



# ADRA Denmark Complaints Report 2020

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## About the report

ADRA Denmark recognises the importance and value of listening and responding to concerns and complaints. The purpose of our complaints handling procedure is to ensure that the organisation is fully accountable to all of its stakeholders, enabling them to raise complaints and concerns about the work and operations of ADRA Denmark as stipulated in ADRA Denmark's Complaints Handling Procedure (2018). We are committed to effective complaints handling mechanisms that reflect the needs, expectations and rights of the complainants and address complaints in an efficient, fair and timely manner. The procedure promotes safety, dignity, respect for all stakeholders involved with ADRA Denmark and our programmes. We align our efforts also with ADRA International's Safeguarding Standards (2020) and ADRA Denmark's Anti-corruption and Whistle-blowing policy (April 2018). This report reflects on complaints and concerns received through the mechanism during 2020. We aim to be accountable and transparent to all our stakeholders by sharing complaints received, our action taken and the lessons we learned from it for our work.

### Principles of complaints mechanism

Driven by our four key organisational values, namely equality, dignity, justice, and social responsibility, ADRA's approach to welcoming and handling complaints is motivated by the following principles:

- Accessibility – including ensuring that mechanisms are culturally relevant, in an appropriate location and in a language understandable by all;
- Participation – including community input to design of complaints mechanisms;
- Confidentiality - where appropriate, protecting identity of complainants and concerned staff and handling sensitive issues with due privacy;
- Safety - seeking to ensure that no one is put at risk due to making a complaint;
- Transparency - being open about how we handle complaints, what can be complained about, and changes that have been made as a result of complaints;
- Professionalism – including acting with a high level of respect and common sense, and handling complaints in a timely manner.

## Executive Summary and Highlights

In 2020, ADRA Denmark has not received any complaints directly, but our ADRA partners in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Malawi have received a number of complaints regarding the projects supported by ADRA Denmark as summarised below. The projects supported by humanitarian flexible funds have also received and handled complaints, which is also summarised below.

Developing complaints mechanisms for ADRA Denmark as well as our partners has been an ongoing process over the last few years, which has now resulted in solid policies and processes in most countries. In 2020 the focus has been on supporting the roll-out of the complaint mechanism procedures in all our partner countries, and in 2021 we will follow up and continuously support this effort.

## Complaints received in 2020

In 2020, ADRA Denmark has received no complaints directly but through our ADRA partners on the projects supported by ADRA Denmark.

In the following, a summary is presented for each country.

### Syria

Promoting Resilience by Offering Multi-sectoral Integrated Services in Emergencies (PROMISE) Project (funded by Danida)

<b>Types of complaints</b>	Requests to join ADRA Syria's activities
<b>Complaints channels</b>	Hotline and in person to ADRA field staff; while there were no official complaints received through the official complaint phone number, the ADRA field staff responded to complaints received directly from the beneficiaries and the local municipalities and the management of the health centers.
<b>Complaints handling</b>	For the livelihood activity, the potential beneficiaries came to ADRA's field office raising their complaints about not being selected for the intervention. ADRA explained to them the beneficiary selection criteria which eventually solved the issue.
<b>Lessons learned</b>	Regular coordination and communication with the beneficiaries of the project

### Yemen

Emergency and Resilience Building (ERB) Project (funded by Danida)

<b>Types of complaints</b>	Complaints against community (Block) leaders (60), Complaints against beneficiaries (13), Complaints against ADRA Yemen staff (3), Requests to join ADRA Yemen's activities (120), Complaints inquiring on selection criteria (57), Complaints on selection criteria (21), Requests to follow up his/her complaint (3). Total: 277 complaints.
<b>Complaints channels</b>	Complaints box (49), Phone call/SMS/Whatsapp (135), Personal (93)
<b>Complaints handling</b>	Complaints against community leaders (Block leaders): Meetings were held with the head of the local communities to describe and explain the complaints without mentioning any complainant name. Some of the local leaders were replaced after an investigation that proved the validity of some complaints. Complaints against beneficiaries: Complaints such as reporting that some beneficiaries are being registered for the second time (receiving double assistance) or about those who are causing problems within their groups. The team has double checked the beneficiary data and has moved some of the beneficiaries from their groups to reduce the issues. Complaints against field officers (ADRA Yemen staff): Beneficiaries sometimes get very upset with the field officers when ticked as absent during attendance tracking and go to report the

	<p>field officer to the MEAL person<sup>1</sup>. As an action, the policy and work mechanism are being explained to them.</p> <p>Requests to join ADRA's activities: The selection criteria are explained to the complainants and they are directed to the block leaders of their respective blocks as a first step for registration.</p> <p>Complaints on selection criteria: Explaining the selection criteria of every activity and whether the criteria apply to them.</p>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	The different channels of complaints are working well. The selection criteria and the importance of attendance should be explained more thoroughly to the beneficiaries at the start of the project.

