SPJ CLASS
CORE LEARNING ACADEMY & SOLUTIONS SERVICES

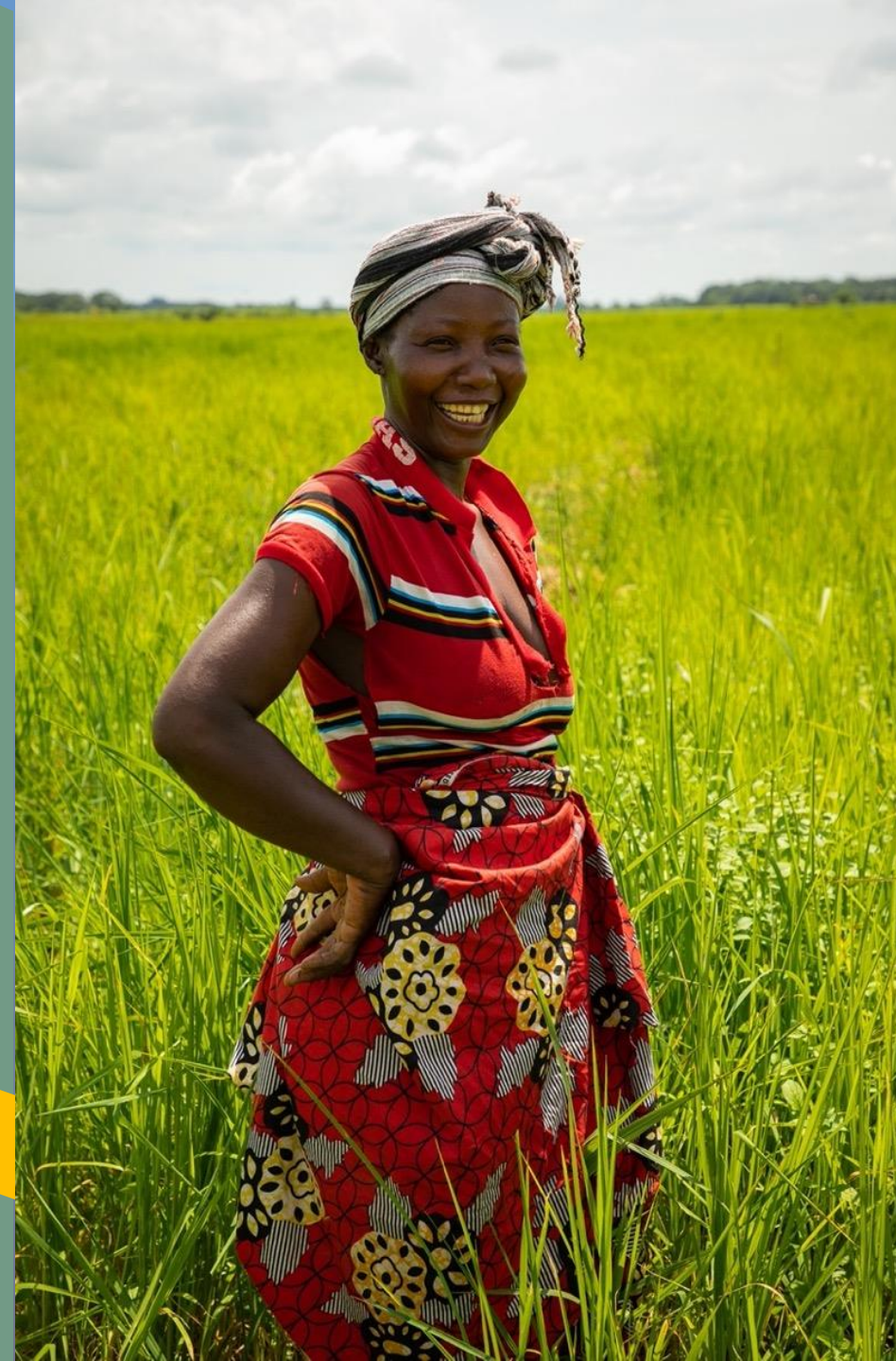# Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRM) in Social Protection Delivery Systems

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GRMs serve as crucial platforms for beneficiaries and other stakeholders to voice concerns and ensure accountability within social protection programs

➤ GRM are formalized processes that allow beneficiaries, stakeholders, or community members to lodge complaints or grievances about the program's services or operations

➤ They typically involve a series of steps for complaint intake, investigation, resolution, and feedback to the complainant

➤ GRM systems can be - specific to a program, support multiple programs, or part of a broader grievance handling system for the whole of government

