



PALMERA

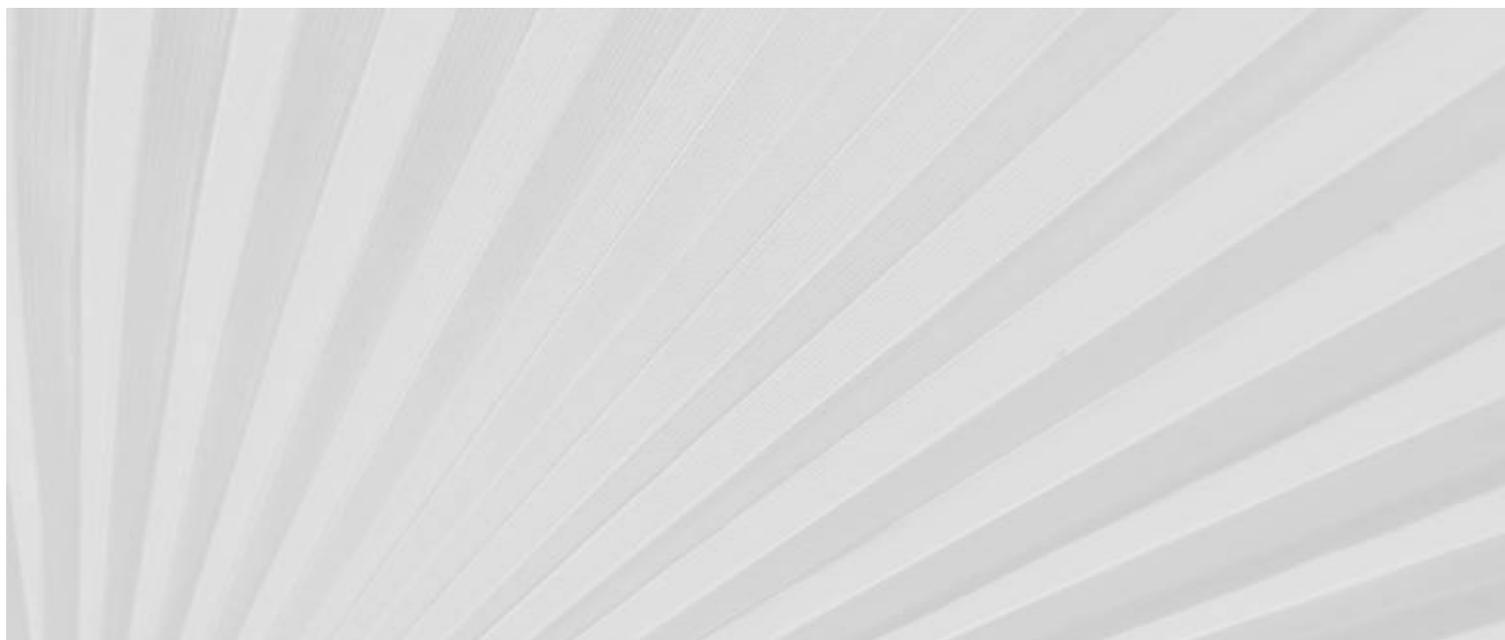
INNOVATING
FOR SUSTAINABLE
LIVELIHOODS



Human Resources Policy

Palmera

FEBRUARY 2017, VERSION 3



Introduction and context

Palmera Projects (**Palmera**) relies on the goodwill and commitment of our people. As a volunteer-based organisation, Palmera's staff and volunteers are encouraged to operate with a high level of flexibility. The Human Resources Policy (**the Policy**) ensures that Palmera promotes the wellbeing of its people so that our human capital can continue to be our strongest and most effective asset.

Human resources in Palmera's Strategic Plan

In particular, Palmera Strategic Plan 2016-2020 notes that Palmera's key team priorities over the next 5 years will include:

- Strengthening the management team to meet the needs of the organisation; and
- Developing a program to more effectively engage volunteers on our on the ground operations to support local partner capacity development.

It is Palmera's aim to continue to utilise the skills and enthusiasm of volunteers. However as Palmera progresses we will also consider the need for paid positions where the use of volunteers would be less effective and/or the employment of staff would increase our ability to deliver on our mission and reduce risk to the sustainability of our organisation.

Palmera's commitment

Palmera is committed to providing an inclusive, non-discriminatory, safe and positive environment for our people to contribute their skills and experience in a meaningful way towards Palmera's vision and mission.

