Grievance Policy

Aiming Change for Tomorrow

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Recommended by : Management Committee headed by CEO
Approved by : Board of Directors, ACT-International

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1 Introduction

ACT-International is a not-for-profit right based national organization focusing on women, youth, children and marginalized segments of society. The organization particularly works with disadvantaged segments of society to empower communities by building peoples engagement, capacity and partnership focusing on women and children for better tomorrow. Organization aims to develop partnerships and innovative programmes with the support of development actors to contribute in the efforts of ***"Aiming Change for Tomorrow".*** ACT-International is registered as a non-profit organization under the Societies Registration Act, XXI of 1860.

2 Vision, Mission, Values

2.1 Vision

Aiming the world of opportunities for a better tomorrow.

2.2 Mission

Empowering communities to recover, progress and advance by building peoples` engagement, capacity and partnership focusing women and children for a better tomorrow.

2.3 We pursue this mission through:

- Grassroots institutional development and networking with local civil society groups and organizations;
- Sustainable economic development that integrates livelihoods, education, health, infrastructure, environment, youth development, social cohesion and local leadership management;
- Child development that integrates child rights, protection and improvement of service provision to reduce neglect, abuse and exploitation;
- Partnerships with civil society and public sector organizations that promote harmony and cohesion amongst development partners, integration of development initiatives and accountability;
- Policy advocacy that integrates evidence based research on socio-economic and political issues which are directly related to sustainable development of marginalized communities especially women and children;
- Emergency relief services and recovery and rehabilitation initiatives that assist people affected by conflict or disaster.

2.4 Our Core Values

- ***Our mission and humanitarian values*** impels us to act for a better tomorrow
- ***Participation*** for attaining ownership that leads to community empowerment

- ***Transparency*** for making humanitarian action accountable to stakeholders
- ***Equality*** for realizing the rights of disadvantaged and discriminated
- ***Innovation*** for achieving excellence to up-bring the lives of marginalized
- ***Responsibility*** for serving the underprivileged voluntarily

3 Purpose of the compliant, dispute and grievance policy

To provide a process where Aiming Change for Tomorrow (ACT) International receives, reviews, and resolves all formal complaint, dispute, and grievance matters of ACT Staff members (including head office staff, provincial office staff, district office staff), beneficiaries, volunteer and stakeholders.

4 Policy statement

This policy is the sole and exclusive means by which any ACT staff member (including head office staff, provincial office staff, district office staff) may escalate and submit a formal organizational or policy complaint, objection, dispute, grievance, disagreement, or similar matter (grievance matter) for review and resolution. All ACT staff members accept this policy as the appropriate and binding organizational system for the fair, equitable, orderly, and efficient consideration and settlement of such matters, without resort to governmental, court, or other outside procedures.

4.1 Application of the Policy

This policy will apply to any grievance matter initiated by any ACT staff members; the ACT Board of Directors; ACT executive management; and ACT Committee members; regarding any matter within organization.

4.1.1 Confidentiality of the process

All non-final resolutions, proceedings, and materials related to this policy are confidential and private, and will be maintained securely by ACT international and its designated staff. Other than the designated staff, no observers or other persons are permitted to participate in the processes established by this policy without the permission of the Chief Executive Officer or other designated ACT authority, and the denial of such permission is not subject to further review or appeal.

4.1.2 Information and proof accepted

The designated ACT authority will receive and consider all information appearing to be relevant to the grievance matter, including any information which may be helpful to a complete understanding of the issues involved. Objections relating to the relevance of

information and other evidence issues will be decided by the ACT designated Resolution Officer (an additional position assigned by CEO) and these decisions are not subject to further review or appeal.

4.1.3 Failure to Cooperate/Submission of Misleading or False Information

Any Party including a Grievant who is not associated with ACT, must cooperate with the designated ACT authority with respect to the resolution of the grievance matter resolution process. Failure to cooperate may result in the imposition of corrective actions or sanctions by ACT, including the denial or acceptance of a grievance, or other appropriate corrective actions. Similarly, any Party who submits false or misleading information to ACT with respect to the resolution of a grievance may be subject to appropriate corrective action or sanction.