➤ GRM is different from Case Management

GRMs are an important component of beneficiary operations management
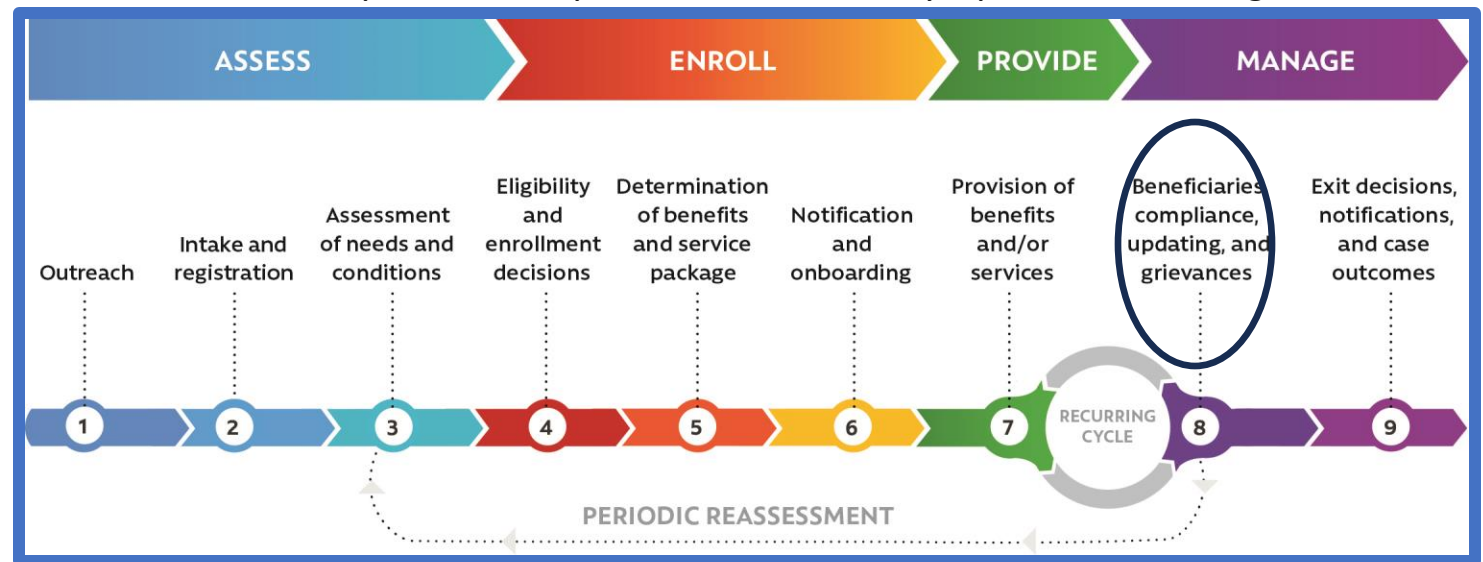
Grievances can occur at every stage of the delivery chain: Assessment Stage
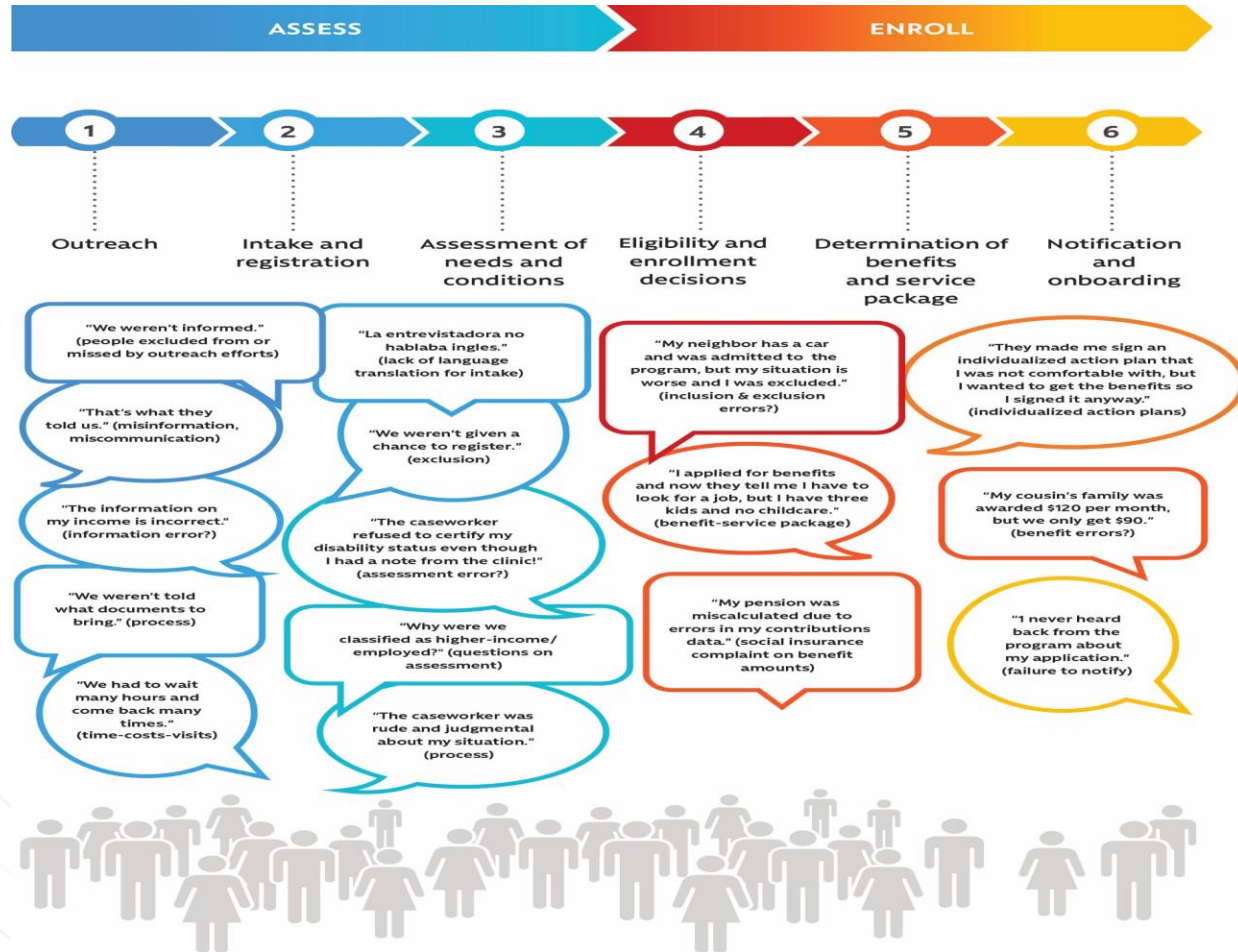
Outreach:
- ➢ Poor outreach mechanisms & inadequate outreach modalities (e.g. missing minorities, remote areas, political opposition)
- ➢ Poorly designed communication strategies (e.g. inaccurate or incomplete information, lack of outreach material in the local language or lack of audiovisual material in contexts of low literacy)

