OWH Community Feedback and Complaint Policy

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A. Organizational Background

Established in Afghanistan in 2017, the Organization for Welfare and Humanitarian (OWH) stands as a non-governmental, non-political, non-profit, and independent entity. Founded by individuals motivated by shared concerns, OWH endeavors to address societal needs and challenges.

Registered with key Afghan regulatory bodies such as the Ministry of the Economy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation, and Ministry of Public Health, OWH demonstrates its commitment to operating within the country's legal framework.

OWH actively engages in pivotal Health, Education, and Nutrition Clusters, significantly contributing to these sectors throughout Afghanistan. Since its inception, OWH has effectively executed diverse projects spanning Health, Training, Research, Pandemic/Disaster Management, Education, and other essential domains.

Bolstered by an experienced team, OWH prides itself on a successful track record of implementing projects supported by prominent international donors operating in Afghanistan. Its extensive experience spans across diverse regions of Afghanistan, enabling substantial contributions to a wide spectrum of developmental initiatives.

OWH holds a profound understanding of Afghanistan's regions and possesses extensive experience operating in various provinces, providing a comprehensive approach to addressing the country's diverse needs.

B. Vision Statement

"A Developed, Educated, Prosperous, and Healthy community, with equal access for all."

C. Mission Statement

"OWH provides quality services, blending ancient wisdom with modern expertise, for an accessible and proud community."

D. Policy Background

Feedback

People have a right to have their voices heard in judging our project implementation activities. Asking for the views of the affected population can help us understand the difference we are making during the course of the project implementation, and not just at the end of a project.

Complaint

A complaint is a grievance made by an individual(s) who believes that the Organization has failed to meet a stated commitment. This commitment can relate to a programme or project plan, beneficiary selection, an activity schedule, a standard of technical performance, an organisational value, a legal

requirement, or any other point. Less serious complaint may relate to poor quality or performance, more serious complaint to fraud, abusive behavior or sexual exploitation.

Whilst a complaint in itself is negative (a grievance), making and complaint and seeking redress can be a positive process.

Complaints and feedback provide valuable information on levels of client satisfaction and provide us with an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of service. Feedback is to be taken seriously and to be seen as an opportunity for improvement.

A feedback mechanism allows the community, Clients and stakeholders to express their concerns, opinion, Views (Both Positive and Negative) or displeasure with the activities of the Organization.

A complaint mechanism allows recipients to confidentially report corruption or abuse of power, inappropriate/unethical behaviors, child abuse, sexual harassment, GBV, mal-practice and interpersonal conflict and to seek redress.

Regarding the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse a comprehensive policy is there and all the required information, procedures and protocols are explained in the policy.

A complaint may be formal or informal, written or verbal, signed or anonymous, but it must always be culturally and politically appropriate. Examples of complaint mechanisms include a complaint committee, locked box, telephone hotline, or direct complaints to project staff members trained to act as "focal points," receiving complaints sensitively and without judgment, and ensuring the complainant's safety

Both feedback and complaint mechanisms help build a culture of transparency and accountability, and improve program quality.

E. Purpose of This Manual

The purpose of this policy to set a pathway that helps OWH staff, in the establishment and implementation of the effective complaint and feedback mechanism, in the population covered under Project implemented by the Organization.

The feedback and complaints mechanism is a formalized mechanism that provides safe, accessible and effective channel for individuals to get information feedback and to raise complaints and for a response or remedy to be given.

For every project, OWH Designs mechanism to collect structured data that enables the Organization to make decisions and take action at the right time.

OWH favors both feedback and complaint mechanisms to be in place during the project implementation.

F. Staff Awareness

In the Complaints and Feedback mechanism the one important part is building the capacity of staff and developing a growing and accepting behavior in staff.

All the staff responsible for the project implementation and the Head Quarter staff are required to attend a training on the establishment of the complaint and feedback mechanism.

It is important to make staffs understand that Feedback and Complaint Mechnaism is not a way for the organization to police their work but a process to support accountability toward communities and to contribute to high quality programs

It is also key to secure management and organizational commitment to seek and act on feedback and complaints. If there is a lack of management commitment, we will not be able to follow up on the feedback and complaints received and if we let the communities down, this will affect our relationship with them, the running of the project and long-term objectives will not be achieved.

G. Community Awareness

OWH strives to fully inform the community about the feedback and complaint mechanisms, their purposes and use, and what constitutes a complaint and feedback.

