



# CEM Volunteer Policy and Guidelines

October 2015

## **1 BACK GROUND OF CEM**

Community Energy Malawi realises the importance of diversity in skills and knowledge. There is strength in unity and diversity. Innovation comes in when people of various backgrounds and knowledge levels come together for one common purpose. We require innovation to achieve our mission which is “To help Malawian Communities generate sustainable energy solutions to meet their energy needs”.

Volunteerism is one sure way of infusing the much needed diversity and unity of purpose in CEM. Through volunteerism we anticipate to timely and innovatively achieve our mission. In return more Malawian communities will have access to energy, indeed the modern forms of electricity that for ages have remained just but a dream. When they get access to electricity, their lives improve and joy and satisfaction will be for the volunteers for a job well done. We all need each other.

This policy sets the pace of a positive engagement between and among people of different races, backgrounds, creeds and languages but united for one purpose...Sustainable Energy for All.

## **2 WHY VOLUNTEER POLICY**

- 2.1 To provide volunteers with a passion for sustainable energy and community development a chance to provide a service to Malawian communities requiring improved access to energy
- 2.2 To provide college and university students an opportunity to become acquainted with the community energy field and to encourage their interest in energy related careers.
- 2.3 To provide CEM members and stakeholders the benefit of organised and constituent community energy services in meeting their energy needs
- 2.4 To set standards with which to recruit and govern volunteers during their stay at CEM
- 2.5 To establish an office within CEM responsible for recruitment, utilisation and supervision of volunteers

## **3 WHO IS A VOLUNTEER?**

Anyone, who without compensation or expectation of compensation performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of Community Energy Malawi. A ‘volunteer’ must be officially accepted and enrolled by CEM prior to performance of the task.

CEM does not accept volunteers who must complete community service hours related to a court order.

#### **4 GENERAL INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Volunteers will be encouraged, but not required, to become members of the CEM.
- 4.2 New volunteer opportunities shall be proposed to various CEM departments. All qualified volunteers will have the opportunity to staff the service.
- 4.3 The Country Director or any such officer designated by the Country Director as in charge of volunteers will work cooperatively with the designated staff person to implement the service.
- 4.4 Volunteers will not replace paid employees but serve to supplement and enhance existing services to CEM Stakeholders
- 4.5 Volunteer service will be an important, honored role at CEM. Every effort will be made to integrate and coordinate volunteer talents and needs with CEM's programs.
- 4.6 Volunteer programs and activities will be monitored and evaluated on an on-going basis by the Country Director or his/her designee in conjunction with other involved staff members.
- 4.7 Volunteers may not drive CEM vehicles. CEM staffs are not allowed to provide transportation for volunteers except in extreme emergencies and on approval from the Country Director during which volunteers will be required to sign an undertaking that indemnifies CEM from any responsibility and obligations arising from motor vehicle accidents etc.
- 4.8 In rare circumstances and only when a vehicle is necessary for the furtherance of CEM mission and fulfillment of the volunteer's role will volunteers be offered to drive or being driven in CEM vehicles.

#### **5 VOLUNTEERS RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES**

- 5.1 Those interested will complete an application and submit to the Country Director.
- 5.2 Volunteers will complete and submit a Release of Information, which will be reviewed by the Police, Immigration Department or any other relevant authority for history.
- 5.3 Volunteers assisting in Finance and Fundraising departments will also undergo background checks especially for criminal records.
- 5.4 Reference checks will be completed on all volunteers.
- 5.5 Volunteers will be interviewed by the Country Director, his/her designee and department manager with support from the Appointment and Disciplinary Committee of the board to assure placement is in accordance with skills of the volunteer.
- 5.6 All volunteers will receive a photo ID badge before volunteerism begins. Departmental training will be done by department staff or trained volunteer.
- 5.7 Volunteers will sign an agreement binding the two parties for the duration of the assignment.
- 5.8 Volunteers are required to attend volunteer orientation session provided by their respective sponsoring organization or CEM Departmental Heads
- 5.9 Any CEM Department wanting volunteer assistance will complete a volunteer service requisition and submit it to the Country Director.

- 5.10 The Finance and Administration Department will maintain a database record and personnel file on each volunteer, to include: Application, Background check(s) | Reference checks | Medical clearance (sick leaves) | Orientation record | Attendance at educational in-services | Evaluations |
- 5.11 Volunteers will be honored at the end of their placements for the period they have volunteered for CEM. Activities to honor the volunteers are held during the last week of their stay.
- 5.12 CEM will also provide reference letters to all volunteers

## **6 VOLUNTEERS CODE OF PRACTICE**

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- Be assigned appropriate tasks according to ability, skill, interests, availability, and training
- Receive training and supervision for the tasks accepted.
- Receive a job description for your assignment as appropriate.
- Be treated as a fellow team member who contributes to CEM mission through your volunteer work.
- Make suggestions about your assignment and the CEM activities including the volunteer programme, and be acknowledged by staff.
- Be given appropriate expressions of appreciation and recognition.
- Be trusted with confidential information if needed to help carry out assignments.
- Expect that records will be kept; documenting areas of interest or positions held (and if applicable, time spent volunteering, commendation, etc.).
- Be treated with a spirit of friendliness and cooperation so that CEM will continue to be known as a “great place to volunteer.”
- A safe and inviting environment to work in that is free of harassment and discrimination

