

Complaints Policy and Procedure of the SRHR Alliance

The SRHR Alliance considers complaints as free advice to improve the alliance and its work in achieving its mission. Therefore, all complaints will be taken seriously.

I INTRODUCTION

The Alliance on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights is a Netherlands based alliance that works towards a society free of poverty in which all women and men, girls and boys, and marginalized groups have the same rights irrespective of their ethnic, cultural and religious background, age, gender and sexual orientation.

The Alliance consists of the following member organizations: AMREF Netherlands, CHOICE, dance4life international, Rutgers WPF and Simavi. In addition, the Alliance consists of cooperating partners in the Netherlands, international and in the developing countries in which the alliance works.

II SCOPE AND BACKGROUND OF THE COMPLAINT POLICY

This complaints procedure applies to the SRHR Alliance itself, as well as its member organisations and to all persons that work within the alliance and these organisations, on behalf of the SRHR alliance. When from now on the word SRHR Alliance is used, this whole group of individuals and institutions is meant. Complaints about cooperating partners of the Alliance should be addressed to these partners. However, if such complaints are addressed to the alliance or alliance members, they will be dealt with according this complaints procedure.

III NOTIFICATION

In order to inform every partner each contract will be accompanied by the complaints procedure in writing.

Article 1 – Definition of terms

A complaint is any written expression of explicitly defined grievance by or on behalf of a complainant and addressed to the Alliance's lead agency or one of its members regarding the service provision/working method of the SRHR Alliance or any of its individual members in general or regarding the actions or negligence of, management, staff, supervisory board/board of trustees members, volunteers, suppliers or consultants hired by the alliance, as far as the alliance or its programme is concerned.

Complainant: any natural or legal person who files a verbal or written complaint.

Complaints Coordinator: the person appointed by the SRHR alliance who will settle the complaint. Who this person will be will be described hereafter and depends on the person or organisation the complaint is directed at.

Article 2 – Who can submit a complaint

Any natural or legal person may submit a complaint.

Article 3 – Letter of Complaint

A complaint is filed by submitting a letter or email of complaint to the Programme Manager of the Alliance's lead agency at Rutgers WPF in Utrecht, the Netherlands (see contact address below).

The letter/email of complaint should include at least:

- name and address of the complainant;
- the date of writing/registering;
- a description of the act/behaviour complained about;
- the reason why the complainant objects to this act/behaviour;
- the complaint must be received within 3 months after the event occurred.

Article 4 – Confirmation of receipt

The Complaints Coordinator shall register the complaint in the complaints register and acknowledge the complainant of receipt within two (2) working weeks. The confirmation of receipt will include information about the complaints procedure, the person that will handle the complaint and the time that will be required to process the complaint.

Article 5 - Complaints Coordinator

The Programme Manager of the Alliance acts as general complaints coordinator. She will handle a complaint, addressed at an alliance member, after having asked the complaints coordinator of the alliance member involved for advice. In case the complaint is directed against the Alliance as a whole or the lead agency the Programme manager will handle the complaint independently. In case the complaint is directed at the Programme Manager, the Complaints Coordinator of the lead agency will take action.

Article 6 – Period of processing and adjournment

1. The responsible Complaints Coordinator shall address/respond to the complaint within six (6) weeks as from the date of receiving the complaint.
2. The Complaints Coordinator responsible can adjourn the processing of the complaint for a maximum of four (4) weeks. This motivated adjournment will be communicated in writing to both the complainant and the person complained against.

Article 7 – Investigation and hearings

In response to the complaint, the Complaints Coordinator in charge shall conduct an investigation into the facts of the act/behaviour addressed in the complaint. The complainant and the person complained against are given an opportunity to present their cases to the Complaints Coordinator separately. This hearing can be done in writing, by making a phone call or in a meeting. The hearing need not take place in case the complainant decides against a hearing.

A report of the hearing will be prepared by the Complaints Coordinator. This report will be forwarded to the complainant and the person complained about. A copy of the report will be filed in the alliance's complaints register .

Article 8 – Adjudication

The Complaints Coordinator will prepare a report on the complaint investigation and proposed judgment to the Executive Director (ED), who will ultimately reach a decision. In case of a complaint about a specific alliance member the ED of the alliance member will act as a decision maker. In case the complaint is addressed at the alliance as a whole, the ED of the lead agent will take the final decision.

Article 9 – Announcement of the judgment

The Complaints Coordinator will provide the complainant with a written explanatory judgment including the possible consequences thereof. The report of the hearings, as described in Article 7, will be attached to the judgment. A copy will be forwarded to the person complained about. Copies of the judgment will be sent to the Programme Manager and

the Steering Committee of the SRHR Alliance.

Article 10 - Appeal

A complaint is considered to be solved if the complainant is satisfied. In case it is not possible to satisfy the complainant he/she has the possibility to appeal with the Alliance's Steering Committee if the complaint was addressed at a specific alliance member or the chair of the lead agency's Supervisory Board, in case the complaint was addressed at the alliance as a whole.

They will check if the complaints procedure has been settled correctly and take proper measures if this is not the case.

Article 11 – Registration of the judgment in the complaints register

All judgments of processed complaints are recorded in the complaints register. This register is administered by the general complaints coordinator of the SRHR Alliance, at the office of Rutgers WPF in Utrecht, the Netherlands. On a biannual basis the Steering Committee of the SRHR Alliance analyses all filed complaints and their causes. Based on this the Steering Committee will come up with suggestions for improvement.

Protection Under the Policy

1. In conducting its investigations and in dealing with complaints under this policy, the SRHR Alliance will maintain the utmost confidentiality regarding the identity of any complainant or any individual who provides information during the course of an investigation.
2. The SRHR Alliance will not knowingly, with intent to retaliate, take any action harmful to any complainant or individual who provides information during the course of the investigation, including interfering with their lawful employment or livelihood, for:
 - a. Reporting a complaint in good faith pursuant to this policy to law enforcement officers, governmental agencies or bodies, or persons with supervisory authority over the complainant;
 - b. Providing, in good faith, information regarding a complaint to law enforcement officers, governmental agencies or bodies, or persons with supervisory authority over the complainant;or
 - c. Otherwise participating or assisting in a proceeding filed or about to be filed.
3. Persons who threaten retaliation against a person reporting a suspected fraud shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
4. An individual who deliberately or maliciously provides false information, may, however, be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Retention of Complaints and Documents

1. All complaints will remain confidential to the extent practicable. In addition, all written statements, along with the results of any investigations relating thereto, shall be retained by the SRHR Alliance in accordance with the Records Retention Policy.

Contact address

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