Report

Beneficiary feedback in donor programme design, development and evaluation

Uganda and Kenya

2016
June

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Development Initiatives

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Summary

- Beneficiary feedback is important for donor agencies to measure results of their programming, as well as offering lessons for development and informing decision-making.
- Feedback is collected through a diverse range of mechanisms – either solicited or unsolicited by the donor agencies – including meetings, field visits, social media and evaluations.
- Beneficiary feedback is viewed as an avenue for sharing experiences and information flow from the project/programme recipients to the donors.
- Beneficiary feedback provides a channel to amplify voices of the beneficiaries to the donors.
- Annual reviews/evaluations and formal group consultations like group discussions, workshops and meetings are the main source of information on beneficiary feedback used by donors.
- Beneficiary feedback provides an opportunity for project improvement, which enables sustainable changes to improve effectiveness through tracking use and benefits of projects.
- Beneficiary feedback can be an important element in programme/project implementation, and should therefore be prioritised by donors with clear and better planning and funding.

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List of acronyms

CRS	Creditor Reporting System
CSOs	Civil Society Organisation
DANIDA	Danish Agency for International Development
DFID	Department for International Development
DI	Development Initiatives
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EU	European Union
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	non-government organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPA	programme partnership arrangement
PRDP	Peace and Recovery Development Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMS	Short Message Service
UK	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United Stated Agency for International Development

Executive summary

Citizen-led development is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, with particular relevance to the principle of ‘inclusive development partnerships’.

Beneficiary feedback provides an opportunity for the beneficiaries to have a say about the services, projects or initiatives provided to them. Beneficiary feedback acts as a checking tool for the donor agencies to ensure that the needs of their beneficiaries are being met. It is a connection channel between the beneficiaries and donors.

Development Initiatives undertook research to assess the application of beneficiary feedback mechanisms used by nine donor agencies involved in the delivery of aid assistance in Kenya and Uganda, identifying challenges faced and drawing key lessons for future application. This report seeks to provide donors with key evidence and lessons regarding the use of beneficiary feedback mechanisms, informing their future use and application in development assistance.

Termed differently among agencies depending on how the feedback is collected, beneficiary feedback provides a channel to amplify voices of the beneficiaries, and also makes a connection between citizens and the donors as decision-makers. It provides an opportunity for project improvement, which enables tracking use, benefits and sustainable changes to improve effectiveness. Beneficiary feedback is viewed as an avenue to share experiences and information flow – from the people for whom the projects are being implemented to the donors.

This feedback is collected through both solicited and unsolicited feedback mechanisms. Periodic reviews and formal group discussions are the most popular source of information on beneficiary feedback among donor agencies, including annual, midterm and end line evaluations, with variations in frequency. Information gathered through these reviews is easily accessible.

Beneficiary feedback is however challenged by unclear systems for uptake of feedback by donors in decision-making; the feedback collected is rarely used at the project conceptualisation stage as its evaluation is done while another project is starting, to avoid a gap in donor assistance. Because English is the main language used in feedback collection, this limits participation of beneficiaries not comfortable with the English language. In addition, beneficiaries’ expectations are raised during the collection of feedback, and most of these expectations are not easily managed by the donors.

Despite these challenges, beneficiary feedback has an important role to play in contributing to development effectiveness, and increasing the role of citizens in development. In acknowledgement of this, donors need to increase the use of more favourable feedback collection mechanisms that emphasise inclusiveness of all citizens, including groups that are more vulnerable. This should be in line with the use of a common local language for the respective beneficiaries when collecting this feedback, to manage the language-barrier challenge.

Donors can also make it a requirement for implementing agencies to collect and share beneficiary feedback in a systematic way, ensuring that beneficiary feedback collection is prioritised in their planning and resources are allocated to its collection, management, review and uptake to influence decision-making.

