



# Code of good practice

*in the management  
and support of  
aid personnel*

The People In Aid  
Code of Good  
Practice, 2003,  
is a revision of  
the People In Aid  
Code of Best  
Practice, 1997

*Principles and Indicators*

## Introduction


The People In Aid Code of Good Practice has become the recognised standard for human resources management in the relief and development sector. Responding to a need recognised by a large and varied group of NGOs in the early to mid-1990s, the Code is a key contributor to the sector's efforts to improve quality, effectiveness and accountability in NGOs, both international and national.

The Code resulted from a recognition that staff were not as well managed and supported as they could be, nor indeed as they should be. This Code, originally a Code of Best Practice (1997), was a sector-wide response to shortcomings in people management identified by staff and volunteers themselves. Using it will increase an organisation's performance in how staff and volunteers are supported, managed, rewarded, prepared, trained, motivated – and more. The Code itself reflects the belief that staff are the key to delivering effective programmes and responding to the needs of many millions of people throughout the world.

The Code is a comprehensive framework and encapsulates everything an NGO needs to think about to enhance the quality of its HR. The Principles are frequently used as the basis for in-house HR manuals, and the Guiding principle as an HR or even organisational strategic statement. Some agencies use the indicators to do

a self-audit of their policies and practices. Many agencies are committed to implementing the Code using a verification process (see page 9) leading to the award of quality marks which distinguish them from their peers.

The Code is a standard, and not a set of standards. It is for each agency to decide how best to respond to an identified need for a clearer policy or an improved management practice. People In Aid offers many services beyond support for agencies committing to the Code and these are all aimed at enabling organisations to continually improve their performance. People In Aid acts as a central hub - part of the wide range of resources we offer includes template policies, handbooks, practical guidelines, workshops, conferences, networking meetings and research. These resources, drawing on good practice from our worldwide membership and the wider sector, provide more detailed insights into the areas of HR management raised by the Code. Your agency can access some of our output for free on [www.peopleinaid.org](http://www.peopleinaid.org) or benefit from a wider range of information and benefits by joining our network [www.peopleinaid.org/joinus](http://www.peopleinaid.org/joinus).



*Jonathan Potter,  
Executive Director*

# People In Aid Code of Good Practice

**Guiding Principle** *People are central to the achievement of our mission*

**Principle 1**

### Human Resources Strategy

*Human resources are an integral part of our strategic and operational plans*

**Principle 2**

### Staff Policies and Practices

*Our human resources policies aim to be effective, fair and transparent*

**Principle 3**

### Managing People

*Good support, management and leadership of our staff is key to our effectiveness*

**Principle 4**

### Consultation and Communication

*Dialogue with staff on matters likely to affect their employment enhances the quality and effectiveness of our policies and practices*

**Principle 5**

### Recruitment and Selection

*Our policies and practices aim to attract and select a diverse workforce with the skills and capabilities to fulfil our requirements*

**Principle 6**

### Learning, Training and Development

*Learning, training and staff development are promoted throughout the organisation*

**Principle 7**

### Health, Safety and Security

*The security, good health and safety of our staff are a prime responsibility of our organisation*

## Principle One

### Human resources strategy

**Human resources are an integral part of our strategic and operational plans.**

Our human resources strategy is central to our organisational strategy. Our human resources strategy is long-term and encompasses every part of the organisation.

#### Indicators

- 1 Our organisational strategy or business plan explicitly values staff for their contribution to organisational and operational objectives.
- 2 The organisational strategy allocates sufficient human and financial resources to achieve the objectives of the human resources strategy.
- 3 Operational plans and budgets aim to reflect fully our responsibilities for staff management, support, development and well-being. The monitoring of these plans and budgets feeds into any necessary improvements.
- 4 Our human resources strategy reflects our commitment to promote inclusiveness and diversity.

## Principle Two

### Staff policies and practices

**Our human resources policies aim to be effective, fair and transparent.**

We recognise that our policies must enable us to achieve both effectiveness in our work and good quality of working life for our staff. We do not aim to respond solely to minimum legal, professional or donor requirements.

