

Mission East Annual Complaints Handling Report - 2021

Background

Mission East is committed to being accountable to the affected populations – beneficiaries and communities where we are working. Mission East is, an organization that welcomes complaints and feedback on what we do and how we do it, as we are constantly striving to improve our work. Beneficiary Complaints mechanisms (BCM) allow us to improve our programmes and quickly react to feedback; they are also indispensable in allowing prevention and detection of fraud, corruption, sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse, as well as other breaches of the code of conduct. We are striving not only at maintaining a well-defined and accessible complaints mechanism, but also at creating an organizational culture where complaints are welcomed and addressed. Beneficiary complaints mechanisms are set up in each of the countries where Mission East operates, as well as at HQ level. We also require our local partner NGOs to set up complaints mechanisms and feedback on projects that we are implementing jointly.

Objectives of the report:

This report is intended to provide a transparent overview of complaints handling at Mission East, as part of our strategy of being accountable to local population. It follows from Mission East commitment to accountability to affected populations and the Core Humanitarian Standards.

The report provides an overview of the complaints received, followed by the actions taken and changes adopted in response to complaints, both for serious/sensitive complaints and standard complaints. There follows a description of the state of Mission East's complaints mechanism, the complaints channels available in each country, and the development of our complaints mechanisms in 2021 and planned developments for 2022.

Overview of Complaints received in 2021

	HQ	Afghanistan	Tajikistan	Iraq	Nepal	*Lebanon	*Syria	*Armenia	*Nigeria	Total
Serious complaints (e.g, alleged fraud or breach of Code of Conduct)	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	7
Standard complaints (operational complaints, quality of services, beneficiary selection, etc.)	3	2	9	3	15	25	184	0	6	247
Total	5	2	10	3	16	26	185	0	6	254

Details of serious or sensitive complaints – by location received

	HQ	Afghanistan	Tajikistan	Iraq	Nepal	*Lebanon	*Syria	*Armenia	*Nigeria	Total
Serious complaints (e.g, alleged fraud /corruption or breach of Code of Conduct)	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	7

* Mission East partner organizations

Theme of complaint	Findings and action taken
Corruption/unfairness in procurement processes	Complaint Not Upheld <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarified the separation of duties in procurement process, and improve transparency via use of online system for tenders
Failure to report case of sexual harassment in a partner project.	Complaint Not Upheld. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ME partner agreement updated with additional PHSEA and communication protocols
Fraud in recorded beneficiary numbers compared with items provided	Complaint Not Upheld <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MEAL team instructed on improvements to beneficiary registry verification
Staff misbehaviour	Complaint Not Upheld <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a thorough investigation, no actions identified
Staff misbehaviour (intoxication)	Complaint Not Upheld <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation showed that staff was on a day off. Advised measures to avoid future similar perception issues.
Interaction between beneficiary and neighbour (case not linked to ME activity)	Complaint Not Upheld <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints handling procedure strengthened
Verbal sexual harassment (at partner organisation)	Complaint Upheld <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termination of partner staff contract; improved training & dissemination of expected behaviours & organizational values to staff.

Details of standard complaints – by location received

	HQ	Afghanistan	Tajikistan	Iraq	Nepal	*Lebanon	*Syria	*Armenia	*Nigeria	Total
Standard complaints (operational complaints, quality of services, beneficiary selection, etc.)	3**	2	9	3	15	25	184	0	6	247

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** These complaints were forwarded to and resolved by country offices – thus they are not counted twice

