



# Grievance Mechanisms Training: Exercises and Handouts

For Rainforest Alliance members

# **Grievance Mechanism Training**

DAY 1 - Understanding Grievance Mechanisms

## Exercise: Are these grievances? Why? Why not?

### Situation 1:

I don't like my job. It's repetitive and it doesn't pay well. I have told my supervisor many times, but I haven't been offered another position.

### Situation 2:

I have been excluded from the cooperative membership because I have been accused of farming in protected areas, but I haven't.

## Case study 1 - what is your organization's responsibility?

**“The group management refused to accept the leaves I picked because I used prohibited pesticides. But the approved pesticides aren't available.”**

- Is this a grievance? Why? Why not?
- What is the harmful negative effect?
- Is it a direct or indirect impact?

## Case study 2 - what is your organization's responsibility?

**“I was evicted from the housing provided by my employer after a row with my supervisor. I now have to rent by myself which is more expensive and I’m getting into debt. I would like to move back into the house I had previously.”**

- Is this a grievance? Why?
- What is the harmful negative effect?
- Is it a direct or indirect impact?

## Case study 3 - what is your organization's responsibility?

**“My relationship with my wife is suffering. She was pleased when I travelled here to work on a farm because I promised her I would earn enough to build a house, but the pay is much lower than what I was promised. I don't want her to be upset but can't go back home until I have paid off what I owe to my recruiter.”**

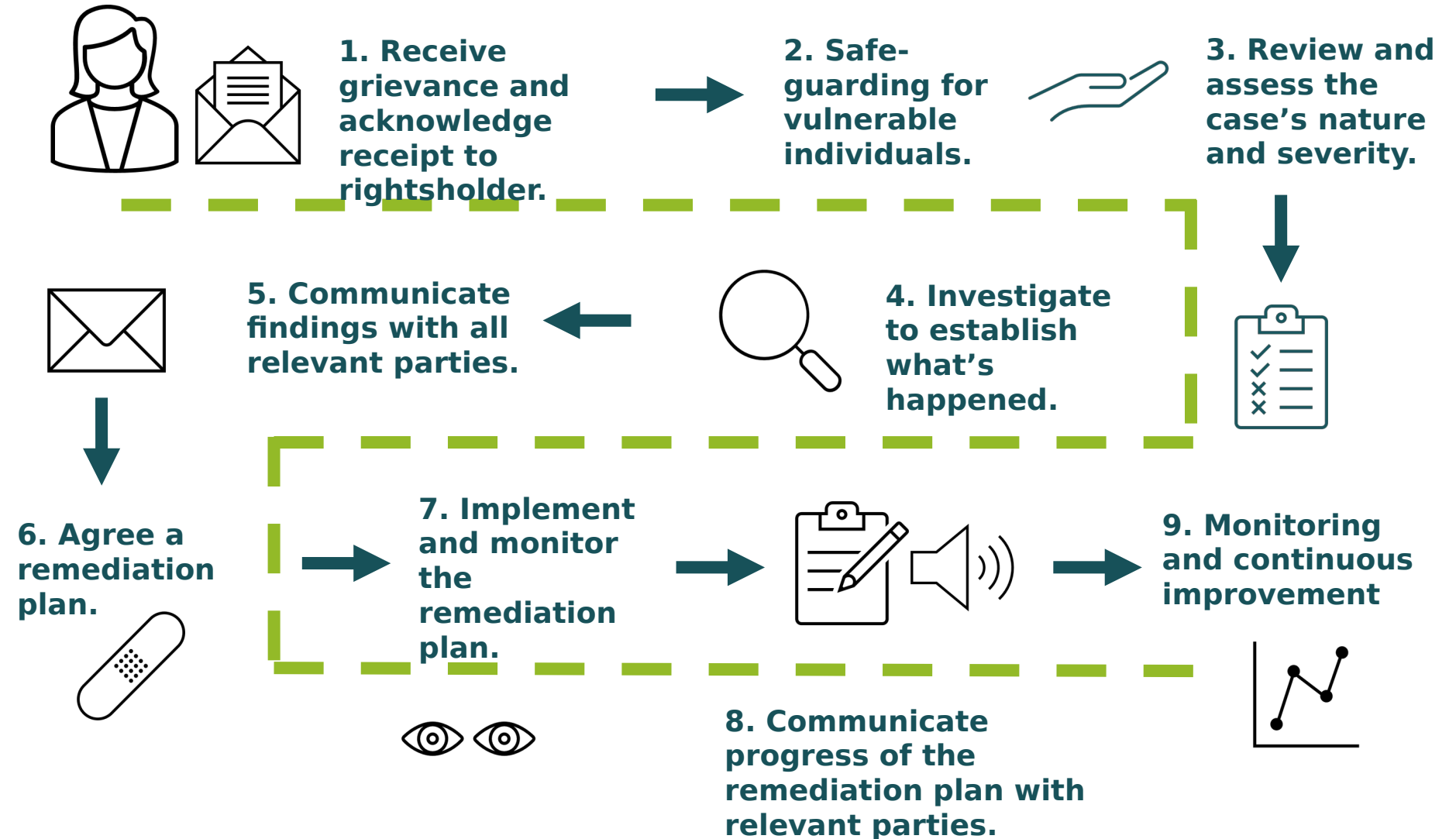
- Is this a grievance? Why?
- What is the harmful negative effect?
- Is it a direct or indirect impact?