Intake and Registration
- ➢ Errors in beneficiary data
- ➢ Exclusion from the registration process
- ➢ Lack of knowledge (including lack of clarity on requirements for registration, such as what documents to bring),
- ➢ Long waits at the registration office, long distances to the registration office
- ➢ Lack of intake and registration staff who speak the local language
- ➢ Lack of assistance for individuals with disabilities
- ➢ Adhoc & infrequent registration

Assessment of Needs and Conditions
- ➢ Lack of understanding of assessment results
- ➢ Errors in the results
- ➢ Correct assessment results being contested (e.g old pmt formula)
- ➢ Issues with the implementation of the process

Grievances can occur at every stage of the delivery chain :Enrollment Stage
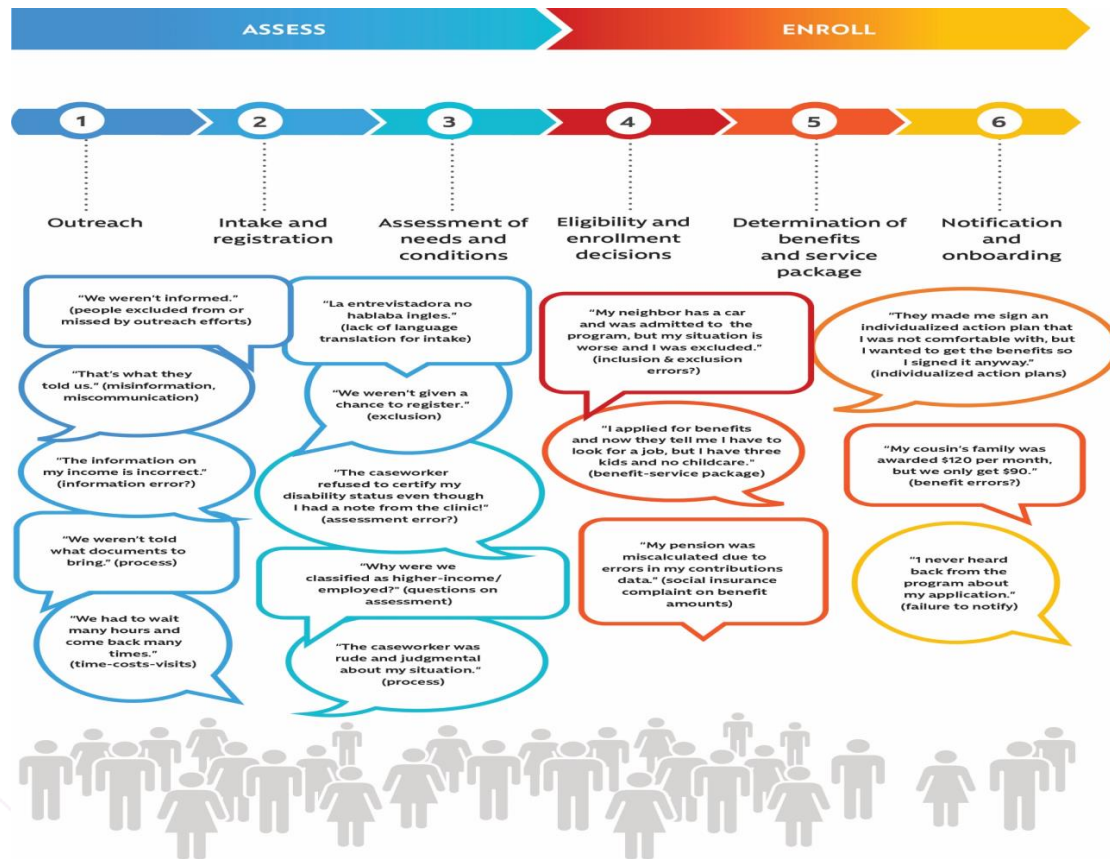
Eligibility and Enrollment
➤ Incorrect decisions about eligibility, (e.g. inclusion or exclusion errors)
➤ Correct decision about eligibility based on false information
➤ Difficulty completing the actions required for enrollment
➤ Missed opportunity to enroll

Benefits and Service Package
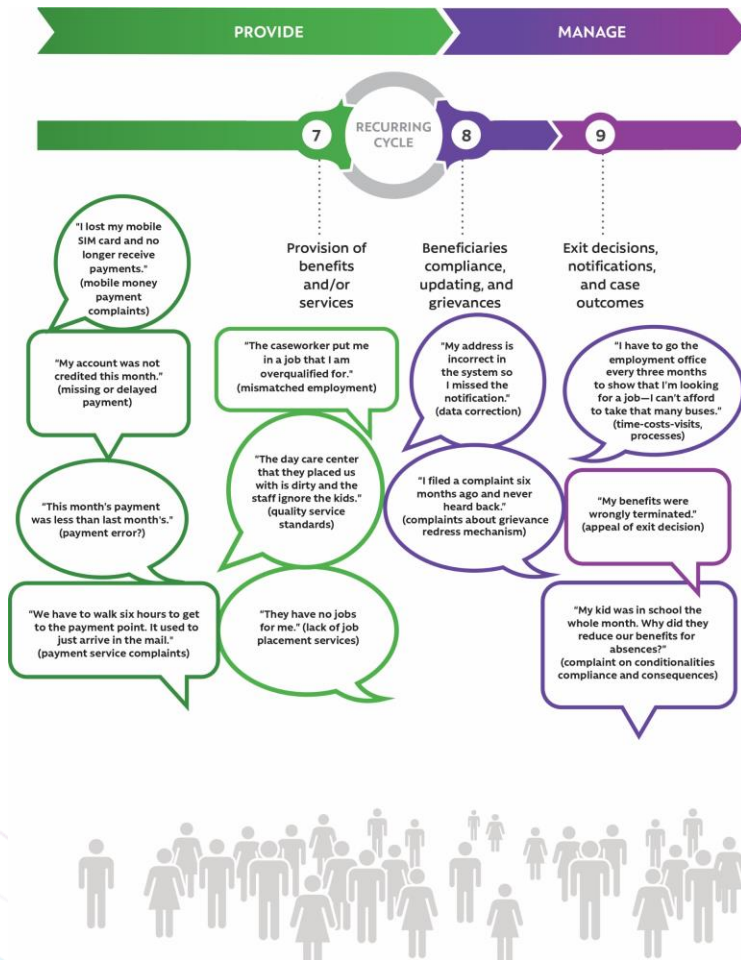➤ Error in the determination of the benefits and services to be provided, including miscalculation of the benefit amount