1. Introduction

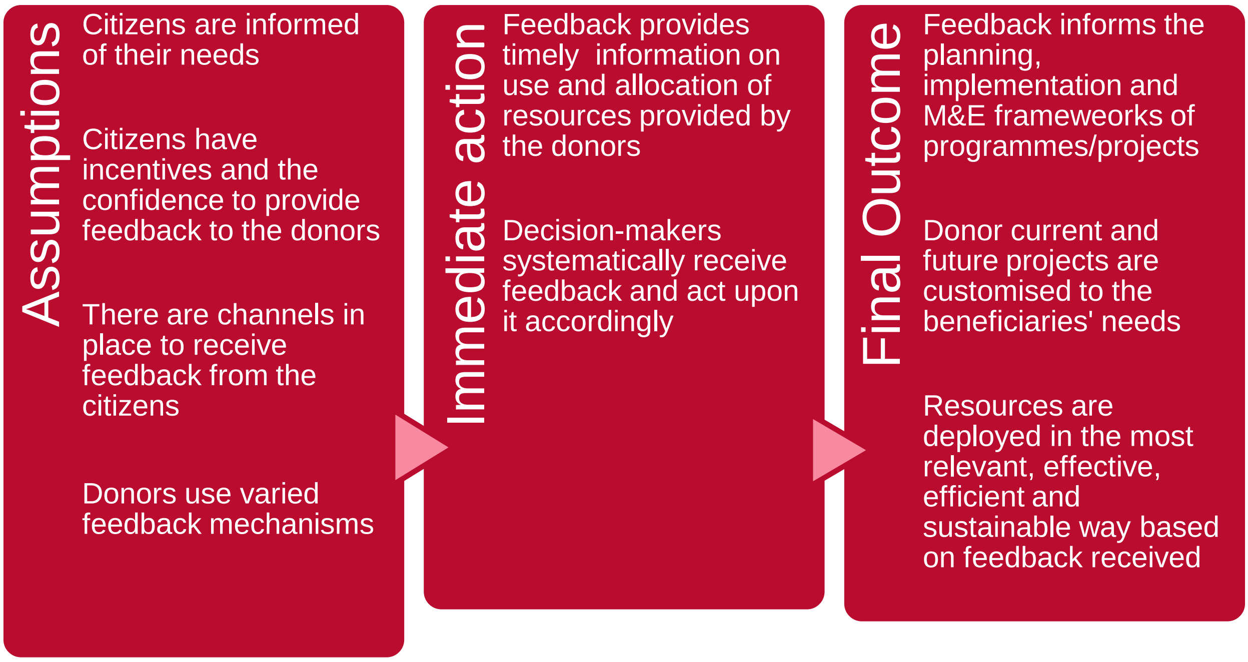
Citizen-led development is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development[1] and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, with particular relevance to the principle of 'inclusive development partnerships'.[2] To end poverty and ensure that development assistance is effective and impacts upon the needs of the most vulnerable people, it is critical that people targeted for development assistance are at the heart of processes to plan, implement and monitor its delivery.

Citizen-led development requires more active engagement by donors, delivery agencies and implementing partners of citizen voices, throughout the programme cycle from planning and monitoring progress to the evaluation of programmes. To achieve this, it is important that donors establish processes for collecting feedback from their interventions, and using such feedback to inform decision-making regarding the targeting of resources and the design, implementation and monitoring of particular projects and programmes.

Progress in this area has been made by a number of donors through the development of mechanisms for collecting and using beneficiary feedback.[3] Such feedback enables donors to assess the effectiveness of their interventions on addressing the needs and livelihoods of those targeted for assistance.

To better understand the beneficiary feedback mechanisms used by donors, identify challenges faced and draw key lessons for future application, Development Initiatives undertook research to assess the application of feedback mechanisms by nine donor agencies[4] involved in the delivery of development assistance in Kenya and Uganda. This research was based on a theory of change as outlined in Figure 1, and a number of key assumptions, which were tested through the research.

Figure 1: Theory of change feedback and engagement



This report seeks to provide donors with key evidence and lessons regarding the use of beneficiary feedback mechanisms, informing their future use and application in development assistance. Section 2 provides an overview of the methodology used in the research, and Sections 3 and 4 present key findings – including donors' understanding of beneficiary feedback and the lessons drawn from the use of various mechanisms. A summary of the key challenges associated with donors' use of beneficiary feedback (Section 5) is followed by a conclusion and summary of the way forward (Section 6).

2. Methodology

This study was carried out over four months, from June to September 2015 in Uganda and Kenya.

