ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITIES IN WORLD VISION PILOT PROGRAMMES: A SYNTHESIS

World Vision strives to be accountable to communities in its work. Over the past 7 years WVUK has supported pilots with a particular focus on how accountability can be strengthened through improved transparency and Community Feedback and Response Systems (also known as 'Beneficiary Feedback Mechanisms'). Community Feedback and Response Systems provide a channel for children, community members and partners to easily raise questions, suggestions and concerns about World Vision's activities, and for action to be taken in response.   The Systems incorporate strengthened transparency through information provision so that community members know the commitments, standards and expectations to which World Vision can be held to account. This paper shares key lessons and considerations to help inform World Vision's continued efforts to strengthen its accountability to communities.

Photo shows flyer in Nepali informing communities of the various ways to provide feedback, and a child using the feedback box in Nepal. Photo credit: World Vision International Nepal.

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"We know what's good and bad for us. We should choose." Child from remote rural community supported by WV Ethiopia. [1]

The purpose of this review is to share learning that has been documented over the course of various accountability initiatives supported by World Vision UK and provide an overview of the common trends in benefits these initiatives bring, what enabling factors and challenges exist for mainstreaming accountability practices. It is hoped that the points discussed in this review will help to inform future planning, especially as we move towards a renewed strategy of 'Standing with the Most Vulnerable Children' in increasingly fragile contexts. 'Standing with' implies empathy and understanding which can only come from listening and responding to their needs and feedback. In addition, the World Vision partnership's new strategy is framed as a 'promise' to vulnerable children which implies that we are accountable to them for fulfilling our ambitions.

World Vision has already committed itself to the importance of accountability to communities through its Programme Accountability Framework and there has been a progressive integration of accountability mechanisms in its Humanitarian programming for some time. In the last seven years World Vision UK has invested in piloting accountability initiatives in more longer term development programming as well, which has concentrated on introducing and strengthening Community Feedback and Response Systems (CFRS).

> **This review discusses findings from three distinct programmes. These are Accountability for Development projects (A4D) that were launched in Bolivia, Cambodia, Honduras and Zimbabwe in 2010; Beneficiary Feedback Mechanisms Programme, World Vision partnered with INTRAC to manage UKAID funded programme on Beneficiary Feedback Mechanisms (BFM) with seven partners (www.feedbackmechanisms.org) ; and most recently UKAID PPA funded Accountability Learning Initiatives (ALIs) in Ethiopia, Nepal, Pakistan and Somaliland between 2014-2016. Each of these phases have been unique in some ways, as they tested CFRS in different contexts with different partners but there have also been some common trends, which are presented as a synthesis below.**

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Benefits

"They hear us. They listen to Us. They do all that they can and tell us what they can't do. And they give us respect."[2] Community Member in Yilmana Dinsa in Ethiopia

The programmes provided clear evidence that there are several benefits of using community feedback: in building trust; and empowering communities which helps enhance programme ownership by the community. Feedback helped to change programmes and project activities so that they became more responsive to the needs of the community. For example, in Ethiopia's ALI, community feedback led to a shift in the selection criteria for their sponsorship and Gardening for Improved Nutrition and Increased Income programs. Community dissatisfaction for selecting children and perception of favouritism and nepotism by community leaders, led WVE to redesign the selection process and was done in partnership with community. This sense of inclusiveness helped build trust.

A community member noted in Somaliland, the BFM component of the GPAF project gave them a sense of voice: "People feel that some-one is listening to their opinion and their opinions or advice can be acted on."[3] World Vision's reputation and relationship with communities also improved as a result of CFRS. As one noted in Ethiopia Initiative: "That's their job. They're here for the rights of the community. So, they have to give an ear to the voice of the community."[4] All these aspects have reinforced the use and validity of CFRS. In Pakistan,

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[1] Cechvala, Sarah, and Isabella Jean. "Accountability is a mirror that shows not only your face, but also your back." CDA-World Vision Ethiopia Feedback Loops Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, March 2016. P14

[2] Ibid p24

[3] Health Poverty Action, INTRAC, World Vision, Beneficiary Feedback Mechanism Case Study: Somaliland. P5

[4] Cechvala, S. & Jean, I., Feedback Loops Case Study in Ethiopia, March 2016. P16