Palmera recognises the diversity of its staff and volunteers and aims to provide a work environment that recognises, respects, and values individuals and enables each person to work effectively and safely towards the achievement of our and their goals. Palmera expects all staff members to act professionally and respectfully at all times and adhere to any professional codes of conduct and behaviour that apply to Palmera.

Scope of policy

The Policy sets out the requirements that Palmera must comply with in relation to its staff and volunteers. "Staff and volunteers" is the broad term used to refer to the individuals who carry out work for Palmera. The word 'staff' is used to describe the employees, contractors or volunteers who fulfil distinct roles within Palmera's Organisational Structure. These staff members are referred to as the 'hub' in the hub and spoke model. The word 'volunteers' is used to describe the volunteers (or the 'spokes') who assist in specific or short term roles, assignments or tasks and who support the staff.

Recruitment

Palmera must recruit staff and volunteers in accordance with the following key principles:

- **Diversity:** Palmera has an inclusive approach in assessing candidates for staff and volunteer positions so as to improve the quality of our work by maximising diversity, enriching the culture of the organisation and drawing upon a variety of skills, perspectives and experience. Palmera welcomes candidates regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, educational background, abilities or disabilities.
- **Fairness and transparency:** Palmera must be fair and transparent in its selection/appointment process. Clear job descriptions must be communicated to prospective candidates. All candidates must be assessed objectively against the criteria for the role. We must provide feedback on the selection process to candidates if requested.
- **Talent:** Palmera aims to recruit the most suitably qualified and experienced candidates. It is insufficient to recruit candidates based on word of mouth or existing relationships. Palmera

must obtain copies of candidates' resumes and outlines of relevant development, not-for-profit or fundraising experience.

- **Risk management:** Palmera must screen candidates for staff positions in the following manner:
 - references should be obtained from at least two sources, one of whom must be a recent employer of the candidate;
 - members of Palmera's network may be approached to provide feedback about the candidate;
 - any candidates who are likely to be working with children in any of Palmera's Projects must undergo a Working with Children Check (or another suitable form of check if the candidate is based overseas);
 - candidates travelling to or based overseas must submit to a police check;
 - candidates based overseas for whom background or police checks may not be readily available should be asked to list prior employment history so that employment references can be checked.

Induction and training

Induction

Upon commencement with Palmera, staff and volunteers must undergo an induction process that must guide them through:

- the Staff Induction pack;
- key organisational and operational policies, including the Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct, the Anti-Terrorism Policy, the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy, the Complaints Handling Policy, the Conflict of Interest Policy, the Non-Development policy, the Policy on the Portrayal of Local People, the Human Resources Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy;
- the ACFID Code of Conduct;
- key procedures relevant to their role; and
- the use of Google Drive and the file saving protocol.

Training

Throughout their time with Palmera, staff and volunteers are encouraged to develop their skills through:

- undergoing training and participating in courses or networking events specific to their roles (although these may not be funded by Palmera);
- sharing knowledge with the Palmera team through disseminating recent developments relevant to their roles;
- shadowing a staff member in the senior role above theirs.

Leadership, support and management

Palmera's staff and volunteers must be supported in their roles so that the organisation as a whole can achieve its mission. Our management ('hub') team is expected to support staff and volunteers in carrying out their role effectively, to develop their potential and to acknowledge good performance.

Clear role descriptions must be provided to staff members so that expectations of employees are made clear from the outset.

Consultation and communication

Palmera encourages dialogue with staff on matters affecting their roles so as to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our policies and practices.

An interchange of ideas and suggestions is always encouraged and this is achieved by working with staff and volunteers to tailor their work processes and procedures in a way that is effective for them and the organisation.

Staff must be consulted when we develop new policies or procedures that affect their roles and how they work.

Staff are encouraged to participate in the Palmera Planning Days to provide input into organisational strategy and development of specific strategy and goals relevant to their role.

Performance

Palmera monitors the performance of its staff and volunteers on an ongoing basis to help them achieve the levels of performance required to meet Palmera's and the staff members own objectives. Regular catch ups with the management team and CEO are encouraged so that the staff member can receive feedback on their role and guidance on how to develop further.

Palmera takes a strengths based approach to providing feedback, promote a clear understanding of the requirements of the staff or volunteer position, the necessary standards of performance, and provide feedback on performance. Regular catch ups are also an opportunity to identify potential problems at an early stage so they can be addressed and to identify professional and personal development needs relevant to Palmera's requirements.

