

# Human Resources (HR) Toolkit

## for Small and Medium Nonprofit Actors

Providing you with the building blocks to strengthen your HR framework



# About this Guide

The information in this toolkit is based on key HR functions and best practices in human resource management to enhance people management practices, embed good HR practices, and encourage sharing of learning. It consists of:

- Guidance, tips, and checklists to inform the development and/or enhancement of HR policies.
- A series of questions to reflect and assess existing HR framework (and possible gaps), and identify the required activities and priority actions to strengthen it.
- Additional learning resources can easily be found on [DisasterReady.org](https://www.disasterready.org) via your personal account: just log in and search per topic or key words.

## Tips for optimal viewing experience

- If you are viewing the toolkit in a web browser, right click on any links and select “Open link in a tab” to always keep the toolkit accessible.
- If you download the toolkit to your device, make sure you are connected to the internet to access any links.

This toolkit is designed for individuals responsible for human resources (HR) functions and activities in nonprofits, and humanitarian and development organisations. This may include HR practitioners, programme/operation teams, finance and administration managers, and staff planning/responsible for tactical HR, including anyone tasked to support and implement basic HR systems and framework.

**Important Note:** *This toolkit is not intended to provide country-specific or legal advice, and rather share good practices and lessons learned on HR systems and procedures.*

## Disclaimer

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	4
BUILDING BLOCKS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	
GOOD PRACTICE HR ACTIVITIES	<a href="#">4</a>
KEY HR FUNCTIONS	<a href="#">7</a>
 <b>ENVISION</b>	<a href="#">8</a>
1.1 HR STRATEGY	<a href="#">9</a>
1.2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	<a href="#">9</a>
1.3 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	<a href="#">10</a>
1.4 WORKFORCE PLANNING	<a href="#">11</a>
1.5 JOB DESIGN	<a href="#">11</a>
 <b>HIRE</b>	<a href="#">12</a>
2.1 RECRUITMENT POLICY	<a href="#">12</a>
2.2 RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES	<a href="#">13</a>
2.3 JOB DESCRIPTIONS	<a href="#">15</a>
2.4 ONBOARDING	<a href="#">15</a>
 <b>MANAGE</b>	<a href="#">18</a>
3.1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	<a href="#">19</a>
3.2 COMPENSATIONS AND BENEFITS	<a href="#">21</a>
3.3 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS	<a href="#">22</a>
 <b>INSPIRE</b>	<a href="#">23</a>
4.1 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	<a href="#">23</a>
4.2 ENGAGEMENT	<a href="#">24</a>
4.3 RECOGNITION	<a href="#">26</a>
 <b>CARE</b>	<a href="#">27</a>
5.1 HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY	<a href="#">27</a>
5.2 STRESS AT WORK AND STAFF WELLBEING	<a href="#">28</a>
 <b>EXIT</b>	<a href="#">30</a>

# INTRODUCTION

In the nonprofit, humanitarian, and development sectors, an organisation's effectiveness and ability to successfully deliver on their mission is closely linked to the ability to attract, develop, retain and engage the right people.

In order to properly support and enable your teams, and deliver positive impacts as an organisation, you need to ensure that there is a formalised and systematised framework for talent management practices.

Not everybody in your organization needs to be a human resources expert, but everyone should be able to access expertise and resources when needed.

## Building Blocks for Human Resources (HR)

This toolkit leverages an array of existing resources and good practice principles to help you improve your organisation's HR framework. More generally, it is intended to support your organisation to build upon existing HR processes and systems, and formalise your people management practices.



**TIP:** Make a note of all the actions identified as you go through this toolkit to help create a priority action list to improve your HR framework.



**TIP:** Collate all the information about the way your organisation works in an Employee (Staff) Handbook. This is particularly useful for new employees to help them understand how your organisation operates. Such handbook can also be a handy reference tool for existing employees and managers to find answers to common HR questions and find information on key policies and references to other HR documents.

## Good Practice HR Activities

HR practices will invariably differ from one organisation to another – and even sometimes from one department to another within the same organisation. They will be influenced by a variety of factors such as organisational culture, the leadership team, who is actually in charge of HR, the size of the programme, local labour laws and customs.

However, there is still a range of HR tasks that should occur across any organisation. Here are some common activities to help you get started in formalising an HR framework, activities for which you'll find additional guidance in this toolkit.