World Vision's initiative to get community feedback was viewed as unique, as one women's group member noted, "No one else asks us for our feedback."[5]

There has been appreciation of the ALI in Nepal in including children's feedback as this is still an area where development agencies have much work to do. As one child noted in the recent project evaluation: "People/organisation usually ignore about children roles for sharing information, school neglect our voices, parents overlook our suggestion, but after feedback mechanism installation the organisation tends to respect our feeling and inspire us for effective roles." Therefore, accountability to children helps in their sense of inclusiveness and interest in being involved in the programme which helps in building trust with children.[6]

Awareness Raising on Community accountability of WVI Nepal through street drama in local language by child clubs. Photo Credit: World Vision International Nepal

Additionally, feedback helps to break down barriers between different government departments and stakeholders as the feedback needs to be addressed comprehensively, in many instances, stakeholders come together to refer and manage community feedback. In Tanzania's BFM pilot, unsolicited feedback was received through SMS and voice calls which led to improvements in the GPAF programme as it highlighted larger community issues. It also utilised suggestion boxes, which proved to be better for women and helped collect cases of sensitive nature, of corruption and violence. The biggest benefit was that it helped government departments to share information with each other through quarterly roundtables that addressed feedback on comprehensive topics.

Similarly in Ethiopia, the ALI has brought together Kebele administrators, local government officials, village elders and other local partners to deal with community feedback and has complemented the efforts by the government to utilise community feedback, as one government training participant noted: "Accountability is all about the cumulative summary of government's principles of ethics. It is a timely and important initiative that we should not only do but also adopt from World Vision for the betterment of our community

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[5] Chechvala, Sarah. " 'Accountability Starts With Me.' Opening Inclusive Feedback Channels in Pakistan." CDA-World Vision Pakistan Feedback Loops Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, December 2015. P15
[6] Final Evaluation of Strengthening Accountability-II Report. World Vision International Nepal, Jan 2017, p15

satisfaction."[7] Therefore, implementing CFRS helps in building a culture of accountability and in many instances, influences government to adopt more accountable practices.

As in the case of Nepal, where World Vision has worked in partnership with local NGOs and has been able to influence their understanding and practice of transparency, they noted a shift in community perception, as one NGO member mentioned: "It had trend to disseminate limited information about programs, staff and institution at beginning, people were afraid to complain or even ask further in front of. But these days, culture of acknowledgements and complains for the improvement have been receiving during and after the program, the positive actions have also been acknowledged from our communities after getting intensive information this year about program and organization, the trend has been gradually changing."[8]The evaluation found that this increased the credibility of partner NGOs and WVIN within the communities.

Enabling Factors

"This is not a new concept for World Vision. The understanding is already there. But it's about intentionality of it. It's making accountability a process that focuses on 'how' we do our work."[9] DME staff, Ethiopia.

The biggest enabling factor in successful implementation of CFRS has been **senior leadership and institutional support structures and commitments already in place within national offices that drive them to prioritise accountability to communities.** Where there has been strong senior leadership commitment to introducing CFRS in programmes and have them incorporated in design, monitoring and evaluation processes, instead of them being stand alone projects or added later within a programme cycle, this has helped orient staff and partners in uptake and encouraged more ownership. This has led to greater impact and likelihood of upscaling activities. For example, WVI in Nepal and WV in Ethiopia implemented the ALI initially in two areas and based on their experience and commitment of senior staff have committed to incorporate accountability in all other programme areas with budget for accountability processes in its overall operations. There is a realisation that standard Monitoring and Evaluation practices do not easily provide opportunities for ongoing changes, as they happen at fixed times, but CFRS does, provided the feedback and information flows to the right people. And this shift in approach is also noted by communities, for example in Nepal ALI, a community member from Jumla mentioned: "If we see staff of WVI asks us for feedback and listen us, we feel they are doing job for us, but when we occasionally see them for monitoring and follow-up, we think they are for them."[10] This perception points to the way communities see the value of their participation in World Vision programmes through engagement in CFRS.

