



Health Action International

Complaints Procedure

1. Complaints

Health Action International (HAI) believes that any stakeholder, regardless of their affiliation to HAI has the right to make a complaint for mistakes, wrongful actions or breaches of the codes to which HAI and its partners and members subscribe. HAI believes that complainants have a right to have their concerns addressed and receive a response.

2. Making a Complaint

The HAI website will carry the complaints procedure (this document), which provides information to stakeholders on how to make a complaint either about HAI activities or partner and member activities. These will be referred appropriately to the relevant partner or dealt with by HAI staff, and the HAI Director, if necessary. Every effort will be made to address and resolve the complaint quickly and efficiently and, if possible, at a partner level. All complaints will be logged and kept by the HAI Director, and anonymised complaints and their resolution will be made available for public scrutiny.

All complaints should be addressed to the Director of HAI in writing by email or mail. HAI will endeavour to assess and respond to complaints in writing as quickly as possible (preferably within 14 days of receipt). Complainants will be kept informed of delays to investigation of an issue (e.g., due to unavailability of relevant staff, etc.), or where it has been referred to a partner organisation. This process is open to partner organisations that wish to complain about HAI, but does not include partners' staff and does not replace a partners' own processes.

3. Complaints about Partners' Activities

In the first instance, complaints about a partner's activities will be referred to the partner and no further action will be taken by HAI. The complainant will be informed that HAI has referred their concerns in order that they might follow up the complaint with the relevant partner.

If the complainant comes back to HAI with a complaint that is well-founded but not satisfactorily addressed by the partner, it will be discussed with the partner's Director, coordinator or equivalent, but may be brought to the HAI Foundation Board if not solved at management level.

4. Complaints about HAI Activities

Where there is a complaint about the activities of HAI (e.g. campaign, programme, or communication/publicity, etc.), whether or not conducted with a partner, the relevant HAI line-manager will investigate and, if the complaint is well founded, endeavour to provide redress (e.g., a retraction, or recompense, etc.), or where this is not possible or appropriate, provide a formal written apology. If a complaint involves the manager it will be dealt with by the HAI Director, or if s/he is implicated, the Chair of the Foundation Board.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, the complaint may be referred to the HAI Foundation Board Management Officers for a response, and beyond that to the Board for a second time. Frivolous or vexatious complaints will not be investigated and the reasons for this will be made clear to the complainant.

5. Complaints about HAI Secretariat

Where there is an unresolved complaint about the HAI Secretariat, the Chair will nominate up to three partner organisation Directors (or equivalent) to deal with the issue so as to offer the complainant a separate process from the Secretariat to seek redress. If this is not resolvable, the issue will be dealt with by the Foundation Board.

6. Whistleblower Policy

HAI encourages Foundation Board members, managers, staff, interns and volunteers to report evidence-based instances of malpractice of HAI or its partners to their manager, the Director, or, if necessary, the Chair of the Board or another Board Officer. This may be done in confidence and without fear of reprisal; HAI will protect whistleblowers from victimisation and dismissal.

If the matter relates to a partner, the issue will be directed to the appropriate manager or partner Director (or equivalent).

7. Raising a Concern/Whistle-blowing

Any member of staff, intern or volunteer who has evidence of an instance or instances that the actions of someone working for HAI could lead to, or has knowingly resulted in:

- A criminal offence;
- A failure to comply with any legal obligations;
- A breach of ethical standards subscribed to by HAI;
- A miscarriage of justice;
- Damage to the environment;
- Danger to the health and safety of any individual, or
- The deliberate concealment of information, which may lead to any of the above,

should raise the matter with their immediate line-manager or that manager's line-manager if the former is implicated in the issue. This may be done verbally or in writing and should include full details and supporting evidence.

8. Assuring Confidentiality

Under this policy, HAI guarantees full confidentiality. If it is not possible to resolve the concern without revealing the complainant's identity, the manager will discuss the implications with the complainant and a decision to proceed (or not) with the investigation will be made.

In order to avoid hindering an investigation into malpractice and to prevent frivolous or malicious complaints anonymous disclosures will be discouraged.

9. Investigation of Allegation

HAI will endeavour to deal with disclosures as sensitively and quickly as possible. An appropriate person nominated by the HAI Director, or, where necessary, the Chair of the Foundation Board, will investigate the allegation within 14 days of the disclosure having been made. The complainant may be asked for further information during the course of the investigation.

10. Outcome of Investigation

On completion, appropriate action will be taken to resolve the issue, which may result in disciplinary action (including dismissal or referral to relevant authorities). The complainant(s) raising the issue will be informed of the outcome of the investigation as soon as is practicable. If they are not satisfied with the response, the matter will be referred to the HAI Director, or if that person is involved in the case, to the Chair of the Foundation Board.

11. Protection

HAI will take appropriate disciplinary action (including dismissal) in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure against any staff member:

- Found to be victimising another staff member, intern or volunteer for using this procedure, or deterring them from reporting genuine concerns under it; or
- Making a disclosure maliciously that is known to be untrue, or without reasonable grounds for believing that the information supplied was accurate.

12. Complaints should be addressed to:

Director, Health Action International (HAI)
Overtoom 60-2
1054 HK Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Email: tim@haiweb.org