

Complaints Handling Policy

**THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED
HEART**

OVERSEAS AID INCORPORATED

Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Incorporated Complaint Handling Policy

Introduction & Preamble

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Incorporated fund was granted a Certificate of Incorporation on the 29th March, 1989 under the Associates Incorporation Act, 1984. The objectives of the Association are to provide for the relief of people in countries which are for the time being, certified by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and including relief of people in the Philippines and Kiribati.

The DOLSH Aid Inc. was established by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is an international Congregation. The sisters work in over 27 different countries in the world. All the projects funded by the DOLSH Aid Inc. are at the service of developing countries and their peoples.

1.1 Vision Statement regarding our Complaints Policy

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Inc. recognize the dignity and value of every human person, especially the most vulnerable. We are committed to respect the rights of all persons, especially children, youth and those whose rights and dignity are devalued or at risk.

1.2 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the policy is provision of guidelines for dealing with complaints and internal review of complaint handling.

1.3 Objectives and Coverage of the Policy

The objective of this policy is to provide guidelines for dealing with complaints submitted or referred to OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. This policy includes a process for internal review of OLSH Overseas Aid complaint handling. OLSH Overseas Aid complaint handling process is designed to ensure that concerns are treated seriously and that complaints are addressed promptly and fairly. This policy concerns complaints about how OLSH Overseas Aid delivers their stated aims.

1.4 Staff Training

All staff working for OLSH Overseas Aid undergo annual compulsory training to ensure they understand and can implement the Complaints Policy.

2.0 Policy and Procedures

2.1 Introduction

OLSH Overseas Aid is committed to providing and maintaining a high standard of service and welcomes feedback, which can include either complaints or compliments. Efficient management of complaints enables OLSH Overseas Aid to identify problems and continuously improve the manner in which aid is distributed.

2.2 Defining Complaints

Members of the public or donors may be dissatisfied or have concerns about the level or quality of service provided by OLSH Overseas Aid and may wish to lodge a complaint. A valid complaint is one where OLSH Overseas Aid may appear to have failed to respond appropriately to a request for funds or a report.

A complaint does not include:

- A request for OLSH Overseas Aid services
- A request for information or explanation of policies or procedures or decisions of OLSH Overseas Aid.

2.3 Lodging a Complaint

Complaints may be lodged with OLSH Overseas Aid by:

- Telephone
- In person
- In writing, including fax, letter or email.

Complaints must include the name, address and contact number of the complainant and a brief description of the problem.

Any members of OLSH Overseas Aid staff can receive a complaint and must follow the procedures set out in this policy to record and action the complaint. The complainant will be advised that they can make a complaint regarding a breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct to the Code of Conduct Committee.

2.4 Complaints that will not be investigated

OLSH Overseas Aid may determine that a complaint will not be investigated where that complaint:

- is considered frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith or concerns a trivial matter
- involves a matter where an adequate remedy or right of appeal already exists, whether or not the complainant uses the remedy or right of appeal
- is subject to a existing mediation process
- relates to a decision made by a meeting of OLSH Overseas Aid
- relates to conduct before a court, coroner or tribunal
- relates to matters under investigation ICAC, the NSW Ombudsman's office, a Minister of the Crown or Government Department or the NSW Police Service
- relates to the appointment or dismissal of any employee or an industrial or disciplinary issue
- relates to a decision, recommendation, act or omission which is more than one year old
- relates to a matter awaiting determination by the Council
- relates to actions or conduct of private individuals
- involves a matter where the complainant declines or refuses to provide further information and/or there are threats made against OLSH Overseas Aid.

If OLSH Overseas Aid decides not to investigate a complaint, the complainant will be advised of the reason for the decision.

2.5 Anonymous Complaints & Confidentiality

OLSH Overseas Aid cannot fully investigate anonymous complaints as OLSH Overseas Aid can not determine the validity and nature of the complaint when the source of the complaint is unknown nor seek additional information when investigating the complaint. An anonymous complainant cannot be provided with reasons for any decision made about their complaint.

OLSH Overseas Aid encourages complainants to provide full contact information when lodging complaints.

OLSH Overseas Aid will not disclose the identity of complainant(s), should the complainant request their details remain confidential at the time the complaint is lodged. OLSH Overseas Aid manages personal and private information collected by OLSH Overseas Aid in accordance with the Congregations Privacy Policy.