Building on cross-departmental feedback systems already established with communities has also helped institutional learning, saved time and resources and enhanced accountability practices. Where CFRS have already been instituted through a Humanitarian intervention as in the case of Nepal in the aftermath of 2015 Earthquake, adapting the feedback system to development programmes has meant allowing staff to jump from the Humanitarian team to Development team and vice versa, thus crossing departmental boundaries to work in a more integrated manner, realising that communities do not see separation in the representation of World Vision in their interaction and strengthening and adapting them has been a good decision. Although it was noted that a reassessment of the CFRS already in place should be done before shifting the CFRS to development programmes, to ensure that this is still appropriate for communities.[11]

It has also saved time, as in contrast in the case of A4D project in Bolivia[12], delays occurred because of setting up organisational structures to support the initiative as it was a new concept.

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[7] As quoted in the PPA Final Report on the Accountability Learning Initiative in Ethiopia, January 2017. P9

[8] Final Evaluation of Strengthening Accountability-II Report. World Vision International Nepal, Jan 2017, p6

[9] Cechvala, S. & Jean, I., Feedback Loops Case Study in Ethiopia, March 2016 p23

[10] As quoted in PPA Final report on Accountability Learning Initiative in Nepal, January 2017. P11

[11] This was noted in the CDA Collaborative's observations of the ALI in Pakistan and Nepal as documented in the Feedback Loops Case Study.

[12] As noted from World Vision Progress Reports on the A4D projects.

The enabling environment can be further bolstered through increased capacity. This means assigning resources in terms of funds and staff time as well as building awareness and capacity of staff and communities at the design stage of CFRS. It has helped create ownership and buy-in, for example in Ethiopia, use of community volunteers as a way of collecting and responding to feedback has been popular and worked well. One community volunteer noted: "There is change. But it's us and the community. We engage the community all the time. It is because of us and the logbook that change happens."[13] Involving other staff members and specialists as well as integrating community feedback in DME reporting checklists and standing items for staff meetings has also built awareness of the importance of feedback coming to programme staff. Assigning resources in terms of staff time and funding for flexibly using multiple methods for providing feedback including different technological solutions has meant that when feedback systems need to be adapted based on the uptake of communities it can be done relatively easily instead of going through many hierarchies of approvals. For example in Somaliland, the BFM pilot discovered that the community is not really using SMS and therefore introduced a missed call call-back service and hotline number, which then helped them receive more feedback.

Community Feedback Officer meeting Health Worker for feedback survey in Ethiopia. Photo credit: AMREF

Providing and receiving feedback as a way of working often requires a mind-set change for both staff/partners who are implementing the programme and for the communities providing feedback. **Leveraging managerial practice in accountability and wider organisational culture that encourages feedback helps in enhancing feedback practice.** In certain instances, pilot projects encountered resistance and suspicion by staff and communities as to what the feedback was for. For example, in Zimbabwe's BFM initiative due to previous use of feedback boxes by the police, they were perceived by the community as a way to report offenders to the police and thus were viewed with suspicion at first by the community. So it has been important to encourage and orient communities as they may feel critical feedback might result in withdrawal of support, as one noted: "well, it is easy for us to give feedback if it is a positive thing you want to talk about, especially if we are asking for support on something else. Otherwise you may be accused of having said something that offended the donors and caused them to leave with their support."[14] And the pilots demonstrated that it takes time to orient communities in becoming confident in providing such feedback. This points to efforts that are needed in communicating clearly why feedback is sought. In many of the pilots, community magic shows and theatre were used to engage communities. Once communities have seen the difference their feedback makes and let go of their awkwardness or fear of reprisal, this has provided more incentives for communities to trust CFRS, as one Ethiopian woman noted, "Time and relationships have proved that they are working in our

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[13] Cechvala, S. & Jean, I., Feedback Loops Case Study in Ethiopia, March 2016. P21
[14] ADRA, INTRAC, World Vision, Beneficiary Feedback Mechanism Case Study: Zimbabwe. P5

interest."[15] Similarly with staff, it has also been important for offices to model the culture of providing and acting on feedback by allowing staff and partners to provide feedback and act on their feedback. This has helped build a culture of feedback.

Evidence have also emerged on **the close links of feedback systems with enhancing general social accountability. Shifting to a culture where feedback is seen as a right expressed and demanded by communities has helped Governmental and Non-Governmental organisations become more transparent and accountable.** World Vision accountability practice has helped to break down barriers between institutions and collaboratively address community concerns in partnership with other organisations. In A4D projects in Honduras, many local institutions began to share financial information and project information in town hall meetings and community participation in development plans meant that ADPs began to be monitored by community members.

