



Women from Zaranou after the training

NESTLÉ GENDER DIALOGUE PROJECT: ESTABLISHING WOMEN'S DIALOGUE FORUMS AND TRAINING ON GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS

Report prepared by the Fair Labor Association
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Yaokouakoukro and Zaranou, Côte d'Ivoire

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Women from Goli-Gninsankro using role-play to address internal conflict

I. BACKGROUND

This collaborative project between the Fair Labor Association (FLA) and Nestlé focuses on the establishment of women's forums as a dialogue platform for women to raise and address their grievances, and to give them a greater voice in two cocoa-growing communities supplying to Nestlé in Côte d'Ivoire. An introductory visit and baseline Social Impact Assessment conducted in Yaokouakoukro (Gagnoa) and Zaranou (Abengourou) in March 2015 and July 2015, respectively, highlighted the following findings:

- Women's leverage and participation in community affairs is limited, adhoc, and unstructured.
- Women's economic status is the most important factor in determining their inclusion in the decision-making and consultation processes for both community and household matters.
- Women often resort to, and feel more comfortable, approaching available informal grievance structures, such as existing women's associations and other community groups.



Women from Zaranou performing role-play

To address these issues, this project focuses on three main dimensions:

1. The first phase of the project in 2015 involved working with members of two women's associations¹ to build their confidence and enhance their economic capacities within their current means and resources. The GALs training held in August 2015 with a follow-up session organized in January - February 2016² achieved this goal.
2. The current, second phase focuses on the establishment of women's forums in communities as platforms to raise and address their grievances and promote further dialogue.
3. The third phase will be dedicated to awareness-building on gender justice and equality within the two communities.

This report presents an overview of the activities conducted May 8-12 and May 13-17, 2016 in Yaokouakoukro and Zaranou, respectively, within the framework of the second phase of the project. These include:

- Establishing women's dialogue forums in the project communities
- Training community members on elements of effective dialogue, dialogue forum functioning, and grievance-handling mechanisms
- Supporting two women's associations to enhance their internal management systems, cohesiveness, and day-to-day functioning

¹ Bah-Mé-Tioh of Yaokouakoukro (Gagnoa) and and AFEDZ of Zaranou (Abengourou) linked to the Nestlé's supplying cooperative USCRG and COOPAZA.

² Please refer to the January–February 2016 visit report for a comprehensive overview.

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN'S DIALOGUE FORUMS

During the January – February 2016 visits, the two women's associations identified women representatives (with names, contact information, and locations) from their existing membership based on selection criteria³ developed for the project, and mobilized them to lead dialogue forums in their respective communities.

The May visit included the establishment of the women's dialogue forums⁴ in the two project locations in the presence of villages' council representatives, and those from the cooperatives COOPAZA and USCRG boards of management. Women representatives selected by the existing women's associations were appointed as Local Advisors or Sectoral Advisor. Tables 1 and 2 provide the locations (clusters) of the dialogue platforms and the names of their respective representatives.

These forums increased awareness of to whom women⁵ should reach out for advice, and with whom they should raise any complaints or grievances they may encounter.

The publicity of these forums in each community will depend on the dynamism of the members of each forum and word of mouth. The project activities will ensure that the necessary liaisoning happens with the leaders of the communities. A stakeholders convening is planned toward the end of the project to publicly present the forums to all local leaders and administrative authorities. This meeting will discuss the role of the leaders and the administrative authorities in taking the lead and supporting these forums. Thus far, the representatives of the villages' councils have welcomed this initiative. The guidance document (Annex 1) presents the administrative details and functioning of these forums.