Selection of donor agencies

The selection of the nine agencies in Uganda and Kenya was based on: (i) the categorisation of development assistance providers as either bilateral or multilateral agencies; and (ii) size of agency by level of funding. The level of funding was assessed by the amount of money provided in the form of aid by these agencies in the last three years, focusing on the top and bottom funders in Uganda and Kenya. Using the OECD-CRS database, these criteria led to categorisation of the agencies into small, medium and large, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Organisations interviewed for the study

Category	Type of organisation	
	Multilateral	Bilateral
Large	World Bank – Uganda European Union – Uganda and Kenya	Department for International Development (DFID) – Uganda United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – Uganda and Kenya
Medium		Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) – Uganda
Small	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) – Uganda and Kenya United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) East Africa office, based in Kenya	Irish Aid – Uganda Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

Desk research

Existing literature on beneficiary feedback was reviewed to understand the development agenda in line with beneficiary feedback, plus the policies guiding donors' operations in Uganda and Kenya. This was backed up with an understanding of the challenges associated with the use of different mechanisms and how beneficiary feedback has been used to inform decision-making in the past.

Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews were held with representatives from nine donor agencies, using the guidance of a questionnaire (included in the Annex). The questions focused on donors' understanding of beneficiary feedback, the types of mechanisms used and challenges experienced and lessons learned.

3. Key findings on donors' understanding of beneficiary feedback

Beneficiary feedback is termed differently among agencies, depending on how this feedback is collected. Examples of the various terms used are presented in Figure 2. Understanding of the purpose of these varying terms and approaches is similar across donor agencies– to consult with and involve recipients of aid in planning, implementation and delivery of projects and programmes in order to strengthen effectiveness and impact.

Figure 2: Word cloud of terms used interchangeably with 'beneficiary feedback'

For example, donors view beneficiary feedback as means of sharing experiences and information – from the people for whom projects are being implemented to the donors. Beneficiary feedback provides a channel to amplify voices of the beneficiaries and to connect decision-makers and citizens.

Beneficiary feedback provides an opportunity for the beneficiaries to have a say about the services, projects or initiatives provided to them. This can be through day-to-day supervision, half-year tracking meetings or learning and reflection workshops, among other methods, as carried out by DANIDA Uganda. Beneficiary feedback acts as a checking tool for the donor agencies to ensure that the needs of the beneficiaries are being met. It is a channel connecting beneficiaries and donors.

Why donors collect and use beneficiary feedback

The research identified the following reasons why donors collect and use beneficiary feedback.

- It increases ownership of the work being done by the community, especially in identifying needs through continued participation of the beneficiaries, enabling and informing means of improvement.
- It increases information flow which optimises spending and donors/funders are guided by the users on what their needs are and where the resources should be channelled.
- It encourages inclusiveness and participation for both the donor and the beneficiary.

- Beneficiary feedback provides an opportunity for project improvement which enables sustainable changes to improve effectiveness.
- It provides checks for implementation of sector projects to ensure value for money.
- Beneficiary feedback assists in tracking use and benefits of projects.
- It is a good source of information on progress of implementation, and helps raise a red flag when necessary if the project is not progressing well.
- It creates links between community and project implementation for accountability and participation, for example through the *Barazas* (public meetings) under the Peace Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP) in Northern Uganda.

