

Consolidated Complaint Handling Process for the MenEngage Alliance

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Background and purpose of this document

This document consolidates and integrates the following five documents to create streamlined guidelines for handling complaints within the MenEngage Alliance.

1. MenEngage Code of Conduct
2. MenEngage Accountability Standards
3. MenEngage Sexual Harassment Policy
4. MenEngage Webpage on How to Report Concerns
5. Global Board Governance Committee agreement regarding vetting and handling of complaints

Additionally, we consulted the internal document “Lessons Learned from Handling Complaints within the MenEngage Alliance” (Feb. 2024) and the publication “Best Practices for Handling an Ethics Hotline Report: Developing Policies and Procedures for Conducting an Effective Ethics Investigation” (LightHouse, 2010).

This document aims to provide a **supportive framework**, rather than rigid rules, for complaint handling. It is adaptable to different regional and situational contexts, ensuring flexibility while upholding the MenEngage Alliance’s principles and values.

The primary audience for this document is MenEngage accountability focal points and network coordinators. By balancing detailed information with conciseness, we aimed to create a user-friendly resource with clear and simple language. The framework provides sufficient structure for handling complaints while allowing flexibility to address the nuances of specific situations.

The development of this document was a collective effort, led by the MenEngage **Accountability Team**, with active engagement from representatives of MenEngage regional networks to ensure inclusivity and contextual relevance. Their dedication and collaborative spirit were instrumental in shaping these comprehensive guidelines.

Core Values Guiding the Complaint Handling Process

The complaint-handling process is guided by the following core values, which must be upheld by all MenEngage networks when addressing complaints:

1. **Fairness:** Ensure a thorough and objective review, treating all parties with empathy and considering their perspectives, emotions, and needs. Neutral parties may assist in these processes to uphold fairness.

2. **Due Process:** Provide clear procedures and opportunities for both the complainant and the accused to present their case.
3. **Respect:** Respect the dignity, privacy, and safety of all parties involved.
4. **Timeliness:** Act promptly and commit to addressing all complaints and concerns without undue delay.
5. **Restorative Justice:** Focus on repairing harm and fostering healing for all parties. This collaborative approach holds offenders accountable while restoring relationships and promoting a sense of justice.
6. **Survivor-Centered Approach:** Implement a survivor-centered approach at every stage of the process, ensuring that responses prioritize the complainant's safety, well-being, and dignity. Decisions and interventions must be guided by the needs and preferences of the complainant while maintaining fairness for all parties.
7. **Accountability:** Take action to address personal or institutional practices that go against MenEngage principles. Acknowledge harm caused and work toward making amends.
8. **Transparency:** Maintain open communication throughout the process, providing clear explanations for decisions.
9. **Confidentiality:** Safeguard the privacy of all parties, ensuring sensitive information is accessible only to those directly handling complaints. Preserve whistleblowers' anonymity when requested.
10. **Provision for Children:** When addressing complaints involving children, the process must reflect the unique vulnerabilities and rights of children as outlined in the MenEngage Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. Prioritize their safety, dignity, and right to participate meaningfully without undue burden.

While the protocol allows flexibility to adapt to regional and contextual needs, all MenEngage networks must adhere to the core values listed above when handling complaints. These values are non-negotiable and serve as the foundation for creating a supportive, accountable, and ethical complaint-handling process.

Reporting Complaints

Anyone and/or groups who believe they have been affected by wrongdoing within MenEngage Alliance, including its country and regional networks, and member organizations, can report complaints via our reporting channels.

Types of Issues

- **Complaint:** A formal expression of grievance that requires a response and resolution.
- **Concern:** A matter of importance or worry, which may or may not escalate into a formal complaint.
- **Rumor:** Unsubstantiated information circulating informally, which MenEngage Alliance must treat as a potential complaint requiring attention and action.