## Case study 4 - freedom of association

**"We are a small group of members of the ABC trade union in the workplace. Management says they respect our right to freedom of association, there is a policy stating this and we have access to a notice board. Yet whenever our trade union representatives request permission to talk to management and address our complaints, the permissions are not granted because we are 'not the majority' or 'just a few members'. When our complaints are addressed, there is no remediation/negotiation process. It's all recorded in the minutes of our meetings."**

- Is this a grievance? Why?
- What is the harmful negative effect?
- Is it a direct or indirect impact?

# The RA grievance mechanism process





## Case study

Prior to 2021, XYZ, a cocoa buying, and sourcing company only had an informal grievance system in place – farmers could approach the XYZ company representatives and discuss issues verbally. However, this system failed to address some of the farmers complaints, and they decided not to sell their cocoa to XYZ as a result. This had a negative impact on XYZ financial targets. Learning from the experience, XYZ invested effort into implementing a more formal grievance system, including issuing a policy, setting up a grievance committee and distributing grievance boxes. This has helped build trust with the farmers and XYZ believes it contributed to increase in their membership.



## Case study

XYZ is a company engaged in cultivating and selling tea, livestock and other produce. A key driver in setting up XYZ's grievance mechanism was a court case taken to a UK court alleging serious human rights abuses by the XYZ's security guards against local communities. As a result, among other remedies, XYZ agreed to pay compensation to the victims and agreed to set up a grievance mechanism accessible for a wide range of stakeholders in order for human rights cases to be resolved quickly and without the need to go to court. XYZ believes that having an effecting operational grievance mechanism much earlier could have prevented the abuse and the victims opting to use a judicial mechanism.

## Exercise

### How effective are the grievance mechanisms at this site?

A coffee cooperative employs 300 small farmers. The cooperative has always operated an open-door policy as the main form of grievance raising but has recently tried to modernize the system and implemented a hotline managed by an external provider. The farmers have been informed about the hotline and hotline posters have been distributed to every farm. However, three months into using the hotline, only two grievances have been received.

- How effective is the system in your opinion?
- How could it be improved?

# **Grievance Mechanism Training**

DAY 2 – Implementing and Operating Grievance  
Mechanisms

# Exercise

You will be given a printed out copy of the Rainforest Alliance Grievance Mechanism Standard 1.5 (1 page).

## Activity 1:

On your own, read the RA GM Standard 1.5 highlighting any terms you don't understand or are new to you. (10 min)

## Activity 2

In pairs, underline any parts of the standard which you think might be difficult to implement and discuss why. (10 min)

# Exercise – stakeholder engagement

## Activity 1

In groups, make a list of as many of your stakeholders as you can think about.