4. Key findings on feedback mechanisms: Challenges faced and lessons learned

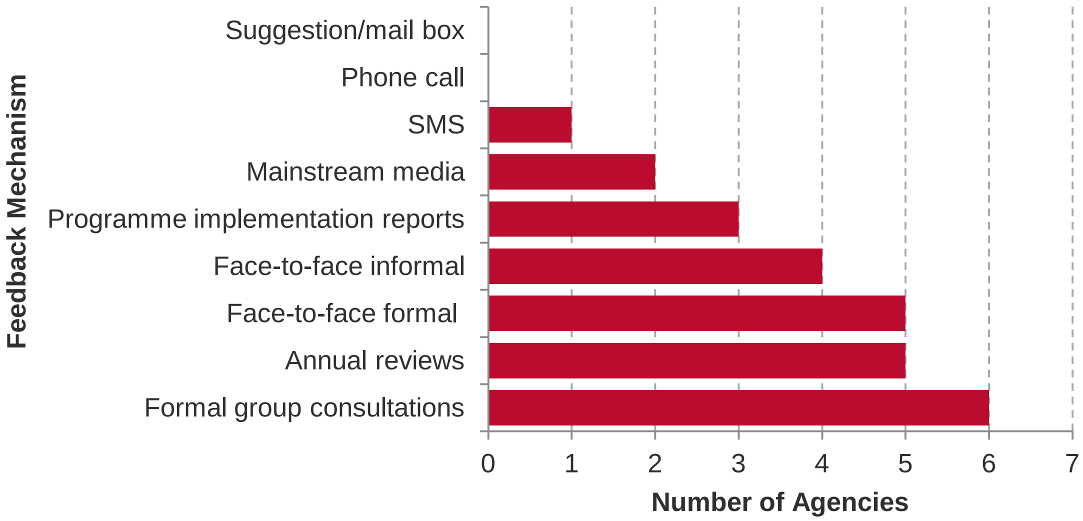
Beneficiary feedback is attained through both solicited and unsolicited mechanisms.[5] An example of a successful solicited mechanism for feedback is the use of Short Message Service (SMS) communications adopted by UNICEF through the U-Report programme to collect feedback directly from citizens regarding the delivery of services.[6]

U-Report is a complete system, which allows citizens to report on what is happening in their communities, providing a forum to amplify their voices through local and national media. It sends alerts to key stakeholders about the issues their constituents are facing, and feeds back useful information to the U-Reporters (citizens registered to U-Report), so they are empowered to work for change and improvements in their localities. This system provides real-time response information from diverse locations and categories countrywide, including both young and old generations, on issues including health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, youth unemployment, HIV/Aids, disease outbreaks and other aspects of social welfare.

Unsolicited feedback on the other hand is not requested by the donors but ends up getting to them on the implementations they are undertaking. For example, the European Union (EU) and the United States Agency for Development (USAID) can receive feedback through mainstream media reporting and social media.

Figure 3 illustrates the most popular feedback mechanisms used by donors. Formal group consultations and annual reviews are the most popular, with over five of the nine donor agencies interviewed identifying them as mechanisms that they use.

Figure 3: Beneficiary feedback collection mechanisms



Source: Development Initiatives

A summary of the key feedback mechanisms used by donors is provided below, highlighting the key challenges and lessons learned regarding each mechanism. These are divided into solicited and unsolicited mechanisms.

Solicited mechanisms

From the key informant interviews held, annual reviews/evaluations are one of the main sources of information provision for beneficiary feedback to the donor agencies in Uganda and Kenya. Five agencies (DFID, the EU, the World Bank, Irish Aid and USAID) out of the nine analysed used evaluations and annual reviews as sources of information on beneficiary feedback. These included annual reviews, midterm and end line evaluations, with variations in frequency. Agencies like the EU and USAID used independent consultants who were based either within or outside the country in question to undertake evaluations, while others like Irish Aid used their own staff members from the monitoring and evaluation department or project heads to undertake evaluations.

Irish Aid through its internal audit department also undertakes independent analysis to review the use of the available resources as per the planned activities. Reports are usually the main product from these reviews, which determine the state of the project and recommend its continuation or termination.

Benefits: This method is objective and the perceptions are non-biased. Information gathered is easily captured in the reports prepared.

Challenges: It was not evident through the interviews how the results of the evaluations feed into the design of new projects or change existing ones. One explanation for this is the project cycle having no gap between projects in order for the evaluations to influence subsequent projects. In addition, annual reviews are often done by external reviewers, who may not know the community well and often do their review over a short period of time – which limits the number of respondents. This can result in limited and lost information especially that provided directly by the beneficiaries.

Formal group discussions and consultations, including focus group discussions, face-to-face interactions, workshops, field visits/missions and meetings, are also a popular mechanism used by donors to collect beneficiary feedback. These methods are independent of the evaluations/reviews and occur as and when needed throughout the project. Operations of donor agencies in Uganda are guided by country strategy papers, which are prepared on a five-year basis in Uganda, and guided by the country's National Development Plan (NDP), currently at implementation of the second NDP (NDP II).