At the same time CEM Expects volunteers to

- Abide by all CEM Policies and regulations in force at the material time
- Respect the cultures, traditions and peoples of Malawi and appropriately behave as such at all times
- Know their own duties and stay on task.
- Cooperate with staff and fellow volunteers, and maintain a team attitude.
- Voice your opinions and contribute your suggestions to improve CEM’s work.
- Be on time for scheduled meetings and work assignments.
- Honor your commitment and come when scheduled
- Treat all volunteers, staff, and CEM beneficiaries and stakeholders with respect.
- To exercise a high level of confidentiality: CEM has an obligation to donors, its Board of Trustees and stakeholders to maintain their confidentiality and to respect their privacy. Every person served by CEM has the right to confidentiality. At the same time, every volunteer must use his or her best judgment. If you are aware of an issue that requires immediate attention, especially if it involves volunteers or staff, please direct your concern immediately to the Country Director or his/her designee responsible for Volunteer programme.

## **7 Harassment and Discrimination**

- 7.1 CEM is firmly committed to providing a positive work environment free of discrimination and bias. Each volunteer is personally responsible for maintaining such a work environment.
- 7.2 CEM prohibits any actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's race, sex, sexual preferences, ethnic background, age, religion, physical condition, or other legally protected characteristic.
- 7.3 Any conduct or action, whether overt or subtle, which creates an offensive or hostile work environment is prohibited and will be grounds for immediate disciplinary action.
- 7.4 CEM prohibits any harassment between volunteers, employees, or other non-employee on the basis of sex.
- 7.5 No volunteer, male or female, should be subjected to unsolicited or unwelcome sexual overtones and conduct, either verbal or physical.
- 7.6 Misconduct applies to males and females, and includes harassment between individuals of both sexes and the same sex.
- 7.7 Any volunteer who believes he or she is a victim of sexual or discriminatory harassment is encouraged to let the harasser know that his or her behavior is unwelcome. In addition, volunteers who believe they have been harassed must immediately report the matter to a Supervisor or the Country Director. A grievance is then filed

## **8 Grievance Procedures**

Under this policy, a grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule, or practice which the volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats him or her unfairly, or causes him or her any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, or an opinion or statement held by a staff member or fellow volunteer.

Volunteer grievances are of great concern to CEM, regardless of whether the problem is large or small. To provide prompt and efficient evaluation of, and response to grievances, CEM has established a procedure for all volunteers.

It is CEM's policy to give full consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for his or her part in presenting a grievance. All grievances are handled confidentially.

The grievance procedure is:

- 8.1 If urgent action is needed, notify the immediate supervisor
- 8.2 . Attempt to discuss your grievance with your supervisor, to work out the problem.
- 8.3 If you are unsatisfied, submit your complaint in writing to a supervisor
- 8.4 A response should be made within 3 business days.
- 8.5 If you are not satisfied within 5 days of how your written complaint was handled, you may appeal by submitting your written complaint to the Country Director.
- 8.6 If the complaint is with the Country Director, then submit it to the Board Chairperson.
- 8.7 The Country Director or Board Chairperson should respond within 5 business days.

8.8 If you are still unsatisfied, you may ask that your written complaint be taken to the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee (ADC). Within 30 days, the (ADC) will act on your grievance, affirming or denying your request, choosing to investigate further, or choosing to take the matter to the entire board. The Board's decision is final.

## **9 Termination of Volunteer Placement**

CEM is has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause, but will always consider the cause leading to the termination. Although it is not possible to list all the forms of behavior or conduct that are considered unacceptable in the work place, the following are examples of infractions or conduct that may result in the limitation and termination of the volunteer relationship.

- 9.1 Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of CEM property
- 9.2 Misuse of CEM funds, equipment, or materials
- 9.3 Falsification of records
- 9.4 Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- 9.5 Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcoholic or illegal drugs in the work place, while on duty or while operating CEM equipment
- 9.6 Fighting or threatening violence in the work place
- 9.7 Boisterous or disruptive activity in the work place
- 9.8 Negligence or improper conduct leading to the damage of property
- 9.9 Repeated failure to follow a supervisor's reasonable request or to carry out a reasonable job assignment
- 9.10 Gross misconduct or insubordination
- 9.11 Violation of safety or health rules
- 9.12 Abuse or mistreatment of homeowners, volunteers, or employees
- 9.13 Sexual or other unlawful harassment or discrimination
- 9.14 Violation of CEM anti-discrimination policies and procedures
- 9.15 Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the work place
- 9.16 Excessive absenteeism without notice
- 9.17 Releasing confidential information

10 Each volunteer will be required to read this policy before commencement of any placement and must sign in agreement with the policy.