Creating an organizational culture that encourages individuals and organizations to openly express concerns and complaints is essential. By providing clear mechanisms for reporting issues and addressing them promptly, we can effectively reduce rumors, foster trust, and safeguard the organization, its members, and rights holders.

Ways to Report Complaints

There are two primary ways to report complaints:

1. **Identified Report:** Complaints where the complainants include their name and contact information for potential follow-up.
2. **Anonymous Report:** Complaints submitted without any identifying information.

Available Reporting Channels

It is imperative to disseminate multiple channels by which anyone can file complaints or provide critical feedback about the work of the Alliance and its members. These channels include:

1. **Global Reporting Page**
 - The MenEngage Global reporting page provides a central mechanism for submitting complaints.
2. **Direct Communication with Reporting Channels**
 - Channels include:
 - Focal points in regional networks.
 - A designated member of the Board of Directors.
 - The Alliance Co-Chairs.

- Co-Directors of the Global Secretariat.
- Staff of the Global Secretariat.
- The complainant also has the option to report the incident via another person in the Alliance that they trust.

3. Anonymous Reporting via LightHouse Services

MenEngage partners with LightHouse Services to offer a third-party anonymous complaint mechanism. This ensures reporters can feel confident that their anonymity will be respected. Options include:

- Online: www.lighthouse-services.com/menengage
- E-mail: reports@lighthouse-services.com (*include 'MenEngage' in the email*).
- App: Download instructions for using the anonymous reporting app. Keyword: menengage.
- Toll-Free Telephone: All Countries: 800-603-2869 (*dial country access code first*).

Receiving and initial steps in responding to complaints

Jurisdiction and Responsibilities for Complaint Handling

MenEngage Regional Networks are primarily responsible for handling complaints. However, if the person denounced is part of the Global Secretariat, the Global Board of Directors, if they are a regional coordinator, or a consultant reporting to these global-level bodies, the complaint will be handled by the appropriate global-level authority.

If a complaint is received by a global-level body but does not fall under their jurisdiction, it will be promptly forwarded to the relevant regional network for handling. In cases where a complaint involves a person from a member organization, and the organization commits to addressing the complaint in alignment with MenEngage values, the national or regional network may take on a supportive role rather than leading the process.

When a case is too complex or significant for a national committee to handle, it must be referred to both regional and global levels for appropriate support and resolution. Additionally, if a regional or national level fails to address a complaint effectively, there is a mandate for higher levels of the Alliance to intervene and take action to ensure accountability.

MenEngage Alliance operates on a decentralized model, granting autonomy to regional networks. However, when addressing Code of Conduct breaches, it is essential to maintain a balance between network autonomy and organizational accountability. Irrespective of which level is leading the case management process, an interconnected approach is vital, ensuring collaboration and coordination among all levels of the Alliance involved in handling and responding to the complaint. MenEngage Global Alliance provides oversight and support to ensure consistent handling of complaints across the network.

Steps for Handling Complaints with Care and Integrity

Upon receiving a complaint, the following steps are followed to handle the case, guided by the principles outlined above.

- Acknowledge receipt promptly: Inform the complainant of receipt within two business days and inform them about the steps that will be taken (case by case basis) for a timely response and resolution.
- Invite for an initial conversation: If the complainants included their names and contact information, invite them to a meeting to further explain their complaint and their expectations on the complaint filed. Clarify they don't have to accept participating in this meeting and explain who will be in the meeting: only the individual(s) appointed to receive the complaint.
- Prioritize the complainant's well-being through a survivor-centered approach: Ensure that all actions taken in the complaint-handling process prioritize the complainant's safety, well-being, and dignity. Treat the complainant with respect, empathy, and care. Avoid accusatory language or unnecessary questioning that may cause further distress or are not directly relevant to the complaint.
- Guarantee confidentiality: Communicate confidentiality measures, including who will have access to the information and how it will be protected. Assure the complainant that their privacy will be respected to the fullest extent possible.
- Accommodate support persons: Allow the complainant to be accompanied by a support person during meetings or interviews, including taking into consideration the psychosocial well-being of the complainant/s and language barriers that might occur.
- Reaffirm our commitment: Let them know that we take any concerns, complaints, or rumors regarding our networks, members organizations, and leaders seriously.
- Listen actively: Encourage the individual(s) to talk specifically about what happened. Ask for the full story, but do not put pressure on the complainant if they are not ready to provide details.
- Document thoroughly: Take notes using the complainants' own words, and allow them to review your notes to ensure accuracy. Keep a secure record of all discussions, including dates, times, and facts of the incident(s), while ensuring confidentiality.
- Respect the complainant's timeline: Do not question the complainant even if there is a delay in reporting the incident. There are many reasons why people delay reporting

