

Standard Operating Procedures (SoP)

for Information Hub and Information Service Centre



Communication with Communities Working Group

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

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CONTENT

CONTENT..... 0

BACKGROUND 2

RATIONALE 2

APPROACH 2

INFORMATION HUB OPERATING SYSTEM 2

COMPLAINTS, FEEDBACK OR QUERIES RECEIVED IN THE INFORMATION HUB 3

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT 8

REFERRAL FOCAL POINTS: (AREA BY AREA) 8

GLOSSARY 9

TRAINING AND SENSITISATION 10

SETTING UP INFORMATION HUB 10

INFORMATION HUB TEAM AND RESPONSIBILITIES 11

Information Hub checklist 11

ANNEX 13



BACKGROUND

Since 25 August 2017, Bangladesh has welcomed over 923,000¹ Forcibly-displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN), who require immediate, large-scale humanitarian services to address their basic needs. Recent multi stakeholder needs assessments, have identified that majority of the new arrivals either have little knowledge of how and where to access services or are not aware of services being available or provided to them. They also need rapid and complete information and knowledge on key life-saving/priority practices. Equally important the community engagement, decision-making and participation of community in different service provision. It is also important to receive and effectively respond to all feedbacks and complaints in a timely, efficient and honest manner, to ensure an effective humanitarian accountability.

As part of the response, the members of CwC Working Group are running around 90 “Information Hubs (Info Hub)/Information Service Centre (ISC)” and are operating multi-sectoral information hubs, which aim to provide information to affected people as well as provide a route for community members to ask questions, give feedback or lodge complaints about services they are receiving. This document sets out a common protocol by which such questions, complaints and other feedback received by information hubs will be dealt with.

RATIONALE

Ensuring that feedback is collected, disseminated to the right people, meaningful action taken and response given, will contribute to a more efficient, relevant and localised response. In coordination with service referral pathways, this system will enable a mechanism that can assist in people being able to make informed and good decisions for themselves and their families.

APPROACH

Any agency can establish Information Hub(s) as a core part of their efforts to respond to the Rohingya Influx in Cox’s Bazar. Agencies will independently operate and manage their own Information Hub(s). To maximise access to accurate information, ensure coordination, and support wider accountability efforts, Information Hubs are expected to coordinate closely with site management at site level – the CiC, and the Site Management Support (SMS) agency. This includes attendance of site-level coordination meetings where human resources allow and sharing of anonymised feedback trends with SMS agencies in accordance with individual agencies’ protocols. Information Hubs agencies should receive updated service mapping from SMS agencies.

The Info-Hub Sub-Working Group (Info-Hub SWG) will provide additional, technical guidance on the following:

- Information and referral to service delivery points
- Disseminate life-saving messages
- Demonstrate behaviours
- Receive and respond to community feedback, questions, grievances and complaints.

INFORMATION HUB OPERATING SYSTEM

All feedback that is provided directly through Information Hub should be recorded. However, if a member of staff or volunteer attached to an Information Hub receives feedback whilst in the community, they should record as much information as possible and convey this to his/her Information Hub base. Similarly, if a moderator of community consultation normally works with an Information Hub, then any feedback from audiences should be documented and sent to his/her Information Hub base for further action. The same is true for any mobile outreach teams who are connected to an Information Hub. They should record feedback



in their feedback log or notepad, clearly indicating that it was collected by a mobile team, and relay the feedback to the Information Hub that they are working from. The feedback response then follows the same steps as feedback provided directly to the Information Hub, as set out below. If there is information to be relayed to the community members, this should be done through the mobile outreach teams.

Community mobilisation staff or volunteers; outreach teams; listening group facilitators; and others who collect feedback but who are not associated with an Information Hub may wish to informally share particular feedback items with an Information Hub(s) in the relevant area, in accordance with their own agency's SOP. This might be useful in helping the Information Hub to prepare for or react to similar questions; or to help highlight issues of concern in a particular geographical area.

COMPLAINTS, FEEDBACK OR QUERIES RECEIVED IN THE INFORMATION HUB

Standard arrival greeting at the Information and feedback centre

When a member of the community arrives at an Information Hub, it is important to greet the person properly and orient him/her to the services offered. This can help manage expectations and raise awareness that this is not a distribution point for anything other than information.

