintain overview of/coordinate the implementation of the accountability work plan by Accountability Focal points and other Save the Children and partner staff, and monitor effectiveness of the mechanisms set up.</p> <p>Support partner organisations in setting up accountability mechanisms.</p> <p>Ensure accountability features in, and is resourced in, all new proposals.</p> <p>Act in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner towards the community.</p>
<p>One Accountability Focal Point to be identified from each project, field office or department, depending on the country context. These should be programme staff with knowledge of, respect and empathy for the communities we work with and understanding of programme accountability principles.</p>	<p>Implementation – responsible for promoting, implementing and monitoring accountability within the projects.</p> <p><i>Information-sharing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess how children and communities would like to receive information about Save the Children and our project, develop tools, and put a system in place to ensure that information about our organisation and our projects is regularly shared with children and their carers <p><i>Participation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that children and their carers participate at every stage of the programme cycle ● Ensure that children's participation in our programmes complies with our participation practice standards

POSTHOLDER	FUNCTION
Accountability Focal Point <i>continued</i>	<p data-bbox="512 398 735 432"><i>Complaints-handling</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="512 450 1267 483">● Consult with children and communities on complaints-handling <li data-bbox="512 501 1321 568">● Design and implement appropriate feedback mechanisms that are contextual, effective, accessible and safe for children and their carers <li data-bbox="512 586 1225 620">● Ensure that feedback is recorded, reviewed and acted upon <li data-bbox="512 638 1321 705">● Ensure that feedback is integrated into regular programme planning, implementation, M&E and reporting <li data-bbox="512 723 1310 831">● Work with M&E officer to ensure that feedback from communities is part of the M&E exercises, and features in M&E and programme reports <li data-bbox="512 848 1291 916">● Raise community feedback in programme meetings for necessary actions to be taken <li data-bbox="512 934 1251 967">● Support our partners in setting up accountability mechanisms <li data-bbox="512 985 1254 1052">● Act in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner towards the community

PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR THE ACCOUNTABILITY COORDINATOR AND FOCAL POINTS

- Experience in working closely with community members throughout a programme cycle
- Experience in or understanding of programme accountability principles
- Knowledge of, respect and empathy for the communities we are working with
- Commitment to championing community and partner points of view
- Strong understanding of the project cycle and of M&E systems
- Good interpersonal and influencing skills
- Non-discriminatory and readiness to involve girls and boys from diverse backgrounds, particularly the most marginalised children
- Very good listening and facilitation skills – capable of managing and facilitating group discussions with programme participants, children, parents/caregivers, local officials, partners and all levels of staff
- Ability to mobilise people – to develop and maintain relationships with staff and communities to ensure their participation in Save the Children's ways of working
- Knowledge and experience of child safeguarding policies and procedures



A group discussion at a health meeting in a camp for displaced people in Port au Prince, Haiti.

9 ACCOUNTABILITY, CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND QUALITY PROGRAMMING

9 ACCOUNTABILITY, CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND QUALITY PROGRAMMING

Safeguarding children is an integral part of Save the Children's vision, mission and core values. While fulfilling our objectives of promoting children's rights in general, it is essential that we do not put children at further risk of abuse or harm. In order to be accountable to children, communities and key stakeholders, and in our quest for quality programming, the organisation itself and all of its activities must be safe for children.

Accountability mechanisms, including CFMs, provide an excellent opportunity for us to embed child safeguarding into all of our work, and to get feedback from the community on how well we are doing in this area.

To give some context to this, child safeguarding can be seen as the internal controls we have in place, through our policies, procedures and practice, to ensure that Save the Children is safe for children. These include:

- Ensuring that anyone who represents our organisation behaves appropriately towards children and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being a member of the Save the Children family.
- Ensuring that we create a child-safe environment in all of our activities by always assessing, reducing and addressing potential risks to children.
- Ensuring that everyone associated with the organisation is aware of and responds appropriately to child safeguarding concerns, including abuse and sexual exploitation

Although we are particularly concerned about abuse or harm caused by the conduct of our staff, serious harm to children can also occur in the way we implement our programmes. Over the years Save the Children has documented situations where children were seriously injured (and in some cases killed), or put at risk of harm or abuse as a result of poor programming practice or preventable accidents. Children have been injured because of unsafe construction sites, hit by Save the Children vehicles, and been left behind at campaigning events when buses have departed. Any intervention we undertake that puts children at risk of abuse, exploitation, harm or injury, or that undermines children's rights in any way, is a child safeguarding issue. Harm caused by our programmes can be as serious as abuse or inappropriate conduct caused by our staff or representatives. In most cases though, these risks are predictable, so planning and undertaking our work through a child safeguarding lens is essential.

Save the Children's approach to safeguarding is based on a four-pronged model of awareness, prevention, reporting and responding; and the **Child Safeguarding Policy** helps to guide the process of putting in place the appropriate mechanisms to uphold our duty of care and be accountable for keeping children safe.

The Child Safeguarding Policy, therefore, underpins and supports all of Save the Children's programming work. It holds us to account by requiring us to undertake our activities safely, to take appropriate and immediate action to mitigate any risks, to report

and respond to inappropriate staff behaviour and to report and respond to concerns of abuse or sexual exploitation, irrespective of whether that abuse is taking place within or outside the organisation.

Child safeguarding is integral to our work. Indeed, we cannot consider ourselves to be accountable and our programmes to be of high quality unless the way we work is safe for children.



An accountability consultation, Niger

PROGRAMME ACCOUNTABILITY GUIDANCE PACK

A SAVE THE CHILDREN RESOURCE

COVER PHOTO: SUZANNE LEESAVE THE CHILDREN

The *Programme Accountability Guidance Pack* brings together practical and tested 'how-to' guidance, films and training materials designed to help country programmes put accountability into practice.

The pack is primarily aimed at country-level Save the Children and partner staff responsible for implementing development or humanitarian projects and programmes.

The pack includes a DVD, with four films developed to improve understanding and facilitate discussions on programme accountability. It also contains a CD, *Accountability Conversations: A series of eight sessions on accountability*. This provides facilitation notes, slides and handouts for use with programme and partner staff.

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