

# Sarathi Development Foundation

## Sarathi Feedback System: Extending Base for Community Participation

### 1.0 Introduction

**Sarathi Development Foundation** works on participatory development principles to priorities and address the issues of children, adolescent girls and women in sphere of integrated community development. It is institutionalizing feedback as a dynamic process **to upstream of their voices, interconnect community and government actions, change behaviors and enrich our work strategies and approaches effectively.** Feedback is integrated with our interventions including:- **a) Community based micro planning** on their needs, issues & problems, **b) Building community resource persons like volunteers and local platforms** for self actions, advocacy on their issues and feedback to service providers such as government, local government institutions, **c) Skill development** of community volunteers, child reporters, groups for their positioning and improving conditions, **d) leveraging government service provisions & resources** to address community needs, **e) Providing technical support** to government, social organizations and development agencies for improving their functions and service deliveries.

### 2.0 Sarathi's Feedback Methodology

**Feedback on Sarathi,s blog** "I liked this post. Not only did it tell a story that engaged me but it started me thinking about how to integrate the same style into my own communications. I find that often I feel that am at a loss for words, and it occurs to me that I may be stuck in my " high level" overview of a project and therefore not immediately conscious of the need for communicating the many small details that create deeper understanding and a sense of" ownership" in finding/assisting in solutions. In school and in business we are taught to be concise, brief and to the point in our writing. In life, the devil is in the details and so a balance is needed to be mindful of readers'time while trying to provide meaningful insights." **By Barabara Bosasco, [www.kasumisou.org](http://www.kasumisou.org)**

Feedback process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>Indicators</b> based on <b>community needs, social norms &amp; behaviors, government service provisions</b> are developed and data on each of the indicators is generated through for planning at community level.</li><li>➤ <b>Participatory learning</b> sessions to generate the <b>demand for public service provisions</b> and facilitate <b>behavioral changes</b>.</li><li>➤ <b>Community level resources</b> and groups such as volunteers, child reporters, adolescent girls groups, women groups are developed and capacitated. They are introduced to wider community, local governance institutions, government service providers.</li><li>➤ <b>Community Action Plans and Social Maps</b> which visually demonstrate the status of Key PerformanceIndicators at the household, community, and systems (government) level are developed.</li><li>➤ <b>Community Volunteers conducts</b> household contacts, school visits, community meetings to collect the data on needs &amp; issues to update community action plan and provide feedback to local governance institutions and government for service delivery actions.</li><li>➤ <b>A common location like village information centre</b> within the community which serves as a meeting point to hold discussions on progress and identifying new issues and evolving mechanism to address them.</li><li>➤ Community volunteers provide <b>feedback through application, feedback slips, participation in service providers meetings and conduct follow up</b>.They <b>escalate feedback to public authority levels</b> in the given government structure and system.</li><li>➤ Community and concerned beneficiary are updated <b>with every step of feedback and actions taken</b>.</li></ul>

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## **Feedback Structure and Steps**

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## SHARED GOALS



Village planning  
(5 days)



Government  
departments  
(3 weeks)

## LOCAL ACTORS

recruit/train  
community  
volunteers



Merge village goals  
with government  
KPIs

## SPECIFIC ISSUES

visit 25 households

- create village maps
- codify maps into government tickboxes on colored slips
- deliver to respective departments



Feedback to  
government

- specific
- localized
- regular follow-up

Resolved?



volunteer follows  
issue until resolved

Repeat in 682 villages with 4000+ volunteers

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## 3.0 Learning

Feedback is base of our community based models. It starts right from our entry in the communities. After participation in feedback summit, Sarathi is focusing on feedback strategically:-orientation of Sarathi team and community volunteers on feedback structure & system, tracking from beginning to closure of feedback loop in sequential way and sensitizing stakeholders like government. We are continuously expanding feedback system net and exploring opportunities to work effectively on this. A few learning are :

- a) **Feedback unlocks** the potential of community to address the issues affecting their rights, entitlements and quality of services.
- b) **Feedback upstream** the issues of community for solutions to their service delivery issues in systematic way engaging individuals, community volunteers, government.
- c) **Feedback builds accountability** at different levels starting from families to community to local governance institutions and government.
- d) **Feedback builds** skills and abilities of the community to communicate and escalate their issues and follow up till solutions are achieved.
- e) **Senior public authorities** need unbiased feedback and believe in community voices through community based systems.
- f) **It opens risk** areas for NGOs as it touches performance levels of service providers. It is important to take service providers into confidence that feedback improves their performance, relations with the community and credibility when solutions are delivered.
- g) **It interconnects** self, community and service delivery actions to solve the issues prevailing at community level.



