

Grievance Mechanism Health Check

Twenty evidence-anchored questions across the eight UNGP 31 effectiveness criteria, scored in twenty minutes with your grievance log open. Three bands route the mechanism to the chapter that repairs it first.

From *Grievance Mechanisms That Work: Designing and Operating Effective Non-Judicial Remedies* · Thomas Gaultier · thomasgaultier.com/resources/gmtw

Set aside twenty minutes with your grievance log and last quarter's data in front of you. Score each question 0 (no), 1 (partial), or 2 (yes, and documented). The questions are deliberately evidence-anchored: if the answer is "yes, but I could not show you," score 1. Be harsh; the score only helps if it is true. The twenty questions sit in eight blocks, one per effectiveness criterion of UNGP Principle 31, and target the failure points I encounter most often in the field: no independence, no timelines, opaque outcomes, inaccessible channels, no recourse, no pattern tracking.

#	Question	Criterion	Chapter that fixes a low score	Score
1	Was the mechanism designed in consultation with the communities who use it, and can you produce the consultation record?	Legitimate	Ch. 3	
2	Are intake, investigation, and decision-making separated, so no team investigates complaints about its own conduct?	Legitimate	Ch. 5	
3	Can a person who cannot read, does not speak the project language, or lives hours from the site file a grievance? Do at least three channels operate, including one face-to-face and one anonymous?	Accessible	Ch. 4	
4	Does your intake profile (gender, age, community) roughly match the affected population, and do you check it against known barriers facing women, youth, and workers?	Accessible	Ch. 4	
5	Are timelines for acknowledgment and resolution published by severity class, and do complainants know them?	Predictable	Ch. 5	
6	Is your acknowledgment-on-time rate above 90%?	Predictable	Ch. 5	
7	Is every complainant told what happens next at each step, in their language, including when a timeline changes?	Predictable	Ch. 5	
8	Have you disaggregated satisfaction and severity ratings by gender in the last year, and acted on what you found?	Equitable	Ch. 8	

9	Can complainants bring a support person or interpreter, and does the company negotiate through someone with actual authority to settle?	Equitable	Ch. 7	
10	Is mediation available and budgeted as a standing line, with a pre-vetted roster, and do the parties enter it knowing the outcome is non-binding unless and until they reach and sign an agreement?	Equitable	Ch. 7	
11	Does every complainant receive written reasons for the outcome, including when the grievance is not substantiated?	Transparent	Ch. 5	
12	Can you produce the last three close-out verifications with complainant signatures?	Transparent	Ch. 5	
13	Is mechanism performance reported back to communities at least annually: volumes, resolution rates, operational changes made?	Transparent	Ch. 8	
14	Does a published policy prohibit retaliation, and has every site supervisor and security contractor been briefed on it?	Rights-compatible	Ch. 6	
15	Do remedies draw on all five remedy types (restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, guarantees of non-repetition) rather than defaulting to one-off cash?	Rights-compatible	Ch. 5	
16	Is it documented that using the mechanism waives no legal right, and are complainants told that courts and other external avenues remain open?	Rights-compatible	Ch. 7	
17	Can you name the last operational change made because of grievance data, and produce the root cause analysis behind it?	A source of continuous learning	Ch. 9	
18	Is the repeat-grievance rate tracked, and is it below 15%?	A source of continuous learning	Ch. 9	
19	Beyond individual cases, is there a standing dialogue channel (focal points, community forums) through which the mechanism hears how it is perceived?	Based on engagement and dialogue	Ch. 3	
20	Since launch, has the design been reviewed with the communities who use it, and were the resulting changes communicated back?	Based on engagement and dialogue	Ch. 9	

Total score _____ **of 40**

— Reading Your Score

0 to 19

A compliance artifact

The mechanism absorbs complaints without resolving them, which is worse than silence because it teaches people that filing changes nothing. Start at Chapter 3: redesign with the community, not for it.

20 to 31

Functioning with gaps

The skeleton works, but specific criteria are failing. Start at Chapter 8: disaggregate the data, find the weakest criterion, and let the numbers set the repair order.

32 to 40

Effective

Maintain and keep learning (Chapter 9). Re-run the check annually, and after any surge or protest episode (Chapter 10); expect the score to dip when the operating context shifts. The point of the instrument is to notice early.



Be harsh; the score only helps if it is true.

The eight criteria are those of United Nations, Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011), Guiding Principle 31, effectiveness criteria (a) to (h). Free to download and to use in your work.

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