wrongdoings and malpractices. Understand that disclosing details about a traumatic event can be difficult. Allow the complainant to share information at their own pace and avoid pressuring them for immediate details.

- Explore desired outcomes: Discuss the complainant's expectations for the resolution of the complaint. Explore their preferred approach to addressing the issue, such as restorative justice, disciplinary action, or reporting to external authorities. Emphasize that the complainant retains the right to pursue additional avenues if dissatisfied with the outcome.
- Offer information about support services: As part of our survivor-centered approach, provide information about available support services, such as counseling, legal aid, social services, and health care, at an appropriate stage in the process to maintain neutrality and avoid the appearance of bias or favoritism. Communicate whether the organization or network can facilitate access to these services. Acknowledge that the availability of such services may vary depending on the resources and capacities of specific local realities. To ensure fairness, consider involving other colleagues to share this information with all relevant parties (that is, not coming from the person coordinating the case handling).
- Prevent retaliation: Assure the complainant of the organization's commitment to protecting them from retaliation. Explain the available measures to prevent and address any retaliatory actions.

Safeguarding of Whistleblowers

Whistleblowing is the courageous act of reporting any malpractice, breach of the Code of Conduct, or illegal behavior. MenEngage Alliance is committed to fostering a safe and supportive environment for individuals who report misconduct. We will:

- Protect against retaliation: Implement robust measures to prevent retaliation against whistleblowers, including clear policies, training, and confidential reporting channels.
- Presume good faith: Refrain from questioning the motives or credibility of whistleblowers unless there is clear evidence of malicious intent or false reporting. In cases where a complaint is proven to have been submitted in bad faith, appropriate disciplinary actions may be taken against the complainant.
- Respect anonymity: Offer options for anonymous reporting when appropriate and feasible.
- Provide support: Offer support and resources to whistleblowers, depending on the organization's capacity.

Whistleblowers are not required to provide evidence to prove their claims if they have reason to suspect something is wrong and consider it deserves further investigation by the organization or authorities.

Processing complaints

Prompt and Confidential Intake

The process of handling complaints should start immediately after receiving the complaints.

The details of the complaint must be stored in a secure case management system, which should only be accessed by the people responsible for processing the complaints.

Based on the reception of the complaint, prepare a report to share with the people responsible for processing the complaints.

Categorization and Preliminary Assessment

To facilitate efficient handling, complaints are categorized according to the MenEngage Code of Conduct, including:

- Abusive behavior
- Sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation
- Discrimination
- Conflicts of interest
- Fraud and corruption
- Conduct impacting workplace integrity and safety.

The initial assessment focuses on determining the potential for an ethical violation without assigning blame or judgment. Acknowledge that coming forward about misconduct or abuse can be incredibly difficult. There are many valid reasons why someone might delay reporting an incident, and these reasons should never be judged. Fear of retaliation, shame, mistrust, or lack of information are some of these reasons

Leadership Accountability

In cases where a MenEngage Alliance leader is accused of a Code of Conduct violation, they are strongly encouraged to voluntarily and temporarily step aside from their leadership role pending resolution of the complaint. This measure aims to create a neutral environment conducive to a fair and unbiased investigation while emphasizing that it is a recommendation, not a mandatory action.