TABLE 1: LOCATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WOMEN DIALOGUE FORUMS IN ZARANOU

	LOCALITIES	LOCAL ADVISORS (MEMBERS OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS)	SECTORAL ADVISOR
1	Centre ville	Assi Anguibi Génériève	Kablan Tchrimboa
2	Addis Abeba	Kablan Tchrimboa	
3	Lagogué	Méa Amoakoa Juliette	
4	Mossikro	Sakané Aminata	
5	Lobikro	Yoboa Boa Olga	

TABLE 2: LOCATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WOMEN DIALOGUE FORUMS IN YAOKOUAKOUKRO

	LOCALITIES	LOCAL ADVISORS (MEMBERS OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS)	SECTORAL ADVISOR
1	Yaokouakoukro	Béhibro Amenan Béatrice	Kouakou Kindo Jeanne
2	Goli N'guessankro	Kouassi N'gbin Véronique	
3	Zigbouyaokro	N'goran Fatai Francine	
4	Danielkro	Kouadio Tèguè	
5	N'zuékro	Kouamé Akissi Agnès	
6	Kopakro	Konan Aménan Méline	
7	Téhiri Chantier	Kouakou Adjo	
8	Goh Koffikro	Koffi Akissi Aimée	
9	Yao Zanankro	Yao Aya Germaine	

3 See Annex 1 for women's dialogue platform guidance document.

4 See Annex 1 for more information.

5 These forums target women from the women's associations involved in the project and women farmers and spouses of farmers from USCRG and COOPAZA. All women from the communities are free to use these forums.

III. TRAINING

In addition to the establishment of the women's dialogue forums, the visits allowed for the training⁶ of the communities' members, mainly women, on:

- Elements of effective dialogue
- Dialogue forum functioning
- Elements of effective grievance mechanisms

The project staff used a combination of training approaches to accommodate the high illiteracy rate among training participants. Training approaches included PowerPoint presentations and participatory action learning, consisting of case studies, role-plays, interpreting and addressing fictional scenarios, and sharing experiences. During the role-play sessions, participants simulated hypothetical situations on the relationship between the cooperative and its members; the abuses faced by women in their households; and internal conflicts within the group. The training sessions were conducted entirely in local languages (Agni, Baoulé, and Malinké).

The 175 participants in the training sessions included female cocoa producers and spouses of male cocoa producers supplying to the cooperatives USCRG and COOPAZA, women members of Bah-Mé-Tioh and AFEDZ, community leaders, and representatives of cooperatives' boards of management (Table 3).

The seven-hour training sessions at each project location aimed to build the capacity of participants on all major elements that an effective dialogue platform and a grievance redressal mechanism should entail. Furthermore, the sessions allowed participants to familiarize themselves with the dialogue platform structure and its standard operating procedures. In Zaranou, the training occurred at the house of the village chief, while in Yaokouakoukro, it occurred at the local farmers' field school. In each locality, the cooperative board of management and the local women's associations coordinated the logistics for the training and mobilized community members to participate in the session.

TABLE 3: TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

	TYPE OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER (ZARANO)	NUMBER (YAOKOUAKOUKRO)
1	Village leaders	6 (5 members of village's notability & 1 community leader)	1 (member of village's notability)
2	Religious leaders	1 (imam)	
3	Cooperatives' management	5 (1 president of board, 1 director, 2 SMI staff, 1 treasurer of board)	3 (1 board member, 1 director, 1 SMI staff)
4	Women cocoa producers	29	5
5	Spouse of cocoa producers	41	26
6	Men cocoa producers	19	5
7	Other members of women's associations	7	27
	TOTAL	108	67

⁶ Training material was specifically developed by the FLA in the framework of this project and will be made available to Nestlé.

Upon training completion, participants, the cooperatives' management boards, and the village council thanked the FLA and Nestlé for the opportunity and welcomed the methodology. They expressed an interest in extending this initiative to more communities. The cooperatives' managements committed to replicate the training on effective grievance mechanisms and effective dialogue in other communities, and to embed it in their internal monitoring system as a capacity-building mechanism. They recognized the value of this training as not only applicable to women, but also to their male members and their families. Post-training, participants are equipped with necessary guidance for effective dialogue amongst other community members, the newly established dialogue forum, and knowledge of effective grievance handling.



