

## Development Philosophy & Policy

### Rationale

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, the people Palms send on assignment 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.

### Mission

The Palms Australia development philosophy is articulated through the mission of Palms Australia, which seeks 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.
- Assist Australians to understand the economic, social & cultural aspirations of people with whom we engage.
- Contribute to partnerships that work towards a just and sustainable world.
- 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, Position Description 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 in response to these invitations. Palms Australia allocates assignments within communities, which have the capacity and commitment to host them and work together towards the overall goal of poverty reduction.

Palms Australia assignments 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, those sent by Palms Australia and Requesting Communities contribute to a process of development that is characterised by respect, mutuality, trust and equality.

### **Palms Australia Preparation**

Palms Australia accepts the responsibility of formation and support for those who participate in its Global program. Training and preparation cultivates 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 those on assignment to share their new understanding with the broader Australian community and to engage Australian community support for their work. In this way, it is hoped that this assists to build an increased awareness and support for development within Australia and a greater movement towards a just and sustainable world for all.