It is important to clarify that stepping aside is a temporary measure and does not imply guilt. The accused leader's perspective will always be heard before any action is taken, ensuring fairness throughout the process.

MenEngage Alliance leaders include Co-Chairs, Board of Director members, national and regional network coordinators, regional Steering Committee members, members of regional secretariats, Co-Directors, and Global Secretariat staff. Leadership accountability also includes directors or coordinators of member organizations even if they are not formal representatives of MenEngage networks.

If the leader chooses not to step aside to step aside, the network may need to consider implementing appropriate measures to ensure the integrity of the investigation and uphold the Alliance's values.

External Expertise

If resources allow, consider involving external mediators or facilitators. Their expertise can contribute to a fair and equitable resolution, providing an impartial perspective that ensures fairness and unbiased treatment of complaints. Additionally, involving external parties can bring valuable skill sets, knowledge, and experience in handling complaints, significantly increasing the likelihood of achieving a successful outcome.

To facilitate timely engagement, it is recommended to pre-identify such organizations and individuals at national, regional, and global levels. This proactive approach ensures that suitable experts are readily available to be contacted when needed, minimizing delays in addressing complex or sensitive cases.

Enhanced Communication and Documentation

Communication guidelines

Effective complaint handling relies on clear and consistent communication with all involved parties. Key elements include:

- **Consistent and Timely Communication:** Maintain regular updates with all relevant parties to ensure transparency and trust throughout the process.
- **Message Comprehension Verification:** Confirm that messages are received and understood as intended, minimizing the risk of differing interpretations of discussions and agreements.
- **Defined Communication Channels and Protocols:** Establish clear guidelines on who communicates with whom, through which channels, at what times, and with what level of openness. Agreements on communication boundaries ensure confidentiality and prevent unnecessary disclosures.

Documentation guidelines

Meticulous documentation is critical for accountability and fairness in complaint handling. Key elements include:

- **Secure and Confidential Record-Keeping:** Maintain secure, confidential records of all interactions, agreements, and decisions to protect sensitive information.
- **Standardized Templates:** Use standardized templates for meeting minutes and other key documentation to ensure consistency and clarity.
- **Sharing Agreements:** Share meeting minutes and other relevant documentation with authorized participants to ensure clear agreements are understood and followed.

Restorative vs. Disciplinary Approaches

Restorative justice focuses on repairing harm through dialogue and accountability involving all affected parties. Its goal is to rebuild relationships and restore a sense of justice by addressing the needs of both the harmed and the responsible parties.

Disciplinary processes, in contrast, emphasize punishment and deterrence. They often involve formal investigations, procedures to establish proof or evidence of wrongdoing, and penalties imposed on the accused if found guilty.

MenEngage Alliance prioritizes restorative justice approaches, along with a survivor-centered approach, aligning them with a feminist perspective.

To determine the appropriate approach for specific cases, the following criteria will be explicitly considered:

- **Nature and severity of the violation** – Serious violations or repeated harmful behaviors may require disciplinary action.
- **Complainant's preferences** – If the complainant explicitly requests a disciplinary process, this will be given due consideration.
- **Potential for harm repair and accountability** – If a restorative process can effectively address harm, rebuild trust, and ensure non-repetition, it will be prioritized.
- **Legal and policy considerations** – Any response must align with local laws, policies, and MenEngage's survivor-centered principles.

Regardless of the approach taken, both restorative and disciplinary processes are guided by the principles of fairness, respect, and accountability.

Processing the complaint based on a restorative justice process

Purpose: Design and facilitate a restorative process that allows understanding of the harm caused and, through meetings and restorative circles, supports awareness, accountability, reparation, non-repetition, and care for the relationships among MenEngage members. (Human Partner. (2024). *Return of Experience: Facilitation of Meetings and Restorative Circles in MenEngage*. [Unpublished report]. Human Partner.

