

DANCHURCHAID Complaints Report

2010

In March 2009 DanChurchAid launched a web-based Complaints Handling System as a one-year pilot project.

At the end of the one-year pilot project a complaints report was made summarising the development of the system and listing the complaints received. This report is available on the DanChurchAid web-site.

This is the second report covering the whole of 2010. Future reports will cover the calendar year, so that the report is synchronised with the anti-corruption report.

Part 1 shows general information about discussions and adjustments made by the DanChurchAid Board or in connection with the daily administration of the complaints system.

Part 2 lists the complaints received through the Complaints System in Copenhagen.

Part 3 lists the handling of complaints in some of the pilot projects in Malawi, Ethiopia, Cambodia, India and the Humanitarian Mine Action programme in Angola¹.

Part 1: General Information

From 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010 the office in Copenhagen received 36 complaints. The complaints are of both a sensitive (11) and operational (25) character and include both our Danish and our international activities. By far the major part of these complaints includes 'lessons learned', whereby the complaint has been followed up by procedural adjustment or internal deliberations in order to prevent future complaints.

In general the system still functions well, but we have experienced a couple of challenging cases:

¹ This report will especially summarise information about complaints made through the different complaints handling systems in Malawi, HMA Angola, Ethiopia, Cambodia and India. The reason for this summary is that so far the cases are operational complaints based on very different pieces of information from the partner organisations and they often mention names and places of the persons involved.

Anonymous complaints about employment and management

Previously DanChurchAid discussed both internally and at the general meeting in the 'Humanitarian Accountability Partnership' (HAP), if there should be access to lodge an anonymous complaint. The Board decided earlier that in principle we do not accept anonymous complaints. However, we can accept an anonymous complaint through a DCA employee who knows the identity of the complainant. In that way we have a better possibility to seek and pass on information to the parties involved in order to investigate a case. In extraordinary situations the complaints committee may consider handling an anonymous complaint without a DCA intermediary if it is made clear that there is a need and a basis for further initiatives.

We want to emphasise that anonymity may obstruct the investigation and the follow-up and that DanChurchAid may decide not to deal with the complaint with reference to anonymity.

During 2010 we received three anonymous complaints related to one of DanChurchAid's international offices. All the complaints were about conditions of employment and the office management, but the complaints were very short and general.

Complaints about conditions of employment are not dealt with in the DanChurchAid Complaints Handling System, but through the ordinary conflict resolution system between staff and management in DanChurchAid. In Copenhagen the system consists of shop stewards and the works council. At the international offices the employees have access to lodge complaints through a selected staff representative in Copenhagen.

Therefore, it was decided to refer all complaints to the selected staff representative in Copenhagen with a strong recommendation from both Human Resource and the staff representative to reveal the identity of the complainants and to elaborate more on the complaints. Unfortunately, none of the complainants wanted to contact the staff representative in Copenhagen.

As a consequence, the DanChurchAid management decided to place extra focus on the management of the office in question, and a number of initiatives were made in connection with the development of the office. The then head of the office is not employed anymore.

This process illustrates how important it is that DanChurchAid now establishes a formal system of staff representatives at our international offices, so that the employees can elect a spokesperson who will be especially protected against dismissal. We hope that this system will contribute to create a better and more transparent cooperation between management and staff at the international offices.

Transparency by publishing corruption cases

Corruption cases are currently published at the DanChurchAid Danish and English websites (www.noedhjaelp.dk/anti-korruption) and www.danchurchaid.org/anti-corruption. The purpose is to ensure transparency to donors, media, external donors and other interested persons. We

want to show that corruption or suspicion of corruption is taken very seriously and that we have nothing to hide, not even in sensitive cases. Most often, the character of the cases is sensitive and in the investigative phase based on accusations without proof; therefore it is very important that what we choose to publish is not harmful to the person, the organisation or the further investigation of the case. Thus we assess from case to case what should be published.

DanChurchAid has decided that the names of individuals involved in a complaint are not published. If we find that publishing the name of the country will harm the victim, or if there is a considerable risk for aggravating the role of the victim, the name of the country in question will not be published. The reason is that DanChurchAid has relatively few employees in each country, and it will be very easy to identify the complainants or the victims. On behalf of DanChurchAid, the DanChurchAid Board member, attorney Thorkild Høyer, will go through specific cases in order to secure the quality of the processing of the case.

Part 2: Specific complaints lodged in DanChurchAid's Complaints Handling System in Copenhagen

From 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010

Corruption cases

Summary made by Maja B. Gram and Gitte Krogh

2010.C01 **Content of the complaint:** In 2009 DanChurchAid's partner reacted to irregularities in "Provincial Advocacy Network" (NAND) in the province of Battambang in Cambodia. NAND had made payments to an inactive land administration committee amounting to USD 186.

What did we do: A four-day investigation of NAND was carried out and a number of meetings with NAND were held to ensure improvements of the financial management and transparency. The amount was paid back and the chairman of NAND resigned. The support to NAND was discontinued until we can see clear improvements.

Lessons learned: DanChurchAid's partners have a big responsibility for discovering and handling fraud. In this case our partner handled the situation on its own and informed DanChurchAid.

2010.C02 **Content of the complaint:** A local DanChurchAid employee in our office in Malawi was suspected of violating the DanChurchAid anti-corruption policy. The case was investigated, but due to the sensitive character and the important protection of whistle blowers, no further details are published here.

What did we do: The investigation of the accusations of corruption followed DanChurchAid's procedures for handling sensitive complaints and was terminated in August 2010. An agreement was made between DanChurchAid and the employee in question who resigned from the DanChurchAid employment on 31 August 2010.

Lessons learned: In this case the central issue was that the protection of whistle blowers guaranteed by DanChurchAid has a decisive influence on the process and closing of the case. If the whistle blower does not want to step forward e.g. in a court case, it will reduce DanChurchAid's possibilities of acting, even if we have very strong proof.

2010.C03 **Content of the complaint:** This case is not handled as a complaint with complaints and investigative committees; it is a report and explanation of a situation. A DCA employee should leave Angola and had prepared all the necessary documents, but he was stopped in immigration. The authorities claimed that a certain document was missing, and the DCA employee was forced to pay USD 100 to be able to leave Angola.

2010.C04 **Content of the complaint:** A DanChurchAid employee was indirectly threatened with detainment if he/she did not pay USD 200 for entering one of the countries where DCA is working. This case was not handled as a complaint with a complaints committee, but is seen as a report on personal security. According to the DCA anti-corruption policy, "*Personal safety or security should never be compromised to live up to this policy*".

2010.C05 **Content of the complaint:** An auditor's report revealed insufficient financial management of a partner organisation in Latin America supported by DanChurchAid.

What did we do: A 100% audit was carried out. This audit confirmed the seriousness of the case. The fraud resulted in DCA's termination of cooperation with the partner, and together with other (former) donors DCA has filed a lawsuit against the partner.

Lessons learned: No final conclusions yet.

2010.C06 **Content of the complaint:** An employee in one of DanChurchAid's international offices brought serious accusations of corruption against the office manager. Due to the sensitive character of the case and considerations of the parties involved, no further information will be published.

