Effective Grievance Redress Mechanisms

by

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(for MoMP, Afghanistan)
Agenda

• Building Trust – The Feedback Loop
• The Importance of Grievance Redress
• Building Blocks of Effective GRMs
• GRM Value Chain
• Barriers to Filing Grievances
• Setting up a Basic GRM
• Grievance Redress Indicators
• Questions for Self-Assessment
Building Trust – The Feedback Loop

1. Share Information
2. Give Feedback
   2a. Solicited
   2b. Continuous
3. Take Action & Communicate
What is a GRM?

“A Grievance Redress Mechanism is a system by which queries or clarifications about the project are responded to, problems that arise out of implementation are resolved and grievances and grievances are addressed efficiently and effectively”

— Kalahi-CIDSS, Philippines

Some Common Characteristics of Effective GRMs:

- multiple grievance **uptake locations** and multiple **channels** for receiving grievances;
- **fixed service standards** for grievance resolution;
- prompt and clear **processing guidelines** (including reviewing procedures and monitoring systems); and
- an effective and timely grievance **response system** to inform complainants of the action taken
Why is Grievance Redress Important?

Intrinsic value:
• Gives voice to the marginalized
• Builds greater trust and mutual respect between citizens and project authorities

Instrumental value:
• Helps project management by enhancing efficiency as resources are targeted properly
• Provides feedback in a systematic and timely manner
• Generates awareness and demand among citizens to utilize the services properly
• Deters project-related fraud and corruption
• Allows beneficiaries to express their voices creating a sense of ownership

BUT

Effective grievance redress takes time, money, and manpower
Risks Associated with GR

- May create tensions between citizens and project authorities
- May be captured by some people/CSOs better able to access the GRM rather than those that represent community interests
- Depth of citizen involvement may be superficial
- Sub-optimal due diligence, rigor and/or financial investment hampers GRM functioning
- Disproportionate focus on front end rather than back end work limits the functioning of a GRM
- Making it easy to complain increases grievance volume
GRM – Nam Theun Hydroelectric Project, Laos PDR

- Total project cost - $20 million (IDA grant)
- Significant resettlement (6,300 people in 15 villages)
- 3 step process - (i) Village Grievance Committees; (ii) District Grievance Committee; (iii) Provincial Court
- Engaged a local NGO to advise and counsel affected persons
GRM – Hubei Yiba Highway Project, China

- Total project cost - $2.2 billion (of which $150 million IBRD Loan)
- Significant resettlement (~10,000 people)
- GRM design included multiple access points, appeals process, & a centralized database
- Later included a SMS based system but people preferred submitting complaints through village authorities.
Building Blocks of GRMs

- **Commitment:** Integrating GR into the project’s DNA by including GR in job descriptions; provide staff and resources
- **Six Principles:** Fairness; objectiveness and independence; simplicity and accessibility; responsiveness and efficiency; speed and proportionality; and participation and social inclusion
- **People:** Dedicated and passionate GR personnel; continuous training and learning
- **Processes:** Outlining and publicizing GR policy and procedures for six stages of value chain
- **Analysis:** Regularly review and act upon grievances data and trends
Example: Grievance Redress Principles – NCEP, Indonesia

- Confidential
- Transparent
- Proportional
- Objective
- Accountable
- Easy
- Fast and accurate
- Participative
GRM Value Chain

- **Uptake** - How are grievances collected? At how many locations and through what channels? What is the organizational structure for grievances handling?
- **Sorting and Processing** – How are grievances categorized, logged and prioritized? Who are they referred to? How are they addressed?
- **Acknowledgement and Follow Up** – Are complainants provided receipts? How are they provided progress updates?
- **Verification, Investigation and Action** – How is information about the grievance gathered to resolve it? How are grievances escalated to higher levels?
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** – How are grievances tracked? How is grievances data analyzed? How are processes modified to prevent grievances from recurring?
- **Feedback** – How are GRM users and the public at large informed about the results of investigations and the actions taken on grievances?
Example: Grievance Redress Steps -
NCEP, Indonesia

1. Documentation
2. Grouping and distribution
   – Grouping of grievances is done on the basis of level, categories and status
3. Cross checking and analysis
4. Grievance handling facilitation
5. Monitoring on the problem solving process
6. Special discussion on grievance handling
7. Reporting and broadcasting of information
8. Special action and sanction
Receiving Grievances – Where & How?