A satisfactory level of performance is required from all staff and volunteers of Palmera, at all times. If a staff member's performance is unsatisfactory, appropriate action will be taken.

Code of Conduct

Unacceptable Behaviour

Palmera has a zero-tolerance policy towards the following behaviour which it considers as unacceptable:

- **Bullying:** Bullying is behaviour that a reasonable person in the circumstances would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine, threaten, degrade, offend or intimidate a person.
- **Violence:** Violence is a physical assault or attack by direct or indirect application of force that creates a risk to health and safety.
- **Sexual harassment:** Sexual harassment is when a person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours to another person or any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to another person.
- **Discrimination:** Discrimination is unlawful and against Palmera policy. Discrimination is essentially any practice that makes distinctions between individuals or group as so as to disadvantage some or advantage others.
- **Harassment and vilification:** Harassment is any behavior that offends, intimidates, humiliates or embarrasses another person. It may be physical or verbal in nature and may occur during a single incident or repeatedly over time.
- **Corruption and fraud:** Fraud is dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means. Corruption is the exchange of improper gifts or use of personal connections to obtain favours.

Allegations, issues or concerns raised regarding an employee and the above behaviour must be investigated with fairness, transparency and confidentiality so that a determination can be made and disciplinary action taken if appropriate.

Misconduct

When alleged misconduct is raised, an appropriate Palmera representative will establish quickly and confidentially the likely facts of the matter and if this provides support for the allegation s/he will arrange a meeting with the staff or volunteer member and provide them with the relevant facts.

The staff or volunteer member will be given the opportunity to provide a response for consideration by the CEO. Where the staff member is a volunteer working overseas, they may be asked to suspend their volunteer involvement during the period of response and consideration.

Staff who admit to or are found to have committed misconduct may be asked to cease their engagement with Palmera and may include summary dismissal. Where the misconduct has involved a loss or impairment to Palmera, the staff member will be asked to make reparation.

Misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- theft or fraud;
- gross professional misconduct;
- failure to maintain the confidentiality of client information;
- deception or dishonesty
- unauthorised entry to computer records, abuse of the email system, infecting the computer system with a virus,
- failure to adhere to Palmera's policies;
- serious negligence, which causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury;
- insubordination;
- conduct which may bring Palmera's name into disrepute; and/or
- arrest and/or conviction of a serious crime.

Allegations of professional misconduct will be notified to the appropriate professional organisation.

Grievance procedure

Palmera believes that open communication is essential in order to maintain good relations and to create an environment in which cooperation and trust are fostered. We aim to ensure that staff and volunteers grievances and disputes are resolved fairly through open and honest discussions. All staff and volunteers are made aware of complaints procedures through familiarisation with the Complaints Handling Policy and Whistleblowing Policy on induction.

Following is a procedure to ensure that all staff and volunteers are treated fairly and consistently and grievances are resolved as expediently as possible:

1. Staff member raises the issue with the person directly involved (where appropriate)
2. Where it is not appropriate to raise the issue with the person directly involved or that course of action fails, the staff member should discuss the grievance with the CEO or Chairperson of the Board
3. CEO or Chairperson of the Board thoroughly and objectively investigates the issue as soon as possible
4. CEO or Chairperson of the Board discusses findings and potential solutions with the staff member.

Work health and safety

Palmera is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all its staff, volunteers, members, supporters and visitors participating in a in a Palmera event, meeting, project, overseas field visit or any other Palmera undertaking (a **Palmera Activity**). At the same time, our staff and volunteers acknowledge that they are aware of their individual responsibility to manage their own safety and well-being by taking reasonable care for their own safety at all times.

Overseas field visits

Before an overseas field visit, all staff and volunteers must:

1. re-read certain Palmera policies including this Policy and the Child Protection Policy;
2. undergo a health check and obtain the necessary vaccinations and medication specific to the country of travel;
3. obtain and show proof of travel insurance to cover the period of travel;
4. obtain necessary visas and travel documentation for the entire period of their travel;
5. receive a briefing from Palmera as to risks relevant to their travel and the measures to put into place to mitigate those risks;
6. agree a communications plan with Palmera so that communication can be maintained consistently throughout the trip;
7. agree a security plan with evacuation procedures; and
8. Consult the government travel advisory at www.smartraveller.gov.au or www.safetravel.gov.nz, and register your travel details,

