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StudyBeyondBorders Organisation

POLICY

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Policy

Change begins with Education

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GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

StudyBeyondBorders in Cambodia's Mission is to provide Cambodian children with access to quality teaching and learning at school.

Our work is based on a clear understanding of our responsibilities. We treat all people fairly and equitably regardless of their gender, disability or social status, including people from all backgrounds as far as possible in all that we do and we advocate for this across the communities where we implement our programs, as well as within StudyBeyondBorders in Cambodia (SBBC). We ensure that women and men benefit from our interventions and avoid exacerbating gender inequality by preventing unintended harm, exclusion, and further marginalisation and by promoting their rights, equal opportunities and benefits. Program and project implementation identifies the numbers of people from marginalised groups such as the most vulnerable, including women and girls, people with disabilities and those living in poverty who are participating in our programs. With this information, we are then able to review our programs and projects and develop activities and implementation plans that ensure all stakeholders are able to access and benefit from them.

We do not hold ourselves to be experts in the identification of difference and largely rely on information provided by the authorities, recognising there may be potential flaws. Within these constraints, we do the best we can in training our primary stakeholders on the importance of pursuing inclusion and advocating for marginalised groups wherever it is possible for us to do so.

2. SBBC OVERVIEW

SBBC is a local Cambodian non-government organisation operating in rural areas of Battambang and Siem Reap Provinces. The organisation is supported by an alliance of registered development organisations in Australia (SBBA), the UK (SBBUK), and Ireland (SBBI).
SBBC 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, SBBC conducts programs to mentor education leaders, upskill teachers, engage parents and communities, and develop 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.

3. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to guide SBBC's organisational governance, and program design and implementation to promote fairness, respect and inclusion. The policy lays out the commitments

made by SBBC and its personnel as defined below, in terms of their responsibilities to actively promote inclusion in programs and within the workplace.

This policy demonstrates a commitment to the inclusion and representation of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by the intersecting drivers of marginalisation and exclusion, including but not restricted to factors associated with disability, age, gender and gender identity.

4. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all SBBC personnel, defined as:

- board trustees
- staff and volunteers
- external consultants and contractors (paid or voluntary)
- contracted staff or personnel of contracted organisations and services
- project team participants
- any other person working for or on behalf of SBBC

This policy may also apply to other individuals and third parties who, through their association with SBBC, may visit our project activities, although the management process for these groups may differ in certain aspects according to their involvement.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion procedures, Code of Conduct and Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) policy. Should you have any concern and/or feedback on compliance with this policy, please follow complaint and feedback reporting mechanisms.

5. WHAT IS INCLUSION?

SBBC recognises that through our program implementation, we are working with people and communities who might be among the most vulnerable. Even among the most vulnerable communities, there are exceptionally marginalised people, e.g. women or people with disabilities, and there are also people who experience multifaceted marginalisation such as the very poor. We work to ensure that everyone is included.

Our primary beneficiaries are primary school teachers and community members, but we believe it is important that our gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) policy addresses how, through our work, we promote an inclusive environment throughout the education sector in Cambodia, which will potentially impact children, parents, classroom teachers and school leadership. We influence those we work directly with, to think about equality and inclusion and become more proactive in their approach to the marginalised in their society. We also believe in the active promotion of equality and inclusion within our own workforce and it is a key organisational priority to offer equal opportunities at all levels and to affirmatively promote women within our leadership where possible.

6. DEFINITIONS

People with Disability: A person with episodic or long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which may create unrecognised barriers as a result of infrastructure design, classroom layout, meeting format, and thereby hinder their full, effective and equal participation in society. As identified by the government of Cambodia, disability may be physical, psychological or intellectual.

Sex: Biological determination of being female, male or an intersex variation.

Gender: Gender can denote a range of identities that do not correspond to binary ideas of male and female. Gender roles attributed to women or men in society vary cross-culturally according to what is traditionally considered to be masculine or feminine, and a person's gender identity does not always align with what sex they have been identified as having at birth.

Minority Language/dialect: A language that is used commonly in communication by the minority of the population of a given society or geographical area.

Gender Equality: Equal opportunities, rights, and responsibilities for women and men, girls and boys, trans and gender diverse people to have their needs met and to enable their full participation in society according to their own wishes. It does not mean that women and men are the same.

Social Inclusion: The process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunity, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI): efforts to ensure people from all backgrounds, including women and gender diverse people, people with a disability and people facing another form of marginalisation, can equitably access, use, contribute to, influence and benefit from the design, development and governance of SBBC's programs, to mirror existing biases and discriminatory practices rather than to reflect the diversity of people in the world that we live. A GEDSI lens is used to prevent unintended harm, exclusion and further marginalisation of at-risk groups, and to promote their rights, equal opportunities and benefits.

7. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets out SBBC's commitment to GEDSI in the design, planning and implementation of our systems, processes, programs and projects. Our belief that GEDSI is everyone's responsibility underpins this policy and our strategy is to advocate for inclusion and equality throughout our system, programs and the communities where we work. We also have a responsibility within our organisation to treat all personnel fairly and equitably.

As we grow and develop, we are committed to identifying barriers that prevent people from accessing our programs or working with our organisation and making reasonable adaptations to

overcome such barriers in line with the work we do. We will build our response to GEDSI and develop our systems and program activities in consultation with the communities we work with and with our personnel. We promote an organisational culture of fairness and equality and ensure our personnel are responsible for advocating this in their roles. SBBC acknowledges that this is an ongoing challenge and that we must be vigilant in recognising and addressing inequalities as they emerge.

7.1 OUR LANGUAGE

SBBC adopts language that advocates for a person-centred approach, e.g. 'a person with a disability' as opposed to a 'disabled person' or a 'person who is a minority language speaker' as opposed to a 'minority language speaking person'. These simple adjustments to how we communicate will help to advocate for inclusive development and to change attitudes and perceptions among the people we work with. Furthermore, where appropriate, SBBC adopts collective pronouns such as "They" as opposed to "He/She".

7.2 INCLUSION FOCUS AREAS

7.2.1 Gender Equality

SBBC understands the difference between gender and sex and is active in working towards all personnel, visitors, stakeholders and beneficiaries having an awareness of this difference. Gender mainstreaming across our programs and within the education sector of Cambodia is supported through annual refresher training for SBBC personnel. By raising awareness, we are advocating for people in the communities we work with to take responsibility for providing fair and equal opportunities for everyone. We also must acknowledge that while gender inequality primarily impacts women, men, trans and gender diverse people are also at risk of certain types of gendered violence and exploitation.

We look to incorporate gender equality into our programs by:

- Seeking greater understanding as to how we could better promote women into positions of influence and power by addressing barriers.
- Ensuring our programs do no harm, by reflecting on proactive management of risks and documenting this in the risk matrix.
- Enhancing education outcomes for women and girls, by prioritising school retention rates and quality education for girls.
- Conducting gender analysis for all projects, making sure the project will not disadvantage women and girls or entrench discriminatory social norms, as well as monitoring for and responding to unintended negative consequences such as backlash. Preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment remain paramount.[1]

Our strategy and activities for GEDSI will be steered by our program and/or systems research and design, which will be in consultation with SBBC personnel, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

[1] ANCP Gender Equality Proposal for circulation to ANGO, July 2024

In the Workplace

As well as actively promoting gender equality across our programs, we are also ensuring that all our staff and volunteers have equal opportunities for career progression and professional development. We look to promote the importance of respect for women and for fair and equal opportunities for leadership, influence and decision making.

7.2.2 Disability Inclusion

Disability inclusiveness can be considered at all stages of the development program management cycle - in policy and planning, design, procurement, implementation, performance management, review and evaluation.[2] This is also considered fundamental to the organisation's internal management. SBBC engages with the DFAT funded resources DID4all and uses Learn with ACFID for further training and resources. We try our best to support the development of an inclusive education sector where no one is left behind and to provide a fair and equitable work environment for all personnel.

For details of SBBC's disability inclusion program please refer to our GEDSI procedures, DME Policy and MEAL manual.

Design Principles

SBBC works to ensure our programs, systems and processes apply the following principles, as far as possible in the context of Cambodia, to ensure activities and approaches are accessible and inclusive to people of all abilities.

Principle 1: Equitable in use

Our programs are communicated in a way that people with diverse abilities understand them. This includes accessible language, format, and presentation of documents. We endeavour to have our policies and procedures and other documents available in both English and Khmer.

Principle 2: Flexibility in use

Where possible our program activities are designed to meet the needs of people with a wide range of abilities. Our policies and procedures are explicitly or implicitly inclusive towards people with disabilities.

Principle 3: Simple and intuitive use

We ensure our programs are designed so they are easy to understand in the context of the work we do. In particular we are mindful of culture and language.

Principle 4: Perceptible information

We communicate necessary information effectively, considering the ambient conditions or participants' sensory abilities as far as is practical and possible within the context of our work and

[2] https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/disability-inclusive-development-guidance-note

recognising that approaches may differ across our organisation depending on the location in which we are operating. We will adopt strategies that are relevant to the particular situation.

Principle 5: Risk management

We appreciate that the context in which we work can make it challenging to apply the same standards as may be expected in more developed countries. We try to minimise potentially negative outcomes of any unintended consequences of our actions through thorough risk assessment and responsible management.

Principle 6: Low physical effort

SBBC's programs can be accessed comfortably and conveniently by all. We consider the physical and/or environmental barriers such as stairs, inaccessible transport, etc when determining where and when we hold meetings so that all relevant people may attend.

Principle 7: Size and space for approach and use

Where on a limited number of occasions, we support infrastructure development, the design will be adequate to accommodate people regardless of size, shape, posture or mobility including people who require assistance from equipment and / or other people.

SBBC uses the DFAT Accessibility Design Guide as a reference when planning and implementing activities across our programs.

In line with DFAT's Development for All 2015-2020 strategy and DFIDs Strategy for Disability Inclusive Development 2018-2023,[3] SBBC is actively promoting an inclusive education system within Cambodia and leaving no one behind. Our approach to disability inclusion is to identify people with a disability through the relevant authorities; assist teachers with identifying and where possible closing the gaps to equal participation; and work with other organisations to provide specialist services where a particular need is identified. We are also committed to raising awareness of disability amongst our personnel so they are able to support our stakeholders and beneficiaries to make the education sector more inclusive for people with disabilities.

Our strategy and activities for disability inclusion will be steered by our program research and design, which will be in consultation with our personnel, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Consultation with people with disabilities will form part of our planning process and be included in relevant planning/design templates or tools. Similarly, we will have strategies in place to enable people with disabilities to participate in decision-making, the first step of which would be to consider what the current barriers to participation might be. SBBC will also proactively integrate practical actions to address inequalities and promote disability inclusion, be explicit about what we aim to achieve and be clear about implementation.

[3] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/760997/Disability-Inclusion-Strategy.pdf

Our commitment to raise awareness amongst our personnel, stakeholders and beneficiaries will promote responsibility within the education sector and communities to provide a fair and equal environment for people with a disability and to recognise that people with a disability can participate fully in society.

In the Workplace

SBBC ensures, where possible, that our workplaces are accessible for people of all abilities. By its nature, the work we carry out is primarily conducted in communities and schools such that many of the responsibilities of our staff require that they have a level of mobility to undertake the job successfully. We believe it is our duty to ensure anyone working for/or on our behalf should not be put at unnecessary risk and SBBC will follow its Risk Management Policy and Human Resource manual to ensure we maintain a safe working environment for all.

When deciding the suitability of a person to undertake a role within the organisation, SBBC will consider the risks and how it can ensure they have a safe working environment and will assess each case on its own merits. SBBC will make reasonable adaptations to the workplace and role expectations, but ultimately needs to balance this with the role of the organisation and any cost implications.

SBBC incorporates disability inclusion into its recruitment processes. Furthermore we consider office accessibility such as minimising the number of steps, and room/desk setup for employees with a physical disability.

7.2.3 Social Inclusion

The United Nations defines social inclusion as “the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.”

To promote social inclusion SBBC tries to identify any barriers to people’s participation in its programs and activities. We analyse the program and project risks to inclusion from the design stage through to final evaluation. We empower the people we work with via inclusive, coordinated and participatory processes.

In the Workplace

SBBC acknowledges the diversity of people involved in our organisation and actively practises social inclusion. Personnel induction includes them being made aware of the SBBC code of conduct, workplace health, safety and security policy and other relevant documents. SBBC’s human resource management processes ensure that SBBC doesn’t discriminate against any applicant or personnel.

7.2.4 Children and Vulnerable People

Children and vulnerable people are at high risk of being excluded from gaining equal opportunity and benefits. SBBC's programs are designed to do no harm to children and vulnerable people and SBBC always treats any misconduct in this area in a zero-tolerance manner.

In the Workplace

All SBBC personnel are required to undertake training in the SBBC Child and Vulnerable People Protection and Safeguarding Policies and all personnel must sign a declaration that they have read and understood these policies before working with children or other vulnerable people. Annual refresher training is conducted to remind all personnel of their obligations and SBBC's expectations in relation to protection of children and other vulnerable people.

8. POLICY MANAGEMENT

All policy will include the following policy management statement and policy management table at the end of the document and the the approving minutes will be used as approval evidence:

This policy has been approved by the General Manager Shared Services and the Managing Director of SBBC as noted below.

Amendments will be recommended to the Managing Director from time to time as deemed appropriate by the General Manager Shared Services, usually annually. Formal reviews are recommended every three years from the anniversary date of approval by the Managing Director. Recommendations for minor changes can be approved by the General Manager Shared Services before the Managing Director review every three years.

This policy and any amendments have also been reviewed by the SBBC Board, as noted below.

Doc Ref	Doc Type	GM-Shared Services	Managing Director	Board Review	Minute Ref
GEDSIP/05/2025/V1.0	Policy	Approved-20250522	Approved/20250508		Email