## Activity 2

Divide the stakeholders into internal and external stakeholders and then put each category in order from the easiest and most important to engage to the hardest and least important to engage.

# Step 1 - map internal stakeholders

Stakeholder group	Needs

## Step 2 - identify their needs

Stakeholder group	Needs
Office employees	
Farm workers - local	
Farm workers - migrant	
Delivery drivers	
Grievance Committee	



## Step 3 - assess your site's needs

Stakeholder group	Needs
Office employees	Prefer to email / send online forms
Farm workers - local	Some are illiterate, can't use a computer and don't have phones
Farm workers - migrant	Some are illiterate, can't use a computer, don't have phones and speak a different dialect
Delivery drivers	Always in a rush, don't spend much time on the farm but have phones
Grievance Committee	Worried about time needed for recording and following up on grievances

# Exercise – anonymous grievances

## Case study:

You are member of a committee on a palm oil plantation with 1500 workers. You receive an anonymous complaint from a worker about issues with paid sick leave. The worker alleges that he has not been paid for days on which he was unwell and unable to work, despite the company policy offering paid sick leave. The worker further states that when he asked his manager about it in person the manager commented that maybe he doesn't want his job if he complains about it so much. The worker was uncomfortable raising the issue directly afterwards.

How would you investigate this case considering it was made anonymously? How would you maintain confidentiality?