What did we do: The accusation was dealt with according to DanChurchAid's procedure for handling sensitive complaints – with very thorough investigation and documentation in relation to the accusations. The investigation showed that there was absolutely no basis for the accusations, and the case was closed. The complaints committee concluded that it was a matter of unfortunate misunderstandings, and therefore no disciplinary action was taken towards the employee who brought the accusation.

Lessons learned: In this case the system for handling sensitive complaints worked satisfactorily.

2010.C07 **Content of the complaint:** A partner in Zimbabwe used a false auditing company. It was revealed that a partner in Zimbabwe supported by DCA used a false branch of a big international auditing company.

What did we do: The auditor's report is being scrutinised to find out if fraud has taken place, and another auditing firm has been hired to revise the activities and the financial capacity of the partner organisation. DCA has currently monitored the partner and the project. In connection with the case DCA has established a close cooperation with the other donors and the board of the partner organisation who was as surprised at the case as was DCA.

Lessons learnt: The case is not closed at the time of publishing this report. Current updating can be seen at www.danchurchaid.org/anti-corruption

2101.C08 **Content of the complaint:** DanChurchAid received an accusation about a corrupt employee in Uganda.

What did we do: The accusation was dealt with according to DanChurchAid's procedure of handling sensitive complaints. The investigation revealed a serious breach of DanChurchAid's anti-corruption policy. The contract with the employee involved was cancelled and the employee dismissed after admitting the breach.

Lessons learned: In this case the system for handling sensitive complaints worked satisfactorily.

2010.C09 **Content of the complaint:** During a monitoring visit to a partner in Bangladesh DCA employees discovered that procedures for procurement of materials for DCA supported projects had not been followed. Apparently, the same supplier had sent three different offers.

What did we do: We initiated an investigation of the complaint and the partner. The investigation revealed that the supplier M/S Color Zone had sent in false offers in order to win the order. No other fraud or corruption could be found. An amicable settlement was arrived at between the partner and the supplier, whereby the major part of the order was cancelled and the rest was purchased at a lower and more reasonable price.

Lessons learnt: All purchases shall follow DanChurchAid's Procurement Manual, and it is the partner's responsibility to live up to it. The Procurement Manual has been introduced to the partner through a number of trainings, and therefore monitoring, follow-up and spot checks are important in order to secure correct and efficient use of the financial means.

2010.C10 **Content of the complaint (similar to 2010.C09):** During a monitoring visit to a partner in Bangladesh, DCA employees discovered that the procedures for procurement of materials for DCA supported projects had not been followed. Apparently, the same supplier had submitted three offers.

What did we do: We investigated the complaint and could not prove corruption; the supplier denied to have submitted false offers. Though corruption could not be proved, the management of the partner took disciplinary action. Two persons were dismissed and several employees were given a warning for not paying attention to the procurement procedures

Lessons learnt: same as 2010.C09.

2010.C11 **Content of the complaint:** A DanChurchAid employee lodge a case about loss in a second-hand shop. Through a period of three weeks money had disappeared from the cash register every time a new volunteer was on duty. One evening the cash balance was not delivered to the bank due to lack of plastic cases, but put away in the shop until the next day. The next morning the money was missing without signs of break-in. All losses happened when the new volunteer was on duty. Only two volunteers knew where the money was placed that the evening, when it was not brought to the bank box. One of them was a highly trusted employee and the other the new volunteer.

What did we do: We did not have direct physical proof, but nevertheless we decided to dismiss the new volunteer from the shop based on an assessment of the total process and the circumstantial evidence. Afterwards, the loss has been reduced to the usual petty differences.

Lessons learned: We discussed if we should have reported the person to the police. As we had no physical proof we agreed that it would not be feasible; but if a similar situation happens, we should try to find physical proof for reporting to the police.

Follow-up on 2009 corruption cases

1.10 **Content of the complaint:** Primo 2009, DanChurchAid's sister agency Norwegian Church Aid reacted on irregularities in a partner organisation in southern Africa. The partner could not submit audited accounts without qualifications

What did we do: DanChurchAid and another donor organisation initiated an investigation of the partner. The managing director was fired because of the first suspicion. Our back-donor Danida was notified.

Follow-up: The investigation showed missing documentation for a number of costs as well as loans for other projects. The partner has acknowledged the problems and is working hard to implement the improved safety measures defined by the donor

group. In this connection, the number of employees has been reduced, a major restructuring and a new strategy has been planned, the role of the board is redefined and made clear, new board members with the right competences have been appointed, a new director has been employed and the auditor changed.

- 1.12 **Content of the complaint:** A partner organisation in Central America did not live up to the requirements of DanChurchAid and other donors to document expenditure and loans between individual projects.

What did we do: We began our own initial investigation, and in cooperation with the partner's auditor we investigated if there was fraud involved in the breach of contract.

Follow-up: The investigations could not prove corruption or fraud. After the second auditing the qualifications stated in the first financial accounts have been withdrawn.

Lessons learned: The financial procedures in the organisation needed to be strengthened, and DanChurchAid has contributed to that, among others by co-financing a new finance system.

- 1.15 **Content of the complaint:** A partner organisation in Africa was suspected of misuse of funds. A closer assessment showed that the problem was mainly within the management and the administrative systems.

What did we do: We had a dialogue with the partner organisation on how to tackle the suspicion, and we discussed management problems. Some key persons in the management were changed. We decided to carry out an extraordinary audit, which is still ongoing. Next step will be based on the conclusions of the audit. Our back-donor Danida has been notified.

Follow-up: The case is still being monitored.

- 1.17 **Content of the complaint:** DanChurchAid employees reacted to irregularities in the documentation and reporting from a partner organisation in eastern Africa. Suspicion of use of project funds for private purposes and disregard of procurement procedures led to further investigation. At present there is no proof of corruption or fraud, so further details will not be published.

What did we do: We informed our back-donors about the case and began an investigation of the partner. An external audit is currently carried out. DanChurchAid's employees were involved in the preliminary investigation.

Follow-up: The investigation showed fraud with the funds in the organisation. Consequently, all DCA support is put on hold until further. There have been attempts to make the board of the partner organisation take responsibility in connection with

the case. The biggest donors of the partner organisation have stopped their funding. The total loss has not yet been computed. It is not very probable that the partner will be able to pay back the amount.

Fundraising in Denmark

Summary made by Gitte Krogh

2010.F01 **Content of the complaint:** A man (and DCA contributor) complained of a glass of marmalade he bought for a Christmas present. The marmalade had gone bad.

What did we do: We apologized and thanked him for his support and offered to send him a new glass of marmalade.

Lessons Learned: As we had not received other complaints of that specific marmalade, we concluded that it was an isolated incident.

2010.F02 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained about the way he was constantly contacted by DanChurchAid fundraisers (facers) in the pedestrian street in his town. He said they approached him very often even if he and his girlfriend clearly signalled that they did not want to be contacted. He felt harassed by facers although he and his girlfriend had said that they did not want to donate money or talk with the facers. In addition he had experienced to be harassed because of his personal conviction after refusing to donate. He was called a fascist and exposed to aggressive signs.