The EU, DANIDA, UNICEF, Irish Aid, SIDA and the World Bank often use this mechanism to collect beneficiary feedback, through planning and strategic meetings, workshops and discussions with government ministries, departments and agencies, and private entities, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Suggestions and proposals made in these consultations often feed into the donor agencies' strategic plans, usually implemented over a five-year period. In 2015, donor agencies like Irish Aid and DANIDA held consultations with various stakeholders including government agencies and CSOs, for their strategic plan preparations for the next five years of operation.

Benefits: Interactions are direct (face to face), and the mechanism leads to good outcomes in terms of the uptake of feedback by donors in planning and strategy delivery. Donors are immediately able to paint a picture of the needs of the beneficiaries.

Challenges: Sometimes limited in scope, these consultations are usually done in urban areas, leaving out those in the rural areas. In addition, the categories of beneficiaries can be limited, leaving out vulnerable groups like women, children and youth. Formal consultations are also constrained by financial resources as they necessitate availability of resources to organise workshops and meetings.

Donors, to collect feedback directly, sometimes use **informal discussions and consultations,** which include abrupt field visits and meetings and random interviews. These enable direct (face-to-face) and real-time interactions, providing first-hand information from the beneficiaries. In some instances, solutions, if needed, are provided immediately. Four organisations (the EU, USAID, DFID and DANIDA) of the nine interviewed in Uganda used this mechanism. They organise missions to inspect the projects being implemented within the respective recipient country. In doing so, they meet with beneficiaries in community meetings and issues are raised about the projects/programmes being implemented.

Benefits: Given the informal approach, beneficiaries are able to speak freely and raise their grievances or appreciation for the project/programme to the donors. As a result, the feedback provided during these visits is usually taken up by the implementers/donors.

Challenges: The informality can make it a challenge to mobilise beneficiaries. Feedback can be further restricted because of language barriers – often in situations where English is not the first language for communities, especially in rural areas. It is not clear how issues raised at the community level then feed into donor decision-making. This study was not able to track the mechanisms that may be used by donors to feed this information into their reports and programme-planning documents and the delivery of projects.

Programme/project implementation reports are prepared by aid recipients, including CSOs and NGOs to whom funding is channelled. These reports include beneficiary feedback, often through success stories from particular beneficiaries. Three out of the nine donor agencies interviewed mentioned use of this mechanism, through which they are able to receive information on the performance, challenges and impact of the funds they provide to these organisations. The reports are prepared at different points of implementation to show progress either annually or semi-annually. These reports are in some instances used for partnerships with sub-national governments and communities.

Benefits: As these reports are routinely prepared by NGOs, this mechanism is much more regular and predictable. Reports including beneficiary feedback are therefore a means of regularly engaging with beneficiaries in communities, as they give first-hand information on behalf of the beneficiaries.

Challenges: Implementation reports are received by the respective programme manager in the donor agency. It is then at the discretion of the programme manager to push the feedback issues forward, and so what is passed on depends greatly on the individual manager. The extent to which NGOs consult with beneficiaries was not clearly stated during the interviews. It could be that some reports reflect the views of the organisation preparing the reports and may not represent beneficiaries. How the feedback provided in these reports is used was not clear, and so their effectiveness is uncertain.

Short Message Service (SMS) The SMS mechanism (text messages via mobile phones) has been an effective way of exchanging information. In Uganda, UNICEF has used SMS extensively in its U-report project to collect and provide information to its subscribers. This has been an effective method, reaching over 250,000 respondents countrywide.

Benefits: The SMS service enables both feedback and feed-forward from the beneficiaries and the donor, and it reaches more and diverse groups of people including the disadvantaged such as women and youth.

Challenges: In addition to SMS being costly, the use of mobile phones is limited to those who can afford them, which would exclude the most vulnerable groups, such as many women.[7] In some instances, the SMS service is restricted by internet coverage, which limits feedback to only those who can afford and access. SMS in most cases also requires subsidisation of the charges with the telecom companies in order to increase coverage and access.

