

Symbiosis International – Complaints Policy

7.3.3	Registration and Resolution of Complaints
Policy	To take the necessary action to investigate and resolve any complaint made about the policies, practices or conduct of Symbiosis International, including its implementing division, Symbiosis Bangladesh, its Board, staff, sponsors, donors or volunteers and its primary stakeholders in their communities in Bangladesh.
Basis for Policy	To ensure that complaints are addressed professionally, appropriately and in a timely manner.
Principles	<p>A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern regarding the policies, practices or conduct of Symbiosis International. This policy covers our employees, volunteers, Board members, project communities, the primary stakeholders as well as our employees, volunteers, Board members, contractors, partners or anyone else acting on behalf of Symbiosis International and any of its divisions.</p> <p>Symbiosis is committed to having a complaints-handling process that can be used by Symbiosis International employees, Board and volunteers in Australia and Bangladesh, supporters, and the people in Symbiosis projects. The principles that underpin the Symbiosis complaints process include that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any person connected with Symbiosis International, including its operating division, Symbiosis Bangladesh, can make a complaint. • Symbiosis International will support advocates to lodge a complaint on behalf of children under the age of 18. • Symbiosis International will encourage stakeholders with a complaint to formally register this with Symbiosis International
Process	<p>Registration of Complaint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The process for submitting a complaint is widely accessible to all stakeholders and includes a range of ways for raising complaints with Symbiosis International. ▪ A complaint may include but not be limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unfair, inappropriate or incorrect conduct; - Any breach of Symbiosis International policies; - Any breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct; - Concern over the inappropriate use of funding; - Concern from a member of the public or the supporter/donor about a particular fundraising approach or marketing campaign; - Timeliness of responses to queries; - Concern over the quality of program delivery; - Concern from a beneficiary in relation to one of our programs; - Behaviour of individuals or a group of employees; and - Organisational practices, policies or procedures. ▪ In Bangladesh, complaints can be received in person by telephone, letter or email and can be submitted directly to the Symbiosis Bangladesh Chief Program officer on 880 171 6037144

- Complaints are to be submitted by the Country Director of Symbiosis Bangladesh to the Symbiosis International CEO or their delegate, or the Chair of the Board of Symbiosis International. Both can be contacted by emailing officebne@symbiosis.org.au or by phone on 61 7 3355 5985
- Within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint, the recipient or their delegate is required to complete the Complaints Form CMF 001 and submit it to the appropriate executive.
- In the case of complaints received in Bangladesh, these must be submitted to the Country Director. In addition to in-country action, a copy of the complaints form will also be submitted to the Symbiosis International CEO or their delegate, or the Chair of the Board of Symbiosis International.
- All complaints are to be recorded and investigated, even if they appear frivolous or vexatious.
- All complaints are to be entered into the Complaints Register at the Symbiosis Office in Australia or Bangladesh, as appropriate.
- This policy is to be distributed to all employees, volunteers, Board, partners, contracted service providers and others acting on our behalf.
- Induction training is provided to our relevant employees in Australia and Bangladesh so they have knowledge and understanding of the policy and procedures, including the need to provide a safe, fair, responsive, accessible, transparent environment in which complaints can be made, addressed through an appropriate process and resolved in a timely fashion.
- Symbiosis Bangladesh project staff, who work and live in each project, have close working relationships with the project members and this enables effective communication in the instance of a complaint by a project participant and facilitates appropriate and effective handling of the complaint, respecting the local people while ensuring a fair outcome.

Resolution of Complaint

- All complaints will be treated seriously and the complainant acknowledged promptly. All complaints received will be addressed in an equitable, fair, confidential and unbiased manner through the Complaints Handling Process.
- When a complaint is raised it will be listed for discussion at the next Board meeting and the complainant advised of the date. Initial actions will be determined on a resolution and the complainant advised within one week of the Board meeting.
- If the matter is urgent, the Board Executive will convene as soon as possible (within one week) to consider a response.
- Minor complaints should be resolved within 2 months of receiving the complaint
- Complaints related to a project in Bangladesh can also be raised with the Symbiosis Bangladesh CD and the principles of this policy will be applied.
- The complainant will be notified of the action through all stages of the process, as required.
- If the issue is not resolved to the reasonable satisfaction of the complainant, or if the complaint involves the Chief Executive Officer or the

