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StudyBeyondBorders Organisation

POLICY

DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Change begins with Education

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DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1 STUDYBEYONDBORDERS OVERVIEW

StudyBeyondBorders in Cambodia (SBB Cambodia) is a local Cambodian non-government organisation operating in rural areas of Battambang, Oddar Meanchey, and Siem Reap Provinces. The organisation is supported by an alliance of registered development organisations in Australia (SBBA), the UK (SBBUK), and Ireland (SBI).

SBB Cambodia aims to build capability within Cambodian education policy-making, leadership, mentoring, and training to equip and motivate teachers to provide quality education to children. The organisation is committed to supporting systemic change so that educators are proud to work in the teaching profession and are highly respected by parents, communities, and peers. To this end, SBB Cambodia conducts resources that together enable the delivery of quality education to schoolchildren. The organisation seeks to embed all its work at the school, district, provincial, and national levels.

2 DOCUMENT PURPOSE

SBB Cambodia is committed to poverty alleviation through sustainable development at all levels of the organisation and its programs. Every day, we strive to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Access to Quality Education for *ALL* children. This policy outlines SBB Cambodia's philosophy of development; documents the series of definitions to which SBB Cambodia subscribes; and provides a development-centric framework for all activities undertaken by SBB Cambodia. All programs or activities should be assessed and reviewed against this document to ensure they accord with the objectives and philosophies of SBB Cambodia.

This document also demonstrates that SBB Cambodia understands, applies, and abides by the principles advocated by contemporary development practice using the vernacular adopted by Cambodian Government and Donor agencies to describe best practice.

This document outlines SBB Cambodia's definition and approach to development and demonstrates our commitment, as well as the distinction between 'development' and 'non-development' expenditure, as ratified by its governing body.

3 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Cross-cutting issues are those that underpin all development initiatives of SBB Cambodia. They include gender equality, disability and social inclusion, human rights, the environment, climate change, child protection and partnership.

Cross-cutting issues and especially care for vulnerable people including child protection and gender equality are considerations that apply across all aspects of the work of SBB Cambodia as it relates to both quality of education-related issues and access issues. Our work aims to alleviate the disadvantages faced by those who are vulnerable and marginalised for a range of reasons.

Addressing their issues and concerns in a sensitive and appropriate manner in all aspects of our work is at the heart of SBB Cambodia's program design and delivery.

4 DEFINITIONS

The discipline of Development has developed rapidly over the last 50 years – as has its own contemporary vocabulary. Emerging from the post-war and colonial era, development “currency” has evolved from what would now be referred to as “Paternalism” to Community Engagement and Sustainability. Definitions for the ascendant vernacular as utilised by ACFID/DFAT and embraced by SBB Cambodia include:

HUMAN RIGHTS: SBB Cambodia is a development organisation that respects, protects, and promotes human rights for all, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class, or socioeconomic status.

SBB Cambodia is committed to the inclusion and representation of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by the intersecting drivers of marginalisation and exclusion. Human Rights provides the framework for the design, delivery, and evaluation of all our activities.

AID AND DEVELOPMENT: Activities undertaken in order to reduce poverty and address global justice issues. In the non-government organisation sector, this may occur through a range of engagements that includes community projects, emergency management, community education, advocacy, volunteer sending, provision of technical and professional services and resources, environmental protection and restoration, promotion, and protection of human rights.

DEVELOPMENT: Development seeks to improve the conditions of communities in a sustainable way. It is based on working *with* communities, rather than *for or on behalf of* communities. It is a process where a community of people work together to break the cycle of poverty and dependence so that their fundamental needs are met, and the quality of their lives is enhanced. Development activities seek to address the root causes of the need identified and in doing so, make a contribution to reducing that need in the long term.

The following principles are key to development activities:

PARTICIPATION: The local community should decide what to do, and how to do it, and do as much of the work as possible, rather than the assisting organisation. All these actions help a community to believe in itself and its abilities. As it tackles and solves one issue, it becomes more skilled and confident in tackling others.

EQUALITY: Development projects seek to improve the well-being of those in need without favouritism or discrimination by gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, race, religion, culture, or political persuasion. This means that although a project may target a particular location or community, it seeks to bring about positive changes for the benefit of all members of the community.

SUSTAINABILITY: Development projects aim to produce benefits that are sustainable, that is, benefits that are appropriate, owned by the stakeholders, and supported on an ongoing basis with locally available resources, such that they will continue after development assistance has ceased.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This includes the development of skills, resources and capital which will endure beyond the scope of individual activities.