Example: Kalahi – CIDSS, Philippines

- Letters
- E-mails
- Text messages
- Verbal narration from walk-in complainants
- Phone calls
- Reports on visits to project offices and sites by project staff, independent monitors, supervision teams, government officials, or any interested persons or special groups like IPs, elderly people, etc.
- Reports of staff, consultants, NGOs, LGUs and journalists
- Call in questions, comments or grievances from radio programs
- Findings of WB supervision missions
- Media newscasts, newspaper articles, and other publications
What are the Barriers to Filing Grievances?

• Women, poor and marginalized communities face numerous barriers in complaining such as -
  – Illiteracy;
  – Lack of knowledge about their rights;
  – Local culture and traditions (including powerful interests);
  – Mistrust in government and fear of retribution;
  – Lack of access to technology;
  – Perceived hassle in complaining; and
  – Belief that project authorities will not act upon their grievances.
Removing Barriers to Complaining - How?

- Some strategies to reduce these barriers are:
  - Establishing grievance uptake locations in areas where poor and marginalized people live;
  - Engaging local intermediaries (community based or civil society organizations) to facilitate submission of grievances;
  - Deploying community-specific communication strategies to allay fears about and increase comfort levels for submitting grievances;
  - Ensuring that there is no formal or informal charge for making grievances;
  - Treating grievances confidentially;
  - ???

**GRMs Need to be Participatory and Socially Inclusive!**
Gemi Diriya, Sri Lanka – Problem Solving Communication Tree

Step 1: If a problem is found – or – a dispute occurs…

Step 2: Take to Maha Sabha or BOD Chair or Social Audit Committee

Step 3: Take to HUB leader
Tel: 0* *********** Address: GemiDiriya Foundation, Which Road, Which Town, Which district, Sri Lanka

Step 4: Take to District leader
Tel: 0* *********** Email: **********@slnet.lk
Address: GemiDiriya Foundation, Which Road, Which Town, Which district, Sri Lanka

Step 5: Take to Project Director
Tel: 011 2688947 Email: batuwita@slnet.lk
Address: GemiDiriya Foundation, 7A Reid Avenue, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

Step 6: Take to World Bank Email: mmunshi@worldbank.org
Address: 1818 H St NW, Washington DC 20433, USA

If not resolved within the community, follow step 2
Allow 2 weeks for action, before step 3 85% cases expected to be resolved
Allow 2 weeks for action before step 4 10% of cases may go up to this level
Allow 1 week for action, before step 5 3% of cases may go this level
Allow 1 week for action, before final step 6 2% cases
Response will be provided Within 48 hours
Exceptionally 0.5% cases
Offline and Online Grievance Submission

Examples: Australia & India

• Maharashtra – Lokshahi Divas (First Monday of every month)
• Gujarat – **SWAGAT** (Fourth Thursday of every month)
• **Tripti, Orissa**
• **Centrelink, Australia** –
• **Karmayog**, an NGO, Mumbai – Facilitates collection of suggestions and grievances for all government departments in Mumbai
  • **SATYA (Suggest an Action to Transform Your Area)**
  • **Corruption ROKO (Corruption Report On Karmayog Online)**
  • **WARN (Write A Report Now)**
Grievance Sorting
Example: Kalahi-CIDSS, Philippines

- Kalahi-CIDSS categorizes grievances into the following four categories:
  - **Category 1**: Comments, suggestions or queries
  - **Category 2**: grievances relating to non-performance of project obligations
  - **Category 3**: grievances referring to violations of law and/or corruption
  - **Category 4**: grievances against project staff or community members involved in project management
Grievance Registration - Methods

- Grievance Registers/Books - Manual Entry
  - Low start-up cost;
  - Low technology requirements

- Grievance Redress Information System (GR MIS)
  - High start-up cost and technological requirements;
  - Effective for monitoring and tracking

- SMS Based Grievance Redress Systems
  - Quicker information gathering;
  - Automatic data transmission to centralized database;
  - Inexpensive;
  - Wider coverage

*Design One Centralized Grievance Registration Database; Use Multiple Grievance Registration Methods*
# Setting up a Basic GRM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRM Area</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| Complaint Receipt                     | • Assign a specific email id, phone number.  
• Set up an easy to access "Suggestion/Grievance box".  
• Designate a complaints handling officer to receive, log, monitor or track grievances; grievances can be registered into grievance log books manually.  
• Modify the project website (if any) to create a permanent sub-window that facilitates collection of complaints. |
| Complaint Processing                  | • Suggest timeframes and procedures to receive, log, monitor or track complaints and respond to complainants.  
• Assign complaint resolution responsibilities to existing staff                                                                                                                                         |
| Monitoring and Tracking Complaints    | • Design a simple, easy to use, excel-based or log-book based complaint registration and monitoring database  
• Regularly review feedback received, cases resolved and complaints trends in resettlement review meetings.                                                                                         |
Complaint Processing Flowchart
Common GR Indicators