Women from a local representation attending the training

IV. SUPPORT TO WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

The third aspect of this visit was to enhance the two women's associations' functioning. To achieve this goal, the project staff met with the two women's associations' boards to understand the recent developments in the action plan devised with the FLA during the January - February 2016 visit, provide a gap analysis based on the current status, evaluate progress, and advise on building on their existing systems and introducing new ones for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

This meeting concluded that following the guidance provided by the FLA during previous visits, both Bah-Mé-Tioh and AFEDZ have now formally and legally registered with the local administrative authorities. They appointed a functional board with proper job descriptions for each board member, developed and agreed upon the statutes and rules that govern their associations, and set-up a bank account to support the needs of the associations.

As a reminder, both women's associations AFEDZ and Bah-Mé-Tioh are platforms that allow women to join forces to overcome common challenges. They also function as a means to pool initiatives for revenue generation and enable women members to more effectively meet their family needs. To achieve this goal, they provide services in farms or develop group projects, such as food crops farming, to generate income. The income earned in the framework of these activities is divided into three parts:

1. Investment in their group-production activities
2. Shared income with the members for their general needs
3. Income kept in reserve to support members in need

The rules of both AFEDZ and Bah-Mé-Tioh cite the collection of membership fees to support their activities.

V. CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINING PROGRESS

During the visits in Zaranou and Yaokouakoukro, the project staff acknowledged some challenges for project implementation. Notably, there was a misunderstanding regarding the participation of some members of the women's associations in the group projects developed by these associations following the GALS training. Representatives of existing women's associations told the project staff that some women do not make themselves available for group activities, such as production and tending to food crops, that were developed together for generating collective income. In addition, the board of AFEDZ also brought forward an intra-personal conflict affecting two members of an association.

The project staff advised the group members to use the newly-established dialogue forums to resolve these issues and promote effective cohesion in the associations. The project staff will monitor progress. This constitutes a first test for the effectiveness of the dialogue platform. At the end of the two-year project, the cooperatives' internal monitoring system will conduct monitoring of the activities of the women's associations and the dialogue platform. Additionally, the staff members in charge of gender related issues at Nestlé will



Representatives of women's dialogue forums of Zaranou

oversee the overall initiative according to the provision in the dialogue platform guidance document. FLA local staff will provide assistance for one year after the project ends to facilitate this transfer of the project to the cooperatives and Nestlé.

In addition to the monitoring of progress, the project team feels that income generation projects will have to be supported by the cooperative and/or Nestlé with technical inputs, farm inputs, and to small extended monetary inputs. Within this project, women have undertaken some income-generating initiatives within their existing means, and it has boosted their confidence and willingness to work as a team. However, in the absence of some form of external support, these activities may not bring about considerable change and impact, as the initiatives still remain very localized and small. Therefore, it is our recommendation that all stakeholders interested in helping the women's associations succeed should investigate ways that they can provide greater material support to for their efforts in the long term.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This visit concluded that in order to be effective, the training sessions should focus more on a participatory action learning approach, consisting of case studies, role-plays, interpreting and addressing fictional scenarios, and sharing experiences.

The visit also highlighted the need for strong and ongoing facilitation, periodically, until the systems achieve a maturity level. It is difficult to achieve such complete self-sufficiency over a two-year time frame, and therefore it is imperative to look at local mechanisms or supply chain stakeholders who can continue to play this facilitation role in the long run and cover basic costs.

The issue of including women in the village notability never emerged in the discussions with communities' members, including women. The participants say they do not perceive this as a challenge and do not expect any changes to this norm in the short term. Based on the achievement of the dialogue forums, the important role that each forum will play in the communities, and the reputation and positioning of each female leader, social change is possible. The interactions with the village notability highlight that they see benefits in such facilitation, so they welcome such initiatives to occur within their communities.