SUGGESTED SCRIPT:

Welcome to the information hub. Please come in and sit down. Let me tell you about this centre and who we are. We are run by an organisation called who is working to support the situation for Rohingya refugee in the camps. This centre provides information and a chance to feedback on services in the camp but does not distribute any supplies, goods or money. We are providing information to people so they can better understand where they can get support and assistance.

On arrival, female community members should be asked if they would prefer to speak confidentially to a female Information Hub staff member. The Information Hub should have a quiet corner, or somewhere where sensitive discussions can happen without people overhearing. The same should be offered to male community members (sexual exploitation or abuse can happen to women, men, boys or girls). If the community member requests this, then the sensitive feedback protocol should be followed – see below.

What an Information Hub should not do

- Investigate criminal complaints
- Accept gifts or money in exchange for services
- Share information based on opinions or personal judgements
- Make commitments or act on behalf of any UN agency or other organisations
- Register persons
- Distribute assistance
- Provide counselling or case management
- Conflict resolution and mediation

Confidentiality of the collected data

The information people give should be confidential, this will protect their identity and ensure that there is no negative impact of their feedback or complaints. If anyone asks to look at the feedback log who is not staff from the agency in charge of the Information Hub, politely, explain that this is not possible. This is true for any person unrelated to the agency in charge, no matter if they are a journalist, community leader, religious leader, INGO or UN staff.



Anonymised feedback data can be shared with other agencies, including those who are undertaking high-level analysis of complaints and feedback across the different sectors. Such data sharing will be arranged at agency level and it should not be necessary for staff or volunteers working at individual Information Hubs to share data directly with anyone outside of their own agency. In addition, the sensitive feedback (Protection/GBV etc) with the names and identities of the beneficiaries should not be shared with anybody including the government / CIC / military or relevant institutions.

SUGGESTED SCRIPT:

Thank you for your interest in the Information Hub – please see the poster on the wall that explains how this works. On the board, you can see the total number of visitors and the breakdown of the different kind of feedback. We must protect the confidentiality of the community members coming here and cannot let you see the data (manually or online). If you have a request for specific information, please contact the CwC focal person from the agency in charge of the Information Hub team in CxB.

I hope you can understand why protecting the privacy of the community is vital to the work we are doing, which is based on trust. Thank you for your interest in our work.



If someone gives general feedback or makes a complaint which is not related to a specific agency:

The feedback is logged into the feedback data tool using the categories below as well as a detailed record of the actual complaint or feedback. Depending on the feedback classification different actions will be necessary. The name of the person giving the feedback should **not** be recorded unless a response cannot be given straight away, in which case it may be necessary to contact the person again to follow up. The Information Hub should designate a focal point for follow-up and escalation (where necessary).

Sector	Short form
WASH	W
Nutrition/ Food Item	N
Shelter	S
Health	H
Education	E
Protection	P
Specialised Counselling	SC
Child Protection	CP
Livelihood	L
Non-Food Items (NFI)/Fuel	NFI
Site Management and Development	SMSD
Staff Code of conduct	CoC
Others	O

Nature	Type
A Complaint	1 Service point
B Feedback	2 Quality
C Query	3 Service delivery
	4
	5 PSEA
	6 Others

Note: Documentation (Smart card, FCN/RCN) related feedback should be recorded under Protection.

If the feedback given is a complaint about UN or partner¹ programmes or services

The staff member should:

- Inform the Information Hub UN/Partner focal point in the CwC team in CxB, who will then provide the complaint to the relevant section or partner. For non-urgent, non-PSEA issues, these complaints will be sent once every 48 hours.
- The Information Hub focal point will then follow up with the relevant section for response after an agreed timeframe (e.g. 48-72 hours)

¹ Local Information Hubs should ensure that they have a list of the services being provided in their local areas, including which of those services are being operated by UN partners. This will ensure that they are clear about which services are being provided by the UN and its partners (complaints for which should use this UN protocol); and which services are being provided by non-UN agencies without a UN partnership (for which the non-UN protocol should be used).



