

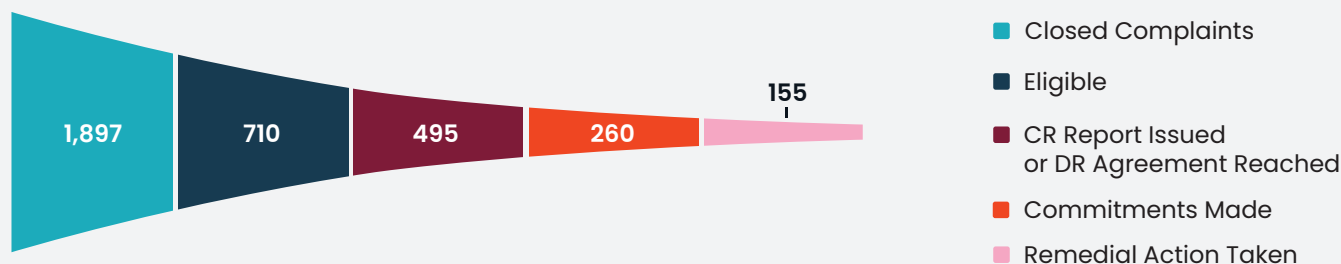
Do Accountability Mechanisms Remediate Harm?

A look at complaint outcomes across Independent Accountability Mechanisms

In its 30 years of existence, **has the Independent Accountability Mechanism ("IAM") ecosystem delivered meaningful remedy to communities harmed by internationally financed projects?** To answer this question, we created a new dataset tracking all publicly available information about any remedial commitments from mediated agreements or findings of non-compliance. We also conducted 45 interviews across 25 different projects where complaints seemed to have achieved a positive outcome.

We learned that communities absolutely need and value the unique and creative opportunities for remedy offered by IAM processes, and that financial institutions have evolved considerably from IAM learnings. But in most cases, significant barriers at every step of the process (eligibility, outputs, commitments, and implementation) prevent communities from realizing the promise of remediation from harm resulting from Bank-financed projects.

From complaint to remedy



The graph reflects the difficulty in achieving remedial action, even when there is acknowledgement of harm and commitments are made to remedy that harm.

Breadth of Outcomes Achieved through IAM Processes

This word cloud illustrates the range and frequency of remedial actions that communities have achieved through IAM processes – including both direct remedy for communities and broader institutional changes.

- Institution-facing commitments
- Project-facing commitments



Findings

Harm is sometimes remedied but not at sufficient scale

"We live in horrible conditions. Our houses are made out of paper, when the rain comes, it wipes us away and we have to build new structures. We don't have work to do. We barely have food."

Community member, Sub-Saharan Africa

Inadequate implementation is all too common

"There was a step-by-step Action Plan in the report. It was never implemented. It was only paper not being implemented to action. [...] I think it was a massive embezzlement. Corruption happens in the implementation process."

Community member, South Asia

Communities face significant burdens—especially retaliation; and outputs are often only achieved with CSO support

"When things were going our way I received death threats. [...] I was told: either they're going to put you in prison or kill you, so get out of here. In 2 days I was out."

Community member, South America

Most IAMs focus reporting on metrics about process rather than outcomes

"That monitoring process found that the company fulfilled every obligation from the Compliance report. [They] didn't do any of these things at all. Yes they are doing the paperwork, but if you don't remedy the grievances, then it's not due diligence."

Union Representative, MENA

Recommendations

Recommendation for Banks

- ✓ Develop a remedy framework
- ✓ Include communities in implementation and monitoring and consider consequences for non-implementation
- ✓ Ensure IAMs have institutional support to carry out their mandate
- ✓ Outcomes of IAM processes should be included in net impact evaluation of projects (or development effectiveness assessments)

Recommendations for IAMs

- ✓ Empower IAMs with remedy mandates
- ✓ Improve monitoring and implementation of commitments
- ✓ Address power imbalances: more community support and zero tolerance for retaliation
- ✓ Improve reporting of data: measure what's important

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