

International Journal of Political Science and Public Administration

Publisher's Home Page: https://www.svedbergopen.com/



Research Paper

Open Access

Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM): Design, Prevention Practices, and Effectiveness as Measured Through Public Evaluation in San Jose Municipal Development Projects

Melchor P. Dioso^{1*}, Hilario M. Fontanilla², Liberty R. Mendana³ and Ma. Angelica B. Sunga⁴

Abstract

¹Faculty, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. E-mail: melchordioso@live.com

²Faculty, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. E-mail: lhar_1020832000@yahoo.com

³Faculty, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. E-mail: mendanaliberty@yahoo.com

⁴Faculty, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. E-mail: maangelicabuban@gmail.com

Article Info

Volume 1, Issue 3, December 2021
Received: 06 August 2021
Accepted: 29 November 2021
Published: 05 December 2021
doi: 10.51483/IJPSPA.1.3.2021.28-36

Development projects such as infrastructure developments are carried out by different government agencies down to the lowest level of local government to enhance the quality of basic services delivered to the public. However, such projects do not always engender positive changes in the lives of all the people intended to benefit from them. In order to respond to complaints and disputes due to these circumstances, people should be provided with access to mechanism, especially in addressing their grievances and dissatisfaction. Hence, this study was undertaken to identify the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) design, grievance prevention practices, and effectiveness of GRM employed by the municipal government of San Jose as far as development projects are concerned. The quantitative method (descriptive-correlation) of research was used in this study using self-constructed questionnaires with a respondent of 65 business establishment owners and people residing in areas with on-going and recently finished municipal development projects. Pearson correlation analysis was used in order to determine the relationship between the GRMs design and prevention practices to its effectiveness through public evaluation. The following findings were derived: The GRM design employed by the municipal government of San Jose is "high" as well as in terms of resolution approaches and handling complaints which implies that the GRM design employs various resolution approaches and handles complaints in many ways. The grievance prevention practices are "high" as well as in terms of communication and information to communities and the conduct of community consultations which implies that the GRM employed paved the way to at least prevent some issues and concerns to become disputes and/or complaints. The overall effectiveness of the GRM is "high" which implies that the GRM is highly effective and delivered its purpose to resolve issues and concerns regarding municipal development projects with accessibility, transparency, fairness, and predictability. Lastly, there is a significant relationship between the grievance prevention practices and its effectiveness which means that as grievance prevention practices are employed more during the project implementation, GRM' effectiveness increases.

Keywords: Grievance Redress Mechanism, Grievance Prevention Practices, Municipal Development Projects, Public Evaluation, Public Administration

© 2021 Melchor P. Dioso *et al.* This is an open access article under the CC BY license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if changes were made.

2788-8983/© 2021. Melchor P. Dioso et al. All rights reserved. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

^{*} Corresponding author: Melchor P. Dioso, Faculty, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. E-mail: melchordioso@live.com

1. Introduction

Development projects such as infrastructure development are carried out by different government agencies down to the lowest level of local government to enhance the quality of basic services delivered to the public. Local government units, such as the municipal government, have been given authority by the Local Government Code of 1991 to implement such.

However, such projects do not always engender positive changes in the lives of all the people intended to benefit from them (Pemasiri, 2010 as cited in the ADB, 2010). For instance, road development projects can place some people and business establishments to lose part of their land or property, dwellings, and even cause inconveniences such as traffic or accidents. In order to respond to complaints and disputes due to these circumstances, people should be provided with access to mechanism, especially in addressing their grievances and dissatisfaction, that are legitimate, reliable, transparent, and cost-effective to satisfy their needs and aspirations (Oswald, 2010 as cited in the ADB, 2010).

Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRMs) are defined as organizational systems and resources established by national agencies (or as appropriate, by regional or municipal agencies) to receive and address concerns about the impact of their policies, programs and operations on external stakeholders (UN-REDD Programme, 2015). It is intended not to replace formal and legal proceedings but to resolve issues and disputes that can be solved internally, as long as it is within the bound of the policy. As such it could be stated or unvoiced, written or verbal, legitimate or ridiculous (Malani, 2017).

Organizations usually create a grievance committee to formulate GRMs to facilitate internal conflicts especially between members and/or stakeholders. In the Project Management cycle, creation of such is included in the risk management and personnel management before and after the project completion. As long as implementations of infrastructure and enterprise projects are concerned, these mechanisms addresses issues of Project Affected Persons (PAPs). This includes people or businessperson who donated parcels of land for road development or construction as well as private people affected by these developments.