- The Information Hub UN/Partner focal point in the CwC team in CxB will communicate this to the local Information Hub, who will log the resolution in their own record and communicate this to the community member, if appropriate.
- Biweekly the most frequent resolutions will be shared with feedback managers from all info-hubs

If the feedback given is a complaint about a non-UN organisation's programmes or services

The majority of issues can and should be resolved at the camp or site level]

The ISP should:

- Inform the local focal point for the agency who the complaint is about (i.e. the local representative in that camp or site) about the complaint. There should be an agreed timeframe for responding to feedback e.g. 72 hours.
- Follow up after agreed timeframe for a response from site-management agency or focal point.
 - *If there is no response*, the issue should be escalated to the CXB CwC focal point for the agency operating the Information Hub for follow up with the agency whom the complaint was about.
 - *If there is still no response* within an agreed timeframe, the CXB focal point for the agency running the Information Hub should raise the issue with the sector.
 - Once the issue is resolved, the agency concerned will communicate this to the local Information Hub, who will log the resolution in their own record and communicate to the community member, if appropriate.

If the feedback or complaint is sensitive/protection related

If the feedback relates to a reported case of sexual abuse or exploitation or any other crime.

- Reports of a sensitive nature should be dealt with a different manner than regular feedback or complaints. The Information Hub staff member should:
 - Have been trained in basic case management – these steps should be followed in particular in explaining that it was not the fault of the survivor and they did the right thing reporting this.
 - In the case that there is a sensitive issue that is raised this should be referred to the PSEA WG, Protection/GBV referral pathways

Interim measure until re: protection referral until camp-level referral pathways exist

1. All information should be handled in a confidential and sensitive manner.
2. As soon as it is clear that the feedback or complaint is of a sensitive nature and/or and relates to protection issues. The ISP should politely stop the discussion, thank the community member for raising the issue, explain that this is not their fault and that they will make sure that the community member has the right support for this sensitive issue.
3. The relevant focal point should be contacted if it is about gender-based violence, child protection, or all other protection related issues. See Annex 1 for focal point information.
4. The ISP should remain with the person giving the feedback until the local protection service provider has arrived.
5. The IH staff will write down the complaint in register or online data system (i.e. ODK) and refer accordingly esp in the case of GBV

If someone gives feedback (as opposed to a complaint) about something

If the feedback is about an UN agency or NGO/another agency supported partner programmes or services:

The ISP should:



- Record the feedback and any additional information in the data tool (manual or online).
- Ask the person giving the feedback if they would like a response and, if so, record their name and location.
- Communicate the feedback to the Information Hub' focal point in the C4Wc in CxB, who can then communicate it to the programme or partner. For non-urgent, non-PSEA issues, feedback will be sent once every 48 hours.
- The response to this feedback (if requested by the person giving the feedback) should be communicated to the community member via the Information Hub.
- Once the response has been received, the entry in the log book should be recorded as 'resolved'.

If the feedback is about a non-UN organisation's programmes or services:

The Information Hub staff member should:

- Record the feedback and any additional information in the log book.
- Ask the person giving the feedback if they would like a response and, if so, record their name and location.
- Inform the local focal point for the agency who the feedback is about (i.e. the local representative in that camp or site) about the feedback.
- The response to this feedback (if requested by the person giving the feedback) should be communicated to the community member via the Information Hub.
- Once the response has been received, the entry in the log book should be recorded as 'resolved'.

The process of feedback for reporting on a UN body or a non-UN body remains the same as above.

If the feedback is not connected to a particular organisation's programmes or services:

The Information Hub staff member should:

- Record the feedback and any additional information in the manual or data sets.
- Inform the person that there will be regular communication to the community via the info-hub, that not all feedback will be answered but that information on the most important issues will be shared
- Escalate the issue to either the local (camp-level) lead for the relevant sector; or to the CxB CwC focal point for the agency operating the Information Hub for follow up with the response-wide sector lead
- The response to this feedback (if requested by the person giving the feedback) should be communicated to the community member via the Information Hub.
- Once the response has been received, the entry in the log book should be recorded as 'resolved'.

If someone has a query

If the information requested is known

- The Information Hub staff member should provide it, recording the information given in the log book. In this situation, there is no need to record the requestor's name.

