Bursary Programme: Project document 2018

This document serves to identify the objectives of the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation's (3ie) Bursary Programme for all stakeholders. It outlines the programme structure, processes and policies, as well as staff roles and responsibilities.

1. Background and introduction

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) is a global leader in funding, producing, ensuring the quality of and synthesising rigorous evidence. We support studies and reviews that examine what works, for whom, why and at what cost in low- and middle-income countries (L&MICs). We are a global advocate for the generation and use of high-quality evidence in development decision-making.

There is considerable demand for assistance with individual and institutional capacity building related to the production and use of evidence. 3ie's bursary programme was set up in 2008 and formalised in 2013 to provide support to L&MIC nationals by funding opportunities for capacity building related to impact evaluations and systematic reviews.

Each bursary award covers the costs of registration fees, accommodation and a round-trip economy class airfare to conferences or trainings (read more about the cost policy in box 1). These awards are primarily for individuals who respond to calls for applications and to individuals from 3ie's member agencies located in L&MICs.

2. Objectives

2.1. Building individual and institutional capacity

Each bursary is awarded with an expectation that participants utilize and disseminate key-takeaways with their colleagues, and embed learning in order to promote better use of evidence within their respective institutions and field of work. Examples include making presentations to peers, undertaking or commissioning impact evaluations or systematic reviews, and encourage senior management to conduct relevant conferences and workshops.

The bursary programme is incorporated into 3ie's member benefits, which provide a more sustained pathway to institutional change. As many of 3ie's L&MIC member agencies are already committed towards evidence-informed policies, providing bursary support to nominees from 3ie member agencies helps strengthen institutional capacity.

A direct benefit of the bursary programme allows alumni to improve their professional or academic capacities by utilising their acquired knowledge. Alumni may also further their learnings by continuing to engage with the bursary programme network. Feedback from bursary

programme alumni indicate they view the learning and networking opportunities to be the key benefits of participation.

2.2. Promoting a culture of evidence

The bursary programme advances 3ie's work to build a culture of evidence in the development sector. In the past, participants have included policymakers, programme managers and researchers who utilised their learning to further their professional development. Alumni of the programme often encourage peers to attend future training and conferences, leading to the enhancement of local capacities.

3. Overview of recent awards

Since the programme's inception in 2008, 3ie has given over 1,000 awards for events organized by the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), Campbell Collaboration, and the American Evaluation Association, among others. While awarding bursaries, 3ie is committed to maintaining gender balance in its selection process and encourages qualified women applicants. In 2017, 46.51 percent of bursary award recipients were women. For a list of events for which 3ie has provided bursaries in 2017, please see Appendix A.

4. Programme structure, processes and policies for 2018

The executive director's office runs the bursary programme. While the executive director heads the programme, a research associate and executive assistant are tasked with the day-to-day management. The director for finance provides guidance on contracts and budgets.

As per our new strategy, 3ie will continue to contribute to raising evaluation capacities by increasing the number of bursaries awarded each year. With an increase in members from L&MICs, 3ie will provide more awards to individuals from member agencies to support capacity building at the institutional level.

3ie will continue to refine its processes and policies in order to improve support to programme alumni. General bursary programme processes and policies are detailed below. These may be modified slightly for individual trainings or conferences.

4.1. Planning and coordination

Before the beginning of each calendar year, the executive director identifies relevant events, the number of bursaries per event and the portion of awards for members. With support from the research associate, the executive director develops a preliminary budget, which includes provision for discretionary funding for new opportunities that may arise during the programme year.

The research associate liaises with event organizers for application and selection process, registration, invoicing, and logistics. The research associate requests the organizers to send draft quotation of amount payable, for which 3ie draws a contract. These contracts are prepared with support from the finance office and highlight the payment agreement between parties. In addition, due to the expansion of the bursary programme, 3ie will ask event organizers to take on more administrative responsibilities where desirable and possible.

4.2. Announcement and communication

3ie advertises open-calls for applications on its website and social media, these calls are open to all interested candidates who meet the eligibility criteria (see box 2). These announcements typically include an application form, a description of the event, applications with specific instructions and information related to costs covered under the programme.

To encourage participants from member agencies, the research associate coordinates with member agencies, sharing information on the training or conference and details the costs covered. The member agencies have to nominate participants, provide detailed resumes and send a letter of support for each. Participants nominated by members are not required to submit formal applications, unless specifically mentioned by the event organisers.

Box 1: Costs policies

- For each bursary award, 3ie covers the cost of round-trip economy airfare from the participant's home city, accommodation specified by 3ie, and registration fee.
- Bursary programme participants (or their employers) are responsible for costs associated with the visa application process, ground transportation and meals that are not included in the registration fee. Where possible, 3ie will arrange for accommodation that includes breakfast.
- Bursary support will not provide per diems or other reimbursements.