	<p>Bangladesh Country Director, then the complaint may be formally referred in writing to the Chair of the Board of Symbiosis International.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
	<p>Policy Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy will be distributed to all our employees, volunteers, Board, partners, contracted service providers and all others acting on our behalf. ▪ Induction training will be provided to relevant employees, volunteers and the Board. This will also be provided following an update or change to the Policy, and included in regular staff meetings and training sessions. ▪ Information on the Complaints Handling Policy and its implementation is provided during the Functional Education Course to ensure all project group members understand the policy and what they need to do if they want to register a complaint, and how it will be addressed. Information on the Policy will also be provided in awareness sessions in each project, held at least on an annual basis or as required. ▪ The information provided in these sessions includes the requirement for projects to take into consideration the needs of the most vulnerable including minority and those disadvantaged, and that they can have their voice heard through this process.
	<p>Publicising the Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All relevant communications will make clear the value we place on receiving concerns and complaints, and the steps and processes that they need to take to register a complaint, including the appropriate contact person for their particular situation, including their contact details. ▪ The policy has a link on the website which provides the necessary information on how to make a complaint, including the contact details of the Symbiosis Executive responsible for Complaints Handling in Australia and Bangladesh
	<p>Types of complaints can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operational and sensitive complaints which may involve employees, volunteers, Board members or external stakeholders questioning operational issues or more sensitive complaints such as allegations of harassment, bullying, sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption or other forms of gross misconduct. ▪ Anonymous complaints where people have genuine concerns that they cannot speak out due to special circumstances. ▪ Frivolous complaints which may be revealed as the complaint is investigated.
	<p>Complaints Handling and Investigations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operational complaints will be resolved according to the process to resolve complaints outlined above. ▪ Sensitive complaints. Where a complaint such as sexual abuse, fraud, corruption or harassment is brought to the attention of an employee, volunteer or Board members, the person will immediately report it to the nominated Complaints Handling Officer in that location, or if the allegation is against the CEO, it will be formerly referred to the Symbiosis

	<p>International Chair. If that person is the Symbiosis Bangladesh Country Director, it will be referred to the Symbiosis International CEO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sensitive Complaints that are related to children. If an allegation concerning abuse or exploitation against a child is identified by or brought to the attention of an employee, volunteer or Board member, the complaints processes outlined in the Symbiosis International Child Safe Policy is to be followed immediately. 	
	<p>Time Frame for Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Following a formal complaint, an initial letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant and the subject of the complaint will also be advised that a complaint has been made. ▪ In normal circumstances the complaints process should be completed within 30 days of the receipt of the complaint. 	
	<p>Recording of Complaint Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The following information is to be provided for written complaints: Date of complaint; description of good or services or practice or procedure complained about; a description of the complaint and relevant supporting data; a requested remedy and a due date for response. ▪ In the case of a verbal complaint, information will be retained on the date of the complaint and to whom it was made 	
	<p>Confidentiality – Information that identifies the complainant or the subject of the complaint should only be disclosed to the appropriate people within the organisation. Such information should be actively protected, unless the complainant expressly consents to its disclosure.</p>	
Date Approved	April 2019	2021
Approved by	Symbiosis International Board	

73.3F.01	Complaint Form (To be completed by Complainant)
Name	
Address	
Contact Details	Mob: H W
Outline of Complaint	

Date of Incident	
If a Symbiosis staff member or representative is involved, please indicate their name	
Signed	
Date	

7.3.3b	Complaints which indicate a Breach of ACFID Code of Conduct	
Policy	To ensure that any complaints that indicate a breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct be managed according to the requirements of ACFID	
Basis for Policy	Compliance with the requirements of ACFID is important to Symbiosis and any breach of the Code of Conduct would also indicate a serious breach of the philosophy of Symbiosis and would be taken most seriously.	
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any complaint form received that indicates that there could possibly be a breach of the Code of Conduct will be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer of Symbiosis International or their delegate and the nature of the alleged breach identified. If required under the terms of the Code of Conduct, the CEO will notify the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee of the complaint. The complaint will then proceed through the review process as outlined in the “Registration and Resolution of Complaints” policy, with a report of the outcome and recommended resolution provided to the Symbiosis International CEO. The complainant will be notified of the action through all stages of the process, as required. 	
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