

Introduction

People are at the core of Christian development organisations:

- These organisations exist to release people from material and spiritual poverty.
- These organisations need people to carry out the work.

Without staff, organisations cannot exist. It is therefore vital that organisations do not take their staff for granted. This book aims to help Christian development organisations consider and improve how they recruit, develop and look after their staff. The term that is often used for this is **human resource management**:

Human(s) – people with their experience, skills, knowledge and personal qualities.

Human resource – the people, and the policies and practices that affect them in the workplace.

Human resource management – the management of the people and the staff policies and practice that enable an organisation to carry out its work. This affects staff from the moment an individual contacts the organisation in response to a job advertisement, to the time they leave the organisation. Human resource management is about enabling staff to use their qualities in order to fulfil their role and contribute to the organisation's mission and purpose.

Good human resource management is essential if organisations want to attract and retain good staff. If people see that an organisation values its staff, they are more likely to apply for a job with the organisation and more likely to stay once they are recruited. Good human resource management means that an organisation reduces risk to its staff and reputation. It can do this by considering issues such as employment law, child protection and health and safety. Good human resource management can also reduce costs for an organisation. For example, good recruitment policies and processes mean that organisations can efficiently recruit people who will carry out their jobs effectively. Good systems for performance management mean that organisations can ensure that they are getting the best from their staff. It should be noted that volunteers are an important resource for many organisations. Some sections of this book, such as salaries and employment contracts, are not relevant to volunteers. However, sections such as benefits, performance management and staff development *are* relevant to volunteers. Development organisations should consider carefully which policies and practices should also be used with volunteers.

Christian development organisations should base their human resource management on Christian values. Staff are human beings made in God's image and therefore organisations should treat them fairly and with respect. Christian organisations should be good stewards of their resources, enabling their staff to use the gifts God has given them and investing in developing their potential. A Christian development organisation that claims to love the poor people it seeks to serve is unlikely to be effective unless it also demonstrates the love of Christ to its staff. Staff who feel undervalued can lose their motivation to love others and as a result, the organisation's direction and impact can be lost. Human resource management is one area in which Christian development organisations can model good practice to others.

This book is for people who manage staff and those who are specifically involved in aspects of human resource management. In some organisations, line managers may be the only people who consider human resource management. Other organisations may employ one or more people to oversee human resource management. The policy and guidelines for human resource practice which such people provide are used by the line managers. Line managers are therefore as responsible for human resource management as any team devoted to it.

This book provides tools that development organisations can use to develop good human resource management. Many of the tools can be used to make improvements at low cost, with enormous benefits. Some of the tools help organisations to employ the right people, while others enable organisations to develop good systems. The combination of good people and good systems leads to an effective organisation – one that achieves its mission and purpose. Throughout the book are reflection questions which can be used by individuals or groups of staff to consider what action they might take.