#### Indicators

- 1 Policies and practices that relate to staff employment are set out in writing and are monitored and reviewed, particularly when significant changes in the legal or working environment take place.
- 2 The policies and practices we implement are consistent in their application to all staff except while taking into account relevant legal provisions and cultural norms.
- 3 Staff are familiarised with policies and practices that affect them.
- 4 Appropriate guidance is provided to managers so that they are equipped to implement policies effectively.
- 5 The rewards and benefits for each role are clearly identified and applied in a fair and consistent manner.
- 6 Policies and practices are monitored according to how well they meet:
  - organisational and programme aims
  - reasonable considerations of effectiveness, fairness and transparency.

## Principle Three

### Managing people

***Good support, management and leadership of our staff is key to our effectiveness.***

Our staff have a right to expect management which prepares them to do their job so we can, together, achieve our mission. Our management policies, procedures and training equip our managers to prepare and support staff in carrying out their role effectively, to develop their potential and to encourage and recognise good performance.

#### **Indicators**

- 1** Relevant training, support and resources are provided to managers to fulfil their responsibilities. Leadership is a part of this training.
- 2** Staff have clear work objectives and performance standards, know whom they report to and what management support they will receive. A mechanism for reviewing staff performance exists and is clearly understood by all staff.
- 3** In assessing performance, managers will adhere to the organisation's procedures and values.
- 4** All staff are aware of grievance and disciplinary procedures.

## Principle Four

### Consultation and communication

***Dialogue with staff on matters likely to affect their employment enhances the quality and effectiveness of our policies and practices.***

We recognise that effective development, implementation and monitoring of human resources policies and practices rely on appropriate consultation and communication with the people who work for us. We aim to include all staff, whether salaried or contract, and volunteers in these processes.

#### **Indicators**

- 1** Staff are informed and adequately consulted when we develop or review human resources policies or practices that affect them.
- 2** Managers and staff understand the scope of consultation and how to participate, individually or collectively.

## Principle Five

### Recruitment and selection

***Our policies and practices aim to attract and select a diverse workforce with the skills and capabilities to fulfil our requirements.***

Our recruitment and selection process tells candidates about our agency. How we recruit and select our staff significantly influences how effective they are in fulfilling our objectives.

#### **Indicators**

- 1** Written policies and procedures outline how staff are recruited and selected to positions in our organisation.
- 2** Recruitment methods aim to attract the widest pool of suitably qualified candidates.
- 3** Our selection process is fair, transparent and consistent to ensure the most appropriate person is appointed.
- 4** Appropriate documentation is maintained and responses are given to candidates regarding their selection/non-selection to posts. We will provide feedback if necessary.
- 5** The effectiveness and fairness of our recruitment and selection procedures are monitored.

## Principle Six

### Learning, training and development

***Learning, training and staff development are promoted throughout the organisation.***

We recognise the importance of relevant training, development and learning opportunities, both personal and professional, to help staff work effectively and professionally. We aim to instil a culture of learning in the organisation so that we and the staff can share our learning and develop together.

#### **Indicators**

- 1** Adequate induction, and briefing specific to each role, is given to all staff.
- 2** Written policies outline the training, development and learning opportunities staff can expect from the organisation.
- 3** Plans and budgets are explicit about training provision. Relevant training is provided to all staff.
- 4** Managers know how to assess the learning needs of staff so they can facilitate individual development. Where appropriate training and development will be linked to external qualifications.
- 5** The methods we have in place to monitor learning and training ensure that the organisation also learns. They also monitor the effectiveness of learning and training in meeting organisational and programme aims as well as staff expectations of fairness and transparency.

## Principle Seven

### Health, safety and security

**The security, good health and safety of our staff are a prime responsibility of our organisation.**

We recognise that the work of relief and development agencies often places great demands on staff in conditions of complexity and risk. We have a duty of care to ensure the physical and emotional well-being of our staff before, during and on completion of their period of work with us.