What did we do: We thanked him for lodging the complaint, because it will help us to improve our work. We explained the background for our fundraising activities in the streets. Since 2001 we have made fundraising in the street, and it is the most important fundraising method of recruiting new members to DanChurchAid. In 2009 we got 10,000 new donors through the face2face work. We also explained how the streets of the Danish cities are divided between the humanitarian organisations, how we train our facers and that we have ethical guidelines for the work of the facers. We acknowledged his complaint and admitted that such behaviour was completely unacceptable.

Lessons Learned: We contacted the coordinator in the town in question. He met with the facers and explained the ethical guidelines to the group. He also informed the group about the consequences of breaking these guidelines.

2010.F03 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained because he was contacted again and again by a DCA fundraiser (phoner). Two years ago he had bought a goat, and he felt harassed by numerous phone calls asking him to donate more money.

What did we do: We apologised and explained that he had been contacted by an employee in a telemarketing company hired by DanChurchAid. We contacted the

company and saw to it that neither the company nor DanChurchAid would contact the complainant again asking for donations.

Lessons Learned: We will continue to use external telemarketing companies, and we will currently monitor methods and conversation tools to ensure that the persons contacted are not offended. As of 1 March 2010 DanChurchAid established her own telemarketing office, which hopefully will increase the quality of our telemarketing activities.

2010.F04

Content of the complaint: A woman lodged a complaint because she was contacted by a DCA fundraiser (phoner). In 2009 she bought a bench, and now she was asked to donate a monthly amount to DCA. She explained that she was a student and a single mother, and that she preferred to help by participating in the annual door-to-door collection, but the phoner still tried to persuade her to donate money. She felt that she had to justify herself and found the phoner's method very unpleasant.

What did we do: We apologised for this negative incident and explained that she had been contacted by an employee in a telemarketing company hired by DanChurchAid. We contacted the company and stressed that such a method was completely unacceptable, and that people do not have to apologise for not wanting to donate money to DanChurchAid. Finally we thanked her for participating in our annual parish collection.

Lessons Learned: We will continue to use external telemarketing companies, and we will currently monitor methods and conversation tools to ensure that the persons contacted are not offended. As of 1 March 2010 DanChurchAid established her own telemarketing office, which hopefully will increase the quality of our telemarketing activities.

2010.F05

Content of the complaint: A man complained about a DCA campaign spot running on TV before the annual parish collection. In general he respected the work of DanChurchAid, but he felt that the campaign pricked peoples' bad conscience and thus was below the dignity of DanChurchAid. It is a personal choice if you support DanChurchAid's work, and DanChurchAid should respect that and not make a fool of people if they do not want to support DanChurchAid.

What did we do: We wrote a comprehensive reply to the complainant explaining the background for that kind of TV spot. The background is that some years ago we experienced a certain fatigue with TV spots showing the sufferings of poor people. We launched a public tender, and among the proposals from different PR companies there was a campaign based on the bad excuses people use in order to avoid collecting money. Many people liked this campaign, and we have used different version of the same theme for three years now. The campaign is effective both in

getting collectors and in raising the awareness about the annual parish collection. We have been praised for our use of humour in spite of the serious reality. However, we have also received some negative reactions to the campaign, even from our own collection coordinators. As a consequence we asked the coordinators if they wanted to continue with this kind of campaign or not. A large majority supported a continuation of the campaign, probably because it is effective.

Lessons Learned: We have to conclude that these TV spots offend some people, but on the other hand that it is effective. In addition, our collection coordinators support a continuation of the campaign. In such a situation we must accept some complaints from people who do not agree with the concept.

2010.F06 **Content of the complaint:** A woman lodged a complaint, because she was asked to give her personal ID number during a conversation with one of DanChurchAid's fundraisers (phoners). She had agreed to support DanChurchAid on a monthly basis and was asked to give her bank account number, e-mail address and ID number. When she refused, the phoner explained to her that it was normal procedure, but she had said that she never gave her ID number over the telephone. The agreement was cancelled. She found the procedure risky for her and thought it could be some kind of fraud.

What did we do: We confirmed that she had been contacted by DanChurchAid or an employee in the telemarketing company hired by DanChurchAid. The procedure is correct. We ask for the bank account number and the personal ID number when a person donates money to DanChurchAid on a monthly basis. The information is treated confidentially. We also informed about some links on our website where the complainant could read more about our fundraising activities and payment services.

Lessons Learned: In our website we describe in detail the rules why we ask for ID number and bank account number. In addition we have established a call-back function for all persons contacted in order to create the necessary trust.

2010.F07 **Content of the complaint:** A man lodged a complaint because he had been contacted three times on his mobile phone by one of DanChurchAid's phoners. He found this unacceptable as he also used his mobile phone when on call in relation to his work.

What did we do: We confirmed that he had been contacted by DanChurchAid or an employee in a telemarketing company hired by DanChurchAid. We found it strange that he was contacted several times by the company. We promised him to follow up on the matter with the company and see to it that his name was deleted from the list of people to contact. Finally we apologised for the bad experience he had had and hoped that he would continue to support people in need either through DanChurchAid or some other humanitarian organisation.

Lessons Learned: We will continue to use external telemarketing companies, and we

will currently monitor methods and conversation tools to ensure that the persons contacted are not offended. As of 1 March 2010 DanChurchAid established her own telemarketing office, which hopefully will increase the quality of our telemarketing activities.

2010.F08 **Content of the complaint:** A man lodged a complaint of DanChurchAid's partner Buy Aid. After the earthquake in Haiti a person contacted him introducing himself as a representative of Buy Aid and DanChurchAid. The complainant was asked to support the disaster victims, and he would then receive a quantity of toffees with the DCA logo. The man accepted and shortly afterwards received toffees amounting to DKK 550; but he was surprised to learn that only DKK 50 went to the victims. After Buy Aid contacted him again, he lodged the complaint as he felt Buy Aid abused the name of DanChurchAid by claiming that they called from DanChurchAid, but not informing that only 10 per cent went to DanChurchAid. He thought we should reconsider our cooperation with Buy Aid.

What did we do: We regretted the incident, but confirmed that DanChurchAid is cooperating with Buy Aid. However, Buy Aid should not act as part of DanChurchAid, and it should be made very clear how much of the income is forwarded to DanChurchAid. We promised to look into the matter.

Lessons Learned: We have a constant dialogue with Buy Aid in order to secure the quality of Buy Aid's information when they contact people.

2010.F09 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained of the DanChurchAid partner Natur-Energi (Renewable Energy). He felt that Natur-Energi abused DanChurchAid's name in order to make people enter into agreement with them – the consequence of which being that the energy price increases quite substantially. He encouraged DanChurchAid to cancel the cooperation.