**Open and fair recruitment processes:** Ensure all positions are open to everyone, and candidates are selected based on their skill set, not for their relationships with colleagues in the organisation. Avoiding nepotism also strengthens the overall organisational culture and reputation.



**Employee onboarding:** Provide all new employees with essential information about your organisation, including its mission, general structure, the expected behaviours (e.g. briefing on Code of Conduct), the reward framework, and the performance expectations.



**Regular staff meetings:** Encourage Country Directors (or members of the leadership team) to hold regular staff meetings with all teams (including national and international staff) to provide useful updates and create a space for staff to share concerns and suggestions, and ask questions.



**Employment contracts:** All staff must have a current, legally valid employment contract countersigned by either a member of the leadership team or the local HR representative.



**Annual performance reviews:** Individual goals should be discussed and agreed, in alignment with the mission and goals of the team, department and organisation. All staff should receive a formal, meaningful performance review assessing both performance and behaviours directly tied to compensation and development plans as applicable. Regular conversations, or “check-ins”, are recommended to nurture engagement and enable feedback. Essentially, performance reviews are critical to employee and organisational success.



**Compensation grids:** All offices need to have a transparent, easy to understand, and justifiable compensation scheme based on relatively current market data. All staff must have a job description linked to a salary grade on the grid.



**Clear and accessible HR policies and manual:** All staff should have access to clear policies related to paid leave, timesheets, discipline and grievance processes, etc. These policies should be covered during onboarding and thereafter during regular reviews to ensure awareness and understanding of the HR policy framework.



**Secure HR records:** The keeping of HR records and personal information should be consistent, comprehensive and be stored in a secure location with restricted access. Any personally identifiable information found in a public location (printing area, copy room, etc.) should be returned to the HR department for immediate shredding.



## WHAT DOES A SUCCESSFUL HR FUNCTION LOOK LIKE?

At its best, a HR function enables hiring, developing, and engaging the right people, and supporting the organisation by:

- ✓ Recruiting employees through fair, creative, and proactive candidate sourcing.
- ✓ Selecting employees who bring the right skills, experience, and the right behaviours.
- ✓ Orienting and onboarding new employees to maximise productivity and engagement from the onset.
- ✓ Organising training around technical and management skills and encouraging continuous learning.
- ✓ Providing market-based pay and benefits in an equitable manner.
- ✓ Organising meaningful performance evaluations that help drive strategic goals and support employees' growth.

# Key HR Functions

This toolkit is designed from a strategic planning perspective and outlines six key areas of focus that are critical for an organisation to meet the basic requirements of an HR system.





## ENVISION



In order to ensure efficient management of HR activities, meet the performance objectives of an organisation and motivate staff, it is critical to establish solid HR processes and procedures. As a minimum, there should be an HR practitioner in place as a focal point and expert lead to oversee HR procedures.

There are many benefits to having a dedicated HR role in place – here are just a few examples:

- The organisation remains up to date on legal issues and the latest employment law development.
- A coordinated approach can be taken with regard to strategy, policy and practice to ensure the organisation has a fair, effective and consistent way of managing its staff.
- Staff feel valued and encouraged to stay with the organisation and they have a place to go to for advice and guidance.

HR policies should be documented in writing and easily accessible to all staff. They need to be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure compliance and relevancy. HR policies also need to be adapted to ensure compliance with local customs and labour law.

The person responsible for HR plays a key role in developing and implementing these policies that should be consistent, fair, and transparent.



**TIP:** Ensure you have access to in-country legal advisors to review legal documents (e.g. employment contracts), ensure compliance and provide guidance in case of issues. HR focal points should be part of networks of NGOs in-country/UN clusters to connect with peers and be part of a collective learning process. There is no need to reinvent the wheel!



## 1.1 HR STRATEGY

Human resource management should be an integral part of an organisation's strategic framework to ensure it supports the overall mission of the organisation.

An HR strategy is a coordinated set of actions aimed at aligning and integrating the culture, people, and systems to achieve the goals and articulate a vision for the organisation. A solid strategy should be informed by good practice and be planned with the support of the leadership team.



### REFLECTION

- Does your organisational strategy explicitly value and recognise staff for their contribution to organisational objectives?
- Does your organisation follow through with implementing contributions and feedback from staff?
- Does your organisational strategy allocate sufficient human and financial resources to achieve its HR strategy?
- Does your HR strategy reflect and support your organisation's objectives and commitment to promoting inclusiveness and diversity, and to prohibiting sexual exploitation and abuse?



