



Palms Australia

# Philosophy, Policies, and Volunteer Code of Conduct

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## About Palms Australia

### Our Vision

People cooperating across cultures in order to achieve a just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful world free of poverty.

### Our Mission

Facilitate, and be open to mutual formation and inspiration, with those who volunteer to:

1. Advance the awareness, enthusiasm and involvement of Australian and international communities in shared action to achieve just, sustainable, and peaceful development.
2. Participate in an exchange of knowledge and skills to meet the requests of communities seeking to reduce poverty by developing the capacities of their people and organisations.

### Our Values

Solidarity is the key energising value of Palms Australia. Solidarity is a principle arising out of our reflection that all living creatures are interdependent and that relationship invites responsibility and therefore solidarity.

Solidarity involves liberation of victims, oppressors and innocent bystanders, allowing all life to live to the full and is not about a vague sort of compassion or shallow distress at others' misfortune. The more who achieve this potential in life, the greater will be the contribution



of all to a common or universal good.

In valuing solidarity we value love that is lived out in respect for the dignity of all life. We value humility lived out in personal integrity and responsibility. We value justice lived out in a willingness to challenge structures that prevent collective participation in creative solutions.

The interaction of these values calls us to further values. The interface of love and humility suggests transparency. The interface of humility and justice suggests ecological sensitivity. The interface of justice and love suggests participative community building. The interface of love, humility and justice gives grace to the value of peace. Movement to such deep peace will be a movement to solidarity.

## Development Policy and Philosophy

Palms Australia engages and links people wanting to build a just, sustainable and interdependent world with communities requesting assistance to alleviate and eradicate poverty and to overcome oppression, disadvantage and injustice.

### Development Philosophy

Development is an economic, social, cultural, spiritual and ecological process that encourages the empowerment and wellbeing of individuals, communities and organisations to reduce poverty, enjoy and nurture basic human rights and independence, and work towards a future where the interdependence of economic and ecological sustainability is achieved.

Palms Australia believes that all people contribute to their own development and we can contribute to the development of others only when invited to do so. Sustainable development derives from the co-ordinated and negotiated plans of the local community. Palms Australia views partnerships with local communities as part of an on-going and dynamic process of interaction, dialogue and negotiation within a work environment.

Palms supports a development by preparing qualified and experienced professionals to build the capacity of individuals and institutions within a community. With the main objective being to bring about the transfer of skills and knowledge to communities, Palms volunteers work side by side with the local people to develop the local skills and knowledge necessary for the communities to become self-reliant. All communities served by Palms seek a future without dependence on money and handouts.

### Aims

The Palms Australia development philosophy is articulated through the aims of Palms Australia

To provide the skills of Australians to requesting communities where those skills make a sustainable improvement to the quality of life of the materially poor and disadvantaged.

To assist Australians to understand the economic, social & cultural aspirations of people with whom we engage.

To contribute to partnerships that work towards a just and sustainable world.

To encourage participant relationships in their communities through the development of self-awareness, interdependence, and intellectual, ethical & spiritual insight.

### Requesting Communities

Palms Australia receives requests from communities or organisations wishing to build their organisational capacity and/or achieve a sustainable and self-defined future. Palms Australia calls these communities and organisations “Requesting Communities”. Requesting communities, through correspondence and completion of a Memorandum of Understanding and Conditions of Service, invite Palms Australia to assist them in achieving their aims and

objectives. Palms Australia recruits individuals with specific skills, qualifications and experience, known as Palms Australia Global Volunteers, in response to these invitations. Palms Australia places volunteers within communities, which have the capacity and commitment to host them and work together towards the overall goal of poverty reduction.

Palms Australia Global Volunteers contribute to the on-going process of community development through skills & knowledge transfer, institutional strengthening, capacity building and working collaboratively. The role of Palms Australia in the development process is one based on partnership and interdependence rather than external control and the creation of dependence. Such partnerships foster accountability and solidarity.

