

Are You Actively Accepting Complaints?

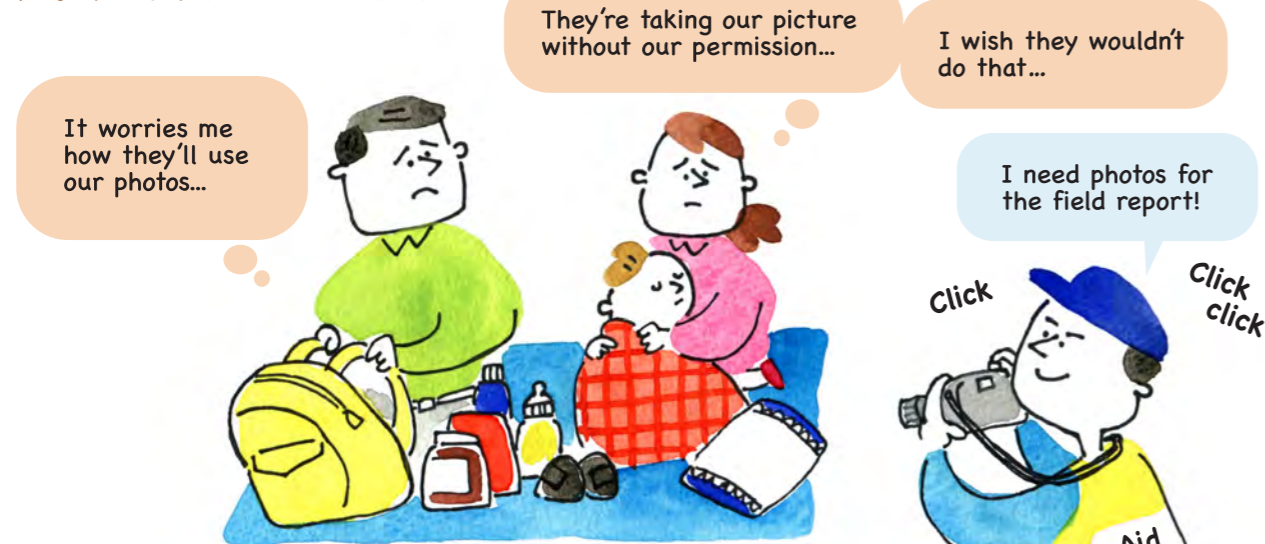
If there are improprieties within the aid organization or staff misconduct such as harassment against disaster survivors, and if nothing is done to address them, then there would be significant consequences. More than anything, bad influences must be removed immediately. Therefore, it is required of aid organizations to have a formal grievance and response mechanism in place.

The same must be done when staff members have complaints against the organization.

Efforts must be made not only in times of disaster, but also during non-disaster times.

Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

Problems left unattended



It is no doubt important to keep a record of the aid site as a record of your response. However, if you wish to record disaster survivors' faces or comments, you must obtain their consent by informing them in advance the name of your organization and how or why the records will be used. Also, let people know in advance that if anyone feels uneasy, there is a point of contact and a system for reporting their concerns safely and comfortably.

Check List

- ✓ Have the responders set up a mechanism to receive opinions and complaints from disaster survivors and thoroughly informed them of how the complaints mechanism works?
- ✓ Is the complaints mechanism easily accessible to disaster survivors and protective of their privacy?
- ✓ Are the responders responding promptly to complaints and reporting their resolution to the disaster survivors?
- ✓ Are the aid organizations taking the same measures for complaints from within the organization?

Responders must take responsibility and begin during non-disaster times to create an environment where disaster survivors can safely voice their grievances.

At aid sites, there are cases where people affected by disasters are forced to do what they are not comfortable with, such as not being able to voice their discomfort or complaints, or responders taking advantage of their position to ask for something in return for the aid. United Nations, state governments, and aid organizations have compiled a report on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation by aid workers, which has garnered international attention. Now, this is available in Japanese.

●PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Harassment) Implementation Quick Reference Handbook

●Video "No Excuse for Abuse: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Action"

*QR codes for the above resources are in the "Useful Links" on p. 32.

Best Practice Cases

Overseas Refugee Assistance

Active Reception of Complaints and Opinions is an Effective Way to Help Survivors Recover

Emergency Phase

Reconstruction Phase

World Vision Japan (WVJ)



Sewing machine training Mask making at a facility for women in a Rohingya refugee camp ©World Vision

In their assistance for those who have fled Myanmar and arrived in Bangladesh, World Vision Japan (WVJ) provides girls and women, who have experienced violence and other victimizations against them, a safe environment to be in while they receive physical and mental care as well as training in sewing, cooking, and other skills. The camp has a box in which people can freely place their complaints and suggestions, and posters have been put up encouraging people to express their opinions this way. With the opinions received, there is a mechanism in place within the organization to review and to respond to them.

The staff also picks up on problems and needs through everyday conversations and responds to them. For example, somebody mentioned, "Now that I could acquire the sewing skills, I'd like to continue practicing what I learned in my personal life, too." In response, the staff set up a system in which sewing machines could be used freely outside of training hours and incorporated this change into subsequent projects so that people could make clothing and other items for their own families.

Responders' Wisdom

- Even when people affected by crises feel that there are problems with the way assistance is provided to them, they tend to hold back and are unable to point them out. However, by creating a mechanism that allowed people to safely communicate their complaints and suggestions, responders were able to receive their opinions and learn about needs of which they were previously unaware.
- Because they had this mechanism set in place within the organization to respond to complaints and suggestions, they could respond appropriately and enhance the effectiveness of their assistance.



Suggestion & Complaints Box ©World Vision

Best Practice Case from abroad

There are organizations overseas who are using Commitment 5 not only to receive complaints and requests from people affected by crises and disasters but also to identify and improve problems among them. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) operates a learning center in a Syrian refugee camp that provides a physically and psychologically safe environment for children and adolescents, where the camp residents themselves serve as staff. Since there was a daily occurrence of staff violence against children and bullying and violence among children, the first step was to develop a means by which the children could safely express their complaints and requests. In fact, the NRC established multiple means such as a complaints box, a dedicated phone line and email address, an entry form, and an opportunity for the children to express their complaints directly to the project manager about once every two weeks.

As part of the subsequent efforts to improve these situations, the NRC implemented dialogue, action, feedback, and awareness-raising activities based on the complaints and requests expressed. In addition, to eliminate violence committed by staff, they also provided support that took into account their feelings as displaced persons. As a result, improvements were seen after these series of resolutions were implemented.

- 1) **Dialogue:** Exercises to help children relax so that they can express their feelings naturally, use of illustrated cards, etc.
- 2) **Action:** Consideration of the most appropriate response to complaints
- 3) **Feedback:** Collection of complaints and provision of feedback to staff and children
- 4) **Awareness-raising:** Activities conducted with staff, parents, and children

Pre-Resolution (Average incidence rate including suspected cases)	Post-Resolution (Average incidence rate including suspected cases)
Physical violence by teachers: 20%	Physical violence by teachers: 0%
Verbal violence by teachers: 22%	Verbal violence by teachers: 0%
Bullying and violence among children: 55%	Bullying and violence among children: 30%