San Jose, the most progressive and industrialized town in the province of Occidental Mindoro, is a first-class municipality comprising industries such as hotel and restaurants and the center of tourism in the second district of the province. It is now aiming to be a city, and thus, have been executing development projects to support its constituents and the possible influx of tourists and investors. With the "build, build program" of the current administration, LGUs are motivated to implement development projects up to the lowest level of the government. This has resulted to repair and construction of multimillion infrastructure projects within the town.

Due to the fact that infrastructure and enterprise projects take a long time to finish, impact on lives of the people near the project is usually dramatic. Traffics, accidents, noise due to construction, or Right of Way (RoW) are just some usual complaints companies or agencies are receiving. These grievances, influenced by their physical, situational (e.g., employment), and/or social losses, can surface at different stages of the project cycle (Asian Development Bank, 2010). That is why it is necessary that PAPs should have access to mechanisms that are responsive to their complaints and be given satisfactory solutions that benefits them and the project.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to determine the GRM design, resolution approaches, and public evaluation on municipal development projects in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following:

- 1. Identify the GRM design employed by the municipal government of San Jose as far as development projects are concerned, in terms of:
 - Resolution approaches; and
 - b. Handling complaints;
- 2. Determine the extent of grievance prevention practices employed by the municipal government of San Jose as far as development projects are concerned, through:
 - c. Communication and information to communities; and

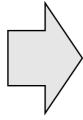
- d. Conduct of community consultations.
- 3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the GRM through public evaluation, in terms of:
 - a. Accessibility;
 - b. Predictability;
 - c. Fairness; and
 - d. Transparency.
- 4. Determine if there is a significant relationship between the GRMs design and prevention practices to its effectiveness as measured through public evaluation.

Grievance Redress Mechanism Design

Resolution approaches; and Handling complaints

Grievance prevention practices

Communication and information to communities; and Conduct of community consultations.



Effectiveness of the Grievance Redress Mechanism

Accessibility Predictability Fairness; and Transparency

3. Methodology

3.1. Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro specifically on areas with on-going and recently finished municipal development projects (finished within the year 2018).

4. Research Design

This study used descriptive-correlation to determine the relationship between the GRMs design and prevention practices to its effectiveness as measured through public evaluation.

4.1. Respondents of the Study

The instrument was distributed among the purposely selected 65 private people and business establishments' owners affected by the projects. Respondents residing on areas with on-going and recently finished municipal development projects (finished within the year 2018) were the criteria for choosing the respondents.

5. Research Instrument and Data Collection

The research instrument was a self-constructed survey-questionnaire guided by reviewing literatures specially the "Designing and Implementing GRM" guide provided by the Asian Development Bank and the GRM evaluation tool by UN-REDD Programme.

The instrument consisted of 3 sections. The first section includes items/questions relative to the GRM design employed by the municipal government of San Jose as far as development projects are concerned and its parameters, having a total of 10 items. The second section includes items/questions relative to the grievance prevention practices and its parameters, having a total of 10 items. The last section includes items/questions relative to the effectiveness of the GRM in general and its parameters, having a total of 20 items. This was answered by the private people and business establishments directly affected by the on-going and finished municipal development projects for the year 2019-2020.

Before distribution, the research instrument was checked by the proponents and some experts in the field of planning and project management. Assistance from the experts was requested. After the final revision/checking, data gathering took place. The data collected was tabulated and analyzed with the help of a statistician.

6. Data Analysis

To determine the GRM design employed, grievance prevention practices, and effectiveness of the GRM, descriptive statistics such as mean was used. To determine the relationship between the GRM design and prevention practices and level of awareness to its effectiveness through public evaluation, Pearson R was used.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1. Grievance Redress Mechanism Design

The following table shows the GRM design employed by the town of San Jose as far as municipal development projects are concerned in terms of resolution approaches and handling complaints.

The grand mean of 3.1 reveals that the GRM design employed by the municipal government of San Jose is "high" which implies that the GRM design employs various resolution approaches and handles complaints in many ways.

Resolution approaches with a 3.2 total mean is interpreted as "high" which implies that resolution approaches are available, and not just one. This has been supported by the Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman or CAO (2008) in its GRM guide for development projects wherein in order to accommodate differences in personal and cultural preferences, the grievance mechanism should offer a variety of grievance resolution approaches, not just a single grievance procedure. Furthermore, among the items under the resolution approaches, "multiple approaches (mediation) for grievance redress are available" got the highest mean of 3.6 which is interpreted as "very high". According to the same source, the grievance mechanism draws upon conflict resolution resources from several areas—those inside the company, traditional and customary systems, and private systems (mediation, conciliation, arbitration). This is also necessary to facilitate the preference of complainants without compromising the process that needs to be undertaken.