Unsolicited mechanisms or non-specific pathways

Mainstream media such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines. These non-specific pathways provide information on the success or failure of projects implemented in a particular area, providing details on how particular projects have affected and or influenced citizens in a particular community. Mainstream media channels have been a useful method of communication over the years, and donors keenly follow up on the stories or articles written about projects they are implementing, as they are quite informative and have a wider reach. From the interviews, Irish Aid, the EU and DANIDA attested to using this mechanism as a source of information on beneficiary feedback. The EU follows up on stories written about its projects in the media as this triggers areas of assessment for the projects they are implementing.

Benefits: Reaches a wider population, including those in areas that are hard to reach.

Challenges: The information provided here is one-way and not entirely reliable***; it*** is usually followed up by the donors and confirmed through reviews/evaluations.

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have over the years been taken up as channels through which feedback is collected, providing grievances, suggestions, appreciations and criticisms raised by the beneficiaries. Through these, donor agencies have continuously received information about their work in-country – both solicited and unsolicited. Organisations like the World Bank, the European Union, and USAID consider these mechanisms as important avenues for feedback collection and provision. UNICEF has started discussions around using social media to collect beneficiary feedback, in addition to the SMS platform.

Benefits: Potential to reach many beneficiaries at minimal cost, particularly in areas that are difficult to access or hard to reach.

Challenges: This feedback requires validation of the information provided**,** as some of it can be false. Feedback provided here is also usually one-sided as the agencies do not respond to the queries raised, and little is known of their effectiveness. The use of social media requires internet access, which is not available in some **–** especially rural **–** areas.

5. Key challenges in donors’ collection and use of beneficiary feedback

Systematic uptake of beneficiary feedback in decision-making is unclear

The research found that, while some donors had specific mechanisms for collecting and sharing feedback internally, most donors did not have clear systems in place for using such feedback in decision-making. Below are some of the examples in which this feedback is shared internally among donors in Uganda and Kenya.

- Monthly back-to-office reports are prepared within Irish Aid after field visits or mission trips, where information gathered on beneficiary feedback is shared with the rest of the team. Best practices are shared internally with the rest of the team and discussed during monthly team programme meetings. This information is also saved as evidence for future evaluations.
- Formal/pager reports are prepared by Irish Aid and USAID for internal use. These are usually brief and straightforward.

However, no systematic pathways were provided of how this information translates into decision-making. Donors reported holding discussions in weekly or 'brown bag'[8] meetings with the entire team. These meetings are usually over lunch, used for sharing major points of concern with the rest of the team, especially if there is something major that is raised. This is a practice often used by the EU for knowledge management.

UNICEF, however, does use its innovations-lab system with U-report, as developed over a period of four years. This system has been able to provide beneficiaries with access to information on services provided, creating opportunities for real-time feedback loops and improved data collection methods.

To address this challenge, all donors should provide clear and systematic channels for information provided to be processed and used for decision-making for better implementation.

Recording by donors of primary data on beneficiary feedback needs strengthening

In many cases, visual or verbal information collected by donor field staff is not recorded, such as field missions in the EU. This leads to challenges in attaining detailed information, which in turn limits the uptake of feedback in decision-making. Some of this information is also lost when collected by external actors such as implementing organisations or evaluators.

To overcome this challenge, each donor should develop systems for collecting such feedback from evaluators, implementing NGOs and field staff, for example through requesting all original data/recordings, as a funding requirement.

Managing beneficiaries' expectations

Surveys undertaken by UNICEF as part of its U-Report programme have indicated that feedback requests raise the hopes of citizens but that most of these hopes cannot be fulfilled. These range from expectation of more funding for the respective programmes/projects being implemented or additions or expansions of the projects to include more beneficiaries or coverage, among others, most of which are dependent on many other factors for them to be achieved. This therefore hinders the management of expectations for local communities. Channelling the respective expectations from beneficiaries to the responsible parties to address would help to meet this challenge.

Lack of common tools for donors to collect beneficiary feedback

The interview results show no uniform and systematic tool used by donors to collect beneficiary feedback. Each donor did this in the most feasible and appropriate way for them, without a preference for a specific methodology to use when collecting and using citizen data. There is need for a systematic tool and guidance for collecting, managing and using beneficiary feedback information. This tool should be able to capture the collected views and convert them into decision-making or policy-related issues that can be fed into the donor plans. Associated guidance would improve the quality and use of feedback among donor agencies to be used by field staff, implementing NGOs, and evaluators.

