

Community-Driven Operational Grievance Mechanisms

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Operational grievance mechanisms (OGMs) are systems that companies create to allow persons affected by the company's operations - workers, community members, and other stakeholders - to file complaints at the site-level and seek resolution outside a formal judicial process. OGMs have been highlighted as an important part of companies' responsibility to respect human rights, but they are often criticized for providing inadequate remedies and using procedures that affected populations do not consider to be legitimate.

Recognizing the promise of OGMs but concerned about the ways in which they fail to meet their potential, EarthRights International is piloting a new model that puts affected communities in the driver's seat. When OGMs are designed by corporations, they serve the company's interests. In ERI's model - which we are piloting at the Thilawa Special Economic Zone in Myanmar - the affected communities design the grievance mechanism from the ground up according to their own traditions and needs. They decide what types of abuses are covered, which remedies are available, who investigates allegations, and what procedures are used to assess and process claims. The community's vision of a legitimate, rights-compatible process then becomes the basis of negotiation and discussion with the company that must implement the mechanism.

For more information:

Jonathan KAUFMAN and Katherine McDONNELL (2016). Community-Driven Operational Grievance Mechanisms. Business and Human Rights Journal, 1, pp 127-132

doi:10.1017/bhj.2015.17

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