VII. NEXT STEPS

The third phase of the project will take place in August - September 2016, with a seminar for couples in the project locations following the GALS methodology to promote gender balance and justice (see Box 1) at the household and community levels. As usual, the seminar will be open to all community members. The participation of men and women with similar interests is key to a successful seminar, and the cooperatives, along with women's associations' board members, are expected to contribute to mobilizing community members to attend. Nestlé staff inclusion in these visits will also aid in their understanding of the process and develop familiarity with the women's associations. In the same visits, project staff will conduct follow-up reviews of the livelihood project activities, dialogue platforms, and grievance mechanisms.

Box 1: ABOUT GENDER BALANCE AND GENDER JUSTICE

Achieving gender balance at the household level and gender justice at the community level are important components of the project's vision of raising the status of women in cocoa-producing communities. When women and men find themselves constrained by gender stereotypes and norms, inequalities can result, both at home and in the community at large. These can include significant differences in the types of work available for men and women, total work hours in a day (including work at home, with cocoa, and with field crops), and differences in the amount of money a member of the community can earn from working with cocoa. The next phase of the gender dialogue project will include co-educational workshops with men and women together, working with specialized "gender awareness tools" (such as the gender justice diamond and gender balance tree), to examine gender roles in cocoa-producing communities. Participants will discuss and commit to measurable ways they can make changes in their communities that will result in greater equality between men and women.

Cocoa producers in Côte d'Ivoire



ANNEX 1:

WOMEN'S DIALOGUE PLATFORM GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

a. Purpose

This guidance document has been developed in the framework of the FLA-Nestlé Gender Dialogue Platform project. According to the FLA, an effective dialogue platform is one of the means to promote gender integration and work toward gender equality. Nestlé wishes to promote this platform in their sourcing cocoa communities. The objective of the dialogue platform is to promote dialogue amongst women and serve as a mechanism for community members - especially women producers, spouses of male producers, and female worker - to collectively discuss the workplace challenges they face (in the home and community) and the grievances they have, and to collectively identify appropriate solutions in a timely manner, in order to mitigate the risks they often face.

b. Preamble

- The Women's Dialogue Platform is a gender-oriented social forum that is built on the existing social entities of the communities involved in the project.
- The Women's Dialogue Platform differs from women's associations. It can focus on the women's associations, but shall not be limited to them.
- Participation in the Women's Dialogue Platform is free, not subject to membership fees.
- There is no provision for compensation for any occupation in the Women's Dialogue Platform.
- The project liaison individual (Focal Point – FP) in each cooperative is responsible for overseeing the effective functioning of the Local Women Representation and the Sectoral Women Representation.
- Nestlé's staff in charge of gender-related issues is responsible for overseeing the overall platform.

c. Proposed structure of the Women's Dialogue Platform

The FLA has identified that interactions within and outside of the communities mainly take place at four different levels. Therefore, four bodies at various levels of community engagement are recommended in order to achieve effective implementation of the Women's Dialogue Platform.

Level 1: At a sub-division village level (inside the community)

Level 2: At the section level (a section is a group of several villages in the same geographical area).

Level 3: At the departmental level (several groups of villages (sections) form a department and in most cases the cooperative headquarters is located at this level)

Level 4: At the national level (later on, as and when the initiative is extended to other departments, they could collectively establish a national forum)

For efficiency and better supervision by the women's association and the cooperative, these bodies are modeled according to the various levels, as described above.

1. Local Women Representation (LWR)

This is the basic body of the dialogue platform. It is implemented in the community (at the sub-division level) and brings together all women linked to Nestlé (women's associations' members, Nestlé's women cocoa suppliers, and spouses of Nestlé's men cocoa suppliers). LWR will promote the interests of women at the community level.

Operationalizing of LWR

Objective

"Problems are often resolved more easily, cheaply, and efficiently when they are dealt with early and locally."⁷ The objective of the LWR is to serve as a first line of contact and a local reliable structure that women can easily access. The intention is to make available multiple entry points for women in the community to raise their concerns and grievances, like face-to face discussions, written complaints, telephone conversations, and electronic means such as text messages or emails. LWR will offer a variety of approaches, not just a single grievance procedure (such as dialogue, arbitration, and mediation). The complainant will have influence on which approach to select, as described above.

Structure and Coordination

This body will be formed at the community/sub-division level with representation from women's association members (living in that place), who will also play a coordinating

function. The members of the women's association (living in the community) shall select amongst themselves a representative and her deputy to administer the representation. They will be responsible for involving other relevant members of the community, as depicted in Figure 1. It is expected that this body will have at least three members and more based on the willingness and availability of others to join.

Selection Criteria for Representatives

The Sectorial Coordinators shall be selected from the LWR in the section, according to the following criteria: (1) respect amongst fellow women and community members; (2) integrity, (3) discretion and ability to maintain confidentiality; (4) available time to invest in this process; (5) connections with in the local community governance structures; (6) ability to communicate, dialogue and negotiate; (7) known for their arbitration and mediation skills; and (8) ability to promote social dialogue.

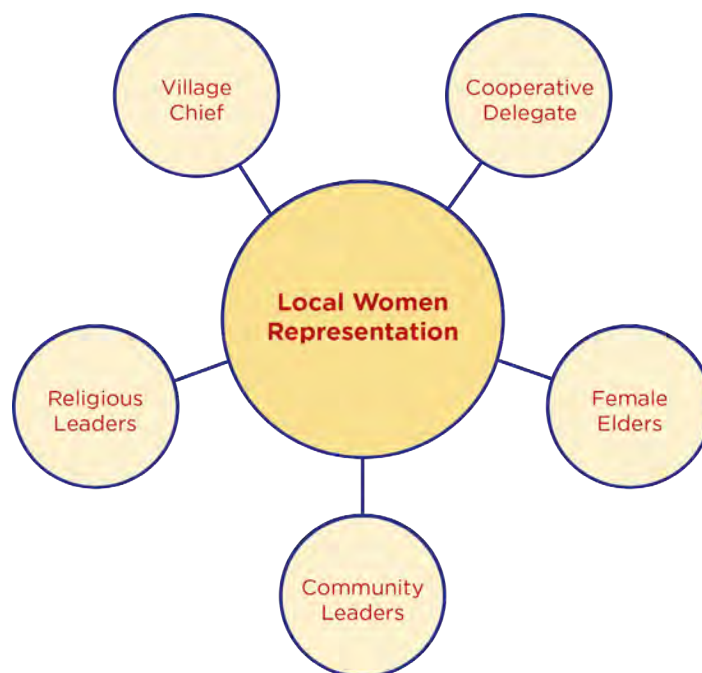


Figure 1: Relational structure of the local representation of women

⁷ <http://www.cao-ombudsman.org/howwework/advisor/documents/implemgrieveng.pdf>

Meeting Frequency

The meetings of the LWR should be held once every month in the beginning while this structure is being set up, as it would require more interfaces to build trust and dialogue amongst its members. These meetings could then be planned once in every two months after six months of their functioning. Interim meetings shall be scheduled based on the grievances and complaints received.

Training

The members of the LWR should be trained on elements of effective dialogue, dialogue forum functioning, and grievance-handling procedures. They should also know how to articulately present the type of issues that the women are facing to the other community stakeholder, as well as to the meeting of the Sectoral Council of Women (SCW).

Reporting back to the Community

Members of the LWR will be responsible for maintaining regular contact with local community leaders such as the delegates of the cooperative, members of village leadership, religious leaders, village female elders, health workers, and school directors. These engagements will be used to inform the others about the types of grievances received and seeking advice on possible solutions (thereby leading to enhances social dialogue in the communities). These interactions will also help clarify expectations about what LWR does and does not do; to encourage people to use the mechanism; to present results; and to gather feedback to improve the grievance system. Information reported back might include types of cases and how they were resolved, and the way the grievance has influenced the women's association's functioning, procedures, operations, and the grievance mechanism itself.

