

## Complaints Policy

Grameen Foundation Australia is committed to the efficient and fair resolution of all complaints and to providing all service in a friendly, efficient and respectful manner.

All people have the right to raise concerns and make legitimate complaints and expect that the issues raised will be handled in a fair, confidential and responsive manner and free from repercussion or prejudice. Grameen Foundation Australia recognises that for the vulnerable and/or marginalised, it may be difficult to submit a complaint via standard channels. The organisation is committed to ensuring access to complaint to all as outlined in the Procedures and Handling Processes detailed below.

All levels of staff must acknowledge a complainant's right to comment and complain. The organisation will ensure all staff understand the Complaint Procedures and will support them to effectively implement the policy.

Complaints provide the organisation with an opportunity to improve the quality of services and processes. With this in mind, all levels of staff will actively seek feedback during interactions with contributors, agents and other third parties.

The policy has application to all staff, including Senior Management and the Board of Directors.

### ***Complaints Procedure:***

- Staff members have the responsibility to:
  - Ensure that an accessible complaints procedure is implemented including provisions for those who may not be able to follow standard procedures;
  - Ensure that the complaints procedure is well publicised including on the organisation's website and in relevant communications to beneficiaries, donors and other stakeholders;
  - Recognise the need to be fair to both the complainant and the organisation or person complained about;
  - Provide a mechanism for responding to complaints in a timely and courteous manner and in a format applicable to the situation of the complainant;
  - Determine and implement remedies;
  - Provide adequate resources to support the complaints management process;
  - Record, assess and review complaints on a regular basis to ensure responsive and ongoing commitment to service improvement;
  - Recognise, promote and protect the customer's right to complain about their dealing with the organisation.
- All complaints will be reviewed in a timely and efficient manner, with a view to resolving issues in a non-confrontational, non-adversarial environment.
- Complaints will be documented and reviewed regularly as part of an ongoing service quality assessment.

- Senior management is responsible for communication of and ensuring adherence to the Policy and Procedures by Staff in international offices. International staff are responsible for ensuring the Policy and Procedures are communicated to beneficiaries and other stakeholders in their area/s of operation.
- Senior management is responsible for communication of and ensuring adherence to the Policy and Procedures to Partner Organisations. Partner Organisations are responsible for ensuring the Policy and Procedures are communicated to beneficiaries and other stakeholders in their area/s of operation.

#### ***Informal Complaint Handling Process***

- Customers and interested parties are encouraged to initially raise issues informally with the staff member providing the service or their manager.
- If informal resolution cannot be achieved or if the matter is of a serious or sensitive nature, the formal complaints policy and procedure should be applied.
- Staff members are obliged to provide complainants with advice in relation to their complaint resolution options.
- This document should be readily available to all customers including those who are unable to access standard channels.
- The right to have an advocate or interpreter present when dealing with staff should be explained and the agency will attempt to facilitate such access.

#### ***Formal Complaint Handling Process***

- The complainant will define the complaint in writing.
- A Complaint Lodgement form (available on the organisation's website) will be used to record all formal complaints and summarise issues and expected outcomes. Accuracy of information will be checked with the complainant if necessary.
- Alternative avenues for submission of a complaint will be made available for those unable to follow the standard channels, including the provision that a complainant may make a verbal complaint to the Complaint Coordinator who will accurately complete the Complaint Lodgement form on behalf of the Complainant.
- The Director of Operations of the organisation will hold the role of Complaint Coordinator.
- The Complaint Coordinator will receive a copy of the Complaint Lodgement form, containing the details of the complaint.
- The Complaint Coordinator will manage the investigation as per below:
  - Written acknowledgement will be sent to the Complainant within five working days of receipt of the complaint, or will be communicated verbally if required due to the nature or situation of the complainant;
  - An initial investigation of the complaint will be completed within 15 working days of the complaint;
  - Where necessary, additional information may be requested;
  - All possible steps will be taken to conciliate or mediate the matter;
  - If conciliation or mediation is not possible the matter will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for review;
  - If resolution cannot be achieved following review by the Chief Executive Officer, the matter will be referred to the Board for final review;

- The organisation or complainant may refer the matter to ACFID at any time during the internal investigation or if the Internal Complaints Processes are unable to find a resolution. The referring party must inform the other party in writing of the decision to refer the complaint to ACFID.
- Documentation including investigation outcomes will be placed on a Confidential File held by the Complaint Coordinator.
- The Complaints Process will respect the privacy and confidentiality to which the parties are entitled under the organisation's Privacy Policy and the Privacy Act.
- Complaints alleging criminal or corrupt behaviour will be referred to the appropriate authority. This may involve removal of an officer concerned until all investigations are complete.
- Staff members who are the subject of a complaint must be apprised of it, the progress of its investigation and the final outcome. They will receive all appropriate information and support and will be given the opportunity to make a written report outlining their perspective.
- Where a complaint reveals systemic or procedural difficulties, action will be taken to resolve them, such as:
  - revision to policy practice or procedure
  - staff training;
  - staff debriefing/counselling;
  - discipline;
  - customer debriefing/counselling.
- The investigation will not be conducted by a staff member whose actions are the subject of the complaint.
- The Complaint Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining accurate records.
- The Complaints Policy and Contact Details will be provided on the organisation's website.

### **Review and Evaluation**

The Board is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy. All board members and staff members, volunteer and contract staff are responsible for adhering to this policy.

Senior Management will undertake an annual review of this policy in line with Grameen Foundation Australia's organisational capacity, the policy purpose stated, and within the framework of the Organisation's commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement. The updated policy will require formal Board approval and will be communicated to all staff for review and re-signing if applicable.

### **Definitions**

- *Complaint* - is any dissatisfaction about the service, program or policy of the organisation that the complainant would like resolved in accordance with this policy – having regard to the exceptions mentioned above.
- *Complainant* - may be a customer affected or an interested party (where it can be verified that this person has the authority to make a complaint) such as a friend, relative, advocate, organisation or staff member etc.
- *Complaint Coordinator* - is the person responsible for investigating the complaint received by the agency.



### **Complaint Contact Details**

Contact: Compliant Coordinator  
Email: [mail@grameen.org.au](mailto:mail@grameen.org.au)  
Mail: PO Box 449  
Rozelle NSW 2039  
Australia  
Phone: +612 8097 9697

If a complaint cannot be submitted to Head Office in Australia, a complainant may submit their complaint to the most senior staff member in a Grameen Foundation Australia Regional Office where applicable or a complaint may be submitted to a Grameen Foundation Australia Implementation Partner who will forward the complaint to the Organisation.

Grameen Foundation Australia is a member of the Australian Council of International Development (ACFID), the peak Council for Australian not-for-profit aid and development organisations. Grameen Foundation Australia is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct and is committed to ensuring full adherence to its requirements including compliance with its Complaints Code.

A complaint may be submitted to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee:

Email: [complaints@acfid.asn.au](mailto:complaints@acfid.asn.au)  
Website: <http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/complaints>  
Mail: Code of Conduct Management Team  
Private Bag 3  
Deakin ACT 2600