

Complaints handling policy

**BENEFICIARIES, PARTNERS, STAFFS, VOLUNTEERS AND
PROGRAMME RELATED STAKEHOLDERS**

November 2018

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1. Introduction

OPEnE internal controls and operating procedures are intended to detect, prevent and deter improper activities. However, even the best system cannot provide absolute safeguards against improper activities. This policy makes it possible for stakeholders, partners, staffs, Volunteers and beneficiaries to complain about OPEnE’s activities and policies/regulations so that action can be taken against improper practices. OPEnE is committed to good communication with its stakeholders. This includes a complaints procedure in which the organisation is receptive to comments and complaints. OPEnE sees complaints as opportunities to improve our services. We welcome complaints as they help us identify areas of our program or internal processes that might need to be changed to help us provide a quality and accountable service. OPEnE works on prevention of complaints through extensive participatory practices and good stakeholder analysis.

2. The procedure

2.1 Who can use this procedure

This procedure is for **staff, Volunteers, beneficiaries, Partner** and other stakeholders in OPEnE program. Any complaint will be treated **in confidence**. Anonymous complaints will also be followed up. In that case, it is of course not possible to provide the reporting party with a written standpoint and the actions taken. In addition, it then is not possible to determine how genuine the report is. Considering this non-anonymous reporting is preferred. A complainant who reports suspected malpractice in good faith according to the complaints procedure **will not be disadvantaged** in any way in his or her position or career, as a result of whistle blowing. The following table describes who can complain to whom:

who	What	where	How	
			Incoming	Outgoing
Beneficiaries	Staff Performance	Team Leader	complaint/ suggestion box	Letter
	Project quality	Project Coordinator	complaint/ suggestion box	Letter
	Project Selection	Project Coordinator	complaint/ suggestion box	Letter
	Fraud/Harassment	Team Leader	complaint/ suggestion box	Letter
Staff/Volunteers	Colleagues Performance	Team Leader	email (complaint format)	email
	HR topics	Team Leader	email (complaint format)	email
	Project Quality	Team Leader	email (complaint format)	email
	Fraud/Harassment	Team Leader	email (complaint format)	email
Partner organization/ Government	Staff Performance	Team Leader	email (complaint format)	email
	Project Quality	Team Leader	email (complaint format)	email
	Team Leader performance	Chair person	email (complaint format)	email

2.2 Whom to send complaints/suggestions

Beneficiaries & Communities

Complaints from beneficiaries and communities will in principle first go to one of the staff on the ground in the communities they work in.

- 1) The complaint can come verbally or written directly to the OPEnE staff working in the area. OPEnE staff on the ground needs to register the complaint officially and fill out the complaint form (see below), or help the beneficiary fill out the complaint form, which is then put in the complaint/suggestion box.
- 2) Another option is to file a written complaint in the complaint box located in the OPEnE office. This box will be opened on a regular basis by and the OPEnE employee. The complaint forms will have to be sent within 1 week to the PC responsible in the district.

Partner organisations and other stakeholders

Complaints from partner organisations or other stakeholders can go to the Team Leader or Chairperson when it concerns the functioning of the Team Leader. Complaints have to be submitted in writing via email

Staff/Volunteers

Complaints from staff/Volunteers go to the **Team Leader**, Complaints have to be submitted in writing via email

2.3 Communication about procedure

The responsible OPEnE staff person will respond in writing within 6 weeks to the person or group making the complaint (in case of the complaint coming from beneficiary or community, this is done via the OPEnE staff on the ground) with at least the following information:

- Whether OPEnE considers the complaint justified or not justified, with an explanation behind this
- In case of a complaint that is seen as a justified:
 - Background on why the situation might have happened
 - If applicable; any follow up action based on the complaint.
 - Which actions are taken to avoid the situation in the future
- That there is a right to appeal to the decision of OPEnE

The Team Leader has the responsibility to inform the staff, volunteers and in partner organisations about this complaint procedure and the way complaints are submitted and handled. The responsible OPEnE staff who received the complaint will ensure that the possibility to complain about OPEnE activities is sufficiently communicated to (groups of) beneficiaries and other stakeholders. This will be done in the local language. In case the complaints is on topics which are not directly related to OPEnE work but within the sphere of influence, the responsible staff member will address/follow up on the complaint in close collaboration with the complainant

2.4 Appeal Procedure

In case the complainant is not satisfied with the decision about the complaint by OPEnE. The complainant can appeal this decision within 30 days at the OPEnE board of directors. This appeal can be handed in at the Team Leader. The Team Leader has the obligation to send the appeal and the file about the initial complaint to the Board of OPEnE. The Board will report back in writing to the complainant, copying the Team Leader within 10 weeks with their conclusions and actions regarding the complaint. After this no further appeal is possible.