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## 4.0 Looking Ahead

Feedback has demonstrated encouraging results in terms of bottom up planning, community empowerment, bridging service delivery gaps and interconnecting community & government actions to achieve development goals. We are gradually enhancing our efforts to institutionalize feedback system in our organization and all the projects. Key plans are:

- Establishing a feedback desk to compile, analyze, document, monitor feedback process. It will contribute in institutionalizing feedback system and disseminating experiences at wider level.
- Regularize communication with Feedback lab and related organization for enriching learning on feedback and other community based strategies.
- Enhance resources for implementation of feedback system effectively.

## Feedback Stories

Following are some stories reflecting on the feedback process adopted by Sarathi in its different programmes. These stories reflect on diversity in terms of service delivery and behavior related issues addressed, target groups covered and thematic areas. The role of the community volunteers in each of these stories is commendable and fetched desired results along with educating the general community on their rights. Sarathi is in process to incorporate feedback in our information system and reporting from field.

### Feedback Story - 1

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This is the story of Jamalpur village located in Fatehpur district of Uttar Pradesh in India. It is a small village having 70 socially and economically marginalised families with no toilets. Women self help groups (SHGs) and volunteers developed by us took a decision in month of August 2015 to make their village open defecation free by having toilets in every house. **Major challenge before them was that their village was not part of annual implementation plan of the government for the year of 2015.**

Hence, there was no fund allocation for this village and families were not in position to invest their money for construction of toilets on their own. They wanted government support for this. **They visited higher authorities and provided written feedback** to them that their village has not been listed for government support. Government authorities were impressed with this feedback and request collectively made by the women and volunteers. They were assured about required actions for the government. It happened in month of August 2015. Based on the feedback; government issued a letter making provision of support for toilets in response to community's feedback.

As a **first follow up** of feedback with community in October, women SHGs and volunteers informed that they do not know if any action has been taken on their feedback. They have not received any communication in this regard. Their feedback was escalated to concerned service providers. The fact came up that government had already taken positive step in terms of including their village in annual plan and allocating the resources for toilets but community was not informed about this. The government letter was provided to the community. It happened



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in November 2015. Loop was yet not closed. Taking this communication gap in feedback process seriously, we trained women SHGs and volunteers in feedback design, follow up and information management.

**Second follow up** of the feedback loop took place in January 2016. Community volunteers informed that materials required for toilet construction is being delivered at household level. We could see the women standing very close to the construction material delivered at their houses. It was encouraging to see the community ownership regarding material supplied by government.

**The third follow-up** of feedback happened in Feb 2016. It was noted that community was not happy with the quality of material such as bricks to be used for the toilets and provided feedback to service providers and village head (Elected representative of the village). Construction of toilets was put on the hold.

**The fourth follow up** in March 2016 informed that the service providers have taken corrective steps. Community is satisfied with the material coming now to their village. Construction of toilets has started. Community is keeping a watch on quality and hoping to see their village open defecation free.

**Feedback loop is closed with declaration of this villages open defecation free. It means all households have their own toilets and using them now. ( May 2016)**

## Feedback Story - 2

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### Feedback Story: Improving Mother and Child Health Services



This feedback story relates to ReMind, an innovative model being implemented in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), to enhance effectiveness, timeliness and quality of public health service provision in Lucknow District. Feedback to the government through Com Care mobile application and community systems is integral part of the model.

**In April 2015**, mothers of newborns and community volunteers provided feedback to the supervisory staff (ASHA *Sangini*) of the health department that community health workers (ASHAs) are not following home

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visits calendar for counseling and linkages services as per the guidelines given in Home Based New Born Care (HBNBC) guideline document. This gap was very well linked with the life risks of newborns and their mothers.

**In the month of June 2015**, this service delivery gap was shared with related higher authorities (Health Education Officer). Real time data received from ComCare mobile application system being used to track the functionalities of community health workers also validated this fact. It was discussed at length in review meeting of the community health workers and their supervisors to sensitize them on health risks of newborns that may be caused by the delays and service delivery gaps. A framework to strengthen supportive supervision system, sharing feedback in the meeting regularly, was also developed.

