

Lively Minds Job Description – Operations Manager

Reports to: Chief Operating Officer

Based: Tamale, Ghana for the first two years. You choose the location after that.

Salary: Specialist, Band 4. Starting salary of 32,861 GBP per annum. Rising to 36,225 GBP per annum after 1 year, subject to meeting performance expectations

Hours: Full time

Contract: Permanent.

About us

Our mission is to get preschool children in rural Africa school-ready. At present over 250 million children worldwide fail to receive the education and care they need in their early years which means they are less likely to do well in school, find gainful employment, and are at greater risk of early marriage, early parenthood and even criminality. Current approaches to solving this crisis are not proving effective or scalable in lower middle income countries.

That's where Lively Minds comes in. We have developed an award-winning Early Childhood Development programme that has been proven to get pre-schoolers in hard-to-reach communities school-ready, so they have a greater chance of succeeding in school and in life. The programme provides marginalised Mothers with a parenting course that empowers them to run educational Play Schemes for pre-schoolers and to provide better home-based care, using cheap local resources. The programme is delivered through government partners, is cheap and highly scalable.

Over the past few years, the Lively Minds programme has been delivered in over 1000 communities in rural Ghana and Uganda. During COVID we launched a radio programme for parents, and this is now reaching over 2 million households each week. We are extremely proud that the Government of Ghana have now adopted the programme and we have a ground-breaking partnership with them to support them to institutionalise it, fund it and to scale it to 60 education districts, reaching over 4000 communities and 1 million children. We see this partnership as the test case that will provide the blueprint to take the programme to scale in Uganda and elsewhere within the next 5 years, so that we can have a transformative role in tackling the global ECD crisis.

We're an ambitious organisation, determined to have a major positive impact on the world. We work hard at a fast pace, in a challenging environment. We expect everyone to give their best to achieve the best possible results. Our work is demanding but provides plenty of opportunity for innovation, responsibility, growth, collaboration, creativity and fun. We want all staff to be happy, fulfilled and to feel appreciated and valued in their work.

To find out more about our programme, take a look at the videos about our programme <https://www.liveminds.org/videos>

About the role

Reporting directly to our COO the postholder will be at the forefront of leading our organisation through this exciting phase of growth and will serve as the right hand of the COO in driving operational excellence organisation wide. We have recently grown our team from 45 to nearly 100 FTEs. We are developing new systems and processes to ensure that our government partners are able to deliver to quality standards at scale, and our staff are enabled to provide them with high-quality technical support.

Over the last year the Lively Minds programme has been compiled into a 'playbook' the bible of how to implement the programme from end to end, one of the postholders key responsibilities will be to own the maintenance of this playbook, keeping it up to date as changes and refinements are made, with the postholders input, to the way we implement.

Main duties and responsibilities

Systems optimisation

Our goal is for our team, located across multiple locations, to be a well-oiled machine at scale and able to expand operations to new countries. As such, we need streamlined, centralised internal operating systems (i.e., finance, HR, IT) that can be customised for context and ultimately enable us to work together as a global team. This role will be responsible for supporting the COO and other Senior Management Team members to optimise our current operating systems and design, build and implement new systems.

- Support evaluation and optimisation of current internal operating systems
- Support design, development, testing and implementation of new internal operating systems
- Manage a log of internal operating systems, uptake, risks and lessons learned and ensure evaluation is translated into actionable improvements

Programme Operations and Quality Management

The Lively Minds Programme is mainly delivered by government partners, with Lively Minds staff performing as master trainers and providing technical support to government (capacity-building training and coaching). We must ensure that delivery by both LM staff and government staff is to quality and that the right systems and tools are in place to support implementation excellence. This role will be responsible for supporting the COO and Implementation Teams to optimise the programme execution rhythm and quality assure the programme delivery.

- Support Country teams to develop termly implementation schedules
- Support Country teams to schedule workforce effectively using automated IT tools
- Ensure process maps for all programme activities are optimised and kept up to date

- Provide technical expertise to the COO and work with Head of M&E to develop and implement programme quality assurance and reporting systems and tool
- Ensure implementation action plans are kept up to date and support Country teams to maintain these, monitoring compliance and progress
- Maintain the risk register: ensure effective actions are put in place to manage risks
- Proactively identify risks in the operations of the programme in consultation with the COO and Country Directors and facilitate problem solving discussions.
- Provide training/coaching to Country teams on quality assurance systems.
- Monitor compliance to organizational policies and escalate compliance risks to COO and policy owners.
- Analyse processes in programme activities and look for opportunities to improve our systems and processes using data and in-depth analysis.

Other

- May be asked to deputise for the COO or Country Director Ghana or other members of SMT at external events with key stakeholders.

You may be assigned any other responsibility in agreement with your line manager, in contribution to Lively Minds work and in recognition of your experience and skills.

To succeed in this role, you:

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- to be an analytical and strategic thinker - with an irrepressible ability to see challenges as opportunities and to find creative solutions
- to be a fast and self-driven learner – you will need to quickly get yourself up to speed with new ideas, approaches, best practices
- to work productively and produce excellent quality work with minimal supervision at pace
- to be a leader - you will need to collaborate well with other team members, and to drive high performance in others

Technical abilities

Essential

- Minimum of 3 years' experience of operations management or change management
- Excellent communication (English), both oral and written
- Professional Project Management certification (i.e., Prince 2, Six Sigma, PMP, APM, PMQ)
- Experience of analysing and reviewing data
- Experience in creating user-friendly tools and processes to support project and quality management
- Experience using Microsoft 365 package including Visio, PowerPoint, with advanced Excel skills
- Tech savvy – ability to learn new tech tools efficiently
- Experience coordinating others
- Ability to manage a complex and varied work load and to work under pressure

- Excellent interpersonal skills

Desirable

- Experience designing internal operational systems (i.e. finance, HR, IT)
- Experience of working in the global south

How to apply

If this sounds like you, please complete an application form and send it together with your CV to jobs@livelyminds.org by **11:59pm GMT on Sunday 13th November 2022**.

Due to resource constraints, we apologise, but we will only respond to shortlisted candidates. Lively Minds operates a strict Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, and we therefore check suitability of successful candidates through background checks consisting of references and police checks.

Lively Minds is fully committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. We want this to be reflected in the diversity of the people who work for us and we welcome applications from people from all backgrounds and identities.