Meanwhile, handling complaints got a total mean of 3.1 which is interpreted as "high". This implies that complaints are handled properly. According to World Bank (2012), complaints collected through a GRM are also a good source of information that allows the project management team to adjust the ongoing technical assistance. Proper handling of such would benefit the project in the end. On the other hand, the item "The project team can receive and handle complaints" got the highest mean of 3.2 interpreted as "high" implies that grievance can be resolve at the lowest level because the project team has this knowledge and ability. This is necessary that project team will need to address to avoid recurrent disputes (Asian Development Bank, 2010).

Table 1: Grievance Redress Mechanism Design Employed by the Town of San Jose as Far as Municipal Development Projects are Concerned					
Grievance Redress Mechanism Design	Mean	Verbal Interpretation			
Resolution approaches					
Multiple approaches (mediation) for grievance redress are available	3.6	Very High			
Negotiations facilitated through a third party is an option	2.8	High			
There can be referrals to other judicial and administrative processes	2.8	High			
Direct negotiations and dialogue between the APs (affected persons) and the relevant agency or agencies is an option	3.5	Very High			
Approach includes investigation of a complaint through review of documents, field investigation, assessments from technical agencies, and/or interviews of different parties	3.1	High			
Total Mean	3.2	High			
Handling Complaints					
Complaints can be received directly through APs or third parties such as associations, unions, etc.	2.9	High			
Complaints can be forwarded anonymously	3.0	High			

Table 1 (Cont.)			
Grievance Redress Mechanism Design	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	
Complainants are informed if complaints are rejected or accepted based on their assessment	3.1	High	
The project team can receive and handle complaints	3.2	High	
Complaints are assessed or verified through requiring supporting documents from the complainants and/or field investigation.	3.0	High	
Total Mean	3.1	High	
Grand Mean	3.1	High	
Legend: $1.0 - 1.49 = \text{very low}$, $2.5 - 3.49 = \text{high}$ 1.5 - 2.49 = low 3.5 - 4.0 = very high			

7.2. Extent of Grievance Prevention Practices

The following table shows the grievance prevention practices employed by San Jose in its municipal development projects in terms of communication and information to communities and conduct of community consultations.

Grievance prevention practices with a grand mean of 3.2 and is interpreted as "high" implies that the GRM employed paved the way to at least prevent some issues and concerns to become disputes and/or complaints. According to Asian Development Bank (2010), grievances cannot be avoided entirely, but much can be done to reduce them to manageable numbers and reduce their impacts. Implementers should be aware and accept that grievances do occur, that dealing with them is part of the work, and that they should be considered in a work plan.

Communication and information to communities with a total mean of 3.2 and is interpreted as "high" implies that San Jose in its development projects gave importance in giving right information and regular communication to the community. Moreover, what's most important is the "accurate and adequate information about a project and its activities are properly communicated" with a mean of 3.6 interpreted as "very high" so as to prevent confusions and further questioning. Information materials such as brochures, tarpaulin or posters should be present in the area (NCDP, ND).

Conduct of community consultations with a total mean of 3.2 and is interpreted as high implies that San Jose in its development projects regularly conducts community consultations and make sure everyone is informed before the project implementation especially the prospective Affected Persons or APs. Regular communication and interaction

Table 2: Extent of Grievance Prevention Practices Employed by the Town of San Jose as Far as Municipal Development Projects are Concerned				
Grievance Prevention Practices	Mean	Verbal Interpretation		
Communication and Information to Communities				
Accurate and adequate information about a project and its activities are properly communicated	3.6	Very High		
Appropriate communication channels such through radio is used.	3.1	High		
The information disseminated is in a form and language(s) understandable to affected people	3.1	High		
Communication to communities is in a regular basis, more importantly, before, during, or after the project implementation.	3.0	High		
Negative and positive impact/effects of the project before its implementation is properly communicated.	3.3	High		
Total Mean	3.2	High		

Table 2 (Cont.)				
Grievance Prevention Practices	Mean	Verbal Interpretation		
Conduct of Community Consultations				
Community consultations are conducted before the project implementation.	3.5	Very High		
There is an opportunity for community members to express concerns such as clarification of issues and responding to it.	3.3	High		
Resolution to problems and issues are available and accessible.	3.1	High		
Project managers and staff provides are equipped with good communications skills.	3.3	High		
Payment (in case of the exercise of power of eminent domain) is properly discussed.	3.0	High		
Total Mean	3.2	High		
Grand Mean	3.2	High		
Legend: $1.0 - 1.49 = \text{very low}$ $2.5 - 3.49 = \text{high}$ $1.5 - 2.49 = \text{low}$ $3.5 - 4.0 = \text{very high}$	•			

with the relevant stakeholders is necessary to get feedbacks and hear concerns from beneficiaries that would mitigate disputes (Environmental Resources Management, 2018). Moreover, as per one of the respondents, some of these projects were also discussed during the Barangay Assembly where almost everyone is present. This gave the people that will be affected enough time to prepare.