4.3. Selection process

3ie awards bursaries on a competitive basis to applicants who apply through open calls. Completed applications include: (i) submitted application form; and, (ii) a letter of support from the applicant's employer.

The executive director's office reviews the application materials, and ensures all candidates meet 3ie's eligibility requirements and selection criteria (see box 2).

Applicants are shortlisted keeping in mind the event-specific criteria and review of application form. The bursary programme manager selects and approves final awards.

Box 2: Eligibility requirements and selection criteria for bursary participants

Eligibility requirements:
- Applicants must be developing country nationals, currently residing in a low- or middle-income country.
- Applicants must be actively engaged in the field of impact evaluation, systematic reviews and evidence synthesis.
- Applicants must be employed with local agencies and not multilateral or international organisations that have the capacity to fund their employees.

Selection criteria:
- How well has the applicant demonstrated their interest in and commitment to the field of impact evaluations, systematic reviews and evidence synthesis?
- How well has the applicant demonstrated that attending the conference will enhance and support their individual and institutional capacity building?
- How would the applicant share their conference experience and knowledge with

---

others in their organisation or community?
- How well has the applicant demonstrated their proposed level of involvement in the conference?

4.4. Notification and Confirmation

Selected candidates are notified of their awards via email. The email includes the official award letter and travel profile form. The award letter contains a short description of the event, costs covered by 3ie and the requirements for participation. Applicants who are not selected are notified via email so they may look for alternate funding.

All participants are asked to confirm their participation and return the completed travel profile and a scanned copy of their passport within 48 hours of receiving the award letter. All applicants must communicate with 3ie's bursary programme office in a timely manner. Failure to do so will result in the bursary being cancelled.

4.5. Post award process and logistics

4.5.1. Flights

Once the participation is confirmed and travel profile is sent, 3ie facilitates travel through an agent. The agent recommends a cost-effective itinerary, which is reviewed by the research associate.

After the itinerary is reviewed, it is sent to participants to review for accuracy. Once 3ie has identified travel logistics, participants must confirm proposed schedule within 24 hours before any tickets can be issued.

The associate may approve flight variances of up to US$200 with justification, such as an excessive difference in flight timings. The executive director has to approve any variance above US$200. Please read the flight policies outlined in box 3.

Box 3: Bursary programme flight policies
3ie suggests flight schedules with reasonable routing based on information provided by the candidates in their travel profile. 3ie will attempt to reduce the number of stopovers and total flight time to the extent possible.   - Participants will be asked to review itineraries for accuracy and confirm their ability to fly at the selected times/days. Concerns regarding arrival or departures should be explicitly stated in the travel profile by the participants. 3ie cannot accommodate requests for alternate routing, trip extensions, or specific airlines.   - Where possible, 3ie will try to schedule return flights on the evening of the last day of the course. If this is not possible due to the course format or unavailability of evening flights, 3ie will pay for an additional night of accommodation and schedule the return ticket for the following day. If an itinerary with an evening return flight is more than US$350 than an itinerary with a return flight on the following day, 3ie will request participants to stay for an additional night at the course location.   - Due to airline regulations, the travel agent is unable to reserve an airline ticket for more than 24 hours. Thus, participants are requested to respond as soon as possible

to all communications related to travel. If participants do not respond within the stipulated time the bursary will be cancelled.

4.5.2   Accommodation

3ie will provide accommodation near the training or conference venue. When possible, 3ie will reserve accommodations that provide breakfast, but this is not guaranteed.

4.5.3   Other logistics

Passport details and other required information for the participants will be sent to the event organizers to prepare visa support letters. 3ie will work with event organizers on registration process and invoicing.

5. External communication

Communications activities play an important role in 3ie's bursary programme. The majority activities and materials are aimed at sharing information about the programme and promoting training and conferences. 3ie's social media, newsletter and website are major platforms for communications between potential bursary applicants and alumni.

Currently, the website includes information regarding upcoming events and general bursary programme information. In 2018, the web page will be expanded to include participant testimonials and a programme brochure.

5.1. Post-course surveys

3ie's bursary programme includes three post-course surveys. The first post-course survey is shared with the participants shortly after completion of a training or conference. The survey includes questions on the content and structure of the event and strategies that can amplify learning with colleagues and institutions. Participants can give suggestions on how to improve the programme.

The second survey is distributed approximately six months after an event has concluded. It is an opportunity to learn how alumni are applying the skills and knowledge gained through their participation. More specifically, the six-month survey requests alumni to detail the implementation of their intent to share the lessons learned. This feedback helps inform future course selection.

