

Complaints Procedure

1 Purpose of the Complaints Procedure

HIV Young Leaders Fund (HYLF) values feedback on our programs. In order to ensure we are responsive to any concerns or grievances that organizations or individuals have about HYLF, we have developed a Complaints Procedure.

The purpose of this Complaints Procedure is to register, handle and manage concerns about HYLF on its policies, programmes or activities in a transparent and effective manner. An important objective of this procedure is to provide insight into the way we deal with our partners and other stakeholders.

This Complaints Procedure relates to complaints as defined below. Other – more general – feedback, questions or requests for information, are not covered by this protocol. Processes on how queries other than complaints are managed are determined by HYLF’s Steering Committee.

2 General Guidelines

- A. This procedure covers all types of complaints that are submitted to the HYLF.
- B. Complaints can relate to all activities of the HYLF, including policies, funding priorities, funding mechanisms, grants awarded, communications, recruitment, governance, etc.
- C. All complaints, fulfilling criteria outlined below, will be responded to in a timely manner and on a case-by-case basis. Official responses will be given to individual cases within four weeks of receiving the complaint.
- D. HYLF Steering Committee (SC), jointly with the HYLF coordinator and other relevant staff, review all complaints on an annual basis and determine whether any structural problem exists. The Complaint Coordinator, who is a member of the SC, is responsible for filing complaints and managing the archive.
- E. The SC reviews this procedure once per annum.
- F. All complaints are treated as confidential and communication regarding the complaint will remain between SC members, HYLF Director and the complainant – unless complaint directly relates to other parties.

3 Procedure

3.1 Complaint – Definition

- A. A complaint is defined as a grievance or concern submitted verbally (by word of mouth) or in writing (by e-mail or letter) directed to the HYLF. Complaints have to be related to any action of the HYLF and/or of an HYLF individual employee and/or of an HYLF body under the responsibility of the HYLF i.e. under governance of the HYLF SC.
- B. Complaints can be received by any member of the SC or Director and are managed as intended in this Complaints Procedure when received by the Complaints Coordinator.

- C. A complaint can only be taken into consideration when it includes the following:
 - Full name
 - Organisation/affiliation (if any)
 - Nature of concern/issue
 - Recommendations to address concern/issue [optional].
- D. Anonymously submitted concerns cannot be formally handled as complaints, as in the complaints procedure it is instrumental that the possibility exists to distinguish comments from factual issues that need to be addressed. Anonymous comments should nevertheless be followed up to see if it refers to an actual matter requiring attention and/or for reference to the complaints procedure.

3.2 Coordination

- A. The Complaints Coordinator coordinates the procedure.
- B. The SC identifies the Complaints Coordinator among its members.
- C. The SC appoints the Complaints Coordinator every year; there is no maximum number of terms for an individual.
- D. Potential conflict of interest is self-identified by the Complaints Coordinator, in the event of which coordination is handled or supervised by another SC member.

3.3 Receiving and Reviewing a Complaint

- A. Any employee, volunteer or SC member who receives a verbal complaint (e.g. by telephone) refers the complainant to the Complaints Procedure.
- B. If necessary or desired, the complainant can be contacted by the Complaints Coordinator. The Complaints Coordinator can send the Complaints Procedure to the complainant, but can also formally receive a verbal complaint.
- C. Complaints verbally expressed to the Complaints Coordinator will be transcribed by the coordinator and communicated to the complainant for confirmation of correct recording.
- D. Contact details of the Complaints Coordinator are mentioned on the HYLFF website.
- E. The date of receipt is the date a complaint is submitted in writing according to the Complaints Procedure or the date on which the verbally transcribed complaint has been confirmed by complainant.
- F. The Complaints Committee, consisting of at least three members of the SC, who are appointed every year by the SC, will handle complaints; there is no maximum number of terms for an individual to serve on the Complaints Committee.
- G. Potential conflict of interest is self-identified by the Complaints Committee (member), in the event of which the respective member(s) is/are replaced by other SC member(s).
- H. Complaints that are in one way or another related to outcomes of a grant selection process, i.e. related to a decision of a CRP or related to a specific grant, are referred by the Complaints Coordinator to the HYLFF Director and further managed by the latter. Responses to such complaints can be limited to automatic responses, stating to what extent the HYLFF communicates about grantees and the grant selection processes.
- I. If complaints as referred to under 3.3.H are not answered satisfactorily or lead to more general issues, the Complaints Coordinator is involved.
- J. The Complaints Coordinator registers all complaints and responses.

3.4 Response

- A. A response in writing will be sent to complainant no later than four weeks after the

complaint has been received.

- B. The intention of the formal response to the complaint is not so much to determine whether the complaint is well founded or justified, but to provide the rationale for the actions of the HYLFF, which were the reason for the complaint to be submitted.
- C. When appropriate, the SC will inform the complainant which measures have been the result of the outcomes of the complaint. This could for example include implications for a specific policy or general procedures.

3.5 Delay in Response

- A. If a complaint cannot be dealt with within four weeks, the complainant will receive acknowledgment of receipt, which includes the date the complaint was received and information about the further process (duration, process, contact information etc.).
- B. The process of handling a complaint can be extended once with an additional period of four weeks.

3.6 Registration of complaints

All complaints received by the Complaints Coordinator are entered in a complaints register. Any employee who is confronted with a complaint by word of mouth (in a (telephone) conversation) should mention this to the complaints coordinator, even if the complaint was dealt with satisfactorily and a record should be taken as a matter of process.