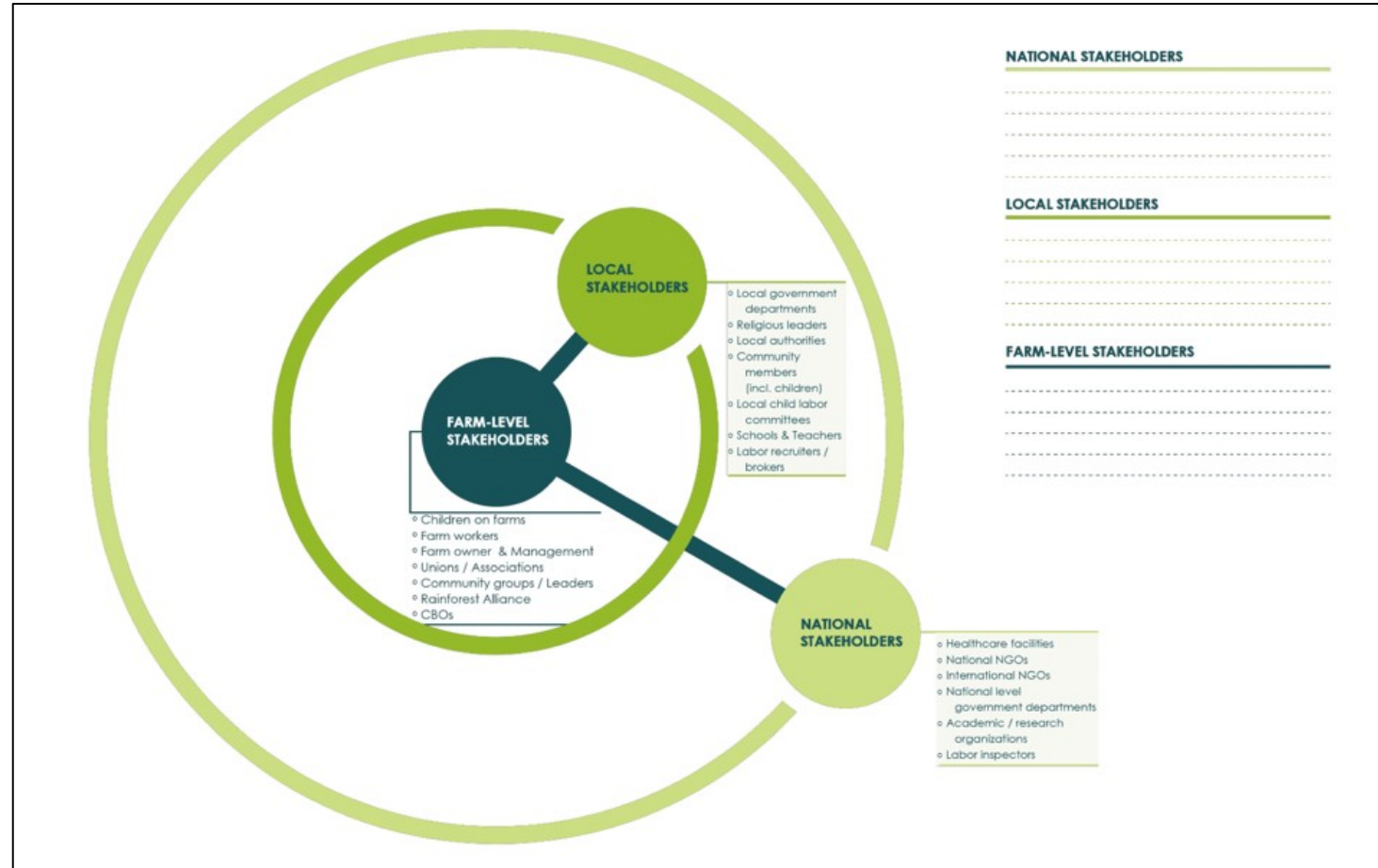
# Exercise: Handling a grievance

## The Grievance

Two female workers have independently submitted a similar complaint about missing out on a promotion to a male colleague. They worked hard and were first praised by their supervisor and promised a promotion but then he asked them to meet him outside of work. After neither of the female workers agreed on meeting the supervisor after work, they were told by the supervisor that one of their male colleagues was promoted instead.

- Work in groups to process the grievance following the RA remediation process, referring to the full Grievance Guide (25 minutes)
- Check your plans together with the trainer

# Exercise step 1: Map remediation stakeholders and response



# Exercise step 2: Develop a remediation plan

## 5. TEMPLATE A - Remediation Plan

Please find here a template you may use to prepare for remediation. It can be integrated in the management plan.

Objective	Action	Locations	Start date, End date	Frequency	Responsible persons	Status
Be prepared to implement effective remediation if and when a potential violation is identified that requires remediating	Assign responsibility internally within management and the Assess-and-Address Committee for remediation including:  a. Internal and external coordination about cases.  b. Safeguarding needs of the affected person					
	Identify local authorities and support agencies who can help with immediate safeguarding needs for at risk women, children and other at-risk groups, including migrants:  1) Government offices (education, labor and social affairs, agriculture)  2) Women's organisations and safe houses  3) Child protection agencies  4) Workers' unions  5) Migrant support agencies					
	A training of the management team and other relevant staff shall take place focusing on everyone's role when a potential case is discovered or reported					

## Exercise: Develop a remediation plan

1. Individually read the detailed response and remediation steps in the Remediation Protocol and discuss within groups (15 min)
2. Quick Q&A with the trainer to clarify the content (5 min)
3. Read the case study and develop a response and remediation plan with your group (20 min)
4. Discuss both cases together as a room (20 min)

## Exercise: scenario 1

Grievance message:

“For two days in a row now I have seen one of the temporary workers bringing two of her children to the field with her. The children are well behaved and they even help their mum with picking, but I have recently attended a training which said that is bad when children work and that we need to report it. I feel bad saying something because it’s better for the mother to keep her children close and safe, but I also feel bad staying quiet having been to the training.”

## Exercise: scenario 2

Grievance message:

“My supervisor has been talking to me inappropriately at work, commenting on my body and that he would like to go on a date with me. I don’t like him and it makes me uncomfortable but telling him to stop only makes him try harder. Today he followed me to the storage room and tried to kiss me, luckily I escaped. I’m scared to come to work and I’m equally scared of losing my job.”