In Nepal, partners realised that they too need to set up CFRS for the longer-term sustainability of the intervention and would like World Vision to build their capacity and train them: "World Vision will leave, and at the end we will be the ones in the community. So, we need our own feedback mechanisms and accountability systems, and World Vision should support us in developing our own efforts."[16] Partners who work in the communities can also then go on to replicate these benefits to different programme areas. For example, in India, World Vision's partner and implementation agency MAMTA made accountability to communities and CFRS a central pillar of their programming which led to immense benefits for the community and helped women gain confidence in providing feedback to influence better maternal and child health services to them. It also made Governmental services more accountable and subsequently MAMTA were approached by other Government agencies to set up such systems in another area.[17] This also works in a virtuous cycle as more community confidence in CFRS, reinforces a culture of feedback, which then helps communities demand rights and make government more accountable. Other factors such as India having a rich background in community mobilisation and also the long-term presence and reputation of the organisation in these communities had also helped in greater ownership of the CFRS.

Feedback meeting with women in India organised by MAMTA. Photo Credit: MAMTA

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[15] Cechvala, S. & Jean I., Case study on Feedback Loops in Ethiopia. March 2016. P22
[16] Cechvala, Sarah. "'For them, with them.' Building Accountability Systems in Post-Earthquake Nepal." CDA-World Vision International Nepal Feedback Loops Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, January 2016. P39
[17] As mentioned in MAMTA's final report to World Vision UK

The opportunity to influence larger changes have been recognised by World Vision's partners, for example a Media person in Jumla, Nepal noted: "Interaction with Media help to build external stakeholder engagement in the districts and set up communication channels, the initiative can be replicated among other agencies if WV continue the actions genuinely because right to information is fundamental right in constitution of Nepal."[18] Likewise, Village Development Committees (local government) have seen how suggestion boxes have helped and engaged in feedback referral. The creation of a joint feedback handling process and referral process has meant that local NGOs have also adopted accountability practices. However, this requires a recognition and a commitment of time and investment to helping partners enhance their capacity in the future as noted by a local NGO partner in Nepal: "Now we think, we must have the practice since very beginning of the program, it help us to increase our credibility into the communities, among stakeholders and much more! It sensitises us to be more accountable in terms of collecting feedback and respond systematically but we need additional capacities and efforts."[19]

Similarly in Ethiopia's ALI, the government's involvement in the CFRS, being on the accountability committee has meant that community feedback could also be directed to government and they addressed the gaps and promised to strengthen their own monitoring system.[20] The consultation which was facilitated by WVE helped in trust building between community and government thus enhancing social accountability.

Barriers and Challenges

As expected with pilot programmes, there have been institutional barriers that have impacted the extent and ease of implementing CFRS in different contexts. In Nepal, partners reported not having the flexibility to make changes as per the community feedback because the **MOUs signed between partners and World Vision do not allow for flexibility to make programmatic changes**. There were also limitations in the way partners were involved with the programme. In Nepal the government requires all international NGOs to work with local partners to implement programmes. However, partners were selected after ALI project design. This has limited the extent of partner involvement at the design stage. However, one possible solution that the NO is adopting is to work with partners through a joint feedback-handling committee to discuss feedback together and identify solutions, this committee could go beyond the life of programmes and act as a collaborative mechanism during design stages of new programmes.

There have also been cases where the pilots have different management structures for delivery and budgetary controls within NOs which makes ownership and decision-making problematic. This had been the case for A4D project in Zimbabwe and to some extent for the ALI in Pakistan as well. The problem is exacerbated by accountability not being assigned to staff roles and integrated in their performance appraisal. As in the case of Pakistan, a staff member noted: "For accountability to work, it has to be part of the project design. It needs to be integrated into the work."[21] One manager said, "We need to start putting more of this into job descriptions and agreements. Accountability needs to go up and down the organisation."[22]

In the ALI in Pakistan, the National Office also had some feedback mechanisms in place after the Humanitarian response to the floods; these were delivered through Programmes, however, when the accountability initiative was introduced, it was a parallel initiative which was implemented through its MEAL team. This created separation of the entry and processing of feedback and proved to be a barrier instead as people were unclear of the purpose of the additional feedback. This lack of an integrated approach thus limited the impact of CFRS.

