



SESSION GUIDE: Local Grievance/ Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

Topic: Local Grievance/Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

Time Frame: 1 day (8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

Objectives:

This module will introduce the concepts of grievance, complaints, and disputes in the context of social accountability at the local level of governance. The session will commence with a leveling of the participants’ understanding and experience of a typical grievance or dispute in a village, and the manner by which the dispute or grievance is raised, presented to, or acted upon by local authorities. This will serve as a take-off point for subsequent discussion of the concepts of grievance, complaints, and disputes, as well as the options for handling these. A discussion of the general principles and framework for handling complaints as a tool for stakeholder engagement process and dialogue-based grievance mechanism will follow, with an illustration of the Philippines experience on the *Barangay Justice System* and *Mediation by the Office of the Ombudsman*. Module will end with some basic skills exercises on effective communication, complaint-preparation, and presentation in a dialogue-based grievance mechanism.

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the concepts of grievance, complaints, and disputes both in the context of rights-based and conflict-power perspectives.
2. Understand the various formal and informal (problem-solving/dialogue-based) options for handling complaints.
3. Appreciate the over-all framework and general principles for handling complaints as a tool for stakeholder engagement process and dialogue-based grievance mechanism.
4. Learn from the Philippine experience on the BJS and Mediation by the Office of the Ombudsman.
5. Learn basic communication skills (active listening & re-framing of statements), including complaint preparation and participation in a dialogue-based grievance mechanism.

Training Procedure/Methodology:

Combination of input-type discussions and individual or group workshops (mini-role play, simulation exercises)

Content Outline

- I. Introduction
 - a. Leveling of participants’ understanding and experience on local grievance, complaints, disputes through a role play
- II. Concepts
 - a. Grievance, complaints, disputes as a concept; distinctions & inter-relationships
 - b. Rights-perspective: Correlation between rights & responsibilities, acts or omissions in violation of rights



- c. Conflict-power perspective: Sources of conflicts and power relations
- d. Options for handling complaints
 - i. Informal (problem-solving or dialogue-based options)
 - 1. Negotiations
 - 2. Informal Third Party Options
 - 3. Classic Mediation
 - ii. Formal
 - 1. Investigation
 - 2. Adjudication

III. General Principles & Framework for Effective Grievance Mechanism

- a. As a tool for effective stakeholder engagement
- b. As a tool for dialogue-based grievance mechanism
- c. The Philippines Experience: Barangay Justice System & Office of the Ombudsman (focus on mediation)

IV. Skills Appreciation

- a. Basic Communication Loop
- b. Barriers to Effective Communication
- c. Skills Exercise on Active Listening & Re-framing
- d. Complaints-Preparation Exercise
- e. Negotiation & Mediation Techniques
- f. Simulation exercise on Dialogue-based complaints presentation (using negotiation & mediation techniques)