## Exercise: scenario 3

Grievance message:

“Since your company diverted the local river into a tributary, our community land for keeping cattle has been flooded. We have approached the local administrator, but they said it is your company that needs to find a solution.”

## Case study 4 - freedom of association

**"We are a small group of members of the ABC trade union in the workplace. Management says they respect our right to freedom of association, there is a policy stating this and we have access to a notice board. Yet whenever our trade union representatives request permission to talk to management and address our complaints, the permissions are not granted because we are 'not the majority' or 'just a few members'. When our complaints are addressed, there is no remediation/negotiation process. It's all recorded in the minutes of our meetings."**

- Is this a grievance? Why?
- What is the harmful negative effect?
- Is it a direct or indirect impact?

# Promotion strategies – poster examples

**EL DORADO GOLD**  
THINK | ACT | INSPIRE  
Responsible Mining for Guyana

## Grievance Mechanism



- STEP 1: SUBMIT YOUR COMPLAINT**
  - Submit your complaint to CH-Guyana by Email, Letter or Telephone Call. (See contact information below)
  - All information received will be treated as confidential.
- STEP 2: ACKNOWLEDGE AND REVIEW**
  - We will respond in 5 days.
  - Your submission will then be reviewed for further action.
- STEP 3: RESPONSE TO COMPLAINT MADE**
  - After reviewing your complaint, we will contact you within 7-14 days with possible solutions.
- STEP 4: RESOLVING THE PROBLEM**
  - We will work together to resolve the problem.
- STEP 5: CLOSE OUT**
  - You will receive a full report on the matter after the problem is resolved.

592-227-8171 EXT 220  
592-608-3252  
grievances@conservation.org  
98 Laluni Street, 3rd Floor, Queenstown, Guyana.  
<https://conservation.org.gy/eldorado-gold-grievances/>

planetGOLD Guyana  
Supported by: GEF  
Led by: UN environment programme  
In partnership with: CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL Guyana, Norad

**NHS**  
St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

## Do you need to raise a concern? SPEAK UP!

**Do it anonymously**  
Contact: Speak in Confidence  
[www.speakinconfidence.com/sthk](http://www.speakinconfidence.com/sthk)

**Do it confidentially**  
Speak to your Line Manager or call the Raising Concerns Hotline on 0151 430 1777

Contact one of our Freedom To Speak Up Guardians

 Ann Marr Chief Executive 0151 430 1242 <a href="mailto:raisingconcerns.chiefexecutive@sthk.nhs.uk">raisingconcerns.chiefexecutive@sthk.nhs.uk</a>	 Richard Fraser Chairman 0151 430 1242 <a href="mailto:raisingconcerns.chairman@sthk.nhs.uk">raisingconcerns.chairman@sthk.nhs.uk</a>
 Rajesh Karimbath Assistant Director of Patient Safety 0151 430 1564 <a href="mailto:raisingconcerns.quality@sthk.nhs.uk">raisingconcerns.quality@sthk.nhs.uk</a>	 Dr Peter Williams Deputy Medical Director 0151 430 1242 <a href="mailto:raisingconcerns.medicaldirector@sthk.nhs.uk">raisingconcerns.medicaldirector@sthk.nhs.uk</a>

Please note:  
Emails to all Freedom To Speak Up Guardians (apart from Rajesh Karimbath) will be viewed by the Chief Executive's Executive Assistant on their behalf.  
Telephone calls to all Freedom To Speak Up Guardians (apart from Rajesh Karimbath) will be answered by the Chief Executive's Executive Assistant on their behalf.