Country & theme of complaint	Findings and action taken
Afghanistan	
Complaint on cash assistance - which was insufficient for a large family	In the future programme team would provide assistance based on actual number of people in a household.
Complaint on payment delay to labourers	Introduction of a system to confirm receipt of materials and items
Complaint that since not everyone in the village received assistance, so that villagers further divided assets received between themselves	ME conducted a meeting with the Community Development Committee explaining selection criteria.
Tajikistan	
Complaint about non-selection of a community for WSS construction	The community will be assessed in future programming
Complaint from a local worker against the contractor	Contractor contacted and requested to make amends, under supervision from ME
Complaint about non-selection for assistance of a family	The family was re-assessed and deemed non-eligible
Complaint on insufficient assistance from livelihood project: beneficiaries requested additional trainings or involvement	Current programming amended to include this feedback.
Complaints on insufficient assistance in a disability / inclusion project, demands for assistive devices and requests for recordings of the trainings	Support with assistive devices included in current programming. Rehabilitation trainings will be recorded and shared in subsequent programming
Complaint on programme requesting for additional trainings by employees of rehabilitation centers	ME organized a study tour for employees
Complaint on programme requesting for additional legal counselling in inclusion project	Programme amended to add a lawyer to provide legal assistance
Complaint about a water point as too far from village	Water system design changed and additional water point added
Complaint from contractor for non-payment	ME held the payment as the work was incomplete, and after the negotiations with the contractor the work was completed and payment made

Complaint from a mother of a child with disability that the child did not receive a wheelchair from a ME partner NGO	Issue resolved by ME directly, and the child received a wheelchair
Iraq	
Complaint from a person not hired to a position	Explanation provided, no changes required
Complaint from a beneficiary of a livelihood project that ME team did not allow to change occupation	Explanation given that changes in occupation need to be coordinated with ME
Complaint from the job placement beneficiary that he was not paid in full	Investigation confirmed that the beneficiary did not attend the workplace regularly. Contract terminated.
Complaint about non-selection in project	Investigation showed that the complainant was not eligible, explanation of selection criteria provided
Nepal	
Complaints on non-selection of beneficiaries	Additional community consultations to be held in the area to explain selection criteria
Complaints on project requesting complementary activities and extension of project	New proposals for projects submitted
Complaints that the food allowance is insufficient	Amount of food allowance revised according to inflation
Nigeria	
Complaints on cash distributions as electronic equipment not capturing fingerprints	Identification process changed to paper documentation

State of the beneficiary complaints mechanisms

In all Mission East country offices, and in most partner NGOs mechanisms to receive and respond to complaints have been established following consultations with communities. Where partner NGOs do not have the capacity to handle complaints and feedback, Mission East office takes care of this. Complaints are received, logged, and responded to. If necessary, corrective actions are taken, which may include improvement or change of policies. Responses are always provided to complainants.

Complaints channels by country

	HQ	Afghanistan	Tajikistan	Iraq	Nepal	*Lebanon	*Syria	*Armenia	*Nigeria
Phone line									
Focal points in communities									
Face-to-face meetings									
Sms (text messages)									
E-mail									
Box in communities									
Referrals from partners									
Focal points on safeguarding									
Website form									
Phone app (e.g. whatsapp)									
Complaints box in office									
Facebook									
Community feedback meetings									

* Mission East partner organizations

2021 Key Developments in BCM

- In 2021 Mission East has continued to monitor the functioning of the BCM remotely in each of our countries and support local NGOs in setting their BCM.
- In 2021 reporting on complaints was extended to more of the partner organisations.
- In 2021 a series of learning and awareness-building workshops on how to handle feedback and complaints were conducted for our country teams.
- In 2021 the independent CHS audit showed some gaps in terms of informing beneficiary communities about the scope of the Complaints and Feedback systems, in particularly with respect to the information that is provided by ME partners to communities. These issues will be addressed as priority in 2022
- In Tajikistan, the system for handling complaints and feedback was improved with additional channels and more robust processes introduced.

Key complaint mechanism actions planned for 2022

1. Mission East will continue to update BCM guidelines taking into account feedback from Mission East teams, partners, communities, and the independent audits.
2. The focus of BCM development in 2022 will be in integrating feedback from the CHS audit and look into improving communication to communities. New guidelines for community communication expected by the end of 2022.
3. Support partner organisations to adopt BCF framework, and increase their capacity to handle, refer, and report on complaints and feedback.
4. Mission East will continue to monitor the status of the BCM in all countries of operations and with partners. Mission East will continue to monitor the BCMs, and, more widely, organizational commitments to Accountability to Affected populations through the introduction of a dedicated mandatory protection indicator for all programming.