- Number of complaints/ grievances registered
- Percentage of grievances resolved
- Percentage of grievances redressed within stipulated time period; or time required to resolve complaints
- Percentage of complainants satisfied with response and grievance redress process
- Percentage of project beneficiaries that have access to GRM
Communication for Effective GRMs

Types of Communication

• Internal –
  – Communication with GRM Users
  – Communication with Employees

• External – Donors, partners, etc.
  – Public reports about grievances/suggestions received
  – Inclusion of a section on grievances/suggestions in annual report
Examples: GRM Communication

Some Essential Messages –

• How can a grievance be submitted? What are the types of grievances that can be submitted? Where is a grievance form available?
• What are the agency’s timeliness standards for handling grievances?
• What are the limitations on the agency’s jurisdiction to handle grievances?
• What are the options available to a person if they are dissatisfied with how their grievance was handled or with the outcome?

Messages to Build Trust –

• There is no financial charge for making a grievance
• Clients are encouraged to complain if they are dissatisfied or feel aggrieved
• Grievances are treated confidentially; there are no adverse repercussions for a complainant.
• Grievances are valued by the agency because they help it improve its policies, systems and service delivery.
Communicating Through Print & Electronically

• NCEP, Indonesia
  – Specially designed brochures and a publicity strategy launched to ensure that all stakeholders (over 10,000 operators and 200,000 beneficiaries) are aware of GRM
  – Website provides detailed information and data on GRM

• Kalahi – CIDSS, Philippines
  – Guide to Grievance Redress

• Centrelink, Australia
  – Helping Centrelink Improve its Service

• UNDP, Tajikistan – CH Brochure

• National Health Service, UK
  – Guidesheet for grievance Investigation
  – grievances: Listening, Acting, Improving
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<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>DON'T</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create accessible uptake locations and channels</td>
<td>Uptake</td>
<td>Create barriers to complaining by making uptake processes time-consuming or complicated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain log books at various levels to record all complaints, inquiries, and suggestions received.</td>
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<td>Forget to take measures to ensure that vulnerable groups are able to access the GRM</td>
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<td>Publicize uptake options/contact information on communication materials, in offices, etc.</td>
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<td>Clearly outline who is responsible for handling different types of complaints</td>
<td>Sort and process</td>
<td>Leave any ambiguity about how complaints are supposed to be routed</td>
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<td>Establish clear timetables for the complaints-handling process</td>
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<td>Develop a GRM that does not differentiate between different types of complaints</td>
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<td>Assign each complaint a unique ID number</td>
<td>Acknowledge and follow up</td>
<td>Divulge complainant's identity to others</td>
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<td>Inform users about steps in the complaints-handling process</td>
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<td>Treat GRM users as if their complaint is an inconvenience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Try to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact</td>
<td>Verify, investigate, and act</td>
<td>Expect users to prove they are right; this is the purpose of an investigation</td>
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<td>Stick to agreed timetables for responding to users</td>
<td>Monitor and evaluate</td>
<td>Forget to update users on the status of their complaint</td>
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<td>Objectively evaluate the complaint's merit on the basis of facts</td>
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<td>Appoint investigators that are biased</td>
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<td>Ensure that investigators are neutral</td>
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<td>Take action that is proportional to the comment or complaint</td>
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<td>Signal importance of complaints-handling putting topic as agenda item for management meetings</td>
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<td>Establish a tracking system to record, classify, and assess complaints</td>
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<td>Analyze grievance redress data and make improvements</td>
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<td>Contact users to explain how their complaint was resolved and how they can appeal</td>
<td>Provide feedback</td>
<td>Miss the opportunity to integrate the GRM into the project's management information system</td>
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<td>Publicize results of investigations to enhance visibility of and increase trust in the GRM</td>
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<td>View the resolution of complaints as an end in itself—it is just a first step in improving processes</td>
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<td>Neglect to follow up with users; this undermines trust in the GRM</td>
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<td>Keep complaint results private; this undermines transparency</td>
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Questions for Self-Assessment

• Does the project have clear, formal and transparent internal procedures for GR?
• Do project officials responsible for GR have the authority to take or demand remedial action?
• Do project-affected people feel that they can provide feedback without fear of retaliation?
• Does the GRM provide timely feedback (written or otherwise) to the grievant?
• Is there an appeals process in place?
THANK YOU!

For clarifications, please contact:
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