In the month of July, feedback system started to demonstrate its value. HBNC field visits, home visits following HBNBC guidelines and services, visits to the field for providing services and establishing linkages with health care system increased. It has impacted high value impact indicators like institutional birth deliveries, immunization, behavioural change, diarrhea management and, of course, better relations between service seekers and the government. **Feedback Loop is closed**

## Feedback Story 3

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### **Feedback Story: Improving Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Mid Day Meal Facilities in School**

There was a meeting held in the school on 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 in which the Community Volunteers participated along with the Members of the School Management Committee (SMC) at school level in Bhitari village of Fatehpur district. School children informed about the issues related to water, sanitation, hygiene and mid day meal facilities. Volunteers took up the issue with teachers, school management committee and village head. As a result of regular follow up the behavior of the school teachers changed towards the children. The quality of the mid-day meal improved, the soap is made available for the children and cleanliness of the toilet in the School was ensured. April 2016 onwards all the school related issues are regularly addressed and now the children, guardians and the Community Volunteers are thinking of identifying and resolving other issues of the village. **Feedback Loop is closed**

## Feedback Story 4

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### **Feedback Story: Feedback Beneficiaries turning into community volunteers.**

This is story s related to mason ( a daily wage earner) who was denied off his wages. On 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2014 was hired for construction of a house in Fatehpur. He worked there for 54 days at the rate of Rs. 350 per day. The total amount for this period came out to be Rs. 18900 of which he received Rs. 14700 only. When he demanded rest of his wages Rs. 4200, he was refused. His could not receive his dues despite several visits to house owner.

He planned to discuss the issue with community volunteers. On 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2015, Community volunteers filed a written application with brick kiln workers association developed by Sarathi development foundation

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for welfare of brick kiln and construction workers. Firstly volunteers contacted the house owner on phone and spoke to him about feedback regarding nonpayment of wages. It could not lead to solution. On 15<sup>th</sup> June community volunteers visited at residence of owners to resolve the issue but he ignored the request. They continued to address this issue informally but mason could not get his due wages.

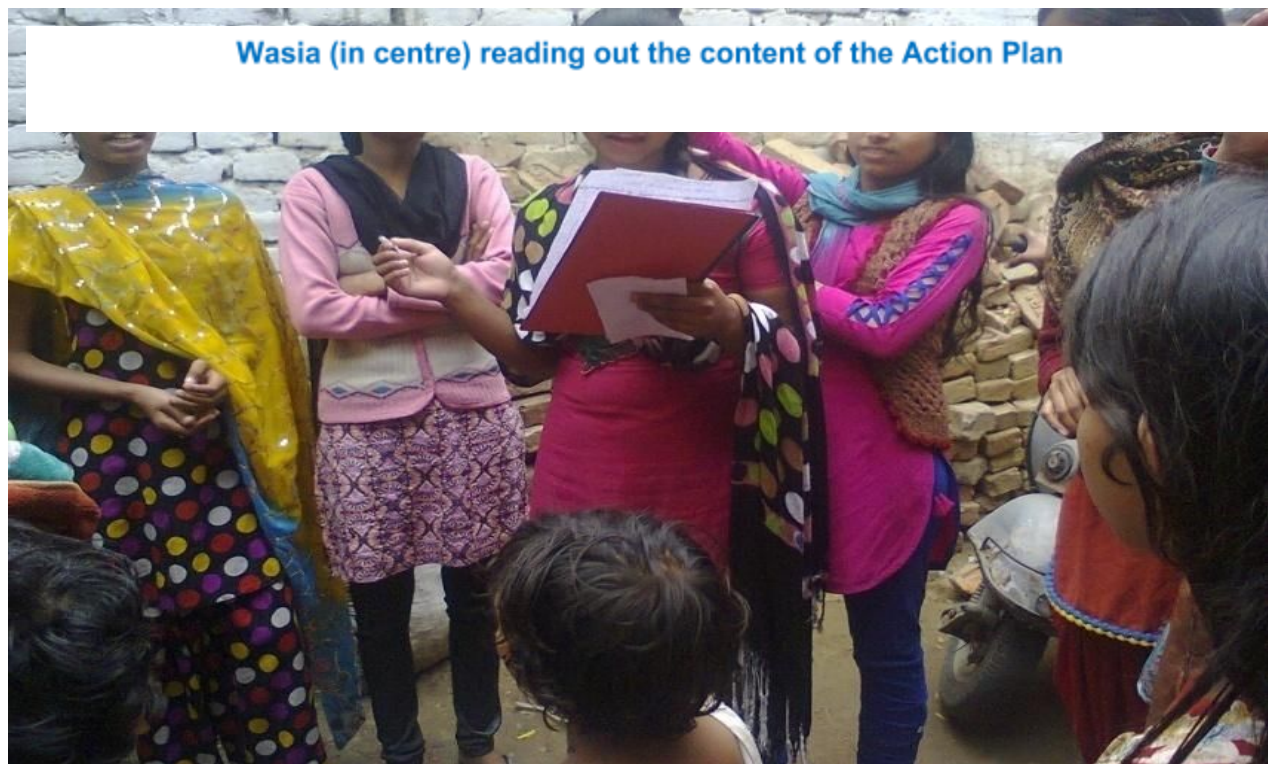
It was followed by formal submission of application with government – Department of Labor to get the issue resolved. Seeing the delays, mason again went to volunteers and association informed on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2015 that he is yet to receive his wages. Community volunteers and association leaders visited with the mason to line department to get the updates. The department came into action and called both the parties in office on 20<sup>th</sup> august 2015. The issue was resolved. The mason got his due wages paid.