Preparation:

- Assess the situation: Determine if restorative justice is suitable for the complaint.
- Involve stakeholders: Get voluntary consent from parties and any others significantly affected. If some of the parties do not accept a restorative justice process, respect their decision and assess if a restorative approach is still valid for the remaining parties.
- Train the facilitator: Ensure the facilitator is neutral and understands restorative practices. Consider an external facilitator, if resources allow.

Gathering Information:

- Hold separate meetings with each party involved to understand their perspectives, needs, and the impact of the incident. Be prepared to conduct more than one meeting if necessary. Ensure that all parties are listened to and understood equally, avoiding any favoritism or premature judgments.

Restorative Meeting:

- Establish ground rules: Create a safe space for open communication and respect.
- Facilitate dialogue: Encourage both parties to share their experiences and feelings.
- Encourage empathy building: Help each party understand the other's perspective.

Reaching an Agreement:

- Develop a solution: Work collaboratively to address the harm caused and prevent future issues.
- Formalize the agreement: Document the agreed-upon steps for moving forward.

Following Up:

- Monitor progress: Ensure the agreed-upon actions are being implemented.
- Evaluate the process: Assess the effectiveness of the restorative justice approach.

Additional consideration: Power imbalances. Be mindful of power dynamics among participants and take steps to level the playing field.

Processing the complaint based on a disciplinary process

Purpose: To address serious violations of the MenEngage Code of Conduct through a formal investigation, determination of responsibility, and imposition of appropriate sanctions.

Process Steps:

1. Review Committee

- Upon receiving a complaint, determine if a formal disciplinary process is warranted based on the severity of the alleged violation and the wishes of the affected individuals.
- Establish a Review Committee composed of impartial individuals with relevant expertise.
- The Review Committee will consist of two to five people with some relevant technical expertise (e.g. gender-based violence, human rights, human resource management, women's rights). Ideally, they should represent diversity and balance in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and other relevant identity markers. Committee members should not have a conflict of interest, including close relationships with the people involved in the complaint.
- Different types of cases may require different committee compositions to ensure appropriate expertise and impartiality in handling complaints.

2. Investigation

Conduct a thorough and impartial investigation, collecting evidence and interviewing relevant parties separately.

- Determine the most appropriate moment to inform the person accused that a complaint has been received and that an investigation will be or is being conducted.
- Examine any documentation provided and lead research to clarify, expand, or verify the information received.
- Ensure the protection of witnesses and the complainant from retaliation.
- If the complaint has legal implications, it may be necessary to seek legal advice.
- Request a temporary removal (leave) from the organization of the person accused, if considered necessary to continue with the investigation or to prevent potential harm.
- Assess the level of harm, the degree of threat, and the level of responsibility accepted by the person accused.
- Keep a record of all actions taken and ensure that all these records are kept confidential.

During the investigation, it is critical to establish and communicate the **standard of proof** required to substantiate the complaint. MenEngage Alliance adopts the **balance of probabilities** standard, meaning the evidence must show that it is more likely than not (greater than 50% certainty) that the alleged actions occurred. This standard allows for fairness and practicality while maintaining the integrity of the investigation.

For severe cases with significant implications, the Alliance may consider the **clear and convincing evidence** standard, which requires a higher level of certainty but not the level required in criminal proceedings. The type and amount of evidence considered sufficient should be aligned with the severity and context of the case.

3. How to conduct interviews during an ethics investigation

- Generally, it is advisable to interview the complainant first, then the witnesses, and then the respondent.
- When conducting interviews, they must take place in a discreet location to protect privacy and avoid rumors.
- The tone of the interview should be professional instead of interrogative. Questions should be open-ended where applicable to allow subjects the opportunity to elaborate on their answers.
- At no time should the interviewer become confrontational or try to make the subject uncomfortable. The goal is to gather as much relevant information as possible, not to badger.

