

PESHAWAR'S IMPROVED FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINT MECHANISM

Muhammad Ali
Country Senior MEAL Manager
ACF-USA in Pakistan



SUMMARY

Action Against Hunger in Pakistan improved the Feedback and Complaints Mechanism for the beneficiaries of an intervention project in Pakistan. This in turn led to more widespread access to this mechanism and thereby increased accountability to the communities.

CHALLENGE

Action Against Hunger has recently concluded an ECHO-funded intervention in Peshawar, Pakistan, in which out-patient therapeutic programme (OTP) sites were set up to prevent undernutrition among displaced communities. The main activities of this intervention included screening children under five and pregnant or lactating women for malnutrition. Out of 30,479 children screened by Action Against Hunger, 1,739 cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) were identified using the Middle Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) measurement. These children were enrolled in the newly established OTP sites, while 5,911 pregnant or lactating women received MM Supplements.

These treatment cases were documented through enrolment registers, and details of the tracing and follow-up of these cases were recorded following the standard procedures. To receive regular feedback and complaints, Action Against Hunger expanded its Feedback and Complaints Mechanism (FCM) by installing boxes with complaint registration forms at all OTP sites, and by displaying a project-specific hotline with details of all intervention areas here as well. The country office MEAL department closely monitored the incoming data and noticed that the response rate was very low.

SOLUTION

The MEAL team investigated the issue in order to try to address the challenge. They assessed the FCM by visiting target communities and interviewing beneficiaries. They found that one of the key challenges for the community was to access the FCM hotline number: beneficiaries used their OTP site visits to find the hotline number, but the high population density and huge number of beneficiaries made it very difficult to visit and register their feedback in a timely way.

To overcome this issue, the MEAL and Programme Team decided to print the FCM hotline number on the beneficiaries' treatment cards. For existing beneficiaries who had already received their cards, they used a stamp to print the FCM hotline number on the cards during follow-up visits to OTP sites.

LEARNING

This new approach turned out to be a great improvement: within a month the amount of feedback had improved significantly with 14 new feedback enquiries. In total, Action Against Hunger received 43 cases of feedback for the remainder of the project, which was a lot more than they were receiving before. Especially interesting was the gender aspect of this improvement: the ratio of women who provided feedback increased as they benefitted from easier access to the hotline number, and as a result more women were able to seek timely support.

Clearly, it is important to stimulate community participation through a context-specific Feedback and Complaints Mechanism. This learning should be incorporated into future programmes to ensure greater quality of our services, as well as greater accountability to the communities that we work with.

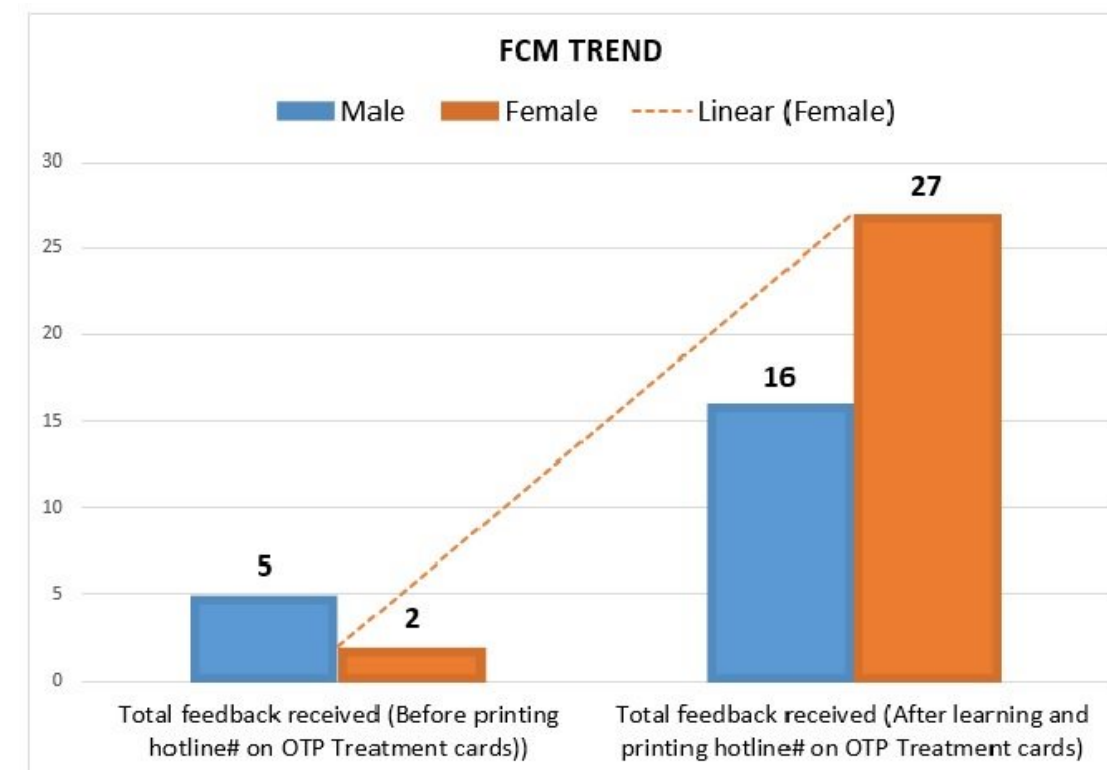


Figure showing FCM trends