Escalation

In the case the complainant finds their complaint to be not addressed properly or if the LWR finds itself in a situation where they have exhausted all their means to address the complaint but have not been able to do so, both parties can escalate the issue to SCW.

2. Sectoral Council of Women (SCW)

This structure is conceived at the section⁸ level and will oversee all local representations in a selected geographical location (Figure 2). The council is the centralized forum for all LWR. The Sector Council meetings bring together representatives from LWR. The SCW will represent the interests of women in the section.

Operationalizing of SCW***Objective***

The objective of SCW is to serve as central coordination forum for all of the LWR and serve as the second line of contact. The SCW will build a body of knowledge on best practices and solutions based on inputs from all LWR and disseminate that information amongst their stakeholders. It will also serve as a safety net for women in the communities who are not comfortable approaching their LWR, who have approached their LWR and not received a satisfactory follow up, or who need a highest-level support/intervention than the LWR.

Structure and Coordination

The SCW will be formed at the section level (the section is a geographical sub-division of the cooperative. The section is made of group of villages/camps supplying cocoa to the cooperative in the same geographical area. The women's association's board is

⁸ The section is a representation of a group of camps and/or villages.

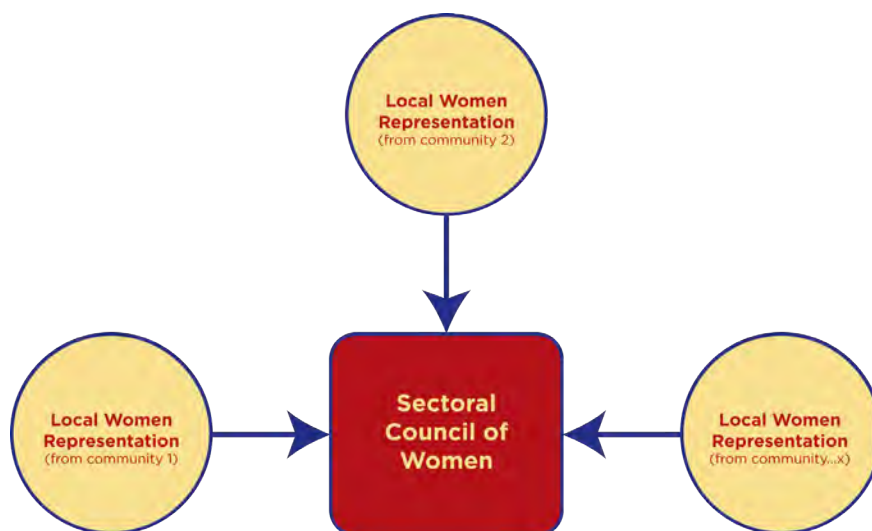


Figure 2: Organizational structure of Women's Dialogue Platform at the section level

also headquartered at the section level). The SCW gathers all representatives from LWR in the section. The representatives from all the LWR of the section shall select the Sectorial Coordinator and her deputy to coordinate the SCW. A third resource shall be selected to serve as the SCW's secretary to take note, communicate information to the LWR, and keep the documentation. The number of SCW is based on the number of LWR in a given section.

Selection Criteria for Representatives

The Sectorial Coordinators shall be selected from the LWR in the section, according to the following criteria: (1) respect amongst fellow women and community members; (2) integrity, (3) discretion and ability to maintain confidentiality; (4) available time to invest in this process; (5) connections with in the local community governance structures; (6) ability to communicate, dialogue and negotiate; (7) known for their arbitration and mediation skills; and (8) ability to promote social dialogue.

