Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning policy

Approved by the Board on _31__ October 2019

Statement of Purpose

1.   The following policy presents the position taken by the Love Mercy Foundation Limited (ABN 71 142 069 645) (**LMF**) in respect of evaluating, starting, managing, reporting and closing LMF projects in Northern Uganda (and any future country in Africa LMF elects to work within).

2.   By articulating common standards and approaches, this policy aims to:

  (a)   support LMF's efforts to demonstrate the sustainable positive impact of its projects;

  (b)   improve program and project design and implementation through identifying lessons learned and good practice, and any unintended positive and negative consequences;

  (c)   provide opportunities for accountability to all stakeholders, particularly those vulnerable and marginalised communities with whom we work;

  (d)   influence our own work and the practice of peer agencies and other stakeholders, through sharing our experience and learning;

  (e)   support our policy dialogue and advocacy to influence policy and practice that supports social justice;

  (f)   support donor relations, fundraising and marketing efforts.

3.   LMF is committed to ensuring that any international activities it conducts are undertaken by LMF and any of its affiliates (including, without limitation, Love Mercy Uganda [*Love Mercy Foundation Trust of PO Box 33587 Kampala*]), partners, donees, colleagues and clients, and each of their

respective officers, employees, agents, contractors and consultants, are properly planned, evaluated and monitored to ensure LMF continually gains the benefit of its experiences.

Scope

4. This policy applies to:

   (a) LMF staff;

   (b) LMF board members;

   (c) LMF volunteers, contractors and interns; and

   (d) members of partner organisations of LMF.

Planning

5. Identification of an overseas aid activity within a community or region, is undertaken by LMF personnel engaging with primary stakeholders to identify the needs of their community. This involves information sharing and listening to community leaders' and primary stakeholders views'. A needs assessment may also be conducted.

6. LMF then collates the findings into a detailed project proposal form which addresses the need/s identified by the primary stakeholders.

7. An in-country analysis is then conducted to identify any potential risks to primary stakeholders, employees, volunteers and partners prior to the approval of a project proposal form. These risks must be provided and details of the strategies for the management of the identified risk provided in the applicable project proposal form.

Project/Program evaluations

8. Each project/program engaged in by LMF will be evaluated, either in its own right or together with other related projects where appropriate. At a minimum, there must be a final completion report (internal or external) assessing and documenting achievements and lessons learned for future programs. The scope of the evaluations will depend upon the scale and/or nature of the project. On balance, greater effort will be devoted to evaluation of larger and longer-term projects. Annexure 1 outlines the evaluation standards to be observed.

9. Where practical a project manager will be appointed by LMF (which may include an officer, employee or agent of LMF and/or its affiliates from time to time) prepare 6 monthly evaluations of current projects to be provided to the LMF board. Final evaluation reports of each project will be completed on completion of projects. Annexure 2 provides an example evaluation report.

Post completion activities and other strategic evaluations

10. In respect of material projects undertaken or funded by LMF, LMF may (together with its partners and/or affiliates as the case requires) within 18 months following the completion of the project, undertake and complete LMF's post-completion review in accordance with LMF's then current program as may be approved by the Board (in its absolute discretion) from time to time. LMF shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure any partner and/or affiliate involved in the project provides such information and/or assistance as LMF reasonably requires in connection with same. Such review and evaluation shall (without limitation) assess the project delivery and outcomes

against any applicable assessment tools, key performance indicators relevant and/or any desired outcomes in respect of the project.

11. Without limiting the foregoing, LMF may conduct further strategic evaluations (on a regular basis) where restricted or unrestricted resources can be obtained. This supplements evaluations of individual projects by allowing a focus on issues or themes of importance to LMF, which can build a broader picture of LMF's impact. Strategic evaluations undertaken by LMF (in its discretion) may include:

    (a) thematic evaluations, which assess LMF's contribution on a particular theme or sector;

    (b) cluster evaluations, which assess a number of projects within a given country or region, to assess where possible the synergy of multiple projects (by LMF and others) to achieve higher-level impact.

12. Such strategic evaluations should also take advantage of project evaluations already completed and/or planned. Strategic evaluations can help us look at how a number of projects interact and how the collective impact may be more than the sum of its parts. In this way, strategic evaluations, together with individual project evaluations, can potentially be part of the building blocks for assessing the impact of LMF's long term programs.

Resourcing

13. LMF commits to allocating and generating the resources required for this Policy to be effectively implemented. In that respect, adequate financial support for all monitoring and evaluation must be written into LMF's annual budget.. LMF may determine the financial investment required for monitoring and evaluation in respect of each project based on the overall financial cost (including to LMF) of that project, as well as all other reasonable considerations having regard to the nature of the project. LMF shall at all times seek to secure an appropriate investment such that there is no material adverse impact on the accuracy and credibility of results, but neither should it divert project resources away from programming to the extent that results are impacted.

14. Regardless of available donor funding, LMF will budget for and undertake strategic evaluation of LMF's projects from time to time as the Board considers necessary (such as a post completion review and/or evaluation) consistent with LMF's commitment to learning and demonstrating impact.