## South Sudan

Rights of Displaced Children (RODIC) project (funded by Danmarksindsamling 2020 + Novo Nordisk), Building Resilience in the Education Sector (BRES) project (funded by Danida)

<b>Types of complaints</b>	Complaints against ADRA South Sudan (11), Requests to join ADRA South Sudan's activities (2)
<b>Complaints channels</b>	Personal during activities and meetings, written complaints
<b>Complaints handling</b>	<p>The secretariat of education (government entity) in Nasir County opened court case against ADRA, because of the delay of payment of Teachers' Incentives in May 2020 in Nasir. In Maiwut they complained about non- payment in the Month of April and May. The complaint was resolved, and the teachers paid their incentives.</p> <p>The supplier complained about non-payment for signposts supplied to schools. This was solved and the company was paid.</p> <p>The RoSS Office (local education office, government entity) complained about the lack of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ADRA South Sudan and local government administration of Sobat state regarding the activities ADRA South Sudan implements in Upper Nile state. The MoU is now in place.</p> <p>Teachers demanded increment of teachers' incentives from 40 USD to 50 USD per month claiming other organisations were paying teachers 50 USD per month. It was explained that this salary was decided by the Education Cluster<sup>2</sup> and despite advocacy from ADRA South Sudan, the standard was kept at 40 USD per month.</p> <p>The Education Office complained about transfer of the support from 3 schools to 4 other schools. It was explained to the Education Office that this was part of the implementation plan, so that all targeted schools would receive support during the implementation period. The Communities had been involved in the planning process.</p> <p>ADRA Field staff complained about delay in procurement of COVID-19 response materials (Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, hygiene materials, sanitizers, learning materials) requested since June 2020 which led to the procurement being finalised.</p> <p>Teachers requested that ADRA should re-open schools which were closed due to COVID-19. This was handled by ADRA project staff informing them that re-opening of schools was not ADRA's mandate as an organisation but the government of South Sudan.</p>

<sup>1</sup> MEAL person: ADRA staff responsible for Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning.

<sup>2</sup> This is part of the UN cluster system

	<p>Parents with special needs requested if their children could be a primary target group of the Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) and they were made to understand the limitations of the project budget. At present the primary target groups are children with special needs and children with psycho-social problems.</p> <p>In 4 cases children complained about lack of food, clothes, washing soaps, toys and it was looked into whether some of these needs could be included in the project budget.</p> <p>Parents from schools not supported by the project requested to have a Child Friendly Space (CFS) too. Parents got the explanation that there was limited budget to establish more CFS centres.</p>
<b>Lessons learned</b>	It could be considered to include the children of parents with special needs into the primary target group for future CFS projects.

## Sudan

Restoring Human Dignity (RHUDI) project (funded by ECHO), Supporting Community Engagement and Empowerment (SCEED) project (funded by Danida), Tamkeen Muzareen Project (TMP) (funded by EU and Danida)

<b>Types of complaints</b>	<p><u>RHUDI</u> Insufficiency of aid provided by other agencies mostly (17), Report on discrimination (1), Request for more information (3), Request to join ADRA activities (3), Referral to other agencies on protection issues (140). Total: 162 complaints.</p> <p><u>SCEED</u> Training participants requested per diem (1).</p> <p><u>TMP</u> A total of 17 complaints were received.</p>
<b>Complaints channels</b>	<p><u>RHUDI</u> Complaint and feedback boxes placed in camp management compound; Through local community leaders; Through women's groups (developed and trained by ADRA as a part of the programme)</p> <p><u>SCEED</u> Verbal complaint directly asked to project staff</p> <p><u>TMP</u> SMS through the contact number of the M&amp;E Officer used as a hotline and through the M&amp;E while in the field and in the office</p>
<b>Complaints handling</b>	<p><u>RHUDI</u> Through local community leaders &amp; or groups (20) Referral to other agencies and local authorities (127) ADRA Sudan solved the issue by including beneficiaries in programme (3) No action taken but solved by other agencies (2) Other solutions which include information sharing/awareness raising, direct mitigation/facilitation of discussions between parties etc. (10)</p> <p><u>SCEED</u> Addressed by explaining the per diem policy (1)</p>
<b>Lessons learned</b>	<p><u>RHUDI</u> There is a need for emphasis on the functionality of the complaint and feedback boxes. The boxes served the dual purpose of also reporting protection incidents as a part of protection</p>