Meeting Frequency

Meetings of the SCW will be composed of representation from each of the Local Representative covered by the Section. It will meet once every quarter. At these meetings, each LWR representative shall inform the Council of the realities of its representation and debate major issues that require Council's opinion. The Council is empowered to adopt resolutions for tracking problems that could not resolved locally in a satisfactory manner. Once the process is set up the Council can hold two meetings annually. Interim meetings shall be scheduled based on the grievances and complaints received and based on collective needs of the LWRs.

Training

The members of the SCW should be trained on elements of effective dialogue, dialogue forum functioning, and grievance-handling procedures. They should also know how to articulately present the type of issues that the women are facing to the other community stakeholders. These members should be trained in notes taking and making a short summary document for the cooperative and company.

Reporting back to the Community

The SCW members will maintain close relations with community leaders such as chiefs of the canton, older and respected females of the township, the co-administrator in charge of the section, religious leaders, and community development agents operating in the section.

To keep in view the future development of the concept of a dialogue platform, this guidance document also proposes two additional higher-level structures.

NOTE:

In the framework of the pilot, only the LWR and SCW will be implemented.

3. Departmental Coordination of Women (DCW)

DCW is envisioned as a seven-member coordinating body with representation from all the SCW that are operating at the department (regional) level. Departmental coordination promotes the interests of women at the headquarters of the cooperative and the department. DCW is composed of the Sectorial Coordinators from the SCW. The DCW will meet twice a year to share information, resolve pending issues, conduct assessment, brainstorm new ideas on gender integration and equality, and take stock of their progress. Each SCW will be provided with feedback from these meetings. The DCW's board, selected within the Sectorial Coordinators, will establish relations with authorities and leaders of the region such as the Prefect, the President of the regional councils, the President of the cooperative's board, the Area Manager of Anader, the Regional Directors of relevant gender and Ministry of Social Affairs and relevant civil society organizations.

4. National Coalition of Women (NCW)

NCW is the top level of representation and is implemented at the national level. NCW brings together the DCW Presidents. NCW represents the interests of women at the national level and identifies major challenges faced nationwide. It will meet annually to share information and reflect on the areas that could bring about independence, empowerment, and economic capability amongst women. NCW is connected with all national and international initiatives defending women's rights and advocating for gender promotion.

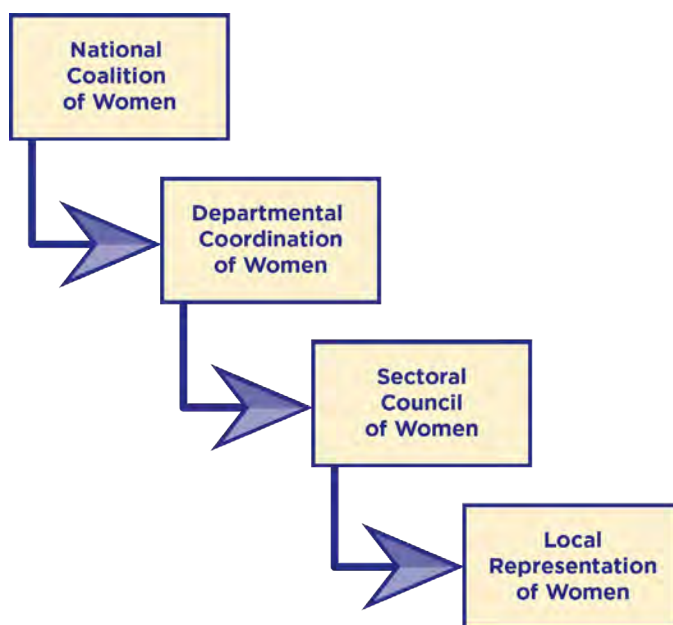


Figure 3: Organizational structure of Women's Dialogue Platform at the national level