## 1.2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

An organisation structure is designed and used to define the hierarchy and relationships in place. It identifies each job role, its function, and where it reports to within the organisation, usually illustrated using an organisational chart.



### REFLECTION

- Is the organisational chart available and easily accessible to all staff so they can reference it as required?
- Is the organisational chart accurate and up to date? When was it last updated? What is the process to update it?
- Is the structure (still) suitable to enable the implementation of the organisation's strategy and meet its goals?
- Does the structure clearly explain the management and communication reporting lines?





## 1.3 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Organisational culture encompasses the values, beliefs, norms and habitual “way of doing things” of an organisation.

Organisational culture impacts and influences every aspect of HR management.

Consequently, organisational culture and people management practices need to be aligned to support each other to create the right environment for staff to thrive and achieve the mission of the organisation.

Ethics are often intrinsically linked to organisational culture. All staff members are responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that supports and adheres to their organisation’s culture as well as the standards and regulations governing the non-profit and aid sectors. Ethics and values should to be seen as a priority and incorporated into daily work.

HR plays a key role in ensuring an overall climate of compliance, trust, and comfort for staff to speak about potential ethical or compliance issues. It is important that HR creates and facilitates an environment where awareness of ethics and values is paramount in the work your organisation does and for all your staff.



### REFLECTION

- How would employees describe the culture of your organisation? How well is the culture serving what the organisation is trying to achieve?
- Do people management interventions support and promote desired cultural attributes or conflict with them (e.g. how performance is managed, what is recognised and rewarded, who has access to learning and development opportunities)?
- Do you have a code of conduct in place? Are the expected standards of behaviours and organisational values clearly communicated to staff? Do you have different channels to enable reporting of abuse and breach of these?
- Does your code of conduct underpin International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), and support good humanitarian practice?
- How is your commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion embedded in your HR policies and practices?



**TIP:** Your Code of Conduct should be aligned to your values and principles, and include a clause stating that it forms part of all contracts of employment or conditions of service. Display it so staff can easily be reminded about it.





## 1.4 WORKFORCE PLANNING

Workforce planning refers to the process of:

- Determining the human resource needs of the organisation.
- Ensuring that the organisation creates the correct number and type of jobs to meet these needs.
- Supporting the scale-up of human resource capacity in times of surge.
- Recruiting the right skills, knowledge, and attitudes
- Developing existing staff to ensure that the organisation can achieve both its current objectives and its longer-term strategic goals.



### REFLECTION

- How suitable is the current level of staffing and overall skills profile?
- What forecasting tools for future staff needs and skills profile are being used? Is there a defined succession planning process in the organisation?
- Is there a clear relationship between country, regional, and organisational strategic planning?
- What constraints exist in achieving desirable levels and skills of staffing, especially in busy and challenging times (e.g. first phase response)?



## 1.5 JOB DESIGN

Job design is the process of creating new roles to carry out specific jobs or reviewing (updating) existing roles to meet the requirements and the objectives of the programmes more effectively.



### REFLECTION

- How are existing roles identified and designed? Is there a consistent approach to job design?
- Have existing roles been analysed/reviewed recently?
- Does the job design process consider specific ways of working (i.e. matrix team management, project base workflow, remote management, etc.)?
- Are management roles “doable” - designed with realistic spans of control?
- Are the job evaluations and grading done consistently for all categories of staff?



HIRE



An organisation's recruitment and selection policies and practices should aim to attract and select a diverse workforce with the skills and capabilities required to fulfil its mission. Various types of recruitment methods can be used within an organisation with the primary goal of attracting the widest pool of suitable candidates. The effectiveness and fairness of these methods should be monitored to ensure compliance and that good practice is maintained.



**TIP:** Recruiting is a two-way street. Remember how much your "employer brand" matters when it comes to attracting the right talent.



## 2.1 RECRUITMENT POLICY

A recruitment policy is an official statement of the purpose, values, and principles of staff recruitment in an organisation which all staff are expected to follow.



### REFLECTION

- ✓ If you are operating internationally, is the recruitment policy contextualised for each country?
- ✓ Are the responsibilities and accountabilities clear and known by all staff to ensure a fair and consistent process?
- ✓ Do you have a diversity and equality policy in place (even if it is not required by law)?
- ✓ Is adequate training provided to those involved in recruitment and selection on critical topics such as interviewing skills and diversity and equality policy?
- ✓ Is the recruitment policy appropriate to the needs of the programme and adapted to the "market"?
- ✓ Have you identified KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to measure and improve your recruitment policy and practices?