Over half of UK women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

**TUC**  
Changing the world of work for good

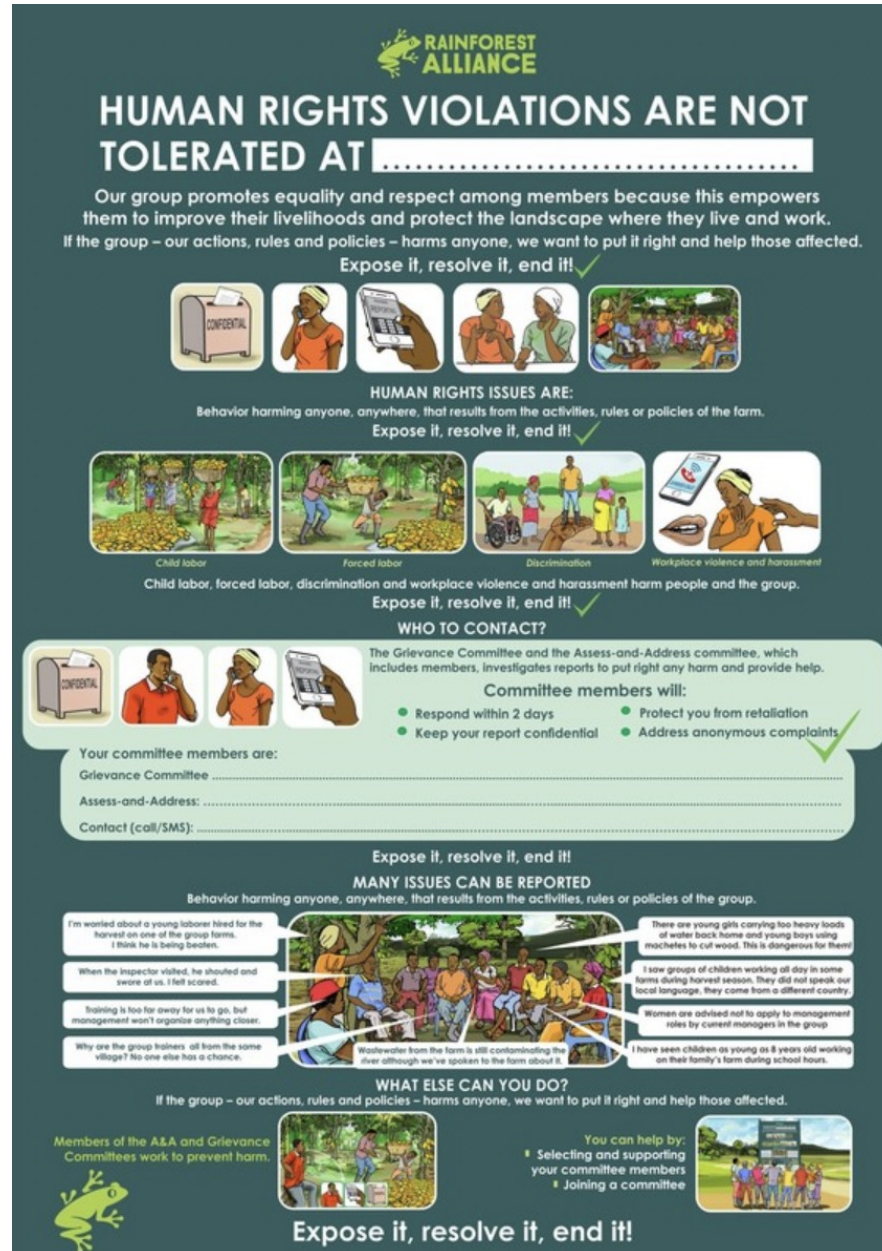


## You're not alone

Don't suffer in silence.  
Speak to your union rep today.

Contact:

Illustration: Anna Smedley / Creative Commons



## Promotion strategies - RA poster example

RA poster template:

- Have you seen it?
- Have you used it?
- What is your experience?

# Poster Exercise

Create a poster that describes the grievance mechanism in your organization. Make sure to include:

- What kinds of issues should be reported
- Who farmers should contact with a complaint
- What information about the incident or issue to include
- What to expect after submitting a report



# Best practice and lessons learnt



- **Treating every grievance with respect and bringing satisfactory remedy to rightsholders.**
- **Sharing information about received grievances and their outcomes with your stakeholders.**
- **Understand and share routes for accessing remedy for cases outside your scope to build trust with your stakeholders.**

# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE