

## THPA COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

### PURPOSE

The Purpose of this Policy is to:

- Provide an efficient, fair, accessible and easily understood framework for monitoring and responding to stakeholder complaints and feedback;
- Provide clear guidelines to all staff on the complaints and feedback policies and procedures throughout The Hunger Project Australia (THPA);
- Inform stakeholders about these policies and procedures; and
- recognise, promote and protect stakeholder's rights, including the right to comment and provide feedback on service.

THPA is committed to handling all complaints about our work and engagement with stakeholders and partners in a timely and professional manner. We recognise that complaints provide an opportunity for learning and are an important "early warning" mechanism for us. We welcome complaints, as they provide useful information to enable us to perform our role better.

All complaints are to be acknowledged, and dealt with quickly, fairly, sensitively and confidentially.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all THPA employees including permanent, casual, temporary, voluntary and contract staff.

The Complaints Management Policy details the major components of the management of feedback. The components include the receipt, management and determination of all customer feedback.

This policy applies to any complaint about an action for which THPA is responsible or which is within our control.

THPA does not operate directly in programme countries (Africa, South Asia and Latin America). In those countries, complaints will be managed as follows:

- Where THPA directly funds a project (either wholly or partially) in a programme country, we will ensure that our in country office has a complaints handling policy that is accessible and communicated to beneficiaries. We will request that any complaints are referred back to us where appropriate, and will monitor compliance as part of our monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Where THPA funds a block of programmes in a programme country (eg programmes promoting empowerment of women across India) we will again ensure that our in country office has a complaints handling policy that is accessible and communicated to beneficiaries. We will request that any complaints are either referred directly back to us or else referred to us via The Hunger Project global office where appropriate.
- Where THPA provides funding to The Hunger Project's global office, we will rely on the complaints handling policies of the global office to ensure that the policy is accessible and communicated to beneficiaries, and that complaints are referred back to us via the global office where appropriate. We will have regular discussions with the global office to understand the nature of any complaints.

## **DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT**

A complaint is:

- Any expression of dissatisfaction or concern made to an organisation by, or on behalf of, an individual, group or member of the public, that relates to the organisation's services, or the performance, behaviour and conduct of staff, or the complaints handling process itself.
- A complaint may be made in person, by phone, fax, email or in writing.

## **DEFINITION OF STAKEHOLDERS**

THPA believes that any stakeholder has the right to raise a complaint, have that complaint addressed and receive a response.

For the purposes of this policy, the term stakeholder refers to:

- Investors – any person who currently or has in the past donated money to The Hunger Project Australia, either directly or via a donation to a grassroots fundraising campaign such as hike4hunger or Business Chicks
- Supporters – any person is part of The Hunger Project community - either by subscribing to THPA's email list, attending THPA workshops or events, participating in THPA programmes in Australia (such as our corporate leadership programmes)
- Beneficiaries – any community, individual, organisation, government or other entity who relies on or benefits from our programmes or services
- Partners – any community, individual, government, organisation or other entity with whom we work from time to time.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

All Staff:

- Are responsible for receiving stakeholder feedback;
- Are to give priority to assist in the resolution of complaints. They will resolve minor verbal complaints where appropriate or refer more serious verbal or written complaints directly to their Manager; and
- Shall record the details of minor verbal complaints received and resolved and send to their Manager.

Managers:

- Ensure that the Complaints Management Policy is implemented;
- Advise the Chief Operating Officer of the nature of any major complaints and action taken/to be taken;
- Maintain a list documenting all complaints received and how they were resolved, including any changes that may be required to delivery of service; and
- Review and investigate all unresolved complaints under the direction of the Chief Operating Officer.

Chief Operating Officer:

- Has overall responsibility for all complaints and ensuring they are addressed as appropriate.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

1. THPA has an email account [complaints@thp.org](mailto:complaints@thp.org), which is monitored by the COO. This email account is displayed on our annual report and listed on our website so stakeholders know this is an avenue to lodge complaints and feedback.
2. Staff will handle straightforward, minor complaints as they are received by responding to the stakeholder with a phone call, email, or other communication channel in which the complaint was received (e.g. social media).
3. Where these minor complaints cannot be dealt with immediately, they will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days. The written communication (email or letter) will detail what action will be taken, the contact details of the responsible manager, and the anticipated time for a response
4. For any complaints that staff cannot handle directly, staff will direct these to their manager or directly to the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Operating Officer will acknowledge the complaint and will liaise with the complainant, in order to keep him/her informed of the progress of the action being taken.
5. Serious complaints involving inappropriate behaviour of staff (eg. rudeness, discrimination or harassment) will be directed to the Chief Operating Officer, and if appropriate, the Chief Executive Officer. The initial acknowledgement by the responsible officer, detailing the action to be taken, will occur within 5 working days.
6. Serious complaints involving personal injury, a breach of the law or financial implications, and complaints which involve the need for a detailed knowledge of THPA's operations and procedures, will be directed to the Chief Operating Officer in the first instance, followed by the Chief Executive Officer where necessary. Once again, the responsible officer will acknowledge the complaint within within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.
7. In cases where the stakeholder does not accept the outcome resulting from this complaints procedure, the complainant will be advised of the ability to make a complaint to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee following the steps outlined on the ACFID website: <http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/complaints>. THPA is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct provides a mechanism for reporting breaches of the code and complaints against signatories.
8. The THPA senior management team including the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer and other staff and/or board members designated by the CEO will review the list of complaints and resolutions on annual basis to ensure compliance with this policy and to ensure that all complaints were handled fairly regardless of the stakeholder's gender, status, background or level of participation with The Hunger Project.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The privacy and confidentiality of parties will be respected to the extent practicable and appropriate. THPA will not reveal the complainant's name or personal details to anyone outside the organisation without the complainant's permission.