	<p>monitoring performed by ADRA and other agencies in the camp. This seemed to have the unintended effect that the boxes were primarily used for reporting protection incidents and request for referrals. Going forward, ADRA staff will emphasis the main function of the boxes, including the opportunity to provide feedback and complaints on ADRA activities in particular. There is a need to protect confidentiality and safe access to complaint and feedback mechanisms. Complaint boxes were placed inside camp management compounds (including camp management agency and local authority) reducing the privacy of the complainants. Moreover, these compounds were fenced and could potentially be locked when camp management staff was not available.</p> <p>ADRA has added a complaint and feedback hotline in future programmes in the camps.</p> <p><u>SCEED</u></p> <p>All INGOs should have unified per diem policy.</p> <p><u>TMP</u></p> <p>By the looks of the number of messages we received, it seems that the channels available are not widely accessible.</p>
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## Ethiopia

Resilience in the Horn of Africa (RiHA) project (funded by Danida)

<b>Types of complaints</b>	No complaints were recorded during 2020
<b>Complaints channels</b>	-
<b>Complaints handling</b>	None
<b>Lessons learned</b>	-

## Uganda

Action for Social Change (ASC) project (funded by Danida)

<b>Types of complaints</b>	Complaint against ADRA Uganda for not having slots for interns (1)
<b>Complaints channels</b>	Complaints boxes, ADRA Uganda's website, tollfree phone number, complaint and feedback meetings
<b>Complaints handling</b>	The complaint of lack of internships was raised in Education Sector Working Group <sup>3</sup> by the District Education Officer in Kotido (government staff) and it was explained that many of the applying individuals' courses were not in line with the strategic direction of the ASC programme (capacity building and advocacy).
<b>Lessons learned</b>	There seems to be a lack of clarity of what is meant by 'complaints' and 'complaints mechanism' by ASC project staff, so this is an area of improvement to be worked during 2021.

<sup>3</sup> NGO coordination forum

## Malawi

Action for Social Change (ASC) project (funded by Danida)

<b>Types of complaints</b>	Total number of complaints for the ASC programme were 11
<b>Complaints channels</b>	-
<b>Complaints handling</b>	The complaints received by ADRA Malawi related to the ASC programme were from community members complaining of the delay in with implementation of activities for the year 2020. CBGs were implementing and advancing issues but received minimal support from the programme as the funds were not available since the support to ADRA Malawi was discontinued. <sup>4</sup>
<b>Lessons learned</b>	-

## FLEX

Flexible funds for acute emergency relief projects (funded by Danida)

<b>Types of complaints</b>	Requests to join ADRA India's activities (26), Inconsistencies with receipt of payments of cash-based assistance from ADRA India (12), Requests for special considerations from ADRA South Sudan for local authorities (3), Request for additional services from ADRA South Sudan (3), Complaint about ADRA Tanzania's COVID-19 response in Tanzania (1)
<b>Complaints channels</b>	Complaints box, SMS, Personal, Letter
<b>Complaints handling</b>	The complaints received by ADRA India related to implementation of the emergency COVID-19 response project activities from community members not selected for activities or inconsistencies in payments. The complaints received by ADRA South Sudan as a response to their emergency COVID-19 interventions were in part from local communities requesting additional support to them during the crisis, and also requests for the project intervention to include additional services, such as gloves, soap and microphones for announcements in more locations. The complaint received in Tanzania was motivated by the Government of Tanzania declaring the country free from the virus, and one government official therefore finding ADRA's intervention inappropriate. By engaging the District Medical officer to mediate the complaint, it was amicably resolved.
<b>Lessons learned</b>	-

<sup>4</sup> As reported elsewhere ADRA Denmark's partnership with ADRA Malawi was terminated in 2020.

## Focus areas for 2021

For the coming year 2021, ADRA Denmark is going to focus on strengthening and improving the following areas:

1. Supporting partners in developing a culture of learning from complaints in order to improve the project / programme design and implementation as well as improvements on organisational level.
2. Supporting partners in documenting and analysing complaints received in a structured way.
3. Look into methods for downwards accountability and how complaints mechanisms supplement that.
4. Cooperate with the ADRA network on upwards and downwards accountability frameworks and methods including the role of complaints mechanisms.