Consult with communities and to make them aware of their role and responsibility in the project implementation.

Community awareness could be made by meetings and leaflets distributed among the community and the occasion of the project monitoring.

Removing the barriers between the community and the Organization through good communication skill and resolving the issues and problems that are valid and identified by the community.

H. Complaint and feedback Channels/Focal Points

Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms should be designed to reduce barriers to access by offering different means of, and access points to providing feedback.

These channels will be build on existing local or traditional communication and dispute resolution mechanisms.

The new feedback channels will be integrated with the existing one and the tools will be adopted as per the local context.

Communities should be consulted about the issues and most appropriate ways for providing feedback and complaints.

When choosing between different channels, at least one should provide communities with aformal way to contact OWH independent of the program implementation team.

The complaints and feedback focal point will be based on the nature and location of the project under consideration.

The staff directly involved in the service delivery can never be allowed to access the complaints and feedbacks, the management staff of the project will be there to

The ultimate responsibility of the complaint and feedback mechanism will be that of the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate.

M&E Department will have to provide the General Director and Executive Director with regular updates regarding the complaints and feedback received received on bi monthly basis.
Reporting time frame may differ depending on the sensitivity of the issue.

I. Response towards Feedbacks and Complaints

OWH responds promptly to valid feedbacks and complaints and proper documentation is made in the processing of responding towards the feedback and complaint. The procedure for responding towards the feedback and complaints includes but is not limited to;

I.1 Channels for Feedback and Complaints

Complainants can submit their feedback and complaints and feedbacks via different channels that are Complaint boxes, Telephones, Meetings, Email, letter and by any other means.

I.2 Acknowledgement of the complaint

Soon after the receipt of the feedback and complaint the complainant to be informed about the receipt and progress of the actions.
Proactively explain the changes you've made and why certain actions sometimes cannot be taken.
Don't wait until the community is frustrated by the lack of feedback make sure a key responsibility of the mechanism is to 'close the loop'. The loop needs to be closed through preferred and trusted channels.

I.3 Analyzing the Complaint/Feedback

The complaints and feedbacks are then recorded in the database, categorized based on the sensitivity and nature of the feedback/complaint and analyzed by the team.

I.4 Defining the TOR

The TOR for the responding towards the feedback / complaint is defined, the TOR is always documented and some time when the feedback/complaint is not critical, can be resolved without keeping the documentation.

I.5 Assigning the Committee

In the next stage a committee including the staff that are not directly involved in the service delivery and are not directly related to the complaint is defined.

I.6 Setting Time Frame for the Investigation

Time frame for the investigation should be defined based on the sensitivity of the issue, if the feedback and complaint is alarming the action must be promptly taken.

I.7 Evidence-gathering

In the process of the evidence gathering the most relevant, accurate and reliable evidences should be gathered, analyzed and assessed. The evidences are to be kept secret and made available along with the final report to the management team.

Interviews and Meetings with the Complainants (If Possible) and the relevant staff to be undertaken during the process.

I.8 Reporting

The report is to be finalized by the investigating team all together and as per the applicable policies the decision are also supposed to be part of the report.

I.9 Appeal by the Staff and Complainant

The staff and the complainant have the right to appeal the decision made by the committee and provide further evidences and justifications that may revert or change the decisions.

J. Confidentiality

This is the Responsibility of the Organization to ensure that there are resources and appropriate channels to create a safe and confidential space for complaints and feedback along with the Reports.

All the staff involved in the process must ensure that the information received is verified in a confidential manner and by no means, the confidentiality of the complainant is compromised.

Existence of a confidential environment improves the confidence of the community in the Organization and this supports a strong feedback and complaint mechanism.

Provide private areas and/or channels for discussion and reiterate the confidentiality of the information being shared. Always consider gender and age dynamics of staffing and ensure they know how to escalate/refer the sensitive issues they receive.

K. Message by the Management Team

OWH management team is thankful to all the employees for their effort in the finalization of the policy and for bringing the Organization to this position.

Thank you for everything you do for making OWH a successful and terrific place to work.

OWH believes that all the rules and regulation must be formed to the best interest of the Organization, the sector of its operation and to the wider population.

L. Revision of the Policy

OWH reserves the right to revise, modify any or all clauses of this policy depending upon the need of the day and after making discussion in the board meetings.

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