If the information requested is not known

The Information Hub staff member should:

- *If not known at the site level*, the Information Hub staff member should contact the feedback manager (if any) or the UN/Partner focal point in CxB, who will find out the information at that level



- If the request is for a distribution of something the person should be directed to that service provider.
- This should then be relayed to the community members via the Information Hub. The staff member will tell the community person that they can come back for feedback in 24 hours. Explaining that some cases are harder to find answers to and therefore take longer.
- The entry in the data tool should be recorded as 'resolved'
- The information should be recorded in the Information Hub's resource pack / FAQs file, so that it can be easily retrieved in future. If the Information Hub staff member feels that the same query is likely to be raised at other Information Hubs in future, s/he should consider sending a copy of the query and the answer, through their agency CXB CwC focal point, to other Information Hubs.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- Data will be collated, aggregated and analysed by the Agency data manager, according to harmonised methods to enable collation with other feedback data sets.
- If the agency operating the Information Hub chooses to do so, anonymised feedback logs can be shared with the collective feedback service (operated by BBC Media Action, Internews and TWB) who will analyse and consolidate feedback into a product to guide strategic decision-making and programmatic course corrections at a response-wide level.

REFERRAL FOCAL POINTS: (AREA BY AREA)

Child protection:

Specialised Counselling:

Etc.

Camp	Org	Service	Contact



GLOSSARY

Case management	Following the appropriate policies and procedures to determine the outcome of a report of violence, exploitation and abuse (including sexual exploitation and abuse).
Child	Any individual under the age of 18, irrespective of local country definitions of when a child reaches adulthood.
Child protection	Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children – including [but not limited to] commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices.
Code of conduct	A set of standards about behaviour that staff of an organisation are obliged to adhere to.
Complaint	Specific grievance of anyone who has been negatively affected by an organisation’s action or who believes that an organisation has failed to meet a stated commitment.
Complainant	The person making the complaint
Complaint mechanism or procedure	Processes that allow individuals to report concerns such as breaches of organisational policies or codes of conduct. Elements of a complaints mechanism may include suggestion boxes, whistleblowing policies and designated focal points.
Confidentiality	An ethical principle that restricts access to and dissemination of information. In investigations on sexual exploitation, abuse, fraud and corruption, it requires that information is available only to a limited number of authorised people for the purpose of concluding the investigation. Confidentiality helps create an environment in which witnesses are more willing to recount their versions of events and builds trust in the system and in the organisation.
Feedback	The information sent to an entity (individual or a group) about its prior behaviour so that the entity may adjust its current and future behaviour to achieve the desired result.
Focal point	A person designated to receive complaints (including specific focal point for complaints about sexual, exploitation and abuse by staff or partners)
Interpersonal Communication (IPC)	The process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts and feelings between two people or among a group of people using verbal and nonverbal messages. The exchange allows them to receive immediate response or feedback that can lead to mutual understanding, agreement and action. IPC can happen in a face to face/direct setting or in a mediated/indirect setting, e.g., letter, email; video, audio or SMS, telephone and internet exchange.
Query	A question or a request for authentic information about something which resolve one’s doubts about it or to check its validity or accuracy from an authority
PSEA (Protection from sexual Exploitation and Abuse)	The term used by the UN and NGO community to refer to measures taken to protect vulnerable people from sexual exploitation and abuse by their own staff and associated personnel.



TRAINING AND SENSITISATION

This aims to ensure the smooth functioning of the systems and includes:

- The skills on how to receive feedback, including inter-personal communication, that may not be consistent across staff and partners. Training and sensitisation will be necessary for all staff and partners interacting with the community (including support staff, drivers, volunteers) as the community will not distinguish between roles and should be able to provide feedback to anyone from UN or Implementing Partners. A mandatory short orientation training for all staff (between 1-3 hours) will be conducted to ensure there are the skills and the awareness to handle feedback or complaints.
- More in-depth training on the systems, skills and principles of the feedback systems for local implementing partners. Training for responding to sensitive case is also essential e.g. in basic case management, how to collect sensitive information in a culturally appropriate manner, ensuring confidentiality and ensuring that they respect the rights and dignity of the survivor.
- Sectors will be informed of the mechanism and understand timeframes for responding to feedback to enable the response to be communicated to the community member.
- Communities will be made aware of the service, what complaints or feedback can be made at the Information Hubs and what response they can expect, including timeframes. This should also cover what behaviours they expect from staff (code of conduct).

SETTING UP INFORMATION HUB

- **Allocate** a suitable **space** for the information points to be located. It must be accessible while also allowing for the possibility of private conversations on confidential complaints
- **Communicate** the availability (opening times) and location of the information points to stakeholders (humanitarian actors, community representatives) in the area that may need to share information with or refer persons of concern to the information point teams
- **Train** information point teams on how to receive and report feedback and complaints (including sensitive issues), identify key protection risks, and use the referral processes that have been set up (see Information Point Induction Pack)
- Provide an **information package** with written information on the services available in the area, including contact details for the appropriate people for referral of protection and operational issues. Consistently advise the team of any changes in assistance and policies
- Provide **adequate resources** for the effective functioning of the information point (see Information Point Checklist) and consistently monitor timely referrals and responses.