Added to these challenges, many of the pilots faced very short time duration for actual implementation in which they had to cover large geographical area and often inaccessible terrain, which made implementation challenging in Ethiopia and Nepal. It seems that time is a crucial factor in ensuring that the design phase has been inclusive. The start-up phase is time intensive so the programme design needs to take this into account.

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[18] As quoted in PPA Final Report of ALI in Nepal, January 2017 p11
[19] *Ibid*
[20] PPA Final Report of ALI in Ethiopia, January 2016.
[21] Cechvala, S, Feedback Loops Case Study in Pakistan, December 2015
[22] Cechvala, S, Feedback Loops Case Study in Pakistan, December 2015. P38
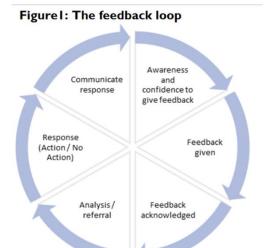
When considering upscaling to other Area programmes, a challenge has been the location of field staff and their embeddedness in the community. This becomes an important factor in timely response in such situations.

In Nepal, the project evaluation highlighted that due to the short duration of the project, accountability was seen as a periodic activity, given competing work priorities. Added to this was the challenge of resources and technical capacity to train staff and partner NGO staff. All these challenges then limit the overall impact of the project. Therefore, recommendations for scaling up has included the need for time and resources for training. Specifically, timely response and closing of the feedback loop remains a challenge. This has been a recurring issue and improvement can happen once prioritisation and technical capacity can be addressed.

Once feedback had been collected, many of the initiatives faced the challenge of analysis and referral and tracking within and outside of the organisation and managing the expectations of communities through timely response. This is discussed in greater detail below.

Considerations for the Feedback Loop

The feedback loop as referenced in Figure 1, represents how feedback flows through a CFRS. There have been common trends emerging from the accountability initiatives on their experience of operationalising different aspects of the loop.

Figure 1: The feedback loop

Awareness raising through information provision: Continuous contextualisation and adaptation: "Because of increased information, the amount of dissatisfaction has decreased. People feel they can voice their issues and get a response quickly and openly. I've seen a positive change" noted a Kebele Administrator in Yilmana Dinsa, Ethiopia.[23] The positive impact of information provision has also led to other effects in Nepal. As more time and effort has been invested in communicating the mandate and commitments of WVI, it has helped clear any misunderstandings, especially with regard to its Christian identity and it has helped WVI to strengthen its relationship in the local areas with the media, political parties and government officials.[24]

Providing information to communities about programmes and the feedback system is a cornerstone of transparency, and evidence from the pilot initiatives points to strengthening this aspect of the loop through **multiple methods of communication and provision of feedback.** While noticeboards, flyers, meetings and focus group discussions were all used, innovative approaches such as listening benches with field staff and community volunteers, using hotline numbers, SMS and suggestion boxes were also used. **But, in order to do this the need is to first spend some time in doing a thorough assessment of the communication and information needs of the community and in tapping into the trusted sources/channels for receiving information and providing feedback**. For example, in Ethiopia ALI, out of the two ADPs that used more noticeboards in more places, the communities had more knowledge of the programme though illiteracy was high. This was because illiterate people asked those who could read the noticeboards. Therefore, a thorough understanding of how information flows within communities and between different groups of people helps attune information provision.

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[23] Cechvala, S. & Jean I., Case study on Feedback Loops in Ethiopia. March 2016. P16
[24] Final PPA Report on the Accountability Learning Initiative in Nepal. January 2016.

Two-way communication channels have been preferred/ popular method for providing feedback, whether it is through a hotline number or face to face meetings/focus group discussions or through individual community volunteers. This is because communities can expect some sort of response immediately and there is an opportunity for dialogue. This option is usually also the most time-intensive, whether it is logging calls through the hotline or setting up community meetings/listening benches. It points to the need for staff time investment and training in these methods which would have continued budgetary implications for ADPs and Grant programmes looking to use CFRS.

Analysis and Referral of feedback: In the Pakistan ALI, a key learning has been how feedback recording and referral channels were separated and thus creating a parallel channel that could have been more effective if it had been integrated within programmes. A way to ensure that this can be done, is to map out the current ways an NO receives and refers different types of feedback and assess if new projects can be integrated within. Where partners have been involved, setting up relationships with them to refer and direct feedback also influences their way of working. The stress has been in developing this collaboratively with partners to encourage collective ownership. However all this depends on how clear the systems of referral are.