## 2.2 RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

Recruitment procedures should gather the detailed process and practices which all staff are expected to follow in the recruitment of new staff. This enables the organisation to attract and select a diverse workforce with the skills and capabilities required to fulfil the requirements of all roles. The process should be fair, transparent, and consistent to ensure the most appropriate person is appointed for each role.

Many recruiting managers consider recruiting to be largely administrative, and often delegate the hiring process - and even hiring decisions - to relatively junior staff. Yet, the risks from a poorly executed recruitment process can be costly. Failing to fill open positions can result in a loss of productivity and hiring the wrong candidates can create internal and external liabilities.



### REFLECTION

- How do you mitigate organisational risks as part of your selection process (i.e. are you conducting all the adequate checks: employment reference, health checks, criminal records, etc.)?
- Is there appropriate and consistent recruitment documentation? Is it stored in a secure location with restricted access?
- Do interviewed candidates receive feedback when they are not selected?
- How is adherence to the recruitment procedures encouraged? Are responsibilities clear and understood?
- Are you using various selection methods and assessment tools to find the right candidates?
- Are there procedures in place supporting a fair process and the recruitment of a diverse workforce?
- Are you leveraging your staff's networks for peer-to-peer referral?
- Does the policy consider local/national recruitment platforms (e.g. LinkedIn, local newspapers, community centres)?



## HOW TO ESTABLISH A WELL-MANAGED RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- ✓ Start by confirming the need for the post with the hiring manager, and the budget approval for it with the finance manager.
- ✓ Have clearly identified objectives converted into a well-written job description and specification. Do not advertise a job until you know exactly what you need and can articulate it to your candidates.
- ✓ Assign a specific recruiting lead to each open job. The lead is responsible for ensuring that the process runs smoothly and that the right candidate is selected.
- ✓ Include a structured and well-defined interview process and qualified interview panel with training provided to all staff involved in recruitment.
- ✓ Develop an active sourcing strategy, rather than a passive approach of posting an ad and waiting for replies.

## REFERENCE CHECKS



01

Obtain a minimum of two professional references to gain an understanding of the candidate's suitability.



02

Get a reference from a former supervisor, whenever possible.



03

Ask specific questions such as:

- *"Tell me about the candidate's most important contributions to the achievement of your organisation's mission and goals."*
- *"What was the applicant's reason for leaving your company?"*



## 2.3 JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Job descriptions are formal documents that specify the accountabilities and responsibilities of a particular job and describe the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and experience of a suitable post-holder for that job. These are used throughout the entire recruitment process and can be used to set up objectives in the initial cycle of performance management.

Each employee should have a job description that delineates, at a minimum, the position title, job classification, salary grade, a general summary of overall responsibilities, minimum qualifications, and job-related competencies. It may also include more specific roles, responsibilities, and targets.



### REFLECTION

- Do you have a job description for every role in your organisation?
- Are they kept up to date and accurate for all roles?
- Is the format appropriate, consistent, and legally compliant?
- Do job descriptions include performance standards/key result areas? Or, where applicable, do they link to the organisation's Competencies Framework?
- Do job descriptions include common core areas of responsibility (e.g. security, safeguarding, child protection, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse) as well as specifics to the role?



**TIP:** Avoid designing a job description with a particular individual in mind. It must be about what need to be achieved through the role rather than “cutting corners” to shorten the recruitment process.



## 2.4 ONBOARDING

Onboarding is the process of introducing new staff members to their organisation and equipping them with the necessary knowledge and support to boost their productivity from the moment they start their role.

Employee retention starts on the first day of a person's employment. A strong onboarding programme is important to make a good first impression with new hires and show them that your organisation invests in and values employee success.

Traditionally, onboarding is considered to be an HR responsibility. Whilst HR should play an active role to ensure consistency across the whole organisation, a truly effective and impactful onboarding process requires the buy-in of all departments, especially with the active participation from line managers. A line manager is the most influential person in an employee's work life, so it is crucial to engage them at the start when bringing on board new staff members.

The orientation pack provided to new hires should cover various aspects of their role and the organisation programmes and country locations. They should receive thorough briefings on security, health, and safety as well as have a review with HR and their line manager about the terms and conditions of their contract, the requirements of their post and the expected behaviours and level of performance.