The third survey is intended for employers/supervisors of the participants which would allow 3ie to assess the impact of learnings from events at an institutional level and the impact on outcome indicators.

5.2. Relationship building and alumni engagement

Bursary programme alumni are reflective of a strong potential network of future 3ie grantees, collaborators, members, partners, staff, and consultants. Thus, 3ie seeks to ensure that participants who attend training and conferences organized by external organizations are aware of 3ie's work.

At present, the challenge for 3ie has been in determining the appropriate programmatic

activities to engage with the alumni, given their diverse geographies, professional backgrounds, and interests, limited staff and resources, and the organizational emphasis on providing resources and opportunities for the public at large rather than a specific target group.

Thus, 3ie has identified, the best way to engage with alumni during 2018 can be at the individual level: hosting informal side-meetings at specific events to discuss participants' interests and opportunities for future collaboration or support at the individual or institutional level. By communicating at the individual level, 3ie can support alumni in their work; for instance, providing materials or guidance to trainers. 3ie's support to alumni can also extend to connections with stakeholders in their home countries.

3ie is currently building a database of all participants with contact and biographical information that will help develop these resources in the future and support communications with individuals as described above.

6. Bursary programme indicators

Key indictors to evaluate the performance of the bursary programme are as follows:
A.   Process indicators
1.   No. of bursaries offered to open-call and nominee from member affiliates
2.   Training and conferences covered
3.   Regions covered

B.   Output indicators
1.   Gender ratio
2.   Quality of courses offered
3.   Indication of intent to contribute to individual and institutional capacity building

C.   Outcome/impact indicators
1.   Examples of application of intent which contributed to promotion and better use of evidence

Appendix A: description of supported courses

Below is a description of courses for which 3ie has provided bursaries. The inclusion of a course in this list does not indicate 3ie's willingness to continue providing bursaries for that specific course. 3ie provides bursaries to additional training and conferences that fits our agenda.

African Evaluation Association (AfrEA)

The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) is a non-profit umbrella organisation registered in Accra, Ghana. The organisation collaborates with governments and international partners to develop a strong African evaluation community. 3ie has supported AfrEA's international conferences, focusing on various development themes. For more details, see: http://www.afrea.org/

University of East Anglia (UEA)

University of East Anglia (UEA) is home to the School of Development Studies, the longest established development-oriented teaching programme in the United Kingdom. The impact evaluation course is a relatively technical two-week course. For more details see: http://www.uea.ac.uk/international-development/dev-co/professional-training/impact-evaluation

Community of Evaluators South Asia (CoE-SA)

The Community of Evaluators (CoE), a Section 25 company registered in India, is a consortium of evaluators from South Asia working together to strengthen the field of evaluation. CoE is South Asia's largest network of evaluators, and a platform for evaluators to interact and engage with one another. The organisation provides opportunities for knowledge sharing, capacity development, networking advocacy, developing protocols and standards for evaluation in South Asia. For more details, see: http://communityofevaluators.org/eng/

Campbell Collaboration Colloquium

The Campbell Collaboration (C2) helps people make well-informed decisions by preparing, maintaining and disseminating systematic reviews in education, crime and justice, social welfare and international development. Campbell events attract researchers and policymakers from around the world. Its purpose is to promote systematic reviews of research evidence on the effectiveness of social interventions, and the methodology involved. For more details, see: https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/news-and-events/events/global-evidence-summit.html

CLEAR

CLEAR is a global network of regional centres of excellence in monitoring and evaluation. It is supported by a secretariat located in the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) at the World Bank. The CLEAR Centers promote effective evaluation capacity development. The centres work at the individual and organizational level to build capacities and also work to create enabling environments for monitoring and evaluation. For more details, see: http://www.theclearinitiative.org/

MEASURE

MEASURE Evaluation has two decades of results improving data collection and the global capacity for research, sharing results for global application, evaluating programs and policies, fostering leadership, and improving health information systems (HIS). MEASURE Evaluation enables countries to improve lives by strengthening their capacity to generate and use high-quality health information to make evidence-informed, strategic decisions at local, sub-regional, and national levels. For more details, see: https://www.measureevaluation.org/measure

American Evaluation Association (AEA)

The American Evaluation Association is a professional association of evaluators devoted to the application and exploration of program evaluation, personnel evaluation, technology, and many other forms of evaluation. AEA's vision is to foster an inclusive, diverse, and international community of practice positioned as a respected source of information for and about the field of evaluation. AEA has approximately 7300 members representing all 50 states in the United States as well as over 80 foreign countries. For more details, see: http://www.evaluationconference.org/