The information Hub team should consist of

- at least 2 staff (men and women);
- someone with knowledge of Chittagonian or Rohingya language;
- volunteer(s) from the refugee population (where possible).
- Field experience in dealing with refugees and traumatized population

Branding of the information Hub

- Information Hub common logo;



- a banner with agency logos;
- visible IDs or name tags.

INFORMATION HUB TEAM AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Operate an Information Hub at the designated location according to agreed opening hours
- Record feedback and complaints in logbook or notepad
- Refer complaints and feedback in line with established referral processes
- Ensuring outreaching to the community hence promoting the awareness of the information point in the area of operation
- Being “inside “the community by working closely with the established community structure as well as working with Imams, teachers, Majhis, women groups, youth groups, persons with disability, among others
- Presence at the information point during opening hours whilst reaching out to the community in accessing the information point by division of task between the 2 staff
- Building on local “Knowledge bank “that will lay down foundation in Providing updated FAQs, and
- relevant information for the different locations as needed. Share this regularly with other Information Hubs within the local area.
- Monitoring the information needs of the community and providing life-saving messaging/ and also
- initiating awareness session when necessary.
- Sharing updated report from all the information hubs (daily, weekly and monthly).

Information Hub checklist

Reception Materials

- Banner with logos in Bangla, Burmese and English
- Sign indicating the location of the information point and opening/closing hours
- Table x1 and chairs x4
- Hand-microphone with spare batteries
- Mobile phone (incl. airtime)
- ID card/name tag for information point team
- Logbook or notepad for recording information requests, feedback, and complaints
- Pens and clipboards
- Interagency referral forms/ incident referral forms

Communication Materials

- Updated FAQs (tokens, services available, etc.)
- Updated schedule of distributions
- Location service map and contact list
- Pictorial list of services in the location
- Interagency and sectoral messages/posters

Information Point Checklist

- Minimum two staff and where possible community outreach volunteers/members
- Safe and respectful environment with possibility for private conversations
- Key messages and announcements are displayed (services provided)



Information Point Team Induction

- Protection principles and humanitarian fundamentals
- Code of Conduct and PSEA
- Child safeguarding
- Safe identification and referrals for child protection, SGBV and other persons at heightened, etc. risk
- Communication & facilitation skills (empathy, neutrality, and respect)
- Psychological First Aid for dealing with people experiencing trauma
- Information Point roles, responsibilities and limitations (Dos and Don'ts)
- Daily Reporting and Referral System



ANNEX

DRAFT: suggested data points for collection and database

These are the suggested minimum data entry points. Please note that there's a difference between data points for collection (feedback forms, apps etc.) and data points for the database at the backend. These data points should be kept to a minimum to make them more actionable for organisations.

These would be suggested minimum standard for any kind of feedback collection. Organisation of course may add their own relevant questions, this is the minimum not the maximum.

This needs to be combined with training on expectation management (for example if you don't give your shelter number we can't find you to give you an answer etc., but agreeing on the processes (referral etc.) will be the next step). These data points have been discussed in the CwC accountability SG with input from site management and will be further shared for input with protection and the CwC Information Hub Sub Group.

1. Collection

Mandatory:

- date
- Gender
- Age (should be age range)
- Camp
- Feedback box
- Does the feedback need follow up?
- Is it a protection issue?
- Comment box for anything else such as food distribution number, Majhi or anything else that's relevant, i.e. is this a community leader.

Optional:

- Shelter number
- Name
- Food distribution number

2. Database (in addition to the data points from collection):

- Who collected feedback?
- What sector(s) does it relate to?
- Topic: keywords that have become relevant through the collected data, for instance 'travel' 'religion' in order to showcase issues that might be cross-sectoral or fall through the gaps i.e. requests for Burkhas)
- Answer to feedback
- Response: closed/referred/open
 - o Referred – who/which org/sector did you refer to/when?
 - o Date follow up with organisation/sector
- In-actionable



This document is subject to change according to the evolution of the situation in the Rohingya refugee camps and the role of the Information Hubs.

