



# Establishing a CBCM

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# Discuss

Given the numerous barriers to reporting, what would make it easier for a complainant to come forward?

# 4 characteristics of an effective complaints mechanism

## 1. Safety

- Considers potential dangers/risks to all parties
- Incorporates ways to prevent injury and harm
- Includes ensuring confidentiality, offering physical protection and addressing potential retaliation
- A safe space (also used for other purposes)

## 2. Confidentiality

- Restricts access to/dissemination of information
- Helps create environment enabling witnesses to engage
- Information should be available to limited number of people

# 4 characteristics of an effective complaints mechanism (cont'd)

## 3. Transparency

- Members of affected community know it exists, input into its development, know how to access it, ensure it is adhered to

## 4. Accessibility

- Available to be used by as many people as possible in operational area – special access measures for children/elderly/disabled
- Communities must be informed how to complain and encouraged to complain as necessary

# 10 Principles in Establishing a CBCM

ECHA/ECPS PSEA Taskforce

1. Integrated complaints mechanism
2. Participation, not just consultation
3. Effective community awareness raising
4. Multiple channels
5. Trained staff
6. Commit to confidentiality
7. Safety of complainant and staff
8. Information clearinghouse
9. Feedback to communities/individuals
10. Resourcing the CBCM

# 1. Integrated complaints mechanism

- SEA Complaints Mechanisms operate within the overall complaints or feedback mechanism
- Community structures involved in the overall complaints system

## 2. Participation, not just consultation

- To ensure buy-in of community
- To foster ownership
- To build on community best practice
- Wide participation of all groups – Focus Group Discussions etc.
  - Consider language, sex, age, caste, faith, sexual orientation, physical ability, literacy, job roles etc.



*“foster an environment of respect, trust and accountability in camps so that **children feel comfortable talking about their problems**, employees respect children’s boundaries and adults and children are willing to challenge exploitative or abusive behaviour at an early stage.”*

InterAction (2002)

→ Therefore, ensure participation of boys, girls, young people and other marginalized groups in the design and implementation of developing a CBCM.

***Note: this takes work.***

### 3. Effective community awareness-raising campaign

- Demystify SEA
  - training staff
  - Community awareness-raising on codes of conduct
- Demystify complaints mechanism
  - Translate information into local languages
  - Communicate mechanisms to all stakeholders
  - Information campaign for all – visual/aural tools etc.

## 4. Multiple Channels

**Goal – make CBCM safe, simple and easy:**

- Adapt **existing systems** (e.g. Gender-Based Violence reporting)
- Incorporate staff with **beneficiary contact** roles
- Opportunity for **written and verbal** complaints
- Ensure there are **a range of options** that meet needs of all groups, e.g. teachers might be one option for school-going children

## 4. Multiple Channels

- What reporting channels does your Agency use?
- What channels are you aware of?

## 4. Multiple channels – examples

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff visiting informal gatherings (active outreach)</li><li>• SEA/CoC Focal Points – ensure they are known to all</li><li>• Web-based systems</li><li>• Helpdesks (e.g., at FDPs)</li><li>• Multipurpose suggestion boxes (allows for anonymous complaints)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trusted (trained) community members</li><li>• Participatory assessments</li><li>• “Open Days” between community members and staff</li><li>• SGBV project staff/ volunteers</li></ul> |
|--|--|

## 5. Trained staff – Elements:

- Early deployment of staff (trained on SEA) with understanding of CBCM
- Trained to receive complaints (esp. for dealing with children)
- Senior staff present to deal with SEA referrals
- Management at all levels [HQ/field] ready/committed to respond

## 6. Commit to confidentiality

- Trust is critical – confidentiality linked to protection
- All communications/complaints confidential & disclosed on need-to-know basis
- Suggestion boxes must be secure and receive other issues as well as SEA
- Written complaints must be locked away
- Complete confidentiality may not be assured. Others will need to be involved.

## 7. Safety of everyone involved

Complaining may expose people to risk of retaliation – this affects willingness to complain – therefore CBCM must protect.

- Conduct risk assessment
  - **immediately...**
    - Provide urgent medical assistance
    - Address urgent safety/protection concerns
    - Refer children to child protection specialists (agency)
  - **...and subsequently**
    - Identify who may be at risk, and how
    - Prioritize risks – which are most urgent?
    - Minimize risk – how to respond

*Important to have safety plans in place for those at risk of retaliation*



## 8. SEA complaints clearinghouse

- A system for agencies to share information:
  - When complaint received about another agency
  - For sharing information related to receiving/recording complaints
  - For making referrals
  - Not necessarily investigating
- Can also provide initial acknowledgement back to complainant

## 9. Feedback to communities/individuals

- Community role must be acknowledged by agencies in how they facilitated the CBCM
- Trust in system reinforced when complainant receives feedback
- Community feedback should be provided based on programming changes as a result of their input

## 10. Resourcing the CBCM

- CBCM-related costs (training, staff time, materials) can be resourced under separate projects
- Essential for accountability purposes and better programming
- Consider too – costs incurred by complainants

# Steps in Establishing a CBCM

# Exercise

What are the steps you would take in setting up a community-based complaints mechanism?

# Steps in setting up a CBCM

1. Consultation/coordination with partner agencies/HQ
2. Engage in participatory process of consultation with community
3. Design mechanism in partnership
4. Train staff
5. Raise awareness
6. Implement, monitor, and adjust as necessary

# 1. Consultation/coordination

A joint CBCM is preferable because:

- It is cost-effective
- It is simple -beneficiaries do not necessarily differentiate between different agencies
- It promotes coordination
- It might be seen as independent

If a PSEA in-country network (ICN) is in place under UN resident coordinator, link with this. It may provide additional technical support and resources.

**Note: ensure HQ is on board.**

## 2. Participatory approaches with community

*Barriers to reporting are site-specific and vary dramatically.*

- A wide range of perspectives should be captured, especially the most vulnerable
- Try to ensure that “gatekeepers” do not take the lead
- Community representatives are important, but may also have their own agenda and not fully represent all perspectives
- Ask people how they would like to report
- Use variety of participatory methodologies
- Beware of superficial consultation



### 3. Design mechanism in partnership

*This is a key requirement, especially if a joint mechanism.*

- Ensures that the expertise of all stakeholders is factored into the process
- Ensures buy-in by all (beneficiaries included)
- Removes possibility of an imposed structure

## 4. Training

- **Staff**
  - knowledge about processes
  - SEA and protection
  - Skills for receiving complaints and carrying out risk assessments
- **Key community member focal points,**  
depending on role they will take

## 5. Raise awareness

- **For all** – this should include partners, government officials, beneficiaries, and staff
- As part of regular SEA awareness-raising, but also stand-alone and/or related to other complaints/feedback people wish to provide
- Use a variety of tools, venues, entry points
- Ensure most vulnerable are targeted, taking into account access to information, language, literacy, and disabilities

## 6. Implement, monitor & adjust

- Develop a monitoring plan covering all facets of CBCM
  - Pilot the mechanism to assess effectiveness
  - Assess impact
  - Adjust, again in partnership with beneficiaries, and other stakeholders
- This is a continuous process.

# Homework