Project responsibilities

15. Roles and responsibilities for evaluations are program specific. However, ultimate responsibility for appointment of project managers and/or review of project management activities and/or review and evaluation of projects lies with and is subject to the approval of the Board of LMF.

16. Project proposals are reviewed by LMF's appointed project manager for approval. Following approval, the LMF board is notified and a partnering agreement is issued to the relevant Partner. Likewise, an official approval of the project is issued to the partner overseas, indicating that fundraising for the project will commence.

17. The project manager has primary responsibility for planning for and supervising project and program evaluations, with support from the relevant LMF members and partners. Responsibilities include developing terms of reference for evaluations for review by the LMF Board for sign off; recruiting consultants where needed; undertaking or overseeing field research, consultation and

analysis; finalising evaluations based on review and comments on the draft; and preparing and following up the LMF board response to the recommendations of the evaluation report.

18. A joint plan for the evaluation process will be agreed between the project manager and the relevant LMF Partners, setting out key steps, inputs, roles and scheduling. Subject to the plan, the LMF Partners may provide support to the project manager in drafting of terms of reference, recruitment of consultants, provision of technical input, in-country support for field logistics, review of draft report, and liaison with the LMF board on follow up action.

19. In support of this policy, LMF will develop further practical guidance on evaluations, seeking to build where possible on strong and innovative evaluation practice happening within LMF and in the sector.

20. It is recognised that operational factors outside LMF's immediate control may affect the ability to fully meet all aspects of this policy in every case. These may include environmental constraints due to emergency or security; donor constraints such as unwillingness of some donors to adequately resource evaluations; varying capacity settings across LMF partners; and availability of qualified and affordable consultant expertise in evaluation. LMF and LMF partners are expected to make best efforts to address these issues; where difficulties are encountered, these will be flagged at the earliest opportunity for discussion between both parties so as to agree the best available alternative approach.

Monitoring and evaluation

21. Adherence to this Policy will be monitored by the project manager and progress reported periodically to the LMF board. Monitoring will consider the following:

    (a) effective dissemination of the policy through LMF's organisation and LMF partners;

    (b) familiarity and confidence of LMF project and program teams with the policy at both head office and country or regional levels;

    (c) reporting of results from evaluations undertaken;

    (d) application and compliance with the policy, and users' assessment of its clarity and usefulness, to be used in future review of the policy;

    (e) extent to which the policy generates learning and exchange of evaluation results and practice amongst LMF and LMF's partners and its contribution to improved practice.

22. In addition, reports from the project manager will be presented to LMF's board when completed.

23. The LMF board will meet quarterly to discuss governance, compliance, project matters and overall operations of the organisation.

Annexure 1 Evaluation standards and principles

The following evaluation standards reflect the key approaches for LMF's conduct of evaluations.

Standards on evaluation content

(a) **Focus on impact**: The primary focus of our evaluations will reflect our interest in the impact of LMF's work on sustainable improvement in the wellbeing of poor and marginalised women, men, boys and girls. Evaluations should assess both benefits and harms including intended and unintended impacts, considering relevant groups such as women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. They should consider the extent to which projects build the resilience of impact groups in the face of external shocks and changes.

(b) **Alignment with LMF strategic directions**: All evaluations need to include an analysis of the activity's alignment with or contribution to implementation of key LMF approaches, as well as the relevant long term program/s.

(c) **Gender and child safety**: All evaluations will include analysis of gender and child safety issues and impacts. Data will be disaggregated by sex, age and other diversity factors and analysis will report upon gender equality and child safety results and the relative impact of the project upon women, men, boys and girls. To facilitate effective field data collection and analysis, gender-balanced evaluation teams should be used.

(d) **Child safety aspects**: All evaluations in respect of child safety will include:

    (i) regularly seeking feedback from persons affected by LMF and its projects to identify and respond to any child safety concerns;

    (ii) monitoring the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to any child safety issues;

    (iii) ensuring that any child safety practices undertaken by LMF are up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice

    (iv) revising any such practices and procedures as part of LMF's review cycle, or as required; and

    (v) notifying parents/guardians (as appropriate) in respect of any child safety issues arising in connection with any projects.

(e) **Sector standards**: Evaluations will, whenever possible, use professional inter-agency and sector standards, so as to "speak a common language" within a larger network of development actors. Examples include the OECD-DAC evaluation guidelines and ACFID Principles for Ethics in Development Research and Evaluation. For humanitarian crises, evaluations will emphasise respect of sphere and other interagency standards recognized by LMF.

Standards on evaluation processes

(f) **Effective planning and baselines**: Whenever possible, planning for evaluation should begin at the time of project design, rather than waiting until the end of the project. This includes conducting an appropriate baseline at project start-up that will allow later comparison to assess 'before-and-after' change, including for gender impacts. Project monitoring

frameworks and processes should also be set up so as to provide useful data for evaluation purposes.