What did we do: We regretted that he had had a bad experience with the product Nødstrøm, which is part of the cooperation agreement between Natur-Energi and DanChurchAid. Nødstrøm is considered an environmental friendly alternative to other power suppliers. Consequently, Natur-Energi does not abuse or cheat, as DanChurchAid has a cooperation agreement with the company. We have agreed that 8 per cent of Natur-Energi's profit goes to DanChurchAid climate projects, such as the project "Clean water in Zambia". It is voluntary to use Nødstrøm and it should be considered an alternative way of donating money to charity. On the other hand we do not conceal the fact that Natur-Energi also profits from the agreement. Finally we asked the complainant to contact Natur-Energi if he wanted to cancel his agreement.

2010.F10 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained of a sponsor letter "disguised" as a letter from "Jonas" who had visited Uganda together with his parents. The letter was sent from Kampala, printed on homemade paper and with a remarkably perfect spelling and punctuation. He found it nauseating, bordering on emotional

pornography, and certainly not a method that would make him donate more to DanChurchAid.

What did we do: As the complainant was already a DCA donor, we phoned him and thanked him for taking time to complain, as it gives us input to improve our communication. We promised that if we received many similar complaints, we would of course drop this kind of letters. We also promised him that he would not receive other letters from the “field”.

Lessons Learned: In some cases it may be a good idea to contact the complainant by telephone, if the person is already known to DCA. As mentioned above, we will monitor how many complaints (or other kinds of feedback) we receive of this kind of letters, so that we can discontinue them if the complaints are in majority.

2010.F11 **Contents of the complaint:** A woman complained that she had been contacted in the street and asked to donate a one-time amount to DanChurchAid. She had not accepted to register for a monthly donation. She had contacted DanChurchAid several times to have the donation cancelled.

What did we do: We regretted the misunderstanding and stopped the transfer immediately. We also asked her if she wanted her contributions back, and when she confirmed that, all contributions were reimbursed.

Lessons Learned: We actually do not know if she had contacted us earlier in order to stop the monthly transfers; however, it seems that in this case the complaint system functioned as an extra contact possibility to DanChurchAid.

2010.F12 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained about the way he had been recruited as “life saver”. For quite some time he had considered which humanitarian organisation he should join as member, and when he was contacted in the street by two facers, he was very interested. The result of the meeting was that he registered as “life saver”, but during the conversation he had asked several times to take the registration form home for further consideration and also if he could register on the internet. The facers had declined both requests – he had to register on the spot. Later he had felt very unsure about the process; and he began to wonder how DanChurchAid actually treated families and children in need in the poor countries, when he looked at how he had been treated. Consequently he wanted to resign.

What did we do: We explained to him in detail about the background of our face2face campaign; that this campaign was the biggest in DanChurchAid and extremely important for the organisation. It is our experience that if we distribute material in the street and refer to our website, we do not get anything near the number of members we get if the form is filled in on the spot. On the one hand, the purpose is to secure an effective way of fundraising, and on the other hand we have to make sure that both the donors and other Danish citizens in the public space are

treated decently. We agreed that he had not been treated in a proper way in this specific case. Therefore, we contacted the coordinator in question and asked that he/she put focus on the ethical guidelines once more. In addition, our staff member described his own very positive encounter with DanChurchAid beneficiaries and the importance of our assistance to these families. Finally we saw to it that the complainant was deleted from our donor register with immediate effect, and expressed the hope that next time he met us in the street he would have a more positive experience.

Lessons learned: We contacted the coordinator in the city in question, and he met with the facers and went through the ethical guidelines with the group.

2010.F13 **Content of the complaint:** A woman complained that she and a friend had been followed through half the pedestrian street by a facer and showered with questions why they did not want to support. It was transgressing barriers and very unpleasant.

What did we do: We thanked her for contacting us, as it will help us to improve our work. Then we explained about DanChurchAid's street recruiting campaign that has been active since 2001, and that it is the kind of campaign that has given DanChurchAid the largest number of new members. It is only possible if the people we contact in the street get a positive impression of DanChurchAid each and every time they meet us and regardless of acceptance of membership or not. We have developed ethical guidelines according to which all street-recruiting staff are trained. When we hear such a story there is no doubt that our employee has made a mistake and violated the ethical guidelines. We regret it very much, and we have asked the coordinator responsible for the region to go through the ethical guidelines with the street recruiting staff.

Lessons learned: We contacted the coordinator in the city in question, and he met with the facers and went through the ethical guidelines with the group.

2010.F14 **Content of the complaint:** A woman complained that she had contacted the administration in order to cancel her monthly donation. As she had not yet started the payment they had promised her that she would be deleted as soon as she had been registered in the system. Nevertheless, one donation was withdrawn from her account.

What did we do: It turned out that there had been no follow-up on the first inquiry, but no amount had been withdrawn, probably because the complainant had refused the payment. We immediately removed the woman from the payment service.

Lessons learned: Even if the woman had contacted us earlier in order to stop the monthly donations, it seems that in this case the complaint system functioned as an extra contact possibility to DanChurchAid.

- 2010.F15 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained that he had wanted to donate only once to DanChurchAid and not monthly contributions. He wanted to be removed as donor.
- What did we do:** We stopped the payment service and reimbursed the extra payments he had made.
- Lessons learned:** The complaint system functions as a good extra contact possibility to DanChurchAid.
- 2010.F16 **Content of the complaint:** A woman lodged a complaint after she had been contacted by a facer in a pedestrian street. The facer had been very insistent that the woman should register as a monthly contributor. The facer had claimed that if you can afford pizza and beer you can also afford DKK 50 a month, had questioned that the woman could not afford it and had spoken ironically of her refusal. Finally the woman had felt so pressed that she had agreed to contribute, but she found the procedure completely unacceptable and very bad marketing. It was the worst experience she had ever had with sales persons, and she wanted to cancel her agreement with DanChurchAid.
- What did we do:** We cancelled her agreement and apologised for the incident. Afterwards we had a talk with the employee in question who was known for his high work ethics and strong commitment, so we considered it a one-time incident. In addition we went through the ethical guidelines once more with the employee
- Lessons learned:** We contacted the coordinator in the city in question, and he went through the ethical guidelines with the employee.
- 2010.F17 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained that somebody phoned him, and when he answered the call the caller hung up.
- What did we do:** It turned out that the person had been contacted once by DanChurchAid's external Call Centre. In connection with moving to new premises the Call Centre had had some technical problems, which may be the reason for the incident. The Call Centre was asked to delete the man's phone number from their list, so that he would not receive more calls
- 2010.F18 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained that school children sold gift labels in front of his local shopping centre and also went from door to door on his road. The children said that the money went to DanChurchAid. He found it quite embarrassing for the organisation to let school children do that kind of begging, and he wanted to know how DanChurchAid had organised that kind of fundraising and if the children were paid from the sales.

What did we do: We regretted that he and his wife had had a bad experience with the sale of gift labels. We informed him that the sale of the labels was not organised by DanChurchAid, but by the School Competition (D.B. Marketing). School classes can join the School Competition, and over the years the profit from the labels has been sent to different charities. Since 2009 DanChurchAid has received a share of the profit, equal to DKK 2.50 per sold packet. In 2009 we received DKK 81,000 which we are happy to use in our work in the poorest countries in the world. We are in regular contact with the School Competition to ensure that the children say that DanChurchAid receives only part of the profit and that the fundraising is not organised by us.

