



Small Scale Livestock and Livelihoods Program (SSLLP) Conflict Resolution and Complaints Policy

SSLLP is a non-profit charitable community-based organization that strives to address community needs, identify gaps in service delivery, and ensure the active participation of diverse communities including women, youth and seniors. SSLLP has embraced capacity building approach to enhance community development. SSLLP's values of Collaboration, Diversity, Empowerment, Inclusion and Innovation are applied actively. We integrate creative responses to existing and emerging ethno-cultural communities' needs by applying effective outreach, leadership training and skills development programs.

Our mission is to enhance the capacity of individuals and families from different ethno-cultural communities through empowerment, innovation, and well-being based programs and services. As an umbrella organization, SSLLP's role is to build a cooperative atmosphere.

The Board of Directors is committed to deal with Conflicts and complaints in a constructive, efficient, fair and respectful manner.

CONFLICTS or COMPLAINTS

From time to time the Board of Directors may receive a complaint regarding Policies, Programs, Fees, The Organization, Behavior of a Member of Staff, Breach of Code of Conduct by another Member of Staff. The Conflicts or Complaints could also concern Vendors, Agents, Partners, Employees or Volunteers.

1.0 INFORMAL INTERNAL COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS

1.1 Attempt to resolve the issue on your own

Individuals who find themselves in conflict with another Staff/ Board member should first attempt to talk directly to the person with whom they experience difficulty. They should give feedback directly to the individual before initiating a formal conflict resolution process. This process involves the sharing of perceptions and experiences, the clarification of needs, desires and expectations, as well as the development of a mutually negotiated plan of action.



1.2 **Keep a Record**

The complainant should keep a record of the incident(s) and any related discussions. The details should be noted, including when it happened, where it happened, who was involved, and any witnesses who may have seen or heard it. These notes will be required if a formal complaint is made. The complaint will still be looked into and addressed even if the complainant did not keep records; complainants are advised to endeavour to keep records.

1.3 **Seek Assistance**

If the Complainant feels uncomfortable in dealing directly with the issue, or if his or her efforts to do so are unsuccessful, he or she should bring any concerns to any person with leadership and/or supervisory responsibilities. One or both individuals may agree upon informing the Supervisor or the Executive Director about the issues involved and the plan of action or they may go to the higher authority to individually report the incident or to seek consultation.

The complainant can communicate the issues or concerns verbally, in person; or by phone or by email or by writing a letter. Concerns or inquiries may be directed to SSSLP staff or to any Supervisor, Manager or Director. This process is available to provide employees with information and/or informal resolution of their concerns when they do not chose to lodge a formal complaint.

2.0 **FORMAL INTERNAL COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS**

This section outlines a Respectful Workplace Complaints Review Process for resolving issues internally, on a formal basis Staff, employees, volunteers and Board members should follow the Respectful Workplace Complaints Review Process as outlined below:

- 2.1 If the Complainant wishes to initiate a Respectful Workplace Complaints Review, he or she must put the issue in writing; by email or a written letter, indicating that it is to be considered as a formal complaint. The written complaint may be



submitted to the complainant's supervisor, or the Executive Director, or the Chairperson of the Board – if the Board member is the complainant.

- 2.2 If the complaint is against the Chairperson of the Board, the matter can be referred to the Executive Committee or to an ad hoc sub-committee of the Board established by the Chairperson (or Vice Chairperson) which sub-committee shall report to the Board.

Complaints should be made as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days from the date of the incident(s). All efforts will be made to ensure that formal complaints are resolved within 30 business days, or within a specified time as discussed with the complainant.

All complaints will be investigated in an unbiased, impartial and timely manner. Management Staff who receive a formal complaint must immediately forward the complaint to the complainant's Executive Director or Chairperson

- 2.3 The Executive Director or Chairperson will arrange to meet and interview the complainant, and notes will be taken. A copy of the interview notes will be reviewed and signed by the complainant and each will retain a copy.
- 2.4 The Chairperson or Executive Director will thoroughly investigate the complaint, including any necessary consultation with other Employees/Staff or Directors/ Board Members. The complaint will be considered in the context of existing policies, established procedures, and applicable legislation.
- 2.5 At the conclusion of the formal investigation, a report will be discussed with the complainant's Supervisor or the Executive Director or the Chairperson, which will include the allegations and the investigation's findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- 2.6 For Members, the Board of Directors will review the complaint – either at the next Board meeting or call a special meeting. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in 2 weeks. A response to the complainant will be provided within



2 weeks to 30 days, by email or a written letter, following the meeting at which the matter was discussed.

2.7 If the complaint is against another Member, the Member can respond to the complaint to the Board. The Member has 2 weeks to respond and can do so by email or a written letter. The Board will consider the Member's response before making a final decision.

2.8 **Disciplinary Action - Board Members:**

The Board may pass a resolution authorizing disciplinary action or the termination of employment for: Violating any provision of the articles or By-laws, the Code of Conduct, Non-compliance to other policies, Missed meetings without reasonable cause

The notice; a written letter or email, to the person shall set out:

- Reasons for the disciplinary action or termination of employment
- The Appeal process: The Appeal process will allow the individual to defend themselves, verbally or in writing within 2 weeks to 30 days

2.9 An Individual can appeal the decision of the Board in a Special Meeting. This meeting will be called within 2 weeks to 30 days after the notice to the Individual

2.10 If the Appeal is not accepted, the Board's decision will be final.

2.11 Any Employee or Board member who violates this policy, and/or Management Staff who fail to take action when advised of a violation, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Disciplinary action will also be taken if a complaint is found to have been made fraudulently and with malicious intent.



3.0 EXTERNAL COMPLAINT RESOLUTION OPTIONS AND RESOURCES

3.1 If the issue is not resolved, consider consulting with a governmental body/ hire or have both parties agree to an arbitrator or mediator/contact legal advisors/lawyers for legal advice This section outlines options available with respect to complaint resolution using external resources

3.2 Malawi Human Rights Commission and Office of the Ombudsman

All persons have the right to file a human rights Application directly with the with the Malawi Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman. The two offices should be consulted directly on the process filing a complaint.

3.3 Police Complaint

If all the other methods and procedures, as outlined earlier in this policy, of addressing and resolving the conflict or complaint, do not address or resolve the issue, Employees have the right to file complaints with the police.

3.4 Confidentiality

All persons involved with a complaint must endeavour to ensure that the matter remains confidential. To this end, complaints shall be investigated both confidentially and objectively, with respect for the rights of all parties involved. Personal information will be disclosed only on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with the Access to Information Act Provisions as well as Privacy provisions within Section 21 of the Malawi Constitution. Those conducting the investigation of a complaint should advise all persons interviewed that they will be expected to treat the matter as confidential, and that they may be disciplined if they breach confidentiality.

3.5 Disciplinary Action - General

Any Employee or Board member who violates this policy, and/or Management Staff who fail to take action when advised of a violation, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Disciplinary action will also be taken if a complaint is found to have been made fraudulently and with malicious intent.