In this way, both Palms Australia Global Volunteers and Requesting Communities contribute to a process of development that is characterised by respect, mutuality, trust and equality.

### **Palms Australia Global Volunteers**

Palms Australia accepts the role of formation and support for those who participate in its Global program. Palms Australia invites its volunteers through training & preparation to develop a clear understanding of the development process, as well as awareness about the economic, social, political, cultural and ecological aspirations of the communities in which they go to work. This will enable them to participate & engage more fully in the life of the community in which they are invited to work.

During placement and upon return, Palms Australia encourages its volunteers to share their new understanding with the broader Australian community and to engage local community support for their work. In this way, it is hoped that the cross-cultural experience of Palms Australia Global Volunteers will lead to increased awareness and support for development within Australia and a greater movement towards a just and sustainable world for all.



Roger and Maliana teacher talking of the need for volunteer teachers

## Gender and Development Policy

All development activities have a gender impact and do not necessarily benefit women and men equally. Palms Australia recognises that just, sustainable and interdependent development can only evolve through the equitable & active participation of both women and men in leadership and decision-making within their community.

Gender equality remains a core development goal of Palms Australia. Having equal rights to, access to and control of resources, opportunities and benefits is fundamental to poverty reduction, achieving gender equity and the promotion of sustainable development.

Palms Australia also acknowledges that this policy must be implemented in a flexible, responsive and culturally sensitive manner.

Incorporating a “Gender and Development”<sup>1</sup> approach into the Palms Australia Global Volunteer Program means considering both women’s and men’s needs and responsibilities and working to ensure that both men and women participate equally in the development activity, program or community as beneficiaries and decision makers.

In order to meet women’s practical needs, it may be that Palms Australia Global Volunteers become involved in separate activities with and for women. These may be required to promote the status of women and/or to promote their human rights.

Furthermore Palms Australia will seek to:

- Work with our partners to enhance the development of gender equity
- Continue to improve opportunities and outcomes for members in the communities we work by : –
  - enhancing women’s access to education, health, employment, other resources and political status
  - encouraging the involvement of women in decision making and the enhancement of women’s access to leadership positions.
  - recognising the unique contributions of both men and women in the development of communities.
- Supporting men and women in open discussion about their roles and responsibilities within the community.
- Broaden general awareness and understanding of gender and development among Palms Australia Global Volunteers, Palms Australia members and the Australian community.

This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that the language and image portrayed in our materials promotes cultural diversity and gender equity by avoiding the use of gender sensitive language in verbal and written communication

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<sup>1</sup> Reference from [Guide to gender and development](#), AusAID; [Gender equality in Australia’s aid program – why and how](#), AusAID

- Information sessions will discuss gender and development issues and scheduling of sessions will be timetabled to encourage attendance by all members of the community.
- Assessment of partners and placements to include gender issues
- Arrangement of placements to consider the necessary balance between family and work responsibilities.
- Improvement of Gender & Development and Country Studies sessions on the Orientation Course to provide adequate training and information about gender equity & associated issues.
- Encouraging volunteers to support efforts of community and employer to promote gender equity within a culturally appropriate and sensitive approach
- Evaluations of the placement by the volunteer and employer to continue to include reference to gender issues.



Local Timorese women with sewing skills are empowered and respected

## Gender Equity, Diversity and Flexibility Policy

Palms Australia is committed to promoting the principles and practice of equity and diversity for Director, staff and volunteer positions across the organisation, and with partners, around the world.

The commitment to Gender Equity, Diversity and Flexibility in Palms Australia is linked to our Mission, Vision and Values. These emphasise cooperation, relationships based on inter-dependence and solidarity.

This policy supplements Palms Australia's commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity principles and practice that are legislative requirements to ensure the elimination of discrimination against people based on gender, ethnic group, country of birth, political or religious affiliation, health status and people with disabilities.

In upholding gender equity strategies, Palms Australia seeks to achieve fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men, and recognises that different approaches will ensure more representative equitable outcomes.