In the event that an anonymous complaint is received by OLSH Overseas Aid it will note the issues raised and, where necessary, try and resolve them appropriately. However, for the reasons outlined above, issues raised in anonymous complaints may not be fully actioned.

2.6 Principles for Managing Complaints

1. Complainants will be resolved in a timely and cost effective manner and, where possible, without recourse to the courts.
2. Staff will seek to resolve difficulties, disagreements or disputes by discussion, negotiation, mediation or conciliation wherever appropriate.
3. Complainants have the following rights:
 - Any member of the public has the right to lodge a complaint
 - OLSH Overseas Aid should inform members of the public that they have the right to lodge a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service.
 - Any complaint lodged will be assessed and investigated in a timely manner.
 - A person who lodges a complaint has the right for their privacy to be maintained, if requested.
 - Complainants will not be subjected to any form of prejudice or harassment in reprisal of their complaint.

2.7 Process for Lodging Complaints in Australia

OLSH Overseas Aid staff members are expected to either manage complaints or refer complaints to the appropriate person to resolve as soon as complaints are received. Most complaints can be satisfactorily and expediently resolved at the level the complaint is lodged.

The process for handling lodging and handling complaints is:

1. The staff member receiving a complaint will deal with the complaint at that time or refer it immediately to the appropriate staff member who may be able to resolve the problem on the spot. Staff will record the complaint and record the action taken to resolve the matter. A copy will be placed on the relevant file.
2. A complaint of a more serious nature or where the above has not been satisfactorily resolved will be referred to the appropriate person either the President or Vice-president for investigation, action or response to the complainant.
3. The person investigating the complaint will determine what, if any, remedial action will be taken and will ensure that all details of the investigation and remedial action taken or offered to the complainant are recorded and placed on the relevant file.
4. If complaints have not been satisfactorily resolved at this stage or the complaint is a complex matter requiring investigation across a number of work or service areas, the complaint will be referred to the relevant person (President or vice President) to resolve.
5. Ideally complaints will be resolved within ten (10) working days from lodgment of the complaint, although it is recognized that some complaints may involve complex issues that will take longer than ten days to resolve.

2.8 Process for Lodging Complaints in Country

It is important to make stakeholders in country, particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged, aware of how they can make a complaint if needed. It is the role of the in country contact to talk to the people, through a translator if necessary, as to how to make a complaint. In country personnel receive training/information to enable them to make stakeholders aware of the process to follow when making a complaint. This process is the same as outlined in Section 2. Where necessary, meetings can be held using IT.

The in country contacts are:

- South Sudan: Sr Wendy Violet at olsh.mapuordit@gmail.com
- South Africa: Sr Sally Duigan at directorfam@mweb.co.za
- Philippines: Sr Sally Amodia at regioncmtty@yahoo.com
- PNG: Sr Relida Gumur at 0011 675 328 1043
- Kiribati: Sr Beneteta Iaone at beneteta12@gmail.com

3.0 Review Processes

3.1 Reviewing Process of Complaint Handling

OLSH Overseas Aid complaint handling policy requires the finalization of complaints by the relevant person. If complaints have not been actioned or resolved in accordance with the above process, the President will investigate the matter and review how the complaint has been actioned and the steps taken to resolve the issue.

In order to review and analyse information from complaints, a summary of complaints will be provided to senior management every six months at the committee meetings, detailing the history of the complaint and actions taken to resolve the issue. The Governing body of OLSH Overseas Aid will determine the appropriate resolution of any outstanding complaint and the review of the complaint handling process.

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EXTERNAL REVIEW ORGANISATIONS

There are various external agencies, which are concerned with reviewing complaints.

Agency Issues

ACFID Code of Conduct Committee code@acfid.asn.au; www.acfid.asn.au

NSW Ombudsman

Phone: (02) 9286 1000

Website: www.nswombudsman.nsw.gov.au

Maladministration or child abuse

Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)

Phone: (02) 9318 5999

Website: www.icac.nsw.gov.au

Corrupt conduct

Privacy NSW

Phone: (02) 9268 5588

Website: www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au

Breaches of the Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998

Anti-discrimination Board

Phone: (02) 9268 5555

Website: www.agb.nsw.gov.au

Discrimination, disability and harassment