Lessons learned: That we maintain the regular contact with the School Competition (D.B. Marketing) to ensure that DanChurchAid's name is not tainted.

2010.F19 **Content of the complaint:** A main sponsor of DanChurchAid's charity dinner in London complained that he had received a reminder for payments that were already made; that the reminder was written in bad English, was very unfriendly and that he only got a very vague apology when he raised the issue.

What did we do: We replied that we regretted his view of the matter, and that we certainly did not intend to cause dissension in an otherwise good cooperation. We really appreciated his participation in the dinner. The reminder was sent out at a time when the payment had already been made but the notification had not arrived - an unfortunate coincidence. The reminder was very short and precise, because only very few had reacted to the first, softer formulation, and it was received positively by other guests. The apology he got when he raised the issue was short but genuine, and we hoped he would accept it. The complainant accepted our reply.

2010.F20 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained, that one evening two school youth came to his door and said that they sold gift labels at DKK 25 per packet. He wanted to support humanitarian work and bought one packet. Later he was surprised to read at the back of the packet that only DKK 2.50 goes to DanChurchAid, DKK 3.00 to VAT and DKK 19.00 to production and distribution and to the school class selling the packets. If DanChurchAid is spending its small share with similar inefficiency, it is no wonder that there is hunger and diseases in the world. Unfortunately he was left with an image of DanChurchAid as an organisation that only existed for itself, definitely not for the suffering in the world. In the future he would not contribute to collections organised by or with participation of DanChurchAid

What did we do: We regretted this experience, and we also had to inform him that if the school children said that they sold gift labels for DanChurchAid, then it was not correct. The sale is not organised by DanChurchAid, but by a private company, D.B. Marketing. They organise fundraising for school classes, from which the children receive part of the profit. DanChurchAid has agreed to receive a share of the profit as a donation, and we have no expenditure in connection with the sale. In 2009 we

received DK 81,000 and for that amount we could do a lot of good in the world, e.g. supply 500 kilos of baby food, 10,000 kilos of rice and 2,800 mosquito nets to the disaster victims in Asia. It is difficult for us to control what the children tell when they try to sell the packets, and we have experienced that some of them are a little too smart using our name and work as the purpose of the sale. Consequently, we are in regular contact with D.B. Marketing (School Competition) in order to make sure that the correct communication is disseminated in connection with the sale of the labels. Finally we supplied more information about DanChurchAid's international activities.

Lessons learned: That we maintain the regular contact with the School Competition (D.B. Marketing) to ensure that the DanChurchAid's name is not tainted.

2010.F21 **Content of the complaint:** A man complained that he had only agreed to pay a one-time contribution. Now he could see that an amount had been withdrawn every month.

What did we do: We regretted that he had not received correct information in connection with his donation, and that we would discuss it with our employee. Then we asked for his ID number so that we could cancel his payment. We also asked him if he wanted his money back.

Lessons learned: We followed up on the matter with our employee.

Organisational issues

Summary made by Gitte Krogh

2010.001 **Content of the complaint:** Two female folk high school students lodged a complaint about their stay in Ethiopia. Their stay was organised according to an agreement between Silkeborg Folk High school and DanChurchAid. The women were supposed to live with a local family and participate in projects in the area. Upon return to Denmark they should join the "End-hunger-now Caravan" and tell about their experience. When they arrived in Ethiopia they were of the opinion that their stay was not properly organised. They never stayed with a local family, but had to rent a room in a "hotel" owned by the richest man in town. The organisation responsible for the projects did not exist anymore due to the new NGO legislation in Ethiopia which meant, that the few staff left did not have time to care for the women, as they had to prepare for a new organisation to be recognised by the authorities.

They only saw their contact person three times during the next 25 days. Consequently they were alone in a town where nobody spoke English, and during the first ten days it was very problematic for them to find something to eat. They tried to contact their teacher from the Folk High school and DanChurchAid's office in Ethiopia, and a meeting was arranged with one of the few project staff left in the area - but no improvements took place. They were very disappointed at the course of

events and felt that they had wasted 25 days and a considerable amount of money. When they evaluated their stay with the DanChurchAid staff in Addis Ababa they felt that the DCA staff did not understand them at all. The local contact person was very sorry for their situation, as he usually had good experience with volunteers, but because of the lack of staff he was not able to organise the usual programme for the two women, and he was notified of their stay only three days prior to their arrival.

Subsequently, the two women heard from other participants that they had not been disappointed. Now the women wanted to know if DanChurchAid thought that they had been treated appropriately – actually they just wanted to be listened to.

What did we do: After contacting Silkeborg Folk High school it was decided to forward the complaint to the school for response as the principal immediately said that the Folk High school was responsible for the students' stay in Ethiopia, and consequently the initial complaint should be lodged with the school.

Subsequently, Silkeborg Folk High school informed us that they held a meeting with the two students and that it was the school's opinion that it was important for the students that the school listened to their frustrations and criticism. The Folk High school admitted that the local partner in the village did not live up to the agreement entered into, and neither the Folk High school's representative in Ethiopia nor DanChurchAid's staff in Addis Ababa had acted in an appropriate way. Thus the Folk High school admitted that the course of events was unacceptable for the two students and apologised to them.

Lessons learned: As the case was transferred to Silkeborg Folk High school for consideration, neither DanChurchAid nor Silkeborg Folk High school has heard the version of the case from the local partner or DCA's staff, which is unsatisfactory. In the future we need to have clearly defined roles vis-à-vis external partners, so that only DCA will be in charge of any complaint relevant to DCA sent to the complaints system. On the other hand it is important that DCA does not reply to any complaint or begin an investigation before contacting the external partner unless otherwise agreed.

2010.002 **Content of the complaint:** A female donor to DanChurchAid complained about the way she had been treated in one of DanChurchAid's second-hand shops that she visited quite often. She said that even if we use only volunteers in the shops, we should expect a certain kindness and not - as she had experienced - to be accused of stealing and approached in an unpleasant tone. During her stay in the shop she felt that the staff suspected her and followed her closely and asked her about a blouse that the complainant did not know anything about; she became irritated by the comment. After the complainant had tried on two dresses, she returned one dress to the nearest rack, and then an exchange took place between the complainant and the staff during which she was asked in a quite unpleasant tone to return the dress to the correct rack. The complainant contacted DCA in order to call attention to the

image the staff gives DanChurchAid; and volunteer personnel should not drive the customers out of the shop. She would suggest that the volunteer reconsider her tone vis-à-vis the customers and is less over-zealous.

What did we do: We thanked for the complainant's contribution to DanChurchAid, both donations and through purchases in our second-hand shop. As an organisation we are obliged to make the meeting with DanChurchAid and our volunteers as smooth and friendly as possible. In our reply to the complainant we did not related to the specific case, but informed her that the case had been transferred to the person responsible for the shop in question, so that the volunteers in the shop can discuss how to serve customers in the best possible way

Lessons learned: Subsequently we agreed that future similar complaints should be referred for comments from the head of the shop/volunteer before replying to the complainant.