## REFLECTION

- ✓ How is the new hire induction designed? How does it support the organisational culture?
- ✓ Who is responsible for ensuring onboarding happens for every new hire?
- ✓ Are line managers systematically involved in the process?
- ✓ Does your onboarding program prepare employees to be productive and successful from the start?

Part of the onboarding process includes a handover when a new staff member takes over from someone leaving their role. Handovers are essential to ensure the continuity of projects and activities and to prepare new colleagues for their role, daily tasks, and working environment.



**TIP:** Newcomers need to be informed of the history and of the current status of the programmes, the up-coming priorities and pending actions, and possible challenges attached to their roles.

When timing does not allow for a direct handover between the former employee and the newcomer, it is important to provide clearly written handover notes and well organised files (paper and electronic files) to ensure a smooth transition and ensure minimum disruption of programme activities.



### Line Manager Outreach

HR should take time to sit down with the line manager of a new employee prior to their arrival to explain the importance of the onboarding process and ensure that the line manager understands that it is their responsibility to be prepared and proactive.



### Pre-Arrival Preparation

When an employee arrives, they should be greeted in a way that makes them feel expected and welcome. This requires timely preparation prior to the start date.





### **First Day Orientation**

On an employee's first day, they should meet with both HR - to review and complete essential paperwork - and their line manager to get acquainted with the job requirements, the office environment and culture, and to understand what is expected of them during their first week.



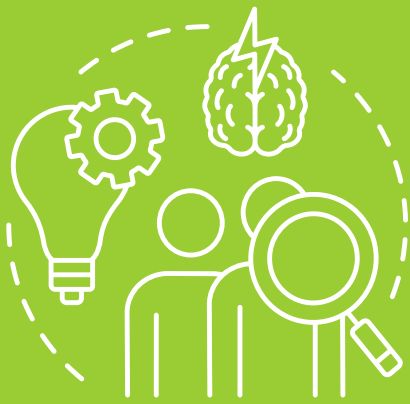
### **Buddy System**

Setting up a 'buddy system' to pair each new employee with an existing employee (ideally someone at the similar level but from a different department) is a great way to support new hires. A buddy, or peer, can be a helpful resource to new hires for asking questions that they may not want to ask their line manager, and it is a good way for them to meet people outside their team/department.



### **"Day 10" Orientation**

New employees often experience information overload during their first days on the job. Holding a "Day 10 Orientation" session can provide an opportunity for new employees to ask follow up questions and share feedback on their experience so far. This session should be held by HR and can be about one hour depending on the number of questions employees may have.



HR policies and practices must enable the organisation to achieve effectiveness in its programmes and provide a supportive working environment to its workforce. Organisations should aim higher than simply meeting the minimum legal requirements.

All policies and practices relating to staff employment should be:

- Documented in writing, using plain language as much as possible.
- Easily accessible to all staff
- Implemented in a consistent and fair manner
- Monitored and updated regularly to ensure compliance with legal provisions and relevance to cultural norms and the operating context

Organisations need to set up a governance process to formalise how policies and practices are carried out. Many organisations have a specific policy review committee to ensure policies are fair, transparent, and comply with current standards.

Managers should receive appropriate guidance, training, and support to effectively implement these policies with their teams. This should include developing and supporting remote management practices and procedures, and embedding them as a key part of the organisation's ways of working.



## REFLECTION

- Does your organisation have current and consistent contracts (including terms and conditions) of employment for all categories of staff?
- Are all policies up to date, legally compliant, and easily accessible to staff?
- Are there processes, practices, and tools to support remote working?
- How often are staff trained and reminded about the key HR policies?



## 3.1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Implementing an effective performance management process is admittedly difficult and can be time consuming for HR, as well as employees and line managers. However, performance management is actually one of the most powerful exercises available to an organisation. A weak performance management system can be very damaging to the organisational culture, lower staff morale, increase employee turnover, and prevent staff and teams from meeting their objectives.

A performance review is a periodic evaluation of a person's job performance. As part of the performance management system, staff appraisal is the process of ensuring that each staff member:

- Agrees on objectives and plans for the year with their line manager.
- Is given opportunities for merit increases and promotions.
- Regularly receives feedback on their performance and the progress they have made towards achieving planned objectives.
- Identifies, with their line manager, areas for improvement along with opportunities for growth through learning and development plans.
- Has regular opportunities to plan for their career development.