7.3. Effectiveness of the Grievance Redress Mechanism

The following shows the effectiveness of the GRM as assessed by the PAPs in terms of its accessibility, predictability, fairness, and transparency.

The overall effectiveness of the GRM is 3.2 interpreted as "high". This implies that the GRM is highly effective and delivered its purpose to resolve issues and concerns regarding municipal development projects. Accessibility, predictability, fairness, and transparency are foremost predictors of GRM effectiveness as provided by the UN-REDD Programme.

In terms of accessibility with a mean of 3.1 interpreted as "high", this implies that the GRM made sure that GRM is accessible to all types of complainants, without bias and discrimination. This is necessary because every member of the community or groups should have access to the grievance procedure (Environmental Resources Management, 2018).

In terms of predictability with a mean of 3.3 interpreted as "high", this implies that the GRM is responsive to the needs of all complainants. According to the World Bank (2013), predictability includes setting clear timetables for responses, and putting in place corporate tracking to ensure all grievances are responded to and addressed (if not ultimately resolved) in a timely manner. This statement supported the items of predictability wherein all got "high" interpretations.

In terms of fairness with a mean of 3.2 interpreted as "high", this implies that the GRM employed is treated with impartiality, no bias, and no discrimination. It should explicitly assure potential users that the mechanism will not impede their access to other judicial or administrative remedies and that they are granted the same treatment as of others (Environmental Resources Management, 2018).

As per the UN-REDD Programme (2015), transparency should be assessed in terms of the public availability and accessibility of documentation of the GRM's mandate, procedures, and case experience, as shown in the item "the complainants are kept informed on the progress being made to resolve grievances" where it was "very high" as per the respondents. Also, the community must be aware of all complaints, grievances and problems reported; must be involved in their redress; and must be kept informed on progress made in resolving grievances (NCDP, ND).

Table 3: Effectiveness	of the	Grievance	Redress	Mechanism	as Far	as	Municipal Development Projects are
Concerned							

Effectiveness of the Grievance Redress Mechanism	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	
Accessibility			
GRM is accessible to all stakeholders, irrespective of their remoteness, language, education or income level	3.4	High	
There is a range of contact options	3.0	High	
Appropriately advertised and communicated to project affected people	2.9	High	
Grievances can be filed anonymously	3.2	High	
Total Mean	3.1	High	
Predictability			
Responsive to the needs of all complainants	3.4	High	
Offers a clear procedure in forwarding and/or conveying complaints	3.2	High	
Offers clarity on the types of results it can (and cannot) deliver	3.2	High	
Total Mean	3.3	High	
Fairness			
Grievances are treated with confidentiality	3.5	Very High	
Grievances are assessed impartially	3.0	High	
Grievances are handled transparently	3.2	High	
Total Mean	3.2	High	
Transparency			
Results of assessment of complaints can be requested	2.8	High	
The complainants are kept informed on the progress being made to resolve grievances	3.5	Very High	
Records can be requested to further support complaints and grievances.	3.1	High	
Total Mean	3.1	High	
Grand Mean	3.2	High	

1.5 - 2.49 = low 3.5 - 4.0 = very high

7.4. Relationship Between the Grievance Redress Mechanism Design and its Effectiveness

The following table shows the relationship between the GRM design and its effectiveness. Overall, it reveals that there is no significant relationship between the two (sig. = 0.911). This implies that the GRM design may not affect the effectiveness of the GRM.

7.5. Relationship Between the Extent of Grievance Prevention Practices and its Effectiveness

The following table shows the relationship between the extent of grievance prevention practices and its effectiveness. Overall, it reveals that there is significant relationship between the two (sig. = 0.044). Moreover, the result shows

positive relationship (b = 0.266) which means that as grievance prevention practices are employed more during the project implementation, GRMs' effectiveness increases.