Palms Australia recognises the value that a diverse and multi-talented Board, staff and volunteers can bring to the delivery of its programs, leading to increased development effectiveness in Australia and in Majority World communities and countries. For this reason in all its organisational positions Palms Australia encourages applications from women and men, people with diverse cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, and people with a disability.

For the Palms Australia Board, at least one-third of the Directors are to be women and at least one third are to be men. As the Board is elected by the members of Palms Australia at an Annual General Meeting for a three-year term, gender balance will be sought in the nomination of Board candidates and members will be sent this policy with pre-selection and electoral information.

Palms Australia seeks to have a gender balance in its organisation particularly in management positions. Recognising that imbalances may exist in the organisation, Palms Australia will use gender equity as a guiding principle for nomination, selection and /or secondment of staff to senior management positions. This principle of gender balance will be taken as an added weighting where nomination, selection and/or secondment to senior management positions are based on the relative ability, skills, experience and suitability for the position.

Palms Australia is also committed to providing staff and volunteers with a work/life balance that recognises the family, caring responsibilities and other personal commitments. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to discuss with their manager about achieving that balance within their Conditions of Employment. These may include: access to part-time work, flexible working arrangements, study leave and other career development opportunities and extended maternity/paternity leave provisions. Palms Australia will give priority to being responsive to the importance of staff and volunteers achieving work/life balance.

Palms Australia's commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women in our global programs is outlined further in our Gender and Development Policy.

# Child Protection Policy

## 1. Preamble: Palms Australia's commitment to child protection

Palms Australia is strongly committed to creating and maintaining an environment that promotes and protects the rights and dignity of children and prevents all forms of abuse and exploitation of children.

All staff, volunteers, directors, interns and contractors engaged by Palms Australia are expected to uphold the dignity of all with whom we work and abide by Palms Australia's Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct.

Palms Australia strongly condemns all forms of abuse and exploitation, including physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse of children. Abuse and sexual exploitation constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment. The protection of children is always paramount and all relevant legal steps will be taken corresponding to the legal and social conditions of the local situation.

## 2. Rationale

This Child Protection Policy has been developed to clearly articulate:

- Palms Australia's strong commitment to the protection of children;
- Palms Australia's strong condemnation of all forms of child abuse or exploitation; and,
- Practical steps to be taken to ensure children are kept safe.

Additionally, this Policy will provide guidance on how to respond to concerns and allegations of child abuse. It provides guidance to staff and others on how to work respectfully and effectively with children. This will provide all stakeholders, including staff, volunteers and others with a safe working environment.

Palms Australia is obliged to adhere to local and international child protection criminal laws, which prohibit the abuse and exploitation of children. These include local laws where Palms Australia's programs exist, and international laws and Conventions in relation to all forms of child abuse and child exploitation, including: child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour and child pornography.

## 3. Guiding Principles

- Palms Australia does not tolerate any form of child abuse or exploitation.
- All children have rights, outlined in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), including the right to be safe at all times.
- Palms Australia believes in the empowerment and participation of children and aims to create environments in which children feel confident to contribute to discussions and decision-making. In such an environment, children will be more able to raise their concerns for their own safety and wellbeing.
- Palms Australia's Child Protection Policy is consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, [AusAID's Child Protection Policy](#) and the [ACFID Code of Conduct](#). Nothing in this policy should be taken as a repudiation of the concepts and principles

outlined in these documents or of any civil law related to the rights and protection of children.

- All staff, volunteers, directors, interns and contractors engaged by Palms Australia are expected to read this policy and the related Palms Australia Child Protection Code of Conduct. Adherence to these documents is mandatory for all staff, global volunteers and others who may be seen as representatives of the organisation.

#### 4. Definitions

**Palms Representative**, for the purposes of this policy, refers to all Palms Australia staff, program participants, office volunteers, interns, directors, state representatives, in-country representatives, contractors or others operating under the auspices of Palms Australia, in Australia or abroad, or who may be seen to be representing the activities and/or values of Palms Australia.

