

# Clear Horizon

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### Ulla Keech-Marx, Principal Consultant



#### Overview of Expertise

Ulla is a highly experienced MEL specialist with almost 20 years of experience working in the Australian aid context and supporting a range of international development programs in the Asia-Pacific region. She applies her expertise in mixed-methods research, strategic learning and adaptive management, and political economic analysis as well as her strong stakeholder engagement and facilitation skills to develop, implement and quality assure MEL systems for complex programs and contexts in the international development sector. She has worked for AusAID and DFAT, and has held evaluation consultancy roles, giving her unique insights into the workings of different aid delivery models and challenges.

Ulla is experienced in complexity-informed and equity-centred MEL, and applying systems-change thinking and GEDSI transformative approaches to help programs and organisations create positive impact. She is also fluent in French and Bahasa Indonesia.

#### Qualifications & Training

- 2020 Using Data Analysis and Visualisation to Drive Social Impact, Clear Horizon
- 2019 Evaluating Systems Change and Place-Based Approaches, Clear Horizon
- 2019 Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter – Participatory Leadership course
- 2018 Partnership Brokering, Partnership Brokering Association
- 2015 Poverty and Social Analysis, DFAT/Calder Consultants
- 2015 Thinking and Working Politically, DFAT/Developmental Leadership Program
- 2014 Political Economy Analysis, ODI
- 2012 Program Theory (Theory of Change/Theory of Action), Australian Evaluation Society
- 2012 Master of Evaluation (International Development), University of Melbourne.
- 2006 Bachelor of Asian Studies (Indonesian specialist) – First Class Honours & University Medal, ANU

#### Project Experience

##### Design, Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) and GEDSI



- Technical advisor, MERLA and GEDSI, International Technical Practice, Abt Associates, 2021 – 2023: As the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning, Adaptation (MERLA) Lead within Abt's International Technical Practice, Ulla led on MERLA strategy, thought leadership and business

development, as well as quality assurance of MERLA products and capacity building for Abt MERLA staff. Ulla provided MERLA and Gender Equality, Disability, Social Inclusion (GEDSI) advisory services to a range of Australian aid programs, both Abt-managed programs and consultancies.

- As MERL Advisor for Fiji-Australia Institutional Partnerships Program (Fiji IPP), she worked closely with Suva AHC to develop and implement a portfolio-level MERL system for Australia's governance support in Fiji. Her long-term role included MERL and GEDSI capacity building for partners and developing tools to help AHC monitor the context and manage risk, as well progress towards development and partnership outcomes.
  - As MERL and Adaptive Management (AM) Advisor for two large, DFAT Facilities in PNG - PNG-Australia Transition to Health and Australia-PNG Subnational Program - she supported program teams to develop and implement fit-for-purpose MERL and AM systems. She focussed on inclusive learning and adaptation processes and embedding political and GEDSI analysis within MERLA systems to support evidence-based decision-making.
  - As MEL Advisor for Australia-Timor Leste Partnership for Human Development (PHD), she provided strategic advisory services to DFAT and the PHD MEL team to integrate DFAT's guidance on Facility performance assessment into the PHD MEL system.
  - She has contributed to a range of successful bids at Abt, both long-term DFAT programs as well as short-term consultancies.
- Design, MEL and Gender Specialist, Social Protection Team, DFAT Canberra, 2020 – 2021.
    - Member of design team for DFAT's Pacific Partnerships for Social Protection (P4SP).
    - Developed a simple and fit-for-purpose MEL Plan for DFAT's work on social protection.

## Evaluation and Research



- Principal Consultant, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Practice, Coffey International Development, 2019 – 2020: strategic consultancies, business development and internal capacity building and quality assurance for the company.
  - Member of team supporting New Zealand MFAT to transition to a programmatic and partnership approach with New Zealand NGOs working in the Asia-Pacific Region, under the Negotiated Partnerships Programme. Her work involved independent appraisal of design documentation, strengthening the design appraisal framework and quality standards, and capacity building in gender, MEL, partnerships and adaptive management.
  - Team Leader for MFAT's strategic evaluation of the Solomon Islands development cooperation programme (2009-2019). Drawing on her skills in adaptive management and remote MEL, she refined the evaluation scope and approach to respond to COVID-19.
  - She co-authored this [\*MERL in a time of COVID\*](#) reference tool.

