

Rural Education and Environment Development Center (REED-Nepal)



SELF-REGULATORY COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

Policy Owner:	Chief Executive Officer
Approved by:	Executive Committee of REED Nepal
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1. COMMITMENT

In operating according to the standards required by the Code of Conduct of the Australian Himalayan Foundation (AHF), Rural Education and Environment Development Center (REED- Nepal) is committed to achieving the highest standard in every area of its work and to continuous improvement.

REED-Nepal encourages the public to continually engage in dialogue to help improve the delivery of its services as well as accountability and transparency to its stakeholders. Through a range of mechanisms (such as information and membership events, Annual General Meetings and social media), the public and stakeholders can directly engage with REED to raise issues and to ask for and receive information about the organization

REED-Nepal recognizes the importance and value of listening and responding to inquiries, concerns and complaints. This is one of the most important ways of learning how to improve its work. The *Complaints Policy* provides an effective, accessible and safe process for stakeholders to raise feedback, a concern or a complaint and receive a response.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The *Complaints Policy* is based on the principles of:

- Providing a formal, public and accessible mechanism for receiving and responding to complaints.
- Ensuring that feedback, concerns and complaint are handle effectively, efficiently, objectively and in utmost confidentiality.
- Providing clear, well publicized and easily accessible information about the process for making a complaint to all stakeholders, irrespective of their gender, status or background, and without prejudice to their future participation.
- Fostering, where applicable, an innovative community-orientated complaints handling process that includes training of staff based on continuous improvement.
- Taking special care to train program partners and stakeholders to encourage, receive and respond to feedback, concerns and complaints.

3. DEFINITIONS

A *complaint* is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction made to REED-Nepal related to its activities where a response or resolution is requested. A *complainant* means a person, organization or its representative making a complaint. A *stakeholder* refers to a person or group having an interest in, or benefiting from, REED activities.

4. SCOPE OF POLICY

This *Complaints Policy* refers to complaints related to the REED-Nepal Board, staff, stakeholders, consultants or anyone else acting on behalf of REED-Nepal. A concern or complaint may be made by any stakeholder be it an: REED supporter; a staff member; a consultant; a stakeholder; an employee of a government authority with whom REED's program partners work; or a person affected by REED-Nepal services.

5. PUBLICITY

This *Complaints Policy* is distributed to all Directors, staff, program partners and stakeholders. The Policy is also communicated to primary stakeholders as a part of project activities. When working in communities REED will endeavor to translate the Policy into the local language.

A link to this Policy can be found on the homepage of the REED-Nepal website – www.reednepal.org This provides information about who the complaint can be made about, the required information, the handling process, time frames and feedback processes.

6. PROCESS FOR RECEIVING COMPLAINTS

REED's preference is to receive feedback, concerns and complaints in writing or by email. If the complaint is made orally REED-Nepal commits to recording the complaint in writing. In all cases the confidentiality and anonymity of the complainant will be respected. In field office complaint box is in place and the guideline is followed to manage complaints.

7. HANDLING PROCESS

The REED-Nepal Senior Management Team (SMT) has prime responsibility for the management of this Policy and its mechanisms. When a complaint has been made REED will not take sides, lay blame or become defensive. It will ensure that the complainant is satisfied with the intended process. To determine how the complaint is to be managed REED will assess it in terms of: severity; health (including mental health) and safety; financial implications; the complexity; the impact on the complainant; systematic implications; and potential timeframes, including the need for and possibility of immediate action.

8. MINOR COMPLAINTS

REED-Nepal may receive minor concerns or complaints that may be based on a misconception or insufficient information that can be readily provided or corrected by a member of staff. If the complainant is satisfied with the response the complaint may be considered an enquiry.

9. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

REED-Nepal will make every reasonable effort to investigate all relevant circumstances and information relevant to the complaint. The level of investigation will match the seriousness and frequency of the complaint.

10. TIMEFRAMES

REED-Nepal commits to acknowledging written complaints within five working days, and oral complaints immediately. It further aims to resolve complaints within thirty working days. If the complaint is not resolved by then it will inform the complainant of the progress and keep them regularly updated regarding the progress of their complaint.

11. RESPONDING TO A COMPLAINT

Either the SMT, or the REED staff member delegated by the SMT to investigate the complaint, will normally make the decision in relation to resolving the complaint. Serious complaints may be referred by the SMT to the REED Board for consideration and decision. The complaint will be addressed in writing or orally in exceptional circumstances in remote rural locations. The complainant will also be asked whether they are satisfied with the decision. If they are not satisfied, a review of the process and decision will be undertaken.

In some cases, REED will advise that the complaint be referred to the Code Committee of its' funding partners will provide all necessary information for referral to the Code Committee and offer to assist in referral.

12. OUTCOMES OF COMPLAINTS

In order to learn from complaints REED will ensure that all relevant personnel are informed of the outcomes of complaints and the implications for the delivery of programs.

REED will take all required remedial action, be prepared to change the way in which it operates, and commit to further training of staff if necessary. Where needed staff or stakeholders will be counselled or disciplined. Where appropriate REED will consult and take advice from funding partners, government authorities and/or relevant regulatory/enforcement authorities.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY

REED-Nepal will at all times respect the confidentiality of the complainant.

14. RECORD KEEPING

All complaints will be registered. A record of the complaint will include the date of receipt, a description of the complaint, supporting and related documentation, and details of the response.

15. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN COMPLAINT HANDLING

REED-Nepal will monitor the effectiveness of its complaints handling on a regular basis and make amendments as appropriate.

16. Monitoring and Evaluation of Complaint Handling Mechanism

The use and relevance of the complaints mechanism shall be monitored. The Program head for Quality Assurance and Accountability will be responsible for monitoring the Project Complaints Mechanism. This may include local initiatives with staff such as a Complaints Handling Committee and focal persons, exploring in detail how resolved complaints were handled to identify any possible lessons, improvements to complaints handling or suggestions for changes in practice, as well as good practice examples.

The Complaint Mechanism Policy and Procedure will be formally reviewed every two years.

17. REED CONTACT PERSON

A complaint should be addressed to:

REED Nepal Incident Reporting Focal Person

REED Nepal Complaint Focal Person

Bhim Bahadur Bogati

phone: 9851140579

email: bhim@reednepal.org

post: CEO

REED Nepal Child Safeguarding Officer

Laxmi Shrestha

phone: 9846063155

email: laxmi@reednepal.org

post: Safeguarding Officer

OTHER Key Complaint contacts:

REED Nepal CHAIR

Neera Shakya

phone: 9841329355

email: neeras126@gmail.com

post: Chairperson

REED Nepal Program Director

Dilli Prasad Dotel

phone: 9851189526

email: dilli.dotel@reednepal.org

post: Program Director

REED Nepal MEAL Manager

Hari Krishna Bhattarai

phone: 9856022919

email: harikrishna@reednepal.org

post: MEAL Manager

Annex 1: REED Nepal Complaints and feedback Reporting Flow Chart