## REFLECTION

- ✓ What performance management approach does your organisation use and do staff feel some ownership of the process?
- ✓ Do staff fully understand the purpose and process? Does the process enable staff engagement?
- ✓ Are staff aware that their performance is tied to their compensation?
- ✓ What recording system is used? Is the documentation adequate and not overly cumbersome?
- ✓ Are review meetings handled effectively (e.g. allowing enough time to prepare and enough time for the meeting)?
- ✓ Do staff reviews relate to job descriptions and are they linked to team/organisation goals?
- ✓ Are managers provided with adequate training to have high quality and honest conversations about performance?



**TIP:** Feedback, whether positive or developmental in nature, should not be reserved for the formal review period. Line managers should aim to give feedback on a regular basis by meeting individually with employees once a week. This meeting is an opportunity for line managers to give staff constructive feedback on their performance, as well as discuss progress, challenges, possible needs for line management support, and upcoming priorities.



## PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

It is important for HR to put in place and implement training for the line managers on the local performance process to:

- ✓ Allow employees to receive highly desired feedback on their work
- ✓ Allow the organisation to reward employees for desired results and behaviors
- ✓ Help the organisation identify and prioritise training and development needs



## 3.2 COMPENSATIONS AND BENEFITS

Compensations and benefits, sometimes referred to as “Rewards,” encompasses the systems and procedures which determine staff grading, salaries and other benefits which are part of the conditions of service for staff.

Many organisations view pay and benefits within the concept of “total rewards” which also includes the range of benefits that make up the overall employment proposition (i.e. learning and development opportunities, career development, environment and working patterns, etc.).

The effective implementation of a rewards structure is a critical piece of an overall HR framework. A rewards system supports organisations in attracting the right individuals with the passion, professionalism, experience, and skills necessary to further its mission, while motivating high-performing employees to feel valued and stay with the organisation.



### REFLECTION

- ✓ Does your organisation use a set of reward principles that link to the organisation’s culture, values, and mission? How are reward decisions measured and monitored?
- ✓ Is there a reward philosophy to guide the compensation system design (e.g. market positioning, pay progression mechanism, adaptability to different labour markets)?
- ✓ Is there a grading and salaries policy?
- ✓ Is there an objective system to evaluate jobs, measure internal relativities and support internal equity?
- ✓ What other non-financial benefits are staff provided (e.g. flexible working, medical insurance)?
- ✓ Are salary administration arrangements efficient and secured (e.g. new starters, annual salary review implementation, one-off payment, accurate and timely pay slips)?

**TIP:** It is common for different country offices within the same organisation to hire employees to support projects funded by different donors.



In such cases, it is critical to implement and maintain a universal compensation (and benefits) plan that applies to all employees. It may be tempting to create parallel approaches based on divergent budgets or donor regulations, but a split approach can be highly problematic and, in some countries, actually illegal.



## 3.3 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Employee relations refers to the formal relations that exist between staff, managers, and the organisation. HR should help line managers at all levels to prevent, manage and mediate conflicts between employees in the workplace.

This support is usually provided through mediation and coaching, following disciplinary and grievance policy processes, providing solutions to concerns, as well as follow-up on resolutions made by either party.

Most workplace conflicts are resolvable, but there are times when employees will need to be disciplined. When these situations occur, the discipline should be constructive and focused on improving performance or correcting undesirable conduct.

Effectively and efficiently addressing performance concerns is an important responsibility of HR. This includes creating an environment where concerns related to performance or other behaviours are addressed in an honest and transparent way.



**TIP:** Words of wisdom: document everything! HR is more than the sum of its forms but to mitigate the risk of lengthy disciplinary cases and sour employee relations. The more facts are captured and tracked with consistency, the more efficiently employee relations will be managed.



### REFLECTION

- Are staff members aware of the grievance and disciplinary procedures? Are line managers trained to implement them properly?
- Who is accountable for employee relations?
- Does your organisation's Code of Conduct clearly indicate what is considered to be unacceptable behaviour and what standards are expected from all staff?
- Is there a staff association, council or union? If yes, what role does it play?





## 4.1 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Learning and development is the process of ensuring that staff have adequate opportunities to:

- Understand and be committed to what the organisation is trying to achieve.
- Take ownership of their own learning and continuous development so they can reskill and upskill throughout their tenure in the organisation.
- Work with staff, partners and beneficiaries in ways which promote learning and participation.
- Assess, plan and review work to increase effectiveness and achieve high standards.
- Learn from the experience and share the lessons inside and outside the organisation, so the organisation is truly a learning organisation, and staff play a key role in this culture.
- Improve their performance and that of others.