##### **Child or young person**

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Palms Australia defines child or young person as any person below the age of 18 years regardless of local laws or other definitions. Notwithstanding this definition, Palms Representatives may have additional obligations under local laws where a higher adulthood threshold is applied.

**Bullying** is the inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, with an intent to injure either physically or emotionally. It is usually deliberate and repetitive. The bullying may be physical or psychological (verbal and non-verbal).

- Physically, bullying includes pushing, hitting, punching, kicking or any other action causing hurt or injury.
- Verbal bullying includes insults, taunts, threats and ridicules.
- Psychological bullying includes physical intimidation and ostracism.

**Child Abuse** can be physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect or sexual abuse.

Both boys and girls can be the victims of abuse, and abuse can be inflicted on a child by men and women, as well as by young people themselves.

- **Physical abuse** occurs when a person purposefully injures, or threatens to injure, a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing.
- **Emotional abuse** occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name-calling, being put down or continual coldness from parent or caregiver to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.
- **Child sexual abuse** occurs when an adult, more powerful child or adolescent uses his or her power to involve a child in sexual activity. That coercive power can be physical, verbal or emotional. Sexual abuse is prohibited regardless by the age of majority or age

of consent locally. Neither mistaken belief in the age of the child nor consent amounts to an excuse or defence to such situations.

**Child Protection** is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused or maltreated.

**Child Sex Tourism** is defined as: *'... the commercial sexual exploitation of children by men or women who travel from one place to another, usually from a richer country to one that is less developed, and there engage in sexual acts with children, defined as anyone aged under 18 years of age.'* (ECPAT International, 2006)<sup>2</sup>

**Particularly vulnerable children** refers to children who may be at heightened risk of child abuse within or external to the family situation, including at institutions, at work, on the streets, in war zones or in emergencies. In an emergency or crisis situation, children are extremely vulnerable when they become part of a displaced or traumatised population.

Children may also experience heightened vulnerability to abuse as a result of other factors, such as a disability or loss or absence of caregivers.

Particularly vulnerable children may experience greater difficulty in reporting abusive situations.

## **5. Context**

Palms Australia recruits, prepares, sends and supports global volunteers in skill exchange programs aimed at reducing poverty. These programs occur in a number of countries, including Australia, and operate in collaboration with local partner organisations.

All Palms Australia global volunteers are over the age of 18, though some may be accompanied by their own children to Palms Australia's preparation and re-entry courses in Australia and to their placements, either in Australia or abroad. Volunteers are placed for an average period of two years in local communities and work directly for a local partner organisation. Placements are scoped by Palms Australia staff, in line with Palms Australia's Field Trip Policy and Procedures.

Palms Australia Global Volunteers will often live in a local community where children are present or may work in roles which require them to work directly with children, for example as teachers, youth workers or in hospitals.

Palms Representatives may also be involved in education or fundraising programs in Australia which may involve children, particularly at schools or churches.

## **6. Scope of the policy**

This policy applies to all Palms Representatives as defined above. While recognising the different laws related to children in different national contexts, all must abide by the Palms Australia Child Protection Code of Conduct in all contexts.

### **7.1 Child Protection Code of Conduct**

All Palms Representatives must sign the Palms Australia Child Protection Code of Conduct prior to being engaged in activities connected to Palms Australia which involve, or may involve, children.

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<sup>2</sup> From ECPAT International, <http://www.ecpat.net/EI/index.asp>

The Palms Australia Child Protection Code of Conduct provides a simple articulation of the responsibilities and obligations of Palms Representatives in their interactions with children. The Code of Conduct is designed to establish clear professional boundaries, and to protect everyone involved from misunderstandings or violations of professional standards.

Palms Representatives must:

- treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, where under the law(s) applicable to the child (including Part IIIA of the Australian Crimes Act 1914 (Cwlth) as amended), the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult person is present when working in the proximity of children
- not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible
- use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium (and see following section on 'Use of children's images for work related purposes')
- refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children (excluding my own children)
- refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury
- comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures.