2.5 Documentation

The Team Leader will review complaints internally with his/her local management team and program leaders at least once per quarter in management team meetings. This review has two functions:

- By reviewing complaints received during the past period and the way these were handled, an extra check is built in to make sure that complaints were properly handled and that its outcome was properly communicated to all stakeholders involved. (Corrective measures)
- Periodic review of complaints in the management team provides an opportunity to check if all lessons that were learned from these complaints were optimally used for quality improvement of the respective processes. (Preventive measures)

The Team Leader keeps a complaints file containing all complaints that have been received and actions taken and will send a report including all complaints and actions to the Board of OPEnE at least once per year. Complaints and leanings from it will be discussed at Board Meeting

Annex A - Complaints form -OPEnE

1. Details of the complainant

Name organization (if applicable):.....

Name complainant:.....

Address :.....

E-mail address (if applicable) :

Phone number :

2. In relation to which programme of OPEnE are you submitting your complaint?

3. Description of the complaint

4. Attachments – In case there are attachments, please indicate which and how many attachments are included.

5. Completion

Date :

Town:

Signature:

Annex B – Information to be published at working locations /shared with people involved in the program

1. OPEnE Suggestion and complaint mechanism

OPEnE is committed to good communication with its stakeholders. This includes a complaints procedure in which the organisation is receptive to comments and complaints. OPEnE sees complaints as opportunities to improve our services. We welcome complaints as they help us identify areas of our program or internal processes that might need to be changed to help us provide a high quality and accountable service to the communities we work with.

2. If you have a suggestion or complaint

OPEnE encourages you to support its staff for improvement of its activities. Our staff will always be available for this. If you have a problem somewhere which is not suitable to communicate to the OPEnE staff member working in your community, you have three options:

1) Complaints or suggestions on **project quality** you can submit in writing into the suggestion box located in OPEnE office. The OPEnE staff member can give you a complaint format that you can fill out, or you can put a letter in writing yourself in the suggestion box. The complaint forms will be sent within 1 week to the project coordinator.

2) Complaints or suggestions on **beneficiary selection for support** you can submit in writing into the suggestion box located in OPEnE office. The OPEnE staff member can give you a complaint format that you can fill out, or you can put a letter in writing yourself in the suggestion box. The complaint forms will be sent within 1 week to the project coordinator.

3) Complaints or suggestions on **the behaviour of OPEnE staff** in your community you can submit in writing into the suggestion box located in the OPEnE office. Please mention the topic clearly on the letter, because then the OPEnE staff opening the box are not allowed to read the complaint letter itself, if it concerns their behaviour. The suggestions or complaints in this category will go directly to the Team Leader.

2. And then what?

The suggestion box will be opened on a regular basis by the OPEnE employee. The complaint forms will have to be sent within 1 week after opening to the project coordinator responsible in the district.

The responsible OPEnE staff person will **respond in writing** within 6 weeks to the person or group making the complaint with at least the following information:

- Whether OPEnE considers the complaint justified or not justified, with an explanation behind this
- In case of a complaint that is seen as a justified:
 - Background on why the situation might have happened
 - Which actions are taken to avoid the situation in the future

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact OPEnE as follows:

The Team Leader

OPEnE

No: 08, Hospital lane, Chavatkaddu

Mannar

Email: opene2016@gmail.com

Phone: 0094232051604

Date: November 2018

Approved by:



Chairperson, OPEnE

3. Agreement

I have received, read, understand, and accept the OPEnE's Complaints handling policy

(PRINT NAME)

(SIGNATURE)

(DATE)