Limited direct donor consultations with beneficiaries

Donor agency staff members are usually based in the capital city – Kampala or Nairobi in this case – with infrequent visits to the field where most of the beneficiaries are based to interface with them. While donors do visit the field, most of this time is not used to meet with beneficiaries to collect feedback, but rather to assess projects. Interviewees felt that this heightened the reliance upon secondary sources of information on beneficiary feedback, and limits the extent to which feedback drives decision-making. There is therefore a need for more frequent field visits, particularly to collect beneficiary feedback.

Beneficiary feedback does not generally inform project design

It was not clear how the feedback collected is used at the project conceptualisation stage, as its evaluation is done while another project may already have started. This feedback is therefore used for monitoring and evaluation purposes only, creating a gap between project conceptualisation, implementation and resource allocation.

To meet this challenge, an assessment of target beneficiaries' priorities and needs should be undertaken before project planning and design commences to inform different stages of implementation.

Cultural appropriateness in collecting beneficiary feedback

There is a considerable language barrier in the collection of beneficiary feedback in certain instances as English is the main language used to gather feedback, which limits participation of some of the beneficiaries. In addition, some of the evaluators, especially the external ones, might not be familiar with the community cultural norms, which contributes to loss of some of the information provided.

The use of varied languages, especially the mother tongue in the respective areas of operation, would be an added advantage when collecting feedback for better understanding and information collection.

Limited donor resources for collection and use of beneficiary feedback

Citizen involvement in project/programme design, delivery and monitoring is critical to the effectiveness of development assistance and, as such, should be given adequate priority. To achieve this, donors could make it a requirement for implementing agencies to collect and share beneficiary feedback with them in a systematic way. However, limited funding is made available within donor agencies for the collection and use of beneficiary feedback, and such activities are often not included in donors' strategic plans. Donors should ensure that beneficiary feedback is prioritised in their planning and that resources are allocated to its collection and management to influence decision-making.

Limitations of the feedback mechanisms used most often

As illustrated in Figure 3, and through research interviews, most donors use project reviews, evaluations, and formal donor–beneficiary consultations undertaken to collect feedback. The reliance upon a small number of mechanisms poses a number of challenges. In particular, reviews and evaluations undertaken by external actors are often done quickly and involve a small number of formal consultations with communities, usually done through sampling. This misses some of the detail as some groups are excluded, and opinions collected might not be representative of the entire community.

To address this and reach a wider spectrum of beneficiaries through feedback mechanisms, there is a need for donors to utilise additional mechanisms – such as capturing feedback from implementing partners, social media and mainstream media. Such indirect mechanisms can reach a larger segment of the population, including those in rural areas and excluded groups (such as women and children). In addition, other donors should consider SMS systems as effective feedback mechanisms.

6. Conclusions and the way forward

Beneficiary feedback has an important role to play in contributing to development effectiveness, and also increasing the role of citizens in development. In acknowledgement of this, a number of donors are using beneficiary feedback mechanisms – such as evaluations, formal discussions and social media – to collect this feedback from beneficiaries. However, this feedback is challenged by unclear systems of uptake by donors for decision-making, language barriers and managing beneficiaries' expectations, among other limitations.

Steps should be taken to formalise the uptake of information gathered through a systematic approach, ensuring clear channels used by the respective donor agencies to collect and handle this feedback, up to the point where it feeds back into policy and decision-making.

This would necessitate donor prioritisation of beneficiary feedback collection and management. Donor agencies can also use a uniform system of collecting and sharing beneficiary feedback among themselves for better coordination and improved citizens' development, as a number of the issues faced by citizens are similar and therefore knowledge sharing would provide opportunity for collaboration to address the beneficiaries' needs. Channelling the respective expectations from beneficiaries to the responsible parties to address would help to meet the challenge of donor management of beneficiaries' expectations.

Donors need to emphasise the use of a commonly used language when collecting feedback, to manage the language-barrier challenges. In addition, consideration should be made of vulnerable groups to avoid their exclusion and promote their participation and engagement. For example, using telephone calls in addition to SMS could help to reduce participation gaps for vulnerable groups.

