# Grievance Procedure

## What is the grievance mechanism?

The grievance mechanism is a team who address reports of human rights risks, or harm, experienced by people as a result of activities at the cooperative or association. The team follow the procedure in this document to verify grievance reports, and they support affected persons, by putting right any harm done to them, and taking action to prevent repetition.

The leader of the Grievance team is […………………………], the member of the HRDD committee responsible for the grievance mechanism and remedy.

## Who can report a problem?

A grievance report can be made by anyone who is negatively affected by the actions, rules, or policies of the cooperative/association (or their subcontractors or service providers).

Complaints can be made by members against other members.

Complaints can be made on behalf of someone else, for example, by a union, lawyer, or parent.

## What reports are admissible?

To be admissible, a complaint is:

* About human rights impacts, especially child labour, forced labour, and gender inequality, or other impacts relevant to the cooperative or association.
* About individuals or communities relevant to the cooperative or association.
* and itprovides sufficient information about the incident, location, and parties involved, to enable a response.

Note. A report can be anonymous, but still provide sufficient information to be actionable.

## Who handles grievances?

A member of the HRDD committee is responsible for the grievance mechanism and remediation and they lead the grievance team. The team includes other HRDD committee members, such as the gender equality member, as well as other individuals who are trusted by management, members, and workers.

Women and men are adequately represented in the grievance team and grievances are handled with a gender-sensitive approach.

Key tasks of the team include:

* Promoting awareness about and access to the grievance mechanism, especially among women and vulnerable groups
* Responding to grievance reports in line with the procedure and key principles below
* Recording data about each grievance report in the Grievance Record, and Remediation Plan
* Identifying and collaborating with expert stakeholders on remediation measures
* Reporting regularly to the HRDD committee and management on the grievance mechanism and remediation to identify areas of improvement.

Everyone on the team receives training on the grievance procedure and the key principles (see below).

Use this checklist to record this information about the grievance team:

* Name of the team members
* Number of women and men in the team
* Members have received training.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Gender** | **Training received** |
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## Key principles

*Impartiality*: The team evaluates grievances without bias, ensuring fair treatment of all parties involved.

*Confidentiality*: The team keeps confidential information about the reports and the identities of parties involved. Personal information is only shared with consent, and when it is necessary for the purpose of remediation.

*Timely and transparent response*: The team responds promptly to reports and keeps to the timelines agreed in the procedure. The team follows the grievance procedure and regularly updates the person who made the report about progress.

*Safeguarding*: If there is reasonable doubt that the person affected is at risk, the team informs the relevant person responsible at the business. The affected person is removed from harm, with their consent, and is offered a safe and secure location, with food and water. Such cases are reported to the board/senior management representative accountable for human rights.

*Accessibility*: The team ensures that everyone can easily report their concerns, including migrant workers, and women and girls, and persons from vulnerable groups. They consult people regularly to obtain their feedback about the grievance mechanism.

*Anonymous complaints*: The team will ensure that complaints can be made anonymously – without any name or identification – and although individual solutions may not be possible, efforts will be taken across the cooperative/association to put right the wrong that has occurred.

*Continuous improvement*: Together with the HRDD committee, the team will review data about who uses the grievance mechanism, and what issues are raised to identify areas of improvement.

## How to report a grievance

There are multiple ways for people to report risks, or experience of harm to the HRDD committee, including those who are less literate or who speak a different language.

This table lists all the options available at our cooperative/association.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ways to report grievances** | **Available**  **(Yes, no, N/A)** |
| Complaints and suggestions box onsite |  |
| Grievance form (including in local languages), delivered by post, email, website, or in person |  |
| By phone – calling or SMS |  |
| An independent hotline |  |
| Talking to a member of the grievance team, or HRDD committee |  |
| Talking to a senior member, supervisor, manager, union representative |  |
| To a person who is a designated grievance contact point |  |
| In a regular cooperative/association meeting or a training session |  |
| In a regular community meeting |  |
| To a community leader, such as a teacher at school |  |
| In a women’s group meeting |  |
| In a community or co-op/association meeting designed to raise awareness about grievance reporting |  |
| Other |  |
| Other |  |
| Other |  |

## Response procedure and timelines

The table below lists the actions and timelines that the team follows to respond to each complaint or report received.

Use the Grievance Record template to record the completion of this procedure for each grievance report received, and the Remediation Plan, to record remediation activities.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Grievance procedure** | **Timeline** |
| Complaint is received | 0 hours/ Day 1 |
| 1. Receipt is acknowledged (unless anonymous) | 96 hours (4 days) |
| 2. Assess if person is at risk and needs safeguarding | 96 hours (4 days) |
| 3. Review the complaint to check it is admissible | 96 hours (4 days) |
| 4. Record data about the gender, age and human rights issue in the Remediation Plan | Within 4 weeks |
| 5. Investigate to establish what has happened and verify the complaint | Within 4 weeks |
| 6. Communicate the findings to the person who made the report | Within 4 weeks |
| 7. Develop the Remediation Plan (immediate and root cause measures) with consent of the affected person, and in collaboration with experts where necessary | Within 6 weeks |
| 8. Record the measures in the Remediation Plan, and monitor progress | Within 6 weeks |
| 9. Complete the immediate remediation measures and communicate progress to the affected person | Within 12 weeks |
| 10. Complete the root cause remediation measures and communicate progress to the affected person | Within 52 weeks |
| 11. Review data about who uses the grievance mechanism, and issues reported to inform continuous improvement | Annual |

For any questions about the grievance mechanism, please contact […………………………], the member of the HRDD committee responsible for the grievance mechanism and remedy.

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