RELIEF: Relief is the provision of basic support to people in emergency situations, in these emergency situations, direct assistance (such as distribution of clothing, food, seeds and tools, temporary housing) may be provided as part of a short-term relief response. Relief does not form part of the SBB Cambodia core program delivery.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS: SBB Cambodia is committed to working with partners, primary stakeholders and all other stakeholders in mutually respectful ways. SBB Cambodia's engagement with partners across all contexts is covered in its "Working with Partners policy".

NON-DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

SBB Cambodia does not engage in Non-Development Activity or Relief

SBB Cambodia is committed to ensuring that no funds are used to: exploit people and communities; or to place any conditions or obligations on recipients in terms of non-development, religious or political outcomes that would affect their access to the services being offered.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY: Supporting a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party, including Agency personnel or their representatives (when using the agency name or resources in paid time) being involved in party political activities; using funds or resources to facilitate or support a specific political party, candidate, or party political organisation in elections, government or any party political structure.

SBB Cambodia does not fund or participate in any Political Activity in beneficiary communities.

EVANGELISTIC/MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES: Evangelism (also called proselytising or missionary work) is the practice of attempting to convert people to a particular religion or faith. Evangelistic activities may discriminate on the basis of belonging to a particular group or aim to persuade or develop religious beliefs and faith practices among project beneficiaries. SBB Cambodia does not endorse, support, or participate in Evangelistic activities.

WELFARE ACTIVITY: Assistance to maintain individuals in a particular condition on a long-term basis, such as institutionalised care programs or support for basic living needs. Where this is implemented independently of other community development activities, these activities fail to meet the standards of sustainable development to which SBB Cambodia adheres.

5 **SBB CAMBODIA PURPOSE**

5.1 **CONSTITUTION**

As stated in SBB Cambodia's constitution, the Organisation's Principal Purposes are:

- a) Serve the public interest through the development of education (including training in social and technical skills and physical education) for those in need, experiencing hardship, or in crisis throughout Cambodia. Principally priority is given to areas with development needs that the organisation's Executive Committee deems suitable for the organisation to intervene and support and that are in line with each community's aim. Such public interest includes the achievement of program outcomes and the development of relevant policies.
- b) Assist in community development in partnership with communities in areas with development needs in the Kingdom of Cambodia, but principally priority is given to areas with development needs that the organisation's Executive Committee deems suitable for the organisation to intervene and support and that are in line with each community's aim.
- c) Contribute to reducing poverty, financial hardship, or barriers to receiving education in Cambodia, principally priority is given to areas with development needs that the organisation's Executive Committee deems suitable for the organisation to intervene and support and that are in line with each community's aim.

SBB Cambodia's overarching objectives include:

- Contribute to developing teacher capacity and involvement in the education sector to improve children's learning outcomes.
- Develop a suite of programs that allow us to operate efficiently and cost-effectively across multiple schools and communities simultaneously.
- Ensure program sustainability through community support and acknowledgement from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

These parameters are deliberately drafted to ensure that a development approach is embedded within all levels of governance and operations. All activities of SBB Cambodia promote the human rights of people and seek to alleviate the poverty of the most marginalised and vulnerable members of the community. Through basing the Constitution in a Development framework, the Board, Quality

Education Committee, and Executive members use this as a lens when setting the initiatives and programs within this broad focus and to keep it under review.

5.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Board determines, from time to time, the focus of activities within the context of this policy, as outlined in the Strategic Plan, which currently identifies our central strategic objectives derived from our mission. Currently, SBB Cambodia's core strategic objectives can be described as follows:

- Transform student learning outcomes by employing a research-informed pedagogical model that empowers teachers and school leaders, elevates classroom practice, and contributes to the evidence base that helps shape Cambodian education policy.
- Continuously enhance and strengthen the organisation's internal capabilities to ensure staff safety and adequate funding to achieve the above-mentioned objective. Continuously develop staff **capacity** to achieve a robust governance system and processes that ensure effective fundraising, financial management, staff management, and project management.
- Strengthen and enhance cooperation with government and international donor institutions to mobilise support and **increase** capacity to implement development programs and strengthen organisational management systems.

5.3 STRATEGIC APPROACHES

Supporting the core objectives and reflecting the means by which these objectives will be achieved are a specific set of strategies. These identify the way in which the strategic objectives will be addressed and met. The strategic objectives are broad while the delivery strategies focus the organisation on a specific set of initiatives that establish its character and areas of expertise.