d. General steps of a grievance procedure

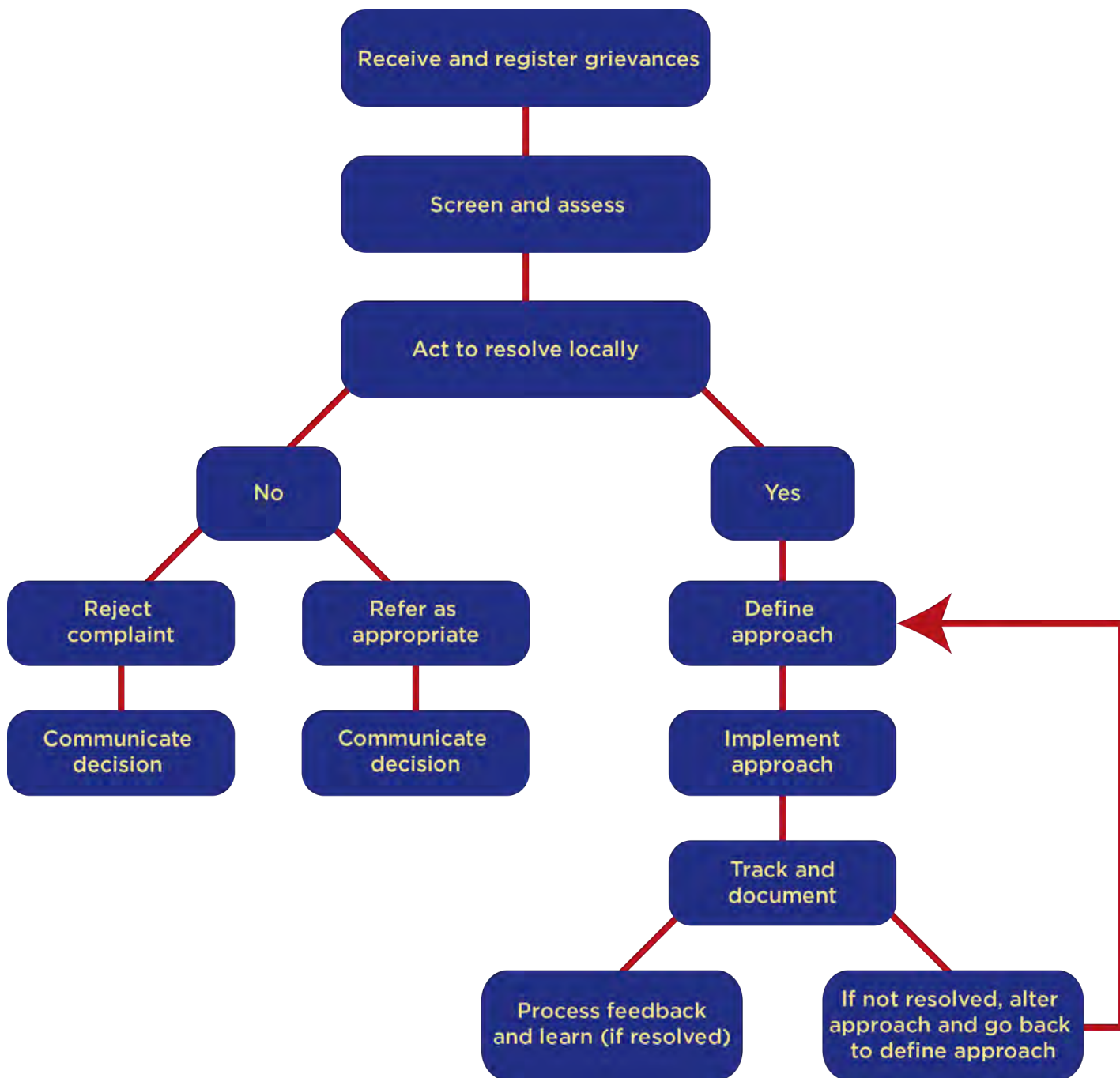


Figure 4: General steps of a grievance procedure
(adapted from Compliance Advisor Ombudsperson (CAO))