

Complaint and Response Mechanism

Policy and Guidelines

ADRA Austria & Partners

	Date:	Signature Board Chair
Approved Board	06 May 2019	
Revision 1		
Revision 2		
Revision 3		
Revision 4		

Coming into effect: 06 May 2019

This complaint mechanism guidelines are binding and relevant for ADRA Austria's daily operation and its implementing partners. These guidelines are in agreement with the ADRA working manual.

Inhaltsverzeichnis

1. General.....	3
1.1 Policy Statement	3
1.2 What is a complaint?	3
1.3 Principles	3
1.4 Standards	3
2. Procedure.....	4
3. Monitoring the Policy and Procedure.....	5
4. Guidance on Implementation	5
4.1 Designing a Complaints Mechanism.....	5
4.2 Training for Staff.....	6
4.3 Briefing and Induction for Staff.....	6
Annex 1 - Flow Diagram for Handling Complaints.....	7
Annex 2 - Complaint Record Form	8
Annex 3 - Log of Complaints Form.....	8

Note:

For the sake of simplicity, this manual does not use a gender-specific language. When talking about employees or tasks in male form, male and female persons are equally meant.

1. General

1.1 Policy Statement

A well designed and managed mechanism for handling internal and external complaints enhances trust and confidence among staffs and external partners and stakeholders, identify areas of our work which need to be improved and ensure that ADRA learns from the feedback provided through this process.

ADRA therefore welcomes feedback and will react constructively to complaints from the people it works with, its supporters/ donors, the general public, official bodies and its partners.

The complaints and response mechanism links to the principles of our accountability and learning, and will ensure feedback, transparency and learning which will strengthen our accountability as an organisation.

This policy applies to ADRA Austria and its partners.

1.2 What is a complaint?

A complaint is a grievance made against ADRA Austria or more specifically against one of its employees, associated "consultants" or partners where the organisation has allegedly failed to meet a commitment or any behavior that affects teamwork, collaboration or partnership.

ADRA will receive and respond to all complaints. If it is established that a complaint has been made maliciously, in bad faith or without serious intent then a response will be made to the complainant explaining why their complaint is not being taken further.

1.3 Principles

- All complaints and constructive feedback will be taken seriously whether submitted from a named source or anonymously.
- All complaints will be handled swiftly so far as reasonably practicable depending on the nature and complexity of the matter, ensuring that they are dealt with in a timely manner.
- The process for making a complaint will be made clear to stakeholders.
- Complaints will be recorded through one central point before any action is taken.
- Sufficient resources and expertise will be provided to handle complaints.
- Staff will be briefed on the nature and purpose of the policy and the leadership dealing with the complaints will be given training in handling complaints.
- Confidentiality relating to the complaint will be safeguarded so far as reasonably practicable including the person(s) to whom the complaint is addressed.
- Issues of conflict of interest will be identified to ensure objectivity.
- Complaints will be handled in accordance with ADRA's policies and procedures and in accordance with local laws and regulations.
- The Country Director and the Chair of the Board depending upon the nature and level of complaints will be the key people to receive complaints.

1.4 Standards

The following are the minimum standards

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Acknowledged | As soon as possible but ideally at least within 5 working days |
| 2. Impartial | Both sides have a chance to tell their side of the story |
| 3. Timely | All complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible |
| 4. Confidential | Information will only be shared with parties involved |
| 5. Fairness | No victimization for making a complaint |
| 6. Documented | Recorded on a Complaints Record Form (Annex 2) |

2. Procedure

Given the different nature of complaints the procedure needs to reflect all circumstances, but should be adaptable to the local situation.

1. Raising Complaints with ADRA in Austria

ADRA Austria staffs, partners and stakeholders are clear that ADRA welcomes complaints and constructive feedback and knows how to raise a complaint with the organisation. There is one central point where complaints are made: At the Country Director level, for operational issues, and Board Chair level for leadership issues.

2. Receiving Verbal and Written Complaints

The complainant must be treated with respect at all times. It is important that the person receiving a complaint face-to-face should clarify the issues underlying the complaint, listen to what the complainant has to say and make a brief and accurate written summary of the complaint. Where necessary, language interpreters may be required to help establish the nature of the complaint. If the complaint is in writing it might be appropriate to write or speak to the complainant to clarify the facts of the case.

3. Acknowledging Complaints

Complainants, who are not anonymous, will receive an acknowledgement of their complaint to confirm that it has been received and an outline of the next steps.