2010.003

Content of the complaint: A woman complained that in connection with a job interview at one of DanChurchAid's international offices she was informed that she was selected for the job and that the head of office would send her an e-mail confirming that DanChurchAid would offer her a job and when she should report to the office. She received the e-mail. Subsequently, she was invited to one more meeting and was informed that International Department in Copenhagen has asked the international office to withhold the employment papers in order to assess the procedure. After one week the woman received a letter informing her that the employment had been annulled due to a decision made in International Department in Copenhagen. By telephone she was informed that someone else had got the job.

The woman questioned the decision of annulling the employment and how International Department could assess her competences when they were not present at the job interview. She knows DanChurchAid as a respectable organisation stressing the rights of the individual and in general working for human rights. She found the course of events in relation to her own case unethical, illegal and unacceptable and that it is a matter of favouring and nepotism. She is very sorry to be treated like that by DanChurchAid, and she thinks that it damages our image and makes us less respectable in the eyes of many people. She does not ask to be re-employed, but she wants the person responsible for this process to be reprimanded.

What did we do: We regretted very much that she had got the impression that DanChurchAid offered her a position. We also thanked her for trusting DanChurchAid enough to lodge the complaint. The final decision of identifying candidates for positions as documentation and information officers in our international offices is left with the DanChurchAid head quarters in Copenhagen, as the international offices have little experience with this kind of work. Therefore, the final decision is made in the Communication Department in Copenhagen. It is correct that the DCA HQ did not

agree with the choice of candidate of the international office, which was based on an analysis of the candidate's education and experience in relation to the Danish public.

It was a very unfortunate mistake of the head of the international office to indicate that DanChurchAid would offer the candidate the position. Both the DCA International Department and the head of the international office are very sorry for this situation.

Lessons learned: There is no doubt that the parties involved regret this case very much, and it is our assessment that it will hardly happen again; consequently there is no need for additional procedures.

2010.004 **Content of the complaint:** A partner organisation in one of our international programmes complained about the bad treatment they were exposed to by the manager of the DanChurchAid office in the country in question. The partner felt that the treatment was unfair and that the office manager harassed them. The complainant said that the background of the case was the new legislation in the country, according to which the partner organisation can no longer work with rights based activities. This was not respected by the office manager who, according to the partner, tried to pressurise the partner organisation to continue with the activities contrary to the new legislation. In addition, the partner organisation complained that the DanChurchAid office manager interfered in the partner organisation's internal affairs such as financial administration, recruitments and fixing of wage rates. The partner also expressed a negative opinion of the office manager. Finally, the partner complained that DanChurchAid would terminate the cooperation because the partner organisation would not incorporate rights based activities in their programme; the partner threatened to take legal action or contact the authorities if the cooperation was terminated.

What did we do: We thanked the partner organisation for the information and the confidence they have in DanChurchAid. However, we supported the efforts of the office manager to ensure the rights based approach in our programmes and projects – all with due respect to the local context and the circumstances in the country. We have spent a lot of time discussing the new legislation in the country, and we found that it would not prevent us from supporting projects with the aim of helping women to improve their economic and social conditions. If the partner organisation is not able to implement equality projects, DanChurchAid will back up the office manager in taking steps to terminate the cooperation.

Concerning the claim that the office manager is interfering with the partner organisation's internal affairs, we admitted that it is against our partner policy. It is the first time we have received such a complaint either from the partner organisation in question or from other partners, even if DanChurchAid HQ staff have visited the partner regularly. Regarding the specific demands for documentation stated in two

attached e-mails we do not find these demands unusual. On the contrary, the documentation was part of the project agreement with DanChurchAid which specifies that both the donors and DanChurchAid are entitled to visit the project areas and ask for all relevant documentation in connection with their support. It is also a precondition that DanChurchAid can pay unannounced visits and make random checks of the project. We admitted that the dialogue between the partner organisation and the office manager was bad. Finally we informed the partner that we had asked the office manager to contact the partner with a view to restore the cooperation.

Part 3: Reports from DCA's Regional Offices in Malawi, Ethiopia, Cambodia, India and the Humanitarian Mine Action Programme in Angola

We have asked the DCA Regional Offices in Malawi, Ethiopia, Cambodia, India and the HMA office in Angola to provide us with information about the progress of the Complaints Handling Systems that have been established there.

Report from Malawi

Prepared by Relief Officer Agnes Lumphezi Banda

DCA Malawi has asked the partners the following question:

With regard to make DCA partners establish grievance mechanisms and channels in projects for rights-holders with the purpose of raising concerns in the organisation about what to expect from the projects, project performance or staff – What progress and challenges have been recorded during the year?

a) Right to Food Programme

1.0 CARD Nsanje Food Security project

CARD has a well defined complaints mechanism in place. The mechanism acknowledges the nature of the complaint and categorises the complaints. Most of the complaints were found to fall into three categories, i) complaints against project staff (staff conduct and delivery of services), ii) complaints against community leadership (Village headmen or Project Committees' conduct) and iii) complaints against Government extension staff conduct. This is the strength the project has in terms of institutionalising complaint and redress seeking mechanisms.

Depending on such complaint categorisation, different complaints are therefore directed to different persons/officers through local structures including advocacy committees who by their mandate are able to handle the complaints and seek redress.

For instance, complaints against conduct of a Project staff should be directed to the Project Officer who is in a better position to address the complaint, while complaints against a project committee

are directed to the Village Headman. This is the recommended channel. However, communities were still informed and encouraged to be free to direct the complaint anywhere else they feel they will receive the right redress, even if it means bypassing the recommended channels, i.e. reporting the staff complaints directly to the Programme Manager at CARD's Head Office in Blantyre or, if it is against their local leadership, reporting directly to the Traditional Authority (T/A). Information (including telephone numbers) about the suggested complaints handlers was therefore made available to the communities.

The project made gateway in the year when a number of communities were able to seek redress on a number of issues that affected the enjoyment of some of their rights.

One example was the ability of the community to seek change of leadership of Ntolongo irrigation scheme committee for its failure to meet farmers' expectation. The committee was removed and the new committee was elected. Another example is when communities surrounding Nkotamo irrigation scheme approached CARD regarding the criteria the organisation used to select Nkotamo as the site for irrigation and not other surrounding, similarly deserving areas. There have also been complaints at local levels where individuals sought redress from local committees and community leadership structures.

However some community members have failed to report complaints due to a number of factors including the following:

- Culture of not reporting. Some members of the community think it is polite not to report complaints. They believe that reporting for something given free is being ungrateful. This practice is promoted by chiefs and traditional leaders who want to gain favour by showing that they are 'a good community'. Therefore, these leaders do not want to see anybody reporting anything against the project.

2.0 SYNODEV Kaphenda Right to Food project

SOLDEV strive to remain accountable and transparent at all times during the implementation process and throughout the project cycle. In this regard, the project has made activities and financial allocations known to community members in Tumbuka, the local language of the area.