During an overseas field visit, all staff and volunteers must:

1. Follow any reasonable instruction by Palmera relating to security
2. Ensure that Palmera knows where you can be contacted at all times, especially in the event of any security risk or emergency.
3. Monitor and take account of the regular travel advisories issued by DFAT (Aust) or MFAT (NZ) and take local advice
4. Exercise all reasonable caution when undertaking any activities that may result in harm or injury to you or others
5. Take all reasonable precautions to protect their own property and that of Palmera. For example, no valuables should be left unattended in local accommodation or vehicles and cash should be kept to a minimum.
6. Report all incidents to the CEO and complete timely and detailed incident reports

On return from an overseas field visit, staff and volunteers must have a debriefing session with Palmera so that any valuable experiences from the trip can be incorporated in planning future trips.

Security

Palmera encourages security-conscious behaviour to ensure that all staff and volunteers, confidential documents, equipment and personal belongings are secure. Staff and volunteers are responsible for personal property and Palmera is not responsible for any loss staff or volunteers may suffer.

Injuries

Any staff or volunteer who sustains injury whilst undertaking a Palmera Activity must notify the CEO as soon as practicable of the injury and the circumstances that gave rise to it.

Palmera must notify either their public liability insurer or workers' compensation insurer (in the event an injury was sustained by an employee or contractor).

Insurance

For so long as Palmera retains employees, Palmera must maintain a Workers' Compensation Insurance Policy.

In accordance with workers' compensation insurance legislation, the Workers Compensation Insurance Policy shall cover all Palmera employees and certain contractors (who are deemed to be workers for the purposes of workers compensation legislation). However, volunteers will not be considered "workers" for the purpose of Palmera's Workers' Compensation Insurance Policy.

Staff members covered by Palmera's Workers Compensation Insurance Policy will be able to make a claim for any injury sustained during a Palmera Activity if their carrying out of employment duties during the Palmera Activity was "a substantial contributing factor to the injury".

The staff member may also be covered for any injury sustained in any journey to or from the Palmera Activity as long as the injury "is not attributable to the serious and willful misconduct of the worker".

Palmera must obtain public liability insurance so as to cover claims made by members of the public or volunteers for any injuries sustained during any Palmera events.

Conflict of Interest

Palmera staff and volunteers who have other employment or voluntary positions should ensure that there is no conflict of interest between their positions.

Palmera has a commitment to fostering ethical awareness, conduct and decision-making. Staff and volunteers need to be mindful that their actions and decisions are legal, consistent with Palmera policies and do not involve any actual or appearance of a conflict of interest.

Aside from any agreed remuneration, staff may not make a financial gain as a result of working with Palmera. Staff must not grant favourable treatment to contractors or suppliers, or operate another business from Palmera resources.

Confidentiality and copyright

Elements of Palmera's work are confidential or otherwise sensitive. Staff must keep confidential to Palmera any work, work product, access codes, information and communications. This also applies when Palmera works with other organisations that may have similar requirements. Confidential information regarding Palmera must not be retained physically or electronically in locations that are not secure. All electronic records must be protected with appropriate and approved security measures including passwords and access restrictions.

Palmera owns the copyright of all work and work products, and it remains with Palmera on termination of engagement. Palmera and its staff must also comply with the Copyright Act 1968.

References

Palmera will provide references for staff and volunteers that have contributed a minimum of 4 hours per week for at least 6 months to the organization or where a very specialised skill has been provided and the reference sought is for validation of that skill.

Palmera has established a policy on references as many volunteers undertake short term volunteering purely for obtaining a reference. Given this, Palmera has created a policy on providing references to ensure fairness and integrity to those who volunteer with us.

Where references are provided they will follow the guidelines below:

- it will reflect the actual work conducted,
- it will reflect the actual period for which the work was conducted,
- it will be provided by the "Manager" responsible for the project or event to which the skills/volunteering relates to.

All references provided by a Palmera Manager will require approval by the CEO.

Reviewing the human resources policy

This policy is to be reviewed every three years, or earlier if appropriate, and lessons learned incorporated into subsequent versions.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Date created	2013
Date last reviewed and updated	February 2017
Signed off by	Abarna / Sagar
Approved by board (if necessary)	No
Date next review	October 2019

Date	Version	Revision Description	Reviewed/Updated by
2013	1	Original	Abarna / Niveda
July 2014	2	Revised	Niveda
February 2017	3	Revised	Sagar