## Performance Assessment Frameworks and Policy Development



- **Performance and Gender Advisor, Afghanistan and Pakistan, DFAT Canberra, 2016 – 2019:** Ulla was responsible for strategic review, policy development and aid effectiveness of Australia's aid programs to Afghanistan and Pakistan. She oversaw and undertook various designs and evaluations, including as team leader for the evaluation of DFAT's Ending Violence against Women program in Pakistan. She was responsible for developing Performance Assessment Frameworks and quality assuring annual Aid Program Performance Reports for Afghanistan and Pakistan. She was also responsible (with her job share partner) for designing and implementing an innovative approach to remote monitoring and risk management for the Afghanistan aid program, the M&E Lab. This body of work, funded by DFAT's InnovationXchange (iXc), included trialing adaptive management approaches and big data approaches for M&E in conflict zones. Ulla's work was

recognised both internally (DFAT Secretary’s Australia Day Award 2018) and externally (papers accepted at Australian Evaluation Society and ANU Aid Conferences in 2019).

- Gender Specialist, South East Asia Divisions, DFAT Canberra, 2014 – 2016:** Ulla was responsible for improving the integration of gender considerations and women’s empowerment into policy and programming across DFAT’s aid programs in South-East Asia, through provision of guidance, training and quality assurance. She supported South-East Asia Posts to develop and implement integrated gender strategies and action plans, and contributed to numerous designs and evaluations, for example as Gender and Inclusion Specialist on the team for the review of Australia’s support for Timor Leste’s Community Driven Development program, PNDS.
- Governance Specialist, Development Policy Division, AusAID/DFAT Canberra. 2010 – 2014:** As a governance specialist at AusAID, Ulla was responsible for policy development and providing internal advice and guidance in a number of areas: MEL for complex programs; women’s leadership and coalitions; political economy analysis; iterative, adaptive programming approaches; and capacity building. Ulla led the development of AusAID’s Performance Assessment Framework for Governance, which drew on cutting-edge thinking around MEL approaches in long-term, iterative and adaptive social change programs. She was a member of AusAID’s Impact Evaluation working group and AusAID’s M&E Standards working group, tasked with developing M&E guidance for the aid program. Ulla managed AusAID’s partnership with the Developmental Leadership Program, which was central to AusAID/DFAT early engagement with the Doing Development Differently and Thinking and Working Politically agendas. She organized and participated in M&E in Complexity workshops with DLP on MEL for adaptive programming and politically-informed MEL. She also contributed to investment concept development for flagship gender programs MAMPU (Australia Indonesia Partnership for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment) and Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, among others.

## Positions held

2023 – present	Principal Consultant, Clear Horizon Consulting
2021 – 2023	Technical Advisor – MERLA and GEDSI, International Technical Practice, Abt Associates
2020 – 2021	Design, MEL and Gender specialist, Social Protection Team, DFAT
2019 – 2022	Principal Consultant, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Practice, Coffey International Development
2016 – 2019	Performance and Gender Advisor, Afghanistan and Pakistan, DFAT
2014 – 2016	Gender Specialist, South East Asia Divisions, DFAT Canberra
2013 – 2016	Board Member, NTA-East Indonesia Aid NGO (volunteer)
2010 – 2014	Governance Specialist, Development Policy Division, AusAID/DFAT Canberra
2008 – 2009	Development Program Specialist for Eastern Indonesia, AusAID Indonesia
2006 – 2008	Policy and Project Officer, Indonesia Program, AusAID Canberra and Indonesia

## Memberships

Australian Evaluation Society