The project has a formalised twelve member complaint mechanism committee with equal representation from Magalasi, Kamphenda, Lusani 1 and 2 responsible for conflict resolution. Some of the documented common cases include: Illegal snatching of marriage partners, Livestock theft, Constituency Development Fund being politicised, gender discrimination and unequal distribution of project inputs based on church affiliation.

The responses on grabbing of marriage partners and livestock theft were settled at village courts where the accused were heavily fined. The other three issues were taken up by the advocacy committee.

3.0 Eagles Chikwawa Food security project

During the reporting period one HAP committee was trained on how to handle complaints emanating from project implementation processes. The committee is composed of 10 people of whom one is the civil servant working in the impact area, a representative of pastors, a representative of village heads and one representative from each village. Committee members have been trained on how to channel community members' complaints and responses.

Committee members have carried out awareness and sensitisation meetings among community members in the respective villages on how to channel their complaints on activities being implemented through the project.

Community members are now using the complaint and response mechanism through which a number of issues have already been handled, one of which is targeting of beneficiaries.

4.0 ELDS Dowa Food Security project

Through the complaint and feedback mechanism process, the targeted community participants have been empowered to demand transparency and accountability from project staff, project monitoring committees and VDC. In this regard, the complaint mechanism is adding value in strengthening service delivery and implementation of project activities.

Through the complaint mechanism targeted participants are aware of project budgets, planned activities and implementation schedule, and they strive to ensure that programme service delivery is according to plans and schedules. Targeted communities have capacity to question observed variances on budgets, quantity and frequencies of field visits. The complaint mechanism is providing check and balances on service delivery.

5.0 CSC Champhira Food Security project

2010 report is yet to be submitted

6.0 ELDS phalombe Food Security project

The project trained project staff and project rights-holders on HAP with the aim of promoting accountability in the project implementation. Complaint mechanisms have been institutionalised in the community, and duty bearers have been able to give feedback to the complaints. The project managed to establish a complaints handling mechanism format for submitting complaints. There is adoption of the mechanism by ELDS management and board.

b) Political Space (PT1) partners:

There is no report concerning complaints.

Note: It is difficult to isolate issues concerning complaints handling because of the nature of the programme which already addresses rights issues in which complaint and feedback are the daily activities and gathering information accordingly.

Observe that information gathering concerning Complaints Handling Response Mechanism is a gap, and mostly this is captured through the normal project reporting and needs to be looked at and discussed on the way forward.

Nothing reported from the HIV/AIDS programme partner.

DCA Regional Office:

We did not receive any complaints at regional Office.

Report from Ethiopia

Prepared by Eyasu Mekonnen, Regional Representative

DCA Ethiopian office has been working rigorously on the implementation of Complaints Handling system with its partner Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus North Central Ethiopia Synod /EECMY-NCES at regional and partner office level.

DCA finds that the system is a highly valuable tool and confirms that it has improved the level of transparency and accountability between all stakeholders.

Please find below a summary of the complaints and response undertaken in 2010. The complaints report is divided into two groups. The first contains all the complaints received through our complaints mailbox and the second includes some of the complaints received at partner level.

1. A candidate for a position in DCA was informed about the result of interview and a rejection letter was sent to him. The candidate complained by saying "...thank you for the result notification for my interview...but I believe and expect that I answered all questions forwarded during the interview...let me know my result and the decision procedure..."
 - a. Response from RO: - The issue was referred to the RR instead of the complaint handling committee since it was more a request for information than direct complaint on the procedure. The RR responded by email to the candidate and we never heard from him again.

2. A complaint was received from a candidate for an accountant position by one of our partners for a DCA supported project. The complaint reads "...I did the examination very well and I fulfilled all the requirements needed...vacancy...the truth was this...because of corruption...a person who was not able to fulfil the minimum requirements was selected..."
 - a. Response from RO: - The Complaint handling team approached the partner and received the following response which was relayed to the complainant. "...Thank you for your email and thanking you for alerting us about the complaint...this complaint was addressed to us 10 days ago & we have discussed the matter in great detail...The person...is nowhere near the selected candidate not even among the three best candidates that the panel ranked after the interview process..."

Examples of complaints at partner level

3. Beneficiary community made oral complaints about the quality of rehabilitation work on traditional deep wells. The beneficiaries indicated that some hanging rocks could pose danger to cattle and women/children when accessing water and the partner was asked to invest more in removing the rocks. Beneficiaries from another village made a complaint that the expanded troughs could allow people to extract more water in a short time so access should be limited to few water fetchers at a time as it used to be in their traditional system.
 - a. Responses from the partner: The partner accepted the beneficiary complaints and is working to remove the hanging rocks and make the troughs to an optimal size.
4. Some government office staffs complained to a partner about trainee selection for DCA managed DRR training. DCA delegated to the partner to identify participants through discussions with local district administration.
 - a. Response from the partner: - The partner responded to the complainants that "...identification of participants was made on assessment of the relevance of each line government office to the work being done, to the subject matter and to the service they give to communities/beneficiaries of the project...and the number of participants is capped due to budgetary constraints..."

These are some of our experiences in 2010 and there is some learning from the incidents.

Report from Cambodia

Prepared by YouMeng Chiv, Programme Officer Cambodia

Progress of Complaint Mechanism

- ***DCA/CA Complaint Mechanism:***

In May 2009, the DCA/CA's Complaint Mechanism was initiated in the process of developing, and the complaint was finalised by the end of first quarter of 2010. In the second quarter of 2010, the complaint leaflets, both in Khmer and English were developed, designed and printed. Totally 700 leaflets (500 in Khmer and 200 in English) were printed. At the same time, the complaint form A was translated from English into Khmer. In the third quarter of 2010, the complaint form A, both in Khmer and English was printed in 750 copies (300 in English and 450 in Khmer). Then a complaint box was designed, developed and placed at the DCA/CA office front door with the clear message "DCA Complaint Box".

The introductory session was made by putting it on the agenda in all the three programme types and partner platform meetings in Cambodia in order to present the complaint mechanism, discussion and guiding on how DCA/CA partners become involved the implementation of the complaint. Moreover, the complain leaflets and the complaint form A, both in Khmer and English were handed and distributed to 28 DCA/CA partners including

associated partners, in which 9 partners of PT1, 8 partners of PT3, 10 partners of PT4 and 1 partner of Regional trafficking programme.

Furthermore, in October 2010, DCA/CA programme officer, who is responsible for the CM, was invited by Diakonia to present the DCA/CA Complaint Mechanism to its partners in Cambodia to bring it to their attention and get them engaged.

The Complaints Mechanism was not ready to be implemented in April as planned in the previous report due to busyness with other related prioritised tasks. The DCA/CA complaint mechanism is formally functioning from the beginning of the fourth quarter 2010. Until now, no complaint has been received yet.

- ***LWF now localised as LWD, Complaint Mechanism:***

As in previous report, two workshops were organised by DCA/CA Cambodia in January on HAP and complaints mechanisms for DCA/CA officers and selected partners, who have been interested in establishing their own complaints mechanism.