This has been supported by UN-REDD Programme (2015) wherein strategies and actions necessary to reduce the risk of grievances and improve GRM performance includes critical planning in stakeholder engagement and oversight, promote ongoing dialogue and joint commitment to grievance prevention and resolution among other relevant external stakeholders. They also added that it includes addressing limitations on access, transparency, and predictability may improve GRM performance.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.	Interpretation	
Resolution approaches	Accessibility	0.066	0.601	Not Significant	
	Predictability	-0.106	0.402	Not Significant	
	Fairness	0.201	0.107	Not Significant	
	Transparency	-0.115	0.364	Not Significant	
Handling complaints	Accessibility	-0.059	0.639	Not Significant	
	Predictability	264	0.034	Not Significant	
	Fairness	-0.090	0.474	Not Significant	
	Transparency	0.080	0.578	Not Significant	
Overall Grievance Redress Mechanism Design	Overall Effectiveness of the	0.070	0.911	Not Significant	

 $\textbf{Note:} ** \textbf{ Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); and * \textbf{ Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).}$

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.	Interpretation Significant	
Communication and	Accessibility	0.425	0.049		
information to	Predictability	0.533	0.024	Significant	
communities	Fairness	-0.010	0.939	Not Significant	
	Transparency	0.334*	0.010	Significant	
Conduct of community	Accessibility	-0.032	0.799	Not Significant	
consultations	Predictability	-0.261	0.035	Significant	
	Fairness	0.058	0.647	Not Significant	
	Transparency	0.348	0.050	Significant	
Overall Extent of Grievance prevention practices	Overall Effectiveness of the Grievance Redress Mechanism	0.266	0.044	Significant	

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); and * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the result of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The GRM design employed by the municipal government of San Jose is "high" as well as its resolution approaches
 and handling complaints which implies that the GRM design employs various resolution approaches and handles
 complaints in many ways.
- 2. The grievance prevention practices is "high" as well as its communication and information to communities and the conduct of community consultations which implies that the GRM employed paved the way to at least prevent some issues and concerns to become disputes and/or complaints.
- The overall effectiveness of the GRM is "high" which implies that the GRM is highly effective and delivered its
 purpose to resolve issues and concerns regarding municipal development projects with accessibility, transparency,
 fairness, and predictability.
- 4. There is a significant relationship between the grievance prevention practices and its effectiveness which means that as grievance prevention practices are employed more during the project implementation, GRMs' effectiveness increases.
 - Based on the findings, the researchers recommended the following:
- 1. The project team or any special unit handling the GRM may inform or educate the APs regarding complaints that could be referred to judicial and administrative bodies and is beyond their capacity such as criminal/civil acts that happened during the project implementation.
- 2. The project team or any special unit handling the GRM may give emphasis in the explanation or discussion of payments in the RoW because some may be confused/misinformed, so as to prevent/mitigate disputes.
- 3. The project team or any special unit handling the GRM may discuss or explain to the complainants or requesting party regarding the limitations to the request of the results of assessment of complaints.
- 4. The project team or any special unit handling the GRM may continue creating resolution approaches and handle complaints more effectively as these are the core purpose of why GRM exists.

References

- Asian Development Bank (2010). Designing and Implementing Grievance Redress Mechanisms: A guide for Implementors of Transport Projects in Sri Lanka. Retrieved on December 27, 2020 from www.adb.org/documents/designing-and-implementing-grievance-redress-mechanisms-guide-implementors-transport-project
- Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman or CAO (2008). A Guide to Designing and Implementing Grievance Mechanisms for Development Projects. Retrieved on January 21, 2020 from www.cao-ombudsman.org
- Environmental Resources Management (2018). *Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Grievance Redress Mechanism*. Retrieved on November 21, 2020 from http://www.erm.com
- Malani, P. (2017). *Grievance Redressal Mechanism: Need for Developing an Adequate Machinery for Redressal of Employee's Grievance*. Retrieved on January 25, 2020 from www.cjcmr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/4.3.7.pdf
- National Community Driven Development Program or NCDP (ND). *Grievance Redress System: A Public Accountability Mechanism*. Retrieved on February 21, 2020 from http://www.ncdp.org
- United Nations (2015). Establishing and Strengthening Grievance Redress Mechanism. FCPF/UN-REDD Programme. Retrieved on January 25, 2020 from www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2015/september/FCPF_UN_REDDWebReady.pdf
- World Bank (2012). CDD TOOLKIT: Governance and Accountability Dimensions. Retrieved December 21, 2020 from http://documents.worldbank.org
- World Bank (2012). *Global Review of Grievance Redress Mechanisms in World Bank Projects*. Retrieved December 21, 2020 from http://documents.worldbank.org

Cite this article as: Melchor P. Dioso, Hilario M. Fontanilla, Liberty R. Mendana and Ma. Angelica B. Sunga (2021). Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM): Design, Prevention Practices, and Effectiveness as Measured Through Public Evaluation in San Jose Municipal Development Projects. *International Journal of Political Science and Public Administration*. 1(3), 28-36. doi: 10.51483/IJPSPA.1.3.2021.28-36.