Questions to Complainant

- The five “W’s” of journalism, “Who, What, When Where and Why” should be used to help set the scene and sequence of events
- How did the events affect you personally?
- How would you like to see the situation resolved?
- Did the conduct occur at other times that you are aware of?
- Do you have any other relevant information?
- Would you like to make a final statement?

Questions to Respondent

- What is your response to the allegations?
- What is your version of the events?
- You have stated that the allegations are untrue. Is there a reason you can think of as to why the complainant would make them?

Questions for the Witnesses

- Can you describe what you saw/heard?
- Are there others who may have witnessed the event?
- Are you aware of any other relevant information?

4. Review Committee Findings
 - The Review Committee analyzes the gathered evidence and determines whether a violation of the MenEngage Code of Conduct occurred.
 - Prepare a detailed report outlining the findings, evidence, and conclusions.
5. Disciplinary Action
 - If a violation is substantiated, the Review Committee recommends appropriate disciplinary actions based on the severity of the offense. The final decision on disciplinary action depends on the level of the case and rests with the designated authority as follows:
 - At the **national level**, the designated authority is the leadership of the respective member organization, or the national Steering Committee, or the national network secretariat.
 - At the **regional level**, the designated authority is the regional Steering Committee or Secretariat.
 - At the **global level**, the designated authority is the Global Secretariat or Global Board of Directors.

The determination of the appropriate level depends on the nature and scope of the case, including who is involved and the jurisdiction under which the complaint falls.

- Possible disciplinary actions may include:
 - Written warnings
 - Suspension
 - Termination of membership or employment
 - Referral to external authorities (if applicable)

When determining disciplinary actions, the **evidence threshold** used to reach findings must align with the chosen standard of proof (e.g., balance of probabilities or clear and convincing evidence). Transparency about the evidentiary basis of decisions strengthens trust in the process.

Some complaints may imply criminal behavior that demands a report to the local authorities. The complainant is always entitled to file a criminal complaint if considered pertinent to do so, and MenEngage Alliance should collaborate in this effort. Legal advice regarding local laws may be necessary in some cases to ensure compliance and protection of all parties involved.

Ensure that the process is implemented as quickly as possible.

6. Notification and Appeal:
 - Inform the accused individual of the investigation findings and disciplinary action in writing.
 - Provide clear information about appeal rights and procedures.
7. Monitoring:

- Follow up to ensure that the consequences for those found responsible for the wrongdoing and the reparation are implemented, especially that the harmful behavior has stopped and that the targets are satisfied with the outcome
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the Review Committee will collaborate with the complainant to find solutions to such concerns. This also applies to the person accused to the extent this is reasonably possible.
- If it cannot be determined that the incident or wrongdoing took place, the Review Committee, in consultation with the complainant, may still make recommendations to ensure the proper functioning of the organization in order to prevent such incidents.

Reaching conclusions

Implementing Corrective Actions

Upon completion of the process of handling the complaint, appropriate corrective actions will be implemented. These actions may include restorative measures, disciplinary sanctions, or a combination of both. Other measures of civil and penal responsibility may also be taken, according to the law of the land.

Key considerations for corrective actions:

- The severity of the violation: The nature and extent of the misconduct will influence the level of response.
- Impact on individuals and the organization: Consider the harm caused to the complainant, the accused, and the overall organizational climate.
- The expectations of those most affected: The wishes of the victims or target of abuse should influence the decision of what correction actions are appropriate.
- Accountability: The degree of responsibility accepted by the accused person.
- Prevention: Implement measures to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

Potential Corrective Actions

The following list of corrective actions is not intended to be a fixed sequence or an exhaustive list. Actions may be applied in different orders, combined, or adapted based on the specifics of each case. Additionally, other appropriate actions may be considered as long as they align with the established criteria, legal frameworks, and the core values guiding this process.

- A dialogue with the accused person, to help him/her take responsibility for their mistake, be accountable, apologize for the harm caused, make amends, and commit to not repeat.
- A written warning.