Feedback Utilization for larger Programme/Policy changes: "Yes, they (WVE) have made changes. The small things they (AP staff) do, but the bigger things need to come from higher up**",** Community Member in Yilmana Dinsa, Ethiopia[25]

The ability of programme staff and partners to take the appropriate action and respond to feedback has often depended on their skills, time and institutional structures. There are costs to analysis of feedback-if it is not automatically aggregated, it requires staff time to collate all this information and there needs to be capacity in aggregating feedback and analysing and packaging this information for decision-makers. This is still an area where there is much more to learn as this is still something that needs more practice. A field staff in Nepal noted: "We are getting a lot of feedback from the community, and at some level I can respond, but at a higher level I cannot respond. So I need support from the higher level."[26] In Pakistan, staff noted that they do not do enough to collate information for senior management decision-making: "we don't prepare analysis and don't share information with SMT and this is creating a missing link,"[27] a senior staff in Pakistan agreed: "data needs to be packaged well in a systematic way that allows me to see patterns or weaknesses."[28] In Nepal, the Humanitarian Team collates bi-weekly feedback reports and have experience in this. Therefore, learning on this can be replicated within the World Vision family. CDA Collaborative case study based on their visit to ALI in

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[25] Cechvala, S. & Jean I., Case study on Feedback Loops in Ethiopia. March 2016. P26
[26] Cechvala, S, Case study on Feedback Loops in Nepal. January 2016. P26
[27] Cechvala, S, Case study on Feedback Loops in Pakistan. December 2015. P33
[28] Ibid p34

Ethiopia observed that there may be larger trends for feedback and a system of channelling response up to recommend policy level decisions such as those to do with community dissatisfaction at shifts in child sponsorship issues were emerging in World Vision Ethiopia which needed the attention of country level management. They suggested that thresholds for types of information being collected and recurring themes, should be devised so that the right types of information are referred to the right type of decision-makers.

Tracking feedback and ensuring it is referred and the feedback acted on, is also an area which is extremely important for ensuring that the loop functions properly but tracking feedback is often challenging as well, especially if the feedback is informal and in some instances field staff may feel too overwhelmed with this extra task on top of their other tasks as often this function does not have a specific staff assigned.[29]

Meeting with Stakeholders to discuss indicators for providing feedback. Photo Credit: CINI, India

Importance of Information sharing and Communicating Response for Managing Community expectations, especially in unstructured feedback: Responding to feedback not only closes the loop, it helps to reinforce the validity of feedback as one female community member in Nepal said: "We know you think it is important because you respond to our feedback and take action on it."[30] Even in instances when the response is not positive, response is appreciated. Another important aspect of the feedback loop has been how best to devise the feedback system so that one can invite unsolicited open-ended feedback and ensuring that unstructured feedback is recorded and fed into the referral system, so that referral can take both types of feedback into consideration. Structured feedback helps in assessing against programme goals yet open ended feedback is necessary for pointing out larger or unintended impact/issues occurring. In some contexts, unsolicited feedback leads to higher expectations, one staff In Pakistan noted: "Our mandate was not clearly communicated to beneficiaries. We never said to the community what our limitations are, which means community's wish lists and expectations keep increasing."[31]

Here it has been pointed out that response, even if it is disappointing, is necessary in order to manage expectations but opening up to inviting unstructured unsolicited feedback has often meant that field staff have to manage a lot of community expectations and this has not always been easy for them. In Nepal as well as Pakistan, staff echoed that even when they have said no, the community may not understand this as 'no'.

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[29] Ibid p24

[30] Cechvala, S, Case study on Feedback Loops in Nepal. January 2016. P26

[31] Cechvala, S, Case study on Feedback Loops in Pakistan. December 2015. P19

Expectation management takes us back to the need for clear communication with communities and also for the need to include all the stakeholders in the design of the CFRS so that there is understanding of the purpose of feedback.

Feedback on Sensitive Issues: In Tanzania's BFM pilot, there was feedback on domestic violence and misappropriation of funds. The pilot developed a system where such information was shared immediately and response given within two weeks. Similarly in Pakistan's ALI, corruption charges against a vendor were referred to the MEAL team, who investigated and verified it. Sensitive issues are treated differently in the sense that they require urgent response but also delicate handling with an investigation element that is independent and can verify the responses. There is still more learning required in how this is mainstreamed within the handling of the feedback by different staff members.