## **7.2 Use of children' images**

The following guidelines also form part of the Child Protection Code of Conduct that must be signed by all Palms Representatives.

When photographing or filming a child, Palms Australia representatives must:

- before photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images
- before photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child or a parent or guardian of the child. As part of this the photographer or assistant must explain how the photograph or film will be used

- ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically

## **8. Child abuse reporting procedures**

It is mandatory for Palms Representatives to report concerns or allegations of child abuse connected with Palms Australia or a Palms Representative.

All instances or concerns should be reported immediately to the Executive Director, or if occurring overseas to the relevant Country Program Coordinator. The individual receiving the report will acknowledge its receipt immediately.

Concerns which must be reported immediately include:

- any disclosure or allegation by a child that he or she has been harmed, or fears being harmed, by a Palms Representative
- concerns expressed by a partner organisation, government representative, other international NGO, or other person about the behaviour of a Palms Representative
- any observation or reasonable concern of inappropriate behaviour by a Palms Representative which breaches the Palms Australia Child Protection Code of Conduct
- Inappropriate use of Palms Australia’s photography or computer equipment for the purposes of child pornography
- Suspicious behaviour of a Palms Representative in regard to sexual exploitation, trafficking or abuse of children

Palms Australia advises prudence in reporting incidents to local authorities. Many countries do not have sufficient child protection services, and may not be able to effectively protect the child in question. Palms Australia recommends considering the “best interests of the child” as a measure of appropriate action. In any case, Palms Australia recommends discussing such incidents initially with the relevant Country Program Coordinator or Palms Australia’s Executive Director.

Palms Australia will treat all reported concerns seriously. All reports made in good faith will be viewed as being made in the best interests of the child regardless of the outcome of any investigation. Palms Australia will ensure that the interests of anyone reporting child abuse in good faith will be protected, however Palms Representatives making intentionally false or malicious claims will face disciplinary action.

### **Confidentiality**

Palms Australia will ensure that the concern is handled with utmost care and confidentiality, including protecting the identities of the reporting individual, the person against whom allegations or suspicions have been raised, and the victim or potential victim of abuse. Details will only be released on a “need to know” basis or when required by relevant local or Australian law or a notification to police or child protection authorities is made. The Executive Director may, at his/her discretion, seek advice from another staff member or Director before deciding how to proceed.

## 9. Risk management

All Palms Australia programs should be designed utilising the principles outlined in Palms Australia's Risk Management Matrix.

Specific steps related to mitigating risk in matters of child protection include:

- The acquisition of criminal records checks for all Palms Australia global volunteers
- At least three verbal or written references will be required for each global volunteer
- The employment of a specialist childcare worker at all Palms Australia courses attended by one or more children where parental supervision is not possible at all times
- The purchasing of travel insurance for all global volunteers and their dependents
- The inclusion of children of volunteers, where possible and appropriate, in Palms' pre-departure preparation and re-entry programs

## 10. Educating staff and others on child protection

Palms Australia is committed to educating all Palms Representatives on the principles of child protection, appropriate behaviour and their obligations related to the reporting of child abuse. This Policy and the accompanying Child Protection Code of Conduct make up part of the Palms Australia Induction Kit that will be provided to all new staff and board members within their first month.

Palms Australia will endeavour to keep staff abreast of the latest standards in child protection and will organise professional development for staff when necessary.

## 11. Reviewing the Child Protection Framework

Palms Australia commits to reviewing the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct every three years. The Executive Director will be responsible for this process and will engage staff and other stakeholders as necessary.



Timorese Children

## Environmental Policy<sup>3</sup>

Palms Australia recognises the link between poverty, vulnerability and environmental degradation. Any work that a Palms Australia Global Volunteer engages in will promote environmental sustainability, which in turn is a long lasting element in reducing poverty.