- Educational intervention with the accused person on how to practice the values included in our Code of Conduct (Respect and kindness; Affirmative consent; Fairness and equality; Ethical decision-making; Transparency and honesty; Self-reflection and growth; Speaking up for justice) and on how to take full responsibility for harmful behaviors, apologize and make amends.
- Referrals to receive psycho-educational treatment offered by external providers.
- Disciplinary actions for more serious wrongdoing may include removal from leadership positions or relieving of responsibilities within the organization, withholding of increments or promotion, fine, suspension from services from two to six months without pay, removal of membership from the MenEngage Alliance and from his/her organization, termination, or reporting the accused to local authorities.
- In cases of dismissal of staff or board members, or expulsion from the Alliance due to a serious breach of the Code of Conduct, MenEngage Alliance may inform relevant organizations within the sector to prevent potential harm elsewhere. Such communication should only occur after a thorough investigation has substantiated the violation and appropriate legal advice has been obtained to ensure compliance with labor laws and confidentiality regulations. It is recommended to avoid signing secrecy clauses or confidentiality agreements with individuals leaving the network and the organization due to misconduct. Such clauses can hinder transparency and the ability to protect others from harm. Instead, employment contracts and agreements should include provisions that allow for sharing critical information with relevant organizations, ensuring the safeguarding of individuals and communities while adhering to legal and ethical standards. This notification policy may also apply to individuals who leave MenEngage Alliance before the completion of the complaint-handling process, provided due process has been followed and sufficient evidence has been gathered to substantiate concerns.
- Organizational changes: Review and revise policies, procedures, or structures to address systemic issues that may have contributed to the incident.

Reparation and Support

Victims of misconduct deserve support and reparation. The organization or network handling the case may assist in accessing counseling, mental health care, and other support services, to the extent this is possible. They also deserve:

- An apology from the perpetrator (verbal and/or written) that includes a recognition of the harm caused, regardless of intent, and a commitment to no repetition.
- If mistakes were committed by the organization in the handling of the case, the leaders of the organization should also issue an apology.
- Commitment that the harmful or inappropriate behavior will cease.
- Re-credit of any leave taken due to the abuse or violence.
- Information, referrals, or guidance to access external resources and services.
- Support with legal, medical, and counseling expenses, if financially feasible.

- Transfer, with no job disadvantage (if possible and in case the complainant does not wish to work in the same premises as the accused)
- A promotion if the target was demoted as a result of the abuse or violence.
- Those who perpetrate abuse or violence also harm the organization. Therefore, an apology to the collective who form the organization may also be necessary.

The resolution of an internal grievance procedure and transformative justice is not binding in most cases, which means that a complainant who is dissatisfied with the final determination of the Alliance's internal grievance-handling procedure can seek other recourse, including filing a lawsuit. However, the support provided by the Alliance or network applies to the internal grievance handling process. If a complainant decides to seek legal action or other external recourse after the internal process has concluded, the Alliance is not obligated to provide further assistance or support. However, the Alliance commits to respecting the complainant's right to pursue further action and will not obstruct or retaliate in any way.

Lessons Learned and Continuous Improvement

Each complaint-handling process presents an opportunity for learning and growth. We need to engage in reflection on our experiences addressing complaints related to breaches of the Code of Conduct and other accountability matters to enhance future responses:

- Document lessons learned: Create a detailed record of the process, including challenges, mistakes, successes, and areas for improvement.
- Share knowledge: Observing confidentiality, share lessons learned with relevant stakeholders through training and documentation.
- Give account: Consider sharing a public statement about the results of a complaint without revealing the parties involved. This is a practice that demonstrates accountability to all stakeholders and helps to discourage future breaches of our Code of Conduct
- Review and update policies: Regularly assess and update complaint-handling policies and procedures to reflect best practices and address emerging issues.
- Monitor and evaluate: Track complaint trends and outcomes to identify patterns and areas for improvement.