Considerations for sustainability of future efforts

A key factor in the success of upscaling and sustaining CFRS after closure of initiatives and programmes that had specific staff and resources for accountability, is the ability of National offices and partners finding established and innovative ways to continue funding and prioritising accountability amongst all other priority interventions. In Nepal and Ethiopia, following the ALI, the National office has made accountability a priority and have assigned budgets for including activities under its operations. BFM pilot partners who have been successful in replicating CFRS have been able to get new funding to support CFRS in other project areas for example, in India, Somaliland and in Pakistan, MAMTA, HPA and Rahnuma were able to use the systems set up during the BFM pilots to replicate and use for new projects starting up in existing as well as new community areas.[32] While in Tanzania, CUAMM has not met with similar success and largely this has been due to funding but also the presence of the organisation in the communities and their pre-existing relationships and commitments to incorporate community feedback in core programmes.

Although many BFM pilots were not designed to be sustainable in the long run, there are also considerations of what happens when hotlines and SMS numbers stop operating and how the closure of feedback channels is communicated. In Pakistan's BFM pilot, Rahnuma informed parents of the closure of the CFRS located in schools but told them that they could still provide feedback through the clinics on their core programmes. While in Tanzania, some community members are still sharing the hotline number even though the hotline is closed, but some still call CUAMM staff whose numbers they may know.

Another aspect of sustainability is for investing in improving technical capacity and understanding on accountability within National Offices. Although funding for staff salaries and other expenses maybe budgeted, it is important to note that field capacity in CFRS implementation remains a challenge as field staff and partners require on-going training, especially given staff turnovers. In fact, in Nepal for example, partners perceive WVI as having expertise although the NO also has technical capacity limitations themselves. Therefore, it would be important for training to be incorporated in budgets. Learning through peer-to-peer experiential sharing workshops could help in knowledge sharing across the Partnership as well as the WVI Community of Practice that organises various online discussions on Accountability.

In summary, World Vision programming has already benefited from piloting accountability to communities through implementing community feedback and response systems, these have proved useful in building trust and empowering communities, they have also helped reorient programmes towards community needs and preferences. Senior leadership commitment has meant that some National offices have been able to integrate CFRS within core programming but these need to be strengthened further through capacity building and training of staff and through continued leadership and organisational structures to support field staff and partners working with communities.

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[32] As mentioned in the Ex-poste interviews with pilot partners in January 2017.

SOURCES

1. Beneficiary Feedback Mechanism Pilot Project Case Studies: Seven organisations piloted beneficiary feedback mechanisms in maternal and child health projects in different locations. Each pilot was documented in a case study. For more information, please follow the links below:

- Ethiopia (AMREF Health Africa)

- Kolkata, India (Child in Need Institute in partnership with ChildHope)

- Pakistan (Rahnuma Family Planning Association of Pakistan)

- Somaliland (Health Poverty Action)

- Tanzania (CUAMM Trustees)

- Uttar Pradesh, India (MAMTA Institute for Mother and Child)

- Zimbabwe (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)

2. CDA Collaborative Case studies on World Vision Accountability Learning Initiatives

Cechvala, Sarah, and Isabella Jean. "Accountability is a mirror that shows not only your face, but also your back." CDA-World Vision Ethiopia Feedback Loops Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, March 2016.

Cechvala, Sarah. " 'For them, with them.' Building Accountability Systems in Post-Earthquake Nepal." CDA-World Vision International Nepal Feedback Loops Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, January 2016.

Chechvala, Sarah. " 'Accountability Starts With Me.' Opening Inclusive Feedback Channels in Pakistan." CDA-World Vision Pakistan Feedback Loops Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, December 2015.

3. World Vision Internal Progress Reports:

Final Evaluation of Strengthening Programme Accountability II Report by WVI Nepal

PPA Final Reports from WV Ethiopia, WVI Nepal.

PPA Monthly Reports from WV Ethiopia, WVI Nepal, WV Somaliland

A4D progress reports from Honduras, Bolivia.

Ex-poste Skype Interviews conducted with BFM Pilot Partners: ADRA, AMREF, CUAMM, RAHNUMA-FPA, HPA, MAMTA.