The specific strategic approaches are:

- Centrality of local voice and respect for local culture.
- Communities of Practice and Learning.
- Teachers and leaders as agents of their own change.
- Action research for enhancement of classroom practice.
- Education as a foundation for social, economic and community development.

6 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

SBB Cambodia advocates that all children should have the opportunity to receive quality teaching and learning at school, and that schools should be places where children are empowered to improve their own lives.

SBB Cambodia also recognises that delivering sustainable development for communities living in poverty is a complex issue. To implement and run our programs, there is a requirement to understand the development context and ensure certain preconditions exist which will provide a setting in which there is the greatest possibility of sustainability, the principal amongst these being:

- 1. Demonstrated Commitment:** The starting point is to identify a community's need and commitment to education before any SBB Cambodia project activity can be considered.

Communities aiming to achieve sustainable improvements in their livelihoods need to recognise that education provides a break in the cycle of poverty and to work collaboratively to improve education practices.

2. **Integrated Support Structures:** For an education system to be able to deliver the desired outcomes for children, those families and their communities' basic needs must be met; appropriate learning environments and facilities are required; and schools should be staffed by competent, trained teachers. Sustainable improvements are achieved through an integrated approach rather than on a case-by-case basis. We work where we can realistically achieve such integrated support through our own initiatives or in conjunction with partners.
3. **Local Knowledge and Understanding:** Being experienced in collaborating closely with communities and helping them build their own aspirations, is essential. It takes time to build rapport and trust with key stakeholders. Identifying and working with partners who have such detailed local knowledge, can help inform SBB Cambodia about local issues and how it can best target its activities, and these local partners assist us in delivering appropriate and sustainable programs.
4. **Connection to Outcomes:** For SBB Cambodia to be able to provide sustainable development, it is necessary for us to facilitate meaningful encounters between donors and recipients. When this is achieved: a) donors gain a clear understanding of the needs of the local people and how they might achieve their goals; and b) recipients of support are more likely to participate actively in reaching these goals.
5. **Ownership rests with the Community:** Ultimately, responsibility for the education system rests with the community and with their government. SBB Cambodia can provide support by mobilising resources and transferring skills. It cannot colonise the schooling system by setting up its own parallel institutions or systems, taking on the role of the government. Therefore, programs and initiatives must complement and support existing Government initiatives, partnering with local education authorities.

Throughout SBB Cambodia projects, we incorporate continual evaluation, learning and ongoing program development – with an underlying principle that we pursue development and not welfare.

We acknowledge internationally recognised human rights principles and our approach to all issues is based upon respect and the promotion of dignity. In all we do, we are mindful of what we call 'cross-cutting themes,' being cultural issues or patterns of behaviour that are evident across all of our development initiatives. We identify the principal cross-cutting issue in our programs as one of care for vulnerable people including child protection and gender equality and disability inclusion, so we

maintain focus on promoting the education and participation of the most vulnerable and of women and on discussing and promoting issues relating to gender, disability and exclusion in our program development.

7 VALUES

SBB Cambodia Development Philosophy underlies what we do and the way in which we approach the issues we seek to address.

In determining the principles by which we can effectively help improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable of people, SBB Cambodia was founded on the belief that change begins with education and that good quality schooling can prevent families from facing poverty in future. At SBB Cambodia our biggest priority is to create positive, systemic, and sustainable change in Cambodia. Our vision is to have “Cambodian children empowered by education.”

The values that SBB Cambodia adopts underpin the ways in which we conduct our business and engage with our stakeholders in all activities.

It is incumbent on all those working with SBB Cambodia to demonstrate these values in their representation of SBB Cambodia or engagement with our stakeholders. SBB Cambodia has five values as follows:

- Respect: We listen to and hear you.
- Integrity: We are trustworthy.
- Competency: We are skilled and experienced.
- Courage: We are committed and resolute.
- Innovation: We support you to create a better future.

The values in more detail are:

RESPECT: Our actions are always founded on respect – for the teachers, students, and community members we work with, for our fellow team members and for our donors and supporters. We recognise the power we have in our representation of the communities we work with, and we only represent people in ways that are honest, respectful, and fully consensual.

INTEGRITY: We strive to be totally transparent and learn from our mistakes. We seek to ensure that it is our shared vision alone that drives our work.

COMPETENCY: All of our programs are supported by knowledge and experience. Our team is made up of well-trained professionals who approach tasks with competency and skill. We are always

working to share and build knowledge, learn from experience, and promote the idea of two-way knowledge exchange.