LWD was a first partner, who was interested in developing its own complaint mechanism as a pilot tool. The LWD's complaint mechanism was developed, finalised and approved by the management committee by the third quarter of 2010. At the end of the third quarter, the LWD complaint was introduced for testing among staff, the communities and field offices, of target areas of LWD. In the first quarter of 2011 complaint boxes were designed, and 20 boxes were produced and distributed to a) 7 boxes for offices, of which 6 field offices in four provinces and 1 in Phnom Penh head office; and b) 13 boxes were placed in 13 villages of the 6 IRDEP project sites of the IRDEP.

LWD has not yet gathered the complaint cases, as it is too early to report on it. As an unofficial discussion, some verbal operational complaint cases were received regarding project implementation, feedback and suggestions; all cases have been taken into consideration by the internal complaint committee and project team to improve.

Two sensitive complaint cases have been received; one regarding misuse of funding (decision made of using funds without community involvement) and one regarding personal attitude. The internal complaint committee had solved the two cases: one staff has terminated the contract and another received a warning letter.

Moreover, regarding the pilot implementation of LWD's complaint, the reporting format was updated by inserting the complaint mechanism section into the report to ensure all complaint cases are reported and recorded.

Opinion

DCA/CA Complaint Mechanism is an interesting tool for DCA/CA Cambodia and its partners in order to improve our quality of works with effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and transparency.

Throughout the workshops, partner platform meetings and monitoring visits to our DCA/CA partners in Cambodia, few partners have shown interest and will to bring it up for further discussion among their governing bodies to consider integrating it into their existing organisation policies/procedures updating or to develop its own policy. Moreover, it will take time to engage and support interested partners in complaint development.

Report from India

Prepared by Nina Ellinger, Regional Representative and Mani Kumar, Humanitarian Response Officer

Progress

DCA India has initiated the process of developing a South Asia Complaints Mechanism (CM) in December 2010 as an action point of HAP audit held in June 2010. This has taken time in drafting over the past three months and several drafts were made with inputs and feedback from HR unit in DCA Copenhagen. Draft copy was finally approved in late Feb 2011 by DCA HQ for sharing with DCA staffs and partners in South Asia.

The India office then rolled it out by presenting the draft DCA South Asia Complaints Mechanism to all its partners in Annual Partners meeting held in New Delhi from Feb 28 to March 2, 2011. The draft copy has further been circulated electronically to all partners for their inputs and feedback via e-mail by end of April 2011; the document will be finalised by May 31st 2011. Therefore from May 2011, DCA South Asia will have a functioning Complaints Mechanism.

Prior to this, DCA South Asia (SA) conducted trainings on HAP (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership) and complaints mechanism for most of its Regional staff and partners in July 2009. It has been further discussed at office level meetings on action plans on HAP at DCA South Asia office with all staff and followed up with DRR partners in regular platform meetings and field visits. HAP audit was conducted in DCA SA in June 2010 with staff interviews after which a field visit was undertaken to ECHO emergency project implemented by DCA partner CASA. The audit overall felt that there has been a significant improvement on HAP bench marks and was overall satisfactory with few minor recommendations. The DCA South Asia team has been working with the recommendations since then.

It has been agreed in the draft Complaints Mechanism of March 2, 2011 that all complaints coming to DanChurchAid SA will be handled by a team of three DCA staff. The team will be headed by the SA Regional Representative (RR) who will have overall authority. The SA RR will be supported by the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Programme Officer who is the HAP focal point and by the Regional HR Officer, who will act as the Secretary of the Team. The team will be supported and advised by the Complaint Mechanism Committee in DCA Head Quarters. As

mandatory, the South Asia complaints committee team will review complaints every quarter and take necessary measures. Serious, sensitive complaints will be taken up on urgent basis.

This complaints committee has already started to act on any complaints received at the office level.

Opinion

DCA India regards the Complaints Mechanism as a valuable tool. This has only been supported by the interest and engagement shown by our team and partners during the DCA Annual Partnership meeting 2011. However, further discussions and orientation of partners on the Complaints Mechanism in South Asia are necessary in coming years to motivate and enable all partners to adopt and apply same.

Number of complaints

Since the formal Complaints Mechanism will come fully to function from May 2011, no formal complaints have been received through this mechanism.

With no formal complains mechanism in place there have been only few complaints lodged with DCA South Asia from beneficiaries regarding partners on project interventions, targeting, and support provided in humanitarian projects. However, those submitted have been analysed and resolved by the respective partners with support and guidance from the South Asia Office. One complaint against a DCA staff was submitted by e-mail to the SA Regional Representative (RR) who subsequently investigated and had a good discussion with the complainant. The complaint of discriminatory behaviour turned out to be a false case in which a colleague had misused the private email ID of a superior to fuel a dispute between DCA and a partner as part of an internal organisational struggle between two factions. The alleged complainant wrote a letter to the RR regretting the false accusations against DCA and providing full explanation to the background. The case was thereafter closed at Regional Office level. It may be interesting to document cases of false accusations and possible violations of the rights of the accused – who remains innocent till proven otherwise.

Report from DCA Humanitarian Mine Action Programme in Angola

Prepared by Kelvin Windsor, Programme Manager-Angola

HAP Background of implementation:

The HAP Complaints Mechanism was introduced to Angola in March 2010.

HAP forms part of the Angola Quality Management Systems (QMS) and has its own dedicated procedures.

During the initial implementation, presentations have been made to the following audiences:

- All staff

- Stakeholders (LWF, CNIDAH, MAG)
- Heads of villages in the operating areas

There are four HAP boxes fixed, one at each project task and one at the DCA office in Luena.

HAP Process in Angola

The HAP process follows detailed guidelines and procedures.

The process is periodically reiterated.

Staff

DCA staff are encouraged to confide confidentially on issues forwarded, but on a number of occasions the response is that if they find a need to report then they will. However, they are satisfied that the structure is in place, and the attention they receive is sufficient and follows a line of reporting that they prefer to maintain. This means reporting any issue directly to their supervisor, and if they are not satisfied then they go to the next line manager until satisfaction is reached. Alternatively, if some issues are sensitive then they come to discuss directly with the internationals whose confidence they trust.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

The villages near the project working areas have received a number of visits by the community liaison officer. The village head has been informed of our policy and that openness from his people is encouraged towards our activities and behaviour in the surrounding areas.

Their culture dictates that we must respect the status of the village head by coordinating this through him, and he has stressed on a number of occasions that if his village has issues they will not undermine his position by reporting anything without informing him.

The village heads have conveyed that they are happy with the procedures we have and the contact established through community liaison where they would discuss issues should they arise. They are confident that any issues will be handled correctly if there is a need.

Number of complaints

Since March 2010 we have only received four complaint forms, three in March and only one in April.

Complaints details

The three in March were jokes and discarded immediately – they were printer test sheets on the complaint form; these were sent to Copenhagen.

The one in April was a complaint about salary. The complainant was informed that this issue was not for HAP. He was directed to HR to follow up and given a satisfactory response.

Gitte Krogh

April 2011