Emphasising more donor involvement in the collection of feedback through more field trips and telephone conversations would increase the collection of firsthand information, alongside the adoption of cheaper mechanisms to increase beneficiaries' participation. This would reduce the involvement of consultants and third-party information handling.

Annex

Questionnaire for beneficiary feedback and engagement

Beneficiary feedback is an essential element of programme/project implementation as it creates a direct connection between the service provider and the service recipient, which accelerates development outcomes. Development Initiatives (DI) is collecting information on beneficiary feedback to understand if donors use beneficiary feedback, when and how. Your response will be greatly appreciated.

1.	NAME OF INTERVIEWEE		**RANK**			
2.	NAME OF ORGANISATION					
3.	POSITION AND DEPARTMENT					
4.	Please describe your organisation structure and clearly explain the stage at which decisions are made for programme/project implementation.					
5.	What do you understand by beneficiary feedback?					
6.	Does your agency collect or use beneficiary feedback?	Yes No (skip to Question 10)				
7.	How is feedback collected? Please rank which methods are most used by your organisation. 1=Most used 2=Often used 3=Sometimes 4=Least used	Face-to-face informal discussion during field visit				
		Face-to-face formal discussion (including interview, etc) during field visit				
		Formal group consultation (including FGD, workshops, meetings, etc)				
		SMS				
		Phone call				
		Social media				
		Suggestion / mail box				
		Mainstream media, e.g. newspapers, radio, etc				
		Programme/project implementation reports from beneficiaries				
		Other, please specify				

8.	How is the feedback collected in 7 above managed? (Please give a detailed process of how this feedback is analysed and made ready to inform decisions)					
9.	At what stage(s) is this feedback used? Please rank which methods are most used by your organisation. 1=Most used 2=Often used 3=Sometimes 4=Least used	Project concept				
		Project design and planning stage				
		Budgeting and financial planning				
		Project implementation				
		Project evaluation				
		Project learning and review processes (non-evaluation)				
		Overall programmatic/strategic review (non-project specific)				
		Other, please specify				
10.	Which type of information does your organisation mostly use to make decisions on resource allocation? For each response, please indicate the extent to which this type of information is used. 1=Most used 2=Often used 3=Sometimes 4=Least used	Feedback from beneficiaries				
		Research				
		Gray literature / literature review (reports, non-academic publications from development practitioners, agencies and institutions, etc)				
		Expert opinion (including colleagues)				
		Strategic country engagements				
		Political interests by donors				
		Other – please specify				
11.	What are some of the challenges and benefits of using beneficiary views in decision-making?					

Notes

[1] ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum (2015, October) 'Citizen-based Monitoring of Development Cooperation to Support Implementation of the 2030 Agenda 2016' Development Cooperation Forum Policy Brief 9.
[2] http://www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/49650173.pdf
[3] Beneficiary feedback is a systematic approach to collecting views of the recipients to whom donor assistance is provided. It is a process of collecting and responding to comments, suggestions, criticism and expression of appreciation on the work done by the donors for the respective recipients. See Groves, Leslie (2015) *Beneficiary Feedback in Evaluation*, USAID.
[4] World Bank Uganda, European Union – Uganda and Kenya, Department for International Development (DFID), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Danish International Agency (DANIDA) – Uganda, United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) – Uganda and Kenya, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) East Africa based in Kenya, Irish Aid – Uganda, Swedish international Development Agency (SIDA).
[5] Solicited mechanisms are feedback channels designed by the donor agencies to collect or request feedback on the work they are doing; unsolicited mechanisms are those through which donors receive feedback, most of which is not collected by them.
[6] U-Report is an innovation-based, user-centred social monitoring tool based on simple Short Message Service (SMS) messages, designed to strengthen community-led development, citizen engagement and positive change (http://www.ureport.ug/about/).
[7] http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA_Women_and_Mobile-A_Global_Opportunity.pdf
[8] A structured social gathering during an organisational lunch-time period which is used specifically for the purpose of transferring knowledge, building trust, social learning, problem solving, establishing networking or brainstorming.

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