Palms understands its relationship to the environment as ecocentric. This relationship is specific yet holistic. The ecocentric approach considers the relationship that particular ecosystems have with each other (ecosystems would include both humans and non humans as well as the living and non living). An ecocentric approach includes economic, environmental, social and cultural systems.

### Environmental philosophy

The environment is central to the Palms Australia faith tradition. It is rooted in the understanding that the natural world is the primary revelation of God. When this natural world is degraded both humans and non humans suffer the consequences. Righting this imbalance is achieved through addressing things such as poverty, education, oppression and injustices.

Taking an ecocentric approach, Palms Australia works with communities so that they can recognise the imbalances in both their local ecological systems and the wider global ecological systems and the relationship that exists between both. In recognising the imbalances, which are both physical and spiritual, the communities work towards righting the imbalances as individuals and as a collective. Palms Australia Global Volunteers contribute to assisting individuals and communities through interaction, dialogue, self-revelation and encouragement.

### How this is achieved:

Palms Australia and the Palms Australia Global Volunteers:

- Supports the development of individual and community decision-making processes within an ecocentric approach. The decision making process would ensure that biological diversity and the integrity of the environment is fundamental to any outcome of the Global Volunteer program or placement.
- Upholds the principle that the environment is not only enjoyed and of benefit to the present generation, but preserves and enhances the environment for future generations (Intergenerational equity).
- Adopts a precautionary approach where there is uncertainty in an action that may cause harm to the environment.
- Endorse the Earth Charter and encourage members & participants to adopt the spirit of the document.
- Draws on the wisdom, experiences and expertise of those who are involved in environmental research, policy writing and active in roles that promote, safeguard and ensure the sustainability and integrity of the environment. An example would be “The Convention on Biological Diversity” (Rio de Janeiro 1992).

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<sup>3</sup> Reference from [The Environment and climate change](#):- AusAID; [Environmental Management Guide for Australia's Aid Program](#)- AusAID; [www.earthcharter.org.au](http://www.earthcharter.org.au) - The Earth Charter

## Privacy Policy

With the introduction of the Privacy Act 1988 (as amended) in December 2001, Palms Australia is obliged and seeks to be compliant with the new requirements of this legislation. The legislation is designed to protect the rights of individuals in relation to the information that can be used.

The following document provides an overview of Palms Australia's privacy policy. This policy is informed by the National Privacy Principles (attached) which govern the ways in which organisations, including Palms Australia collect, use, disclose and store personal information. When personal information such as name, address, or health details are collected, we are bound to follow these principles.

### Palms Australia Policy

Palms Australia respects the privacy and confidentiality of our donors, volunteers, subscribers, members and partners.

A Privacy Officer has been nominated to implement Palms Australia's privacy policy and to respond to queries.

#### Applications of the Privacy Policy

##### 1. Palms Australia Global Volunteers

- a. When collecting personal information, we will attempt to explain why personal information is being collected and for what purposes. However, generally, the main reasons for the collection of personal information are:
  - To process a volunteer's application with Palms Australia
  - To organise cross-cultural training and preparation
  - To organise and facilitate placements
  - To communicate with relevant employers and government departments
  - To provide on-going support during the application process, whilst on the field and upon return to Australia
  - To provide feedback about a placement and experience
  - To monitor, evaluate and improve the Palms Australia Global Volunteer program
  - To provide a de-briefing weekend after completion of a placement
  - To communicate to volunteers news & events of Palms Australia, future placements, employment or community development, education and personal formation opportunities.
- b. Information may also be provided to necessary third parties. These parties may include the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), health & insurance providers, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, overseas governments and overseas or Australian employers. Consent will be sought if information required is of a sensitive\* nature. Consent will be sought from volunteers for any letters, stories, reflections, information or photographs to be used in any publications.