4.1.4 Fiduciary Responsibility and Retention of Legal Rights

Notwithstanding any provision of this, or any other, policy to the contrary, consistent with legal fiduciary responsibilities and the ACT governing documents, ACT retains all rights and privileges to: seek any available legal remedies and relief on behalf of itself and authorized representatives; and defend itself and authorized representatives to the fullest extent permitted by law.

5 Complaint, Dispute, and Grievance Policy

5.1 Submission of Grievance Matter

All grievance matters must be submitted to the ACT Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee, and explicitly identified by the Grievant as a formal complaint, dispute, or grievance, submitted for treatment under this policy.

5.1.1 Initial Review

Chief Executive Officer Determination of Nature of Complaint: The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) shall review the matter and make a determination as to the nature of matter and inform the complainant.

a) **Matters of an Operational Nature**: shall generally be defined as those issues related to the day-to-day management and conduct of Institute business including operational policies and program, product and service offerings of the Institute.
b) **Matters of a Strategic Nature:** shall generally be defined as those issues related to the strategic direction of the organization including Board policy directives, Board Governance Policies and any items reserved to the Board for decision by the ACT By-laws, Board Policies or the Rules of the Board.

c) **Mixed Matters:** to the extent that the complaint contains matters which are covered in Operational and Strategic nature matters, the complaint shall be bifurcated and each matter shall be handled by the process relevant to that matter, as contained in this policy.

5.1.2 Resolution Officer

Operational ACT Head office Matters: The Chief Executive Officer, or his/her appointed designee, shall serve as Resolution Officer (which will be an additional position) for matters described in Section 5.1.1 a), above. In the event of a possible conflict of interest, the nature of the complain or other appropriate basis for referral, the Chief Executive Officer may refer the matter to the Chief Strategy Officer, appropriate Manager or another appropriate designee appointed by the Chief Executive Officer, for initial review and resolution.

Strategic Board Matters: All matters which are described in Section 5.1.1 b), above, shall be referred, by the Resolution officer, to the Chief Executive Officer. In the event of a possible conflict of interest, the nature of the complaint or other appropriate basis for referral, the CEO may refer the matter to another Officer of the Board, one or more members of the Board or another appropriate designee appointed by the Chair for initial review and resolution.

Grievance Matters pertaining to the Chief Executive Officer: The ACT Board of Directors is solely responsible for all matters concerning the Chief Executive Officer. Any grievance matter or other complaint received concerning the Chief Executive Officer shall be treated as a confidential personnel matter, and immediately forwarded to the ACT Board of Directors, for handling in the appropriate process, or as required by employment contract, ACT governing documents and applicable law. The full Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Strategy Officer shall be kept informed, on a confidential basis, of all such matters, so that the full and complete interests of the corporation are represented and maintained and that they may cooperate with the Chair to ensure that the Chair has adequate staff or other assistance in the process.

To the extent that any Resolution Officer appointed by the Chief Executive Officer or the Chair should discover during the course of the proceedings that he/she has a conflict of interest, the Resolution Officer shall immediately contact the Chief Executive Officer or Chair, as applicable, and to advise of the conflict. The Chief Executive Officer or Chair shall then appoint a new Resolution Officer to proceed with the Grievance.

5.1.3 Resolution Officer Review and Actions

The Resolution Officer shall inform the individual, group, or organization that is the subject of the grievance of the complaint and will thereafter conduct a preliminary review of the grievance matter, including the collection and consideration of all relevant communications and other materials submitted by the Parties or others in possession of material information. Following such review, the Resolution Officer may take any of the following actions:

1. Issue an informal resolution (where a grievance matter is appropriate for informal mediation between the two parties) to the matter registered in grievance register;
2. Request or direct that one or more of the Parties, or others in possession of material information, provide relevant documents, data, or information necessary to consider and resolve the grievance matter.
3. Issue a formal resolution to the matter, which will include a written, initial decision and resolution, and which may include any appropriate corrective or remedial action(s) and/or disciplinary sanction(s). Among other formal resolution conclusions, the Resolution Officer may: affirm the grievance in whole or in part; or, deny and dismiss the grievance in whole or in part;
4. Submit the complaint to the respondent for a reply within such timeframe as the Resolution Officer deems appropriate;
5. Dismiss the complaint when the Resolution Officer determines that (1) the complaint fails to state a claim that is supported by the facts alleged or (2) that the complaint challenges only the reasonableness of an action which was in the discretion of the respondent to take and the complaint fails to allege sufficient facts to show a gross abuse of that discretion;
6. Refer the matter to the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Strategy officer (in case of absence of CEO) for review, further referral, and/or resolution; or,