Notification and Onboarding Stage
• Program fails to notify registrants about their acceptance or rejection for the program
• Onboarding is of poor quality, such as lack of clear information on program rules and beneficiaries' rights and responsibilities

Grievances can occur at every stage of the delivery chain: Provision & Beneficiary Operations Management Stage

Provide

- ➢ Missed or delayed payments or payment errors
- ➢ Distance to reach payment points (out-of pocket expenses for transportation, and other needs such meals)
- ➢ Faulty payment cards and automated teller or mobile money systems and failures in authentication of IDs at the point of benefits or service provision
- ➢ Delays and mishaps in the service, long waits, poor standards

Manage

- ➢ Incorrect beneficiary data or lack of updated info leading to missed benefits or benefit fraud
- ➢ Administrative errors or incorrect capturing and processing of conditionalities compliance data cand lead to beneficiaries facing penalties, delays, or cancellation of services and benefits
- ➢ **Grievances about the grievance redress mechanism itself**—if the process is lengthy, time-consuming, unclear, or not easily accessible, or if GRM officials appear to show poor behavior, discrimination, nepotism, fraud, or corruption
- ➢ Wrong exit decisions, notifications, and case outcomes related to unclear processes and decision-making rules about exit decisions or case resolutions

A well-designed and well-implemented GRM ensures that there are principles and formalized steps for grievance collection and resolution

Principles of GRM

1 — INDEPENDENCE

➢ Must be operated **independently** of all interested parties to guarantee fair, objective, and impartial treatment of each case

2 — ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVITY

➢ **Accessible to beneficiaries** and general public
➢ Simple resolution process **to easily understand the process and timeline** stipulated for resolution
➢ **Uptake channels to be accessible** regardless of the remoteness of an area, the language spoken, and the levels of education, literacy, or income.

3 — CONFIDENTIALITY

➢ **Grievances are treated confidentially**—no personal information should be disclosed to third parties

4 — RESPONSIVENESS

➢ Designed **to be responsive** to the needs of complainants **in a timely manner**
➢ Actions taken need to be **communicated to complainants** to close the feedback loop
➢ Officials handling grievances **trained to take effective actions** and respond to grievances

5 — EFFECTIVENESS & CONTINIOUS IMPROVEMENT

➢ **Monitors and analyzes GRM data** to utilize beneficiary and citizen feedback **to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the program** and of the GRM itself.
➢ A GRM can start small and simple and can be assessed and continuously improved

Most GRMs go through six similar steps although there might be a slight variation from system to system

1. Uptake (locations and channels)
2. Sort and process
3. Acknowledge and follow up
4. Verify, investigate, and act
5. Monitor and evaluate
6. Provide feedback

➢ Grievance redress usually starts at the community level, moves through local administrative entities, and escalates to national institutions through program administrative structures or independent institutions, like the offices of ombudsman, only when grievances cannot be resolved at the local level.

➢ SE/SH and allegations of fraud and corruption shall have specials channels of escalation

Important to consider institutional arrangements when designing GRMs

➢ **Institutional Arrangements differ from country to country - 2 basic types of GRMs for social protection programs:**

1. **In-house GRMs** at the ministry, program or project level. For example, **Philippines 4PS, Egypt's Takaful, Karama Rwanda, SWCE Ghana**

   ✓ Single program
   ✓ Multi-program or Ministry level GRM

2. **Outsourced GRMs.** For example, the Ombudsman offices in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Rwanda, and Anti-Corruption Commission in Sierra Leone's cash transfer program.

   ❖ Overlap of (1) and (2) above where Ombudsman offices serve as an alternative for escalating grievances unresolved under program or ministry GRMs e.g. in Rwanda

Important for GRM systems to offer multiple uptake channels

Traditional Channels in GRM

- ➢ Social workers and community agents
- ➢ Complaint boxes
- ➢ Complaint and appeals registries or books
- ➢ Call centers
- ➢ Community grievance committees
- ➢ Mobile unit

More recent Channels in GRM

- ➢ Mobile Solutions for GRM
- ➢ Social Media communication channels and feedback mechanisms
- ➢ Natural language processing: Chatbot and virtual assistants

Successful GRMs have common key features

➢ Outreach and communications: essential to the functionality of the GRMs from enrolment to closing feedback loops

➢ Uptake channels should be inclusive: addressing different populations segments e.g., rural vs urban; last-mile vs accessible areas; disability constraints;

➢ A process for grievance resolution: elaborate and functional processes to investigate, provide a resolution and feedback to the complainant

➢ Information systems and performance: capacity to store, analyze, and use the information for decision making

➢ Institutional capacity: important to also be prepared for addressing surge in demand during crisis and disaster situations