- c. Consistent with our past and current practice, contact details of volunteers will not be disclosed to Australian or overseas sources without prior permission from the volunteer.
- d. Under the new legislation, volunteers have the right to access personal information held and the right to request that the information held on file is correct, complete & up-to-date.
- e. If a volunteer requests to see or wishes to change information held on file, this request needs to be forwarded to the Privacy Officer. Changes and response to request must occur within 7 days.
- f. Volunteers' paper files will be kept in a secure location and access to these files and computer database is limited to certain employees and protected by a password. Files will be kept for 7 years.

The collection of volunteer's personal details is covered by the Privacy Act and forms a significant part of Palms Australia's obligation.

## 2. Donors, Members & Subscribers

- a. Under the new legislation, donors, members & subscribers have the right to access personal information held and the right to request that this information held on file is correct.
- b. If donors, members or subscribers request to see or wish to change information held on file, this request needs to be forwarded to the Privacy Officer. Changes and response to request must occur within 7 days.
- c. Consistent with our past and current practice, personally identifiable details of donors, members & subscribers will not be disclosed without prior permission.
- d. Opportunities to be removed from the Palms Australia mailing list are to be provided with regular mail-outs.
- e. Access to contact details and database is limited to certain employees.

### Sensitive Information in regards to privacy

- Racial or ethnic origin
- Political opinions
- Membership of a political party
- Religious beliefs
- Philosophical beliefs
- Health information
- Membership of a professional or trade association
- Membership of a trade union
- Sexual preference
- Criminal record

## Principles Governing the Support of Palms Australia Volunteers

**Principle 1**— That Palms Australia staff will listen with respect to volunteers, recognizing their unique contribution to mission & development, while being responsive and consultative in all phases of the Global Volunteer program.

**Principle 2**— That Palms Australia in collaboration with Palms Australia partners will ensure that volunteers are informed of job requirements; performance expectations; reporting channels; living arrangements and will receive suitable levels of support/guidance and feedback whilst in placement.

**Principle 3**— That Palms Australia will maintain a high standard in the provision of preparatory training & resources for volunteers before, during and after field placement to maximize the well-being, capacity and rights of volunteers.

**Principle 4**— That Palms Australia will aim to ensure ongoing volunteer security and minimize and manage risk, especially in areas of high vulnerability and post-conflict or natural disaster situations. Volunteers will be briefed prior to departure & throughout placement on any pertinent security & health risk specific to the country, insurance arrangements and medical evacuations.

**Principle 5**— to endorse and inform volunteers of current development issues and best practice initiatives as outlined by Palms Australia, ACFID and AusAID.

**Principle 6**— to maintain high levels of staff competency in the provision of support to volunteers before, during and after field placement.



98<sup>th</sup> Palms Australia Orientation Course January 2017

## Volunteer Code of Conduct

Under the code, Palms Australia Global Volunteers agree to:

- Work towards the achievement of the Palms Australia Vision and Mission
- Uphold the standards articulated in the ACFID Code of Conduct
- Abide by the laws, regulations & employment rules of the country of placement and employer.
- Maintain a professional standard of behaviour, in line with the Palms Australia Child Protection Code of Conduct (to be signed separately).
- Avoid involvement in party or sectarian politics, and public comment on political or religious matters.
- Refrain from any wrongdoing or conduct that may bring Palms Australia, its program or the Commonwealth of Australia into disrepute.
- Perform the duties set out in the Position Description in the best interests of the requesting community.
- Provide accurate & reliable reports to Palms Australia or donors when requested.
- Act in a manner which gives due respect to the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people with whom they work consistent with the principles of basic Human Rights (ACFID Code of Conduct).
- Cooperate with Palms to create and develop links with Australian Institutions for their own professional support in the field and the ongoing development support of the overseas partner with whom they work.
- Take adequate precautions to ensure personal security including:
  - abiding by the security advice given by Palms Australia;
  - immediately advising Palms Australia of any health, safety or security threat;
  - maintaining a sufficient balance of credit on their mobile phone.
- Avoid all comment to the media during any period of crisis, health or security threat, including during or after an evacuation.