COURAGE: It is not easy to challenge the status quo. But to build a better future for Cambodian children, our staff, our partners, and the communities we work with, we act with personal courage every day to stay the course in the face of adversity.

INNOVATION: Our biggest priority is to create positive, systemic, and sustainable change in Cambodia. We work to promote the culture of continuous improvements across the education system so that quality education will become available for all and one day the assistance of SBB Cambodia in our current guise will no longer be needed.

These values are regularly reviewed at all levels of the organisation to ensure that our guiding principles remain current and that they provide an equitable, rights-based lens for all activities we deliver.

8 **APPROACH**

8.1 **BACKGROUND**

Our programs are designed and delivered through a deep knowledge and understanding of the current situation in Cambodia regarding education and the barriers to quality education. Our approach is further informed by the past and present work of reputable international agencies and the Royal Government of Cambodia in the area of education and learning.

SBB Cambodia works with respected organisations and recognises international policies and guidelines to ensure that we deliver the best and most sustainable programs.

SBB Cambodia's programs and objectives are also informed by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning - or "Quality Education". "Achieving inclusive and quality education for all reaffirms the belief that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development. This goal ensures that all girls and boys complete free primary and secondary schooling by 2030." **UNDP**

8.2 **THE CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS (CFS) INITIATIVE**

SBB Cambodia recognises the importance of the objectives inherent in the Government's Teacher Policy Action Plan; the Education Strategic Plan (ESP); and fully embraces the six dimensions of the CFS policy, which underlie all these initiatives, which are:

1. ***Access and Inclusion*** – education is accessible to all children with equity, especially those in poor and difficult circumstances (including orphans, girls, those affected by drugs, violence, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases).

2. *Effective Teaching and Learning* – teachers have theoretical and practical knowledge that promotes active, creative, and child-centred learning, in a joyful and harmonious environment.
3. *Health and Safety* – children are cared for, healthy, safe, and protected from violence at school, in the family and in society.
4. *Gender* – promote awareness of the responsibility to provide equal and equitable opportunity for both girls and boys to participate in all activities in school, family, and society.
5. *Community Involvement* – enhance the dynamic relationship between schools and communities so that schools, families, and communities are active resources for each other.
6. *Management* – ensure the CFS (Child-Friendly Schools) policy is embraced and implemented in all schools, and all levels of the national education system work together to improve the quality of education.

9 STRATEGY

SBB Cambodia recognises that developing education in Cambodia is a complex and continuing process. Our strategies are based on Cambodian needs and covered by the Child-Friendly Schools policy.

SBB Cambodia's current strategy can be summarised as follows:

“Working within the government primary education system, SBB Cambodia partners hand-in-hand with schools in northern Cambodia to champion the professional growth of teachers and school leaders. Locally driven and internationally engaged, we combine respected research with contextual wisdom to co-create relevant solutions that embed ownership directly with local educators. Together we draw on evidence to ensure students have access to quality, inclusive teaching and learning, and to support the translation of evidence-based insights into policy and practice through advocacy. This serves to foster system-wide change, securing a brighter future for Cambodian children and their communities.”

9.1 CURRENT OPERATIONAL FOCUS

Specifically, SBB Cambodia's mission is to enable quality teaching and learning at school for Cambodian children regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class, or socio-economic status.

Our vision is for Cambodian children to have choices, free from the social deprivation faced by so many today. As we would for our own children, we aim to help them develop a sense of self-worth and the importance of their contributions towards building a mutually supportive and just society.

Our overarching objective is to have more children complete their primary education and progress to lower secondary school. SBB Cambodia's strategic plan sets out initiatives with expected outcomes and key performance indicators to realise the overarching objective.

We promote local participation, management, responsibility, and ownership across all our programs, including the identification, training and support of people living with disadvantages. This includes

promoting the role of women as beneficiaries, trainers, community leaders and senior management staff within our organisation, as we recognise the importance of gender equity in achieving truly sustainable development.

10 **COMMITMENT STATEMENT**

SBB Cambodia is committed to enabling the participation and contribution of primary stakeholders to ensure our programs are owned locally and that communities benefiting from the program have opportunities to contribute to the planning and design. We do this through a variety of mechanisms, such as:

- SBB Cambodia holds a project agreement with the Ministry of Education, education authorities at each province, district and school in the program, and teachers sign a participation agreement that details the commitment from all stakeholders at all levels.
- Actively identify opportunities for the support and promotion of vulnerable or marginalised members of the community, including women and people with disabilities.
- Program design and review is informed by individual participants' action plans, evaluations, and ongoing feedback, as well as regular collaboration with District, Provincial and National members of the Ministry for Education, Youth & Sport.
- SBB Cambodia is committed to ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning alongside its communities, to ensure that programs align with this policy, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and desired outcomes of all stakeholders, funding bodies and beneficiaries.

10.1 **Minimum Standards for Projects**

All projects must meet our minimum quality standards before being approved as follows:

a. **Organisational Standards**

- Contribute towards our organisation's Institution and Overarching Objectives (5.1)
- Support at least one of our strategic objectives (5.2)
- Reflect our key development principles:
 - *Participation*: Project design documents must describe how stakeholders will contribute to the design and implementation of the project.
 - *Equality*: Project design documents must demonstrate how the project will be inclusive to all, with no discrimination by race, gender, religion, disability, or culture.
 - *Sustainability*: Project design documents must outline how the project will continue after development assistance has ended.
- Do not engage in non-development activities (6).
- Ensure that children are protected from harm.

b. **Resource Management Standards**

- Provide an estimate of the cost of the project that is reasonable and in line with other projects.
- Explain project staff requirements and highlight any capacity development areas.

c. **Monitoring and Evaluation Standards**

- Identify the data that needs to be tracked which will identify the extent to which the project is achieving its delivery, performance, and impact measures.

- Include processes that engage stakeholders in discussions around project design, improvement, and results that optimise the chances for sustained improvements to these stakeholders' livelihoods.

These quality standards are covered in SBB Cambodia's project design documents and approved by the Quality Education Committee and Senior Leadership Team before any implementation activities can be planned. More details about program and project lifecycles can be found in the SBB Cambodia Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Policy.

11 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING NON-DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

As per section 4, SBB Cambodia does not engage in Non-Development Activities or Relief and would not engage in such activities with partners. If this were to change, there would need to be associated Board approval. For completeness and for reference in regard to working with partners, where Partners' Development Policies permit them to undertake any non-development activities, certain control procedures would need to be in place, and we would need to check them against the following respective areas.

Separation of development, relief and non-development activities in programs and projects

Procedures:

1. SBB Cambodia will appraise all project proposals to determine whether they include relief and/or non-development components.
2. SBB Cambodia will record any issues, which must then be followed up to ensure that the policy requirements are satisfied before the project is approved.
3. SBB Cambodia will record any aspects of the project that should be closely monitored over the life of the project to ensure compliance with this policy.
4. SBB Cambodia will assess whether the implementing partner (if any) is engaged in relief and/or non-development activities, and if so, how it is able to manage and account for them separately to development activity.
5. The implementing Partner organisation will need to be able to identify that components of projects that represent relief or non-development activity will be managed, reported, and accounted for separately to development components.
6. Implementing Partner organisations will need to demonstrate that In-country project monitoring will include monitoring of the separation of non-development activities from development and relief activities as part of project monitoring, learning and evaluation processes.

Separation of development, relief and non-development activities in communications – including advocacy materials.

Procedures:

1. Implementing Partner organisations will need to demonstrate that, or SBB Cambodia will need to verify that guidelines are in place that addresses appropriate reporting in organisational promotional materials.

2. Implementing Partner organisations will need to demonstrate that, or SBB Cambodia will need to verify that, all articles written or photos supplied for reporting materials are reviewed for differentiation between development, relief and non-development activities.
3. Implementing Partner organisations will need to demonstrate that, or SBB Cambodia will need to verify that communications materials are reviewed prior to publication to ensure separation of reporting and fundraising for development, relief and non-development activities.

Separation of development, relief and non-development activities in fundraising and provision of choice for donors.

Procedures:

1. Implementing Partner organisations will need to demonstrate that, or SBB Cambodia will need to verify that fundraising materials are reviewed prior to publication to ensure that solicitations make a clear distinction between relief, development and non-development activities.
2. Implementing Partner organisations will need to demonstrate that, or SBB Cambodia will need to verify that, where fundraising solicitations include references to development, relief and non-development activities, they will ensure that donors are provided with the choice of contributing to relief and/or development activity only.
3. Implementing Partner organisations will need to demonstrate that, or SBB Cambodia will need to verify that funds raised for any non-development activity will be tracked, managed, reported, and accounted for separately to those raised for development and relief components.

12 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

- Working with Partners policy
- Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

13 POLICY MANAGEMENT

Reference Code	DevP/05/2026/V1.0
Executive Owner	SBB Cambodia Managing Director
Policy Manager	The General Manager-Shared Services
Effectiveness Approval Body	SBB Cambodia Board
Date Approved	30/April/2026
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