5.1.4 Specific Expertise Panel

Where the allegations of the complaint involve factual or legal issues which the Chief Executive Officer or other Resolution Officer determines that require specific expertise beyond that of the Resolution Officer, he/she may refer the grievance to a panel of arbitrators for binding arbitration, consisting of one or more individuals, possessing the needed expertise to act as the Resolution Officer(s). In the case of such a referral, the Parties shall bear the cost of the arbitration as the arbitrator(s) may determine.

5.1.5 Finality of Resolution

All informal and formal resolutions of the grievance matter by a Resolution Officer will be final and not appealable.

5.2 Mediation/Informal Resolution

Matters Appropriate for Mediation: Each Resolution Officer is authorized to determine if a grievance matter is appropriate for informal mediation between the Parties, based on the facts and circumstances related to the matter. Such mediation will be intended to assist the Parties in reaching a fair, informal, mutually acceptable settlement of the issues and concerns presented without resort to any formal process.

Mediator Authorities/Designation of Mediator(s): Once a matter is determined to be appropriate for mediation under this policy, the Resolution Officer may begin and conclude the necessary meetings, discussions, and negotiations appropriate to reaching a mediated settlement of the matter. In the alternative, and in consultation with the Parties, the Resolution Officer may appoint one or more designated mediators to supervise and oversee the mediation process consistent with these provisions.

Successful Mediation: In the event that the Parties reach a successful, mediated resolution of the grievance matter, the designated mediator will prepare a report identifying the resolution terms, and forward the report to the Parties for approval, and the Chief Executive Officer for receipt.

Unsuccessful Mediation: In the event that the Parties are unable to reach a successful, mediated resolution of the grievance matter, the resolution officer will accept the matter for resolution.

5.2 Resolution Hearings:

All the resolution hearings will be made in ACT international head office Islamabad. The resolution officer will conduct resolution hearing and will inform and update the authorities accordingly. No expenses will be paid to any party regarding travel, boarding and lodging; parties will be responsible for their own expenses. The record of each hearing will be closed following the conclusion of the hearing, unless otherwise directed by the Resolution Officers. Any Party may request that the record remain open for thirty (30) days for the purpose of receiving additional documentary information and or similar materials. The Resolution Officer authority may deny requests to keep the hearing record open without appeal.

6 Policy Distribution

Internal for Action:

Board of Directors
Chief Executive officer
All ACT staff who participate in complaint, dispute, and grievance policy process

Internal for Information and Awareness:

All other ACT staff

7 Glossary

This policy uses the following specific terms, acronyms, and abbreviations:

Term	Definition
Parties	The individual, group, or organization initiating a grievance matter will be identified as the grievant(s). The individual, group, or organization that is the subject of the grievance will be identified as the respondent(s).
ACT	ACT International

The Board of Directors RESOLVED and unanimously approved the Complaint, dispute and grievance policy of Aiming Change for Tomorrow-International with additions and revisions under Agenda item no in the BOD Meeting held on 9th March 2024.

9th-MARCH-2024

We the following members participated and put our respective hands on this documents on the day, month and year mentioned herein below;

S.No	Name	ID #	Membership	Ph. No	Signature
1	Mr. Saeed ul Hassan	35202-6543978-1	Chairperson	0345-5576454	
2	Prof Farkhanda Aurangzeb	54400-4895286-0	Member	0321-8001170	
3	Dr.Bushra Aizaz	82203-1135528-6	Member	0346-8502112	
4	Muhammad Javid Malik	61101-0488964-3	Member	03335129462	
5	Babar Aziz	61101-3686940-9	Member	03005011222	
6	Dr. Zaineb Hafeez	37301-3531962-6	Member	00447583685208	
7	Ms. Farzana Yaqoob	37405-5480398-2	Member	0334-5363333	
8	Mubashar Nabi	61101-9146195-7	Founder President	03018562934	