Professional development plays an important part in ensuring your organisation's ability to successfully achieve its mission. It also greatly influences employee attraction and retention.

Well-designed training sessions contribute to organisational learning through the development of skills that allow individual employees to strengthen their own capabilities.

A commitment to learning and development is essential for organisations, especially with the ever growing focus on professionalism in the nonprofit and aid sectors and an increase in expectations from and for staff to engage in continuous growth and development to improve their performance.



## REFLECTION

- ✓ How does your organisation conduct training need analysis?
- ✓ Do you have a competency framework in place?
- ✓ Is the training budget adequate and secured?
- ✓ Do staff have equal access to training and development opportunities?
- ✓ What evaluation methods are used to assess the impact of training on the learner and of their activities?
- ✓ Is there clarity and ownership on what the impact of training should be for both staff and the organisation?
- ✓ What role do line managers play in the training and development of their staff?



## 4.2 ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement is tightly linked to job satisfaction and is the result of the right conditions for all employees to give their best each day, demonstrate a commitment to your organisation's goals and values, and be motivated to contribute to organisational success with an enhanced sense of their own wellbeing.

Your organisation's success depends upon your level of employee engagement. High engagement means that an employee feels fully involved and enthusiastic about the organisation. Engaged employees are proven to be more productive, creative, and loyal to their role and the organisation.

Encouragement and active mentoring can also have a positive effect on employees and their colleagues.



### REMEMBER THE NUANCES OF ENGAGEMENT

- ✓ Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their organisation. They drive innovation and move the organisation forward.
- ✓ Disengaged employees are essentially "checked out." They are sleepwalking through their workday, putting time—not energy or passion—into their work.
- ✓ Actively disengaged employees are not just unhappy at work: they are busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish.



## REFLECTION

- ✓ What mechanisms exist for measuring job satisfaction and engagement?
- ✓ What level of identification or engagement with the organisation is there among staff?
- ✓ Do you know the current levels of job satisfaction among your staff members?
- ✓ What are the causes of satisfaction or dissatisfaction among staff? Does this differ in different cultures, locations, and positions?



## ENGAGEMENT

Ways to maintain and improve engagement:

- ✓ Create objective and inclusive performance management systems.
- ✓ Organise regular all-staff meetings (monthly/quarterly) to provide staff with information pertaining to local activities and organisational initiatives.
- ✓ Provide key developmental experiences.
- ✓ Offer mentoring and networking opportunities.
- ✓ Create an inclusive work environment.
- ✓ Provide equal opportunities.
- ✓ Educate the workforce about diversity and inclusion.
- ✓ Guard against reverse discrimination.
- ✓ Address work/life balance needs and reduce expectations of very long work hours.
- ✓ Provide role models.
- ✓ Rethink career paths.
- ✓ Support involvement in activities outside of work.
- ✓ Have an “open door” policy to encourage two-way dialogue.



## 4.3 RECOGNITION

Employee recognition is the practice of acknowledging employee contributions, sometimes through rewards or incentives. Numerous studies show that effective recognition can have a major impact on an employee's productivity, loyalty, and stress level.



BE FAIR. Recognition should be given for genuine effort or achievement and not based on favouritism or internal politics. It should also be suitable and appropriate for local customs and culture.



DO NOT assign awards on a fixed schedule. Awards that are given out every month, for example, will begin to seem forced and/or disingenuous because they are driven more by a schedule than by actual employee achievements.



DO design programs to be equitable. Recognition should be distributed on merit, which means that some employees may be recognised a lot more than others. This is actually a good thing. If everyone is equally recognised, then the recognition becomes meaningless and engagement starts decreasing.



## 5.1 HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

Organisations must seriously consider setting up their own health and safety policy, including an accident reporting procedure and risk management practices. Employers have a responsibility to ensure, as much as possible, the safety and security of their staff in the performance of their duties.

Employers have both a legal liability and a duty of care to fulfil in ensuring a healthy workplace and workforce. Providing a staff health programme as part of a reward or benefit package is one way to achieve this.