4. Registering Complaints

All complaints, whether verbal or written, should be recorded on the Complaints Record Form (Annex 2). Each complaint should also be recorded on the log form (or a simple database, see Annex 3), which will form the basis for review at the end of each year.

5. Resolving Complaints (Investigation and Action)

Each complaint will be investigated. The person handling the complaint will:

- Establish the facts and gather the relevant information
- If necessary and/or practicable, interview those involved.

If, as a result of the investigation it is felt that there is a case to answer by the staff member then the appropriate disciplinary and other organisational policies and procedure should be followed. Any applicable local employment law should be followed and taken into account.

6. Responding to the Complainant

Complainants, who are not anonymous, will receive a response outlining the outcome of the complaint or, if it is a complex matter, when it will be investigated further and how long it is likely to take. ADRA will let the complainant know the outcome which may include the:

- corrective action which has been taken
- timeline for implementation
- person/role addressing the issue

Wherever possible ADRA will invite the complainant to outline suggestions for actions the organisation can take to ensure similar complaints do not arise in future.

7. Action taken

The decision of ADRA will be actioned, and the complainant and alleged perpetrator advised of the outcomes. Outcomes may include:

- counselling
- disciplinary action

- an apology
- training on anti-discrimination or other matters, or
- clearing the alleged perpetrator of any wrong

All documentation associated with complaints and investigations of discrimination or harassment will be handled strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Regulations.

Policy and Guidelines review; Relevant policies, guidelines, processes will be reviewed and lessons learned incorporated to prevent the case from repetition.

8. Appeals Process

If a complainant is unhappy about the response received from ADRA or if they believe the corrective action has not been adequately implemented they may appeal to the next level; if the complaint is about a matter at country management level then to the National Board Chair; if the complaint is about the governance in the country then to the Chief Executive and; if it is about the Chief Executive to the Chair of the International Board. If the complainant continues to be dissatisfied with the outcome, after all avenues have been explored to resolve the complaint, a letter will be sent to the complainant explaining the steps/actions that have been taken, outlining any changes that have been put in place as a result of the complaint and bring the matter to a close.

3. Monitoring the Policy and Procedure

An annual participatory review and reflection will be held to reflect on the learning from the complaints and constructive feedback they have received.

The Internal Audit function will include a review of the complaints mechanism among our partners to ensure that country programmes and affiliates are adhering to and resolving complaints as part of their internal process.

4. Guidance on Implementation

Each partner and affiliate will be asked to implement the framework with their context in mind.

4.1 Designing a Complaints Mechanism

Consultation with Local Communities

The first step will be to consult with the people in communities we work with to establish the right approach. Aspects that need to be considered are the languages the local community prefer you use, the levels of literacy, and whether it would be better to have oral rather than written procedure.

Local knowledge of the community would be needed to ensure that the process and information is available by the most effective means which might include:

- transparency board
- suggestion box
- reception book for complaints/comments at country office/ partner office

Consultation with Stakeholders

Some initial consultation with official bodies, supporters and relevant organisations to establish the best method of making a complaint to ADRA will be essential.

Analysis of the Types of Complaint

It is recommended that all country programmes, affiliates, international themes and functions undertake some initial analysis of the types of complaint received at the local level. This will ensure that any adaptation of the policy will include the range of types of complaints pertinent to that particular country programme or affiliate.

4.2 Training for Staff

Training should be provided to members of staff who are handling complaints. The training should include elements around:

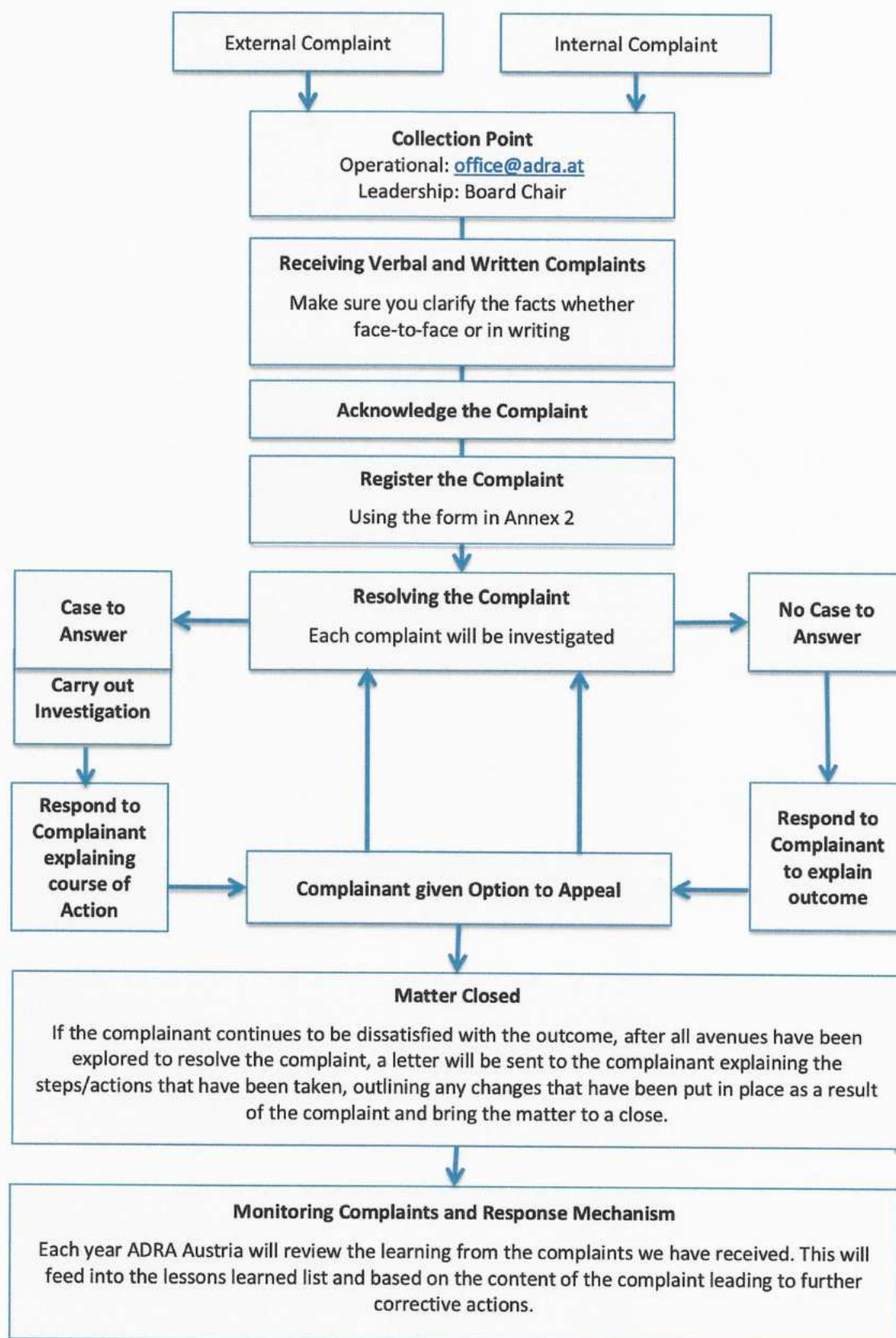
- Receiving complaints: listening and empathising skills
- Responding to complaints: using tact, understanding the complainant view point and responding using constructive language
- Investigating the complaint: gathering factual information, interviewing skills
- Handling difficult complainants: how to respond when under pressure

4.3 Briefing and Induction for Staff

As part of implementing the policy and procedure, all staff should receive a briefing on the benefits and purpose of the policy. This should be via a staff briefing meeting or another appropriate communication vehicle.

Information about the policy should be included in the induction for new staff and board members.

Annex 1 - Flow Diagram for Handling Complaints



Annex 2 - Complaint Record Form

This example can be adapted as appropriate. All complaints should be recorded and logged. These records will be used to ensure complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively and to monitor any trends. It will provide information on the number and types of complaints ADRA is receiving.

Date: <i>Date complaint is received</i>	
Personal Details: <i>Name, Contact Details (if appropriate)</i>	
Nature of Complaint: <i>Brief outline of the complaint</i>	
Detail of Complaint: <i>A detailed description of the complaint the person has made</i>	
Who dealt with it: <i>Name of person who is or has responded to the complaint</i>	
Outcome: <i>Outline of what has happened as a result of the complaint</i>	
Follow up required: <i>Any action required as a result of the complaint. This may include a change to ADRA's procedures and policies</i>	

Annex 3 - Log of Complaints Form

Date:	Nature / Detail of Complaint:	Who dealt with it:	How it was dealt with:	Outcomes:	Follow up required: