POLICY

DESIGN, MONITORING AND EVALUATION (DME) POLICY

Change begins with education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a not-for-profit organisation, StudyBeyondBorders holds key responsibilities to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs and processes. It is also responsible for taking appropriate steps to ensure that these processes do not harm or negatively affect the communities in which it operates, either directly or indirectly.

StudyBeyondBorders recognises that:

- Well-designed, effective, and well-managed programs and projects are indispensable for achieving its objectives and realizing its vision.
- Well-designed, effective, and well-managed programs and projects are indicators of StudyBeyondBorders' value, professionalism, and commitment.

- Monitoring and evaluation activities are essential performance management practices for assessing program and project effectiveness and supporting continual improvement processes.

StudyBeyondBorders serves as the primary implementing partner within the SeeBeyondBorders alliance, working alongside its partners in Ireland, Australia, and the UK, who provide critical support to advance shared goals

2. DOCUMENT PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline StudyBeyondBorders' approach to the design, monitoring, and evaluation of its programs and projects related to education in Cambodia, from the initial research stage to the final evaluation stage, and to demonstrate how learnings from this process are applied.

3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all StudyBeyondBorders personnel involved in the design, monitoring, and evaluation processes. This includes staff, volunteers, interns, program participants, Board/Advisory Committee members, trustees, and staff of partner organisations, insofar as they are working with StudyBeyondBorders (collectively referred to as 'StudyBeyondBorders Personnel'). This policy also applies to stakeholders and beneficiaries involved in the monitoring process. The policy follows standard procedures and is designed to comply with third-party donor audits, evaluation processes, and frameworks.

4. DEFINITIONS

Accountability: The responsibility of StudyBeyondBorders to ensure that programs and projects are conducted ethically, transparently, and in a participatory manner.

Baseline: The quantitative score/level for an indicator prior to starting an intervention, against which progress is measured.

Beneficiaries: Individuals or groups that directly or indirectly receive benefits from a program or project. Direct beneficiaries are those who actively participate in and directly experience the project's activities, such as teachers, while indirect beneficiaries are those who benefit indirectly, such as primary school students, who experience improvements in their overall circumstances as a result of the program.

Evaluation: The systematic collection and analysis of information related to strategies, programs, projects, and activities that aims to determine whether program goals have been achieved, enhancing effectiveness through learning and informing decisions about current and future programming.

Indicator: A quantitative metric to measure achievement, monitor performance, or determine accountability.

Learning: An ongoing process of reflection and adaptation that generates knowledge products, disseminates information, and helps both internal and external stakeholders improve program and project design, implementation, and outcomes based on feedback and evidence.

Logic Model: Summarises how an intervention is expected to work by identifying inputs and mapping the pathway from activities through outputs to outcomes and ultimately to impact. It shapes strategies and priorities while illustrating the approaches taken.

Monitoring: The systematic collection and analysis of data throughout a program's or project's progression enhance efficiency and effectiveness, ensure alignment with planned activities and targets, and provide a basis for evaluation.

Program: Comprises interconnected projects managed and implemented as a cohesive package to deliver specific results and strategic objectives.

Program Review Committee: The committee advises StudyBeyondBorders' Senior Leadership Team to support informed decision-making. It guides StudyBeyondBorders in structuring operations and directing resources towards projects that deliver on the program plan and funding obligations efficiently and sustainably. Additionally, it ensures project alignment with the Development Policy and adherence to rigorous standards for design, management, and implementation. It also reviews recommendations from the annual Program Review to ensure that all projects are relevant and contribute meaningfully to StudyBeyondBorders' overall program objectives.

The committee includes senior members of the StudyBeyondBorders team, plus an external representative drawn from academia, other education focused Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) or another relevant sector in Cambodia.

Project: A single, specific endeavour designed to deliver defined, tangible outputs, objectives, outcomes, and impacts within a specified timeframe and budget.

Results Framework: Focuses on how the program and project goals will be achieved. It illustrates the main activities, highlights the logical connections between them, and identifies the expected outputs, objectives, outcomes, impact, performance indicators, and targets.

Risk: The potential for an event or condition to adversely affect the achievement of program or project objectives, including financial, safeguarding, operational, cultural, and political aspects, which may hinder StudyBeyondBorders' ability to effectively implement its programs and achieve desired outcomes.

Senior Leadership Team: The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for implementing the organization's strategy, overseeing program development, and ensuring alignment with the Board's directives. The Senior Leadership Team leads staff, manages resources, and monitors performance to achieve organizational goals in accordance with the mission, vision, and values. They are accountable for policy revisions, financial oversight, risk management, and staff development.

The Senior Leadership Team consists of the Managing Director, who serves as the chairperson and oversees all activities, the General Managers of Shared Services and Programs, who manage key operational areas and represent the Managing Director when needed, the Finance Manager, who handles financial operations, and the Provincial Manager, who oversees critical areas including GEDSI and child protection, as well as staff wellbeing and safeguarding.

Stakeholder: A person, group, or entity that has a direct or indirect role and interest in the goals, objectives, implementation, and evaluation of a program or project.

Strategic Review Committee: The committee advises StudyBeyondBorders' Senior Leadership Team to support informed decision-making. It guides StudyBeyondBorders in structuring operations and directing

resources towards programs that deliver on the Strategic Plan and funding obligations efficiently and sustainably. Additionally, it ensures program alignment with the Development Policy and adherence to rigorous standards for design, management, and implementation.

The committee includes senior staff and board representatives from StudyBeyondBorders, external education and development professionals (both national and international), and relevant SeeBeyondBorders staff, including the Chief Executive Officer (CEO-IO) and board members from SeeBeyondBorders Ireland, SeeBeyondBorders Australia, and SeeBeyondBorders UK. The committee meets every six months or as determined by organisational needs and/or program development, where there are items for consideration.

5. PROGRAM AND PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

The program and project life cycles encompass the entire duration of each initiative implemented in designated districts and schools. They begin with the research phase, progress through planning and design, and continue to implementation. This is followed by monitoring and reviewing as part of a continuous improvement cycle, concluding with the evaluation phase.

Programs and projects are divided into distinct phases to clarify the responsibilities of StudyBeyondBorders personnel and other stakeholders, including beneficiaries and local authorities. These defined phases ensure that decisions are based on relevant information and help clarify the roles of meetings and documentation. Based on the evidence produced at each phase, decisions are made on whether to continue activities as planned, amend them, or discontinue them.

This process helps keep programs and projects on track to meet stated outcomes and achieve the goals outlined in the relevant Program and Project Results Frameworks. It also promotes sustainability throughout every phase of the program and project life cycle, which is essential to the mission of StudyBeyondBorders as an organisation.

During annual program reviews, each project is evaluated in relation to the program, focusing on the program's effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance. This evaluation may result in adjustments to the program or projects. Additionally, the program and project evaluations conducted at the end of their life cycles - which also consider impact and sustainability - may lead to the phasing out of a program or project, necessitate further adjustments, or enable the scaling up of successful components.

5.1 Research

During the research phase, StudyBeyondBorders conducts research to gain an initial understanding of the context in the provinces and districts where it is considering working. Research tools are tailored to identify beneficiary needs, as well as stakeholder interests, priorities, and resources. The Senior Leadership Team has the final say on implementation, with support from the Strategic Review Committee, which assesses whether new programs align with the organisation's strategy and vision, and the Program Review Committee, which evaluates the alignment of new projects. Key considerations include: a) whether StudyBeyondBorders has the skills and resources to effectively meet beneficiaries' needs and drive sustainability through program or project implementation; b) whether the financial capacity exists to deliver tailored activities to communities committed to educational improvement; and c) whether lasting positive impact can be ensured through monitoring and evaluating progress and performance at the local level.

5.1.1   Environmental Scan

Initially, the StudyBeyondBorders Program Team conducts an environmental scan to collect and present contextual evidence that informs decision-making for proposed new programs or projects. The environmental scan includes the following key components:

- **Proposed Program/Project Goal and Location**: Clearly outlines the specific goal of the intervention and the geographical area (province, district) where it will be implemented, noting whether these are new or existing locations for StudyBeyondBorders activities.
- **Socio-economic and Educational Needs Assessment**: Analyses statistical data on the local population's socio-economic status and educational landscape to identify specific needs.
- **Local Attitudes**: Assesses the positions of provincial and district authorities regarding the intervention, as well as school and community perspectives, including potential support or resistance.
- **Other NGOs**: Identifies other NGOs operating educational programs in the proposed location to understand the existing landscape, potential partnerships, and possible overlaps or duplication.
- **Logistics**: Evaluates the distance, condition of roads, and means of transport from existing StudyBeyondBorders offices or work locations.
- **Climate and Environmental Issues**: Identifies the status of climate change impacts, awareness, and actions in the area.
- **Other Significant Issues**: Highlights any additional issues of potential significance that need to be considered or determined.
- **Recommendations**: Provides a recommendation on whether to proceed to the next stage based on the findings of the environmental scan.

The environmental scan document will be reviewed by the appropriate committee: the Strategic Review Committee for programs and the Program Review Committee for projects. Each committee will assess the potential need based on the evidence and recommendations provided, submitting their findings to the Senior Leadership Team for a final decision. If the Senior Leadership Team agrees with the rationale to proceed, the program team will advance to the logic model phase.

5.1.2. Logic Model

The StudyBeyondBorders program team develops a logic model, which is a graphic illustration of the relationship between a program or project's resources, activities, and intended effects. It clearly demonstrates how planned activities lead to expected results. Specifically, the logic model visually illustrates the inputs (resources) required to implement the program or project, the activities and outputs, and the desired outcomes (both short-term and long-term) that contribute to the overall goal.

The logic model will be reviewed by the appropriate committee: the Strategic Review Committee for programs and the Program Review Committee for projects. Each committee will assess the potential need based on the logical pathways from activities to the goal and will then submit its findings to the Senior Leadership Team for approval. If the Senior Leadership Team agrees with the rationale to proceed, the program team will advance to the next phase.

5.1.3. Concept Note

A concept note is prepared by the program team and presented to the appropriate committee: the Strategic Review Committee for programs and the Program Review Committee for projects. This document includes a detailed proposal covering the proposed duration and estimated total budget. It also outlines the program or project description, including the context, a rationale with supporting evidence that demonstrates the likelihood of achieving goals, proposed activities, expected results, and information on both direct and indirect beneficiaries, including estimated numbers.

Upon approval from the Senior Leadership Team, and confirmation that StudyBeyondBorders has the skills, resources, and financial capacity to ensure sustainability in the identified districts and schools, the respective committee will proceed with requesting a feasibility study.

5.1.4.   Feasibility Study

Following the approval of the concept, the program team will propose a feasibility study, including the study's proposed locations, dates, budget, scope of work, objectives, personnel, research methodologies, and logistics. If approved, the study will report and analyse findings based on its stated objectives. It will conclude with recommendations derived from the analysis of the finding. Upon completion, the feasibility study is sent to the appropriate committee: the Strategic Review Committee for programs and the Program Review Committee for projects, for review against the Feasibility Report Appraisal Form. The study will then be submitted to the Senior Leadership Team for final approval. The next phases of the program or project life cycle will not commence until approval from the Senior Leadership Team has been received.

In certain instances, StudyBeyondBorders may choose to replicate a program or project in a different province from the one originally evaluated during the research phase. If the program or project is substantially similar, it may not be necessary to repeat all stages. In such cases, the program team shall submit a feasibility study to the relevant committee, which will provide recommendations to the Senior Leadership Team for approval. However, if the feasibility study reveals significant differences, certain aspects of the program or project may need to undergo the research phase again before progressing to the next stage.

5.2.   Planning and Design

In the 'Planning & Design' phase, programs and projects are structured within the Results Framework and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) plan. This process includes comprehensive risk assessments and a detailed work plan that outlines specific project activities, ensuring both strategic alignment and operational clarity.

5.2.1.   Results Framework

For each program and project, a Results Framework will be developed. A Results Framework helps plan and understand the strategic elements of a program or project intervention and presents them graphically. It uses a chain of series to display outputs, objectives, outcomes, and the overall goal. This process leads to the identification of performance indicators at the output and outcome levels, as well as assumptions and risks for each objective.

5.2.2.   MEAL Plan

StudyBeyondBorders will create a MEAL Plan for each program and project, outlining the tools required for collecting and analysing related data, the individuals responsible, the reporting frequency, and the use of data.

5.2.3.   Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is completed for each program and project. It aims to analyse and evaluate the inherent risks in program and project design, activities, and evaluation, while outlining mitigating actions to reduce or eliminate the identified risks. Risks will be considered across various areas, including financial, safeguarding, operational, cultural, and political aspects.

5.2.4.   Work Plan

The work plan sets out all of the steps required to achieve the project goals. The purpose of the work plan document is to consider all of the aspects of the project and what needs to happen to make it successful, and it is usually presented as a Gantt chart.

The components of the Planning and Design phase—such as the results framework, MEAL plan, and work plan—come together to form a comprehensive foundation that includes the development of the program and project budgets. These budgets, along with the other planning documents, are regularly referenced by project teams to track progress toward project and program goals on an ongoing basis.

5.3.   Implementation

During the project implementation phase, StudyBeyondBorders staff members carry out activities promptly according to the operational and work plans that have been developed. All operational activities and allocated staff responsibilities are specified in detailed weekly and monthly work plans. Key administrative tasks, such as data collection, data analysis, report writing, and training activities, are integrated into these plans to ensure alignment with operational implementation. Oversight of operational activities during implementation is conducted by project managers on a monthly basis, the Senior Leadership team at six-week intervals, and through quarterly reports from the Managing Director to the Board.

5.4.   Monitoring

The monitoring process begins in the implementation phase and continues until the program or project is completed. StudyBeyondBorders personnel conduct monitoring activities daily, weekly, and monthly, while beneficiaries regularly contribute to these efforts.

StudyBeyondBorders has developed comprehensive monitoring and evaluation processes to effectively track progress. In the program and project Results Frameworks, each key activity includes a set of performance measures used to monitor progress throughout the year and assess success against specific outcomes. Programs and projects are monitored, and outcomes are evaluated regularly, with internal reports generated every quarter and more detailed progress reports produced every six months. All reports are circulated to StudyBeyondBorders staff and board members, and the 6-month reports will also be published online. Reports are also shared with the CEO-IO, boards of SeeBeyondBorders Ireland, SeeBeyondBorders Australia, and SeeBeyondBorders UK. Annual reports are generated to provide an overview of achievements and challenges from the previous year, as well as progress toward program goals.

Each program and project's MEAL Plan outlines activities, data collection tools, timeframes, and staff responsibilities. Timely data collection is vital for enabling flexibility and adaptation. Set timeframes ensure that data and information are collected and analysed regularly, allowing programs and projects to evolve as necessary. Monitoring tools include reporting templates, data collection tables, observation forms, questionnaires, and skills scales. The specific monitoring tools for each program and project are outlined in the Monitoring and Evaluation process table of the relevant Results Framework. Program beneficiaries and StudyBeyondBorders staff receive training and support in collecting ongoing data to ensure the breadth and quality of monitoring activities.

5.5.   Review

The review stage is designed to assess the progress of activities against the established results and timelines. It provides an opportunity to identify challenges, successes, and areas for improvement, ensuring that the program and projects remain aligned with their objectives. This stage also encourages ongoing communication among stakeholders, fostering collaboration and facilitating timely adjustments to strategies as needed.

5.5.1.   Progress Reports

Quarterly, six-monthly, and annual progress reports enable the StudyBeyondBorders Senior Leadership Team to monitor the progress of each project. In addition, Project Managers have been coached to identify problems as they arise on a day-to-day basis and to consult with their peers or Line Manager to discuss the best ways to resolve issues quickly, rather than waiting until the next progress report is produced, when the problem may have escalated.

The information in progress reports is used in a variety of ways:

- To build staff capacity, celebrate successes, and learn new and different ways of working.
- To create news stories and social media content for dissemination to supporters.
- To inform the Board and senior staff members about achievements and challenges on the ground and escalate issues for resolution that may impact the success of the program or project.
- To monitor financial activity against the budget at the project level.

- To identify schools or teachers that have consistently underperformed and implement a plan to support their improvement.
- To communicate with District Offices of Education and keep them informed of progress and activities in their districts.
- To monitor progress toward the outcomes stated in our Strategic Plan and Results Frameworks and make changes where necessary.
- To hold Project Managers accountable for the activities in their districts.
- To compare activities between districts.
- To report to donors and other stakeholders.

5.5.2. Beneficiary Feedback

Obtaining feedback from beneficiaries regularly is recognized as a key tool for monitoring the success of programs and projects. Beneficiary feedback mechanisms are integrated into design, monitoring, and evaluation processes in various ways, including post-activity evaluations, questionnaires, focus groups, informal conversations, complaints and feedback forms, suggestion boxes, and community workshops. Listening to beneficiaries informs project adaptations to ensure that they effectively meet their needs.

5.5.3. Data Collection

All personal data collected is treated sensitively and in line with the Privacy Policy. Data is collated on spreadsheets stored on StudyBeyondBorders' secure, password-protected Google Drive.

5.5.4. Program Review

An annual program review occurs at the end of each academic year and before the new school year begins, usually in September.

At the end of the academic year, staff facilitate annual student tests and evaluate teacher and mentor skills. The results of the student tests and the teacher/mentor skill assessments, along with data and statistics collected throughout the year (such as mentor visits and workshop statistics), are reviewed by Project Managers. Program Managers then assist them in populating the results in the results framework, aligned with program indicators.

During the annual program reviews, attended by all staff, the results are summarized before challenges are discussed, and lessons learned are agreed upon. Staff members collectively suggest amendments to program or project activities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. These suggestions are first reviewed by the Program Review Committee, which makes necessary amendments to ensure the solutions are practical and achievable. They then prepare a summary of the recommendations for the Managing Director's approval. If the recommendations involve significant strategic changes or have major financial implications, they must be submitted to the Board for approval.

Program Managers will update the results framework and associated documentation and tools if approval is granted. A six-month review for program and projects takes place, providing an opportunity for senior managers to review and, where necessary, update StudyBeyondBorders documents, the operational plan, and the budget. Any significant updates will occur in December or April of each year, when budgets are reviewed and new operational plans are developed, respectively.

6. Evaluation

In the final phase, StudyBeyondBorders engages independent evaluators to provide an objective assessment of program and project performance, impact, and alignment with the strategic goals outlined in the program or project's Results Framework. The evaluation ensures accountability and offers critical insights for continuous improvement. External evaluators assess the program or project based on efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance, sustainability, and any other criteria specified in the terms of reference by StudyBeyondBorders. Evaluators use data collected by the program team throughout the program and project, as well as new data gathered during the evaluation process. The evaluation is summarized in a

report with recommendations and is disseminated to all relevant StudyBeyondBorders staff, local stakeholders, and board members of StudyBeyondBorders, SeeBeyondBorders Ireland, SeeBeyondBorders Australia, and SeeBeyondBorders UK as well as donors.

For programs or projects lasting longer than three years, StudyBeyondBorders may commission a mid-term external evaluation in addition to the final assessment. These evaluations offer an objective review of the program or project's progress and effectiveness at the midpoint, allowing for course corrections and adjustments to ensure alignment with strategic goals. The findings from mid-term evaluations are also shared with relevant staff, local stakeholders, board members, and donors.

In some cases, StudyBeyondBorders may opt for an internal evaluation as an alternative to an external one. Internal evaluations are conducted by the MEAL team and Program Managers who have a deep understanding of the program or project and its context. These evaluations follow the same steps as external evaluations.

StudyBeyondBorders actively uses the learning from both internal and external evaluations to inform program and project adjustments and strengthen future initiatives. Insights gained from these evaluations help identify best practices, address challenges, and refine strategies to enhance program and project effectiveness. This learning is integrated into ongoing programs and projects, shared with staff and stakeholders for capacity strengthening, and used to shape the design of new programs and projects. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, StudyBeyondBorders ensures that evaluation findings drive improvement across all levels of the organisation

7. Procedures

All processes related to the program and project life cycle, from design to evaluation, are described in detail in StudyBeyondBorders' Program and Project Manual and the Monitoring and Evaluation Manual. These manuals provide links to template documents and additional information for staff to use when planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating their projects.

8. Policy Management

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
DME/11/2024/V1.0	Policy	Approved/10/2024	Approved/10/2024		