### REFLECTION

- Is there equity between international and local employees?
- Do employees follow digital security measures and practice healthy working habits (e.g. workstation, taking breaks)?
- Who is responsible and accountable for health checks, security training, etc.?
- Are there any procedures for ensuring staff safety and security (e.g. vehicles, accidents, fire, etc.)?
- Who has accountability for staff safety training and awareness?
- What does your organisation's safety record look like?



## 5.2 STRESS AT WORK AND STAFF WELLBEING

Staff in nonprofit, humanitarian, and development organisations often work in multicultural teams and high-stress and insecure settings, with limited access to private space and leisure activities. These conditions often add stress to staff who are already overworked and under pressure.

An HR manager should be mindful of staff's physical and psychological wellbeing and coordinate closely with the leadership team and the relevant departments to support staff care initiatives. Stress can have a direct impact and negative effects on individuals and teams that will interfere with the overall effectiveness and security of the organisation. Staff care and wellbeing must be taken seriously and cannot be ignored.

HR managers should remind line managers to ensure that their team members and themselves are taking adequate rest and recreation breaks.



### REFLECTION

- ✓ Are there appropriate health and support programmes for staff (e.g. access to EAP-Employee Assistance Programme)?
- ✓ Does your organisation have access to professional psychological support?
- ✓ Who are the champions and role models for healthy work practices and work/life balance?







### EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES (EAP)

These are employee benefit programmes that provide staff with options to help them cope and manage with work-related or personal problems. These benefits can range from short-term counselling to financial advice for both staff and their families.



### MINDFULNESS AND WELLNESS INITIATIVES

These are activities organised to promote and maintain wellbeing within offices. Promoting staff wellbeing contributes to employee performance and overall effectiveness. Examples of wellness activities include weekly meditation, yoga or sport sessions in the office or within the compound, rest and recreation, time off in lieu (TOIL) policy, annual health check with a visiting medical team in the office, wellbeing weeks where the emphasis is on promotion and awareness of staff wellbeing and mindfulness, and team building events



### PSYCHOLOGICAL BRIEFINGS (COUNSELLING SESSIONS) FOR STAFF

These are especially relevant for emergency response staff. HR managers should ensure this is available to all staff when needed. Organisations usually provide this through their EAP scheme (above) as well as through external providers to maintain confidentiality for staff members. These must be adapted to the local culture and customs.



### COACHING OR MENTORING PROGRAMMES

These programmes encourage two-way conversations between staff and managers, and enable staff to feel safe asking for help and advice from managers when needed. Having an open culture has a huge impact on reducing work-related stress.



### TRAINING FOR MANAGERS

These programmes help to identify early signs of burnout or other stress related symptoms.



### COMPREHENSIVE BRIEFING FOR STAFF PRIOR TO FIELD DEPLOYMENT

Some organisations include wellbeing and resiliency training in their induction training to make staff aware of the organisation's policy and practices around this issue. Other organisations also provide more comprehensive briefings for emergency response staff prior to deployment or intermittently as a refresher.



Exit is the “natural” final stage in the employee life cycle. Just like welcoming staff members, saying thank you and goodbye to them while acknowledging their contribution are important gestures that should be facilitated by HR.

Exit includes separation, retirement, or termination of employment due to a reduction of staffing, layoffs, end of contract/programmes, resignation, or other reasons for termination. Whatever the reasons for separation, some HR processes form the core of this activity.



## REFLECTION

- ✓ What policies does the organisation have on termination of staff employment?
- ✓ Is employee exit part of the planning process?
- ✓ Are exit interviews conducted? If yes, how is the information used?

When a staff member leaves an organisation, there are many formalities that need to be completed, for the staff member as well as for the organisation. These formalities can be finance, IT, administration or HR related.

An ‘Exit Checklist’ is a good way to ensure that there is a consistent process in place for all employee who leave the organisation. The checklist describes all the various activities and actions required. There is no prescriptive method in designing the checklist, as long as it covers everything your organisation and the exiting employee will need to know and do.

The completed checklist should then be filed in the staff members’ personnel files to maintain records of completion of service.



## CHECKLIST - EMPLOYEE EXIT

A practical checklist for outgoing staff:

- ✓ Administrative issues (phone, accommodation, building pass, etc.)
- ✓ Financial clearance with finance department
- ✓ IT clearance with technical department (e.g. laptop, email)



**TIP:** If the feedback shared by the exiting employee led to improvements or changes in practices, why not send them a note to let them know their input was heard and useful? This will show them that their voice was actually heard and valued.

