

Family Planning Policy

Palms Australia values and promotes access to information and services which allows individuals to determine their own future and to participate fully in community life. Palms Australia's approach to reproductive health and family planning exemplifies these beliefs.

Palms Australia does not place Global Mission participants specifically in established family planning programs or clinics. Nonetheless, as part of their work on behalf of Palms Australia, Global Mission participants may be involved in the health or education sectors, and so may need to engage in discussion or activities in relation to maternal health, reproductive health, sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention, all of which may involve family planning advice and education.

Palms Australia endorses a proactive approach to family planning which enables sexually active men and women to take responsibility for the number and spacing of their children, and for the improvement of their reproductive health, and family and community life. Family planning and reproductive health activities are integral to women's and children's health and as such to the general health of the community. They also provide a real opportunity to participate in community health. Palms Australia also recognises that poverty can be seen both as a cause and a consequence of unlimited population growth.

Palms Australia Global Mission participants will always respect both the family planning policy of the requesting community and the decisions individuals take in relation to their reproductive health and family planning, and will "treat all persons with respect, compassion and sensitivity whatever their sexual or marital status, orientation or lifestyle" (*Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care*, 2.2).

As members of Palms Australia, a Catholic organisation, Global Mission participants will not advocate family planning methods not approved by the Catholic Church but will respect the right of the individuals they serve to be provided with accurate information (physical, moral and technological) about the widest range of safe and effective family planning methods available to them, so that they can make responsible decisions about the number and spacing of their children and about the means by which to exercise their decisions. In providing this information, the individual's cultural setting, ethical and religious beliefs, personal privacy and individual dignity will always be respected.

Furthermore, Palms Australia Global Mission participants will

- Respect the right for both women and men to have information on, and access to safe, acceptable and affordable family planning programs.
- help ensure participation of communities in drawing up family planning programs appropriate to their culture, values and needs.
- enhance the capacity and competence of health and family planning service providers through skills transfer.
- ensure that family planning services within culturally appropriate settings include accurate information, confidential counselling for clients and follow-up advice and service to clients.
- Within the cultural and work context, expand the range of family planning methods available
- assist the provision of appropriate health care services that will enable women to have a safe pregnancy, childbirth and healthy children.

- encourage the free and constructive communication amongst family members in relation to family planning issues.
- not support any activities that involve abortion training or services, research, trials or activities, which directly involve abortion drugs. Also, Palms Australia and the Palms Australia Global Mission participant will not provide information, education or communication materials on emergency contraception.