(g) **Rigour**: Evaluation plans should clearly outline the methodology used, and look to utilise a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods so as to provide a credible, objective assessment of results. When drafting or reviewing evaluation reports, staff should ensure that assertions regarding impact are linked to data and evidence.

(h) **Participation**: All evaluations will include, whenever possible, significant participation and high level of influence of parties external to LMF, in planning, implementation, analysis, and utilisation of evaluations. In particular, project and program participants (both women and men) should be provided the opportunity to provide their assessment and experiences of LMF's work and its outcomes.

(i) **Transparency**: Evaluation results and learning may be made available to the public domain from time to time, including by means of summaries and/or reports being made available (including via online means); provided at all times LMF will give due consideration to potentially sensitive content (for example, case studies of project beneficiaries, photographs of children, host government sensitivities and other contextual issues). Further, the Board may determine (including, where reasonably requested to do so), to make such information and materials available and accessible (for example, through translation) to host governments, LMF partners, peer organisations, and participant communities, recognising that different formats may be required for different audiences.

(j) **Integrity**: Evaluation activities will be conducted openly and in a transparent manner. Staff members and external evaluators engaged by LMF will maintain the highest possible professional, ethical and personal standards. In particular, they will ensure the honesty and integrity of the evaluation process, and respect the security and dignity of the stakeholders with whom they interact.

(k) **Independence**: The findings and recommendations of those conducting an evaluation should be included in their report without interference of managers, although a process of consultative, negotiated agreement should be undertaken from the outset. Those associated with activities being evaluated should be given the opportunity to respond to conclusions and recommendations, and their responses included in the final version of the official evaluation report.

Annexure 2 Evaluation Report

1.0 Project Information

Project Identification	
Project Name	
Project Duration: Date Started	
In-Country Partner	
Name of Organisation	
Street Address of Organisation	
Phone / Fax	
Email	
In-Country Project Manager Name	
In-Country Project Manager Email	
In-Country Project Manager Phone	

2.0   Achievements against project description

2.1 Project Activities Report

(Please provide a description of the project activities)

2.2 Outcomes

What are the project quantitative and qualitative outcomes?

3.   Successes and Challenges

What have been some of the successes and challenges of the project. What are your proposed solutions to the challenges that have arisen.

4.   Key Staff Changes

What changes of staff have occurred in roles of In-Country Director, Project Manager, Administrators, volunteers, etc.? What has been the reason for these changes?

5.   Children issues

A. Child Protection

Have you appointed a responsible officer for managing Child Protection issues?

How have staff, volunteers and beneficiaries been engaged in Child Protection matters?

Have you handled any child generated complaints this period?

Have there been any violations of your Child Protection Policy and/or guidelines and how have these been addressed by your organisation?

B. Child Needs Analysis

Have children been consulted during the project cycle? Have children's needs and rights been addressed in this project? Are there additional opportunities for participation in the program by children?

6. Staff Building

What staff building activities have been done for the staff/volunteers/beneficiaries. (This relates to training relevant to the role – financial management, teacher's training, office administration, aid & development, basic computing skills, etc)

7. Gender

How are women and girls given opportunities equal to men and boys in your project?

How are their views, needs, interest and rights heard and considered?

An assessment of the progress of gender needs, rights and inclusion of woman and girls. Are the project goal/objectives/outputs being met for these group of people and detail the barriers and enablers to doing so? Eg. how have woman and girls participated in this project and what strategies have been used to address their needs, rights and inclusions.

8. Beneficiaries living with Disabilities

How many people living with disabilities were integrated into the project activities?

How have their needs been considered eg. accessibility, assistive technology?

What barriers were encountered with participants?

Were any children with disabilities integrated into the project activities?

What assistance was necessary for primary carer's of children with disability to participate in the project eg. shift work or casual employment opportunity to enable the primary carer to care for disabled children.

9. Risk Management

Make a current assessment of the main risks you see for the project. These may be related to economic, social, cultural, managerial or environmental factors. Examples of risk may be in the protection of children, the inclusion of disabled or disadvantaged people, financial controls, local legal changes, etc.

Risk	Severity	How likely?	Action

10.   Marginalised & vulnerable people

An assessment of the progress of the needs, rights and inclusion of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by marginalisation and exclusion. Are the project goal/objectives/outputs being met for these group of people and detail the barriers and enablers to doing so? Eg. how have vulnerable and marginalised people participated in this project and what strategies have been used to address their needs, rights and inclusions.

10 (B) Strategies to mitigate the risk of harm to those affected by marginalisation & exclusion

This section should also detail any potential impact of their development and humanitarian initiatives. on those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by marginalisation and exclusion with a view of preventing unintended harm.

Risk	Severity	How likely?	Action

11. Any other matters to report?

Are there any incidents, accidents, good or bad news that have occurred in the project this period?

Are there any Partnership relationship matters we should discuss?

12.   Photos

Please provide photos that show the progress of the project during the reporting period

13   Australian Identity

Please detail how the Australian identity was promoted.

ATTACHMENTS:

Financial report for the project

Please complete a financial report for project in the Excel Spreadsheet.