This whole feedback process sensitized mason on problem of other wage earners. He expressed his desire to work as volunteer so that he can contribute in addressing the issues of other workers. Now he is working as volunteers and facilitates access of wage earners to government service provisions. **Community and government appreciate his work as volunteer. He proudly considers himself as one of the volunteers in the village and tells of the benefits that he has taken from the Labour Department to the village. Feedback Loop is closed**

## Feedback Story - 5

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### Feedback Story: Changing Behaviors and Preventing Early Girls Marriage



This feedback is related to our Saloni model being implemented with the Partnership of Dasra in the slums of Lucknow. Wasia's marriage was fixed, groom selected and date scheduled. She got worried of her future and



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found none to talk to regarding this. It was then, a 5 day integrated slum planning process started in Gandhigram, a poverty stricken slum of Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, India where Wasia reside. Here she got the opportunity to express herself on out of school girls and early girls marriage prevalent in the community. The community volunteers and Adolescent Girl's Group (AGG) members along with the Women's Group supported her expression. As a consequence of it, community volunteer Kavita along with the AGG members did counseling of Wasia's parents and other girl's parents. After counseling and persuasion her parents postponed marriage for 2 years.

Thus, the feedback at the time of micro-planning process saved her and the girls of similar age in the slum from early girl marriage. She joined entrepreneurial skill development course and completed with success. She got married on 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2016 at the age of 20 years. She happily thanked the opportunity, community volunteer and of course her parents for postponing her marriage. It brought a turning point in her life. It has demonstrated other community members also that early marriage should be eliminated and girl's choices must be considered. **Feedback Loop is closed**

## Feedback Story -6

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### Feedback Story: Result through chain of Feedbacks

Sarathi, in partnership of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), is working on the health issues in the three blocks of Sitapur District of Uttar Pradesh, India, namely Reusa, Piswan and Sanda. This is a feedback story of one of the most backward villages of Reusa block, Ganga Purwa.

Three years ago in 2013, the Auxiliary Nursing Mid-wife (ANM) designated in Ganga Purwa, was not regular in her services citing her transfer as the reason. 8 of the villages covered under Ganga Purwa sub-centre were affected due to this'. Immunization of the children and the pregnant women was not taking place timely. The community of all the 8 villages was waiting for the new posting but it was taking too long. The people approached community volunteer. Community with support of the volunteer approached the Supervisor and the Medical Officer in Charge (MOIC) for filing up the vacant ANM position, but all in vain. Temporary arrangements by inviting ANMs from other areas were made but it was not an appropriate solution to protect children and mothers from the risks in absence of regular and timely immunization.

Community volunteers continued their follow up. A new officer joined the health center. Volunteers saw this as an opportunity. She along with ASHA met new officer and intimated the situation. They also told that due to this 160 children are not getting immunization services properly in absence of health workers. It was shocking for the new officer that there has no transfer of ANM appointed there. Further, seeing the gravity of the situation, he, wrote a letter requesting the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the district to take necessary action for 'filling up the position'. The District level Project Team on the other hand informed SMO (Surveillance Medical Officer) of WHO of the situation. SMO visited the field, interacted with the community there and gave his feedback to the CMO. The CMO in return arranged for the immunization services to all the eight villages. **Feedback Loop is closed**

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