

Engagement in the Workplace: Information for Managers

Well-functioning grievance mechanisms gather workers' views through participatory monitoring tools that lead to clear resolution of issues and protections for the workers sharing grievances.

- Grievance processes provide a framework for addressing grievances of workers that relate to all stages of their employment, including during recruitment.
 - The ability to access grievance processes should be included in the business code of conduct.
- Processes can take different forms, formal or informal:
 - Formal procedures include grievances reported to human resources, management, a helpline, or worker representatives.
 - Informal procedures are typically conversations, unwritten and undocumented, between a worker and manager.

Resource: [Global Seafood Assurances: Worker Voice on Fishing Vessels](#)

Worker voice is workers' freedom and ability to represent their own interests through the communication of their priorities, needs, and concerns to their management to elicit a response and resolution. The term "worker voice" derives from the organized labor movement, with trade unions historically being the main conduit for it to occur.

Source:

- [RISE: Worker Voice Continuum](#)
- Worker voice mechanisms are needed because workers should always have a way to be heard by their employers. Employers should also value honest feedback from their employees about how the business could improve. Workers regularly observe different issues and conditions within a company's operations, which is an asset that can contribute to management decision-making.

Genuine worker representation means that workers and their representative organizations are involved in all aspects of workplace management and - for people at sea - real-time, worker-driven monitoring occurs.

Source: [ILRF: Taking Stock](#)

- Programs that attempt to ensure decent working conditions must include workers and their representative organizations at every step of the process to ensure the measures put in place address the needs of the workers the program purports to benefit.

- Source: [ETI: Entry points to worker representation](#)

Participatory negotiation means the inclusion of local, representative worker organizations from the initial stages of negotiations. Although this can be more challenging in sectors with low levels of unionization, such as fishing, representatives' meaningful participation in negotiations can help improve working conditions.

- Ideally, programs involving labor rights would be implemented through union recognition and collective bargaining because the framework already exists for a legally recognized relationship between employers and worker organizations. However, the role of trade unions can be complex, given the industrial relations context in each country and there are low levels of unionization in certain sectors, such as fishing. In countries with restrictions on freedom of association contrary to international standards, such as prohibitions on migrant workers organizing or leading unions, representative worker centers or labor NGOs can play an important role. It is essential to have representative organizations at the table and for the facilitators of the negotiations to have a good understanding of the dynamics. For example, the dynamics between employers and different unions, including independent unions and any government or employer-controlled unions. Inclusion of global union federations – such as the ITF and IUF in the fishing and processing sectors – can help navigate complex worker dynamics on the ground.

Resource: [ILO Q&A on when law prohibits full recognition of the right to freedom of association](#)

Full participation in workplace-centered strategies and grievance processes includes monitoring, access to company reports, and handling grievances.

- Workers need to be fully involved in all aspects of workplace monitoring and grievance programs so their perspectives are fully reflected. They need to be active participants in assessment processes, both as sources of information and in the collection of data. The results of audits should be made available to them, and they should be part of any discussions or other work on remediation, including identifying root causes of issues, proposals for solutions, and monitoring the implementation of agreed upon actions.

Co-governance means equal standing and voting rights between worker and industry representatives on governing bodies and their related mechanisms.

See [Collaborate](#) for more information about mechanisms for collaboration between employers and worker groups

- New models of co-governance between buyers, suppliers and worker representatives – such as the [Fair Food Program](#), developed by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, and the [2019 Lesotho's Agreement](#) – are producing demonstrable reductions in what were once common, and sometimes deadly, exploitative practices.