#### Indicators

- 1 Written policies are available to staff on security, individual health, care and support, health and safety.
- 2 Programme plans include written assessment of security, travel and health risks specific to the country or region, reviewed at appropriate intervals.
- 3 Before an international assignment all staff receive health clearance. In addition they and accompanying dependents receive verbal and written briefing on all risks relevant to the role to be undertaken, and the measures in place to mitigate those risks, including insurance. Agency obligations and individual responsibilities in relation to possible risks are clearly communicated. Briefings are updated when new equipment, procedures or risks are identified.
- 4 Security plans, with evacuation procedures, are reviewed regularly.
- 5 Records are maintained of work-related injuries, sickness, accidents and fatalities, and are monitored to help assess and reduce future risk to staff.
- 6 Workplans do not require more hours work than are set out in individual contracts. Time off and leave periods, based on written policies, are mandatory.
- 7 All staff have a debriefing or exit interview at the end of any contract or assignment. Health checks, personal counselling and careers advice are available. Managers are trained to ensure these services are provided.
- 8 In the case of staff on emergency rosters, managers should ensure that health clearance, immunisations and procedures for obtaining the correct prophylaxes and other essential supplies are arranged well in advance.

## Implementing the People In Aid Code

The People In Aid Code of Good Practice is an internationally recognised management tool that enables organisations to improve the way in which they manage their people.

It can be used in your organisation to:

- monitor and evaluate the implementation of your existing human resources policies
- identify where improvements can be made
- demonstrate to key stakeholders that your people are central to the achievement of your mission.

Implementing the People In Aid Code is based on a process of social audit. Agencies that formally commit to implementing the Code are recognised as being 'Committed to the People In Aid Code', by People In Aid. Implementation itself is evaluated through an independent assurance process enabling successful agencies to be 'Verified compliant with the People In Aid Code', by People In Aid.

Full support is available to implementing agencies from People In Aid.

The implementation process is a continuous cycle and has four key stages:



**Commitment**, entailing scoping the implementation process; planning for reviewing organisational practices; ensuring senior management commitment and securing adequate resources for the implementation process.

**Stakeholder engagement**, involving reviewing organisational practices, consulting with stakeholders to identify key issues, reviewing findings and generating an action plan. The Principles and Indicators of the People In Aid Code provide a framework for the dialogue, review, and analysis, and from this targets for improvement are set.

**Reporting and auditing**, entailing the preparation of a full report on how the organisation has performed against the Code and an action plan, which acts as the basis for an independent external audit, and ultimately, verification by People In Aid.

**Continuous Improvement**, where the organisation implements its action plan, monitors achievements against objectives, and continues the social audit process in accordance with the audit cycle.

# About People In Aid

People In Aid is an international network of development and humanitarian assistance agencies. We help organisations whose goal is the relief of poverty and suffering to enhance the impact they make through better people management and support.

The People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the management and support of aid personnel is just one of many tools available from People In Aid to agencies that are committed to improving their human resources management.

## **What does People In Aid do?**

People In Aid acts as a hub for networking, learning and information exchange on human resources management issues. Some of our most popular resources include:

- Practical handbooks on essential policy areas such as health and safety, briefing and debriefing, staff development.
- Guideline policies on key areas such as security, codes of conduct and rest and relaxation.
- Workshops on topical HR issues for the sector such as HR strategy, managing performance, and learning and development.
- A quarterly newsletter addressing key issues affecting the sector.
- Research on topics such as employee engagement, retention, compensation and benefits.

- Special interest group meetings on human resources issues and priorities, for example benchmarking, HIV/AIDS in the workplace, development of national staff.
- Support for members implementing the Code.
- A resource centre and information network.

Our range of available resources is constantly expanding – visit our website for an up-to-date summary.

## **People In Aid Membership**

People In Aid has various membership categories, and members enjoy a wide range of benefits including substantial discounts on our publications, workshops and other events, information and support on human resources issues of concern, and support for implementing the Code of Good Practice.

### **For further information:**

[info@peopleinaid.org](mailto:info@peopleinaid.org)  
[www.peopleinaid.org](http://www.peopleinaid.org)